

The Ancient East Asian World and Gaya: Maritime Networks and Exchange

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A Confederation Linked through Separation and Equality

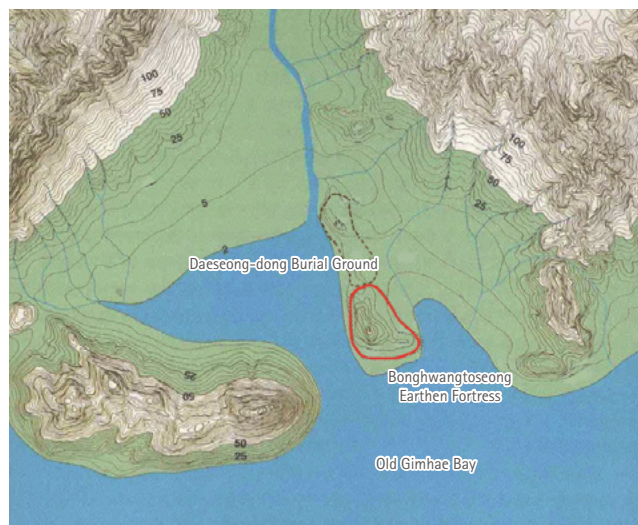
The Samhan polities developed following the arrival of iron culture to the southern Korean Peninsula in the third century BCE. Byeonhan was located in the middle reaches of the Nakdonggang River, running north to south through what is now the Gyeongsang region of Korea. “Account of the Eastern Barbarians” (東夷傳) from the “Book of Wei” (魏書) in the ancient Chinese historical record *Sanguozhi* (三國志, Records of the Three Kingdoms) relates that Byeonhan was made up of twelve polities. These were statelets spread around bays along the southern coast of Korea or in basins along tributaries of the Nakdonggang River.

As iron-working culture developed, these twelve smaller units combined into several polities and then reorganized themselves as Gaya (42–562). Byeonhan reemerged as Gaya around the third century CE, but not every part of what would become incorporated into Gaya was involved from the time of its establishment. Centered on the leading Byeonhan statelets, each political unit developed by merging or forming alliances with smaller nearby polities.

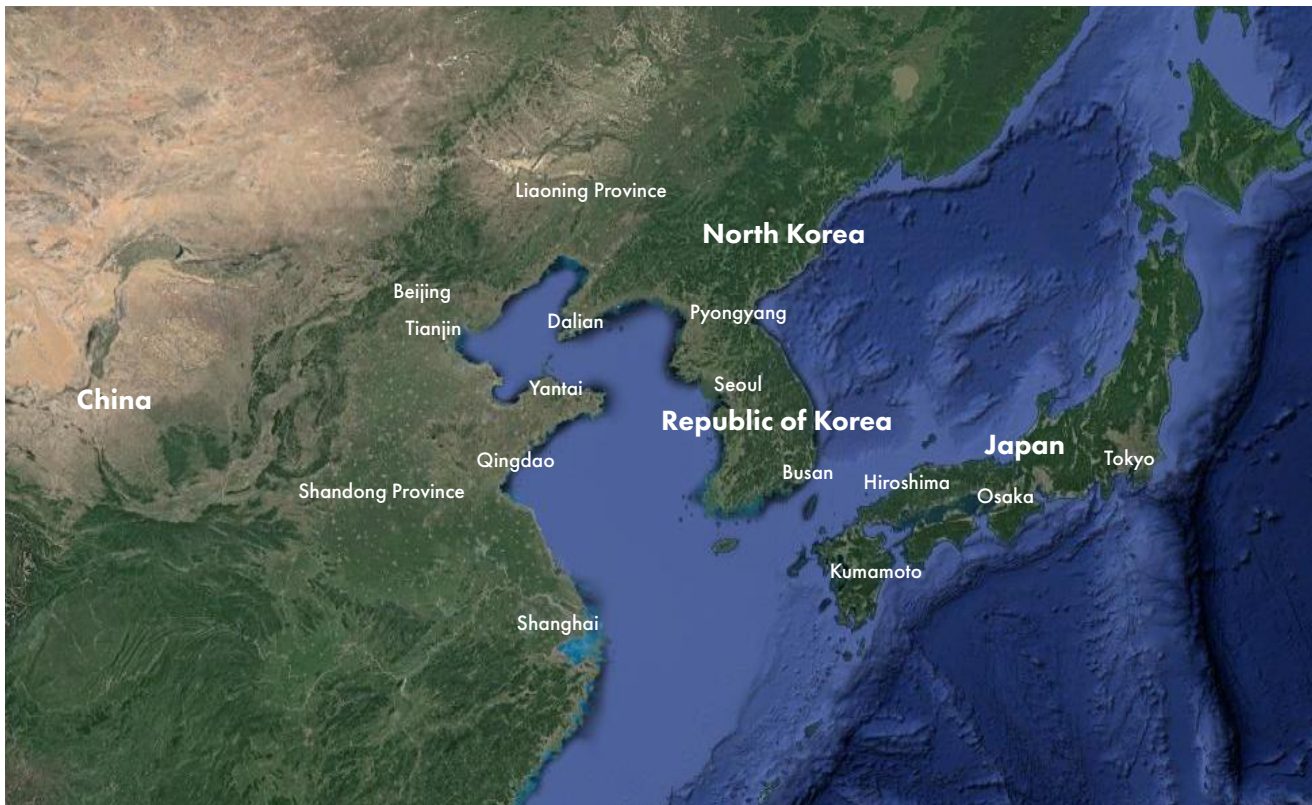
In the third to fourth century CE, several areas with

advantageous conditions for expansion into the back bays along the southern seaboard came to the forefront. The two definitive examples are Geumgwan Gaya, where the Nakdonggang River meets the coast, and Ara Gaya in Haman, which enjoyed easy access to Jindong Bay on the southern coast (Map. 1). Geumgwan Gaya, located at the nature-blessed Old Gimhae Bay (what is now Gimhae plain), was originated from Guyaguk (狗耶國) of Samhan and became the leading polity of the early phase of Gaya allying with Dongnoguk (濇盧國) at the eastern side

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Map. 1. Old Gimhae Bay, the Capital of Geumgwan Gaya, and its Royal Tomb Complex



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Map. 2. Map of East Asia

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of the Nakdonggang River. Old Gimhae Bay was the meeting point of the seas to the south and east of the Korean Peninsula, and also a geographical gateway where water routes provided access to the inland Gyeongsang areas up the Nakdonggang River. Trade here could pass from China to Japan via Korea. Geumgwan Gaya accumulated wealth and power through serving as a trade intermediary between Han Chinese states, non-Han states of the equestrian people, Korean Peninsula's Goguryeo (37 BCE–668 CE), Baekje (18 BCE–660 CE), and Silla (57 BCE–935 CE), and Wa (倭) in Japan (Map. 2).

Although Geumgwan Gaya emerged as a leader in the early phases of Gaya, it could not control the entirety of the confederation, and influential polities in different regions of Gaya began to gain power while maintaining their independence and building trade networks with their neighbors.

Geumgwan Gaya sustained a close relationship with Wa in the Japanese Archipelago. People from Wa crossed to the Korean Peninsula and settled near the Geumgwan Gaya harbor with the permission of Geumgwan Gaya's ruling class. They adopted advanced culture and exploited iron resources on the Korean Peninsula, including those of Gaya, and then conveyed them to Wa in Japan. When the Wa people began to plunder areas outside Geumgwan Gaya, particularly Seorabeol (today's Gyeongju), the capital of Silla, Silla appealed to Goguryeo for military assistance.

King Gwanggaeto (r. 391–412) of Goguryeo defeated Gaya forces in 400 CE with an army of fifty thousand mixed infantry and cavalry. This southern conquest of Goguryeo led to Geumgwan Gaya's rapid decline, and as the other Gaya polities rose to take prominence, the balance of power shifted in the region.

After the fifth century CE, Dae Gaya in Goryeong, Ara Gaya in Haman, So Gaya in Goseong, and Bihwa Gaya in Changnyeong emerged as leaders in Gaya society. The respective Gaya polities were constituted through mergers and alliances between the small neighboring polities surrounding the major polities. Meanwhile, ancient states were rapidly developing around East Asia, including the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589) in China; Goguryeo in the northern Korean Peninsula and northeastern China; and Baekje and Silla to the south of Goguryeo. Wa also pursued to form an ancient state by unifying much of the Japanese Archipelago.

The Gaya polities shared close relations, but they remained actively independent through the mutual recognition of each polity's autonomy. The presence of Gaya served as a buffer zone within the Korean Peninsula, and Gaya's autonomous polities provided a fundamental basis for the maintenance of international trade networks in East Asia. Various Chinese dynasties, the Three Kingdoms on the Korean Peninsula, and Wa in the Japanese Archipelago began to build relationships

with the respective polities in the newly reorganized Gaya Confederacy. Gaya was a disparate entity maintaining equal internal relations and played the role of a hub in the distribution routes in East Asia linking the Three Kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula, Wa, and China as they developed into ancient states.

Geumgwan Gaya and the Maritime Network

Old Gimhae Bay, where Geumgwan Gaya was located, had already been the main center for the flow of trade from China to the Korean Peninsula and on to the Japanese Archipelago since at least the Samhan period. Chinese dynasties maintained a close relationship with Samhan societies through the Nangnang (108 BCE–313 CE, Ch. Lelang) Commandery in the northwestern section of the peninsula. The Samhan ruling classes imported prestige goods such as bronze mirrors, bronze pots, and double-layered glass beads from China, and received official posts and the requisite attire associated with them (Fig. 1). Some traders

from the Japanese Archipelago settled in Old Gimhae Bay, secured prestige goods from China and the advanced culture from the Samhan states, and then conveyed them to Wa. This acquisition of iron and iron tool-producing technology from the Samhan states was critical in the cultural development of the Japanese Archipelago. A considerable number of the artifacts excavated at archaeological sites in Gimhae's Yangdong-ri, Bonghwang-dong, and Naedeock-ri demonstrate these dynamic processes. The Old Gimhae Bay area has produced the greatest concentration of Wa and Chinese artifacts from the Samhan period.

After the establishment of Gaya, which originated out of Byeonhan, the role of Old Gimhae Bay in international trade in East Asia increased in importance. Even though international relations shifted with the collapse of the Nangnang Commandery and the Daebang (early 3rd century–314, Ch. Daifang) Commandery at the hands of Goguryeo in 313 and 314 CE, respectively, Old Gimhae Bay was still regarded as an important hub along the route linking the Gulf of Bohai, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the Strait of Korea (Hong Bosik 2014).

The large wooden chamber tombs at the burial complex



Fig. 1. Bronze Tripod Cauldron of Han Dynasty China. Excavated from Yangdong-ri Tomb No. 322 in Gimhae, Gaya, 3rd century (date of tomb). Bronze. H. 17.5 cm, D. 16.1 cm. Gimhae National Museum

in Daeseong-dong, Gimhae, the royal cemetery of Geumgwan Gaya, has produced numerous artifacts from Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla along with Wa-type goods and items from China's central plain in the Xianbei style. Artifacts originating in the central plains and northeastern China mostly symbolize the prestige of the ruling class: bronze mirrors, iron cauldrons, bronze cauldrons, horse harness, gilt-bronze belt buckles, bronze bowls, bronze basins, and double-layered glass beads (Fig. 2).

The ruling class of Geumgwan Gaya further developed the trade routes established during the Samhan phase and imported from their neighbors an entirely different level of prestige goods compared to the previous Samhan ruling class. Iron cauldrons, bronze cauldrons, bronze basins, and bronze bowls were used as a means of expressing social status rather than as vessels for actual daily use.

Gilt-bronze belt ornaments were worn by the ruling class in China as symbols of social rank during the Western Jin period (265–316 CE) and spread widely across neighboring regions. The ruling classes of the nations established by the nomadic peoples of the north, known as the Sixteen Kingdoms, also wore them as prestige goods. Some of the ruling elites of Geumgwan Gaya joined this practice for expressing social rank common among the East Asian ruling classes of the third to the fourth century (Fig. 3). This was only possible because the Geumgwan Gaya ruling class actively participated in the East Asian networks of exchange.

Artifacts from Wa, such as stone prestige items used as burial goods by the ruling class of the Yamato court in the Kinki region, the center of Wa at the time, were buried in the royal tombs of Geumgwan Gaya. Prestige goods from



Fig. 2. Bronze Cauldron by the Nomadic Tribes. Excavated from Daesung-dong Tomb No. 29 in Gimhae. Gaya, 3rd century (date of tomb). H. 18.2 cm. Gimhae National Museum

the ruling classes of China to the north and the Japanese Archipelago to the south were buried together in the royal tombs of Geumgwan Gaya. This demonstrates that the ruling class of Geumgwan Gaya possessed a full awareness of the systems of prestige goods in both mainland China and the Japanese Archipelago.

Artifacts from China's central plain and the Xianbei peoples were concentrated in the royal tombs of Geumgwan Gaya, but items from Baekje, Silla, and Wa have been excavated

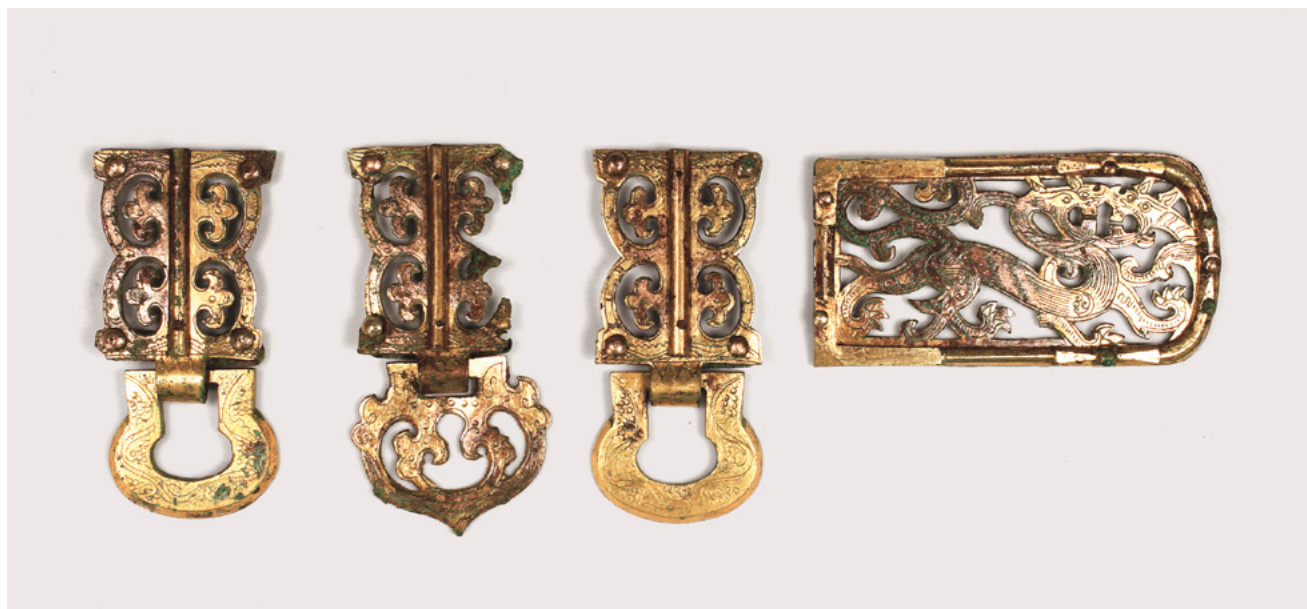


Fig. 3. Chinese Gilt-bronze Belt Ornaments. Excavated from Daeseong-dong Tomb No. 88 in Gimhae. Gaya, 4th century (date of tomb). L. 7.1 cm, W. 3.1 cm. Daeseong-dong Tombs Museum



Fig. 4. Wa-type Stone Tools. L. 5.1–11.3 cm. Jinju National Museum

in several villages and tombs of the lower elites, including the Bonghwang-dong site and the shell midden at Hoehyeon-ri in Gimhae, where the ruling class's residential areas and rubbish dumps were located (Fig. 4). The foreign artifacts yielded by the villages and tombs of the lower elites include Chinese mirrors. However, most of the artifacts were pottery vessels for daily use that were widely traded or used as containers (Fig. 5).

Pottery for daily use from Baekje, Silla, and Wa has been excavated in several villages along what was the shore of Old Gimhae Bay, indicating that outsiders involved in trade resided in Geumgwan Gaya. In particular, locally imitated Wa potteries used as cooking vessels were frequently found in the region, indicating that the people accustomed to Wa lifestyles present in Geumgwan Gaya. The Wa people who resided in the periphery of Geumgwan Gaya traded specialty items from the Japanese Archipelago with Gaya and in turn imported advanced culture and goods from China and the Korean Peninsula, including from Gaya. They also imported iron and iron tool production technology from Gaya along with items for military use, including Gaya armor (Hong Bosik 2014).



Fig. 5. Wa-type Pottery. H. 21.9 cm (the third from the left)



Fig. 6. Layout of village in the Aju-dong Site on Geoje Island

Archaeological findings of Geumgwan Gaya-style artifacts have been uncovered in the southwestern coastal regions of Korea, such as the Jangdong burial group in Goheung, the Sinchon-ri site in Boseong, the Guksan site and the Mangachon site in Hampyeong, and the Yangjang-ri site in Muan. They have also been unearthed in Fukuoka, which was the gateway to the Japanese Archipelago, and in ancient tombs and villages in the Kinki region of Japan. The coastal sea route passing from the Chinese coast to the Korean Yellow Sea coast, to the East China Sea, and on to the Strait of Korea, through which high-value goods and information were constantly traded and people came and went, ranked as one of the most important international trading routes in East Asia at the time.

As seen from the above, Geumgwan Gaya groups at the Old Gimhae Bay held leadership roles in the Gaya-East Asia trade network during the third to fourth centuries. Important structures that illustrate this dynamic have been found at the west Bonghwang-dong site and in the Yulha district near Old Gimhae Bay. These include boats, which made trips loaded with people and goods between the southern and western coasts, and bustling harbor facilities that would have been filled with workers helping ships to dock and loading and unloading them in the harbor. Although it is a fertile plain today, at the time of Gaya it was a natural port blessed by geography with a bay that

remained deep through its interior and far out to the open sea but was still located right where the sea meets the Nakdonggang River. We can picture scenes of ships being loaded with jars and boxes full of goods produced using advanced technologies and rare minerals along with specialties such as salt, honey, alcohol, and spices.

At various waypoints along this coastal sea route, mixed communities of Gaya, Mahan-Baekje people, and Wa people coexisted and intermingled. The village site at Aju-dong on Geoje Island clearly demonstrates this (Fig. 6). Here, styles of pottery originating in Gaya, Mahan-Baekje, and Wa were excavated along with dwelling sites that exhibit both local features and others unique to the southwestern coastal regions.

This demonstrates that the cultures of Gaya, Mahan-Baekje, and Wa coexisted in the Aju-dong village, or at the very least that the village consisted of people from the three areas. It suggests that the people who lived there were merchants involved in practical work related to the international trading network. It can be inferred that there would have been similar merchant groups in various locations along the coast. Assorted goods and information were distributed through the international network linking the Chinese central plain, the northeastern region of China, Goguryeo, Mahan-Baekje, and Wa.

Weaponry, which reflects the wars of conquest that

were waged as ancient states expanded and developed, has been discovered extensively in Gimhae and Busan around the Nakdonggang River estuary. Protective equipment that appeared in the first half of the fourth century, such as iron helmets and armor, was locally produced around the Nakdonggang River estuary, but it was modeled after the armor of Goguryeo and Xianbei (Fig. 7). After the first half of the fourth century, the Geumgwan Gaya ruling class adopted the weaponry, weapons systems, and tactics of the northern states, including Goguryeo, in order to respond more effectively to the new political order. This means that Geumgwan Gaya had established trading networks with groups in the north, including Goguryeo, following the introduction of advanced warfare tactics from these countries.



Fig. 7. Helmet and Body Armor. Excavated from Bokcheon-dong Tomb No. 38 in Busan. Gaya, 5th century. H. 34.0 cm, D. 17.3 cm (helmet), H. 43.0 cm, C. 107.0 cm (body armor). Gimhae National Museum. Treasure No. 2020

Reorganization of Gaya Society and the Trade Network

The situation in East Asia reached a turning point in the first half of the fourth century when Goguryeo consolidated its control over the northwestern regions of the Korean Peninsula. Nangnang had removed itself from the former trade network and Baekje had grown powerful enough to pressure Mahan in the southwestern coastal area. Gaya was critically weakened by a southern expedition of Goguryeo troops in 400 CE and the maritime network led by Geumgwan Gaya declined rapidly, hardly functioning at all after the early fifth century.

Once the seaborne trade network operated by Geumgwan Gaya collapsed, other polities that possessed the potential for growth became increasingly assertive in accepting the advanced cultural elements and goods from Goguryeo, especially weapons and armor including horse harness, which were essential to expanding one's power. In particular, as groups located along inland transport routes developed, the balance of power shifted from the maritime clusters to those located in the interior. Araguk (阿羅國), Bisabeolguk (比斯伐國), Daraguk (多羅國), and Garaguk (加羅國), respectively located in today's Haman, Changnyeong, Hapcheon, and Goryeong, emerged as new polities during this reorganization. Araguk and Garaguk rose to become the leading groups in this late phase of Gaya by taking advantage of the shifting situation as they amalgamated or allied with smaller surrounding polities.

After the first half of the fifth century, these rising Gaya polities sought closer relations with Baekje and enthusiastically borrowed advanced cultural elements from it. The Baekje-style Gilt-bronze Cowl Cap that was found in Tomb No. 23 of the Okjeon burial ground in Hapcheon, a Daraguk's ruling class site, is notable as the first known instance of the use of a metal crown by a *hangi* (旱岐), the name for the supreme ruler, essentially the king, of each Gaya polity as described in the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀, The Chronicles of Japan), and also as the first evidence of the adoption of elements to express social rank reflecting the customs practiced by the ruling classes of the Three Kingdoms (Fig. 8). The dominant Gaya groups intended to maintain and display their increased power by adopting the manners of the ruling classes of other developed states as a means to express their prestige. Tombs for the supreme ruling class of Gaya, such as the Marisan burial ground in Haman and the Jisan-dong burial ground in Goryeong, yielded not only Baekje-style goods but Silla- and Goguryeo-style items as well.

The *hangi* of Gaya acquired the advanced weapons and



Fig. 8. Baekje-style Gilt-bronze Cowl Cap. Excavated from Okjeon Tomb No. 23 in Hapcheon. Gaya, 4th century. Gilt-bronze. H. 23.5 cm. Gyeongsang National University Museum

horse harness that began diffusing within East Asia after the fifth century and adapted them to suit local circumstances. *Hangi* also established trade networks by importing prestige goods from Baekje and conducting regular trade with groups in the outlying regions of Silla. In the midst of active swings in the local power balance, examples such as the Gyeseong-ri site in Changnyeong demonstrate that groups from Mahan-Baekje even migrated into Gaya.

Construction of the Mounded Tombs of Gaya and Regional Exchange Networks

Mounded tombs were built in different regions around Gaya after the latter half of the fifth century. The careful selection of a location that would ensure the mounded tombs were visible to the populace and the construction of broad and tall mounds over coffins demanded advanced engineering technologies. Tomb No. 73 at the Jisan-dong burial ground in Goryeong, which was the



Fig. 9. Royal Tomb of Dae Gaya (Jisan-dong Tomb No. 73 in Goryeong). 5th century

royal burial complex of Garaguk, provides a clear demonstration of this engineering technology (Fig. 9). Tomb No. 73 is one of the largest tombs among all the mounded tombs of Gaya: It spans 21 by 22 meters in diameter at the base, and the surviving mound is 4.5 meters tall. As illustrated in the example above, the nearly complete form of the tomb at the time of its adoption indicates that its construction technique had already been perfected.

Found among the burial goods from Tomb No. 73 were the horse harness ornaments and gilt-bronze wing-shaped crown ornament found in the chamber for human sacrifices to the west of the pit; these items were the primary burial goods for Silla's central ruling class. This indicates that the ruling class of Garaguk received or accepted some kind of information regarding the construction of the mounded tombs from central Silla or surrounding regional groups that is deeply connected to central Silla. Also, it is unusual that a burial item so closely associated with Silla's highest ruling groups, a gilt-bronze bird-wing-shaped crown ornament, was among the burial goods for a sacrificed individual. It can be inferred that the person sacrificed in the pit had a close relationship with Silla or had served as an intermediary between Gara and Silla in the trade network.

The wooden coffin in the stone chamber of the Tomb No. 73's main chamber was assembled with iron nails at the left and right edges and hinges in the center. Wooden coffins with iron nails and hinges are frequently reported from the cemeteries of the ruling class of Baekje. A sword with a phoenix-decorated ring pommel was found among the burial goods, which closely resemble those excavated from Tombs Nos. 1 and 12 among the stone-lined tombs at the Yongwon-ri site in Cheonan. Relations

with Baekje are demonstrated in Jisan-dong Tomb No. 73 by the use of wooden coffins, the manner in which they were assembled, and the items included as burial goods. Direct and indirect relations with both Baekje and Silla are reflected in the construction of mounded tombs for the ruling class of Garaguk, which signifies that Garaguk's *hangi* had established trading networks with the two kingdoms.

Each of tombs Nos. M1 and M2 in the Okjeon burial ground in Hapcheon, which was for Daraguk's *hangi*, was divided into a main and an auxiliary chamber by a partition and was capped with a wooden lid. This structure is a prominent feature of the mounded tombs of the Gyeseong burial ground in Changnyeong. The burial goods in Tomb No. M1 included a Roman glass, as well as gilt-bronze horse harnesses, Bisabeol-type potteries, and belt ornaments with monster-face design. The gilt-bronze horse harness and the Roman glass were brought in from central Silla via Bisabeol with the Bisabeol-type pottery. The belt ornaments with monster-face design were imported from Baekje. Silla-style prestige goods were highly concentrated in the Okjeon burial ground, suggesting that Garaguk and Daraguk independently built networks with Silla.

Dagger-shaped horse harness pendants, belt ornaments with monster-face design, and a long sword with a flying-dragon-decorated ring pommel were yielded from Haman Marisan Tomb No. 54. Another similar dagger-shaped horse strap pendant was excavated from Tomb No. 1, a stone-lined tomb, in the Cheonan Yongwon-ri burial group where the most powerful group of the Baekje region was interred. The belt ornaments with monster-face design were a characteristic artifact of burial goods from Baekje cemeteries, as mentioned above.

Tombs for the ruling classes in different areas around Gaya borrowed mounded tomb building methods and prestige goods from Silla and Baekje, respectively. The ruling class of Gaya selectively adopted means of expressing their authority and improving their standing, depending not only on the states they engaged with but also by using multiple networks for gathering knowledge. The emergence of mounded tombs in Gaya's sphere of influence reflects the growth of polities in Gaya's hinterlands, which clearly indicates that these polities had joined the ranks of wider East Asian society by actively participating in exchange networks.



Fig. 10. Roman Glass Cup. Excavated from Okjeon Tomb No. M1 in Hapcheon. Gaya, 5th century (date of tomb). Jinju National Museum

The Dae Gaya Alliance Seen through Networks

The burial ground of the *hangi* of Gimunguk (己汶國, located on the border between Baekje and Gaya), the Durak-ri and Yugok-ri burial ground, and the Wolsan-ri and Cheonggye-ri burial ground, were all located in the Ayeong basin in Namwon, which was part of the Dae Gaya alliance even though it was located in a border area. Wolsan-ri Tomb No. M5 and Durakri Tomb No. 32 together yielded a vessel with a rooster head, a bronze mirror, which are thought to have been imports from the Southern Dynasties in China, and an iron tripod vessel with a handle, gilt-bronze shoes from Baekje.

Some regard the Chinese and Baekje-type artifacts excavated from the Ayeong basin burial grounds as gifts to the group from the Garaguk king, rewarding their role in the Garaguk-China parley (Kim Jaehong 2019; Park Cheonsu 2019). On the other hand, others view it was Baekje that gave these artifacts to the Ayeong basin group in return for the group's certain role in building relations between Baekje and Garaguk (Park Sunbal 2012). Some other opinions suggest Baekje ruling class, who pursued to gain control over the groups at the marginal Dae Gaya, may have gifted the prestige goods to the ruling class of the Ayeong basin group in an attempt to obtain the Seomjingang River area, which was the shortcut to the South Sea (Kim Nakjung 2019).

The Chinese Celadon Vessel with a Rooster Head discovered in Wolsan-ri Tomb No. M5 is the only such piece that has been found in the entire Gaya realm (Fig. 11). This indicates that Gaya's ruling class did not consider the Chinese

porcelain as difficult to obtain or as rare or prestige goods. The bronze mirror that was excavated from Durak-ri Tomb No. 32 is the only Chinese mirror unearthed in Gaya, but a similar mirror was found in the Tomb of King Muryeong (r. 501–523) of Baekje. It is significant that a Chinese mirror resembling one interred as a burial good for the king of Baekje was included among the burial goods for a tomb of the *hangi* of Gimunguk, which was a member of the Dae Gaya alliance. The iron tripod vessel with a handle from Wolsan-ri Tomb No. M5 is also the only excavated example found in the Gaya realm. However, iron tripod vessels with a handle have been found in Baekje territory in the Beobcheon-ri Tomb No. 4 in Wonju and Bujang-ri Tomb No. 5 in Seosan, and a similar tripod made of bronze was uncovered in Pungnaptoseong Earthen Fortress in Seoul, the royal capital of Baekje during the Hanseong Phase.

The Gaya cemeteries have yielded only two examples of a pair of gilt-bronze shoes: one in Tomb No. 32 at Durak-ri, Namwon, and the other from Tomb No. M11 at Okjeon in Hapcheon. The pair from Durak-ri Tomb No. 32 is decorated with a lozenge pattern in repoussage and chasing. Similar finds to those are a pair excavated in Baekje's Ipjeom-ri Tomb No. 1 in Iksan and Coffin *Eul* in Tomb No. 9 at Sinchon-ri, Naju. It is hard to entirely rule out the possible existence of the gilt-bronze shoes buried at the Tombs Nos. 4 and 5, the largest ones of the Jisan-dong burial ground. However, given the research results accumulated so far on the tombs of Dae Gaya region, it is clear that the gilt-bronze shoes were quite rare within the area.

Such artifacts, which were recognized as prestige goods within the central Baekje, were not buried in the royal and ruling classes' tombs of the Garaguk, the core statelet of the Dae Gaya alliance; instead, they were buried at the *hangi* tombs of Gimunguk located on the periphery of the alliance. Thus, the burial goods excavated at the Gimunguk's *hangi* tombs cannot be thought of as through distribution—or gifts—from Garaguk. The gilt-bronze shoes from the Yugok-ri Tomb No. 32 were likely brought from Baekje without passing through Garaguk.

The above-mentioned prestige goods may have been obtained by the Ayeong basin *hangi* group through their relationship with Baekje. It is also likely that Baekje during the 510s conciliated the *hangi* group at the Ayeong basin, where Gimunguk was located, by allocating prestige goods—Baekje adopted the same method to regional leaders within its sphere of influence—in order to occupy Gimunguk and Daesaguk (帶沙國).

Similar burial goods to the ones found in the cemetery for



Fig. 11. Celadon Vessel with a Rooster Head. Excavated from Wolsan-ri Tomb No. M5 in Namwon. Southern-Dynasties of China, 5th century. H. 14.3 cm. Jeonju National Museum

the ruling class of Gimunguk have also been found in the tombs of a member of the Dae Gaya alliance, Daraguk in Hapcheon. Baekje-type prestige goods were interred in the cemetery of Daraguk's *hangi*, the Okjeon burial ground in Hapcheon, from the first half of the fifth to the early sixth century. The greatest concentration of Baekje-type prestige goods among the cemeteries of Gaya, including longswords with dragon, phoenix, or dragon and phoenix designs on the ring pommels, a cowl cap, a saddle with an openwork hexagonal design, bronze bowls, and spades for irrigation work, was found in Tomb No. M3. They surpassed the burial goods even in the royal tombs of Garaguk in terms of both number and quality. Daraguk was incorporated into the Dae Gaya alliance after the late fifth century, but it borrowed production techniques for Silla-type gilt-bronze crowns and earrings in the middle of the sixth century. Research indicates that the *hangi* of Daraguk consistently adopted Silla culture through the group responsible for constructing the tombs at the Gyo-dong and Songhyun-dong burial ground in

Changnyeong in the eastern Nakdonggang River region.

It is difficult to presume that diplomacy was monopolized by Garaguk, the core polity of Dae Gaya, considering the foreign prestige goods buried in the mounded tombs of other polities of the Dae Gaya alliance. Some major members of the Dae Gaya alliance, such as Daraguk and Gimunguk, were likely to have established direct trade networks with Baekje without going through Garaguk. Polities in the eastern Jeolla region, a transition zone between the Dae Gaya alliance and Baekje, had no choice but to defer to Garaguk or Baekje depending on their respective political standing, the political or military pressure being exerted by Garaguk and Baekje, or their political and economic interests. Daraguk, situated on the Nakdonggang River, would have taken a similar stance. The statelets which composed the Dae Gaya alliance had the autonomy to shift their political interests accordingly as needed without being locked into the framework of the Dae Gaya alliance.

The diplomatic sovereignty of the Dae Gaya alliance was not solely under the control of Garaguk, but the king of Garaguk was recognized as the representative of the Dae Gaya alliance. The Garaguk King hoped to be included within the framework of the China-centric international sphere, whether on the same level as other neighboring countries or at least as a discrete polity within the East Asian political system. King Haji (r. unknown) of Garaguk dispatched envoys to the Southern Qi (479–502) court in 479 in an attempt to demonstrate his standing. Garaguk put great effort into establishing connections with China. For example, King Haji's accredited envoys to Southern Qi returned with a title bestowed upon him, Bogukjanggun Bongukwang (輔國將軍本國王), meaning "General Defending the State, King of Gara". Sending these envoys was intended as a means of learning about the institutions of a new ruling system as well as trumpeting the stature of Gara at home and abroad.

The Arteries of the Gaya Network, the Namgang River and the South Sea

Starting from the latter half of the fifth century, a new network began functioning apart the prestige goods-centered networks operated by individual Gaya polities. These networks linked the Nakdonggang River to the Namgang River and to Goseong Bay with the *hangi* of Gojaguk, the core polity of So Gaya based on Goseong Bay, at their heart.

Goguryeo's expedition to the south in 400 CE disrupted the trade routes dominated by Geumgwan Gaya, and these routes never again functioned actively as they once had. King Jangsu (r. 413–491) transferred the capital of Goguryeo to Pyeongyang in 423, ended the autonomous rights of the old Nangnang and Daebang regions, and enthusiastically supported a southward expansion. The international arena on the Korean Peninsula experienced unprecedented turmoil. For instance, Baekje reacted to the southern expansion of Goguryeo while simultaneously exerting pressure upon Mahan forces.

As the international situation in East Asia shifted, Gaya's international trading arena, and those of its counterparts, were inevitably diminished. In particular, domestic exchanges expanded within Gaya, and Wa worked actively to obtain advanced cultural elements from the Korean Peninsula.

The burial ground at Gyeongsan-ri in Uiryeong is situated in the Namgang River water system, a major branch of the Nakdonggang River running through Gaya from east to west. Tombs Nos. 1 and 2, the main tombs in the cemetery, yielded goods originating from a combination of various polities, including Silla, So Gaya, Dae Gaya, and Ara Gaya, and also showed Wa-type elements in the cemetery structure (Fig. 12). This is very close to the junction of the Namgang River with the Nakdonggang River and is presumed to have been an area where groups belonging to Silla, Dae Gaya, Ara Gaya, and So Gaya came to exchange not only common goods but also cultural and technological knowledge (Hong Bosik 2013b).

Burial ground at Cheongok-ri in Uiryeong, Myeongdong, Saengcho, and Pyeongchon-ri in Sancheong, all located along the Namgang River or its tributaries, have yielded Silla pottery, but only in very small quantities. The Silla pottery excavated from these sites was brought in via the downstream areas of the Namgang River. Artifacts from the Yeongsangang River region, such as mounted dishes, small pottery, barrel-shaped vessels, and bird-shaped pottery, have been excavated from the burial ground at Saengcho and Pyeongchon-ri in Sancheong (Fig. 13). Some groups based in the areas near the Namgang River and its tributaries engaged in relations with the Silla people to the east and the Baekje people along the upper reaches of the Geumgang River and in the Yeongsangang River basin to the west while maintaining a network trading in daily items.

Another region where artifacts from Dae Gaya, Silla, the Yeongsangang River basin, and Wa were concentrated is the Goseong Bay area, a halfway point on the southern coast between the burial grounds at Songhak-dong in Yuldae-ri and Naesan-ri in Goseong. Songhak-dong Tomb No. 1 yielded



Fig. 12. Wa-style Stone Chamber Tomb with Horizontal Corridor Entrance of Songhak-dong Tomb No. 1B-1 in Goseong

large amounts of artifacts in the style of Silla, Dae Gaya, Yeongsangang River basin, and Wa (Fig. 14). Ornamental horse harness, lamellar armor, and a Wa-style stone chamber tomb with a horizontal corridor entrance were found at the cemetery. Furthermore, stone chamber tombs with horizontal corridor entrances in a style originating in Kyushu in the Japanese Archipelago were established on islands and in bays along the southern coast and on the banks of the Namgang River, for example, the Jangmok Tomb on Geojedo Island, Ungok-ri Tomb No. 1 in Uiryeong, and the Seonji-ri Tomb and the Hyangchon-dong Tomb in Sacheon. The debate surrounding

the interpretation of these artifacts and whether the people buried in these Wa-style tombs were from Wa or Gaya remains heated. The Wa-style tombs spread along the southern coast of Korea are different from the interment practices of Gaya, so the people buried in them are inferred to have been from Wa. It is assumed that the Wa people interred in Wa-style tombs had settled in Gaya to work as traders obtaining advanced practices and goods and conveying them back to Wa.

Silla pottery finds are another means of demonstrating that the *hangi* of Gojaguk, based on Goseong Bay, was a central figure in East Asian international trade during Late Gaya. Silla



Fig. 13. Bird-shaped Pottery Imported to Gaya from Baekje. Excavated from Pyeongchon-ri Tomb No. 114 in Sancheong. Three Kingdoms Period. H. 9.9 cm. Jinju National Museum



Fig. 14. Pottery Imported to Gaya from the Japanese Archipelago. Excavated from Songhak-dong Tomb No. 1 in Goseong. Gaya, 5–6th century (date of tomb). H. 13.3–18.6 cm. Jinju National Museum

pottery was buried in different sites around Gaya after the first half of the sixth century, particularly so in tombs in the Goseong Bay area. The Silla pottery excavated in the Gaya region, including in Goseong Bay, was produced or transferred in areas along the periphery of Silla, such as Changnyeong on the eastern side of the Nakdonggang River, or Gimhae to its west, and was then diffused into Gaya. This distribution network was mainly used to exchange items of daily life between Silla groups in areas on the eastern side of the Nakdonggang River and groups living along the banks of the Namgang River and in the main ports of the southern coast. This trade was led by the *hangi* of Gojaguk, the leader of the So Gaya alliance, which consisted of groups along the shores of Sacheon Bay on the southern coast and areas in the middle reaches of the Namgang River. The Baekje people along the southwestern coast and near the Yeongsangang River waterways worked together with the Wa people in this network. Demonstrating the activities of the network are the Wa-style tombs established in areas along the southern coast, the southwestern coast, and the Yeongsangang River basin, with Goseong Bay at its center. The reason why So Gaya pottery was concentrated in the Dongrim-dong Site in Gwangju is likely to be related to this network.

The trading activities led by Gajaguk in the Goseong region after the latter half of the fifth century reflect the renewal of the ocean trade connecting the southern and southwestern coast that had declined after the latter half of the fourth century. It is inferred that major goods and local specialties, such as salt, that were exchanged along the southwestern coast were distributed to the different regions of Gaya by the *hangi* of Gojaguk.

Reciprocal exchanges in the necessities of daily life were actively developed by the groups that lived in or controlled the major ports along the banks of the Nakdonggang River, major

islands which served as waystations and ports along the southern coast, and border areas with Baekje, especially transition zones such as the upper reaches of the Gyeonghogang and Geumgang Rivers, such as Jangsu, Jinan, and Muju (Hong Bosik 2013b).

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