

Cultural Exchange among the Three Kingdoms as Revealed by Artifacts from the Tomb of King Muryeong

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Introduction

In July 1971, a brick tomb was discovered by chance in the Songsan-ri group of tombs in Gongju, Chungcheongnam-do Province. The stone epitaph plaque excavated from the burial chamber revealed that those interred in the tomb were King Muryeong (武寧王, r. 501–523), the twenty-fifth monarch of the Baekje Kingdom, and his Queen Consort. This discovery instigated archaeological research on the Ungjin period of Baekje.

When the bricks closing the tomb entrance were removed, many items were discovered in their original state along the corridor from the entrance to the burial chamber. Most were Baekje artifacts, but a small quantity of items from the Southern Dynasties of China were also found. Most notably, luxurious items made of gold that had been worn by the King and Queen were discovered inside the wooden coffin.

Since the 1990s, items similar to those excavated from the Tomb of King Muryeong have also been found in the ancient tombs of the Dae Gaya Kingdom. These artifacts included many items made in Baekje as well as items with Baekje-style features. But this aspect of exchange between the ancient kingdoms was not something that appeared for the first

time in the early sixth century CE—it was a continuation of conditions existing during the latter half of Baekje’s Hanseong period. Unlike the Gaya tombs, however, the tombs of the Silla Kingdom have yielded only a small quantity of Baekje objects.

This article investigates the artifacts excavated from the Tomb of King Muryeong, retrospectively linking them stylistically to the latter half of the Hanseong period in order to examine exchange between Baekje and its neighboring countries.

Baekje–Silla Exchange

The Baekje and Silla kingdoms shared borders, and while they did ally with each other at times, the periods of conflict between the two nations were longer than the periods of peace. Joining forces with Gaya and Wa (Japan), Baekje invaded the Silla capital of Gyeongju at one time. As for Silla, they decapitated King Seong (聖王, r. 523–554) of Baekje at the Battle of Gwansanseong Fortress. In 660 CE, Silla and Tang joined forces and conquered Baekje. Perhaps due to this flow of history, Silla items have rarely been excavated from Baekje historical sites,

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Silla and Baekje maintained fairly amicable relations during the reigns of King Dongseong (東城王, r. 479–501) and King Muryeong. In the later years of the King Dongseong era, the royal houses of the two nations were united in marriage, and they continued on good terms until the reign of King Muryeong. Prior to the 520s, it was crucial for Silla to maintain friendly relations with Baekje as they had not been able to directly form diplomatic relations with the Southern Dynasties of China. According to the *Liangshu* (梁書, Book of Liang), “In 521, second year of the Putong era of Liang, for the first time Mojin [King Beopheung] of Silla sent envoys with the Baekje mission and offered jewels and accessories.”¹ This record reflects Silla’s circumstances at the time and indicates that Baekje was the channel through which Silla received the diverse products and culture of China.

Silla Elements in Artifacts from Baekje Tombs

If the historical records are taken as the standard, Silla artifacts could potentially have been excavated from the Tomb of King Muryeong, but in reality, this is not the case. In contrast, a number of items made in China were discovered in the tomb. However, Silla elements can be partially detected in the earrings and the belt that were found there. What follows is an explanation of which aspects of these items can be regarded as Silla elements.

1. Earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong (Fig. 1)

These earrings consist of the main ring with two rows of pendants hanging from it: one with a heart-shaped ornament at the end and the other with a comma-shaped jade. The following examines the earrings based on the row of pendants with a heart-shaped end ornament.

The middle ornament in this row has an unusual structure. It is composed of two cylindrical pieces joined together, top and bottom. Each cylindrical piece features three furled wing-shaped ornaments that are narrow at the top, rounded at the bottom and decorated with gold granules around the edge. A similar middle ornament can be seen in several artifacts, including the earrings from Hwango-ri Tomb No. 34 and Tomb No. 1 at 106-3 Hwangnam-dong in Gyeongju, from Seongsan-ri Tomb No. 1 in Hwawon, Daegu, and from Eta Funayama Tumulus in Kumamoto, Japan. Among them, the earrings discovered in Eta Funayama Tumulus appear to have been made in Baekje. The three pairs excavated from Gyeongju and Daegu were made in Silla during the first half of the sixth century CE.

The shape of the middle ornament on the earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong stands out from the general trend of Baekje earrings and seems to reflect the influence of Silla earrings.

Earrings from the Three Kingdoms period are finished off by joining the separately made parts with gold wire or gold plate. For this reason, the metal pieces connecting the parts were also richly decorated. The connecting links on this pair of earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong have an unusual structure. The two rings hanging from the central ring are wide and seemingly connect the middle ornament with the end ornament, but are, in fact, an ornament placed over the surface of the connecting link. This is the only pair of Baekje earrings to feature this style of connecting link, but similar examples can be seen on Silla earrings discovered in the southern coffin of Seobongchong (Auspicious Phoenix Tomb), Cheonmachong (Tomb of the Heavenly Horse), and Noseo-ri Tomb No. 138. Gaya earrings with the same kind of connecting link were found in Okjeon Tomb No. M4, Hapcheon. As the techniques used in the connecting link of the earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong are the exception to the general stylistic and manufacturing trend of Baekje earrings, it would seem appropriate to trace the lineage of these earrings to Silla.

The end ornament is composed of three pieces made of gold sheet. The largest piece in the middle is flat and heart-shaped. Attached to the front and back are circular pieces with a concave surface. A trace of repair remains on the inner side. The top of a smaller piece hanging from the connecting link had been lost, so the piece has been tied on with gold wire.

The earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong are composed of diverse parts. Essentially, they are made of hammered gold sheets, and were welded or assembled using sophisticated techniques such as gold granulation. In terms of techniques, they are similar to earrings made in the Silla and Gaya kingdoms. King Muryeong ascended the throne in 501 CE and passed away in 523 CE. After the funeral procedures and rites, he was interred in the tomb in 525 CE. Therefore, there is a possibility that the King’s earrings were also made in the first quarter of the sixth century CE.

2. King Muryeong’s Belt (Figs. 2)

This belt was made entirely from metal, without the use of any leather, and is the most luxurious of all extant Baekje belts. The pendants hanging from it are decorated with tortoise, demon-face, white tiger, and red phoenix designs.

The buckle is in the form of a mushroom on its side and the chape, connecting the buckle to the rest of the belt, is a seven-



Fig. 1. Earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong (bottom left photo: a trace of repair)

leaf-shaped ornament with a heart-shaped perforation in the center. The metal plaques making up the belt links (K. *gwapan*) are oval in shape with no openwork design, similar to those found on the pendants of Silla belts. Small plaques and large plaques are alternately linked together. The belt's tip ornament is almost pentagonal in shape, and also has a heart-shaped perforation in the center.

The belt pendant has a pentagonal gold-plate fitting at the top, featuring an openwork tortoise design. The rectangular plate further down features a demon-face design. The long rectangular end ornament, in the shape of a ritual plaque, is engraved with a white tiger and red phoenix design. It may be possible to associate the design on the pentagonal fitting with the image of the moon (in the form of a tortoise), and the design on the rectangular silver end ornament with the

mural of the four guardian deities in Goguryeo tomb murals. If such speculation is valid, then the tortoise on the belt of King Muryeong can be seen as a representation of the moon, the tiger and phoenix as two of the four guardian deities, and the demon face as the mediator between heaven and earth. The Baekje people possibly had an awareness and understanding of these icons that were introduced from China via Goguryeo and chose to express half the icons on the pendant.

Among Baekje belts made during the Hanseong and Ungjin periods, there are some with metal links decorated with an openwork dragon design or molded demon-face design, or are shaped like an inverted heart. In contrast, the links on the belts from the Sabi period are mostly shaped like an inverted heart. Therefore, the gold and silver links on the belt found in the Tomb of King Muryeong are unusual since they do not



Figs. 2. Belt from the Tomb of King Muryeong and its design

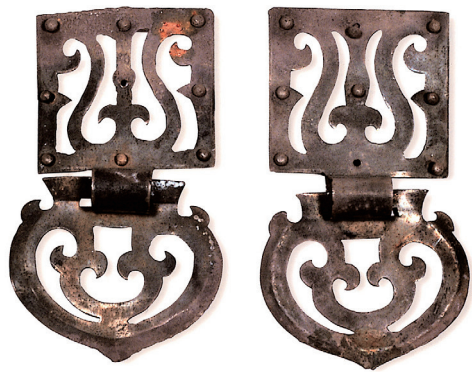


Fig. 3. Silver belt-tip ornaments from Songsan-ri Tomb No. 4

follow this general trend. That is, the links consist of big and small oval plaques hooked together; no similar example has yet been found in any neighboring country. There is merely a similarity with the Silla belt pendants of the sixth century CE, the earliest being the artifacts from Cheonmachong (Tomb of the Heavenly Horse).

A notable discovery was the two silver-plate belt tip ornaments (Fig. 3) similar to those from Geumgwanchong (Gold Crown Tomb) in Gyeongju (Fig. 4) and Songsan-ri Tomb No. 4 (formerly No. 1) in Gongju, which predates the Tomb of King Muryeong.

These ornaments consist of a rectangular silver plaque with openwork fronds forming the shape of honeysuckle. At the center of the lower edge, there is a ring with a heart-shaped pendant hanging from it. In the center, the rectangular plaque has a simplified openwork three-leaf honeysuckle with a two-leaf design on either side. The design is vertically symmetrical and, apparently, was made by cutting out the design from a silver plate folded in half, which was then spread open, or by drawing the complete design onto the silver plate and cutting it out.

Judging by the appearance and techniques, these ornamental plaques may be the end ornaments from a typical Silla three-leaf openwork belt; they are particularly similar to those on the belt excavated from Geumgwanchong in Gyeongju. Both exhibit the same design and techniques, and evidently, they were made in Silla. The question is, why was a Silla belt buried in the tomb of a Baekje king? Though it was possibly imported through trade, Baekje had its own system of official uniforms around that time, including the Baekje-style belts. The king could not have worn a belt from another nation while conducting the morning court assembly. Hence, it is necessary to look at the usage and owner of the belt from

a slightly different perspective. That is, it may be deduced that the owner of the belt was a person from Silla.

Regarding the owner of the belt, it is necessary to focus on the historical materials for the state wedding between Baekje and Silla in 493 CE. Related content found in both the Silla and Baekje sections of the *Samguk sagi* (三國史記, History of the Three Kingdoms) states that the wedding took place when King Dongseong of Baekje made a nuptial request to King Soji (炤知王, r. 479–500) of Silla, and that the woman who came from Silla to be married was the daughter of Biji,² an official of the first rank (伊伐浪, K. *ibeolchan*) or second rank (伊浪, K. *ichan*). Considering Silla's society at the time, Biji may have been a member of the royal family, and his daughter may have worn Silla-style attire to maintain her identity even after the marriage brought her to Baekje.

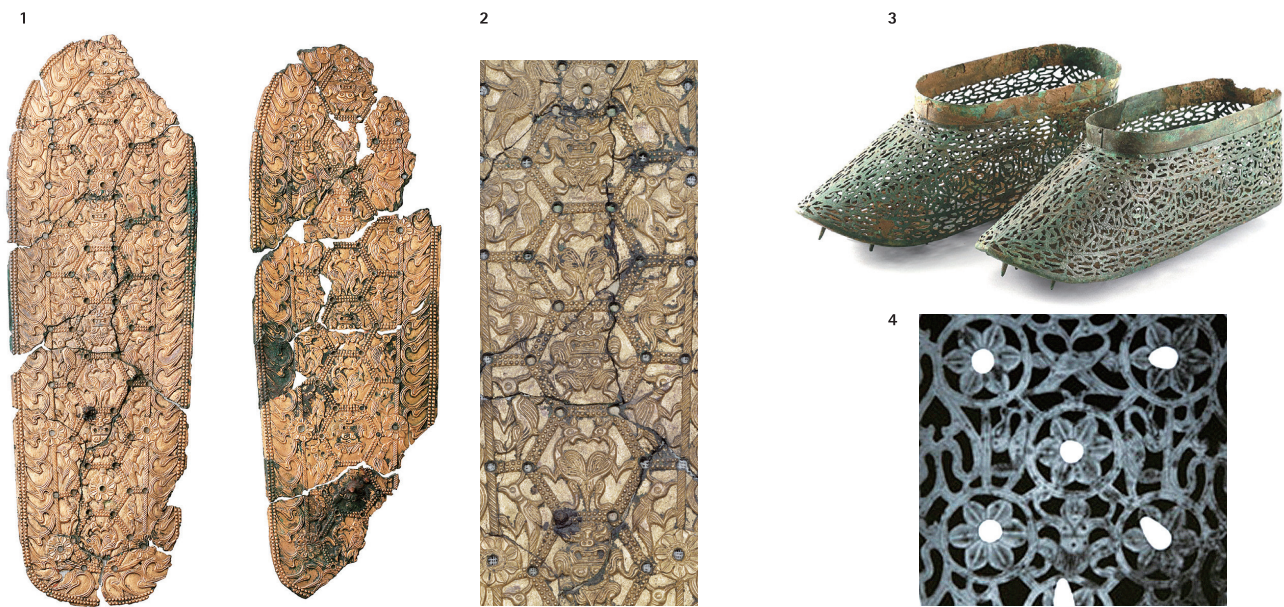
Baekje Elements in Artifacts from Silla Tombs

From the fifth century CE, a series of very large tumuli were constructed in the center of Gyeongju, and a much larger number of foreign artifacts were excavated from Silla's historical sites dating after that time. The foreign artifacts include not only items from neighboring states but also goods from the faraway western regions. They reflect the superiority of the Silla royal family, who monopolized foreign trade and controlled the provinces, as well as the rapid change in Silla's foreign relations. However, unlike Baekje tombs, the Silla tombs yielded very few Chinese items, but rather many items either made in Goguryeo or in Goguryeo style.

Among the artifacts excavated from the Silla tombs, the only items that can be considered objects from Baekje are the gilded metal shoes (飾履, K. *singni*) (Figs. 5-1 and 5-2) found in Singnichong (Tomb of the Shoes). The gilded metal shoes excavated from tombs of the Three Kingdoms period are



Fig. 4. Gold belt from Geumgwanchong Tomb



Figs. 5. Gilded metal shoes 1) from Singnichong Tomb and 2) their detail; 3) from Bongdeok-ri Tomb No. 1 in Gochang and 4) their detail

items that show an aspect of the funerary customs of the time. Excessively large, structurally weak, and lavishly decorated, they cannot be considered shoes for everyday wear, which is why many regard them as ritual funerary items. The shoes excavated from Singnichong in Gyeongju are the most finely made and sumptuous pair of gilded metal shoes of the Three Kingdoms period.

The shoes are composed of three thin layers of sheet copper covered with a thick layer of gold. The soles are edged with a bead design and a flame pattern band. Along the edge of the pattern band and at regular intervals inside the tortoiseshell design on the sole, there are a total of eleven lotus flowers, each with eight petals. The tortoiseshell sections are alternately filled with animal faces and twin-bird designs. These designs are symmetrically arranged and include figures with the face of a human and the body of a bird, ordinary birds, and the mythical kylin. The sides are decorated in a similar way to the soles, with a difference only in the designs inside the tortoiseshell sections, which include figures with the head of an animal and the body of a bird, ordinary birds, and the mythical kylin.

Scholars are divided as to where the shoes were made. Some argue that they show the influence of Southern Qi, the second of the Southern Dynasties of China, while others believe they were made in Silla. Based on the techniques used to make them, they have the features of Baekje ritual implements. Similar Baekje gilded metal shoes were discovered in Stone Chamber No. 4 of Bongdeok-ri Tomb No. 1 in Gochang (Figs. 5-3 and 5-4); Stone Chamber No. 1 of Jeongchon Tomb in

Naju; and the Tomb of King Muryeong. The main difference is that the metal plates used for the sides and bottom of the Singnichong shoes were cast in a mold, while the other gilded metal shoes were made from openwork plates.

Shoes aside, some objects cannot be seen as products of Baekje but were possibly introduced to Silla via Baekje. These include bronze mirrors, bronze clothes irons, and black-glazed, dish-mouthed jars excavated from the southern and northern mounds of Hwangnam Daechong (Grand Tomb of Hwangnam-dong) and Singnichong. Though the possibility that the bronze mirrors and irons were implements to ward off evil cannot be ruled out, there are few precedents on the Korean peninsula, so for the time being, they can be seen as Chinese-style products.

Baekje–Gaya Exchange

Baekje and Gaya maintained close relations for many years. Conflict arose in the early part of Baekje's Ungjin period when Dae Gaya forces advanced westward, but relations were apparently restored after the reign of King Muryeong. The exchange of people and goods between Baekje and Gaya would have been significant in such circumstances. Nevertheless, almost no Gaya objects have been excavated from Baekje sites. The reason may lie in the cultural time gap between the two nations.

In contrast, Gaya tombs have occasionally yielded items not



Figs. 6-1 through 6-3. Earrings of the Queen Consort and their details

only from Baekje but also other neighboring nations, including Silla, China's Southern Dynasties, and Japan. Finished goods from Baekje were introduced to Gaya as well as elements such as design or techniques. Few excavations have been carried out on the large tumuli in Goryeong, the central part of Gaya. Indeed, as the tombs were robbed several times before any excavations could be conducted, the discovery of Baekje objects has been rare. However, in the tombs of the rulers of Dae Gaya, such as the Okjeon tomb cluster in Hapcheon, items made in Baekje or reflecting Baekje style have sporadically been excavated.

Accessories

Among the items discovered in the Tomb of King Muryeong, the gold earrings (Fig. 6-1) worn by King Muryeong's Queen Consort not only have all the Baekje-style features but are the most finely made pair of Baekje earrings. They represent the consolidation of Baekje's metalworking capabilities that had been developing since the Hanseong period. Earrings similar to these were also found in a Gaya tomb.

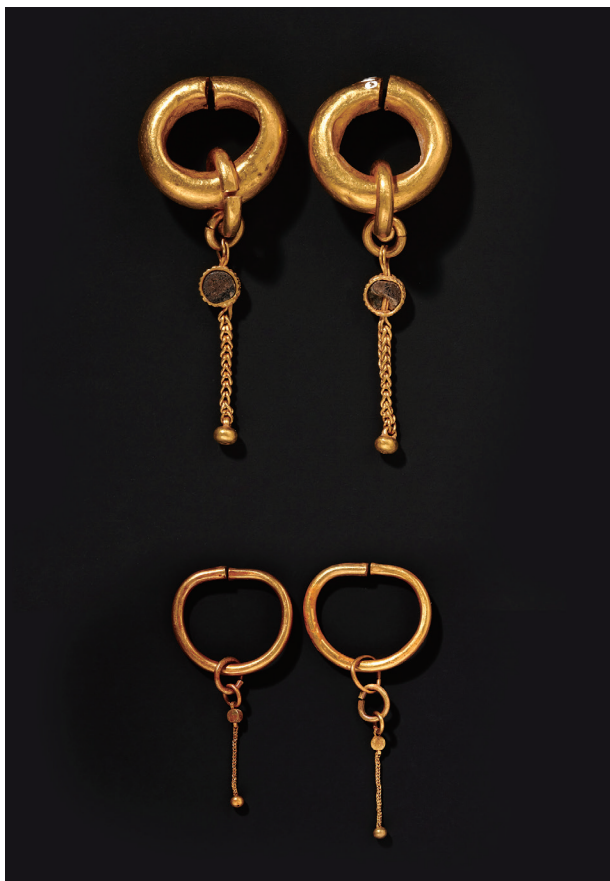
The distinguishing features of the two pairs of earrings excavated from the remains of King Muryeong's Queen Consort are the middle ornament and end pendant. The middle ornament is composed of two dark green glass beads with a domed cap. The end pendant has a four-winged shape, composed of four heart-shaped pieces of gold plate vertically folded (forming an inverted V-shaped section) and joined together at the folds in a cross form. Protruding from the tip of the pendant is a longish piece of gold wire. This wire provides the framework for the attachment of the gold granules. The ring connecting the middle ornament is also made of a gold wire, which is wound twice around the ring above and then once crosswise. This type of connecting ring is one of the distinguishing features of Baekje earrings from the Hanseong period onwards.



Fig. 6-4. Earring from Okjeon Tomb No. M11



Figs. 7. Baekje-style gilt-bronze crowns from 1) Yo-ri Tomb No. 1, 2) Bujang-ri Tomb No. 5, 3) Yongwon-ri Tomb No. 9, 4) Suchon-ri Tomb Nos. II-1 and II-4, 5) Ipjeom-ri Tomb No. 86-1, 6) Andong Tomb in Gildu-ri, 7) Okjeon Tomb No. 23, and 8) Funayama Kofun



Figs. 8. Gold earrings from Sinbong-dong Tomb in Cheongju (top) and Okjeon Tomb No. 23 in Hapcheon (bottom)

This pair of earrings also has features from the Ungjin period that differ from the Hanseong period features: the glass bead decorated with a domed cap made of small rings joined together and the four-winged end pendant. These earrings were buried in the tomb in 529 CE and serve as a standard for dating earrings of the same type.

Other earrings that also have a domed cap over a glass bead have been found in Songsan-ri Tomb No. 6 in Gongju and the Kamo-Inariyama Tomb in Shiga Prefecture, Japan. The earrings found in Okjeon Tomb No. M11 (Fig. 6-4) have a domed cap over both the top and bottom of the glass bead, a decoration considered similar to the middle ornament on the earrings of King Muryeong's Queen Consort. Aside from the middle ornament, the connecting ring and the end pendant were also made with the same techniques seen in earrings from the Baekje Ungjin period and hence were, presumably, made in Baekje.

The silver belt excavated from Okjeon Tomb No. M11 and another found in Gyeongsan-ri Tomb No. 2 in Uiryeong are similar to the gold belt found in the Tomb of King Muryeong. Considering that belts were not actively made in Gaya and, therefore, no particular Gaya style of belts ever developed, it is

possible to conclude that both silver belts were made in Baekje.

Even before the time the Tomb of King Muryeong was built, Baekje accessories had been transmitted to Gaya. Generally, the number increased from around the mid-fifth century CE, and the Gaya style was created, showing no large time gap with Baekje. Among the typical accessories found in the tombs, the only items in which the Gaya style manifests are the gold earrings. The number of crowns, belts, textiles, and gilded metal shoes is small, and while the Gaya style can be seen in the crowns, it is not uniform. Among Gaya accessories of the fifth century CE, those made in Baekje or which are in the Baekje style will be discussed below.

The gilt-bronze cap-type crown excavated from Okjeon Tomb No. 23 in Hapcheon (Fig. 7-7) is very similar to the Baekje gilt-bronze crowns from the Hanseong period. Attached on the left and right sides of the body of the peaked crown is a feather-shaped ornament with a trefoil, openwork design. A pipe is attached at the top, but it does not have a bowl-shaped finial ornament.

The crown most similar to this one is the gilt-bronze crown excavated from the wooden coffin of Yo-ri Tomb No. 1 in Hwaseong (Fig. 7-1). Like the crown from Okjeon Tomb No. 23, it is a cap-type crown with the exterior in a peaked shape. The sides are decorated with a regular, openwork pattern based on a trefoil design.

The Yo-ri crown and the Gildu-ri gilt-bronze crown (Fig. 7-6) are early examples of items made in the Baekje style, and in terms of absolute chronology, they have been dated to the first half of the fifth century CE.

Compared to the metal crowns excavated from the Jisan-dong tomb cluster in Goryeong, the Okjeon crown is of a different type; the delicacy of the techniques used indicates that it is probably a product of Baekje.

As an aside, Baekje style earrings have also been discovered in Okjeon Tomb No. 23. The middle ornament on these earrings is disc-shaped with small globules hanging from the end of a long chain, similar to Baekje earrings from the Hanseong period (Figs. 8). There are Hanseong Baekje precedents of a disc-shaped middle ornament, such as the earrings excavated from the stone coffin of Yongwon-ri Tomb No. 9 in Cheonan and Bujang-ri Tomb No. 6-6 in Seosan, which suggests that the Okjeon Tomb No. 23 earrings were influenced by Baekje.

The main hoops of all Dae Gaya earrings are the thin type, and—as yet—no thick-type ones have been found. This is a common point in Baekje earrings. Many Baekje elements are found in early Gaya earrings, and the absence of thick-



Fig. 9. Sword with dragon and phoenix decorated ring pommel from Jisan-dong Tomb (formerly) No. 39

hoop earrings from that time can be understood in this context. However, as in the case of earrings discovered in Okjeon Tomb No. M4 and No. M6, earrings where the main hoop is a little bit thicker and made hollow in the middle in the same way as thick-hoop earrings, appear in the first half of the sixth century CE. The major characteristic of Gaya earrings is that they have a globular middle ornament and chains. For the end pendant, heart-shaped ornaments were popular, and various other shapes such as cones, three wings, globules, and cape jasmine flowers are found. Few Gaya earrings from the fifth century CE are finished products of Baekje; most of them are in the Gaya style, created by assimilating the characteristics of Baekje earrings.

Lastly, fragments of Baekje-style gilded metal shoes were discovered in Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tomb No. 32 in Namwon. The sides and soles are decorated with a repoussé diamond design, similar to artifacts excavated from Ipjeom-ri Tomb No. 86-1 in Iksan and Sinchon-ri Tomb No. 9 in Naju. The

shoes were seemingly transmitted to Gaya from Baekje. The pottery excavated with the shoe fragments is Dae Gaya-style earthenware made in the local area.

Ornamental Swords

Ornamental swords of Baekje were first made during the Hanseong period, and as evidenced by the sword of King Muryeong, the highest quality swords were made around the latter half of the Ungjin period. These ornamental swords were also transmitted to Gaya since Baekje maintained close political relations with them. Actual swords were transmitted as well as the technology, design, and techniques.

An item that can be directly compared to the ornamental sword of King Muryeong is the sword from Jisan-dong Tomb (formerly) No. 39 in Goryeong (Fig. 9). The ring pommel on the sword was made of cast iron and may be hollow inside. It was decorated using the repoussé technique, and there is a rounded recess at all the nodes formed by the dividing lines



Figs. 10. Swords from Suchon-ri Tomb No. II-1 (left) and from Okjeon Tomb No. 35 (right)

of the design. The sections inside the lines feature a design of circles and flames. Inside the ring sits a metal phoenix with red wings and neck, which was made separately then gilded with white gold and attached afterwards. The horns at the top of the head were also made separately and attached. The metal fitting connecting the pommel and the hilt was made using the same techniques as the pommel. That is, after executing a repoussé design on the metal plate, bronze was embedded in the nodes of the design, and the whole piece was then covered with gold plating. Engraved inside the sections of the tortoiseshell design are phoenixes with wings spread wide. The crosshatch design on the handle is openwork on a silver plate, in contrast to the metal sheath attachment with an X design that was welded onto the scabbard of the sword discovered in the Tomb of King Muryeong.

The techniques used to make the sword differ from those used on the swords discovered in the stone coffin of Yongwon-ri Tomb No. 1 in Cheonan and the ornamental swords of Baekje,



Fig. 11. Sword with dragon decorated ring pommel from Okjeon Tomb No. M3

including King Muryeong's sword with ring pommel. In the case of Baekje swords, the ring pommel and figure inside the ring are cast together as one piece. Therefore, it can be presumed that the sword from Jisan-dong Tomb (formerly) No. 39 in Goryeong is a product of Gaya rather than Baekje.

There are some fifth-century CE ornamental swords of Gaya that may have been made in Baekje. The most likely items are explained below.

First, there is the phoenix-decorated sword from Jisan-dong Tomb No. 32, NE-1. The ring pommel features a silver inlaid grass design. Similar examples have been excavated from the Baekje tombs, namely Hwaseong-ri Section A, Tomb No. 1 in Cheonan, and Suchon-ri Tomb No. II-7 in Gongju. Inside the ring is the head of a phoenix with three protruding horns.

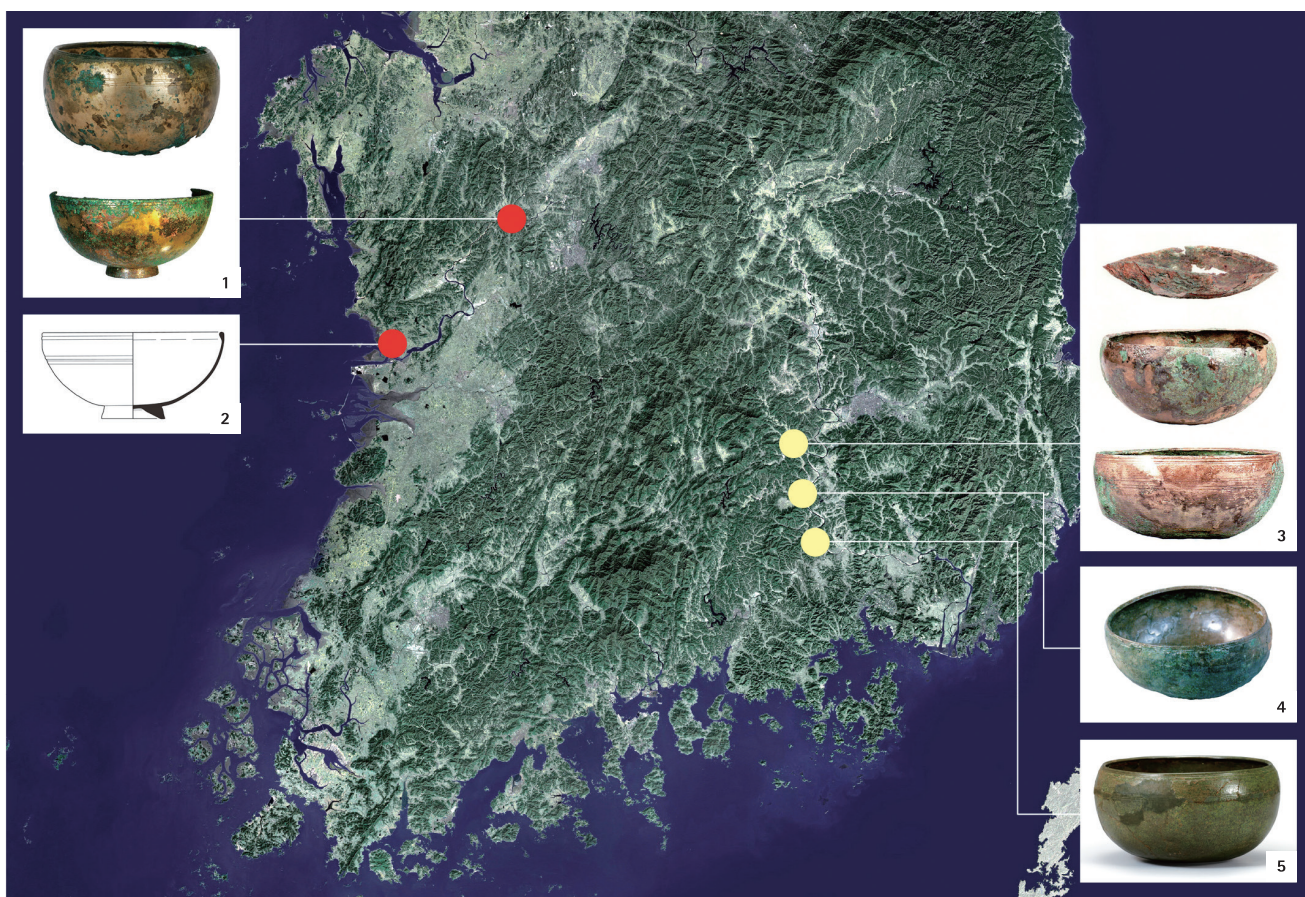
It seems the inlay technique of the early emergence period was as sophisticated and high-level as the granulation technique. Moreover, based on materials known so far and considering the existence of many inlaid items from Baekje's Hanseong period, it is possible that the sword mentioned above was either made in Baekje or with the help of a Baekje artisan.

The second example is the sword from Okjeon Tomb No. 35 in Hapcheon (Figs. 10, right). It is one of the early Dae Gaya swords with dragon and phoenix decorated ring pommel. Particularly notable in this case is the execution of the design. The basic raised design was made with cast iron, then the raised parts were inlaid with a silver wire for emphasis, and the lowered background parts were covered with gold leaf.

Swords with these characteristics have also been excavated from the Baekje tombs. The typical form is embodied in the sword from Suchon-ri Tomb No. II-1 in Gongju (Figs. 10, left). After casting the dragon design on the ring pommel and emphasizing it with silver wire inlay, the lower background was covered with gold leaf. The use of the same techniques is evident on the sword discovered in the stone coffin from Yongwon-ri Tomb No. 12 in Cheonan. The twin dragons on the ring pommel and the dragon head or phoenix head inside the ring are decorated with precious metals using techniques such as silver inlay and gold leaf.

When examined in terms of production skill, the sword from Okjeon Tomb No. 35 in Hapcheon was made with complex techniques, though not of the same level as the sword from Suchon-ri Tomb II-1 and is therefore unlikely to have been made by a Gaya artisan on his own. It can be presumed that the sword was made in Baekje or with techniques directly transmitted by Baekje.

The third example is the sword from Okjeon Tomb



Figs. 12. Bronze vessels excavated from the tombs of Gaya and Baekje: 1) the Tomb of King Muryeong, 2) Okbuk-ri in Seochon, 3) Jisan-dong Tomb No. 44 in Goryeong, 4) Okjeon Tomb No. M3 in Hapcheon, 5) Gyeongsan-ri Tomb No. 2 in Uiryeong

No. M3. Among the four swords with dragon and phoenix decorated ring pommel excavated from the same tomb, one of them (Fig. 11) stands out for its clear difference in techniques. The part below the pommel is overlaid with a silver plate with an openwork dragon design and the carved out background parts are covered with gold leaf. Based on the techniques used to execute the design and color contrast, and to make the handle, the sword can be said to have similar characteristics to the Baekje swords excavated from the stone chamber of Yongwon-ri Tomb No. 1 in Cheonan, Suchon-ri Tomb No. II-1 in Gongju, and Stone Chamber No. 4 of Bongdeok-ri Tomb No. 1 in Gochang. Therefore, this sword from Okjeon Tomb No. M3 may have been brought into Gaya directly from Baekje.

The fourth example is the silver sword from Okjeon Tomb No. 28. The ring pommel is silver plated, and the metal fitting on the front of the scabbard is made of a silver plate decorated with a repoussé wave design. Similar examples are the swords from Suchon-ri Tomb No. II-1 in Gongju and Mochon-ri Tomb No. II-5 in Nonsan.

As discussed above, among the ornamental swords excavated from Gaya tombs there are a few that were made in

Baekje. Many more of them, however, exhibit a style that was developed in Gaya. While finished swords from Baekje were introduced to Gaya in the emergent period, it is likely that a definitive Gaya style emerged soon afterwards.

Metal Vessels

It seems that metal vessels were not so commonly used in Gaya as they were in Baekje and Silla. The only Gaya metal vessels that have been discovered are: the copper cauldrons from the major Geumgwan Gaya tomb clusters in Daeseong-dong and Yangdong-ri in Gimhae, a number of bronze bowls and other metal dishes from the Okjeon tomb cluster in Hapcheon and the Gyeongsan-ri tomb cluster in Uiryeong, and bronze mounted cups from Songhak-dong Tomb No. 1-C at the So Gaya site in Goseong. The Geumgwan Gaya relics would have been made in the Manchurian region and introduced directly from there.

The first items to be discussed are the bronze vessels excavated from Okjeon Tomb No. M3 (Fig. 12-4), Jisan-dong Tomb No. 44 (Fig. 12-3), and Gyeongsan-ri Tomb No. 2 (Fig. 12-5). The bronze bowl from Okjeon Tomb No. M3 has eleven lines running horizontally around the body and a thick, pronounced

rim that slants inwards. The bowls from Jisan-dong Tomb No. 44 have a similar rim. One has no lines while the other is engraved with more than six horizontal lines around the body. The basic form of the bowls was made using a casting technique. Each bowl was then fixed in place on a lathe, the walls of the bowl were smoothed down, and the lines were carved using rotary power. These bowls are notable for their similarity to the bronze bowl found in the Tomb of King Muryeong of Baekje (Fig. 12-1) that also has an inwardly protruding rim and lines running around the body just like the Gaya bowls.

The second item is the small, bronze mounted cup from Songhak-dong Tomb No. 1-C in Goseong. As Tomb No. 1-C is one of the stone chambers of Songhak-dong Tomb No. 1 that was constructed at a comparatively later date, the artifacts inside it were excavated intact. Pottery from So Gaya made up the greatest proportion of the items, and some earthenware vessels from Dae Gaya were also found. Among the metal objects discovered, the bell-shaped, bridle-strap pendant is of the Silla type, while the ornamental sword and the small daggers are of the Baekje or Dae Gaya type.

The bronze mounted cup is a small vessel, 6.3 centimeters high with a mouth diameter of 10.6 centimeters. It is the only one of its kind among artifacts from the Three Kingdoms period, which makes it difficult to conclude exactly where it was made. However, in terms of techniques used and the treatment of the mouth, it is similar to the bronze vessels of Baekje. Few Silla metal vessels with thin walls and shaped with rapid rotary power have been found. The mounted cup, therefore, can be presumed to be a product of Baekje.

As seen above, a large number of objects made in Baekje or of the Baekje type have been excavated from Gaya historical sites. Of course, there are objects from various other places as well, including Silla, China, the northern regions, and Japan, but there are many metal craft artifacts that can be connected with Baekje. This would be the result of an exchange between Baekje and Gaya, who maintained close relations from the fourth century CE, as mentioned previously.

As recorded on the Stele of Gwanggaeto the Great, international affairs in the late fourth century CE saw serious conflicts between Goguryeo–Silla and Baekje–Gaya and Wa (Japan). In this situation, Baekje and Gaya formed a blood alliance, which means many Baekje goods would have been introduced to Gaya. However, Goguryeo's attack on the southern part of the peninsula in 400 CE dealt a severe blow to the Baekje, Gaya, and Japanese forces, and it was a long time before the situation was restored. When Silla drove out the

Goguryeo soldiers and formed an alliance with Baekje, it can be presumed that the culture of both Silla and Baekje was naturally introduced to Gaya.

Gaya's status in international society was officially recognized when the king was conferred a title by the Southern Qi Dynasty of China.³ Around that time, Baekje had lost the Hangang River basin to the southward advance of Goguryeo and moved Baekje's capital to Ungjin. It was a difficult time when national welfare was of paramount concern. Evidence from written records and archaeological materials indicate that Gaya took advantage of this opportunity to expand to the upper reaches of the Geumgang River and the area west of the Seomjingang River. They also appear to have strengthened their network with Qi forces in the Yeongsangang River basin. The expansion of Gaya was only temporary, however. Through the reigns of King Dongseong and King Muryeong, Baekje regained its original strength, recovered lost territory, and apparently also intended to strengthen its influence on Gaya. The Baekje-made items excavated in the Jisan-dong tomb cluster in Goryeong, the Okjeon tomb cluster in Hapcheon, the Gyeongsan-ri tomb cluster in Uiryeong, and the Songhak-dong tomb cluster in Goseong are materials that clearly reflect the situation at the time.

Conclusion

This article examines exchange among the kingdoms in the central and southern parts of the Korean peninsula based on the artifacts excavated from the Tomb of King Muryeong. The major points can be summed up as follows.

From the fifth century CE, Baekje made concerted efforts to build foreign relations with neighboring states to protect itself from the threat posed by Goguryeo. The situation grew especially serious following the relocation of the Baekje capital to Ungjin. This is evidenced not only by historical records but also by excavated artifacts. Baekje strived to maintain closer relations, particularly with Silla and Gaya, with which it shared borders. However, such relations did not last, and alliances shuffled around according to changes in the international situation. The circumstances at the time are partially reflected in objects excavated from archaeological sites.

Baekje and Silla maintained an alliance for some 120 years from the first half of the fifth century CE, but objects from each other's country have rarely been excavated from their respective

territories. The silver belt links excavated from Songsan-ri Tomb No. 1 in Gongju are practically the only Silla objects that were transmitted to Baekje, and the only Baekje objects introduced to Silla were the gilded metal shoes discovered in Singnichong in Gyeongju. Most of the Chinese products of the Southern Dynasties that were discovered in other royal tombs of Gyeongju were likely transmitted to Silla via Baekje. Up until that time, Silla had not been able to send envoys to China on its own.

The flow of material culture between Baekje and Gaya is relatively clear. Rather than a bilateral exchange between the two countries, Baekje culture was transmitted to Gaya unilaterally. The Baekje-type artifacts excavated from Gaya tombs indicate diverse contexts as they include items made in Baekje, items made in Gaya under the guidance of an artisan from Baekje, and items made by Gaya artisans copying Baekje techniques.

Translated by Cho Yoonjung

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- 1 梁書, 列傳 東夷 (Ch. *Liangshu, Lichuan, Dongyi*): “普通二年 王姓募名秦始使使隨百濟 奉獻方物”
- 2 三國史記, 百濟本紀 東城王 (*Samguk sagi*, “Record of Baekje,” Passage on King Dongseong): “十五年 春三月 王遣使新羅請婚 羅王以伊飡比智女 歸之” 三國史記, 新羅本紀 炤知麻立干 (*Samguk sagi*, “Record of Silla,” Passage on Soji Maripgan): “十五年 春三月 百濟王牟大遣使請婚 王以伊伐飡比智女 送之”
- 3 南齊書, 列傳 東南夷 (Ch. *Nanqishu, Lichuan, Dongnanyi*): “建元元年 國王荷知使來獻 詔曰 量廣始登 遠夷洽化 加羅王荷知款關海外 奉贄東遐 可授輔國將軍本國王”

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