



SILLA KOREA AND THE SILK ROAD

GOLDEN AGE, GOLDEN THREADS

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THE SILK ROAD
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(Cover)

Gold crown ornament from Kungwan Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

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Gold crown from Kungwan Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

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Photo caption and credit– Sword hilt, gold, Silla period; 5th–6th century

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INTRODUCTION

Content Despite the Silk Road’s importance in East Asian history, the place of Korea and Japan in that history is usually neglected. For example most maps of the Silk Road do not record the Eastern trade routes to Korea and Japan and the Silk Road’s impact on the two cultures is usually ignored.

In the fifth century, Korea was divided into Three Kingdoms—Koguryo (37 BCE–668 CE), Paekche (18 BCE–660 CE) and Silla (57 BCE–668 CE)—often quarreling with each other. Eventually, Silla united the Three Kingdoms to form the Unified Silla Kingdom (668 CE–935 CE). Culturally, this era is often seen as the golden age of Korea for its architecture, thought and stories. But until recently, Silla’s connections to the Silk Road have rarely been explored. Now, by exploring these connections, the Silk Road’s impact on Korea and Japan can be told.

Subjects World history, World geography, Asian studies

Grade Levels 9-12

Time Required Two to three class periods are needed to complete the lesson. The readings provided reflect different aspects of Korea’s and Japan’s part in the history of the Silk Road and are to be used as in-class group assignments.

Objectives At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. analyze and differentiate among maps presented in texts and other media to demonstrate how Silla fits into the trade networks along the Silk Road;
2. provide examples of how silk was used as a product, medium of exchange, and diplomatic tool;
3. describe how new ideas can stimulate or undermine a golden age;
4. evaluate the impact of the Silk Road on both individuals and a culture;
5. understand how foreign influences may shift gender roles; and
6. compare how issues of “globalization” may or may not have changed over time.



Purpose Maps, timelines and descriptions of the Silk Road rarely show Korea’s integral involvement in Silk Road trade or the transmission of Silk Road ideas and goods from Korea to Japan. The overall purpose of this lesson is to expand the view of the Silk Road and of international trade found in most world history textbooks and classes.

Further, students rarely have the opportunity to study the impact that traded goods and exchanged ideas had on people from different cultures. The Silla example is significant because it shows an Eastern instead of a Western view of Silk Road trade and deals with a time period that produced one of the world’s golden ages. This lesson shows how the Silk Road stimulated great architecture and sculpture, lofty ideas, new trade routes and a unique political system that allowed women to rule.

For some students, histories of trade may seem abstract, and it may be difficult for them to understand how cultural exchanges on the Silk Road affected people’s lives. Fortunately, many folk tales and histories document the Unified Silla period. This lesson includes the biographies of twelve Sillan individuals and how they dealt with the changes and challenges affecting their society.

The lesson concludes with material for a debate on whether or not Silla benefited from the international connections along the Silk Road. Students may come to understand that some of the issues of globalization that we face today were also present for past cultures as well.

Other early Korean states, like Koguryo or Paekche, may also illustrate some of these themes. But as a topic exploring the Silk Road and Korea, Silla, with its several World Heritage sites, ties to China, and its naval history seems to be an appropriate place to begin.

Procedure & Materials To introduce the lesson, teachers may compare and contrast maps that are typically used to illustrate the Silk Road to a revised map that includes the land and sea routes extending to Korea and Japan.

Part I of the lesson will initially require more explanation from the teacher of Silla and its connection to the Silk Road. Group activities will supplement the teachings.

Part II is largely a group activity in which small groups analyze and discuss an assigned facet of Silla’s society. At the end, each group will present their observations and findings to the whole class to enable the class to gain a more complete understanding of Silla’s transformation to meet new challenges.



Part III is a group activity in which students will study and evaluate twelve individuals to determine the six who most appropriately illustrate the influence and impact of the Silk Road on Silla's development.

Parts II & III also acquaint students with this remarkable era in terms of its art and philosophy. The readings may be assigned individually in class or as homework.

Part IV is a debate in which the class is divided into groups and asked to argue different aspects of the impact of trade. In addition to the given arguments, students may wish to add arguments of their own. After the debate, the teacher may bring in other examples of "globalization" and suggest that students consider these issues in their own culture as well as others they have studied.

Part V is two articles for advanced readers to expand their knowledge of the topic.

Part VI contains suggestions how to include Silla Korea into the world history courses.

Lastly, there is a pronunciation guide for Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Sanskrit terms, and a bibliography of sources available in print or on the Internet for further research.

Handout 1



PART I. WAS SILLA PART OF THE SILK ROAD?

SECTION A. WHY STUDY SILLA? A CASE STUDY IN CREATIVITY

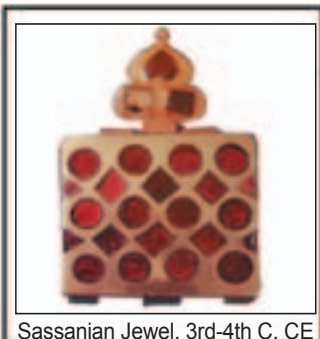
In various periods in world history, opportune meetings of trade and talent have created golden ages of literature and thought. Examples include the golden age of Athens, Greece, Renaissance Italy, and Elizabethan England. While historians have focused on Renaissance Italy as an example of a civilization with access to new routes of open trade, little has been done to show the ways in which earlier trade routes stimulated other cultures into an era of unprecedented cultural and philosophical development. Silla represents an Eastern version of a golden age which flourished in part as the result of trade and cultural exchange.

What makes Silla unique? Early Korean history depicts constant tension with its large neighbor China, and Silla's history is marked by both accommodation and resistance to Chinese influence. By the fifth century, the Korean Peninsula was divided into the Three Kingdoms—Koguryo (37 BCE–668 CE), Paekche (18 BCE–660 CE) and Silla (57 BCE–668 CE). Of the Three Kingdoms, Koguryo had the greatest military skill and bore the brunt of repelling Chinese attempts to conquer the Korean peninsula. It seemed most likely to unify the peninsula. Paekche, known for its design and construction of pagodas and temples and for its friendly ties to Japan, resisted Koguryo and, for a time, allied itself with Silla.

Internal problems in China gave the Three Kingdoms respite, but the creation of the Sui dynasty (581–618 CE) and the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) meant a full frontal attack on Koguryo. The eventual result was that Koguryo expended its resources and suffered heavy casualties while the Paekche-Japanese trade alliance was challenged by Silla. Meanwhile, Silla was able to spend its resources on developing forts, a naval fleet and an army, thus successfully conquering Kaya, the land of iron, seizing the heart of the peninsula on the west coast, a gateway to China and driving far up the West coast to achieve a position on Koguryo's flank. In 668 CE Silla, with the support of Tang China, defeated Koguryo and unified the Korean peninsula. Then for the next nine years, the Tang forces unsuccessfully tried to annex Silla into China by using their "divide and conquer" tactics. Thus Silla, which had seemed the least likely to unify the Korean peninsula, became the state to do so.

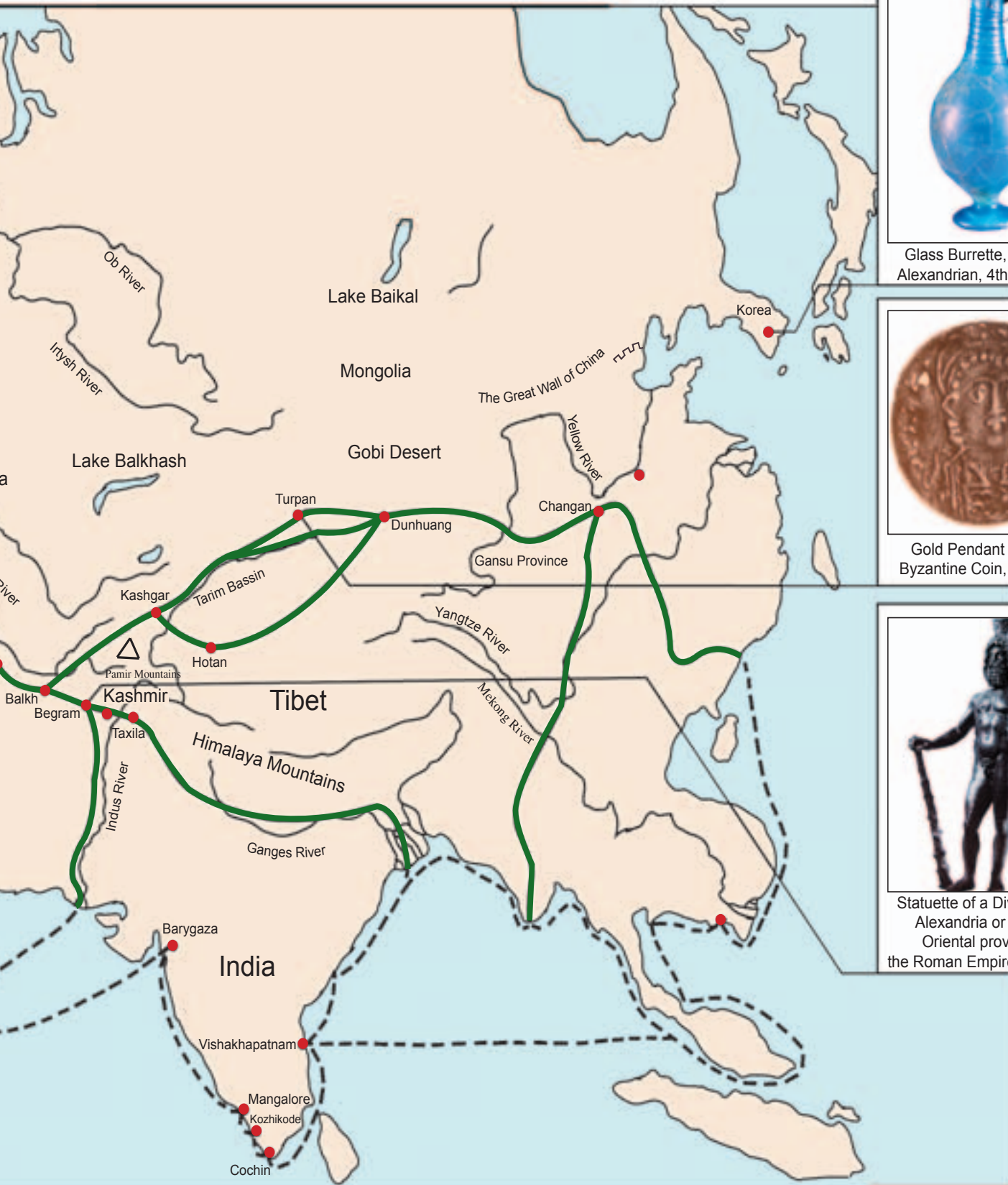
By uniting all Three Kingdoms, Silla incorporated Koguryo's military skills and Paekche's artisans to design and build pagodas and temples. Moreover, Silla was able to maintain diplomatic ties with Tang China, thereby benefiting from the trade routes and cultural exchanges passing through China along the Silk Road. Silla, from her long alliance with China, did not see the Tang as a total enemy and new ideas flowed from China and its Silk Road contacts. At the same time, the people of Silla were aware that to accept too much would merely make them a province of China itself. The balance between these two positions may be one of the reasons for the golden age of Silla.





— land routes
- - - sea routes





Glass Burette, Syrian or Alexandrian, 4th-5th C. CE



Gold Pendant imitating Byzantine Coin, 7th C. CE



Statuette of a Divinity, from Alexandria or another Oriental province of the Roman Empire, 1st C. CE

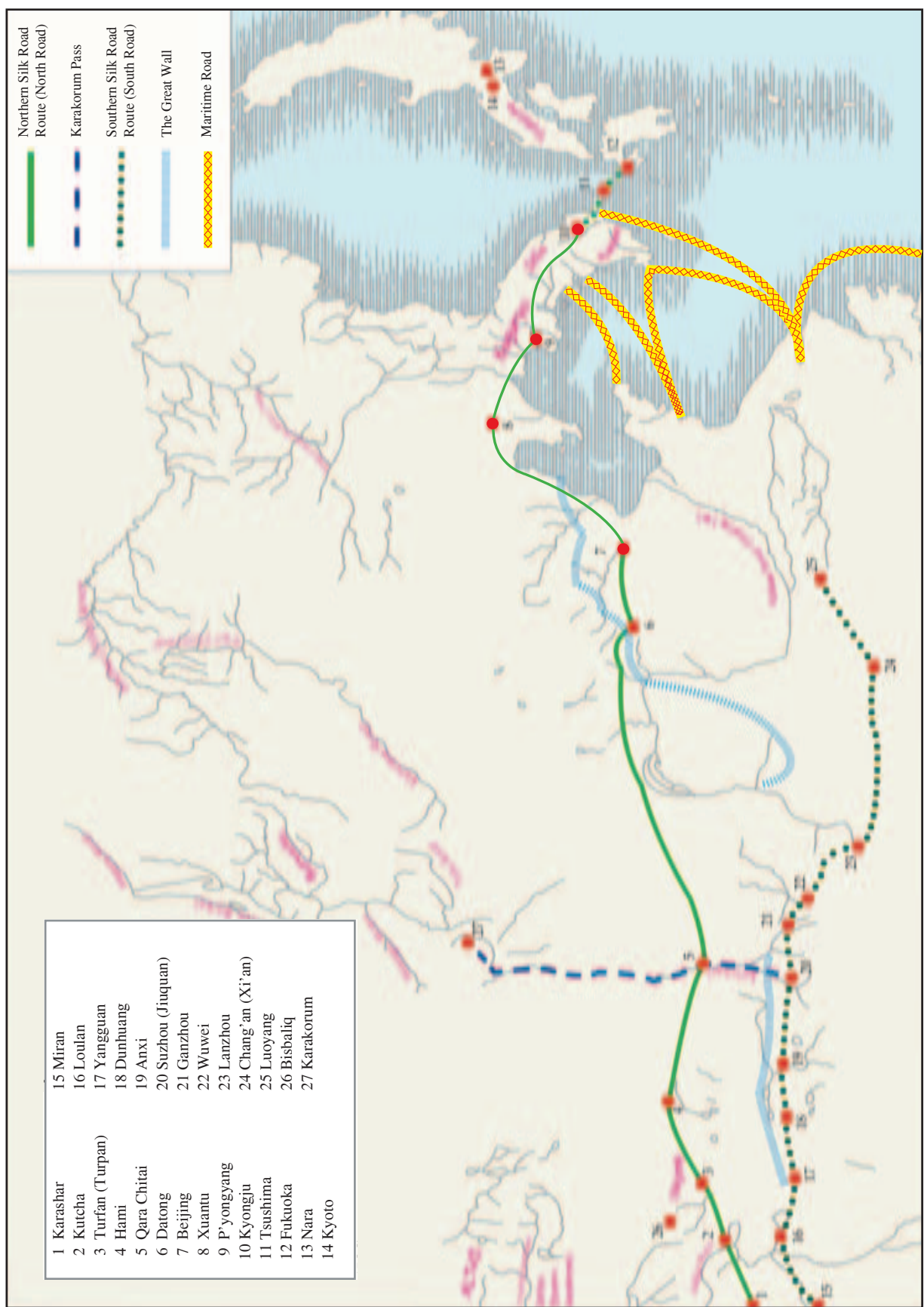
Voyages of art objects through the Silk Road from the 1st to 8th century
 (Source: Beurderley, Cecile, Sur les Routes de las Soie, 1985, 114-115.)



Points to Consider

1. Historians have debated the reasons Silla was the state to unify the Three Kingdoms. Which of the following is the most convincing argument to you?
 - A. Silla's geographic position—protected by distance from an invasion by China.
 - B. Their natural resources—iron production in southern Silla and good agricultural fields of rice, barley and wheat.
 - C. Koguryo and Paekche drained their strength by fighting between themselves and in the case of Koguryo, against the Chinese as well. This allowed Silla to take advantage of their weakness.
 - D. The leaders of Silla were highly knowledgeable of international relations in East Asia and approached Tang China for support. Tang China needed a peninsular ally to defeat Koguryo.
2. Some argue that Koguryo, with its control of Manchuria, would have been a better state to unify Korea, making it a larger and more prosperous and powerful state. Therefore, Silla's alliance with China is seen as a betrayal of Korea's potential. Defenders of Silla suggest that trying to control Manchuria with constant threats of invasion from China, Mongolia and later Russia would have been not only an impossible task but also would provide a greater opportunity for these nations eventually to dominate the Korean peninsula. What view would you take?
3. The trade of new items and new philosophies such as Buddhism arrived later in Silla than in the other kingdoms on the Korean peninsula. How might this have been affected by its geographic position?
4. China waged a long war against Koguryo, pouring a million men into one attack. Why do you think China did not marshal the same kind of attack on Silla? Was it geography? No threat to China? Silla's potential as a trading partner, or Silla's closer cultural and diplomatic ties to China? Koguryo was always a threat to China, and Paekche was allied to Yamato Japan while Silla was Yamato's enemy.
5. How did the "divide and conquer" tactics of this era compare to other eras you may have already studied? For example, Rome with Gaul, Venice with the Byzantines, Suleiman of the Ottomans with the Balkans? What are the benefits and dangers of such tactics?





Map of the Silk Road with the Korea connection
 (Source: Haussig, Hans Wilhelm, Die Geschichte Zentralasiens und der Seidenstrasse in Islamischer Zeit, 1988.)*
 *Map has been modified from original to reflect additional Silk Road routes.





Map of the Three Kingdoms, 568 CE





Map of Unified Silla







PART I. WAS SILLA PART OF THE SILK ROAD?

SECTION B. A COMPARATIVE TIMELINE

The Silk Road refers not only to a specific network of roads from China through Central Asia to Europe but also to a complicated system of cultural exchanges that spanned several different eras. Moreover, despite the emphasis on silk, the Silk Road saw the flow and exchange of many other goods along with influential philosophies. The first period of the silk trade (ca. second century BCE to second century CE) saw very little participation from Korea. However, from the fourth through tenth centuries, Korea actively traded silk, glass, bronze, pottery, tea, silver and other products. At this time, Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist ideas were examined, modified and spread. Art, architecture, song and dance were developed in response to these new religions and philosophies. Silla came to some of these influences later than other Korean states. However, Silla skillfully married foreign influences with Korean traditions and ideas, allowing new ideas and goods to spread even faster throughout the unified kingdom.

The following timeline itemizes major Silk Road events and Silla's involvement in the Silk Road.

 SILK ROAD TIME LINE 	
First Era: 4000 BCE to 500 CE	
4000 BCE	Horse domesticated on the southern Russian steppes.
3000 BCE	China breeds silk worms and produces silk.
2000 BCE	Horse-drawn chariot introduced in Near East.
1500 BCE	Iron technology developed in Asia Minor.
800 BCE	Scythians and Sarmatians appear in the northern steppes—the first people to ride horses and wear trousers, use the stirrup, etc.
500/400 BCE	Buddha lives in northern India.
551–479 BCE	Confucius lives in China.
500–200 BCE	Silk, jade trade to Central Asia and India.
330–320 BCE	Empire of Alexander the Great expands into Asia.



300 BCE	Buddhism begins to spread from India to the north, Gandhara art type emerges, and paper is first made in China.
100 BCE	Road opens from Rome to Beijing: trade in paper, spices, fur, etc.
100–200 CE	Jade, bronze, glass trade between Asia and Europe.
100 CE	Buddhism spreads to Central Asia and China. Chinese General Pan Chao defeats Xiongnu and keeps the peace in the Tarim Basin. The stability of the Silk Road leads to two caravan trade routes, one north, one south. Roman Syria develops the technique of blowing glass. The glass industry expands. Rome sends the first Roman envoy overseas to China.
200 CE	Han China falls and rival warfare interrupts trade network. Sassanians rise to take power from Parthians and exert a strong cultural influence along the Silk Road.
300 CE	Secret of silk industry begins to spread west along the Silk Road. Carving of the Dunhuang caves begins. They become the world's largest Buddhist caves.
400 CE	New techniques in glass production introduced to China by the Sogdians.
500 CE	Sassanian Empire at its greatest extent in Central Asia.

Korea: Three Kingdoms

200 BCE	Silk industry reaches Korea with Chinese immigrants.
372 CE	Buddhism arrives in Koguryo.
384 CE	Buddhism arrives in Paekche.
450 CE	Silla adopts Buddhism as a state religion.
527 CE	Paekche sends Buddhist missionaries to Japan.
552 CE	Koguryo mural shows woman weaving silk.

Second Era: 600–1100 CE

618 CE	Tang China establishes more trade. Buddhist monks travel in East Asia.
648 CE	Muslim religion and trade expand. Sassanian Persia falls to the Arabs.
750 CE	Silk Road traffic is at its peak. Chang'an (Xi'an) is the world's richest city. Paper making introduced into Central Asia. Block printing and gun powder are invented in China.



- 845 CE Tang China suppresses Buddhism. The Silk Road declines.
- 900 CE China suppresses foreign relations, but trade continues throughout North China. Khitan (Liao) trades ceramics directly with Korea.
- 1100 CE Sea trade routes become more important.

Korea: Unified Silla

- 647 CE Kites are used for military purpose.
- 648 CE Chinese customs, calendar, writing system and institutions are adopted, including the court dress. Buddhist missionaries travel to and from India.
- 660 CE Tea introduced from China. Seeds are in use. Tea rites adopted.
- 682 CE Confucian academy is instituted.
- 788 CE Confucian-style examinations are introduced.
- 800 CE Chang Pogo achieves mastery of the sea in East Asia.
- 900 CE Trade with China and Japan continues.

Third Era: 1100–1300 CE

- 1100–1300 CE Mongol Empire gives security to travel. Silk Road trade prospers again under the “Pax Mongolica.”
- 1266–1295 CE Marco Polo comes from the West and sojourns in China.
- 1206–1368 CE Rise and fall of the Mongol empire.
- 1368 CE Ming dynasty expels Mongols.
- 1405–1433 CE Zheng He sails from China to many places in southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.
- 1453 CE The fall of Constantinople. The West seeks sea routes to East Asia.



Korea: Koryo

1231–1259 CE Koreans lead about 30 years of strong resistance against the Mongol invasion, in the process devastating human and economic resources, destroying many cultural treasures (e.g. Hwangnyong Temple pagoda) and changing the political and social system. Neo-Confucianism is introduced to Korean scholars visiting the Yuan court.

1274/1281 CE Failed naval invasions of Japan by the Mongols. Some 14,600 Koreans were forced to take part in the first (1274) attack.

Points to Consider

1. The Silk Road began with a secret–silk cultivation. What did it later become?
2. What was China’s role both in supporting and destroying international trade?
3. How did Silla’s participation in cultural and trade exchanges compare to other areas of Korea?
4. While objects traded along the Silk Road may be identified, what ideas were “traded” along with these objects?

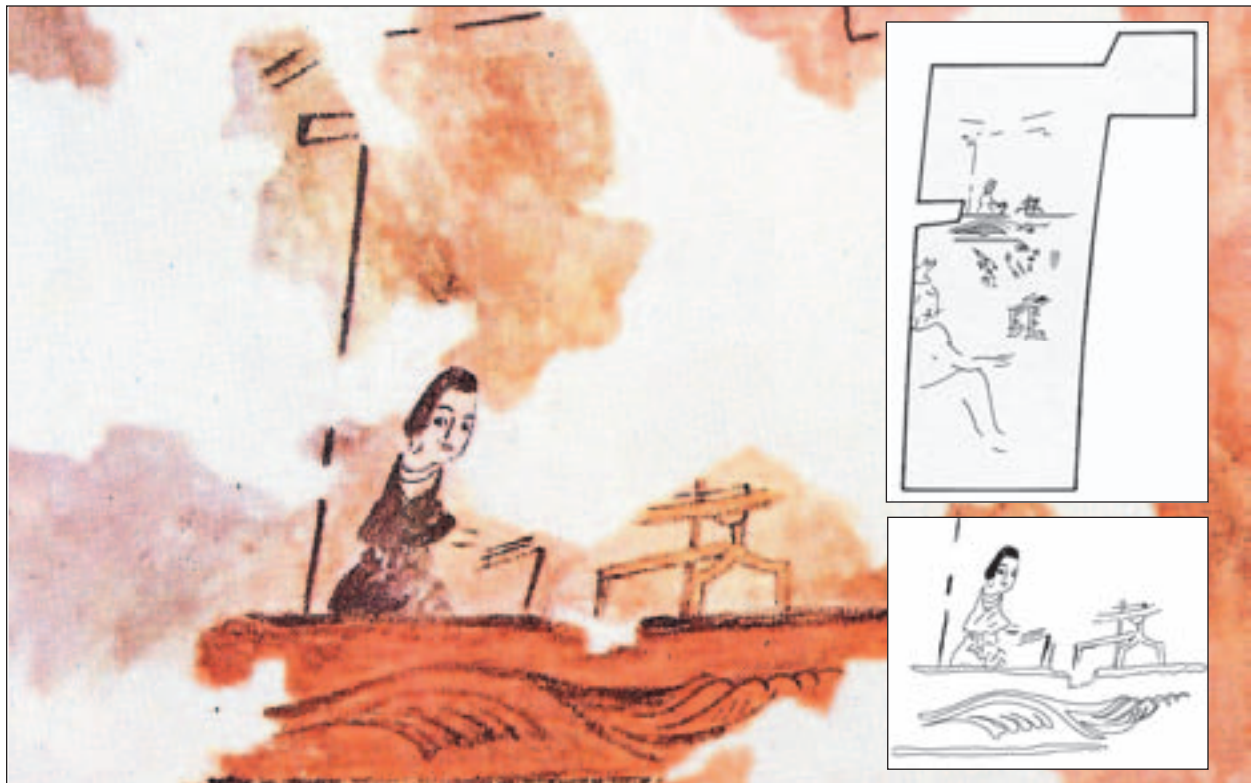


PART I. WAS SILLA PART OF THE SILK ROAD?

SECTION C. SILK AS A MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE

One of the first indications of silk in Silla's history is depicted when the first king and queen of the kingdom—King Hyokkose and Queen Aryong—promoted silk cultivation in 37 BCE. At this early time in Silla's history, the kingdom was organized primarily around six major clans, and the king and queen were said to have traveled from village to village, teaching people how to produce silk by feeding mulberry leaves to silkworms. The resulting silk from the cocoons could be spun into thread and woven into cloth.

Hyokkose had his queen accompany him on his ventures because it was generally women who cared for the silkworms and did the spinning and weaving. In Asian societies, it was frequently the task of royal women to supervise the production of silk since it was highly valuable. Not only was it soft, light to wear, resistant to cold and offered protection from wounds in battle, but also its scarcity meant it could be used as a medium of exchange. While it is not fully known how much silk Silla was able to export, the kingdom was certainly aware of the value of silk. The following are some of the instances of silk being mentioned in Silla's history.



Koguryo tomb mural of woman weaver (replica), mid 5th century. Tae-an-ni Tomb No. 1, Undok-tong, Tae-an-gu, Namp'o city, North Korea. Reproduced by permission from *Koguryo*, vol. 4, *Choson Yujok Togam* 6 (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1990), fig. 148.



Silk was the traditional material of upper class clothing, and features prominently in lists of tribute goods exchanged between Korea and China. Silk probably first entered Korea from China, and historical texts and wall painting show that fine silks were worn by the aristocracy in the first centuries CE, when Korea stood at the end of the Silk Road between the Roman and Han Chinese Empires. The earliest extant examples of Korean silk are fragments found in the 6th century Heavenly Horse Tomb in Kyongju.

Pratt, Keith and Rutt, Richard, *Korea, A Historical and Cultural Dictionary* (Boca Raton: Curzon Press, 1999), 417.

Group Activity: With the class arranged in groups, examine the following examples in which silk was used and answer the questions below:

1. How is silk being used in each scenario? Is it likely to be worn by the recipient? (Buddhist monks were supposed to dress simply, whereas royalty dressed according to status.) What other uses might silk have had?
2. Who is giving the silk and who is receiving it? Were the people who were offering the silk likely to be the ones who produced the material as well? What diplomatic gain or benefit would the person giving the silk get from the exchange? What affect might the gift have on the recipient?
3. Why might silk have been traded rather than other goods, such as jade, armor or glass?

Examples of the Silk Trade in Silla Society

Example 1

A husband and wife revered for their piety went to an island and lived alone. The people from the couple's hometown suffered a devastating wet season, resulting in famine, and decided that their "sun" and "moon" had left them. Messengers were sent to the couple pleading for their return, but the couple wished to stay where they were. Out of pity, the husband Yonorang gave the king's messenger a bolt of fine silk.

He said, "Take this silk, handspun by my wife, and offer sacrifices to heaven." Once the king received the gift, he took the silk and climbed a mountain near the capitol of Silla and offered the silk to the Spirit of Heaven. Suddenly the clouds broke and there was a clear sky. The silk was kept at the shrine thereafter.

Adams, Edward, *Korea's Golden Age* (Seoul: International Publishing, 1991), 189-190.



Yonorang and Seonyo

In the fourth year (157 CE) of the reign of King Adala, the eighth Silla sovereign, there lived on the eastern seacoast a married couple named Yonorang and Seonyo.

One day Yonorang was diving in the ocean to collect seaweed. Suddenly a monstrous rock (some say a big fish) rose beneath him and carried him off to Japan. The people there thought him quite an uncommon person and made him their king.

Seonyo, meanwhile, was wondering why her husband did not come back. As she was searching for him along the shore, she saw a pair of straw shoes lying on a big rock at the edge of the water. Recognizing them as her husband's, she jumped onto the rock and looked about for him. The rock immediately shook gently to and fro for a moment and then drifted merrily off to Japan as before.

The Japanese in great wonderment took her from the rock and presented her to their king. Thus the couple was reunited and Seonyo became a queen. The people respected the royal couple and worshiped them like the sun and moon.

Just at this time, the sun and moon ceased to shine in Silla. The King was astonished, and sent for the official astrologer. This official informed His Majesty that the spirits of the sun and moon had formerly resided in Silla, but some months before had bid farewell to this land and departed for Japan in the east.

The King immediately sent a royal messenger to the eastern islands to find Yonorang and Seonyo and bring them back. But Yonorang, when found, shook his head and said, "We drifted to this land by the command of Heaven. How can we return to our native country? Look! Here is a roll of fine silk cloth, handspun by my wife the queen. I will give it to you as a gift. If you take it home and offer it as a sacrifice to heaven, you will see an astonishing result."

The disappointed messenger accepted the gift and returned to Silla, where he reported the whole story to the court. The king thereupon offered the silk cloth as a sacrifice to heaven, praying for the return of the sun and moon in a solemn ceremony. Hardly had he finished when the dark, overhanging clouds dispersed and the sun and moon shined brightly in the sky.

In commenting on this story, Iryon, the author who recorded it, points out that Japanese records contain no mention of a person from Silla becoming king. He speculates that perhaps Yonorang became a small king in a frontier town, not a real king in Japan.

Iryon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 57-58.

Example 2

Kwanch'ang (645–660 CE), the son of a Silla general, valiantly fought against Paekche troops in 660 but was captured. The Paekche general Kyebaek was so impressed with his captive's bravery that he let Kwanch'ang go free. But soon he was captured again in battle. This time he was decapitated, and his head was sent back to Silla tied to a horse. The grieving Silla troops were so moved by this that they regrouped and defeated Paekche. The



Silla king Muyol had a huge funeral for Kwanch'ang and gave 31 rolls each of Chinese silk and cotton to pay for the funeral.

Lee, Peter H., et al., eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 56.

Example 3

Chajang (active 643–650 CE), a famous Silla monk, went to study in China. There he became such a noted scholar that the Tang emperor granted him 200 rolls of damask (silk) to use as capital. In 643 Queen Sondok wrote a letter requesting Chajang's return to Silla to further the religion of Buddhism. Chajang was given one bolt of damask and 500 bolts of assorted textiles by the Chinese to take back with him to Silla.

Lee, Peter H., et al., eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 47.

Example 4

Queen Chindok (reigned 647–654 CE) sent a bolt of embroidered silk brocade to the emperor of Tang China. She had embroidered the silk herself and included a short poem entitled "Song of a Peaceful Reign." The Emperor accepted her gift and praised her thoughtful gesture.

Iryon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 75.

Example 5

The monk Wolmyong (active during the reign of King Kyongdok, 742–765 CE) was well known for his devotion to Buddha. The king of Silla paid him great respect and gave him a gift of 100 rolls of silk.

Iryon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 353.



Example 6

The monk Chinpyo brought the ideas of Buddhism to many. King Kyongdok (reigned 742–765 CE) invited Chinpyo to his place and received from him the Bodhisattva ordination and he, in return, received 77,000 bags of tax grain. The courtiers and the queen's family also received the commandments of Buddha and donated 500 rolls of silk and 50 ounces of gold to the monk. Chinpyo distributed these donations to various mountain monasteries for the support of Buddhist services.

Lee, Peter H., et al., eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 106.

Example 7

When Queen Chinsong (reigned 888–898 CE) sent Prince Yangp'ae to the Tang court by sea, he had to face storms and pirates. Stopping at one place, he managed to rescue an old man's family from an evil monk. However, one of his boatmen, Kot'aji, had to be left behind; but he was saved by two dragons who brought him to the prince who was in China. The Chinese were so impressed by the dragon escort that the emperor invited the prince to a special court banquet at which he gave him a gold-lace brocade as a present for the Queen of Silla.

Iryon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 130-131.



AYAHA-GU IKEDA SHRINE

Ayaha-gu Ikeda Shrine located in Ikeda City, Osaka Prefecture, Japan, enshrines Ayaha and Kureta, two sisters who came from Koguryo in 306 CE, planted mulberry trees and raised silkworms. They spread the cultivation of silkworm and weaving techniques in Japan.

Ayaha-gu Ikeda Shrine Brief History. [Souvenir booklet from the shrine. No additional bibliographical data available.]

SILK WEAVING IN JAPAN

The Hata, one of the most famous [Korean] peninsular families to make Japan their home in the ancient period, “presented thread and silk cloth as tribute, and when the emperor donned the clothes they were soft and warm to the skin.” The name Hata appears on a tapestry made for Prince Shotoku now kept at Horyu-ji, suggesting that the Hata might have specialized in weaving techniques.

William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 97.

Two weaver sisters at Ayaha-gu Ikeda Shrine. Reproduced by permission from Hong, Yun’gi, *Hangugini Mandun Ilbonui Kukpo* (Seoul: Munhak Segye Press, 1996), 240.





PART I. WAS SILLA PART OF THE SILK ROAD?

SECTION D. WHAT CAN ARCHEOLOGY REVEAL ABOUT TRADE GOODS?

Introduction The people of Silla placed relics and other objects with religious significance in metal boxes like “time capsules” of today that tell us about the era in which the building was erected or the religious meanings of the relics. The most common place to find these boxes—known as *chindan-gu* or foundation offerings—are in the ancient pagodas. Though Silla was introduced to Buddhism later than Koguryo and Paekche, “By that time in Kyongju and its environs the golden roofs of temples glittered against the sky like the [stars of the] Milky Way and lotus-crowned pagodas stood in unending lines like flights of wild geese.”* While Buddhist temples themselves illustrate the movement of religion from India to China to Korea, Sillan Buddhist monks made trips to India for direct contact with India.

*Iryon, *Samguk yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 189.

Directions In addition to studying stories from Silla’s history, one can examine Silla’s connection to the Silk Road through archeological remains. After reading over the contents of *chindan-gu* found at the largest Silla temple and at two smaller temples, either in groups or individually, indicate on a map where the ideas or materials of the relics may have originated. Then answer the following question:

What three overall generalizations can you make about the trade in Silla revealed through archeology?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Example 1 Though the Nine-Story Pagoda at Hwangnyong Temple, the largest of Silla’s Buddhist temples, was destroyed by the Mongols in the 13th century, many relics have been found at its foundation. Here is a partial list:

1. Bronze artifacts: blades, earrings, dishes, scissors, scythes, needle cases, mirrors, rings, belts, bells.
2. Glass artifacts (glass was considered rare): thousands of beads, small vases, bottles.
3. Silver and gold: rings, beads, bowls.
4. Rock crystal: ornaments.

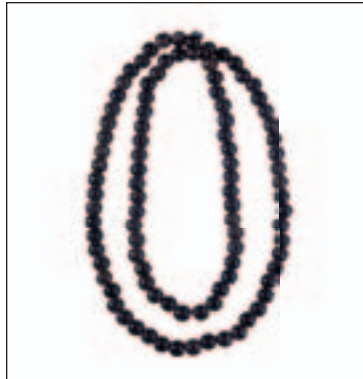


While Korea had bronze smiths and exported silver along the Silk Road, which of the above items does it seem most likely to have imported? (For more information, see Handout 10.)

OBJECTS FROM HWANGNYONG TEMPLE SITE, 553 CE



Standing Buddha
Gilt-bronze



Beads
Glass



Buckles and Bells
Bronze



Ornaments
Jade



Bowl
Silver



Budda Image
Gilt-bronze

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Example 2 The *sarira*, or relics container pictured below came from Kamun Temple dated to Unified Silla around 682 CE. It was located at the base of the temple's pagoda. Here are some of its features:

1. Bronze figures playing music, demonstrating the Buddhist view of harmony with the universe.
2. Terracotta figures crafted by Silla artisans.
3. The crystal bead-like relics known as *sarira*, which are said to be found in the cremation ashes of some highly enlightened Buddhist monks. *Sarira* are preserved in glass bottles that usually are enshrined in brass reliquaries protected by an outer box-shaped container.
4. A centrally placed *sarira* bottle with designs similar to the clay tiles of Silla.
5. Musical instruments that resemble those of Central Asia.



SARIRA RELIQUARY AND CONTAINER
FROM KAMUN TEMPLE, 682 CE



Sarira Reliquary and Container (east pagoda)



Container (west pagoda)



RELIQUARY FROM KAMUN TEMPLE, 682 CE

Bronze Figure on Northwest Corner

Bronze Figure on Northeast Corner



Pagoda like *Sarira* Reliquary

Bronze Figure on Southwest Corner

Bronze Figure on Southeast Corner





Terracotta figures of Silla

Reproduced by permission of Jong Wook Lee.



Example 3 This *sarira* container is from Songnim Temple, a temple in North Kyongsang province. Here are some of its features:

1. The lotus leaves on the side of the container are a symbol of Buddha.
2. The fringe of triangles that are hanging down resembles the fringe of a Central Asian tent.
3. It is designed in the shape of a Chinese Buddhist temple, which is more decorative than some Silla or Japanese temples.
4. Contains a green glass vase. (Rome introduced glass to Asia. Later it was produced by China and Korea)
5. There is another bottle inside the vase.
6. It incorporates gold that was mined in the Korean Peninsula.

From the above examples, why might archeologists have difficulty determining which products were imported and which were indigenous to Silla?

Do you think these objects held the same significance to the people who received them as to their original creators? Why?



RELIQUARY FROM SONGNIM TEMPLE, 344 CE



Sarira reliquary from Songnim Temple

Reproduced by permission of the Taegu National Museum of Korea.



PART I. WAS SILLA PART OF THE SILK ROAD?

SECTION E. HOW DID SILLA PASS ON GOODS TO JAPAN AND ITS OTHER AREAS OF INFLUENCE?

Introduction Although Silla (57 BCE–935 CE) imported many ideas and materials which had traveled along the Silk Road, it also served as a conduit to the Japanese archipelago for the same concepts and goods, particularly during the Unified Silla period (668–935).

Buddhism was transmitted via the Silk Road from China to Korea and then to Japan. Its transmission was a byproduct of diplomatic activities among the three countries. Buddhism was introduced first to Koguryo (37 BCE–668 CE) from China in 372 and via Koguryo to Paekche (18 BCE–660 CE) in 384 and to Silla in 527. The Paekche court sent Buddhist monks and books to Japan starting in 552.

In the eighth century CE, Silla sent monks and artisans to Japan to promote the maturation of the religion and Buddhist art. They included Simsang (Shinjo in Japanese), who delivered lectures on the Avatamsaka doctrines of Buddhism in the capital of Japan in 740 CE and is regarded as the founder of the Avatamsaka sect in Japan. Japan's ruler at the time, King Shomu (reigned 724–749) embraced the teaching of the new school with fervor. To strengthen his country and bolster royal power, Shomu led a truly kingdom-wide effort to create Todai-ji as a national shrine worthy of the supreme authority in the universe. Artisans from Silla built the temple.

Cultural Transmission from Korea to Japanese Islands between 300–700 CE

The following list summarizes the current international scholarly consensus regarding the materials, technologies and religious and political systems that flowed from the Korean peninsula to the Japanese islands between 300–700. The items noted here are particularly striking because they embrace all social classes, including things that common people would have used and consumed—such as blades for iron farming tools, household ovens, and pond-digging techniques—along with methods of statecraft, religion, and aristocratic fineries.

Despite great gaps in scholarly knowledge, it is possible to arrange these items into three categories. First, several of them essentially originated on the peninsula, such as iron and ironworking techniques, the cuirass, the oven, bronze bells, court titles and surnames, the district, measurements for the field pattern system, and mountain fortification. Second, inhabitants of ancient Korea transmitted some items from China long after their invention, such as the ring-pommeled sword, iron attachments for agricultural tools, pond- and canal-digging technology, stoneware, silk weaving, the idea for service and producer units, law codes, and writing. Because of the long interval between the invention of these items in China and their transmission to the archipelago through Korea, natives of the peninsula are likely to have altered or refined them. Third, many items were invented elsewhere but were transferred virtually unchanged (lamella armor, horse trappings, stone-fitting methods and tombs, gold and silver jewelry, Buddhism, and the crossbow).

Farris, William Wayne, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 69-70.



Cultural Connections: Confucianism and Writing

Wangin (Japanese: Wanikishi) was a Paekche scholar who brought books, *Thousand Chinese Characters and the Analects*, and taught writing to people in Japan in the late fourth century.

Hong, Yun'gi, *Hangugini mandun Ilbonui kukpo* [*Japanese Treasures Made by Koreans*] (Seoul: Munhak, Segye Press, 1996), 74-81.

Today-ji

King Shomu of Japan decreed in 743 that a Great Buddha Image, the colossal image of Vairocana, be created on the grounds of the Kinsho-ji, the original site of Today-ji. Construction of the Great Buddha Hall took place and the image was dedicated in 752 with a lavish consecration ceremony. The West and East Pagodas, the Lecture Hall and Monks' Quarters were then completed by 783. Today-ji became the chief temple and was a center for rituals for the peace of the nation and the prosperity of the people.

Rōben (689–773), the first Chief Abbot of Today-ji [a Sillan monk], along with Emperor Shomu and the monk Gyōgi (668–749), played an important role in the establishment of the temple.

Today-ji (Nara, 2002) a tourist souvenir leaflet.

Construction of Today-ji

Those involved in building this Buddhist temple were all descendants of Koreans: the master architect was Minister Koma no Fukushin (高麗福信 709–789) of the Koguryo Kingdom. The Buddhist monks who provided religious significance to the building layout were: Rōben (689–773), descendant of a Paekche immigrant who studied under Shinjō (Korean: Simsang), the Sillan monk who is the founder of Hossō sect of Japanese Buddhism; and Gyōgi (668–749), a descendant of Wangin (Japanese: Wanikishi) who studied under Hyeje, another Sillan monk.

Kuninaka no Muraji Kimimaro (died 774), the superintendent of construction of the Daibutsu, Vairocana Buddha in the main worship hall in the Today-ji, was a grandson of Kuni no Koppu who had moved to Japan from Paekche in 663. Casting of the Daibutsu began in September 747 and the chief caster was Takaichi no Okuni from Yamamoto (present day Nara Prefecture). The gold for gilding was proffered by the governor of Mutsu, named Kudara-no-Kokishi Kyofuku (Korean: Paekche King Kyongbok) who is a great-great-grandson of Paekche's King Uija (reigned 641–660). Copper was offered by Akajome uji, a Sillan descendant. Paekche artisans must have played a major role in the casting. The temple complex of seven halls was completed in 783 and the chief carpenter was named Iyabe no Momoyo, a Sillan descendant.

Hong, Yun'gi, *Hanugini mandun Ilbonui Kukpo* [*Japanese Treasures made by Koreans*] (Seoul: Munhak Segye Press, 1996), 74-81.

Kim, Lena, "Early Korean Buddhist Sculptures and Related Japanese Examples: Iconographic and Stylistic Comparisons." *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan*. (New York: Japan Society, 2002), 82.

Kim, Lena, *Comparative Studies on Korean Ancient Buddhist Sculpture* (Seoul: Munye Publishing Company, 2003), 259-260.

Toshifumi, Konno, "Todaiji's Great Buddha: Its Foundation in Buddhist Doctrine and Its Chinese and Korean Precedents," *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan*. (New York: Japan Society, 2002), 118.

Construction of Todai-ji

The JGC construction company of Japan has a Web site dedicated to traditional Japanese crafts and craftsmanship. In the article on Todai-ji the author writes, "At this time [the construction of the Great Buddha and Todai-ji] Japan had close relations with Tang (ancient China) and Silla (ancient Korea) and was striving to introduce the cultures and philosophies of these two mentor nations, and of Tang in particular.

http://www.jgc.co.jp/waza/a1_nara/todaij01.htm

Shoso-in Treasures Repository in Nara

Todai-ji figures prominently into the creation of the Shoso-in Treasures in Kyoto. On the occasion of the festival celebrating the drawing of the eyes on the face of the Great Buddha in 752, over 600 items donated by Queen Shomu were collected. In 756, after the death of King Shomu, who had decreed the building of Todai-ji, over 600 of his favorite things were added to the queen's donation. These are the foundation of the Shoso-in Treasures. Over the years, the depository has accumulated over 10,000 pieces.

On the occasion of the eye-drawing on the Vairocana Buddha image, Korean artisans performed music and masked dances of the Three Kingdoms. This is one explanation of the presence of 171 mask-dance masks and Korean musical instruments from the Three Kingdoms—a harp from Paekche, a 12 string zither from Silla, a flute from Koguryo—in the Shoso-in Treasures Repository.

The Shoso-in Treasures also include spoons and nest bowls in copper from Silla as well as 18 brushes and 15 ink stones, some made in Silla.

Adapted from Hong, Yun'gi, *Hangugini mandun Ilbonui kukpo [Japanese Treasures made by Koreans]* (Seoul: Munhak Segye Press, 1996), 74-81.



Kongo Gumi: Korea's First Multinational Company

In business since the sixth century of the Common Era, Kongo Gumi is the oldest continuously family-owned company in the world. For centuries, its owners and workers have built and maintained Japan's architectural treasures.

The business, which was transplanted from Korea to Japan around 578, was a contractor for various government-supported projects for nearly 1,300 years.

The Shitenno-ji, the earliest of Japan's Buddhist temples, in Osaka, was commissioned by Prince Shotoku and built by Kongo Gumi in the sixth century and is still standing today. The firm built Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and castles. It also worked to maintain them, repairing damage caused by decades of battles, fires and storms.

In 1583, Japan's head of state, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, commissioned Kongo Gumi to construct the Osaka Castle; one of his many extravagant, fortified residences. It was there that his son Hideyori took refuge after Hideyoshi's death in 1598.

After Tokugawa Ieyasu's ascension to power, Kongo Gumi was commissioned to rebuild the Shitenno-ji, which had been completely destroyed during the Winter Battle of 1614, as well as the Osaka castle. These repair projects employed Kongo Gumi builders for two generations.

Source: O'Hara, William T., *Centuries of Success, Lessons from the World's Most Enduring Family Businesses* (Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2004), 1-15.

International Relations in East Asia:

China, Koguryo, Paekche, Silla and Wa Japan during the 4th and 5th centuries

In the years between 350 and 500 Koguryo's and Paekche's contacts with China were by far the most extensive, although Silla and Wa Japan had some official intercourse with China. It was the time when China was politically fragmented into domains of two or more contending dynasties, with the Yangzi River valley commonly separating the regimes of the north from those of the south.

Koguryo favored relationships with the dynasties of the north while Paekche favored those of the south. In 370 Koguryo established relations with the Former Qin regime (351–394) in north China. Two years later a Former Qin embassy arrived at its capital with a Buddhist monk, icons, and texts. In 374, another Buddhist monk arrived at the Koguryo court. During the following year the Koguryo's ruler had separate temples built for the two foreign Buddhist monks.

In 372 the king of Paekche dispatched his country's first known mission to China, an embassy to the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420) in the south. In 384, an Eastern Jin monk, seemingly of Central Asian background, arrived at the Paekche capital of Hansong (present-day Seoul). The king welcomed him and a year later had a temple built for him.



Silla's relative isolation in the southeast corner of Korea precluded extensive contact with China or with elements of Chinese culture, including Buddhism. This in turn slowed its development as a royal centralized state. Koguryo was able to force the emerging kingdom of Silla into a dependent relationship by the end of the fourth century. With the help of Koguryo, in 377 and 382 Silla sent embassies to the northern Chinese court of Former Qin.

In response to Koguryo's southward expansion movements in the late fourth century and as a counterbalance to the Silla's alignment with Koguryo, Paekche established close ties with the Yamato rulers of Japan in present day Nara. The relationship between the rulers of Paekche and Japan remained remarkably strong for some three hundred years. The *Nihon Shoki* recorded that in the year 552, Paekche's ambassador presented to Yamato king a royal gift of Buddhist texts as well as an image of the Buddha and other ritual paraphernalia.

In 553 Silla had gained possession of a port on the Yellow Sea by securing the entire Han River valley by a sudden attack on Paekche that was engaged war against Koguryo. Silla's conquest of the Han River valley was the most important factor in determining the subsequent course of Northeast Asian history. It provided the kingdom with a port on the Yellow Sea and accordingly, for the first time, with unmediated access to China. Silla's rulers quickly availed themselves of this opportunity, sending embassies in 564 and 566 respectively to the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577), the power then dominant in northeastern China, and to the Chen regime (557–589), the last of the southern dynasties.

In 577 and again in 588, Paekche sent embassies with gifts to the Japanese court to foster the development of Buddhism. Among these gifts were Buddhist relics and texts, several monks and a nun, as well as a number of technical personnel with the skills necessary to construct and outfit a proper temple. Included among the clerics were specialists in medication, monastic regulations and magical incantation; and among the technicians were temple architects, a sculptor of Buddhist images and roof-tile makers. The surviving evidence suggests that not only was Paekche responsible for the introduction of Buddhism to the Japanese court, but further that this Korean kingdom continued to exert a primary influence on the religion's development in the archipelago.

After the victory of the pro-Buddhist group of Soga no Umako and Prince Shotoku in 587, Korean monks helped spread Buddhism in Japan. They include the Koguryo monk Hyeja (J: Eji) and the Paekche monk Hyech'ong (J: Eso). They guided Prince Shotoku with Buddhist teachings and in popularizing Buddhism. A third influential monk was Kwalluk (J: Kanroku), who spread the use of calendar making, geomancy, and invisibility.

Relations between Silla and Japan, however, were much less cordial throughout most of the period before Silla achieved the unification of the Korean peninsula in 675. Their relationship was largely dictated by Paekche's foreign policy, which attempted a cooperative relationship with Japan. Paekche sent cultural and technical knowledge to help Japan's strong centralized state building. Japan, in return, sent military assistance to Paekche at the critical time against the Koguryo's southward expansion campaigns.

Silla achieved the unification by deploying diplomatic skills to get Tang China's military power expelled. Following Silla's expulsion of the Tang military government from Korea in 675, the nexus of international relations in East Asia became much simpler than it had been for

centuries. The late seventh through ninth centuries, in effect, comprised an era of unparalleled international tranquility in East Asia. This tranquility, in turn, fostered a marked expansion of official contacts between Silla and China and between Silla and Japan. Significant to note, however, no comparable expansion occurred in the relations between Japan and China. From 675 to 907, there was much diplomatic activity between Korea and China but little between Japan and China. Silla sent 103 official missions to the Tang court, but in that time frame, only seven diplomatic missions from Japan reached China. Meanwhile, Japan sent more diplomatic missions to Korea; 39 Silla missions were received by the Japanese court, and 31 Japanese embassies visited the Silla capital of Kyongju. The eighth century is commonly known as the high point of direct Chinese influence on Japan's emerging elite culture, but Korea sent 15 times more diplomatic missions to China than Japan did. Japan sent five diplomatic missions to the Tang court and 14 to Korea.

Jonathan W. Best, "The Transmission and Transformation of Early Buddhist Culture in Korea and Japan," in *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan* (New York: Japan Society, 2003), 19-43.



Emissary from Koguryo, Paekche, Silla and Wa to Liang Dynasty (502-557 CE) in China

Reproduced by permission of Professor Kil Su Suh.

The Silk Road extended across the ocean between Korea and Japan. Silla naval commander Chang Pogo, with 10,000 under his command (see Handout 23), oversaw trade to Japan and the Yellow Sea in the ninth century. Order gave way to chaos and pirates after Chang's assassination and resulted in the eventual decline of Silla. Trade was not restored until the 19th century.



The Flow of Goods from Silla to Japan

Among the Shoso-in treasures at Todai-ji in Nara there are more than 20 sheets of purchase orders (one dated as early as 752), indicating that the favorite luxury goods they imported from Silla included perfume, medicine, cosmetics, fabric dyeing materials, metallic goods, musical instruments, carpets, and measuring tools. Some were made in Silla; Others were of foreign origin, probably from Southeast Asia, India or South Asia. Silla products were of ginseng, pine nuts, honey, ink sticks, candles, candlebra and candle wick trimming scissors, spoons, bowls with lids, the Avatamsaka Sutra and other Buddhist sutras.

Catalogue of the Exhibition of Shoso-in Treasures (Nara: Nara National Museum of Japan, 2002), 122-125.

CANDLE SNUFFERS IN ANAP-CHI IN KYONGJU, KOREA AND SHOSO-IN IN NARA, JAPAN

Pictured here are items housed in Nara, Japan that resemble those excavated in Silla's capital Kyongju, evidence of Silla's eighth century exports to Japan. A purchase order dated 752 and 20 additional purchase order sheets remain at the Shoso-in. They list trade items including perfume, medicine, cosmetics, fabric dye, metal, musical instrument, and measuring tools.

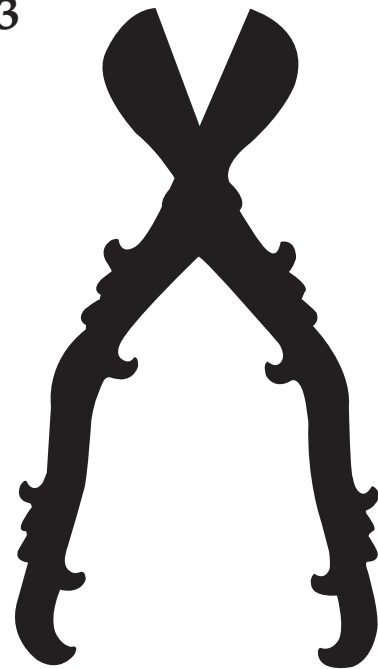
1



2



3



1. Candle snuffers from Anap-chi
2. Candle snuffers from Anap-chi (close-up)
3. Candle snuffers from Shoso-in in Nara, Japan

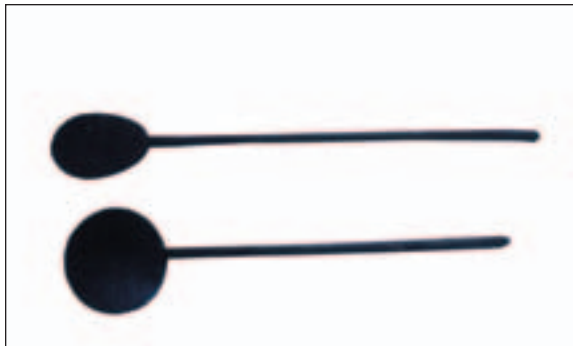
Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



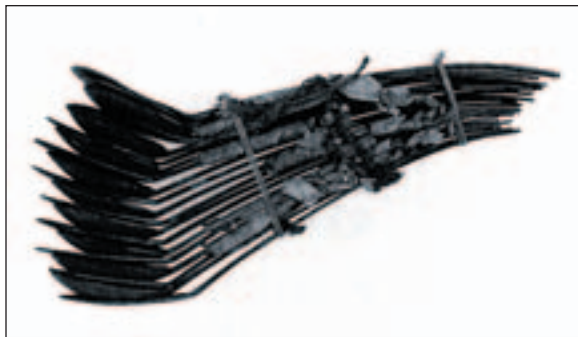
BRONZE SPOONS IN ANAP-CHI, KYONGJU AND BRONZE SPOONS IN SHOSO-IN, NARA



Bronze spoons from Anap-chi
Kyongju, 8-9th century CE



Bronze spoons from Anap-chi
Kyongju, 8th century CE



Bronze spoons from Shoso-in in Nara, Japan

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.

PURCHASE ORDER



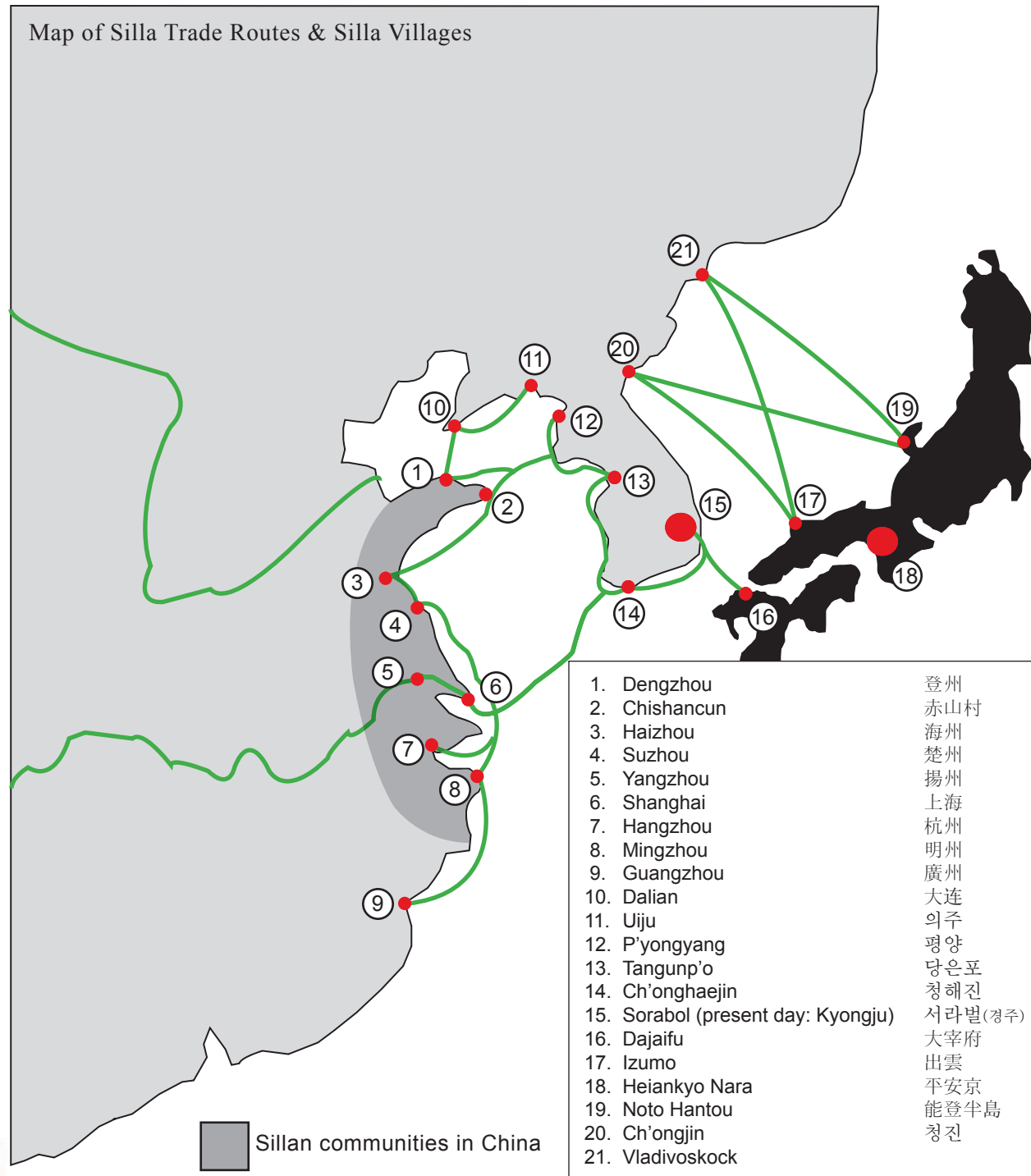
Purchase order from Shoso-in Nara, Japan, 8th century CE

Photo from *Exhibition of Shoso-in Treasures* (Nara National Museum of Japan, 2002), 122.



Directions Examine the list of goods and the map presented below.

The Unified Silla exports: paper, stationery (brush and ink), Buddhist scriptures, cosmetics, medicine, fabric dyeing materials, musical instruments, measuring tools, silver, ceramics, rice, silk, bronze, spoons, bowls, scissors, carpets, candlestick, candles, pine nuts, honey and ginseng.



Sillans in China

...The Near Eastern merchants apparently went no farther east or north than Yangzhou, and at this point the Koreans took over for the last leg of the trading route, to the easternmost corners of the known world. From what Ennin tells us, it seems that commerce between East China, Korea and Japan was, for the most part, in the hands of men from Silla. Here in the relatively dangerous waters on the eastern fringes of the world, they performed the same functions as did the traders of the placid Mediterranean on the western fringes. This is a historical fact of considerable significance but one which has received virtually no attention in the standard historical compilations of that period or in the modern books based on these sources...

It is not all surprising that there were many Koreans among the foreigners thronging the streets of the Chinese capital. In fact, Ennin's diary and many other historical sources give the impression that Koreans were among the most numerous of the foreign peoples there and had worked their way into Chinese life more thoroughly than most. Many members of the conquered Paekche and Koguryo ruling families and courts had been transplanted to China, and the unification of the peninsula by Silla under the aegis of Tang led to a steady stream of ambassadors going from Korea to Chang'an. Sometimes more than one legation was dispatched in a single year, and there seem to have been no less than 45 in the 36 year period between 703 and 738.

These missions, like the much less frequent ones from Japan, were often accompanied by scholars and monks, as well as by courtiers and junior members of the ruling house. Some of these men settled in China for many years, where a few even passed the civil service examinations and many more served in the Imperial guards. It's most likely that the great majority of the Koreans sooner or later returned to their homeland, but some remained permanently in China, and a few of these carved out impressive careers for themselves as servants of the Chinese emperors...

Many of the Korean monks who went to China to study also turned into permanent residents, and several became famous members of the Chinese Buddhist community. A great Chinese cleric and translator for Buddhist scriptures, Yijing, who himself sailed for India from Yangzhou on board a Persian ship in 671 and returned by sea to Canton 24 years later, has left us an account of the trips to India of 56 clerics and of these no less than seven were Korean. After Yijing's time, other Koreans continued to make this perilous trip. For example, in 1908 the famous French scholar, Paul Pelliot, discovered a manuscript which proved to be a fragment of the travel record of Hyech'o (of Handout 22), a monk of Korean origin, who some time around the year 723 went by sea from China to India and returned about six years later by way of Central Asia...

With many Koreans drawn to the Chinese capital, it is not surprising that Ennin encountered some there. While his patron, Li Yuanzuo, the court functionary and officer of the Left Guard Army of Inspired Strategy, was the only official of Korean origin whom he mentions, he does write of several Korean monks, even if briefly. ... Ennin also met or heard of several other Korean monks who had been in Chang'an or other parts of North China. Popchong, the prior of the Mt. Chi Cloister, had lived in the Chinese capital some thirty years before Ennin first met him and other members of this Korean monastic community had also traveled to Chang'an as well as to Mt. Wutai...

Ennin encountered no Korean diplomats in China, but he had direct or indirect dealings with two legations traveling the other way. At the Mt. Chi Cloister in 839 he met more than 30 members of a mission on its way from China to Korea. In the early part of 847 members of a group of diplomats bound for Korea prevented Ennin's Korean patron, Wang Chong, from building a ship on which to take Ennin back to Japan. Ennin also saw further indications of the flow of ambassadors between Korea and China in the presence of a Korean Inn, Bohai Inn at Dengzhou and Korean Cloisters in a Qingzhou monastery and at the Liquansi west of that city.

Traders on the Coast

While many sources tell of Korean monks in the monasteries of China and Korean courtiers and soldiers in the services of the Tang emperors, there are only hints, in other works, of the flourishing communities of Korean traders which Ennin found on the eastern coast of China. One such hint is a reference to a Korean merchant who bought every poem he could find by Ennin's great contemporary, the poet Bai Juyi. Another is found in a work on the famous painters of the Tang, probably written during the very years when Ennin was in China. In this text, reference is made to a Korean who some four or five decades earlier had "bought up at good prices several tens of scrolls" of paintings by a certain contemporary artist in the Chuzhou and Yangzhou area and had taken them back to Korea...

The Korean trading communities seem to have been concentrated along the southern coast of the Shandong Peninsula and the lower stretches of the Huai River, which together formed the natural water route between Korea and the heart of the Tang Empire. The chief terminal port for trade between China and its eastern neighbors was apparently the city of Chuzhou, strategically located at the juncture of the Grand Canal and the Huai River, where ocean-going vessels could meet smaller boats from Yangzhou and the Yangzi River system to the south and the river craft of the upper Huai and Pien Rivers, leading westward toward the capital region.

In Chuzhou, as we have seen, there was a large Korean colony; so large in fact that there was a Korean ward under its own General Manager. Another indication of the size of the Korean community was that in the spring of 839 Kim Chongnam, one of the Korean interpreters for the Japanese embassy, was able to hire at Chuzhou 60 Korean sailors to man the nine ships he had obtained there for the returning embassy. Some of these men came from the town of Lianshuixian, a short distance down the Huai River from Chuzhou. When Ennin visited this town for the first time in 845, he found that it too had a Korean ward under its own General Manager...

Ennin indicated that large numbers of Korean lived along the coast from the mouth of the Huai northward to the tip of the Shandong Peninsula. One of the largest of these communities must have been the one in the neighborhood of the Mt. Chi Cloister, near the usual landfall for ships bound from Korea to China and the point from which they left the Chinese coast on the homeward voyage. Here, the Korean Cloister with its 29 Korean monks stood high on a hill, guarding, as it were, the open-water crossing between China and Korea and around it lived a large number of Korean laymen under the general supervision of Ennin's patron, Chang Yong....



The Mt. Chi community seems to have been a bit of Korea transplanted to the shores of China. For example, on the 15th day of the eighth moon, Ennin found the cloister beginning the observance of a national Korean festival, in which all the local Koreans apparently joined. According to Ennin, they served noodles and cakes on this occasion and made music and danced gaily. Moved by the scene, he wrote, "They prepare all sorts of food and drink, and sing, dance, and play instruments for three days before stopping, continuing from the daylight hours into the night. Now, in this mountain cloister, in memory of their homeland, they are today observing this festival." The celebration, he thought, was to commemorate the great victory of Silla over Bohai. Actually it was the anniversary of the destruction of Koguryo, the last of Silla's rivals on the Korean peninsula, but there is some support for Ennin's initial belief, because fleeing remnants of the Koguryo forces merged with the tribal group which subsequently founded the kingdom of Bohai...

Ennin includes scattered references to individual lay members of the Mt. Chi community, but its size is best indicated by the number of Buddhist believers who attended the lecture meetings on the Lotus Sutra held during the winter at the cloister. These, Ennin tells us, were conducted for the most part in Korean and according to the customs of Korean Buddhists, and the congregation, which numbered around 250 on the last two days, was entirely Korean, except for the four Japanese in Ennin's party.

This was by no means the only Korean community along the coast. Korean sailors with the returning Japanese mission wanted to go to an area southwest of the modern Qingdao in order to repair their ships. This, and the plan Ennin made, with the aid of the Korean Interpreter, Kim Chongnam, to leave the legation's ships at that same spot and hide in a private home ashore both indicate that there may have been a Korean colony of some size in that area. Subsequently when the ship on which Ennin was a passenger came ashore northeast of Tsingtao, it was visited by a Korean in a small boat and later by a local official accompanied by a Korean. After sailing a very short distance southwest, down the coast, the Japanese were visited by a group of more than 30 Koreans who approached the shore mounted on horses and donkeys, and later the local guard officer himself arrived on a Korean boat and spoke with the Japanese through their Korean Interpreter. Ennin inquired of the local Korean residents whether it would be possible for the Japanese monks to reside safely ashore. They replied yes, though in the end nothing came of the exchange.

The possession of horses and donkeys by these coastal Koreans, and of a wagon by one member of the Mt. Chi community with whom Ennin later traveled part way down the peninsula with, suggests that these Koreans were not merely maritime transients but were permanent settlers. This conclusion is underscored by what Ennin tells us of the boatmen transporting charcoal from Shandong to Shuzhou, whom he encountered when he and his companions were put ashore by the Japanese mission north of the mouth of the Huai River. These boatmen claimed that they were of Korean origin, but they obviously no longer spoke the language, for they apparently were duped by the claim of the Japanese that they too were Koreans. It would appear that some Koreans had even moved inland a ways and become farmers, because when the Japanese reached a village across a range of hills from the sea that same day, they rested briefly in the home



of a Korean villager, and their little deceit was immediately detected by the village elder, who realized that they were speaking neither Korean nor Chinese to each other.

While the Korean traders seem to have lived primarily in the cities of the lower Huai and along the southern coast of Shandong, they no doubt extended their commercial activities to many other parts of China. Several times Ennin writes of Korean ships, or presumably Korean ships, which visited Yangzhou and even ports south of the Yangtze. In Yangzhou, Ennin also met a Korean who, in the company of some Chinese, had been wrecked on the coasts of Japan and, because of his long enforced stay there, still understood the Japanese language very well. Far inland at Chang'an, Ennin encountered Koreans from Chuzhou. One brought him a letter from his friend Yu Sinon early in 843, and one of the two other times Yu wrote to Ennin in the capital the message may also have been taken by one of the Chuzhou Koreans.

At least some of the Korean communities on the Chinese coast appear to have enjoyed a certain degree of extraterritorial privilege. The same is known to have been true of the Muslim communities in the cities of the southeastern coast of China, which were allowed to manage their own affairs autonomously and according to their own customs. It is, therefore, not at all surprising to find that the Korean traders were granted the same autonomous status.

In Chuzhou and Lienshui the units of Korean self-government were, of course, the Korean wards, and the headmen of these were the general managers. Korean interpreters appear to have been the next ranking officers of these communities, for Yu Sinon, who originally held this post, became Sol Chon's successor some years later when the latter either resigned or was dismissed as general manager of the Korean ward of Chuzhou...

While there were limits to the influence of the Koreans along the eastern coast of China, there can be no doubt of their dominance over the waters off these shores. There were many ships which Ennin encountered off the coast of China or heard were engaged in trade between China and Japan, but few of these appear to have been manned by either Chinese or Japanese. While the ownership of some of the ships and the nationality of many of the mariners cannot be established with certainty, Ennin clearly labeled several of the ships and merchants as Korean, and judging from the context in which they appear, many of the others too seem to have been Korean. In contrast to this, Ennin identifies only one of the international traders as Chinese, and the ship on which this man was traveling also carried three Koreans, one of whom seems to have been either the owner or the captain.

While Ennin's diary, as well as other sources, shows that the Japanese were starting to compete with the Koreans in the maritime trade of the Far East, their challenge was still feeble. Even if one makes due allowance for the bureaucratic inefficiency and confusion of the Japanese legation, Ennin's crossing to China and his subsequent voyage up the south coast of Shandong on Japanese ships as well as the whole catastrophic maritime record of the mission contrast sharply with the speed and efficiency with which Korean vessels whisked him up and down the Shandong coast and finally back home to Japan. Another indication of the discrepancy in navigational skill between the Koreans and Japanese at this time was the employment by the Japanese embassy of 60 Korean

helmsmen and sailors to help get the main party safely home. The role of the Korean interpreters on each of the original vessels is also a case in point. These men were not only very useful in dealings ashore but, from what Ennin tells of his own crossing to China, apparently were the chief navigational experts on board the ships. The days of Korean maritime dominance in the Far East actually were numbered, but in Ennin's time the men of Silla were still the masters of the seas in their part of the world.

Reischauer, Edwin O., *Ennin's Travels in Tang China* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), 276-283.

Points to Consider

1. Why would Korea act as a natural "cultural bridge" between Japan and the Silk Road?
2. What was the impact of cultural migration among the three kingdoms on goods and ideas in circulation on the Silk Road?
3. Why would Chang Pogo's location at Wando (Ch'onghaejin) be a good base of operation for trade? How could this strategic location protect Silla?
4. Why might the struggles between the Three Kingdoms have encouraged Korean migration? What affect might this migration have had on local conditions or relations between Silla and the areas where the migrants settled?



PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION A. HOW DOES AN ERA BECOME KNOWN AS A GOLDEN AGE?

A golden age in history generally refers to a period when various parts of a culture and society seem to merge to create great art, literature, thought and intriguing political systems. In the fifth century BCE, citizens such as statesman Pericles, philosophers Socrates, Plato, dramatists Sophocles, Euripides, the creators of the Parthenon helped establish a golden age in Athens, Greece. Renaissance Italy and Sulleyman's Istanbul are other major examples of civilizations that experienced eras of great achievement and prosperity.

Many of these civilizations flowered when new ideas and trade from foreign sources were introduced to their societies. These influences often challenged fundamental beliefs within a society and were violently resisted at times, such as when the Japanese forcefully opposed Christianity in the 17th century or when Western European Crusaders tried to contain Muslim advances. Sometimes outside influences may overwhelm a society, which then has to struggle to retain its own identity. In the contemporary world Western influences have been accused, for example, of "McDonaldizing" or "Disneyfing" the world.

However, if a society can incorporate and synthesize new ideas into its own while retaining its distinctive culture and beliefs, the result may be a golden age of lasting cultural achievements. Historians consider the Unified Silla as one of these ages, though they may disagree as to origins and reasons it was able to achieve this period of rapid development and prosperity.

Points to Consider

1. The above reading suggests that outside stimulus is necessary for a civilization to experience a golden age. Would you agree or disagree with this implication? Could internal changes within the social structure also produce such change?
2. Have other golden ages in history, such as Elizabethan England, Mogul India or any other culture you have studied, been influenced by a new influx of information and ideas flowing into their societies? If so, how?
3. The Tang period often is considered China's golden age. Can a golden age in one nation stimulate one in another? Would Silla's achievements have been possible if China had not been at a cultural high point?
4. Has the United States experienced a golden age or is it yet to come? How would the concept of continual immigration support or refute the idea that a foreign stimulus is necessary to generate a flowering of a civilization?





PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION B. WHAT ELEMENTS OF SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE REFLECT SILK ROAD INFLUENCES?

Group Exercise The following topics on Silla's economics, politics, art, religion, education and military reflect reasons Silla is considered to be a golden age in Korea's history. The class will be divided into six groups, and based on the following questions, each group will report their observations to the class on the topic it was assigned:

1. What do you see as the most significant element in this topic; new things coming from the Silk Road experience or something already present in Silla culture?
2. Did the elements of this topic make for a major achievement as part of a golden age or do you see it as a minor element?
3. What evidence is there to suggest a legacy from this early era to later eras? Would you see the legacy as a continuing one?

Class Summary After each group has reported to the class its responses to the above questions, the class as a whole should decide:

1. Did the influences and contributions from the Silk Road create Silla's golden age or was it mainly the result of indigenous Korean culture?
2. Which parts of society seemed to shift the most?
3. What were the major legacies of this period?



PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION B-1. ECONOMY

Early Silla While information about Silla's early economic development is somewhat sparse, Silla seems to have been an agricultural society. As in the Western feudal system, large landowners used peasants, indentured servants and slaves to work the land, cultivating crops of rice, millet, barley and wheat. After the introduction of silk production at the turn of the millenium, mulberry trees were grown in addition to the walnut and pine nut trees previously cultivated. Cattle, horses and other livestock were also raised. The central government owned and controlled some "office land," which provided tax revenue for the government and could be used to award state service.

Trade seems to have been primarily local or with other kingdoms on the Korean peninsula. However, archeological discoveries reveal that some trade with China existed in early Silla as Chinese merchants exchanged some prestige goods, such as bronze mirrors, bells, iron weapons and agricultural tools, for natural resources, such as wood and iron.



Horse bells with clapper, bronze, from P'yongni-dong Taegu, Early Iron Age, 1st century BCE



Anchor-shaped ornament, bronze, from Ipsil-li Kyongju, Early Iron Age, 1st century BCE



Daggers and spearheads, bronze, from Ipsil-li, Kyongju, Early Iron Age, 1st century BCE

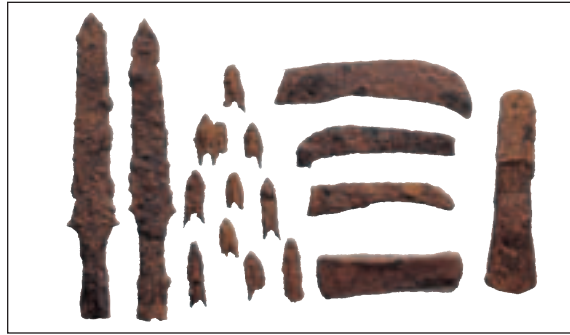


Mirrors, bronze, from Choyang-dong, Kyongju, Proto-Three Kingdoms, 1st century CE





Bit & rakes, iron from Choyang-dong, Kyongju,
Proto-Three Kingdoms, 2nd-3rd century CE



Iron implements, iron from Choyang-dong, Kyongju,
Proto-Three Kingdoms, 2nd-3rd century CE



Bowl with the inscription "Kwanggaeto the Great" of the Koguryo Kingdom
bronze from Hou Tumulus, Kyongju, 415 CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.

Silk Road Influence By its conquest of Paekche and Koguryo, Silla had expanded into the rich agricultural land of the Han River and the south western region of the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, after the unification by conquest, when the nobles of the conquered kingdoms had emigrated from the Korean peninsula, Silla's rulers were able to distribute more land to their supporters. Further, since Silla had generally supported China against the other states, the Chinese viewed Silla favorably as a trading partner and opened its ports to merchants from Silla. Though Silla paid tribute to China in the form of raw materials, livestock, silk, wool, medicine and ginseng and highly crafted gold and silver bells, knives, and hair pieces, China introduced books, tea and court dress to Silla. A Chinese emissary also brought peony seeds as a gift to Silla's Queen Sondok.

Without much Chinese intervention in the late 8th to 9th century, Chang Pogo and his large paramilitary force of 10,000 men, which was based in Cholla province in the southwestern area of the Korean peninsula, were able to control many of the Chinese and Japanese sea trade routes. This allowed the Silk Road goods and local products, such as silk, horses, ginseng, ceramics, fur and paper, to spread to Silla and from there to Japan. Chang Pogo and his fleet also provided protected naval passages for Buddhist monks bringing new ideas from China and India. The influx of Buddhism also inspired the construction of many temples, which frequently acted as banks, where wealth might be held for safekeeping and trade.



Result of the Golden Age The Unified Silla experienced a prosperous and relatively peaceful period in Korean history. Kyongju, the capital city of Silla, was known as a beautiful city where inhabitants could afford tile roofs and commission the construction of major Buddhist temples and works of artistry.



Circular eaves-end tile with a lotus design from Hwangnyong Temple, 553 CE



Circular eaves-end tile with a Kalvavinka (human-headed heavenly bird) design.



Circular eaves-end tile with a Kirin (Unicorn) design from Anap-chi, 674 CE

Reproduced by permission of Sok-hong Han.



Legacy With the assassination of Chang Pogo (of Handout 23) Silla's control of the naval trade ended. Local nobles became increasingly powerful, and eventually the Koryo Kingdom supplanted Silla. Korean business people still honor Chang Pogo today for sustaining Korea by demonstrating the importance of international trade. The Chang Pogo Memorial Foundation has sponsored conferences that deal with Korea's commerce.

Chang Pogo, Adventurer and Merchant Prince

The name of Chang Pogo, fabulous adventurer and merchant prince, turns up in several variant forms in the official histories of China and Japan as well as in the Korean chronicles, and, although he never appears in person in Ennin's diary, he frequently looms in the background as the master of more than one of Ennin's Korean friends and patrons. He was a man of obscure origin who migrated to China and made his fortune there, serving as a military officer in the lower Huai area and very possibly rising to become the recognized headman of one of the Korean colonies, in much the same way as the semi-military officials, Chang Yong and Sol Chon, of Ennin's day. Returning to Korea in 828 a rich and powerful man, he established his headquarters on Wando Island at the southwestern extremity of Korea, an excellent vantage point from which to control the trade routes from China down the west coast of Korea and around the southwestern corner of the peninsula to the capital region of Silla and to Japan. While in China, Chang Pogo had discovered that many Koreans were being abducted and taken to China as slaves, and, after he returned to Korea, he requested the king of Silla to permit him to guard the coasts against these slaving depredations. The king accordingly appointed him commissioner of Ch'onghaejin, the administrative center on Wando Island.

Conceivably because of this royal favor, but more probably because of his control over the lucrative trade between China and its eastern satellites, which itself was no doubt the reason for this royal indulgence, Chang grew to be an important figure in Korean politics.

Reischauer, Edwin O., *Ennin's Travels in Tang China* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955), 287-88.





PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION B-2. POLITICS

Early Silla Silla's unique political system was based on hereditary divisions called "bone-ranks." The following itemizes ranks from the top government positions to the commoners in Silla's society:

1. **Holy-bone (aka hallowed-bone or sacred-bone):** highest rank from which kings and queens derived (disappeared in 654 CE);
2. **True-bone:** royal family members and capital-based aristocrats, who monopolized the highest positions in the Silla government;
3. **Head-rank six:** government officials with literary skills and knowledge in writing, music and military strategies—the highest rank that non-royal family members could reach;
4. **Head-rank five:** larger landowners, middle-level technocrats;
5. **Head-rank four:** local leaders, lower-level administrators; and
6. **Head-ranks three, two and one:** commoners.

Although mobility among the ranks was possible, the top two ranks, which controlled nearly all the power and wealth of the country, were nearly impossible to enter. From the upper ranks, advisors to the king would be chosen to form a council of nobles, the *hwabaek*.

Because hereditary was so important, Silla, unlike elsewhere in Korea or China, permitted women to be sovereigns. The hereditary sequence to the throne was as follows: (1) the ruler's legitimate eldest son; (2) the ruler's legitimate second son; (3) the ruler's eldest unmarried daughter; (4) the ruler's eldest illegitimate son; (5) the husband of the ruler's eldest married daughter; and (6) the ruler's eldest married daughter. Under the bone-rank system, Silla had three legitimate female rulers: Queens Sondok, Chindok and Chinsong. When Sondok reigned as Silla's queen, she became one of the first legitimate female rulers in East Asia. Others preceding her, such as Empress Suiko of Japan (reigned 592–628 CE), had been subordinated to powerful male regents; and others succeeding her, such as Empress Wu of China (reigned 690–705 CE), had first been regents for their children.

Silk Road Influence Contact with China influenced the modification of Silla's political system. Silla's government adopted the idea of a civil service examination system, which nobles would have to pass in order to assume a government position. Further, Silla departmentalized the government by creating different ministries, like the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Public Works.



Contact with China also caused conflicts to arise regarding the role of women and their place in leadership. Some Buddhist sects suggested that all people could achieve nirvana (a perfect state of being) despite gender; therefore, both men and women had equal spirits. China had a number of female rulers, and from 582 to 770 CE, Japan had an “Epoch of Queens” when six queens ruled. Therefore, it was not only Silla that was ruled by queens. However, Confucian ideals entering Korea from China did not consider women fit to rule a nation, and later, as Confucianism took effect in Korea, women’s roles became increasingly restricted in society. Song China was contradictory in its attitude toward women, producing great women poets while introducing foot-binding, although Koreans did not adopt this practice.

See John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1992), 175. See also Howard S. Levy, *Chinese Footbinding: The History of a Curious Erotic Custom* (New York: Walton Rawls, 1966).

Result of the Golden Age Silla’s political structure based on bone-ranks created a stable society, and the *hwabaek* allowed people to voice some of their grievances and to take greater roles in the government. Also, increased revenue and major state-building programs, like those of Silla’s famous temples, were a result of the more organized division of ministries. However, the Chinese system of ranks by merit rather than heredity clashed with the upper nobility of Silla, who resolved to continue their privileges—particularly the non-payment of taxes—and thus eventually created a strain on the Silla state. Silla imposed the bone-rank system on the conquered kingdoms of Koguryo and Paekche. In their bid to unify the peninsula into one state, some nobles of Koguryo and Paekche were made true bone and head rank six elites, such as the Koguryo prince Ansung who was raised to true bone status and granted the surname Kim, but many people were enslaved, especially in the old Paekche territory.

Legacy Many of Silla’s cultural achievements were made possible by a series of stable rulers, including Queens Sondok and Chindok. Though the bone-rank system did not continue later in Korea, some of its ethos on the status of women did until Confucianization was completed in the mid-Choson period, i.e., the 17th century. Even though Korea later accepted the Confucian constricted view of women, Korean women did not face the Chinese foot-binding or tight restricted kimono/heels of Japan.

Silla, in its ability to unify the Korean peninsula, paved the way for later Korean history.

Korean Women in the Early Choson Kingdom

Men and women were equal. Daughters were listed with sons in the order of their birth in genealogical and inheritance documents. Inherited property was divided equally among sons and daughters. Women held rights to property and could give or receive property on an equal footing with men. Ancestor ceremonies were not the responsibility of the male children alone. Daughters also had responsibility for the ceremonies and held land to support them. Adoption was seldom practiced. When adoption took place, representatives of the woman’s natal lineage were involved in the decision-making process. It was not a matter for the husband’s kinsmen alone. Female lines were as important as male lines. In record-keeping and in recognition of relationships, affinal ties seem to have been as significant as those between lineage members. Remarriage was not unusual.

Peterson, Mark, “Women Without Sons,” in *Korean Women: A View from the Inner Room* (New Haven: East Rock Press, Inc. 1983), 33-44.



PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION B-3. ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Early Silla While art from early Silla is scarce, pottery, bronze knives, buckles and animal figurines from this era reveal some information on the society. For example, an early bronze deer



Horse & deer head bronze from Oun-dong, Yongch'on, bronze, Early 1st century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Horse & tiger-shaped belt buckles, bronze, from Oun-dong, Yongch'on, Early 1st century CE

Reproduced by permission of Professor Kang Seung Lee.



that was found may illustrate the influence of shamanism in early Silla. Shamans were said to be able to reach the spirits of both the natural and supernatural worlds, and often wore deer antlers to signify their ability to bridge the two worlds. The crowns of Silla's rulers, often in the shape of deer antlers or trees reaching toward heaven, also reflected such shaman beliefs.



Golden crown, from Kumnyong Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Bronze Culture of Korea

On the Korean peninsula, the Bronze Age is first manifested as early as 1,500 BCE. It is signaled by a change in settlement pattern, accompanied by the emergence of Mumun pottery, and new cist-like burial facilities. In the Hunam-ni site on the left bank of the Southern Han River in the central region of the peninsula, four of the fourteen rectangular dwellings in the Hunam-ni site, have been radiocarbon dated to between 1,570 and 270 BCE, indicating occupation throughout the Bronze Age. The discovery of rice at this site revolutionized the thinking about its introduction into the Korean peninsula from the southern part of mainland China.

The Korean Bronze Age per se is defined by the intrusion of the Liaoning dagger from the Manchurian Basin. This unusually shaped tanged dagger derives from the Upper Xiajiandian culture. The Songgung-ni site, a 5th-century BCE Bronze Age village, occupied the rolling countryside in the Kum River drainage area of the central western region of the peninsula.

A Late Bronze Age cist burial discovered at Koejong-dong, in the western peninsula, illustrates the major changes which occurred in the bronze repertoire in the late first millennium BCE. The broad Liaoning dagger had been transformed by the time into a slender stabbing sword; flaring-bladed socketed axes had become narrower with a rounded blade; and the short, stubby socketed spearheads had become long and slender.



Liaoning dagger, bronze, from Yejon-dong, Chongdo, 8th-7th century BCE
Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Bronze weaponry and bronze mirror motifs

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Dagger, mirrors, arrowheads, jade, bells, bronze, jade, stone, from Koejong-dong stone cist in Taejon, Bronze Age



Ritual implements, bronze, from Koejong-dong stone cist in Taejon, Bronze Age



Daggers, carving knife, axe, rattles, mirrors, bronze, from Taegong-ni Stone Cist in Hwasun, Bronze Age

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Ritual bronze artifact with an agricultural design (front)



Ritual bronze artifact with an agricultural design (back)



Charriot fittings, P'yongyang area, Early Iron Age

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Burial Systems in Prehistoric Korea and Their Socio-Ethnic Significance

The Korean peninsula has been inhabited for at least 200,000 years, or since the Old Stone Age, but no burial sites older than 3,500 to 4,000 years have been discovered.... The earliest burials known in Korea come from 1,500 to 2,000 BCE at the end of Korea's Neolithic Period. This was a time when the inhabitants of the peninsula were dependent on fishing, hunting, gathering and limited farming (millet and sorghum). They made decorated pottery vessels and used tools made of stone, bone or wood. No metal was yet known.... The oldest burials suggest that 3,500 to 4,000 years ago the Korean peninsula was occupied by relatively simple societal groups. There were no special status goods marking off certain individuals as higher or dominant over others. It was a time of coastal and riverine villages made up of kin groups living in close cooperation for fishing, gathering and perhaps for primitive farming.

Around 1,500 BCE, a complex of distinctly new cultural elements began to appear on the Korean peninsula. Along with new kinds of stone tools (beautifully polished stone daggers and arrowheads) and new forms of pottery ware (called *mumun* or "undecorated"), there also appeared bronze implements (daggers and mirrors) of crude Manchurian type. Particularly significant was an increase in farming (millet, sorghum, rice, peas, beans), in population, and in the number of village settlements throughout the whole peninsula, including the remote hinterlands. In association with these new cultural phenomena there also appeared new burial systems, called dolmens.

Found in all parts of Korea, except in the far corner of the peninsula's northeast and numbering more than 20,000 in total, Korean dolmens were constructed with large stone blocks, in varying sizes and shapes. Broadly, there are three types of dolmens: the Northern Type (huge slabs and capstone forming a cist-like chamber above ground), the Southern Type (a large capstone resting on several smaller stones at ground level with the burial in the ground underneath), and the Capstone Type resting directly on the ground.

After about 600 BCE, dolmen construction waned in the northwest and central region. In its place, a new burial system involving stone coffins, called cist burial, became increasingly important. Found in various parts of northern Asia, the cist tombs were originally associated with the nomadic cultures of northern Asia, beginning with the Andronovo bronze culture of southern Siberia. In association with the southward expansion of the Karasuk culture (ca. 1,300–700 BCE), it diffused into Korea via Manchuria in the early part of the first millennium BCE and, in time, spread as far south as the Kum River basin in the middle of the Korean peninsula. Objects recovered from cist burials include a mandolin-shaped Manchurian-style bronze dagger, polished stone arrowheads, cylindrical beads made of jasper and exquisitely polished comma-shaped ornaments made of precious amazonite stone. These burial contents suggest a close cultural connection between the slab tombs of the north and those in the south of the Korean peninsula.

Judging from the artifacts, the main emphasis of the burial goods was clearly on military objects, as is the case with other cist burials. The unusually large size of the cist, as well as the impressive wealth of burial goods, strongly suggests that such tombs belonged to persons of high status. From archaeological records it now appears that the cist culture was brought into Korea by a nomadic people of the north, probably Manchuria, who had long been familiar with bronze technology as well as warfare. Moving into Korean peninsula, whose inhabitants



had for several hundred years been pursuing farming and building dolmens for elites, the warlike nomadic intruders overcame and dominated the native peoples. This scenario would explain why dolmen construction waned in the cist culture zone after around 600 BCE, while it continued to flourish in the southwest, which lay outside the zone of cist tombs (70 percent of all dolmens in Korea are concentrated in the southwest).

Within the cist culture zone, the pre-existing dolmen culture would have become either subordinate to or integrated into the new, militarily superior group. This in turn would have resulted, at the very least, in a three-tiered social hierarchy: commoners from both the old and the new groups who were buried in simple earthen pit graves; those above them, who were buried in cist tombs with or without polished stone daggers; and persons of the highest rank, who were buried in large cist-tombs with polished stone daggers and a mandolin-shaped Manchurian bronze dagger.

In the dolmen culture zone of the far southwest, a similar social hierarchy emerged. The elites continued to enhance their status through dolmen building, in increasing size. Also, through trade and exchange, they acquired status goods from the cist zone, including mandolin-shaped Manchurian style bronze daggers and tubular and comma-shaped jades.

After around 300 BCE, local Koreans, especially those in the southwest, perfected bronze technology and began to produce all sorts of Korean bronze implements including slender daggers, mirrors with geometric designs, axes, halberds, buckles, horse trappings, bells and rings. And beginning around 100 BCE, in the Naktong River basin in the southeast, a local iron industry also began to emerge, producing iron weapons as well as a variety of agricultural implements.

At the same time, the cist burial system underwent significant modifications. In the north, along the middle reaches of the Yalu River, it took the form of a piled-stone tomb with the coffin part located in its top center. In the Kum River basin, the slab coffins were replaced by underground rectangular enclosures lined with broken rocks and cobble stones and capped with a wooden cover, the practice of which soon diffused to the Yongsan River basin in the far southwest also. In the southeast, slab coffins were replaced by wooden ones. These later versions of the cist burial continued for several hundred years.

These burials are often associated with a rich array of precious goods. A modified cist burial at Chopo-ri, from around 250 BCE has yielded a horde of bronze artifact, including daggers, dagger handle tips, spears, halberds, chisels, axes, mirrors, and bell ornaments, along with a pair of comma-shaped jades. Similar bronze artifacts and precious jades have been found in southern Korea in many other graves of the same period.

Constructed about 200 years later, a wooden coffin grave at Taho-ri (Changwon) in the southeast (50 BCE–100 CE) has yielded an extraordinary number of precious goods in bronze, iron and lacquer. The bronze objects unearthed included weapons (daggers, spears) and decorative ornaments (bells, rings). The iron included weapons (daggers, spears, halberd, knife) and woodworking and agricultural tools (axes, hoes). The lacquer ware included weapons (bows, arrows, wooden mace), vessels (bowls, cups), calligraphy brushes and fans. The grave also contained multicolored glass beads, fiber rope, a Chinese coin from the Han Dynasty, and a Chinese mirror.



Similarly, wood coffin graves of the same period in the northwest have yielded an impressive array of bronzes (daggers, arrowheads, spearheads, bells), iron artifacts (crossbow pieces, axes, chisels, halberds, horse trappings, long swords, armor plates, buckles, chariot fittings) and glass beads.

These graves suggest that between 300 BCE and 100 CE, Korean society was reaching an unprecedented degree of cultural and technological sophistication. Along with well-developed bronze and iron technology, advanced agriculture, and active trade and exchange with China (through Chinese military commanders in the area of what is today P'yongyang), there was an elite group of native leaders and administrators governing various local polities. These native figures controlled the production and distribution of valued goods, such as bronze, iron, lacquer, weapons and grain, and also symbolically expressed their high status with bronze and iron daggers and long iron swords.

Clearly, this was a period when powerful chiefdoms were emerging in various parts of the peninsula, preparing for the rise of the Koguryo kingdom in the north in the first century BCE and for the later-developing Paekche and Silla kingdoms in the south.

Also, judging from the array of ritual bronze implements, such as bells, mirrors and other ornaments, found in the Chopo-ri grave and others of the same time period, religious rituals, most likely those of ancient shamanism, played an integral role in the increasingly agricultural society. This change is strongly suggested by decorative designs, agricultural in nature, on the ritual implements.

The rich burial contents of the graves also suggest that belief in an afterlife was a matter of paramount importance at this time, much more so than it had been previously. Though the burial structure of a chief's grave was generally quite humble, they contained rich grave goods that were intended for the use of the dead. Apparently, prehistoric Koreans of 2000 years ago believed that the soul of the dead lived on in another world, enjoying the same precious things they did in this life.

Of special significance in prehistoric Korea was the long and persistent emphasis on bronze daggers, bronze mirrors and comma-shaped jade ornaments. First found in the Songguk-ni cist burial of around 700 BCE as well as in Southern Type dolmens of 300 to 500 BCE, the bronze dagger and the comma-shaped jades were, by 250 BCE at the latest, joined by bronze mirrors as a set of valued and sacred treasures of high ranking persons. In time, these three objects – bronze daggers, bronze mirrors, and comma-shaped jades – became the three sacred symbols of even Japan's imperial throne and lineage.

By 200 CE, in conjunction with newly emerging kingdoms and states, the piled-stone tombs of the north had developed into the monumental tombs of the Koguryo elites. The wooden coffin burials in the southeast evolved into those of the wooden enclosure, and by the fourth and fifth centuries CE, into imposing mound tombs, in which the kings and queens of the Silla kingdom were buried with dazzling gold crowns and precious jewelry.

Adopted from Rhee, Song Nai, "Burial Systems in Prehistoric Korea and Their Socio-Ethnic Significance," *Korean Culture*. Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1993). (Los Angeles: Korean Cultural Center), 14-21.





Dolmen



Bronze Culture in Korea

During the early first millennium BCE, distinctive bronze objects derived from the Eurasian steppe bronze tradition and incorporating many animal motifs were found all across the northern frontier of Northeast Asia. A nomadic life style appears to have developed about this time and is associated with a particular “Animal Art” style of bronzes. Much has been written about the supposed Scythian affinities of this art, suggesting continuing cultural contact and exchange across the Eurasian steppes. (Refer to the animal shaped belt buckles on p. 48)

Adapted from: Kwon, Young-pil, *The Art of Silk Road, From Central Asia to Korea* (Seoul: Yeonhwa Publishing Company, 1997)

Iron and Ironworking



Koguryo tomb mural of metalworking in Ji'an, Jilin Province, 6th century
 Reproduced by permission of Professor Kil Su Suh.

In the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas, technicians smelted ore in a small furnace called a bloomery and formed the product through smithing methods on an anvil. This mode of ironworking diffused in the Central Asian steppe, where the nomadic Scythians carried the knowledge into eastern Siberia by 700 BCE.

The Chinese invented ferrous techniques later on their own. While they may have experimented with iron casting and forging techniques as early as 800 or 900 BCE, artisans of the Middle Kingdom became proficient at making iron blades and tools about 500 BCE. By 400 BCE, both the Scythian and Chinese methods were probably available to residents of northern Korea.

William Farris, Wayne, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 70.



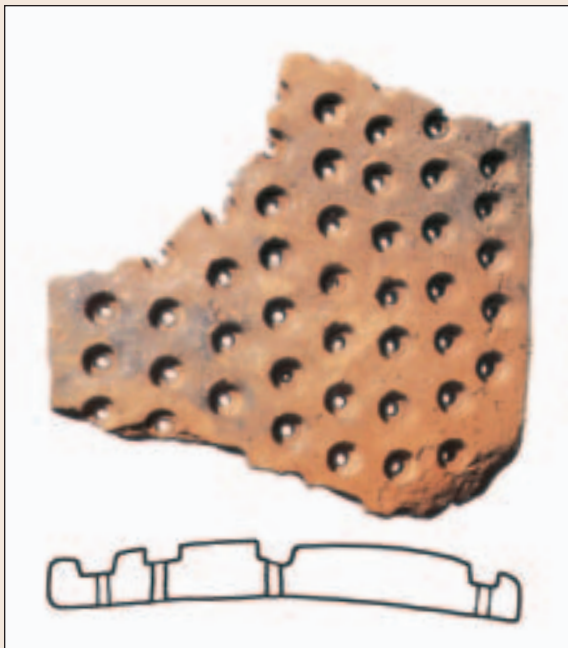
Glass Production

Glass was first produced in Mesopotamia in about 3,000 BCE and transparent glass was made in the Roman Imperial period. In Korea, the earliest glass is that found at the Hapsong-ni site in Puyo County and the Soso-ri site in Tangjin County, dating from the 2nd century BCE, the Early Iron Age. These glass beads were made of a lead-barium type glass, identical to the Chinese glass at this period.

As known in historical records of this period, glass beads were regarded as more precious than gold and silver at the time; the frequent discoveries of glass beads from the archaeological sites of the Proto-Three Kingdoms Period reflect this historically recorded reference.

Glass beads were commonly placed in tombs but have also been recovered from dwelling sites. Some moulds used in manufacture of small glass beads and curved jades have been found in dwelling sites and shell middens, implying widespread glass production in the period. The period witnessed a wide diversity in both the kinds of glass beads and also their chemical composition.

Adapted from Yi, Kun-moo, et al., eds., *National Museum of Korea* (Seoul: Tongchon Publishing Company, 2002), 66.



Mould for glass beads, earthenware, from Kungong-ni Shell Mound in Haenam



Bead ornaments, glass, crystal, agate

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Iron Culture in Korea

The introduction of iron technology enabled the manufacture and use of stronger and sharper weapons and agricultural tools than previously. This increased efficiency in both agriculture and weaponry resulted in an acceleration of the processes leading toward political integration, as well as greater concentrations of power and wealth, leading to inequalities and social stratification.

During the Proto-Three Kingdoms Period different iron-production techniques were used depending on the intended function of the finished artifact. For example, weapons such as swords, which needed very strong and sharp blades, were made by the pounding technique, whilst agricultural tools, and other general implements, were made by either pounding or moulding techniques, according to their functions.

Yi, Kun-moo, *et al.*, eds., *National Museum of Korea* (Seoul: Tongchon Publishing Company, 2002), 64.



Mirrors, sheath for dagger-axe, headpieces of hilt, etc.,
 bronze, probably from Chisan-dong, Taegu,
 1st century BCE



Rattle, bronze, 1st century BCE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Armour, iron, from Kujong-dong, Kyongju, 4th century CE



Bit, gilt-bronze & iron, from Wolsong-no, Kyongju, 5th–6th century CE



Iron plates, axe, grindstone, iron and stone, from Wolsong-no, Kyongju, 5th–6th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Silk Road Influence Various cultural objects of Silla reveal influences of the Silk Road. For example, a phoenix head-shaped glass bottle, various cut glass cups, a glass necklace with an inlaid face, a dagger with an ornamental sheath all show the cultural influences of the Silk Road.

One of the major influences on Silla's art and architecture came from Buddhism, which traveled from Gandhara through Central Asia to China and Korea. Unlike the shamanic tradition that allowed ceremonies to be held at any place of need—such as a mountain site, a sick bed or fields in drought. Buddhism required temples, monasteries, nunneries, libraries and schools for ceremonies and the study of Buddhist texts. Thus, when Silla accepted Buddhism as its state religion, there was a flurry of temple building. Since Buddhism expanded in different areas over a lengthy time, many sects developed with different representations of Buddha. Therefore the Indian stupa, Central Asian cave-figures, and even Hellenistic artistic traits passing through Gandhara influenced Silla's Buddhist art. Moreover, because Silla was exposed to bronze, silver, glass and gold through the Silk Road, Silla artisans were able to develop and exchange skills using these materials.

Results of the Golden Age Silla's capital city of Kyongju became known for its temples, sculptures and other works of art, many of which were inspired by Buddhist ideas and Chinese and Indian models. But art historians have suggested that Silla also managed to incorporate its unique shamanic beliefs and values into their Buddhist paintings.

Legacy Kyongju has been cited as one of the world's most significant cultural sites with the Pulguk Temple—a Buddhist temple—and the Sokkuram Grotto listed as World Heritage Sites. Korea's history has often been a violent one, and Silla's temples suffered great damage from various Mongol and Japanese invasions as well as the Korean War. But even non-Sillan rulers have tried to rebuild and restore these sites. The largest of the Silla temples, Hwangnyong Temple, has not yet been excavated enough for restoration. However, efforts to rebuild and restore these valuable sites dating from Silla have continued to the present day.



Relics Imported via the Silk Road into Early Silla (4th–6th century)

The number of metal relics and personal ornaments, excavated from the Silla royal tombs, indicate cultural elements transmitted from the northern Scytho-Siberian culture that became part of the indigenous society of Silla.

Horse Head-Shaped Pottery (*Rhyton*)

A *rhyton* is a Hellenistic horn-shaped drinking cup made from tusk, horn and silver or the like. Iranians of the Sassanian Dynasty made pottery rhytons in the shape of an animal's head, such as that of sheep, cow or horse. *Rhytons* with these Iranian adaptations were brought to China and Korea through Central Asia.

The horse head-shaped pottery *rhyton*, unearthed from Pokchon-dong, Pusan, followed the basic pattern of the Iranian style but is more rustic. The image of the mounted warrior and the horn-shaped-cup are each independent motifs but here they are joined together as one.



Horse head-shaped pottery *rhyton* from Pokchon-dong, Pusan, 4th century CE

Reproduced by permission of Professor Nan Young Lee.



Sheep-headed *rhyton*, Iran, 6th century BCE



The image of the mounted warrior and the horn-shaped-cup are each independent motifs but they are joined together as one.



Mounted warrior with twin horn cups, probably from Toksal-li, Kimhae, 5th century CE.

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.

Tiger And Horse-Shaped Bronze Belt Buckles (See p. 48)

Belt buckles with tiger-shaped or horse-shaped animal figure ornaments are influenced by the art of the Ordos region in Scythia in the seventh century BCE. In China, this tradition was introduced in the period of the Eastern Zhou. In terms of shape, the belt buckles in Korea seem to have adopted both Scythian features and a Chinese form of plasticity. The voluminous modeling in these two animal sculptural reliefs and the vitality and “aliveness” are reminiscent of those from Scythia. The belt covering the regions around the chest and abdomen is related to the “cowrie shell” band, which appears in tiger-shaped belt buckles of China from the fifth century BCE. The belt buckles from Korea seem to have been made around the beginning of the first century with variations up until the fourth to fifth centuries. Latter forms lacked the extensive modeling and shaping, becoming more stylized and conventional, and subsequently lost their sense of vitality.



Bowl-Shaped Silver Cup

A small, (7.8 centimeters in diameter) bowl-shaped silver cup from the early 5th century was unearthed from the north tomb of the Great Tumulus of Hwangnam. The entire surface of the cup is covered with bas relief designs, i.e., the designs extend slightly from the background surface. The designs were created employing the projection technique and cover the surface from mouth to base.

The floral petal design is in two tiers, one around the mouth rim, and the other around the base. The outer surface of the cup is circumscribed with a tortoise shell pattern which has animals such as deer, horse or the like in each section of the pattern. The bottom has an inner and an outer design. In the center of the inner design, a floral pattern of six petals encircles a phoenix.

An extraordinary human figure is set within this design. The big eyes of this human figure, the round buckle in her belt, the wrinkled pants and the pomegranate-shaped item held in her hand suggest some similarities with an Anahita figure, a traditional goddess of Iran. Nevertheless, this similarity in no way guarantees that the cup is typical of the pottery from the Sassanian Dynasty (224–661 CE) of Iran. Even though the human figure remains within the motif of Anahita, it still differs from an Iranian aesthetic configuration. The figure is more in the Korean style of artistic expression in its use of a simpler, more restrained approach. Furthermore, the animal motif is far removed from the Sassanian style.

The tortoise shell pattern found on the cup is also used for ornamentation on a dagger handle (Pubu Tumulus at Pomun-ni, Kyongju) and a decorated gilt bronze shoe sole (Sigi Tumulus) unearthed at other sites. Since the projection technique was widely popular for gold craft in Silla, one may presume this silver bowl was produced there.

A typical technique of Sassanian silversmiths was to add a thin layer of silver to the inside of the Hwangnam bowl. That characteristic is missing on this bowl, leading scholars to speculate that it may have been produced in Silla.



Anihita, Iran, 6–7th century CE



Silver bowl from Hwangnam Tumulus, Kyongju, Early 5th century CE





Silver bowl from Hwangnam Tumulus, Kyongju, early 5th century CE

Phoenix Head-Shaped Glass Bottle

A phoenix head-shaped glass bottle was excavated from the grand Hwangnam Tumulus in Kyongju. It has Syrian origins in its shape.



Phoenix head-shaped glass bottle,
Kyongju, 4th–5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of Professor Kang Seung Lee.



Dotted Patterned Glassware

A dotted pattern glassware vessel unearthed from the Kumnyung Tumulus is quite similar to glassware unearthed in Cologne, Germany. The dotted pattern was characteristic of the Cologne region, emerging in the middle of the third century through the early 4th century CE.



Dotted glassware from Kyongju, 4th century CE



Several cut glasses & glassware from Kyongju, 5th–6th century CE

Cups With A Base Or Cut Glass

Cups with a base or cut glass have been excavated in Korea that are mostly of the same types as Roman glasses excavated in southern Russia, near the Mediterranean or in Near Eastern regions. They are similar in shape and manufacturing technique to the cut glass of Iran and it is quite likely that they came to Silla via the Silk Road in the 5th–6th century CE.

Reproduced by permission of Professor Kang Seung Lee.



Necklace With Inlaid Face

Korean products portraying foreigners include a glass bead. Excavated from King Mich'u's tomb, dating to the 5th–6th century CE, the bead shows an obviously non-Asian face, a Western face. The technique of glass eye-beads showing human faces and birds has been documented in artifacts produced in the Mediterranean region around the 4th–5th centuries BCE.



Glass necklace with inlaid face

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Syrian Blue Glass Cup



Glass cup from Ch'onma Tumulus,
Kyongju, 5th–6th century CE

Reproduced by permission of Professor Kang Seung Lee.

Chestlace



Chestlace, gold, glass & jade, from Wolsong-no,
Kyongju, 4th–5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Jade-Inlaid Gold Dagger With Ornamental Sheath

This dagger excavated from Tomb No 14, Kyongju, is an exception among the relics of Silla. It is the only one of its kind extant today throughout northeast Asia. It has round and floral designs made with gold wire and it is inlaid with red agate. Daggers such as this are similar to those depicted in the Kizil murals and can be related to the gold ornamental dagger unearthed from Borovoje in Kazakhstan. The arabesque designs found on the dagger places its origin in either western Turkestan or from the steppe region. Dated from late 4th or 5th century CE.



Jade inlaid gold dagger from King Mich'u Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th–6th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.

Short Golden Dagger



Short golden dagger from Kazakhstan, late 4th–6th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.



Heavenly Horse Saddle Guard

A saddle guard with a “Heavenly Horse” motif was excavated from the Ch’onma Tumulus in Kyongju. The ornamental white birch bark saddle guard with the drawing of the Heavenly Horse was the first example of this motif discovered in Korea. A similar image of the Heavenly Horse also was discovered in the Gansu (Hexi) region in Central Asia, which was the Silk Road gateway to Asia. Another example of the motif is the Sacred Horse that was found in the mural of the Dingjiazha Tomb No. 5 at Jiniuquan.

The Korean concept of the Heavenly Horse does not seem to be related to that of China, but one can see similarities with the Heavenly Horse from the Gansu (Hexi) region. Minor differences among them are found only in details such as the darting appearance, the vapors from the mouth and the sublime cloud patterns around the horse. If there are any distinct features indigenous to Silla, they must be the expression of auspicious airs swirling about the four legs of the horse in cloud-like patterns or the insertion of crescent-shaped forms on its body. The latter, in particular, is reminiscent of the inlaid-jade ornamentation of the Scythian derivation. The Silla painting is dated to the 5th or 6th century CE.



Heavenly Horse painting from Ch’onma Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th–6th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Seoul National Museum of Korea.



Golden Crowns, Girdle With Pendants And Other Accessories

Earrings, caps, shoes, belt buckles and plaques fashioned from precious metal were probably a Middle Eastern or Greek practice, but once again the Chinese were the first settled people in East Asia to wear these ornaments, having learned of the techniques over the Silk Road. Koguryo people were the first to acquire gold jewelry where warfare and exchange with the Xianbei and other peoples of Inner Asia were common. Strong likenesses between Silla and Koguryo artifacts suggest that Koguryo could have been responsible for introducing the adornments into the southern Korean land as early as 300 CE.



Golden girdle with pendants from Kumgwan Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Gold crown ornament from Kungwan Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





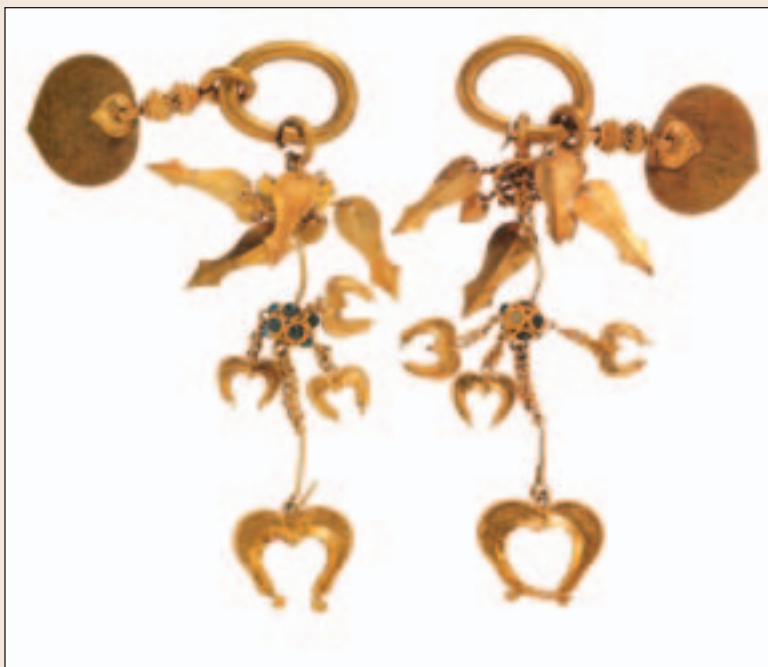
Golden crown from Hwangnam Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





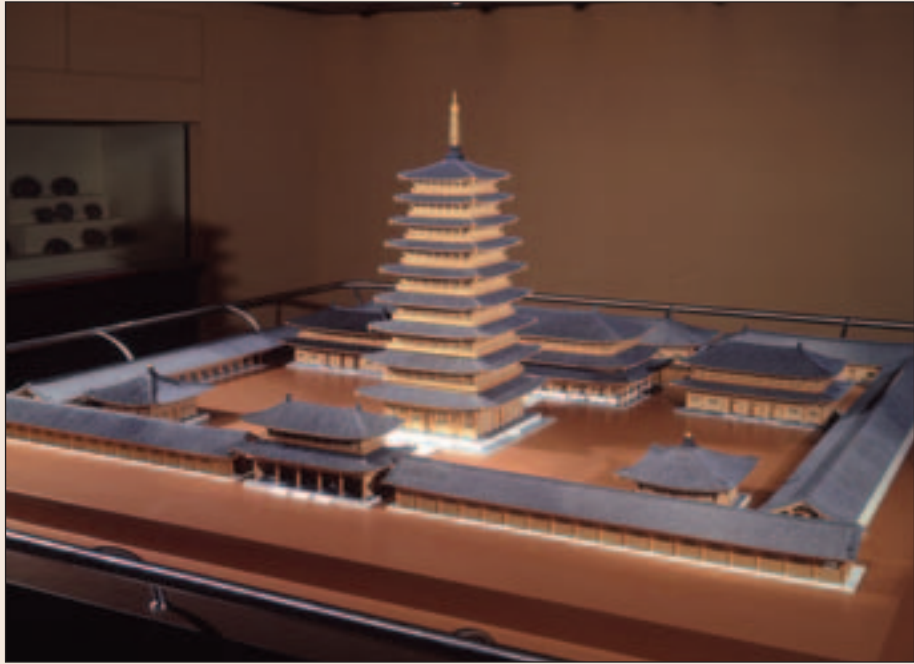
Golden earrings from Pubu Tumulus, Kyongju, 6th century CE



Golden earrings from Kumgwan Tumulus, Kyongju, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Maquette of Hwangnyong Temple, Kyongju, originally built in 553 CE
(configuration shown dates to about 800 CE)



Remaining foundation stones of the nine-story pagoda in Hwangnyong Temple

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Pulguk Temple, Kyongju, 751 CE



Overview of Pulguk Temple

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





The Sokkuram Grotto, Kyongju, 751 CE

Reproduced by permission of Ahn Jang Hon.





The Sokkuram Grotto, Kyongju, 751 CE

Reproduced by permission of Ahn Jang Hon.





Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva in Sokkuram Grotto

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





The Sokkuram Grotto, Kyongju, 751 CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION B-4. RELIGION

Early Silla Shamanism and the belief in the spiritual interconnection of humans and the rest of the natural and even supernatural world dominated early Silla's religious beliefs. Therefore, a mountain as well as an animal could have been considered protective spirits. Shamans are individuals who could divine these spirits either by their insight or by going into trances, thereby providing advice on how to resolve or counter troubles one might be facing or may face in the future. Of particular significance in Silla's folklore were deer and white horses whose spirits were seen as protective forces since they were considered closest to those of humans. The crowns of Silla's rulers were shaped much like deer antlers, and the most solemn oaths were taken using the blood of a sacrificed white horse.

Silk Road Influence Despite vehemently resisting Buddhism at first, Silla eventually made Buddhism its state religion. Many Sillan monks went to China to study, and some, like Hyech'o (cf. Handout 22), went as far as India to make a pilgrimage: to travel in the Buddha's footsteps; to experience King Asoka's messianic monuments; and to gain more insight into Buddhism. Silla monks also traveled as missionaries to Japan. Moreover, the Buddhist temples, which were inspired by Chinese and Indian designs, changed the face of Silla's architecture, and Gandhara art greatly influenced Silla's Buddhist art. Depending on the sect of Buddhism to which monks adhered, the temple designs stressed one of the following elements:

1. Scholarly study of texts
2. Practice of a compassionate life to follow the Bodhisattva's path
3. Belief that lay people could reach nirvana by chanting
4. Belief that sudden flashes of insight could lead to enlightenment

In addition to Buddhism, other influences, like Confucian philosophy and Taoism, came into Silla. Confucian ideals of a strictly ordered society based on gender, age and scholarly hierarchies became more significant in the later part of the Silla era.



Introduction of Buddhism to Silla

Buddhism was transmitted to each of the Three Kingdoms during their transition from tribal federations to an ancient state: to Koguryo in 372, to Paekche in 384, and to Silla in 527. During its dissemination Buddhism absorbed the myths, legends, and shaman beliefs of the tribes and forged a more systematized religion and philosophy. By offering a way for the people to comprehend the conflicts and contradictions in society, it provided the social and spiritual basis for each of the Three Kingdoms to develop into a state.

From its inception Buddhism was allied with the royal authority. But this alliance was most conspicuous in Silla, which had the lowest standard of culture and was the last to develop as a state. In Silla, Buddhism became a catalytic force accelerating the growth of the state structure and of royal power. In order to strengthen kingly power, the ruler was viewed as the wheel-turning emperor of the Ksatriya caste. The twenty-third to twenty-eighth rulers adopted Buddhist names for example, King Chinp'yong adopted the name of Suddhodana, his queen became Maya, and Queen Chindok became Srimala.

Early Buddhism in Silla developed under the influence of Koguryo. Hyeryang, an exile from Koguryo, was made the national overseer of monks, and Chajang, upon returning from Tang China, succeeded to the position as great national overseer. Both contributed to the institutional development of the church and the consolidation of Buddhist thought. Chajang also systematized the belief that Silla was the land of the Buddha—that in Silla, a land supposedly chosen and blessed by former buddhas, Buddhism was not a new religion.

Lee, Peter H., et al., eds., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Vol. I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 62-75.

Declaration of Buddhism as the National Faith of Silla

When Silla King Pophung attempted to spread Buddhism and adopt it as the national religion, his ministers opposed him with a great fervor. To suppress the strong opposition, the Grand Secretary Ich'adon offered to sacrifice himself for the Buddhist teaching. The following is the story told of his martyrdom and the miraculous outcome.

In the fourteenth year of King Pophung (527), when the Grand Secretary Ich'adon was decapitated, his head flew to Diamond Mountain, falling on its summit, and white milk gushed forth from the cut, soaring up several hundred feet. The sun darkened, wonderful flowers rained from heaven, and the earth trembled violently. The king, his officials, and the commoners, on the one hand terrified by these strange phenomena and on the other sorrowful for the death of the Grand Secretary who had sacrificed his life for the cause of the dharma, cried aloud and mourned. They buried his body on Diamond Mountain with due ceremony. At that time the king and his officials took an oath: "Hereafter we will worship the Buddha and revere the clergy. If we break this oath, may heaven strike us dead."

Lee, Peter H., et al., eds., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Vol. I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 75-78.



Gandhara Art

In the Gandharan region, situated in the Peshawar valley of what is now northwestern Pakistan, the Buddha image in the style later to be known as Gandhara first appeared. The artistic marriage had already taken place between Indian Buddhist art, imported by the ruling Kushans in the first century CE and the Greek art, introduced to the region four hundred years earlier by Alexander the Great. It has been suggested by scholars that these early Buddhist sculptures were created by the local Greeks. These artists, while retaining their classical conceptions of the human form, Indianized it and transformed it into the figure of a Greek-featured Buddha, dressed in a toga and seated in the yoga pose. Thus, the Gandharan style represented a union of classical, Indian and Iranian elements.

“The Buddha is shown with straight, sharply chiseled nose and brow, classical lips and wavy hair, all Hellenistic influences. He wears a toga-like robe instead of a loin cloth. But his eyes are heavy-lidded and protruding, the lobes of the ears elongated, and the oval-shaped face fleshy—all characteristics of Indian iconography. The sculptures were cut from the grey schist of the region. It was this Gandharan art therefore, instead of the original Buddhist art of India, that traveled over the northern passes with the revolutionary message of Buddhism into Chinese Central Asia. From there it moved slowly eastwards along the newly founded Silk Road, following in the footsteps of missionaries, merchants and returning pilgrims, and gradually absorbing new influences, including those of China.”

Hopkirk, Peter, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 23-24.



Buddha triad plaque, Anap-chi, Kyongju, 8th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Standing Buddha, India, Gupta period, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Result of the Golden Age Buddhism became a central part of Sillan life, with even a several rulers abdicating their throne to become Buddhist monks or nuns. Buddhism also heavily inspired the art and architecture created during the Silla period, while monks, like Chajang and Wonhyo, were well-known in both China and Japan for their religious writings. Even the *hwarang*, the elite military, also adopted Buddhist ideals of bringing about a new Buddhist utopia.

Shamanism was still practiced and did not necessarily conflict with the Buddhist ideals stressing the sanctity of all life and the belief that a spirit may pass through all different life forms as it tries to achieve nirvana. Moreover, the placement of statues in natural sites of beauty and the folktales that combined shamanic practices with Buddhist figures were common. Buddhism may also have helped to continue women's religious roles. Unlike Confucian thought, in which women's leadership was seen as unnatural, there were some Buddhist roles for religious women as nuns, abbesses or as founders and supporters of temples. Thus, while most Buddhist leaders and scholars were male, the shamanic tradition was not entirely gone. Some historians, however, have argued that the wealth given to Buddhist temples and the shift in loyalty from Sillan rulers to the religion may have been reasons for Silla's eventual decline.

Confucianism was introduced from China and in 682 a Confucian Academy was instituted to train government officials and in 788 Confucian style examinations were introduced.

Legacy The Buddhist artwork of Silla has gained much wider recognition for its religious and aesthetic significance, and some of the sites have been designated as World Heritage sites by UNESCO. Many of the religious texts from this era are still studied and practiced today both in Korea and elsewhere. Later Confucianism, particularly during the Choson kingdom, shaped the structure of Korean government and society. However, the shamanic tradition also still exists as it emphasizes the spiritual connections to the natural world. Finally, dances from early Silla, like Ch'oyong for example, still continue this tradition.





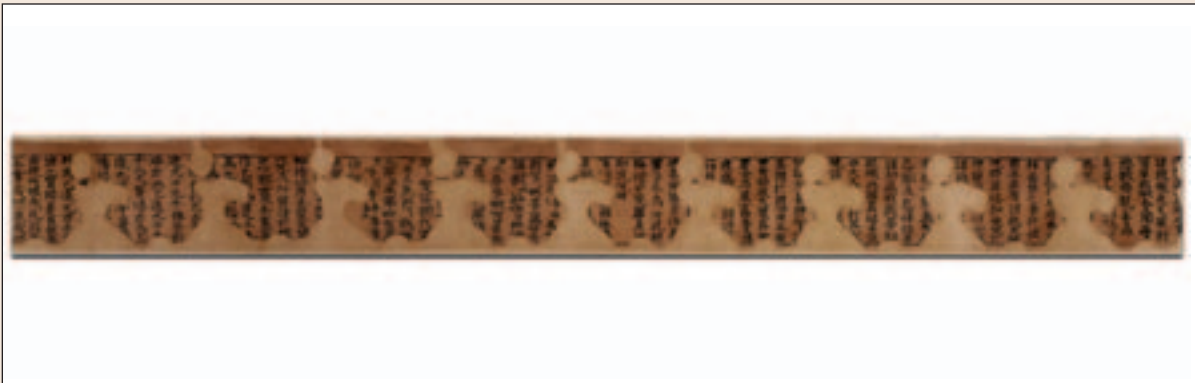
PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE? SECTION B-5. EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Early Silla Since most education took place through oral transmission, the exact curriculum is virtually unknown. The nobility were most likely tutored at home, while others would be apprenticed to a craftsman or trader by their families. As an example of the passing on of skills, the first ruler of Silla and his wife are said to have gone village to village, teaching people how to cultivate mulberry trees for silk production. The court may also have taken leading roles in the introduction of new ideas and skills.

Silk Road Influence Along with trade goods, the Silk Road also introduced new educational ideas, technology and scientific thought. Confucian ideas from China encouraged organized scholarly pursuits, which included the collection and cataloguing of books. Moreover, the use of paper made possible more portable methods of information exchange. As China had many written sources and a long tradition of historical recordkeeping, other Asian countries like Japan and Korea came to rely on the use of Chinese characters in writing. Silla also eventually began to use the Chinese examination system to staff government positions. The Silk Road also brought calendars, clocks and different scientific theories into Silla. Additionally, farming became more efficient as agricultural tools, such as the yokes to harness water buffalo for planting fields, became more prevalent.

Paper in Silla

The world's oldest printed Buddhist scripture, The Pure Light Dharani Sutra, was discovered inside the Sokka-t'ap at Pulguk Temple in Kyongju. Since the temple was constructed in 751 CE, the scripture must have been printed from woodblocks before that year.



Dharani Sutra discovered in Sokka-t'ap, Pulguk Temple in Kyongju, 751 CE

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PART
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Ch'omsong-dae, Kyongju, 7th century CE

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Ch'omsong-dae

Ch'omsong-dae, which means “star-observing terrace,” was built during the reign of Queen Sondok in 634 CE, making it the oldest existing observatory in the world. Reflecting the fact that Sondok was the 27th ruler of Silla, the observatory has twenty-seven levels of stones in a round shape with four sets of parallel bars to make a square-shaped structure at the top. The ends of the parallel bars jut out several inches from the surface and might have been a support for a staircase inside. The twelve rectangular base stones are positioned in a square, three on each side, representing the four seasons and twelve months of each year. The twelve tiers of stones to the window entrance and twelve tiers above the window opening also represent the twelve months of the year or the twelve symbols of the zodiac.

Result of the Golden Age With the acceptance of Chinese characters for writing, Silla produced scholarly works that become part of the East Asian intellectual canon. The writings of Chajang, Wonhyo and Sol Ch'ong became well-known. Monks traveled to China and India to deepen their understanding of Buddhism and founded schools in Silla upon their return. Silla also adopted the Chinese calendar, and during Queen Sondok's reign, Ch'omsong-dae, the oldest existing observatory was built. The building itself reflects a Chinese calendar with symbolic bricks representing the days of the year, but parts also reflect the years of Sondok's reign. This modification of Chinese influence is also evident in Sol Ch'ong's introduction of *idu*, a method of inserting Korean particles written with Chinese characters into a Chinese text-without otherwise changing or altering that text-in order to help Koreans read text.

Legacy The Confucian tradition of formal education and state examinations became increasingly important in later eras of Korea's history. Passing these examinations became a way of entering the government bureaucracy. *Idu*, however, proved to be an unsuccessful writing reform and later King Sejong created a new Korean alphabet now called *han'gul* (1443 CE) that made education more accessible to the Korean people.

The observatory of Silla has become a symbol of early astronomy and the Southern observatory of the European astronomers located in Chile is called Silla.





PART II. DID THE SILK ROAD CREATE SILLA'S GOLDEN AGE?

SECTION B-6. MILITARY

Early Silla Although among the Three Kingdoms Koguryo was particularly known for its fierce warriors, Silla also developed an elite fighting group. The early Sillan military seems to have been based on young men from midteens to thirty years of age recruited from villages to do the fighting. While these village groups continued, later King Chinhung (reigned 540–576 CE) created a force of upper-class warriors called *hwarang*, who were young men recruited to train in riding, archery and self-defense. The *hwarang*, or “flowering youth,” were also expected to appreciate natural beauty and part of their training was climbing mountains and becoming aware of the terrain.

Silk Road Influence The *hwarang* were heavily influenced by Maitreya Buddhism, which stressed a utopia where everyone would be made ready for the future presence of the Maitreya Buddha. The Buddhist monk Won'gwang established 5 ideals for the *hwarang* to follow:

1. Be loyal to your country
2. Be obedient to your parents
3. Be trustworthy to your friends
4. Do not retreat in battle
5. Do not kill indiscriminately

Confucian philosophy and other Buddhist ideas also became part of their curriculum. Based on the Chinese system, a more formal military structure of royal guards and other units that were identified by color was later implemented in Silla.

Result of the Golden Age The *hwarang*, which produced notable generals such as Kim Yusin, was one of the reasons Silla succeeded in unifying Korea. The *hwarang* also developed and taught secret martial arts, like *Taekkyon*. In addition to their military importance, the *hwarang* reflected Silla's interest in nature, dance and poetry. The young men were encouraged to spend time in the natural world, reflecting both Buddhist and shamanic attitudes toward being an integral part of nature, while gaining power from it. Many of the folk stories handed down from this era are about the adventures of these “flower boys” and various forms of art, including ceramics, also highlighted these warriors.





Image of a mounted warrior
Doksal-li, Kimhae, 5th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





Silla horse rider cup, Kumnyong Tumulus, Kyongju, 6th century CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Hwarang Story: Kwanch'ang (from *Samguk sagi* 47:437)

Kwanch'ang (or Kwanjang) was the son of General P'umil of Silla. His appearance was elegant, and he became a *hwarang* as a youth and was on friendly terms with others. At the age of sixteen he was already accomplished in horseback riding and archery. A certain commander (*taegam*) recommended him to King Muyol (654–661).

When, in the fifth year of Xianqing, *kyongsin* (660), the king sent troops and, together with a Tang general, attacked Paekche, he made Kwanch'ang an adjunct general. When the two armies met on the plain of Hwangsan (now Nonsan), P'umil said to his son, "You are young, but you have spirit. Now is the time to render brilliant service and rise to wealth and honor. You must show dauntless courage."

"I shall," Kwanch'ang replied. Mounting his horse and clutching his lance, he galloped into the enemy line and killed several of the enemy. Outnumbered, he was taken a prisoner and brought to the Paekche general, Kyebaek. Kyebaek had Kwanch'ang's helmet removed. Kyebaek was greatly moved by the youth and valor of his captive and could not bring himself to kill him. He said with a sigh, "Silla has marvelous knights. Even a youth is like this how much stronger must their soldiers be?" He then let Kwanch'ang return alive.

Upon returning, Kwanch'ang remarked, "Earlier when I attacked the enemy's position I could not behead the enemy general, nor capture their standard. This is my deepest regret. In my second attack, I will be sure to succeed." He scooped up water from a well and drank; he then rushed upon the enemy line and fought desperately. Kyebaek caught him again, beheaded him, and sent back the head, tied to the saddle of his horse.

P'umil took the head and, wiping the blood with his sleeve, said, "He saved his honor. Now that he has died for the king's cause, I have no regrets." The three armies were moved by this and strengthened their resolve. Beating drums and shouting war cries, they charged the enemy lines and utterly routed the Paekche forces.

King Muyol conferred the posthumous title of *kupch'an* (Rank 9) on Kwanch'ang and had him buried with full rites. Toward funeral expenses the king sent thirty rolls each of Chinese silk and cotton and one hundred sacks of grain.

Lee, Peter H., et al., eds., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Vol. I*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 104-105.

Legacy Somewhat similar to King Arthur and the Roundtable legends, the *hwarang* have been an active part of Korea today. The main Korean military academy is named after them, there is a Hwarang Institute in Kyongju. Korean films often portray stories of the *hwarang*, and a Silla ceramic knight is frequently used as a Korean symbol. Moreover, the modern martial art of Taekwondo derives its origins from *Taekkyon*, though it has been modified over the centuries. When the Japanese outlawed *Taekkyon* during their occupation of Korea, it still continued as a secret society. Some modern Taekwondo patterns are named after *hwarang* figures and achievement.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION A. CONSTRUCT FOR EXAMINING SILLAN BIOGRAPHIES

Introduction While a topical approach toward examining changes in politics or art reveals ways in which Silla was influenced by the Silk Road activity, it may also be helpful to study the following prominent individuals from the times in which the Silk Road affected Silla.

This assignment is designed to be a group exercise, although students may read the biographies and write an overall analysis for homework.

Group Exercise Dividing the class into five groups, each group should examine and analyze two to three individuals for the following:

1. Their Silla background
2. Foreign influences or changes in their lives
3. Their individual achievement and how they rose to prominence
4. Their later significance either in Korea or other countries

Each group should read through the biographies and then jointly answer these main questions about each of the assigned people:

1. Did contact with foreign ideas hurt or help their careers?
2. Which aspects (i.e., economy, art, religion, etc.) of the Silk Road were most likely to affect them?
3. What do you see as their major achievement?

After each group reviews and answers the questions, the class may have a final discussion on the following topic:

An issue of *Education about Asia* magazine (Vol. 6, no. 2, Fall 2001) had one Silla figure on its cover. Based on the biographies, who do you think it was? The cover story of this issue explored “Six Portraits of Famous Koreans,” five of whom were not from the Silla period. Which six of the twelve figures in these biographies would you select for a similar article solely on Silla?





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-1. QUEEN SONDOK: GOLDEN AGE RULER (REIGNED 632–647 CE)

Brief Background Queen Sondok was one of the first legitimate female rulers in East Asian history. Silla’s “bone-rank” system emphasized the importance of the hereditary bloodline for its rulers, who were said to be of “holy bone” status. Because her father King Chinp’yong died without a legitimate male heir, as the eldest unmarried daughter, Sondok was next in line for the throne according to Silla’s political system. Although bouts of rebellion against Sondok’s assumption of rule erupted, her supporters, led by General Kim Yusin, quickly quelled the uprisings.

Foreign Influence Sondok did not travel beyond Silla but fostered close ties to China when Silla was warring with Paekche and Koguryo. Besides her military alliance with Tang China, Sondok sent monks there to study and acquire more knowledge about Buddhism and Chinese culture. Generally the Chinese supported such exchanges, and the Buddhist ideas coming from India through China seemed to support wider roles for women. However, the Chinese, influenced by Confucianism, were somewhat dismayed by Sondok’s power and for not keeping her “proper place.” One story relates to this Confucian uneasiness, while another shows how Sondok used Buddhism to protect her country:

1. A powerful Tang emperor is said to have sent Queen Sondok a beautiful painting of peony flowers in three different colors along with three measures of seeds. Sondok said that, when grown, the flowers from these seeds would have no fragrance. She was right. She explained to her surprised advisors that since there were no bees or butterflies on the painting of the peonies, the Tang ruler was teasing her for having no husband. She understood his criticism that she was an “unfertile” ruler because a “proper” flower would have a fragrant scent to attract a bee or butterfly. Since she correctly interpreted the criticism of her having no husband, she also was seen as an intelligent ruler.
2. Sondok built a nine-story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong Temple (Temple of the August Dragon), following the advice of the royal monk Chajang (ca. 600–655 CE) who returned from China in 643 CE. Buddhist legends say that Chajang met a dragon spirit in China who said that the dragon of Hwangnyong Temple would protect Silla and cause her to conquer her enemies if it were built, and if a special Buddhist ritual for the protection of the state were performed there. The Sillan nine-story pagoda, which was designed by a Paekche architect named Abi, was probably modeled after another large nine-story pagoda built at Yongning Monastery in Luoyang, China, the capital of the Northern Wei dynasty in the early sixth century. It caused Japan to compete with Silla by building its own nine-story pagoda near Kibi pond in Asuka, the site of the Kudara Odera (Great Paekche Temple). The building of this monastery and its large pagoda shows the wealth, opulence, and power of Silla and Queen Sondok’s court and its promotion of Buddhism for the success of the Sillan state.



Achievements Much of what we know about Sondok comes from the *Samguk Yusa*, which was written by the Buddhist monk Iryon (1206–1289) centuries after her life. Sondok appears in his book often as a merciful, wise ruler who further established Buddhism in Silla, rescuing Kim Yusin’s sister from his wrath and giving a gold ring to a beggar. Some of her achievements include the following:

1. Building the Nine-Story Pagoda at Hwangnyong Temple (cf. p. 76)
2. Building the oldest existing observatory in Asia (cf. p. 87)
3. Founding Buddhist monasteries like Punhwang Temple (cf. p. 96)
4. Further expanding the *hwarang* (Silla’s elite military system)
5. Encouraging sculptures like the Buddhist images in Sokkuram Grotto (cf. pp. 78-81)
6. Sending monks to China and supporting their activities on return
7. Sending promising students to study in Tang China’s national academy
8. Advancing Silla’s military attacks against Paekche and Koguryo to support eventual unification

The scholar Robert Tennant has referred to Sondok’s “Elizabethan quality” in comparing her to Queen Elizabeth I of England, a much later queen. Both encouraged a renaissance era in thought and literature and kept a religious balance in the midst of new ideas. Two queens, Sondok and her successor Chindok, left their realms with strong cultural legacies, the advancement of learning and a more secure military and financial situation.





Pagoda at Punhwang Temple, Kyongju, 634 CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.



Legacy Later Korean historians who were strongly influenced by Confucian views could not deny Sondok's accomplishments, but they were less kind in their interpretation of her rule than the Buddhist Iryon. In the *Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms*, the Confucian historian Kim Pusik (1075–1151 CE) explained why he was offended by the idea of female rulers. He saw setting up women to rule as a mark of an age of chaos, and he thought it was truly fortunate that the country did not collapse. He explained that women rulers go against the proper order of things. Citing passages from Confucian classics, he likened women's ruling to the unnatural and inauspicious omens of "a hen's crowing at dawn [in place of a cock]" (from the *Book of Documents*) and "a sow's hopping about [as though it were a rabbit]" (from the *Book of Changes*). More recent historians like Edward Adams, who are not bound by Confucian prejudices, consider her as advancing the golden age of Silla. Her tomb, reflecting her Buddhist beliefs about closeness to nature, is set in a hillside away from the venues of Silla rulers. Recently it has become more visited.



Queen Sondok's tomb, Kyongju, 7th century CE

Reproduced by permission of Wha Ja Lee.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-2. QUEEN CHINDOK: THE DIPLOMAT (REIGNED 647–654 CE)

Sillan Background Queen Chindok succeeded to the throne as the heir of her cousin Queen Sondok. As a member of the “holy-bone” elite, she was able to rule despite being a woman. Korea’s shamanic tradition considered women to have the power to bridge the natural and supernatural worlds and predict the future. Soon after Chindok came to the throne, powerful nobles instigated a rebellion against her. When a meteorite appeared over the military camp of her supporters, the rebels used the natural phenomenon as a bad omen to say that her reign was doomed. However, her supporter General Kim Yusin prepared a great kite and tied torches to the long tail of the kite. As the torchlight rose over Chindok’s forces he declared that the falling star had gone back from whence it came. The startled rebel troops then thought nature’s forces had turned against them. Kim also sacrificed a white horse on the site where the meteor had crashed and in his prayer stated that Chindok’s rule was the will of heaven and that great disaster would result for the people who went against her rule. Such was the respect she enjoyed from her officials.

Foreign Influences The kite was one of many items China introduced to Silla during Chindok’s reign. Chindok’s main problem was to avoid Chinese military domination while securing Chinese aid against Koguryo and Paekche. She resolved this problem by instructing her emissary, Kim Ch’unch’u (604–661 CE), to demonstrate that Silla was Tang China’s best potential ally on the Korean peninsula. While her general Kim Yusin held Silla’s enemies at bay, Chindok endeavored to prove to China that her rule was a “civilized” one because the people of Silla followed the rules of Chinese decorum. To make this point, Chindok implemented the following measures:

1. Adopted Chinese court dress
2. Accepted the Chinese calendar
3. Had herself invested as ruler of Silla by the Chinese emperor
4. Acted in accordance to her given name, Srimala, the name of an ideal Indian queen in Buddhist scripture, by promoting the Buddhist teachings in Silla and showing piety to Buddha
5. Encouraged Chinese educational exchanges and the teaching of Chinese history and writing

Achievement Chindok was able to forge an alliance between Silla and Tang as Silla adopted and adapted many Tang customs. In order to secure the alliance, Chindok wrote a poem titled “The Song of a Peaceful Reign” for the Tang emperor and sent silk brocade, which she had woven and embroidered herself. The silk was a sign of richness and continued trade; her own weaving and sewing a sign that, though queen, she understood women’s role and their distinctive artistry.



The following is an excerpt from the poem:

Great Tang created the powerful Celestial Empire,
The glorious royal achievements so high bloom for aye;
The reigning monarch ceases war giving his soldier's rest,
He esteems culture as a noble heir to a Hundred Kings . . .
Brightly his banners flutter, covering the sky,
Loudly his gongs and drum ring, filling the earth,
Forcing barbarians who disobey the Emperor's commands,
Fall to his swords and suffer penalties;
Love and respect for warm heartedness under his sway
Shine on myriads in light and shade.
Far and near happy people vie in raising voices
To praise his august virtues

Iryon, *Samguk Yusa, Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 76.

While the poem lavishly praises the Tang emperor and his power, it also emphasizes Chinese culture, harmony and the loyalty of Silla to China. The Chinese emperor said that he found her poem to be “full of delicate phrases.” However, as Chindok was praising Tang culture, she was careful not to ignore Silla’s own cultural achievements and contributions. One of her efforts was to send monks to collect Sillan poetry in the first Korean anthology. Though many of these poems were lost later, those remaining forms are the first poems we know from Korean history.

Legacy Though Chindok is not well known, her tomb has been identified and is part of the cultural site of Kyongju. Perhaps because she was identified so closely with Chinese influences, she is seen less as a Korean national hero than as a promoter of Korea’s participation in the greater East Asian world. But in keeping China at bay, establishing cultural ties and encouraging learning and poetry, she did contribute to Silla’s welfare and the development of her culture.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-3. KIM YUSIN: SILLA'S GREATEST GENERAL (595–673 CE)

Silla Background Kim Yusin was a warrior-aristocrat whose military strategies led to the unification of the Korean peninsula in 668. A descendent of the kings of the Kaya confederacy and a member of the second highest level of Silla's bone-rank system, the general came to power through a combination of his abilities on the battlefield and his family connections, which included Kim's prominent father, an important regional military commander named Sohyon. He was also a brother-in-law of the nephew of Queen Sondok, Kim Ch'unch'u (who later reigned as King Muyol, 654–661).

Despite his noble rank, Kim's great love, according to legend, was Ch'on'gwan, a commoner (a Korean singer/dancer comparable to a Japanese geisha). The story goes that Kim's mother opposed the match and ordered her dutiful son to vow to break off relations with her. As proof of his obedience he decapitated his favorite horse, which had taken him to Ch'on'gwan's house while he was asleep drunk on the horse's back. He loved his horse, but it had caused him to break his oath to his mother. Kim's respect for his mother was also reflected in his support for the two Silla queens, Sondok and Chindok, when rebels threatened their reigns.

Famous for his energetic swordsmanship, Kim joined the *hwarang*, the elite Silla military organization for aristocratic youths, when he was only 15. By the time he was 17 he was leader of his own *hwarang* band. He advanced to the rank of general by 34 and eventually became the commander-in-chief of the Silla army. He suppressed riots against Queen Sondok and supported the subsequent kingship of Muyol. In 660 he became the head of the *hwabaek*, or council of aristocrats, which was the highest position within the true-bone rank. As the leader of the Silla army, he successfully waged war to defeat the rival kingdoms of Paekche in 660 and Koguryo in 668, thereby unifying the Korean peninsula.

Foreign Influence Kim Yusin's greatest challenge as Silla's commander-in-chief was to use China's help to defeat Paekche and Koguryo without succumbing to China's designs on the peninsula. Kim incorporated some Chinese military forces into his strategies but after receiving little recognition for aiding Chinese forces in a difficult march through the cold mountains, he became wary. When the Tang offered Kim and his followers the authority to rule parts of Paekche, he aptly understood that such a "gift" would mean China would play the major role in governing the area. He declined the "gift" and continued to fight. After relations between China and Silla deteriorated due to disagreements over the management of the conquered regions, he played an important role in defeating the Chinese forces left to garrison Korea eventually causing them to leave the peninsula by 676.

Achievement From his earliest *hwarang* days, Kim was hailed as an extraordinary leader with the ability to fortify Silla against rival states. When an attack on Koguryo's Nango Fortress looked like a Silla defeat, Kim mounted his horse, drew his sword, and leapt over a trench and into the enemy ranks, where he beheaded the enemy general. Silla troops then rallied to win.



Kim's military skills and political insight helped Silla defeat its rival kingdoms in order to unify the Korean peninsula. He also marshaled forces against the Tang, preventing a Chinese takeover of the Korean peninsula and continuing Korean control of international Silk Road trade in his homeland. He acquired extraordinary power and the support of the army but did not abuse it. Instead, he followed his *hwarang* vows and supported the monarchy, enabling a peaceful change of rulers.

Legacy Kim Yusin's life is woven into several Korean folk stories. Some accentuate his strength and sense of duty, such as when he threatened his sister for being pregnant out of wedlock. Queen Sondok convinced him to show mercy, allowing his sister eventually to marry. But most legends focus on his role as the unifier of Korea. His tomb and a statue are located in Kyongju, Silla's capital and a Korean cultural landmark. There is even a movement in Taekwondo, a Korean martial art, based on an incident when Kim Yusin drew his sword so quickly that a Chinese general was forced to retreat.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-4. WONHYO: EMINENT BUDDHIST MONK (617–686 CE)

Silla Background Frequent battles in seventh-century Silla took place against Paekche and Koguryo to unify the Korean peninsula, which was finally accomplished in 668 CE. However, it was followed by eight years of war against Tang China to maintain the unity of the Korean peninsula. The monk Wonhyo, whose name means “break of dawn” and refers to the first dawn after the night of the historical Buddha’s enlightenment, lived during this tumultuous period. Wonhyo entered a Buddhist monastery at age 15 and achieved enlightenment by age 44. His ideas and scholarly works helped shape Korean Buddhism.

Sorting out the historic Wonhyo from the legendary one is no easy task. Wonhyo did not study Buddhism in China, although he was a famous Buddhist scholar. In legend he is known for his love of wine and pretty women. Through a union with Yosok, a Silla princess, he fathered one of Silla’s most famous scholars, Sol Ch’ong. In one of the most famous stories, Wonhyo planned to go to China with his friend Uisang (625–702) to study under the canonical master Xuanzang (d. 664). However, before reaching China, they were caught in a rainstorm and sought shelter for the night in a cave. That night, Wonhyo woke up thirsty and he found an old pot with refreshing water in it. In the morning, he found that the cave was a tomb and that he’d actually drunk from a skull filled with rainwater. Since the rain continued to fall, they had to stay the night. Throughout the night he had horrible nightmares. The next morning he realized that the mind controls everything and produces all truth. To some, this experience accounted for his being an insightful commentator on Buddhist scriptures.

Like many other Buddhist leaders in Silla, Wonhyo was only of head-rank six status, making his relationship with an aristocratic, true-bone, Silla princess even more remarkable. He was such an unusual and charismatic figure that he surpassed the conventional boundaries between lay and monastic life as a scholar and a monk.

Foreign Influences Buddhism became the state religion of Silla in 527. Wonhyo lived in the seventh century, when Silla received Buddhist ideas not only from China but also through texts translated from Sanskrit into Chinese. The monk Won’gwang (555–638) represented the first generation of Silla monks who traveled to China. He mastered literary Chinese and studied Buddhist texts, and then returned to establish monasteries in Korea. These monasteries enabled Wonhyo and the other monks in his generation to study Buddhism in Korea without ever leaving the country. He used a wide variety of Buddhist texts and commentaries and out of them developed his own philosophy. Not having gone through the hierarchical system of examinations in place in China, he developed a conviction that the path to Buddha could be followed by anyone, and not necessarily through study.

Achievements Wonhyo was perhaps the most original and prolific Buddhist philosopher in Korea and East Asia for his time. Furthermore, he contributed greatly to the development of a distinctive Korean style and practice of Buddhism. Through over 100 treatises and commentaries on East Asian Buddhist materials then available to him in Korea, he was a major contributor to the indige-



nous approach to Buddhist doctrine and practice in Korea. Many of these works are still in existence and reveal much about Korea's early ideas of Buddhism as it was introduced into the peninsula. In his writing, Wonhyo sought to show that the doctrines of various schools of Buddhism from India and China had more similarities than differences. His works promote harmony between various doctrinal schools within Buddhism.

When Wonhyo gave up the monastic life, he traveled in the countryside and lived with and taught common people. Playing a simple gourd instrument to beat time, he composed songs to teach the ordinary people about Buddhism. He did not scorn the holy life, but he recognized the arbitrariness of the division between secular and sacred. In the opening paragraph of his *Treatise on Ten Approaches to the Reconciliation of Doctrinal Controversy (Simmun Hwajaeng Non)*, he said:

The attitude of staying in a deep valley while avoiding great mountains, or loving emptiness while hating existence is just like the attitude of going into a forest while avoiding trees. But one should be aware of the fact that green and blue are identical in essence, and ice and water are identical in origin; a single mirror reflects myriad forms, and parted waters will perfectly intermingle once they are reunited.

Wonhyo was effective in expanding Buddhism out of monasteries and court circles into the lives of commoners. He wove together scholarly texts of different Buddhist sects. For example, a passage of the *Diamond Sutra*, a Buddhist text, states: "Not one, but not different, not disconnected, but not constant, no entrance but no exit, no birth and no death."

Abstract to ordinary people, the parable was explained by Wonhyo as a seed and fruit, which appear different but are becoming each other:

The fruit and the seed are not the same and yet are one thing.
Their shapes are not the same, but they are not different,
Because if there is no seed, there is no fruit . . .
Therefore there is no birth.
Nothing is constant and nothing is disconnected.
Therefore there is no death.

Another parable deals with the connection between life and death:

The sea is ruffled by the wind.
Therefore the wind and waves are inseparable from each other.
The movement of the sea is the wind aspect
And the wetness of the sea is the water aspect.
There are two sides but only one body.
Therefore, the two sides are inseparable . . .

Korean National Commission, *UNESCO Korean Survey* (Seoul: Dong-a Publishing, 1980), 176.

Legacy Wonhyo's writings, especially his commentary on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (known as the *Korean Commentary*), the *Treatise on Ten Approaches* and *The Meaning of Two Obstructions*, were widely read by East Asian scholars. These works influenced such thinkers as the Chinese philosopher Fazang (643–712 CE) and the Japanese monks Gyonen



(1240–1321 CE), Zenshu (723–797 CE), and Joto (740–815 CE). Some of his works were said to have been translated into Sanskrit for further study in India.

Wonhyo did not try to establish his own school in Korea or to create a set of disciples. Nevertheless, his writings have become an important part of Korean Buddhism. His portrait is displayed in temples, there is a statue of him on the campus of Tongguk Buddhist University, and a street in Seoul as well as a pattern in the Taekwondo are named for him.



Wonhyo dreams of a demon while he and Uisang take shelter from the rain in a cave.



Wonhyo parts from Uisang who is going to Tang China for study.



Wonhyo plays music with other people in front of a temple.

Reproduced from Chung, Sae Hyang, "The Silla Priests Uisang and Wonhyo," *Korean Culture* Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 1982): 36-43, with permission of the publisher, the Korean Culture Center, Los Angeles.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-5. SOL CH'ONG: CONFUCIAN SCHOLAR (CA. 660–730 CE)

Silla Background As the son of Silla Princess Yosok and the famous Buddhist monk Wonhyo, Sol Ch'ong's controversial birth circumstances must have influenced his views on life. Princesses were forbidden to marry below their social station, and monks were committed to their a vow of celibacy. Sol Ch'ong seemed to have turned away from both the Silla aristocracy of his mother and the Buddhist faith of his father. But by trying to devise a written language that would represent Korean speech, his major achievement was in preserving Silla's culture through the written word.

Foreign Influence Sol Ch'ong was trained in Chinese scholarship and philosophy and was receptive to Chinese influences. Unlike his father, however, he was a supporter of Confucianism and popularized Confucian beliefs. He worked with other Confucian scholars to encourage Silla rulers to limit the funding of Buddhist monasteries that spread Buddhist ideas that contradicted Confucianism. Though Sol Ch'ong did include his own interpretations of Confucian ideas, he generally was receptive to Chinese influences.

Achievements Sol Ch'ong is known primarily for drawing the royal court closer to Confucian ideals, and popularizing *idu*, a system that used a combination of Chinese characters together with special symbols to represent Korean verb endings and other grammatical markers. He was instrumental in establishing a national academy of Confucianism in Silla.

Sol Ch'ong helped Silla rulers establish Confucian ideas by drafting their correspondence with the Chinese, devising financial policies, and writing inscriptions for court officials. He also counseled rulers on their conduct so that they better modeled Confucian ideals. One day, the Silla King Sinmun asked his advisors to reflect on his reign. When the room fell silent, Sol Ch'ong told a tale about a “Peony King” who fell so deeply in love with a young “Cinnamon Rose” that he neglected humbler flowers like the old man named “Anemone Flower.” When “Peony King” wised up, he admitted that many kings “have gone to ruin because of the wiles of a lovely woman.” Sol Ch'ong's king and his advisors got the point of this cautionary tale, which reaffirmed the Confucian respect for old men and tradition and its wariness of women's power. He also used poetry to spread Confucian ideas. He wrote:

A benevolent heart is the foundation and belief, piety, brotherly love, loyalty and confidence are the pillars. When a house is fully furnished with prosperity and integrity, though wind and rain buffet it, the house will not fall.

Sol Ch'ong's most significant achievement was the systematization of *idu*. He did this by translating the Confucian classic known as the *Book of Documents* into Korean. The use of this writing system made it easier for Koreans to read, which helped popularize Confucianism. It also enabled the transcription of *hyangga*, the oldest form of Korean poems. King Sejong eventually replaced *idu* with the Korean alphabet *han'gul*.



Sol Ch'ong was a very philosophical and erudite scholar author and teacher, becoming one of the Ten Worthies and one of three leading literary figures of Silla. He translated the classics of Confucianism into the Korean language and annotated the customs and names of China and Korea, the six classics of Confucianism, and other literary works in the Korean language through the *idu* system.

Legacy Sol Ch'ong is one of only four Silla scholars enshrined in the Confucian Hall of Worthies in Seoul, as determined by the later Choson kingdom, and his portrait appears in Confucian schools of learning. Recent scholarship suggests that his writing is less original than his Buddhist father Wonhyo, but Sol Ch'ong's contributions to the spread of Confucianism through writing helped make Confucian learning more accessible for subsequent generations.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-6. YANGJI: ARTIST MONK (MID-600'S CE)

Silla Background Yangji was a Buddhist monk and artist who produced some of the earliest remaining Buddhist works of art. According to Iryon's historical treatise, *Samguk Yusa*, Yangji was talented in sculpture, painting and calligraphy, and was also renowned for his virtue, dedication and expertise in Buddhist scriptures and practices. Although his ancestry, birthplace and years of birth and death are obscure, historical records show that he was active from the reign of Queen Sondok (632–647 CE) through the reign of King Munmu (661–681 CE), when Buddhism was accepted as a state religion and Buddhist art reached its peak. The following story is recorded about Yangji in the *Samguk Yusa*:

During the reign of Queen Sondok in Silla there lived a monk whose name was Yangji. He had a magical metal staff. He tied a large bag to the end of it and pronounced a spell over it ending with the Buddhist invocation, "Namu Amita Pul." The staff then walked away by itself and visited each house in the neighboring villages. When the housewives heard it clacking on the road they came out and put rice and money in the bag, smiling happily. When the bag was full, the staff returned to its master. This went on every day of the monk's life until he died, and the temple where he lived was therefore called Sokchang Temple, the Temple of the Metal Staff.

Iryon, *Samguk Yusa, Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 291-92.

Foreign Influences Examining his works of art, Yangji evidently adapted Central Asian artistic styles in his sculptures. The guardian sculptures of the pagoda foundation at the Sach'onwang Temple (Temple of the Four Heavenly Kings), as well as the images of Buddha, the guardian sculptures and the brick-shape tiles excavated in Sokchang Temple have been influenced by Gandharan art, especially in its use of stucco. There are no records that Yangji travelled to India or Central Asia, so it is unclear how he was introduced to these different styles of art.

Achievements The eight types of divine generals inscribed beneath the pagoda at Sach'onwang Temple in Kyongju are attributed to Yangji. These divine generals are supernatural beings who protect the precincts of the Buddhist temple. The images are distinctly Central Asian, and more specifically Gandharan, in style: the clothing and footwear of the generals, which are clearly not of Korean origin, most closely resemble Central Asian military fashions of the time. Moreover, the stucco sculptures exhibit the style prevalent in Gandharan Buddhist art in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE. The three 16-foot images of Buddha, the roof-tiles and pagodas at Yongmyo Temple (Temple of the Spirit Shrine), and the three images of Buddha at Pomnim Temple (Temple of the Dharma Forest) are examples of Yangji's other artistic contributions.

Legacy Yangji's works are among the few Buddhist sculptures that remain today and therefore give valuable clues to the state of Buddhist art during this period. The Central Asian influences in his work reflect the rich cultural dialogue and transmission that took place during ancient times.

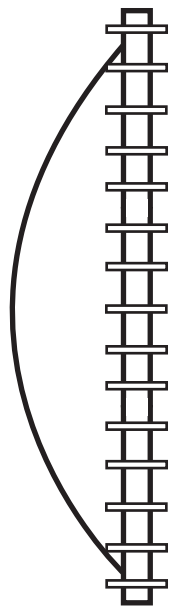




Green-glazed tiles with Four Guardian King images from Sach'onwang Temple, Kyongju, 679 CE

Reproduced by permission of the Kyongju National Museum of Korea.





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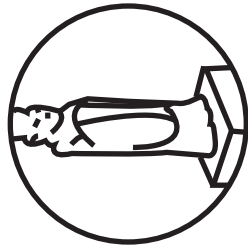
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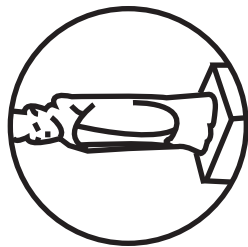
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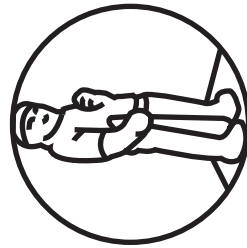
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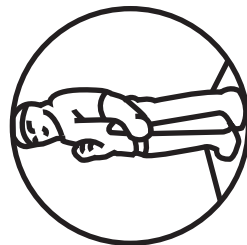
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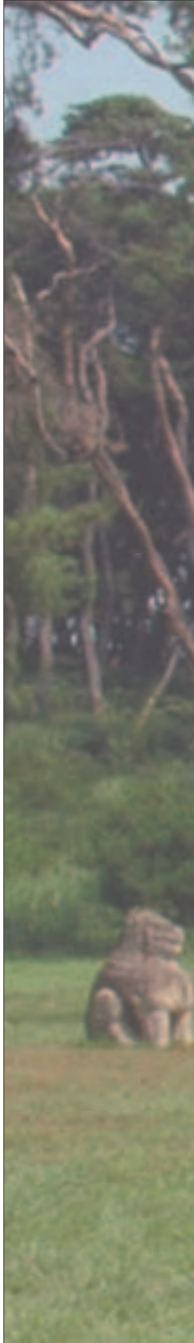
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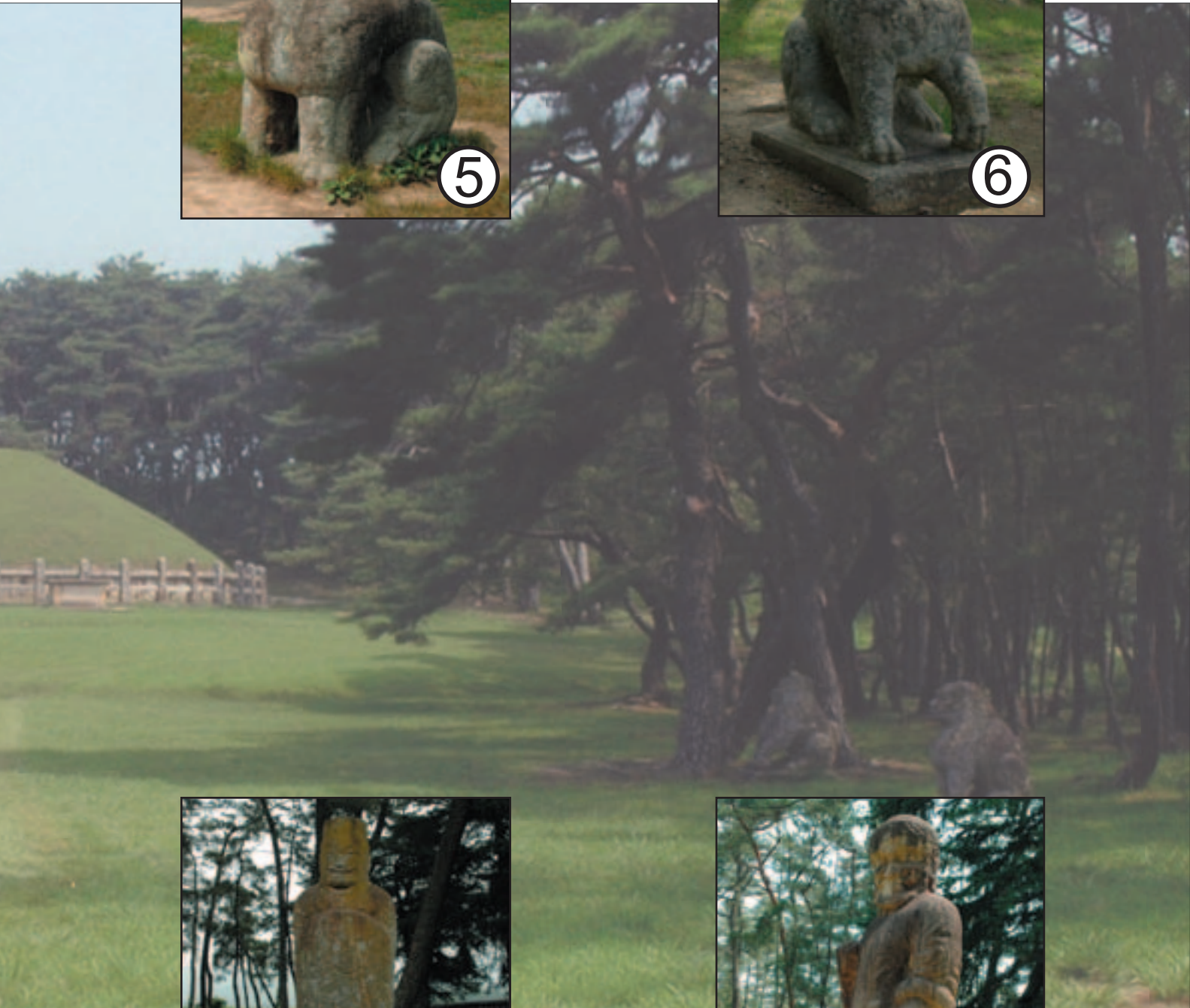


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Cultural Relics Illustrating a Rich Cultural Dialogue and Transmission

At Kyongju's Kwaenung, which is presumably the tomb of King Wonsong (reigned 785–798 CE) of Silla, a walkway is lined with facing statues of both civil and military officers. The nine-foot military stone guards have Central Asian features with deep-set eyes, high nose ridges and headbands that resemble those worn by Iranians during that time. The stone statues of the civil officers seem to resemble the Uighur with square jaws, protruding noses, full beards and large eyes. Iryon wrote in his *Samguk Yusa* that a man from Hexi visited Silla in the company of a Tang envoy around the same time period. There is no evidence that the man from Hexi was definitely Uighur, but he was from Central Asia.





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PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-7. KO SONJI: KOREAN GENERAL OF TANG CHINA (?–755 CE)

Silla Background After Silla unified Korea, with Tang assistance, many people left the Korean Peninsula. The Tang Chinese government resettled many Koguryo families in China. Although Silla achieved supremacy by unifying Korea with the former Paekche and Koguryo kingdoms, their peoples were excluded from high status by the rigid bone-rank system, forcing men of talent to establish careers elsewhere. Among them was Ko Sonji (Gao Xianzhi in Chinese), whose clan moved to China after the Tang-Silla conquest of Koguryo. There his father served as an officer in the Tang Chinese army. There are biographical records of Ko Sonji in the *Jiu Tang shu* (Old Tang History), the *Xin Tang shu* (New Tang History) and the *Zizhi tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government). However, there is no information about his birthplace, how or why his family went to China, or how his father made a career in the Tang army. Ko Sonji is remembered by later historians as a brave, handsome, quick-witted horseback rider and archer.

Foreign Influences The Tang government and its civil examination system allowed Koreans to study in China and take administrative positions. Once in the Chinese government, Ko became known by the Chinese pronunciation of his name: Gao Xianzhi (Kao Hsien-chih). Aided by his father's military status and his own talents, he was given the rank of general at age 20. By the end of the Kaiyuan (713–741) he was already the vice commander of Anxi. He was in charge of weapons and horses of the Four Garrisons when the Tibetans began to assert control over Gilgit and 20 other small hilly states, stopping them from sending tributary missions to the Tang court. At least three Chinese expeditions were sent to restore Chinese influence but to no avail. In 747 the task was entrusted to Ko Sonji by imperial decree. During the next four years he led three expeditions to Central Asia, establishing for himself a widespread fame and changing the later history of that part of the world. He became an influential figure in the international history of the Silk Road as a Chinese general.

Achievements In 747, Ko Sonji led a successful military expedition against a Tibetan-Arab coalition over the passes of the Pamirs in the Indus Valley. The Gilgit War is remembered by the severity of natural phenomena that Ko and his men experienced. That battle was critical to the lasting war between the Chinese and Tibetans for hegemony in Central Asia; his conquest of Kashmir was the biggest triumph achieved by the Tang in its territorial expansion into Central Asia that got underway at the beginning of the dynasty. The Chinese enjoyed only a few years of hegemony in Central Asia after the year of 747.



The achievements of Ko Sonji are illustrated by the famous Tang poet, Du Fu, who was a contemporary of Ko, and by Sir M. Aurel Stein, who actually visited the Pamir valleys in the early years of the 20th century.

An excerpt from Du Fu's poem reads:

Snow is falling. The army makes its way through the high mountains. The track is dangerous. For fear of slipping they cling from rock to rock. Their frozen fingers slip on ice several layers thick. There they are far distant from the land of Han

Expressing a great deal of admiration for the eighth-century general, Sir M. Aurel Stein wrote :

The Darkot Pass, with its six to seven miles of glacier slope on the north face, is a trying pass even during the few summer months when it is supposed to be practicable for men and unladen animals. Just opposite to it the path on the right bank is obstructed by precipitous cliffs rising amidst slopes where mighty boulders are heaped up in wildest confusion. Here all loads had to be taken off and carried by the men for some distance. For me it was no small satisfaction to see now with my own eyes how the scene of the exploit of Ko Sonji, the able Korean general who for the first, and perhaps the last time, led a real army across the Pamirs, and successfully pierced the great mountains rampart that defends Yasin and Gilgit from northern invasion. I could not mark my admiration for the feat by putting up the humblest cairn to his memory; for there was nothing but snow and ice for many feet below us. But I could not refrain from writing a note on the spot to my friend M. Chavannes . . . and telling him how in my thoughts I had performed 'kowitz' here to the memorial tablet of its hero.

Yuan, Waiming, George, *Ko Sonji (Kao Hsien-Chih) A Korean in the Chinese Military Service. Asia Yearbook Vol. 13-3* (Seoul: 1970), 155.

The Central Asian Silk Road was often under attack, and the Chinese needed control of the route to expand its own trade. Ko's victories in Gilgit and the Ferghana region helped secure Tang control over the Silk Roads, but it did not last long. In 751, Ko's forces were defeated by a Muslim army in the battle of Talas near the city of Taraz in Kazakhstan. Perhaps out of respect for Ko's ability, the Muslims did not pursue the retreating Chinese into Central Asia. Among the prisoners rounded up after the battle were many experts in paper and silk manufacturing, two closely guarded secrets of the Chinese, which found their way west to Europe, where they helped advance these industries.

Legacy As a foreign general, Ko is not generally known as a figure in Korean history. His career, however, is becoming better known as the dynamics of the Central Asian trade network are becoming more widely understood.

The battle of Talas River, the only battle between Arab Muslims and Chinese imperial armies, had significant ramifications for the future of China. It ended the Chinese advancement into Central Asia and led to a rebellion by An Lushan in 755, which brought about Ko Sonji's death and weakened the Tang until it collapsed a century and a half later. The Arabs were in a position to extend Islamic influence throughout Central Asia and its Silk Road network. Muslim shipping



in the Indian Ocean improved, which restricted contacts with Hindu and Buddhist areas.

Paper manufacturing, an unexpected byproduct from the battle, was first spread to Samarkand and Baghdad. Paper had been invented in China at least 650 years earlier, and Chinese prisoners who knew how to make paper were taken by the Arabs at the Talas River. The first paper factory was built by the local people in 751 CE, the year of Ko's third expedition. From there, paper-making techniques traveled to Damascus, Cairo and Morocco, and entered Europe through Italy and Spain.

When civilizations make contacts, cultural transmissions and changes occur. In addition to paper manufacturing, Westerners learned other techniques along the Silk Road.

Stein, M. Aurel, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1912)

The Impact of Ko Sonji's Campaign on Fortress Construction:

But in the use of the brushwood layers I could not fail to recognize a peculiarity with which ancient Chinese construction in the Tarim Basin had made me familiar. It was, no doubt, intended to assure greater consistency, and must have been used, as my subsequent explorations much farther to the east showed, from the very commencement of Chinese expansion into Central Asia. But later discoveries in the Lop-nor region and elsewhere have proved also that the Tibetan invaders of the Tang period, when building their own forts, did not neglect to copy this constructive expedient of their Chinese predecessors and opponents in this region. So, in the absence of other remains, it can scarcely now be decided whether the construction of the Kansir walls was due to the Chinese while they held for a few years the route to Yasin and Gilgit, or to the Tibetans when they returned after Ko Sonji's final retirement...

Yuan, Waiming George, *Ko Sonji (Kao Hsien-Chih) A Korean in the Chinese Military Service. Asia Yeonku Vol. 13-3* (Seoul: 1970), 163.

Who built the wall or walls does not concern us here but it is clear that Central Asians learned and mastered the Chinese style and techniques of constructing fortress walls through this historical event.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-8. KIM TAESONG: PRIME MINISTER AND PATRON OF PULGUksA AND SOKKURAM (ACTIVE 751–774 CE)

Silla Background According to legends about Kim Taesong, he was a very bright young man who excelled in the Silla court by his largely on the strength of his own learning. He did have some connections however, as he was born into Prime Minister Kim Munyang's family. One story about him, may suggest shamanic influence as well. The story relates an incident when Kim Taesong killed a bear while hunting as a young man. At night the bear appeared in his dream, threatening to destroy Kim Taesong unless he built a temple in the bear's honor. Kim Taesong eventually built three temples—one where he encountered the bear, another where he killed it and the last where he dreamed about it. The Korean creation myth of how humans were created includes a she-bear, and the idea of dreams being sacred can be seen in the story.

Tan'gun: First King of Korea

There was once a wise and brave Prince, Hwanung by name, son of the Heavenly King. The Prince asked his father to grant him the Beautiful Peninsula of Korea to govern. The King granted his wish, and he was dispatched to the Earth, bearing three Heavenly Seals, and accompanied by three thousand followers.

The Heavenly Prince arrived under the sacred sandalwood tree on the Taebaek Mountains, and ascended the throne. There he established the Sacred City. There were three ministers to carry out his orders, P'ungbaek (Earl Wind), Usa (Chancellor Rain), and Unsa (Chancellor Cloud), who were charged with the supervision of about three hundred and sixty officials, who controlled all things, such as grain, life, sickness, and the determination of good and evil.

At that time a bear and a tiger were living in a big cave near the sandalwood tree. They wished ardently that they could become human beings. Every day they prayed so earnestly before the tree that the Heavenly Prince, who was now the ruler of the land, was moved by their sincerity, and, giving them twenty bulbs of garlic and a bundle of mugwort, he said to them, "Eat these, and confine yourselves deep in your cave for one hundred days, and then you will become human."

So the bear and the tiger took the garlic and the mugwort and went into their cave. They prayed earnestly that their wish might be granted. The bear patiently endured weariness and hunger, and after twenty-one days became a beautiful woman, but the tiger ran away, for it could not tolerate long days sitting quietly in the cave.

The woman was overjoyed, and visiting the sandalwood again she prayed that she might become the mother of a child. Her ardent wish was regarded with favor, and before long she became queen, and gave birth to a prince, who was given the royal name Tan'gun, or the Sandalwood King.

The people of the country rejoiced at the birth of the prince, Tan'gun who reigned afterwards



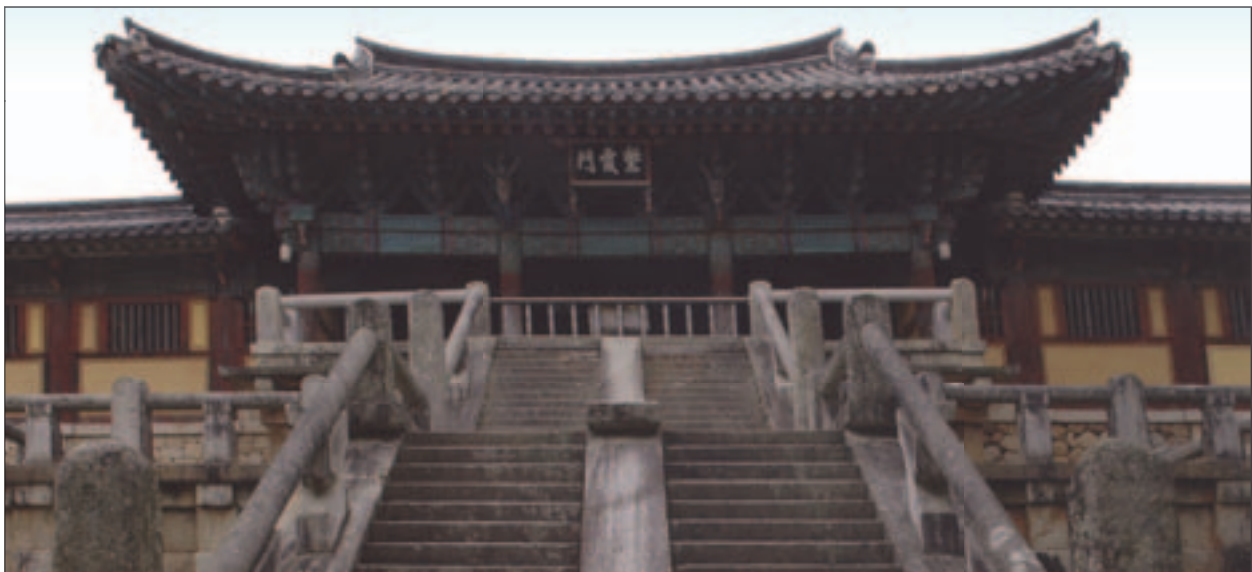
as the first human king of the peninsula. When he came to the throne he established a new capital at Pyongyang, and gave the kingdom the name of Choson which means Land of the Morning Calm. This was four thousand two hundred and eighty-three years ago. As the King's real name was Wang Gum, the capital was also known as the Castle of Wanggom.

He later removed the capital to Mount Asadal (now Mt. Kuwol in Hwanghae Province, North Korea), where there is now a shrine called Samsong (Three Saints-Hwanin, the Heavenly King; Hwanung, the Heavenly Prince; and Tan'gun, the first human king). It is said that when Tan'gun abdicated and left his throne to the next king he became a Sansin (Mountain God).

In the T'aebaek Mountains, now called Myohyang-san, where the Heavenly Prince descended and the first king was born, there is even to this day a cave, known as the cave of Tan'gun. There are also historical relics of Tan'gun on Mt. Mai, on the island of Kanghwa. Which is located near Seoul.

Zong, In-Sob, *Folk Tales from Korea* (Seoul: Hollym, 1982), 3-4.

Foreign Influences One of the reasons for Kim's success was that he was taught Chinese characters very early and, therefore, was useful in the royal government. He was also known as a pious Buddhist and other stories suggest he had originally, in his first life, been born the son of a poor widow. His mother's sacrifices of money to a temple made possible his reincarnation into a family who could educate him well. Another story suggests that his loyalty to his parents led him to building works to honor Buddha. Kim Taesong was influenced by the styles of Buddhist temples and sculptures found in Chinese and Silk Road sources, but he created distinctively Korean works.



Blue Cloud Bridge, Pulguk Temple, Kyongju, 751 CE

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Achievements Kim was the patron and master builder of two major works conceived during the reign of King Kyongdok (742–765 CE), both of which are on the World Heritage list. The first is Pulguk Temple (See p. 77), one of the most beautiful temples in East Asia. One of its distinguishing features is the design of two staircases or bridges that give a sense of welcome to the larger temple. The stairways are in two sections, the first representing the “Blue Cloud Bridge” where pilgrims pass from the world of suffering to enter Buddha’s Land, *pulguk*. The second stairway is smaller and called the “Lotus Flower Bridge” through which pilgrims enter the western paradise where the Buddha Amitabha lives. The design seems to reflect Kim’s “commoner first incarnation” with its bridges from a world of suffering to a more beautiful life. Instead of trying to awe the observer, the temple seems more accessible, even to commoners.

The second major work done under Kim Taesong’s direction was the Sokkuram (See pp. 78–81), a complicated cave structure, which contains one of the most famous statues of Buddha in Asia. There are also many other statues included in the design. While the overall format of cave Buddhist art was present in China and India, the Sokkuram site has become especially well known for the sense of proportion, serenity and the fitting of sculpture to the natural site. Instead of elaborate flames behind the Buddha’s head, there is the outline of a simple “halo” on the ceiling, illustrating a wheel of life and the future. The Buddha is seated with a “touching the earth” gesture with one hand, capturing the moment of Buddha’s enlightenment, a gesture often found in Korean art. Some have felt that this gesture relates more closely to common people and their closeness to nature.

Legacy Though both of these World Heritage sites may be interpreted in several different ways and some of the stories about Kim are legendary, the sites themselves are remarkable artistic achievements. They remain major pilgrimage places for Buddhists from all over the world and for those who want to see Korean art at its best.



Lotus Flower Bridge, Pulguk Temple, Kyongju, 751 CE

Reproduced by permission of Wha Ja Lee.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-9. HYECH'O: TRAVELING MONK (CA. 704–787 CE)

Silla Background The Silla scholar Ch'oe Ch'iwon wrote, “Despite long and distant roads, there are no bounds to where people can go, no countries where people can't travel. Through seas and language barriers, Koreans, Confucians, and Buddhists are moving west in their quest for knowledge.” There was a constant flow of people migrating to seek better opportunities in other countries, and the monk Hyech'o did just that, learning and sharing scholarly ideas wherever he traveled.

Source: Byong Ik Koh, “Silla Monk Hyech'o,” *Han'guk ui ingansang [Famous Koreans]*, Volume 3 (Seoul: Sinku Culture Publishing Company, 1965), 61.

Hyech'o earned the name the “Traveling Monk” for his boundless travels through China, India and Central Asia to study and spread Buddhist principles. He was born during the Unified Silla period when Buddhism was widely accepted and supported by the royal court. Although information about his early life in Silla does not exist, it is known that he went to study Buddhism in China at an early age.

Silla was the last of the three kingdoms in the Korean peninsula to adopt Buddhism, which it had learned from Paekche and Koguryo. The first Silla Buddhist monk, Kakdok traveled to China in 549 and later returned with Buddhist books. Many Buddhist monks were part of the Silla community in China, and people from Silla engaged in trade and even took the Tang civil service examinations to work in the Chinese government. During that time, it was not unusual for people to make the long journey to China to study Buddhism or Confucianism.

Foreign Influences In China's Guangzhou province, the southern part of China, Hyech'o became a student of Vajrabodhi, the Indian Buddhist monk who introduced Tantric Buddhism to China in 719. He decided to travel to India to follow the footsteps of previous Chinese and Korean monks who made pilgrimages to India. He went by sea to Sumatra and the Nicobar Island to reach the east coast of India. In his journey, Hyech'o visited the four sacred places of Buddhism, including Buddha's birthplace in India, where Buddha achieved enlightenment, gave his first lecture and died. He traveled to the five regions (north, south, east, west and center) of India and wrote about his observations of Indian society and culture as well as of the different regions, such as Kashmir, Tibet, Gandhara, Afganistan, Persia, Tashkent, western and eastern Turkestan, Samarkand, Pamir, Kashgar, Kucha and the Arab lands.



When he was on the way to south India, he composed a poem in five-word style:

On a moonlit night I looked towards the homeward path,
Floating clouds return by the wind.
I wish this letter to go with this opportunity,
The wind blows too fast; the clouds neither listen nor return.
My country is in the northern horizon,
Other lands lie at the western extremity.
No wild geese in the hot south,
Who will take my words to the homeland?

Source: Yang, Han-sung, et al., *The Hyech'o Diary: Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1984), 43.

In November 727, Hyech'o reached the western Chinese border and reported that the Chinese authority had helped him return to Chang'an, the capital city of China at the time. His journey was for five years. He resumed his study with Vajrabodhi and translated Tantric Buddhist sutras into Chinese and left behind hand-copied volumes. He was a great influence in the spread of Tantric Buddhism in Tang China and eventually became the third master of Tantric Buddhism. He never returned to Korea.

Achievements Hyech'o's writings and contributions were little known to the outside world until Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), a French scholar of Chinese Buddhism, learned about Hyech'o through his study of Buddhist books and manuscripts in the early 20th century. In 1904, he introduced Hyech'o in his article entitled "Two Travelers from China to India, Later Eighth Century." Pelliot wrote that he could not find any information on Hyech'o, however, he discovered that Hyech'o traveled to India and left a travelogue on the places of his visits in the eighth century. Since there was no mention of Hyech'o in an annotated bibliography written in 810, Pelliot assumed that his travels must have taken place before this time. In 1908 CE, a few years after his first writing on Hyecho, his assumption proved right. Pelliot discovered a copy of Hyech'o's diary in The Cave of Thousand Buddhas in Dunhuang. *Hyecho's Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India* was found amid piles of books and manuscripts of the Northern Wei, Sui and Tang dynasties of China. That year, Pelliot published an article introducing Hyech'o's life and work to the world. The book itself was published in 1911. In 1915, a Japanese scholar named Takakusu visited Beijing University and published an article about Hyech'o and discovered that he was from Silla. In this way, he and his book have been discovered and received wider recognition.

Legacy With the publication of *The Hyech'o Diary: Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1984), Hyech'o's life became accessible to a wider audience. The diary includes colorful entries with the monk's impressions of India and his disappointment at the deterioration and decline of Buddhism in India in the eighth century. The book was of interest because of its valuable ethnographic information about the food, local products, history, life style, religion, language, weather, marriage systems and inheritance customs of the places (India, Persia, Arabic lands and Central Asia) where he traveled. He was the first Korean to travel in the Arabic lands in 727, 25 years before General Ko Sonji's battle at the Talas River in 751, and to observe the rapport of the two civilizations of China and Islam.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-10. CHANG POGO: EMPEROR OF THE YELLOW SEA (CA. 790–846 CE)

Silla Background In the final years of Unified Silla (780–935 CE) on the Korean peninsula, when it also produced its greatest Buddhist art, internal strife plagued Silla and its power was declining. Silla kings and the true-bone rank aristocracy attempted to maintain the royal court but with little success. The role of the king dwindled to preserving the influence of his own clan while fighting the increasingly powerful clans in the provinces. It was during this time that Chang Pogo lived and became a successful seafarer who controlled the lucrative maritime trade of the Silk Road products among the three East Asian countries.

Chang Pogo belonged to a family of commoners from Wan Island, located on the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula. Although it was part of the Unified Silla state it was not part of the original Silla. A fisherman, Chang's father was at the bottom of the bone-rank system, but he probably taught his son about the sea. Chang became an experienced sailor and was peerless in his horsemanship. His ambition drove him to leave behind the limited opportunities in Silla to pursue a brighter future in China.

Foreign Influence As China's military was supposedly based on merit, Chang Pogo's ability enabled him to become a commander in the Tang military and to develop close connections to Chinese officials. In an era when Tang China was open to foreign trade, Chang had three major advantages: 1) his Chinese contacts could help him expand his trading business; 2) his role as a migrant, like other Silla migrants to the Shandong peninsula, meant that he could speak both Chinese and Korean and serve as a mediator for emigrants; and 3) he had a reputation of working alongside his followers, rather than being a Silla aristocrat. These factors helped Chang become the top maritime trader of his era.

Achievements After serving Tang China, Chang Pogo returned to his former home, Wan Island in southwestern Korea, to establish a garrison called Ch'onghaejin. Using this as a base, he recruited a private army and navy of 10,000 and began patrolling the East Asian region. Eventually, he controlled most of the trade with Silla connections to China and Japan. There were three outcomes of his role:

1. it brought stability from pirate raids and, as trade was more likely to arrive at its destination, trade increased;
2. an international exchange of ideas was also fostered, as demonstrated by the Buddhist monk Ennin's report that he had applied for permission to use Silla ships on his travels from India to Japan; and
3. the slavery trade, especially for Korean victims, was greatly reduced—not only did pirates raid ships for their goods, but they also raided villages, capturing people to be sold in China or Japan as slaves—Since stopping the slave trade was one of Chang Pogo's motives for building his forces.



The story of Chang Pogo's fall from power is a dramatic one. Once he became very powerful, he tried to get involved with royal Silla leadership. At a time when the nobles were gaining more and more power from King Munsong (reigned 839–57), Chang offered his support if the king would marry Chang's daughter. The idea of this marriage went against the long held Silla bone-rank tradition. When the aristocrats prevented the marriage, Chang revolted against the king. An assassin named Yom Chang then was sent to kill Chang, who died in 846. The Ch'onghae Garrison was demolished in 851, ending Silla's dominance of East Asian trade.

Legacy In the 20th century, Korea endured the difficult Japanese occupation, a devastating Korean War, and the division of the Korean Peninsula into North and South Korea. Nonetheless, South Korea's current economy reflects the achievements of Chang, who advanced international trade to become an essential element in Korean prosperity. Today, shipbuilding is one of South Korea's main industries, and the country is a major trader in the world's economy. Chang's achievements are an integral part of the studied history of Silla and Korea. The Chang Pogo Memorial Foundation encourages international trade conferences like "Chang Pogo and Global Trade in the 21st Century" to further promote this industry. In 1993, a Korean musical about Chang's life was produced and played both in South Korea and other countries. The final song of the musical includes these lines: "Let's open the sea that was closed for a thousand years. Open the closed sea! Go out to the world!"

The Maritime Trade

The Tang dynasty's advancements in seafaring led China to establish two maritime Silk Road networks: one to the Persian Gulf and the other to East Africa. Trade between the east and west was very active, and Koreans traded with Arabian and Persian merchants in cities like Yangzi, Suzhou and Mingzhou in the Yangzi River basin. These goods were then shipped off to Korea and Japan for commerce. Chinese and Japanese history books on the history of Tang China contain many references to Chang Pogo's contributions. His maritime routes in the Yellow Sea and South China Sea are still in use today. The list of trade items among China, Korea and Japan reveals an active trading of products among Korea, Japan, China, Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Traded products included silk, wool, gold and silver objects from Korea; perfume and fabric dye materials from Southeast Asia and Central Asia; and ceramics, leather goods and stationery from China.



Ennin's Travels in Tang China

Ennin was a Japanese monk who traveled in China in search of Buddhism from 837–847 CE. Ennin's diary, *The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, a richly detailed account of daily life and ways of thought in ninth century China, describes Korean communities in China and their business and religious activities. In his book, he wrote that he was able to travel and study throughout China because Chang Pogo had written a letter of sponsorship on his behalf. According to Ennin, large communities of Koreans had settled in China's coastline region, from the Shandong peninsula to the entrance of the Yangzi River basin. There were 250 monks in the Shandong peninsula alone at the time of Ennin's visit.

In *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, author Edwin O. Reischauer wrote that Chang Pogo was the trade prince of the maritime commercial empire. During Chang's tenure in China, he became the protector of Korean communities in China and controlled maritime trade among China, Korea and Japan. An influential expatriate, Chang was bilingual and an effective mediator between the Chinese and Koreans who, like him, had emigrated for better opportunities. His Chinese contacts further helped him expand his trading business.

Reischauer, Edwin O., *Ennin's Travels in Tang China* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1955), 272-294, esp. pp. 287-294. Also see Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1955)





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-11. CH'OE CH'IWON: FATHER OF KOREAN LITERATURE (CA. 857–915 CE)

Silla Background The Silla writer Ch'oe Ch'iwon may have received the nickname “Lone Cloud” for a variety of reasons, but one might be that he had never fully felt part of Silla’s culture. He was from the Saryang district of the capital of Silla, but his family originally came from Kaya (42–562), a state that had a flourishing iron culture in the south part of Korea from the second to third centuries. Silla eventually absorbed Kaya in the sixth century.

At age 12, Ch'oe was sent to China to study. In 874, at age 18, he passed the Tang’s civil service examination and held a number of posts as a writer and recorder of current events until he returned to Silla in 885. During his stay in Tang, he associated with famous literary figures and left a voluminous amount of poems and essays in China. When he returned to Korea at age 28, he delivered a letter from the Chinese emperor to the Silla king. The Silla rulers never fully accepted him, because of the rigid bone-rank class system and Silla’s decline in power. Ch'oe was able to serve only in some minor government positions and later retired to Haein Temple in the Kaya Mountains to write, leaving many famous poems and a collection of his writings from his stay in China. According to legend, he is said to have become a Taoist immortal in the Kaya Mountains.

Another popular legend about Ch'oe Ch'iwon, preserved in the literary genre of strange tales in both China and Korea, tells of a romantic interlude he enjoyed with the ghosts of two sisters. Posted to southern China after passing the civil service examination in Tang, he came across an old burial mound one day while he was out wandering. The stone marker read “Tomb of Two Women.” Ch'oe wrote an impromptu poem lamenting the two women that so touched the spirits of the two sisters buried inside that they visited him for a night. After entertaining each other by writing romantic poems and sharing wine, the spirits told a sad tale of how they had been raised by a local official and how they had hoped to marry a bright scholar such as Ch'oe. However, circumstances were such that their father married them to merchants. Both died young and full of resentment for their ill fortune and were buried together. After a night of pleasure the ghosts reported that they could never visit Ch'oe again. According to the tale Ch'oe pined after these two sisters long after his adventure ended and he returned to Silla, so this story may also attempt to account for Ch'oe’s melancholy and his nickname “Lone Cloud.” The narrative is important because it not only preserves romantic poetry and tells us what people did for fun but also highlights the reservations some people had about the Confucian value of family loyalty.

Foreign Influences Ch'oe Ch'iwon’s biography suggests the ever increasing importance of Chinese-style learning in Silla’s educational system. No longer was it just mature monks going to China to study, but Silla parents were sending their young sons to be part of the Tang system. According to Ch'oe’s autobiography, his father sent him off with these words, “If you cannot pass the Chinese examinations in ten years, you are not worthy of being my son. I will tell people I have no son. Study hard.” Ch'oe did so, and became the first Korean to pass the Tang examinations.



He then served in various positions within the Tang bureaucracy until he returned to Silla as an envoy. Though the Silla king later appointed him as a magistrate, he did not get the kind of recognition usually given his Tang rank.

Achievements Ch'oe is dubbed as the "Father of Korean Literature" for his skillful poetry and calligraphy. His "Lone Cloud" nickname is reflected in the following poem, originally written in Chinese:

Autumn winds are blowing
I chant a sad song
So few people in this world
have ever understood me.
It is the third watch
rain splatters the window.
I sit in front of the lamp
my spirit 10,000 li away.

As the Silla monarchy seemed less and less capable of controlling its society, Ch'oe seemed to have shifted his loyalty to Wang Kon, to whom Silla eventually surrendered. Ch'oe wrote:

The leaves of the Forest of Kyerim have fallen,
but the needles of the Snow Geese Pass are still green.

Note: Kyerim is an ancient name for Silla. Snow Geese Pass is Wang Kon's place of origin.

In another poem, Ch'oe reflects upon the decline of Silla, which he alludes to as the "flat mountains":

Stopping my horse at Sandy Pavilion, I wait for the boat.
A dense fog cover me—here ancient worries.
Also, as when the mountains are flat and the rivers dry,
the hardship of human parting will be seen no more.

Legacy A Korean pioneer of Confucian studies, Ch'oe wrote about Silla kings and history from a Confucian perspective and believed that Silla should adopt Confucianism as its new political ideology. He trained late Silla scholars in Confucianism and was very influential among scholars in the next kingdom, Koryo which began to advocate for implementing Confucianism. An example of Confucian influence was the civil service examination, which resulted in a more effective bureaucracy because officials were appointed to not by lineage or class but according to skills and merit. As a result, capable scholars began to replace upper class family members who had previously enjoyed positions of authority in the government. Ch'oe, like Sol Ch'ong, was canonized as a saint of Confucianism during the Koryo period.

Today, Koreans write in the Korean alphabet, *han'gul*. But though he lived at a time when Koreans wrote with Chinese characters, he is still considered to be one of the first major Korean writers and calligraphers. His writing reflected a blend of Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist ideas and perspectives. Although most of his works have been lost, his reputation was such that he is memorialized in the Confucian Shrine in Seoul. Korean literature still includes many legends about Ch'oe Ch'iwon.



The writings of Ch'oe Ch'iwon show him to be the most sophisticated Korean thinker of his time and a master of Chinese literature. This is significant because he also maintained a deep respect for the customs of Silla. In writing a funerary inscription for a *hwarang*, he praised his country for preserving its own “wonderful and mysterious way” in the traditions of the *hwarang*. He then explained that this Korean way embraced the Three Teachings imported from China: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. To him the Tao (way, study, truth) was not restricted to state boundaries and it went beyond all borders. In other words, people should not be restricted by their national borders to pursue learning and should be encouraged to adopt ideas from different cultures. This shows how he was a cosmopolitan thinker at the time.

Lee, Peter H., et al., ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 101-102.





PART III. SILLAN INDIVIDUALS AND THE SILK ROAD

SECTION B-12. WANG KON: CONQUEROR OF SILLA AND FOUNDER OF KORYO (877–943 CE)

Silla Background By the tenth century, the power of Silla had declined. Much of the land was not in royal hands but instead controlled by local nobles who did not pay taxes. The conflict between Buddhist and Confucian supporters weakened a central vision of what Silla should be. Rulers of Silla seemed more concerned with their own court than with maintaining the overall prosperity of their country. The result was a series of rebellions, particularly in areas like the former Paekche and Koguryo states which had never been fully assimilated into Unified Silla. One of these rebels was Kungye who founded the Later Koguryo Kingdom with his respected general Wang Kon, who was himself from a powerful clan located at Songak (modern day Kaesong), an area that had controlled much maritime trade.

Foreign Influences One of the reasons men like Kungye from the north did not hesitate to attack Silla's central authority was that they had less to fear from China. By the ninth century, Tang was also in decline, both financially and militarily. With local warlords becoming increasingly powerful, the Tang Dynasty ended in 907 and was not replaced until 960 when the Song Dynasty restored a central Chinese government. Silla had, in the past, often used her relationship with China to ward off her Korean rivals, but could no longer turn to Tang for major support.

Achievements The most significant of Wang Kon's achievements is that he founded the state of Koryo (918–1392) and became its first ruler, posthumously named T'aejo. But his path to that end was rather complicated and it took all his diplomatic and military abilities to succeed. Essentially, he overcame three men to unify Korea under his own leadership

The first man was Kungye, a Silla prince who started a rebellion in Koguryo after he was expelled from Silla's capital. He was known to be cruel and erratic and even claimed to have the supernatural power to read people's minds. Wang Kon and his supporters overthrew Kungye in 918. The second man he defeated was Kyonhwon, a Paekche rebel who devastated Silla with his attacks, even raping members of the Silla royal family and forcing King Kyongae to fall on his sword. Wang Kon, through both his military prowess and his use of rewards to rebels, managed to defeat Kyonhwon in 936. The final person he needed to overthrow was the ruler of Silla, which he accomplished relatively easily since Silla was already so unstable. The Silla king's son, the crown prince, was quoted to saying to his father, "How can you decide in one morning to end a dynasty of a thousand years?"

Wang Kon, however, did not try to destroy Silla as Kyonhwon had wanted to do. In fact, he ordered that the cultural treasures of Silla be preserved, such as the Buddhist temples, the nine-story pagoda at Hwangnyong Temple, and the jade belt of the king. He gave the former Silla king Kyongsun (reigned 927–935) a high post in his government and married a woman of the Silla royal family so that his heirs would be part of the Silla aristocracy. Though he moved the capital to Kaesong in the north, he protected the cultural sites of Silla. His kingdom of Koryo lasted until 1392 when the Choson kingdom (1392–1910) was established.



Legacy In one sense Wang Kon was an enemy of Silla who absorbed the kingdom and defeated various rebels. But he was no ordinary enemy. Through his vision of unification and his diplomatic efforts, he was able to reconcile Silla's former leaders to Koryo's dominance, in the process averting widespread violence, saving cultural properties, effectively utilizing the talents of former Silla officials and smoothing the way for the integration of future conquered kingdoms.

In North Korea, most notably, he is seen as one of Korea's greatest heroes for carrying on the Koguryo tradition of northern leadership of the Korean peninsula. According to North Korean sources, his tomb has been recently excavated and a representation of Wang Kon has been found in a small statue. For South Koreans, Wang Kon is considered a more ambiguous figure because he did not seek to regain all of the ancient Koguryo lands in Manchuria and because he sought close relations and expanded cultural contact with China. Nevertheless, he founded a dynasty that lasted nearly five centuries, which produced some of the world's most beautiful types of ceramics, celadon, and was the first to publish books using moveable metal type.





PART IV. CONCLUDING EXERCISE
DOES INTERNATIONAL TRADE HURT OR HELP A CULTURE?
CASE STUDY: DEBATE ABOUT SILLA

The following are some arguments, pro and con, about the impact of the Silk Road on Silla. However, many of the same arguments may prove true for other cultures along ancient trade routes or the globalizing world today. The exercise may be done in any of the following three ways:

1. Individually as a written position paper in which the student develops a thesis and decides which set of points is most convincing.
2. In small groups examining the arguments and together answering the questions.
3. As a whole class divided into two groups, pro and con, to debate which side carries the most compelling arguments.

Finally, the class may wish to examine American culture and other cultures they have studied to see if Silla's experience compares to other eras as well.

A. Arguments Suggesting That Silla Was Hurt By International Trade

1. New beliefs like Buddhism and Confucianism challenged Silla's system of government, the bone-rank order, and made people more likely to revolt.
2. Confucian ideas lowered the status of women and conforming to Chinese law took away some of the property rights women once had.
3. Switching to crops more suitable to trade made large landowners less concerned with their peasants' needs. For example, peasants had to cultivate mulberry trees for silk worms rather than fruit or nut trees, which could have produced food for them as well.
4. The new desire on the part of landowners for luxury goods, like glass and silk, led to funds being sent to other countries instead of being used to purchase goods at home.
5. Trying to protect trade routes, like Chang Pogo's control of the East Asian sea trade, was expensive. The fleets, armies and forts helped drain Silla's economy.
6. Further undermining the economy were the numerous Buddhist projects, such as the building of monasteries, temples, statues and pagodas. While Silla's early shamanic roots emphasized the unadulterated beauty and spirit of nature, Buddhism seemed to require massive funding.
7. Being part of an international trade network meant that Silla's fate was tied to other nations. If China became too powerful, it might swallow up Silla as China's army had tried to do. On the other hand, when the Tang dynasty began to decline, so did Silla's ability to carry on peaceful trade.



8. Sending Silla citizens to study in a foreign nation to learn new ideas may have created a problem upon their return. They may have lost their sense of Silla culture and only wished to impose foreign ideas.
9. If only members of the upper class had access to new learning and new goods, the gulf between the classes widened. Silla's nobles increasingly lost concern for peasant welfare.
10. Trade can produce a new group of individuals, like Chang Pogo, who had the wealth and means to challenge the ruling class.

B. Arguments Suggesting That Silla Was Helped By International Trade

1. Silla's prosperity was advanced by being able to trade goods like rice, paper, silk and pottery to both the Chinese and Japanese.
2. New ideas about religion, science and education stimulated Silla citizens to produce great art and the beginnings of Korean written literature.
3. Buddhist beliefs encouraged the building of temples and the *hwarang* spirit, which served as major defenses for Silla. The huge Hwangnyong Temple acted as a base for the "fighting monks" of Silla.
4. Buddhist ideas about the ability of all souls to reach nirvana encouraged a positive attitude toward commoners and women, enabling Queen Sondok and Queen Chindok to rule Silla.
5. Trade allowed commoners another way of acquiring wealth, and talented Koreans who were limited by the bone-rank system could serve in the Tang government.
6. With the use of written characters from the Chinese, Korean stories and poems could be preserved and exchanged with other cultures.
7. Silla's alliance with China gave it access not only to Chinese culture but also to the other states along the various travel networks. Thus, Silla was inspired by other styles of art from Greece, the Arab lands, India and Central Asia.
8. The need to protect trade routes encouraged the reorganization of the army along a Chinese model, making Silla stronger and more able to unify Korea. Silla's was the first real unification of the peninsula and, therefore, an important step in Korean history, paving the way for later dynasties.
9. With increased wealth, the capital of Kyongju became a "city of tiled roofs," meaning that its inhabitants were well-off and living in more comfortable, fire-proof homes.
10. Silla's legacies, such the temples, bells, major art works, martial arts, women rulers, poetry and philosophy, are considerable. Bringing new ideas and goods into Silla made the state notable in world history, not just another long forgotten people.





PART V. ARTICLES FOR ADVANCED READERS

CULTURAL EXCHANGES ACROSS NORTH ASIA

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Today we come to the last day in this seminar on Korea and the Silk Road. It is my job to help you bring it all together and to raise some issues of a general nature about how the Silk Road commerce affected the cultures of eastern Eurasia. I will begin by emphasizing four basic insights that have appeared in your readings and in the presentations.

1. The Silk Road is not just the trade routes leading from China to Central Asia and Northern India and from Central Asia to the eastern Mediterranean, but also includes the roads of exchange that stretch from China to Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Malaysia. From the 10th century until the 16th century the Sea Silk Road replaces the land route and extends Eastern Eurasian commerce to Indonesia, Southern India, Arabia and Africa.

2. If Silk Road commerce is responsible for the development of periods of technological and cultural florescence in Tang China, Silla Korea and Nara and Heian Period Japan, it continued to have effects well beyond these periods of florescence. Even as the older land-based Silk Road ceased in the 10th century, and was replaced by maritime commerce, goods and technologies, cultures and ideas continued to spread even after the Muslim and Mongol conquests.

3. The Silk Road was not just the means for exchanging technologies and manufactured goods, but also the exchange of people and cultures. What may have started off as an attempt to procure exotic goods, soon became the means of creating new cultures as merchants, missionaries, and pilgrims from many of the countries of Asia learned to live in racial and culturally diverse circumstance. Syrians, Parthians, Sogdians, Kotanese, as well as Chinese and Koreans freely mixed in China and Central Asia. As a result all participants shared in each other's history.

4. If we think of the Silk Road as a trans-national trading route between the Mediterranean and East Asia, then we should make a distinction between its two parts. The trading roads of Syria and Persia linking the Mediterranean to Central India began to develop as early as the 4th century BCE. Alexander's conquest of these regions in 330 BCE did more than spread Greek ideas; it also brought about emigration of various peoples. Tribesmen from Palmyra, Parthia, Scythia moved about the region and acted as cultural ambassadors and merchants of exotic goods. Two centuries later



the eastern part of the Silk Road was created, linking China to the Kushana Empire in Northern India, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 128 BCE the Han emperor sent an envoy Zhang Xian west to form an alliance with the Yuezhi people against the Xiongnu (or Huns) who were invading China. Though the expedition failed, Zhang Xian was able to bring back detailed information about the regions west of China, especially information about a large breed of horse in Central Asia that once procured would prove effective in the Chinese battles against the Huns. More expeditions were sent, horses were obtained, and thereafter a lively commerce developed between China and Central Asia. A series of roads were established around the Taklimakhan Desert which eventually met up at Kashgar. From there roads went south to India and West to Persia. The eastern end of the Chinese Silk Road also followed Chinese roads to the Korean peninsula, and sea routes from Southern China across the Yellow Sea to Japan.

While the 3rd to the 5th centuries saw the establishment of the Silk Road, it was during the Tang Dynasty, 7th to the 10th centuries, that commerce flourished and non-Chinese poured into China. By the middle of the eighth century, there were well over five thousand foreigners living in the capital city of Chang'an. These included Turks, Iranians, Parthians, Indians, Japanese, Koreans, Malays and Vietnamese—mostly merchants and missionaries—and pilgrims.

North Asian commerce along the Silk Road included the exchange of Chinese silk, animal furs, ceramics, jade, iron, bronze and lacquerware for equally exotic foodstuffs, plants, animals, precious metals, and glass from the Mediterranean and India. Persians, Parthians, Sogdians, Kushans and later Central Asiatic Muslims served as the middlemen of this commerce. Trade was never direct, but done in stages as goods were deposited in Central Asian trading towns and then dispersed in several different directions.

While hundreds of kinds of goods were exchanged over the centuries, the most significant commodity was Buddhism, followed later by Christianity, Manicheism, Judaism and Islam. Chinese and Koreans pilgrims traveled to China and Central Asia and returned with Indian, Scythian and Parthian texts and teachers. From the 3rd to the 5th centuries, merchants, missionaries and pilgrims helped to spread Buddhism throughout North Asia. We have several important travel diaries of Buddhist monks that describe what they saw and the impact of Buddhism in the regions they traveled. These are the diaries of Faxian, Xuan Zang Yi Qing, as well as the diary of the Silla monk Hyech'o .

In the trading towns of Central Asia and Western China we also find sandstone Buddhist grottoes containing paintings, murals, sculpture and, most importantly, Buddhist, Nestorian and Manichean religious literature. These grottoes served as temples and later as Buddhist became active in China, they were replicated in the Grottoes of Yungang and Lungmen and Datong.

Because of the cultural and racial mix of Central Asia, it is almost certain that Pure Land Buddhism, later to become the most popular form of Buddhism throughout Asia, was a product of the Silk Road. Chan Buddhism may also have developed first in Central Asia before it was transmitted to China, Korea and Japan.

KOREAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUDDHIST WORLD IN CHINA AND BEYOND

Buddhism, one of the great religious traditions, as everyone will recognize, has had a great impact on both Asian and global culture. What is especially salient about Buddhism is both its flexibility and adaptability to varying cultural contexts. Its primary focus on the liberation of the self from the bonds of desire and the creation of an enlightened and flexible mind well adapted to the process of change allowed Buddhists to transcend the deep-seated notions of ethnic and cultural self-identification and assumptions about the self-evidentiary character of human experience. Though Buddhism did become identified with cultural forms in India, Tibet, Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan, it always maintained the notion that truth was always greater than its particular embodiments or localized applications.

Korean Buddhists of the ancient and medieval periods clearly displayed such an attitude. Their mastery of a multitude of languages, their willingness to travel in search of the Buddhist Dharma, and their self-chosen residence in non-Korean societies as learners or teachers are evidence of this. Korean Buddhists belonged to their own societies, of course, but they also participated in a much wider realm of Buddhist discourse and civilization that had allowed them to transcend racial and cultural boundaries. Their contributions to the development of Chinese, Japanese and even Indo-Tibetan Buddhism were significant.

One of the salient characteristics of Korean Buddhism up to the Choson period was an emphasis on scholasticism. After an initial period of missionization by Central Asian and Chinese monks, Korean Buddhists studied and commented on the Chinese Buddhist texts that filtered into the peninsula. When texts were not forthcoming, they traveled to China or to Central Asia and India, often to study and practice for long periods of time, or to aid the Chinese and Central Asian monks in the translation of Indic scriptures. Like the Chinese, Koreans were interested in understanding how the Buddhist texts they had received in piecemeal fashion related to each other. Unhampered by the notion that Buddhist texts were the product of sometimes contradictory and sectarian schools of Buddhist theory and practice or that the scriptures may have developed chronologically at different times and in different parts of the Buddhist world, Koreans studied every text they could obtain as though they were part of a single message. Korean monks also excelled in philosophical synthesis, being certain that if texts were properly understood all contradictions among them could be overcome.

One of the first contributions Koreans made to Buddhist philosophy was the formulation of the non-duality of the two types of truth: the provisional and the non-provisional. In the late 6th century the Koguryo monks Sungnang (d. 614), traveled to China and helped to establish the Madhyamika or Three Treatise School in China. This school was based on the writings of the Indian philosophers Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, whose treatises on logic and epistemology had been translated into Chinese in the early 5th century and were later transmitted to Koguryo from the Eastern Jin. The Koguryo monk Sungnang traveled to the state of Liang where he established the Three Treatise School at Sheshan. Based on his studies of the Three Treatises, Sungnang formulated the core doctrine of this school: the Madhyamika two-truth theory exists in three levels and as such represents a positive philosophical stance. His Chinese disciples Sengquan and Falang and his Parthian disciple Jizang propagated his teachings well until the Tang period, when the Madhyamika teachings were



absorbed into the Tiantai and Hua-yen and later Chan Schools. The importance of the Three Treatise School for the development of later Chinese Buddhist schools cannot be stressed enough, because it was Madhyamika logic and forms of argumentation that were used in the commentarial tradition in China, Korea and Japan. Scripture commentary gave rise to scripture lineages schools throughout North Asia, schools in which Korean monks and nuns were intimately involved.

A second notable contribution to the development of Chinese and Korean Buddhism was the Korean participation in the Vijñānavāda or Consciousness Only School. The most famous of the Korean students in China was the Silla monk Wonch'uk (613–696). Wonch'uk spent his life from age 15 in China. He was well versed in Sanskrit and honored by the Emperor Taizong. He had his own following in China and trained many of the best minds in The Vijñānavāda School. Though he never returned from China, his influence spread far beyond China to Central Asia, Tibet and Japan. As a token of his standing within the Chinese Buddhist community, his memorial stupa was placed alongside that of his teacher, Xuanzang (ca.596–664), and his classmate, Kuiji (632–682). He is considered by some to be the best student of Hsüan-tsang, even though his classmates and rivals, Kuiji and Huizhao (650–714), criticized him. Despite the rivalry among the students of Xuanzang, Wonch'uk's ten volume commentary on the Sandhinirmocanasutra (*Haesim milgyong so*) was taken to Dunhuang by Tanguang and translated into Tibetan by Chosgrub. Thus, his views on the Consciousness Only School were studied in Central Asia and Tibet. Like many of his Silla contemporaries, Wonch'uk interpreted the *Vijnaptimatrasiddhi* within the context of the one vehicle doctrine found in the *Avatamskasutra*. He was followed by many other Silla monks who also studied in Xuanzang's school. The *Yugaronki* or *Notes on the Yogacarabhumisastra* by the Silla monk Turyun is the only existing complete commentary on this canonical work. In this work reference is made to the opinions of twenty *vijnaptimatra* masters, of which eleven are Silla monks. Later in the 8th century the Silla monk Taehyon wrote an eight-volume commentary on the *Vijnaptimatrasiddhi*, which influenced many scholars in China, including the poet Bai Juyi.

Silla contributions to the founding of orthodox esoteric Buddhism in China and Japan are also noteworthy. Two Indian monks, Subhakarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi, brought orthodox Esoteric Buddhism to China. The Silla monk Hyonch'o studied the teachings of *Gharbhadhatumandala* under the Indian teacher Subhakarasiṃha and subsequently taught it to the Chinese monk Huiguo (764–805). It was Huiguo who helped to popularize esoteric Buddhism in the Tang. Hyonch'o's contemporary Hyech'o studied under the teacher Vajrabodhi and helped him to translate the *Treatise on Anuttarasamyaksambodhi* according to Amoghavajra. Together Huiguo and Hyonch'o transmitted the teachings of *Vajrabodhi* to a host of Silla monks and to one very important Japanese monk by the name of Kukai, the founder of the Esoteric Shingon Sect in Japan.

From the 8th to the 12th centuries, China, Unified Silla-Koryo and Heian Japan shared the common belief in Esoteric Buddhism, a form of Buddhism that easily assimilated native gods and shamanistic healing and good fortune practices in each country and thus increased the popularity of Buddhism. Esoteric emphasis on the avatars and embodiments of the Buddha in the form of *Vairocana* (The Primal Sun Buddha), *Avalokitesvara* (Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion) and *Amitabha* (the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Light) led to the development of Pure Land Buddhism among the masses.



Between 636–643 the Silla National Preceptor, Chajang, studied and lectured in China and was even asked to lecture on the *Avatamsakasutra* at the invitation of the Chinese emperor. His commentary on the *Amitabhasutra* was well known in Japan as reported, in part, by 13th century *Hokkekyo shigi* of Ryocho.

Finally, mention should be made of the Silla monk Wonhyo (617–686). Though he never traveled to China, his writings were influential in China and Japan, as well as in Korea. Wonhyo spent much of his life studying the various philosophical and religious lineages of Buddhism that had been transmitted to Silla during the Three Kingdoms period, and he created a synthetic understanding of them all. His first great accomplishment was to analyze and then synthesize the differences of *Madhyamika* and *Yogacara* by reference to the *Awakening of Faith*, a syncretic text that reduces all doctrinal differences to their source, the mind. This formulation was crucial in the later development of the Huayan and Chan schools in China, Korea, and Japan, where there was a universal reference to Wonhyo's commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*.

Wonhyo also applied this syncretic logic to his next contribution to North Asian Buddhism, the *Treatise on the Ten Approaches to the Reconciliation of Doctrinal Disputes* (*Simmun hwajaeng non*). Throughout the Silla period Koreans were presented with Chinese texts and commentaries, each of which claimed orthodoxy for one particular lineage over the texts and commentaries of other lineages. Wonhyo applied syncretic logic to all the lineage positions and demonstrated that can all be understood as various approaches to the same end, a single harmony. This treatise was so highly regarded that when it was disseminated in China, the Indian logician, Dignaga, had it translated into Sanskrit and then had it widely distributed in India.

Koreans continued to travel and study in China from the 9th to the 14th centuries. Monks spent many years mastering the latest currents in Chinese Buddhism, including Ch'an Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism. In China, Koreans set up Silla Temples (Silla-won) where Korean and Japanese students of Chan studied throughout the Tang and Song periods. They were aided financially by the castle lords that had appeared in the late Silla and early Koryo periods. These castle lords, excluded from the central government in Kyongju because of their descent, fostered in their own domains economic, cultural and trade exchanges with China and Japan.

Koreans not only lived and worked in China as students and teachers but also played a fundamental role in the transmission of continental culture in general and Buddhism in particular to Japan. It is probably no exaggeration to say that between the Asuka and mid-Heian periods in Japan, the principle actors in the Japanese adoption of Buddhism, Confucianism, and continental culture were Korean monks, nuns, classics scholars, artisans, and architects. From the 4th through the 7th centuries, Koreans, weary of their increasing political instability, frequently migrated to Japan while mostly scholars, priests, artists and artisans, as evidenced by the 815 court register, one third of the Yamato aristocracy, was Korean.

Beginning in 584 Paekche monks and nuns regularly went to Japan to teach both Buddhism and Chinese civilization. In 602 the Paekche monk Kwalluk arrived in Japan and taught the Japanese astronomy, calendar making, medicine, and geography at the Ganko Monastery. He was followed by Popchong who transmitted and taught the Confucian classics, and the



Koguryo monk Tamjing, who taught the Japanese the arts of brush, paper, and ink making as well as the use of stone handmills. Later, after the fall of Paekche, the monk Uigak went to Japan and instructed the Japanese in calligraphy and Chinese composition.

The transmission of Buddhism was also extensive. With the opening of relations between Paekche and Japan, a steady flow of Koreans began to enter Japan taking with them scriptures, statuary, Korean Buddhist commentaries, and the experience of organized Buddhist communities in Korea and China.

In 584 the Koguryo monk Hyep'yon arrived in Japan, became the teacher of Soga no Umako and established an order of nuns by ordaining three Japanese women. Hyeja, a Koguryo monk, and Hyech'ong, a Paekche monk, became teachers to the renowned Prince Shotoku in the third year of the reign of Empress Suiko (594) and trained him in the texts of the Three Treatises School, the *Saddharmapundaikasutra* and the *Vimalakirtisutra*. Shotoku was later to write his own commentaries on the *Saddharmapundarika* and *Vimalakirti* sutras as part of his effort to make Buddhism the state religion of Japan. In 605 the Koguryo monk Hyegwan, who had returned from China after studying the *Madhyamika* under Jizang, went to Japan and in 646 established the Three Treatise School (*Sanron*). Another Koguryo student of Jizang, the monk Todung, followed.

The Koguryo monk Tokchok was made overseer (*sungdo*) of the Japanese *sangha* by Empress Suiko in 624, thus helping to establish the first organizational structure of Buddhism. In 688 Emperor Jito honored the Paekche monk, Tojang, for his performance of a rainmaking ritual. Later Tojang composed a commentary on the *Satyasiddhisutra*, which became the basis for the Satyasiddhi School in Japan centered at Todai monastery. Both Paekche and Silla monks and nuns were instrumental in the establishment of the Buddhist precepts, and it was the Silla commentaries on the *Vinaya* that were studied by Nara and Heian period monks. The number of Korean monks and nuns living and working in Japan increased through out the 8th and 9th centuries, and in 758 there were so many Korean monks and nuns teaching in Japan that a Silla-style town was built from which they carried on their work.

While Korean monks and nuns helped to establish the main doctrinal schools of Buddhism in Japan, they and the artisans that accompanied them also built the first temples and monastery complexes in Japan. In 588 Paekche architects and painters constructed the Daibetsuo and Shitennoji monasteries using a style of arrangement of buildings along a single north-south axis that can still be seen in some extant Korean temples. Koguryo Buddhist architecture was also adopted in the creation of the Hokoji (later renamed Gankoji) in Asuka in 596. It differed from that of Paekche in that the additional image halls were added on the East and West sides of the central pagoda as were secondary gates. It was at Gankoji that many Korean teachers resided.

We should also make reference to the role of Koreans in secular affairs. One of the most important contribution to Japanese was the development of masked dance music (Jp.gigaku) in the 7th century. Paekche monks introduced Buddhist dramatic arts which had been brought to Korea from China and India. These masked dramas and their musical scores had been used as a form of public preaching in India and China and once introduced into the Three Kingdoms, flourished. After their introduction to Japan they were later transformed into No stage



drama during the Ashkigaga Period (1338–1573). This same form of Buddhist drama was secularized in the Choson period and became an anti-establishment dramatic performance known as talchum or Masked Dance.

Another notable Korean was Yamanoe Okura (Korean name unknown). He was the son of a Paekche doctor born in 660 and when the Silla–Tang alliance destroyed Paekche, he and his father joined the Paekche–Japanese forces that had sought to restore Paekche in the invasion of 663. When defeated, he and his father went to Japan. In 701 he was included in the list of envoys that were to be sent to China because of his linguistic ability in Chinese. Later he was appointed tutor of the Future Emperor Shomu and died in 733. His intellectual and religious background was informed by the Madhyamika Buddhism of Paekche. He is most noted in Japan for the fact that 40 of his poems are included in the *Manyoshu* (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), the oldest imperial collection of Japanese poetry as is a prose essay written in classical Chinese called Lamenting His Own Illness, which is also included in the *Manyoshu* and reflects his own knowledge of the Vimalakirti Sutra, an essay written towards the end of his life. His poetry also indicates that edible melons were brought to Japan by the Koreans.

KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN CONFUCIANISM IN CHINA AND JAPAN

Though much maligned by 19th and early 20th century Korean nationalists, the Confucian tradition was one of the most important social, political, and philosophical movements in Korea. It served as the primary source for the organization of the Korean people into a nation state and provided them with the basis for interaction with their neighbors in the region. Though the uses and adaptations of Confucianism and the degree to which it influenced all strata of Korean society varied according to the era, Koreans, like their neighbors, adopted the Confucian view that human nature is good, and virtuous humane leadership will produce moral and diligent behavior in others. Confucianism taught them that the best of all societies was one in which people were educated in good models, good rituals, and good communication, from the home all the way to the national leadership.

Until the appearance of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy in the Choson period, Koreans understood Confucianism, Buddhism and even Taoism as representing the three necessary traditions of truth. One of the earliest of the Korean Confucian philosophers, Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, in writing about the relationship between Confucianism and Buddhism said:

The Way (Dao) is not far from people, and [this is true for all] people, no matter what country they live in. And therefore our nation's youth practice both Buddhism and Confucianism.

This recognition that the search for truth is a universal human trait, not limited by social, racial or cultural circumstances and that truth is not restricted to a single form of learning was typical of the Korean approach to scholarship in the Silla and later Koryo periods.

It was during the Koryo that Confucianism gained ground. No longer strapped by the restrictions of birth and descent that had been the hallmarks of Silla caste society, Koryo Confucian literati, drawn from all levels of society, were able to establish the structures



of a bureaucratic meritocracy by establishing a system of civil service exams and public and private education. It should be noted, though, that Koryo Korean participation and development of Confucian culture was not exclusivistic. Most literati practiced Buddhism, and Buddhists in turn supported the dissemination of Confucian values in public life and private life.

From the Silla to the end of the Koryo, Korean scholars frequented the Chinese capital to complete their studies in Confucianism. Before the establishment of the civil service examination system, they would participate in the Chinese exams and receive bureaucratic status within China. When they could not travel to China for study, Koreans would use their periodic embassies to China as a way of meeting with Chinese scholars and purchasing Confucian texts. When the Mongols established the Yuan Empire, Koreans were allowed to use their own civil service examinations as qualifying examinations for the Yuan exams, and under the Mongol system of government Koreans were given bureaucratic ranks. With the wedding of the Mongol and Koryo royal families, Koryo crown princes and retired kings established official residences in the capital at Dadu (Beijing), which also functioned as scholarly centers for Korean and Chinese literati. Though Koreans contributed little to the development of Confucianism in China, it being an indigenous Chinese tradition, they did earn a reputation as serious and dedicated scholars of the Confucian classics.

Korean exportation of Confucianism to Japan was a different story. As early as 513 Paekche sent five classics scholars to Japan along with Buddhist statuary and scriptures. It is also known that the Buddhist monks and nuns that came to Japan in the 5th and 6th centuries were proficient in Confucian literature. In the *Nihongi* we are also told that in addition to the Koguryo and Paekche teachers of Prince Shotoku, there was also a Korean doctor (*paksa*) by the name of Kakka, who schooled the regent in the Confucian classics.

The effect of this schooling of the Japanese in Confucian texts can be best seen in the regency of Prince Shotoku. Confronted by the appearance of a unifying and expanding China and Korea, the Japanese government under the leadership of Shotoku sought to emulate the organization and culture of its closest neighbors. In order to centralize and strengthen Japan, it adopted many Chinese political and social institutions in order to enhance its prestige in the eyes of foreigners and domestic rivals. These included a reorganization of the court in accordance with Chinese and Korean models, the adoption of the Chinese calendar, the compilation of a national history, and most importantly, the promulgation of a national constitution and a tradition of law in which the Confucian ideals of government under the direction of a divine “son of Heaven” were made explicit.

With the establishment of the Choson kingdom, Confucianism in the form of Neo-Confucianism became the dominant and exclusive ideology of Koreans. This form of Confucianism was a highly personal, spiritualized reformulation of Confucian ideas. Its intent was both humanistic and secular: to replace the medieval Buddhist outlook that had dominated North Asian societies with a renewed and sophisticated conviction that it was only in the reality of social relations that humans would find fulfillment. Choson Koreans moved quickly to disestablish Buddhism, replace it with Confucian orthodoxy, and then enforce that orthodoxy on all levels of society. So thorough was their adherence to Neo-Confucian social, political and moral canons, that in time they were even critical of the Chinese, who did not measure up to the standards set forth in the Neo-Confucian texts.



Koreans had more success with the Japanese. At the end of the Heian period, Japan entered into its feudal period. The imperial system of authority and government that allowed Japan to emerge as a centralized state in the 6th century was decimated by intermittent wars between and among regional lords. In the mid 1500s a series of powerful military unifiers appeared—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideoyoshi and Ieyasu Tokugawa—whose chief ambition was to pacify and unify the whole country. One of the chief concerns of these unifiers was the development of a new political and social ideology that would keep the peace. Though they did not personally concern themselves with the formulation of such an ideology, they were aided by a number of scholars and teachers who were able to transform their coercive military power into a legitimate ruling authority. The new social order that was initiated in 1600 by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the last of the unifiers, was one that was to draw heavily from Neo-Confucian models of civil society, law, personal and collective discipline, and a shared ideology about the nature of human relations.

These scholars, including Fujiwara Seika, Yamazaki Ansai, Hayashi Razan and Kaibara Ekken, took their lessons from the writings and experiences of both Chinese and Korean Neo-Confucians. In the case of the Korean contributions, they were instructed by the disciples of two of Korea's most illustrious Neo-Confucian thinkers, Yi T'oebye and Yi Yulgok. From their Korean teachers they were able to forge an ideology of personal and social transformation that viewed nature as a field of knowledge that humans must investigate, engage in, and learn from, in order to contribute to the common good. This ideology was distinct from the dominant medieval Buddhist ideology of the impermanence of reality and emotional attachment as the root of suffering. It was an ideology intended to create a disciplined, hierarchically ordered, productive, and civic society in which the rulers and the ruled shared the moral imperative to abide by what was rational and decreed by the "Way of Heaven."

From 1598–1600 Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619), then a Buddhist monk, studied Neo-Confucianist interpretations of the classics under Kang Hang (1567–1618) a disciple of the Choson scholar Yi T'oebye (1501–1547). From T'oebye Seika adopted the Korean reformulation of the Neo-Confucian tradition of the Learning of the Mind, a form of spirituality or self-cultivation that would allow one to achieve sagehood. Seika left the monastery and became the founder of the Neo-Confucian movement and through his writings and disciples, Suzuki Shosan and Naoe Kanatsugu, transformed the ideology of the Tokugawa State. Later, another monk by the name of Asayama Irin'an (1589–1664) studied Neo-Confucianism with a member of the Korean embassy in 1609. Like Seika, Irin'an also left the monastery to become a Confucian teacher. In 1645 he rose to become the tutor to Tokugawa Tadanaga, the third son of Tokugawa Iyeyasu and brother of the then current shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu. Irin'an also published in 1638 and again in 1645 a popular defense of Neo-Confucianism in the form of the anti-Buddhist work, the *Kiyomizu monogatari*. This text, though popular, was addressed to the ruling class and demonstrated the appropriateness of Confucianism for solving the needs of Tokugawa society and the moral imperative of following the way of heaven (*tendo*). Another leading theorist of the Tokugawa period, Yamazaki Ansai (1618–82), based his writing on the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy on the works of T'oebye, and his disciple, Sato Naokata identified with T'oebye even more than with Ansai.



THE RETREAT INTO ETHNO-NATIONAL ISOLATIONISM

While there was a long history of Korean participation in regional and global cultures up to the 17th century, this state of affairs did not last. Beginning as early as the mid-Choson period, Koreans began to foster a sense of seclusion. This sense of seclusion turned into a national obsession following the depredations of the Japanese in the 1590s and the disaster of the Manchu invasion of 1636. Distrust and fear turned into national policy and the Choson government sealed the borders, seacoasts and discouraged contact with other peoples. Koreans viewed the “barbarian” Manchu replacement of the Ming Dynasty in 1644 as the loss of civilization in China. They saw themselves, then, “as the last custodians of civilization...and their task was no longer ‘Confucianization’ but the maintenance and transmission of Confucian norms in as pure a form as possible.” At the same time this self-chosen isolation helped to deepen the effects of Confucianism on Choson society. Patrilineality and patriarchy as represented in classical, Sung and Ming texts transformed native Korean non-patrilineal family structure. Uxorilocal marriage and the remarriage of daughters were abolished, and the adoption of male agnatic kin as heirs, even over the sons of concubines, became widespread. By the 18th century these Confucian values had penetrated the lowest strata of Choson society.

As part of their isolation and prompted by Neo-Confucian interest in recovering the ancient past, Choson Koreans also studied Korea’s history. From the 17th to the 20th centuries, they produced a series of local histories whose primary purpose was to demonstrate that the Korean racial and cultural identity was as ancient as, if not more ancient than that of the Chinese. From being ancient it was later described as being antecedent, that is, that values found in Neo-Confucianism had already existed in Korean culture long before the introduction of continental culture. Superior Korean adherence to Confucian tradition was in fact adherence to ancient Korean tradition. Once this shift had been made, Korean cultural historians could dismiss Confucianism as a foreign import that had prevented Koreans from understanding their true place in the world. This is exactly what occurred in the 19th century.

19th century Korean cultural historians conceived of Confucianism as an obstacle to modern development and as an external tradition inconsistent with Korean nationalism. They associated it with obsequiousness (*sadaejuu*) before foreign Chinese culture and the cause of the Korean loss of their independence. It was an anti-democratic feudal ideology that had sapped the Koreans by legitimizing a classed society and encouraging factionalism and regionalism in Korean politics and history. It was due to Confucian tradition that Koreans had become complacent and arrogant, identifying their own way of life as the model for East Asia. The Confucian-engineered belief in Korean cultural and moral superiority had led them to point where, blinded to the advancement of other nations, Koreans were ripe for colonization. These 19th and 20th century nationalists developed their own ideology of Korean cultural superiority and uniqueness. In this ideology Korean ethnic self-identification is linked not to the traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism or Taoism, or to Korean participation in a world in which such traditions are shared, but to a primordial set of beliefs and practices handed down in folk culture from the time of Tan’gun. These beliefs and practices identify the Korean or Han race with a worldview based on the concept of *han* or unity. Koreans alone have shared a unique consciousness of unity, while other races and peoples and the

cultures they represent have been divisive, competitive, and colonialist. In this reformulation of Korean identity, though, we should note that there is not just a little of the cultural superiority of the Confucian Choson period that it was meant to overcome. The same process of isolationism and ethno-cultural exclusivity also occurred in the late Tokugawa period.

THE NEW SILK ROAD

Though 19th and early 20th century Koreans have limited their outlook for the sake of national integrity, they have not abandoned their role as merchants, missionaries and pilgrims. In the later half of the 20th century Korea found itself divided by the superpowers and needed strong allies to survive. Since the end of the Korean War, Koreans have slowly, and then quickly begun to move out of their isolation. There are several examples. The first is BoA, a South Korean pop star who has become the rage in Japan where she is called the Korean Britney Spears. She began her career at 13 and now at the age of 18 she is the top selling artist in Japan. She sings in Korean, Japanese and Chinese to a combination of Japanese pop, R&B and hip hop. Her 2002 album *Listen to my Heart* sold more than 1.3 million copies in Japan and her second album *Valenti* also topped the charts in 2003. She regularly appears in Japanese television commercials and was dubbed the most influential Artist in Asia in 2004 at the MTV Asia award show.

In an age of globalization and long-term Korean experience abroad the nature of Korean studies has changed in two ways. The first is that Korean studies can no longer be limited to understanding the experience of Koreans on the peninsula but must also take into account the experience of Koreans who are living permanently abroad. Those Koreans represent a new generation of Koreans whose experiences and continued ethnic self-identification are changed by living in multilinguistic, multiracial and multicultural contexts. It is largely due to their continued presence abroad that there is an increase in global interest in Korea, its culture and its people. Second, Korean Studies must take into account the rapid changes occurring among Koreans on the peninsula as they meet the economic, political and cultural challenges of being a part of an increasingly borderless, global community. What is the state of peninsula Korean response to global diversity? How will peninsula Koreans reconstruct their understanding of themselves, their history, and their cultural heritage in order to maximize their participation in global affairs? How will this participation in global affairs change Korean ethnic identity? Both types of Koreans face similar challenges; both types are engaging in a dialogue with the collective Korean past as it does or does not make sense in the globalized present.

While this phenomenon of the globally interactive Korean may appear to be totally new, there is much in the collective Korean past that can serve as a mirror for guiding the present. At least until the mid-17th century, Koreans did not think of themselves merely as members of an ethnically distinct peninsula community. Rather, they thought of themselves as members of a larger regional, even global community. From the Three Kingdoms period onward, Korean Confucians and Buddhists went to live abroad in China, Japan and Central Asia. There, they contributed to the development of culture and civilization. Though they recognized that Chinese, Japanese, Central Asians and other peoples were culturally, socially and linguistically different, they also recognized them as human, able to exhibit the same kinds of virtues and ideals that Koreans prided themselves on. They were participants in and adherents of two universalistic worldviews, which they shared with the peoples around them.



I assume here that Koreans, at least in the past, did not, as they did after the 17th century, engage in cultural politics. The idea of competing cultural allegiances, as opposed to ethnic and national allegiance, is decidedly modern and narrow. Korean defense of their participation in a larger Confucian and Buddhist oikumene or worldview was not based on some unenlightened betrayal of their past, their own people or their heritage. It was an acknowledgement that they as Koreans were active participants and developers of a world civilization. Korean adoption and adaptation of Chinese Confucian and Buddhist outlooks and their transmission of what they had adopted and adapted to Japan, Central Asia, Tibet and even India should not be seen as an exercise in political and cultural hegemony, the extension of Korean cultural control. Rather, it should be seen as Korean, Japanese and Chinese Confucians have themselves expressed it, as an affirmation of human life and growth, the continued recovery of human dignity and humanness, and the transcendence of the particular and the finite in the search of the Way.

CONCLUSION

Korean contributions to the development of Asian civilization were both direct and indirect. Many lived abroad for a time and then returned to the peninsula; others stayed abroad and finished out their lives among non-Koreans. While their activities abroad had a direct impact on the development of other societies, oftentimes their activities within the peninsula also contributed to the development of those societies. It was especially through the medium of books that Koreans exerted their strongest influence, just as they had been influenced through the same medium.

While this tradition of regional and global engagement was a long-standing hallmark of Korean history and identity, it came to an abrupt end in the 17th century. Like most of its neighbors at the time, Koreans chose to turn inward. Over the period of the 17th to 20th centuries, xenophobia coupled to a sense of cultural and racial superiority came to replace the tradition of regional and global engagement. Japan, China and lands west of China became the domain of the “barbarian” and the “uncivilized.” Korea alone sought to maintain a Confucian civilization in its purest form, ignorant and distrustful of the changes that were soon to appear from the West.

What I have proposed here is that Korean heritage and history, whether for Koreans living on the peninsula or those living abroad, is greater and deeper than the economic, political or social concerns of the moment. Understanding who Koreans are is understanding who Koreans have been and how they have related to the peoples around them. Korean contributions to the development of Asian regional civilization have been momentous. In surveying those contributions, I have noted that Koreans for a large part of their history did not see themselves as standing alone or apart from other peoples. They received, developed and passed on to others what they recognized as the best of civilized behavior. They shared a global perspective even while they were part of a distinct society and culture. The Korean devotion to the truth allowed them to look beyond the limits of their own society and engage in a dialogue about truth with all they encountered. In our own present age of global convergence, this outlook should not only serve Koreans well but also the rest of humanity.



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PART V. ARTICLES FOR ADVANCED READERS

CULTURAL DIFFUSION ALONG THE SILK ROAD THE CASE OF SILLA'S GOLD METAL ORNAMENTS

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In 1921, villagers in Nosuh-dong, Kyongju, found an ancient gold crown lying exposed in the yard of a humble local house. The discovery led to a series of excavations at a nearby tumulus (a mound of earth piled over an ancient grave) from the Silla period. At the time, Silla wasn't known for the quality of its gold artifacts. However, inside the tumulus, archaeologists found a stunning array of gold crowns, belts, earrings, necklaces, shoes, swords and other objects.

Just as with this long unknown tumulus, there is much more to Silla—as a subject of historical study—than at first meets the eye. Though relatively isolated in the southeast corner of the Korean Peninsula, Silla was an important player in Korea, and throughout East Asia, during the fourth and fifth centuries of the common era. Diplomats from Silla practiced politics in the court of the Chinese emperor, and abundant natural resources made the kingdom a highly desirable trading partner.

The sophistication of Silla's arts and society are evident in *Hwangnamdaech'ong*, the largest Sillan tumulus (Fig. 1). Located in Tumuli Park, in Kyongju, *Hwangnamdaech'ong* dates from the fifth century. The tumulus measures 23 meters high and 120 meters in diameter. Experts have not positively identified the human remains entombed in *Hwangnamdaech'ong*. However, during excavations in the 1970s, archaeologists found an unparalleled wealth of art objects, tools and jewelry—over 50,000 artifacts in total—that provide a look at Silla during the height of its power. Among the more stunning items were gold crowns, gold belts, earrings, necklaces, large chestlaces made of gold and glass beads, saddles intricately decorated with hundreds of delicate green beetle wings, stirrups, harnesses, iron axes, and silver belt buckles.



Fig. 1. *Hwangnamdaech'ong*

Many of these artifacts reflect the influence of goods and ideas that came to Korea along the ancient trans-continental trade route known as the Silk Road. In this paper I will examine a selection of artifacts from *Hwangnamdaech'ong* (as well as surrounding tumuli throughout Kyongju) and discuss how these outside influences mixed with local traditions and beliefs to create distinctly Korean, and distinctly Sillan, items.

CROWNS

Excavations at *Hwangnamdaech'ong* and other tumuli in Kyongju have unearthed 27 gold, bronze and gilt-bronze crowns from the fifth century (Fig. 2). Signifying the wealth and power of the wearer, the excavated crowns each exhibit four features that tie them to Silk Road cultures: tree branch motifs, deer antler motifs, dangling disk pendants and hanging pendants.



Fig. 2. Fourth or fifth century gold crown from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*



TREE BRANCH MOTIFS

Tree branches are a persistent element in Sillan crowns, and can be traced back to earlier crown designs (Fig. 3). Scholars believe that this motif derives from animistic beliefs prevalent throughout northeast and central Asia since prehistoric times.

The tree was an important fixture in Asian animist spirituality, symbolizing the life giving, regenerative powers of nature. Prehistoric Siberian peoples believed that prior to incarnation at birth, human spirits lived in tree branches. Birch trees were believed to be paths that guided spirits to and from heaven.

From these groups, tree symbolism migrated to occupy an important place in Korean shamanist belief as well. The tree is an important element in Korea's creation myth. In the story of Tan'gun, the father of all Koreans, a bear and a tiger pray to become a woman under a sacred tree called *sindansu*.

Ancient Koreans also created sacred space known as a *sodo*. The *sodo* was a natural area defined by a tall tree. A bell and a drum were hung from the tree, and a shaman lived nearby. The *sodo* was considered a place of spiritual cleansing and rebirth. Criminals were allowed to seek sanctuary there, to gain access to its energies.



Fig. 3. Fourth to fifth century gold crown from Kyodong in Kyongju, Korea



DEER ANTLER MOTIFS

The deer antler motifs in Sillan crowns likewise resemble those found on crowns from the Sarmatian culture (Fig. 4), which occupied an area at the far end of the Silk Road, in the lower Don River region of present-day Russia. Made centuries before the Sillan crowns, these crowns exhibit many of the same ornate gold antlers with tree motifs. The Sarmatians were nomads who traversed a corridor between the Black Sea and northern China. It is possible that cultural diffusion may have occurred.

Elaborate deer antler motifs can be traced back even further, to gold deer figures found in excavations in southern Russia. Created in either the fourth or fifth century BCE by a people that lived along the southern edge of the Ural Mountains, the deer figures feature elongated ears and snouts (Fig. 5) may have been the source of deer antler motifs in Sillan crowns.

The antler motif of the Sarmatians would have been well suited to the cultural environment of northeast Asia. A primary food source during the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages, deer were, like trees, honored in animist traditions throughout northern Eurasia, Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula. (Fig. 6,7, and 8)



Fig. 4. First century gold crown with deer figures and tree motifs, from Khoklach Kurgan in southern Russia



Fig. 5. Fourth century BCE deer figure, with elaborate antlers, from Filippovka Kurgan in southern Russia



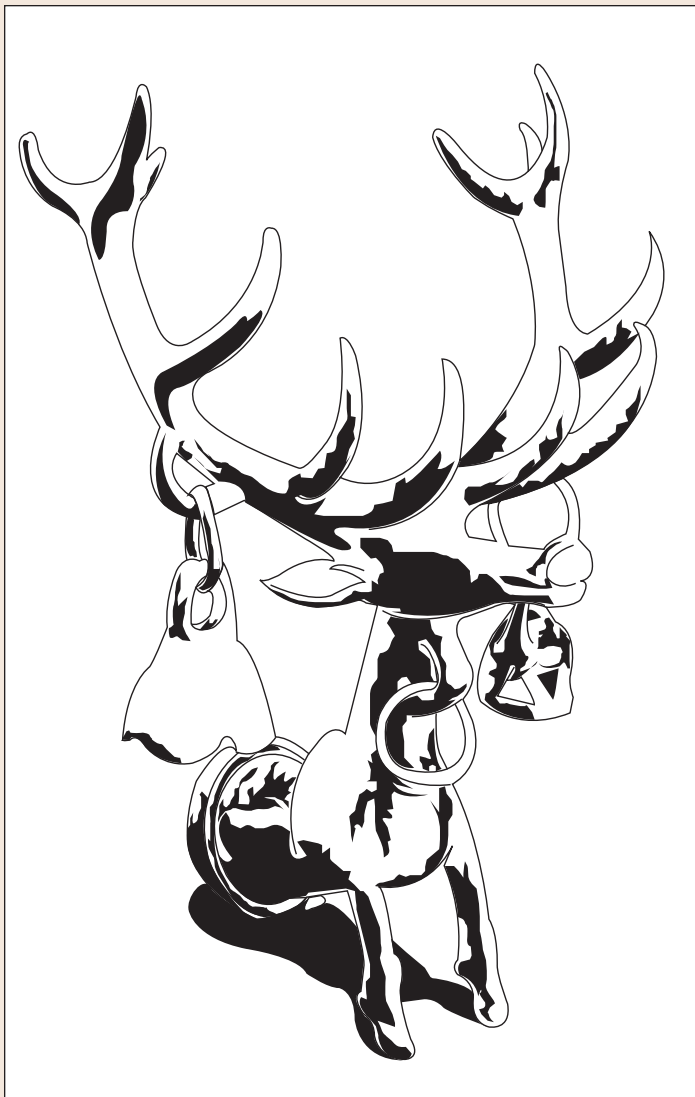


Fig. 6. Fifth century stag-shaped finial. Southern Russia.

Deer occupied an important place in Korean culture as well. Deer hunting is described as a favorite sport of the kings of Koguryo and Paekche in early historical records. Deer were sacrificed to ensure good harvests during the time, and thought to be creatures of beauty and power, as evidenced by bronze deer head sculpture dating from the first century unearthed in Yongch'on. A few of horse strap pendants with three-like deer antler motifs were in northern China as well as in the northern part of Korean peninsula: a silver horse strap pendant was found in Sokam-ni Number 219 Tomb in Pyongannamdo, Korea (Fig 8).

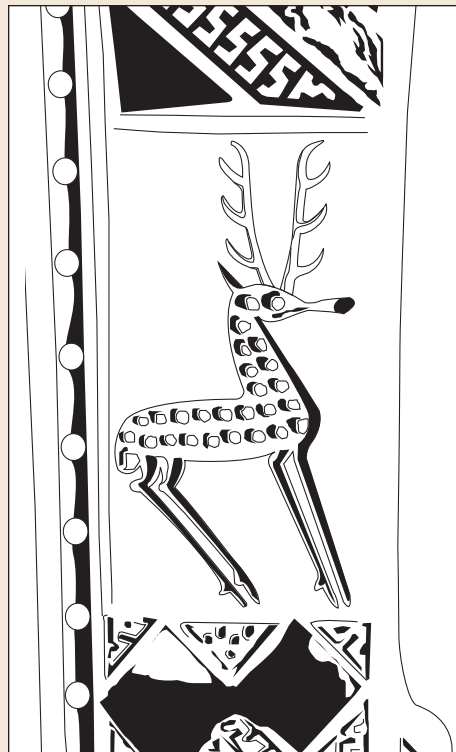


Fig. 7. Fifth century belt clasp with deer motif. Southern Russia.

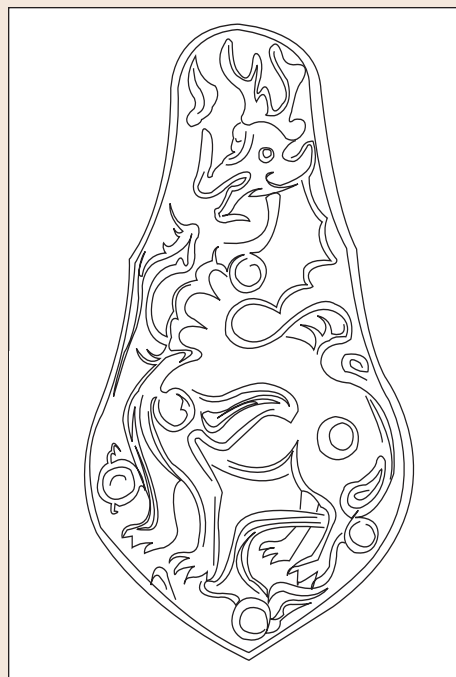


Fig. 8. First century silver plaque, excavated Sokam-ri Tomb 219 near Pyongyang.

DISK PENDANTS

Disk pendants—often gold, and attached to larger objects with thin, gold thread—were a common form of ornamentation for Sillan crowns, jewelry, equestrian objects and shoes. Disk pendants were first widely used by the smiths of Murong Xanbei in northern China and transmitted to Silla through Koguryo. However, the disks exhibit Greco-Roman, Parthian and Bactrian influences as well, and crowns adorned with disk pendants similar to those seen on Sillan objects have been found in the first century Tilly Tepe tomb in Afghanistan (Fig. 9).

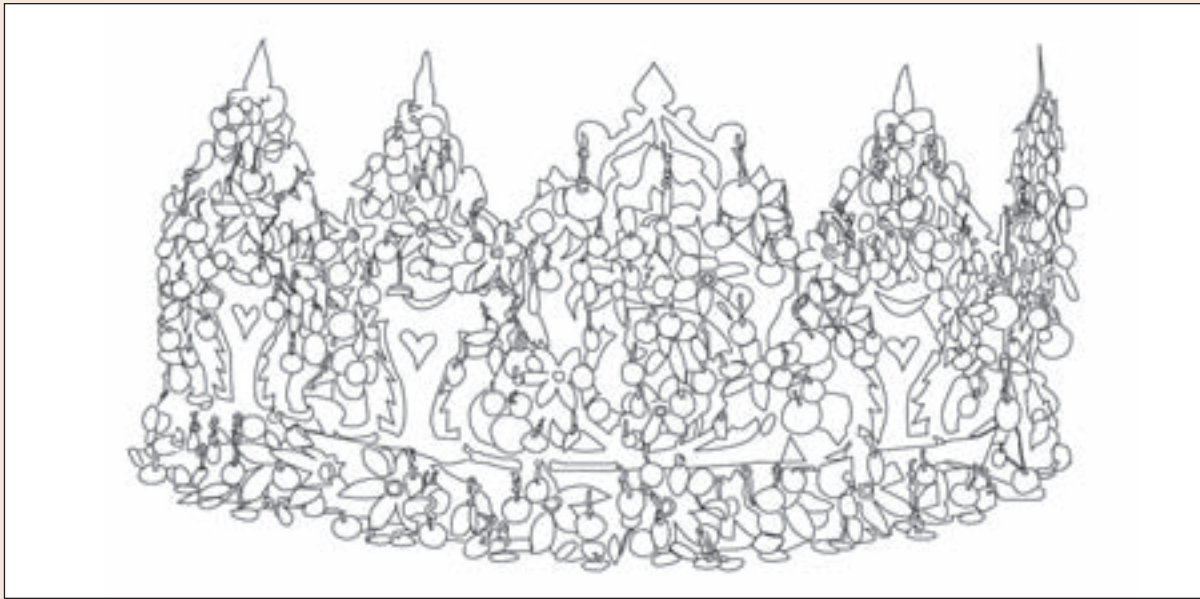


Fig. 9. First century gold crown with disk pendants, from northern Afghanistan

Disk pendants have also been found adorning third to fifth century CE hats in Inner Mongolia and fourth century CE plaques in China's Liaoning province (Fig. 10 and 11).

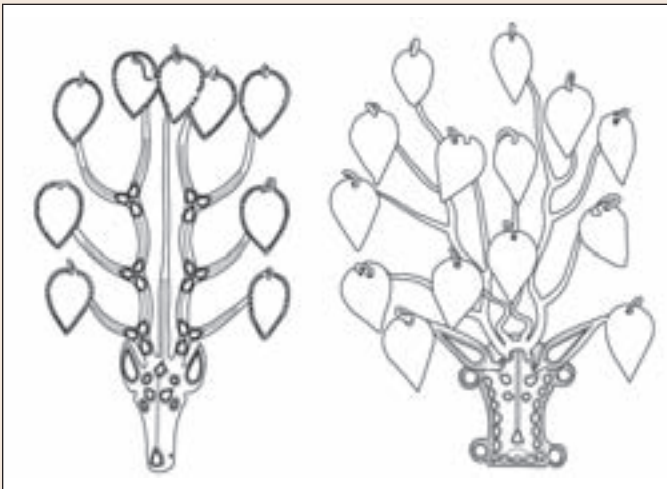


Fig. 10. Fourth century plaque with gold disk pendants. Liaoning province, China.

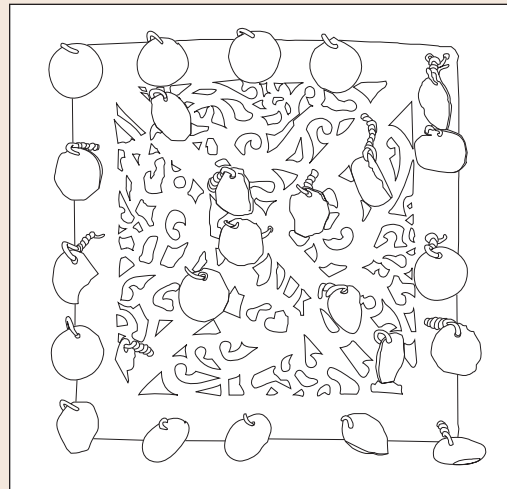


Fig. 11. Third to fifth century pair of gold hat ornaments. Inner Mongolia.



HANGING PENDANTS

Many of the crowns excavated from *Hwangnamdaech'ong* (Fig. 2)—as well as some earrings and other decorative objects—feature long hanging pendants (Fig. 12). The long hanging pendants are made up of shaped disk pendants (floral, oblong and heart-shaped) and small, hollow gold balls hanging from strands of double- and triple-intertwined gold thread. Often, gold thread and tiny gold dots were applied to the exterior of the hanging gold spheres as decorative elements. Occasionally, thin gold plate would be applied to the spheres to create a multi-faced surface (Fig. 13 and 14).

These long hanging pendants reflect myriad influences from across Asia. As noted, disk pendants were first developed by artisans in Murong Xanbei (Fig. 10). The goldsmithing techniques for creating hollow, multi-faced metal balls and decorating them with dots and thread were originally developed in Mesopotamia around 2500 BCE and subsequently improved by Greco-Roman artisans. These techniques were transmitted to China during the Warring States period (480–221 BCE), where they became popular, especially in southern China. Hats and ornaments featuring disk pendants have been found in northern China and Inner Mongolia, as well as farther south. Thus, it's possible that disk pendants reached Koguryo (Fig. 15) from both the Silk Road through the stepp routes and the goldsmithing techniques for hollow, multi-faced gold balls through the ports of southern China that were part of East Asia's maritime trade routes. These various techniques reached Koguryo and then Silla.



Fig. 12. Fifth century gold hanging pendants, *Hwangnamdaech'ong* North Tomb, Kyongju





Fig. 13. Fourth to fifth century gold earring, from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*



Fig. 14. Sixth century gold earring (detail), from Anjang, Korea



Fig. 15. Fourth to fifth century silver crown with gold disk pendants, from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*



Once Silla had received hanging pendants from Koguryo, its artisans created innovative new features and adaptations for them. Sillan artisans pioneered a technique of punching rounded holes in the body of a crown, through which the pendant threads could be looped. They also developed a filigreeing technique that came to be used throughout Asia.

Crowns, jewelry and other ornaments artistically similar to those created in Silla have been found at sites all along the Silk Road, in China, Xinjiang, Mongolia, north Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, southern Russia and Syria. However, taken collectively, these are only one example of the diffusion of culture and artistic styles to Korea along the Silk Road.

Archaeologists excavating *Hwangnamdaech'ong* have also found glass beads similar to those created in Southeast Asia during at the time (Fig. 16). They have found necklaces made from lapis lazuli, a product of Afghanistan (Fig. 17); a phoenix-headed glass bottle from Syria (Fig. 18); Roman glass vessels; Sogdian sculptures (fig. 19); a wide silver cup with bas-relief designs of animals, and a human figure with a round buckle in her belt, wrinkled pants and a pomegranate-shaped item held in her hand—all features typical of Sassanian decoration (Fig. 20); and gold daggers with Arabesque jade inlay (Fig. 21).

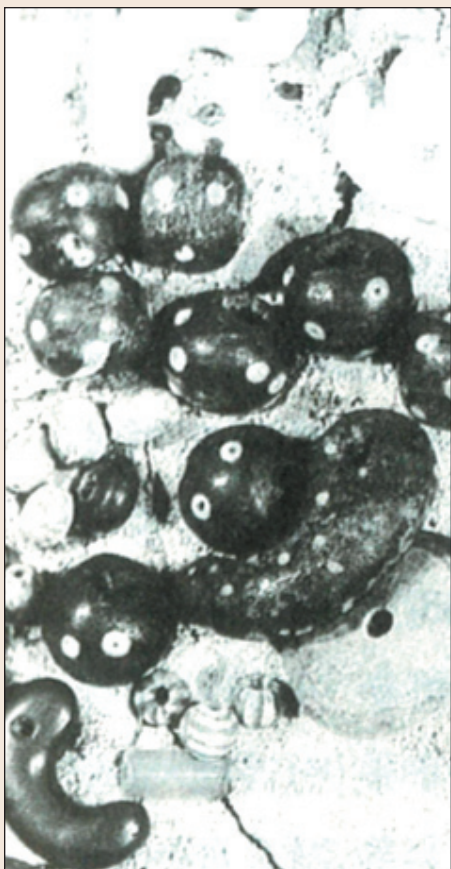


Fig. 16. Fourth to fifth century dotted glass beads, from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*



Fig. 17. Fourth to fifth century chestlace, gold, glass & jade, from Wolsong-ni, Kyongju





Fig. 18. Fourth to fifth century phoenix-headed glass bottle, from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*

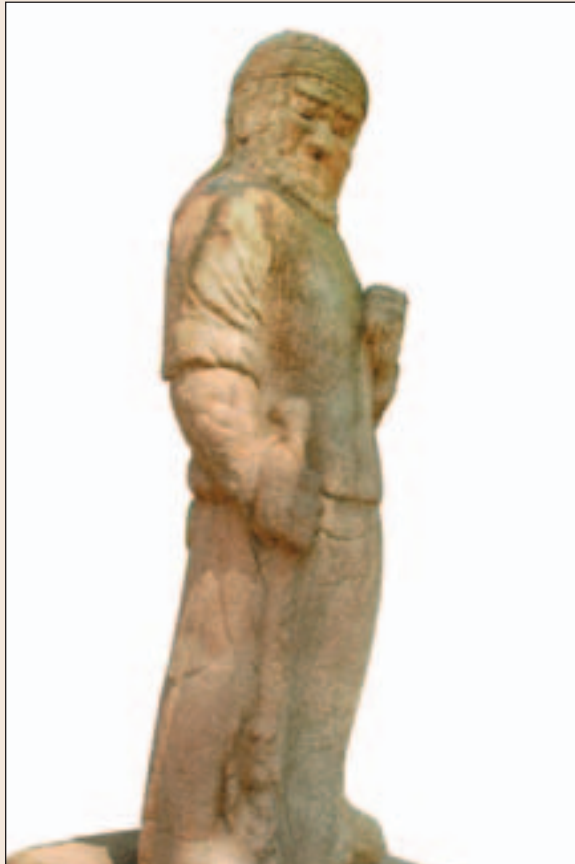


Fig. 19. *Kwaenung* in Kyongju, the tomb of the 38th ruler of Silla, King Wonsong, who reigned 785-798 CE.



Fig. 20. Fourth to fifth century silver bowl, with signs of Sassanian influence, from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*





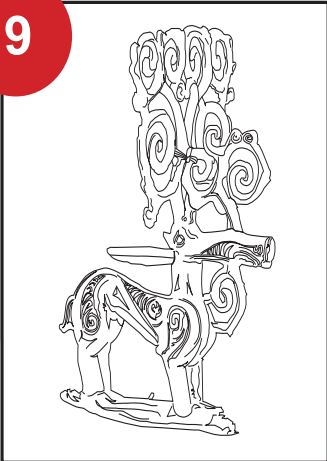
Fig. 21. Fourth to fifth century silver bowl, with signs of Sassanian influence, from *Hwangnamdaech'ong*

While most contemporary Silk Road education tends to focus on China's role, the artifacts at *Hwangnamdaech'ong* clearly show that Silla was a player in the trade as well. Over hundreds of years, the Silk Road brought a wide array of goods and cultural influences to Silla. Silla was an active participant as well. As in the case of the hanging pendants, Silla adapted the goods and influences it received and re-transmitted them throughout Asia.

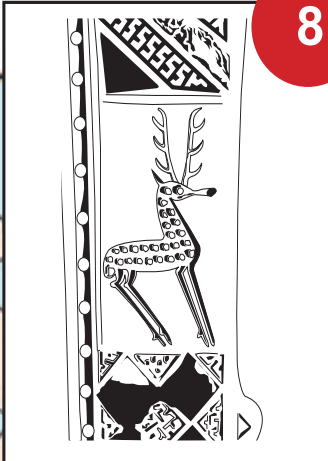
The gold crowns and other artifacts from *Hwangnamdaech'ong* show that Silla was a thriving part of the Silk Road trade, absorbing, modifying and contributing cultural influences throughout. In the future, global studies curriculum would benefit from an inclusion of Silla's role in Silk Road units.



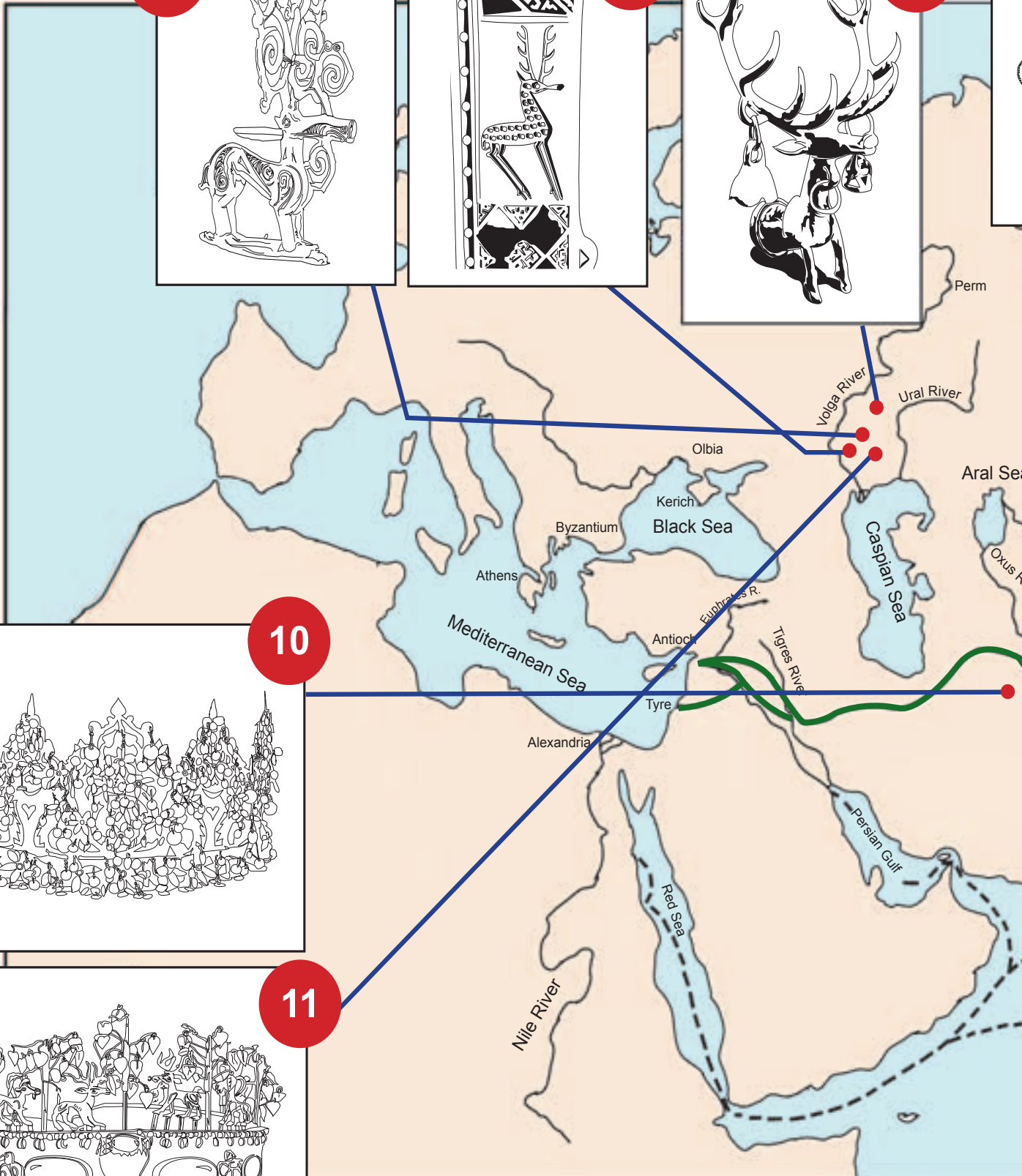
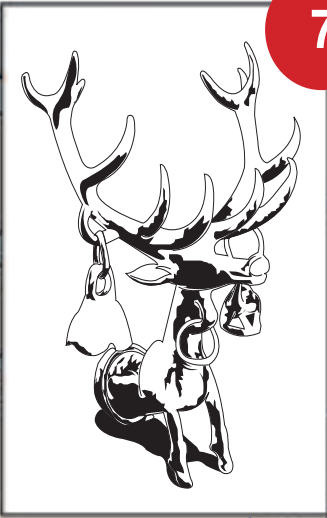
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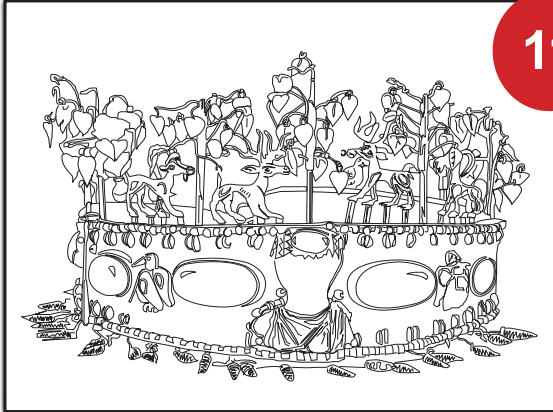
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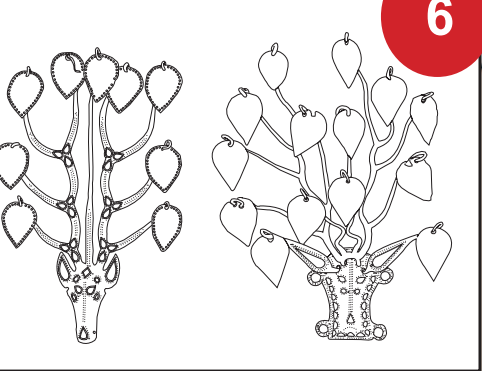
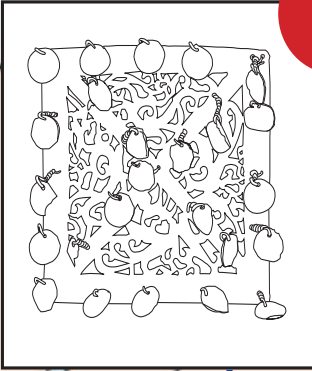


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REFERENCED ARTIFACTS

- 1.) Gold crown. *Hwangnamdaech'ong*. (Kyongju, Korea.)
Fourth to fifth century CE.
- 2.) Chestlace with glass, lapis lazuli and jade. Kyongju, Korea.
Fourth to fifth century CE.
- 3.) Phoenix-headed glass bottle. *Hwangnamdaech'ong*. (Kyongju, Korea.)
Fourth to fifth century CE.
- 4.) Silver crown with gold disk pendants. *Hwangnamdaech'ong*. (Kyongju, Korea.)
Fourth to fifth century CE.
- 5.) Plaque with gold disk pendants. Liaoning province, China.
Fourth century CE.
- 6.) Pair of gold hat ornaments. Inner Mongolia.
Third to fifth century CE.
- 7.) Stag-shaped finial. Southern Russia.
Fifth century BCE.
- 8.) Belt clasp with deer motif. Southern Russia.
Fifth century BCE.
- 9.) Deer with elaborate antler design. Filippovka Kurgan (southern Russia.)
Fourth century BCE.
- 10.) Gold crown with disk pendants. Northern Afghanistan.
First century CE.
- 11.) Gold crown with tree and antler motifs. Khoklach Kurgan (southern Russia).
First century CE.

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ANCIENT JAPAN'S KOREA CONNECTION

William Wayne Farris's *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures* provides substantial and highly controversial new insights into recent understandings of Japan's early historical period from 100–800 CE through an integrated discussion of historical texts and archaeological artifacts. In his book, Farris not only describes the archaeological discoveries of post-war research that have resulted in far more satisfactory interpretations of ancient Japan, but also the knotty problems inherent in any culture's investigation of its past.

Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures begins with a short discussion of the available historical texts on ancient Japan, and then identifies four major topics of interest: the question of Yamatai, the political and trade relationship between Korea and Japan from 350–700, Japan's apprentice relationship to mainland China from 650–800, and Japan's interaction with Chinese civilization as it is expressed in the wooden writing tablets recovered from archaeological sites of the period.

While the earliest historical documents in Japan date from the seventh century CE, information concerning the archipelago is available in fragmentary records from Korea and mainland China starting from around the first century BCE. The primary source of information for this period is a document called the *Wei Zhi*, or *History of the Wei Dynasty*, written by the Chinese scholar Chen Shou in 280 CE. The exact location and configuration of Yamatai, a second to third century Japanese site known as the Land of Wa in the *Wei Zhi*, has been long debated in Japanese history. Although there is no real consensus among Japanese research concerning its polity, strength or location, according to Farris's conclusions, Yamatai was probably a loose confederation of villages with economies based on rice farming and fishing, and with bronze and limited iron metallurgy.

The period at the close of the third century to the mid-seventh century is known collectively as the Tomb age in Japan because of the increased number and size of elite burials. The grave goods within these tombs have provided the most evidence of Japan's connection to Korea and subsequently to mainland China. Contrary to Japan's historical traditions and claims, archaeological evidence has shown that much of the technology in Japan during the fourth through eighth centuries was imported from Korea directly, including iron and military equipment, architectural methodologies, metallurgy, writing and possibly some language characteristics, and methods of statecraft.

Sensitive to the controversy surrounding the Korea-Japan connection, Farris enumerates several factors contributing to the serious disputes about how the techniques and items found in the Japanese tombs were dispersed and which country's leadership was dominant. Firstly, he points out the extremely delicate nature of any discussion concerning the origins of a particular nation-state. Secondly, the few documented Japanese records from 300–700 are mostly written at a much later date than they claim to describe. Thirdly, historical records intrinsically espouse a distinctive ideology from a specific perspective. Fourthly, archeology is still not a prevalent practice in Korea and is greatly restricted in Japan. Finally, nationalism often exaggerates or influences claims to legitimize or explain current understandings of the past.



Until the 1920s, Japanese annals, especially *The Chronicles of Japan* and *A Record of Ancient Matters*, have contributed to the understanding of Japan's first court history and its justification for colonizing Korea (1910–1945). According to Farris, most Japanese historians of the times revered *The Chronicles* as the literal truth, and any aggressive criticism of the classics was considered to be an act of treason against the sovereign power. In 1888, Naka Michiyo, prominent for asserting that the descent from heaven of the first Emperor Jimmu in 660 BCE was a fabrication and that the chronology of later reigns was inaccurate by at least 120 years, was one of the few historians who voiced doubts about the descriptions of the early Japanese court's conquest of Korea. Moreover, he asserted that *The History of the Three Kingdoms* and the *Record of the Three Kingdoms*, which were Korean chronicles written in the 12th and 13th centuries, respectively, were more accurate and credible than the Japanese annals.

During the Japanese colonization of Korea, iconoclastic historian Tsuda Sokichi conducted 20 years of research on *A Record of Ancient Matters* and *The Chronicles of Japan*. His research led him to the startling conclusion that much of the Jingu annals, which claimed that the Yamato court controlled southern Korea, was invented by mid-sixth century Japanese historians. In 1939, the militaristic Japanese government banned Tsuda's writings and convicted him of *lèse-majesté*, incarcerating him in 1942. In this jingoistic, World War II atmosphere, Japan censored scrupulous research and allowed prejudiced interpretations of the relations among the ancient states of Korea and Japan.

In 1948, Egami Namio synthesized archaeology, history and ethnology to emerge with the "horse-rider" theory, which claimed that by the early fourth century the Japanese islands had witnessed a sudden invasion by militaristic nomads from North Asia. His theory claimed that these aristocratic equestrians had ridden down the Korean peninsula, crossed the Korean Straits in boats to the archipelago, and founded kingdoms in both Korea and Japan. Although Egami's theory was met with disdain and rejection, his theory attempted to explain a period for which there was no written evidence to contradict his claims. Furthermore, the archaeological trends he proposed were based on the influx of horse-riding equipment and massive amounts of weapons during the late Tomb period. Finally and most importantly, the theory connected Japan to Korea and the peoples of Northeast Asia.

In the early 20th century, Koreans were virtually voiceless about their own ancient history because of the Japanese colonization and the Korean War. However, in 1963 a North Korean historian named Kim Sok-hyong introduced a new contentious thesis that Japanese scholars dubbed the "Korean satellite theory." Kim's interpretations alleged that from the beginning of the Yayoi era (ca. 300 BCE) through the fifth century, peninsular immigrants had streamed into Japan where their considerable skills made them invaluable in three regions: northern Kyushu, where Paekche and Kaya immigrants were ascendant; Izumo-Kibi, where Silla immigrants were dominant; and the Kinai, where the original Japanese residents were still dominant, but with a flow of Silla immigrants from Izumo and Kibi at first and then later an increasing population of Paekche and Kaya immigrants in the fifth and sixth centuries. Kim also asserted that the peninsular sovereigns of these colonists maintained rule over their former residents in the three regions of Japan until the 5th century.



Although Japanese historians did not support any of the Korean interpretations of the ties between the ancient kingdoms in Korea and Japan, throughout the 1970s and 1980s Japanese historians were called upon to reconsider their interpretations of their history. Firstly, historians began to reread all the East Asian written sources to discover how the leaders in China, Korea and Japan conducted international politics in the period between 300–700. Secondly, Japanese scholars began critiquing the ideology of the early eighth century court that compiled *The Chronicles of Japan*. Moreover, many postwar historians sought to promote greater awareness of Korean peninsular civilization through the publication of the popular journal *Korean Culture Within Japan*. Thirdly, the Japanese, Korean and Chinese historians and archaeologists were communicating and cooperating in joint research projects even though interpretations continued to differ from scholar to scholar. Finally, as archaeologists in South Korea and Japan excavated new and exciting materials, more tangible evidence supplemented the slim and dubious textual evidence.

Current archaeological records now show that many materials, technologies, and religious and political systems flowed from the Korean peninsula to the Japanese archipelago between 300–700. In fact, peninsular influence reached its peak between the mid-fifth and late seventh centuries, and played a crucial role in population growth, economic and cultural development that resulted in the rise of a centralized Yamato state. Many of the items found in Japan that are known to originate in Korea cover all social classes, from the agricultural and household tools used by farmers to the jewelry, silk goods and methods of statecraft employed by the aristocrats. Despite great gaps in scholarly knowledge of many of the excavated items from this time period, the findings fall into three categories. In the first category, several of the items essentially came from the peninsula, such as the iron and ironworking techniques, the cuirass, the oven, bronze bells, court titles and surnames, the district, measurements for the filed pattern system and mountain fortifications. In the second category, inhabitants of ancient Korea transmitted some goods from China long after their invention, like the ring-pommeled sword, iron attachments for agricultural tools, pond- and canal-digging technology, stoneware, silk weaving, the idea for service and producer units, law codes and writing. Because of the long interval between the invention of these items in China and their transmission eastward, natives from the Korean peninsula most likely refined or altered the items before they reached the Japanese islands. In the last category, many items, technologies and ideas were conceived elsewhere but were transferred virtually unchanged, such as the lamellar armor, horse trappings, stone-fitting methods and tombs, gold and silver jewelry, Buddhism and the crossbow. The transmission of all these materials reflects the seminal role of the Korean peninsula in the formation of Japan's Tomb age culture.

Both the archaeological and historical records illustrate that from 375–700, a constant influx of ideas, institutions, technologies, materials and immigrants flowed from the Asian continent into the Japanese islands, especially to western Japan, and affected people of every social class and occupation. Although the Chinese invented many of the items, the Koreans placed their distinctive stamp on many of the ideas and materials before they reached Japan. Moreover, the growing consensus among Japanese, South Korean and Western archaeologists that the ancient Koreans carried invaluable technologies and ideas into ancient Japan provides overwhelming evidence that the kingdom states from the Korean peninsula were more advanced than the Wa of Japan, making it increasingly doubtful that the Yamato court and the Wa confederation could have subjugated southern Korea.



According to Farris, the most sensible explanations for the introduction of Korean-borne culture into the Japanese islands are as follows: trade between the peninsula and archipelago; immigration to Japan, especially in the form of refugees; political gifts; and plundering by Wa soldiers involved in battles on the Korean peninsula. Archaeologists have proven that there was an exchange of goods between ancient Korea and Japan even in the beginning of Yayoi times (400–300 BCE), but South Koreans have not yet excavated enough sites to allow them to generalize about the flow of Japanese products into southern Korea. Although items have been discovered all over southern Korea and indicate extensive contacts between the two peoples, the quantity and value of Japanese artifacts found in Korea cannot possibly be compared to the volume of materials flowing into Japan.

Both historical and archaeological evidence show a steady flow of immigration of ancient Koreans to Japan ever since the Yayoi period. Beginning in the second half of the fourth century, the frequent wars on the Korean peninsula that raged on and off until the close of the seventh century certainly created a constant flow of refugees. In order to escape the turmoil in southern Korea between 400–700, many immigrants were the ironworkers, gold and silver engravers, clerks and scribes, potters, and other craftsmen and women who introduced to Japan the many ideas and technologies mentioned earlier, such as the iron agricultural tools, household ovens, stoneware and chamber tombs, to list a few. Furthermore, as much as a third of eighth century aristocrats in Japan could trace their origins to Korea dating from 300.

Reliable historical sources also document that the Paekche elite dispatched artisans, scrolls, and other items of various kinds for Yamato's use on a regular basis beginning around 500 and shipped Buddhist materials to Yamato in 538. In 618, Koguryo sent the Yamato the crossbow. It seems reasonable that other items also found their way to the archipelago as "tribute gifts" from the courts of Paekche, Koguryo, Silla and even Kaya. Farris hypothesizes that one of the reasons the peninsular states sent these political gifts to the Wa in ancient Japan was to obtain Wa military aid and troops in their wars, especially during the recurrent strife on the Korean peninsula between 390–663. Paekche and Kaya in particular may have sent advanced military technology to allies in Japan, who in turn armed their men and shipped them back to Korea to help the friendly regimes.

An archaeologist specializing in the Tomb period named Niiro Izumi contends that there was a relationship between Japan's political organization and the influx of continental materials and technologies, envisioning competition among the regional Wa lords in the fifth and sixth centuries for foreign goods and services. The more successful a Wa strongman was in obtaining foreign items the more powerful he became, and this pursuit of political domination may explain the distribution of such items throughout the archipelago. The waves of peninsular goods and services flowing into Japan played a critical role in the islands' gradual unification under Yamato from 500–700. The strongest family in the Yamato court from 550–645 was the Soga family who had intimate ties to Korea and Korean immigrants in Japan. Yamato eventually gained hegemony in Japan by reducing the regional lords' access to continental culture while simultaneously securing the court's own resources with the help of Paekche until 663 and many immigrants thereafter.



The various materials, technologies and ideas that entered Japan from Korea between 400–700 played a crucial and fundamental role in the development of ancient Japan and built upon the growth of the Yayoi age. Imports of the fifth century like iron farming tools, weapons, horse gear, gray stoneware and new irrigation techniques were particularly noteworthy contributions from the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, because much of the techniques, products and ideas were tried and tested in the Korean kingdoms, they were more advanced and readily adaptable when they reached Japan. Though he doubts that the Koreans founded the Japanese imperial line, Farris emphatically acknowledges that the Korean peninsular culture “intensely” influenced early Japan.

The above is a summary of a chapter titled “Ancient Japan’s Korea Connection” in Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan, Farris, William Wayne, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 55-121.





PART V. ARTICLES FOR ADVANCED READERS

Important Events in Northern and Western China

TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)	<p>China expands its territory into Central Asia</p> <p>Capital at Luoyang sacked by Xiongnu</p> <p>Traditional arts destroyed</p>	<p>The Han empire was ended by Dong Zuo, a Han Chinese, raised in Longxi (south of Langzhou, Gansu), where he became a valuable commander for leaders of the local Qiang population. Dong Zuo led an army consisting of three thousand cavalry, as well as many Qiang and <i>hu</i> (generally translated as “barbarians,” a general description for people originally from the Central Asian steppes, but referring at this time to the Xiongnu in particular.).</p> <p>Dong Zuo’s army ransacked Luoyang before retreating to Xian. They looted and destroyed palace buildings and imperial tombs and ordered the people to move with him to Chang’an. Many fled or died along the way.</p> <p>This is the first instance of nomadic warfare making inroads into the heart of China and it would be repeated over northern China for the next two centuries.</p> <p>The wanton destruction of Luoyang marked the end of many traditional crafts, for even if those craftsmen who escaped the massacre and survived the move to Chang’an lost their patrons.</p> <p>Two types of luxury articles, patterned silk and lacquer, continued to be made. Jade carving is the craft that suffered an almost irreversible setback after the sack of Luoyang. It took a thousand years to reestablish its long tradition.</p>





TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
<p>Late Han (late second–early third centuries)</p>	<p>Gold, jade and Roman glass objects appear in China</p> <p>Buddhism introduced</p>	<p>Throughout the two Han dynasties (the Early and Late Han), there was constant contact with West and Central Asia by land and sea.</p> <p>It would appear that by the middle of the second century, there was great increase of foreign populations in China: these foreigners brought not only trade goods but music, dance, costumes and furniture.</p> <p>The foreigners (<i>hu</i>) came from oasis towns like Qichi (Kuchar) on the Silk Road in Central Asia, from the Kushan empire beyond the Pamirs, and from as far as the Parthian (Iranian) empire. They would have brought with them exotic articles such as the Roman glass bottle. Though influential, this trade was overshadowed by the cultural influence of nomadic Eurasian confederations on the steppes north of the Silk Road.</p> <p>During the late Han period, Central Asians and Indians brought to China more than foreign goods and customs. They also introduced Buddhism. Among the earliest and best-known translators of Buddhist scriptures in China was the Parthian An Shiago (An Qing) who arrived in Luoyang in the time of Huandi (c. 147-67) who was said to be fond of “foreign dress, hangings, beds, foreign chairs, food, harps, flutes, dance.”</p>





TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
The Third Century	<p>Social and political order collapses</p> <p>Confederations of Xiongnu, followed by Xianbei, rise in the West.</p>	<p>The third century witnessed the collapse of social and political order in China. This caused immense suffering and untold loss of life, not to mention the destruction of buildings and monuments and the devastation of the countryside. In the wake of this upheaval however, the yoke of orthodox Confucianism, imposed on the population by the Eastern Han government, was shattered, and a new period of free inquiry and imagination began.</p> <p>In the meantime, the prefecture of Bingzhou (present-day Shaanxi province) was being taken over by the Xiongnu, nomadic tribes who had settled in the Ordos (enclosed by the great loop of the Yellow River in northern Shaanxi) and Bingzhou. In the late third century BCE the Xiongnu had established a mighty nomadic empire on the Mongolian steppe, but it had weakened considerably by the first century. Large groups of Xiongnu began to move west into Central Asia and south into northern China. The power vacuum left behind by the Xiongnu in Mongolia was filled by a new confederation, known as the Xianbei, of which there were several branches. In the late third century CE, the branch called the Tuoba Xianbei made their headquarters in Shengle, north of Bingzhou. When in 304 the Xiongnu of Bingzhou declared independence and began their uprising, the Tuoba Xianbei came to the aid of the Jin government forces and again defeated the Xiongnu.</p>





TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
<p>The Coming of Xianbei (late third century–early fifth century)</p>	<p>Political and military equilibrium between Han and Xiongnu ends.</p> <p>Xiongnu migrate into China.</p>	<p>A confederation of nomadic tribes led by the Xiongnu built a powerful empire on the steppes north of the Great Wall. For centuries, there was political and military equilibrium between the Han empire and the Xiongnu.</p> <p>When the Han empire began to disintegrate, the Xiongnu tribes moved west and south.</p> <p>The vacuum left by the departure of Xiongnu was gradually filled by another confederation of tribes known collectively as the Xianbei. By the third century, various Xianbei tribes had amassed along the entire northern border of China. The group known as the Tuoba Xianbei began to penetrate into Bingzhou from their base in Shengle (southwest of Hohhot in Inner Mongolia). To the east, the Murong Xianbei extended into northern Hebei Province (including present-day Beijing).</p> <p>The Xianbei confederations vied for power in northern China from the late third century until the early fifth century, when the Tuoba vanquished the Murong and all other migrants from the steppes who had established themselves in northern China during a period known as the Sixteen Kingdoms (304-439). Tuoba Xianbei occupied areas in modern Liaoning province and expanding into Hebei, Shandong and the western part of Henan in the fourth century.</p>



TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
		<p>When the Tuoba Xianbei began to participate in military and, to some extent, political activities in northern China at the beginning of the fourth century, their social structure and way of life remained traditionally tribal. The Xianbei decorative arts were not simple continuations of Xiongnu tradition, but displayed potential influences from Bactria and other areas in Central Asia.</p> <p>Metal objects from Xianbei, made of organic materials, demonstrate the survival of earlier traditions of nomadic art. Gold ornaments show signs of trade with the Roman Near East and India. Early Buddhist images, jewelry and groups of bronze and gilt-bronze objects from the area of present-day Chaoyang and Beipian in western Liaoning province can be identified as specific to the Murong Xianbei. Typical Murong Xianbei designs would later be seen in the arts of the northern Wei in China and the Silla kingdom in Korea. Perhaps the object that best represents this period is the gold hat ornament. The basic form is that of a cicada ornament worn by senior officials beginning in the Han period, but with the addition of disk pendants (as seen in gold ornaments from Bactria and Silla Korea).</p>





TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
<p>The Migration Period (fourth century–early fifth century)</p>	<p>Political and military turmoil precipitates mass migrations and ethnic mixing</p>	<p>Numerous migrations within China began at the turn of the third century and reached massive proportions in the fourth century, ending only with the unification of the empire under the Sui. The migrations caused the redistribution and mixing of ethnic groups.</p> <p>Some of the early ethnic mixing was caused by the recruitment of nomadic tribes to serve in the cavalry of the contending factions in the civil wars that erupted at the end of the Han dynasty. Another major cause of relocation in the fourth to early fifth centuries was nomadic-style warfare. Entire populations of conquered areas were moved to serve their new masters in their home region. Another cause of mass migration was famine that resulted from wars and weather.</p>



TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
Early Northern Wei Dynasty (398-493)	Capital moves to Pingcheng (present-day Datong)	<p>The early fifth century saw the gradual consolidation of political power in both northern and southern China, leading to the period known as Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589). In the North, in the year 398, Tuoba Gui (r. 386-409), founder of the Northern Wei dynasty, led his people across the Great Wall into northern Shaanxi and established his capital in Pingcheng (present-day Datong). By 439, Northern Wei ruled all of North China, extending into present-day Gansu Province in the northwest, thus opening direct access to Central Asia along the Silk Road. The Song dynasty (420-479) was established in the South.</p>
Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589)		<p>Love of western culture and fashion was widespread among the nobility of the time. A group of objects found in a fifth-century tomb at Datong show foreign (Central Asian) influence.</p> <p>The steppe route was active until at least the early part of the fifth century. After the Northern Wei conquest of Gansu in 439, the Silk Road in Central Asia was wide open and must have been the main conduit for trade into China. Glass bowls came from either the Roman or Sassanian empires. Period metalware displaying Hellenistic, Persian and Indian forms and motifs was presumably made somewhere in Central Asia.</p>





TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
<p>Empire Splits</p>	<p>Capital moves to Luoyang in 394</p>	<p>The empire split in two, with Luoyang more or less on the border between the two states known as Eastern Wei and Western Wei, which soon became Northern Qi (550-577) and Northern Zhou (557-581) respectively. Eastern Wei / Northern Qi inherited the culture of Luoyang, while the Western Wei / Northern Zhou retained many early Xianbei traditions from the period before North Wei moved its capital south to Luoyang.</p> <p>By far the most striking aspect of the art of Northern Qi is the overwhelming influence of Central Asia. Many of the pottery vessels recovered from Northern Qi tombs display distinct forms and motifs from this region, which themselves were fusions of Hellenistic, Persian and Indian influences.</p>



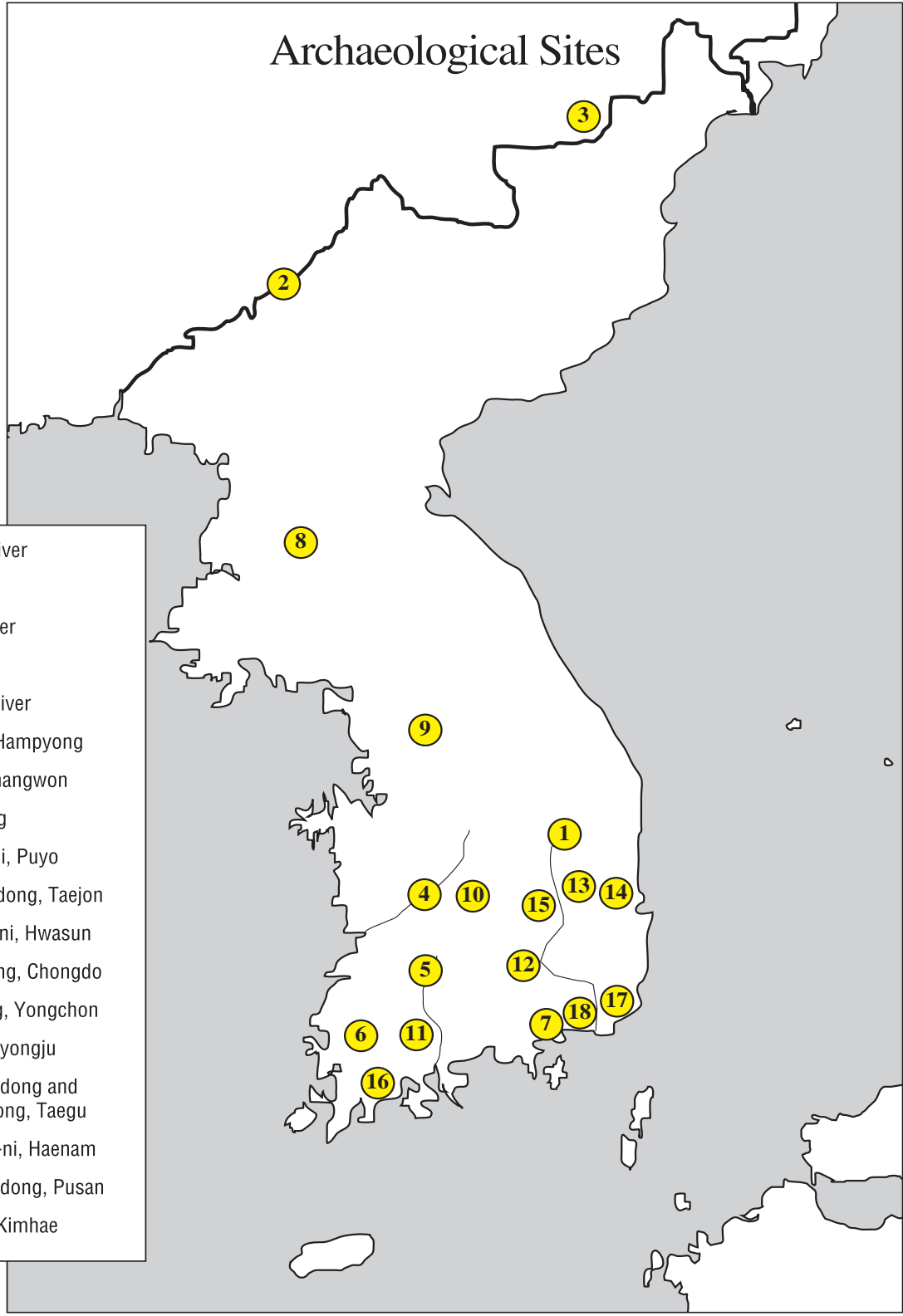


TIME LINE

Period	Highlights	History
Late Sixth Century	The Silk Road transmits and transforms Buddhist art	<p>Buddhist art from the late sixth century was carried on the Silk Road, through China (where it was influenced by Chinese traditions) to the port of Chang'an.</p> <p>A richly decorated crown, which displays the originally Iranian motifs such as orbs and crescents clearly marks the artistic synthesis occurring along the Silk Road in the late sixth century</p>



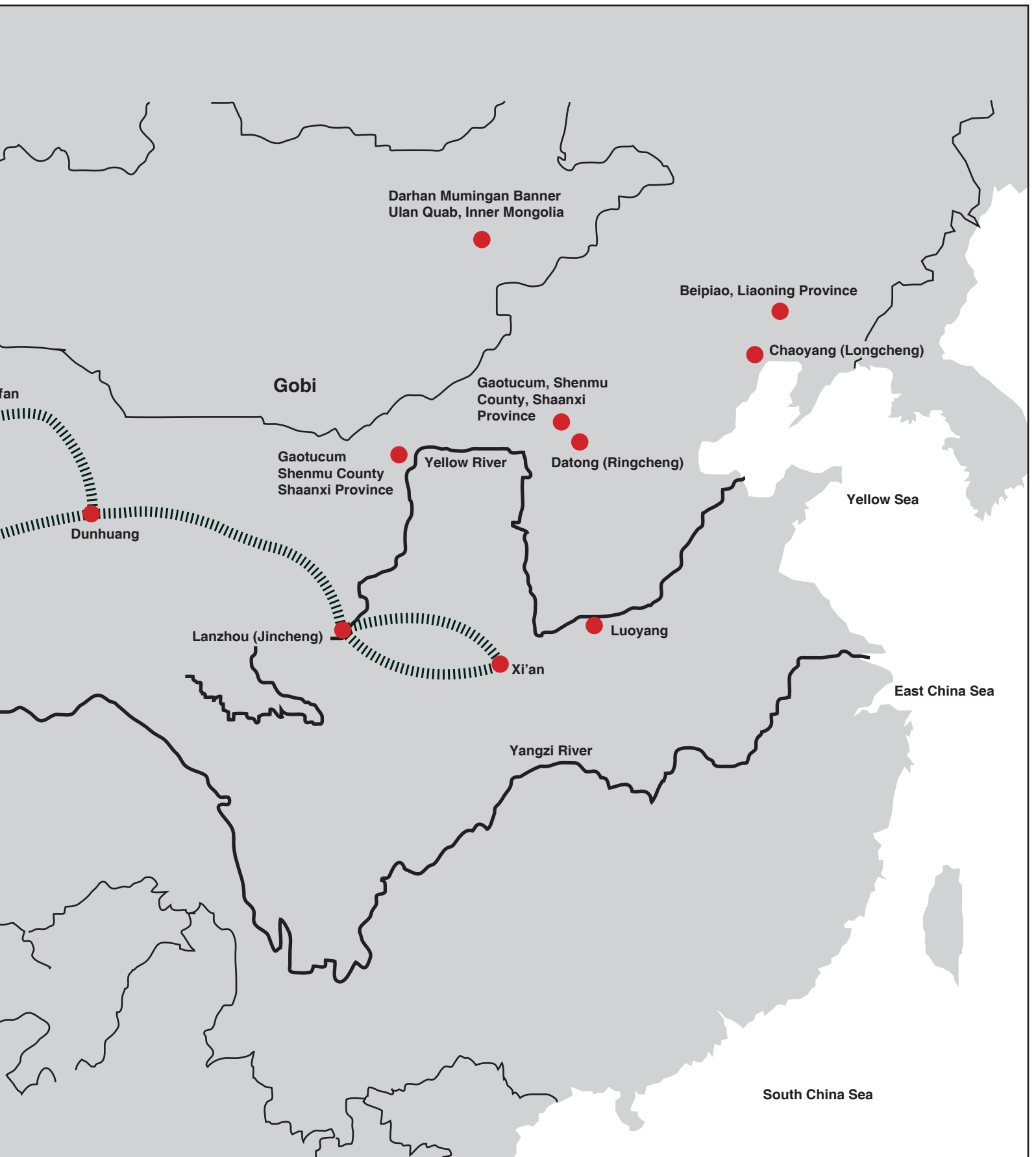
MAPS: ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN KOREA AND THE SILK ROAD REGION



1. Naktong River
2. Yalu River
3. Tumen River
4. Kum River
5. Yongsan River
6. Chopo-ri, Hampyong
7. Taho-ri, Changwon
8. P'yongyang
9. Songguk-ni, Puyo
10. Koejong-dong, Taejon
11. Taegong-ni, Hwasun
12. Yejon-dong, Chongdo
13. Oun-dong, Yongchon
14. Ipsil-ni, Kyongju
15. P'yongni-dong and Chisan-dong, Taegu
16. Kungong-ni, Haenam
17. Pokchon-dong, Pusan
18. Toksal-li, Kimhae









PART VI. WHERE TO INCLUDE SILLA KOREA

TEACHING THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SILK ROAD IN THE POST-CLASSICAL ERA (CA.500–1450 CE)

by

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In many world history survey courses and introductory textbooks, Korea comes into the historical narrative only as a flashpoint for the Cold War in the mid-20th century. This, of course, doesn't quite do justice to a people's history. But few teachers have been taught anything about Korea, and in consequence they can't teach anything about Korea. Drawing on *Silla Korea and the Silk Road* and a few other sources, I'm going to suggest ways to incorporate Korean history into that great Classical and Post-Classical topic of World History, the Silk Road.

Everyone knows that the Silk Road began in China and went westward by land and water routes, across Eurasia. Although scholars and teachers may have their "favorite parts" of the Silk Road to explore with our classes, we all tend to teach that the land-based silk routes began in Chang'an (or Xi'an) China and ended in the bazaars and marketplaces of the eastern Mediterranean area. Some adventurous souls went through the Khyber Pass into the Indian subcontinent, and others sailed the sea-based routes of the Indian Ocean Basin.

I'm going to argue that including/inserting Korea, although east of Chang'an, into the history of the Silk Road is easy to do, is important to do, and adds to our students historical understanding of East Asian history in total as well as their appreciation for the intricacies of interactions along Silk Road in the Classical and Post-Classical eras.

I'm going to approach this task thematically. First, historians "use" the Silk Road as a way to discuss cross-cultural diffusion—the conditions that allow for the spread of ideas, peoples, merchandise, technologies, diseases—from point A to point B and all the way through point Z. Second, we discuss the reasons and processes by which people—individually or as a significant part of the whole society—adopt or adapt pieces of foreign cultures and blend them into their own cultures. (This is a process that Jerry Bentley termed syncretism in his book *Old World Encounters*.)

In the Classical era, the Korean peninsula was divided for centuries into three small kingdoms (cf. map on p. 6). There was a good deal of contact with China. All three used Chinese writing, with transcription systems for Korean words; there was a Confucian academy founded in Koguryo in 372.¹ One kingdom, the Silla (57 BCE–668 CE), began military



and political moves to conquer the other two kingdoms in the 6th century CE, and with the help of the Tang Chinese dynasty, succeeded in conquering/uniting most of the peninsula in 668 CE. The Tang, however, had helped Silla merely as part of a divide-and-conquer strategy, and in turn began to fight the Silla. The Silla forces fought and defeated the Tang forces by 676, and thereby unified most of the peninsula under the single, aristocratic government of the Silla kingdom. For Korean scholars, the Unified Silla kingdom (668–935 CE) presents a golden age of the development in Korean culture, unified and separate from Chinese domination.²

Silla was a prosperous kingdom: its economy was based on agriculture, but there were gold mines, iron mines and a complex handicraft industry orchestrated by the royal government.³ The capital at Kyongju “became a large and splendid city, having a million inhabitants at its height.”⁴

Although Silla Korea was politically independent from Tang China, there was almost constant diplomatic, economic and cultural contact between Korea and China. Korea also became the conduit of Chinese ideas to Japan. Economically, the Silla became part of the Tang tributary system, and there was also much cultural borrowing between the two empires.⁵ Silla Koreans borrowed and adapted thoughtfully, melding Chinese systems with native practices—a process Jerry Bentley termed syncretism.⁶

When one teaches Tang China (usually as part of the triumvirate of Sui, Tang, Song China), it’s not hard to mention that other places in East Asia developed sophisticated urban economies in this era. Furthermore, one usually emphasizes the *westward* expansion of the Tang, and its control over the East and South China Seas. It’s easy to insert a piece about Tang’s *eastward* expansion, its unusual defeat and its accommodation of the Silla. This also gives some complexity to the idea of creating and maintaining a tributary empire and what it meant to be a tributary state. This is easy to do, and it sets up Korea as a political unit in East Asian history, and begins to familiarize students with Korea as a unit of analysis in World History. This leads us to the Silk Road.

SILK ROAD

The Silk Road was not really a single interstate highway, of course, but a series of trading routes. The first and easiest thing a teacher can do is to acquire a map that includes Korea and Japan (cf. maps on pp. 5 & 34). A map will make the obvious point that the trade routes extended *eastward* from Chang’an as well as westward. The Eurasian trade routes of the Post-Classical period also extended into the waterways. The Indian Ocean Basin trade networks connected with the East Asian/South China Sea networks, and the foreign merchant port communities of southeast China became hubs of cross-cultural interactions between the Koreans and the wider Eurasian world.

When I discuss imperial roads and significant trade routes—Roman, Persian, Incan, trans-Saharan, Indian Ocean basin and the Silk Road—I give my students a little mantra: “What travels across the roads? Military, merchants and missionaries.” While this may not cover everything and everyone, it works really well for my students, and they have a ready handle with which to grasp the complicated interactions across “trade routes.”

MERCHANTS & MERCHANDISE

Since trade and travel along the Silk Road were handled like a long distance relay, and merchants very rarely traveled the length of Eurasia with their goods, it's not surprising that Koreans didn't generally travel very far west to conduct their trade. Korean merchants traveled to China and Japan, primarily.

By the late Tang dynasty, however, there were large numbers of Korean merchants living in the port cities of southeast China, especially Guangdong and Fuzhou (cf. map on p. 34).⁷ "As foreign trade was usually monopolized by the local government and only special envoys dispatched by the royal house could travel and barter abroads, the majority of all businessmen active on the Guangdong market were those from overseas."⁸ Persians and Arab traders were the majority of traders there, followed by those from India, Ceylon, Malay, Rome and Korea.⁹ Korean merchants of the Silla era had access to the merchandise from all these areas, which highlights Korean involvement in the maritime Eurasian trade routes.¹⁰ Some Korean merchants also traveled significantly westward: a Silla envoy is depicted in a wall painting in Samarkand.¹¹ Even though the Silla merchants may not have traveled past the Chinese coast, they were well connected with the Eurasian trade routes.

EXPORTS

From the early Silla kingdom through the Unified Silla Kingdom, Koreans exported *their own goods* to China as either tributary payments or as trade goods. They probably traveled in flat-bottom boats across the comparatively shallow Yellow Sea.¹² These items included bronze, iron and metalware (including such things as scissors and candle snuffers), wool, livestock (dogs, horses and exotic birds), medicines and perfumes, paper, candles, honey, pine nuts, ginseng and slaves.¹³ The Koreans had obtained sericulture from China during

Types of Merchandise Imported and Exported During the Silla Period

IMPORTED GOODS (from China)	EXPORTED GOODS (to China and Japan)
silk (cloth and threads), buddhist relics, gold, silver ornaments, books (paper), tea, peonies, bells (silver, gold, bronze), mirrors, weapons, ceramics, musical instruments from Central Asia, gold daggers from Central Asia, transparent glassware and jewelry from the Mediterranean, etc.	wood, iron, bronze bells, perfume, medicines, metals, tools, spices, scissors, copper needles, candle-snuffers, fabric dye, paper, Buddhist statuaries, silk, gold and glass, crystal jewelry, weapons, armor, horse trappings, etc.
TRIBUTARY TRADE (with Tang China)	
livestock (exotic birds, horses), books, paper, highly crafted silver and gold pieces, bells, knives and hair pieces, silk (embroidered, finely decorated), ginseng, pinenuts, medicines, etc.	



the Han dynasty (probably from Chinese immigrants/smugglers) and had their own indigenous silk-making industries.¹⁴ Koreans sometimes sent Korean-made silk to China, especially if it was elaborately embroidered.¹⁵ Chinese silk, however, seems to have been more valued than domestic silk in Korea: there are some sources that speak of Silla kings giving *Chinese* silk as a high-level gift.¹⁶ Korean exports to China have a slightly utilitarian flavor to them.

Horses were very important to Silla Korea, and were exported to China in large numbers. Gilt-bronze saddle fittings and iron stirrups, as well as vessels decorated with horses have been found in Silla tombs, and there were Silla sumptuary laws stipulating who could own horses and how luxurious their fittings could be.¹⁷ (The horses were probably the sturdy Mongolian variety, which had been exported to China, probably by the Koguryo since their territory had included some Manchurian steppe lands, since the late Han period.)¹⁸ In 669, there were 174 horse farms in Silla, 22 of which were allocated to the palace, 10 to government offices, and the rest distributed to local aristocrats.¹⁹ Animals were a small but important part of the Eurasian trade routes, and Silla was one of the few places where they could be easily obtained by the Chinese and the Japanese.

In contrast, Koreans exported both utilitarian items *and* luxury goods to Japan. The luxury goods were obtained from Chinese trade via the Silk Road, with Korean merchants serving as the middlemen. Koreans sold everything to the Japanese, including metalware, weaponry and armor, and jewelry. The Koreans brought silk to Japan and eventually silk production secrets, perhaps as early as the 4th century CE.²⁰

I think the export of paper is also noteworthy: the production of paper as well as wood-block printing were well developed in Korea by the 10th century; and Koreans developed cast metal type in the 13th-century, well before Gutenberg in the Holy Roman Empire, ca. 1485.²¹

IMPORTS

Koreans imported luxury goods that merchants had brought to China from the Silk Road. Wild mountain ponies from Manchuria were obtained from the northern nomads and domesticated in Silla Korea. Many were later re-exported as domestic animals along the Silk Roads by the Silla government and merchants. Aristocratic and royal tombs show Central Asian musical instruments, an elaborate gold and jeweled dagger from the steppes of Turkmenistan; highly crafted bells, mirrors, silver and gold jewelry, and transparent glass vases and beads from the Mediterranean.²² These luxury goods supported the status of the Korean aristocracy as well as the coffers of the merchants.

The Silla elite's desire for gold ornaments originally arose from contacts with various kingdoms of China and with the nomadic cultures of the northeast. Gold, the raw material, initially was imported but eventually must have been produced within the Silla territories to satisfy the huge demand. Scythian gold ornaments make an intriguing and visually convincing precursor to Silla gold—witness the use of the ubiquitous tree-branch motif on their respective gold crowns. Exotic objects made in Central Asia and further west to the Mediterranean have been found in several Silla tombs, testimony to the vibrant international exchanges of the time. Close similari-



ties between the gold ornaments and crystal and jade necklaces of Silla and Japan illustrate the deep ties shared by the elites of the two neighboring kingdoms and the eastern flow of artisans and goods.²³

In the National Museum of Korea, there are stunning gold crowns from the 5th century in shapes reminiscent of deer antlers or tree branches, which was an ancient symbol of a shaman's ability to bridge the worlds of earth and heaven (cf. photos on pp. 49 & 74).²⁴

In their design—notably the vertical projections that suggest antlers, dangling pendants, and treelike shapes—and goldworking techniques, Korean crowns are similar to ones excavated from various parts of the Eurasian steppes, suggesting not only connections between these regions but also that Korean shamanism derived from Scytho-Siberian shamanism. The existence of active land and sea trade linking Korea with lands far to the west and south is evidenced by glass vessels and beads, some of which are imported from as far away as the Mediterranean. Pure gold earrings uncovered from Silla and Kaya tombs display a variety of designs and accomplished techniques, from simple cut gold sheet to complicated filigree and granulation. The ultimate source of such elaborate techniques as granulation is probably the Greek and Etruscan goldsmiths of western Asia and Europe, whose skills were transmitted to northern China and later to Korea. The resemblance of earrings found in Japan in the Kofun period (ca. 3rd century—538 CE.) to those from Silla and Kaya tombs suggests that such articles were imported from Korea.²⁵

Excavated Silla tombs reveal not only gold crowns, but long gold belts, bronze shoes, gold earrings, bracelets, finger and toe rings on the elite and royal corpses.²⁶

In an Arabic work of the 9th century, Silla was referred to as the “gold-glittering nation.”²⁷ Many tomb objects, like these crowns, do not appear in Chinese tombs, “suggesting *direct* Silla contact by sea and land with Mediterranean and Arab traders, rather than the ‘down-the-line’ trade which is usually implied.”²⁸

SPREAD OF WORLD RELIGIONS: BUDDHISM & CONFUCIANISM

One of the crucial cultural interactions along the Silk Road was the spread of world religions (and philosophies) from their places of origin to new places, and the syncretism (blending of the new with the old) that took place within the new cultures.

Chinese Buddhist monks brought Buddhism into the three kingdoms. The Koguryo court was the first to accept the religion in 372. The Paekche king followed suit twelve years later.²⁹ Buddhism became the official religion of the kingdom of Silla in 527. Monks, sponsored by the northern Korean kingdom of Paekche, spread Buddhism to Japan in 552.³⁰ Korea needs to be mentioned as the recipient as well as the conduit of Buddhism.

The conversion of the rulers to Buddhism no doubt hastened the conversion of the aristocrats and the common peoples. It also may have helped several prominent Silla rulers, especially its queens, solidify their power to rule, since Buddhism was considerably less



gender-conscious than Confucianism.³¹ Buddhism was used by Silla royalty to accentuate their claims of authority: Buddhism required a single community of believers, and if the rulers were the most important sponsors of Buddhism, then the believers would also be united behind a Buddhist leader.³² With its acceptance of nuns and female Bodhisattvas, Buddhism presented no philosophical problems for Silla queens, of which there were at least three. In Korean culture, bone-rank (bloodlines) trumped gender hierarchies: women ruled and participated in Korean public life.³³ Here is another example of cultural syncretism in the Post-Classical era.

Koreans of Unified Silla saw a veritable building boom of beautiful temples, and an influx of relics, artifacts and sculpture designed to compliment and adorn the temples, especially in the Silla capital of Kyongju. “Throughout the peninsula, the increasingly close association of Buddhism and the state is signaled by the erection of temples and crafting of icons at royal expense.”³⁴ Gandharan art—the Buddha presented with Greco-roman robes with Indian facial characteristics—was also brought to Korea and placed in Silla-built temples.³⁵ “Many eminent monks journeyed to Tang China or even to far away India to study the way of the Buddha.”³⁶ Korean monks can be added to the Chinese monks who made the arduous treks eastward along the Silk Road. Korean scholars also traveled to China and even to India to learn from other masters and to collect texts. Buddhism also influenced Silla Korean art forms: art and architecture of the period reflected Buddhist spirituality with its concepts of idealized beauty and contemplation.³⁷

Not surprisingly, given Unified Silla’s close contacts with Tang China, Confucianism came to rival Buddhism as an alternate system of thought during the Unified Silla period. The establishment of a national Confucian college in 682 was one result of this development. “This national educational institution made possible the inauguration of a state examination system for the selection of government officials in 788, and candidates who passed this examination were given appointments on the basis of their proficiency in reading Chinese texts.”³⁸

Confucianism was especially appealing to the lesser aristocrats, whose bone-rank dictated fixed positions in the government hierarchies. The examination system, on the other hand, held out the idea of a meritocracy, thereby bypassing one’s bone-rank.³⁹ Korean scholars traveled to China for ideas and for books.

Korean scholars had already adapted Chinese script, and paper books imported from China made the information exchange even easier.⁴⁰ Silla Korea “developed wood block printing into order to reproduce a variety of texts, especially Buddhist sutras and classical Confucian writing.”⁴¹ The world’s earliest extant wood-block printed text is a Korean Buddhist spell sutra from a pagoda dating to 751.

This article is based on a presentation delivered at The Korea Society in August 2006.



FOOTNOTES

¹ Lee, K. *A New History of Korea*. trans. Wagner, E., E. Schultz. Cambridge: Harvard UP/Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1984.

² Eckert, C., K. Lee, Y. Ick Lew, M. Robinson, E. Wagner, *Korea, Old and New: A History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press/Ilchokak Publishers, 1990.

³ Nelson, S. M. *The Archaeology of Korea*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. The 14 state-run departments produced: silk, cotton, hemp, and ramie fabrics; wool blankets and leather products; tables and wooden containers, willow and bamboo products; ceramics and tiles; lacquerware; clothes and embroideries; tents; metal weapons; and tools.

⁴ Nelson, 244.

⁵ Eckert et al., 46.

⁶ For example, Silla kept its traditional social system, called the bone-rank system, with its unusual gender near-equality, even when they also adopted Confucianism with its patriarchal foundation and ideas about governmental meritocracy. Nelson, 243-4.

⁷ Deng, G. *Chinese Maritime Activities and Socioeconomic Development, c. 2100 BC – 1900 AD*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997.

⁸ Chin, J., “Ports, Merchants, Chieftains and Eunuchs: Reading Maritime Commerce of Early Guangdong,” in *Guangdong: Archaeology and Early Texts*. eds. S. Müller, T. Höllman, P. Gui. Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004. There were many Chinese eunuchs, since maritime trade was monopolized by the imperial house. (Chin, 234).

⁹ Chin, 231.

¹⁰ Choi, 119.

¹¹ Nelson, 249

¹² Louise Levanthes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433*. New York: Oxford, 1994.

¹³ Choi, 25, 31,32, 33, 34-38,119-120; Levanthes, 36, 133; Nelson, 245.

¹⁴ Choi, 12-16.

¹⁵ Choi, 97.

¹⁶ Choi, 97.

¹⁷ Nelson, 254. There is some scholarly debate about Korean stirrups: from where did the Koreans obtain them—nomads, Chinese, Indians—or did they develop them independently? Nelson, 257.

¹⁸ Chin, 222; Nelson, 258, 260.

¹⁹ Lee, 77.

²⁰ Choi, 16.

²¹ Eckert, et al., 75, 105, 119, 128.

²² Nelson, 247,248,249, 251.



²³Metropolitan Museum of Art, Art History Timeline, The Golden Treasures of Silla at <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sila/hd_sila.htm>. Accessed 6/17/06.

²⁴Choi, 48, 72. Scholars have also suggested connections between Silla crowns and those of Shibarghan in Afghanistan (an oasis town in the north, near the border of Turkmenistan).

²⁵Metropolitan Museum of Art, Timeline of Art History at <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/05/eak/ht05eak.htm>>. Accessed 6/15/06.

²⁶Nelson 253-4.

²⁷Nelson, 249

²⁸Nelson, 249

²⁹Lee, 59.

³⁰Choi, 29-30.

³¹Choi, 45-46, 93.

³²Lee, 59.

³³Nelson, 260.

³⁴Metropolitan Museum of Art, Art History Timeline, Korea 500-1000 at <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/06/eak/ht06eak.htm>> Accessed 6/18/06. For example, in 527, the impressive Buddhist temple Taet'ong-sa was built at the center of the Paekche capital, Ungjin (modern Kongju, South Ch'ungch'ong Province), in part as a diplomatic gesture intended to reinforce the kingdom's ties to a pious Chinese sovereign. Twenty-six years later, in 553, in the Silla capital of Kumsong (modern Kyongju, North Kyongsang Province), construction is initiated on Hwangnyong-sa, a royally endowed temple whose famous nine-storied pagoda (begun more than a century after the founding of the temple) came to be revered as one of the protective talismans of the nation.

³⁵Choi, 75-80.

³⁶Eckert, et al., 50.

³⁷Lee, 86-8.

³⁸This paragraph from Eckert, et al., 51-52.

³⁹Lee, 84. The "sinification" of the Unified Silla bureaucracy caused significant social upheaval in Korea, which already had an established social ranking system based on birth and occupation. The "meritocracy" implied by the examination system as well as the desire of Silla monarchs to establish centralized royal authority eventually drove the aristocrats and gentry into rebellion against the regime. The Silla King Hyegong (r. 765–80) was dethroned and executed by hereditary aristocrats in 780. By the 17th-century, during the Choson Kingdom, the government became completely Confucianized. (Eckert, et al., 52, 57).

⁴⁰Choi, 85-86. It wasn't until the 15th century that *han'gul*, an indigenous Korean script, was created. Interestingly, women were taught only *han'gul*, and were then effectively shut out of the male-dominated culture of Chinese Confucianism. Papermaking spread to the Abbasid dynasty when craftsmen of a Korean-born Chinese general were captured in the battle of Talas between the Chinese and Abbasid forces in 755. Choi, 111-112.

⁴¹Lee, 85.





PART VII. STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

California Content Standards

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/>

WORLD HISTORY

6th Grade – World History

- 6.6 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious and social structures of the early civilizations of China.
- 6. Detail the political contributions of the Han Dynasty to the development of the imperial bureaucratic state and the expansion of the empire.
- 7. Cite the significance of the trans-Eurasian “silk roads” in the period of the Han Dynasty and Roman Empire and their locations.
- 8. Describe the diffusion of Buddhism northward to China during the Han Dynasty.

7th Grade – World History

- 7.3 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious and social structures of the civilizations of China in the Middle Ages.
 - 1. Describe the reunification of China under the Tang Dynasty and reasons for the spread of Buddhism in Tang China, Korea and Japan.
 - 2. Describe agricultural, technological, and commercial developments during the Tang and Sung periods.
 - 3. Analyze the influences of Confucianism and changes in Confucian thought during the Sung and Mongol periods.
 - 4. Understand the importance of both overland trade and maritime expeditions between China and other civilizations in the Mongol Ascendancy and Ming Dynasty.
 - 5. Trace the historic influence of such discoveries as tea, the manufacture of paper, wood-block printing, the compass and gunpowder.
 - 6. Describe the development of the imperial state and the scholar-official class.
- 7.5 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious and social structures of the civilizations of Medieval Japan.

Describe the significance of Japan’s proximity to China and Korea and the intellectual, linguistic, religious, and philosophical influence of those countries on Japan.





VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

6th –7th Grade

Historical And Cultural Context

3.0 Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts
Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

Role and Development of the Visual Arts

3.1 Research and describe how art reflects cultural values in various traditions throughout the world.

Diversity of the Visual Arts

3.2 Compare and contrast works of art from various periods, styles and cultures and explain how those works reflect the society in which they were made.

8th Grade

Historical And Cultural Context

3.0 Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts
Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

Role and Development of the Visual Arts

3.2 Compare, contrast, and analyze styles of art from a variety of times and places in Western and non-Western cultures.

9-12th Grade

Historical And Cultural Context

3.0 Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts
Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

PART

VII





State of Michigan Content Expectations Correlations

<http://www.Michigan.gov/mde>

WORLD HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

7th Grade - Eastern Hemisphere Studies and World History
Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE)

W2 WHG Era 2 – Early Civilizations and Cultures and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 4000 to 1000 BCE

- 7 – W2.1.3 Examine early civilizations to describe their common features (ways of governing, stable food supply, economic and social structures, use of resources and technology, division of labor and forms of communication).
- 7 – W2.1.4 Define the concept of cultural diffusion and how it resulted in the spread of ideas and technology from one region to another (e.g., plants, crops, plow, wheel, bronze metallurgy).
(page 59 of the state GLCE document)

W3 WHG Era 3 – Classical Traditions, World Religions, and Major Empires, 1000 BCE to 300 CE

- 7 – W3.1.1 Describe the characteristics that classical civilizations share (institutions, cultural styles, systems of thought that influenced neighboring peoples and have endured for several centuries).
- 7 – W3.1.2 Using historical and modern maps, locate three major empires of this era, describe their geographic characteristics including physical features and climates, and propose a generalization about the relationship between geographic characteristics and the development of early empires.
- 7 – W3.1.5 Describe major achievements from Indian, Chinese, Mediterranean, African, and Southwest and Central Asian civilizations in the areas of art, architecture and culture; science, technology and mathematics; political life and ideas; philosophy and ethical beliefs; and military strategy.
- 7 – W3.1.6 Use historical and modern maps to locate and describe trade networks among empires in the classical era.





- 7 – W3.1.7 Use a case study to describe how trade integrated cultures and influenced the economy within empires (e.g., Assyrian and Persian trade networks or networks of Egypt and Nubia/Kush; or Phoenician and Greek networks).
(page 60 of the state GLCE document)

Note: WHG in coding denotes World History and Geography

High School World History and Geography

WGH Era 4 – Expanding and Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 300 to 1500 CE

- 4.1.3 Trade Networks and Contacts – Analyze the development, interdependence, specialization, and importance of interregional trading systems both within and between societies including
- land-based routes across the Sahara, Eurasia and Europe
 - water-based routes across the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, South China Sea, Red and Mediterranean Seas
(National Geography Standard 11, p.206)
- 4.2.2 Unification of Eurasia under the Mongols – Using historical and modern maps, locate and describe the geographic patterns of Mongol conquest and expansion and describe the characteristics of the Pax Mongolica (particularly revival of long-distance trading networks between China and the Mediterranean world).
(National Geography Standard 10, p.203)
(page 22 of the state HSCE document)





National Standards for History

<http://ncss.org/standards>

- Era 2 Standard 4: Major trends in Eurasia and Africa from 4000-1000 BCE
- Era 3 Standard 5: Major global trends from 1000-300 BCE
- Era 4 Standard 3: Major developments in East Asia and Southeast Asia in the era of the Tang Dynasty, 600-900 CE
- Standard 7: Major global trends from 300-1000 CE

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORICAL SKILLS

Standard 1: The student thinks chronologically

- 1 A. Distinguish between past, present and future times
- 1 B. Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story
- 1 C. Establish temporal order in constructing historical narratives of their own
- 1 E. Interpret data presented in time lines and create timelines
- 1 F. Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration

Standard 2: The student comprehends a variety of historical sources:

- 2 C. Identify the central questions
- 2 F. Appreciate historical perspectives
- 2 G. Draw upon data in historical maps
- 2 I. Draw upon visual, literary and musical sources

Standard 3: The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation

- 3 A. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas
- 3 B. Consider multiple perspectives
- 3 C. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships, bearing in mind multiple causation, the importance of the individual, the influence of ideas
- 3 D. Draw comparisons across eras and regions in order to define enduring issues
- 3 F. Compare competing historical narratives
- 3 H. Hold interpretations of history as tentative
- 3 J. Hypothesize the influence of the past

Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

- 5 A. Identify issues and problems in the past
- 5 F. Evaluate the implementation of a decision





New York State Social Studies Standards

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/pub/sscore2.pdf>

GLOBAL HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Unit One: Ancient World-Civilizations and Religion (4000 BCE – 500 CE)

- C.7. The Growth of Global Trade Routes in Classical Civilizations
- C.7. b. Silk Road
- C.7. c. Maritime and Overland Trade Routes



Chinese

An Lushan	ahn loo-shah'n	安錄山
Anxi	ah'n-she	安西
Chang'an	chah'ng-ah'n	長安
Chen	cheh'n	陳
Gao Xianzhi	gau she'en-jeer	高仙芝
Guangzhou	gwang-joe	廣州
Jin	gin	晉
Jiu Tang shu	jee'u tah'ng shoe	舊唐書
Qi	chee	齊
Qin	chin	秦
Shandong	shah'n-dong	山東
Song	soh'ng	宋
Sui	sway	隋
Tang	tah'ng	唐
Wei	way	魏
Xin Tang shu	sheen tah'ng shoe	新唐書
Xuanzang	shoe'en-zang	玄奘
Yangzi	yah'ng-tzu	揚子
Yongningsi	yoh'ng-ning-ssu	永寧寺
Zhou	joe	周
Zizhi tongjian	tzu-jeer tong-jee'an	資治通鑿

Japanese

Ennin	eh'n-nin	円仁
Nara	nah-rah	奈良
Nihon shogi	knee-hone show-ghee	日本書記
Shosoin	show-so-in	正倉院
Shotoku	show-toe-koo	聖德
Soga no Umako	so-ga no oo-mah-koh	蘇我馬子
Todaiji	tow-die-jee	東大寺
Wa	wah	倭
Yamato	yah-mah-toe	大和

Sanskrit

Avalokitesvara	ah-valo-ki-tesh-vara	-
Avatamsaka Sutra	ah-vah-tah'm-saka soo-tra	-
Dharani	dhah-rah-knee	-
Sarira	sha-ri-ra	-
Vajrabodhi	ve-dra-bow-dee	-

Korean

Adala	a-dah-la	아달라
Anap-chi	ah'n-ah'p-chee	안압지
Aryong	ar-young	아령
Chajang	cha-jah'ng	자장
Chang Pogo	chah'ng po-go	장보고
Chindok	jean-duck	진덕
Chinp'yong	jean-piung	진평
Chinhan	jean-hah'n	진한
Chinp'yo	jean-pio	진표
Chinsong	jean-sung	진성
Ch'oe Ch'iwon	chway chee-won	최치원
Ch'omsong-dae	chum-sung-day	첨성대
Ch'onghae	chung-hay	청해
Ch'on'gwan	chun-gwan	천관
Choson	cho-sun	조선
Han	hah'n	한
han'gul	hah'n-guh'l	한글
hwabaek	hwa-beck	화백
Hwangnyong-sa	hwah'ng-niong-sah	황룡사
hwarang	hwa-rah'ng	화랑
Hyech'o	hay-cho	혜초
Hyeja	hay-ja	혜자
Hyokkose	hyuk-koh-say	혁거세
idu	e-doo	이두
Iryon	ir-yun	일연
Kaya	kah-yah	가야
Kimhae	kim-hay	김해
Kim Ch'unch'u	kim choon-choo	김춘추
Kim Munyang	kim moon-yah'ng	김문양
Kim Pusik	kim poo-shik	김부식
Kim Sohyon	kim so-hyun	김서현
Kim Taesong	kim tay-sung	김대성
Kim Yusin	kim yoo-sheen	김유신
Ko Sonji	koh sun-jee	고선지
Koguryo	koh-goo-rio	고구려
Koryo	koh-rio	고려
Kumgwan	kuh'm-gwah'n	금관
Kumsong	kuh'm-sung	금성
Kungye	koong-yay	궁예
Kwaenung	kway-nuh'ng	괘능
Kwanch'ang	kwah'n-chah'ng	관창
Kyebaek	kay-beck	계백



PRONUNCIATION GUIDE



Kyerim
 Kyongae
 Kyongdok
 Kyongju
 Kyongsun
 Kyonhwon
 Mich'u
 Munmu
 Muyol
 Namsan
 namu Amit'a pul
 Paekche
 Pomnim-sa
 P'umil
 Punhwang-sa
 Pulguk-sa
 Sach'onwang-sa
 Samguk sagi
 Samguk yusa
 Saryang
 Seonyo
 Silla
 Simmun hwajaeng non
 Simsang
 Sinmun
 Sokchang-sa
 Sokkuram
 Sol Ch'ong
 Sondok
 Songak
 T'aejo
 Taekkyon
 Tan'gun
 Uisang
 Wang Kon
 Wolmyong
 Won'gwang
 Wonhyo
 Yangji
 Yongmyo-sa
 Yonorang
 Yosok

kay-rim
 kyoung-ay
 kyoung-duck
 kyoung-joo
 kyoung-soon
 kyoun-won
 me-chew
 moon-moo
 moo-yul
 nah'm-sah'n
 knaw-moo a-me-tah pool
 peck-jay
 pum-neem-sah
 poo-mill
 poon-hwang-sah
 pool-gook-saw
 sah-chun-wang-sah
 sah'm-gook sah-ghee
 sah'm-gook you-saw
 sah-riang
 say-oh-nio
 shill'a
 shim-moon hwa-jay'ng non
 shim-sah'ng
 sheen-moon
 suck-chah'ng-sah
 suck-koo-rah'm
 sul choh'ng
 sun-duck
 soh'ng-ah'k
 tay-joe
 tay-kkyun
 tah'n-goon
 uwi-sah'ng
 wah'ng gun
 woll-myong
 won-gwang
 won-hio
 yah'ng-jee
 young-mio-sah
 yun-oh-rah'ng
 yoh-suck

계림
 경애
 경덕
 경주
 경순
 견훤
 미추
 문무
 무열
 남산
 나무아미불
 백제
 범림사
 부밀
 분황사
 불국사
 사천왕사
 삼국사기
 삼국유사
 사랑
 선녀
 신라
 심문화쟁논
 심상
 신문
 석장사
 석굴암
 설총
 선덕
 송악
 태조
 태권
 단군
 의상
 왕건
 월명
 원광
 원효
 양지
 영묘사
 연오랑
 요석

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<http://www.google.com/images> (search for "silk road map")

http://scienceview.berkeley.edu/VI/handbooks_history.html

<http://www.korea.net>

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