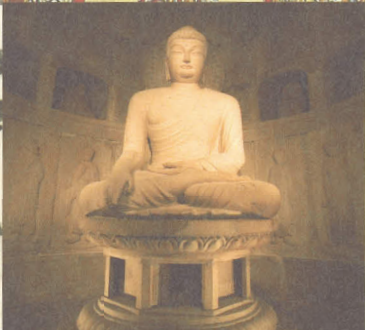
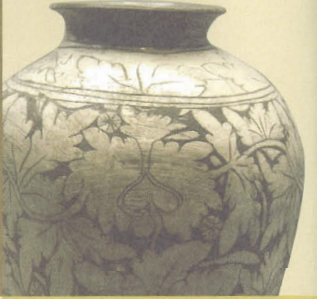


A Korean History for International Readers

Written by The Association of Korean History Teachers

What Do Koreans Talk About Their Own History and Culture?





How can we talk about Korean history to non-Korean readers?

To Korean history teachers, the time we discuss past events with students while dreaming for a better tomorrow is the moment that we feel fulfilled. Although we are discouraged with the reality in which schools are situated, there are more cases where we feel joyful by being able to connect with the students. We also think that history should be alive in the students' life, so we endeavor to teach it to be a meaningful lesson for them.

Korean history teachers teach both Korean and World History classes across disciplines. In other words, we attempt to understand Korean history in the context of world history, thus having the advantage to prospect Korean history in relation to other nations' history. This allows us to have a more appropriate discussion of Korean history with non-Koreans. Also, history teachers are disciplined to talk and teach Korean history with language that is easily understood amongst students and therefore have an advantage to write Korean history in a way so anyone can comprehend it. It has been 6 years since we started writing this book which has such merits, and finally it is time to publish it.

This book attempted to explore Korean history without bias for non-Korean readers in the international community. Of course, it was written not only for non-Koreans but also for Koreans. As the subtitle indicates in its question, "What do Koreans talk about their own history and culture?" this book should be first read by the Koreans who play a key role in forming their history. We, Koreans, should understand our own history to introduce our history to others, because when we know the diverse historical experiences of Koreans that affected the Korean life and culture and their influence on other cultures, we could talk about our history. Thus, this book asked and answers the questions on how Koreans should tell their history.

This book was published in two versions: Korean and English. We expect that many Koreans read this volume in Korean and English versions together and talk about it with many foreigners. We wish Korean readers to have the opportunity to review Korean history from an outsider's view and to offer different cultures a deeper look into the internal aspects of the Korean people. We also desire that this book would contribute to idealizing a better future by suggesting deliberate discussions to introspect on modern day Korea.

The Korean version is suitable for those who are searching for ways to explain Korean history to foreigners. We also recommend it for those who have a foreign friend, or those who have frequent meetings with culturally different individuals, or those who are planning to travel abroad. The English version was specifically geared towards giving a comprehensive outlook for foreigners who simply want to learn more about Korean history.

This book was designed a bit differently compared to previous Korean history books. First of all, a chronological table of world events is presented on the first page of each chapter to show what was happening in other parts of the globe while events were unfolding in Korea. Also, the section of <Korea in the world, The world in Korea> shows how the world and Korea are related to each other. <Historical Sites> introduces cultural assets representing Korea and its significant historical sites, and <Life and Culture> tries to reveal various historical imprints that have accumulated over the years to be embodied into the life and culture of Koreans today.

We deliberately described Korean history for both foreigners and Koreans to understand it with ease while designing the flow of history to be clearly shown. Instead of just describing historical events and facts, we provided a number of maps and visual materials with detailed ex-

planations to entice readers' understanding the contexts. In addition, we emphasized significant figures who led the nation in every period of time with further details regarding the characters.

This volume talks about the history of Koreans from the beginning when they first appeared on the Korean Peninsula to forming a unification of national and cultural identities. Particularly, it reviews modern and contemporary Korean history that accomplished both democratic and economic successes that other third world countries little accomplished. Therefore, readers can meet those Koreans who created a history with hope having overcome the fluctuating contemporary Korean history of the Korean War and the tragic division of the country.

Although we put a lot of time and effort to write and publish this book, we are still afraid of its insufficient work. Nonetheless, we decided to publish this book to introduce Korean history to the international society with more appropriate interpretations. We hope this book can be an inspiration for more Korean history books to be published in other languages.

There are many history teachers who participated in designing and planning this book from the start. Also, the Humanist Publishing Group Inc. largely contributed to publishing it by taking its duty as a publisher into consideration. Much gratitude and respect is owed to these contributors who have made this book possible.

Nov. 2010

The Association of Korean History Teachers

Hoping to get closer to each other through Korean history

Are you ever reminded of any images or words when you hear about Korea? Or have you ever had a chance to talk about Korea with your friends?

Korea has a long history, and therefore it has cultivated diverse cultures over many years. The diverse experiences of Koreans and their culture that have long been accumulated are significant parts of the world history. We believe this book, *A Korean History for International Readers*, would contribute to studying the world history by introducing Korean history to the world.

This book is a historical text that covers Korean history from its foundation to the modern era. It especially deals with pre-modern societies of Korea in detail. Despite its long history, life in its society and its culture are rarely spoken of outside the peninsula.

Rather than arranging the historical events chronologically, this book focuses more on the details of the historical events by questioning how the diverse experiences that Koreans had affected their life and culture and what influences that culture had on constructing Korean history. This is the reason why we publish this book, although there are already numerous books introducing Korean history. Readers could realize what Koreans have endured and how it lead to their position in the world today. It also mentions their moral values and what they believe is right or wrong.

This book was written by the Association of Korean History Teachers, a major representative of history professionals. Up until now, this association has published alternative text books on Korean and world history to reform its education. In addition, it has published many research papers that cover theories of an alternative history educational process. Although this book is written by two teachers, it is the product of many minds.

History teachers try to grab the interest of students towards an unfamiliar past by speaking in their language. This book was written based on that experience that history teachers have had while attempting to bridge the gap with their students. Looking at Korea in the past and the present, we have written this book as a reminder of what is possible for the future. We did our best to compose it for readers who are unfamiliar or unaware of Korea and its history, in hopes to bring them one step closer to understanding Korea.

Thus, this book differs from any other general history books in that it organizes narrative methods to be read easily and allows readers to feel closer to Korea by using various maps and picture materials. Readers could learn cultural assets, customs, and formalities that all symbolize the lifestyle of Koreans. Also, it introduces historical sites where significant events occurred with vivid photography. Moreover, it describes in detail many important figures whom Koreans respect as their role-models.

It has been already 6 years since we began to prepare this book, and this journey has come to end. It's not a simple task to fully understand what is familiar to us when looking from another perspective. It is said, "A Journey is the experience where I meet another one of myself at strange places". We hope those readers who read this book could meet another part of themselves by being able to relate to the historical journey of Korea.

Nov. 2010
The Association of Korean History Teachers

- To Korean Readers
How can we talk about Korean history to non-Korean readers? · 5
- To non-Korean Readers Who Read This Book
Hoping to get closer to each other through Korean history · 8
- Prologue – Korea and Koreans, Who are they? · 16

I The Beginning of the Korean History B.C. 500000–B.C. 1C

Korea in the World, The World in Korea · Prehistoric Culture of the Korean Peninsula, and the Historic Periods · 22

1. Since When Did the Existence of Man Begin on the Korean Peninsula?
Neolithic remains found all over the Korean Peninsula · 24 | The origin of the Korean people · 25 | Farming allows people to settle down · 26
2. Koreans Found Gojoseon: the First Kingdom of the Korean Peninsula
Korea, and its name “Korea and Joseon” · 28 | Gojoseon was founded on agriculture · 29 | Gojoseon’s development and its becoming a representative power of the Yemaek race · 30 | Confrontation between Han China and Gojoseon · 31
3. Developments of Several Ancient Kingdoms, in the South and North of the Korean Peninsula
The time when Myeongdojeon was used · 32 | Iron changes the world · 33 | Jin, Buyeo and many other states established inside the Korean Peninsula after the days of Gojoseon · 34
Historical Sites · The Largest Dolmen Kingdom in the World · 36
Life and Culture · Ritual Ceremony to God · 38

II The Beginning of the Three Kingdoms Period B.C. 1C–A.D. 700

Korea in the World, The World in Korea · Formation of the East Asian Culture Block · 42

1. The Formation of the Three Kingdoms: Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla
Buyeo and Goguryeo fight for power in the northern region of Korea · 44 | Baekje, Shilla and Gaya · 45 | Aristocrats, slaves and free peasants · 46 | The fall of Buyeo and Gaya · 47
2. Competitions Become Intense Among the Three Kingdoms
Goguryeo drives out the Han Chinese presence · 48 | Confrontations between Baekje and Goguryeo · 48 | Overcoming crises, Goguryeo develops into a great empire · 49 | Allied Baekje and Shilla forces confront Goguryeo · 51

Historical Sites • Ancient Tombs and Murals; Meeting the Goguryeo People 1,600 Years Ago · 52

3. Goguryeo's Defeat of Successive Invasions of Sui and Tang
Shilla, rise of a new power · 54 | Tumultuous Northeast Asia · 55 | Goguryeo wins the wars against United China · 56
4. A Variety of Flourishing Cultures due to the Expansion of Trades
Worshipping Heaven and Earth · 58 | Introduction of new religions · 59 | Prosperity of Buddhism · 59 | Active cultural exchanges between the three kingdoms and Japan · 61
Life and Culture • Bab and Gimchi, Stories of the Korean Dining Table · 62

III Unified Shilla and Balhae in the South and North 648~926

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • People Embarking upon a Journey to the World, and Seokguram · 66

1. Shilla Unites Baekje and Goguryeo
Shilla's agreement to a military alliance with Tang · 68 | The Collapse of Baekje and Goguryeo · 69 | The people who fought for the restoration of Baekje and Goguryeo · 70 | Shilla defeats Tang · 71
2. The Unified Shilla and Balhae's Occupying the South and North of the Peninsula
Shilla accomplished a unified kingdom · 72 | Balhae's succession to Goguryeo · 73 | Balhae, the dynasty that was called "Haedong Seongguk" · 73
3. The Remarkable Development of a Buddhist Culture
Shilla and Balhae's expanding their views toward the world · 76 | Development of Confucianism in studies and philosophies · 78 | Buddhism becomes the people's religion · 79 | Flourishing Buddhist art · 81
Historical Sites • Bulguksa, a Temple in the Land of Buddha · 82
4. The Decline of the South and North Kingdoms Era
Thriving capital; starving people · 84 | Power struggles inside the nobility class intensified · 85 | The collapse of Shilla, a new beginning · 86 | Collapse of Balhae · 87
Life and Culture • Tile-roofed Houses, Straw-roofed Houses, and Ondol and Wooden Floors · 88

IV Emergence of a United Power Named Goryeo 900~1135

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • The Byeokraznaru Ferry Dock and Gaegyeong, the Imperial Capital of Goryeo · 92

1. Goryeo Unites the Later Three Kingdoms
Opening of the Later Three Kingdoms Period · 94 | Gyeonghwan and Wang Geon's struggles for unification · 95 | Goryeo's unification of the Later Three Kingdoms · 95
2. Goryeo Adopts the Civil Service Examination, and Develops a Bureaucratic Ruling System
The three Chos in the final days of Shilla and the beginning of Goryeo · 98 | Adaptation of new official employment system · 99 | Goryeo forms the foundation for a ruling system that will last for 1,000 years · 100
Historical Sites • Blue Celadon and Porcelain Expositions · 102
3. Northeast Asia in Turmoil: Goryeo Employs Practical Diplomacy
Policy enhancements in centralizing power · 104 | Goryeo battles with Liao for 30 years · 105 | Goryeo, a dynasty ruled by an Emperor · 105 | Goryeo is introduced as "Corea" to the world · 106
Life and Culture • Goryeo Believed in Buddha and Respected Confucius · 108

V A New Historical Perspective Formed Through Struggles Against Foreign Powers 1135-1380

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • Cultural Exchanges Between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire · 112

1. “Liberate the Slaves of Samhan!”

The sad story of Jungmijeong · 114 | Trembling aristocracy · 115 | 100 years of the military regime · 116 | Popular uprisings for reform · 116

2. Development of a New Historical Perspective

Samguksagi and Samgukyusa · 118 | The Mongolian invasions · 119 | Continuing torment · 120 | The aftermath of the Mongol war · 121

Historical Sites • Jikji, and the Museum of Archaic Printing · 122

3. Rise of the Reformers, Dreaming of a New World

King Gongminwang raises the flag against Yuan · 124 | Trembling reforms; continuous invasions from the Red Turban rebels and Japanese marauders · 125 | Those dreaming of reforms · 127

Life and Culture • The Meaning of Buddhism to Koreans · 128

VI Rise of a New Dynasty, Joseon: The Beginning of New Traditions 1380-1474

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • Korean's First Calendar, Chiljeongsan · 132

1. Joseon Designates Hanyang as the Capital for a New Dynasty

The meeting of Yi Seong-gye and Jeong Do-jeon · 134 | The new dynasty is named Joseon, and the capital is moved to Hanyang · 135 | From Buddhism to Confucianism · 136 | Yangban rules the Confucian society · 137

Historical Sites • The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty · 138

2. Joseon's Expansion of Its Northern Border to the Annokgang and the Dumangang

Joseon and Ming maintain a Tributary-Investiture relationship · 140 | Joseon expands its northern border · 141 | The people's awareness of the border lines of their country becomes evident · 143

3. The Korean Alphabet Hangeul is Invented

Because of differences between Korean and Chinese languages... · 144 | The new alphabet becomes widely used in Joseon · 145 | “People are the foundation of a dynasty” · 146

Life and Culture • Beautiful and Scientific Letters of Hangeul · 148

VII The Spread of Confucian Culture 1474-1650

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • Northeast Asia Engulfed in Wars · 152

1. The Sarim Scholars, Dreaming of an Idealistic Governance Based on Neo-Confucianism

Who are the people called Sarim? · 154 | Sarim Scholars at the government posts · 155 | The Sarim political group is formed · 156 | “Easterners” and “Westerners” are formed · 157

Historical Sites • Seowon, Where Joseon Scholars' Life Can be Found · 158

2. Turmoil from the Two Wars

Japanese invasions of Joseon · 160 | Japan's ambition to rule East Asia · 161 | The resistance of warriors against the Japanese invaders · 162 | Aftermath of the war · 164 | Joseon enhances security of the southern

border and guards the northern border · 164 | Abolishment of “Neutral Diplomacy” and the outbreak of “Byeongjahoran” · 165

3. Establishment of a Patriarchic Family System

“From now on, Joseon is the only remaining Confucian state” · 166 | Changes in marriage customs and family system · 167 | Establishment of Confucian customs throughout the Joseon society · 168

Life and Culture · Ancestral Rituals: Commemorating the Deceased Parents · 170

VIII Various Attempts for Changes 1650~1862

Korea in the World, The World in Korea · Those Who Visited Yeongyeong (Beijing) and Edo (Tokyo) · 174

1. From “Bukbeol” to “Bukhak”; Expanding One’s Perspective in Viewing the World

The tragic successor to the throne · 176 | The Northern Campaign Movement hits its limit · 177 | Land reforms, or tax reforms · 177 | A new recognition on self and the world · 179

2. “Let’s Rebuild Joseon!”

Cheongju in March 1728 · 180 | From faction-centered politics to the king-centered governance · 181 | Collapse of the faction-centered politics · 183 | The Time of “Baekhwajebang” · 184 | Jeong Yak-yong and Park Je-ga, and King Jeongjo · 185

Historical Sites · The Hwaseong City and the Manseokgeo Reservoir, King Jeongjo’s New City Construction Project · 186

3. The People’s Uprising

The old system becomes the subject of reform · 188 | Hong Gyeong-rae died and became a legend · 189 | People are the Heaven · 190 | The people proclaim they are the main characters in history · 191

Life and Culture · Joseon’s Folk Paintings, Strikingly Reflecting the Daily Life · 192

IX Joseon at a Turning Point 1863~1896

Korea in the World, The World in Korea · Ports of All Three East Asian Countries Opened · 196

1. The Old System at Risk; Joseon Seeks Reforms

Joseon refuses to form an amicable relationship with the West · 198 | Nations of the West: recognized as invaders · 199 | Defense against foreign invasions and internal reforms · 200 | The policy of pursuing national prosperity and strong defense · 201

Historical sites · Ganghwado, the Beginning of the Modern History of Korea · 202

2. Joseon Joins Modernized Countries

Opening ports · 204 | “Let’s learn Western technology and civilization” · 205 | Which one should we choose, Western civilization or the Asian culture? · 206 | Soldiers protesting the Open-door Policy · 207

3. Radical Reforms Attempted

“Let us reconstruct the nation!” · 208 | Qing claims its suzerain over Joseon · 209 | Western technology added to the spirit of the East · 209 | Britain’s occupation of Geomundo; Will Joseon be able to maintain its sovereignty? · 211

4. Clashes Between “Revolution from the Bottom” and “Reforms from the Above”

The year of 1894, diverging fates: three nations of East Asia · 212 | The farmers, revolting to invite an equal society · 214 | Revolution and anti-revolution · 214 | Reforms from the above · 215 | The people’s opposition to a modernization process dependent on foreigners · 217

Life and Culture • The Joseon's Image Reflected on the Westerners' Views, and the Western World in the Eyes of the Joseon People · 218

X An Unfulfilled Dream of Constructing a People's Nation; Subsequent Colonization and Oppression by the Japanese 1897~1921

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • Imperialists' Invasion and the Colonized Joseon · 222

1. Last Reform of the Great Empire of Han (Daehan Empire)

Establishment of the "Great Empire of Han" · 224 | The movement for constructing a people's nation gains momentum · 225 | The "Dongniphyeophoe" and the "Manmingongdonghoe" · 226 | Failure of the last reform for the establishment of a People's Nation · 227

Historical Sites • Modern History at the Gyeongungung Palace and the Jeongdong Street · 228

2. Joseon's Confrontation Against the Japanese Invasion

"Today, we cry out in lamentation!" · 230 | The Great Empire of Han became a protectorate state of Japan · 231 | Outburst of anti-invasion struggles · 232 | Struggling for freedom with their lives at risk · 233 | From the emperor's subjects to citizens · 234

3. Joseon, a Colony of Japan: Distorted Modern History of Korea

Joseon became a Japanese colony · 236 | A despotic ruling of the Japanese military government · 237 | Violence forged under the justification of modernization · 238

4. Establishment of a Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea

Persistent struggles in the darkness · 240 | The great outburst, the March 1st Movement · 241 | Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea is born · 242 | Armed anti-Japanese resistance rages · 243

Life and Culture • Taegyeukgi and the National Anthem: Wishes for Independence · 244

XI Koreans' Preparation for Liberation 1922~1945

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • World War II and the Korean Independence Movement · 248

1. Development Without Development: People Are Tired

Exploiting the colony under the name of development · 250 | The landlord system of the Japanese colonial government · 251 | Three different faces of the colonized Korea · 252 | Nationalism and Socialism · 253

2. Emergence of Social Movements

Uprisings of tenant farmers spread like wildfire · 254 | Beginning of the modern labor movements · 255 | Active social movements in various classes · 256 | Rising Nationalism · 257

3. Emergence of Various Nationalist Movements

The stirring of East Asia · 258 | Nationalist movements diverging in various directions · 259 | Making the "National Solitary Party" · 260 | Another outburst of "Hurray for Korean Independence!" · 261

4. Founding a Nation While Fighting Against Fascism

Colonial Fascism and the sufferings of Koreans · 262 | Confrontation of Koreans against the Japanese in alliance with the Chinese · 263 | Koreans struggled until the Day of Liberation · 264

Historical Sites • Historic Hall of the Seodaemun Prison, and the Independence Memorial Hall of Korea · 266

Life and Culture • Migration of Koreans During the Occupation: Koreans Overseas · 268

XII The Establishment of a Democratic Republic and the Country's Division 1945-1960

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • Conflicts During the Cold War Period · 272

1. Upon Liberation, the Process for Building a Nation Accelerates
Preparations for founding a nation · 274 | U.S. and USSR Forces occupied Korea and divided it into two · 275 | Confrontations between the Left and Right: hindrance to founding a single government · 276
2. Establishment of the Republic of Korea
Beginning of the division · 278 | Establishing the Government of the Republic of Korea · 280 | A division after 1,300 years of unification · 281
3. Outbreak of the Korean War
The anti-Communist system established by the Yi Seung-man administration · 282 | South and North plunged into a civil war · 283 | Outbreak of war · 285 | Damages by the war, and atrocities committed against civilians · 286 | The fire ceased, however... · 287
Historical sites • DMZ; from the Days of the 38th Parallel to the Restoration of the Gyeongju Railroad · 288
4. Divided into Two Nations
Formation of a divided nation · 290 | North Korea establishes a Socialist regime · 291 | Market economy system reinforced in South Korea · 292 | Competing dictatorships between South and North · 293
Life and Culture • The Differences and Similarities Between Two Koreas · 294

XIII Changing Korean Peninsula, Dynamic Korea 1960-2010

Korea in the World, The World in Korea • People's Power in the 1980s and the June Democracy Movement · 298

1. Industrialization Picks Up Pace in South Korea
The Democratic Revolution of April 19th, and the Military Coup on May 16th · 300 | Promotion of the Economic Development Plan · 301 | Korea, an industrialized nation · 302 | Miracle on the Hangang, Ups and Downs · 303
Historical sites • Metropolitan City: the New Image of Today's Seoul · 304
2. Accomplishment of Both Industrialization and Democracy
Park Chung-hee seeks for Military Authoritarianism · 306 | Democratization Movements engaged · 307 | Accomplishing an 'Industrial Revolution' · 308 | The June Democracy Movement, the first steps towards Democracy · 309
3. North Korea: the Socialist Country Hits a Wall
Establishing 'Socialist industrialization' · 310 | Attempting to apply the "Juche" ideology to the entire society · 311 | The planned economy meets a wall · 312 | "Let us live by our own ways" · 313
4. The Korean Peninsula Changing, South and North Getting Closer
The Republic of Korea after the June Democracy Movement · 314 | Korean Peninsula in crisis · 315 | Two South-North Summit Meetings · 316 | Koreans remain optimistic on future prospects · 317 | Korea and the Koreans, achieving dynamic changes · 318 | A prospect of the future · 319
Life and Culture • One Million Foreigners, Various Nationalities Inside Korea · 320

- Sources and Copyrights · 322
- Index · 323

Korea and Koreans, Who are they?

Koreans, the first people who utilized movable metal type printing

Korean ancestors were the first to invent and use movable metal type printing in the world. This happened in the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) about 200 years before Johannes Gutenberg in Germany printed the copies of the Bible with such movable metal type printing. Among the printed materials that still remain today, *Jikji*, which was printed during the Goryeo Dynasty, is the earliest book of its kind.

Prior to this printing technique, woodblock printing prevailed during the Shilla Dynasty (B.C. 57~A.D. 935), which was used to print *Mugujeongwangdaidaranigyeong*, the oldest woodblock print material known to exist. Amazingly, the elaborate and delicate woodblocks that were made in the Goryeo Dynasty for producing multi-copies of the sutras are still functional today.

Not only did Korea have such a well developed printing system, but is also a culturally rich nation that has left its mark and legacy throughout its history. However, such cultural accomplishments are not widely known. Korea lies between China, with a long history of civilization, and Japan, which has risen to a technologically advanced nation in the modern era. For this reason, Korean history is frequently examined through the perspectives of these two powerful neighbors, and thereby often evaluated unfairly.

One race divided into South and North

The Southern part of the Korean Peninsula is now the Republic of Korea (South Korea), while the Northern part is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The people of both South and North wish for reunification even though they have competed with each other ever since their division over 60 years ago. This is because they had lived together under one nation for over 1,000 years and shared common experiences like fighting for liberty under foreign occupation.

South Korea has a population of approximately 50 million and land of roughly 99,000km², while the North has about 24 million people and 120,000km² of land. The total population of both South and North together are a bit more than that of Britain or France, and a little less than that of Germany. The total land area combined is close to that



of Britain. Most parts of the country lie in the temperate climate, so the people settled and lived in one place to farm. South Korea has more plain farm areas ranking at 3rd place with its population density of 490 people per km² than North Korea. The Korean Peninsula was governed by a united people from the very beginning and had relationships with neighboring countries; meanwhile there were no massive migrations that often have occurred in other countries.

Korean Peninsula, linking the continent and ocean

Japan is located east of Korea, whereas west of Korea is China. Japan and Korea are narrowly separated by the Korean Strait. Koreans may travel to the mainland China both via land and sea routes.

All the previous dynasties that once emerged in the Korean Peninsula existed as a member of Northeast Asia. Especially, the earlier kingdoms of old Korea survived constant battles against China or the nomads who lived on the prairies of China. When the Korean Peninsula was thrown into turmoil during the unification war in the 7th century, China and Japan were also involved. In the 13th century the Mongolian invasion of Goryeo was followed by the invasion of allied armies of Mongol-Goryeo upon Japan. Furthermore, both Japanese invasions of Korea in the 16th century and 19th century turned into international wars on the Korean Peninsula. Also, the Korean War of 1950, which was caused by the division of the Korean Peninsula, was another international war.

Korea is located at the center of the sea that China and Japan also share, and its routes to the continent and the seas are open. So it has often been at the center of international turmoil or sometimes Korea has developed its culture cooperating with the world and became the starting point toward the world. Korea has also sought for absorbing foreign cultures and expanding its influence in the world while maintaining an independent political community and forming a unique cultural identity.

In the Pre-modern era Koreans adopted diversified cultures from China, but from the 19th century they were able to absorb Western cultures through Japan and America. There was once a time that under the name of modernization Western cultures overwhelmed



the traditional values. Even though the process of resisting and struggling against outside influences persisted, Koreans eventually became more accepting of foreign cultures. This clash of civilizations has left a diversified cultural heritage along with its long history, and contributed to forming a land where many different religions co-exist in harmony.

Korea is standing at the center of the tide of globalization, just like many other countries. Perhaps they may contribute to making these waves move along. Many Koreans inquire the following questions to themselves: “How are the Koreans viewed in the world?” “What does something like Korean or something global mean?”

‘The Land of Morning Calm’, or ‘Dynamic Korea’

About one hundred years ago a foreign visitor, Griffis, William Elliot (1843-1928) described Korea as a “Corea, The Hermit Nation.” (1882) Perhaps what he wanted to express was of its standing aloof from the secular interests and seeking its own value. Another foreigner Percival Lowell (1855-1913) also gave a nickname to Korea “The Land of Morning Calm.” (1886) It seems likely that it was derived from ‘Joseon’, the name of the dynasty at that time, which stands for ‘fresh morning’.

However, Joseon was neither a hidden country nor a country that appeared out of nowhere. Though Joseon was a new experience to those visitors, Joseon had been interacting with other countries in its region, forming a historic community for a long time.

Many foreigners happen to imagine Korea with a negative connotation such as the Korean War, a divided nation, and the land with nuclear threats. Perhaps, this reflects the last half century of suffering endured by its people. The minds of many Korean adults of the older generation were occupied by this kind of negative correlation that had been inscribed in their younger ages.

Today, it is no longer possible to see Korea with the same viewpoint presented to the eyes of the foreigners in the 19th century. Korea failed to maintain its sovereignty in the beginning of the 20th century, then experienced a civil war and poverty while being divided soon after being liberated from the Japanese occupation. However, in the latter half of the 20th century Koreans made spectacular improvements in a relatively short time grasp-



ing the attention of the world. Its brilliant economic development has made it possible for Koreans to be recognized as one of the top ten largest trading nations. And Koreans have accomplished a democratic nation after overthrowing fascism of Imperial Japan and despotism of military regimes.

So the younger generation of Korea paints a portrait of its society with the images that are quite different from those of their parents. Instead of picturing the gloomy nation that their parents had imaged, they are reminded that Korea is a dynamic nation that has accomplished successful industrialization and democracy in the last half century when it took over a few centuries in the Western world. Foreigners have contradictory images on depicting Koreans; likewise, there are differences between generations, regions and classes when Koreans portray their own self images. The modern Korean history is the co-existing history in which positive and negative impacts were integrated at various levels.

Koreans who are dreaming their future reunification

Koreans have optimistic prospects on their promising future. They believe they will be able to overcome any kind of difficulties, and even the unification of the two Koreas seems to be not far off. Perhaps Koreans learned a lesson from their history that their ancestors never relinquished their heritage and identity even when their culture was at the brink of destruction.

For more than 1,300 years Koreans have formed communal societies in the Korean Peninsula that used the Korean language. In the 7th century, Shilla united the middle and southern regions of the peninsula and already recognized that they were unique and different from the Chinese and Japanese kingdoms. In the 13th century, people of Goryeo acknowledged that they were a homogeneous people from a common ancestry. Since then, for several hundred years Korea had not been divided, so Koreans' recognition of the homogeneous identity grew stronger. This feeling of unity was a critical factor that inspired a revolutionary movement to fight and protect their homeland from the Japanese invasion, and that keeps them optimistic about reunification in the future, though they are currently divided.

Koreans, who are they? Let's take a step to meet them!

B.C. 500000 ~ B.C. 1C

B.C. 500000

Stone tools, which were used by the humans who lived in this period of time were unearthed at the Geomeunmorudonggul (cave).

B.C. 50000

A human bone fossil, which is believed to have belonged to a person at the age of 35, was discovered at the Seungrisandonggul (cave).

B.C. 8000

Polished stone tools and pottery, which were used by the humans who lived in this period, were unearthed at Jeju-do (Is.). From this evidence we may assume that the Neolithic Period began around 10,000 years ago.

B.C. 4000

Agricultural production began in numerous regions throughout the Korean Peninsula. The beginning of agricultural production brought stability to the settlements and also led to fast social changes.

B.C. 3200

Sumerian civilization was formed.

B.C. 2333

According to *Samgukyusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), Dangun founded Gojoseon in B.C. 2333. This was the first state that ever emerged in the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria.

B.C. 6C

Persia united the Orient.

B.C. 4C

While Gojoseon was developing into a kingdom, it assimilated political authorities in its vicinities. It conflicted with Yan China, which was established by the people of the Chinese Han race.

B.C. 221

Qin united China.

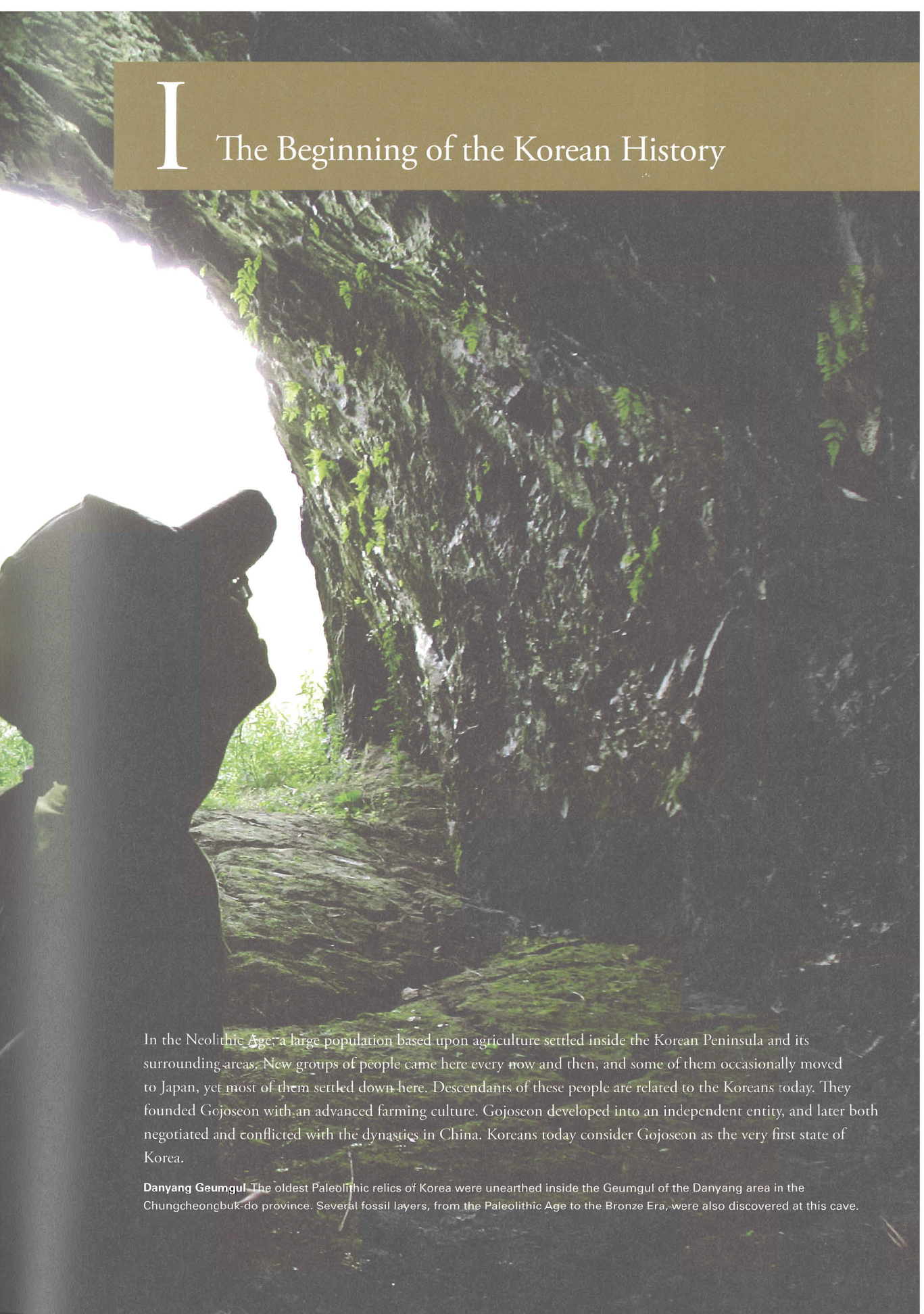
B.C. 109~108

Having resisted Han's invasion for more than a year, Gojoseon was finally defeated. Nonetheless, the command posts established by Han China came to face fierce resistance from the Gojoseon people.

B.C. 1C

Upon the fall of Gojoseon, various states including Buyeo and Goguryeo emerged in the Korean Peninsula and several regions of Manchuria.



The background of the page is a photograph of a cave entrance. In the foreground on the left, the dark silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is visible, looking towards the cave. The cave's interior is dark and filled with green moss and ferns. Light streams in from the opening on the left, creating a strong contrast with the dark interior. The overall mood is mysterious and ancient.

I The Beginning of the Korean History

In the Neolithic Age, a large population based upon agriculture settled inside the Korean Peninsula and its surrounding areas. New groups of people came here every now and then, and some of them occasionally moved to Japan, yet most of them settled down here. Descendants of these people are related to the Koreans today. They founded Gojoseon with an advanced farming culture. Gojoseon developed into an independent entity, and later both negotiated and conflicted with the dynasties in China. Koreans today consider Gojoseon as the very first state of Korea.

Danyang Geumgul. The oldest Paleolithic relics of Korea were unearthed inside the Geumgul of the Danyang area in the Chungcheongbuk-do province. Several fossil layers, from the Paleolithic Age to the Bronze Era, were also discovered at this cave.

Prehistoric Culture of the Korean Peninsula and the Historic Periods

The lands in the vicinities of the Korean Peninsula changed several times since the emergence of human beings upon it. The East Sea was originally a lake, and people were able to walk across the Yellow Sea. Considering the land's such configurations in the past, some fossils may very well be found inside the Korean Peninsula, like fossils of the humans who are believed to have lived in the southern part of China about 1,800,000 years ago, or of the Homo erectus (also called Peijing-men) figures.

The tools that may have been used by people of the Korean Peninsula around the time of the Peijing-men were unearthed inside the peninsula. Crude tools seem to have been made by cracking stone. They show us what the lives of the people back then were like: living with a lot of difficulties to prepare food. And they also show how a new era was ushered in overcoming the obstacles of nature.

The Neolithic Era began in the Korean Peninsula about ten thousand years ago. Around 4000 B.C., Koreans settled down to farm. When their lives were settled upon farming, and livestock farming was stabilized as well, political communities were formed to unite those who were scattered across the region.

Joseon was the first nation that emerged in the northwestern part of the Korean Peninsula. With its emergence, the first chapter of the history of the Korean people was opened.



Stone Hatchet
One of the most representative remains from the early Paleolithic Era.



The Seungrisan Man



The front of lower jawbone



The Yeokpo Child
A human bone fossil 100 thousands year old was unearthed in the vicinity of Pyeongyang.

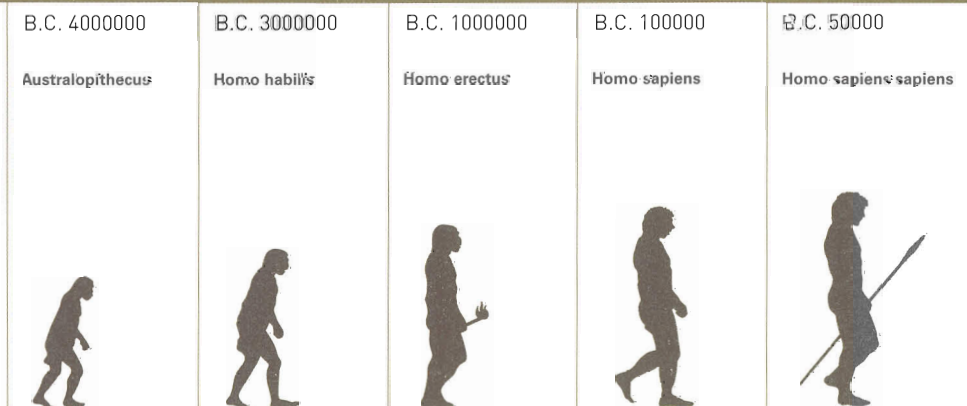


Mandal Man

The side of a skull



The side of lower jawbone



Paleolithic and Neolithic Relic Sites of Korea

- Major paleolithic sites
- Major prehistoric sites
- Major excavation sites of human bones



Comb-patterned pottery



Grinding stone board and grinding stone



Foundation of Gojoseon



Liaoning Bronze dagger



Remains unearthed at the Jeju-do Gosan-ri vestige
Prehistoric era started around 8000 B.C.

B.C. 4000

B.C. 2333

B.C. 1500~B.C. 1300

B.C. 8000

B.C. 5000

B.C. 3000

B.C. 2000

B.C. 1000

B.C. 100

B.C. 10

Mesopotamian and Egyptian Civilization formed

Ancient Egyptian Kingdom Period; Construction of Pyramids; Formation of the Indus and Yellow River Civilizations



1

Since When Did the Existence of Man Begin on the Korean Peninsula?

Neolithic remains found all over the Korean Peninsula

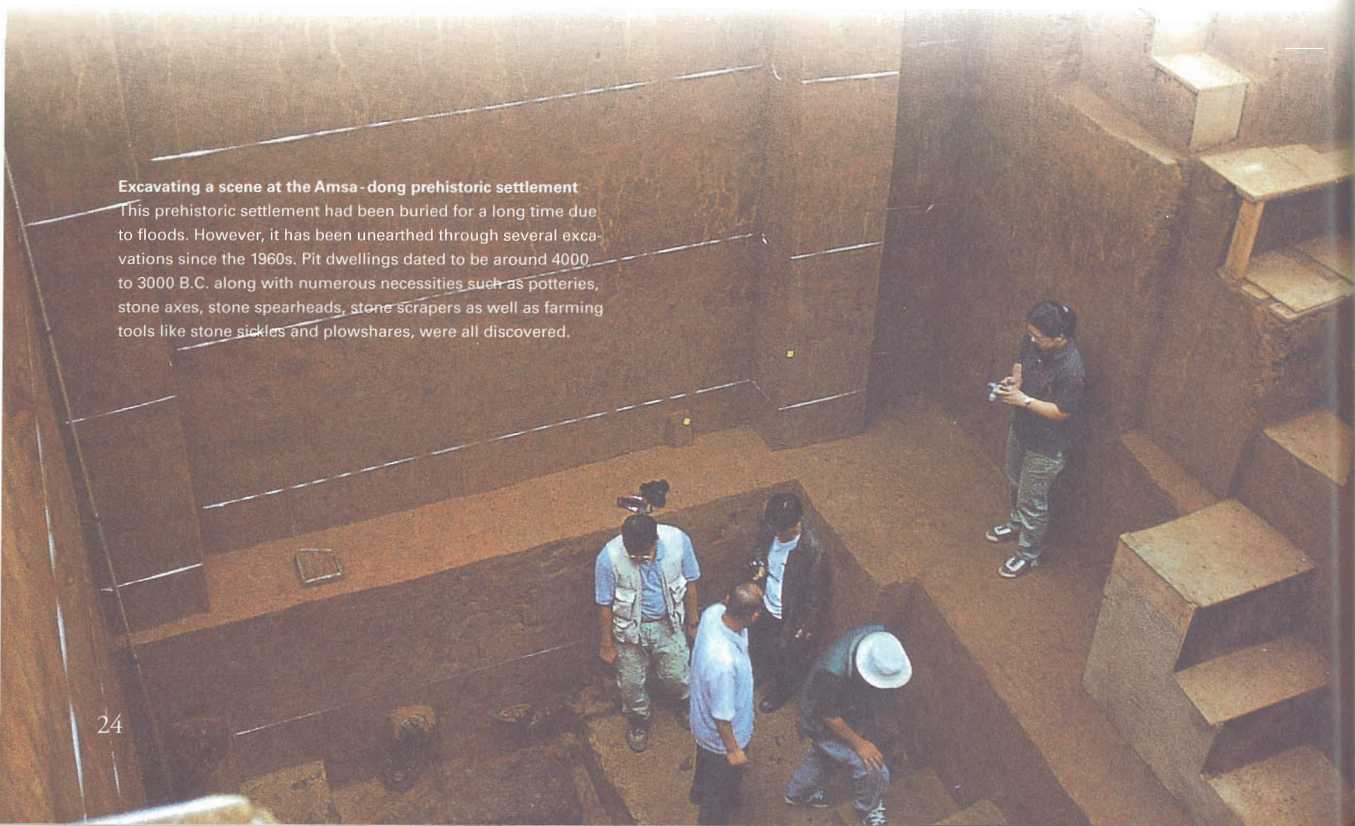
The Hangang (R.) which is quite a large river, flows across Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Located along the banks of the Hangang in this overcrowded modern city are large and small prehistoric settlement sites. "Amsa-dong," which is located at the eastern tip of Seoul, is widely known as one of these Neolithic sites.

Today we are able to visit and observe the nine 'pit dwellings' that provide evidence of prehistoric human activities in the region. Various tools used by the prehistoric inhabitants near the Hangang are exhibited at the pavilion of "Amsa-dong." Judging from the tools, fashioned by ground stones and bones as well as clay potteries, we can trace back to the farming and fishing life of a communal society that settled along the banks of the Hangang thousands of years ago.

It is common to find such prehistoric remains like "Amsa-dong" throughout Korea, and these show

Excavating a scene at the Amsa - dong prehistoric settlement

This prehistoric settlement had been buried for a long time due to floods. However, it has been unearthed through several excavations since the 1960s. Pit dwellings dated to be around 4000 to 3000 B.C. along with numerous necessities such as potteries, stone axes, stone spearheads, stone scrapers as well as farming tools like stone sickles and plowshares, were all discovered.



that many people used to live all over the Korean Peninsula in the Neolithic Period. These Neolithic people were settlers and are regarded as direct forefathers of the present Korean civilization.

The origin of the Korean people

People began to live in the Korean Peninsula from the Paleolithic Period. Inside Geomeunmorudonggul, which is located near Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, stone tools struck off from larger stone and likely to be more than 500,000 years old were found. And in Beijing, an area not so far from this cave, the bones of a 700,000-year-old Homo erectus were excavated, clearly revealing that cave men had resided in the land of Korea long before the Neolithic Period.

Through the center of the Korean Peninsula flows the Imjingang (R.) which goes into the Yellow Sea. At an archaeological site half way up the river, stone axes ("Jumeogdoki") were discovered at Yeoncheon's Jeongok-ri area for the first time in Asia. Human bones that must have belonged to the people who lived in the same period when stone axes were made were found near Pyongyang. If so, could we infer that these people were the Neolithic men who once lived in the Korean Peninsula? It's just too early to



Hand axe found at Jeongok-ri, Yeoncheon-gun, Gyeonggi-do province
This tool was called "hand axe" because of its small size which allowed people to grab it easily. They had been only discovered in the areas of Africa and Europe, but after they were unearthed here, such assumption had to be changed. More than 3,000 pieces of stone tools have been unearthed at this prehistoric site, since 1978.



Traces of mankind who lived in the Korean Peninsula

Throughout the Korean Peninsula, several human fossils estimated to have belonged to one of the humans who lived in the same time period with the Cro-Magnon (Homo sapiens sapiens) men were unearthed. Tools used by the people who are also believed to have lived in a similar time period with the 'Beijing men' have occasionally been found as well. The picture on the right shows a restored figure from a human fossil that seems to have been from a human who lived around 40,000 years ago on the Korean Peninsula. His age must have been around five. This child was named as the "Heungsu-Ahi", as the name of the person who discovered it was Kim Heung-su.



make such a conclusion.

The remains discovered in “Geomeunmorudonggul,” provide evidence of the existence of tropical animals in the Korean Peninsula. The bones of hyenas and rhinoceroses estimated to be about 500,000 years old were discovered in that cave. Interestingly, fossils of animals that might have lived only in the cold region are commonly found in Korea.

These findings may be explained by the weather changes that occurred in the Paleolithic Era, which alternated between glacial periods and interglacial periods. Due to sea level changes, the landmass of the Korean Peninsula changed significantly in the subsequent periods. Earlier human beings who depended on hunting, picking, and gathering would have frequently moved searching for food due to weather changes. They seem to have covered an incredible amount of distance. It is generally believed that these Paleolithic inhabitants of the Korean Peninsula were not directly related ancestors of the Korean people today.



Neolithic farming tools

The item at the top is a ‘Galpan,’ which was used in peeling or grinding grains. The middle one is a plowshare used in plowing. The bottom one is a stone sickle used in cutting ears off the grain. The Neolithic Period in the Korean Peninsula can be traced back to B.C. 800. Various tools and pieces of pottery were unearthed from Jeju-do, located in the South Sea.

Farming allows people to settle down

About fourteen thousands years ago, the last Ice Age came. And about ten thousands years ago the earth’s climate began to warm up again. The earth’s landscape came to feature its current shape, and the Korean Peninsula came to have four clearly distinguishable seasons. The number of acicular trees dropped during this period, and broadleaf trees flourished instead. Large animals that used to live in the cold weather disappeared, whereas small and swift animals such as wild boars and deer burgeoned across the region.

As the climate changed, many of the prehistoric humans must have moved to other areas. Yet, there were many others who adapted to the environmental changes by using advanced tools. Perhaps it was them or other groups of people who migrated to the Korean Peninsula later that contributed to the opening of the Neolithic Era in which clay pots were made to store or process food, and ground stone tools were used.

Changes in the environment and the advancement in skills had great influence upon the lifestyles of these earlier inhabitants. As broadleaf trees prevailed, acorns were soon added to their food resources. Also, their skills for gathering clams and fishing were refined. Yet, in the end it was the farming skills that ultimately brought a dramatic turn to their lifestyle.

The scorched grains found at Bongsan of Hwanghae-do province, show that the Korean people used to farm around 4000 B.C. And there are many other sites throughout the Korean Peninsula where various kinds of farm-

ing tools have been discovered.

People cultivated farming lands at the riversides or set fire upon hills. Using stone plows they softened the soil and spread seeds, and using stone sickles they harvested. Not only did farming become a major way of producing food for the Neolithic men, but also let them build secured settlements. Usually, ten or more shelters formed a clan community, and several communities constituted a tribe. At the time, there were no classes between the poor and the rich. As productivity was not so high, all the grains harvested were equally shared among members, and important matters were discussed through meetings. Also, the women were not discriminated against. Moving toward the end of the Neolithic Period, these early farming communities changed. Development of farming skills increased productivities, which in turn enlarged the gap between the rich and the poor. As a result, the equality within the society was disrupted.

Comb-patterned Clay Pots

The most well known Neolithic clay pottery is the comb-patterned pottery, which has comb-like designs on the surface. Interestingly enough, some similarly patterned potteries have been found in regions from North Europe to Siberia. European Archaeologists called these potteries "Kammkeramik," which also means 'comb-patterned potteries.' Comb-patterned potteries were commonly used between B.C. 40C and B.C. 10C, and during this time period people lived in the vicinity of the rivers and streams, hunting and fishing. The clay culture of the Korean Peninsula along with those of the Northeast region of China and Siberia, feature similar forms of pottery. Their origin differs from the clay pottery culture of the Yellow River basin, where the mainstream Chinese civilization was formed.



Comb-patterned clay pot at Amsa-dong, Seoul

This clay pot, unearthed near the Hangang was created approximately between B.C. 40C and B.C. 30C.



Japanese "Jomon" clay pot

"Jomon Period" refers to the Neolithic Period in Japan. The most well known clay artifact of the time is the 'Jomon clay pot,' which has a straw-rope pattern designed on the surface.



Siberian comb-patterned clay pot

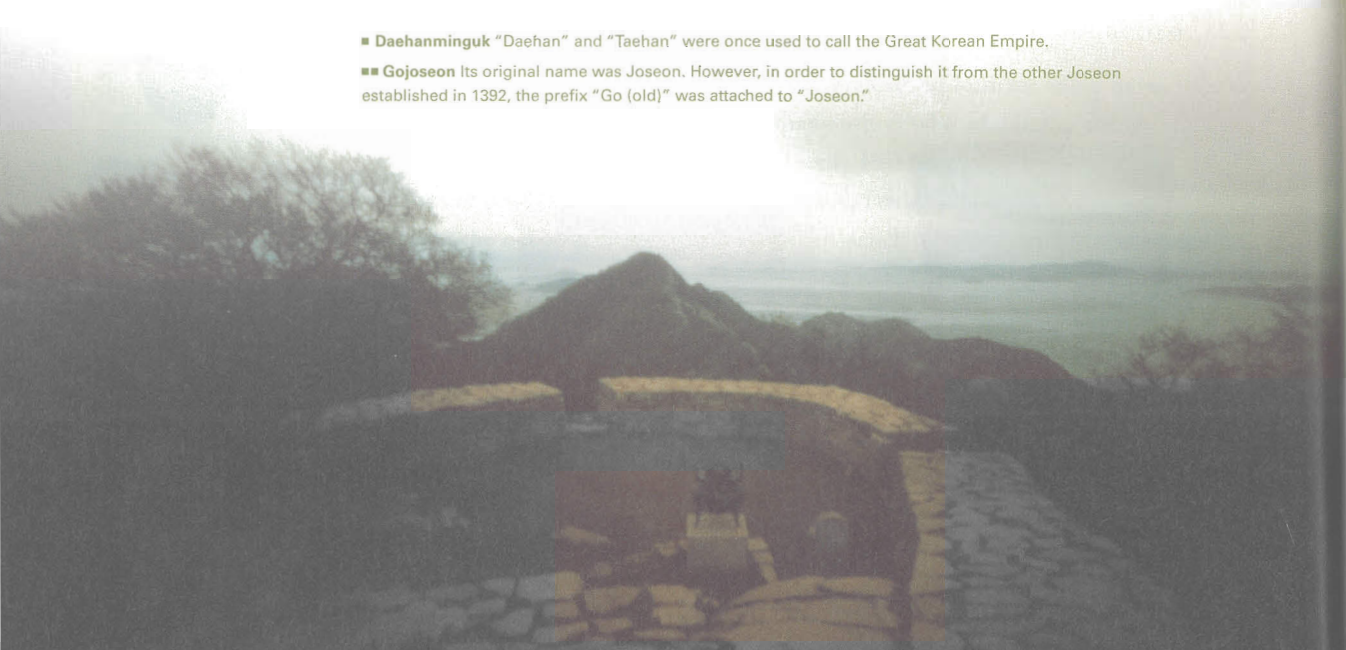
2

Koreans Found Gojoseon: the First Kingdom of the Korean Peninsula

Korea, and its name “Korea and Joseon”

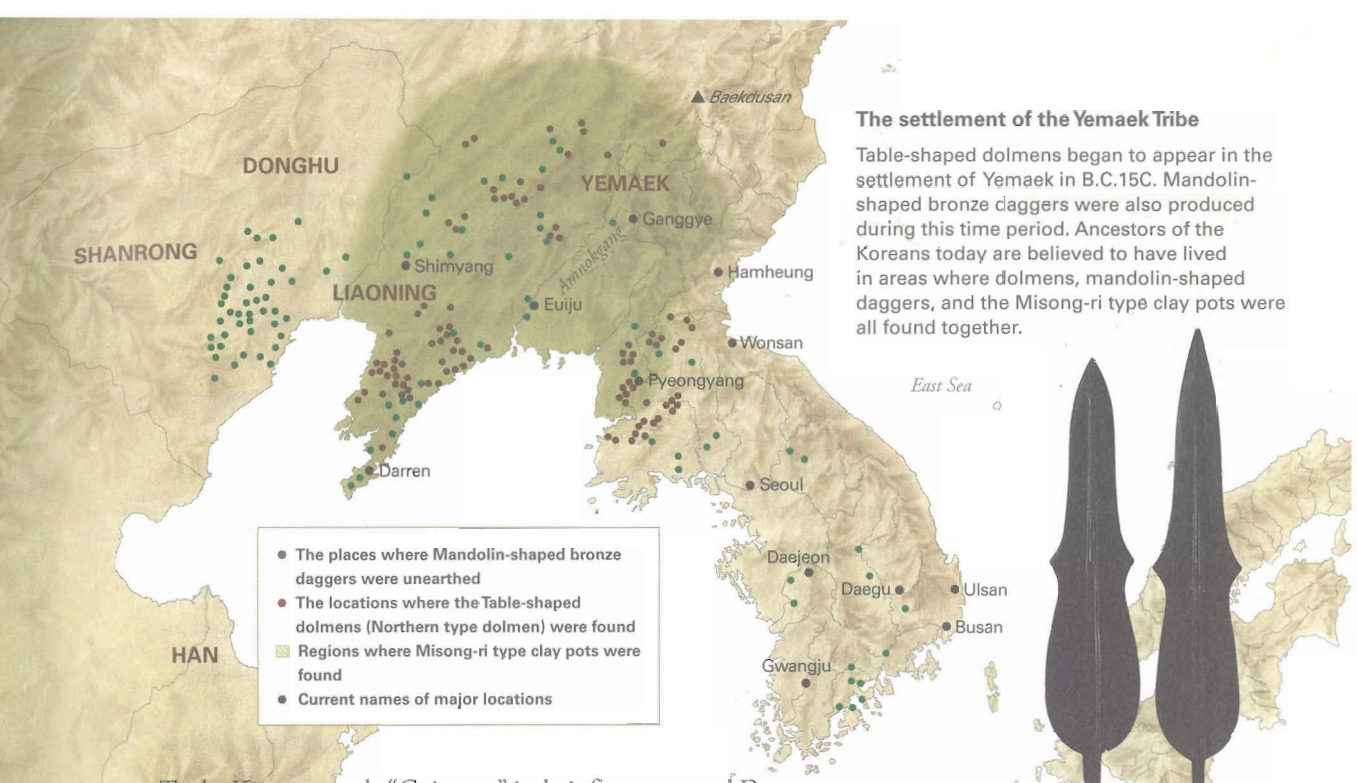
North Korea and South Korea are currently called the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) respectively. Though both names have the word “Korea” in them, the North Koreans identify themselves with the term “Joseon,” while South Koreans call their country with the title “Daehanminguk.”[■] The origin of the name Joseon can be found from “Gojoseon (Old Joseon),”[■] from which the North Koreans claim their ancestry. “Han” in the name of South Korea means that they are the successor of “The Daehan Empire (Empire of the Great Han)” and also the Korean Provisional Government which was set up (in exile) inside China in the 1910s. However, the first historical record of “Han” appeared when a king of Gojoseon moved southbound and became “the King of Han” in the early 2nd century B.C. Based on this information, we can see that either “Joseon” or “Han,” with which the Koreans identify themselves, originated from “Gojoseon.”

- **Daehanminguk** “Daehan” and “Taehan” were once used to call the Great Korean Empire.
- **Gojoseon** Its original name was Joseon. However, in order to distinguish it from the other Joseon established in 1392, the prefix “Go (old)” was attached to “Joseon.”



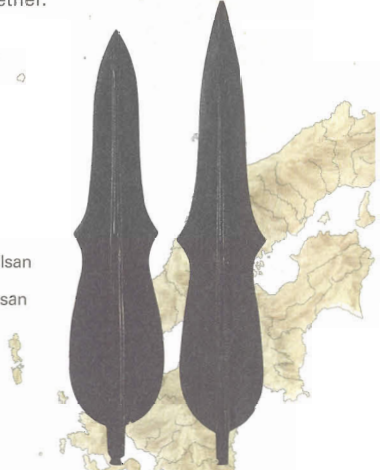
Cheomseongdan (altar)

It is recorded in a book from the 15th century that this was the place where Dangun built Cheomseongdan to perform rituals meant for Heaven. We can see that Koreans have commemorated Dangun’s foundation of Gojoseon for a very long time. As the Olympic torch is lighted in Greece, today the torches that would be used in the opening ceremonies for national sports events in South Korea are all lighted here.



The settlement of the Yemaek Tribe

Table-shaped dolmens began to appear in the settlement of Yemaek in B.C.15C. Mandolin-shaped bronze daggers were also produced during this time period. Ancestors of the Koreans today are believed to have lived in areas where dolmens, mandolin-shaped daggers, and the Misong-ri type clay pots were all found together.



Mandolin-shaped bronze daggers
These daggers are named ‘Mandolin-shaped bronze daggers’ due to their mandolin-like shape. As many of these daggers have been found in the Liaoning area of China, they are also called as ‘Liaoning-style bronze daggers.’ In terms of shape, they are quite different from the bronze daggers made in China.

To the Korean people “Gojoseon” is their first state, and Dangunwangeom is accepted as their common forefather. So South Koreans celebrate the National Foundation Day, October 3rd, as a national holiday. Some South Koreans even continue to use the “Dangi” calendar, which begins with the year that Dangun established the nation (2333 B.C.). A religion which worships Dangunwangeom was created as well.

However, there have been various theories regarding the beginning of Old Joseon and its process of development. Fortunately, a Chinese book “Gwanja” written in B.C. 7C described that Gojoseon was located 8,000 li units (a distance that equals 3,200km) away from Qi. According to this book, we can presume that Gojoseon was formed at least prior to B.C. 7C.

Gojoseon was founded on agriculture

The term “Joseon” sparsely appears in Chinese records. According to them, the west side of Gojoseon was occupied by the tribes named “Shanrong and Donghu,” while the east side was occupied by the “Yemaek” people. Gojoseon was established by the latter, the Yemaek tribe. This tribe settled down and began farming around B.C. 40C and used bronze-based tools beginning from the 15th through 13th century B.C. When farming skills were advanced, farming replaced gathering as their main source of livelihood.

As agriculture turned out to be a significant method in food supplying, men rose to dominant positions of leadership. Women’s social status also started to decline. The gap between the poor and the rich continued to



Misong-ri clay pot
Clay pots from the Bronze Era without any particular patterns. Approximately 20 or 30 centimeters high. Usual colors include taupe, dark-taupe, and red-taupe. Because many clay pots of this kind were found in Misong-ri of the Euiju region located at the lower reaches of the Amnokgang, they are called as ‘Misong-ri type clay pots.’



A portrait of Dangun
 The story of Dangun's foundation of Gojoseon was recorded in *Samgukyusa* written by Il-yeon in the 13th century. Dangun has always been considered as the symbol of Korean independence, especially at times when the Korean people suffered from foreign invasions.

expand as well. Eventually, conflicts among tribes waged to obtain more wealth came to break out frequently. Either individuals or groups defeated in competition became possessions of the victorious. Appeared was a distinction between the ones who governed and the ones who were governed, and such distinction led to the birth of social classes. Technological advantages generated by using bronze-based instruments resulted in more diversity, not to mention more gaps among classes and tribes. The large dolmens found in the Yemaek region are proofs to the authority and power possessed by political leaders who used to rule either small or large communities composed of several tribes. The legend of Dangun's foundation of Gojoseon is recorded in *Samgukyusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), which contributes to understanding the fact that Gojoseon was indeed an advanced agricultural society.

Gojoseon's development and its becoming a representative power of the Yemaek race

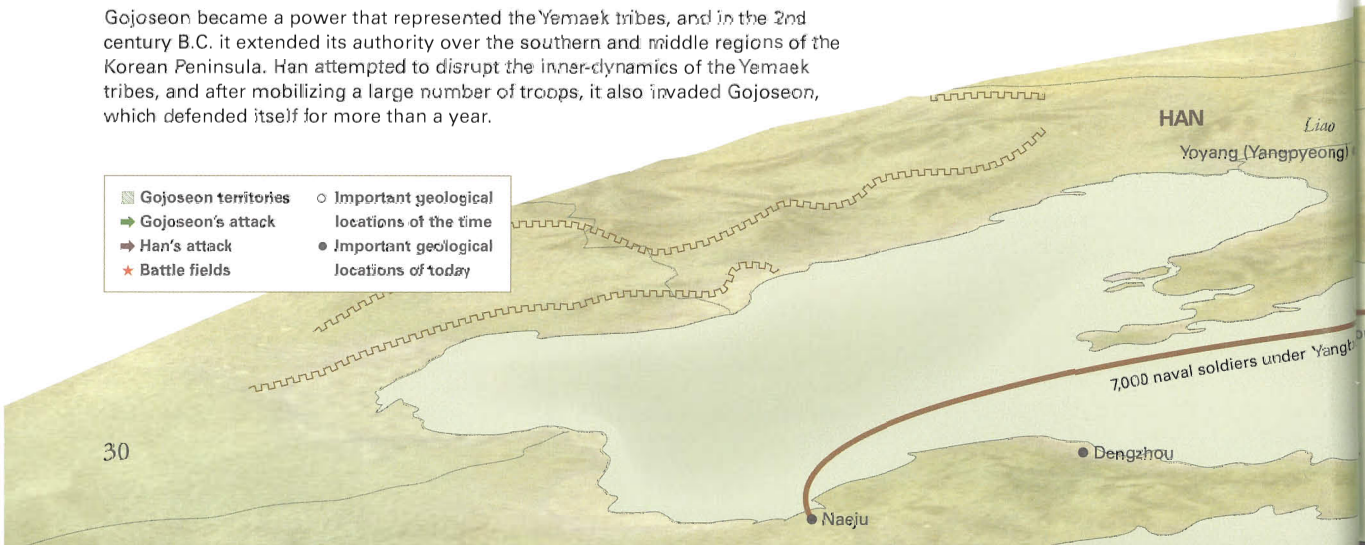
Between the 5th and 3rd centuries B.C., drastic political changes occurred in the northern region of the Korean Peninsula and the northeast region of China. In China, various states of the Han race competed with each other to achieve unification. And on the north side of the Great Wall of China, the nomads called Donghu and Shanrong organized large and small political power groups. In the meantime, in the land of Yemaek, several states coexisted with each other, and Gojoseon was one of them.

As the Chinese Han race moved toward east, Gojoseon continued its growth assimilating states near its border and developed into a confederate kingdom that ruled neighboring small states since B.C. 4C. However, its power eventually weakened by on-going confrontations with Chinese states like Yin. With repeated competitions and compromises ensuing, Gojoseon decided to accept and embrace the advanced civilization of the Han race,

Gojoseon's territories, and its battle against Han in the latter half of the 2nd century B.C.

Gojoseon became a power that represented the Yemaek tribes, and in the 2nd century B.C. it extended its authority over the southern and middle regions of the Korean Peninsula. Han attempted to disrupt the inner-dynamics of the Yemaek tribes, and after mobilizing a large number of troops, it also invaded Gojoseon, which defended itself for more than a year.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| ■ Gojoseon territories | ○ Important geological locations of the time |
| ➔ Gojoseon's attack | ● Important geological locations of today |
| ➔ Han's attack | |
| ★ Battle fields | |



including Chinese letters. Gojoseon achieved political and social developments under the centralized authority and power of the king.

In B.C. 2C, Gojoseon of the Wanggeomseong fortress (today's Pyeongyang) established itself as the power representing the Yemaek tribes. It built its own economy and enhanced its military power, with iron-based tools and weapons they devised. Gojoseon came to control trade traffics between China and other Yemaek areas, and tap into them as well.

Confrontation between Han China and Gojoseon

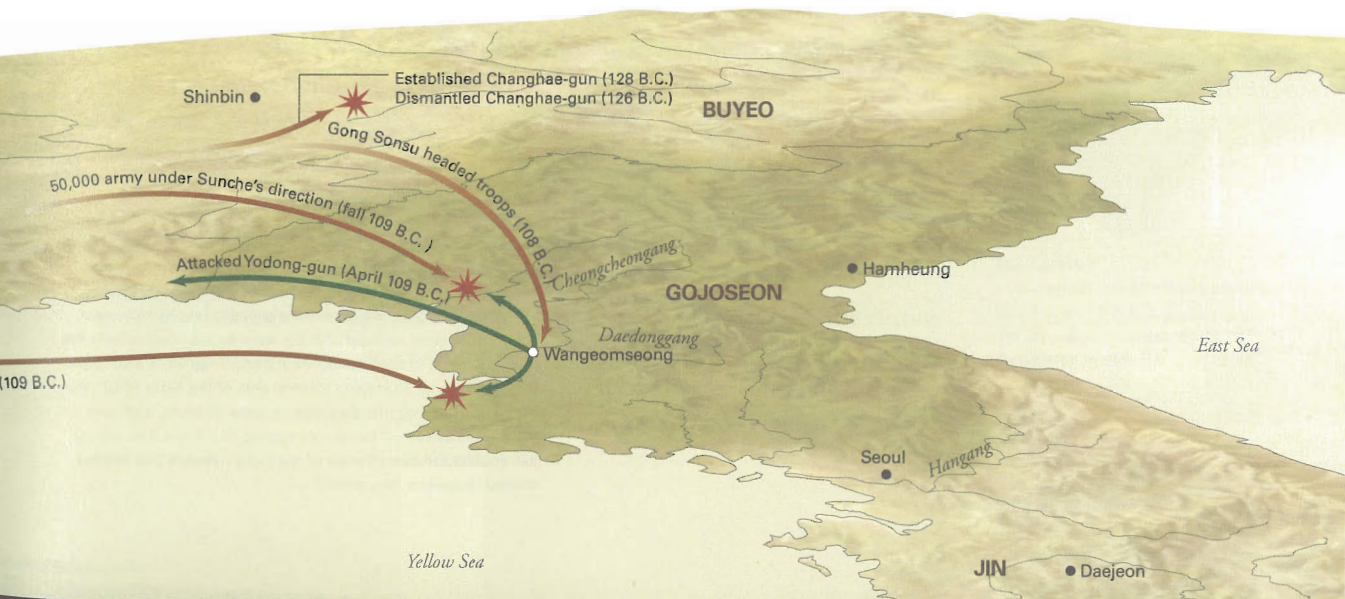
As Gojoseon seized power, the Han Dynasty that had united China revealed its intentions and started to threaten the Gojoseon borders. In fear of being killed, several tribes of the confederate Gojoseon surrendered their land and people to China, instead of resisting the incoming Chinese army.

Gojoseon's authority was challenged by various opponents, and it was also invaded by 50,000 troops of Wu Ti of the Han China (B.C.109). Wu Ti succeeded in uniting all the remaining kingdoms in China, and he pushed the powerful nomad tribe Xiongnu all the way up to the outside of the Great Wall of China. Then those Chinese troops invaded Gojoseon. At first, Gojoseon stood its ground for a year. The Gojoseon soldiers continued to defeat the invaders and their reinforcements as well. However, a prolonged war caused certain disruptions to occur inside Gojoseon. People started to call for ending the war.

Internal conflicts led to the fall of the capital city, and shortly after that Gojoseon fell as well in 108 B.C. After the war, Chinese invaders left, but not before they established commanderies here and there to rule the Gojoseon region from remote. Then, all the Chinese commanders who led the invasion were punished upon their return to China, and because the Gojoseon people continued to fight even after the war ended, the Chinese commanderies were also dismantled in a not so distant future.



Sehyeong Bronze Daggers
Because their shape is thin and long, they are called "Sehyeong Bronze Daggers." These daggers are only found inside the Korean Peninsula. So they are also called "Korean style daggers." They were the next generation of the Mandolin-shaped bronze daggers.



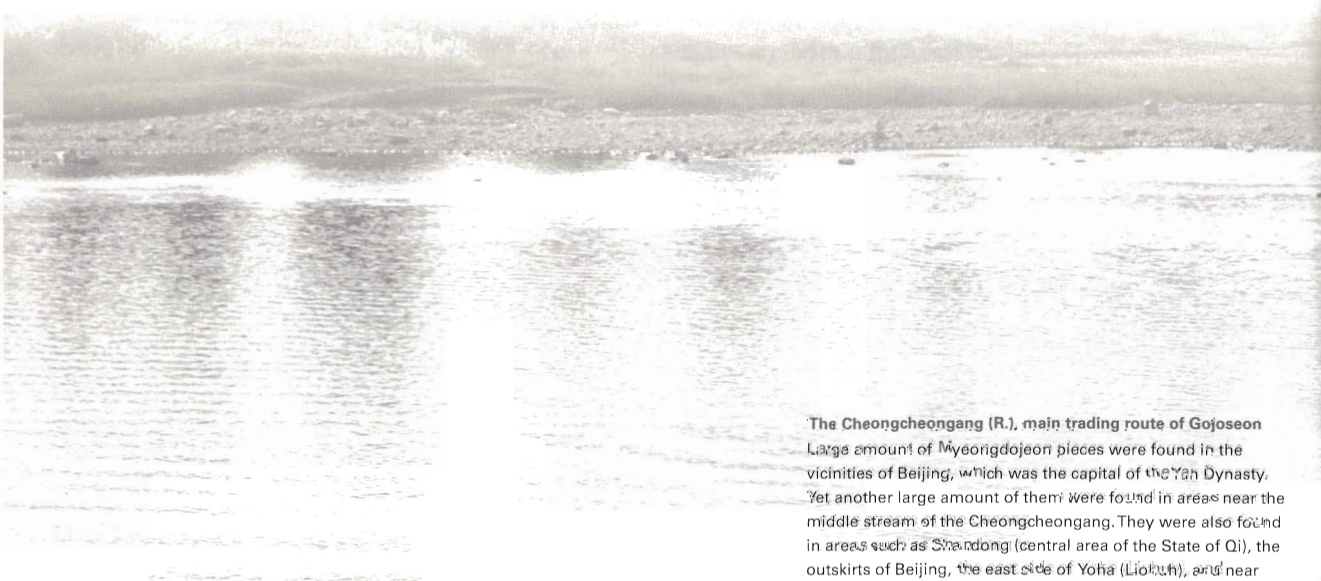
3

Developments of Several Ancient Kingdoms, in the South and North of the Korean Peninsula

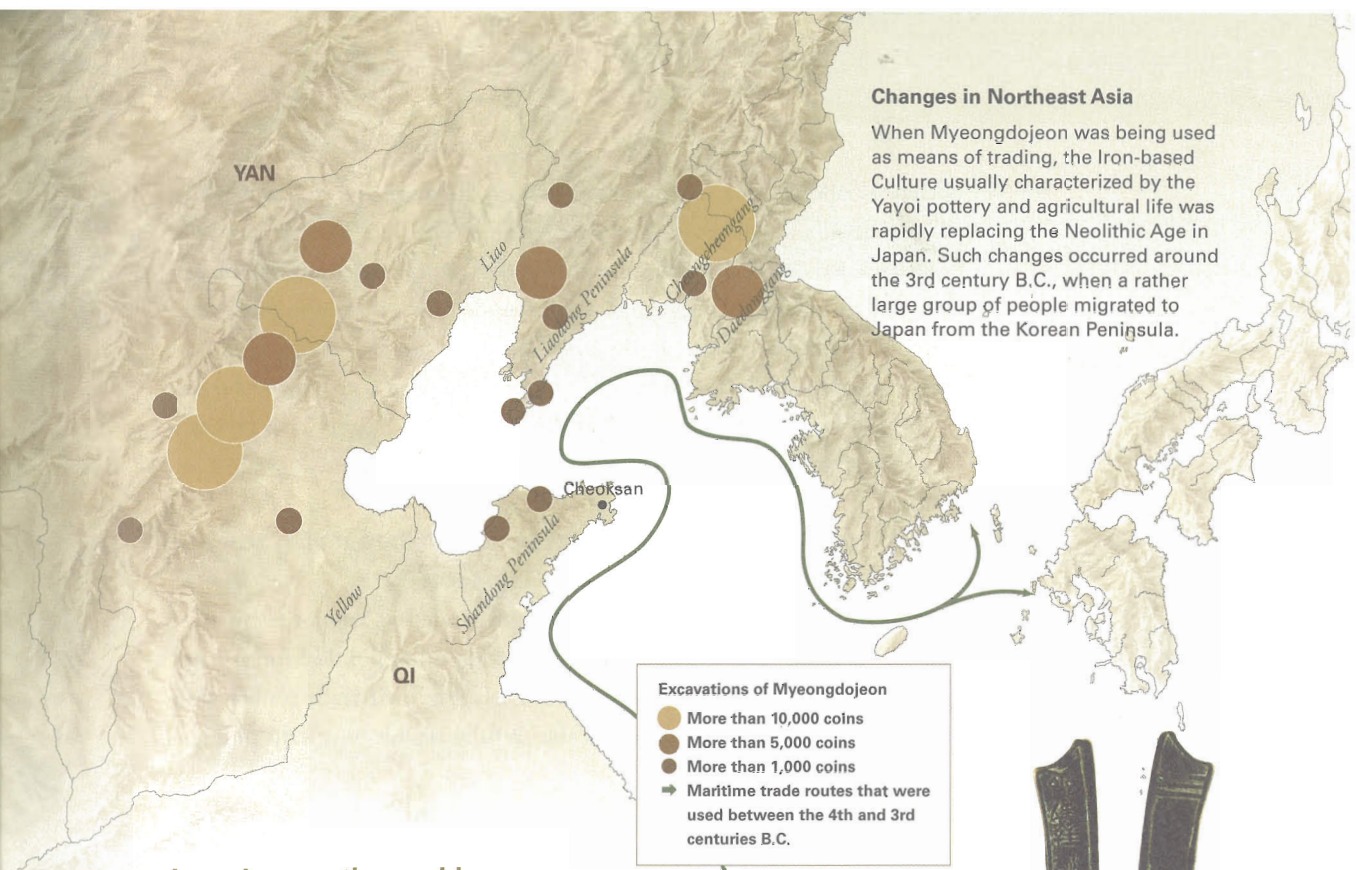
The time when Myeongdojeon was used

In 1927, several iron-based artifacts of unknown origins and functions were discovered in the Yongyeon area of the Pyeonganbuk-do province. The most interesting one found in this ruin which belonged to the 3rd century B.C. was a sword-shaped item with the letter “Myeong (明)” inscribed upon its surface. There were several of them. They had a hole at the center so one could hang them with a string. Archaeologists soon concluded that they must have served as some kind of currency.

This item was called Myeongdojeon, a currency which was used in the Chinese Yan and Qi dynasties. Today they are found all over the region that belonged to Gojoseon, and that means that Gojoseon was in active trade engagements with Yan. This is also supported by Chinese records, as they say that in the 7th century B.C. Gojoseon had an active trade partnership with Qi, and that the Cheoksan region in the Shandong Peninsula was an important port for the Qi Dynasty. Later, many states were established in the southern region of the Korean Peninsula as well. They produced a substantial amount of iron which they traded with not only Japan but also other countries in the north. One of the reasons that Han China invaded Gojoseon in the first place must have been Gojoseon's taking initiatives in international trades.



The Cheongcheongang (R.), main trading route of Gojoseon. Large amount of Myeongdojeon pieces were found in the vicinities of Beijing, which was the capital of the Yan Dynasty. Yet another large amount of them were found in areas near the middle stream of the Cheongcheongang. They were also found in areas such as Shandong (central area of the State of Qi), the outskirts of Beijing, the east side of Yohia (Liokukh), and near the middle stream of the Daedonggang (R.). From this, we can extrapolate the overall scale of the trade network that existed among Gojoseon, Yan, and Qi.



Iron changes the world

The Korean Peninsula is connected with the Chinese continent through land, but one could also reach either country on sea, in a relatively short period of time. From the ancient periods, Korea and China operated in the same trade network, and people from both countries continued to visit one another.

In the Gojoseon region, Myeongdojeon is often discovered along with some iron tools, which included agricultural utensils, mechanical tools, and weapons such as spears and swords. Lumps of iron chipped from a larger one, probably to make other iron tools were also found with these tools. These are all solid evidences which prove the fact that iron was widely used in the Korean Peninsula at the time.

Between the 4th and 2nd centuries B.C. in Northeast Asia, large groups of people were always on the move, fleeing from the on-going wars waged for unification inside China. And even after unification, they still could not settle as they had to evade all the smaller internal battles going on as well. Many of them moved to the region which used to belong to the late Gojoseon, and some of them moved southbound even further, spreading the culture of using items made from iron as they progressed.

Iron literally changed the world. The iron-based agricultural utensils replaced the existing ones that were made of wood and stone. The cutting-edge technology also contributed to producing more diverse and more ef-



Myeongdojeon
Currency that was used in Yan and Qi China.



Yayoi pottery
This clay pot was produced between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D. during the Yayoi Age of Japan. It was discovered in the Kitakyushu area.

efficient weapons. As a result, agricultural productivity and military tactics were refined and advanced. Meanwhile, the gap between the poor and the rich widened drastically, and tribes that took advantage of channels through which they accessed the merits of iron expanded their own influence rather rapidly by integrating less skillful tribes around them into their realm. Going through a similar procedure, Gojoseon developed into a powerful political force in the first place and was able to battle the mighty Han Dynasty for more than a year.

Jin, Buyeo and many other states established inside the Korean Peninsula after the days of Gojoseon

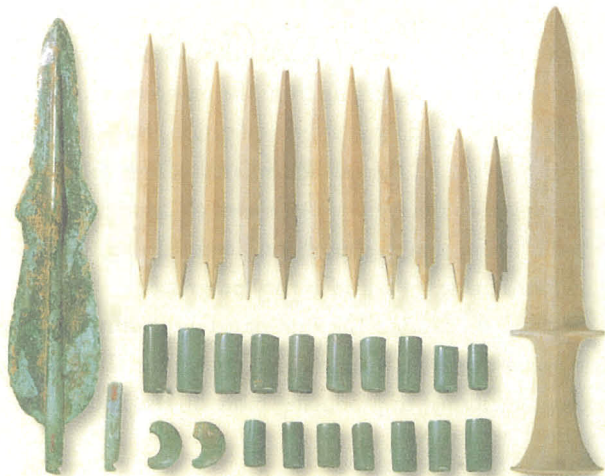
Around the 2nd century B.C., Gojoseon expanded its territories by uniting the political forces of Yemaek. By blocking other political forces from trading with China directly, and instead relaying their trade traffics with each other for them, Gojoseon was able to fully exploit the merits of international trading.

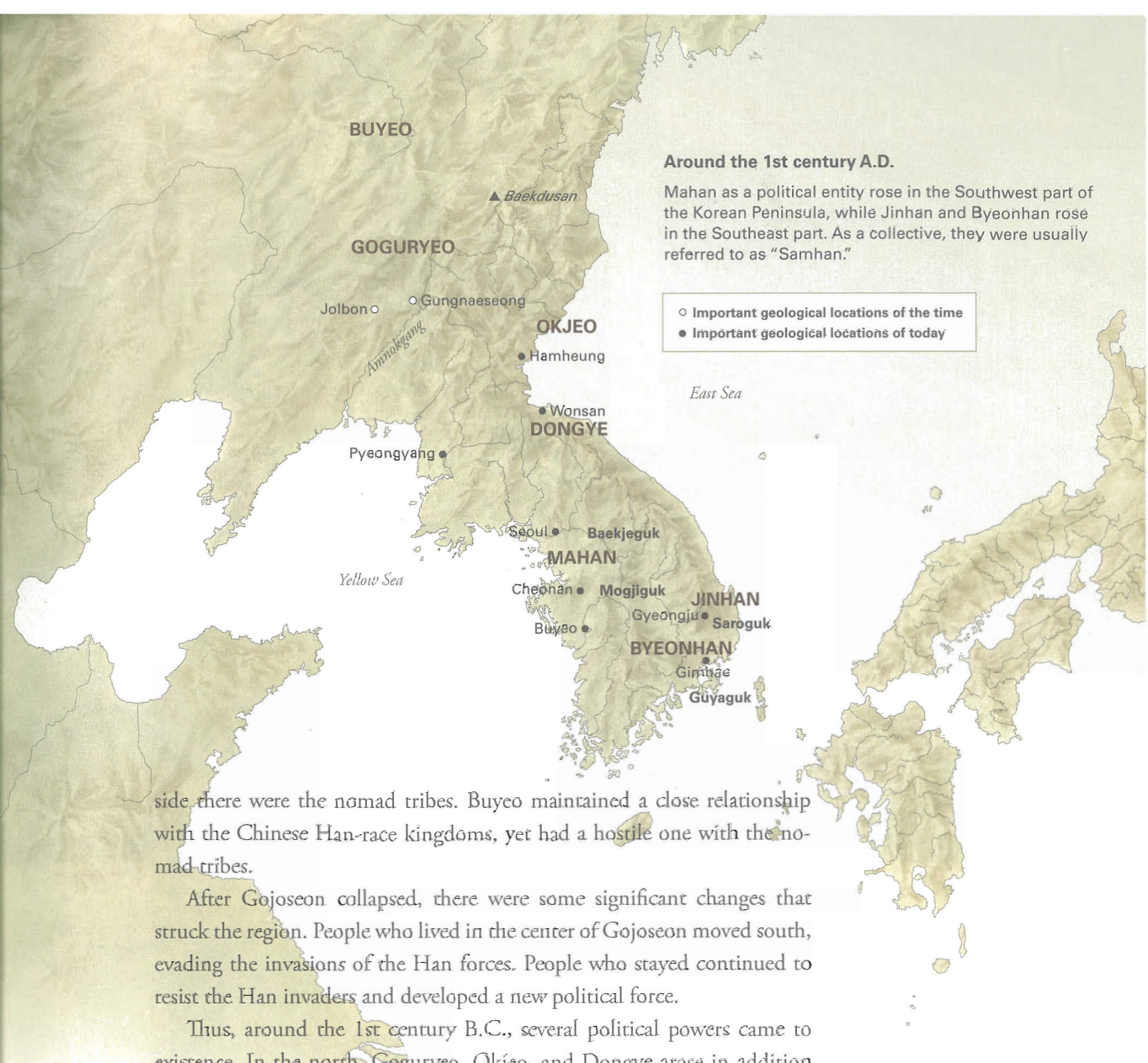
Around this time, a state called Jin was founded in the south of Gojoseon, the middle and southern parts of the Korean Peninsula. Around the 10th century B.C. a bronze-based culture was introduced to the region, and soon followed by an iron-based culture, showing a similar rate of development with the northern regions. Development of productivity and social classes progressed steadily, and by the time around the 3rd century B.C. several states came to existence in this area. These states appointed the king of Mogjiguk as their representative and established a relationship with the Han Dynasty.

In the north of Gojoseon there was Buyeo, in the basin of the Songhua River. Its economy was based on farming and animal breeding. In its west

Remains excavated at Songguk-ri, Buyeo area

There is a city named Buyeo in the southwest region of the Korean Peninsula. Buyeo was the last capital of Baekje. Baekje once considered itself the successor of Buyeo, as we can see from the title "Nambuyeo (South Buyeo)," which they used to refer to themselves. In Buyeo, a bronze-based culture based upon farming was formed in the 10th century B.C. This picture shows the remains of the Bronze Era: a bronze sword, stone arrowhead, stone knife and jade, which were all unearthed at Songguk-ri in Buyeo.





Around the 1st century A.D.

Mahan as a political entity rose in the Southwest part of the Korean Peninsula, while Jinhan and Byeonhan rose in the Southeast part. As a collective, they were usually referred to as "Samhan."

- Important geological locations of the time
- Important geological locations of today

side, there were the nomad tribes. Buyeo maintained a close relationship with the Chinese Han-race kingdoms, yet had a hostile one with the nomad tribes.

After Gojoseon collapsed, there were some significant changes that struck the region. People who lived in the center of Gojoseon moved south, evading the invasions of the Han forces. People who stayed continued to resist the Han invaders and developed a new political force.

Thus, around the 1st century B.C., several political powers came to existence. In the north, Goguryeo, Okjeo, and Dongye arose in addition to Buyeo, and in the south, small and large states formed political alliances such as Mahan, Jinhan, and Byeonhan.

The states in the north grew and developed, in the midst of confrontations with the ever-advancing Chinese forces. Sometimes they had to negotiate and make compromises, and such efforts helped them develop as well. Goguryeo was the prime example.

Among 54 internal states of Mahan, Baekje rose above all else, as did Saro and Gaya inside Jinhan and Byeonhan respectively. These were the central powers that would develop into Baekje, Shilla, and Gaya, states that all played a pivotal role in the ancient history of Korea.

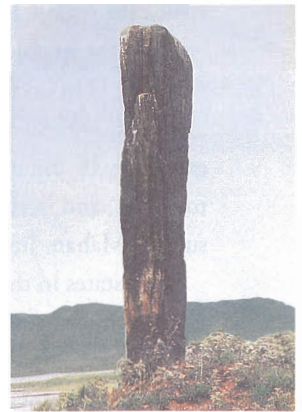
The Largest Dolmen Kingdom in the World



Large stone monuments just like Stonehenge in England or stone statues in the Easter Island of Chile are also found in the regions where the ancestors of the Koreans resided. They are either dolmens or monoliths. The most frequently discovered ones are the dolmens. They feature different shapes from one another in various regions. Yet, they are all believed to have been erected between the 15th and 10th centuries B.C., and they continued to appear all over the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria up until the 2nd century A.D.

The dolmens constructed in the north side of Korea resemble large tables. And other dolmens concentrated in the central and southern regions of Korea look like square-shaped game boards. Assuming that dolmens were built to bury people who held significant importance, and considering the ancient people's ideas that the deceased would take care of their offsprings, we can imagine them being used as stone tombs or altars for religious services.

Quite impressively, Korea has the most dolmens in the world. Some of them are of tremendous historical significance, and added to that they are beautiful as well. In the year 2000, sectors of dolmens inside Gochang, Hwasun, and Ganghwa areas were designated and declared as part of the World Cultural Heritages.



Monolith

Numerous monoliths were erected with dolmens during the Bronze Era. The monolith shown in this picture is located in Songbong-ri of the Euncheon-gun area inside the Hwanghae-do province.



Hwasun Dolmen Park in Jeollanam-do
 A place where a heavy concentration of dolmens was discovered. This Hwasun Dolmen Park is now registered as part of the World Cultural Heritages.



North-style Dolmen (above) and South-style Dolmen (below)
 Among the dolmens discovered inside Korea and its vicinity, there are North-style dolmens that look like round tables, and South-style dolmens that look like Chinese play tables. The former ones have a chamber upon the surface, while the latter ones have a chamber beneath it.



Things found with dolmens

Many artifacts which show us the life style of the time were discovered from dolmens. These are the items discovered inside the dolmen chambers: from the left to the right, there are a stone knife and a Mandolin-shaped bronze dagger, personal ornaments made of jade, and red polished pottery.

Ritual Ceremony to God

“Always in May, after sowing is finished in the field, Koreans perform a ritual ceremony. Many people gather around, dance, sing, and drink many days and nights. In October, when harvest is over, they celebrate in the same way.” –*Samgukji* (Records of Three Kingdoms)

This is a story from a Chinese source named *Samgukji*. It describes how people in the central and southern parts of the Korean Peninsula lived around the 1st century. The words such as “Dongmaeng” and “Mucheon” appear in Goguryeo and Dongye sections of that book. These words referred to a harvest festival, a ritual of thanksgiving that was usually held in Goguryeo and Dongye in October. Just as such events which were observed in the south, all the events in the north also had people gather around, prepare a memorial service for the ancestors, and hold a banquet and a festival. The Buyeo people also had a similar custom, but they performed their rituals as their hunting season began. “In December, all people of the nation gathered together to give thanks to heaven.”

“Chuseok” is considered to be the most important holiday in Korea, and on this day, August 15th of the lunar calendar, people celebrate the harvests of the year. On “Chuseok,” Koreans cook rice with new grains, brew liquor, and perform a ritual to thank their ancestors with newly harvested fruits and foods. Those who left their home town return, and all the family members scattered around the country get together in a long time. It is also an opportunity for the family to get together and pay respect to the heaven and their ancestors altogether.

■ ‘October’ and ‘December’ mentioned here are the lunar calendar months. Even today, Koreans commemorate New Year day and Chuseok by the lunar calendar.





Holiday customs

In Korea, populations are concentrated in large cities, and always a few days before Chuseok, the roads are over-crowded with people returning to their homes for the Chuseok holiday; people make jokes, naming the unending trail of southbound traffic "the great migration." They reunite with their family members and relatives whom they haven't seen for a long time. And they conduct rituals and care for their ancestors' graves together.

- ① A memorial service for the ancestors
- ② An express bus terminal crowded with people heading for their hometowns
- ③ Making Songpyeon
- ④ Family paying respect to their ancestors' graves

B.C. 1C ~ A.D. 700

B.C. 57

Saungukagi (History of the Three Kingdoms), which is the oldest historical record in Korea that remains today, documents that Shilla, Goguryeo, and Baekje were founded in B.C. 57, B.C. 37, and B.C. 18 respectively. However, it is a more general opinion that Goguryeo emerged earlier than Shilla and Baekje.

A.D. 260

Baekje established its own official rank system which distinguished sixteen rank positions with different official uniform colors. The rank system indicates that an institution for ruling was being formed.

313

Rome officially authorized Christianity.

372

Buddhism was authorized in Goguryeo. In 384, Baekje authorized Buddhism, and then Buddhism was introduced to Shilla as well.

391~413

King Gwanggaetowang of Goguryeo unified the region of Manchuria and formed a great kingdom, and began to expand his power to the middle section of the Korean Peninsula.

427

King Jangsuwang of Goguryeo moved the capital to Pyeongyang. Pyeongyang was located at the center of the old territory of Gojoseon.

540~576

Under the leadership of King Jinheungwang, Shilla achieved quite a development. Such development was large enough to push Shilla into a dominant position in the war for unification.

610

Muhammad established the religion of Islam.

612

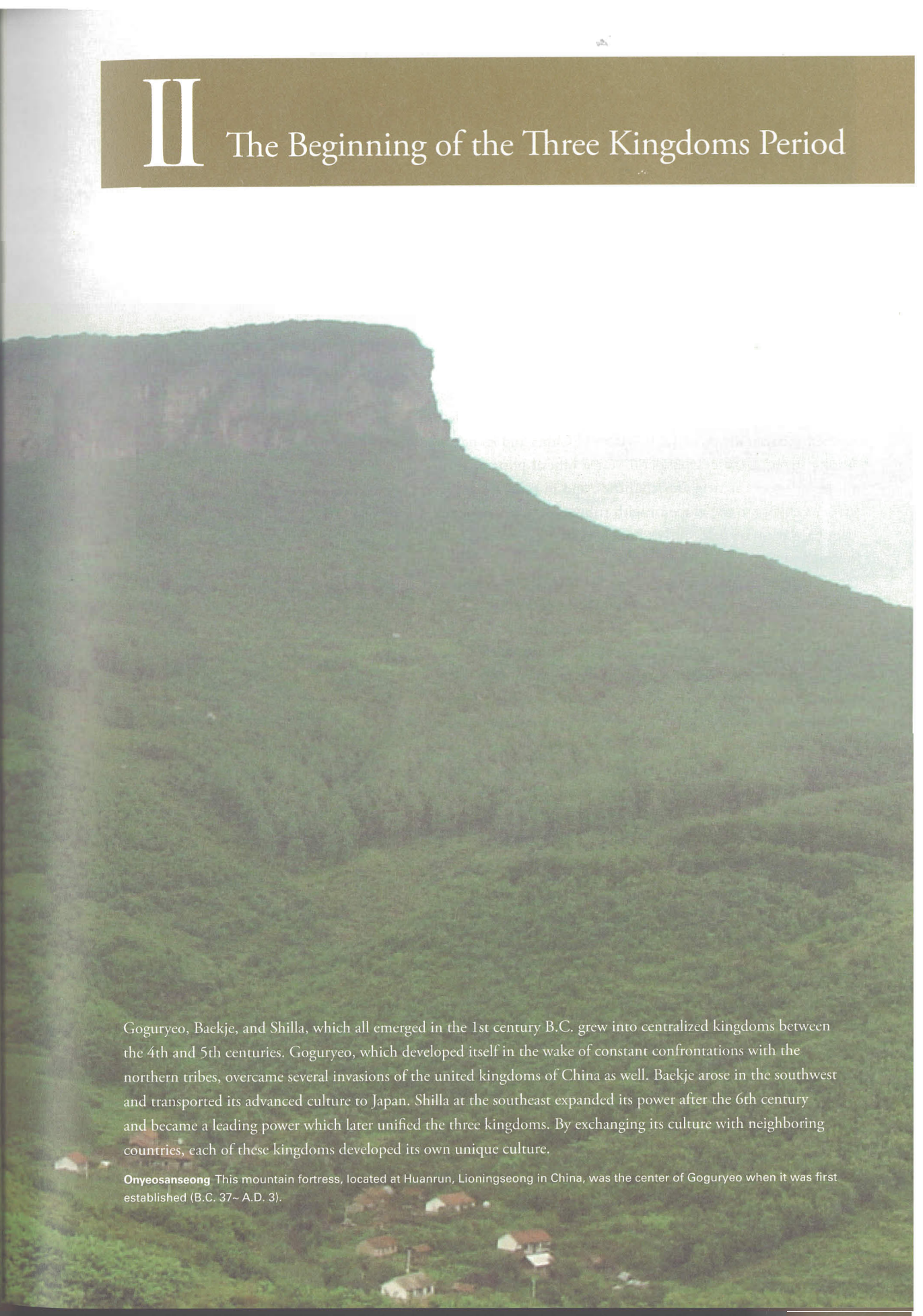
The Sui emperor invaded Goguryeo with 1,130,000 troops. The Goguryeo people defeated them under the leadership of Eulji Mundeok.

645

The Goguryeo people defeated the large troops of Tang led by Emperor Taizong, one of the most magnificent kings in Chinese history.



II The Beginning of the Three Kingdoms Period



Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla, which all emerged in the 1st century B.C. grew into centralized kingdoms between the 4th and 5th centuries. Goguryeo, which developed itself in the wake of constant confrontations with the northern tribes, overcame several invasions of the united kingdoms of China as well. Baekje arose in the southwest and transported its advanced culture to Japan. Shilla at the southeast expanded its power after the 6th century and became a leading power which later unified the three kingdoms. By exchanging its culture with neighboring countries, each of these kingdoms developed its own unique culture.

Onyeosanseong This mountain fortress, located at Huanrun, Lianingseong in China, was the center of Goguryeo when it was first established (B.C. 37~ A.D. 3).

Formation of the East Asian Culture Block

As powerful, united kingdoms appeared in China, a unique political system called 'Appellation and Tribute' relationship was formed between the powerful kingdom of China and its neighboring states. A Chinese emperor vested official posts or titles to the rulers of the neighbor countries, and in turn, those rulers sent envoys to the emperor with tributes. The price for the tributes was always paid, and exchanges of envoys were arranged through mutual agreements.

This particular relationship contributed to the stabilization of the region. Economic and cultural exchanges, either official or unofficial, became more active between countries.

The East Asian region came to share various cultural elements. People used Chinese characters in their daily lives. Chinese-style governing spread throughout the region through Confucian scriptures and Chinese history books. Buddhist scriptures from India were also translated into Chinese characters and were introduced to the neighboring countries. Through such process East Asian countries formed a cultural block, sharing Chinese letters, political ideals of Confucianism, Chinese political system, and the Buddhist culture.



History of Vietnam's Fall

History of Vietnam's Fall was published in Shanghai, China, in September 1905. This book recorded the dialogues between Phan Boi Chau (1867-1940), a Vietnamese nationalist and Liang Qi Chao (1873-1929), a Chinese political reformist during the ending days of the Qing Dynasty. Soon after this book was introduced to Korea, it attracted and intrigued many Koreans. Phan Boi Chau most admired An Jung-geun (1879-1910), a young Korean man who assassinated Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909, the first Prime Minister of Japan) who led the invasion of Korea. These four men, An Jung-geun, Liang Qi Chao, Phan Boi Chau and Ito Hirobumi never met each other. Given an opportunity, they would have continued to communicate with each other through letters. If so, their psychological distance would have been much closer than that between the Koreans and the Japanese, or the Chinese and the Vietnamese today.

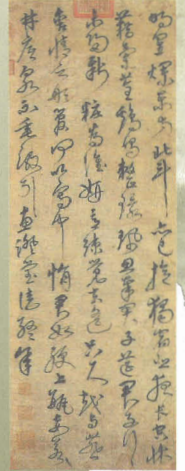
China

Chinese character



Characters inscribed on bones and tortoise carapace

The early Chinese life using letters can be traced from characters inscribed upon bones and tortoise carapace. During the days of Qin and Han dynasties, the Chinese letters were formed in a unified fashion. "Hanja" refers to 'the letters of the Han race or the Han Empire.' "Ganjahe," which is a letter style that displays a simplified form of the individual original characters, has been in use in China since the 1950s.



Vietnam

Chu Nom



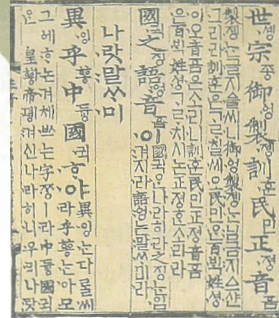
Chu Nom

Vietnamese used the Chinese letters as well. However, 'Chu Nom,' designed to describe Vietnamese pronunciation using Chinese sounds or utilizing the Chinese letters' meaning, was put to use since the 13th century. From the beginning of the 20th century, they began to use Roman letters instead of either Chinese letters or Chu Nom.



Korea

Hangeul



Hunminjeongeum

Before the 15th century when 'Hangeul' was invented for the first time, the Korean language was recorded by using Chinese characters or Idu, which adopted some Chinese letters to indicate Korean sounds.

Japan

Kana

かな

Kana

Japanese invented "Kana" by applying Chinese characters, but they still heavily use Chinese characters. Many East Asian countries with different languages and letters invented their own letter systems based upon Chinese characters.

た た 太 さ さ と 左 か い か 加 あ あ あ 安
 ち り ち 知 し し し 之 き き き 幾 い い い 以
 つ つ つ 川 す す す 寸 く く く 久 う う う 宇
 て て て 天 せ せ せ 世 け り け 計 え え え 衣
 と と と 止 そ そ そ 曾 こ こ こ 己 お お お 於

1

The Formation of the Three Kingdoms: Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla

Buyeo and Goguryeo fight for power in the northern region of Korea

After Gojoseon collapsed, Buyeo became the No.1 power among the political forces of Yemaek. Buyeo had already been exchanging active trades with China, while advancing agriculture and farming as well. Around the first century B.C. Buyeo developed into a kingdom and continued to grow as a powerful state.

Still, Goguryeo remained a threat to Buyeo. Goguryeo, which originated from inside Buyeo, was established by Jumong in 37 B.C. in the Amnokgang basin. It continued to assimilate minor tribes around it. In an attempt to take control of the prairies near Buyeo and Han China, Goguryeo confronted both of them.

The conflicts between Buyeo and Goguryeo became more complicated as they came in contact with the nomads in the west, not to mention with Han China, which was striving to expand its influence to the east. While clashes continued between Goguryeo and Buyeo or Goguryeo and Han China due to Goguryeo's ambition to obtain wider fertile regions, China and Buyeo managed to maintain a friendly relationship.



Gold crown

A gold crown, discovered inside one of the tombs of the Gyeongju area, shows well developed craftsmanship.

Daereungwon

In Gyeongju, which had been the capital of Shilla for a thousand years, there are 23 tombs of kings, queens and noble men. The picture shows large scale tombs that were built between the 4th and 5th centuries. Bodies were placed along with grave goods inside wooden coffins, and then the coffins were covered with a number of stones. After that, soil was piled over the stones in a shape of a hill. Numerous remains that show us an impressive culture, such as gold crowns, were unearthed from these tombs.



The growth of Goguryeo, Baekje, Shilla and Gaya

Thanks to the iron culture, states further developed. At first, these states were mere alliances of tribes, then they established ancient kingdoms with a centralized power. Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla began competing with each other.

- Major cities of the time
- Today's major cities

Baekje, Shilla and Gaya

As Buyeo and Goguryeo were struggling for territory in the north of the Korean Peninsula, in the central and southern areas Baekje, Shilla, and Gaya rose to power.

In 18 B.C. Baekje, which was established earlier by those from Goguryeo emerged in the vicinity of today's Seoul as a confederated kingdom which incorporated various walled-town states of Mahan. During the 3rd century it expanded its borders and grew large enough to occupy the entire Hangang region.

In the same time, the Shilla Kingdom, which would literally last for a millenium (57 B.C.~935 A.D.), was formed in Gyeongju in the southeast side of the Korean Peninsula. In this area, many states called as the Jinhan Alliance were established and prospered around the B.C. 2nd~A.D. 1st centuries. Then the Saro state, which emerged in Gyeongju, developed into a leading force by assimilating surrounding political powers.

Also, in the west side of the Nakdonggang (R.) which passes through the southeast part of the Korean Peninsula, there was the Gaya Alliance of six allied states led by the central state of Gaya (Geumgwangaya). These people

were able to advance their skills of cultivation and farming, using iron utensils. With natural resources at their disposal, the six states continued to grow. This area produced substantial amounts of iron as well, and the state of Gurya established at the Gimhae area became the trade center dealing with the northwest region of the Korean Peninsula, and Japan as well.

Aristocrats, slaves and free peasants

The emergence of dominant powers led to the assimilation of small political forces. Some states yielded to centralized powers without conflict, yet most of them were dominated by force and forced to relinquish their own authority. The treatment of local residents who were assimilated into more powerful states varied to a certain degree, mainly by the policy of integration. The heads of factions who surrendered without a fight were incorporated into dominant positions inside the central government, and the local residents of those factions were not harshly discriminated against. Yet, the residents of the areas or factions that were conquered by wars were treated very much differently. Many free peasants were captured and taken as slaves to serve the occupants. In some cases, even the whole population was treated like slaves.

In the meantime, disputes and conflicts continued in the inside of the unified center. Through campaigns, leaders were able to accumulate power and expand their land, while a majority of peasants continued to suffer from constant wars and heavy taxes. Thus, the peasant class was being shoved into poverty.

Eventually, differentiated treatments of certain local regions and differences among certain groups of people, all gave birth to a hierarchical so-

Susan-ri Mural Painting (Restored graphics)

This mural painting of Goguryeo depicts the aristocratic members going on a picnic. At the left of this picture, there are actors who are fooling around, and the slaves are holding an umbrella for the nobles. Also, the nobles are drawn largely, while the slaves are described in small sizes. We can see that this painting attempted to exhibit different social statuses. The commoners constituted the largest portion of the population. However, the Korean slavery system was quite different from that of the western world, as most slaves were allowed to live in family.



cial structure that was composed of classes such as aristocrats, independent peasants, and slaves. Most of the aristocrats were either officials who developed a kinship with the king or chieftains of the conquered states. They enjoyed political and financial privileges as a dominant class. On the other hand, a majority of the people were peasants who engaged in farming and they were levied heavy taxes. And at the bottom of the foodchain, there were either privately owned slaves or collectives of slaves that belonged to the state.

The fall of Buyeo and Gaya

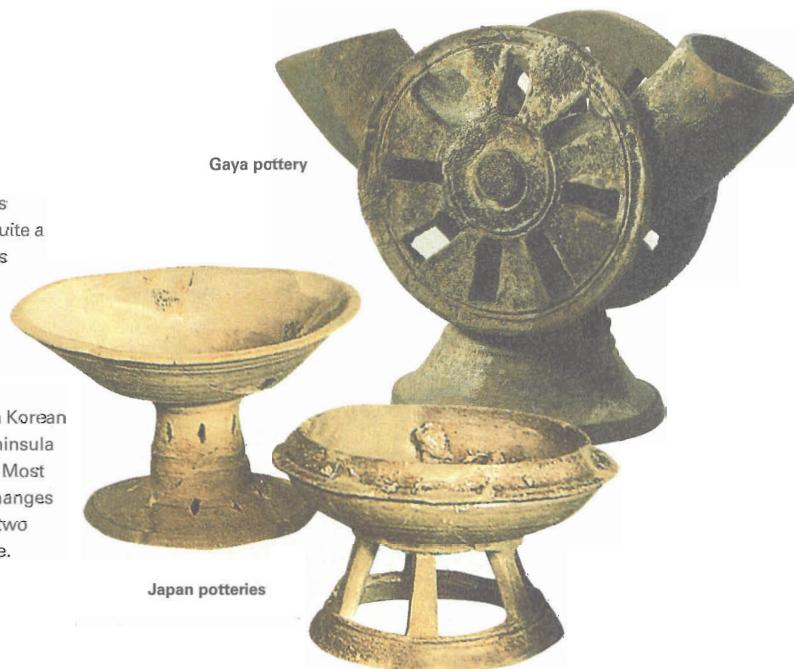
Buyeo, which made spectacular development while competing with Goguryeo, was eventually destroyed by the attacks of nomad tribes from the west. In the 4th century, its capital was turned to ruins and more than fifty thousand people were captured and taken away from their homes. Later, the royal lineage of Buyeo resurrected, but soon it was merged into Goguryeo.

The collapse of Gaya also showed a similar process. Geumgwangaya, which led the Gaya Alliance for a long time, suffered a large defeat by the allied forces of Goguryeo and Shilla, and could barely maintain its state, at the end of the 4th century and the early of the 5th century. Without such leadership, the Gaya Alliance was dismantled and various Gaya states strayed away from each other.

The struggles and confrontations of the five states narrowed down to conflicts among the remaining three kingdoms. Goguryeo was in the north, while Baekje and Shilla were in the south. Hence the so-called 'Era of the Three Kingdoms' began.

The Gaya Potteries

In the regions that belonged to Gaya which was located in the south of the Korean Peninsula, quite a few remains were unearthed, and they show us the fact that this area was actively engaged in a variety of exchanges with Japan. For example, the clay potteries of Gaya show a lot of similarities to those of Japan. Some Japanese historians argue that Gaya was the ancient Japan's ground of activity. Some North Korean scholars claim that the states in the Korean Peninsula established their own sub-states inside Japan. Most scholars agree that there were quite a few exchanges in both regions; however, they consider these two opinions as groundless, due to lack of evidence.



Gaya pottery

Japan potteries

2

Competitions Become Intense Among the Three Kingdoms

Goguryeo drives out the Han Chinese presence

In the beginning of the 4th century, the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria were in turmoil. In the north of the Korean Peninsula, nomad tribes grew more powerful, while Goguryeo and Baekje were ready to extend their territories after enhancing their own governmental systems.

China achieved unification at the end of the 3rd century, but came to face internal disturbances in the 4th century. The Han race also lost its control over its garrisons along the border, and the nomads established their own independent state. Goguryeo's attacks upon Han people who remained in the old terrain of Gojoseon further complicated matters for them.

In 311, Goguryeo expanded its territory all the way to the basins of the Amnokgang, and between 313 and 314 it seized power throughout the northwest region of the Korean Peninsula, the realm of the late Gojoseon. The Liaotung area was occupied by the Seonbi tribe who have their root in the Mongol prairie, and Goguryeo's confrontations with the nomad states at the east of the Liao began. Han China found itself no more staying in the game.

Confrontations between Baekje and Goguryeo

While Goguryeo was confronting the Seonbi tribe, Baekje grew remarkably in the Hangang area. By the end of the 3rd century, Baekje took control of the middle part of the Korean Peninsula to the point that they expanded their borders and came in direct contact with Goguryeo.

Goguryeo's expansion policy toward the south became an enormous threat to Baekje which had



YOSEO

YODONG (LIAOTUNG)

Baekje's prosperity in the 4th century

Baekje emerged in the Hangang basin, and extended its power to the north and south sides of the Korean Peninsula and overseas as well in the 4th century. According to Chinese sources, Baekje expanded its presence to the Yoseo area and conducted several exchanges with Southern China.



an equal ambition to extend its power to the northwest side of its territories. In the middle of the 4th century, Baekje and Goguryeo had frequent battles. In 369, the Baekje army defeated Goguryeo troops led by a king, and in 371 Baekje even killed the king of Goguryeo at the battle of Pyeongyangseong.

With its triumphs in the north of territory, Baekje turned its attention to the southwest, even reaching out to Tamraguk in Jeju-do. Its presence became a threat to several states inside Gaya, located between Shilla and Baekje.

And Baekje also stretched its influence overseas. With its advanced navigational skills Baekje actively engaged in trades with various areas of China. Baekje dispatched delegations to Japan and had maritime trades with it. Meanwhile, by continuously accepting the advanced governing system and Buddhism from China, Baekje came to establish a strong, centralized ruling power, and thus strengthened authorities of its royal family.

Overcoming crises, Goguryeo develops into a great empire

Goguryeo was battling two enemies at the same time, one in the south and the other in the north. Yet, even in such crisis, Goguryeo also reconstructed

◀ Janggunchong

32m in width, and 12.5m in height. The tomb has a nickname, "the pyramid of Asia," and is also called "Janggunchong" due to its mammoth scale. This tomb is known as King Jangsuwang's burial ground. There are more than 10,000 stone tombs inside the Gungnaeseong area (Jiahn, Jilinseong in China) where Janggunchong is located.



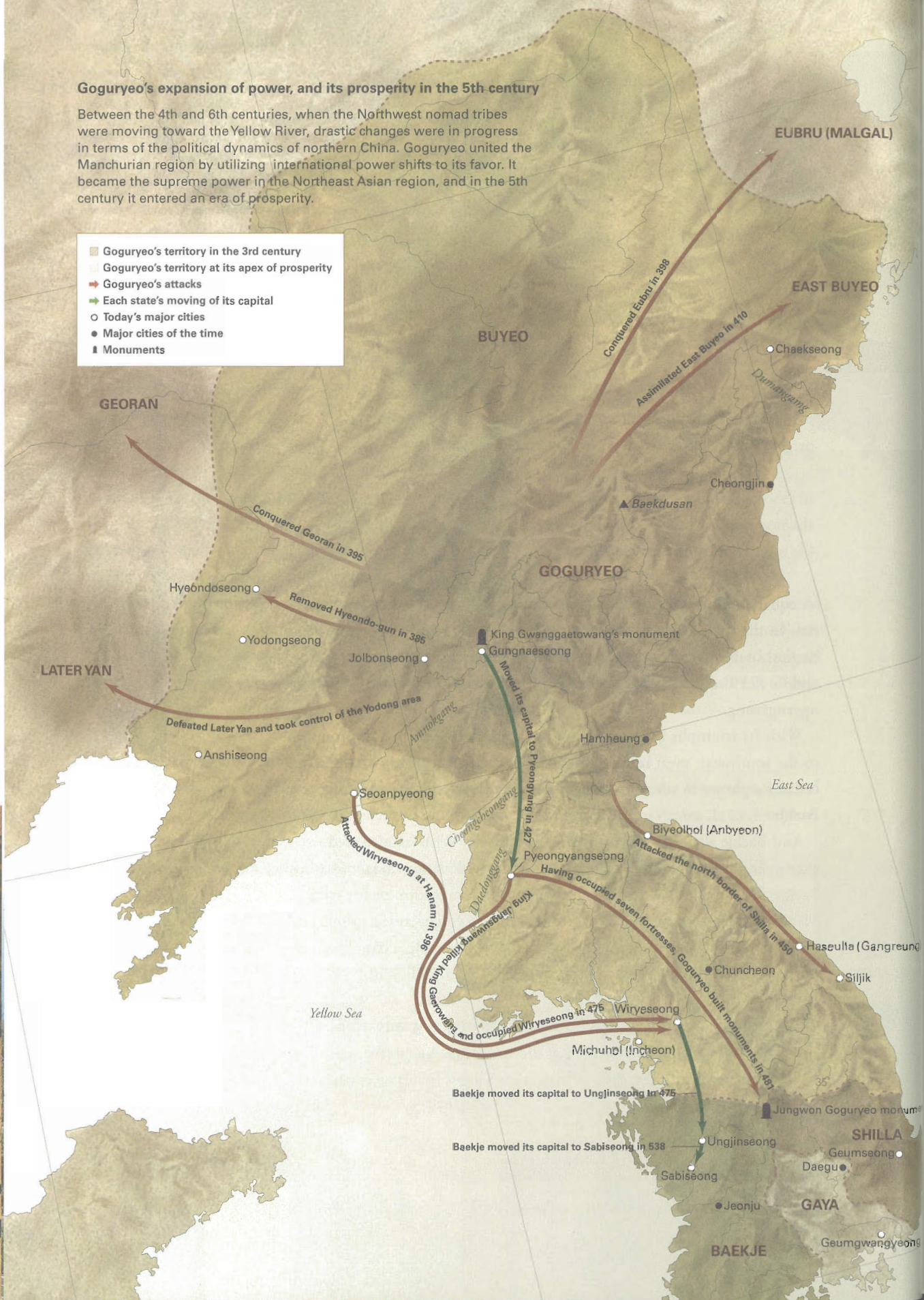
Chiljido

A spear-like sword, approximately 74cm in length. Including its main branch it has seven branches, with three of them on each side, so it has been called "Chiljido." On this sword there are 61 letters inscribed, stating that it was created as a gift, and then bestowed from Baekje to Japan. However, conflicting arguments have been suggested concerning the nature of this gift presentation. Japanese claim that it was given as a tributary to their king, whereas Koreans argue that it was a simple gift of friendship.

Goguryeo's expansion of power, and its prosperity in the 5th century

Between the 4th and 6th centuries, when the Northwest nomad tribes were moving toward the Yellow River, drastic changes were in progress in terms of the political dynamics of northern China. Goguryeo united the Manchurian region by utilizing international power shifts to its favor. It became the supreme power in the Northeast Asian region, and in the 5th century it entered an era of prosperity.

- Goguryeo's territory in the 3rd century
- Goguryeo's territory at its apex of prosperity
- ➔ Goguryeo's attacks
- ➔ Each state's moving of its capital
- Today's major cities
- Major cities of the time
- Monuments



its nation by reinforcing a centralized ruling power, adopting the political ruling system of China, and implementing educational institutes to raise and train political administrators. During the reign of King Gwanggaetowang (391~412), Goguryeo triumphed in its conflicts with Baekje in the south and the nomads in the north. Thus, a great empire was established in Northeast Asia.

King Gwanggaetowang who ascended to the throne at the age of 18 led tens of thousands of infantry and cavalry soldiers in his campaign into vast areas of Manchuria and in his occupation of the long-contested Liaotung region, which used to be one of Gojoseon's central areas.

Also, Goguryeo extended its territory to the Hangang basin by defeating Baekje. In order to defend itself, Baekje allied itself with Gaya and Japan. However, when Goguryeo sent 50,000 troops to the south, Baekje lost the northern area of the Hangang. The former Gaya Alliance with Geumgwangaya in its center was forced to disband, and the king of Shilla pledged its loyalty to Goguryeo by sending hostages.

In the reign of King Jangsuwang, the successor to King Gwanggaetowang, Goguryeo flourished and prospered. King Jangsuwang moved the capital to Pyeongyang and engulfed more and more populated areas and fertile lands of the south. Goguryeo's army even attacked and occupied Baekje's capital city Hanseong, the Hanam Wiryeseong fortress, penetrating deep inside the inlands of the Hangang area.

Allied Baekje and Shilla forces confront Goguryeo

Goguryeo's aggression towards the south forced Baekje to fall into a disastrous situation. After the capital fell the king was executed by Goguryeo; Baekje moved its capital to Ungjin (today's Gongju), maintaining a wartime ruling system for survival. Shilla was also threatened by the rapidly growing power of Goguryeo.

In response to Goguryeo's southbound advance, Baekje and Shilla formed an alliance to protect themselves from Goguryeo. To ensure the amicable nature of such ties, the two countries arranged a marriage between both countries' royal families, thus they were able to protect their territories from Goguryeo's invasions. Allied with each other, the two reserved their power for another round of competitions, fighting for the hegemonic rule over the peninsula between themselves.



The Tombstone of King Gwanggaetowang
The stone monument of King Gwanggaetowang was built in 414. It features 6.14m in height. The achievements of King Gwanggaetowang, who exponentially expanded Goguryeo's territory, are inscribed upon this monument. At this time, Goguryeo recognized itself as the center of the world and demanded submissions from its annexed neighbor states. His own title indicates that he was the king who achieved a territorial expansion larger than ever.



The Royal Tomb of King Muryeongwang (above)
The features of King Muryeongwang's royal tomb show similarities to those of the brick tombs that prevailed in southern China. King Muryeongwang (501~523) centralized the Baekje kingdom's power and actively engaged in diplomatic activities with both China and Wae (Japan). Baekje, located inside a fertile plain, flourished with an aristocratic culture.



Golden ornaments (below)
These golden ornaments were pinned to both sides of the golden crown. They were found inside the Royal Tomb of King Muryeongwang.

Ancient Tombs and Murals; Meeting the Goguryeo People 1,600 Years Ago



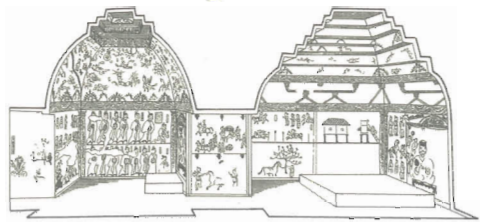
Tombs of Goguryeo

There are a number of ancient tombs located near the Gungnaeseong area, which served as the Goguryeo's capital until the early 5th century. The picture is a scene of the capital, viewed from Hwandosan (Mt.).

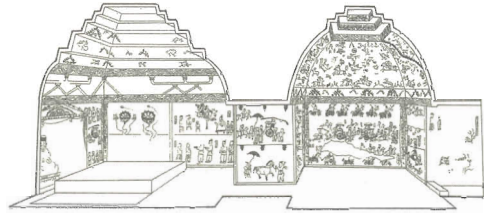
The remains of Goguryeo show us the lives of the Goguryeo people. There are a number of ancient tombs, and from each of them a variety of drawings were found. From early on, tombs were built by piling up stone blocks. The ancient tomb Cheonchuchong was made of square-shaped stone pieces (85m in each side) piled up like staircases.

In the middle of the 4th century, another type of tombs were constructed. Appeared were Burrow Style Stone Chamber tombs, covered with soil and built with stone walls with an exit to the outside. They continued to be made until the end of Goguryeo. Ancient drawings painted upon the walls of the tombs depict the lives and visions of the people of Goguryeo.

In the beginning, they drew paintings on plaster-coated stones, but later they polished the stones' surface so that they could draw pictures upon a flat surface. Also, in earlier days, they usually depicted the lives and customs of Goguryeo people, but pictures depicting Taoist hermits and Buddhism emerged as well. Since the mid-6th century, mural paintings of hermits used to fill entire walls.



An opened view of the Burrow Style Stone Chamber tomb (Deokheung-ri Ancient Tomb, west side)



An opened view of the Burrow Style Stone Chamber tomb (Deokheung-ri Ancient Tomb, east side)



Muyongchong (tomb) Mural Painting depicting a hunting Scene

This wall painting of Goguryeo was drawn upon the north-west wall of the Muyeongchong, which is now located inside Jian, China. The hunting scene is vividly depicted, like a motion picture.



Wall Painting at the First Jangcheon Tomb (partial)

The faces of Buddhist saints are drawn upon the ceiling of the south-front chamber of the First Jangcheon Tomb, located in Jian, China. As Buddhism prevailed in Goguryeo, people expressed their wishes that the Buddhist virtues could be observed in the afterlife as well, hence these wall paintings were made. It is interesting to see the faces of Buddhist saints described upon the petals of a lotus flower, a symbol of Buddhism.



Hyeonmu on the wall of Gangseodaemyo (tomb)

This picture of a Hyeonmu is drawn upon the wall of Gangseodaemyo, located at Gangseo-gu, Nampo city of North Korea, and it reveals that Goguryeo was influenced by Taoism. Goguryeo people believed in the four imaginary animal gods that protected the four directions of the world: at the east side there was a blue dragon, west side a white tiger, south side a Suzak figure, and in the north side there was a Hyeonmu, which had a head of a snake and a body of a turtle.

3

Goguryeo's Defeat of Successive Invasions of Sui and Tang

Shilla, rise of a new power

At first, Shilla's position among the three kingdoms was rather peripheral. Yet, after accumulating power in the 4th and 5th centuries, centralizing the kings' leadership and evading Goguryeo's intrusions, Shilla significantly grew to have its own voice. In the 6th century, Shilla established a strict form of royal sovereignty, reconstructed its own bureaucratic organizations, and systemized the nation's Youth organization, which was called Hwarang. It successfully finished preparations for further development.

In the early 6th century, Shilla was able to unite all the areas of the Nakdong-gang (R.) region and also assimilate the Ullreungdo (Is.) of the East Sea into its territory.

Shilla's remarkable expansion was accomplished during the reign of King Jinheungwang (reigned from 540 to 576). Shilla annexed Gaya in the south and attacked Goguryeo in the north to expand its territory to the north. Shilla also fought with Baekje in the west and occupied the vast plains sitting in the middle of the Korean Peninsula.

With a growing economy, expanded territory and increased population, Shilla quickly became the most powerful of the three kingdoms. In addition, Shilla independently developed a diplomatic relationship with China and secured yet another springboard for future victories. While Shilla basked in victory and also the spoils of war, both Baekje and Goguryeo sought revenge against Shilla.

Bukhansan (Mt.) King Jinheungwang Monument (located in Seoul)

This monument was built after Shilla became the occupant of the Hangang area. King Jinheungwang, was touring the newly conquered areas, and ordered the erection of this monument, in commemoration of his own royal tour, which must have taken place somewhere between 553 and 561. Comments that he dropped taxes levied upon the subjects and that he released the incarcerated prisoners, are inscribed upon it.



Tumultuous Northeast Asia

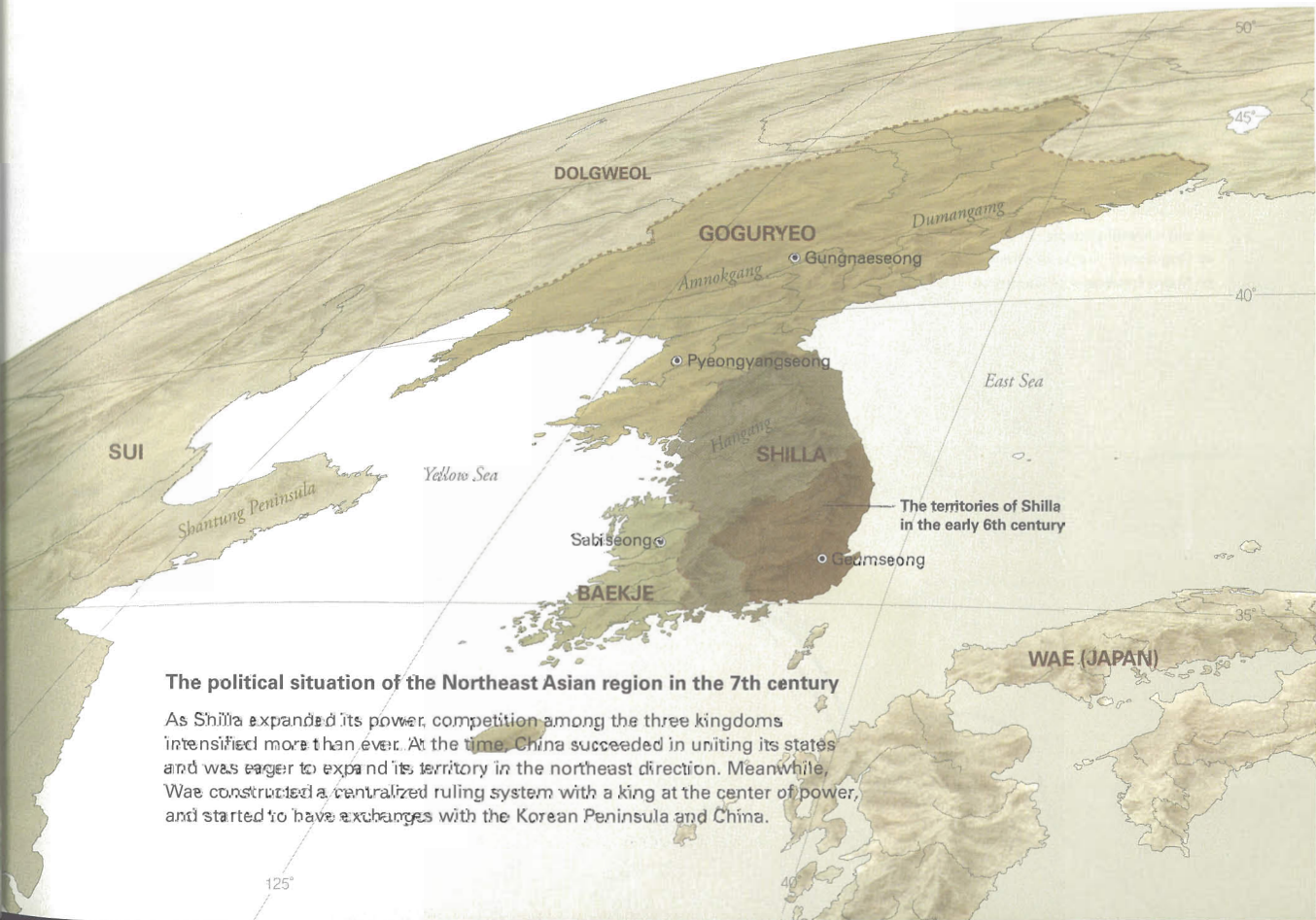
The race to unify all three kingdoms was also affected by outside variables. The Sui Dynasty united China, and Japan was forming a powerful, centralized nation. They had their own agendas intertwined in confrontations going on inside the Korean Peninsula. The united China wished to extend its territories, the nomads attempted to prevent further Chinese intervention, and Japan wished to trade and negotiate directly with the continent for their own benefit.

The most important factor was the united Sui. The ambitions of Sui did not stop with the unification of China, as it wished to extend its borders into the northeast of the Asian continent. Such international circumstances gave Shilla a valuable opportunity for growth, which would have otherwise suffered attacks from the powerful Goguryeo. As Shilla requested help from Sui, Sui placed military pressure on Goguryeo. In preparation of the final stretches of the war, Shilla developed close ties with Sui. Goguryeo confronted the invasion of Sui by forming an alliance with the Dolgweol, and to join them Baekje allied with Japan. In the early half of the 7th century, international warfare was gearing up between the east-west allied forces of Shilla and Sui and the north-south alliance of Goguryeo and Baekje.



**A miniature of Hwangnyongsa (temple)
Nine-story Pagoda**

A huge wooden pagoda erected in Gyeongju effectively exhibits Shilla's own ambition for territorial and cultural expansions. According to the legend of Shilla's foundation, there was a myth concerning a construction of a Nine-story pagoda. It dictated that if people's faith in Buddha was strong enough, foreign invasions would be prevented. The magnitude of this pagoda signals the intense nature of the ongoing international conflicts of the 7th century. The pagoda was incinerated in the Mongol invasion of the 13th century, and was never reconstructed.



The political situation of the Northeast Asian region in the 7th century

As Shilla expanded its power, competition among the three kingdoms intensified more than ever. At the time, China succeeded in uniting its states and was eager to expand its territory in the northeast direction. Meanwhile, Wae constructed a centralized ruling system with a king at the center of power, and started to have exchanges with the Korean Peninsula and China.



Eulji Mundeok Memorial Coin (North Korea, issued in 2003)
 Eulji Mundeok was the Goguryeo's greatest general who protected the kingdom from the Sui's invasions in 612. He successfully lured the Sui troops to Pyeongyangseong and completely destroyed them. He was also known for his talents in Chinese poetry; His poem, conveyed to Sui's general Wu Jungmun, has been passed on for generations. Eulji Mundeok is a historical figure whom both the South and North Koreans admire.

Goguryeo wins the wars against United China

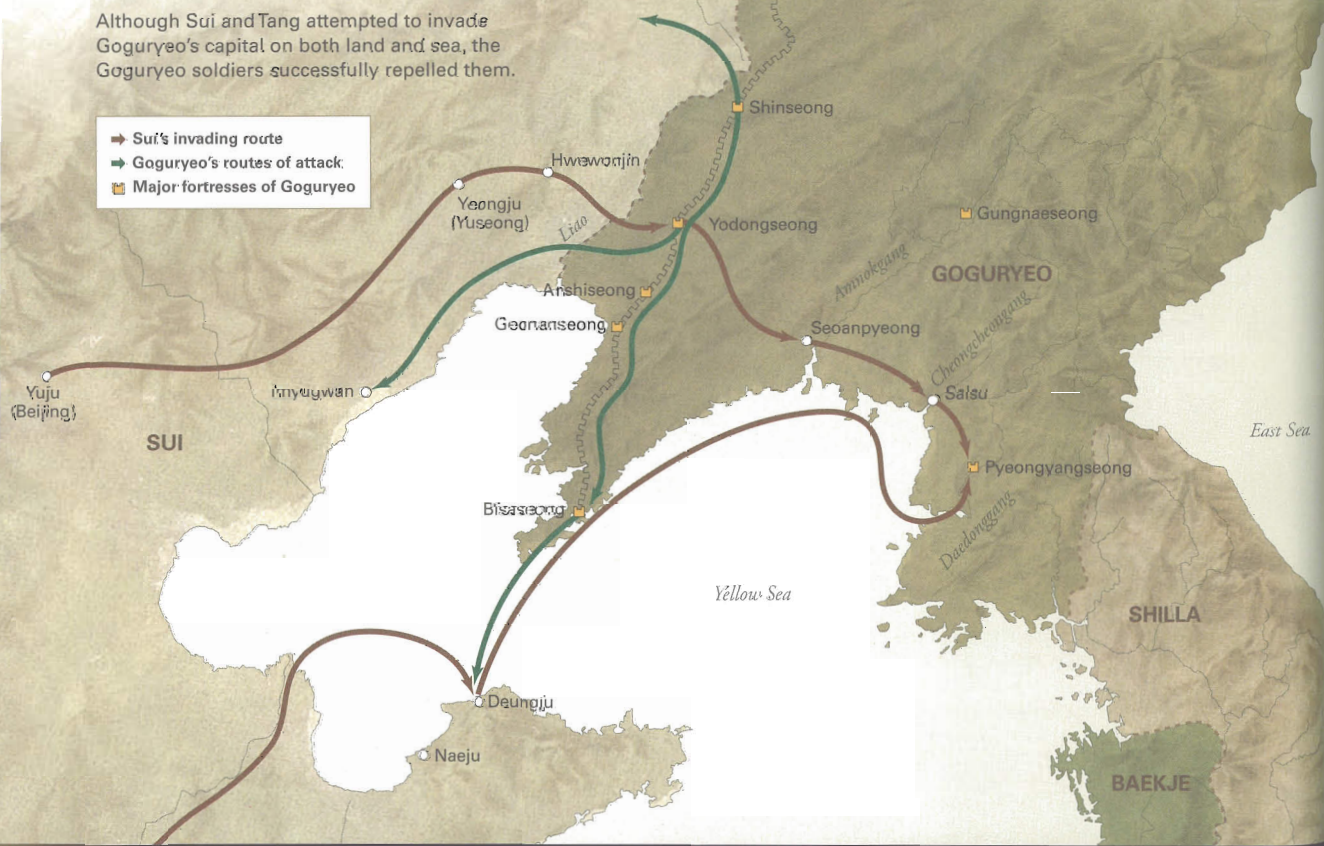
Sui, which accomplished the unification of the Chinese continent, demanded submission from all the political forces at its periphery, promulgating its almighty power. However, Goguryeo, which had prospered for 600 years and maintained its independence in Northeast Asia, firmly refused Sui's order. Battle was inevitable between the demanding Sui and the stubborn Goguryeo.

The first Chinese attack on Goguryeo occurred in 598 when the first emperor of Sui, Munje (reign 581~604), was in power. While 300,000 troops crossed the Liao and attacked the outskirts of Goguryeo's territory by land, the naval forces of Sui attempted to conquer the capital of Goguryeo by penetrating Goguryeo's defenses by sea. However, Goguryeo managed to defeat Sui's soldiers and successfully drove them out of Goguryeo's borders. The Sui Dynasty came to suffer a crisis in and outside of its borders.

The second emperor of Sui, Yangje (reign 604~618), assaulted Goguryeo again with a massively mobilized troops. In 612, 1,130,000 troops led by Yangje himself invaded Goguryeo. Surprisingly, Goguryeo, with a total population of about 3.5 million, refused to surrender and resisted boldly until they demolished the invaders and drove them out of the territory once again. Another retaliatory attack of Sui followed in 614, and failed as well.

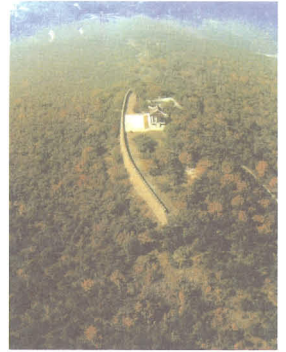
Goguryeo's wars against Sui and Tang

Although Sui and Tang attempted to invade Goguryeo's capital on both land and sea, the Goguryeo soldiers successfully repelled them.

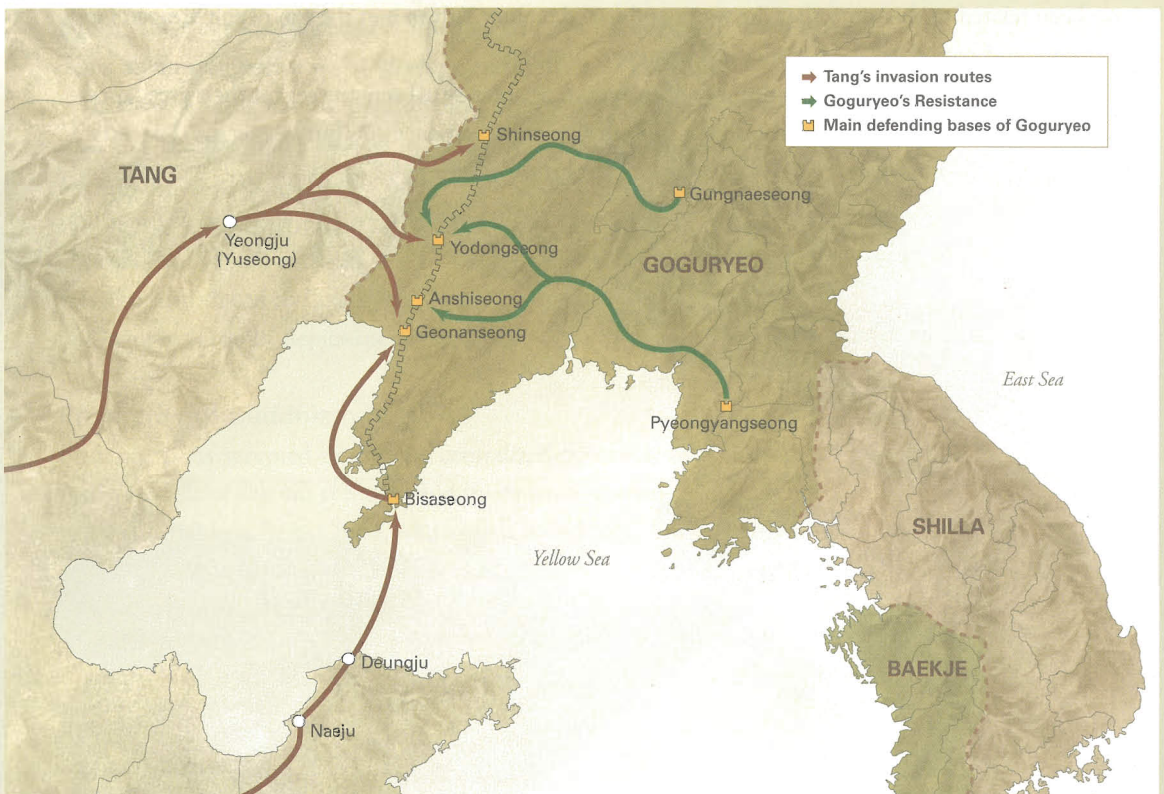


The continent of China was again united by the Tang Dynasty (618~907), which managed to control the chaos caused after the collapse of Sui. Like its predecessor, Tang ordered Goguryeo to yield to its authority and frequently threatened Goguryeo with military force. In 645, Goguryeo was attacked by the troops of Tang led by Taizong. In the beginning of the war Goguryeo lost several fortresses, but later in the battle of the fortress of Anshiseong, Goguryeo offered furious resistance to force the Tang's troops to withdraw.

The invasions of Sui and Tang were essentially wars fighting for the hegemonic power in Northeast Asia. Sui and Tang claimed themselves to be the center of the world, whereas Goguryeo identified itself as the most powerful in the region. Goguryeo must be given some credits for its triumphs over Sui and Tang, as it made possible for Baekje and Shilla as well as itself to maintain political and cultural independence. However, consecutive battles left irreparable damage on Goguryeo, and as a result, its power weakened substantially. Also, the conflict between Goguryeo and China divided the international order in half, and opened a door for more multi-national conflicts.



Daeseongsanseong
Pyeongyang, the capital of North Korea, was not only the capital of Gojoseon but also the capital of Goguryeo in its golden years. There are countless historical remains inside Pyeongyang. This picture shows a fortress built to defend the capital.



4

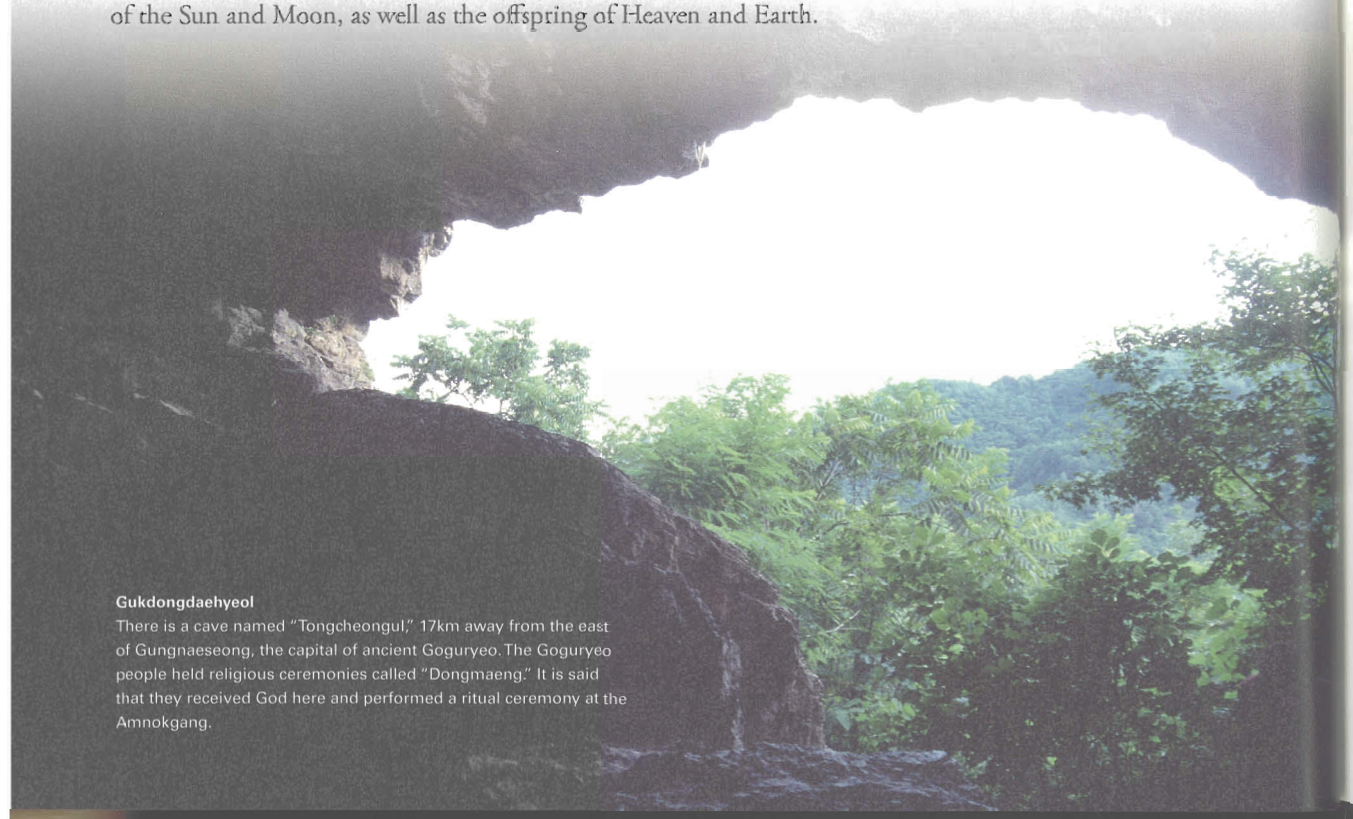
A Variety of Flourishing Cultures due to the Expansion of Trades

Worshipping Heaven and Earth

According to Chinese records, Goguryeo people celebrated a harvest by holding a festival every fall, and gathered together to perform a religious ceremony. And a record says, "There is a huge cave in the east of the capital of Goguryeo. They received God here and then carried out a religious ceremony at the Amnokgang which is located in the east side of the capital, where they kept their wooden statue of God." During the 5th century, on a tombstone of Goguryeo, the following lines are inscribed: "The son of the Sun and Moon, and the grandson of the water goddess Habaek, King Chumo Seong-wang (Jumong) was born in a town of North Buyeo. All people under heaven should be able to feel the holiness shining over it."

The reason that they carried out a ritual ceremony above the river under the illuminating sun must have been related to this story that the water goddess' daughter Yuhwa met the son of the Heaven God Haemosu, and conceived the founder of Goguryeo, Jumong.

Goguryeo's royal families built a number of shrines to perform ritual ceremonies for their great ancestor. They seem to have worshipped Jumong not only as their great ancestor, but also as the descendant of the Sun and Moon, as well as the offspring of Heaven and Earth.



Gukdongdaehyeol

There is a cave named "Tongcheongul," 17km away from the east of Gungnaeseong, the capital of ancient Goguryeo. The Goguryeo people held religious ceremonies called "Dongmaeng." It is said that they received God here and performed a ritual ceremony at the Amnokgang.

As farming progressed, worshipping Heaven and Earth became more important, since it was believed that heaven provided water whereas earth bore fruits and crops. Thus, rulers wished to identify themselves as a direct descendent of the heaven father and the earth mother. The legend of Shilla's foundation was also based on such ideas. The birth of Shilla's founder began with the meeting between a man from Heaven and a lady who was born near a well. In order to establish royal sovereignty the royal families made these ritual ceremonies for the heaven and earth as to reflect prestige.

Introduction of new religions

In order to unify numerous political forces accustomed to worshipping their own distinctive gods, royal authorities needed a more powerful and persuasive ruling system with well-organized theories that would support it.

China, being a civilized country with a long history, established an empire that had a variety of legal systems and well-constructed ruling structure. When Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla adopted a more advanced legal governing system from China around the 4th century, they also accepted the Chinese laws and rules, along with Confucius scriptures and history books. The three kingdoms established an educational system to teach students about progressive social ideology and systems of the world.

As trades among nations became more active, the Chinese religious culture also became more known to the Korean people. As a result, many Chinese gods appeared in the three kingdom's religious culture and myth. Among these religions, Taoism, the most popular Chinese religion, became prevalent in Korean societies. And Buddhism, which originated in India, was also introduced to Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla. The mural paintings in Goguryeo's tombs depict such religious activities of the time.

Prosperity of Buddhism

Buddhism was accepted to support centralized power of royal authorities. In the middle of the 4th century, Buddhism was introduced to the general population. Priests from China, who were believed to harbor Buddha's holy abilities, were considered healers for the sick and prayers for the nation's wellness and prosperity. The Buddha was introduced as a powerful God



The God of Sun and the God of Moon
This is a portion of a mural painting found at the fourth grave in Ohhoibun located at Jian-hyeon, China. Inside these ancient tombs from the 6th century, various figures of Taoist hermits were portrayed. Haemosu, father of the Goguryeo Dynasty's founder Jumong, was considered as the God of the Sun, while his wife (and Jumong's mother), Yuhwa, was considered as the Goddess of the Moon.



Baekje incense burner made of gold and copper
This burner was used in rituals commemorating the deceased kings. It has detailed inscription upon it which represents the ideals of Buddhism and Taoism. It is believed that this burner was made in the late 6th century. It was first made of bronze, and then plated with gold. 64cm in height, 11.8kg in weight.



Introduction of Buddhism

Buddhism was introduced to Goguryeo through the Northern route of China, and to Baekje through the Southern route of China. The Buddhism that was introduced from the Chinese was Mahayana Buddhism that worshipped Buddha as a God, and its key message was the salvation of people. Japanese Buddhist religion was introduced from Baekje and Goguryeo.

■ **Jeonryun Seongwang** This king appears in the legend of India. He was an ideal king who ruled the world by rolling the Wheels of Truth. Many people consider King Asoka who founded The Maurya Dynasty as a real Jeonryun Seongwang figure.

from a foreign land.

Buddhism was officially accepted and flourished in the three kingdoms with support of the royal authorities. Goguryeo, Baekje, and Shilla all competed in building large temples and in creating statues of the benevolent Buddha. Religious congregations of Buddhism where people prayed for the wellness of royal families required a large budget. The three kingdoms also sponsored Buddhist priests who were sent abroad to further their study of Buddhism.

In the 6th century, King Jinheungwang, the conqueror of the Hangang, identified his son as the most idealist ruler, and the Buddha of the real world, Jeonryun Seongwang. Also King Jinpyeongwang, the grandson of King Jinheungwang, identified himself as the father of Buddha (Jeongbanwang), and his wife adopted the same name of Lady Maya, the mother of Buddha. Based on this idea, he endowed the holiest status to his families.

However, among commoners, the gods of Heaven and Earth were still widely believed and accepted, along with totems. Since Buddhists claimed that Buddha was the almighty God, the royal families sanctified its holiness and came to identify themselves as family to the holy Buddha, claiming that their own country was indeed the kingdom of Buddha.

Active cultural exchanges between the three kingdoms and Japan

The three kingdoms, maintaining an adversarial relationship among themselves for centuries, tried to enhance their diplomatic ties with neighboring countries. Baekje, Gaya, and Shilla all invested huge amount of efforts in establishing an allied relationship with Japan. Isolated from the cultures of the continent, Japan was eager to accept and embrace more advanced cultures especially through them.

The three kingdoms and Japan not only exchanged frequent official delegations, but also had non-governmental trade activities and transactions among merchants. At times, Korean people moved to Japan in large-scale migrations, and at times Japanese troops battled with the Koreans inside the Korean Peninsula. Through such exchanges either peaceful or hostile, the culture of the three kingdoms were transmitted to Japan. Japan developed a close relationship especially with Baekje, which sent numerous scholars, priests, and technicians to convey and deliver elements of an advanced culture.

At the end of the 6th century, Japan's cultural exchanges with the three kingdoms reached its peak. As Shilla continued to expand, Baekje and Goguryeo wanted to promote friendly relationships with Japan. Meanwhile, the royal families of Japan successfully achieved centralization of their power and more rapidly embraced the advanced cultures of the continent. After Buddhism was introduced to Japan through Baekje, Buddhist arts of the three kingdoms such as statues, architectures, and paintings were transported to Japan as well.

The three kingdoms' culture widely spread throughout Japan in the late 7th century. However, when Japan began to directly dispatch its delegations to Tang, the relationship between Shilla and Japan deteriorated, and thus the nature of their cultural exchanges began to shift into a different direction.



Baekje Gwaneumsang (statue)
This Gwaneumsang located at the Horyu Temple of Nara, Japan, was made of wood, presumably in the 7th century. Its height is 210.8cm. The Horyu Temple was constructed in a style similar to that of a Baekje temple in the 7th century.



Maitreya statue in sitting posture at the Goryu Temple

This Maitreya statue in sitting posture is at the Goryu Temple of Kyoto, Japan. It was made of wood and its height is 123.5cm. The overall features are quite similar to those of the Golden/Bronze Maitreya statue, National Treasure No. 83.



National Treasure No. 83: A Sitting Golden/Bronze Maitreya statue
This Maitreya has a head featuring a curvy mountain shape. Its inner layer was molded in bronze and then plated in gold. It was made in the Three Kingdoms Period. 93.5cm in height.



Bab and Gimchi, Stories of the Korean Dining Table

Steamed rice, referred to as “Bab,” is the Koreans’ staple meal. The dining table is also known as “Babsang,” and upon this Babsang table rice is usually served with soup and side dishes.

In the past, millet or Indian millet served as the Koreans’ main meal, but soon after rice and barley began to be cultivated, they quickly replaced their predecessors. Around the 6th century, as irrigation facilities like reservoirs were built and agricultural tools made of iron began to be widely used, rice farming showed remarkable advances. However, millet and barley still remained as significant options for food in the northern area, where dry fields instead of wet fields were better developed.

During the cold and long winter seasons, Koreans consumed their vegetables that they had been preserving in salt. Those preserved vegetables supplied not only necessary nutrients such as vitamins and minerals, but also much needed sodium to the bodies of human beings.

Dwenjang (soybean paste), full of protein and sodium, was also a very important type of food. With

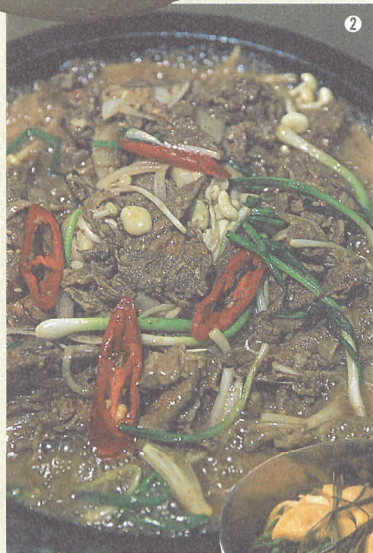
Processes of Making Soy Sauce

- ① Steam soy beans and pound them for making soybean lumps. Hang lumps of fermented soy beans with straw strings during the winter and then allow them to continue fermenting in the air.
- ② After removing mildew on the lumps of well-fermented soy beans, soak them in salt water.
- ③ After adding a lump of charcoal and red peppers, wait for between thirty and forty days until all the elements delude into the water, to make soy sauce juice.
- ④ Scoop up all the soy sauce juice from the jar and then boil it until it thickens to a proper degree.
- ⑤ After adding cooked barley with salt, mix it with sedimentary soybeans, press the paste in the jar firmly.
- ⑥ Until the soy sauce paste well ripens, hang “the caution string” around the jar in order to well and cleanly preserve it.





1



2



3

bean productions active all over the Korean Peninsula and Manchurian areas, Koreans developed a habit of adding salt to fermented steamed beans to make Dwenjang paste, or dipping lumps of fermented beans in salty water to make soy sauce. At the same time, cuisines made of beans like tofu and bean sprouts had been developed early on as well.

In Buyeo and Goguryeo, a Korean meat cuisine named Maekjeok was introduced and spread. It was a sort of seasoned meat, similar to the Korean's favorite meat cuisine today, which we all know as Bulgogi. Due to the Buddhist influences and the tradition of farming, Koreans have shown a tendency of eating grains more than meat in the past, but since the 14th century, both vegetable and meat have been considered equally important in balancing people's diet.

① **Gimchi** The word "Gimchi" is originated from "Chimchae," which means salted vegetable. In the past it was simply preserved with salt or lees of rice liquor that were used for keeping vegetables fresh. However, as various types of seasoning began to add its flavors, many different types of Gimchi were made. Today's fermented Gimchi, mixed with ingredients such as hot peppers, green onions, garlic, pickled anchovies and other seafood, appeared only after the 18th century.

② **Bulgogi** These days, Koreans enjoy eating grilled Bulgogi, which is made of beef that has been set in seasoned soy sauce. When pork is used in place of beef, it is called Pork-Bulgogi. It can be eaten with meat juice dripped from the specially made Bulgogi-grill, or without juice and just grilled on the loosely interlaced grill.

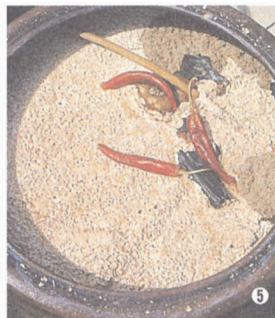
③ **Bibimbab** Bibimbab is rice mixed with fresh vegetable, seasoned wild vegetable, along with red hot paste. Because of its flavor and taste of several seasoned wild vegetable, it has become the Korean's representative menu. Another type of Bibimbab, Dolset Bibimbab, served in a heated stone pot, also is enjoyable.



4



5



6



7

648 ~ 926

660

The allied forces of Shilla and Tang conquered Baekje in 660 and defeated Goguryeo in 668. Restoration movements of Baekje and Goguryeo both occurred, yet eventually failed.

676

Shilla defeated Tang forces, which attacked Shilla after the fall of Baekje and Goguryeo. Shilla took control of the entire Baekje territory and also part of the Goguryeo territory. The Shilla royal family were proud that they finally unified all the three kingdoms.

698

In the old territory of Goguryeo, the Balhae Kingdom was established under the leadership of Dae Jo-yeong, who was once a general of Goguryeo. He claimed himself as the successor of Goguryeo. Shilla and Balhae together opened the Era of the 'South and North Kingdoms.'

751

The Shilla royal family and the Buddhist community began the exquisite renovation of Bulguksa (temple), to prove Shilla was the land of Buddha.

771

Carolos the Great Emperor unified the Franc Kingdoms.

828

Jang Bo-go who dominated the East Asian trades in the Yellow Sea of the Korean Peninsula constructed a trading base at Chconghaejin.

900

Gyeonhwon established New Baekje in the southwest region of the Korean Peninsula, and the next year Gungye established New Goguryeo in the north and middle regions. Shilla was divided into three kingdoms once again.

907

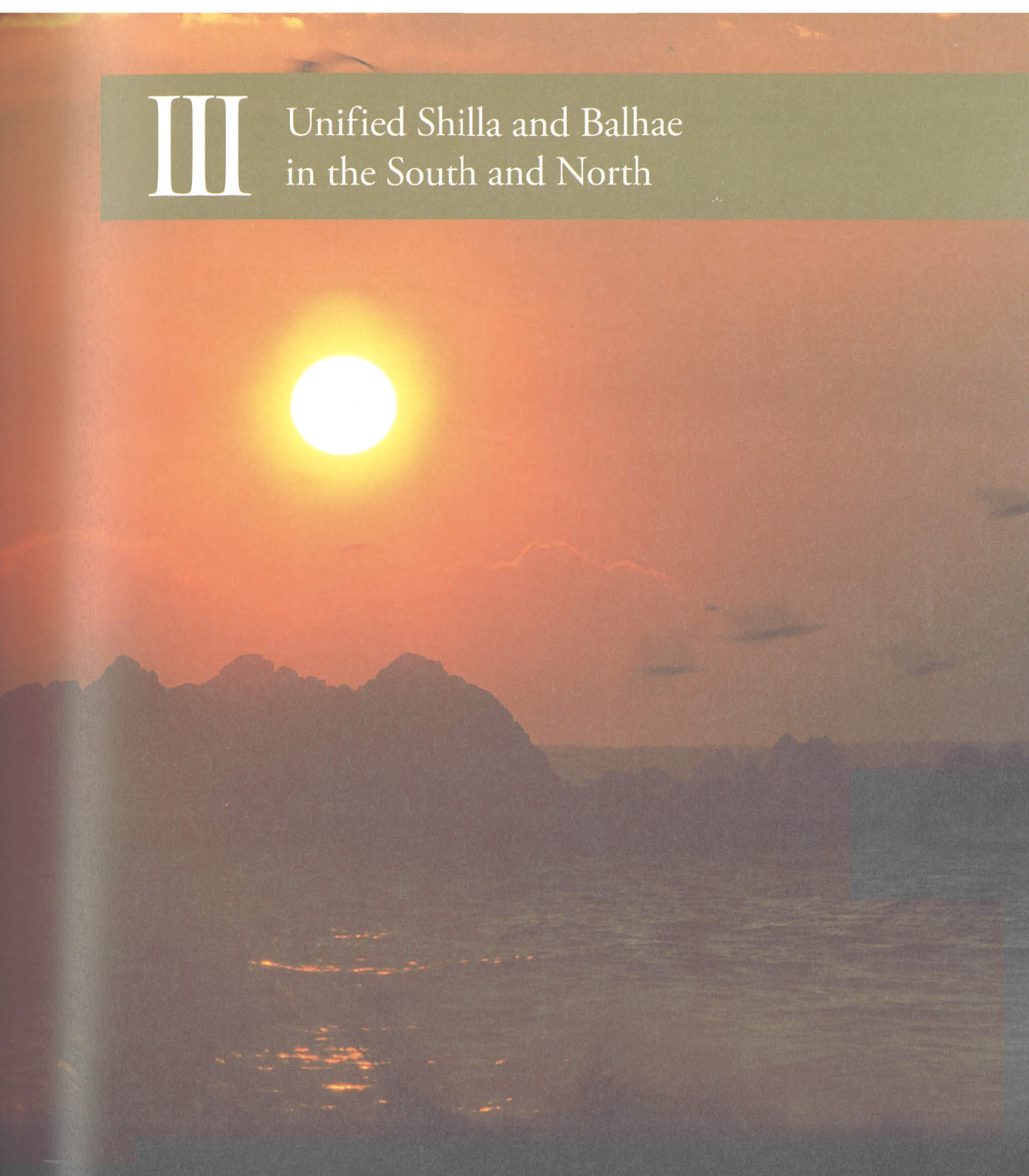
Tang was demolished.

926

Balhae whose power had waned since the latter half of the 9th century was demolished soon after the Georan attacks.

III

Unified Shilla and Balhae in the South and North

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the upper left quadrant, casting a long, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. The sky is a gradient of orange and red, with some light clouds. In the background, dark silhouettes of mountains are visible against the bright sky. The water in the foreground is dark with some ripples.

As Shilla united Baekje and Goguryeo with itself, and Balhae emerged in the old terrain of Goguryeo, the Era of the South and North Kingdoms began. When fierce competitions among the three countries finally ended, the society was stabilized, the economy expanded, and active cultural exchanges with the outside continued. Shilla was proud of being a Buddhist land, while Balhae, which succeeded Goguryeo, constructed a unique culture based upon a variety of Goguryeo and Tang traditions. Many merchants, scholars, and monks actively visited neighboring countries.

Munmudaewangam in the Front Sea of Gampo, near Gyeongju Inside the rock, there is an underwater tomb of King Munmuwang.

Buddha statue in the Gandharan region

Buddhism originated in the 6th century B.C., and was introduced to China through Northwest India and the Silk Road. Statues of Buddha were first established in the Gandharan region, northwest of India. Greek statues might have had some influences upon them.



People Embarking upon
a Journey to the World,
and Seokguram

In 1908, a scroll manuscript was found at the Mogao stone cave in Dunhuang, China. Even though the author and the title remained unknown as the front and back cover pages were gone, most of the main contents which contain approximately 6,400 Chinese letters were intact. The manuscript turned out to be *Wangoh Cheonchuk Gukjeon* (A Travel to the Five Regions of India), written by a monk of Shilla named Hyecho (704~787).

Hyecho crossed over to the Tang Dynasty when he was 16 years old, and there he devoted himself to Buddhist studies. And later when he became 19 years old, he headed for India where Buddhism originated (723). Upon arriving in India, he started to passionately study Buddhism, on pilgrimage tours and through discussions with other monks. He returned to Tang through the desert route between India and China, and continued practicing Buddhism.

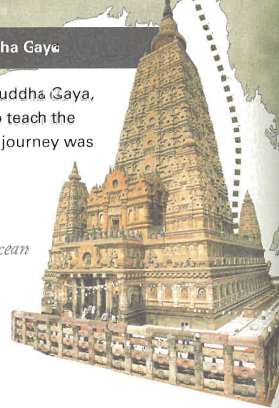
Although he is considered as a true cosmopolitan, he was not the only one at the time. Before him many monks travelled to India, and traces of Shilla people's life can be found in many regions of China and Japan. Also, it is not difficult to find traces of other worlds in Shilla people's life and culture as well. Mahayana Buddhism which was first established in the northwestern part of India, and the statues of Buddha in the Gandharan region which influenced the Seokguram (grotto) statue are good examples.

SARACENS



Grand Temple in Buddha Gaya

Hyecho first went to Buddha Gaya, where Buddha used to teach the people. Hyecho's long journey was a sort of pilgrimage.



SOUTH
CHEONCHUK

Indian Ocean



Lungmen Stone Buddha Statue

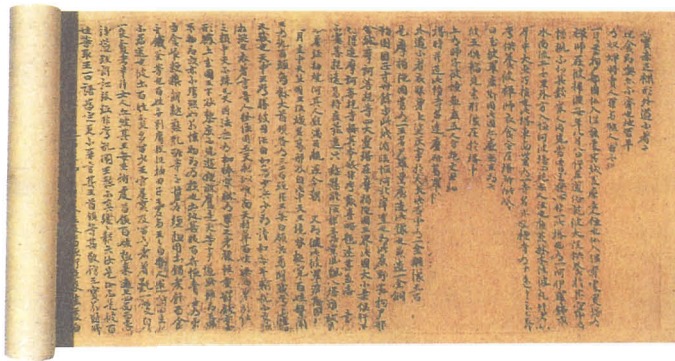
In China during the 5th-8th centuries, magnificent grotto temples were constructed and a number of Buddha statues were built. The Gandharan style of India had a huge influence upon them. Many traces of Mahayana and Gandharan style Buddhism can also be found in Korea and Japan, which received Buddhism through China.

Statue of Buddha in Seokgum

Seokgum which was built between 751 and 774, is located in Gyeongju of the Gyeongsangbuk-do province. It shows that the Shilla people successfully integrated foreign cultural traditions with their own, and developed a new intriguing culture which could have challenged those of other worlds. Although grotto temple was a norm in India or China, Seokgum was different as it was an artificial cave created with highly complicated mathematical calculations.



— Traveling Routes of Hyecho
 - - - Routes believed to have been traveled by Hyecho



Wangho Cheonchuk Gukjeon
 This book, written by Hyecho in 727, describes the religions, customs, and cultures of India and all the Silk Road areas in great detail. It is now preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris.

1

Shilla Unites Baekje and Goguryeo

Shilla's agreement of military alliance with Tang

In the year of 648, Shilla dispatched delegates to Tang. Having been struggling with frequent attacks from Baekje and Goguryeo, Shilla sought for an allied relationship with Tang in order to turn the tides of war. The chief-delegate was Kim Chun-chu, who later ascended the throne and became King Tae-jong Muyeorwang (654~661).

Diplomatic negotiations between Shilla and Tang continued for days, and they finally agreed to organize an allied force to defeat Baekje and Goguryeo. In case of victory, Shilla agreed to occupy Baekje, and Tang was to rule Goguryeo as a remuneration. Shilla also promised that it would accept and embrace Chinese institutions and culture.

With this newly forged military alliance, Northeast Asia was embroiled in rapid changes. Baekje and Goguryeo failed to deal with these new changes effectively, and failed to reform their internal ruling systems as expected. As a result, they both had to stand alone against the allied forces of Shilla and Tang.

Kim Yu-shin (595~673)

Kim won numerous battles against Baekje and Goguryeo, and from the year of 660, he led the overall war effort for the unification of the three kingdoms. He received a posthumous title with an honorary rank of a king, 150 years after his death. It shows that he was remembered by the Shilla people for a long time.

The picture is the statue of Kim Yu-shin erected in Gyeongju.

Muyeorwangreung

This is the grave of King Muyeorwang who established the foundation for unification of the three kingdoms. A monument commemorating his achievements was erected in front of the tomb, yet today only the top and base sections remain.

The collapse of Baekje and Goguryeo

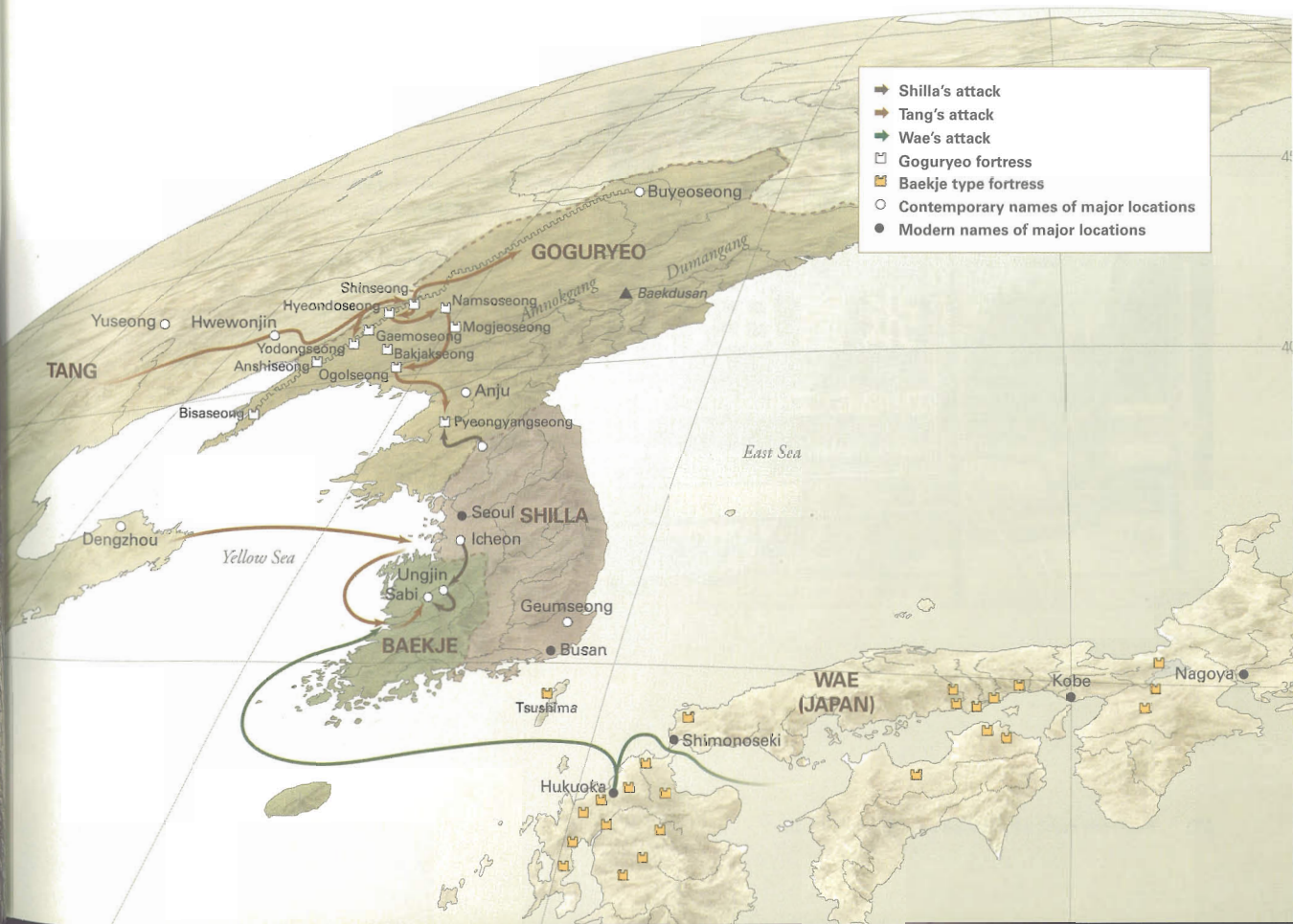
In 660, 50,000 soldiers from Shilla and 130,000 soldiers from Tang invaded the Baekje territory. Baekje never faced such a gigantic number of troops before, and defeat was inevitable. Although Baekje fought courageously to the very end, their capital was seized, and the Baekje king surrendered.

It was Tang's intentions to demolish Shilla as well after the surrender of Baekje. Yet, their plan was thwarted when Shilla displayed impressive determination of military resistance. Tang reluctantly put its advances on hold and concentrated upon its priority target, Goguryeo. Allied troops of Shilla and Tang attacked Goguryeo the following year. Tang's troops advanced from Goguryeo's northwest border and Shilla attacked from the south. Though Goguryeo managed to deflect numerous attacks, the circumstance became inescapably worse, as the allied forces continued their attacks.

Yeon Gaesomun, the powerful leader who led all the battles, died in 666. Without a leader, Goguryeo was plunged into internal conflicts raised over the issue of whether or not to continue fighting. Added to that, power struggle for the throne aggravated. And in the midst of such chaos, the allied army of Shilla and Tang finally succeeded in destroying Goguryeo (668).

Wars Throughout North-east Asia in the 7th Century

Conflicts between Goguryeo and Tang, and competitions among the three kingdoms, triggered the so-called Unification War. And this war quickly developed into an international conflict, which even included the Japanese as well. In 663, a large number of Japanese troops participated in battles against the Shilla-Tang alliance, under the cause of supporting the Baekje restoration army. After defeated, Japan was concerned about possible retaliatory attacks from the alliance, so it constructed fortresses in numerous locations, and even moved its capital to another location.



The people who fought for the restoration of Baekje and Goguryeo

After the capital was seized and the king surrendered, many Baekje people were captured and forcibly relocated to Tang. And when Tang returned home, it seemed like the war was finally over.

Even after the Baekje king was taken to Tang, the Baekje people continued to fight. They instated a new king and fought the invaders. In response, Tang dispatched reinforcements to Baekje, and Shilla sent troops as well. In spite of its inferior situation in terms of military resistance, Baekje was able to maintain control over 200 castles throughout its territory.

At the request of Baekje, Wae (Japan) sent a large relief troops. In 663, 30,000 troops of Baekje-Wae allied forces confronted the Shilla and Tang armies; nevertheless, they eventually lost. Any chance for Baekje's own revival was lost as well.

Meanwhile, the resistance of the Goguryeo people was so severe that numerous battles significantly hurt the Tang troops. In response, Tang put the captured Goguryeo king in charge, but failed to suppress the Goguryeo people's resistance. And subsequent confrontations led to the creation of a new Korean dynasty inside Goguryeo's old territory. It was Balhae which in the end drove out Tang's forces.



Goryeoyeong

After the fall of Goguryeo, about 200,000 people were forcibly relocated to the border regions of Tang's territory. Though the majority of them went through tremendous suffering, a few people managed to obtain significant social positions. A Goguryeo general named Go Seon-ji led the decade-long campaign launched against the Islam dynasties over the control of the Silk Road. Another Goguryeo emigrant named Yi Jeong-gi formed an independent political force in the Santung area inside Tang's territory. There are other records of many Baekje people being forcefully taken to Tang, after their restoration movement failed. Their fate was not that much different from that of the Goguryeo people. Some of the war refugees even went over to Japan, where they maintained their identity and traditions. This picture is of a Goryeo town, located 20km away from the north of Beijing. Goguryeo migrants used to reside here. We can see the name written clearly on the road sign (in the circle).



Shilla defeats Tang

After Goguryeo collapsed, Tang took control of its territory, as both Tang and Shilla had agreed in the beginning of their alliance. However, Tang was not satisfied with the agreement. It wanted to extend its power to Baekje too, and furthermore, it intended to rule Shilla as well. Shilla protested this blatant breach of the original agreement and sternly requested them to honor it. However, Tang continued to extend its power over the territories of Baekje and Goguryeo, and in the midst of such efforts to subjugate Baekje, Shilla had to confront Tang as well. In response, Tang either sent diplomatic missions or launched military attacks upon Shilla forces.

Since Goguryeo's collapse, Shilla continued to fight Tang, for total of eight years. Shilla defeated 200,000 soldiers of the Tang's army at the Mae-oseong fortress (today's Yeoncheon, Gyeonggi-do province), and at the same time Shilla destroyed Tang's well-trained naval forces in the Yellow Sea. With the costs for a prolonged conflict estimated to be too high, the Tang forces finally withdrew from Shilla.

Although Shilla was still concerned about further attacks from Tang or from other potential enemies like Japan, it was indeed the final winner of a war that had involved the entire Northeast Asia.

The underwater tomb of King Munmuwang

King Munmuwang who accomplished the unification of the three kingdoms ordered his people to "Melt all swords to make plows." According to records, his instruction in the will was that he wished to be cremated and buried under the East Sea in front of Gyeongju, so that he may defend Shilla as a dragon. Though he must have believed in a peaceful future, it seems that he was also concerned with possible invasions by Tang, or the allied forces of Baekje and Japan.

2

The Unified Shilla and Balhae's Occupying the South and North of the Peninsula

Shilla accomplished a unified kingdom

It was not Shilla's intention from the beginning to unify all the three kingdoms. But after it annexed Baekje and as it kept on battling Tang's advances, Shilla continued to incorporate all those refugees from Baekje and Goguryeo into the Shilla population. Shilla offered official positions to former Baekje and Goguryeo dignitaries. And the newly established unified army allowed people from all three countries to participate. Shilla extended its bureaucratic ruling system to former territories of Baekje and Goguryeo.

The Korean Peninsula finally entered an era of peace that lasted for a couple of centuries. The people of all three kingdoms came to live under a unified ruling system. Nevertheless, some discrimination against the conquered did exist. The unified Shilla had a rigid caste system in which the aristocrats in Gyeongju were the ones who came to enjoy exclusive privileges.

However, as the people of the three kingdoms continued to live together and share experiences, a homogeneity was developed among them in terms of identity. In that regard, Shilla's unification of all the three kingdoms did mark a significant turning point in the formation of the Korean race. The Shilla royal family's argument that they unified all the three kingdoms, was not far from the truth.



Regional government's ruling in the time of unified Shilla (8th, 9th centuries)

Total of nine new "Ju" units were installed throughout the Korean Peninsula, three for the old territory of Goguryeo, three for the old territory of Baekje, and three for Shilla. Also, royal family members were dispatched to newly designated local capitals which were called 'Sogyeong.'

Balhae's succession to Goguryeo

While Shilla developed a new governing system for the unified Korean Peninsula, Goguryeo people's struggles continued in Manchuria. As the resistance grew, Tang established large military bases throughout the region and relocated a number of Goguryeo people to the border areas of Tang. However, Tang's attempt to subdue the Goguryeo resistance and rule them under the laws of Tang, eventually failed.

The Goguryeo people who were forcibly relocated to Tang began a resistance movement in 696 inside the Yoseo area which was under Tang's occupation. The leader of these Goguryeo resistance fighters was Dae Jo-yeong. After defeating Tang's forces, he established Balhae (698~926) in the old territory of Goguryeo.

Dae Jo-yeong's foundation of Balhae was the final straw placed upon the already broken back of Tang's ruling in the region. Balhae reorganized the Goguryeo people throughout the region and rapidly developed into an independent kingdom.

Balhae, the dynasty that was called "Haedong Seongguk"

Balhae's foundation by the Goguryeo descendants in the old territory of Goguryeo changed the map throughout the northeast region. Tang at-



Balhae's Dongmosan (Mt.)

Dongmosan (600m above sea level) is where Dae Jo-yeong supposedly established the Balhae Kingdom. It is also called as Seonganjanseong fortress. It is located in Jirinseong's Dunhwa-shi area. A number of ancient tombs of Balhae are found in the northeast area, 10km away from here.

Haedong Seongguk, Balhae

In the 9th century, Balhae was immensely prospering, thanks to political stability and economic developments. At the time, Balhae's territory included the northern part of the Korean Peninsula and reached the Chinese northeast region in the west and the littoral province of Siberia in the northeast. The history of Balhae is considered as part of the Korean history by Korean historians, for the reason that it was founded by Goguryeo refugees in the old territory of Goguryeo.

On the other hand, Russia considers the history of Balhae as history of one of the Siberian region's minority tribes, the Malgals. And, because most of the past events concerning Balhae occurred inside regions that currently belong to the Chinese territory today, the Chinese claim that the history of Balhae should be considered as an exclusive chapter of the Chinese history. Chinese historians in fact have claimed that all the historical events that occurred in the current territories of China fall in the category of Chinese history; for this reason, they consider Balhae as a regional government of the Tang Dynasty.

- Early centers
- Central places in the first half
- Expanded areas in the 8th century
- Capital transfers
- 15 bu units (gubernatorial offices)
- Capitals
- 5 Gyeong units
- Contemporary names of major geological locations
- Current names of major geological locations
- The current border line among North Korea, China and Russia



Balhae's stone lantern
This stone lantern remains at the Sanggyeongseong area, which was the capital of Balhae. It is six-meters high. The strong and powerful patterns of lotus flowers signal the influence from Goguryeo's Buddhist traditions.

tempted to attack Balhae by taking sides with the Malgal tribes in the north of Balhae. Pursuing an amicable relationship with Tang, Shilla also sided with Tang and assumed a hostile position against Balhae. But they were never successful. In 732, the allied forces of Shilla and Tang launched a joint attack upon Balhae, yet Balhae firmly stood on its ground. And proclaiming that it was the legitimate successor of Goguryeo, Balhae continued to expand its territory at a rapid pace, and also overcame other crises as well by developing a close relationship with the Dolgweol tribes in the north and Japan.

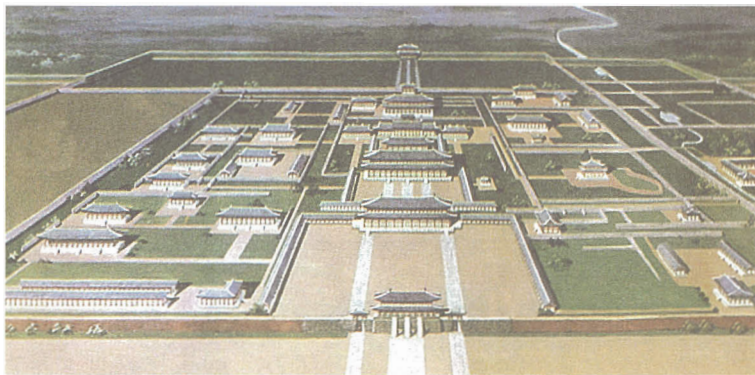
By the middle of the 8th century, Balhae was already exhibiting remarkable advances. By adopting the Tang dynasty's ruling system to its internal governance, Balhae established a stable government and took control of a region that was even wider than the old territories of Goguryeo. The Chinese praised their achievements, by calling them with the nick name "Haedong Seongguk."[■]

With all such developments, Tang and Shilla had no choice but to admit Balhae's sovereignty. Balhae began to send diplomatic delegates to Tang and Shilla, and Shilla also dispatched its representatives to Balhae. And, in order to promote more efficient transportations, roads connecting Balhae's capital and the border areas of Shilla were constructed. But exchanges between Balhae and Shilla were not that active, as the two kept competing with each other in order to garner Tang's exclusive support. Tang even encouraged such rivalry between the two countries, using that kind of situation to its own advantage.



A Dragon Head, which was excavated at Palace Vestige No.1 of the Sanggyeongseong area. It was unearthed at the vestige of Sanggyeongseong, the capital of Balhae. Its height is 37cm.

■ Haedong Seongguk means 'the most prospering country over the east sea.'



Restored image of the Sanggyeongseong palace (left)

The Sanggyeongseong palace was constructed during the reign of Balhae kingdom's 3rd king Munwang. The Hwangseong structure was at the center, and many public offices and temples stood closely to each other. The design of this city was well planned. The circumference of the palace was 16km. The city perished with the fall of Balhae. Today we can only see where the palace and temples would have been standing. The overall design of this city was modelled after the Tang Dynasty's Janganseong capital.

Restored image of the Heian Castle in Japan (right)

In the 8th century, the internationally acclaimed Tang culture spread to its neighboring states. Tang capital Jagan's features inspired the capitals of Balhae and Japan.



3

The Remarkable Development of a Buddhist Culture

Shilla and Balhae's expanding their views toward the world

Although Shilla continued to battle the Tang dynasty for many years, the Shilla people also studied and embraced the Chinese governing system. Shilla's authorities intended to establish a centralized power, and the administrative ruling system and legal codes of China had considerable influences upon the bureaucratic governance of Shilla.

Civilian contacts with Tang were also very active. The Chinese civilization was internationally recognized, and Tang's reputation attracted people from all over the world. In order to study the advanced Tang society, many Shilla students went over there, and countless merchants visited Tang for trade purposes. Some of them chose to take a permanent residence there. Also, there were some Shilla travelers who did not stop at visiting Tang. They left for India, West and Central Asia in search of a new world.

Balhae too actively engaged itself in foreign relationships. Since the middle of the 8th century, Balhae sent more than 60 separate official delegations to Tang. It enthusiastically embraced Tang's culture

Traces of log barricades at Cheonghaejin and Jang Bo-go's portrait

Jang Bo-go (?-846), who once served as a Tang dynasty military officer, established Cheonghaejin as a base of maritime activities. This base served as the center of overseas trading and connected Shilla, Tang, and Japan to each other. He was also once involved in the struggle for the throne.



East Asia, in the 8th and 9th Centuries

Soon after the wars ended, each country was actively involved in a variety of exchanges. Some Japanese students took a ride aboard Shilla vessels to reach Tang and study there. Some were even later dispatched to Vietnam as diplomats. Tang's territory served as a valuable place where the people of Shilla and Balhae had academic exchanges. And especially in cities near seashores and canals, countless Shilla people resided and engaged themselves in active commercial trades.



Glass

Jewel sword

Imported goods of the time
During the reign of King Heungdeokwang (826-836), many exotic goods were imported from China, the Southeast and Central Asia, and West Asia.



TANG

BALHAE

SHILLA

JAPAN

A statue of a military officer at Gwaereung

The stone statue guarding the tomb of Shilla King Wonseongwang (?-798) has a face of a West Asian figure. It is a well known fact that Arab merchants frequently traveled to China. This stone statue is an evidence which reveals Shilla's various exchanges with Islamic countries.



- ➔ Shilla's trading route
- ➔ Balhae's trading route
- Shillabang
- Balhae people's accommodation
- ⊙ Balhae's five capitals
- Major geological locations of the time
- Current major geological locations

and learned many things about the Tang's advanced administration system. Many students studied in Tang, and some of them successfully passed the Chinese state examination held for foreigners, just as the Shilla students did.

By embracing the world's diverse ideas, historical experiences, and religious philosophies, the Shilla and Balhae people widened their cultural horizons. Especially, the Confucian ideology that formed the foundation of the Chinese governance system, and Buddhism which came to reflect Chinese lifestyle and values, proved to be quite instrumental in various social changes and developments that continued inside these two countries.

Development of Confucianism in studies and philosophies

In Shilla, there was an institution named 'Dokseosampungwa.' It was an educational system for the civil officers of the Shilla government. Students were hired to various levels of administrative positions according to the grades they received. Gukhak, the national university of Shilla, oversaw the process. It also continued to educate officer candidates who would pledge their loyalty to the king in future services.

Acquiring an understanding of Confucian scriptures was considered a fundamental element in their education. Students who deeply understood scriptures, history, literature, and also other kinds of philosophy were highly valued and respected. Balhae also established schools to develop knowledge and ideas regarding Confucianism, history, and literature. As a result, many students who had earlier studied in Tang largely contributed to the advancement of Balhae's academics and culture.

Wonhyo (left) and Euisang (right)
Wonhyo (617~686) and Euisang (625~702) endeavored to study the Buddhist scriptures and educate the public of their meanings. Their efforts led to a new era of popular Buddhism. Many of the oldest temples we have today were built during this time period.



As the people's understanding of Confucianism and history continued to deepen, the emphasis placed upon understanding the Confucian philosophy of governing increased as well. The Chinese governing system based on Confucianism was widely introduced to Korea, and Chinese characters were adopted in renaming geological locations. Morally absolute values such as loyalty to the kings and filial piety to the parents became general values of the society.

Yet, at the same time, Shilla's noble class called "Jingol (true-bone)," was the only class that held socio-economic privileges. Members of this class occupied most of the high ranking seats inside the government. Balhae was also run by only a few aristocratic elites who were descendants of the people of Goguryeo. A bureaucratic ruling system with the king at the center continued hiring governmental officials according to their abilities, yet the power of the nobility was still being passed down to following generations.

Buddhism becomes the people's religion

At the time, Buddhism had more influences upon the people's lives than Confucianism. Confucianism was of interest to a few powerful politicians, while Buddhism was a religion for all classes of people.

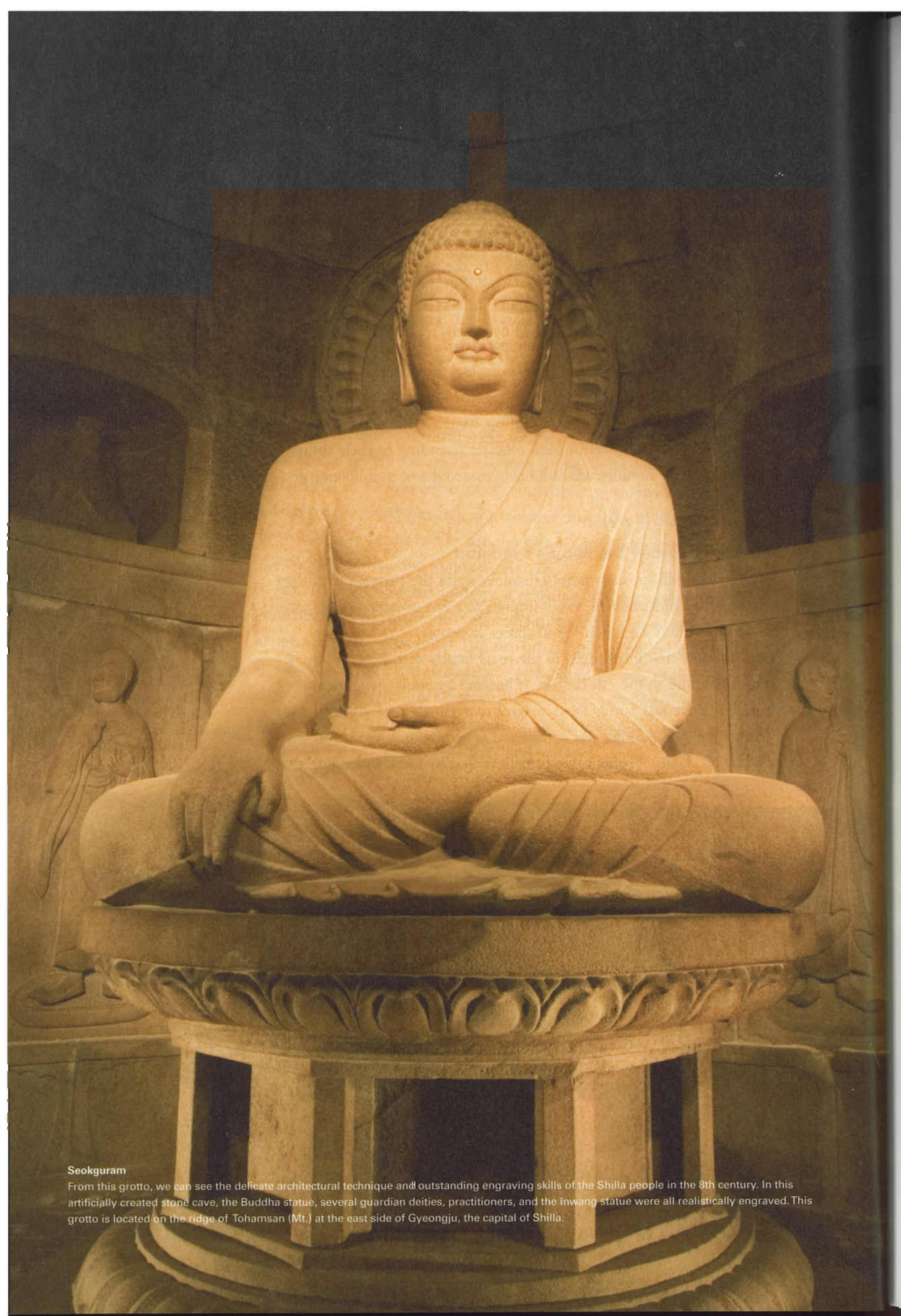
Buddhism was first introduced to the royal family members and the aristocracy class, and in the 7th century it became a popular religion among the people. The royal family held magnificent rituals wishing for peace and prosperity. The Buddha was considered as an almighty God, and worshipped by all classes. People came to believe that by merely pledging that



Budo
 'Budo pagoda' refers to pagodas where the monks' 'sari' remains were preserved. They are also called as 'Seungtab.' The picture is a Budo pagoda that contains the 'sari' remains of Monk Doeui Seonsa. It is located at the Jinjeonsa (temple) in the Gangwon-do province.



Pagodas of Unified Shilla and Balhae
 Pagodas were a sort of tombs made to preserve the 'sari' remains that came from the body of Buddha. Because the Buddha was considered as an eternal being, pagodas were also believed as his residences. The left is the Shilla Dynasty's Gameunsatab (pagoda), and the right is the Balhae Kingdom's Yeonggwangtab (pagoda).



Seokguram

From this grotto, we can see the delicate architectural technique and outstanding engraving skills of the Shilla people in the 8th century. In this artificially created stone cave, the Buddha statue, several guardian deities, practitioners, and the Inwang statue were all realistically engraved. This grotto is located on the ridge of Tohamsan (Mt.) at the east side of Gyeongju, the capital of Shilla.

“I believe in Buddha and will rely upon him.” one would be saved. They also believed that the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy would bring them good fortune before they die and leave this existence. Buddhism’s growing popularity was also due to the contributions of some monks such as Wonhyo and Euisang, who dedicated themselves to helping people by sharing their pains and woes.

Buddhism was a religion that interpreted death and life in a philosophical context. And there have always been questions like “What was my prior life like?” or “What can we expect in the next one?” or “What would be the most desirable life?” or “What are the mysteries of life and death?” or “How can a true understanding be reached while going through a cycle of reincarnation?” Numerous Buddhist scriptures that were introduced to Korea were studied. There have been serious discussions in pursuit of the true nature of the genuine teachings of Sakyamuni.

Flourishing Buddhist art

As the royal family and aristocrats actively absorbed Buddhism into their society, Buddhism became the religion of the people and it initiated the development of a Buddhist art. Most of the renowned temples in Korea, as well as cultural treasures of Buddhism, were constructed during this time period.

Gyeongju, the old capital city of Unified Shilla, is full of cultural treasures of Buddhist origin. Also in Sanggyeongseong, the capital of Balhae, many artistic pieces of Buddhist items such as big stone lamps have been found. Bulguksa and Seokguram are the representative historical remains of Gyeongju, a city where we can experience the artistic spirit of the Shilla people.



Double Statues of a Sitting Buddha

Since two Buddha figures are sitting together, this statue is called “Yibulbyeongjwasang.” Next to this pair of Buddha figures, the female Buddha figures and monks can be seen. These statues reflect the influence from the Goguryeo Buddhism in the 7th century, which was based upon the Beobhwa Sutra Buddhist scripture that worshipped Buddha and Dabo. This statue was excavated at Jirinseong, which used to be the center of Balhae, and is currently in custody of the Tokyo University of Japan. We can see that the Buddhist beliefs of Goguryeo were transmitted to Balhae. The height of this stone statue is 29cm.

Bulguksa, a Temple in the Land of Buddha

The Buddhist followers of Shilla believed that Shilla had been a land of Buddha for a very long time. The belief that the world in which they lived was the chosen land for Buddhism, and the idea to develop that land into a most idealistic nation for Buddha, is generally called the idea of 'Bulgukto (Land of the Buddhist Nation).'

Bulguksa, the greatest Buddhist temple of Shilla, was first built in the 6th century during King Beobheungwang's reign. He officially authorized Buddhism as the Shilla dynasty's national religion and encouraged the people to believe in Buddhism. Later in the 8th century, when the cultural prosperity and self-confidence of the Shilla people reached its apex, Bulguksa underwent an extensive reconstruction.

Inside the Bulguksa, there are three figures of Buddha enshrined. One is Sakyamuni who came to this world to enlighten the people, another is the Amitabha who would save the people by leading them into Nirvana, and the third is Birojana who serves as the light of truth.



Panoramic display of the Bulguksa's features

In order to meet Sakyamuni Buddha of the real world, one must cross the 'cloud bridges' that were called 'Baegungyo (White Cloud Bridge)' and 'Cheongungyo (Blue Cloud Bridge)' at the right side. And in order to meet the Amitabha Buddha, one must pass 'Chilbogyo (Seven Treasure Bridge)' and 'Yeonhwagyo (Lotus Flower Bridge)' at the left side.



Bulguksa site

Bulguk-sa was constructed on the ridge of Tohamsan east of Gyeongju, alongside Seokguram. Its original size was much larger, yet many sections and structures were lost in wars during subsequent periods. The largest structure in this picture is the main temple. The building on its right side is the Paradise building where Amitabha Buddha was enshrined.

- ❶ **Ijumun** Entering the temple through this gate, practitioners should be ready to obtain awakening by cleansing themselves of the suffering and troubles from daily life, and by thinking about Buddha's teachings, before standing before Buddha.
- ❷ **Cheonwangmun** When believers pass through this gate, they meet the four Devas (heaven guards). They are symbolic figures who would keep the believers from the turbulence of mind when practicing.
- ❸ **Yeonhwagyo, Chilbogyo** These are stairways to the Paradise Building, and lotus flowers are inscribed on it.
- ❹ **Cheongungyo, Baegungyo** The stairways where blue clouds and white clouds stay. It is a passage way, leading to 'heaven', which is represented by the Main building (Daeungjeon; 'Daeung' indicates Buddha).
- ❺ **Buddha (Sakyamuni)** Buddha is enshrined in the Main building, located at the center of the temple.



Seokgatab (left)

The official name of this pagoda is the Bulguksa's Three-story Pagoda. This is an exemplary pagoda featuring simpleness and plainness. Inside this pagoda, the oldest book ever printed in Korea, *Darani Sutra*, was discovered.

Dabotab (right)

Dabotab is a representative pagoda with splendid designs. It transforms its shape from a square, then to an octagon, and finally to a round shape, as it escalates to the top tier, depicting the process of completing one's Karma. From this elegant shape, some Japanese praised it by saying, "Stone material seems like to be used to make a rice cake."

4

The Decline of the South and North Kingdoms Era

Thriving capital; starving people

When the king mounted the Weolsangru (tower) to have a look at the city of Geumseong (Gyeongju), he saw crowded residences and heard songs coming out of those houses. He asked his subjects, "Is it true that people nowadays usually build their roofs with tiles instead of straws, and that they prepare their meals with charcoal and not wood?" In response, a subject named Mingong answered, "Yes, I heard so, Your Highness."

— *Samguksagi*

We can see that at the time in Shilla many houses were built with tiled-roofs, and used charcoal instead of wood in order to produce less smoke when cooking and heating. However, not everyone was able to have such luxuries.

Sonsun had a child, who often took away the meals that Sonsun prepared for his mother. Unable to bear the child's misbehavior, Sonsun and his wife took the child to a nearby mountain, intending to bury the child in a pit. While digging, they found a stone bell. And when they struck the bell, the bell produced marvelous sounds.

— *Samgukyusa*

The characters who appear in this story were from Geumseong as well.

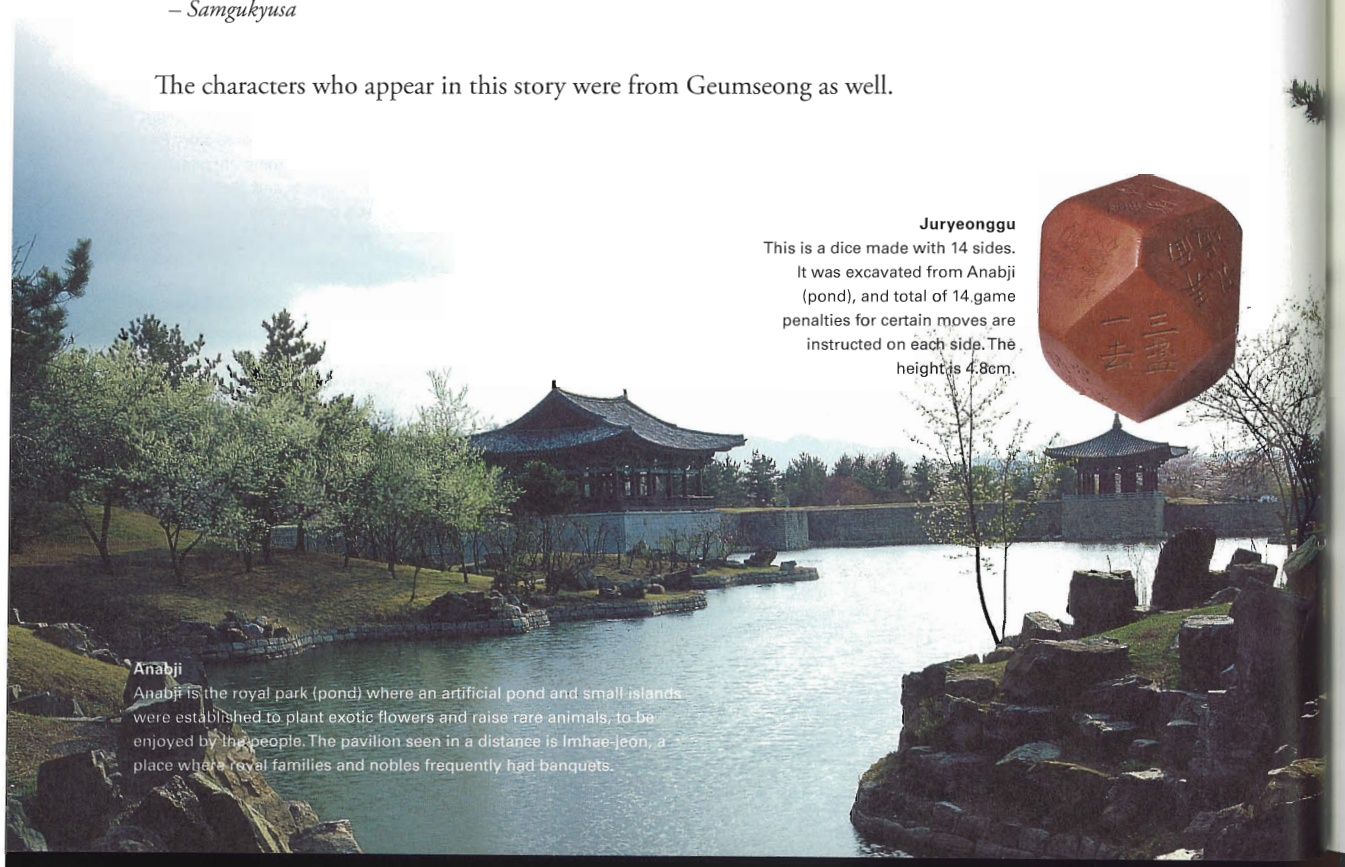
Juryeonggu

This is a dice made with 14 sides. It was excavated from Anabji (pond), and total of 14 game penalties for certain moves are instructed on each side. The height is 4.8cm.



Anabji

Anabji is the royal park (pond) where an artificial pond and small islands were established to plant exotic flowers and raise rare animals, to be enjoyed by the people. The pavilion seen in a distance is Imhae-jeon, a place where royal families and nobles frequently had banquets.



Power struggles inside the nobility class intensified

At the time, there were more than one million people living inside the Geumseong capital city, yet the prosperity of the country was only reflected in the lives of the nobles. In a strictly hierarchical social system, only the members of the nobility class had opportunities that led to higher positions in the government, and with those positions, they expanded their own private lands and enjoyed services from a large number of slaves (Nobi workers). With their multiplying wealth, they also purchased a large quantity of foreign goods and luxury items.

However, it was the peasants who occupied the largest portion of the population. Because their overall productivity was still quite low, commoners were not able to escape poverty, in spite of their long hours of labor. In order to collect taxes more efficiently, Shilla performed a census research and surveyed the number of individuals and households throughout the country, the size of land units owned by individual peasants, the number of farm animals owned by them, and also certain special products that were being generated in respective regions.

The tax burden was too harsh and eventually pushed the peasantry population into poverty, yet the aristocrats continued to exploit the people. They continued to do so, as the domestic demand for luxury items drastically increased due to the ever expanding popularity of profitable foreign trades, and as competitions among the nobles intensified in their pursuit of political power.

In 780, King Hyegongwang was assassinated, soon after one of his distant relatives seized the throne. Major struggles for power among the no-

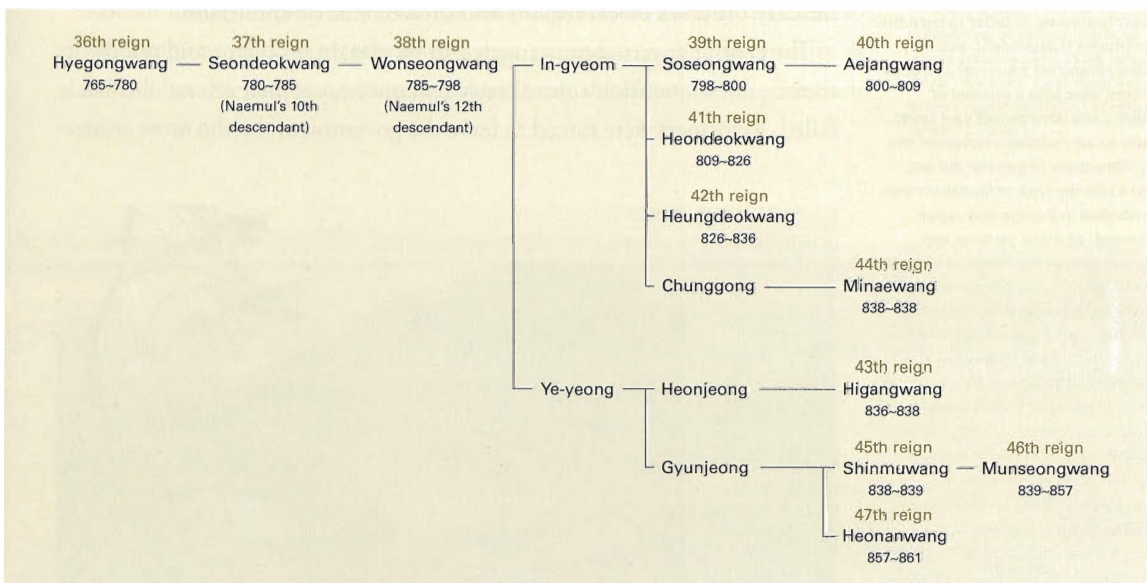


Survey report on Shilla villages

From Jeongchangwon (Shosoin), a Japanese storage facility where royal treasures were preserved, this survey report was discovered in 1933. The economic details and the overall size of an individual village, and information regarding the tax administration of the 7th century, are recorded in this document.

Succession chart

Due to conflicts among nobles that broke out when a new royal family was established in 780, the throne in this period was rarely passed to the sitting king's son. In many occasions, even the kings who fought their way to the throne could not keep it that long. The nobles' struggle for the royal throne brought extreme divisions to the Shilla society.





Choi Chi-won (857~?)

Choi Chi-won was a Shilla noble. He studied in Tang and later passed the state examination. He served the Tang Dynasty as an official for many years. Upon his return to Shilla, he stood up for a political reform, but when it was met with strong resistance from other nobles, he had to withdraw from his official position. He was well known for his literary talent and achievements, and left several outstanding pieces of writing.

Castle of gentry

The gentry who appeared in the ending days of Shilla governed farmers independently and built their own fortresses, in order to keep their territories independent, and they also possessed a number of troops. There were also a number of aristocrats who owned vast lands and private soldiers. However, the Shilla society in general did not turn into the type of feudalism that prevailed in Europe and Japan. Instead, all these gentries and aristocratic figures used to support more powerful nobles, and later they participated as volunteers in establishing a new united kingdom in Korea. The homogeneity level shared by the Korean people at the time in terms of history and culture was already high enough, and that prevented the arrival of another period of divided kingdoms. This picture is the Gyeonhwonseong fortress that was built by Gyeonhwon, which is located in the Sangju city of the Gyeongsangbuk-do province.

bles had begun. And ever since then, the fight for the throne continued for 155 years. In that time period, about twenty members of the royal family claimed the throne.

The nobles routinely exploited peasants in order to acquire resources that would help them win the competitions with the others. Unable to withstand all the suffering any longer, the people staged revolts and resistance. And in the wake of all those power struggles, the authority of the king and the government in general eventually collapsed. The powers of the gentry class arose. They challenged the king's authority and formed a new wave of political forces.

The collapse of Shilla, a new beginning

Kim Heon-chang, a member of the nobility class, staged a revolt in the western region of Shilla in 822. Such revolt was not to kill the sitting king and to seize the throne himself. Yet, he proclaimed that a new kingdom should be founded and replace the declining Shilla. 16 years later, a general named Jang Bo-go, who was the leader of the most prominent maritime force ever formed in the Korean sea, defeated the king's army and endorsed a new king for the reign.

Yet, neither Kim nor Jang was successful in establishing a new kingdom. It was only in the middle of the 9th century when the government lost control over the local provinces. In remote areas distant from the capital, numerous figures of the gentry class called "Hojok" ruled their own peasants independently and attempted to seize opportunities to build their own realms of influence that were free from the king. Meanwhile, wealthy individuals who accumulated profits through maritime trade activities, and the military officers in local regions also showed similar ambitions.

The central government struggled to fix certain problems and reform its society, not to mention control such civil unrest, yet their efforts ultimately failed. Reformers were forced to leave the government, by the more conser-



vative nobles who wished to protect their prerogatives and privileges.

In the meantime, Buddhist beliefs continued to challenge the authorities of the aristocrats, by claiming that anyone could be a Buddha by having an enlightenment. Also, spreading rumors had it that Shilla's fortune had finally run out and a new kingdom would eventually emerge to replace Shilla before long. A new order was already on the horizon.

Collapse of Balhae

In 926 Balhae, the great nation of the north, collapsed with the invasion of the Georan tribes, the nomads who resided in the Mongolian plateaus. The invasion started in December 925, and in January the next year the war between Balhae and Georan already ended. Balhae fell in a mere month, ending its 230 years of history. Georan historians described the fall of Balhae in a sentence that says, "Our ancestors won without a fight."

However, it is impossible to verify the validity of this description since no reliable records remain today. Another speculation is that there might have been a natural disaster, such as volcanic eruptions that eventually resulted in Georan's victory. However, another record of Georan states that "They (the invading Georan forces) took advantage of the division and dissension between the Balhae people." We can also consider for a variable the lives the common villagers led, which was quite different from the life inside the Sanggyeongseong capital, in terms of size and extravagance. With such kind of internal polarizations, confronting a new mighty rising force might have been a fatal blow that broke the camel's back.

After the fall of Balhae, many refugees moved to the south, and through these emigrants, Balhae's history and culture were incorporated into the Korean history. However, the Balhae people who were forcibly relocated to other regions, and many others who were grounded in the old territory of Balhae became more and more alienated from the history of the South as time went on.



Dae Jo-yeong

After the fall of Balhae, the center of old Balhae turned into ruins. And there remains no history book written by the Balhae people today. A majority of Koreans today believe that Balhae succeeded Goguryeo, and that a large number of Balhae people merged with the Goryeo population. This led to the belief that the history of Balhae is part of the Korean history as well. This poster is made to advertise the TVdrama "Dae Jo-yeong" that was on the air between 2006 and 2007.

The traces of Sanggyeongseong

Sanggyeongseong was the capital city of Balhae. In this place, traces of seven palaces and several temples were discovered. Although the individual palaces and the Balhae Kingdom in general all disappeared into history, the positioning of stones in places where palaces used to be, lets us know that there must have been some magnificently big structures standing here.





A bone container with a shape of a tile-roofed house
Chinese used to cover their roof with clay tiles. Such technique dates back to somewhere prior to the beginning of the 15th century B.C. and around the 1st century, clay tiles were widely used in China. Tile roofs first appeared in Korea at the beginning of the 1st century. This is a container in which bones were restfully placed after the cremation of a dead body. It was excavated from Bukun-dong at Gyeongju.

Tile-roofed Houses, Straw-roofed Houses, and Ondol and Wooden Floors

In the 8th century, Geumseong (Gyeongju) was a city well-designed, in a squared shape resembling a Chinese chess board. The life in Gyeongju is depicted as follows; “In this city, many houses were decorated with gold. There were so many temples positioned throughout the capital, like stars scattered in the sky shining at night. Pagodas stood side by side, in a fashion resembling a flock of wild geese flying somewhere.” (*Samguksagi*) Sources also state that most of the houses in Gyeongju had tile roofs.

However, not all houses in Geumseong were covered with tiles. The lower class people who couldn't afford to pay the cost of expensive tiles, used straws to cover their roof because they were easy to secure during harvest seasons. Even until the 1960s most houses in this country were made with straw-covered roofs. Regardless of the type of roof, all houses installed the Ondol heating system and a wooden floor called 'Maru.' Floors for rooms were equipped with Ondol. A foreigner who visited Korea in the early 20th century joked that “Koreans all accustomed themselves to baking their bodies like hot bread every night.” Koreans indeed warmed themselves in winter using heated stones which increased the temperature of a room. Meanwhile, wood floors were laid to connect rooms, or to extend the fringe of the exterior of a room. The openness of the main floor was designed to facilitate air ventilation and maintain a pleasurable temperature in hot summer days.

Ondol is a heating system which originated in the north, while wood flooring was used in houses of the south. When the three kingdoms were unified, cultural exchanges became active. As a result, the Maru originating from the south and the Ondol from the north merged with each other and became essential components of Korean traditional houses.



1



2



3



4

1 2 Tile-roofed house and straw-roofed house Most Korean traditional houses are either tile-roofed or straw-roofed houses. Only the rich lived in a tile-roofed house. **3 Tiles** During the Three Kingdoms Period, tile-roofed houses were common. Tiles were made of baked clay, and round-shaped "male" tiles and flat-shaped "female" tiles were laid on the roof in an alternating fashion. The row-closing tile is called "Magsae," and the end section of a male tile was called 'Sumagsae' while the end section of a female tile was called 'Ammagsae.' **4 Ondol and 'Maru'** The climate of Korea is characterized as 'continental,' which has hot summers and cold winters. Ondol and a wooden floor called Maru, were very effective devices in fighting hot and cold weathers. Thus the Korean traditional house, "Hanok," is commonly equipped with an Ondol system and a Maru floor.

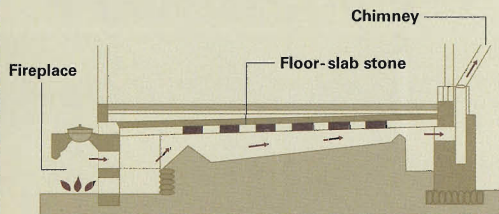


Korean traditional kitchen



A miniature of a cooking fireplace

On the fireplace a large iron pot is placed. It was used to boil water or cook food. This picture is a recreated model of a fireplace that is believed to have been used during the Goguryeo period. It clearly shows the structure of the fireplace, the ondol system, and the chimney. This was excavated in Unsan, Pyeonganbuk-do province. The length is 66.7cm.



Ondol structure

Ondol heats the stone laid underneath a room's floor, as the fire hole causes heated stones to emit warmth into the room. Through the burrows which were laid underneath the stones, the heat and smoke were able to travel and exit through the chimney.