

The Donors of Bulguksa and Seokbulsa.

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Questions of political patronage

The turning point of political changes took place during the reigns of King Gyeongdeok(r.742-762) and King Hyegong(r.765-780). What I call the three treasures of the Unified Silla Period(the Divine Bell, Bulguksa and Seokbulsa) were all begun to make during the reign of King Gyeongdeok, and were completed under King Hyegong, around 775. Historians often use the term 'absolute monarchy' to refer to the middle period of Silla. It is necessary to define this terminology, not according to the characters of the individual monarchs, but rather from the political system of the time, in which all power was concentrated in the hands of the monarch. This is different from tyranny.

These two temples were built between 750 and 775. In this period of about twenty-five years, the absolute monarchy was changing to a system in which the aristocracy also had power. Why, in such a time of confused political circumstances, should such a beautiful work of art have been created on such a magnificent scale? In this period, not only these two temples built, but the great bell of Hwangryongsa and the Divine Bell for the great King Seongdeok were cast, with the patronage of the royal court. When king Hyegong ascended the throne at the age of eight, under the regency of his mother the Queen Dowager, it was a time of political confusion. Yet while the casting of these temple bells was taking place in the capital city, the two temples were being constructed by the aristocracy some distance away on Mt. Toham. In the literary sources, the patron was Kim Dae-jeong alone, however, all the scholars think that it is almost inconceivable that such a large construction could have been built by a single individual, even though the power of the aristocracy was on the rise. The two temples might have been planned by the state, but overseen by Kim Dae-jeong. In the following I shall examine the question of patronage of the these two temples in the light of contemporary circumstances.

Kim Dae-jeong(also known as Kim Dae-seong), the son of Kim Mun-yang, who was Jurgsi(Chief Minister) during the reign of King Seongdeok, become Chief Minister in the reign of King Gyeongdeok who was son of Seongdeok. It was a rare case for both father and son in succession to occupy such a high position. So Kim Dae-jeong clan was close to the monarch, and played a crucial role in fortifying

the absolute monarchy. It is quite possible that he not only gained extreme political power, but that he and his father also had accumulated enormous wealth including private land.

The Chancellery office was one of the most important offices in the Silla kingdom and the head of that office was Jungsi, a position similar to today's Prime Minister. As this office was attached directly to the king, he participated in all the secret business of court policy. He would receive all royal decrees, and had the control of all the various bureaux. Aristocrats from the 'Jingol' lineage only were appointed as Jungsi. These included minor members of the royal clan, so the Jungsi was often chosen from among the close relatives of the king. This means that the blood relations of the king were appointed to a principal post in the governmental organization. However, new political power, based on the growing power of the Chancellery Office, began to form. There emerged new political and social figures who rebelled against the power of the monarch.

When one considers the political circumstances, centering around the Chancellery Office and its Chief Minister, Kim Mun -yang and Kim Dae-jeong might have been relatives of the king. Did they truly work to strengthen the power of the king, or did they rebel against the monarch? King Gyeongdeok was the last absolute monarch who had strong political power. He reformed the official system, changing all the names of the provinces and the names of central government offices into the Chinese style. It was his intention to model the absolute monarchy on the orderly Chinese system.

When King Hyegong ascended the throne at the age of eight, there was constant unrest. His accession was accompanied by a struggle to gain political power among the aristocracy. In the tenth year 774 of King Hyegong (just this year Kim Dae-jeong died), a new powerful group entered the scene. The members of this group reverted to the former names of the provinces and all the official titles. In the sixteenth year of the reign (780), the Chief Minister, Kim Yang-sang and his deputy Kim Gyeong-sin (later King Wonseong) assassinated King Hyegong and thus ended the middle period of Silla. In consequence, absolute monarchism was weakened, and through coalition the aristocracy regained the powers.

Kim Dae-Jeong as a great donor

It is possible that King Gyeongdeok, sensing the decline in the power of the monarch, may have asked Kim Dae-jeong to conduct the construction of Bulguksa and Seokbulsa. However, Kim Dae-jeong retired in the year of 750 from his post as

Chief Minister. It is therefore doubtful whether the king would have entrusted in the following year such a large undertaking to him. It is difficult to discover a political motive behind the construction of these two temples, nor do they seem to have made any attempt to hasten the construction. On this account the spiritual and artistic character is enhanced. Also, in the case of the Divine Bell, it was produced during the period of political turmoil, but it has a sublime beauty and is technically perfect, so that it too cannot have been made in a brief period.

In the chapter on Silla in the New Tang History, it is recorded: "The families of state ministers continuously receive emoluments and they have 3,000 slaves, armoured soldiers, oxen, horses and pigs in great number". Judging from this passage, the aristocracy and landowners, perhaps including Kim Dae-jeong, appear to have had their private armies and private lands.

Under such circumstances, Kim Dae-jeong, after his retirement, protected and continued to live a comfortable life, regardless of the contemporary political troubles. He assembled craftsmen and devoted all his energies to create a sublime work of art. Once, hunting on Mt. Toham, he captured a bear, and built Jangsusa (Temple of Longevity) on the spot. It is therefore quite possible that Mt Toham, where Jangsusa, Bulguksa and Seokbulsu are located, may have been on his estate. It is just like when Kim Ji-seong, the deputy minister in the Chancellery office during the reign of King Seongdeok, donated his lands to build Gamsansa (4 kilometers south of Bulguksa) following his retirement from government. In this context, Kim Dae-jeong, who was not only politically able but only deeply devout, may also have donated his own land to build Bulguksa and Seokbulsu.

The core religious ideas of Buddhism are superbly presented in the plan of the two temples. Judging from the high artistic quality, it is difficult to find any political motivation and purpose. During the period of greatest political turmoil, when there were continuous rebellions, the creation of such an outstanding religious work is deeply moving.

Bulguksa and Seokbulsu are the products of an exceptional imagination, unlike most other temples in Korea. Therefore they are highly regarded worldwide. If Kim Dae-jeong had only wished to build Bulguksa for his parents of this world, and Seokbulsu for his parents in previous lives to express his filial piety, how was it possible for him to create such large-scale monumental temples, which took over twenty years to complete?

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The Discussion on the Development of Porcelain Production System in the Joseon Period : From the Kiln of Dogi-so and Jagi-so to the Punwon, Governmental Kiln

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The aim of this paper is to examine significant changes in porcelain production system around April in 1467 and 1468 when the government took the initiative of porcelain production from local Dogi-so(陶器所), Jagi-so(磁器所) and other kilns. The paper primarily concentrates on discerning the concept of Dogi-so, Jagi-so and other kilns of pre-Government Kiln period and that of Governmental Kiln(官窯), neighboring ones(周邊窯), and local ones(地方窯). This was conducted on the basis of various facts discovered through the researches on the kilns of Jeollabuk-do, Chungcheong-do, Gyeongsang-do as well as Kwangjiu(廣州) province in Gyeonggi-do where the governmental kilns were located.

Before the establishment of the Punwon, governmental kilns, local porcelain kilns-Dogi-so, Jagi-so and other kilns-produced all types of porcelain, from Punch'ong to the finest white porcelains as tributes for both the royal household and government offices. The tribute porcelains were either Punch'ong or fine white porcelain. Jagi-so are believed to have produced Punch'ong, white porcelains, and blue-and-white ones. However, a "Punch'ong with an inscription of 'Hapcheon Jangheuaggo'(陝川長興庫) and Punch'ong sherds from a kiln site in Daejeon, Yuseong-gu Seongbuk-dong' introduced in this paper reveal that Dogi-so also produced Punch'ong. Interestingly, other kilns, except for Jagi-so and Degi-so, produced Punch'one. Kilns at Daljon-ri, Yeongi-gun in Chungnam maybe such case. Punch'ong sherds with inscriptions 'Yeobin'(禮賓) and 'sa'(司) were found from the kiln site at Daljeon-ri, Chungnam Province.

The Punwon, governmental kilns had been established in Kwangu province in between April in 1467 and the end of 1468. For this reason, local kilns including Jagi-so and Dogi-so had to find new customers, and ultimately began to supply individual customers in local provinces with their products.

In Kwangju province, were governmental kilns variously classified by quality and way of execution ; kilns mainly producing the finest white porcelains and blue-and-white porcelains-called Gapbeon(匣燐) porcelains (porcelains executed with Gapbal(匣

鉢), a vessel made of fire clay to produce finer and more delicate porcelains), kilns producing a small amount of Gapbon porcelains, but primarily yeobon(例燔) white porcelains (fine quality porcelains, but were not executed with Gapbal), kilns producing a small amount of Gapbon porcelains, but primarily low quality white porcelains, kilns only producing low quality white porcelains. Although Gapbon porcelains produced in the governmental kilns were originally intended only for the royal household and government, both higher and lower officials also used the finest Gapbon porcelains although they were not legally allowed to. For this reason, it was the real situation that Gapbon porcelains of the governmental kilns were not produced exclusively for the royal household.

While fine white porcelains or blue-and-white porcelains were produced primarily in the governmental kilns, low quality Punch'ong were produced in Dogi-so and Jagi-so before April in 1467, which were to continuously Produced with low quality white porcelain in kilns neighboring governmental kilns after April in 1467. But a lot of kiln producing Punch'ong became to be changed to produce white porcelain under the influence of the high quality white porcelain of governmental kiln.

In the paper, 1 confirms that the two types of celadon - Joseon-style celadon made of white clay and Goryeo celadon made of grey clay - were continuously produced till the mid-17th century. The Songjeons-ri kiln(1649-1659) shows that Joseon-style celadon was produced even after the total disappearance of Goryeo-style celadon.

As stated above, local kilns, which had been active during the period of Dogi-so and Jagi-so, primarily executed porcelains for local people and local governments even after the establishment of government kiln in Kwangju between April in 1467 and the end of 1468. However, it is supposed that such local kilns as Chunghyodong kiln and Hakbong-ri kiln, which had been famous porcelain kilns in the period of Dogi-so and Jagi-so, still received commissions for the central government from time to time. Some of the Punch'ong with the inscription, 'Yeobinsi'(禮賓寺) are strong evidences.

This paper may take the first step toward discerning the concept of the governmental kilns, neighboring kilns, and local kilns. However, more determinant conclusion awaits further research. If researches on kilns all over the country are conducted more thoroughly, it will be possible to establish more determinant and clearer concepts of the governmental kilns and local ones including Dogi-so, Jagi-so, and other kilns.

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Shin Yun-bok's Beauty as Prototype of Courtesan Beauty Painting

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Woman had been a favored subject throughout a long history of art. In the ancient periods, woman was universally represented as an emblem of fecundity and abundance. Particularly in Eastern Asian art scene, "Aristocrat Lady Painting," a genre usually rendering faithful wife, wise empress, and court lady, had been appreciated as a popular artistic expression.

The archaic representation of women tracing back to as early as the fourth century C. E. is found in the wall paintings of the Tomb Anak (357 C. E.) and the Tomb Deokheung-ri (408 C. E.). In the wall paintings, women were depicted either as portraits of the deceased or as engaging in everyday life activities. Unfortunately, almost no works of the Unified Silla and Goryeo periods remained, however, one can assume that female portraits executed during those periods were under a strong overshadow of Chinese feminine beauty. Illustration of Maitreya - Vyatarana Sutra (彌勒下生經變相圖, 1350 C.E.) of the Chinwang-won in Japan, one of the few buddhist paintings of the Goryeo period shows the depiction of palace ladies.

Shin Mal-ju's (申末舟, 1429-1503) Ten Old Aristocrats in a Party (十老圖像 軸) executed in 1499 at his seventies, is the earliest example to represent courtesans as the major subject. In this work, six women accompanying the old men can be identified as courtesans for their lavish costume and hair styles. Three hundreds years later, in 1790 Kim Hong-do (金弘道, 1745- after 1806) made a replica of Shin Mal-ju's work to include it into his own album.

Dongrae-busa Welcoming Japanese Envoys (東萊府使接倭使圖), a ten-panel folding screen attributed to Jeong Seon (鄭澈, 1676-1759), illustrates a group of courtesans welcoming Japanese envoys. Kim Hui-seong's (金喜誠) Passing Time nearby a Stream (石泉閑遊) in 1748 shows Jeon Il-sang (田日祥, 1700-1753), a former governor of Gyeongsang-do engaged in an entertainment party accompanied by courtesans. The highly realistic depiction of the scene seems to remind us of a documentary photograph. In this work, the courtesans are engaged in various activities ; some of them are asking the governor and his guests to smoke, others are playing the lute, carrying a white-porcelain wine bottle, and bringing a watermelon. The courtesans are realistically depicted as thoroughly as the governor, the main character of this work.

The courtesans' garments, shoes, and hair styles are rendered in great details as though a piece of portraiture.

Anreungsinyeong-do (安陸新迎圖), a hanging scroll attributed to Kim Hong-do illustrates a procession of over three hundreds people. Its opening inscription pronounces that Kim Hong-do executed the painting in 1786. Totally nine courtesans -four courtesans leading the procession, a youthful courtesan riding the horse, two other courtesans, and a courtesan riding the white horse- are illustrated.

During the middle and late years of the Joseon period, Kim Si (金 , 1524-1593), Jeong Seon, Kang Hui-eon (姜熙彦, 1738-1782) executed Beauty paintings with a strong connotation of the favored type of Chinese feminine beauty, Yun Deok-hui's (尹德熙, 1685-1766), Beauties Reading the Book (讀書美人圖) shows both Chinese and Korean types of feminine beauty. His another work, Lady of the Horse (馬上婦人), Kim Hong-do's Beauty, Yi Jae-gwan's (李在寬, 1783-1837) Landscape with an Aristocrat (故事人物畫) reveal that Chinese Beauty type was still influential of the pictorial languages of Korean Beauty painting.

Shin Yun -bok's Beauty can be characterized as the following artistic features. Firstly, the work is highly pronounced by excellent brushwork, virtuous technique, and subtle elegance. Shin Yun -bok's artistic originality did not only mark his work the prime among Beauty paintings throughout the entire Joseon period, but also established the prototype of Courtesan Beauty painting for later generation.

Secondly, Shin Yun -bok found his main subject in courtesans rather than ordinary women. Since the courtesans were relatively free to behave and decorate themselves unlike ordinary women strictly restrained by various social rules, painters like Shin Yun -bok usually employed courtesans as models for their works.

Thirdly, a particular value of Shin Yun -bok's painting is to reveal the favored type of Korean feminine beauty in his time. Spring Outing, from Haewon's Genre Painting Album of the Gansong Art Museum shows a tiny woman. She is probably the appreciated feminine type at that period. The woman has a willow like or a crescent moon like eye brows, a small genteel eyes, a small mouth and an oval-shaped face. She is wearing a beautiful garment composed of narrow sleeves, a short yellow jacket, an ample bluish skirt, white lapels and so on.

Fourth, the realistic depiction of woman, particularly its subtle facial expression differentiates Shin Yun -bok's Beauty painting from Chinese one. The realistic quality of his work implies that classical "Aristocrat Lady Painting" conceded its artistic popularity to realistic Courtesan Beauty painting. The newly emerged philosophy that emphasized practicality in the second half of the eighteenth century probably

contributed to the development of realism in various artistic genres such as portraiture, landscape and animal painting. Unlike a dreamy idealized beauty that characterized earlier pictorial traditions, one finds an intimate and charming realism in Shin Yun-bok's work. Such a pictorial realism not only features the art scene of the later Joseon period, but also elevates Korean paintings above Chinese and Japanese ones.

Fifthly, the epilogue written on the upper left poignantly reveals the artist's complacency about his own work. The one thing I wish to address here is that the woman in the work is fastening the breast-tie of her upper jacket to hang her pendant trinket rather than to loose it as had been suggested by some scholars.

Finally, throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only in Korea, Beauty paintings were increasingly produced in China and Japan. It seems to be true that Beauty painting was one of the popular artistic genre prevailed in East Asian art scenes at that time. I believe that Shin Yun-bok was one of the leading painters who brought popularity to Beauty painting as well as its innovator.

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The Chaekgado(冊架圖) of Royal Court During the Late Joseon(朝鮮) Period

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In November 1783, the seventh year of his direct reign, King Jeongjo(正祖, 1752-1776-1800) established the office of Jabidaereong-hwawon(差備待令 畫員, the painters -in -waiting) at Krujanggak(奎章閣, Royal Library), where was located in royal palace, Chongdeokguug(昌德宮). Jabidaereong-hwawon refers to a group of painters specially selected by examination to take full charge of important drawing activities on royal order. Jeongjo regularly conducted the Nokchwijae(祿取才, salaried post selection system) examination to manage, support, and re-educate these outstanding court painters.

The Nokchwijae examinations took place twelve times a year, requiring the Jabidnae-reong-hwawon to submit their paintings on given topics, and those who scored the highest marks were rewarded with special additional salaries. Among the 8 categories of the Nokchwijae examination, Jeongjo included a new subject, Munbang(文房, scholar's items) and offered the topics of examination such as Chaekga(冊架) or Chaekgoeri(冊巨里) (the books and bookshelves). Such topics of examination demonstrate that the pictures of the Chaekgoeri were not the folk paintings as commonly known, but rather were the court paintings prompted by the institution of Jabidaereong-hwawon and Nokchwijae examination.

Chaekgoeri paintings became popular among the upper class nobilities and richman when Dabogyek(多寶格) furniture or Dabogyek types of pictures were introduced in Joseon along with the Qing's scholarship, Bukhak(北學). At first it developed as paintings of books due to the strong Confucian tradition during the early Jeongjo era, but by the end of the 18th century, the theme of books were marginalized as subject while decorative utensils and materials became more emphasized. Along with the changing atmosphere, the Munbang category of Nokchwijae no longer offered the Chaekgoeri topics, and the fabulous and moody topics of curios and scholarly utensils were increased reflecting the decorative tastes and styles.

This study claims that we should re-examine the character of Chaekga or Chaekgoeri paintings that is widely understood as folk-oriented paintings. The Chaekgoeri topic of the Munbang category of Gyujanggak Jabidaereong-hwawon Nokchwijae is the realistic proof supplying the most essential and specific resources in fundamental

reviewing of the character of Chaekgoeri paintings which was actually originated from the court. To some extent, the King and the high officials imposed their own upper class cultural aesthetics on the Jabidaereong painters by this examination system and it could influence folk trend of Chaekgoeri. Then we showed approach to the Chaekgoeri painting with a completely different view from the generally accepted concept until now.

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An Examination of the Chronology of the Foundation of the Songrim-sa Temple Located in Chilgok, North Gyungsang Province

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The major purpose of this paper is to reexamine the chronology of the foundation of the Songrim Temple located in Chilgok, North Gyungsang Province. It has been generally accepted by Korean historians that the Songrim-sa Temple was founded sometime between the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. However, there is a high possibility that the temple might have been built at the beginning of the 7th century A.D.

There are a couple of material evidence to support this argument. First of all, a small squarish stone artifact (Length 7.8cm, Width 8.7cm, Thickness 1.4cm) on which approximately 21 Chinese characters were engraved was recovered by the curators of the Uiduk University Museum at the temple in 1997. It is assumed that the small stone artifact was originally placed in the Stupa of the Songrim temple. In particular, the documentary source of the stone artifact provides the definite date of 624 A.D. Besides, a name of Silla aristocrat and an government post that engraved on the small stone turned out to have had been commonly used by the old Silla Kingdom (ca. 57 B.C. -676 A.D.).

Second of all, a gold sarira container decorated with a number of lotus of which design was quite popular between 584 A.D, and 650 A.D. was recovered while the Korean National Museum people were investigating the Stupa in the temple in 1959. Some Korean historians have argued that a glass bottle placed inside of the Sarira container was made at the beginning of the 8th century A.D. That is the reason why they have considered that the temple was built in between the 8th and 9th century. It is not totally unconvincing. Yet, we cannot exclude a possibility that the glass bottle was placed later on when the Stupa was rebuilt at the beginning of the 8th century.

Taken all these widemes together, I argue that the Sorim temple was founded at the beginning of the 7th century A.D.

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Tomb Tablets of Crown Prince Sado

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The tomb of Crown Prince Sado(1735-1762) was discovered by Mr. Yi Jong-man at Dongdaemoon -gu Huigyeong-dong 29 -1 in November 6th, 1968, where presently corresponds to a hill behind the University of Seoul. Five pairs of porcelain tomb slates with epitaph written on were excavated. In 1979, they were ultimately reverted to the National Museum of Korea as national properties.

The tomb consists of ten rectangular white porcelain tablets (16.7cm wide, 21.8cm long, and 2.0cm high). Blue-glaze was thickly applied to both frontal and lateral sides of the slates. Each tablets conveys an inscription on its either lateral sides ; on the right lateral side, is inscribed "Crown Prince Sado," and on the left lateral side, numbers to indicate the order of the tablets. More importantly, on the frontal side of each tablets, is inscribed an epitaph comprising more or less eight lines of 15 characters, stylized in the rectangular hand. The epitaph of the first pair of the tablets consists of 105 characters, the second, 120 characters, the third 117 characters, the forth, 120 characters, the fifth, 48 characters.

The content of the epitaph may be divided into five parts. The first part(up to the sixth line of the first pair of the tablets) narrates in a rather apathetic tone t he birth of the crown prince and his prominent intelligence. However, the second part(up to the third line of the second pair), instead of commemorating the virtues and achievements of the deceased, castigates his misconducts and prodigality. The third part(up to the fifth line of the third pair) gives a brief account of the Im-O Incident conducive to the death of the crown prince. Touching the climax of the epitaph, the third part explicitly reflects contrition of the heart broken father who had to kill his own son. The fourth part(up to the fifth line of the fourth pair) consoles the spirit of the deceased. The last part(up to the end) recovering calmness introduces the bereaved family members of the deceased.

Although the image of the tomb of Crown Prince Sado was released by "Discover - ed Impofant Buriaj Cultural Properties," a catalogue published by the Cultural Properties Administration in 1989, it did not draw much attention from art historians until December 1999. Having undergone a series of restoration, the tomb tablets made its first public appearanœ as a cultural property of the month in the National Museum of Korea in December 1999, and finally created a sensation among scholars.

The epitaph on the tablets proven as important as the Im-O Diary, which describes at length the dying process of the crown prince in a rice chest, is expected to serve as a basic reference to resolve the substantial truth about the death of Crown Prince Sado.

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