

## Silla Art and the Silk Road

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### Introduction

One of the characteristics of Silla Dynasty art is the strong reflection of Northern or Western influences.<sup>1</sup> Scythian culture, a nomadic tribe which appeared around the 7<sup>th</sup> century, had been an early focus of the Northern region. The characteristic of Scythian arts was the use of animal forms. Spreading far from the coastal area of the Black Sea to the border of China, Scythia's headquarters reached the eastern area of Scytho-siberia, at the end of which included the Korean Peninsula. Specific examples of this applied animal pattern are the Bronze Horse-shaped Buckle (青銅馬形帶鉤) and Bronze Tiger-shaped Buckle (青銅虎形帶鉤), excavated from Ôûn-dong Yôngch'ôn. In addition, I believe that Ch'ônmodo and T'uch'ang excavated from Ch'ônma-ch'ong are related to the Scythians.<sup>2</sup>

Western style was also strongly expressed in Silla art, and this style can be seen in burial accessories from Silla's Ancient Tombs. Typical examples of burial accessories are glass artifacts and metal crafts found in

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1 Won-young Kim, "Kodaehan'gukkwa sôyök" [Ancient Korea and the Western Region], Misuljaryo 34, (National Museum of Korea, 1984).

2 Young-pil Kwon, "The Aesthetic Sense of Silla People: mainly in relation to the Art of Northern Asia," in *The Art of Silk Road from Central Asia to Korea*, (Yôrh-wadang, 1997a).

Hwangnamdae-ch'ong. A form of sculpture from the countries bordering on Western China was also introduced to Silla following the introduction of Buddhism, and it had a huge impact on Silla Buddhist art. Especially after the Unification War, the Western cave temple, which had been introduced into Silla through China, had significant influence on the construction and sculpture of Sôkkuram; and it also became the basis for establishing many traditions of Korean Buddhist art.

This study will, first of all, introduce the history of the Silk Road and analyze the relationship between the relics excavated from Hwangnamdae-ch'ong and the Silk Road. Then through Unified Silla and Sôkkuram Buddhist sculptures, this article will evaluate how cave temples in India influenced Silla via the Western region.

### **Hwangnamdae-ch'ong and the Silk Road**

The Silk Road basically consisted of all trade routes from China to Istanbul and Rome through Central Asia and the oasis region in West Asia. Yet it could include the routes such as the 'Grass Field Route (the Northern Route),' which crosses the grassland in the northern Eurasian Continent, or the 'Marine Route (the Southern Route),' which takes a detour around the southern Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, and extends to East Asia. The influence of the Silk Road was not limited to material and economic trade in the Eurasian Continent but also included interchange among the cultural groups on the continent as well. The expansion of the Silk Road's sphere of influence from mere material trade to abstract concepts like cultural interchange enabled the Silk Road to become a symbol of cultural exchange, which was significant to the formation and development of cultures.

Hwangnamdae-ch'ong is a large tomb, located in Hwangnam-dong, Kyôngju-si, and was excavated from 1973 to 1975 by the Kyôngju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage. Both domestic and foreign scholars have shown much interest in this tomb due to its large scale and number

of golden burial accessories found during the excavation. Hwangnamdae-ch'ong consists of twin burials that are adjoined back to back, one in the south and the other in the north. The southern tomb of Hwangnamdae-ch'ong was created first, then the northern tomb was built alongside. The structure is identified as a Stone-compiled Wooden Chamber Tomb. Men were buried in the southern tomb while women were buried in the northern tomb. The north-south length is 120m, and the diameter from east to west is 80m. The height of the southern tomb is 21.9m, while that of the northern is 22.6m. It is clear that the tomb is a royal tomb because of its size and decorations. It is also generally assumed that this tomb was built in the 5th century, during the period of Maripgan.<sup>3</sup>

In Hwangnamdae-ch'ong, a number of glass artifacts were excavated: seven from the southern tomb and four from the northern tomb respectively. Among them, three from the southern and two from the northern are considered to have been trade goods along the Silk Road. The artifacts from the southern tomb are believed to have been made in the region between Syria-Palestine in the early Byzantine period, as the neck of the glass was usually rolled or a band was added to the lip. However, it is believed that from the northern tomb, a piece of cut glass was derived from Sassanid Persia, while a marble patterned mounted cup is said to have originated in the late period after Roman glass became prevalent in Europe. A large quantity of glass beads were also excavated from Hwangnamdae-ch'ong. Although it is difficult to determine the origin of the glass beads, we assume that the multicolored beads of the northern tomb were created in a different region. The same kind of glass beads were excavated from 126 graves in Niizawa Senchuka (新澤千塚) in Japan's Asuka region, revealing that trade along the Silk road during the Maripgan period extended as far as Japan.

Excavated kŭmchegamok (金製嵌玉) in the northern parts of Hwangnamdae-ch'ong, were regarded as trading goods throughout the

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3 Munhwachae-gwan'riguk munhwachae-yŏn'guso, *Hwangnamdae-ch'ong balgul-chosabogosŏ*, [Report of Excavation Research on Hwangnam Daech'ong] (1994).

Silk Road. These Northern bracelets were made with a border above and below the long backing and assembled by inserting jewels, such as turquoise, and crafted with Gold-filigree skill (鏤金細工) as decorations onto the front plate. This technique was not found in Silla at the time, but because the reach of the Silk Road was wide and expansive, this bracelet could be found not only in Central Asia, but in West Asia as well. This too shows that the reach of the Silk Road expanded as far as Silla.

In regards to the reason why these kinds of goods were excavated from Hwangnamdae-ch'ong, it is said to be related to the fact that Silla frequently sent envoys to China. As the Chinese traded with Western border countries, Chinese envoys would gift Silla rare goods they had received and these high quality 'gifts of thanks' later became relics found in the royal tombs.<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, however, it cannot be concluded that the presence of these kinds of art works on the Silk Road and in Silla are evidence of direct exchanges with the Western region. In an indirect manner, they are relics which demonstrate the influence of the Silk Road upon Silla's culture as well as the effect of the Silk Road on the state of cultural exchange. At the '2010 G-20 Seoul Summit Conference' official banquet, a special exhibition of Hwangnamdae-ch'ong was held in the exhibit hall, which was praised for showcasing the extravagance and internationality of Silla's culture. World leaders were especially surprised at Korea's originality after seeing Silla's golden crown and pelvic girdle.

### The Development of Silla's Buddhist Sculpture

Through artifacts from Hwangnamdae-ch'ong and similar remains from Silla during the Three Kingdoms Period, it is possible to verify that a connection with the Silk Road did exist. One component of the expansion

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4 Kukripchungangbakmulgwan, *Hwanggŭmŭi nara Sillaŭi Wangrŭng Hwangnamdaech'ong* [Royal Tomb of Silla, a Country of Gold: Hwangnam Daech'ong], a planned special exhibition book (2010).

of cultural exchange was symbolized by Buddhism which by way of the Silk Road was passed down to Korea through China. Buddhism persisted throughout all the ancient civilizations, and the royal families of Koguryô, Paekje, and Silla all actively embraced Buddhism and established it as a basic principle of government. The high level of royal and aristocratic support created a legacy of Buddhist culture. Cultural assets from the Three Kingdoms Period such as Koguryô's "Yôn'ga-chillyönmyông Standing Gold Bronze Buddha Statue" or Paekje's "Rock-carved Triad Buddha", are Buddhist cultural relics which carry a profound meaning in Korea. Even among the Three Kingdoms, Silla left behind the greatest number of Buddhist relics. Especially after the Unification War, an evolved Silla culture although independent, was valued as being open, international and sustaining a truly original culture.

Through an alliance with the Tang Dynasty, Silla overthrew Paekje in 660 and Koguryô in 668, and after the Silla-Tang wars, concluded the Unification War. Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms did not encompass the entire former territory of Koguryô. In addition, certain scholars assess that due to its reliance upon Tang Dynasty foreign forces, in the true sense of the word, there could be no real unification. However, this led to the formation and framework of a unified national culture, which is a point that cannot be denied. After the Unification War, Silla was willing to consolidate the national systems through the reigns of King Munmu and King Shinmun. Silla also adopted and developed a new culture by resuming trade with the Tang, which had been suspended after the Silla-Tang War. Consequently, Buddhist culture matured and the standards for Buddhist art were raised. Buddhist art improved in various fields such as architecture, painting, and sculpture, yet today there are no surviving Buddhist architectural structures or paintings from Silla. Therefore, we are only able to discover the outstanding characteristics of that era through remaining Buddhist statues and stone pagodas.

In terms of early Silla sculpture, Silla displayed a cultural diversity co-existent with the old and new by keeping a traditional foundation and adopting the latest trends. Therefore, around the year 680, realistic and

powerful works of art began to be produced in and around Kyôngju, the capital city of Silla. This resulted from an understanding of Buddhism and refined production techniques, along with the impact of scriptures and Buddhist statues which were brought by monks from their studies abroad or from pilgrimages to Tang China and India. In particular, the Green-glazed Four Guardians which was excavated from the wooden tower in the outdoor transition zone at Sach'ônwangsa, and the Four-Guardian Statues from a Sarira case excavated at Kamûnsa's Three-story Stone Pagoda show that the style of Tang Buddhist sculptures were well adopted and the national Buddhist character utilized during the Silla period.

Thereafter, from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century – a period when Unified Silla sculptural styles were established - the deepening of diplomatic relations between Silla, China and Japan is reflected in the international commonalities in Buddhist sculpture. The flexibility and curved body of the Gilt Bronze Plate Buddha, which was excavated from Wôlji, Kyôngju and the lotus pond at Kuhwang-dong, Kyôngju, have been evaluated as releasing formative tension and vitality with a rhythmic fold in the cloth. As several works similar to this Buddhist plate were also found in Tang China and Japan, it is possible to identify the international integration of these styles. The principal idol Sakyamuni of the Buddhist Triad Plate excavated from Wôlji, for example, had commonalities with the “Painting of Amitabha Pure Land” at Mogao Grottoe from the early Tang period of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the Ohzon-abchulbul of Amithabha from Japan's Nara Period, which is assumed to have been produced in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century or early 8<sup>th</sup> century. Through this, it can be reconfirmed that Unified Silla shared an artistic style which was on trend with East Asian Buddhist art during that period.

Silla also adopted popular idols from Tang China for its own stone Buddha statues. Around the year 700 AD, the seated statue of the Hangma-chok-ji Mudra covered with Woogyönp'ondan style of Gasa (a Buddhist costume), a style leaving the right shoulder uncovered and left shoulder covered, from Maaesamjonbul in Namsan Chilburam is very similar to those made in Tang China in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century to the early 8<sup>th</sup>

century. Amitabha Buddha and Maitreya Bodhisattva from Kamsansa, exemplify the characteristics of this period which fully adopted Tang's sculpture style and reveal the cosmopolitan character of Unified Silla's sculptural style of the time, while simultaneously projecting Korean quintessence.

In the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, well-balanced and well-proportioned statues of Buddha were produced based on highly refined production techniques. The most representative work is Sôkkuram and it could be said that this was a masterpiece of the Korean Classic period. According to the article 'Taesônghyoisebumo' in the volume of Hyo in the *Samgukyusa*, Sôkkuram was built with Pulguksa in 751 by Kim Tae-Sông, who was a high authority during the reign of King Kyôngdôk. During the early stages of its construction, it was referred to as Sôkbulsa. Kim Tae-Sông built Sôkbulsa for the parents of past-lives while Pulguksa was actually for parents of the present life, but the state completed its construction after he died. Therefore, it is assumed that Sôkkuram was built around the same time.

Sôkkuram is an artificial cave with a unique form that was made using stone blocks. It is different from Indian or Chinese stone caves which were made by digging into bedrock. Sôkkuram was constructed on a geometrical frame which has a route connected between two spaces, a rectangular front room and a circular main chamber with a dome ceiling. Around 40 statues, such as the principal icon-Sakyamuni with Hang-mach'ok-ji Mudra, Bodhisattva, Buddha's disciples, Brahma-Deva, Indra, Four Guardians and the eight classes of divine beings, were systematically placed in the cave. The principle icon-Sakyamuni of Sôkkuram is regarded as the peak of Unified Silla's sculpture due to the illustrated benevolent and dignified look, imposing body figure, and concise but powerful clothes. This resulted from Silla's active adoption of foreign cultures and stable domestic conditions due to brisk trade with Tang China.

Later, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (referred to as late Silla), social unrest persisted due to contention for the throne. This social context directly influenced the construction of Buddhist sculptures, resulting in less realistic, more

exaggerated, more formalized, and more schematized styles in comparison to the early part of the dynasty. In addition, by the close of the Silla Dynasty, the style of sculptures became deeply localized and naturalized due to a decrease in the belief of the Buddhist faith.<sup>5</sup>

The exhibition “Echoes of Life, the Enduring Tradition of Unified Silla Sculpture” held at the National Museum of Korea from December 2008 to March 2009 presented the development of Buddhist sculpture during Unified Silla. The exhibition emphasized the changes in Unified Silla’s sculpture through history and summarized the characteristics of each period by displaying representative works. It also introduced Japanese and Chinese statues of Buddha during the Unified Silla period, and compared those statues with others from the three states of East Asia.

This exhibition had a particularly special meaning since it displayed the four pieces of the Gilt Bronze Buddhist Statue and an octagonal-shaped Gilt Bronze Sarira Reliquary from the Ogura collection housed in the Tokyo National Museum. The Ogura collection is a general term for archeological materials or artistic handicrafts from Korea collected by Ogura Dakenosuke.

Ogura was born in 1870 and graduated from Tokyo University. After graduating, he became the owner of Daehûng Electric and Namsôn Electric Trust. As this company was the most successful electric company in Chosôn, a fabulously wealthy Ogura was able to collect Korean artifacts for approximately 30 years beginning in 1921. When mentioning his motive for collecting he said, “I was astonished that through Chosôn excavations and ancient works of art, Japanese ancient history became clear. From such a standpoint, I do not call it ancient art but I assume that systematically maintaining and reserving ancient vessels contributes not only to clarifying Japanese ancient history to the world, but also the research of the Far Eastern Tungus’s culture. Thus, for many years, I have done my

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5 For further information about the sculpture of Unified Silla, see Kukripchungangbakmulgwan, *Yŏngwŏnŭi saengmyungŭi ullim tongilsillachogak* [An Echo of Eternal Life, Unified Silla’s Sculpture], a planned special exhibition book, (2008).



best to contribute to the collection of this work.”<sup>6</sup>

These collected relics had been separately preserved in Ogura's houses in Taegu and Tokyo respectively. When he went back to Japan after Korean liberation, the collected relics in Taegu were naturally left behind in Korea while the ones in Tokyo were sent to the Foundation for the Preservation of Ogura's Collection, along with relics collected from the Korean peninsula. This foundation was created by Ogura in his home in order to preserve and maintain the relics. After his passing, his son Ogura Yasuyuki managed the foundation, but in 1982, the collection was donated to the Tokyo National Museum for more efficient management and for public display.

There are in total 1,100 works in Ogura's collection, and 580 archeological sources, most of which are from Korea. For artistic handicrafts, 494 materials are related to Asia, and 38 materials are Japanese drawings, books, and ceramics. The majority of archeological sources are from the Neolithic Era, the Bronze Age, the age of the Three States, and the Unified Silla period, followed by sculptures between the period of the Three States and Unified Silla, and artistic handicrafts from the Koryô and Chosôn Dynasties.

This collection, including many significant cultural assets, is significant enough that the Korean government requested its return from Japan. However, Japan rejected the request and made the excuse that the collection belongs to an individual. Today, this collection is still being displayed in the East Asian room of the Tokyo National Museum. The Tokyo National Museum carried out an academic survey in partnership with the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage four times from 1999 to 2002. This survey resulted in photographing Oguro's entire Korean cultural heritage collection, recording the condition of real-sized materials, and publishing a pictorial book named *Korean Cultural Properties in the Ogura Collection of Tokyo National Museum*.

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6 *The list of Ogura Collection* (the 39<sup>th</sup> year of Showa, 1964)

The Ogura Collection, introduced through the exhibition at the National Museum of Korea in 2010, included four Buddha statues: gilt-bronze standing of Bodhisattva excavated from Kyôngju which is similar to the 927<sup>th</sup> treasure at Leeum (Samsung Museum of Art); gilt-bronze standing of Bodhisattva which is similar in style to the 200<sup>th</sup> national treasure; Gilt-Bronze Standing of Bhaisaiyagura which showed the religious belief of the state of Bhaisaiyagura which was particularly famous in Silla between the late 8<sup>th</sup> century and the 9<sup>th</sup> century; and Gilt-Bronze Standing of Bodhisattva which has a U-shaped fold in the clothing, along with an octagonal-shaped Sarira Reliquary excavated from Kwangyang, Southern Chôlla province. This reliquary is comparable to the hexagonal-shaped Gilt-Bronze Sarira Reliquary excavated from Sarira pagoda in Torisa, Kumi, Northern Kyôngsang province and has a similar shape to a pavilion, with eight flat angles. It was also produced at the end of the Silla period. Ogura's collection holds the highest importance amongst Korean art collections overseas, and it has significant meaning since the essence of Unified Silla's sculpture is displayed in sculptures related to Buddhism.

### **Western Regional Factors as Represented in Unified Silla Sculpture**

The development of Unified Silla sculpture is a combination of Korean Buddhism's uniqueness and Chinese influences from the North and South Dynasties, and Sui and Tang Dynasties. However, there is also confirmation that some sculptures of Silla were influenced by countries outside of China such as the bordering Western countries and India. An example is represented in an image found at the tomb of Silla's 38<sup>th</sup> King Wônsông in Kwaerûng-ri.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the appearance of the images at Hûngdôk royal tomb in Angang, along with the Hôn'gang royal tomb in Pukch'ôn

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7 Yôngsup Byôn, "Kwaerûnggo" [A Consideration about Kwaerûng], *Idaesawôn* 12 (1972).

Pugûn, Kyôngju, both have deep set eyes and large noses. The Relief Carving Guardians on a gravestone excavated from tombs located in Sôak-dong and impressionable gifts left at the edge of the ancient tombs located in the Kujông-dong area also have a Western appearance.<sup>8</sup> Manchurian statues excavated from tombs in Hwasông-dong, Kyôngju, wearing a homo (胡冒), also have deep set eyes and Sogdia-type features. In the Yonggang-dong area, prominent figures from China and the Western border countries were also excavated from ancient tombs.<sup>9</sup>

The face on the Kwaerûng image was identified as being Western because of its exotic appearance, and there has been no disagreement. If the tomb belonged to King Wônsông, then it would have been completed around the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century or early 9<sup>th</sup> century. There are several similarities (such as the figure's characteristic clothing such as the form of the band wrapped around the head, the attire cast above the belt and the small pouch worn around the waist) found among the recently excavated Manchurian stone coffin statues from Chinese provinces, the wall drawings in the Baizikelik Thousand Buddha Caves from the Tianshan Uyghur Kingdom period, and the recently excavated Manchurian statue in Kansu castle from the Tang period.

Specifically there is an impartial opinion that these statues are Iranian. Tang people described Iranians as good-natured, possessing similar faces, and particularly during the Sassanian Dynasty, as wearing bands on their heads. Furthering this perspective, the figure of a scholar standing with the figure of a soldier at Kwaerûng are both said to be Tianshan Uyghur and not from Silla. The contour of their faces as a whole is rectangular with thick eyebrows, handlebar-like mustaches and beards with considerable volume; also the figures found in paintings from the Baizikelik Cave

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8 Young-pil Kwon, "Kyôngju Kwaerûng inmulsoksangjaeko – Irangyemuin, wigulûgye inmulsoksang," *Silk Road misul Chungangasia ësô han'gukkkachi*, (Yôrhwadang, 1997b)

9 Kukripyôngjubakmulgwan, *Silla sôasiarûl mannada* [Silla Meets West Asia], (2008).

and illustrations from the Manichean scriptures closely resemble the Uyghur people.<sup>10</sup>

As for Buddhist sculpture, the Relief Carving Guardians excavated from Sachônwangsa Buddhist temple, the Four-Guardians statue from Kamûnsa, the Wooden Standing Amittabha statue from Kamsansa, and the Sandstone Standing Buddha owned by the Kyôngju National Museum are also said to have Western features.<sup>11</sup> In the case of the Relief Carving Guardians, it shows the Buddha sitting on top of two demons standing back to back and pressing into them with two feet. The muscles bulging out of their feet and ankles, and the detailed armor have been evaluated as outstanding. Through a yielding clothes line, a smooth curve of the body, arms and legs, and the realistic expression of the muscles, from early on it has been insisted that Western factors were strongly depicted in this sculpture.<sup>12</sup>

According to the article ‘Yangjisasôk of Ūihae(義解)’ in the *Samgukyusa*, Yangji was a Buddhist monk during Silla and built the Eight Guardian Gods of Buddha at the bottom of the Guardian Tower along with the Changyuk Noble Images at Yôngmyosa, the Heavenly Kings Image, the roof tiles of the Brick Pagoda, the Triad statue at Pôblimsa, the Deva king and the Three-thousand Buddha Statue and the Relief Carving Guardians excavated from Sach’ônwangsa. Further, several studies have

10 Young-pil Kwon. 1997a.

11 Rina Kim, “Silla gamsansayôraesikpulsangüi üimun’gwa ilbonbulsang gwaüi gwan’gye” [Dress Pattern of the Statue of Buddha in Silla Gamsan Temple and the Relation to the Japanese Buddhist Statutes], *Han’gukkodae bulgyochokakasa yôn’gu*, (Ilchogakak, 1989); Myungdae Mun, “Kyôngjubakmulgwan Saamjeyôraeipsanggo” [Consideration on the Standing Sandstone Statue of Buddha in Kyôngju National Museum], *Kogomisul* 123 (1974), 124; “Han’gukkodaechokaküi Taeoekyosube taehan yôn’gu,” *Yesulnonmunjip* (The National Academy of Arts of the Republic of Korea, 1981).

12 U-Bang Kang, “Sinyangjilon – Yangjiüi Hwaldonggiwa Chakp’umsegye” [A New Theory about Yangji –The World of Yangji’s Period of Activity and Works], *Misulcharyo* 47 (1991); *Pöpkonggwa changöim*, (Yörhwadang, 2000)

proposed two possibilities that Yangji had studied in China or Central Asia,<sup>13</sup> or that he was a foreigner. From the latter perspective, it is assumed that Yangji worked in China as a Westerner but was naturalized in Silla, mainly because it was difficult to find information about his origin and also because his sculptures described both Western and Tang styles.<sup>14</sup> Although this assumption is not clear, in my opinion, it is unreasonable to conclude that he was Western.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the noticeable style of the Western face and costume, there are several Western factors shown on the statues such as the way the clothes are folded and their style of dress. This is a particularly interesting aspect of art history, in which the style and period of a statue can be determined just by looking at a fold in the clothing. In this respect, the Stone Buddhist Standing Statue and Stone Amitabha Standing Statue from Kamsan Temple, which were housed in the Kyôngju National Museum, show distinctive Western features. The folds on the clothing on these statues are described as making a U-shaped fold from the neckline to around the stomach area, dividing both legs, and showing the body's figure through a thin robe. This type of fold is classified as a unique Indian way of wearing robes, a so-called "Udyana Style," and is also viewed as a newly accepted way to wear clothing following the new Kūptabul style in India. The fact that these forms of folds were in fashion from China's Rawak Temple on the Southwestern part of the 'Oasis Road' to the Kucha region on the Northwestern road, it could be seen as an identifier of Western influence that appears in Silla's Buddha statues.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned above, this illustration of Western characteristics in

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13 Ch'ung-Sik Chang, "Sökchangsachi ch'ult'oyumulgwa sökyangjiüi chokakyup'ung" [Excavated Relics in Sökchang Temple and Sculpture Style of Sökkyangji], *Silla munhwa* 3 & 4, (1987).

14 U-Bang Kang, (1991).

15 Myungdae Mun, "Silla daechokakchang yangjilonë daehan saeloun haesök," *Misulsahakyön'gu* 232, (2001).

16 Rina Kim; Myungdae Mun, (1981).

many of Silla's existing sculpture is quite interesting. One opinion asserts that the influx of Western elements occurred as a result of Westerners directly coming to Silla, and then the Korean people depicted them as such. The reason this opinion exists, is due to the appearance of the stone statues located in Kwaerûng. One scholar specifically claims the statues of Kwaerûng are Iranian due to their unique ornaments (such as a head-band which was not identified in Tang's pottery figures) and thus assume that the Silla people who created the statue understood Iranian customs. Therefore it would seem that Silla was in direct contact with the Iranian people.<sup>17</sup>

However, there is another theory that Silla was influenced by Western factors that had already been in fashion in China, as opposed to being directly influenced from the West. The representative opinion is that "after the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Westerners appeared in the form of statues of Muin (武人) or Mushin(武臣) as a result of influence from Tang China, and because the courage and bravery of the military units from the countries bordering on Western China were the most outstanding, there are many statues celebrating their images from the Tang period. The Four-Guardian Statues from Kamûn Temple faithfully copy this style of Tang sculpture, and indeed the faces of Kwaerûng statues are replicated directly from the Tang figures."<sup>18</sup> Also, as there are many examples of the Guardian Figure with exotic or distinctive facial features that was a stereotyped look, there is one opinion that due to their close relationship, Unified Silla was highly likely to be influenced by the Tang, as opposed to direct influence from Western border countries. Another reason is the fact that there is no recorded basis showing a direct exchange between Silla and Western border countries. It should be kept in mind that it was impossible not to travel through China, even for Silla's monks, on a pilgrimage to India or the Western border countries. By examining the details of the style of folded clothing, one can ascertain that Silla's style of fold was a modified style,

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17 Yöngsup Byön 1972; Young-pil Kwon. 1997a.

18 Won-young Kim.

and was different from the Western areas. Therefore, the latter opinion suggests that instead of direct influence by the Western region, a more convincing argument is that Silla's arts were influenced by Western elements that were prevalent in Tang culture.<sup>19</sup>

In the second part of this paper, we examined Sôkkuram, a representative work of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and a finished product of Unified Silla. We also examined the development of Silla Buddhist sculpture, and the different opinions on the contribution of foreign factors to the formative characteristics of Sôkkuram. There are concerns about the historical background of its foundation and basis of ideology such as the Huayen ideology, Sinin-sect Ideology or Esoteric Buddhism, as well as whether Sôkkuram was originally named Sôkbulsa or Sôkkuram. In addition, there is much research on issues related to whether the original statue of Buddha is named Statue of Śakyamuni or Buddha Maita, the existence and standard scale of the front room, and the architectural plan of Sôkkuram's floor and elevation. In particular, it has been considered that there still is much to learn from the Buddhist statue's stylistic and iconic characteristics and features, as well as questions over the restoration of Sôkkuram to its original foundation.<sup>20</sup>

However, due to the unique circular structure and form of the stone cave, along with the various Stone Brahmas such as Sakyamuni Buddha, the Stone Eleven-headed Avalokitesvara Statue, the Eight Devas, Indra and Brahma-Deva, it is believed that influence was received from India and the Western border countries. For example, as a stone cave temple, Sôkkuram is comparable to other Buddhist stone cave temples located in India, Central Asia, and China. Many caves were built in India such as

19 Yöngae Im, Tongilsilla bulgyochokakēsō ilünba 'söyö' yöngnyang" [The Influence of the so-called 'Western Region' to Buddhist Sculptures in Unified Silla], *Kyoryu-lopön Han'gukbulgyochokak*, (Hakyön Munhwasa, 2008).

20 Ch'an-Hüng Park, "Sökgulamē daehan yön'gusa gömt'o" [History of Research about Sökgulam], *Sökgulamüi sinyön'gu*, (Silla munhwaje haksulbal'yoheo, 2000).

Ajanta, Kali, Kanherī, and Ellora, and after entering China, during the Sui and Tang periods a number of stone caves were built beginning from the Northern Wei area. Representative works are the Kyzyl cave at the Southern and the Northern roads of Western China along the Silk Road's "Oasis road," Kumtura Thousand Buddhist Caves, Baizikeli Cave, Mogao Grotto, Bingling Cave Temple and Maijisan Grottoes in Gansu province, and Yungang cave and Longmen Grottoes in China. The expansion of these stone caves extends all the way to Silla's Sōkkuram.

Sōkkuram's plain circular dome ceiling is unique among stone caves. Particularly in East Asia, the circular structure was used only for special ritual buildings such as the Temple of Heaven or Myōngdang, but there are few examples of such structures associated with Buddhism. For this reason, one opinion traces the origin to India, instead of China. In the early 1960's, it was suggested that Sōkkuram's form was based on Indian-style forms.<sup>21</sup> Several features were emphasized, such as the plain-circular structure that was made according to the Stupa formation, the circular pagoda, in India, and the structural and period similarities between Sōkkuram and the Bāmiyān Caves of Hindu Kush located in the Northwest of India, along with the Takht-iRustam near Aybak, Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> For the main Buddha enshrined in Sōkkuram, one view is that it

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21 According to Su-Yōng Hwang, Lomas Rishi Cave, one of the seven Barabar Caves, is a representative case with a circle-shaped rear room connected to a square-shaped front room, which is similar to Ss a rep's plane figure. For more information about the relation between the cave and Sikkuram, see Su-Yōng Hwang, "Indot'ongsin (I) Patna ë(ö," *Kogomisul* vol.4, no.2, (1963). Yet a study criticizes this theory that, even though it has a similarity to Svol.4, , Lomas Rishi Cave, which fell into disuse around the third century B.C., was hardly a Buddhist temple. Thus, the study insisted that the cave could not be the origin of SCave, w; see Ju-Hyōng Lee, "Boda gayaesö k'uk'unesyubalalo: sökgulamgwa indoüi yulye," *Han'gukkwa indoüi munhwa sasanggyoryu*, (Kukchehaksulhoeüi charyochip, Munhwayusan-yön'guso, 2006a); "Indo jungangasiaüi wönhungdanggwa sökgulam," *Chungangasiayön'gu* 11, (2006b).

22 Ju-Hyōng Lee, (2006a)



was influenced by a mixture of the Buddhist statue of Jangyukhangmasông (5th century) of the Mahabodhi Temple in Buddha Gaya, India and another built in the Gupta style around the 7<sup>th</sup> century in the Northwest of India.<sup>23</sup>

If Sôkkuram's primitive form was derived from these Indian stone cave temples, the idea of historical influence of Indian Buddhist culture being introduced to China and Silla during the 7th and 8th centuries is compelling. The role of monks must have also been especially important as they traveled to India on pilgrimages in order to advance their knowledge of Buddhism. It is assumed that the main sacred Buddhist places they visited on their journey were regions such as the Bodhgaya and Nalanda, and Gandhara.<sup>24</sup> Among the 60 monks described in the *Daedangseyek-KupopKosûngjon* by a high priest of Buddhism in Tang China, Aryavarma, Hyeôp, Hyôn'gak, Hyeryun, and Ojin were identified as monks who left Silla for a pilgrimage. Even Hyôntae and Hyecho returned safely to Tang after their pilgrimages to India.<sup>25</sup> However, it is possible that the monks were not able to directly influence Silla due to the fact that they never actually traveled back to Silla. Instead, Silla monks who traveled to Tang China would have had to send their knowledge to Silla, thus it can be concluded that there must have been an ample amount of roads which would have introduced Western elements to Silla.

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23 Myungdae Mun, "Kyôngju sôkgulam bulsangjokaküi pikyosachugyôn'gu," *Silla munhwa* 2, (1985).

24 Chin-Dal Pae, "Sôkpulsa sôkgulguchoüi wônhyunggwa yônwôn – Indo chungguk-sôkgulgwaüi pigyolül t'onghayö," *Sôkgulamüi sinyôn'gu*, (Silla munhwaje haksulbalp'yohoe nonmunjip, 2000).

25 Tök-Yöng Kwön, "Silla sôpuk kupöpsünggwa kü sahoe" [Buddhist Pilgrims of Silla and Its Society], *Chöngsinmunhwayö'n'gu* vol.30, no.2, (2007).

## Conclusion

The direct and indirect interchange between Silla, the Western border countries and India is visible enough to acknowledge that Western and Indian factors shown in Silla's art was either directly or indirectly introduced through China. Many researchers have been interested in these factors from early on and continue to study this topic, most likely because it plays a significant role in the origin of ancient cultures and the process of harmonization between them. Through artifacts and the Silk Road, we are able to directly see how Western border culture and products flowed into Silla.

In this article, we have examined the meaning of the "Silk Road" in terms of cultural exchange between the East and West, and have examined closely this exchange in its historical context. From this, we are able to see that in fact, from ancient times, the formation of Korean culture was influenced by various cultures including China and countries bordering on Western China, along with the West. Particularly, Indian Buddhism that was introduced to the Korean peninsula by way of China and the Silk Road played a role in developing Silla's culture, and even more so, contributed immensely to the formation of traditional Korean culture.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Gwangsik Choi, *Silk Road wa Han'gukmunhwa*, (Nanam ch'ulp'an, 2013).

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〈Abstract〉

## Silla Art and the Silk Road

*Choe Kwangshik*

Western and Indian features found in Silla art, whether they came from the Western border regions of China or through a connection with China, it is recognized that there was both a direct and indirect a relationship between Silla, the West, and India. Many scholars have been interested in these aspects, conducting various studies as these factors played a large part in defining the origin of ancient culture and the process of harmonization between cultures. Through the Silk Road scholars are able to identify how Western cultures and civilizations were introduced to the Silla Dynasty.

As the Korean peninsula has been a nexus for exchange between the East and the West, this paper aims to understand the meaning of the “Silk Road” and examines the actual state of cultural exchange at this historical site. Through artifacts excavated from Hwangnamdae-ch’ong (especially glass products), it has been determined that the Western and Western bordering countries of China culturally influenced the art of Silla. They also clearly prove that Buddhist sculptures from India and the Western bordering countries of China had a great impact on Silla art as well. Through these findings, it can be confirmed that from ancient times the influence of many cultures including China, the West, and the Western bordering countries of China had an impact on Korean culture. Particularly, Indian Buddhism which flowed into China and the Korea peninsula participated in the development of Silla culture and also played a significant role in the formation of traditional Korean culture.

**Keywords:** Silk Road, Exchange of Cultures, Steppe Road, Oasis Road, Sea Road, Hwangnamdaech'ong, Seokguram, Silla Art, Sculptures of United Silla, Goereung

〈국문초록〉

## 신라의 미술과 실크로드

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신라 미술에 보이는 서역적 혹은 인도적 요소가 서역을 통해 직접 전래된 것이든, 아니면 중국을 통해 들어온 것이든 간에, 신라와 서역·인도 사이의 직·간접적 교류관계 자체는 충분히 인정될 수 있다고 본다. 이러한 요소에 대해 여러 연구자들이 일찍부터 관심을 두고 다양한 연구를 진행해 온 것은 이 부분이 고대 문화의 원류와 문화 간 융화 과정에 중요한 부분을 차지하고 있기 때문일 것이다. 우리는 실크로드를 통해 서역의 문물이 신라시대 우리나라에 전해져 들어오는 모습을 유물을 통해 직접 확인할 수 있다.

우리는 동서 문명교류의 대명사로서 ‘실크로드’의 의미를 이해하고 실크로드를 통한 문명교류의 실상을 역사의 현장에서 구체적으로 살펴보았다. 황남대총의 유물들, 특히 유리제품의 경우 실크로드를 통하여 서양과 서역의 문화가 한반도로 들어와 신라의 미술에 영향을 미친 것을 알 수 있었다. 또한 신라의 조각과 석굴암을 통하여 인도와 서역의 석굴사원과 불교조각이 신라미술에 커다란 영향을 미친 것을 알 수 있었다. 그리고 이를 통해 한국 문화가 고대로부터 중국을 포함해 서역 그리고 서양에 이르기까지 다양한 문화의 영향을 받으며 형성되었다는 점을 확인할 수 있었다. 특히 인도의 불교는 실크로드를 통해 중국에 유입되어 한반도에까지 전래되어 신라문화를 발전시켰으며, 나아가 한국의 전통문화 형성에 커다란 축을 담당하였다.

**주제어:** 실크로드, 문화교류, 초원로, 오아시스로, 해상로, 황남대총, 석굴암, 신라미술, 통일신라 조각, 패릉