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Islamic Material Culture in Medieval Korea and Its Legacy

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in History of Art

2016

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ABSTRACT

The thesis investigates the material-cultural relationship between the Islamic world and the Korean peninsula during medieval period until mid-15th century. The research sheds light on how Islamic cultural elements were accommodated in the predominantly Buddhist society of Goryeo and Neo-Confucian monocultural Joseon, and examines its continuation in the present-day Korean material-culture scene. In presenting the forgotten history of Muslim residents and their contribution on the hardly visible stratum of Korean art, it challenges the fundamental issues of Korean art history. It will also extend the confines of medieval Islamic arts by investigating their cultural survival in a place at the farthest distance from the Islamic world geographically and culturally.

The centuries of Korean contacts with Islamic culture are divided into two phases according to Korean's response to incoming Muslims - the period from 8th to 13th centuries when their contacts were purely based on trade and commerce, and mid-13th century to the final phase of their relationship when the royal edict of 1427 of the nascent Joseon dynasty abruptly prohibited any manifestation of Islam and its culture. To contextualise the long-term cross-cultural communications in a material cultural term, each historical phase is discussed using relevant evidence from literature sources against archaeological findings. Every case is chosen to showcase the essential status of the exceptional cross-cultural contact between medieval Korea and Islamic lands and how they interacted.

At an early phase, metalworking technique of 'white bronze' transmitted from Islamicised Iran to Silla probably through the maritime trade, while the decorative idiom of 'intertwined birds' was shared by them alongside the other regions of Inner Asia via overland routes. In the second phase, the contact between these two medieval cultures was intensified through the intervention of the Mongol Empire and permeates all level of medieval Korean society. During the period, Korean decorative schemes leaned toward the extensive use of stylised foliate scroll in overall density, reminiscent of Islamic decoration. The multicultural milieu is also detected by the sudden cultural promotion of the basin in medieval Korea. Finally, the motif of 'a bird in attack', another international visual idiom of the medieval period, reflects the change of Korean society from multicultural to strictly Neo-Confucian status, and serves as material cultural evidence of the irreconcilable cultural distance between these two cultures .

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research explored the relationship between the Islamic world and Korea. In going through a road not taken before, I was deeply indebted to so many for so much.

My first gratitude goes to Professor Doris Behrens-Abouseif, who first accepted my application about highly unusual research topic. Perhaps against her better judgement, she had accepted me, and under her tutelage and guidance I was able to formulate the topic beyond abstract ideas into a fully-fledged research. It was through her tireless feedback and motivation that I was able to go over the finishing line.

Over the last year, I was also lucky enough to be under co-supervision of Prof Scott Redford. His detailed insight into the history of crusaders deepened my knowledge of cross-cultural studies. I am also grateful to Dr Lukas Nickel and Dr Charlotte Horlyk who provided helpful critique. Without the insight of my examiners, Prof Lee-Kalisch and Mr Tim Stanley, I would not have been able to review the thesis from a fresh perspective. With the expertise and experience, they gave crucial pointers necessary in finalising the thesis into a solid academic argument. I am grateful for their constructive criticism and to SOAS for providing a venue for such a unique subject.

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A few that I can mention in the limited space here include, Prof Lee In-Sook, who gave a tailored lecture on glassware, and Professor Jung Soo-II, who took the time to help form the direction of my research over two summers that I visited. I am also grateful to Professor Lee Nan-Young, who kindly responded to all the enquiries despite my intrusion into her well-deserved retirement. Professor Park Hyun-gyu shared records of the Ramadan tombstone and researches related to it. And Professor Kang Gyeong-sook, who was positive to the idea of Islam-Korea cultural interaction, shared her expertise on the history of Korean ceramics with me.

Outside of academia, I realised that embarking on an international scale of research required a global scale of support network. Dr Sami de Giosa, whom we first met through our mutual interest in Islamic studies, was one of the first people to encourage my idea of transcultural study between Korea and Islam. Jihee Park has been a constant – and sometimes literal – companion in my research journey, helping me collate photographic resources and organising Korean materials. My gratitude goes to Nahid Assemi, who has been willing to help me with her linguistic and cultural knowledge of Iran. Amongst many others, I am particularly grateful to my dearest friend, Carola di Pauli. Apart from her thorough proof-readings of my works, which I repeatedly made her go through for my benefit, her kindness and friendliness was the biggest boon that anyone could be gifted with.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family. My husband and two sons have been incredibly supportive – despite their initial reservation. Il-Song, who comes from an engineering background, provided a different perspective to the thesis. He was also an ever present help, who checked the technical details which often confuses humanity scholars. My two sons, Woo-Sup and Woo-Joon, have been big helps also. Whenever a late-night printing and binding was required and last-minute proof readings needed, they pulled all stops to get it done. Without their devotion, this research would not have borne fruit.

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CONVENTIONS

1. TRANSLITERATIONS:

All diacritics and honorifics have been omitted, to leave the text as uncluttered as possible. Where a foreign word has entered English usage (for example, mihrab, sufi, buncheong etc.), it is neither italicised nor provided with diacritics. For convenience, the plurals of these terms have been formed following the English convention of adding *s*.

The transliteration of Arabic and Persian follows the systems used in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. The Romanization follows the Revised Romanization of Korean system for Korean, the *Pinyin* for Chinese and the Hepburn system for Japanese, except for some familiar place-names, such as Seoul or Taipei, and personal names with a preferred other Romanisation. In cases where the title or author citation of a published work follows different transliteration conventions, original spelling has been maintained so as to expedite location of the cited work.

When Koreans and Japanese shared same Chinese characters with Chinese, the pronunciations differ. They are shown in the parentheses throughout the thesis whenever necessary.

2. In order not to confuse the present political situation with historical entity, the term, ‘the Korean peninsula’, has been used to denote the geographical amass covering present-day South Korea [the Republic of Korea in its official name] and North Korea [the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as known officially]. Korea throughout the thesis means present-day South Korea, unless otherwise stated.

3. CITATIONS:

Korean, Chinese and Japanese names appear with surnames listed first, except in the case of authors with publications in English. Since many Korean surnames are identical, Korean names appear in full in all references. Names of places or suffixes (mountains, river, and monastery) are translated wherever possible, but without such pleonasms as Bulguk-sa Monastery.

For the publications in the non-European languages, the full citations with its English translation are provided in the bibliography. For the sake of brevity, only the English translated version of the title within the brackets is referred in the footnotes.

For example, in the bibliography,

Kim Ho-dong (2006), “Mong-won jegukgi han saekmok-in gwansau chosang: isa kellemechi ui saeng-ae wa hwaldong [A Portrait of a Christian Official in China under the Mongol Rule: Life and Career of `Isa Kelemechi (1227-1308)], *Jung-ang-asia yeongu* [Central Asian Studies], vol.11, pp.75-114.

In footnote referencing of the same article,

Kim Ho-dong (2006), "[A Portrait of a Christian Official in China under the Mongol Rule: Life and Career of `Isa Kelemechi (1227-1308)]", *Jung-ang-asia yeongu*, 11: 75-114

Frequently cited sources are abbreviated in the main text and notes.

4. CAPTIONS:

When available, three dimensions have been provided for the images, expressed as height by width by depth. Otherwise, the following abbreviations are used to identify the known measurements: h. (height), w. (width), d. (depth), diam. (diameter), and l. (length). Dimensions are expressed only in centimetres.

Every image has two types of caption. An immediate caption to the image is in the brief order of name, dimension (if known) and its date with provenance. The full explanation of the image, including the source and credit, is in the list of figures. Of the images being taken on site, the date the photo taken (its month and year) is provided with the photographer's name.

5. DATE:

In the interest of clarity, all dates of this thesis are according to the Gregorian calendar and do not give *Hijri* and Chinese dates specifically. All dates are Common Era (CE) or BCE (before Common Era) unless otherwise noted. The Three Kingdoms period, for example, is noted as 57 BCE -668, indicating that the period starts in the year of 57 BCE and finishes in the year of 668 CE.

Dates for rulers are reign date without *r.* They are preceded by birth and death dates if required.

6. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

List of abbreviations and glossary of terms

Abbreviations

BM	British Museum, London, UK
Leeum	The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
MOCO	Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka, Japan
NMK	National Museum of Korea
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
EI	Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2 nd edition

Terms

Buncheong A type of fine stoneware produced in Korea from the late Goryeo period to the first half of the Joseon dynasty.

It is an abbreviated form of *bunjang cheongja* [powdered celadon], a term coined by Ko Yu-Seop (1905-1944), a pioneer in the study of the history of Korean art, in an attempt to replace misnomers Japanese collectors gave to this group of ceramic. Made of greyish or greyish white clay, buncheong is covered with fine white slip and then decorated with the various techniques before being baked. The finest examples of buncheong were mainly produced in the 15th to 16th centuries.

Sanggam Inlay technique on celadons

It consists of inserting coloured clay into grooved parts of the ceramic body which results in polychrome decoration after the second firing. The technique was developed in the Goryeo dynasty, most probably inspired by contemporary inlaid metalwork. Although the term itself can mean a wide variety of inlaying methods in any type of media including metalwork, ceramic and lacquerware, it is reserved only ceramic decorative technique in Korean art historical scholarship.

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	Islam			Korea	China	Japan																			
550				Three Kingdoms {Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla} (57 BCE - 668 AD)	Sui (隋) (581 - 618)	Asuka Period (538 - 710)																			
600	Muhammad (610 - 632) Rashidun (الخلافة) (661 - 632)				Tang (唐) (618 - 907)		Nara Period (710 - 794)																		
650	Umayyad (بنو أمية) (661 - 750)					Five Dynasties & Ten Kingdoms (907 - 960)		Heian Period (794 - 1185)																	
700	Abbasid (العباسيون) (750 - 1258)	Fatimid (الفاطميون) (909 - 1171)	Umayyad (Cordoba) (إمارة قرطبة) (خلافة قرطبة) (756 - 1031)	Goryeo (918 - 1396)	Liao (遼) (907 - 1125) Jin (金) (1115 - 1234) Song (宋) (960 - 1279) {Western Xia (西夏) (1038 - 1227)}		Kamakura Bakufu (1185 - 1333)																		
750			Almoravid (المرابطون) (1085 - 1145)			Ming (明) (1368 - 1644)		Joseon (1392 - 1910)	Qing (清) (1644 - 1911)	Edo Bakufu (1603 - 1868)															
800											Ayyubid (الأيوبيون) (1171 - 1250)	Granada (إمارة غرناطة) (1238 - 1492)	Yuan (元) (1271 - 1368)	Muromachi Bakufu (1338 - 1467)											
850		Mongol Il-khanate (1250 - 1335)	Safavid (سلسله صفويان) (1501 - 1736)												Ottoman (عثمانلي دولتي) (1299 - 1923)	Meiji Period (1868 - 1912)									
900											Timurid (گورکانی) (1370 - 1526)						Sengoku Jidai (1467 - 1573) Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1568 - 1603)								
950		Joseon (1392 - 1910)																Qing (清) (1644 - 1911)	Edo Bakufu (1603 - 1868)						
1000											Ming (明) (1368 - 1644)									Joseon (1392 - 1910)	Qing (清) (1644 - 1911)	Edo Bakufu (1603 - 1868)			
1050																							Yuan (元) (1271 - 1368)	Muromachi Bakufu (1338 - 1467)	
1100																									Kamakura Bakufu (1185 - 1333)
1150																									
1200	Asuka Period (538 - 710)																								
1250				Nara Period (710 - 794)																					
1300					Three Kingdoms {Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla} (57 BCE - 668 AD)																				
1350			Sui (隋) (581 - 618)																						
1400						Tang (唐) (618 - 907)																			
1450		Five Dynasties & Ten Kingdoms (907 - 960)																							
1500							Liao (遼) (907 - 1125) Jin (金) (1115 - 1234) Song (宋) (960 - 1279) {Western Xia (西夏) (1038 - 1227)}																		
1550								Fatimid (الفاطميون) (909 - 1171)																	
1600									Umayyad (Cordoba) (إمارة قرطبة) (خلافة قرطبة) (756 - 1031)																
1650										Almoravid (المرابطون) (1085 - 1145)															
1700	Ayyubid (الأيوبيون) (1171 - 1250)																								
1750				Mongol Il-khanate (1250 - 1335)																					
1800					Timurid (گورکانی) (1370 - 1526)																				
1850			Abbasid (العباسيون) (750 - 1258)																						

INTRODUCTION

1. The objective of the study

The primary aim of this thesis is to provide an art-historical evidence of Islamic artistic elements in Korean art, reviewing the narrative of Korean art history accordingly - a topic that has hardly been investigated in depth and with coherence. I will prove that the stylistic and technical features of Korean art, particularly in the medieval period, cannot be properly appreciated without considering 'the Islamic art element' in it. And by doing so, the thesis may contribute to further discuss an issue of the transferability of Islamic art in cross-cultural contacts.

Until quite recently, Korea and its history have been generally viewed and approached without adequate consideration for its historical complexity and cultural diversity. Such orientations can be summarized into two prevalent scholarly positions: one of them emphasizes the 'remarkable ethnic homogeneity'¹ amongst Korean people, culture and history; the other views Korea mainly within the context of the Sino-sphere. While the apparent homogeneity of the present population and language has often led to disregard for Korea's mixed historical background,² the widespread Sino-centric scholarly approach to Korean art has prevented examining its supra-regional network beyond East Asia over a long period of time.

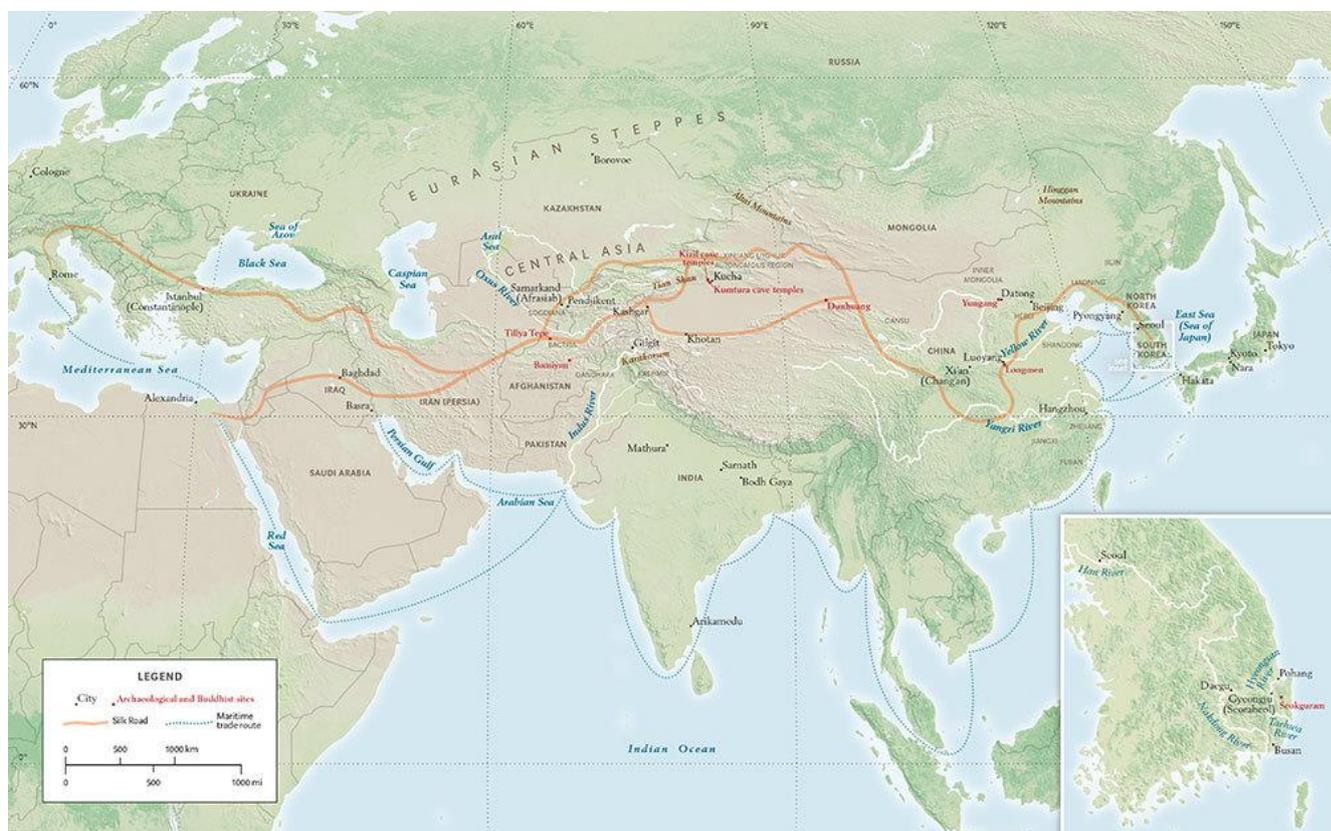
Contrary to common understanding, Korea was never disconnected from other parts of Eurasia, at least until the medieval period, and its art did certainly not develop in isolation. In fact, some scholars have convincingly argued that Korea enriched its artistic production and aesthetic performance via continuous exchanges of artistic ideas with the so-called 'Western Regions (*seo-yeok* in Korean, *xiyu* in Chinese)', a generic term of denoting the regions west of China, most often including Central Asia and sometimes South Asia. The influence of foreign, non-East Asian material culture on the arts of The Three Kingdoms Period and the Unified Silla have now been better recognized based on archaeological evidence and extant material culture.

However, the concept of the 'Western regions' has hardly been defined with its geographical, cultural, and temporal demarcation. The exact geography, the nature of its art and the extent of its influence on Korea remain nebulous in Korean art scholarship. What's more, the present political demarcation of China hides the historical fact that some of the most active agents of cross-cultural and supra-regional transmissions came from the Central Asian cultural zone rather than from China. Although many elements of traditional Korean art tend to be designated as 'Chinese', some are more

¹ Kim Won-yong (1983), [*Introduction to Korean Archaeology*], Seoul, 2-3.

² Sarah M Nelson (1995), "The Politics of Ethnicity in Prehistoric Korea", Kohl, P.L. and C. Fawcett (eds), *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, Cambridge: 218-231.

likely to come from the places beyond the traditional Sinosphere, reaching as far as the Iranian cultural zone and Eurasian steppe. If we insist that, for example, the form of Buddhism imported to Korea is ‘fully sinicized Buddhism’, we would not give a proper consideration to the ‘foreign’ elements, such as the ones described by early Buddhist translators who came from the Iranian world, Indian monks having directly come to the peninsula, and dharma-seeking Korean monks having undertaken the journey to Central Asia and India. The surviving objects from these Korean kingdoms testify to the trans-regional contacts during the period far before Muslims came to be involved in international contacts and cultural exchange.³ A wide variety of their material cultures, ranging from potteries and metalwork to the oft-quoted golden crowns link ancient Korean kingdoms to the Western Regions and northern nomadic tribes through overland networks (map 1).



Map 1) Silla and other Eurasian centres, c.400-800

One major caveat of existing scholarship on this issue lies in the fact that the comments about the Western regions have been repeatedly made without proper appreciation of the status and change in the regions. The scholarly interest in the artistic and cultural relations with the ‘Western regions’

³ Many studies and exhibition catalogues on intercultural exchange of Korea in the pre-Islamic period have been published. Among the most recent ones are Soyoung Lee and Denise Patry Leidy (eds)(2013), *Silla: Korea's Golden Kingdom*. MMA; National Museum of Gyeongju (ed.)(2008), [*Silla Meets West Asia*], Seoul.

has not properly considered the historical fact that most of these areas became gradually and markedly Islamised by the 8th century.⁴ Instead, academic interest in any cross-cultural communications of Korean art seems to almost dry up after the late period of Unified Silla (668-935 CE), when the kingdom was losing its power and influence in the peninsula. In the predominant narrative of Korean historians, Korea became part of the Sinic world then, with ever increasing dependence on it.

A prevailing assumption under this narrative insinuates that no type of cross-cultural communication could have taken place between the Islamised lands and Buddhist Korea. It erroneously presupposes that the same regions, in constant contact, suddenly lost cultural exchanges once they converted to Islam.

The antagonism of Islam against Buddhism is mostly the product of our age, intensified by present political entanglement of the Islamic lands and the West, spread by such ideas as influential *Clash of Civilizations*,⁵ and visually stigmatised by the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha by the Taliban in 2001. During the medieval period, on the other hand, such a ‘cultural Maginot line’⁶ did not exist between the two cultures due to much generosity, or perhaps to mutual indifference, among their adherents. It is well-known fact the family of the Barmakids (also known as Barmecides) that held great political power under the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad was of Buddhist origin.⁷

Either through lack of knowledge or misunderstanding, luxury items from the Islamic world were well accepted in medieval Korea, in the same fashion as a Mamluk tray was used in an important church ceremony unbeknown to the clergy who was ignorant of the fact that its epigraphic decoration contained the name ‘Muhammad.’⁸ It was in this way that Islamic artistic elements came to the peninsula and played a vital role in the making of Korean arts, even though their presence and influence have not been properly appreciated. In particular, from the 14th to early 15th century when the peninsula experienced precipitous political changes, this intercultural relationship grew to fruition, leading to a change in its aesthetic taste of Korean art at an unprecedented level.

⁴ For the conversions of Iran and Central Asian, see T.W. Arnold (1913), *The Preaching of Islam*, 2nd ed. London, 159-167, esp. 162-164; Iranians gradually converted during the Umayyad period, and the number of Iranian converts rapidly increased after the Abbasid revolution of 749-51, in which they played a major role. Hugh N. Kennedy (2004), *The Prophet and the age of the Caliphates*, Harlow, 123-132; According to Richard Bulliet (1979), the Muslim population of Iran rose from approximately 40% in the mid-9th century to 80% or more by the mid-10th century when regional dynasties had been established.

⁵ Samuel P. Huntington (2002 [1997]), *The Clash of Civilizations: And the Remaking of World Order*, London.

⁶ Richard M. Eaton (2005), “The Articulation of Islamic Space in the Medieval Deccan”, Irene A. Bierman (ed), *The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam*, Reading: 113-132. 127

⁷ Kevin van Bladel (2011), “The Bactrian Background of the Barmakids”, A. Akasoy, C. Burnett and R. Yoeli-Tlalim(eds), *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, London: 43–88.

⁸ Robert S Nelson (2005), “Letters and Language/Ornament and Identity in Byzantium and Islam”, Irene A. Bierman (ed), *The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam*, Reading: 61-88.

The other side of my argument in dealing with the Korean interaction with the Islamic world (*Dar al-Islam*) is to prove the way in which Islamic art adjusted to and survived in a distant and foreign land. There are many studies on the topic of Islamic art and its interaction in peripheral or marginal zones, such as Byzantium, Western Europe and India.⁹ Even China has seen arts and objects produced by or for Muslim communities. In spite of apparent differences, these regions all have a common factor: their historical involvement with the Islamic world through being close to or sharing borders with it.

By contrast, the geopolitical location, religious background, historical development of Korea cannot easily provide such a commonality and commensurability with the Islamic world. Its remoteness, as this thesis will prove, served as a true testing ground for the resilience of Islamic art and its fundamental appeal beyond national borders and religious confinement. We will see how far Islamic art has adapted and transformed itself to be accepted by the non-Muslim locals, and at the same time we will analyse the limits of acceptability and of integration into a local culture, such as Korea. This thesis intends to provide some evidence aimed at extending the circumference of Islamic art to the Korean peninsula.

2. Terminologies and theoretical framework

In order to achieve these goals, the material and visual evidence will be examined across a wide spectrum of Korean history and society in the medieval period.

2.1. 'Medieval period'

2.1.1. Medieval period of Korean history

In this thesis, 'medieval period' covers nearly seven centuries starting from approximately late 8th century to the first half of the 15th century. In terms of Korean dynastic transitions, the period includes the later period of Unified Silla, the whole period of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), and the early phase of Joseon (1392-1897). There are two major reasons for following the long-term historical structure - 'medieval'- rather than usual dynastic divisions.

It is true that the term, 'medieval period', has not been much used to describe historical events in Korean historiography.¹⁰ A common approach to understand the history of East Asia is primarily in

⁹ Recent scholarship on each of these regions is found in Brandie Ratliff and Helen C. Evans (eds)(2012), *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition, 7th-9th century*, New York; Rosamond E. Mack (2002), *Bazaar to Piazza : Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600*, Berkeley, CA; Finbarr Barry Flood (2009), *Objects of Translation : Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, Princeton.

¹⁰ There is a debate about the definition of the medieval period in Korean history. Recently, following Kim Yong Sup (2000, ['Historical Trend of Land System']), most Korean scholars argue that the Korean medieval period started with Unified Silla. About the debate, refer to Jeon Deog-Jae (2014), [The Ruling mechanism and the Taxation Systems of the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla Periods]', 305-306

terms of dynasties and their rise and fall. One of the results of this historical approach is a sharp division between dynasties. And this often hides a more complex, fluid reality of the society.

Until the forced annexation of the Korean peninsula by the Japanese in the early 20th century, any changes in the political ruling class of Korean kingdoms were made among the existing power groups of local residents. Some may suggest the Mongol rule on Goryeo as an exception to such a generalisation of Korean history. It is true that, in order to secure influential positions in the Mongol Empire, most of the Goryeo kings under the Mongol suzerainty took Mongol princesses as their official wives and had legitimate heirs from their Goryeo-Mongol marriage union. In a strict patriarchal society of pre-modern era, however, all Goryeo kings represented an exclusively Goryeo reality and resided on their territory all by adopting Mongol customs and fashions.

Because of the virtual absence of foreign power groups during the historical period covered in this thesis, dynastic changes in Korean kingdoms were always carried out by powerful individuals and groups within the pre-existing political structure. Wang Geon (877-943, r.918-943), founder of the Goryeo dynasty, was from a merchant family at Songdo (present-day Gaeseong, capital of Goryeo) during the final decades of Unified Silla. When he finally unified the Korean peninsula in 936 through battles against other regional kingdoms, Wang Geon allowed rulers and aristocrats of previous kingdoms to keep their lands and property, with new titles, on condition of their swearing allegiance to newly formed kingdom of Goryeo. The same pattern of continuity of ruling classes can be noted between the late Goryeo and the early Joseon period. Although the new dynasty took the new dynastic name of 'Joseon' and their official narrative claimed a stark difference from the previous dynasty of Goryeo, Joseon did not represent a new beginning as its founding members advocated it to be. While some of the Goryeo officials were renowned for their loyalty and self-sacrifice to the dying dynasty, most Confucian literati in the early days of Joseon actually held governing posts of diverse ranks and roles in the final phase of Goryeo.

Such continuity is even more evident in the material culture of Korea. Buncheong ceramics, known as the artistic symbol of the early Joseon period, were actually produced from the late Goryeo period onwards. This demonstrates that Buncheong wares were an extension or evolution of Goryeo celadons in terms of techniques and aesthetics. Likewise, the historic origin of Goryeo celadons has been hotly debated. Some Korean academics have suggested that 'Goryeo' celadons actually started during the late Unified Silla period in the 9th century. Considering that datable or dated objects in the medieval Korean period are not as numerous as we might expect, it is thus obdurate and misleading to insist on sharp divisions of material culture according to each dynasty.

Another reason to take the broader term of 'medieval' period lies in the fact that the thesis deals with foreigners unknown to Korean history and culture. When Muslim foreigners made visits to the Korean peninsula in the medieval period, their travels had little, if anything, to do with the local dynasty and its domestic operations. This was especially true in the case of Muslim visitors during the

Goryeo period. From extant descriptions of their visits, their motive for hazardous long-haul travel to the peninsula was solely commercial, getting profit through trade. Although their ‘tribute’ items would have left a certain impact on Korean material culture, as will be discussed later, there was no other innate relations of their visits with Goryeo domestic politics. Thus the term ‘medieval’ allows us to see the hidden continuity between dynastic divisions, and to go beyond rigid concept of national borders, by including separate countries and different cultures into one single time zone.

2.1.2. Muslim-Korean encounters of the medieval period

In order to reconstruct the historical reality of Muslim-Korean encounters of the medieval period, the period from the emergence of Islamic states to mid-15th century can be divided into three stages of cultural contacts; they are ‘commerce and trade’, ‘co-existence’ and ‘integration’ based on local Korean reactions to Muslim newcomers.

The first stage of historical cross-cultural encounter covers nearly five centuries from the 8th to mid-13th century, when Muslims were called ‘*daesik* (*dashi* in Chinese)’ in Korean historical records. In dynastic terms, this includes the second half of Silla (668-935), commonly known as Unified Silla, to the period until the advent of the Mongol Empire in the middle of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). It is the period when Muslims and Koreans interacted through international trade and commerce.

At the second stage, Goryeo became a tributary state of the Mongol Empire, seeing many Muslim residents in the peninsula as *hoehoe* (*huihui* in Chinese). It covers the period from the first half of the 13th century, when the Mongols began military campaigns in Goryeo, to the late 14th century when the Mongol influence in the Korean peninsula died out after the recapture of northern territories by Goryeo from the Mongols in 1351. During this period, Muslims came to stay in the peninsula serving the ruling class in diverse capacities, getting involved in political, diplomatic, and social aspects of Goryeo.

Despite the dynastic changes, this type of ‘co-existence’ continued to the final stage of Muslim-Korean encounters which includes the end of the Goryeo dynasty in the 14th century to King Sejong’s edict in the early Joseon period. The decree to prohibit Islamic cultural expressions in 1427 forced Muslim residents to find ways of assimilation and integration.

It is in this line of thought that I do not treat the period between 1000 and 1500 as a continuum, although I agree with Jerry Bentley’s idea that the centuries as a whole could be called as the ‘Age of the trans-regional nomadic empires.’¹¹ Bentley refers to the important contributions of the Khitans, Tanguts, and the Jurchens to the re-emergence of Central Asia as an economically vibrant

¹¹ Jerry Bentley (1993), *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times*, New York

region, leading to the eventual expansion of the Mongol ascendancy beyond Persia in the 13th and 14th centuries. Notwithstanding the extraordinary landmass the Mongols conquered and the cultural diversity they eventually embraced, the Mongol Empire is not an overnight success but should always be considered as an extension of nomadic tradition in the past. In the current topic, however, the role of the Mongols is distinct from the previous nomadic states, allowing substantial numbers of Muslims to settle in Korea, stay with local Koreans, and get involved deeply in local politics and society. It is in the ‘13th-century world system’¹² ruled by the Mongols that Koreans began to recognize Muslims as *hoehoe*.

2.2. Geographical terms

National borders in the medieval period were not the same all the time. The concept of frontiers during the period covered in this thesis is naturally different from the current one, and has to be taken as ‘considerably fluid zones’, rather than ‘thin and artificial lines’.¹³ To define ‘Korea’ and ‘the Islamic world’, this thesis relies on geographic markers that reflect the perception the two regions held of each other during the seven centuries under analysis.

‘Korea’ in this thesis is defined as the present political, geographical circumference of ‘the Korean peninsula and its adjacent islands’. Korean art in this thesis concentrates on the events and histories that happened in this territory. Until ‘Unified’ Silla (668-935) established the first unified kingdom on the Korean peninsula, the Korean peninsula had been divided amongst the three rival kingdoms, Goguryeo (37 BCE-668 CE) in the north extending to Manchuria, Silla (57 BCE-935 CE) and Baekje (18 BCE -660 CE) in the southeast and southwest, respectively. Although annexed by Silla prior to the eventual unification, Gaya (42-562), a confederation of city-states, had also flourished at the borderland of the southern coast between Silla and Baekje until the mid-6th century (map 2). All of them had spent nearly 300 years before forming a centralised government. During this formative period, the Han-Chinese colonies installed in the northern part of Korea, then Goguryeo territory, were finally removed by indigenous forces. Goguryeo had always been the most powerful kingdom, with its territory reaching over the vast landmass of the north-eastern part of China.

¹² The ‘thirteenth-century world system’ was linked through eight politically and culturally diverse ‘subsystems’. For the map of the system, see Janet L. Abu-Lughod (1989)’s *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*, Oxford, 34.

¹³ Magdalena Naum (2010), “Re-emerging Frontiers: Postcolonial Theory and Historical Archaeology of the Borderlands”, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 17(2): 101-131, 102.

Map 2) Korean peninsula, mid-5th centuryMap 3) Korean peninsula, late 7th-8th century

However, it was Silla that achieved the first unification of all the states of the Korean peninsula by the middle of the 7th century, by annexing Gaya in 562, conquering Baekje in 660, and finally Goguryeo in 668 with the aid of the Chinese Tang forces. Although Silla finally unified the regional powers of the peninsula, hence known as Unified Silla, the refugees from the perished states fled to other parts of East Asia and the people remaining from the previous kingdoms, mainly from Goguryeo (37-668), founded their own dynasty, Balhae (Bohai in Chinese, 698-926) in the massive area covering the northern part of the Korean peninsula and Manchuria (map 3). Although Balhae existed concurrently with Unified Silla, the discussion of Korea in this thesis only focuses on the Unified Silla Kingdom during this North-South States Period of Korea. This is not least because of the inaccessibility of the Balhae territory due to the current geopolitical situation. Unlike Unified Silla, the Goryeo (918-1392) and Joseon (1392-1897) dynasties were the only Korean kingdoms to rule the Korean peninsula during the Silla period.

As a key intermediary between the Islamic world and the Korean peninsula, ‘China’ in the thesis mainly refers to the area covering the river valleys of the Yellow, Yangzi, and Pearl Rivers. During the period under discussion in this study, these areas were sometimes under Han Chinese rule and sometimes not.¹⁴ The boundaries fluctuated during the various ruling dynasties. When it was

¹⁴ For the early relation between the Chinese and their northern nomadic neighbours, see Nicola Di Cosmo (2002), *Ancient China and its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, New York.

necessary to clarify the Chinese geopolitical zone of a certain period, I have used the name of the dynasty followed by ‘China’, such as Tang China or Yuan China.

The definition of ‘the Islamic world’ is to mean both a faith with its doctrine and a culture in this thesis. Having established itself as a new religion in 622, Islam began to rise as strong political and military power under the Arabs. It swiftly conquered West Asia, followed by dominance over Central Asia, North Africa, and Southern Europe, creating the religious and cultural unity known as *ummah* (the community of the Muslims).

Unlike medieval East Asia, where a powerful dynasty maintained a considerable political and cultural unity in the region, Islam is a multi-centred, multi-regional, and multi-dynastic civilisation. Its material culture was formed by regional traditions, traditions that Clifford Geertz called ‘local knowledge’.¹⁵ As Said poignantly discussed in his *Orientalism* (1978), there is a danger in bringing together diverse local cultures of such a vast geography under a blanket term, ‘Islam’ or ‘the Islamic world’.¹⁶ This awareness also led Marshall Hodgson to coin the term of ‘Islamicate’ referring to ‘not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims’.¹⁷

Despite these issues, I will continue to use the term ‘Islamic’ as a descriptive term referring to both a religious and a cultural entity. This choice is due to the recognition that ‘the shared sources of the Islamic experience’ led to easy migration of co-religionists and rapid cross-fertilisation of ‘common discourse’ within the Islamic world.¹⁸ Amidst their diverse local traditions, Islamic artisans and craftsmen shared a distinctive set of cultural requirements for their arts and objects, among which a special position was given to writing and arabesque.¹⁹ Certain techniques, such as tin glazing and lustrewares, were mainly confined to the Islamic lands of the medieval period, as Muslim potters moved and transmitted their skills along co-religious regions.

Another reason that led me to adopt a broader definition of Islam is that the material evidence I have looked at is mainly related to portable objects. As no Islamic monument from the period discussed in the thesis has been found in Korea, I have relied on the transmission of portable objects and their cultural impact. The portability meant that these objects could travel from any part of the Islamic world to the Korean peninsula as gifts, personal belongings, souvenirs and others.

¹⁵ Clifford Geertz (1983), *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York.

¹⁶ For further anthropological debates on this issue, see L Abu-Lughod (1989), “Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18: 267-306.

¹⁷ Marshall Hodgson (1974), *The Venture of Islam. Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Vol. 1*, Chicago, 59.

¹⁸ J. O. Voll (1994), “Islam as a Special World System”, *Journal of World History*, 5:213-226, 219.

¹⁹ R Ettinghausen, O Grabar, and M Jenkins-Madina (2001), 79.

Furthermore, when a visual language has Pan-Islamic use and appeal, it leaves an intense cultural memory to its users and observers. I have, therefore, duly focused on a pan-Islamic artistic phenomenon, not on regional or short-term idiosyncrasies.

As such, this thesis innately requires a ‘global’ perspective to account for the long-haul journey covering heterogeneous political entities from Islamic lands in Mediterranean regions to the Korean peninsula at the far end of Eurasia.

2.3. Theoretical orientation

In the discussion of cross-cultural communication with the Islamic world, the exceptional position of medieval Korea becomes more evident when compared with the medieval Christian world. Unlike Korea, the region dominated by Christianity and Islam is related intimately through geography, history and culture. The intercultural communications between these two seemingly discordant religions have attracted a great deal of scholarly interests and publications. From the 12th century, Byzantine and Islamic societies intermingled to produce cross-cultural artefacts showing more complex and overlapping cultural and artistic links.²⁰ Richard Ettinghausen inferred three different modes of inter-cultural transmission – transfer, adoption, and integration – from these interrelated worlds.²¹

Although his study focuses on the cultural interaction between closely connected societies, these three concepts are still applicable to my research because of the same period it dealt with as my thesis. Unlike his approach, it is not my intention to survey all the Korean monuments and art objects that betray Islamic influence, nor is it to deal specifically with chronology, iconography in general or artistic trends. Rather, I shall present archetypal cases of modes of acceptance that appeared even while the two civilizations were far away separated from each other for geographical, political and religious reasons.

As explained in his study, ‘transfer’ refers to ‘the taking over of shapes or concepts as they stand, without change or further development’ For the course of my research, a type of ‘transfer’ will be found to have occurred in the technological interaction between Islamised Iran and Unified Silla, when the traditional method of ‘white bronze’ technology is found in Korea as it was originally used. While historical records and technological observation mainly support the transfer from Iran to Silla during the early phase of Islam, other circumstantial evidence points to technological transfer happened concurrently in reverse direction. In the medieval world centered on barter trade, diffusion

²⁰ As for the ambiguous identity of Islamic art, see Eva Hoffman (2001); Scott Redford (1990), “How Islamic is it? The Innsbruck Plate and its Setting,” *Muqamas* 7: 119-35.

²¹ Richard Ettinghausen (1972), *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic world: three modes of artistic influence*, Leiden, 1

through the exchange of objects and goods was most likely to take place mutually, not a linear way from the centre to periphery, as traditional diffusionists often argued.²²

In understanding the transcultural transmission of an artistic idiom, however, my theoretical stance is different from Ettinghausen's approach. The transcultural movement of visual and decorative idioms between the Islamic world and the Korean peninsula could not follow Ettinghausen's model; there were no commonalities or shared experiences, geographically, historically and culturally. The geographical distance between the Islamic world and the Korean peninsula requires a global perspective in order to trace the movements of cultural elements. As it travelled through foreign regions, Buddhism, Esoteric Buddhism and Confucianism, have all played their parts in apportioning and translating Islamic cultural element to be accepted. To evaluate the variations in the same artistic element, depending on its agent and the receiving society, each semantic framework of these different cultures needs to be addressed.

I have referred to the translation theories in understanding visual and decorative idioms of transcultural movement. Above all, the most widespread and on-going process was one of translation whether this was 'transplantation, osmosis, diffusion, or acculturation'.²³ Although developed in relation to the texts, the modes of conceptualising translation provide alternative models for evaluating the hermeneutical and physical displacements to and in a place of destination. My argument of cultural translation is mainly based on Walter Benjamin's idea on translation together with Homi Bhabha's post-colonial theory. In his oft-quoted passage, Benjamin emphasises that the translation is not one of original and copy but passes through a process characterized by 'a continua of transformation, not abstract ideas of identity and similarity.'²⁴ This also permits 'living-on' of a source text even in its absence. As for the residual cultural unassimilability of the migrant ones in a receiving culture, Benjamin called 'untranslability'. This view shift the emphasis from the priority of artistic idioms to the contingencies of cultural practice, and thereby arguing a dynamic form of production rather than a passive form of reproduction as a mode of reception for foreign idioms.

The two decorative idioms I have chosen, 'intertwined birds' and 'a bird in attack', demonstrate how exotic motifs play a semantic role in a cultural context, beyond the merely

²² As for the diffusion of an artistic idiom, see Karl Jettmar (1967). *Art of the Steppes: The European animal life*. London: Methuen. It explains the spread of 'animal style' in the Eurasian steppe according to this view. And for the area of technology spread, refer to Everett Rogers (1983), *Diffusion of Innovations*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe

²³ Stated by Yorgos Dedes and quoted in Finbarr Barry Flood (2007), "Lost in Translation: Architecture, Taxonomy, and the Eastern 'Turks'", *Muqarnas* (24), 79-115: 79.

²⁴ Walter Benjamin (1997), "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man", *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, Edmund Jephcott & Kingsly Shorter (trans.), London: Verso, 117

decorative.²⁵ When foreign styles and motifs were considered devoid of meaning, they were localised purely as ‘ornament’ or simply died out. This process points to the ‘translability’ and ‘untranslability’ as historically conceived. A travel of a certain decorative idiom across the medieval Eurasian regions went through a similar process, refiguring it in the continua of transformation. The same process of translation took place in a locus of reception. In this way, the artistic idioms or objects can be viewed as constantly ‘(re) produced by a potentially open-ended series of displacements and interpretations mediated and negotiated by multiple chains of actors and agents in specific contexts.’²⁶

Further to the theoretical orientation, the focus of the present discussion is on the way that a certain objects, form and decoration suddenly become prevalent and enjoy unprecedented popularity at a particular time span. As shown in many object-based studies, there is a risk of overlooking the variety of phenomena, dehistoricising and unifying these into manageable items for the sake of argument instead. In order to avoid this pitfall, I owe to three techniques of analysis proposed by Patrick Manning. To adopt cross-cultural approach in our global past, Manning suggested three criteria: firstly, to consider a wide range of interactions –food, dress, music, and others – beyond migration of people, rise and fall of empires, and commerce; secondly, to identify specific criteria and agents for cross-cultural contact; and lastly to give an attention to the changing character of cross-cultural interaction even in the same region throughout time.²⁷ Hence, I will not only address the transmission of specific cultural elements from the Islamic world to the Korean peninsula, but cover a wide spectrum of cultural expressions within the Korean cultural context over the course of time. Through the diachronic analysis, we will discover both the commensurability of these two cultures and the irreconcilable differences between Confucian Joseon and the Islamic culture.

3. Notes on historiography

The topic of cultural connections between Korea and the Western Regions has been a long-standing issue among Korean historians and art historians. Since the 1970s when South Korea started to get involved in trade with and exports to the Islamic countries, the country has seen a rapid increase of serious formal study of the various aspects of the Islamic world, including its languages and literature, social history, economics and international relations. Although non-practical sectors such as culture and literature of the countries where Islam is the major religion, have attracted scholarly interests

²⁵ The same applied to Islamic artistic motifs at the middle Byzantine court. Alicia Walker (2012), "Islamicizing Motifs in Byzantine Lead Seals: Exoticizing Style and the Expression of Identity," *Medieval History Journal* 15.2: 381-408.

²⁶ For the concept of translation and its relevance to premodern cultural production, see Ruth Evans (1994), "Translating Past Cultures?" *The Medieval Translator* (4), 32

²⁷ Patrick Manning (1996), "The Problem of Interactions in World History", *American Historical Review* 101(3):771-82.

from Korean academics, the study of Islamic art has never been seriously discussed in Korea. No academic institute has ever offered a course on Islamic art as a separate unit at any level of formal education in Korea. It was not until the summer of 2013 that the first Islamic art exhibition was held on the Korean peninsula.²⁸

The near-absence of art-historical interest in Korea-Islam relations is in stark contrast to an ever-increasing historical research on the same issue. The following section will present the historiographies of historical research and art-historical research separately.

3.1. Historical research

In the midst of the general tendency of existing scholarship, an historical approach based on text analysis has already been taken on the Muslim presence in the Korean peninsula. Amongst the first-generation scholars of Korean history, Koh Byong Ik (1924-2004) and Lee Yong Bum (1921-1989) are particularly noteworthy for their lifelong contribution to the development of academic interests in the interactions between the Korean peninsula and the Islamic world. Koh started his long academic career on the historical position of Korea with the study of Muslims under the Yuan dynasty.²⁹ His publications, particularly the articles on Korea's contacts with the Western Regions, sets up a scholarly precedent for the study on Korea's international relationship with the regions beyond the Chinese cultural circumference.³⁰ Showing the same interest in East-West cultural communications, Lee approached the topic from the perspective of the continued interaction between the northern nomadic states, especially the Khitans and the Mongols, with the Korean peninsula through the analysis of relevant historical documents.³¹ In his historical research of northern states, he emphasised that academic vigilance was required to avoid racial stereotype and prejudice embedded in Chinese historical records. He further stated that the north-eastern Asia communities had to be approached from an angle different from the pre-existing Sino-centric view. Primarily pertinent to my topic is his

²⁸ The exhibition, named as 'Art from the Islamic civilization: from the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait', was held at the National Museum of Korea, in an attempt to promote international relationship between South Korea and Kuwait. Although the accompanying catalogue [*Treasures of Islam*] was published in the Korean language, it was part of touring exhibitions curated by the Italian Islamic scholar, Giovanni Curatola.

²⁹ Koh Byong-Ik (1949), [Muslims and the Yuan society], idem (1970), [*Studies on the History of Exchange in East Asia*], Seoul.

³⁰ Koh Byong-Ik (1958), "Korea's Contacts with the 'Western Regions' in Pre-Modern Times", *Sahoe gwahak*, II: 55-73.

³¹ Lee Yong Bum (1976), [*Studies on Northeast Asia in Medieval Period*], Seoul.

study on Muslim visitors in the Unified Silla period through an analysis of historical records and comparative investigation of Islamic contacts of Silla with Tang China.³²

Before proceeding onto the next stage of the scholarly development, a mention should be made of the earlier study on this area by Kei Won Chung and George F. Hourani, published in the USA in 1938.³³ As the first ever thorough study on the Islamic geographers' records of the Korean peninsula, the joint article includes detailed descriptions and exploration of medieval Islamic records. While Hourani (1913-1984) is still frequently referred to for his works on Islamic philosophy and trading networks, very little information on Chung (1902-1986), a Korean scholar of this article, remains. From their background, it is most likely they met at Princeton University, while studying under the direction of Philip Hitti when they wrote the article together. Completely independent from Korean scholarship, their work laid solid foundations for Korean scholars to analyse Islamic sources.

After decades of little progress, the historical research on cultural exchanges between Koreans and Muslims made a remarkable advancement at the turn of the century. The work of Jeong Soo-il is particularly noteworthy. Although he was not the first scholar to suggest the long-term, long-distance interaction, Jeong provided a whole new picture of cross-cultural contacts between Silla and Islamic lands in detail,³⁴ unlike the rather one-sided and anecdotal characteristics of prior studies. Jeong was able to connect Korea and Islamic countries on a global scale with reliability and persuasion through his exceptional personal experience of living in various countries. His linguistic ability gave him access to historical documents of those countries and nurtured his profound understanding of pre-modern societies. From his seminal work in 1994, Jeong establishes cultural contacts and communication between the Western Regions and the Korean kingdoms in the early Islamic period by analyzing literary sources written in Chinese, Arabic and Persian.³⁵ In addition to his research on Islam-Korea encounters, he translated a series of important but neglected books, including Hyecho's diary and Ibn Battuta's journey, with detailed annotations.

While Jeong's research gained public support and academic attention, other researchers also contributed to further developments of this field, by focusing on a particular region and culture amongst broad supra-regional contacts of pre-modern Korea over centuries. The research interest of Kim Jeong-wi, an Islamic scholar with a major interest in Iran, supports Jeong's argument of cultural

³² Lee Yong Bum (1989), "[A Review of the legend of Cheyong: Muslim Merchants in Tang China and Silla]", *Han-man gyolyu-sa yeongu*, Seoul: 13-55.

³³ Kei Won Chung and George F. Hourani (1938), "Arab Geographers on Korea", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 58(4): 658-661.

³⁴ When referring to the relationship with Islam, Silla means the Unified Silla period, unless otherwise stated.

³⁵ Joeng Soo-il (1994), [*Cultural Interaction between Silla and the Western Regions*] Seoul; idem (2001), [*History of Cultural Exchange in Ancient Civilization*], Seoul; idem (2001), [*Studies on the Silk Roads*], Seoul.

contacts between Silla and the Iranian cultural zone and elaborates it further to cover the entire period of Silla.³⁶

The most active of all scholars in the academic circles of Korea is Lee Hee-soo, who has continuously produced works on cultural contact between Korea and the Islamic world for the general public and academics alike.³⁷ Whilst his recent discovery of an Iranian epic, the *Kushnameh* has provided fascinating ideas and topics on ancient Iranian-Korean relationships,³⁸ his major interest lies in Turkish literature and history where he advocated the promotion of the status and the significance of the Turkish side of the Islamic world, a relatively new addition to Islamic studies in Korea.

A wider view of the medieval world can be found in the works of Kim Ho-dong, whose research is dedicated to the medieval world of the Mongol Empire. In his topic of Chinese Muslims, with his meticulous approach and linguistic ability, Kim is a true disciple of his tutor, the late Joseph Fletcher, whose painstaking research and linguistic fluency discovered the long-lost connection between New Teaching (*shin xiao*) of Chinese Muslims and the Naqushiband, a Sunni order of Sufism. In his research on the diverse aspects of the Mongol Empire and Goryeo's position in it, Kim has disclosed multiple intersections of various cultures through the eyes of Mongols, Persians, Chinese, and Koreans.³⁹ His detailed study on Isa Kelemechi, a Christian official at the Mongol court, for instance, has provided an important case study to prove cultural fluidity and historical complexity of the period.⁴⁰ His research also describes nomadic states and empires throughout history as decisive cultural agents of East-West traffics. Kim also translated major works relevant to his research interests, including *L'Empire des Steppes* and *The Travels of Marco Polo*. His translation of *Jami al-tawarikh* is closest to its oldest version (1518), now in the Topkapi Museum, and in it he restored the life of the royal house of the Mongols and its history with solid commentary and cross-reference to other related records in diverse languages.

3.2. Art historical research

In contrast to the rapid growth of historical approaches to inter-cultural exchange, art-historical research of pre-modern Korea in relation to the Islamic world has barely made progress. It is true that several Korean scholars have already made some observations on visual and material cultural

³⁶ Kim Jeong-wi (2009), “[Cultural Exchanges between the Korean peninsula and Central Asia before Goryeo Dynasty]”, *Munmyeong-gyoryu yeongu*, 1: 35-88.

³⁷ As for his most recent publication, see Lee Hee-soo (2012), [*Islam and Korean Culture*], Paju.

³⁸ Lee Hee-soo and Karyoosh Akbarzadeh (2014), [*Kushnameh : an Persian Epic Love Story of Persian Prince and Silla Princess*], Paju.

³⁹ Kim Ho-dong (2007), [*The Mongol Empire and Korea: The Rise of Qubilai and the Political Status of the Goryeo Dynasty*], Seoul.

⁴⁰ Kim Ho-dong (2006), “[A Portrait of a Christian Official in China under the Mongol Rule: Life and Career of `Isa Kelemechi (1227-1308)]”, *Jung-ang-asia yeongu*, 11: 75-114.

evidence of such a connection. Ko Yu-seop (1905-1944), the first Korean scholar trained in western-type art historical approach, noticed the ‘Western regional’ traits in some ancient Korean artefacts during the Colonial period of Korea (1910-45).⁴¹ Kim Won-yong (1922-1993), a first-generation Korean archaeologist, developed Ko’s suggestions further, with his first-hand experience of archaeological excavations into a comprehensive argument supporting the nomadic origin of ancient Korean arts. His influential publications discuss the artistic influence of the Western Regions on ancient Korea, the examples of which include Silla gold crowns, glass objects of western origin found in Silla tombs, and Iranian motifs expressed in various media.⁴² Most of his arguments are based on the claim of Korea’s close connections to the western regions beyond China.

In a male-dominated field of archaeological research, Lee Nan-young should be mentioned not just as a first female Korean archaeologist and museologist but for her thorough study of Korean metalwork of the pre-modern period and its international features, a topic hardly touched upon until then.⁴³ Her research on metalwork saw the supra-regional contacts in ancient Korean metalwork through a holistic approach combining traditional art historical approach with technological knowledge.

On the art-historical and curatorial sector, Jin Hong-seop (1918-2010), another immediate disciple of Ko, stated the possibility that, although it was hardly noted, Muslims may have played a certain role in the material culture of Korea from mid-Goryeo to early Joseon in his collected essay on unresolved cases of Korean art history.⁴⁴ Encouraged by Jin, Byun Young-seop delved into the topic of a guardian statue at the tomb of King Wonseong (r.785-798) of Unified Silla in full detail for the first time, connecting it to the Western Regions, with particular emphasis on the Iranian cultural zone.⁴⁵ At the same time, based on Kim Won-yong’s observation that saw the long-range connection in the glass objects found on the peninsula, Lee In-Sook has dedicated her life-long research on glass to prove the existence of extended networks of Korean kingdoms with distant regions through scientific analysis of glass components and stylistic comparisons.⁴⁶ Young-sook Pak, a major Korean art historian active in the West, has developed Kim’s point on foreign features of Silla metalwork

⁴¹ Kim Im-su (1991), [*A Study on Ko Yu-seop*], Hongik University, PhD dissertation; Kim Young-na (2010), “The Achievements and Limitations of Ko Yu-seop, a Luminary in Korean Art History”, *Archives of Asian Art*, 60:79-87.

⁴² Kim Won-yong (1965), [Lineage of Silla Gold Crown], *Art and Archaeology of Ancient Korea*, Seoul, 285-294.

⁴³ Lee Nan-young (2000), [*Metal Crafts of Ancient Korea*], Seoul.

⁴⁴ Jin Hong-seop (2011), [*Mookjae’s talk: Untold story of Korean Art History*], Seoul.

⁴⁵ Byun Young-seop, [*Study on the Hanging Mausoleum*], Ewha Women’s University, MA thesis.

⁴⁶ Lee In-Sook (1999), [*Glass and Ancient Korea*]; James W Lankton, Insook Lee, Gyu-Ho Kim and Hyung-Tae Kang (2010), “Bactrian Glass Vessels in Korean Tombs” K. Janssens et als (eds)(2006), *Annals of the 17th Congress of the International Association for the History of Glass*, Brussels : 579-589.

arguing for the ‘internationalism’ of Korean art, by persuasively linking it to the nomadic cultures of Eurasia.⁴⁷ Now retired from the National Museum of Korea, Min Byung-hoon devoted his research to the arts of Central Asia, especially Buddhist arts, and Korean artistic connections along the Silk Roads beyond East Asia.⁴⁸ Compared to the specialized research interest of these scholars, Kwon Young-pil has tirelessly worked on the ‘syncretic’ feature of early Korean art found in various media from Goguryeo mural paintings to Buddhist statues of the Unified Silla period.⁴⁹ His most recent research on Han Nak-youn (1898-1947), a Korean-Chinese painter working on mural paintings along the Silk Roads, represents an extension of such studies.⁵⁰ All these scholars have contributed significantly to prove that art and material culture of pre-modern Korea was far more diverse and globalised than commonly presumed.

Thanks to their research, ancient Korea becomes known as being in constant contact with distant areas far beyond East Asia. And the history of the Korean peninsula is now no longer to be seen as a ‘Hermit Kingdom’, a term often used to describe the supposedly closed society of pre-modern Korea. Despite the indisputable contribution by scholars mentioned above, nearly all previous studies on the cross-cultural interaction have focused on the early period, namely from the Three Kingdoms (57 BCE-668) and Unified Silla (668-935) periods. Little attention has been paid to the influence that such cross-cultural contacts may have left on the artistic and cultural movements of Korean art history. More importantly, they have paid even less attention to political, religious and cultural changes of the ‘Western Regions’ itself. The reality of the Islamicised ‘Western Regions’ and its possible connection with Korean kingdoms have rarely been discussed in Korean art historical scholarship.

The name of the Western Regions was indefinably used in historical records, denoting various regions at diverse directions. The Regions were known to cover virtually any parts of Eurasia to the west of China; it could have meant Central Asia, as shown in Tang Taizong’s campaign to the Western Regions in the mid-7th century, but in other cases, it could also have meant India, as Xuanzang’s journey to search for Buddhist teachings recorded in his book, *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* (646). The term became more inclusive when covering the Islamic world during the period of the Mongol Empire. Even in present-day scholarly writings, the Western Regions invoke a legendary trace of indefinable geopolitical entities, with no proper attention being paid either to the

⁴⁷ Youngsook Pak (1984), “Internationalism in Early Korean Art,” *Orientalism*, 15(1):12-25; idem (1988), “The Origins of Silla Metalwork”, *Orientalism*, 19(9):174-183.

⁴⁸ Min Byung-hoon (1999), [*The Silk Roads and the Korea Culture*], Seoul.

⁴⁹ Kwon Young-pil (1991), “Ancient Korean Art and Central Asia”, *Korean Journal*: 5-20; idem (1997), [*Art of the Silk Road : From Central Asia to Korea*], Seoul.

⁵⁰ Kwon Young-pil (2011), “[Han Nak-Youn and Mural Paintings of the Silk Road]”, *Munmyeong-ui chungdol-gwa misul-ui hwahae*, Paju : 201-218.

individuality of different Western Regions or to the periodic changes therein. Consequently, most of the discussions on Korea's cross-cultural contacts have concentrated on the pre-Islamic period, or simply ignored the Islamic culture when the contacting regions became Islamicised.

Considering the fact that no systematic teaching on Islamic art is available in Korea, it is not surprising that the international dimension of Korean art since the Unified Silla dynasty has always been defined with reference to Chinese artistic elements from high-end calligraphic and pictorial style to minor decorative motifs. It is a common practice among Korean art historians to explain any new artistic phenomena, whether it be a technological innovation or an emergence of a visual vocabulary, as having been transmitted from China. This Sino-centric view of Korean art has been re-affirmed by most of the articles presented in a decade-long biannual conferences on international contacts and connections of pre-modern Korean art from 1996 to 2006, organised by the Art History Association of Korea, a representative academic community of art historical research in Korea.⁵¹ The study of Korean ceramics, in particular, has evolved along the timeline of the development of its Chinese counterpart.

Due to the absence of teaching and research on Islamic art in present-day Korea, an academic attempt to investigate the link between the Islamic world and the Korean peninsula is yet to be made. Up to now, an article by Kim Lena is the only art-historical publication in Korea with a focus on the artistic relations between Korea and the Islamic art, albeit at a marginal level. The study deals particularly with East-West contact transition of 'ogival', or multi-lobed, patterns during the Mongol Empire.⁵² Having originated in Tang, ogival-shaped patterns, she argues, became popular in northern parts of China during the Liao, Jin and Yuan dynasties, and the contemporary Goryeo dynasty of Korea, which was then transmitted to the Islamic world along the Silk Roads in the 13th century, especially through the westward invasion of the Mongols. Although Islamic art is not as discussed as its East Asian counterpart at equal weight, her article could serve as a landmark representing the first art-historical attempt at connecting Korean art with Islamic art.

4. Sources and their complications

4.1. Written sources

Written sources on Islam-Korea cultural encounters come from both Islamic and Korean sides. Textual sources, even if scarce and patchy, shed light on the history of Muslim-Korean encounters and their cultural interaction. Major documents establishing cultural communication are from official

⁵¹ The conferences were held in the chronological order of dynasties as Goguryeo (1996), Baekje (1998), Silla (2000), Unified Silla (2001), Goryeo (2004), and the early phase of Joseon (2006).

⁵² Lena Kim (2004), "[East-West Contact in the Ogival-shaped Pattern]", *Misulsahak-yeongu*, 242-243: 63-93.

historical documents of the medieval Korea; *Samguk Sagi* [Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms] (1145, hereafter *Sagi*) and *Samguk Yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms](1285, hereafter *Yusa*), two key sources covering the early period of the cultural encounter. For the later period, *Goreyo-sa* [History of Goryeo] (1392-1451) and the *Goryeo-sa jeolryo* [Condensed History of Goryeo] (1452) can be consulted for the Goreyo period, and the earlier entries of the *Joseon wangjo sillok* [Annals of the Joseon Dynasty] (compiled in 1413-1865) for the subsequent Joseon dynasty. On a lesser scale are anthologies of some private writings called *munjip*, inscriptions and fragmentary family records scattered across the peninsula.

Contemporary Chinese works are supplementary to the Korean sources. A valuable source is *Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing* [Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe envoy to Goryeo] (1123, hereafter *Gaoli tujing*) by the Chinese envoy of Northern Song, Xu Jing (1091-1153). Xu Jing's descriptions of the Goryeo society are especially enlightening due to his meticulous observation of various aspects of society. His portrayals of the Goryeo society and comments from the point of view of an outsider revive the Goryeo society and its characteristic customs with great refinement and precision. Another one is *Zhufan zhi* [Description of the Foreign Lands](1225) written by Zhao Rugua (1170-1228), who was a customs inspector of Quanzhou in the Song dynasty. Its meticulous list of nations with their traded goods gives an in-depth picture of trade networks between east and west throughout the medieval period. In addition to these two contemporary sources, Chinese dynastic chronicles are referred to both in original sources and in their translations with annotations. I have consulted, for example, the more recent translation and commentary of Igor de Rachewiltz with Paul Kahn's (1998)⁵³ alongside F.W. Cleaves' (1982) regarding the history of the Mongol ruling class, as well as a Korean translation of the original text in Mongolian by Kim Jang-goo (2014).

Japanese historical chronicles are also referred to in order to corroborate any relevant historical event by elaborating tantalisingly terse descriptions of Korean written sources. Particularly for the first phase of Korean-Muslim encounter, Japanese sources, The *Nihon Shoki* [The Chronicles of Japan] (720), *Shoku Nihongi* [Continued Chronicles of Japan] (797), and *Shoku Nihon Koki* [Continued Later Chronicle of Japan] (869), contain important information on the Korean peninsula of the period, when first-hand Korean documents were not available to us. Among other sources, *Nitto Guho Junrei Koki* [The Record of a Pilgrimage to Tang China in Search of the Law] written by the Japanese monk Ennin (794-864, better known as *Jikaku Daishi* in Japan) provides crucial information on the widespread maritime networks of Silla. And a valuable list of trade items Silla traders brought to Japan is found in the *Baisiragi mojjeuge* [Official Invoice of Products Traded with Silla] (c. 752), the inventory document recorded Japanese aristocrats' purchases from Silla traders.

⁵³ Paul Kahn (1998), *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Origin of Chinghis Khan: An Adaptation of the Yuan Ch'ao Pi Shih, Based Primarily on the English Translation by Francis Woodman Cleaves*, San Francisco.

Against these East Asian documents, Islamic sources are also referred to. Islamic written sources cover Muslims' acquaintance with the Korean peninsula in the early period. More importantly, they provide the information of the period when no contemporary Korean sources have survived. The relevance of these literatures is in the rich information Muslim geographers and travellers left on trade and commerce, ethnography and cultural history, as well as on East Asia including the Korean peninsula.

As for Islamic sources, I have relied on established scholarship with a special focus on the works of Jeong Soo-il and Lee Hee-Soo (see Table 1-a, 2-a).⁵⁴ In addition to their expert knowledge in each academic field, their linguistic proficiency of Islamic lands by translating medieval Islamic documents has been indispensable to my research. When available, English translations on the Islamic sources have been consulted alongside Korean versions. Among Islamic geographers, Ibn Khurdadbih (d.886), Ibn Rosta and al-Masudi (d.956-7) will be mentioned for the Silla period, alongside a merchant, or probably sea captain, named Sulayman al-Tajir [Sulayman the Merchant]. For the Goryeo period when contemporary Korean historical sources record the visits of Muslim traders to their kingdom, al-Idrisi (1058-1154), the most renowned Muslim geographer of the medieval age, located a Korean kingdom (named *al-Silla*) on the map for the first time in the cartographical history. As for the Mongol period, the works of Ibn Battuta (1368-1377) and Rashid al-Din (1247-1318) are sources of information on medieval customs and practices of *Dar al-Islam* and Korea.

4.2. The complications of Korean textual sources

For the inquiry into the literary materials of medieval Korea, special attention needs to be drawn to two issues: The first issue is related to the language used in the source, and its translation. The second complication is the extent of the reliability of the source material.

4.2.1. From classical Chinese into Korean translation

The innate problem of translation is an essential issue when approaching the Korean written sources. All Korean sources under discussion were written in classical Chinese, having been written before Korea invented its own writing system for their spoken language.⁵⁵ The Korean writing system, *hangeul* was devised and finally proclaimed in 1441 during the reign of King Sejong (1418-1450). Even long after that, learned Koreans continued to use classical Chinese for their writings as a sign of scholarship and authority, much like the use of Latin in contemporary Europe.

⁵⁴ Chung Kei Won and George Hourani (1938), "Arab Geographers on Korea", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 58(2): 658-661; Lee Hee-Soo (1991), "Early Korea-Arabic Maritime Relations Based on Muslim Sources", *Korea Journal*: 21-32, 22-24.

⁵⁵ Earlier attempts were made in Unified Silla to devise a writing system, known as *idu* (or *hyangchal*) suitable for the Korean spoken language. See chapter 2 footnote 54.

The use of classical Chinese in written texts does not mean that medieval Koreans spoke the Chinese language to communicate with each other.⁵⁶ Koreans had their own spoken language different from the Chinese spoken language in many aspects including its phonetics, syntax and semantics. Although Chinese terms and idioms were introduced into Korea, mostly throughout the Tang period, and accepted widely in the Korean vocabulary among the learned circle, Chinese ideographs did not always come to correspond to the realities of Korea, and thus did not correctly convey their meaning to the Korean spoken language and society. The confusion became more complicated when proper names were translated from classical Chinese into Korean, due to the difference of pronunciation and local culture. It was made doubly difficult to transcribe any non-East Asian proper names or cultural element because of the double translation – transliterating a foreign idiom into Chinese according to Chinese pronunciation, and then using the same Chinese word but with Korean pronunciation for the same foreign idiom.

Medieval Korean record-keepers had to put those names in accordance with their original pronunciation in classical Chinese. *Daesik* and *hoehoe* are such examples. These two essential terms of the thesis shared each of the same Chinese characters -大食 and 回回 – with China, where they were pronounced differently as *dashi* and *huihui*. While Chinese transliteration had tried to accommodate the original pronunciation of these two words, it lost their native connotation when they were transmitted to Korea and underwent the localisation.⁵⁷ The double translation of this sort made it very difficult to identify or understand any foreign names or cultural element. In medieval Korean records, Muslim travellers or residents were all introduced through this double translation. Some of the Muslim traders visiting Goryeo were recorded in classical Chinese, 悅羅慈, 夏訖, 羅慈, and 保那蓋, in the *Goryeo-sa*. They are pronounced as ‘Yeollaja’, ‘Haseon’, ‘Laja’, and ‘Bonagae’ in Korean (see table 1-a). It is a reasonable guess that those names could mean ‘al-Raja’, ‘Hasan’, ‘Raja’, and ‘Baraka’ or ‘al-Bukhara’, however the credibility of this correspondence cannot be absolute. The issue becomes trickier in the case of *hoehoe* Muslims completely assimilated with local convention. ‘Min Bo’ is such a case (see Table 2-a). Min Bo became a governor of Pyeongyang, the second most important city during the Goryeo period. As for this name, we can ask the questions; did he change his Muslim name in the Korean style and have the surname ‘Min’ followed by a single syllable ‘Bo’

⁵⁶ A common assumption is that three countries of East Asia, China, Japan and Korea in the pre-modern period, shared classical Chinese as their common language, with all important documents written in the language. The historical reality is proved otherwise. They all shared classical Chinese in their elite group, but they were spoken with different pronunciations, and sometimes even incurring different meanings. In diplomatic missions, translators and interpreters were always present in the diplomatic entourage to China. The officials from both countries of Korea and Japan were proficient in their Confucian scholarship and well-versed with Chinese scholars, but their conversations were mainly through writing, not by sharing colloquial Chinese. Koh Byong-Ik (1993), “[Mutual distance and Integration of the East Asian Countries]”, *Changjak-gwa bipyeong*, 21(1) : 276-288, 279-280.

⁵⁷ As for the reason for the Chinese to choose such characters for these two words, see each of the introductions of Part 1 for *daesik* and Part 2 for *hoehoe*.

for his given name? Or, as some scholars suggested, is it simply a Koreanised transliteration of a syllable ‘Min’ of his Muslim name? In the complex web of translation of transliteration of Korean medieval sources, we will never be able to answer it.

The lack of correspondence between the Chinese word and its Korean reality permeates in most of passages describing a foreign cultural scene. A passage of *Goryeo-sa* described a unique feature of architectural decoration of a house built by Jang Sun-ryong, a high-ranking Muslim official serving to Goryeo royal court:

Jang Sun-ryong was originally a *hoehoe* and his original name was Samga. ... Sun-ryong was competing with In hu and Cha Sin in power and luxury, and he had his house built extremely luxuriously and ostentatiously. Its exterior walls were constructed using tiles and pebbles and *decorated* (狀) with floral motif. And it was called ‘Jang’s Wall’. (“Jang Sun-ryong”, Biographies 36, Book 123, *Goryeo-sa*) (Italics mine)

Although translated as ‘decorated’ here, the Chinese character, ‘*sang* or ‘*jang* (狀, *zhuang* in Chinese)’, could mean ‘putting’, ‘covering’, ‘inlaying’ or simply a ‘shape’ in different contexts. Some Korean translations of this passage prefer the interpretation ‘inlaying’ for the sake of visualising the scene, but others prefer ‘decorated’ simply because of its relative neutrality. Knowledge of medieval Korean craftsmanship would certainly help to clarify the actual scene of this particular episode, but no visual record survives to substantiate any argument. In this respect, Korean translators of Korean medieval texts written in Chinese classical characters are in a similarly dire situation as their European counterparts. They have to pay special attention to the degree of complexity in which a Chinese word was used in different contexts.

4.2.2. Primary or secondary source?

Another complication in Korean sources arises from the fact that apart from the *Annals* of the Joseon dynasty, all Korean official dynastic histories were compiled and edited by subsequent dynasties, in the tradition of Chinese dynastic chronicles. In this historiographical tradition, the succeeding dynasty collected all the available written sources which court scribes and historians had already recorded during the previous dynasty, and compiled into an official version of the dynastic history.⁵⁸ Severe editing and heavy re-writing was inevitable with the necessary modification.

In this regard, the official chronicles in Korea, as in China, are not to be deemed strictly primary sources as usually recognised. They are not first-hand knowledge of a situation, or of the period under study, but are highly dependent on the interpretation and the political view of the dynasty in charge of editing. It could be argued that every official history in Korea is an official

⁵⁸ For the Tang example of Sui dynasty, see Denis Twitchett (1992), *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*, Cambridge, 8-10.

interpretation of the historical facts and events, and should be treated as a source with different degrees of intervention of historians depending on their ideological position during the period.

As no other dynasty followed Joseon and therefore its historical documents remain as they were written during the dynasty, the *Annals* of Joseon contain the activities of kings and the court as recorded on a day-by-day basis by official diarists throughout the dynasty (1392-1897). Joseon historians and chroniclers were expected to keep their impartiality to the highest level, and to record the facts according to the classical maxim ‘write them down, do not invent facts (*sul’i buljag*)’, even though the court diarists or chroniclers were appointed to compile historical records, and paid to do so by the court. Rulers were strictly prohibited to see the veritable records for their own reign, with which no Joseon King dared to tamper.⁵⁹ However, the scholar-diarists were by no means ideal impartial observers, nor were they meant to be. As Denis Twitchett wrote of Tang official history, Joseon scholars, following the didactic preoccupations of traditional historiography, were expected to be ‘active participants in, and commentators on, state affairs’.⁶⁰ They were to exercise a sort of moral censorship over the king’s pronouncements and actions. Their ideology or strong moral orientation took ultimate precedence over their impartiality in their record keepings.⁶¹ The *Annals*, in this sense, are another product of the ‘bureaucratic apparatus’ of the Sinic world.⁶²

The didactic orientation of Joseon Confucian scholars gave a strong effect on the source materials including the *Annals of Joseon*. As literati officials were the only group participating in the writings, it is not surprising that commoners and their way of life were rarely depicted in depth. Even less is the chance of finding any detailed mention of foreigners in Korean medieval histories compiled or written by Confucian scholars, who were highly suspicious of foreign or barbaric influences and regarded them as the source of corrupting moral decorum of a society. Therefore, special cautions should be taken in referring to the passages describing Muslims and their deeds in these sources, as they were very often coloured by the strict Neo-Confucian judgments of Joseon literati.

4.3. Material cultural sources and their complications

The material sources chosen for this thesis are mostly comprised of ceramics and metalwork produced in the Islamic world and on the Korean peninsula. They make an entrée into the complex history of Islamic-Korean cultural relation. To complement these two media, other types of objects, such as

⁵⁹ A single exception to this rule was made by Prince Yeonsan (1494-1506), the 10th king of Joseon, who was dethroned for his tyranny and debauchery.

⁶⁰ Denis Twitchett (1992), *The Writing of Official History Under the T’ang*, Cambridge, 8, 10.

⁶¹ Remco E. Breuker (2010), “Writing History in Goryeo: Some Early Goryeo Works Reconsidered”, *Korean Histories*, 2(1): 57-84, 57-60.

⁶² Denis Twitchett (1992), 5-31.

lacquer ware, textiles, architectural decoration, are also considered. Paintings are rarely referred to in the thesis, because of the rarity of surviving Korean works of the period and the reluctance of figural representation in Islamic art.

Thus, the material cultural sources of this thesis belong to the conventional art-historical category of ‘decorative’ or ‘minor’ art, a term subjected to much debate and criticism among scholars. These terms are certainly charged with a value judgment in the strict framework of Western art-historical hierarchy. Some Islamic scholars have recently suggested ‘portable’ art to emphasise ‘their potential for movement and indeterminacy’.⁶³ In addition to their portability, I often collectively define them as ‘practical’ or ‘utilitarian’ art in order to stress their functional use.

4.3.1. Dating of Korean artefacts

As common with these artefacts, it tends to be hard to find an object that provides historical information on its manufacturing date, provenance, and the maker.⁶⁴ In addition to this general tendency, Korean material culture discussed in this thesis has the added feature of the difficulty of determining a chronological order. Vast amounts of pre-modern Korean artefacts were excavated and re-organized during the Japanese colonial period (1910-45).⁶⁵ Many of them were destroyed due to large-scale excavations and frequent lootings, while other objects were dispersed into foreign collections in Japan and the West with their provenance unknown.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Japanese aesthetical preference for a certain aesthetic approach has inevitably affected its dating as well as the hierarchical value of each piece (see chapter 6).⁶⁷

Difficulties in identifying date and provenances for many artefacts become a fundamental problem of Korean art historical studies, resulting in critical differences among scholars. A representative case is shown in a Goryeo celadon from Moon Gong-yu’s tomb (fig.1). This bowl is

⁶³ Eva R. Hoffman (2001), “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century”, *Art History*, 24(1): 17-50, 17.

⁶⁴ Few objects found in Korea bear the inscription of their maker. The earliest known information of the maker of an extant artefact is ‘*Dari*’, inscribed on the underside of a silver bracelet made for the queen of Baekje, dated 520. The earliest survived name on potteries is found as ‘*Choi gil-hwoe*’, seen on the bottom of a proto-type celadon made in 994, or could be ‘Gentleman surnamed *Wang*’ on a high-stemmed cup made in 993, which was found in North Korea. Until now, ten names of craftsmen have been discovered on Korean ceramics but their identities are unknown due to the absence of any corroborating records or relevant context. Jin Hong-seop (1999), “[Biographies of Korean Craftsmen]”, Ch. 25, Seoul.

⁶⁵ Pai Hyung Il (1994), “The Politics of Korea’s Past: The Legacy of Japanese Colonial Archaeology in the Korean Peninsula”, *East Asian History*, 7: 25-48.

⁶⁶ For a particular case of Goryeo celadon, see Charlotte Horlyck (2013), “Desirable commodities – unearthing and collecting Goryeo celadon ceramics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 76 (03) : 467 – 491.

⁶⁷ Park So-hyun (2006), “[How ‘Goryeo celadon’ Became ‘Art’: ‘Goryeo celadon-mania’ and Politics of Yiwanga Museum in the Colonial Period]”, *Sahoe yeongu*, 11: 9-45.

known to be one of the rarest Goryeo artefacts extant that can be dated. The caption of this bowl, in the National Museum of Korea, Seoul, reads:

This artefact is known to have been found in the tomb of Moon Gong-yu (died in the 13th year of King Uijong's reign, 1159). It has become a critical benchmark to research Goryeo celadon decorated with *sanggam*. It shows the production trend of the middle of the 12th century when full-scale Goryeo celadon decorated with *sanggam* had begun.⁶⁸

As an appointed official, Moon Gong-yu was recorded in the official chronicle of Goryeo. The epitaph tablet from his tomb has the inscription of the date corresponding to 1159,⁶⁹ a solid evidence supporting the dating of this bowl to the mid-12th century. *Sanggam* is an important cultural signifier in Korean ceramic history, as a unique invention of medieval Korean potters. This bowl shows not only the *sanggam* technique executed in a very refined way, but it also employed *yeok-sanggam* (reverse inlay) technique of carving away the background and then filling it with white clay, a more advanced form of *sanggam*. With few relevant objects and no documents extant on this matter, Goryeo celadons with *sanggam* have been dated in reference to this object, with mid-12th century as a period of Goryeo ceramics reaching maturity.

However, in-depth research sheds a new light on this artefact. The item in question was not found during a systematic archaeological excavation, but purchased from a Japanese antique dealer in Seoul in 1926 during the Japanese colonial rule. Fifteen other pieces were also bought together with this bowl; they include a stone sword, bronze mirrors and Chinese ceramics. As no evidence has yet been found to support the fact that bowl was part of Moon's tomb burial objects, many scholars have suspected its provenance. Controversy continues on the dating of this bowl in particular, and of *sanggam* celadons in general. In fact, counter arguments have been made for revising the evolution of *sanggam* celadons of the Goryeo period since the recent excavations in royal tombs in Ganghwa Island (2003-2009)⁷⁰ and underwater searches in the sea off the small island, Ma-do in Taean (2008-2010).⁷¹ Approximately, a difference of one century exists among the estimated chronologies of Goryeo celadons.⁷² And it is the reason for dating the objects in the thesis in a broader chronological context, wherever they are not datable or dated items.

⁶⁸ The caption was displayed in National Museum of Korea, Seoul, in the summer of 2013.

⁶⁹ Kim Yong-sun (2001), [*Anthology of Tomb Inscriptions of the Goryeo period, with annotations Vol.1*], Chuncheon; Heo Heung-sik(1984), [*Inscriptions of Korea in medieval period Vol. 1*], Seoul.

⁷⁰ Han Seong-uk (2003), “[Character of the celadon excavated from the tomb of 21st King of Goryeo, Huijong]”, *Ganghwa seongneung balgul josa bogoseo*, National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage: 147-164.

⁷¹ National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage (2010-2012), [*Underwater Excavation: Taean Mado Shipwreck*], No.1, 2,3.

4.3.2. The identity of Islamic art

In addition to common complications of dating and provenance, another fundamental issue has been detected in Islamic art following its relatively late emergence in the 7th century. Contrary to the popular belief, early Arabic Muslims were hardly armed with the Islamic concept of holy war (*jihad*), ordering ‘convert or die’ alternatives to their conquered subjects.⁷³ The primary concern of Muslim conquerors was not to impose the Islamic faith by force. They were rather content with levying taxes on the non-Muslim native populace, and were fairly tolerant of other religions. Likewise, during the early period of expansion, Islamic art favourably continued the visual and artistic tradition of its conquered world of different religions and cultures, and its products were profoundly influenced and inspired by previous empires - Roman, Byzantine and Sasanian. As Islam was not meant ‘as a totally new faith but as the continuation and final statement of the faith’, its visual expression, as Grabar mentioned, aspired to be ‘the sum total of the art and the material culture of the pre-Islamic world’.⁷⁴

Except for its reluctance of figural representations in a religious context, Islamic art could not easily be differentiated from previous cultures Arab Muslims conquered. In this sense, Islamic art and culture, especially at the early stage, acts like a large reservoir of previous cultural heritages. Although cases existed to show sharp disjuncture between the pre- and post-Islam, a common pattern of transition was more complex and inclusive, particularly in cultural and artistic aspects.

A clear witness to this continuation can be found in archaeological evidence from Jordan, Palestine and Syria, which show complex pattern of Islamic settlement. Many of the early Islamic monuments built by the Arab conquerors demonstrate the synthetic character of Islamic art. As early as in 634, the Great Mosque of Damascus was built on the site of a Christian basilica dedicated to John the Baptist, which had long been used as a major sacred place in Roman times and even earlier. It was this inclusive, complex set of cultural, artistic expressions of Islam that came to the East, and, accordingly, contributed to the difficulty of discerning Islamic arts from other cultural imports of the Western Regions.

In conventional East Asian scholarship, foreign elements in cosmopolitan Tang China (618-907) have been commonly regarded as something Iranian or the last echo of Sasanian culture, even if they happened after the collapse of the Sasanian Empire by the Umayyad Caliphate in 651. The work in gold and silver, and the textiles of the 8th-century Hejia village hoard, for example, are regarded as

⁷² Kang Gyeong-sook (2000), [*Research on History of Korean Ceramics*], Seoul, 32-33. There are two theories on the development of Goryeo celadon, either from the 9th century or 10th century. As for the *sanggam* technique, academic debates are focused on whether the early 12th or mid-12th century could be the starting date. Kang suggests, however, that the technique itself developed far earlier than 12th century, independently from celadon developments.

⁷³ G. R. Hawting (2000), *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750*, New York, 4.

⁷⁴ Oleg Grabar (1973), *The Formation of Islamic Art*, New Haven, 41, 62.

the product of Chinese craftsmanship that was mostly receptive to Iranian artistic influence, which came either from ‘Sasanian-Iran’ or Sogdian art from the Eastern Iranian area. There has hardly been any interest in the fact that these objects fall pretty clearly into the first half of the 8th century,⁷⁵ a period more than a century after the Arab conquest of the Iranian cultural zone. Another example of an even closer relationship to the Islamic era is the widely published Famensi deposit near Xi’an, dated 874. The transparent blue glass plate decorated with chequered square demonstrates distinctively Islamic artistic preference for geometric decoration (fig. 2a).⁷⁶ This corresponds to glass objects of Nishapur, an area firmly Islamicised by then (fig.2b).⁷⁷ Without a clear delineation between pre-Islamic and Islamic art, however, the possibility cannot be denied for these objects to have come to China before the Islamic era.

The transition from Pre-Islamic to Islamic period was made so seamlessly that it is sometimes hard to demarcate these two periods. As they conquered large parts of ancient world and extended their power, Muslims inherited the same routes as their predecessors, whether they were Zoroastrians, Nestorians, Jews or Buddhists, and undertook transactions with players at both ends of the continent and regional kingdoms in-between.⁷⁸ Likewise, they inherited a great pool of material-cultural expressions of their predecessors. To historicise the distinctive feature of the Islamic cultural influx into Korea in this continuum, the particular focus of the thesis is to be on uniquely Islamic cultural phenomenon. ‘White bronze’, for example, is regarded as the earliest material-cultural response of Iranian metalworkers to the fundamental Islamic cultural climate of the period. The motifs of ‘intertwined birds’ and ‘a bird in attack’ are decorative idioms which were derived from ancient symbolism of princeliness and reached their culmination in visual diversity and refinement by medieval Muslim artisans.

5. Structure of the thesis

This thesis is comprised of two parts, arranged in chronological order. All parts cover the artistic products of overlapping or transitional periods. Every part addresses the historical situation and the artistic products in different length of time. Considering the continuity and synthetic nature of early Islamic art, the cultural impact of the Islamic world on the Korean peninsula is better understood in a long tradition of cross-cultural communication, when we recognise that long-distance trade and

⁷⁵ Shaanxi Sheng Bowuguan (1972), “Xi’an nanjiao Hejiacun faxian Tangdai yaozang wenwu”, *Wenwu*, 1972-1 : 30-42 ; Qi Dongfang (2003), “The Burial location and Dating of the Hejia Village Treasures”, *Orientalism*, 34 (2), 20-24.

⁷⁶ An Jiayao (1991), “Dated Islamic Glass”, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*: 123-38, 123-24.

⁷⁷ Jens Kröger (1995), *Nishapur: Glass of the Early Islamic Period*, New York, 116-119.

⁷⁸ Richard C. Foltz (1999), *Religions of the Silk Road: Overland Trade and Cultural Exchange from Antiquity to the Fifteenth Century*, New York.

contacts was already expressed in Korean material culture of the pre-Islamic period. As the thesis concerns cultural events during the Islamic period, the discussion of cross-cultural contact in the pre-Islamic period will be included in the Appendix.

The main point of the thesis is discussed in Part I and Part II. They present Korean contacts with Muslims as '*daesik*' and '*hoehoe*' respectively. Each part starts with an analysis of extant written sources that establish the historical background of cross-cultural contacts and interactions during the period under scrutiny. The chapters within each part show case studies of historical and cultural complexities, which show how a particular Islamic artistic element interacted with the medieval Korean kingdom. Each chapter focuses on a corpus of objects or a specific artefact, either extant or described in written texts. The objects under discussion vary according to media.

Part I deals with two cross-cultural cases during the period from late 8th to 13th century. Each chapter starts with the cross-cultural transmission route before presenting a case in point. Chapter 1 shows the maritime trading route as the locus of cross-cultural contact without intermediaries, and Chapter 2 suggests the transmission of 'white bronze' metal technology from the Islamic world into Unified Silla Korea along this route, which was reciprocated by transfer of wire-drawing technique from Silla to Islamic Iran. Chapter 3 shifts the discussion from technology to a decorative idiom shared by Muslims and Koreans via the overland transmission route. It discusses how various agents of diverse ethnicity, religions and cultures across Inner Asia would respond to the motif of 'intertwined birds', a decorative idiom that existed only from 10th to the 14th century. The sudden popularity and equally sudden disappearance of this visual vocabulary serve as cultural symptom attesting to the complex web of medieval Inner Asia.

Part II concerns intercultural contacts during the period until the early 15th century. Also starting with investigations of written sources, it shows the co-existence and interaction between Muslims and local Koreans. Chapter 5 gives a survey of the shift in material culture during this period with a diachronic approach to change in patterns of decoration and in the cultural biography of an object; decorative schemes developed towards meandering, stylised foliate scroll and towards increased density, evocative of decoration of contemporary Islamic arts and objects. And to trace the effect of Korean exposure to Islamic culture on the peninsula, the basin is chosen not least because the ordinariness of the object best testifies to the local reception of Islamic culture at an ordinary level. It reveals the productive afterlife of Islamic material culture well beyond its initial acceptance.

Chapter 6 returns to the discussion of a specific decorative idiom. The motif of the bird attacking its prey enjoyed popularity in the visual vocabulary of medieval Islamic arts and objects, but failed to penetrate into a visual decorum of Korean art – a material-cultural evidence of local reluctance to Islamic iconography in a non-Islamic society. It demonstrates the untranslatability and the limits of transferability of Islamic art into Korean culture. The resistance to a non-conforming visual element grew as the society became heavily realigned through the Confucian transformation,

eventually leading to the complete disappearance of this particular motif from the Korean art scene.

PART I

Muslims as '*Daesik*' and their trade with Koreans: 8th -13th century

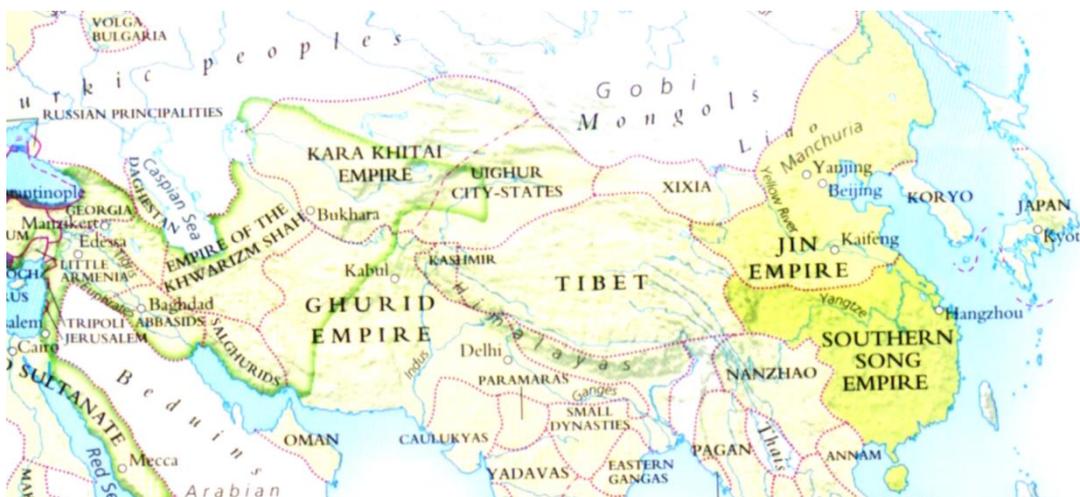
Introduction

1. Historical background

This part deals with the period ranging from the late 8th century when mass conversions to Islam occurred in Central Asia, to the mid-13th century before Goryeo became part of the Mongol Empire in 1270.

During the early stage encompassing approximately five hundred years, the Korean peninsula saw its first unification of the peninsula by Silla (698-935). It was followed by two-centuries of ensuing prosperity, but the peninsula was once more divided into three different states during the late 9th to early 10th century. By the early 10th century, Unified Silla and other local powers were one-by-one subsumed under the Goryeo dynasty (918-1396), which kept a delicate diplomatic position in the volatile East Asian political landscape.

China also went through precipitous societal changes with the fall of the Tang dynasty in 907. Between the period from the decline of Tang to the establishment of the powerful Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), China faced an era of political upheaval under the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960), resulting in a split of the region into several powerful states in competition with each other - Khitan Liao (915-1125), Song China (960-1279), Tangut Xixia (1038-1227), Jurchen Jin (1115-1234) along with Goryeo (918-1396) on the Korean peninsula (map 4).



Map 4) Asia in 1000-1200

During the same period, the Islamic world expanded rapidly through conquest and conversion, resulting in changes of local dynasties and powers. During the early Islamic conquests of the 7th and early 8th centuries, Arab armies established an Islamic empire. By the middle of the 8th century, the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) transferred the capital from Damascus, the centre of Umayyad Empire,

to Baghdad, and strengthened their presence in Central Asia, gradually establishing their own unique culture by incorporating the existing traditions into Islam. The Islamic cultural sphere of Central Asia gradually saw the Persian Islamic dynasties of the Samanids (819-999) and of the Buyids (934-1062) gaining power in an area traditionally under strong Iranian cultural influence.⁷⁹

When the rulership of the Caliphate weakened in the 11th century, Islamic cultures went through rapid Turkification or Persian-Turkic symbiosis, starting with the Ghaznavids (963-1187) and reaching its apogee under the Seljuk Empire (1037-1194). Although local or trans-regional Islamic states played the role of virtual leaders, the Abbasid Caliphate continued to retain the image of the supreme ruler of the Islamic world (*dar al-Islam*). The Caliphate was able to hold a degree of unity among the diverse local powers of the Islamic lands, until its final abolishment by the Mongols under Hulagu Khan in 1258. Nearly all of the regions mentioned in this period had to undergo the sweeping and brutal conquest of the Mongols in the late 13th and early 14th century.

2. Muslims in East Asia

The earliest written reference to Muslims travelling to East Asia is found in the *New Tang History*, which states that a delegation sent by the caliph ‘Uthman arrived at Chang’an (Xi’an), the capital of Tang China, in 651.⁸⁰ The alleged previous arrival of Saad ibn Abi Waqqas (c.595-c.674) and his three companions in 616 has been usually treated as a rather dubious mythical account due to its happening at such an early stage of Islam. The instruction of Prophet Muhammad, “Seek knowledge, even unto China,” has often been quoted as a rhetorical statement confirming the remoteness of China as an unlikely place for Muslims to travel to for any reason. There is, however, plenty of evidence of a close relationship between these two cultures. A wall painting in the Umayyad desert palace of Qusayr Amra depicts a Chinese emperor standing with five other kings, suggesting an early Muslim awareness of China (fig.1-1).

The Battle of Talas in 751 has been regarded as a landmark moment to signal the uncompromising confrontation between the Tang forces and the Muslim army of the rising Abbasid Caliphate. Known as ‘the Black Robed *dashi*’ in Chinese records, the Abbasids decisively defeated the Chinese Tang forces, just as they did defeat the rival Umayyad Caliphate at the Battle of the Zab in 750. While the Battle of Talas marked the end of the Tang dynasty’s western expansion of their territory, the Chinese defeat at the Battle did not worsen the diplomatic relations between the Chinese and Muslims, nor lessen the Chinese presence over Central Asia immediately. The story that Chinese

⁷⁹ Clifford Edmund Bosworth (2004), *The New Islamic Dynasties: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual*, Edinburgh.

⁸⁰ Ouyang Xiu (1936), [*New Tang History*], 221b/11b-12, Shanghai

prisoners captured at the battle spread the paper-making technology to the Middle East and eventually to Europe confirms once again that war creates dynamic contacts between different cultures.⁸¹

The Abbasids, like their predecessors, continued to send embassies to China uninterruptedly after the battle of Talas.⁸² Arab and Persian Muslim merchants and traders from the Abbasid Empire maintained a trade of luxury items between the Middle East and China, and many of them relocated to China.⁸³ By this time, the international relationship between China and the Abbasids became even closer, expanding beyond economic trading and commerce. Chinese Emperor Suzong of Tang (756-762) asked the second Abbasid Caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur (754–775) to help them during the notorious An Lushan Rebellion (755-763). Emperor Suzong's request was answered by Caliph al-Mansur, who sent a strong army of several thousand Muslims. After quenching the rebellion, these Muslims were well rewarded by the Chinese Emperor and allowed to settle in China.⁸⁴ This episode represents one of various reasons behind Muslim migration to China. Although it is true that a high percentage of Muslims who came to China were merchants and traders, many other reasons and motives, including military and political ones, were behind their migration and their eventual settlement in China.

2.1. Muslims as *daesik*

While Korean historical documents of the medieval period do not contain a generic term for Muslims or for Islam, a local term was used to denote Muslims when they first came to their territory. During the period covered in the present discussion, Muslims were known as *daesik* (*dashi* in Chinese, literally meaning 'big eat 大食') in Korean historical records. *Daesik* or *Dashi* is known to be a transcription of the Persian word *Tazi*, a Persianised pronunciation of Arab tribe of Tayyi who was in frequent contact with the Sassanids.⁸⁵ The Sassanian term was initially created in China, and subsequently adopted by Korean history writers.⁸⁶ Although *daesik* normally means Arab, referring to

⁸¹ For other historical cases, see Tansen Sen (Nov. 2010), "The Intricacies of Premodern Asian Connections", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 69(4): 991-999, 994-997.

⁸² In Chinese historical records, Arab embassies came to Tang China at least 25 times from 651 to 750 during the early phase of Islam to the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750). Right after the transition of Islamic power to the Abbasids, the newly formed Caliphate sent emissaries from 752, continuing beyond the end of the Tang dynasty (618-907). See the Chart 2: Embassies from the Arabs, Donald Leslie (1986), *Islam in Traditional China: a short history to 1800*, Belconnen, 31; Mi Shoujiang and You Jia (2004), *Islam in China*, Min Chang (trans.), 3-4.

⁸³ Sheila Hollihan-Elliott (2005), *Muslims in China*, Philadelphia, 30.

⁸⁴ R. Israel (1980), *Muslims in China: A Study in Cultural Confrontation*, London, 80.

⁸⁵ Bosworth, "al-Sin", *El*, 9:618

⁸⁶ The earliest extant Chinese literature to mention the term is the fragmentary notes from the *Jingxingji* [Record of Travels] under the *Tongdian* [Comprehensive Institutions](766-801). Now lost, the *Jingxingji* was

the people from the country of *daesik-guk*, or the Arabian Peninsula, it is improbable that contemporary East Asians knew the ethnicity of ‘*daesik*’ and the difference between the terms, Arabs and Muslims.

The danger of equalizing Arabs with Muslims in general has been rightly pointed out by both historians and art historians.⁸⁷ The Arabian Peninsula was continuously populated by people of diverse ethnicity, religion, and language, who intermingled with outsiders in neighbouring areas and with other regions. ‘Arabs’ could thus not automatically mean ‘Muslims’, as there were Jews, Christians and other religious communities in Arabia. Equally, the term ‘Muslims’ may embrace a wider variety of ethnicity and locality. It could have been used to describe a Persian, a Turk, an East African, an Indian or a Southeast Asian, as much as an Arab. Given the lack of detailed geographical knowledge in China and Korea during the period under discussion,⁸⁸

Like Chinese, Koreans of this period did not have a generic term to define Islam or Muslims in general and used a rather metonymical term to denote Muslims when they first came to their territory. The ethnicity or religious identity of new trading partners may have not been the most important matter for local Koreans. Their foreign physical appearance and noticeably different costumes must have been the most visible difference in Muslim visitors and traders. It may suffice to say that *daesik* are Muslims or Muslim traders from faraway, including, but not exclusive to, Arabia. This rather ambiguous usage of *daesik* epitomizes Korea’s long-distance trade-only relationship with the Islamic world.

2.2. Hyecho and his westward journey to Islamic lands (*daesik-guk*): 8th century

The first East Asian to identify the land of *daesik* (*daesik-guk*) and to capture the change of political authority and religious dominance from Buddhism to Islam in Central Asia is Hyecho (704-787, *Huichao* in Chinese), a Buddhist monk from the Unified Silla Kingdom. He travelled to the relevant regions to acquaint himself with the language and culture of the land of the Buddha. In his *Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India* (723-c.730), Hyecho recorded his travels through the five

written by Du Huan upon his return to China in 762 after 12 years of captive stay in the Islamic empire. The first record using the term as a name for China is the memoirs written by Hyecho, a Silla monk; Jeong Soo-il (1994): 83.

⁸⁷ D.A.Agius (2008), *Classic ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, Leiden: Brill, 8-13, Ch. 13, 361ff ; For the cultural fluidity between the Islamic world and neighboring regions in the medieval period and their trade relationship, see Scott Redford and Nina Ergin (ed)(2010), ‘Introduction’, *Perceptions of the Past in the Turkish Republic: Classical and Byzantine Periods*, Leuven, 1-11.

⁸⁸ For the history of mapping in the Islamic world and China, see Hyunhee Park (2012), *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds: Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-modern Asia*, Cambridge; despite the development of commercial activities in Song China, the key officials of the dynasty saw foreign countries and international trade as subsidiary. As such, the map drawn in the Song period, if including foreign regions, is not the one with the grid of uniform squares and accurate measurement by modern standards. Daniel C. Waugh (2013), “Expanding Geographic Horizons along the Maritime Silk Road”, *The Silk Road* 11 : 200–214, 207-8.

Indian kingdoms of West, East, North, South and Central India and observed on local diet, languages, climate, cultures, and political situations.⁸⁹ His pilgrimage started from China, leading to India by sea, and finished with his return journey to China by land, via the Pamirs and Kucha of East Turkestan in the first quarter of the 8th century.

The memoirs contain much information about the Byzantine Empire (Greater *Bulim* / *Fu-lin* in Chinese), the Arabs, Persia and several Central Asian states. He accurately describes the geography of Persia as lying west of Tohara and Arabia as North of Persia, and informs that Persia had recently been absorbed into the Arab world.⁹⁰ In the early 8th century, when Hyecho travelled to the regions, Tohara and other small nations to the west of the Pamir Plateau became areas of contention between Tang China and the Umayyad Caliphate, often leading to sudden changes in political and geographical borders. The small nations between these two super powers of Eastern and Central Asia had to establish themselves through this volatile environment.

By comparison, the *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* (*Da Tang Xiyu Ji*, 646) by Xuanzang (602-664), the great Dharma-seeking monk of a century earlier, reveals that Buddhism was declining in India and Central Asia as the main religion. ‘Where the Southern Indian King resides’, he wrote, ‘[d]uring the days when Nagarjuna was alive, the monastery had over three thousand monks. But at present the monastery is ruined and there are no monks. Seven hundred years after Nagarjuna this place began to decay.’⁹¹ Instead, Islam is widespread with growing influence, as he noted in Samarkand:

Arab rulers turned ancient temples into mosques. In Samarkand (*Gang-guk* / *Kangguo* in Chinese) there is only one monastery and one monk, who does not know how to revere the Three Jewels of Buddhism. In these countries of the Hu people [Barbarian or foreigners], both the beard and hair are cut. People like to wear white caps made of cotton.⁹²

He lamented Persia and Arabia ‘as having no knowledge of Buddha and faith in their own deity.’⁹³ Allah (or Heaven) was the only deity of worship at that time. Other descriptions, such as ‘no difference in clothing of king and his subjects’, ‘no discrimination in different foods (all food is eaten

⁸⁹ The manuscript was discovered by P. Pelliot from Dunhuang in 1908, and interpreted and studied by Luo Zhenyu (1866~1940) and Takakusu Junjiro (1856~1945). Luo Zhenyu (1909), [*Dunhuang Grottoes Manuscripts*], 1, Beijing. Particularly notable among recent researches is Kuwayama Seishin et al. (1998), [*Study on Hyecho's Wang ocheonchukguk jeon*], Tokyo, and Jeong Soo-il (2004), [*Hyecho's Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*], Seoul. For the English version, see Yang Han-Sung, Jan Yun-hua and Iida Shotaro, Laurence W Preston (trans and ed.)(1984?), *The Hye Cho's Diary: Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*, Berkeley, Calif : Seoul, Korea.

⁹⁰ Jeong (2004), 341

⁹¹ Jeong (2004), 197.

⁹² Yang, Jan and Iida Shotaro (1984?)(trans. & ed.), 54; Jeong (2004), 373.

⁹³ Yang, Jan and Iida Shotaro(1984?)(trans. & ed.), 53; Jeong (2004), 341, 360.

from single dish)’ and ‘no customs such as bowing to one’s knees (to the Buddhist statues)’,⁹⁴ show his careful observation with his apprehensive surprise as a devout Buddhist monk encountering the non-Buddhist transformations of the societies. In spite of the shift in religious and political environment, nevertheless, no acrimony or conflict among local people were recorded in Hyecho’s diary.

Hyecho’s description delivers the reality of the relationship between Buddhism and Islam, which was mutually tolerant, or indifferent, in this period. Some pictorial evidence supporting such religious leniency is found in the wall paintings of Dunhuang, Gansu province, China. Now famous for its Buddhist caves maintained throughout the medieval period, the place was better recognized for being a crossroads of trans-regional trades along the overland Silk Roads connecting China and Central Asia. The painting in Cave 158, dated to the mid-Tang period, depicts the passing of the Buddha, surrounded by local princes from Central Asian states in their lamentation (fig.1-2a). The funerary entourage of local elites consists of different ethnic and religious identities, united in their grief and despair on the passing of Buddha. They are crying, beating their chests, piercing themselves with swords or knives, or cutting off their noses or ears. Their presentations are so accurate in their physical appearance, garments and customs of different states along the Silk Roads that each participant can be recognized in their ethnicity and religious affiliation. Amongst them is found a Muslim attendant, depicted as wearing his stereotypical white head scarf (fig.1-2b).⁹⁵ The visual presentation of a congregation of people with diverse religious beliefs at the early phase of Islam is to show the cultural ecumenical climate during the period. In addition to the historical information it delivers, Hyecho’s travelogue represents the possible west-ward travels made by other Koreans to the Islamicised areas of this period.

3. *‘Daesik’s trade routes to the Korean kingdoms*

As shown in Hyecho’s travelogue, there were two ways of cross-cultural encounters between Korea and the Islamic world for a long time in over five centuries: One was through maritime routes during the late Silla to early Goryeo period (late 8th to 11th centuries); the other through overland connections during the mid-Goryeo period (10th to 12th centuries) when powerful local East Asia states were subject to fierce competition not only in military campaigns but also in cultural advancements amongst themselves. All these states, including Goryeo (918-1396), actively accepted and entertained material cultural products by getting involved in supra-regional, cross-cultural trade networks. Both

⁹⁴ Jeong (2004), 360.

⁹⁵ Roderick Whitfield (1995), *Dunhuang : Caves of the Singing Sands : Buddhist Art from the Silk Road Vol.1*, with photographs by Otsuka Seigo, London, 182.

of these trade routes had been in use during virtually all the centuries (see Appendix). By occupying the regions through these historic roadways, Muslims were able to exercise their trade efficiently and powerfully as new international merchants and intermediaries. The advancement of maritime navigation made it equally possible for Muslim merchants to engage in long-distance trade carrying goods in bulk with more frequency and efficiency.⁹⁶

Thanks to this active international maritime network, Unified Silla became to play a crucial role in East Asian maritime. Once united, the elites of Unified Silla directed their interest towards inter-regional trade and commerce to appease their seemingly insatiable demand for exotic goods and they became an efficient local intermediary connecting Tang China, Silla Korea and Heian Japan (794-1185). They actively participated in cross-cultural contacts and trade, documented in various Muslim geographers' works (see Table 1-a). Goryeo inherited the maritime trade route from Silla when they formed the new dynasty, and large-scale Muslim traders and merchants were able to directly visit Goryeo through the established maritime route (see Table 2-a). I will deal with this in detail in the next chapter, and will argue that 'white bronze' metalworking technology came to the Korean peninsula through the maritime route from the Islamic world.

Equally important to maritime trade was overland trade and cultural exchange. Compared to the studies on cross-cultural exchanges via the maritime trade and contact, there is virtually no research on artistic exchanges between the two medieval cultures through land routes. This lack of scholarly endeavour may be due to the fact that it is very difficult to find accurate historical records of trade and exchanges through continuously identifiable intermediaries along the long stretch of the continent. On the other hand, the maritime trade route started to flourish as a mass trade route after the emergence of Islam, which not only opened up the possibility of direct exchanges between Silla and Islam, but also enabled documentation of the relationship in historical records.

However, overland routes and seaways were mostly used in parallel for international trade and transportation. Compared to maritime trade, the trade volume when using overland route was similar, but the movement of people through these routes was easier. The history of cross-cultural trade cannot be properly understood without taking into account the transcontinental trade route, famously named as the Silk Roads. This is well attested by the historical fact that Buddhist monks made more frequent use of overland routes than of maritime journeys during the process of the spread of Buddhism to East Asia. International trade on overland routes took place through a myriad of intermediaries and dynamic exchanges among local powers. In the course of this overland trading process, material cultures were shared and transmitted, eventually shaping into a common culture along the relevant regions.

⁹⁶ For the expansion of Muslim seafaring in medieval times, see George Hourani (1995 [1951]), *Arab Seafaring: In the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton, 51-86.

Amongst many different denominations including ‘Silk Roads’, I take the term ‘Inner Asian intercultural style’ to explain the cultural phenomena widely shared by whole parts of the Islamic world to Goryeo. The term can more clearly point to the transmission route of the particular motif of the ‘intertwined birds’, an example of a shared style. The seemingly simple motif acted as an international visual idiom of the medieval period, as it travelled and was accepted along the overland trade routes. Although its visuality remained almost intact, the idiom was open to various possibilities of local translations, hence various forms of visual adjustment. Interestingly, this adaptation process is reminiscent of the localization in the spread of Buddhism to East Asia. Chapter 2 presents the cultural adjustments of this idiom over continental travel routes and it proves that some aspects and products of material culture serve as historical evidence where few written sources survive.

1. Chapter 1. The maritime network between the Islamic world and the Korean kingdoms

This chapter consists of two sections: The first section explains how the maritime trade network could make it possible to connect such different cultural zones as the Islamic world and the Korean kingdoms. The evidence, which has been found in Muslim writers' records, Korean historical documents, and other material cultural traces, confirms that Muslim traders went to China via the increasingly used maritime route. Within the supra-regional contacts between seafaring Muslim traders and local Koreans, I will discuss the interregional maritime network in East Asia, controlled by Silla and Goryeo seafarers, merchants, and Buddhist monks. The way that this local network interacted with long-haul international trade will also be analysed.

The period this chapter covers encompasses the 8th century when a distinctive Islamic artistic expression emerged up to the 13th century when the Mongols appeared on the historical stage. During this period, the Korean peninsula saw two unified kingdoms – Unified Silla and Goryeo. However, Muslim writers did not seem to care about dynastic changes of their trading partner. They simply kept the name of 'Silla' until Goryeo came under the rule of the Mongol Empire, and preferred to use it even after they heard of the new name as 'Kaoli'. Accordingly, I will approach the Silla-Goryeo transition as described in written resources, not as a continuum. Also included are the trade goods between the two cultures. The relevant written sources will be discussed in chronological order.

1. Islamic written sources and supporting evidence

1.1. 'Al-Silla' in Muslim records

It is not clear when Muslims and Koreans made the first contact with each other, and how it was made. However, *Silla* and the relevant information in the Kingdom appeared in the writings of medieval Muslim geographers from the 9th century, by which period their maritime navigation had greatly improved. More than one century earlier Muslims and *daesik* were mentioned in Korean historical records. No less than twenty Muslim scholars from Ibn Khurdadhbih (c. 820 – 912) to Al-Idrisi (1099–1165/1166) mentioned the Silla.⁹⁷ Referring to these written sources from the medieval Islamic world, Hourani argues that 'some Moslems went as far as Korea (al-Shila or al-Sila), either by land or by sea'.⁹⁸ He includes Silla on the map of Muslim maritime coverage (map 5).

⁹⁷ W. Heyd (1885). *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge*. Leipzig, p.32; K. W. Chung and G. F. Hourani (1938), 658-661; Lee Hee-Soo (2011), [*The Survey of New Discovery, Analysis and Interpretation of Ancient Manuscripts and Literary Materials on Korean Studies in the Middle East*], Seoul; Jeong Soo-il (2002).

⁹⁸ G.F. Hourani and J. Carswell (1995), *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton, 72.

merchants. A Muslim merchant known as Sulayman al-Tajir [Sulayman the Merchant], whose identity is not clearly confirmed, gave accounts of his travels to India and China, with endings as follows:

On the sea side [of China] are the islands of al-Sila, whose inhabitants have fair skin; they send gifts to the lord of China and say that if they did not do so the heavens would not send them rain. None of our companions has reached their country to bring back reports about them. They have white falcons.¹⁰⁰

Sulayman's explanation on Silla has often been dismissed as unreliable, mainly because of its description of Silla as islands.

This mistaken observation, however, could have been made by Muslim traders once they reached the country by way of sea for the only purpose of commercial trade. Like Sulayman's story, Korean historical records in the early Goryeo dynasty also mention that it was through the seaway that Muslim traders ultimately visited the peninsula (see Table 1-b). They stayed in the capital for trade and commerce, without the necessity of travelling to the hinterland. Hence, temporary visitors of the medieval period most likely believe, that the geographical characteristics of the Korean kingdom were those of an island or islands, especially when more than 3,000 islands, big and small, surround the Korean peninsula. This geographical misunderstanding of regarding Silla as an island or islands continued to appear in Islamic written sources of the later period, including the ones by al-Qazwini in the mid-13th century, Dimashqi and al-Nuwayri in the early 14th century. It may indicate that the maritime route was the only available source of large-scale transportation for long-haul travellers visiting East Asia, including the Korean peninsula, at that time.

In spite of its terse and vague introduction, Sulayman's description does contain some historical facts of the Korean kingdom. Sulayman accurately mentions Silla's relationship with China, explaining their gift-giving to Chinese emperors as a diplomatic tool of safeguarding national peace and safety. Furthermore, as he noted, among imported items from Silla, falcons were particularly favoured by the Tang court, together with sable and pine nuts. Falcons were so highly prized that they continued to be the favourite present of Korean kingdoms to the Chinese imperial courts. The Mongols applied this trading practice by demanding increased quantities of native species of falcons of the Korean peninsula and they exploited falconry to the extreme. Upon the request of the Mongol-Yuan court, on authority called *Eung-bang* (Division of Falconry) was established in the Goryeo period for the sole purpose of breeding falcons and of promoting falconry. It survived to the Joseon period in spite of their fierce anti-Mongol policy (see Part II).

¹⁰⁰ Abu Zayd Hasan ibn Yazid al-Sirafi, 10th century (1733) *Silsilat al-tawarikh*. (Ancient accounts of India and China, by two Mohammedan travellers, who went to those parts in the 9th century), tr. from the Arabic, by Eusebius Renaudot, London: Printed for S. Harding Kei, 38. For modernised translation, refer to Kei Won Chung and George F. Hourani, (1938), 658-659.

Over time, Muslim geographers and writers showed that their knowledge of the Korean peninsula became more accurate. Ibn Khurdadbih rightly recorded Silla not as a series of islands but as connecting to the mainland. His *General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms* (*Kitāb al Masālik w'al Mamālik* 846 / 885) is known to be the earliest reference of a Korean kingdom from an identified Muslim writer. The book was written when he was serving as 'Director of Posts and Intelligence' in northwestern Iran under the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutammid (r. 869-885).¹⁰¹ Ibn Khurdadbih first mentioned 'the land of al-Shila' as being 'located across from Qansu to the extreme end of China':

It is mountainous and is governed by many rulers (kings, *Muluk*). It has much gold. Every Muslim, who entered it, would settle down there permanently because of its excellence. No one knows what is beyond it.¹⁰²

He situated Silla in a somewhat vague geographical relation to Qansu, its exact location remained disputed. Each sentence in its brevity contains many historical facts of the Korean kingdoms of the time. Exactly as in his record, the Korean peninsula was known for its ranges of mountains, covering roughly seventy percent of its landmass. And his report on 'many rulers' suggests that the information may have been gathered from the earlier period when three or more local kingdoms had existed in the peninsula before Silla eventually unified them in the mid-7th century.

In the 10th century, several more comments from Muslim writers followed, with more details added to earlier statements. Some of them repeated a certain amount of the earlier information. They praised Silla for its pleasant weather and landscape, noble people and their incredibly high standard of life. Above all, its abundant gold was mentioned repeatedly. These accounts must have been part of rhetorical trope of the period, as they seem to have been passed down from earlier records and were shared widely among Muslim writers. Nevertheless, the apparently imaginative storytelling provides considerable insights into the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula and their international relationship with the Islamic world. A closer reading of the seemingly insignificant and fragmentary anecdotes often leads to important pieces of supra-regional information on the period.

In 903, Ibn Rusta noticed the land of Silla in his geographical work of *Catalogue of Precious Things*, while describing the route to China. He pointed out that Silla consisted of the mainland and islands, saying: "Beyond China on the side of the sea there are neither known kingdoms nor any country that has been described except the country of al-Sila and its islands."¹⁰³ While repeating some

¹⁰¹ All translations are done with reference to K. W. Chung and G. F. Hourani (1938) ; Jeong (1992) : 152-208, 314-320 and Kim Jeong-Wi (1977), "[The Image of Korea reflected in the medieval literature of the Middle East]", *Hanguk-sa yeongu*, 16.

¹⁰² Lee Hee-Soo (1991), "Early Korea-Arabic Maritime Relations Based on Muslim Sources ", *Korea Journal* : 21-32, 22, 24.

¹⁰³ C. E. Bosworth et al (2010), "al- Šīn." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, P. Bearman et al. (eds)(2010).

of earlier records, he newly comments that it was Iraqi people who moved to Silla: ‘Foreigners from al-Iraq or any other land who go there seldom depart, because of the health of its air, the softness of its water, the fertility of its soil, and the abundance of its resources.’ Al-Masudi wrote of China and Korea in his geographical work, *Learning and General Survey* in 955-6 as the last inhabited areas in the east, saying that “the farthest outposts of civilisation in the east are the frontiers of China and al-Sila.”¹⁰⁴ From his writing, ‘al-Silla’, like China, has ‘a single king and a single language.’ His remark of ‘a single King’ differs from that of the 9th-century Muslim record, suggesting Muslim writers did not just repeat earlier documents but updated their information on the Korean kingdoms.

While the dynasty of the Korean peninsula changes from Silla to Goryeo in 935, medieval Muslim records continued to use the word ‘Silla (al-Sila, al-Silla)’ for the peninsula. Al-Idrisi (1058-1154), the most renowned Muslim geographer of the medieval period, is the first geographer to locate Korea on a world map. As with earlier Muslim writers, the country was recorded as the name of al-Silla when it was already well into the Goryeo dynasty. Al-Idrisi describes the peninsula as composed of six islands. According to the brief record in his book entitled *Trekking Adventurer across Remote Regions* in 1154, travellers to Silla did not think about leaving it under the charm of its pleasant climate. He observed, there is ‘a city called *Kaiwa* in Silla.’ The name, although not absolutely confirmed, may refer to ‘*Gyerim*’, an old sobriquet for Silla.¹⁰⁵ In the *Old Book of Tang*, Tang Gaozong designated Silla as Gyerim Territory in 663 and King Munmu of Silla as the *Gyerimju dodok*, Head of Gyerim Territory. The name was pronounced ‘*Gyewi*’ in China at that time. It was also used in India as identifying Silla.¹⁰⁶ As Muslim sailors and merchants were actively engaging in trade and contact with China through India and the southeast they may have picked up ‘*Kaiwa*’, as it was close to the Chinese pronunciation of *Gyerim* or *Gyewi*, from China or India.

No further description is found until al-Qazwini (1203-1283) recorded ‘Silla’ in the 13th century at the time the Mongols emerged as the new power in Eurasia. The life of al-Qazwini spans the turbulent period when Hulagu marched his invincible Mongol army to destroy the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and established the Ilkhanid (1256-1353) dynasty in Iran. Al-Qazwini mentions

<http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-1080> Accessed 17 November 2011

¹⁰⁴ C. E. Bosworth et al (2010); S. Maqbul Ahmad (trans.)(1989), *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China*, Shimla , 80.

¹⁰⁵ The name literally means ‘rooster forest’. *Sagi* related the term to the legend of the birth of the Kim clan’s founder, while *Yusa* sought the origin from the founding myth of Silla. According to *Sagi*, a book of Silla, now lost, *Gyerim japjeon* [*Miscellaneous Anthology of Gyerim*] was written by the 8th-century Silla scholar Kim Daemum. ‘Gyerim’ appears again as the title of the early 12th-century book *Jilin Leishi* (*Gyerim Yusa* in Korean), written by Sun Mu, Song envoy to Goryeo, on the language and customs of the native Koreans.

¹⁰⁶ Koh Byung-ik (1984), [*Tradition and Modernization of the East Asia*], Seoul, 78; *Samguk Yusa*, 263

‘Silla’ twice in his books, mostly following previous geographers and legends accumulated over the course of centuries, but added more details to earlier explanations. Being remote and little known, al-Silla is described as ‘an Earthly Paradise’:¹⁰⁷

Silla is a country at the furthest limit of China and of the utmost excellence. Afflictions of the body are unknown there because of the health of its air, the sweetness of its water and the excellence of its soil; its people are unequalled in handsomeness and freedom from disease. It is said that when the water is sprinkled in their houses it exhales the odour of ambergris. There are few plagues or diseases and few flies or lions; sick people from other countries are brought here and their sickness ceases. Muhammad ibn-Zakariya al-Razi [the famous doctor, 865-925] said that whoever enters this land settles in it and does not depart, because of its excellence, its abundant resources, and its plentiful gold.¹⁰⁸

In spite of medieval literary convention praising a foreign land in a long rhetorical trope, certain merits of Silla are fairly realistic to the author, such as plentiful water and good soil, with abundant gold.

The comment of al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) is shorter and more concise, repeating a geographical description of Korea as a series of islands. His account, however, adds interesting information of Muslim migrants to Korea.

At the side of this eastern sea beyond China there are six islands, known as the islands of al-Sila; some of the followers of Ali who fled in fear for their lives in the early days of Islam came and settled here.

Mention about the followers of Ali was already made by Dimashki (d.1327), a cosmographer from Syria, and repeated with a slight variation by Ahmad al-Nuwayri (d.1332).¹⁰⁹ The statement by al-Maqrizi was not perceived as reliable, since no reasonable explanation could have been provided as to why this particular group was suddenly mentioned after such a long time gap since its emergence during the early phase of Islam.¹¹⁰ Although further research would be needed, these anecdotal comments confirm the fact that Muslim scholars noted migration and subsequent settlement of Muslims on the Korean peninsula as a fact. Furthermore, some Muslims even tried to find out the identity of the Muslims who went to the far and strange place. Over the course of centuries, Muslim writers provided more concrete descriptions of Korea. With increasing knowledge of its location and

¹⁰⁷ Kei Won Chung and George F. Hourani (1938), 660.

¹⁰⁸ Ferramd. Relations, 312.

¹⁰⁹ Kim Jeong-wi (1977): 29-50, 42-25.

¹¹⁰ Jeong (1992), 205-6.

natural features, they treated Muslim migration and their subsequent settlement on the Korean peninsula as a matter of fact.

In the 9th-century description, Sulayman noted that no Muslim seafarer or trader had ever reached Silla, ignoring the possibility of direct commercial activities with the Silla Kingdom at the time. Unsubstantiated as they often look, most Muslim writers stated that some Muslims had actually visited and even remained to stay on the Korean peninsula. It is interesting that artefacts of the late Silla period often give clues to the presence of a Muslim population in capacities other than trade and commerce on the peninsula. Notable examples are found in some of the figural statues discovered inside tombs, alongside some guardian statues, of the Silla period (fig. 1-2).¹¹¹

Contemporary Silla annals recorded intriguing stories of surprising arrivals of foreigners. According to *Sagi*, King Heongang (875-886) of Silla was greeted by four people of mysterious origin on his tour of Silla's eastern territory in 879 (Book 1, *Sagi*). These people, with 'bizarre appearance and strange outfit', were regarded as *Sanhae jeongryeong* (Mountain-River Spirit) residing in the oceans and the mountains. An article from the *Yusa* corroborates the amazing appearance of one such visitor who suddenly appeared on the shore at the same spot. He was named 'Cheoyong (Son of dragon)', and given an official post. He settled in Silla and married a local Silla woman. In the records, all the characters appearing in the *Cheoyong* legend were particularly noted for their distinct physical appearance and different attire.

More interestingly, they performed a dance so unique that people gave it a name of 'cheoyong's dance'. The dance must have been a typical combination of whirling, twirling movements performed with bent knees and jumping spin, commonly known as Sogdian dance. A bronze figure, now in the Shandan Municipal Museum, Gansu Province, China, shows the dancer to be of West Asian origin in the depiction of its clothing, hat and shoes (fig.1-3). His large nose is greatly exaggerated to accentuate a defining feature of Sogdians and of Persians. The dance was to be played at court ceremonies of Korean kingdoms until the Joseon dynasty. In the 18th-century *Gisa gyeocheop do* [Scene of the Elder Statemen's Private Banquet at Kisa], five male dancers perform the dance with bent legs and whirling movements in the centre of the painting (fig.1-4). Each dancer wears a mask with a high nose and oddly elongated chin, maintaining the image of the exotic facial appearance of original performers of such dance. The dance form travelled and transmitted extensively with the spread of Islam to the inter-cultural contacting zones across the Asian continent.

¹¹¹ Byun, Young-seop (1975), "[Study on the Hanging Mausoleum]", *Idaesawon*, 12: 57-82; Kwon Young-pil (1991), 10.

The port where these ‘strange-looking men’ were found is identified as Gaeunpo (literally ‘Cloud-clearing shore’) in present-day Ulsan.¹¹² Ulsan, the biggest port in Silla, was not far from Gyeongju, the capital of Silla. From this port, sailors could travel directly to Yangzhou, the prime trading centre for Islamic merchants between 8th and 10th century.¹¹³ All these details point to the likely direction Muslims took in order to escape the persecution in China during the tumultuous incidents of the period, in particular the Huang Chao Rebellion. In 878 Huang Chao’s men burned and pillaged Guangzhou and massacred the foreign merchants, including Muslims, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians alongside many Chinese civilians.¹¹⁴ Abu Zayd recorded that ‘no less than 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians and Parsees perished’.¹¹⁵ The arrival of the *Cheoyong* group most likely occurred in this period of unrest when Western traders hastily fled en masse to escape the disaster, and dispersed along the trade route.¹¹⁶

1.2. How Muslims had maritime contact with Koreans (1)

The aforementioned written sources show two ways through which Muslim traders and merchants gained knowledge about the Korean kingdom –either through Korean émigrés living in China or from Muslim travellers’ first-hand experience of the Korean peninsula. Even when some Muslims ultimately made the long-haul journey to the peninsula, it was a trip made via some entrepôt along the coast of China. Considering the delicate diplomatic relationship in East Asia from the 11th century onwards, however, another possibility of direct encounters between Muslims and Koreans without an agency will also be discussed.

If Sulayman and other Muslim travellers had collected the information from someone outside the Silla territory, some port cities of Tang China could have been the most plausible places for it. Sulayman reportedly stayed in the city of Guangzhou in the south-eastern coast of China, where more than one hundred thousand Muslims lived in the middle of the 9th century.¹¹⁷ In Chinese historical records,

¹¹² [Geography of Gyeongsang Province] (1425)

¹¹³ Lee Yong-bom (1969), “[A Study on the Legend of Ch"öyong: Islamic Tradesman in Tang Period and Silla Dynasty]”, *Jindan hakbo*, 32: 1-34, 20-34.

¹¹⁴ Wang Gundwu (1998), 78.

¹¹⁵ G.F.Hourani and J. Carswell (1995), 76.

¹¹⁶ Michael Flecker (2001), “A Ninth-Century AD Arab or Indian Shipwreck in Indonesia: First Evidence for Direct Trade with China”, *World Archaeology*, 32 (3) : 335-354, Shipwrecks.

¹¹⁷ In this historical circumstance, the infamous Yangzhou massacre took place in 760 when several thousand Arab and Persian merchants were killed by Chinese insurgent bands. *New Book of Tang*, Book, Biography 69, ‘Tian Shengong’; Yarshater et al(ed.)(1993), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, I, 553 ; Jacques Gernet (ed.)(1996), *A History of Chinese Civilization* , Cambridge, 292.

Muslims coming to China known as ‘*dashi*’ became the middlemen of the *Nanhai* (South China Sea) trade during the Tang dynasty. Their ships were used as the chief means of commercial trade and intercultural contacts during the 8th century,¹¹⁸ stretching back to the 7th century.¹¹⁹ By the mid-9th century the direct sea route was established from Basra to Guangzhou, and there seem to have been regular voyages of Muslims to China.¹²⁰ The Belitung shipwreck is such evidence showing the large-scale sea trade during the middle ages. It is the wreck of a (Arab or Persian) ship from China, apparently destined for the Middle East. The ship sunk in the Gelasa Strait between Bangka and Belitung Island, Indonesia, sometime between 758 and 845, or more specifically around 830 and 840, when the Tang dynasty (618-907) and the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258) were both at their peaks. The quality and quantity of the cargo is enough to prove that the amount of maritime trade between these two powers was not just high in value but substantial in volume. The ship contained luxury objects of imperial quality, but most of the cargo was for a mass market.¹²¹

When Muslim traders in Tang China stayed in these port cities, they resided in a specially designated area, called *fanbang* [Foreign Quarter]’. In this quarter they were protected by extra-terrestrial rights with their own leader. They preserved their native tongues and their culture (free to wear their original dress).

In the late 8th to 9th century when Chinese southern maritime routes were controlled mainly by Persian traders, Koreans also had a dominant role in trade between East China, Korea and Japan. Their successful domination of maritime trade in three kingdoms in East Asia -Tang China, Silla Korea, and Heian Japan - was attributed to the excellence of Silla ships. Silla vessels of the mid-9th century were highly regarded as ‘certainly capable of withstanding wind and waves (839, 6th year of Jowa, Book 8)’, and ‘sail through waves (840, 7th year of Jowa, Book 9)’, according to *Shoku Nihon Koki* (869). General Jang Bo-go (787-846, or 841) was particularly reputed as an influential figure in the East Asian maritime route during the late Silla period.¹²² He established a major naval complex of

¹¹⁸ Wang Gungwu.(1998), *The Nanhai Trade: The Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* Singapore, 73.

¹¹⁹ G. F. Hourani (1995), *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton, 46-62.

¹²⁰ For example, a type of large turquoise-glazed earthenware jar with simple decoration was produced in Iraq in the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods. Judging from the sherds of the jars found as far away as Japan, they seem to have been used to ship date syrup to East Asia. My gratitude goes to Tim Stanley for reminding me that this type of ceramics were found along the maritime route.

¹²¹ Thousands of Changsha ceramics were found, including 40,000 bowls, 1,635 ewers, 763 inkpots, and 915 spice jars. Regina Krahl, et al. (eds.)(2010) *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, Washington, D.C.,Singapore.

military headquarters and a trading hub called *Cheonghaejin* ('Blue /Clear Sea Garrison, fl. 828-851) at the maritime crossroads of the East Sea,¹²³ protecting Silla merchants and coastal residents from pirates. Thus he maintained strong commercial ties and cultural exchanges with China and Japan.¹²⁴

Like Muslim traders, Silla people resided mainly in the coastal areas of Shandong, Zhejiang, and Fujian provinces, and Yangzhou and Haizou in Jiangsu province. Yangzhou and Haizou were particularly busy boom towns of the Tang dynasty, as they had extensive canal waterways to connect various parts of the region.¹²⁵ A rare account of General Jang and Silla people's impressive maritime connections comes from the journal of a Japanese monk Ennin (794-864), who made a pilgrimage to Tang China in 840 in search of Buddhist scriptures.¹²⁶ Ennin relied on the maritime facilities of General Jang not only to reach China and for his return journey to Japan, but also on the diverse capacities of Silla people, such as interpreters, local guides, and Buddhist believers, for his inland travels throughout China. In his journal, Ennin recorded many cases evidencing the wide network people from Silla had obtained in Tang China; Jang's effective control of the East Asian sea route, prosperous communities of Silla immigrants in Tang China, called *Silla bang* [Silla Quarter], and their Buddhist ceremonies in the *Silla won* [Silla institute], Buddhist temples built by Silla people in Tang.¹²⁷

Yangzhou has been frequently quoted as representing vibrant international port cities of the Tang dynasty. Ennin noted the substantial scale of foreign communities in the city. An interesting excerpt describes the seventh day of the first month of the year 839, when Ennin was invited by the Chinese local authority to attend the fundraising lecture on the Diamond Sutra in order to renovate a Ruixiang [Auspicious Images] Hall in the Xiaogan Temple, Yangzhou. In this invitation document, he

¹²² Iryeon (2006 [1281]), *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea*, Tae-Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz (trans.), Book Two, Seoul, 103; Il-yeon (2002[1281]), *Samguk Yusa*, Kim Won-jung (trans.), Seoul.

¹²³ Edwin O. Reischauer defined Jang's naval influence akin to a maritime commercial empire, translating Jang's title as 'commissioner', a governor of oversea Silla people. Edwin O. Reischauer (1955), *Ennin's Diary; the Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, New York, 294.

¹²⁴ Kim Sang-gi (1935/6), "[On the Ancient Maritime Trade and the Development of the Late Silla period-with a Focus on Cheonghaejin Ambassador Jang]", *Jindan hakbo*, 1-2.

¹²⁵ Park Hyun-gyu (2007), "[Review on the names of Silla administrative places in China]", *Daeye munmul gyoryu yeongu*, 7: 59-89. Many other locations along the southern coastal area of China still preserve the names relating to Silla, a testament to the active presence of Silla people since the Tang dynasty. Park Hyun-kyu (2006), "[Study on the Use of Name 'Silla' in the Southern Part of Fujian Province, China]", *Silla Munhwa*, 28 : 167-188

¹²⁶ Edwin O. Reischauer (1955), 288; For Korean translation, see Shin Bok-ryong (2007), [*The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*], Seoul.

¹²⁷ Among these temples, *Jeoksan Beophwa-won* (Ch. *Chishan Fahua-yuan*) in Rongcheng of Shandong Province was built for Silla émigrés in China with the patronage of General Jang. For the lives of Silla people in Tang China, see Kwon Deok-young (2005), [*Research on Silla people in Tang China*], Seoul, 88-111.

found that some of the expenses were already covered by the donations of the people from *Bosi guo* (Persia, *Pasa-guk* in Korean) and from *Zhanpo guo* (Southeast Asia, or Champa country, *Jeompa-guk* in Korean):

In estimation, 10,000 strings of cash will be enough to repair this hall. Persian people have already paid the sum of 1,000 strings of cash and Southeast Asian people donated amount of 200 strings of cash. Now the number of Japanese people is small, the money of 50 strings of cash is to be asked for (*Ennin*, the seventh day of the first month, 839).

The difference in the donation of funds by each foreign community, as shown above, reflects the actual size and influence of the residents of each group. From the above reference in Ennin's record, we know that the number and influence of Persian residents in Yangzhou was at least five times higher than that of Southeast Asians, another group of well-connected international traders and merchants.

Whilst Persian Muslims made up significant parts of *fanbangs* in the city, the Silla community was another powerful and densely inhabited group, due to its geographical proximity to China and its active maritime network in East Asia. On several occasions in Yangzhou, Ennin met Wang Cheong and Wang Jong (no family relation), both active traders from Silla, who had active networks not only in the local *Silla bang* but across the region. It is in Yangzhou where Choe Chiwon (857-?), an eminent Confucian scholar from Unified Silla, held his civil posts after passing the Imperial examination of Tang China at the age of eighteen, an indication of the strong presence of Silla émigrés in the city during the 9th century.

Koreans in *Silla bang* and Muslims in *fanbang* were located in close vicinity of each other, as both areas were only for foreigners. This geographical closeness resulted in frequent contact and communication between them, leading to busy and intense cultural interactions. Among archaeological discoveries in Yangzhou were many fragments of Islamic glass from the Tang architectural ruins of the city, which were used for storage for foreign merchants.¹²⁸ Fragments as well as complete pieces of Islamic pottery were discovered at sites in the city. At the same site, Silla ceramics were found alongside with Iranian ceramics.¹²⁹

Apart from being traders and merchants, substantial numbers of Silla people came to live in Tang China in diverse capacities, such as envoys, students and Buddhist monks. On a more formal interaction, Silla and the Abbasids frequently sent official envoys to Chang'an and the durations of their sojourn often overlapped; Silla sent official envoys to Chang'an every year, sometimes more than once a year. Between 703 and 738, more than 46 of a large group of emissaries were sent to

¹²⁸ Qi Dongyang (2010), 226, ft26.

¹²⁹ Feng Xianming (1986), "Persian and Korean Ceramics Unearthed in China", *Orientalism*, 17 (5): 47–53.

represent Silla in the court of Tang.¹³⁰ According to Chinese records, as many as 39 official Muslim envoys visited China between 651 and 798, and at least 13 diplomatic gifts were recorded between 752–98.¹³¹ Just as some people from Silla served the Tang government, so did some Muslims.¹³²

With the coming of new powers and traders, additional trading ports were added to the list of established ports in China.¹³³ In the Song dynasty, Quanzhou in Fujian province and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province in eastern China quickly became known as two of the greatest seaports of international trade. Various ethnic groups with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds came to these cities from neighbouring countries and further away. In Quanzhou, most of the foreigners appeared to have lived in the commercial district, located to the south of the wall and in the eastern suburbs of the city, but there was no designated foreign ward or quarter like under the Tang dynasty. Muslim Arabs and Persians made up the most prominent, and perhaps largest, group of foreigners in the city.¹³⁴ By the early 12th century, Quanzhou in particular grew in importance and the Arab settlement was larger than that in Guangzhou.¹³⁵ The fame of the city with its prosperity and varied foreign communities spread throughout the medieval world under the Arab name of ‘Zayton’.¹³⁶ The long-standing presence of Muslims and the Islamic culture is demonstrated by its renowned monuments. The tomb of two worthies in Quanzhou commemorates the earliest Muslim emissaries to China who were reputedly sent by the Prophet. One of the oldest mosques in China, the al-Ashab

¹³⁰ Lee Hee-Soo (2010), “[Cultural Confluence along the Maritime Silk Roads: Socio-economic Studies on the Triangle Relations among Arab-China-Shilla]” Seaport city networks and cultural interaction, *Colloquium* 11, Korea Maritime University: 37-57, 49.

¹³¹ Bai Shouyi et al. (2003), *A History of Chinese Muslim*, vol.2, Beijing, 239–42; See footnote 6 for the Muslim envoys in the Tang period ; Donald Leslie (1986), 3-4.

¹³² At least 32 Muslims served in Tang forces as high-ranking military officials; Cheong Eun-joo at al. (2005), [*World History at Silk Roads*], Paju, 293.

¹³³ Chinese historical documents record at least 54 Muslim embassies came to the Northern Song (960-1127) from 954 to 1118. The diplomatic and commercial visits from the Islamic world were renewed in 1127 when the Song court established their capital at Hangzhou located south of the Yangtze River Delta. See the Chart 4: Arab embassies in the Song; Donald Leslie (1986), 62-3.

¹³⁴ John W Chaffee (2006), “Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of the Maritime Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49(4): 395-420.

¹³⁵ For recent research on Quanzhou in English language, see Hugh Clark (2002), Angela Schottenhammer (ed.) (2001), John Chaffee (2008) in the bibliography

¹³⁶ Zayton (‘olive’), variously spelt Zaytun, Zaiton, Zitun, etc., is an Arabic transliteration of the Chinese characters *Citong* (刺桐), meaning coral tree (*Erythrina*). The name seems to have been derived from the extensive plantations which Liu Congxiao (留從效) (906-962), the governor of the province in 944, had planted round the city when he extended its boundaries to increase foreign trade. D. Howard Smith (1958), “Zaitún's Five Centuries of Sino-Foreign Trade”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3/4 :165-177, 165.

mosque -also known as the Quingjing mosque – with its history of continuous repairs and renovations attests to the enduring Islamic cultural manifestation in the city.¹³⁷

The international relationship of Korean people with Muslims through the agency of China was succeeded by the subsequent Goryeo dynasty. The same trading communities were continuously inhabited and used by Koreans in the Goryeo period, under the new name, *Goryeo gwan* (Goryeo Residence) instead of *Silla bang*.

2. Supporting evidence from Korean kingdoms : 11th to 13th century

Two centuries later than stated in Islamic historical records, clear remarks on maritime connections with Muslim traders appear in Korean written sources. According to *Goryeo-sa*, Muslim merchants made at least three visits in the earlier period of Goryeo during the 11th century. *Daesik* (Muslims) came to the peninsula ‘to pay a tribute to the King’, on three different occasions in 1024, 1025, and 1040. The first written record of Muslim visits to the Korean peninsula is found in the tenth month of lunar calendar in 1024. According to the entry, *Yeollaja* came to Goryeo with one hundred merchants from the country of *Daesik-guk* (Arabia) to pay their tribute. In the same month of the following year, *Haseon*, *Laja* and another one hundred people came from ‘the sea of Arabia’ to pay tribute again (Book 5, *Goryeo-sa*, see Table 1-b).

2.1. How Muslims had maritime contact with Koreans (2)

These records suggest that Muslim merchants visited Goryeo with a flotilla of ships. While their destinations during the Silla period was Ulsan, a port situated in the south-eastern part of the peninsula, the inter-regional commercial activities shifted to the port of Byeokrando, an island in the vicinity of Gaegyeong, the capital of Goryeo.¹³⁸ As its location was much closer to overland and maritime trade routes, many foreign traders and envoys came relatively easily from Central Asia and Southeast Asia. A famous Goryeo scholar wrote of this busy port in his poem:

Wave is coming forth and back again, coming and going boats are tied together.
Leave this pavilion in the morning and it will arrive at the place of Southern Barbarians
before midday.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Chen Dasheng et al. (eds.)(1984) [*Islamic Stone Inscriptions from Quanzhou*], Yinchuan , Fuzhou,16-18; The earliest Arabic tombstones unearthed in Quanzhou has the date 1171 inscribed.

¹³⁸ Kim Sang-ki (1959), “[Maritime Activities and Cultural Exchange: with the Focus on Yesung Port]”, *Guksasang-ui jemunje* ,4.

¹³⁹ Yi Kyu-bo (1220-1241), *Dongguk yisangjukjip* [Collected Works of Minister Yi of Korea], Book 16

As for the travel route of these Muslim traders to Goryeo, the general view is that they made this long-distance voyage by stepping through port cities in China as staging points. Quanzhou is assumed to have been the most likely port serving such transshipment of Muslim traders from China into Korea. Some scholars argue that Quanzhou merchants, mainly Muslims, outnumbering all other ports, must have been the *daesik* who are recorded as having visited Korea.¹⁴⁰

The argument of indirect maritime trade by way of China, however, raises some issues. Since the Tang dynasty, China took organized bureaucratic measures to control and restrict international trade on the Chinese coasts. Since the *Shiibo-si* (Bureau of Maritime Trade) was established to manage overseas trade in the early 8th century under the Tang dynasty,¹⁴¹ its role and function expanded during the Song dynasty from the fundamental tasks of checking trading ships and tax collection to include management of merchants, foreign or native, logistics and sale of cargo. It was even responsible of rescue work of shipwrecked vessels.¹⁴²

Furthermore, the 11th century was a particularly difficult time for Song-Goryeo international relationship. After three invasions by the Liao, Goryeo signed a peace treaty in 1019 on condition that it would keep any disputed territory in return for abandoning the era name imposed by the Song dynasty and take up the Liao one, and of making no further contacts whatsoever with Song. Since then, diplomacy and trade between Song and Goryeo went behind the scenes, and could not be publicly acknowledged. Was it therefore possible under the circumstances that a trade fleet of 100 foreign merchants in a Chinese port would have left for Goryeo quite freely?

‘Song merchants’, with their renowned commercial acumen, managed to monopolise on the profitable routes of interregional trade, and established close links with Goryeo’s ruling class. There is little reason to believe that these merchants would have shared the detailed information about profitable sources of commerce with Muslim traders. A more plausible explanation for the visits, in my view, is that Muslim seafaring traders took the seaway to trade directly with Goryeo, without going through Chinese maritime control or regional entanglements. Although relating to an earlier period, there are some items from the list of trade goods in *Sagi* to testify that Silla maintained its own trade network, independently from Tang China. In the Book 8 of *Sagi*, Tang Emperor Xuanzong (712-756) offered words of compliment to the Silla king, because some objects among Silla tribute items

¹⁴⁰ Billy K. L. So (2000), *Prosperity, Religion, and Institutions in Maritime China: the South Fukien Pattern, 946-1368*, Cambridge, Mass, 36, 38.

¹⁴¹ For the history of the shobo-si in earlier period, see Wang Zhenping (1991), “Tang Maritime Trade Administration”, *Asia Major*, 4(1) :7-38.

¹⁴² For research on the Shibo-si in Korean language, Lee Kyoung Kyu (2005), Lee Won-geun (2005), Jun Young Seop (2009), and Shin Chae-sik (2008) in the bibliography

were extremely elaborate and luxurious ‘being imported over the treacherous sea and vast plateau.’¹⁴³ It shows that Silla was able to source unique products unavailable to the Tang court. China certainly played a crucial role as a cultural and commercial intermediary between the Islamic lands and the Korean kingdoms, but this should not completely exclude the possibility of direct contact between Muslims and Koreans through maritime trade networks.

2.2. The significance of the record in *Goryeo-sa*

The number of Muslim visits was recorded only three times in *Goryeo-sa*. Against such a minor treatment, there are several reasons to argue that these events were planned well in advance and executed with more frequency than actually recorded. The actual significance of these articles could be hidden in the terse summary.

Firstly, a particular note can be made of the date of the visit of Muslim traders to the peninsula. It coincided with one of the most celebrated festivals in Goryeo, the *Palgwanhoe*, a Buddhist festival mixed with ancient animistic elements held in autumn.¹⁴⁴ From the beginning of the Goryeo dynasty, this ceremony was an important trading opportunity for foreign envoys and traders. Goryeo kings invited the merchants of Song, Jurchen, Japan and Tamra (present-day Jeju Island of Korea) to the ceremony, and the traders received substantial gifts in return of their ‘tributes’ to the court (9th month of the 10th year of the reign of Hyeonjong, Book 4; the first month of the inauguration year of Jeongjong, Book 6, *Goryeo-sa*). The festival was known to have fallen on the tenth and eleventh month of the lunar calendar, which was the same period as the arrival of Muslim traders. They must have known which season was the most profitable for their mercantile visits, and did not fail to take advantage of the international trading opportunities provided by the festival season of Goryeo. Their awareness was richly rewarded by the royal court of Goryeo. In 1040, Jeongjong (1034-1046) rewarded them with luxuries including gold and silk upon their departure.

The substantial number of Muslim visitors gives another clue to the possibility that their visits were carefully organised with prior knowledge of their host. The number of Muslim visitors was recorded as one hundred on their each visit. Whether this number can be taken as a rhetorical expression to represent the large size of Muslim merchant groups or as the exact number of them, the scale and impact of their visit can be measured against other mercantile visitors. From contemporary historical records, the most important international traders during the Goryeo period were Chinese merchants from Quanzhou. According to Chinese literature and *Goryeo-sa*, they came to Goryeo nineteen times from 1015 to 1090. The largest group of Quanzhou merchants having ever visited to

¹⁴³ Kim Pu-sik (1154[2012]), Edward J. Shultz, and Hugh H. W. Kang (trans.), *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, Seongnam-si, Book 8.

¹⁴⁴ For research on the *Palgwanhoe*, refer to An Gye-hyeon (1956), Kim Hye-suk (1999), An Ji-won (2005), and Jeon Yeong-Joon (2010) in the bibliography

Goryeo was once composed of one hundred and fifty people. Compared to most frequent merchants from a neighbouring country, one hundred Muslim traders on each visit must have been a scale large enough to leave a huge impression on Goryeo record-keepers.

It would not have been possible to launch such big maritime expeditions without prior knowledge of the country. Although their prior visits had not been recorded in Korean historical sources, extensive participation of Muslim traders in any one visit must have been the result of their continuing trade with the previous periods of Goryeo or Silla. Contemporary Islamic records as discussed earlier support Korean interaction and trade with Muslim merchants from Silla to Goryeo.

Related to these matters is the frequency of their visit. The names of the leading figures of the Muslim trade delegation on each visit were mentioned and recorded as *Yeollaja*, *Haseon*, *Laja* and *Bonagae*.¹⁴⁵ It was more customary in official chronicles to refer to foreign visitors by their ethnicity rather than their individual name in official chronicles, unless they were formal envoys from foreign states or regular visitors with important tasks. Among more than thousand Chinese merchants and visitors, only a few were identified with their name.¹⁴⁶ Even rarer was a recording of an audience of the king with foreign visitors or any mention of them.¹⁴⁷ The identification of the names of Muslim visitors in the Korean official chronicles and royal consideration of them indicated their special status. They were most likely to have made previous visits on a regular basis. At least their visits were frequent enough to leave a memorable impression on their host.

The Preface of the *Goryeo-sa* addresses the principal rules of compiling and editing numerous historical documents written during the Goryeo period. One of them is not to repeat the same event, unless associated with kings and royal families. The Preface of *Goryeo-sa* admits,

King's speeches were all recorded and the titles and addresses used in the Goryeo society were all kept as they were used. However, a customary event is only recorded if it is the initial event for its kind, thereby showing the example. But any event should be noted if the King himself resides in it.

Under this condition, the following questions can be raised; Are those three episodes of Muslim visit an exhaustive record of all the events that actually happened, or a selection of repetitive events?

¹⁴⁵ For their transliteration, al-Raza, Hassan, Raza, and Barakah or al-Bukhara are suggested. Lee Hee-Soo (2008), [*Cultural Interaction between Korea and Islam Along the Silk Road*], 10th Annual Lecture of Korea Foundation Cultural Center, Seoul.

¹⁴⁶ Typical examples of such cases include *Chuk Yeonjo* 祝延祚, an international trader from the Northern Song who naturalized to Goryeo (1124, 1st year of King Injong, *Goryeo-sa Jeolryo*), *Ha Dugang* 賀頭綱, Song merchant, whose episode with a Goryeo couple gave an inspiration to the folksong 'Yeoseong River', and *Im Daeyu* who brought the largest group of merchants –estimated to have been 330 people–to Goryeo in the eighth month of the year 1148.

¹⁴⁷ For the different measures taken by Goryeo administrators to deal with foreigners, see Park, Oak-kol (2001), "[The Naturalized People's Dwelling Place in the Goryeo Period]", *Hanjung immunhak yeongu*, 7 :141-170.

Although official records mentioned that Muslim merchants suddenly came to Goryeo again in 1040 after a 15-year interval, is it not possible that they did come to Goryeo annually, as shown in consecutive year of 1024 and 1025? No mention of their visits in the intervening years could simply be the result of the editing rule to skip ‘customary events’ that incurred regularly. As mutually profitable trade and exchanges had been made between the Goryeo court and Muslim visitors, it was very unlikely that Muslim traders simply deserted the maritime route when no serious chaos was recorded during the intervening period.

It is an established fact that the Confucian principles of Joseon literati cast a long shadow over the compilation of *Goryeo-sa*. Commercial activities and merchants of the Goryeo period, to mention just one example, were not properly recorded and worryingly under-represented. Confucian scholars despised and dismissed traders and merchants as the lowest class of society, who were ‘doing nothing but playing in groups, wearing silk clothes without farming silkworms, and eating good foods despite being extremely unworthy’ (3rd month of the 3rd year of King Gongyang. Book 35, *Goryeo-sa Jeolryo*). It was at these Confucian scholars’ request that King Sejong of Joseon approved the royal edict of 1427 to renounce their Islamic cultural identity for Muslim residents on the peninsula and to assimilate fully into Joseon society. It was highly unlikely that Joseon scholars had a positive view towards Muslims and their roles in society. Whether due to historical memory of the Muslims’ role in the Mongol Empire or their unease of sharing royal support, power and benefit with foreigners in high society, or simply because of an increasingly closed-door policy of the period, mentions of Muslims by Joseon Confucian literati can hardly be a fair and accurate reflection of real life. In all likelihood, the level of Muslim contacts with the Goryeo dynasty was not accurately documented, nor duly appreciated by the compilers of history.

3. Trade goods between the Islamic world and Korean kingdoms

The trading items exchanged between Muslim visitors and Korean kingdoms are not often mentioned in medieval texts. Often, archaeological findings and remaining objects can help to overcome the lack of evidence and reinforce the argument of medieval connection between two cultures.

3.1. From the Islamic world to Silla

Numerous entries of Korean written sources indicate the importation of various foreign goods during the Silla period. In 834 (9th year of King Heungdeok), a decree was proclaimed to prohibit the import of exotic goods in order to curb the extravagance of Silla people. The decree states that a royal act of prohibition needs to be issued owing to Silla’s overindulgence in foreign goods and luxuries, which is

reminiscent of its contemporary Tang China. An example from the long list of prohibited items applied to the women of the higher rank of the Silla society:

Only exotic items from foreign imports are admired, and native products are disliked for being crude...Hereafter prohibited are the gold and silver thread, tail feathers of peacocks, kingfisher's feather. Comb should not be decorated with *seul-seul*¹⁴⁸ and tortoiseshell. Hairpin should not be inlaid and decorated with beads. Crown should not be decorated with *seul-seul* ('Costume', Miscellaneous 2, Book 33, *Sagi*).

All the items mentioned in the decree were from foreign lands; kingfisher's feathers from Southeast Asia, *seul-seul* or bluish-green accessories from Central or West Asia, tortoiseshell from Borneo, the Philippines and Java. The year of this decree falls into the period when Muslim merchants, whether Arabs or Iranians, were actively involved in international maritime trade. It was during King Heungdeuk's reign that General Jang set up his maritime base camp in present-day Wando, an island in the south sea of Korea, to take advantage of such trade environment. The decree was more honoured by breaching it than by observing it. Similar regulations were proclaimed many times during the late Silla period and surviving objects attest to Silla's continuous imports of such luxury items. Some such examples were gems and semi-precious stones, textiles and incense, and glass objects.

Attributed to the late Silla period, some of the Silla artefacts are decorated with exotic gemstones and semi-precious stones, although mines for such minerals have not been found to this date on the Korean peninsula. A highly ornate comb made of tortoiseshell, datable to the 9th century, has a handle decorated with an exquisite gold border and is inlaid with bluish-green gems, presumably emeralds or turquoise (fig.1-5). These gemstones are also inlaid into three hanging pendants, two on the front with eight-petalled flowers and one on the back with a ten-petalled flower.

Another example, a raden bronze mirror of the same period is decorated densely with the cut linings of mother-of-pearl, and ornamented with motifs of flowers and birds in various colours from red amber to blue turquoise (fig.1-6a). Having originated in Tang China, raden was transferred to Silla in 733 (recorded in the entry of the 32nd year of King Seongdeok, *Sagi*). And Silla developed the raden-making skill to produce fine objects with local craftsmanship by the 9th century. Raden mirrors of similar style and technique are now stored at the Shosoin, Japan (fig.1-6b). They were probably

¹⁴⁸ '*Seul-seul* 瑟瑟 (*se-se* in Chinese, *sit-sit* in Japanese)' is a gemstone, but what stone it exactly means is still escaping us. Lee Yong-beom (1969) suggests blue-greenish gemstone originated from Jurkistan or Tashkent for this stone, whereas Laufer argued that *se-se* in Chinese pronunciation is the transliteration of an Iranian word of 'emerald', 'the original of which, however, has not yet been traced (p.516)'; Laufer, B. (1919), *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran : With Special Reference to the History of Cultivated Plants and Products*, Chicago, 516-518.

part of items purchased from Silla.¹⁴⁹ The materials were from various parts of Asia, including Myanmar, Iran and Afghanistan.¹⁵⁰ Gemstones and jewellery, such as ambergris, pearls, ivory, rhinoceros horns, coral, cat's-eyes (chrysoberyl), and other translucent yellowish gemstone, are mentioned as the product of the country of *dashi* in *Zhufan zhi* (1225). Having been involved in international trades with the places to produce such gemstones, Muslim traders most probably were the agent delivering a variety of luxury goods of diverse origins to East Asia.

As Muslim traders played an active role as trading intermediaries in the international trade, so did Silla in East Asian trade network. Documentary proof for their inter-regional trading connections can be found in Japanese historical records of the period. From the *Nihon Shoki*, Silla sent camels to Japan on two separate occasions in 680 and in 686 (the first year of *Shucho*), an indication that Silla had already obtained this non-East Asian animal through trade, gift or others.¹⁵¹ More information on inter-regional trading of Silla is found in the *Baisiragi mojjeuge*, the inventory document of 752 recording Japanese aristocrats' purchases from Silla traders. This document consists of 30 scrolls, and describes a thorough list of orders made by Japanese aristocrats. The list of exceptionally diverse items on the *Baisiragi mojjeuge* includes items of re-traded goods as well as local products from Silla. An example to suggest Silla's involvement in intermediary trade is a type of woollen carpet, described as 'dapdeung' and 'guyu' on the list. Analyses of the origin of these words and its related descriptions have revealed that these terms, originated from Takht or Takhta in Persian, actually represent Persian textiles made by using wool and other fabrics.¹⁵²

Other items on the list such as precious stones, spices, incense and perfumery also highlight the intermediary role of Silla. Incense was highly coveted among East Asian elites. Its importance in ancient Korean kingdoms is well attested by incense bags in gold decoration, attached to gold girdles, mostly excavated from Silla tombs of the 5th to 6th centuries (fig.1-7).¹⁵³ Having been already known for nourishing the body and the spirit,¹⁵⁴ incense became an essential part of liturgical

¹⁴⁹ Choi Jae-seok, [*Shosoin Collection and Unified Silla*], Seoul; Jin Hong-Seop(1992), "[Raden Mirror Inlaid with Mother-of-pearl]", *Unofficial History of Korean Art*, Ch. 22, Seoul.

¹⁵⁰ Minagawa Kan'ichi (1994), "[Analysis of the *Baisiragi mojjeuge*]", *Shosoin monjo kenkyu*, 2.

¹⁵¹ Yeon Min-Soo (1998), [*History of Japan*], Seoul; idem (2013), [*Annotated Translation of Nihon Shoki*], Seoul, 1-3; Camel had already been sent to Japan from Baekje of the Korean peninsula (*Nihon shoki*).

¹⁵² Lee Yong-beom (1969), "[Trade Items of Muslim Merchants Written in *Samguk Sagı*]", *Ihongsigbaksa hoegap ginyeom hanguk sahak nonchong* : 98-99, Seoul.

¹⁵³ National Museum of Gyeongju (2001), [*The Golden Arts of Silla*], 176-9, 184-7.

¹⁵⁴ Edward H. Schafer (1963), *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand, a Study of T'ang Exotics*, Berkley, London, 155-7.

and meditative practices from the beginning of the establishment of Buddhism in East Asia.¹⁵⁵ Incense from Southeast Asia was an age-old cross-cultural trade item but the demand intensified with the involvement of Muslim traders on this route.¹⁵⁶ Among various types of incense including aloeswood, agarwood and benzoin (*anshikhyang/anxixiang* in Chinese, meaning *Iranian perfume*), large imports of frankincense from Silla were mentioned on the list. This incense is recorded in *Zhufan Zhi* as being ‘exported to China from Palembang in Eastern Sumatra, by Arabian traders’ in its section of ‘Frankincense’.¹⁵⁷ The fragments of the same incense were found with other types of incense in the Seokga-tap at Bulguk-temple, Gyeongju in 1966. This shows that a series of diverse trade routes and agents were involved in the delivery of precious items to East Asian regions.

Muslim traders were recorded as bringing ‘mercury, dragon's Teeth, sandalwood, myrrh, sappan and other valuables’ when they visited Goryeo in 1040. Although this visit took place with a long interval, the consistency of Muslim trade items confirms high value due to their exotic nature and medicinal effects. Sappan was extremely valuable as scarlet or purple dye and, above all, for its medicinal properties. Mercury was widely -falsely- regarded as the elixir of Life. Even the ivories were used as a medicine to cure general lethargy, as described in *Yusa*.¹⁵⁸ Although some of these goods must have been produced in the areas adjoining the Arabian Peninsula, all were not indigenous to the place. Sappan, for example, was obtained from the native plants of Indonesia and other South East Asian regions. The collection of goods of diverse origins once again testifies to the extensive and dynamic maritime networks of the period.

Along with textiles, spices, and medicinal ingredients, the most obvious item Silla imported from the Islamic world was glassware. While glassware had been imported from the west before the advent of Islam, Islamic glass was even more prized for its strength and colour. In numerous parts of the *Zhufan zhi*, glass is repeatedly pointed out to be the product of Arabia, and is especially praised for its opaque glass.

The visual evidence of continued popularity of foreign glassware in the Korean peninsula is found in the stone pagoda built in the late 11th century (c.1085) commemorating a Buddhist master Ji-gwang (984-1067). It also shows how glassware was received and used in Korean kingdoms from Silla to Goryeo. The pagoda itself exudes exotic foreign ambience with its elaborate and detailed

¹⁵⁵ Silvio A. Bedini (1994), *The Trail of Time. Time measurement with incense in East Asia: Shih-chien ti tsu-chi*, Cambridge, 44.

¹⁵⁶ Schafer suggests ‘the infiltration of Islam into Champa’ in the 9th century was mostly connected to Muslims’ commercial interest in ‘the heavier-than-water aloeswood.’ Edward H. Schafer (1967), *The Vermilion Bird. T'ang images of the South*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 75-6 .

¹⁵⁷ Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill (1911), 195-7.

¹⁵⁸ Dragon’s teeth tisane (*yongchi-tang*) was prescribed to the Sangdaedeung [the First of Peers] for his heart disease in 822, the 18th year of King Heondeok’s reign (809–826) (*Yusa*).

decoration of carved drapery, tent-like lobed frames, and lobed windows in relief (fig.1-8a). In each side panel of its middle part, a pair of two men is shown to carry a palanquin containing a sarira glass under the curtain embellished with thick tassels (fig.1-8b). The custom of placing a glass object in a gilt-bronze container of palanquin shape was already noted in the 8th-century sarira reliquary with glass cup and bottle found at Songrim-temple. This combination of palanquin-shaped metal container holding a glass vessel (fig.1-9) was probably the most courteous manner of offering of the period.

In the panel of men wearing contemporary Tang-style headgears and costume, a glass bowl or cup is carved with a row of protruding roundels. Glass objects with this decoration have been found in various sites in East Asia (fig.1-10).¹⁵⁹ In the other panel, a bowl or cup with wave pattern is carried by two exotic-featured men. Glass vessels with similar decoration have been found in China and in Korea. A beaker excavated in *Hwangnam daechong*, Korea, has a mesh pattern of trailing-thread decoration on the lower half of the body and a zigzag line near the rim (fig.1-11). At least two more glass coils and one fragment of glass with an applied glass coil have been found in Korea.¹⁶⁰

It is difficult to define foreign glassware as ‘Islamic’, as the glassmakers from the west continued to use traditional techniques and materials which had been accumulated since Antiquity. Shapes and decorations also followed their tradition. Apart from the glassware in traditional shapes, some glass ewers unearthed in the peninsula are considered to be an import from Islamic lands in the early Goryeo period. Particularly interesting is a dark brown glass ewer of relatively big size, now in the Tokyo National Museum as part of the Okura Collection (fig.1-12). Found during the Colonial period when Korea was under Japanese rule, it is from an unidentified site from Yeonbaek-gun, Hwanghae Province in present-day North Korea – a site closer to Gaeseong, Goryeo’s capital. Another glass ewer of identical shape, now in National Museum of Korea (Deok 1332), is known to have been unearthed also in the vicinity of Gaeseong. These objects were supposedly made by blowing the body before joining it with a neck and spout. Glass ewers of round-shaped flask body with a spout attached to it were made continuously from the Roman period of the first century CE to the Islamic period, but a spout extending at a 45° angle of body has not yet been found amongst pre-Islamic glassware.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Ellen J. Laing (1991), 3:109-121, 111-112; Examples have been found in the tomb of Li Xian in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and from Xinjiang, the desert land between China and the West, indicating one transport route from west to east; bowls were reconstructed from fragments found on Okinoshima Island and in Kyoto, Japan; [*Ancient Glass*], 103, nos. A, B; Some bowl fragments found in Japan are reconstructed to yield the decoration of the same protruding roundels.

¹⁶⁰ Min Byeong-Hoon (2012), “[The Birth and Spread of Islamic Glass]”, *Yuli: samcheonnyeon-ui iyagi-jijunghae, seoasiaui godae yuli*, Seoul, 222-237, 236-7.

¹⁶¹ Korea Foundation (1996), [*The Korean Relics in the Overseas collection*], Seoul; *Okura Collection*, 421; A private conversation with Dr Lee In-Sook in August 2012.

3.2. From Silla to the Islamic World

Medieval Muslim writers left more records on Silla than Silla had left on the Islamic world, but the detailed description of the trade goods is as scarce as Korean documents. Gold, however, was constantly associated with Silla. The association of gold with Silla is unanimously shared amongst medieval Muslim writers. Ibn Khurdadbiḥ particularly mentioned ‘much gold’ for the products of Silla, and so did other Islamic writers. It is true that medieval Muslim writers used the expression ‘gold’ rather too generously in order to conjure up the fancifulness of their trading places at remote distance, but the consistency of their usage in the case of Silla throughout the centuries is worth noticing, especially when compared with that of China.

Despite a general reticence about mentioning trading items, a Korean written source endorses the fact that gold was actually traded between Muslim seafaring traders and Korean kingdoms. In the early phase of the Goryeo dynasty, as Muslim traders had come to the Goryeo kingdom with incense, medicinal properties, dying ingredients in the 11th month of lunar calendar in 1040, the Goryeo king ordered to treat them with lavish hospitality and give them much ‘gold’ in return of their tributes, upon their departure back to their homeland (see Table 1-b).

Apart from gold, Ibn Khurdadbiḥ mentions other imported goods from Silla, such as ‘silk, swords, *kiminkhau* (?), musk, agarwood, saddles, marten pelt, ceramics, canvas, cinnamon, *khulanjan*’,¹⁶² Amongst them, silk, sword, musk, saddle, pottery, and canvas were produced in Silla in the mid-9th century. Swords (*Firind*) are particularly notable because Ulsan in the southern part of the peninsula, the busiest port town of Silla, has long been renowned for the production of its distinctive local swords.¹⁶³

However, some of the items, which he regarded as Silla products, must have been acquired from other regions by Silla traders. For example, marten pelt was the fur of an indigenous animal in the territory of Balhae (698-926), a successor kingdom to Goguryeo. Agarwood and cinnamon were most likely originated from Southeast Asia.¹⁶⁴ The confusion probably arises from medieval Muslim traders’ perception, which simply regarded all items of Silla traders as originating from their own country.¹⁶⁵ Ibn Khurdadbiḥ’s list of mixed goods from Silla and foreign regions indicates that the Silla kingdom must have participated in a kind of triangular trade, which re-exported exotic goods once they had arrived in the country or exported locally manufactured commodities made of imported raw resources. Such dynamic mercantile activities could be realised through the vibrant and extensive

¹⁶² Ibn Khurdazibah (1968), *Kitabu’l Masalik wa’l Mamalik*, Leiden, 70 ; Quoted in Jeong (1992), 228-229.

¹⁶³ Ulsan Cultural Centre (1978), [*Regional history of Ulsan and Gyeongju*], 464.

¹⁶⁴ Park Nam-Su (2009), “[Silla trade goods and their characteristics in the 9th century]”, *Daeoe munmul gyoryu yeongu*, 8 : 41 -71, 47-54.

¹⁶⁵ Park Nam-Su (2009) : 55-56.

trade network of Silla, of which General Jang's successful trading activities referred to previously were just one example.

These reciprocal trading items demonstrate that Muslim merchants and medieval Korean kingdoms interacted actively. That was the time when international trade and commerce incurred, if ever, in the form of barter. Gold and silver would act as internationalised currency, and so did spices, incense, textiles, pottery, and metalwork. In this type of trade system, if one of the partners benefitted from importing skills and products, the other would have most likely to have benefitted from it too. The next chapter will deal with cases of material culture showing mutual interaction between the Korean kingdoms and the Islamic lands beyond the Sinosphere.

Chapter 2. Cultural transfers and mutual inspiration between Silla and Islamic Iran

When the Western regions became dominated by Islam and its culture, a new pattern of dynamic cultural interaction emerged in the supra-regional contacts between Unified Silla and the early phase of Islamic expansion. Compared to the sporadic and spontaneous contacts of the previous era, Islamic period can be summarised as an increasing presence of mutuality and reciprocity. Both parties participated in trade and, through it, were mutually inspired by the other, thereby transforming material cultures accordingly. The interaction was a multivalent and mutually inspiring, and led to changes in the material culture for the both sides. There are several possible explanations for this change. The advancement of maritime navigation made it possible for Muslim merchants to engage long-distance trade carrying bulk of goods with more frequency and efficiency.¹⁶⁶ Silla also played a crucial role in the East Asian trade since it established a first ever centralised kingdom in Korean history.

The main focus of this chapter is on a specific metalworking technology of ‘white bronze’ that moved from the Islamic world to the Korean peninsula. It will be followed by the argument that the metalworking technique of ‘wire-drawing’ went from Silla to the same region of the Islamic world concomitantly. The discussion will eventually lead to identify Iran and the Iranian cultural zone¹⁶⁷ in the vast territory of the Islamic world as the region most actively in contact with the Korean kingdoms for the period under discussion.

To understand its significance in the context of cross-cultural communication, I will start with essential information of this copper-alloying technology, followed by some evidence to support the Iranian connection in the metalworking development of the Korean peninsula from the Unified Silla period onwards.

1. ‘White Bronze’: cultural transfer from the Islamic World to Silla

1.1. Historical and technological background of ‘white bronzes’

1.1.1. Terminologies

The term ‘white bronze’ here only covers binary high-tin bronze, not to be confused with other types of metal under the same name. Like many ancient terminologies, the term was widely used in the past enough to be clouded with uncertainty. The main reason for this nomenclature was not the chemical

¹⁶⁶ For the expansion of Muslim seafaring in medieval times, see George Hourani (1995 [1951]), *Arab Seafaring: In the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton University Press, pp. 51-86.

¹⁶⁷ Iranian“ refers here not only to present-day Iran but also the broad region of the Middle East and Central Asia, whose culture was historically under the various Iranian states.

composition, but naked-eye observations of colour. Virtually any type of copper-alloy was called ‘white bronze’ if its colour was shiny enough, although many other metal alloys other than high-tin bronze have a bright sheen. Thus, the word tends to be easily corrupted with diversified meanings. ‘White bronze’ mirrors, for example, were made of high-tin contents, but accompanied by lead in most cases.

In fact, Chinese ‘white bronze mirrors (*Baitong jing*)’, in spite of their name, ‘rarely have any substantial amounts of tin’.¹⁶⁸ Already exported to the west during the time of Qin China (221 BCE -206 BCE),¹⁶⁹ Chinese ‘white bronze’ mirrors were known as *kharsini* (Chinese arrow-head metal) or *hadid al-Sin* (Chinese iron) in the Islamic world, and fascinated many Islamic alchemists or chemical scholars for its whiteness and reflectivity. Jabir ibn Hayyan (8th to early 9th century), the famous alchemist of the Abbasid period, wrote a book especially dedicated to this metal, the *Kitab al-Kharsini*, during the period of Caliph Harun al-Rashid.¹⁷⁰ From Chinese sources and material evidence, this mysterious metal is known to mean nickel or cupro-nickel, but not high-tin bronze.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, the word, *safidruy*, appeared to represent an alloy of the early Islamic period rather than just any kind of bronze (*surf*). As ‘white bronze’ with clean white surface resembling silver, it has the chemical composition of binary high-tin copper alloy with 21-22% tin, with reliable consistency. Other elements, including lead, are only negligible impurities.¹⁷² Likewise, Korean binary high-tin bronze ware, locally known as *yugi*, was often identified as ‘*sahari* (white bronze)’ in Japanese records for its shiny surface.¹⁷³

The technological definition of bronze is to help to clarify this issue: bronze is a copper alloy with tin as its major alloying element. In the copper-rich solid solution, the maximum theoretical limit of the solubility of tin is 17%. It is the major factor for ancient alloys having less than 17% tin. The usual

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*, 238

¹⁶⁹ Joseph Needham (1974), 235ff.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Kraus (1943), *Jabir ibn Hayyan. Contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans d'Islam. Vol. I: Les corpus des écrits Jabiriens* [Mémoires présentés à l'Institut d'Égypte, 44], Cairo; His imprecise use of language is well-known. *Glss* (*zujaj*) and *kharsini* are often confused in his writing. It might have something to do with reflectiveness of the white metal. Syed Nomanul Haq (1994), ‘Names, Natures and Things: The Alchemist Jābir ibn Ḥayyan and his *Kitab al-Ahjar* (Book of Stones)’, *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 158: 7.

¹⁷¹ Joseph Needham and Ping-Yu Ho (1980), *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5 (4), Cambridge, 430. Another possibility for this metal is arsenic copper, since a number of Arabic texts emphasize the poisonous nature of the arrow-heads. See Joseph Needham (1974), 238.

¹⁷² Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani (1974). “The White Bronzes of Early Islamic Iran”, *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 9 (1974), 122-151, 123-126.

¹⁷³ Naruse Masakazu (1999), “[Study on Production Areas of the Shosoin Gilt Bronze Products]”

proportion of tin content in metalworking is nearer to 14% in practice in order not to make the alloy brittle. At this level of tin content, bronzes can be cold-worked and annealed. If the tin content is between 17% and 19%, the alloy is not workable, that is, it can neither be hot-worked nor cold-worked. However, above 19% tin bronze can be hot-worked, only with a precise control of temperatures.¹⁷⁴ Due to this metalworking difficulty, most of ancient high-tin bronzes were composed of a ternary system of copper, tin and lead with different ratio. And they were invariably cast.

Exceptionally, certain bronze vessels, such as bells and mirrors, were often made of high-tin bronze, in which the tin content is more than 19% with near absence of lead.¹⁷⁵ Such lead-free high tin bronze, commonly known as binary tin-alloy, is hard to cast, because it does not contain enough lead, an element of a low melting point with high malleability and density. The metalworking problem of binary high-tin alloy was dealt with only the thermo-mechanical method, which consists of hot-forging and then quenching. Muslim blacksmiths in the medieval period were highly knowledgeable of the proper thermo-mechanical metallurgical method to manufacture binary high-tin bronze.

The special merit of high-tin bronzes is their musical effect and bright colour. As the name implies, ‘bell-metal’ in the West or ‘sound metal’ in East Asia (*xiangtong* in Chinese, *hyangdong* in Korean, *kyodo* in Japanese) is made from this alloy. The colour of typical high-tin bronze resembles gold or silvery white; hence the name of ‘white bronze’ was commonly used. These alloys are known to have been first found in India and Thailand from the early centuries BCE and spread slowly to the Near East.¹⁷⁶ *Safidruy* - literally meaning ‘white bronze’ or ‘white copper’- is an Islamic example of such alloy. Less than a century later, binary high-tin bronze was firmly established in Silla Korea, which is known as ‘*bangjja yugi*’, a local name for binary high-tin bronze produced only by the traditional thermo-mechanical method. As will be discussed, Islamic and Korean high-tin bronze have shown commonalities not only in the chemical composition but in their manufacturing method.

1.1.2. ‘*Safidury* (white bronze)’ as an early Islamic art

The existing material culture of the early Islamic period does not easily provide the feature of critical bifurcation from previous cultural tradition to Islamic art. In search of a definitive Islamic material culture disparate from the previous traditions, Melikian-Chirvani suggests that ‘a specific technology’

¹⁷⁴ David A. Scott (1991), *Metallography and Microstructure of Ancient and Historic Metals*, Marina del Rey, CA, 25-26.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*

¹⁷⁶ For ancient Thai bronze objects treated by forging and quenching, see Warangkana Rajpitak and Nigel J. Seeley (1979), Tamara Stech Wheeler and Robert Maddin (1976); for Indian bronze vessels (datable to 800 BCE) made of high-tin component with similar treatment, see Sharada Srinivasan (1998). For a more recent report on high-tin bronze vessels found in Southeast Asia and South Asia, see Ian Glover and Anna Bennett (2012) in the bibliography.

and ‘a distinctive style’ of metalwork emerged in Iraq or Fars in present-day Iran.¹⁷⁷ ‘A specific technology’ in his article means the use of a special alloy, ‘a copper and tin mixture, the amount of tin usually somewhat in excess of 20 % (MC 124).’ The technical reports on the chemical composition showed bronze objects of this type have 21-22% tin, rather consistently. While other elements including lead are only negligible impurities, the tin ratio of 21-22% seems ‘a deliberate attempt ... by the metalworkers to achieve a constant tin content (MC 150).’ The metal has ‘peculiar patina, ranging from a deep mirror black to an ashy grey’, often with almost white areas,¹⁷⁸ hence commonly called ‘white bronze’.

White bronzewares, plain or decorated, continue to be in use until the 17th century during the Safavid period. Wares without decoration tend to have faceted or lobed shapes, often incised with lines (fig.2-1). The decorated vessels bear a distinctive style of geometric ornamentation, mostly dots, lozenges, and other geometric shapes divided by fillets or small partitions (fig.2-2). The decoration became more intricate over time, as shown in the 12th-century bowl produced in the Ghaznavid period (fig.2-3). An eleventh-century high-tin bronze spoon, possibly made in Khurasan, is finely decorated with geometric and vegetal patterns with Arabic inscriptions within a small space (fig.2-4).

Known in the medieval sources as *safidruy*, literally ‘white bronze (or white copper)’, this alloy has a clean white surface resembling silver. Indeed, the word, *safidruy*, appeared to represent an alloy of the early Islamic period rather than just for any kind of bronze (*surf*) (MC 123-126). According to al-Biruni in the 10th to 11th century and Abul Qasim Kashani in the 14th century, this high-tin bronze was initiated in response to the prohibition of all gold and silver wares by al-Hajjaj bin Yousef (661-714) in the provinces of Iraq and Fars. As to drink out of gold and silver vessels was a very old tradition of social elites in the Iranian cultural zone, the silvery white bronze became widely accepted among the affluent classes who had newly embraced the Islamic religion and were aware of the passage of the Hadith (the corpus of the teachings of prophet Muhammad); ‘Do not drink from vessels of gold and silver;... Whoever eats and drinks from vessels of gold and silver, is taking fire from Hell into his belly.’ Apparently this alloy acted as a compromise to satisfy the fearful governor’s banning of precious metalware and at the same time to cherish age-old tradition.

It was Berthold Laufer to suggest that the Iranian cultural zone and Korean kingdoms were connected by this metalworking technology. As the word, ‘*sabari* or ‘*sahari*’ was used for medieval

¹⁷⁷ Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani (1974), 122-151, 122. Hereafter references to the article appear in the body text, with MC followed by relevant page numbers in the parentheses.

¹⁷⁸ Depending on the content of tin, the copper alloy shows different colour. It is orangish-yellow or gold-like yellow when tin content is 10 to 20 %. And it becomes from grey white to silver white as tin ratio changes from 20-30% to 30-40%. Joseph Needham (1974). *Science and civilisation in China* 5 (2), *Spagyric discovery and invention: Magisteries of gold and immortality*. Cambridge, 197 Table 97. Brasses and bronzes (percentage compositions); Jo Nam-Cheol & Kim Gyu-ho (2009), ‘[Research on the material characteristics of Korean high-tin bronze: with a focus on Bronze mirrors and *Banjja yugi*], *Chuki seisaku gijutsu kenkyukai & Dongasea munhwajae yeonguwon* (ed.), [Research on manufacturing technology of high-tin bronze in Korea], 20

bronze ware stored in the Shoso-in Repository (Shoso-in hereafter) at Nara in Japan, he pointed out that the word, ‘*sahari*’, ‘apparently retained the Persian word, which may have reached Japan via Korea’(MC 144, ft. 51).’ I have delved further into his brief remark and found the technical commonality between Islamised Iran and Unified Silla of the period. It should be noted, therefore, that, unlike common understanding, cultural contact and transmission was not always taking place in linear sequence. As discussed, maritime routes made direct cross-cultural contacts between Silla and Islamised Iran during the medieval period. As we will find, a special kind of high-tin bronzes were produced in Silla as late as the 8th century, and became one of the most unique Korean metalworking tradition to this day.

1.1.3. *Safidruy and sahari*

‘White bronzes’ of medieval Korea are known under various names in Japan. The medieval collection of bronze vessels and spoon sets in Shoso-in, Japan, was called *sahari* (さはり, 佐波理) in the inventory record. These bronze vessels are made of a type of copper alloy with 15-25% tin, by casting and heat treatment of forging with quenching. In *Bai siragimojjege* (datable to 752), the list of importations from Silla include a white bronze nest of five bowls, white bronze censer, white bronze spoons, and white bronze chopsticks, corresponding to *sahari* dishes, nested bowls and spoons.¹⁷⁹ And it is the term, *sahari*, which makes Laufer and Melikian-Chirvani link the Iranian word ‘*safidruy*’ to the east. Another term, *hyangdong* (literally ‘sound metal’) is also used for these objects, pronounced as *kyodo* in Japanese or, occasionally as *sahari* (サハリ), same pronunciation of *sahari*, albeit spelt in different Chinese characters.¹⁸⁰ Another term, *safura* (鈔羅, さふら) was also used for the same bronze objects in the earlier record. These terms are often used interchangeably with ‘white bronze (*hakudo*)’ in Japanese records.¹⁸¹

The use of different Chinese characters for the same object is indicative of transcribing something or someone from foreign lands in local pronunciation in Japanese texts of the period.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Tono Haruyuki (1977), [study on the documents and inscriptions on wooden panels in the Shoso-in], Tokyo; Minagawa Kan’ichi (2012), [Study of Shosoin documents and ancient medieval historical materials], Tokyo

¹⁸⁰ In Japanese language, a single *kanji* (or Kana, Chinese characters adopted in Japan) may be used to write one or more different words due to the various forms of adaptation of Chinese characters in Japan over the course of time.

¹⁸¹ Naruse Masakazu (1999), [Study on production areas of the Shosoin gilt bronze products], *Kodai bunka*, 51 (8)

¹⁸² Chinese characters are used with a heavy mixture of Japanese elements in Old Japanese texts, and the oldest extant chronicle in Japan, *Kojiki* [Records of ancient matters], is mostly written in *Man’yogana*, a writing in which Chinese characters are only used to convey sounds. A study on this 8th-century text finds out that words,

Considering that *sahari* items were imports from Silla and that binary high-tin bronze was never in production in medieval Japan,¹⁸³ Berthold Laufer linked the term, *sahari*, to an Iranian word ‘*safidruy*’ through the medieval Korean kingdom.¹⁸⁴

The Silla origin of the set of *sahari* objects has been proved by the accidental discovery of out-dated official documents, known as *Silla jangjeok* (A village register of Silla) from *Kaban* (*gaban* in Korean). *Kaban* is a set of vessels differing slightly in sizes, each to be contained in the next larger one (fig.2-5). When the lid is placed on the outermost vessel, the set takes on the appearance of a covered bowl. There are 86 nests in total in the collection, each nest consisting of five, seven, eight, nine, and ten bowls.¹⁸⁵ One of the nests of *sahari* bowls was found wrapped in a page of the *Silla jangjeok* (fig.2-6). The fragmentary document was supposedly used by Silla craftsmen as superposed layers of wrapping papers for each bowl, after the original paper became obsolete (fig.2-7).¹⁸⁶ Following Yasutami Suzuki’s research, this document is generally thought to have been made in 752 or around the time of the reign of King Gyeongdeok of Silla (742-765).¹⁸⁷

Further evidence supporting a Silla origin comes from bowls of the same shape with chemical compositions identical to the one found in the Korean peninsula, especially in the vicinity of Gyeongju. Excavations at Anapji, a man-made lake in a royal residence of Silla at Gyeongju, confirmed the local production and consumption of nests of bowls of same type (fig.2-8). Other bronze bowls from the same site show clear concentric line decoration incised around the body, such

za ㅈ and ha ㅏ, were particularly used with high frequency of various meanings. Kim Yeong-hwa (2007), [A Study of Sino-Japanese Kana in *Kojiki*], MA thesis, Chonnam National University, Korea

¹⁸³ Yasuji Shimizu (2010), *Origin and diffusion of binary high-tin bronzewares: Introduction of sahari into Japan*, Mifune Yutakasho et al.(eds.)(2010), [High tin Bronze of Asia: Production technology and Locality].137-144, esp.138-140

¹⁸⁴ Some Korean words have been suggested as the candidate for the etymology of the term. Nakano Masaki also suggested the association of ‘*sahari*’ and ‘*sabal*’ a Korean word for bowl. see Lee Nan-yeong (1992), [Study on ancient Korean metalwork], Seoul,104; Yoon Seon-tae has traced a medieval pronunciation of a Korean word for high-tin bronze ware, *zapra* or *sapra* (迺羅) and proved its closeness to *sahari* or *safura* (鈔羅), the earlier notation for the vessel. Yoon Seon-tae (1997), 295-333, esp 298-230; A recent study has suggested that some Silla vocabularies are traceable to the Iranian language and reaffirmed the connection between medieval Korean expression and Persian words. Seong Ho-Gyong (2007), “[A Study about the Nature and Origin of *Saneo-ga* : Centering on the Search for the Influence of Persian Poetry]”, 147-177.

¹⁸⁵ Nakano Masaki (1976), [*Metalwork at the Shosoin*], Tokyo, 55-77.

¹⁸⁶ The documents show the items offered to the authorities in a village of Silla, such as dried horse meat, pork, rice, beans, with the information on how to mill rice. Yoon Seon-tae (1997), “[New Review of *Sahari* Documents in the Shosoin]”, 295-333; Lee Tae-jin (1979), “[‘Gong-yeon’ and the Village Administration during the United Silla Period], 52-53. Li cheng shi (1999), [*Kingship and trade in East Asia*], Kim Chang-seok (trans.), Seoul, 36.

¹⁸⁷ Yasutami Suzuki (1977), “[Reading of *sahari* documents in the Shosoin]”, 49-61; for the dating of 755, see Yoon Seon-tae (1997), 295-333.

as the Shosoin *sahari* bowls (fig.2-9). The bronze bowls unearthed at the Hwangrong Temple site at Gyeongju have a round underside, and still retain their golden colour through their rusty surface (fig.2-10). Most recently, a bowl of the same type with incised line decoration was excavated at the early Goryeo site of Ingak Temple at Gunwi, a small town near to Gyeongju in North Gyeongsang province (fig.2-11), an evidence of the continuous use of *sahari*-type bowls in the peninsula.

Dishes seem to be the most popular item among *sahari* objects in the Shosoin. Seven hundred dishes are known to be stored and are still intact, others are broken. They have various shapes; with flat, round, or bevelled bases, with everted rims, rings on the rims and so on. Most of the *sahari* dishes were finished on the surface with lathe work after casting in order to bring forth the metal face of a light yellow colour. A common shape amongst the *sahari* dishes is one with a flat bottom and an everted mouth with slightly inward curves, as the one in the South Section (fig.2-12). An X-ray fluorescence (XRF) of a dish shows that its material is composed mainly of copper (about 80%) and tin (about 20%), with the addition of a negligible amount of lead.¹⁸⁸

1.1.4. *Sahari* spoons

In the *sahari* collection, high-tin bronze spoons of Korea are objects which advocate the advance of new metalworking technology in Silla and its defining impact on Korean culture. Korea is the only country in East Asia to use a metal spoon in conjunction with a pair of chopsticks as a set of eating utensils. Although sharing rice-based diets, China and Japan mainly use chopsticks, with the occasional use of a small ladle made of ceramic or wood. It shows that the use of spoon is not simply related to the type of food people consumed, but depends mainly on cultural choice.¹⁸⁹

The concomitant appearance of binary high-tin technology and spoons made of the same material strongly points to the fact that both of them were introduced simultaneously to the peninsula. It shows that the new technology inspired local blacksmiths and metalworkers to try their existing skills on new items, including high-tin bronze spoons. As a misleadingly mundane but culturally significant item, the spoon made by this technology embodies medieval Korean ways of adopting a new material culture, and sets its culture apart from China and Japan. This cultural orientation left a long legacy on present-day Korean culture, showing the unusually high esteem for high-tin bronzeware (*yugi*) and in their cultural choice to include spoons as essential eating implements.

¹⁸⁸ Shosoin Office (ed.) (1965), *Treasures of the Shosoin, South section*, Tokyo, xxix.

¹⁸⁹ The cultural decision to include a spoon in the set of eating utensils went beyond mere convenience. In his insightful book, Marcel Mauss perceptively describes how 'things are mixed up with spirits, their originators, and eating instruments with food (p.56).' In human cultures he researched, ceremonial dishes and spoons are 'replicas of the never-ending supply of tools, the creators of food, which the spirits gave to the ancestors (p.43).' Hence they are supposedly miraculous. The symbolic meaning and cultural significance of the spoon remain even to our days, as expressed in the adage 'one was born with a silver spoon in one's mouth.' Marcel Mauss (1923-24 [1970]), *The Gift: Forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*. London.

Since the Unified Silla period, spoons were almost invariably made of binary high-tin bronze in the peninsula. A spoon mould was found together with bronze spoons in the Bunhwang Temple site, in Gyeongju (fig.2-13), a material evidence of local manufacturing of spoons in the Korean peninsula during the period. Although the absence of lead in the chemical composition is appropriate for an eating utensil, it is doubtful that health was the main reason of Silla metalworker to opt for this metal composition. Rather, colour may have been the most attractive feature of high-tin bronze spoon.

By the mid-8th century, high-tin bronze spoons spread to a wider population of Silla at an exponential rate. A complete spoon made of high-tin bronze was found along with a fragment of a spoon, various potteries and roof tiles in the Hanumul ('Large Well') site no.2 at the Hoam Fortress in Seoul (fig.2-14).¹⁹⁰ Considering the fact that most of the Silla objects under present discussion were linked to Gyeongju in southern province of the peninsula, the discovery of two spoons in the central province attests to the widespread use of high-tin bronze products across the country over time. The Han-u-mul spoon also reveals the value Silla people placed on this seemingly ordinary object. On the back of the spoon handle is inscribed with Chinese characters, *ing-beol-ne lyeok-gi naemal*, followed by three unidentifiable characters. The inscription of the title, *naemal*,¹⁹¹ on such a personal item either refers to the owner of the spoon or its producer. In either case, it proved that high-tin bronze spoons were treated as valuable enough to inscribe them with a title.

The uniqueness and cultural significance of high-tin bronze spoons in Silla society can be noted at the Shosoin collection. There are approximately 345 bronze spoons and 60 seashell spoons.¹⁹² Two sets of spoons had been kept intact without any trace of use since the time when they had been imported from Silla in the 8th century (fig.2-15). One of those sets, an oval- and a round-shaped spoon is wrapped together with paper, and 10 sets of such pair are tied with hemp strings,¹⁹³ the other is simply bound together with the same string, without paper. Described as 'sahari spoon' in their inventory record, these spoons were recognised as the archetypal item of Silla bronzeware made of binary high-tin alloy,¹⁹⁴ by using hot-forging and quenching. Amongst many bronze spoons unearthed

¹⁹⁰ Im Hyo-jae and Choi Jong-taek (1990), [*Excavation Report on Han-u-mul and Hoam Fortress*], Seoul.

¹⁹¹ *Naemal* was the title presented to the 11th grade of the official in the central government official rank system of Silla, which was graded from the 1st (*gakgan* for the highest) to 17th (*jowi* for the lowest) rank (Article of Miscellaneous 7, Book 38, *Sagi*). Most of *naemal* officials were active as envoys travelling to foreign countries, professional administrators, technical masters and artisans. Kwon Deok-yeong (1991), "[Study on Governmental Posts of 'achan' and 'nama' in Silla]", 25-56.

¹⁹² Lee Nan-yeong (2012), [*Ancient Metalworking in Korea*], 252; She states that spoons made of seashell are named as *gabi* (*gahi* in Japanese) in the Shosoin record, most probably a corrupted form of a Korean word for seashell, *jogabi*; Nakano Masaki (1976), 76.

¹⁹³ Nakano Masaki (1976), 9-19.

¹⁹⁴ An analysis of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) on a *sahari* spoon (North Section 45) revealed that its chemical composition is 80% copper and 20% tin, without other elements. Kimura Norimitsu and Naruse Masakazu (1992), "[Survey of Treasure]", *Shosoin nenpo*, 14.

in the Korean peninsula, excavations of the Anapji site exhibits identical oval and round spoons as in the Shosoin (fig.2-16a,b). The absence of chopsticks in the finds of a Shosoin package and of the Anapji site suggests that two different types of spoons were probably used at the same time for different purposes.

A specific point can be made with regard to the Western connection of high-tin bronze spoons; bronze vessels share a particular range of shapes where they were found together with metal spoons in Silla sites. The vessels appear to have been made of a type of set, almost always including a tray-type dish with shallow depth, a footed bowl and a bowl with its lid (fig. 2-17). These vessels are shown together in the Shoso-in collection, Anapji excavation, and the site in the Mountain Buso in Buyeo, all belong to the Unified Silla period. The older bronze spoons were unearthed alongside the same type of metal vessels from the Tomb of King Muryeong of Baekje (fig.2-18 a,b). In the case of later spoons, both Joyang-dong in Gyeongju and Sanseong-ri in Pyeongsan-gun, now in North Korea, produced the same combination of metal vessels –a round shallow dish with five-lobed outline, a footed bowl, and a lidded bowl, with fragments of metal spoons.¹⁹⁵ The excavation of the Anapji site most clearly confirms the accompanying use of spoons with certain vessel types, especially with lidded bowls. Lee Nan-yeong, the well-known Korean metalwork expert, suggested a meaning or symbolism behind the combination of vessels.

Interestingly enough, this type of vessel repertoire, found together with spoons, was popular in Iranian high-tin metalwork. The two famous high-tin bronzewares, the ‘Vaso Vescovali’ (fig.2-19) in the British Museum¹⁹⁶ and the ‘Wade Cup’ in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 2-20) share the shape of Korean high-tin bronzewares, one a bowl with lid decorated with rosebud-type knobs and the other a footed bowl.

In this regard, a *sahari kundika* in the Shosoin visually represents the hybrid culture of this period (fig.2-21a). Originally used in Buddhist ceremonies, *kundika* is a type of water bottle with a long neck, ovoid body and short foot. The neck is covered with a lid. Made of high-tin bronze, it still retains its original luminescence. On its body is affixed a human mask (fig.2-21b). The spout is in form of the head, with a lid on hinges. As noted in the Shosoin catalogue, the face imitates a *hu* (western foreigner) facial type, perhaps representing a Turco-Iranian face.¹⁹⁷ The strange-looking feature may also have been an expression of a head of Bes, an Iranian adaptation of an Egyptian god.¹⁹⁸ The appearance of foreigners or foreign artistic conventions on *sahari* objects may serve as a

¹⁹⁵ Lee Nan-yeong (1992), 108-115, 257-284

¹⁹⁶ The lid of this bowl set is not in original shape. It has been hammered in around the rim to give a closer fit. Richard Blurton (1997), *The Enduring Image, Treasures from the British Museum*, London, 246

¹⁹⁷ Shosoin Office (ed.) (1965), 26.

starting point to investigate how Silla's new metalworking technology was linked to Islamic Iranian material culture.

The comparatively late appearance of high-tin bronze in Silla - one century after its appearance in the Islamic Iranian zone - suggests that Silla was the receiving partner of this technology. In addition to the identification of the component of white bronzes, metallurgical development and evolution in the Korean peninsula shows significant commonality enough to suggest supra-regional influence of Iranian white bronzes on Silla metalworking. A brief historical survey of Korean metallurgical development is to be followed to detect the moment when the external stimulus introduced, and how the impact was causing the shift in Korean metallurgical orientation. And the comparison of metalworking traditions of these two cultures will find identical material and metalworking process in *safidruy*, Iranian white bronze and Korean *bangjja yugi* (hand-forged high-tin bronze vessel).

1.2. Metalworking method of 'white bronze'

1.2.1. Metalworking history of Silla

While high-tin bronze objects were made in the Korean peninsula from a very early age since the Iron-Age objects (3 BCE-1 BCE),¹⁹⁹ these metal objects were composed of a ternary system of copper, tin and lead with different ratios, not binary. All of these metal objects were cast, like alloys of this type, in other parts of the world of the period.

During the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla era, Korean metalworking technology as well as metallurgic knowledge underwent rapid development. Based on the historical documents of the period, gold, silver, copper, and iron were all mined on the peninsula in the 4th century during the Three Kingdoms period. Baekje, in particular, transmitted smelting and metalworking technology to Japan, according to *Nihon Shoki* (in the year of 587). A gold-plated bronze bowl and several other

¹⁹⁸ Prudence Harper et al. (1984), "Ancient Near Eastern Art", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 41 (4): 48, fig. 65.

¹⁹⁹ The biggest bronze mirror (dia 21.2cm) discovered so far on the peninsula contains more than 32-34% tin in the alloy. Yu Hye-seon (2009), "[A Study on the National Treasure No. 141 Bronze Mirror with Multi-handle with Fine Motif: Based on Cases of Component Analysis of Bronze Mirrors of Korea and China]"; National Museum of Science and Conservation Team (2008), *Conference on Scientific Conservation of National Treasure No. 141, Bronze Mirror of Multi-handle with Fine Motif*, Seoul; Each of the bronze mirrors found in Wonbuk-ri at Nonsan, in Hyoja-dong at Jeonju, and in Daegok-ri at Hwasoon has 32, 30 and 28 % tin, respectively. Kang Hyeong-tae et al. (2003), "[Scientific Analysis of the Bronze Artefacts from Wonbuk-ri site, Nonsan]", 19-30. Jo Nam-cheol and Kim Gyu-ho (2009), 16-30. Choi Ju (2000), "[History of Korean Metallurgy: 3]", 56-66; Apart from mirrors, some weapons including daggers are known to have been composed of 17-22% tin. Jang-sik Park and Robert B. Gordon (2007), "Traditions and transitions in Korean bronze technology", 1991-2002.

bronze vessels excavated from the Tomb of King Muryeong of Baekje (501-523) testifies to the production of tin-alloyed metal vessels and its development in the region (fig.2-22a).

An early attempt at forging copper is detected in an almost pure copper bowl found in the *Hwangnam daechong*, dated to the mid-5th century during the Silla period.²⁰⁰ The shaping of the unalloyed copper bowl must have required hammering in view of the difficulties in casting, and was done probably at elevated temperatures (fig.2-22b).²⁰¹ It indicates that local metalworking technology may have developed to include the hot-forging technique with skilled control of temperature, thus adopts in a new method for other copper-based alloys including high-tin bronze.

It was during the Unified Silla period that Korean metalworking practice reached its height and turned to new directions. During the period, the metalworking technologies greatly improved to produce metalwares made of lead-free binary high-tin bronzes. While some of them were manufactured through the traditional way of casting, certain binary high-tin bronze products are found to have been produced the newly acquired thermo-mechanical metal treatment technique of forging and quenching. Often, the combination of casting and quenching was used,²⁰² as some bronze vessels from the Bunhwang Temple site illustrate.²⁰³ The analysis of bronze objects unearthed at the Wanggyeong site confirms that with time the Silla blacksmiths became proficient in using the thermo-mechanical method to make binary high-tin metalwork.²⁰⁴ A research into the metallurgical microstructures of eight bronze objects excavated from the site reveals that six of them were made from copper alloy with 22% tin, and the remaining two objects contained 15% to 20% tin. Lead was not found in any object. While bronze vessels with lesser tin content (14.6% and 16.6%) were made by casting, all the other objects were made by hot-forging and quenching.²⁰⁵ Two spoons from the site, in particular, need special attention as to their material (tin contents being 21.7% and 22.4% each) and the fabrication method. They correspond exactly to Korean traditional bronzewares, known as *Bangjja yugi*.

Therefore, it is argued that from the 8th century onwards, high-tin bronze objects were made in various forms and shapes on the peninsula, and enjoyed high esteem in East Asian markets.

²⁰⁰ Scholars differ on its dating, as 4th to 5th century for the South tomb and mid-5th to early 6th century for the North tomb. The mid-5th century (c.460) is chosen here for its dating based on a recent article using radiocarbon dating technique. Lee Chang-hee (2012), “[The Radiocarbon Dating to the South Tomb of Hwangnam Daechong and Sueki], 51-84.

²⁰¹ Jang-Sik Park and Robert B. Gordon (2007), 199.

²⁰² *ibid*, table 1.

²⁰³ Jeong Yong-dong and Park Jang-sik (2005), 80-86.

²⁰⁴ Jung Yong-dong & Park Jang-Sik (2004), ‘ [Transitions in Bronze Technology Observed in Bronze Artefacts Excavated from the Silla Wang-Gyeong]’, *Munhwajae* 37

²⁰⁵ Jung Yong-dong & Park Jang-Sik (2004),.268-284

Archaeological findings and extant bronze objects attest that the metalworking direction of Silla turned towards lead-free high-tin copper alloys during the 8th century. Diachronic comparisons of Silla mirrors with contemporary Chinese ones show the change in the chemical composition of mirrors produced on the peninsula. Lead is composed of 4-7.8% of the alloy until the Three Kingdoms period, and changed to 2.24-nearly 0% during the Unified Silla period.²⁰⁶ It shows that, as the content of lead decreased to the extent of being nearly absent, the chemical composition of mirrors tended to be made of unleaded binary high-tin bronze. Although commonly known as ‘white bronze mirrors (*Baitong jing*)’, Tang mirrors have 5-6% lead against 69-72% copper and 22-25% tin by comparison.²⁰⁷

This metalworking orientation starting from the 8th century was not confined to vessels but covered any type of metal objects regardless of size, significance and usage. The most prominent examples showing the evolution of Silla metalworking technology towards this direction are the Buddhist temple bells of Silla. In the Buddhism-centred world of Silla, manufacturing a Buddhist temple bell was the biggest metalwork project, requiring the skills and the experience of the best blacksmiths and metalworkers. Judging from the extant objects, temple bells began to be made in the Unified Silla period.²⁰⁸

Among the three extant Silla bells, Sangwon Temple bell is the oldest one, having been manufactured in 725. Its chemical composition consists of copper, tin and lead in the ratio of 83.87%, 13.26% and 2.12%, showing lower lead contents than contemporary bells of Tang China.²⁰⁹ Fifty years later, the Bongdeok Temple bell (commonly known as the Divine Bell of King Seongdeok the Great, or Emille) was finally completed in 771 after a long period of experiments and preparations. This Buddhist temple bell is the largest in Korea and almost entirely made of binary high-tin bronze, with its composition of 78.56-84.39% copper, 11.21-15.51% tin and 0.14-0.45% lead depending on the part of the bell (fig.2-23).²¹⁰ It is confirmed to have been manufactured by the method of moulding

²⁰⁶ Jo Nam-cheol and Kim Gyu-ho (2009), 23, table 2: Composition of bronze mirrors

²⁰⁷ Park Jin-Kyung (2012), “[The Origin and Development of the Flower-shaped Bronze Mirror with Paired Bird and Holy Flower Pattern]”, 200.

²⁰⁸ Historical records suggest the earlier existence and use of temple bells in Silla and Baekje. Passages in *Yusa* suggest the uses of temple bell during the reign of King Jinpyeong (579-632) and King Hyoso (692-702) of Silla. An existence of the Baekje bells can be noted from the inscription of Jeongrim Temple (660).

²⁰⁹ Yeom Yeong-ha (1991), [*Korean Bell*], 43; idem (1993), “[Historical Development of Bell and the Science and Technology Found in Silla Temple Bells]”, Shimane ken kodai bunka senta (ed.) [*Ancient culture of Shimane: collection of records on Ancient culture*], 1.

²¹⁰ Research Institute of Industrial Science and Technology (1997), “[The Status of Fabrication of the Divine Bell of King Seongdeok and Diagnosis of the Status of Conservation Depending on Environmental Change]”, *Report*, 153.

and casting, the usual method for this type of large and weighty metal product.²¹¹ Analyses of other Silla temple bells, now located in Japan, also agree with this finding. According to Tsuboi Ryohei, their compositions at the binary ratio of 80.1% copper and 12.2% tin is a unique feature of ‘Korean bells’.²¹²

Given the technical differences in conducting the measurement and analyses, the alloy used for Silla temple bells is made of 80-85% copper and 12-18% tin on average. Other elements have negligible rate with 0.1% iron, 0.07 % lead and 0.013% zinc. Without lead, the casting of huge bronze objects is extremely difficult, resulting in far less level of pressure tightness in the end product.²¹³ The long period it took to make the bell,²¹⁴ together with the legend behind its creation, illustrates the difficulty of lead-free bronze casting as well as the determination of the craftsmen to use high-tin alloy for such big bells. Their hard work was rewarded with the bells’ clearer tone and long-lingering vibration,²¹⁵ a special feature of ‘Silla bronze’ much acclaimed by neighbouring countries.

Several centuries later, Li Shizhen (1518-1593) of Ming China made an interesting statement in a chapter dealing with metals of the *Bencao Gangmu* (*Compendium of Materia Medica* 1593): ‘Persian bronze is suitable for mirrors, but Silla bronze is superior for casting bells.’²¹⁶ The significance of this brief comment is not only in its precise recognition of each metal but in way it compares Persian and Silla bronzes. Until the Ming period, in all likelihood, bronzes from Persia and from the Korean peninsula were valued equally highly in China. The comparison of these bronzes alone implies a certain commonality to both of them. Apart from their good quality, colour is most likely the most visible characteristic to draw our interest, instantly differentiating one material from

Bongdeok Temple bell	Chemical Composition						
	Copper	Tin	Lead	Gold	Zinc	Silver	Sulphur
Upper Section	84.39	11.21	0.23	0.009	0.22	0.64	0.07
Middle Section	78.56	15.51	0.45	0.009	0.22	0.30	0.07
Lower Section	83.13	12.98	0.14	0.016	0.22	0.61	0.08

²¹¹ Ra Hyung-Yong (1998), “[Moulding and Casting Techniques of the Divine Bell of King Seongdeok]”, 315.

²¹² Tsuboi Ryohei (1974), [*Korean Bell*], Tokyo; Ryohei actually used the name ‘Joseon Bell’, not ‘Korean bell’, but his observation covered bells of Korea from the Silla period onwards.

²¹³ Ernest P. De Garmo, J. T. Black, and Ronald A. Kohser (2012), *DeGarmo's Materials and processes in manufacturing* (11th edition), 188 Hoboken, NJ, 188..

²¹⁴ The bell had been initiated by King Gyeongdeok (742-765) to commemorate his father, King Seongdeok (702-727) hence the name of bell, but was not completed until 771 when casting was successfully completed according to the inscription on the bell (Book 3, *Yusa*).

²¹⁵ Lee Jang-Mu et al (1989), “[Study on the vibrational characteristics of Korean bells]”, 398.

²¹⁶ Li Shizhen (2003[1596]), *Bencao Gangmu: Compendium of Materia Medica*, Luo Xiwen (trans.), Section of metal and stone, 7, Book 15; Kim Jong-ha (trans.)(2007), [*Compendium of Materia Medica with New Commentary*], Seoul.

the other. Also remarkable is the use of the country name of ‘Silla’ even in the later period of Ming China and Joseon Korea - a testament that this type of copper alloy had been available since the Silla period.

The next section will show how blacksmiths from both cultures manufacture ‘white bronzes’ and if the same technical process was used.

1.2.2. Metalworking method of Iranian *safidruy* and Korean *yugi*

The manufacturing method of *safidruy* consists of a flat disc of metal with a diameter of roughly 5 cm stretched from the central area by hammering, once placed on an anvil. Some of the white bronze vessels in Iranian Islamic lands were produced ‘by first casting a thick round cake, heating and forging this to a flat disc, then raising the metal into its present shape by hammering, while still hot. Then ‘it would have been quickly quenched, slightly hammered to rectify small distortions, and finished with a scraping tool while rotating on a simple lathe. If the alloy is not to become embrittled, skilful control of heating and cooling is essential at all stages.’²¹⁷ To have spun a bowl of this shape from a metal lump would therefore have involved repeated removal from the lathe. The reason for ‘this rather unusual procedure’ is to produce a vessel as thin as this, and to prevent brittleness.²¹⁸

The basically identical process was adopted to make *bangjja yugi*, binary high-tin bronze vessels with more than 15% tin in its alloy during the Unified Silla period. *Yugi* was fabricated with three different methods of casting, forging with quenching, or a mixed technique of both. *Bangjja* is a Korean word for a time-consuming method of hand-forging and quenching the binary high-tin alloy in the ratio of 78% copper to 22% tin.²¹⁹ The traditional process involves the distinctive metalworking process with peculiarly laborious steps, described as follows:

The key aspect of *bangjja* is to make a vessel by hammering on a single block of alloy until it becomes paper-thin stretch. The work begins with the leader warming a block of alloy having made in the crucible. Once the block is placed on the anvil or a plane of amphibole rock (fig.2-24a), the hammering started in the workplace, where only a tiny lamp on the wall gives a light on the anvil with all the other lights turned off. In the course of the hammering, the leader turns the alloy block around while holding it with forceps, in order to ensure an even forging (fig.2-24b). He measures the cooling level of the alloy, and heats it again to be forged.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Hong Jeong-sil (1989), *Yugi*, Seoul; An Gwi-suk (2002), [*Yugi Master: Important Intangible Cultural Properties, No 77*], Seoul.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*124.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*148

²²⁰ Lee Jong-seok (1994), [*The traditional crafts of Korea*], Seoul, 63-4.

This is quickly followed by quenching (fig.2-24c). In this way the metal becomes relatively hard but retains enough malleability to permit some finishing by making up the desired form with smooth hammerings.

By adopting the method of *bangjja*, the possible brittleness of high-tin bronze is avoided through the sequential fabrication method of forging and quenching. With this technique, vessel walls can be made thinner, ultimately saving a lot of material; it is a more economical way to produce aesthetically pleasing metalwork with luminous colour.²²¹ Virtually lead-free, *bangjja* bronze objects were in continuous use as table wares and other essential items of Korean households until the mid-20th century, when metal objects, especially with high tin content, were nearly wiped out from the peninsula by the forced collection policy of the Japanese colonial government.²²²

The comparative observation reveals that metalworking methods both in Iran and Silla followed the technical process of starting with a single lump of alloy, continuous hammerings while rotating, and finishing with smooth hammerings. With the introduction of lathe, *bangjja* was furthermore assisted by a machine, which replaced time-consuming manual adjustments executed by the leader of a metalworking group. The extreme control of temperatures during the process with accurate heating and cooling timing is also found in the white bronze making of these two regions. In addition to the identical metalworking methods, both regions used chemical components with unusually high components of tin.

Compared to the Korean case, apart from its application to certain metalwork such as musical instruments the thermo-mechanical metalworking method was never widely accepted as a technological choice for Chinese metalworkers.²²³ Instead, well-crafted bronze items were produced by using their casting skill. Chinese metalworkers mastered the piece-mould casting technique to create a myriad of bronzewares with remarkable shapes and decorations as early as in the Shang period (1600-1046 BCE), and more complicated objects were produced by using the lost-wax process by the late Spring and Autumn periods (770 BCE-476 BCE).²²⁴

By contrast, Korean blacksmiths used different methods to produce metalwork following their choice of high-tin material. This new technique took place at the same time as the changes to Korean metalwork made to exclude lead from high-tin alloy compositions. The absence of lead in Silla's

²²¹ Lee Nan-yeong (1992), 294; Lee Jae Sung et al. (2008), “[A Study on the Traditional Forged High Tin Bronzes and the Rivet Joints in Korea]”, 26-32.

²²² For the metal collection policy during the last phase of the Colonial period, see Kim In-ho (2010), “[Research on metal mobilization policy of Joseon governor-general office in Pacific Wartime]”, 305-374.

²²³ Certain Chinese musical instruments are known to have been made of high-tin bronze (23% tin contents), by hot forging and quenching. Sun Shuyun and Wang Kezhi (1994), “An Experimental Study of Chinese Gongs and Cymbals”, 19-34.

²²⁴ Tan Derui and Lian Haiping (2011), “The ancient Chinese casting techniques”, 129.

white bronze and the thermo-technical sequential process highlight the departure of Korean metalworking technology from the geographic confines of East Asia.

1.2.3. Technical transmission of ‘white bronzes’ from Islamic Iran to Silla

An interesting point in this regard is that nearly all relevant evidence support white bronzes and its manufacturing technology were introduced in the mid-8th century under the reign of King Gyeongdeok (742-765). The aforementioned Bongdeok Temple bell was initiated by King Gyeongdeok to commemorate his father. The *sahari* collection in Shoso-in is known to have been exported during his reign. The *sahari* kundika embellished with a Persian figure, an example of the multiculturalism of Silla art, is another product of his reign. A white bronze spoon with a rare inscription excavated in Seoul area also points to the reign of the same king.²²⁵ And, various poems in the genre of *Saneoga* were also produced in his reign. Another cultural achievement of his reign is the copy of the Avatamsaka Sutra (The Flower Garland Sutra) - a central text of Mahayana Buddhism-, which was made with fine illuminations in gold and silver on purple-dyed paper in 754 to 755 (the thirteenth year of King Gyeongdeok).²²⁶

Important to the current discussion was the fact that during is the period the character, ‘*yu* 鑄 (tin)’ first appeared in Korean historical documents (‘Miscellaneous’ in Book 2 and Book 39, *Sagi*). The research on the etymology of ‘tin’ in the Korean language, ‘*yu*’ discloses its non-East Asian origin.²²⁷ It also shows that immense interest in this metal began to occur during the Unified Silla period, specifically in the mid-8th century under the reign of King Gyeongdeok (742-765).²²⁸ Under this king’s reign, Silla produced high volumes of binary high-tin bronzes in spite of their relatively new introduction. The interest in tin in this period is noteworthy. Korea was rich in copper but not in tin resources.²²⁹ Although tin was intensively mined in the Korean peninsula during the last

²²⁵ Lee Nan-yeong (1992), 116

²²⁶ Hwang Su-yeong (1979), ‘[New Discovery: the illuminated copy of the Avatamsaka Sutra during the King Gyeongdeok of Silla]’, *Yeoksa hakbo* 83:121-126; Lee Ki-baek (1979), 126-140; Mun Myeong-dae (1979), ‘[Study on the copy of the Avatamsaka Sutra and its illumination]’, *Hanguk hakbo* 14: 27~64

²²⁷ ‘*Yu*’ is the Korean pronunciation of a Chinese character 鑄, pronounced *tou* in Chinese. Laufer supposed that ‘*tou*’ was a loan word from the Middle Persian *tutiya* for calamine. Against this theory, Needham supported Chinese scholars who claimed that the real origin was Indian, from Sanskrit *tamra* (copper, brass), based on the ground that trade between Persia and China did not begin until after around the 6th century. In any case, the origin of the word ‘*yu*’ points to a non-East Asian region. Joseph Needham (1974), 203.

²²⁸ According to the article of ‘Miscellaneous’ in Book 2 and Book 39, *Sagi*, the character, *yu* 鑄, has first appeared in Korean historical documents during the reign of King Gyeongdeok of Silla (742-765).

²²⁹ Park Jang-Sik (2004), ‘[Technical systems of ancient Korean bronze]’, *Hanguk yeolcheoli gonghagji*.17 (3): 189-198

phase of the Colonial period (1910-1945),²³⁰ mention of this element is hardly found in medieval Korean sources. Nevertheless, a sudden production of high-tin bronzes took places during the Unified Silla period.

The rarity of tin and the continuous popularity of tin-alloyed wares notwithstanding are confirmed in a passage of *Goryeo-sa*. In 1391, an official called Bang Sa-ryang beseeched to King in his public appeal to prohibit the use of bronze vessel, ‘because bronze (*yu-dong*) is not indigenous material in our country. From now on, customs shall be restored by using vessels solely made of ceramics and wood (*Goryeo-sa*, Book 46 and 85).’²³¹ Intriguingly enough, in a local environment that tin was not available, Korean metalworkers used more and more tin to the extent of producing binary high-tin copper alloy since the Unified Silla period. The material and documentary evidence begs the question - where did tin come from?

In any discussion of tin-alloys in the past, the most crucial issue is how tin was procured. As tin is much rarer in contrast to copper, the acquisition of tin had a major stimulus to develop long-distance trade since Bronze Age. The Tin Road is actually the first known trade route and a forerunner of the Silk Roads. Naturally, high-tin bronze first started in the region with plenty of tin, such as Southeast Asia.

The supply of tin was essential to giving the impetus for the sudden shift of Iranian metalworking in the 7th century and that of Silla’s metalworking technology and industry during the mid-8th century. Procurement of tin represented a problem for both sides, as both of them lacked this natural resource. Like the medieval Korean kingdoms, tin was not produced in the Islamic Near East in medieval times. Unlike copper, it had to be imported from Southeast Asia, particularly from an unidentified place called Kalah in the texts until the Il-khanid period.²³²

The same applied to Unified Silla. Like the Islamicised Iranian zone, Silla had to import tin. Although there were tin ores along the Yellow River valley in China, this did not mean that China exported such a rarity to a neighbouring country. In fact, apart from the earliest Chinese Bronze Age objects of Erlitou and the Shang Dynasty (2500 to 1800 BCE), the main source of tin in Chinese bronze was transported from present-day Yunnan in China from Han times onwards, according to the

²³⁰ After extensive geological surveys, tin mines were detected, and started to be extracted in the Korean peninsula from 1936 under the auspice of the Japanese colonial government. As ‘gun metal’, another name for this metal, indicates, tin is indispensable component for the production of weapons, and was heavily demanded during the Second World War, just like in any period of war. Through full-scale mining, the production dramatically increased from 11 tons in 1930 to 8,333 tons in 1944. Kim Jong-seok (1989), [Brief History of Korean Mining], Seoul, 32-80

²³¹ 鑄銅本土不產之物也願自今禁銅鐵器專用瓷木以革習俗. His post is recorded as court doctor at the fourth rank (*Gyeong’jeon’ui Si’sseung* 兼典醫寺丞, *Goryeo-sa*, Book 46, 2nd year of King Gongyang) but differently as military officer at the fifth rank (*Jung’nam’jang* 中郎將, *Goryeo-sa*, Book 85, Code of Prohibitions). The inconsistency of the description is very unusual of the *Annals*.

²³² James Allan (1979), *Persian Metal Technology 700-1300*, Oxford, 23-28

historical texts of the Han, Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties.²³³ Judging from material evidence, Silla most probably acquired tin from Muslim seafaring traders. Some objects found on the Korean peninsula indeed point to Southeast Asia as their origin. The most obvious evidence for connecting Southeast Asia to Silla through the Islamic trading network is incense and spice. Gems and precious stones such as *seul-seul* (emerald or turquoise) were also brought to the Korean peninsula by Muslim traders. As mentioned in the previous section, Islamic documents included descriptions of Silla from the early phase of its establishment. Some Muslim writers stated the trade items with Silla, and the settlement of Muslims on the peninsula. More importantly, the time of the sudden popularity of high-tin bronze in Unified Silla coincided with the time when General Jang of Silla was governing a maritime empire to control the East Asian Mediterranean trade and exchange.

Interestingly enough, there was a sudden shift in metalworking during the Unified Silla period, while China continued to use its traditional material compound to produce metalwork. Tin was used in China, but a standard recipe of bronze was the mixture of tin and lead. Among other components of bronze, lead was been one of the major alloying elements in China, and was found in the majority of bronze objects.²³⁴ Indeed, Chinese craftsmen have normally worked with lead, with remarkable results in nearly all of their material cultures. The famous *sancai* ceramics of the Tang dynasty are coated with lead-based glaze. Ancient Chinese glass was distinct from glass objects of the west in their lead component. Even today, the so-called Chinese brass contains some level of lead component. Having achieved such a technical proficiency with lead, Chinese metalworkers probably had no reason to be attracted to lead-free metalworking.²³⁵

The shift in bronze technologies in Silla was most probably the result of increasing interaction with those involved in the production, distribution, or consumption of bronze goods. Several hypotheses can be presented about the pattern of interactions that brought the techniques of production to Silla: (1) the circulation of finished goods from the Iranian cultural zone to Silla; (2) the accumulation of bronze items produced in Islamic lands for later re-casting by local metalworkers in

²³³ R. E. Murowchick (1989). *The Ancient Bronze Metallurgy of Yunnan and Its Environs: Development and Implications*. Ph. D. Harvard University, 76-77

²³⁴ Jin, Z (2000), 'Erlitou qitongqi de zjran kexue yanjiu yu Xia wenming tansuo'. *Wenwu* 1: 57-64; Jianjun Mei (2009), 'Early Metallurgy and Socio-Cultural Complexity: Archaeological Discoveries in Northwest China', Kathryn Linduff & Bryan Hanks (eds.) (2009), *Social Complexity in Prehistoric Eurasia: Monuments, Metals, and Mobility*. Cambridge, 215-232; Kathryn Linduff (2002), 'At the Eastern Edge: Metallurgy and Adaptation in Gansu (PRC) in the 2nd Millennium BC', K. Jones-Bley & D.G. Ždanovič (eds.) (2002). *Complex Societies of Central Eurasia from the 3rd to the 1st Millennium BC: Regional Specifics in light of Global Models*. Washington, D.C., 595-611.

²³⁵ Technological innovation would not find its place when the local technical system is in a state of saturation or plenitude. For André Leroi-Gourhan's notion of 'favourable [technical] milieu', see Pierre Lemonnier (2013 [1993]), 'Introduction', *Technological Choices: Transformation in Material Cultures Since the Neolithic*, Routledge, 13

Silla; and (3) the migration of bronze specialists out of Iranian cultural regions directly influencing local bronze production.

Considering the aforementioned facts, none of the hypotheses are mutually exclusive. Several of these processes may have been in operation in tandem or at different times throughout the early phase of the Islamic period. In spite of the geographical distance, the raw materials were carried across the Silk Roads and transportation of heavy metalwork became more frequent thanks to Muslim involvement in the long-distance of maritime trade. Under these circumstances, it was possible that high-tin bronze products were imported from Islamic Iran to Silla for local consumption and later used for recycling. At the same time, the sheer volume of Silla white bronzeware, together with its variety, suggests a local production of high-tin bronzeware. It must have been hard, if not impossible, to reproduce such high volumes of metalwork of a particular chemical composition simply by recycling such prototypes. Metalworking technology, especially in pre-modern times, was reserved only for a certain group of craftsmen in any part of the world. The skill itself was not easily transferable, especially when such a unique process was involved.

Amidst the powerful cultural web of the Sinosphere, the introduction of new technology for high-tin bronzemaking accentuates the cultural divergence of Korean Kingdoms. Both Silla and Islamicised Iran showed same metalworking technology and its product in tandem, while other East Asian kingdoms did not. During the 8th century, Silla adopted Islamic cultural elements rigorously to change the direction of its material culture. The new technology inspired Silla blacksmiths and metalworkers to advance their existing skills to achieve a significant amount of variety enough to set its material culture apart from China and Japan. It can thus be said that Silla's departure from the Tang Chinese cultural network was possible through its direct contact with Persiant Islamic lands. This cultural orientation has left a long legacy on present-day Korean culture, keeping local white bronze (*yugi*) in high esteem.

As in the medieval world of bartered trade, in return for materials and new methods of metalworking from Islamic Iran, Silla would have offered equally worthy items to Muslim seafaring traders, who ventured the long and treacherous journey to the peninsula. In tandem with the transmission of high-tin metalworking, the technique of wire-drawing is, in my view, the craft that moved from Silla to the Islamic world as a bartered transaction.

2. From Silla to Islamic Iran: wire-drawing technique

Although we tend to neglect thin wire as insignificant to material cultural developments, it would not have been possible to reach the present-day stage of technical sophistication without the skill of drawing thin wires out of gold, silver and copper. Nowadays a wide range of metals and alloys is used

to produce wires of various length and diameter for various purposes. But most of the wires of the pre-modern period were made of gold and silver, due to their high ductility and low melting point. Without delicate strands of gold wire, it would have been hard to ornament metalwork with fine granulations and intricate filigree. As exemplified in the bronze-age (early 2nd millennium BCE) ring-shaped goldwork (fig.2-25a) and in the medieval Byzantine cross (fig.2-25b), a wide variety of objects were made of and ornate with thin wires from a very early period onward.

Now wires are produced through the so-called wire-drawing method - drawing a metal rod through a hole in a die or 'draw-plate' by machinery. Although it is quite simple in concept, the wire-drawing process was not widely available in the west until the early medieval period, by the 8th or 9th century CE, or possibly by the 7th century at the earliest.²³⁶ Wire-drawing technique is commonly known to have come to Europe through Islamic intermediary between the 8th to 10th centuries. But the start of the drawing technique cannot be exactly identified because of dearth of extant Islamic metalwork that can be securely dated to the period. As mentioned in the invention of high-tin bronze in the early phase of Islam, the prohibition of gold and silver based on the Hadith may have contributed to the rarity of such metalwork. Nonetheless, it is established that strip-twisted wires were normal in Byzantine gold objects well into the 7th century, while wire drawing became universal in the Byzantine and Islamic worlds by about the 11th century.

2.1. Wire-making techniques of the past

2.1.1. Technical background of wire-making methods

Apart from hammering and swaging, there were two major hand-made wire-making techniques in pre-modern times. One is the strip-twisting method and the other the drawing process. Prior to the medieval period, wire was mainly formed by the strip-twisting method, a hand-made process of twisting narrow metal strips and then rolling to compact them into wires. To make a wire in this process, a rod of narrow strip is cut from the edge of a sheet of metal or made by hammering out an ingot. This is then twisted until it forms a helical tube with an open centre. Or, this tube is then rolled between two smooth blocks of stone or metal which compress the tube that will cold weld to form a round-sectioned wire (fig.2-26).²³⁷ As the method was employed widely around the world, Old and New, it is more likely to have developed independently at local level rather than being transmitted by

²³⁶ The earliest object with certain drawn wire in the west is the oval-shaped pendant from a group of six similar ornaments from Paphos, Cyprus, now in the British Museum. It dates to the 7th century CE. Jack Ogden (1991), "Classical Gold Wire: Some Aspects of Its Manufacture and Use", 97.

²³⁷ For ancient techniques, see Jack Ogden (2007 [1994]), "Technology of Medieval Jewelry", 161-166; Andrew Oddy (1977), 83-85.

diffusion.²³⁸ It indicates the strip-twisting process was a more natural choice to ancient blacksmiths than wire drawing.

On the other hand, in the hand-made drawing process, a rod or metal strip is prepared by hammering, filing, rolling or swaging, so that it fits through the hole of die or drawplate; it is then pulled through the holes. An illustration from a late 14th-century manuscript, known as the Mendel Brothers *Hausbuch*, is probably the first visual representation showing how wires were made through a draw-plate (fig.2-27).²³⁹ In the figure, a monk grips the wire and pulls it through the hole with tongs fastened to his belt. He sits on a swinging seat so that he can push backwards and forwards by straightening or bending his legs, to secure a steady pull. As the strip is pulled through the die, its volume remains the same, allowing the diameter to decrease while the length increases. Usually the wire requires more than one draw, through consecutively smaller holes, in order to reach the desired size. The process makes it possible to get longer and thinner wires.

Under microscopic examination, a wire made by strip-twisting technique clearly shows a variety of spiral seam lines (fig.2-28a). In comparison, the wire-drawing process left parallel striation (a series of linear patterns) (fig.2-28b). Through the wire-drawing technique, larger quantities of longer wires with better quality could be produced.

2.1.2. The origin of the wire-drawing technique

In Europe, the wire-drawing process began to replace the strip-twist wire method around 800 CE. However, both methods were used concurrently for centuries. The gold wires used in most of the jewellery in the Old World between about 2000 BCE and around 800 CE were made by twisting and rolling a strip of gold smooth.²⁴⁰ It means that they were made by strip-twisting method.

Despite its central importance among metal working processes, there is no satisfactory history of the origin and development of wire-drawing. Indian scholars claim that drawn wire was used as early as the third millennium BCE by the Indus Valley civilisation.²⁴¹ This theory, however, rests purely on one word, *guna*, in the ancient text, *Arthashastra*, with no supporting evidence.²⁴² The Persians of the 6th or 5th century BCE, Egyptians of around 1800 BCE or Greeks since Hellenistic

²³⁸ For independent local development of the wire-making technique, see David A. Scott (1991), "Technical Examination of Some Gold Wire from Pre-Hispanic South America", 65-75.

²³⁹ Andrew Oddy (1977), "The production of gold wire in Antiquity", 79.

²⁴⁰ Jack Ogden (2003), "Connections between Islam, Europe, and the Far East in the Medieval Period", 2-7.

²⁴¹ Rai Govind Chandra (1979), *Indo-Greek Jewellery*, New Delhi, 100.

²⁴² In spite of the importance of the text on an ancient Indian statecraft of the Mauryan Empire (321-185 BCE), the date of the text itself is not fully established, with scholarly debate on its date ranging from the 4th century BCE to 4th century CE.²⁴² More importantly, the word, *guna*, cannot be simply interpreted to mean 'wire drawing', but rather closer to 'thread-making or string making.' R. P. Kangle (trans.)(1997), *Kautilya Arthashastra*, New Delhi, 120.

times (3rd to 2nd centuries BCE) were suggested as the inventors of the draw-plate.²⁴³ No authoritative proof, however, has been provided, and no observation made to show the characteristic parallel striations on the surface, an essential feature of the drawing wire.

In China, the strip-twist technique was in use during most of the Tang period (618-907). Spiral seam lines of characteristic feature of strip-twisted wire, are visible on the wires of ancient Chinese gold jewellery. By the Song period (960-1279), the wire used on Chinese artefacts appears to have been drawn and is marked by longitudinal indentations.²⁴⁴ Even if a suggestion was made of earlier use of wire-drawing technique in China, it is more likely to have been erroneously ascribed as drawn since some of the spiral twist seams were virtually eliminated by applying heat near or at the melting point of gold.²⁴⁵ It is certain that the process was not common and widespread in China until the 13th to 14th century.²⁴⁶

Compared to these cases, the examination of 5th- or 6th-century gold objects in the British Museum confirms early evidence for wire-drawing technology in the East. The drawn wire technique was detected in a Silla goldwork in 1978.²⁴⁷ In 1991, Ogden again confirmed its existence in the securely dated objects of the Museum. He used an electron microscope to scan three pairs of gold earrings or diadem ornaments from the Silla period (ca. 5th to 7th centuries) (fig.2-29a), and found that they contained the wire that was ‘undoubtedly produced by drawing’(fig.2-29b).²⁴⁸ Other researchers including Janet G Douglas and Pieter Meyers have also confirmed drawn wire used in Korean goldwork of the Silla period.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ Cited in Andrew Oddy (1977), 80; For the Persian origin, see Leslie Aitchison (1960), *A History of Metals* London, 214; C. Singer et al. (1956), *A History of Technology: The Mediterranean Civilisations and the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 481-2; for Egyptian, see C. H. V. Sutherland (1959), *Gold: Its Beauty, Power and Allure*, 36; and for Greek, refer to E. Anastasiadis (1950), “Bronze Welding, Riveting and Wiremaking by the Ancient Greeks”, 322-324.

²⁴⁴ Emma Bunker (1994), “The metallurgy of Personal adornment”, 46.

²⁴⁵ Emma Bunker (1997), “Gold wire in ancient China”, 95.

²⁴⁶ Two gold hairpins excavated from a Western Han tomb at Shizhaishan, Kunming, Yunnan, were suggested to have been made of rods that had been drawn. Noel Barnard (1996), *The Entry of Cire-perdue Investment Casting, and Certain other Metallurgical Techniques (Mainly Metalworking) into South China and Their Progress Northwards*, 73.

²⁴⁷ *Christie Catalogue* (1978) 10 July, lot 232.

²⁴⁸ Jack Ogden (1991), 97.

²⁴⁹ Jack Ogden (2003), 4; It is common knowledge for Korean art historians that most wires of ancient objects were made through the drawing process (Personal Communication with Lee Nan-yeong, former director of Gyeongju National Museum).

Although Ogden continued to highlight the possibility that the wire-drawing technique originated in Korea, this was not sufficient to claim that Silla was the origin of the technique.²⁵⁰ It rather confirms the prevalence of the technique and the popularity of the objects made with wire-drawing technique in Silla society.

2.1.3. Early use of the wire-drawing technique in Silla

Silla is particularly famous for its extravagant use of gold and gold decorations. In their gold crowns (fig.2-30a, b) and official caps (fig. 2-31a, b), gold wires of diverse length and width were used profusely to connect each gold piece together like threads in sewing. Many of their gold vessels are decorated with dangling gold ornaments, which are attached to the vessel by twisting gold wires (fig.2-32). The Silla earrings are heavily embellished with gold wires for their granulations and filigree decoration (fig.2-33a,b). Along with splendid gold objects, plenty of loose gold wires were unearthed from Silla sites, as if stored away for times of need (fig.2-34).

Apart from gold wires discovered in Silla sites, much evidence point to the historical fact that Koreans continued to produce various types of metal wires by using the drawing technique. The unique item to embody a long tradition of wire-drawing technique is the metal needle of Silla. Needles have become so commonplace in our days that the prized status it once enjoyed in the past is not appreciated any longer. As one of the first human inventions, every culture around the world has shown material evidence of needles made of bones, wood, metal and even glass. Prior to the introduction of wire-drawing process, however, metal needles of evenly elongated form involved extremely time-consuming work, from cutting a slip out of metal sheet to hammering out the final shape.

The value of needles must have been equally high in East Asia as in the West, or probably even higher, considering its medicinal use in acupuncture as well as sewing and embroidery.²⁵¹ Silla included needles in official gifts to Tang on several occasions. In 869, Silla sent extraordinarily generous gifts to the Tang court, mostly made of gold (9th year of King Gyeongmun, Annals 11, *Sagi*). The biggest portion of the official gift was made up of 200 scabbards, either red or multi-coloured, all embellished with gold or silver strands, 1500 metal needles, alongside 30 gold needle cases inlaid with precious stone and 30 silver needle cases decorated with gold. The inclusion of needles in their

²⁵⁰ I am indebted to Jonathan Woods, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, for his meticulous paper on the difficulty to determine the origin of wire-drawing technology, particularly because of the object's antiquity. Prof Lee-Kalisch also raised the same issue.

²⁵¹ The origin and historical development of acupuncture is a debatable topic. Gwei-Djen Lu, Joseph Needham (2002 [1980]), *Celestial Lancets: A History and Rationale of Acupuncture and Moxa*, Cambridge, 5ff; the practice was certainly widely respected in the period of Tang China and Silla Korea. Tang Taizong practised acupuncture by implanting needles personally in the foot of his chief commander, having wounded in the battle of the Ansi Fortress in 645, when he was leading a failed expedition against Goguryeo (4th year of King Bojang of Goguryeo, *Sagi*). In 692, King Hyoso of Silla (691-702) founded the office of Medicine, where at least three classical texts out of seven required texts of Chinese medicine were about acupuncture (Miscellaneous 8, *Sagi*).

gifts attests to the proficiency of the Silla metalworkers in wire-making skills, which is verified by excavated finds from Gyeongju (fig. 2-35 a,b).

The latest analysis shows that Korean metalworkers could have employed wire-making techniques depending on the chemical composition of each alloy. In a Goryeo lacquer box inlaid with mother-of-pearl (fig. 2-36 a, b), dated to 11th to early 12th century, thin wires (0.3-0.5 mm) were used to enhance the subtle contour of motifs by surrounding them. In addition to the aesthetic appeal, the wires also had the practical purpose of strengthening the corners of the box. Among these wires, one is solder, composed of 40% tin and 60% lead and the other is brass made of 70-75% copper, 20% zinc and less than 5% lead. Solder wires were produced by hammering because the alloy is too soft and snaps easily, while brass wires were drawn. Brass is a material strong enough for the drawing process.²⁵²

2.2. Trade and transmission of wire-drawing technique

As for the transmission of the wire-drawing technique to Europe, Ogden proposes the Islamic trading link in the medieval world by illustrating Javanese goldworks that were produced around the very early 11th century.²⁵³ As proven in the previous section, numerous examples from written sources and material culture support the claim that Islamic trading links extended to the Korean peninsula during the Unified Silla period. Given the observations on drawn wires in Silla goldwork, the transmission of the wire-drawing technology in all likelihood consists of the transfer of the basic idea of the technology rather than the fully-fledged technique. As explained above, the basic idea of drawing technique is not difficult to understand, and does not require long periods of apprenticeship. Muslim visitors to the Korean peninsula would have easily acquired the basic idea of the technical knowledge. We can obtain proof of this from the records of their trading items.

2.2.1. Trade item of Silla (1): 'Gold'

The trading items exchanged between Muslim visitors and Korean kingdoms are not often mentioned in medieval texts. Gold, however, was constantly associated with Silla. The association of gold with Silla is unanimously shared amongst medieval Muslim writers. Ibn Khurdadbih particularly mentioned 'much gold' for the products of Silla, and so did other Islamic writers. It is true that medieval Muslim writers used the expression 'gold' rather too generously in order to conjure up the fancifulness of their trading places at remote distance, but the consistency of their usage in the case of Silla throughout the centuries is worth noticing, especially when compared with that of China.

²⁵² Lee Nan-hee (2014), "[Status of the Goryeo Incense Box in the History of Mother-of-pearl Lacquer Art from a Technical Perspective]", Seoul.

²⁵³ Jack Ogden (2003), 4.

The 10th-century Islamic writer, al-Hamdani wrote of China (*al-Sin*) as ‘one of the countries of gold’, citing the saying of Tubba’: ‘A wish was fulfilled for me in China-garments of silk and a treasure of gold.’²⁵⁴ China was certainly the country of ‘garments of silk’, but no Chinese dynasty contemporary to Silla ever produced gold objects in as big quantities and with such diversity as to make metalwork as the representative and unique product of the kingdom. Although gold and silver wares produced during the Tang dynasty show the accomplished craftsmanship of Chinese metalworkers in their various forms and decorative schemes, Tang metalwork was deeply influenced by its Iranian counterpart, mostly in the guise of Sogdian variations. Objects made of precious metals are less representative of Chinese material culture than, for example, ceramics, jade or lacquerware.

In fact, medieval Islamic texts barely included pure gold objects as items coming from China. In the medieval book, *Kitab al-Hadaya wa al-Tuhaf* (Book of Gifts and Rarities), gold is not described as a specialty of China during the period immediately preceding Islam and through the first four centuries of Islamic rule. As for gift items from China, ‘the King of China’ sent a book concerning the secrets of Chinese sciences to the Umayyad Caliph Muawiyah. When the Saffarid ruler of Sistan offered ‘fine articles from China’ to al-Mutadid, no mention was made of gold. Earlier in the Sasanian period, ‘the King of China’ sent a gift with a letter to Anushirvan the Sasanid, comprising a jewelled figurine of a horse and its rider, a sword with the hilt embossed with a variety of precious stones, and a piece of silk cloth portraying him in the throne room.²⁵⁵

Despite a general reticence about mentioning trading items, a Korean written source endorses the fact that gold was actually traded between Muslim seafaring traders and Korean kingdoms. In the early phase of the Goryeo dynasty, as Muslim traders had come to the Goryeo kingdom with incense, medicinal properties, dying ingredients in the 11th month of lunar calendar in 1040, the Goryeo king ordered to treat them with lavish hospitality and gave them much ‘gold’ in return of their tributes, upon their departure back to their homeland (see Table 1-b).

Gold ingot or decorated with gold?

In the absence of further details, ‘gold’ becomes an enigmatic word. Could it be gold ingot? Even if this were plausible, it is not very likely. Reports of presenting gold ingots as gift goods were extremely rare in Korean written sources. An exceptional case is recorded to have happened in the 12th year of the reign of King Munmu (661-681) in 672. The king sent to the Tang court ‘33,500 *pun*

²⁵⁴ D. M. Dunlop (1957), “Sources of Gold and Silver in Islam According to al-Hamdānī (10th Century AD)”, 40.

²⁵⁵ Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi (1996), *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs 29, paragraph 8, par 47, and par 1

²⁵⁶of silver, 33,000 *pun* of copper, 400 metal needles, 120 *pun* of *u'hwang* (*Calculus bovis*, organic medicinal ingredient), 120 *pun* of gold, 6 bolt of finely woven textiles, 60 bolt of fine textiles (Annals 7, *Sagi*).⁷ At that time, the King was desperate to appease the Tang court as he had engaged in a battle against Baekje, without informing Tang, thereby breaking the treaty demanding Silla not to take any pre-emptive military action against other kingdoms in the Korean peninsula without prior authorisation of Tang. King Munmu of Silla ultimately achieved the unification of the peninsula by defeating the Tang forces in the Silla-Tang War in 676. Four years before the final confrontation, the King was shrewd enough to write an ardent letter pledging loyalty and asking for forgiveness to the Tang emperor Gaozong (649-683).

This anecdote attests to the fact that raw metals including gold and silver were used as ‘gift’ in times of crisis, not as normal exchange items. Even though Silla royals and aristocrats enjoyed plenty of goldworks, gold remained a highly valuable commodity to be used sparingly. An episode in 699 supports this statement. In the 8th year of King Hyoso (692-702), a man called Mihil had discovered a gold nugget weighing around one hundred *pun* and offered it to the King.²⁵⁷ For his gold gift, the King awarded him with a title and grains equivalent to the gold (Annals 8, *Sagi*).

Another convention of medieval Korean documents is the unlikelihood of gold ingot as the gift to Muslim visitors. Any object with a certain amount of gold, whether inlaid with gold wires, painted with gold dust, or woven with mixtures of gold thread, were referred unreservedly to ‘gold’ in the written documents. The same King Munmu sent ‘gold and silver’ in return of Tang Emperor’s gift of a purple garment, a belt, 100 bolt of rich fabrics like damask and brocade, 200 bolt of raw silk (5th year of King Munmu, Annals 6, *Sagi*). The phrase, ‘gold and silk’, already appeared in 648. Emperor Taizong of Tang (626-649) lavishly granted ‘gold and silk’ to Kim Chun-chu, a Silla envoy, in order to try to gather detailed accounts of the situation in the Korean peninsula (2nd year of King Jindeok, Annals 5, *Sagi*). In those episodes, the absence of measuring units for gold is significant, indicating that the item was not gold ingots but objects decorated with gold. In this historical circumstance, it is very unlikely that gold ingots were used as gifts to foreign visitors, not least because of their higher value and scarcity.

In all likelihood, objects embellished with gold, not bulk of gold, were given to the Muslim traders. Although we can only guess the type of gold decoration, it is certain that ‘gold’ in the historic passage must have been something at least matching the exotic, rare gifts Muslim traders had already offered to the Goryeo court. Given material and written evidences of the period, goldwork embellished with gold wires could have fascinated Muslim traders, as being precious and also unfamiliar to them.

²⁵⁶ Ancient measuring unit equivalent of 0.4 g, but ancient measuring unit before the Unified Silla period are not fully verified.

²⁵⁷ ‘One hundred’ often meant simply ‘large’ and ‘numerous’.

2.2.2. Trade items of Silla (2): objects inlaid with wires made of precious metal

Although inlaying is an old metalworking technique in Korea (fig.2-37), inlaid artefacts gained sudden popularity from the Unified Silla to the Goryeo period.²⁵⁸ A small *sarira* gilt bronze bottle (h. 8.z, w. 4.7) from Galhang Temple in Gimcheon of the North Gyeongsang province was found to have inlaid traces, with inscription of its manufacturing date of the 17th year of King Gyeondeok (758), but its size and exfoliated surface makes it very hard to detect the inlaid remains. The 8th-century bottle, by contrast, shows clear decoration inlaid with silver wires, exhibiting inlaying skills with fully developed wires (fig.2-38). The six round cavities along the shoulder of the bottle would have received glass or beads of other types, although now lost. Its thin silver line constitutes an arabesque pattern, covering the main body of the ewer. Since then, numerous objects were made, inlaid with wires made of copper-alloy, tin-alloy, silver and gold. The identical inlaid pattern with thin wires is found in a wide range of Goryeo metalwork, from a fragment among the Hwangryong Temple site (fig.2-39) to metalware with advanced decoration (fig.2-40).

The inlaying technique and design may well be recognised as the period style of Goryeo metalwork. Following the Silla period, the Goryeo dynasty also saw abundant wires made of precious metals and various alloys. Goryeo metalworkers used thin metal slip for a bigger space, but their technical and aesthetical achievement lies in their prevalent and fluent use of metal wires in the inlaid artefacts. Unlike Goryeo inlaid metalwork, Chinese metalwork preferred a technique that filled the space with flat metal plate, fundamentally closer to overlay.²⁵⁹ Basil Grey noted that the linear inlaying of Goryeo metalwork is more similar to contemporary Islamic artefacts than Chinese ones.²⁶⁰

The idea and practice of inlaying with thin wire spread to almost all media of the Goryeo period. Goryeo lacquer wares were especially coveted in East Asia for their fine decoration using minuscule metal wires to render polychrome effect (fig.2-41).²⁶¹ The technique of using wires in combination with shell inlay is recognized as a unique specialty of Goryeo craftsmen.²⁶² The idea of inlaying with thin strip extended even to their celadon decoration, in the form of *sanggam*, a

²⁵⁸ Among extant objects, the oldest inlaid item among dated Korean objects is a seven-branched sword, a gift of Baekje to the King of *Wae* (ancient name of Japan) in 369, based on the inscription inlaid with gold. The oldest inlaid object unearthed in archaeological excavations is round pommels inlaid with silver wires, found in the Baekje sites in Cheon-an, and in a large tomb complex of Gaya in Goryeong of the North Gyeongsang province. They are dated to the late 4th to mid-5th century. A sword found in Namwon of the North Jeonra province demonstrates the development of inlaying technique in the finer decoration in gold and silver wires. Lee Nan-yeong (1992), 220-226.

²⁵⁹ William Watson (1970), "Overlay and "P'Ing-T'O" in T'Ang Silverwork", 210-215; Personal communication with Wu Tung, former curator of Chinese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, August 2013

²⁶⁰ Basil Gray (1956), "The Inlaid Metalwork of Korea", 92-96.

²⁶¹ Lee Nan-hee (2014), 101-104.

²⁶² Basil Gray (1985), "Korean Inlaid Lacquer of the 13th century", 236.

technique of inlaying ceramics with finely coloured clay. In spite of a wide range of ceramic decoration methods employed in Song ceramics, the method of inserting coloured clay into the incised lines was not used in China.²⁶³ The transition from metal inlay to clay inlay on ceramics may not be an easy option when using mainly the overlay technique in China. In contrast, Goryeo metalwork, which used wires in their inlay, may have inspired local potters to try similar decorative methods in ceramic production.

Judging from the extant inlaid objects, the inlaying technique was reserved for the most powerful class of the society, including royal circles and Buddhist temples. All inlaid objects of the Three Kingdoms period were parts of armour and weapons, such as swords, pommels, scabbards, stirrups and horse trappings - a sign of the upper strata of the period. Incidentally, Ibn Khurdabih mentions 'sword and saddle' among imported items from Silla. When Silla or Goryeo courts presented 'sword and saddle' to Muslim traders, they would have been embellished or inlaid with gold or silver wires, rather than being undecorated plain objects.

It can be argued that although the idea of wire drawing moved from Silla to the West, the subsequent process of technical development took place in the place of destination. Gold wires were mostly used to make or decorate luxury objects for the elite group of the Silla kingdom. The exclusive use of fine wires for luxury objects continued into the Goryeo period, even when the drawing technique became widely applied to base metals. By contrast, the technique in medieval Europe could have been developed to meet more utilitarian demands, including 'mail armour on the one hand and for wire carding brushes in the wool industry on the other.'²⁶⁴ The increasing demand of metal wires throughout the society necessitated to extend the application of drawing techniques to cover iron and other stronger, more practical metals over the course of time. The monk in the 14th-century illustration (fig.2-27) employs various fine tools to accelerate the wire production –a swing, a tightened belt, a pair of pliers, securing an anvil, and others. This refined adjustment must have been the result of technological developments over long periods of time, and many anonymous people in various professions would have contributed to each and every stage of the improvement and adaptation. This shows that, once the idea was learnt, contents of technology are decided by the social demand of the new environment. In technological innovation, development and subsequent inventions are needed in order to transform an initial discovery into an actual technique.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Qin Dashu (1998), Kim Young-Mi (trans), "[The Relationship Between the *sanggam* Ceramics in the Northern China during the Song-Jin period and Goryeo *sanggam* celadon]", 45-76.

²⁶⁴ Andrew Oddy (1977), 81.

²⁶⁵ Thomas Hughes stressed that 'Eureka' is certainly important but 'innovation is 110 percent transpiration' even in our industrial societies. Thomas Hughes (1976), "The Development Phase of Technological Change", 423-31.

Chapter 3. Concurrence of ‘intertwined birds’: International style of Inner Asia and local adaptations

Introduction

In the previous chapter, metalworking technology and its related objects were discussed to show the maritime connection between Korean kingdoms and the Muslim seafarers. The medieval written sources from both the Islamic world and Korean kingdoms left records on long-distance, supra-regional trade and communications between these two cultures via maritime routes. At the same time, overland routes across the Eurasian regions, famously known as the Silk Roads, were equally or even more actively used for commercial trade, human transport, and cultural transmission. This could lead to a shared culture along the trade routes, and local variations within the culture could serve as a visual evidence to appreciate difference of each culture. The travel and transformation of decorative idioms, as discussed in the last section of Chapter 1, can give us such an example. While the previous chapter concerns the 8th-century maritime contact, this chapter is focusing a particular decorative idiom - the intertwined bird motif - which was shared by the medieval Islamic world and Goryeo Korea.

Numerous examples in the Islamic cultural sphere support the existence of the same pattern from around the 10th century. The Goryeo period did not see celadon pieces bearing a pattern of intertwined birds until the 12th century at the earliest. An investigation into the travelling routes of the motif reveals how this shared motif developed over time. It also reveals the translation process of this visual idiom, which is how it adjusted and transformed its visual and semantic aspects in accordance with each culture.

1. Terminologies and historical background

1.1. ‘Intertwined birds’

The intertwined bird motif in this thesis consists of a pair of birds with their necks interlocked. Despite some differences in detail, ‘avian animals with intertwined necks’ are a common theme in these motifs found in Goryeo and in the Islamic world. Not only did it appear in various forms of portable art, it was also widely disseminated in Islamic culture from the Perso-Turkic cultural zone to al-Andalus (Islamic Spain). The ivory casket currently on display in Burgos, Spain bears a clear depiction of two birds –likely to be peacocks- with their necks intertwined (fig.3-1). According to the Kufic inscription on the edge, this casket was produced in 1026. On the Korean peninsula, a region apart from the Islamic world geographically and culturally, this pattern was used on ceramics from the late Goryeo to the early Joseon period. The motif always includes two birds with their neck intertwined and their wings outstretched in a roundel (fig.3-2). Judging from the remaining objects,

the pattern appeared only in ceramic wares during this period, although the chances of sharing it with other media cannot be ruled out judging from its wide dissemination of later periods.

Although the prototype had been widely disseminated in a variety of ancient cultures of the Eurasian continent, the intertwined bird motif of this type only appeared in the medieval period. Interestingly enough, this motif is not present in the contemporary Chinese - Song or Yuan- ceramics, while appeared in the Islamic cultural sphere and Goryeo Korea. Another point should be noted that, ethnically Han-Chinese, the Song dynasty did not draw an interest in this visual idiom, while its contemporary semi-nomadic northern states – Khitan Liao (915-1125) and Jurchen Jin (1115-1234) – were sharing this international visual idiom with other non-East Asian cultures. To affirm its nomadic root, the motif appeared when Korea kingdoms were in active communication with non-Chinese nomadic groups. It had been favourably employed by upper echelon of society before being near absent during the Unified Silla period as it will be discussed. Korea under Unified Silla became more active in their effort to become part of the Chinese cultural sphere, leading to the decline and eventual disappearance of nomadic cultural elements in the peninsula. The visual idiom came back when Goryeo absorbed nomadic and non-East Asian cultural elements by becoming part of international competitions between Song and northern states. Thus this puts the decorative idiom outside the sphere of traditional Chinese culture.

In other parts of Inner Asia, regions with strong nomadic roots often shared the visual vocabulary of the intertwined birds. It was during the period of Turkic ascendancy in Islamic lands that the motif started to be represented in their art productions. Turks brought the motif of intertwined birds to Islamic lands and beyond as migrated from their homelands in Inner Asia with growing intensity from the late 9th century, traditional Inner Asia styles also spread across the Islamic world through the Iranian cultural zones with them

1.2. Inner Asian International styles

‘Inner Asia’ as presented here is a broader term to cover ‘Central Asia’ plus the regions bounded by East Asia. Following Sinor’s definition, it is ‘a cultural rather than a geographical concept’, including the regions of ‘the Barbarian’ as “the antithesis to ‘our civilized world’ (p.18). Accordingly, “the Roman province of Pannonia and the Greek territories in Asia Minor became ‘Inner Asia’ when occupied respectively by the Huns (5th century AD) and the Saljuk Turks (11th century AD). Northern China became, for a while, ‘Inner Asia’ under occupation by the Kitan, the Jurchen, the Mongols and the Manchus (p.3).”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ The term was once used by scholars to indicate different meanings. Most of them assume Tibet as a crossroad for cross-cultural dissemination. Exclusively focusing on the Buddhist context of Tibet, Klimburg-Salter used “Inner Asian International Style” in 1998 to define multifarious Pala-derived painting traditions of Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal, and Burma. Since that publication, however, scholars, including Klimburg-Salter herself, have shunned away from using the term when addressing the Pala-derived painting style of Tibet. Kerin,

The so-called ‘Inner Asian International styles’ means the shared style of Inner Asia, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, and political affiliations.²⁶⁹ The style was not limited to the motif of intertwined birds. The motif of animals – in particular that of hares – overlapping a part of their body in a circular format became a visual idiom across Eurasia (fig.3-3a,b). The pattern appeared from 6th-century Buddhist Dunhuang through to the 11th-century tantric Buddhist Guge kingdom to the Islamic world and Christian Europe.²⁷⁰ In spite of its ubiquity during the medieval period, the original meaning of the motif remains obscure.

Another visual idiom shared by Inner Asian regions is simple geometrical patterns of zigzag and checkerboard. These patterns have been found from the 5th-century Goguryeo and Dunhuang (3-4a), through Guge to 13th-century Anatolia (fig.3-4b). Compared to the ambiguity of the motif of overlapping hares, these geometric patterns are rightly interpreted as signifying ‘signs of power – regalia and emblems of office’ in nomadic culture, ‘akin to modern flags.’²⁷¹ Examples of such shared culture show adaptation and transformation in accordance with the visual and semantic framework of each local culture.

The intertwined bird motif is no exception to this scheme. A good indicator to cultural acclimatisation can be found in the way in which this motif was represented during the period of Turkic ascendancy in Islamic lands. Another way is to investigate the process that occurred in Goryeo. A comparison of such adaptations in different guises would be a topic worthy of future research. As my current research orientation concentrates on examples of the Korean peninsula, I here focus on the acclimation process that this Inner Asian cultural element went through in Korean art history.

2. ‘Intertwined birds’ as an international decorative idiom

for example, opted for ‘Central Tibetan Style’ referring to the western Himalayan iterations of the Central Tibetan style of the period. The term is also used when addressing the close relation of style and subject-matter between Tibet and Xixia (Tangut) in the 11th to 13th centuries. Refer to Deborah Klimburg-Salter (1998), 1-12; Melissa R. Kerin (2015), note 25

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²⁷⁰ Sue Andrew, Chris Chapman and Tom Greeves (2004), “Exploring the Sacred Journey of the Three Hares”, *2004 International Conference on Grottoes Research Abstracts of Papers*, Dunhuang. Their website, <http://www.chrischapmanphotography.co.uk/hares/index.html>, has a substantial collection of this image across Eurasia.

²⁷¹ Scott Redford (2005), “A Grammar of Rum Seljuk Ornament”, *Mésogeois*, 25-26: 283-310, 294.

2.1. In the pre-Islamic period

Although the motif of birds with intertwined neck itself was in fashion only during the medieval period until 14th century at the latest, there is material evidence to demonstrate the Inner Asian origin of this motif far earlier than the introduction of Islam. The pattern of animals or imaginary creatures physically joined by their neck has occurred in the Iranian cultural sphere since the before the Common Era. And the theme of two birds facing each other or adorning had long been used in the traditional decorative repertoire of Iranian culture even prior to the arrival of Islam.

The Jasper cylinder seal and rectangular-shaped clay impressions from Uruk period (4100 BCE-3000 BCE), currently at the Louvre museum, has long-necked monstrous animals – possibly lions - intertwined with each other in confrontation (fig.3-5). Muscarella concluded through the examination of a large corpus of ancient chlorite objects, normally assumed to be functioned as handled weights, the intertwined snake motif originates from the ancient Iranian cultural zone, probably during the 3rd millennium BCE. Since then, the motif depicting intertwined animals spread onwards to Mesopotamia, Iran, and Central Asia, along with some shared motifs and designs –palm trees and guilloches, to name just two examples. From early on, the image of intertwined animals is ‘in the repertoire of Intercultural Style’s corpus’.²⁷²

Thus, the depiction of this motif can be understood as starting from Eurasian nomads, as a variation of the so-called ‘animal style’ – a representation of ferocious animals in fighting or hunting their prey. A plaque – or perhaps a belt buckle – from 1st -2nd century BCE, currently at the British Museum, shows the adoption of the visual device of intertwinement to the animal style. The plaque depicts an almost heraldic composition with the image of two horses (or onagers) biting while crossing each other’s neck (fig.3-6a). The depiction of their interlinking necks heightens the tension and ferocity of the scene. Intertwinement in the iconography of battling animals was used again on the large plaque (possibly a *phalera*, chest-collar trapping for a horse, datable to the 4th-century BCE) from the recent excavation of Filippovka Kurgan I (fig.3-6b).²⁷³ In a symmetrical position of this object, two confronted double-humped camels bite each other’s haunch with their fierce-looking teeth, while their neck intertwined. In these early cultures, intertwined birds were understood as an extension of symbolism of war and conflicts, and regarded at the same time as an expression of both power and prestige in nomads.

²⁷² Oscar White Muscarella (1994), “Intercultural Style ‘Weights’”, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*: 143-153.

²⁷³ Spectacular works of art were excavated between 1986 and 1990 from burial mounds at Filippovka, in Russia, on the border of Europe and Asia. The objects were created from about the 5th to the 4th century BCE by pastoral people who lived in the steppes near the southern Ural Mountains. The funerary deposits give a glimpse of the material culture of the nomads who traversed the steppe corridor extending from the Black Sea region to China in the first millennium BCE. Joan Aruz (2000), *The Golden Deer of Eurasia: Scythian and Sarmatian Treasures from the Russian Steppes*, New York.

Strikingly similar to the medieval motif of intertwined birds is the motif on the 4th-century saddle plates excavated in the vicinity of the city of Chaoyang in Liaoning province, China (fig. 3-7a).²⁷⁴ Although currently in China, the province was under the influence of northern nomadic tribes in that period. The plates of both saddles are decorated with the openwork pattern of hexagon enclosing fantastic animals and birds. In the middle is a pair of birds with intertwined neck, confronting each other (fig. 3-7b). They were discovered with other objects reminiscent of the contact of this region with Central Asia as far as Bactria.²⁷⁵ Although the precise chronology of the site has yet to be confirmed, these finds are generally thought to be from the Former Yan (337-370), a state established by the Murong clan of the Xianbei.

The Xianbei were a nomadic confederation dominating Mongolia in the 3rd century when the power of Xiongnu –presumably the earliest Turkic group- collapsed, dispersing its tribes out of the steppe terrain to the west. The Murong Xianbei, one of its branches, ruled several small kingdoms in northeast China extending into northern Hebei province (including present-day Beijing) in the 4th century. The Tuoba Xianbei later conquered the Murong and other steppe tribes, establishing the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534) in North China.

The same visual representation as the one found on Xianbei artefacts appears on 5th-century weapons excavated in southern part of the Korean peninsula. The area is known to be a higher concentration of discoveries previously belonging to Gaya and Silla. A number of swords of the late Three Kingdoms Period (57 BCE - 660) have the decoration of intertwined birds by their neck while facing the opposite directions in the ringed pommel (fig. 3-8).²⁷⁶ Of particular interest is a gold sword hilt from the Silla period (5th to 6th century). The intertwined birds appear not only on its pommel in openwork but decorate the upper and lower part of the handle (fig. 3-9). Inside the handle, two interwoven birds exude strength and power. Each bird has a pearl in its beak, while its feathers are portrayed in minute detail. The eyes made of blue coloured glass convey liveliness. The handle is adorned by gold wire with incised pattern, with the top and bottom showing the openwork motif of the intertwined birds.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Excavation report *Wenwu*, 1997, 11.

²⁷⁵ James C. Y. Watt (2004), *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD*, New Haven, London, 124; such finds include an object attached with antlers and a gilt-bronze fan-shaped ornament in openwork.

²⁷⁶ Swords with the identical decoration are now in the NMK and the Guimet, France. For the Guimet collection, *Korea Cultural Properties of the Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts, France*, p.51, fig 10 (l. 52, l. 20.7, dia. Of pommel 6.0cm)

²⁷⁷ This avian animal has often been described as a dragon, or ‘dragon and phoenix design’. This may be over-interpretation. First of all, dragon depicted intertwined by its neck are hardly known in East Asian material culture. This interpretation can be the result of retrospective interpretation which regards this motif from present-day contemporary cultural framework.

The date of these swords overlaps with the other Inner Asian nomadic artefacts discovered in the Korean peninsula. By the 4th and 5th century, there was a sudden popularity of items styled after Central Eurasian culture. Among such examples are wooden chamber tombs with stone mound in Silla, horse trappings, large bronze cauldrons, belt buckles in animal style, an Achmenid-type dagger, gold crowns, and glass objects of various types (see appendix). Not found in the Chinese cultural zone, the intertwined bird motif of the Three Kingdoms Period and of the nomadic kingdom of Xianbei share the animal style expressed in media which channels the ferociousness of those birds. In both cultures, these motifs appear regularly on military items such as swords and saddles, an indication of the motif being synonymous with martial superiority and political authority.

Against this cultural backdrop, the prevalence of the intertwined bird motif in ancient Korea can be interpreted in two ways; either as part of the cultural transmission of certain nomadic visual vocabularies to the peninsula²⁷⁸ or as a migration of nomadic tribes to the peninsula, bringing this visual idiom with them.²⁷⁹ In either case, the motif is visual evidence highlighting the strong presence of nomadic cultures in the peninsula at that time. The next section will show how the decorative idiom went through local translation when the region became part of pan-Buddhist world during the medieval period.

2.2. In the medieval period

It was during the medieval period that the international decorative idiom appeared in the Islamic world and Korean kingdoms. Here, the discussion on the medieval phenomena is to follow the chronological order of its appearance. The Islamic artistic expression of this motif will be presented, and followed by Korean cases.

2.2.1. ‘Intertwined birds’ in medieval Islamic culture

The Central Asian roots of the image can be detected in the architectural decoration of the 11th-century Seljuk monument in Iran. The earliest dated architecture to bear the interwoven birds motif is the Kharraqan twin tombs near Qazvin in northern Iran (fig.3-10). The tombs were built by two generals of the Seljuk army, who were said to have been of Central Asian origin. The eastern mausoleum was built by a person named Muhammad bin Makki al-Zanyani, in 1067 and 1068 during the reign of the great Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan (1063–1072).²⁸⁰ The walls of this octagonal

²⁷⁸ Kang Hyunsook(2003), “[A Comparative Study on the Xianbei Burials of Three Yans Period and Hwangnamdaechongnambun of Gyeongju Silla]”, 41, *Hanguk sanggosahakbo*: 71-107.

²⁷⁹ The ethnic mixture during the period was particularly conspicuous in the upper strata of the society. Intensive exchange of different tribes is shown in Goguryeo-Xianbei wars. Jang Yu-li (2015), “[The Process of Establishment and Management of Multi-Ethnic Order System in Goguryeo]”, *Jeontong munhwa nonchong* : 223-259.

mausoleum are decorated with unique designs in fresco, representing eight large, circular medallions within a blind pointed arch. The heavily worn-out medallions are six-pointed or eight-pointed stars alternating with three different types of peacocks –a single peacock with its tail feathers in the shape of fan, a pair of peacocks confronting each other, and a pair of peacocks intertwined by their necks (fig.3-11)

An interpretation of the intertwined bird motif on the Kharrağan tower suggests it represented an aspiration to paradise. When used in a funerary context, according to Shani, the birds may symbolize the souls of the deceased, whose path in the world of the afterlife is illuminated by the light God provided for the righteous.²⁸¹ To support this point, a mosque lamp is depicted suspended by three chains in a keel-shaped arch on each façade in the lower fresco (fig.3-12). It is true that the image of the lamp especially in a mihrab setting is commonly interpreted as a metaphor of the Divine Light, as it is described in the Light Verse of the Quran (24:35).²⁸² Of the figures and their symbolism, Gönül Öney pointed out that they are ‘undoubtedly inspired by Central Asian shaman traditions and tomb symbolism which are partly incorporated into Islamic beliefs’.²⁸³ Although the phrase ‘shaman’ may need further clarification to avoid its negative connotation, art historical evidence attests to the fact that the Turks were the first to make this motif an essential cultural element of their newly adopted religion.

A. In the western part of the Islamic world

From around the 10th century, numerous portable objects - Instead of architectural decoration -bear the decorative idiom in Islamic cultural sphere. I will present such Islamic examples in chronological order, firstly in the western part of the Islamic world, followed by the eastern side. The Egyptian ceramic sherd, attributed to the 10th century, now in the Benaki Museum, clearly shows the two long-legged birds against a background of ochre and green colour (fig.3-13). The birds intertwining their

²⁸⁰ For the general information of the towers, see David Stronach and T. Cuyler Young, Jr (1966) “Three Seljuq Tomb Towers”, *Iran*, 4 (6) :1-20 ; Gönül Öney (1976), “The Interpretation of the Frescoes in the I. Kharragan Mausoleum near Qazwin”, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut; Abteilung Teheran, and International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology (1979), *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München 7.-10. September 1976*. Berlin: 400-408. My deepest gratitude goes to Carola Di Pauli for providing the photos of the tower and references.

²⁸¹ Raya Y. Shani, “Paradise Glimpsed by the Muslim believer at Prayer”, Robert Hillenbrand, E. Grube and Altajir World of Islam Trust (ed.) (2005), *Image and Meaning in Islamic Art*, London, 109-128, 114-115.

²⁸² The verse of An-Nur (The Light) reads: Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom he wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.

²⁸³ Gönül Öney (1976), 402.

long necks at the base of the vessel are identified as ‘swans or peacocks’²⁸⁴ but could be geese. The motif was made by using a mould, an indication that it was repeatedly used as a popular decorative vocabulary at that time. The pattern fills the inside space of the dish and is surrounded with a band of pearl motifs on the rim, giving an impression of being enclosed within a circular frame, like the one of the Goryeo period.

Various examples with the motif can be found in Ernst Kühnel’s encyclopaedic work (1971) on Islamic ivory artefacts.²⁸⁵ The popularity of intertwined bird motif is proved by his thorough research on ivory, the highly coveted luxury item of the medieval period. Particularly in the Mediterranean region, the motif spreads to and was adopted by the craftsmen of medieval Islam and its neighbouring cultures. Recently, Avinoam Shalem, whose works on medieval ivory oliphants has reaffirmed Kühnel’s research, has once again verified the sharing of this motif in the medieval Mediterranean. By tracing the portability of this ‘distinctively Islamic object’, he found that it spread across the Islamic regions from the Levant to the Latin West, and from Africa to Italy between the 10th and 12th century.²⁸⁶

Among these remarkable objects demonstrating communal artistic language of the southern Mediterranean is an oliphant at the National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh (fig.3-14). Thought to be from the very early 11th century, this item offers a window through which we can see the prevalence of Islamic visual art in the Mediterranean region and the fluidity of the society.²⁸⁷ Regarded as the largest of the surviving oliphants,²⁸⁸ the Edinburgh piece has animal motifs of diverse range within roundels. The running animals appear on the arabesque ground of the upper band, while a single animal is positioned in each separate roundel. Highly visible among them is the motif of two birds intertwined by their necks in the middle roundel of the body. As the 10th-century Egyptian motif, two long-necked birds stand on their long legs. This time, however, the clearer rendition of feathers or wings points to the birds being peacocks. Although the decoration on the body was most probably carved later than the one on the rim, perhaps by western craftsmen,²⁸⁹ this does not mean that the

²⁸⁴ Helen Philon (1980), *Early Islamic Ceramics: Ninth to Late Twelfth Centuries*, London, 24.

²⁸⁵ Ernst Kühnel (1971), *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen, VIII-XIII. Jahrhundert*, Berlin.

²⁸⁶ Avinoam Shalem (2004), *The Oliphant: Islamic Objects in Historical Context*, Brill.

²⁸⁷ The fluidity of the society in the Fatimid period, when ‘the Christians and Jews’ lived under Islam, particularly in its capital, Cairo, is well documented in the so-called the *Geniza* documents. S.D. Goitien (1967-1993), *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6, Berkeley.

²⁸⁸ Among the ‘Saracenic’ oliphant, the largest pieces are the oliphants from the National Museum Scotland (previously known as Royal Museum of Scotland) in Edinburgh and the Blackburn one from the V&A, both of which measure 68-69cm in length. Avinoam Shalem (2004),16.

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*

intertwined bird motif originated in the Christian world. Instead, the dissemination and sharing of this motif shows the far-reaching influence of the visual vocabulary of Islamic culture during the late Abbasid and the Fatimid period.

A more evident example to confirm the Islamic artistic origin of this motif is that of the 11th-century rectangular ivory caskets, now in Burgos and Madrid. The caskets were signed by Muslim carvers, Muhammad ibn Zayyan for the Burgos casket (1026) (fig.3-15) and his son (or brother) ‘Abd al-Rahman for the Madrid one (made around 1049-50).²⁹⁰ Both of them are densely decorated with a similar combination of decorative idioms as that on the Edinburgh oliphant. In these caskets, the pair of peacocks with intertwining necks occupies the centre stage on its middle facet of the trunk body while other motifs of ‘Islamic par excellence’ - running animals against the delicate vegetal imagery, devouring and hunting animals- are depicted on the lid. Further to the decorative idioms and the engraved name of its craftsman, The Islamic origin of this luxury casket is again confirmed by human figures carved on the object. On either facets of the body is typical figural representation of Muslims in the region engaging in hunting activity (fig.3-16). These prized ivory objects prove that the visual vocabulary of intertwined birds was widespread throughout the Fatimid dynasty (909-1171) which linked Mediterranean cultures with North Africa and the Umayyad Spain.²⁹¹

B. In the eastern part of the Islamic world

The medieval Mediterranean culture shows its artistic investment in this decorative idiom of intertwined birds, but it was not bound to a particular section of the Islamic world. Extant objects demonstrate that the motif disseminated throughout the Islamic world from the westernmost frontier to its eastern stretch. Eva Baer regarded this as a purely Persian motif based on its regular occurrence in Medieval Persian metalwork,²⁹² Melikian-Chirvani specifically pointed out “the purely Khorasanian character of the motifs’.²⁹³

In the medieval Iranian cultural zone, the motif was particularly favoured on a peculiar type of Persian perfume vessel produced in Khorasan, the eastern edge of Persianate Islamic zone, during the 11th to 13th centuries. The object is a small bird-shaped phial. Although seemingly unusual, the bird-shaped phial was used as a perfume bottle in the late Byzantine period.²⁹⁴ It is likely that the

²⁹⁰ Avinoam Shalem (1995), “From Royal Caskets to Relic Containers: Two Ivory Caskets from Burgos and Madrid”, Gülru Necipoğlu (ed.), *Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, Leiden, 24-38 ; The Zayyan family was responsible to manufactured luxury ivories in the city of Cuenca for potentates of the Dhu’l-Nunid dynasty (p.27).

²⁹¹ As shown in the pen box in the MMA, ivory objects decorated with animals found on numerous Islamic works have been attributed to Amalfi, southern Italy. Robert P. Bergman (1974), “A School of Romanesque Ivory Carving in Amalfi”, *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 9, 163-186.

²⁹² Eva Baer (1984), *Metalwork in Mediaeval Islamic Art*, New York, 167.

²⁹³ A. S. Melikian-Chirvani (1973), *Le bronze iranien*, Paris, 122.

shape of object was inherited to Muslim craftsmen when Islamic powers communicated with and eventually captured substantial part of the Byzantine Empire. This shows that Muslim metalworkers in the region brought the new decorative idiom of the intertwined birds to a traditional shape during the medieval period. A late 12th-century phial of such shape bears the motif of a pair of birds twisting their necks to connect (fig.3-17a,b). The feathers at the back are symmetrically pointing upwards and meeting at the centre, and the birds are literally touching or kissing each other with their beaks. A bird-shaped container decorated with this motif can be found in the Louvre,²⁹⁵ the Fogg Art Museum (T.L.16838.1), and the Idemitsu Musuem, Tokyo, Japan.²⁹⁶

Nor is this motif only limited to bird-shaped perfume bottles. It has been found in different types of metalwork. As mentioned, the late 12th-century high-spouted ewer in the British Museum is decorated with a series of circular frames enclosing this motif (fig.3-18). A metal bowl container in the Benaki Museum (ΓΕ 13131) shows intertwined birds on one of the twelve facets of its surface. Likewise, the central surface of the metal ewer with a curved handle, now in the Louvre, is adorned with this bird motif in a more stylised form (fig.3-19). Like its Goryeo counterparts, all of these decorations tend to be inside a frame, whether in a variation of circled setting, in a separate register or in a lobbed surface.

The depiction of this motif in the Eastern part of Islamic culture lacks the intricate details shown in the Mediterranean ivory works. Instead, it gains liveliness and even a degree of playfulness. The sketchy presentation of the motif progressed even further to becoming part of scroll design or the arabesque. Equally noticeable is the fact that it strengthened the purely decorative quality to embellish the vessel surface, while losing its semantic significance. The growing tendency towards stylisation of this motif in the Iranian Islamic material culture, in my view, must have contributed to its complete evanescence by the end of the 13th century or at least not later than the early 14th century.²⁹⁷

C. The ‘princely cycle’ and the ‘intertwined birds’ in Islamic culture

The sudden occurrence of this motif in the early medieval Islamic lands and its ensuing prevalence suggest that the motif had a certain relation to the influence of Central Asian Turkic culture, as the idiom was popularised with the advent of Turkic Islamic dynasties culminated in the ascendancy of

²⁹⁴ See the bronze lamp (l (max) 11.8, w 6.9, h 4.3) in the shape of a bird of early Byzantine (68.14) in Anna Gonosova and Christine Kondoleon (1994), *Art of Late Rome and Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Art*, Richmond, 256-258.

²⁹⁵ A cast bronze bird-shaped flask inlaid with silver (w. 1.14, x 5.3), attributed to Khorasan in the second half of 12th century in A. S. Melikian-Chirvani (1973), 122, fig.50.

²⁹⁶ Idemitsu Museum of Arts (ed.)(2013), [*Art of the Orient*], Tokyo, 115, plate 132. The catalogue introduces the object (l.12.8cm) as an inkwell.

²⁹⁷ Eva Baer (1984), 166.

the Seljuks.²⁹⁸ The term ‘Turk’ has been defined by their ethnicity since the medieval period. But the ethnonym ‘Turk’ was not always used as a ‘political-territorial’ concept,²⁹⁹ especially when the name first appeared in the Inner Asian tribal world.³⁰⁰ Their culture is amalgamation of interlinked world of various Central Asian and Inner Asian nomadic tribes.³⁰¹ In fact, we encounter the image of intertwined birds far earlier than in the Islamic representation in this complex web of Inner Asia.

Including the motif of birds intertwined with their neck, the pattern of animals or imaginary creatures physically joined by their neck became one of the common denominators of medieval Islamic art.³⁰² Analysis of the oliphants and other ivory objects suggest that the motif appeared alongside other typical iconography of the so-called princely cycle. The Edinburgh oliphant, thought to be from early 11th century, shows the concomitant occurrence of these motifs on a single object, while the combination of intertwined birds with other decorative idioms of the princely cycle are not found on ivory objects from earlier periods. For example, the two famous ivory items of Al-Andalus, the pyxis of al-Mughira (dated 968), now in the Louvre, and the Leyre (or Pamplona) casket (dated 1004-1005), now in the Museo de Navarra,³⁰³ do not bear the motif of intertwined birds in their visual representations of various activities of royal life. We can thus argue that this visual vocabulary became popular in Mediterranean region by the early 11th century.

As noted, on the Edinburgh oliphant, the motif of intertwined birds has often been depicted alongside other patterns which signified royalty and good life, such as running animals, lions attacking deer, birds in confrontation and particularly with a bird in attack. Some of the medieval

²⁹⁸ The migration of Turkic people into the Islamic world is usually but misleadingly represented by the establishment of the Seljuk dynasty in the Iranian cultural zone. Although their power culminated with the Saljuqs, who captured Baghdad in 1056, Turkic tribes and Turkish soldiers had begun to migrate into the Islamic world as early as the beginning of the 9th century. During the second half of the 10th century, it quickened and finally burst into the open. The wholesale conversion of a Turkic dynasty, the Qarakhanids (840–1212) was followed by the powerful Ghaznavids (977-1186), their territory encompassing the regions of Afghanistan and northern India. Svat Soucek (2000), *A history of Inner Asia*, Cambridge.

²⁹⁹ André Wink (2002), *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, Vol.2: *The Slavic Kings and the Islamic conquest, 11th-13th centuries*, Leiden, 69.

³⁰⁰ Peter B. Golden (2005), “The Turks: A Historical Overview”, David J Roxburgh (ed.), *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600-1600*, London, 18-31.

³⁰¹ Hereafter ‘Inner Asia’ will replace these two geographical terms. ‘Inner Asia’ sounds more neutral than ‘Central Asia’, a region represented by dense Muslim population. As noted in the second footnote of this chapter, ‘Inner Asia’ covers a wider range of geography and diverse religions, including Muslim Turks, Buddhist Tibet and Mongolia.

³⁰² Baer (1984), 166: Other patterns are less intricate. Pairs of birds with crossed tails in high relief, decorate the shoulder of a certain type of 12th- to 13th-century east Iranian ewer (167, fig.74).

³⁰³ The casket was used during a number of centuries in the Leyre Monastery to store relics of the saints Nunilona and Alodia. Afterwards it was transferred to the church of S. María la Real de Sigüenza and then to the treasury of the Pamplona Cathedral. It was made for 'Abd al-Malik, the son of the 'Amirid regent Al-Mansur. The use of particular titlature in the patron's name can give a clue to the dating of the casket to 1004/1005.

Islamic ivory objects simultaneously include these two bird motifs - one in attack and the other in interlink - in their decorative scheme. An ivory casket in the V&A represents such examples (fig.3-20a). The entire surface of the casket is carved with courtly scenes and hunting on horseback in medallions. Various kinds of animals appear, some setting within circular frames while others just filling the space. The top lid is symmetrically decorated with two identical images of a bird attacking a quadruped (probably sheep or goat) on either side. The theme of hunting resonates throughout the whole decorative scheme of this casket in the form of running and chasing animals. The actual scene of fighting animal is depicted in a separate medallion. Various kinds of paired animals, whether fantastic or real, endorses royal pastime enjoyed by the owner of this precious object. Added to the visual list of the traditional princely cycle is the paired bird with intertwined neck, some in medallions with interstices while others are filling the space between roundels with their outstretched wings (fig.3-20b).

Likewise, inlaid metal wares from Herat in Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan) during the late 12th to 13th century also provide examples of these motifs in their inlaid decoration. Herat of this period is particularly important as the locus of an origin of Islamic inlaid metalwork, it is from there that the technique spread to Syria and Iraq at the time of the Mongol invasion of Iran. Two metal objects of this period, now displayed in the British Museum - a jug (or vase) and a ewer - were both made of luminous sheet brass, and are densely decorated with medallions containing figural images in their vertical panels. Benedictory inscriptions are displayed in a variety of different scripts. The silver-inlaid decoration of a jug (or vase) depicts typical activities of the princely cycle – hunting, drinking and merrymaking (fig.3-21). Each lobed medallion in the central panel accentuates the century-old royal pastime of hunting by containing a bird of prey attacking a hare, waterfowl, and other quadruped. Intertwined animals are also playing a decorative role on the rim with monkeys, birds and snakes interwoven in the shafts of the letters.

Another example is a contemporary high-spouted ewer from the same area (fig.3-18), showing a clearer image of interwoven birds in the lower panel (fig.3-22). Within each medallion, a pair of birds is standing with their neck intertwined, so closely that their beaks are almost in kissing position. Their tails in upright position are very noticeable, suggesting that these birds are peacocks. Its layout is identical to the one on the V&A ivory casket, with the birds intertwining their necks so closely to almost touch their beaks. Their long and upright tails also touch each other to form a half-circle. The whole decorative scheme of this ewer, including the lion embossed on the neck, points to zodiac and planets, one of the most popular visual vocabularies of this period, and frequently appeared together with the theme of the princely cycle.

These objects demonstrate that the image of intertwined birds came as a later addition to the traditional Islamic visual repertoire, which transmitted the visual concept of royal life across the regions from the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia to west Asia. This decorative idiom enjoyed popularity

as a component of the princely cycle and we can detect simultaneous presence of the motif of intertwined birds and other decorative idioms of the princely cycle of the medieval Islamic objects. Interestingly, it only occurred in medieval objects in the Islamic world, and did not continue to the later period. The disappearance may have related to the gradual loss or integration of Inner Asian Turkic culture into Islamic society. Furthermore, the intertwined birds motif is the only decorative idiom among the components of the princely cycle which hardly has a metonymic quality; birds in attack and running animals, for example, capture the very moment of actual hunting scene, and are supposed to conjure up the general image of regal life through its visualisation. Comparing to the traditional symbols of princely cycle, the image of intertwined birds was not the conventional idiom of the Islamic way to visualise the high life. It did not fit into any visual image of such life, a possible reason of its gradual disappearance in Islamic arts and objects.

In the following subsection, we will look at the way that the decorative idiom of intertwined birds was expressed and translated at the other side of Eurasian continent. Based on the dating of surviving objects, the motif appeared in Goryeo Korea at least one century later than in the Islamic world.

2.2.2. ‘Intertwined birds’ during the Goryeo period

The motif of a pair of birds with intertwined necks is one of the examples Goryeo potters used a self-contained frames enclosing a decorative motif. It is not firmly established when the motif was introduced into Goryeo material culture. Yet, all of the extant Goryeo celadons bearing this motif show maturity in their ceramic technology as well as finer arrangements of decorative elements, pointing to the later period of the dynasty. The pattern made its first appearance in Goryeo *sanggam* celadons, thus leading to claim that the late 12th century may have seen the introduction of this motif into the decorative repertoire of Goryeo ceramics.

However, the delicate and detailed level of the *sanggam* technique shown in some examples may also suggest the possibility of its later appearance, probably around the late 13th to the first half of 14th century when Mongol-Yuan China wielded its coercive power onto virtually every aspect of Goryeo society. The material evidence to support such a date is that the pattern is also found on gold-painted celadons, one of the unique ceramic types developed when Goryeo was under Yuan influence. Well-known for its exceptional technique of decorating gold onto celadon surfaces, gold-painted celadons were surely one of the items valuable enough to be offered to Kublai (1260-1294), the Mongol khan and emperor of Yuan China, as mentioned in *Goryeo-sa*.³⁰⁴ Even now, some visible

³⁰⁴ A record of a gold-painted celadon is found in an article of 1297 (23rd year of King Chung-yeol) in *Goryeo-sa*. In his audience with Jo In-gyu, a Goryeo envoy, Kublai Khan (Emperor Shizu of the Yuan dynasty) asked about the status of gold in the gold-painted celadon(s) offered to him from the Goryeo court, before ordering not to produce it any more. As for the technique of this celadon and its related debates, Charlotte Horlyck (2012) “Gilded Celadon Wares of the Koryo Kingdom (AD 918-1392)”, *Artibus Asiae*, LXXII (1) : 91-121.

traces of gold pigment, though faded, can be detected on a very small number of extant Goryeo gilt celadons.

In this rare celadon group, the intertwined birds motif seems to have been employed as one of popular patterns. There is, for example, a gilt celadon dish in the Leeum, Seoul, with a pair of birds linked with their neck in the centre amongst densely decorated, all-over scroll patterns in *sanggam* inlay (fig.3-23).³⁰⁵ The same motif is found again on another gold-painted celadon flowerpot (or saucer) in the V&A (fig.3-24). In the deeply sunken centre is a pair of intertwined birds in a medallion, which is encircled with double lines and surrounded by a band of tiny floral motifs. The object is also tightly decorated with phoenixes (*bonghwang* in Korean, *fenghuang* in Chinese) with their long tails flying amongst flowers, foliage and clouds - another symptomatic decorative scheme of the Goryeo period.

These examples indicate that the motif of a pair of birds in an intertwined form was a decorative idiom of the Goryeo period reserved for valuable items, such as gold-painted or in underglaze copper decoration, a technique believed to have been initiated by Goryeo potters and only used on special pieces. This decorative pattern remained not simply popular among Goryeo craftsmen but attained a certain symbolic status, probably relating to an auspicious meaning among ceramic consumers of the period. Current interpretation of this medieval motif was based exclusively on a Confucian framework. This interpretational dominance will be reviewed by looking at the historical development of the motif. We start with an evolution of its visualisation over time.

The intertwined bird motif is almost always set within a circular frame. A bowl in the NMK, Jeonju represents celadons with a framed decoration for this motif (fig.3-25).³⁰⁶ The inside centre of this shallow bowl is inlaid with a pair of birds with entwined necks in white slip, encircled by double lines and further enclosed by a series of *yeoui* (*ruyi* in Chinese). Six white cranes with their beaks and tails inlaid in black slip are among clouds, circling around the central medallion. An identical Goryeo celadon with the same decorative scheme is found in the Gompertz collection, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum (c.400-1991), supporting the popularity of this particular decorative format in the decorative repertoire of Goryeo celadons.³⁰⁷ This decorative scheme makes the motif visually separate from the other parts of the ceramic surface, thereby accentuating its presence and the possible auspicious meaning.

³⁰⁵ Leeum (2013), [*Opulence: Treasures of Korean Traditional Craft*], Seoul.

³⁰⁶ NMK, Jeonju (2009), “[*Buddhism, Celadon, Paintings, Calligraphic Works and North Jeonra Province*]”, 45, fig. 34; Goryeo, 13th century, h. 6.1.

³⁰⁷ Yun Yong-I (2005), *Korean Art from the Gompertz and Other Collections in the Fitzwilliam Museum: A Complete Catalogue*, Regina Krahl (ed), Youngsook Pak and Roderick Whitfield (trans), Cambridge, 178, fig.106.

The Horim Museum, Seoul, has a few distinctive pieces of diverse shapes to prove the tendency of enclosing the motif in a circular frame. Among its collections are two types of celadon pillows –one in square shape while the other is in the unusual three-lobed oblong shape (fig.3-26a,b). The latter type of pillow must have shared its shape with contemporary Goryeo lacquerware and celadon round boxes with small containers inside. In the square-shaped pillow, the entire decoration with openwork concentric designs³⁰⁸ sets the background distinguished from a round shape of medallion on the top and makes its enclosing intertwined bird motif more noticeable.³⁰⁹ The oblong-shaped pillow also allows a round medallion in the centre, accentuating the birds' motif.³¹⁰

The continuous preference of placing the motif within a medallion may be best portrayed on a celadon stool, known as *don* in Korean (fig.3-27). A rare piece bearing this motif, the stool shows a medallion enclosing intertwined birds in *sanggam* in the centre of a slightly curved-up top. The surrounding space is densely decorated with carved lotus scrolls in openwork, which is technically and visually contrasting the central roundel with the motif, thereby highlighting its self-contained, emblematic quality.

The preference for circular frames is highlighted in a celadon pillow of the Ataka collection, now preserved in Osaka, Japan (fig.3-28).³¹¹ The rectangular tube shape of the ceramic pillow contrasts a round frame with double circles in the central sections of the front and back, and heightens the distinctiveness of the enclosing pattern of two intertwined birds. The two birds are closely intertwined by their soft necks in the centre, and tightly fill the medallion with their open wings.

The preference for medallions could be the reason for the motif being predominantly found in round-shaped ceramics, mostly on the round lid of celadon covered boxes. Probably used as a cosmetic case or incense container, a celadon covered box consists of two identically-shaped round vessels, the bowl and the lid. This type of celadon must have been greatly favoured in the Goryeo period, judging from the existing number of celadons and metalwork of this shape. A celadon box in the Horim Museum bears a pair of birds intertwined by their necks as a single figural motif in the medallion, following the decorative scheme of this motif (fig.3-29). Within a medallion, the birds are inlaid in white slip with black dots and lines for their eyes, feathers and general contour. Another, nearly identical, celadon box (h. (total) 3.7, dia. 7.9) displays the same decorative scheme including a

³⁰⁸ The pattern is known as the name of 'seven treasures' in Korea. A relatively neutral term of geometric description is used to avoid inherent danger of such culturally charged term.

³⁰⁹ Horim Museum (2009), [*Goryeo Celadon: Special Exhibition to Inaugurate Shinsa Annex of the Horim Museum*], Seoul: 130, fig.99.

³¹⁰ Horim Museum (2009), 129, fig.98.

³¹¹ Ikutaro Itoh and Yutaka Mino (1991), *The radiance of jade and the clarity of water : Korean ceramics from the Ataka collection*: New York.

pair of birds intertwined by their necks, but the inner band encircling the medallion is decorated with pearls.³¹²

In an exceptional case without a circular frame, the motif itself forms a roundel by exaggerating their outstretched wings and their necks in the shape of circle, as shown in another celadon pillow (fig.3-30).³¹³ Such a decorative scheme is epitomised by a celadon covered box from the Dongwon Collection in the NMK (fig.3-31).³¹⁴ The side of the round box is decorated with vertical lines in the shape of flower petals using an intaglio technique, probably inspired by similarly-shaped Goryeo metalwork. A raised circle line on the lid provides a self-contained pictorial space, which is entirely filled by a pair of birds with their necks loosely intertwined and their wings fully outstretched. The birds are carefully depicted with their beaks, crests, and the contours of feathers inlaid in fine black slip that gives them a three-dimensional effect.

The same scheme was used in some of the Goryeo white wares. Contrary to the general understanding, the Goryeo period saw the production of a variety of ceramics besides its signature items of celadon. In Korean ceramic history, white porcelain in the sense of western ceramic terminology³¹⁵ is known to have been produced by the early Joseon period, but neat and luxurious white ceramics had already been created during the mid-Goryeo period. Among extant Goryeo white ceramics, some covered boxes show the identical shape and decoration as the Dongwon celadon box shows. An object of white ware in Osaka, for example, has the cover decorated with a thinly carved design of two intertwined birds in a roundel (fig.3-32). Comparable pieces can be found in the collections of the NMK, Seoul (Dongwon 1249) and of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1985-81-12a-k).³¹⁶ The form and the design of these white wares, as well as the colour of their glaze over white clay, are all remarkably refined, which strongly advocates the prestige of the interwoven bird motif. This motif was a decorative pattern only used for these fine ceramics.

Evidence shows that the visual representation of the motif found on Goryeo artefacts is stylistically similar to that of Islamic cultures. Geographically distant and culturally different, Goryeo and Islamic

³¹² See the celadon box with cover inlaid with a design of cranes in Horim Museum (1992), [*The Selected Collection of the Horim Museum: Celadon*], II, Seoul: 67, fig 51.

³¹³ Ewha Woman's University Museum (1981), [*Goryeo Ceramics*], Seoul: fig. 213.

³¹⁴ NMK (2012), [*Masterpieces from the Dongwon Collection in the NMK*], I, Seoul, 61, fig 21.

³¹⁵ Porcelain is defined as high-fired, translucent, white ceramic ware in the West, while it means high-fired white ceramics – usually opaque white stoneware. For the concepts of porcelain in the West and in East Asia, see Nicole Rousmaniere (2012), *Vessels of Influence: China and the Birth of Porcelain in Medieval and Early Modern Japan*, London, 25-6.

³¹⁶ National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (2008), [Korean Art Collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA], Seoul, fig. 131.

lands shared fundamental elements of the motif, such as the presence of two birds alone, intertwinement of necks and symmetry of two figures. The tendency to present the motif within a frame can also be regarded as a similarity. The context, in which the motif is presented, as well as its accompanying patterns, suggests that both cultures embraced it as auspicious or as a symbol of blissful life.

Against these similarities, clear distinctions can be noted as well. One of the most visible differences is that the bird of this motif in Islamic culture was never in flight, whereas Goryeo's depictions always show birds with wings spread at full stretch, giving the impression of flight. While the bird motif was most likely used to deliver a certain propitious meaning in both cultures, the motif took a more heraldic form within Islamic culture compared to Goryeo's symbolic representation. Even in minute details, another difference can be found in the direction of the concerned birds. Goryeo's birds intertwine each other's neck in addorsed positions, whilst the Islamic representation prefers birds intertwining to face each other in direct confrontation. The apparently minute dissimilarity in detail can be understood as a change and adaptation required by local cultural decorum.

It would be useful to identify the transmission route connecting these two cultures in more detail in order to explain a shared culture between the Islamic world and Goryeo Korea. As mentioned, this decorative idiom belongs to the long tradition of Inner Asian International styles. In other examples of International styles, I already pointed the role of Tibet as a cross-cultural centre of the Eurasian overland route in the medieval period. Now we'll see how the idiom transmitted to northern nomadic states of East Asia along the spread of tantric Buddhism. During the period, Tibet was a powerful Inner Asian centre to connect various – or mutually exclusive from a present-day perspective – religious, cultural, and ethnic groups, not only because of its geographical location but of their religious influence on East Asian nomadic states

3. Inner Asian networks in the medieval period

The decorative idiom appeared again on Korean artistic expressions when East Asia was under multi-state competitions. During the time under the present discussion, Song China (960-1279), the main producer of written sources, became ever more marginalised politically and territorially. Although Song was the most advanced of these states at least from cultural aspect, East Asia was subject to the fierce competition from equally powerful states of Khitan Liao (915-1125), Tangut Xixia (1038-1227), Jurchen Jin (1115-1234) with Goryeo (918-1396) (map 6). With the shift of power from Liao to Jin in northern China, the territory and power of Song China shrunk even more, and eventually forced the establishment of the Southern Song (1127-1279), with the capital in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in south-eastern China. Once cut off from continental connections by its geographical location and

diminishing power, Southern Song had to forfeit all traditional continental trade routes, obliging them to focus on maritime trade.



Map 6) Asia in 1000-1100

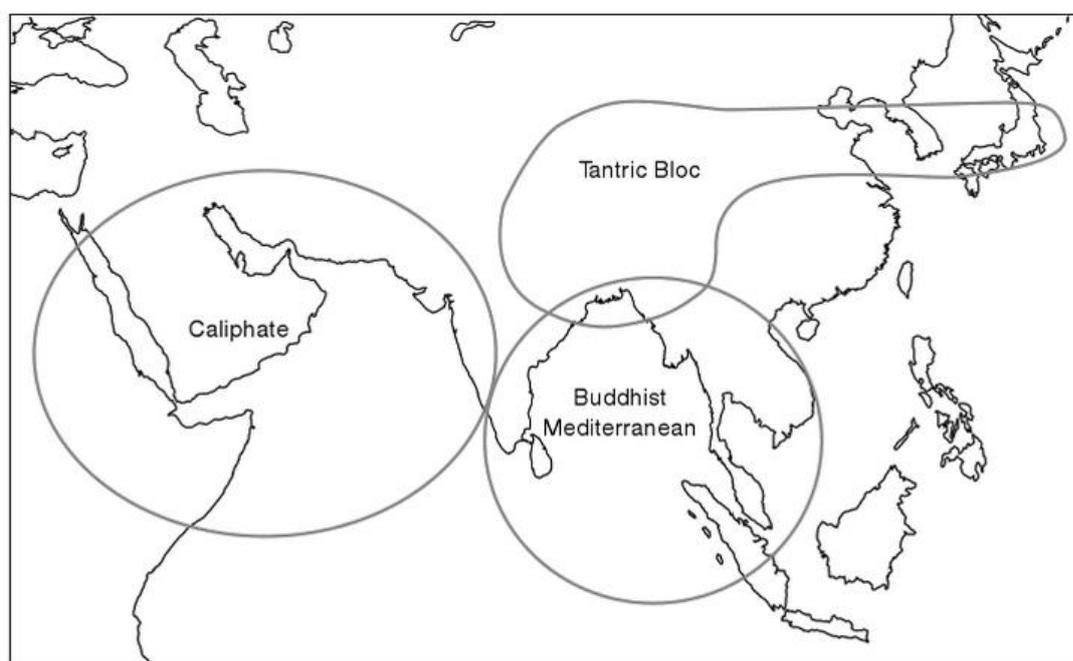
In the midst of constant strife for political hegemony, trade through overland traffic grew stronger, and these states were in constant contacts with the Islamic world directly or indirectly. Overland contacts and communications with the Islamic world had flourished under Tang, which were inherited and thrived with the nomadic kingdoms who took over northern China. In order to better understand Korea's cultural interaction with Islamic culture, these nomadic states need to be addressed with no less weight than the Song dynasty. Judging from the remaining cultural heritage, Korean kingdoms took part in this commercial network of 'Inner Asia' by engaging in a multi-state political phenomenon of East Asia.

3.1. Tibet at the Inner Asian crossroads

More relevant to our issue, the geographical scope of 'Inner Asia' is more precisely understood as 'the wide swath of territory stretching from Afghanistan to Mongolia' in the words of Elverskog.³¹⁷ Although it is well known that the economic miracle of the Song dynasty was closely related to the explosion of maritime trade at this time, generally overlooked is the simultaneous economic boom of

³¹⁷ Johan Elverskog (2010), *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, Philadelphia, p.7

this period happening among the ‘Tantric Bloc’³¹⁸ in Inner Asia, that linked the Pala dynasty in India with Tibet, the Tangut kingdom in Central Asia, and the Khitan Liao dynasty in north China, all of whom were Buddhist (map 7). The ‘Tantric Bloc’, whose spiritual master was Tibet, allowing cultural elements flow in both directions. Tibet as its centre, Tandrlic Buddhism encompassed various dynasties with nomadic roots such as Liao, Western Xia, Jin and Yuan China - collectively known as northern nomads in the Sino-centric approach.³¹⁹



Map 7) Tantric Bloc in three economic zones of the medieval age

The development of Buddhism in Tibet cannot be grasped without linking it to the integration of the Tibetan economy within the trading networks of Eurasia. Indeed the rise of Tibet and the spread of tantric Buddhism across Asia since the 10th century was part of the development of nomadic expansion and migrations along the traditional trade routes of Inner Asia, commonly known as the ‘Silk Roads’. Tibet was an important region in the expanding Muslim trading network on account of its legendary deer musk.³²⁰ Closeness of Tibetans and Turks can be inferred from the fact that most of

³¹⁸ The term, ‘Tantric Bloc’, used by Johan Elverskog, points to Buddhist trade networks, which begun with the rise of tantric Buddhism and its development in Tibet in the 10th century. It spread across Inner Asia to East Asia. Johan Elverskog (2010), *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*, Philadelphia, 84ff.

³¹⁹ For interactions, hostile and friendly, between Tibetan Buddhism and Turkic Muslim, see Johan Elverskog (2010), 104.

³²⁰ Medieval Islamic writers made repeated comments on the high-quality of the Tibetan musk. By the mid-10th century, the Tibetan musk was recognised as ‘the best and most excellent (149)’ of ‘many types and differing kinds’ of musk and became a most desired commodity in the Islamic world. Anya King (2011), ‘Tibetan Musk and Medieval Arab Perfumery’, 145-161.

the information on Tibet in medieval Arabic sources came through Central Asia via the Turks (Tibet, *ED*).³²¹ To Muslims, the monarch of Tibet was also known by his Turkic nomenclature, ‘al-Khaghan, king of Tibet’ (al-Tabari iii. 815, *ED*). As we shall see, the Tibetan use of this visual vocabulary is not dissimilar to the way the Seljuks expressed it when they first entered the Islamic culture, another indication to show long-standing Turko-Tibetan relations and interactions.

Tibet is currently designated as Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) by China, and the political complication arising from such a designation sometimes clouds the equally important cultural significance of the region. First amongst them is Tibet’s political boundary that had been flexible throughout history, sometimes dwarfing the current border of TAR. Tibet maintained an empire which had reached the border of Islamic Central Asia to the western parts of present-day China under its influence between the 7th and 9th century. Tibetan military strength overwhelmed the neighbouring Tang in its military apogee, as proven by their two week raid of Xi’an, the capital of Tang dynasty in 763.³²² Tibetan indications, whether ethnic, religious or cultural, are thus found across Western China, particularly in Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan. Dunhuang, a treasure cove of Buddhist art, is a strong reminder of Tibetan art.

Before looking at Tibet and Tibetan art, Tibet in this context does not stand for the present-day TAR, nor for the Tibet ruled by the Tibetan government in Lhasa (1642-1959). Instead, it means the state encompassing large areas of Inner Asia inhabited by Tibetan-speaking people adhering to Tibetan cultural preferences. Pertinent to Tibet in this sense is Goldstein’s statement.

Ethnic Tibetan populations ...are found in the TAR (of China), the traditional heartland of political Tibet, but also in parts of the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan and Xinjiang, as well as in parts of other nations such as India (Ladakh, Sikkim, Northern Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh), Northern Nepal and Bhutan. ...all of these regions were once united under the rule of the early kings of Tibet.³²³

Partly because of the current political situation which affects it, Tibet as a nation has often been thought of as a Buddhist country and nothing else. While present-day Tibet gained fame from Tibetan Buddhism, this does not imply that Tibet had always been a Buddhist country. Historically Tibet had been one of later adopters of Buddhist religion, only embracing it around the late 7th century.

³²¹ For the early contact between Islam and Tibet, see Douglas M. Dunlop (1973), “Arab Relations with Tibet in the Eighth and Early Ninth Centuries AD”, *Islam Tetkikleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Istanbul, 5 : 301–318.

³²² Tibet and China signed a peace treaty in 821 (or 822). A bilingual account of this treaty, including details of the borders between the two countries, is inscribed on a stone pillar which stands outside the Jokhang temple in Lhasa. Kim Han-gyu (2003), [*Historical Relationship Between Tibet and China*], Seoul, 170-175.

³²³ Melvyn Goldstein (1994), “Change, Conflict and Continuity among a Community of Nomadic Pastoralists-A case Study from Western Tibet, 1950-1990”, Robert Barnett and Shirin Akiner, *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, London, 76-111, 76-77.

Even then traditional Tibetan religion, Bon, had not lost its power, and has retained its influence up to modern days.

Contrary to a tendency to view Tibet from the Sino-centric narrative focusing on Chinese influence on Buddhism in Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism should be regarded as a product of collective Himalayan cultures. This characteristic became acute when Buddhism became predominant once again in ‘the Second Diffusion’ during the 10th century. During the resurgence of Buddhism at this time, Guge, a western Tibetan kingdom occupying present-day western Tibet and northeastern India, the territory covering the Western Himalaya, where the four great cultures of Asia – China, India, Persia and Tibet – meet, was more influential.³²⁴ From such multifarious cultural aspects and diverse contacts, Tibet had a close political and military relationship with China, but had far more similarities with the Indian and the Iranian cultural zone from the cultural and religious perspective.³²⁵ As such, it should be understood not from a traditional Chinese cultural structure – in particular that of Confucian ethics – but rather from a Central Asian or Inner Asian culture which encompassed the long traditions of nomadic pastoralists.

The intertwined bird motif in Tibet becomes prevalent during the early medieval period, when Tibetans were competing fiercely against their Chinese neighbour for regional supremacy across Inner Asia. Whilst such a motif could have appeared prior to this period, the surviving material evidence gives weight to the 9th century as the earliest appearance of this theme in Tibet. This visual vocabulary re-emerged in Guge, the west Tibetan kingdom contemporary to Goryeo.

An earlier example of intertwined birds can be found in a cast silver vase in the Pritzker Collection. It presents a decoration showing a pair of birds, which could be either ducks or mandarins, with their necks interlocked (fig.3-33a,b). The distinctive form of inscriptions on the vase confirms that the vase was made or in use during the sPuryal dynasty.³²⁶ The production date of this vase is around the 9th century, a time when Tibet was an established empire stretching across from the Tarim Basin to the Himalayas and Bengal, and from the Pamirs to the Chinese provinces of Gansu and Yunnan. Until the middle of the 9th century, Tibet was a power of Central Asian empires rather than part of the Chinese geopolitical sphere. Geographically and culturally, Tibet consolidated multiple

³²⁴ Christopher I. Beckwith (1987), *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages*, Princeton.

³²⁵ Kim Han-gyu (2003), 187-190.

³²⁶ Amy Heller (2003), “Archaeological artefacts from the Tibetan Empire in Central Asia”, *Orientalism*, 63. The sPuryal dynasty’ is better known as the Yarlung dynasty in the 7th to 9th centuries. Both names for the Tibetan dynasty were given by later historians.

heritages of Eastern Iran and western Central Asia, and constantly played a role of transferor of diverse cultural elements.

Above all, the shape of the bronze vase reminds us of the presence of Iranian influence. In Central Asia, Sasanian vases of this form persist through the 7th to 8th century.³²⁷ This vase shape appears to have been introduced into China from the West. The Ashmolean Museum (EA1999.98) and the Cleveland Museums of Art (1988.67.1) also have Tibetan vases of the same shape and proportion,³²⁸ a testament of its popularity in Tibet during the period. This silver vase is particularly significant in its exquisite craftsmanship, the finesse of the numerous designs and its historic inscription.

Visual expressions present in this vase are quite different from contemporary Chinese ones, showing a distinctly non-Chinese flavour. The unusual hybrid animals on the vase represent fantastic birds, each with a head of a horse, a feline creature (or lion) and a dragon. Although all have wings and only two legs, they have feet of quadruples –paws or hoofs- not birds. Their tail plummages are in the shape of flames. The dragon's long curled nose deserves particular attention. This form of dragon with a nose in the shape of an elephant's trunk is 'a central Asian hybrid creature'³²⁹, probably taking the non-Chinese attribute from that of the *makara*, an Indian mythological creature.³³⁰ This hybrid dragon of Central Asia type was mainly widespread on Tibetan wall murals and objects of the 8th to 9th century (fig.3-34a). While the type of snout dragon was popular throughout the Tang era, Chinese dragons lost their long noses after this period. Only in eastern Central Asia did this type of dragon persist, mostly in textile designs.³³¹

Such hybridity is also visible in other visual themes. Detailed examination of the intertwined birds on the upper body of the vase reveals that their beaks hold not ribbons, pearls or other visual

³²⁷ Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire and Crédit communal de Belgique. (1993), *Splendeur des Sassanides: L'empire perse entre Rome et la Chine, 224-642 : 12 février au 25 avril 1993*, Bruxelles: pl. 93.

³²⁸ For the Ashmolean vase, see Amy Heller (2008), *A Full Catalogue of the Ashmolean's Collection of Diverse Works from the Formative periods of Himalayan Art, c. AD 700-1400*, Oxford; for the Cleveland vase, Martha L. Carter (1998), "Three Silver Vessels from Tibet's Earliest Historical Era: A Preliminary Study", *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art*, 3 : 22-47.

³²⁹ James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell (1997), *When Silk was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*, New York, 68.

³³⁰ Makara is an imaginary animal of ancient India, a hybrid creature of crocodile, elephant and fish. It is called "Makara" in Sanskrit and Pali, and referred to as "Magar" in Indian. In Chinese-translated Buddhist sutras, it is recorded as "摩竭", "摩羯", "摩喝魚", "摩竭大魚", "摩伽羅", and "摩迦羅魚". In terms of iconography, they are also understood as the origin of life. The most significant iconic features of Makaras are long noses, wide open mouths showing sharp teeth, and fish tails. The Makara image passed onto East Asia along with trade between East and West, and the spread of Buddhism into the East. Jang Seo-ko (2013), "[The System and Meaning of Makara Appearing in Early Buddhist Art]", *Bulgyomisulsahak*, 16 : 39-72.

³³¹ Martha L. Carter (1998), 22-47, 33.

objects commonly shown in Iranian motifs, but rather a snake. The protrusion from the vegetal scroll enclosure which encompasses this theme is also depicted in a shape similar to a snake. Such iconography suggests that these birds do not represent the common motif of waterfowl, but a variation of the older traditional Tibetan icon of *kyung*. *Kyung* is a significant icon associated with the Bon religion -the predominant pre-Buddhist indigenous religion in Tibet. In some of the early Tibetan texts, this bird was born on Mount Kailash and is also connected to myths of creation and the legendary Tibetan kings. It is depicted as ‘a horned eagle-like bird with human arms, a snake is secured by the hands and the beak.’³³² The bird on this vase is seen as retaining a certain element of the *kyung* while adopting age-old Persian motifs of confronting animals or birds inside pearl medallions.

Another point of note is the way the main motif is encircled. The birds are encircled with heart-shaped format made by symmetrical double curled sprays, which end in tri-lobate bud-like forms in the centres at the top and in a downward bud-shaped roundel. This is closer to the Iranian style, which often depicted bird figures within a pearl motif or roundel. Compared to it, the Chinese style generally prefers more naturalistic depictions in open space. Based on the historical fact of the active mercantile network of Sogdians across the eastern part of Eurasia, it is fair to say that the birds on this vase are ‘Tibetan adaptations, influenced by Sogdian textile designs which favour confronting animals or birds inside pearl medallions, as well as floral motifs or hearts as interstitial designs.’³³³

In addition, the bird figures do not appear stationary. With their feet not touching the ground, they give an impression of flying. Amid heavy strap-work are three hybrid creatures prancing inside elaborate branches and foliage, all flying with their wings spreading. The complex vine frame surrounding the creatures looks more like clouds than petals, further emphasising the impression of flying (fig.3-34b). Furthermore, the vegetal scroll protruding from the lotus flower decoration on the lower part of the vase is also shown to be intertwined, emphasising the dominant nature of intertwinement in this object (fig.3-34c). This observation can lead us to state that intertwinement itself is a visual representation commonly utilised in the Tibetan culture of this period

Around the 11th century, the bird motif began to re-emerge in Tibet, a little earlier than the time when Goryeo saw the appearance of the bird-themed decoration in its material culture. The best place to look for such evidence is on the architectural decorations from the Kingdom of Guge in Western Tibet.

The kingdom of Guge was founded in the early 10th century by descendant of King Langdarma, whose assassination led to collapse of the Tibetan Empire by the 10th century. The kingdom became a wealthy centre supporting Buddhism. And the great King Yeshe O (947-1024) began to nurture an exchange of ideas between India and Tibet. During his reign, Tibetan Buddhism

³³² Tony Anninos (1998), “Tokches: Images of Change in Early Buddhist Tibet”, *Orientalism*, 29 (9): 93-98, 94.

³³³ Amy Heller (2003), 55-64, 63-64.

was reintroduced to and revived in western Tibet, with the help of the famous translator-monk, Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055) and the Indian master Atisha (982-1054). The Guge kings and monks ruled throughout entire Western Himalayan region including the upper regions of Ladakh before being destroyed in war in the 17th century.

Rooted in the native culture of Bon, Guge art assimilated cultural aspects from Western Himalaya to the western parts of China, reflecting a remarkable diversity. What is noteworthy in Guge art are the fine frescoes and murals in vibrant colours present in temples and on Buddhist statues. The early Guge paintings cover the period from the 11th to the 13th century. Known as Western Himalayan style or Kache-Tibetan style,³³⁴ they are known to have been mostly influenced by Kashmiri art with some factors of Central Asia. Stylistically, they have much in common with the Silk Road cave murals of Central Asia and Dunhuang in China.³³⁵

It is in early Guge art that we encounter several instances of intertwined bird motifs. The motif made its appearance on the painted ceilings at Dungkar, northeast of Zanda county in Ngari Prefecture to the extreme south west of present-day TAR. Probably the earliest case of Guge art is the lantern ceiling of Cave I lavishly decorated with Buddhist figures, temple motifs and a row of stupas (*chorten* in Tibetan).³³⁶ Each space between the layers is densely filled with a series of geometric decorations. Contrasting these repetitive geometric patterns, monochrome strips make a square pictorial frame in the middle of each layer of the ceiling. Auspicious animals of Buddhist mythology are depicted within the frame in a highly stylised, sketchy style (fig.3-35). In the ceiling layer decorated with a series of concentric motifs, for example, white strips make a pictorial boundary enclosing paired white elephants. For all their various postures, these elephants are always depicted in symmetry. Amongst them is a pair of white elephants whose trunks are intertwined against a blue background (fig.3-36a) and blue elephants in another frame. A pair of white elephants in addorsed position has their trunks linked backward (fig. 3-36b). Two lions, another symbolic animal in Buddhist mythology, wrap around their bodies against blue background in a frame bounded by white strips. At the corner meeting the ceiling and walls is another triangular space holding a pair of birds intertwining their long necks in the same fashion as in the Pritzer vase.

The identical layout and motifs found in numerous other examples of Guge art may lead to argue that such intertwined motifs are a stereotypical Tibetan way of depicting religious iconography.

³³⁴ Pratapaditya Pal (1984) has referred to the early Western Tibetan style of painting as Kache-Tibetan. Pratapaditya Pal (1984), *Tibetan Paintings*, Basel.

³³⁵ Huo Wei (2009), “[Analysis on Artistic styles of Cave paintings of Western Tibet]”, Huo Wei and Li Yongxian (eds.) [Tibetan Art and Archaeology: Essays on the International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art, Sichuan Publishing Group], Shanghai: 245-273.

³³⁶ The Dungkar murals are regarded as one of the earliest artefacts of Guge arts, and are often seen as earlier than the renowned Alchi murals. The cave may have been painted by the same artists that were employed at Dungkar, possibly towards the end of the 11th century (Helmut F. Neumann (1998-99) and idem (2001) in the bibliography). Deborah Klimburg-Salter (2001) suggests that the paintings date to the end of the 12th century.

Guge Castle, located on a hill in Zhaburang (currently Zhada county) still preserves frescos and wooden engravings in its Main Hall.³³⁷ Inside the hall, main beams span the ceiling, each with carved figures underneath (fig.3-37). The eight-sided plane of the ceiling makes a triangle-shaped space with beams, each filled with different pairs of auspicious animals of Buddhist mythology; a pair of *makaras*, lions, phoenixes, dragons, snakes, *Kalavinkas* (Buddhist imaginary bird with human head), white elephants and peacocks. These pictures show the unique Tibetan visual interpretation of conventional Buddhist iconography. Amongst these pictures, a fresco depicting two *Kalavinkas* is the only fresco not to show a pattern of confrontation or intertwinement. Of the animals filling the Mandala, a pair of *makaras* and phoenixes is facing each other at very close distance, and other animals are shown in tightly intertwined forms. In another triangle, two lions against a simple blue background are intertwined with their bodies while facing each other. Two white elephants in a red triangular space have their trunks intertwined against a backdrop of a tall plant.

In comparison, dragons and snakes are placed in each triangular frame with a single cloud-like motif. They face opposite directions while their bodies are interlocked with each other. With elaborate wings and tail plumages, a pair of dark blue peacocks with a lotus placed in between is also shown to face opposite directions whilst having their necks intertwined. What breaks the scene of symmetry is the presence of a snake in the beak of one of the peacocks, following the Mahamayuri, or Peacock King, an iconography derived from esoteric Buddhism of Tibet. This observation tells that Tibetan artisans appropriated the theme of addorsed or confronted birds in pair by adding diverse ways of visual representations from different cultures of West Asia, Central Asia and China with their own tradition. These examples testify to the fact that intertwined animal motifs became part of Buddhist iconography during the early period of Guge kingdom, a testament to their heightened status in the visual culture.

The multicultural aspect of Guge art also occurs on murals in Ladakh, in present-day Jammu and Kashmir. Until the early 17th century, Ladakh was part of the Guge kingdom, sharing its religion and culture with Tibet. In contrast to the remote and exotic image, Ladakh was one of the focal points of the Buddhist pilgrimage and trade routes of Inner Asia.³³⁸ A series of Arabic inscriptions from nearby

³³⁷ Only five halls are still extant at the castle. N. Agnew (2010), *Conservation of Ancient sites on the Silk Road: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Conservation of Grotto Sites, Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang, People's Republic of China, June 28-July 3, 2004*, Los Angeles, 351.

³³⁸ In sharp contrast of today's image of conflicts between the Hindu and Muslim population, Kashmir was the homeland of famous Buddhist monks who contributed to the spread of Buddhism to Himalayan region and China. The famous 4th-century translator-monk, Kumarajiva is known to have come from Kashmir to Kucha, and Padmasambhava brought Buddhist teaching to Tibet from the same region in the late 8th century. Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055) had studied in India and Kashmir before founding his Buddhist school in Tibet.

Tangtse datable from the 9th century onward attests to the ‘international’ contacts of the region.³³⁹ Although the murals of Ladakh, particularly Alchi, are Buddhist in subject matter, they reveal, in the words of Pratapaditya Pal, ‘a remarkably electric world...in which elements from Tibet, Kashmir, Indo-Aryan art culture as well as those of the Turko-Mongol people of the north, and from the Iranian and even the Byzantine civilizations comingled.’³⁴⁰

More examples of animals in entwinement can be seen at Alchi Monastery on the bank of the Indus River, which was built in the medieval period (10th to 13th century), when Alchi was within the western Tibetan cultural sphere.³⁴¹ The motif of intertwined birds is found on the mural painting of Shyama Tara (Green Tara) seated on a sun disc on the wall of the niche of Avalokiteshvara at the Dukhang (Assembly Hall) (fig.3-38a). Above the sun disc is Buddha Amoghasiddhi, the spiritual father of Tara, in dark green. Tara is the most adored female deity of Alchi, and often depicted with fine decorations and clothing in elaborate patterns. It is no exception in this case, as the clothing in red colours shows incredibly detailed patterns.

Tara wears a crown as head decoration, and a scarf with checkerboard patterns from the top of her head. Of all the beads and jewels adorning her hair, the most prominent hair accessory is a large openwork roundel which starts from the crown reaching from her ears (fig.3-38b). What decorates this hair accessory is a pair of peacocks tightly entwined by their neck in a highly stylised fashion. The peacocks perch on the lotus bud, their high crest exaggerated and their dazzling tails merged into scroll patterns. A pair of birds interlocking their necks while facing opposite direction is identical with other examples of Guge art.

In the ecumenical approach of Tibetan art, the peacock is of Indian origin, yet is much more akin to Iranian phoenix in its conceptualization, which associates the bird with ‘paradise in Iranian culture and hence perfectly appropriate for these Buddhist paradise.’³⁴² This phrase is reminiscent of

³³⁹ Rohit Vohra (1995), “Arabic Inscriptions of the Late First Millennium AD from Tangtse in Ladakh”, Henry Osmaston and Philip Denwood (eds.), *Recent Research on Ladakh*, London, 419-29.

³⁴⁰ Pratapaditya Pal and Lionel Fournier (1982), *A Buddhist Paradise: The Murals of Alchi Western Himalayas*, Vaduz, 6. To testify to the international scope of Tibetan trade, trade and commerce between India and Tibet (and then on to China or to Europe) continued to be carried out by Armenian merchants as well as by Nepalese intermediaries during the 17th century and certainly in earlier periods too. Philip Curtin (1984), 193-196; Hugh Richardson (1981), 63-67.

³⁴¹ The dating of the monastery complex is yet to be determined. Tradition says Rinchen Zangpo built it between 958 and 1055, hence the earliest temple on the site. Philip Denwood (1980), “Temple and Rock Inscriptions at Alchi”, D.L. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski (eds.), *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh, Vol. 2*, Warminster : 117-163, 151-52. However, different readings of inscriptions in the preserved monuments ascribe it to rather different dating of the temple complex, ranging from the mid-11th century to 12th / 13th century. For recent research suggesting a later date, Christian Luczanits (2005), “The Early Buddhist Heritage of Ladakh Reconsidered”, John Bray (ed.), *Ladakhi Histories. Local and Regional Perspectives*, Leiden, 65-96, 74.

³⁴² Pratapaditya Pal and Lionel Fournier (1982), *A Buddhist Paradise: The Murals of Alchi Western Himalayas*, Vaduz, 31.

the description of the peacock decoration found on the Iranian Seljuk architecture of the Kharraqan tower. What's more, Tara's round head decoration with intertwined bird motif harks back to *togcha*, which suggests the possibility that this visual vocabulary spread through accessories and other portable items.

3.1.1. Metalwork as an agent of motif

Several contemporary Tibetan objects show bird-like creatures interlocking their necks and facing the opposite direction, showing visual similarity to the bird motifs found in Goryeo. Evidence supporting the popularity of the intertwined bird motif is found in the Tibetan amulets called *togcha*, round-shaped pendants cast in copper alloys. A *togcha*, roughly contemporary with the vase, shows a pair of birds facing each other with confronted bodies and entwined necks. Their heads are turned backward (fig.3-39). These birds, whose species cannot be determined exactly, have high crest feathers, almost as a crown, like peacocks. Each of their beaks touches or holds a strip.

The theme of intertwined birds looking opposite directions can also be observed in Goryeo celadons. The great majority of *togchas* are known to depict the *kyung* or a pair of birds. Most of them are known to face outwards in the opposite direction. The *togcha* in the Ashmolean Museum has a relatively realistic depiction of peacocks perched in profile on a stem with their heads turned backwards in a three-petalled flower (fig.3-40). The evidence suggests that the opposite-facing paired birds had become a stereotypical decorative repertoire of the 9th-century Tibetan artefact.

Although its actual purpose remains up for debate, scholarly consensus is that *togchas* were used as amulets, apparently originally conceived as talismanic pendants. Loops on the lower section support their function as pendants. As in figs 43 and 44, it is suspended from the central hole and possibly affixed with the loops of the lower rim. *Togchas* could also be used as important devices to serve 'as a fibula or brooch, useful for securing garments in the cold mountain climates.'³⁴³ Apart from its practical function, the loops may reflect the bead or pearl roundel motifs 'which were imported via the Silk Route, either from Central Asia or from China, where these Sogdian fabric designs were copied in Sichuan.'³⁴⁴

Because of their portability, *togchas* have been found across Tibet, an indication of its function as an agent of transfer of the visual idiom of intertwined birds. Although some scholars presumed that *togchas* may have gone out of fashion by the first half of the 11th century,³⁴⁵ this type of roundel is still used for woman's decorative accessories in present day, a testament to its long-lasting

³⁴³ Tony Anninos (1998), 93-98, 95.

³⁴⁴ Amy Heller, "Talismanic plaque, or tokcha, with confronted peacocks"
http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/7/680/681/all/per_page/25/offset/25/sort_by/seqn./object/11380

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

influence (fig.3-41). Another worthwhile observation is the following: when there are two birds on *togchas* they usually face opposite directions (fig.3-41a), as on Goryeo celadons. Moreover, their round shape is reminiscent of the circular frame of the Goryeo motif.

When discussing the transfer of visual themes, textiles have been justifiably mentioned as a most prominent agent.³⁴⁶ Their light weight and ease of storage and portability, with their high value, meant textiles remained a popular choice of goods for long-haul traders. The name of the ‘Silk Roads’ implies the importance and abundance of textile items transferred through this transmission channel. The motif discussed in this section would have travelled with its presence on textile items.

An equally probable medium of transfer would have been precious metalwork. Through high-end portable metalwork, the intertwined bird motif would have arrived from Tibet to Goryeo. The presence of similar Goryeo accessories found in the Korean peninsula further supports that Tibetan *togcha*, or portable precious metalwork, could travel across Inner Asia as another agent of cultural transmission for the intertwined bird motif.

Togcha has been found not just in the present-day TAR but also in other regions that were part of the Tibetan cultural zone historically and ethnically. In particular, Amdo (present-day Qinghai), a region in the northeast of the TAR, has seen a concentration of *togcha* finds, a testimony to the portability of this item.³⁴⁷ Furthermore, *togcha* supposedly had some Buddhist connotations. An apotropaic or auspicious object with religious overtones invokes strong emotions from the general populace, thereby securing a greater range of dispersal of such objects, like relics or religious talismans. *Togcha*, in addition to its significance as a religious amulet, also served a practical purpose as a brooch or fibula for tying textiles and scarfs, allowing for much quicker and wider dissemination.

One of the best supporting evidence for *togcha* as a transmission agent comes from the fact that similar objects were discovered in the Korean peninsula. Various museums around the world have button-shaped small accessories of the Goryeo period. They are usually made of pairs, and depicted animals -mostly avian creatures- gazing upon each other (fig.3-42). Bigger objects tend to bear animals in solo. Some are round-shaped; others are in the shape of teardrops. Most of them are made of bronze, although jade seemed as popular as bronze. These accessories are from unidentified

³⁴⁶ For the deep and wide impact of textile on the culture and history of the entire Eurasia, Thomas Allsen (2002), *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles*, Cambridge.

³⁴⁷ Amdo was a traditional name for a region of Tibet, covering the area of present-day Qinghai, China. Since the mid-twentieth century, it became part of China, but it is still primarily Tibetan area, culturally and ethnically. ‘In earlier times the general route between Central Tibet and China had been almost exclusively via the northwest, i.e., via Amdo/Qinghai’ Elliot Sperling (1988), “The Szechwan-Tibet Frontier in the Fifteen century”, *Ming Studies*, No. 26 : 37-55, 41.

provenance, leading to a debate on their function. Although proper name has been allocated to this group of objects, it is generally believed to have been used as a decoration on clothing.³⁴⁸

The motif of intertwined birds is frequently found in these accessory items. A pair of long-necked birds in the NMK, for example, bears waterfowls with their necks interlocked in openwork decoration (fig.3-43).³⁴⁹ Such decoration is reminiscent of the image of intertwined birds on the early Joseon Buncheong wares. A common motif accompanying the bird pattern is the lotus flower, suggesting the link between this decoration and Buddhist culture. Although the East Asian region was broadly under the influence of Buddhism, such small portable accessories showing Buddhist visual idiom were mostly used in Tibet, an evidence of their Tibetan association.

3.1.2. The cultural contacts between Goryeo and Tibet

Few written records providing substantial information of direct contacts of Goryeo with Tibet have survived. It is a debatable issue whether this lack of records corresponds to an absence in the actual history. One of the reasons for this absence could be the same as the lack of records in relation to Islamic culture or the presence of Muslims during the Goryeo period - the compilation principle of Goryeo's official history. Much of Goryeo's historical records had to go through editorial compilation from the succeeding Confucian literati of the Joseon period, who, as mentioned earlier, were selectively accentuating or removing actual occurrences downright in order to meet their preferred narratives. The prejudice and suspicion of Confucian scholar-officials towards non-native elements affected a broad range of issues for their inclusion or exclusion in the 'official' version of dynastic histories.

Joseon literati's adherence to Confucian philosophy led to the decline of Buddhism within the Korean peninsula. Only the tradition of Zen Buddhism survived the period.³⁵⁰ Under this circumstance, tantric Buddhism was as foreign as Islam to Korean populations until very recently. Herbert Franke commented on this aspect in the case Chinese official history as written in the *Yuan-shi*. According to him, the official version of Yuan history is not very explicit about the Buddhist and Lamaist elements inherent in Yuan statehood, and the Tibetan and Mongol sources are needed to

³⁴⁸ Yu Hong-june (2011), [*National Treasure Pilgrimage*], Seoul, 84.

³⁴⁹ Almost identical objects are in the British Museum and the Okura collection in Japan. Unidentified inventory numbers.

³⁵⁰ The original twelve schools of Korean Buddhism were ultimately merged into two sects -Seon and Gyo - in 1424 (the sixth year of King Sejong's reign). Among the lost schools are the two tantric schools. For the shaping of Korean Buddhism, see Henrik Sørensen (1933), "On Esoteric Practices in Korean Sōn Buddhism during the Chosōn Period," Commemoration committee of the Sixtieth Birthday of Dr. Jinsan, Han Gi-doo (eds.), *Review of Korean religious thought* I, Iri, 526-546.

rectify such Chinese historical narrative, ‘even though the latter ones are mostly relatively late and sometimes unreliable and fanciful.’³⁵¹

However, there are several hints of esoteric Buddhism in Goryeo histories. An excerpt from *Goryeo-sa jeoryo* (1452) states that ‘there were Grand Buddhist services of Peacock King’, one of five Wisdom Kings in esoteric Buddhism. This suggests that Tibetan Buddhist influence had already put down its roots in Goryeo society.

In fact, many items of the surviving Buddhist artefacts from the Goryeo to early Joseon period do exhibit elements of a visual and decorative vocabulary of Tibetan Buddhism. The stone statue of the Peacock King was found in Seongdong-ri in North Pyeong-an province (fig.3-44). The statue is one of rarest object and its existence is confirmed among North Korean historical remains. The current political landscape places Gaeseong, capital of the Goryeo dynasty, and other key towns within North Korea, which makes it difficult to discover more such objects. Other findings from North Korea include the statue of Avalokiteshvara in Gwaneum Temple, Gaeseong, North Korea (fig. 3-45). Its ornate cylindrical crown, a long floral garland, and detailed and generous display of accessories reflect the influence of esoteric Buddhist iconography. The cylindrical type of crown was a popular style in the Tibetan cultural zone and its iconography survives in early Joseon Buddhist sculptures.³⁵²

When Buddhist ceremonial paraphernalia from the Goryeo period was discovered in Seoul in 2012, a Vajra bell was also found. Each lobed space of the bell is filled with depictions of the five Wisdom Kings, the main iconography of tantric Buddhism. This attests to the existence of religious rituals with the worshippers who followed Tantric Buddhism in Goryeo. The southern region of the peninsula has produced several examples of Buddhist objects showing tantric Buddhist iconography. One object of interest amongst them is a small statue of Buddha (H. 5.1cm) found in Iksan in the south of the peninsula (fig..3-46). Made of pure gold, this early 15th-century object (dated 1421) combines high value with portability. Despite its small size, numerous evidence of Tibetan Buddhism can be detected on this artifact - the pointed aureole filled with large floral scrolls, the inverted lotus leaf canopy with hanging garlands, the double layer of upturned and inverted petals of the lotus throne.³⁵³ In addition to these objects, some of the late Goryeo funerary stupas were made in the shape

³⁵¹ Herbert Franke(1978), *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God : the Legitimation of the Yüan dynasty*, München , 60, quote in Sanping Chen (2012), *Multicultural China in the early Middle Ages* Philadelphia , 8.

³⁵² An example is a Buddha Triad (h. 40.6cm) in the Cleveland Museum of Art; Korea Foundation(1996), [*The Korean Relics in the United States* 2], 166, fig 7-8.

³⁵³ Youngsook Pak and Roderick Whitfield (2002), *Buddhist Sculpture*, Seoul: 384-6.

of Tibetan Buddhist pagoda. The best-known example is a sarira-reliquary of master Ji-gong (?-1363), currently in Boston (39.591a-f) (fig.3-47).³⁵⁴

Coupled with such material evidence, Buddhist ceremonies in the Joseon dynasty and some terms used in Korean Buddhism suggest the pre-existence of Esoteric Buddhist elements in Korean Buddhism.³⁵⁵ A linguistic connection of Goryeo to Tibetan Buddhism is found in two examples; ‘*gwaebul*’ and ‘*Tangka*’. ‘*Gwaebul*’ comes to mean a large hanging Buddhist painting during outdoor Buddhist rituals. Normally these paintings would be stored inside ‘*gwaebul-ham* [Storage box for hanging Buddhist paintings]’ in the main hall, and would be placed on a special hanger outside during use. Such customs were not always established in Buddhist countries, but only prevalent in Tibet and Korea. Of the Tibetan paintings of the same kind, big ones reach 30m in size and are used in exactly the same way as in Korean Buddhist ceremonies.³⁵⁶ Another example is the word ‘*Tangka*’ for portable Buddhist paintings. The term is used in Tibet and in Mongol areas where Tibetan ethnic groups and Tibetan Buddhism gained influence. A similar word, ‘*tanghwa*’, is used in Korea for the same type of painting.³⁵⁷ This evidence can be used to show the existence of Tibetan Buddhism and its rituals during the Goryeo period. In the cultural and religious contacts between Goryeo and Tibet, *togcha* would also have played a part in the dissemination of a visual element of Tibetan Buddhism.

When the Joseon society shunned manifestations of Buddhism, foreign cultural elements needed to be adapted and transformed in order to be part of the new society. Within the context of Korea during early Joseon, this meant adapting it to the ideological inclination of the ruling class. In order to discover how this material-cultural element of foreign origin came to signify the Confucian values of harmony in Joseon society, another and more traditional path of cultural transmission should be looked at: the route of northern China from the Tang to the Liao. The players on this route were also connected to Inner Asian cultures, but were closer to the Chinese cultural zone.

³⁵⁴ The sarira container must have been from Hoe-am Temple or Hwajang Temple in Gaeseong, Korea.

³⁵⁵ A recent study suggests an esoteric element of Joseon Buddhist rituals, *gamno-taeng* (Sweet-dew painting). Kim, Jeong-Eun (2011) *Sabangbul during the Chosŏn dynasty: Regional Development of Buddhist Images and Rituals*. PhD thesis, 223- 264.

³⁵⁶ Although all existing *gwaebul* were produced during the 17th and 18th centuries, *gwaebul* may have been used during the Goryeo dynasty, based on the fact that outdoor rituals such as *jae* 齋, *doryang* 道場, and *beopsek* 法席 (dharma assembly). Yun Yeol-soo (1990), [*Buddhist Hanging Painting*], Seoul, 10-14; Jang Choong-sik (1994), “[Review on the Style of Joseon Buddhist Hanging Painting]”, *Sahak nonchong*, Seoul, 667-674, 650-652; For the full catalogue of Korean *gwaebul*, refer to National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (1992, 2000, 2004).

³⁵⁷ An Byeong-in et al. (2005), [*Buddhist Art at the Buddhist temple*], Seoul, 232-233; Personal communication with Professor Kim Jung-hee of Wonkwang University, Korea, Oct 2014.

3.2. The case of contemporary adaptation: Tang - Liao

In the narrative of Han-oriented Chinese history, the focus is often placed on the Tang-Song dynastic transition, disregarding nomadic states simply in times of strife and division. However, it is neither fair nor accurate to rule out these nomadic kingdoms of northern China for their crucial role in the trans-regional trade and their pervasive impact on China and the Korean peninsula over a long period of time. Ironically, the most prominent time for people to cross the border with relative leniency in East Asia is the period when Tang China (618–907) had begun to lose power as the centre of vast territories of the Asian continent. Long-distance overland trade continued to prosper in spite of all the tumultuous situations of Tang China and fluctuation of religious, political dominance along the overland trade routes.

As already discussed, the intertwined motif appears in the Korean peninsula selectively and sporadically. The pattern of intermittent appearance can also be noticed in China proper. Following its appearance in Xianbei artefacts, the intertwined bird motif appeared again during the time of the Tang dynasty, which was famous for its extensive trade and interaction with western Asia regions.³⁵⁸ One of the most open dynasties of China, Tang is known to be ‘a self-consciously multi-ethnic empire untied by a heterogeneous Chinese culture’.³⁵⁹ Their imperial families, and the upper echelon of the society, have close blood relations with the Xianbei, a nomadic group occupied northern area of China.³⁶⁰ And they were also known as predecessors of the Khitan Liao. In spite of a general understanding, the multi-ethnic society of Tang has many parallels with the Liao in northern China. Their material culture does provide abundant instances of continuity between Tang and Liao.

The seemingly minor motif of intertwined birds came on the art scene with the rise of hybrid dynasties such as Tang and Liao. The observation that the political fluctuation of nomadic powers somewhat related to the prevalence of this particular decorative idiom suggests the nomadic roots of the theme. The hybrid culture of Tang meant inclusion of nomadic visual vocabularies into Han-Chinese artistic expressions. The decorative idiom of intertwined birds from the Tang period shows that it was translated within Confucian semantic framework.

A gilt shell-shaped silver box from the Tang period, found near Xian, Shanxi province, shows two birds interlocking their necks and touching each other’s beaks (fig.3-48). While this is also a depiction of the same motif, there is certain distinctiveness about this Tang object compared to the intertwined bird motifs from Xianbei or the Three Kingdoms period of Korea. Unlike the Xianbei

³⁵⁸ Two of Edward Schafer books (1963 and 1967), mentioned in the previous chapter, could be exemplary study on Tang internationalism through the analysis of literary documents and material cultures.

³⁵⁹ Marc Samuel Abramson (2008), *Ethnic identity in Tang China*, Philadelphia, xi

³⁶⁰ Sanping Chen (2012), “The Legacy of the Tuoba Xianbei: The Tang dynasty”, *Multicultural China in the Early Middle Ages*, Philadelphia, 4-38.

artefacts, there is little indication of conflict between the two birds, despite the birds facing each other as the ones on the Xianbei saddles. On the contrary, serene closeness of two birds strongly implies they are male and female mates.

Another Tang object bearing this motif better demonstrates such a process. A bronze mirror, now in the Shandong Province Museum, shows two birds holding a ribbon with their touching beaks while their necks are interlocked (fig.3-49). From here, we can surmise that Tang artisans became accustomed to the motif of a pair of birds, a traditional Iranian cultural symbol, as well as the intertwined bird motif, a visual theme of nomadic origin. This familiarity gave them the expertise necessary to integrate these two themes within the Chinese context.

The above examples show that the meaning of the two birds facing each other changed to signify marital bliss as it entered Chinese culture. Indeed, a Tang poem called ‘Written for my wife’s birthday (*Wei qi zuo shengri jiyi*)’ by Li Ying has an expression which connects the interlocking necks of mandarin ducks with conjugal bliss.³⁶¹ In the visual aspect, the semantic adjustment of its symbolism in Tang China turned towards its feminisation. Artefacts bearing this motif from Xianbei and early Korean kingdoms are typically masculine and aggressive objects, such as the swords and saddles, whereas the motif in Tang China begun to appear on relatively feminine objects, like portable boxes for cosmetics or incense and finely decorated mirrors. The birds themselves appear much tame and passive. Their interlocking necks are no longer in conflict, but meant to illustrate harmonious intimacy.

The same translation of the decorative idiom repeats itself during the time of Liao. Jade objects carved with two birds, whose necks are interlocked, are found among the jade accessories from the tomb of the Princess of Chenguo of the Liao Dynasty, dated 1018 (fig.3-50).³⁶² Although its general design looks similar to that of Tang objects, Liao’s use of this particular motif cannot be simply regarded as an imitation and preservation of the motif used during the previous Tang period. First of all, material evidence is not enough to support the uninterrupted continuity of the Tang visual vocabulary into the Liao dynasty. The discussed idiom could have simply gone out of fashion after its initial popularity in certain regions of Tang, especially when China lost interest in extending its power into Inner Asia. Liao objects seem to have been a new introduction to northern China, then the Khitan territory.

Compared to its Tang counterparts, Liao design principle of the same motif appears to be a further divergence from its Inner Asian nomadic origins. It is given a much softer touch in depiction than previous portrayals in Tang. The birds’ heads are now facing different directions after their necks

³⁶¹ Shin Suk (2010), “[A Study on Hamjomun, Pattern of a Bird Holding Various Objects in Its Beak, of Unified Silla and Tang]”, *Misulsa yeongu*, No.24, 61-85, 77.

³⁶² Archaeological Institute of Inner Mongolia et al. (1993), [*The Tomb of the Liao Princess of Chenguo*], Beijing.

tenderly interlock. Such representation gives a greater sense of closeness, as if in embrace. In addition, while the Tang motif showed two birds standing in complete symmetry in accordance with the heraldic composition of the Iranian theme, the small birds in Liao motifs are often portrayed with their wings alone, hiding their legs.

These observations may reflect Liao's conscious process of cultural blending.³⁶³ As witnessed by the objects and the murals found in their temples and tombs,³⁶⁴ Liao maintained their traditional culture of nomadic roots, as their elaborate burials with the use of funerary masks on the deceased demonstrates.³⁶⁵ At the same time, it was also importing goods from Central Asian Islamic cultures. The inclusive attitude of Liao nobles is best testified in the astrological maps painted on the vaulted ceiling of the tomb chambers of Zhang Shiqing and Zhang Gongyou in Xuanhua, Hebei (fig. 3-51). They combine the Chinese lunar lodges with the twelve symbols of the Western Zodiac in the ceiling paintings.³⁶⁶ In addition to this remarkable mixture of different cultures, many of the findings from the tombs of the Zhang family also indicate the tantric Buddhist belief of the deceased.³⁶⁷

In the multifarious culture of Liao, the motif of intertwined birds shown here can be understood as a visual expression of their conscious process to absorb Chinese cultural elements. The use of jade - a quintessential Chinese material- for carving this image further reaffirms that the motif underwent the similar adaptation process as their Tang counterparts, and developed into an even clearer visual symbol of conjugal bliss. These small pieces are most likely to have been allocated to the female tomb occupant. Many instances of excavated artefacts from the Princess's tomb point to the gender-specific world, particularly in clothing and adornments. A specific zoomorphic motif, for example, exclusively designates either the male or the female tomb occupant. The boots for the princess are adorned with phoenixes while her consort's decorated with dragons. From this perspective, this small feminine accessory must have been made for the female owner, a reminder of the Joseon red silk pouch adorned with this motif for a wedding gift (fig.3-58). By the time of Liao's ascendancy in the early 11th century, the visual vocabulary of intertwined birds came to epitomize a

³⁶³ Denis Twitchet (1994), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, Cambridge, 43-153; Seo Byeong-gook (2006), [*Study on History of Khitan Empire*], Paju.

³⁶⁴ For the catalogue of findings from Liao tombs, see Hsueh-man Shen (2006) (ed.), *Gilded Splendour: Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907-1125)*, Milan; For Liao murals, see Su Bai (ed.)(1989), [*The Complete Works of Chinese Art Painting, Painting Vol.12: Murals*], Beijing.

³⁶⁵ Nancy Steinhart argues that Liao tombs were not based on Tang Chinese models, but sourced from their northern pastoral-nomadic world. She finds particularly close links between the tomb structures of Liao and of Goguryeo, the strongest power among the three kingdoms of Korea. Nancy Steinhart (1997), *Liao Architecture*, Honolulu, 363-379.

³⁶⁶ For an explanation of these ceiling paintings, See Wu Hung (2010), *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs*, Honolulu, 160-163, 177-179.

³⁶⁷ As their surnames reveal, the Zhang family was Han-Chinese, as Zhang Shiqing was the Han official serving Liao court. His grandson married a woman of the Yelu clan, the royal lineage of Liao.

sign of marital union. The interpretation of this motif travelled to Goryeo to be absorbed and disseminated in a similar type of motif.

3.3. Goryeo and Liao

While adopted Han-Chinese cultures, Liao embraced every cultural element channelled into their territory through their continental network with the dynamic world of Inner Asia, as to serve the purpose of a designated cultural project. As recorded in their history, Liao established a multi-ethnic empire including not only the Khitan, a pastoral-nomadic tribe, but Han-Chinese, Bohai (a kingdom descendant from Goguryeo from the Three Kingdoms Period of Korea) refugees, and Silla immigrants from the Korean peninsula and Muslim traders alongside other nomadic tribes.³⁶⁸

By the time of Shengzong (982-1031) of the Liao dynasty, a dual governmental structure was established with the Northern Privy Council largely ruling Khitan populations and the Southern Privy Council governing the area containing a majority of Han Chinese population. Through this process of integrating diverse ethnic groups within the empire, Liao emerged as one of the major powers in Inner Asia. In fact, it was Liao, not Song China, to be the real power in the new form of economic network in East Asia, challenging the traditional the Sino-centric political structure based on tributes and investiture.

The level of their culture was also considerably advanced. The Khitans were the first northern nomads to create their own alphabet, which formed the basis of the Tangut and Jurchen languages.³⁶⁹ In addition, the Khitans pacified the Turks, Tibetans, Shatuo and other ethnic tribes one by one, monopolising the north and the south routes to the Tianshan, a frequent passage of trans-cultural trade. They received tributes from 59 states and emerged as one of the main players of the Silk Roads.³⁷⁰ Shangjing, the capital of Liao, had an establishment of Turkic Uighurs, who played a vital role in the Silk Road trades (Shangjing, Geography, Book 37, *Liaoshi*). Through their network, the Liao formed the basis for intercontinental trading which reached the Kara-Khanids, Ghaznavids and, even farther, Abbasid Baghdad, and could enjoy exotic cultural imports from the Islamic world.³⁷¹ The name

³⁶⁸ For the chronicle of Liao, see Karl Wittfogel and Chia-sheng Feng (1949), *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907-1125)*, Philadelphia, 46-49.

³⁶⁹ Sakuma Shigeo, Mamoru Masao, Mikami Tsugio et al. (1974), [*Chinese Civilization and Inner Asia*], Toyo, 322-32.

³⁷⁰ Kim Jae-man (1961), “[A Shorten History of sanbuk and sanmam of Khitan]”, *Jindan hakbo*, 22: 87.

³⁷¹ The communications of Liao with Turkic Muslims was not confined to trade and commerce. They made several marriage offers to Islamic kingdoms, although documentary evidence only shows one case in 1022. Wittfogel suggested that the marriage partner in this case might have been the Qara-Khanid ruler, Qadir-khan, the Persianate Turk. Shengzong's letter of 1024 to Mahmud is a unique document revealing Khitan official mentality at the peak of its dynastic power. Mahmud was unwilling to entertain closer relations with the Ch'i-tan until they accepted Islam. Wittfogel (1949), 50-52.

‘Goryeo’ itself probably reached the Islamic world, not through direct trading or through China proper, but rather through Liao’s wide-reaching trade networks which came to include Islamic lands as well.³⁷² The ecumenical attitude of Liao was reflected in their willingness to trade with Muslims despite Buddhism being the Khitan’s religious belief. One of the best Tripitaka made during the Goryeo period, ‘*Shinjo Daejang-gyeong* [literally meaning ‘newly carved Tripitaka’],³⁷³ was known to have been influenced by Khitan Tripitaka, suggesting the high level of Buddhist culture in Liao and its influence on Goryeo.³⁷⁴ As Buddhism was a focal point of Goryeo culture, such high level of interaction between two nations implies equally active economical trading between the two nations.

In spite of the strong hostility of the founding king of Goryeo, Goryeo and Liao did maintain trading and diplomatic relations with each other for nearly 200 years from the 10th century until the fall of Liao in 1125.³⁷⁵ This period would account for the first half of the 450 years of the Goryeo dynasty. The most influential and powerful neighbour for Goryeo during this period was not Song China, but Khitan Liao.³⁷⁶ During this period, for example, Goryeo’s calendric system followed Khitan’s era name, but not Song’s. And Goryeo’s tributary relationship with Liao was testified by the fact that Khitan envoys, who arrived at the Goryeo court, were offered seats reserved for the most honourable foreign guests.³⁷⁷ It was due to pressure from Liao that Goryeo was forced to abandon trade with Song completely or to be carried out through the maritime route only. Land-based trading of Goryeo was mostly partnered with the Khitans, along with other nomadic tribes.

The long period of relationship between Goryeo and Liao left common cultural elements to Goryeo. Visual repertoire was easily transmitted from Liao to Goryeo. Majority of Goryeo’s tribute or gifts to Liao was primarily traditional products, including textiles, silver vessels and ginseng.³⁷⁸ And hunting

³⁷²Chae Tae-hyeong (1998), “[Domestic Industry, Foreign Trade and the Development of Monetary Circulation in 10th -12th century]”, *Yeoksagwahak nonmunjip*, 12: 231.

³⁷³ The discourses of the Buddha were collected in the first century and arranged into the three divisions of sermons, monastic law, and metaphysics. Only the compilation of the Theravada school, written in Pali, survives in its entirety.

³⁷⁴ Lee Yongbeom (1955), “[A Study on the Goryeo-Khitan Trade]”, *Dongguksahak*, 3; Kim Yeong-mi (2002), “[The Diplomatic Relationship and Exchange of Buddhist Scriptures between Goryeo and Liao during the Late 11th century – Early 12th century]”, *Yeoksawa hyeonsil*, 43.

³⁷⁵ Lee Yongbeom (1977), “[The Relationship between Goryeo and Khitan]”, *Dongyanghak*, 273-277.

³⁷⁶ Lee Jae-seok (2008), “[Aspects of International Relations of early Goryeo dynasty]”, *Hanguk jeongchi oegyo sahakoe*, 29 (2) : 103-128.

³⁷⁷ For the diplomatic relationship between Goryeo and Liao, refer to Marugame Kinsaku (1935), Lee Yongbeom (1955), *idem* (1977), Kim Jae-man (1963), Seo Byeong-guk (1973), Na Jong-wu (2002), Pak Ok-geol (2002) and Lee Jeongsin (2003) in the bibliography.

³⁷⁸ Lee Jae-seong (1996), [*History of Study on Khitan*], Seoul.

falcons were particularly favoured by Liao court, and regarded it as a key tributary item.³⁷⁹ Amongst these trading and tributary items, textiles played the biggest part in the transfer of visual themes. While Goryeo sent linen and ramie textiles, Liao, on the other hand, provided woollen items such as felt and high-class silk fabrics.

Amongst these textile items, *Georan-sa*, literally translated as ‘Khitan silk’ or ‘Khitan thread’, was an item highly coveted by the Goryeo aristocracy. Their fondness for this silk is well documented in the episode in which large amounts of silk fabric of various thicknesses and multi-coloured silk were brought by the Khitan envoy Gao Sui (first year of the reign of Hyeonjong, Book 10, *Goryeo-sa*). So popular it was that it created a market for smuggling. In an article from the 15th year of Myeongjong of Goryeo (1185), the King himself gave a royal command to buy Khitan silk with ramie from the Royal Depository of Ramie Cloths, when Lee Ji-Myung left for his post of commander of the north western region of the peninsula. What is of note in this record is that the location of trade was in Euiju, at that time a place where trading with Liao was banned (Book 20, *Goryeo-sa*).

There were also substantial cases of human movements between Liao and Goryeo. From around 1010 when the first Khitan incursions occurred, a constant stream of Khitan refugees and immigrants arrived at Goryeo.³⁸⁰ When Liao fell to Jin in 1125, refugees from Liao emigrated en-masse to various parts of Inner Asia. A Khitan prince named Yelu Dashi led the Liao refugees to the central Asian region, previously ruled by the Kara-Khanid Khanate (840–1212), and established the Qara Khitai (1124-1218) – known as Western Liao in Chinese records, thereby creating an unique dynasty of Buddhist Khitans ruling a Muslim population.³⁸¹ On the other hand, some other Liao refugees escaped eastwards, seeking exile in Goryeo. Amongst these refugees, there seemed to have been numerous artisans and craftsmen with refined skill, as perceptively noted by the Song envoy, Xu Jing:

What I also heard is that, among tens of thousands of Khitan prisoners of war who had surrendered to Goryeo, there were craftsmen in the ratio of one against ten and those with exceptional skill now worked in the royal workshop. This is reflected in their household vessels and dresses becoming more sophisticated these days (‘Commoners’, Book 19, *Gaoli Tujing*).

³⁷⁹ Lee Yongbeom (1955), 49-51.

³⁸⁰ Park Ok-geol (2002), “[The Assimilation of Refugees during the Goryeo dynasty]”, *Gangwon sahak* : 17,18.

³⁸¹ For the probable reason of Qara Khitai’s observance of Buddhism amidst Islamic lands, see Michal Biran (2005). “True To Their Ways: Why the Qara Khitai did not Convert to Islam”, Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (eds), *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, Leiden, 175-200.

Further to these interactions, various Goryeo metalwork items and celadons bear decorative designs and motifs similar to Liao material and visual culture.³⁸² The fact that the intertwined bird motif appears in Goryeo around the 12th century suggests a high probability of the Khitan's contribution to the transfer of the interpretative approach towards this motif. These historical references suggest that Liao-Goryeo interaction would have provided big impact on the establishment of the visual idiom of intertwined birds in Goryeo.

Goryeo's intense contacts and interactions with Liao, however, do not mean that every aspect of the visual idiom of the intertwined birds was influenced by Liao. Some elements of this idiom, such as the spreading of wings of the intertwined birds, suggest that there are unique features used in Goryeo alone. In Liao artefacts, the intertwined bird motif rarely shows birds spreading their wings when their necks are interlocked. This may reflect a Liao principle of visual representation applied to this particular idiom. In Liao decorative repertoire is a motif of two birds making a circle with their outstretched wing. A Liao fabric repeats the motif of a pair of yellow birds –maybe eagles –³⁸³ forming an elaborate roundel by meeting their wingtips together (fig.3-52). This particular motif, because of its circular shape and the birds' open wings, gives a definite resemblance to the Goryeo motif. At the same time, however, there also exists a tantalisingly different aspect. In Liao textiles, the birds are placed in a somewhat awkward way in order to avoid touching each other's neck.

The same visual principle was in use in other media of Liao. A jade accessory, excavated in the Chaoyang North Tower,³⁸⁴ Liaoning Province, northern China, is in the shape of paired butterflies (fig.3-53).³⁸⁵ Two butterflies are carved as being so close to each other as to make an almost perfect roundel with tiny gaps in the middle. These Liao artefacts and their Goryeo counterparts share significant parts of the motif –from a pair of winged creatures, their symmetrical position, their formation of a perfect circle with their wings, to the visual impression of them floating in the sky. Despite such close similarities, Liao motifs of this type do not incorporate the actual intertwinement of the birds into them. They seem to have used these two elements separately –one for lovingly entwined birds in static position, the other for paired birds flying together in a circular form.

³⁸² Ahn Kui-Sook (2010), “[The Influence of Liao Culture on Goryeo Metalcraft]”, *Ewha sahak yeongu*, 40: 119-160.

³⁸³ Zhao Heng (2004), [Liao Textile], Xianggang, fig. 173.

³⁸⁴ The tower symbolises the continuity of Buddhist tradition among non-Han Chinese dynasties in northern China. It was found during the late 5th century in the Xianbei Northern Wei period, and was re-built in the Sui and Tang periods. The exterior structure of the current tower dates from the middle of the 11th century under the Liao rule, with some modern restorations and changes. Youn-mi Kim (2010), *Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos: The Chaoyang North Pagoda (1043-1044)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.

³⁸⁵ Liaoning Provincial Institute of Archaeology and North Tower of Chaoyang City Museum(eds.)(2007), [Chaoyang North Tower: Archaeological Excavations and Maintenance Engineering Report], Beijing.

The way these two elements set in a frame seems to have come through the Tibetan channel. As noted earlier, motifs present in Tibetan circular accessories, called *Togcha*, would have played a role in transmission and transformation process of this aspect of the motif. These divergent viewpoints towards one motif demonstrate multiple layers of a transformation process during its integration into the receiving culture. It confirms that the world where Goryeo played a role was highly dynamic and fluid. Through a single design motif incorporated via several different routes Goryeo craftsmen were able to provide a product of cultural amalgamation through a diverse adaptation process catering for the demands of Goryeo society

4. Local transition and translation of 'intertwined birds' from Goryeo to Joseon

In their contacts and cultural choice, Goryeo society did not show discrimination based on political, cultural, and religious differences. Goryeo artisans used virtually any decorative motif and patterns from the pool of diverse cultural elements, a testament of the fluidity of Goryeo society. This must have been the common attitude of all the regions across Inner Asia of the period. Diverse societies of Inner Asia, ranging from Goryeo through Buddhist Tibet to Islamic lands, shared certain cultural elements irrespective of their religious and cultural affiliations. The sharing of material culture with the inclusive attitude spread widely especially among the rich and powerful of these regions. It continued at least until the dissolution of the Mongol Empire.

The way Goryeo adopted the international visual vocabulary and adapted it into their society predicts the type of cultural assimilation of Islamic art in the early Joseon dynasty when all Islamic cultural expressions were abruptly prohibited. Semantic adjustment was an absolute requisite for any Islamic cultural element that wanted to survive the harsh eradication policy of Joseon. In this sense, the localisation process of the visual idiom of intertwined birds tests the limits of Islamic cultural elements in the Confucian culture of the Joseon dynasty.

On the other hand, the same motif has been reinterpreted from Confucian narrative of universal order and harmony in hierarchical human relationships. Evidence for semantic transformation of the symbolism of this motif - from martial prowess and prestige to harmony and unity - can be found in northern Chinese regions during the Tang-Liao period.

The process of transfer and integration, particularly from around 13th-century Goryeo under the Mongol hegemony to the Joseon dynasty, means that the Confucian cultural aspect rose to the point of absolute dominance at the expense of any other ideological approaches. All foreign cultural elements which had already entered or just arrived at the peninsula had to go through a process of acclimatisation under this interpretive dominance; otherwise, they were rejected under strict cultural filtering. The motif in the present discussion survived a local transformation by going through the re-translation process.

4.1. 'Intertwined birds' in early Joseon

At the early stage of Joseon, a delicate change took place in the presentation of this motif. Two almost identical celadon boxes, one in the Yamato Bunkakan, Japan and the other in the Ho-Am Art Museum (now re-named as Leeum), Korea, show the two ways of dealing with this decorative motif in a designated pictorial space (fig.3-54a, b). Both of the celadon boxes adopted the same decorative scheme with a complex ceramic technique combining inlaid and underglaze copper decoration. They both have intertwined birds in the centre surrounded by a panel of lotus petals inlaid in black and white slip, and a band of frets inlaid on the sides of their cover and the bowl. 'The birds in the Ho-Am box are inlaid in white slip and further embellished with copper dots on the crests, while the Bunkakan box used copper red more lavishly, it completely fills the inside of the medallion, except for the bird motif inlaid in white slip. The chromatic choice of red was available only by utilising copper oxide under the celadon glaze, and this advanced ceramic technique makes the image of interwoven birds standing out from other surrounding motifs of clouds and cranes.

By adopting the decorative strategy of dividing the surface with zones, the pictorial space in the Bunkakan box is more strictly controlled than the Ho-Am counterpart. The enclosed space of the medallion in the former is emphasised with encircling double lines in white slip against its greyish-celadon background, where three cranes fly among clouds. The Ho-Am box, by comparison, displays an open space with intertwined birds in the middle surrounded by three cranes in flight alternated with clouds, all within one bigger frame. While they both betray a decorative preference to place the motif in a framed space, particularly a round-shaped one, we can sense a delicate but certain shift out of these two approaches made in the visual representation of intertwined birds over time.

The foremost change is the reduced appearance of the decorative idiom in Joseon artefact. Early Joseon ceramics adopted the motif much less than Goryeo counterpart. And the way of presenting the motif was also changed. Later examples bearing the intertwined birds tend to evolve into placing the motif in an open space, often without frame enclosing it. A buncheon oblong flask known as *Janggung* in the Honolulu Academy of Arts (HAA2.514) conveys the new visual attitude towards this motif. The motif is most likely the biggest one of its kind (fig.3-55). One of the visible changes from this object is the occurrence of this motif in the previously unseen objects. Unlike the types of Goryeo celadons bearing this motif, this type of flask could hardly have been used on special occasions or as precious gift, as proved by its quotidian function during the late Joseon period. It can be argued, therefore, that the motif made its appearance in a practical, utilitarian ceramic. As for their techniques, Goryeo celadons prefer being thinly carved and finely inlaid, whereas the buncheon flask depicts the motif in the *sgraffito* technique, using a sharp implement to cut the motif out of the white background and allowing the dark body to show through the slip. This type of decoration was

much practised during the early Joseon period, especially at the Gyeryong-san kilns in the Chungcheong province, a site mass-producing buncheong wares for everyday use.

On the flask, the motif becomes a more dynamic decoration in a wide space, being far from the delicately refined motif in a small enclosed space shown on Goryeo celadons. And unlike Goryeo celadon, the flask shows a visual indifference to any framing device. Also noticeable is the greater detail given to the wings and the tails of the bird. While the Goryeo examples glossed over some details, like tails, here efforts were given to the realistic depiction of the bird. The detail dedicated to the tail of the peacock reflects such visual attitude.

The realistic approach on the bird figures is also found in other buncheong wares. A pilgrim flask, known as *pyeonbyeong* in Korean, now in Osaka, represents the examples of buncheong ware applying the *sanggam* technique commonly used on Goryeo celadons. The flask was made by joining two plates at the rims, creating a round form (fig.3-56). The main decoration is a lotus flower pattern on one side, and a pair of birds on the other. The point of comparison can be made that if the bird motif on Goryeo celadons carefully and methodically followed a set of decorative grammar, this buncheong's design shows more freedom in expertly representing two birds. The absolute symmetry of the two birds on the Goryeo celadon is broken. The birds are depicted not in the stylised patterns of the Goryeo period, but more dynamic and alive in a space without boundary designating each space. The bird on the top shows more dynamism with its tails spread across while coming downwards, whilst the bird at the bottom is more passive with its tail and wings facing downwards. The accentuated long flowing tails and detailed wings leave no doubt that we are looking at a phoenix. The *Taegeuk* (Polarity) pattern around the motif further supports the inclusion of this motif within an East Asian cosmological framework.

Although the general concept is to follow the Goryeo-era bird motif, two crucial differences exist in the design of this buncheong ware. The necks of these two birds are touching each other diagonally rather than in an intertwined fashion. As no object with the same design has been found, this seems rather unprecedented. It was most likely in use during the Goryeo period, as an identical display of paired birds can be found in some metal accessories of the Goryeo period (fig.3-57). As no later examples have ever been found, the decorative idiom of two birds in this particular position has to be identified as part of a new visual idiom that only lasted until the early Joseon period.

4.2. 'Intertwined birds' translated in later Joseon

While visual realignment happened to material culture at practical levels, court material culture preserved the visual grammar of the age-old decorative idiom. The surviving artefacts used in courtly circumstances show that the motif kept the medieval style to represent birds intertwining their necks in symmetrical position. While keeping the visual tradition, however, a translation to accommodate Confucian culture of Joseon society has occurred to the decorative idiom. A red silk pouch, which

was a gift from the last queen of the Joseon dynasty to her daughter-in-law, contains a pair of birds with their necks symmetrically intertwined in gold thread (fig.3-58). The motif is surrounded by clouds and vegetal scrolls. As this silk pouch was a wedding gift to a royal bride, one can safely infer that the bird motif came to 'signify conjugal fidelity and bliss.'³⁸⁶ This interpretation is now regarded as the most valid, unquestionable decoding of this symbol.

In addition to blissful matrimony, a few instances show that the intertwined bird motif had a deeper significance in the Confucian culture of the Joseon dynasty. The decorations at the royal palace are examples where the motif was used as an architectural decoration unrelated to the marriage ceremony. The bird motif is found in the Geunjeong-jeon (Throne Hall) in Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul (fig.3-59). Built in 1395 during the early Joseon period, Gyeongbok Palace continued to serve as the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty.³⁸⁷ Geunjeong-jeon, as the largest and most formal hall in the Palace, is the place where the king granted audiences to his officials, presided over large official functions and met foreign envoys. The ceiling of the interior of the Hall is embellished with a series of small square-shaped frames surrounding a central square space enclosing a pair of whirling dragons with seven claws within its recessed frame. A closer look at the surrounding square frames reveals a pair of birds with intertwined necks and symmetrically outstretched wings within each frame (fig.3-60).³⁸⁸ Except for the circular frame of the Goryeo celadons being replaced by the square, the interwoven bird motif in the Hall is the Joseon continuation of the Goryeo decorative idiom. The inclusion of this motif in Joseon royal architecture has been interpreted as harmonious blend of two opposing powers such as *yin* and *yang* of the universe in peace. Like conjugal bliss, the understanding of this visual idiom was, and still is, heavily influenced by the Confucian cultural background of the Joseon dynasty.

At the more visible level of material culture, the visual memory of the decorative idiom became weakened until the visual element of intertwinement was entirely forgotten. When the decorative motif appeared on ceramics of later Joseon, it was reinterpreted as two completely separate birds meeting each other with their fully-spread wings or kissing with their beaks. A blue-and-white porcelain dish in the Ho-Am Art Museum has two phoenix figures interlinked by their beaks in almost perfect symmetry (fig.3-61).³⁸⁹ Around the figures are depictions of clouds giving the impression of

³⁸⁶ Rhee Byung-chang (ed.) (1978), *Masterpieces of Korean Art: Yi ceramics*, Tokyo, 73.

³⁸⁷ The palace is the largest of the five Grand Palaces of the Joseon dynasty. Its continuity as royal residence and the seat of government was disrupted by the fire during the Japanese invasions of Korea of the 16th century, and again during the Colonial period of the early 20th century. Kim Changjun (1997), "[Destruction of Gyeongbokgung during the Japanese Occupation of Korea and Reconstruction Enterprise]", *Munhwajae*, 30 : 61-77.

³⁸⁸ NMK (2007), [*Gelatin Dry Plates in Custody of the National Museum of Korea*], Seoul.

³⁸⁹ Ho-Am (1983), I, fig. 139.

two cranes in full flight. Another example is a square-shaped water dropper in the Pak Beong-rae Collection of the NMK (fig.3-62). This ceramic dropper takes a very rare and bold decorative approach covering the entire surface of the porcelain body with copper-red except, while the two white cranes standing out in relief decoration. The birds are touching each other's beaks and their fully-spread wings also connect. The white birds stand out well against the red surface, with striking overall effect.

At the same time, those examples affirm that the symmetrical position of the birds became an established idiom of Korean visual culture. This visual image fitted into Confucian semantic framework by representing two opposing elements at peace. The interpretational framework of Confucian culture extended to the identification of the birds. They were assumed to be, without exception, cranes or phoenixes, two of the most popular auspicious birds in the Confucian symbolic system of animals. Indeed, the buncheong flask (fig.3-56) has a pair of phoenixes with their long swirling tails, and the Ho-Am blue-and-white porcelain dish (fig.3-61) renders a real image of cranes by depicting particularly their long legs.

A first-hand observation, however, sometimes betrays that some of the birds could be simply a fanciful depiction of imaginary birds. Or, they could be a different species, such as a waterfowl as shown in lyrical waterside landscape decoration in Goryeo celadon pieces. This ambiguity is more noted in Goryeo celadons, in which bird figures are highly stylised and sketchy, whereas the same visual idiom in the Joseon period tends to deliver the realistic image of auspicious birds. This difference between Goryeo and Joseon is not owing to the level of technical and artistic maturity. Rather, it is Tibet to the identity of birds the artisans tried to deliver. Joseon artisans, over time, gained more confidence in portraying the birds in a more realistic manner or following the conventional formula of the imaginary bird, *bonghwang* or phoenix, as they lived in a society sharing a system to warrant instant recognition of the iconography of the bird and its accompanying connotation. In contrast, more meticulous Goryeo potters appear to have been satisfied with displaying a stylised bird regulated by a scheme.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the international style of Goryeo material culture, with the focus on the visual idiom of intertwined birds. The visual vocabulary of intertwined birds, with its origins in the nomadic Inner Asian tribal world, spread far and wide during the medieval period, mainly through the dynamic movements of Turkic Muslims. It went to the Islamic world through continuous migrations of Turkic people. The dominance of Turkic Islamic dynasties in the Islamic world during this period made the

image of intertwined birds keep its original semantic code. Accordingly, the motif became part of a centuries-old repertoire of the princely cycle, whose main theme is military superiority.

While human migration contributed to the establishment of a shared culture in the Islamic world, the same decorative idiom travelled to Goryeo mostly via the transmission route of Tantric Buddhism. Comparing to the Islamic world, the visual idiom of international style went through the translation process along different cultural spectrum of Buddhism and Confucianism in the eastern part of Inner Asia. The artisans on the medieval Korean kingdoms took the visual vocabulary and translated in accordance to their local culture, without any need to consider its original cultural symbolism.

This 'accidental' encounter with exotic visual image was translated to main stream of local culture. In the Goryeo period, the decorative idiom kept the essential part of its original visual expressions by travelling through Tibet and northern nomadic cultures of East Asia to the Korean peninsula. During the period, the image was interpreted as vaguely auspicious, while in the process of acquiring a more appropriate meaning. In the Joseon period, the visual vocabulary ultimately translated itself to fit into the Confucian mould. Under the Confucian culture in Goryeo society and later, the decorative idiom of intertwined birds finally represents the symbolic epitome of blissful harmony, mainly between spouses. It is a far cry from the image of martial power in contemporary Islamic lands.

PART II

Muslims as '*hoehoe*' and their co-existence with Koreans: 13th - 15th century

Introduction

Since the mid-13th century, direct contact between Koreans and Muslims grew stronger in intensity and influence on society in general. Compared to previous supra-regional cultural communications, the cross-cultural pattern during late medieval period until the 15th century became far more coercive and intense. By the time of the Mongol intervention, Muslims of every region of Asia from Iran to the Korean peninsula were heavily involved in politics, both domestic and international. As part of the Mongol empire, they came to the peninsula in a variety of capacities such as traders and merchants, diplomats and government staff, and even scholars. Some of them became localised in Korean kingdoms and served in high office in the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties. To the present day, their descendants have remembered them by regularly holding the Confucian ancestral rites.

Their influence and impact on Korean society were substantial enough to be recorded in official dynastic histories of both Goryeo and Joseon. Other ordinary Muslims contributed to the making of a pluralist society until the mid-15th century, when Joseon Korea turned strongly against multi-cultural milieu of the previous dynasty to take a powerful political stance of mono-cultural society. During the period of the dynastic change both in China and Korea, these naturalised Muslims went through historical turbulence alongside Koreans. The intercultural co-existence between Muslims and Koreans on the peninsula was abruptly over in the year of 1427, when King Sejong (1397-1450, r. 1418-1450) of Joseon proclaimed a royal edict, as entreated by the Ministry of Rites (*Yejo*). This decree, in the early reign of King Sejong, targeted a single minority group on Joseon territory, the *hoehoe* (localized Muslims). It officially prohibited any sign of Muslim identity, including Islamic cultural and religious expressions and customs, within the Korean peninsula.

Ironically, this powerful policy was to attempt to eradicate Muslim identity and at the same time serves as an equally powerful endorsement of Muslim presence and of their influence. Before going to discuss artistic phenomenon during the period of co-existence, we will look into the historical background of the late medieval period. Above all, the term *hoehoe* will be identified.

Muslims as *hoehoe* in medieval Korea

It is during the late Goryeo period that the term to denote Muslims changed from '*daesik*' to '*hoehoe*', which parallels the change of mode of contacts between Koreans and Muslims over a long period of time. It reflects the intensity of Muslims' involvement in local life over time. If the early stage of cultural encounters between Muslims and Koreans started in the guise of trade and commerce as epitomised in the term '*daesik*' meaning the Arabs, then the presence of Muslims in the late medieval Korean society was intensified by the use of '*hoehoe*', meaning that they were sharing a common

geographical space, co-existing and competing with locals for personal advancement. The term most probably started from Song China, in a reference to ‘Uyghur’ (回鶻 *Huihu* in Chinese) Muslims.

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Hoehoe specifically refers to Muslims naturalized or permanently resided in the Korean peninsula. As time passed, this evolved to indicate other localized Muslims in China, irrespective of their origin. In Korean historical documents, the term *hoehoe* was first used in the second half of the thirteenth century during the late Goryeo period when the dynasty was in the Mongol-Yuan political sphere (Table 2-b). With no mention of their ethnicity or place of their ancestral origin, *hoehoe* in this thesis means Muslims of any origin settled in Korea. The degree of their settlement and the extent of their acculturation would depend on each individual case. In cases of completely voluntary integration, some *hoehoe* were allowed to take local surnames, marrying Korean women, and eventually being progenitors of certain clans, which survive to this day. It is apparent, however, that most *hoehoe* in Korea kept their religious conventions that were noticeably different from local rites in their own religious place, called *Yedang* (Ceremonial Hall).

The fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China hastened the weakening of the already fragile Goryeo, which made way for the new dynasty, Joseon. As the new dynasty of Joseon did not completely sever itself from the intercultural society of the previous dynasty, Muslim residents on the Korean peninsula were in same situation as before. Muslims certainly kept their own religious and cultural identities. Some of them enjoyed even more prominent status in the upper strata of society. Regardless of traditional dynastic divisions, the direct contact of Koreans with Islamic art and culture thus continued from the Mongol intervention until the early Joseon period, when an abrupt policy came into force ordering the immediate integration of Muslim residents in the peninsula. This part deals with the dramatic rise and fall of these *hoehoe* in medieval Korea.

³⁹⁰ There are many opinions regarding the origin of *huihui*. The term itself first appeared in Tang dynasty annals as a Chinese transcription of the Turkic runic inscription *uygur*. Colin MacKerras (1972), *The Uighur Empire According to the Tang Dynasty Histories*, Canberra, 224; The most widely accepted theory is that the term ‘*Huihui*’ first appeared in *Mengxi bitan*, [夢溪筆談, The Dream Pool Essays, 1088] by Shen Kuo (沈括 1031-1095) during the Northern Song period. In the Article ‘*Yuelu* [樂律 Musical law]’ of the book 5, the phrase ‘attack *huihui* 打回回’ is found in the lyric to celebrate victory in the battle of the Northern Song against Western Xia. Quoted in Jeong Soo-il (1994), 435.

Chapter 4. Historical background of *hoehoe* in Goryeo and Joseon

1. Muslims and Goryeo Koreans in the Mongol Empire

‘They came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered, they departed.’³⁹¹ These are the phrases commonly associated with the Mongols throughout history. Before recent revisionist interpretations of the Mongol Empire, the most usual way to describe this era was through the image of a barbarous monster with one-off success of an accidental empire (c 1210-1350). The Mongol’s steppe nomadic tradition may have contributed to certain barbarous activities until Hulegu’s conquest of Baghdad.³⁹² Once they settled and eventually ruled the largest ever congruous landmass in Eurasia, the Mongols came to acknowledge the value of sedentary culture and they protect it.

The Mongol conquest of the greater part of Eurasia in the thirteenth century brought the extensive cultural traditions of two great states, China and Iran, into a single empire. Commercial and diplomatic ties between the Iranian world in pre-Islamic to Islamic period and China were already formed a couple of centuries ago, perhaps even earlier. Arabs and Persians long praised ‘Chinese silk, Chinese porcelain vessels and Chinese lamps, and other perfect things of a similar kind, admirable in execution, exact in production.’³⁹³

Under the auspices of the Mongols, however, both the maritime trading routes and overland trade thrived, reaching their zenith. The extent of their interaction is neither like Song nor like any of the previous dynasties, as the Muslim presence during the Yuan dynasty was not a simple result of the maritime trade, nor limited to southern coastal cities. The Mongols also incorporated overland trading routes, resources and experiences from previous northern nomadic dynasties of Liao and Jin. Transcontinental exchanges of goods, ideas and people were encouraged on a full scale under the auspices of the *Pax Mongolica*, a term used for the period of relative peace that followed the Mongol conquests. It describes the stabilizing effects of the conquests of the Mongol Empire on the social, cultural and economic life of the inhabitants of the vast Eurasian territory. The unified Mongol government helped to create speedy and reliable communications and commerce by using the *yam* (the mounted courier service) and relying on the *Yassa*, Ghenghis Khan’s code of Laws, which was strictly observed by his descendants until the dissolution of the Mongol Empire.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ It was a terse sketch of Mongol proceedings drawn by a fugitive from Bokhara after Ghengis Khan’s devastation. Henry Yule (trans.)(1903), *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 943.

³⁹² Joseph Fletcher (1986), “The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 46 (1) : 11-50.

³⁹³ Quote of the Geographer Ibn al-Fakih (903 AD), quoted in Paul Kahle (1941), “Chinese Porcelain in the Lands of Islam”, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic society* (1940-41), London, 27-46, 33.

³⁹⁴ Bira Shagdar (2000), “The Mongol Empire in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: East-West Relations”, Vadime Elisseeff (ed.), *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*, Paris.,127-157. For Yasa, see Leo de Hartog (2006[1989]), *Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the World*, London, New York, 35-41.

The Mongols were well-known for their open policy towards the religions of their conquered lands. Their flexible attitude towards diverse cultures permitted its residents to have complete religious freedom. It is said that this freedom was recorded in the *Yassa*. It was not only Muslims who settled in Yuan China, though they were the most prosperous group. The tolerant, or rather, indifferent Great Khans encouraged various religious groups of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, and others. It was multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic society,³⁹⁵ where musicians ‘sang in Chinese, Arabic, and Persian’ in the water-borne entertainment in Khansa (Hangzhou), as described by Ibn Battuta.³⁹⁶ The Mongolian *paizas* (paizi), a pendant with inscriptions of the Mongol government’s endorsement, used a variety of languages that reflect the polyglot nature of the Empire. On some preserved tablets inscriptions were written in Chinese, Persian, Uighur-Mongolian, and Phagspa alphabet respectively.³⁹⁷ A number of *paiza* (a government-endorsed safe passage) were excavated in various parts of the Mongol dominion,³⁹⁸ a testament to the multi-cultural interactions in a globalized world.

1.1. Human migration in the Mongol Empire

The transcontinental trade that took place under the various branches of the Mongols is readily evident from reports by the wave of travellers who crisscrossed Eurasia during this period. This rapid extension of horizons has often been linked exclusively to the two famous travelers, Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, but a legion of lesser figures accompanied innumerable commercial, diplomatic, and religious missions across regions. A recent study calculated that between 1242 and 1448, over 126 individuals or embassies, all from Eastern and Western Christendom, undertook journeys to central or East Asia.³⁹⁹

While most of his fellow travel writers of the day journeyed eastwards, people of East Asia went in the opposite direction, and also participated in this trans-regional movement and cultural communication. In his work *Daoyi zhilue* [Shortened Account of the Non-Chinese Island Peoples], Wang Dayuan (1311-1350), a Chinese traveler, wrote about the various places in Southeast Asia,

³⁹⁵ Denise Patry Leidy (2010), “Buddhism and Other ‘Foreign’ Practices in Yuan China”, *The World of Khubilai Khan*, New York, 87-128.

³⁹⁶ H.A.R. Gibb(trans. and abridged)(1929), *Ibn Battuta Travels in Asia and Africa (selections)*, London: ; Kegan Paul, 282-300; Jeong Soo-il (trans.)(2010), [*Travels of Ibn Battuta*], Seoul.

³⁹⁷ Linda Komaroff and S. Carboni (eds.)(2002), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan : Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353*, New York, 69.

³⁹⁸ Sheila S. Blair (2005). “A Mongol Envoy”, Bernard O’Kane (ed)(2005), *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, Edinburgh, 45-60, 51-57.

³⁹⁹ Thomas T. Allsen (2001), *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* , Cambridge, 113-114; For the travellers with religious missions, see Lauren Arnold (1999), *Princely Gifts and Papal Treasures: The Franciscan Mission to China and Its Influence on the Art of the West, 1250-1350*, San Francisco.

South Asia, and even West Asia, and northeastern Africa, places that he claimed to have visited in the 1350s.⁴⁰⁰ A famous intermediary between China and Iran –and even Europe– is Rabban Bar Sauma (c. 1220-1294), a Nestorian monk of Mongol origin. He travelled with a student named Rabban Markos from Xanadu (Shangdu, the summer capital of Yuan China) to the Il-Khanate along the overland routes of Asia. After a number of complications, Rabban Markos became the Nestorian Patriarch of Baghdad, and during his tenure, Rabban Sauma made several overland travels as the Khan's ambassador to Europe, once as part of a failed attempt to arrange a Franco-Mongol alliance.⁴⁰¹ Another cultural agent of scholarly exchange is Bolad Chingsang (*Boluo Chengxiang*), a Mongol aristocrat whom Kublai Khan dispatched to the Il-Khanate as a political advisor.⁴⁰² With his advice and reliable sources, Rashid al-Din (1247-1318) was able to write about East Asia accurately in his *Jami al-tawarikh* [Compendium of Chronicles] (1314-15), even though he never travelled to Mongolia or China.

In comparison to the terse descriptions of earlier Muslim geographers, Rashid al-Din had a fair understanding of geography of even the farthest part of the Empire, Korea. Unlike hasty repetitions made by earlier Muslim geographers, Rashid al-Din's knowledge of the Korean kingdom is accurate and up-to-date, as shown in his usage of the name of 'Kaoli', the Sinicised name of Goryeo, unlike previous Muslim writers, who kept using the name of the previous dynasty, Silla, even well after the establishment of the Goryeo dynasty. In his account of the Yuan Empire, Rashid al-Din writes that the kingdom of Yuan consists of 12 provinces, to one of which 'Kaoli' belongs.⁴⁰³ And he also shows his clear understanding of the political situation at the time of his writing (see Table 2-a).

The third shire (*Shink*) is Kao Kau-li.⁴⁰⁴ It locates at the border of the Empire, having its own system of kingdom. The king is called 'wang (*Wank*)' in there. Kublai Khan married one of his daughters away to the King. Their son, Ingir Buka, although having a close family relationship with the Khan, couldn't inherit the throne.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁰ Wang Dayuan (c.1330), *Daoyi zhilue jiaoshi*, Su Jiqing (ed)(1981), *Zhongwai jiaotong shiji congkan*, Beijing; Hyun-hee Park, (2012), *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds: Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia*. Cambridge, 115ff.

⁴⁰¹ Morris Rossabi (1992), *Voyager from Xanadu : Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West*, Tokyo; Hyunhee Park (2012), 139.

⁴⁰² Thomas T. Allsen (1996), 'Biography of a cultural broker: Bolad Cheng-Hsiang in China and Iran', *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art*, vol.12, Oxford, 7-22

⁴⁰³ Rashid al-Din (c. 1307), *Jami al-Tawarikh Volume II*, Kim Ho-Dong (2005)(trans.)(*The Successors of Genghis Khan*), Seoul, 421.

⁴⁰⁴ An Old kingdom of The Three Kingdoms period, Goguryeo was defeated in 668 by a Silla-Tang joint army, although it was stronger with vast territory covering parts of Manchuria and was the most advanced among the three kingdoms. Goryeo claimed to be a descendant of this powerful kingdom, keeping the name. Goguryeo changed its official name to Goryeo in the 5th century.

⁴⁰⁵ [New History of Yuan dynasty], 486

As shown above, the spread and share of local knowledge reveals how deeply and widely cultural and intellectual diffusion occurred in the Mongolian empire. At a lesser level, ordinary people moved and migrated to other parts of the continent mostly by force. In recent scholarship, few have been through such a dramatic reinvention of image than the Mongol. Instead of the traditional image of bloodthirsty savages, some revisionists highlighted the Mongols' successful management of free trade across the Eurasian continent, their unprecedented tolerance of diverse ethnicities and religions, and their generous support of intellectual and cultural interactions between China, the Middle East, and Europe.⁴⁰⁶

Notwithstanding this positive reevaluation, the so-called free flow of ideas and people in the Mongol Empire, even if much praised, had another, darker side. Mongols were tolerant only to the lands that surrendered submissively. Once conquered, their tolerance was practiced only to the extent that the ideas and customs of the subject people did not contradict the Mongol system. As a conqueror pursuing their interest, they were ruthless. The massive scale of human migration under the Mongol rule was mostly due to the rulers' greed and interest in a certain material culture. Mongols' renowned affection of rich textiles and extravagant garments, for example, caused a series of forced mass relocation of weavers and their families from west Asia to China, and vice versa. Khitans, Jurchens, Uyghurs, Muslims, Koreans, Chinese, and many others, one by one, came under the Mongol Empire, and, once they were conquered, their movement in the Empire was not so much related to their own motives as to the demand of their conquerors.

As one of those forced human traffics, the Yuan court demanded young women as tribute from Goryeo starting from 1273 (the third month of the 15th year of King Wonjong's reign, Book 27, *Goryeo-sa*), and such practice continued until the collapse of both dynasties. Although some of the Goryeo women to Yuan China managed to reach a high level,⁴⁰⁷ most of them are said to have lived an unwanted life in a foreign land. A daughter of Chae In-gu, a Goryeo official, had been married away to Sang-ga (Sangge in Chinese), a prime minister of the Yuan court as a tributary woman. When her husband was murdered, she was told to remarry a prince' of a vassal kingdom known as *Mapal* (馬八國 *Maba* in Chinese), a small country on the Coromandel coast, southeast of India. *Goryeo-sa* records that the prince known as Paehabli (Bei hali in Chinese) sent silver hats, incense and cotton to

⁴⁰⁶ Two recent exhibitions in the MMA, are the acknowledgement of cultural achievement of the Mongol Empire. An exhibition was held in 2002 at the Museum, and accompanied by the acclaimed Exhibition catalogue, *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* edited by Stefano Carboni and Linda Komaroff. The other one, in 2011, was organised from a Chinese point of view, entitled *The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty*. James Watt, principal curator of the exhibition, wrote an article, 'Apologia for an Exhibition,' in *Orientalism*, 41(6), 2010, unwittingly reflecting the frequency of mentions of and references to the art and culture in the Mongol Empire.

⁴⁰⁷ Empress Gi (1315-unknown date), the principal wife of Toghon Temur, the last emperor of the Yuan dynasty, was originally a tribute woman from Goryeo to Yuan court.

the Goryeo court as a tribute (6th Month of the First year of King Chungseon, Book 33, *Goryeo-sa*). When this Korean record was checked against Chinese and Indian sources, it turned out that she married a local Muslim official named Sayyid, who was ‘at odds’ with the rulers of Ma’bar. The court granted asylum to Sayyid and sent envoys to bring him to China. Sayyid arrived in China in 1291 and was bestowed a Korean wife –Chae’s daughter- by Qubilai Khan.⁴⁰⁸ Sayyid provided strategic information, both political and commercial, regarding coastal India, to the Yuan court. As his wife, Chae’s daughter seemed to play a role in creating commercial relations with ports in southern India and the Goryeo court.

It was such forced traffic in human resources and skills that made a great impact on material culture of the period. The Mongol practice of sparing the lives of artisans and exploiting their skills had an immense cultural impact as well. From their early campaign, the Mongols encountered strong resistance everywhere, a slaughter ensued but only after the artisans, craftsmen and scientists had been identified and singled out. This process, reported in grisly detail, was applied at every conquered place. Captured artisans were then forced to relocate throughout the empire. Their preference for gold and luxury cloth of gold (*nasji*) woven in Iran and Transoxiana was a particularly important factor for the general mobilization of craftsmen. During the Mongol period, the Chinese of the Southern Song were well known for monochrome-patterned silks, such as damasks and gauzes of various kinds, but these textiles were considered drab by the Mongols.⁴⁰⁹

Yet from the beginning of the 13th century, the Mongols deliberately encouraged the production of such textiles. Genghis Khan ordered craftsmen captured in Central and West Asia to be sent to Karakorum, and by the time of his son Ogodei, textile artisans from Samarkand were relocated to Xunmalin, a locale in northern China. This was once again reorganized in the 1270s under Kubilai locating West Asian weavers in the three textile centres within the Yuan domain. One early centre was in the former Uyghur capital in the northern foothills of the Tianshan range. In 1222 one thousand households of weavers were relocated from Herat to Beshbaliq, which had been well-known for its cloth of gold. The second centre was in Hongzhou, west of Beijing. There three thousand artisans from Western Asia and three hundred from Bianjing (Kaifeng) were relocated, which meant that weavers from two different weaving traditions of China and Iran were now working together. The third centre was Xunmalin, the destination for three thousand households of Muslim artisans, many of them from Samarkand.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ Tansen Sen (2006), “ The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks to Southern Asia, 1200-1450” , *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49(4),Maritime Diasporas in the Indian Ocean and East and Southeast Asia (960-1775) (2006) : 421-453, 430.

⁴⁰⁹ Thomas T. Allsen (1997), 97; James Watt and Anne E. Wardwell (1997), *When Silk Was Gold : Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*, New York ,109,122-23.

1.2. Muslims in East Asia under the Mongol Empire

1.2.1. Muslims in Yuan China

The intimate interaction between the two extreme poles of the empire, China and Iran, enabled an unusual opportunity for the Muslims from Central Asia to serve as advisors and officials in the Mongol Empire, which subsequently subsumed the Korean peninsula in 1270 and Southern Song China in 1276. As in other parts of the Mongol Empire, Muslims were the most favoured subjects from the East Asian side of the Empire. The largest proportions of Muslims were Persians, and their language was one of the official languages at the Yuan court. The earliest reference to Quanzhou by its Persian and Arabic name, 'Zaiton' can be found on a tombstone dated AH 692 (1292/93) in the 13th-century cemetery of the town. It names the deceased as a young man of the Ahmad family. The inscription on the tombstone is written in Persian and Chinese, indicating that the family had lived in China for generations and attesting to the long-standing intermarriage of Persians and Chinese in Quanzhou.⁴¹¹

Several Iranian Muslims became ministers of the service of the Mongol Khans. Among Muslims of virtuous reputation, Sayyid Ajall (*Shansiding Saidianchi* in Chinese, 1211-79) is worth a mention, not least because of his continuing legacy among local peoples. He was a Muslim from the Western regions of Khwarazmshah, and in the 1270s became the powerful and benevolent governor of a newly conquered province in the southwestern corner of China, Yunnan.⁴¹² His principal accomplishment was the development of an irrigation system which provided higher yield of agricultural products and greater stability to the economy of Yunnan.⁴¹³ Although a Muslim, he introduced Confucian education into the area without resistance from local subjects thus establishing a true Chinese province in that region. His descendants still played an important role in the Islamic community even into the Ming and Qing period.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ Thomas T. Allsen (1997), *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles*, Cambridge, 38-45.

⁴¹¹ Jonathan Neaman Lipman (1998), *Familiar Strangers: a History of Muslims in Northwest China*, Washington D.C.

⁴¹² David G. Atwill.(2005), *The Chinese Sultanate : Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856-1873*, Stanford, 34-8, 41-2; Raphael Israeli (2007), *Islam in China: Religion, Ethnicity, Culture, and Politics*, 284-5; Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein (1998), *Sayyid Adjall Shams Al Din : A Muslim from Central Asia, Serving the Mongols in China and Bringing 'Civilization' to Yunnan*, Harvard PhD Dissertation.

⁴¹³ Song Lian et al., *Yuanshi* [History of the Yuan Dynasty] (1370), Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1976, 3063-70

⁴¹⁴ Morris Rossabi (1962), "Muslim Inscriptions in China: A Research Note", *Ming Studies*, 15 : 22-26.

By contrast, Ahmad Fanakati (or Banakati, c1242-1282) was particularly reputed for his ruthlessness and avariciousness to the Chinese, eventually leading to his assassination in 1282. He was the Muslim Prime Minister under Kublai for twenty years. His employment is an epitomizing case representing the turbulent shift of power in northern China. Ahmad came from a town in Transoxiana (present-day Central Asia) when it was under the rule of the Kara Khitai (1124-1218). When the region was conquered by the Mongols, he became involved in financial matters at the Mongol court.⁴¹⁵ Rahid al-Din provides corroborating evidence of Ahmad's works and assassination, but he describes Ahmad as a skillful financial expert, contrary to what Chinese sources say.

Muslims also took the role of efficient business partners for the empire, and the most prominent person in this context was a Muslim merchant called Pu Shougeng (d.1296). The family name Pu may have derived from the Arabic word, *abu*, meaning 'father'.⁴¹⁶ For generations, the family members were very active in the trade between South China and Southeast Asian countries, initially in Guangzhou and then Quanzhou.⁴¹⁷ Pu Shougeng was in charge of the *shibo si* [Maritime Trade Office] during the Southern Song. Due to his power and wealth, his surrender to the Yuan precipitated the collapse of the Southern Song. Kubilai Khan bestowed high positions in the local government of Fujian and Guangdong in recognition of his services in international trade and his network of overseas countries. He was a major player who contributed to the expansion of the maritime power of the Mongol Empire.

Alongside powerful individual Muslim merchants, the Muslim commercial network was best shown through their involvement as *ortog*. *Ortog* is the word of Turkic origin meaning 'partner.' It became to mean Muslim traders under employment of Mongol elites. These Muslim contractors travelled all around the Mongol Empire with certificates issued by the Mongol elites showing that the *ortog* was acquiring luxury goods for them. The Muslim *ortog* may have provided luxury with efficiency and convenience to the Mongol ruling elite, but at the same time they were easy targets for these rulers' subjects affecting their anger and frustration.⁴¹⁸

Mongols were the most powerful agent in medieval times, sometimes encouraging, and at other times forcing, people of their conquered territory to move. Such communication and travel encouraged a shared culture in the various parts of the empire. When Kubilai Khan (1215-1294, r.1260-1294)

⁴¹⁵ For Ahmad's work and achievement, see Igor de Rachewiltz (1993), *In the service of the Khan: eminent personalities of the early Mongol-Yüan period (1200-1300)*. Wiesbaden, 539-57

⁴¹⁶ Angela Schottenhammer (2008), *The East Asian Mediterranean : Maritime Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration*, Wiesbaden, 134.

⁴¹⁷ James C. Y. Watt (ed.)(2010), *The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty*, 163.

⁴¹⁸ Thomas T. Allsen (1989), "Mongolian Princes and Their Merchant Partners, 1200-1260", *Asia Major*, Third Series, 2 (2) : 83-126, 85.

ultimately defeated the Southern Song in 1279, Muslims came to be regarded as the second highest group just below the Mongols themselves, enjoying newly established powerful roles in addition to the traditional ones in business and in the international trade sector. Through intercultural communications, either forced or voluntary, Islamic culture influenced technology, sciences, and philosophy in East Asia. Exchanges of geographical and astronomical knowledge, for example, explain why the Chinese, from Song to Ming, viewed the lands and seas to their west and southwest, ‘through Arabo-Persian spectacles’.⁴¹⁹ The same situation was enacted on the Korean peninsula since Goryeo became part of the Mongol Empire until the early Joseon. Following the mapping tradition of the Mongol Empire, a world map called *Honil Gangni Yeokdae Gukdo Jido* [Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals] was created in Joseon in 1402.⁴²⁰

1.2.2. Muslims in Goryeo

A. Muslims as *hoehoe*

During the period of its confrontation with the Mongol army, Korea suffered several devastating invasions of the Mongol army from 1231 to 1270, before finally becoming one of their tributary states. Goryeo became part of ‘the thirteenth-century world system’ of the first ever globalised empire, otherwise known as the *Pax Mongolica*. During the 13th and 14th centuries, Muslims came to the peninsula, and not only played important parts in imperial affairs and politics, but settled on a permanent basis.

The presence of Muslims during the Mongol suzerainty over Goryeo was thus incomparably more powerful, pervasive and coercive than the one in the previous era. Besides their traditional way of trading, Muslims came to the kingdom of Goryeo as envoys and entourage of Mongol princesses when they wed Goryeo kings. Some Muslims became *Darughachi*, officials in the Mongol Empire in charge of a certain province, since Goryeo became one of the tributary states of the Mongol Yuan dynasty.

Nearly two hundred years passed before Muslims appeared again in *Goryeo-sa*. At this time, the denomination of their identity is changed from someone from *deshik* to ‘*hoehoe*’, a term commonly used for Chinese Muslims or Muslims naturalised in China. It indicates the stability and importance of the Muslim status in Yuan China and the Mongol Empire in general. As in Yuan China, Muslims in the Korean peninsula were no longer guests or visiting merchants but had become residents. The record that ‘the *hoehoe* people held a banquet for the King’ in 1279 (Book 29/29,

⁴¹⁹ Paul Wheatly (1975), “Analecta Sino-Africana Recensa”, H. Neville Chittick and R I Rotberg (eds)(1975), *East Africa and the Orient: Cultural Synthesis in Pre-Colonial Times*, New York, 113-4.

⁴²⁰ Shin Byung-Ju (2007), [*Joseon Masterpieces from Gyugangak*], Seoul ; *Gari Ledyard in the History of Cartography, Part 2, Ch. 10.

Goryeo-sa, see Table II) indicates a Muslim presence at the Goryeo royal court and their closeness to Goryeo kings. Muslims were appointed as high-level government officials. Min-Bo, a Muslim, served as the governor of Pyongyang, the second capital of Goryeo, in 1310 (Book 33/33, *Goryeo-sa*, see Table 2.5)

The Muslim community was set up in and around the capital in Goryeo, with many Muslim people mixing with the local population through business or marriage. Some of them naturalised and adopted Korean names. Samga is such a case. He was originally ‘a *hoehoe*’, and came to Goryeo as private assistant (*geop’ryong’gu*) to the Great Princess Jeguk, daughter of Kubilai Khan, when she married the Goryeo King Chungryeol in 1274. Samga had various appointments in Goryeo, made frequent visits to the Yuan courts, and eventually became naturalised. He changed his name to Jang Sun-ryong (see Table II.6). Awarded with the title and land from the court, he became the primogenitor of the Deoksu Jang clan. Though not Muslims themselves, they still commemorate their Muslim roots in their ancestral worship rite.⁴²¹ His ethnicity is yet to be identified, with different suggestions of Arabic or Uyghur (or Central Asian) Turkic origin.⁴²²

B. Korean Muslims

A recent discovery of a Goryeo Muslim tombstone shed further light into relations between Koreans and Muslims of the period. The tombstone was found in 1985 when construction work was being done on Islamic grave sites *qingzhenxianxian gumu* in Guangzhou (fig. 4-1).⁴²³ It is in the form of common shape and structure of traditional East Asian tombstone, a rectangular stone filled with inscriptions. But the inscriptions of this stone are made in two different languages, Arabic and Chinese. In fact, having nearly the whole of the tombstone covered with passages from Qu’ran Chapter 2, Verse 255 in the Arabic language, the language and his Islamic background look more relevant and significant to the deceased than the Chinese side. The Chinese language, in comparison, was used just for the border strips around the edges, from which inscriptions, the deceased has been identified as ‘Ramadan (刺馬丹)’, a Korean Muslim in the Goryeo period. He held the position of ‘Darugachi of Guangxi province.’ When he passed away ‘at the age of 38 in the 9th year of the Zhizheng reign (1349)’, “his funeral was held on the 18th day of the 8th month at the North of Guangzhou Castle.” Arabic inscriptions further state that he was born ‘as the son of Allah Uddin on

⁴²¹ Jeong Soo-il (2005), [*World in Korea*], 2, 244 ; Jeong Su-II (2002), [*Civilisation of Islam*], Seoul, 404.

⁴²² Lee, Hee-soo (1991a), [*The History of Exchange between Korea and Islam*], Seoul, 129-137.

⁴²³ The first identification of the tombstone was made by the Korean professor, Park Hyun-Gyu during his research visit to southern China in 2003, which was followed by his academic report “[*Tombstone of Ramadan, Joseon Muslim*]” in the Annual Spring Conference of Korean Academic Society of Chinese Culture on 27th April, 2004. Emeritus Professor Choi In-Hak made an earlier comment on the tombstone, but only the copy had been available, not the authentic object, at the time.

1312 (the 4th Year of Goryeo King Chungseon's reign).’ It also informs us that the Arabic inscription was written by someone called ‘Arsa, who had travelled to Halab (present-day Aleppo).’

It is impossible to state with any degree of certainty how and when Ramadan's family converted to Islam but this tombstone enlightens us in many ways. Above all, it confirms the existence of Korean Muslims in Goryeo. In addition to incoming Muslims from foreign lands, there were local Koreans converted to this newly introduced faith. And the inscriptions shows that the Islamic heritage continued among the local Korean population of Goryeo, as Ramadan came from a Muslim family of at least two generations earlier. Considering the well-known open policy of the Mongol Empire and the lack of missionary zeal in the traditional attitude of ordinary Muslims, their conversion must have been voluntary (following Bentley's ‘conversion by voluntary association’ model).⁴²⁴ Whatever the reason for their conversion, Islamisation occurs most profoundly among the succeeding generation, since the children were raised within the father's new community, and not his original one.⁴²⁵

The strong network and power of the Muslims within the Mongol Empire may have been of help for Ramadan in attaining a higher social position in Yuan China. His extensive travels in the southern part of China, including his official residence and final resting place, confirms the presence of longstanding Muslim communities in the areas, and suggests the possibility that other Korean Muslims may have settled there. Finally, a remark on ‘Arsa,’ albeit in passing, is noteworthy. Specific mention of his travelling to Aleppo may have been related to his origin, his travel to the city at a crossroad of continental trade route, or even his experience of the Hajj, as Aleppo, along with Damascus, was a common passage leading to Mecca from regions of Inner Asia. Whichever it was, the mention attests to the sheer extent of the network of Muslims settled in East Asia, who covered the vast landmass from Syria to Korea.

This multi-cultural social atmosphere is well-versed in a Goryeo folksong entitled *Ssanghwa-jeom* from the 13th century.⁴²⁶ The title is generally interpreted as *Hoehoe Bakery*, although the meaning of *Ssanghwa* is a point of continuous debate. The most recent theory convincingly interprets it as

⁴²⁴ Jerry H. Bentley (1993), *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times*, New York; Jerry H. Bentley (1996), “Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History” *The American Historical Review*, 101 (3): 749-770, 759.

⁴²⁵ Richard Bulliet (1979), “Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society in Iran”, Nehemia Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam*, New York, 30-51.

⁴²⁶ It is not known when exactly the song was composed. Ironically, the song has survived only through Joseon Confucian scholars' comment on its seedy contents and their distaste in the mid-Joseon period. From the records of the Joseon period, the composition date of the song is attributed to the 21st to 25th year of the reign of King Chungryeol (1274-1308), Cha Ju-hwan (trans.) (1972), [Music, *Goryeo-sa*], Seoul, 5, 246.

accessories worn and used by *hoehoe*.⁴²⁷ In any discussion, the title invariably refers to something related Muslims having lived in the Korean peninsula. Here, Muslim presence in Goryeo society was noted as not only visible, but closely inter-related with other –mainly disreputable- groups of Goryeo. The song consists of four stanzas with refrains and similar contents. Its first stanza reads:

I go to the *Hoehoe* shop, buy a dumpling (or accessories).
 An old *hoe* holds me by the hand
 If the story spreads out of the shop
 (Meaningless musical refrain: *daroreo geodireo*)
 I'll blame you, little clown!
 (Refrain)

The remaining three stanzas consist of similar libretto regarding a monk, a dragon and an innkeeper. The bawdy content of this folksong provides the picture of social circumstance in medieval Korea, in which the Muslim population and their dynamic, sometimes boisterous, presence was involved.

The song was known to have been created for a stage performance at a royal banquet of King Chungnyeol (r.1274-1308). The king, like many other Goryeo princes during the Yuan dynasty, spent his young age as royal hostage in the Yuan capital, as arranged by the peace treaty of Goryeo and Yuan in 1257. The song is known to have been moderated by the subsequent dynasty of Joseon to accommodate the high moral standards demanded by Confucian philosophy, and was cited as evidence of corruption and decadence of later Goryeo society under Mongol suzerainty. Apart from the moralistic approach to the song, the content unveils the social circumstances of Muslim integration happening at the most humble strata, running parallel to the assimilation on the highest level. Like Jang Sun-ryong, Muslims at higher status were allowed even to compile their own genealogy, a habit that is kept even today. The mention of *hoehoe* alongside lower levels of social strata in *Ssanhwa-jeom* suggests that there is much to be learned about the mutual influences and historical connectedness between these two traditions among ordinary people. Such co-existence continued to the early period of the Joseon dynasty, with Muslim identities even more prominent.

2. *Hoehoe* Muslims in early Joseon

2.1. 1427 edict of early Joseon

In the year of 1427, King Sejong of nascent Joseon dynasty proclaimed a royal edict, and it reads;

Since the *hoehoe* has worn different costume (with clothing and headgear), people watch them as not belonging to our people and avoid marrying them. Having become this kingdom's

⁴²⁷Park, Deok-yu (2001), “[Study on the Rhythm and Syntactical Structure of *Ssanhwajeom*]”, *Hanguk eomun gyoyug yeongu*, 29(2), 21-42, 36-37.

subject, our way of clothing must be followed in order to remove difference of the *hoehoe*. This would naturally lead to intermarriage. Furthermore, the *hoehoe* should be forbidden to do their way of ‘rites’ during Great Assembly of the Court. Decree Allowed (see Table 2-b)

The edict officially prohibited any sign of Muslim identity, including Islamic cultural and religious expressions and customs and ordered them to mingle with local Koreans seamlessly. From the edict, on the other hand, we can surmise that there was a substantial number, or influence, of Muslims in the Korean peninsula. While some of them probably mixed with locals in the early Joseon society, the majority of them seemed to be content to live in their own community. A mention of ‘intermarriage’ further indicates that their stay on the peninsula was not on a temporary basis but had become a permanent residence. They were allowed to practice Islam (‘their way of rites’) not just within their own community but even in court ceremonies of Joseon until the year of the edict. And Muslims still managed to keep their own cultural identity, wearing different clothing and headgear. The presence of a number of high-profile Muslims must have been the result of certain length of continuous participation in the local high society. Some of them held governing offices and status high enough to participate in the royal assemblies of the Joseon court. In summary, these Muslims were not upstarts. They were sufficiently powerful and visible to attract the attention of Joseon Confucian officials, who did not want to share the court assembly and power with them.

Other articles from the *Annals of the Joseon dynasty* corroborate that Muslims before the edict attended royal ceremonies and official audiences. They appeared quite regularly at the royal attendance, especially during the reign of King Sejong. In 1418, when the new King held his coronation ceremony, Muslims, along with Buddhist monks, paid homage to the King standing at the end of the long procession of Joseon Confucian officials. Several further cases record the presence and the role of Muslim subjects, such as the New Year ceremonies in 1419, 1425, and 1426, the winter solstice ceremony of 1426 and a regular court assembly in 1427. In 1422 when the royal funeral of the previous king was held, Muslim dignitaries were standing alongside ‘many officials who were left in the capital, ‘respectable officials in retirement (*kiro*)’, Buddhist monks’ to bid farewell to the funerary procession. The order of the procession seems to be a formal procedure in official gatherings and court audience, as Muslim subjects are recorded to have accompanied ‘respectable officials in retirement’, Buddhist monks, and the Japanese envoy most of the time.

Until they were ultimately forced to assimilate into local culture, Muslims in medieval Korea were able to have their own religious leader, the *hoehoe-samun* (Muslim *imam*). Some of these *hoehoe-samun* were recorded and their names were identified; a Muslim leader, named *Dara*, appeared at the New Year ceremony of 1412. The name may have been used for an individual imam, but equally possible is that it could have covered a general term of a certain functionary amongst Muslim clerics. ‘*Doro*’ is such a case. The Muslim cleric whose name was *Doro* appeared in 1407

when he was introduced by a Japanese high-ranking envoy to the court of King Taejong and asked for permission to stay on the peninsula with his wife and children (see Table 2). The same name occurred in 1422 when King Sejong ordered to grant him ‘five *seok* of rice.’⁴²⁸ Although it is possible that this particular *hoehoe-samun* could have appeared in the Joseon court with an interval of almost two decades, in all likelihood the name of Doro was a generic title accorded to the *hoehoe-samun*. More importantly, this story records the presence of the religious leader, *hoehoe-samun*. It confirms the fact that the number of Muslim believers populating on the peninsula at that time was substantial enough to warrant *hoehoe-samuns*. Some of these imams even received a royal stipend, indicating that their religion and their role were acknowledged by Joseon royal circles of the early period.

2.2. Confucian orientation of Joseon society

Apart from its harsh eradication of a minority group in society, the extreme policy of 1427 can also shed a light on the unique feature of Joseon society and its ruling principles. What seems to be an odd and inconsequential incident became in fact a powerful political manoeuvre, reflecting and influencing the historical process that led to the formation of the Joseon society. The nascent dynasty and its officials, most of whom had initially served the Goryeo dynasty in various capacities, were determined to show the image of their regime as something fresh and powerful. In the process of legitimisation, the past dynasty was destined to be seen as old, corrupt, and incompetent, morally and politically. The Joseon officials, armed with Neo-Confucianism, accomplished this task with unprecedented success. The Goryeo-Joseon transition, in the words of Martina Deuchler, is ‘the Korean rendition of the celebrated Confucian concept of ‘renovation (*yusin*)’. ‘Nowhere in East Asia’, she states, ‘was the re-creation of the institutions of Chinese antiquity more compelling than in Korea.’⁴²⁹ The Joseon Neo-Confucian officials, after having established themselves in the new dynasty, articulated a sociopolitical programme on the firm basis of a new version of Confucianism.

A most remarkable achievement of the early Joseon period is, however, not only their near-obsessive utilization of Neo-Confucianism as a political tool to distance their regime from the previous history. More importantly, they claimed cultural independence from China by using Confucianism, a philosophical system originated in China. The early period of the Joseon dynasty, especially the reign of King Sejong, became the very moment when its power groups engaged in essentialist claims of cultural authenticity. In the midst of the ever-increasing cultural and political dominance of Ming China, King Sejong, the most venerable monarch in Korean history, invented and proclaimed a new Korean writing system (*Hangeul*) for ordinary Koreans having little or no

⁴²⁸ *Seok*: traditional unit for measuring grains. 1 *seok* is approximately equivalent to present-day 1000 litres

⁴²⁹ Martina Deuchler (1992), *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology*, Harvard, 95,26: see also pp.14-20 for the transmission of Confucianism to Korea.

knowledge of classical Chinese.⁴³⁰ It was ‘the classificatory moment of purification’, as B.F. Williams aptly states - the period of discreet but significant movement of cultural authenticity and independence.⁴³¹ During this period, the sense of national pride and cultural independence created the boundary to differentiate ‘our Koreans’ from some population as the ‘absolute Other’.

In this context, the prohibition of anything ‘*hoehoe*’ in 1427 was not an isolated cultural practice. Indeed, it was not Islam but Buddhism, the most prominent religion of Goryeo, that became ‘the Other’ to the Neo-Confucian scholar-officials of Joseon. The Neo-Confucian literati had been somewhat lax towards Buddhism before the Joseon dynasty was firmly established. During the late Goryeo period, many Confucian scholars and eminent Buddhist monks shared a refined culture and enjoyed the sophisticated companionship of each other. But once they came to power as the founding members of the new dynasty, the Confucian literati formally denounced Buddhism and prevented its growth. Although privately venerated in royal and aristocratic circles of Joseon, Buddhism and its practices were ridiculed and despised in official narratives.

In the space where the Neo-Confucian ideology exerted its policy to emphasise the purity and the homogeneity of the Korean people, the precarious situation of the Muslims was even more evident. Muslims in Joseon Korea maintained a community of their own, apparently not mixing much with local people, and keeping different customs from the rest of society. Paradoxically, their unguarded visibility proves their comfortable relationship with local Koreans before the declaration of the edict. The Armenian experience in the 17th-century Iran can be a counter-instance mirroring the complacent circumstances Muslims had enjoyed in medieval Korea. ‘With a long history of massacre, and so often in the vulnerable position of being a Christian minority in a Muslim country’, as Carswell noted, Armenians realised that it is wise ‘not to proclaim their identity and activities too vociferously.’⁴³² Unlike other minority groups in continuously precarious situations, Muslims in medieval Korea inadvertently but actively asserted their ‘otherness,’ by adhering to their own life style, wearing different clothing and hats, and observing a unique set of religious practice known only to them.

The intention of Joseon Confucian officials throughout the edict was to erase their foreignness and assimilate them into the homogeneous image of society. Once this was successfully achieved, in what manners did Muslims integrate into Korean culture? Unlike any other part of Islamic lands including

⁴³⁰ The creation of the authentic Korean writing system was never an easy and straightforward process, politically and culturally. Its proclamation ensued bitter conflicts between the King, who was in charge of the promulgation of the *Hangeul*, and the staunch Confucian literati, who revered the traditional Chinese writing system and the advanced culture of China.

⁴³¹ Brackette F. Williams (1989), “A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation across Ethnic Terrain”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18, 401-44, 429.

⁴³² John Carswell (1966), “The Armenians and the East-West Trade Through Persia in the Seventeenth Century”, Michel Mollat (ed.) *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l’Ocean Indien*, Beirut, 485.

China, such significant cultural markers as grand mosques, majestic Qurans sumptuously embellished with Arabic calligraphy have not been found in Korea. But, the more ‘neutral’ and universal appeal of Islamic material culture has, however, survived and left its impact on the Korean material-cultural repertoire. Its influence is so permeated and so well integrated into ‘traditional’ Korean art that its Islamic origins are almost forgotten.

2.3. The Confucianisation of *hoehoe* Muslims

As for the possible mode of assimilation of Muslims into Joseon society, the case of Chinese Muslims gives a relevant point of comparison that allows us to figure out how Muslims in Joseon Korea may have responded to the abrupt policy of 1427. Throughout Chinese history since their arrival, Chinese Muslims adapted well to their new environment. During the Mongol-Yuan period, Muslims served the court and society in a variety of roles, particularly as *darugachi*, a court-appointed local governor, and *ortog*, a contracted merchant. Acting as agents in Mongol-Yuan dynasty, Muslim officials and rich merchants were mostly targets of hate from Han-Chinese.

Like Sayyid Ajall in Yuan China, Muslim acculturation to Chinese culture, particularly to the Confucian system, was inevitable as they became part of the Chinese population under the Yuan dynasty. Many of Muslims became well-versed in Confucian scholarship and served the dynasty following the tradition of Confucian literati, while keeping their religious identity intact. Sadula (c.1300-c.1350), a Central Asian Muslim, is well-known for such an example.⁴³³ Although his family originally belonged to the Danishmand (men of letters and experts of rational sciences) in the Western regions, he was born in present-day Daixian, Shanxi Province of China, as a consequence of his family’s relocation owing to the Mongol’s western campaigns. Sadula became an accomplished Confucian scholar, passing the imperial examination with *jinshi* (equivalent to a doctorate) degree in 1327. He was renowned for his poetry and calligraphy. Such familiarization of Confucian learning by Muslims became even more pervasive during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), when the contacts with other Islamic lands outside China declined.

During the same period when the Joseon court ordered acculturation to local Muslims, Ming China underwent an anti-climax of international trade and communication. China imposed isolation upon itself after the powerful support of the Yongle Emperor (1402-1424), who had encouraged the daring maritime expeditions of Zheng He (1371-1434).⁴³⁴ And defensive reactions and nativist policy of Ming reduced travel beyond China to a minimum. Increasingly separated from the Islamic world,

⁴³³ Ch’ien Yüan (1925 [1966]), *Western and Central Asians in China under the Mongols: Their Transformation into Chinese*, Ch’ien Hsing-hai and L.Carrington Goodrich(trans. and annotated), Los Angeles, 151.

⁴³⁴ Most of the official records of the Zheng He expeditions were destroyed. The few pieces of private record-keeping that have survived show us what we are missing in the way of sharp eyes and meticulous recording. See for example J. V. G. Mills (1970) (trans.), [*The Overall Survey of the Ocean’s Shores*], London.

Wang Daiyu (c.1570-c.1660), the most influential Muslim scholar of the period,⁴³⁵ presented a system of Islamic thought interpreted through Confucian ideas and anecdotes.⁴³⁶

An identical phenomenon of adaptation of Confucian Muslim took place in the Muslim community in Korea during the period between late Goryeo and Joseon periods. Seol Son (?-1360, *Xie Boliaoxun*, aka *Xie Xun* in Chinese) epitomizes such a type of cultural synthesis. He was a Muslim from a highly cultured Uyghur family in the Mongol-Yuan Empire. The family was renowned for their Neo-Confucian scholarship, whose members had taught the Mongol imperial princes. They were also noted for ‘their competence in multiple languages, a skill that they inherited from their Uyghur ancestors, as Michael C Brose wrote.⁴³⁷ Following his family tradition, Seol Son passed the *jinshi* examination in 1345 and was eventually promoted to become part of staff in the Imperial Crown Prince’s Study (*Duanbentang zhengzi*) in Dadu. During his tenure, he made a close friendship with the future Goryeo King Kongmin (1351-1374), who was also placed in the same office as a royal hostage from Goryeo.⁴³⁸ In 1358 when the Red Turban Rebellion swept through most of China, Seol Son fled to Goryeo with his family (Biographies, Book 25, *Goryeo-sa*). King Gongmin welcomed his old acquaintance and endowed him with a honorary title and land. His Confucian scholarship and teachings were highly esteemed among Goryeo officials, who became increasingly attracted to Neo-Confucianism. Some of Seol Son’ sons and grandsons became proficient Confucian scholars, took several high-ranking offices at the Joseon court, sometimes assuming the successful role of envoys to Ming China.⁴³⁹ As shown by the example of the Seol family, the Muslim community, or at least its upper echelons, had already mastered a refined accomplishment of Confucian learning and higher knowledge of local culture even before their full assimilation was enforced by the Joseon Confucian literati.

Through adapting Confucian learning and local knowledge, Muslims came to be impeccable members of society. In the process of complete acculturation and assimilation, it became virtually impossible to distinguish the Muslim immigrants from the local Koreans once they had adopted the

⁴³⁵ Michael Dillon (1999), *China's Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects*, Richmond, 36-38.

⁴³⁶ Sachiko Murata et al. (2000), *Chinese Gleams of Sufi light: Wang Tai-yü's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm; with a New Translation of Jāmī's Lawā'ih from the Persian by William C. Chittick*, 4-22; Raphael Israeli (1980), *Muslims in China: A Study in Cultural Confrontation*, London, 1-42, 32.

⁴³⁷ Michael C Brose (2013), “Neo-Confucian Uyghur Semuren in Goryeo and Joseon Korean Society and Politics”, Morris Rossabi (ed), *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China*, Singapore, 178-199, 187.

⁴³⁸ It was the usual custom of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty to demand that certain members of the royal family from its tributary countries were held as political hostages (*doklohwa* 秃魯花) and as partakers in the culture of the Mongol empire. Goryeo sent their crown princes and other members of royal family to the Yuan court after the treaty with the Mongols in 1259.

⁴³⁹ Baek Ok-kyoung (2008), “[The Political Thinking and View of Reality of Seol Jang-su from the Late Goryeo to Early Joseon], *Joseon Sidae-sahakbo*, 46 : 5-40; *Annals of the Joseon Dynasty*.

Joseon way of life and changed their names to Korean ones. Many descendants of Seol Son, for example, are commemorated for the high level of their Confucian scholarship and their role as efficient court officials. None were remembered for their Islamic devotion. When Muslim families with renowned ancestors went through such intense cultural transformation, severing themselves from their original roots, ordinary Muslims living in the peninsula could hardly have left any cultural traces to their original religion. Over the course of the time, they lost their Islamic identity and completely blended into Korean culture.

3. *Hoehoe* in later Joseon

From the year 1427, the existence of Korean Muslims was brought to an abrupt end. Any mention of them virtually disappeared from historical records. This silence could have been explained as mass exodus of Korean Muslims to China or to Islamic lands in order to escape the enforcement of the 1427 edict. It is highly unlikely, however. First of all, no record of mass migrations of Muslims were found in Korean historical documents, nor was any mention of Muslims emigrated from the Korean peninsula made in Chinese or Islamic records. It was extremely difficult to move across the border during the period when both nascent dynasties of Ming China and Joseon Korea were vigilant of their people's movements, and heavily regulated them.

In spite of the re-establishment of the Han-Chinese dynasty, the early phase of Ming was not a fresh start with complete severance from the previous Yuan dynasty. The powerful Mongol-Yuan dynasty had cast a long shadow on the early Ming period, when precarious confrontation with the Northern Yuan, successive dynasty from the Mongol-Yuan dynasty, led the newly-established Ming court to grip their people in tense control. During this period, the Ming court fiercely demanded the return of Yuan officials, who had fled to Goryeo for their safety during the transition period of Yuan to Ming, from the Goryeo and subsequently Joseon courts. The tensions between the two countries eventually led King Wu (1365-1389) of Goryeo to embark on a failed expedition to Ming China in 1388 (Biographies 46, Book 133, *Goryeo-sa jeolryo*). Under this tight control of borders and increasingly protective policy of both countries, it would have been impossible for Muslims to make a mass exodus out of the Korean peninsula. Under this historical circumstance, it is fair to suggest that Muslim residents stayed in the peninsula and assimilated themselves into Joseon customs in the face of the sudden enforcement policy eradicating their cultural identity.

Further mention of Muslims or *hoehoe* is rarely found in the later period of Joseon after King Sejong's reign. On a few occasions when Muslims were mentioned in Korean written documents until the end of the dynasty, they were only casually referred to and always extraneous to main events. It shows how gradually but firmly the memory of Korean local Muslims, *hoehoe*, faded away to a level of complete oblivion (see Table 2c).

In 1443 and 1445, still in Sejong's reign, Islamic culture played an important part. When the new calendric system was regulated, Joseon Confucian literati relied on Islamic astrological knowledge as its basis. In the *Annals of King Sejong*, Joseon literati appeared acquainted with Islamic calendric system and kept the relevant documents in the court library for reference. It was not only at scholarly level that the memory of Islamic culture was retained. Ordinary people's cultural memory of Muslims in Joseon was still relatively certain and vivid until the mid-fifteenth century. In 1453 during his grandson's brief reign (Danjong 1452-1455), Joseon seamen reported their experience in the Ryukyu kingdom (present-day Okinawa) after having been rescued from shipwreck. Among their thorough observations of Ryukyu customs, the men's way of covering their head with white cloth was compared with the typical way of Muslim dress. The white headscarf was apparently an obvious sign of Muslim sartorial custom. A Muslim attendant wears a white head scarf, in a manner described by Joseon seamen in one of Dunhuang murals in cave 158, datable to mid-Tang period.⁴⁴⁰ For a contemporary image of the same attire, a Muslim woman wearing a white scarf is recognized in one of the murals of *Yongle Gong* (the Palace of Eternal Joy), in northern China's Shanxi Province.⁴⁴¹ The Joseon seamen's remark on the headscarf as a common reference point attests to their accurate understanding and vivid memory of the Muslim way of life among Joseon people.

The precipitous decline of local knowledge of Muslim lifestyle is found in a later remark of Muslims in the *Annals*. In 1508, eighty years after the proclamation of the 1427 edict, Joseon envoys reported to the court of their official visit to the Ming court in Beijing and described Muslims in China;

I [one of the envoys] heard *hoehoe* people do not eat meat killed by other people and always eat what they butchered. They also are of good disposition and read scriptures, and have been accepted within the palace as learned men (see Table 2-c).

Their report is notable especially on account of two points: The first point of note is the manner in which they reported Muslims. Both the envoys and the Joseon court audience did not show any preliminary knowledge of the way of life Muslims led. The envoy started the report on the Muslims in China with the word, 'heard', an indication of their absence of personal experience or observation. Their elaboration on the very fundamental difference of dietary habits further supports this argument. No hint of familiarity with Muslims and their religion transpires from the report.

Secondly, the accurate reflection of the sudden popularity of Muslims in the contemporary Ming court of Emperor Zhengde (1491-1521). The reign of Zhengde was well-known for his overt

⁴⁴⁰ Roderick Whitfield (1995), *Dunhuang : Caves of the Singing Sands : Buddhist Art from the Silk Road, vol.1*, with photographs by Ōtsuka Seigo, London, 182.

⁴⁴¹ Xiao Jun (2008), "[The Murals in Yongle Palace]", *Wenwu*, 205; Known as the largest Taoist temple, it started to be constructed in 1247 and was not completed until the late fourteenth century, contemporary of early Joseon. The temple features a distinctive architectural style of the Yuan dynasty (1206-1368).

preference towards his Muslim subjects, permitting them various posts as advisors, eunuchs, and envoys in his court. In an art historical context, this was the time when many types of porcelain with Islamic inscriptions in Arabic or Persian were produced in official kilns. Most of blue-and-white ceramics and their shapes may reflect the essential paraphernalia of Islamic congregational meetings or their everyday life. These include pen boxes, basins, ewers, incense burners among others. Brush holders, as shown in many museums, seemed particularly favoured during this period. Amongst less common objects is a blue-and-white porcelain vase with globular shape in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, which bears Persian inscriptions in each diamond-shaped frame with the Zhengde mark on its bottom.

As far as Muslim residents in their territory were concerned, Ming China and Joseon Korea took a markedly different approach. The Ming dynasty, as usual in China, adopted a *laissez-faire* policy on foreign religions and cultures as long as certain boundaries were respected. Compared to it, Joseon created a fairly uniform society by forcing foreigners to accommodate themselves into its tradition and culture. In the later Joseon historical records, there are no more mentions of Muslim population or their idiosyncrasy at all in the Korean peninsula. Having no record of mass emigration of any ethnic or religious group in the Joseon dynasty, we can deduce that, within less than 100 years since the proclamation of the royal edict in 1427, any Muslim identity would have been fully assimilated with that of the local population of the Korean peninsula.

It is the traditional view that the religious acculturation was regarded as the cause of the disappearance of the Korean Muslims. The truth might be different, however. The acculturation of the Muslims in medieval Korea, both gradual and abrupt, made local Koreans become aware of the commensurability of both cultures of Islam and Korea, and contributed to enrich local traditions by compromising, negotiating, and synthesizing these two different cultures. This is the basic tenet of an influential cultural theorist, Eric M Kramer, and his approach to acculturation. Kramer states that acculturation is not just ‘mere quantitative combinations’ implying one-way assimilation of a minority group to a larger society, but ‘co-evolution’ and ‘pan-evolution’, an integral way to understand how all species are constantly adjusting to each other through complex patterns and chain reactions.⁴⁴² One minority, however small, affects and changes the whole society. Although the assimilation of Muslims has left no visibly different Islamic art with cultural markers, it has released other -more neutral- elements of Islamic culture and affected the status quo of Korean culture. The loss of the Muslim cultural identity and their acculturation led *hoehoe* Muslims to a reinvention of their culture by adjusting it to local taste and convention, thus making it more acceptable to local Koreans. In

⁴⁴² Eric Mark Kramer (2013), “Dimensional Accrual and Dissociation: An Introduction”, 129-133.
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following chapters we will explore which of the Islamic artistic elements were successful in surviving by way of their cultural assimilation in Joseon society.

Chapter 5. Intercultural contacts of *hoehoe* Muslims and Koreans

The aftermath of the Mongol invasion in the 13th century marked a new phase in the development of art and culture in Goryeo. By ruling two powerful empires of China and Iran within their territory and also controlling age-old trading routes under their auspice, the Mongol empire encouraged unprecedented artistic interaction between the Islamic world and East Asia via the movement of craftsmen and artisans. Becoming a member of the powerful Mongol empire after total defeat in the war meant Goryeo entered a dynamic multicultural society. In this rapidly changing political climate, Muslims, mainly from Central Asia and the Iranian cultural sphere, came to the Korean peninsula and played various roles in it. Written documents and material cultural evidence reveal many instances of direct intercultural contacts between *hoehoe* Muslims and local Koreans. This unparalleled multiculturalism managed to preserve its shape until the formation of new Joseon dynasty in the mid-15th century, when the powerful political orientation of Joseon literati put an end to the multicultural milieu and eradicated any type of Islamic cultural expressions in a mono-cultural, Confucian society.

In spite of the dynastic changes, a cultural continuum was maintained during the period from late Goryeo to early Joseon. Since the first ever direct intercultural contacts had taken place in the late Goryeo period, they continued to survive in the multi-cultural social milieu of nascent Joseon. Such direct intercultural contacts left an impact on the course of the material-cultural history of Korea.

1. Co-existence of *hoehoe* Muslims and Koreans in a multicultural society

During this time, the material culture of Korea showed an incomparable variety of forms, decorative idioms, visual vocabularies, and techniques. To cite just a few examples of the new material culture, gold-painted ceramic (fig.5-1),⁴⁴³ celadons decorated in red-colour with copper pigment (fig.5-2), and with marbled design (fig.5-3) were produced alongside refined inlaid metalwork during this period. Tile panels were another innovation (fig.5-4). These celadon square or rectangular tiles were most likely decorated individually and then combined to form a larger pictorial scene. Sutra lacquer boxes embellished with continuous series of densely packed fine decorations are another example of artistic feat highly acclaimed throughout East Asia during this period but nearly faded out after that.

There could be several reasons for the sudden diversity of artistic expressions in the medieval Korean kingdoms. Above all, Goryeo's trading and diplomatic contacts extended to various cultures

⁴⁴³ The Goryeo technique of applying decorative design in gold over a celadon glaze is mentioned in an entry for the year 1297 in the *Goryeo-sa*

northern nomadic states beyond the traditional cultural sphere of Song China. The intensity of such contacts dramatically increased as Goryeo participated in the operations of the Mongol Empire. Exotic goods became more readily available in this multicultural society; as mentioned in *ssanghwa* in the previous chapter, there were foreign objects, food,⁴⁴⁴ costumes and other cultural expressions, some of which were no interchangeable words from Korean vocabularies. As direct intercultural contacts increased within the society, they prompted the trans-regional mobility of forms and styles, while Goryeo artisans and craftsmen drew on a vast repertoire of cultural expressions.

The most active engagement with the multicultural empire was made at the late 13th-century Goryeo royal court. When Khutugh Beki (1259-97, r. 1274-97), Kublai Khan's youngest daughter, became the Queen consort of King Chungnyel of Goryeo (1236-1308, r. 1274-1308), the royal court was keen to take advantage of the pool of artistic talents from the various cultures of the Mongol empire. In 1276, the Queen called for master builders from the Yuan court to carry out work in Goryeo when she was unhappy with the progress of construction made by the local builders (Book 19, *Goryeosa Jeoryo*). No further records followed this episode but we can refer to contemporary Chinese sources to guess the possible outcome of such intercultural contacts. Muslim architects and craftsmen, along with many other non-Chinese workers, were actively involved at the time in building the Yuan dynasty capital of Dadu (present-day Beijing). Although there is no doubt as to the importance of the Chinese architect Liu Bingzhong (1216-74) in the planning of Dadu, Muslim artisans including Yeheidie'er, Yisimayin (Ishma'il), Alaowading (Allah al-Din), and Iqimayin were influential in the construction and decoration process in Yuan architecture.⁴⁴⁵ As Goryeo grew closer to the Mongol imperial family by marriage, it was more likely that the art and culture of the upper strata of society of both dynasties enjoyed simultaneous developments.

An episode in the *Goryeosa* affirms that the architectural decoration of Islamic culture was a part of intercultural communications between Yuan China and Goryeo Korea. The historical text explains Jang Soon-Ryong was a Muslim settler with powerful connections to both the Yuan and Goryeo royal courts. He was accused of vainglory and avarice by the Joseon literati, who edited the actual Goryeo annals during the beginning of the dynasty. As already discussed in my introduction, Joseon editors were not impartial. They were heavily biased in their political, cultural stances and denouncement of anything foreign. In the new historical context offered by Joseon, it is rare to find passages on Muslims or anything Islam. Jang is exceptional in this regard. He was mentioned in his

⁴⁴⁴ A case in point is *Soju*, a distilled alcoholic spirit. The spirit originated from Levant, known as *araq* or *airaq*, and transmitted to Goryeo through the agency of the Mongol army. Some of the Korean towns where it was produced according to traditional methods have still kept its original name. For the history of *Soju*, see Jang Ji-Hyeon (1985), "[The Course of *Soju* Culture in Korea: History of *Soju*]", *Julyu saneop*, 5(2): 9-20

⁴⁴⁵ Morris Rossabi (1981), "The Muslims in the Early Yuan Dynasty", John Langlois (ed). *China under Mongol Rule*, Princeton; Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt (1983), "The Plan of Khubilai Khan's Imperial City," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 44, No. 2/3), 137-158.

various official capacities in Goryeo court, and his antics were recorded in detail. The bad reputation of him as a Muslim high-ranking official was firmly established in Goryeo society. The differentiation points to his foreign ethnicity and his reliance on cultural memory of his country of origin - most probably, Islamic Central Asia. An episode in 1297 states that ‘he had his house built in a conspicuous style. Its exterior walls were constructed using tiles and pebbles and decorated with floral motifs. It was called ‘Jang’s Wall’ (Biographies, *Goryeo-sa*, see Table 2-b)’. This indicates that the motif on the wall was sufficiently different from the visual representations of contemporary Goryeo to earn such a sobriquet. Considering that floral motifs were already popular as an established decorative idiom of Buddhist art in Goryeo, the architectural decorations Jang employed most likely include something foreign and unfamiliar, suggesting Islamic visual vocabularies from his cultural origin. A mention of wall tiles in his building is also evocative of contemporary Islamic architecture, where tiles were widely used as an important architectural decorative material.

A more significant factor supporting Islamic artistic presence in medieval Korean kingdoms is the fact that Muslim artisans were actually living among *hoehoes*. Apart from royals, aristocrats, high-ranking scholars, most of the Muslims, just like any other immigrant population, tended to be involved in some kind of manual work, technique or crafts for their livelihood in Goryeo and Joseon society. As in early Joseon, some imams served as carvers of crystal, jade, or other precious stones, some of whom were offered the right of monopoly to mining (see Table 2-b). It is noteworthy that Muslim artisans were mainly involved in decorative arts. Of particular interest is the fact that Muslim artisans were involved in the carving of rock crystal, a material linked to the heydays of Muslim craftsmanship under the Fatimids (909-1171).⁴⁴⁶

Imams as skilled craftsmen were in tune with Islamic cultural tradition, as Islamic countries in medieval period rarely looked down on manual craftsmen. Craftsmen and other commoners succeeded in reaching high positions in the Mamluk establishment. Even Sultans took up some crafts as their hobby, boasting their highly developed skill.⁴⁴⁷ Korea was not different in this regard until the early Joseon period. Some Buddhist monks at lower position of a monastery or religious order were reputed for their refined craftsmanship. Some monks were indeed called to Yuan China in order to produce had-copied Buddhist sutras with fine illuminations and highly coveted inlaid Buddhist sutra boxes for the Court.⁴⁴⁸ This combination of religious devotion with skilled work virtually disappeared

⁴⁴⁶ Jeremy Johns & Elise Morero (2013), “The diffusion of rock crystal carving techniques in the Fāṭimid Mediterranean”, *The Courtauld Institute of Art*, 1-5

⁴⁴⁷ Doris Behrens-Abouseif (2011), “Craftsmen, upstarts and Sufis in the Late Mamluk period”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 74 (03): 375-395.

⁴⁴⁸ Kwon Hee-kyung (2006), [Sutra Copying in Goryeo], Seoul, 42-43, 62-65

when Buddhism was marginalised and manual work started to be looked down upon in the Joseon period.

Another point to consider is that the sporadic mention in historical sources of *hoehoe* artisans working at every level of society were not exhaustive; some Muslim artisans were mentioned in the official annals of the Joseon dynasty. Written evidence shows that Muslim artisans were mentioned only on special occasion where having an audience with the King or when involved in diplomatic matters (see Table 2-b). It was very rare to find written records of craftsmen or objects bearing the inscription of their maker.⁴⁴⁹ Even when their names could be found on the objects, their identities remained vague. In most cases, craftsmen were only remembered for their role in the controlled economy of the medieval period. In the historical situation of the time where written documents generally glossed over the ordinary lives of common people, the Neo-Confucian literati of Joseon were vocal in their disdain for artisans and craftsmen. Their aversion and suspicion towards foreigners was well documented. The description of foreigners by Neo-Confucian Joseon literati was generally hasty, many were mentioned without their names. There was rare mention of foreign craftsmen in written records. Considering the mono-cultural tendency of early Joseon, the fact that foreign artisans and craftsmen were mentioned at all in official records indicates that the Muslim presence could no longer be ignored.

In addition to the migration of artisans, the exchange of objects or gift-giving contributed to the dissemination of visual and decorative idioms. Object acted as purveyors of cultural transmission in terms of spreading relevant shapes, decorative idioms, ideas of use and others. Amongst them, textiles are most frequently mentioned as an example of cross-cultural artistic fusion of the period. For the semi-nomadic Mongols, portable textiles and clothing were the best means of demonstrating their acquired wealth and power. In this regard, the Mongols had a close cultural affinity to textiles of the Islamic world. In the words of Golombeck, both have ‘a textile mentality’, showing extensive use of cloth not only in clothing but in the home, where carpets, curtains, and cushions to a large extent replaced furniture, doors, and walls.⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, the Mongol’s fondness of Islamic textiles, particularly a special silk textile woven with gold threads, known in Mongolian as *nasji*, was well

⁴⁴⁹ The earliest known information of the maker of an extant artefact is ‘*Dari*’, inscribed on the underside of a silver bracelet made for the queen of Baekje, dated 520. The earliest survived name on potteries is found as ‘*Choi gil-hwoe*’, seen on the bottom of a proto-type celadon made in 994, or could be ‘Gentleman surnamed *Wang*’ on a high-stemmed cup made in 993, which was found in North Korea. Until now, ten names of craftsmen have been discovered on Korean ceramics but their identities are unknown due to the absence of any corroborating records or relevant context: Jin Hong-seop (1992[2011]), *Mookjae Hanhwa : Hankuk Misul-sa hoesa*, ch. 25 “Jangin yeoljeon” Seoul

⁴⁵⁰ Lisa Golombeck (1980), “The Draped Universe of Islam”, Priscilla Soucek (ed)(1988), *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World: Papers from a Colloquium in Memory of Richard Ettinghausen*, University Park, 25-50, 30.

known; Ogodei, for example, once ‘traded’ five agricultural villages in Turkestan in return for Herati weavers to be resettled in Beshbaliq at one of five workshops to weave *nasji*.⁴⁵¹

As textiles were a symbol of power and prestige for the Great Khan, the robe of honour constitutes a major part of the Mongol practice of investiture. The model for the Mongolian practice of investiture can be traced back to ancient West Asian practices, where it played a pivotal role in the fashioning of the political culture of cloth that had a profound effect throughout the greater part of Eurasia. Further to its traditional symbol of royal majesty, the bestowal of sumptuous garments and the related ceremonies were of profound importance to Mongol society. Abaqa Khan of the Ilkhanate (r.1265-1282) received a robe of honour from Khublai Khan (r.1260-1294) at the time of his investiture, an event symbolizing his majestic authority and also his status within the Great Mongol Empire.⁴⁵² The same type of gold-woven textiles was sent to the Goryeo court several times. In 1296, Khublai Khan, the emperor of Yuan sent ‘*Jikgeumdan* (a local name for *nasji*) and red silk, four rolls each, while the Empress sent two bottles of wine to a Joseon envoy to deliver to King Chungryeol’ (*Goryeo-sa* Book 31). Although only few have survived, extant Goryeo textiles show a variety of decorative idioms shared with other parts of the Empire.⁴⁵³ Among them are textiles with brilliant gold thread on purple or light green background.⁴⁵⁴ The exchange of sumptuous textiles thus attests to the wide dissemination of visual and decorative vocabularies across the elites of the Eurasian continent to the Korean peninsula.

2. Interculturalism of medieval Korean art

As for the foreign cultural impact on Korean art, we cannot state that the Islamic cultural presence caused all the change in medieval Korean material culture. Buddhism and its material cultural expressions have had left deep impressions due to its longest presence on the peninsula. Their presence in every aspect of Korean material culture was so prevalent and powerful that it became to be regarded as indigenous. Especially during the Goryeo period, Buddhism was venerated as the national religion of the kingdom, with royals and upper echelons of society competing to make offerings to Buddhist temples. Most of the medieval Korean high-end objects were to do with

⁴⁵¹ Thomas T. Allsen (2009), “Mongols as Vectors for Cultural Transmission”, N. Di Cosmo, Allen Frank and P. B. Golden (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, Cambridge, 135-154, 148.

⁴⁵² For the role of textiles under the Mongol empire, see Thomas Allsen (1997[2002]), *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles*, Cambridge

⁴⁵³ Shim Yeon-ok (2006), [2,000 Years of Korean Textile Design: An Illustrated History and Technical Survey], Seoul, 44-173.

⁴⁵⁴ Yeom, Ha-ryeong and Jo Hyo-suk (2009), “[A Comparative Study of Plant Patterns Found in the Textiles of Goryeo and its Neighbour Countries]”, *Journal of the Korean Society of Costume*, 59 (9): 71-86.

Buddhism in their artistic significance, practical function, decorative symbolism and others. And artistic expressions related to Buddhism and Buddhist rituals tended to be open to foreign cultural elements and eagerly accepted imported luxury objects, technique, decorative scheme, etc. After all, Buddhism itself, however localised, is a religion from a foreign land known as the Western Regions in the past.

Interestingly, Islam and most Islamic artistic expressions also travelled via virtually the same routes as Buddhism when it spread from the Western Regions to East Asia. In the period under discussion, Tibet was the centre of Tantric Buddhism as well as the powerhouse for dissemination of Inner Asian International styles. In essence, the transmission route of Islamic cultural elements to the Korean peninsula overlapped with that of the Buddhism. Buddhism and Islam were not in conflict in the medieval period; they were rather indifferent to each other. Apart from Muslim aversion towards figural representations in religious context,⁴⁵⁵ there was no prohibition of motifs or reservation of a particular form for the religious purposes. As discussed in Chapter 2, Buddhism and Islam shared decorative idioms and their symbolism irrespective of their religious doctrines.

While searching for Islamic artistic elements in Buddhist-oriented medieval Korea, the interchangeability of neutral decorative idioms of these two religions presents dual aspect; as in Chapter 2, Islamic artistic elements, when neutral and purely decorative, could have travelled alongside Buddhism through the same transmission routes, and were effortlessly accepted into the Buddhist cultural repertoire. This process can be called accidental multiculturalism where even Buddhist ritual objects could accommodate artistic expressions originating from the Islamic cultural zone. As will be discussed, religious paraphernalia essential to Buddhist rituals generously accepted these decorative idioms and objects were lavishly decorated for solemnity and offering.⁴⁵⁶ However, only the purely non-religious artistic expression could survive in a potentially hostile society as that of Joseon. Once the society became rigidly mono-cultural in the form of Neo-Confucianism, any identifiable expression of Islamic culture could not survive.

This section will deal with the diachronic change in the way that Islamic cultural expressions were accepted in the medieval Korean kingdoms over time. Additionally, metalwork technique will be mentioned as a type of shared culture of the period. My argument for this intercultural phenomenon in the medieval Korean kingdoms is that the prevalence of certain decorative idioms in the late Goryeo arts represents a shared culture of the period. In the same vein, the disappearance of some decorative

⁴⁵⁵ Aversion of figural representation was limited to the religious context, such as mosque. A viewpoint to see this as prevalent in every aspect of Islamic material-cultural expressions is the outcome from present-day clash between different political, cultural, religious zones. For a revision of anti-figural attitude in the Islamic world, refer to Finbarr B. Flood's lecture (2016), "Images Incomplete: Prescriptive Piety as Material Practice in Islamic Art", *Regionality*, 5th Biennial Symposium, The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

⁴⁵⁶ I'm deeply indebted to my examiner, Prof. Jung-hee Lee-Kalisch, for drawing my attention to the decoration of Buddhist art and its religious significance.

idioms in Joseon artefacts attests to the breakdown of the cultural sharing provided by the powerful and vast empire of the previous century. When the Mongol Empire fell to pieces, medieval Korean kingdoms lost their connections with the Islamic world. With the loss of the connection, the foreign visual vocabularies also lost their cultural appeal, and eventually disappeared from the Korean cultural repertoire.

2.1. Shared culture of the period

In order to identify Islamic artistic inspirations for Goryeo artisans of this period, we will focus on two types of decorative schemes: densely packed overall decoration and undulating vegetal motifs. Although the latter can also be called as arabesque because of visual similarity, the descriptive term, 'undulating vegetal' or 'stylised foliate' motif will be used in preference, as the name, arabesque, can conjure many different interpretations.⁴⁵⁷ In East Asia, this decorative idiom is commonly known as the 'Tang scroll pattern', suggesting this motif originated in the Tang dynasty. This is demonstrated by artefacts found in the hoard at Hejiacun, Xi'an.⁴⁵⁸ They are datable to the 8th century.⁴⁵⁹ The finds not only indicate a high level of Chinese craftsmanship but also point to a certain degree of Iranian or Sogdian influence in its form and decorative technique. It showed that the meandering stylised vegetal motif certainly originated from the west.

Considering the long presence of the foliate motifs, sudden fame of 'Jang's Wall' is particularly intriguing (see Table 2-b). The motifs were already common in 12th-century Goryeo artefacts. It was the late 13th century when Jang Sun-ryong, a *hoehoe* Muslim naturalised in Goryeo, had his residence built. The foliate motifs spread widely and favourably in the objects of the period. In such cultural circumstance, identifying his wall decoration as a special nickname was most likely to do with the more sophisticated and complex way of rendering the periodic motifs used in its decoration. Although we cannot be sure that Jang's wall showed Islamic style of vegetal decoration, it was certainly foreign and exotic enough to the local Koreans to earn a special designation.

It is true that most of the foliate motifs used on Goryeo objects are not as stylized as those seen in Islamic art. Goryeo plant motifs are rendered realistically, usually in the form of peonies or small chrysanthemums, whereas vegetal motifs in Islamic art were rarely related to real-life botanical counterparts. But some of the later Goryeo artefacts show a transition to dense decoration in more

⁴⁵⁷ As for the history of the arabesque, refer to Ernst Kühnel (1976), *The arabesque: meaning and transformation of an ornament*. Graz, Austria

⁴⁵⁸ Qi Dongfang & Shen Qinyan (eds)(2003), *Hua wu da Tang chun: Hejiacun yibaojingcui*, Beijing : 92-93; Valerie Hansen (2003), "The Hejia Village Hoard", *Orientalia*, 34 (2), 14-19; Yang Xiaoneng (ed)(2004), *New Perspectives on China's Past*, New Haven and London, 2:410-13

⁴⁵⁹ Qi Dongfang (2003), "The Burial Location and Dating of the Hejia Village Treasures," *Orientalia* 34(2): 20-24

stylized forms. Objects covered in stylised foliate designs were probably produced in the early 9th-century kiln of Unified Silla, but what is unique to Goryeo artefacts is the previously unseen proliferation of this particular artistic expression. One of the most evident traits is the frequency of foliate decoration on metalwork and inlaid celadon wares. Some of Goryeo bronze mirrors show more prominent forms of stylized foliate decoration. The decoration scheme of this type of mirrors is to almost entirely cover whole area with arabesque-like design. Only exception is the inscription of 'made in Goryeo' in the cartouche at the lower middle level (fig.5-5). Its decoration is closer to contemporary or earlier Islamic expressions of floral motifs, such as the ones depicted Iranian ceramics (fig.5-6). Both wares, one in metal, the other in ceramics, are decorated with similar scrolling foliage design with bifurcating ends.

It is metalwork that predominantly bears stylized foliate decoration reminiscent of 'arabesque' in Islamic art. A metal embellishment around the neck of a *kundika*, or water sprinkler, for example, displays a closely knitted stylised foliate motif (fig.5-7a,b). Numerous incense-burners with deep basins and broad projecting rim were made during the Goryeo dynasty. Some of them are dated, mostly from the 13th century to 14th century, some specify the temple for which the censer was intended. The British Museum displays the lower part of an incense burner with an inscription dated 1358 on the base (fig.5-8).⁴⁶⁰ The period corresponds to the late Goryeo and late Yuan periods. The body is covered mostly with unidentifiable stylized motifs. Its base depicts a whirling dragon, a common motif of medieval East Asian artefacts, whereas the whole surface is packed with abstract and geometric decoration, evocative of some of the medieval Islamic objects covered with a densely packed and undulating decorative scheme. The same decorative idioms were transferred to other media. A ceramic box with its lid for instance, datable to the 12th or 13th century, is wholly covered with a meandering stylised foliate design in delicate openwork decoration (fig.5-9).

Because of the frequent use of this foliate pattern, the decoration became denser during the later Goryeo period. Both of the decorative idioms were often employed on a same object. This artistic phenomenon is rather sudden, as it had hardly been noticed prior to the Goryeo period. It was Gompertz who noticed the density applied on bronzes and inlaid celadon wares of the Goryeo dynasty.⁴⁶¹ A bronze bottle inlaid with silver, dated from the 11th to the 12th century, represents an example of an earlier type of overall decoration with a naturalistic representation of a lakeside scene

⁴⁶⁰ The incised inscription around the base reads: On the first day of the sixth month (of the wuxu year) in the 18th year of the Jijeong (Zhizheng emperor of Ming China) reign period (7 July 1358), in front of Jijang (Ksitigarba) at Sojae temple on Biseul Mountain (in Gyeongsang province), incense is burned by the Great Donor Myohae and the Eminent Monk Gonghae for the long life of His Majesty the King (King Gongmin, 1330-74), Her Majesty the Princess Royal and her majesty the Queen, may they have long life without end, and that the world may be at peace.

⁴⁶¹ Gompertz (1954), "Inlaid Korean Celadon", *Transactions of Oriental Ceramic Society*, Vol. xxviii.

(fig.5-10). Most probably originated from the Liao visual vocabulary,⁴⁶² the decoration, with ducks, reeds, and plants, was to become a favourite motif in Goryeo inlaid celadons as well as metalwork. While other objects in the same shape from earlier period took a decorative approach that showed much empty space, the scene on the body of the bottle is ‘not just a vignette but covers the whole surface’,⁴⁶³ with ducks swimming around the neck near the top as well as some seen in varied attitudes near the base.

Over time, natural vegetal motifs and designs as in overall decorative scheme were replaced with stylised ones. Two incense burners show such changes of decorative schemes, one in Leeum in Seoul, Korea (fig.5-11) and the other in North Korea (fig.5-12). One is inscribed with date of the 13th century (1229 or 1289), the other with 1352, when Goryeo was dependent on the Mongol Empire.⁴⁶⁴ Both of them have the same shape of a contemporary high-stemmed incense burner, a unique shape in the Goryeo period. Their decoration reveals the change of taste showing a preference for a stylised foliate decorative idiom. These incense burners are decorated with ornate patterns inlaid in silver on their body, stem and foot. On the incense burner (fig.5-11) of the 13th-century, lotus scrolls adorn its flat rim and small concentric circles dot the edge of its rim. The body has four double-bordered floral medallions, each of which has designs of two phoenixes holding lotus stems in their beaks alternated with a dragon holding a precious jewel. The areas outside the floral medallions have lyrical scenes of water reeds, lotus flowers, and swimming mallards reminiscent of scenes decorating Goryeo *kundikas*. The flared stem is embellished with scrolls and clouds. In comparison, the incense burner from the 14th-century, now in North Korea, covers almost all the surfaces with undulating foliate design, with the exception of the Sanskrit script in gold plate in four separate medallions.

The stylisation of decorative idioms that became predominant in the late Goryeo period, which can be seen in two well-known ceramic vessels of the period; one in Yamato Bunkakan and the other in the British Museum. They are decorated with two different types of a rare ceramic decoration technique. The Yamato Bunkakan bottle is the only known ceramic object in the world with reverse inlay decoration in black. The design was executed by reverse inlay, while leaving the colour of the background in black rather than in the usual white (fig.5-13). A British Museum celadon bowl with was adorned with underglaze copper-red decoration (fig.5-14). Painting in iron-brown or copper-red under the celadon glaze was an innovation of Goryeo potters. Although underglazed red

⁴⁶² The scene has been compared to a Liao wall-painting in the East Mausoleum at Quingling in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia.

⁴⁶³ Roderick Whitefield (ed.)(1984), *Treasures from Korea: Art through 5000 years*, London, 132.

⁴⁶⁴ The actual date on the inscription is *gichuk-yeon* [the year of ox] in the traditional calendrical system of the sexagenary cycle. As the name of the years is repeated every 60 years, the year is one of those years 1229 or 1289.

was tried on Changsha wares of the Tang dynasty, it was never as fully developed as in Goryeo.⁴⁶⁵ Few examples have survived, as the unpredictability of copper during firing tends to make it difficult to guarantee the desired colour of the final product. In addition to the innovative technique, both of the luxurious celadons are packed with tiny stylised foliate motifs. In the case of the Yamato Bunkankan bottle, a band of overlapping lotus petals is wrapped around the foot and the upper part of the neck, while the body is entirely decorated with stylized floral scrolls. The surface of the British Museum bowl is also fully covered with tiny stylised floral motifs. They indicate that overall decoration using stylised vegetal motif was pervasive in the luxurious items of the period.

The tendency for this is shared in other media of the same period. A large 13th-century Goryeo lacquer sutra chest in Boston is fully covered with a series of stylised inlaid little flowers (fig.5-15). Inlaid lacquer sutra boxes were some of the coveted items, which the Mongols regularly demanded, and a special government office named as Superintendency for the Production of Inlaid Chests was set up in 1272 to manufacture lacquer containers for a set of Tripitaka upon the request of Chabi, Empress to Kublai Khan (13th year of King Wonjong's reign, *Goryeo-sa*). Goryeo Buddhist monks with this skill were also sent to Yuan China at their request. Only nine such boxes are extant around the world, including the British Museum, the Rijksmuseum, the NMK, and the museums and private collections in Japan.⁴⁶⁶ They show the similarly dense and regular decoration consisting of rows of small flowers encircled with rings of C-shaped pieces⁴⁶⁷ –a popular motif of the period.

The fine decorations with unbroken patterns on Goryeo lacquer boxes were exclusively executed in mother-of-pearl and thin metal wire. Although sutra boxes of the 13th and 14th centuries represent the pinnacle of precision of Goryeo lacquerware, the decorative styles remained essentially the same during the transition period from Goryeo to Joseon. In the Joseon period, lacquer was mainly used in the secular world to make cosmetic or incense containers, furniture and vessels for domestic use. The early Joseon lacquered tray shows the change of design from foliate scroll with tiny flowers as seen during Goryeo, into stylised scrolling vines circling a rosette in the centre (fig.5-16a,b). Buncheong, an epitome of artistic expression of the period includes many wares decorated with closely packed design. One such example is a buncheong jar with four ears on the shoulder and a flat lid (fig. 5-17).The lack of empty space in this work creates an almost suffocating impression of density, making it a perfect illustration of overall decoration, which appeared in medieval Islamic art in tandem.

⁴⁶⁵ J. Portal (1997), "Korean Celadons of the Goryeo dynasty", *Pottery in the Making*, London, 98-103.

⁴⁶⁶ Kim (2003), 181-3.

⁴⁶⁷ Jane Portal (2011), "Some Korean Masterpieces in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston", *Orientalism* : 65-72, 69.

Apart from these decorative idioms, there may have been other phenomena to support the shared culture of this period. In this regard, we need to re-consider Basil Gray's comment on inlaying techniques used on Goryeo incense burners. The style and technique of inlay in Korean bronzes, as he noted, are quite different from the Chinese traditional technique. The Chinese inlay technique before the Ming dynasty consists of cutting out large areas of bronze to receive silver plates. Usually these flat areas are extended by hooks and spurs, which frequently terminate in spirals. These thinner lines seem to have been prepared by using a graver which left a shallow incision on the bronze. By contrast, the Korean technique is essentially a linear design, in which different widths of line were employed in the decoration of a single piece, but in which there is no transition from thick to thin in the course of a single line. Thus on the Museum's incense burner, 'the main outline of the lotus, the back, horns, and tongue of the dragon are in heavy wire, the remainder in a thinner wire. Here as well as on other Korean inlaid bronzes, the outline seems to have been more deeply excavated, probably with a square-ended chisel, rather than a V-shaped graver.'⁴⁶⁸ In brief, the Chinese inlaying technique is basically overlay, whereas Korea and the Islamic world used inlaying with thin wires.⁴⁶⁹

As far as its origin is concerned, Gray suggested an importation from the Buddhist lands of Inner Asia, Mongolia, or Tibet on the basis of the general 'assumption' that the inlaid bronzes of Korea are all Buddhist. The transmission route with Tibet as a centre is exactly the same concept as the Inner Asian International Styles, as discussed in Chapter 3. We could extend this connecting line to include contemporary Islamic art. The first use of silver inlay in the decoration of bronze in the Islamic east was also in the 12th century, and this practice seems to have been developed in the eastern province of Khurasan nearest to Central Asia.⁴⁷⁰ Gray was also inclined to connect the Islamic technical influence with Korean inlaid bronzes:

A bronze mortar [from Islamic Central Asia] in the Museum collection is inlaid with both copper and also silver in essentially the same technique as the Korean pieces. ... This has been assigned to the early Mongol period in the thirteenth century, and may perhaps be from the same area of Inner Asia where Muslim trader and Chinese met under the Mongols or, earlier, under the Ch'in Tartars.⁴⁷¹

Although Gray did not know at the time of the publication of his article, that a bronze bottle inlaid with silver had been attributed to the 10th-century Unified Silla period.⁴⁷² His proposition still bears a

⁴⁶⁸ Basil Gray (1956), "Buddhist Incense Burner, Bronze Inlaid with Silver-Korea", *The British Museum Quarterly*, 20(4): 92-96, 95.

⁴⁶⁹ My gratitude goes to Prof Wu Tung, former curator of Chinese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for giving me a clear summary on this technique.

⁴⁷⁰ Rachel Ward (1993), *Islamic Metalwork*, London, 71.

⁴⁷¹ Basil Gray (1956), 95.

certain validity. The sheer quantity of inlaid objects made in the Goryeo period is not comparable to the one-off existence of a single Silla bottle. Considering the fact that no inlaid objects during the intervening period have been found, the impetus of Islamic art and its technique may be referred to as a reason for the sudden popularity of inlaid artefacts in the later Goryeo period

2.2. Confucianisation of Islamic art in medieval Korea: Social history of basin

Once Muslims became absorbed into Joseon society, the Islamic culture they had brought and produced at the beginning was assimilated into the local one. As their assimilation progressed, Islamic cultural identity was gradually forgotten and became recognized as Korean. A point in case is the formation of a new calendric system under rule of King Sejong in the early 15th century. To produce an accurate calendar, the King appointed the best minds of the kingdom regardless of their rank in an exceptional attempt to take charge of the project. In order to produce a Korean calendar, they studied the Xuanming calendar from Tang China and compared it with the Shoushi calendar from Yuan China, known as *hoehoe* calendrical system due to its foundation in the Islamic astronomical system.⁴⁷³ After twelve years of labour and research to develop a calendrical method that would facilitate accurate calculation of the movements of the heavenly bodies, a work entitled *A Calculation of the Movements of the Seven Celestial Determinants* was proclaimed in 1442. Regarded as the most important intercultural astronomical achievement of its day, the calendar fully incorporated the calendrical theories of China and the Islamic world, by adjusting them in reference to the latitude of Seoul.⁴⁷⁴ It shows that what we regard as a high achievement of Korean culture is not the product of a closed society, but of continuous adaptation and integration of foreign cultures into a local reservoir of accumulated knowledge. The most prominent impact amongst them was from the Islamic culture. The most outstanding achievement of medieval interculturalism was made when Neo-Confucian society responded flexibly to Islamic cultural elements in its own.

The most important point when considering the cultural assimilation of the Muslims in Confucian society is the compatibility of Islam and Confucianism. Wang Daiyu (c.1570-c.1660), the

⁴⁷² Lee Nan-yeong (2000), [*Gold works of Ancient Korea*], Seoul, 217-218; Exact date of production, however, is still open to discussion.

⁴⁷³ Nathan Sivin (1990), "Science and Medicine in Chinese History", Paul S Ropp (ed), *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, Berkeley, 164-196, 192; Park Seong-rae (2002), "[Institutional Borrowings from China and their Korean Recreations: Calendrical Sciences]", *Hanguk gwahak sahakhoe-ji*, 24(2) : 166-199.

⁴⁷⁴ Jeong, Seong-hui (2005), [*Understanding of the Concept of Universe and Calendar during Joseon dynasty*], Seoul, 124-131.

prominent *huihui* Muslim scholar in China, established a refined theoretical system after several decades of translations of Islamic texts into Chinese alongside his own research of various religions to prove the commensurability of these two great cultural traditions.⁴⁷⁵ While being very critical of Buddhism and Taoism, Wang states that Confucianism expressed in Chinese Classical texts is in harmony with Islamic ideas.⁴⁷⁶ In the same line of thought, the integration of Islamic art into the cultural repertoire of Neo-Confucian Joseon did not require a particularly difficult process of adjustment. In view of the relatively smooth cross-religious communications between Confucian and Islam, Islamic artistic elements could find an easy compromise to blend themselves in Joseon society.

In order to trace the path of reception of an object in Korean material culture, I would suggest a new perspective in reviewing an object in the theoretical context of the ‘social life of things’ discussed by the anthropologists Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff.⁴⁷⁷ The definition of ‘things’ in this notion is not just limited to artefacts, but anything which at certain point of its history enters into circulation where it is treated in a way similar to an object. The principal argument of the theory is that the value of a ‘thing’ is not inherent in the thing itself, but is a judgment made by the persons handling it. And, in being subsequently handled, the thing may progressively have acquired its own biography, based on the series of judgments that its various owners have placed on what is possible, desirable and appropriate with this thing. Thus, we may pursue the objects themselves and the uses to which they are put, thereby revealing their meanings through the analysis of these paths.⁴⁷⁸ Against this theoretical background, I have chosen an ordinary object – a basin, to follow the trajectory of its semantic shift from quotidian object to fine artistic product through diachronic observations of its social and aesthetic status across society.

A. The object and its historical context

The principal object for this discussion is a basin-shaped epitaph with an inscription (fig.5-18a). It is now in the Leeum, Seoul, transferred from another private collection. The basin is a buncheong ware made of iron-rich clay coated with transparent blue glaze. Around the wide rim of the basin is inscribed *Jeongtong-onyeon gyeongsin sip-il-wol sip-il-il monyeojak... Joseonguk Jeonra-do Buanhyeon sai*.⁴⁷⁹ in black *sanggam* (fig.5-18b). Although many of the characters are now unclear, the inscription can provide information on its date and relevant place. The fifth year of Jeongtong

⁴⁷⁵ Michael Dillon (1999), 36-38

⁴⁷⁶ For his thought, see Sachiko Murata et al. (2000)

⁴⁷⁷ Appadurai, Arjun (1986), “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value”, Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in a Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: 3-63; Igor Kopytoff (1986), “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process”, *ibid*, 64-91.

⁴⁷⁸ Appadurai, Arjun (1986), 5.

⁴⁷⁹ Kang Kyung-sook (2012), [*History of Korean Ceramics*], Seoul, 367.

(Zhengtong Emperor of Ming, 1435-1449) corresponds to the year 1440, the 22nd year of King Sejong (1418-1450). The place named as Buan was an important production site of buncheong ware during the early phase of the Joseon dynasty.⁴⁸⁰ With this crucial information, this ceramic object serves as a reference point to trace the transition from *sanggam* celadon to buncheong, and to follow the chronology and the development of buncheong ware.

Apart from its importance in Korean ceramic history, the function of this ware follows the long tradition of epitaphs, which is to record the biography of the deceased buried in a tomb. Since the Goryeo dynasty, tomb tablets were made in various shapes of stones and ceramics.⁴⁸¹ The shapes include rectangular ones, bordered with lotus or geometric motifs, circular dishes, cylindrical forms and others. However, the basin shape of the epitaph was very rare. An epitaph is a significant marker for the deceased within the Confucian cultural sphere, while basins are plain vessels for everyday use. The question then arises as to how basin of this particular vessel shape could have been elevated to be such essential paraphernalia in Confucian practice? At what point did a purely ordinary object undergo significant changes to be accepted as a ceremonial implement? I will start to place this object in an historical context by giving a short summary of historical background. It highlights the multi-cultural space of the period, when the Confucian Joseon society conversed continually and familiarised itself with Islamic culture.

The basin mentioned above belongs to the early Joseon period. That period, specifically the reign of King Sejong, was the moment when the nascent dynasty and its officials engaged in essentialist claims of cultural authenticity, as mentioned in Chapter 3. In the midst of the ever-increasing cultural and political dominance of Ming China, King Sejong invented and proclaimed the Korean alphabet (*Hangeul*, or *Hunmin jeong-eum* as known then) in 1446 for the ordinary Koreans and at the same time claiming cultural independence from Ming China. The 1427 edict was not an isolated cultural practice, but part of a big social reengineering programme aimed at getting rid of non-conformist groups. Further mention of Muslims were virtually non-existent in a society where fundamental Neo-Confucian ideology exerted its policy of purity and homogeneity,

As we do not have written records of a Muslims exodus, we can state that Muslims stayed on in Joseon society in spite of the prospect of enforced assimilation. They had to discard their cultural and religious identities in order to accommodate to local ways of life in the Confucian Joseon society. From a material-cultural aspect, their characteristic visual expressions either disappeared or they became invisible if they remained, going through the same transformation process as their religious accommodation. Among the products, forms and decorations of Islamic material culture maintained in

⁴⁸⁰ Kang Kyung-sook (1984), [*Kiln Site of Buncheong Ceramics at Udong-ri, Buan*], *Buncheong sagi*, Seoul.

⁴⁸¹ NMK (ed.)(2006), [*Letter to History: Epitaphs of the Goryeo dynasty*], Seoul.

the peninsula, certain objects survived only because they could be integrated into local culture. As discussed, purely utilitarian object can have more chance of survival if it was accepted as 'Korean' art and culture.

B. Basins in Islamic culture

From historical records of the Joseon dynasty, we know that Muslims kept their own way of ritual or religious ceremony. Before their ultimate assimilation, Muslims in medieval Korea were able to have their own religious leader, the *hoehoe-samun* (Muslim *imam*). Some of these *hoehoe-samuns* were recorded in official documents and identified by their names. To name just two, imam *Dara* was mentioned in the New Year ceremony of 1412 and *Doro* in 1407. Muslims had their distinctive rituals in their own 'ritual hall' – the mosque. What kind of paraphernalia did they require for their rituals and ceremonies?

Unlike Christian or Buddhist rituals, Muslims do not need any religious implements to worship God, only basins and matching ewers, as shown in the Berlin museum (fig.5-19). Especially in foreign regions where ablution fountains were not available, a basin with ewer could fulfil the essential part of their *wudu* (the Islamic ritual practice of washing before daily prayer). The necessity of a basin in Islamic culture has been confirmed by a latest incident when South Korea entangled with Somali pirates in an unpleasant happening in January 2011. After their capture, the Somalians were brought to Korea for trial. The first thing the Somalians –all Muslims- asked for was a basin for their ablution before prayer. It was duly given to them. The basins given to the Somali pirates were low-priced ones, made of plastic. Although their rawness could never conjure up the image of those majestic and proud medieval Islamic basins displayed in museums around the world, the symbolic importance Muslims placed on this ordinary object was nonetheless the same.

It is a general rule of Islamic aesthetics not to dictate any strict hierarchy of objects between everyday functions and religious assemblies. There is no such thing or type of object which is innately noble or religious from an Islamic artistic point of view. In theory, any everyday object can be used in mosques and vice versa. Basins were used at almost any kind of Islamic gatherings, including greeting guests, daily cleansing and hand-washing. At times it was an indispensable receptacle for washing clothes, like in any other society. Against this ordinariness, the basin was also required for Muslims to carry out ritual ablutions before prayer. As a result, some of the basins provided at mosques were treated with exceptional care and sophistication by Islamic artisans, as an essential object for ritual ablutions.

The importance of the basin in medieval Islamic society is reflected in its continuous artistic concern of and investment in this particular object. Basins were made of various materials, metal,

ceramics (fig.5-20), glass (fig.5-21) and even rock crystal.⁴⁸² Contemporary historians describe them as being used as gifts at weddings and essential parts of a trousseau of high-ranking ladies. Like the Berlin ewer and basin, some basins are even signed with the name of the craftsman, a testament to their high status. This demonstrates not only that the craftsman enjoyed high regard but at the same time the high status of the person who commissioned its making. The Mamluk period (1250-1517) is especially renowned for their production of grand basins, which were mostly made of bronze or brass finely inlaid with gold and silver wires, and sometimes made of enamelled glass. The importance of basins during the Mamluk period is reflected in the word ‘*tast khana* (abode of the basin)’ designating the wardrobe or storeroom where basins, apparel, jewellery, swords, chairs and carpets, together with clothing, was stored for the sultans.⁴⁸³

Some of the finest Islamic basins have ended up in European royal collections. The Baptistère de Saint Louis (made about 1320-40), now in the Louvre, is one famous example of such cultural transmission between Islamic lands and the Christian region. Even with typical Islamic features of its decoration such as their recurrent motifs, Muslim attendants, and Arabic inscriptions, the basin was used as a baptismal font for several royal children, including Louis XIII of France. Several other Islamic basins entertained similar degrees of attention. One such example is in the royal collection of Hugh IV of Lusignan, King of Cyprus (1324 -1359). This object is well-researched not least because of the hybrid iconography of the basin and the accompanying artefacts (fig.5-22). Lesser known objects is the basin made for the Sicilian Queen, Elizabeth of Carinthia (c. 1300-c. 1350), probably ordered from Muslim metalworkers in Islamic lands, Cairo or Damascus, like the others.⁴⁸⁴

In the intercultural world, basins would have been the most common item carried by Muslim travellers and settlers, as unwittingly proved by the incident with the Somali pirates described earlier. Their fine craftsmanship together with the crucial role they played in Islamic culture would have been instantly recognized by local people. As shown in European collections, basins were worthy of attention from the upper echelons of non-Muslim societies. It is with the same purpose that blue-and-white porcelain basins were made in considerable quantities by Chinese potters in the Ming period, whether for local market or abroad (fig.5-23). These basins are a cultural indication reminiscent of the artistic efforts Muslim craftsmen invested in the objects as well as their use in religious circumstances.

C. Basins in medieval Korean society

⁴⁸² Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi (1996), *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs 29.

⁴⁸³ Muhammad Abbas Muhammad Selim “Basin”, *Discover Islamic Art: Museum With No Frontiers*, 2015. http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;eg;Mus01;15;en

⁴⁸⁴ Jan De Hond and Luitgard Mols (2011), “A Mamluk Basin for a Sicilian Queen”, *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*, 59 (1): 6-33.

In East Asia, basins gained sudden popularity and became a coveted item from around the 10th century. In China, the bronze basin (*pan*) was made for ritual purpose as early as in the Zhou period (1046-256 BCE), but no remains of basins have been found in Korean material culture of the pre-Goryeo period. This is not to suggest that ancient people in the peninsula did not use basins. It simply establishes the humble and mundane status of the object before the medieval period. In both Chinese and Korean cultures, basins hardly attracted any special comment within historical documents and literary texts, let alone visual representation during the pre-medieval period.

As such, visual appearance and enhancement of the basin in East Asia during medieval period could be viewed as sudden and unanticipated. Basins became part of the ceramic repertoire of Song China, including Ru ware and Longquan celadon (fig.5-24). Similarly, in contemporary Goryeo society, basins were sufficiently widespread and carefully treated to draw the attention of the Song envoy Xu Jing (1091-1153). In his observation, Xu Jing describes three groups of basins according to their material and decoration, as ‘*o’hwa-se* (*wuhan xi* in Chinese, basin with dark decoration), *eunhwa-se* (*yinhua xi*, basin with silver decoration), and *baikdong-se* (*baitong xi*, white-bronze basin) (Book 31, *Gaoli tujing*). During the Goryeo period, metal, particularly bronze was favoured, but a number of extant Goryeo ceramic basins reveal a wide range of diversity of shape, material, and decoration. It suggests that Goryeo people became fascinated with this apparently mundane object.

The sudden popularity of the basins in the medieval material-cultural repertoire cannot be simply explained by an increase of the well-to-do population or the abundance of affordable luxuries. Basins are virtually the only one type of vessel among everyday items to enjoy such big visual and material-cultural promotion. They were made of precious metal and embellished with a variety of decorative designs in fine techniques. Basins also became an important component of the official gift list from this time. Gold basins of ‘fifty *lyang*’⁴⁸⁵ are some of the tribute items Goryeo sent to the Liao court, recorded in *Qidan Guozhi* [Records of the Khitan Empire].⁴⁸⁶ The custom of including basins as important diplomatic items remains when Ming China sent five ‘blue-and-white porcelain basins’ to the Joseon court in their official gift in 1428 (*Annals of King Sejong*). A basin, reminiscent of Islamic lusterware in its glaze and colour, was found in Gaeseong, capital of Goryeo, in north Korea (fig.5-25). This unique object is known to have come from Yuan China as a gift or commodity, indicating the status of basins as luxury items.

Although no Korean paintings with such themes has survived, many Chinese narrative paintings of the Song era contain scenes in which basins are included as significant objects

⁴⁸⁵ Lyang is a weight unit of traditional Chinese measuring system. 1 lyang is equivalent of 37.5g.

⁴⁸⁶ Park Han-nam (1955), “[The Relationship with Northern Tribes]”, *Hanguksa* 15, Seoul ; Lee Yong-beom (1989), “[Trade of Goryeo with the Khitan]”, *Hanman gyoryusa yeongu*, Seoul.

representing a crucial moment in the pictorial narrative.⁴⁸⁷ Despite differences in historical context of each scene, the inclusion of basins in the paintings confirms that this everyday object embodied unprecedented visual interest from high-level painters and connoisseurs. This artistic investment attests to the semantic shift happening in the appreciation of basins in medieval East Asian culture, a different cultural attitude seeing the object not as everyday goods but as symbolically charged objects. This unusual transformation and cultural change could be epitomised when basins were treated as a significant indicator for the deceased within the Confucian cultural sphere. Joseon Korea used the basin-shaped object as a tomb epitaph, while contemporaneous Ming China began to include a miniature-scale basin placed on a wooden stand in the list of their burial items (fig.5-26).

This shift can be seen to reflect the cultural background of the period, that was constantly in contact with a foreign culture that treated basins so differently. Islamic art and material culture spread to China from the early days of its establishment, and Korea was also engaged in this intercultural communication both indirectly and directly. The pattern of cultural contacts grew even more diversified and wide-ranging from the 10th century onwards, when East Asia was beset by fierce competition among equally powerful states. All of these states were in constant contact, directly or indirectly, with the Islamic world. Among them, Song China is known to have been most actively engaged in trans-regional trade and open to the cultural influx of the Islamic world, and it received rising numbers of Muslim incomers to the region not only as traders but as invited guests, as military aids to ease the continuous conflict with Liao.⁴⁸⁸ The success of Quanzhou in Fujian province, China, can be attributed mainly due to Muslim merchants and traders using it as a transshipment centre for South Sea goods.⁴⁸⁹ No less important trading partners of the Islamic world, however, were the Liao and the Jin, collectively known as northern nomadic states in Chinese history. While maritime networks were controlled by Song, it was the northern nomadic states, who continued century-old overland trade routes and cultural connections with Islamic lands since the Tang era.

An archaeological excavation from northern China (dated 1018 or earlier) contributes to a better understanding of the Islamic artistic connection in terms of the cultural change of the status of the basin as a luxury object. The finds of the Liao dynasty yielded an Islamic basin made of hammered bronze, with Persian inscription (fig. 5-27a, b).⁴⁹⁰ The basin combines precise Islamic features of the Persian inscription on a deep broad bowl with a flat base and flaring sides, a traditional

⁴⁸⁷ For example, two famous Chinese narrative paintings of the Song era, the *Night Revels of Han Xizai* (datable to 12th century, Palace Museum, Beijing) and *Duke Wen of Jin Recovering His State* (datable to the early 12th century, MMA) contain the scenes of both protagonists washing their hands in the basin.

⁴⁸⁸ Raphael Israeli (2002), *Islam in China*, United States of America, 283-4.

⁴⁸⁹ John W Chaffee (2006), "Diasporic Identities in the Historical Development of the Maritime Muslim Communities of Song-Yuan China", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49 (4) : 395-420.

⁴⁹⁰ Archaeological Institute of Inner Mongolia et al. (1993), [*Tomb of the Princess of Chen in the Liao Dynasty*], Beijing, 48; Hsueh-man Shen (2006), *Gilded Splendour: Treasures of China's Liao Empire*, Milano.

shape for basin as far as in the Mediterranean region.⁴⁹¹ Alongside Persian writing on the interior of the rim, the main decoration on the basin consists of a six-pointed star at the bottom. Like other excavated Iranian items from the same tomb, this basin may have been an import from western Iran, probably from the Ghaznavids (975-1186) with whom the Liao had diplomatic contacts. The Muslim writer Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marwazi (1050-1120) recorded the arrival of a Liao envoy from Emperor Shengzong (r. 982-1031) to their court.⁴⁹² Equally possible is that this item was from another part of the Islamic world, considering Liao's correspondence with the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) and other Islamic objects excavated from Liao sites.⁴⁹³ On the other hand, it could have been commodity or gift from local Muslims, mainly Uighur merchants who had already settled in the Liao territory with their trading business.⁴⁹⁴ After the collapse of the Liao dynasty in 1125, many Khitans sought refuge in Goryeo, resulting in a significant impact upon its art and culture, as acutely observed by Xu Jing in his remark on the Khitan's artistic influences on Goryeo artefacts (Book 19, *Gaoli tujing*,). This may have been a way of transmitting the Islamic cultural significance of the basin to Goryeo material culture.

D. Intercultural communication and local adaptation

The continuous and ever-increasing contact of Koreans with Islamic culture are shown in various aspects of medieval material culture. Islam's long-standing legacy can be felt in some aspect of Korean material culture. The basin as one such example demonstrates that exposure to Islamic cultural conventions and artistic expressions played a major role in heightening the status of an otherwise trite object. The Korean reception of the new cultural influx may be summarised as a process of selection and assimilation, through which local artisans pick and choose specific elements to enhance the artistic potential of their work. By doing so they were able to integrate these elements into the existing system as acceptable.

Back to the initial object, the basin-shaped epitaph adopted the semantic eminence of a medieval Islamic basin and translated it into a Confucian cultural framework, where the whole society

⁴⁹¹ The basin of identical shape was produced in the Old Kingdom period of Egypt (2504-2216 BCE), showing stylistic continuity over a long period. For the Egyptian basin, see a copper-alloy basin in the Fitzwilliam museum E.211.1954. <http://webapps.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explorer/index.php?qu=basin&oid=62267>

⁴⁹² Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marwazī, *Sharaf Al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marwazī on China, the Turks and India / Arabic text* (circa 1120 CE), English translation and commentary by V. Minorsky (1942), London, 19-20.

⁴⁹³ Particularly glass objects found in the Liao site are visual testimony of their familiarity with and favour for Islamic objects. Glass bottles excavated from the tomb of Princess of Chen and ewer holding a small ewer within it (Height 16 cm) from the Northern Pagoda (Beita), Chaoyang (sealed in 1043), are fine examples of Islamic glass.

⁴⁹⁴ Karl A. Wittfogel, and Jiasheng Feng (1949), *History of Chinese Society: Liao, 907-1125*, Philadelphia, 170-3.

was geared to setting up a powerfully uniform milieu. Epitaphs, which represented most significant marker for the deceased within the Confucian cultural sphere, were usually inscribed on tablets and other rectangular-shaped objects. The use of the basin as an epitaph ceased to be such in the later Joseon period. It can be surmised that this 15th-century basin was considered a material-cultural expression of the period endorsing the object as an appropriate accoutrement for commemorating the deceased. As an object for purification and renewal, the cultural significance of the basin in early Joseon Korea can be compared to its importance in Islam, albeit in a different context.

Another and more visually conspicuous mode of assimilation can be noted in the so-called ‘dragon basin’, a bronze basin discovered in the south of the Korean peninsula and now on display in NMK, Jeonju (fig.5-28a). The basin is decorated with dense arabesque-like vegetal scrolls with cloud and thunder patterns in silver inlay. It leaves virtually no empty space on the surface. The overall decoration densely packed with meandering vegetal scrolls, an essential feature of luxury artefacts of the medieval period, makes the visual background against which two opposing dragons swirl around a circular motif of the *taegeuk* (great polarity) – a vital artistic expression in the Korean cultural repertoire (fig.5-28b). Although this basin is widely thought to have been used in Buddhist ceremonies, it is more likely, in my view, to have been used at court or in elite circles with its fine dragon motif, a symbol fully charged with auspicious meanings. Historical texts, from the *Gukjobogam* (Handbook of Court and Government, 1458-1908) to literary anthologies of Confucian scholars in Korea (Book 46, *Gukjobogam*; Books 29, 33, 34, *Sagyeyugo*), mention the basin as part of the essential ritual paraphernalia for Confucian ancestor worship and royal ceremonies.⁴⁹⁵ In fact, ‘*gwanse* (the hand-washing ceremony)’ represents an indispensable step of Confucian ceremony (fig.5-29).

The symbolic function of basins is not just reserved for Confucian or Buddhist ceremonies, but widely disseminated and received in important rites across Korean society. The first step of *Hollye* (Korean traditional wedding ceremony) involves the bride and groom washing their hands in a broad-rimmed bronze basin. As in the medieval Islamic world, a basin mostly made of *yugi* (high-tin bronze) was an essential component of the trousseau of Joseon brides, a historical fact rapidly forgotten in the midst of uniformly modernised lifestyle. Likewise, the Islamic cultural presence in the Korean peninsula was completely forgotten in the course of its long acculturation. The biography of the basin, however, retains the cultural memory of Islamic cultural presence in medieval Korean kingdoms. It also conjures up a long process of acculturation of Islamic artistic elements within Confucian Korea.

⁴⁹⁵ In-Sung Kim Han (2013), “Objects as History: Islamic Material Culture in Medieval Korea”, *Orientalism*, 44(3) : 62-70, 69-70

Conclusion

In the early 20th century, Berthold Laufer proposed two reasons for the difficulty in researching Islamic art in China; one is the scarcity of the material at our disposal and the other is distinctive efforts by Muslims to being invisible in China. On the second reason, he comments as follows:

They [Muslims] have always worked quietly, noiselessly, unostentatiously and have even purposely eschewed any sensations and publicity. Buddhism always understood the art and value of advertising and never tired of announcing *urbi et orbi* the benefits that would accrue to its votaries.⁴⁹⁶

The statement above reflects the uneasy way of living Muslims would have taken after the 1427 edict declared. When Muslims eventually assimilated in Korean culture, their cultural idiosyncrasies have become faded to the point of complete oblivion. Laufer again pointed out the trouble of distinguishing acculturated Muslims from local Chinese, ‘save that they abstain from pork and do not eat together with infidels or anything cooked by them’⁴⁹⁷ In China, even high-rising minarets, the most prominent architectural marker of Islam in any part of the Islamic world, disappear between the other one-storied houses.

However, this does not warrant the complete eradication of Islamic material-cultural elements. Instead of losing distinctive cultural markers of Islam, Muslims could have left their legacy in other way - by leaving more neutral and universal appeal of Islamic material culture, which would be adopted and become known as ‘Korean’ by the locals over the course of time. As the aforementioned cases show, a quotidian and utilitarian object - whether pottery, metalwork, glass, textiles or others - could compensate for the silence of Islamic culture incorporated into Korean art. In the absence of written sources, object and artefacts sometimes address the forgotten history of the Korean peninsula in the course of socio-political movements towards a mono-cultural society.

⁴⁹⁶ Berthold Laufer (1934), “Chinese Muhammedan Bronzes: With a Study of the Arabic Inscriptions by Martin Sprengling”, *Ars Islamica* 1 (2): 133-147, Freer Gallery of Art, 134

⁴⁹⁷ *ibid*, 133

Chapter 6. Untranslatability in cultural translation: Islamic visual idiom in Neo-Confucian Joseon

This thesis has so far examined how Islamic cultural elements were accepted and adapted into the cultural context of Goryeo and Joseon Korea. Now we will look at the challenges faced by these foreign cultural elements which failed to be adapted to the rapidly changing environment of the Confucian Joseon society. If the majority of the discussions in the previous chapters were devoted to the incorporation process of motifs and the objects themselves, this chapter will concentrate on how a certain motif of Islamic art could not survive in Joseon. To trace back its introduction into late medieval Korean culture and subsequent reception will show how a Confucian society responded to an artistic element of Islamic culture when the foreign visual idiom kept its unique cultural connotation. The approach will eventually lead to identify the boundary for cultural transmission and highlight dissimilarities of the two cultures. The subject matter under discussion here will be called ‘a bird in attack’ motif - a portrayal of a single avian animal attacking a weaker animal.

1. The visual idiom of ‘a bird in attack’ in the medieval period

Observations of surviving Korean objects reveal that the motif was always depicted as a bird of prey attacking or pecking at a fish. The design has been found exclusively on buncheong ware – a type of fine stoneware mainly produced during the first half of the Joseon dynasty.

One object which shows this motif in a clear delineation is a flask with flattened sides (*pyeon-byeong* in Korean), currently kept in the Gansong Museum, Seoul (fig.6-1). The flask was brushed unevenly with white slip and decorated with incised designs under greyish green glaze. With a few incised lines and vague pattern, the main decoration is composed of a man in a sailing-boat on one side and a rough sketch of a bird, probably a crane catching a fish on the other.

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The motif of a bird in attack appearing on early Joseon buncheong wares has never been interpreted as a separate decorative idiom, whether as the Sino-centric auspicious meaning or as part of the theme of hunting. The dearth of surviving objects with this motif could be a reason for the lack of scholarly interest in it. But a variety of shape of extant ceramics and sherds bearing this motif suggests that the number of actual objects decorated with this motif could have been much higher during the Joseon period. Many of such ceramic wares must have worn out and disappeared over the long period of the Joseon dynasty.

This chapter approaches the design of a bird attacking a fish as a separate entity, and discusses it in relation to the widespread use of a conspicuous visual idiom of medieval Islamic

⁴⁹⁸ Chewon Kim and G.St.G.M. Gompertz (1961), *Korean Arts: Ceramics*, Vol. 2, Seoul, 160

material culture. It will show that the appearance of the motif itself was a product of cultural fusion that happened until the early Joseon period, when cultural and visual themes of hunting and martial superiority were commonly entertained by the upper echelon of society, like in other parts of Eurasia. And its eventual disappearance reflects the shift of Joseon society towards a more inward-looking, uniformed culture within the Sino-centric zone.

As discussed, the two motifs - intertwined birds and a bird in attack - belonged to the same scheme of the medieval Islamic decorative repertoire. They often appear together in the same time and location, and even on the same Islamic objects. And, like the other bird motif with intertwined necks, a bird of prey attacking an animal almost always appears in a medallion or in a panel, separating it from background decoration and emphasising its presence both visually and symbolically. Their popularity was not confined within the Iranian cultural sphere – an intercultural contact zone of East Asia most frequently mentioned. The use of this decorative idiom was shared by the western part of the Islamic world of the medieval period.

The design bearing the bird motif seems to have been particularly favoured in objects made of ivory and rock crystal, a material used for those with power and prestige. Most of the extant objects bear the visual expression of a bird attacking an animal or another bird. Their recurrent appearance over long periods on luxury items advocates the status of this particular motif as an archetypal decorative idiom of a visual theme, known as the princely cycle in Islamic culture and even earlier.

By comparison, the reception of these two bird motifs took a different route over the course of time in the Korean material-cultural scene. Until the Joseon period, Korean cultures resonated with other parts of Eurasia, shared and adapted the most common visual idioms with them. When the Joseon society became more detached from other parts of Inner Asia beyond China, the Islamic visual programme of the ‘princely pleasure’ failed to find a symbolic framework from the local culture. In the ideological transition in Joseon society, the motif of intertwined birds has been semantically transformed to become a significant part of Korean material culture, while the image of a bird in attack lived only on the early Joseon *buncheong* wares. Through a long period of oblivion of their Islamic connection, the motif of a bird in attack lost its original connotations and metaphors. And it gradually disappeared from the Korean decorative repertoire.

1.1. In Joseon

Unlike the intertwined bird design, the motif of a bird in attack has not been found on many objects of Korea. It was predominantly used in early Joseon *buncheong* ware. Based on extant evidence, the motif made an appearance on the Korean material-cultural scene only for a while during the early Joseon period. Later, it ceased to be part of the decorative repertoire of Korean art. In spite of the extant evidence, the chances are that the period of its introduction into Korean art may have been earlier, in the Goryeo dynasty, more or less simultaneously with the motif of intertwined bird

previously discussed. In fact, there remain a series of small Goryeo accessories bearing the motif of a bird in attack in openwork decoration.

The absence of surviving Goryeo celadons or any other type of objects with this theme, however, makes it difficult to claim its concomitant introduction to the peninsula as the interwoven bird motif. In addition, there is the subtle but perceptible difference between the design of the motif of same theme in Goryeo accessories and Joseon buncheong, suggesting that the motif under present discussion may have come to the Korean peninsula through different channels in different times independent from intertwined birds motif.

Furthermore, the production history of buncheong itself has been a continuous topic for scholarly debate. Archaeological excavations find that buncheong ceramics started to be produced alongside celadons, mostly at the same kiln, during the late Goryeo period, and became a major player in Korean ceramic culture during the early Joseon. The most aesthetically pleasing buncheong wares are supposed to have been produced during the 15th to 16th century. These wares are well known for their typical qualities – unpretentious refinement in its form and almost child-like naturalness in its decoration. The general academic narrative is that the demand for buncheong wares decreased with changing aesthetic taste of Joseon elites, whose ideological predilection leaned towards white porcelain for its symbolical quality.

1.1.1. During the early Joseon period

Against this big picture, the dating of individual buncheong ware, especially under discussion in this chapter, was made purely based on stylistic comparisons of art historians. Firm evidence, such as inscriptions, rarely exists. Most of their provenance has remained obscure. This tricky circumstance makes it hard to give a specific time for each object. Thus, the time of the appearance of this particular motif can only be presumed in a range of time from the late 14th century at the earliest to the 16th century.

Among the frequently quoted items as prime example of buncheong ware is a late 15th- or early 16th-century drum-shaped bottle (*jang-gun* in Korean), now in Osaka. It shows a bird –probably kingfisher- diving down to catch a fish in a lotus pond on the one side (fig.6-2). On the other side, a heron stands among flowering lotuses, while a bird flies in the distance. Its iron-painted decorative technique points to the early Joseon ceramic ware known as ‘Gyeryong-san buncheong’ - a type of buncheong ware renowned for its iron-painted decoration, whose production is known to have been concentrated at the kilns of Mount Gyeoryong in Hakpong-ri, Gonju, South Chungcheong Province.

Often buncheong decoration is thought to give an impression of unrefined, untamed child’s play, but the figural representation painted here shows a level of technical sophistication and pictorial maturity. The visual proficiency of its decoration has attracted much scholarly attention; a recent suggestion has been made that ‘the degree of liberated, dynamic, free-style drawing’ of this piece is

rarely found in contemporaneous paintings with similar themes in any medium, whether Korean or more broadly East Asian.⁴⁹⁹ Itoh Ikutaro, the Japanese scholar on Korean ceramics, compared the visual serenity delivered by the decorative scene of this piece with Zen painting.⁵⁰⁰

The Osaka flask also shows a distinctive difference from the Gansong *pyeon-byeong* in terms of detail devoted in portrayal of the motif. The motif in *jang-gun* depicts a bird in descent towards the prey's head with its wings fully spread, while the bird in *pyeonbyeong* is shown to be pecking at the rear of a fish. The examination of this motif in other ceramics confirms that the layout of a bird attacking the rear of a fish, as in the style of Gansong *pyeon-byeong*, was more generally accepted as a decorative formula for this design.

A large jar at the Kurashiki Museum, also in Japan, demonstrates such positioning of figures in the motif more clearly. As a fine example amongst this type of ceramic, the jar has an everted lip, sloping shoulder and bulging body in a fine balance. It shows the popular decorative method of partitioning of medieval Korean ceramics (fig.6-3a,b). The decoration on the body is divided into three horizontal registers under the transparent celadon glaze. In the middle zone are depicted fishes of humorously massive size and black-headed birds of unidentifiable species in a row. Plants are sparsely placed in between. As often shown on other fish design of buncheong ware, the fish scales are methodically expressed with the technique of combed incising through the slip. The birds are sketchily portrayed within the register to chasing after the fishes, with their black beaks pecking at the fish tails.

Similar representations can also be found on the bottle from Rhee Byung-chang collection currently on display in Osaka (fig.6-4a,b). The bottle is densely decorated with iron-painted patterns under the celadon glaze. The band from the mouth to the shoulder is filled with a series of plantain leaf pattern in white and black *sanggam*. Stylised plants fill one side of the bottle in near symmetric position. The main design, which invokes underwater scenery, is inlaid with coloured clay from the centre to the base of the bottle. Here, a strange-looking animal with a long neck and an equally long beak is shown to be attacking the fishes by pecking at the tail of the fish (fig.6-4b). These figures, although looking like aquatic animals, are birds in a unique presentation. The curved beak, the sparse crests, and the funny look are the definite characteristics of the crested ibis. Although this presentation of the bird is the first of its kind in Korean visual culture, the crested ibis was one of the common birds in the biological resources of the Korean peninsula until the 19th century. So widespread, it was occasionally understood as the symbol of Korean emotionality.⁵⁰¹ The similar design of fish with ibis

⁴⁹⁹ Soyoung Lee, JaHyun Kim Haboush, Sun-pyo Hong, Chin-Sung Chang (2009), *Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400-1600*, New York, 51.

⁵⁰⁰ Itoh Ikutaro and Yutaka Mino (1991), *The Radiance of Jade and the Clarity of Water : Korean Ceramics from the Ataka collection*, New York , 98.

can be found in a buncheong bottle with inlaid design in the Dongwon collection in NMK (H 26.1cm).⁵⁰²

An archaeological find confirms that this composition within the motif was not accidental. The kiln sites in Buan, in the North Jeolla Province, are well known for the production of fine Korean ceramics until the last days of the Joseon dynasty. The sites have provided ceramic sherds for plenty of material evidence of its development. A *pyeon-byeong* sherd found in Udong-ri, Buan, shows an out-of-ratio fish against a lotus-stem background with a much smaller bird inlaid in *sanggam* technique on the back of the fish (fig.6-5). As seen from previous examples, this was a caricatural portrayal of a giant fish being attacked by a smaller, agile bird of prey. Although these rather crude drawings of the piece in no way measure up to the high standard of the Osaka *jang-gun*, at least they indicate that this decorative theme became common for the wider ranges of ceramics.

Various techniques employed on the sherds found at the kiln, along with the distribution of kiln sites, allows us to estimate the time of production of this sherd to be precisely around from 1400 to 1450, with a supporting evidence from the Book of Geography of the *Annals of King Sejong*.⁵⁰³ The production period of this particular sherd corresponds to the reign of King Sejong (1418-1450), when Muslims retained some degree of autonomy and presence within the Joseon court as well as in its society in general.

1.1.2. Later period

As we move away from the first half of the Joseon period, the motif depicting a bird in attack becomes almost extinct. So far, there was only one example of such case - a late 19th- century bottle found in modern-day North Korea (fig.6-6). As the present location of this ceramic is not known, a photographic image is the only available source. Standing 20cm tall, this porcelain bottle also used iron pigment to sketchily portray a bird hunting a fish against a white background. The proportion of the size of the bird and the fish has changed for both figures to reflect their real-life ratio.

The visual representation lacks the humorous and lively atmosphere present in the earlier portrayals of the same motif. No sign of excitement while the bird attacks. Any dramatic impact of the moment is not delivered. This transformation seems to reflect the changing attitude towards the motif, from its spontaneous expression shown in the 15th- to 16th-century objects to a more

⁵⁰¹ The four-stanza poetry, 'Crested Ibis', was a prize-winner of the annual spring literary contest of Dong-a newspapers in 1925, and later made a song for children. During the Japanese occupation, the song was prohibited from singing and distribution on the basis of its supposedly rendering the joys and sorrows of the Korean people. Jang Yeong-mi (2010), "[Study of Han-Jung-Dong: Focused on 1920, 30s Literary Works]', *Hanguk-adongmunhak-yeongu*, 18 : 55-70.

⁵⁰² Kim Jae-yeol (2002), *Handbook of Korean Art: White Porcelain and Buncheong ware*, Seoul, plate 75.

⁵⁰³ Kang Kyeong-suk (2000), [*History of Korean Ceramics*], Seoul, 259 ; Recorded in the Article 148 to Article 155 of the *Annal of King Sejong*, the Book of Geography is a comprehensive geographical survey of the Korean peninsula. It was completed in 1454 (2nd year of King Danjong).

stereotyped design unit in the 19th-century pottery. This change indicates that the motif lost its initial vivacity and meaning, and was simply handed over to the next-generation potters like a set of neutral design unit.

There is no other surviving material evidence from the late Joseon period than this piece of ceramic. It shows the declining popularity of the motif. Even if objects containing this motif were produced, the same motif no longer implied the same connotation as in the high-end buncheong ware of the early Joseon. It is certain that the motif lost the visual appeal and the symbolic status it might have once enjoyed. Most of all, this particular motif completely vanished from the current Korean material cultural repertoire, a proof that any previous cultural significance associated with the theme was sporadic, transitory, and not sustainable in Korean culture.

1.1.3. The significance of the visual idiom in Korean culture

What would have been the original meaning and purpose of this motif as a decorative idiom in the early Joseon period? Findings so far have not provided a conclusive evidence for a specific cultural significance. Unlike the general approach to Korean artefacts, the attacking bird motif has never attracted a Sino-centric interpretation, whether valid or not.

Frequently, the motif has been subsumed into the general argument about buncheong decoration being a reflection of the naturalness of the Korean people. The concept of ‘untamedness’ as a main quality of buncheong was initially proposed by Yanagi Soetsu (also known as Yanagi Muneyoshi, 1889 - 1961), an influential Japanese art critic of the Japanese Imperial period. He argues that ‘healthiness (*kenkosei*)’ is a measure of beauty, and promoted ‘true beauty’ in ordinary and utilitarian objects in his *mingei* (folkcraft) movement. Yanagi saw unpretentious Korean wares, especially buncheong ware, as the ultimate example of wholesome beauty created by unknown craftsmen.⁵⁰⁴

Yanagi’s approach to Korean art has deeply affected and left a defining impact on the appreciation of Korean art not only in Japan and Korea but also in the West. It was Yanagi who started to read the ‘beauty of pathos’ of Joseon people in Joseon ceramics. His subjective impression of Joseon ceramic, as well as his personal taste developed under the social sway of Japanese Imperialism, and is still reiterated among scholars, who uncritically follow Yanagi’s observation like an innate quality of Joseon buncheong ware.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁴ Soetsu Yanagi and Bernard Leach (1972[1989]), *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*, Tokyo.

⁵⁰⁵ Recent research has suggested that Yanagi’s pessimistic judgement of Joseon ceramics was a reflection of his personal history, his historical prejudice toward Joseon, the aesthetic propensity inherent in Japanese people, and an absence of academic studies into Joseon ceramics. O Sun-hwa (2010), [*A Study of Yanagi Muneyoshi's Early Aesthetic Sense toward Joseon Ceramics*], Seoul, PhD Thesis.

According to this argument, the motif comes to signify the spontaneity and the emotional tendencies of Korean people. The approach of associating a certain pattern, subject matter, or technique with nationality is a reflection of the early 20th-century nationalistic and colonial attitude.⁵⁰⁶ With the assumption of a permanently innate nature of the Korean people, this approach fails to explain the sudden popularity and equally the sudden disappearance of the motif in Korean material culture. More importantly, this approach has the immediate drawback to prevent this visual motif from being examined as an independent decorative entity.

If we read the visual vocabulary without any pre-conditioned symbolism attached to it, the imagery of a bird pecking at a fish is to be seen as a representation of the hunting theme. The visual expression of such a theme came to be visible in Korean history from mid-Goryeo. It was also popular in contemporary northern nomadic states in China. The sudden appearance can be attributed to the rise of northern nomadic tribes in China from the 10th to the early 15th century, when this decorative style enjoyed a previously unseen visual ascendancy.

Compared to the belated presence in East Asian material and visual culture during the medieval period, however, this theme was more deeply ingrained in other cultures of Eurasia for much longer. In this respect, the meaning of the motif depicted on Joseon buncheong ware could not be fully explained just in connection with East Asian cultural aspects, but needs to link to other cultures in the contemporary period. The motif played a particularly predominant role in Islamic culture.

2. In the medieval Islamic culture

In contemporary Islamic culture, the motif of bird in attack was so widespread in a variety of artistic media, that it is sometimes difficult to determine the production time and place of the objects. It has been one of major patterns in the cultural sphere of Persianate Islam, and was also highly popular across the regions beyond the Pamir regardless of geographical or religious divides during the medieval period. Evidence of pervasiveness of this motif in medieval Islamic culture can be found in various types of material culture. In various artistic media, this motif has spread into all regions of Islamic culture, including Iran, Egypt and Turkey, and reached Europe. It was particularly favoured as a heraldic symbol or coat of arms, and motifs of this kind were also popular in the Christian crusader states in Palestine. In virtually any part of medieval Islamic lands, the motif became a prevalent part of luxurious items.

2.1. The motif in various media of medieval Islamic lands

⁵⁰⁶ Like Yanagi, equating certain artefacts with predetermined nationality was a crucial part of early modern aesthetic theories, predominantly powerful in Fascist countries. For the revision of the political substance of Yanagi's aesthetic approach, Kim Brandt (2007), *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan*, Durham; Noriko Aso (2009), "Mediating the Masses: Yanagi Soetsu and Fascism", Alan Tansman (ed)(2009), *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, Durham, 138-154.

The motif of a bird attacking the prey was a traditional cultural element of the Iranian region, which survived and thrived even after the introduction of Islam in the region. A bird –possibly a rooster – and a fish in its beak decorates a lusterware bowl from Basra of the late 9th - to early 10th -century Iraq (fig.6-7). These creatures have long carried positive associations, with the rooster as the harbinger of dawn and the fish as symbol of bounty.⁵⁰⁷ But birds of different species, peacock for example, appear holding a fish in its beak in the decorative scheme of contemporary lusterwares (fig.6-8). Judging from the widespread appearance of this motif on lusterware during the medieval period, we might deduce this visual vocabulary was accepted in urban culture of the medieval Islamic world.

The motif of a bird attacking a fish or other prey animals was not confined to the Persianate Islamic zone but shared in other regions of the medieval world far beyond it. A Syrian earthenware jug datable between the 12th and the 13th century, for instance, is decorated with the identical scheme of a bird pecking at or holding a fish in its beak in a beaded roundel (fig. 6-9). The decoration was made by using a mould, pointing to the multiple production of this design in Islamic ceramics (see fig.6-10).⁵⁰⁸

Clearer designs of this scheme are found in the so-called *lakabi* ('painted') ware, a stonepaste pottery with decorations painted under transparent colourless glaze. Thought to be from Syria during the Zangid or Ayyubid period, a dish now in the Cleveland Museum of Art is decorated with a single motif - a falcon attacking a waterfowl (fig.6-11). This type of ceramic was widely produced in Iran, Egypt and Syria from about the beginning of the 11th century until the mid-14th century. It was deemed luxury product and exported to other countries of the Middle East,⁵⁰⁹ a testament to the transmission and spread of this motif across Islamic lands.

The evidence of extensive dissemination across the western part of Eurasia can be recognized in other objects sharing the motif, including textiles. The light-blue silk with golden embroidery, known to have been worn by St Thomas à Becket, was made in 1116 in Almeria, the centre of the Spanish textile industry. It is adorned with large roundels interlinked with smaller roundels and eight-pointed stars in between (fig.6-12).⁵¹⁰ Each of its thirty-four large roundels bears a bird of different species in various postures, some with hunting birds atop gazelles or hares in a similar layout as the

⁵⁰⁷ Mary McWilliams (ed.) (2013), *In Harmony: The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art*, Cambridge, MA, 173, cat. 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Pottery fragments found at Nishapur, Iran bear the moulded motif of birds in combat. <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/449480?rpp=60&pg=2&ao=on&ft=islam+bird&pos=66>

⁵⁰⁹ Dalu Jones and George Michell (eds.) (1976), *The Arts of Islam*, Hayward Gallery, exhibition catalogue, London, 243.

⁵¹⁰ Annabelle Simon-Cahn (1993), "The Fermo Chasuble of St. Thomas Becket and Hispano-Mauresque Cosmological Silks: Some Speculations on the Adaptive Reuse of Textiles", *Muqarnas*, 10: 1-5.

one mentioned above. This silk garment provides a visual reference to the cross-cultural trade and shared culture between Islam and Christianity in the medieval period.

As found on the Almeria textile, the motif of an eagle hunting a rabbit is one of most frequent motifs in various media of Fatimid art. Probably dating from about the same time is the fragmentary panel, decorated with a bird of prey attacking a hare in marquetry technique (fig.6-13).⁵¹¹ And the same motif is also carved in Fatimid ivory panels now in the Walters Museum, Baltimore (71.564 and 71.565).

The image of a bird-of-prey in attack was particularly favoured in luxury objects produced in the Mediterranean when the Fatimids were the dominant power. As already shown as an example of the intertwined birds motif in chapter 3, most of the ivory objects contain the attacking bird motif as well. On the Edinburgh oliphant, there is the imagery of a peacock attacking a gazelle and an eagle attacking a goat in roundels (fig.6-14a,b). The V & A casket shows falcons attacking gazelles in symmetric composition (fig.6-15). The popularity of this visual vocabulary is confirmed in other luxury items from the same period. Rock crystal objects of the Fatimid period were another coveted artefact illustrating the technical skills of the Islamic craftsmen. The identical scene is repeated on a rock crystal ewer in the V&A, with a bird of prey attacking a four-legged horned animal (fig.6-16). Another luxury example to attest the usage of this motif as a formularized decorative idiom is the cameo-glass ewer in the Corning Museum (fig.6-17). Often famed as the innovative and the most beautiful Islamic object, this ewer was produced with the high-relief glass cutting techniques used by the Islamic glassmakers in the central Islamic lands during the period of the end of the first millennium or the beginning of the second.⁵¹² The inside panel of the high-relief bichrome decoration outlined in turquoise-blue against the transparent glass is a symmetrical image of a pair of bird of prey, each perched on the rump and pecking at the back of the neck of the horned quadrupeds. This innovative vessel presents the century-old motif in a highly creative technique.

A most popular group of objects for this motif is inlaid metalwork, which is representative of high-end medieval Islamic arts. Metalwork also avidly follows the periodic fashion. As in the example of an inlaid jug from Herat in the British Museum (1885 7-11 1), the motif of a bird in attack sometimes appears alongside the intertwined bird motifs (fig.6-18). The 12th-century perfume bottle in the Freer Gallery can be an object diagnosing the period in its shape and decoration alike. It has the popular Iranian bottle shape with the slender neck and bulbous body, and is decorated with various

⁵¹¹ Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar; and Marilyn Jenkins (2001), 202.

⁵¹² The question of the origin of this ewer remains unresolved. Like the so-called Buckley Ewer in Victoria and Albert Museum, this ewer reportedly was also found in the Iranian region. But the shape and quality of the decoration are reminiscent of rock-crystal ewers made for the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt. David Whitehouse (1993), "The Corning Ewer: A Masterpiece of Islamic Cameo Glass", *Journal of Glass Studies*, 35 : 48–56.

images of bestiary and animal hunting in each medallion (fig.6-19a). The birds and harpies are on the neck and the lion is shown in combat with an ibex and a deer. Although the images seem to have been chosen at random without a predetermined iconographic programme, these animals represent the ancient symbols of royalty, victory, strength, and good wishes.⁵¹³ In a medallion, the eagle is shown overpowering a weaker, horned animal (fig.6-19b).

The 15th-century Islamic export metalwork to Europe, known as the misnomer 'Veneto-Saracenic', attests to the continuing popularity of the hunting bird motif as a visual idiom throughout the Middle Ages. Thought to have been made in Mamluk Syria (1250-1516) for the European market, the metalwork of this group often contains European shields and coats of arms, showing the diverse sets of styles of Islamic metalworkers adopted to suit the large-scale demand from Europe. A brass tray inlaid with silver of this group, now on display in the British Museum (fig.6-20a), is decorated with the visual themes typical of Islamic art depicting hunting scenes; a hawk seizes waterfowl and a lion attacks a bull or a deer in each roundel (fig.6-20b).

2.2. The significance of the motif in Islamic culture

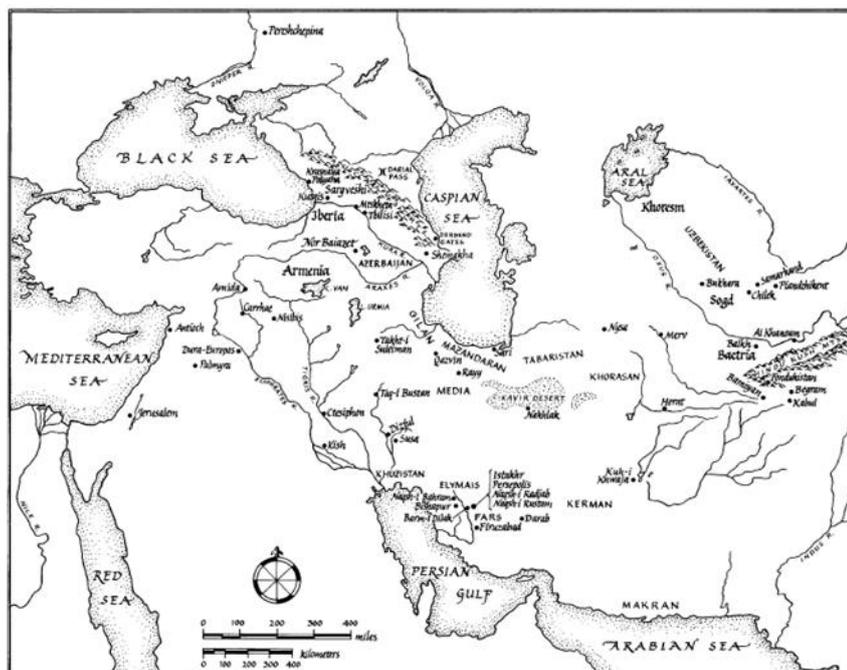
2.2.1. The visual idiom of royal power in the ancient world

Motifs depicting hunting scenes have a long history as a visual idiom of the Middle East. The scene of a king hunting a lion with spears, or shooting with bow and arrow was already used in the Late Uruk period (c.3300-3000 BCE).⁵¹⁴ When it was used in the decoration of fine silver and gold vessels depicting the Sasanian king hunting during the 5th to 6th centuries, Sasanians already used an ancient image of the royal hunt motif. The iconography was firmly established as an essential part of artistic conventions intended to enhance the visual reference to royal power and prowess throughout Eurasia in the Sasanian period (map 8).⁵¹⁵ The 5th- to 6th-century silver plate epitomises such image charged with symbolic meaning, in which the king appears alone on horseback while shooting swiftly running animals with arrows (fig.6-21).⁵¹⁶

⁵¹³ Esin Atil, W.T. Chase and Paul Jett (1985), *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington, D.C., 84.

⁵¹⁴ For the so-called "lionhunt stele" of the Uruk period, see Kim Benzel, Sarah B. Graff, Yelena Rakic, and Edith W. Watts (2010), *Art of the Ancient Near East A Resource for Educators*, New York, 31, fig 13.

⁵¹⁵ The widespread influence of the Persian image of kingship is due to the vast geographical landmass the Sasanian Empire covered with its international relationships stretching beyond its territory. 'At times the Sasanian rulers', Harper states, 'expanded the frontiers of their empire west to the Mediterranean, east to Balkh and Merv in present-day Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, and north into parts of Soviet Uzbekistan. It is probable that Sasanian silver was sent to these areas, but it is also conceivable that silver vessels were made there by local rulers in imitation of Sasanian originals'. Prudence Harper (1981), *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period: Voll. Royal Imagery*, New York, 8.



Map 8) The Iranian cultural sphere in the Sasanian period

The hunting motif containing imagery of birds also has a long history in the Middle Eastern region. On a plaque from 2400 BCE, there is an image of a lion-headed eagle, or the Imdugud bird in ancient Mesopotamian religions, standing on the back of the bison, biting into its hindquarters (fig.6-22). Thought to have been part of the temple-façade decoration,⁵¹⁷ this artefact serves as evidence of a bird of prey in a hunting scene and is linked to authority and religious powers. Birds, particularly the imagery of a bird of prey in hunting, have sustained a special significance, which was shared by the regions in and close to the Persian cultural sphere in the Middle East, as well as in India and the Steppe area.⁵¹⁸ The extent of distribution and shared meaning of the bird motif suggest that the motif of hunting birds, together with the theme of hunting, is an integral part of ‘Eurasian intercultural styles’.⁵¹⁹

2.2.2. A visual idiom of the princely cycle in medieval Eurasia

⁵¹⁶ For the study of hunting and royalty in surviving Sasanian objects, see the exhibition catalogue by P. Harper (1978), *The Royal Hunter: Art of the Sasanian Empire*, New York.

⁵¹⁷ Joan Aruz et al. (eds.) (2003), *Art of the First Cities: the Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 88.

⁵¹⁸ Joan Aruz et al. (eds.) (2000), *The Golden Deer of Eurasia : Scythian and Sarmatian Treasures from the Russian Steppes : the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, and the Archaeological Museum, Ufa*, New York, 256, fig.179.

⁵¹⁹ Joan Aruz (2003), “Art and Interconnections in the Third Millennium BC”, Joan Aruz et al (eds.) (2003), 239-250, 244-247.

Even when the older religions and mythology disappeared under the Islamic hegemony, traditional artistic motifs continued for a considerably longer period of time. The Islamic world inherited the literary and visual tradition of the theme of hunting, together with the symbolic significance of the bird motif. They continued to flourish across the regions in the medieval period. The motif of the hunting bird became predominant after the Arab conquest of Iran and Central Asia, when Muslim artisans continued to adapt the royal theme almost exclusively borrowed from the Ancient Orient throughout the Iranian kingdom. As such, hunting in general was the staple iconography of the princely cycle in Islamic art since the Umayyad period. The symbolic status of a bird in attack persisted in medieval Islamic lands. The rulers of northern Jazira, for example, used eagles as royal emblems in the late 12th and 13th centuries.⁵²⁰

Before addressing the thematic significance, it is worth assessing a different perspective proposed recently. The motif of a bird holding the tail of a fish in its beak is depicted in the mihrab in the Seljuq mausoleum, the Gunbad-i Alaviyan, Hamadan, Iran (fig.6-23a). The motif is twice repeated beside the vine-palm in symmetric position under the blank arch (fig.6-23b). Raya Shani interpreted the motif with a particular iconographic meaning based on the symbolic framework in which the birds represented the soul of the deceased. A bird holding a fish in its beak signifies, according to him, the symbol of the soul represented by birds having been provided with food in paradise. He further argues that the motif and its talismanic quality might also refer to the fertility rites, originally Sasanian, which continued to be celebrated in Iran well into the Islamic period.⁵²¹

Aside from the reliability of the argument, none of the buncheong examples with such motif have been known in a funerary context. The motif of a bird pecking at a fish on Joseon buncheong ware emphasizes the moment of attack when the bird hunts the fish, delivering the ambience of fighting even in static, lifeless motion. Like the main narrative of medieval Islamic art history, it is seen as the metonymic symbol of powerful activities of hunting.

As illustrated in the previous section, this kind of princely theme is the keynote of medieval Islamic art in virtually every medium. The main theme of the cycle has been visualized in various activities of royal pastime. The stock motifs include male and female attendants, dancers, musicians, drinkers, gift-bearers, with particular emphasis on hunting. The Fatimid ivory plaque currently in Berlin shows a series of activities and motifs related to the theme in continuum. Amongst figures carved in high relief against spiralling grapevine are hunters with falcons, men carrying game or picking grapes, musicians (flute, lute, and other string instruments), a reveller pouring into his goblet from a jug, and

⁵²⁰ James W. Allan (1986), *Metalwork of the Islamic World: the Aron collection*, London : Sotheby's, 70-71.

⁵²¹ Raya Shani (1996), *A Monumental Manifestation of the Shi'ite Faith in Late Twelfth-Century Iran: The Case of the Gunbad-i 'Alaviyan, Hamadan*, Oxford, 132-9 ; Raya Shani (2005), "Paradise Glimpsed by the Muslim Believer at Prayer", Robert Hillenbrand (ed.), *Image and meaning in Islamic Art*, London, 109-128.

a prince reclining on a bolster with a goblet in his left hand (fig.6-24). These activities show the image of a lion hunting down a bull and of a falcon hunting a deer. This carved ivory plaque is known to have been produced in Egypt between the 11th to 12th centuries, and then repurposed as a book frame in Venice during the 14th century.⁵²² In spite of the re-arrangement in non-Islamic culture, the unbroken continuity of these images aptly suggests essential parts of the princely theme of *razm* (battle) and *bazm* (banquet).

The same combination of visual motifs was repeated in other regions of Islamic culture. Currently in the David Collection, a 13th-century Iranian pen-case, for example, shows inlaid decoration of a bird pecking at a waterfowl (fig.6-25a,b).⁵²³ A pen-case contains reed pens, an inkwell, a pen-knife for cutting a fresh pen-nib, a whetstone to sharpen the knife and scissors to trim paper-edges. Under the clasp is inscribed as follows: “The favourite piece of Uthman ibn Abu Bakr from Zanjan.” No wonder Uthman liked it!’ The identity of the owner of this finely decorated object remains unknown. His relative obscurity vis-a-vis the finesse of the utilitarian object reveals that the visual vocabulary expanded beyond the luxury items for urban elites to everyday objects.

As in the pen-case, the hunting bird motif, originally metaphoric of princely cycle, decorated objects for urban elites in medieval period, which attests to the change of the meaning of this motif over the course of time. The exclusive use and regal bearing of the motif during the pre-Islamic period became diluted and it adapted to the urban culture of the medieval Islamic world.⁵²⁴

The propagation of the motif in the medieval Islamic world was so pervasive that virtually any object, from princely gifts to commercial items for urban elites and utilitarian pottery for everyday use, could have adapted the decorative idioms of hunting and of a bird in attack. Such eclectic dissemination shows the level of popularity this visual idiom enjoyed during the medieval period. At the same time its talismanic and apotropaic appeal helped a wide dissemination of this visual vocabulary.

The hunting motif, when decorating objects commissioned by the bourgeoisie or for mundane use, can be interpreted ‘not as mere descriptions of royal pastimes, but rather as allusions to an affluent and successful life similar to that of kings.’ As visual ‘equivalent to the stereotypic epigraphs

⁵²² Eva Hoffman (1999), “A Fatimid Book Cover: Framing and Re-framing. Cultural Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean World”, *L’Egypte Fatimide: Son Art et Son Histoire*, M. Barrucand(ed.), Paris, 403–19 ; The Arab historian al-Maqrizi (AH 766–845 / AD 1364–1442) described a Fatimid throne made of ebony and ivory.

⁵²³ Under the clasp is inscribed as follows: “The favorite piece of Uthman ibn Abu Bakr from Zanjan”. “No wonder Uthman liked it!, No more information of this owner remains”.

⁵²⁴ Contrary to the perspective of Orientalists, urbanism with myriad of buildings, city structures and ‘green spaces’ has always been major trends of the Islamic world since the dawn of Islam. Arab-Muslim urbanism reached its apogee in the Umayyad period with the appropriation of a new imperial idiom derived from Byzantine prototypes. With the rise of the Abbasids, Persian concepts of city planning were added to develop a mature urban model, which were adopted across the Islamic world by their governors and political rivals. Amira K. Bennison (2008), *The Great Caliphs*, London, 54-93.

which usually accompany this imagery’, Behrens-Abouseif continues, it delivers the wish of ‘glory, happiness, prosperity, wealth, excellence, victory, authority, power, longevity, and so on. Princely imagery conveyed the message, May you live like a king!’⁵²⁵ When utilitarian objects bear this motif, it is generally represented in a fairly plain way. When the motif was dispersed to a wider variety of objects of lesser quality and low craftsmanship, it went through the process of what Hillenbrand termed as “some degree of vulgarisation.”⁵²⁶

For its caricatural portrayal and its near farcical meaning, the motif of bird in attack occurring on the 15th-century Joseon buncheong ware can be regarded as a final destination for the process of vulgarisation applied to the centuries-old hunting theme. In Joseon society, this decorative idiom managed to survive into the early phase of the dynasty, when powerful traces of the legacy of the Mongol Empire still lingered. Through the far-reaching political influence of the Empire, alien cultural elements were able to travel across different regions of Eurasia and reach the eastern end of the continent. The Muslim population could migrate and settle in the Korean peninsula during this period, a testament to the fluid culture until the early Joseon period. Why, then, did this motif fail to survive as part of the Korean decorative repertoire? The failure of cultural integration of this visual theme will disclose the irreconcilable difference between Neo-Confucian Joseon and Islamic cultures.

3. Cultural context of the visual idiom of ‘a bird in attack’

3.1. A visual idiom of shared culture among Eurasian princes

In medieval society, the upper echelon of any society, who held power and resource, shared certain cultural aspects beyond the boundary of their geographical location, religious affiliation, and cultural background. As Grabar stated,

For in a much wider sense the art of the princes in the early Middle Ages – and perhaps at all times – was not tied to any single culture but belonged to a fraternity of princes and transcended cultural barriers, at least in the vast world from the Atlantic to India and the Pamirs ... Borrowings from one political entity or another, or from the past of any of these entities, were as frequent as they were normal.⁵²⁷

The traditional image of the princely cycle, with hunting in particular, was such a common cultural element, widely adopted by the upper strata of the society across the region. It was an activity which

⁵²⁵ Doris Behrens-Abouseif (1999), *Beauty in Arabic Culture*, Princeton, 138.

⁵²⁶ Robert Hillenbrand (2006), “The Islamic Re-working of the Sasanian Heritage: Two Case Studies”, Patricia L. Baker and Barbara Brend (eds.), *Sifting Sands, Reading Signs: Studies in Honour of Professor Géza Fehérvári*, London, 215-225, 217.

⁵²⁷ Oleg Grabar (1973), *The Formation of Islamic Art*, New Haven, 177-178.

symbolised regal life of medieval princes, and grew to be a popular visual idiom in all areas of art. The visual vocabulary of the bird in hunting scenes appears on monuments and objects from majestic luxury items to common vessels of ordinary households.

Such cultural attitude of hunting as a royal pastime was shared across the whole of Eurasia until the time of the Mongol empire. As an essential item for hunting and falconry, pacific gyrfalcons from East Asia, known as *hedongcheong* (*haidongqing* in Chinese, literally meaning ‘blue bird from east of the sea’) in East Asia and *sunqur* in Iran, was highly esteemed as a royal gift among the princes of Eurasia. The stables of the Ilkanid ruler, Oljeitu (1280-1316) of the Ilkhanid dynasty contained ‘both ‘Frankish’ gyrfalcons from the North Atlantic and ‘Chinese’ gyrfalcons from the North Pacific.’⁵²⁸

Until the early Ming dynasty, the Sinosphere continued to share hunting as a common pastime for the rulers of Eurasia, and it adheres to martial prowess. ‘Ancestral Instructions’ of 1373 proclaimed by the Hongwu Emperor, the founder of the Ming dynasty, specifies that the imperial princes were to schedule annual hunting expeditions combined with military maneuvers.⁵²⁹ And just as his predecessor of the Yuan dynasty, Emperor Yongle (1403-25) offered diplomatic gifts to the Islamic rulers. He presented Shah Rukh’s embassy from the Timurid court in China, 1419-21, with gyrfalcons on several occasions.⁵³⁰

The appetite for falconry and hunting was no exception to the rulers of the Goryeo dynasty in Korea. The theme of hunting with attacking birds can be found on small accessories from the mid Goryeo period. Some of these accessories bear the motif of a small nimble-looking bird of prey attacking much larger waterfowl (fig.6-26). The appearance of such decorative motifs is attributed to the rise of northern nomadic states in China from the Liao to the Yuan dynasties. Jade ornaments currently on display in the NMK, Seoul, show its similarity with the objects of contemporary northern China in its layout of motif and use of jade as material.

Currently in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the belt slides of the Liao or Jin dynasty, made from translucent white nephrite (fig.6-27), show usage of material and themes identical to Goryeo accessories. The openwork centre of the piece depicts the moment when a goose holding a lotus in its beak is being aimed at by a small but fearless falcon. Like other parts of Eurasia, gyrfalcons were coveted among the rulers and elites throughout East Asia. This specific iconography of the bird and the general mark-up of the design indicate that the belt slide may have been made for a spring rite by the Khitan Liao and the Jurchen Jin hunting for goose or swan.⁵³¹

⁵²⁸ Thomas T. Allsen (2006), *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, Philadelphia, 252.

⁵²⁹ Thomas T. Allsen (2006), 214.

⁵³⁰ Thomas T. Allsen (2006), 252.

By the time of the Yuan dynasty, the attacking bird motif became more ferocious in its depiction. An ornamental plaque made of the same material of nephrite, now in the same museum as the above object shows the recurrent motif of the bird in hunting in northern China in its decoration. A small fierce falcon is now pecking at the head of a swan, while the other swan flies over (fig.6-28).

As a well-known supplier of the pacific gyrfalcon, the Goryeo court included trained falcons as a regular tribute item to China for a long time. Increased demand during the Mongol period led to the establishment of a specialised government office known as the *Eungbang* (Office of Falconry) to take charge of breeding gyrfalcon and of hunting.⁵³² The tradition of Goryeo kings enjoying the royal pastime of hunting had carried over at least until the early Joseon period. King Taejong (1400-1418) of Joseon was especially renowned for his passion for hunting and horse-riding, and for his outstanding military skills.⁵³³ He often brought his studious son, King Sejong, on hunting trips and falconry practice despite the opposition from Confucian literati.

3.2. Change in visual representation of power in medieval East Asia

3.2.1. A shared visual idiom of the nomadic interlude

Although it became an important state event and popular artistic subject matter during the period between the Liao and the Yuan, hunting had not been a popular pastime for the Chinese gentry after the Tang dynasty.⁵³⁴ The large use of this theme in belt decorations attests to the fact that these

⁵³¹ There were two hunting events in the yearly cycle of the Liao, Jin and Yuan dynasties in northern China- the spring goose hunt (*chunshui*, literally ‘spring water’) and the autumn deer hunt (*qiushan*, literally ‘autumn mountain’). As important state activities, both hunts were attended by the emperor himself, and officials were required to wear special clothing and other personal accoutrements according to these events. The materials used for the belt slides were determined by the rank of the wearer, as jade and gold were worn by senior officials, while the same themes in less valuable materials were worn by those of lower rank. Wen Fong, and James C. Y. Watt (eds.)(1996), *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, New York, 59-60.

⁵³² Having been installed in the first year of King Chungryeol (1275) under the instruction of the Mongol Yuan court, *Eungbang* [Office of gyrfalcon] continued to exist until the reign of King Sukjong of the Joseon dynasty (1715). It drew continuous criticisms from Korean officials and commoners alike from the initial stage, and abolished several times.

⁵³³ Several articles in the *Annals of Taejong* record that the king’s fondness of hunting irritated the Confucian principles of the Joseon literati, who continued to remind King Taejong that hunting did not comply with the Confucian ideal of a benevolent king. In 1403, Lee Gwan (d.1418), an Inspector (*Jangnyeong*) at the government office of Censorate (*Saheonbu*), for example, had raised the appeal to the king to restraint the hunt, which subsequently raised a court debate on the status and function of hunting in Confucian rites.(1st day of October in the 3rd year of the Taejong reign, *Annals of Taejong*)

⁵³⁴ Maxwell K. Hearn (1996), “Reunification and Revival”, Wen Fong, and James C. Y. Watt (eds.)(1996), 269-298; Even in the Tang period, none of Chinese Emperors was represented in the manner of Persiante kingship. Although some of Chinese emperors are well-known for their fondness of outdoor activities and martial prowess, Tang emperors was never depicted as chasing animals on horseback with swords and arrows in public image. There are, however, objects of various shapes bearing the motif of hunters on horseback. For the 7th-century silver stem cup with hunting scenes (h.7.4cm, dia 6.3cm), see Li Jian (ed.)(2003), *The Glory of the Silk Road*:

hunting motifs were not part of traditional Chinese visual expressions. Although jade belts were a sign of status worn by members of the imperial family and high-ranking individuals from the Tang to the Ming dynasty, belts themselves were not indigenous to Han Chinese culture. They were first introduced to China from Central Asia in the Western Jin period (265-317) as in the shape of metal pieces attached to leather or fabric.⁵³⁵ In the Metropolitan jade belt, the association of Central Asian culture is more heightened by the borders decorated with a series of pearl motifs, a design that can be traced back to Tang-dynasty metalwork and ultimately to the art of western Central Asia and Persia.

While the image of falcons preying after waterfowls becomes popular between the Liao and Yuan period, the visual theme of the hunt – in particular the moment of hunting as a visual idiom – went out of fashion by the time of the Ming dynasty. Images of geese or of swans with lotus continued to decorate small jade accessories but the falcon is missing from the later works. Once the country was again reclaimed by the Han Chinese, ritual hunts were no longer held in the Sinosphere. Its symbolic connotation, with visual appeal of the imagery, was lost by the time of Ming's consolidation of powers in East Asia during the mid-15th century.

The foreignness of the visual theme of royal hunting is best illustrated in the famous painting, *Kublai Khan Hunting* (c.1280) by court painter Liu Guandao (active 1279-1300) (fig.6-29a). It depicts the emperor, his female consort and a small party of hunting companion in a stately hunt. Liu Guando's position in the Imperial Wardrobe Service allows for the remarkably meticulous details of costume and personal accoutrement in this painting. The detailed examination of the figures reveals a specific dress code and decorations for the occasion of the Imperial hunting event (fig.6-29b). The non-Han Chinese aspects are accentuated by the presence of the female consort on horseback at an outdoor event and non-Chinese companions, together with the subject matter of hunting. Their facial features seem to represent the entire spectrum of peoples absorbed within the Mongol empire.⁵³⁶

For all the cultural sharing of power groups, certain aspects were unfamiliar and foreign to East Asia, due to different cultural expectations. In this region, Persian statecraft and its kingly image may have been known by reputation but did not assume the same value. China and its neighbouring countries never adopted the Persian-Sasanid tradition, which affected other parts of Eurasia and completely transformed the Islamic dominion in the Abbasid realm of the 8th and 9th centuries. The visual and decorative idiom of hunting was able to retain its status as a vital artistic element in the medieval period.

Art from Ancient China, 196, fig.105 ; The cup was unearthed in 1963 in Shapo, Xi'an, the capital of the Tang dynasty.

⁵³⁵ Denise P. Leidy, Wai-fong Anita Siu, and James C. Y. Watt (1997), *Chinese Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 55(1).

⁵³⁶ Maxwell K. Hearn (1996), 269.

On the other hand, the idea of the ruler engaging in hunting and physical combat was not an ideal image of a prince in the Sinosphere. After the Tang dynasty, the act of hunting came to signify the barbarian activities of savage nomads, in contrast to ‘civilized’ Chinese cultural values. It was only during the period between the 10th and 14th century, the period we now call as the Nomadic Interlude, that the image of hunting represented by bird in attack gained prestige and popularity, as in the other parts of Eurasia.

Viewed from this perspective, *Kublai Khan Hunting* by Liu Guando can be read as a visual compromise of the two cultures of Han Chinese and nomadic Mongols with contrasting value. The Mongols brought their own ideas and imagery of political legitimacy, but were soon faced with the need to conform, at least in appearance, to the image of the ruler acceptable to their subjects.⁵³⁷ Despite being placed in the context of a hunting ground, the Khan himself is not portrayed as an actual hunter on horseback with a bow and arrows. He is shown as contented to being simply on horseback in fine, exotic costumes, surrounded by his hunting companions.

When the Yuan rulers unified China, they incorporated the collection of the Southern Song dynasty, and emulated the Chinese imperial portraits for the artistic and political image of dynastic power.⁵³⁸ Here, Kublai Khan himself is depicted less closely to the image of a fearless Mongol warrior on their ruthless military campaigns across the continent as described in literary texts than to a traditional image of a Chinese ruler – that of a benevolent sage king (*sheng* in Chinese, meaning ‘sage’, ‘sageliness’).⁵³⁹ Unlike other parts of Eurasia, hunting or martial superiority had never been a quality of the ideal king of the Sinocentric sphere. Instead, the long tradition of Confucian ideology considered the offering of sacrifice as a privilege par excellence for the king.⁵⁴⁰

3.2.2. Incompatibility of Islamic culture in Confucian Joseon

⁵³⁷ Compared to the Mongols’ adaptation of Chinese culture, the Mongol khans in Iran embraced Persian cultural norms. They appropriated and developed ancient Iranian models of rule as ‘perceived through the filter of the Persian ‘national epic’, the eleventh-century poem *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), and as advocated in the *Mirrors for Princes*’, and promoted the image of rulership in its heroic actions of warfare and hunting. Charles Melville (2012), “Every Inch a King: Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds”, 1-22, Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville (eds.)(2012), *Every Inch a King : Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, Leiden, 15-16.

⁵³⁸ Anning Jing, “The Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi by Anige (1245–1306), a Nepali Artist at the Yuan Court”, *Artibus Asiae* 54 (1/2):74; For the changing aspect of Chinese kingship, refer to Dora C. Y. Ching (2011), *Icons of Rulership : Imperial Portraiture during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644)*, Princeton University, PhD Thesis.

⁵³⁹ Julia Ching (1997), “Son of Heaven: sacral kingship in ancient China”, *T’oung Pao* , 83 : 3-41, 17-18.

⁵⁴⁰ Julia Ching (1997), 29; The ancient story of the Nine Cauldrons during Shang and early Zhou times was symbols of the all-important ritual that gave their owners access to ancestors and to political authority. Kwang-chih Chang (1983), *Art, Myth, and Ritual: the Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, Cambridge, MA. , 97-101.

Since the Unified Silla period, Korean kingdoms have been deeply influenced by political philosophy of dominant Chinese dynasties of their times, eagerly adopting the image of kingship from their powerful neighbour.⁵⁴¹ The dynastic change from Yuan to Ming brought the fundamental form of Confucianism to the social restructuring of Joseon society. In an attempt to distance itself from anything reminding them of the Mongol hegemony in the peninsula, the same appellation, “His Sagely Majesty” (*Seong-sang*, *sheng shang* in Chinese), was re-adopted and continued to be in use in Joseon Korea as in Ming China.⁵⁴²

This cultural orientation hardly gave a visual impetus to Korean artisans and craftsmen to produce the flamboyant image of a King engaging in spirited hunting. In contrast to contemporary Islamic cultures where such images were highly desirable and commonly available, the Joseon cultural context gave a negative interpretative framework to the visual image of a prince chasing after quarries. The scholarly inclination of the dynasty is most likely to be the main reason for the visual idiom of hunting in any expression being rarely produced in Korean art and material culture.

In medieval Korean art, there is only one surviving painting that depicts figures engaged in hunting⁵⁴³ - *Cheonsan Daeryeop Do* [A Hunt in the Mountains of Heaven] attributed to King Gongmin (1351-1374) of Goryeo (fig.6-30). Interestingly enough, whilst the painting shows hunters on horseback dynamically chasing animals, all the figures are depicted with the two most essential cultural signifiers of nomadic tribes - *byeon-bal* (‘braided hair’ down the back) and ‘*hobok* (nomadic costume). They only highlight the ‘otherness’ of this hunting scene. Historically, Goryeo kings took Mongol names, adopted Mongol customs and regularly held hunting excursions, often together with their Mongol consorts on horseback at their side while they were under the Mongol suzerainty. However, even at that time, the response from Goryeo officials and society in general was severely critical of this royal pastime.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴¹ Since Fairbank’s influential book (1968), *The Chinese World Order*, the higher cultures of East Asia (China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam) are thought as derived from the civilization of ancient North China and shaped over the millennia by Confucian ethical concepts and traditions of centralized empire. Scholars no longer take this vision of the Sinic world order for granted. For the review of the traditional Sino-centric view; Shih Chih-yu (2013), “Sinic World Order Revisited: Choosing Sites of Self-Discovery in Contemporary East Asia”, Arlene B. Tickner and David L. Blaney (eds.), *Claiming the International*, New York, 98-117.

⁵⁴² Lord (*Sang* 上, *Shang* in Chinese) or Master Lord (*Ju-sang* , 主上, *zhu shang* in Chinese) is the other way of royal appellations in Chinese and Korean kingdoms until the last dynasties. Shin Myeong-ho (2002), [*Rituals and Life of the Korean Royal Family : Palace Culture*], Seoul.

⁵⁴³ The original shape of the painting is currently unknown. Three fragmentary pieces of silk, two in the NMK and the other one in Kyujanggak, Seoul National University, show similar designs of hunters on horseback chasing animals. The very dilapidated state of these pieces makes it difficult to guess the style and its original source.

⁵⁴⁴ *Goryeo-sa* records many incidents of the sufferings and hardships commoners had to bear due to royal hunting events. In one article, Jang Sun-ryong, a favourite Muslim official naturalised to Goryeo, criticised King Chungryeol for his indulgence in hunting, ‘What merit would the king have when he enjoys hunting this much, although he believes in Buddhism?’ Book 123, ‘Biographies’, vol. 36, ‘Favourite Subjects’, *Goryeo-sa*

During the Joseon dynasty, attitudes towards hunting and general martial activities changed rapidly, corresponding to the cultural shift that occurred in neighbouring Ming China. After the 15th century, both nations developed more reservations about hunting. In Ming China, the battue was still used to train troops in accordance to the traditions of the Tang and Song, but hunting was depreciated by Chinese scholar-officials.⁵⁴⁵ By the time of the Ming Emperor Xuande (1426–35), the emperors were not viewed as ‘martial heroes’, but epitomised the ‘solemnity and ceremony’ of the institution,⁵⁴⁶ reflecting changing attitudes towards hunting and martial arts.

Likewise, in Joseon, the Military Training (*Gangmu*), which had taken place during the change of season in the early period, often was cancelled in the later period of the dynasty. The frequency of call for training itself was reduced significantly. Even when rulers of Ming and Joseon engaged in martial activities including royal hunting, these were always presented in the guise of being acted ‘for the people’.⁵⁴⁷ In Han Chinese culture, the falcon was not related to hunting. A symbol of physical power and fearlessness of rulers in other parts of Eurasia, this bird of prey in China has long represented justice, righteousness, and strength, specifically associated with the Imperial Censorate, a supervisory agency for required moral courage and uprightness checking administrators at every level.⁵⁴⁸ In early 16th-century Joseon painting, the literati-painter Yi Am (1507-1566) presented a heroic falcon perching on a finely decorated stand (fig.6-31). Following the theme and artistic style of the Song (960-1127) painting of the bird, the falcon represents an embodiment of the long-standing Sinospherical symbol of Confucian scholar-official with moral integrity.⁵⁴⁹

The Confucian transformation of Joseon Korea established a firm ideological background and symbolic framework which stimulated a cultural aversion to hunting and martial prowess. These activities were not deemed worthy of visual presentation for kings and the upper echelons of the society. With the rapid decline of the inter-cultural atmosphere that existed under the Goryeo, Joseon society did not offer a frame of cultural reference for this foreign motif to be accepted and integrated in its material culture. The closed, homogenous traits of Joseon society eventually excluded the transferability and compatibility in Korean culture from this decorative idiom.

⁵⁴⁵ Thomas T. Allsen (2006), 214.

⁵⁴⁶ Wang Zhenghua (1998), *Material Culture and Emperors: the Shaping of Imperial Roles at the Court of Xuanzong (r. 1426-35)*, Yale University, PhD Thesis, 213.

⁵⁴⁷ David M. Robinson (2013), *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court*, Cambridge, MA, 61.

⁵⁴⁸ Wu Tung (1997), *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1000 Years of Chinese Painting*, Boston, 219.

⁵⁴⁹ Sun-pyo Hong and Chin-Sung Chang, “Peace under Heaven: Confucianism and Painting in Early Joseon Korea”, Soyoung Lee, JaHyun Kim Haboush, Sunpyo Hong, Chin-Sung Chang (2009), *Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400-1600*, New York, 65-90, 86; O Da-yeon (2012), “[Yi Am's Falcon on a Perch: The Tradition and Symbolic Visualization]”, *Misulsawa sigak munhwa*, 136-169.

Closing remark

When they survived the long-distance travel to reach the Korean peninsula, not every Islamic visual idiom went through same reception or adaptation in medieval Korea. Among all Islamic visual repertoires travelling to Joseon Korea, the motif of bird in attack seems to be the only one to have gained temporary popularity in the early Joseon period when the society was going through its fundamental neo-Confucian transformation. At some point, the image of the bird in attack enjoyed favourable status as a visual idiom, but its popularity was short-lived, with only a rare occurrence in ceramics of a much later period.

Newly armed with the Sino-centric ideology, Joseon artistic conventions stripped the original, auspicious meanings and essential visual appendage from this image with time. Having been a common visual language of power and splendour in Islamic cultural expression, the bird in attack tends to serve merely a decorative function for Korean viewers. It becomes an example of an alien motif being adopted without local understanding of its original context. Once devoid of this aura or symbolical context, only the visuality of the image of the bird in attack remained. Through this process, it lost its powerful appeal. The eventual extinction of this motif from the Korean material-cultural repertoire suggests that any cultural expression, however powerful, will not be able to enjoy a long tenure in the material culture of its receiving society if it cannot find the commensurability in a symbolical narrative of that culture.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research has been to approach a more complex reality of medieval Korean society by reconstructing Korean-Muslim encounters through the literary and material-cultural evidences of the medieval period. Korea's geographical location at the far end of the eastern part of Eurasia, between two big powers - China on the continent and Japan at its seaside - has misled scholars to assume that the peninsula was always bound to the East Asian cultural sphere. Its foreign relationship was mainly understood as relating to Han-China and Chinese culture only, with occasional references to Japan. Within this framework, the Confucian system was adopted and it operated in such diverse aspects of the Korean peninsula as the political, social, and ethical arena, while Buddhism served a parallel role in the religious and cultural sector. The academic journey to find international connections beyond this sphere has usually gone as far as the northern nomad groups in the northeastern Asian continent at the farthest. The turbulent political situations of the peninsula in the modern period have hardly favoured the development of a wider view seeing its history from diverse angles. Against this historical backdrop, few people were as perceptive as to find Islamic cultural elements or influence in this easternmost corner of the Eurasian continent.

Until the Joseon dynasty was firmly established in the 15th century, all the kingdoms in the peninsula, whether out of their own choice or not, were always actively involved in dynamic international trade and communication with other parts of Eurasia as well as with the East Asian cultural sphere. They openly embraced foreign immigrants, some of whom played significant roles in shaping Korean history and culture. Ancient material culture from Korean kingdoms attests to long-distance trade and contacts with the Western Regions in a diverse range of objects from royal crowns to Buddhist offerings. Into this historical context, the Muslims came with their religion and distinctive culture to the peninsula from the late Silla period.

This thesis has presented a series of Korean interactions with Islamic artistic traditions as shown on Korean decorative or practical arts from the early stage towards a complex –often critical– process of transmission until the 14th to 15th centuries. This cultural dialogue involved stylistic appropriation, aesthetic appreciation, and finally semantic transformation. The first two themes focused on decorative motifs and objects which moved from Islamic cultures to Korea. The second issue involved the meaning of these items both in their original source and in a translated context, proving the semantic shift of imported Islamic art instigated by cultural contacts of the medieval Korean society. Both synchronic and diachronic approaches were used to identify Korean contacts with Islamic arts and the subsequent transformation. In addition to these themes, technological transmissions between Islamic Iran and Silla in their early stage were also discussed together with relevant examples.

With the medieval Islamic realm ever-increasing, the Muslim seafarer's nautical skills were combined with their acumen for supra-regional, cross-cultural long-distance trade, culminating in their presence in maritime connections. A chapter of Part I have been devoted to the possible direct contact between Silla and Islamic Iran through maritime connections, leading to be materialised in to the mutual development of a new metalworking technology of 'white bronze'. At the time when the maritime routes grew the value of international commercial connection, the Muslim traders intensified transcultural trade and commerce along the overland routes, now known as the Silk Roads. The inland states of Inner Asia, which the famous trading routes penetrated, shared certain material cultural elements due to their interconnectedness. As I have suggested, one representative of the International Inner Asian style, the visual vocabulary of 'two birds with their neck intertwined' spread throughout the continent, covering the Islamic Mediterranean to the west as far as to the Korean peninsula to the east end. The journey of this seemingly minor motif revealed an interesting picture of medieval Inner Asia.

Much of documentary evidence has been brought to light to confirm the presence of Muslims and their roles in the Goryeo period of Korean history. The recent discovery of the tombstone of Ramadan (1312-1349), a Korean Muslim in the Goryeo dynasty, has most dramatically substantiated the strong ties between the Islamic world and Korea. I have shown that Muslim residents left their impact and influence on Korean art, culture, and life. From the late Goryeo period to the early Joseon, Korean artefacts disclose a specific preference for geometric decoration with arabesque. Korean exposure to the Islamic use of basins for ritual ablutions led to a profound change in the use of basins in medieval Korea- a semantic shift from an ordinary item that became an intrinsic part of the ritual paraphernalia in Confucian rites, wedding ceremonies, and burials.

The final case study returned to the decorative idiom of the 'bird in attack', another visual element of medieval Islamic art transmitted to late medieval Korea. Together with the intertwined bird motif, the image of a bird attacking its prey was part of the age-old repertoire of the 'princely cycle' in medieval Islamic arts. These two motifs were worth a special mention because they demonstrate the following points: Firstly, the study of these motifs reinforces the argument addressed in the previous chapters, detecting the change of Korean material culture both synchronically and diachronically. The two bird motifs show what they transformed during their journey across the wide range of geographical spaces. Further to this synchronic adjustment, they acquired different meanings diachronically throughout the centuries within a Korean cultural context. Secondly, they endorsed the importance of non-Chinese northern nomadic states of the medieval period as agents of intercultural movement. They acted as conduits of transmission for these motifs to medieval Korea. Most importantly, these visual vocabularies were examples showing a notable mode of reception of Islamic artistic elements in medieval Korea. In the pan-Buddhist world of medieval East Asia, imported goods from the west were taken as being associated with Buddhism, as the religion itself is the most

significant importation from that direction. Islamic artistic elements moved through this historical atmosphere to East Asia and were eagerly received by the non-Islamic Korean society, mainly associated with this legendary place charged with symbolic meanings culturally and religiously. In this respect, the adaptation of Islamic visual vocabularies can be described as an 'unintentional' or 'accidental' acceptance.

This naïvely inclusive attitude was, however, discarded in the early 15th century. The change in attitudes towards Islamic cultural presence occurred as Joseon literati became more conscious of their 'Korean' identity; once their cultural unity was formulated, the 'otherness' of Islam and Islamic cultural expressions were seen as disturbing the 'Korean' identity. As a result, an adverse attitude toward its cultural elements came to the fore.

I have observed that Islamic artistic elements were accepted and widely circulated only in an ornamental mode in Confucian Joseon society where the cultural framework became drastically different from the previous, more fluid form. While these motifs were comprised of a universal visual repertoire of medieval Islamic culture, the meaning and specific association of these motifs could not be sustained when the underlying source culture was not maintained. To survive in an alien culture, they either had to undergo semantic transformations, or they simply died out.

A major difficulty in tracing back the Islamic cultural presence in medieval Korea lies in the fact that, unlike any other cultures connected to the Islamic world, no Islamic cultural monuments or its objects bearing signatures or backed by powerful patronage have survived. Present-day Korea does not offer grand mosques, Quranic texts with beautiful illuminations, or Islamic objects finely decorated with Arabic or Persian inscriptions. This absence is caused by the absence of a commensurable cultural system that permits such visual expressions at first and cherishes them long after individual sponsors or regimes have gone. When Muslims were forced to assimilate themselves into Korean ways of life in the early period of the Joseon dynasty, distinctive markers of Islamic material culture disappeared concomitantly with the dissolution of their discernible religious and cultural life style. More precisely, as proved by the Joseon-period roof tile decorated with Persian script, the homogenous non-Islamic society surrounded by non-Islamic neighbouring countries could not afford to retain the memory of Islamic cultural expressions, which merged fully into the local society. Islamic cultural signifiers could not survive some six-hundred years of negligence and absence of Muslim identities within a completely non-Islamic social context.

The arguments of my thesis, therefore, were based on the premise that the disappearance of conspicuous cultural expressions of monumental scale does not necessarily mean the concurrent disappearance of all other cultural signifiers. Although magnificent monuments and stunning objects are certain signs of the existence of Islamic art, they consist of only one category of the multifarious expressions of Islamic material culture. The art historical approach, often focusing on the finest

objects of the period, tends to overlook the fact that culture of any type is made up of various components including ‘ordinary’ elements.

The ‘ordinariness’ of art may be the most noticeable feature of Islamic art in comparison with other types of art, including Christian or Buddhist ones. Apart from their reluctance of figural representation, Islamic objects bear no particular symbols of religious or ideological features, thereby attracting less suspicion and resistance from non-Islamic consumers. The finest craftsmanship of Islamic arts is usually found in utility items of everyday life, such as basins, ewers, cups, pots and others. These ordinary objects share common visual idioms with royal artefacts, at a lower accomplishment and embellishment. A basin is used in everyday circumstances for cleansing, greetings and *wudu* by ordinary people of Islamic lands, and at the same time it can become a treasure to a foreign royalty of non-Islamic culture. Christian establishments holding many items of Islamic art demonstrate the easy transferability of Islamic art. In this respect, I tended to give my focus on ordinary objects, marginalized and neglected visual vocabularies in Korean material culture in order to reach the Islamic past on the peninsula.

As an attempt to regain the voice for a hitherto untold story, this thesis has revived a neglected aspect of medieval Korean history by going beyond the traditional confines of the Sinic world to embrace more diverse stories of a variety of people. In doing so, it has challenged the conventional approach seeing Korean society with its art history as a continuum of an unequivocal ideology with a homogenous ethnic group and culture. Instead, this research found an unexpected participation of Islamic culture in the medieval Korean material-cultural scene providing a variety of visual vocabularies to Korean art and an impetus to develop the metalworking technique of *yugi*, which still enjoys popularity among Koreans nowadays.

My thesis started with a definition of ‘Islamic art’ as covering the whole range of the medieval Islamic world. The reason for assuming this particular definition was that the material evidence I have researched is all related to portable objects. These objects could travel from any part of the Islamic world to the Korean peninsula as personal belongings, souvenirs, gifts or others.

In spite of the wide dispersal of portable objects, I have given support to the Iranian cultural region as a possible candidate for the main zone of contact with Korea. This has been stated clearly in the section on technological transmission. The visual vocabulary of birds with their neck intertwined strongly suggested Turkic involvement for its transmission during the medieval period. This visual idiom appeared in the Islamic material culture in tandem with Turkic ascendancy, and was more prominent in Iran and Anatolia of the Seljuk period. Of the whole regions of the medieval Islamic world, I argued that the Turkic-Iranian cultural zone held most of the cultural contacts and interaction with the Korean kingdoms. This observation agrees with existing scholarship. Most of the mosques in China, a significant example of Islamic architectural expression in the East Asian cultural region,

reveal a strong visual affinity to the ones in Persianate Islam, with their iwans and arches. Interestingly enough, the motif of the intertwined birds had lost the visual appeal in the Islamic world by the early 14th century while it has enriched Korean material culture until today by adjusting its symbolic meaning in accordance with local cultural demand.

Based on the findings of this thesis, I will further pursue the subject of cultural dialogue between the Islamic lands and East Asia with a special focus on three topics: 1) the relationship between the emergence of white bronzes and of tin-glazed ceramics in the early phase of Islam; 2) locating the transmission route of another Inner Asian style, the zigzag pattern, and its accommodation in each local culture; and 3) the change of chromatic symbolism that happened in East Asia and in the Islamic lands in tandem during the early medieval period and its historical background.

Together with the study covering wider regions, research will continue on the Islamic cultural legacy in Korea. The thesis has discussed the late Goryeo society when it underwent its complex and overall social change through being exposed to the multi-cultural trends of the Mongol Empire. An in-depth study of this social change in relation to the Islamic cultural influx could complement the present research. The introduction of certain Islamic objects into the Goryeo ceramic repertoire, for example, corresponded to the change of dietary customs that occurred in Goryeo society. By investigating this relationship we could revive the multi-cultural Goryeo society where the actual objects were demanded and served. Additional research on certain Buddhist monuments bearing Islamic decorative idioms would also highlight the fluidity of the medieval Korean society and its ecumenical approach.

The possible survival of an Islamic material culture during the early Joseon period needs to be re-assessed with a closer scrutiny of historical documents. Apart from the material culture described in the thesis, the period saw many other aspects of life that were affected by local Muslims and by contacts with Islamic cultures, widely available at that time. As mentioned in the main text, a newly formularized calendric system of the period discloses Joseon literati's awareness of medieval Islamic astronomical learning and calendric schemes. Likewise, their cartographical notions and extended pharmaceutical knowledge reflect the level of understanding by Joseon intellectuals, of Islamic culture. By combining material-cultural evidence with other aspects of societal changes, we will be able to find a well-rounded view on Islamic influence on early Joseon society beyond the limit defined by the Confucian literati in their official histories.

More research could aim at the assimilation process of the descendants of the Muslims. The *Annals of the Joseon dynasty* contain several entries on some of them, who served the dynasty in various posts of both civilian and military capacities, but the records about them virtually dried out by the end of the first half of the dynasty. How did they survive and in what capacity did they place themselves in society? I suspect that their dispersal contributed to the unprecedented cultural

effluence of the early Joseon period, and will direct my future work to find a link with the art-historical investigation through more fieldwork.

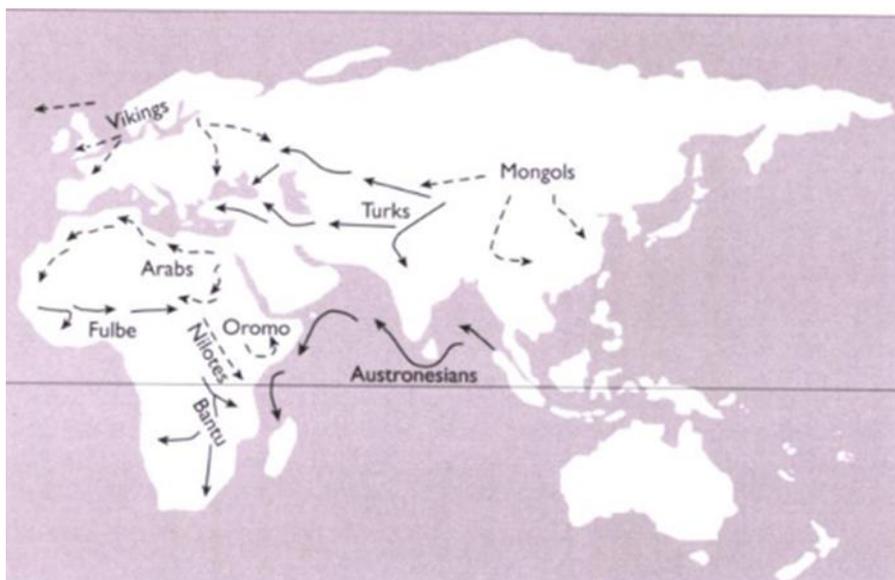
Appendices

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I. Korean contact with the ‘Western Regions’ in pre-Islamic period

This part presents pre-Islamic connections of Korean art. It aims to demonstrate two points - the continuous exposure of Korea to the ‘Western Regions’ and the sustainability of the traditional trading routes, regardless of change of players on either end of the path and in-between. The long-haul cross-cultural communications had continued far before Islamic traders came on the scene, who brought their own arts and material culture along the trading routes to the Korean peninsula in later periods. Numerous researches have made on non-East Asian material cultures found on Korean peninsula in ancient period. Amongst them, this part focuses on some selective material cultural findings –a decorative motif, glassware and rhyton – along with the famous pictorial representation of Korean envoys in present-day Uzbekistan. Further to it, the presence of foreigners –probably Iranians or Central Asians – on the Korean peninsula will be discussed.

Introduction



Map 0-1) Old World migration, 500-1400 CE

In his approach to world history, Patrick Manning illustrates migratory paths of people from 500 to 1400 CE, ‘on horseback, on foot, and by boat’ (map 0-1).¹ His broad and wide net does not cover the easternmost part of the Old World, as Korea, along with Japan, looks as if slipping through the international network and was more or less untouched by any of the interregional criss-cross movements. This is not at all an exceptional view of Korea and its history. It reflects an enduring

¹ Patrick Manning (2005), *Migration in World History* (Themes in World History), New York, 93; map: figure 6.1, 94.

effect of the image of the ‘Hermit Kingdom’ or ‘the Land of the Morning Calm’ in public imagination.² Even the Goryeo dynasty, although it took the dynamic part of the Mongol Empire of the 13th and 14th centuries, has never been properly included in the general survey of world history.

Against this misunderstanding, archaeological evidence have established the connections between peoples of Korea and neighbouring nomads in Manchuria and Mongolia, and even farther to Siberia was extant since the Neolithic period (beginning around 6000 BCE).³ In the greater scheme of his anthropological standpoint, K.C. Chang, the renowned Chinese archaeologist, located Korea as a part of the vast ‘Maya-China cultural continuum’ along with all the rest of East Asia. According to Chang, this cultural continuum goes back to long before the Mayan civilisation (2000 BCE -900 CE) or Shang China (1600 -1050 BCE) existed.⁴ While people may not have travelled, their knowledge and material culture have crossed borders between agrarian and nomadic societies or any seemingly conflicting territories.⁵ The ancient kingdoms in the Korean peninsula had been already involved in cross-cultural communication and trade with the major players of the pre-Islamic period, long before Muslim traders and merchants inherited centuries-old routes from the 7th to 8th century.

1. Korean connection to the Old World along the Silk Roads

Before Islam began to replace pre-existing cultures and religion, the regions west of China, including present-day Xinjiang, were known under the generic term, ‘the Western Regions’ in East Asian historical records. It is well-known that the written history of the famous Silk Roads begins with the daring explorations of Zhang Qian in China, who was sent by Emperor Wu of Han (140-87 BCE) to the Western Regions to seek an alliance with the Yuezhi (Tokharians) against the Xiongnu. However, the whole civilizations of Eurasia had already been linked through the transcontinental connections for much of pre-historic period. With ‘comparative suddenness’ between about 200 BCE and the

² These two names have been most popular sobriquets to denote Korea since the late 19th century, when Joseon (1392 – 1897/1910) took a rigid closed-door policy when contacted and forced by the Western nations. The earliest examples of these appellations can be found in William Elliot Griffis (1882), *Corea, the Hermit Nation*, New York and Percival Lowell (1886), *Chosön: the Land of the Morning Calm. A Sketch of Korea*, Boston.

³ Lee Ki-baik (1984), *A New History of Korea*, Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (trans.), Cambridge, 2-3.

⁴ This term was coined by Kwang-Chih Chang in defiance of the ‘civilisation’ defined by Gordon Child, Renfrew and other Western archaeologists. For his discussion on its meaning see the Epilogue in *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, New Haven, 414-422.

⁵ For the great ideas shared by humans in history, see Peter Watson (2005), *Ideas: A History of Thought and Invention from Fire to Freud*. New York.

beginning of the new millennium, different regions of the world became more regularly connected and sustained long-range trade.⁶

In East Asia, Zhang Qian brought the first concrete information on Dawan or Dayuan (Ferghana), Kanju (Sogdiana), Anxi (Parthia) and others when he returned to the court of Han-China in 126 BCE. Although his efforts to secure allies failed, his remarkably detailed tales of the towns, the agriculture, and other characteristics of those trans-Pamir lands and peoples represented tempting trade opportunities to Wudi.⁷ Wudi's fascination of 'blood-sweating horses' eventually led to Chinese military intervention to the region, and finally control over the trade routes across Central Asia. Within a generation of Zhang Qian's journey, Parthia and Han-China were in diplomatic relations and a regular trade had begun. The first caravan was said to have arrived in 106 BCE, stopping at Daxia (Bactria) on the way.⁸ The rich treasures found in Bagram, an ancient Kushan site in present-day Pakistan, are a showcase of the wealth of the trading connections of the first century. Among the finds are ivory-plated stools of Indian origin, lacquered boxes from Han China, Hellenistic statues of Egyptian origin, and Roman glass from the Mediterranean or the Middle East.⁹ The trade network of Korea expanded along this general trend over time.

This is the reason why, in the midst of dearth of literary documents, many traces of exotic material culture of non-East Asian origin were found on the Korean peninsula. The majority of these objects appeared when the three Korean kingdoms became firmly established. They reveal an undeniable sense of 'internationalism'.¹⁰ To name just two big archaeological findings, more than 60,000 items of burial goods were unearthed from 'Hwangnam daechong [Great burial mound of Hwangdam]', the 4th to 5th-century royal tomb of Silla and many such accessories and vessels suggest trade and cultural contact with West Asia¹¹; similarly, the excavations of the Tomb of King Muryeong (501-523), Baekje, dated around a century later than *Hwangnam daechong*, showed items and

⁶ Philip D. Curtin (1984), "A New Trade Axis: the Mediterranean to China, circa 200 B.C.- A.D. 1000", 90.

⁷ In this regard, Torday has suggested that Zhang's mission was less an official embassy than 'an intelligence mission staffed with expendable personnel'. Laszlo Torday (1997), *Mounted Archers: The Beginnings of Central Asian History*, Durham, 91.

⁸ For Zhang's journey, Sima Qian, *Shi Ji*, 123/63, Gu Jiegan and Xu Wenshan (1936), Beijing, 3 : 677-692; Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian of China. Han Dynasty, Vol.II*, Burton Watson (trans.) (1993), New York, 264-289; Ban Gu, *Qian Han shu: The History of the Former Han dynasty, Vol. 2*, Homer H. Dubs (trans. & annotated)(1944), London, 27-136.

⁹ Fredrik Hiebert and Pierre Cambon (2011), *Afghanistan: Crossroads of the Ancient World*, London, 131-209.

¹⁰ Youngsook Pak (1984), 12-25.

¹¹ National Museum of Korea (2010), [*Golden Splendours: The Royal Tomb of Silla Hwangnam daechong*], Seoul.

materials demonstrating evidence of Korean connections to the regions beyond East Asia.¹² Among such material evidence, Silla gold crowns, mostly from the 5th to early 6th century, have continuously drawn scholarly interest in regards to their origin and cross-cultural network with the regions beyond the Sinosphere.¹³ In their shape, decoration, and their occasional portability, these non-Sinic objects are closely reminiscent of Eurasia nomadic culture, reaching as far as present-day Afghanistan. While dazzling gold crowns epitomise Eurasian connection of ancient Korean arts and culture from the 5th to 6th century, there are many other cases to represent the continuity of inter-regional trade between Korean kingdoms and the Western Regions, irrespective of political, religious, and cultural changes happened in both regions.

1.1. Decorative idioms of Persian origin

Numerous objects of ancient Korea, from architectural remains to personal possessions, were decorated with a variety of motifs of ‘Western’ origin. Typical Persian motifs such as pearl borders, coupled or addorsed birds, sometimes with a tree in between, appeared recurrently on architectural decorations and roof tiles in all of the Korean kingdoms of this period. From the Hwangnyong temple site in Gyeongju, for example, tiny silver plates were found decorated with pearl border and twin birds surrounded with so-called fish-roe motifs by using repoussé technique (fig.0-1).¹⁴

The motif of birds holding jewels, ribbons, or twigs in their beaks was also shown when adorning bronze mirrors and other luxury items, like the elegant set of chess (*Baduk* in Korean, *Weiqi* in Chinese, and *Go* in Japanese) sent by King Uija (641-660) of Baekje to Japan. Now stored in Shosoin, Nara, each of the chess pieces, made either of ivories, black quartz or Korean jade (antigorite), was painted and inlaid with the motif of a bird holding a twig (fig.0-2a). The identical motif appears on bone objects of unidentified function, excavated from the site of Weol-ji (previously known as Anap-ji), a man-made pond of the Silla palace complex of Gyeongju, the capital of Silla (fig.0-2b).

Among the objects associated to the Western regions, some are understood as imported goods from the Western Regions in the form of the finished product. A ceremonial dagger with scabbard of gold and agate, such an example, shows a visual affinity of the style of the Hun Empire (434-454) (fig.0-3). On the other hand, there are artefacts locally made in emulation of exotic prototypes.

¹² Office of Cultural Properties (1973), [*Excavation Site Report of the Tomb of King Muryeong*], Seoul.

¹³ Korean gold crowns were already compared with the Tillya Tepe gold crown excavated in present-day Afghanistan by Youngsook Pak (1988: 45). One of most recent publications on Silla gold crowns, Ham Soon-Seop, “Gold Culture of the Silla kingdom and Maripgan”, Soyoung Lee et al. (2013), 31-68; Lee In-sook “Of Glass and Gold: Silla tombs, the Silk Road, and the Steppes”, *ibid*, 115-132.

¹⁴ Kim Won-yong (1984), “[Ancient Korea and the Western Regions]”, 18.

1.2. Imported goods from the Western Regions: Glassware

A most popular example of imported goods is glassware. It is the most common foreign object discovered in the tombs of high-ranking members of the society or Buddhist sites in the peninsula prior to interaction with Islam. Glass ewers, bowls and cups were discovered in Hwangnam daechong (fig.0-4). A variety of glasswork techniques can be discerned from glass blowing to marvelling, trailing, colouring with lapis lazuli, and facet cutting, all suggesting Mediterranean or Iranian origin.¹⁵ Analysis and cross-cultural comparisons of other glass works found on the peninsula point to their trade interests in maritime routes, leading to the regions of West Asia and Southeast Asia.¹⁶ They attest to the popularity of exotic objects among elite group and their high appreciation of diverse shapes, colours, and decorative schemes.

Most of the glass objects found at Buddhist temple sites or pagodas were sarira reliquaries. They were often used as innermost containers, as the glass was regarded as more valuable than gold and silver. Typical reliquary bottles were tiny, with average height of approximately 5cm. Nearly all glass objects with this function, attributed to the 8th century, have long-necked shapes with green bodies, as shown in a glass bottle was unearthed from a five-storey Pagoda in Wanggung-ri, Iksan and a bottle of the same shape was found in the four-storey brick pagoda at the Songrim Temple, Chilgok. The Wanggung-ri glass bottle is an elegant long-necked green bottle with a gold stopper (fig.0-5a,b), while the Songrim-temple bottle has a ball-shaped dark green glass plug on its top (fig.0-6a).

These glass bottles have high plead-silica ingredients, suggesting their local production in Silla¹⁷ but their shape and colour indicate Silla connections to the Western Regions, probably through China. A bottle of identical shape and colour was discovered in Tang dynasty finds of Sasanian glass, an undecorated emerald-green bottle with slender neck.¹⁸ The long-necked bottle is comparable to perfume bottles used from the late Roman to early Islamic period, as shown on the 3rd- to 7th-century Sasanian glassware found in Gilan province in Iran.¹⁹ The technique is also reminiscent of the same cultural connections. The glass bowl used as a receptacle for the relic bottle at Songrim Temple (fig.0-6b) has twelve applied glass coils in three tiers, with four coils each. The glass coils were originally inset with glass roundels and pearls.²⁰ The decorative treatment is related to that on a glass cup found

¹⁵ NMK (2010), 68; for techniques including facet cutting, see David Whitehouse (2012), *Glass: A Short History*, London, 115.

¹⁶ James W. Lankton et al. (2010), "Bactrian Glass Vessels in Korean Tombs", 579-589.

¹⁷ Lee In-sook (1994), "Ancient Glass Trade in Korea", 73-81.

¹⁸ An Jiayao (1984), *Early Chinese Glassware*, M. Henderson (trans.), Hong Kong, 7, fig.112.

¹⁹ Ellen J. Laing (1991), "A Report on Western Asian Glassware in the Far East", 111.

in an 8th-century hoard in Xi'an in China.²¹ Both the shape and decoration of the cup are similar to the cobalt blue glass cup in the Shosoin in Nara, Japan.²² Whether they were made locally or imported from afar, their shapes, techniques, and decorations point to Sasanian or Syrian prototypes.

1.3. Local emulation of foreign object: Rhytons

Rhyta found in the peninsula of this period belong to a group of exotic objects produced locally. A rhyton (*Gakbae* in Korean) is a special type of drinking horn, sometimes with zoomorphic terminal. Probably originating from the Near and Middle East since pre-historic times, they were extensively used across Eurasia. Rhyta in ancient Persia commonly had various types of animal heads as their openings. From the pre-Achaemenid to Sasanian periods, examples made of silver, gold, and clay were used throughout the Iranian cultural sphere from central Asia to present-day Iraq (fig.0-7a). This Iranian type of vessel was adopted by the Greek world as exotic and prestigious Oriental products, as depicted in a Greek Krater (fig.0-7b). In a banquet scene, a banqueter entertains himself by dispensing liquid from a rhyton (with forepart of a horse) into a phial.²³ Their broad appeal can be noted in the 7th- and 8th-century wall paintings from Panjikent, where certain rhyta show strong eastern influences from non-Iranian sources, possibly from Bactria.²⁴

Amongst excavated objects in the Korean peninsula are various types of rhyta, made in bronze or ceramic, which were widely used across the society during the Three Kingdoms period from the 4th to 6th century. Most of them are known to have been found in the tombs of Silla and Gaya, in the southern parts of the province. Among the items from identified and datable sites is a bronze rhyton of horn shape in complete form with a lid and loop handles, excavated in Changryeong Gyo-dong, burial mounds of the Gaya period (fig.0-7c). Another gilt bronze rhyton of similar shape was unearthed in the Gold Crown Tomb of the Silla period, in Gyeongju (length 28.6cm). The variety of its form, especially in ceramic, covers a wide range of shapes from a plain type of horn to vessels in the shape of a fabulous bird (excavated from the area of the tomb of King Michu, Gyeongju) or a rider (excavated from the Gold Bell Tomb, Gyeongju). A small rhyton, unearthed in Bokcheon-dong, Busan is particularly remarkable for its visual affinity to a ceramic rhyton of the Parthian period (250 BCE -225 CE), now in the Freer Gallery (fig. 0-8a,b).

²⁰ Jeong Yang-mo, Judith G Smith et al (ed.)(1999), *Arts of Korea*, New York, 112.

²¹ An Jiayo (1984), "Early Glass Vessels in China", 413-47.

²² A footed cup is now in Shoso-in, Todai-ji, Nara, Japan. Roichi Hayashi (1975), *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, New York, Pl.16.

²³ Kim Benzel et al. (2010), *Art of the Ancient Near East A Resource for Educators*, New York.

²⁴ P. O. Harper (1978), *The Royal Hunter: Art of the Sasanian Empire*, New York, 36-38.

Although most of the surviving Korean rhyta dates back to the 4th or 5th century, historical sources record that drinking horns were used from much earlier times, at least around the 1st century CE. In an episode of King Talhae (57-80), the fourth king of Silla, a rhyton (*gakbae*) is recorded as a power symbol whose possession and use should have been strictly reserved for the highest strata of the society:

One day when Talhae went on the way back from the Dong-ak (present-day Toham mountain, Gyeonju), he asked a commoner (white-clothed people)²⁵ to bring him a drink of water. The commoner dipped the water and, on his way, put the rhyton to his mouth in order to drink it himself first. But the rhyton did not fall from his mouth, stuck to it. When Talhae chided him for it, the commoner swore, "From now on, I will not have dared to taste first, whether near or far away." The rhyton fell from the mouth only after that. Since the commoner did not dare to deceive in fear of Talhae (Book 1, King Talhae, *Yusa*).

In another episode, Talhae said his predecessors had been blacksmith. The episodes of rhyton and blacksmith support the argument that a foreign tribe with advanced metal technique came and configured the ruling class of Silla.²⁶

1.4. 'Two Korean envoys'

In addition to remains of material culture, we can find traces of human migration occurring across diverse regions in Eurasia during the pre-Islamic period. It is well-documented that people from the Western Regions, particularly Sogdians, had permanent residences in Tang China.²⁷ Artefacts of the Silla period often give clues to the presence of non-East Asian populations on the peninsula. In response to such human movements, ancient kingdoms of Korea were also likely to be engaged in diplomatic relationship with regions of Central Asia.

The so-called 'two Korean envoys', for example, have been recognized from a section of the 7th-century wall painting in a Sogdian palatial house at Afrasiab near Samarkand (fig.0-9).²⁸ While

²⁵ 'The white clothed (白衣)' meant laymen in Buddhism. In the Buddhist practice of early period, Indian Buddhist monks were dressed in colours, while laymen wore a white robe. Due to this practice, white clothing is pointing to the secular person. Kang In-goo et al. (2002-3), [*Translation and Annotation of Samguk Yusa*], Seoul, 253.

²⁶ Lee Nan-yeong (2000), 117.

²⁷ Étienne de la Vaissière (2003), "Sogdians in China: A Short History and Some New Discoveries", 23-27; The presence of Sinicised Sogdians was most visually proved by a celebrated excavation of the tomb of Yu Hong, a *Sabao* (head of Sogdian merchants) in 1999 at Taiyuan, Shanxi Province. Detailed research papers are in Wu Hung (2001) with Boris. I. Marshak (2004); for the bibliographic information on the Sogdians during the pre-Islamic period, see Frantz Grenet (2003).

²⁸ It was first suggested in the official excavation report by L. I. Alibaum from the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1975. The theory is supported by Korean scholars, such as Kim Won-yong (1965), Koh Byong-ik (1984), Jeong (1992), Lee Nan-yeong (1991), and Kwon Young-pil (2009).

three walls of the room are covered with paintings depicting China, the Iranian world, and India, the painting on the western wall shows envoys from various countries of the world escorted by Turkish soldiers. Two envoys at the end corner of the painting are wearing feathered hats, a typical headgear identified as distinctively Korean in Chinese historical records. Contemporary Korean mural paintings in the Ssang-yeong chong [the Twin Column Tomb] show a Goguryeo horse-rider with a long-feathered hat on the west wall (fig.0-10a). On the east wall is depicted another Goguryeo man wearing the same hat with a shorter feather (fig. 0-10b).

Feathered hats, as the significant cultural sign of ancient Korean aristocrats, were not only worn in Goguryeo but were widely adopted across Korea in the Three Kingdoms Period. This common sartorial custom shared by three kingdoms has led scholars to debate on from which kingdom these two envoys came, although most scholars tend to support the theory that they were envoys from Goguryeo seeking military assistance in a Sogdian region when their state was threatened by the Tang-Silla joint army.²⁹ The envoys are also equipped with the round-pommel sword at their waist, another fashionable object among Eurasian elites. Like in other parts of the Eurasia continent, this type of pommel was found on various archaeological sites of the Korean peninsula.

It is not only these two envoys who have travelled on a westward journey from Korea. In murals of the Dunhuang caves of the Tang period, such as no. 220, 332 and 335, ancient Koreans wearing feathered caps are depicted.³⁰ As will be discussed in the next chapter, the fact that a travelogue by Hyecho, a Silla monk, was among the manuscripts found by Paul Pelliot in the Dunhuang Library Cave also supports the Korea's participation in the supra-regional network with the West.

2. Foreigners in the Silla kingdom

2.1. Foreign figural representations in the Silla period

Material cultural evidence from the Silla period also supports the theory of migration of people from the Western Regions to the Korean peninsula beyond China. The level of Silla's acquaintance with the Western Regions, more precisely with the Iranian cultural zone, could be measured from a stone relief found Banghyeong Tomb in Gujeong-dong, Gyeongju. The tomb contains a stone square chamber with Twelve Deities embossed on lining stones. Each corner of the chamber is decorated with a pillar. One side of the pillar in the corner (fig.0-11) is carved with a military figure whose

²⁹ For a recent Western research on this topic, see Markus Mode (2002), "Court Art of Sogdian Samarqand in the 7th century AD: Some Remarks to an Old Problem".

³⁰ Duan Wenjie (1988), [*Collection of Papers on Dunhuang Cave Art*], Lanzhou, 294.

facial features include deep eyes and a high nose with thick beards, a physical identifier of people from the Western Regions. It holds a stick with a slight curve at the top end, pointing to a polo stick. Polo started in Iran, and spread to East Asia. The sport was enjoyed by Eurasian elites, as shown in Goguryeo murals.

Another feature which reminds of the Iranian connection is the lion design on the adjacent side. The lion perches upright, with its hind paws crossed, while mysterious plumes pouring out from its mouth. Due to its frequent representation in Buddhist art, it is customary to see the image of lion in conjunction with Buddhism. However, the lion *rampant* as shown in this case has never been represented within a Buddhist context. The ferocious image was more frequently used to represent the traditional image of the animal in the Middle East, including Iran and Iraq since antiquity until the present day.

Judging from the rather modest scale of the burial site, the tomb occupants do not seem to have been from a high echelon of the society. Together with other material cultural evidence, these observations indicate that the Silla society as a whole was widely familiar with foreigners from the Western Regions, especially from the Iranian cultural zone and its visual culture.

2.2. Written sources of human migration to Silla

The recent discovery of a Persian epic, called *Kushnameh* [Story of Kush], provides a fresh point of reference for possible migration of people of diverse capacities from Iran to Silla. As one of five epic poems in a manuscript collection in the British Museum (OR 2780), *Kushnameh* is the story about the eventful life of ‘Kush the Tusked’ (or ‘The Elephant-eared’), the son of Kush (brother of Zahhak) during pre-Islamic Persia. The big portion of the epic, 3914 couplets between No.2011~5925 among the total of 10.129 couplets, is devoted to ancient Silla-Iran relations. In the epic, following the advice of the King of Macin for a safer place, Abtin of the third generation of Jamsid’s line, eventually moved to ‘Basila’, an island a month’s journey from Macin (KN 2196-2241).³¹ Just as in the way of many other medieval Muslim geographers, Basila has been identified as the Silla kingdom in the Korean peninsula.³² The main narrative is about Abtin’s stay in Silla. It includes his arrival at Silla and the lavish reception by Teyhur, the king of Silla, his marriage to Frarang, a Silla princess, who later gave birth to their son, Faridun. Against this background the poem describes exceptionally high standards of living enjoyed by the Silla people, China-Iran-Silla relations and Iranian settlements in Silla society.³³

³¹ Lee Hee-soo (2012), “[A Study on the *Kushnameh* Epic Characteristics Compared to the *Shahnameh*]”, 64.

³² Daryoosh Akbarzadeh (2008), *Korea in the Medieval Persian Manuscripts and Korea-Iran Relation*, Seoul; idem (2010), “Silla, Paradise of Ancient Iranians”.

³³ Lee Hee-soo and Daryoosh Akbarzadeh (2014), *Kushnameh*, Seoul.

Intertwined with fanciful mythological adventures, the epic gives interesting glimpses into historical facts and events. The story of Abtin's escape from the violence enacted by Kush to the kingdom ruled by Macin (China), for example, reminds us of the historical record of the flight of a last Sasanian prince to Tang China. After the murder of his father, Yazdegerd III, prince Peroz (636-679) came to Tang China to ask for military help against the Arabs.³⁴ In spite of the support of Tang emperor Gaozong (628-683), Peroz could not recover the land from firmly-established Arabs, and finally remained in Tang China. He served as a military general and as governor of Iranian exile communities.

Although the epic is set in Sasanian Iran, the work is actually a production of the Islamic period, written by Hakim Iransan ibn Abul-Kayr between the years 1108 and 1101, dedicated to the Seljuk ruler Ghiyath ad-Din Muhammad ibn Malik Shah (1105-1118).³⁵ With the story set against the backdrop of war between Iranian and Arab Muslims in the early Islamic world, the *Kushnameh* is likely to reflect the migration of the Muslims to the Korean peninsula. Most of the medieval Islamic written sources mention Muslims immigrating to the Silla Kingdom and permanently settling there.

Admittedly it is difficult to distinguish between fact and fantasy in the epic. However, the story encourages us to look at the inter-regional situation at a time when Islam surged on the horizon one thousand and five hundred years ago. Regardless of the religious and political changes of the Western Regions, Korean cross-cultural contacts continued with increasing intensity over time. Moreover, the epic advocates a possibility that political turbulence may have caused a wild array of intense cross-regional contacts, as it necessitated people embarking on a long-haul journey using existing routes to the seemingly farthest place for their safety. Some remains of Silla material cultures, especially from the late part of the dynasty, also point to the continuity of cross-cultural contacts from Sasanian Iran to Islamised Iran.

Conclusion

It is an undeniable fact that Korea had consistent cultural communications with China, which has given influence and inspiration to their various types of material culture. The contact between Korean kingdoms and China became more pronounced from around the 7th century when Tang China (618-907) became a major ally of Silla in its process of unification of the Korean peninsula. Silla wholeheartedly followed Chinese way of social ideology and government administration, and imported China's advanced arts and material culture. To place Korean art exclusively within the Sinosphere,

³⁴ The record can be found in Book 198 'Xirong 西戎' of the *Old Book of Tang (Jiu Tang Shu)*

³⁵ Jalal Matini (2008), 'Kus-Nama', *Encyclopedia Iranica*

however, thwarts proper appreciation of cultural fluidity and long-distance contacts Korean kingdoms maintained for a long time.

Many extant objects found on the Korean peninsula serve as witnesses to long-distance cross-cultural contacts of Korean kingdoms in the early period. They attest to a significant cultural stimulus coming from 'the Western regions', a broad geographical term covering both sedentary and nomadic cultures across various parts of the Eurasian continent. Their contacts with diverse cultural spheres enriched the material culture of the Korean kingdoms during this period. When these regions became Islamicised, the long tradition of their involvement in cross-cultural dynamics motivated the Unified Silla kingdom to actively participate in long-distance trade with Muslim visitors.

FIGURES (Appendix)



0-1. Silver plate, 7th century, dia. 2.5cm, Gyeongju, Korea. NMK, Gyeongju (ed.) (2007), 125



0-2a.*left*: Ivory chess pieces, Shoso-in (North Section), Nara, Japan. Kim Won-yong & Ahn Hwi-joon (2003), 147.

0-2b.*right*: Detail of bone objects, Unified Silla, 8-9th century, Anap-ji, Gyeongju. NMK, Gyeongju (ed.) (2007), 198



0-3. Dagger, excavated from Gyerim-ro, Gyeongju. Lee Soyoung and D. P. Leidy (ed.) (2013), 132



0-4. . Ewer (h.25cm), bowl (h. 7cm) and cups, glass, Silla, Hwangnamdae-chong (South Mound), Gyeongju. NMK, Gyeongju.<http://www.chis.go.kr/daekwan/WebContent/popsrc/01/193.html>



0-5a.*left*: Sarira bottle, glass, h. 7.7cm, (mouth) dia. 1.0cm, from stone pagoda in Wanggung-ri, Iksan, Jin Hong-seop et al (2006), 360

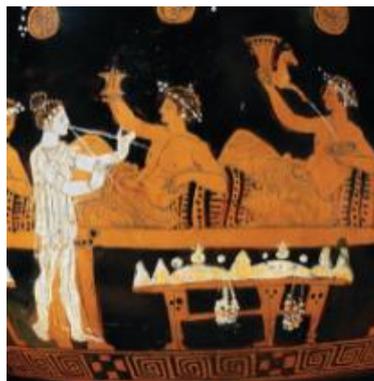
0-5b.*right*: Sarira reliquary, gilt-bronze, from stone pagoda in Wanggung-ri, Iksan.

http://www.cha.go.kr/korea/heritage/search/Culresult_Db_View.jsp?VdkVgwKey=11,01230000,35



0-6a.*left*: Bottle, glass, h. 6.3cm. Jin Hong-seop et al (2006), 359

0-6b.*right*: Bowl, glass, h.7.1cm, *ibid*



0-7a.*left*: Silver Rhyton, Achaemenid period, 5th century BCE, 19.99cm x 11.99cm x 12.29 cm, Iran. MMA 1989.281.30. Joan Aruz et al. (eds.) (2000), 154, fig 68

0-7b.*right*: Detail of terracotta bell krater, ca. 400 BCE, h. 34.5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Kim Benzel, Sarah B. Graff, Yelena Rakic, and Edith W. Watts (2010), 31. fig.12



0-7c. Rhyton, bronze, Three Kingdoms period, Changryeong gyo-dong, Gaya, Korea. Photo taken by author, 2014



0-8a.*left*: Rhyton, Three Kingdoms period, 5th century, Gaya, Korea. NMK. Photo taken by author, 2014

0-8b.*right*: Ceramic vessel with zoomorphic terminal, Parthian period (250 BCE-225 CE), h.28.5cm, w.12.3cm, dia.16.6cm, Northern Iran, Freer Gallery. S1987.948.
<http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/zoomObject.cfm?ObjectId=23581>



0-9. Digital reconstruction of 'Wall painting at the Ambassador's Hall in Afrasiab, Samarkand, NMK. Photo taken by author, 2014.



0-10a.*left*: Goguryeo horse-rider, mural painting on Ssangyeong-chong, Yong-gang-gun, Jieon-myeon, Pyeongyang Province, Korea (North). Joseon Chongdok-bu [Governor-General of Korea] (eds)(1915-1935), 187, plate 542

0-10b.*right*: Goguryeo man, mural painting on Ssangyeong-chong, *ibid*, plate 543



0-11. Corner Pillar of a tomb, 8-9th century, Unified Silla, Banghyeong Tomb, h. 73.6cm, NMK, Gyeongju, NMK, Gyeongju (ed.) (2007), 143

Appendix II

Tables: Documentary evidence

Table 1-a: Korea as ‘Silla’ in Islamic historical records¹

	Korean history ²		Date ³	Islamic world ⁴	Writer	Title	Category	Descriptions	References
	Dyna-sty.	King							
1	Silla	Mun-seong (839–857)	846 / 885 (2nd edition)	Abbasid Caliph al-Mutammid (869–885)	Abu’l-Qasim’ Ubaidullah Abdullah Ibn Khurdadbih (d. 886)	Kitāb al-Masalik wa’l-Mamalik (The book of Roads and kingdoms)	Cartographic, Arabic	Silla’s environment, geography, political structure, products and two articles about Muslim migrants in Korean peninsula	Ibn Khurdadbih, Kitāb al-Masalik wa’l-Mamalik(ed.M.J. de Goeje), Leiden, 1889, pp. 70, 180(Tunus Bibliographia Nationale : Ref. 6818) / Ibn Khordadbeh, Le Livre Route Et Province (ed. trs. C. Barbier De Meynard), Paris, 1865
2	Silla	Mun-seong (839–857)	c.851*		Sulaiman al-Tajir (Sulaiman the Merchant) & Abu Zaid Sirafi	Akhbar al-Sin wa’l-Hind (An account of China and India)	Travelogue, Arabic	Silla’s geography, custom and Sino-Korean relationship	Sulaiman al-Tajir, Akhbar al-Sin wa’l Hind(ed. trs. J. Sauvagat), Paris, 1948, p.73/ Sulaiman al-Tajir, Akhbar al-Sin wa’l-Hind (ed. trs. M.Reinaud), Paris, 1845
3	Silla	Hyo-gong (897–912)	c.903*		Abu’ Ali Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ishaq Ibn Rustah (d. 912)	Kitāb al-a’laq al-nafisah (Book of precious objects)	Encyclopaedia, Arabic	Silla’s geography and its gold, excerpt of Muslim settlement in Silla	Ibn Rustah, Kitāb al-a’laq al-nafisah(ed. M. J. de Goeje), Leiden, 1892, pp. 82-83 British Museum; Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, Leiden, 1892
4	Go-ryeo	Taejo (918–943)	943		Abu’l Hasan’ Ali b. Husain al-Mas’udi (d. 957)	Muruj al-dhahab wa ma’adin al-jauhar	30 volumes about World History, Arabic	Silla’s environment, Sino-Korean relation, overview of	Mas’udi, Muruj al-dhahab wa ma’adin al-jauhar, Cairo, 957, Vol. 1, pp. 155-156, Vol. 2 p. 6/ ---, Bagdad, Daru’l Raja, 1938 /

¹ Based on Lee Hee-Soo (2010)² Dynasty and reign year in the parenthesis³ *date of compilation / **date of completion⁴ Reign year in the parenthesis

						(Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems)		Muslim settlement	---, (trans.) Macodi, Les Prairies d'or(C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet Courteille), 1861
5	Go-ryeo	Gwang-jong (949–975)	955		Mas'udi (d. 957)	Al-tanbih wa'l-ishraf (Notification and Review)	Geography, Arabic	Silla's geography and general overview of its people	Mas'udi, Kitāb al-tanbih wa'l-ishraf, Bagdad, 1938, p. 24 --- (trans. ed. E. J. Brill), Leiden, 1967/ Carra De Vaux, Le livre de l'avertissement et de la revision, Paris, 1896
6	Go-ryeo	Gwang-jong (949–975)	966**		Abu' Abdullah Muhammad b. ahmad al-Maqdisi	Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-tarikh (Creation and History)	Historical, Arabic	Introduction into Silla's geography, environment and products	Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-tarikh, Bagdad, 1907, Vol. 4, pp. 61-62/ ---, Cl. Huart (trans), Le livre de la creation et de l'histoire de Motahhar ben Tahir Al-Makdisi, Paris, 1907, p. 8
7	Go-ryeo	Gyeong-jong (975–981)	977*		Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Nadim al-Badhdadi (d. 995)	Al-fihrist (The Catalogue)	Catalogue, Arabic	Brief mention of existence of Kingdom of Silla	Nadim, Al-fihrist, Badhdad, 1929, p. 492 ---, (ed. E. J. Brill), Leiden, 1967
8	Go-ryeo		11 th century		Iran-shah Ibn Abdal Khayr Manuscript copy- Mohammed Ibn Said Ibn Abdullah al Qadari	Kushnāmeḥ (Book of Kush)	Persian folklore, Epic, Historical	Link between Sassanid and Silla during mid-7 th century. Flight of a prince of Persia and his eventual marriage with a Silla princess	Library of British Museum, No. OR. 2780, London/ "Cont Rthur de Gobineau," Collection
9	Go-ryeo	Uijong (1146–1170)	1154*		Abu' Abdullah al-Sharif al-Idrisi (1018~1165)	Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq (The Pleasure Excursion of One Who Is Eager to Traverse the	Geography, Arabic	Introduction into geography, key towns and local produce of Silla	Al-Idrisi, Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq(ed. E. J. Brill), Napoli, 1970, p. 110 ---. original manuscript, Micro-film No. 45761, National Library of Egypt / ---. original manuscript, Topkapi Saray

						Regions of the World)			Museum-Aya Sophia No. 3502, Turkey
10	Go-ryeo	Go-jong (1213–1259)	1216 (Persian translation) [early 8 th -century original version]		Ali b. Hamid b. Abubakr Kufi	Fathnāmahi Sind (Conquest of Sind)	Historical, Persian	“King of Silla has ordered for deceased trader’s son alongside his widows to be given a ship to viceroy Hajjaj at Basra in Iraq... This was to maintain good relationship with Arabic kingdoms...”(FN. 6p. 4)	Among the manuscripts of Fathnāmah-i Sind are ① The Punjab University manuscript (Azad Collection, No.A: Pe III/77)), dated 24 Shawwal 1061 H. ② The manuscript preserved in the private library of the former ruling house of the Talfur in Hayderabad Sind, dated 3 Dhul Qadah 1232H ③ The manuscript(No. 520) of the Nawab of Rampur Library(India), dated 1245H ④ The British Museum manuscript (No.OR 1787), dated Muharram 1248H ⑤ The Bakipur Library manuscript, dated Dhul Qadah 1272H.
11	Go-ryeo		Early 13 th century*		Qazwini Zakariya (1203~83)	Aja’ib al-makhlūqat wa gara’ib al-mawjudat (Marvels of creatures and strange things existing)	Astronomical, Arabic	Silla’s custom; Sino-Silla relation; example of products from Silla	Qazwini Zakariya, Aja’ib al-makhlūqat wa gara’ib al-mawjudat, Cairo, 1957, p. 105/ ---, Beirut, 1973/ Erster Thell, Kitāb’ adjaib al-makhlukat, Göttingen, 1849
12	Go-ryeo		Early 13 th century*	Abbassid	Qazwini Zakariya (1230~83)	Athar al-bilad (Monuments of the Land)	Astronomical, Arabic	Silla’s natural environment, health and living conditions. Muslim settlement	Qazwini Zakariya, Athar al-bilad, 1860, p. 50/ ---. Beirut, Daru’l Afaqi’l Jadidah, 1973 Zweiter Thell, Kitāb athar al-bilad, Göttingen, 1848

13	Go-ryeo		Mid-13 th century*		Abu'l-Hasan' Ali Ibn Sa'id al-maghribi (1214~86)	Kitāb al-jughrafiya fi'l-aqalim al-sab'a' (Book of Geography on Seven Climate Zones)	Geographic, Arabic	Silla's location using longitude and latitude	Ibn sa'id, Kitāb al-jughrafiya fi'l-aqalim al-sab'a. Beirut, 1970
14	Go-ryeo		1325*		Dimashki Shamsuddin (d. 1327)	Nukhabat al-dhahr fi' aja'ib al-barr wa'i-bahr (Contemporary Essence about the wonders of the Continents and Oceans)	Astronomical, Arabic	Silla's geography, agrology, natural resources and introduction to literatures	Dimashki Shamsuddin, Nukhabat al-dhahr fi'aja'ib al-barr wa'l-bahr, Petersburg, 1865, pp kop5749 kop.13-14, 130-131 --- (trans.) Chems ed Din Abou Abdallah Mohammed Ed-Dimicqi, Manual de la cosmographie du Moyen age, Paris, 1874
15	Go-ryeo		Early 14 th century*		Abu'l-abbas Ahmad al-Nuwayri (d. 1332)	Nihayat al-'arab fi funun al-adab (The Aim of the Intelligent in the Art of Letters)	Encyclopaedia, Arabic	Muslim settlement in Silla	Al-Nuwayri, Nihayat al-'arab fi funun al-adab, Cairo, 1923, p. 230
16	Go-ryeo		Early 14 th century*		Abu'l-Fida 'Ismail b. Ali (1273~1331)	Taqwim al-buldan (Locating the Lands)	Geographic, Arabic	Silla's location using longitude and latitude	Abu'l-Fida, Taqwin al-buldan(ed. trans. M. Reinaud), Paris, 1883, p. 124
17	Go-ryeo		Early 14 th century*		Abu'l-Fida (1273~1331)	Kitāb al-muhtasar fi akhbar al-bashar	Historical, Arabic	Silla's geography, and detailed description of some local produce	Abu'l-fida, Kitāb al-muhtasar fi akhbar al-bashar, Beirut, 1956

Table 1-b: Muslims as ‘daesik’ in Korean historical records

Historical References in *Goryeo-sa* [*History of the Goryeo Dynasty*] corroborated by *Goryeosa jeolryo* [*Essentials of Goryeo History*]

	Date ¹	King (reign year)	Translation	Original Text
1	1024/10	Hyeonjong (15)	This month (in the ninth month), <i>Yeol-la-ja</i> [<i>Al-Raja?</i>] and 100 people from <i>Daesik</i> [Arab] have paid tributes. <i>Daesik</i> is in the Western Regions.	是月大食國悅羅慈等一百人來獻方物大食國在西域
2	1025/9	Hyeonjong (16)	In the ninth month, <i>Haseon</i> [<i>Hassan?</i>], <i>La-ja</i> [<i>Raja?</i>] and 100 others have come from Sea of Arabia to pay their tributes.	九月辛巳大食蠻夏訛羅慈等百人來獻方物
3	1040/11	Jeongjong (6)	In the eleventh month, Arab traders like <i>Bona-gae</i> (or <i>Bona-hap</i>) [<i>al-Bukhara</i> or <i>Baraka?</i>] have paid tribute in form of Mercury, Dragon's Teeth, sandalwood, myrrh, sappan and other valuables. And the King ordered for arrangement for luxury during their stay in the official guesthouse and awarded them gold upon their departure back to their homeland.	十一月丙寅大食國客商保那蓋(盒?)等來獻水銀龍齒占城香沒藥蘇木等物命有司館得優厚及還厚賜金帛

¹ The order of the dates in the table is the year, the month, and the day, as in the order of convention of Korean calendric system. All the dates in the primary sources follow the traditional Chinese lunar calendar. 1024/10, for example, means that the tenth (lunar) month of the year 1024. 1279/10/26 is the 26th day of the tenth lunar month of the year 1279. It is possible that the lunar month would not be exact equivalent to the month in the Gregorian calendar.

Table 2-a: Korea mentioned in Islamic historical records after the mid- 14th century¹

	Korean history ²		Date ³	Islamic world ⁴	Writer	Title	Category	Descriptions	References
	Dyna-sty.	King							
1	Go-ryeo	Chung-hye (1330–1332 1339–1344)	1342*		Rashid al-din (1248~1318)	Jami' al-tawarikh (Compendium of Chronicles)	Mongolian History, Persian	Goryeo's political atmosphere, and description of Yuan-Goryeo relationship	Rashid al-Din, Jami' al-tawarikh(ed. E. Blsch), Leiden, 1911, p. 486/ H.M.Elliot, Djami' u-t-tawarikh of Rashidu-d-Din (History of India as told by its own historian), vol.1, London, 1867/
2	Go-ryeo	Wu (1374–1388)	1375*		Ibn Khaldun (1332~1406)	Kitāb al-'Ibar' (Book of Lessons), Muqaddima (Introduction)	Historical, Arabic	Silla's location and mention of its key cities	Ibn Khaldun, Kitāb al-'ibar, Muqaddima, Beirut, 1956, pp. 95-96
3	Jo-seon	Taejong (1400–1418)	1402*		Abdul Rashid Ibn al-Bakuwi	Talkhis al-athar wa' aja'ib al-malik al-quhhar	Geographic, Arabic	Brief mention of Silla's environment	Ibn al-Bakuwi, Talkhis al-athar wa aja'ib al-malik al-quhhar, Moscow, 1971, p. 76
4	Jo-seon		Early 15 th century*		Abu'l' Abbas Ahmad al-Maqrizi (1364~1442)	Al-mawa'iz wa'l-i' tibar fi dhikr al-khitat wa'l-athar (Commentary and Reference on Settlements and Monuments)	Historical, Arabic	Description of Silla as an island, and statement of Muslim settlement in Silla	Al-Maqrizi, Al-mawa'iz wa'l-i' tibar fi al-khitat wa'l-athar (ed. G. Weit), Cairo, 1911, p. 59
5	Jo-seon		15 th century*		Ahmad b. Majid al-Nazdi	Kitāb al-fawa'id fi usul al-bahr	Oceanic map, Arabic	Mention of Silla	Al-Najdi, Kitāb al-fawa'id fi usul al-bahr

¹ Based on Lee Hee-Soo (2010)² Dynasty and reign year in the parenthesis³ *date of compilation / **date of completion⁴ Reign year in the parenthesis

					(15 th century)	wa'l-qawa'id (Book on Maritime Rules)			wa'l-qawa'id. London, 1981, pp. 219-220
6	Jo- seon	Jung- jong (1506– 1544)	1516*		Ali Akbar	Hitayname (Book of Hitay)	Historical, Persian	Goryeo's commercial and trade activity	Suleymaniye Reisülkuttap Mustafa Efendi Kütüphanesi No. 610 Ali Akbar. Hitayname(ed. Lin Yin- min), Taipei, 1967, p. 5
7			Late 16 th century*		Abu'l-Fazl (1551~1602)	Akhbarname (Book of Akhbar)	Historical, Arabic	Statement of Silla's longitude and latitude location as (+180, +6.5)	Abu'l-Fazl, Ain-i Akhbari(ed. trs. H. Blockmann), Calcutta, 1977, pp. 5- 25

Table 2-b: Muslims as ‘hoehoe’ in Korean historical records until 1427

1. In the Goryeo period

Historical References in *Goryeo-sa* [*History of the Goryeo Dynasty*] corroborated by *Goryeosa jeolryo* [*Essentials of Goryeo History*]

	Date ¹	King (Reign Year)	Translation	Original Text
1	1279 /10/26	Chungryeol (5)	<i>Hoehoe</i> people held a banquet for the King in a new Hall.	諸回回宴王于新殿
2	1310 /10/25	Chungseon (2)	Min-Bo has been appointed as a governor of Pyeongyang ² , and he is a <i>hoehoe</i> .	以閔甫爲平壤府尹兼存撫使, 甫回回人也.
3		<i>Goryeo-sa</i> , Book 123, Biographies 36, “Jang Sun-ryong (1254/5-1297)”	Jang Sun-ryong was originally a <i>hoehoe</i> and his original name was Samga. His father became a court cleric, ³ who served Yuan Emperor, Kublai. Jang Sun-ryong had come as a personal assistant ⁴ of the Great Princess of Jeguk, ⁵ and became a recipient of the title, Deputy Commander before finally reaching the level of General ⁶ through several promotions. ... Jang Sun-ryong was competing with In hu and Cha Sin in power and luxury, and he had his house built extremely luxuriously and ostentatiously. Its exterior walls were constructed using tiles and pebbles and decorated with floral motif. And it was called ‘Jang’s Wall’	張舜龍 本回回人 初名三哥 父卿事元世祖爲必闌赤 舜龍以齊國公主怯怛口來 授郎將 累遷將軍 改今姓名...舜龍與印侯車信爭權 競爲奢靡 起第宅極侈麗 以瓦礫築外垣 狀花草以爲文 時稱張家墻
4	1344/6	Chunghye (5), Book 36, Annals	The King had been on the throne for six years and his age was 30 when he died. .. The King was belligerent, licentious, indulging in games and hunting, and decadent without any shame. He took wives and concubines from others, irrespective of their relationship and social standing, and made	王性游俠好酒色耽于遊畋荒淫無度聞人妻妾之美無親聶貴賤皆納之後宮幾百餘...給布回回家取其利令椎牛進肉日十五斤..

¹ The order of the dates in the table is the year, the month, and the day, as in the order of convention of Korean calendric system. All the dates in the primary sources follow the traditional Chinese lunar calendar. 1024/10, for example, means that the tenth (lunar) month of the year 1024. 1279/10/26 is the 26th day of the tenth lunar month of the year 1279. It is possible that the lunar month would not be exact equivalent to the month in the Gregorian calendar.

² Governor of Pyeongyang: Pyeongyang–*buyun* 平壤府尹, an official post of highest rank to govern the whole area of Pyeongyang. It was established by Chungseon (r.1298, 1308-1313) in 1308. Pyeongyang, now the capital of North Korea, was the second most important city, known as West Capital (Seogyeong 西京), during the Goryeo dynasty.

³ court cleric: *pildoji* 必闌赤 (Ch. *biduchi*), Yuan Mongol government offices in charge of clerical officials

⁴ personal assistant: *Geomnyeonggu* 怯怛口, Members of personal entourage to accompany the Mongol princesses

⁵ Great Princess of Jeguk: 齊國公主, youngest daughter of Kublai Khan, Emperor of Yuan China and Great Khan of the Mongol empire

⁶ Deputy Commander: *Nangjang* 郎將, A military officer in Goryeo, fourth Deputy Commander. Among the highest rank (1st grade) to the lowest (18th) in Goryeo military official posts, *Nanjang* belong to mid-rank level while General (*Janggun* 將軍) is the third highest rank.

			more than one hundred concubines.. . He took interest on linen textiles given to <i>hoehoe</i> families, who also had to offer 15 <i>geun</i> [9 kilograms] ⁷ of veal to him every day....	
5	1373 /7/5	Gongmin (22)	In the thirteenth day, a high-ranking senior official, ⁸ Kang In-yu [and others] came back from the capital of Ming [Nanjing]. On the seventh day of the twelfth month in the fifth year of the reign of Hongwu Emperor, when Kang In-yu and others had stayed in Zhejiang province, China, .the Emperor delivered command as follows: “..Their [Goryeo people’s] aim was to watch over the status of warship and warhorse in the area of Shandong. This year, a celebratory envoy entourage came four months earlier. For some reason, they began espionage campaigns in earnest. .. A <i>hwaja</i> ⁹ surnamed Yi came here with various people such as Tartar and <i>Hoehoe</i> to keep spying in the disguise of trading. <i>Hwaja</i> Yi has come a couple of times. He could speak Tartar to Tartar people, Korean to general <i>hwaja</i> people, and Chinese to Chinese people. This was the way of espionage.	壬子 贊成事 姜仁裕, ..., 回自京師. 仁裕等, 於洪武五年十二月初七日, ..., 在浙江省地面, ..., 傳奉聖旨, “...正意看我那山東一帶船隻·軍馬動靜. 今年正朝使臣四箇月前到來, 不知怎的, 的是正意來打細...姓李的火者并達達·回回諸色人都來推做買賣打細... 李火者來了兩三番, 也見達達說達達話, 見一般火者說高麗話, 見漢兒說漢兒話, 這般打細呵.
6	1387/11	Wu (13)	Wu had visits to a family of Kim Bi, <i>hoehoe</i> , and asked for his daughter but without success. Wu awarded saddle and horse to his son, and ordered his son to serve him, having his hair queued. Thereafter, Wu took his daughter as well and made her wear man’s clothing in accompanying him.	禍如金鼻回回家, 索其女不得, 賜回回子鞍馬, 仍令編髮侍從. 後又取其女, 著男服隨之.

2. In the Joseon Dynasty from 1407 – to 1427

Historical References in *Joseon Wangjo Sillok* [Annals of the Joseon Dynasty] corroborated by *Seungjeongwon ilgi* [Daily Records of the Royal Secretariat]

	Date	King (Reign Year)	Translation	Original Text
7	1407 /1/17	Taejong (7)	Japanese Emissary reported to the palace that 'Doro', a <i>hoehoe</i> monk, wished to reside [here] with his family, and his majesty ordered for residence to be provided.	日本丹州使詣闕辭. 有回回沙門都老, 率妻子與之偕來, 願留居, 上命給家以居之.

⁷ *Geun*: 斤 (Ch. jin), a weight measurement of the medieval period in the East Asia. By the mid-eleventh century, 1 *geun* 斤 became equivalent to 600g. *Geun* was the biggest unit to measure the mass of objects. Lee Jong-bong (2001), *Hanguk jungse doryanghyeongje yeongu* [Research on Weights and Measure in Medieval Korea], Seoul: Hyeon,p.20, 209

⁸ a high-ranking senior official: *Chanseongsa* 贊成事, a senior official of the second highest rank in Goryeo central government

⁹ *hwaja* 火者: one of two meanings, either eunuch or a transliteration of Persian *Khoja*. *Khoja* means dignitaries renowned for their holy descent, wealthy men and revered scholars in Islamic lands. Especially in Xinjiang and Central Asia, it means the upper nobility of Muslim community.

8	1412 /2/24	Taejong (12)	An order was issued to ‘Doro’, a <i>hoehoe</i> monk, that he is allowed to mine crystals in Diamond Mountain [Geumgang-san], Sunheung, Kimhae, ¹⁰ and other places of the Korean peninsula. Earlier, Doro had made and offered crystal headgear of his native country to the King, of which his majesty was glad. Doro offered another suggestion to the King. “There are many mountains and rivers here, in which precious treasures must be contained. Please allow me to wander around the country and I will definitely find and acquire them.”	己卯/命回回沙門都老,採水精于金剛山、順興、金海等處。都老嘗造本國水精帽珠以獻,上稱善。都老又上言:“山川之多,必蘊珍寶。若使我周行,可得也
9	1412 /3/29	Taejong (12)	An Deung, the Governor of Gyeongsang-do, ¹¹ offered 300 <i>geun</i> [equivalent of 100 kilogram] of crystal, which had been mined by a <i>hoehoe</i> monk, Doro.	癸丑/慶尙道都觀察使安騰,進回回沙門都老所採水精三百斤。
10	1412 /9/ 5	Taejong (12)	Dara, a <i>hoehoe</i> monk, was awarded 10 <i>seok</i> ¹² of rice. His majesty entrusts prestigious jade [or a semi-precious stone] to Dara, with the order to carve it and return it [to the court].	賜米十石于回回沙門多羅。上出良玉授多羅,令刻署以進。
11	1413 /2/24	Taejong (13)	Seoji, a <i>hoehoe</i> , was awarded 5 <i>seok</i> of rice.	賜回回西地米五石
12	1413 /7/16	Taejong (13)	Doro, a <i>hoehoe</i> monk, was sent to Sunheung-bu to mine crystal.	遣回回沙門都老于順興府,採水精。
13	1415 /5/25	Taejong (15)	A <i>hoehoe</i> monk in Guju [present-day Kyushu] ¹³ sent his second son ¹⁴ to pay tributes. And Doyoung, the Head of the Iki Island, ¹⁵ also paid tribute of local products and brought captives back.	九州回回沙文遣彦次郎,獻禮物,一歧上萬戶道永亦獻土宜,

¹⁰ Diamond Mountain [Geumgang-san], now part of North Korea, is located on the east coast of the country. Sunheung and Kimhae are both in Gyeongsang-do in the southeast of the Korean peninsula.

¹¹ Governor: *Gwanchalsa* 都觀察, A Governor sent by the central government of Joseon 1446-1910) to each of 8 provinces (designated as *do* 道) of the Korean peninsula, one of which is Gyeongsang-do.

¹² *Seok*: 石(Ch. dan), bushel, a traditional dry measure for cereal grain. It differed according their type of grains. 1 *seok* of rice is equivalent to 144 kg, but was more generally taken as the amount of grain to be consumed by one adult male for a year. *Seok* was the biggest value to measure grains; see E Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, Section 7.3.3 and Tables 17-18

¹³ *Guju* [present-day Kyushu]: 九州, Now one of the four major Japanese islands, Kyushu enjoyed independence while keeping tributary relationship with both Japan and Korea until the sixteenth century when Toyotomi Hideyoshi finally conquered to make it part of Japan. Mary Elizabeth Berry (1982). *Hideyoshi* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp.87-93. For the history of Kyushu, see Andrew Cobbing (2009), *Kyushu, Gateway to Japan: A Concise History*, Global Oriental. For a contemporary report on Japan and these islands, see the book of a Korean literati and diplomat to Japan, Shin Suk-ju (1471), *Haedong jegukki* [Record of Various Countries of East] annotated by Shin Yong-ho (2004), Paju: Beomusa

¹⁴ his second son: *Euncharang* 彦次郎, pronounced as Hiko *Jiro* (ひこじろう) in Japanese. It means ‘the second son’ from a respected family, in this case, of the *hoehoe* monk. 彦 (hiko), a now-obsolete word, was an honorary title of male member of hereditary circle, such as prince or sir. *The Indexer* Vol. 26 No. 2 June 2008 p.C4-6

¹⁵ Head: *Sang manho*, 上萬戶 literal meaning of ‘Head of Ten Thousand Men’, it was the second-highest rank of governmental official in charge of public security. The post, along with the system it was operated in, had continued from Goryeo to early Joseon. However, here it seems to mean the head of the Iki island, now a part of Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan. Like Kyushu, Iki had been an independent state until Toyotomi Hideyoshi unified Japan in 1590. However small, Iki was sometimes crucial to East Asian history because of its

				發還被擄人口。
14	1417 /6/27	Taejong (17)	Guju tamjae (Ja. Kyushu Tandai) ¹⁶ General, the Head of the province, sent his envoy to offer tribute and to request the return of the <i>hoehoe</i> monk who resided in Joseon.	九州探題右武衛源道鎮使人獻禮物， 請還留居回回沙文
15	1418 /9/27	Sejong (0)	After the ceremony at the Royal Shrine, ¹⁷ Ministry of Rites ¹⁸ reported that the formality of attending to his Majesty was the following:....Then, after Buddhist monks and <i>hoehoe</i> people have come to pay their homages, an Officer of Ceremony ¹⁹ declared in his prostration, 'Ceremony has been completed'.	禮曹啓謁廟後朝賀儀曰： ...僧徒及回回人等入庭祝頌訖， 判通禮跪啓禮畢，
16	1419 /1/1	Sejong (1)	The King, alongside many officials has given new year's greeting ceremony. Then having worn a formal costume, ²⁰ his Majesty has received homage from many subjects, including Buddhist monks, <i>hoehoe</i> and Japanese.	上以冕服率群臣，遙賀帝正， 以遠遊冠、絳紗袍，御仁政殿， 受群臣朝賀，僧徒、回回、倭人亦與。
17	1419 /5/3	Sejong (1)	Having watched hunting in the western mountains of Geumgyoyeok, ²¹ his Majesty's carriage arrived at Gaegyeong [present-day Gaeseong], ²² where Han Ong, the Governor of Gaeseong, ²³ and Yi Jeok, a deputy governor, came to greet [his Majesty] at special reception with retinue of local gentries and <i>hoehoe</i> .	觀獵于金郊驛西山， 駕至開京，留後韓雍、兼副留後李迹率父 老、 回回等奉迎于迎賓觀前。
18	1419 /7/21	Sejong (1)	His Majesty ordered, "Now free 130 Han captives from the Eastern campaign to Liaodong and give them clothes,	上命今東征所獲漢人凡百三十餘名， 依被虜逃回人例，給衣笠鞋布，解送遼東

southernmost location in the Japanese archipelago. It was from this island that the Mongol (failed) invasion of Japan embarked in 1274 and 1281, and the Japanese pirates, *Waegu* (ch. Wokou; Ja. Waki), based, plundering coastal areas of Korea and China until the sixteenth century.

¹⁶ *Guju tamjae* 九州探題 [Ja. Kyushu *Tandai* (きゅうしゅうたんだい)] is the title of a military and civil deputy of the Muromachi Shogunate (c.1337-1573) to govern the Kyushu area. Louis Frédéric (2002), *Japan Encyclopedia* [Japon, dictionnaire et civilisation] translated by Käthe Roth in English (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), p.947; The *tandai* under discussion was Shibukawa Mitsuyori(渋川満頼,しぶかわみつより r.1396-1419), whose family continued to hold the post for 150 years as a single Ashikaga branch family. The Kyushu *tandai*, the first two Shibukawa (Mitsuyori and his son Yoshitoshi) in particular, did appear several times in Korean chronicles of this era, because of their on-going participation in trade and foreign relations. Lorraine F. Harrington (1985), "Regional Outposts of Muromachi Bakufu Rule: The Kanto and Kyushu", Jeffrey P. Mass & William B. Hauser (eds.), *The Bakufu in Japanese History*, (Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, pp.65-97), pp.94-95

¹⁷ Royal Shrine: Ancestral Shrines of the Royal Lineage of the Joseon dynasty

¹⁸ Ministry of Rites: Yejo 禮曹

¹⁹ Officer of Ceremony: *Pantongnye* 判通禮, A minister from late Goryeo to early Joseon, which was responsible for court assemblies and ceremonies

²⁰ a formal costume: One of the royal attire with formal headgear (*weonyuguan* 遠遊冠) and formal costume (*gangsapo* 絳紗袍) of Kings and Crown Princes for official Audience from late Goryeo to early Joseon

²¹ Geumgyoyeok 金郊驛 [present-day Seoheung Gun, Hwanghe-do], now in North Korea, is located ideally between Gaeseong and Pyeongyang.

²² Gaegyeong 開京[present-day Gaeseong], now in North Korea, was the capital of Goryeo.

²³ Governor of Gaeseong: *Yuhu* 留後, was an official to govern Gaeseong, the name of which had been changed into Gaeseong *yuhusa* by Taejo in 1395. It reverted to the original name of Gaeseong in 1438 under the rule of King Sejong.

			headgear, shoes and fabrics according to the customs of <i>hoehoe</i> prisoners who escaped from their bondage	
19	1422 /2/ 1	Sejong (4)	Doro, the <i>hoehoe</i> monk has been awarded five <i>seok</i> of rice.	賜回回沙門都老米五石。
20	1422 /9/4	Sejong (4)	[In the funeral of King Taejo]... left by the Heungin Gate, and those remaining in Seoul including hundreds of officials, monks and <i>hoehoe</i> , made their farewells outside the gate, and their cries echoed across the fields.	... 出自興仁門， 留都百官、耆老、僧徒、生徒、回回各 奉辭於門外，哭聲振野。
21	1423 /1/ 12	Sejong (5)	The reason for the harvest being not good in recent years is due to ghosts from Tsushima in the East, so if these people are well-treated and sent back, annual harvest shall be prosperous. Furthermore, a living reincarnation of a <i>hoehoe</i> Buddha will come to our land in the 9 th , 10 th and 11 th months	‘近年風雨不調，禾穀不登， 只緣自東方對馬島來鬼人之所致，饋餉送 還則可致年。 又東方來回回生佛，九月十月十一月三朔 巡行我土，
22	1425 /1/1	Sejong (7)	The king in royal attire, having carried out the official ceremony ²⁴ with the crown prince and the officials, then wearing a formal costume proceeded to the Main Hall ²⁵ to receive homages. Jurchens, forest people, <i>hoehoe</i> monks also attended the ceremony.	上冕服，率王世子百官， 行望闕禮訖，絳紗袍、 遠遊冠，御仁政殿受朝賀， 兀良哈、兀狄哈、回回僧徒亦參賀。
23	1426 /1/ 1	Sejong (8)	The king in royal attire, having carried out the official ceremony with the crown prince and the officials, then proceeded to the Audience Hall ²⁶ to receive homage of many officials. Japanese, Jurchen, and <i>hoehoe</i> monks have also paid their homage with the officials.	丙申朔/上以冕服， 率世子及百官，行望闕禮； 以遠遊冠絳紗袍，御勤政殿， 受群臣朝賀，倭人、野人及回回僧徒亦隨班
24	1426/ 11/15	Sejong (8)	Having carried out the Winter Solstice official ceremony with the crown prince and the officials according to convention, his Majesty gave his presence at the Audience Hall and received homage. <i>Hoehoe</i> , Japanese and Jurchens also attended this ceremony.	上率王世子及百官，行冬至望闕禮如儀， 御勤政殿，受朝賀， 回回與倭、野人等亦參賀。
25	1427 /1/1	Sejong (9)	The king in royal attire, having carried out the official ceremony with the crown prince and the officials, according to convention, wore a formal costume and proceeded to the Audience Hall to receive homage. Japanese, Jurchens, naturalised <i>hoehoe</i> , Buddhist monks and people of seniority have all attended the ceremony.	上以冕服，率王世子及文武群臣， 行望闕禮如儀。 以絳紗袍，御勤政殿受朝賀， 倭、野人、向化回回及僧人 耆老皆參賀。
26	1427	Sejong (9)	[Ministry of Rites] has again commented,	又啓：“回回之徒，衣冠殊異，

²⁴ The official ceremony: *Manggwollye* 望闕禮, an official rite of Goryeo and Joseon at which the King, Crown Prince, and high-ranking officials in every capacity would prostrate four times facing toward the North to commemorate special occasions, such as the New Year's day and the Winter Solstice.

²⁵ Main Hall: Injeong-jeon 仁政殿, the Main Hall of Changdeokgung 昌德宮 Palace of Prospering Virtue

²⁶ Audience Hall: Geunjeong jeon 勤政殿, the Main Hall of Gyeongbokgung 景福宮 Palace of Heavenly Blessing

	/4/4		<p>Since the <i>hoehoe</i> has worn different costume (with clothing and headgear), people watch them as not belonging to our people and avoid marrying them. Having become this kingdom's subject, our way of clothing must be followed in order to remove difference of the <i>hoehoe</i>. This would naturally lead to intermarriage. Furthermore, the <i>hoehoe</i> should be forbidden to do their way of 'rites' during Great Assembly of the Court. Decree Allowed.</p>	<p>人皆視之，以為非我族類，羞與為婚。既為我國人民，宜從我國衣冠，不為別異，則自然為婚矣。且回回大朝會祝頌之禮，亦宜停罷。”皆從之</p>
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Table 2-c: Muslims as 'hoehoe' in Korean historical records after 1427

	Date	King (Reign Year)	Translation	Original Text
30	1443 /7/6	Sejong (25)	Ministry of Rites, on the advice of an officer of the Observatory, ¹ have raised, "...Susi calendar ² and <i>Hoehoe</i> calendar ³ are already placed within inner and outer library, so there is no necessity to make recalculations..."	禮曹據書雲觀牒啓:...《授時曆》及《回回曆》法則已具內外篇中,不必更推...;
31	1445 /3/30	Sejong (27)	' <i>Jegayeoksangjip</i> [Collected Discourses on Astronomy and Meteorology of the Chinese Masters]' has been made in 4 volumes, Assistant Royal Secretary, ⁴ Yi Sun Ji wrote the following foreword: "... in understanding calendrical system, there are 'Great Ming calendar', ' <i>Hoehoe</i> calendar', and many other books such as <i>Tonggwe</i> and <i>Tonggyeong</i> , which have been compared and corrected..."	《諸家曆象集》成,凡四卷。同副承旨李純之跋曰:...曆法則於《大明曆》、《回回曆》、《通軌》、《通徑》諸書,竝加讎校,...
32	1453 /5/11	Danjong (1)	'Doan', an emissary sent by King Jungsan of <i>Rukyu</i> have been greeted with banquets arranged by the Ministry of Rites. Ministry of Rites has recorded Doan's words.... And the Ministry also informed the reports of Mannyeon and Jeongrok who have been shipwrecked, "...The man have tidied his hair above left ear and made a hair knot above the right ear with the rest, then covered it with white fabrics, like a <i>hoehoe</i> ..."	宴琉球國中山王 使者道安于禮曹。禮曹錄道安之言以啓...又錄漂流人萬年、丁祿等所言以啓: ...男子頭髮,結于左耳上,餘髮環結于右耳上,以白布裹之,如回回之形 .."
33	1508 /2/3	Jungjong (3)	The emissary, Seong Hui-an, ..having returned [from China],.. told of current situation. "...I heard <i>hoehoe</i> people do not eat meat killed by other people and always eat what they butchered. They also are of good disposition and read scriptures, and have been accepted within palace as learned men."	奏聞使成希顏 ... 既詣闕復命,仍啓曰: "...聞回回人,不食他人所殺之肉,必手宰乃食,且有善心讀經等事,迎入闕內,師事之。
34	1798 /2/19	Jeongjo (22)	Chief envoy to celebrate the Winter Solstice, ⁵ Kim Mun-sun and his deputy Sin Gi on leaving Yeongyeong [present-day Beijing] said, "...On the 26 th day, small bags of grapes from the place of <i>hoehoe</i> was awarded to us and the Censor-secretary, ⁶ one for each of us.	癸丑/冬至正使金文淳、副使申耆,自燕京離發馳啓曰 ... 二十六日,賜臣等書狀官,回回葡萄各一小袋。

¹ an officer of the Observatory: *Seoungwan* 書雲觀, officers of Government Agency Specializing in Astronomical and Meteorological Observation

² Susi calendar: *Susi-ryeok* 授時曆 (Ch. *shoushili*), a calendric system used in the Yuan China. It was organised into a detailed explanatory text of 3 volumes, *Chiljeongsan naepyeon* [Calculations of the Movements of the Sun, the Moon, and the Five Planets] during 1442-1444 under King Sejong of Joseon

³ *Hoehoe-ryeok* 回回曆, Islamic calendric system imported mainly from Iran in Yuan and Ming China

⁴ Assistant Royal Secretary: *Dongbu-seungji* 同副承旨, His main work was to supervise the department of Manufacture (*Gongbang* 工房)

⁵ Chief envoy to celebrate the Winter Solstice: *Dongji Jeongsa* 冬至正使

⁶ Censor-secretary: *Seojanggwan* 書狀官, an officer of diplomat entourage to record every event and report it to the King

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6-27. Belt slide, nephrite, Jin to Yuan dynasty, 12th -14th century, h. 6.7 cm, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift, Metropolitan Museum of Art (1991.483). Denise P. Leidy, Wai-fong Anita Siu and James C. Y. Watt (1997), "Chinese Decorative Arts", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 55(1).

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1b. *right*: Side view



2a.*left*: Glass dish, 9th century, dia.23.8, Famensi Museum

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PART I



1-1. Fresco drawing of six Kings, c. 705-15CE, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan



1-2a.*left*: Painting in Cave 158, Dunhuang, Tang dynasty



1-2b.*right*: Detail showing depiction of Muslim attendant wearing white head scarf

Chapter 1



1-3a. *left*: Tomb guardian, Unified Silla, h. 257, Gwae-reung, Gyeongju



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1-11.*right*: Glass beaker, h. 12.5, Hwangnamdae-chong, Gyeongju



1-12.Glass ewer, Goryeo, h.15.7, Okura Collection



1-13. Crown, gold, jade, Silla, c. late 5th century, h. 27.3, NMK, Gyeongju

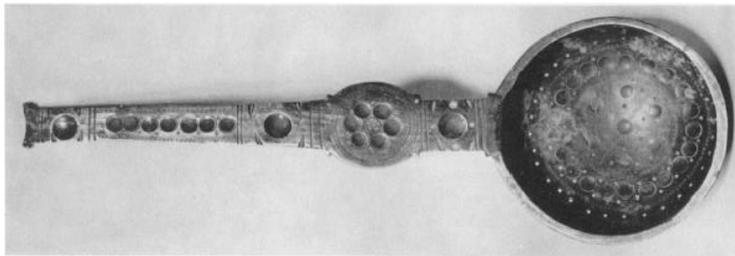
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2-18a.*left*: Bowl, silver, from Tomb of King Muryeong, Baekje, h.15



2-18b.*right*: Bowl, bronze, from Tomb of King Muryeong, Baekje, h.15



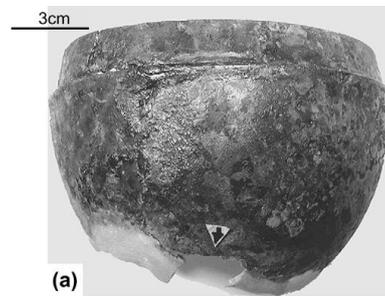
2-19. Bowl with lid, high-tin bronze, c.12th century, Khurasan, h.21



2-20. "The Wade Cup", Seljuk period, present-day Iran, h. 11.5, dis. 16.1



2-21a.*left*: Sahari ewer, Unified Silla, 8th century, h.31.7, Shoso-in
 2-21b.*right*: Detailed opening of the ewer



2-22a. Bronze bowl, Baekje (pre-529 AD), tomb of King Muryeong
 2-22b. Copper bowl, Silla Period, c.5th century, Hwangnamdae-chong, Gyeongju



2-23. Bongdeok Temple bell, bronze, Unified Silla, h.375, weight 18.9 tons



2-24a. A block of alloy moving to the anvil from the crucible



2-24b. Stretching the wall of the vessel and checking the evenness during the hammering



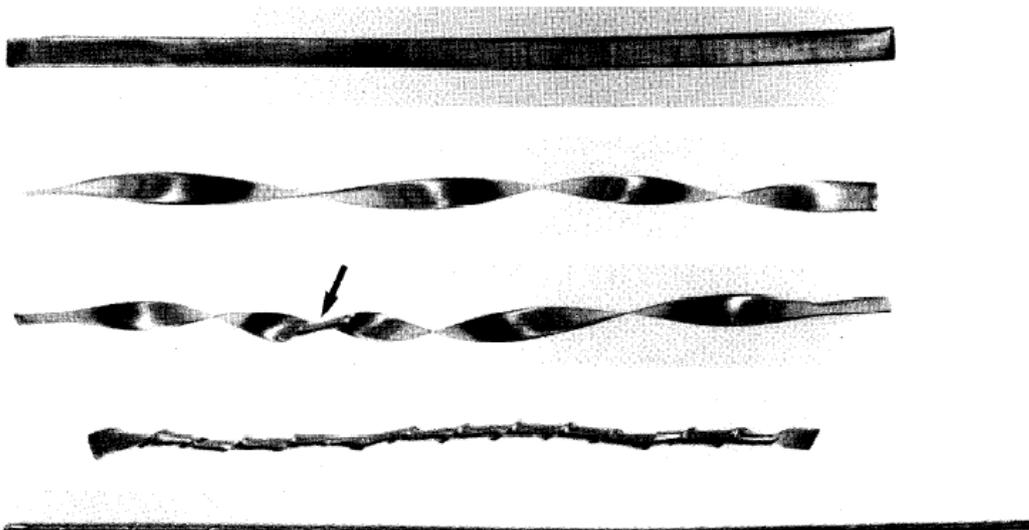
2-24c. Quenching in the *yugi* manufacturing process



2-25a.*left*: Earring or Nose ring, gold, early 2nd millennium BCE, Old Syrian, d.3.2, National Museum, Aleppo, Syria



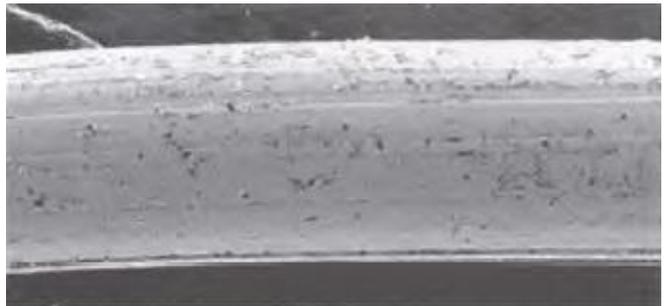
2-25b.*right*: Cross with Pearls, Byzantine, c.1200-1400, h. 4.8, MMA



2-26.*From top to bottom* : Gold strip cut from a sheet → The strip forms a 'block twist' as it is twisted → The strip begins to form into a coil as twisting continues → The strip is fully twisted into a coiled length → The twisted strip into a wire after rolling between two pieces of wood.



2-27. Illustration of wire drawing through a draw-plate, a manuscript of 1389 the *Hausbuch*, compiled in Germany by the Mendel Brothers

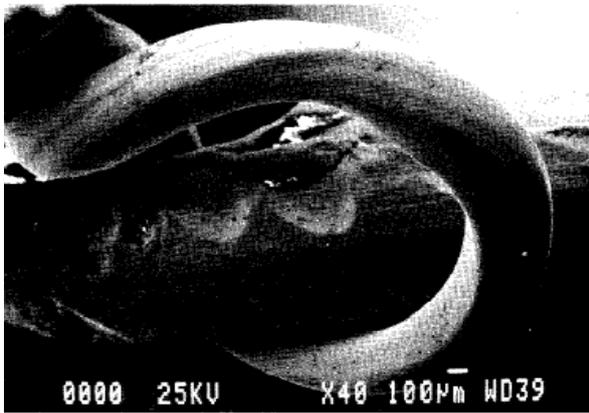


2-28a. *right*: Detail from a Roman-period chain link

2-28b. *left*: Example of modern wire



2-29a. Three single gold earrings or diadem ornament, Silla, 5th -7th centuries, BM



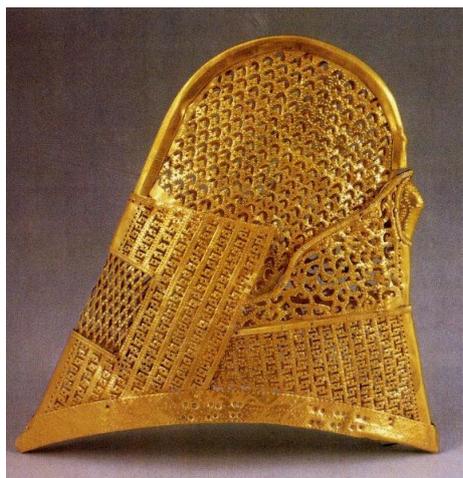
2-29b. Scanning electron microscope view of the drawn wire on an earring



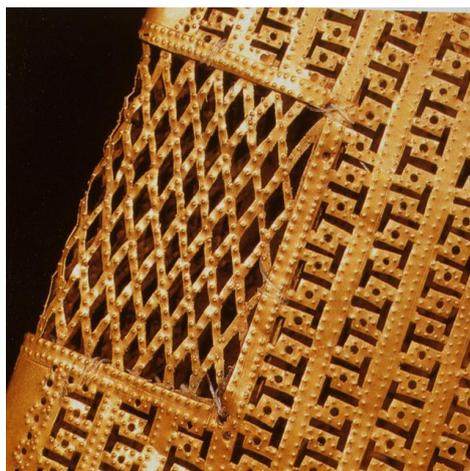
2-30a. *left*: Gold crown, Silla, c. 5th -6th century, h. 44.4 (27.5), Geumgwan-chong, NMK



2-30b. *right*: Detail



2-31a.left: *Gwanmo* [Gold conical cap], Silla, c. 5th-6th century, h. 19, Cheonma-chong, NMK, Gyeongju



2-31b.right: Details displaying gold wires used in *gwanmo*



2-32. Gold stem cup, Silla, c. 2nd half of 5th century, h. 9.1, Hwangnamdae-chong, NMK, Gyeongju



2-33a.left: Pair of earrings, gold, Silla, c. 2nd quarter of 6th century, l. 8.75, Bomun-dong Hapjangbun, NMK



2-33b.right: Detail of Gold wires in the earring

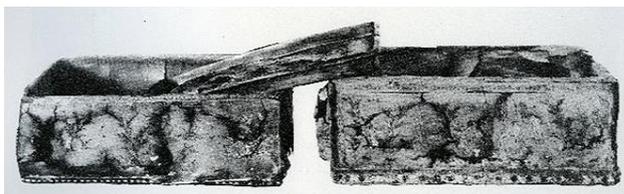


2-34. Gold wires and pendants



2-35a.*left*: Silver needle case (l. 5) and needles (gold and silver, l. 3.5), Bunhwang temple site, NMK

2-35b.*right*: Bronze needle case, Unified Silla, h. 7, Hwangnyong temple site, NMK, Gyeongju



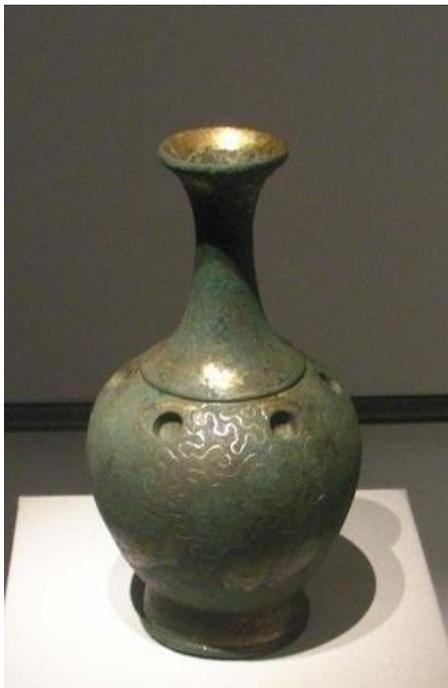
2-36a.*left*: Incense lacquer box, Goryeo , 29.1×18.8×11.3 (outer), NMK



2-36b.*right*: Detail



2-37.Detail, bronze inlaid with gold and silver, Gaya, Weolsan-ri, N. Jeolla province, NMK, Jeonju



2-38.Bottle, gilt bronze, silver, Unified Silla, 8th century, h.16.8, NMK



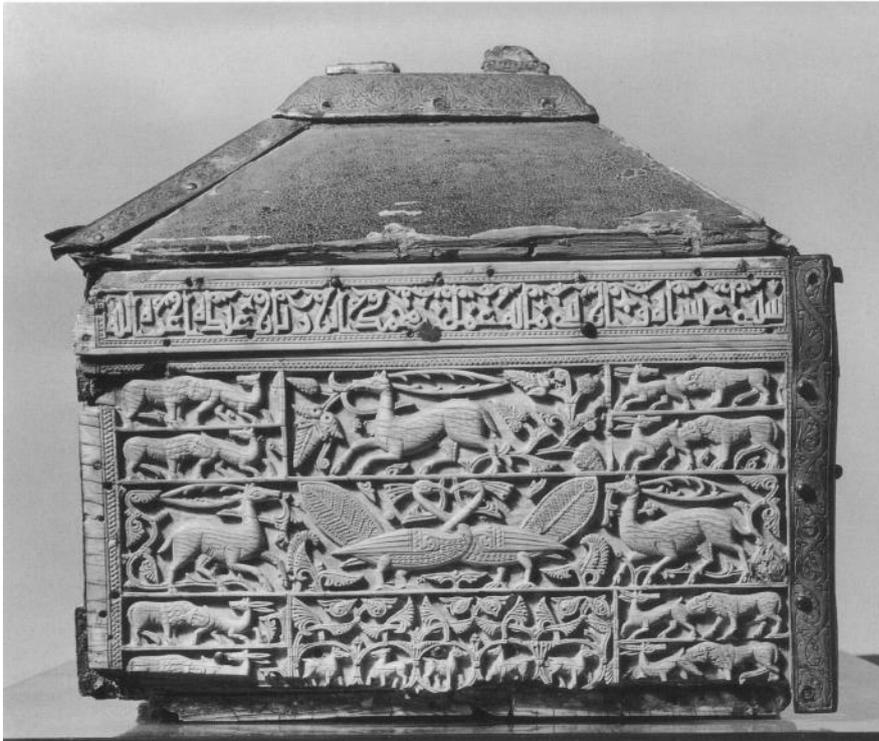
2-39.Sherd, bronze, silver, h. 26, Hwangnyong temple site, NMK



2-40.Incense burner, bronze, silver, Goryeo, Ho-Am Art Museum (Now Leeum)



2-41. Lacquer box, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell, Goryeo, h. 4.1, MMA

Chapter 3

3-1. Burgos casket, carved ivory, 1026, h.19, Museo de Burgos



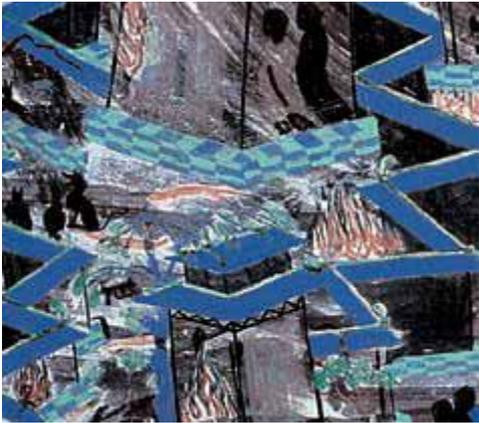
3-2. Box with cover, celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 3.1, dia. 6.8, Horim Musuem



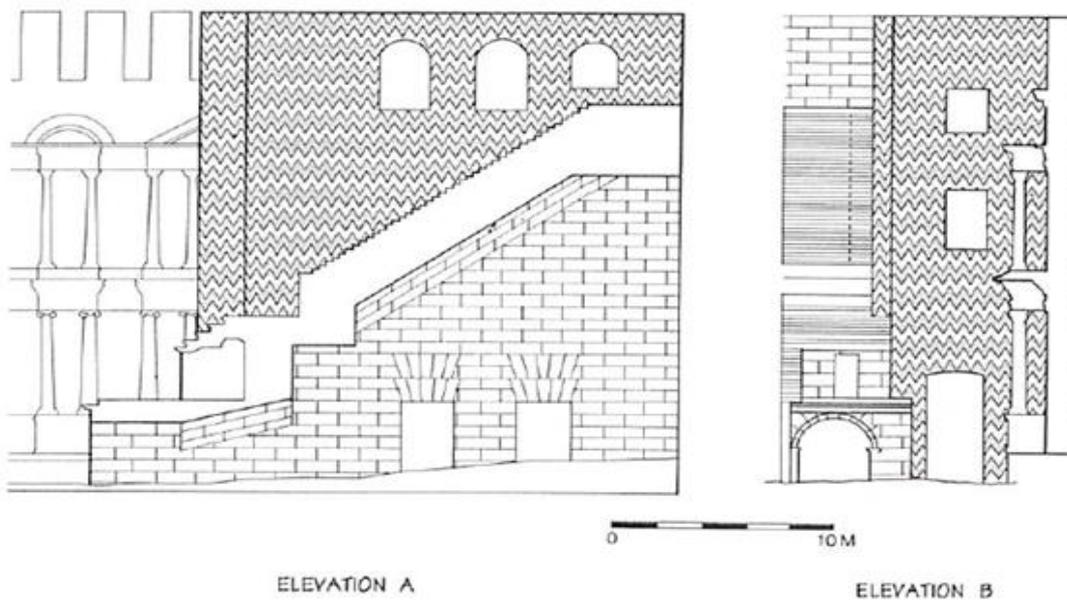
3-3a.*left* : Detail of painting on Avalokiteshvara garment, Alchi, Tibet, 12th century



3-3b.*right* : Detail of casket , Trier, Germany



3-4a. Zigzag pattern, mural , Sui dynasty, 7th century, Dunhuang



3-4b. Zigzag decoration, Seljuk, c. 12th century, Theatre of Aspendos, Antalya, Turkey



3-5. Jasper cylinder seal and impression, Uruk Period, Mesopotamia, Louvre



3-6a. Plaque , silver , bronze, Ordos, c. 2nd century BCE- 1st century BCE, l. 10.64, BM



3-6b. Phalera , bronze, 4th century BCE, h. 15, Archaeological Museum, Ufa



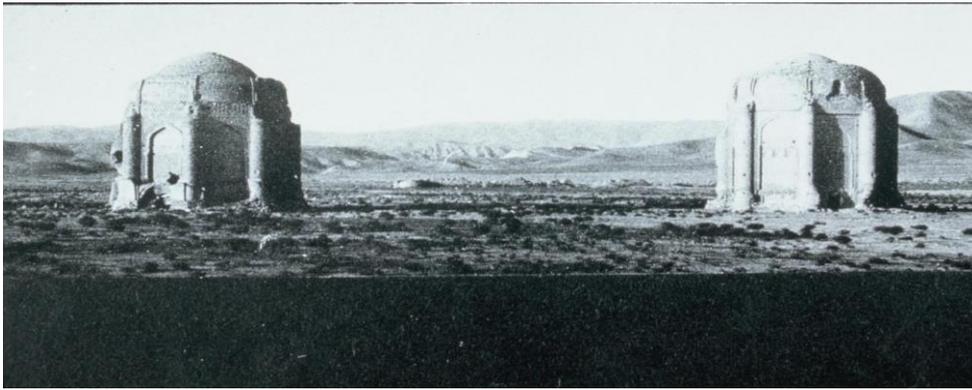
3-7a. *top*: Saddle plate, former Yan dynasty, 4th century, w. 45, Liaoning Institute of Archaeology

3-7b *down*: detail of 3-7a

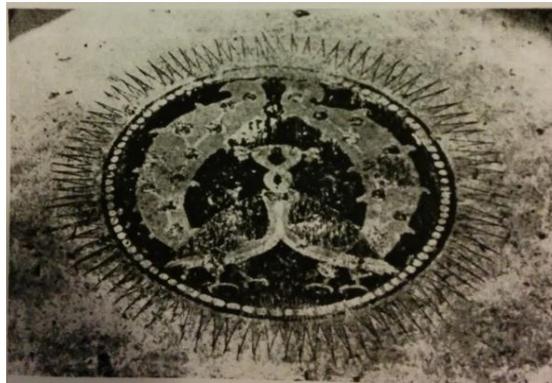
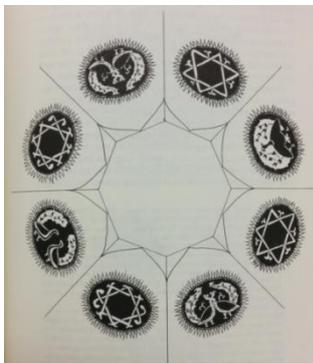


3-8.*left*: Gold sword hilt, Silla, 5th -6th century, h.13.8

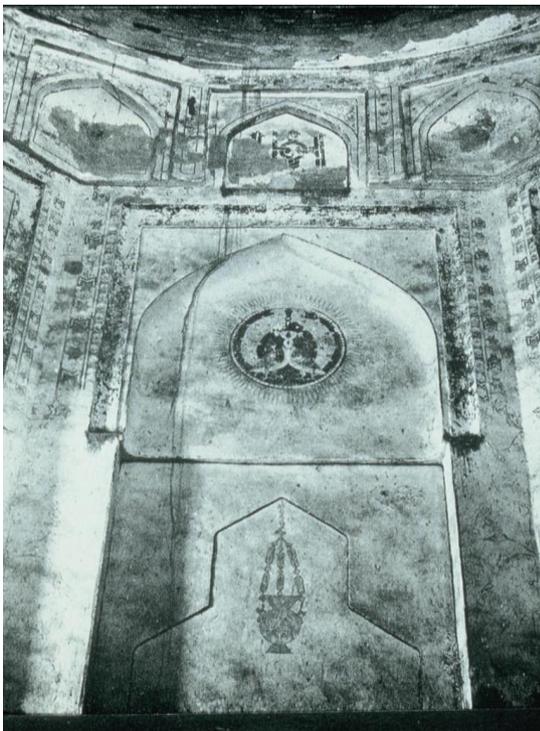
3-9.*right*: Detail



3-10. Kharragan, Tomb Towers, Architect Muhammad b. Makki al-Zanyani, 1067-6



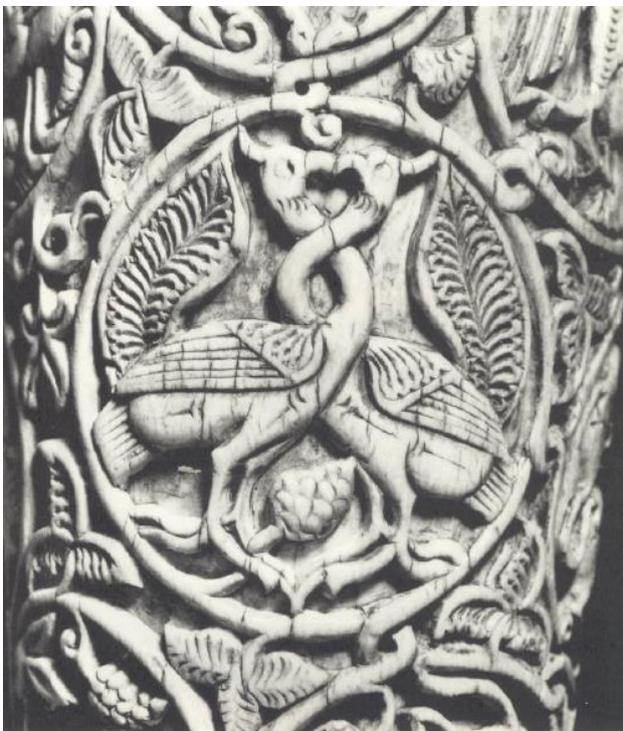
3-11. Sunburst medallions painted on the interior walls of Kharragan, Seljuk Period, 1067-8



3-12. Kharragan East Tomb Tower (interior frescoes)



3-13. Ceramic dish (fragment) and dish, 10th century, Egypt, dia. 13.6, Benaki Museum



3-14. Detail of the Oliphant, 11th century, National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh



3-15. Casket, carved ivory, 1049-50, Cuenca, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional



3-16. Right side panel of 3-15



3-17a. *left*: Phial, inlaid with silver, later 12th century, East Iran, The Fogg Art Museum

3-17b. *right*: Detail



3-18. High-spouted brass ewer, silver, 1180-1200, h. 40, BM



3-19. Ewer, silver, copper decoration, 1190—1191, h. 22, Louvre



3-20a. Casket, ivory, 1000-25, h. 26.8, V&A



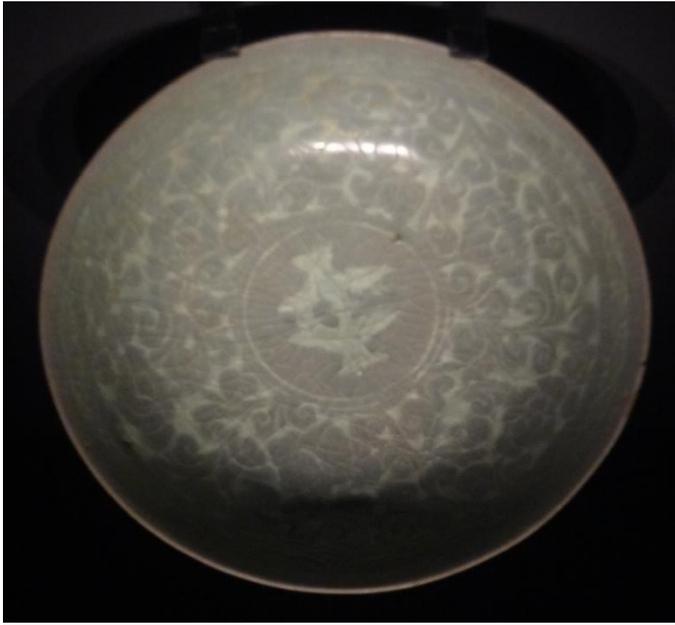
3-20b. Detail



3-21. Jug , brass, silver, c.1200, h.15.3cm, Iran, BM



3-22. Detail of fig. 3-18



3-23.Dish, celadon, Goryeo, late 13th century, h. 4, The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art



3-24.Bowl, gilt celadon, Goryeo, 1250-1300 , V&A



3-25. Detail of a dish, celadon, NMK, Jeonju



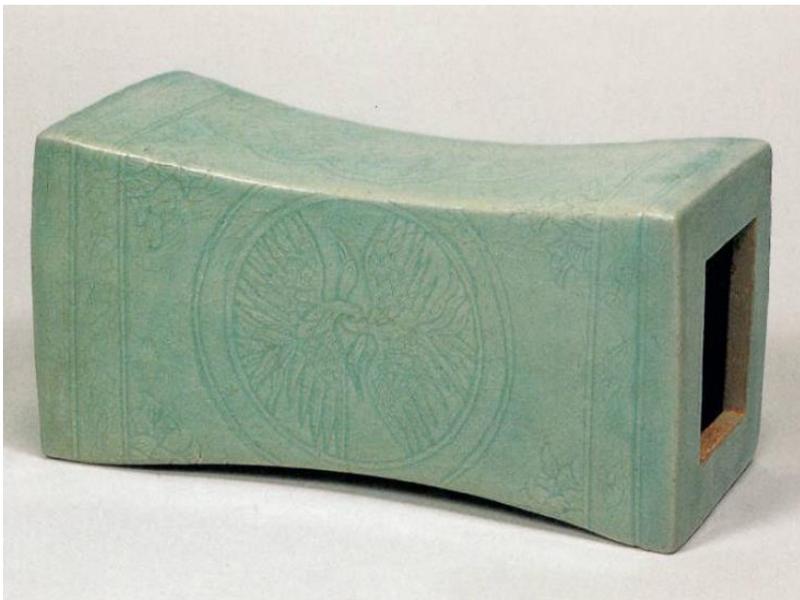
3-26a. *left*: Pillow, celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, 15.1 x 11.1 x 12.8, Horim Museum, Seoul



3-26b. *right*: Pillow, celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 8.8, w. 25.5, Horim Mueum



3-27. Stool, celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 41.6cm, dia. (base) 26.6, Horim Museum



3-28. Rectangular pillow, celadon, Goryeo, 9.1 x 21.5, MOCO



3-29. detail of 3.1, Horim Musuem



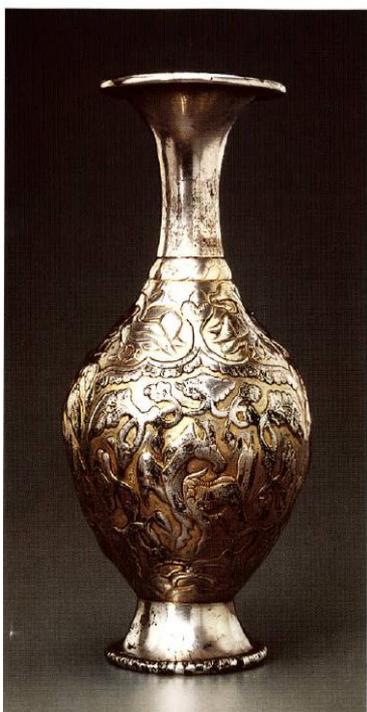
3-30. Pillow, celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, 12.1 x16.1 x10, Japanese private collection.



3-31.Box, celadon, Goryeo, 12th century, h. 4.2, dia.4.7, NMK



3-32. Box, celadon, Goryeo, 1st half of 12th century, h.6.4cm dia.14.8, MOCO



3-33a.*left*: Vase, silver, 8th – 9th century, Pritzker Collection



3-33b.*right*: Detail



3-34a. Detail of fig. 3-33, dragon

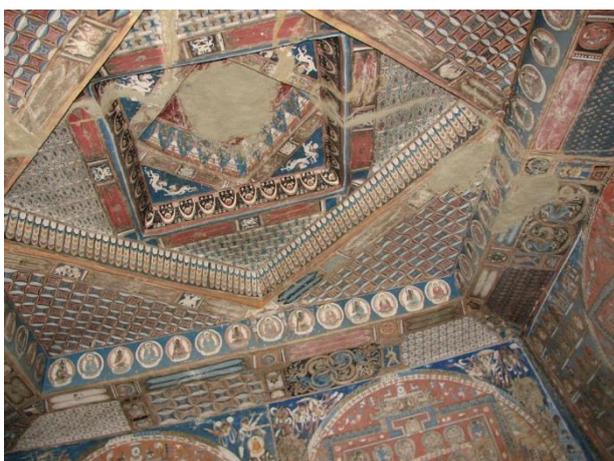




3-34b.*left*: Detail



3-34c.*right*: Detail

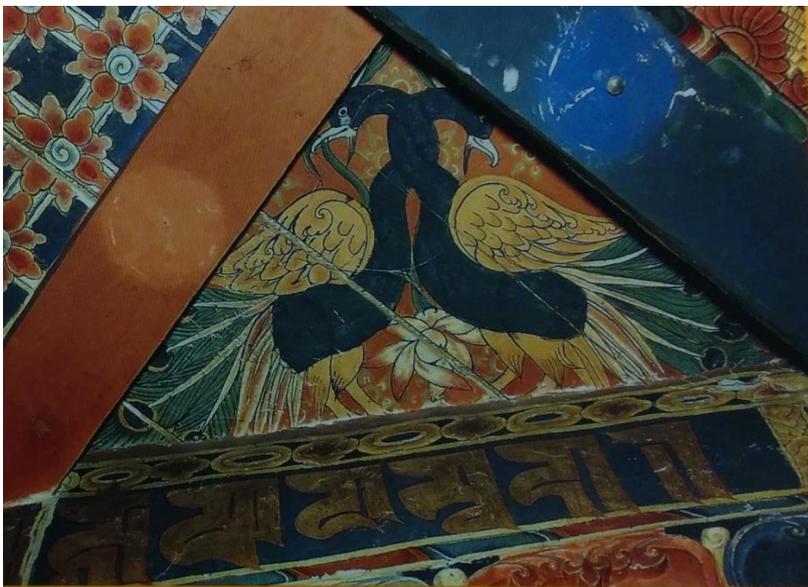


3-35. Dungkar Caves, Uranchimeg Tsultem Gallery, northeast of Zanda county, Tibet

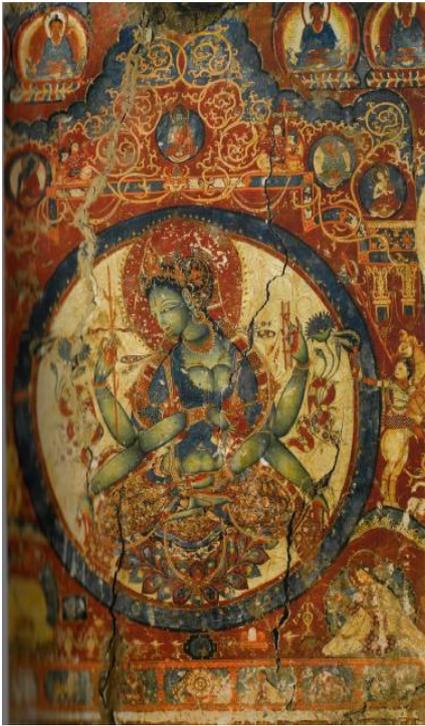


3-36a..left: Detail of Dungkar Cave I, ceiling, early Guge kingdom, 12th century, Tibet

3-36b..right : Detail of Dungkar Cave



3-37. Detail of eight-sided plane of the ceiling of Tancheng Hall, The Guge Castle, Tibet



3-38a.*left*: Shyama Tara (Green Tara), Dukhang (Assembly Hall), Alchi Monastery, 10th -13th century

3-38b. *right*: Detail of Tara's jewels



3-39.*left*: Togcha, brass alloy, Tibet, 8th-9th century dia. 4.5, Private collection

3-40.*right*: Togcha, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford



3-41. Hanging ornament, metal, modern days



3-41a. Togcha in 3-45



3-42. *left*: Ornament, NMK



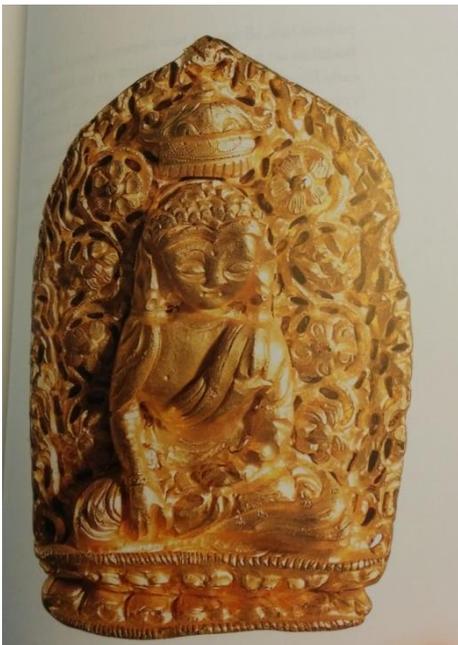
3-43. *right*: Ornament, bronze, Goryeo, dia.4, NMK



3-44.*left*: Mahamayuri, stone statues, Goryeo, Seongdong-ri



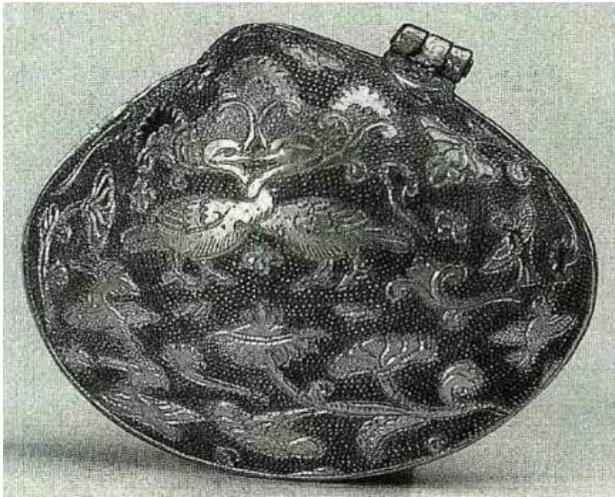
3-45.*right*: Avalokiteshvara, Gwaneum temple, h. 113, Gaeseong, North Korea



3-46.*left*: Statue of Buddha, gold, h. 5.1, Iksan



3-47.*right*: Sarira Reliquary of Master Jigong (?-1363), Goryeo, 14th century, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



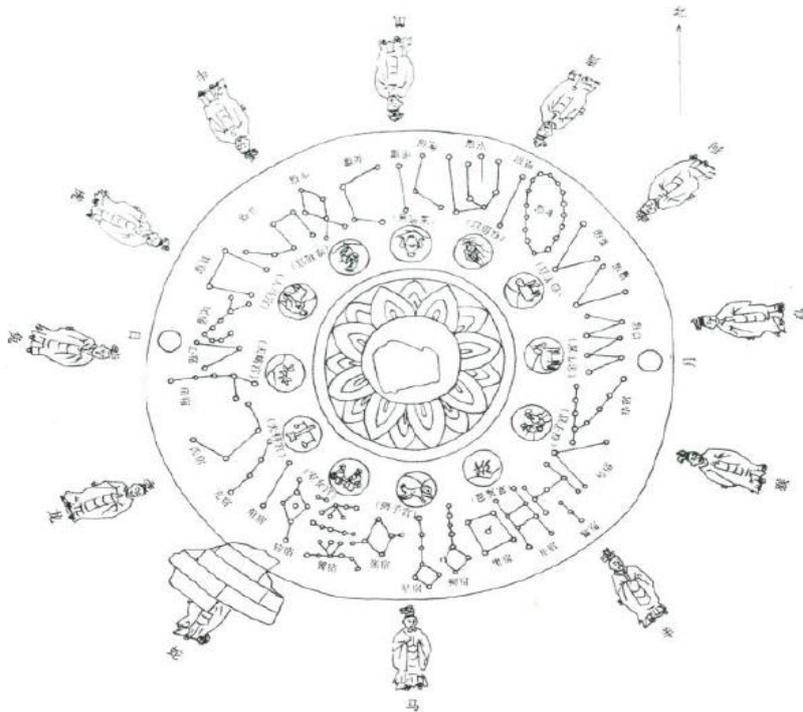
3-48. Gilt shell-shaped box, silver, Tang dynasty, Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology



3-49. Mirror, bronze, Tang dynasty, Shandong Province Museum



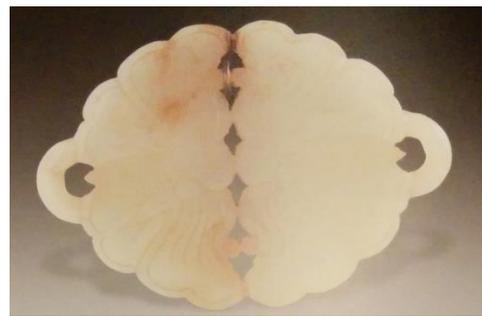
3-50. Jade artwares, Tomb of Princess of Chenguo



3-51. Painted ceiling of Zhang Gongyou's tomb (Tomb No.2), Liao dynasty, Xuanhua, Hebei.



3-52. *left*: Textile, paired eagles surrounded with flowers



3-53. *right*: Jade butterflies



3-54a. *left*: Covered box, celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 13.9, dia. 10.7, Museum Yamato Bunkakan

3-54b. *right*: Small container, Goryeo, 12th century, h. 3.5, dia. 9.6, Ho-Am Art Museum.



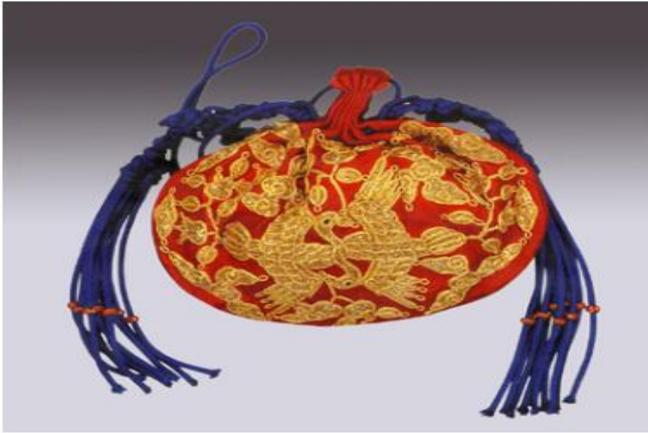
3-55. Flask (*Janggun*), *buncheong*, Joseon, 15th century, h. 24.4, Honolulu Academy of Arts



3-56. Flask (*Pyeonbyeong*) and detail , *buncheong*, Joseon, 1st half of 15th century, h.22.7, MOCO



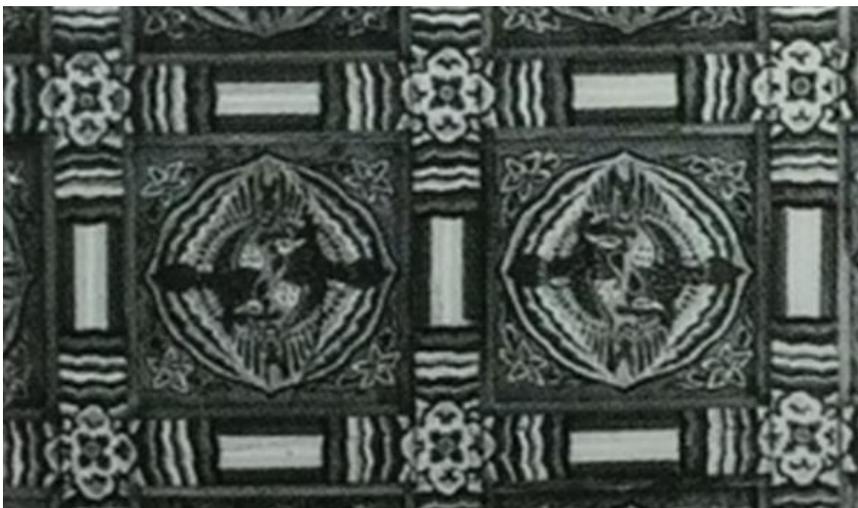
3-57. Ornament, bronze, h.4cm, BM



3-58. Court lady's pouch, silk with gold thread, Joseon, 19th century, h. 11\



3-59. The interior of Geunjeong-jeon (Throne Hall), Gyeongbok Palace, Korea



3-60. Details of the ceiling with intertwined birds, Geunjeong-jeon

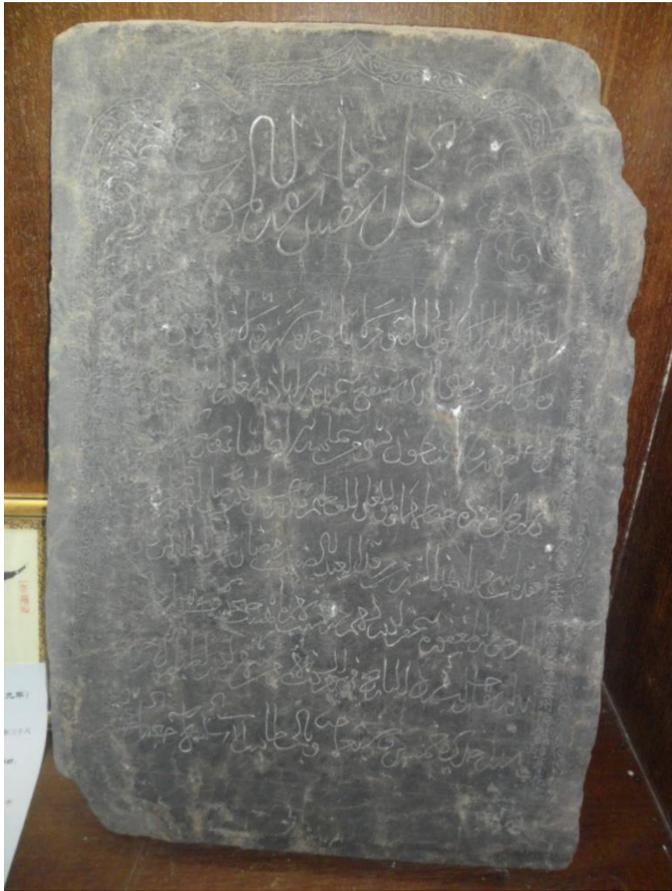


3-61..Blue-and-white dish, porcelain, Joseon, 19th century, h. 4.3, dia. 16.8, Ho-Am



3-62.Square-shaped water dropper, Joseon, 19th century, Joseon dynasty, 6.9 x7 x5.4

Chapter 4



4-1. Tombstone of a Goryeo Muslim, Ramadan (1312-1349), Goryeo, early 14th century, h.62, Guangzhou's Islamic grave sites

Chapter 5

5-1. Jar (fragment), celadon, Goryeo, 2nd half of the 13th century-14th century, h. 25.5, NMK



5-2. Double gourd-shaped ewer (h.34.2) and bowl (h.7.4), Goryeo, 13th century, NMK



5-3.Lidded box, Goryeo, c.12th century, h.3.6, NMK



5-4.Tile (plate), celadon, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 30.3, NMK



5-5.Mirror, bronze, Goryeo, dia. 9, Museum of Fine Art, Boston



5-6.Bowl, glazed clay, 11th -12th century, Garrus district, Iran, h. 14.2, Freer Gallery



5-7a.left: *Kundika*, bronze with silver wire inlays, Goryeo, 12th to 13th century, h.7.5, NMK

5-7b.right: Detail of the neck of the *kundika*



5-8.Stand for an incense burner, bronze inlaid with silver wire, Goryeo,1358,BM



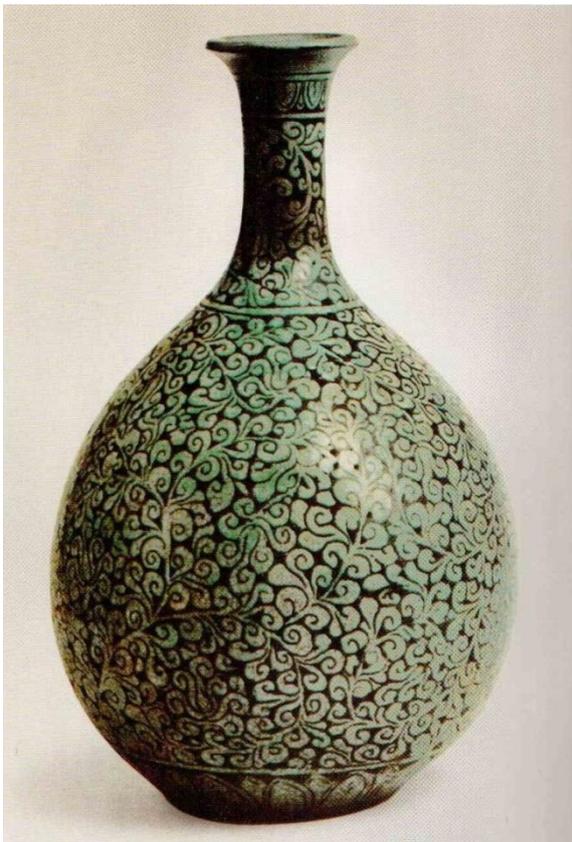
5-9. Box with lid, celadon, Goryeo, c.12th century, h. 11.7, National Museum of Tokyo



5-10. detail of Kundika, 5-7a



5-11.*left*: Incense burner, bronze, 1229/1289, h. 38.1, The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art
 5-12.*right*: Incense burner, bronze, Goryeo, 1352, h. 42.9, Joseon Museum of Art, Pyongyang



5-13..Bottle, stoneware, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 31.5, Museum of Yamato Bunkakan



5-14..Bowl, stoneware, Goryeo, dia. 17.8, BM



5-15.Sutra box, wood with lacquer, Goryeo, 13th century, h. 25.8, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



5-16a.*right*: Lacquered tray, mother-of-pearl, early Joseon, 15th century, h.2cm, dia.15.4, Hakgojae Gallery Collection, Seoul

5-15b.*left* : Side view



5-17.Jar with lid, *buncheong*, Joseon, 15th century, h. 21.5, Ewha Woman's University Museum



5-18a. *left*: Basin-shaped epitaph, *Buncheong*, Joseon, 1440, h.9.4, The Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art Seoul
 5-18b. *right*: Interior of the basin



5-19. Wash basin (h.17) and jug (h.37), brass, gold, silver inlay, Post-Zangid, 2nd half of 13th century, Mosul, northern Iraq, Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum, Berlin



5-20. Basin, luster ware, 1425-50, MMA



5-21..Basin, enameled glass, 14th century, h. 16.5, dia. 29.2, MMA



5-22. Basin of Hugh IV of Lusignan, inlaid with silver, 1324-59, h. 39, dia. 57, Louvre



5-23. Blue-and-white Basin, Yongle Reign (1403-1424), Ming dynasty (1368-1644), National Palace Museum, Beijing



5-24.Celadon vessels with basin, Longquan, Song dynasty, 13th century, Musée Guimet, Paris



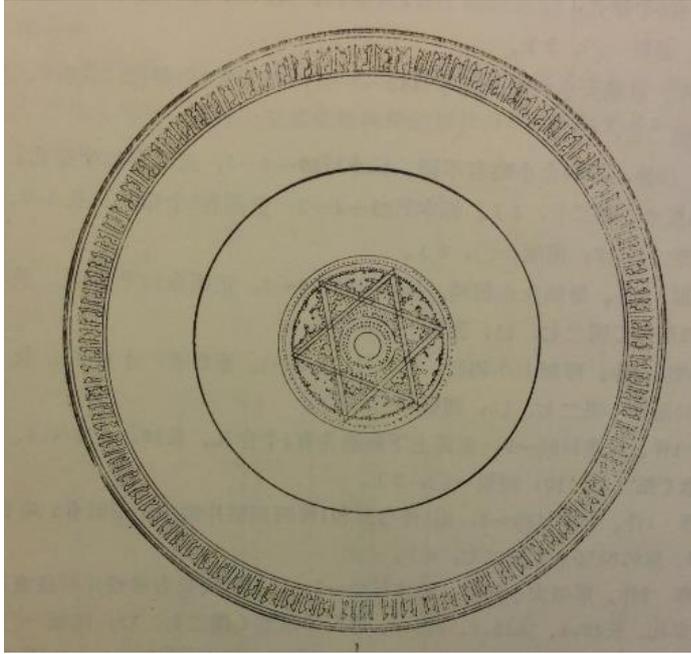
5-25.Basin, Yuan dynasty, NMK



5-26. Basin with stand, funerary items, Ming dynasty, National Palace Museum, Beijing



5-27a. Basin, bronze, Liao dynasty/Persia, 1018 or earlier, h. 19, dia. 57 (mouth), 9.33(base),
Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia



5-27b. Interior of the basin



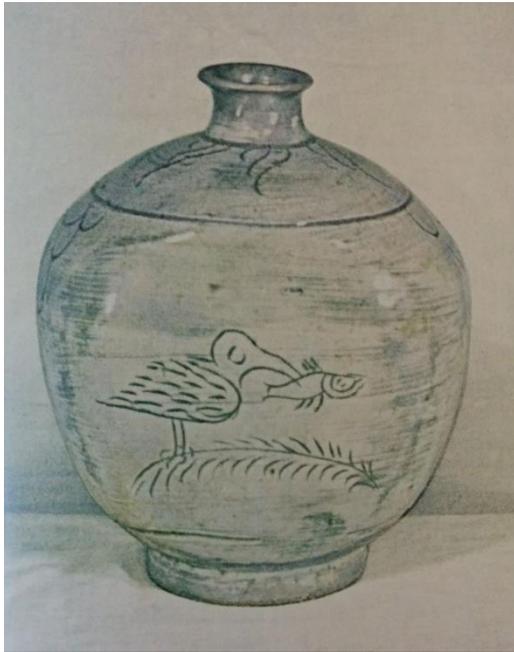
5-28a. Basin with silver inlay, Goryeo, 12th -13th century, dia. 77.5, NMK, Jeonju



5-28b. Interior of the basin



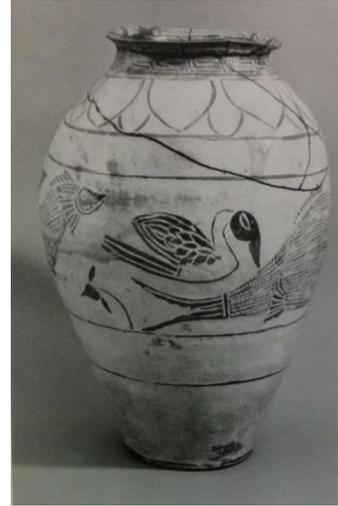
5-29. Photo of the rite of initiatory Cleansing (*kwanse*)

Chapter 6

6-1. Flask (*Pyeonbyeong*), *buncheong*, Joseon, 15th century, h. 20.7, Gansong Art Museum



6-2. Flask (*Jang-gun*), *buncheong*, Joseon, 15th-16th century, h. 14.4, MOCO



6-3a.*left* : Jar, buncheong, Joseon, 15th century, h.33cm, Museum of Folkcraft, Okayama

6-3b.*right* :Side view



6-4a.*left*: Bottle, buncheong, Joseon dynasty, 1st half of the 15th century, h.31, MOCO

6-4b.*right*: Side view



6-5.Sherd, *buncheong*, Joseon, 15th century, Museum of Ehwa Woman's University



6-6.Bottle, white porcelain, Joseon, 19th century, h.20



6-7.*left* : Bowl, lusterware, Abbasid Dynasty, late 9th – early 10th century, Arthur M. Sackler Museum

6-8.*right* : Bowl, lusterware, 10th century, Louvre



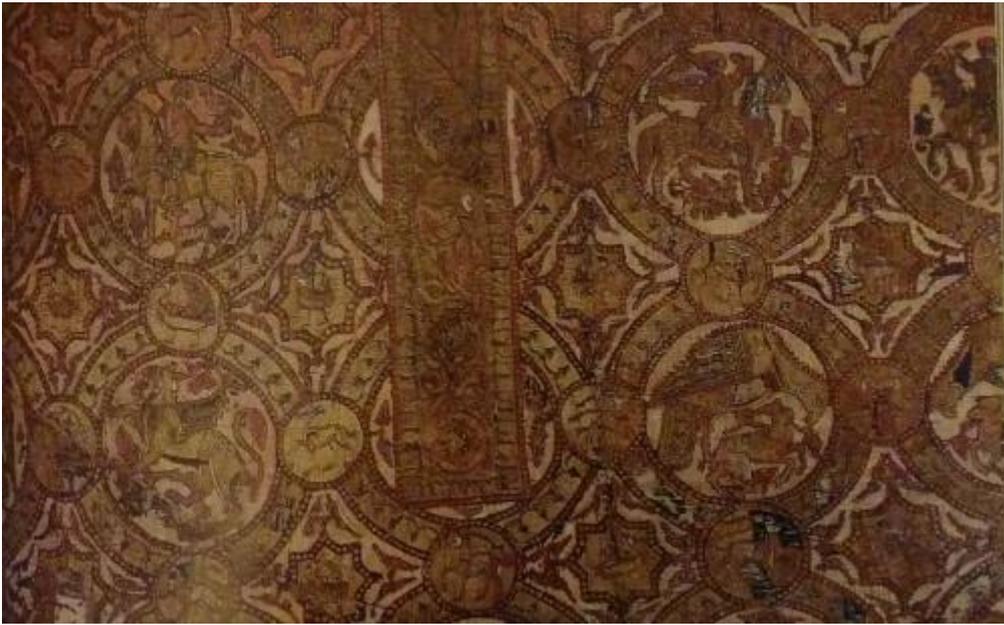
6-9.Jug, earthenware, 12th -13th century, Syria, h.16.7, Kuwait National Museum



6-10. Fragment of a moulded vessel, earthenware, 10th century, Iran, h. 5.1, MMA



6-11. Dish, *Lakabi* ware, Tell Minis, Zangid or Ayyubid period, 1100s, h. 8.3, Cleveland Museum of Art



6-12. Chasuble of St. Thomas Becket, textile, Fermo Cathedral, Rome



6-13. Marquetry panel, datable to 11th century, h. 22, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo



6-14a.Oliphant, ivory, 11th -12th centuries, Sicily or southern Italy, National Museums Scotland



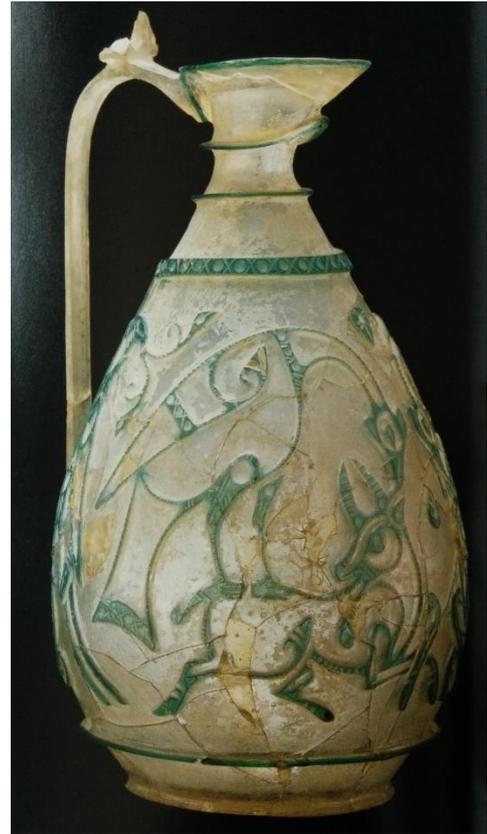
6-14b.Detail



6-15.Casket, ivory with silver mount, 1000-1025, Spain, h.26.8, V&A



6-16.*left* : Ewer, rock crystal, Fatimid, 1000-1060, h.19.4, V&A



6-17.*right* : Ewer, glass, c.1000, west Asia or Egypt, h.16, Corning Museum of Glass



6-18.Detail of jug, engraved and silver inlaid brass, c.1200m Herat, Iran, h.15.3, BM



6-19a.*left*: Perfume bottle, silver, 12th century, Iran, h.24.9, Freer Gallery of Art



6-19b.*right*: Detail



6-20a.*left* : Tray, sheet brass, inlaid with silver, c.1400, Damascus, dia.55, BM



6- 20b.*right* : Detail



6-21. Plate, silver, Sasanian period, late 5th – early 6th century, dia.21.9cm, MMA



6-22. Plaque, limestone, early dynastic III B (c.2400-2500 BCE), Mesopotamia, h. 14.5, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology



6-23a.*left*: Seljug Mausoleums, stucco, late 12th century, Gunbad-i Alaviyan, Hamada (Iran)

6-23b.*right*: Detail



6-24.Panels, carved ivory, 11th -12th century, Egypt, Museum



6-25a. Pen case, cast bronze, inlaid with copper and silver, 1st half of 13th century, Iran, h.4, The David Collection, Copenhagen



6-25b. Detail



6-26. Personal ornament, jade, Goryeo, 10th – 14th century, dia. 5, NMK



6-27.*left*: Belt slide, nephrite, Jin to Yuan dynasty, 12th -14th century, h. 6.7, MMA



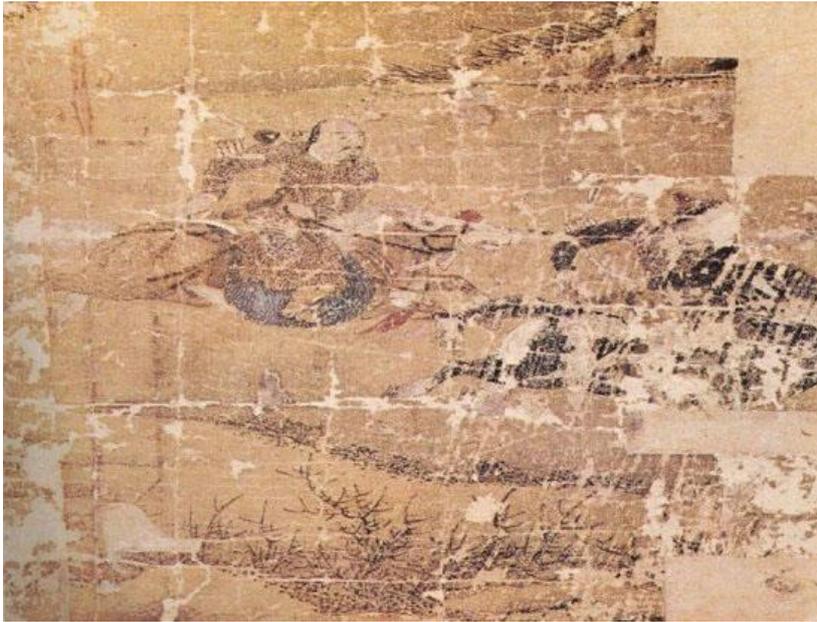
6- 28.*right*: Plaque, nephrite, Yuan dynasty (1272-1368), h.7.61, National Palace Museum, Taipei



6- 29a.*left* : Kublai Khan hunting, Liu Guandao, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, Yuan dynasty, dated 1280, 182.9 x104.1, National Palace Museum, Taipei



6- 29b.*right* : Detail of hunting motif in the shield



6-30. Cheonsan Daeryeop Do [A Hunt in the Mountains of Heaven], ink and colour on silk, attributed to King Kongmin, Goryeo, 14th century, 22.2 × 21.8, NMK



6-31. *Falcon on a Perch*, Yi am, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, Joseon, 16th century, 8.1 x 54.2, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston