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Tombs in Ji'an: the Course of the  
Divergence from the Tradition of  
Genre Paintings and the Invention  
of a New Pictorial Scheme**

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**Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies volume 2-1**

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## **The Case Study of Late Koguryō Tombs in Ji'an: the Course of the Divergence from the Tradition of Genre Paintings and the Invention of a New Pictorial Scheme**

In the present paper, we have observed that there are two types of transitions in the evolution from the middle to the late phases. Although a major theme, that of the Four Directional Animals, is shared, details and pictorial schemes are different. It is interesting to notice that two different characteristics, the complexity and the simplicity in each region contributed to make the unique regional evolution. Tombs of the Northern Dynasties and Koguryō could provide us with interesting case studies of adaptation and transformation of nomadic people through art. Examining their painted tombs reveals the course of the divergence of each from the former common tradition. Differences between (late middle and) late Koguryō tombs and late Northern Dynasties tombs might tell us that the perception of a tomb chamber in late Koguryō is changed and become to perceive the chamber as transitional one, transporting the soul of the dead to the next world with the exclusion of a genre scene.

## The Case Study of Late Koguryō Tombs in Ji'an: the Course of the Divergence from the Tradition of Genre Paintings and the Invention of a New Pictorial Scheme

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Koguryō painted tombs are distributed through the regions which were territories of Koguryō. These includes Huanren, Liaoning and Ji'an, Jilin, in China as well as Chagang, North and South P'yŏngan, and South Hwanghae Provinces in North Korea. Of one hundred or so Koguryō painted tombs, only about one tenth fall into the category of late Koguryō tombs. The beginning of late Koguryō painted tombs is assumed to be as early as the mid-5th century. Most of them are dated to the 6th century and the 7th century. The construction of those highly-developed painted tombs stopped abruptly when the united forces of Silla and Tang destroyed Koguryō in 668 CE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For general references on Koguryō painted tombs, see Umehara Sueji, *Chōsen ko-bunka sōkan* (Tōkyō, 1947); Sekino Tadashi, *Chōsen no kenchiku to geijutsu* (Tōkyō, 1941); Ikeuchi Hiroshi, *Tsūkō* (Tōkyō, 1938-1940); Ikeuchi Hiroshi, *Manshūokoku Anto-sho Shuan-ken Kōkuri iseki* (Tōkyō, 1936); *Chōsen koseki zufu* (Tōkyō, 1915-1935); *Koseki chōsa hōkoku* (Seoul, 1929-1940); Sekino Tadashi, *Chōsen no kenchiku to geijutsu* (Tōkyō, 1941); Geng Tiehua and Sun Renjie ed., *Gaogouli yanjiu wenji* (Yanbian, 1995); *Gaogouli Bohai wenwu jichen* (Haerbin, 1994); Li Dianfu, *Dongbei Kaogu yanjiu*. Vol. 2 (Zhengzhou, 1994); *Jianxian wenwuzhi* (Jilin, 1990); Kim Yongjun, *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa yŏn'gu* (P'yŏngyang, 1958); Chu Yŏnghŏn, *Koguryō pyōkhwa mudŏm ūi p'yŏnnyŏn e kwanhan yŏn'gu* (P'yŏngyang, 1961); Yi T'aeho and Yu Hongjun, *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa* (Seoul, 1995); Kim Wŏnyong, *Han'guk pyōkhwa kobun* (Seoul, 1980); Kim Ki'ung, *Han'guk ūi pyōkhwa kobun* (Seoul, 1982); An Hwijun, *Han'guk hoehwasa yŏn'gu* (Seoul, 2000); Azuma Ushio, *Kōkuri kogaku kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1997); Hanguk pangsong kongsa ed., *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa* (Seoul, 1994); Chosŏn ilbosa ed., *Chiban Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa* (Seoul, 1993); Li Dianfu, *Chungguknae ūi Koguryō yujŏk* (Seoul, 1994); Sin Hyŏngsik, *Chiban Koguryō yujŏk ūi chosa yŏn'gu* (Seoul, 1997); Pukhan ūi Munhwajae wa munhwa yujŏk (Seoul, 2000); Yi Hyŏnggu, *Koguryō ūi kogo munmul* (Seoul, 1996); Chŏn Hot'ae, *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa yŏn'gu* (Seoul, 2000); Chŏn Hot'ae, *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa ūi segye* (Seoul, 2004).

The focus of the article will lie on the three representative late Koguryō painting tombs in Ji'an, Jilin, China - Wukui Tomb No. 4, Wukui Tomb No. 5, and the Tomb of the Four Directional Animals at Tonggou for the reason that not only they possess extraordinary quality paintings in the exquisite composition but also that they represent distinctive characteristics of the Ji'an region art and culture different from those in the P'yōngyang region (figs. 1-4). In addition, the late phase paintings of Koguryō and the Northern Dynasties tomb paintings of China provide us with interesting case studies as both were produced by non-Chinese Northern people.

One of the issues related to the late Koguryō tombs is the sudden transformation from the genre painting to the Four Directional Animals painting either in the late 5th century or in the early 6th century. In the middle phase tombs such as Changchuan Tomb No. 1 and the Three Chambers Tomb in Ji'an, the major subject of tomb paintings was a daily life scene. A radical change occurred in a painting subject and in a composition of a chamber decoration as Koguryō tombs developed into the late phase, which gives us an impression of a striking contrast.

The most typical features representing the late phase Koguryō tombs are a single chambered tomb plan with a lantern ceiling and a subject of the Four Directional Animals. In a tomb plan, a multi chambered plan of the middle phase is changed into a single chamber plan. The early and middle phase Ji'an tombs are either one chambered tomb (Wanbaoting Tomb No. 1368) or a two-chambered tomb (Tomb of the Wrestlers and Tomb of the Dancers).

As for the ceiling structure, most of the early and the middle phase tombs in Ji'an have a flat ceiling, a vaulted ceiling, or a parallel-leveled ceiling. The Tomb of the Three Chambers is the only middle phase tomb in Ji'an with a lantern ceiling. Most late phase tombs in Ji'an, on the other hand, have a lantern style ceiling. As this structural change occurred in late Koguryō tombs, the interior of a single chambered tomb became to be decorated exclusively with the painting of the Four Directional Animals.

In terms of painting subjects, daily life scenes have disappeared and fantastic and mythological animals have become the major themes. This suggests a radical change in the perception of the tomb funerary space in



Fig. 1 The exterior view of the Wukui Tomb Complex (After *Chōsen Kobunka sōkan*, pl. 10)

Koguryō people's minds. Presenting the Four Directional Animals on each directional wall of a single chamber transforms the tomb chamber into an unrealistic symbolic world. Daoist influence has been taken for granted as the inspiration of the Four Directional Animals tombs of Koguryō. Understanding the transition from middle to late Koguryō artwork might come from determining the reason for the disappearance of figure paintings. In the late Koguryō tombs, a painting of human figures in a daily life scene completely disappeared, while it persisted in painted tombs of the Northern and Southern Dynasties of China. The study of the change from the middle to the late phases could be connected to the study of the late Northern and Southern Dynasties tombs, which were contemporary to the late Koguryō tombs.

In order to trace the changing process of the disappearance of the human figures in a daily life scene and the newly composed pictorial scheme in late Koguryō, I shall turn to the middle phase painted tombs showing the transition. There is a striking contrast in comparing the two Ji'an region tombs, the Tomb of the Dancers, an early phase tomb, with Wukui Tomb No. 4 in their pictorial programs, painting techniques, and ideological implications. Located relatively close to each other in the same Yushanxia tomb complex, the Tomb of the Dancers and Wukui Tomb No. 4 are separated by more than 100 years in time, presenting us with an interesting problem in connecting the patrons and painters who must have worked on them. It is difficult to explain how the transition from Changchuan Tomb No. 1 to the



Fig. 2 The Four Directional Animals, the Tomb of the Four Directional Animals (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 270-273)

Wukui tomb happens because of sudden changes in the subjects and composition of wall paintings in a tomb chamber. Rather primitive and small, the Four Directional Animals in Changchuan Tomb No. 1 and in the Tomb of the Three Chambers are quite different from those of the late middle phase P'yŏngyang tombs. It is hard to imagine the Four Directional Animals in Wukui Tombs from these paintings.

The number of Ji'an mural tombs is about one fourth that of the P'yŏngyang region tombs. We can see that the early and middle period tombs in the Ji'an region and those in the P'yŏngyang region demonstrate the common interests of and representations done by painters. Since Ji'an was the second capital of Koguryŏ and P'yŏngyang was the third and last capital, I will use the term, the P'yŏngyang region tombs for those Koguryŏ tombs located in North Korea. It was in 427 CE that King Changsu moved the cap-

ital from Ji'an to P'yōngyang. Late phase tombs in Ji'an approximately dated from the late 5th century to the early 7th century must have been built after the movement of the capital. With the consideration of the capital movement, one can raise a question about who the occupant of three late tombs in Ji'an might have been if they moved the capital in 427. We will examine the tradition of paintings of the Four Directional Animals in the two regions, and see in what way both regions interacted with each other in making a new trend. The examination will show that Ji'an formed an interesting and unique cultural and artistic center from the 4th to the 7th centuries distinctive from the trends of other regions at that time including P'yōngyang and Datong and Luoyang of Northern Wei.

### The Description of the Late Phase Tombs and Painting in Koguryō

Five earthen mound tombs are lined up along the east and west axis behind the Ji'an train station in Yushan cun, Taiwang xiang, Ji'an xian, Jilin, China (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> Due to the exterior view of a tomb mound in the shape of helmet, the tombs got their names *wukui* in Chinese. Among them, two tombs from the left were investigated by Japanese scholars before 1945. An easternmost tomb was called Tonggou Tomb No. 17 at the time of the first investigation. In 1962, Jilin Provincial Museum reinvestigated the tomb. They designated the tomb Yushanxia Tomb No. 2105, but it is usually called Wukui Tomb No. 5.

The other tomb was also investigated by Japanese before 1945, and an investigation in 1950 revealed beautiful paintings executed directly on a stone granite wall. In 1962, Jilin Provincial Museum and Ji'an County Cultural Preservation Office examined the tomb. The official name of the tomb is Tomb No. 2104 in Yushanxia Tomb Complex in Ji'an. The other three tombs among the five Wukui tombs are still awaiting for excavation work.

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2 "Jilin Ji'an Wukui fen Sihaomu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1 (1984), pp. 121-136; "Jilin Ji'an Wukui fen Sihao he wuhao gumu qingli lueji," *Kaogu* 2 (1964); Li Dianfu, *Chungguknae ū Koguryō yujōk* (Seoul, 1994), pp. 137-243; *Jilinshengzhi*. Vol. 43. *Wenwuzhi* (Changchun, 1991); Dong Changfu and Wen Lin, "Ji'an Gaogouli gumu bihua," *Wenwu tiandi* 6 (1984); Sin Hyōngsik, *Chiban Koguryō yujōk ūi chosa yōn'gu* (Seoul, 1997); Hanguk pangsong kongsa ed., *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa* (Seoul, 1994); *Chiban Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa* (Seoul, 1993).

The Tomb of the Four Directional Animals, another late phase Koguryŏ tomb in Ji'an, was discovered by Japanese scholars in 1935. The Tomb of the Four Directional Animals at Tonggou is located about 50 meters to the north of the Wukui tombs. To the west of the Tomb of the Four Directional Animals and to the north of the Wukui tombs, there are another group of tombs. They are called Sikui Tombs whose names stem from the same reason as that of Wukui tombs. Recent archaeological work carried out for the purpose of renovation of the site in preparation of the World Heritage nomination revealed that a large earth mound tomb (Yushanxia Tomb No. 2110), which is next to Sikui Tombs and in front of Wukui Tomb No. 2, is decorated with wall paintings too. The Tomb of the Four Directional Animals at Tonggou was first known to the public by the Japanese scholar Ikeuchi Hiroshi who introduced the tomb in Tonggou (1935-40) along with other tombs in the region. Wukui Tomb No. 4 and No. 5 were introduced in *Kaogu* (1964. 2). In general, the paintings in Wukui Tomb No. 4 are better preserved compared to those of Wukui Tomb No. 5 and the Tomb of the Four Directional Animals.

Late phase tombs in the North Korea region which are chosen for a comparison here include the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Honam-ri, Chinp'a-ri Tombs No. 1 and 4, the Great Tomb at Kangsŏ, the Middle Tomb at Kangsŏ, the Tomb of Horse Armor (Kor. Kaema-ch'ong), and Nae-ri Tomb No. 1.<sup>3</sup> While one can observe the exquisite and colorful composition and brushwork in Wukui Tomb No. 4, which appears to be a phenomenon peculiar to late Ji'an tombs late P'yŏngyang tombs such as the Great Tomb at Kangsŏ and Chinp'a-ri Tomb No. 4, exhibit rather simplicity, but are clearly within a tradition of highly skilled, beautiful artwork.

The Four Directional Animals Tomb at Honam-ri is located at the base of Taesŏng Mountain in Songmun-ri, Samsŏk District, P'yŏngyang City. The

3 Yi T'aeho and Yu Hongjun, *Koguryŏ kobun pyŏkhwa* (Seoul, 1995); Chŏn Hot'ae, "Koguryŏ hugi sasingye kobun pyŏkhwa e po i nŭn sŏnbul honhapjŏk naesegwan," *Ulsan sahak* 7 (1997), pp. 1-48; Sin Hyŏngsik, *Chiban Koguryŏ yujŏk ūi chosa yŏn'gu* (Seoul, 1997); Hanguk pangsong kongsa ed., *Koguryŏ kobun pyŏkhwa* (Seoul, 1994); *Chiban Koguryŏ kobun pyŏkhwa* (Seoul, 1993); Chŏng Chaehun, *Pukhan ūi munhwa yusan*. vol. 2. (Seoul, 1990), p. 50; Li Dianfu, *Chungguknae ūi Koguryŏ yujŏk* (Seoul, 1994); Yi Hyŏnggu and Cho Yujŏn, *Koguryŏ ūi kogo munmul* (Sŏngnam, 1996).

tomb was excavated in 1916 along with the adjacent Tomb of the Horse Armor. To the west, there is Kosan-ri Tombs No. 1 and No. 9 and to the east is Nae-ri Tomb No. 1. Oriented to the south, the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Honam-ri is a single chambered tomb with a parallel and lantern ceiling (3.6 m. long [east-west], 3.1 m. wide [north-south], 3 m. high). Its walls are made of marble - a feature unique to this tomb.

Located in Mujin-ri, Yōkp'o District, P'yōngyang City, Chinp'a-ri Tomb No. 4 (formerly Mujin-ri Tomb No. 1, now Tongmyōng wangnūng kobun-gun Tomb No. 1) is one of nine tombs located to the north of the Tomb of King Tongmyōng. Those tombs in the Chinp'a-ri tomb complex have various types of a single-chambered plan. The earthen mound of Chinp'a-ri Tomb No. 4 is 23 m. in one side and 6 m. high. Its single chamber is oriented to the south (3.04 m. long x 2.53 m. wide x 2.5 m. high). It usually dates to the early 6th century. The tomb is assumed by North Korean scholars to be the joint burial place of General Ondal and the P'yōnggang princess. The tomb paintings mainly use red, green, yellow, white, purple, black, and faint red. And the use of a golden powder is extraordinary. Ninety-one stars are painted with this golden powder on the ceiling's top stone.

Chinp'a-ri Tomb No. 1 is at Ryongsan-ri, Ryōkp'o District (formerly Chinp'a-ri), P'yōngyang city (formerly Mujin-ri Tomb No. 9. Now the Tomb No. 9 at the Tomb Complex around the Tomb of King Tongmyōng). The tomb is oriented to the south. Its earthen mound is 30 m. long and 7 m. high, and the single chamber measures 3.4 m. long, 2.5 m. wide, and 2.54 m. high. Chinp'a-ri Tomb No.1 is dated to the early 5th to late 6th century. A guardian in the entranceway holds a spear and stands on a lotus. This figure, with a halo and a floral crown recalls Buddhist guardian figures. Since the tomb is located close to the Tomb of King Tongmyōng, the tomb might be related to the royal family. North Korean scholars assume that it may be the tomb of General Ko Hül, who defeated Tujue invaders at the walled cities of Sin and Paekam in the late 6th century.

Three large earthen mound tombs are located in Sammyo-ri, Kangsō district, Namp'o City. The one to the south is the Great Tomb at Kangsō and the one on the west side in the back is the Middle Tomb. The Great Tomb at Kangsō is a single-chambered tomb (3.18 m. long, 3.15 m. wide, 3.5 m.

high). The Middle Tomb at Kangsŏ measures 3.29 m. long, 3.09-3.11 m. wide, and 2.55 m. high.

In the following, I shall analyze the pictorial scheme of late Koguryŏ tombs in Ji'an with an emphasis on the subjects representing the distinctive characteristics of Ji'an. Discerning the distinctive feature of Ji'an tombs will enable us to see the different evolution processes in the two regions, Ji'an and P'yŏngyang, as well as with that of the Northern Dynasties tombs.

The most conspicuous and significant theme in the three Ji'an Tombs is the painting of the Four Directional Animals. The theme of the painting of the Four Directional Animals does not appear in the early phase tombs such as the Tomb of the Wrestlers. It is the subject that gained the increasing significance as Koguryŏ murals developed into the middle phase. It then became to represent the late phase paintings and gave late painted Koguryŏ tombs the name *sasindo kobun* (a tomb decorated with the painting of the Four Directional Animals).

As late phase tombs in Ji'an, the theme in Wukui Tombs and the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Tonggou have typical features of the late period (figs. 2-4). Each animal occupies an entire wall space on each directional wall. Their bodies are elongated and slender and their tails stretch backward in a wavy line. The Black Warrior in the three late Ji'an tombs is similar in the exaggerated twisting of a snake's body.

In contemplating late Koguryŏ tombs, although a major theme, that of the Four Directional Animals, is shared, the difference between Ji'an and P'yŏngyang is very obvious when one compares the details and pictorial schemes in each region. Especially the background painting in the scene of the Four Directional Animals helps us to understand a regional difference in late tombs. Two types of the background paintings were employed. The one is a landscape or floral motif. The other is a continuous decorative motif such as a lozenge or net-like motif in Wukui tombs.

In the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Tonggou, the Four Directional Animals are drawn on a cloud background. The background in the painting of the Four Directional Animals of Wukui Tombs No. 4 and No. 5 is a complicated continuous decorative pattern consisting of lotus, vines,

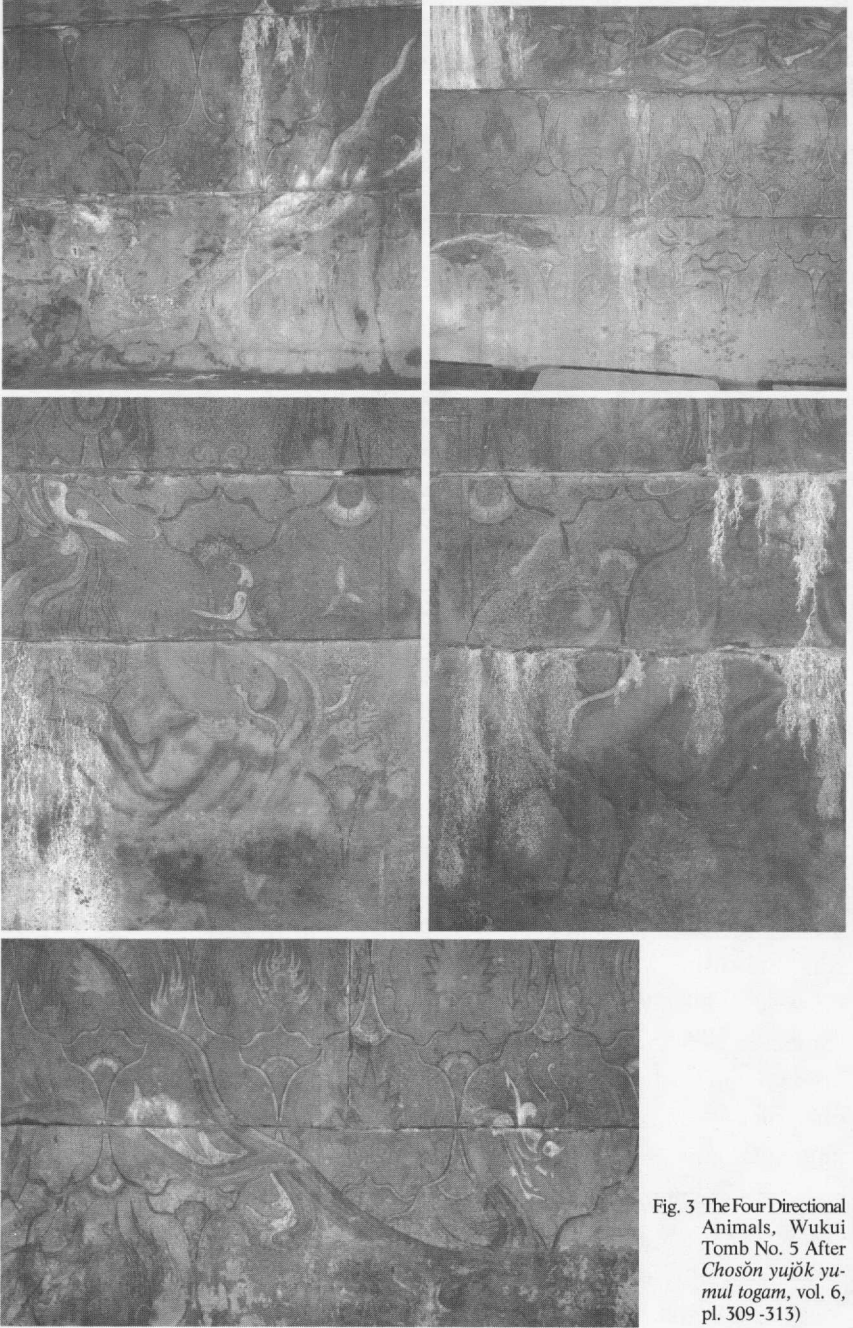


Fig. 3 The Four Directional Animals, Wukui Tomb No. 5 After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 309-313)



Fig. 4 The Four Directional Animals, Wukui Tomb No. 4 (After *Chosŏn yujök yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 288-292)

flame, and various figures. This continuous pattern somewhat reminds us of the kind of diamond-shaped enclosure pattern used in early Kizil caves.

Wukui Tomb No. 4 and Tomb No. 5 have almost identical paintings, but one addition is found in Wukui Tomb No. 4. About ten small figures are standing inside a continuous diamond-shaped motif on a wall (fig. 4). However, unlike the human figures in the early and the middle phases, the context in which the figure is inserted is not in a daily life scene. Each figure inside the net pattern has a different pose and outfit. The posture and paraphernalia of some figures inside the continuous motif resemble those of the imperial donors who stand in a row in Chinese Buddhist stone caves, especially in Longmen and Gongxian (fan, trailing garment, shawl in front of chest, shoes, and hair dress). Longmen caves started to be built in the late 5th century after the capital moved to Luoyang (494 CE). Wukui Tomb No. 4 is dated to the early 6th century by Chŏn Hot'ae, to the early to mid 6th

century by Chu Yǒnghǒn, to the mid 5th to the late 6th century by Li Dianfu, and to the mid 6th century by Liu Xuantang.

The context where the figure is put, however, is different from Buddhist caves. First of all, all figures appear individually not in a row. Several figures who clearly are not imperial personages appear on the north and south walls. The one on the north wall (close to the west wall and at the bottom) has a shaven head and points with a stick at eight diagrams drawn in front of him, as he crouches on a lotus. His clothing (light green in color) is not that of an imperial donor but an immortal, and he exposes part of his body. The one on the south wall sitting with a small vessel in front of him is also an immortal. These figures remind us of two immortals on the ceiling of the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Tonggou and of Seven Sages of Bamboo Grove in Nanjing Museum.<sup>4</sup> The question here is why those figures are placed inside the continuous motif on a wall. Imperial donor-like figures do not accompany any attendant. These imperial donors like figure might have been perceived as an unearthly subject like an immortal in Koguryō people's mind.

Among the late phase tombs in North Korea, the Honam-ri Tomb in the North Korea region is probably the earliest. Its Four Directional Animals are painted on a plain background. The tomb mural is very simple overall, without any decorative motif.

The Four Directional Animals in Chinp'ari Tomb No. 1 are depicted on a beautiful cloud and floral background which is similar to those in the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Tonggou. In particular, the two pine trees stand beside the Black warrior on the north wall and they are a well-known example of landscape representation in late Koguryō. The landscape representation in this tomb is very close in style to that found in the filial piety stone sarcophagus from the Northern Dynasties of the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City dated to c. 525 and in wall paintings of the Northern Qi Tomb of Cui Fen.

The Four Directional Animals in the Great Tomb at Kangsǒ done in exquisite and natural style is the most excellent example of this kind in late

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<sup>4</sup> See *Zhongguo meishu quanji* vol. 1, figure 98.

Koguryō. The Black Warrior is painted more finely than all the others. The Vermilion Bird stands on small mountains.

We have observed that landscape settings with trees and mountains are unique to P'yōngyang while Wukui tombs have unique decorative paintings-tortoise shell patterns covering the wall. The Four Directional Animals in a landscape are surrounded by fluttering floral motifs and the wind, all strongly giving the sensation of movement, corresponding in style to that of the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

Besides a continuous decorative pattern on the background, another unique feature in late Ji'an tombs is a mythological animal on a corner of a tomb chamber. These strangely looking beasts increase the impression of the intensity and exaggeration about late Ji'an tombs. On the four corners of a single chamber of Wukui Tomb No. 4 are mythological beasts that appear to support the ceiling or running away. The one in the Tomb of the Four Directional Animals at Tonggou has a rat-like face (fig. 5). While the one in the Tonggou Tomb shows its back, the beast in Wukui Tomb No. 4 is facing forward (fig. 6). The facial feature of Wukui Tomb beast is similar to the beast face (Kor. kwimyōn; Ch. guimian) drawn on the Tonggou Tomb ceiling. The same type of animal-headed beast appears on the ceilings or on an entranceway of late Northern and Southern Dynasties tombs as well as in Dunhuang Caves No. 249 and No. 285, where it appears as a wind god and a spirit monster. They appear to replace a painting of a dark red colored pillar found in the early and middle phase tombs. The painting of a beam of a house interior is also changed into a band of an entwined dragon (Ji'an) or a vine decoration (P'yōngyang) in late Koguryō.

A mythological animal on a corner of a tomb chamber in late Ji'an tombs implies that the chamber space now represents not a house interior but a non-realistic, imaginative space. In the Three Chambers Tomb, the second and the third chambers are decorated only with life sized atlas figures. Such an atlas figure appears even smaller in Changchuan Tomb No. 1, where he squats at the corner of a ceiling in the front chamber. In P'yōngyang tombs, a similar transition is shown in the life sized atlas figure in the Taean-ri Tomb who is supporting a bracket set protruding on a corner. The large beast supporting a ceiling in Ji'an, however, does not appear

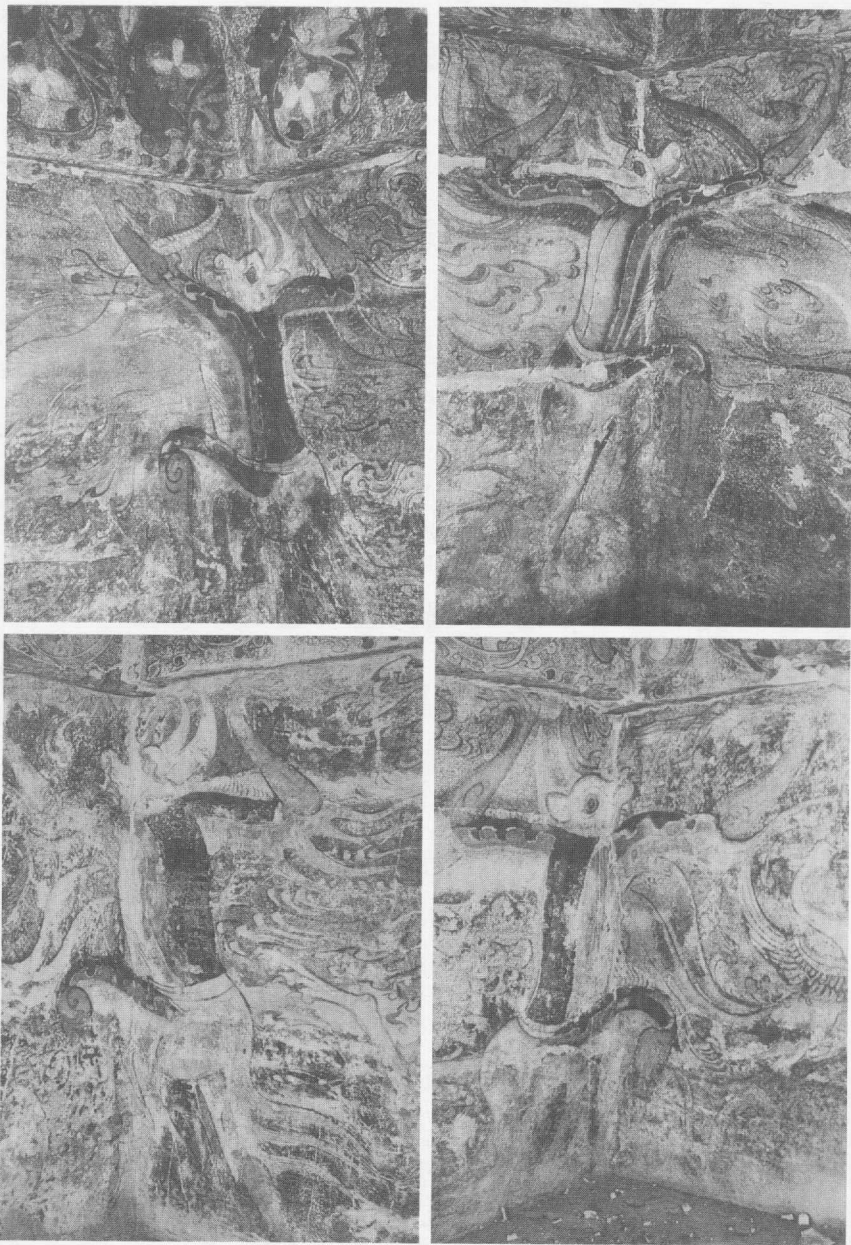


Fig. 5 Beast on a corner of a chamber, the Tomb of the Four Directional Animals (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 276-279)

at all in late tombs in the P'yŏngyang region.

This distinction between the Ji'an and P'yŏngyang region tombs are observed in the ceiling paintings as well (figs. 7 and 8). In the P'yŏngyang region, the ceilings tend to be decorated with winding floral or cloud motifs. Unlike late tombs in Ji'an, most late tombs in P'yŏngyang, such as the Middle Tomb at Kangsŏ, the Nae-ri Tomb, and Chinp'a-ri Tomb No. 1, have no human figures depicted on ceilings, but only decorative motifs. The ceiling of Chinp'ari Tomb No. 1 is full of vine decorations. The top ceiling has the sun and the moon.

On the other hand, immortals either riding on an animal or playing a musical instrument were a favorite theme in the ceiling of the Ji'an region tombs. A similar heavenly being motif is found in tombs and cave temples of China during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period. Dunhuang Buddhist caves, especially with a vaulted ceiling, provide a similar example to that of late Ji'an tombs.

Subject matter on the ceiling in the Tonggou Four Directional Animals Tomb is not much different from the earlier tombs—the sun, the moon, a dragon, and a heavenly being. Wall paintings are not well preserved compared with those in Wukui Tombs No. 4 and 5. A vine decoration spreads along the parallel level. In Wukui Tombs, it is replaced by tightly coiled dragons.

On the first lantern ceiling level are ten figures riding on animals and flying amongst clouds. The five figures on the west sides are immortals and ride on a bird and a deer while the five on the east wear an imperial head dress and ride on a dragon. There are no figures playing musical instruments. In number, they are the same as the immortals and imperial donor-like figures on walls in Wukui Tomb No. 4. In Wukui Tombs, half of the heavenly beings play musical instruments and they have the same attributes as heavenly beings in Longmen caves in China.

The second lantern level has the sun and moon deities who hold up the sun and moon over their heads (east ceiling), as well as two immortals who kneel toward the north (west ceiling). One immortal is seated in front of a table and is writing something on paper. An ink stone (?) is placed beside him. The other is holding a stick in his hands. In this tomb, three beast faces

are drawn on the corner stones of the second level.

On the first parallel level of the ceiling in Wukui 4 are some intricately intertwined dragons. In this tomb, the intertwined dragons are used in place of a painting of a beam and bracket set. This kind of complicated dragon motif is similar to the decoration on the inner red coffin of Tomb No. 1, Mawangdui, China (ca. 165 BCE).

On a lantern ceiling are various figures such as an ox headed deity, a wheel deity, the sun and the moon deities, the sun, the moon, and heavenly beings playing music. As daily life scenes become extinct in late Koguryō, the entertainers also disappear from the murals on walls. In late Koguryō tombs, we find no more entertainers wearing the typical spotted clothing with long sleeves. However, music and dance perfor-

mances continue to appear on ceiling space as performed by heavenly beings. In late Koguryō tombs, there is no realistic depiction of the actual dancing of Koguryō. Those musicians found in Wukui Tombs are unique in that their attributes are closer to those of heavenly beings depicted in Chinese and Central Asian Buddhist caves. A Buddhist-inspired heavenly being is found as early as in the Three Chambers Tomb and Changchuan Tomb No. 1. This suggests that the fusion between Koguryō funerary art and Buddhist art might have been intensified in the late Koguryō. Entertainers in late Koguryō tombs are either bare-chested or they wear a fluttering heaven-



Fig. 6 Beast on a corner of a chamber, Wukui Tomb No. 4 (above), Wukui Tomb No. 5 (below) (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pls. 293 and 314)



Fig. 7 Paintings on a ceiling, Wukui Tomb No. 5 (left) and the Great Tomb at Kangsŏ (right) (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 369, 307)

ly garment. They are also often riding on an animal. Musical instruments become more varied, and come to be more similar to those in Central Asian or Chinese caves.

In the Kangsŏ Great Tomb, the first parallel level of the ceiling has a vine decoration and the second level has a heavenly being and an immortal as well as mountains. The east and west ceilings each have a mountain in the center. Amongst clouds, two immortals in front lead a rider on a bird who is about to fly over the mountain. Four heavenly beings in a Longmen cave style appear on the north ceiling. With fluttering heavenly scarves, the two of them in the front are scattering flowers while the two in the back are playing flutes. The Middle Tomb at Kangsŏ has a ceiling simply decorated with a plain vine decoration, the sun and the moon, and a lotus flower.

### **The Consideration on Transitional Tombs and the Change in the Perception of a Funerary Space in Late Koguryŏ**

In the above, the major themes in late Koguryŏ tombs in Ji'an have been described and regional differences between the two regions, Ji'an and

P'yōngyang, were discussed. Next, placing those late Koguryō tombs in the three-phase development of painted tombs in Ji'an from the 4th to the 7th centuries would be necessary since it will help us to understand such specific iconographic program presented in late Koguryō tombs and the relationships with other East Asian examples.

The examination of the early and middle Ji'an tombs could be a case study of the art and culture of Ji'an as the capital of a non-Chinese kingdom from the 4th to the 5th centuries in Northeast Asia. From the mid 4th to the mid 5th centuries, it was the period of territorial expansion in Koguryō. The middle phase tombs in Ji'an are Tonggou Tomb No. 12, the Tomb of the Three Chambers, and Changchuan Tomb No. 1, all of which are approximately dated to the 5th century. Especially, Changchuan Tomb No. 1 and the Tomb of the Three Chambers (and Shanchengxia Tomb No. 983) can be seen as the transitional tombs from the early tombs such as the Tomb of the Dancers to the late tombs such as Wukui Tomb No. 4. For example, in Changchuan Tomb No. 1, the back chamber excludes genre painting entirely and contains only decorative motifs, which will be one of the major themes in late tombs (fig. 9). Several atlas figures in the second and the third chambers of the Tomb of the Three Chambers represent a transition to late tombs as did several P'yōngyang tombs including Taaen-ri Tomb No. 1 (figs. 10, 11, 12).

The middle phase tombs in Ji'an can be divided into two types, a tomb decorated with a painting of a tomb occupant in his lifetime activities and a tomb filled with a purely decorative motif. A tendency toward a complex composition in late Ji'an tombs appears to partly stem from the prevalence of the purely decorative motif tombs in the region around the 5th century. The appearance of a tomb decorated exclusively with purely ornamental paintings in the 4th and the 5th centuries in Koguryō may not have a counterpart in the history of Chinese tombs. Those purely ornamental motifs are sometimes attributed to the influence of Buddhism. It is the middle phase Koguryō tombs that Buddhist-inspired motifs and themes (heavenly beings, Buddha, the bodhisattvas, rebirth from a lotus flower, etc.) are apparent. The counterparts of these motifs are easily found in many Chinese Buddhist cave temples. The Buddha worship scene on the Changchuan Tomb ceiling

tell us that by the time of the construction of Changchuan Tomb No. 1, funerary images and practice of Koguryŏ experienced incorporation with those of Buddhist. At the same time, the appearance of purely decorative motifs in the back chamber shows that the unique funerary ideology in the late phase is in development.

In Chŏn Hot'ae's chronology, there are no late 5th century tombs in Ji'an. There are several Ji'an tombs dated approximately to the late 5th century by other scholars. They are Yushanxia Tomb No. 41 (Kang Hyonsuk), the Tomb of the Concentric Circles and the Tomb of the Tortoise Shell Pattern (Liu Xuantang), Changchuan Tomb No. 1 (Liu Xuantang and Park Chinuk), and the Tomb of the Three Chambers (Liu Xuantang and Kang Hyonsuk).<sup>5</sup> Among them, the Tomb of the Concentric Circles and the Tomb of the Tortoise Shell Pattern are decorative motif tombs. The case of the Tomb of the Concentric Circles could be very interesting since it is known that a painting of human figures in a daily life was first drawn on a wall, and then later, the walls were later covered with a painting of a purely decorative motif, a concentric circle. What we can consider as a comparable example for the decorative pattern as a back ground painting is the Guyuan lacquer coffin from the Northern Wei Tomb. The side of the coffin of the Tomb No. 1 at Guyuan is divided into three bands. The middle part is covered with a lozenge pattern and the upper and the lower parts have a painting of a filial piety scene and a hunting scene each.

There are about ten early and middle phase tombs in North Korea with relatively well-preserved pictorial schemes. In the P'yŏngyang region, the transitional tombs would be Anak Tomb No. 2, the Susan-ri Tomb, Tae-an-ri Tomb No. 1, and Tŏkhwa-ri Tomb No. 1.

In case of the late P'yŏngyang group, a transition towards having the Four Directional Animals as the major or, indeed, single motif is easily discernable in the Tae-an-ri Tomb, the Tŏkhwa-ri Tomb, and the Hunting Tomb (figs. 13, 14). In these tombs, the gradual process of the disappearance of genre scenes and their replacement by the Four Directional Animals is clearly suggested.

<sup>5</sup> Chŏn Hot'ae, *Koguryŏ kobun pyŏkhwa yŏn'gu* (Seoul, 2000), pp. 417-419



Fig. 8 Heavenly Beings on a ceiling, Wukui Tomb No. 5 (After *Chōsen Kobunka sōkan*, pl. 12)

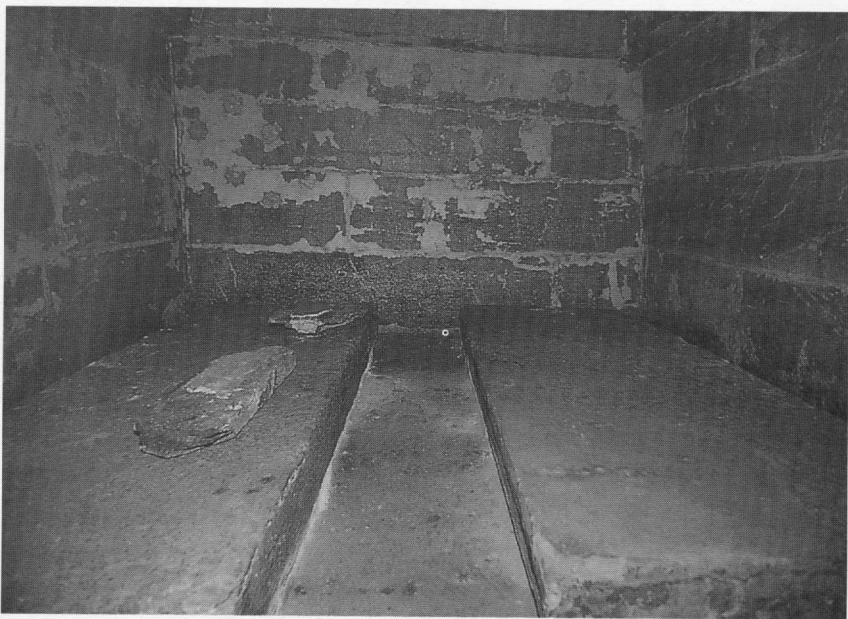


Fig. 9 Lotus Flowers in the back chamber of Changchuan Tomb No. 1 (After *Chiban Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa*, pl. 68)

As the Four mythical deities move down to a wall from a ceiling, human figures in a procession scene appear on the upper part of the wall above the Four Directional Animals. According to Chŏn Ho'tae's chronology on Koguryŏ painted tombs, the Tomb of Hunting (Suryŏp-ch'ong), the Tomb of the Twin Pillars, the Tŏkhwa-ri Tomb, and the Susan-ri Tomb are late 5th century tombs (Tae-an-ri is mid-5th century).<sup>6</sup> In the Tae-an-ri Tomb, the Four Directional Animals occupy the back chamber; these animals, in the Tomb of the Twin Pillars, appear in the front chamber. The position of the genre paintings is also different. Yaksu-ri Tomb is also comparable to the two tombs in that the back chambers is used for the Four Directional Animals and the front chamber for figures in daily life scenes. A common feature found in the Yaksu-ri Tomb and Changchuan Tomb No. 1 is a simple decoration in the back chamber. An octagonal ceiling appears in the Tae-an-ri Tomb and the Tŏkhwa-ri. Genre paintings in the Susan-ri Tomb are probably the best-developed stylistically among tombs with the same genre painting.

### **The Achievement of the Distinctive Style in Ji'an in the Evolution of Funerary Arts**

Most late Koguryŏ tombs are dated to the 6th century, while the middle period Koguryŏ tombs are of the 5th century. The period from the late 5th century to the early 6th century coincided with the reigns of King Changsu (413-491 CE), King Munja (myong) (491-519 CE), and King Anjang (519-531 CE). The movement of a capital in 427 CE yields intricate considerations about two groups of tombs, those of the 3rd to the early 5th centuries and those of the late 5th to the 6th centuries. It is important to consider the identity and characteristics of the people who continued to build mural tombs in Ji'an after the transfer of the capital to P'yŏngyang.

Before the movement of the capital, we found more similarities in the

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<sup>6</sup> Chŏn Ho'tae, *Koguryŏ kobun pyŏkhwa yŏn'gu* (Seoul, 2000), pp. 417-419.



Fig. 10 *yōksa* figure on the ceiling, the front chamber of Changchuan Tomb No. 1 (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 105)

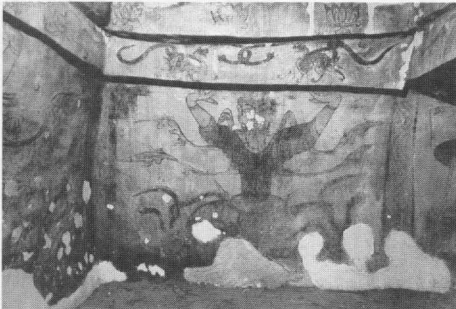


Fig. 11 *yōksa* figure, right wall, the second chamber, the Tomb of the Three Chamber (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 85)

development of human figures in daily life in both regions. However, as we move to the late phase, or more exactly speaking from about the later part of the middle phase, we can observe the two region tombs became to have more regional variation and distinction. Subjects dominant in Ji'an such as a purely ornamental painting (fan-shaped lotus) and subjects missing in Ji'an (carriage procession, ancient stories and legends from Chinese sources) show differences and give clues about Ji'an's originality.

There are two types of transitions shown in the evolution from the middle to the late phases. The one found in the Ji'an region is the use of a transitional motif such as *yōksa* and a lotus flower. On the other hand, the change in the P'yŏngyang region is rather gradual as showing the co-existence of two subjects, human figures in a daily life scene and the Four

Directional Animals on one wall space. In the above, we have observed that in spite of the fact the two regions developed the same trend around the late 5th century, the manifestation of the theme took a little different form. In contemplating late Koguryō tombs, another aspect to point out concerns the difference between Ji'an and P'yŏngyang. Although a major theme, that of



Fig. 12 *yōksa* figure, Northeast corner, the back chamber, Tomb No. 1 at Taean-ri (After *Chosŏn yujŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 157)

the Four Directional Animals, is shared, details and pictorial schemes are different. As for late P'yŏngyang tombs such as the Great Tomb at Kangsŏ and Chinp'a-ri Tomb No. 4, they exhibit simplicity, but are clearly within a tradition of highly skilled, beautiful artwork. The exquisite and colorful composition and brushwork found in Wukui Tomb

No. 4 may be a phenomenon peculiar to late Ji'an tombs. It is interesting to notice that two different characteristics, the complexity and the simplicity in each region contributed to make the unique regional evolution.

The Ji'an region appears to be fond of a complex decorative pattern to use as a background of the major theme. Sometimes, it could be seen that the emphasis on the background pattern result in less attention on the major theme. For example, the Black Warrior in Wukui Tombs is drawn relatively small and the body of a snake is too exaggerated. It does not possess the awe-inspiring power which is clearly expressed in that of the Great Tomb at Kangsŏ. The gracefulness and simplicity shown in the P'yŏngyang region theme give us a contrasting feeling in comparison with the tension and exquisiteness in Ji'an.

Thus, Ji'an's new invention in the choice of mythological themes is observed in the composition of the Four Directional Animals and a strange beast on a corner of a chamber. The continuation of old themes with a unique variation is also recognizable. In late Ji'an tombs, human figures, which were used to illustrate the lifetime activity of a tomb occupant, now appear mostly on a ceiling as entertaining or guiding the soul of the deceased

to the next world.

Tombs of the Northern Dynasties and Koguryō could provide us with interesting case studies of adaptation and transformation of nomadic people through art. Examining their painted tombs might reveal their possible cross-inspiration and the course of the divergence of each from the former common tradition of Han (206 BCE -220 CE) funerary art. It also helps to determine a certain force that caused the unique evolution from the early and middle phase tombs to the late phase tombs in Koguryō, that is how Koguryō departed from conventional figures in daily life scenes. It is usually cited that it is the late period tombs of Koguryō that exhibit an independent and unique characteristics of Koguryō paintings compared to the other parts of East Asia. As for Chinese history, the Northern Wei capital was moved to Luoyang in 494 and Northern Wei collapsed in 535. Late Northern and Southern Dynasties tombs are mostly from the mid 6th century. If a change to the late Koguryō occurs in the late 5th and early 6th centuries, earlier than late Northern and Southern Dynasties tombs, it might suggest that it was at this time, in Koguryō and Chinese territories, that East Asian funerary art departed from the Han tradition. It is not known if the initial changes in late Koguryō tombs first occurred in Ji'an or in P'yōngyang. Chōn's periodization



Fig. 13 *yōksa* figure, Northeast corner, the back chamber, Tomb No. 1 at Taean-ri (After *Chosŏn yuijŏk yumul togam*, vol. 6, pl. 157)



Fig. 14 The procession scene and the Black Warrior, North Wall, Tomb No. 1 at Tökhwa-ri (After *Koguryō kobun pyōkhwa*, 1985, pl. 142)

chart shows that the beginning of the late tombs in both regions are from sometimes in the early 6th century, which would be around the time of the fall of the Northern Wei in 535 CE. Painted tombs of the Northern and Southern Dynasties are mostly from the mid 6th century (the 550's).

Differences between (late middle and) late Koguryō tombs and late Northern and Southern Dynasties tombs are that the Chinese tombs include no ornamental tombs and continue to have large figure paintings. Also, the Four Directional Animals of Koguryō are different from those of the Northern and Southern Dynasties in that, in Koguryō, there are no riders mounted on them and they appear on walls, not on ceilings. In the Northern Dynasties tombs, a strange looking beast, so-called a wind spirit and a thunder monster, often appears on a ceiling or on the entranceway while it is drawn on the corner of a tomb chamber in Koguryō. It might tell us that the perception of a tomb chamber in late Koguryō is changed and become to perceive the chamber as a transitional one, transporting the soul of the dead to the next world. In the early and the middle phases, murals were used to record a lifetime achievement of a tomb occupant. Until the middle phase,

the tomb chamber might be the place to stay after the death and enjoy the same activities that they had in their lives. The murals in late Koguryō tombs tell us that the late 5th century Koguryō might have witnessed the sudden transformation of the afterlife view or mortuary rituals. Koguryō people had no more needs to furnish their tombs to commemorate their lifetime events. The function of a tomb chamber and the purpose of mural decoration are dramatically changed from realistic displaying of a lifetime activity to representing a microcosm as the deceased soul could successfully travels to the next world. The dynamic running pose of four beasts on corners and the Four Directional Animals over a swirling cloud background of the Four Directional Animals Tomb at Tonggou give the impression of a tomb chamber in a vivid dynamic motion. This fluttering and windy movement corresponds to the characteristics of the Northern and Southern Dynasties art in China. The fact that all pictorial images in late tombs become to have a strong feeling of movement with the fluttering windy atmosphere might have been related to this change in the concept and symbolism of a funerary space.

Literally, late Koguryō tomb paintings are extraordinary and have no comparable example in other parts of East Asian funerary art. The exquisite quality painting of Koguryō reached the highest point of its evolution in the 6th century. Sadly, the innovative tradition established by Koguryō suddenly died out in 668 CE without any sign of decline. However, the mural tradition of Koguryō which appears to completely disappear from the history of funerary art in East Asia might be related to the development of the late Northern Dynasties tombs where the genre tradition suddenly revived. It is certainly plausible if we consider Koguryō people's continuous interaction with Chinese and moving into the Chinese territory even after the collapse of the Kingdom, and it is tempting to consider the possibility that the Koguryō's highly developed mural tradition could have been transferred to elsewhere.

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