



The Age of Transition and Leap: Trends in Korean Craft Study (2000-2020)

Introduction: The Field of Crafts in Korean Art History

The study of Korean art history has a history of less than a hundred years since it was recognized as a modern discipline. Go Yu-Seop (1905-1944), who majored in aesthetics and art history, published his studies in the 1930s (Go 1934, 1937, 2013), and in 1960, the first academic society, which later became the Art History Association of Korea, was organized in the form of a social gathering.¹ In the 1970s, Korean art history began to be studied in earnest beyond merely introducing resources and grasping the contemporary status. In 1973, the first graduate degree program was established, but undergraduate programs on art history did not emerge until 1987. Therefore, study on Korean art history within the academia has a history of only about 30 years. Despite the short history, it has shown remarkable achievements both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Traditional art history has been often categorized into painting, sculpture, crafts, and architecture, but recently, there have been suggestions to reconsider this categorization. Then, how can we define the field of crafts in Korean art history? When the modern Western culture was introduced to Korea, “fine art” was translated as *misul* (art), and crafts (*gongye* 工藝) became a subcategory of *misul* as the term “crafts” connotes the concept of both crafts or technology. The original meaning of *gong* 工 and *ye* 藝 is not very different from art, but placing “crafts” as a subcategory of art might have narrowed down its scope (Choi 2011).

Depending on the materials, crafts are again subdivided into ceramics, metals, woodwork, etc. In ancient times, the profession of craftsmen was also categorized according to the materials, such as textile workers, masons, potters,

1. The original society was not only about art history, but also archaeology. However, in December 1967, another academic society was formed for archaeology. Subsequently, in February 1968, the Art History Association of Korea was launched independently.

woodworkers, leather workers, metalworkers, and lacquerers, and their umbrella term was *baekgong* 百工 meaning all kinds of craftsmen. In the old literature, *baekgong* appears more frequently than crafts, and it also had the meaning of masters. On the other hand, in contemporary Korean art history, the term “crafts” is used in a rather limited sense.

Crafts cover all fields dealing with various materials, but the category of ceramics is handled separately. It is true that ceramics are also crafts, but there are many cases where the history of ceramics and that of crafts are distinguished in courses offered at universities or graduate programs. Ceramics has been in the spotlight since the early phase in the study of art history; therefore, researchers and academic achievements have been exceptionally concentrated in the field of ceramics, thus establishing its own domain.

Likewise, crafts often refer to the relevant fields excluding ceramics, and courses on the history of crafts are organized in the same manner. In a strict sense, ceramics should also be included in the study of crafts, but considering the research history so far, it might be reasonable to look at the two fields separately as they have taken different paths. Accordingly, this article will cover the researches and achievements in Korean craft history without the field of ceramics.

The next point which I want to clarify is why this article focuses on the period after 2000. The year 2000 and this year, 2020, both have the interesting number arrangement, and they are also both significant in Korean art history. Although Korean art history can be studied in undergraduate and graduate schools now, before 2000, there were very few universities which held lectures on the history of crafts, unlike the sculpture history or painting history. This is partly due to the lack of competent faculties. Lee Nan-young, a representative scholar of the early Korean craft history, was instructing graduate courses while working at the National Museum of Korea, but there were no full-time professors. Around 2000, as doctoral researchers who studied metalworks or wooden lacquer wares appeared, a number of universities began to launch lectures on craft history.² In addition, many master’s dissertations were published. Meanwhile, in 2004, the Art History Association of Korea held an international academic conference on the theme of “Crafts and Craftsmanship,”

2. After a decade from Lee Nan-young’s doctoral dissertation in 1991, a number of doctoral dissertations on Korean craft history were published. For further information on exemplary dissertations, see Lee 1998; Jang 1998; Ahn 2001; Choi 2001; Lee 2002a; Joo 2002.

and in 2007, the Korean Association of Art History Education held the conference on the theme of “Art History and Crafts.” Since it was difficult to find such a case which solely highlighted crafts in the academia previously, these opportunities were significant as they showed changes in interest and status of craft researches. They could be realized as the foundation of research was firmly laid. Therefore, Korean craft history since 2000 deserves attention.³

In the past 20 years, the art history has received consistent attention, compared to other humanities fields which are having difficulties of being considered as minor disciplines. Art history is still one of the most popular majors in graduate school, and the number of students studying craft history is increasing as well. More conferences are held every year, and the academic journals have diversified. As more dissertations and journal articles are published, it is easy to come across a wide scope of researches. It would be impractical to cover all research outcomes of the last two decades in this article, so I will introduce the overall trend and current status of Korean craft history and explore future directions.

Research Topics on Certain Time Periods and New Changes

It is a long-standing point that the study of Korean craft history was too biased toward ceramics and metals. As mentioned above, the study of ceramics has accumulated considerable research achievements from the early years, followed by the metal field. At the time when an interest in the study of art history began to burgeon, it was closely linked to the fields of history and archeology. Therefore, studies on ancient ceramics and metal-wares were actively conducted. In addition, in order to distinguish the characteristics of Asian art history in comparison with Western art history, researchers of East Asian art history tended to focus on ceramics around the early 20th century. Likewise, Korean craft history has long been immersed in this representative genre of certain time periods, such as ancient pottery, metal crafts excavated from the tombs of the

3. For the comprehensive researches on Korean craft, see Ahn 1990 and Y. Lee 2007 on metalworks, and Choi 2007 on the current trends and associated issues. After 2000, the Korean Historical Association has been publishing *Yeoksa hakbo* every two years, highlighting accomplishments in Korean art history, which contains the craft history as well.

Three Kingdoms period, celadons from the Goryeo dynasty, and ceramics from the Joseon dynasty.

Within the topic of Buddhist culture, which has long been the main driving force of Korean art, the mainstream of the studies was Buddhist crafts of the Unified Silla and Goryeo dynasty periods in particular. This tendency has continued from the earlier researches to the present. The long-standing interest has led to in-depth research with multifarious perspectives and results. As the number of researchers gradually increased, the scope of research naturally expanded to unexplored areas. In addition, as more artifacts were excavated and various literary records were scrutinized, meaningful achievements could be obtained even from times and themes that were difficult to explore previously.

Consistent Interest and Changes in Topics Related to Certain Time Periods

Artifacts Excavated from the Ancient Tombs of the Silla Dynasty and the Silk Road

Artifacts excavated from the ancient tombs are considered to be critical research materials hinting various aspects of ancient art, but unfortunately, many of them often remain stolen or damaged. However, the ancient tombs of the Silla dynasty were relatively intact and retained their condition of the time, thereby being an important field of study since long ago. In 1921, during the Japanese colonization period, a gold crown was first discovered in the Geumgwanchong Tomb. Then, excavation works were carried out for the Sikrichong Tomb and Geumryeongchong Tomb in 1924, the Seobongchong Tomb in 1926, and the Cheonmachong Tomb and Hwangnamdaechong Tomb in 1973.

Among the burial items collected from the tombs, golden artifacts were of particular interest, ranging from gold crowns, caps, diadem ornaments, belts, shoes to various ornaments. (Figures 1 and 2). Earlier studies based on archaeology and history either paid attention to the symbolic meaning of the gold crown or to the classification of the excavations to identify the chronology of the tomb or governing area of the ruling power. However, art historical studies explored the origin and lineage of artifacts, their functions, influence relations, decoration techniques, etc. In particular, further from the



Figure 1. Gold Crown, Silla, 27.5cm (height), Northern Tomb of Hwangnamdaechong Tomb, Gyeongju National Museum

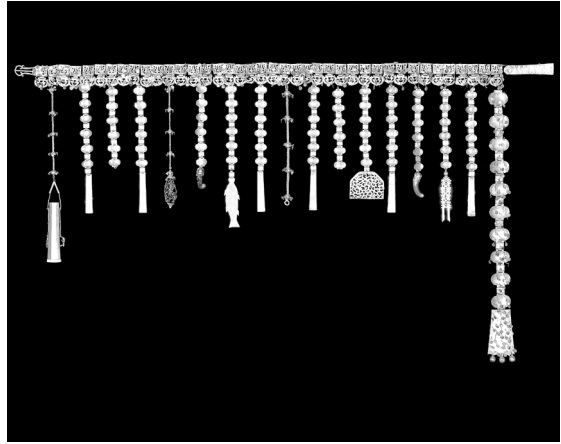


Figure 2. Gold Belt, Silla, 109cm (length of waistband), 54.4cm (length of pendants), Geumgwanchong Tomb, Gyeongju National Museum

previous research, a new discussion on the use of the gold crown from the Silla dynasty was raised. One suggested that it was worn during the ceremonies of the ancestral rites at the progenitor tombs 始祖廟, noting that the ruler of the dynasty also took over the progenitor's role of a god who communicated with the heaven. Another argued that the gold crown was made as a funeral item (S. Lee 2002b, 5-33; H. Lee 2004). The associated discourse includes whether it was worn during the rituals, whether it was a practical item used as a prestigious item, or whether it was specifically made for funerals.

Meanwhile, large-scale special exhibitions played an important role in stimulating the public interest. In 2001, the Gyeongju National Museum held an exhibition, *The Golden Arts of Silla*.⁴ This exhibition displayed relics excavated from Gyeongju, a capital of Silla, and surrounding areas from the 4th to the mid-6th century. Exhibited items were categorized as gold crowns, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, belts, shoes, swords, and imported goods. It was an opportunity to identify the distinctiveness of Silla art which bloomed through the culture of gold and to appreciate the beauty of metal crafts. Since then, understanding ancient gold crafts was gradually enhanced, becoming a popular exhibition theme. In

4. See the catalogue published by the Gyeongju National Museum in 2001, *The Golden Arts of Silla*.

2013, the National Museum of Korea and the Gyeongju National Museum jointly organized *Silla: Korea's Golden Kingdom* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, introducing Silla's golden culture internationally.

In the 2000s, as the study of gold crafts from the Silla dynasty was further vitalized, the Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage held an international academic conference on the subject of "Re-illumination of the Hwangnamdaechong Tomb," and the Gyeongju National Museum has consistently held exhibitions and published catalogues. In addition, a series of publications such as Lee Song-ran's *Metal Crafts of the Silla Dynasty*, based on the author's doctoral dissertation (Lee 2004a), and *Golden Kingdom, Silla* by Lee Han-sang was published (Lee 2004). The Hwangnamdaechong Tomb is the largest of the tombs excavated so far. Associated studies led to the special exhibition *Golden Splendors: The Royal Tomb of Silla: Hwangnamdaechong* in 2010.⁵ After its excavation work from 1973 to 1975, there was no opportunity to look at the whole excavations before this exhibition, except for the major items such as the golden crown. In short, this exhibition had a significance of comprehensively introducing one royal tomb.

Sometimes, the tombs have been reinterpreted from various perspectives long after excavation works. Some examples of exhibitions include Gyerim-ro Tomb No. 14 of the Silla dynasty in Gyeongju (2010), The Double Burial of Bomun-dong in Gyeongju city (2011), Golden Crown Tomb and King Isaji (2014), Cheonmachong, the Royal Tomb of Silla (2014), and Gold Crown from Geumryeongchong Tomb (2019). The ornamented sword from the Gyerim-ro Tomb No. 14, gold earrings from the Double Burial of Bomun-dong, and gold crowns from the Geumgwanchong, Cheonmachong, and Geumryeongchong tombs were representative relics that were exhibited multiple times already, but overall excavations or tombs were not introduced in detail. The tombs excavated or investigated during the Japanese colonization period did not often have officially published reports; therefore, such exhibitions were also meaningful in the similar manner of excavation reports. In addition, an international academic symposium was held to provide an opportunity to review recent research outcomes. As the research outcomes on the excavations of the Silla tombs were accumulated, it was possible to reinterpret them through special exhibitions,

5. See the catalogue published by the National Museum of Korea in 2010, *Golden Splendors: The Royal Tomb of Silla: Hwangnamdaechong*.

thereby revitalizing academic researches.

Likewise, studies on the Hwangnamdaechong tomb expanded their scope from focusing on metal crafts such as gold crowns, gold belts, and gold ornaments to other fields such as glass, lacquer wares, and textile crafts (Jang and Kwon 2012; Hwang and Yoon 2015; Lee 2016; Jung and Lee 2018). There were some attempts to newly interpret the buried person and the tomb's chronology (Lee 2015; S. Kim 2016; D. Kim 2017). The ornamented sword from the Gyerim-ro Tomb No. 14 was excavated when several tombs were discovered during the road construction work in 1973 (Figure 3). It was collected near the waist of the buried man on the left in the Stone-compiled Wooden Chamber Tomb, where two adult men were buried. Unlike other excavations, it was decorated with gold and jewels, attracting special attention. Above all, because of this finding, the short sword discovered during the construction work near the Borovoye lake in northern Kazakhstan in 1928 regained attention.

At the time of excavation, only a part of the remains was discovered, so it was difficult to grasp the exact use. However, taking the ornamented sword of Silla as a reference, it could be clearly identified as part of the short sword.

Although the ornamented sword was recognized as an important artifact for a long time, devoted researches began to appear after the ancient tombs from the Silla dynasty period began to be highlighted again. The production location, how the type of excavations was transmitted to Korea, and the characteristics of the tombs were discussed (H. Lee 2007; S. Lee 2008; Yoon 2011). Also, the measurement, preservation treatment, and scientific analysis were carried out, thereby revealing that the decorative materials of the sword are garnet and glass.⁶ In the past when relying on visual observation, red gems on the sword



Figure 3. Ornamented Sword, 36cm (length), Tomb No. 14 of Gyerim-ro in Gyeongju City, Gyeongju National Museum

6. See the catalogue published by the Gyeongju National Museum in 2010, 156-63.

were often recognized as carnelian. Furthermore, it was possible to review the production area of materials, decoration techniques, and cultural exchange (Shin 2018).

Silk Road craze also contributed to diversified research on the excavations from the ancient tombs of Silla. Hosted by the Foundation of Silla Cultural Heritage Research Institute in Gyeongju city, the first international academic conference, “Silla in the World, The World in Silla,” was held in 2007. In the next year, “Silk Road and Silla Culture” was held to scrutinize the international exchange of Silla. The Gyeongju National Museum organized the special exhibition, *Silla Meets West Asia*, in 2008 and held the academic conference with the theme of “Silla Culture and West Asian Culture,” highlighting the Silla dynasty in relation with Silk Road art. Such attempts have gradually increased; the international symposium organized by the Gyeongsangbuk-do province, “Encounter between Silla and the World through Silk Road,” was launched in 2012 and continued up to date (Lim 2015). Recently, the Gyeongju National Museum and the National Museum of Iran planned a joint exhibition, *Silla and Persia, a Common Memory*, held at the National Museum of Iran. The National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage consistently conducts joint academic research with various regions of Silk Road and introduces related relics and artifacts in Korea. In particular, *Gold of the Elite of Kazakh Steppes*, published together with the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, introduced artifacts excavated from the Kurgan area and metal crafts from the collection of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2018). It contains detailed information about metal crafts along with the articles of scholars from both countries, exhaustively examining the golden culture of Silk Road and the foreign exchanges during the Silla dynasty period. The efforts of each field on how to understand the excavated crafts of the Silla tombs will entail further achievements.

Consistent Research on Buddhist Crafts

Together with the excavations from the Silla tombs, Buddhism crafts have drawn attention since the earlier phase of Korean craft history. Since Buddhism has great stature in Korean art history, earlier studies on art history were centered around the topic of Buddhism. This popularity tends to remain unchanged to this day, but the scope of studies has expanded from Buddhist bells to sarira

reliquaries, incense burners, water bottles (*kundika*), drum-shaped bells (*banja*), and Buddhist altars. Then, it included not only metal-oriented objects, but also more various items, including crafts such as glass and wooden lacquer wares. In addition, targeted time periods, mostly the Unified Silla and Goryeo dynasties, have also changed as studies on the Three Kingdoms and Joseon dynasty have appeared more frequently. Previously, when a new opinion was presented, there were few cases in which follow-up studies appeared or objections were raised, but it became possible to find interesting disputes and fresh arguments.

The study of the Buddhist bells began early on, and it has been exploring the uniqueness of the “Korean bell” that is distinct from that of China and Japan. In 1966, the first book on the Korean bells was published, and in 1980, a research society for the Korean bell was organized, publishing a journal (Cho 1966). In 1998, a comprehensive research report on the Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok was published.⁷ It is a representative bell of Korea as a large-size bell weighing 19 tons with a beautiful appearance and a deep ringing sound (Figure 4). The report includes 13 papers covering the bell’s history and art historical, scientific, and technological analysis, and its measurement survey result was delineated in terms of acoustic analysis and ingredient analysis. This report is considered as a monumental piece of the study on the Korean bell, also analyzing ideological background and aesthetic significance (Choi 2011).

Since then, efforts have been made to find the origin of the Buddhist bells and the distinctiveness of the Korean bells. This interest originated from the Unified Silla bells and eventually reached to the bells of Goryeo and Joseon. Associated studies include the research on the Korean bells located in Japan to identify stylistic characteristics (Choi 2007) and the study on the patrons



Figure 4. Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok, Unified Silla (771), 3.66m (height), 18.9 ton, Gyeongju National Museum

7. The report was published by the Gyeongju National Museum in 1999.



Figure 5. Sarira Reliquary, Unified Silla (682), West Pagoda of Gameunsa Temple, National Museum of Korea



Figure 6. Sarira Reliquary, Unified Silla (682), East Pagoda of Gameunsa Temple, National Museum of Korea

and masters through analyzing the inscriptions on the bells. Also, some studies focused on the stylistic or formal differences in the bells according to the social status of patrons, the Buddhist beliefs, the role of masters as well as the production conditions (Nam 2007; G. Lee 2009, 2012; Jung 2014). The time scope of the studies has also been extended to the modern period, so the study on the style of modern bells, production techniques, and masters appeared (Won 2014a, 2014b).

It is also worth noting that the number of studies on sarira reliquary increased after 2000. The Tongdosa Museum held the special exhibition and academic conference on the theme of “Buddhist Sarira Belief and Sarira Reliquaries” in 2000, and the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage published a report on the sarira reliquary of the East Three-story Stone Pagodas at Gameunsa Temple Site.⁸ The Gameunsa Temple is an exemplary temple of the Unified Silla period, but currently only two stone pagodas remain. The sarira reliquary was discovered from the west pagoda in 1959, and in 1996, a complete sarira reliquary was found from the east pagoda, attracting great attention (Figures 5 and 6). These highly aesthetic artifacts of the two pagodas are similar to each other, with differences in detail, leading to important

8. See *Buddhist Sarira Belief and Sarira Reliquaries* published by the Tongdosa Museum in 2000 and *Sarira Reliquary of the East Three-story Stone Pagodas at Gameunsa Temple Site* by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2000.

achievements in understanding sarira reliquaries of the Unified Silla period (Lee 2000; Y. Kim 2000; Shin 2003; Han 2010; Joo 2014a). When the Association of Korean Buddhist Art History was established in 2003, the first issue of its journal featured a special theme of East Asian Buddhist sarira reliquary. It was an opportunity to review the characteristics of Korean sarira faith and reliquaries and compare them with those of China and Japan.

The study of sarira reliquary focused on the Unified Silla period has been extended to the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties. Studies on the sarira reliquaries from the Goryeo dynasty classified the reliquary types, identified differences from the reliquaries of the Unified Silla period, or highlighted the Lamaist-style sarira reliquary that was popular in the late Goryeo dynasty period (Jung 2002; Shin 2004). Also, there are patron-focused studies to identify the background and significance of enshrining sarira; for instance, the characteristics of sarira reliquaries from the late Goryeo and early Joseon dynasty period were studied through the sarira reliquaries made upon the prayer of Yi Seong-gye, the founder of the Joseon dynasty (Joo 2008).

Meanwhile, as the research achievements on sarira reliquaries have been accumulated, a number of papers reinterpreting extant excavations have been published. The topics include the sarira reliquary excavated during the repair work on the stone pagoda of the Bunhwangsa Temple in 1915 and enshrined items regarding another sarira reliquary collected from the three-story stone pagoda in Guhwang-dong, Gyeongju city, in 1942 (Han 2006; Joo 2007). In addition, a study that examined the excavation process of sarira reliquaries and the style of individual artifacts to identify the uncertain production time was also meaningful (Han 2005; Joo 2011).

Another important Buddhist craft is the incense burner. Along with the spread of Buddhism, an incense culture was introduced. In the early days, it was primarily used in temples, but the incense burners gradually became a daily object. Two doctoral dissertations are especially notable in the study of Buddhist incense burners. “A Study on Korean Buddhist Incense Burners” considered the incense burners used for Buddhist rituals and the supply and demand of the incense, outlining long history from the Three Kingdoms period to the Joseon dynasty period (Y. Lee 2011). A recently published dissertation, “A study of the Iconography and Symbolism of Baekje Gilt-bronze Incense Burner,” identified the characteristics of the craft culture of Baekje Kingdom (Park 2018). This gilt-bronze incense burner was excavated in 1993 from the ancient tombs in



Figure 7. Gilt-bronze Incense Burner, Baekje, 61.8cm (height), Ancient Tombs of Neungsanri in Buyeo County, Buyeo National Museum



Figure 8. Buddhist Crafts Excavated from Ingaksa, Unified Silla, Ingaksa Temple Site in Gunwi County

Neungsan-ri, Buyeo county. It is the largest among the Baksan mountain-shaped incense burners 博山香爐 found in East Asia and shows exceptional aesthetic beauty, symbolizing the beauty of Baekje (Figure 7). Many scholars are ruminating on its producer, time of creation, formative principles, production techniques, and iconography of gilt-bronze incense burners.

Also, the studies of Buddhist artifacts newly excavated in recent years are noteworthy (Choi 2010, 2019). In 2003, during the investigation of the temple site in Malheul-ri in Changnyeong county, more than 500 crafts were found, and in 2008, several Buddhist crafts in full condition were found at the Ingaksa Temple in Gunwi county, such as a bronze incense burner with a handle, a water bottle (*kundika*), a coffer, etc. (Figure 8). Moreover, in 2016, two bronze water bottles were discovered in complete form at the temple site in Heungeon-ri in Samcheok city. These artifacts from three sites are all considered as the crafts of the Unified Silla period. Since there have been rare excavations from this time period, they are critical sources for academic studies. Meanwhile, in 2012, a large number of temple artifacts were found at the site of Dobong seowon, which was constructed in the early Joseon dynasty period. Since this was originally the site of the Yeongguksa Temple in the Goryeo dynasty period, these artifacts are presumed to be metal crafts of that time period. A total of 79 items include the Vajra bell, the Vajra, the incense burner, and the pot. It is also interesting that many of the Buddhist crafts excavated after the 2000s are

hoarding relics. They are mostly found as an artificially hoarded form, thereby being considered to be an object for storage in an inevitable situation or an item that reflects special ritual or religious significance. Studies on each craft should be continued, but a new perspective is also required for a comprehensive understanding of overall excavations.

New Excavations and Broader Outlook

Sarira Reliquary and Offerings of Baekje

The Baekje Kingdom period is also re-illuminated in the recent study of Korean ancient art. While the mural paintings of the ancient tombs from Goguryeo and the excavations of the ancient tombs from Silla take an important share in the ancient art study, the art of Baekje was not very accessible since most of the ancient tombs had been robbed, except for the Tomb of King Muryeong, excavated in 1971. However, its status has changed since the Baekje Historic Areas were inscribed as the UNESCO World Heritage site in 2015, each property being distributed from Gongju city and Buyeo county in Chungcheongnam-do province to Iksan city in Jeollabuk-do province. The excavations from the Tomb of King Muryeong, the gilt-bronze incense burner from the ancient tombs of Neungsan-ri, the sarira reliquary from the Wangheungsa Temple site in Buyeo county, the sarira reliquary from the five-story stone pagoda in Wanggung-ri in Iksan city, and the sarira reliquary from the stone pagoda in the Mireuksa Temple site are all associated with the Baekje Historic Areas.

Particularly, the sarira collections found at the Wangheungsa Temple site and the Mireuksa Temple site in 2007 and 2009 respectively are of great significance in craft history. Since a large amount of offering items were collected together with the sarira reliquaries, it was possible to thoroughly explore the Buddhist art and various craft culture of Baekje. At the Wangheungsa Temple site, a bronze sarira box, a silver sarira jar, and a gold sarira bottle were discovered, and the inscriptions confirmed that they were enshrined in 577 (Figure 9). They are the oldest among the extant sarira reliquaries, being critical materials demonstrating the Buddhist culture of the King Wideok period of Baekje whose written historical records are not existing. Its special exhibition was



Figure 9. Sarira Reliquary, Baekje (577), A Wooden Pagoda Site at the Wangheungsa Temple in Buyeo County, Buyeo National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage

held in 2008, and the excavation report was published in 2009.⁹ At the wooden pagoda site of the Wangheungsa Temple site, thousands of ornamental crafts, including necklaces, earrings, belt decorations, and beads, were excavated together with those sarira reliquaries. Accordingly, a number of studies on such crafts that show outstanding craft techniques and aesthetic quality of Baekje art appeared (Shin 2008; H. Lee 2009a; Joo 2018).

At the Mireuksa Temple site, approximately 9,900 artifacts were excavated during the dismantlement and repair work of the stone pagoda. The artifacts comprise of 23 types, including the sarira reliquaries, the gold plate with sarira enshrinement records, gold earrings, silver crown ornaments, glass items, various beads, etc. (Figures 10 and 11). The discovery of the gold plate was especially monumental as precise information on the establishment of the pagoda and the temple could be obtained by analyzing its inscriptions. These artifacts were introduced to the public at the special exhibition and an academic conference, and reports were published as well.¹⁰ As the academic importance of artifacts is highly valued, there have been various research achievements. There was a

9. The exhibition, *Baekje Wangheungsa Temple*, was jointly organized by the Buyeo National Museum and the Buyeo branch of the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage. For the excavation report published by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea in 2009, see *Excavation Report on Wangheungsa Temple Site III-Wooden Pagoda Site, Main Shrine Site*.

10. For the catalogue of the special exhibition published by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2009, see *Sarira Reliquary of Mireuksaji Stone Pagoda*. In the same year, the Research Institute for the Mahan-Baekje Culture and the Baekje Society held the academic conference, “Great Discovery: Re-illuminating Sarira Reliquary of Mireuksa Temple.” For further information, see *Mireuksa, Treasury of the Baekje Buddhist Culture* (2010), National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, *Sarira Reliquary of Mireuksaji Stone Pagoda* (2013), National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Jeollanam-do province, *Sarira Reliquary of Mireuksaji Stone Pagoda in Iksan City* (2014), National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Jeollanam-do province, and *Baekje Sarira Reliquary and East Asian Buddhist Culture* (2015), Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.



Figure 10. Excavation of Sarira Reliquary from the Stone Pagoda of the Mireuksa Temple



Figure 11. Sarira Reliquary, Baekje (639), Stone Pagoda of Mireuksa Temple in Iksan City, Iksan National Museum

comparative study between the sarira reliquaries from the wooden pagoda at the Wangheungsa Temple site and those from the stone pagoda at the Mireuksa Temple site, focusing on their characteristics and compositions of reliquaries from two time periods, 577 and 639 (H. Lee 2009b; Han 2015). Also, as to the artifacts of the Mireuksa Temple, there was a study that illuminated the Sarira faith of Baekje and a study that analyzed the composition, production techniques, and patterns of sarira reliquaries (S. Lee 2009; Lee and Park 2010; Joo 2014b).

At the Wangheungsa Temple site and the Mireuksa Temple site, a number of offerings were excavated together with sarira reliquaries. They are composed of many different types such as gold beads, silver crown ornaments, gems made of jade, crystal, or amber, and glass. Therefore, research on jewel and glass was also vitalized. At the Wangheungsa Temple site, several pieces of cut-off jade fragments were found, leading to a study that tried to restore the jade pieces into a complete form and analyzed their functions (Lim 2015). Such jade fragments in a cut-off shape were rarely found in other relics, so it was presumed that they were intentionally cut into pieces for the sarira enshrinement ceremony. On the other hand, another study on glass artifacts attempted to find out the linkage with glass production in East Asia or analyze the ingredients to find out the characteristics of soda glass and lead glass (S. Lee 2011; Han 2017). Moreover, a large amount of pearls were unearthed from the stone pagoda of the Mireuksa Temple, drawing great attention (Figure 12). Since there have been few cases in which pearls were excavated, there have been no related studies. So, the



Figure 12. Pearls, Stone Pagoda of Mireuksa Temple in Iksan City, Iksan National Museum

pearls of the Mireuksa Temple site became a valuable research object (Shin 2016b). Such study focusing on enshrined jewels reviewed the enshrinement background, uses, and an origin of production for jewels. These diverse studies on Baekje crafts are fueled by newly excavated sarira reliquaries and offerings. It is expected for future studies to show us many more undiscovered stories.

Royal Crafts of the Joseon Dynasty and Interest in the Modern Period

From the early phase of the Korean craft study, the ancient times drew the most attention. Then, scholars also focused on the Unified Silla period and the Goryeo dynasty period when Buddhist culture flourished. As the scope of Buddhist craft study has expanded and the study on techniques has been invigorated, the Joseon dynasty period has been explored as well. However, the studies on the crafts associated with the royal ritual ceremonies and the royal protocols were not very popular. In 1998, a pioneering degree dissertation on the crafts for the royal wedding ceremonies of the Joseon dynasty was published. Even though it was accompanied by the follow-up studies by the same author (Jang 1998, 2006, 2015), it was only after a long time that two other scholars published their doctoral dissertations on this topic. However, the number of related studies is increasing recently.

“A Study on Ok-Chaek Nae-Ham of the Late Joseon Dynasty Period” dealt with the jade crafts used for the royal ritual ceremonies during the Joseon dynasty period (M. Kim 2016). *Ok-chaek* (books made of jade plates) and *Nae-ham* (a wooden case for *ok-chaek*) were used for investiture ceremonies or Sangjonho (praising the royal family’s achievements) ceremonies, symbolizing the legitimacy and status of the royal family (Figure 13). This study presents a valuable overview of extant artifacts and associated records from the royal protocols. “A Study on the Interior Decoration and Ritual Artifacts of Joseon Dynasty Jinjeon” is on the crafts of jinjeon, portrait halls, where the royal portraits were enshrined and various ritual ceremonies were held (Choi

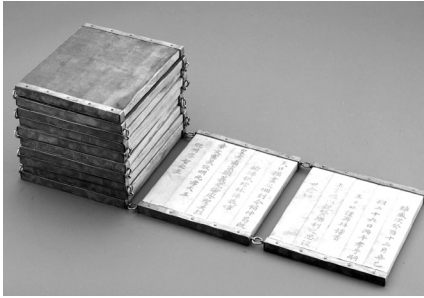


Figure 13. *Ok-chaek* (Jade Plates) for Sangjonho Ceremonies of King Sookjong, Joseon (1753), 24.6cm (width), 322.4cm (length), 1.7cm (thickness), National Palace Museum of Korea



Figure 14. King Myeongjong's Seal for Sangsiho Ceremonies, Joseon (1705), 10.1cm (length), 10.1cm (width), 7.1cm (height), National Palace Museum of Korea

2016). Previously, studies on *jinjeon* were primarily on the production of royal portraits or ceremonies; therefore, this study was meaningful in that it was a comprehensive study on reliquaries and ceremonial tools. Also, there were studies on the utensils for royal ritual ceremonies, production system, *yugijang* 鋤器匠, who cast the utensils, double dragon iconography, and bronze incense burners (Jang 2008; J. Kim 2013; Sagon 2014). Moreover, other topics include the production process of the royal seal (Figure 14), the symbolic meaning of royal wedding ceremony utensils, and the operation of *gyeonggongjang* who produced the royal crafts during the Joseon dynasty period (Je 2017; 2019; J. Kim 2017; Choi 2018).

The interest in the Joseon dynasty period is followed by the interest in modern crafts. Around the 2000s, the academia of Korean art history began to immerse itself in the modern era. However, most research outcomes were focused on paintings and sculptures. The doctoral dissertation published in 2001 took the lead in Korean modern craft history, but there were few scholars to produce follow-up studies.¹¹ The publication, *At the Crossroads of Industry and Art*, by the same author, Choi Gong-ho (2008), explored the structure of craft production system throughout the process of modern industrialization and analyzed changes in perception. The interest in modern craft is not simply

11. This pioneering doctoral dissertation, "A Study on the Korean Modern Craft History: System and Idea," was written by Choi Gong-ho of Hongik University.

an extension of the research scope, but a transitional step in presenting new perspectives. The modern craft should be understood within the framework of industrialization, with a different perspective from traditional crafts. Therefore, new researches beyond the simple observation and analysis have emerged, dealing with changes in the concept of crafts or social context (Roh 2014). On the other hand, in modern crafts, the second popular topic next to the ceramics was lacquer wares inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The studies on this topic highlighted the characteristics of production techniques, technical changes according to the tools, achievements of artisans, and their influence on future generations (Roh 2016, 2017; Choi 2017).

Important Elements and Various Topics of Craft Study

In-depth Topics on Production Techniques

Usage, production techniques, and aesthetic values are essential elements of crafts, thus being critical components of craft study. Forms and decorations accompanied by outstanding production techniques upgrade the quality of crafts and reflect the aesthetics of the times. The production techniques of craft have been difficult to study due to the lack of written records and the



Figure 15. Gold Earrings Showing Filigree Techniques, Silla, 8.7cm (length), Hapjangbun Tombs of Bomundong in Gyeongju City, National Museum of Korea

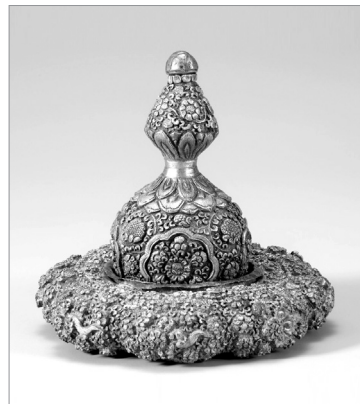


Figure 16. Silver Gourd-shaped Bottle Made with Repoussé Technique, Goryeo, 8cm (height), National Museum of Korea

discontinuation of traditional techniques, but recent scholars have achieved considerable results. Furthermore, more researches are accompanied by scientific analysis, so the prospects for the future are bright.

Studies on ornamenting techniques have begun with interest in the metal crafts of the Silla Kingdom. The filigree technique which uses golden wires or gold grains on the metal surface to maximize splendor was an exemplary ancient craft technique (Figure 15). After a dissertation on the filigree technique used in the excavations from the ancient tombs of Silla was presented, follow-up studies delved into how Silla accepted and developed the filigree technique through tracing its origin (Y. Lee 2000; S. Lee 2001, 2015). Meanwhile, the repousse technique which creates the decoration relief from the back of the metal was first studied with the artifacts of the Three Kingdoms period, and the technique's heyday, the Goryeo dynasty period, was highlighted (Figure 16) (Joo 1998; Kim 2007). As to *eojamun* (ring-pattern punching) technique, its origin and introduction, examples of Baekje artifacts, and its popularity as a major decoration technique during the Goryeo dynasty period were studied (N. Lee 1991b; G. Lee 2010; Lim 2011).

Studies on the Unified Silla period were mainly on Buddhist crafts, but more scholars began to pay attention to general crafts, focusing on decoration techniques for luxurious crafts used by the royal family and the gentry. *Pyeongtal* technique was one of the techniques that are studied first (Shin 2004). When the *pyeongtal* technique is used, gold or silver plates are attached to the object's surface, followed by lacquer coating and drying. Then, the patterns are carved out to reveal the splendid color and gloss of gold and silver underneath (Figure 17). It can be applied to various base materials such as metal, wood, and leather, and it is meaningful as a technique that is the predecessor of lacquer was inlaid with mother-of-pearl. This lineage was studied in China and Japan from an early stage, but in Korea, extant artifacts that used

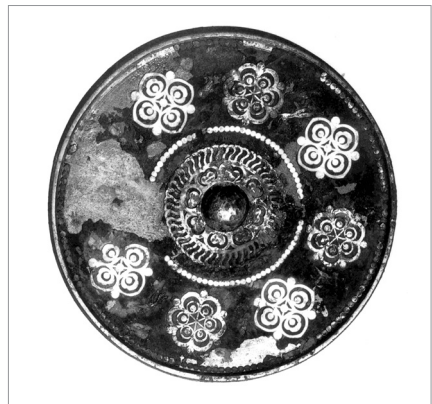


Figure 17. Gold and Silver *Pyeongtal* Mirror, Unified Silla, 15.3cm (diameter), National Museum of Korea

the *pyeongtal* technique were scarce so that it was difficult to discuss in earnest. By comparing Chinese artifacts from Tang dynasty and Japanese artifacts from the Shōsō-in repository with Korean artifacts and reviewing the literature sources, it was confirmed that the *pyeongtal* technique was very popular in the Unified Silla period.

Lacquerware inlaid with mother-of-pearl (*najeonchilgi*) from the Goryeo dynasty period reflects excellent technological advance and outstanding aesthetics. Despite its reputation, it was not extensively studied because there were few existing artifacts and most of them belonged to foreign collections. In 1995, the Ho-am Art Museum held an exhibition *National Treasures of Goryeo* where a number of *najeonchilgi* artifacts from overseas art museums were introduced, attracting great attention from both the academia and the public. Afterwards, studies on the origin of *najeonchilgi* and its characteristics of the Goryeo dynasty period were presented (S. Kim 2000; Choi 2001; E. Kim 2013). A special exhibition at the National Museum of Korea in 2006, *Korean Lacquer Wares: The Everlasting Beauty*, was significant in that it solely focused on *najeonchilgi*. Another exhibition, *Exquisite and Precious: The Splendor of Korean Art*, held at the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in 2015 also introduced a large amount of *najeonchilgi* (Figure 18). Such exhibitions contributed to the understanding of lacquering techniques.

The Goryeo dynasty period was the culmination of craft culture, thus also being the era of excellent decoration techniques. Along with the metalwork



Figure 18. A Box Inlaid with Mother-of-Pearl, Goryeo, 25.9cm (height), British Museum

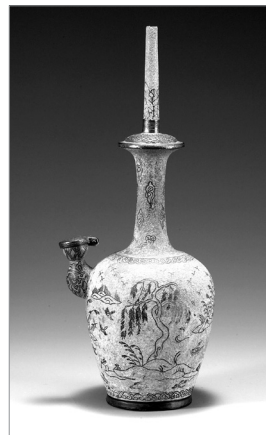


Figure 19. Bronze *Kundika* Inlaid with Silver Line Drawings, Goryeo, 37.5cm (height), National Museum of Korea

decoration techniques mentioned above, the inlaying technique was greatly improved. The inlaying technique engraves patterns on the surface of metal objects and inlays gold and silver strings or fragments on those engraved patterns (Figure 19). In the ceramic history, it is called *sanggam*, but in the field of metal crafts, it is called *ipsa* according to the literary records. The major features of the technique are similar to each other, but the materials and specific techniques may differ in two fields. The *ipsa* technique drew attention since it was applied to incense burners during the Goryeo dynasty period, but it was only recent that the academia began to actively deal with this technique, and the targeted time period has been extended to the Joseon dynasty period (S. Kim 2013; Lee 2015). Beyond the study of techniques, some studies began to highlight the roles and achievements of masters (Y. Lee 2008; S. Kim 2017; 2019).

Hwagak technique of the Joseon dynasty was also notable. The *hwagak* technique is a horn painting method which uses a cow horn. A cow horn is sliced in thin transparent pieces and painted with various colors. Then, these painted slices are flipped over and attached to the surface of an object (Figure 20). Painting on the back surface is called *bokchae*. Goryeo *najeonchilgi* also utilized the *bokchae* technique on the sea turtle's shells, similar to the horn painting method. However, the exact origin of the *hwagak* technique is obscure. Crafts finished with the *hwagak* technique required of arduous production process but boasted of opulent decorations, making them popular as a luxury item in the late Joseon dynasty period. The *hwagak* technique cannot be found in the crafts of other countries. As a unique feature of Korean craft, it is actively studied among extant artifacts (Jung 2000; Hong 2016).

Active research on crafting techniques since the 2000s focused on metal and woodwork. Major topics include the definition and origin of a technique, the technique's introduction to Korea and development, and the types and characteristics of decorated artifacts, etc. These topics tend to be recurring, but it is inevitable until the firm establishment of



Figure 20. A Box Made with Hwagak Technique, Joseon, 37.3cm (height), National Palace Museum of Korea

the study on crafting techniques. Individual studies on the origin, spread, and development of the technique become a valuable asset in comparative studies that can demonstrate the correlation among various techniques of the period. Also, they can feature how those techniques had responded to the demand of the time period through consistent changes.¹² Such study has not been vigorous yet, but it will be critical in a comprehensive understanding of Korean craft history.

Study of Patterns and Its Significance

The pattern reflects the aesthetics of the times and functions as a symbol of aspiration. To contemplate the use, symbolism, and the production time, it is essential to comprehend the type, composition, and stylistic characteristics of patterns. As such, patterns are regarded as a basic element of craft research, but few researches have dealt with patterns. This is because it is difficult to find the origin and the scope of research is too broad as the patterns tend to be ever-changing and widespread.

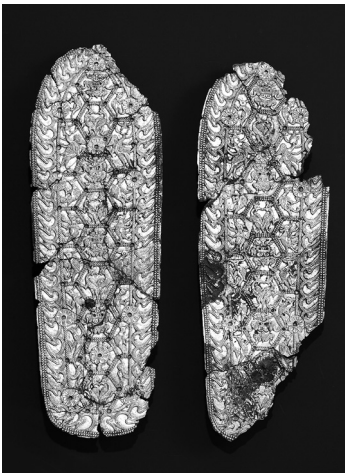


Figure 21. Gilt-bronze Shoes, Silla, 32cm (length), Sikrichong Tomb, Gyeongju National Museum

In the process of examining the excavations from the ancient tombs of Silla, patterns were one of the integral categories. For instance, Buddhism patterns and auspicious patterns of the artifacts from the Hwangnamdaechong Tomb and Sikrichong Tomb were identified as reflecting afterlife views of the Silla people and used as the basis for grasping the characteristics of the early Buddhism in Korea and the construction period of the Stone-compiled Wooden Chamber Tomb (Lee 2004b). The gilt-bronze shoes found at the Sikrichong Tomb showed unique and interesting patterns on their sole (Figure 21). *Ssangjomun* pattern (a pair of birds)

12. For the studies on the correlation of various crafting techniques, see Y. Lee 2004; Shin 2019.

which originated from the West, a dragon and a phoenix found in the ancient tombs of the Han dynasty, and an animal with man-face and bird-body were engraved in hexagonal sections. It was an ethereal imagery of the heaven filled with auspicious animals, thereby leading to the mainstream perspective arguing that this imagery visualizes a posthumous world aspired by the owner of the tomb. There is a study which reviewed the iconography of the gilt-bronze shoes and the composition of patterns by comparing them with Chinese artifacts. It suggested that the gilt-bronze shoes were produced around the 5th century (Lee 2006).

A study on the East-West exchange of *neunghwamun* pattern can be cited as an example that traced the origin, development, stylistic transformation, and its iconography through analyzing a specific pattern (Kim 2004). *Neunghwamun* is in a rhombus shape. Often, there are two concave curves between two vertices, forming 12-side *neunghwamun* pattern. However, there are also modified cases where the number of concave curves are less or more. Artifacts with *neunghwamun* pattern are identified as the relics of the Goryeo dynasty period, and they can be also found from the Liao, Jin, and Northern Song dynasties. Then, it was highly popular during the Yuan dynasty period, thereby reaching the Islamic culture as well. This study dealt with *neunghwamun* pattern as an internationally used pattern that connected Islamic culture with East Asian art through land or sea routes.

Yeonjumun and *hamjomun* are patterns that have been popular in many regions. Together with *neunghwamun*, they demonstrate the cultural exchange between the East and the West. As these patterns were spread widely along the Silk Road, they were applied in various crafts, such as ceramics, metal, wooden lacquer wares, glass, and textiles. In Japan, research on patterns began early on, primarily starting from the patterns found in the collection of the Shosoin Repository 正倉院 while research in China has been blooming in virtue of archaeological achievements. Such interest gained momentum in Korea since the 2000s as a formal subject.

Yeonjumun is a pearl roundel pattern. It is often applied to decorate boundaries or to divide sections. Various icons are depicted in the sections marked by *yeonjumun*. Study of *yeonjumun* is mostly on the fabric of Sui Tang dynasty period, a heyday of the pearl roundel pattern. Therefore, scholars are trying to understand *yeonjumun* of Korean artifacts through the study on Sui Tang dynasty (Ahn 2007; Jang 2007). *Hamjomun* is a pattern of a bird



Figure 22. Roof-end Tile with *Hamjomun* Pattern, Unified Silla, Wolji Pond in Gyeongju City, Gyeongju National Museum

holding various objects such as pearl decorations, ribbon, or flowers in its beak. Sometimes, the patterns are divided into subcategories according to the type of the objects (Figure 22). By comparing the patterns from the Sassanid Empire of Persia, Sogdiana, and China, their stylistic characteristics, iconography, and significance are analyzed to explain the popularity and significance of *hamjomun* during the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla period in one study (Shin 2010). It is

meaningful in that it examined the cultural exchanges of Northeast Asia in the 8th century and reconsidered the status of Unified Silla through studying patterns. Another study dealt with how the palmette pattern originating from West Asia was introduced and developed in Goguryeo Kingdom (Je 2010). When the palmette pattern was introduced from West Asia to China, it was transformed as vegetal patterns decorating the world of Taoist immortal, often together with Buddhist lotus pattern. In Goguryeo, it was also used as vegetal patterns, but also to symbolize the holy tree. In short, this mysterious flower pattern introduced from the West has gone through various transformations according to the intention of the user.

Patterns are also an integral part of understanding international exchange of art culture. As shown in the studies mentioned above, the newly introduced pattern can make its presence known as a representative decorative pattern only when it is transformed according to ethnic or regional preferences. Moreover, if the patterns from other countries are too conflicting with the existing traditions, it would be difficult to accept them. In ancient society, a freely flying bird was recognized as a sacred animal that connects human beings and the sky (heaven), and the bird bringing something in its beak has been a motif that gives many people a rich imagination. Likewise, *hamjomun* was a universally favored pattern. Nevertheless, each region has a different kind of favored bird, and *hamjomun* has changed from the symbol of the highest power or religious authority to the universal lucky sign. The study of patterns is important in

that it can reflect the universal perception of humanity while showing the distinctiveness of the times and regions.

Production, Distribution, and Consumption

The appearance, crafting techniques, and decorative patterns of crafts are essential research topics, but it is also necessary to understand the context outside the work, such as production, distribution, and consumption. Many of the crafts are royal gifts, wedding presents, religious items, and luxury items exchanged at the national level, demonstrating active international exchanges. Therefore, efforts to find traces of cultural exchange and examine the influence relations in craft study have been lingering for a long time. The craft itself and its social, cultural, or aesthetic context are dealt together in such study.

Most of the researches on Korean crafts discussed above elicited a multi-layered interpretation and constructive conclusion by tracing the origin of foreign elements or comparing them with artifacts from neighboring countries. This methodology is also useful in other fields, but it is especially meaningful in the study of crafts. Noting the significance of international exchanges, the Art History Association of Korea held an academic conference on the theme from 1993 to 2008. They were held in a chronological order from Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla, Unified Silla, Goryeo, the early and late Joseon dynasty, to the modern era, scrutinizing each time period's crafts in detail.¹³ Subsequent academic conferences are still held on the theme of international exchanges.

Research on crafts with emphasis on international exchanges has been devoted to finding the origins of icons and styles or exploring the developmental process of crafting techniques. Based on such research, further efforts are being made to identify the place of origin for materials, the place where the craft is made, the distribution channel as well as the area and target of its consumption, and the activities of merchants. One of the exemplary researches is on the lion pendants excavated from the ancient tombs of Nakrang, scrutinizing the associated traces of international exchanges and the commercial activities (Lee 2005). The author examined the lion pendants distributed in India, Southeast Asia, and southern China to identify sea trade routes. In addition, it traced the

13. As a result of the academic conferences, a total of 8 books were published. See for instance, *International Exchanges of Goguryeo Art* (1996) and *International Exchanges of Modern Art* (2010).

intermediate base areas such as Shandong and Nakrang and their merchants to comprehend the social background reflecting blooming international culture of the period.

A study on the jade inlaid bracelet excavated from the northern mound of the Hwangnamdaechong Tomb is also interesting. A total of 13 bracelets were found from the wooden coffin; among them, a jade inlaid bracelet shows unique ornaments and crafting technique in particular. The bracelet was composed of the golden plate, a layered plate below, and joints to held the ends. It was inlaid with turquoise, lapis lazuli, and black amber. A layering technique and the inlaying technique are both introduced from the West, and the gems are not the domestic kinds. Therefore, whether the artifact was produced domestically or abroad was a main issue of associated studies. Scholars suggested differing opinions, and among them, a recent study argued that it was produced in Northern Wei (H. Lee 2011). This study refers to literary records and archaeological evidences to explain that there were many Westerners in the capital of Northern Wei, thus having an active inflow of Western culture. The author pointed out the similarity in decoration techniques between the gold hair plaque excavated from Inner Mongolia and the jade inlaid bracelet from the Hwangnamdaechong Tomb. After all, the possibility of domestic production of bracelets cannot be ruled out since those techniques were already introduced and materials could be imported easily. Although there may be different opinions in conclusion, this study is meaningful to suggest new perspectives and raised the potential point of discussions through comprehensive consideration of literature records, international exchanges, and the surrounding background.

There are many extant bronze mirrors from the Goryeo dynasty, and various iconography and patterns on their back surface become a valuable object of study. However, since the mirror can be recast and a large number of imported mirrors do exist, it is not easy to discuss the specific aspects of their production process and the original location of production. Another meaningful research on the gold mirror excavated in Gaeseong city tried to identify the status of trade during the mid-Goryeo dynasty period and the production and distribution of mirrors (Park 2013). A doctoral dissertation on the relationship between international exchanges and jewels decorated on artifacts was also published. It examined the regions where materials were produced, processed, and consumed (Shin 2016a). The jewel's beautiful luster, color, scarcity, and enduring solidity symbolize the highest authority and status (Figure 23).

Above all, high-quality jewels are concentrated in a specific region. Therefore, considering the place of origin, processing location, and consumption location can witness the cultural exchanges among neighboring countries. Another study from the field of archaeology highlighted the overall process of manufacturing, trading, and burying metal artifacts distributed in Korea and Japan during the Three Kingdoms period (D. Kim 2019).

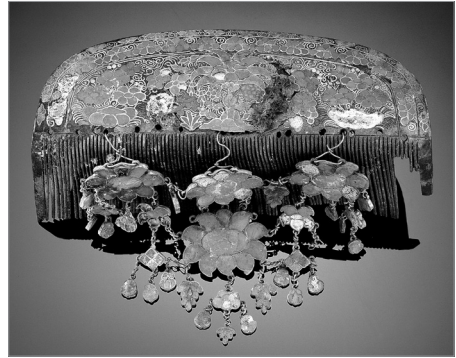


Figure 23. A Comb Inlaid with Jewels, Unified Silla, 10.3cm (length), 4.7cm (width), Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art

Considering the art historical analysis and the social context of the work together is not new in art history. Such approach is also common in other humanities, and within art history, various topics such as production and distribution, consumption and acceptance, and cultural heritage excavation and relevant policies are primarily considered. However, not every multilateral approach led to meaningful research outcomes because it takes a lot of time and effort for a new field of interest to build up concrete results. Also, compared to the modern era, the pre-modern era has limitations in applying various methodologies due to the lack of physical data and literature records, but efforts are being made to overcome these obstacles.

Conclusion: The Era of Quest for and Transition in Methodologies

The history of studying Korean art is not long, and in particular, the craft history has been on the track later than other fields. Nevertheless, a number of researchers have achieved significant results over the past 20 years. The tendency to focus on ceramics or metals can be understood in that any field may have certain topics that are the first to be illuminated. Such concerns are shared by all scholars, stimulating recent researches in diversified fields. In addition, the academia generally agree that the discipline classifying the subdivisions of crafts based on materials and techniques must be changed with an integrated

perception. Furthermore, there are constant efforts to overcome the concomitant indictment of the division in sculpture, painting, and crafts. In particular, studies on Buddhist art have recently raised the need for comprehensive understanding of ideology, rituals, and temple spaces. Accordingly, scholars specialized in Buddha statues, Buddhist painting, and Buddhist craft are moving toward solidarity through more active communication and collaboration. The interdisciplinary research with other fields of humanities is also becoming more vigorous.

As the craft history studies accumulated tangible achievements in various topics spanning wide time periods and genres, the methodologies and aesthetic issues have been reconsidered as well (I. Lee 2007; Choi 2012, 2017). The necessity for new methodology has been a long-standing topic, but it is not an easy task. In addition, it is necessary to reflect on whether various methodologies have been accompanied by fruitful research results. The fundamental questions of what is craft and what is Korean craft history should be always recalled in the light of critical rumination. The absence of a comprehensive Korean craft history which is practical and in line with the status quo is also a task to be unraveled.

It was not easy to introduce a large amount of researches systematically, and it was also difficult to classify multifarious articles and dissertations. Occasionally, I followed the widely-accepted categories and excluded some studies in the process of selecting key academic trends.¹⁴ In addition, since this article focused on Korean researchers' achievements in the field of Korean crafts, studies conducted by foreign scholars could not be covered. Recently, as domestic research has been cultivated, the number of foreign scholars who are interested in Korean arts and crafts has also increased and visible results have been achieved. Domestic scholars are widely embracing research achievements by scholars abroad, utilizing them as a basis for further studies. We look forward to more academic exchanges in the future. In retrospect, there have been some unsettled issues and self-reflective discourses within the craft research.

14. Many researches are not covered in this article, but it is necessary to call attention to some cases that are actively discussed recently. To commemorate the 1100th anniversary of the establishment of the Goryeo dynasty in 2018, there have been notable achievements in the study of the Goryeo dynasty. Also, as to the field of Buddhist art, *bulbokjang*, items inserted into the Buddha statues with prayer statements and offerings, has been highlighted as a key research area. For further information on *bulbokjang*, see the article by Heo Hyeong Uk in this same issue.

However, based on the precedent studies, this field has demonstrated qualitative growth and attained considerable achievements in various topics that were not previously explored. In the unceasing cycle of questioning and finding answers, the accumulated results will become the foundation for another leap forward.

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