The Growth of Individuals and Social Transformation in the Korean Bronze Age

—Interpreting the symbolic structure of the Korean Bronze Age in mid-west Korea—

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This article aims at interpreting the change of material culture in the Korean Bronze Age with regard to symbolic structure. For this work, first of all, it has been pointed out that the existing research paradigms based on culture-historical and processual approaches fail to interpret the process and the reason of that change at a deeper level. Instead, as an alternative, a synthetic view, in which settlement (for every day life) and burial (for mortuary practice) and their reciprocal relationship are taken into account in social and symbolic structure, has been suggested. In order to substantiate this approach, the analysis on spatial structure has been conceived and carried out under the premise that space or place is a field in which temporal sequence and power relation is marked, and is meaningfully constructed or even thrown to us. As a result, a conclusion has been drawn that communality and the role of a common origin within a community is emphasised in the middle phase. By contrast, the growth of individuals and individual expression is observed in the late phase. This change does mean a fundamental change in the ways of symbolic structure, power execution and further, a formation of community and individual identity.

Keywords: Bronze Age, symbolic structure, communality, individuals, power.

Introduction

The Bronze Age in Korea has been considered one of the most important research areas in Korean archaeology for a long time. This is because of its prominent archaeological objects including Bronze objects, unique ritual items, various styles of pottery and dolmen as a kind of mortuary practice.

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Most research themes on this period tend to aim at the establishment of detailed chronological and distributional frameworks based on material culture and explanations of social structure (e.g., social hierarchisation). As already known, the methodological and explanatory base for this research originates from cultural-historical and new (or processual) archaeology. For example, typology (e.g., Montelius 1903; Childe 1956) new evolutionism (chiefdom theory) (e.g., Service 1975) and the covering law model (Hempel 1966) are good cases in point. This trend of research makes it possible to broaden our knowledge on the material culture of the period. Although there are some polemics, the basic and overall chronological sequence and regional pattern of material culture established are now generally accepted between Korean archaeologists.

In spite of its own contribution to our better and systematic understanding of the period, it is also true that this trend of research contains many inevitable problems in its methodology and even limitations in its explanatory framework.

First of all, chronological sequence and regional patterns can provide only a rough idea (neither practical nor actual aspect, but just ideational aspect) of how (material) cultural sequence tend to change in temporal and spatial terms to us. Other research interests based on this cultural sequence (e.g., tracing the origin of a specific style of object and of diffusion processes and routes) do not further an exploration of why the change of material culture as such took place in various ways.

An explanation of the social structure in terms of "new" (processual) archaeology gives us only a simplistic glimpse of what happened. As long as "the covering law model" is followed, the range of "facts" explained here is quite narrowly limited, for example, whether it is a chiefdom society (or state) or whether there is a social hierarchy. Although it sometimes attempts to explain the process and reason for social change, the main research topics in this approach tend to focus on just the growth of political power (or sometimes socio-economic power) as regards the appearance of the "elite" and "social hierachisation." It fails to take various social contexts embedded in this growth of political or socio-economic power into account (e.g., social agency such as gender, individuals, community, and even technology) and therefore, it cannot suggest any persuasive and abundant "interpretation" on diverse social phenomena regarding material culture. In addition, the over-emphasis on political power for the research results in making the whole Bronze Age and its material culture was just a backdrop for the growth of political power and social hierachisation.

In this article, I will suggest an alternative for a better understanding of the

material culture with a critical review of the existing perspective and methodology adopted so far. After this, an attempt to interpret the process of change of the material culture will be made and finally, the significance of that change will be discussed in a broader historical context.

It is expected to contribute to the development of archaeological methodology for the ultimate establishment of archaeology as the main discipline for material culture research as well as to explore the potential that the material culture of the Korean Bronze Age has at a much deeper level.

Structural Change and Material Culture
—A synthetic view of social categories—

As mentioned above, the interest in the establishment of the cultural sequence of change has dominated all research on the Korean Bronze Age for a long time with some claims for reconstruction of social structure influenced by New (processual) archaeology.

Based on this, it becomes possible to grasp the outline of the contents and the characteristics of the Korean Bronze Age. The important contents and characteristics can be summarised as follows: In the early phase, there were various *Mumun* pottery (pottery with no design) cultures such as the "bowl with perforated rim culture" as represented by "the Yeoksam-dong (cultural group)" and from the northeastern part of the Korean peninsular, top-shaped (double rim) pottery with short oblique lines of "the Garak-dong (cultural) group" transmitted from the northwest, and "the Heuam-ri (cultural) group" as their cultural cohesion in the Han River valley. These three cultural groups can be mentioned as the main cultural content as well as being an important research theme. The Songgung-ni culture, a unique style of settlement with other evidence of agriculture, of the mid-western part of the Korean peninsular including Songgung-ni-type pottery and stone cist and earthen inhumation burials with cap stone is thought to represent the middle phase of the Korean Bronze Age itself as well as the cultural change in the mid-west region. Stone cists (or earthen inhumation burials with/without stone cap) with black burnished pottery and various kinds of bronze objects such as trumpet-shaped bronze implements, split bamboo-shaped bronze implements and other unique styles of bronze ritual objects as well as bronze daggers and spearheads have emerged as intriguing research topics for the late phase of the Korean Bronze Age. Aside from these, the research

on dolmen has been spotlighted continuously by archaeologists. The attempt to establish the cultural sequence based on typology became possible due to this very detailed research on the material culture of the region and in reality, it contributes to our understanding of the material culture in a successive way to some extent.

However, recent findings (and newly obtained data) and new methodology developed in Anglo-American archaeology requires us to adopt a completely different perspective and attitude as researchers. In other words, many excavations of various types of settlements and enclosure sites all over the country raise the necessity to change our whole attitude toward the research on the Bronze Age in an ultimate and fundamental way (e.g., Ahn J. H. 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2001; Yi H. J. 1996; Kwon O. Y. 2002). This also implies the adoption of new way of research, that is, methodology, not in the least a simple supplement and modification of the existing cultural sequences. This is because the dominant methodology so far, a simple typological approach (on settlement itself as well as various artefacts from it) cannot claim to explore the potential of those various types of settlements and enclosure sites. For example, massive settlement sites (of a village) and the circumscribing enclosures are ideal examples that can inform us of the social and symbolic structure and social relationship between villagers as individual agents and between individuals and the community itself. These ultimate but impending puzzles in archaeology cannot be tackled with just "arrowhead" archaeology (in the sense that the origin and its diffusion route is expressed by lines and arrows on a map based on typological comparison in a cultural-historical approach).

It is evident that the processual approach itself cannot provide any covering law (or universal hypothesis) to explain the potential of this kind of settlement site and that the H-D method (Hypothetical-Deductive method) does not give any meaningful interpretive framework because of its own methodological limitations. As already known, the tentative hypothesis suggested in this method cannot escape from the range of our pre-interpretation obtained by a fusion of the already established and prior interpretation and our observation. Furthermore, only testable hypothesis is likely to be suggested in order to "test" the reliability easily. In reality, various quantitative methods (e.g., statistical method) are frequently used as a testing method. In this case, a hypothesis suggested will be that which could be easily quantified. This would restrict the range of hypothesis suggested.

Recently, statistical methods (mainly descriptive statistical techniques) that

were not often adopted by local archaeologists in Korea have been used for the detailed analysis on settlements in the early and the middle phases of the Korean Bronze Age by several young archaeologists (e.g., Woo J. Y. 2002; Cheon S. H. 2003; Yi J. M. 2003). It is true that the adoption of statistical methods allowed us to grasp invisible variables and to draw some meaningful results that could not have been possible to infer without their adoption.

In spite of its own value as such, this kind of approach contains serious limitations. For example, only formal attributes are likely to be considered when defining attributes. Problematic is whether those attributes extracted based upon the cognitive concepts of the researcher reflect the categorical concepts of the users or consumers in the past. Moreover, those attributes themselves and the definition of them are not contextualised within the context in which those material data would be produced, used (or consumed), and finally disposed. That is to say, the meanings and the significance attached to those material objects are not taken into account in this approach. Unintended (or sometimes intended) distortion in data analysis also seems inevitable. More importantly, there is no place in which social agency (including individual agents) that would produce, maintain and/or disuse the material objects would be considered.

Although there is a new attempt to interpret the change of inner structure as well as the overall spatial structure of a settlement site with a location analysis based upon detailed observation (e.g., Ahn J. H. 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2001), it cannot be said that this approach is enough to explore the data itself. This is because the concepts frequently used in this approach such as household community, hierarchy and ritual, are neither elegantly defined nor elaborated.

For these reasons, it seems prerequisite to develop a new perspective and methodology appropriate to the extant archaeological data before any actual analysis. With regard to this, I suggest here a holistic view of the existing social categories, say, to understand the diverse social categories such as settlement, burial, and other categories synthetically at a deeper structural level. Originally, a similar approach had been attempted in European prehistory (Hodder 1984, 1990). In his later work (1990), Hodder explored the change of material culture throughout the Neolithic Age in Europe with a conceptual framework of "domus" and "agrios" and their chain of meanings in a very persuasive and successful way. In other words, he has interpreted the changes of settlement, burial, and other material objects with a link of meanings based on binary opposition such as male-female, in-out, wild-domestic, etc. I believe that despite several polemics in methodological terms, this approach has considerable value that

other approaches could not provide. That is, this approach has attempted to "interpret" the reasons as well as the process of the material cultural change that other "descriptions" of cultural-historical approach or "explanations" of processual approaches claimed but failed to suggest.

As I mentioned before, recent excavations on Bronze Age sites in Korea are mainly concentrated on settlements and enclosures of the early and the middle phases. This indicates that various types of material culture (corresponding social categories such as every day life, death, and ritual) are ready to use for archaeological interpretation in Korea and thus the holistic (or synthetic) approach mentioned above can be adopted. However, one should be aware that this approach neither claims to grasp the wholeness of a society nor returns to fundamental reductionism. By contrast, it is argued that everyday life and settlement as its materialistic expression, and death as its materialistic form, can be understood within their relationship and within the context that their relationship constructs in a society, respectively. Settlement and every day life can be comprehended by comparing burial to death in a symbolic and structural aspect, and *vice versa.* For this, it seems necessary to refine the relationship between everyday life (mundane life), death, and ritual more clearly. This is because this relationship is not fixed and unchanging but variable and contextual. Therefore, it is taken for granted to refine the relationship within the context of material culture in question. This work could be considered as a process of the "hermeneutic circle."

The analysis and research on settlement representing everyday life (or mundane) could be thought of as relatively easy in that the living itself is dealt with and thus the inference can be made from our own experience or knowledge with ease. However, it was not so long ago that every day life became a theme and object in the humanities and social science. In reality, it was possible with the advent of phenomenology (e.g., "Lebenswelt" of Husserl and in the "World" of Heiddegger) (Husserl 1970; Heidegger 1962), linguistic philosophy (e.g., language game of the later Wittgenstein) (Wittgenstein 1958), and the emphasis on culture (e.g., Gramsci's point of view with Marxism and so called Post-structuralism of Barthes and others) (e.g., Gramsci 1988; Barthes 1972, 1973). The concept of "every day life" can be conceptualised in various ways, for example, (1) something repeated or common; (2) non-political or private area; (3) something chaotic or non-controlled etc. These concepts contain partial plausibility respectively, yet the contrary evidence for these can also be suggested. The definition of something repeated or common could be different according to individ-

ual standard and it is doubtful if a non-political or private area can exist in this well-controlled capitalistic world. Furthermore, the cases happening in everyday life are not necessary in chaos but under control and predictable in reality.

Considering the values and the weakness of these concepts, an alternative can be conceived here by drawing the boundary between every day life and non-every day life in our mundane usage of the concept and archaeological practice. That is to say, the aspects of material culture that are less noticed, less changed and continued (and/or repeated), unconsciously invisible and feeling natural, and relatively less typified or formal can be conceived as everyday life (mundane). Accordingly, these aspects need to be borne in mind in the research on settlements. In order words, not only the changes in the inner structure of houses or the spatial structure of whole villages and associated material objects, but also the repeated use of places and unchanged material objects in use are critical to understand the settlement and everyday life.

By contrast, the terms "ritual" or even "symbol" are good examples that have been used without exact conceptualisation in Korean archaeology. It is so general that sometimes the meaning or the function of a specific item (or site) is difficult to assume. The shape of the item (or site) is too unique to use in every day life and is discovered not in the context of every day life (e.g., settlement) but in burials or ritual sites (clearly defined), and thus the item (or site) used to be called a "ritual item" or "symbol". However, as much as every day life is difficult to define, ritual or symbol is not easy to grasp. For example, any items or sites can have a second and other meanings as well as a function and a first meaning customarily recognised in every day life context. The fact that an item has a unique shape or form does not automatically indicate its possibility as a ritual item or symbol in itself because whether or not one item is a symbol should be decided by the result of reading the context within which the item lies.

Therefore, it seems possible to conceive a tentative definition of "ritual" or "symbol" as in the case of everyday life. For symbol, it can be thought of as a symbol for which a second and/or other meanings (or reference) of a material object are intentionally (or consciously) emphasised in a specific context in addition to an original function (and the first and direct meaning). If a set of actions (signified and symbolised) related to the use of that symbol is repeatedly executed in accordance with a specific procedure and formality, it can be defined as a ritual.

There is an important point to be remembered as regards symbol or ritual. That is to say, symbol (in particular, with reference to the use or interpretation of

symbol) and ritual are also fields in which power (or power relationship) is executed (Bourdieu 1977). In order words, the symbolic system (with regard to symbolisation and interpretation of material culture) is a structure that makes it possible to understand the world and power relations (a kind of network) in which social dominance is justified and thus the existing various power relations, including political and economic power relations, become justified, legitimised and agreed upon by both of the dominant and the dominated. Therefore, the establishment and execution of mortuary practice (burials) and other ritual practices (hoards) in archaeology can be interpreted in terms of symbolic power. This is because the social phenomena related to ritual can be understood as a symbolic system in which various material cultures related to ritual and other social actions symbolised and signified are combined.

Another important issue to be raised here is about the relationship between every day life and ritual (and/or other social categories). In reality, rituals such as mortuary practice, sacrificial services, and the establishment of hoards do provide the members of a community, in particular, the individuals especially involved with the ritual, with a moment to re-think the existing norm or structure and the encoding or decoding (or interpretation) of symbolisation and signification of a symbol and sign. The process of "re-think" is substantiated and materialised by placement of burials, body treatment of the dead, expression of sorrow or condolence by the mourners, and the selection of items buried (or used) in hoards. In the course of substantiation and materialisation, the established social relationship and hierarchy, or power relationship, is likely to be justified and occasionally re-adjusted (e.g., Barrett 1994; Parker-Pearson 1999). It is in the rituals that a part of individual identity (and subjectification) is formed and re-considered. For example, the experience and execution of mortuary practice enable the individuals involved to retrospect the past (individual or collective) and to project him/her self into the future (Thomas 1996; Kim J. I. 2002a; b). Although the ritual is executed by the living in general, it is also a place in which the object of the ritual (such as the dead or the deity, or even supernatural existence) can affect the living.

The exercise in everyday life is also a moment in which the existing "structure" (Giddens' term) (Giddens 1984) or "habitus" (Bourdieu's term) (Bourdieu 1977) is reaffirmed as in rituals. Furthermore, the identity of individuals is also formed and confirmed by the experience and even the body sense of individuals in everyday life. Then the next question follows; what differences exist between everyday life and ritual in addition to the points (e.g., the emphasis on symboli-

sation) mentioned above and what kind of relationship do every day life and ritual have?

For this matter, it could be suggested that "structure" or "habitus" implicitly (or sometimes explicitly) embedded in the exercise of everyday life is drawn and re-affirmed (or changed) in the ritual. So to speak, various social norms and relationships existing as structure or habitus in every day life are legitimised or hidden (or mystified) by various symbolic actions in the ritual. Furthermore, "structuration" itself in everyday life is given its base in the course of ritual. "Structure" or "habitus" and its "structuration" in every day life as "a long-term duration" is examined and re-affirmed (modified or discarded sometimes) in the ritual as a case or event. Therefore, the structure observed in every day life can be the same or similar to that of the ritual, yet they are not necessarily the same or similar to each other because it is also possible that structure and structuration in the ritual would hide or mystify those of every day life (e.g., class or gender conflicts).

Adopting this basic idea to the relationship between settlement (every day life) and burial (mortuary practice), the structures are structurated in settlement and burial respectively. However, in their reciprocal relation, various structures and their structuration in settlement can be symbolically confirmed or hidden by those of burials. The important point remembered here is that a detailed and specified relation between these social categories (every day life and mortuary practice) should be contextualised and/or interpreted in a context rather than ruled or regulated by a general law (or an universal hypothesis) or a specific pattern.

Symbolic Power and Place

It has been discussed that the relation between every day life and ritual can be grasped by their reciprocal relation with reference to "structure" and "structuration." Among many structures involved in every day life and ritual, this article will pay attention to those observed in the formation of place (or placement of settlement and burial). This is because structures observed in placement can be much more easily interpreted and compared to each other than any other "structures."

Since the 1980's, landscape has emerged as one of the main research themes in various disciplines such as cultural studies, cultural history, anthropology,

archaeology, and geography. This is partly because of criticism of quantitative analysis on space as a methodology, which was accepted as an innovative and later main methodology in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, it should be noted that there was the emergence of critical thought in relation to a fundamental methodological paradigm. First of all, it is true that the interest and concern laid on landscape has existed for a long time regardless of the birth of modern geography in the western countries. However, tradition related to current landscape research seems to originate from the particular concern on landscape in England. It is well known that the noble and gentry class enjoyed their traditional landscape and thus were so critical of deconstructing the traditional landscape in the course of industrialisation and urbanisation. In addition, the megalithic culture (such as Stonehenge and Avebury) also seemed to contribute to the formation of landscape in that it could produce a mystified atmosphere and sense related with the distant past. Although there is an aspect that the landscape (of countryside) was objectified for appreciation by the noble or the gentry class in this concept of landscape, it should be emphasised that this view of landscape has become the historical background for the current research on landscape.

In addition, the growing interest in continental philosophy made it possible to criticise the existing approach to spatial analysis systematically. In particular, Marxism, structuralism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics gave a theoretical base to criticise the existing view of space as a vacant and thus conquered object. The settlement analysis by Levi-Strauss based on structuralism and its binary opposition is a good example to show of the way in which a social structure is meaningfully structured in space and thus the social structure can be deciphered in space (Levi-Strauss 1968). Phenomenological concepts such as Dasein, dwelling or Being-in-the-world (of Heidegger), have been thought to give crucial insight in understanding the place and the environment with the bodily senses (seeing, visible and invisible, sensibility, and temperature), bodily movement (moving and walking), and memory (Heidegger 1962; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Tilley 1994; Ingold 2000). These philosophical concepts also enable to penetrate the relationship between the formation of individual identity and the understanding of landscape. The objectified "space" as the other since the nineteenth century could be changed to the subjectified (and objectified as well) "place."

The practice theory of Bourdieu and the structuration theory of Giddens provide an important theoretical foundation to interpret the ways of reproduction of a specific place and landscape, the relationship between individual agents and

the process of reproduction, and the role of landscape or place as a social agency. These theoretical views make it possible to recognise a place or a landscape as a meaningfully and significantly constructed (living) social entity (or even thrown to us) rather than the dead or even nothingness.

It seems possible to draw several important points for a further and detailed analysis in question out of the discussions above and the arguments in other's works thus far (e.g., Mizoguchi 1992; Tilley 1994; Barrett 1994; Thomas 1996; Ingold 2000). First of all, temporal sequences of events are marked in a place or a landscape. Therefore, a place or landscape is a field in which the past, the present, and the future co-exist. Secondly, a structure (as a rule or norm) is reproduced and varied in various forms. Therefore, a place or a landscape is a medium and also plays an active role in reproduction and change of structure as an agent. Thirdly, a place or a landscape is recognised or even thrown to us as an already signified or sensed existence instead of a vacancy or nothingness. Therefore, individuals and community are likely to form, maintain, and change their identity by interpretation and reinterpretation of meanings attached to the place or the landscape. Fourthly, a history (as a past) attached to a place and a landscape is preserved as a form of memory. The memory as such is re-affirmed in the present and projected to the future by a continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of meanings. Fifthly, the processes of cognition, interpretation, and practice related to a place and a landscape is also an important part of the execution of power in a community.

The Symbolic and Structural Change in the Bronze Age of Mid-West Korea

It is certain that archaeological phenomena related to the Bronze Age in Korea are too complicated and broad to be treated as a single unit for analysis. Therefore, it seems necessary to select and to concentrate on a specific region to reflect the overall situation to a degree. It is not claimed that the results drawn here reflect or represent the whole situation exactly. Rather, the results drawn are just a part of the whole situation but still have significance to allow us to touch the outline of the change. For this reason, mid-west Korea is chosen for the analysis in question. This is because this area is considered as the most developed area at the moment and believed to show the characteristics of change of the period most dramatically. Of course, the other regions such as the Han River

valley is taken into account when necessary.

Recently many settlement sites dated to the early phase of the Bronze Age have been excavated (see Fig. 1) and reported and active discussions on the characteristics of those settlement sites have been followed (Song M. Y. 2001; Kim J. S. 2001; Yi H. W. 2001; Cheon S. H. 2002). However, these researchers are most likely to focus on the conceptualisation of cultural groups (or assemblages) such as Yeoksam-dong, Garak-dong and the Heunam-ri assemblages, and the general characteristics of the relationship between cultural groups (or assemblages) based on the typology of the inner structure of settlement and pottery and cultural sequences itself. Therefore, despite the detailed analyses, the main themes of the research are limited to the description of cultural contents and an explanation of cultural change while further exploration on a deeper structure and structural change has been out of the question. This makes it difficult to interpret the formation of the spatial structure of settlement sites in any detail. Yet, it is still possible to sketch an outline of the characteristics of the early phase settlement sites.

First of all, the settlements of this phase can be characterised as having a rectangular shape, being with (or without) a single (or plural) fire place inside in general. Second, although there are exceptional settlements sites in the Heumam-ri assemblage (dated to the late stage of the early phase) in which several tens of settlements are found, the settlement sites of the early stage, including Garak-dong and Yeoksam-dong types of pottery, are in general composed of a single or at most 2-4 settlements (Song M. Y. 2001: 92). This indicates that a single or 2-4 settlements would become the fundamental unit for the formation of community (regardless of whether it was a household community or not).

It is also difficult to grasp the overall pattern of mortuary practice in this period. Despite the existence of dolmens (with triangular arrowheads) dated to this period, it is not easy to date dolmens because of the absence of burial goods. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to interpret the formation of spatial structure and to compare it with that of settlement. Even so, it is quite possible to draw an interesting point. As shown in Fig.1, the settlement dated to the early phase is observed in many areas (in particular, the main river valley regions) in South Korea. This also indicates that the diffusion or spread of the settlement (and its cultural assemblage) would take place massively and rapidly in various mechanisms (Kim J. S. 2001). This fact implies that everyday life and settlements as its materialistic expression would be emphasised at least as much as mortuary practice and its expression, burials. Everyday life context would be given an impor-

tant value in a symbolic structure.

This situation seems to change with the advent of the middle phase of the Bronze Age. Of course, the settlement sites with approximately. Twenty settlements are frequently found from the Heunam-ri assemblage of the late stage of the early phase. However, it is in the end stage of the early phase and the middle phase in which enclosed settlement sites and (possibly) the associated mortuary practice with them do appear at the same time.

The Geomdan-ri site (Gyeongnam province) and the Songgung-ri (Chungnam Province) site exemplify the characteristics of the end of the early phase and the middle phase of settlement. According to Ahn J. H. (2000), the Geomdan-ri site (see Fig.2) can be divided into three phases by the time of establishment of enclosure; a plural middle-sized settlement and other small-sized settlements would constitute the whole community and one middle-sized settlement and two small-sized settlements are composed of a basic unit for the formation of a community (i.e., a patriarchal household community) in the first phase.

By contrast, the middle-sized settlement would be a residential place for the head of the community and the heads of household community would exercise a common ritual. A plural middle and small-sized settlements would emerge with the enclosure. In particular, one huge-sized settlement located at the very centre of the site would play a role as the centre for rituals in the second phase.

In the third phase, a plural middle- and small-sized settlements appeared with one huge settlement at the centre of mortuary practice or ritual. This indicates that one central household community for a ritual and other plural small community emerged. He also points out that the enclosure would landmark the boundary of a specific family or ritual group or even a specific individual and thus this enclosure seems related to the differentiation or hierarchisation or the growth of a specific individual.

It is absolutely true that his view is very unique and gives a lot of insight for an understanding and interpretation of the settlement sites. Yet, there are several polemics in his view, for example, the role of the middle-sized house in the first phase and the one huge house of the second and third phases. There is no substantial evidence to infer the role of those houses as a residence of a head of a household community on the basis of their scale. Furthermore, the fact that there is no evidence of such a hierachisation in any other contexts causes us to hesitate to draw any tentative conclusions.

In this sense, the Songgung-ri site is worthy of note. The Songgung-ri settle-

ment site has been paid attention to for a long time because of burials and wooden walls as well as settlements on the plateau (e.g., Buyeo National Museum and Buyeo-gun 2000). As in other sites belonging to the Songgung-ri cultural group, this site is composed of two types of settlement (round and rectangular types). Three or four round settlements are likely to form a residential unit as shown in Figs.3. In the distributional pattern of the rectangular settlements, No. 23 settlement with a huge size and relatively abundant material objects, which is located some distance from other settlements, is noticeable. The excavators have suggested two possibilities about the role or function of this settlement, which are a residence of a superior individual and a communal building for work or meeting. This question seems to be answered not by observation of the settlement itself, but by a consideration of the wooden wall.

As in the case of Geomdan-ri and other sites with enclosures, it should be taken into account that the wooden wall would probably emerge with rectangular settlements (including No. 23 settlement). That is to say, the emergence of huge sized settlements seems to be closely related to the enclosure or the wooden wall. The role of the enclosure varies according to time and region in European prehistory (cf. Whittle 1985; Hodder 1990; Thomas 1996). For example, it could be interpreted either as having a symbolic meaning or as a kind of defence wall. However it is important to note that regardless of whether of a symbolic existence or defence wall, the enclosure and the wooden wall would function substantially to emphasise the communality within the community concerned. In other words, their function and meaning would stem from its symbolic role for enforcement of communality. In this sense, it is very intriguing that a community can be recognised as a symbolic boundary and remain in an individual's mind consciously or unconsciously (Cohen 1985). To further this definition of community with regard to material culture in question, it can be also inferred that the enclosure and the wooden wall would be a substantiated and materialised form of community as a symbolic boundary.

The interesting point is that substantiation and materialisation of the symbolic boundary does not always occur. Rather, it is likely that substantiation and materialisation of a community would take place according to various social conditions and individuals' social actions. Therefore, it can be understood that the emergence of a huge settlement and enclosure or wooden wall would be mediated by an emphasis on communality within a community.

The overall characteristics (inhumation burials such as stone cist or pit grave) and spatial structure of mortuary practice in the Songgung-ri cultural group has

been examined (Kim S. O. 2001; Kim J. I. 2002b). In particular, Kim S. O. has suggested that the Songgung-ri-type burials can be classified into stone cists, pit graves with stone covers and jar coffin (urn) tombs, and again, each type of tomb is divided into several categories according to their typological characteristics (for example, structure of pit, capstone and paved stones). He has also proposes that the Songgung-ri-type burials are categorised into three inclusive levels; "burials," "burial clusters," and "macro cluster" (concentric or linear pattern) according to a "layout plan of burial sites," and the burial structure is closely related to the age/sex of the dead (for example, males are related to stone arrowheads and stone slabs or an earthen floor whereas females are related to pot fragment-floor and no stone arrowheads). Furthermore, he has argued that while most of the Songgung-ri-type burials are organised according to the age/sex of the dead, some burial groups, such as the Songgung-ri burial group, can be ascribed to that of high-ranking groups; there is, so to speak, some degree of social ranking within and between Songgung-ri-type burials (Kim S. O. 2001: 47-68).

For example, the Songgung-ri stone cist burial group is assumed to be the burial place in which the elite (or the ruling class) of the neighbouring Songgung-ri settlement group are buried in contrast to the Namsan-ri burial group thought to be that of ordinary people from the same settlement group (Choi J. G. 1995; Kim G. S. 1998). This is supported by the superiority of the burial location (located on a hill top), the absence of other burial groups that can be presupposed to be the builders of the Songgung-ri settlement group and grave 1 in which a Bipa-type bronze dagger (supposedly the earliest example of the use of metal ever found on the Korean peninsular) and stone arrowheads were found (e.g., Yi G. M. 1992; Kim G. S. 1998).

Despite plausibility inherent to this explanation, it should be pointed out that this is still limited to a simple "morphological description" of society because it fails to conceptualise how symbolic power is executed in the construction of burial groups or cemeteries through the interpretation of placement of each burial group and in this process, how the existing structure (as a rule or norm) is structurated by individuals and community. In other words, it has not been considered that the "layout plan of burial sites" (or burial placement) can show a process of maintenance or change of structure (structuration), which is inscribed onto time (the past, the present, and the future) and space (Kim J. I. 2002b: 111-3).

According to Kim Seung-Og, a total of thirty-six burial groups (composed of

193 stone cist burials, 64 pit graves with cover stones and 46 jars) can be divided into three categories according to a distribution pattern which are single burials (or no regular pattern), a linear pattern, and a concentric pattern. (Kim S. O. 2001: 47-60). A linear pattern is observed in the burial groups from Songgung-ri, Namsan-ri, and Majeon-ri C districts whereas a concentric pattern is observed in the burial groups from Sanui-ri and Oseok-ri. He has argued that with sex/age division observed in most of the burial groups (of the concentric pattern), several burials with linear patterns can be ascribed to high-ranking groups. However, in the case of the Sanui-ri and Oseok-ri burial groups with concentric patterns (see Fig. 4), several important characteristics in burial placement can be observed by close examination (Kim J. I. 2002b: 112-5). They are summarised as follows; first and foremost, it can be observed that two burials are located in the centre and other burials surround them. For example, graves 8 and 10 in Sanui-ri and graves 3 and 10 in Oseok-ri are burials located in the centre of the burial groups. Although it is difficult to probe at present because of the difficulty of physical anthropological examination, it seems very possible that the dead of these burials are considered as the common ancestors or origins of the other burials and that these burials are referenced by the dead in his/her lifetime and the mourners in mortuary practice and burial placement.

Secondly, most of the burials in these burial groups do not include any burial goods except for stone arrowheads and broken pottery shards in a few graves. This indicates the less placing of care or emphasis on burial goods and body ornamentation in mortuary practice rather than no conspicuous difference in burial goods between the burials and a lack of high-ranking existence in these burial groups (Kim S. O. 2001: 62-7). The dead in his/her lifetime and the mourners would not emphasise individual expression by using highly standardised burial practice in terms of material objects; they stressed their relationship with specific burials.

Thirdly, despite gender (or age) differentiation by material objects (e.g., stone arrowheads or stone daggers with males and pottery-shard floors with females), the fact that male and female (and adult/child) are likely to be buried in the same place indicates that equal membership would be emphasised between community members, at least in mortuary practice, regardless of sex/age.

To recapitulate, equal membership between individual burials and between the segments of burials is stressed in relation to a common ancestor or origin. The dead in his/her lifetime and the mourners (the future dead) would recognise this relationship and build burials based on it. The burial of a common ancestor

or origin would be a power source where this structuration of burial placement takes place. Therefore, its own unique power execution would exist in this structuration of burial placement, rather than just the absence of social rank or hierarchy. The fact that no other burials of a specific sex or age group with their associated ostentatious burial goods are found around these burial groups reinforces this interpretation.

In contrast, in the linear pattern burial groups, burials with stone (or bronze) daggers or stone arrowheads (assumed to be of male) tend to be located at the end of rows as in the Songgung-ri, Namsan-ri and Majeon-ri C district burial groups (see Fig. 5), and five burials with stone daggers are located in a row as in the Gazung-ri burial group. It is not still clear whether a stone dagger (or arrowhead) is a status symbol because it should be decided within the specific context in question and the fact that almost a half of burials in these burial groups include a dagger or a arrowhead does not support the possibility of social hierarchy. Therefore, it can be tentatively inferred that the males in the linear pattern burial groups would be buried in the restricted area, not because of their high-rank but because of their sex (male). Structuration of these linear pattern burial groups could be understood as a process of differentiation of male from female rather than that of high-ranking people from others. The male dead in his lifetime and the mourners would recognise that males should be buried in a specific area in a row or a separate place.

It seems possible to look into the relationship between every day life and mortuary practice of the middle phase based on the results of observation and interpretation hitherto. First of all, it can be said that communality is stressed as a structure in both every day life and mortuary practice. The appearance of a huge-sized settlement (as a communal place for rituals or meetings) and enclosure (and wooden wall) would be a medium to reinforce the communality as a symbolic value in everyday life context. This emphasis on communality as a symbolic value is also observed in the mortuary practice. The emphases on equal membership and on equality in burial goods (except for gender division) are good cases in point. However, it is also to be pointed out that the common origin or the past would play an active role as a power source within this community. That is to say, the emphasis on communality would be justified (or legitimised) by the past or the common origin as a power source. The important point here is that this emphasis on communality and justification due to the past was possible by the individual agents' social action and practice, in particular, those who held hegemonic power within a community. In order words, the

emphasis and justification need to be understood as a social strategy executed by those who held hegemonic power and thus the emphasis and justification would be a discourse of power execution. Although there is no obvious evidence of social rank or hierarchisation in this community, it does not necessarily mean that this community was a politically and socially equal society. Rather, this community had its own unique way of power execution and it is within this community in which individual agents executed his/her hegemonic power.

The late phase of the Bronze Age shows a completely different feature. As already known, the late phase of the Bronze Age is also called as the Korean-type bronze dagger culture. Although there are many cases in which Liaoning-type (or Bipa-shaped) bronze daggers (accepted as a preceding culture to the Korean-type bronze dagger culture) dated to the middle phase have been found on the Korean peninsular (e.g., a bronze dagger from grave 1 in the Songgung-ri burial group), most of them have been reported in Manchuria. Therefore, the Korean-type bronze dagger culture can be claimed to represent a cultural development of the period on Korean peninsular in comparison to the Liaoning-type bronze dagger culture which has a close cultural affinity to Manchuria.

It has been widely accepted that the Korean-type bronze dagger culture would originate from the Liaoning-type bronze dagger culture because of a continual stylistic variation in the bronze dagger. That is to say, the Korean-type bronze dagger evolved from the Liaoning-type dagger. However, it needs to be noted that in spite of a typological succession as such, there also exist many differences between them (e.g., burial type). In particular, the inhumation burials dated to this phase in the mid-west Korea demonstrate a unique feature of their own.

Approximately fifty to sixty inhumation burials (such as pit graves with/without cap stone) have been hitherto found in mid-west Korea (see Fig. 6). They include various types of bronze artefacts such as bronze daggers, bronze spearheads, bronze chisels and unique styles of bronze ritual items (e.g., trumpet shaped bronze artefacts or bronze discs) and/or bowls with clay stripes and/or black burnished pottery (see Fig. 7). These burials have been divided into three categories based on the quantity and the kind of burial goods, such as the first group (with ritual items + bronze dagger and/or spearhead and/or bronze mirror + pottery), the second group (with bronze dagger and/or spearhead + bronze mirror), and the third group (with bronze dagger and/or spearhead) (Kim J. I. 1994). It has also been argued that centred on the first group sites, the second and third group sites are placed on the boundary between the first group sites

and thus these second and third group sites tend to circumscribe the first group sites from a distance. Finally, it has been assumed that the buried of the first group sites would be a shaman or shaman-king and those of the second and the third groups would be of the warrior class on the basis of ethnographic data and written documents.

Although it was attempted to explain this observed phenomenon with various archaeological and geographical hypotheses such as "X-Tent model" and the Central Place theory (Renfrew 1984: 58-60; Grant 1986), it is noticed in relation to the material culture of the previous phases that these burials are individual inhumation burials and placed as a single burial (not a communal cemetery) distanced from each other without exception and that social rank (or hierarchy) between the burials is observed. This implicates that regardless of the characteristics of the buried (e.g., shaman or shaman-king), individuals who could be buried with sometimes a massive amount of bronze objects would appear in this late phase. Instead, the burial group or the cemetery of the middle phase, in which communality is emphasised and the common origin is referenced as a power source, is no longer observed in this phase. This indicates several important points; first, the emphasis on individualistic value would be allowed in this phase. In other words, the individuals could express him/herself without consideration of equality and communality within a community or that way of expression would be legitimated or conceded by other members of a community.

Second, the way of execution of power is also changed in this phase. The individual expression by various material objects associated with his/her lifetime status would be efficiently used to differentiate him/herself in mortuary practice. The power obtained by him/her (more precisely, the position obtained by him/her in a power network) would be justified by the buried him/her self rather than the past or common origin.

Third, the power (or a position in a power network) obtained by the dead would be remembered by the mourners, but the dead no longer plays a decisive role as seen in the middle phase. In contrast to a specific burial repeatedly referenced by the mourners in the middle phase, an individual burial and the dead within it would not be referenced for the future burial placement within a community.

Therefore, it can be argued that there is a change in the ways of power execution and of social and symbolic structure as well as in the material culture of this phase (from the emphasis on the equality and communality to that of individual expression). Another intriguing point in this phase is that the settlement sites

containing bowls with clay stripes as an index artefact of the late Bronze Age are extremely rare. Although the absolute number of settlements with that kind of bowl slowly increases, it seems still true that the overall number of settlements would decrease drastically when compared to the previous phase. This is indicative of a shift in the relationship between social categories, from settlement (everyday life) to mortuary practice (mortuary practice) in terms of social and symbolic structure in the late phase.

Conclusion

The change of material culture during the Bronze Age in Korea has been hitherto outlined and its characteristics with regard to social and symbolic structure have been discussed with an analysis on spatial structure. Based on the discussion so far, it seems more evident that a change of material culture from the early phase through to the middle and late phases needs to be interpreted not by a simple observation of typological variation and the establishment of cultural sequence, but by a "thick description" of material culture in terms of symbolic structure.

In this sense, the change of social and symbolic structure during the Bronze Age in Korea can be characterised as the use of diverse social strategy in the formation of a community including the emphasis on the communality, and the growth of individuals and individual expressions. As already discussed, a relatively small scale society of the early phase composed of a single or 2-4 settlements in which a living context (or every day life) would be given important value, which then changed to the formation of enclosed settlement sites (or settlement sites with wooden wall) and cemeteries of a community in the middle phase.

In the settlement and cemetery of the middle phase, the emphasis on communality and the role of a common origin as a power source is observed. The individuals, in particular, those who held hegemonic power, would exercise it by the emphasis on communality and their authority would be legitimised or even endowed from the common origin of a community. The emphasis on communality as such might indicate the increase of community power literally. However, it is more likely that the individuals would use a symbolic value of communality to justify and even to expand their power. This is not necessarily related to the emergence of social rank or hierarchy since without visible evi-

dence of social rank or hierarchy, it seems possible to assume a community or society in which a power relation (or power network) is formed.

The growth of individuals and the reinforcement of individual expression observed in the late phase could be understood in this historical context. In other words, the individuals, who legitimise and expand their power or hold a dominant position in a power relation, could eventually establish and declare their power and position with growing individual expression and thus differentiate him/her self from the others within a community.

Therefore, the change of material culture as such in the Korean Bronze Age should be understood as an active and dynamic process in which various social agencies are involved (e.g., social action and practice of individual agents), rather than just a simple typological change of material objects or uncritical adoption of theories based on social morphology.

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Table of Figures

Fig. 1. Distribution of Settlements in the Early Phase of the *Mumun* Pottery Culture (After Kim J. S. 2001)

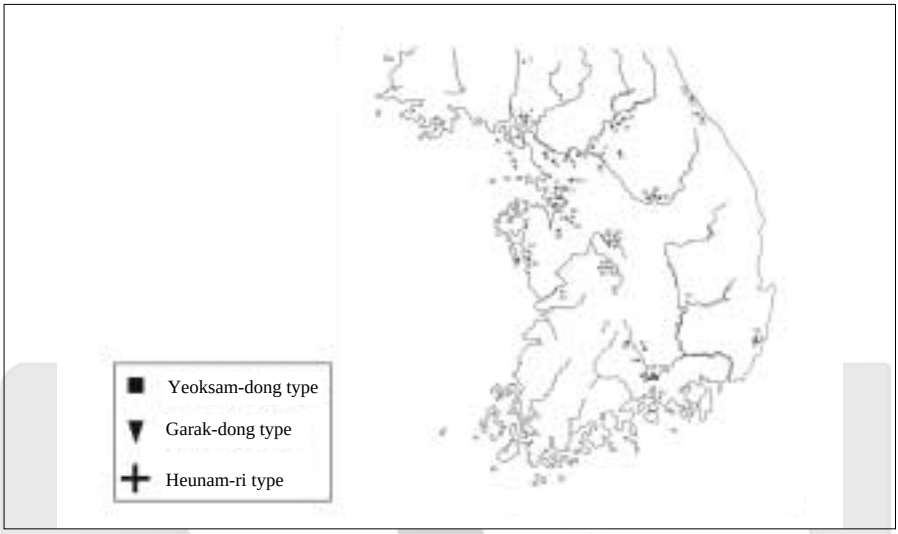

Fig. 2. Settlements and Enclosure at the Geomdan-ri Site (After Ahn J. H. 2001)

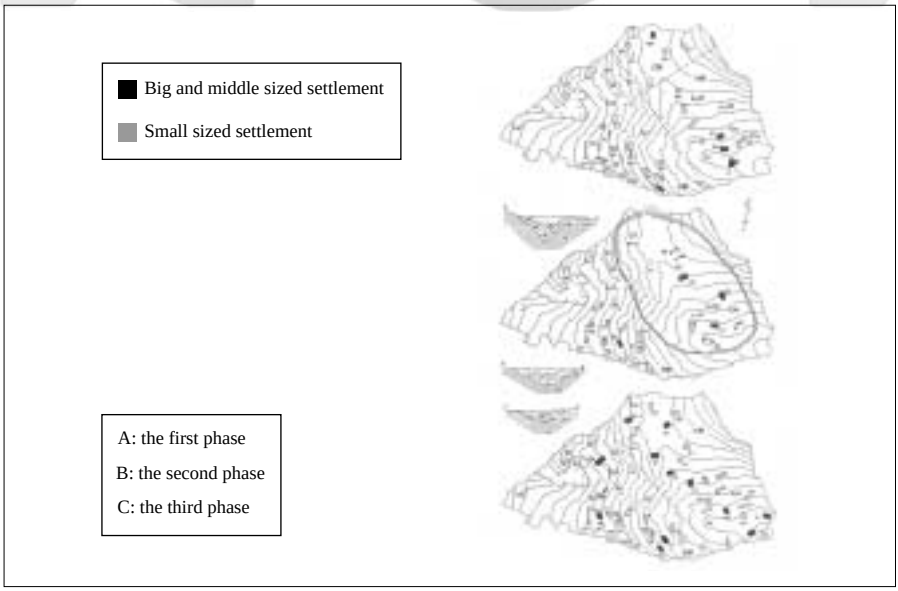

Fig. 3. Wooden Wall at the Songgung-ri Site (After Buyeo National Museum and Buyeo-gun 2000)

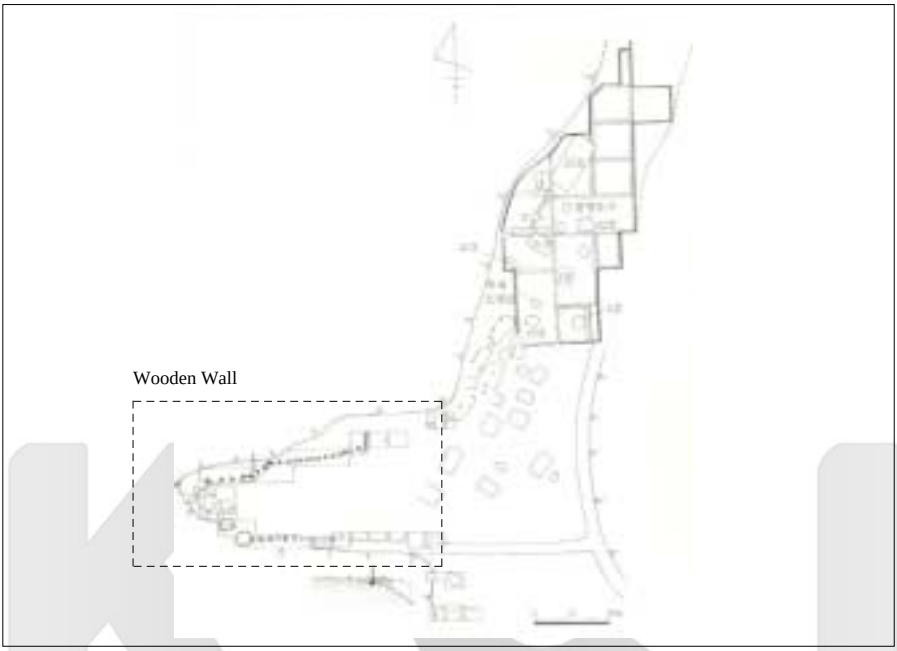

Fig. 4. The Oseok-ri Burial Group (Based on Yi N. S. 1995 and modified by the author)

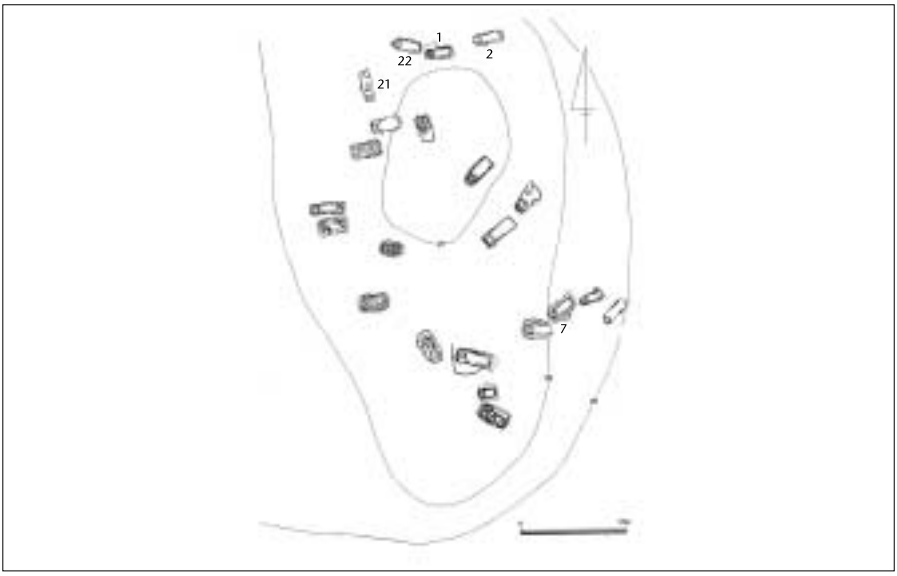

Fig. 5. The Namsan-ri Burial Group (Based on Yun M. B. 1987 and modified by the author)

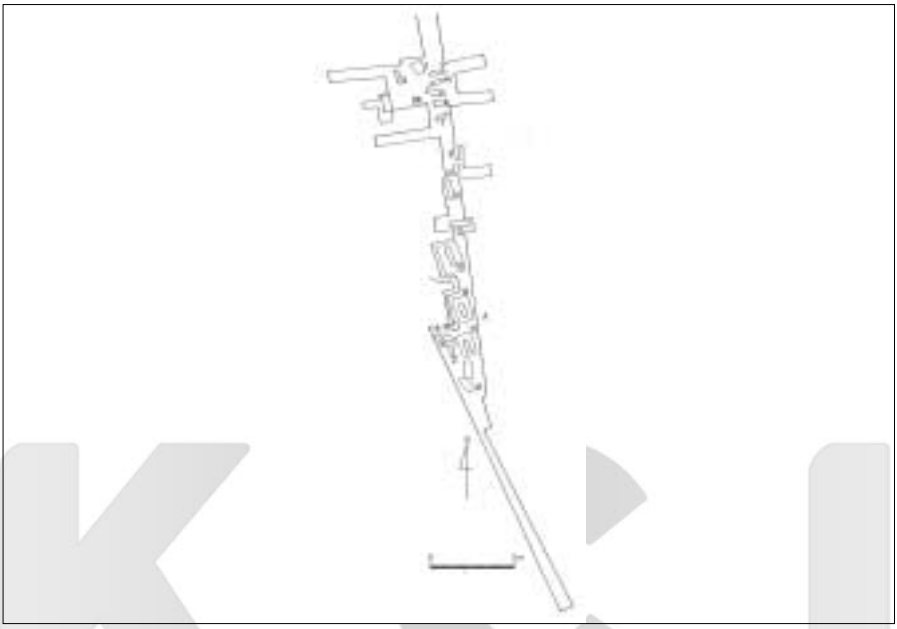

Fig. 6. Distribution of the Korean-type Bronze Dagger Burials in Mid-west Korea (After Kim J. I. 1994)

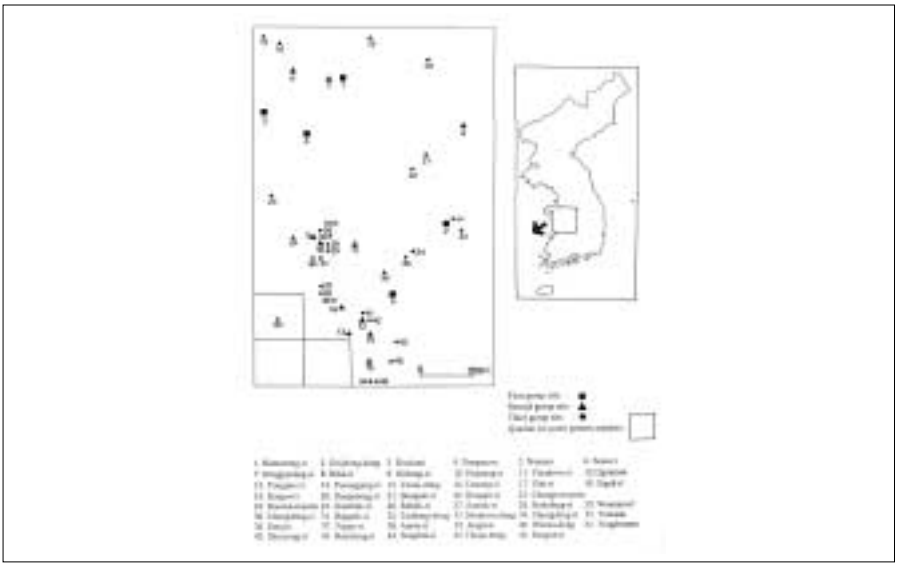

Fig. 7. Various Material Objects from the Dongseo-ri Burial (After Ji G. G. 1978 and modified by the author)