

(DIS)ASSEMBLING THE
 NATIONAL CANON:
 SEVENTH-CENTURY
 “ESOTERIC” BUDDHIST RITUAL,
 THE *SAMGUK YUSA*, AND
 SACH’ŎNWANG-SA

Youn-mi Kim

Studying a time period or a region that has left few textual records is a daunting task. The time when the Korean peninsula was ruled by the Three Kingdoms—Koguryō (trad. 37 B.C.E.-668 C.E.), Paekche (trad. 18 B.C.E.-660 C.E.), and Silla (trad. 57 B.C.E.-935 C.E.)¹—is one of those time periods that has challenged scholars because of its significant lack of contemporaneous records. Fragmentary records from this period—epigraphs from the three kingdoms, records regarding these kingdoms scattered in contemporaneous Chinese and Japanese texts, and some Buddhist commentaries written by monks of this period—are insufficient to offer a complete picture of Korean history before the tenth century. Despite the lack of historical records written during the Three Kingdoms period, studies of the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla constitute a significant portion of scholarly literature on Korean history and art, especially in Korean academia.

How then have researchers attempted to study the Three Kingdoms of Korea? Two texts have served as primary sources of information about the

¹ Silla unified the Korean peninsula in 668. Modern scholars often use the term “Unified Silla” (Kr. T’ongil Silla 統一新羅) for the period between 668 and 935. For the modern coinage of this term, see Richard D. McBride II, “Introduction,” in *State and Society in Middle and Late Silla*, ed. Richard D. McBride II (Cambridge, MA: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 2010): 3.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

history of the Three Kingdoms: the *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (History of the Three Kingdoms), compiled around 1145 by a group of scholars led by Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075-1151) following an order of King Injong 仁宗 (r. 1122-1146), and the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), compiled around 1281 by the monk Iryŏn 一然 (1206-1289).² In particular, the latter has served as the foundation for the study of early Korean Buddhist history because it offers records of many events related to the history of Buddhism.³ Unfortunately both texts were compiled several centuries after the demise of these kingdoms. The late compilation dates as well as the inclusion of myths and miracle stories, especially in the *Samguk yusa*, have led to debates over the reliability of these texts. Since such debates tend to evolve around issues that can easily arouse nationalistic sentiments, there has always been discord among scholars, with some scholars viewing the texts as precious historical data, and others viewing the same texts as spurious fabrications.

I hope to offer an escape from this predicament. In this chapter, through a case study of an important passage from the *Samguk yusa* about an early “esoteric” ritual exhibiting Buddhho-Daoist characteristics,⁴ I aim to provide,

² Since the 1980s, however, a number of Korean scholars have argued that more than one compiler created the *Samguk yusa*, suggesting different figures or a group of people around Iryŏn as possible participants in the compilation. The philological study of the *Samguk yusa*—research into its different editions and publication dates—also constitutes an important part of the academic literature concerning the *Samguk yusa* produced by Korean scholars in recent years.

³ For a brief history of the *Samguk yusa*'s rise as an important historical source in the twentieth century, see Park Daejae, “Doubts about the Edition of the *Samguk yusa*,” *International Journal of Korean History* 13 (2009): 17-19.

⁴ These types of ritual were often categorized as practices of “miscellaneous esotericism,” which is a translation of the term *zōmitsu* 雜密. In modern scholarship, *zōmitsu* forms a binary system with “pure esotericism” (Jp. *junmitsu* 純密), the systemized “esoteric” Buddhism introduced to East Asia in the eighth century. In this binary system, as implied by the names of the two categories, *junmitsu* is regarded as superior to *zōmitsu*. As scholars have recently pointed out, however, the binary division between *zōmitsu* and *junmitsu* is a modern creation. A number of scholars have observed that such a distinction between *zōmitsu* and *junmitsu* did not exist in China, and even in Japan usage of these two terms as binary concepts first appeared only in Ekō's 慧光 (1666-1734) writing. Ryūichi Abe, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 152-154; Robert Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002): 267. To avoid the simplistic binary notion and hierarchical bias implied in

if not a perfect solution, then at least useful suggestions on how to productively use the *Samguk yusa*. This chapter shows that it is possible to read the *Samguk yusa* contents in the context of relevant visual and material evidence as well as other external texts. By taking such an interdisciplinary approach, I believe, one can make more productive use of this rich but problematic document. Although it still remains unknown to many Western scholars, there exist quite abundant archaeological and art historical data from the Three Kingdoms period and Unified Silla that retain traces of early Korean Buddhism. Through my careful reading of these precious data sources, this chapter explores the diverse and interesting intersection between Buddhology and art history in the context of seventh-century Korea.

Another goal of this chapter is to throw some light on the early history of Korean “esoteric” Buddhism, which is also a topic of heated debate. The passage of the *Samguk yusa* that will be investigated below is a short record about a ritual known as Munduru 文豆婁,⁵ meaning Mudrā (religious hand gesture or seal), purportedly performed in the early 670s at about the time when Silla unified the peninsula, bringing an end to the Three Kingdoms period. This passage about the Munduru Ritual has been critical in shaping modern scholars’ understanding of early Korean

the term *zōmitsu*, in this chapter I simply use the term “early” esoteric Buddhism. Koichi Shinohara is currently writing a book on the development of early “esoteric” Buddhist *dhāraṇī* rituals to elaborate systemized “esoteric” Buddhist rituals of the eighth century. The term “esotericism/esoteric Buddhism” (Ch. *mijiao* 密教) itself has become contentious in contemporary Buddhist studies as well, since Buddhist “esotericism,” as pointed out by Robert Sharf, did not form an independent form of teaching or school in China. The term *mijiao* was used to designate “esoteric” teachings and practices only in the tenth century in China. Robert Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 263-278, especially 269. In Korea, there were two distinctive esoteric Buddhist schools, Sinin 神印 and Ch’ongji 摠持, at least from the time of the Koryō kingdom. So I do not use quotation marks when referring to esoteric Buddhism of Koryō. For more on this subject, see Henrik H. Sørensen, “On the Sinin and Ch’ongji Schools and the Nature of Esoteric Buddhist Practice under the Koryō,” *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 5 (2005): 49-84. Following the recent remarkable study of esoteric Buddhism in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, this chapter uses the term “esoteric” Buddhism as one that comprehensively includes diverse esoteric practices before and after the introduction of the systemized tantric Buddhist tradition to East Asia in the eighth century. See Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011).

⁵ For the meaning of “Munduru,” see page 142.

“esoteric” Buddhism because it is one of the few records mentioning “esoteric” Buddhist practices in Korea before the Koryŏ period (918-1392). Depending on their different interpretations of this passage—from the record about the starting point of the Korean esoteric Buddhist school known as Sinin 神印 to a fabricated origin story about a much later ritual practice—scholars have offered quite different views on early Korean “esoteric” Buddhism.

Neither indiscriminately trusting this record nor simply dismissing it as untrustworthy, this chapter aims to provide a more sophisticated and refined understanding of this earliest record about an “esoteric” Buddhist ritual in Korea. I begin with comparing the passage in the *Samguk yusa* with earlier and later texts in an attempt to discern what textual comparison will reveal with regard to the subject of analysis. Next, through a further examination of the nature of this ritual in a larger context of the history of “esoteric” Buddhism in East Asia, I explore the question of when this ritual began to be practiced in the Korean peninsula. Lastly, by exploring archaeological and art historical data from the seventh century, I examine whether material data can enhance our understanding of this important passage. Simply proving the validity of this passage is not my goal; instead, in this chapter I hope to demonstrate the extent to which an intertextual reading and interdisciplinary methodology can deepen our understanding of early Korean Buddhism and Buddhist art.

The Earliest Record of “Esoteric” Buddhist Ritual in Korea

The *Samguk yusa* reference to the Munduru Ritual is important because our current understanding of the early history of “esoteric” Buddhism in the Korean peninsula drastically changes depending on the interpretation of this passage. The passage appears in the section of the *Samguk yusa* titled “King Munmu whose posthumous title was Pömmín” (*Munho Wang Pömmín* 文虎王法敏). It would not be an exaggeration to state that King Munmu’s 文武 (r. 661-681) reign was the most eventful time in the history of the Silla kingdom. Through a series of wars, Silla finally conquered Paekche (trad. 18 B.C.E.-660 C.E.) and Koguryŏ (trad. 37 B.C.E.-668 C.E.), the other two kingdoms of the peninsula. Silla, initially the weakest among the Three Kingdoms, managed to turn the tables through its military alliance with China’s Tang empire (618-907). By the end of this extended unification process, however, Silla’s relationship with Tang suddenly went sour, as a serious territorial dispute emerged over the newly conquered lands, eventually leading to the Silla-Tang War (670-676).

According to a passage included in the “Munho Wang whose posthumous title was Pömmín” article of the *Samguk yusa*, the Munduru Ritual was practiced to protect Silla as the Silla-Tang War was about to begin. The passage explains that King Munmu, discovering that Tang was planning to launch a military attack against Silla, summoned a monk named Myöngnang 明朗 (fl. seventh century) and asked for providential help. The monk advised the king to build Sach’önwang-sa 四天王寺, or Four Heavenly Kings Monastery, as a site at which to perform a ritual. Because time was lacking, a monastery was instead created using silk textiles as a temporary measure, and the monk performed the Munduru Ritual at the temporarily built monastery immediately before the two countries began to battle. The *Samguk yusa* ascribes Silla’s victory in battles in 670 and 671 to the ritual’s efficacy. The relevant passage reads:

[Myöng]nang told [King Munmu], “There is Sinyu Forest 神遊林 on the southern side of Mount Nang 狼山. Build Sach’önwang-sa in that place, and install a ritual place. Then all should be fine.” At that time, a messenger from Ch’ongju reported, “Countless Tang soldiers approached our border, and [their warships] are patrolling on the sea.” The king summoned Myöngnang and said, “The issues have become extremely urgent. What should we do?” [Myöng]nang said, “[We] should temporarily build [a monastery] with colorful silk.” Thereupon [they] built a monastery using colorful silk, made images of *obangsin* 五方神 (the Deities of the Five Directions) with grass, and twelve Yoga (Kr. Yuga 瑜伽) monks, the leader of whom was Myöngnang, performed the secret Munduru Ritual. Furious wind and waves sank all the Tang warships, even before Tang and Silla had a battle. Later rebuilt and officially launched, the monastery was named Sach’önwang-sa. The ritual platform [at the monastery] has not been damaged until today. <The *Kuksa* 國史 says that the renovation and formal opening of the monastery took place in the first year of the Tiaolu 調露 reign, which was the year of *kimyo* 己卯 [679].>⁶ Later in the year of *sinmi* 辛未 (671), Tang once more dispatched Zhao Xian 趙憲 as general of the army, and fifty thousand soldiers again came to

⁶ The sentence in angled brackets is an interlinear note. In the original passage from the *Samguk yusa*, the interlinear note appears in smaller characters than the characters of the main text.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

defeat [Silla]. They performed the [Mundurū] Ritual again, and the warships sank as before.⁷

朗奏曰，狼山之南有神遊林，創四天王寺於其地，開設道場則可矣。時有貞州使走報曰，唐兵無數至我境，迴槩海上。王召明朗曰，事已逼至如何。朗曰，以彩帛假構宜矣。乃以彩帛營寺，草構五方神像，以瑜伽明僧十二員，明朗爲上首，作文豆婁秘密之法。時唐羅兵未交接，風濤怒起，唐船皆沒於水。後改剎寺，名四天王寺，至今不墜壇席。〈國史云改剎在調露元年己卯〉後年辛未，唐更遣趙憲爲帥，亦以五萬兵來征，又作其法，船沒如前。⁸

Korean Buddhologists generally regard this ritual as one of the major events in the early history of Korean esoteric Buddhism, and many think that the monk Myōngnang who performed this ritual later founded the Sinin School, one of two Korean esoteric Buddhist schools.⁹ On the other hand, Henrik H. Sørensen, a specialist in Korean esoteric Buddhism, does not view this passage as a trustworthy historical record, and has suggested that the practice of the Mundurū Ritual probably began only in the eleventh century under Koryō, the polity that succeeded Silla.¹⁰ This opinion conforms with his view that the majority of records about “esoteric” Bud-

⁷ All English translations in this chapter are by the author.

⁸ *Samguk yusa* 2: “Munho Wang Pōmmin,” Han’guk Chōngsin Munhwa Yōn’guwōn 韓國精神文化研究院 [Academy of Korean Studies], ed., *Yōkchu Samguk yusa* 譯註 三國遺事 [Annotation and translation of the *Samguk yusa*] (Seoul: Iho Munhwasa, 2003), 2:22-23. The sentence appearing in angled brackets is an interlinear note.

⁹ See publications of Kwōn Sangno, Yi Chongik, Pak T’ae-hwa, and Mun Myōngdae for the account that the Sinin School was founded during the time of Myōngnang. For a list of their publications discussing this issue, see Sō Yun’gil 서운길, *Han’guk milgyo sasangsa* 한국밀교사상사 [History of Korean esoteric Buddhist thought] (Seoul: Unjusa, 2006): 324, footnote 68. Sō Yun’gil, however, argues that the Sinin School became an independent school only in 936 under the Koryō kingdom. See Sō Yun’gil, *Han’guk milgyo sasangsa*, 324-326. It is clear that Myōngnang has been regarded as the founder of this esoteric school since the thirteenth century, if not earlier, when Iryōn compiled the *Samguk yusa*. The *Samguk yusa* records that Myōngnang had been to Tang China and describes him as the founder of the Sinin School. See *Samguk yusa* 5: “Myōngnang Sinin,” *Yōkchu Samguk yusa*, 4:225-226.

¹⁰ Henrick H. Sørensen, “On the Sinin and Cho’ngji Schools,” 49-84, especially 58-59.

dhism from the Three Kingdoms period in Korea, which mostly come from the *Samguk yusa*, are fabrications modeled on stories having similar patterns found in earlier Chinese texts.¹¹

Here we find drastically differing views on this *Samguk yusa* passage among scholars. How shall we deal with this quandary? Simply following one of the opinions will not deepen our understanding of early Korean “esoteric” Buddhism; instead, it will only contribute to the ever-widening gap between the two camps. To resolve this issue, I will first identify key information provided in this record and then compare it with external texts as well as archaeological data.

The passage from the *Samguk yusa*, although brief, provides several pieces of key information about the ritual under discussion:

1. The name of the ritual was Munduru 文豆婁,¹² meaning *mudrā*.
2. The ritual was performed in order to protect the state.
3. The ritual was performed under Silla in 670 and 671 during the reign of King Munmu.
4. The ritual was performed at the Sach’önwang-sa site located on Mount Nang 狼.
5. The ritual used statues of the Deities of the Five Directions (Kr. *obangsin* 五方神).
6. After the war, permanent buildings were built at the Sach’önwang-sa site, which were completed in 679.
7. The monk Myōngnang performed the ritual with twelve eminent Yoga monks.¹³

¹¹ See Henrick H. Sørensen, “Early Esoteric Buddhism in Korea: Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla (ca. 600-918),” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011): 575-579.

¹² The meaning of this word will be explained more fully below.

¹³ Some scholars have previously suggested that the term “Yoga monks” in this passage refers to Yogācāra monks. Because the record is about an “esoteric” Buddhist ritual, however, I agree with Sō Yun’gil, a specialist in Korean esoteric Buddhism, who suggests that “Yoga monks” in this context means monks who practice esoteric Buddhism’s three mysteries (瑜伽三密). Sō Yun’gil, *Han’guk milgyo sasangsa*, 174-175. About the three mysteries appearing in early Buddhist texts, see Charles D. Orzech and Henrik H. Sørensen, “Mudrā, Mantra, Mandala,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011): 83-87.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

8. The ritual platform at Sach'önwang-sa was intact when the monk Iryön composed the *Samguk yusa* in the thirteenth century during the Koryŏ period.

For the convenience of the reader, this chapter will use the above numbers when referring to these key points in the following sections.

External Texts

In this section, I examine the *Samguk yusa* passage through a traditional method commonly used by historians—comparison with external textual sources. Four external texts from different genres, from an anthology compiled by a scholar-official to the official history composed by royal order, provide some useful records concerning the Munduru Ritual; this information can then be compared with the above key information from the *Samguk yusa* passage. As will be shown below, intertextual reading of these external documents helps understand the nature of the Munduru Ritual during the Koryŏ period, but does not tell us much about its practice during the Silla period. The four texts show that key points 2 and 4 were true at least from early Koryŏ to early Chosŏn (1392-1910), and that key point 6—that the construction of Sach'önwang-sa was completed in 679—was not a simple fabrication by the compiler of the *Samguk yusa* but a quotation from an older text.

The first external text that can be used for comparison is the *Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip* 東國李相國集 (Collected works of State Councilor Yi of the Eastern Kingdom), an anthology of works by the Koryŏ scholar-official Yi Kyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241). A prose work in this anthology, titled “Prose for the Munduru Ritual at Vajra Monastery in the Western Capital” (Sŏgyŏng Kŭmgang-sa Munduru Toryangmun 西京金剛寺文豆婁道場文), shows that the Munduru Ritual was practiced under Koryŏ during Yi Kyubo's lifetime and that the purpose of this ritual at that time was state protection.¹⁴ As the title of this work clearly indicates, Yi Kyubo composed it for the Munduru

¹⁴ The “Western Capital” 西京 in the title appears as the “Same Capital” 同京 in the original text. This means that it is the same capital that appears in the title of the previous prose work included in the anthology. The title of the previous prose work begins with the word “Western Capital.” *Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip* 39:9, original manuscript reprinted in Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe 民族文化推進會 [Korean Classics Research Institute], ed., *Kugyŏk Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip* 국역동국이상국집 [Translation of *Collected Works of State Councilor Yi of the Eastern Kingdom*] (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1979): 5:24. The reproduction of the original manuscript is included in the back part of this book, which has pagination marked in Chinese characters.

Ritual practiced at the monastery named Vajra located in Koryō's Western Capital, which is present-day Pyongyang 平壤, North Korea.¹⁵ Yi Kyubo's composition invokes religious protection of the state. It reflects a chaotic time for Koryō between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries, a period tainted by wars and rebellions. In the final passage of his prose composition, Yi Kyubo pleads with Buddhist deities to protect his country:

[I] bend my body to rely on your spiritual power's response, [so that] wars will be loosened and suspended, worries of indignity caused by foreign countries will permanently disappear; the state will be sublime and numinous for a long time; and [we can] effortlessly enjoy the happiness of revived prosperity.¹⁶

曲借神通之應兵戈韜戢永無外侮之虞社稷靈長坐撫中興之慶。

Yi Kyubo's prose, especially the sentence quoted above, suggests that the purpose of the Munduru Ritual as practiced during Koryō was state protection and peace. This text validates key point 2, but only during Koryō. It does not confirm that the ritual was practiced for state protection during the Silla period.

The second text that provides more information about this ritual is the *Koryōsa* 高麗史 (History of Koryō), which was compiled between 1449 and 1451. The *Koryōsa* contains many records of various types of Buddhist rituals performed by the Koryō court, including records of nine Munduru Ritual performances.¹⁷ The dates of the Munduru Ritual performances

¹⁵ Koryō had three capitals (Kr. *samgyōng* 三京)—the Central Capital (Kaegyōng 開京, present-day Kaesōng 開城), the Western Capital (present-day Pyongyang), and the Eastern Capital (present-day Kyōngju). The usage of the term “Three Capitals” became complicated when Koryō installed the Southern Capital in Yangju 楊州 in 1067. The location of the Southern Capital's palace is inferred to be near the site of the Blue House (Ch'ōngwadae 青瓦臺) in Seoul, South Korea. After the installation of the Southern Capital, the Koryō people often used the term “three capitals” to indicate the Central, Western, and Southern Capitals, excluding the declining Eastern Capital. In addition, the same term, “three capitals,” was sometimes used to denote only the three local capitals: the Western, Eastern, and Southern Capitals.

¹⁶ The literal translation of the last phrase (坐撫中興之慶) is “touch the joy of restoration while sitting.”

¹⁷ The examples of the Munduru Ritual performances recorded in the *Koryōsa* include the performance at Sach'ōnwang-sa on the fourth day of the seventh month

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

recorded in the *Koryōsa* range from 1074 to 1217, with a concentration occurring in the early twelfth century.

These records regarding the Munduru Ritual practice from the *Koryōsa* verify that Sach'ōnwang-sa was one of the places this ritual was performed under the Koryō kingdom (key point 4). The *Koryōsa* record of the fourth day of the seventh lunar month of 1074 (the twenty-eighth year of King Munjong's 文宗 reign) reads,

On the day *kyōngja*, [they] performed the Munduru Ritual at Sach'ōnwang-sa in the Eastern Capital for twenty-seven days, and thereby subdued a barbarian military attack.

庚子設文豆婁道場於東京四天王寺二十七日以禳蕃兵.¹⁸

of 1074 (*Koryōsa* 9:12, Munjong 文宗 28.7.4); the one practiced on the eleventh day of the fourth lunar month in 1101 [the sixth year of Sukchong's reign] (*Koryōsa* 54:1, *chi* 志 8 *ohaeng* 五行 2); the one at Chinjōng-sa 鎮靜寺 on the twenty-eighth day of the seventh lunar month in 1108 (*Koryōsa* 12:37, Yejong 睿宗 3.7.28); those performed at Hūngbok-sa 興福寺, Yōngmyōng-sa 永明寺, Changgyōng-sa 長慶寺, Kūmgang-sa 金剛寺, and other monasteries on the eleventh day of the lunar fourth month in 1109 (*Koryōsa* 13:3-4, Yejong 4.4.11); and the two performances at Hyōnsōng-sa 賢聖寺, one on the twenty-seventh day of the fourth lunar month in 1217 (*Koryōsa* 22:11, Kojong 高宗 4.4.27) and one on the nineteenth day of the twelfth lunar month in the same year [the fourth year of Kojong's reign] (*Koryōsa* 22:14, Kojong 4.12.19). I used the Yōnhūi University (Yonsei University) edition of *Koryōsa*. For the original texts of the above *Koryōsa* passages, see Yōnhūi Taehakkyo Tongbanghak Yōn'guso 延禧大學校東方學研究所 [The Institute of Far Eastern Studies Chosun Christian University], ed., *Koryōsa* 高麗史 [History of Koryō], 3 vols. (Seoul: Yōnhūi Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1955) [hereafter *Yōnhūi Taehakkyo Koryōsa*], 1:186; 2:125; 1:257; 1:260; 1:443; 1:444. The dates refer to the traditional Korean lunar calendar. Because the ritual of 1109 was performed in multiple monasteries and the article records the names of four monasteries, I count them as separate ritual performances. I would like to point out that there were clearly more occasions of the Munduru Ritual performances not recorded in the *Koryōsa*. We can notice, for example, that the Munduru Ritual for which Yi Kyubo wrote the prose piece was not mentioned in the *Koryōsa*. Sō Yun'gil has also suggested that the Buddhist rituals recorded in the *Koryōsa* are only some of the rituals actually performed during Koryō. He pointed out that records of annual Buddhist rituals were often omitted for the sake of brevity and that the many records of the king's visits to local monasteries also imply unrecorded Buddhist rituals performed during those visits. Sō Yun'gil, *Han'guk milgyo sasangsa yōn'gu* (Seoul: Pulgwang Ch'ulp'anbu, 1993): 508-510.

¹⁸ *Koryōsa* 9:12, Munjong 28.7.4, *Yōnhūi Taehakkyo Koryōsa*, 1:186. A literal

Koryŏ's Eastern Capital was Kyŏngju 慶州, the former site of the capital of Silla. Mount Nang—the mountain identified as the location of Sach'ŏnwang-sa in the *Samguk yusa*—was also located in this place. These details corroborate that Sach'ŏnwang-sa in this *Koryŏsa* record of 1074 is the monastery mentioned in the *Samguk yusa* passage.

Furthermore, the nine performances of the Munduru Ritual recorded in the *Koryŏsa* also affirm that Koryŏ practiced this ritual for state protection (key point 2). With the exception of the two occasions in 1217 when the Munduru Ritual was performed at Hyŏnsŏng-sa 賢聖寺 for unstated purposes, the ritual was clearly recorded to have been performed each time in order to win victory in war or subdue military attack.¹⁹ In particular, this ritual was most frequently performed in the early twelfth century when Koryŏ was waging a series of battles with the Jurchens, who were gradually gaining military power on Koryŏ's northern frontier. The unspecified purposes of the two ritual practices of 1217 may have been related to state protection as well: comprehensive reading of the entire record of the year 1217 in the *Koryŏsa* suggests that the ritual may have been performed in order to repel the Kitans of Later Liao 後遼 (1216-1219), who were invading and plundering Koryŏ that year.²⁰

The third external text, *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (Annals of the Chosŏn dynasty), records a performance of the Munduru Ritual as late as the year 1400 in the early Chosŏn period.²¹ This is the latest docu-

translation of the first phrase of this sentence (設文豆婁道場) is “installed a ritual place/altar of the Munduru [Ritual].” In Korea, the phrase *sŏl toryang* 設道場 is often translated as “perform a ritual.” As Koichi Shinohara has pointed out to me, however, this phrase suggests that a certain kind of altar was installed to practice “esoteric” Buddhist ritual.

¹⁹ The record of the occasion for each ritual is very short, usually only one or two sentences. In order to understand more about the military attack or the war mentioned in each record of the Munduru Ritual performance, one has to read the records from the same month or year. For more about the original sources from the *Koryŏsa*, see the list in footnote 17 of this chapter.

²⁰ The Kitan's Liao state fell to the Jin 金 (1115-1234) in 1125. The remaining Kitan people, however, briefly founded the short-lived Later Liao polity, also known as Great Liao (Ch. Da Liaoguo 大遼國), when the Mongols began to conquer the Jin in the early thirteenth century. Driven away by the Mongols from their territory, between 1216 and 1219 the Kitans of the Later Liao invaded Koryŏ. In 1219, Koryŏ subjugated the invading Kitans through a military alliance with the Mongols.

²¹ 設祈禳文豆屢道場于賢聖寺七日. *Chŏngjong sillok* 定宗實錄 3:14, Chŏngjong

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

mented practice of the Munduru Ritual. As Buddhism soon lost favor in the Chosŏn court, it seems that afterward this Buddhist ritual was not practiced by royal patrons.

The last text having a relevant intertextual relationship with the *Samguk yusa* passage is the above-mentioned *Samguk sagi*, the official history of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, which was compiled under Koryŏ. Comparative reading reveals that the completion date of 679 noted in the *Samguk yusa* (key point 6) was derived from this official historical work. According to the *Samguk yusa* passage, Sach'ŏnwang-sa had been temporarily built with silk textiles in preparation for the Munduru Ritual performance in 670 at the beginning of the Silla-Tang war, and permanent wooden buildings were erected at the monastery site in 679, two years after the end of the Silla-Tang war. In the above *Samguk yusa* passage, this completion date appears in an interlinear note.²² This interlinear note, written in smaller characters than those used for the main text in the original manuscript, explains, “The *Kuksa* says the renovation and formal opening of the monastery took place in the first year of the Tiaolu reign, which was the year of *kimyo* [679].”²³ There are several different opinions regarding the identity of the text *Kuksa* (State history) repeatedly quoted in the *Samguk yusa*. As for the *Kuksa* quoted in this specific interlinear note, however, it is clear that it indicates the *Samguk sagi*,²⁴ since the same content is found in this text's entry for the eighth month of the nineteenth year of King Munmu's reign, which records that “Sach'ŏnwang-sa has been completed” (*Sach'ŏnwang-sa sŏng* 四天王寺成)

2.3.15 (*kyŏngjin* 庚辰), original manuscript reprinted in *Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe* 國史編纂委員會 [National Institute of Korean History], ed., *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 [Annals of the Chosŏn dynasty] (Seoul: Tongguk Munhwasa, 1955): 1:167b. The second year of King Chŏngjong's reign corresponds to the year 1400 in the Western calendar.

²² I marked the interlinear note with angled brackets in my translation of the *Samguk yusa* passage provided earlier in this chapter.

²³ “Tiaolu” was one of the reign titles of emperor Gaozong (r. 649-683) of China's Tang empire, and its first year corresponds to the year 679. During the Koryŏ period, it was common to use the title of the Chinese reign in official records. Depending on changing international politics, Koryŏ chose to use Song, Liao, or other Chinese dynasties' reign titles. There were, however, several Koryŏ kings, such as T'aejo 太祖 (r. 918-943), Kwangjong 光宗 (r. 949-975), and Kyŏngjong 景宗 (r. 975-981), who used their own Koryŏ titles.

²⁴ This does not mean that all the records titled *Kuksa* appearing in the *Samguk yusa* citations refer to the *Samguk sagi*.

in this month.²⁵ The nineteenth reign year of King Munmu corresponds to the year 679, thereby matching the monastery's completion date in the above *Samguk yusa* passage. In writing this passage, the compiler was referencing the earlier text when available. The fact that the monastery's completion date came from the *Samguk sagi*'s quotation of the previous official history attests that this date for the completion of Sach'onwang-sa is at least not a pure fabrication by the compiler of the *Samguk yusa*. The matching document in the *Samguk yusa* and the *Samguk sagi*, however, does not fully verify that the completion date of 679 is a trustworthy record. Although the latter text, an official history of the Three Kingdoms, is widely accepted as a much more reliable text than the former, its credibility is unfortunately still a matter for debate.²⁶

Comparison with external texts so far has proved useful, but at the same time reveals an apparent limit in evaluating the *Samguk yusa* passage under examination. Although it provides relatively rich information about the nature and practices of the Munduru Ritual in later dynasties, it does little to illuminate this ritual under the Silla kingdom. This is where archaeological, art historical, and other types of data come in, as will be discussed in a later part of this chapter.

Epigraphs and Internal Signs

As shown above, external texts do not give many clues about whether the Munduru ritual was ever practiced in seventh-century Silla. This rather frustrating limitation of using external texts to evaluate the contents of the *Samguk yusa* is not unique to this passage about the Munduru Ritual. Much of the content of the *Samguk yusa* cannot be authenticated by external texts, since most of the earlier or contemporaneous texts produced on the Korean peninsula did not survive.

As a small suggestion to remedy this predicament to some degree, before further discussing the passage about the Munduru Ritual, I want

²⁵ *Samguk sagi* 7: King Munmu, nineteenth year, Han'gukhak Chungang Yon'guwön 韓國學中央研究院 [Academy of Korean Studies], ed., *Yökchu Samguk sagi* 譯註 三國史記 [Annotation and translation of the *Samguk sagi*] (Söngnam: Han'gukhak Chungang Yon'guwön Ch'ulp'anbu, 2011), 1:183.

²⁶ The *Samguk sagi* obviously includes some errors. Most scholars would agree that this is the case. The problem arises, however, in that some believe that the text is mostly trustworthy except for small errors, while others argue that a large portion of this text was fabricated.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

to draw the reader's attention to quotations included in the *Samguk yusa*, since they can be useful in identifying relatively trustworthy information in this text. The *Samguk yusa* has quite a few long and short quotations, the sources for which are clearly marked. The quotation from the *Kuksa* documenting the completion date of Sach'önwang-sa included in the above passage about the Munduru Ritual is one such example. These quotations come from inscriptions as well as various writings from preceding dynasties in Korea and China. Some are embedded in the main text and are written in the same size characters, and some appear as interlinear notes written in smaller characters.

Some of the epigraphs excavated in modern times show that certain types of quotations in the *Samguk yusa* came from epigraphs collected in the Korean peninsula. One good example is the reliquary inscription (872) found at the pagoda site at Hwangnyong-sa 皇龍寺 (569), meaning Imperial Dragon Monastery, located in present-day Kyōngju (fig. 3.1).²⁷ The inscription provides a good opportunity to understand how Iryōn used epigraphic data (fig. 3.2). Hwangnyong-sa—a palace turned into a Buddhist monastery during its construction²⁸—was an unprecedentedly large and ambitious Silla monastery. Following the advice of the famous monk Chajang 慈藏 (590-658), the Silla royal family built a monumental nine-story wooden pagoda at this monastery in 645.²⁹ This pagoda stood at Hwang-

²⁷ A few historical records spell this monastery's name as Hwangnyong-sa 黃龍寺, meaning Yellow Dragon Monastery. As shown in the reliquary inscription from the monastery and many other records, however, the correct name of this monastery is Hwangnyong-sa 皇龍寺, Imperial Dragon Monastery. The latter name is also widely used by modern scholars.

²⁸ *Samguk sagi* 4: King Chinhūng, fourteenth year, *Yōkchu Samguk sagi*, 1:135.

²⁹ *Samguk sagi* 5: King Sōndōk, fourteenth year, *Yōkchu Samguk sagi*, 1:147-148. While the *Samguk sagi* records that this pagoda was first created (Kr. *ch'angjo* 創造) in 645, the reliquary inscription from this pagoda, which will be discussed below, records that construction of the pagoda began and its heart pillar erected in 645, while the construction of the pagoda was completed the following year. This suggests that people placed much importance on the erection of the heart pillar, the most symbolically significant part of the pagoda, and the enshrinement of the Buddha relics beneath it; it also demonstrates that this act was regarded as the completion of the pagoda. When the relic is enshrined, the pagoda is consecrated and transformed into a sacred monument. Such a momentous event must have been celebrated with an appropriate Buddhist ceremony. This becomes more evident in that the compiler of the *Samguk yusa*, who referred to this reliquary inscription, also



Figure 3.1
Hwangnyong-
sa site, Kyongju,
Korea.
Courtesy of
the Gyeongju
Research Insti-
tute of Cultural
Heritage.



Figure 3.2 Reliquary casket, from the Hwangnyong-sa Pagoda site, Kyongju, Korea.
Silla, 872. Gilt-bronze. 22.5x94cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

nyong-sa until the Mongols invaded the Korean peninsula and reduced it to ashes in 1238. Although the pagoda was lost many centuries ago, its stone bases, showing that each of the pagoda's four sides had seven bays, remained mostly intact until the twentieth century. In December 1964, however, looters took the pagoda reliquaries and accompanying objects from the relic crypt inside the central stone base, which initially supported the heart pillar (Kr. *ch'alchu* 刹柱) of the pagoda.³⁰ Fortunately the looters were caught two years after the robbery, and the stolen objects, which had been sold to a private collector, were sent to the National Museum of Korea. Among the objects retrieved were two nested gilt-bronze caskets, forming part of a reliquary set. The smaller gilt-bronze casket had seventy-four lines of inscription titled *Hwangnyong-sa ch'alchu pon'gi* 皇龍寺刹柱本記 (Record of the heart pillar at Hwangnyong-sa) engraved on the recto and verso of its three sides.³¹ The casket lost its bottom plate due to natural processes over the many centuries it stayed underground. The illustration in this chapter shows the unfolded sidewalls of this casket, connected with hinges (fig. 3.2). The width and height of each plate, except for the frontal plate divided into two pieces in the center, are 23.5 centimeters and 22.5 centimeters, respectively.

recorded the completion date of the pagoda as 645 instead of 646. *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'ung't'ap," *Yökchu Samguk yusa*, 3:130.

³⁰ The "heart pillar" means the central pillar of a wooden Buddhist pagoda. Buddha's relics were often enshrined inside the stone supporting the heart pillar, so that the reliquary could not be taken out without moving the enormous heart pillar.

³¹ For a transcription of the entire inscription and annotations on its content, see Hwang Suyöng 黃壽永, "Silla Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'ung't'apchi: Ch'alchu pon'gi e taehayö" 新羅 皇龍寺 九層塔誌: 刹柱本記에 대하여 [Record of the Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa from Silla: Regarding the *Record from the Heart Pillar*], *Misul sahak yön'gu* 美術史學研究 116 (1972): 275-277; Hwang Suyöng 黃壽永, "Silla Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'ung mokt'ap ch'alchu pon'gi wa kü sarigu" 新羅 皇龍寺 九層木塔 刹柱本記와 그 舍利具 [Record from the Heart Pillar of the Nine-story Pagoda of Hwangnyong-sa from Silla and the pagoda's reliquary], *Tongyanghak* 東洋學 3 (1973): 269-328. For a translation of the inscription into modern Korean with thorough annotations, see Han'guk Kodae Sahoe Yön'guso 韓國古代社會研究所 [Research Institute of Korean Ancient Society], ed., *Yökchu Han'guk kodaekümsöngmun* 譯註韓國古代金石文 [Annotation and translation of ancient inscriptions of Korea], vol. 3 (Seoul: Karak-kuk Sajök Kaebal Yön'guwön, 1992): 364-375. *Yökchu Han'guk kodaekümsöngmun* contains one minor error: the thirtieth reign year of King Chinhüng 眞興 (r. 540-576), the completion year of Hwangnyong-sa, is not 574, but corresponds to 569.

The content of the inscription, dated to 872, shows that this reliquary was enshrined during the pagoda's restoration under the reign of King Kyöngmun 景文 (r. 861-875). Discovered at the Hwangnyong-sa site in 1960s, this reliquary inscription reveals that Iryön referred to epigraphs from the Korean peninsula when compiling the *Samguk yusa*. This inscription was cited in the *Samguk yusa*'s "Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa" (Hwangnyong-sa Kuchüngt'ap 皇龍寺九層塔).³² This article includes two very short quotations of epigraphs from Hwangnyong-sa. One is included in the main text and reads, "*Ch'alchugi* 刹柱記 (Record from the [pagoda] heart pillar) says that the pinnacle of the pagoda is 42 *chök* tall and the body of the pagoda is 183 *chök* tall."³³ The name of the original text, *Ch'alchugi*, implies that this text is the reliquary inscription enshrined under the pagoda's heart pillar. The *Ch'alchugi* indeed includes information regarding this pagoda's height,³⁴ indicating that the compiler of the *Samguk yusa* undeniably referred to this particular reliquary inscription.³⁵ Since the pagoda used

³² It was Hwang Suyöng, one of the first generation of Korean art historians after the colonial period, who first examined this inscription in 1972. Hwang found that the *Samguk yusa*'s "Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa" article quoted this inscription, and that the official historical work *Samguk sagi* also has records conforming to the contents of this inscription. See Hwang Suyöng, "Silla Hwangnyong-sa kuch'eng mokt'ap," 278-279. For *Samguk yusa*'s "Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa" article, see *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'üngt'ap," *Yökchu Samguk yusa*, 3:128-130. Since its discovery in the 1960s, this inscription from the Hwangnyong-sa pagoda has been well known among Korean scholars, but it is not widely known in Western academia. When I say that this ancient inscription matches the records in the *Samguk yusa* and the *Samguk sagi*, my colleagues usually show immediate interest and curiosity. It is quite interesting, however, that this discovery did not come as much of a surprise for Hwang Suyöng, who saw many archaeological remains corresponding to records in the *Samguk yusa*.

³³ 刹柱記云。鐵盤已上高四十二尺，已下一百八十三尺。 *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'üngt'ap," *Yökchu Samguk yusa*, 3:129. The literal translation of this quotation is "Record from the [Pagoda] Heart Pillar says that the height of [the pagoda] above the iron plate is 42 *chök* and below [the iron plate] is 183 *chök*." The "iron plate" refers to the metal component forming the lowest bottom part of the pagoda's metal pinnacle. This part of the pagoda pinnacle is also called "dew plate" (Kr. *noban* 露盤). The *chök* is a traditional measurement unit in East Asia.

³⁴ For the height of the pagoda in the reliquary inscription, see Hwang Suyöng, "Silla Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'üng mokt'ap," 278; Han'guk Kodae Sahoe Yönguso, ed., *Yökchu Han'guk kodae kümsöngmun*, 368.

³⁵ Hwang Suyöng, "Silla Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'üng mokt'ap," 278-279. It is quite

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

the measurement unit known as the Koryŏ *chŏk* 高麗尺 in which one *chŏk* was 35.63 centimeters,³⁶ the original height of this pagoda including the pinnacle part was about 80.2 meters. Iryŏn noted the source of this pagoda height probably because the exact pagoda height was not common knowledge that he could draw on from memory and he had to refer to a transcription of the reliquary inscription.

Another quotation in the *Samguk yusa*'s "Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa" reveals that the compiler cited the epigraph to explain that there were two different accounts of why this pagoda was built. This quotation appears as an interlinear note, which reads, "*Sajunggi* 寺中記 (Record from the monastery) says that [the monk Chajang] was given the idea of building the pagoda [at Hwangnyong-sa] at the meditation master Yuanxiang's dwelling on Mount Zhongnan."³⁷ After reading the entire article, one realizes that the compiler added this short quotation to inform the reader that the *Sajunggi*, an epigraph from the monastery, describes a version of the story that differs slightly from the version provided in the main text. In the story recounted in the main text, the monk Chajang encountered a man with supernatural power (Kr. *sinin* 神人) near Lake Taihe 太和 in China, who told Chajang to return to Silla and build a nine-story pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa in order to make neighboring countries surrender to Silla. In this version of the story, the man with supernatural power later turns out to be the father of the dragon protecting Hwangnyong-sa in Silla.³⁸ On the other hand, the version of the story recorded in the reliquary inscription from the monastery's pagoda site is more realistic: In this version, a meditation master called Yuanxiang 圓香 (dates unknown), not the father of the

surprising that the compiler of the *Samguk yusa* knew the precise information from this inscription that had been written four centuries earlier and then buried under the pagoda. As one of the attendees of my presentation at Harvard in February 2012 has pointed out, it is likely that there was a transcription of this reliquary that was being circulated when the *Samguk yusa* was compiled. I appreciate her comment.

³⁶ Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 國立慶州文化財研究所 [Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage], *Sach'ŏnwang-sa: Kŭmdangji palgul chosa pogosŏ* 四天王寺 I: 金堂址 발굴조사보고서 [Sach'ŏnwang-sa 1: Main Buddha hall site excavation report] (Kyŏngju-si: Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso, 2012): 341, chart 12.

³⁷ 寺中記云。於終南山圓香禪師處。受建塔因由。The literal translation of the phrase, "su kŏnt'ap inyu" 受建塔因由 is "received the reason and cause to build the pagoda." *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'ŭngt'ap," *Yŏkchu Samguk yusa*, 3:128.

³⁸ *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'ŭngt'ap," *Yŏkchu Samguk yusa*, 3:128.

dragon, tells Chajang to build the nine-story pagoda to protect Silla.³⁹ The fact that the meditation master's name is the same reveals that this is the version of the story mentioned in the *Samguk yusa* quotation. Evidently Iryön knew both versions of the story. Unfortunately Iryön does not clarify the source of the legend of the man with supernatural power at Lake Taihe that he relates in detail in the main text of the *Samguk yusa* article. As a result, ironically, we can only know the source of the story that Iryön treated as a secondary version of the story and hence only briefly mentioned in the interlinear note, while the source of the version of the story detailed in the main text remains unknown.

Among the works quoted in the *Samguk yusa*, those works titled *Sajunggi*, *Sajung kogi* 寺中古記 (Old record from the monastery), and *Chalchugi* are epigraphs collected from monastery and pagoda sites in the peninsula. These quotations, although appearing under generic titles, are mostly epigraphic documents from specific monastery and pagoda sites which are discussed in the sections of the *Samguk yusa* that cite those epigraphs. Understanding Iryön's usage of Korean epigraphs is very important in that it would help us better to comprehend the way Iryön composed the *Samguk yusa* and therefore better to understand the nature of this text. According to my brief research, the *Samguk yusa* includes more than seven quotations from works titled *Sajunggi* or *Sajung kogi*, whose contents and nature deserve more careful study in the future. For this chapter concentrating on the Munduru Ritual at Sach'önwang-sa, however, it suffices to point out that Iryön referred both to epigraphs and to received texts and that he from time to time marked his source when quoting them.

Besides this specific type of quotation from epigraphic data, general quotations in the *Samguk yusa* also faithfully preserve information from the original texts. For example, in a 2006 article, Richard McBride examined four lengthy citations in the *Samguk yusa* that were derived from

³⁹ For a translation of the inscription into modern Korean with thorough annotations, see Han'guk Kodae Sahoe Yön'guso, ed., *Yökchu Han'guk kodae kümsöngmun*, 364-375. It seems that more than one epigraph from Hwangnyong-sa was available to the compiler of the *Samguk yusa* when he composed the "Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa" section. For example, the final part of this section quotes the *Sajung kogi* (Old record from the monastery), and the quotation includes some information not found in the reliquary inscription. *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'üng'ap," *Yökchu Samguk yusa*, 3:130. This means that the *Sajunggi* mentioning the meditation master Yuanxiang, quoted in the *Samguk yusa*, could be another epigraph from Hwangnyong-sa that is not extant today, recording a similar content.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

earlier texts from Korea and China, as well as one epigraph from Silla, and concluded that the compiler of the *Samguk yusa* did not change or distort the contents of the quoted text, although he often summarized or rephrased the original sources.⁴⁰

All these observations suggest that although the *Samguk yusa* is regarded as a less reliable text than other historical documents written earlier in China and Korea, at least the quotations it includes should be treated in a similar way that scholars would have treated the original epigraphs or texts cited, had those epigraphs or texts survived. For example, the renowned Korean monk Anhong's 安弘 (fl. sixth century) proposal to build a nine-story pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa for state protection, as described in his *Tongdo Söngnipki* 東都成立記, was cited in the "Nine-story Pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa" article of the *Samguk yusa*.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the *Tongdo Söngnipki* does not survive today. In this case, it would be proper for a scholar to treat the specific quotation from this book included in the *Samguk yusa* as he or she would treat the same information from the *Tongdo Söngnipki* if that text had survived. Even though quotations are often short and occupy only a small portion of the *Samguk yusa*, information included in those quotations, however meager, would serve as useful data about early Korean Buddhism especially because most ancient Korean texts have been lost.

Ritual from Silla or Koryö?

Now we can move on to consider the *Samguk yusa* passage about the Munduru Ritual. As discussed above, external texts clearly verify that this ritual was practiced under the Koryö kingdom to ensure state protection from the eleventh century onward, but they do not verify much about the ritual's practice in seventh-century Silla. Here, one can posit the possibility that the practice of this ritual began only in Koryö times, and that the story of Silla's practice of the Munduru Ritual was fabricated later. Is it not possible that the monk Iryön, who witnessed the Munduru Ritual performed at Sachönwang-sa located in the former capital of Silla, gave the ritual an imagined origin in Silla based on his observation of the contemporaneous

⁴⁰ Richard D. McBride's article shows that the *Samguk yusa*'s quotations often abbreviate and rephrase the original texts, but do not add incorrect or fabricated information. Richard D. McBride II, "Is the *Samguk yusa* Reliable? Case Studies from Chinese and Korean Sources," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 11, no. 1 (2006): 163-190.

⁴¹ *Samguk yusa* 3: "Hwangnyong-sa Kuch'üngt'ap," *Yökchu Samguk yusa*, 3:129.

ritual, especially if he had—although one can't prove it—a need to give the ritual more authority?

Further examination of the nature of this ritual in the larger context of East Asian “esoteric” Buddhism, however, suggests that this is less likely to be true. Scholars unanimously agree that the primary textual source of the Munduru Ritual is the seventh fascicle of the *Foshuo guanding jing* 佛說灌頂經, or the *Consecration Sutra Preached by the Buddha* (hereafter *Consecration Sutra*),⁴² an opinion first put forward by Pak T'ae-hwa in his 1965 article.⁴³ Key points 1 (the name of the ritual was Munduru) and 5 (usage of statues of the Deities of the Five Directions) connect this ritual, practiced

⁴² T1331, 21:495a-536b. This sutra had several different names, such as the *Da guanding shenzhou jing* 大灌頂神呪經, meaning the *Great Consecration Supernatural Incantation Sutra*. Strickmann recognized the importance of “apocryphal” Buddhist sutras, which reflect and adopt Chinese indigenous religious practices, and argued that the *Consecration Sutra* is “a repository of practice and oral tradition.” For more about the *Consecration Sutra*, see Michel Strickmann “The *Consecration Sūtra*: A Buddhist Book of Spells,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990): 75-118; Oka Sumiaki 阿純章, “*Kanjōkyō ni okeru jujutsu no juyō*” 『灌頂經』における呪術の受容 [Embrace of incantation in the *Consecration Sutra*], *Tendai gakuhō* 天台学報 39 (October 1997): 179-185; Oka Sumiaki 阿純章, “*Kanjōkyō no seiritsu ni tsuite*” 『灌頂經』の成立について [On the establishment of the *Consecration Sutra*], *Waseda Daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka kiyō* 早稲田大学大学院文学研究科紀要 41, no.1 (1996): 97-108; Endō Yusuke 遠藤 祐介, “*Kanjōkyō no yakusha ni tsuite*” 『灌頂經』の訳者について [On the translator of the *Consecration Sutra*], *Mikkyōgaku kenkyū* 密教学研究 36 (March 2004): 45-64.

⁴³ Pak T'ae-hwa 朴泰華, “Silla sidae ūi milgyo chōllaego” 新羅時代の密教傳來考 [Study on the transmission of esoteric Buddhism during the Silla period], in *Hyosōng Cho Myōnggi Paksa hwagap kinyōm Pulgyo sahak nonch'ong* 曉城趙明基博士華甲記念佛教史學論叢 [Festschrift on Buddhist history in honor of Hyosōng, Doctor Cho Myōnggi, for his sixty-first birthday], ed. Hyosōng Cho Myōng-gi Paksa Hwagap Kinyōm Pulgyo Sahak Nonmunjip Kanhaeng Wiwōnhoe 曉城趙明基博士華甲記念佛教史學論叢刊行委員會 [Committee for the Publication of Festschrift on Buddhist History in Honor of Hyosōng, Doctor Cho Myōnggi, for his Sixty-First Birthday] (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo, 1965): 73-74. For more about this ritual, see Ko Ikchin 高翊晋, “Silla milgyo ūi sasang naeyong kwa chōn'gae yangsang” 新羅密教の思想内容の展開様相 [Thoughts and evolution of Silla esoteric Buddhism], in *Han'guk milgyo sasang yōn'gu* 韓國密教思想研究 [Research on Korean esoteric Buddhist thought], ed. Pulgyo Munhwa Yōn'guwōn 佛教文化研究院 [Research Institute of Buddhist Culture] (Seoul: Pulgyo Munhwa Yōn'guwōn, 1986): 145-161.

on the Korean peninsula, with the *Consecration Sutra*. In the seventh fascicle of this sutra, titled “Sutra of Consecration Seal and Great Spell That Subjugate Māra, as Preached by the Buddha” (*Foshuo guanding fumo fengyin dashenzhou jing* 佛說灌頂伏魔封印大神呪經),⁴⁴ the Buddha, responding to Indra’s (Ch. Tian dishi 天帝釋) request,⁴⁵ expounds on a ritual named “Mundurū” 文頭婁 (Ch. Wentoulou).⁴⁶ This ritual was performed to help people with various difficulties, especially sick people. The name of this ritual comes from the thaumaturgic power of wooden seals inscribed with the names of deities. The wooden seals are called “Mundurū” and used for healing and for other efficacies in the *Consecration Sutra*. The word “Mundurū” in this sutra is the same word as “Mundurū” 文豆婁, the name of the “esoteric” ritual as recorded in the *Samguk yusa*, the *Koryōsa*, and other Korean texts. “Mundurū” (either spelled 文頭婁 or 文豆婁) is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term *mudrā*.⁴⁷ *Mudrā* can be either apotropaic Buddhist seals (Ch. *yin* 印),⁴⁸ or religious hand gestures (Ch. *shouyin* 手印) that were used by monks for ritual performances or formed by Buddhist deities as iconographic signs. In East Asian Buddhist texts, however, the Sanskrit term *mudrā* usually appeared as translated Chinese words, *yin* (seal) or *shouyin* (hand gesture or hand seal), and this specific transliteration of the term “Mundurū” was very rarely used. To the best of my knowledge, the word “Mundurū” does not appear in other Buddhist sutras, which makes the matching names of the two rituals all the more noteworthy. Moreover, just as in the Mundurū Ritual described in the *Samguk yusa*, the Deities of the Five Directions (Kr. *obangsin*, Ch. *wufangshen* 五方神) play an important

⁴⁴ T1331, 21:515a-517b. Michel Strickmann provided a translation of the beginning half of this seventh fascicle from the *Consecration Sutra* in his book, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002): 132-136.

⁴⁵ Tian dishi can be also translated as “Heavenly Sovereign Śakra.”

⁴⁶ To avoid confusion, I use the Korean pronunciation, instead of Chinese pronunciation, of this ritual explained in this *Consecration Sutra* fascicle.

⁴⁷ Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖, *Mikkyō hattatsushi* 密教發達志 [Record on the development of esoteric Buddhism] (Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai Zuzōbu, 1918): 1:132; Sō Yun’gil, *Han’guk milgyo sasangsa*, 169; Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 316, no. 21.

⁴⁸ Michel Strickmann suggested that Chinese Buddhists adopted the practice of using seals for healing and thaumaturgic efficacy from the Daoist tradition. See Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 123-193.

role in the ritual explained in the *Consecration Sutra*.⁴⁹ Probably not coincidentally, the Deities of the Five Directions are also deities that rarely appear in Buddhist sutras. The *Samguk yusa* and the *Consecration Sutra* are the only texts that mention these deities among the texts included in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, the Buddhist canon compiled in Japan in the early twentieth century. In short, the matching names of the ritual and the principal deities provide a strong connection between the ritual recorded in the *Samguk yusa* and the one explained in the *Consecration Sutra*.⁵⁰

Most significantly, the “Munduru” Ritual explained in the seventh fascicle of the *Consecration Sutra* is categorized as an early “esoteric” ritual of a type popular before the eighth century. More specifically, this ritual is an early “esoteric” Buddhist ritual that exhibits influence from Daoist practices.⁵¹ This type of ritual is distinguished from the highly developed and systemized “esoteric” Buddhism that was introduced to East Asia in the eighth century by a group of Indian monks. The *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* attributes the translation of the *Consecration Sutra* to Śrīmitra (Ch. Bo

⁴⁹ T1331, 21:515a-c. In addition to the *Consecration Sutra*, only a few other Buddhist texts mention the Deities of the Five Directions.

⁵⁰ One needs to consider, however, that many of the rituals explained in the Buddhist canon do not document actual ritual performances. Ritual practices evolve and become modified as they spread to different regions and as time passes. Therefore, while I agree that a very strong relationship exists between this ritual and the sutra, the “Munduru” Ritual explained in the *Consecration Sutra* is not necessarily exactly the same as the Munduru Ritual practiced in Korea. In other words, small deviations between the Munduru Ritual practice and the descriptions in the *Consecration Sutra* do not prove that there is no relationship between them. At the same time, as I will discuss more in this chapter, one should not depend too much on this text when reconstructing the Munduru Ritual practiced in Korea. For an example of a *dhāraṇī* ritual modified from the Tang to Liao and Heian Japan, see Youn-mi Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos: The Chaoyang North Pagoda (1043-1044),” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2010): 216-307; Youn-mi Kim, “The Secret Link: Tracing Liao in Japanese Shingon Ritual,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* (forthcoming, 2014).

⁵¹ For more about the Daoist influence on the *Consecration Sutra*, see Michel Strickmann, “The *Consecration Sūtra*,” 75-118; Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 113-119, 132-140, 185, 187, 192; Kang Ubang 姜友邦, *Wōnyung kwa chobwa: Han’guk kodae chogaksa ūi wōlli 圓融斗 調和: 韓國古代彫刻史의 原理* [Synthesis and harmony: Principle of the history of ancient Korean sculpture] (Seoul: Yōrhwadang, 1990): 190-197; Oka Sumiaki, “*Kanjōkyō* ni okeru jujutsu no juyō,” 179-185; Oka Sumiaki, “*Kanjōkyō* no seiritsu ni tsuite,” 97-108.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

Shilimiduoluo 帛尸梨蜜多羅, d. 343 C.E.), a Kuchean monk who was active in the capital city of Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420 C.E.). Ōmura Seigai, however, pointed out that this attribution is incorrect because its twelfth fascicle was composed by the monk Huijian 慧簡 in 457,⁵² as explained in the *Chu sanzang jijī* 出三藏記集 (Compilation of notes on the translation of the Tripitaka).⁵³ More recent scholarship also suggests that this sutra was written in China's Jiangnan 江南 area around 457 by Huijian or by people in Huijian's circle.⁵⁴ Oka Sumiaki has pointed out the strong Daoist influence in the *Consecration Sutra*,⁵⁵ and Michel Strickmann argued that the "Mundurū" Ritual from the seventh fascicle of this sutra is essentially a Daoist ensigillation ritual—a ritual that uses magical seals—in Buddhist guise.⁵⁶ This type of "apocryphal" Buddhist sutra written in China with strong Daoist influence became old-fashioned after the eighth century when monks from India, such as Śubhakarasiṃha (637-735), Vajrabodhi (671-741), and Amoghavajra (705-774), introduced to China systemized "esoteric" Buddhism, which, according to Robert Sharf, was regarded as "new technology."⁵⁷ After the introduction of the systemized "esoteric" Buddhism to China, its new "ritual technology" gained the favor of the imperial court. The early "esoteric" rituals, although they did not completely disappear, were no longer a leading form of Buddhist ritual.

If the practice of the Mundurū Ritual began in the time of Koryō rather than Silla, one needs to find plausible reasons why the Koryō court in the eleventh century suddenly began to practice this ritual, which by that time was rather old-fashioned. One convincing reason has been suggested by Sørensen. Observing that there is no trace of similar rituals practiced in either Tang or Song 宋 (960-1279) China,⁵⁸ Sørensen suggested that Koryō

⁵² Ōmura Seigai, *Mikkyō hattatsushi*, 1:126-133, especially 129-130.

⁵³ T2145, 55:39a21-23.

⁵⁴ Michel Strickmann, "The *Consecration Sūtra*," 79-81, 90-93; Endō Yusuke, "*Kanjōkyō* no yakusha ni tsuite," 45-64; Oka Sumiaki, "*Kanjōkyō* ni okeru jujutsu no juyō," 179-185; Oka Sumiaki, "*Kanjōkyō* no seiritsu ni tsuite," 97-108.

⁵⁵ Oka Sumiaki, "*Kanjōkyō* ni okeru jujutsu no juyō," 179-185; Oka Sumiaki, "*Kanjōkyō* no seiritsu ni tsuite," 97-108.

⁵⁶ Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 132-140.

⁵⁷ As for the systemized "esoteric" rituals as new technology in eighth-century China, see Robert Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 263-278, especially 276-278.

⁵⁸ Henrik H. Sørensen, "On the Sinin and Ch'ongji Schools," 59. Absence of records of the actual *practice* of the Mundurū (Ch. Wentoulou) Ritual suggests

began to practice this ritual because the *Consecration Sutra* drew the attention of Korean monks in the eleventh century when the Koryŏ court had the ambitious project of creating the *Koryŏ Taejanggyŏng* 高麗大藏經 (Koryŏ Tripiṭaka).⁵⁹ According to this view, the *Consecration Sutra*'s explanation of how to prevent disaster and adversity probably attracted Koryŏ Buddhist monks, who were looking for sutras that might help protect the state.

This suggestion, however, is not sufficiently convincing to support the idea that this old-fashioned Buddhist ritual suddenly received the patronage of the Koryŏ royal court. First, instruction on how to avoid disasters and gain worldly benefits using ritual or Buddhist incantation (*dhāraṇī*) is a feature commonly found in numerous early esoteric Buddhist sutras included in the *Koryŏ Taejanggyŏng*. The content of the *Consecration Sutra* itself, therefore, offers little explanation of how this specific sutra would have caught the attention of Koryŏ monks. Even within the *Consecration Sutra*, this “Munduru” Ritual is just one of many ritual practices, all of which promise various worldly benefits. Second, the discrepancy between the *Consecration Sutra* and the Koryŏ texts regarding the believed efficacy of the Munduru Ritual suggests that it was not the discovery of this sutra that triggered practice of the ritual in the Korean peninsula. As explained previously, the *Koryŏsa* and *Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip* attest that Koryŏ people performed the Munduru Ritual for state protection when there were wars and rebellions, but the *Consecration Sutra* states that this ritual is especially efficacious in healing disease, among other disasters. This discrepancy suggests that the practice of the Munduru Ritual was not simply triggered by an accidental discovery of the sutra. Lastly, it would have been fairly difficult to create a new ritual based on the terse instruction provided in the *Consecration Sutra*, since this sutra is not a ritual manual. On a related note, we need to further consider what role any text could have played in the formation of a new ritual tradition. Buddhist rituals, especially esoteric rituals, were usually transmitted from teacher to disciples through training and practice, thus forming the source of the ritual's

either that it was not practiced at all during the Tang and Song or that this type of ritual was not sponsored by the imperial family or powerful patrons and thereby was left unrecorded. In either case, royal patronage and the high level of importance given to this ritual are unique to the Korean peninsula.

⁵⁹ Henrik H. Sørensen, “On the Sinin and Ch'ongji Schools,” 58-59. Although I very much respect Sørensen's scholarship, I find this particular suggestion to be less convincing.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

authenticity. A randomly discovered old sutra would not create or authenticate a new ritual practice unless a special event occurred that made people believe in the efficacy of the new ritual.

Before moving on, I also want to point out the problem of many Korean scholars' attempts to reconstruct the Munduru Ritual using contents of the *Consecration Sutra*. Even though it might have preserved some oral traditions of fifth-century China as Strickmann has argued, the *Consecration Sutra* is not a descriptive record of what people practiced but essentially a prescriptive text. On the other hand, all the Korean texts cited in this chapter are, regardless of their faithfulness to fact, essentially descriptive records. This means that a gap might exist between what was stated in the sutra composed in fifth-century China and what people actually practiced in the Korean peninsula in later times. Besides the issue of the ritual's intended efficacy, quite a few other discrepancies can be found between the prescriptive texts in the *Consecration Sutra* and the descriptive documents from Korea describing this ritual. A ritual practice often continuously evolves and changes, which naturally creates variations of the same ritual when practiced in different regions and time periods. Therefore one should not expect a one-to-one match between the actual practice of the Munduru Ritual in Korea and the prescriptive explanation of the ritual in the *Consecration Sutra* several centuries earlier in China, even though there are apparent connections between them.⁶⁰ In other words, reconstructing the particulars of the Munduru Ritual practice in Korea using this descriptive text entails a methodological error. What is clear from the *Consecration Sutra* is that the Munduru Ritual practiced in the Korean peninsula was an early "esoteric" Buddhist ritual mixed with Daoist practices.

Considering the nature of the Munduru Ritual—a ritual related to the fifth-century early "esoteric" sutra that became old-fashioned before the eighth century—seventh-century Silla is a more plausible starting point for this ritual practice than eleventh-century Koryō. If this ritual had been practiced by Silla's royal court due to its efficacy in providing state protection, as recorded in the *Samguk yusa*, this would explain why this particular ritual remained as a popular and unique tradition in the Korean peninsula until the time of Koryō. As explained earlier in this chapter, this ostensibly ancient Buddhist ritual was actually practiced until around 1400 under the Chosŏn kingdom. In this context, it is also notable that there is evidence

⁶⁰ For the same reason, small deviations between the Munduru Ritual practice and *Consecration Sutra* descriptions do not necessarily mean that the two are unrelated.

that the *Consecration Sutra* was already well known in seventh-century Silla; Buddhist texts, including the *Tōiki dentō moku roku* 東域傳燈目錄 (Record of the transmission of the lamp to the Eastern Regions) compiled in 1094 by Eichō 永超,⁶¹ record that the eminent Silla monk Kyōnghūng 憬興/璟興 (fl. seventh century) composed the *Kwanjōnggyōng so* 灌頂經疏 (Commentary of the Consecration Sutra) in two fascicles.⁶² This seventh-century commentary on the *Consecration Sutra* refutes the assumption that this sutra began to receive attention only in the eleventh century. This shows that the *Consecration Sutra* was a well-known sutra in the Korean peninsula in the seventh century.⁶³ One more interesting point is that, as

⁶¹ T1152, 55:1152b18-20.

⁶² For more about this commentary, see Tongguk Taehakkyo Pulgyo Munhwa Yōn'guso 東國大學校佛教文化研究所 [Dongguk University Research Institute for Buddhist Culture], ed., *Han'guk Pulgyo ch'ansul munhōn chōngnok* 韓國佛教撰述文獻總錄 [Complete list of Korean Buddhist literature and texts] (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1976): 43. The monk Kyōnghūng composed about forty-seven written works about Buddhist teachings, out of which four works have survived. For a complete list of Kyōnghūng's writings, see Han T'aesik 韓泰植, "Kyōnghūng ūi saengae e kwanhan chae koch'al" 憬興의 生涯 에 관한 재고찰 [Re-examination of the life of Kyōnghūng], *Pulgyo hakpo* 佛教學報 28 (1991): 210-212. Quite a few Japanese scholars, in particular Watanabe Kenshō, studied the monk Kyōnghūng, especially from the 1960s to the 1980s. For example, see Watanabe Kenshō 渡辺顕正, *Shiragi Kyōgō shi Jutsumonsan no kenkyū* 新羅·憬興師述文贊の研究 [Research on writings by Silla monk Kyōnghūng] (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1978). According to Michel Strickmann, the *Consecration Sutra* has the earliest description of consecration as an actual Buddhist ritual, known as *abhiṣeka*. Michel Strickmann, "The *Consecration Sūtra*," 81-85. The *abhiṣeka* ritual originated from the royal investiture ritual in India. The royal implication of this ritual could have made the *Consecration Sutra* more popular at the royal court of Silla and Koryō. I appreciate Mimi Yiengpruksawan's comment on this.

⁶³ There is an interesting record about the monk Kyōnghūng in the *Samguk yusa*. In the section titled "Kyōnghūng usōng" 憬興遇聖, the *Samguk yusa* records that King Munmu left a will at his deathbed and asked his son to appoint Kyōnghūng as *kuksa* 國師 (National Teacher), and that King Munmu's son appointed him as *kungno* 國老 (National Elder). If this record is true, it is worth noting that the monks Kyōnghūng and Myōngnang are both related to King Munmu as well as to the *Consecration Sutra*. It seems that the compiler of the *Samguk yusa* also referred to epigraphic data regarding the monk Kyōnghūng since the conclusion of this section mentions a stele called the "Samnang-sa Stele" 三郎寺碑, which recorded the virtuous deeds of the monk Kyōnghūng. Unfortunately since the compiler does not

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

Strickmann has pointed out, among all the printed versions of the *Consecration Sutra* from premodern times, only the Korean version had its fascicles in correct sequential order,⁶⁴ a detail that may also suggest the special position this sutra enjoyed in the Korean peninsula.

Considering all these points, Silla seems to be a more plausible starting point for the Munduru Ritual practice than eleventh-century Koryō. If this ritual was practiced by Silla's royal court and was known for its efficacy in protecting the state, it would also explain why this particular ritual remained as a popular and unique tradition in the Korean peninsula long after this type of early "esoteric" ritual went out of fashion in China. Bearing in mind all these pieces of circumstantial evidence suggesting the possibility that the initial practice of the Munduru Ritual took place under Silla rather than Koryō, let us investigate the archaeological remains related to this ritual.

Archaeological Remains

This chapter has so far analyzed the *Samguk yusa* passage mainly in light of the external texts and historical context. Now this chapter will examine whether our understanding of this passage further changes if we take archaeological data into consideration. Are there any relevant archaeological remains related to this *Samguk yusa* passage? What deserves our attention in this *Samguk yusa* passage is the venue mentioned for the performance of the Munduru Ritual—Sach'ōnwang-sa. According to the *Samguk yusa* passage, the Silla people built this monastery in Sinyu Forest on the southern side of Mount Nang.

As a matter of fact, the ruins of the Sach'ōnwang-sa site remain at the very southernmost foot of Mount Nang in present-day Paeban-dong 排盤洞 in Kyōngju, the city which had been the capital of Silla, located in North Kyōngsang Province 慶尙北道 (fig. 3.3).⁶⁵ The monastery site sits

include a direct quotation from this stele, it is difficult to know what part of the article about the monk Kyōnghūng came from this stele inscription. *Samguk yusa* 5: "Kyōnghūng usōng," *Yōkchu Samguk yusa*, 4:262-263. A small stele fragment, which is possibly a piece from the Samnang-sa Stele, is currently in the collection of Dankook University Museum, but only a few characters in the inscription on the stele fragment remain legible.

⁶⁴ Michel Strickmann, "The *Consecration Sūtra*," 111-112, no. 18.

⁶⁵ While a number of academic articles about this monastery site have been written in Korean, the site has not been widely known among Western scholars. Juhyung Rhi's (Yi Chuhyōng 李柱亨) paper, "Monks, Dragons, and Guardians: Sach'ōnwangsa, an Esoteric Buddhist Temple in the Unified Silla," presented in 2007



Figure 3.3 Sachŏnwang-sa site before excavation, Paeban-dong, Kyŏngju.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

at a height of 53.3 meters above sea level. Several gazetteers and geography books from the Chosŏn period provide a continuous record of this monastery, including the *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* 新增東國輿地勝覽 (Newly augmented survey of the geography of the Eastern Kingdom) completed in 1530.⁶⁶ An interlinear note added to the title of the

at *An International Conference on Esoteric Buddhist Tradition in East Asia: Text, Ritual and Image*, is the only paper about this monastery written in English. This conference, organized by Youngsook Pak, was held at Yale University with the support of the Korea Foundation. This paper will be soon published in the conference volume.

⁶⁶ *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* 21:30, original manuscript reprinted in *Kugyŏk sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* 國譯新增東國輿地勝覽新增東國輿地勝覽

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

poem, “Sach’önwang-sa Site” (Ch’önwang-saji 天王寺址), by Kim Sisüp 金時習 (1435-1493), in the *Maewöltang chip* 梅月堂集 (Anthology of Maewöltang), comments that “Today [the monastery] became a residential dwelling.”⁶⁷ Since the anthology was published in 1583, this inter-linear note, probably added by compilers, suggests that Sach’önwang-sa lost its religious function before the end of the sixteenth century. One short record suggests that the buildings at this monastery site had been destroyed by the mid-eighteenth century; specifically, it was recorded in the *Yōjidosō* 輿地圖書 (Book of geographical information with maps), which was compiled between 1757 and 1765, that “Sach’önwang-sa, located to the south of Mount Nang, is currently in an abandoned state.”⁶⁸

The ruins of Sach’önwang-sa began to draw the scholarly interest of archaeologists and art historians in the early twentieth century. Although the monastery’s original buildings were destroyed several centuries ago, floor tiles and fragments of glazed terracotta reliefs scattered at the monastery site attracted Japanese scholars’ attention during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945) (fig. 3.4). Ayukai Fusanoshin 鮎貝房之進 (1864-1946), Harada Yoshito 原田淑人 (1885-1974), and Fujita Ryōsaku 藤田亮策 (1892-1960), among others, investigated the monastery site, measuring the size of the remaining base stones of lost buildings and collecting roof tiles and terracotta reliefs from the ruins.⁶⁹ In 1963, following the colonial

[Translation of the *Newly Augmented Survey of the Geography of the Eastern Kingdom*] (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinhoe, 1970): 3:83 The reproduction of the original manuscript is included in the back part of this edition, which has pagination marked in Chinese characters.

⁶⁷ 今爲人家。For the original text of this poem in its entirety, see Kungnip Kyōngju Munhwajae Yōnguso, *Sach’önwang-sa*, 54.

⁶⁸ 四天王寺在浪山南麓今廢。The original text requoted from Han Myōnghūi 한명희, “Sach’önwang-sa kūmdang ūi pogwōn e kwanhan yōn’gu” 사천왕사 금당의 복원에 관한 연구 [Research on the restoration of the main hall of Sach’önwang-sa] (Myōngji Taehakkyo sōksa hagwi nonmun 明知大學校碩士學位論文 [Myōngji University M.A. Thesis], 2010): 12, no. 11.

⁶⁹ For reports on the investigation of the Sach’önwang-sa site from 1918 and 1922, see Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 [Governor-General of Korea], ed., *Taishō shichi-nendo koseki chōsa hōkoku* 大正七年度古蹟調査報告 [Report of the survey on historical remains in the year 1918] (Keijō [Seoul]: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1922); Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 [Governor-General of Korea], ed., *Taishō jūichi-nendo koseki chōsa hōkoku* 大正十一年度古蹟調査報告 [Report of the survey on historical remains in the year 1922] (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1925). For black and



Figure 3.4 Glazed terracotta plaque, from the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site. From Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府, ed., *Chōsen koseki zufu* 朝鮮古蹟圖譜, vol. 5. (Seoul and Tokyo: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1916): 636, Plate 2146.

white photographs of floor tiles and fragments of terracotta reliefs published during the Japanese colonial period, see Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府 [Governor-General of Korea], ed., *Chōsen koseki zufu* 朝鮮古蹟圖譜 [Illustrated book of Korean historical remains] (Seoul and Tokyo: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1915-1935): 5:636-638, 644. For a brief history of the investigations conducted at the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site during the Japanese colonial period, see Kungnip Kyōngju Munhwajae Yōn'guso, *Sach'ŏnwang-sa*, 58-60. For a list of scholarly publications on Sach'ŏnwang-sa written in Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and English, see Kungnip Kyōngju Munhwajae

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.5 Excavation of the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site in 2010.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

period, the Korean government designated the monastery site as Historic Site (Sajök 史蹟) No. 8.

It is the current archaeological excavation, which began in April 2006, however, that provides a more comprehensive understanding of the original ground plan and the construction date of Sach'ŏnwang-sa (fig. 3.5).⁷⁰ Conducted by Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, this excavation-in-progress has revealed the monastery's full ground plan (fig. 3.6). In addition to the main hall and the twin pagodas, whose base stones were briefly examined during the colonial period, the excavation has uncovered remains of corridors that originally surrounded the monastery precinct to form two courtyards, the main monastery gate site to the south of

Yŏn'guso 國立慶州文化財研究所 [Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage], *Silla hoguk ūi yŏmwŏn: Sach'ŏnwang-sa* 신라 호국의 염원: 四天王寺 [Silla's wish for state protection: Sach'ŏnwang-sa] (Kyŏngju-si: Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso, 2008): 149-153.

⁷⁰ For a description of the results of the excavation between 2006 and 2011, see Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso, *Sach'ŏnwang-sa*, 1-409.



Figure 3.6 Sachŏnwang-sa site, Paeban-dong, Kyŏngju. Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.7 Roof tile with an inscription, “Sach’ŏnwang-sa” (detail), from the Sach’ŏnwang-sa site. Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.



Figure 3.8 Roof tile with an inscription, “Sach’ŏnwang-sa” (detail), from the Sach’ŏnwang-sa site. Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

the main Buddha hall, evidence of a lecture hall located to the north of the main Buddha hall, and traces of two stone bridges crossing the monastery’s small drainage ditch. The excavation has also uncovered quite a few important objects, including thirteen different kinds of roof tiles stamped with the four characters “Sach’ŏnwang-sa” 四天王寺 (figs. 3.7, 3.8),⁷¹ and other objects indicating the approximate date of the monastery.⁷² Seven pieces of floor tiles with floral patterns (Kr. *posanghwamunjŏn* 寶相華紋埴), for

⁷¹ Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn’guso, *Sach’ŏnwang-sa*, 238-242, 350-352. For more about various kinds of tiles excavated from this monastery site, see Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn’guso 國立慶州文化財研究所 [Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage], *Kyŏngju Sach’ŏnwang-saji wa* 경주 사천왕사지 瓦 [Tiles from the Sach’ŏnwang-sa site] (Kyŏngju: Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn’guso, 2011): 1-182.

⁷² Since the excavation reports also refer to the *Samguk yusa* for dating some of the excavated materials, in this chapter I have cautiously selected only materials verified through scientific analysis, dated inscription, and stylistic analysis.

example, have a shape similar to that of a floor tile inscribed with the date 680 (the second year of the Tiaolu 調露) excavated from nearby Anap Pond 雁鴨池, the pond and palace site created during the reign of King Munmu, thereby helping to date the monastery (fig. 3.9).⁷³ In addition, the monastery site has yielded earthenware pieces from the seventh century.⁷⁴ Also conforming to the recorded date of the monastery is the result of the AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dating of charred organic material found under the pedestal of the sculpture at the main Buddha hall. The AMS result roughly matches the recorded monastery completion date of 679 (key point 6). It suggests calendrical dates between 660 and 730, which has a probability of 42.9 percent probable at the 68.2 percent confidence level, and the midpoint of this range is 695 C.E.⁷⁵

This scientific as well as stylistic dating of the archaeological remains of Sach'önwang-sa strengthens the possibility that the Munduru Ritual explained in the *Samguk yusa* was actually practiced not under Koryö, but under Silla. Given the date of the archaeological remains of Sach'önwang-sa, what deserves our attention is the state-protection function of this monastery during the Silla period. Sach'önwang-sa together with Hwangnyong-sa and Kamün-sa 感恩寺 (ca. 682) served as the three major state-protection monasteries (*hoguk sach'al* 護國寺刹) of Silla.⁷⁶ Although the Four Heavenly Kings are generally understood as protectors of Buddhist law, in the context of seventh-century Silla, where state-protection Buddhism (*hoguk Pulgyo* 護國佛教) was the dominant form of religious practice, the Four Heavenly Kings were especially worshipped as divine protectors of the country.⁷⁷ Such worship originates from the Four Heavenly Kings chapter in the

⁷³ Kungnip Kyöngju Munhwajae Yön'guso, *Sach'önwang-sa*, 264-269, 356.

⁷⁴ Kungnip Kyöngju Munhwajae Yön'guso, *Sach'önwang-sa*, 358. For images of the floor tiles with floral patterns excavated from the Sach'önwang-sa site, see Kungnip Kyöngju Munhwajae Yön'guso, *Sach'önwang-sa*, 264-269. The monastery site also had porcelains of later periods because the monastery continued to be in use until the early Chosön period.

⁷⁵ Kungnip Kyöngju Munhwajae Yön'guso, *Sach'önwang-sa*, 396-400.

⁷⁶ Richard D. McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and the Huaö'm Synthesis in Silla Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008): 28. For more about the state-protection function of Sach'önwang-sa, see Kim Sanghyön 金相鉉, "Sach'önwang-sa üi ch'anggön kwa üüi" 四天王寺의 創建과 意義 [Establishment of Sach'önwang-sa and its meaning], *Silla wa Nangsan* 신라와 남산 [Silla and Mount Nang] (Kyöngju: Silla Munhwa Sönyanghoe, 1996): 125-144.

⁷⁷ For more about Four Heavenly Kings worship in Silla, see Sim Hyosöp 沈曉

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.9 Tile inscribed with the date 680 (the second year of the *Tiaolu* 調露), excavated from Anap Pond, Kyöngju, Korea. Gyeongju National Museum. Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

Jing Guangming jing 金光明經 (hereafter *Golden Light Sutra*), in which these Heavenly Kings promise the Buddha that they will protect the country whose king venerates the *Golden Light Sutra*.⁷⁸ Much ink has been spilled about the Four Heavenly Kings images from Silla. According to the most recent scholarship by Im Yöngae, Silla's production of the Four Heavenly

變, "Silla Sachönwang sinang üi suyong kwa chön'gae" 新羅四天王信仰의 受容과 展開 [Reception and evolution of Four Heavenly Kings worship in Korea], *Tongguk sahak* 東國史學 30 (1996): 113-146.

⁷⁸ T663, 16:341b.



*Figure 3.10 Glazed terracotta plaque at the Sach'ŏnwang-sa excavation site
(Plaque C at the north side pedestal of the east pagoda).
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.*



*Figure 3.11 Glazed terracotta plaque newly excavated from the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site
(Plaque C from the north side pedestal of the east pagoda).
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.*

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

Kings images began with the construction of Sach'önwang-sa.⁷⁹ Im Yöngae suggests that although Silla already had Hwangnyong-sa, the grandiose state-protecting monastery, the introduction of Four Heavenly Kings worship necessitated the construction of a new state-protection monastery to enshrine these new state-protecting deities, which resulted in the construction of Sach'önwang-sa. The status of Sach'önwang-sa as the state-protection monastery during the Silla period conforms to the nature of the Munduru Ritual as the state-protection ritual.

Glazed terracotta tiles with reliefs of guardian deities excavated from this monastery site provide archaeological data that further reveal the state-protection function of Sach'önwang-sa (figs. 3.10, 3.11). Although only their fragments were found, the elegant shape and naturalistic style of these guardian reliefs are among the reasons this monastery site has attracted scholarly attention since the early twentieth century. Assembled fragments show that each terracotta tile, sixty-nine centimeters wide and eighty-six centimeters tall, bears an image of a deity seated on two demons, wearing armor, and holding a sword or a bow (figs. 3.12, 3.13, 3.14). The fierce face with bulging eyes, big nose, and mustache is believed to have its prototype in figures from Central Asia.⁸⁰ The naturalistic style and Central Asian physiognomy reveal that these terracotta images were made in the seventh century in the style of Tang Buddhist art.⁸¹ Identification of these images has been a long-debated issue. Until the recent archaeological excavation, they were widely accepted as images of the Four Heavenly Kings.⁸² There

⁷⁹ Im Yöngae (Lim Youngae) 林玲愛, “Sökkuram Sach'önwang-sang' üi tosang kwa Pulgyo kyöngjön” ‘석굴암 사천왕상’의 도상과 불교 경전 [The iconography of the “Four Heavenly Kings at Sökkuram” and the Buddhist sutra], *Kangjwa misulsa* 講座美術史 37 (2011): 25-26.

⁸⁰ This does not mean that these reliefs have a direct connection to Central Asian people or art.

⁸¹ Kang Ubang, *Wönyung kwa chohwa*, 182-184.

⁸² Kang Ubang's in-depth study published in 1979 was most influential in supporting this identification. Kang Ubang 姜友邦, “Sach'önwang-saji ch'ult'o ch'aeu ch'önwang pujosang üi pogwönjök koch'al: obangsin kwa Sach'önwang-sang üi chohyöngjök süphap hyönsang” 四天王寺址 出土 彩釉天王浮彫像의 復元の 考察: 五方神斗 四天王像의 造形の 習合現象 [Restorational examination of glazed Heavenly Kings relief images excavated from the Sach'önwang-sa site: Formal synthesis of the Deities of the Five Directions and the Four Heavenly Kings], *Misul charyo* 美術資料 25 (1979): 1-46. This article was later included in his book, *Wönyung kwa chohwa*, 159-201.



Figure 3.12 Computer software-assisted reconstructed image of Glazed Terracotta Plaque A.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.



Figure 3.13 Computer software-assisted reconstructed image of Glazed Terracotta Plaque B.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.



Figure 3.14 Computer software-assisted reconstructed image of Glazed Terracotta Plaque C.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

... 一 羅
... 波 道 特
... 款 波 道 特
... 大 款 波 道 特
... 特 大 款 波 道 特
... 月 特 大 款 波 道 特



Figure 3.15 Fragment of a stone stele, from the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site.
11.0×55.0×14.0cm. Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

was also an opinion, although less widely accepted, that these terracotta images represent the Eight Kinds of Beings (Kr. P'albujung 八部衆).⁸³ Surprisingly, the result of the recent archaeological excavation supports neither of these opinions. The excavation instead has revealed that there were three kinds of terracotta images. Two sets of the three images were attached to each side of the pagoda's pedestal, and therefore twenty-four images in total surrounded the pagoda. This puzzling number does not fit either the Four Heavenly Kings or the Eight Kinds of Beings. Following the excavation, Im Yŏngae has convincingly argued that these terracotta images are generic guardian deities, which cannot be identified as either Four Heavenly Kings or Eight Kinds of Beings.⁸⁴ She further suggested that they should be understood as *shenwang* 神王, the guardian deities often appearing in the *Consecration Sutra*.⁸⁵ Im Yŏngae's new argument is very convincing, but at the same time there is a possibility that these guardian images, although their concept came from the *Consecration Sutra*, were known under the more generic name *sinjang* 神將 (guardian general or guardian deity) among the Silla people who made them. The fragment of the stone stele excavated from the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site in 2011 also supports this idea, because among the several legible letters is included the clearly engraved word *sinjang* (fig. 3.15).⁸⁶ Although images of *sinjang* became prevalent in

⁸³ Mun Myŏngdae, *Wŏnŭm kwa chŏkchomi: T'ongil Silla Pulgyo chogaksa yŏn'gu, ha* 圓音斗寂照美: 統一新羅 佛教彫刻史研究(下) [Beauty of the Buddha's perfect voice and wisdom: Research on the history of Buddhist sculpture of the Unified Silla 2] (Seoul: Yegyŏng, 2003): 28, 242-244. As Kang Ubang pointed out, however, the Eight Kinds of Beings became widespread only after the mid-ninth century in the Korean peninsula.

⁸⁴ Im Yŏngae (Lim Youngae) 林玲愛, "Sach'ŏnwang-saji sojosang ūi chonmyŏng" 四天王寺址 塑造像의 尊名 [Name of the images modeled with clay from the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site], *Misulsa nondan* 美術史論壇 27 (2008): 7-37. Im Yŏngae thinks that the images of the Four Heavenly Kings, which did not survive, were probably enshrined inside the pagoda or main Buddha Hall of this monastery.

⁸⁵ In the *Consecration Sutra*, the Deities of the Five Directions of the Munduru Ritual are one of these *shenwangs*. Several passages of the seventh fascicle of this sutra call them *wufang shenwang* 五方神王, *Shenwang* of Five Directions. T1331, 21:515b14, b16, c14.

⁸⁶ For more about this stele fragment, see Choe Changmi 최장미, "Sach'ŏnwang-saji p'algul chosa sŏngkwa wa ch'ujŏng sajŏkpi p'yŏn" 사천왕사지 발굴조사 성과와 추정 사적비편 [The achievement of the excavation of the Sach'ŏnwang-sa site and the stele fragment inferred to be from the stele of the monastery history], *Mokkan*



Figure 3.16 Inner reliquary, from the east pagoda of Kamün-sa (detail).
Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.

later periods, these terracotta images constitute one of the earliest examples of *sinjang* images remaining in Korea. In fact, they are one of three such surviving examples from the seventh century: the other two examples are the set of eight *sinjang* images engraved on the bronze reliquary casket (ca. 645) from the nine-story pagoda of Hwangnyong-sa and the two sets of four *sinjang* figurines inside the niches on the pedestal of the inner reliquaries from the Kamün-sa twin pagodas (fig. 3.16).⁸⁷ It is significant that these earliest three extant examples of *sinjang* images are from the three

kwa muncha 목간과 문자 8 (December 2011): 171-184.

⁸⁷ Im Yŏngae, "Sach'ŏnwang-saji sojosang ūi chonmyŏng," 21-22.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.17 West stone remains behind the main Buddha hall site at the Sachönwang-sa site.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

major state-protection monasteries of Silla. This strongly suggests that under the specific context of the seventh century these images of *sinjang*, which did not have specific iconographic features but looked similar to the Four Heavenly Kings, were also generally related to state protection. This was probably because the iconographic difference between *sinjang* and the Four Heavenly Kings was not fully understood in the seventh century when the iconography of the Four Heavenly Kings as divine state protectors was newly introduced to Silla.

The most notable archaeological remains at this monastery site that may have a direct connection with the Munduru Ritual, however, are unique stone installations placed behind the main Buddha hall site. There



Figure 3.18 East stone remains behind the main Buddha hall site at the Sachönwang-sa site.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

are two sets of mysterious stone remains, facing each other in the east and the west, placed in this monastery's courtyard between the main Buddha hall and the lecture hall sites (figs. 3.17, 3.18). Together with the main Buddha hall and paired pagodas to the south of the main hall, these two sets of stone remains create an almost mandalic monastery ground plan, one unprecedented in the Korean peninsula (fig. 3.19).⁸⁸ Each stone installation

⁸⁸ Some scholars have argued that this monastery plan is related to a Buddhist mandala. For example, see Kim Sangt'ae (Kim Sang-Tae) 김상래 and Pak Ōngon (Park Eon-Kon) 박연근, "Sachönwang-sa ūi milgyojök tüksöng e kwanhan yön'gu" 四天王寺의 密敎의 特性에 關한 研究 [Research about the esoteric Buddhist features

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

consists of twelve pieces of square stone, whose width and length are about ninety centimeters long. The twelve stones are neatly arranged to form a square ground plan. In the center of each stone is a round hole, twenty-two centimeters wide and twenty-three centimeters deep. Surrounding the hole is a raised square form. Diagonal lines connect each corner of this square with the corresponding corner of the stone (fig. 3.20). As architectural historians Fujishima Gajirō and Ko Yusöp pointed out during the Japanese colonial period, the shape of these stones differs from that of ordinary base stones for pagodas found in Korea, which typically show few decorations.⁸⁹ For example, they are markedly different from the contemporaneous stone bases of the twin pagodas at Sach'önwang-sa (fig. 3.21) and those of the above-mentioned nine-story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong-sa. The twelve holes in these stone installations are not relic crypts not only because they are too small but also because a relic crypt usually appears only in the central stone supporting the heart pillar.

In his articles published in 1996 and 2002, Chang Ch'ungsik argued that these trimmed stones were not bases for wooden architecture, but the *tansök* 壇席 or remains of the ritual platform for the Munduru Ritual mentioned in the *Samguk yusa* (key point 8).⁹⁰ Chang Ch'ungsik suggested,

of Sach'önwang-sa], *Taehan kŏnch'uk hakhoe nonmunjip* 大韓建築學會論文集 24, no. 2 (2004): 151-158.

⁸⁹ Fujishima Gajirō 藤島亥治郎, "Chōsen kenchiku shiron, sono ichi" 朝鮮建築史論(其一) [Historical essay on Korean architecture 1], *Kenchiku zasshi* 建築雜誌 530 (1930): 255-329; reprinted in *Chosŏn koch'uk saron* (Seoul: Kyōngin Munhwasa, 1982): 59-60; Ko Yusöp 高裕燮, *Chosŏn t'app'a ūi yŏn'gu* 韓國塔婆의 研究 [Research on Korean pagodas] (Seoul: Ŭryu Munhwasa, 1954): 11-12. Chang Ch'ungsik also agrees that these stones were not base stones for wooden pagodas. See his "Silla Nangsan yujök ūi che munje (I): Sach'önwang-saji rül chungsimūro" 新羅狼山遺蹟의 諸問題 (I): 四天王寺址를 中心으로 [Various problems of Silla's cultural remains at Mount Nang 1: Focusing on the Sach'önwang-sa site], *Silla munhwajae haksul palpyohoe nonmunjip* 新羅文化祭學術發表會論文集 17 (1996): 15-36. Before Chang Ch'ungsik's 1996 article, following colonial-period scholars' suggestions, many people believed that these stones were ruins of twin sutra pavilions (Kr. *kyōngnu* 經樓), or a paired sutra pavilion and bell pavilion (Kr. *chongnu* 鐘樓). But there is no concrete evidence supporting such beliefs. In his 1930 article, Fujishima Gajirō wrote that he was the first person to argue that these stones were sutra pavilion sites, but at the same time he admitted that there is no single convincing explanation for the function of these stones.

⁹⁰ Chang Ch'ungsik, "Silla Nangsan yujök ūi chemunje (I)," 15-36; Chang Ch'ungsik, "Silla Sach'önwang-saji tansök ūi koch'al" 新羅 四天王寺址 壇席의 考察

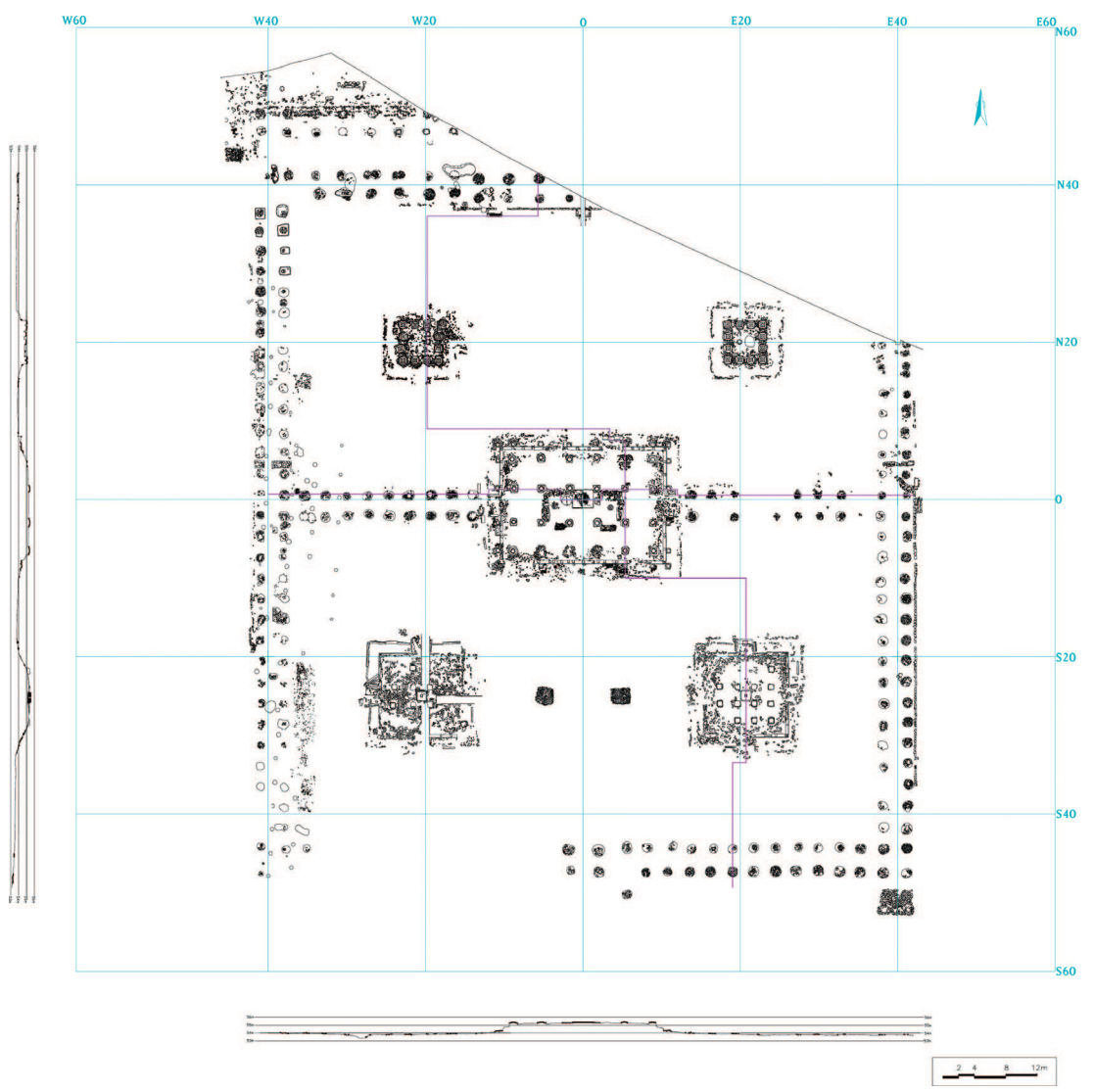


Figure 3.19 Ground plan of Sachŏnwang-sa revealed after excavation.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



*Figure 3.20 Stone remains at the Sachŏnwang-sa site (detail).
Courtesy of Ahn Jangheon.*



Figure 3.21 Stone bases of the east pagoda at the Sachönwang-sa site.
Courtesy of the Gyeongju Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.

based on the seventh fascicle of the *Consecration Sutra*, that the holes in these stones were used to insert round pieces of wood (Kr. *wönmok* 圓木), or logs, inscribed with the names of the Deities of the Five Directions and their retinues. As explained above, these inscribed logs serving as thaumaturgic seals are called “Mundurū” in this ritual, and the name of this ritual comes from these wooden seals. Chang Chūngsik also suggested that the number of the stones in each stone installation symbolized the twelve Yoga monks who performed the Mundurū Ritual under the direction of the monk Myōngnang. This new suggestion has been positively accepted among many scholars. The interim excavation report of 2012, while awaiting complete excavation of the stone installations, identifies these two stone remains as “sites inferred to be ritual platforms.”⁹¹

While waiting for the complete excavation result to be published by the Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, I want to add

[Examination of the ritual platform at Sachönwang-sa from Silla], *Pulgyo hakpo* 佛教學報 39 (2002): 7-23.

⁹¹ 推定壇席址. See Kungnip Kyōngju Munhwajae Yōnguso, *Sachönwang-sa*, 82-86.





Figure 3.22 Twin pagodas of Kamün-sa (view from the north side of the monastery site), Yangbung-myŏn, Kyŏngju. Silla, ca. 682. Courtesy of Ha Jigwon.

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

a few observations that reinforce Chang Ch'ungsik's suggestion. In addition to the unusual decorations on these stones, their arrangement also indicates that they were not base stones for a typical wooden structure. In traditional East Asian timber architecture, the basic spatial unit is the bay defined by two pillars. If the twelve stones served as bases for wooden architecture, the structure would have been a three-by-three-bay building. The space between two stones in these installations, however, is about sixty-four centimeters, too narrow to form one bay for a normal wooden building. The sixty-four-centimeter distance between stones is even shorter than the length of each stone that forms these stone remains. Also strange is that, unlike in a normal pagoda or building site, only a few base stones were found inside the square ground plan (compare figs. 3.17 and 3.18 and fig. 3.21). It is difficult to find similarly arranged stones at monastery sites elsewhere. This means that either a special wooden structure having an unusual form was built above these stones, or there was no wooden building at all. Additionally, the size of the small wooden log on which the names of the deities were written, explained in the *Consecration Sutra*, is noteworthy. In the sutra, Indra asks the Buddha, "What should be the length and breadth of the Munduru (*mudrā*) made of round pieces of wood?" and the Buddha answers, "The length and breadth [should be] seven *fen* by seven *fen*."⁹² In modern units of measurement, one *fen* 分 is about 3.03 centimeters, and seven *fen* is about 21.21 centimeters. Interestingly, a small log about twenty-one centimeters tall and twenty-one centimeters wide would exactly fit into the holes on the stones forming the two stone remains at the Sach'önwang-sa site (fig. 3.20). Were wooden logs inscribed with deities' names inserted into the stones? Were superstructures of some kind enshrining the inscribed wooded pieces built over the stone? Although details regarding the usage of these mysterious stones remain as yet unclear, these unprecedented stone installations from the Silla period at least suggest that this monastery was designed to

⁹² 貝木文頭婁縱廣幾許 佛言縱廣七七分。T1331, 21:515b18. Strickmann translated the phrase "*qiqifen*" 七七分 in the Buddha's answer to "7 inches by 0.7 inch," but I see no reason to interpret the second *qi* 七, which simply means seven, as 0.7. Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 134. Chang Ch'ungsik suggested that *qiqifen* means seven multiplied by seven, hence 49 *fen*, which is about 148 centimeters. Chang Ch'ungsik, "Silla Sach'önwang-saji tansök üi koch'al," 15. From reading the entire fascicle, however, one can understand that this round wooden object is a seal (*mudrā*) placed on the chest of a sick person during the ritual (持此神印致病者身當胸上而安之). A forty-nine-inch long log would be too heavy to place on a sick person's chest.

have a special function that other contemporaneous Korean monasteries did not have. As Koichi Shinohara pointed out to me, the word *toryang* 道場/道場 in the phrase “install a ritual space 開設道場” implies that the ritual space had a certain kind of esoteric ritual altar. In the seventh century, painted mandalas to be hung over ritual altars had yet to appear, but mandalas painted on the ground for ritual practice or mandalas as ritual altars already existed.⁹³ It is plausible that these stone installations arranged in mandalic format were the ritual altar/platform mentioned in the *Samguk yusa* passage,⁹⁴ and that, as Chang Ch’ungsik suggested, the “ritual platform” Iryŏn saw at this monastery in the thirteenth century consisted of these stone installations (key point 8).

Reliquary Reminiscence of the Ritual

Now we will briefly examine the inner reliquary excavated from the east pagoda of Kamŭn-sa, since it can serve as visual evidence to connect this ritual with King Munmu (key point 3). Kamŭn-sa, one of the three major state-protection monasteries of Silla, as mentioned above, is also a fortunate case in which archaeological data as well as relatively reliable textual records have survived. The archaeological remains of Kamŭn-sa, which still retains its three-story twin pagodas made of stone (fig. 3.22), are located in present-day Yongdang-ni 龍堂里, Yangbung-myŏn 陽北面 in Kyŏngju. The first excavation of the Kamŭn-sa site was conducted in 1959 by the National Museum of Korea with the financial support of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (figs. 3.23, 3.24).⁹⁵ This was the first modern archaeological excavation conducted by Korean archaeologists.

Fortunately, the *Samguk yusa* includes a quotation from an epigraph from Kamŭn-sa. It explains that King Munmu initiated the construction of this monastery but passed away in 681 before its completion, and his son King Sinmun (r. 681-692) completed the construction for his father

⁹³ I appreciate Koichi Shinohara’s comments on this. For more about early “esoteric” Buddhism in East Asia, see his “The All-gathering Maṇḍala Initiation Ceremony in Atikūa’s Collected *Dhāraṇī* Scriptures: Reconstructing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Ritual,” *Journal Asiatique* 298, no. 2 (2010): 389-420.

⁹⁴ In East Asian languages, the plural form and the singular form are often undifferentiated. So the *tansök* in the *Samguk yusa* can be either singular or plural.

⁹⁵ For the excavation report, see Yun Mubyŏng (Youn Moo-byong) 尹武柄 and Kim Chaewŏn 金載元, *Kamŭn-saji palgul chosa pogosŏ* 感恩寺址 發掘調查報告書 [Excavation report of Kamŭn-sa site] (Seoul: Ŭryu Munhwasa, 1961): 1-202.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.23 Kamūn-sa site before excavation. Courtesy of Youn Moo-byong.



Figure 3.24 Archaeologist Youn Moo-byong (Yun Mubyöng 尹武炳) examining a figurine excavated from the west pagoda of Kamün-sa. Courtesy of Youn Moo-byong.

one year after King Munmu's death. As a result, King Munmu became the patron as well as dedicatee of this monastery.⁹⁶ The beginning half of the quotation reads:

*Sajunggi*⁹⁷ says that King Munmu wanted to quell the Japanese military. Therefore he began to construct this monastery. He passed away

⁹⁶ Based on the location of the monastery and the records in the *Samguk sagi*, the official history of the Three Kingdoms, some scholars have suggested that Kamün-sa served as *wöndang* 願堂, or a commemorative monastery, of King Munmu. Yi Yönggho 李永鎬, Kim Chiangho 金昌鎬, and Kim Wönju 金源周, "Silla söngjön sawön üi söngnip" 新羅 成典寺院의 成立 [Establishment of Silla's *söngjön* monastery], *Silla munhwajae haksul pal'yo taeboe nonmunjip* 新羅文化際學術發表大會論文輯 14 (1993): 247-288.

⁹⁷ As discussed earlier in this chapter, records of this type are epigraphic data collected from monasteries.





Figure 3.25 Underground space under the main hall of Kamün-sa, photograph from the excavation in 1959. Courtesy of Youn Moo-byong.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.26 Outer reliquary, from the west pagoda of Kamün-sa. Silla, ca. 682.
31.0×18.8×18.8cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.



Figure 3.27 Inner reliquary, from the west pagoda of Kamün-sa (without the canopy part).
Silla, ca. 682. Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.

before completing [the monastery], and became a dragon in the sea. His son [King] Sinmun ascended to the throne and completed [the construction of Kamün-sa] in the second year of the reign of Kaiyao 開耀 (682). [King Sinmun] had a hole opened toward the east under the stone steps of the main Buddha hall. It was a preparation for the dragon to enter the monastery and coil itself up . . .⁹⁸

寺中記云，文武王欲鎮倭兵，故始創此寺，未畢而崩，爲海龍。其子神文立，開耀二年畢，排金堂砌下，東向開一穴，乃龍之入寺旋繞之備。

⁹⁸ *Samguk yusa* 2: “Man’asikchök,” *Yökchu Samguk yusa*, 2:45.

3 (Dis)ASSEMBLING THE
NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM



Figure 3.28 Outer reliquary, from the east pagoda of Kamün-sa. Silla, ca. 682.
30.2×18.9×18.9cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.



Figure 3.29 Inner reliquary, from the east pagoda of Kamün-sa. Silla, ca. 682.
18.8×14.6×14.6cm. Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.

Although parts of this record are closer to myth than history, especially the story about the dragon, surprisingly the 1959 excavation of the Kamün-sa site discovered a mysterious underground space under the main hall (fig. 3.25), which conforms to the space that was prepared to invite the dragon reincarnation of King Munmu to the monastery recorded in the above quotation.⁹⁹ The excavation of 1959 also found an unprecedentedly

⁹⁹ Yun Mubyöng and Kim Chaewön, *Kamün-saji palgul chosa pogosö*, 3-4, 19-28; Kungnip Kyöngju Munhwajae Yön'guso 國立慶州文化財研究所 [Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage], *Kamün-sa palgul chosa pogosö* 感恩寺 發掘調查報告書 [Excavation report of Kamün-sa], (Kyöngju: Kungnip

3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

sophisticated reliquary set from the west pagoda (figs 3.26, 3.27). A matching reliquary set was discovered from the east pagoda in 1996 during the pagoda restoration (figs. 3.28, 3.29).¹⁰⁰

The complete reliquary sets, which have unique and complicated design, will be the subject of a separate publication. What is relevant for the discussion in this chapter is the inner reliquary from the east pagoda of Kamün-sa. The design of this exquisite inner reliquary, especially that of the eight figurines on its pedestal, is unique and is not seen anywhere else in East Asia. The reliquary has an architectural form in which four pillars on a high platform support a canopy. On the platform, eight figurines surround the relic container placed in the center (fig. 3.30). Among the eight figurines, the four standing in each of the four corners of the platform are figures of monks. Despite their tiny size, ranging from 2.8 to 3.2 centimeters tall, these monk figurines have fascinating details, including especially their hand gestures and the objects in their hands. The one in the southeast corner holds an object similar to the ritual apparatus *vajra*.¹⁰¹ The monk in the southwest corner also holds an unidentifiable object. The one in the northwest forms a *varada mudrā* with his left hand, but the object that was initially inserted in the hole of his right hand is now lost. The northeastern monk is secretly hiding his left hand in his robe under his right hand. These intentionally differentiated hand gestures and ritual objects show that the artisan put special emphasis on these details to imply that the monks are performing a certain kind of ritual action. One more detail to note is that these four monk figurines do not fit any known Buddhist iconography. In Buddhist art, the most frequently appearing monk images are those of young Ānanda and old Kāśyapa, the two disciples of the Śākyamuni Buddha; the ten disciples of the Buddha; and *arhat* images often made in sets of sixteen, eighteen, or five hundred.

Kyōngju Munhwajae Yōnguso, 2009): 221-222.

¹⁰⁰ For the excavation report of the reliquary sets from the east pagoda of Kamün-sa, see Kungnip Munhwajae Yōnguso Misul Kongye Yōngusil 국립문화재연구소 미술공예연구실 [Research Team on Art and Craft at the National Cultural Properties Research Institute], *Kamünsaji tong samchūng sökt'ap sari changōm* 감은사지 동삼층석탑 사리장엄 [Reliquaries from the east pagoda of the Kamün-sa site] (Seoul: Kungnip Munhwajae Yōnguso, 2010): 1-235.

¹⁰¹ For the drawing showing details of these four monk figurines, see Kungnip Munhwajae Yōnguso Misul Kongye Yōngusil, *Kamünsaji tong samchūng sökt'ap sari changōm*, 103, Drawing 2.

What is even more unique is that these four monks are grouped together in this reliquary with four guardian figurines. Standing between the monks, the four guardian figurines, wearing scale armor and holding weapons, are positioned in the four cardinal directions of the reliquary's platform.¹⁰² Taking a closer look, we see halos behind the guardians' heads, indicating that they are not ordinary human beings but some sort of deities. The small pagoda in the hand of the northern guardian indeed indicates that these four figurines are the Four Heavenly Kings. A small pagoda is the most distinctive attribute of Vaiśravaṇa, the Northern Heavenly King. In fact, images of the Four Heavenly Kings from Kamūn-sa are the earliest surviving example of these deities in the Korean peninsula.¹⁰³ In short, both the images of four monks and the Four Heavenly Kings are unprecedented in previous reliquaries of the Korean peninsula, and the iconography grouping them together into a set is seen only in this Kamūn-sa reliquary.

This unique design reveals that the reliquary figurines were not made by simply following a previous visual tradition or known iconography. What would have triggered creation of this unique design, if it did not come from preexisting visual models? Considering that this reliquary is from Kamūn-sa, built by and dedicated to King Munmu, the strong resonance between the Munduru Ritual and reliquary design is all the more significant. As the readers of this chapter may already have noticed, this reliquary design has an uncanny resonance with the Munduru Ritual as examined above. As explained in the *Samguk yusa*, a group of Yoga monks led by Myōngnang performed the Munduru Ritual using the statue of the Deity of Five Directions. The term "Yoga monks" in this context means monks who practice *mantra* (Buddhist incantation), *mudrā*, and mandala (visualization).¹⁰⁴ The monk figurines in the reliquary are forming *mudrā*, and some even seem to have slightly open mouths as if they are reciting incantations. The Deities of the Five Directions, as explained in the *Consecration Sutra*, take the form of guardian deities wearing armor and carrying

¹⁰² For images showing details of these four figurines, see Kungnip Munhwajae Yōn'guso Misul Kongye Yōn'gusil, *Kamūn-saji tong samch'ūng sōkt'ap sari changōm*, 99, Plate 1.

¹⁰³ Im Yōngae, "Sōkkuram Sach'ōnwang-sang ūi tosang kwa Pulgyo kyōngjōn," 25-26. Im Yōngae thinks that Sach'ōnwang-sa had images of the Four Heavenly Kings but that they did not survive.

¹⁰⁴ See footnote 13 of this chapter. *Mantra*, *mudrā*, and visualization are also important in the Munduru Ritual explained in the seventh chapter of the *Consecration Sutra*.

Figure 3.30 Figurines of the inner reliquary (detail), from the east pagoda of Kamŭn-sa. Courtesy of the National Museum of Korea.





3 (DIS)ASSEMBLING THE NATIONAL CANON—YOUN-MI KIM

weapons.¹⁰⁵ What is particularly relevant here is Kang Ubang's argument that the shape of the Deities of the Five Directions was probably modeled after that of the Four Heavenly Kings at Sach'önwang-sa.¹⁰⁶ According to him, the Munduru Ritual in the *Consecration Sutra*, which assimilated indigenous East Asian religious practices into Buddhism, promoted the synthesis of Silla's indigenous religion with Buddhism. In the process, religious arts also reflected such synthesis, and the Deities of the Five Directions, which retained the nature of the indigenous religion, were visualized in the form of the Four Heavenly Kings. In the *Consecration Sutra*, Indra indeed promises that the Four Heavenly Kings will protect this Munduru Ritual of the Deities of the Five Directions.¹⁰⁷

I would not want to argue that these figurines faithfully represent the Munduru Ritual. Rather, the design of the reliquary responded to contemporaneous religio-political events and was inspired by the Munduru Ritual. Although it is not a faithful representation of the Munduru Ritual, the reliquary clearly borrowed motifs from the Munduru Ritual, a ritual performed during the reign of King Munmu for the sake of the state, in order to symbolize state protection.

Conclusion

In this postmodern era, many historians acknowledge that complete and objective reconstruction of the past is an impossible task. Study of ancient history and art in any culture involves a certain level of speculation and interpretation. While keeping in mind the limits of modern knowledge of the past, in this chapter I attempted to open up the possibility of productively using the *Samguk yusa* through an interdisciplinary approach to the text, using archaeological data as well as intertextual readings. Careful “understanding” of ancient Korean Buddhist history obtained through an interdisciplinary approach that neither simply ignores nor naively trusts the value of the *Samguk yusa* as a meaningful historical source, I believe, can add more depth to our prior conceptions of Korean Buddhist history.¹⁰⁸

As a stepping-stone to new approaches to the *Samguk yusa*, this chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach to its passage about the Munduru

¹⁰⁵ T1331, 21:515c.

¹⁰⁶ Kang Ubang, *Wönyung kwa chohwa*, 190-197.

¹⁰⁷ T1331, 21:516a.

¹⁰⁸ In Korean history, the time before Koryö is often categorized as ancient history (Kr. *kodaesa* 古代史).

Ritual to provide a case study. Inspection of external texts and relevant archaeological materials suggests that it is highly probable that this early “esoteric” ritual was actually performed during the Silla period under King Munmu’s reign, and that this ritual practice also served to shape one characteristic of later Korean esoteric Buddhism, in which early “esoteric” ritual mixed with Daoist tradition was patronized by the royal court as late as the fifteenth century. This chapter has also shown that the religious art of Unified Silla sensitively responded to its socio-religious environment.

This chapter represents an endeavor to connect not just the present and the past but also Western Buddhologists and Korean art historians. Communication between modern scholars and premodern materials flows only in one direction—scholars can only make educated inferences using fragmentary or mute data; this relationship will necessarily remain one-sided, but the relationship among scholars from differing disciplines and regions is something we can work to develop further. Prominent scholars of Korean Buddhism, such as Henrik H. Sørensen, have already discussed Buddhist art and architecture in their own scholarship, but I hope that a growing number of scholars of Korean Buddhism will more actively engage archaeological and art-historical materials in their future studies. Through the cross-disciplinary and interregional approach I have conducted in this chapter, we can collaborate in drawing a more vivid and accurate picture of socio-religious activities in early Korea.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Using visuals can also produce interesting and new types of studies of Korean Buddhist history for later periods, including modern times, as recent works by young scholars with mixed disciplinary backgrounds have demonstrated. Today more young scholars have official training in both Korean art history and Korean Buddhism, such as Dr. Se-Woong Koo and Dr. Maya Kerstin Stiller. I look forward to the new generation of scholars’ contributions to the fields of both art history and Buddhology.