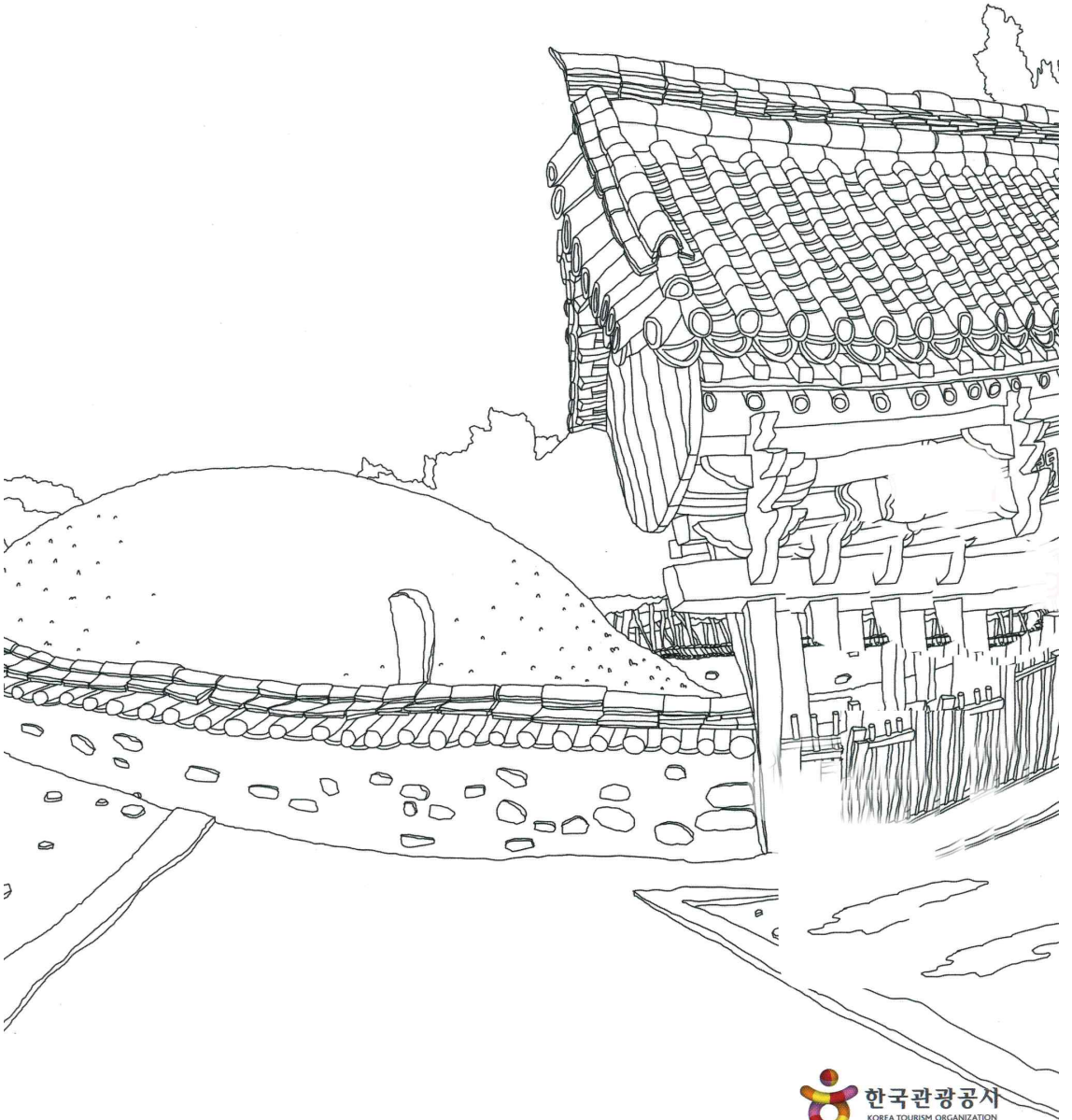


Gongju National Museum

1. Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall
2. Ancient Chungcheongnam-do culture hall



Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	1. King Muryeong, the King who Revived Baekje
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Welcome to the Gongju National Museum. In this museum, you can see many diverse artifacts dating from 18 B.C. to 660 A.D. from Baekje, the ancient kingdom that was located in the southwest of the Korean Peninsula. The capital of Baekje was originally located where Seoul is today and Baekje developed around this area. However, from the 5th century, Baekje was in an extremely precarious state. The king of Baekje was killed in a battle with Goguryeo, the kingdom based in the north of the peninsula, whilst fighting for supremacy within East Asia. Baekje was dispossessed of its territory around Seoul and relocated its capital to Gongju. Even after this move, the crisis in Baekje continued and another king was assassinated. The next king to succeed to the throne was King Muryeong, whose statue we see in front of us. The great King Muryeong was the 25th king of Baekje and ruled from 501 A.D. to 523 A.D. He reinvigorated the kingdom, brought political stability to Baekje, and increased agricultural production. He also improved political relations with China by acting as a conduit between China and Japan and exported advanced Baekje culture to Japan. King Muryeong's statue is located here at the entrance to the Gongju National Museum, because the establishment of the museum can be attributed to him. In 1971, the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was discovered in Gongju by chance. For over a

thousand years after its collapse, few remnants from Baekje had been found due to the destruction of most of its artifacts. It was basically a miracle that the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was discovered in its entirety. It was only then that the recorded history of this king was uncovered, and the culture of Baekje was understood. King Muryeong, the king who revived Baekje during a time of crisis, returned 1,500 years later to uncover the mysteries of the lost Baekje Kingdom. Of the 108 types of artifacts and 2,906 items in total that were found in the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong, the Gongju National Museum is exhibiting select pieces from this find, including breathtaking ornate regal jewelry. How about we take a journey to discover the life and death of Baekje and the breathtaking culture and arts shared with us by King Muryeong? Don't miss the prehistoric artifacts from the southwestern region and the Buddhist relics that are also exhibited here at the museum.

Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	2. The Royal Tomb of King Muryeong Discovered After 1500 Years
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[Narration] The exhibition in front of us is the Korean equivalent of the Tomb of Tutankhamun. Shall we go back in time to July 6, 1971 when the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was first discovered? A number of tombs from Baekje had already been discovered in the early 20th century, but they were almost completely empty. In 1971, construction work around the tombs was undertaken to improve drainage, and...

[Worker] What's this? Boss, come here! There's something here!

[Manager] What's wrong? Oh... this is...

[Narration] The worker had found an old brick. The next day, as the construction progressed, it was confirmed that it was part of the entrance to an ancient tomb. As the discovery was notified, an excavation team was dispatched to Gongju. After careful excavation, the entrance to the new tomb was revealed. Finally, the head of the excavation team and a second person entered the tomb. After examining a slate engraved with characters, the two were able to identify the occupants of the tomb, and emerged into the sunlight to announce that this was indeed the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong and his queen. Indeed, it was the greatest discovery in Korean archaeological history. The discovery of the 2,906 artifacts in the tomb was enough to excite all of Korea. This was the moment where the existence of the breathtaking culture of Baekje was proved to the world.



[Narration] The two tomb steles in front of you appear so simple and common. But, because of these stone steles, the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong is regarded as one of the most important historic sites found in the Korean Peninsula. These steles were inscribed with the interred person's biography, including their name and date of birth. Upon discovery of these steles, the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong became the only royal tomb from the Three Kingdoms Period to be conclusively identifiable.

[Tourist] Wait a minute! It looks like the characters inscribed are Chinese. Doesn't Korea have its own characters?

[Narration] Yes, we do, but the Korean alphabet was only created in 1443. Before then, we used Chinese characters. This is similar to how Latin was used in Europe. The inscription on the steles provides a biography of the King and details about how he purchased the land for his tomb from the god of the earth.

[Tourist] What? Are you saying that the King bought the land for his tomb?

[Narration] The people of Baekje believed that divine beings dwelled in natural phenomena, such as the earth. On the steles, it is engraved that, "After negotiation, 10,000 mun were given to the god of the underground to purchase the site for use as a tomb." Approximately 90 ancient Chinese coins were found on top of the tomb stele, and they are believed to have been payment to the god of the earth.

[Tourist] How interesting. Which of the two stone tomb steles belonged to King Muryeong?

[Narration] When we look at the wall engraved with Chinese characters, the one on the right belonged to King Muryeong and the one on the left belonged to his queen. The Queen died 7 years after King Muryeong in 529 and was buried with the King.

[Tourist] If the King and Queen were buried together does that mean the King was not buried until the Queen died?

[Narration] No, that's not the case. The tomb was constructed after the King's death. When the Queen died, the tomb was re-opened and she was laid in the tomb next to the King. However, neither the King nor Queen was buried immediately. They were buried 27 months after their deaths. We will talk about this later at another exhibit. Nonetheless, the identities and dates of the death and burial of the King and Queen were ascertained by these steles. This is another reason why the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was a valuable discovery.

Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	4.Jinmyosu, the Guardians who Protected the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong
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[Narration] The interesting objects that you see through the glass are stone animal figurines excavated from the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong. Don't they look like pigs with horns? Why were these interesting stone figurines in the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong? We will listen here to what the head of the excavation team had to say about the discovery of the tomb in 1971.

[Excavation head] It was the afternoon of July 8, 1971. The entrance of the tomb was uncovered around 3 p.m. We first prepared some food to hold a memorial service for the occupants of the tomb. We then started to remove the bricks from the entrance. Once the bricks were removed, we could see a dark, long, narrow passage. We entered the passage and as we walked in we saw two stone tomb steles and an animal figurine glaring at us.

[Narration] This animal figurine is prevalent in mythology, and its purpose is to protect the tomb from both intruders and evil spirits. The animal figurines had protected the tomb for all those years. The figurines also played another role. If you look carefully, you will see that there are horns on their heads and that their feet are winged. It is believed that these figurines had wings so that they could escort both the king and queen safely to the mountain in heaven for the dead. Maybe they were similar to Hermes in Greek myths. Next, we will take a look at the stone tomb steles.



This is the replica of the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong. Do you recall the stone animal figurines and the stone tomb steles that you previously saw? The floor of the tomb was simply constructed, and the artifacts were placed on the floor. The northern and eastern walls were more detailed, with niches for lamps set into them. The long passageway leads into the tomb. Follow the passage and take a look at the artifacts on the floor.

As you can see, the stone tomb stele, coins, and stone animal figurines were found in the passage. The coffins of the King and Queen were placed in the chamber of the tomb. Can you see the raised part of the floor? This was the holy place where the corpses were placed, distinctly separate from the other areas. If you look at the walls, they are patterned with lotuses and there is a flame-shaped niche for an oil lamp. It is believed that the oil lamp was part of the last ritual performed after enshrining the coffin. When the door of the tomb was finally closed, the light remained until the oil ran out and the tomb was plunged into total eternal darkness. The soot from the lamp withstood the ravages of time for 1,500 years and is still visible. The Royal Tomb of King Muryeong is located in the Songsan-ri Ancient Tomb Complex in Gongju. In 1996, it was realized that humidity was beginning to affect the tomb and the bricks were becoming damaged, so to preserve the tomb, it was closed to the public. This is why today we are unfortunately unable to see the actual interior of the tomb. You may however wish to visit the model exhibition at the Songsan-ri Ancient Tomb Complex, which has a replica of the interior of the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong.



What you are seeing now are the coffins of King Muryeong and his Queen. They are coated with the sap of the lacquer tree and are decorated with gold and silver. They look so well preserved that you probably find it impossible to believe they are 1,500 years old. Look to the left. The original coffins of King Muryeong and his Queen are exhibited too. The wood has almost completely decayed over the years and there are only fragments remaining. There is an important secret regarding the relationship between Korea and Japan hidden within these coffins. The timber used to make these coffins is not native to the Korean Peninsula. In fact, this type of pine is only found in the southern part of Japan. The origin of the wood was determined in 1991, 20 years after the discovery of the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong. This supports the theory that there was active cultural exchange between Baekje and Japan. According to the Chronicles of Japan, King Muryeong was born on a small island in the Kyusu region of Japan. Much of the details regarding the relationship between ancient Korea and Japan are yet unknown, but this small piece of timber is certainly a clue.



These artifacts are items of ornate regal jewelry excavated from the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong. Let's examine them one by one. The first ones are gold diadem ornaments that belonged to the king. Can you recall the features of the bust of King Muryeong that we saw earlier? These flame-shaped ornaments were made with thin gold plates and were depicted adorning the king's head. The design, cut out from thin gold plates, resembles flames with one shooting to the left and another upwards to the right. The king's gold diadem ornaments consist of a lotus and flame design. If you look closer, you will see the stems and blossoms of the lotuses with small gold spangles attached. Tiny holes were punched in the spangles and woven 4-6 times with gold thread. Imagine the spectacle the king would have made wearing such splendid accessories. When the king wore the diadem, these spangles would have looked both mystical and beautiful. Now, shall we take a look at the Queen's gold diadem ornaments? Just like the king's, the queen's gold diadem ornaments are made out of thin gold plates and the pattern is quite similar. The only major difference is that the queen's are smaller. The accessories are similar; however, compared to the extravagant, splendid ornaments of the King, the Queen's diadem ornaments are simple and elegant. Next, we will look at the King's gold chignon ornament and belt, followed by the King and Queen's earrings.



[Narration] These are the king's shoes.

[Tourist] Baekje people must have been very tall. What big shoes!

[Narration] These shoes were not for practical wear, but for use after the king's demise. They were originally highly decorated, and beautifully adorned with lotus patterns and phoenixes. The shoes also featured twisted, bronze thread detail.

[Tourist] But the material the shoes are made from is hard and sharp. They must have been very uncomfortable to wear, even in the afterlife.

[Narration] Actually, the shoes were lined with tree bark so that the king's feet would not have been in direct contact with the metal.

[Tourist] I see. But why do these shoes have spikes like soccer boots?

[Narration] They were only to decorate the shoes. Warriors featured in the murals of Goguryeo were depicted wearing a similar kind of spiked footwear. It is assumed that they were designed to prevent the approach of enemy soldiers on the battlefield. Such thick spikes must have looked quite intimidating. In the case of the king's shoes, the nails might have been thought to repel evil spirits after the king's death. If you move to the right, you will see the Queen's shoes, which look similar to those of the King.



We previously looked at the gold diadem ornaments belonging to King Muryeong and his Queen. Now let's examine the other gold ornaments. Can you see the ornament that looks like a bird in flight, with wings outstretched and a tail comprised of three prongs? This is a gold chignon ornament which was discovered near the King's head. It is a type of hairpiece used to tie the hair back when wearing a topknot. Lotuses are engraved on the wings. Now let's look at the King's earrings, made of pure gold. Smaller, gold beads were attached to the two dangling ornaments and curved jade were incorporated to increase the grandeur of the jewelry. Isn't it interesting to learn that the King used to wear

earrings? Four pairs of the Queen's earrings were also discovered. The detailed rings and pendants are amazing. You can see the Queen's earrings if you move to the exhibition room behind you where the Queen's items are displayed. Now let's look at the belt. Two of King Muryeong's belts were discovered. One was made of leather, but it has been completely disintegrated, leaving only two belt ring and decorations remaining. The other belt was made of metal and therefore withstood the passage of time. It is detailed and decorated beautifully. These types of gold ornaments were made by linking individual gold beads together one by one. In the case of the gold earrings, tiny gold beads measuring 0.5mm in diameter were used. Crafting such small components was a very elaborate work, but the process of linking these beads together required a lot of time, perseverance, and commitment. This method of jewelry-making is still appreciated today as high quality because of its complex and time-consuming nature. These examples of regal jewelry illustrate how splendid and detailed metal craft was in Baekje.

Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	10. Sword with Round Pommel from the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong, a Symbol of Supreme Power
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The artifact exhibited here is the sword of King Muryeong. It was discovered to the right of the King. How about we take a closer look at it? A cord was laced through the round pommel at the end of the hilt so that the sword could be secured to the wrist. It prevented the weapon from being dropped on the battlefield. Inside the ring of the pommel, a dragon is depicted holding a cintamani, a wish-fulfilling jewel. On the outside of the pommel, there are two dragons looking downwards, with vivid scales. Similar to the lions and eagles of European culture, dragons and phoenixes are used in East Asia to represent only the most powerful leaders. A sword with such decorations is symbolic of great power. The splendid decorative features are continued on the hilt, which is wrapped with gold and silver thread. Both ends of the hilt are gold-plated and adorned with silver tortoiseshell and gold W-shaped patterns. There is a phoenix inscribed within the tortoiseshell pattern. Let's examine the W-shape on the hilt. Analysis of a picture of this detail taken with a 1200 pixel digital camera revealed 800 stitches using small, gold beads along each side of the W. The diameter of each gold bead used was less than 0.5mm. The reason for such splendid, intricate decorations is that this sword symbolized the power of the King. Swords with round pommels were found not only in Baekje but also around the Korean Peninsula and in Japan. Of those found, King Muryeong's sword with a round pommel has been evaluated as being the greatest.

Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	11. The Headrest and Footrest Used to Support the Corpse
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The wooden U-shaped and W-shaped objects here were the headrests and footrests used by King Muryeong and his Queen. The black one belonged to the King and the red one belonged to the Queen. Both the headrests and footrests were carefully prepared to support the bodies of the King and Queen. Look at the King's headrest first. It is covered with thin, gold decorations in a hexagonal tortoiseshell pattern and adorned with small, gold flower designs. The W-shaped footrest of the King is similarly decorated. Gilt decorations cover the edges of the Queen's headrest and it has the same gilt, hexagonal tortoiseshell patterns. Each tortoiseshell pattern has a different design in it, for example, a flying fairy or a fish-like dragon. The paintings are indistinct and difficult to identify, so come closer and look carefully. On the upper part, there are two wooden, oriental phoenixes facing each other. The Queen's footrest is also covered with gilt decorations and embellished with lotus and cloud motifs. There are iron rods on the top part of the footrest, designed to resemble bamboo.



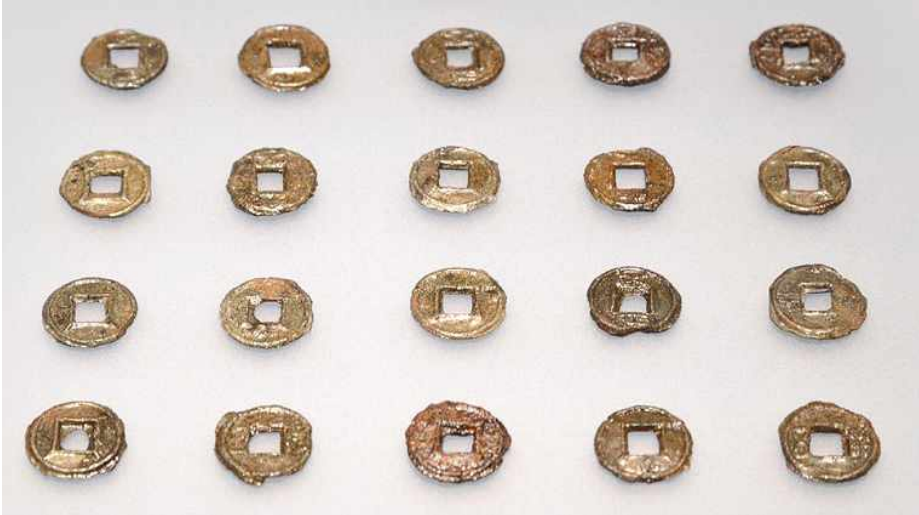
[Narrative] After being carved in darkness for so long, the moment the entrance to the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was opened, various artifacts were discovered. One of the most amazing discoveries was none other than the tooth displayed before you. It was incredible to find a single molar where brilliant golden relics had lost their sheen and even the bones of the king and his queen had vanished into thin air. Then, who does this tooth belong to? Considering the tooth is smaller than a fingernail, it is more likely to have belonged to the queen than to the king. Records on the stele of the royal tomb show that the queen was the mother of King Seong, the son of King Muryeong, and that she died a natural death without suffering from a disease. But the records also raised questions about the owner of the tooth. When the tooth was found, it showed no trace of decay and its surface was unused and clean. People therefore concluded that it was a wisdom tooth that had not emerged through the gums. But, given that wisdom teeth usually grow out of the gums past the age of 20, one may presume that the queen died before she turned 20 years old. Such a presumption, however, is inconsistent with records that state that the queen gave birth to a son and lived to a ripe old age. According to a recent study, there are some cases where wisdom teeth do not emerge through the gums of people even in their forties. In addition, a close analysis of the molar shows that there is a possibility

that the queen's wisdom tooth didn't even emerge in her advanced years. As a result, it is difficult to simply conclude that the queen was 17 years old, and the molar found in the royal tomb is presumed to have belonged to the queen who died a natural death as described in the stele.

Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	13. Silver Bracelet Inscribed with Names of the Owner and Maker
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This artifact with the two entwined, three-toed dragons with their tongues out is a bracelet that the Queen had worn. The detail of the dragons' scales and even toenails is very intricate, making the bracelet so exquisite and stylish. The value of this artifact is not only due to the detailed decorations, but also because of the names that are engraved on the inside. Take a look at the inside of the bracelet. It is a little faded, but there are definitely engravings of Chinese characters. Shall we read them? "February, 520 A.D., a person named Dari made a silver bracelet for the Queen." Similar to brand names on bags or clothes produced today, the maker's name was engraved on the bracelet. Regardless of how skilled the ancient artisans were, it is difficult to imagine them engraving their name on their work because of their low rank. This bracelet is the only artifact from Baekje that bears the name of both the artisan jeweler and the owner, and thus has been deemed exceedingly valuable. "Dari" is the first known artisan from this period, and he was the first person to mark his name in Korean history.



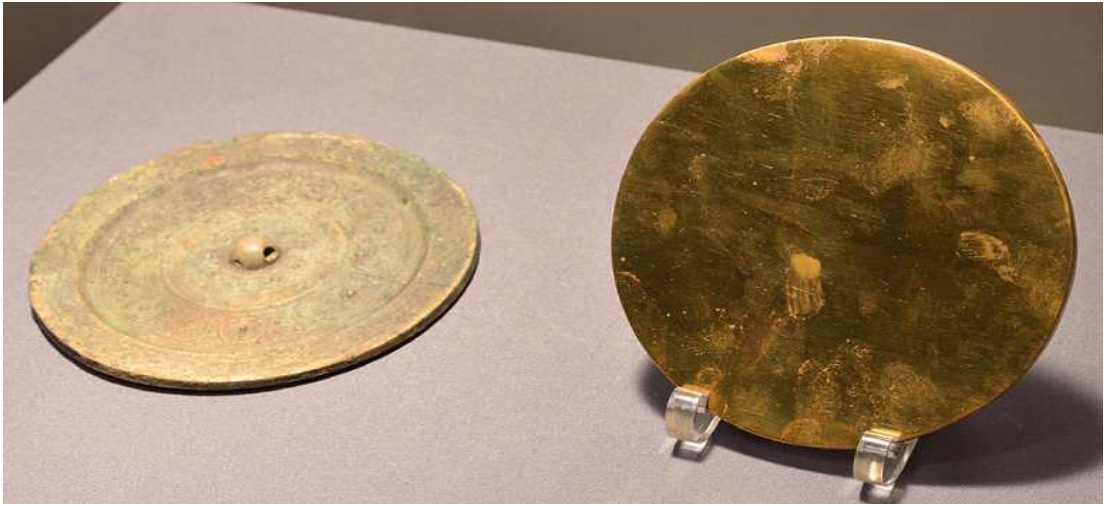
[Narration] The artifacts exhibited here are "Wu-shu" coins from the Liang Dynasty of China. A bag of coins was found on top of the stone tomb steles which stood in front of King Muryeong's coffin. The money was a payment made to the god of the earth for the use of the site of the tomb. [Tourist] Are you saying that there was a monetary transaction made with a god? [Narration] Yes. The King was the ruler of the land above. When he died, he paid the god of the earth in order to use the plot for his tomb. It was a symbolic ritual to show respect to the underworld. The "Wu-shu" coins were used to buy land from the god of the earth, but also more importantly, they indicate the relations that existed between Baekje and the Liang Dynasty. The "Wu-shu" coins were sent to Baekje, a neighboring kingdom, from the Chinese imperial family. [Tourist] So, Baekje and China enjoyed a close relationship? [Narration] Yes. They had an especially close relationship with the Liang Dynasty and there was frequent cultural exchange between the two countries. Pottery or bronze crafts made in the Liang Dynasty were imported directly into Baekje. The lamp that was found in the wall of the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was also from the Liang Dynasty. Baekje was an international country that actively exchanged and traded with its neighbors.

Muryeong Royal
Tomb Hall

15. Gold and Silver Ornaments That Decorated the
Coffins of the King and Queen



The artifacts that you are seeing were used to decorate the coffins belonging to King Muryeong and the Queen. Most of them were found around the spot corresponding to where the King and Queen's heads and waists would have been. It is supposed that they were decorations of either the shrouds, the silk cover for the coffin, or the wall coverings. How about we look at each ornament separately? The gold artifact farthest to your right, shaped like four leaves, used to be a half sphere with four leaf-shaped ornaments attached to it. To its left, the gold and silver flower-shaped ornaments were the most common type of ornament found in the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong. The flower petals were attached to half spheres made of gold and silver. The third gold and silver sphere ornament on the right was made by pressing a gold plate into the shape of a cap. Other artifacts included diamond-shaped silver ornaments and pentagonal gold ornaments. Although similar ornaments had been discovered in other tombs from the Baekje period, the quantity and diversity of the ornaments discovered in the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong is unsurpassed.



[Narration] The round bronze exhibit here is a mirror. One was found near the Queen's head, while a second was found near the King's feet.
[Tourist] That's a mirror? That is interesting. I don't think it can show a reflection.

[Narration] You are looking at the back of the bronze mirror. The front of the mirror is different to the back, and was polished to a smooth and reflective surface so that it could reflect the light. It is now corroded and a greenish color, but originally it was shiny bronze.

[Tourist] Oh, I see. I guess that the mirror must be significant, considering it was found by the head of the Queen.

[Narration] Yes, you're right. Bronze mirrors have been used since ancient times, not only to see your reflection, but also as a symbol of authority or shamanist power. The light from the sun, symbolizing life, was harnessed and brought to earth by the bronze mirror. This is why the bronze mirror became a symbol of the King, who was often depicted as the sun. Therefore, it makes sense that the bronze mirror, an emblem of the King, was buried in the tomb. Now, let's look at each mirror in more detail. The mirror to your left is unique because it has a square pattern in the center with four animals and hunters engraved around the outside. The one on the right has animals engraved on it.

[Tourist] The one in the center seems to have some type of string attached to it?

[Narration] Yes. It is a leather thong and was thought to be used by the King so that he could wear the mirror around his neck. He may also have used the bronze mirror for harvesting rituals.

Muryeong Royal
Tomb Hall

17. Copper Spoon / Copper Plates-The Food
Culture of Baekje



[Narration] These artifacts are copper plates and spoons that were found in the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong.

[Tourist] Did the King and Queen use them when they were alive?

[Narration] Well, the King and Queen may have used them when they were alive, but the spoon is very small and with its triangular shaped handle, it must have been inconvenient to use.

[Tourist] So, why were they placed in the tomb?

[Narration] I think that the people of Baekje believed that even dead people needed spoons and plates.

[Tourist] Did the people of Baekje use spoons and chopsticks?

[Narration] Yes, they did. Korean people began to use spoons and chopsticks a long time ago. It is a part of their culture to eat with these utensils.

[Tourist] Oh, I see. But the utensils are a different color than the ones we use today. What are they made out of?

[Narration] They were made out of copper. In the past, copper was very valuable and only kings and queens, or people of high social ranking, were able to use copper spoons and chopsticks. Now, shall we move on to the next artifact?



This artifact is a silver cup with a bronze stand that was found by the head of the Queen. Metal arts and crafts were highly valued in Baekje. How about we examine the metal crafts from the Baekje period by beginning with the artifact at the top? Isn't the flower bud on top of the lid's handle beautiful? The lotus leaves that cover the top are decorated with gold and there are more leaves underneath the gold ones. The sparkling gold resembles the pink cheeks of a little girl. The four peaks engraved on the lid represent the homes of hermits or ascetics. Above them you can see an engraving of a flying phoenix. Below this, there is another engraved lotus that is in full bloom, and there are three dragons surrounding the whole cup. The silver cup fits within the bronze stand, so there is no chance of the cup toppling over. I think that this tea cup may have been a special favorite of the Queen, since it was found next to her head. Maybe the tea cup was buried in the tomb so that the Queen would be able to enjoy tea from her favorite cup even in the afterlife?

Muryeong Royal Tomb Hall	19. Jeongjisan Historic Site - Royal Coffin Hall of King Muryeong and His Queen
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What you are looking at now is a miniature of the historic site found at the top of Jeongji Mountain. From here, you can see the panoramic view of Gongju and the entire east mountain fortresses of Baekje. A plate holder and potteries excavated from this site are exhibited along with this model. According to the inscription on the tomb steles found in the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong, King Muryeong and his Queen were each enshrined 27 months after their deaths. However, until recently, nobody knew where the King and Queen had been enshrined before they were transferred to their final resting place. In 1996, during the construction of a road, a roof tile engraved with the same lotus pattern that was found at the Royal Tomb of King Muryeong was found on a nearby mountain. Additional artifacts that were unique to Baekje royal sites were subsequently unearthed in the area. Eventually, a freezer that was used to store ice was found and it confirmed the suspicions of historians. It had been a long tradition, even since ancient times, for ice to be used to lessen the odor of decaying corpses. The artifacts discovered at the site were like the pieces of the puzzle that eventually led to historians confirming that Jeongji Mountain was indeed the place where the bodies of King Muryeong and his Queen had each been preserved for 27 months.