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# Buddhist Kingship and Symbolic Architecture in Silla Korea

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## Abstract

*The evolution of kingship in the early Korean state of Silla (ca. 300–935) was closely linked with the accommodation of various Buddhist practices that conferred symbolic legitimacy and promoted royal authority. During the sixth and seventh centuries, Silla's sovereigns assimilated several overlapping approaches to statecraft and kingship drawing on Sinitic and imagined Indian models mediated through such Buddhist literature as the Sūtra for Humane Kings and the Sūtra of Golden Light, resonant with policies followed in the Northern and Southern Dynasties in China. Buddhist monarchs in Silla adopted several overlapping and increasingly sophisticated approaches to symbolically consolidate and project political authority. Silla merged native East Asian cosmological symbolism with Buddhist architecture to establish royal legitimacy. Hwangnyong Monastery combines Sinitic symbolism with Buddhist-inspired propaganda, which both assert Silla's regional dominion. The significance of the yellow dragon was astrological, signifying Silla's ascendancy among the Korean states. Hwangnyong Monastery was the locus for state-protection rituals centered on the Sūtra for Humane Kings beginning in the sixth century, but early monasteries built with a single golden hall and two pagodas may have some connection to the Sūtra of Golden Light. Sach'ōnwang Monastery was the most important twin pagoda monastery in seventh-century Silla, with Yōngmyo Monastery and Kamūn Monastery also performing a magico-religious function as loci for ritual centered on divine protection by the four heavenly kings, the eight classes of divine beings, spirit generals, and wholesome deities from the unseen world.*

**Key words:** Silla history; Buddhist kingship; state-protection Buddhism; Hwangnyong Monastery; Sach'ōnwang Monastery

## Introduction

The development of kingship in the early Korean state of Silla 新羅 (traditional dates, 57 BCE–935 CE) was intimately associated with the adaptation and implementation of various symbolic forms of Buddhist legitimation in conjunction with Sinitic or “Confucian” statecraft, and was resonant with policies followed by the Northern and Southern Dynasties in China. Buddhist kings and queens in Silla adopted several overlapping and increasingly sophisticated approaches to symbolically consolidate and project political authority. In the early sixth century, King Pōphŭng 法興 (r. 514–540) adopted Buddhism as a state religion and began to present himself as a sacred Buddhist ruler in the mode of King Aśoka (r. 268–232 BCE) and Liang emperor Wu 梁武帝 (r. 502–549). In the mid-sixth century, King Chinhŭng 眞興 (r. 540–576) embraced the imagery of the cakravartin—a great king who turns the wheel of the Buddhist dharma—and constructed the state palladium Hwangnyong Monastery 皇龍寺/黃龍寺 to combine Sinitic and Indian modes of legitimation (Mohan 2006). In the late sixth and early seventh century, King Chinp’yōng’s 眞平 (r. 579–632) family was modelled on the Buddha Śākyamuni’s family and during his reign figurative and cosmological connections were made between Silla and India. In the mid-seventh century, Queen Sōndōk 善德 (r. 632–647) continued the propaganda characterizing Silla as a Buddha-land, and identified Trāyastriṃśā Heaven, the heaven of the thirty-three gods that rests atop the axis mundi of Mount Sumeru in Indo-Buddhist cosmology, as an actual geographical locale in the Silla capital. Silla kings derived legitimacy from sponsoring Buddhist rituals at sites rich in Buddhist and East Asian symbolism (McBride 2008, 13–32). The purpose of this essay is to examine how the symbolic architecture and state-sponsored rituals at Hwangnyong Monastery and other complexes, such as Sach’ōnwang Monastery 四天王寺, particularly those associated with the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* (*Renwang jing* 仁王經) and the *Sūtra of Golden Light* (*Jingwangming jing* 金光明經), played a seminal role in legitimating the rule of the Silla royal family and embodying the concept of protection.<sup>1</sup>

The primary sources for the early history of Silla and Silla Buddhism are *History of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk sagi* 三國史記) and *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa* 三國遺事). Both are relatively late sources compiled during the succeeding Koryō period (918–1392). The former, an official history that—

like other works in the genre—treats material related to Buddhism laconically, was compiled on royal order by the scholar and statesman Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075–1151) and was presented to the court in 1146. The compilation of the latter, a collection of traditional narratives and stories many of which were culled from now-lost books, appears to have been initiated by Iryōn 一然 (1206–1289), amended by his disciple Hon'gu 混丘 (also called Mugūk 無極, 1250–1322), and further edited by other unknown hands prior to achieving its present form in 1512. Although *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* is a late source, it reproduces the language of its original sources with general reliability. Furthermore, when these Korean materials are placed in context with earlier Chinese and Japanese materials that are more contemporary to Silla Korea, the Korean materials correspond well (McBride 2006; 2007).

### State-Protection Buddhism

The state and Buddhist church were closely affiliated during the Chinese Northern dynasties period (ca. 386–589). Buddhist scriptures strongly advise that monks should not bow to their parents or rulers, but one of the Buddhist leaders of the time, Faguo 法果 (fl. 396–398), asserted the innovative and conciliatory position that the Northern Wei emperor Taizu 太祖, Daowu 道武 (r. 386–409), was not a mere earthly ruler but actually a living Buddha; therefore, it was proper for monks to bow to him. The Northern Wei ruler took advantage of this situation by appointing Faguo an imperial official over Buddhism, the “Buddhist Overseer” (*daoren tong* 道人統), thus fusing the Buddhist church to the imperial state (*Wei shu* 114:3031; Tsukamoto 1957, 371). The assertion by politically-savvy monks that the Northern Wei emperors were living buddhas enabled the growth of a symbiotic relationship between the state and the monastic community. The state upheld the church by founding and financially supporting temples and monasteries, and patronized official monks who benefited the state by executing rituals promising prosperity in the country and the longevity of the dynasty at these ritual complexes. The symbolic employment of Buddhism by Chinese states was often crucial in crafting the ideology of imperial legitimation under the Northern dynasties (Ware 1933, 127–128; Ch'en 1964, 146).

Despite brief periods of intense suppression, the Northern dynasties held

special Buddhist assemblies for the protection of the state at imperially-patronized monastic complexes, a concept that has become known as state-protection Buddhism (Ch. *huguo fojiao*, Kor. *hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教) (Ch'en 1964, 168–169; Emmerick 1970, 23–43). State protection was an important aspect of Silla Buddhism as well. Several aspects of this form of Buddhism in Silla are especially important: special dharma assemblies, monasteries reflecting symbolic architecture, and the early government organs for controlling the Buddhist monastic community.

Two special dharma assemblies were held from time to time on behalf of the Silla court and kingdom: the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions and the Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks (*Inwang-gyōng paekkojwa kanghoe* 仁王經百高座講會). They were introduced to Silla by the Koguryō monk Hyeryang 惠亮 (fl. 540–576), who emigrated to Silla at the time of Silla's conquest of the Han River Basin in 551. The first Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions was held in the tenth lunar month of 572 at an unnamed monastery (*oesa* 外寺) on behalf of deceased soldiers, and it lasted for seven days.<sup>2</sup> Āgama literature suggests that the eight prohibitions refer to a special dharma assembly for laymen, particularly kings, in which they empower themselves by fasting and following eight precepts that a monk would follow for a specified period of time. Full-fledged monks usually reviewed and rededicated (i.e., empowered) themselves to the monastic precepts (*kyeyul*, Ch. *jielü* 戒律; Skt. *vinaya, śīla*) twice a month on the seventh and fifteenth days in a special dharma assembly (Skt. *poṣadha*) in which the monastic code was recited. Although scholars are not sure what was contained in the Silla assembly, they suggest that the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions in Silla was used to empower the Silla kings and prosper the country and that it included worship of the native gods and spirits of Silla (An 1956; J. Kim 1994).

The Assembly of Eight Prohibitions links the most fundamental of Buddhist ritual observances, the *poṣadha*, to Maitreya worship because the Maitreya sūtras encourage aspirants to hold “abstention ceremonies or fasts of the eight precepts” (*p'algye chae*, Ch. *bajie zhai* 八戒齋) (T 452, 14.420a15; T 453, 14.422c27; T 456, 14.432a8–9). A fast of the eight precepts is another name for a fast of the eight prohibitions (*p'algwān chae*, Ch. *baguan zhai* 八關齋, Skt. *aṣṭāṅga-poṣadhe*, Pāli *aṭṭhaṅguposatha*). The *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* (*Haedong kosūng chōn* 海東高僧傳), which was compiled by Kakhun 覺訓 in 1215, reports that an abstention assembly of the eight prohibitions (*p'algwānjae hoe* 八關齋會) was held

for the war dead in a monastery outside of the capital (T 2065, 50.1019c4–5; *Samguk sagi* 4:53 [Chinhŭng 33]). Medieval Chinese Buddhist records preserve accounts of fasts of the eight prohibitions being held in primarily in the Southern Dynasties (T 2059, 50.390c3–4 [Beidu 杯度]; T 2064, 50.961a8 [Huishao 慧紹], 50.961c25–26 [Beidu], 50.989c27–28 [Hongfang 洪昉]; T 2122, 53.315a28–b2, 53.417c24, 53.601c1, 53.747a12, 53.900c28–29). A fast of the eight prohibitions refers to a fast kept by lay men (*upāsaka*) and lay women (*upāsikā*) in which they observe eight precepts for a full day and night: (1) not to kill living beings; (2) not to steal; (3) not to misuse sex; (4) not to lie; (5) not to drink intoxicants; (6) not to ornament the body with flowers or perfumes, sing, dance, or attend shows; (7) not to sleep on high or comfortable beds; and (8) not to eat at inappropriate times (*viz.* after noon) (T 89, 1.913a–b; An 1956). Liang emperor Wu held similar assemblies (*baguanzhai hui* 八關齋會) in the first half of the sixth century to expiate the sins of his people and to ward off calamities (Rhi 1982, 221; J. Kim 1994, 98–102). Korean Buddhist literature suggests that the assembly was held only once more, at a ceremony celebrating the completion of the nine-story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong Monastery, perhaps in 646. It later became a regular Buddhist ritual held by the Koryŏ 高麗 court (918–1392).<sup>3</sup>

The Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by One Hundred Eminent Monks is the ritualized recitation of the “Protecting the State” chapter (*Huguo pin* 護國品) of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra for Humane Kings* (*Renwang bore boluomi jing* 仁王般若波羅密經) by one hundred eminent monks. According to scholarly consensus, the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* is an apocryphal sūtra composed in Central Asia or Chinese Turkestan sometime in the third or fourth century CE.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese monk-historian Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) reports that eminent monks lectured on this sūtra at the request of rulers in both Northern and Southern China during the second half of the sixth century at roughly the same time that Hyeryang must have been active in Koguryŏ, before he instituted the practice in Silla (T 2060, 50.436b29–c1 [Yancong 彦琮], 50.440c29–441a1 [Huize 慧曠], 50.565c10–11 [Zhiyi 智顓], and 50.633c21–22 [Huisheng 慧乘]). The monk-historian Zhipan 志磐 (fl. 1258–1269), who lived during the Song 宋-Yuan 元 transition period, supports this assertion, although neither writer provides any great detail on the extent of royal or imperial support (T 2035, 49.353b19 [Deyuan 德元3], 49.363b28–29 [Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 627–649)], 49.451a1–2 [Liang Wudi 梁武帝 (r. 502–549)], 451c24–25 [Chen 陳 dynasty (557–589)], and 49.466a2–4). This does not preclude the possibility that

monks performed this ritual in monasteries prior to this time. In other words, Hyeryang may merely have been transferring to Silla a ritual practice that was quite familiar and one that he performed regularly in Koguryō. Rituals involving this sūtra in Silla reached their peak in seventh and eighth century (Mohan 2013, 92–96).

The scripture stipulates that whenever a country is faced with difficult or threatening circumstances, the humane king should first prepare one hundred images and one hundred high seats. In the sūtra, the Buddha teaches the Indian King Prasenajit a method for protecting the state. The ritual prescription is as follows: The monks performing the ritual procedures are to (1) hold, read, and recite this *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; (2) adorn the ritual area by setting up one hundred Buddha images, one hundred bodhisattva images, and one hundred seats for Buddhist masters. Those who have commissioned the ritual are to (3) invite one hundred dharma masters to expound this scripture, (4) make offerings of flowers and lamps, clothes, and utensils, and burn incense. (5) Twice a day, during the course of the ritual, dharma masters are expected to expound the sūtra. The scripture promises that if a king, his great officers, and members of the saṃgha hear, read, and recite the sūtra, and practice the method, then disasters and difficulties will be eradicated in the country (T 246, 8.840a11–19; Chou 1945, 241–233, esp. 296n10; Mochizuki 1946, 425–485; Rhi 1982, 163–93; Buswell 1989, 44n8).

Different than the ritual utilizing the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* or *Sūtra of Golden Light*, which invokes the power of the four heavenly kings (*sach'ōnwang* 四天王) to protect the state, this convocation draws upon the merit produced by worshipping images of buddhas and bodhisattvas and the merit produced by eminent monks' reading, reciting, and lecturing on the sūtra. One of the visual aspects of this convocation was probably similar to the practice of “coursing in a sūtra” (*chōn'gyōng*, Ch. *zhuanjing* 轉經). “Coursing” in a sūtra combines a few aspects of the Buddhist cult of the book: the rolls of the sūtra would be unrolled and rolled up again; the “coursers” would perhaps chant some lines or sections of the sūtra or even lecture on a few particular points; the whole thing would be done to generate merit for the one who commissioned the coursing. In a broad sense, however, “coursing in a sūtra” is merely one way of rendering the idea of sūtra-recitation or sūtra-chanting into Buddhist Chinese. Other compounds include “reading sūtras” (*tokkyōng*, Ch. *dujing* 讀經), “chanting sūtras” (*p'unggyōng*, Ch. *fengjing* 諷經), “chanting and reciting [sūtras]” (*p'ungsong*,

Ch. *fengsong* 諷誦), “reciting sūtras” (*songgyōng*, Ch. *songjing* 誦經), “looking at sūtras” (*kan’gyōng*, Ch. *kanjing* 看經), and “contemplating sūtras” (*yōmgyōng*, Ch. *nianjing* 念經). Many Buddhist scriptures speak of the merit generated from reciting or chanting a Mahāyāna sūtra, such as the famous passage in the “Dhāraṇī” chapter in the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the Buddha teaches that people who chant, recite, or copy that sūtra will earn immeasurable amounts of merit. Furthermore, for instance, *Larger Pure Land Sūtra* (*Sukhāvativyūha-sūtra*, Ch. *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經) contains a passage teaching that people will achieve the highest level of enlightenment if they accept the sūtra wholeheartedly in faith, chant the sūtra, and practice in accordance with its teachings (T 262, 9.58b10–12; T 360, 12.279a3–6).

This convocation was held at least twice during the seventh century at Hwangnyong Monastery and purportedly featured the lectures of the eminent monk Wōn’gwang 圓光 (d. ca. 640) in 613 and 636.<sup>5</sup> King Sōngdōk 聖德 (r. 702–737) founded Pongdōk Monastery 奉德寺 in order to perform rituals on behalf of his ancestor Kim Ch’unch’u 金春秋 (604–661), posthumously known as King T’aejong Muyōl 太宗武烈 (r. 654–661). At that monastery he erected the Humane Kings’ Enlightenment Site (Inwang toryang 仁王道場)—a hall for the recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*—and as part of the festivities lasting seven days he granted amnesty to prisoners (T 2039, 49.974a8–9). The recitation assembly was held again in 779 in response to an earthquake that killed one hundred people in the Silla capital and other inauspicious omens in the sky. The state-protection ritual was conducted more frequently at Hwangnyong Monastery in the final years of Silla in 876, 886, 887, and 924, where it was held in conjunction with general amnesties and vegetarian feasts of Buddhist monks (*Samguk sagi* 9:112 [Hyegong 15]; 11:132 [Hōngang 2]; 11:133–134 [Hōngang 12]; 11:134 [Chōnggang 2]; 11:134 [Chinsōng 1]; T 2039, 49.977b25–27).

## Symbolic Architecture and Royal Authority

Three monasteries were directly associated with state-protection Buddhism in Silla in the seventh century: Hwangnyong Monastery, Sach’ōnwang Monastery, and Kamūn (Responsive Grace) Monastery 感恩寺. Hwangnyong Monastery held a special place among all monasteries in Silla because it functioned as the state palladium. Hwangnyong Monastery was a massive

structure; built northeast of the main palace complex of Silla at Moon Citadel (Wölsöng 月城), it took nearly ninety years of sporadic construction in several phases to bring to its final form, before being burned down by the Mongols in 1238 in an act of cultural terrorism. Construction on the monastery began in 553, and the nine-story pagoda was completed in 645 (*Samguk sagi* 4:56 [Chinhŭng 14]; 5:62–63 [Söndök 14]; Park 2003). It not only served as the location for the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions and the Convocation for the Recitation of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*, but was also the principal residence for monastic leaders selected by the government and the location where Silla kings attended the Lantern Festival and other Buddhist gatherings.

Although a narrative was advanced that an oddly shaped stone just north of the Hwangnyong Monastery was the meditation stone of the previous buddha Kāśyapa, providing evidence that Silla was itself actually a buddha-land, greater symbolic importance is attached to the sighting of the yellow dragon (T 2049, 49.989a22–b27 [Kayöp puryön chwasök 迦葉佛宴坐石]). The Sinographs of Hwangnyong Monastery are rendered in two forms: “Yellow Dragon Monastery” 黃龍寺 and “August Dragon Monastery” 皇龍寺. These two titles serve as labels accentuating its role as a pivotal work of symbolic architecture in Silla empowering royal prerogatives, authority, and legitimacy. Buddhism was an important vehicle by which Sinitic culture and mores were adopted and adapted by the peoples of the Korean peninsula. The conventional interpretation of the appearance of the yellow dragon is that the formerly swampy land on which it made its appearance was the locus of an early dragon cult (K. D. Lee 2004, 55). However, the yellow dragon was and is an important emblem of imperial authority, and symbolically represented the direction or location of “the center” (*chungang* 中央) in East Asian astrology and astronomy (*ch'önmunhak* 天文學).

Koguryö royal tombs of the sixth century, such as Wukui Tomb no. 4 五盔墳四號墓 in Ji'an district 輯安縣 (early sixth century) and the Great Kangsö Tomb 江西大墓 (late sixth century) in South P'yöngan province, depict a yellow dragon in wall paintings (*pyökhwa* 壁畫) with the four heraldic animals, the deities of the four directions (*sasindo* 四神圖), or by itself (*hwangnyongdo* 黃龍圖). The depiction of yellow dragons on the ceilings of tombs, along with other asterism and celestial phenomena, functioned as a means of depicting Koguryö's regional dominion (I. Kim 2007, 239–242; 2018, 282–287). King Chinhŭng's sighting of a yellow dragon at the site that would eventually

become Hwangnyong Monastery suggests that the Silla king was asserting that dominance of the Three Kingdoms of Haedong (Haedong samguk 海東三國) had passed from Koguryō to Silla because it conceivably emulated an auspicious event from the legendary life of the Koguryō founder King Tongmyōng 東明 (Chumong 朱蒙, r. 37–19 BCE).<sup>6</sup>

The appearance of a yellow dragon at the proposed construction site of the new palace was an auspicious event symbolizing resonance between men and gods (*ch'ōnin kamūng* 天人感應). Another early Chinese text, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, says that because the sagely person is one who embraces the mind of Heaven and moves and transforms Heaven and earth, the sage's sincerity is caused to be felt within. If phenomena and trends move Heaven, an auspicious star appears and a yellow dragon descends and an auspicious phoenix (*xiangfeng* 祥鳳) arrives.<sup>7</sup> In order for a yellow dragon to appear like this, Heaven and men must enjoy mutual understanding. The appearance of a yellow dragon on the site where King Chinhūng had planned to build a new palace is an auspicious commendation recognizing that the sincerity of the Silla king communicated well with the will of Heaven. The general idea of the propitiousness of the appearance of a yellow dragon in Sinitic culture transcended such early texts and symbolized fame, progress, and advancement. Such a sighting functioned as royal propaganda, advertising the grandeur and might of Silla as a recipient of heaven's favor.

Construction on the monastery began at the height of success in Chinhūng's drive for territorial expansion, a few years after Silla's conquest of the Han River Basin. The imprint of Hwangnyong Monastery was "imperial" in size, being 9,900 *p'yōng* 坪 (ca. 59,528 sq. meters; one *p'yōng* = 6.013 sq. meters), nine times the footprint of Pulguk Monastery 佛國寺 (1,100 *p'yōng* = ca. 6,614 sq. meters), which was constructed in the mid-eighth century. The monastery conveyed royal might and entitlement in its massive size and three golden halls arranged on the east-west axis, with the middle golden hall larger than the two flanking buildings. Because the monastery began as a palace complex, it cleverly depicts how Silla king Chinhūng combined and exploited the spiritual or sacral prestige of the Buddhist church to enhance his symbolic resources and depict himself more fully as a transcendent ruler vis-à-vis the nobility (Mohan 2004).

By the mid-seventh century, the monastery's most important asset was the nine-story pagoda constructed at the behest of Chajang 慈藏 (d. ca. 650),

a monk of the noble true-bone social strata linked to the Silla royal family (K. B. Lee 1986, 51–74; Han'guk Pulgyo Yŏn'guwŏn 1974, 15–27). Two narratives purport to provide the reasons for the construction of this wooden pagoda. The first and apparently older story was recorded in 872 on a reliquary container placed under a large stone marking the base of the central or main pillar, the “heart stone” (*simch'ŏ* 心礎). It says that when Chajang desired to return to Silla, he bowed as he took his leave from an otherwise unknown meditation master named Yuanxiang 圓香 on Mount Zhongnan 終南山, located in the vicinity of the Tang capital Chang'an 長安. In parting, Yuanxiang gave him the following instruction: “By observing your mind I have observed that of your country. Build a nine-story pagoda at Hwangnyong Monastery and all the countries east of the [Yellow] sea (Haedong 海東 = Korea) will surrender completely to your country.” Chajang memorized his words and reported them to the Silla court when he returned.<sup>8</sup>

The second and more popular legend was recorded by Iryŏn. According to that legend, Chajang went to Tang China to study Buddhism during the years 636 to 643, during which time he had an encounter with a spiritual being (*sinin* 神人) at Taihe Lake 太和池. When the spirit asked him why he had come, Chajang responded that he was in search of enlightenment. The guardian then asked him what difficulties his country faced. Chajang told the spirit being that his country was surrounded by enemies on all sides and that incursions by foreigners were bringing hardships on the people, and he asked what he could do to benefit his country. The spirit informed him that the dharma-protecting dragon at Hwangnyong Monastery was his eldest son and instructed Chajang to build a nine-story pagoda at that monastery and, when the pagoda was complete, to perform an Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions. When all this was accomplished, the spirit promised, Silla would prevail over its neighboring states, and the expansionist designs of Silla would be secured. The nine stories of the pagoda were later said to represent the various states and tribal peoples with which Silla had dealings, such as Japan, China, Wuyue 吳越, the Malgal 靺鞨 (Ch. Mohe), and the Yemaek 濊貊 (T 2039, 49.990c–991a; P. Lee 1993, 87–89).

Silla's nine-story wooden stūpa, which was designed by a Paekche architect named Abiji 阿非知, was probably modeled after another large nine-story pagoda built at Yongning Monastery 永寧寺 in Luoyang 洛陽, the capital of the Northern Wei dynasty, in 516 (T 2092, 51.999b–1000a; Yang 2000, 9–56). According to Iryŏn's version of the *Basic Record of the Main Pillar of the*

*Monastery* (*Ch'alchu pon'gi* 刹柱本紀), the height above the bronze tray (container of sweet dew) was 42 *ch'ök* 尺 (14.96 m = 50 ft.) and the wooden construction was 183 *ch'ök* (65.20 m = 245 ft.).<sup>9</sup> Silla would have been using the “Tang foot” (*Tangch'ök* 唐尺); hence all together it was the height of a 30-story building (approx. 300 ft.). The *Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon shoki* 日本書記) reports that the Yamato court began building its own nine-story wooden pagoda on the site of the Kudara Ōdera 百濟大寺 (Great Paekche Monastery), also called Daikan Daiji 大官大寺, situated near Kibi Pond 吉備池 in the capital at Asuka in 639 (*Nihon shoki* 23:233–235 [Jōmei 11]; Aston 1972, 2:169; Yang 2004, 153–170; Park 2003; McCallum 2009, 90–92, 97–98, 109–115). The building of this massive wooden pagoda shows the wealth, opulence, and power of Silla and Queen Sōndōk's court and their promotion of Buddhism for the success of the Silla state.

Although later Korean legends attribute the “unification” of the three Korean kingdoms of Paekche, Koguryō, and Silla to the nine-story wooden stūpa at Hwangnyong Monastery, the pagoda by itself was not able to protect the state from invading Tang Chinese armies. Silla was able to defeat its rivals, Paekche in 660 and Koguryō in 668, only with the intervention of Tang China; and the mighty Tang was able to bring Koguryō to submission only with the assistance of Silla. Once the allies had completed their conquest, however, Silla had designs to rule the peninsula itself and Tang had plans to annex and administer all of the regions they conquered. This difference led to war between the erstwhile allies in 671, and the Chinese dispatched a large invasion fleet across the Yellow Sea. Chajang's relative, the monk Myōngnang 明朗 (fl. 632–671), also a true-bone noble, who had apparently studied Buddhist rituals in China at the same time as Chajang, instructed King Munmu to construct a makeshift monastery dedicated to the four heavenly kings, the protectors of the dharma in this world, south of Mount Nang 狼山 (Wolf Mountain) in the sacred Sinyu Forest 神遊林. It was initially made with colorful silks instead of wood and images of the spirits of the five directions (*obang sin* 五方神) out of grass. There, Myōngnang conducted an esoteric ritual procedure (*munduru pimil chi pōp* 文豆婁秘密之法) with twelve other Yoga monks (Kwak 2004; Sørensen 2005, 55–60). According to the narrative found in *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*, a violent storm wrecked the invasion fleet, causing the Chinese to make peace with Silla and recognize Silla's hegemony over the former Paekche lands and the southern portion of the former Koguryō domain.<sup>10</sup> King Munmu later reconstructed the monastery and called it Sach'ōnwang Monastery (T 2039,

49.972a–b; P. Lee 1993, 93; Han'guk Pulgyo Yŏn'guwŏn 1974, 28–35).

An anecdote preserved in *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* relates that during the reign of Tang emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683), the Chinese imperial court dispatched an emissary to Silla, Attendant Gentleman of the Ministry of Rites 禮部侍郎 Le Penggui 樂鵬龜,<sup>11</sup> who requested to see Sach'ŏnwang Monastery. However, because Silla king Munmu did not want to show it to him, he had another monastery built south of it. When he was led there the Chinese emissary said, “This is not Sach'ŏnwang Monastery. This is like gazing at virtue from a remote mountain (*mangdŏk yosan* 望德遙山),” and would not enter it. Silla officials gave him a generous bribe to make a favorable report to the imperial court, and he said that “Silla built the Monastery of the [Four] Heavenly Kings, and only prays for the longevity of the emperor there.” Thereafter, the new monastery, the double of Sach'ŏnwang Monastery was named Mangdŏk Monastery 望德寺 following the words of the Chinese emissary (T 2039, 49.972b18–25).

Mangdok Monastery was completed in 685 (*Samguk sagi* 8:97). Located on Mount Nang, 300 meters south of Sach'ŏnwang Monastery, it was also constructed in the twin pagoda style. The style of these twin pagodas, however, does not appear to have been the same. Mangdŏk Monastery's pagodas were thirteen-story pagodas made in a Tang-style. They most likely bore some resemblance to the thirteen-story stone pagoda at the site of Chŏnghye Monastery 淨惠寺址 in Kyŏngju (Hwang 2012a; 2012b). Something was structurally unsound about the twin pagodas at this site. Entries in both the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* and *History of the Three Kingdoms* report that the two pagodas quaked and quavered, sometimes boding ill for Tang because the monastery symbolically represented Silla's veneration of the Tang imperial family. The pagodas trembled violently in 755, the year the An Lushan rebellion (755–763) shook the Tang court to the core (*Samguk sagi* 8:109; T 2039, 49.1013a22–23), but they also crashed into each other in 798, 804, and 816 (*Samguk sagi* 10:117, 118, 120; S. K. Kim 2018, 91–92).

The foregoing narratives indicate that Sach'ŏnwang Monastery served an important symbolic function for the royal family besides being a site for state-protection Buddhist ritual. The site of Sach'ŏnwang Monastery was most recently excavated between 2006 and 2011. Scholars have recently begun to examine the layout and structure of the monastery and its pagodas in comparison to other monasteries featuring twin pagodas, including examples

in Japan (Kwak 2004; S. T. Kim 2007; S. K. Kim 2018). In addition, numerous relics and remains were discovered in the recent excavation, and scholars have advanced new theories on the process of its construction and the significance of the artifacts unearthed (Ch'oe 2011; T. Kim 2016). An unusual stone installation (*tansök yugu* 壇席遺構, lit. “remnant structure of altar seat”) was discovered north of the site of the golden hall. Some Korean scholars have advanced arguments that the installation was used for esoteric ritual procedures like those described above that were conducted by Myōngnang (Chang 1996; Chang 2002; Y. Kim 2013). Nevertheless, more compelling than the stone installation is the evidence from the terracotta plaques unearthed from the site of the two pagodas that portray images of various kinds of protector beings or “spirit kings” (*sinwang* 神王): the four heavenly kings, the eight classes of deities (*p'albusin* 八部神), divine generals (*sinjang* 神將), and so forth. If we may reasonably accept the assumed connection between Sach'ōnwang Monastery and the *Consecration Sūtra* (*Guanding jing* 灌頂經), the figures protecting the pagodas should be called “wholesome deities that protect pagodas” (*buta shansben* 護塔善神), following the designation given in the apocryphal sūtra (T 1331, 21.513b16; Kwak 2004, 52–58; Lim 2008, 21–31).

The short and fragmentary narratives in the *Samguk yusa* on Myōngnang have led scholars, predictably, to focus on the *Consecration Sūtra* when attempting to assess the significance of Sach'ōnwang Monastery. From an archeological or art historical perspective, however, the importance of this monastery lies in its structure comprised of one golden hall and two pagodas. The conventional interpretation has been that Sach'ōnwang Monastery was the first of such twin-pagoda monasteries in Silla, and the twin-pagoda model became prevalent in late seventh and eighth century Silla, from whence it spread to Japan, first being used at Yakushiji 藥師寺 (McCallum 2009, 201–236). Although no extant monastery or temple site excavated in China displays the two-pagoda format, documentary evidence suggests that monastic complexes with two pagodas existed at least as early as the Eastern Jin dynasty in 372; they were also found in the Northern Wei and Sui dynasties (Murata 1940, 52; He 2014, 165; S. K. Kim 2018, 86). Some scholars argue that the Silla version of twin-pagodas derives from a Northern Chinese lineage stretching back to the pagodas built by Sui emperor Yang 隋煬帝 (r. 604–618) for his parents, the “Two Sages” (*ersheng* 二聖) Emperor Wen 隋文帝 (r. 581–604) and Empress Wenxian 文獻 (Dugu Qieluo 獨孤伽羅, 544–602), to the two pagodas at Huifu Monastery

暉福寺 built in 488 for the original “Two Sages,” Northern Wei emperor Xiaowen 北魏孝文 (r. 471–499) and Dowager Empress Feng 馮 (442–490) (He 2014, 165–168; Ŭ. Yang 2020).

Because no *sūtra* or commentary advances a clear doctrinal reason or purpose for such a monastery layout, scholars have advanced numerous theories on the symbolism of the two-pagoda model. Previously, scholars advanced the idea that the two pagodas symbolized cause and effect (Murata 1988, 33–34; He 2014, 164), and others state-protection deriving from the *Lotus Sūtra* (H. Yi 2000, 2003). In this scenario, the two pagoda format traces back to the “Apparition of the Jeweled Stūpa” chapter (Jian baota pin 見寶塔品) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, in which Śākyamuni is visited by the Buddha Prabhūtaratna (Many Treasures), who arrives from his world system riding in his Pagoda of Many Treasures (*dabaota* 多寶塔). Matsuura Masaaki recently analyzed the paintings representing “Forsaking One’s Body to Feed a Tiger” (Jpn. *shashin shikō zu* 捨身飼虎圖), “Offering of Śarīra” (Jpn. *shari kuyō zu* 舍利供養圖), and “The Pure Land of Vulture Peak” (Jpn. *Ryōjusen jōdo zu* 靈鷲山淨土道), which are also found on different parts the Tamamushi Shrine 玉虫厨子 (mid-seventh century). He concludes that they are all based upon or derive from the *Sūtra of Golden Light*, which, as we have seen above, was an important *sūtra* dealing with the protection of the state from various kinds of calamities (Matsuura 2004, 22–23). “The Pure Land of Vulture Peak” painting depicts a central seated Buddha figure flanked by two other Buddha figures all lodged in pagoda-like structures. Building on Matsuura’s work, by analyzing several passages from the “Forsaking the Body” chapter (Sheshen pin 捨身品) of the *Sūtra of Golden Light*, Han Chōngho advances the argument that the *Sūtra of Golden Light* articulates a conception of the “three bodies of the Buddha” (*samsinbul*, Ch. *sanshenfo* 三身佛) (Han 2010c, 191–201). In support of this view, Han cites a passage from the early Tang Buddhist monk-exegete Jizang’s 吉藏 (549–623) *Commentary on the Sūtra of Golden Light* (*Jingguangming jing shu* 金光明經疏), who outlined the doctrinal teachings of the *sūtra* as follows:

Discussing the extent of its core meaning, it expresses three threefold dharmas (*sanzhong sanfa* 三種三法). First, it expresses the fruits of Buddhahood in three bodies (*sanshen fogue* 三身佛果); second, it manifests the three virtues of nirvana (*niepan sande* 涅槃三德); and third, it indicates the three kinds of Buddha nature (*sanzhong foxing* 三種佛性). In expressing the three bodies [of the Buddha], the

reality of the essence of gold (*jin* 金) is compared to the Buddha of the dharma body (*fasbenfo* 法身佛), the reflective capability of the function of light (*guang* 光) is likened to the Buddha of the response body (*yingshenfo* 應身佛), and the universal benefit of the ability of clarity (*ming* 明) is similar to the transformation body (*huashen* 化身). (T 1787, 39.160b11–15)

In this reading, each of the Sinographs in the sūtra's title represent one of the three bodies of the Buddha. When translated into an architectural format in a religious complex, the golden hall (*kūmdang* 金堂) equates to the dharma body (*pōpsin* 法身), and the two pagodas would represent the response (*ūngsin* 應身) and transformation bodies (*hwasin* 化身) respectively. Although Han's thesis is novel and somewhat compelling because it attempts to see the one golden hall and twin-pagoda format as an archeological representation of Buddhist doctrine, it is ultimately unprovable. The fundamental problem for researchers seems to be whether the two pagodas should be understood as separate from the golden hall or whether they symbolically function in conjunction with it. That the remains of the terracotta plaques discovered at the Sach'ōnwang Monastery site depict the four heavenly kings and spirit generals may also suggest some connection to the protection promised in the *Sūtra of Golden Light*, which will be discussed below. Dated by scholars to the mid-eighth century, the twin stone pagodas at the site of Wōnwōn Monastery 遠願寺, which is located on the road from Ulsan to Kyōngju, are somewhat analogous, depicting images of the twelve earthly deities (*sibi chisin* 十二支神) on the face stones (面石), three to each side, on the supporting level above the foundation and the four heavenly kings on the face stones on the first story (Han'guk Pulgyo Yōn'guwōn 1974, 48–51). These heavenly and earthly gods suggest invoking protection from terrestrial enemies such as Japanese pirates or other calamities.

A short narrative on the Silla monk Myōngnang preserved in the *Samguk yusa* links him with the *Sūtra of Golden Light*. In the story, which Iryōn reports as deriving from the *Original Record of Kūmgwang Monastery* (*Kūmgwangsa pon'gi* 金光寺本記), Myōngnang received a thousand taels of gold from the “dragon of the sea.” When he returned from Tang, he donated his ancestral residence, converting it into a monastery. He adorned the stūpa [or stūpas?] and image with the gold he had received. Because the radiance and brilliance of the stūpa [or stūpas?] and the image were distinctive and peculiar, the monastery was called Kūmgwang 金光 [Golden Light] (T 2039, 49. 1011b7–12). The location of

Myōngnang's Kūmgwang Monastery has not yet been found, but archeological work provides some limited evidence that the first religious complex to have been laid out in a twin-pagoda format may have been Yōngmyo Monastery 靈妙寺, which was initially constructed in 635.<sup>12</sup> Due to its location just north of the Five Royal Tombs (Onūng 五陵), a group of five early Silla tombs, Yōngmyo Monastery likely was intended to function as a votive temple for the royal ancestors of Silla.<sup>13</sup> Fires burned Yōngmyo Monastery three times between 635 and 668, and finally again in 703. King Munmu visited the monastery in the ninth month of 674, where he reviewed his military forces en route (*Samguk sagi* 7:91 [Munmu 14]). Although Yōngmyo appears to have played some role in state-protection, the frequent fires that afflicted the monastery suggest that it did not fulfill its magico-religious responsibilities well (S. Kim 2013).<sup>14</sup> In this context, King Munmu followed the instructions of Myōngnang to build a new twin pagoda monastery on Mount Nang, which Queen Sōndōk had identified as Trāyastriṃśā Heaven (Torich'ōn 仞利天) (T 2039, 49.968c8–13). Munmu's son King Sinmun 神文 (r. 681–692) was buried near Sach'ōnwang Monastery on the east of Mount Nang (*Samguk sagi* 8:98 [Sinmun 12]).

The very name Sach'ōnwang Monastery invokes the four heavenly kings of the *Sūtra of Golden Light*, and the relationship between kings, their states, and Buddhist protector-deities. Three translations of the text were made. Although a translation by the Northern Liang 北凉 monk Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 曇無讖, 385–433), in four rolls (T 663), dating to the early fifth century, was probably in circulation, the version of the scripture used in the seventh-century Silla was most likely the Sui 隋 (581–618) monk Baogui's 寶貴 (d.u.) translation in eight rolls executed in 597 (T 664) because the extant fragments of the eminent Silla monk Wōnhyo's 元曉 (617–686) commentary on the *Sūtra of Golden Light* utilized Baogui's translation as the base text (S. H. Kim 1994). The *History of the Three Kingdoms* reports that Yijing's 義淨 (635–713) translation of the sūtra in ten rolls (T 665) entered Silla in the third lunar month of 704 with a Silla emissary to the Tang court. Considering that Yijing's translation was completed in the tenth lunar month of 703, its quick dissemination to Korea also suggests the sūtra's importance to the Silla court (*Samguk sagi* 8:99 [Sōngdōk 3]; T 2154, 55.567a19–20). A key passage from Baogui's translation dealing with state-protection is as follows:

When kings of men hear this sūtra, if neighboring states and vengeful enemies

will give rise to the kind of thought to immediately prime their fourfold armies<sup>15</sup> to destroy that country, [they can be protected by the scripture]. O World-Honored One, by means of the majestic divine power of this scripture, at that time, enemies of that neighboring [state] that have differences again will maliciously construct obstacles, and inside their borders will arouse all manner of degrading vexations, calamities, and plagues. At that time, once the vengeful enemies have endured all these unwholesome affairs, if they prepare their fourfold armies to advance toward this state and draw close for a punitive expedition, we, at that time, with our retainers and hundreds of thousands of limitless and immeasurable ghosts and spirits will conceal their forms to render protection and assistance, cause those vengeful enemies to be driven back and scattered naturally, and arouse all kinds of fear and dread and all manner of obstacles, the hordes of soldiers of that country, furthermore, will not be able to effect entry. Moreover, they will be able to be broken and destroyed. (T 664, 16.382c12-21; cf. T 663, 16.341b13-c3; T 665, 16.427c6-27)

This passage speaks directly to the types of concerns the embattled Silla state had in 630s and 640s, when a resurgent Paekche launched multiple military initiatives to regain lost territory and reconquered a number of Silla fortresses, and Koguryō demanded the return of its former territory in the Han River basin that Silla had annexed between 551 and 554. In addition, the passage would have been relevant in the 670s and 680s when Silla's relations with Tang broke down after the allied victory over Paekche and Koguryō and headed toward conflict between the erstwhile collaborators.

King Munmu's obsession with the protection of his newly conquered territory continued to his death. According to legend, prior to his passing, he swore an oath that he would be reborn as a dragon protecting Silla's coast from invasion and piracy and commanded that he be cremated, according to Buddhist custom, and his ashes scattered in the East Sea (Sea of Japan). A turtle-shaped rock was placed in a rocky crag off the coast of the present-day small fishing village of Kamp'o 甘浦 to commemorate his vow. This is now known as the Tomb-Rock of the Great King (Taewangam 大王巖). His son, King Sinmun, constructed Kamūn Monastery less than a mile inland on a spot that is connected to the coast through an underground channel so that the dragon-spirit of his father could rest at the monastery. All that remains of this monastery are the twin stone pagodas constructed in front of the golden hall,

which are the largest extant stone pagodas dating from the middle and late periods of Silla (654–935) (Han 2010a; Han 2010b). Because Kamŭn Monastery was specially administered by the state, scholars think that Buddhist rituals for the longevity of the royal family of Silla and the protection of the state were also performed regularly at this monastery (*Samguk sagi* 38:376–377; T 2039, 49.963a–b; Han'guk Pulgyo Yŏn'guwŏn 1974, 41–48). The twin pagoda format seems to have continued in monasteries built by the Silla royalty and nobility in and around its capital during the eighth and into, perhaps, the ninth century, including such sites as Pulguk Monastery and Wŏnwŏn Monastery.

Although exactly how the twin-pagoda monastery format symbolized Buddhist doctrine or royal authority continues to both baffle scholars and stimulate scholarly imagination, the introduction of the *Sūtra on the Great Dhāraṇī of Immaculately Pure Light* (*Wugou jingguang datuoluoni jing* 無垢淨光大陀羅尼經, T 1024) immediately after its translation into Chinese in 704 led to a more specialized ritual function for some pagodas at monastery sites with two pagodas. This dhāraṇī sūtra describes procedures to empower pagodas that can be used to protect the state from mundane marauders, as well as the ghosts and goblins that cause various kinds of epidemics and illnesses. Although several ritual procedures are outlined in the text, the most efficacious encourages rulers of states to make ninety-nine or seventy-seven small mud stūpas (pagodas), to inscribe several of the dhāraṇī on paper, and insert the inscribed spells into the small stūpas. The small stūpas, thus empowered, are placed inside a larger pagoda and function to protect the state for the calamities described briefly above (Joo 2004; McBride 2011, 41–43).

Numerous pagodas in the middle and late Silla periods were empowered by this dhāraṇī-sūtra. For instance, although only one three-story stone stūpa remains at the site of Hwangbok Monastery 皇福寺址, archeological excavations revealed that the two square wooden pagodas were in the original main courtyard of the monastery in front of the golden hall. Because the monk Ŭisang 義湘 (625–702), the traditional founder of the Hwaŏm tradition 華嚴宗 in Silla, is remembered as having been ordained a monk at this monastery in about 652 (T 2039, 49. 1006c3–4), some have recently advanced the assertion that Hwangbok Monastery is the oldest twin-pagoda monastery in Silla (S. Pak 2019; Yun 2019). The name of the monastery, “August Merit,” suggests a close relationship with the royal Kim family of Silla; it may have been the votive temple for King Sinmun, his wife Queen Sinmok 神穆 (ca. 655–700),

and their son King Hyoso 孝昭 (r. 692–702). Silla king Kyōngmun 景文 (r. 861–875) was also buried close by. In the early eighth century, a stone pagoda was erected west of the main courtyard. The inscription on the śarīra container inside the pagoda provides the date of 706. The *Sūtra on the Great Dhāraṇī of Immaculately Pure Light* features prominently on the inscription, and ninety-nine small pagodas were inscribed on a side of the gilt-bronze śarīra container. The so-called Śākyamuni Pagoda at Pulguk Monastery, erected about 751 (and refurbished in 1024 and 1038), also was found to contain a copy of the *Sūtra on the Great Dhāraṇī of Immaculately Pure Light*. In addition, when the nine-story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong Monastery was restored in 872, the inscription on the śarīra container reports that copies of four the dhāraṇī from the dhāraṇī-sūtra were installed in ninety-nine small stone pagodas, and that these were placed inside the pagoda above the iron plate (*Yōkchu Han'guk kodae kūmsōngmun* 3:369). In all, at least eleven pagodas dating to the middle and late Silla periods are related to the *Sūtra on the Great Dhāraṇī of Immaculately Pure Light*. Although in most cases, the sūtra is mentioned by name in an inscription as having been enshrined in the pagoda, in some cases ninety-nine small pagodas were enshrined somewhere inside or fragments of dhāraṇī from the sūtra have been discovered (Joo 2004, 168–173; McBride 2011, 48–56). Some of these were west pagodas, such as the case of Pulguk Monastery, or in east pagodas, such as the case of the three-story stone pagodas at Sōdongni pagoda 西洞里三層石塔 in Ponghwa 奉化, in North Kyōngsang Province.

## Reflections

The society and culture of Silla were dominated by the prerogatives of the royalty and nobility. The royalty, nobility, and elites also collaborated in spreading stories about Silla's prehistory as a bona fide Buddha-land, which symbolically removed Silla from its marginal position in Northeast Asia to a central role in propagating the Buddhadharma. As in China and Japan, Silla Korea constructed lavish monasteries and held special Buddhist assemblies and rituals for the protection of the state. Silla's state palladium, Hwangnyong Monastery, combines Sinitic symbolism with Buddhist-inspired propaganda, which both assert and promote Silla's regional dominion over the states on the Korean Peninsula. The significance of the yellow dragon may have been just

as much astrological, asserting Silla's centrality among the Korean kingdoms, as referring to an indigenous religious cult. Hwangnyong Monastery was the locus for state-protection rituals centered on the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* beginning in the sixth century, but monasteries built with a single golden hall and two pagodas seem to have some connection with imagery presented in the *Sūtra of Golden Light*, regardless of the possible symbolism of the three bodies of the Buddha. Sach'ōnwang Monastery was perhaps the most important twin pagoda monastery in seventh-century Silla, with Yōngmyo Monastery and Kamūn Monastery also performing a magico-religious function as loci for ritual centered on divine protection by the four heavenly kings, the eight classes of divine beings, spirit generals, and wholesome deities from the unseen world.

When established in Silla, these patterns of Buddhist representation, cosmology, and architecture enabled the Korean state to participate confidently in the cosmopolitan Sinitic world. The religion provided new and powerful forms of legitimacy and prestige for its royalty and nobility and predisposed the people, both elites and non-elites, to a wealth of cultic practices and efficacious rituals associated with the images and icons enshrined with great pomp and circumstance in monasteries and shrines.

The twin-pagoda layout for Buddhist monasteries become popular and widespread in Silla during the seventh and eighth centuries. Although numerous theories have been advanced about the symbolic or doctrinal meaning and significance of such monasteries, scholars have yet to achieve consensus on its purported meaning. Nevertheless, there is good reason to believe that the *Sūtra of Golden Light*, which promised the protection of the four heavenly kings and other supernatural beings, is somehow related to the function of Sach'ōnwang Monastery—in conjunction with the *Consecration Sūtra*. The connection of monasteries to state-protection Buddhism was enhanced with the introduction of the *Sūtra on the Great Dhāraṇī of Immaculate Light* in the early eighth century. Many new pagodas were empowered by means of this dhāraṇī-sūtra and its procedures, and even the numinous power of some established pagodas, such as the nine-story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong Monastery, was reestablished through its ritual use.

## Notes

- 1 An essay by Durt (1987) discusses the symbolic role of architecture in early Buddhism and stories in Korean narrative literature.
- 2 *Samguk sagi* 4:53 (Chinhŭng 33); *Samguk sagi* 44:423 (Köch'ilbu). The *Samguk sagi* calls these rituals *p'algwān yŏnhoe* 八關筵會, *p'algwān chi pŏp* 八關之法, *paekchwa kanghoe* 百座講會 and respectively. For a slightly different approach to some of the same materials, see Kim Poksun (2012, 69–70, 78–80).
- 3 T 2039, 49.990c18–19; An (1956). For the *p'algwānhoe* as practiced during the Koryŏ period see J. Kim (1994, 170–192).
- 4 For research on the *Renwang jing* in China, see Orzech (1989; 1995; 1998, 207–288). The first recorded performance of this convocation in China was in 585 in the state of Chen 陳 (557–589). In Japan, the first convocation using this sūtra was held in 660. See de Visser (1935, 1:116).
- 5 *Samguk sagi* 4:56 (Chinp'yŏng 35); 5:47 (Sŏndŏk 5). The mid-seventh-century *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Wŏn'gwang says that he died in 630 (Iryŏn amends it 640 in an interlinear note), but since the *Samguk sagi* says he was alive in 636, modern scholars have attempted to amend his dates to roughly 555 to 638. Zanning's biography of Wŏnhyo contains a reference to another convocation that, if it indeed really occurred, must have taken place during the reign of either King Munmu (r. 661–681) or King Sinmun (r. 681–691). See T 2061, 50.730a6–b29; Rhi (1982, 185); and Buswell (1995, 553–562). Although this and other assemblies were quite common during the succeeding Koryŏ (918–1392) as well, Buswell suggests that the allusion to the *Renwang jing* convocation in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* is probably only a legend since the date is unknown and no other historical evidence is extant (1989, 44–47, esp. 46n12).
- 6 *Samguk sagi* 13:147 (Sijo Tongmyŏng 3), “Year three [35 BCE], spring, third month. A yellow dragon was seen on Kollyŏng 鶻嶺 [Falcon Ridge]. Autumn, seventh month. An auspicious cloud was seen to the south of Kollyŏng. Its color was bright red.” Translation following Shultz et al. (2011, 40).
- 7 *Huainanzi* 淮南子, 20:2 (“Taizu xun” 泰族訓), “故聖人者懷天心，聲能動化天下者也。故精誠感於內，形氣動於天，則景星見，黃龍下，祥鳳至。”
- 8 “Hwangnyongsa kuch'ŭng mokt'ap sariham ki” 皇龍寺九層木塔舍利函記 (Record on the śarīra container of the nine story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyong Monastery), in *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodaek ūmsŏngmun*, 2:366–371, esp. 367.
- 9 T 2039, 49.991a2–3. By contrast, the “Hwangnyongsa kuch'ŭng mokt'ap sariham ki,” which was discovered in 1964 in the ground beneath the “heart stone” (*simchŏ* 心礎), the foundation of the nine-story pagoda, says in 645 that “They erected the main pillar and the next year they completed the merit [of casting] the iron plate, which already reached [seven] “paces” in height. After that, it was a height of thirty “paces” and three feet when [Silla] effected the combination of the Three Han [states] into one” (立刹柱明年乃畢功

鐵盤已上 高[七] [步已下高卅步三尺果合三韓以爲). See *Yökchu Han'guk kodae kümsöngmun*, 2:366–371, esp. 368. For these two descriptions to be equivalent, a “pace” (步) would need to be about six “Chinese feet” (步尺).

- 10 Evidence of the failure of the Tang navy to subdue Silla in the 670s was expunged from Tang official records. However, there is some corroborative evidence that the Tang fleet was sunk. Yi Sanghun uncovered the case of the Tang official Guo Zhigai 郭志該 (ca. 630–671). His funerary epitaph says: “His taboo name was [three Sinographs missing] Zhigai, a man of Taiyuan 太原. The generals of the army took him and he previously received training in military affairs; his old leisure activity was military strategy. Subsequently, [the emperor] named him Administrative Assistant and Concurrent Area Commander-in-chief of Zhizi Encampment 知子營 in Jilin Circuit 鷄林道 [Kyerim = Silla]. Furthermore, by imperial rescript he became a commissioner supervising and escorting the transportation of goods. Thereafter, he set sail in a boat across the vast sea, rowing his boat to Liaochuan. The wind arose and billows were churning. The ship was useless and leaking. Its form sank into the watery depths, and he was mystically absorbed in cultivating patterns. The time his traces were transformed (he passed away) was precisely the second year of the Xianheng reign period of the Tang (671).” See “(Shangque) xianling Guo jun (Zhigai) muzhiming bingxu” (上關縣令郭君(志該)墓誌銘并序 (Epitaph and preface of Mr. Guo [Zhigai], District Magistrate of [Missing]), in *Quan Tang wen buyi* 5:213; see also S. Yi (2011, 33).
- 11 Le Penggui is otherwise unknown in Chinese sources and not mentioned in any extant sources dealing with the Tang period. His name is mentioned once more in the *Samguk yusa* at the end of a brief narrative about Ch'öllyong Monastery 天龍寺 in which he says, “If you destroy this monastery, the state will fall in a few days” (T 2039, 49.1000b27–28).
- 12 There is a scholarly debate regarding the location of Hüngnyun Monastery and Yöngmyo Monastery. A compelling case can be made that what is called Hüngnyun Monastery in present-day Kyöngju was built on the site of Yöngmyo Monastery. The site under debate was excavated in the 1970s and 1980s, and bears the traces of having had twin pagodas. Yöngmyo Monastery was built in the mid-seventh century (although the “Basic Annals of Silla” in the *Samguk sagi* reports it was “completed” in 635 [Söndök 4]), and so it might have been the first twin pagoda monastery, which suggests close connection to royal prerogatives. See Pak (2002); K. Yi (2002); and Sin (2002).
- 13 Although Kim Sönju holds the position that the Five Royal Tombs included the tumuli of Pak Hyökköse and his queen Aryöng (2013, 305–306), I have argued elsewhere that the myth of Pak Hyökköse was unknown in Silla until the Koryö period (McBride 2020, 541–547). It is more likely that early rulers of the royal Kim family were imagined as inhabiting these tombs in the seventh century.
- 14 Presently, the site has been redesignated as Hüngnyun Monastery 興輪寺, the first royally commissioned Buddhist complex in Silla, because the real site of this monastery is most likely on the grounds of the Gyeongju Technical High School.

- 15 The fourfold army (*sibing* 四兵) refers to the four kinds of military forces that could be mobilized by a king in India: (1) elephant forces (*xiangbing* 象兵), (2) cavalry (*mabing* 馬兵), (3) chariot forces (*chebing* 車兵), and (4) foot soldiers (*pubing* 步兵). See T 24, 1.318b26–27.

## Abbreviations

T Takakasu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, et al., eds. 1924–1932[–1935]. *Taishō shinshū dai zōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon]. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai.

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- Fayuan zhubin* 法苑珠林 [A forest of pearls in the garden of the Dharma]. 100 rolls. Comp. Daoshi 道世 (ca. 596–683) completed in 668, 100 rolls, T 2122, 53.269a–1030a.
- Foshuo Guanding jing* 佛說灌頂經 [Consecration Sūtra]. 12 rolls. Translation attributed to Po Śrimitra (Bo Shilimiduoluo 帛尸梨蜜多羅) between 317–322. T 1331, 21.495a–536b.
- Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 [Chronicle of the Buddhas and patriarchs], 54 rolls. By Zhipan 志磐 (fl. 1258–1269). T 2035, 49.129b–475c.
- Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [Lives of eminent monks]. 13 rolls. Comp. Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554) completed ca. 519–554. T 2059, 50.322c–418a.
- Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經 [Sūtra on the visualization of Maitreya's rebirth above in Tuṣita Heaven], One roll. Trans. Juqu Jingsheng 洄渠京聲 (d. 464) in 455. T 452, 14.418b–420c.
- Haedong kosūng chōn* 海東高僧傳 [Lives of eminent Korean monks]. Five rolls (two rolls extant). Comp. Kakhun 覺訓 in 1215. T 2065, 50.1015a–1023c.
- Hebu jingguangming jing* 合部金光明經 [*Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, Sūtra of golden light]. Eight rolls. Translated by Baogui 寶貴 in 597 and combined with the earlier translation by Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 曇無讖, 385–433) completed between 414–421. T 664, 16.359b–402a.
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- Jingguangming jing* 金光明經 [*Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, Sūtra of golden light]. Four rolls. Trans. Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 曇無讖, 385–433) completed between 414–421. T 663, 16.335a–359b.
- Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 [Record of Śākyamuni's teachings compiled during the Kaiyuan period]. 20 rolls. By Zhisheng 智昇 (fl. 700–740) in 730. T 2154, 55.477a–723a.

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