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Inscriptive Practice and Sinographic Literary Culture in Early Historic Korea and Japan

By

Marjorie Grace Burge

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Japanese Language

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:
Professor Mack Horton, Chair
Professor Jiwon Shin
Professor Junko Habu
Professor Alan Tansman

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Abstract

Inscriptive Practice and Sinographic Literary Culture

in Early Historic Korea and Japan

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Marjorie Grace Burge

Doctor of Philosophy in Japanese

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Professor Mack Horton, Chair

This dissertation probes the development of written culture on the Korean peninsula and in the Japanese archipelago in the early historic period, roughly the sixth through eighth centuries CE, through the study of archaeologically excavated wooden documents known as *mokkan* 木簡. In particular, this study aims to understand the various functions of writing in early historic Paekche (trad. 18BCE-660CE), Silla (trad. 57BCE-935CE), and Japan, and explore how literary writing first emerged in these contexts. In addition to being used for bureaucratic documentation, record-keeping, and ritual purposes, because of the unique material characteristics of wood, *mokkan* played an important role as surfaces for literacy acquisition, composition practice, and the drafting of documents. As a result, they are both a window into emergent written culture overall and a particularly rich archive for the study of emergent literary approaches to writing. *Mokkan* are contextualized alongside other extant materials, such as stone inscriptions and documentary sources from later periods.

The goals of this dissertation are two-fold: one is fundamentally comparative, seeking to illuminate how *mokkan* unearthed from sites on the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago can help to flesh out our understanding of the development of written cultures throughout the region. The other goal is to highlight the connections between these written cultures and make the case that these did not develop in isolation from each other. Because of the frequent movement of people among Paekche, Silla, and Japan both prior to and during the early historic period, and particularly because of the exodus of literate Paekche elites into Japan that occurred in the aftermath of the Battle of the Paek River, this dissertation argues that an understanding of the connections among the written cultures of these three kingdoms is essential to understanding the written culture of any one of them.

This dissertation is organized into four chapters. Chapter 1 treats the history of writing and the development of written culture in the kingdom of Paekche on the Korean peninsula through *mokkan*. The chapter makes particular note of nascent literary tendencies seen among the Paekche *mokkan* corpus and how these might inform our understanding of written culture in Japan, where many Paekche refugees fled after the Japanese navy's defeat at the Battle of the Paek River in 663. Chapter 2 contrasts the development of written culture in pre-unification Silla (trad. 57BCE-668CE) with that of Paekche, highlighting the unique speed with which written culture expands in mid-sixth century Silla during the reign of King Chinhŭng through an examination of both monumental inscriptions on stone steles and more mundane inscriptions found on *mokkan* from sites in both the provinces and the royal capital. In addition, the chapter probes in detail evidence for early vernacularization in Silla as observed through pieces of correspondence inscribed on *mokkan*, but notes that examples of nascent literary writing are few. Chapter 3 evaluates the evidence for the emergence of written culture at Japan's mid-seventh century courts in Naniwa (645-652) and Ōmi (667-672), in the context of evidence from the peninsula. In particular, the chapter takes up the narrative of the preface to *Kaifūso* (751) as a frame for interpreting the evidence for literate communities and literary writing at these two palace sites, and centers the role of Paekche refugees in the post-Paek River defeat modernization efforts carried out by the sovereign Tenchi (r. 661-672). Chapter 4 examines the emergence of a mature written culture in Japan through extant *mokkan* from the late seventh century capitals at Asuka and Fujiwara, connecting them to the intensified modernization programs under Tenmu (r.672-686) and Jitō (r. 686-797). This chapter presents evidence for the composition of literary writing in both Literary Sinitic and the vernacular, and argues that these forms were probably more or less equally important. Finally, the Conclusion connects the sixth and seventh century evidence presented in Chapters 1-4 to the elements of the literary cultures of the eighth century in both Korea and Japan.

Dedication

For Jun-kyou, who has been with me through this whole ride.

"Oh moon, now, do you go to the west?"

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Maps included in this dissertation were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com.

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations may be used in the text to facilitate easy reference to frequently cited works. Further information can be found in the Bibliography.

AFGH	Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 1973-2008. *Asuka Fujiwara-kyū hakkutsu chōsa shutsudo mokkan gaihō* 飛鳥藤原宮発掘調査出土木簡概報. 22 vols. Nara-shi, Nara: Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo.
AFK I	Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 2007. *Asuka Fujiwara-kyō Mokkan I: Asuka-ike, Yamada-dera mokkan* [Asuka Fujiwara-kyō Mokkan I: Asuka Pond, Yamada-dera Mokkan –]. Nara-shi, Nara: Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo.
AKS II	Nara-kenritsu Kashihara kōkogaku kenkyūjo (Kashikoken), ed. 1980. *Asuka kyōseki* II . [Asuka Capital Site II]. Nara-shi, Nara: Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai.
CJ	Munhwajaech'ŏng [Cultural Heritage Administration] and Kungnip Kaya Munhwajae Yŏn'guso [Kaya National Institute for Cultural Properties], ed. 2011. *Hanguk mokkan chajŏn* [Character dictionary of Korean mokkan]. Ch'angwŏn, Kyŏngsangnam-do: Kungnip Kaya Munhwajae yŏn'guso.
FKM I	Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed.. 1978. *Fujiwara-kyū mokkan I*. Nara-shi, Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai kenkyūjo.
FKM II	*N*ara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, ed.. 1980. *Fujiwara-kyū mokkan II*. Nara-shi, Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai kenkyūjo.
FKM III	Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 2012. *Fujiwara-kyū mokkan III.* Nara-shi, Nara: Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo.
HJKGH	Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo, ed. 1963-2015 *Heijō-kyū hakkutsu chōsa shutsudo mokkan gaihō*.44 vols. Nara-shi, Nara: Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo.
Kashikoken	Nara-kenritsu Kashihara Kōkogaku Kenkyūjo (Archaeological Institute of Kashihara)
KCM	Azuchi kōkogaku hakubutsukan. 2008. *Kodai chihō mokkan no seiki – moji shiryō kara mita kodai no Ōmi* [The age of ancient provincial *mokkan* – ancient Ōmi as seen through inscribed materials]. Azuchi, Shiga: Azuchi kōkogaku hakubutsukan.

KJK	*Kojiki* Reference text: Yamaguchi Yoshinori and Kōnoshi Takamitsu, eds., 1997. *Kojiki* . Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 新編日本古典文学全集, vol. 1. Tokyo: Shogakukan.
MR	Nara Bunkazai Kenkyujo Asuka Shiryōkan, ed. 2010. *Mokkan reimei – Asuka ni tsudō inishie no moji tachi* [The Dawn of Mokkan – Ancient Letters Gathered in Asuka]. Asuka, Nara: Nara bunkazai kenkyujo Asuka Shiryōkan.
MYS	*Manyōshū,* ca. 759, 20 vols. Reference text: Kojima Noriyuki, Kinoshita Masatoshi, and Tōno Haruyuki, eds. 1995. *Man'yōshū.* 4 vols. Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū, vols. 6-9. Tokyo: Shōgakukan.
Nabunken	Nara Bunkazai Kenkyūjo (Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)
NKBT	*Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系
NS	*Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, 720 Reference text: Sakamoto Tarō et al. 1967. *Nihon shoki*. 2 vols. Nihon koten bungaku taikei, vols. 67-68. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
NSAM	Kungnip Puyŏ Pangmulgwan [Puyŏ National Museum] and Kungnip Kaya Munhwajae Yŏn'guso [Kaya National Institute for Cultural Properties]. 2009. *Namu sok amho mokkan* 나무 속 암호 목간 [History Passwords in Woods, Wooden Tablets]. Sŏul: Yemaek.
RHKM	Kungnip Ch'angwŏn Munhwajae yŏn'guso. 2006. *Kaejŏngp'an Hanguk ŭi kodae mokkan.* Ch'angwŏn, Kyŏngsangnam-do: Kungnip Ch'angwŏn Munhwaje yŏn'guso.
SNKBZ	*Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集
SS	*Samguk sagi* 三國史記, 1145 Reference text: Pak Changnyŏl 박장렬 et.al ed. 2012. *Wŏnmun kwa hamkke ilgnŭn Samguk sagi* 원문과 함께 읽는 삼국사기. 3 vols. Sŏul: Hanguk inmun kojŏn yŏn'guso.

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Introduction: Understanding Sinographic Writing in Pen/Insular East Asia

The earliest writing from both Japan and Korea is Sinographic writing.[1] That is, writing did not develop indigenously in either location, but was rather "borrowed" from Chinese civilization, which had developed and used the technology since at least the Shang dynasty (c.1200BCE-1046BCE).[2] Even after its initial introduction to the peninsula and the archipelago, writing was slow to be adapted as an administrative technology, and remained for some time restricted to the realms of ritual and diplomacy. After significant political shifts that occurred in the aftermath of military conflicts, kingdoms in both Korea and Japan began to increase their use of writing in order to facilitate more effective responses to new sociopolitical circumstances. However, because the Sinographic script, by virtue of both its foreign origin and its logographic nature, was not well adapted to directly reflect the vernacular speech of people in Pen/Insular East Asia, [3] the transition to written culture was marked by a number of negotiations and re-negotiations of the relationships between the vernacular spoken language and the cosmopolitan written language. Moreover, the emergence of literary writing in the context of written culture was heavily influenced by cosmopolitan precedents, and shaped by the types of materials available as surfaces for writing.

This study will focus on extant Sinographic inscriptions from the early historic period—roughly defined as the sixth through eighth centuries—that offer insight into the emergence of written culture in Pen/Insular East Asia. In particular, this study will highlight inscriptions on wooden strips known as *mokkan* 木簡,[4] recovered archaeologically from a variety of sites in both the archipelago and the peninsula, in order to examine the phenomenon of early written culture from both pragmatic and material perspectives. That is, I will first seek to understand the reasons behind the emergence of written culture in the Korean kingdoms of

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[1] In this dissertation, I adopt the term "Sinograph" to refer to the individual graphemes that make up

[2] Some examples of what may be proto-writing are known from the Erlitou 二里頭 (c. 16th century BCE) and Erligang 二里崗(c. 16th-15th centuries BCE) cultures. While some graphs seen in Erligang inscriptions may have been precursors to later forms seen in the Shang oracle bone inscriptions, it is unclear if they were associated with particular consistent pronunciations. See Keightley 2006, 180-182.

[3] The term "Pen/Insular East Asia" is adopted herein following Gina Barnes (2007: 3), who coins the term "Pen/Insulae" to contrast the region ecompassing Japan and Korea with China, noting that the Pen/Insulae developed "later, together, and under the influence" of the Chinese core (3). While Barnes' framework pertains largely to the prehistoric and protohistoric periods, it continues to be a useful framework into early historic times, and provides an essential corrective to tendencies of seeing the Korean peninsula as a "passive conduit for the flow of civilization from China on into Japan," and Japan as "an isolated nation of autochtonous origins." I share Barnes' conviction that traditional historiography's portrayal of the Korean peninsula as little more than a "bridge" via which Chinese civilization entered Japan is problematic, and I therefore appreciate her devising of a geographical term that allows for the consideration of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago as a single region in which people, ideas, and objects flowed freely across "cultural boundaries" beginning in the Paleolithic period through the unification of the Korean peninsula in the mid-seventh century.

[4] It is a matter of fortunate coincidence that this term has the same pronunciation in both Sino-Korean and Sino-Japanese.

Paekche (trad. 18BCE-660CE) and Silla (trad. 57BCE-935CE) [5] in the sixth century and Japan in the seventh, through an inquiry into the ways in which inscriptions appear to have functioned at particular sites. In the context of this inquiry, I will also question, to the extent possible, how the technology of writing was being understood and appropriated by early scribes through attention to early instances of vernacularization (i.e., the incorporation of elements of the vernacular language into inscriptions). Second, I will highlight evidence for the emergence of literary writing in the context of the early written cultures of Korea and Japan. Here, I will argue that the unique material properties of wood as a writing surface meant that *mokkan* became an important medium for early literary experiments in the written mode, a phenomenon facilitated by the identification of *mokkan* with literary acquisition and calligraphic practice.

Below, in addition to introducing *mokkan* and the field of *mokkan* studies in Japan and Korea, I will outline several key concepts that will shape the proceeding discussion, as relate to general issues of the 'pragmatics of writing' and the nature of literary writing. I will attempt to contextualize the early historic written cultures of Pen/Insular East Asia in terms of theories of the emergence of writing in the context of early states, but because the written cultures of Pen/Insular East Asia were based on a "borrowed script" (and, one might say, a "borrowed literary language"), I will also turn to Sheldon Pollock's theorizations of cosmopolitan-vernacular dynamics in South Asian written cultures in order to help frame the complexities of the linguistic situation. In addition, I will attempt to contextualize the development of written culture in Korea and Japan in specifically East Asian terms—that is, through the Chinese concept of "balance between the civil and the martial" (*wenwu*), and through an understanding of the importance of script in the context of the Buddhist faith.

Writings on Wood: *Mokkan* and Written Culture

The term *mokkan* refers to strips of wood that were carved for use as writing surfaces. This study will primarily focus on those *mokkan* excavated from 'early historic' contexts in Korea and Japan, that is, from the sixth through eighth centuries. While the history of writing on both the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago extends further back into the first few centuries of the first millennium, the advent of "written culture"—that is, of the widespread use of writing among elites—is a phenomenon of this period. Wood was not the only available surface for writing, but because of its qualities as an "everyday" and relatively "value-less" medium, the inscriptions preserved on *mokkan* offer a more comprehensive picture of the diversity of 'textual production' in this period.[6]

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[5] While these two kingdoms were in close proximity in the southern part of the peninsula, they remained culturally distinct, retaining different foreign ties and regularly clashing with each other militarily until Paekche's final defeat by the combined forces of Silla and Tang China in 660. Linguistically, they both spoke southern Han languages that were probably closely related (see Yi Sŭngjae 2017, 421), perhaps enough to be mutually intelligible (a passage in the *Sui shu* suggests as much), but their histories of the reception of literacy are quite distinct.

[6] Here, I use the term "textual production" following Stephen Houston (1994: 28-29; 2004: 8), who defines it as "the painting, incision, and sculpting of written signs."

Writing on wood has a long history in China, where bamboo was the preferred writing surface prior to the invention of paper during the Han dynasty. While bamboo and wood strips continued to be used alongside paper for some centuries thereafter, they had largely ceased to be in circulation by about the fifth century, supplanted by paper, which was increasingly available (Tsien 2004, 96-99). In Korea and Japan, however, wood was an important medium for writing in the early stages of the development of a written culture. Because paper for some time remained a scarce commodity, it made good economic and practical sense to fell locally abundant trees and shape them into surfaces suitable for writing.

Like in China, however, the importance of *mokkan* as writing surfaces is thought to have diminished as paper became increasingly available in the Korean kingdoms and the Japanese archipelago.[7] While paper may not have necessarily been unobtainable, it was a more prestigious material, and its use therefore imbued its inscription with value. This is not to say that texts on *mokkan* were automatically devalued: *mokkan* were sturdier than paper, to be sure, and thus could be called upon for specialized tasks (Lurie 2011, 161-162; Frydman 2014, 175). However, it was unavoidable that a division of labor among media should manifest itself: while there are exceptions, generally it can be understood that *mokkan* operated in more mundane and preliminary contexts, providing the support for the production of inscriptions of greater significance on other surfaces.[8]

The term *mokkan* was originally coined in Japan, where large numbers of inscribed wooden tablets have been unearthed consistently since 1961.[9] To date, approximately 380,000 have been recovered archaeologically from sites throughout the archipelago, with particularly large concentrations found in the Yamato region (present-day Nara prefecture), where Japan's early historic capitals were located.[10] The vast numbers of these inscribed artifacts have proved a boon to the study of Japan's early history, providing insight into aspects of early transportation networks, taxation systems, bureaucratic structure, folk rituals, educational processes, and poetic practices. *Mokkan* studies has become a full-fledged sub-discipline in the study of Japanese historical documents (*shiryōgaku* 史料学), and a scholarly society

[7] Based on current evidence, *mokkan* use arguably diminishes on the peninsula post-seventh century; however, *mokkan* use peaks during the eighth century in Japan. Yun Sŏnt'ae (2007a) speculates that the reason *mokkan* continued to be used in large numbers in Japan alongside paper was not merely economic (i.e., that paper was harder to obtain/more expensive in Japan), but rooted in the fact that *mokkan* seem to have been introduced to Japan (probably by individuals from Paekche) in the early part of the seventh century, and that their use followed the example of the Korean kingdoms, where *mokkan* and paper were being used side by side, in different capacities, at that time (73). Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 71-74. See also Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2013, 24.

[8] For instance, Lurie (2011), writing about early historic Japan, notes the importance of *mokkan* in providing the literal material support (i.e., facilitating the flow of writing supplies) for the production of the copy of the *Yue Yi lun* 楽毅論 in the hand of Queen-Consort Kōmyō 光明皇后, dated 744, which is preserved in the Shōsōin 正倉院 (153; 162).

[9] Fortuitously, the word *mokkan* is a Sinitic compound with the same pronunciation in Korean as in Japanese.

[10] This figure includes *mokkan* from later periods. Early historic *mokkan* make up approximately 250,000 of these. See Watanabe 2014, 11.

devoted to the study of *mokkan* from the archipelago, formed in 1979, continues to meet and publish a journal on an annual basis. Japanese *mokkan* have also garnered the attention of scholars working outside of Japan (e.g., Farris 1998, Lurie 2011, Frydman 2014).

By contrast, scholars have just begun to tap the potential of Korean *mokkan* for the study of the Three Kingdoms (ca. third century-668C.E.) and Unified Silla (668-935) periods, and until very recently, little had been published on Korean *mokkan* in English.[11] This is at least partly due to the fact that *mokkan* from sites on the Korean peninsula remain considerably fewer than their Japanese counterparts, with only about 350 decipherable *mokkan* recovered from Silla (ca. third century-935C.E.) sites, and a little less than one hundred from Paekche sites.[12] *Mokkan* were first discovered on the Korean peninsula in 1975 at Anapchi Pond 雁鴨池 in Kyŏngju 慶州, the former Silla capital. This initial cache of about fifty *mokkan* opened up a new avenue for understanding written life in early historic Korea, but research on them remained relatively underdeveloped until the use of infrared photography began in the early 2000s (Hong Kisŭng 2013, 96-98).

Mokkan are important because they provide detailed information not only on bureaucratic operations and the more "everyday" uses of writing (and in the case of Korea, because so little other written material survives from this period), but also because they offer vital insight into how literacy was acquired and spread throughout the ranks of elites in Japan and the Korean kingdoms. Wood as a writing surface had several unique properties: it was cheap, durable, and relatively easy to obtain. Most of all, however, it was reusable. When an inscription was no longer useful or necessary, one might scrape off the surface of the wood and inscribe anew; further, when a *mokkan* had been worn down beyond the possibility of reuse, or when one simply no longer wished to reuse it, it could be easily discarded. In a way, it was this valuelessness that was the true value of *mokkan*: it did not matter if one used a *mokkan* to practice calligraphy, or to jot down experimental compositions, because the wooden surface could easily be erased, or the wood itself deposited. Paper, on the other hand, was usually much too scarce to be used for such purposes. Roger Chartier, writing of the wax tablets of medieval Europe, notes that the erasable quality of the wax was what made it a valuable material for "poetic invention and composition." It was on wax tablets, he continues, that "authors drafted their texts for later transcription onto parchment," making these a vital "support for the written word" (Chartier 2007, 3-5). I propose here that *mokkan* played a similar role in the written cultures of early historic Korea and Japan: *mokkan* were *the* means of literacy acquisition, providing a surface for calligraphic practice, and this naturally made them a site for composition practice as well. Further, I will argue, *mokkan* were also the surface for drafting important documents that would be later copied onto paper.

This was not the sole role of *mokkan* in written culture, however. A great number of *mokkan* are tags 荷札 (J. *nifuda*; K. *hach'al* or *kkoripy'o* 꼬리표) and labels

[11] Some articles have begun to be published in recent years; however, these are mainly English translations of articles published in Korean. See Lee SeungJae 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016.
[12] These figures calculated by the author.

付札 (J. *tsukefuda*; K. *puch'al*), which would have been attached to tax shipments coming into administrative centers, and to containers of goods kept in storehouses, respectively. Some other mokkan, in particular the four-sided "rod" *mokkan* common in sixth and seventh century Korea, and some standard-sized pieces used in eighth century Japan, served as surfaces for inscribing official documents and records. The fact that the former disappear by the eighth century suggests that most official record keeping was probably transferred to paper. In the case of the latter, *mokkan* were used widely in the eighth century Japanese bureaucracy probably both because paper continued to be scare and expensive, and because a number of document types required durability (e.g., bureaucratic performance review cards that would be used over the course of several years of a single man's career).

Inscription, Erasure, Deposition

Across these different functions of *mokkan*, the ability to erase and reuse was crucial. The presence in excavated contexts of a large amount of inscribed wood shavings (J. *kezuri kuzu* 削屑; K. *pusŭrŏgi*), which had been scraped off/erased from a surface of a *mokkan*, show that inscriptions on *mokkan* were seen as "necessarily ephemeral" (to quote Chartier again), but as such were also free to be more fragmentary, more preliminary, and more idiosyncratic. While many of these wood shavings appear to be the discarded remnants of an inscription related to a shipment of a certain amount of goods, suggesting they once adorned the surfaces of tag *mokkan*, there are also a plethora of examples of calligraphic practice, and in some of these scribes seem to have been either practicing their ability to write rather poetic vocabulary or attempting to weave together what may have been lines of verse. These inscriptions show that *mokkan* were a surface for honing both calligraphic and compositional skills, and suggest a developing appreciation for formalistic and/or literary modes of writing.

For instance, Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-1123[13] is a wood shaving that appears to bear multiple layers of overlapping text; the scribe made full use of the surface of the wood as it was before shaving it off, probably to repeat the exercise beneath. The visible portions of text read:

Figure 1: Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-1123, Wood Shaving (*AFK* I, Plate 73)

Side 1: 我曰□〔朋？〕／○秋秋思○□／□○□

Side 1: I say, "[friend…]"/ Autumn autumn long for…/ ….

The text "I say, 'friend..'," is written on top of, and in darker ink, than the "autumn autumn long for," which is fainter and smaller, although it appears to be in the same hand. The character 思 appears wedged in between 曰 and 朋, but the placement suggests the column beginning with the character 秋 was probably written first. A few stray characters, one that looks like 古 ("old") in particular, are scattered in other open areas. This inscription appears to have been a combination

[13] For more on the Asuka Pond site and the *mokkan* recovered there, see Chapter 4.

of calligraphic and composition practice; that is, the particular characters here are not just repeated randomly, but appear to be connected in coherent sequences. The character 曰 (J. *iwaku/etsu*) in particular is used in narrative to present dialogue, and rarely found in official documents, which tend to opt for humilific forms of "say" (such as 白 or 申); moreover, official correspondence rarely explicitly features the first-person pronoun, but rather implies it through the use of a humilific, or opts for the name of the speaker. Further, characters such as "friend" or "autumn" are also not frequently seen in official contexts. Interestingly, the sequence 秋思 "autumn long for" is in Japanese word order, with the verb following the direct object. The layers of text here all appear ultimately to have been inconsequential, written on top of each other and eventually discarded. However, this example shows how calligraphic practice often morphed into the practice of composing sentences, and in focusing on characters not used often in official discourse, this scribe can be seen to be moving beyond the strict use of script as technology of administration.

A further example can be found in wood shaving Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-1125, from the same site. It shows a more deliberate attempt at composing something that resembles a metered line of Sinitic:

Side 1: 應睦生常死

Side 1: Surely all sentient beings invariably die…

Figure 2 Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-1125, Wood shaving (*AFK* I, Plate 73)

Unlike the previous example, the text on this shaving fills the space, and features a single line of characters, with no extraneous or overlapping text. The first character, "surely" 應, is written with considerably thinner brush strokes than the rest of the text, suggesting that it might have been part of a separate inscription (or a previous line). However, whether it is read together with the following four characters or not, the meaning is not significantly altered. Furthermore, if we are to take this as a line of verse, a five character sequence would certainly be more likely than four (the deliberate use of archaic four-character forms can be seen in Paekche, however, and so it is not impossible that this could have been a line just four-characters long). The character 睦 (J. *mutsubu/boku*) means something akin to "many [people] together in harmony," but here seems to stand in for the character 衆, as in 衆生, meaning "all sentient beings." The text as a whole expresses a relatively common Buddhist sentiment: the impermanence of this existence. While part of the following character is visible, it is not decipherable, and so we are left with this single line expressing a general, fatalistic aphorism, that indeed might not have been out of place in a piece of Sinitic verse. Calligraphic practice was not the sole goal here; clearly composition of a syntactically intelligible inscription was also important. Ultimately, while some version of it may have made its way into permanent form, this preliminary version, with its particular idiosyncrasies,

represents an inscriptive moment where a scribe was engaged in the act of creating, facilitated by a material form that allowed him the freedom to fail.

One final example also comes from within the Asuka capital, from within the boundaries of an administrative complex likely dating to the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō. Its inscription reads:

Side 1: □由見望々空□〔明？〕

Side 1: ...reason to look gaze gaze empty [brightness]

Much like the previous example, this again appears at first glance to be something like a line of Sinitic verse; however, the thick brush strokes and uneven spacing suggest a composition not necessarily meant for the eyes of others. As *AKS* II (189) notes, the extant inscription divides somewhat neatly into three two-character sequences, the content of which seems to somewhat cohere; a more fluid rendering might be something akin to "I look out in order to gaze into the brightness of the void," but the fact that the character immediately prior to 由 is inaccessible presents problems for interpreting the line as a whole. However, of particular note is the repetition of the character 望, marked by an early instance of the use of a repetition mark 々, which gives the speaker's gaze an expansive quality that encompasses the vastness of that verb's object, 空明, and suggests not only a familiarity with poetic forms of Literary Sinitic,[14] but an active effort to manipulate expression in a literary manner.

Figure 3. Asuka-kyō Mokkan No. 10-53 (*AKS* II, Plate 56)

I introduce here these three wood shavings to highlight the manner in which *mokkan* were both a key medium for literacy acquisition and for the development of compositional skills, including competency in literary expression. The presence of these sort of inscriptions among the wood shavings that have been recovered from sites in Japan's Asuka capital suggests the growing literate population there was increasingly invested in written composition as a mode of elite expression. Further, it is the ephemeral nature of the wooden surface that allowed for the production of

[14] I use the term "Literary Sinitic" to refer to the written language of classical China, not because I seek to avoid the term "Chinese" but because this literary language was probably never a spoken idiom, and because I seek to be specific in referring the "standard," terse mode in which the Chinese classics are written. "Spoken Chinese" itself is a rather problematic category, because even in the modern China, topolects are numerous, but spoken langauge also would have varied based on the time period/the location of the capital during a given dynasty. As a language specifically for textual production and something that transcended local topolects (and "national" boundaries, since individuals elsewhere in East Asia also produced texts in this idiom), distinguishing it from "Chinese" and opting for the term "Literary Sinitic" seems appropriate. On the provenance of this term in recent scholarship, see Ross King 2015.

such inscriptions, because they could easily be scraped away with a small paring dagger.

Unfortunately, wood shavings have not yet been recovered from any Silla sites. Acidic soil makes preservation in Korea of wooden artifacts especially rare, and while there may be some discoveries in the future, wood shavings are particularly fragile and unlikely to survive unless packed in a dense organic layer. Three pieces have been discovered from the Nŭngsan-ni temple site in Paekche, however. All three are examples of calligraphic practice, featuring certain characters repeated several times. These three wood shavings serve as evidence that *mokkan* were an important medium for literacy acquisition in Paekche, and were erased and reused like their Japanese counterparts.

Further evidence of the erasure and reuse of *mokkan* surfaces comes from fully extant *mokkan*, where the faint outlines of previous inscriptions, incompletely effaced, can still be made out; scrape marks on the surface of a *mokkan* also clearly indicate the current inscription on its face is not its first. Indeed, sometimes previous inscriptions can interfere with the interpretation of present inscriptions (e.g., Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 8-1 in Chapter 1). The ability to erase meant that the written word did not have to remain static or rigid; what was written may have been "symbolically elevated" vis-à-vis the oral (Pollock 2006, 4), but whereas texts on stone, and to a lesser extent, paper, must have seemed immalleable, wood, as a more elastic material, naturally bred more elastic varieties of inscription.

The importance of *mokkan* as material surfaces for writing can only be understood in terms of the overall written cultures of which these artifacts were a part. Reconstructing these written cultures involves not only categorizing the types of inscription found on different materials, including wood, paper, and stone, but also understanding the sociopolitical context for the emergence of written culture as a phenomenon. Due to the paucity of source material, the resulting picture will undoubtedly remain incomplete, but herein I will attempt to integrate my readings of *mokkan* inscriptions with both their material and sociopolitical/historical contexts in order to produce the most comprehensive understanding possible of the mechanisms of textual production and literary experimentation in early historic Korea and Japan.

Writing as Phenomenon: The Pragmatics and Aesthetics of Script

The reasons for the development of written culture in Paekche and Silla in the sixth century and in Japan in the seventh century are multiple, but most of these can be tied to the state's actions following certain major political shocks.[15] These ruptures in the status quo prompted the early states of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago to make efforts toward centralization, which included not

[15] These include the loss of Paekche's Hansŏng capital in 475 and the transfer of power to the Kŭm River region; significant military conquests by Silla's King Chinhŭng (r.540-576) in the mid-sixth century which created the problem of administrating vast swaths of new territory; and the Isshin Incident/Taika Reform of 645-646 and the Yamato navy's loss at the Battle of the Paek River in 663. While "state formation," as it were, is a phenomenon generally understood as occurring several centuries prior (cf. Barnes 2001; Barnes 2007), these moments inaugurated new eras of state consolidation and centralization following Chinese models.

only pursuing military fortification (the martial) but also instituting Chinese-style bureaucracy (the civil) in order to make "legible" their territory and resources.[16] In essence, this was "modernization"—that is, the updating of the state apparatus to reflect the most up-to-date governing technology. The composition of documents and the process of record keeping in Sinographic script were only one piece of these modernization efforts, but they proved to be crucial components of both statecraft and elite culture from this point forward.

Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth

The consequences of the invention of script have been exhaustively debated. So-called "literacy studies" might be said to begin with Goody and Watt (1963), who argued for an implicit connection between alphabetic writing and the development of logic in ancient Greece. However, their "literacy theory" has been significantly attenuated over the years, and has largely been abandoned (cf. Halverson 1992). As Houston (2004) notes, their view of literacy paints writing as an independent technology whose consequences also "erupt independently of social setting" (6). More recent studies have placed more emphasis on the contexts in which writing develops, acknowledging that script does not merely emerge based on "features of language" that might be amenable to "graphic communication," but is more likely an answer to certain sociopolitical and economic needs, and that any treatment of "literacy" as a phenomenon must consider both primary processes that fall under that rubric, that is, both reading and writing (Houston 2004, 7-8). Building upon but moving away from Goody and Watt, more nuanced studies related to the connections between cognition and orality/literacy have proliferated (e.g., Ong 1982; Finnegan 1988; Small 1997). These works have tended to focus less on writing as an "advanced" technology in favor of highlighting both the breaks and the continuities between oral and written modes of thinking and composing. However, while these works offer insight into understanding the minds of individuals capable of manipulating the technology of writing, these studies also tend to fixate on the processes of composing more than the "pragmatics of writing"—that is, "writing-in-use and writing-in-context" (Houston 2004, 9).

[16] This concept originates with James Scott (1998)'s theory that states seek to "classify" and bring order to their population and resources, i.e., to render their territory "legible." Norman Yoffee (2001:766; 2005:94) notes that while Scott (1998: 2) argues that premodern states were "partially blind"—i.e., lacking in detailed knowledge of their subjects and resources, in fact ancient states also placed a premium on what Scott calls "legibility," and this is particularly meaningful in that the development of the first writing systems was probably connected to the need for records of "people and things." While the level of "legibility" afforded to premodern states may not be on the level of the modern states that Scott discusses, the 'legibilization' of people and resources was certainly a primary concern, and thus both Yoffee (2001; 2005) and Wang (2014: 3-4) argue for the applicability of this concept to ancient states. Herein, I will also be using this term to refer to the state's efforts to better understand its own territory, which often involved the use of script, and therefore 'legibility' is meant both literally and metaphorically (in contrast to Scott, who is more concerned with 'legibility' as metaphor for the state's ability to 'read' its population; Yoffee [2001] does note that this term can be taken more literally in the context of ancient states).

By contrast, the question of the emergence and functions of early writing in those civilizations where writing came about *ex nihilo*[17] has been explored extensively by archaeologists in the context of state formation. As Wang Haicheng (2014) notes, writing has generally been characterized as an innovation accrued during the process of state formation, as a tool that could further the state's pursuit of classification of its subjects and resources (4); put another way, writing was a means of attaining "order, legitimacy, and wealth." This phrase was coined by John Baines and Norman Yoffee in their seminal 1998 article "Order, Legitimacy, and Wealth in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia," in which they argue that these three interlinked concepts govern the development of "high culture" in early states (of which writing was one part). The importance of these three factors is related to what they see as the "rapidity of formation and relative instability" of early states, which meant that achieving order, legitimizing that order, and sustaining that order were particular imperatives for elites in early states (Baines and Yoffee 1998, 212-214).

Whereas writing probably "originated through invention" in both Egypt and Mesopotamia, and may have even been the work of a single individual (Baines and Yoffee 1998, 215), it would have been an already-established system connected to relevant institutions when it was imported into proto-historic Korea and Japan. However, in the proto-historic contexts into which writing was first introduced, there was yet little awareness of such institutions nor was there widespread acknowledgment of its power for ordering; rather, it seems to have been conceived of as largely a tool for ritual or diplomatic purposes. When the pace of state formation and consolidation rapidly increased, prompted by military developments, the potential of writing for establishing, legitimizing, and sustaining order began to be tapped by elites in Pen/Insular East Asia, giving rise to what I herein refer to as the "early historic period." Further, it was in the context of writing's mobilization as a tool for securing order that the first works of written literature can be observed in Korea and Japan; this is because literature, like religion, was a mode for "expressing" legitimacy.

The Martial and the Literary

While Baines and Yoffee's theory of the centrality of "order, legitimacy, and wealth" is an informative framework for understanding the emergence of written culture, it is important to also view the written cultures of Paekche, Silla, and Japan through the lens of traditional Chinese theories of governance, because these offer insight into how these early states would have conceptualized their own approach to the technology of writing. In this context, the reasons for the implementation of document-based administration in the aftermath of external conflicts (see footnote 11 above) can be seen as both practical and ideological. Moments of political rupture certainly highlighted the need for so-called "legibility"—that is, the ability to classify people and resources within the state's realm in order to better coordinate response to crises (cf. Scott 1998; Yoffee 2001; Yoffee 2005). However, these

[17] I follow Wang (2014) in using this particular term to mean those cultures where writing was an "indigenous" development.

moments would have also conjured appeals to principles of statecraft as expressed in canonical Chinese texts on political theory, which championed the importance of balancing the state's martial endeavors with the civil and the ritual. This was known as *wen-wu* 文武 ["the civil and the martial"], and the balance between these two poles was seen as essential for a state's long-term stability (McNeal 2012, 14-15).

The conceptual pairing of *wen* 文 ["the civil"] and *wu* 武 ["the martial"] in Chinese political philosophy may have originated as far back as the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods, but concrete evidence of the employment of this dyad in attempts to reconcile "disparate goals of the state" within a coherent set of "values and justifications" is a phenomenon of the Warring States and Western Han periods (McNeal 2012, 14-19). This concept seems to have emerged as a way of explaining the use of state-backed force, while simultaneously extolling the virtue of rulers who practiced restraint and actively sought to propagate virtue and "unity" among the people; the means of instilling virtue was none other than the "civil"—that is, through "letters," the literal meaning of *wen*—which encompassed the "rituals and music" that Confucius alleged to be the pillars of virtuous governance. When these methods failed, then the martial was considered to be an acceptable recourse, but military action was generally conceived of as a "punitive" measure directed at those who could not be transformed by virtuous example (McNeal 2012, 26-28).

In the case of Paekche and Japan, it was on the heels of military failure that the civil was pursued with particular gusto; in the case of Silla, such a move followed military success, but was likely at least partially motivated by fears of future confrontations. The civil—that is, the institution of lettered bureaucracy—offered a means of acquiring knowledge of the populace, and therefore the number of able-bodied individuals who might serve the state in future conflicts (i.e., order). Moreover, letters could help render visible the wealth of the realm—that is, make apparent what resources were available to be put in service of the state in time of peace or war (i.e., wealth). However, letters had one other crucial function: embodying stately authority (i.e., legitimacy). This embodiment could be either literal, such as in case of the erection of stone steles on Silla's frontier (see Chapter 2), or figurative, when verse was composed that forged bonds of unity between a ruler and his subjects (as described in the preface to the *Kaifūsō*; see Chapter 3). This legitimacy derived both from the letters themselves—the power/authority invested in writing/texts by virtue of their material form—but from the *wen-wu* dyad: the production of texts was in itself a counterpoint to military action, and therefore imbued the state with a virtuous aura.

Any form of writing—from document-based bureaucracy or monumental inscription—imparted stately authority that derived from virtue and not force; however, *belles lettres* was a special category of writing with particular effects for bolstering legitimacy. Document-based bureaucracy used writing to bring order to the world and its wealth; monumental inscription was authoritative on the basis of its material form, capable of perpetuating memorializing ritual beyond the moment

of performance.[18] The fact of inscription was a powerfully legitimizing force in itself; a natural extension of this would be the embodiment of oral performance and ritual in script—that is, the composition of written literature. The act of inscription would inevitably transform such performances, but was capable of rendering spatially that which was inherently time-bound and impermanent; its effects, therefore, were lasting in ways that oral performance could not be. Further, just as the textual narration of a king's actions can be seen as both recording and "reflexively constituting" them (Baines 1997, 156), the praising of the king's virtue in textual form by his subordinates can be seen as reflexively constituting his virtue, thus proving his sagely identity. For instance, the preface to *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻 (751), a collection of Literary Sinitic verse composed by Japanese poets (discussed further in Chapter 3), presents the fact of his subordinates offering up numerous verses of praise as *proof* of the effectiveness of the sovereign Tenchi's "civil" reforms. Here, literary texts not only attest to but affirm the virtue of his rule. In this way, *belles lettres* provide a clear testament of legitimacy, in a way that mere practical writing cannot; that is, while administrative documents showcased a particular technological sophistication that contributed to state authority, *belles lettres* were able to perform and communicate the legitimacy of the sovereign in a more direct, affective manner.

The question of what sorts of writing qualify as *belles lettres* must now be considered. John Baines (1997) describes literary writing in ancient Egypt as that which has an obvious audience, is "there to be performed and communicated," is both general and repeatable, and is "bracketed apart from everyday life" in "formalized and structured episodes," but not necessarily abstracted as fiction (128). Baines is speaking of a specific kind of fiction found in Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom inscriptions, but he looks to earlier inscriptions from the Old Kingdom as examples of early literary writing, insofar as he sees *belles lettres* as framing content and attributing significance to it in a certain way that relativizes and invites an interpretative act (127); in other words, literary writing is writing with specific form that is designed to elicit certain kinds of interpretations from a reader (127-128). This might well be said of any type of formal writing, to be sure, but Baines draws an important distinction in highlighting the importance of "oral and ceremonial counterparts and antecedents" for early literary inscriptions, arguing that a performative dimension remained primary, and any inscription was to some extent modeled on the manner in which an oral performance unfolded (142). Sheldon Pollock (2006)'s definition of early literary writing in premodern South Asia intersects with that of Baines, but focuses more extensively on the question of language. First, Pollock highlights the importance of understanding literary writing as that in which the use of language is "expressive and imaginative" as opposed to "contentual and informational," and contrasts "workly" (this term derived from Heideggerian aesthetics) and "documentary" types of writing, noting that "workly" (i.e., literary) texts were meant to provoke a "self-conscious" interpretative act on

[18] This aspect of monumental inscription is explored further in Chapter 2. On the role of inscriptions in perpetuating memorial performance, see also Baines 1997, 136-137.

the part of a reader (3).[19] He further stresses that the inscriptive act imbues that which is written with an authority the purely oral does not have, and writing enables "textual features far in excess of the oral," making "language itself an object of aestheticized awareness, the text itself an artifact to be decoded and a pretext for deciphering" (4). While Pollock also retains that early writing of both South Asia and western Europe "preserved features realized only in oral performance," and that "listening to rather than reading literature long remained the principle mode of experiencing it," in his view the fact of its being written is an essential characteristic of "literature." (4).

While Baines' understanding of early "pre-literature" literary writing is informative for thinking about the types of inscription that proliferated in early historic Japan and Korea, the situation is more complex in that the lines of connection between early inscriptions, which are entirely in Sinographs, and oral performance, which would have been in the local vernaculars, remain obscure. To that end, Pollock's work, which incorporates questions of the interplay between cosmopolitan and vernacular languages, is somewhat more informative, but as Pollock is dealing primarily in phonographic scripts, the situation is again somewhat simpler than in Pen/Insular East Asia. In Egypt, Baines argues, writing was "generally pronounced both when read and when written down," although certain codified written forms had developed and would have been unnatural in an oral performance (137-138).[20] Indeed, this is probably also true of writing in Silla, Paekche, and Japan, but the nature of the process of pronunciation is not entirely clear. However, it can be certain that the pronunciation of most Sinographic inscriptions bore little resemblance to oral performance in the vernacular, even if elements of the vernacular language were represented. By virtue of its written form, any text was always necessarily estranged from oral forms, but early scribes of Korea and Japan were working within a primarily logographic script that had not been designed or developed to fit their own languages[21]—not only did they usually attempt to write in Literary Sinitic or a variant form thereof for the sake of efficiency and intelligibility, when they did seek to represent their vernacular languages, they were essentially force-fitting their language to Sinographic script, which resulted in varying levels of imprecision and/or cumbersome transcriptions.

Nevertheless, within and around these different modes of transcription, we find inscriptions that both perform and communicate while incorporating "textual features" specific to a written context and framing content in meaningful ways in order to invite an interpretative act. Herein, while I will be looking generally at the pragmatics of writing in early historic Pen/Insular East Asian written cultures, I will also be considering with particular interest those inscriptions that might be identified as "literary" in this sense.

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[19] Here and elsewhere, "reader" might also be understood as "listener" (i.e., in the case of the text's being read aloud/performed).

[20] The existence of such codified forms is consistent with Pollock's view that 'writing was never essential to literature—until literature *became literature*" (4).

[21] The Egyptian script, of course, is also primarily logographic, but had been developed in Egypt to write the Egyptian language.

The Cosmopolitan-Vernacular Dialectic

It is now necessary to address the question of the relationship between language and writing. If writing can be identified as having literary characteristics—defined as formal elements that frame content in a particular way and thus enable it to be more efficiently and evocatively performed/communicated—then must these features of the written text somehow correspond to aspects of the spoken language?

In early historic Japan and Korea, the phenomenon of writing was not something that was tied to a specific variety of spoken language. That is, depending on the audience, the scribe, and the nature of the text, an inscription might be composed in "pure" Literary Sinitic, in a hybrid style that incorporates elements of the vernacular into a more or less syntactically Sinitic text, or in an entirely vernacular style (i.e., by adapting Sinographs as both semantograms and phonograms). In all three cases, however, a text was probably *read* or performed in a variety of the vernacular language.[22] Moreover, the latter two categories encompass several different sorts of transcription, many of which could be, particularly early on, considerably idiosyncratic and ad-hoc, rooted in choices made by individual scribes; it is unclear, however, whether or not these choices hindered the proper reception (i.e., reading) and/or animation (i.e., recitation/performance) of the text.

Early inscriptions, then, on the surface all appear to be in the same Sinographic script, but their relationship to the spoken language differed considerably based on their function. While there are exceptions, monumental inscriptions—carved for public display—tended to be in a register that was closer to a pure form of the cosmopolitan language (Literary Sinitic). Likewise, official documents tended to be in a more "official," and therefore cosmopolitan, register, but this was prone to breaking down in contexts where cosmopolitan literacy was not pervasive (i.e., provincial settings). In these cases, the language of official documents mirrors that of correspondence, which was remarkably more vernacular in inflection, primarily because of its pragmatic intention; the primary purpose of a piece of correspondence was the communication of a specific message, and so ease of interpretation on the receiving end seems to have incited scribes to use the vernacular. Nevertheless, correspondence still endeavored to borrow certain features of cosmopolitan forms in order to carry over a sense of propriety and authority endowed only to the language of the cosmopolitan.

[22] Early evidence for 'reading by gloss' practices is found indirectly in inscriptions such as the 'Imsin Year Vow Record Stele' of Silla, which inscribes Sinographs in transposed word order that reflects the grammar of the vernacular language (see Chapter 2), and more directly through *mokkan* inscriptions such as Kita Ōtsu Mokkan No. 1 (see Chapter 3). These sorts of practices may have been informed by the Chinese annotative tradition and the types of notations seen in Literary Sinitic translations of Buddhist sutras (see Kin Bunkyō 2010). While it is possible that some form of "direct reading" was also practiced, where either the Chinese or Sino-Xenic pronunciations of Sinographs were employed to recite the text as-is, this was probably done parallel (and not instead of) some sort of vernacular gloss, as it is clear that 'reading by gloss' practices were important for students of Literary Sinitic throughout the premodern period in both Japan and Korea. The earliest learners of Literary Sinitic in Pen/Insular East Asia could hardly have been an exception.

The earliest literary inscriptions, by contrast, come in a variety of orthographies and registers, ranging from the purely phonographic (the adoption of Sinographs purely for sound value) transcription of vernacular oral literary modes to heavily logographic texts that are indistinguishable from (and indeed may be examples of) cosmopolitan literary forms.[23] In between, there are a number of ways in which these two systems are combined, into more logograph-heavy texts with the interspersal of some grammatical elements of the vernacular language provided in phonographic form, and phonographic-heavy modes with particular words or phrases represented in logographs. In these contexts, because the possible phonographs for a given sound were often several, a scribe might opt for particular phonographs whose semantic content, while not relevant to vocalizing the transcription, might resonate with its meaning; on the other hand, a scribe might choose to render certain words or phrases in logographs in order to stress their importance. All of these transcriptive possibilities rely on the interplay between cosmopolitan and vernacular, to such an extent that no text can ever be wholly one or the other. The very fact of a vernacular text being inscribed in Sinographs imbues it with an air of the cosmopolitan; the very fact of a cosmopolitan text being composed by a native of Pen/Insular East Asia connects it to the vernacular.
With this ambiguity in mind, I will explore herein the phenomenon of literary writing as it transcends the strict divide between the cosmopolitan and vernacular languages and emerges out of the contact between them. This means that any and all writing, regardless of whether it can be strictly deciphered as a transcription of "cosmopolitan" or "vernacular" language, will be the subject of inquiry, and should that writing fit the parameters of "literary" as outlined above—i.e., writing that frames content in a particular way (form) in order to facilitate effective performance/reading, and which uses the medium of writing to produce textual features "in excess of the oral"—it will be evaluated as such without dwelling on the question of a definitive linguistic identity.

Vernacular as Literary Mode

Further, I will treat the process of "vernacularization," that is, "the historical process of choosing to create a written literature…in local languages according to models supplied by a superordinate…cosmopolitan literary culture" (Pollock 2006, 23) as something that was being constantly negotiated by scribes in the kingdoms of Paekche, Silla, and Japan, from the very inception of written culture. That is, because of the difficulties associated with adapting the Chinese script and the tendency to "read by gloss," I will argue that efforts to create vernacular transcriptions using cosmopolitan methods and graphs began almost simultaneously with the importation of script.

In Japan, literary compositions in the vernacular began at an early date, with evidence of oral forms of poetry being transcribed possibly as early as the mid-

[23] I say that they "may" be examples of cosmopolitan literary forms primarily because of the problem of "hidden vernaculars"—i.e., because of "reading by gloss" practices, it is difficult to assign a particular linguistic identity even to ostensibly cosmopolitan texts produced in Pen/Insular East Asia—but these were most likely attempts by Korean and Japanese scribes to compose in traditional Chinese forms. Above, I have offered two examples of what may be lines of verse composed in such forms on *kezuri kuzu* from the Asuka Pond site.

seventh century,[24] and the influence of Sinitic "models" is clear in some poetic works dating to the late seventh century. The vernacular continued to be an important literary language throughout the course of Japanese history, developing alongside discourse in Literary Sinitic. However, vernacularization in Korea has a remarkably different history: as will be discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, both Paekche and Silla *mokkan* exhibit the use of phonogram and semantogram-based vernacular transcription systems to write the names of people and places. Silla *mokkan* show an early tendency to vernacularize Sinitic, rendering it "legible" in the vernacular language through "reading by gloss." However, the transcription of fully vernacular texts in phonograph-heavy style is not common in early Korean contexts, and does not seem to appear until the eighth century. While there are some possible cases of full vernacular transcription that predate this, they are unconfirmed.[25] Furthermore, while the vernacular gained prominence as a literary mode in Silla through the activities of the *hwarang*, a group of young men close to the monarch tasked with performing national rituals, it seems to have fallen out of favor quickly with the founding of the Koryŏ dynasty in 918, only to experience a resurgence toward the end of that dynasty during the Mongol era, be initially promoted by the following dynasty, Chosŏn (1392-1910), with the creation of the *hangŭl* script, and then be marginalized yet again as a mode used only by women and the uneducated, until the modern period. So-called vernacular literature throughout Korea's pre-modern history has an air of transcribed oral literature, while a "vernacular literary language," so-to-speak, did not emerge. Full "vernacularization," in Pollock's terms, did not occur, perhaps, until the modern period and the *ŏnmun ilch'i* movement.[26]

What should be made of the remarkably different histories of vernacular literary language in Korea and Japan? In the period with which this dissertation is concerned, it seems that while there may have been ways of transcribing the vernacular in Paekche, Literary Sinitic was preferred (see Chapter 1). In Silla, early attempts were made to vernacularize Sinographic writing, some of which appear to have been successful (see Chapter 2). Full transcription of vernacular utterances, however, does not appear until the Unified Silla period (see Conclusion). Perhaps because of the distance from China, and certainly thanks to relative domestic political stability, the vernacular was able to function as a literary mode in Japan; while some early examples of "written literature" appear to be more or less in the a cosmopolitan mode, there are also early examples of transcriptions of vernacular oral forms to match (Chapter 3), and cosmopolitan literary forms (Literary Sinitic verse) and vernacular literary forms (Japanese *uta*) may have enjoyed relative parity in the late seventh century (see Chapter 4). According to *Samguk sagi*, Silla's

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[24] See Chapter 3, Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. NW06-2-1.

[25] These include the Imsin Vow Record Stele, which is composed in Korean word order, although it does not feature particles or final-sound transcription (*marŭm ch'ŏmgi* 末音添記), and the Paekche *mokkan* Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

[26] This phrases means "unity between speech and writing," and in many ways parallels the modern *genbun itchi* movement among Japanese writers, although it unfolded over a much shorter period. See Ross King (1998), "Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea: The Question della Lingua in Precolonial Korea," in Hyung Il Pai and and Timothy R. Tangherlini, ed., *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity,* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies).

final female monarch, Queen Chinsŏng (r. 887-897), ordered the compilation of an anthology of the vernacular verse form known as *hyangga* 鄕歌, in 888. This collection is not extant, and seems to have had limited circulation. However, royal support seems to have been key in elevating the vernacular as a literary mode in Japan—in the context of court poetry; indeed, had Silla not perished by the beginning of the tenth century, Chinsŏng's efforts might have had more of an impact on the literary scene in the kingdom. Unfortunately, political change brought about a reversion to the cosmopolitan norms, and the possibilities of a vernacular literary mode were lost.

The Reception of Script in Pen/Insular East Asia

The written cultures of early historic Pen/Insular East Asia manifested as multi-media, multi-faceted worlds by the sixth and seventh centuries, but the reception of writing on the Korean peninsula and in the Japanese archipelago, where script was not an indigenous development but appropriated from Chinese civilization, was not a straightforward process. Script arrived in the peninsula and in the archipelago in the form of classic texts, many of them composed during China's Warring States epoch (475BCE-221BCE), which were by the Han dynasty (206BCE-220CE) constituted as the Confucian canon. In other words, these were no ordinary texts, but were a guide to Chinese political philosophy, history, and cultural norms. Their consumption by peninsular and archipelagan people was not just a matter of deciphering the Chinese script, but amounted to a form of indoctrination into "Chinese civilization." While the process of "cosmopolitan transculturation," to borrow a term from Sheldon Pollock (2006), unfolded over the course of centuries, and was flush with idiosyncrasies, by the eighth century it was more or less complete: both the Japanese court at Nara and the court of Unified Silla in its capital of Sŏrabŏl imagined themselves through the prism of ideals that had originated in Chinese civilization, administered their territory by means of a Chinese-style bureaucracy, and composed regulated verse in Literary Sinitic.

However, this process was not a matter of simply replacing the local with a "pregiven, stable, and sharply defined" set of cultural practices from Chinese civilization, but a process by which "cosmopolitan" (i.e., Chinese) and "vernacular" languages and lifeways were "brought into being simultaneously and continuously" (Pollock 2006, 10-11). As such, the tenuous relationship between cosmopolitan writing and the vernacular languages was negotiated in fits and starts. For elites of proto-historic Korea and Japan,[27] the technology of writing would have been understood as an imported prestige product, from a cosmopolitan culture far removed from their own, and would have carried with it the same awe-inducing aura as foreign textiles, ceramics, and persons. Those with mastery of it for a time remained few, mostly the members of hereditary scribal lineages; without a large administrative state, there was not yet a need for widespread command of the technology. Even with knowledge of writing, elites in the nascent states of Japan and Korea were not rushing to implement document-based administration in their

[27] Proto-historic is here understood as the Iron Age in Korea (100BCE-300CE) and the late Yayoi(100BCE-250CE)/Kofun (250CE-600CE) periods in Japan.

domains; unlike in early states where writing developed *ex nihilo,* writing's potential to render territory and population "legible" remained untapped for some time, while its diplomatic and ceremonial functions were emphasized (Wang 2014, 3-4). Composing diplomatic documents and keeping minimal court records did not require a substantial "script community."[28]

Sinographic writing[29] makes its first appearance on the Korean peninsula during the period of the Lelang Commandery 楽浪郡(108BCE-313CE), an outpost set up by the Han dynasty in the vicinity of modern Pyŏngyang, North Korea.[30] During this period of Han rule over portions of the Korean peninsula, the flow of goods and people in the regions around the commanderies was controlled by ethnically Chinese administrators who were relocated to these outposts of Chinese authority in the hinterlands. While its power waxed and waned over approximately four centuries, the Lelang commandery continued to function as any Han bureaucratic center would, producing documents that would render the resources of the peninsula "legible" to the imperial authority. There is evidence that the ways in which writing projected a certain kind of authority was appealing to the local populations of the peninsula: a tomb in Taho-ri 茶戸里, Ch'angwŏn 昌原, dated to the first century CE, has yielded five writing brushes and paring knife as part of an assemblage of burial goods.[31] While some have argued the brush's recovery indicates that the use of writing had begun in the small polities located in the southern part of the peninsula at the time, it is equally likely that writing implements were symbols of power on par with the bronze mirror or Han coins also found in the tomb. This identification of a writing brush as an object of power may have derived from observation of how Lelang elites made use of them.[32] Actual evidence of the use of writing by indigenous peninsular populations is not found

[28] This term taken from Wang Haicheng (2014), is defined as the literate elites who filled the ranks of early bureaucracies.

[29] The term sinograph is adopted here to refer to the individual graphemes that make up the Chinese script, known as 漢字 (Ch. *hanzi,* K. *hanja*, J. *kanji*).

[30] Originally four commanderies were established: Lelang, Xuantu 玄菟郡 (107BCE-302CE), Lintun 臨屯郡(107BCE-82CE), and Zhenfan 真番郡(107BCE-82CE). The commandery of Daifang 帯方 (204CE-314CE) was established later, made up of the southern half of the territory of Lelang. All four of the original commanderies are thought to have been located in the northern part of the peninsula, as they were set up in the aftermath of the Han defeat of Wiman Chosŏn 衛滿朝鮮, a state that had existed there prior. Lelang was the longest lasting of the four commanderies (Xuantu, while technically operational until 302, had retreated into Manchuria) and had sustained relations with peoples in the southern part of the peninsula. For more information on the Han commanderies, see the essays in Mark E. Byington, ed. (2013), and for an overview of extant material and issues in the scholarly studies of these commanderies, see in particular the introduction to that volume, Oh Youngchan and Mark E. Byington (2013).

[31] For an overview of this tomb in English, see Yi Young Hoon (2009). On the brushes, see especially pp. 167-169.

[32] Despite the discovery of a pairing knife, there was no inkstone found in the tomb, and given the prevalence of lacquer ware items among the burial good assemblage, it could also be that the brush was used for applying lacquer rather than for writing. There is also no other contemporaneous example, nor any extant inscriptions datable to this period from this part of the peninsula to support the notion that writing had been widely adopted/developed by this time. On the interpretation of these brushes, see Yi Kŏnmu (1992), 5, and Takakura Hiroaki (1991), 3.

prior to the fourth century (i.e., after the fall of the Lelang commandery),[33] and even then, inscriptions remain sporadic and isolated prior to the sixth century.

In the Japanese archipelago, prior to the sixth century Sinographs seem to have possessed a sort of totemic status as indicators of elite status, or as ritual symbols which imbued an object with magical qualities, moreso than they were apprehended as something "legible." This is evident in so-called Yayoi period (ca.700BCE-300CE) inscriptions, which are mostly found on potsherds and whose status as writing is questionable.[34] However, the magical power of writing is most apparent in what David Lurie calls "pseudo-inscriptions," which appear on Kofun period (ca.250CE-600CE) copies of Chinese inscribed bronze mirrors. This "pseudo-writing" seems to have been just as effective in enhancing the ritual potency of the mirror, as there is no evidence these copies were valued any less than imported mirrors with "real" inscriptions (Lurie 2011, 59-62). These Yayoi and Kofun period "inscriptions" belong to an era of the "alegible" reception of writing in the archipelago. "Alegibility," as defined by David Lurie, includes all the various ways in which script is appropriated that "share a disconnection from what we tend to see as the core functions of reading and writing." This ranges from script used for decorative purposes, to magical/talismanic writing, and the display of writing to "indicate social affiliation or cultural distinction" (Lurie 2011, 31-33). In other words, according to Lurie, one is a "reader" of legible writing, while one is a "spectator" of alegible writing (29). It is not until the seventh century that we see writing begin to supersede alegible functionality in the Japanese context. Certainly, the alegible modes of understanding writing do not necessarily end with its legible reception; however, with the growth of a literate community and the proliferation of inscriptions, legible reception comes to dominate.

Wang Haicheng (2014) argues that the target audiences of inscriptions in *ex nihilo* cultures was always necessarily the literate community, for it was they who "held all or most of the power in the state and hence [were] probably the only audience for royal propaganda that mattered" (303). This understanding cannot hold water in the context of proto-Three Kingdoms or early Three Kingdoms Korea, nor in Yayoi or Kofun period Japan, since there is no evidence of a literate community consisting of the "elite and sub-elite."[35] Indeed, Claude Levi-Strauss' experience bringing writing to Nambikwara may prove more informative for understanding the role of writing when it was first introduced in proto-historic Pen/Insular East Asia.[36] Writing was a means of conveying power and prestige "alegibly" in this early period, and inscriptions "did not 'contain' information that

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[33] While some Koguryŏ inscriptions might date to the third century, those that can be definitely dated are from the fourth. See Kiho Song 2007, 155, and Mark Byington 2017, 8-9.

[34] The earliest of these probably dates no later than the first century CE. For more detail, see Lurie 2011, 47-51.

[35] Wang argues that the elite, consisting of the ruler, his relatives, and other nobility, and the sub-elite, aka the scribal class, who made up the majority of the bureaucracy, were mostly literate across the four *ex nihilo* civilizations he covers (China, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Mesoamerica). See Wang (2014): 302-303.

[36] This observation based on David Lurie (2011: 22-28)'s reading of the episode. The episode itself can be found in Claude Levi-Strauss 1992, 295-304.

was otherwise unavailable"; in other words, there were no inscribed objects "whose significance would have stemmed only from the writing they bore" (Lurie 2011, 74). This fact will be highlighted in discussions of Paekche and Silla epigraphy in Chapters 1 and 2; the prevalence of "pseudo-inscriptions" in proto-historic Japan is also indicative. Those inscriptions that function to "affirm" the meaning of an object, when that meaning can be easily inferred from the object's material form or context, I term "affirmative." It is not until political conditions ignited a need for legibility that there are signs of a shift in these cultures' reception of script, toward inscriptions that are "constitutive" – that is, where the written content is what imbues an object with meaning and/or value.[37] This is the age of *mokkan*, the wooden tablets that will be the focus of this study.

Literization and Literarization

The emergence of literary writing does not immediately follow from written culture. This is something of which even the earliest narrativization of the history of writing in Japan, the preface to the Sinitic poetry anthology *Kaifūsō* (751), seems well aware:

襲山降蹕之世。橿原建邦之時。天造草創。人文未作。至於神后征坎品帝乗乾。百済入朝啓龍編於馬厩。高麗上表図烏冊於烏文。王仁始導蒙於軽嶋。辰爾終敷教於訳田。遂使俗漸洙洒之風。人趨斉魯之学。逮乎聖徳太子。設爵分官。肇制礼儀。然而専崇釈教。未遑篇章。

In hearing the wisdom of prior ages, and in looking at the classic texts of the distant past, we find that in the age of the descent onto the mountains in So, and at the time when the country was established at Kashihara, it was still the time of heaven and earth being created, of the myriad things being made—and people did not yet compose texts.

Then, in the age of the heavenly empress' invasion, at the time of the Hon emperor's ascension, Paekche came to the court and taught us the dragon editions in the stable. Then Koguryŏ submitted a memorial, drawing a crow document in bird letters. Wang-in was the first to lead the unlettered in Karushima, while Chin'i laid out his teachings in Osada. In this way they caused the people of this country to be steeped in the way of the Zhu and Si, and led them to the learning of Qi and Lu. Then, in the time of Crown Prince Shōtoku, the ranks were established and the offices divided, and for the first time the rites were organized. However, because people were in uncommon awe of the way of the Buddha, they did not yet have the time to compose *belles lettres*.

I will return to this preface in Chapter 3, but I bring it up here first for two reasons: first, it clearly outlines a contrast between more utilitarian uses of script and *belles lettres*; second, it designates Buddhism as in direct conflict with the development of *belles lettres*.

[37] Of course, there is also a category of inscription that falls somewhat in between the "affirmative" and "constitutive" functions; that is, writing that creates meaning through interacting with the material onto which it is inscribed. Silla stele inscriptions, discussed in Chapter 2, might be said to fall into this category.

The passage follows the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* accounts of the arrival of Sinographic script in Japan via Paekche during the reign of Great King Homuda (J. *Homuda wake no mikoto* 誉田別尊, here stylized as the "Hin Emperor" 品帝, posthumously referred to as the sovereign Ōjin 應神天皇 [r. 390-430]).[38] It then refers to a famous anecdote, found in *Nihon shoki*, wherein the scholar Wang Chin'i (J. Ō Jin'ni 王辰爾) is called upon to interpret a memorial from the kingdom of Koguryŏ that is inscribed on black crow feathers (in black ink), a moment that might be construed as a "test" of the Wa[39] court by the northern Korean kingdom.[40] The text then props up Wang-in (J. Wani 王仁), a classical scholar from Paekche, and the aforementioned Chin'i, of allochthonous origin,[41] as indicators of the presence of Confucian learning (and by extension, letters) in Japan prior to the time of Prince Shōtoku (574-622).[42] It seems to acknowledge the limitations of this sort of "written culture," however, in painting this learning as something primarily controlled by allochthonous scribal families, and as something they "preached" rather than "shared" with the wider elite population. Finally, it declares that despite reforms under Shōtoku, peoples' reverence of Buddhism hindered any impulse to compose literature. The phrase used here, 篇章, literally "books and chapters," an expression

[38] Generally, I avoid the term "emperor" and prefer to render *tennō* 天皇 as "sovereign" (I choose to omit the modifier "heavenly," although technically speaking, Joan Piggott [1997]'s term "heavenly sovereign" would be more accurate). On this point I follow Joan Piggott (1997), who argues that "empire," "emperor" and "imperial" are inappropriate terms for the Japanese context (8-9). The character 帝, however, very clearly designates a Chinese-style imperial ruler, and so "emperor" is an accurate translation in the context of this passage. Homuda, a semi-mythical figure, would not have been known as 天皇 in his lifetime, since this term came into being in the late eighth century during the reign of Tenmu (r. 672-686), and thus he is more appropriately termed a "Great King." I will generally refer to all pre-Tenmu rulers as "Great King," except for in translating texts where the term 天皇 is used retroactively.

[39] A term for ancient Japan, commonly used throughout East Asia before the name *Nihon* 日本 was adopted by the Japanese in the late seventh century. This term and the indigenous "Yamato," which also describes the basin/home province of the Wa kings, will be used interchangeably to describe pre-seventh century Japan as the context warrants.

[40] He does this by steaming the feathers and taking an impression of the inscribed characters on a piece of silk, showing clever ingenuity that cements his reputation as a scholar at the court (and elevates the status of his particular scribal lineage, known as the Fune no Fubito 船史). See *NS* Bidatsu 1.5.15.

[41] I use the term allochthon/allochthonous to refer to individuals and family lineages who traced their origins outside of Japan (usually to one of the Korean kingdoms, but sometimes to China). I will also refer to people living in Paekche and Silla who traced their origins to Koguryŏ/China in this way. I adopt this term following Herman Ooms (2008). The term "immigrant" has certain nuances in modern parlance which suggest socioeconomic marginalization; in the case of these people, they often held privileged status because of their intimate knowledge of foreign technologies, and sometimes occupied central positions at court, such that the term "immigrant" seems an inappropriate descriptor.

[42] Both Wani and Chin'i were claimed as ancestors by prominent scribal lineages. Prince Shōtoku (J. Shōtoku taishi 聖徳太子) became a key figure in early Japanese Buddhism, especially after his death when legends about him proliferated. The *Nihon shoki* paints him as prince-regent during the reign of his aunt, Suiko 推古天皇, in the early seventh century, and credits him with instituting a variety of political reforms, but the historicity of these is highly suspect.

generally used to refer to works of poetry (which, in the Confucian sense, is what constituted "literature"), indicates that at least in the mind of our preface author, writing literature was something fundamentally different from knowledge of the Confucian classics and Buddhist sutras. In other words, one could be "lettered" without being literary.

Sheldon Pollock (2006) introduces two terms that map on to this binary, "literization" and "literarization." Although he uses these in the context of his discussion of vernacularization (i.e., the emergence of written vernaculars), they might also apply to the cosmopolitan written language as received by those places to which writing is not a native development. Pollock defines "literization" as "the breakthrough to writing," where the written becomes recognized as something of value, and that which is written is "symbolically elevated" by the very fact of its being written.[43] Literarization, on the other hand, is the "achievement of conformity" with the cosmopolitan literary paradigm, which among other formal features, includes the fact of its being *written* (Pollock 2006, 5). These two terms are a bit clunky, and visually similar, and therefore I will generally prefer to refer to these processes as "becoming lettered" and "becoming literary."

With regard to Japan and Korea of the early historic period, access to these two processes is limited by available sources, but even if this were not the case, it cannot be assumed that these processes were instantaneous or universal. As illustrated above, "becoming lettered" was a long process in Pen/Insular East Asia, with many centuries of literacy being limited to a few scribal lineages while most people digested text "alegibly," and true "written culture" only came about under significant political pressure to "modernize." Becoming literary, on the other hand, is a less straightforward and less easily observed process, one that can only be understood as taking place on the individual level in isolated moments in the context of a written culture. The sixth and seventh centuries are characterized by such moments, while the eighth century, when written forms proliferate, might be said to be the age of true "literary culture" at the Japanese and Unified Silla courts.

Buddhism and Writing

In addition to mapping out the binary between "lettered" and "literary," the preface to the *Kaifūsō* specifically identifies Buddhism as a force of stagnation in the development of literary culture in Japan. In both Korea and Japan, the royal house's sponsorship of Buddhism began to shift the predominantly "alegible" modes of the reception of writing among elites toward the "legible." As a religion with a rich textual culture and a long tradition of support for the use of vernacular languages in its practice, it inevitably fueled changes in the conception of writing (Mair 1994, 709-722). Copying a sutra, for instance, could help one accumulate positive karma; transcription, in this case, was an act of piety. Preachers drew on their literacy—i.e., their ability to explicate the Buddhist canon—as a source of legitimacy. The earliest Japanese inscriptions, dating to the early part of the seventh century, are found on Buddhist icons in Buddhist settings; meanwhile, the supposed beginnings of law

[43] As opposed to "the oral," which, Pollock notes, only comes into existence through the advent of literacy. Pollock (2006), 4.

codes and historiography in Silla coincide with the royal sponsorship of Buddhism and the importation of the canon in the sixth century.

However, as David Lurie (2011) notes, Buddhism was not the sole factor in expanding the role of script and fueling the creation of a more substantial script community, but rather worked simultaneously and in tandem with more "secular" uses of writing (149-150). Tōno Haruyuki (2005) outlines the peculiarity of the lack of inscriptions from the sixth century in Japan, pointing out that there are some sporadic inscriptions dating through the end of the fifth century and the very beginning of the sixth, including the bronze mirror with human figures from Suda Hachiman shrine (J. *Suda Hachimangū jinbutsu gazōkyō* 隅田八幡宮人物画像鏡) dated to 503, but that the bulk of the sixth century is an inscription-less void (Tōno 2005, 94-96). Given that the sixth century is allegedly the time of the Japanese court's adoption of Buddhism, the absence of contemporaneous inscriptions would seem to indicate that an uptick in written life was not an immediate result of the importation of the Buddhist faith, probably at least partly because Buddhism also took until the first half of the seventh century to percolate beyond the family temples of allochthonous clans.[44] Rather, the adoption of Buddhism was yet another aspect of the centuries-long process of cosmopolitan transculturation in Japan, one that helped lay the foundation for the lettered age to come, but one that was not sufficient in itself to fuel the development of inscriptive practice.

In Silla, the Buddhist faith gained elite followers during the sixth century, and in Paekche, some of the earliest inscriptions come from temple contexts, but in both cases a royal brand of Buddhism was propped up as a key component of a larger "modernization" project led by the state. Japan led a similar "modernization" project in the mid-seventh century, with Buddhist inscriptions forming one part of a record that is also characterized by administrative, ceremonial/ritual, and belletristic writing. While the initial introduction of Buddhism may somewhat antedate these modernization projects, its royal branding and the emergence of Buddhist inscriptions coincide temporally with them.

Overview

This dissertation is organized into four chapters. Chapter 1 treats the history of writing and the development of written culture in the kingdom of Paekche on the Korean peninsula through *mokkan*. The chapter makes particular note of nascent literary tendencies seen among the Paekche *mokkan* corpus and how these might inform our understanding of written culture in Japan, where many Paekche refugees fled after the Japanese navy's defeat at the Battle of the Paek River in 663 (see Chapter 3 for details). Chapter 2 contrasts the development of written culture in pre-unification Silla (trad. 57BCE-668CE) with that of Paekche, highlighting the unique speed with which written culture expands in mid-sixth century Silla during the reign of King Chinhŭng through an examination of both monumental inscriptions on stone steles and more mundane inscriptions found on *mokkan* from

[44] The inscriptive lives of members of allochthonous lineages, e.g., the Soga 蘇我 or the Kuratsukuri 鞍作, prior to 660 is a topic for another dissertation. These lineages were the first adopters of Buddhism in Japan, and sixth-century Japanese Buddhism might be described as largely allochthonous family temple based.

sites in both the provinces and the royal capital. In addition, the chapter probes in detail evidence for early vernacularization in Silla, as observed through pieces of correspondence inscribed on *mokkan*, but notes that examples of nascent literary writing are few. Chapter 3 evaluates the evidence for the emergence of written culture at Japan's mid-seventh century courts in Naniwa (645-652) and Ōmi (667-672), in the context of evidence from the peninsula. In particular, the chapter takes up the narrative of the preface to *Kaifūso* as a frame for interpreting the evidence for literate communities and literary writing at these two palace sites, and centers the role of Paekche refugees in the post-Paek River defeat modernization efforts carried out by the sovereign Tenchi (r. 661-672). Chapter 4 examines the emergence of a mature written culture in Japan through extant *mokkan* from the late seventh century capitals at Asuka and Fujiwara, connecting them to the intensified modernization programs under Tenmu (r.672-686) and Jitō (r. 686-797). This chapter presents evidence for the composition of literary writing in both cosmopolitan (Literary Sinitic) and vernacular modes, and argues that these forms were probably more or less equally important. Finally, in the Conclusion connects the sixth and seventh century evidence presented in Chapters 1-4 with the literary cultures of the eighth century in both Korea and Japan. In particular, the Conclusion will attempt to highlight the ways in with the "pragmatics of writing" had been transformed by the eighth century, and how these changes were prefigured by developments in the seventh.

Conventions

In transcribing *mokkan* inscriptions, I follow the system used by the Japanese Mokkan Gakkai, with some minor exceptions. The basic symbols used in this style of transcription are as follows:

□ One character that cannot be clearly identified

□〔X？〕One character that cannot be clearly identified, but X is a possibility

〇 A blank space of approximately one character's length

〈〉 A series of an unknown number of characters that cannot be deciphered

／ End of a column of writing on a single side

// Split of writing into two columns (below what had been a single column)

【】Writing in opposite orientation (upside-down)

In the case of Japanese *mokkan*, unless otherwise noted, I generally present the standard identifications (J. *handoku* K. *p'andok* 判讀) as provided in Nabunken's Mokkan Database, accessible at http://nabunken.go.jp/Open/mokkan/mokkan.html. The matter of Korean *mokkan* identifications is less settled. While I generally defer to the 2011 Munhwajaech'ong publication *Hanguk mokkan chajŏn* (hereafter abbreviated *CJ*), in certain cases I may rely on identifications proposed by other scholars. As a rule, I prefer to transcribe *mokkan* inscriptions using traditional character forms; exceptions to this may be made in the case of *mokkan* inscriptions which feature abbreviated forms.

References to historical texts for which there are multiple modern editions, such as *Nihon shoki* and *Samguk sagi*, are given by the date of the entry first, and then cited by page in a particular reference edition, as detailed in the List of

Abbreviations. Likewise, poems from *Man'yōshū* are first given by book/poem number.

All Romanization of modern Japanese and Japanese personal/place names is according to the Modified Hepburn system. Romanization of modern Korean language and Korean personal/place names is according to the McCune Reischauer system. Personal and place names are always Romanized according to their modern pronunciations, and names of Korean persons are Romanized according to modern Korean pronunciations even when they occur in Japanese texts. Romanization of Old Japanese is according to a modified version of the Kunrei system whereby the *ha-gyō* は行 is represented with /p/ instead of /h/. Romanization of pre-modern Korean languages is done according to the Yale Romanization system.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

Chapter 1. Written Life in Paekche: From "Lettered" to "Literary"

The written culture of the kingdom of Paekche (trad. 18BCE-660CE) is known only in fragments, largely due to the poor survival rate of both documents and artifacts on the Korean peninsula, especially for those societies who met violent ends. However, we know that the kingdom had once been prolific in its production of writing: Chinese sources cite Paekche memorials dating back to the third and fourth centuries, while Japanese sources attest to the existence of a number of historical works, some of which became important sources for the compilation of Japanese histories in the early eighth century. *Mokkan* unearthed in recent archaeological excavations have begun to supplement the minimal epigraphic sources to present a more well-rounded picture of written life in Paekche. As the earliest of the three societies treated in this dissertation to adopt the technology of writing, by the Sabi period (538-660CE) scribes in Paekche were competently producing a variety of written texts, many of which are strikingly literary in orientation. Compared to Silla and Japanese *mokkan*, Paekche *mokkan* are fewer but also considerably more diverse, and suggest a written culture in which *how* something was written was valued as highly as the content of its message. Following the Battle of the Paek River (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3), a large number of those individuals who had been producing texts in Sabi seem to have made their way to Japan, affecting the development of written culture there beginning in the mid-seventh century. Therefore, while "Paekche written culture" technically ends with the fall of that kingdom in 660, this chapter will argue that its legacy can be discerned in the early historic written culture of Japan.

Writing in Paekche: The Received Wisdom

According to a number of early historic Japanese texts, including the *Kojiki* 古事記, *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, and the preface to the Sinitic poetry collection *Kaifusō* 懐風藻, it was taken as historical truth at least as early as the eighth century that knowledge of script was first brought to Japan through learned men from Paekche, Achikki 阿直岐 and Wang-in 王仁, both of whom were sent at the behest of the Paekche king himself. The *Nihon shoki* provides the following account:

十五年秋八月壬戌朔丙卯、百濟王遣阿直伎、貢良馬二匹。卽養於輕坂上廐。因以阿直岐令掌飼。故號其養馬之處、曰廐坂也。阿直岐亦能讀經典。卽太子菟道稚郎子師焉。於是、天皇問阿直岐曰、如勝汝博士亦有耶。對曰、有王仁者。是秀也。時遣上毛野君祖、荒田別・巫別於百濟、仍徵王仁也。其阿直岐者、阿直岐史之始祖也。

十六年春二月、王仁來之。則太子菟道稚郎子師之。習諸典籍於王仁。莫不通達。所謂王仁者、是書首等之始祖也。[1]

Fifteenth year, Autumn, Eighth month, Yang Water (Sixth) day (where the first of the month was Yang Fire Rabbit). The King of Paekche sent Achikki [J. Achiki] to present tribute of two fine horses. Thereupon, the horses were kept in a stable atop Karu Hill. As a result, Achikki was made their caretaker. Therefore, because this was

[1] *NS* Ōjin 15.8.6-16.2(NKBT 67:370-2).

now the place where the horses were kept, it came to be called Stable Hill. Achikki was also able to read the classics, and so he was also made tutor to Crown Prince Uji no Wakiiratsuko. Hereupon the Emperor asked Achikki, saying, "Are there other scholars even superior to you?" Achikki answered, saying, "There is Wang-in [J. Wani]; he is superior to me." Then Arata wake, ancestor of the Kamitsukeno no Kimi clan, and Kamunaki wake were sent to Paekche, where they sought out this Wang-in. Achikki was the first ancestor of the Achiki no Fubito clan.

Sixteenth year, Spring, Second month. Wang-in arrived, and promptly he was made tutor to the Crown Prince Uji no Wakiiratsuko. The prince learned various books from Wang-in, and there were none which he did not grasp in its entirety. This man called Wang-in was the first ancestor of the Fumi no Obito clans.[2]

Here, a Paekche man sent to care after horses is called upon to also tutor the crown prince in the classics. These two occupations would seem to be miles apart, but the fact that Achiki is capable of both does indeed suggest something about the levels of literacy among the Paekche elite—or at the very least, those elites who were dispatched to Japan's Yamato court. Both Achikki and Wang-in are cited as founders of scribal clans in Japan, and so we know they must have lingered for some time, and were likely responsible for teaching to more students than just Crown Prince Uji Wakiiratsuko.

The *Kojiki* account echoes the *Nihon shoki*, but mentions the transmission of specific texts:

> 亦、百濟國主照古王、以牡馬壱疋、牝馬壱疋、付阿知吉師以貢上。〈此阿知吉師者、阿直史等之祖。〉亦、貢上横刀及大鏡。又、科賜百濟國、若有賢人者、貢上。故、受命以貢上人名、和邇吉師。卽論語十巻・千字文一巻、幷十一巻、付是人卽貢進。〈此和邇吉師者、文首等祖。〉又、貢上手人韓鍛、名卓素、亦、呉服西素二人也。[3]
>
> Then, Paekche's King Ch'ogo sent as tribute a male horse and a female horse by means of a man named Aji-kilsa [J. Achi-kishi]. (This Aji-kilsa is the ancestor of the Achiki no Fubito clans). They also offered as tribute a sword and a large mirror. Then, the sovereign asked of Paekche that if there by any wise men, that they send them as tribute. Thereupon, receiving the order, Paekche sent as tribute a man named Hwai-kilsa [J. Wani-kishi]. With this person they also sent as tribute the *Analects* in ten volumes and the *Thousand Character Classic* in one volume, for a total of eleven volumes. (This Hwail-kilsa is the ancestor of the Fumi no obito clans). In addition, they sent as tribute a person skilled in metal-working named T'akso [J. Takuso] and two weaver women of Wu.[4]

[2] Translation is my own, with reference to Aston 1972, 261-3.
[3] *KJK* (*SNKBZ* 1), 267-269.
[4] It is unclear if 呉 here necessarily refers to the state of Wu, or just conveys the general idea that the women were not in fact of Paekche origin. See *SKNBZ* 1: 268 n.5.

This roughly accords with the *Nihon shoki* version but contains some different information: for instance, we find that both Achikki and Wang-in are of *kishi* 吉師 ["lord"] status, and that Wang-in brought with him the *Analects* and the *Thousand Character Classic*.[5] Here, Achikki's lettered prowess is not mentioned; rather, Wang-in is presented as solely responsible for the transmission of written texts in Japan, and his arrival is mentioned alongside that of other "technicians," a fact highly suggestive of the Yamato court's perception of scribes and their particular skills in this historical moment.

Curiously, neither account equates the arrival of Achikki and Wang-in with the advent of inscription in Japan; rather, it paints the two men as teachers of the "classics." This suggests that fragmentary knowledge of script may have been available in Japan prior to their arrival, a proposition that is supported in large part by the archaeological record, which features Chinese-made objects bearing inscriptions going back to the middle of the Yayoi 弥生 period (first century BCE), and failed imitations thereof during the early and mid Kofun 古墳 periods (Lurie 2011, 47-62). However, these two men (or perhaps a larger class of literate migrants from Paekche) seem to have been key in facilitating the next step in Japan's cosmopolitan transculturation—the study of the vast textual tradition of China. In this sense, their alleged arrival at the court of Ōjin 應神 (who probably reigned around the early fifth century) must be viewed as marking the beginning of a transition where script ushered Yamato toward greater integration with the larger East Asian universe. The *Sui shu* 隋書 views this as nothing less than the transition from illiteracy to literacy:

> 無文字、唯刻木結繩。敬佛法、於百濟求得佛經、始有文字。[6]
> They were without letters; they merely carved wood and tied rope. But because they revered the dharma, they sought to attain the Buddhist sutras from Paekche, and then for the first time they had letters.

Although some claims made in various Chinese histories about the "Eastern barbarian" peoples of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago must be regarded suspect, the fact that Paekche appears here as the primary means by which knowledge of script came to Japan is unsurprising. What does draw attention, however, is the fact that the transition from illiteracy to literacy here is marked not only by the acquisition of texts, but by the adoption of the Buddhist faith. The arrival of Buddhism in Japan is usually cited as having occurred in the sixth century, but its introduction there was also orchestrated through the "tribute" sent to a Yamato king by a Paekche king.

Whether we see the tale of Achikki and Wang-in as indicative of the introduction of script by learned men from Paekche in the fifth century, or we trace the more full-

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[5] The former of these works is certainly a possibility for the early fifth century reign of Ōjin, while the latter, not composed until the sixth century, is not; as David Lurie (2011: 112-3) notes, the inclusion of the names of these two texts is more likely the result of ideas of the basics of literacy education that were current in the eighth century (when *Kojiki* was written), as opposed to actual historical fact.
[6] "Weiguo 倭國," in *Sui shu* vol. 81.

scale adoption of writing in Yamato to the importation of Buddhism in the sixth century, it is would appear that both Chinese and Japanese sources are in agreement on the arrival of textual culture in Japan being a direct result of the Yamato court's relationship with Paekche. In the context of both of these narratives, Paekche's lettered prowess is assumed.

Even modern scholarship has seldom questioned this assumption, despite the fact that very few primary sources from Paekche currently survive. Rather, it has generally been taken for granted that written culture in Paekche was more or less equivalent to that of the "Sinographic cosmopolis," and therefore the Yamato court was the passive recipient of a textual universe largely unaltered from its cosmopolitan origin. As a result, individuals from Paekche (and the Korean peninsula as a whole) are usually understood as little more than "vessels" who transmit cosmopolitan technologies "intact" with few marks of localization. In other words, men such as Achikki and Wang-in, who settled in Yamato and founded hereditary scribe households, have often been understood as conduits of continental culture, rather than as individuals with connections to a particular written culture that had developed on the Korean peninsula.

An assumption that Paekche written culture was basically equivalent to that of the cosmopolitan core was perhaps inevitable due to the paucity of source material for re-constructing a more concrete picture. Until very recently, scholarly knowledge of script use in Paekche was based on a small number of inscribed artifacts supplemented by a few sporadic documentary references, most of which come from sources dating to after the kingdom's demise in 660. While the *Nihon shoki* uses as source material several non-extant works of alleged Paekche provenance, including texts titled *Paekche sinch'an* 百済新選, *Paekche pongi* 百済本紀, and *Paekchegi* 百済記, and *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (comp. 1145) records the compilation of historical works in the kingdom as early as the reign of King Kŭnch'ogo 近肖古王 (r. 346-375), no such works seem to have survived much past the destruction of the kingdom itself, and their nature is largely a matter of speculation.[7]

Given the poor quality of the documentary record, archaeologically recovered materials emerging from recent excavations offer a compelling new avenue for understanding written life among Paekche's elite. Unfortunately, these new materials still reveal precious little about writing in earlier periods of Paekche's history, including the supposed time of Achikki and Wang-in. However, they do provide unfettered access to the written culture of Paekche for about a century prior to the kingdom's destruction in 660; this written culture would have been the context in which many of the "lettered" elites that flowed into the Yamato court from the peninsula throughout the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries would have acquired and honed their literacy skills. For the earliest period of Paekche history, known as the Hansŏng 漢城 period (c.270-475), written materials constitute little more than some pottery fragments inscribed with one or two characters. These are

[7] It should also be noted that the "direct" quotes from Paekche sources provided in *Nihon shoki* show varying levels of modification by the compilers of that text to fit with the ideology of Japan's *ritsuryō* state of the early eighth century.

supplemented by the inscription of the renowned Seven-Branch Sword from the Isonokami Shrine in Tenri, Nara, Japan, which was likely carved at its place of manufacture in Paekche. For Paekche's Ungjin 熊津 period (475-538), when the capital was located at what is now Kongju 広州 in Ch'ungch'ŏngnam-do 忠清南道, inscribed materials are equally limited, but more impressive in nature. The scant evidence for Ungjin written culture includes two inscribed stone slabs and some other inscribed objects recovered from the tomb of King Muryŏng 武寧王陵 and other tombs in Kongju, and an inscribed ink stone with a Liang 梁 reign date found at Kongsan fortress 公山城. In addition, there are a number of inscribed roof-tiles dating to this period. However, it is during Paekche's Sabi 泗沘 period (538-660), when its capital was located at present-day Puyŏ 扶餘, that the presence of inscription expands considerably in the archaeological record. In addition, inscriptions of this period speak to an expansion of the role of writing in the lives of Paekche's elite, and the culture of the kingdom as a whole: the Sabi period marks a moment when writing went from fulfilling primarily diplomatic, ceremonial, and documentary roles for those of the highest status to being used by a wider swath of elites for everyday official and spiritual business. This moment can be seen as directly paralleling similar developments that occurred in Japan and Silla beginning about a century later.

Writing in Hansŏng Paekche

Given the well-attested Han Chinese presence on the peninsula in the first centuries CE, it might be fair to assume that the ruling elite of the kingdom of Paekche had knowledge of writing from the kingdom's inception. In fact, if founding narratives are to be believed, the royal house of Paekche was derived from that of Koguryŏ 高句麗, which is thought to have adopted writing fairly early, in the first century CE; however, no extant Koguryŏ inscription predates the fourth century, after the fall of the Lelang Commandery (Song 2007, 155). While implements resembling writing brushes have been recovered archaeologically from a first century CE tomb in the southern part of the peninsula, at Taho-ri in Ch'angwŏn—which would have been part of the Kaya confederacy—there is no conclusive evidence that these would have been used for writing, or that they necessarily belonged to a member of the autochthonous peninsular population (Takakura 1991, 3; Yi Kŏnmu 1992, 5). There is thus little support for the notion that writing was widespread in the southern part of the peninsula prior to the rise of the fledgling states of Paekche and Silla in the third and fourth centuries. In the case of Paekche, as will be seen, the technology of writing was slow to spread into various facets of elite life; while it appears some had access to it in the Hansŏng period, its uses remained restricted.

Inscribed Fragments from Pungnapt'osŏng

Within Paekche territory, some fragmentary inscriptions have been recovered from the P'ungnapt'osŏng 風納土城 site on the southern bank of the Han River, thought to be the site of Paekche's early capital at Hanam Wiryesŏng 河南慰禮城. P'ungnapt'osŏng is a long elliptical rammed-earth fortification erected on the relatively flat terrain just south of the Han River 漢江 in the southeastern part of

modern Seoul. There is over 2.1km of the fortress wall intact, with an original estimated total circumference of 3.5km, encompassing an area nearly 800,000 square meters (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 14). There is evidence that this location was settled as early as the first century, but that the site underwent a considerable expansion around the late third century, generally considered to be the period when Paekche emerged as a royal state (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 14-15). This location was first identified with Paekche's early capital described in the *Samguk sagi*, Hanam Wiryesŏng, by Japanese archaeologists working in the 1920s. However, Korean archaeologists generally considered the nearby Mongch'on t'osŏng 蒙村土城 to be the site of Wiryesŏng until rescue excavations at P'ungnapt'ŏsŏng began in earnest in 1997, revealing the scale of the wall surrounding the fortress, the presence of public buildings, and a vast number of features and prestige artifacts (An Chŏngjun 2015, 19). Not only has the considerable scale of the site been confirmed, the timeline of its construction—with it reaching its full/current size sometime in the mid-third century—and the range of its internal features—including ceremonial buildings, ritual pits, tiled-roof buildings, large pit-dwellings thought to have been home to high-level officials, a number of large storehouses, and roads running east-west and north-south—has become known. In addition, a large variety of ceramic artifacts from both north and south China, Lelang, Kaya, and Wa attest to the site as a center of thriving interregional trade (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 15).

Inscribed artifacts were first recovered from the site during an excavation carried out by the Hansin University Museum in 1999-2000 (An Chŏngjun 2015, 19). These consist primarily of an inscribed brick and some inscribed pottery fragments. A piece of brick bearing an inscription now thought to be the character 道 was discovered in a refuse pit, located just inside the fortress wall (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 17; An Chŏngjun 2015, 23). This pit is located ten meters from the southwest corner of a building feature thought to be a ritual site, and seven meters from another refuse pit which contained remains of a ceremonial nature. Furthermore, because the pit has also yielded the remains of a variety of land animals, including horse, ox, wild boar, deer, and bear, and a Former Han five *zhū* coin, it was probably a spot for ceremonial deposition, rather than an ordinary refuse pit (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 18; An Chŏngjun 2015, 24).

The inscribed brick, along with the Han coin, are two of the earliest pieces of evidence for the presence of writing in not just Paekche, but in the whole of the southern peninsula. The contents of the pit as a whole have been dated to the latter half of the third century, based not only on the style of recovered pottery fragments but several AMS dates from the animal bones (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 18-19; An Chŏngjun 2015, 24). The inscription was originally identified as '直,' but is now generally believed to be 道, written in a

Figure 1. Brick fragment with '道' inscription (Sŏul Yŏksa Pangmulgwan 2002, 94)

style of clerical script popular in the Later Han and Northern Wei periods, and also seen on the Kwanggaet'o stele (Sin Hŭigwŏn 2014, 17; An Chŏngjun 2015, 23). Sin Hŭigwŏn (2013) suggests this brick points to a larger culture of writing during the Hansŏng period—and indeed that writing was widespread in Paekche from at least the third century (29-30). However, it is difficult to take this single-character inscription as indicative of the role of inscription at Wiryesŏng: while its discovery suggests writing had some presence at Paekche's earliest capital, it amounts to a mere fragment and remains a relative outlier in terms of datable inscribed artifacts from the kingdom.

Other inscribed fragments recovered from P'ungnapt'osŏng are dated to the fifth century, and their nature suggests that the third-century brick fragment was likely apprehended "alegibly."[8] The fifth century inscriptions are mainly pieces of inscribed pottery, with most consisting of just one or two characters. There remains some question as to whether certain characters, such as 井, belong to the category of "symbol" rather than "writing"; however, when we consider that in the majority of cases, the characters found on inscribed pottery were likely apprehended alegibly by those who produced and handled them, the distinction between "symbol" and "writing" is less meaningful. Rather, their fragmentary nature speaks to the nature of written culture at P'ungnapt'osŏng as a whole: while writing was present, it maintained a marginal, largely symbolic significance. Indeed, the inscribed pottery pieces found at the site, including the brick fragment inscribed with 道 discussed above, have been recovered exclusively from features associated with ritual practice.

The Seven-Branch Sword

The inscription on the famous Seven-Branch Sword, held at Japan's Isonokami Shrine located in Tenri, Nara prefecture, might be similarly understood as symbolic. Since coming to light early in the Meiji period (1868-1912), this object has been the subject of countless studies which attempt to interpret the content of its inscription, debate its proper dating, and determine its significance for understanding early Paekche-Wa relations (O T'aekhyŏn 2015b, 602).[9] The 61-character inscription that spans both its front and back surfaces certainly suggests a certain competency in composing inscriptions in the kingdom of Paekche. If the conventional date of 369 is accepted, it too belongs to Paekche's Hansŏng period and is one of the earliest extant inscriptions to

Figure 2. The Seven-Branch Sword of Isonokami Shrine (O T'aekhyŏn 2015b, 603)

[8] In other words, the character would not have been "read" for its true semantic value ["path, way"] but rather its visual presence in and of itself would have been meaningful; see Introduction for further explanation of this term, coined by David Lurie (2011).

[9] Some of the more impactful studies include Saeki Arikiyo 1977, Miyazaki Icihsada 1982, and Yoshida Akira 2001.

have been produced in the kingdom.[10] The language of its inscription contains many of the flourishes typical for an object such as a sword, noting its material superiority and its promise to bring good fortune to its bearer and his descendants. Part of the inscription recounts the circumstances behind its manufacture, which, according to the most widely accepted interpretation, was ordered by a prince (or king) of Paekche for the king of Wa. However, while there are many historical questions that this sword is uniquely poised to answer, its inscription is rather unremarkable in its language use; that is, it mainly reproduces extant patterns, albeit accurately.

Side 1: 泰和四年十□〔一？〕月十六日丙午正陽造百練□〔鉄？〕七支刀□〔帯？〕避百兵宜供供候王□□□作

Side 2: 先世以来未有此刃百済王世□奇生聖音故為倭王□〔旨？〕造傳示□〔後？〕世

Side 1: Taihe Fourth Year, Eleventh Month Sixteenth Day, Yang Fire Ox, High Noon. [I] made this hundred-times refined iron seven-branched sword. With it at your waist, may you repel the hundred armies. May it be suitable for duke and king alike.[11] Made by □□□.

Side 2: Since time immemorial, there has never been a sword such as this. The Paekche kings for generations have relied upon the virtuous teachings.[12]

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[10] While 369 is the most commonly cited likely equivalent for the 'Fourth Year of Taihe' that appears in the inscription, this is by no means universally accepted. See Kim Ch'angho 2009, 87-92.

[11] The meaning of 宜供供候王 has proved a matter of some debate; 候王 does not seem to refer to a "vassal king" in the strictest sense (although it has been taken as referring to the intended recipient, the Wa king; see Kim Ch'angho 2009), and so some (See O T'aekhyŏn [2015b], 614; Lurie [2011], 86) have opted to interpret it as referring to 候 and 王 as two separate entities. In this interpretation, the preceding phrase 供供 is especially important: because the inscription on this side is focused on the sword's manufacture and its talismanic power, and there is yet no mention of its political role that is the focus of the second side, it is more appropriate to understand 供供 as to be "useful" or "suitable" than as meaning "to present," especially since the reduplication would suggest this is meant to be taken as a stative verb/adjective phrase, rather than an active verb. Another theory argues that 供 is being used in place of the homophonous 恭, and so 供供候王 can be taken as "reverent vassal king" (cf. Suzuki [2006]: 188; O T'aekhyŏn [2015b]: 614.). Suzuki Tsutomu (2006) argues for the separation of the five characters into 宜供 + 供候王 and interprets this as "it is appropriate for offering" + "may it be offered to a vassal king" (188-189).

[12] The character following 世 has often been deciphered as 子, creating the sequence 世子, "crown prince," and a reading of the entire sequence 百済王世子奇生聖音 as "the Paekche Crown Prince Kusu the honorable," where 奇生 is taken as the name of the Paekche crown prince (and is the name of a Paekche king who reigned 375-384, known as Kŭngusu ["the recent Kusu"] in the *Paekche Annals* of *Samguk sagi*), and 聖音 taken as an honorific title, possibly a transcription of a vernacular title (such as *nirim* in the Silla context). However, recent scholarship, including Suzuki Tsutomu (2006) and O T'aekhyŏn (2015b), has taken issue with the deciphering of the character following 世 as 子, and argued for the repetition of 世 instead. 奇 is then understood as an abbreviated form of either 寄 or 倚, allowing for the sequence 寄生, to be understood as "putting one's life on" or "relying on," and likewise 聖音 is understood as essentially corresponding to 德音, "virtuous words," which may refer to "the words of the son of heaven," or "the teachings of the Daoist immortals" (O T'aekhyŏn [2015b], 614). I have opted for this newer interpretation here because of the 故 that immediately follows this sequence. Without a predicate in the previous sequence, 故 does not fit the context; understanding

Therefore, for the Wa King [Zhi], [we] made [it], so that it might be passed down to future generations.

The style of inscription on the sword is remarkably enigmatic: scholars have struggled with whether to classify it as a type of clerical script, or a type of regular script, or something in between the two in terms of development (Suzuki and Kawachi 2006, 90-91). However, as Suzuki Tsutomu notes, legibility does not seem to have been a primary concern (unlike with both clerical regular script), as the placement of strokes is often odd or unbalanced, with the form of a character sometimes left unfinished (Suzuki and Kawachi 2006, 92). Therefore, while many of the character forms observed in the inscription resemble clerical or regular script forms from the Three Kingdoms through the Six Dynasties periods, the style is overall inconsistent, resulting in a variety of identifications of the script as belonging to the tradition of Eastern Jin 東晋, Northern Wei 北魏, or Wu 呉, but generally with dates clustering in the fourth and fifth centuries (Suzuki and Kawachi 2006, 92-104).

The inconsistency, roughness, and general illegibility of the inscription all point toward the rather tangential importance of the inscription in and of itself. That is, while in fourth century Paekche some individuals certainly possessed the capacity to manipulate writing when directed to do so by the king, the power of this particular inscription rested less in its ability to be read and interpreted than in its ability to designate this object as an embodiment of the relationship between Wa and Paekche (Lurie 2011, 86-88). The inscription's *presence* can thus be understood as more significant than its decipherable meaning; while it adheres to established patterns and consists of sentences ultimately decipherable by a literate eye, the inscription is fully in the service of the object, which possesses intrinsic value of its own, and could function in its designated capacity without the aid of its inscription. This type of functionality might be termed "affirmative": the inscription serves to affirm the sword's intended meaning, and functions effectively in this capacity, but the inscription itself does not create meaning. The inscription's annotative status is perhaps most clearly grasped when one considers the sword continued to be venerated over the centuries at Isonokami shrine, long after the inscription itself had rusted over.

Writing at the Ungjin Capital

The inscriptions found on two epitaph stones at the entrance to King Muryŏng's tomb (K. *Muryŏng wangnŭng* 武寧王陵) in Kongju assume a more symbiotic relationship with the stone surfaces onto which they are inscribed: on a different material, the efficacy of the inscription might be diminished, but deprived of the specific content of their inscriptions, the stones would be ineffective signifiers. Few inscribed artifacts can be attributed to the Ungjin period, when Paekche's capital was located at Ungjin fortress in modern Kongju, with the exception of an ink stone with a Liang reign date and some impressed roof tiles recovered from Kongsan

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the whole sequence as a name and title of the crown prince does not allow for a syntactically appropriate understanding of the function of 故.

fortress 公山城 (Pak Chihyŏn 2015a, 29-39), inscribed bricks from Songsan-ni Tomb No. 6 宋山里 6 号墳 as well as King Muryŏng's tomb (Pak Chihyŏn 2015b, 41-46), and the metal artifacts and two stone epitaphs recovered from King Muryŏng's tomb. The most significant extant pieces of inscriptive life from Paekche's capital at Ungjin are the two stone slabs found at the entrance to the tomb upon its discovery in 1971, which identify the king and his queen as the interred, and, interestingly, also feature a certifying document for the purchase of the land where the burial mound is located. These documents offer invaluable insight into funerary practice in Ungjin Paekche, while also displaying a confident command of Sinitic in a calligraphic mode reminiscent of styles popular in the Northern Wei and later in the Southern dynasties (Yi Chaehwan 2015, 49).

Figure 3. King Muryŏng's Epitaph Stone (Paekche munhwa kaebal yŏn'guwŏn 1992, 322)

Stone 1 (King's epitaph):

Side 1: 寧東大將軍百濟斯
麻王年六十二歲癸
卯年五月丙戌朔七
日壬辰崩到乙巳年八月
癸酉朔十二日甲申安厝
登冠大墓立志如左
□〔印？〕

Side 1: Pacifier of the East Great General King Sama of Paekche, at the age of sixty-two years, on the seventh day Yang Water Dragon after the new moon on Yang Fire Dog in the fifth month of the Yin Water Rabbit year, passed away. Upon the twelfth day Yang Wood Monkey after the new moon on Yin Water Rooster in the eighth month of the Yin Wood Snake Year, he was laid to rest, a great mound placed over his head.[13] The intent is as stated to the left.[14]

[13] The term 登冠 remains obscure, with interpretations including seeing it as a proper noun, i.e., the name of the "great burial mound" 大墓, or "erecting" (humble, literally, "raising over his head") the great burial mound for the king at the time of his interment. I have here rendered it as "placing/erecting" a great mound "over-head" 冠. See Yi Chaehwan 2015, 54; Kwŏn Oyŏng 2005, 92.

[14] There is considerable debate as to the meaning of this particular phrase. The 如左"as stated to the left" seems fairly clear, in that it seems to refer to the Land Purchase Register slab, placed to the left of the King's epitaph stone in the tomb (the queen's epitaph seems to have been added to the back of the Land Purchase Register slab upon her death/burial). The meaning of 立志 is less obvious, but seems to be related to the primary function of these slabs as ritual items securing the parcel of land the tomb rests on. The King's epitaph slab can then be seen as explicating the identity of the interred for the benefit of those to whom the Land Purchase Register slab would have had meaning, i.e., the gods of heaven and earth.

Stone 2 (Queen's epitaph/Land Purchase Register):

Side 1: 丙午年十二月百濟國王大妃壽
終居喪在酉地己酉年二月癸
未朔十二日甲午改葬還大墓立
志如左

Side 1: In the Yang Fire Horse Year, twelfth month, the Great Queen Consort of the country of Paekche's life reached its end. Mourning for her was conducted on the land in the direction of the Rooster [west]. In the Yin Earth year, on the twelfth day Yang Wood Horse after the new moon on Yin Water Ram in the second month, she was re-interred being returned to the Great Mound. The intent is as stated to the left.

Figure 4. Queen's epitaph stone (side 1) (Paekche munhwa kaebal yŏn'guwŏn 1992, 324)

Side 2: 錢一萬文　右一件
乙巳年八月十二日寧東大將
軍
百濟斯麻王以前件錢詣土王
土伯土父母土下衆官二千石
買申地為墓故立券為明
不從律令

Side 2: Coins: Ten Thousand *mun*;[15] for the matter to the right[16] Yin Wood Snake Year Eighth Month Twelfth Day,[17] Pacifier of the East Great General King Sama of Paekche, with regard to the preceding

Figure 5. Land purchase register (side 2) (Paekche munhwa kaebal yŏn'guwŏn 1992, 325)

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[15] Some ninety Han five *zhū* coins were found placed in between the two stone slabs in the tomb. Because these would not quite add up to ten thousand *mun*, it is assumed that their placement and thus the "land purchase" is meant to be symbolic, rather than literal, and "ten thousand *mun*" is simply meant to express "a large sum." See Yi Chaehwan 2015, 56.

[16] That is, the following matter.

[17] This is the same day that the King is said to have been laid to rest in his permanent tomb according to the inscription on the first slab. His "paying of respects" (詣) to the various deities listed, then, is figurative, or at least, performed on his behalf by those in charge of his burial/composition of the two stone inscriptions.

> matter, paid respects to the King of Earth,[18] the Duke of Earth,[19] the Mother and Father of Earth,[20] and the many various elite officials of the Earth,[21] to purchase this land to the southwest[22] for the construction of a grave. Therefore this register was erected to make this clear. Let he who does not acknowledge this be punished according to the law.[23]

There is some debate over whether these two stones in fact functioned as epitaphs, or are more rightly classified as land-purchase records (known as 買地券 [Kor. *maejigwŏn* Ch. *maidiquan*]), given that information typical of an epitaph—such as the king's accomplishments in life—is absent. Because of a relative lack of examples of epitaphs from the Southern Dynasties, with whom Paekche's relationship was exceedingly close,[24] it is difficult to discern with certainty whether these can be properly called "epitaphs." Based on the content of the inscriptions, it does seem possible that these stone slabs functioned primarily to secure the land on which the tombs rested, rather than to memorialize the interred (Im Ch'angsun 1974, 48; Yi Chaehwan 2015, 49). However, because there is no single consistent epitaph style known from the Six Dynasties, it could also be that these stones functioned in both capacities (Yi Chaehwan 2015, 49).

However, regardless of whether these slabs can be rightly classified as epitaphs, their content imbues the inscriptions with a ritual importance in the context of the act of burying the king and queen on this particular parcel of land. While the inscriptions are limited to the designation of specific dates for death, interment, and transaction, such basic information is both necessary and sufficient to create a

[18] The title 土王 is only found once among Chinese materials, in a similar "land purchase document" from the Wu kingdom, dated to the year 262. It is posited that this refers to a "king of the underworld," who presides over a court set up like an earthly court, with a king, ministers, and officials. This belief does not appear to have been widespread, however, due to the absence of other examples. See Yi Chaehwan 2015, 56; Zhang Chuanxi 2008, 291.

[19] One example of the title 土伯 is found in a Eastern Jin land purchase document dated to 338. See Zhang Chuanxi (2008), 291.

[20] This designation 土父母 is obscure, but may refer to the King Father of the East and Queen Mother of the West according to Chinese cosmology, or may refer to native Paekche gods. See Yi Chaehwan 2015, 56. According to Zhang Chuanxi (2008), no examples exist among Chinese sources (291).

[21] 二千石 would have been the standard salary amount for officials of a certain caliber, and thus here seems to indicate those officials 官 of elite status of "the earth," i.e., the underworld. Yi Chaehwan 2015, 56. While no examples of 土下衆官二千石 are found in Chinese sources, 地下二千石 is found in one example each from the Eastern Han, Liu Song (420-479), and the Sui. There is also one example of 土下二千石 from the Northern Zhou (557-581). Zhang Chuanxi 2008, 291.

[22] From the royal palace at Kongsan-sŏng. Literally, "in the direction of the monkey."

[23] This phrase is also a matter of some debate, but the basic meaning of a warning to those deities who might not honor the "contract" is generally agreed upon. There are no exact parallels in Chinese sources, although the land purchase register from a general's tomb in Nanjing has a similar phrase. It is perhaps best understood as a ritual incantation that seals the ceremonial contract, not unlike the common '急急如律令'. See Yi Chaehwan 2015, 57.

[24] This fact is reflected in the style and construction of the tomb itself. The brick-lined tomb of King Muryŏng and his queen is modeled directly on Liang precedents. See Mun Myŏngdae 1991, 344-346; Kwŏn Oyŏng 2005, 35-36.

ceremonial role for the inscribed stones; this role, because it was inscribed in stone, could then be performed in perpetuity, thereby securing a peaceful afterlife for both king and queen. The placement of coins in between the two epitaphs also attests to the role these stones played in the burial ritual itself, and the invocation of the different "earth" deities suggests the intended audience of the inscriptions was the set of deities mentioned, and not any human entity. It is therefore perhaps obvious that they should not feature any of Muryŏng's "worldly" accomplishments, but rather the bare-bones information necessary for the deities' acceptance of his petition to buy the land. As a result, they do not feature many rhetorical flourishes; the only thing that suggests a sort of ritual chant is perhaps the final line of the land purchase register, "不從律令 [Let he who does not acknowledge this be punished according to the law]." This adds to the overall feel of the two slabs as material signifiers of a ritual transaction, whose continued presence in the tomb allowed the effects of that transaction to be stretched out for eternity.

Where spoken language creates a momentary pact between the realms of the human and the divine, written inscription, through the transferring of language into a material form, allows that pact to transcend the moment of incantation. The ascendance of written language into this sort of ritual role, both supplementing and sometimes supplanting oral performance, attests to the expansion of the role of inscription in an elite ceremonial context. This development probably coincided with the increased presence of script in administrative functions—especially given the way that ritual transaction is "deeded" in the case of the Muryŏng tomb stone slabs—but no direct evidence for documentary bureaucracy is extant for any time prior to the Sabi period.

While these and other Ungjin period artifacts suggest a world in which writing was indeed available for certain purposes, particularly in proximity to the royal house, they do not offer any information about a written world beyond that limited scope. It has been suggested that the sophistication of the Muryŏng tomb inscriptions represents not only a culmination in the evolution of a Paekche-specific calligraphic style, but a peak in the development of an increasingly localized written culture;[25] while these inscriptions are indeed remarkable for a number or reasons, they are not sufficient, in light of the lack of other evidence, to stake the claim that written culture had thrived at Ungjin. It is not until the Sabi period that excavated artifacts permit an investigation of true "written culture" in Paekche.

Writing at the Sabi Capital

While the number of inscribed artifacts recovered from Ungjin capital sites remains scant, as archaeological excavations have proliferated in Puyŏ, inscriptions from the Sabi capital are increasingly abundant. Inscribed artifacts begin to appear as early as the mid-sixth century—immediately after the transfer of the capital to

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[25] Because the calligraphic style seems based on but deviates from that of the Northern Wei, Kim Pyŏnggi (1991) makes the argument that this is a Paekche-specific style developed locally over time after the initial adoption of Northern Wei calligraphic style. Kim Yŏnguk (2003) argues there are *idu*-style Korean word-order based sequences within the inscription, suggesting modes of vernacular transcription had already appeared within Ungjin inscriptive culture.

Sabi—with a large number of *mokkan* recovered from the Nŭngsan-ni temple site (K. *Nŭngsan-ni saji* 陵山里寺址), adjacent to the royal cemetery at Nŭngsan-ni at the eastern edge of Puyŏ, just outside of the former city wall (known as *Nasŏng* 羅城). In the central area of the capital, a large number of recovered artifacts bearing inscriptions, including many *mokkan*, date to the early seventh century and suggest that Paekche written culture had reached new heights during the kingdom's twilight era. For instance, the stele of Sat'aek Chijŏk (K. *Sat'aek Chijŏk pi* 砂宅智積碑), composed in beautiful parallel prose, along with Kuari Mokkan No. 47, show considerable mastery of cosmopolitan literary conventions, while the inscription on Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2 appears to preserve a moment of experimental composition.

In the Sabi period, it is clear that inscriptions, while still materially dependent, have attained a constitutive status: without them, the objects they occupy are of little value in and of themselves. The inscriptions have become primary signifiers, while their material simply gives them form. Nevertheless, in the case of wooden documents, the material was an enabling factor: the disposable medium of wood allowed for written life to flourish because *mokkan* were a writing surface where mistakes, revisions, and experimentation were all possible. It is this disposability of inscription that allowed for it to supersede its former role of annotation of an object and/or strict record-keeping. In the remainder of this chapter, I will delve into the structure of the written landscape at Sabi, with a focus on excavated *mokkan*, highlighting particular inscriptions that attest to the dynamic quality of wood as a medium. While inscriptive life in the Sabi capital was multi-faceted, *mokkan* served as its backbone, creating a space for types of writing absent from the written landscapes of Hansŏng and Ungjin.

Mokkan in the Sabi Capital

The exact layout of Paekche's capital at Sabi is still poorly understood. According to *Samguk sagi,* Sabi seems to have been a candidate for the capital's transfer as early as the reign of King Tongsŏng 東城王 (r.479-501), who went on several hunting expeditions there, and the earthen wall demarcating its northern and eastern boundaries, known as Nasŏng 羅城, was either under construction or possibly even complete by the time King Sŏng 聖王(r. 523-554) moved his court there in 538 (Kim Kyonyŏn 2005, 102). It is clear that the location was chosen for strategic defense purposes: the Kŭm River 錦川 marks its western border, while a large marsh extends to the south (Kim Kyonyŏn 2005, 102). Documentary sources and *mokkan* attest to a five-part division of the capital into sections known as 部, although the locations of these have yet to be determined through archaeological excavations. In addition, the roads of the capital do seem to have been set up in a grid system, but it is unclear how far this grid may have extended beyond the central capital. Meanwhile, the exact location of the palace and other key facilities has remained a matter of significant debate (Pak Sunbal 2010, 264-265).

Because of the concern with defense, the fortress on Mt. Puso 扶蘇山 in the north, along with the Kwanbung-ni 官北里 area at its foot, has long been considered

the likely site of the royal palace. More recent scholarship has placed the palatial complex in the Kwanbung-ni foothills and parts of the adjacent Kuari 舊衙里 district, with Mount Puso as a defensive/garden space (Pak Sunbal 2010, 274-276). Yi Pyŏngho (2013) goes a step further in arguing that, based on artifact distribution and the strategic locations of facilities established by the Tang military force that occupied Sabi after Paekche's defeat in 660, the palace may have included the entirety of the Kwanbung-ni, Ssangbung-ni 雙北里, and the northern part of the Kuari districts (see Figure 6; Yi Pyŏngho 2013, 118).

While little of Yi's theory can be proved conclusively through current archaeological data on features within this span, he compares the configuration of Puyŏ to that of Iksan 益山, where the detached palace at Wanggung-ni 王宮里 seems to have been built simultaneously and deliberately alongside the temple Chesŏksa 帝釋寺. In addition, in the Asuka 飛鳥 capital of ancient Japan, each successive palace in the early-mid seventh century seems to have had a particular spatial relationship with a temple. He argues that Chŏngnimsa 定林寺 is that temple for Sabi, and based on its placement within modern Puyŏ, asserts that the structure of the city itself must be understood as in Figure 6 (Yi Pyŏngho 2013, 118).

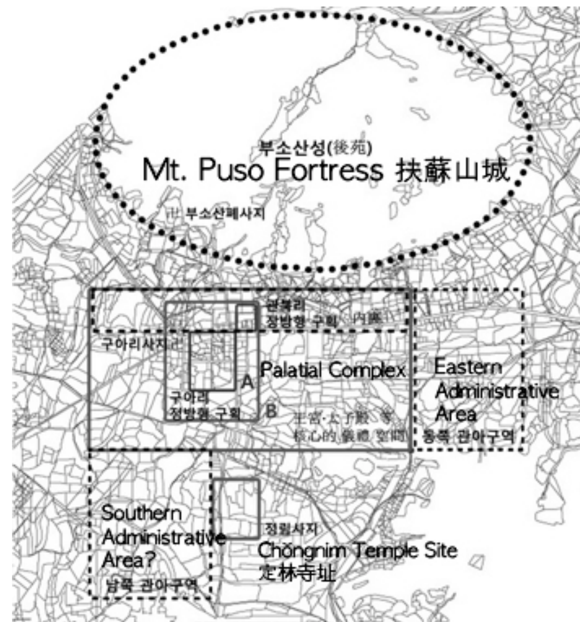

Figure 6. Sabi period palatial complex and placement of other important facilities (Yi Pyŏngho 2013, 118)

Some support for Yi's theory of the palace's location might be found in the distribution of *mokkan* finds in Puyŏ (Figure 7). To date, no *mokkan* have been recovered from the interior of the Mount Puso fortress. However, a number have been found in the area known as Ssangbung-ni, to the south and east of Mount Puso: here, a total of twenty-five *mokkan* have unearthed from eight different sites. Yi identifies this area as an eastern administrative extension of the palace, and the content of the *mokkan* found in this area generally supports this idea. Meanwhile, the Kwanbung-ni site also falls within the area Yi designates as the royal palatial complex (Yi identifies this particular area as the the residence of the royal family).

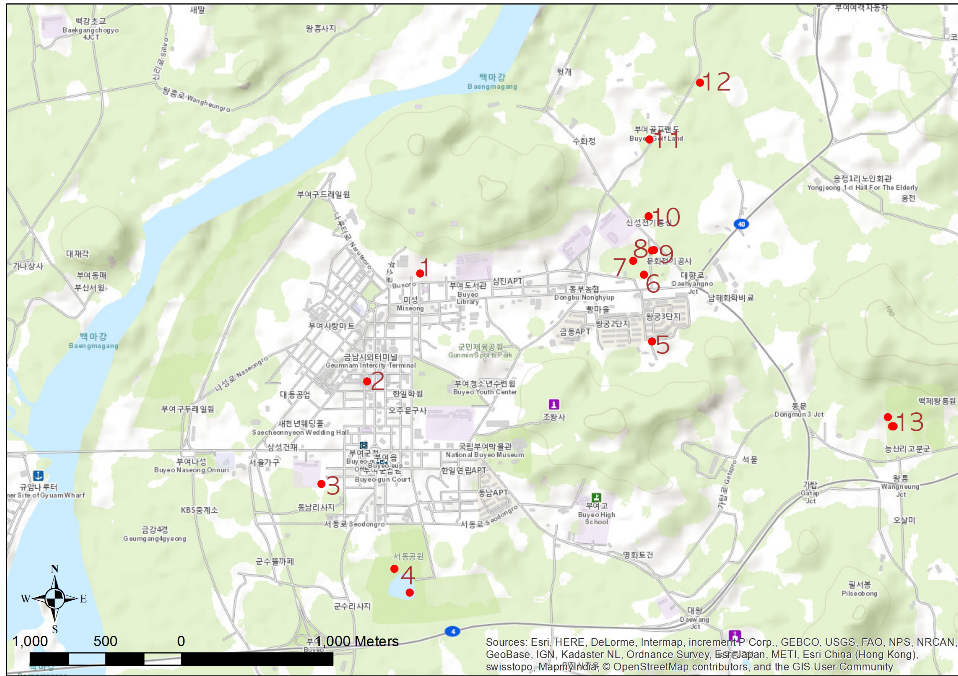

Figure 7. Mokkan sites in Puyŏ: 1) Kwanbung-ni Site; 2) Kuari 319/Puyŏ Holiness Church Site; 3) Tongnam-ni 216-17 Site; 4) Kungnamji Site; 5) Ssangbung-ni 102 site; 6) Ssangbung-ni 201-4 Site; 7) Ssangbung-ni Hyŏnnaedŭl Site; 8) Ssangbung-ni 173-8/Sabi 119 Site; 9) Ssangbung-ni 184-11 Site; 10) Ssangbung-ni 280-5 Site; 11) Ssangbung-ni 328-2 Site; 12) Ssangbung-ni Twitgae Site; 13) Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site

While the palace's shape may be considered somewhat atypical for an East Asian capital modeled on Chinese precedents,[26] its placement at the foot of Pusosan fortress, with the fortress itself as not only a defensive but also a "garden" space, may have been an appealing configuration. Overlaying Yi Pyŏngho's theory for the location of the palatial complex onto Figure 7 results in Figure 8 below.

[26] Given Paekche's relationship with the Liang dynasty in southern China, it is conceivable that Sabi would have been modeled in some manner on the Liang capital, but such connections have yet to be thoroughly investigated. It is known that Liang's capital at Jiankang was also home to a temple known as 定林寺 (Ch. Dinglinsi).

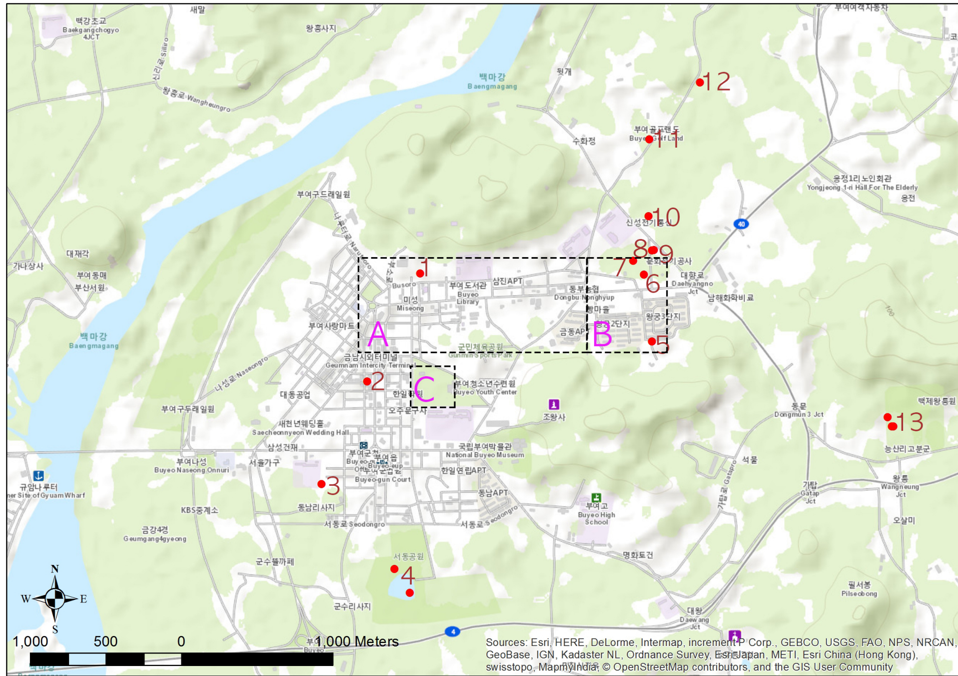

Figure 8. Mokkan Site Locations relative to the location of Yi Pyŏngho's theorized palatial complex

Based on Figure 8, five of the eight Ssangbung-ni sites fall within or immediately to the north of what Yi calls the "eastern administrative area" (B), an area he speculates was an expansion of the original palatial complex that was built after a flood in 612. Indeed, all eight of the sites that yielded *mokkan* in this area do seem to date to the early-mid seventh century (Yi Pyŏngho 2013, 117; 127). Yi does not identify the area to the immediate east of Mt. Puso Fortress, north of what he calls the "eastern administrative area," which encompasses the Twitkae, Ssangbung-ni 280-5, and Ssangbung-ni 328-2 sites, as being connected to the palace. However, given the trajectory of the outer fortress wall (Nasŏng), it is certainly possible that these sites were proximate, if not immediately within, the sway of officialdom.

In addition, other mokkan sites not immediately falling within the palace boundary nevertheless seem to have had a royal connection. These include the complex at Kungnamji Pond, at the southern edge of the capital, which was built and presumably used primarily by the royal house,[27] and the temple at Nŭngsan-ni,

[27] It should be noted that the current reconstructed Kungnamji does not accurately represent its scope/location during the Sabi period, although there is some overlap. Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2, discussed later in this chapter, was found in an irrigation channel on the northwest side of the pond, meaning it may not have originated from the royal complex itself, but from some sort of facility in close proximity (Kim Chaehong 2001, 428; Ki Kyŏngnyang 2014, 135).

located adjacent a royal cemetery just outside the outer fortress wall, which was founded by and probably remained under the control of the royal family. This leaves only the Tongnam-ni 東南里 216-17 (located near the site of the ruined temple at Tongnam-ni) and Kuari 319 (part of a private estate) sites as possibly without direct connection to the palace and/or the bureaucratic state.

The location of the final deposition of a *mokkan* is not the only factor in understanding its inscription and use-life as an object. However, the distribution of finds within Sabi, with such a large number coming from the Ssangbung-ni administrative complex or from within Yi's proposed palatial boundaries, suggests that overall *mokkan* were used as writing surfaces by officials within the state bureaucracy more than anyone else. However, as will be seen in the next section, the writings of these officials were not always "official" in nature. Furthermore, *mokkan* are also found in limited numbers outside of "official" areas, and so cannot always be assumed to have functioned in an "official" capacity.

Types of Mokkan from Sabi

Table 1 outlines *mokkan* finds from sites within the Ssangbung-ni area of modern Puyŏ. Of the twenty-five artifacts recovered from these eight sites, five can be conclusively classified as documents, while ten are tag *mokkan*. Of the remaining ten, two appear to be writing practice, one is an central rod for a scroll, one is a study aide featuring the multiplication tables, and six are of an unknown nature. While five may seem like a small number for "official" documents, out of the 80 total *mokkan* from Puyŏ, only fourteen can be put conclusively into this category (see Table 2), and five out of these fourteen are from the Ssangbung-ni site group. Meanwhile, those that can be conclusively classified as tags are also few: eighteen total out of 80, ten of which are from Ssangbung-ni sites. This is partly due to the overwhelmingly large number of Paekche *mokkan* that are difficult to classify into the standard categories of Document and Tag (and thus considered "Unknown"), but also bespeaks a relative diversity in the *mokkan* found outside the Ssangbung-ni area. It seems clear that "official" documents were being drafted on wooden tablets in the Ssangbung-ni area at a greater rate than elsewhere (with the possible exception of Kwanbung-ni, with three out of eight *mokkan* from the site being documents). Meanwhile, tag *mokkan*, which likely served as labels for the tax goods that flowed into government coffers, are also found with greatest frequency at Ssangbung-ni sites.

Site	Documents	Tags	Unknown	Other
Ssangbung-ni 102	0	1	1	0
Ssangbung-ni Hyŏnnaedŭl	1	3	2	1
Ssangbung-ni 280-5	1	1	0	1
Ssangbung-ni 173-8 (Sabi 119)	1	2	2	0
Ssangbung-ni Twitgae	0	0	1	1
Ssangbung-ni 184-11	0	1	0	0
Ssangbung-ni 201-4	2	0	0	0
Ssangbung-ni 328-2	0	2	0	1
Total (25)	5	10	6	4

Table 1. Mokkan classifications for sites in Ssangbung-ni, Puyŏ

Based on the information in Table 1, those *mokkan* from Sssangbung-ni that can be classified into either the Document or Tag categories make up 60% of all *mokkan* from these sites, with only 24% falling into the "unknown" category. Meanwhile, for Puyŏ as a whole (Table 2), only 40% can be conclusively classified as Document or Tag, while the percentage of *mokkan* classified as Unknown is roughly equivalent, at 37.5%. For only non-Ssangbung-ni sites, the number of Documents and Tags goes down to roughly 30%, while the number of Unknown climbs to 44%. The relative large number of Unknown among Paekche *mokkan* stands in stark contrast to Silla *mokkan*, where the majority can be conclusively identified as either Tag or Document *mokkan*. It is noteworthy that such a large percentage of Paekche mokkan, despite being decipherable to some degree, remain enigmatic in terms of their function.

Site	Documents	Tags	Unknown	Other
Ssangbung-ni 102	0	1	1	0
Ssangbung-ni Hyŏnnaedŭl	1	3	2	1
Ssangbung-ni 280-5	1	1	0	1
Ssangbung-ni 173-8 (Sabi 119)	1	2	2	0
Ssangbung-ni Twitkae	0	0	1	1
Ssangbung-ni 184-11	0	1	0	0
Ssangbung-ni 201-4	2	0	0	0
Ssangbung-ni 328-2	0	2	0	1
Kwanbung-ni	3	2	3	0
Kungnamji Pond	1	0	0	2
Nŭngsan-ni Temple site	3	4	17	11
Tongnam-ni 216-17	0	0	1	0
Kuari 319	2	2	3	1
Total (80)	14	18	30	18

Table 2. Mokkan classifications for all sites in present-day Puyŏ

These numbers might be at least partly explained through an understanding of how Paekche's written culture may have been divided among material surfaces. While there are many possible reasons for the significantly fewer numbers of *mokkan* found in Korea compared to Japan, poor preservation and possibly different waste management strategies cannot account entirely for the gap. *Mokkan* do not seem to have ever been mass-produced in either Paekche or Silla in the same way that they were in eighth century Japan; Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2013) notes that each *mokkan* seems to have been an individual piece, and often only minimal effort was expended during their manufacture (20-21). Further, it appears unlikely that several *mokkan* were ever tied together for the purposes of inscribing a longer text; rather, multi-surfaced *mokkan* (K. *tagakmyŏn mokkan*, referred to as *gu* 觚 in Chinese contexts) were used when more space was needed (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a: 73; Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2013: 21-24). Given Paekche's close relationship with the Liang court during much of the sixth century, and sustained relationships with the Sui and Tang thereafter, it is possible that paper was not as scarce as it might have been in Japan's early historic capitals. It is also possible that paper was being manufactured in Paekche. Unfortunately there is little empirical evidence concerning the availability of paper

in the Sabi capital, but based on the relative paucity of surviving *mokkan*, and the relatively low numbers of "official" document *mokkan* as compared to those of a more inscrutable nature, it seems probable that paper served as a more prominent surface for inscription in Paekche, while the role of *mokkan* was more restricted.

The high prevalence of writing practice *mokkan* does suggest that the role of *mokkan* as a material surface for writing in Paekche was somewhat specific. Among the 80 *mokkan* from Puyŏ, those classified as "writing practice" are fourteen in all, or 17.5% of total *mokkan*, and are equivalent in number to the Document *mokkan*. In fact, given that what appear to be Document *mokkan* may also contain some "writing practice," as in the example of the Chiyaga Meal Rice Record *mokkan* discussed below, many of those pieces that have been identified as Documents may in fact be better classified as drafted documents. While it may not always be possible to distinguish a draft from a "final" document, there are some strikingly draft-like qualities in the examples described below, which I argue are substantial enough to re-categorize them as "composition practice," a proposed sub-category of "writing practice."

Composing on mokkan

Writing on *mokkan* was necessarily ephemeral: what was important would be presumably copied onto paper, what was not could be simply discarded (either by scraping the text off the surface in order to reuse the wood, or discarding the entire piece). For those making use of *mokkan* as writing surfaces at Sabi, more than any other material they offered a space for experimenting with one's compositional skills. In the following pages, I will examine several examples of *mokkan* inscriptions that I think exhibit the productive possibilities inherent in a disposable writing surface. Although these inscriptions do not represent a majority of Paekche *mokkan* (see Table 2 above), such examples are numerous enough to allow us to understand written culture in Sabi as increasingly literary in orientation. Such an understanding is both appropriate and necessary context for considering the emergence of mid-seventh century works such as the Stele of Sat'aek Chijŏk.

Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site: inscriptive life on the fringes of mid-late sixth century Sabi

The Nŭngsan-ni temple site was discovered during the construction of a waste-water disposal system for a new exhibition hall to be located adjacent the Nŭngsan-ni tumulus group 陵山里古墳群. As construction got underway in 1985, a number of lotus-patterned roof-end tile fragments began to be unearthed, which prompted a series of excavations beginning in 1992 that continued through 2009 (Yi Ŭnsol and Yi Chaehwan 2015, 169). The excavation unearthed a previously unknown royal temple, which, according to an inscribed stone *sarira* reliquary[28] found at the site, was dedicated during the reign of King Widŏk 威德王, by his younger sister, possibly in memory of their father King Sŏng, whose mausoleum was

[28] That is, a stone container for Buddhist relics, often found buried under the foundation stone of a pagoda, and usually including crystal-like objects recovered from the cremated remains of Buddhist masters.

likely the first to be constructed at Nŭngsan-ni.[29] That such a temple should have stood adjacent a royal cemetery is perhaps unsurprising, but its existence was previously unknown from documentary sources, and the name by which the temple is known, Nŭng-sa 陵寺, literally, "mausoleum temple," is a matter of convenience, as its contemporary name has not yet be confirmed. However, this site has provided some of the richest material remains from any Sabi period temple, including the aforementioned inscribed stone reliquary, the renowned Gilt-Bronze Incense Burner (K. *Paekche kŭmdong taehyangno* 百濟金銅大香爐, discovered in 1993), countless ceramic roof tiles, ritual artifacts, and the single largest concentration of *mokkan* from a Paekche site.

Excavations have revealed a central gate, wooden pagoda, Golden Hall, and Lecture Hall, all built on a north-south axis, and surrounded by cloisters, in a style similar to that seen in other Sabi period temples (Kungnip Puyŏ Pangmulgwan 2007, 3).[30] A number of drainage canals have also been noted along the eastern and western edges of the site, which may have been based partly on natural waterways that pre-date the temple.[31] This has led to theorization that the manufacture of the *mokkan* may also pre-date the construction of the temple; in particular, it has been proposed that the *mokkan* may be related to the construction of the Sabi city wall (Nasŏng) itself, and thus pre-date even the transfer of the capital (Kondō Kōichi 2004; Kondō Kōichi 2008), or they are connected to the site's role in state rituals conducted in the four cardinal directions at the boundaries of the new capital (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2004; Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 113-161). Yi Pyŏngho (2008a) has advanced the most empirically grounded theory: based on the excavated contexts, one group of

[29] The reliquary inscription reads as follows: 百濟昌王十三季太歲在丁亥妹兄公主供養舍利 "In the thirteenth year of the reign of King Ch'ang of Paekche, when Jupiter was in the Yin Fire Boar position [i.e., in the Yin Fire Boar year], the king's younger sister, the eldest princess, offered this *sarira*." Although the inscription does not directly mention King Sŏng, many scholars have attempted to tie the *sarira* dedication by his daughter to his memory, based on the fact that Sŏng was probably the first and only king to be buried at Nŭngsan-ni at the time the temple was constructed. In addition, since Sŏng died in battle, the erection of a temple to help ensure his soul's successful transition may have been seen as an especially pertinent move. Because the previous king is not directly mentioned as he is in the reliquary uncovered from the Wanghŭngsa 王興寺 site, it is possible that the temple bore no direct connection to King Sŏng himself. However, the location of the temple does make this unlikely, and it is probable the temple came to serve as a place to pray for the pacification of all the royal souls that were buried there; it may have also have played a role in royal funerary services. A similar temple, said to have been located adjacent the alleged tomb of Koguryŏ founder Tongmyŏng 東明(Chumong 朱蒙), is cited as a precedent (indeed, such temples may have doubled as/been largely indistinguishable from royal ancestral shrines). Yi Ŭnsol and Yi Chaehwan 2015, 169-171.

[30] This one-pagoda one-Golden Hall configuration is seen elsewhere in Paekche temples such as Chŏngnimsa 定林寺 and Wanghŭngsa 王興寺, also located in Sabi. Mirŭksa 弥勒寺, located in modern Iksan, has three such layouts aligned side-by-side in a tripartite formation. All three temples were founded by the Paekche royal house.

[31] The site is located on low-lying swampy land, surrounded on all four sides by low peaks. Given the fact that the northern part of the site is at a slightly higher elevation than the southern side, good drainage would have been of considerable importance; presumably some time after the temple ceased to be active (probably around the time of Paekche's destruction in 660), the site was converted into terraced paddy fields, befitting the geographic features of the site. Kungnip Puyŏ Pangmulgwan 2007, 7.

mokkan date to the period immediately after the temple was first established, a second group contains *mokkan* deposited about the time the site transitioned from its previous incarnation into a temple complex, and a third group was deposited about the time the wooden pagoda was constructed, meaning they were likely produced by whatever facilities had been located there prior (56-60; see also Yi Pyŏngho 2008b). Of these three groups, however, the third is the smallest, consisting only of the two *mokkan* (Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No. 299 and No. 2001-8) recovered from the natural waste water canal on the southeastern side of the Central Gate. The majority of the remaining *mokkan* were recovered from the southwestern side of the Central Gate, and thus, they are probably in some way connected to the temple.

While the Nŭngsan-ni Temple seems to have been primarily a site for royal worship, its importance to the state was compounded by its strategic location: just outside the city wall at Sabi's eastern boundary. Indeed, the clergy who lived within the temple precincts may have been joined by bureaucratic officials tasked with monitoring traffic flowing through the capital's eastern gate. The content of some of the mokkan found here supports the notion that there was something of a dual presence. There were, then, potentially two sorts of people producing inscriptions at Nŭngsan-ni: Buddhist practitioners and state bureaucrats. Despite their marginal location relative to the location of the palace, given the importance of the temple, the individuals serving there were probably of some status, sponsored by or even members themselves of the royal house. In addition, the types of writings they produced, along with the striking material artifacts recovered from the site, suggest the temple at Nŭngsan-ni may have been one of the earliest Sabi period cultural centers.

From the Nŭngsan-ni temple site alone, ten "writing practice" *mokkan* dated to the latter half of the sixth century have been recovered. Not all of these classifications are conclusive, but this represents almost a third of the *mokkan* recovered from the site overall. Further, certain pieces, such as Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 8-1, also known as the "[Chiyaga] Meal Rice Record **支藥兒食米記**," clearly begin as documents, but then show a repurposing of parts of the *mokkan* for writing practice. The *Hanguk mokkan chajŏn's* (hereafter *CJ*) deciphering of the inscription on this mokkan is as follows:

Figure 9. Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 8-1 (Kungnip Puyŏ Pangmulgwan 2007, Plate 213)

Side 1: 支藥兒食米記 初日食米四斗〇二日食米四斗小升一〇三日食米四斗

Side 2: 五日食米三斗大升 六 日食三斗大二 七日食三斗大升二八日食米四斗大

Side 3: 食道使家□次如逢//使豬／小治//耳其身者如黒也〇道使後後弾耶方//牟氏／牟祋// 祋耶

Side 4:【又十二石〇又一二石〇又十四石〇十二石〇又石又〇二石〇又二石】 (*CJ*, 262)

Side 1: Chiyaga Meal Rice Record. First Day, meal rice four *mal*,[32] second day meal rice four *mal* one small *toe*,[33] third day meal rice four *mal*[34]
Side 2: Fifth day meal rice three *mal* one big *toe*, sixth day meal three *mal* two big, seventh day meal three *mal* two big *toe*, eighth day meal rice four *mal* big
Side 3: Meal *tosa*'s[35] house… __ch'a, Yŏbong, the Sori Chŏi, all of their bodies are as if black. After the *tosa* of rear T'anya-bang, Mo Ssi, Mo Tae, Taeya…[36]
Side 4: Another twelve *sŏm*,[37] another one two *sŏm,* another fourteen *sŏm*, twelve *sŏm*, another *sŏm* another, two sŏm, another two sŏm

This *mokkan* (Figure 9) is an example of a "writing rod" (Ch. *gu* 觚), or a "multi-surfaced *mokkan*" (Kor. *tagakmyŏn mokkan*). "Multi-surfaced *mokkan*" are often touted as unique to peninsular *mokkan* culture, being almost unknown in Japanese contexts (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 71-74; Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2013, 21-24). There are precedents in Chinese contexts: during the Han dynasty, such pieces were used as surfaces for the copying out of texts by aspiring students, as well as for the transmission of official state documents in a durable form (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 70-71). Yun Sŏnt'ae (2007a) argues it was the peninsula's unique contact with Chinese *mokkan* culture beginning in the Han Commanderies period (108 B.C.E.-313 C.E.)

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[32] In Korea, one *mal* is traditionally the equivalent of ten *toe*, or about 18 liters. However, the exact amount represented by 斗 varied greatly across historical periods and regions, and it is unknown what the relationship between 斗 and 升 might have been in Paekche. Further complicating the matter is the fact that "large *toe*" 大升 and "small *toe"* 小升 appear; this distinction is not found on other similarly datable inscriptions and so its nature is largely a matter of speculation (Yi Sŭngjae 2017, 127). Kondō Kōichi (2004) understands 小升 as it appears on Han Juyan Tablets 居延漢簡, as being equivalent to 1/3 of a 斗 (Ch. *dǒu*) (99). Yun Sŏnt'ae (2007a) argues that 大升 and 小升 that appear here cannot be equated with the 大半升 and 少半升 of the Han texts that Kondō sources, and that they more likely represent shorthand ways of representing a "one person portion" (小升) and "two person portion" (大升) developed for the sake of efficiency (137-139). According to Yi Yonghyŏn (2007a), one 'large *toe* 大升' was less than or equivalent to 1/3 of a *mal,* or 3 1/3 *toe*, while a 'small *toe* 小升' was simply a way of indicating a normal *toe* in contradistinction to 'large *toe*' (280-281).

[33] One *toe* is a measurement for grain, traditionally 1/10 of a *mal* (斗) and 1/100 of a *sŏm* (石). It is unknown if these relative values are accurate for Paekche.

[34] The readings *mal, toe,* and *sŏm* are based on traditional 'reading-by-gloss' renderings of these characters into Korean (as attested in Middle Korean). In the case of *mal,* this reading is also supported by part of the inscription on Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 306, which has been deciphered as '斗之末米' [*tu*, this is *mal* (rice)] (the character 米 [rice] is actually written smaller and to the bottom right of 末, likely meant to be an annotation, indicating perhaps that *tu = mal* is the case "for rice"). This inscription appears to give a phonogram-based reading of the character 斗 as 末 (*mal,* or **mat*), with 之 seeming to function as either a genitive or appositive particle (this would be something akin to '*tu in mal* [mal, which is tu]' or '*tu ŭi mal* [*tu*, that is, *mal*]' in modern Korean). Yi Sŭngjae 2017, 125-126.

[35] *Tosa* were officials dispatched from the center to administer territory in the provinces. See Kondō Kōichi 2004, 102. The term is attested in inscriptions from all three peninsular kingdoms (Koguryŏ, Paekche, Silla).

[36] For this translation, I have followed Yun Sŏnt'ae (2007a)'s interpretation. I offer a different interpretation in the following discussion (cf. Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 141).

[37] *Sŏm* (石) is the largest measurement unit for grains, traditionally the equivalent of ten *mal*, one hundred *toe,* or 180 liters. It is unclear exactly how much grain was in a Paekche *sŏm*.

that accounts for their unique prevalence in sixth century Paekche and Silla contexts. However, it should be noted that this "peak" in the use of multi-surfaced *mokkan* on the peninsula comes long after their prominence during the Han dynasty (73). Of the seventeen multi-surfaced *mokkan* found at Sabi capital sites, fourteen are from the Nŭngsan-ni temple site, and therefore dated to sometime in the mid-late sixth century, while only three have been recovered from seventh century contexts within the city proper. This *mokkan*, known as the Chiyaga Meal Rice Record *mokkan*, found during the eighth stage of excavations at the Nŭngsan-ni temple site in 2002, is one of the fourteen sixth century examples, and the longest of Paekche *mokkan* recovered to date, measuring 440mm x 20mm x 20mm. Moreover, it is thought the original length of the *mokkan* would have been around 500mm or more, based on the fact that the first side ends at the third day's provisions and the second side starts with the fifth day (Kungnip Puyŏ Pangmulgwan 2007, 320).

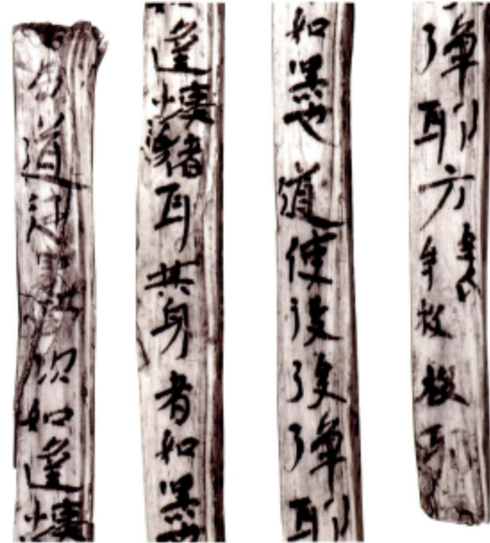

Figure 10. Side 3 of Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No. 8-1, infrared photo (*NSAM, 32*)

While it is unclear just who or what 支藥兒 may refer to,[38] this *mokkan*, at least on its first two sides, is easily understood as an account register, recording the provision of "meal rice" either to or by that entity. However, there is an abrupt change in the nature of the text on the third side, which seems to be written in a different hand, with a thinner tipped brush and in darker ink (see Figure 10). While the fourth side features simple writing practice of numerals and the counter 石 (*sŏm*) in repetition,[39] the third side cannot be immediately identified with this sort of calligraphic exercise or with the preceding document.

While some scholars have tried to understand the enigmatic text of the third side as somehow connected to the first two (e.g., Son Hwan'il 2010),[40] most

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[38] There are, of course, several theories. Yun Sŏnt'ae has advanced the idea that 支藥兒 was the name of a position for those who were in charge of the provision of medicinal plants grown in the provinces (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 142-3), while Yi Pyŏngho (2008a) argues that 支藥兒 was the name of a building or facility in charge of the distribution of rice or the storage of goods at the temple (Yi Pyŏngho 2008a, 78). Kondō Koichi (2008) argues that 支藥兒 is akin to the title 薬師 found on two of Silla King Chinhŭng (r. 540-576)'s territorial tour steles, and was likely someone responsible for distributing medicine to help stop the spread of disease (Kondō Kōichi 2008, 344).

[39] This might also be construed as additions to the register on the first two sides, but given that the text is at the opposite orientation of the first two sides and does not contain any dates(and the considerably larger scale of the measurement *sŏm* 石 compared to *mal* 斗), this seems unlikely.

[40] Son Hwan'il (2010) reads the third side as providing something of narrative bridge between the provisions outlined on the first two sides and then on the following fourth side. He sees the first two sides as describing provisions granted to 'Yaga' (藥兒) by some sort of central institution, but the

acknowledge that there seems to be something of a break between the main text of the "Chiyaga Meal Rice Record" (sides 1-2), and the text of the remaining two sides (cf. Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007a, 2007b; Kondō Kōichi 2008).[41] Yi Pyŏngho (2008) offers what would appear to be the simplest explanation for the disconnect: the first character on the third side, '*sik* 食' [eat; meal], is faint and seems to have been partially erased. Because it is spaced at a distance and to the upper right of the next character, '*to* 道,' and seems to be in a lighter shade of ink, Yi argues that it is an incompletely erased trace of a previous inscription. By Yi's estimation, the two characters identified as the sequence '*soch'i* 小治,' which appear alongside the sequence *'sajŏ* 使猪,' also appear to be traces of a previously erased text. In this case, '*so* 小' resembles in style the '*so* 小' seen in the sequence '*sosŭng* 小升' on the first face. This all suggests that the third face of the *mokkan* was a continuation of the account register found on the first two surfaces, but the original text was scraped off, albeit incompletely, to allow for a new inscription (Yi Pyŏngho 2008, 78-79).

This new inscription confounds standard classifications in that it features grammatically complete sentences, a relative rarity for *mokkan*, whose spatial parameters called for brevity and therefore usually contain only the essential information (i.e., mostly nouns; see sides 1 & 2 of this *mokkan*). Yi Pyŏngho (2008a) suggests that the first two sides offer an objective account of provisions, meant to be read by others, while the third side is a subjective self-memo to help recall identifying characteristics of certain individuals for the same writer (82-83). There are some similarities in calligraphic style between sides 1&2 and side 3 that may indicate the inscriptions are by the same person. However, given that Yi argues this *mokkan* shows signs of erasure and re-inscription, it is equally possible to imagine the third side as the work of a separate individual. Furthermore, if the content of the third side is nothing more than a few notes about the physical appearance of certain *tosa*, meant to facilitate the scribe's own recall of said individuals, why does it feature complete sentences?

Yi Pyŏngho (2008) argues that this third side exhibits a subjective point-of-view inflected with the scribe's own self-awareness. He sees this self-awareness in the act of taking down a "self memo," in essentially opening up a dialogue between self in present and self in future (82-83). While I do not take issue with Yi's assertion

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third side shifts to describing a certain *tosa*, named Mo Tae 牟祋, and it is that *tosa* who then grants additional provisions as described on the fourth side. It was at the home of the *tosa* Mo Tae that the scribe met a *sori* 小吏 who raised pigs, whose body was black (i.e., dirty) (Son Hwan'il 2010, 241).

[41] Yun Sŏnt'ae (2007a) does not offer a convincing theory as to why the content changes so drastically on the third side, but he does seem to acknowledge that the third side is likely a different sort of document/record than that of the first and second sides (138-144). Yun Sŏnt'ae (2007b) argues that the third and fourth sides are both distinct from the "meal rice record" of sides 1-2, with the third side containing short memos about individuals who have come from the provinces (he sees the text as primarily consisting of a list of names with either ranks or place names – see initial translation above), and the fourth side being calligraphic practice (83-87). Kondō Kōichi (2008) does not attempt to explain the third side's function in relation to the other three sides, but he does argue that the text consists of the names and origins of officials from the provinces who had come to the facilities at Nŭngsan-ni (the temple and/or checkpoint), about whom a certain scribe felt the need to jot down some notes (345).

of scribal awareness, I believe this face of the *mokkan* can be best understood as an example of composition practice, rather than as an inscription that served some "practical" or "official" purpose. The reuse of part of a *mokkan* that formerly functioned as a document or tag for calligraphic practice was not uncommon. The fourth side of this *mokkan* is case-in-point: the repetition of numerals and the measurement '*sŏm* 石,' the omission of important "practical" information such as dates (which figure prominently on sides 1 and 2, the main text of the record), and the opposite orientation of the text, are all features which mark this side as calligraphic practice. Although there is no clear evidence of erasure on this side, it seems that the remaining unused space on the fourth side of the *mokkan* was adopted for the purpose of this writing exercise. However, side 3 of this "Chiyaga Meal Rice Record" *mokkan* shows that parts of a *mokkan* might also be reused for "jotting," or what I argue is more aptly referred to as "composition practice."

The idea that the text of side 3 is a "memo" of sorts does not preclude its identification as "composition practice." While our scribe may have indeed been interested in storing information about certain *tosa* for later recall, a close examination of the inscription suggests he was also clearly attentive to the form in which he did so. The text on this face can be broken down into several smaller segments. As noted above, Yi Pyŏngho (2008) has argued that this *mokkan* shows signs of erasure and reuse. Yi does not mention in this context the two graphs that come in between the first '*tosa* 道使' and the character '*ch'a* 次,' which the *Hanguk mokkan chajŏn* identifies as '家 .' Like the other characters that seem to have been "erased," these characters are in a considerably lighter shade of ink and are partially obscured by a natural feature of the wood that may have hindered erasure and/or re-inscription. Given that the inscription on this side was, in all likelihood, for the scribe's eyes only, it is possible that these were simply left as-is from this face's previous use. In addition, *tosa* 道使 as written at the top looks to be in a considerably less practiced hand than when it appears again below; while both instances of *tosa* do appear to have been written by the same person, the shade of the ink and the thickness of the brush strokes suggest they were perhaps written at a different time or with different implements, and with differing degrees of precision. We might accordingly set aside the first five characters in the inscription on this face, as either pieces of a previous inscription or as isolated moments of calligraphic practice. It is then possible to begin with '*ch'a* 次,' whose placement after the laceration in the wood and inscription in a deeper shade of ink suggests the beginning of a new inscription. While '*ch'a* 次' is normally interpreted as part of a person's name (as are the following '*yŏbong* 如逢' and '*chŏi* 猪耳,' with *'sori* 小吏' being understood as a title),[42] it is also possible to understand its function as adverbial and thus as beginning a new sentence. This allows for the parsing of the following twelve characters of the text into two six-character segments, each ending with a sentence final ('*i* 耳' and 'ya 也'). While these are by no means a poetic

[42] The character 次 is attested in personal names of individuals of Paekche background in Buddhist inscriptions from the early Unified Silla period. Yun Sŏnt'ae 2007, 139-140.

parallel couplet, they do show that our scribe was tuning his content to fit a particular form:

> 次如逢使猪耳　其身者如黒也
> Thereupon it was just as if meeting a boar messenger. His body was as if black.

As noted above, what comes before '*ch'a* 次' seems to be the product of a separate "inscriptive moment," while what follows '*ya* 也' is yet another blank space, almost a full character's size, before the second '*tosa* 道使' appears. Visually these two sentences are set off as a pair; even the space between them is mediated by the final stroke of the character '*i* 耳,' which dangles almost to the top of '*ki* 其.' These two sentences are also written in characters slightly narrower than those found toward the bottom of the *mokkan*, which fill its entire width. All of this would seem to mark them as a separate and distinct inscription from the remaining text on this face.

Without any further context, these isolated sentences read as nonsense. The nonsensical quality might be construed as another indication that this was composition practice: while the scribe has devoted considerable attention to form, his content seems relatively inconsequential, bordering on "playful." Despite this playful tone, the text itself appears carefully constructed, with the scribe attentive not only to meter but also to word choice: '*i* 耳' ['just', 'that is all'] suggests a hint of exaggeration and enthusiasm, while '*yŏ* 如' ['as if'] creates an impression of uncertainty, a difficulty in reaching a clear understanding of what one is experiencing. In other words, our scribe seems to be attempting to find the words, so to speak, that can translate his thought into script. This inscription, then, appears to be a work in progress, inscribed on a surface that had once featured a relatively mundane record, and which might have later featured some other sort of text, should another moment have called for this particular inscription's erasure.

The inscription on this *mokkan* has survived and is studied by scholars in the present entirely by accident. Its current status as a piece of cultural history does not mean we should disregard its basic identity as moment of "drafting" or preliminary composing. This fact is all the more apparent as we continue down this face: the text that follows these twelve characters returns to simple calligraphic practice of place and personal names. This inscription seems to be the product of a moment where an ambitious scribe attempted to weave a sentence or two amidst calligraphic exercises. The act of turning briefly to experiment with sentence form, for the purpose of both practice and entertainment, is perhaps a natural outgrowth of a material environment (the wood surface) that encouraged the pursuit of refinement in calligraphic form.

This particular *mokkan,* along with the others from the Nŭngsan-ni Temple site, is generally dated to about the third quarter of the sixth century (with some scholars arguing for a slightly earlier date). As seen in Table 2, Nŭngsan-ni Temple site *mokkan* are overwhelmingly classified as "unknown," with only a few cleanly fitting into the standard categories of "Documents" and "Tags." Indeed, there is a notable diversity in the types of writings observed on the Nŭngsan-ni *mokkan*: in

addition to records of meal provisions such as the "Chiyaga Meal Rice Record" *mokkan*, there have been found *mokkan* featuring ritual texts for the performance of road-side rites (Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 295) as well as written instructions for the performance of official duties (Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 301). Further, as noted above, there is no shortage of examples of calligraphic practice; as in the case of side 3 of the "Chiyaga Meal Rice Record" *mokkan,* calligraphic exercises might also provoke composition practice. In addition to such efforts, full drafts of works of poetry and prose can also be found among the corpus of Paekche *mokkan*, which suggest that scribes were operating within a larger written culture that valued formal sophistication as well as calligraphic mastery. One of the earliest examples of such "drafts" is the inscription on this *mokkan* from Nŭngsan-ni (Figure 11):

Side 1: 宿世結業同生一處是／非相問上拜白来
Side 2: 慧暈◯師□（藏？）
(*CJ*, 260)
Side 1:
宿世結業 In a previous life, our karma became intertwined
同生一處 And in this life, we are once again together—
是非相問 So let us ask each other what is right and wrong
上拜白来 Bowing before you,[43] I come to humbly plead.
Side 2: Hyehun [of] master's repository

Figure 11. Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 305 (*NSAM,* 21)

Kim Yŏng-uk (2003) was the first to argue that the text on this *mokkan*, known as Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No. 305, could be segmented into a verse consisting of four four-character lines (140-144). Since then, this *mokkan* has been generally accepted by scholars to contain a work of "Paekche poetry," although there is some disagreement over interpretation (cf. Yi Sŭngjae 2008, Cho Haesuk 2006, Kim Yŏngsim 2009). Moreover, because of the paucity of surviving material from Paekche, literary historians have been eager to ascribe this verse "canonical" status as a work of Paekche literature (cf. Cho Tong-il 2005: 1:133-134).

While the text on this *mokkan* is certainly remarkable, the push to canonize elides sufficient consideration of the material context. The text was composed on a *mokkan*, and as such shares material form with a number of other 'preliminary' texts: raw records to be compiled in final form later, calligraphic and/or

[43] The formulation 上拜 literally means "bowing upward," but this formulation is awkward in English. It suggests the bow is being "offered up" to someone who is "above" the speaker, and so I have chosen to translate as "bowing before you" (i.e., "bowing in your presence").

composition practice, drafts of important documents. Even if this was its final form, and assuming it circulated beyond its composer, the fact that this verse was inscribed on a *mokkan* likely communicated something of its relative importance to those who came in contact with it. Furthermore, this *mokkan* features the name of a Buddhist priest, was found at the site of a prominent temple, and its inscription features Buddhist-inflected terms such as '*sukse* 宿世' ["previous life"], '*kyŏrŏp* 結業' ["intertwined karma"], and '*tongsaeng ilch'ŏ* 同生一處' ["this life, same place"]. The solemn humility expressed in the fourth line suggests an exchange between someone of lower rank and someone of higher status, and therefore a specific social interaction. The language of this line would not be out of place in an official request document, and despite the verse form of its inscription, this *mokkan* may have functioned as a document exchanged within the temple hierarchy, as a material index of the forging of an important social bond.

None of these factors make this verse any less "literature," but they do necessitate reflection on the ability of this inscription to accurately represent "Paekche literature." The syntax appears to be more or less standard Sinitic, with the possible exception of the fourth line; while Kim Yŏng-uk (2003) argues it is composed in Paekche *idu* 吏讀,[44] Cho Haesuk (2006)'s interpretation of it as a Paekche verse "translated" into Sinitic is probably more accurate. Translation would surely have been one fundamental component of the production of any sort of inscription in this period; the additional step of fitting a translated text into a pre-existing Sinitic literary form (four-character verse) suggests an awareness of the process of composition beyond mere mechanics. The calligraphy on this *mokkan* is generally neat and there seem to be about half-character-sized spaces left open between each four-character "line," emphasizing the intentional nature of the metered form of the inscription, and suggesting a desire for an appealing presentation. However, the arrangement of characters is not especially precise, with nine in the right column and seven in the left, and in the left column character size begins to vary considerably, with the final character written seemingly without as much concern for legibility. In addition, possibly due to natural features in the wood, there is an especially large gap left open between the final two characters, '*paek* 白' and '*rae* 來.' While these imperfections do not necessarily mean the object itself was not exchanged, it could suggest this was a draft or practice version.

[44] *Idu,* as Kim Yŏng-uk is using it, is an umbrella term to refer to methods of transcribing vernacular Korean language(s) using Sinographs. He argues this verse would have been read-by-gloss (*hundok*) into the Paekche language.

Another peculiar feature of this *mokkan* is its shape: it is a small, relatively wide rectangular shape with remarkable thickness, measuring 128mm x 31mm x 12mm. The only similar example found thus far is an eighth century Silla *mokkan*—Anapchi Mokkan No. 206 (Figure 12), excavated from Anapchi Pond in Kyŏngju—which also features what appears to be metered text. This piece measures 145mm x 42mm x 10mm, and includes two columns of six and five characters, respectively, on front and back. While the first column on the first side starts out in a relatively neat and even regular script, the second column seems squeezed in as an afterthought; on the back, the calligraphy begins to look more like grass script.[45] While these are only two examples, a comparison of these physically similar *mokkan* which both feature metered text suggests a certain type of *mokkan* may have been utilized for the drafting of verse. Outside of these two, no other similarly shaped *mokkan* have yet been identified. Based on the manner in which the style and spacing of the text deteriorate toward the end of the inscription in both examples, it seems unlikely this was the verse's final form in either case. Poetic composition is something for which initial drafting was likely an important step; that this drafting may have occurred on a disposable surface such as a *mokkan* is an important possibility to consider.

Figure 12. Anapchi Mokkan No. 206 (*NSAM*, 154)

Among early historic Japanese *mokkan* are a sub-category of approximately forty pieces known as *uta mokkan* 歌木簡, or "poetry mokkan," which contain verses or fragments of verse in the vernacular. However, none of these bear particular resemblance to the "Song of Karmic Bonds from a Previous Life" *mokkan*, or to Anapchi Mokkan No. 206. Further, they seem to have largely been used in performative/ritual contexts, or to be examples of calligraphic practice (cf. Sakaehara 2011; Frydman 2014). While it is possible that the Paekche and Silla examples cited here may have functioned in performative/ritual contexts, this would probably have taken a quite different shape from the hypothesized use of *uta mokkan*. Unlike the Japanese *uta mokkan*, which Sakaehara (2011) hypothesizes to have been about three times the length (about 360mm, or two *shaku* 尺) and contain text largely composed in phonograms, these two *mokkan* are more compact and in nearly pure Sinitic (or possibly a form of logogram-centric transcription of the

[45] For a more detailed discussion of this *mokkan*, see the Conclusion.

vernacular, per Kim Yŏng-uk), making it hard to imagine they could have been of particular use to an oral performer of verse.

This composition, then, which has been dubbed "Song of Karmic Bonds from a Previous Life" (*Suksega* 宿世歌), is likely either a piece of correspondence or a draft of a verse, but was probably not circulated as "literature" on a *mokkan* or used as an aid in oral performance. While there seems to have been effort expended for presentation in terms of both literary and calligraphic form, some features of the inscription suggest this was not the final incarnation of this particular inscription. Its language is certainly more poetic than the "nonsense" sentences of side 3 of the "Chiyaga Meal Rice Record," but given the way in which the verse positions its speaker vis-à-vis its addressee, it seems probable that a more polished version was later produced, possibly on a different material, to be offered to the intended recipient. Nevertheless, this *mokkan* is another example of an inscription from the Nŭngsan-ni site where content has been molded to fit an existing literary form.

The temple at Nŭngsan-ni in the late sixth century seems to have been home to a variety of unique inscriptive moments, with a high occurrence of not just "writing practice" but what might be more aptly called "composition practice." Such moments are likely attributable to both civil officials (as with Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No. 8-1) and to individuals of a religious persuasion (Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No. 305). While excavations have not yet uncovered any contemporaneous examples from within the city of Sabi proper, early and mid seventh century sites in the Ssangbung-ni and Kuari districts have yielded a number of *mokkan* that show similar trends. Ssangbung-ni is the home to several smaller sites which have yielded, on average, about three *mokkan* each. So far, only one site within the Kuari district, the Puyŏ Central Holiness Church Site at Kuari 319, has yielded mokkan.

Ssangbung-ni Sites: Inscriptive Life in the Bureaucracy

The eight Ssangbung-ni sites are scattered to the east of Mount Puso Fortress, in more or less a vertical arrangement from north to south. This arrangement is probably the result of a drainage canal running in a northward direction from the foot of Mount Kŭmsŏng 錦城山, where the Ssangbung-ni 102 site is located, toward the Kŭm River and the Wŏlhamji 月含池 reservoir just below the fortress on Mount Ch'ŏngsan 青山城 (Chŏng Tongjun 2015, 295-296). If Yi Pyŏngho's theory of the layout of the Sabi capital is to be believed, at least the sites to the southern part of Ssangbung-ni may have been home to palatial administrative facilities from around 612. In addition to counting and documenting, officials in the Ssangbung-ni area used *mokkan* as learning aids—e.g., the multiplication tables on Ssangbung-ni 328-2 Mokkan No. 3—a fact that highlights the role of *mokkan* in the written life of Sabi as a space for learning and honing both one's literacy and literary competence.

Ssangbung-ni 102 Site

The Ssangbung-ni 102 site was the first of the Ssangbung-ni site group to be excavated. As the result of impending construction at the site, Chungnam National University Museum excavated in 1998. A number of Sabi period settlement features

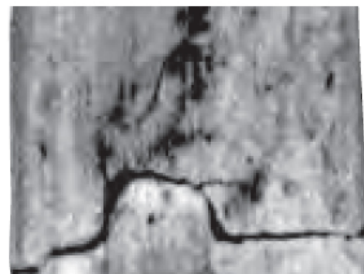
were unearthed, including a drainage canal, a well, and a stone building platform. From the drainage canal were recovered two *mokkan*, one partial and one complete, along with a wooden ruler with increments of 1.5cm (Chŏng Tongjun 2015, 296-297; *RHKM*, 234). These wooden artifacts were found on the western bank of the canal in an organic sediment layer that also included some inscribed pieces of pottery, stamped roof tiles, and agate ornaments. However, these artifacts are thought to have accumulated there after being brought downstream from a higher point by the current. This means they may not have any connection to this particular site, having originated at some sort of facility to the immediate south, at the foot of Mount Kŭmsŏng (Chŏng Tongjun 2015, 297). Nevertheless, the content of the *mokkan*, along with the strategic geography of the expected point of origin, does suggest that facility, and likely the site at Ssangbung-ni 102, had some sort of official function. The single complete *mokkan* found at the site, Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 317, is particularly interesting in this regard:

Figure 13. Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 317 (*NSAM*, 63)

Side 1: ·那内□連公

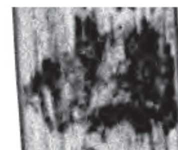
Side 1: Nanae □ muraji no kimi

This *mokkan* assumes the characteristic "tag" shape, meaning it was likely attached to a shipment of some kind coming into the facility. The legible text on the first side appears to be a personal name, either of the sender or of the recipient. What is most noteworthy about this particular *mokkan*, however, is that the name appears to be that of a Wa (Japanese) individual. In fact, Hirakawa Minami (2009) has argued that the second character is in fact 尓, not 内, and the third character can be inferred to be 波(while the right side does bear a resemblance to this character, the left side is indecipherable), making the name 那尓波連 or, Naniwa no *muraji*—*muraji* 連 being one of the higher family aristocratic titles (*kabane* 姓) used in pre-eighth century Japan (Hirakawa Minami 2009, 133). However, both *CJ* and Hong Sŭngu (2013) identify the character as 内, and based on a comparison of infrared photos, I am inclined to agree with them (see Figure 14). Although it is possible to extract a 尓



Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 317

Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No 307.



Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site No. 300

Figure 14. Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 317, close up infrared image of second character as compared to 尓 as seen on Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site Mokkan No. 307 and 内 as seen on Nŭngsan-ni Temple Site No. 300 (Photos from *CJ*)

from the text as present on the *mokkan*, this can only be done through willfully evading what otherwise seems to be clearly the top part of 内. Furthermore, the faint outline of the right side of the enclosure can be made out in the infrared photograph. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the possible reading of the name as Naniwa, or some close phonetic proximity thereof, since 内 is known to be used in other Korean sources for the representation of syllables such as –ni- or –nʌ- [perfective aspect]. Even if the name transcribed here is not "Naniwa," the sequence 連公 is in all likelihood a Japanese title (one appropriate for an early seventh century context), meaning this individual was probably of Wa origin, and for some reason, present in the Sabi capital in the early part of the seventh century. It is known from both Chinese and Japanese sources that individuals of Wa descent were dwelling in the Sabi capital, and some of them indeed worked for the central bureaucracy (Chŏng Tongjun 2015, 300; Hirakawa Minami 2009, 143). Further, this name does not resemble other names transcribed on Paekche *mokkan*, and so it is not all that farfetched to imagine it is a non-Paekche name. This tag *mokkan*, which features the name of this individual and nothing else, may have been something like an ID badge, or else it may have identified provisions for this particular person, as so many examples from Haman Sŏngsan Fortress do (see Chapter 2). Regardless of its particular function, the fact that it seems to confirm the presence of Wa individuals among the inscriptive community of Sabi is remarkable.[46]

The Ssangbung-ni 102 site is thought to have been located along a key route connecting the Sabi capital with the former capital of Ungjin via present-day Nonsan. To the immediate south, where the *mokkan* and other artifacts are thought to have originated, are the foothills of Mount Kŭmsŏng, making the site perhaps an ideal location for a checkpoint. At the very least, the facility from which these *mokkan* originated had some use for measurements, as evidenced by the discovery of a wooden ruler. That the name of a Wa individual should appear on a tag *mokkan* recovered here suggests such a checkpoint was host to those from far and near. It would seem appropriate that such an environment should also be host to varied types of writing. The other *mokkan* recovered from the site, Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316, although damaged and perhaps

Figure 15. Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316 (*NSAM*, 62)

[46] Another possible connection to Wa/Japan can be found in two *mokkan* recovered from the Kwanbung-ni site, Kwanbung-ni Mokkan No. 810 and Kwanbung-ni Mokkan No. 823, which are made of *hinoki* cypress, a wood that must have been imported from the Japanese archipelago. No other *mokkan* recovered from the Korean peninsula are known to be made of this material. See *CJ,* 872.

incomplete, is of a quite different character than the "name tag" of the Wa official. It reads:

Side 1: 呼時伎兄来〈〉
Side 2: 屋上部聞成〈〉
Side 1: When I call, he[47] comes to me
Side 2: At my dwelling, it is heard ["…."]

The translation above is based on a preliminary interpretation of the content as a vernacular text. Not much has been written about this particular *mokkan*, given the obscurity of the inscription; Chŏng Tongjun suggests that if the damage to the extant piece is minimal, it might have originally contained a seven-character *hansi* couplet (Chŏng Tongjun 2015, 299). It seems clear that this is probably some sort of poetic text; however, while there may be some illegible characters following both 来 and 成, and thus the inscriptions may have originally been slightly longer on both sides, the syntax here remains difficult to identify as that of Literary Sinitic. On the first side in particular, the sequence 時伎 seems to feature final-sound affixation (*marŭm ch'ŏmgi* 末音添記), a practice heretofore seen mostly in Silla texts (see Lee SeungJae 2016), to transcribe what I have tentatively read as /*ceki*/ [time]. However, no "final sounds" are affixed preceding this sequence, for instance, to represent the attributive form of "to call" (呼). While this may at first seem to undermine the notion that 伎 is in fact transcribing such a syllable for 時, let us consider the following excerpt from the inscription on the famous Imsin Year Vow Record Stele (K. *Imsin sŏgisŏk* 壬申誓記石) of Silla (discussed in detail in Chapter 2):

Figure 17. Imsin Year Vow Record Stele (Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan 2002, 38)

今自三年以後 忠道執持 過失无誓

From now, for three years hence, to take up and maintain the way of loyalty, without fail, we vow.

This stele is widely regarded as the earliest extant *idu* 吏讀 text from Silla. However, this style of *idu* transcription does not adhere to the parameters of *idu* script as defined through later examples, as it features few transcriptions of Korean grammatical elements.[48] The one exception in this excerpt

[47] Literally, "older brother." This may indicate a close male friend, or a lover, if we imagine the speaker to be female.

[48] While this style of *idu* has often been referred to as sŏgi [vow-record] style 誓記體 (based on the sequence 誓記 which appears at the beginning of the inscription on this stele), and defined as an abbreviated form of *idu* where particular grammatical elements and verb endings are not directly provided and therefore need to be deduced, Yi Sŭngjae (2017) has advocated the adoption of the more straightforwardly descriptive term "Korean logograph sentence transcription" (*hanhunja*

is 自 "from," which follows 今 "now," as it would in vernacular Korean (as opposed to preceding it, as it would in Sinitic). The fact that the verbs come at the end of each sequence marks this text as a transcription of vernacular Korean, and has thus earned this inscription a special place in Korean orthographic history. In this and other early examples of Silla *idu*-style vernacular transcription, grammatical elements are kept to a minimum, but logographs are ordered in a manner contrary to standard Sinitic,. However, certain grammatical elements were transcribed frequently: one prominent example is '-中,' which was used as a locative particle, and usually follows a date. In addition to extant Silla examples, this usage also appears on *mokkan* from both Paekche (Ssangbung-ni 280-5 Mokkan No. 2) and Japan (Yunobe Site Mokkan No. 1-1). Some other grammatical elements, such as the declarative ending '-之,' also appear with relative frequency. In other words, we might conclude that while economy in transcription was valued, a certain reading or nuance might be specified at the scribe's discretion (in the case of 中, scribal convention may also play a role). In the case of the first side of Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316, the scribe seems to be exercising such discretion in order to produce a certain rhythmically appropriate reading that also specifies the grammatical relationship between the first and second parts of the inscription.

呼時伎兄来 */*pwur[ur] ceki [hyeng]*[49] *o[ra]/*[50]

In this case, it seems likely that the inclusion of 伎, which indicates an ending /*ki*/ for the word "time" (tentatively identified as *cek*), probably functions to indicate the presence of a locative particle, such that we can then understand the "coming" 来 of "*hyeng*" 兄 (rendered "he" in the preliminary translation above) occurs *when* the speaker performs the action of "calling" 呼. This locative particle may be the equivalent of the Silla /*koi/. Such a relationship might be grasped simply from context—that is, even without the inclusion of 伎—but there is reason to believe that the nature of the scribe's composition (verse, as I will argue below) may have encouraged the specific transcription of the particle to achieve a sort of break in the string of logographs, given that the structure of the inscription on the back follows a similar pattern, this time designating a direction/location, rather than a time, something occurs:

屋上部聞成 */*morowi poi tut-toy/*[51]

For the most part, in Paekche inscriptions the character 部 designates a particular area/district, as in 西部 "Western District" (Kungnamji Mokkan No. 1), 下部 "Lower District" (Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 297), or 中部 "Middle District" (Kuari Mokkan No. 90). However, based on its frequent usage in designating individuals' place of residence, it may have also carried an attributive function as in, "a person *of* such

munjang pyogi 韓訓字文章表記), based on the fact that this style of transcription features almost entirely logoograph-based transcription, with relatively few examples of phonogram usage.

[49] As it is unclear what the contemporary vernacular semantic rendering of this character may have been, I have provided a rendering of the modern Sino-Korean.

[50] This rendering is preliminary and based on Middle Korean. Very little is known about the Paekche language, and so it is entirely speculative and for sake of argument only.

[51] This rendering, too, is provided for speculative purposes only.

and such a district." This is further supported by the inscription on the first side of Ssangbung-ni 280-5 Mokkan No.1, which reads:

Side 1: 外椋部鐵
Side 2: 代綿十両
Side 1: Outer Storehouse's iron
Side 2: Exchange for ten *ryang* of cloth

Figure 18. Ssangbung-ni 280-5 Mokkan No. 1 (Paekche Munhwajae yŏn'guwŏn 2011, iii)

This is a small rectangular *mokkan* only 81mm long by 23mm wide by 6mm thick. It appears to be the tag for a shipment of iron from the Outer Storehouse 外椋 in exchange for cloth (or the other way around). The standard understanding of 部 here as "area/district" fails (it is certainly not one of the five divisions of the capital); neither does an understanding of it as referring to an "occupational group/family," as in the *be* 部 system of sixth and seventh century Japan, fit the context.[52] Rather, it seems to function much like a possessive particle: the Outer Storehouse is exchanging *its* iron for cloth. The reason it can function this way is likely because of the aforementioned attributive implication: it is iron *of* the Outer Storehouse, but the main meaning of "district/area" is elided.

Likewise, in the five-character sequence on the second side of Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316, translating 部 as "area/district" again fails to produce a meaningful interpretation. However, two things allow us to understand it as a locative particle: 1) the sense of 部 meaning a person (or thing) "of" or "from" such and such a place, as seen in Ssangbung-ni 280-5 Mokkan No.1, and, potentially, 2) its use in Japanese *man'yō gana* transcription. In *Man'yōshū*, 部 occurs in later period phonogram-centric transcription as a phonogram for "be," but in earlier mixed semantogram and phonogram based-transcription, can be read as the directional particle /*pe/." This is especially true in the case of the sequence 春部 /*paru pe/ ["toward spring"], which recurs at least six times throughout the anthology.[53] However, /*pe/ 部 is also used to represent movement toward places, particularly the names of provinces or countries, with two instances of /yamato *pe/ ["toward Yamato"] being written 倭部 and 山跡部, respectively, while examples such as /yoshino *pe/ ["toward Yoshino"] 吉野部 and /ki *pe/ ["toward Ki"] 木部 also occur. As a particle, however, 部 does not occur outside of this particular context.

[52] The *be* 部 system was the primary organizing principle of occupation-based clan groups that served the throne.

[53] This sequence also appears on Heijō Palace Mokkan No. 7-12764, which features two rather unique transcriptions of the Naniwazu 難波津 poem (see Chapter 3 for more details). This verse is commonly attributed to Wang-in, one of the Paekche scholars who arrived at the Yamato court during Ōjin's reign. This verse does not appear in *Man'yōshū* despite its prevalence in the zeitgeist of early historic Japan (indeed, perhaps it was so well known that it was excluded, either intentionally or unintentionally).

While there is no concrete evidence that this usage in *Man'yōshū* is analogous to that of 部 as seen on Paekche *mokkan*, the influence of Paekche orthography on the development of *man'yō gana* transcription techniques is undeniable, and so it is certainly possible that there is some connection here. The context could certainly warrant such an interpretation: that some sound comes "toward" the speaker. Conversely, said sound could be coming *from* the (roof of) the dwelling (屋上), in accordance with the type of usage seen in Ssangbung-ni 280-5 Mokkan No. 1. In addition, it might be possible to take 屋上 as a toponym (it actually appears as such in *Man'yōshū*, read "Yakami"), and thus the sound of the speaker calling for him is moving toward that place, where *hyeng* presumably is (following this interpretation, the text on the second side could even be seen as a response to that on the first, with *hyeng* answering that the sound can be heard where he is). With any of these interpretations, 部 demands to be understood as a particle of some kind, matching the position of 伎 as the third character on the first side. Given that one side features a time and the other a location, it would appear the two segments of text are meant to be parallel, strengthening the case that what we have here is a fragment of poetry.

This *mokkan* also features what appear to be the remains of a previous inscription, incompletely shaved away from the surface of the wood. This obscures some of the readings, making some characters look as if they have too many radicals; the reuse of a *mokkan* for the purpose of this inscription, along with the incomplete erasure of the previous inscription, suggests that it was likely not a final product meant to be shared with others. While the calligraphy is legible, it is in a neither neat nor practiced hand. The appearance of the character 時 is particularly unbalanced, and the sequence 屋上 seems jumbled together. Furthermore, overall the spacing tends to be quite uneven. Whatever the nature of the text itself, it seems to have been merely drafted on the surface of this *mokkan*.

Ultimately, the text on this *mokkan* is too fragmentary to allow for any substantial conclusions about its nature. However, the similarities in the transcription style to early examples of Silla *idu* point to it being a vernacular text, and further, the seemingly parallel structure of the text on both sides and the romantic overtones of the decipherable content do allow us to consider it a creative work of some kind, and possibly a piece of verse. It is both an exercise in transcribing the vernacular language, in itself an active endeavor necessitating a number of creative choices, and a draft composition (ora draft transcription of an oral composition).

<u>Ssangbung-ni Twitkae</u>

A *mokkan* with an inscription strikingly resonant with that of Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316 has been found from another Ssangbung-ni site, the Twitkae site, the northernmost of the Ssangbung-ni sites and closest to the path of the Kŭm River. While this *mokkan* is a four-sided piece, writing is only legible on two of the four surfaces, and its two dimensional surface area (150mm x 30mm) closely mirrors that of the Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316 (182mm x 31mm). The inscription reads as follows:

Side 1: □慧草而開覺

Side 2: 人□筆道□[54]
Side 3: 〈〉
Side 4: 〈〉
Side 1: ...wisdom grasses and become enlightened...
Side 2: people .... brush path...

Figure 19. Ssangbung-ni Twitkae Mokkan No. 1 (*CJ,* 594)

The text here is even more fragmentary than that of Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 316, making interpretation considerably difficult. There are no clear indications, for instance, that this is a vernacular or Sinitic text. It is clear that it is meant to be a sentence transcription, as the appearance of 而 links two predicate clauses on the first side, the first ending with "wisdom grasses" (since a verb is missing here, we might assume that the character preceding it may have been one).[55] Very little of the text on the second side is legible; the three characters that can be identified all appear to be nouns. On the first side, the calligraphy is remarkably clear, but some characters, including 慧 and 開, are written in abbreviated forms (in the case of the former, the right top radical is written as a repetition mark ㄹ, which has led to some dispute over its identification as 慧, whereas in the case of the latter, the outer enclosure radical 門 is written in its common abbreviated form). While it is unclear if 慧草 refers to a particular plant (see note 55) or should be taken more metaphorically as "grasses of wisdom" or some such, the semantic connection between 慧 and 開覺 is intuitive, lending a certain logic to the extant portion of the inscription. This results in what is almost a call to action of sorts, one that may be infused with either a Taoist or Buddhist religiosity. In any case, this particular sentence does not appear to come from any extant classical text, and therefore we might assume it is an original composition. While there is very little decipherable text here, we might at least conclude it is a work of composition practice.

Excavations at the Twitkae site were carried out as a result of construction at the new Paekche Culture Complex in the northern part of Puyŏ in 2010. Preliminary site surveys revealed the site included part of the former outer city wall (Nasŏng), and seems to have been located on the western bank of the Wŏlhamji reservoir near where the eastern and northern parts of Nasŏng intersect. The two *mokkan* recovered from the site were excavated from a subterranean aqueduct flowing into Wŏlhamji along with other wooden artifacts. The site itself is thought to have been located at a strategic point on a key route going northward out of the city (the

[54] This reading is based on that in original site report (Sim Sangyuk and Yi Mihyŏn 2013, 185) with the exception of 筆, which is my own addition. The bottom radical is clearly 聿, but the top does appear to be a grass rather than a bamboo radical; however, this is probably a mistake for 筆.
[55] The sequence 慧草 can refer to a type of orchid, and is found in one Li Bai verse (eighth century). On this *mokkan*, it may or may not refer to an orchid, or be meant more literally as "wisdom grasses," given the connection 慧 has to the second part of the inscription 開覺. See Li Bai 李白, "Qiūsī [Autumn Thoughts] 秋思," in Hattori Nankaku 服部南郭, comp., Hino Tatsuo, ed. 1982, 1:285-286.

northern gate of Nasŏng may have been in the vicinity),[56] and along with some official facilities possibly associated with both the management of the reservoir (which may have also served as a location for royal outings), contains some features that suggest some ordinary dwellings were also located in the vicinity (Sim Sangyuk and Yi Mihyŏn 2013, 235-237). Given its location along a key route out of the capital, like the Ssangbung-ni 102 site, it follows that there may have been a number of different people from disparate backgrounds congregating in the area; further, if the Wŏlhamji reservoir served as a site for royal outings, such outings may have brought high ranking individuals to the site. While it is impossible to know who exactly inscribed this particular *mokkan*, it suggests written culture was thriving at this 'frontier' (relatively speaking) outpost, where leisure time may have been more than enough to allow for inscriptive experimentation.

The Nŭngsan-ni site and the two Ssangbung-ni sites discussed thus far all have in common a marginal location relative to the palace and the central civic capital; all three are also located along a route coming into (or going out of) the city. Such locations, as noted, would have been host to a number of visitors, but also home to officials who may have had an unusual amount of leisure time with which to practice composing in Sinographic writing. In contrast, the following Kuari site, located in the central area of the Sabi capital, probably right outside the palace itself, was far from marginal, and has yielded a striking example of considerably more polished and calculated composition drafting.

Kuari Site: Composing at the Center of the Sabi Capital

The Kuari 319 site, also known as the Puyŏ Central Holiness Church site, was excavated in 2010 prior to expansion construction at the church. The site is located in present-day downtown Puyŏ, but is thought to have also been in a central location during the Sabi period. While urban development has leveled out the area, it is known from topographical maps dating from the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945) and aerial photos from the 1960s that it was previously about seven meters below sea level, with waterways running to the Kŭm River cross-cutting the area, making preservation conditions for wooden objects relatively favorable (Sim Sangyuk et al. 2011, 118-119; O T'aekhyŏn 2015a, 106-107). This resulted in one of the highest concentrations of *mokkan* excavated from a single site in Puyŏ, second only to the Nŭngsan-ni temple site (and tied with the Kwanbung-ni site).

Among the eight *mokkan* excavated from the Kuari 319 site, two are clearly tag *mokkan* and another two appear to be document *mokkan*. While another three are of a unclear nature, Kuari Mokkan No. 47 (Figure 20) contains a trace of the epistolary culture of the elites in Sabi. Not unlike Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 305 above, although it appears to be a complete composition, it is unlikely that this would have been its final form. The inscription on the *mokkan* reads as follows:

[56] It is known from Chosŏn period and Japanese colonial period maps that this area was home to at least two way stations on a key route coming into Sabi from the north (i.e., Kongju). See Sim Sangyuk and Yi Mihyŏn 2013, 236.

Side 1: 所遣信來以敬辱之於此貧薄
Side 2:一无所有不得仕也//莫瞋好邪荷陰之後／永日不忘[57]
Side 1: The letter you sent came, and I felt both veneration and shame [upon reading it]. [That you should send it to me] even though I am poor and insignificant
Side 2: with not one thing to my name, and having been unable to attain rank. – I shall no longer be enraged by matters of good and bad: now, after all the blessings you have granted me, for all my days I will be unable to forget.

Figure 20. Kuari 319 Mokkan No. 47 (*Mokkan kwa munja* 15, 3)

This inscription is strikingly legible, in an obviously practiced hand; furthermore, our scribe writes in four-character lines that show considerable familiarity with epistolary convention, and commands sophisticated expressions, including '*kyŏngyok* 敬辱' ["veneration and shame"] '*pinbak* 貧薄' ["poor and insignificant"] and '*haŭm* 荷陰' ["time of blessings"] (Sim Sangyuk and Kim Yŏngmun 2015: 58-59). Moreover, after meeting all the requirements of epistolary discourse, he appends a three-line addendum that focuses in on his personal feelings of gratitude toward the addressee. Whether this portion is written in smaller characters intentionally or because he ran out of space, it shifts focus to the writer's feelings in a way that distinguishes these three lines from the first five, such that the smaller text produces an echo-like post-script.

This *mokkan* was found in an area designated Feature #5, an oblong marsh-like feature about eleven meters long by four meters wide, at least part of which may have been an outhouse, as the eggs of human parasites have been found within the feature (Sim Sangyuk et al. 2012: 51). While the *mokkan* was found mostly intact, its discovery in this particular feature strongly suggests an intention to dispose of it. Furthermore, Sim Sangyuk and Kim Yŏngmun (2015) note that the content shows none of the information that would be normally appended to the beginning or end of a letter, such as the date, or the names and titles of the sender and recipient. It does include an initial greeting, but few other of the formal elements of a letter are present; in other words, the *mokkan* contains only the main text of the letter. While Sim and Kim (2015) admit that this seems strange, they do still see the *mokkan* itself as having been exchanged as a letter. What they do not seem to consider is that this *mokkan* contains only those portions of a letter that might need to be drafted in advance. The sender needed to spend some time crafting his sentences, and he did so on a *mokkan*.

The Kuari site is located near the center of the Sabi capital, just outside the area that Yi Pyŏngho (2013) argues was the location of the palatial complex. The features uncovered at the site are largely related to water management, which has led to the theory that this was the site of the garden of a private estate (Sim Sangyuk

[57] This rendering/interpretation of the inscription follows that presented by Sim Sangyuk and Kim Yŏngmun 2015, 54-58.

et al. 2011, 121). If so, the resident, living in close proximity to the palatial complex, was almost certainly a high-ranking official. However, it is not clear who composed the text on the *mokkan*, or if it was originally composed anywhere near where it was deposited. Nevertheless, its presence here does suggest that written culture had extended beyond the immediate boundaries of the bureaucracy. Further, its content suggests that written composition had become an important aspect of elite social interaction, and concern with proper literary form was increasingly a crucial element of decorum. As a result, it is possible that drafting one's correspondence ahead of time on a disposable surface such as a *mokkan* was common practice.

Kungnamji Site: Creative Writing Adjacent the Royal Pleasure Garden

The Kungnamji site is a pond-garden complex located on the southern edge of present-day Puyŏ. The present-day Kungnamji was reconstructed between 1965 and 1967, and was named "pond to the south of the palace" based on the following passage from the "Paekche Annals" of *Samguk sagi*, which is dated to the reign of King Mu (Ki Kyŏngnyang and Ch'oe Kyŏngsŏn 2016, 135):

> [634] 35th year, Spring, 3rd Month. A pond was excavated to the south of the palace and a channel was dug to supply it with water from more than twenty [*li*] away. The four banks of the pond were planted with willows and, in its midst, a group of islands were fashioned resembling the Fang-cheng Isles of the immortals. (Best 2006, 363)

Figure 21. Kungnamji Mokkan No. 295 (*NSAM*, 66)

It is unclear that the pond-complex described here in fact corresponds exactly to the present-day location of the reconstructed site. There is almost certainly some overlap, however, based on the fact that a Paekche period stone embankment was found toward the western edge of the present-day pond. The site has yielded a variety of features including rice paddies, irrigation canals, aqueducts, and roads (*NSAM*, 64).

A total of three *mokkan* have been found from different areas around the site. The first of these three *mokkan*, Kungnamji Mokkan No. 295 was unearthed in 1995 from the interior of the eastern side of the pond, alongside a wooden water storage vessel, straw sandals, and a human footprint. This particular *mokkan* has generated a large amount of historical debate, particularly because of its heading, ["Western District Rear Block"], which

seemed to confirm the existence of the *pu* 部 partitions of the capital, and that those partitions may have been subdivided into *hang* 巷. This *mokkan* also features what seem to be three major divisions of "persons" (丁, 中口, 小口), what may be a personal name (已達已斯), a place name (邁羅城法利源), and what appears to be a Paekche-specific classifier for paddy fields (形). While there is a trove of vital historical and linguistic information on this one document *mokkan*, it does not appear to feature any full-sentence transcription.

Kungnamji Mokkan No. 295 is a document *mokkan*, the content of which suggests a possible bureaucratic presence somewhere in the vicinity, perhaps responsible for the regulation of paddy fields. The second *mokkan* recovered from the site, Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-1, is a four-sided *mokkan* featuring calligraphic practice, and was found alongside artifacts such as an iron dagger (for scraping the surface of *mokkan*) and an ink-stone (Ki Kyŏngnyang and Ch'oe Kyŏngsŏn 2015, 147). The characters practiced on this mokkan are all extremely practical in nature, including 文, 書, 之, and 也. Such practicality suggests the scribe's motive was to improve his calligraphy for the drafting of future documents. Clearly, writing had some role at the site, which, located in the southernmost part of Puyŏ, may have served some sort of official function in addition to being proximate the royal pleasure complex.

In contrast to the document Kungnamji Mokkan No. 295 and the calligraphic practice seen on Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-1, the third *mokkan* recovered from Kungnamji, Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2 is a unique example of a *mokkan* which features the transcription of full sentences throughout. While its material features preclude an understanding of this *mokkan* as a final product, it is a unique artifact of compositional experimentation that seems almost narrative-like. The inscription has been deciphered by Ki Kyŏngnyang (2014) as follows:[58]

Side 1: □君前軍日今□〔敵？〕白惰之心□□〔之？〕□

Side 2: 死所可依故背□作弓彀□〔日？〕間□〔落？〕 (Ki Kyŏngnyang 2014, 136)

Side 1: □ lord before, Kun said, now (enemies?) have revealed their ignorant hearts, …

Figure 22. Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2 (*NSAM*, 68)

[58] The reading presented in *CJ* (p.270) is similar, though not as complete, as Ki's:
Side 1: □君□軍日今敎白有之心□
Side 2: 死□(所?) 可依故背□三月□日間□
I find Ki's identifications (see pp.137-143) convincing and so have opted to follow his reading.

Side 2: Death is what can be depended upon. Thereupon, turning his back… made a bow and drew it, the (sun?) at that time (set?)…

This *mokkan* emerged largely intact from an irrigation channel excavated on the northwest side of Kungnamji pond. Originally upon discovery, this *mokkan* was classified as a wooden object because no ink was visible to the naked eye; however, during the conservation process, an inscription was revealed and subsequently deciphered (Kim Kyŏngnyang 2014: 135; Kim Chaehong 2001: 428). Initially, it was widely thought that the inscription must be based on a classical text of some sort; however, no such text could be identified. Furthermore, the mokkan was deliberately split at the top, probably as part of the deposition process; Kim Chaehong (2001) argues that this intent to destroy probably indicates it is not a mere transcription of an extant work (429; 431-432). Ki Kyŏngnyang (2014) outlines an alternative interpretation of the text, understanding it as a document recounting the meritorious actions of a military leader, perhaps as part of an evaluative process whereby rewards were granted for esteemed service (143).

While Ki's understanding has some appeal, the idea that this is an official document of some kind finds little support, as it fails to mention any specific dates or personages. While the first character is illegible and may be the name of the 'kun 君' ["lord"], it is unlikely—with the possible exception of a well-known personage or a member of the royal family—that an individual would be identified by surname only. '*Kun* 軍' does appear to function as a name, but again it is a single character, and so barring some additional narrative context that could have been provided elsewhere (on another *mokkan*, perhaps), would not appear to be a historical individual. Even if this *mokkan* did fulfill the sort of function that Ki suggests, it goes above and beyond what would have been necessary for such a task, in narrating a vivid scene, complete with dialogue.

The brush strokes here are thick and uneven, while the spacing of each character is relatively consistent and careful, with a few exceptions. While fourteen characters fill the space on the front, only thirteen occupy the back. For the most part the characters fill the width of the *mokkan*, with the exception of *'il* 日*'* on the second side, which appears to have been deliberately written narrowly, perhaps in order to distinguish it from *'wal* 曰*'* on the front. While Kim Chaehong (2001) doubts whether there is a connection between the two sides, it would seem that narratively they do somewhat fit together, and the calligraphic style is consistent between them.

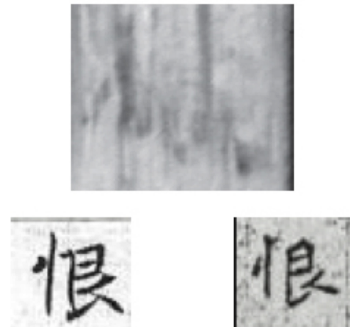


Figure 23. Identification of seventh character on second side of Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2 (Left: from Epitaph of Li Bi [520]; Right: from Epitaph of Yŏn Namsaeng [679])

The *mokkan* features the recounting of a speech made by an individual, seemingly named '*Kun* 軍,' before a certain lord *'kun* 君,' expressing resentment for an "enemy" and an intent to effect their deaths. Although there are

some illegible characters on the bottom of the first side, I believe the quotation initiated by *'wal* 曰' carries over to the second side, ending after '*ŭi* 依,' where there is a rather large space left open before the following character, *'ko* 故.' It is there that the language shifts to describing actions, which seem to be prompted by the end of the speech. *'Pae* 背' can be taken as a verb indicating to "turn one's back", while the following character is considered to be indecipherable. However, the faint outline of the right side radical appears to be *'kan* 艮,' while the left radical resembles a standing heart radical, which makes this character possibly *'han* 恨,' an identification that would certainly befit the context (see Figure 23). Ki's identification of the following character as '*chak* 作' is somewhat suspect, as there appears to be no person radical (亻) to the left of '*sa* 乍;' moreover, '*sa* 乍' arguably fits the context better, as an adverb which modifies the action that follows. In the case of the sequence '*kunggu* 弓彀,' Ki's identification is quite convincing: even as the left side of '*ku* 彀*'* has been blotted over with ink, the outline of the *'kung* 弓' radical is recognizable. However, it is noteworthy that this sequence diverges from standard Sinitic word order, in putting the direct object, 弓, before the verb, 彀. The following *'ilgannak* 日間落' provides a temporal context, while zooming out in order to bookend the scene. A more polished translation might look like this:

> Side 1: □君前軍曰今敵白惰之心□□□
> Side 2: 死所可依○故背恨乍弓彀日間落
> Side 1: Before Lord , Kun said, "Now our enemies have revealed their ignorant hearts…
> Side 2: They can depend on death." Thereupon he turned his back, and resentfully, swiftly drew back his bow. The sun, at that moment, set.

The inclusion of some rather obscure characters here, such as *'ku* 彀,' suggests that this inscription is more than calligraphic practice, and would be more aptly called composition practice. *Mokkan* featuring calligraphic practice generally exhibit the repetition of certain characters or sequences of characters, and such practice is usually geared toward those graphs that might be considered more useful in the drafting of official documents or correspondence. There is no repetition here; rather, the author of this inscription has made deliberate choices of characters he found appropriate to convey the content. Words such as *'han* 恨' work to portray the protagonist Kun 軍's state of mind, while adverbs such as *'sa* 乍' serve as a bridge between his emotions and actions. He speaks directly here, characterizing his enemy as "ignorant" [*ta* 惰] in no uncertain terms, and then declaring his own intent and taking swift action. There is no real meter or rhyme at play here: the power of the text's form is dependent on the deliberate and evocative word choices. However, with the thick brush strokes that obscure certain characters, this text hardly seems to have been composed to be easily read and understood by others; in fact, the attempt to dispose of it might suggest a desire to actively conceal it. Therefore, it is perhaps best understood as an example of "composition practice," where the writer was experimenting with crafting narrative in a written mode. While in this case he

may not have been particularly interested in conforming to any given Sinitic literary style, he delights in the evocative potential of individual Sinitic words.

The Stele of Sataek Chijŏk

As seen thus far, inscription dots the landscape of Sabi from north to south, east to west, and is far from homogenous. There is an undeniable diversity in the types of excavated writings from throughout the former capital: while a great many are of a mundane provenance, a significant number attest to a growing self-awareness among the literate elite. It is just this self-awareness that I have described as the hallmark of an emergent literary culture. The preceding examples have served to illustrate the types of inscriptive experimentation that the surface of *mokkan* enabled at Sabi: nonsense jottings, poetic vows, vernacular verse, and polished correspondence. None of these were finished literary products, but rather index certain moments where scribes tested, drafted, and composed on a disposable surface. Nevertheless, such drafts highlight the fact that the written culture of Sabi was increasingly literary in its orientation. This fact is all the more poignant when these "drafts" are seen alongside arguably more "finished" pieces of the period. The most strikingly literary inscription that has survived to the present is undoubtedly that on the Stele of Sat'aek Chijŏk, erected in 654, on the eve of Paekche's demise. As such, it represents one of the final inscriptive accomplishments of the kingdom that has survived, and offers insight into the heights achieved by the literate elite at Sabi. The inscription reads as follows:

Figure 24. The Stele of Sat'aek Chijŏk.
From Paekche munhwa kaebal

甲寅年正月九日奈祇城砂宅智積	Yang Wood Tiger Year, First Month, Ninth Day. I, Sat'aek Chijŏk, of Naegisŏng,
慷身日之易往慨軆月之難還穿金	agitated that my self should set as easily as the sun, and grieved that my body should be as difficult to restore as the moon,
以建珎堂鑿玉以立寶塔巍巍慈容	have carved gold, by means of which I have built a magnificent hall, and have chiseled jade, by means of which I have erected a treasured pagoda,

吐神光以送雲峩峩悲貌含聖明以	Its lofty benevolent appearance emits divine light by sending forth clouds, and its vastly dignified and solemn visage envelops sagely brightness by…

This incomplete stele was discovered by the roadside in the Kwanbung-ni area of Puyŏ in 1948. It had been among a number of stones gathered from all over Puyŏ to line the entranceway of a Shinto shrine established on Mt. Puso during the Japanese colonial occupation (Hong Sajun 1954, 254). As a result, it is unclear where this stele might have originally stood. Further, the stone has been cut off on the left side, seemingly intentionally, as it is clear that the text would have continued for at least one more column on that side (grid lines and traces of characters are visible). Based on the content of the stele, we know that it must have been erected on the site of a temple built by Sat'aek Chijŏk, but just what the name of that temple was, and where in Puyŏ it might have once stood, remains unknowable. The recent discovery of an inscription accompanying the *sarira* reliquary from the pagoda of Mirŭksa 彌勒寺 temple in Iksan, which features the name of a Paekche queen of the Sat'aek family and is dated to 639, suggests the Sat'aek family were indeed major aristocratic patrons of Buddhism during the Sabi period, a fact that helps to further authenticate this stele.[59]

The extant portion of the text is composed in four-six parallel prose 駢文(Ch. *pianwen,* Kor. *pyŏnmun*), laid out carefully in grid-lines chiseled onto the surface of the stone to create evenly sized squares. The calligraphic style is thought to be a mix of Northern Dynasties and Sui styles, in a careful regular script where each character fills the square (Yi Ŭnsol 2014, 218). While the style and craftsmanship of the lettering is impressive, the stele itself is not very large, measuring about one meter high by 38cm across and 29cm thick. Such a stele would likely have stood somewhere on the temple grounds, but given the language used to describe the temple itself therein, it is unlikely it was meant to attract particular attention away from its surroundings. It is the durability of stone, rather than its monumentality, that would have made it the apt choice for erecting on the temple grounds to commemorate Sat'aek Chijŏk's role in the temple's construction. While the act of commemorating in and of itself is ritual in nature, the stone's function here is essentially as a durable vehicle for the inscription, and it is the inscription that would have imbued the surrounding landscape with further significance.

It is not only the physical stone that shows considerably crafting, but the language of the inscription itself is testament to the valorization of literary composition in Paekche's latest years. Two character compounds such as 慷慨. 身體, 日月, 易難, and 往還 are split into their components to create parallel couplets (cf. Pak Ch'an'gyu 2014, 283), while the building of the temple itself is described in elaborate metaphor ("carving gold" 穿金 and "chiseling jade" 鑿玉). Moreover, the temple itself is depicted in opulent terms: the golden hall is a 珎堂, literally "precious stone hall," and the pagoda appears as a 寶塔, literally "treasure tower,";

[59] For a recent summary of the research of this inscription, see Im Hyegyŏng 2014, esp. 156-165.

meanwhile the magnificent appearance (another split compound, 容貌) of the temple is such that it both "emits divine light" 吐神光 and "envelops sagely brightness" 含聖明. Such hyperbole is perhaps par for the course with this sort of commemorative and celebratory inscription: a certain degree of excessive praise is to be expected. However, the attention paid to aspects of rhythm by not only maintaining a parallel prose style throughout but also through the echoing of the reduplicative descriptors 巍巍 "high and lofty" and 峩峩 "vast and dignified," betrays the literary nature of this inscription. Indeed, it is clear that this inscription was meant to be savored for the texture of its language as much for the texture of the stone.

The grandiose language of this inscription differs markedly from the text of *mokkan* presented above. The context of a stone monument that once stood within a temple, as opposed to a wooden strip that was deposited in the earth, certainly makes this point rather obvious. However, despite the polished, finished nature of the Sat'aek Chijŏk stele inscription, there are certain resonances with some *mokkan* inscriptions. The sophisticated expression found in Kuari Mokkan No. 47 is oriented toward humbling the sender and elevating the recipient, but its four-character lines and rhythmic qualities, particularly with the three-line addendum, suggest that an emphasis on the quality of form, and not merely content, was emerging in Paekche during the early part of the seventh century. We might trace this back further with works such as "Song of Karmic Bonds from a Previous Life," but the Six Dynasties-inflected sophisticated prose styles of Kuari Mokkan No. 47 and the Sat'aek Chijŏk Stele stand apart as products of the kingdom's final half-century. While far from the lofty prose of either of these two inscriptions, the inscription on Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2 is also a remarkably unique piece of prose displaying considerable imaginative scope, although formal meter is absent. The *mokkan* from Ssangbung-ni 102 and Ssangbung-ni Twitkae show that the valorization of the "literary" in inscriptive life may have begun to permeate beyond the realm of the cosmopolitan language, and that a vernacular literarization of sorts may have been underway. The Sat'aek Chijŏk stele is important context for such a process: the inscription paints a picture of a late Paekche aristocracy who appreciated finely crafted sentences in Literary Sinitic, and an awareness of literary value in the cosmopolitan language would have been a prerequisite for the composition of literary inscriptions in the vernacular.

Paekche's Inscriptive Legacy

The literary culture of Sabi just prior to Paekche's defeat in the unification wars was the culmination of inscriptive experimentation carried out on *mokkan* stretching back to the transfer of the capital to Sabi in the mid-sixth century. Individuals answering to both religious and civic callings produced a variety of inscriptions at Nŭngsan-ni; outside of producing "official" inscriptions, scribes made use of available writing surfaces to craft nonsense sentences and oaths in verse form. The gradual proliferation of these types of activities that expanded the value given to literary form, increasing into the beginning of the seventh century, can be seen as leading toward inscriptions such as that on the Sat'aek Chijŏk stele, a work that

exhibits the literary aesthetic preferences of the Paekche aristocracy on the eve of destruction. For them, inscriptions were no longer annotations in the service of the surface they inhabited, nor was their purpose merely to document: they had become objects of aesthetic value in and of themselves, to be appreciated for both their material form and their literary content.

What happened to this class of literarily inclined elites after the destruction of Paekche in 660? The simple answer is that they were scattered to the wind: some, including the royal family, ended up in exile in Tang, while a great many others made their way to Japan, where they began new lives as part of an allochthonous sub-group of the aristocratic class. Still others may have remained on in the former territory of Paekche, adjusting to the new era of Silla rule.

The achievements of the Paekche literate class were relatively soon forgotten, but there can be little doubt that individuals who were once part of it made significant contributions in these new contexts. Following the wars for unification, the Silla leadership shifted their attention from the martial to the literary, just as they had over a century earlier when they first asserted themselves as a peninsular power, and there may have been formerly Paekche elites who put their literary prowess to work in service of the post-unification Silla state. In the context of Silla, limited materials necessitate considerable speculation, but abundant sources attest to the importance of individuals of Paekche heritage in the rapidly developing written culture of late seventh century Japan (discussed in detail in Chapters 3 & 4). Their importance at the Ōmi 近江 court, where anxieties about a potential Tang invasion were driving rapid "modernization," cannot be overstated (see Chapter 3). Yet, despite considerable degrees of assimilation, including the adoption of "Japanese-style" surnames (as granted by the sovereign), individuals remained keenly aware of their heritage, whether it be in the recounting of family genealogy (cf. *Shinsen shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏録), or in the consideration of one's personal feelings toward a superior in verse:

辛人之 衣染云 紫之 情尓染而 所念鴨[60]

karapito no	People of the land of Kara
koromo wo somu to ipu	are said to dye their robes
murasaki no	with the deep purple of the gromwell root—
kokoro ni simite	I feel as if it is that very color
omopoyuru kamo	that now dyes my heart!

This verse is included in the poetry collection *Man'yōshū* and is attributed to an individual known as Asada no muraji Yasu 麻田連陽春, whose father was among those who fled Paekche following the Battle of the Paek River in 663. While the first three lines might be taken as a mere *jo* 序 preface leading into *kokoro* [heart] in the fourth line, when considered alongside the background of the poet, they take on considerable significance. A number of different metaphors would have been

[60] *MYS* IV.569; *SNKBZ* 1:309.

theoretically possible to express the unyielding nature of his loyalty, but Asada has chosen to make it a deeply personal verse, one that expresses his loyalty in terms of his heritage. On the level of orthography, too, there are extra layers of meaning provided: instead of /kara/ being spelled phonetically, or with the character 韓, it is here rendered as 辛, literally, "painful." Meanwhile, /kokoro/ is not written 心, but 情, which carries with it the nuance of not the abstract entity the "heart/mind," but rather one's true *feelings*. The repetition of /k/, /s/, and /m/ sounds also seem to echo evocatively the deep emotive quality of this verse. While Asada has composed in the vernacular Japanese poetic register masterfully, he has followed in the footsteps of his Paekche forebears through his calculated choices of each individual character and syllable, and he has evoked those forebears themselves to help illustrate the depth of his feeling. While more mechanical connections between Paekche literary culture and that of seventh and eighth century Japan will be suggested in the ensuing chapters, I would like to argue here that it is in the work of individuals such as Asada no muraji Yasu that the legacy of Paekche's literary world can be most keenly felt: an almost overwrought quality of prosody (Sat'aek Chijŏk stele), minimal and yet poignant orthography (Ssangbung-ni 102 Mokkan No. 317, Ssangbung-ni Twitkae Mokkan No. 1), and an almost melodramatic tone (Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 305, Kuari Mokkan No. 47, Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2), all contribute to a sense of temporal depth and interconnectedness of distant inscriptive spaces. Asada's verse manages to transcend both the temporal and spatial divides that might otherwise separate him from his ancestors, whose experiments with the written mode paved the way for his own composition two generations later in Kyushu.

Chapter 2 : Inscribing the Land: Letters and Power in Pre-Unification Silla

This chapter will examine the development of a written culture in sixth and early seventh century Silla, and compare the state of script acculturation in pre-unification Silla to that of Paekche and Japan. This chapter aims to understand how writing was used in sixth century Silla as an instrument of effecting state control over new territories, while also considering the early dynamics between the cosmopolitan and vernacular languages. In the context of the protracted struggles among the three peninsular kingdoms that began roughly around the time of the fall of the last of the Kaya states in the early 560s, writing was an important means of organizing territory and facilitating the movement of goods and people, and extant inscriptions on stone and wood show it gaining rapid currency in Silla. By contrast, as will be seen in the Conclusion, writing was less critical as a means of power consolidation in Unified Silla, but as it became less of an ideological expedient, it was more susceptible to literary manipulation. This chapter will argue that writing was an essential means of organizing the state and its control over different populations in pre-unification Silla, and was therefore used exhaustively in the provinces as a means of projecting state power through compulsory performance of compliance with the state's *yullyŏng* system. In the capital, writing was equally a required method of performing one's place within the state system, but was less overtly about projecting power so much as it was about demonstrating one's place within the hierarchy of officials in the capital.

The History of Writing in Silla: The Reigns of Chijŭng, Pŏphŭng, and Chinhŭng

Silla is unique among Korea's Three Kingdoms in its belatedness: its interactions with the Chinese dynasties, and its the reception of Sinitic cultural staples such as Buddhism and Sinographic writing, did not begin in tandem until the kingdom's ascendancy as a peninsular power in the sixth century.[1] As late as the early sixth century, the history of the Liang dynasty (502-557), *Liang shu* 梁書 [The Book of Liang] describes Silla as being letterless:

> 無文字、刻木爲信。語言待百濟而後通焉。[2]
>
> They have no letters, and instead conduct correspondence by carving wood. Their language compares to that of Paekche, and the two languages are mutually intelligible.

As Kiho Song (2007: 161) notes, the Liang were probably not privy to much of the domestic developments in the Silla context; while there are some extant inscriptions from the late fifth and early sixth centuries, the overall picture that the *Liang shu* presents—that is, of correspondence between officials not being in

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[1] Gina Barnes (2004) also notes Silla's "belatedness" as compared to its neighbors from an archaeological perspective; she places state formation in Silla as a phenomenon of the late fourth/early fifth centuries, and notes that in Silla, technologies such as ceramics and metalworking, as well as general social stratification, seem to have lagged behind Kaya/Paekche/Koguryŏ (15).

[2] From "Silla 新羅," in Yao Silian (1973), *Liang shu*, volume 54.

written form—does seem to match the material record. According to material sources, an abrupt explosion of inscriptive activity occurs beginning in the middle decades of the sixth century; prior, inscriptions were relatively few and occur in isolated contexts. The mid-sixth century expansion of inscription in Silla did not escape the Chinese, with the Sui dynasty (581-618) history, *Sui shu* 隋書 [The Book of Sui], describing the situation mere decades later as follows:

其文字、甲兵同於中國。

Their letters, armor, and weapons are the same as in the Middle Kingdom.

The same passage on Silla in the *Sui shu* notes that the kingdom was home to a cosmopolitan mix of people, many of whom were supposedly descendant from Koguryŏ soldiers chased into Okjŏ 沃沮 and then Silla territory by the Wei 魏 general Guanqiu Jian 毌丘儉 in 244, but also including people whose lineages originated in Paekche and China.[3] As with the *Liang shu* passage above, the veracity of Chinese histories on the domestic situations of "barbarian" countries is always suspect, but the notion that Silla welcomed outsiders into its elite ranks can be confirmed against the record of the integration of the Kaya royal lineage following the collapse of Kumgwan Kaya 金官加耶 in 532.[4] Like their Wa counterparts, elites in Silla likely saw the advantages in accepting skilled outsiders into their ranks, and so the *Sui shu*'s record is probably more or less accurate. This is important because the rapidity with which script became an integral part of the state's operations in both center and periphery, to the extent that in the time between the Liang and the Sui, Silla became indistinguishable from China ("同於中國") in terms of both letters and armaments,[5] was probably only possible because literate outsiders—that is, allochthons—were able to contribute. This can be seen as analogous to the phenomenal growth in inscriptive activity that occurred in Japan about a century later, fueled by both entrenched and newly arrived literate groups from the peninsula (see Chapter 3).

Both the *Liang shu* and the *Sui shu* were compiled some time after the dynasties whose history they narrate, and they are written from the perspective of Chinese dynasties that were not particularly invested in accurately depicting the societies of peripheral barbarians, and so some discrepancies with reality are expected. However, the overall pattern is clear: Silla went from being a letterless place to a lettered one seemingly overnight. What prompted such changes?

To answer this question, we must turn to the indigenous histories compiled on the Korean peninsula; unfortunately, the earliest extant of these is the Koryŏ period compilation *Samguk sagi* (1145). While this work was completed sometime after the fall of Silla, it is thought to have been based on records from the kingdom still extant at the time. Compared to Paekche or Koguryŏ, which fell in the

[3] From "Silla 新羅," in Wei Zheng et. al (1973), *Sui shu*, volume 81.

[4] The Kaya king and his family are said to have been welcomed by King Pŏphŭng. Kim Yusin, one of the most famous generals of the Unification Wars, was the grandson of this very king; his sister would become King Muyŏl's queen. See *SS* Vol. 4, Pŏphŭng 19 (532).

[5] The linking of these two phenomena in this passage is undoubtedly related to the concept of *wenwu* (see introduction).

unification wars, resulting in the comprehensive destruction of many of their records, Silla's king had surrendered to Koryŏ in 935, and so much of what had been produced in the kingdom survived into the new dynasty. Therefore, the *Silla Annals* are considerably more comprehensive than the *Koguryŏ Annals* and the *Paekche Annals* in the *Samguk sagi*, and the majority of the biographies and other materials included in the text are derived from Silla records. Furthermore, beginning with the early sixth century, the *Annals* begin to feature considerable detail, and the record is generally assumed to be more or less reliable from this point forward.

Prior to this early sixth century point, and indeed prior to the reign of Chijŭng (r. 500-514), there is scant evidence in the *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* to suggest any substantial use of script in the kingdom. A sole entry for the third month of 487 references the establishment of postal stations, but the annals of the fifth century are otherwise absent any references to inscriptive activity, and tributary relations with Chinese states seem to have tapered off at the end of the fourth century. This largely accords with the material record: while some inscriptions have been recovered from pre-sixth century contexts, these are restricted to isolated single or short sequences of characters found inscribed on lacquerware vessels and metal ornaments from the Hwangnam Taech'ong 皇南大塚 and Ch'onmach'ong 天馬塚 tombs, and a small number of metal artifacts originally manufactured in China.[6]

According to *Samguk sagi*, things began to change in the beginning of the sixth century with Chijŭng's ascension to the throne. Chijŭng immediately seeks to "modernize" Silla, banning human sacrifice as part of royal burial practices, introducing oxen to agricultural practice, and reforming his own title from the vernacular *maripkan* 麻立干 to the Sinicized *wang* 王.[7] In addition to the updating of his own title, he oversaw the establishment of the standard spelling for the name of the country itself as "new" [sin] 新 "net" [ra]羅, Silla 新羅.[8] Chijŭng also established new administrative units (*chu* 州, *kun* 郡, and *hyŏn* 縣), dividing up his territory in a systematic manner and assigning governors for each *chu*, and built a number of new defensive structures in key locations.[9] His reign also saw the establishment of an important precedent in the creation of a "minor capital" at Asich'ŏn,[10] where some aristocrats and other capital residents were forcibly relocated. This practice can be seen as an important part of Silla's approach to integrating new territory into its realm, by creating new "centers" in the periphery by moving segments of the

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[6] These include a bronze seal for a "Ye" 穢 chieftain, found in Yŏngil county, Kyŏngsang-bukdo in 1936, and a triangular rim bronze mirror recovered from Hwangnam Taech'ong. For an overview of extant Silla inscriptions (as of 2005), see Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2005), *Hanguk kumsŏngmun charyochip* 한국 금석문 자료집(석사~고려), (Taejŏn: Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso): 199-231.

[7] See *SS* Vol. 4, Chijŭng 3.2; 3.3; 4.10.

[8] This is explained as 新者徳業日新、羅者網羅四方義 ['sin 新' is conducting ourselves virtuously and renewing our efforts each day, 'ra 羅' means a vast net that extends into all four directions]. Prior to this time, the kingdom's name did not have a fixed orthography, the most common alternate spellings being 斯羅 and 斯盧, both of which are mentioned in the same passage. See *SS* Vol. 4 Chijŭng 4.10.

[9] See *SS* Vol. 4 Chijŭng 6.2; 5.9.

[10] There is some debate over this location's modern equivalent; see Shultz and Kang (2012), 117 n.15.

capital's population, who were then responsible for bringing the culture of the capital to these new centers. Further, Chijŭng was the first Silla king to be conferred a posthumous reign title. All of these efforts at "modernization" speak to a certain urgency in Chijŭng's reign to bring Silla's administrative and defensive infrastructure up-to-date, and more or less in line with the norms of the greater East Asian world.

Again, the material record largely supports the *Samguk sagi* narrative of Chijŭng's reign as a time of reform, in that the earliest extant epigraphic texts date to this period: the Chungsŏng-ni stele 浦項中城里新羅碑[11] and the Naengsu-ri Stele 迎日冷水里新羅碑, both recovered from P'ohang (a coastal city up the Naktong River to the northeast of Kyŏngju), and one of the inscriptions carved into the rock face at Ch'ŏnjŏn-ni in the Ulju district of modern Ulsan 蔚州川前里刻石. Both the Chungsŏng-ni and Naengsu-ri steles feature legal decisions related to the ownership of land and/or property, and therefore suggest that one of writing's emergent roles in this period was the creation of an irrefutable, stable record of such decisions. The carving of such texts into stone, moreover, was undoubtedly a symbolic means of handing down an indisputable, immutable ruling that was to operate in perpetuity. Such inscriptions certainly echo the intention of many of the "modernizing" reforms attributed to Chijŭng in the *Samguk sagi*: beginning with his reign, the state actively sought legibility in managing its own territory and functions, and assuming a role in the arbitration of ownership of property certainly would have bolstered its efforts to present itself as exercising control over everything within its realm. The stones were both manufactured evidence of and precedents for the state's ability to create and carry out "the law."

Chijŭng's son and successor Pŏphŭng (r. 514-540) continued modernization efforts that included the adoption of a number of Chinese-style practices. According to the *Silla Annals,* relations with China resumed after more than a century with a mission to Liang sent by King Pŏphŭng in 521.[12] Just one year prior, Pŏphŭng had ordered the promulgation of law codes (K. *yullyŏng* 律令) and introduced sartorial regulations for the court;[13] toward the end of his reign, he established the practice of using reign era names.[14] The most important development of Pŏphŭng's reign, however, may have been the acceptance of Buddhism by the court in 528 after the alleged martyrdom of Ich'adon.[15] While early Silla Buddhism, like early Japanese

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[11] This stele was first discovered in 2009 during road construction in P'ohang, only 8.7km from where the Naengsu stele was found in 1989. It features a record of a legal ruling to return land to a person from whom it was previously confiscated, and features the names of many high-ranking nobles. See Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2009), esp. 10-12; 17-26, and discussion in Richard D. McBride II (2016), 71-73.

[12] See *SS* Vol. 4 Pŏphŭng 8.

[13] See *SS* Vol. 4 Pŏphung 7.

[14] See *SS* Vol. 4 Pŏphŭng 23.

[15] This famous story features King Pŏphŭng's aide Ich'adon asking that the king execute him in front of the officials who opposed Buddhism, declaring that if Buddha be worthy of worship, his death would "produce an unusual event." According to the account in *Samguk* sagi, upon his beheading, the color of his blood was "white like milk," the strangeness of which effectively quieted the critics of Buddhism going forward. See *SS* Vol. 4, Pŏphung 15. This story also appears in *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事

Buddhism, seems to have been largely icon-centric, rather than overly text-based (although sutra copying does seem to have begun fairly early—see discussion of Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* below), the rise in prominence of this foreign religion with a long textual tradition could not but have influenced the relative importance of letters in Silla. However, this was in all likelihood a simultaneous development with the growing ideological significance of inscription in the political realm.

Two known steles, the Pongp'yŏng stele 蔚珍鳳坪新羅碑 discovered in Uljin, North Kyŏngsang Province, about 100km up the eastern coast from P'ohang, and the Ch'ŏngche stele 永川菁提碑, recovered from the city of Yŏngch'on, about 40km to the west of Kyŏngju in North Kyŏngsang Province, bear inscriptions with dates corresponding to the reign of Pŏphŭng. The former inscription, dated 524, relates another legal ruling regarding the punishment of villagers who staged an uprising against Silla rule (Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2005, 203; McBride 2016, 74-76). The latter inscription, dated 536,[16] is on one face of a stele that bears an additional inscription dated 798 on the reverse face, and was found adjacent a second stele with an inscription dated 1688. The content of the inscription is related to the construction of an embankment at the site, and the subsequent inscriptions record the repair of that embankment at later dates (Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2005, 205). The original 536 inscription references the mustering of a workforce of 7,000 to complete the project, and describes the scale of the embankment, emphasizing the state's role in the construction of infrastructure and memorializing that role through the physical presence of the stele.[17] Both the Pongp'yŏng and Ch'ŏngche steles can be seen as enshrining the state's power to administer—whether that be the doling out of punishment or the commanding of a substantial labor force to build infrastructure—and speak to a world in which writing was being used as a means of consecrating and perpetuating state control over space. By inscribing the details of legal decisions and records of construction in stone, there was created a physical marker of the state's unique ability to preside over space; in this way, these steles are the product of a literal approach to the "legibilization" of territory, whereby spaces were literally inscribed with records of the state's actions there, in a form that was both visible and irrefutable.

The state's ability to preside over time became an equal concern under Pŏphŭng's successor, Chinhŭng (r. 540-576). While Pŏphŭng's reign supposedly also

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(c. 1285), wherein the narrative is largely the same, but Pŏphŭng shows more hesitancy in executing Ich'adon, and there is significantly more drama and emotion from all involved.

[16] The sexagenary year 丙辰 found on this face of the stele is thought to correspond to 536 based on the Silla ranks seen therein (particularly the use of the character 第 in the transcription of the seventeen ranks).

[17] Bong W. Kang (2006: esp. 205-209) analyzes the inscription and related historical documents to argue for the dating of the reservoir completion/stele inscription back another one or two cycles, to either 476 or 416, concluding that such a project would have been associated with an early centralized state that he sees as emerging in the beginning of the fifth century; further, he uses the mentioned labor force and scale of the project to argue for large-scale irrigation projects as a result of state centralization, rather than a cause for the consolidation of power. While the latter conclusion seems sound, he does not present substantial evidence to support his argument for dating the stele to the fifth century, and this is counter to the general scholarly consensus for a 536 date.

saw the promulgation of law codes, a textual source for the court's authority over its established territory, Chinhŭng's reign saw the beginnings of the compilation of history, by means of which that authority was extended to the past and indefinitely into the future. That is, through the writing of history, the kingdom's past was "rendered legible;" this process was about establishing and ordering the state's temporal parameters, just as the division of its territory into units such as *chu* and *kun* had enabled the clear delineation of its spatial boundaries. In the sixth year of Chinhŭng's reign (545), his Minister of Military Affairs (K. *pyŏngburyŏng* 兵部令), the Ich'an Isabu 伊飡異斯夫 memorialized the throne, saying,

> 國史者、記君臣之善悪、示褒貶於萬代、不有修撰、後代何觀。
> The history of a country records the good and evil deeds of rulers and subjects, and designates those worthy of praise or blame from those of later ages. If one is not compiled, what will later generations look at?[18]

The king agrees with this sentiment and promptly orders the compilation of a history, by instructing his courtiers to gather "men of letters" from far and wide ("廣集文士"). The fact that such men needed to be gathered and assembled in order to compile a history suggests that literacy was not the norm among courtiers of the time; rather, it seems that, like in Japan, writing was probably a specific type of occupation at this point in Silla's history. Moreover, following the *Liang shu* account of the cosmopolitan demographics in Silla's capital, many of those engaged in this occupation may have been of allochthonous heritage or outside origin.

As will be discussed below in the context of the Haman Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan*, Silla's military conquests under Chinhŭng appear to have generated a significant shift toward the increased use of writing within state institutions, as the fledgling bureaucracy struggled to "render legible" new territories, resources, and citizens. Chinhŭng's cunning maneuver in seizing territories in the Han River valley after troops of Koguryŏ and Paekche exhausted each other in battle added considerable territory to the Silla sovereign's realm,[19] and retaining that hotly contested territory was a true test of both martial and administrative capacities. In addition to changing the era name to the apt *kaeguk* 開國 ["opening the country; founding the country"],[20] Chinhŭng aborted his plans to erect a new palace in favor of a royally sponsored temple, Hwangnyongsa 皇龍寺, in central Kyŏngju,[21] and made a tour of his new lands, visiting Mount Pukhan in the Han River Valley in particular to "set the boundaries of the country" 拓定封疆.[22] In changing the era name, Chinhŭng marked a new moment in Silla's history, with a newly expanded territorial scope and new military might, but he also exhibits humility in his decision to erect a temple instead of a palace, showing deference to the divine.

[18] Translation is my own, with reference to Shultz and Kang (2012), 123.
[19] See *SS* Vol. 4 Chinhŭng 11.3; see also Chinhŭng 14.7.
[20] See *SS* Vol. 4 Chinhŭng 12.1.
[21] See *SS* Vol. 4 Chinhŭng 14.2.
[22] See *SS* Vol. 4 Chinhŭng 16.10.

His royal tour, however, is where Chinhŭng's posturing as a sagely ruler is the most symbolic: the act of surveying land is an ancient ritual performance of sovereignty; it is in his manner of performance that Chinhŭng set himself apart from his predecessors. Chinhŭng performed this ancient ritual but supplemented it with modern technology: monument steles memorializing and perpetuating Chinhŭng's tour were erected along his route as visible material markers of the king's presence in the landscape. In this way, the abstract notion of sovereignty over land was rendered manifest, especially to those in the new territories where acceptance of Silla rule was still tentative at best. The projection of sovereignty over space through monumental writing is certainly seen in other contexts,[23] but Silla is perhaps distinct in the rather remote locations in which such monuments were erected, and in the fact that their primary audience was not a literate class of elites, but probably both divinities and local people occupying the landscape, and therefore the material form of the inscriptions took precedence over the content.

Figure 1. Chinhŭng Tour Stele Locations

Four extant steles are known to be markers erected at sites along the route of Chinhŭng's tour. These include the Ch'angnyŏng Stele 昌寧新羅眞興王拓境碑, which records Chinhŭng's inspection in 561 of lands which had previously been part of the Pihwa Kaya 非火伽耶 state; the Mount Pukhan Stele 北漢山新羅眞興王巡狩

[23] Armando Petrucci [1980] (1993: 2-6) discusses the use of monumental writing in urban spaces in medieval and renaissance Italy, where the imitation of Roman monumental inscription was a symbolic act meant to imbed the power of new rulers in the urban landscape; however, he contends that the audience of such inscriptions was a growing literate class of elites, and indeed such inscriptions were generally restricted to urban space. Wang Haicheng (2014: 301-303) similarly contends that "display" writing was necessarily directed at a literate audience of elites. In Silla, by contrast, while a literate elite would certainly be capable of extracting specific information from monumental inscriptions, it seems that the majority of people who encountered steles such as those of Chinhŭng's tour probably simply took the inscriptions on their surface as symbolic markers of state power/the sovereign himself, affirming what they already knew about the monument on by virtue of its monumentality.

碑, thought to have been erected about 568 to memorialize an "inspection" of the Han River Valley conducted from the mountain's peak; the Maunnyŏng Stele 磨雲嶺新羅眞興王巡狩碑, originally erected atop Mt. Unsi 雲施山 in the district of Riwŏn in South Hamgyŏng province in 568; and the Hwangch'oryŏng Stele 黄草嶺新羅眞興王巡狩碑, also originally erected atop a mountain in modern South Hamgyŏng province in 568 (see Figure 1).

All four steles contain accounts of Chinhŭng's visit to the site in question, with three of the four deriving from what appears to have been a tour of Silla's northern borderlands in 568. The Maunnyŏng Stele is in particularly good condition, and is thus a good source for understanding the format of the "tour stele" inscriptions. The inscription begins with a declaration of the stele as a memorial of Chinhŭng's tour, followed by praise for Chinhŭng's expansion of Silla's territory and his good governance, making special note of his efforts to reassure the people living in his new lands through his tour, and finally listing all the names and titles of those officials who made up the king's retinue on the tour.

Figure 2. King Chinhŭng Tour Stele on Mount Pukhan (photo taken 1961, before the stele was moved to the National Museum of Korea in 1972)

With the exception of the Ch'angnyŏng Stele, which was found in the foothills of Mt. Hwawang 火旺山, these steles were all erected on mountain peaks, suggesting the importance of mountains as both ritual sites and vista points for the "inspection" of territory. As can be seen in Figure 2, with these mountain-top monuments, the message was as much the stone as it was the inscription—certainly the inscription worked to control the meaning of the stone, but it did not function as an independent text. The inscription was not meant as a historical document, but an affirmation of the stone's power to command the landscape in which it was imbedded. The stone's monumentality stands in for the figure of the king, projecting his presence across the landscape unfolding before it.

The text of the inscription, while important in ritually affirming the stele's role as substitute for the king, would not have been legible to many who encountered it, and its inscription, removed from its material context and transplanted onto some other material, would have been ineffective in conveying the state's power over the space in question. It is the stone's monumental presence that matters most of all—the inscribed letters here are in service of the material form, not the other way around. This fact is especially poignant when one considers the status of a possible fifth Chinhŭng Tour Stele, the Mt. Kamak Stele 紺岳山碑, which stands atop Mt. Kamak in P'aju, Kyŏnggi Province. According to a 1982 study, this stele is similar in design and material to the Mt. Pukhan Stele, and yet contains

no trace of an extant inscription. Chosŏn period texts also note the lack of an inscription, and indeed it seems the surface of the stele may have never been inscribed at all (Kugnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2005, 214-215). While it remains unknown whether the lack of an inscription may have been intentional, or whether an inscription may have been carved, but could not withstand the elements over the intervening centuries, its significance within the landscape seems to have been clear nonetheless, with at least some local people referring to it as the "Stele-King Stele" well into the twentieth century (Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2005, 215). In this way, it seems that the stone itself, at least as far as "the people" are concerned, was sufficient to transmit the message of kingly sovereignty.

That Chinhŭng's reign should be marked by both territorial acquisition and the proliferation of inscriptions is perhaps unsurprising. As Wang Haicheng (2014) has argued, writing is a vital technology for rendering territory "legible," and given the rapid pace with which the expansion of Silla's territory proceeded under Chinhŭng, inscriptions were produced in response to an urgent need to secure control over new sovereign space. Under Chinhŭng, Silla expanded into former Kaya territory (Ch'angnyŏng Stele), the Han River Valley, territory that was formerly held by Paekche (until 475) and then Koguryŏ (Mt. Pukhan Stele), and the northeastern coastal region, territory formerly held by Koguryŏ and the Malgal (the Maunnyŏng Stele and the Hwangch'oryŏng Stele). Given the military nature of these acquisitions, there was both a symbolic and a practical need for the king to visit the lands and reassure those populating them. While the king would eventually return to his capital in Kyŏngju, the material marker he left behind would both "reassure" and evoke the submission of local people in perpetuity.

Sixth century steles are, in essence, markers of state presence in a given landscape—on the surface, they are records of past visits to the site by representatives of the state, but in practice they imbed that presence into the landscape in perpetuity. The presence of such stones was a powerful message in and of itself, the details of which were affirmed by an inscription on the surface of the stone. Occasionally, stones already present in the landscape might be inscribed so as to control their significance, again in terms of their connection to the state: this is the case with several inscriptions found among the Ch'ŏnjŏn-ni petroglyphs, inscribed on a rock face located in the northern outskirts of modern Ulsan on a key route leading south from Kyŏngju into the Naktong River Valley. All seven of the sixth century inscriptions found scattered across the surface of the rock, which measures approximately 2.7 meters high by 9.7 meters across, record the visit of elite personages to the site, including some royal individuals quite close to the king (among them are Pŏphŭng's younger brother and

Figure 3. Ch'ŏnjŏn-ni Petrogylphs

the father of Chinhŭng, the *Kalmunwang* Sabuji 徙夫知葛文王,[24] his queen Chimolsihye 只没尸兮, as well as a young Chinhŭng himself), members of the ruling council, and Buddhist priests from prominent temples with connections to the throne. This imposing rock face was probably both an inviting place for travelers to rest in the shade and an enticingly soft material for carving; as a result, people began to adorn it with a variety of motifs beginning in the Bronze Age. The upper section of the rock is characterized by abstract, geometric designs that are thought to belong to this early period, while the bottom section contains more "realistic" depictions of phenomena such as animals, human figures, and boats, as well as a number of inscriptions, which are generally thought to have been carved at a later date than those in the upper section.[25] Given that the inscriptions, which largely date to the reigns of Pŏphŭng and Chinhŭng, were always carved by elites seeking to mark their presence there, they can also be understood as efforts to exert power over the surrounding space. These elite visitors to the site sought to control the meaning of the glyphs on its surface through the appending of their own inscriptions in Sinographs, which would have been symbolically synonymous with state power. One inscription, bearing the earliest date of the seven, describes Chinhŭng's father *Kalmunwang* Sabuji as giving a name to the place, an act that is inherently an effort to control and administer space (Kang Chonghun 2004). That elites close to the throne took an interest in this particular rock surface may have been as simple as a conception that such a natural monument should "naturally" belong to the state. After all, steles were "unnatural" monuments purposefully erected amidst monumental landscapes, exerting state control over the surrounding land; why should a pre-existing monument in a place frequented by travelers since time immemorial be any different?

In sixth century Silla, inscription was an important means of possessing land—both the physical landscape and the people that inhabited it—that proved crucial in the kingdom's negotiating of its newfound position as a peninsular power. Most of those who encountered the monumental inscriptions imbedded in different landscapes probably would not have been able to read them, but rather would have apprehended them as purely symbolic representations of the state and its ability to command foreign technologies. This meant, essentially, that writing in these contexts was a ritual tool put to use in the performance of sovereignty, and this is abundantly clear from the steles erected at the sites of King Chinhŭng's tour of his new territory. Steles erected after the reign of Chinhŭng—that is, toward the end of the sixth century—contain inscriptions largely related to the construction and repair of infrastructure (the majority are related to the construction of a new fortress wall on Mt. Nam in Kyŏngju toward the end of the sixth century, known as the Mt. Nam New Fortress Steles 慶州南山新城碑), where the emphasis is usually on the state's ability to muster an appropriately sized labor force to complete a large-scale project. However, compared t the Chinhŭng Tour Steles, these are

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[24] *Kalmunwang* was a Silla rank reserved for individuals second only to the king in terms of rank, that is, mainly his siblings or other close relatives. It is something akin to the term "princes of the blood."
[25] For more on the petroglyphs, see Kang Chonghun (2004); Kungnip Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2005), esp. 202-204; 206; 211-214.

considerably smaller in scale, and seem to highlight the practical applications, rather than the symbolic origins, of state power. In this respect, their inscriptions share much with how *mokkan* came to be used in sixth century Silla.

Writing on Wood: *Mokkan* and the Sixth Century *Yullyŏng* State

Steles had a certain kind of relationship with space that was largely dictated by their material form. By contrast, the ephemerality and mutability of *mokkan* meant they were used for fundamentally different kinds of inscriptions. As Armando Pertrucci ([1980] 1993) has noted, "the functions of writing always correspond to the type of materials used, and therefore those functions correspond to the typologies of products created" (2). The durability and monumentality of stone meant that the type of writing inscribed into the surface of steles was necessarily distinct from that brushed onto wood with ink. However, in sixth century Silla, both material surfaces were used for the production of inscriptions that were inherently embodiments of state power. While there are some exceptions, the majority of pre-unification *mokkan* from Silla have been recovered from mountain fortresses in outlying territories, and as a whole their inscriptions represent the records of a fledgling law-code based administrative state staging an effort at "legible" operation, with varying levels of success. By contrast, *mokkan* finds from the post-unification period are fewer and primarily concentrated within

Figure 4. Pre-Unification Silla Mokkan Sites

and near the capital, present-day Kyŏngju. As seen in Figure 4, the distribution of pre-unification Silla *mokkan* sites mirrors the distribution of the Chinhŭng Tour Steles discussed above, to the extent that one wonders if the discovery of similar sites extending up the eastern coast to South Hamgyŏng Province might be expected in the future.

Until *mokkan* began to be unearthed from sites in Silla territory, sixth century written culture was known only through steles, which present a skewed and "monumental" picture of the usage of script in the kingdom. While writing on stone could commemorate and enshrine authority, it was cumbersome for everyday communications within bureaucratic institutions; further, stone surfaces were too expensive and time-consuming to inscribe to be used for literacy acquisition. Rather, although steles are somewhat more common in Silla than elsewhere in Pen/Insular East Asia, we can assume that like in Paekche and Japan, stone surfaces for inscription were used in particular contexts and constituted one sliver of a growing multi-surface written culture in Silla that also included paper and wood. While scant evidence remains for paper use in Silla, *mokkan* discoveries offer an alternative means of approaching written culture in Silla, and as such can help provide a larger context for interpreting sixth century steles.

Mokkan have been recovered from five separate pre-unification sites, with only one of these located in the capital: the Wŏlsŏng Moat 月城垓子 site. Among the four provincial sites, three are mountain fortresses (Haman Sŏngsan Fortress 咸安城山山城, Hanam Yisŏng Fortress 河南二聖山城, and Inch'ŏn Kyeyang Fortress 仁川桂陽山城), while Kimhae Ponghwang-dong 金海鳳凰洞 appears to have been a settlement/administrative site located at the former Kumgwan Kaya capital. The dating of the *mokkan* recovered from Inch'ŏn Kyeyang Fortress and Kimhae Ponghwang-dong is still unsettled; while these *mokkan* may in fact date to the post-unification period, they were likely inscribed no later than the early eighth century, and so for our purposes here they will be discussed as pre-unification/immediate post-unification period artifacts.[26] In total, the pre-unification corpus of *mokkan* from Silla consists of some 306 artifacts, with the majority of those (86%) having been excavated from the Haman Sŏngsan Fortress site. Because of the large number coming from one site, the data is somewhat skewed toward the types of inscription prevalent at Sŏngsan Fortress, but the classifications of pre-unification *mokkan* are outlined in Table 1. Again, largely due to the large number of artifacts from Sŏngsan Fortress, pre-unification Silla *mokkan* can be said to make up approximately 80% of Silla *mokkan* recovered to date.

Site	Documents	Tags	Other	Unknown
Haman Sŏngsan Fortress	5	224	2	31

[26] The significance of unification for understanding the development of Silla written culture will be treated further in the Conlcusion. At issue here is writing as a means of consolidating and integrating new outlying territories, and since this process continued into the early post-unification era through the beginning of the eighth century, these artifacts will be lumped together with those clearly belonging to the pre-unification period. The factors surrounding the dating of these artifacts will be discussed in detail below.

Hanam Yisŏng Fortress	2	2	0	8
Kyŏngju Wŏlsŏng Moat	9	4	4	12
Inch'ŏn Kyeyang Fortress	1	0	1	0
Kimhae Ponghwang-dong	0	0	1	0
Totals (306)	17	230	8	51

As can be seen above, the data is heavily skewed by the large number of tag *mokkan* recovered from Haman Sŏngsan Fortress, making tag *mokkan* 75% of pre-unification Silla *mokkan*; however, tags are relatively underrepresented from other sites, where documents are somewhat more common, although unclassifiable *mokkan* predominate. The highest number of document *mokkan* belongs to the Kyŏngju Wŏlsŏng Moat site, the only one of the five pre-unification *mokkan* sites to be located inside Silla's capital, which may suggest something about the relative importance of documenting official correspondence and recording information within a fledgling capital-based bureaucracy compared to the expediency of tracking the flow of supplies into a fortress under construction, like at Haman Sŏngsan. Included in the category of "other" are both Silla *Analects mokkan*, found at Kimhae Ponghwang-dong and Inch'ŏn Kyeyang Fortress, examples of calligraphic practice (four from Wŏlsŏng Moat and one from Haman Sŏngsan), and a central index rod for a scroll (from Haman Sŏngsan Fortress, indicating some paper documents were also in use there).[27]

Based on this information, we might conclude that in Silla, *mokkan* were used primarily as a means of identifying shipments; however, as has been noted, the survival of *mokkan* depends on a number of factors, and the manner of disposal and the conditions at Haman Sŏngsan were particularly apt for their survival. The fact that tag *mokkan* predominate in the Haman Sŏngsan corpus does not necessarily indicate anything more than that a group of tag *mokkan* were deposited and survived. Countless other *mokkan* may have been reused, burned, or deposited somewhere yet undiscovered, or somewhere with less than ideal conditions for the survival of wood through the centuries.

Nevertheless, the many tag *mokkan* from Haman Sŏngsan do at least indicate that one of the primary uses for the technology of writing at this sixth century fortress was monitoring the in-flow of supplies, and, arguably, showing people that they were capable of doing so. Using writing in this way would have undoubtedly been centrally mandated, as a means of ensuring that those responsible for delivering certain types of goods followed through. However, the ideological implications of using writing in this way were probably not lost on the representatives of the center who may have been present there: in the corpus of *mokkan* from the site, we see that the authority of the written word as an irrefutable embodiment of laws, obligations, and responsibilities, as well as a means of meeting and fulfilling the same, was taking root at Sŏngsan Fortress.

The classification scheme presented here is useful for understanding basic functions of *mokkan*, but obscures some ways in which they may have functioned

[27] Only one features an identifiable description, and so has been included in these figures; other indexes without inscriptions have also been recovered from Sŏngsan Fortress.

outside of their inscriptions. While *mokkan*, by virtue of their malleable nature and the manner in which they circulated, were not powerful presences in the landscape in the same way as stone steles, there is evidence from Hanam Yisŏng Fortress that *mokkan* as objects may have served in certain ritual capacities in Silla. In this case, the manner of deposition of several uninscribed *mokkan* has prompted questions with regard to *mokkan* as ritual objects independent of any inscribed content, something that appears to be without parallel in Paekche or Japanese contexts. In addition, some Silla *mokkan*, including several pieces from the Kyŏngju Wŏlsŏng Moat site, are only haphazardly manufactured, with an irregular amount of sides and minimal finishing, creating the impression that *mokkan* use in pre-unification Silla was somewhat ad hoc; indeed, there are some pieces that appear to be merely a piece of wood where the bark has been stripped off but the girth remains round—hardly an ideal surface for writing.[28] As a writing surface, then, *mokkan* seem to have been of-the-moment in nature, and we know that their use lives as objects often extended beyond this fleeting purpose.

All of these idiosyncrasies of *mokkan* as a phenomenon in pre-unification Silla written culture are obscured by these broad categories, but it is these very divergences that are worth exploring in order to understand inscriptive practice in Silla. Below, I will outline *mokkan* found at each of the five pre-unification sites and describe how writing functioned in each context. Finally, based on the analysis of each of these separate localized "written cultures," I will highlight key features of Silla written culture as a whole. Generally, as will be seen, writing was both a practical and ideological tool utilized by the state, but there are nuances to that picture that problematize a unitary conception of written culture in Silla prior to unification.

Haman Sŏngsan Fortress

Haman Sŏngsan Fortress (K. *Haman Sŏngsan sansŏng*) is located in present-day Kaya-ŭp, Haman county, South Kyŏngsang Province, atop a mountain known as Chonamsan 鳥南山 (also known as Sŏngsan 城山), overlooking what was once the capital of Ara 阿羅, one of the many Kaya states, which met its end some time in the 550s.[29] Silla is thought to have annexed Ara territory around the year 560, and

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[28] Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2013: 23) calls these *wŏnjuhyŏng* 圓柱形 ["round rod shape"] *mokkan*, and notes that because they seem to have been a rather impractical choice for writing, they may have had a secondary function as ritual objects.

[29] The annals of the *Samguk sagi* lack detail in how the Kaya statelets were absorbed by Paekche and Silla, and say nothing about Ara in particular. The geographical treatise offers a little more information, noting merely that the district of Haman 咸安郡 was once home to Ara Kaya (written 阿尸良國, with a variant transcription 阿那加耶 also given), and that it was conquered in the time of King Pŏphŭng (this dating does not fit with other evidence which shows Ara still extant in the early 550s). The *Nihon shoki*, in the annals of the sovereign Kinmei, provides a detailed narrative of the unfolding conflicts in the Kaya region in the late 540s and throughout the 550s, with Silla and Koguryŏ allied against Paekche, Ara Kaya, Tae Kaya, and Japan (in the 540s, it appears Ara was attempting to play all these powers off one another, but then aligned itself with Paekche/Japan). Paekche and Japan are represented as attempting to preserve the "independence" of Ara against Silla/Koguryŏ aggression, although there are hints that Paekche may have been attempting to acquire territory of its own (see Kinmei 9 [548].1.3). While much of the text of *Nihon shoki* is fraught

based on a *Nihon shoki* entry for the 22nd year of Kinmei (561) that notes Silla was building a fortress on Mount P'asa 波斯山 in former Ara territory,[30] the construction of Sŏngsan Fortress is thought to have begun immediately thereafter. The equation of the Mount P'asa that appears in *Nihon shoki* with Sŏngsan Fortress is based on little more than the fact that Sŏngsan is located in what is thought to have been the former Ara capital. Some scholars have admitted there is little evidence that Sŏngsan Fortress is indeed the same fortress whose construction is noted in *Nihon shoki,* but argue that the entry in that text shows Silla had taken possession of Ara territory in the early 560s, and so the construction of Sŏngsan Fortress probably dates to about this time (Chŏn Tŏkchae 2008a, 3-4).[31] Nevertheless, this has provided scholars with an approximate date for the fortress' construction that has been largely consistent with excavated materials from the site, which are clearly Silla, and not Kaya, in origin.[32]

The *mokkan* unearthed here are widely thought to predate the fortress itself, and so scholars have largely agreed that they must date to about the middle of the sixth century. However, because no sexagenary dates or reign era names appear anywhere in the *mokkan* inscriptions,[33] and the generally accepted mid-sixth century date is based on a number of assumptions, some scholars have argued the *mokkan* should be dated to the seventh century or later.[34] It is clear, however, that

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and colored by eighth century imperial ideology, its version of events appears to be based largely on earlier Paekche histories, and the overall picture does fit with what is otherwise known about the fall of the Kaya confederacy in the mid-sixth century. Mentions of Ara or the Ara king stop around 554, when Paekche suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of Silla, who executed their King Sŏng. Although it is unclear if the same battle also resulted in the destruction of Ara, they cease to be a player in the *Nihon shoki* narrative after this point.

[30] This entry, along with two further entries for the 21st and 22nd years of Kinmei's reign (560-561) where Silla is seen sending envoys "offering tribute" to Japan (i.e., attempting to appease them/avert retaliation for their conquest), suggest that Silla's absorption of Ara was complete by this time.

[31] The provincial ranks seen among the tablet inscriptions also support a mid-sixth century date.

[32] The fortress was long assumed to have been constructed by Ara, given its location; excavations began under the assumption that this was an Ara fortress, but quickly revealed construction techniques characteristic of Silla. Moreover, artifacts such as pottery are clearly Silla in origin, and the *mokkan* contain a number of Silla titles and place names. Yi Yonghyŏn (2006), 321; Pak Chong'ik (2007), 157.

[33] Son Hwanil (2017) has argued that one *mokkan* unearthed in the seventeenth stage of excavations (2014-2016), No. W155, contains the sexagenary date 壬子 ["Yang Water Rat"], which would correspond to 592. However, the character that follows this compound is closer to 寧 than 年, and so this theory has not been generally accepted. Furthermore, the first character is closer to 王 than 壬. Given the placement of the three characters 王子寧 relative to the rest of the inscription (which also contains the characters 大村 and the two characters 刀只, which are probably part of a personal name), and granted the standard format for other tag *mokkan* excavated from Sŏngsan Fortress, it is more likely that this three character sequence constitutes a place name or a part thereof. See Ch'oe Changmi (2017), 200-201.

[34] Yun Sangdŏk (2015) argues that the organic sediment layer (discussed in detail below) from which the *mokkan* were unearthed was in fact constructed at the beginning of the seventh century, as part of a renewal project for the eastern wall of the fortress. Therefore, he contends the *mokkan* themselves probably date to around the late sixth century. Yi Chuhŏn (2015) takes a similar view, but argues for an early seventh century date for the organic sediment layer based on pottery typology of earthenware fragments excavated alongside the *mokkan*. Yi Sŭngjae (2017: 440) argues that the

the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* predate the unification of the Three Kingdoms in the mid-seventh century, and therefore whether they date to the mid-sixth century or slightly later is not at issue for the present discussion. Moreover, the inscriptions seen on the *mokkan* excavated from the site contain distinct echoes of the inscriptive projects of King Chinhŭng aimed at national integration.

Mokkan were first discovered at the Sŏngsan fortress site in 1992, and ongoing excavations thereafter have consistently yielded new *mokkan*. With the exception of a single piece discovered in 2003, all of the *mokkan* discovered to date have come from drainage facilities located at the East Gate of the fortress, and specifically from a man-made organic sediment layer. This layer was part of land surface leveling that occurred prior to the construction of the fortress wall, intended to facilitate the flow of water out of the fortress through the gaps in the sediment.[35] *Mokkan* are distributed across several strata, but are mainly concentrated in the upper part of this layer, that is otherwise made up of a variety of organic "waste" such as reeds, bark, seeds, and tree branches, as well as man-made wooden objects and pieces thereof. That *mokkan* were included in this layer is a clear indication of the way in which those responsible for the leveling viewed them: as pieces of organic waste. In fact, it seems they likely did not draw a distinction between *mokkan* and the other wooden objects deposited in the layer (Yi Sŏngjun 2007, 132).

Once the use-life of their inscriptions expired, the *mokkan* recovered from Sŏngsan Fortress became part of a layer of organic waste, the completion of which was a crucial first step in the construction of the eastern wall of the fortress. This layer lies below a grayish-brown clay layer that contains the foundation stones of the fortress wall (Pak Chongik 2007, 160). Therefore, it is clear that these *mokkan* predate the fortress, and likely relate to the process of its construction. After all, the majority are tags noting items and their place/person of origin, which are thought to provide information about shipments of supplies for construction; once those supplies were delivered and/or consumed, the *mokkan* inscriptions would have been rendered useless and therefore fitting material for use as fill soil. The fact that they appear concentrated toward the upper part of the layer hints at their being one of the last materials utilized as the layer was nearing completion, and perhaps resorted to only as other resources became scant, or as a means of disposing of

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typology presented by Yi Chuhŏn is imprecise, and that the calligraphy of the *mokkan* inscriptions supports the original mid-sixth century dating.

[35] This layer begins at the southern end of an underground drainage channel located in the interior of the fortress (Yang Sukja 2014, 103; Yi Sŏngjun 2007, 130-131). Yi notes that because the East Gate of the fortress stands at the bottom of a valley, leveling would have been a crucial first step prior to erecting the fortress wall. Without adequate drainage, any wall would effectively become something of a dam and therefore subject to significant damage/erosion over time. Furthermore, the organic sediment layer, because of the larger gaps in between particles, would have been an effective way of dispersing run-off into the earth. Yang Sukja (2014: 103) notes that civil engineering research (carried out by the Gaya National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage) has shown that such "sponge-like" layers are capable of absorbing nearly 28 times as much run-off compared to cases in which such a layer was not constructed, and speculates that this layer may be one reason the eastern wall of Sŏngsan Fortress still stands today (102).

clutter prior to moving on to the next stage of construction.[36] That said, including them among other types of organic waste and debris as part of the fill soil is certainly a type of reuse; in this case, disposal and reuse overlap, as these *mokkan* found a second life in helping to fortify the ground beneath the fortress wall. The question of their original purpose, however—that is, the function of the *mokkan* inscriptions—remains a matter of significant debate. [37]

Tag Mokkan and Provincial Administration

Among the tag *mokkan* unearthed at Sŏngsan Fortress, scholars have long noted certain patterns of inscription, which can be broken down as follows:[38] 1) (place name) + personal name; 2) (place name) + personal name + 一伐; 3) (place name) + personal name + 稗 or 稗石 or 稗(numeral); 4) (place name) + personal name + 麥石; 5) (place name) + personal name + 負; 6) (place name) + personal name + 一伐 + 稗.[39] Prior to the discovery of *mokkan* in the latter three categories in the 2002 and 2006 excavations, certain scholars had argued that all or some of the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* were not "tags" but something akin to "ID" cards for those involved in the construction of the fortress. This was based on the idea that 稗 or 稗石 was an alternative way of writing the Silla provincial rank 彼日 (K. *p'iil*, the tenth rank out of eleven), and so such inscriptions were considered akin to those featuring another provincial rank 一伐, the eighth of eleven (Yi Yonghyŏn 2006, 322-324; Pak Chongik 2007, 169-170). However, the discovery of *mokkan* that featured 一伐 followed by 稗 (category 6) offers fairly decisive evidence that this theory is incorrect, since no one person is likely to have had both ranks; further, the discovery of *mokkan* in category 4, where a quantity of a different type of grain 麥 ["barley"] was recorded following the identification of an individual, means that the

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[36] Some have raised the possibility that their inclusion at the top of the layer may have been the result of some sort of ritual, but this is not a mainstream view, and has been harshly criticized by archaeologists (Yi Sŏngjun 2007, 132; Yang Sukja 2014, 104).

[37] For an in-depth summary of recent research and ongoing debates related to the *mokkan* from Sŏngsan Fortress in English, see Nari Kang (2017).

[38] Here I am interested in how the content of the inscriptions can be categorized; many scholars have focused instead on classifying the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* according to artifact shape (cf. Yun Sŏnt'ae [1999: 4-7], Chŏn Tŏkchae [2008b]), with a focus on the location of v-grooves and the presence/absence of holes, but these are all generally characteristic features of tag *mokkan*, and while certain styles of manufacture may predominate among *mokkan* bearing certain place names, these differences are not especially relevant to an understanding of the function of the inscriptions.

[39] These categories are based on Yi Yonghyŏn (2006): 322-324. For a slightly different schema, see also Pak Chongik (2007): 165. Yun Sŏntae (1999: 14-20) was the first to offer a classification scheme, based only on those *mokkan* excavated in 1992 and 1994 (27 pieces total; 24 with writing); he divides these into Type A (place name + personal name + [rank]), Type B (place name + personal name + 稗) and Other. Chu Podon (2002: 331-332) offers a similar classification scheme (place name + personal name; place name + personal name + rank; just place name) based on those same 24 *mokkan* excavated in 1992 and 1994 (in addition to these 24, another two were recovered in 2000, but are not discussed by Chu). Hashimoto Shigeru (2014: 63) argues that the tag *mokkan* all generally fit the pattern of place name + personal name + item name, with some of these elements sometimes omitted. Indeed, Yi's classifications presented here could be all characterized as permutations of Hashimoto's general formula.

interpretation of 稗 ["millet"] as similarly referring to foodstuffs is almost certainly correct.[40] Moreover, 石 is a common measurement for grains, seen elsewhere in extant Silla inscriptions, although often without the top horizontal stroke of the character (an abbreviated form that may be a uniquely Korean character; see Yi Sŭngjae 2017, 331; Lee SeungJae 2014, 159-161). Although a few pieces that fall into categories 1 and 2 might still be considered to be "ID" tags, the overwhelming majority of the 224 confirmed tag *mokkan* from the Sŏngsan Fortress site appear to have been shipment labels.

The fact that these inscriptions were likely shipment labels indicates that the Silla state was enforcing tribute taxes on certain areas in order to provide materials for the construction of the fortress, including, but not limited to, grain to feed conscripted laborers. A significant amount of research has been conducted to determine the locations of the place names that appear on the *mokkan*, and therefore where goods coming to the Sŏngsan Fortress site had originated.[41] This work has confirmed that most of the place names belong to the Sangju region—that is, to the north along the Naktong River from Haman (see Figure 5 below).[42] Those whose modern equivalents have been identified[43] are outlined in Table 2, along with the personal names and types of grain included in their inscriptions.[44]

Place Name	Modern Equivalent	Number of *mokkan*	Personal Name(s)	Grains
Kuribŏl 仇利伐	Okch'ŏn, North Ch'ungchŏng Province, or Masan area	18	乞利, 谷珎次, 波婁 (x2), 仇礼支, 於非支, 只即智, 仇阤尒一伐, 尒利□一伐, 近德知一伐,仇陀知一伐, 牟利之, 今你次, 詩本礼兮, 伊西比支, 夫□知一伐 (16 total)	Millet 稗 (x1)

[40] Outside of these two grains, salt is also mentioned in one *mokkan* inscription. See Yi Yonghyŏn (2006): 324-325; Pak Chongik (2007): 169-171.

[41] See for instance Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2013): 133-141; Yi Yonghyŏn (2006): 328-331; Chŏn Tokchae (2008b; 2009).

[42] A number of these areas (and the Naktong River Valley in general) were traditionally Kaya territories.

[43] The identification of these place names is for the most part based on similar names seen in the geographic treatise of *Samguk sagi.*

[44] Table is based on Yi Kyŏngsop (2013): 136, but with some modifications/additions. The data presented here is based on the corpus of 224 inscribed *mokkan* from Haman Sŏngsan Fortress included in the *Hanguk mokkan chajŏn* (2011), plus the additional twelve inscribed *mokkan* recovered in the sixteenth stage of excavations from 2011-2012, as described in Yang Sŏkchin and Min Kyŏngsŏn (2015), and the twenty-three inscribed *mokkan* recovered in the seventeenth stage of excavations from 2014-2016, as described in Ch'oe Changmi (2017).

Kammunsŏng 甘文(城)	Kaeryŏng-myŏn, Kimch'ŏn, North Kyŏngsang Province	8	伊竹伊, 毛利只, □利兮, 卜只次, 大只伐支, 加本斯, 伊負只 (6 total)	Unspecified 一石 (x1), Rice 米 (x1), Wheat 原 (x1),[45] Millet 稗 (x1)
Kot'a 古阤／古陀	Andong, North Kyŏngsang Province	16	仇仍支, 智卜利古支, 豆于利智, 毛羅次尸智, □利夫, 仇利酒支, 和□□, 乃兮支, 弥伊□□, 日系利, 勿大兮, 陀之支, 他□只, 干支兮伐 (14 total)	Millet 稗 (x12)
Kŭppŏlsŏng 及伐城	Sunhŭng-myŏn, Yŏngju, North Kyŏngsang Province	9	烏伐尺	Millet 稗 (x9)
Kubŏl 仇伐	Tanch'on-myŏn, Ŭisang-gun, North Kyŏngsang Province	5	弥次分, 智支	Millet 稗 (x4)
Subŏl 須伐	Sanju, North Kyŏngsang Province	1	居須智	None
Maegokch'on 買谷村	Yean-myŏn/Tosan-myŏn, Andong, North Kyŏngsang Province	2	斯珎于 (x2)	Millet 稗 (x2)
Mulsabŏl 勿思伐	Yech'ŏn-gun, North Kyŏngsang Province (?)	1	None	Millet 稗

[45] This based on Yi Sŭngjae (2017: 390-391)'s argument that 本 and 原 are used as semantogram-borrowings (*hunch'aja* 訓借字), where both would be glossed as /**mit/* /["origin; base], which would have been homonymous with the Old Korean word for "wheat" (modern Korean *mil*, Old Korean /*mit/, with the former derived due to t->r lenition that is thought to have occurred about a century later and was a prominent feature of Middle Korean as attested in the fifteenth century).

Ch'umun 鄒文	Kŭmsŏng-myŏn, Ŭisŏng-gun, North Kyŏngsang Province	4	內旦利, 尒利牟利, 伊□習 (3 total)	Wheat 本 (x1)[46]

The reason for these particular places' bearing the brunt of the responsibility for shipping grain and salt into Haman probably relates to their favorable location along the Naktong River, enabling efficient transport to the fortress site (see Figure 5). Moreover, it is likely that laborers for the construction of this particular fortress were conscripted from these areas, and indeed the shipments to which these *mokkan* were attached may have been provisions for those laborers. The fact that so many of these tag *mokkan* feature personal names, and not just the name of an area/village,[47] suggests that the grain was either being provided by or provided for a particular individual. The Taika Reform edicts in the *Nihon shoki* stipulate that in the case of palace servants and waiting women conscripted to serve in the capital, a certain number of households were designated to provide rations for that individual.[48] It is entirely conceivable that this was also the case in Silla's law code system, and therefore corvée laborers sent by certain villages to aid in public construction projects would have been also responsible for their own rations (i.e., their village needed to send grain along with them). These *mokkan*, then, would

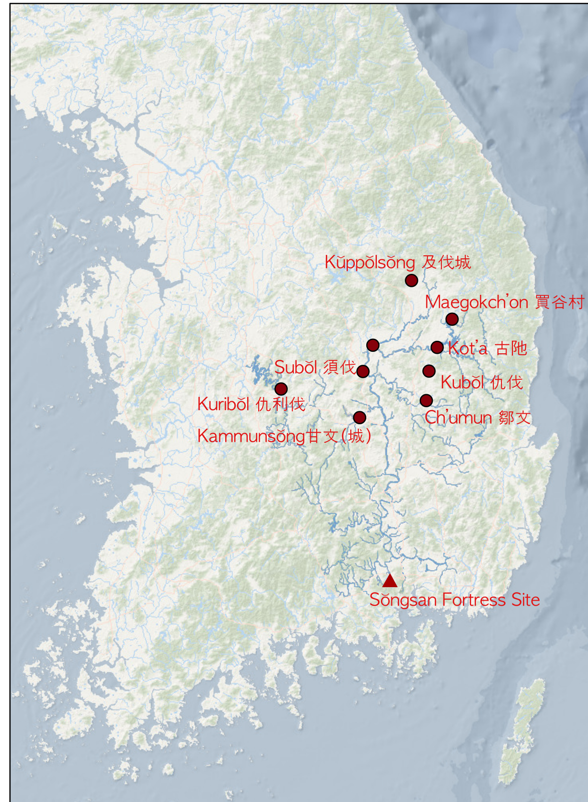

Figure 5. Speculative locations of toponyms appearing on Haman Sŏngsan Fortress tag *mokkan*

[46] See Footnote 45 above.
[47] There are exceptions, as can be deemed from Table 2. For instance, only one of the nine tags from Kŭppŏlsŏng contains a personal name, as opposed to sixteen out of the eighteen from Kuribŏl),
[48] See *NS* Kōtoku 2.1.1 (Taika 1): 以五十戸宛仕丁一人之糧 [...] 以百戸宛采女一人糧.

function to clearly identify a supply of grain as for the feeding of a certain individual, and thus exhibit compliance with the law that required they furnish both a laborer and his rations.

These different locations, scattered along the course of the Naktong River and its many tributaries (as seen in Figure 6), were all attempting to inscribe their compliance with the law, but the disparities in the ways in which they did so likely reflect the relative recentness of this system and the use of writing in such contexts in Silla. As Hashimoto Shigeru (2009: 284) notes, it is clear from epigraphic sources that the administrative reach of Silla's central state was gradually extended over the course of the sixth century, with officials dispatched from the center increasingly present at not only the district 郡 level, but at the village level as well by the end of the sixth century. Further, holders of "provincial rank" are increasingly common.[49] As this central presence spread, so too probably did the use of writing in the provinces, but Hashimoto (2009: 295-301) argues that the Haman Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* were probably not manufactured at the village level, but at the district level, pointing to certain *mokkan* that appear to be in the same hand that inscribe shipments from different villages in the same district, as well as one that appears to inscribe a shipment originating from two different villages. This means that literate persons at the district headquarters were responsible for inscribing the origin and content of a shipment for the benefit of their counterparts at Sŏngsan Fortress, and suggests that not only had the bureaucracy developed to such an extent that these sorts of protocols were in place, but district-level officials were those charged with implementing them. Moreover, Hashimoto argues that these district-level officials were probably originally from the provinces; however, the basis for this argument is his reading of one of the Mt. Nam steles dated to 591, which mentions officials called *munch'ŏk* 文尺 "scribes," who bear provincial ranks. The Haman Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* are thought to date from approximately 30 years earlier, and from a moment when the technology of writing was arguably much less entrenched in Silla. It is therefore unclear if those responsible for composing these inscriptions at district headquarters were also locally sourced scribes, like they would be a generation later.

While the format of inscriptions are generally consistent in a particular district, because of clear differences in handwriting styles, there were clearly multiple individuals capable of writing within a given district center.[50] The inconsistency of inscription styles across different districts shows that different individuals pursued different ways of fulfilling a centrally mandated requirement for shipment labeling; because the shipments would probably have also been accompanied by a messenger (or the laborer himself), adhering to a standard form was probably less important than the fact of the inscription's presence, and as long as it contained very basic information with regard to the shipment's origin, any omitted elements of the [place name + personal name + item + amount] formula

[49] These were ranks given to locally powerful gentry, and were distinct from the rank system of the capital.
[50] Hashimoto Shigeru (2009): 301.

could be attained through other means.[51] While the lack of a standard could be attributed to local scribes with disparate interpretations of a central mandate, it can also be explained as a symptom of a relatively young written culture in which the transmission of information was still a priority over adherence to any standard, and was acceptable because the inscribed text on the wood would not have been apprehended independently. This phenomenon can be seen as directly parallel to the earliest tag *mokkan* seen in Japan at the Naniwa capital site (see Chapter 3).

The use of writing to facilitate the movement of people and goods for the purposes of fortress construction was also a means of symbolically integrating the realm and representing that integrated realm to its inhabitants (officials and laborers, but also any local people who would have born witness). The physical exchange of the *mokkan* as objects was an official transaction that connected representatives of the state across space, and the inscriptions on them opened up a channel of direct communication between those same individuals, in a manner that was ideologically powerful but the practical implications of which were not yet fully accepted (as noted, messengers were probably still an important part of the transmission process). While the need to inscribe was motivated by the ideology of the centralizing state, the means of transcribing important elements of the required information were without precedent and therefore arguably under development at the time. This included not only the format of the inscriptions, but the manner of transcription of both place and personal names.

Transcribing the Vernacular

The majority of the Sŏngsan Fortress tag *mokkan* follow the standard patterns outlined above, and mostly feature sequences of nouns; rarely do we see anything like sentence structure in this corpus.[52] However, it goes without saying many of those nouns (both place and personal names) are vernacular words. The fact that these tags represent a veritable trove of material for the study of the transcription of the Silla language using Chinese characters has not been lost on scholars of linguistics, who have used the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* to explore different aspects of Old Korean phonology, lexicography, and orthography.[53] Kwŏn Inhan (2008) is perhaps the most comprehensive of these studies, as he focuses on compiling characters that are used for transcribing proper names in the Sŏngsan Fortress corpus and compares them to those seen used in *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*. Other works have largely focused on individual words or particles that appear in the inscriptions. However, by far the most interesting studies from a linguistic

[51] Watanabe Akihiro (2008) argues that imprecision in early Japanese *mokkan* is a symptom of a larger written environment in which texts lacked independence from their transmitters. For further discussion of his thesis, see Chapter 3.

[52] There are a few possible exceptions to this, but their identification as sentences remains tentative: *Chajŏn* No. 170, and W94 and W167 from the 17th stage of excavations (see Ch'oe Changmi 2017: 199-201).

[53] For instance, see Yi Sŭngjae (2017: 256-275) for several different reconstructions of Old Korean vocabulary based on the Haman *mokkan*; on phonological aspects of the Old Korean language as revealed by *mokkan* inscriptions see pp. 363-381 of the same work. See also Kim Yŏng-uk (2008: 183-184), Kwŏn Inhan (2008) and (2010b: 267-268), and Yi SŭngJae (2009: 182-186). For a brief summary in English of research on the subject up until 2010, see Kwon In-han (2010a: 131-133).

perspective have focused on the limited number of document *mokkan* from the site, several of which appear to feature sentence transcription that is at least partly based on the vernacular language. This has led to the declaration that the Haman Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* contain the earliest instances of *idu* writing from Silla (Yi Sŭngjae 2013, 29-30).

Prior to the unearthing of the Haman Sŏngsan *mokkan*, the Imsin Year Vow Record Stele 壬申誓記石 was considered to be the earliest piece of Silla *idu* writing.[54] The dating of this stele is still controversial, and depending on where one falls in the debate, the Sŏngsan fortress *mokkan* may be earlier evidence of *idu* inscription, or they may be roughly contemporaneous.[55] This stele is renowned for its apparent Korean word order, with verbs generally following their objects; however, no particles or inflections are represented, leading some to question the inscription's status as *idu*.[56] However, it is certainly a type of truncated vernacular transcription (what Lee SeungJae [2016: 39] calls "semantogram-centric sentence transcription"), one that suggests there was already considerable fluidity in how people in Silla perceived the linguistic status of the Sinographic script. Furthermore, it differs markedly from the sixth century monumental steles erected by the state, in

[54] *Idu* is used as a catch-all term for varieties of vernacular Korean transcription that use Chinese characters in both their semantic and phonetic capacities. It may also refer to a specific type of writing in which texts are composed in Sinitic characters but interspersed with Korean verb endings and particles written in phonograms, which continued to be used as an administrative shorthand among civil officials through the Chosŏn period. *Idu* is generally understood to refer to original texts composed using Chinese characters to transcribe vernacular Korean, whereas the term *kugyŏl* refers to the annotations in abbreviated Sinitic characters appended to pre-existing Sinitic texts (usually Buddhist sutras and commentaries). See Lee SeungJae (2016): 37-45; 50-60 for descriptions and examples of these different types of Korean vernacular transcription.

[55] There are several theories with regard to the dating; Yi Yonghyŏn (2016: 114-115) summarizes them in some detail. The stele contains two sexagenary years, 壬申 and 辛未, but scholars have differed as to which western calendar years these dates correspond. Early studies focused on the Confucian texts cited in the stele inscription as a point of departure. Suematsu Yasukazu (1954: 462-465) argues that the study of those texts must have been connected to the National Confucian Academy 國學, which was founded in 682 (although scholarly ranks were created in 651; see *SS* Vol. 38 [3:163-164]), and due to one part of the inscription which pledges to take action should the country "be unstable" 不安 or encounter a "great calamity" 大乱, he further infers that at the time of inscription the country must have been relatively peaceful, and so proposes either 732 or 792 as possible dates for the stele. Yi Pyŏngdo (1957) rejected Suematsu's conclusion and instead argued the stele probably dated to either 552 or 612, noting that Confucian texts had been brought to Silla well before the creation of the National Academy, and proposing that the two youths who inscribed their vows on the stele were probably members of the *hwarang*. Other studies have generally concurred with Yi Pyŏngdo's findings, most preferring the later date of 612, but recently Son Hwanil (2000) has argued for a definitive date in the mid-sixth century (552), citing the similarities in character form to the Tanyang Stele (generally dated to the 540s based on the names and titles appearing therein). Yi Yonghyŏn (2016) likewise argues for a 552 date based on aspects of the text's structure, noting that the dual structure of the predicate "vowing" 誓 appearing at the beginning and then again at the end of the inscription is characteristic of sixth century texts, including the Naengsu-ri stele and Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 (discussed below). Yi Sŭngjae (2017: 255) concurs with this date.

[56] Yi Pyŏngdo (1957: 5-6) sees this type of transcription as preceding *idu*; in other words, he sees it as a related but earlier form of transcription that fell out of favor once *idu* had developed. He also proposes it could have been used parallel to early forms of *idu* which may have been developing in the same period.

that not only is it a much smaller size (measuring only 32cm in length), but it appears to have been inscribed by two *individuals*. These individuals, however, were probably not wholly unconnected to the state.

The inscription records a pledge between two people (二人幷誓), who are generally assumed to be young men, and possibly members of the *hwarang,* wherein they both vow before heaven (天前誓) to:

今自三年以後忠道執持過失无誓
From now, for three years hence, to take up and maintain the way of loyalty, without fail, we vow.

若此事失天大罪得誓
If we should fail in this matter, to accept a great punishment from Heaven, we vow.

若国不安大乱世可容行誓之
If the country should be unstable or the world fall into disarray, that we shall take it upon ourselves and act accordingly, we hereby vow.

Figure 6. Imsin Year Vow Record Stele (Kungnip Kyŏngju Pangmulgwan 2002, 38)

The inscription then goes on to recount another vow, made in the previous Sinmi year 辛未 (Yin Metal Ram):

詩尚書礼伝倫得誓三年
To obtain the *Book of Poetry*, the *Book of Documents*, the *Book of Rites*, and the like, we vow, three years.

Each of these "vows" is punctuated by the character 誓, which Yi Yonghyŏn (2016) notes is superfluous, because the stele begins with 二人幷誓記, and the act of vowing in the moment is described further by 天前誓. In a "proper" Sinitic register, the additional 誓 at the end of each line would be unnecessary, both grammatically and stylistically, but here they bespeak not only the text's status as vernacular transcription, but the entrenched orality of the ritual inscribed here.[57] The fact that these vows were inscribed at all is perhaps partly explained by the final vow, appended as almost an afterthought, which enshrines in writing a pledge previously made without inscription in the year prior. That is, these two young men were students of the Confucian classics, and therefore, believers in the power of script to enshrine fleeting moments and ensure their endurance. The ritual inscribed here could well have been something of an initiation into the order of the *hwarang* or something similar, as it is clear the two parties are

[57] Yi Yonghyŏn (2016: 117) goes on to note other examples of this sort of "framing" of a text in sixth century Silla, such as the Naengsuri Stele mentioned above, and Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221, discussed below. This framing is also seen frequently in seventh century Japanese *mokkan* inscriptions (see Chapter 3), and was likely inherited from peninsular practice.

invested in a higher purpose (ensuring the stability and prosperity of the state). However, by converting the ritual from an oral performance into an inscription, that ritual can then be enacted in perpetuity, ensuring the two men would continue to be bound by it in a physically manifest way. While this inscription is focused on two individuals, it is far from a "personal" moment between them: it is a public, ritual display of their conviction to follow their proper path and preserve the peace in their country. Their vow to study the mentioned texts is a direct extension of this, as these works would have been seen as offering access to means of better achieving those goals.

While the text of this inscription is undoubtedly inflected by the vernacular, this fact does not seem to have detracted from its effectiveness in securing the endurance of the vows made therein. The fact of inscription, therefore, was probably more important as an element of the vowing/initiation ritual, than it was in creating something that would have functioned as an actual "legal" document. There are no notable deviations from "standard Sinitic" in any of the monumental Chinhŭng tour steles, and this is perhaps consistent with the "official" character of those particular inscriptions. However, while the inscription on the Imsin Vow Record Stele may be less "official" in nature, it is certainly still a "formal" piece of writing, and, further, one that was ritually binding. This aspect in many ways mirrors the function of the monumental stele within space, except that this stele mediates the space between two people, holding them to the moment of their vow in perpetuity. In terms of function, then, this stele might have more in common with the monumental inscriptions discussed above than with the vernacular-inflected inscriptions found on *mokkan* from Sŏngsan Fortress.

Methods for transcribing vernacular words certainly developed in Koguryŏ from an early date, but it remains a matter of debate whether there was any sentence-length vernacular transcription in Koguryŏ.[58] Buddhism made its way to Silla via Koguryŏ, and it is indeed possible that people of Koguryŏ descent made up part of the scribal ranks in sixth-century Silla, given the above-mentioned *Liang shu* account of the kingdom's demographics. This could help explain why *idu* style transcription seems to appear almost simultaneously with the inscriptive expansion that began in the early part of the sixth century. As can be seen in the following inscription, on what is known as Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221, by the time of the Sŏngsan Fortress construction, *idu* style transcription seems to have already been substantially developed. Further, unlike the Imsin Year Vow Record stele, there appears to be more concern with precision in transcription, as suggested by the inclusion of particles and auxiliaries:

[58] Kim Yŏng-uk (2008: 171-175) notes that many aspects of early *idu* that are pointed out in Koguryŏ texts, like the sentence final 之 and the locative particle 中, are also attested in Han era inscriptions, and so their frequent appearance in Koguryŏ and later Silla inscriptions may be simply a legacy of the Han commanderies, rather than unique Korean developments designed to reflect vernacular inflections.

Side 1: 六月十日孟□城□□村主
敬白之□□□
Side 2: □□來昏□□也為□□大
城從人丁六十[59]□[60]
Side 3: □彡走在日來此□□□金
有干□
Side 4: 卒日治之人此人嶋□城置
不行遣乙白[61]
Side 1: Sixth month, tenth day. The Village Head of □□ in Maeng□-sŏng, respectfully reported, "□□□
Side 2: □□ came, sunset □□. For the □□ Great Fortress, following him were adult men sixty □
Side 3: □ on that day, as they hurried to go, [someone] came. This □□□ Kim Yugan □[62]
Side 4: On the final day, the person in charge, left these people in Tok□ Fortress, and so they could not go." I reported.

Figure 7. Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 (Yi Sŭngjae 2013, 5)

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[59] Yi Yonghyŏn (2015) notes 六十 may in fact be read as the character 本; a similar-looking character has been found on Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 17-23, which has been read as 六十 by Ch'oe Changmi (2017) and Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017). However, Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017) and Pak Nam-su (2017) take issue with this and argue for 本, making the case that the composition of the character on that *mokkan* in fact differs slightly from this *mokkan* (No. 221), with there being more space between the top and bottom radicals here, suggesting the reading 六十 is accurate in this instance. Given the placement and the nature of the top part, it does look like the characters 六 and 十 were written in the space of a single character here, as opposed to Mokkan No. 17-23 (discussed below), where the top radical more closely resembles 大 than 六. In addition, the horizontal stroke in 十 is written much wider than the space of 六 on this *mokkan*, whereas it is completely enclosed by the top radical 大 on Mokkan No. 17-23.

[60] The final character on this side has been identified as 巴 by Yi Sŭngjae (2013) and as 日 by Yi Yonghyŏn (2015). Because of the wood being split on the bottom third of this face, the character has been obscured considerably, and it appears to have a final stroke that continues toward the right, thus making the identification 日 suspect. The discovery of Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 17-23 (discussed below) suggests this might indeed be 日, and, if we follow the readings of Ch'oe Changmi (2017) or Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017), might refer to a "sixty-day" rotation of conscripted laborers. However, the "sixty" might just as easily be understood as the number of men, and the following character, whether it be 日 or otherwise, either a counter or unrelated.

[61] This reading primarily based on Yi Yonghyŏn (2015), with some modifications with reference to Yi Sŭngjae (2013) and based on my own judgment.

[62] This seems to probably be a personal name, but it is somewhat unclear.

While there are disagreements as to the proper deciphering and interpretation of the inscription on this *mokkan*, there is consensus that it contains elements that resemble *idu* style transcription. These elements include the direct object particle 乙 [ul] that appears toward the end of the inscription, but also possibly continuative/honorific auxiliaries in their attributive forms with 在 and 遣.[63] It has also generally been agreed that this inscription is a report by a village head 村主 to a superior, probably someone stationed at Sŏngsan Fortress (in all likelihood the "Great Fortress" referred to in the inscription), and that the content of that "report" is bookended by description of the act of reporting, that is, with the sequences 敬白之～ ["respectfully reported"] and ～乙白 ["I reported the above"]. As Yi Yonghyŏn (2015; 2016) points out, this structure resembles several sixth-century steles from Silla, including the Imsin Year Vow Record Stele discussed above, but also the 教～教 structure seen in the Naengsu-ri Stele from P'ohang (503), and the 記～記 structure seen in the Myŏnghwal Fortress stele from Kyŏngju (551). As will be seen in Chapter 3, this sort of pattern is also seen among Japanese *mokkan* inscriptions from the late seventh century.[64] Verbs generally appear to follow objects, which again suggests an overall vernacular inflection to the "content" of the report. This pattern, wherein the body of a report to a superior is rendered in a vernacular register, perhaps in order to best capture appropriate nuances in a delicate social context, is again also seen in seventh century inscriptions from Japan.

This inscription has a number of implications for understanding early written life in Silla. Firstly, it appears that reports to superiors were to be made in writing, such that even locally entrenched officials ("village heads" 村主 are understood to be those who traditionally held power in their villages) needed to compose documents (or have someone compose on their behalf). While the details are obscure due to the problems in deciphering the inscription, the inscription seems to refer to a responsibility of the Village Head to send a certain number of laborers (and supplies) to Sŏngsan Fortress, but goes on to explain his failure to do so due to certain circumstances. The Village Head, then, was clearly subordinate to the official at Sŏngsan Fortress to whom he dispatched this *mokkan*, and his describing of his reasons for not dispatching laborers as demanded was, in essence, a performance of complicity in the state's "legibilization" of power. Although the village head failed to comply with the directive to provide laborers, he does comply with the directive to inscribe the relations between center and periphery, and in so

[63] Yi Sŭngjae (2013; 2017) argues that 在 and 遣 should be identified with their usages in *kugyŏl* from later ages, that is, as the honorific pre-final ending /kye/ plus the nominalizing suffix /-n/, meaning that both should be read as /kyen/. However, it is unclear why an honorific would be used in either context within the inscription, where the subject seems to be the corvee laborers (adult men/人丁). It seems more likely that 在 is a continuative/perfective suffix, as is it is in early Japanese inscriptions (see Chapter 3), but the case of 遣 is less clear. 遣 is indeed a very common ending in *kugyŏl*, but as Yi Yonghyŏn (2015) notes, it could just as well retain its original meaning of "send" in this context. In any case, 在 at least appears to be used as an auxiliary affix, and therefore can be considered to fall into the category of *idu*.

[64] See for instance, Ishigami Mokkan No. 18-1, Fujiwara Palace Mokkan No. 1-8 and Fujiwara Palace Mokkan No. 2-525.

doing subjugates himself to the central authority both literally (in using the term 敬白), and figuratively, through participating in documented administration.

Second, it shows that a means of writing in the vernacular language was not something that developed once cosmopolitan written culture had been fully digested. Rather, vernacular modes of writing appear in Silla almost simultaneously with the emergence of written culture itself. While perhaps counter to the model of vernacularization outlined by Sheldon Pollock (2006), vernacular writing was quick to appear in Silla (and, as will be seen in Chapter 3, this appears to be also true of Japan, but Japan was almost certainly drawing on peninsular models). This may be partly due to the fact that the logographic nature of the Sinographic script meant that any text could be *read as* vernacular.[65] Indeed, there is clear evidence for vernacular reading-by-gloss practices in Silla during the post-unification era, and there is reason to believe that such practices had a longer history which could stretch back into the sixth century (and, indeed, the Imsin Year Vow Record Stele inscription has long been seen as a product of a culture in which such practice was the norm).[66] Therefore, it was probably perfectly natural for a Village Head to produce a text that could be *read* as

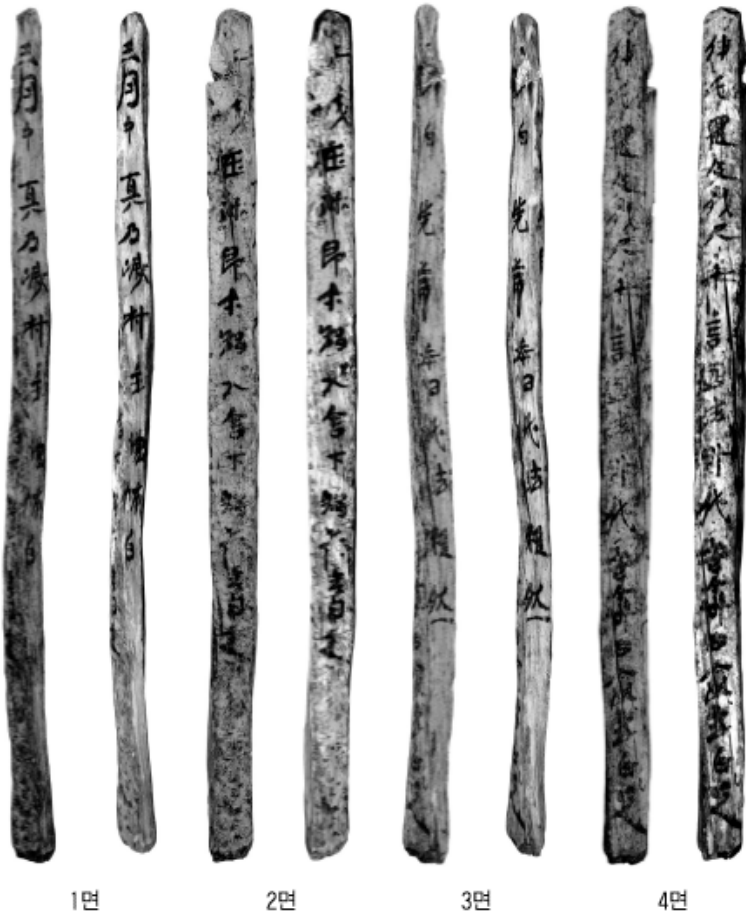

Figure 8. Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 17-23 (Ch'oe Changmi 2017, 216)

[65] See Ross King (2015: 4-5) for a discussion of the notion of "hidden vernaculars" in East Asia.

[66] See discussions of Imsin Year Vow Record Stele in Kin Bunkyō (2010), 197-199; see also David Lurie (2001), 238-240. For evidence of "reading-by-gloss" practices in Unified Silla, see Kin Bunkyō (2010)'s discussion of an early Heian manuscript of a text called the *Hwaŏm munŭi yogyŏl* 華嚴文義要決 (J. *Kegon bungi yōketsu*), supposedly compiled by a monk called P'yowŏn 表員 of Kyongju's royally-sponsored Hwangnyong Temple, which features reading-by-gloss punctuation (121-125).

vernacular, and conveying his message with appropriate nuance may even have required it.

As Yi Yonghyŏn (2015) has pointed out, the register of Haman Mokkan No. 221 has parallels in epigraphic sources, meaning it was probably not particular to the Village Head responsible for the inscription on Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221. This fact has found further support in the inscription on a *mokkan* unearthed in the most recent round of excavations, conducted from 2014-2016. This is yet another four-sided "writing rod" document *mokkan*, that begins with a date and offers a report from a village head to a superior at Sŏngsan Fortress:

Side 1: 三月中眞乃滅村主憹怖白

Side 2: □城在弥[67]卽尒智大舍下智前去白之

Side 3: 卽白先節本[68]日代法[69]稚然

[67] Ch'oe Changmi (2017), Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017) and Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017) all see this as the beginning of a personal name which precedes the title 大舍, thus as "Mijŭkiji Taesa", and then they read the following 下智 as the name of yet another individual. Pak Nam-su (2017), however, I believe correctly identifies this as a common kugyŏl character for the Korean auxiliary continuative suffix /*mye/. Pak stipulates that the left radical should be understood as 糸 instead of 弓, but either character can be understood as having a grammatical function in the vernacular context as /*mye/. Given that it is connected to the character 在, this seems to be an appropriate reading that can be rendered "as [he] is at □ fortress". While in extant documentary sources such as *Samguk sagi* titles generally precede personal names, it appears from contemporary epigraphic sources and from later on this *mokkan* itself (side 4, where the title 及伐尺 follows the personal name 伊他罹) that in this case the three characters 卽尒智 (or, possibly just the two 尒智, since 卽 is not, to my knowledge, used elsewhere as a phonogram in Silla contexts, and is just as easily understood as a connective "therefore" or "thereupon") make up a personal name of the person who holds the rank 大舍 (the twelfth of seventeen in Silla's capital rank system, thus identifying this individual as an official dispatched from the center). That most scholars have seen the following 下智 as another name is rather baffling, as that individual would then be referred to without a title. While I think it is possibly an honorific, Pak Nam-su (2017:40-41) offers the simplest explanation for these two characters as simply a continuation of the title 大舍, which is indeed found transcribed as the longer 大舍帝智 on the Uljin Pongp'yŏng Stele (524) and the "original inscription" on the Ch'ŏnjŏn-ni petroglyphs. There are many further examples of "long-form" titles being shortened to just two characters over the course of the sixth century; the fact that the long-form appears here helps bolster Pak Nam-su's argument for the dating of this and other *mokkan* from Sŏngsan Fortress to the reign of King Pŏphŭng.

[68] This character was originally identified as a "compound" character of 六 and 十, like that which appears on Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 (discussed above). Both Ch'oe Changmi (2017) and Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017) take this view, and use it to present an argument (based on the idea that 代法 refers to the 'rotation law' for conscripted laborers) that workers were conscripted for sixty day periods, and explore the implications of this for understanding the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* corpus. However, both Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017) and Pak Nam-su (2017) present a convincing case, based on comparisons with other instances of 本 appearing within the corpus and the fact that 十 appears to be clearly connected to the upper 大 radical, that this should be identified as 本. I have followed their view here.

[69] The compound 代法 is understood by Ch'oe Changmi (2017) and Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017) as referring to a specific type of law related to the rotation of conscripted labor that would have been part of Silla's *yullyŏng* system. This finds some support in readings of the Tang Code, which contains a passage that uses the term 代 to refer to the rotation of palace guards in different shifts (see Nari Kang 2017: 136-137). Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017: 198-199), by contrast, sees 代 as referring to units of

Side 4: 伊他[70]罹及伐尺寀[71]言□[72]法卅代[73]告今卅日食去白之

Side 1: In the third month, the Head of Chinnaemyŏl Village, in fear and awe, reports.

Side 2: Since he is present at □ fortress, I go before Chŭngniji, the Taesahaji, and report as follows.

Side 3: Therefore I report, the 'day-of substitute law' that was used in the past was insufficient.

Side 4: It'ari Kuppŏlch'ŏk looked into this and said that the □ law was thirty. He now reports in my stead and brings thirty days' provisions. I reported.[74]

Compared to Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221, the inscription on this *mokkan* is remarkably well preserved, with only two characters considered illegible (albeit with a few disputes on the appropriate identifications of those characters

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land from which one *sok* 束 of rice could be produced, as it is defined in the Yōrō Code 養老令 (718) in Japan (and presumably was also in the Taihō Code of 701, and possibly even earlier versions of Japanese law codes, because late seventh century *mokkan* with this as a unit counter for land have been recovered from Asuka and elsewhere). Pak Nam-su (2017), whose view I follow here, sees 代 as simply the verb "to substitute" in both instances where it occurs in this inscription. Contextually, this appears to be the most logical way of understanding 代. However, I part ways with Pak Nam-su in understanding 本日代法 as a single phrase referring to either a law or "method" (法) of "same-day substitution" – which the Village Head of Chinnaemyŏl sees as "foolish" or "insufficient" (稚然)– in contrast to a different law/method (referred to on side 4) that stipulates an alternative.

[70] Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017: 129) sees this as 氵十乇, and Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017: 189) agrees; it does look like it might be 沰, and in any case if it is 他 the left radical is not clear. Regardless of the proper identification, it is certainly part of a personal name.

[71] This character is identified as 寀 by the original Ch'oe Changmi (2017: 202) report, Son Hwanil (2017), and Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017: 190-191), but is rejected in favor of this variant form of 審 (consisting of just the top half, without the bottom radical 田) by both Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017: 129) and Pak Namsu (2017: 47), the latter of which I follow.

[72] Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017) and Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017: 191) have identified this as 廻 and interpret 廻法 as something like "avoid the law." Son Hwanil (2017) agrees with the identification but interprets 廻法 as simply the name of a law. Pak Nam-su (2017: 47; 51) sees this character as something like 辶+勹 with 力 or 刀 inside the latter enclosure. This is understood as the title of a law that is an alternative to the 本日代法 mentioned on side 2. Pak (57-59) interprets □法卅 as "the □ law is thirty," which matches up with the "thirty days' provisions" that follows, and so according to this law, one should send thirty provisions (understood as that which will support a conscripted worker for thirty days).

[73] While Ch'oe Changmi (2017), Kim Ch'angsŏk (2017), Son Hwanil (2017) and Chŏn Tŏkchae (2017) all understand this as being affixed to the previous character, i.e., 卅法, Pak Nam-su (2017) instead reads it as modifying the following 告 and therefore identifying It'ari as the "messenger" who is relaying the information on the tablet in the Village Head's stead. Since 告 would imply the reporting of information from an inferior to a superior, it is likely that it refers to the act of reporting to the Chŭngniji Taesahaji, especially given that It'ari's speech is described with the more neutral 言 earlier on the same side, which appears to describe an act of his speaking to the Village Head. Therefore, I follow Pak in seeing a semantic break between 卅 and 代, with 代告 beginning a new sentence.

[74] This translation largely follows the interpretation of Pak Nam-su (2017) with some minor differences.

considered "legible"). As a result of this clarity, the recent announcement of its discovery (in Ch'oe Changmi 2017) prompted an immediate flood of studies (Kim Ch'angsŏk 2017, Chŏn Tŏkchae 2017, Pak Nam-su 2017) on the implications of its content for understanding labor conscription in Silla, and indeed this inscription has the potential to change the interpretation of the Haman *mokkan* corpus as a whole. First of all, it appears to clarify that the grain being sent to Sŏngsan Fortress as recorded on the many tag *mokkan* was in fact for the consumption by conscripted laborers from the designated location. While there have been theories that these were tribute/tax payments, these views are contradicted by the information found in this inscription (specifically, the sequence 卅日食 "thirty days' provisions").[75] Second, it suggests, as Pak Nam-su (2017) argues, that the grain for conscripted laborers was sent in increments of thirty days, and this further implies that the term of conscripted labor may have been of the same length. The "one *sem*" 一石 that appears consistently throughout the corpus of tag *mokkan* from the site can also possibly be understood as equivalent to thirty days' rations, if Pak's interpretation is correct (59-61).

This inscription helps to confirm the function of most of the corpus of *mokkan* from this site: presumably, the majority of the tag *mokkan* were inscribed to verify the dispatch of laborers and their rations by certain localities, for both practical and symbolic purposes. Practically, the leaders of the construction at the fortress would have needed a record of whether laborers had brought their own rations, in accordance with the labor conscription law. Symbolically, by participating in a system in which these matters needed to be inscribed, the localities in question were performing their subordination and compliance with the *yullyŏng* system. This is apparent in the composition of the inscriptions on both Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 and No. 17-23, where a Village Head "reports" humbly 白 before someone who is presumably a central appointee. While there do seem to have been some established modes of inscribing that compliance, such as the use of the 白～白 structure, the messages themselves seem to vary in format and even attempt to reproduce elements of vernacular speech. These relatively non-standard qualities suggest that overall the importance of such inscriptions was rooted in the symbolic act of their production and dispatch, and therefore their identity as indexes of the sender's participation in the state system, moreso than their practical functions as pieces of correspondence.

The apparent freedom of the "body" of the text as compared to the opening and ending is testament to the relative immaturity of written culture in sixth century Silla. Stringent regulation of document styles was not practiced; rather, the accurate and efficient transmission of content was valued. This is probably due to two factors: first, the inscription of such messages was a means of performing compliance with the state system and accepting one's place within it; second, without a sufficiently large literate population, shortcuts for transcribing information in a way that was easily comprehensible to both the sender and the recipient was of utmost importance, and this by definition meant a recourse to the

[75] See Pak Nam-su (2017): 51-53.

vernacular, the nuances of which were more readily apparent than those of the cosmopolitan language. On Sŏngsan Fortress No. 17-23, like on Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221, we have some of the earliest obvious uses of *idu* style transcription, which include both the more commonly seen sentence-final 之 and locative marker 中 (if indeed we accept these as "idu"),[76] but the continuative 弥 [-mye]; in addition, the majority of the text is in vernacular word order. Further, there appears to be intentional use of spacing to indicate semantic breaks, to the extent that the fourth side appears crammed because the scribe used space liberally on the first three.[77]

Pak Nam-su (2017) has introduced the argument that these inscriptions may date as far back as the reign of King Pŏphŭng. While this early dating cannot currently be confirmed, both Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 and Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 17-23 show that methods for transcribing the vernacular—or, we might say, composing inscriptions in a sort of written Sinitic creole that incorporates elements of the vernacular—appear in Silla almost simultaneously with the advent of written culture. Indeed, these methods appear to have developed as a type of shorthand that helped smooth over some of the insufficiencies in early literacy education, but they likely continued for purposes of both convenience and tradition. As will be seen in Chapter 3, early inscriptions in Japan follow a very similar pattern; where there was an insufficient number of literate individuals to meet state demand, vernacularization proceeded ahead of full literization as a means of circumventing this problem. Of course, this contradicts the model outlined by Sheldon Pollock (2006), and is perhaps only possible in the context of adapting a received logographic writing system.

As both one of the earliest and largest corpuses of writing from pre-unification Silla, the Haman Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* offer a window into early lettered practice as performed between center and periphery, and suggest that inscription was a means of expressing compliance and subordination within the newly established *yullyŏng* system. The distribution of places from which *mokkan* were sent, presumably along with laborers and their provisions, suggests Silla was actively incorporating specific territories into this system by requiring them to provide resources for the Sŏngsan Fortress project, but also by requiring them to inscribe their compliance. Writing was symbolic of Silla's status as a "modern" kingdom within the Sinographic Cosmopolis, and compelling new territories to participate in a system that was embodied in written documents was one means of securing the legitimacy of their rule over them. In this sense, the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* mirror the monumental steles erected by King Chinhŭng: they embody the ideology of the administrative state, and through their materiality connect center and periphery in a dynamic manner.

Hanam Yisŏng Fortress

After Haman Sŏngsan Fortress, the site yielding the second largest number of *mokkan* from provincial Silla is the Hanam Yisŏng Fortress site 河南二聖山城, which

[76] As noted above, these usages may have originated in Han inscriptions, but they are certainly more common in Korean texts. However, the exact vernacular glosses for these characters are unknown.
[77] On the usage of spaces in Silla texts, see Yun Sŏnt'ae (2008).

encircles the mid-slope of Yisŏng Mountain 二聖山, a low 208m peak in present-day Hanam city, Kyŏnggi province. The fortress is positioned in a geographically advantageous location, with much of the Han River Valley visible from its northern side, including the sites of Paekche's early capital fortresses on the south bank of the Han River, P'ungnapt'osŏng 風納土城 and Mongch'ont'osŏng 蒙村土城, which are located approximately 7km to the west (Yi Yonghyŏn 2006, 427). Originally, prior to excavations, the site was thought to have been a Paekche fortress, and then possibly, at some point in its history, a Koguryŏ fortress.[78] The confusion with regard to the fortress' origins is rooted in its strategic location, which theoretically could have bolstered any of the three kingdoms' attempts to control the region. However, successive excavations have confirmed, based on construction techniques and unearthed artifacts, that Yisŏng Fortress was probably built by Silla in the mid-sixth century after seizing control of the Han River Valley, and was subsequently re-built and modified in the mid-late seventh century, before being abandoned in the ninth century (Yi Kyŏngsop 2011, 67-68).

Like the erection of steles at sites toured by King Chinhŭng, the construction of mountain fortresses in key locations within Silla's new territory was as important a means of creating state presence that emanated across landscapes as it was a vital component of military strategy. Yisŏng Fortress would have been a key vantage point overlooking a number of other fortresses along the Han River—fortresses that were now guarding Silla's northern frontier—as well as a point of connection between those fortresses and others located more deeply within Silla's domain. Of the Silla *mokkan* sites, Yisŏng Fortress and Kyeyang Fortress in Inch'ŏn are located furthest north, and at the greatest distance from the capital in Kyŏngju; however, the continuities between the *mokkan* found here and those found not only at Wŏlsŏng Fortress in Kyŏngju but at other provincial sites suggests strong

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[78] After the eighth stage of excavations, where seven *mokkan* (five with writing) were recovered from a reservoir feature, the site report (Kim Pyŏngmo et.al. 2000a) deciphered a two character sequence on one four-sided document *mokkan* (Hanam Yisŏng Fortress Mokkan No. 117/8-1) as the Koguryŏ provincial title *yoksal* 褥薩 and argued the four-sided *mokkan* on which it appeared contained a Koguryŏ inscription (280-281). The same report also claimed Koguryŏ pottery had been recovered from the same feature (Kim Pyŏngmo et.al. 2000a: 277-278). This resulted in a flood of excitement about the first "Koguryŏ *mokkan*," but Yi Yonghyŏn (2006: 435-436) and others subsequently called into question the identification 褥, as well as the identification of the accompanying earthenware as Koguryŏ pottery (see Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2011: 65-66). No additional pieces of "Koguryŏ pottery" were recovered in the subsequent ninth or tenth stages, and it is likely that the site report misidentified those from the eighth stage (Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2011: 65-66). Further, the fact that the inscription includes the name of a Koguryŏ official title is not substantive evidence of the fortress having been controlled by Koguryŏ at any point; given the frequent military confrontations in the vicinity in the sixth century, it is possible that a Koguryŏ individual or two would have interacted with the officials present at the fortress, or, indeed, that because this land had formerly belonged to Koguryŏ (after their defeat of Paekche in 475 through Silla's seizure in 553), some local person of power still carried the title despite the area now being under the control of Silla. The same *mokkan* apparently contains the characters for Paekche 百濟, and so the inscription could be related to Silla's dealings with its two peninsular rivals. Unfortunately, however, the large number of indecipherable characters means the overall content of the inscription is irrecoverable.

connections between the center and the periphery were key to Silla's strategy for territorial integration.

Out of a total of 37 *mokkan* recovered from this site, only twelve have been confirmed to have inscriptions. The large number of seemingly uninscribed *mokkan* is notable, as is the fact that a total of twelve of the 37 (including four with writing) have been found inside earthenware jars that were recovered largely intact from the bottom of a reservoir feature (see Figure 9). Jars #1 and #2 were found in the third

Figure 9. Earthenware jars containing *mokkan* from Yisŏng Fortress (Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2011, 71)

stage of excavations, while Jar #3 was recovered in the fourth stage. Jar #1 contained three mokkan, all small rectangular pieces, two with inscriptions, while Jar #2 contained four uninscribed mokkan, all tag-shaped with v-grooves carved into one edge. Jar #3 contained a total of five tag-shaped mokkan, two with inscriptions. To date, this is one of only two sites on the peninsula where *mokkan* were deposited in such a manner, and the only such case from pre-unification Silla.

Kim Pyŏngmo and Sim Kwangju (1991, 165-166) speculate that *mokkan* may have been put inside pots either for a particular ritual purpose (in the case of Jar #1) or in order to store them (in the case of Jar #2). The mokkan in Jar #1 are unusually small in size and two have traces of ink on them, but unfortunately the inscriptions are indecipherable, and so the accuracy of their identification as ritual objects remains unsettled. The four *mokkan* found in Jar #2 show signs of erasure and reuse, despite the absence of extant inscriptions; further, near the v-grooves on these *mokkan* there are traces of an organic material that may have been a string used to tie the four together for efficient storage. In this case, it seems clear that the pot was a storage vessel for the *mokkan;* however, how and why they ended up being deposited in the reservoir inside the pot is a matter of speculation. The *mokkan* found in Jar #3 likewise appear to have been placed there primarily for storage; although two still have writing on them, it is likely that their surfaces simply remained unerased at the time of deposition (Kim Pyŏngmo and Kim Agwan 1992, 145). Recently, excavations of a pond feature at Hwawang Fortress in Ch'angnyŏng yielded a *mokkan* thought to date to the Unified Silla period that had been split into three pieces and placed inside a stoneware jar. This deliberate destruction, as well as the importance of water-related rituals, might suggest there is indeed some ritual purpose to this style of deposition (Pak Sŏngch'ŏn and Kim Sihwan 2009, 204-

205).[79] It is hoped that future discoveries can shed more light on whether such ritual practice can be traced back to pre-unification Silla, and therefore whether the *mokkan* from Yisŏng Fortress can be understood as having been deposited for a similar purpose.

Figure 10. Yisŏng Fortress Mokkan No. 118 (*NSAM*, 125)

Whether or not the deposition of these *mokkan* in pots in a reservoir had any sort of ritual meaning, the presence among them of *mokkan* that appear to have been used and re-used multiple times, and then stored together for future use, suggests that both the manufacture and re-manufacture of *mokkan* was taking place at Yisŏng Fortress. In addition, Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2011) remarks on the large number of inkstones from the site—30 pieces total—noting that this is the largest number from a single site outside of Kyŏngju (where only 54 pieces total have been found) and highly unusual for a provincial fortress (84-85). Taken together with the fact that two large roof-tiled buildings were found in the interior of the site, dating to the early stages of the site's use, this plethora of inkstones leads Yi to speculate that the site was a provincial center that played a key role in administering Silla's newly created province of Sinju 新州,[80] but also in managing the situation on the frontier, including relations with Koguryŏ and Paekche (Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2011, 88-89).[81] This meant that Yisŏng Fortress was a major location for the sending and receiving of documents from the center and other peripheral fortresses, and thus a locus for written culture "on the frontier." It is in this context we can place the following inscription, which echoes the four-sided document *mokkan* from Sŏngsan Fortress discussed above:

Side 1: 戊辰年正月十二日朋南漢城道使

Side 2: 須城道使村主前南漢城□（城？）火□

Side 3: 城上□□（甫？）□（黄？）去□□（得？）□（　　時？）□

Side 4: 〈〉[82]

Side 1: Yang Earth Dragon Year [608?],[83] First Month, Twelfth Day. The *tosa* of Namhan Fortress, together with…

[79] In the case of the jar in which this *mokkan* was found, a wooden lid was placed over the top, possibly to "prevent escaping." Another jar from the site was recovered with not only a *mokkan* inside (possibly inscribed with the characters for "dragon king" 龍王), but also an animal bone (probably a scapula) and a rod-like wooden object. See Pak Sŏngch'ŏn and Kim Shihwan 2009, 204-205.

[80] This was created from lands in the Han River Valley taken from Paekche in 553. See *SS* Vol. 4, Chinhŭng 14.7.

[81] See note 78 above on a *mokkan* from the site that refers to Paekche and also possibly an individual holding a Koguryŏ title.

[82] These identifications are based on Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2011, 77), with reference to *CJ*.

Side 2: Before the *tosa* and the Village Head of Susŏng, [I report], Namhan Fortress fortress fire…
Side 3: Fortress above … (dry field?) (yellow?) go … (get?) (time?) …
Side 4: …

The *mokkan* is broken off on the bottom, meaning the extant inscription is missing a considerable portion of its original text. The names of the sender and recipient(s) are clearly present, however, as is what appears to be a key component of the body of the message: 城火 ["fortress fire"]. The third side seems to be focused on explaining further the circumstances and/or solutions to that crisis, while the fourth side is completely illegible. There are some key differences between this inscription and the two recovered from Sŏngsan Fortress, the most striking of which is the lack of honorifics. It is unclear if this is intentional or if reports between two parties of more or less equal status were commonplace, and what form they may have taken. Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2011, 80-81) argues that, based on similar examples from Fujiwara-kyō in Japan, 朋 as used here serves to identify the senders as multiple, an interpretation that could fit because the recipients here also appear to be two distinct individuals. However, syntactically it appears in the place where one might otherwise expect a humilific verb referring to the act of reporting, but because no such verb appears in the inscription, 朋 might be indicative of a different sort of relationship between sender and recipient.

Outside of the problem of understanding the implications of 朋, the legible content of this inscription is fairly straightforward and does not shed any particular light on writing as used in Silla's provincial outposts compared to the Sŏngsan Fortress examples (other than to serve as confirmation of a centrally-dispatched *tosa* and a locally appointed Village Head serving as co-leaders of a locality). Nevertheless, it is demonstrative of continued efforts to integrate the realm through writing, in that we see provincial officials and their centrally dispatched counterparts using writing to communicate amongst themselves. Probably because of the associated prestige as much as the practical imperative, provincial elites appear to have actively inserted themselves into the new administrative system, helping to facilitate the symbolic connections between center and periphery (and, as in this case, the practical connections between periphery and periphery).

As noted above, many of the Yisŏng Fortress *mokkan* are uninscribed or indecipherable. Unlike Sŏngsan Fortress, while there are some inscribed tag-shaped *mokkan*, their content is generally unclear, and the overwhelming majority of the inscribed Yisŏng Fortress *mokkan* appear to be documents. This, again, appears to fit with the character of the site, and suggests the ways in which document-based

[83] There is some debate with regard to what calendar year this 戊辰 should correspond. The consensus is generally 608, not only because the title *tosa* 道使 was used mainly in the sixth through early seventh centuries, but because the layer from which this *mokkan* was recovered yielded primarily pre-unification era artifacts. The only other proposed date that has gained any traction is 668 (see Kim Ch'angho 1992: 435-436), but Yi Tohak (1993: 192-193), Yi Sŏngsi (1997: 240-243), and Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2011: 76-77) all argue that historically, 608 makes the most sense, as it was a time when Silla and Koguryŏ were frequently clashing in this area, as opposed to 668, when most of the fighting was taking place elsewhere.

administration was being implemented in new territories to both practical and symbolic effect.

Analects mokkan **from Inch'ŏn Kyeyang Fortress and Kimhae Ponghwang-dong**

The question of who was writing, and how they may have become literate, has been alluded to above, but is now something that must be addressed in more concrete terms. The *Liang shu* account mentioned above hints at the fact that allochthonous members of Silla's population, particularly from Koguryŏ, may have been responsible for facilitating the spread of writing and written culture, probably beginning in the fifth century and continuing at least through the beginning of the sixth century and the first extant epigraphic texts. Silla's national Confucian academy was not established until the mid-late seventh century, but allusions to Confucian classics in epigraphic texts begin with the Uljin Pongp'yŏng Stele (524), which directly quotes from the *Analects* (Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 32-33). Furthermore, the Imjin Year Vow Record stele (552?), both the Mt. Pukhan and Mt. Maun King Chinhŭng Tour Steles (568), and other sixth century epigraphic sources appear to allude to or borrow the language of Confucian classics and Chinese histories (Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 34-35). This suggests that some people in the kingdom—those who could produce these inscriptions—were familiar with the Chinese canon, and probably acquired their ability to read and write at least partly through the study of these texts.

Given the nature of some of the earliest *mokkan* from Silla, those from Sŏngsan and Yisŏng Fortresses, it is little surprise they fail to offer many clues about the individual scribes or their process of literacy acquisition. These two sites, as has been discussed, were provincial outposts where writing served as an embodiment of the connection between periphery and center—where inscriptions were a performance of compliance with a new "modern" institutional system based on law codes and modeled on precedents from China. None of the extant decipherable inscriptions from these two fortresses can be said to truly diverge from this pattern. However, two more provincial sites, Kyeyang Fortress in Inch'ŏn and the Ponghwangdong site in Kimhae, have yielded evidence of study of the *Analects* in the form of multi-surfaced "rod" *mokkan* inscribed with excerpts from that text. These *mokkan* constitute an important piece of the scant extant evidence related to literacy acquisition in early Silla.

While calligraphic and composition practice *mokkan* from Paekche and Japan are numerous, allowing for an understanding of one of the key functions of *mokkan* in written culture as being related to the process of literary acquisition, such *mokkan* are not especially common in the Silla *mokkan* corpus. They are somewhat more numerous from Wŏlsŏng Moat in Kyŏngju (see below), but indeed nearly absent from provincial contexts. Extant *mokkan* inscriptions from provincial sites suggest instead that *mokkan* were used as a practical substitute for paper, perhaps because they were more durable and could survive trips between peripheral locations, but also likely because an ample supply of paper would have been harder to obtain in fortresses far from the capital. The use and reuse of *mokkan* for writing practice, however, is relatively unattested. There may have been little time or

incentive to hone one's calligraphic and compositional skills in the context of a military/administrative outpost in the sixth or early seventh century.

In contrast to this overall picture, the *Analects mokkan* from Kyeyang Fortress and Kimhae Ponghwangdong suggest that by the mid-seventh century, there were at least some people stationed outside the capital engaged in the study of the classics (and, it is

Figure 11. Kyeyang Fortress *Analects mokkan* (*NSAM*, 200)

understood, in improving their reading/writing capabilities). As mentioned in the introduction, the first *Analects* text extant in Korea comes from Tomb No. 364 in P'yŏngyang's Chŏngbaek-dong 平壤貞柏洞三六四号墳, but this is a collection of bound bamboo strips produced in the first century BCE during the early years of the Lelang commandery (108BCE-313CE). Evidence of indigenous peninsular people having studied this text does not come until the Jian Koguryŏ stele 集安高句麗碑 (ca. early fifth century), erected roughly around the time Koguryŏ is said to have established a national Confucian academy.[84] However, the possible instances of allusion to the *Analects* in this inscription are still a matter of debate (Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 26-27).[85] No direct quotations or mentions of the *Analects* are found among extant Paekche inscriptions, although Kwŏn Inhan (2015) argues that Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 7-17 contains writing practice of characters that frequently appear in the text (28). However, because Chinese histories describe elites in both Koguryŏ and Paekche as engaging in the study of various classics, despite a relative lack of extant primary material, we can probably safely assume that the *Analects* u would have been one of the most important texts studied in either kingdom. The case for the *Analects* being central to the literacy education of Silla elites—especially if their practices were informed by migrants from Paekche and Koguryŏ—is significantly bolstered by the *mokkan* from Kyeyang Fortress and Ponghwangdong, which stand apart from the rest of the excavated *mokkan* corpus but are remarkably similar to each other.

Firstly, the similarities between the two site locations, insofar as they both constitute the edges of Silla's domain (northwestern and southeastern), has been

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[84] See *SS* Vol. 18, Sosurim 2 [372].

[85] The terms identified as allusions, especially 弥高 ["more high"], also appear in other texts, and so it is unclear if a reference to the *Analects* in particular is necessarily intended. See Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 27.

noted by Yi Sŏngsi (2012). Kyeyang Fortress in Inch'ŏn is a frontier fortress surrounding a 394.9m peak which offers a view of the Han River Valley to the north, the Pup'yŏng plain to the south, and the Puch'ŏn plain to the east. The fortress itself was probably originally built by Paekche, and may have frequently changed hands amidst the struggle for control of the Han River Valley between the three kingdoms. Ponghwangdong is thought to be the site of the former royal capital of Kumgwan Kaya, which surrendered to Silla in 532, and then became the center of a newly established Kumgwan district (and then a minor capital, known as Kumgwan Minor Capital 金官小京, following the unification wars). While on the surface these two sites are very different in nature (one a mountain fortress, the other a settlement/local administrative headquarters), by virtue of their locations both on the extreme frontiers of Silla's domain and within territory acquired through military conquest, they can be understood as having shared important symbolic characteristics as outposts of royal authority, overlooking both land and sea. Further, their mutual proximity to the sea ensured they were both also important to military strategy during the frequent clashes of the early-mid seventh century.

Figure 12. Kimhae Ponghwangdong *Analects mokkan* (*NSAM*, 196)

Second, in terms of material form, both *mokkan* are fragments of what were likely original pieces around 1.3m in length, and the width of the writing faces are also quite comparable (ranging from 14mm to 19mm); the major difference between the two appears to be the fact that the Kyeyang Fortress *Analects mokkan* has an usual five writing surfaces, while the Kimhae Ponghwangdong *Analects mokkan* has the standard four (Hashimoto Shigeru 2014, 126-132).[86] Both pieces appear to have been manufactured from pine branches (Hashimoto Shigeru 2014, 136). Moreover, both feature excerpts from the same chapter of the *Analects*, the Gong Ye Chang 公冶長篇 (volume 5). This suggests there may have been something particular about this chapter that made it particularly important to inscribe/study

[86] In the case of the Kyeyang Fortress *mokkan*, one surface of the five is rather narrow at only 11.9mm, but the remaining surfaces all fit within the 14~19mm range. The Kimhae Ponghwangdong *mokkan* faces range between 15 and 19mm in width. The Kyeyang Fortress *mokkan*'s extant length is 138mm, while the Kimhae Ponghwangdong *mokkan* is 209mm. The 1.3m figure is calculated by Hashimoto (2014: 129-130; 134-135) in each case based on the number of characters that would have to have been inscribed in between the extant sides in order to fit the excerpt from the text of the Gong Ye Chang chapter (chapter 5) of the *Analects* that each *mokkan* appears to transcribe. In the case of the Kimhae Ponghwangdong *mokkan*, Hashimoto estimates the original *mokkan* would have been between 1.25 and 1.5m in length, while he estimates at least 1.3m for the Kyeyang Fotress *mokkan*.

at these provincial fortresses, to the extent that Yi Sŏngsi (2012) has argued that the content of the chapter may have made an inscription of it an apt inscription for display at a government outpost overlooking the ocean.[87]

Despite there being several theories about these *mokkan* being used for symbolic and/or ritual display (see Yi Songsi 2012; Hashimoto Shigeru 2014, 143; Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 45-46), the most likely purpose these *mokkan* served was as study aides for officials posted at these locations (Kwŏn Inhan 46-47). Indeed, in comparing these to Chinese and Japanese examples where large, long multi-surfaced *mokkan* (also known as "writing rods" 觚) are inscribed with excerpts from the *Analects*, it seems clear that these were probably used for individual study of that text, whether for the purpose of memorization or comprehension, and the act of inscription may have also served as calligraphic practice (see Yun Chaesŏk 2012, 15-17; Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 47). After completion of the study of one particular chapter, the student of the *Analects* may have erased and reused the *mokkan* to transcribe a different chapter in order to continue their study (Kwŏn Inhan 2015, 47). That such active study was occurring at these distant locations suggests that by the mid-seventh century, Silla was demanding higher levels of competency in their literate officials, and even those dispatched to the periphery were working to improve their knowledge of the canon and its language.

Unlike the *Analects mokkan* from Japan discussed in Chapter 3, for the most part these two Silla examples appear to be faithful transcriptions of the original text. As Hashimoto Shigeru (2014, 128) notes, some "empty characters" (or "function words" [虛字], particles such as 之 and terminal 也) are omitted from the Ponghwangdong *mokkan* transcription, and while this may suggest something about Silla reading practice, such omissions are also found in inscriptions dating to China's Northern Dynasties. The lack of anything but the most minimal divergences from the original suggests that the scribes of both the Kyeyang Fortress and Ponghwangdong *mokkan* were transcribing the excerpts based on a text, and not reproducing it from memory. By contrast, many of the examples from Japan do seem to have been transcribed based on the scribe's recall of the text, and therefore word order is often inverted and incorrect characters are frequently substituted. Yun Chaesŏk (2012) argues the Japan examples, many of them fragmentary and the majority transcribing the opening of the first chapter of the *Analects*, are best understood as calligraphic practice, while the Silla examples are likely study aides belonging to individual students (16-17).[88] As Yun Sŏnt'ae (2005) argues, there is sufficient evidence from Chinese contexts that multi-surfaced writing rods were an apt format for both beginning and more advanced students to practice calligraphy and memorize important passages (120), and these two examples probably fulfilled this role for students of the *Analects* who resided at these provincial outposts.

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[87] In the chapter, Confucius proclaims that if the Way is not practiced, he would board a raft and float out onto the ocean (子曰。道不行、乘桴浮于海). Yi Sŏngsi (2012) argues that these inscriptions may have had symbolic value in frontier outposts who were party to the project of inscribing sagely kingship throughout the realm, and especially because they overlooked the ocean, this particular chapter may have been chosen.

[88] For more on the idiosyncrasies of Japanese *Analects mokkan*, see Chapter 3.

There is mixed scholarly opinion with regard to the dating of both of these *mokkan*, but the most recent consensus appears to be that they both probably date to the mid-late seventh or early eighth century.[89] While this potentially places them in Silla's post-unification era, they nonetheless represent a stage in the development of provincial written culture beyond the utilitarian, ideological and symbolic uses attested by the Sŏngsan Fortress and Yisŏng Fortress *mokkan*. Not only do the two *Analects mokkan* reveal something of the process of literacy acquisition undergone by officials in Silla, they suggest that more people were acquiring higher levels of written competence as Silla's centralization and militarization pushed forward toward and beyond unification in the mid-seventh century. As more and more people worked to become part of the Silla "script community," the stage was set for the onset of literary culture in the Silla in the eighth century.

Writing in the Capital: The Wŏlsŏng Moat Site Mokkan

The only *mokkan* from the pre-unification era to be found within the boundaries of Silla's royal capital are those recovered from the Wŏlsŏng Moat site in present-day Kyŏngju. As is implied by the name of the site, the *mokkan* were found in the moat dug around the outer fortress wall of the former royal palace, Wŏlsŏng 月城 ["Moon Fortress"]. The palace, named for its "half moon shape" (and sometimes alternatively referred to as Panwŏlsŏng 半月城 ["Half Moon Fortress"]), was home to Silla kings beginning about the late fifth century throughout the lifespan of the kingdom, with some expansions happening in the early post-unification era to include the Kyerim 鷄林 woods to the north of the palace and a newly constructed Eastern Palace, home of the crown prince, complete with a pleasure garden that has come to be known as Anapchi 雁鴨池 (and more recently, Wŏlchi 月池).[90] Fortified walls of earth and stone, varying between 10~20m in height, enclosed the northern, eastern, and western boundaries of the palace, while the Nam River running to the south served as a natural barrier. Both for defensive purposes and to facilitate proper drainage of water from the interior of the fortress, a moat was constructed outside the walls to the north, east, and west. The Wŏlsŏng

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[89] The initial site report of Kyeyang Fortress dated the *Analects mokkan* to Paekche's Hansŏng period (ca. late third century-475CE), which would have made it the earliest *mokkan* recovered to date on the peninsula (excepting those from the Lelang commandery). However, the similarity of the *mokkan* to the Ponghwangdong example and the doubtful quality of some of the reasons given for the early date (the fact that fourth and fifth century Paekche pottery was recovered from the same layer as the *mokkan*, the script style mirroring that of the Wei/Jin dynasties, and the chronology of other wooden artifacts discovered in the same layer) has led to the majority of scholars pushing the dating back to the late Three Kingdoms/early Unified Silla period. See Hashimoto 2014, 131. Meanwhile, the Ponghwangdong *mokkan* was recovered from a survey trench dug at the site prior to actual excavation, and while the date has been estimated at the sixth-eighth centuries based on accompanying artifacts, further precision dating has proved difficult (Hashimoto 2014, 125).

[90] Anapchi is more specifically the name of the pond that is part of the garden area of the Eastern Palace, but has been used as a general name for the entire complex. It has been pointed out that Anapchi was a name used during the Chosŏn dynasty to refer to the complex, and so there has been a recent effort to refer to it instead as Wŏlchi, the name by which it was known during the Silla period, spearheaded by Kyŏngju City itself, which has changed the official name of the site accordingly (and all the associated signage).

Moat *mokkan* were recovered from the northern side moat, from one of four connected narrow reservoir-like features (styled "lotus ponds"), between which channels facilitated water flow.

The context of excavation immediately recalls the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan*, the preservation of which was also enabled by their being buried beneath water management facilities outside the fortress wall. However, the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* do not appear to have been deliberately buried, nor does their content overlap in any significant way with the *mokkan* from Sŏngsan Fortress. While the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan* are primarily tags related to the construction of the fortress wall, the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* are more varied in nature, relating to different aspects of the daily operations of different palatial institutions. In terms of period of deposition, the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* are thought to date to the late sixth through early seventh centuries, however, and thus offer a roughly contemporaneous center-based counterpart to the Sŏngsan Fortress corpus.

The Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* were some of the first to be unearthed on the Korean peninsula after the initial discovery of *mokkan* at Anapchi in 1975. A survey of the moat site was conducted between September 1984 and February 1985, during which one *mokkan* was recovered, and a series of excavations were carried out between September 1985 and December 1989, during which a total of 104 *mokkan*-shaped objects—and twenty-five with identifiable writing (twenty-nine according to *HKM*)—were recovered (cf. Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2006, 3:138-162; Hong Kisŭng 2013, 98-99). However, the 1990 site report did not describe the *mokkan* found at the site, and therefore the recovered *mokkan* were known primarily through scholarly articles and exhibition catalogues, until the publication of *Hanguk ŭi kodae mokkan* in 2004 and the release of the 2006 site report, which features detailed summaries of the *mokkan* unearthed through 1989 (Yi Kyŏngsŏp 2008, 148-149; Hong Kisŭng 2013, 99).[91]

As a result of excavations, it has been confirmed that the north-side "pond-style moat" was first constructed in the latter half of the fifth century, and was abandoned in the late seventh century as the bounds of the palace were extended to incorporate areas to the north and east (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2005, 117-118; Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2006, 214; Lee Sang-jun 2009, 43-46; Hong Kisŭng 2013, 98). It is generally believed that the *mokkan* date to the period of the moat's use, i.e., to the sixth and seventh centuries. Yi Sangjun (1997) was the first to argue that the *mokkan* probably dated to between the late fifth and mid-seventh centuries, based on the period of the moat's use but also the types of pottery found in the same layer with the *mokkan.* Excavations have confirmed that the moat was buried in the early part of the Unified Silla period in order to re-direct water to Anapchi and enable expansion of the palace boundary northward; thus, Yun Sŏnt'ae (2005) argues, the *mokkan* probably predate the reign of King Munmu (r. 661-681), and could have been deposited no later than the beginning of the eighth century (118-

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[91] The relevant part of the site report (Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2006) was compiled by Yi Yonghyŏn, who reproduces it as a chapter in his 2006 book *Hanguk mokkan kich'o yŏn'gu*.

119).[92] Yi Yonghyŏn (2006) makes a similar argument, laying out the details of the burial and/or reconstruction of moat-related features to supply water to Anapchi, which seems to have occurred more or less simultaneously with the construction of the latter between 674 and 679.[93] This would mean that the *mokkan* would have been deposited prior to this time. Further, Yi Yonghyŏn argues, the sort of proto-*idu*[94] identifiable on these *mokkan* is consistent with that seen in other sixth and seventh century contexts (202-203; Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2006, 214-215). However, he laments that the information on accompanying artifacts—pottery in particular—is too inadequate to aid in the dating of the *mokkan* (203), a position which would seem to contradict Yi Sangjun (1997) and Kim Nakchung (1998), who both argue for a late fifth to early seventh century date based on pottery chronology. Yi Kyŏngsŏp (2008) re-examines the issue of accompanying artifacts in a comprehensive manner, concluding that the roof-end tiles and pottery recovered from the same reservoir feature as the mokkan are datable to the late fifth through the third quarter of the seventh century, and argues the *mokkan* likely date mainly to the mid-sixth through the third quarter of the seventh century, based on aspects of their written style and content (158-163). In addition, the types of *mokkan* recovered from Wŏlsŏng Moat differ markedly from those of Anapchi, which are clearly datable to the mid-eighth century because of the inclusion of era names in several inscriptions. The Wŏlsŏng Moat corpus features a large number of multi-surfaced "writing rods," among which are some relatively unfinished "round rod" *mokkan,* both of which suggest an earlier stage in the development of written culture, when *mokkan* manufacture was a relatively imprecise craft (Yun Sŏnt'ae 2005, 120; Hong Kisŭng 2013, 100). Here, I will follow the conventional understanding that the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* date to the sixth through seventh centuries, and thus are contemporary with the *mokkan* from provincial locations discussed thus far.

The Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* show some continuity with the provincial corpus in some of the document forms and in the employment of proto-*idu* systems of vernacular transcription. However, they also depart from provincial examples in important ways. First, the Wŏlsŏng Moat site has yielded a number of round *mokkan* that appear to be minimally re-shaped pieces of wood, onto which a variety of content is inscribed, including what appear to be official documents. This suggests *mokkan* were, at least to some extent, produced on a relatively ad-hoc basis in the capital, and there were few standards for their manufacture. Even those *mokkan* from Wŏlsŏng Moat that appear to be "tag-shaped"—and there are surprisingly few of them—appear rather rudimentary, and in at least one case the carving of v-

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[92] This "upper limit" given by Yun is based on the fact that construction on the palace did continue into the eighth century, but the burying of the moat was probably an early part of the process, and so the reign of Munmu is a more likely estimate (118-119).
[93] These dates based on *SS* records. See also Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2007), 214.
[94] Despite the teleological character of this term, I use it for simplicity's sake since there is no viable alternative at the moment. "*idu*" here is understood as a general term encompassing forms of transcribing vernacular Korean using Chinese characters.

grooves appears to have taken place after the initial inscription.[95] This could be explained in terms of earliness—that is, that these are some of the earliest *mokkan* produced in Silla, and therefore without established conventions governing their manufacture and use—or in terms of the relative rarity of *mokkan* in the capital, where paper may have been more abundant. Unfortunately, none of the *mokkan* contain fully legible sexagenary years, and therefore speculation on absolute dates is difficult. It is possible that these *mokkan* could predate those from Sŏngsan Fortress, but this seems unlikely, and indeed most scholars place them somewhat later (see above). With regard to the use of paper in Silla's capital, however, on e of the most renowned of the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* offers some vital clues:

Side 1: 大烏知郎足下万拜白之
Side 2: 經中入用思買白不雖紙一二斤
Side 3: 牒垂賜教在之○後事者命盡
Side 4: 使内[96]
Side 1: Before the Taeo[97] Chirang, with ten-thousand bows I humbly report.
Side 2: "I am thinking I might use them for the copying of sutras, so please buy white unfinished paper, one or two *kŭn*."
Side 3: You bestowed a letter and honorably instructed me thus, and thereafter your orders I have exhaustively
Side 4: carried out.

Figure 13. Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 149 (*NSAM*, 162)

This *mokkan* has been the subject of a number of scholarly investigations because of what its content appears to suggest sutra copying and Buddhist practice in pre-unification Silla, the availability of paper in Sŏrabŏl, and for the proto-*idu*-like style in which the inscription is composed. The vernacular word order seen here is reminiscent of the Imsin Year Vow Record Stele and several of the provincial *mokkan* discussed above, but the particular vernacular locutions seen here, including 垂賜 /*nayrisi/ and 教在之 /*hasigyen/, have attracted notice for

[95] *HKM* Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 160/Chajŏn No. 13. Given that a break also appears at this point, it is possible what appear to be grooved sides are an accidental consequence of the damage; however, the bottom of the *mokkan* also appears to have been refashioned into a point, and given the placement of characters, some amount may have been taken off the sides as well. The front and back inscriptions may be in different hands, which could help explain why such secondary manufacture occurred without erasing the initial inscription, if it was that only one side was reused.
[96] This transcription based on *CJ* with some minor modifications based on Kwŏn Inhan (2013). Translation is based on interpretations presented by Yi Yonghyŏn (2007) and Kwŏn Inhan (2013).
[97] "Taeo" was the fifteenth of seventeen official ranks in Silla's capital rank system.

the manner in which they appear to be explicitly connected to formulaic usages seen in later documentary sources (Yi Sŭngjae 2017).

The basic format of the inscription is that of a report to a superior, as evidenced by the 白之 with which it begins. The recipient is identified by the inscription as the official Chirang, who is of Taeo rank. The two characters 足下 seem to be a substitute expression for 前 "before," or perhaps, literally, "at the feet of"; this expression is found in the *Shiji* but also on eighth century *mokkan* recovered in Japan.[98] The following two characters, 万拜, moreover, modify the following act of "reporting" 白 in a manner commensurate with 敬 ["respectfully"] or 懼怖 ["with fear and awe"], seen in the Sŏngsan Fortress document *mokkan* discussed above.[99] Following this frame, the main content of the message is presented, and although this particular *mokkan* inscription does not conclude with an additional act of reporting (白), as seen in several of the above examples, it does end with a final 使内, interpreted as an *idu* expression that represents the causative (使) plus a perfective (内), thus implying completion, in a way that effectively doubles as a conclusion. In this lack of an ending frame, the style is somewhat reminiscent of Nishigawara Morinouchi *mokkan* discussed in the following chapter.

The main thrust of the inscription lies in conveying to Chirang that a previous order of his had been carried out. The body of the message begins by appearing to quote the gist of a *sŏp* 牒, a document that conveys an order from a superior to an inferior, presumably issued by Chirang himself (given the use of honorifics). Interestingly, this summary of the *sŏp* makes a point of first describing Chirang's intent—to use it for copying sutras—before outlining the scope of the order: to buy one or two *kŭn* of paper. Much effort has been expended in attempts to understand exactly what sort of paper 白不雖紙 may be; while

Figure 14. Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 158 (*RHKM*, 130)

[98] This can be seen as essentially equivalent to the 前白 form (see Chapter 3). On this point, see also Yun Sŏnt'ae (2005), 137-138; Kwŏn Inhan (2013), 389.

[99] These two characters were originally identified variously as 万引 and 万行, and understood as the personal name of the speaker. The correction to 拜 (cf. Ichi Hiroki 2008a, Chŏng Chaeyŏng 2008a, Yun Sŏnt'ae 2008, Kwŏn Inhan 2013) not only seems to be a more apt identification of the character, but fits better with what we know of the formal structure of document *mokkan* in Silla; that is, to the extent possible, the act of reporting 白 would not go without an additional humilific modifier(despite 白 already being a humble verb form). See also Kwon In-han (2010), 136-137.

most scholars agree it is certainly white (白) in color, 不雖 has been interpreted in various ways.[100] Notably, because sutras and paper are mentioned, and because this *mokkan* was recovered from a moat around the Silla royal palace, this has led many scholars to conclude that this inscription is evidence for a royally-sponsored sutra copying bureau operating within or near the palace (Yi Sŏngsi 2005, ; Chŏng Chaeyŏng 2008b, ; Kwŏn Inhan 2013). While this seems a bit of an overreach, the fact that an official document relates this sort of content may be indicative of just such a reality; however, it seems equally plausible (although perhaps unlikely, given the national quality of Buddhism in Silla at the time) that Chirang may have been looking to copy a sutra for his own individual merit, and requested paper to do so from one of his subordinates. However, one further *mokkan* among the Wŏlsŏng Moat corpus does bolster the case that there may have been an official Sutra Copying Bureau in the vicinity:

Side 1: 第八卷○第廾三大奈麻新五衣節草宮

Side 2: 祭食常弥//□□□第一卷第十七大奈麻□□[101]

Side 1: Volume Eight, Volume 23: Taenama Sinoŭi, Seasonal Grasses Palace…

Side 2: Ritual offerings as always… □□□ Volume 1, Volume 27 Taenama □□…

This inscription has generally been interpreted as identifying two different (or possibly the same) individuals bearing the title Taenama as being responsible for [copying] certain volumes of an unnamed sutra (Yi Yonghyŏn 2006, 192-194). The bottom of the *mokkan* is broken off and so the inscription on the front side is truncated, making it unclear if there may have originally been a verb here that could shed further light on the relationship between the people and volumes mentioned. Otherwise, we might interpret the inscription as similar to a list. The first four characters inscribed at the top of the second side, beyond which the text seemingly splinters into two columns (only one of which is extant), appear to read 祭食常弥[102] ["ritual offerings are as always"], which might suggest the preparation of these volumes was related to a particular ritual purpose, for which "ritual food" 祭食 would be "as usual." Therefore, the volumes mentioned in the inscription might have been for the purpose of ritual chanting, or to be presented as (non-food) offerings. Certainly, we cannot be sure if the "volumes" are necessarily sutras, as no

[100] There is general agreement that the four characters 白不雖紙 refer to specific kind of paper. Kwŏn Inhan (2013) spends a considerable amount of time arguing it refers to a special kind of paper that was unfinished/unpolished on a fulling block, the work of which would have been done ritually by sutra copiers (389-391). Kwŏn's interpretation is interesting, but until further evidence arises, this sequence will remain cryptic.

[101] Identifications based on Yi Yonghyŏn (2006)/Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2006) with minor modifications based on *HKM* and *CJ,* and my own discretion.

[102] This fourth character was considered indechiperable by Yi Yonghyŏn (2006)/Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2006) and *CJ,* but was identified as 時 by *HKM*. 弥 is my own identification based on the infrared photo provided in Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2006)—where the right radical is clearly 尓, while the outline of the top part of 弓 on the left is also plainly visible—and is understood as *idu* for /*mye/ (continuative verbal affix).

direct mention is made of any text, but the fact that "ritual" is mentioned leads us toward this being the most likely scenario. Taenama 大奈麻 was the tenth of seventeen ranks in the Silla capital rank system, and the highest title to which individuals of the fifth head rank 五頭品 might aspire. The fact that two Taenama are charged here with the preparation of certain volumes is interesting considering the much lower rank of Chirang (Taeo, fifteenth out of seventeen) as seen on Mokkan No. 149; we may understand the Silla Sutra Copying Bureau, if indeed there was one, to then include individuals of varying ranks working together, and perhaps the importance of some particular ritual may have necessitated participation of those of higher ranks.

Returning to Mokkan No. 149, it is clear that the content of the message, if not the entire inscription, is transcribed in the sort of written creole/vernacular-inflected style that has been seen thus far in the provincial corpus and in certain epigraphic sources. Here, the representation of particles and verbal inflections is considerably more thorough, suggesting that this style had developed to value the more precise representation of spoken utterances by the time of the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan*. The level of precision might also be attributed to the fact that this is an inscription produced by someone at the center, and thus perhaps someone considerably more literate than a provincial counterpart. Nevertheless, it bespeaks a continued trend toward the valuing of legibility and efficient transmission that accelerated the vernacularization of Sinitic script in Silla. Further, since the types of inflections that the scribe has chosen to represent include a large number of honorific non-final endings (賜 and 在), it appears that emphasizing the hierarchical relationship between sender and recipient was considered imperative, and the humble opening frame was insufficient in this regard.

This *mokkan* thus attests to the pace of vernacularization in seventh century Sŏrabŏl written culture, while suggesting the larger written world of which it was a part, one in which sutras were being copied on paper that was available, in some form and for a price. As David Lurie (2011) has noted, *mokkan* could form part of the support network for producing paper documents, such as in the case of Empress Kōmyō's (701-760) sutra-copying endeavors, where *mokkan* related to the flow of writing supplies have been recovered archaeologically (153; 162). While this does not seem to be all that *mokkan* were doing in the context of the sixth and seventh century Silla royal capital, this particular *mokkan* shows that such material support may have been an important aspect of their usage. Because they were then secondary, marginal, and preliminary surfaces for inscribing "behind the scenes," it is perhaps little wonder that many of them are so crudely constructed in this period. Again, effective transmission seems to have been of the utmost value in the context of Silla's written culture, such that the material format of the message does not seem to have been given much consideration. A conception of *mokkan* as a space for preliminary writing may have contributed to the devaluing of their material form in favor of their written content.

Thus far, I have noted that unlike in Paekche and Japan, *mokkan* from provincial Silla offer very little evidence of the process of literary acquisition or calligraphic calibration. The exceptions to this would appear to be the two *Analects*

mokkan from Ponghwangdong and Kyeyang Fortress. However, based on the Wŏlsŏng Moat corpus, it appears that *mokkan* were indeed being used as surfaces for calligraphic practice in the capital. A total of four of the twenty-nine Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* identified as having inscriptions by *HKM* can be categorized as writing practice. These all appear to be clear instances of calligraphic practice, where a scribe is refining their hand by repeatedly writing the same character(s). Two appear to be reused four-sided *mokkan*, while the other two may have once been tag-shaped *mokkan*.

One of the four-sided examples contains repeated practice of the character 朔 ["new moon"/ "first of the month"] on three of four sides, with one of the sides featuring repetition of the sequence 朔十三日 ["thirteen days after the new moon"]. This sequence, where 朔 is seemingly treated as a verb—that is, "a new moon rises," and then thirteen days pass—is seen frequently in seventh century Japanese inscriptions, where instead of 朔, the character 生 is often be used (i.e., 正月生十日, "ten days after the new moon of the First Month rose"). Either character is superfluous in terms of recording dates in Sinitic, but perhaps speaks to a certain way of thinking about months (literally, "moons") within what would have been a relatively new calendrical system for both Silla and Japan. Such usages are generally not seen in post-eighth century contexts.

A second example features repeated practice of the character 茂, which may have been used as a phonogram in Silla,[103] and a third contains the repetition of what may be a place name, 乙忽.[104] The final example is a bit more varied in terms of content, showing clear signs of erasure and attempts at erasure, and a tentative hand that struggles with the forms of certain characters and leaves ample space between them:

Side 1: □○遺○稱○稱毛○道○道使○奉□□

Side 1: □ remain call call hair way *tosa* present□□

Figure 14. Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 164 (*RHKM*, 135)

There appears to be at least one half-erased character in the large space between the first "way" 道 and *tosa* 道使, which is more clearly written as a compound, as is 稱毛. The two unidentifiable characters following 奉 have 如 on top with a bottom radical resembling 夊. There appears to be at least one other almost-completely-erased character toward the bottom, after the second □, a centimeter or so above what appears to have been a hole (a break appears at this point in the *mokkan*'s extant form). This *mokkan* has largely attracted notice because it is another instance of *tosa* 道使, a type of official dispatched from the center to perform administrative duties

[103] It possibly appears as part of a personal name on a tag *mokkan* from Sŏngsan Fortress.
[104] If this identification is correct, it would suggest the character 忽, frequently used for /*hol/ or /*pŏl/ in Koguryŏ contexts, was also used in Silla place names. See Yi Yonghyŏn (2007), 121.

in the provinces (Yi Yonghyŏn 2006, 192). However, this *mokkan* is more important as evidence for *mokkan* as a space for the honing one's calligraphy, and in the process experimenting with larger and smaller sized characters, erasing and re-inscribing. As noted, evidence for such important literacy acquisition exercises is scant from pre-unification Silla, and therefore this along with the three other writing practice *mokkan* from the Wŏlsŏng Moat site are valuable material for understanding written culture in Silla's capital.

In addition to these calligraphic practice *mokkan*, there is further evidence that *mokkan* were frequently re-used and repurposed by individuals in Sŏrabŏl. One *mokkan* which appears to be a preliminary document recording receipt/non-receipt of some unknown product from various villages, shows signs of having been erased/reused at least once, which is fitting considering this may not have been the final form of this type of document (Yi Yonghyŏn 2007b, 122). In addition, *mokkan* that were once inscribed might be re-fashioned into wooden objects; Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 157 is a long horizontal piece carved out of a larger inscribed piece of wood (Figure 16), refashioned into an object of unknown usage. The inscription was presumably no longer useful by the time of this re-manufacture, and indeed was meaningless to the point that the individual charged with re-shaping it did not bother to erase it. It is impossible to tell to what sort of inscription the seemingly random assortment of characters may have belonged, although the calligraphy appears to be in a well-practiced hand.

Figure 15. Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 157 (*RHKM*, 129)

Examples of *mokkan* being repurposed as wooden objects, or of the repurposing of wooden objects or pieces thereof as *mokkan*, especially for writing practice, is common in Japanese contexts; the precedent seen here in Silla suggests that the versatility of *mokkan* as a medium—that is, their reusability, and not just as writing surfaces—was indeed an important aspect of their role in written culture across Pen/Insular East Asia, which would have featured a variety of other mediums fit for particular purposes. Furthermore, as noted, the use of *mokkan* in Silla in the time of Wŏlsŏng's northern pond-style moat (late fifth through seventh centuries) appears to have been an ad-hoc, non-standardized enterprise, that offered considerable freedom and fluidity of forms. Within that context, however, a particular written register inflected with the vernacular seems to have been developing—and while choice from a variety of expressions was still afforded to a scribe, the proper use of this register to show deference to one's superior/recipient would have been a vital skill, in both capital and provincial contexts.

Although extremely rare, it appears at least one of the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* features an order addressed to subordinates by a superior. The type of register employed here suggests the scribe is a third party relaying the order, but it nonetheless stands out amidst a corpus of document *mokkan* that are primarily reports from subordinates to their superiors:

Side 1: 四月一日典太等教事
Side 2: 勺舌白故爲□教事□□
Side 3: □□□□□□□□[105]
Side 1: Fourth Month, first day. Chŏnt'aedŭng instructs as follows.
Side 2: Because of Chaksŏl's report, I now □ issue the following instruction □□
Side 3: □□□□□□□□

Figure 17. Wŏlsŏng Moat Mokkan No. 153 (*RHKM*, 124)

This *mokkan* is a round rod type, and appears as if simply the bark was stripped off and a branch was used as is (Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso 2006, 3:146). While other round mokkan are inscribed with up to six lines of text (sometimes called "six-sided" or "six-faced" *mokkan*), this piece only has three extant lines. The unfinished appearance of this *mokkan* bespeaks a lack of concern with presentation, given that the inscription was addressed to subordinates, but is also characteristic of the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* corpus as a whole. Content-wise, it appears to be a direct response by an entity, Chŏnt'aedŭng 典太等, to a report made by an individual, Chaksŏl 勺舌. Perhaps because the latter is a subordinate, no titles are given for either (unless, of course, Chŏnt'aedŭng is an otherwise unattested office/title), but the hierarchical relationship is clear from the verbs used (白 "humbly report" vs. 教事 "instruct"). Here again, the inscription seems to follow Korean syntax, and we see the *idu* expression 教事 /*hʌsin/ appear twice. Again, then, it is clear that some *idu* conventions had already developed by this point, even if other conventions of written culture—related to the manufacture of *mokkan* in particular—were still largely unestablished and/or disregarded.

This piece helps balance our view of written culture, in showing that documents were exchanged between higher and lower officials, and not just submitted by the lower to the higher. However, again, the formal qualities of this *mokkan*—the unfinished appearance, the simple, legible regular script—suggest that effective transmission was of the utmost, and aesthetic concerns were secondary in importance. If anything, this aspect of the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* suggests written culture overall was still in a nascent stage when these inscriptions were created, and contrasts sharply with what is clearly a more mature lettered world glimpsed through the eighth century Anapchi site *mokkan* (see conclusion for details).

The Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan*, like their counterparts in the provinces, show preliminary attempts at vernacular transcription that bespeak a developing written creole in Silla inscriptive practice, one that was particularly well-suited to the

[105] Identifications follow Kungnip Kyŏngju Munhwajae Yŏn'guso (2006), 146-147.

efficient transmission of information in document form. However, compared even to the relatively standard forms seen among the Sŏngsan Fortress *mokkan*, the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* exhibit a notably ad-hoc nature, minimally shaped and fitted to specific situations and content, and then sometimes re-shaped and re-fitted to new content after the expiration of their original inscription. *Mokkan* clearly filled an important role in written culture as a place for drafting simple documents, whether for communication with superiors/subordinates or for later copying onto paper. The starkets difference with provincial written culture would seem to be the availability of paper, which may have contributed to the downplaying of the need for standard forms of *mokkan* manufacture.

Moreover, in the center, inscription was less a reflection of state power directed at a provincial audience than a fact of bureaucratic life for those in the employ of the state. However, the performance of one's place within the state system through inscription was still at the root of early written culture in Silla. Therefore, while the participants in written culture might not necessarily have been aware of this imperative, the need to perform one's role in the institutional hierarchy nevertheless shaped the types of documents produced. In this way, although the nature of the inscriptions differs considerably, the underlying ideology of the Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan* corpus is in line with that of Sŏngsan Fortress and Yisŏng Fortress, and to a lesser extent Kyeyang Fortress and Ponghwangdong.

Conclusions

Silla was the last of the three major peninsular kingdoms to adapt writing as a means of administration, but that adaptation occurred with remarkable speed, giving rise to a large number of inscriptions dating to the mid-sixth century. Because of the difficulty of acquiring a skill such as literacy with any sort of speed, especially as an adult, it can be imagined that the early ranks of Silla's written culture were filled with people of allochthonous heritage and/or outside origin, and shortcuts were developed to aid others endeavoring to "become literate." The most important of these shortcuts was the inflecting of Sinitic writing with vernacular locutions, allowing not only for direct links between the written and spoken forms of language, but for the portrayal of culturally-specific nuance through honorifics and humilifics that are relatively absent from the standard Sinitic register.

The high demand for literate persons who could produce written documents was fueled by a state seeking to rapidly modernize as a means of bolstering its position vis-à-vis outside aggressors. After acquiring vast swaths of new territory in the middle of the sixth century, establishing legitimate rule that could endure challenges from both inside and outside was something that could only be accomplished through ideology, and letters were one of the most effective means for the propagation of that ideology. The erection of stone steles was a means of marking the landscape with sovereign presence that was buttressed through an inscription in the cosmopolitan script, a type of visual cue that even if illegible to some, was nevertheless undoubtedly associated with the cultural prowess of the powerful Chinese states. The production of inscriptions on *mokkan* was not as overtly symbolic, but was also a symptom of a new ruling ideology based on written law modeled on cosmopolitan precedents; this new ruling ideology required the inscription of compliance, through which one ascribed to a particular role within the

state system. As such, inscription was important as both a practical and a symbolic means of connecting center and periphery, as those in the periphery acquiesced to the central state's dominion over them through participating in document-based correspondence.

In sixth and early seventh century Silla, writing seems to have been conceptualized as a technology of state, and this technology was put to use for the cause of national integration. While this aspect of writing is less prominent in capital inscriptions (Wŏlsŏng Moat *mokkan*), the Silla *mokkan* corpus as a whole attests to inscription as a means of ascribing particular roles in the state system. Stringent rules for composition were not yet established, as effective transmission was more heavily valued, but the particular type of vernacular-inflected Sinitic creole that appears on *mokkan* of this period may have developed as a means of inscribing proper deference. This suggests that while forms may not have mattered, rank certainly did, and one's use of language/script needed to reflect one's position in the hierarchy. These nuances of Silla's vernacular-inflected Sinitic are a remarkable development, but again betray the still "niche" nature of writing as a technology in sixth century Silla, where it does not appear to have functioned beyond this type of state system-centric setting. While this was the case during the earliest years of written culture in Silla, and the development of written culture may have been somewhat stymied by the constant warfare on the peninsula, as more and more people acquired literacy and countless Silla monks and students traveled to Tang, uses of writing became more rich and varied. Although some aspects of written culture as it had developed in the early years remained, by the eighth century, Silla's capital was home to a substantial "script community," many of whom were highly invested in the formal and aesthetic possibilities of the Sinitic script.

Chapter 3: Written Culture in Japan Before and After the Battle of the Paek River

The seventh century was a transformative time in the history of writing in Japan. There are a number of reasons for this, but the catalyst for that transformation was undoubtedly the defeat of the Japanese forces at the Battle of the Paek River. This battle not only awakened the Japanese state to their vulnerability tomilitary threat from China, it also threw into question Japan's place in the East Asian order, ending centuries of Wa involvement in peninsular affairs. The defeat brought with it an influx of literate immigrants from Paekche fleeing the destruction of their country. Like Sillla's King Chinhŭng, who responded to his acquisition of new territory and the impulse to defend it by using inscription as a means of projecting political power across space, the Japanese sovereign Tenchi reacted to a similar impulse to defend his territory against the new threat of the combined Silla-Tang forces not only by constructing Korean-style military fortresses along the Inland Sea (the martial), but also by instituting reforms that would usher in the existence of a document-based bureaucracy in Japan (the literary). While it is possible that King Chinhŭng's may have leaned on literate groups who were of Koguryŏ descent during the initial years of his campaign to integrate his territory through inscription, Tenchi clearly relied on literate Paekche refugees for his inscriptive needs. The early written cultures of Silla and Japan thus share much in terms of the circumstances that inspired and fueled them. But, significantly, excavated *mokkan* from the mid-seventh century show that even in the earliest years of written culture in Japan, scribes did not restrict themselves to state business, but indeed used *mokkan* in particular as a surface on which to compose literary writing. This, of course, was probably motivated by the fact that *mokkan* could be erased, reused, and discarded; however, it may also suggest a link with the literary culture of Paekche discussed in Chapter 1.

This chapter aims to understand the impact of individuals from Paekche on early written culture in Japan, by examining inscribed materials excavated from the sites of mid-seventh century capitals dating to just before (Naniwa) and just after (Ōmi) the Battle of the Paek River. While individuals of scribal heritage had knowledge of writing for some time prior to the mid-seventh century, it is not until the reign of Kōtoku (r. 645-654) that written culture appears to emerge in the material record. However, from its earliest attestation, written culture in Japan features some inscriptions of literary quality, suggesting the presence at least of some individuals (perhaps peninsular in origin) who had considerable command of script. In order to contextualize the emergence of literary inscriptions in the mid-seventh century, this chapter takes as a starting point the preface to the mid-eighth century *kanshi* (Literary Sinitic poetry) collection *Kaifūsō*, which asserts that the reign of the sovereign Tenchi at the Ōtsu palace was the beginning of *belles lettres* in Japan, and evaluates the validity of this claim by looking at the evidence for literary writing in Japan prior to the reign of Tenchi (the court at Naniwa), during the period of the Ōmi court (Tenchi's reign), and in the Ōmi region after the fall of the Ōmi capital in the Jinshin War of 672.

Discoveries of *mokkan* from the Naniwa and Ōtsu capitals have been limited, and suggest that overall the literate population remained small and centered on the

sovereign, and efforts at document-based administration were more performative rather than practical. In the case of Ōmi, the sovereign's inner circle and those that served his fledgling bureaucracy were largely allochthons and newly arrived Paekche refugees; as I will argue, despite the Ōmi court's brief tenure, these individuals would have a significant impact on the development of written culture in Japan, but unfortunately relatively little material evidence of their activities is extant.

The material essentials for writing in seventh century Japan included a brush, ink, a strip of wood (*mokkan*), and a small knife for erasing. The small knife was particularly important for beginners, who, in the words of Confucius "from time to time practiced what they learned" (學而時習之). The ability to erase offered one the freedom to work toward perfecting the forms of their characters. However, this perfecting was not merely a matter of "character form" (字体), but of the forms in which characters might be woven together into a pattern (that is, into a syntactically coherent sequences). Because the material setting conditioned one to be actively seeking perfection of character forms, we might assume this facilitated attention to "sentence form" (文体) as well. An awareness of this type of form can be seen to emerge in *mokkan* beginning in the latter half of the seventh century, and is a prerequisite for the type of literary culture that can be seen to emerge in Japan at the beginning of the eighth century.

Letters and Literature: An Eighth Century Perspective

The earliest complete narrativization of the rise of literary writing in the Japanese archipelago is found in the preface to the *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻, an anthology of Literary Sinitic poetry composed by Japanese authors, compiled in 751.[1] This work is also coincidentally the first extant poetic anthology in Japan, and, it might also be ventured, the first extant work of *belles lettres*. The story it lays out is as follows:

逖聴前修。遐観載籍。襲山降蹕之世。橿原建邦之時。天造草創。人文未作。至於神后征坎品帝乗乾。百済入朝啓龍編於馬厩。高麗上表図烏册於烏文。王仁始導蒙於軽嶋。辰爾終敷教於訳田。遂使俗漸洙洒之風。人趨斉魯之学。逮乎聖徳太子。設爵分官。肇制礼儀。然而専崇釈教。未遑篇章。

In hearing the wisdom of prior ages, and in looking at the classic texts of the distant past, we find that in the age of the descent onto the mountains in So,[2] and at the time

[1] The identity of the compiler is uncertain. There are several theories, the most prominent of which argues that the compiler is Ōmi no Mifune (722-785), a great-grandson of Prince Ōtomo (son of the sovereign Tenchi; Ōtomo committed suicide upon losing his bid to succeed his father to his uncle, Tenmu, in the Jinshin War of 672). The focus on the court of Tenchi as a seminal moment in the history of Sinitic literature in Japan and the sympathy toward Prince Ōtomo seen in the anthology both lend credence to this theory. Mifune was an accomplished *kanshi* poet in his own right, with five of his verses appearing in *Keikokushū* 經國集 (comp. 827), and he served as both professor of letters (*monjō hakase* 文章博士) and head of the imperial university (*daigaku no kami* 大学頭) toward the end of his lifetime. See Nakanishi Susumu 2010.

[2] This is a contracted reference to a place name that appears in a variant account of the story of descent of the heavenly grandchild (Hoho ninigi no mikoto). In this version, the location of the descent is 日向襲之高千穂串日二上峯 ["the two peaks of Takachiho and Kushihi, in the So region of Hyūga"]. See *NS Jindai* II, *NKBT* 67: 157.

when the country was established at Kashihara,[3] it was still the time of heaven and earth being created, of the myriad things being made—and people did not yet compose texts.
Then, in the age of the heavenly empress' invasion, at the time of the Hon emperor's ascension,[4] Paekche came to the court and taught us the dragon editions[5] in the stable. Then Koguryŏ submitted a memorial, drawing a crow document in bird letters. Wang-in was the first to lead the unlettered in Karushima, while Chin'i laid out his teachings in Osada. In this way they caused the people of this country to be steeped in the way of the Zhu and Si,[6] and led them to the learning of Qi and Lu.[7]
Then, in the time of Crown Prince Shōtoku, the ranks were established and the offices divided, and for the first time the rites were organized. However, because people were in uncommon awe of the way of the Buddha, they did not yet have the time to compose *belles lettres*.[8]

This narrative begins by looking back at a "letterless" past, drawing on the timeline of "national history" established in *Nihon shoki*. This "national history" begins with the age of the descent of the sun goddess' grandson descent to a mountaintop in Hyūga 日向 (located in present-day Miyazaki prefecture), followed by his great-grandson, the legendary sovereign Jinmu 神武, "founding the nation" (建邦)—i.e., establishing his palace—at Kashihara. Noting that in that distant past "people did not yet compose texts" 人文未作 (in other words, people did not yet have writing), the preface turns to writing's legendary arrival in the archipelago via Paekche, when the horse-handler Achikki tutored the Crown Prince "in the stables," and then Koguryŏ's "testing" of Wa through its submission of a memorial written on crow feathers. These two pivotal moments in the history of writing in Japan are then further emphasized in the highlighting of the two men responsible for them: Wang-in, the "first to lead the unlettered," and Chin'i, who managed to read the Koguryŏ memorial (by steaming the feathers and pressing them on silk). These two men represent stages in the adoption of writing in the archipelago: Wang-in is its very beginnings, while Chin'i is representative of a certain level of maturation (the fact that both these men are of peninsular background is a non-issue in the narrative, although it does probably reflect accurately *who* was reading/writing in this early period). The composer of this preface clearly sees Chin'i as proving that Wa was "civilized" (i.e., a literate member nation of the "Sinographic cosmopolis") through his clever solution to Koguryŏ's "test."[9] Thus he is able to characterize Wa post-Chin'i as a place where men were "steeped in the way of Zhu and Si," and aware of the "learning of Qi and Lu." He describes the next stage in the development of

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[3] Where the first sovereign, Jinmu, is said to have established his palace.
[4] King Homuda, otherwise known as the sovereign Ōjin (r. late fourth~early fifth centuries).
[5] The Confucian classics.
[6] Two rivers in Confucius' home country of Lu.
[7] Two places where Confucius taught.
[8] This translation and discussion below is informed by the interpretations/annotations provided by Tatsumi Masaaki 2012, 27-42.
[9] It is interesting that this posturing is taking place among kingdoms of Pen/Insular East Asia, without the involvement of any Chinese dynasties.

writing in Japan as occurring in the age of Prince Shōtoku, which allegedly saw the introduction of bureaucratic state institutions.[10] To this point, the preface paints a straightforward developmental narrative of a pre-lettered Japan receiving letters via Paekche, followed by the maturation of written culture through the propagation of the study of the Confucian classics.

The text now turns sharply away from its build up, noting that the development of *literary culture* was not immediately forthcoming. Moreover, the author of this preface explicitly blames devotion to Buddhism for a delay in the pursuit of *belles lettres* in Japan. Given the association of Prince Shōtoku with the propagation of Buddhism in the archipelagan context, it is not surprising that the text pauses at the mention of his name to note the hindrance it sees Buddhism to be in the development of literary writing. However, it is clear that our compiler sees literary writing (i.e., poetry) as the next logical step in its developmental narrative: for the preface author, literary writing is a phenomenon that should follow naturally on the heels of a "mature" written culture where Confucian learning is widespread. In the logic of the preface's narrative, the propagation of Buddhism in the archipelago under the leadership of Prince Shōtoku hindered the progress made by Confucian teaching toward literary culture; this progress would not resume until the reign of Tenchi in the mid-seventh century:

及至淡海先帝之受命也。恢開帝業。弘闡皇猷。道格乾坤。功光宇宙。既而以為。調風化俗。莫尚於文。潤徳光身。孰先於学。爰則建庠序。徵茂才。定五礼。興百度。憲章法則。規摹弘遠。夐古以来。未之有也。於是三階平煥。四海殷昌。旒紘無為。巖廊多暇。旋招文学之士。時開置醴之遊。当此之際。宸翰垂文。賢臣献頌。雕章麗筆。非唯百篇。
Then we reached the time of the Ōmi emperor's[11] assuming the mandate. He expanded the enterprises of the emperor and broadened the programs of the sovereign. His way stretched to both heaven and earth, and his achievements shone throughout the universe. It was already known to him that, as for something that would enable him to polish the customs and transform the vulgar of the world, nothing could be more revered than writing, and as for something that would enable his people to steep their minds in virtue and thus improve their being, what could be more primary than learning? Hereupon he established an academy, summoned those of great talent, instituted the Five Rites, and gave rise to the many laws and

[10] Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子, who was known in life as Prince Umayado 厩戸皇子, is a semi-legendary figure, a nephew of the sovereign Suiko 推古天皇 (r. 593-628), who served for some time as regent during her reign. His name is associated with the founding of many early Buddhist temples, especially Hōryūji in Ikaruga, where his detached palace is also thought to have been located. Following his death in the early part of the seventh century, he became venerated as something of a founding figure of Buddhist practice in the Japanese archipelago, and a number of stories of his sagely character began to circulate; by the mid-eighth century, this narrative was well-established, with this being the first recorded instance of the name "Shōtoku" ["sagely virtue"]. On the development of the Shōtoku legend after the death of the historical Prince Umayado/Kamitsumiya in 622, see Como 2008.
[11] Because he ruled from the Ōtsu palace in the province of Ōmi, this is a common way of referring to the sovereign Tenchi.

institutions. His statutes and laws were vast and wide-ranging, and stretching back into antiquity, there had never before been such a feat. Thereupon the three staircases of the palace were at peace and shone brilliantly, their efflorescence extending to the four seas. The sovereign had no need to act, such that in the Great Hall there was much time for leisure. From time to time he would invite men of letters, and on occasion he would hold gatherings where he would put out sweet wine. And at these gatherings, he would hand down a piece of his own composition, and in return his wise vassals would offer up verses of praise. The intricate stanzas and beautiful lines did not number a mere one hundred.

The reign of Tenchi is put forth as the decisive moment in the emergence of *belles lettres.* According to the preface, literature is something that could only emerge under the direction of a wise sovereign, whose reign facilitated such prosperity as could allow for the leisure time for its pursuit. At Tenchi's idyllic Ōmi court, where his wise policies meant that there was "much time for leisure" in the Great Hall, the sovereign could convene his courtiers for the sole purpose of exchanging verses: he would bestow upon them a composition of his own, they would offer up verses of praise in return. Their literary harmony was a symptom and a symbol of the sagely quality of his reign. This sort of literary culture, where ruler and ruled communicate through literary form, is depicted as the zenith of lettered achievement—and is only enabled by a sovereign enlightened enough to see the power of writing to "transform the vulgar."

Unfortunately, there is very little extant evidence that can corroborate the *Kaifūsō*'s description of Tenchi's "literarily enlightened" court. Outside of the *Kaifūsō* itself, there are some verses dated to the court's brief stint at Ōmi (667-672) found in *Man'yōshū* (c. 759), the first extant anthology of vernacular verse. In addition, we are given a picture of the literary world of Tenchi's court in this preface to the famous verse by Nukata no Ōkimi (dates unknown) on the merits of spring vs. autumn:

近江大津宮御宇天皇代［天命開別天皇謚曰天智天皇］
天皇詔内大臣藤原朝臣競憐春山萬花之艶秋山千葉之彩時額田王以歌判之歌[12]
In the reign of the sovereign who reigned from the Ōtsu palace in Ōmi (Amemikoto Hirakasu wake no mikoto, whose posthumous name is Tenchi tennō)
The sovereign ordered Palace Minister Fujiwara no Asomi to compare the lustrous sheen of the myriad blossoms of the spring mountains to the iridescence of the many leaves of the autumn mountains. At this time Nukata no Ōkimi offered this poem rendering her judgment.

Here, we have Tenchi ordering his minister Fujiwara no Kamatari (614-669) to compose a Literary Sinitic verse on a very specific topic, an order to which Nukata, a prominent female poet at court and one of the consorts of Tenchi's younger brother, then Prince Ōama (later the sovereign Tenmu), responds with a Japanese song

[12] *MYS* 1:16; *SNKBZ* 6:34.

instead. This suggests the atmosphere of literary banquets at Tenchi's court: the sovereign would request certain courtiers compose on particular topics, and then probably judged their efforts. In this case, it appears such banquets also included woman members of the royal retinue and courtly circle—perhaps only those among them who were particularly gifted poets—who might provide verse in the vernacular. This suggests an early effort at elevating vernacular composition to the same relative level with verse in the cosmopolitan language, a development which helps explain the increasing influence of Literary Sinitic poetic convention on vernacular poetry as seen in *Man'yōshū* verses dating to the late seventh and early eighth century. Simultaneously, Nukata's insertion of her verse as a response to Tenchi's command also casts the vernacular as belonging to the realm of "letters"—something which could and should be written down—a definition that would also have a tremendous impact on the development of Japanese poetry from this point forward. This inclusion of vernacular poetry in the written realm facilitated the integration of new and complex meanings into verse through the clever manipulation of orthography, a fact that is testament to the ways in which scribes in Japan increasingly came to view their medium as both practical and aesthetic.

In contrast to these accounts as found in *Kaifūsō* and *Man'yōshū*, extant material evidence for the literary efflorescence of the Ōmi court is scant. A very minimal number of *mokkan* have been found in the vicinity of the Ōtsu palace site 大津宮跡 (discussed below), and indeed it is difficult to definitively date them to the five year period of the court's residence there. One of these is the so-called "glossary *mokkan*" from the Kita-Ōtsu site, the content of which suggests that textual study, and the parsing of texts into Japanese (*kundoku*), was taking place at or near the palace. However, while it is true excavations of the Ōtsu palace have only been conducted in a piecemeal fashion, little other inscribed material has been uncovered from the area. This is not to say that the *Kaifūsō* is wrong about the types of textual production taking place at Ōmi. Rather, because unlike most other early historic capitals in Japan, Ōtsu was destroyed rather than simply abandoned, not much material evidence could survive. As the *Kaifūsō* preface continues, the Jinshin War of 672 razed the short-lived capital, such that it essentially erased the Tenchi court's accomplishments from history:

> 但時經亂世、悉從煨燼。言念湮滅、軫悼傷懐。
> However, later the world was thrown into chaos, and each and every one of these was turned to ash. When I reflect upon their total destruction, I am overcome with grief and heartache.

In this short sequence, the compiler of *Kaifūsō* ends his account of the Ōmi court by bearing witness to the tragic consequences of history. As a result of the Jinshin War, the fragile written materials produced by the Ōmi court—on paper and wood alike—were "turned to ash," without a trace left behind. While the compiler laments the destruction of the "not a mere hundred" verses that were composed there, the impact of the literary culture of the Ōmi court was not something that could be so easily erased. Rather, the literary pursuits of Tenchi and his vassals at

Ōtsu, however brief their tenure, undoubtedly helped to create a foundation for a written culture that valued literary writing and the ability of literature to aid in governance.

While the *Kaifūsō* preface's depiction of Tenchi's court as a place of poetic collaboration borders on idyllic fantasy, there is probably some truth to Tenchi's characterization as a sovereign interested in the power of letters to "polish the customs and transform the vulgar." From a practical standpoint, his establishment of an academy (alluded to in the preface) suggests he was invested in literacy training in order to expand the reach of his administrative apparatus; however, as he only reigned from Ōtsu for five years, it is unlikely this had much of an impact during his lifetime, where his officialdom seems to have been largely composed of already-literate refugees (with some important exceptions, including his Palace Minister/trusted advisor Kamatari). From an ideological standpoint, the positioning of himself at the center of the court as a sagely ruler who interacted with his vassals in a refined manner through letters, would have a lasting impact. This image of Tenchi proved so robust as to be the subject of the *Kaifūsō* preface author's fascination almost a hundred years later. However, due to the relatively short period of time that the court occupied the Ōmi capital, and because of the succession struggle that unfolded after his death, the importance of Tenchi and his court in the history of letters and literature in Japan is indeed often overlooked. On this point, there can be no disputing the *Kaifūsō*.

The *Kaifūsō*'s account of the acquisition and development of written culture in Japan is an eighth century retrospective which draws heavily on "records" found in the *Nihon shoki* in order to depict Tenchi as an enlightened ruler. As noted in Chapter 1, the *Nihon shoki*'s account of the introduction of writing and the role of scholars such as Achiki and Wani reflects eighth century notions of literacy and scholarship. However, the historical truth of the account is not what is of importance to our *Kaifūsō* compiler; rather, the mention of Wani and Wang Chin'i reflects an understanding of pre-seventh century written culture as one dominated by peninsular immigrant families with scribal training who sought to propagate the study of the classics (Wani), and who played a vital rule in diplomatic exchanges (Wang Chin'i). This is all a prelude to the compiler's setting up of Tenchi as *the* first patron of literary culture in Japan. The compiler is clearly cognizant of a qualitative difference in the written culture of the pre-Tenchi era and that of the post-Tenchi era, and positions this difference as one of "lettered" vs. "literary." While it is difficult to pinpoint the emergence of a literary culture to the reign of Tenchi (given the scantiness of surviving material), I cannot but agree with its focus on the mid-late seventh century as a pivotal moment in the development of a literary consciousness in Japan.

Below, I will examine the evidence for literary writing in extant *mokkan* from the mid-seventh century, highlighting *mokkan* inscriptions from the Naniwa Palace site, which was occupied during the reign of Kōtoku (r. 645-654), and from the Ōmi region, including the Ōtsu Palace site (occupied 667-672) and the surrounding areas, which remained home to many of the Paekche refugees who served Tenchi's court even after the shift of power back to the Asuka region under Tenmu (r. 672-686). While there were immigrants flowing in from the peninsular kingdoms throughout

the early part of the seventh century, I will focus on the aftermath of the Battle of the Paek River in 663 as a pivotal moment whereby a large number of literate refugees were integrated into the elite population of Japan. These refugees were instrumental in carrying forward Tenchi's modernization program, including the establishment of document-based bureaucracy, and it is they who helped facilitate the spread of written culture and the establishment of literary writing as an ideal.

Writing in Japan Before the Mid-Seventh Century

As discussed in the Introduction, writing in Japan in the Yayoi (c.500BCE-250CE) and Kofun (c.250-600CE), epochs was not wholly unknown, but was extremely limited in its scope. Isolated inscriptions serve as indicators of writing's largely alegible reception in pre-seventh century Japan. By the middle of the Kofun period, members of scribal lineage groups were likely tasked with producing diplomatic documents to send to the Korean kingdoms and the Chinese court, and quite possibly composed some limited court records, but the day-to-day operations of governing probably did not involve script in any major way.

The introduction of Buddhism sometime in the middle of the sixth century has long been interpreted as an important moment in the history of the use of writing in Japan: among the sacred items allegedly sent by Paekche's king as he sought to propagate the dharma were several sutras.[13] The *Sui shu* (also quoted in Chapter 1) understands the arrival of literacy and the arrival of Buddhist law in the islands as one in the same:

> 無文字、唯刻木結繩。敬佛法、於百濟求得佛經、始有文字。[14]
> They were without letters; they merely carved wood and tied rope. But because they revered the dharma, they sought to attain the Buddhist sutras from Paekche, and then for the first time they had letters.

Despite the strong association between Buddhism and letters presented here, texts such *Nihon shoki* and *Gangōji engi,* which record the narrative of Buddhism's transmission to Japan, do not mention the names of specific sutras that were sent by the Paekche king. The nonspecificity of these accounts accords with what seems to have been the relative unimportance of texts in the earliest forms of Buddhism practiced in the archipelago (Lurie 2011, 138-139). Indeed, it is icons, and not texts, that are the focal point of the narratives of resistance to Buddhism (featuring the Soga family as its defenders) in the reigns of Kinmei and Bidatsu (Lurie 2011, 139).

Nevertheless, the idea that Buddhism was an essential part of Japan's "becoming lettered" has persisted in scholarship, bolstered by the claim made in *Sui shu* as well as studies of the so-called "Suiko Reign Extant Texts" 推古朝遺文, a number of inscriptions allegedly dating to the reign of the female sovereign Suiko at the turn of the seventh century, many of which are inscribed on Buddhist relics and feature content related to Buddhist practice. Recent scholarship has called into

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[13] See *NS* Kinmei 13.10; *NKBT* 67: 100-101.

14 "Weiguo 倭國," in Sui shu vol. 81, https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/隋書/卷 81.

question the dating of the majority of these epigraphical texts, including those that survive on actual artifacts.[15] Out of fourteen pieces of writing alleged to be from the reign of Suiko, Lurie (2001) admits the possibility of authenticity for just two, both dated to the 620s and found on the mandorla of gilt-bronze Buddha images from Hōryūji 法隆寺, the temple allegedly founded by Prince Shōtoku in the Ikaruga region of Nara prefecture (418-420). One further inscribed text, also found on a mandorla originally housed at Hōryūji, is dated 594, and is thought to be authentic; however, the name of the dedicatee and the style of the inscription, as well as the form of the object itself, suggest it was probably made on the Korean peninsula, probably in either Koguryŏ or Paekche (Lurie 2001, 405-406; Lurie 2011, 132-134; Kōnoshi 1997, 73). The remaining "Suiko reign" inscriptions, found either on physical artifacts or copied down into textual compilations, were likely composed at later dates to record remembered events or shape the interpretation of an object in a certain manner.[16] As Lurie (2011) argues, it would be odd that there should be no textual remnants of the Buddhist culture in the archipelago from the early seventh century; however, their relative paucity is consistent with the largely icon-centric nature of contemporary Buddhist practice and the evidently limited scope of with written culture at that time (i.e., very limited) (142-150).

It is likely that, as in Paekche, Buddhism played some role in the propagation of written culture in the Japanese context. However, as Lurie (2011) argues, the expansion of Buddhist inscription seems to have been occurring simultaneously and alongside the expansion of other types of inscription (e.g., bureaucratic, folk-ritual, literary), and was not necessarily the sole guiding impulse for the rise of a literate court in the seventh century (150). The two Hōryūji inscriptions mentioned above are outliers, and along with some inscribed pottery, represent the entirety of extant inscriptions dating to the first part of the seventh century; while this does not mean writing was not produced in some form during that period, material remains of its spread do not begin to appear until the 640s.

Writing and the 'Taika Reform'

In narratives of Japanese history, the calendar year 645 is often given as the end of the Kofun period. This is the year of the so-called Isshi Incident [J. *isshi no hen* 乙巳

[15] A number of the so-called surviving texts are actually found in later sources, having supposedly been copied from a no-longer surviving original. These include the famous "Seventeen Article Constitution," quoted in its entirety within the text of the *Nihon shoki*, the "Dōgo Hot Springs Stele Inscription," (dated 596), which was allegedly quoted in the eighth century *Iyo no kuni fudoki* and then transcribed from that no longer extant text as part of *Shaku nihongi* 釈日本紀, a Kamakura period (1185-1333) commentary on the *Nihon shoki*, and the "Gangōji Pagoda Steeple-Base Inscription," (dated 596) found only as a quotation in an appendix to the *Gangōji garan engi* that is dated to the twelfth century. In the case of all three of these examples, there is a connection to Prince Shōtoku, the legend of whom was being increasingly embellished in the late seventh and throughout the eighth centuries, suggesting it is indeed likely that these "inscriptions" were composed at a later date. See Lurie 2001, 399-422, and Kōnoshi Takamitsu 1997, 68-74.

[16] In particular, the construction of the legend of Prince Shōtoku was bolstered by the production of inscriptions related to his legacy. Out of the fourteen "Suiko Reign Remnant Texts" listed by Lurie, nine have some alleged connection to Shōtoku (either he is thought to have composed them, or he is mentioned in them).

の変], which led to the Taika Reform, a series of edicts that upended the theretofore established relationships between center and periphery. According to the *Nihon shoki*, in the sixth month of 645, Prince Naka no Ōe 中大兄皇子(who later reigned as the sovereign Tenchi) and his confidant Nakatomi no Kamatari 中臣鎌足 (later Fujiwara no Kamatari) lured Soga no Iruka 蘇我入鹿, son of the Great Minister Soga no Emishi 蘇我蝦夷, to court ostensibly to attend the presentation of "tribute" from the "Three Koreas," only to ambush and kill him in the presence of the sovereign Kōgyoku 皇極(Naka no Ōe's mother). The following day, after briefly attempting to mount a resistance, Emishi committed suicide by burning his residence to the ground.[17] The deaths of Iruka,and his father Emishi effectively ended the century-long dominance of the Soga family over court politics, supposedly freeing up the sovereign (who abdicated after this incident in favor of her younger brother and Naka no Ōe's uncle, known posthumously as Kōtoku 孝徳) to institute much-needed reforms, including the promulgation of law codes (*ritsuryō*) which reorganized provincial administration and put more power in the hands of those at the center.

While the Taika Reform has been traditionally regarded as the beginning of the *ritsuryō* [law-code] state, recent scholarship has questioned the extent to which relevant bureaucratic institutions were in fact established and operational during the 640s and 650s. Archaeological evidence suggests the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō in the late seventh century as the era in which the *ritsuryō* state achieved full maturity, with the reign of Tenchi as the likely beginning of real administrative reform.[18] Nevertheless, the events of 645, styled the 'Isshi Incident' after its sexagenary year designation, did certainly alter the playing field of Japanese court politics: the ousting of the Soga family from power meant a return of the royal family to the fore of governance and a resurgence of other formerly prominent clans such as the Nakatomi (in the person of Kamatari, whose descendants would be the Fujiwara, the dominant clan at court for centuries thereafter). However, the narrative of sweeping changes carried out in the aftermath of the deaths of the scions of the Soga clan may have been something of a fiction, crafted as a means of justifying the ousting of the Soga, by painting them as not only potential usurpers but also opponents of modernizing reforms.[19]

In the annals of the sovereign Kōgyoku [r. 642-645], who ascended the throne upon the death of her husband Jomei 舒明 in late 641, the *Nihon* shoki devotes considerable attention to the crafting of a narrative that justifies the Isshi Incident, by focusing on the royal ambitions of the Soga scion Emishi and his son

[17] See *NS* Kōgyoku 4.6.12-13; *NKBT* 67: 262-265.
[18] While the historicity of the reforms that are supposed to have followed in the aftermath of the coup d'etat is still debated, the historicity of the coup itself seems to be increasingly clear. Archaeological excavations of the site of the former Soga family mansion, Amakashi Hill in present-day Asuka village, have revealed layers of ash and burned soil that date to about the middle of the seventh century, suggesting that at least the part of the *Nihon shoki* narrative where the mansion was burned by Emishi is credible. See Nabunken 1995, *Asuka, Fujiwarakyū hakkutsu chōsa gaihō* 25, 95-101, Ban Hikaru et al. 2011 and Oda Yūki et al. 2013.
[19] On the historicity of the reforms/their connection to the Isshi Incident of 645 (the assassination of Iruka), see Nakamura Shūya 2006.

Iruka. The structure of this narrative suggests that a sense of an urgent need to expunge the Soga may have been prompted by events from without. The Kōgyoku annals begin with the arrival of envoys from the peninsular kingdoms, first from Paekche, and then from Koguryŏ in the spring of 642.[20] The Paekche envoys report on "unrest" in their country, possibly the result of the death of their king, Mu [r. 600-641], which may have prompted a succession struggle.[21] The Koguryŏ envoys, arriving about a month after their Paekche counterparts, report that Yŏn Kaesomun 淵蓋蘇文, a prominent figure whose father and grandfather had both served as prime ministers, had seized power in their kingdom via a bloody coup. The envoys from Koguryŏ report on these events as follows:

> 秋九月。大臣伊梨柯須彌殺大王。并殺伊梨渠世斯等百八十餘人。
> Autumn, Ninth Month. The Great Minister Iri Kasumi [Yŏn Kaesomun] killed the Great King [of Koguryŏ]. He then also killed Iri Koseshi and others, in all more than one hundred eighty people.[22]

Those in power in Japan at this time were paying close attention to developments on the peninsula; the *Nihon* shoki's records of the reigns of Kōgyoku and the two successive reigns of Kōtoku and Saimei,[23] are full of reports about peninsular events. News of Yŏn Kaesomun's coup likely ignited latent anxieties among the royal clan about the role and intentions of high level officials in their own orbit, especially the Soga, who were intent on placing children sharing their bloodline on the throne.[24] In fact, the *Nihon* shoki's narration of Emishi and Iruka's

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[20] While tribute from Silla is mentioned, the arrival of envoys from that country does not occur until just before Jomei's funeral, carried out at the end of 642. See *Nihon shoki,* Kōgyoku 1.10.15; *NKBT* 67: 242-243.

[21] The *Paekche Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* are silent on this matter, painting the transition as a smooth one from father to eldest son (King Ŭija, who reigned 641-660). However, the *Nihon shoki* record of the report of the Paekche envoys' servants on events in the kingdom following Mu's death features the account of a younger prince, Kyogi, being exiled along with his sisters of the same mother and a significant band of followers, including a former prime minister; this same Kyogi appears in Japan soon thereafter. This account has puzzled textual critics of *Nihon shoki,* not only because no such account appears in Korean or Chinese sources on Paekche, but because the same Kyogi appears later in the Kōgyoku annals, with a title that suggests he was leading an embassy from Paekche. However, such a title may have been granted him to validate his status in Japan while he was essentially in exile; the remainder of his mentions suggest he may have settled in the Kudara region of Asuka, and there is no mention of his departure from Japan anywhere in the text (both the arrival and departure of embassies is usually noted). See Appendix XV in Jonathan Best 2006, 462-463.

[22] The events are reported by Koguryŏ envoys who are supposed to have arrived in Naniwa in third month of the first year of Kōgyoku's reign, or 642, meaning the events they describe would have occurred in the autumn of 641. The Koguryŏ annals report Yŏn Kaesomun's assassination as taking place in the tenth month of 642, so it is possible that the *Nihon shoki* account is off by one year, and the envoys in fact arrived in the second year of Kōgyoku (643), and reported on the events of the previous autumn.

[23] Saimei is the re-ascension name of Kōgyoku, used for her second reign between 654 and 661. She re-assumed the throne after her brother Kōtoku's death in 654.

[24] The possible succession struggle in Paekche following Mu's death may have also seemed a little too close to home, considering that Naka no Ōe [Tenchi]'s older brother and primary rival for the throne, Prince Furuhito, was born of a Soga mother. The fact that Kōgyoku ascended the throne following Jomei's death was probably due to the fact that neither Furuhito or Naka no Ōe was yet old enough to

"misdeeds" picks up following the Koguryŏ envoys' announcement, with Emishi taking charge of national rituals just a month later, hosting envoys in his homes and bestowing gifts upon them, tasting the new rice alongside the Crown Prince, and finally setting up his own ancestral shrine by the end of 642.[25] Furthermore, according to *Nihon* shoki, Emishi was in the process of building two great burial mounds for him and his son, conscripting laborers from the lands of the Kamutsumiya branch of the imperial family (Prince Shōtoku's descendants) in order to construct them. In other words, he was acting like a king. The fact that Yŏn Kaesomun did not assume the title of king himself, but rather placed a nephew of the slain king on the throne in order to legitimize his new role as *tae mangniji* 大莫離支 [great general], probably contained echoes of the Soga approach to wielding power in ways that were deeply discomfiting to Kōgyoku and her intended heir Naka no Ōe. While there is no proof of an actual Soga plot to assume power in the manner of Yŏn, the *Nihon shoki* goes to great lengths to *suggest* one through depicting the outrageous self-aggrandizing actions of Emishi and Iruka, and the precedent in Koguryŏ sets the stage for this narrative, which leads into the 'Isshi Incident' of 645. Placing the account of Yŏn's usurpation at the beginning of Kōgyoku's reign helps to structure the narrative of this particular chapter of *Nihon shoki*: the fate of Koguryŏ casts a shadow over what is occurring at the Japanese court, and only the assassination of Iruka at the conclusion of the chapter can save the Japanese monarchs from suffering the same fate as their counterparts in Koguryŏ.

The Isshi Incident was thus likely prompted by both domestic and international concerns; however, its impact was probably more significant in the latter arena. Japan's monarchs were intent on re-asserting themselves as the power-holders in their domain. Following the Isshi Incident, the seat of government was relocated to Naniwa (modern Osaka) to not only escape the traditional entrenched powers of the Asuka region, but, more importantly, to facilitate more efficient contact with the continent as inter-kingdom conflicts continued to escalate on the peninsula (Ueki Hiasashi 2009, 29). Meanwhile, the domestic reforms instituted following the incident were probably not on the scale that *Nihon shoki* suggests. The absence of written material to support the institution of such reforms is particularly telling in this regard. That is not to say there is no written material from around the time of the supposed reforms: excavations of the Naniwa Palace site in modern-day Osaka have yielded a *mokkan* with a sexagenary date equivalent to 648, three years after the supposed Taika Reforms and squarely within the reign of the sovereign Kōtoku. Currently, this is the oldest *mokkan* found bearing a date,[26] while

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become sovereign, but it also delayed an inevitable succession struggle, which was only "solved" in the aftermath of the Isshi Incident by Furuhito taking the tonsure and allowing Kōtoku, Kōgyoku's brother, to assume the throne instead.

[25] See *Nihon shoki*, Kōgyoku 1; *NKBT* 67: 238-245.

[26] The second oldest *mokkan* recovered to date featuring a sexagenary year comes from the Sanjō Kunotsubo Site 三条九ノ坪遺跡 in Ashiya, Hyōgo prefecture. This *mokkan* appears to feature writing practice, including the characters for several different animals of the zodiac on one surface, and the date 壬子年 appearing on the other. While this date would correspond to 652, given the nature of the content on the other side, it is debatable whether this year should be taken as the date of inscription,

stratigraphy and chronology for accompanying artifacts have resulted in approximate dating for some other early *mokkan* from sites in Asuka and Naniwa to the 640s and 650s.[27] Based on these examples, it is possible that text-based administration began in limited capacities in the 640s; however, the dearth of sufficiently literate officials probably hindered its growth beyond some minimal contexts. Most of the earliest *mokkan* found, which may date to this post-Taika period, are relatively sparse in their content (for example, see Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. NW-PH-2 below) and the majority are *kezuri kuzu* (wood shavings) bearing single characters repeated, which suggest that the process of literacy acquisition was underway.[28] This material evidence seems to indicate that the minimal form of written bureaucracy that may have been adopted at this time was likely more performative than practical in nature.

The Naniwa Palace Site: Roots of Seventh Century Written culture

According to the *Nihon shoki* narrative of the Taika Reform, Kōtoku declared that censuses were to be taken and records of storehouse transactions kept; furthermore, in laying out the hierarchy for newly established districts (*kopori* 郡), the Taika edicts declare that individuals proficient in "writing and computation" (書算) be sought to fulfill the roles of Constable 主政 and Recorder 主帳, respectively.[29] As noted above, there are several problems with the edicts, not the least of which is the fact that the character 郡 was not used to designate "district" until after the Taihō Code was established in 701 (in the seventh century, the character 評 was used instead). If we assume that some sort of reform did occur about 645, we might dismiss the discrepancies in the *Nihon shoki* as simply the efforts of the compilers to update some of the content of those original reforms to correspond to structures familiar to them in the early eighth century. Yet there is no extant evidence to suggest a census was carried out in this period, nor is there any support for the notion that paddy fields were standardized and divided up among the farming population. However, there may have been some initial forays into document-based administration, which would have required literate persons be hired by local bureaucratic institutions. Some support for this can be sought in the *mokkan* recovered from the Former Naniwa Palace site (J. *Zenki Naniwa no miya ato* 前期難

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or simply as writing practice (of course, it could be that it is both). After the Naniwa Palace Site *Mokkan* No. NW-PH-11 (dated 648) and this Sanjō Kunotsubo Mokkan No. 1, the next oldest *mokkan* bearing sexagenary years date to the 660s and later. For more on early sexagenary date *mokkan*, see Watanabe Akihiro 2008, 21-36.

[27] Pottery chronology is not a full-proof method for dating, especially of adjacent artifacts. Nevertheless, the *mokkan* recovered from the Yamada-dera site in Sakurai, Nara prefecture, are likely among the earliest, and may in fact date to the 640s, while some examples from the Ishigami site in Asuka also fall into this category. In addition, some of the *mokkan* recovered from the Naniwa palace site are thought to have been deposited prior to the palace's construction there, meaning they would date to before the Taika Reform. See the discussion of Naniwa Palace Site Mokkan No. 66-1 below. Dating of the earliest *mokkan* is discussed in detail in Ichi Hiroki 2015, 67-71.

[28] For an overview of the earliest extant *mokkan*, see Ichi Hiroki (2015): 68-69.

[29] The third and fourth highest ranking officials in district administration. See *NS* Kōtoku 2.1.1; *NKBT* 67*:*282-285.

波宮跡), the probable location of Kōtoku's Nagara Toyosaki Palace (J. *Naniwa Nagara Toyosaki no miya* 難波長柄豊碕宮).[30]

Writing was probably not unknown in Naniwa before Kōtoku moved the court there in the twelfth month of 645. Prior to that time, Naniwa was an important port of entry for those coming through the inland sea from the west, including continental envoys, but also messengers and dignitaries returning from Kyūshū and other outlying areas. Envoys almost certainly carried with them written communications and were likely literate themselves. The site itself was far from ordinary prior to the construction of the palace: the so-called Naniwa Palace Lower-Layer Site 難波宮下層遺跡 (those layers dating immediately prior to the palace's construction, containing primarily late sixth through early seventh century features) contain the remains of large buildings, palisades, and a large number of smaller buildings, of a scale and type not seen in more typical settlements of the period (Ueki Hisashi 2009, 22-23). This suggests that the area may have been an administrative facility established by the state to manage the area around Naniwa. This is further corroborated by the artifact assemblage, which not only shows a stark contrast to previous periods of the site's usage, but also closely mirrors that of Asuka at the time (Ueki Hisashi 2009, 23-24). The court seems to have taken an interest in the location as a means of controlling the flow of goods, people, and information into the capital region perhaps as early as the sixth century, but the site remained outside of the court's direct control until the early part of the seventh century: the sixth century assemblages are characterized by a distinctive Naniwa type of *haji* ware, which disappears concurrently with the appearance of the large-scale buildings in the early seventh century (Ueki Hisashi 2009, 23-27). The early seventh century thus represents a new moment in the history of Naniwa: as relations with the Korean kingdoms became ever important in the midst of the escalation of the conflicts there, Naniwa was fully integrated into the court's direct influence, and became a crucial site for diplomatic and economic exchanges going forward. As a result, already in the first half of the seventh century, Naniwa was essentially already a secondary capital.

The palace itself is not quite on the grand scale of later complexes such as the Fujiwara or Heijō palaces, but it is a respectable size: built on a north-south axis, archaeological excavations have found that the palatial complex measured approximately 630m east to west, and was probably somewhat longer than 600m north to south.[31] The main buildings have been identified as fourteen halls of state (J.

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[30] As Farris (1998) notes, there is still some disagreement about this site being identified with Kōtoku's palace. While some see the site as the result of Tenmu's efforts at building up an alternative capital there, the vast majority of scholars have adopted the view that it is Kōtoku's palace because there is no evidence of the use of foundation stones or roof tiles, and the layout is rather odd, with two additional meeting halls (*chōdōin* 朝堂院; the Naniwa palace has fourteen instead of the usual twelve) and two "octagonal turrets." These elements allow the site to be classified as more of an "indigenous" palace, possibly with some peninsular design elements; on the whole, this site is markedly different in both layout and material remains from Fujiwara, which is known to have been planned/built during Tenmu's reign (136-139).

[31] Since the northern boundary of the palace has yet to be identified, more accurate measurements are as yet unavailable. See Ueki Hisashi 2009, 73-75.

chōdōin 朝堂院), an imperial audience hall, and inner quarters for the royal family (the latter two of which are connected). In addition, the sites of administrative buildings and storehouses have also been identified (Ueki Hisashi 2009, 36-75).

The Naniwa Palace has not yielded *mokkan* in the numbers seen at its successors: fewer than sixty pieces total have been recovered, but most of these can be dated with some certainty to the middle of the seventh century (and therefore, it is assumed, the court of Kōtoku/the aftermath of the Taika Reform). These come from eight separate excavations, beginning with the discovery in 1974 of a mokkan with this rather peculiar piece of text:

Side 1: 廣乎大哉宿世

Side 2: 是以是故是是

Side 1: Oh how vast! How grand! [Our] former existences—

Side 2: As a result of this, because of this, this is this

Figure 1. Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. 66-1 (*MR*, 12)

This *mokkan* was recovered from the bottom of an elevated earthen platform located just outside the South Gate of the Naniwa Palace (Nakao Yoshiharu 1976, 32). Eight wooden shavings (*kezuri kuzu* 削屑) were also recovered from the same layer of fill soil thought to date to the mid-seventh century (Nakao Yoshiharu 1976, 32). The content of the first side in particular has been the subject of much scholarly attention, largely because of the appearance of the word 宿世, meaning "previous existence(s)," which has a clear Buddhist inflection. Fukuyama Toshio (1987) traces the genealogy of the term in sutras and commentaries, attempting to identify a single work from which this text on this *mokkan* might be drawn. Although he identifies a similar phrase in Xuanzang's translation of the *Abidharmakośakārikā* 阿毘達磨倶舎論, this translation was completed in 654, and was probably not transmitted to Japan for sometime thereafter, so it seems unlikely that this inscription could be drawn from it (Fukuyama Toshio 1987, 245). Ultimately, he offers up a theory that such a line might have been spoken by one of the preachers who, according to an account in the *Nihon shoki*, gave sutra explication lectures at the Naniwa palace in the fourth month of 652,[32] and that this the line was probably praise for the sovereign, whose previous life would have secured his fortunate position in this one (Fukuyama Toshio 1987, 245). Furuichi Akira (2008) notes that there is some evidence, including lotus pattern roof tiles in the same style as those of the Shitenōji 四天王寺,[33] that suggests there may have been some sort of temple-related building(s) to the south of the site that predated the construction of the Naniwa palace in the late 640s (Furuichi Akira 2008, 6). This would push the date of

[32] See *NS* Kōtoku/Hakuchi 3.4.15; *NKBT* 67: 318-319.

[33] This temple is also located in modern day Osaka, not far from the Naniwa palace site to the southeast. It was supposedly first constructed in the late sixth century by Paekche architects invited by Prince Shōtoku.

the *mokkan* back even further, certainly making it one of the oldest found in Japan. Further, if the identification of a temple complex is accurate, the inscription may have been authored by a priest; this fact, as well as the use of the term "previous life" 宿世 echoes the "Song of Karmic Bonds from a Previous Life" *mokkan* discussed in Chapter 1.

Fukuyama's understanding neatly ties this artifact to a specific moment in recorded history, but there is nothing concrete to tie this *mokkan* to that particular occasion of sutra explication. It is certainly possible that it emerged out of a Buddhist lecture, but such a lecture would almost certainly have been given in the vernacular language, and so whoever produced this inscription would have exercised his own discretion in translating it into Literary Sinitic. It is unclear whether the text continues after 世 or not; we might expect that it does, given the general preference for five or seven, and not six characters, in Sinitic meter. However, even without the full line, we can see the extent to which the scribe has gone to dramatize his statement, in using two exclamatory particles, 乎 and 哉. We are drawn in by his pronouncements of vastness and grandness before we are given the subject: [our] "previous existence(s)." There is obvious attention to form here in the structure that places subject and predicate in a reverse order, and repeats exclamations that are similar in meaning.

Something might also be said of the second side, which most scholars, including Fukuyama (1987), have dismissed as "calligraphic practice," due to the repetition of the character 是. Fukuyama (1987) identifies several instances in the classical canon, and in sutras, of the phrases 是以 and 是故, and concludes that the writer must have been copying these set phrases in order to learn them (246). While this is probably at least partly the case, the six characters on this face of the *mokkan* also form something of a syntactically coherent sentence, one that is playful and a bit nonsensical, but which can be parsed nonetheless. In the infrared photo of this *mokkan* included in Okimori Takuya and Satō Matoko, ed., (1994) the character 以 appears to have been at least partially erased, and while this could be due to natural imperfections in the wood, it may also be indicative of the scribe's intent to "re-start" the sentence—and use the phrase 是故 instead of 是以, which have very similar meanings. There is then a significant amount of space after 故 before the next 是, that suggests a pause or a break. While all this probably is mere calligraphic practice at its core, it appears to be in the same hand as the front surface, and the attempt to practice calligraphy is at least partially subsumed into a moment of inscriptive play, creating a nonsense sentence by interspersing instances of the character 是 with other syntactically meaningful characters. Calligraphic practice here has given way to something more, where the environment of the medium—which encourages improvement of character form (字体)—has ushered in experimentation with sentence form (文体).

The size, clarity, and placement of the characters down the center of the *mokkan* on both sides suggest legibility and placement were factors for this scribe. Moreover, this *mokkan* does not seem to have been reused excessively: it is still 9mm thick, meaning it is probably nearly "new" in *mokkan* terms. While this *mokkan*

has long been labeled simply "writing practice," this is an insufficient descriptor: there may have been an intent to practice calligraphy here, but there is also clearly an effort to compose. Here, our scribe is conscious of his inscriptive choices, and he actively produces a fragment of text that transcends pure transmission of content by manipulating form to create particular affective resonances.

Not only was Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. 66-1 one of the first to be discovered at the site, along with some *kezuri kuzu* with equally evocative inscriptions (calligraphic practice of characters such as "spring"春 and "console" 慰), it is perhaps the only Naniwa Palace *mokkan* dating to the mid-seventh century that contains an inscription of literary writing. It is probably not a coincidence that this text has a Buddhist tint to it: like the "Song of Karmic Bonds from a Previous Life" from the Nŭngsan-ni Temple site, it probably represents the work of a literate priest who spent considerable time buried in the Buddhist canon. Outside of this remarkable piece, Naniwa Palace *mokkan*, although considerably fewer than those recovered from other sites in the Yamato basin, are quite varied: while a number are tags, others appear to be account books,[34] labels for distribution of tribute to different members of the royal family, and the oldest known *uta mokkan* (see below). Perhaps the most peculiar among them, however, is a document *mokkan* that details a dispute over slaves, that has been re-carved into a human figurine, presumably after its inscription's usefulness had expired. It reads as follows:

Figure 2. Naniwa Palace Site Mokkan No. NW-97-3-1 (*MR*, 12)

Side 1: …奴我罷間盜以此往在／□言在也自午年□〔國？〕□

Side 2: …於是本奴主有□□□／□〔知？〕部君之狂此事□□〔口？〕言□

Side 1: …slave[35] while I was gone to the provinces stole. As such, having gone there…. it was said. Since the year of the Horse, [country]…

[34] The example described here is also the oldest known *mokkan* bearing a sexagenary date, equivalent to 648. For more on this *mokkan*, see Sakaehara Towao (2000) and Satō Sōjun 佐藤宗諄 (2000), "Kinen mokkan to nengō 紀年木簡と年号 [Dated *mokkan* and era names]," *Higashi ajia no kodai bunka* 103: 14-21.

[35] Tōno Haruyuki (1999) sees this as a humilific modifier for the following 我. While this is certainly possible, given that the *mokkan* has clearly been broken off on the top edge, we might assume that the inscription was originally longer, and that 奴 may belong to a different context than the clause beginning with 我 here (and given the continuation on the back side of content having to do with a slave, I find it more appropriate to see the slave as the subject of the verb 盜 that comes at the end of the sentence). Tōno's overall interpretation differs slightly from mine: "When lowly I was on my way to the provinces, I stole this and by means of it made my way. …it was said. From the year of the horse, country… It was here that the original owner of the slave had… the fact of the lord of [Chibe]'s having gone mad… saying out loud…" See Tōno Haruyuki 1999, 60.

Side 2: Thereupon the original owner of the slave had… The lord [Xchibe] has gone mad. This matter…said…

This *mokkan* is remarkable for the content of its inscription as well as for the shape of the wood. As Furuichi Akira (2008) notes, *Nihon shoki* records that Kōtoku's court was involved in arbitrating slave disputes, among other matters, through a petition system it allegedly instituted beginning in the second year of the Taika era (646), shortly after the move to Naniwa (Furuichi 2008, 10).[36] This may be one such petition, as it seems to outline an individual's grievances with regard to a slave having stolen something while the petitioner was "away in the provinces" (the use of the character 罷 here probably indicates he had been called upon to serve/perform labor in some capacity in the provinces).

Most of the above translation is preliminary, not only because the text is fragmented due to illegible characters and the fact that this *mokkan* has been cut down from its original shape, but because the register in which it is written appears to be heavily inflected with the vernacular. While it would perhaps not be appropriate to say this text was "written" in vernacular Japanese, there are several indicators that it was likely *read* into some version of the vernacular.[37] In the first part of the text, we have what appears to be Japanese word order: a verb, "steal" 盜, coming at the end of a sentence. Further, the distribution of the character 在 is inconsistent with standard Literary Sinitic, appearing here as an auxiliary suffix for a verb. Similar use of this character can be found on Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 (discussed in Chapter 2), and throughout those *Man'yōshū* verses transcribed in logographic (semantogram-centric) modes.

Readings for this character in *Man'yōshū* are largely derived from its semantic gloss, *ari* ("to be; to exist"), but as an auxiliary *ari* is usually contracted to the perfective –*ri*. Other possible readings include –*tari,* derived from a combination of the imperfect stem of the perfective suffix *tsu (te*) and the verb *ari*, and -*keri*, derived from a combination of the past tense auxiliary –*ki* plus *ari*, but the gloss –*ri* is the most common reading by far. While these auxiliaries have different nuances, they all have in common the portrayal of an action as complete and then continuing to be so (equivalent to the modern Japanese construction –*te aru*). Given how this character appears on the *mokkan* appended to two different verbs, "go" 往 and "say" 言, we might interpret them as being modified in a similar way by 在; in other words, 往在 can be glossed as *yukeru*, "having gone," and 言在 as *iperu*, "it was said [and the fact of its having been said continues to be the case]."

While there is compelling evidence that parts of this inscription are indeed meant to be understood in terms of the grammatical inflections of vernacular Japanese, there are also many standard Sinitic expressions, including 以此 ("as such," "as a result") and 於是 ("thereupon," "at that"), and the sequence 自午年 ("from the

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[36] See *NS* Kōtoku/Taika 2.2.15; *NKBT* 67: 283-285.

[37] It should be noted that this text might just as easily be parsed into vernacular Korean, and since we cannot know the identity of the author, it remains a perfectly reasonable possibility that it was (especially considering the use of 在 here, which is found in *idu/kugyŏl* transcription and also on Silla mokkan). In any case, the text is not written in a standard Sinitic register.

year of the horse") is in proper Sinitic order. However, there can be little doubt that these, through the reading process, would also have been rendered into the vernacular. As David Lurie (2011) notes, departures from standard Sinitic structure are clear markers that a text should be read-by-gloss into the vernacular (*kundoku*), but there are also cases where there are no clear signs of this type, where a a text appears to be in "standard" Sinitic—and yet still would have been rendered via *kundoku*.[38] In the case of this inscription, the use of 在 seems to be an indicator of the need to render this as a vernacular text, such that we might expect that those portions written in more or less "standard" Sinitic would have been glossed as vernacular Japanese as well.

The manner in which this inscription is composed is worthy of notice: sentences are connected by conjunctive adverbs (以此, 於是), which are not repeated, suggesting a deliberate attempt at constructing a coherent narrative with sufficient variation of diction, perhaps in order to keep the attention, and thereby the sympathies, of the expected reader (who may have been some sort of government official charged with arbitrating disputes; in other words, exactly the person who our speaker here ["I" 我] wanted on his side). The final portion of the text on the second side, where the speaker declares that "Lord [Xchibe] has gone mad," betrays a sort of emotive turn perhaps not entirely appropriate for the context. Furthermore, the pleasant, well-spaced calligraphy suggests legibility was also a concern. In other words, our scribe actively devoted attention to both visual and textual composition, in order to help elicit the best possible outcome for the speaker (我).

After this *mokkan* had fulfilled its immediate function, it was cut into a human figurine, without regard for the inscription on its surface. This was probably done in order to turn the *mokkan* into a *katashiro* 形代, a figurine to which the ailments of a human were transferred in order to cure the human. After this transferal, these ritual implements were cast into rivers or streams in order to complete the process of purification (see Mihashi Takeru 2010).[39] Here, the driving in of five wooden nails into the "head" of the figurine may hint at an original illness connected to the head or upper body. It is also possible this was used as a means of implementing a curse on another person; in other words, the pain deriving from the five nails driven into the head of the figurine was meant to transfer to a human adversary (Satō Takashi 1998c, 3). Although examples of *katashiro* figurines clad in inscriptions are also found from later periods, this is certainly the most elaborately inscribed *mokkan* to be repurposed in such a manner, and likely the oldest. Furthermore, for most inscribed figurine *mokkan* dating from later periods, the inscription does relate to the ritual act in some manner—indicating, for instance, the desired outcome of transferal. Here, however, the shape of figurine was cut through parts of the inscription, which strongly indicates the inscription was not a factor in the ritual itself. The total neglect of the inscription here—the deliberate "not seeing"

[38] David Lurie (2011): 183.

[39] On these sorts of ritual practices in the Heijō capital during the eighth century, see Baba Hajime 2010, 154-158.

of the text, is significant because it does suggest that for whomever performed the ritual, inscription itself was not a meaningful phenomenon.

Compared to the sufficiently "lettered landscapes" of the eighth century Heijō capital (710-784) or even the late seventh century Fujiwara capital (694-710), writing was probably somewhat rare at Naniwa.[40] Naniwa was not constructed as a true "capital city" in the same manner as Fujiwara or Heijō,[41] but it is likely that the majority of the court and elite families would have been represented there in some manner. Certainly, the major scribal lineages would have at least partially relocated to assist the court in its new capital. However, the paucity of inscribed material from Naniwa fails to suggest any elite literacy beyond a small hereditary segment of the traditional artisanal workforce.

In addition to the inscriptions on Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. 66-1, which hints at the importance of Buddhist inscriptions, and Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. NW-97-3-1, which transcribes the grievances of a petitioner, one other *mokkan,* found alongside the Mokkan No. NW-97-3-1, features the character sequence "謹啓," clearly identifying it as a standard form of official document, composed by lower level officials to report to their superiors (Satō Takashi 1998c, 3). This again shows that *someone* was capable of composing such documents at the Naniwa palace—that methods for composing official bureaucratic documents had percolated into Japan to some extent—but tells us nothing about how widespread the composition of such documents may have been, or who exactly might have been composing them (Tōno Haruyuki 1999, 60). The low numbers of *mokkan* from the Naniwa palace site in general, compared to those sites from the later seventh and eighth centuries, suggest writing was probably not as common in the mid-seventh century as it would be later. However, the diverse content of the Naniwa palace *mokkan* leads us to see Kōtoku's court as actively taking steps to broaden its use of the technology of writing, and to introduce it into a variety of capacities in service of the state (such as a "petition system," as mentioned above). Yet, as I will argue below, the Kōtoku court would have continued to rely on the service of hereditary scribes, whose numbers would have been far fewer than was necessary for a full scale implementation of continental style bureaucracy and law-code based administration. In other words, while the attempts at reform in the Taika era may have been real, their effectiveness was undoubtedly limited by the available human resources.

The limited manner in which script was employed at the Kōtoku court is perhaps best illustrated by the tag *mokkan* unearthed from the Naniwa palace. Among the Naniwa palace site *mokkan* that probably date to the reign of Kōtoku, there are ten that can be more or less conclusively identified as tag *mokkan,* with another four probably falling into this category (due to a lack of legible inscription, their identification remains tentative). This amounts to about a quarter of the total

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[40] On literacy and the use of writing within the eighth century capital at Heijō, see Lurie 2011, 165; Baba Hajime 2010, 16-17.

[41] Farris (1998: 139-141) discusses, but largely dismisses, the possibility that a Chinese style capital city was constructed in Naniwa during the time of Kōtoku. There may have been some major avenues, and some important temples, built alongside and at the same directional orientation, but this was probably not on the scale of any Chinese capital. However, the layout of Naniwa does seem to have mirrored that of Paekche's capital at Sabi (see Chapter 1).

mokkan recovered from the Naniwa palace site. Of these fourteen, eleven possess a characteristic tag *mokkan* shape; that is, they are rectangular with v-shaped grooves carved into both the right and left edges, on either the top or bottom part of the mokkan (and occasionally on both). While the shape is consistent with tag *mokkan* of later ages, the information provided on them is scant when compared with examples from the Fujiwara or Heijō capitals. It is assumed that these still represent labels for tribute/taxed goods of some kind, but with perhaps one exception, they do not list the entirety of information generally required in later generations—that is, the name of the province, district, and village from which the shipment originated, the personal name of the sender (although this may be omitted in the case of tax goods submitted collectively), the name of the item being sent, and the amount of the item included in the shipment. In the case of at least three of the tag *mokkan* with legible text from the Naniwa palace site, only the name of the item is listed. For example, Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. NW-PH-2 reads simply:

Side 1: 支多比

Side 1: *kitapi* [Dried meat]

Figure 3. Naniwa Palace Site Mokkan No. NW-PH-2 (*MR,* 11)

This particular *mokkan* provides the name of the item ("dried meat," which probably refers to dried fish in this case) in phonogram-based transcription (*on'gana* 音仮名). The representation of common nouns such as this in phonograms, rather than with a semantically proximate Sinograph, is characteristic of seventh century tag *mokkan.* In this case, our scribe may not have known an appropriate Sinitic character, and therefore opted for a more straightforward phonogram-based rendering; given the early date of this inscription, this suggests that recourse to phonograms may have been an option for individuals with limited literacy.[42] The fact that this *mokkan* remains four millimeters thick, with no evidence of previous inscriptions—and therefore presumably disposed of after just one use—also suggests that *mokkan* were a relatively new and infrequent phoneomenon.

Given the scant information provided, one might argue this merely functioned as a *tsukefuda*, or a storehouse label, rather than as a shipment tag. Sakaehara (2000, 39) and Furuichi (2008, 6) both point out that tag *mokkan* bearing just the name of a tribute item do appear in eighth century contexts, although they are uncommon.[43] It is not clear this is necessarily what is happening here, however, because there are no "standard" examples to which they might compare. In other words, while such "item name only" tag *mokkan* are found in limited quantities from

[42] Because this *mokkan* likely originated outside the capital, the inscription could have been produced by someone with limited knowledge of the Sinitic script. However, it is also possible that the scribe deemed the phonogram-based transcription a more clear method of conveying the exact contents of the shipment. The calligraphy does seem to be an experienced hand.

[43] These primarily come from the site of Prince Nagaya's mansion in Nara, and are thought to be labels for *nie,* a special kind of tax that required the provision of "local specialties" for consumption by the royal house.

eighth century sites, standardly composed tag *mokkan* bearing all the "essential" information listed above are also found in abundance. In the case of the Naniwa palace site mokkan, however, there are the only these sort of "minimalist" tags; it is thus difficult to clearly define them as either *tsukefuda* (storehouse label) or *nifuda* (tag). While the tag *mokkan* from Silla's Haman Sŏngsan Fortress (discussed in Chapter 2) do not always contain all of this information, they do generally provide more identifying factors for the shipment in question (location/name/item). The lack of such information on these Naniwa Palace tag *mokkan* suggests that *mokkan* inscriptions in this period "did not 'contain' information that was otherwise unavailable" (Lurie 2011, 74), and indeed *mokkan* did not *need* to contain such information, because this information would have been provided orally by a messenger accompanying the shipment. In other words, the act of transcribing the name of the item on a *mokkan* and attaching it to a shipment intended for the fulfillment of tax obligation was largely a performative gesture; these *mokkan* were accessories that helped foster the image of an administrative state. In that capacity, the inscriptions on these tags can be seen as affirmative in nature.

Despite the still preliminary nature of document-based administration carried out in the Taika era, methods of transcribing the vernacular, in both purely phonogram-based transcription and in a variant Sinitic mode (what Lurie calls "Chinese-style" writing), seem to have flourished even at this early date. This accords with the corpus of Silla *mokkan* from Haman Sŏngsan Fortress, which also show recourse to vernacular-inflected transcription very early in the "performance" of document-based administration. In both cases, vernacularization seems to have proceeded simultaneously alongside "literizaton" in the cosmopolitan language. Some of the methods developed for transcribing vernacular-inflected utterances would become entrenched—taking form as what we might call a 'written creole'—and remain as shortcuts even among later generations of officials with full educations in Literary Sinitic composition.

Part of this early vernacularization seems to have been the development and use of a standard set of phonograms for basic transcription. In an era where literacy among those using script was tentative at best, the ability to transcribe spoken utterances would have been a useful workaround. This did not become the dominant mode of writing for a number of reasons, not least among which is the amount of space required for a full phonetic transcription in Japanese as opposed to the brevity and clarity afforded by logographic writing. However, primarily phonographic modes of transcription were adopted for those utterances that either defied the scribe's ability to "translate" into the logographic mode, or were simply beyond translation. For a case of the former, one need only turn to the opening passage of *Kojiki* (712), where the adept scribe Ō no Yasumaro is nonetheless unable to render "久羅下那州多陀用弊流之時 [*kurage nasu tadayoperu no toki;* 'at the time of floating along like a jellyfish']"[44] into logographs (with the exception of 之時[*no toki*; 'at the time']" at the end of the sequence); or, perhaps, he willfully renders this passage into phonograms because of the sacred nature of the content, which would make it "beyond translation." Also falling into the latter category

[44] *KJK* Book 1; *SNKBZ* 1:29.

would be personal names, which by their very nature resisted logographs; however, as script became naturalized, auspicious logographs corresponding to the meanings (or the meanings of homonyms) of family and personal names were increasingly adopted and "read by gloss" into the vernacular.

Transcribing Vernacular Poetry

Something that was always largely "beyond" translation into pure Sinitic was vernacular poetry (*uta*), the efficacy of which was tied to its aural qualities.[45] The practice of rendering poetry purely in phonograms was also subject to the invasion of logographic modes of writing, particularly in the late seventh and early eighth centuries with the rise of *ryakutai* and *hiryakutai* inscription; however, vernacular poetry was never transcribed in a purely 'cosmopolitan' Sinitic, and phonogram-based transcription was once again dominant by the middle of the eighth century (cf. books 17-20 of *Man'yōshū*).[46] The early emergence of a standard set of phonograms for the transcription of the vernacular is suggested by the prevalence of *mokkan* bearing the "Naniwazu poem," a verse attributed to the Paekche scholar Wani, that was a primer for calligraphic education from the seventh through the tenth centuries. As Tōno Haruyuki (1999) argues, however, the significance of the poem's prevalence in extant inscription seems to go beyond its capacity as a calligraphic primer, in that the poem was also likely an introduction to basic phonograms and phonogram-based transcription for vernacular Japanese (58). Tōno identifies a convex rooftile from Yamada-dera in Sakurai, Nara prefecture, with the opening three morae 奈尓皮 ["Naniwa"] carved twice in succession, that is thought to have been fired sometime in the third quarter of the seventh century; a *mokkan* recovered from the Kannonji site in Tokushima city bears the first two *ku* of the verse, and is thought to date to the 670s (Tōno 1999, 57-58; Frydman 2014, 63-64). This suggests the verse's importance in early script education, as a means of establishing a basic knowledge of phonogram-based transcription, can be traced to the period immediately after the court's defeat at the Battle of the Paek River. However, the Naniwa Palace site has not yielded any *mokkan* bearing an inscription of this specific poem, an excavation in the northwestern part of the site in 2006 did unearth an object inscribed with a vernacular poem written entirely in phonograms:

Side 1: 皮留久佐乃皮斯米之刀斯

Side 1: parukusa no pasimesi tösi

[45] There were certainly attempts to "translate" Japanese poems into Literary Sinitic equivalents, but these were a phenomenon of mature literary culture in Japan in the ninth century. The most important/successful of these is probably *Shinsen Man'yōshū*, compiled at the tale end of the ninth century, which offers *jueju* translations for the poems composed for two different *utaawase* (poetry contest) held in the 890s. See Inoue Minoru 1960, 112. Conceptualizing Japanese poetry in terms of Litearary Sinitic verse began somewhat earlier, with the treatise *Kakyō hyōshiki* 歌經標式, completed in 772 (see Rabinovich 1991).

[46] While a number of explanations have been advanced for the rise and fall of *ryakutai/hiryakutai*-style transcriptive practices, the preference for phonogram-based transcription by the middle of the eighth century suggests that experiments with writing poetry in logographic modes ultimately proved the utility of phonograms in this particular context. Phonogram-centric modes of writing Japanese poetry would be preferred throughout the centuries to come.

Side 1: Spring grasses, having begun to sprout, the year…

Figure 4. Naniwa Palace Site Mokkan No. NW-06-2-1 (*MR*, 24)

Without the full verse, the text on this *mokkan* is difficult to interpret, and there are a number of issues with the orthography that have obstructed scholarly understanding.[47] The context of its discovery, at the bottom of a fill layer for the leveling of a valley to the west of the palace, alongside the bones of oxen and horses and pieces of Paekche pottery, suggests its deposition was ritual in nature (Mōri 2007, 6; Frydman 2014, 100-101). The act of filling in the area in order to construct the new palace would have required ritual intervention with the local land deities, in a manner similar to the ritual "purchasing" of land from such deities for the burial of King Muryŏng (see Chapter 1). The deposition of this *mokkan* may have been accompanied by a ritual recitation of the poem, or the writing's power to communicate with local deities may have been assumed, with "silent" ritual taking the place of oral performance (Frydman 2014, 103).

Regardless of how it was deposited, the ritual efficacy of the artifact—given the relative "valueless" quality of the wood itself—relies on the inscription. This again mirrors the situation with the epitaph stele of King Muryŏng's tomb: it is the inscription that mediates the space between human and non-human. Unlike the epitaph stele, however, the inscription here does not directly invoke the deity or represent the exchange as an economic transaction; rather, the verse seems to function prefiguratively, outlining an auspicious situation that is *yet to be*, in order to create the favorable conditions under which it *will be*.

While we do not have access to the full poem, the portion that remains (just eleven characters) uses language that evokes prosperity, abundance, and vitality. The line *parukusa no* appears just three times in *Man'yōshū*, but each time is associated with overgrowth of vegetation, which in turn serves as a metaphor for vigor, youth, and efflorescence.[48] It is followed by the verb phrase *pasimesi,* which is generally taken to be the attributive form of the verb *pazimu* (modern *hajimeru*) meaning "to begin" or "to start anew," and to modify the following "töshi" (for which

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[47] For instance, the question of the proper reading of 之 has been particularly difficult, because while it is generally read *shi* when used as a phonogram (*on'gana* 音仮名), there are instances even in *Man'yōshū* of it being used as a *kungana* 訓仮名 (vernacular phonogram) for the possessive/connective particle *no*. In addition, there has been some controversy about the understanding of the final two characters, *toshi*, as the word "year," or if it should be taken as an adjective meaning "vigorous," because the character 刀 is generally a phonogram for the B-type vowel (J. *otsurui* 乙類) *tö,* whereas the *to* in *toshi* "year" has been understood to be an A-type vowel (J. *kōrui* 甲類) in this period. However, Mōri Masamori notes that confusion in orthographic practice between A and B type vowels does begin fairly early, especially with *to/tö*, so we cannot discount that *toshi* "year" is meant here, especially considering the context. See Mōri Masamori (2007), 16-21.
[48] These poems are 1-29, 3-239, and 10-1920, the first two of which are attributed to the famous late seventh century poet Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂.

“year” seems to be the most straightforward interpretation). We might then place this poem’s composition at the time of the new year, and perhaps associated with a new year ceremony that doubled as a groundbreaking ceremony at the new palace. As Frydman (2014) notes, we know that a grand ceremony was held at the Nagara Toyosaki palace prior to its occupation in the twelfth month of 651,[49] complete with readings from the Buddhist canon; this was something that likely doubled as a year-end ritual (101;101; Ueki Hisashi 2009, 32-35). Other ritual acts, such as the bestowal of gifts on those who were displaced (or whose ancestors’ graves were displaced) by the building of the palace, are also noted in *Nihon shoki* as having been carried out prior to the palace’s occupation (Ueki Hisashi 2009, 32).[50] Thus it is perhaps unsurprising that a poetic artifact of another such ritual should emerge. Its inscription, which might be glossed more smoothly as “This year, when the spring grasses have already begun to sprout…” is both a praise poem for the new year and prefigurative of prosperity to come.[51]

That a new year’s praise poem should serve in this ‘ground-breaking’ ritual context, where it seems to be relatively untailored to the specifics of the ritual itself, looks strange at first glance; however, given that this poem was not the sole offering, and that it portends a prosperous future in cooperation with the deities of the land, it was probably not ineffective. In addition, what appears to be a purely phonogram-based transcription suggests that the phonic qualities of the verse were an important element, as the sounds of the vernacular language itself may have been particularly efficacious in soliciting the deities’ favor. The logographic transcription of poetry, then, when it did occur, must have been a secondary process, whereby script was utilized to add layers of meaning and complexity (Mōri Masamori 2007, 8-9; Lurie 2005, 6-7). By contrast, the use of script here is rather utilitarian: it transcribes the verse faithfully, but it does not “add” anything to the sounds that constitute it. It reuses certain characters, such as *pa* 皮 and *si* 斯 (although it also uses 之 once for the sound *si*).[52] All the phonograms found here are common *on’gana*, used as either primary or secondary options for the transcription of the syllables they represent throughout the *Man’yōshū* (cf. Case 2000, 29-104). The majority, moreover, are found on other poem *mokkan* from the seventh century, especially those that transcribe the famous Naniwazu poem.[53]

[49] *NS* Kōtoku/Hakuchi 2.12.30; *NKBT* 68: 316-317.
[50] *NS* Kōtoku/Hakuchi 1.10; *NKBT* 68: 312-313.
[51] Interestingly enough, there are certain resonances between this poetic fragment, which reads as a ritual proclamation of the prosperity emerging from the earth with the arrival of spring, and the Naniwazu poem. The Naniwazu poem, too, may have originated in rituals associated with the inauguration of Kōtoku’s court at Naniwa, and also features content related to the arrival of “spring,” with metaphorically implies vitality or efflorescence. We might imagine its composition as having taken place in a very similar moment to this *parukusa no* verse, at a groundbreaking ceremony or new year ritual. On the possibilities of the ritual performance of the Naniwazu poem, and its dating/possible connections to Kōtoku, see Frydman 2014, 55-57; 87-90.
[52] It is interesting to note that 之 sometimes has an attributive function in classical Chinese, meaning that it may be possible to understand its choice here as deliberate, and that it functions as both a phonogram and logogram.
[53] For a detailed outline of the history of this poem and the *mokkan* that feature the text of it, see Frydman 2014, 55-95.

The *mokkan* does not appear to have been reused (it is 5mm thick), with the text written cleanly down the center in a solid, experienced hand. It is not the most beautiful calligraphy, but it is clear and robust (Mōri Masamori 2007, 10). This suggests the *mokkan* was created and inscribed with a singular purpose, and was not subject to the cycles of reuse that so many *mokkan* were; moreover, the calligraphy is sufficient for its intended divine audience. The simplicity of the inscription suggests that script was still very much being utilized primarily as technology, as a means of capturing and embodying an orally recited verse. While the figurine *mokkan* above suggests logogram-based transcriptive modes were also current in the time of Kōtoku, this *mokkan* shows that in certain contexts, a straightforward phonogram-based approach was preferred.

The *mokkan* of the Naniwa palace site are remarkably diverse despite their small number. Not only do they seem to have functioned in a variety of capacities, their modes of recording information span different modes of transcription, from mixed logographic modes to purely phonographic. It is clear that the methods of transcription were negotiated by individual scribes within specific contexts, and were not yet "settled." While there are moments, as with the Naniwa Palace No. 66-1 in particular, where scribes seem to be practicing composing, overall the written culture of the Naniwa palace seems to be characterized by "performative inscription" rather than practical inscription. In other words, the production of inscriptions helped to create an appearance of authority and permanence, but in reality these inscriptions were heavily supplemented by oral communication among elites for whom literacy was still a relatively rare skill. The text of the figurine undoubtedly served as a physical artifact of the speaker's testimony, representing but probably not replacing the act of orally declaring his grievances. Meanwhile, the tag *mokkan* from this site feature only the names of products, probably because their origins were communicated by other means. Finally, the act of transcribing the poem created a physical object that could mediate between worlds, but would have been part of a larger ritual that provided the substance of the inscription's purpose. This in many ways mirrors the early written culture of sixth century Silla, where inscriptions were a mode of performing authority. In both cases, inscription could not function without the vast oral context in which it was imbedded. What we have here, in other words, would seem to be something of a "proto-" written culture, which would achieve maturity in the following decades, ushered into being by the arrival of a large population of literate refugees from Paekche.

Peninsular Wars, Refugees, and Reforms

The mid-seventh century saw what might be called the first inter-regional war in East Asia. Like the Imjin War of the 1590s, and the Sino-Japanese War of the 1890s, this war too focused on the Korean peninsula: the kingdom of Silla, located in the southeastern part of the peninsula, enlisted the aid of Tang China (618-907), in order to vanquish its two peninsular rivals, Koguryŏ 高句麗 (trad. 37BCE-668CE) in the northern half of the peninsula, and Paekche in the southwest. Both Koguryŏ and Paekche sought material and military aid from their ally across the sea, Japan. Japan, for its part, had a vested interest in keeping these two kingdoms afloat: it had a long

history of favorable relations with the monarchs of both, but particularly with Paekche, and did not want to lose the access to the continental goods and information they provided. While Japan's assistance of Koguryŏ in its struggle against the Silla-Tang allied forces seems to have been limited, the fall of Paekche's capital in 660 stirred Japan's rulers to action: they moved their entire court from Asuka 飛鳥 in the Yamato basin to the bay of Hakata (known at the time as Nagatsu) on the island of Kyūshū, close to the Korean peninsula, in order to more efficiently monitor the efforts to "restore" the kingdom, and from there they funneled both supplies and men into former Paekche territory. The efforts to "restore" Paekche eventually resulted in a showdown between Silla and Tang forces on the one hand, and Paekche and Japanese forces on the other, at the Battle of the Paek River (J. *Hakusuki no e no tatakai* 白村江の戦い・Kor. *Paekgang chŏnt'u* 白江戦闘) in 663:

戊戌、賊將至於州柔、繞其王城。大唐軍將、率戰船一百七十艘、陣烈於白村江。[54]
[Second year, Eighth month,] Seventeenth day (Yang Earth Dog). Enemy forces arrived at Chuyu, and surrounded the royal fortress. The Great Tang commanders, leading over one hundred seventy war ships, assumed battle formation at the mouth of the Paek River.

戊申、日本船師初至者、與大唐船師合戰。日本不利而退。大唐堅陣而守。[55]
[Eighth Month,] Twenty-seventh day (Yang Earth Monkey). The first of the Japanese warships to arrive engaged the warships of Great Tang in battle. The Japanese ships were without the advantage and so retreated. Great Tang reinforced its formation and stood guard.

己酉、日本諸將、與百済王、不觀氣象、而相謂之曰、我等爭先、彼應自退。更率日本亂伍、中軍之卒、進打大唐堅陣之軍。大唐便自左右夾船繞戰。須臾之際、官軍敗續。赴水溺死者衆。艫舳不得廻旋。[56]
[Eighth Month,] Twenty-eighth day (Yin Earth Rooster), Japan's many generals, along with the King of Paekche, without fully grasping the situation, conferred with each other, saying, "If we attack the vanguard, surely their response will be to retreat." So they again led forward the muddled Japanese ranks and the soldiers of the Middle Regiment, and advanced to attack the Great Tang's newly reinforced fleet. Great Tang then closed in upon their vessels from both sides, surrounding them. Within a short time, the Sovereign Forces were defeated, and falling into the water, those who were drowned were many. Neither bow nor stern could be turned about.

Japan's devastating defeat here, where according to some accounts, their ships numbered as many as one thousand up against Tang's mere 170,[57] was deeply

[54] *NS* Tenchi 2.8.17; *NKBT* 68:358-359.
[55] *NS* Tenchi 2.8.27; *NKBT* 68:358-359.
[56] *NS* Tenchi 2.8.28; *NKBT* 68:358-359.

shocking to its rulers: it spelled the end not only of their long time ally Paekche, but of their sense of security when it came to their position on the periphery of the Sinosphere, where they had long felt safely out of reach of any Chinese dynasty's military.

While the war between Koguryŏ and the Silla-Tang forces would continue for another five years, this was the end of Paekche, and with it, Japan's direct involvement in the peninsular conflict. Koguryŏ would make impassioned pleas for Japan's assistance against Silla and Tang through its own demise in 668, but Japan's rulers backed away from the conflict, choosing to instead update their defensive infrastructure to help fend off a potential Tang invasion of their own territory. Ultimately, with the failure of their efforts to "restore" Paekche, Japan's rulers opted to accept Silla rule on the peninsula, and turned their attention to "modernizing" their own kingdom to face the dual threats of a newly unified Silla and the mighty Tang. As a matter of happenstance, in instituting vital reforms and constructing new fortifications, it proved something of a boon to them that the failure to restore Paekche meant the absorption of hundreds of refugees with precise technical knowledge on a variety of fronts. Immediately following the Battle of the Paek River, the *Nihon shoki* narrative continues:

九月辛亥朔丁巳、百濟州柔城、始降於唐。是時、國人相謂之曰、州柔降矣。事无奈何。百濟之名、絶于今日。丘墓之所、豈能復往。但可往於弖禮城、會日本軍將等、相謀事機所要。遂教本在枕服岐城之妻子等、令知去國之心。[58]
Ninth month (where the first day was Yin Metal Boar), Seventh Day (Yin Fire Snake). The Paekche fortress at Chuyu surrendered to the Tang. At this time, the people said to each other, "Chuyu has surrendered. There is no use asking what can be done. Today, the name 'Paekche' is no more. When will we ever again be able to return to visit the graves of our ancestors? All that is left to do is to go to Taerye fortress, meet up with the Japanese commanders, and figure out our best course of action." They then instructed their wives and children, who had been in residence at Chimbok-gi fortress, making known to them their intent to leave the country.

甲戌、日本船師、及佐平余自信・達卒木素貴子・谷那晋首・憶禮福留、幷國民等、至於弖禮城。明日、發船始向日本。[59]
[Ninth month], Twenty-fourth day (Yang Wood Dog). The Japanese commanders, along with the Chwapyŏng Yŏ Chasin, the Talsol Mokso Kwija, Kongna Chinsu, and Ŏngnye Pong-nyu, accompanied by a number of their people, arrived at Taerye fortress. The following day, they set sail, headed for Japan.

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[57] This number is from the annals for Silla's King Munmu 文武王 in the twelfth century Korean history *Samguk sagi* 三國史記; the *Jiu Tang shu* 旧唐書 puts the number of Japanese ships at a mere four hundred (*NKBT* 68:359 n.22). In either case, the figure is probably inflated, but meant to convey that the Japanese clearly had the larger number of warships.
[58] *NS* Tenchi 2.9.7; *NKBT* 68: 359-361.
[59] *NS* Tenchi 2.9.24; *NKBT* 68:360-361.

The *Nihon shoki'*s description of the aftermath of the battle is relatively brief, but it presents a clear picture: those Paekche loyalists who had fought alongside Japan, accepting the loss of their kingdom, gathered themselves at Taerye, a friendly holdout probably located somewhat in modern-day South Chŏlla province, and made their way to Japan along with the returning forces. The text names a few specific individuals, including two of high court rank, and mentions a number of ordinary "citizens" as accompanying them. It is certain that these were not the only refugees who made their way to Japan, however, because the names of countless individuals of Paekche origin appear in the text of the *Nihon shoki* in the years following that kingdom's destruction. These Paekcheans (if you will) gradually "earn" new Japanese style names—that is, the Japanese sovereign made them into his subjects by bestowing upon them new surnames—through their service to the court. In particular, they gain acclaim in aiding the construction of new infrastructure for the country's defense (Korean style walled fortresses, which are first built in Japan in this period), practicing continental medicine, and instructing members of the royal family in Chinese-style learning.

Ŏngnye Pong-nyu 憶禮福留 (J. Okurai Fukuru), who is mentioned here as one of those fleeing Paekche along with the returning Japanese forces, re-appears in the annals of *Nihon shoki* less than two years later, in the eighth month of 665, as being enlisted, along with another individual of Paekche origin, to help build fortresses in the northern part of Kyūshū.[60] The sovereign Tenchi, the ruler of Japan at the time of the defeat at the Paek River, not only takes it upon himself to settle groups of refugees in particular areas, but also provides state subsidies for three years post-settlement—that is, until the residents could support themselves.[61] Such measures were likely not only a matter of showing benevolence to displaced people, but part of a program to develop certain areas through the planting of people familiar with continental technologies (e.g., agricultural techniques, infrastructure construction, and writing).

After witnessing the ease with which the Tang could destroy their naval forces, it was abundantly clear to Tenchi and his close confidants that Japan needed to "modernize." In other words, they perceived an urgent need to re-make the Yamato state along continental models, so that its sovereignty would be respected by both Silla and Tang (that is, they would not be considered a "barbarian" state). With the help of newly arrived refugees from Paekche, steps were immediately taken to combat the new threat from a military standpoint. However, modernization did not mean mere military fortification: on the contrary, civil reforms were just as important to ensuring Tang's recognition of the legitimacy and power of the Japanese state. Thus began a half-century of intensive bureaucratic expansion and reform, culminating in the Taihō Codes 大宝律令 of 701. By the early eighth century, with the transfer of the capital to Nara 奈良, a new city modeled after the Tang capital of Changan, in 710, Japan was a fully "modern" kingdom, in that its governance was based on law codes and documents, its frontiers secured, access to the capital region restricted, and two national histories were in the works (the *Kojiki*

[60] *NS* Tenchi 4.8; *NKBT* 68:363.
[61] See *NS* Tenchi 4.2; 4.3; 5.10; *NKBT* 68:362-365.

[712], and the *Nihon shoki* [720], from which the above passages are drawn). Furthermore, in addition to the conducting of a census, the court had ordered collections of local lore for each province be compiled, as it worked to strengthen its presence in its territories far from the capital, sending not only administrators but clergy to secure frontier spaces.

While I use the term "modern" here with some hesitancy, there is no other word quite as fitting for the phenomenon in question. The Meiji Restoration of 1868 was brought about by those who perceived a threat to Japan's sovereignty which could only be countered through reform and emulation of the latest and most technologically advanced foreign forms of statecraft and militarization. Likewise, the Japanese court of post-663 upended its prior norms in order to adapt the most up-to-date continental modes of governing and defending one's territory. While the Taika Reform had been an attempt to implement some initial changes, it was only in the heightened climate in the aftermath of the Battle of the Paek River that the need for reform was cast with an unprecedented urgency that allowed changes to be be made with unprecedented speed. Formal *ritsuryō* (Ch. lulling, Kor. *yullŏng*) law codes were promulgated, while an extensive bureaucracy that relied on prescribed forms of documentation was created; in terms of defense, Paekche refugees wre enlisted to help build Korean-style fortresses in key strategic locations. In both the seventh and late nineteenth centuries, such actions were prompted by fear of outside threat, but they forever transformed the face of society, bringing it into tandem with the rest of the world, from whom they could now demand respect—and in the eyes of whom they were no longer "barbarian."

Construction on fortresses began almost immediately following the retreat from the Paek River, beginning in 664 and 665. The *Nihon shoki* further notes the placement of guards and beacons at key locations along the route from the continent to the Japanese capital, in 664.[62] The first of Japan's law codes, the Ōmi Code (J. *Ōmi-ryō* 近江令) was promulgated in 669.[63] These changes were swift, and would have likely been impossible without the skilled human capital imported from Paekche. In fact, without newcomers from Paekche, large-scale continental-style document-based administration would have been all but impossible for at least a generation. This is for one very simple reason: prior to 663, literate individuals were scarce in the Japanese archipelago.

By the time Tenchi gave the order for the transfer of the capital to the Ōtsu palace in the land of Ōmi in the third month of 667, much of this modernization was well under way. *Kaifūsō* presents the court at Ōmi as an idyllic environment embodying enlightened rule through emphasizing its literary orientation. While we know that equal effort was being expended in this period toward the martial, Tenchi seems to have regarded "the civil"/ "the literary" as central to the expression of Yamato's enlightened "modernity." The role of Paekche regfugees in creating the

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[62] See *NS* Tenchi 3; 4.8; *NKBT* 68: 362-363.

[63] It should be noted that the existence of these is in dispute, since no copy is extant. The *Nihon shoki* makes no official mention of them, except in noting that Tenchi promulgated court ceremonial regulations in the first month of 670. Without a doubt, some sort of official regulations were instituted during Tenchi's reign; whether these took the form of an official law code is uncertain.

conditions for this idyllic literary court was no less than their role in constructing the new “Korean-style” fortifications: without the influx of this crop of literate human resources, the technological and artistic expertise that enabled this new era in Japanese writing would have been impossible.

The Ōmi Capital

The literary efflorescence of Tenchi’s reign described in the preface to *Kaifūsō* is painted as clearly breaking with written culture as it had existed before. It is clear that Kōtoku’s court at Naniwa, for instance, did not rely on large numbers of inscriptions for its daily operations, and the number of truly literate persons was probably low. Based on the evidence garnered from the Naniwa palace *mokkan*, written culture was just beginning prior to Tenchi’s reign, although individuals with literary inclinations may have been present (see discussion of Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. 66-1 above). How, then, could Tenchi’s courtiers be producing Literary Sinitic poetry indistinguishable from continental precedents just a decade later?

Unfortunately, no vast caches of *mokkan* have yet been recovered from the Ōtsu palace or the Ōmi capital. Granted, the period of occupation of the site was a brief five years, and so we might not expect the large numbers seen at Fujiwara or Heijō, but the Naniwa Palace was occupied for an even shorter period (651-653),[64] and yet the site has yielded about sixty *mokkan*. The author of the *Kaifūsō* preface offers an explanation for this lack of material evidence for Ōmi written culture in the form of the simple two character compound, 湮滅 “total destruction.” While the Jinshin War of 672 may not have been a wide-ranging conflict, it wiped away all traces of the Ōmi capital, and with it a large part of the lettered legacy of the Ōmi court. The location of the Ōtsu palace seems to have become obscure as early as the late Nara period (Farris 1998, 142). However, even just a little more than a decade after the capital’s fall, the acclaimed poet Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂, upon visiting the site of the former Ōmi capital, reflected on the total destruction of Ōmi with the same profound sense of loss felt by the author of the *Kaifūsō* preface:
過近江荒都時柿本朝臣人麻呂作歌
A verse by Kakinomoto no Asomi Hitomaro, when he passed through the ruined capital at Ōmi

[中略] 淡海國乃 樂浪乃 大津宮尓 天下 所知食兼 天皇之 神之御言能 大宮者 此間等雖聞 大殿者 此間等雖云 春草之 茂生有 霞立 春日之霧流 百礒城之 大宮處見者悲毛[65]

apumi no kuni no	From the land of Ōmi,
sasanami no	at the palace in Ōtsu
opotu no miya ni	of the rippling waves,
ame no sita	he had ruled over

[64] The court had moved to Naniwa in late 645, but the construction of the palace was not completed until 652. Until the occupation of the palace at the end of the twelfth month of 651, the royal family resided at a number of different detached palaces located near the Naniwa port. See Ueki Hisashi 2009, 30.
[65] *MYS* I.29; *SNKBZ* 6:42-43.

sirasimesikemu	all under heaven—
sumera mikoto no	that Heavenly Sovereign,
kami no mikoto no	a deity incarnate,
opomiya pa	his Great Palace, I hear,
koko to kikedomo	was here—
opotono pa	his Grand Hall, they say,
koko to ipedomo	was here—
parukusa no	but the spring grasses
sigeku opitaru	are overgrown,
kasumi tatu	as this spring day, when the haze rises,
parupi no kireru	fogs over,
momosiki no	I look over this place,
opomiya tokoro	where the one-hundred-walled Great palace
mireba kanasi mo	once was, and I am overcome with grief.

The scene laid out by Hitomaro here very much accords with the sense of "without a trace" from the *Kaifūsō* preface: the grief he feels here upon visiting the site of the palace is rooted in the fact that nothing of the palace's former glory remains. He *hears* that it was there, people tell him that this is the place—and yet all he *sees* is the spring overgrowth. This contradiction between hearsay and visual experience produces both a profound shock and a strong sense of grief rooted in the irretrievability of the past. Unlike the *Kaifūsō* preface author, however, he does not evoke the scene of destruction; rather, he contrasts what *must* have been here before (*sirasimesi<u>kemu</u>*) with what is here now, and the incongruity creates a deeply affecting moment, as the irrecoverability of that glorious past is echoed in the unmarked landscape. In other words, a moment of destruction is suggested, but not directly depicted; Hitomaro's grief is rooted in his failing to understand its totality as reflected in the "traceless" landscape, leading to his bemoaning the irreversibility of time. Of course, at the time Hitomaro composed this verse, nostalgic affectation was probably all that could be articulated with regard to the Ōmi court, given the circumstances of its fall to the then-current rulers and Hitomaro's patrons, Tenmu and his consort/successor, Jitō. Therefore, there may be a certain degree of poetic license at work here in depicting a landscape completely devoid of traces of the old capital. Nevertheless, even if the "total destruction" Hitomaro suggests is more figurative than literal, this slightly more contemporary account agrees with the mid-eighth century preface to the *Kaifūsō* in painting the disappearance of Ōmi as complete.

In more recent times, archaeological excavations have revealed that there are in fact "traces" of the former Ōtsu palace 大津宮 and the Ōmi capital, but they are now deeply buried. A series of excavations around the Nishikori area of modern day Ōtsu city, Shiga prefecture, has revealed the outlines of the residential quarters (J. *dairi* 内裏), but the extent of the palace as a whole, and the nature of the "capital city"

remains indeterminate.[66] The site where the palace once stood is now a densely packed residential neighborhood, and so excavations can only be carried out when houses are being torn down, or on small tracts of open land (Suzaki Yukihiro 2004, 12). However, based on those small-scale excavations that have been carried out, the location of the southern gate to the royal residential quarters and the northwestern storehouses have been identified, along with a number of other features, and this has allowed an estimation of the extent of the inner palace at approximately 200m east to west by 240m north to south (Suzaki Yukihiro 2004, 19).

While the transfer of the capital from Asuka to Ōtsu did not happen until 667, planning for the move may have been initiated as early as 663. The configuration and the scale are markedly different from the Naniwa palace, suggesting not only a break with previous reigns but also the influence of Paekche construction methods and a new desire to adhere more closely to continental models.[67] Given that new arrivals from Paekche were put to work building fortresses along the Inland Sea and in the capital region nearly immediately after the Battle of the Paek River, it would be unsurprising if they were also responsible to some extent for constructing the new palace and its surrounding "city." Indeed, the move to Ōmi itself seems to not only have been influenced by the Tenchi regime's anxieties vis-à-vis the Silla-Tang alliance, but also by a shift in domestic politics toward prioritizing allochthonous lineages over the entrenched autochthonous powers of the Yamato region. The network of Korean-style fortifications erected along the Inland Sea route from Kyushu to Naniwa were the product of a new defensive strategy developed in the face of possible invasion, and the move to Ōmi did create yet another geographic barrier to be crossed before access to the capital was possible.[68] However, as both Inoue Mitsuo (2004) and Hayashi Hiromichi (2004) note, a capital at Ōtsu also enabled more swift communication with Koguryŏ, the Tenchi regime's last potential ally in the struggle against a Silla-Tang-dominated East Asia.[69] Ōtsu was thus a strategically advantageous location for a capital in terms of the international

[66] Suzaki Yukihiro (2004) notes that several seventh century temples (most long since abandoned) line the old road into Ōtsu, and these might be assumed to have been within the boundary of the capital (19). However, like Naniwa, while there may have been some major roads built and important buildings, such as temples, may have been constructed in alignment with the palace, this does not necessarily mean there was a planned "city"; Farris (1998, 142) argues that Tenchi, in any case, would not have had the resources to construct a full capital city in Ōtsu at the time.

[67] There is some evidence that the area around the Ōtsu palace may have been a planned with a grid layout, probably constructed according to Paekche models; at the very least, it was built on a north-south orientation, seems to have been symmetrical, and may have had a fortress wall along some parts of its border. See Inoue Mitsuo 1999, 74-75; Hayashi Hiromichi 2004, 81.

[68] It is possible, and even likely, that a Korean-style earthen fortress wall was also erected in some key areas on the edges of Ōtsu, particularly on Mount Hiei in the west. However, it is thought that most of this wall was probably destroyed in the process of the construction of Enryakuji 延暦寺 in the early part of the Heian period. See Hayashi Hiromichi 1998, 84-85.

[69] Both scholars also note the fact that Koguryŏ was destroyed only a year after the move to Ōmi, but the beginning of planning of the capital was almost certainly influenced by the perceived need for ease of contact with the northern Korean kingdom. See Inoue Mitsuo 2004, 61; Hayashi Hiromichi 2004, 88-91.

situation of the time (in other words, in terms of the "martial"), but it was also the right move for Tenchi in that it brought his court closer to allochthonous groups already in Ōmi who had connections with the continent and its technologies, whose presence could help hasten the process of creating a functioning bureaucratic state (the "civil").

Archaeological excavations have shown that the area immediately to the north of the Ōtsu palace was a large, flourishing village of allochthons beginning in the early part of the sixth century, and early seventh century Ōtsu was home to at least three lineage temples (J. *uji dera* 氏寺) which were re-built and incorporated into the layout of the capital at Ōtsu in the 660s.[70] As Hayashi (2004) notes, the construction of such large temples suggests the sort of vast political and economic power that would have been necessary to build the grand tombs of earlier ages (88). Furthermore, the maintenance of Buddhist temples in this period of Japanese history would have necessitated independent contacts with the continent, and a certain level of cultural "advancement" that would include, to some extent, literacy. In other words, the allochthonous elite at Ōtsu represented the sort of political and economic backing that Tenchi needed in a potential conflict with continental powers, but they, along with the new arrivals from Paekche, also knew how to utilize key continental technologies (not least among which was script) that could help in Japan's "becoming civilized" 文化 (J. *bunka*).[71]

The *Kaifūsō* account of literary efflorescence at the Ōmi court, then, may be more or less reliable because of the extent to which the Ōmi court was populated by allochthons, including both those who were newly arrived following the Battle of the Paek River, and those who had called Ōmi home for more than a century. Unfortunately, the preface is probably also accurate in describing the "total destruction" wrought by the Jinshin War: the manner in which the era of the Ōmi capital came to an end ensured that most of the media on which we might expect to find Ōmi court inscriptions could not survive. While future excavations may yet

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[70] This village featured houses built in peninsular style (with enclosed pillar walls), and some had *ondol* floor-heating systems. In addition, as many as 1,000 horizontal stone chamber tombs with domed ceilings (an allochthonous style of burial) are thought to be located in and around the Nishikori area, to the immediate west of where the Ōtsu palace site is located (however, many of these have been destroyed over the centuries). These tombs begin to appear around the beginning of the sixth century, and were a marked departure from prior burial styles in this part of the Ōmi region. See Hayashi Hiromichi 1998, 108-112; Hayashi Hiromichi 2005, 71-78; 88; Inoue Mitsuo 1999, 82; Ōhashi Nobuya 2015, 43.

[71] It is important to note that it seems that even prior to the Battle of the Paek River and the wave of Paekche refugees that followed, the area around Ōtsu was occupied by families who claimed descent from Paekche (these families likely came over in a "first wave" of migration from the peninsula that seems to have happened toward the end of the fifth century; see Inoue Mitsuo 1999, 85-88). Ōhashi Nobuya (2015) argues that the groups arriving in Ōmi toward the end of the fifth/the beginning of the sixth century were those who had first settled in Yamato and/or Kawachi in the early part of the fifth century, and who sought out new spaces as their numbers grew (43). Tenchi's settling of different groups of refugees in the Ōmi area during his reign was probably at least partly motivated by a desire to keep communities of Paekche lineage together (although he also seems to have calculatedly sent them to places where they could most help with development; see Inoue Mitsuo 1999, 84). Inoue (1999) also notes that it seems allochthons from different Korean kingdoms did not really "mix" in this period, and Ōtsu was a specifically "Paekche" settlement (89).

reveal further material (given that excavations can only be carried out on an ad hoc basis, one hopes some caches have simply evaded discovery), to date there are only two inscribed *mokkan* from the vicinity of the Ōtsu palace that may date to the period of the Ōmi capital. These come from the Minami Shiga site, located to the north of the Nishikori site (the suspected location of the Ōtsu palace), and the Kita Ōtsu site, located to the south of Nishikori.

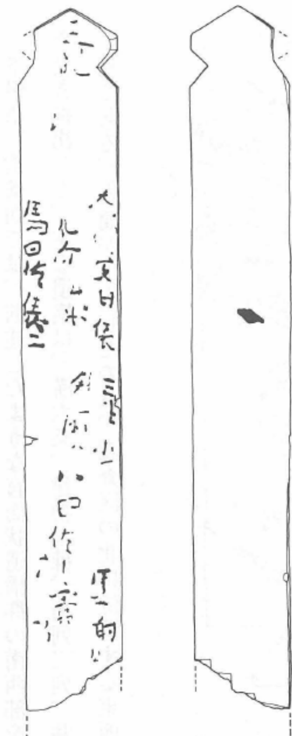

Figure 5. Minami Shiga Site Mokkan No. 1 (Aoyama Hitoshi 1996, 107)

The Minami Shiga site 南滋賀遺跡 is a seventh-century settlement site located to the east of the Minami Shiga Ruined Temple Site 南滋賀廃寺, one of three allochthon *uji dera* (lineage temple) thought to predate the construction of the Ōtsu palace (Hayashi HIromichi 2004, 81; 87-88). A 1995 excavation on the eastern edge of the site revealed several imbedded-pillar buildings, an imbedded pillar fence, and a mid-late seventh century waste-water channel, from which a single *mokkan* was recovered (Aoyama Hitoshi 1996, 106). The *mokkan* was accompanied by a rather large cache of artifacts, including *haji* ware, *sue* ware, ceramic roof tiles, and wooden objects, including one wooden object resembling a *mokkan* but devoid of identifiable writing (Aoyama Hitoshi 1996, 106). The *mokkan* takes the typical shape of a tag, with v-grooves carved into the top edge, while the bottom edge has been damaged. The inscription reads:

Side 1: □□（月？）□□下□〈〉□〈〉
Side 2: ○□□□□俵□□□小□○□○馬射□／三□（籠？）〈〉○〈〉
人□□○□□□□曰佐上□俵／○馬曰佐俵二○□□□□□□□
Side 1: …(month)….below….
Side 2: …bag….small…mounted archery… three (baskets)…
person…Translator upper … bag…/ (horse) Translator bundle two…..

This text is only legible in very small fragments, and so translating what has been deciphered has very little meaning, but I have provided a rough outline of the minimal content that is recoverable here. Interestingly, while the *mokkan* is clearly shaped like a tag that would be attached to a shipment, the length and apparent detail of the inscription stands in sharp contrast to the tags found at the Naniwa Palace site, and thus presumably dating to just a decade or so prior. Firstly, the front side features the character 月, indicating this inscription was dated. Second, the back side clearly features the personal names of at least two different individuals with the family title (*kabane* 姓) of *wosa* 日佐 ("translator," almost certainly an allochthonous lineage), along with measurement units for different types of items (俵 "bags"; 籠 "baskets"). In its detail and format, then, it resembles a

document *mokkan* despite its characteristic tag shape. Since this *mokkan* was not found at a site directly associated with the palace, it is possible it was used in the context of a storehouse (perhaps one connected to the temple), and that it was there that precise record keeping was a priority. Furthermore, given that the names inscribed here seem to belong to allochthonous individuals, this kind of detailed recording of the contents of a shipment (or even of an area of the storehouse) may have been something practiced in their communities from an early date relative to other parts of Japan (i.e., Naniwa).

As Ōhashi Nobuya (2015) has noted, an extensive trading network centered around Lake Biwa seems to have been established by the Shiga no Ayahito 志賀漢人, a branch of the Ayahito scribal lineage, with familial sub-groups belonging to this lineage being strategically located in districts around the lake and tasked with managing local port facilities (42-44).[72] Not only was this already extant network—which enabled exchange with different parts of Japan as well as with external powers such as Koguryŏ—likely a major reason for the court's relocation to Ōtsu, Tenchi probably also intended to utilize the skills of local literate allochthons to rapidly improve the extent and effectiveness of the administrative state, since they already managed the flow of people and goods around Lake Biwa. It is perhaps little wonder, then, that this tag *mokkan* should be one of the earliest to transcribe such concrete details in a format that would become par for the course in the eighth century written landscape.

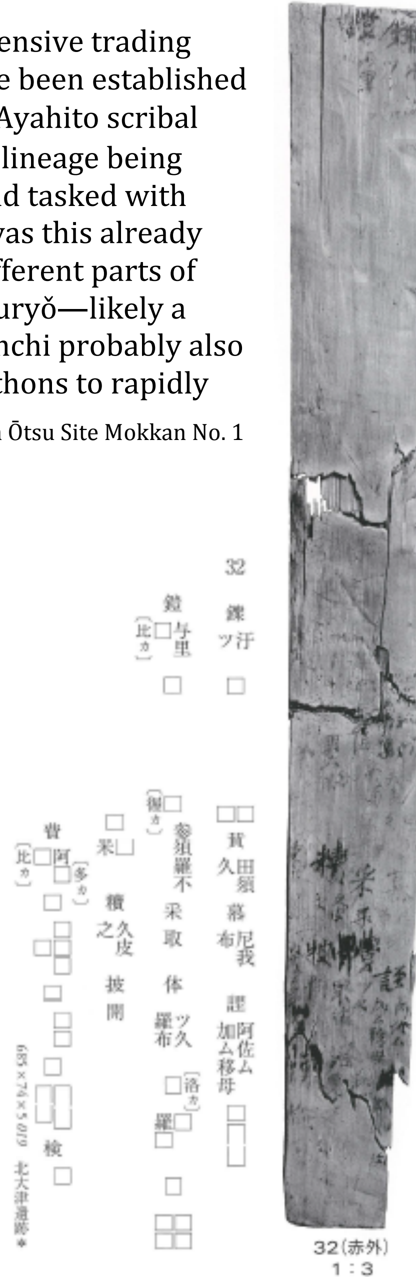

Figure 6. Kita Ōtsu Site Mokkan No. 1 (*MR,* 16; 55)

The *mokkan* recovered from the Kita Ōtsu site, to the south of Nishikori, also bears signs of lettered life among the allochthons populating the new capital. In particular, it appears to be an inscription produced by literate allochthons who were actively attempting to parse literary Sinitic into vernacular Japanese (*kundoku*):

Side 1: ○鑠○／汙／ツ／□／□□／○賛○／田須／久／○慕○／尼我／布／○誣○／阿佐ム／加ム移母／〈〉／○鎧○／与里□〔比？〕／○□○／○□

[72] Such activities may have been at the behest of the Yamato state, but nevertheless were the work of scribal lineages with the knowledge and technologies to realize them.

〔偓？[73]〕○／参須羅不／○采○取○体○／ツ久／羅不○□〔洛？〕○／□／羅□／○□○／□□／□□／○□○／□／米／○□〔米＋賣[74]〕／久皮／之／○披○開／○費○／阿□〔多？〕／□〔比？〕／○□○／□□□／□／○□○／□□／○□○／〈〉／〈〉／○検○／□
Side 1:
First column: 鑠: *utu* …. 賛: *tasuku*; 慕: *nigapu*; 誈: *azamukamu yamo; …*
Second column: 鎧: *yoropi…* 偓: *sasurapu;* 采: 取; 体: *tukurapu*; 洛: □*ra*□; …
Third column: □:□*me*; 精: *kupasi*; 披: 開
Fourth column: 費: *atapi*; …検: _

While there appears to be ink inscription covering most of the surface of the *mokkan*, only a small amount of the text is legible. However, it appears that the entirety of the text was likely of the nature seen here: a series of glosses for particular Sinographs. Some of these glosses are in phonograms, providing a vernacular Japanese pronunciation guide, while others are given as semantically equivalent characters. The presence of glosses such as 采: 取, where we are told explicitly that the former character can be understood as semantically the same as the latter, immediately discounts the possibility that this is a mere transcription of a phonographic dictionary; furthermore, given that the glosses for certain characters are highly contextual—for instance, the reading of 体 as a verb (*tukurapu,* "to don"), or the understanding of 精 (*kupasi,* "fine") as an adjective—and some, like that for 誈 (*azamukamu yamo* [could (he?) be fooled? (no, he couldn't)]), even include vernacular auxiliaries and particles, it is almost certain that these annotations were produced based on a particular text.[75] While no such text has yet been identified, on the basis of the glosses recovered here, Inukai Takashi (2011) proposes it might have been a Buddhist moral tale (*setsuwa*) of some kind (43).

Because of its position to the southeast of the Nishikori site, where the inner quarters were located, it has been proposed the Kita Ōtsu may be the southern edge of the administrative area of the palace, features related to which have yet to be confirmed elsewhere (Ōhashi Nobuya 2015, 45). An excavation was carried out in 1973, prior to the construction of the new Nishi Ōtsu station, now known as Ōtsu-

[73] This character appears to be written with 彳, rather than 亻, as a left side radical. However, the gloss "sasurapu" would seem more or less consistent with the character 偓 ("restless").

[74] This would appear to be a variant character form of 精, which, when used adjectivally, is glossed as *kupashi* (modern *kuwashii*), meaning "detailed; fine; intricate." See Inukai Takashi 2011, 41.

[75] Because of this, Inagaki Nobuko (2013) takes issue with this being called a "glossary *mokkan* 音義木簡," arguing that these annotations are not a glossary for the purposes of *kundoku*, or "reading by gloss," but an example of a *kunshaku* 訓釈 supplement to a particular text*,* for purposes of both "glossing and interpreting." See Inagaki Nobuko 稲垣信子 (2013), "Kita Ōtsu iseki shutsudo mokkan no seiritsu nendai ni tsuite 北大津遺跡出土木簡の成立年代について [On the dating of the *mokkan* unearthed from the Kita Ōtsu site]," *Dōshisha joshi daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka kiyō* 同志社女子大学大学院文学研究科紀要 [Annual bulletin of the literature research division of the graduate school of Dōshisha Women's University] 13 (2013.3): 38.

kyō "Ōtsu capital" station (Hama Osamu 2011, 144). The *mokkan* was recovered from a man-made waste-water channel, along with a large number of ceramic and wooden artifacts. While the channel yielded artifacts dating from the beginning of the Kofun period and through the Nara period, judging from the artifacts found in the immediate vicinity of the *mokkan*, as well as the direction of the flow of water in the channel, the *mokkan* has generally been interpreted as an artifact of the Ōmi capital period (Hama Osamu and Yamamoto Takashi 2011, 144; Ōhashi Nobuya 2015, 45).[76]

While this *mokkan*—with the possible exception of the Minami Shiga site *mokkan* above—may be the only extant inscription from the Ōmi capital, its implications for understanding broader written life during the court's brief tenure at the Ōtsu palace are wide-ranging. Firstly, as David Lurie notes, this *mokkan* offers concrete evidence of the importance of *kundoku* glosses as part of the reading process, at least as far back as the mid-seventh century (Lurie 2011, 187). Indeed, coupled with evidence for reading-by-gloss in Silla outlined in Chapter 2, it seems increasingly likely that the inception of *kundoku* occurred more or less simultaneously and alongside the initial reception of Sinographic script. Second, it preserves a moment of active reading and interpretation, something that suggests a level of textual engagement beyond memorization and/or transcription, and with the inclusion of grammatical particles, such as the ironic counterfactual *yamo* in *azamukamu yamo* [could he be fooled?], inflects that interpretation with a certain affect.[77] Such engagement with a text, in which through *kundoku* one produces a "translation," involves a number of active choices on the part of the reader. Because there is no evidence that *kundoku* practices were "standardized" through annotated versions of texts prior to the Heian period (cf. Inagaki Nobuko 2013, 38-39), a reader in the seventh century would need to cultivate their own awareness of a text's expressive intricacies, and this process in turn would inevitably guide them toward honing their own ability to craft nuance in scripted contexts. We might then posit the sorts of reading practices on display in this *mokkan* as forming part of the foundation for the emergence of a literary culture.

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[76] Inagaki Nobuko (2013) takes issue with this dating, arguing on linguistic grounds that a mid-seventh century date is infeasible. However, as she notes, this inscription was likely produced by an allochthon, which could explain the uncommon usage of the sentence final form (*shushikei*; in this case, it is indistinguishable from the attributive *rentaikei* form) before *yamo* in the sequence *azamukamu yamo*; she explains that *yamo* should always follow the perfective *izenki* form in this period, but all the examples she cites come from *Man'yōshū*. Given this is not a poetic text, this "grammatical mistake" need not necessarily be taken as evidence of the "foreignness" of the scribe to the Japanese language per se. While she is right to point out that unfortunately the excavators were not exceedingly careful in recording the exact locations where artifacts were found, and she criticizes the excavators as possibly playing up the significance of some of the recovered ceramics, noting that it is difficult to determine exact dates based on the stratigraphy/pottery typology, her argument that this *mokkan* must be from the Nara period or later is based more on these criticisms of the excavators' methodology, than it is on any concrete evidence that this inscription could not have been produced in the Ōmi capital period. Her linguistic arguments, in turn, rest largely on absence of evidence, rather than evidence of absence, of this type of *kundoku* annotation in the seventh century.

[77] Although such irony was surely present in the original text, the choice of *yamo*—which combines the interrogative *ya* with the exclamatory *mo*—contains a sort of exasperated disbelief.

Finally, as Inagaki Nobuko (2013) notes, there is at least one strong indicator here that this text may have been produced by the hand of an allochthon: the use of 移 as a phonogram for the sound *ya*, which she argues is likely derived from Paekche practice (43). On this point, she follows Inukai Takashi (2008), who argues that the usage of 移 as a phonogram to transcribe Japanese is indeed based on prior Korean usage of the same, and the sound *ya* represents an older received pronunciation (i.e., based on Early Middle Chinese 上古音) that was still current on the seventh century peninsula (33; 95). This phonogram is indeed seen in the transcription of a Paekche toponym in the *Paekche pongi* 百濟本記 (*J. Kudara hongi*), a no longer extant work quoted in *Nihon shoki*, and is even found as part of what appears to be a personal name on a mokkan recovered from a site in the Ssangbung-ni area of Puyŏ. In addition, it appears as a transcription of *ya* as part of a Naniwazu poem fragment on a *mokkan* recovered from the Ishigami site in Asuka, and it is also used as a phonogram for *ya* in Volume 5 of the *Man'yōshū*, also as part of the locution *yamo* (written as the sequence 移母, identical to the transcription seen on this *mokkan*).

The majority of the Ishigami site *mokkan* (discussed in Chapter 4) date to the last quarter of the seventh century, so the Naniwazu poem inscription featuring the phonogram 移 recovered there certainly postdates anything produced in Paekche, and the *Man'yōshū* poem is dated to the eighth month of the first year of Tenpyō (729). This suggests that, while its usage was somewhat rare, the currency of this phonogram did indeed last into the eighth century. However, its use in the fifth volume of *Man'yōshū* might have been something of an intentional archaicism.[78] Nevertheless, the fact that this phonogram appears here, in a region known to have been home to Paekche allochtons, suggests that even if this inscription is not the product of an allochthonous scribe, allochthonous influence on local scribal practice was substantial. As Ōhashi (2015) notes, not only were the earliest efforts at transcribing Japanese using Sinographs undoubtedly the work of allochthons, but these attempts would have been informed by approaches developed on the Korean peninsula for the transcription of the Korean language. Moreover, for some time after their development, these methods for transcribing probably only circulated amongst allochthonous groups (44). It perhaps goes without saying, then, that the earliest forms of written culture on the Japanese archipelago were an extension of the written culture of the sixth and early seventh century peninsular kingdoms. Furthermore, this *mokkan* is material evidence of allchthonous influence on the written culture of Tenchi's Ōmi court. While archaeological evidence and historical texts attest to the fact that seventh century Ōtsu was home to both entrenched allochthonous groups and newly arrived refugees from the peninsular conflict, this inscription provides direct insight into their inscriptive activities, even conjuring up a moment of textual engagement that was perhaps as much about language

[78] The transcription of this verse is entirely in phonograms, but is peculiar in that it seems to explicitly avoid repeating phonograms, opting for rather obscure alternatives when a sound appears more than once (there are two exceptions: 等 [tö] and 尓 [ni] both appear twice; however, two different characters are used for the sounds [kö] and [ga], while three different phonograms are used to represent the sound [mo]). See *MYS* 5.812; *SNKBZ* 7:37.

acquisition—learning to write/interpret texts in Japanese—as it was about the accurate deciphering and annotation of a given work.

The new capital's geographical position afforded Tenchi's government numerous advantages as it worked to recover from the loss at the Battle of the Paek River. Along with the newly arrived members of the Paekche elite, the allochthonous population of Ōmi province and the Ōtsu area in particular constituted a literate workforce capable of instituting the reforms necessary to "modernize" statecraft in Japan. The Paekche refugees in particular were kept close, with *Nihon shoki* noting a number of promotions granted to them by Tenchi during his reign from Ōtsu. The way in which Tenchi brought them into his orbit and utilized their abilities was even commented on in a popular song included in *Nihon shoki:*

多致播那播　於能我曳多々々　那例例騰母　陀麻爾農矩騰岐　於野兒弘爾農倶[79]

tachibana pa	The oranges:
ono ga eda eda	Each on their own branches
nareredomo	they ripen,
tama ni nuku toki	but when they are strung as beads,
onaji wo ni nuku	they are all on the same cord.

The integration of these Paekche migrants into existing structures, and their proximity to the sovereign as they helped to create new structures, is echoed in this popular "ditty" (J. *wazauta* 童歌), where allochthons and autochthons are envisioned as fruits ripening on different branches, but ultimately working together as "beads on a string." Tenchi's relied on Paekche refugees for everytning from the production of inscription—crafting of censuses, drafting official documents, keeping detailed account registers—to the staffing of his academy and the construction of new infrastructure. Further, if *Kaifūsō* is to be believed, he called upon them to assist him in the pursuit of Literary Sinitic verse, so that he could simultaneously demonstrate his court's enlightenment and disseminate an ideology of authority that reinforced his position vis-à-vis not only Tang and Silla, but also his own courtiers, including the very Paekche individuals upon whom he so relied.

While *Kaifūsō* unfortunately does not include any verses by Tenchi himself, the first two verses in the collection are by Prince Ōtomo, Tenchi's intended heir who was toppled by Tenmu in the Jinshi War of 672. The compiler describes the prince himself as "other-worldly" in appearance, of being well-studied and proficient in both "the civil and the martial" (Ch. *wenwu*; J. *bunbu* 文武), and of being beloved by all the courtiers. He further attributes the establishment of an imperial academy to the prince. Incidentally, this academy appears to have been staffed entirely by allochthons, with several of the names given as teachers also appearing in *Nihon shoki* as members of the party fleeing Paekche with the remnants of the Japanese fleet after the Battle of the Paek River. The compiler's agenda here is clearly to emphasize the accomplishments and literary prowess of the prince, and the narration of the prince's short life (he was just twenty-five at the time of the

[79] *NS* Tenchi 10.1; *NKBT* 68:376-377.

Jinshin War) is followed by two verses of the prince's own composition to justify the *Kaifūsō*'s argument that the Ōmi court was the fountainhead of literature in Japan. The first of the two quatrains attributed to Ōtomo paints a picture of the Ōmi court that very closely parallels that given in the preface:

皇明光日月	The light of the sovereign shines like that of the sun and moon
帝徳載天地	The virtue of the emperor supports both heaven and earth
三才並泰昌	Heaven, earth, and mankind are peaceful and prosperous
万国表臣義	The myriad lands express their intent to become vassals.

This verse not only perfectly encapsulates the message of the preface, and thus is perhaps the perfect means of opening the collection (although the primary reason for it being the first poem appears to be chronological), but also exhibits the power of literature for articulating ideology.[80] Here, Ōtomo declares the sitting sovereign, his father, "as bright as the sun and moon" and "supporting both heaven and earth," and he again echoes the preface in painting Tenchi as a sagely ruler, who, through his "non-action" 無為(Ch. *wuwei*; J. *mui*) , ensures the prosperity of the realm. While there seem to be several allusions here to the *Wen xuan* 文選, a Liang dynasty (502-557) anthology compiled about 530 which was well-studied by aspiring poets throughout East Asia, there is nothing out of the ordinary in terms of expression; in other words, it closely follows Chinese models for verses praising the sovereign. Given that the poem is said to have been composed in a royal banquet setting, this is unsurprising: such circumstances would have required certain forms and metaphors. That said, Ōtomo's execution is meticulous: he parallels "sovereign" 皇 with "emperor" 帝, the combination of which yields 皇帝, a compound referring to the Chinese emperor (and thus suggesting an equivalency with the Japanese sovereign), echoes "sun and moon" with "heaven and earth," thus giving his verse cosmic scale, and rounds off the verse by pairing peace and prosperity within the realm with solicitations for beneficence from without. While it is by no means a remarkable or unique composition, it is sufficient in the context, and confidently displays a c level of erudition and skill within the written mode that would have been impossible just a generation before. Ōtomo's comfort in this laudatory mode is no doubt the product of his education, which the *Kaifūsō* narration suggests was the responsibility of Paekche teachers. While the language and expressions here do not quite reach the level of the Sataek Chijŏk stele (see Chapter 1), they do represent a new moment in the inception of literary culture in Japan.

[80] It is interesting that this poem and the preface so neatly coincide, and that these two verses by Ōtomo seem to have managed to survive the Ōmi capital's destruction. That is to say, this verse certainly could be a fabrication by the compiler.

The overall written landscape of the Ōmi court can be described as allochthon-centric, and, essentially, as direct heir to the legacy of the written culture of Paekche. The achievements of Tenchi's reign would have been impossible without a crop of already-literate elites to facilitate the transition to a *ritsuryō* (law-code) and document-based system of government, and the bolstering of the role of the Japanese sovereign through Chinese-style imperial rhetoric would not have been possible without individuals already steeped in Confucian discourse and its literary articulations. While Tenmu's reign would be marked by a shift back toward traditional centers of power, with the return to Asuka and the re-centering of autochthonous elites (who, by that time, had become more sufficiently "lettered"), Tenchi's reign established key precedents and began important trends that would shape written culture as it developed throughout the latter half of the seventh century.

Ōmi Before and After the Ōtsu Capital

The court's departure from the shores of Lake Biwa back to Asuka in 672 did not mean that written life in Ōtsu and other areas around the lake was diminished. In fact, relative to other parts of Japan during the late seventh century, written culture in Ōmi was booming. While *mokkan* that can be associated directly with the era of Tenchi's court at Ōtsu remain few, evidence from elsewhere in the province of Ōmi during the late seventh century clearly display the unquestionable prowess of this heavily allochthon-populated area when compared with other non-capital region locations in this period.

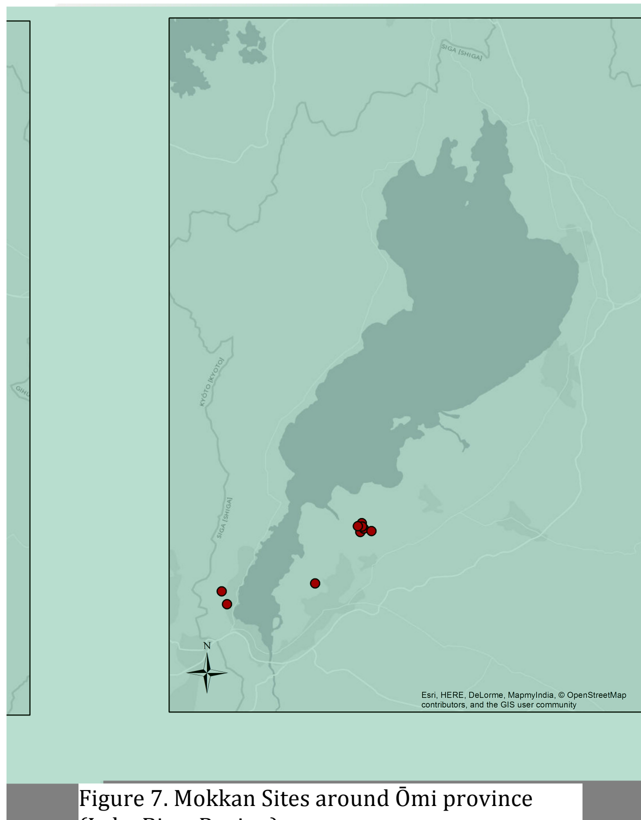

Figure 7. Mokkan Sites around Ōmi province (Lake Biwa Region)

Ōhashi Nobuya (2015) emphasizes the pre-Ōtsu capital landscape of Ōmi province as being characterized by local settlements of branches of the Shiga no Ayahito scribal lineage, who managed local port facilities as well as way stations (J. *eki* 駅) for the over-land transport of goods and persons (44). To these already extant allochthonous settlers were added new arrivals from Paekche: the *Nihon shoki* records Tenchi as having settled Paekche refugees in the districts of Kanzaki

神崎 and Kamō 蒲生, both on the eastern coast of Lake Biwa.[81] While the court may have left Ōmi in 672, many of these settlers stayed behind, integrating into pre-exisiting allochthon communities in the Ōmi region. It is these communities we might see as responsible for producing the inscriptions found in late seventh century contexts around Lake Biwa, as the court's brief relocation to Ōmi probably affected very little of the existing transportation networks and the management of them by local allochthon lineages, whose ranks and methods were undoubtedly bolstered by newcomers from Paekche.

Outside of the Minami Shiga and Kita Ōtsu *mokkan* mentioned above, seventh century *mokkan* from Ōmi number about thirty-three in total. The majority of these (29 pieces) come from the Nishigawara site grouping in modern day Yasu city, located on the eastern side of the lake, slightly south of the districts of Kanzaki and Kamō (see Figure 7). Another four *mokkan* have been recovered from the Jūri site in modern Rittō city, to the southwest of Yasu. As with elsewhere in Japan, numbers of *mokkan* increase greatly beginning in the first half of the eighth century; however, among finds dating to the seventh century from outside of the immediate capital region, Ōmi has yielded the second greatest number of *mokkan*, after Awa province, home to the Kannonji site in modern-day Tokushima prefecture (discussed in Chapter 4).

There can be little doubt that the people producing inscriptions in seventh century Yasu were people of peninsular background. As noted above, prior to the promulgation of the Taihō code in 701, written culture in Japan might be considered an extension/outgrowth of peninsular written culture. For the first two decades following the Battle of the Paek River, those producing inscriptions, and instructing others on the production of inscriptions, were almost always connected to the peninsula and/or continent in some manner. There are some distinctive characteristics of archipelagan written culture that emerge during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō (see Chapter 4), but the fundamental underpinnings of written life—use of multiple media (mainly wood and paper), standard document formats, and modes of inscribing content using a mixed vernacular-Sinitic mode and logographic/phonographic transcription—remained constant. Ōmi is unique in that the majority of its literate population likely remained allochthonous through the end of the seventh century; despite upcoming generations of literate autochthons that filled out the ranks of the Fujiwara capital by the late seventh century, local administrative activities in Ōmi seemed to have remained in the hands of those with peninsular origins. In fact, the court's five year sojourn at the Ōtsu palace seems to have had very little impact on the written culture in Ōmi: Ōhashi Nobuya (2015) notes that the pre-existing socioeconomic structures in the province seem to have remained constant both pre- and post-*ritsuryō* (i.e., before and after the inception of

[81] See *NS* Tenchi 4.2; *NKBT* 68:362-363, and Tenchi 8; *NKBT* 68:373. Interestingly, the year after settling refugees in Kamō, among whom were included elite members of Tenchi's court such as Yŏ Chasin 余自信 and Kwisil Chipsa 鬼室集斯, Tenchi apparently began planning to transfer the capital to the area (see Tenchi 9.2; *NKBT* 68: 374-375). Other refugees were settled in the "East Country" (see Tenchi 5; *NKBT* 68:364-365) and a son of Paekche's final king, Ŭija, was given residence in Naniwa (Tenchi 3.3; *NKBT* 68:360-361).

Tenchi's "modernization" policies), with members of the Shiga no Ayahito scribal lineage continuing to play important roles in district and provincial administration, filling the ranks of the bureaucracy underneath central appointees (50-51).

The particularly strong resonances between *mokkan* recovered on the peninsula and *mokkan* from Ōmi has been widely noted (Ōhashi Nobuya 2015, 45). This famous *mokkan*, seemingly a piece of correspondence, is often cited as an example:

Side 1:椋□[82]傳之我持往稲者馬不得故我者反来之故是汝卜部

Side 2:自舟人率而可行也○其稲在処者衣知評平留五十戸旦波博士家

Side 1: Kura [no Atai] conveyed this: "As for the rice I was to bring, I could not get a horse, and so I came back. Therefore I ask you, Urabe,

Side 2: to yourself lead some boatmen and you can go [to get it]." As for the location of the rice, it is at the home of Tanba no fubito, in the village of Heru in Echi district.

Figure 8. Nishigawara Morinouchi Mokkan No. 2-2 (*MR*, 22)

This *mokkan* is remarkable for a number of reasons. First of all, despite being in several pieces, the entirety of the inscription appears to be intact, at a total length of 410mm. Secondly, the inscription is remarkably legible to the naked eye, with only one "illegible" character, rendered obscure by the break pattern in the wood. Third, the text of the inscription itself departs sharply from a standard Sinitic mode, and closely follows established peninsular methods for the transcription of vernacular texts in a logogram-centric style (what Lurie calls "Chinese-style" writing; known as *sŏgi* transcription in the Silla context). Further, two of the personal names mentioned here (Kura no *atai* 椋直, Tanba no fubito 旦波博士) are both branches of the scribal lineage Shiga no Ayahito, clearly indicating the continued importance of members of allochthonous scribal groups in the day-to-day operations of the local arm of the administrative state.[83]

The style of the inscription is certainly what has received the most attention, particularly from scholars of the history of writing in Japan. There is some evidence that this semantogram-centric mode of transcription was operative in Ōmi written culture even in the early seventh century: a *sue* ware jar found in a tomb in present day Yasu city (where the Nishigawara site group is located) contains an inscription

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[82] A proposed deciphering for this character is the *kabane* (family title) *Atai* 直, as indicated in the translation.

[83] The third name, Urabe 卜部, may have been an appointee dispatched from the central government to manage the local district office thought to have been located in the Nishigawara area. However, those filling the ranks under him, Ōhashi (2015) argues, would have continued to be members of the Shiga no Ayahito (50-51).

that begins 此者, which can be glossed *kore wa* ["this is…"] (Ōhashi 2015, 45). Inukai Takashi (2011) sees this mode as something that was likely widely used for everyday communication in seventh century Japan, and as a progenitor of the logogram-centric mode of transcribing Japanese used in the *Kojiki* and in some volumes of *Man'yōshū* (Inukai Takashi 2011, 68; 71). The entirety of the text is in Japanese word order, with verbs following their direct objects, the topic particle *wa* (OJ *pa) is represented with the character 者 (which, particularly in the case of 我者 [*ware pa*] would be unnecessary in Sinitic), and sentence finals are transcribed with the character 之, a practice that seems to have originated on the Korean peninsula.

A one-character sized space left open following 也 on the back side of the *mokkan* suggests an effort to indicate the end of the quotation that begins with 傳之 on the front; this same phenomenon is observable on Paekche Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2, and on the Silla Imsin Year Vow Record Stele. Inukai Takashi (2011) argues this deliberate spacing indicates the end of a sentence in a text that is written in a vernacular language, but also clearly highlights a shift in the content of the inscription/the beginning of a new topic. He points to a similar phenomenon seen in one of the Shōsōin documents spelled out in phonograms (86-89). It may well have been important to indicate the end of a sentence this way in prose texts spelled out entirely in phonograms, given the lack of other visual cues for an ending. However, in a logogram-centric text there were other more efficient methods for underlining a transition between topics and/or sentences, such as the use of 之 or 也 (both seen on this mokkan), and/or a conjunctive adverb (e.g., 然而). Rather, when we view the space on this *mokkan* in the context of both the Imsin Year Vow Record Stele and Paekche Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2, it seems apparent that such spaces were used to mark the end of a quotation. Here, we can understand what follows the space to be separate from the content of Kura no Atai's speech—it is additional information for Urabe's benefit. The providing of the location of the rice sheaves consists of a long-form place name and the name of an individual, complete with his family *kabane* title—two features that would seem out of place in the actual substance of the quotation (where Kura no Atai omits Urabe's *kabane,* and refers to him as "you"). While the format of this post-quotation content is still "vernacular," the opening of the quotation (椋□傳之) is also in a vernacular mode, and so this does not present a contradiction.

This *mokkan* can be more or less conclusively dated to sometime before 684, due to the fact that the Kura no Atai were granted the new *kabane muraji* 連 in that year by Tenmu. Because the individual who was unable to deliver the rice is identified with the former *kabane,* the inscription on this *mokkan* must predate the change (Ichi Hiroki 2008b, 82). This inscription thus seems to belong to the decade following the fall of the Ōmi capital. It not only shows considerable continuity in Ōmi written culture, with the continued strong presence of allochthons, but suggests the legacy of Paekche written culture continued to affect inscriptive practice for at least a generation following the kingdom's demise. While the influence of Paekche refugees on written culture in Japan may have been most prominent during the

period of the Ōmi capital and the reign of Tenchi, in the province of Ōmi that influence continued well beyond Tenmu's victory in 672.

As Inukai Takashi (2011) notes, this *mokkan* seems to have functioned in an official capacity: despite the "informality" of the vernacular-inflected register used, it seems to be a document exchanged between officials (89). Evidence of "private" communications, so-to-speak, seems relatively non-existent for this period. The Nishigawara site group seems to have been located where land and water routes converged, at a key point connecting the capital region and other parts of Japan (Hatanaka Eiji 2008, 78). The strategic importance of the location is perhaps responsible for the variety of seventh-century inscriptions recovered there: outside of the piece of correspondence, there have been found a number of transaction record *mokkan*, tag *mokkan*, and an official request document submitted to a superior. All of these inscriptions are more or less consistent with the characterization of the site as a district administrative center, tasked with the sort of management of local transportation infrastructure that had been the responsibility of the Shiga no Ayahito in the pre-*ritsuryō* age. Offering particular insight into the day-to-day operations of that administrative center is a *mokkan* that seems to have served as a "style guide" for the composition of a certain type of document. Dated with a sexagenary year equivalent to 676 (Tenmu 5), this *mokkan* seems to have been kept for a considerable period before being deposited sometime in the late seventh or at the beginning of the eighth century:

Right edge: 丙子年十一月作文記
Side 1: 牒玄逸去五月中□〔官？〕□蔭人／自従二月巳来〈〉養官丁／久蔭不潤□〈〉□蔭人
Side 2: 次之□□丁〈〉□□〔等利？〕／壊及於□□□〈〉人□〔宮？〕／裁謹牒也
Right edge: In the Eleventh Month of the Yang Fire Rat Year, this text was composed and transcribed
Side 1: Report. Gen'itsu, in the fifth month past… official…shadow person[84]

… since the second month…serving in

Figure 9. Yunobe Site Mokkan No. 1 (*KCM*, 3)

[84] The term here, 蔭人, indicates an individual who, on the basis of their parentage (if a parent was at least fourth or fifth rank, or if a grandparent was third rank or above), could be granted court rank once they turned 21. While this system is part of the Taihō code of 701, it has been questioned whether it might have applied earlier. However, an entry in *Nihon shoki* for the fourth month of the fifth year of Tenmu (i.e., just a few months before the date featured on this *mokkan*), Tenmu grants the ability to "serve" at the court to the children of local gentry from the "outer provinces," and even encourages the recruitment of particularly "able" commoners. See *NS* Tenmu 5.4.15; Ichi (2010): 542. For details of the "shadow child" rule under the Taihō code, see Farris (1998): 213.

bureaucracy at "commoner"[85] rank… For a long time, the "shadow" status has not been afforded me… shadow person
Side 2: succeed to. Commoner…harmed to the point of…people. (palace) pass judgment. Respectfully reported.[86]

This *mokkan* was recovered from the Yunobe site, part of the Nishigawara site group; it was found in a drainage ditch surrounding what is thought to have been a smithy, based on the nature of the artifact assemblage. Given the extraordinary thickness (20cm) of this *mokkan*, it may have been reused in the smithy as some kind of tool before it was eventually discarded (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 541). The unusually thick piece of wood, along with the fact that there is an inscription on the right edge, immediately set this apart as a unique *mokkan* specimen. Furthermore, the sexagenary date marks this as possibly one of the oldest dated *mokkan*—only four years after the Jinshin War. Ichi Hiroki (2010) notes that the *mokkan* itself may not actually date to the time of Tenmu; rather, as a successful example of a "report" to superiors (J. *chō* 牒), it may have been recopied in order to serve as a template for the composition of future such documents (543). However, as Yamao Yukihisa (1995) argues, because the inscription on Nishigwara Morinouchi Mokkan No. 2 (discussed above) was likely composed before 684, it is not impossible for this *mokkan,* found nearby, to date to either 676 or shortly thereafter (186); the fact that it was found in a layer accompanied by early eighth century artifacts can be reconciled through understanding the *mokkan*'s deposition as having occurred following many years of use.

The language of the inscription approximates a standard Literary Sinitic register, and conforms to a prescribed format, the *chō* 牒 (a report addressed to superiors), faithfully, by opening and ending with 牒～謹牒也 (the final 也, although grammatically/formally unnecessary, does accord with the mood of urgency that pervades the legible portions of the inscription). While the scribe seems focused on the effective communication of his grievance, he does affectively inflect parts of the text, highlighting his own emotional distress in order to solicit the symapthies of his reader (i.e., his superior; Yamao [1995] speculates it may have been directed at the head administrator for the province of Ōmi, the main representative of the capital/central government in the area). His use of the term 潤, in particular, to refer to the "trickle" or "seeping" down of this sort of status to himself not only effectively humbles the speaker, downplaying his own importance and stressing the benevolence of the center, but the metaphor of a liquid "spreading" (the original meaning of the character, particularly with the water radical on the left) resonates with the "shadow" component of the term "shadow person." On the reverse, the inscription very explicitly highlights the harm done to the speaker through the lack of action regarding his status by using the character 壊 (literally "break" or "shatter"). This visceral metaphor is presumably carried through to some extreme

[85] The character 丁 used here generally indicates a mature adult male, but seems to be used specifically in contrast to "shadow person" 蔭人 to indicate a mere "commoner" status.
[86] The preliminary translation provided here relies on the deciphering/reading produced by Yamao Yukihisa 1995, 186.

that follows 及於 [“to the point of…”], but is no longer legible. While these are very small flourishes, they do create the impression of a scribe deliberately selecting words with particular emotional resonances in order to highlight his own suffering. As a whole, this document is not necessarily “literary,” but it is a text where the scribe has put considerable thought into “sentence form” (文体).

Among the seventh century *mokkan* recovered from the Nishigawara sites, just two “writing practice” *mokkan* have been found. However, they both hint at the process of literacy acquisition and an emphasis on the visual forms of characters. In this particular example, the inscription slowly abstracts the form of the character 木 in a playful manner:

Side 1: □九□乙木□〔嶋？〕木□〔国？〕／○□□□□□□

Side 2: 有木□□□□□■■■■■■■

It is possible to dismiss this as mere doodling—something the scribe never meant to be seen by another. This *mokkan* shows a transformation of script into something plastic in nature; the rigidity of the bureaucracy and its modes of “ordering” the world dissolves alongside the shape of the character 木 [“tree”], which slowly reverts to its picotgraphic roots over the course of its repeated inscription, before finally dissolving completely into a blotch of pure black ink.

While very little of the front side of the *mokkan* is legible, the shape of the characters and the thickness of the brush strokes suggest it is indeed in the same hand. Among the characters that are legible are at least two 木 [“tree”]. Whatever the text may have been, our scribe seems to hone in on the character 木 by the time he reaches the reverse side, and gradually the shape of that one character seems to take over the inscription. It is possible to see this as possibly a ritual inscription, connected in some way to trees; however, it also seems remarkably self-referential—the word for “tree” and “wood” are one in the same—and suggests a level of attention being directed at the *mokkan* surface itself. The reversion of the character, and its dissolution into black ink, is in effect a re-merging of the sign with the signified.

Figure 10. Nishigawara Morinouchi Mokkan No. 13 (*KCM,* 24)

While it is difficult to speculate on the scribal intent here, it is clear that he was interested in testing the boundaries of a written sign—how far could it be distorted, altered, or twisted around before it became “illegible”? Ultimately, his answer to that seems to be the black ink splotch that covers the bottom half of the reverse side. This seeming eagerness to “deconstruct” Sinographs certainly emerges out of a context in which calligraphic skills are valued, and where effort is expended in producing “beautiful” calligraphy; our scribe may have even though he was producing “beautiful calligraphy” here. Naturally, such efforts channeled into

the visual forms of characters could translate into attention to beautiful "patterns" (i.e., *aya/bun* 文) in written language as well.

The written culture of the province of Ōmi continued to flourish into the last quarter of the seventh century, even as the court departed the region and returned to Asuka. While other provincial outposts have yielded caches of written material from this same period (see Chapter 4), these come mainly from singular sites connected in some way to local administration. In the case of Ōmi, we have evidence from several sites of the use of writing in the late seventh century, and while these locations, too, ultimately are associated with local power centers, the inscriptions produced are the products of a written landscape still largely occupied by allochthons. These allochthons were capable of producing correspondence written in a logogram-centric vernacular mode, and of composing official documents conforming to the regulations of a law-code governed state in a confidently "standard" Sinitic register. Moreover, at least one individual was interested in the plasticity of Sinographic form; this level of engagement with Sinographs 漢字(J. *kanji*) cannot but have been a precursor to a similar desire to stretch the limits of Sinotext 漢文 (J. *kanbun*).

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the earliest written culture in the Japanese archipelago, centering on what came before (Naniwa palace site) and after (Ōmi capital/Ōmi region) the absorption by Japan of large numbers of Paekche refugees following the Battle of the Paek River. I began this chapter by citing the *Kaifūsō* preface's understanding of lettered history in Japan; I would like to close by evaluating its accuracy in light of the *mokkan* analysis presented here.

The preface to *Kaifūsō* narrates the inception of writing in Japan by means of the ancestors of allochthonous scribal lineages, Wani and Wang Chin'i, and points to the time of Shōtoku as a time of the spread of written culture, but argues that literary writing is something not seen until the time of Tenchi. Here, I have argued that an "exclusive" written culture probably existed among scribal lineages prior to the mid-seventh century, but it is not until the time of the Naniwa palace that there is solid evidence of the use of writing in some more "everyday" affairs of state.

The *Kaifūsō* compiler's portrayal of Tenchi's reign as a time of literary efflorescence probably has some truth to it. As I have argued, Tenchi surrounded himself with Paekche refugees, promoting them to high ranks and staffing important bureaucratic offices with them; many of them also probably served as part of a literary coterie, attending banquets and presenting praise poems as described in the preface. Tenchi had only five years at Ōmi to execute his vision for a centralized state, and he had only a small crop of literate individuals to help. These individuals would have been capable of producing the Literary Sinitic literature so acclaimed by the *Kaifūsō* preface, but their accomplishments would have been destroyed along with the palace in 672. Therefore, their impact on the course of development of literary writing in Japan may have been limited to inciting an interest among certain royal family members (e.g., Princes Ōtomo, Ōtsu, Kawashima) in the composition of Sinitic poetry. While Tenchi established an academy and thereby encouraged the

training of more officials, his work would be continued and intensified by Tenmu, under whom the *ritsuryō* state would achieve full maturity, fueled by an increased literacy rate among the elites eligible to serve in the bureaucracy. Tenmu would continue to rely on allochthons, refugees, and other migrants to staff his academy at Kiyomihara, and Jitō and her successors Monmu and Genmei would do the same at Fujiwara.

While the "literary culture" of Ōmi was an ephemeral phenomenon, it did inaugurate a new "lettered" age in Japan, where literacy was increasingly an integral component of elite life. Furthermore, the esteeming of vernacular poetry at the courts of Tenmu and Jitō may have had its origins in how Literary Sinitic verse was made to operate in the context of Tenchi's court. The valuing of vernacular verse as something with courtly function akin to that of Literary Sinitic verse would in turn facilitate a conception of vernacular compositions as written works that were meant to endure beyond a specific moment of oral performance. An understanding of a vernacular verse as having written form set the stage for the active layering of literary meaning through orthographic practice, as seen in *Man'yōshū* (see Conclusion).

By "literature," the *Kaifūsō* means Sinitic verse; it does not consider the vernacular literary realm, insofar as it exists alongside a Sinitic one. However, in terms of the history of the use of writing in Japan, the compiler certainly knew the basics, and ultimately he seems on target in his evaluation of Tenchi's reign as inaugurating a new moment in the history of written culture. The beginning of letters in Japan came with the arrival of literates from Paekche, and the beginning of literature, we might say, came with the same. Through the reign of Tenchi, written culture continued to be more or less a realm occupied exclusively by people with some connection to the continent (i.e., allochthons and refugees), but the last quarter of the seventh century would usher in a new inclusive moment by virtue of the *ritsuryō* state's demand for literate officials

Chapter 4: The Lettered Empire of Tenmu and Jitō: Writing in Japan at the Turn of the Eighth Century

Compared to the Naniwa and Ōmi capitals, the large numbers of *mokkan* coming from sites in the Fujiwara capital (694-710) and its immediate predecessor Asuka Kiyomihara (672-694) suggest a rapidly expanding written culture engaged in the production of writing for a variety of documentary and non-documentary purposes. This more frequent use of *mokkan* can be seen as directly connected to the expansion of the *ritsuryō* state bureaucracy that occurred under Tenmu (r.672-686) after the return to Asuka, and continued into the reign of his consort/successor, Jitō (r.686-697). While allochthons and refugees continued to serve in Tenmu's bureaucracy, their numbers were insufficient to fuel the reforms undertaken, but they did become educators of a generation of autochthonous elites, whose process of literacy acquisition can be observed in the inscriptive record of this era. By the time of the Fuijwara capital and the promulgation of the Taihō Code in 701, true "document-based" administration was being implemented by a newly come-of-age generation of literate elites from throughout the sovereign's domain.

The extant *mokkan* from Asuka and Fujiwara offer insight into the process of this generation's literacy education, with many examples of calligraphic practice based on literacy primers such as the *Analects,* the *Thousand Character Classic,* and the Naniwazu poem. Literacy acquisition in this period already meant proficiency in both Literary Sinitic and vernacular modes of writing. This was the foundation on which the written culture of Fuijwara capital emerged at the dawn of the eighth century. This "mature" written culture is characterized by a dual valuation of inscriptions in the cosmopolitan and vernacular languages, and in both contexts an orientation toward literary writing is emergent.

Lettered Empire: The Reigns of Tenmu and Jitō

Tenmu's court was the stage for something of a backlash against the heavily pro-Paekche allochthon reign of Tenchi.[1] Given that Tenmu's reign began only by

[1] The account of Tenchi's reign in the *Nihon shoki* features extensive references to the raising of the ranks of men formerly of Paekche (e.g., *NS* Tenchi 10.1; *NKBT* 68: 376-377). Meanwhile, although formal relations with Silla seem to have resumed in some capacity by 668 (see *NS* Tenchi 7.9.11; *NKBT* 68: 370-371), and Tenchi appears to have sent at least one mission to Silla in 670 (*NS* Tenchi 9.9.1; *NKBT* 68:374-375), it remained clear where his sympathies lay, with Paekche restorationist forces offering reports at Ōmi as late as 671. Tenmu, on the other hand, almost immediately sought closer ties with Silla, inviting a mission from Silla to Naniwa (whereas during Tenchi's reign they seem to have been detained and sent back from northern Kyushu) during the second year of his reign (673), where they were hosted for more than a month and entertained lavishly (see *NS* Tenmu 2.6.15; 2.9.28; 2.11.1; *NKBT* 68:412-415). Silla followed up that mission with an embassy headed by a prince in the second month of 675 (at the height of their war with Tang; *NS* Tenmu 4.2; *NKBT* 68:417), which was again welcomed to Naniwa (*NS* Tenmu 4.4; *NKBT* 68:419), with the prince staying through the autumn (*NS* Tenmu 4.8.25; *NKBT* 68:420). This led to Tenmu sending a mission to Silla himself that same year (*NS* Tenmu 4.7.7; *NKBT* 68:420). This nearly immediate resumption of relations, and cultivation of close ties, sharply contradicts Tenchi's Silla policy, and perhaps reflects a certain pragmatism on the part of Tenmu, but also an altogether different approach to peninsular affairs—one that accepted Silla as the main power there, and leaned on a relationship with them in order to have access to continental products while direct contact with the Tang was avoided. Silla's

defeating Tenchi's son, Ōtomo, and his allies—most of whom were his father's former allies, including many of those who had fled Paekche in 663—in the Jinshin War,[2] it follows that those who occupied positions of power under the new regime would be of a different pedigree. Indeed, most of those who climbed the ranks during Tenmu's reign were those who fought alongside him during the sixth and seventh months of 672, including powerful families from Yamato province (the "home" province) who had not made the move to Ōmi (this included members of both the Aya and Hata allochthonous lineages), as well as local elites from some outer provinces, including Ise, Mino, and Owari (Ooms 2008, 51). The *Nihon shoki* account of Tenmu's reign contains references to numerous occasions on which those who assisted Tenmu in the Jinshin War were acknowledged and rewarded. This did not mean that Paekche refugees were entirely absent from Tenmu's court; however, they were considerably less influential than they had been at Ōmi. Despite this shift in the nature of the sovereign's inner circle, many of the reforms begun under Tenchi, including the intensification of document-based bureaucracy, were continued during the reigns of Tenmu and his successor, Jitō.

Tenmu and Jitō, whose reigns cover the final quarter of the seventh century, oversaw a number of fundamental transformations of the Japanese state, finally bringing to fruition the efforts at reform that had begun following the Isshi Incident in 645. The *ritsuryō* state did not begin with Tenmu's reign, but it is during this period that we have some of the most abundant and complete evidence of its maturation. A large amount of that evidence is in the form of *mokkan* that have been recovered from the Asuka region, where Tenmu returned the court after his victory over Ōtomo, and in the Fujiwara capital, the construction of which began during Tenmu's reign and the occupation of which was presided over by Jitō. The large number of *mokkan* dating to the end of the seventh century unearthed in this area show a proliferation of inscription and a written culture full of vitality, where literary uses of written language were increasingly not uncommon.

Written culture in Asuka

The seventh century had seen a number of moves away from the court's "ancestral" home in Yamato province. Outside of a brief return during the reign of Saimei (655-661), Yamato was the location of a mere "secondary" capital for much of the pivotal period following the Isshi Incident, while the court operated primarily out of Naniwa and then Ōmi. The moves to these two capitals were prompted largely by international concerns, which in turn spurred domestic reforms, but the return to Asuka was a return to "stability": after a brief civil war between two different royal factions, the homecoming to Asuka was one among many ways in which Tenmu sought to legitimize his victory and his claim to the throne. He built his

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efforts at state building and organization may have served as models for Japan's efforts in this period, with the Kiyomihara and Taihō Codes possibly being based on Silla modifications of the Tang Code (see Ooms [2008]: 51). See also Horton 2012, 133-134.

[2] At least one named general (Chison 智尊) named on the side of Ōmi court in the *Nihon shoki* account of the Jinshin War seems to have been originally from Paekche. However, Tenmu also counted some Paekche refugees among his allies: there are several different mentions of their being rewarded posthumously for their service at various points during his reign and that of Jitō.

palace on the same site as those of both of his parents' reigns—and where the "secondary capital" had remained during the court's time elsewhere—asserting his roots as a son of the royal line and the rightful heir to his father (Jomei), mother (Kōgyoku/Saimei), and brother (Tenchi), who had each held court there at one point. He appealed to his connection to this place, striking a contrast with his opponent (Ōtomo), who had been a son of Ōmi, i.e., some "other," non-home province.[3]

Tenmu's construction of his palace at Kiyomihara by incorporating the grounds and some of the former facilities of the palaces of both his mother's reigns (Itabuki and Nochi no Okamoto) as well as that of his father (Okamoto), was symbolic of this "return" as much as it was an act of inheritance. He integrated other existing structures, such as Asuka-dera, the oldest temple in Japan and just north of the palace, the pond located to the palace's northeast, which became the site of an imperial smithy, and the banquet facilities to the northwest located at what is now known as the Ishigami site. Furthermore, rather than name his palace for a geographic feature (Okamoto 岡本, "foothill"), or for its architecture (Itabuki 板蓋, "plank covered"), he chose a name that could encapsulate the ideology of his reign—one envisioned as pure, enlightened, and righteous—a "pure, fair plain" (J. *kiyomihara* 浄御原). While this name change came in 686, toward the end of his reign, it encapsulated his ruling ideology, whereby he was the "great purifier" of the realm, taking upon it himself to purge his subjects of all forms of defilement through a variety of purification rites that emphasized the ritualistic role of the sovereign (Ooms 2008, 56).

Not only did Tenmu build on pre-existing structures in Asuka, incorporating elements of the past into the landscape over which he ruled in the present, but he elaborated on and greatly intensified the modernizing efforts undertaken by Tenchi. He continued to maintain defensive structures erected in the aftermath of the Battle of the Paek River,[4] further revised *kabane* titles and cap ranks,[5] and devised a number of new regulations that required increasing layers of bureaucracy.[6] He also made efforts to integrate powerful provincial lineages into the new central system, providing them with ranks and titles and encouraging their participation in the central officialdom (see the discussion of Yunobe Mokkan No. 1 in Chapter 3), while also calling upon members of the royal family to serve the state in some capacity (Ooms 2008, 51-52). Further, as mentioned in note 1 above, he earnestly pursued relations with Silla almost immediately after his ascension, seeking out Silla approaches to the adaptation of all things continental, such as the Tang Code and the construction of a Chinese-style capital (Ooms 2008, 51-52).[7] Tenmu sought out

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[3] Tenchi's decision to move the court to Ōmi in 667 was very unpopular, and met with widespread protest and unrest. It is probably safe to assume that the return to Asuka in 672 was welcomed. See *NS* Tenchi 6.3.19; *NKBT* 68:366-367.
[4] *NS* Tenmu 4.2.23; *NKBT* 68:417.
[5] *NS* Tenmu 13.10.1;*NKBT* 68:464-465; Tenmu 14.1.21; *NKBT* 68:467-469.
[6] *NS* Tenmu 7.10.26; *NKBT* 68:431-433.
[7] In addition, the Silla bone rank system (which seems to have inspired Tenmu's reforms of the *kabane* titles in the tenth month of 684) and methods of transcription of the vernacular language (specifically, the adaptation of a logogram-centric phonogram affixed 訓主音従 transcription style to

talent near and far, but he also doubtlessly continued to lean on scribal lineages and some Paekche refugees at least for the education of a new class of literate civil officials. While his efforts were earnest, the level of inscriptive production during his reign suggests that Tenchi's reign must have been a formative and foundational period for written culture. Without some already initial forays into the education of the autochthonous elite, including members of the royal clan, Tenmu's successes with document-based administration would have been considerably more limited.

That said, the "script community" that formed at Kiyomihara does seem to have still been relatively young, and certainly lacked the sophistication of its eighth century counterpart: as Ichi Hiroki (2010) notes, late seventh century *mokkan* are distinguishable by their rounded Six Dynasties-style calligraphy, poorly-balanced characters, and single line inscriptions; by comparison, eighth century examples become considerably more complex, with multiple columns of writing, rigid calligraphy, and diverse document types—in accordance with the Taihō code (45). In many ways, participants in the written culture of the late seventh century at Asuka and Fujiwara were still "learning the ropes," with very little apparent standardization or substantial differentiation among different categories of inscription. In fact, the conflation of different types of "document" styles, especially by those inexperienced with script, appears to have been common:

Side 1: 己卯年八月十七日白奉経
Side 2: 観世音経十巻記白也
Side 1: Yin Earth Rabbit year [679], Eighth month, Seventeenth day, it is reported, "[As for] the presented sutras,
Side 2: they were ten volumes of the Avalokitesvara sutra I copied," it was reported (I hear). [8]

Figure 1. Ishigami Site Mokkan No. 18-1 (*MR*, 17)

The entire piece appears to be intact, and other than the initial sexagenary year, the inscription is relatively clear to the naked eye. The sexagenary year included here allows for the inscription to be dated exactly, to the eighth year of Tenmu (679). The calligraphy is sufficient but rather imprecise, with a few of the characters, particularly 月 on the front and 観 on the top of the back side, slightly off balance. While for the most part the inscription fills the space of the *mokkan* surface, there is considerable inconsistency in spacing. Tōno (2008) speculates that there was a pause in inscription after the first 白 that appears on the front, because the central axis of the character 奉 that follows seems to be oriented slightly to the left by comparison (400). A similar phenomenon occurs on the top part of the back surface, where 観世音 ["Avalokitesvara"] is written toward the left of center, whereas the characters in the text that follow are more centered and slightly larger. In this case,

Japanese—as is seen in some poems in the *Man'yōshū*) are thought to have influenced the Japanese during this period. On cultural influences from Silla in the late seventh century, see Horton 2012, 134.
[8] This translation based on an interpretation provided by Tōno Haruyuki 2008, 399-403.

then, we are able to reconstruct something of the inscriptive process, one that was characterized by pauses as the unsure scribe checked with some source (another text or person) to confirm the content of his inscription. There is no doubt that this scribe was proficient, but his level of mastery, and certainly his level of confidence, does seem to have been limited.

The format here mimics that of "report" *mokkan*, which in the seventh century commonly take the form of what is commonly called *zenpaku* 前白 *mokkan*, where the addressee of the report is identified prior to inscribing the sequence 前白, glossed as …*mae ni mōsu* [before….I report/it is reported].[9] Such "reports" are generally opened with 白 [*mōsu*], which can be understood as marking the beginning of a quotation. In this case, the scribe provides 白 again at the end, closing the citation. While many *zenpaku mokkan* are unfortunately incomplete, some examples, such as Fujiwara Palace Mokkan No. 1-8 and Fujiwara Palace Mokkan No. 2-525, show a similar demarcation of a quotation on either side. While Paekche Kungnamji Mokkan No. II-2 features a quotation opened by a single character 曰, and closed by leaving empty space between it and the beginning of the following sentence, this is an outlier among Paekche inscriptions. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, such structures were common Silla inscriptions, with "enclosed" quotations appearing on the Imsin Year Vow Record Stele as well as in the inscriptions of Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 221 and Haman Sŏngsan Fortress Mokkan No. 17-23.[10] This need to enclose a quotation with identical structures, emphasizing that the act of speaking that had begun previously has now ended, is shared among vernacularly-inflected inscriptions of Silla and Japan.[11]

While it does seem to function as a marker of citation, the use of 白 here also fills in for other characters that might more clearly identify the type of document; such characters are usually at the beginning and the end of the text to demarcate the main "body" of the document (see, for instance, the use of 牒 in Yunobe Mokkan No. 1 discussed in Chapter 3). The scribe here seems to have somewhat conflated the transcription of a citation and the format of an official document, resulting in an inscription that presents itself as an official "report" document to a superior, including the provision of the date, but falls short of adhering to prescribed formats. This accords with Tōno (1993)'s assertion that late seventh century Japanese reception of continental style documentation systems was essentially surface-level (278), and echoes the performative use of tag *mokkan* at the Naniwa palace as discussed in Chapter 3.

The fact that this *mokkan* refers to the copying of sutras hints at the larger inscriptive world that lies beyond this *mokkan*. While there are some extant sutra

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[9] In rare cases the identity of the speaking subject is given in between 前 and 白.

[10] On these "enclosed" quotation structures in Silla inscriptions, see Yi Yonghyŏn 2015.

[11] Tōno Haruyuki (1993: 255-264) traces the genealogy of so-called *zenpaku mokkan*, pointing out similar structures found in Chinese inscriptions, identifying in particular examples from royal edicts of the Western and Northern Zhou and wooden inscriptions from the Jin. However, in none of these cases is a quotation completely "enclosed." This sort of enclosure is also a feature of *senmyō* style transcription seen in the royal edicts of the *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀, and of early vernacular inscriptions in Silla, as discussed in Chapter 2.

copies dating to the late seventh century,[12] they are scant in number compared to the relative abundance of such copies still extant from the eighth century. This is probably partly due to the less textual character of Buddhist practice in Japan during the seventh century. However, this *mokkan* serves as material evidence that at least *some* sutra transcription was occurring in the Asuka region at this time, which matches the *Nihon shoki* account of Tenmu's sponsorship of the transcription of the Buddhist canon at Kawara-dera 川原寺 beginning in 673 at the start of his reign. While that project was likely complete prior to 679, it may have incited interest in copying sutras among elites, the literate among whom were likely sought out to contribute to Tenmu's project.[13]

This *mokkan* suggests that many of those actively participating in the written culture of Asuka likely had no more than a basic understanding of letters and how to use them. The numbers of allochthon scribes and Paekche refugees were eclipsed by the growing demand for literate individuals in the latter half of the seventh century, resulting in the generation between the Battle of the Paek River and the move to Fujiwara in 694 being largely transitional, marked by a written culture that might be called, in a word, "amateur." However, while literate elites in Asuka may have been calligraphic novices concerned with transmission of information first and foremost, they also could be considerably adventurous with written language. As they became acculturated they also became inclined to treat the process of composition as potentially one of creation.

The majority of excavated sites in Asuka that have yielded *mokkan* dating to the Kiyomihara period are located in and around what is thought to have been the location of the palace and facilities closely related to the palace, including important temples with royal ties. This is perhaps to be expected, and no less true of any other locations discussed thus far; while writing in more private contexts (i.e., elite residences) began to flourish in the eighth century, in the seventh it was still very much an enterprise more or less exclusively in service of the state. Accordingly, the majority of *mokkan* from Asuka are somehow related to the various functions of the state, with a large number of tags and labels, and a healthy abundance of document *mokkan*. Ichi Hiroki (2010) counts about 14,500 total *mokkan* excavated in the Asuka area, but this figure includes *mokkan* from the seventh century through the early modern period, and includes a large number of wood shavings (J. *kezuri kuzu*). However, of these, the overwhelming majority—about 14,000—probably date to the late seventh century, and thus offer a crucial window into the use of writing during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 32-35; 47-64).

Among those sites yielding a large number of *mokkan* in the Asuka area, the Ishigami site and the Asuka Pond site have yielded the largest total numbers of *mokkan*, and feature a considerable variety in their content. While there are, expectedly, a number of tag and document *mokkan*, there are also a large number which cannot be definitively placed in either category. Further, unlike their counterparts at Naniwa, the tag *mokkan* from Asuka are remarkably more standardized, providing information on the origin and quantity of goods; document

[12] Only one of these was actually copied in Japan. See Lurie 2011, 143.
[13] On Tenmu's sutra copying project, see Lowe 2017, 116-118.

mokkan, moreover, begin to display recurring formats, such as the *zenpaku* form mentioned above. Among those that can be called neither tag nor document are a number of "writing rods" (Ch. *gu* 觚) or what are known as "multi-surface" *mokkan* (*tamyŏn mokkan*, 多面木簡) in Korean contexts. These are found relatively rarely in Japan, but almost without exception feature some form of writing or calligraphic practice, with the opening passage to the *Analects* being a consistent choice for such exercises. Two multi-surface *mokkan* featuring fragments of the *Analects* have been found in Asuka, one each from both the Ishigami and Asuka Pond sites, while the Asuka Pond site has also yielded two other multi-surface *mokkan*, one with calligraphic practice primarily of the characters 身, 天, and 聞, and another with a fragment of the Thousand Character Classic 千字文, which, like the *Analects*, was also an important literacy primer in this period.[14] Unlike the Korean examples of *Analects* mokkan, which for the most part are faithful transcriptions of the original text (see discussion of *Analects mokkan* from Kimhae Ponghwangdong and Inch'ŏn Kyeyang Fortress in Chapter 2), and where the entire space of the *mokkan* is generally devoted to the transcription of the *Analects*, Japanese examples often diverge considerably from the original text, and the wood surface is often used (or re-used) to practice other material as well.[15] The latter is the case with both the multi-surface *Analects mokkan* from Asuka:

Figure 2. Ishigami Site Mokkan No. 16-102 (*AFGH* 18, Plate 11)

Ishigami Site Mokkan No. 16-102

Side 1: ←乎〇有朋自遠方来〇□

Side 2: 〇「大大大大□□□〔大？〕

Side 1: …? If a friend comes from afar…

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[14] This text, along with the *Analects*, is identified by the *Kojiki* as having been first brought to Japan by the Paekche scholar Wang-in (see Chapter 1). As Lurie (2011, 112-113) notes, this is a clear anachronism for the reign of Ōjin (supposedly in the late fourth/early fifth centuries), but is probably included in the account due to the fact that it was an introductory textbook for students learning to read and write in the late seventh and early eighth centuries (the *Kojiki* having been compiled in 712). Because Wang-in introduced literacy to the archipelago, it was imagined he did so via the same learning materials used in the contemporary moment.

[15] On the differences between Korean and Japanese examples of *Analects mokkan*, Yun Chae-sŏk (2011) points out that Korean examples seem to have had a different purpose than Chinese examples, given that paper versions of the *Analects* were probably also available when they were inscribed, and that they were without exception inscribed on multi-surface *mokkan*; Japanese examples, especially those from Ishigami and Asuka Pond, seem to parallel their Korean counterparts, but are unique in their tendency to feature different types of calligraphic practice alongside the transcription of the *Analects.* It would seem that the Korean examples are educational aides to the *Analects*, while the Japanese examples are closer to simple calligraphic exercises. Yun further notes that *Analects mokkan* from both the peninsula and the archipelago differ markedly from those recovered archaeologically in China, where bamboo or wooden strips containing the text of the *Analects* for the most part are exclusive to the period prior to the widespread use of paper. One set of bound bamboo strips containing text from the *Analects* has been found in modern Pyŏngyang, but these were recovered from a tomb of a Lelang commandery elite. See Yun Chae-sŏk 2011, 12; 16-17.

Side 2: big big big big …. big

Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-39
Side 1：観世音経巻
Side 2：支為□〔照？〕支照而為
Side 3: 子曰学〈〉是是
Side 1: Avalokitesvara Sutra Volume
Side 2: *ki* do (shine) *ki* shine and do
Side 3: The master said, "To study… this this

Figure 3. Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-39 (*AFK* I, Plate 34)

In both cases, the *Analects* text appears on only one side, and ink traces are not present on all four sides in either example. The association between four-sided *mokkan* and calligraphic practice/textual study, which included the transcription of the *Analects*, may have been transmitted by individuals from the peninsula, but like with many such borrowings during this early period of written culture, the Japanese adaptation of this established material for literacy acquisition seems to have been more performative than practical, resulting in just a few characters from the beginning of that text making their way onto the *mokkan* surface.[16] Of course, it could be that each of these originally featured longer transcriptions of the first chapter of the *Analects* that covered all sides, and that the majority of these transcriptions were subsequently erased in order to make room for additional calligraphic practice. This does seem to have possibly been the case with Ishigami Mokkan No. 16-102, where the practice of the character 大 "big" on the second side appears to be in a different hand than the text of the *Analects*. Further, the top and bottom edges are broken off, meaning the *mokkan* may have originally featured more of the *Analects*. In the case of Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-39, the *mokkan* appears to have been used and reused, and it is unclear if all three sides may in fact be inscribed in different hands. The characters on the first face are exceeding large, with just five characters filling the same amount of space that seven characters easily fit on the second side. On the third side, where the scribe sets out transcribing the opening passage of the *Analects*, the characters are left of center, with enough space to the right that the scribe may have even intended to write in two columns. Some splotches of ink obscure the central part of this face, while the final two characters, both 是, are written at about the same scale as those on the first face, where the final character in particular has a top radical 日 about the same size or even a little larger than the 曰 that comes at the top, and a tail stroke that stretches for some distance. If the three faces of this *mokkan* are all in the same hand, they show a certain erratic quality that suggests the scribe tended to jump

[16] As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, multi-surface *mokkan,* known as *gu* 觚 in the Chinese context, were used for a variety of purposes, but most often as spaces for calligraphic practice, producing rough drafts of documents, and the jotting down of summaries/excerpts from textual materials (i.e., as study aides). See Yun Chae-sŏk 2011, 59.

around, erase, change direction, and scale up and down, in the process of "practicing" his calligraphy.

Given their context on multi-surface *mokkan* that also feature calligraphic practice that is not from the *Analects*, it is likely that these forays into transcribing that text were considered to be calligraphic exercises more than they were for the purpose of study, and therefore an initial effort to copy the text could quickly dissolve in favor of the practice of characters of more pressing interest to the scribe in the moment. These examples differ markedly from what is probably the oldest *Analects mokkan* found in Japan, from the Kannonji site in Tokushima. While the different faces of the *mokkan* again appear to feature different types of writing practice, the transcription of the *Analects* found on the left face of this *mokkan* is less fragmentary and seemingly produced from memory, suggesting the scribe was engaged in some form of textual study:

Figure 4. Kannonji Site Mokkan No. 77 (*MR*, 17)

Side 1 ("front"): □〔冀？〕□依□□〔夷？〕乎□□〔還？〕止□〔耳？〕所中□□□

Side 2 ("back"): □□□□乎

Side 3 (left surface): 子曰〇學而習時不孤□乎□自朋遠方来亦時楽乎人不知亦不慍

Side 4 (right surface): 〈〉用作必□□□□□〔兵？〕□人〈〉□□□〔　　　刀？〕

Side 1: (wish)…based on..(barbarian?)? … (return) stop (and that is all). What is in the middle…
Side 2: …. ?
Side 3: The master said, "To learn and to practice at times, is this not lonely…? …from friend distant place comes, this too at times to rejoice? If people do not know, again to be unbothered…
Side 4: … use to make, must… (solider) … person… (knife)

Only the left surface features text from the *Analects*; the remaining three sides are only partially legible, but it does not seem possible to trace their inscriptions, in current form, to any extant work. With the left surface, however, enough of the text is intact that it is clear that it was a piece of the *Analects*; however, there are several anomalies in the transcription that draw notice. There are two instances of the transpositioning of characters. First in the sequence 學而習時, the order of 時 and 習 is switched, and the final 之 is omitted, resulting in a transcription that approximates but does not exactly reproduce the original line, 學而時習之. Second, the sequence 自朋遠方来 pushes 自 to the front of 朋; the line

should read 有朋自遠方来. In the first case, the misordering is likely the result of the scribe's conception of certain types of Sinitic constructions which are glossed (*kundoku*) with the particle *ni* in between; while in the case of locative marker *ni*, the characters certainly would be in the reverse order in Sinitic, in an adverbial construction such as in this sequence (*toki ni narapu* 時習 "at times to practice"), such a reversal is an overcorrection (Lurie 2011, 188-189; Sem Masayuki 1999; Sema Masayuki 2006, 224). The scribe thus seems to be attempting to reconstruct the text based on a memorized *kundoku* rendition of it: the omission of the final 之 altogether is also highly suggestive in this regard, as there is evidence that this character likely went unvocalized in reading practices of this period (Sema Masayuki 2016, 224). In the second case, a similar phenomenon seems to be occurring, where the scribe cannot quite remember where to place the character 自 ["from"], and since the *kundoku* gloss would have rearranged the characters in such a way that its reading, *yori*, would follow both 朋 and 遠方, the scribe logically reasons it should come before both words in his reconstruction (Sema Masayuki 2016, 224). In addition to problems with transpositioning, the scribe also misremembers, or mistranscribes, certain words, with 孤 ["alone"] taking the place of 亦, resulting in the rather strange locution 不孤□乎 "is this not lonely?" instead of 不亦説乎 "is this not also a pleasure?"

The hand here is rough and rather inexperienced: the top portion of 學 appears rushed and written without much attention to detail, the tail stroke of 學 touches the top of a 而 that seems to be leaning to the left, on the verge of toppling over. Spacing is uneven throughout, and such little attention appears paid to stroke order that the scribe may be said to have been attempting to approximate the shapes of the characters more than he was faithfully practicing their forms. A rather large space is left open after 子曰 ["the master said"], however, that again suggests that the scribe understood the content of what he was transcribing—and that his attempt to reproduce the text was a study exercise, rather than mere calligraphic practice. While the scribe may have been interested in developing his minimal calligraphic skills further through this transcription, it is clear that the primary purpose of this inscription was the recall and reconstruction of the text's content. In this way, it is evidence of textual interpretation and education in the classics that goes beyond surface-level memorization and/or reproduction, and thus belongs in a separate category from the Asuka examples.

This example comes from outside the capital, and, moreover, it is thought to be possibly older than Ishigami and Asuka Pond examples, with some scholarship placing it in the second quarter of the seventh century (i.e., the Taika era). Whether it dates to the middle or toward the end of the seventh century, it is clear this *mokkan* has much more in common with the Korean examples discussed in Chapter 2 than those found in Asuka, in that it attempts to transcribe more than just the first few words of the opening of the *Analects*. However, the calligraphy on the Kimhae Ponghwangdong *Analects mokkan* is considerably more careful, suggesting it may have been partially for display and review. This example, by contrast, seems to have been an in-the-moment attempt at rapidly reconstructing a piece of the text from a

memorized vernacular gloss, and the haphazard calligraphy suggests this inscription's utility did not extend much beyond that. The calligraphy on the other surfaces of the *mokkan* seems similarly rushed, which suggests that either our scribe was either inclined toward textual study to such an extent that the quality of his jottings was not a concern, or, more likely, he was still learning to read and write.

In addition to multi-surface *mokkan* bearing the text of the *Analects*, the Ishigami and Asuka Pond sites have also yielded both intact *mokkan* and wood shavings with fragments of the *Analects*. Clearly, this was an important text for literacy acquisition in the late seventh century, and this would continue to be the case into the eighth century. Its frequent appearance here suggests that one of the key uses of *mokkan* during Tenmu's reign was indeed the acquisition of literacy. While *mokkan* would be used for this purpose long thereafter, it is fitting that we should see multi-surface as well as "flat" *mokkan* featuring pieces of this text in a moment when the number of literate officials was not keeping pace with Tenmu's centralization projects.

Beyond writing rods and *Analects mokkan*, calligraphic practice is a common phenomenon throughout the corpus of *mokkan* from the Kiyomihara era. Clearly, Yamato elites were rapidly becoming literate, as it was they who were primarily being called upon to fill the ranks of an increasingly large and extended administrative bureaucracy. In Tenmu's new capital, where the assertion of his legitimacy rested just as much on his civil accomplishments as his martial victory, there was a severe shortage of literate labor. It is in the context of writing practice *mokkan* that we might observe the process of literacy acquisition, undertaken to meet this demand. It is here we also begin to see the emergence of a relatively regular set of phonograms, knowledge of which seem to have been at least partly acquired through an effective mnemonic device: the Naniwazu poem. The use of this poem as a primer for phonograms is first attested at the Kannonji Site in Tokushima, but this example from the Ishigami site, probably dating to the 680s, is the second oldest:

Figure 5. Ishigami Site Mokkan No. 15-36 (*MR*, 14)

Ishigami Site Mokkan No. 15-36
Side 1: 奈尓波ツ尓佐児矢己乃波奈□□〔布由？〕→
Side 2: □○□倭部物部矢田部丈部□〔丈？〕
Side 1: Nanipadu ni sakö ya kono pana (puyu) [In Naniwa harbor, it blossoms forth, this flower (winter)]
Side 2: … Yamatobe Mononobe Yatabe Hasetsukabe…

There are four other *mokkan* containing fragments of the Naniwazu poem recovered from the Ishigami site, suggesting that those inhabiting this complex in Tenmu's reign—when it was converted to an administrative complex—were

actively working to improve both their calligraphy and their knowledge of phonograms through the transcription of this verse. This example in particular shows the fluidity between this phonogram-based transcription practice and other calligraphic practice: in this case, the reverse side has been used to transcribe the names of prominent lineage groups. While not all *mokkan* featuring the Naniwazu poem transcribe it in exactly the same phonograms, suggesting that there was some variation in what phonograms certain individuals preferred, it is clear that its transcription was one of the primary means by which individuals were initiated into and refined the art of transcribing vernacular Japanese.

There is evidence for at least two different literacy acquisition exercises being carried out among Kiyomihara elites, then—the practice of character forms through the copying of texts from the Sinitic canon and the acquiring of knowledge of a relatively standard set of phonograms through transcribing the *Naniwazu* poem. This dual education may have been at least partially responsible for the attribution of the *Naniwazu* poem to Wang-in, who is known to have brought the Confucian canon to the archipelago. In addition to the presence of writing rods featuring fragments from the *Analects* and *mokkan* with fragments of the Naniwazu poem, the Asuka Pond site has yielded another "glossary" *mokkan* that differs from the Kita Ōtsu example cited above in that it appears to be aimed at the study of Sino-Japanese readings. Thus to classical study and phonogram practice we might add one other type of literacy training occurring among some in the Kiyomihara orbit: the practice of enunciating Sinitic texts in something conceived of as phonetically proximate to its "original" pronunciation.[17] This type of literacy training might be construed as the study of script "as foreign language," but the practice of *ondoku* (reading aloud in Sino-Japanese) was probably largely ritual in nature, an initial step of recitation that brought the text into the aural realm before it was "interpreted" by means of gloss and/or translation. The Ishigami site, a palace re-fashioned as an administrative complex under Tenmu, seems to have been ground zero for the training of the elite in the use of letters during the court's time at Kiyomihara; the nearby Asuka Pond site, similarly, was a location where a number of moderately literate bureaucrats toiled, some of whom were working continuously to improve their writing skills.

Individuals at Asuka were clearly using *mokkan* as a place to practice their calligraphy—and not just for the repetition of single characters with clear usage in bureaucratic contexts. The custom of transcribing full sentences from well-known texts, and striving for calligraphic perfection, created a material environment in which attention to visual form was accompanied by increasing acculturation into the Sinitic textual universe. These two aspects of the material circumstances of transcription might be considered a prerequisite for the emergence of a certain type

[17] The sounds indicated by the *mokkan* suggest that the Sino-Japanese readings being studied at the time may have been derived rather from Korean readings based on Early Middle Chinese, rather than contemporary Tang pronunciation. By the time of the Fujiwara capital, the academy is said to have employed "professors of pronunciation" 音博士 (e.g., Jitō 5.9.4; 6.12.14), but their impact on reading practices thereafter is unclear.

of literary writing, where attention began to be directed to the form and style of inscription beyond the purely visual dimension.

Attempts at "weaving" patterns of words can be found in the context of all this evidence of "literization" from the Ishigami and Asuka Pond sites—while 'literary culture' as a phenomenon emerges in the beginning of the eighth century, as elites became accustomed to the honing of their calligraphic skills on *mokkan*, they also began to produce original pieces of text. One of the most interesting examples of this from Asuka is a rather playful composition that is fashioned in a prescribed form borrowed directly from the continent, a five character *jueju* (quatrain):

Side 1: 白馬鳴向山◯欲其上草食
Side 2: 女人向男咲◯相遊其下也

Side 1: A white horse whinnies, facing the mountain—it wants to eat the grass atop it;
Side 2: A woman smiles, facing a man—together they romp below it

Figure 6. Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-248 (*AFK* I, Plate 36)

This *mokkan* belongs to the vast corpus of recovered artifacts from the Asuka Pond site, a reservoir to the southeast of Asuka-dera, on the site of which now sits the Nara Prefecture Complex of Manyō Culture. The general artifact assemblage clearly indicates this site was home to metal-working, glass, and lacquer workshops, and that among other things produced what seem to be the first royally minted coins in Japan.[18] In addition to its location, the vast array of things produced here is highly suggestive of this site having been a royal workshop in the direct employ of Tenmu himself. The northern part of the site is thought to have been the southeastern boundary of Asuka-dera at the time, and the *mokkan* recovered there suggest some sort of link with the temple administration.[19] This *mokkan*, recovered in the 84th excavation stage, comes from the northern side of the site, and thus may have been inscribed by someone with a connection to the Asuka-dera.

While poetic diction does allow for some play with word order in Sinitic, the placement of the verb at the end of both the second and third lines seems to be indicative of a vernacular inflection, and perhaps an intended gloss

[18] These coins are known as *fuhonsen* 富本銭, based on the characters 富本 inscribed on them; they are thought to correspond to the copper coins Tenmu ordered be used beginning in the twelfth year of his reign (683; see *NS* Tenmu 12.4.15; *NKBT* 68:457-459). Site details can be found in Terasaki Yasuhiro 1999, 14-16.

[19] It appears that the administration of this temple was carried out by state-affiliated bureuaucrats; see Tenmu's edict on temple administration in *NS* Tenmu 9.4 (*NKBT* 68: 440-441), where Asukda-dera is excepted.

(*kundoku*) for this verse. Moreover, rules of meter are not followed, the second and fourth lines do not rhyme, and while there seem to be attempts at parallelism, these are not executed quite correctly. Lurie (2011) argues that this failure arises out of "overcorrections" informed by *kundoku*, in the same manner as the Kannonji *Analects mokkan* (189). While our scribe has managed to arrange his content to fit in the four-lines of five characters allotted, he has come up short of producing a true *jueju*; what he has created is something that looks like a *jueju*. With this example, then, we find that the composition of Literary Sinitic poetry is being "performed" by Japanese scribes who do not quite completely understand the forms in which they are working, but aim to create an appearance of authority and erudition.

The content here, however, undermines the erudite appearance of the verse form. Despite its technical failures, the verse manages to be evocative, and even suggestive: it appears to be attempting to be both euphemistic and funny, and some have proposed it may be a "translation" of a similarly intentionally humorous folk song (perhaps one composed in the context of *utagaki* gatherings), or a playful riff on the thirty-third through thirty-sixth lines of the *Thousand Character Classic*.[20] Sema (2016) suggests that this might be seen as a playful response, in an "everyday" moment, prompted by the study of that text; however, the fact that the poem has been "updated" to a five-character *jueju* (as opposed to the four-character meter of the *Thousand Character Classic*) suggests a scribe whose awareness of continental literature transcended this basic work (230-231). The humor in the scene originates in the juxtaposition of a couple "romping" below the mountain, while their horse, uninterested in them, simply looks up at the grass on the mountain longingly. The horse's desire to eat the grass atop the mountain is already an amusing way to open the verse—with the horse as the emoting subject, filled with desire (欲). This sets up an analogy with the woman's gaze that is directed at the man, such that her longing can go unsaid, and instead, we skip promptly to the scene of its fulfillment. That the woman looks at the man in the same manner that the horse gazes up at the grass on the hill is a rather vulgar comparison, but it is in that very vulgarity that the humor can be found. The Literary Sinitic quatrain form (*jueju*) allows the speaker to set up this analogy without explicitly saying one is like the other—the parallel couplet allows for likeness to be conveyed simply through apposition. Thus, while the use of the quatrain form seems to be very much about "performing" the composition of Sinitic poetry, parallelism is a natural literary device within this context, and is effective in shaping the content of the verse.

The *mokkan* itself is an usually thick (11mm) wedge-shaped piece of wood, and both surfaces have a convex shape to them. It may have originally been a wooden object used for some unknown purpose before our scribe used it to inscribe this poem. The calligraphy does seem to be in a relatively experienced hand—and it is clear from the verse itself that our scribe had considerable familiarity with the practice of writing in Sinitic—but the fact that this object does not seem to have originated as a writing surface suggests the text was probably not intended for circulation; on the front surface, the characters are written left of center, and

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[20] These lines read: 鳴鳳在樹、白駒食場、化被草木、頼及萬万. See Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo 2007b, 130.

although some effort seems to have been expended to restrict the text on both sides to a particular amount of space, the size of the characters is inconsistent, and the amount of space left between the "lines" is starkly different on the front and back. Given the technical shortcomings of the composition itself, it is reasonable to consider this to be either a jotting or a draft of a composition to be reshaped and re-inscribed later on a different medium.

This is not the only *mokkan* from Asuka that appears to feature an "original" composition. Many of these, like the example above, appear to fall into the category of "jotting"—this includes those pieces that seem to meld calligraphic with composition practice.

Side 1:「◯□／〈〉我何□□者恒□□〔願則？〕□／◯身」／□何◯送◯日◯恒◯願◯徳◯均

Side 2:「〈〉相◯想〈〉」

Side 1: ...I why...always (wish therefore).../body/...why spend my days invariably wishing that virtue will level...

Side 2: mutual...feel... (other overlapping text)

Figure 7. Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-250 (*AFK* I, Plate 34)

This *mokkan* was also recovered from the 84th stage of excavation at the Asuka Pond site, and the content is considerably more suggestive of a temple connection, in that the phrase 恒願 does appear in the Buddhist canon. While this has led some to speculate that the entirety of this text was likely copied out of a sutra, no source text has yet been identified (Nabunken 2007b, 131). Because the *mokkan* = has been considerably altered, including breaks on both the top and bottom and a split down the middle into two pieces, it is difficult to decipher the sequence that seems to be repeated here (or perhaps in slightly altered form) in a different hand to the right side, in smaller characters. There is clearly an interrogative, 何, and so we know what follows must presumably be some sort of question; however, it is unclear where or if the sentence breaks at all thereafter. The preliminary translation offered above reads it as one continuous inquiry, asking why it is that the speaker should spend his days engaged invariably in wishing (which might also be understood as "vowing" or "praying") for virtue to level (something). In a Buddhist context, this "invariable wishing" is the continued belief in one's ability to make it to the Pure Land after death. Despite the somewhat cryptic quality of the inscription itself, it is clearly constructed, making use of the context of "practice" to compose a question—perhaps not one that was necessarily intelligible or answerable, but more a product of a meandering mind focused on "practice" of both character and sentence form. In addition, the overlapping layers of text, and the fact that the *mokkan* seems to have been deliberately destroyed before deposition, suggests this text was probably for personal consumption only.

The layers of text here make an orderly type-rendered transcription difficult, but speak to the utility of the *mokkan* medium itself. Scribes eager to practice both their character and their sentence form made use of any and all space available in order to do so. When they ran out of space, while "erasure" was of course an option, if that seemed too tiresome in the moment, one might continue their practice in the margins, or on top of previous inscriptions. This speaks to the personal quality of these moments of literacy training, where the scribe's efforts to fit in new inscriptions create a constellation of script that is no longer really a "legible" text but something of a collage that illustrates particular thought pathways pursued in a given inscriptive session. Further, such a collage need not necessarily be the work of a single person, but as is the case here, could also be an amalgamation of moments of inscription and reception/re-inscription by multiple individuals.

Here, on the front surface, our scribe seems to have first engaged in conversation with a pre-existing inscription (the larger characters to the left of center), but although that conversation seems to have begun with mere mimicry, as it continues the "copy" begins to diverge from the original. While not all of the "mirror" inscription on the right side is legible, it appears that it has fleshed out the original text with particles (者 – "as for," or it could be the conditional "ha/ba" in vernacular Japanese) and conjunctive adverbs (則, "therefore"), possibly in order to make the meaning clearer ("why is it that I, as for how I spend my days, am invariably wishing, and therefore…"). These modifications show a scribe engaging with technical aspects of the text's form, focusing on the manner of conveying meaning.

While the finds from the Ishigami and Asuka Pond sites are by far the largest, there are numerous other sites in the Asuka area that have yielded *mokkan* dating to Tenmu's reign at Kiyomihara. For instance, the *mokkan* recovered from Asuka Capital Pond Feature site have drawn attention in that they appear to indicate a royal pleasure garden's existence at the site, perhaps dating back as far as the reign of Saimei (r.654-661), and that key bureaus associated with the well-being of the court, including the royal brewery and medicine gardens, were also nearby (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 49-52). Other sites located around the outer walls of the Kiyomihara palace have yielded *mokkan* related to the *nie* tribute system, records of the payment of salaries to officials, and a large number of wood shavings featuring calligraphic practice (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 52-53). In addition, a wooden straightedge used for the creation of ruled grids on paper shows that paper documents were being produced, probably in limited amounts, alongside those composed on *mokkan* (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 53).

Writing was being used throughout Asuka for a variety of purposes, and as it appeared that document-based bureaucracy would be the new normal, elites were rapidly working to acquire literacy skills. The idiosyncrasies in forms suggest a written culture that was still largely "performing" its adherence to continental models. Despite the relative immaturity of written culture in Asuka during the reign of Tenmu, there were preliminary efforts at literary composition that show many of those using script as a tool were also interested in its possibilities as a medium. If the *Kaifūsō*'s account of Tenchi's elevation of Literary Sinitic poetry as a means of

accumulating and displaying virtue is correct, then elites at Kiyomihara may have been invested in the idea of achieving such virtue through their own inscriptive lives. By the following generation, when the court moved to Fujiwara, the seeds of the mature literary culture that would emerge in the early eighth century had already been sewn.

The Fujiwara Capital and the Beginnings of High Literacy

While Nara (Heijō) is often said to be Japan's first planned capital city in English language scholarship, that designation actually belongs to the short-lived Fujiwara capital (694-710), located just to the north of Kiyomihara and built in a geomantically favorable setting, set down on the plain located between the so-called "Three Mountains of Yamato" in what is today the city of Kashihara.[21] The plan to construct a Chinese-style capital originated early in Tenmu's reign, but it appears the site of the palace was still undecided and construction at Fujiwara was either stalled or had been limited to the laying out of a road grid prior to 682 (the eleventh year of his reign).[22] In the meantime, Tenmu had also been building up Naniwa as a second capital (following the model of the "dual capitals" of Tang), but in the beginning of the final year of his reign (686), the palace there burned, and after Tenmu's death in the tenth month, construction on the Fujiwara capital was also halted (Farris 1998, 150).[23] Construction was resumed under Jitō in 690, and seems to have been a national effort completed largely through corvée labor over the following several years.[24] As was the case with Naniwa, a number of religious rites are mentioned in *Nihon shoki* as having preceding its occupation in 694 (Farris 1998, 151-152),[25] but it is likely that construction was not complete for a few years thereafter.

The Fujiwara Palace was different from all previous imperial residences in that not only was it surrounded by Japan's first true capital city, it was built on a grand scale using continental techniques and incorporating an official audience hall separate from the royal residence (Farris 1998, 151-152). Complete with its tiled

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[21] As noted in Chapter 3, some scholars have attempted to make the case for Naniwa and Ōtsu as having been planned capital cities, but there is insufficient evidence.

[22] Ichi (2010, 194-195) notes that although a plan to build a "new capital city" seems to have been launched in 676, and the location probably corresponds to the area north of Asuka that became Fujiwara (after 676, Tenmu's use of the word capital 京 seems to include both Asuka and Fujiwara), it is not until late 682 that Tenmu seems to have given the order to open the construction that is noted to have been planned but never having taken place in 676. However, because there has been found archaeological evidence of roads having been built on the sites that became the palace as well as Yakushiji 薬師寺, it appears that the construction of a road grid system, at least, had begun prior to designating the locations of any major capital-based institutions, including the palace. This pre-emptive road construction is not seen at Heijō or later capitals. Farris (1998, 149) notes that no *mokkan* unearthed from a canal used in palace construction date to earlier than 682, but Ichi (2010: 195) points to *mokkan* possibly dating to before 681 (because *sato* is transcribed as 五十戸 instead of 里) from a road-side ditch at a Fujiwara Capital site (however, it may have been deposited post-682).

[23] On the Naniwa fire, see *NS* Tenmu 15 (Suzaku 1).1.14; *NKBT* 68: 474-475.

[24] A *chōka* (long-form song) in the voice of these laborers is found in the first volume of *Man'yōshū* (I:50; *SNKBZ* 7: 53-55.

[25] *NS* Jitō 5.10.27; *NKBT* 68:511-513; *NS* Jitō 6.5.23; *NKBT* 68: 515-517.

roofs and foundation stones, the Fujiwara Palace and the city that surrounded it were meant to project the grandness of the royal family, who now styled themselves as "imperial" (the title *tennō* 天皇["heavenly sovereign"] having been introduced under Tenmu). As "emperors" on par with those of China, they needed a capital as "modern" and elaborate as Chang'an, and Fujiwara was a bold declaration of equality. That said, not everything about Fujiwara adhered to Chinese models: the palace's location at the center, rather than the northern part of the city, is a markedly different configuration; this layout is thought to probably originate in the idealized capital described in the *Rites of Zhou* (Farris 1998, 157; Ooms 2008, 76-78). Moreover, contact with Tang had been stopped throughout Tenmu and Jitō's reigns, and so there were probably very few people with direct knowledge of Chang'an who could advise them. Given the close relations with Silla, on the other hand, and based on the fact that post-unification Silla had remodeled its capital to feature a grid style layout, it might even be suggested that the plan for Japan's first "Chinese-style" capital was in fact, mediated through Korean adaptations thereof.[26]

The Fujiwara Palace site was first excavated beginning in the 1930s through the early 1940s; over the course of these initial excavations, the location of key buildings in the palace complex were confirmed (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 193). Excavations resumed as part of a rescue effort prior to the construction of a highway in the late 1960s, and resulted in the confirmation of the northern, eastern, and western limits of the palace; in the midst of this excavation, approximately 2,000 *mokkan* were unearthed (Ichi Hiroko 2010, 193). Since 1969, the Nara National Institute for Cultural Properties (Nabunken) has been tasked with continuing yearly excavations at different parts of the palace site, while parts of the capital grid have also been excavated by local boards of education as well as the Archaeological Institute of Kashihara (Kashikoken). Total numbers of excavated *mokkan* from the palace have climbed to about 16,000, while those from different parts of the capital number another 14,000 (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 193). While these do not all necessarily date to the period when the capital was occupied, i.e., between 694 and 710 (many date to the time of its construction and to the decade or so after the transfer of the capital to Nara), these high numbers—about double the amount of *mokkan* excavated from Asuka—attest to the monumental growth of written culture at the tail end of the seventh century and into the very beginning of the eighth.

Hermans Ooms (2008) argues that experimentation with power symbolics was a central component of Tenmu's program of state-building and the elevation of the royal house at its center; this is why, he explains, Tenmu and Jitō established the Bureau of Yin-Yang (Onmyōryō 陰陽寮) and built an "astronomical platform" for the monitoring of the stars (*senseidai* 占星台)—both of which also helped to control and harness cosmic forces that posed the only possible barrier to their earthly rule (Ooms 2008, 78).[27] According to Ooms, the "ideal capital" design of Fujiwara, too,

[26] Indeed, Wŏlsŏng, the Silla royal palace, was located more or less in the center of Kyŏngju, with the city built around it.
[27] The *Nihon shoki* notes that an "observatory" of this nature was erected in the first month of the fourth year of Tenmu (*NKBT* 68: 416-417). The possibility of this having been modeled on a Silla precedent has been noted by some scholars.

with the palace at the center surrounded by the Three Mountains of Yamato, might also be understood as a means of symbolically representing the centrality of the sovereign and his court within a cosmic context (Ooms 2008, 78-79). While Tenmu would hardly have been the first ruler to use writing as a means of symbolically representing the power of the ruler and the state—as outlined above, it is clear that Kōtoku and Tenchi also made efforts to render their territory "legible" and project their authority through script—writing seems to have been a key component not only of his practical approach to power, but of cementing his ideological orientation: after all, it was Tenmu who ordered the compilation of the first "history," the *Kojiki* (712). Unlike Tenchi, he seems to have promoted vernacular verse over Sinitic, and thus favored the oral presentation of "praise" verses for the sovereign, but he valued writing as a means of ordering the cosmos that he had "inherited," and, in particular, for its ability to control and cement the narrative of his rise to power.

The gradual escalation of the use of writing as more and more literate labor became available at Kiyomihara is apparent in the *mokkan* recovered there; the further expansion and maturation of written culture at Fujiwara can similarly be observed among *mokkan* recovered from throughout the capital. Beginning with the period of its construction, *mokkan* seem to have been used as a means of organizing labor, and upon occupation of the palace, for the acquisition and dispensation of everyday necessities, and the exchanging of information and persons among agencies (Ichi Hiroki 2010, 199-205; 220-227). Given that the comprehensive Taihō Code was promulgated in 701, the fact that the Fujiwara palace site has yielded a substantive "wood trail" of its day-to-day operations is perhaps unsurprising; while this set of laws and regulations was preceded by the (alleged) Ōmi Code (668) and the Kiyomihara Code (689), the Taihō Code was a reformed version based on Tang precedent, and was instituted in an age where the bureaucracy had matured to the point where strict adherence to the guidelines laid out therein could now be expected. Preliminary archipelagan "shortcuts" such as the *zenpaku* format for report documents were replaced by continental standards, as were terms for administrative units around the country (e.g., replacing the term 評 with 郡).

Figure 8. Fujiwara Palace North Mokkan No. 34 (Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 1968, 29)

This standardization and "updating" of Japanese document styles and administrative terminology went hand-in-hand with other efforts at projecting Chinese-style imperial authority from Fujiwara. Furthermore, under this new system, the importance of documentation itself appears to have been emphasized. While their jobs may now have required considerably more meticulous efforts in document composition, bureaucrats still found time to experiment as they continued to work on their calligraphic skills and textual knowledge:

Side 1: 糞土墻墻糞墻賦

Side 1: Dung earth wall wall dung wall *fu*

This might also be called an "*Analects mokkan*," since it transcribes fragments from the fifth book of that work, specifically a passage that reads: "one cannot plaster over a wall made of dung" (糞土之墻不可杇也). Our scribe's practice of this passage does show that he was reading and engaging with that text beyond the first passage (the "to learn" passage [學而編] so often found among calligraphic *mokkan*), to the extent that he sought to practice some rather non-utilitarian characters that appear in this passage, 糞 "dung" and 墻 "wall", which are both repeated. The calligraphy is not that of a very experienced scribe, but this individual seems to have been eager to learn and practice what he had learned; moreover, his stream of consciousness is on display here, as he seems to have sought out to transcribe the passage verbatim, and then skips over 之, perhaps unintentionally, only to pause on 墻, repeating it twice before circling back to the beginning of the passage and transcribing 糞 again, but then skipping over the relatively simple 土 in favor of another 墻. He may have chosen this passage particularly because of the difficult characters involved, and thus his pausing on them to refine their forms is inevitable; his attention then appears to be diverted elsewhere at the very end of the extant inscription, when he transcribes the character *fu* 賦(either a reference to taxation, or the literary form *fu* ["rhapsody"]). The fixation on the particular passage of the *Analects*, in which Confucius decries a lazy disciple for his habit of napping during the day, using the metaphor of a "wall of dung" to highlight the immutability of such people, might even suggest a certain indignation on the part of the scribe, who we might imagine may have been frustrated by a similar such person.

Calligraphic practice is said to continue onto the back of the *mokkan*; although no photo or transcription is available, there is said to be the characters 糞, 土, 墻, and 我 (this being an alternate name for the disciple Confucius scolds), suggesting a continued focus on the same passage (Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 1968, 28). The *mokkan* as extant has clearly been cut down from its original form, with a large piece of the right side having been split off, creating the appearance of an off-center inscription; this is probably due to the *mokkan* having been used for some non-inscriptive purpose sometime after this calligraphic practice had been completed. This sort of "after-life" of *mokkan* is not unknown from earlier periods (see the figurine *mokkan* from the Naniwa Palace site), but becomes increasingly common as these objects themselves become increasingly abundant. "*Mokkan* culture," as it were, was one in which an inscribed piece of wood could be erased, re-used, and/or repurposed. Beginning with the Fujiwara *mokkan*, *mokkan* that are no longer in their "original" form and show signs of secondary use (erasure) and/or re-shaping for an alternate purpose become increasingly common, to the extent that they might be considered to be one indicator of a maturing written culture where inscriptions are abundant. Just because *mokkan* were more accessible than paper does not mean

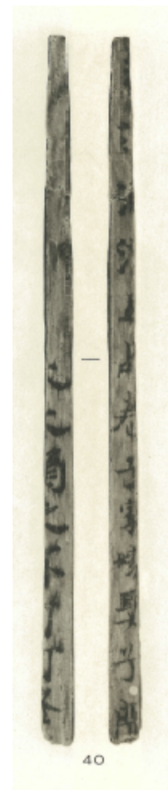

Figure 9. Fujiwara Palace Site (North Side Central Gate) Mokkan No. 40 (*FKM* I, Plate 9)

they were necessarily so abundant as to be disposable without efforts at recycling and/or repurposing, particularly in a context where surfaces for inscription were increasingly in demand.

A similarly repurposed calligraphic practice *mokkan* with a stream-of-consciousness style inscription has been found from the north side of the palace:

Side 1: □□□〔酒？〕□□品巻子家嫁娶子開

Side 2: ○□□〔大大？〕酒之□〔下？〕□□□

Side 1: …(wine) … thing volume child home bride take a bride child open
Side 2: … (big big) wine this (below)…

While I have translated each part of this inscription more or less as a separate word, some sequences, especially 嫁娶, which might be rendered simply “to marry” (嫁 meaning “to go as a bride” and 娶 “to take as a bride”). The relative incoherence of the entire sequence, however, marks this as an example of calligraphic practice. At first glance, the sequence does not seem to follow any sort of pattern, with the brush jumping between characters that share certain resonances (like from 家 to 嫁 and then to 娶), but at other times appearing to transcribe random words. For the most part, this “practice” exercise seems to follow the whims of the scribe, guiding us through his thoughts as his mind wanders from a child into the home, to a bride, to the act of wedding said bride, and then back again to the child. However, there may be something else going on here—namely, the scribe may have been engaged in textual study of the *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語, a collection of Confucius’ “sayings” that was compiled in the Former Han (206BCE-9CE). This seems likely because the front side features the character 巻, and then 子家 , which seems to be taken from the title of the work. The scribe’s failure to transcribe the whole title suggests his enterprise was not limited to “practice,” however; rather, he was interested in the semantic resonances created between particular characters when taken out of context, such as 子 and 家, and where those semantic resonances might lead. The compound 嫁娶, moreover, is found within the sixth volume of the *Kongzi jiayu*, in the context of a passage in which Confucius is expounding on the proper timing for marriage for men and women (Uno Seiichi 1996, 338-341). It seems that our scribe may have fixated on this particular passage, perhaps because he was thinking of “children” 子 and “family” 家, the former being the second half of “Confucius 孔子” and the latter being the first part of *jiayu* 家語 “house sayings.” While this may be mere calligraphic practice, the scribe chose to draw upon this particular passage, and to meander around its content rather than to simply transcribe it verbatim—this “stream of consciousness” style calligraphic practice speaks to a certain level of comfort in the written mode.[28] Moreover, in that this inscription appears to deconstruct and re-arrange the form of an extant

[28] In addition, this is a supplement text to the *Analects*, and the passage in question comes in the sixth volume; this suggests the scribe was reading widely and deeply into canonical works, and his literacy skills may have been considerably more advanced than those scribes transcribing the very first passage from the *Analects* at Kiyomihara and the Kannonji sites (discussed above).

canonical text, it would appear that textual study at Fujiwara was an active and interpretative mode.[29]

The *mokkan* itself has been deconstructed and re-configured—presumably after its use as a surface for calligraphic practice had expired. The right side of the wood has been split off, such that only a little more than one half of each character is visible on either side. Given that the piece seems otherwise intact, it is likely that this was for repurposing as some sort of wooden tool, moreso than it was for purposes of disposal. As noted above, a proliferation of *mokkan* seems to have precipitated more recycling and repurposing of *mokkan*, resulting in depositions of many *mokkan* that are no longer in their original form. The complex nature of *mokkan* as objects in circulation among bureaucratic officials is evident from the multiple stages of use and reuse. The flexibility of *mokkan* as a medium made them an ideal surface for not only literacy acquisition and textual study, but for the production of original texts, including drafts of important documents and works of a more personal and/or literary inclination.

Perhaps no documents produced in the *ritsuryō* system were as ideologically important as "imperial decrees," known as *senmyō* 宣命. Such documents would have demanded inscription on a more prestigious medium—and so it is rather difficult to parse the nature of *mokkan* bearing text resembling *senmyō*:

Side 1: ←□御命受止食国々内憂白

Side 2: ←□止詔大□□〔御命？〕乎諸聞食止詔

Side 1: … receive this august directive," "People from within the lands [I] rule are reporting their anxieties as follows…"
Side 2: …so it was decreed. Let all please hear this Great (august directive)," so it was decreed.

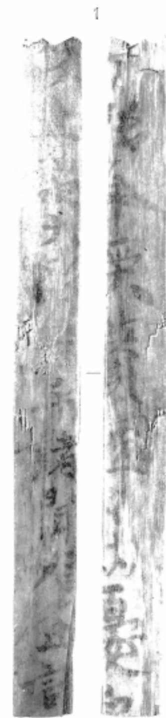

Figure 10. Fujiwara Palace Site North Mokkan No. 1 (Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 1968, 7)

The decipherable content of this *mokkan* closely mirrors that of extant *senmyō* from the *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀 (797), in which the sequence 止詔 [*…to noritamapu*] "so it was decreed" is a staple. The expression 大(御)命乎諸聞食止詔 [*ōmikoto wo moromoro kiki tamae to noritamapu*] "'Let all please hear… so it was decreed" that appears on the back here, is also found frequently in *senmyō* texts in *Shoku Nihongi* (Kotani Hiroyasu 1986, 9). With both this text and the edicts found in the *Shoku Nihongi*, a mixed Sinitic-vernacular style is employed, one that centers on logograms and affixes phonograms to represent grammatical particles (and sometimes conjugations/auxiliaries/endings). Similar transcription can be noted on Silla *mokkan,* and given the close contact with Silla

[29] While Nara Bunkazai Kenkyūjo (1978b, 59) agrees that this *mokkan* is calligraphic practice, it argues that 嫁娶 and 開 are terms common in the annotations of calendars, and that it is from such annotations that the scribe is drawing.

during the final quarter of the seventh century, it is possible that the development of *senmyōtai* was influenced by transcriptive methods such as that seen in Silla *hyangga*.[30] The major point of departure between the text on this *mokkan* and the text of the edicts in *Shoku Nihongi* is the fact that characters representing grammatical particles are here written the same size as all other characters; at some point later, the practice developed to transcribe such characters as half-width, as if they were annotations to the main text.[31] In all other respects, however, this text looks like *senmyō* as they are known from later ages.

The codification of methods for transcribing orders handed down by the sovereign in what has become known as *senmyōtai* 宣命体 seems to have already been well underway at Fujiwara. The notion that the words of the sovereign needed to be transcribed in a particular, highly stylized manner, probably originates with Chinese precedents; however, the highly regular, ritually-inflected mode in which Japanese edicts are transcribed is a unique development.[32] This unique inscriptive mode in which the sovereign "spoke" can be understood as likely emerging from within the centralizing and sovereign-aggrandizing efforts of Tenmu and Jitō. The edicts in this style from *Shoku nihongi* all date to the reign of Monmu (697-707) or later, and no similar examples on *mokkan* have been found from earlier sites, including Asuka, suggesting that the reign of Jitō may in fact represent something of a point of origin for texts composed in this particular style.[33] Of course, Monmu reigned from Fujiwara, and so if the ascension edict quoted in the *Shoku* nihongi is not a later forgery, *senmyō* style transcription must have been in use by 697. If so, it follows that scribes working at the Fujiwara Palace would need to be able to draft texts in this style. While the official edict would no doubt be copied onto paper, *mokkan* would be an appropriate context in which to shape the text into its final form.

The fact that this *mokkan* has been broken off at the top, split on the left side, and cut clean across the bottom, thus considerably modified from its original shape, strongly suggests this was not a "final" form for this imperial decree (if indeed this edict was officially enacted). Depending on the audience of the decree, it may have made sense to transport it in *mokkan* form, due toits relative durability compared to paper; however because this was found at the site of the palace, from an area known to be home to bureaucratic offices, it is more likely that this represented a preliminary draft and/or practice composing in this particular "decree" style.

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[30] On the logogram-centric phonogram-affixed transcription (K. *hunju ŭmjong* 訓主音從) in Silla contexts, see Lee SeungJae 2016.

[31] This practice probably developed out of analogy to "annotation" of Sinitic works, but *senmyōtai* of both varieties, with grammatical particles written at full and at half size, is found throughout Nara period works. See Kotani 1986, 11-16.

[32] On Chinese precedents for royal edicts, see Tōno 1993, 258-259.

[33] While earlier *mokkan* transcribed in a vernacular-inflected mode do feature the quotative ～止 [*to*]—for instance, Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-2 does feature a sequence 世牟止言而 [*semu to ipite*] "saying that [they] would…" and there are many examples of the sequence 止申 [*to mawosu*]—the Fujiwara Palace *mokkan* are the first to feature the sequence 止詔 [*to mikotonoru*], "so it was decreed," which is characteristic of the so-called imperial decree style (*senmyōtai* 宣命体).

A further example of *senmyō* transcription found among the Fujiwara Palace *mokkan* bears a fragment of what appears to be another "decree":

Side 1: □〇詔大命乎〇伊奈止申者
Side 2: 〇頂請申〇使人和□〔安?〕
Side 1: …decreed. If there be any who say they will decline to follow the Grand Directive…
Side 2: Humble request reported. Messenger Wa (Yasu)

Figure 11. Fujiwara Palace Site Mokkan No. 3-1063 (*FKM* III, Plate 1)

The front side here clearly mirrors the first *senmyō mokkan* above, featuring a sentence ending in ～止詔 [*to noritamapu*], which appears to have been followed by a new directive admonishing those who would fail to follow the order as given. While there are no exact parallels in the known corpus of *senmyō,* the structure and tone match many examples.[34] The back side of the *mokkan* features the name of a messenger, along with the phrase "humble request reported," and appears to be in the same hand. Again, the fact that this *mokkan* was deliberately broken apart before being deposited suggests this was probably not the final form of an imperial decree. However, the inclusion of the name of a "messenger" might indicate this "decree" was an order to a particular person and/or institution, and that the party delivering the order was "humbly reporting" it; the *mokkan* form may have been necessary due to distance, or it may have been a companion to a paper document, identifying the carrier and the order's authenticity.

The messenger presenting the order would presumably be separate from the person who received/transcribed it; we can be certain that no sovereign was transcribing their own edicts—the very fact that these are always marked by "～to *noritamapu*" (and in some *Shoku Nihongi* examples, further "narration" of the context of the sovereign's act of decreeing is included), clearly indicates the voice of a third party who is interpreting and transcribing decrees upon their bestowal. We might then understand the "humbly reported" on the back as in the voice of that third party, who on behalf of the sovereign requests cooperation, but still speaks in his own voice—but we need not necessarily identify him as the messenger; rather, it this voice that does the identifying. The complexity of intermingling voices present in *senmyō* style transcription means that locating the agency of the scribe is rather difficult; while he would have been expected to adhere to established structures, he would also have been forced to make certain transcriptive choices in order to accurately reflect the content of the sovereign's decree. To a large degree, we might assume, these choices would be informed by precedent, but it is unclear just how much precedent there was for this form and this style of transcription prior to the

[34] By this I mean that there is no example of …伊奈止申者 [*ina to mawosaba* or *ina to mawosu pa*], i.e., "if there be any who say they decline," or "if [he] declines." The locution *ina to* ["I decline,"] does occur in the Empress Shōtoku's 765 edict appointing the monk Dōkyō as "First Minister of the Great Council of State" 太政大臣. For a translation of this edict, see Ross Bender 2018, 55.

age of Fujiwara – indeed, as noted, the first *senmyō* style transcription on *mokkan* are these two examples.

The Fujiwara Palace was rife with written activity—amidst their everyday duties, officials were studying canonical texts on a deeper level than ever before, and new, specialized modes of transcription were under development in support of state-building projects. Tōno Haruyuki (1994) argues that Fujiwara Palace site *mokkan* are evidence of a written culture in transition: focusing on calligraphic style, he notes that the Fujiwara Palace *mokkan* are a mixture of Tang and older Six Dynasties styles of calligraphy; moreover, he notes, phonogram usage on the whole continues to reflect earlier borrowings from Early Middle Chinese transmitted to Japan through received Sino-Korean pronunciations (Tōno Haruyuki 1994, 85-89). This assessment largely accords with the conventional understanding that the Taihō Code of 701 marks a movement away from traditional practices originating on the peninsula and associated with allochthon scribal lineages, toward a written culture modeled directly on the contemporary Tang example. Following the promulgation of the Taihō Code, document formats are indeed increasingly standardized, and the terms used to refer to administrative units (郡・郷) are updated to match current usage in Tang. However, these reforms of administrative documentation would not have been possible without the growth in the literate population that came about in the last part of the seventh century, an accomplishment built on the contributions of allochthonous and refugee educators. That this "updating" of written practice came about a generation after the inauguration of document-based bureaucracy in Japan at Ōmi, is in many ways unsurprising—as a young literate population sought to ensure they were informed of the most current norms in Tang—and, as the conventional wisdom suggests, should be seen as a declaration of "literate maturity."

Belles Lettres at Fujiwara

The reigns of Tenmu and Jitō involved quite a bit of conscious forgetting of Tenchi's contributions to the world they inherited, although, as Herman Ooms (2008) notes, a rehabilitation of Tenchi's legacy was initiated by his daughter Jitō, who belatedly built a tomb for him to the north of the Fujiwara Palace toward the end of her life (Ooms 2008, 50). By the time Jitō's half-sister Genmei assumed the throne in 707, her ascension edict spoke of Tenchi as "origin" of the rites of imperial succession,[35] but during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, his reign seems to have been confined to the shadows of historical memory in favor of the glorification of Tenmu's victory and accomplishments as sovereign. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that *Nihon shoki* should offer a different view from *Kaifūsō* of the inauguration of the composition of Sinitic verse in Japan: in the brief biography of Prince Ōtsu after his assassination following his implication in a plot to usurp the throne from Jitō's son, Kusakabe, the *Nihon shoki* credits him with "beginning" the practice:

> 皇子大津、天渟原瀛眞人天皇第三子也。容止墻岸、音辭俊朗。為天命開別天皇所愛。及長辨有才學。尤愛文筆。詩賦之興、自大津始也。[36]

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[35] See edict in *Shoku Nihongi* Genmei 1.7.17; *SNKBT* 12: 119-122.
[36] *NS* Jitō 1.10.3; *NKBT* 68: 486-487.

The Prince Ōtsu was the third son of the Heavenly Sovereign Ama no Nunahara Oki Mahito [Tenmu]. His conduct was noble and his words refined. For this reason he was beloved by the Heavenly Sovereign Amemikoto Hirakasu Wake [Tenchi]. As he grew he was discerning and had a talent for learning. He especially loved composing texts. The efflorescence of poetry and rhapsodies started with Ōtsu.

The *Nihon shoki* narrates that Ōtsu was just twenty-four at the time of his death, barely old enough to remember the Ōmi court. However, this "biography" makes special mention of Tenchi's fondness for him (as the son of Jitō's older sister, Ōtsu would have been both his nephew and his grandson), while also highlighting his love of letters (文筆). Moreover, his name, Ōtsu, recalls the location of Tenchi's palace, and in all likelihood is derived from it; thus, despite being Tenmu's son the *Nihon shoki* would have us associate him more with Tenchi. *Kaifūsō* features four verses attributed to Ōtsu, along with a short biographical sketch that largely mirrors this excerpt from *Nihon shoki* while bemoaning the prince's fate, forced to take his own life in his youth after having been led astray by a treacherous Silla monk (Tatsumi Massaki 2012, 62-66). While the compiler of *Kaifūsō* would certainly disagree with *Nihon shoki* that the composition of Sinitic verse in Japan began with Ōtsu, he does paint him as a talented poet. Further, with a name like Ōtsu, arguably he is a fitting heir to the poetic traditions of the Ōmi court, and is thus placed third in the text following Ōtomo and his younger brother Prince Kawashima. Thus, while *Nihon shoki* attempts to frame Ōtsu as progenitor of Sinitic verse in Japan, it is probably more appropriate to understand him as invested in continuing the culture of Sinitic verse that had developed around the Ōmi court; that the *Nihon shoki* goes out of its way to note the connection between Ōtsu and Tenchi is particularly telling in this regard. In his short life, he clearly had an impact in continuing the Sinitic verse traditions of Tenchi's court after the move back to Kiyomihara.

While Tenmu's reign is not known as one in which Sinitic verse flourished, the Asuka Pond *mokkan* discussed above suggests at least some efforts at composition were taking place, and these efforts were continued at Fujiwara. The literary coterie at Ōmi had consisted of allochthons and refugees, and was probably rather small; as written culture expanded at Kiyomihara and Fujiwara, we might assume so did the number of individuals capable of composing verse. While *mokkan* evidence to this point is far from abundant, it is more than what is extant from Ōtsu:

Figure 12. Fujiwara Palace Site Eastern Admin Complex North Mokkan No. 664 (*FJK* II, Plate 22)

Side 1: □雪多降而甚寒

Side 1: …much snow has fallen, and so it is exceedingly cold…

This mokkan features a fragment of what appears to be a report on the weather. However, that comment appears to possibly take the form of a line from a seven-character Literary Sinitic verse.

While it has been fit into that form nicely, as Sema (2016) notes, it is a fairly novice attempt: the use of 降 is superfluous in verse—just 雪 would normally suffice—and the whole line reads a bit too neatly into the vernacular via *kundoku* (233-234). Our scribe was clearly interested in presenting his work in the form of Sinitic verse, but his knowledge of poetic conventions seems to have been somewhat limited. Nevertheless, this *mokkan,* like the Asuka Pond *mokkan* above, represents an important moment of composition practice, and suggests that not only was literacy education increasingly incorporating *belles lettres*, but scribes were actively seeking to shape content into particular literary forms, with varying levels of success.

It was not only *kanshi* that were being composed and refined on *mokkan*, but the composition of vernacular poetry (*uta*) was also being integrated into the written realm during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō. Scribes in previous eras, beginning in time of the Naniwa palace, had transcribed vernacular poetry to serve in ritual contexts, and as a means of the learning the basics of phonogram-based transcription.[37] One of the most complete Naniwazu poem *mokkan* from the pre-Nara era has been recovered from the Fujiwara palace and features calligraphic practice of various other characters; the importance of this verse in literacy acquisition would persist well into the Heian period, resulting in its identification as the "father" of poetry by Ki no Tsurayuki in the preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905). At Fujiwara, composition of poetry likely remained a largely oral exercise and probably depended heavily on established formulas. However, the growth in transcriptive practices that actively added layers to a verse through orthographic choices is probably a late seventh century phenomenon (see Lurie [2005]), and so it follows that an awareness of poetry as a written mode (however secondary to its aural reception) must have been ascendant. Two examples of "original" poems (that is, not found on other *mokkan*) can be identified from the Ishigami and Asuka Pond sites, while one further example comes from the Fujiwara Palace. These three examples differ markedly from the Naniwa Palace *Harukusano mokkan*, in formal aspects (e.g., estimated original size, and number of columns of writing on a single surface) and in context of excavation, suggesting they did not function in ritual contexts. Rather, they are generally classified as "calligraphic practice" or jottings.

In all three cases, the extant *mokkan* is fragmentary, having been altered from its original form; the fact that these have been broken in such a manner indeed suggests their relative valuelessness—*mokkan* served only as temporary surfaces for the transcription of

Figure 13. Asuka Pond Mokkan No. 84-16 (*AFK* I, Plate 56)

[37] On uses of *uta mokkan*, see Sakaehara Towao 2011, esp. 110; 119-123; a summary in English is provided in Frydman 2014, 40-41.

these poems. In the case of one of the fragments from Asuka, where a poem beginning *asanagi ni* ["in the morning calm"] is incised into the wood (rather than written in ink), someone may have been idly carving a known poem into an available piece of wood (the shape of which is not that of a standard *mokkan*, but rather appears to have been an object of unknown use).[38] In that case, refining of one's brushwork could hardly have been the purpose; rather, recall of the verse, or simply boredom, may have been the impetus (in any case, it is unlikely that someone would have "composed" a verse in this manner). The remaining example from Asuka, found at the Asuka Pond site, reads:

> Side 1: □止求止佐田目手和□〔加？〕／○□□□
> Side 2: □〈〉□□〈〉／○羅久於母閉皮
> Side 1: …toku to sadamete wa ga… [undone, deciding, I …]
> Side 2: …raku omopeba [thinking that…]

This *mokkan*, like those above, was also recovered in the 84th stage of excavations in the northern part of the site, and may have been produced by someone with a connection to the Asuka-dera temple complex. It has been modified considerably from its original form, with some amount being cut off the top of the piece, while the left side, which formerly featured an additional column of writing, has been split off. In its current form, the extant line on both sides is somewhat centered, but the remnants of additional text can be glimpsed in the margins. The text is clearly written entirely in phonograms, but because the marginal text is not legible, only a few fragments of words are recoverable. Furthermore, although the meter does read like part of an *uta*, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility that this could be prose, because all that remains are predicates. Moreover, it is unclear if they are connected, or if two different texts might have occupied either surface. However, the coarse quality of the calligraphy, the multiple lines of text, and the fact that it was broken into several pieces before being deposited all point to its being either "practice" or a draft, and given that a source for the text inscribed cannot be identified presently, quite possibly an original piece of composition practice.

The Fujiwara Palace example is similar in its fragmentary nature, although its extant state does enable more speculation on the type of verse it may have contained, because the extant inscription consists of five phonograms that make up a *makura kotoba* (epithet) found in *Man'yōshū*:

> Side 1: 多々那都久→
> Side 1: tatanaduku [layer upon layer]

This line appears on a *mokkan* fragment that, based on the placement of the text, probably originally featured two columns of writing. The top of the *mokkan* seems to be perhaps intact, but the bottom as well as the right side have been damaged; however, the extant text is written toward the right side, and despite the

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[38] For a detailed discussion of this piece, see Frydman (2014): 104-110.

damage to the area around 那, the right edge is partly intact. The left edge, however, has been split, meaning the original was probably quite a bit wider.[39] There are several scratches in the surface of the wood, and in the infrared photograph (Figure 14) provided in Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai (1968), the remnants of a previous ink inscription that has been partially erased are visible on the bottom left (the top character resembles 道, but due to the wood being split on the left side, the left part of this character is missing). This is clear evidence of the *mokkan* having been reused to transcribe this phonogram-based text, which is neatly lined up in the center, evenly spaced, but in a perhaps slightly unpracticed hand (note the large amount of space left between the left and right radicals for both 那 and 都, and the somewhat awkward placement of the top and bottom halves of 多). Sakaehara Towao (2011) provides an infrared photograph of the back side, omitted from the Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai publication, that shows calligraphic practice and/or jottings (largely illegible) written at an opposite orientation from the front, suggesting the content was probably unrelated.[40]

Figure 14. Fujiwara Palace Site North Mokkan No. 36 (Nara-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 1968, 29)

As Sakaehara (2010) notes, the five-morae sequence *tatanaduku* appears three times in the *Manyōshū*: in one poem each by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Yamabe no Akahito, and in one anonymous verse on the pain of parting found in Book 12. Of the three, only the anonymous verse features *tatanaduku* as the opening *ku*, and so if indeed this *mokkan* can be linked with a known verse, it would be a possible match (although there is no way to know for certain the extant inscription was meant as the first *ku*):

立名付　青垣山之　隔者　數君乎　言不問可聞[41]

tatanaduku	Layer upon layer
awokakiyama no	the verdant mountains form a fence—
henarinaba	if you are on the other side,
sibasiba kimi wo	will I not even be able to inquire
koto topazi kamo	after you from time to time?

While it is appealing to imagine this *mokkan* as containing a verse that would later be anthologized in *Man'yōshū*, without anything beyond the first *ku* such a conclusion would rest on very tenuous ground. While *tatanaduku* may not have been the most popular epithet, it is twice used used by *Man'yōshū* poets to describe "verdure fence mountains" (青垣山); Hitomaro employs it somewhat differently, but

[39] Sakaehara (2011, 85) reconstructs the likely "life cycle" of this *mokkan.*
[40] Sakaehara (2011): 83-84.
[41] *MYS* 12.3187.

in all three cases the epithet seems to have been working to create an impression of layers upon layers, folds upon folds, that are both lush but create a barrier with their abundance. Thus, even if the second *ku* were extant, and read *aokakiyama*, it would still not be sufficient to identify this *mokkan* with the poem above, simply because *makura kotoba* conventionally modify a specific place or phenomenon, and any number of very different verses could open with that combination. While this five character inscription gestures toward a larger vernacular poetic world current at the Fujiwara palace, and suggests that literate individuals were actively composing and transcribing vernacular verse, its fragmentary nature prevents further speculation.

The written culture of the Fujiwara palace was very much a continuation of that seen at Asuka, but like many aspects of elite life, underwent a number of changes as the Taihō Code sought to bring Japan "up to date." Such changes were only possible because a new literate generation had come of age, and was engaged in textual study and literacy training on a level not seen among previous generations. Officials at Fujiwara needed to be proficient in a number of new document forms and transcription styles; the bureaucracy required that communications take particular forms, and as such an ability to work within form became a priority of literacy education. This included both Sinitic and vernacular literary forms, the latter of which was increasingly present in the written realm. While draft compositions of original works are still relatively rare in the material record from the Fujiwara palace, their presence among a vast corpus of tag and document *mokkan* attest to a growing appreciation for literary writing among bureaucrats whose everyday use of the technology was rapidly intensifying. This proliferation in texts, both literary and non-literary, is the hallmark of a mature written culture.

Provincial Mokkan of the Late Seventh Century

As we have seen, written culture reached new maturity in the capital region by the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth. During this time, literacy in the provinces was also increasing. Inscriptions do indeed cluster at sites under the direct control of the central government, but outside of the top officials, many of those employed in these bureaucratic bastions would have been members of the local gentry. Written life in the provinces would be considerably more prolific during the eighth century, but some late seventh century finds attest to the role of writing in the projection of the *ritsuryō* state's power outside the center, as Tenmu and Jitō sought to render their outlying territories "legible."

Outside of the Naniwa palace site and the Asuka region, some scattered sites probably connected to provincial and district administration have yielded a number of *mokkan* datable to the seventh century. Above, I have already discussed those that were recovered from the Ōmi region, which is somewhat of a special case given its connections to allochthonous and Paekche refugee populations. The excavation of *mokkan* from early provincial centers mirrors the case of early Silla *mokkan,* found in the largest quantities outside of the capital (see Chapter 2). The locations of the largest finds, in present-day Shizuoka, Nagano, Saitama, and Tokushima prefectures, are fairly spread out (see Figure 15), with no clustering of sites in any particular region of the realm.

The spread of written culture to these provincial locations seems to have predated Tenmu, and may have been part of Tenchi's initial push for centralization. As Watanabe (2008) indicates, among *mokkan* bearing sexagenary dates which correspond to years prior to 680, five out of thirty (17%) are from provincial sites (Watanabe 2008, 22-25). For the years between 680 and 700, eleven out of seventy-five (15%) were recovered from provincial sites (Watanabe 2008, 22-25). Taking sexagenary date *mokkan* as a measure of seventh century *mokkan* as a whole, Watanabe suggests the trend toward high prevalence of seventh century *mokkan* from the provinces vs. the capital might be attributed to the relative ease with which messages could be passed by means of messengers in the capital. While there are a fair number of *mokkan* from the capital addressing or reporting to superiors (so-called "*zenpaku*" 前白 *mokkan*), orders from above to below are virtually absent (with the exception, perhaps, of the two *senmyō mokkan* from the Fujiwara palace). This suggests that the formality of the former situation (an inferior addressing a superior, often to make a request of some kind) may have encouraged the use of inscription to verify and authenticate. In the latter situation, a superior may not have needed to follow such formal protocols for his message to be received and complied with (Watanabe 2008, 35). Watanabe's theory suggests that the distance at which provincial centers operated from the capital necessitated the use of script to cover and in a sense "collapse" that distance: a message might travel through the hands of several messengers on its way to and from the provincial outpost, or an inscription might serve as an independent means of verifying the contents of a shipment, since its sender could not be immediately reached.

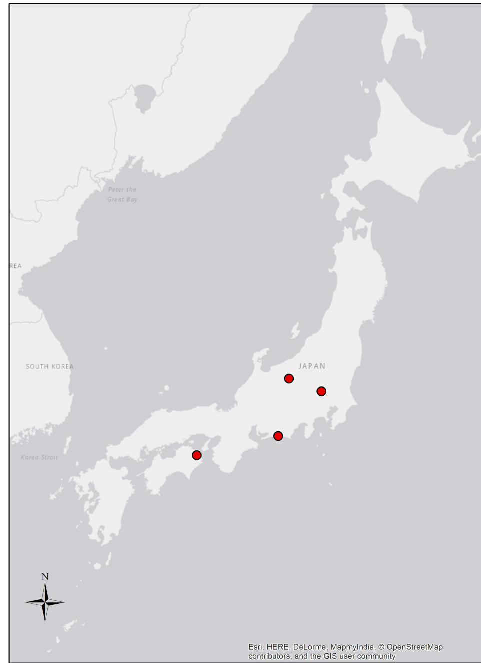

Figure 15. Provincial Mokkan Sites (Ōmi excluded)

However, in the context of an outlying bureaucratic center, likely stratified with centrally appointed officials at the top and local elites occupying the lower ranks, inscription was also an important means of projecting the presence and authority of the state. The practice of documenting and recording official activities was a method for exhibiting state power to local people and entrenched local authorities. In the case of the Kannonji site in Tokushima, however, the use of writing may predate the *ritsuryō* expansion and therefore could have originated with efforts by local authorities, but is likely somehow connected to any initial reform efforts that may have begun under Kōtoku.

In this section, I will briefly address each of the major late seventh century provincial *mokkan* sites, and consider the types of *mokkan* found there within the larger development of written culture in the Tenmu and Jitō eras, while paying close attention to those examples which make use of those new forms and transcription methods ascendant during this period.

Kannonji Site

The Kannonji site, located in modern day Tokushima city, Tokushima prefecture, on the island of Shikoku, is thought to have been the site of the provincial headquarters for Awa province. The site has yielded more than two hundred *mokkan* from three different natural waterways, where they seem to have been ritually cast along with a number of different wooden objects.[42] Out of those 200, approximately 85 probably date to the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries. The lowest layer of a natural waterway in the southern part of the site has yielded some of the oldest *mokkan* in all of Japan, with a few thought to date to the 640s and 650s, including the *Analects mokkan* discussed above, and the earliest example of a Naniwazu poem *mokkan* which is thought to date to the 670s (Ōhashi Yasunobu 2009, 24; Frydman 2014, 63). While there are some questions with regard to the reliability of the stratigraphy inside the waterway, the bottom-most layers are thought to be intact.[43]

Figure 16. Kannonji Site Mokkan No.8 (Fujikawa and Wada 1998, 210)

Despite the early dating of a few isolated examples, most of the seventh century *mokkan* probably date to the 680s and 690s, i.e., the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō. Among those *mokkan* probably roughly contemporaneous with the Fujiwara palace, is the following example, another so-called "glossary" *mokkan*:

Side 1: 安子之比乃木／少司椿ツ婆木

Side 2: □□□□〔留？〕木

Side 1: asi no hinoki / shōshi; 椿: tubaki

Side 2:… (ru?) ki

Because the current form of *mokkan* is limited to a fragment of what appears to have been the bottom, there is limited text available upon which to evaluate its original character. There is not much to decipher here, but there is a clear set of phonograms (both *ongana* and *kungana*—木 and possibly 子 falling into the latter

[42] These included human and boat-shaped wooden figurines and a large number of *igushi* [prayer sticks]. Given how the *mokkan* and other objects have clustered into the riverbanks, Ōhashi Yasunobu (2008, 25) speculates that they probably did not move all that far from their point of entry. It is clear they were deposited deliberately along with other objects, although whether for purposes of disposal or ritual, it is not possible to say. See also Fujikawa Tomoyuki 2001, 116.

[43] The *Analects mokkan* and the *Naniwazu* poem were found in a layer below where a *mokkan* bearing a sexagenary date equivalent to 689 was found (meaning they were likely deposited prior to Tenmu's reign). See Fujikawa Tomoyuki and Wada Atsumu 1998, 206, and Fujikawa Tomoyuki and Wada Atsumu 1999, 205-206.

category), and in one case, ツ婆木, these phonograms are arranged below and on a smaller scale than 椿, which they appear to be glossing. The preceding column of writing (安子之比乃木), and the 少司 immediately above 椿 appear to be readings for characters that were originally placed higher up on the *mokkan*; the text on the back is mostly illegible but also seems to follow this pattern. Unlike the Kita Ōtsu *mokkan,* this inscription seems to be primarily concerned with providing phonogram-based vernacular readings for nouns. The sequence 安子之比乃木 is peculiar because the arrangement of the characters has 安子 to the upper right, while 之 is pushed to the left, suggesting there was probably some sort of break here and the two sets of characters are unconnected. Overall, the arrangement of the characters suggests no set columns or lengthy sentences; rather, it seems the surface would have been a constellation of scattered notes on enunciation. The fact that trees seem to have been somewhat of a focus here may suggest our scribe was relying on a particular portion of a lexicographical text, and shares certain resonances with the similarly tree-focused Nishigawara Mokkan No. 13 discussed in Chapter 3.

Along with the *Analects mokkan* and the *Naniwazu* poem example, this "glossary" serves as testament to the efforts toward literacy acquisition and textual study happening at the Kannonji site. While the site has also yielded a number of document *mokkan*, including one that looks like a census (a list of names and ages), and a large number of tags, these three *mokkan,* along with a number of calligraphic practice *mokkan*, show that officials in the provinces were actively honing their inscriptive skills, through recourse to both the Sinitic tradition (the *Analects*) and transcription of vernacular poetry in phonograms (*Naniwazu*), while simultaneously seeking to build their Sinographic vocabulary. That our scribe was interested in practicing characters for particular trees may suggest he was interested in composing on the seasons. Of course, this is pure speculation, but it is difficult to imagine the word *tsubaki* "camellia" as being particularly useful in the drafting of official documents. While its written culture may not have been quite as vibrant as that of the capital, the Kannonji site *mokkan* show that document-based administration had penetrated the provincial landscape, and was quite possibly breeding literate elites who may have never set foot in Yamato province.

Iba Site

The Iba site is located in present-day Shizuoka prefecture in the city of Hamamatsu. The centerpiece of the site is an ancient river-bed about 20 meters wide by 2.5 meters deep. The area around this river became home to a settlement beginning in the Late Kofun period (eastern bank), and then was the site of an imbedded-pillar building complex during the *ritsuryō* era (western bank) (Kawae Hidetaka 1979, 31-32). Given the site's coastal proximity and the content of some of the *mokkan*, it may have been a way station for both sea and land travel. The site was discovered and first excavated in 1949, but it was a series of excavations initiated in 1968 prior to railway construction that revealed early historic period features; by the time excavations concluded in 1981, a total of 111 *mokkan* had been unearthed (Suzuki Toshinori and Watanabe Akihiro 2008, 196). Out of these, ten have been conclusively dated to the late seventh century, and seven of those bear

sexagenary dates ranging from 681 to 699, with three separate pieces dated 695. They thus squarely fall within the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, and their inscriptions show general continuation of trends seen also in the capital region and in Ōmi at the time. However, one of the three dated to 695 seems to have more in common with the Nishigawara "Letter" *mokkan* than any other extant *mokkan* inscription, which may point to some commonalities in provincial written culture—and in the written life at "way stations" in particular—that transcend the mutual connection to the center and point perhaps to a written world on the margins that was specific to transfer points, the "in-between" spaces of a travel network.

> Side 1: 乙未年二月□□〔下官？〕□〔何？〕父丈部御佐久□〔何？〕沽故買□〔支？〕□物〈〉／□〔以？〕御調矣本為而種々政負故沽支然者〈〉／□大□□〔末呂？〕□□□不患止白
>
> Side 1: Yin Wood Ram Year [695], Second Month…. (my?) father, Hasetsukabe Misaku sold, and thereby [he] bought… things… considering the local tribute tax to be the base, he took on various responsibilities, and so he sold it. Therefore… I, Opomaro… I am without worry. I reported.[44]

Figure 17. Iba Site Mokkan No. 84 (Suzuki and Watanabe 2008, 206)

Found on the eastern bank of a channel feeding into the main riverbed from the southwest direction, this *mokkan* was recovered from a lower layer, but due to several stakes having been erected to direct the flow of water, the stratigraphy is unreliable (Hamamatsu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 2008, 18). However, the *mokkan* itself bears a sexagenary date, allowing the inscription, at least (as opposed to time of deposition) to be dated to the very end of the seventh century (695). There is an incised line clear across the top, which is probably related to secondary cutting-down of the wood rather than to the production of the inscription; given that the inscription and the other edges seem to be intact, it appears that the re-manufacture of this piece was halted before completion. A view of the *mokkan* from the side shows that while the wood has warped, it appears to be thicker toward the top; there are also faint traces of a previously erased inscription toward the bottom. This suggests the *mokkan* had gone through several stages of use and reuse by the time of its deposition, and so perhaps the person tasked with cutting it down for further reuse determined that such an effort would be wasted on this piece. At almost 11cm wide, this is one of the widest, most "rectangular" of known seventh century *mokkan*, and is physically similar to the Yunobe site *mokkan*, which is 12cm wide but almost a full 10cm shorter in length. Alongside the Yunobe *mokkan*, moreover, this one of the few examples from the seventh century to feature more than two columns of writing on one surface, and given the content, it is possible that a custom may have

[44] Translation based on interpretations provided by Hamamatsu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai, ed. 2008, 24-25 and Watanabe Akihiro 2010, 177-178.

developed of using such wide, flat, thick pieces of wood for inscribing correspondence meant to travel some distance.[45]

The content of the inscription seems fairly mundane, although the illegibility of the bottom portion of the second and most of the third columns of writing render obscure the details of the situation being reported. It would seem that Ōmaro is the speaker in the text (it may be he that he is also the scribe), and he is reporting on his father's actions in selling something in order to better prepare tribute tax. However, the form here is somewhat unusual in several aspects: first, although it begins with a date and ends in ~to mōsu [I report], it does not identify the recipient nor does it begin with an act of "speaking" (the so-called *zenpaku* 前白 format), but rather jumps right into the message following the date (Watanabe Akihiro 2010, 178). The inclusion of ~to mōsu almost seems like an afterthought, added to give the document a sense of formality that is otherwise largely absent. This sort of superficial formality is appended to what is essentially a vernacular message, transcribed in what is a mixed vernacular mode (Lurie's "Chinese-style"), in mostly vernacular word order complete with transcription of particles and phonogram affixation. In this respect, it shares much with Nishigawa Morinouchi Mokkan No. 2-2 (although the transcription style clearly belongs to the tail end of the seventh century), because it seems primarily concerned with communicating a particular message (content), and the form is made to fit around that content (rather than fitting the content into a prescribed form). The fact that both Nishigawara and Iba are sites where land and water routes converge is also a point worthy of note: the sort of officials who were staffing these way stations may have been familiar with script and its uses for managing traffic flow, but they were very utilitarian in their approach. In other words, they made script work for them in particular ways, moreso than they were actively seeking acculturation.

The late seventh century occupants of the western part of the Iba site, tasked with managing traffic by land and sea, appear to have been very meticulous in their recording of dates, but other formalities were perhaps less important, so long as communications remained between those operating on the margins. While some of those staffing the outpost may have been from the area, probably most were appointed from the center to oversee affairs in this distant location. Prior to the Taihō code, it seems that such distance enabled the appointees to dispense with whatever specific "protocols" might have been in place for the drafting of official documents (and there is some question as to whether *zenpaku* was an official document form). In addition to the seven sexagenary dated document *mokkan* from the site, there is one piece of calligraphic practice thought to date to the seventh century. The "stream of consciousness" on display here echoes the distance between Hamamatsu and the capital:

Side 1: 坐□□〔易？〕易遠慰慰□

[45] The ability to withstand travel and exchange would have necessitated a thicker piece of wood: this *mokkan* is a full 9mm thick while the Yunobe *mokkan* is 20mm thick. One reason the re-manufacturing process may have been halted was that this piece had already been shaved down and was no longer as likely to endure as much handling as in its previous incarnations.

Side 2: ○小斉漏尓□〔尓？〕

Side 1: seat (content) content distant soothe soothe…

Side 2: small hem seep ni (ni?)

Figure 18. Iba Site Mokkan No. 87 (Hamamatsu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 2008)

This *mokkan* was found on the western bank of the same channel where No. 84 was recovered, from the very bottom of the early historic period layer, allowing it to be tentatively dated to the late seventh century (Hamamatsu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 2008, 19). It was found in two separate pieces; the break between them appears deliberate and probably occurred immediately prior to deposition(Hamamatsu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 2008, 26). While this seems to be mere calligraphic practice of scattered characters, there are semantic resonances from one character to the next that suggest the path of the scribe's thoughts. The first side repeats characters, making its identification as calligraphic practice more-or-less certain; however, we begin with "seat" 坐, and our scribe is at ease 易, repeating that character twice before seeming to pause in the inscription, leaving some space before beginning below with 遠 in darker, fuller brush strokes. Of course we do not know how long this pause may have lasted, but he resumes his calligraphic exercises by reflecting on the distance 遠 (perhaps from the capital?), and then "consoling" himself 慰. The reverse side is a bit more obscure, with some traces of erased text appearing on the top piece, with the extant text beginning below the break with 小. However, the text on the reverse does appear to be in a similar hand and style to the second part of the inscription on the front.. Given the size of 漏, what was initially read as 文日 below 小 has been corrected to an alternate form of 斉, where the bottom radical is written as 日 (Hamamatsu-shi Kyōiku Iinkai 2008, 26). The character 斉 as an adjective means "to make uniform (in size)," "to render equal," but can also mean "the hem of one's robe," a usage based on the notion that the length of a hem is "uniform," and which appears in the *Analects*. Because the following character is 漏 (also an alternate form missing the left-side water radical), it is likely that this carries such a meaning here—i.e, that the hem of the scribe's robe has become damp. The water seeping into the hem is probably meant to be the tears of the scribe. The following 尓 is another alternate character form, that we might understand as the sentence final particle 爾 ("and that is all"). If we then take 小 to be an adverb describing the extent of the robe's dampness, what appears on the back side can be read as a syntactically coherent sequence. In its entirety, we might interpret the four character sequence as "the hem of my robe has become

slightly damp (and that is all).” It has been proposed that this may be an excerpt from some unknown text, but a source has yet to be successfully identified. Without such an identification, it seems more likely that a moment of reflection on distance in the midst of calligraphic practice naturally led to an experimentation with composition on that topic, in what is no less than a lyric moment. While this is a brief four-character take on the topic, it evokes similar such reflections on the behalf of border-guards (*sakimori*) whose verses are found in *Man'yōshū*.

Yashiro Site

Like the Iba and Nishigawara sites, the Yashiro site group, located in present-day Chikuma city, Nagano prefecture, is thought to have been an important transit location where land and water routes converged on the banks of the Chikuma River. The site sits on a low-lying area that was part of the Chikuma River riverbed until the late Kofun period, just north of a natural floodbank. In the latter half of the seventh century, the now abandoned Amenomiya Temple was built about 600m to the east of the site (Terauchi Takao 1996, 110), while large-scale imbedded pillar buildings began to be constructed within an existing settlement whose occupation history goes back to the Kofun period (Terauchi Takao 2008, 266-271). The site has yielded a total of about 120 *mokkan*, but only eight of these are thought to date to the late seventh century. Of these eight, two *mokkan* feature calligraphic practice based on the *Analects*, several document *mokkan* contain lists of names, and two inscriptions feature sexagenary dates. One of these dates corresponds to the time of the Fujiwara capital (698), and seems to be concerned with the listing of provisions and/or collections of grain from different individuals.[46] The other sexagenary *mokkan*, however, is notable because its date corresponds to the fourth year of Tenchi's reign:

Side 1: 乙丑年十二月十日酒□〔人？〕

Side 2: 「他田舎人」古麻呂

Side 1: Yang Wood Ox Year [665], Twelfth Month Tenth Day, Saka(hito)..

Side 2: 'Osada no Toneri' Komaro

Figure 19. Yashiro Site Mokkan No. 46 (*KCM*, 16)

This *mokkan* was recovered from fill soil used to fill in an irrigation channel in the first half of the eighth century. Because the inscription features a date that appears to correspond to the middle of the seventh century, this *mokkan* may have been held onto for some time before it was eventually deposited, or earlier layers may have been disturbed and became mixed with the fill soil during the process of the channel's burial (Denda Ifumi 1998, 280; Watanabe 2008, 33). While it is also possible that this year could correspond to 725 (one cycle later), it is exceedingly rare for *mokkan* inscriptions composed in the post-Taihō world to feature sexagenary dates instead of era name-based dates (J. *nengō* 年号), and dated eighth

[46] A similar example has been found at the Iba site. See Denda Ifumi 1998, 280.

century *mokkan* from the Yashiro site all follow this standard. Furthermore, unlike an example dated with the same sexagenary year recovered from the Ishigami site in Asuka, which appears to be a mistake for the 丁丑 year (10 years later, or 675), there seems to be no question that the first two characters on this *mokkan* are 乙丑. Therefore, the identification of this date as corresponding to 665 has ben generally accepted (Denda Ifumi 1998, 280; Watanabe Akihiro 2008, 33). The name 'Osada no Toneri' on the top of the reverse side is clearly in a different hand than the remaining text, written with considerably thinner brush strokes, and possibly over an erased portion of text. This could lend credence to the idea that the *mokkan* was kept and reused over time.

The legible content here consists of no more than a date and a few personal names, but along with a few examples from the Kannonji site, show that some features of written culture had begun to percolate into locations remote from the capital as far back as the reigns of Kōtoku, Saimei, and Tenchi. As noted in Chapter 2, one of the primary goals of Silla's adoption of document-based administration was the integration of new territory into its realm effectively and "legibly." The recovery of some *mokkan* from provincial sites at the earliest stages of *ritsuryō* centralization should hardly be surprising, then, in that writing was certainly being conceived in similar terms by Japan's rulers beginning in the time of the Naniwa court.

Both the Iba and Yashiro sites, while not themselves the location of district headquarters (*hyōke* 評家), are thought to be probably somehow connected to district governance—possibly as branches charged with the oversight of transit (Nagano-kenritsu Rekishikan 1996, 52). As such, they also have much in common with the Nishigawara site in Yasu, which is thought to have been the site of administrative headquarters for the district. While the eighth century would see provincial and district headquarters become centers for written life in the provinces, in the late seventh century writing seems to have been an important means of communication along transit routes, and so *mokkan* are found largely at sites where these routes converged. Writing in the provinces was in some respects still a performance of state authority, but it also had important practical applications, and many of the extant inscriptions are of a remarkably utilitarian quality.

Koshikida Site

The Koshikida site, located in modern Gyōda city, Saitama prefecture, is the site furthest east of the capital yielding *mokkan* dating to the seventh century. The site is located on the eastern floodplains of the Ara River, atop a natural embankment, and was home to settlements beginning in the Middle Yayoi period. Due to the high water table, excavations have yielded a large number of wooden artifacts, including *mokkan* (Tanaka Masao 1985, 77). A total of ten *mokkan* were recovered from two earthen refuse pits over the course of a rescue excavation conducted in 1983 and 1984. Based on the types of ceramics found in the fill soil, both pits are thought to have been buried at about the same time, around the turn of the eighth century (Tanaka Masao 1985, 78). In addition to *mokkan*, a number of pieces of *haji* and *sue* ware (some with ink inscriptions of single characters) and an

abundance of wooden artifacts were recovered from these two pits (Tanaka Masao 1985, 78).

Among the *mokkan* recovered here, generally thought to date from the end of the seventh century, are one of the oldest *mokkan* to detail rice loan interest (Unknown 1991, 86), and a document *mokkan* which has been possibly converted into a ritual object, with the reverse surface featuring the character 鬼 ("ghost" or "demon") repeated (Unknown 1992, 83). Another appears to be calligraphic practice of transcribing dates of the month, the surface of which shows clear signs of erasure and reuse; yet another example is in the familiar *zenpaku* format, although with some interesting elaborations. The most peculiar inscription, however, appears to echo the correspondence *mokkan* from the Nishigawara Morinouchi and Iba sites:

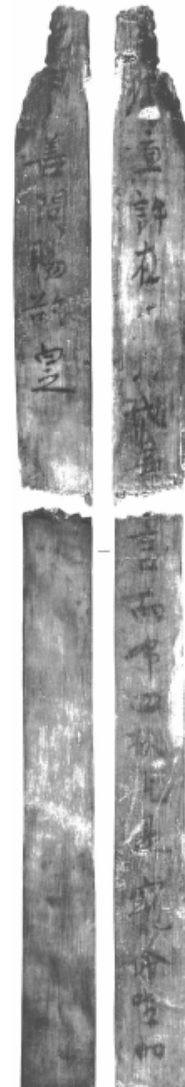

Figure 20. Koshikida Site Mokkan No. 43 (Tanaka Masao 1985)

Side 1: □□直許在□□代等言而布四枚乞是寵命座而

Side 2: □乎善問賜欲白之

Side 1: … [XX]yo and others who are at the home of [XX] no Atai said to me, "I beg you for four sheets of cloth. This is because an imperial order has been bestowed…"
Side 2: … I want you to honorably inquire of this for me. I reported.[47]

Our speaker here seems to have been approached by some individual(s), □□代, who is staying at the home of □□ no Atai, who asked him for four sheets of cloth, claiming something with regard to an imperial order. The speaker appears to ask the addressee to first look into the legitimacy of the request before he grants it. While this site is typically described as a settlement site, larger imbedded pillar structures are erected in the beginning of the early historic period, suggesting there may have been some sort of *ritsuryō* state presence nearby, and therefore someone who might answer our speaker's question. The area is home to some exceedingly large round tumuli, suggesting it was home to some locally powerful clans prior to integration into the *ritsuryō* system, and so would have been a fitting home for a new administrative outpost.

As noted above, late seventh century *mokkan* are part of a written culture in transition, one that was built on traditions that originated in peninsular customs,

[47] There is some question here as to who is speaking when. Given the use of honorifics and humilifics on the back side, it would appear the speaker is humbling himself vis-à-vis the addressee, so the subject of 言, which is more neutral, would need to be the third party, mentioned here as □□代(等). Therefore, I have interpreted this character as marking a moment of speech wherein the speaker was addressed by □□代(等), and he is now repeating the content of that speech to the addressee of his own report (白). Reading and interpretation/translation are informed by those in Saitama-ken Kyōiku Iinkai 2011, 27; and Okimori Takuya and Satō Makoto 1994, 110.

but was increasingly seeking to elevate itself by "updating" to Tang models of textual production. However, those older trends did not disappear with any particular swiftness, for they were a familiar mode of effectively communicating one's message. While there certainly would have been more formal, up-to-date document styles to which our scribe might have fit his message, instead this correspondence takes the same sort of provincial, utilitarian approach seen in the Nishigawara Morinouchi No. 2-2 and Iba Site Mokkan No. 84. The only true "framing" device here is the final 白之, which has an older, more peninsular feel to it than even something like 止白/止申, which would have been more current at the time. The entire text here, while it does represent grammatical particles such as 乎, mainly sticks to logogram-based transcription in vernacular word order. In this regard, it seems to be of an older lineage than the *senmyō* style transcription seen on Asuka and Fujiwara *mokkan* in this period. Moreover, during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, there are several mentions in the *Nihon shoki* of the settlement of both Paekche and Silla migrants in Musashi province as well as nearby Shimotsuke and Hitachi.[48] It could be, then, that the new residents of northern Musashi province, where the Koshikida site would have been located, were still producing documents in a mode most familiar to them. With the Silla migrants in particular, they were sent to Musashi soon after their initial arrival, and so they would have had little time to adjust to modes of writing common in Japan. While the identity of our speaker is unknowable, his transcription style as well as his uncertainty about how to proceed in certain matters might point to his being something of an outsider.

Like the Iba and Yashiro sites, the Koshikida site was located along an important regional waterway, and may have served as a stopping point along that route, given the erection of larger imbedded pillar buildings there in the early historic period. *Mokkan* from provincial sites throughout Japan, including Kannonji in Shikoku and those sites around Lake Biwa in Ōmi province, all show that the use of writing was inevitably connected in some manner to the execution and exhibition of the authority of the center vis-à-vis those on the periphery. While there are moments of provincial officials practicing calligraphy and possibly reflecting on their own condition in a written mode (see Iba Mokkan No. 87 above), these examples are fragmentary and heavily overshadowed by the solidly utilitarian character of provincial inscriptions, which prioritize communication and often neglect to follow established forms, except in the most minimal and performative manners. However, given that writing in the provinces was in its inception a performative exercise as much as it was a practical endeavor aimed at rendering the realm "legible," it is perhaps unsurprising that rules were not as stringent or as closely followed by locally-sourced scribes in the employ of administrative officials transplanted from afar.

Conclusions

Mokkan from Asuka and Fujiwara show developing modes of vernacular transcription, and suggest that, especially given the ways in which imperial decrees

[48] See *NS* Tenmu 13.5.14; Jitō 1.3.22; 1.4.10; 4.2.25.

were inscribed, the vernacular as a written mode was increasingly valued equally with "pure" Sinitic (just as the *Analects* and the Naniwazu poem were equal parts of literacy priming). "Written culture" thus came of age in a reign where both cosmopolitan and vernacular written modes were valued, and this would have significant repercussions on how literary culture emerged in the eighth century, and continued to develop thereafter. Although there may have been vernacular-inflected writing in Paekche, it does not seem to have achieved any sort of status akin to that of vernacular writing in Japan. While the case is less clear for Silla, like in Japan, this sort of bifurcation of written modes does seem to have come into existence early, but cosmopolitan and vernacular modes of writing do not seem to have been equally valued or developed after unification. Thus, the written culture of late seventh century Japan is unique in showing not only a tendency toward a shared space for cosmopolitan and vernacular inscriptions, but a valuing of literary writing across both of these linguistic modes. These trends would continue into the eighth century, when scribes began to enhance their compositions through creative orthographic practice and the composition of Literary Sinitic verse continued to be a valued form of political discourse.

Conclusion: Lettered Aesthetics in Eighth Century Japan and Silla

In this dissertation, I have introduced the earliest forms of written culture in Paekche, Silla, and Japan as can be observed from excavated *mokkan*. Paekche written culture was characterized by a variety of genres, ranging from the documentary to the literary; Silla written culture, on the other hand, was explicitly connected to the expansion of state power in its earliest manifestations. This difference is perhaps best explained by the significant temporal gap in the origins of written culture. In Paekche, complex inscriptions are known to date from the Ungjin period (475-538CE) and Sinographs may have been in use for some time prior to that; in other words, the *mokkan* of Paekche's Sabi period (538-660CE) are products of a written culture that has already had some time to develop. The earliest *mokkan* from Silla, by contrast, temporally coincide with the proliferation of monumental inscriptions precipitated by territorial expansion under King Chinhŭng; the rapidity with which written culture was inaugurated and developed in Silla resulted in a more homogenous written landscape in the sixth century. However, early experiments with vernacular transcription in Silla do suggest an eagerness to adapt the technology of writing to local needs and bolster its potential as a technology of communication. In Japan, the emergent written culture of the mid-seventh century was already distinctive during the time of the Naniwa Palace. This written culture was probably limited to a small number of hereditary scribes, however. Written culture in Japan would be heavily influenced by the arrival of Paekche refugees following the Battle of the Paek River, and betrays affinities with peninsular precedents while mirroring the diversity seen in Paekche inscriptions. During the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, written culture in Japan would achieve full maturity alongside the *ritsuryō* state apparatus, ushering in an era where literary inscription was an increasingly valuable part of elite life.

In Paekche, Silla, and Japan alike, writing was a means of securing "order, legitimacy, and wealth" for states engaged in the dual processes of modernization and centralization. As we have seen, the ascension of literary writing was a natural extension of writing's legitimizing force; the ability to compose was also the ability to praise the sovereign and the state in efficacious and evocative language. This meant that frequent practice of composition was an important aspect of literacy training, and this phenomenon can be observed frequently in the *mokkan* corpus. However, as written culture matured into the eighth century, inscription was increasingly an important part of ritual and aesthetic life at court. The composition of written inscriptions allowed for the stabilizing of relations between ruler and subject as well as humans and spirits, but it also allowed for the layering of meanings to facilitate expedient reading and interpretation of verse. As the processes of composition and inscription became increasingly intertwined, orality became secondary to inscription. Not only the ability to write, but the ability to write *well*—in terms of both style and calligraphy—became an essential skill for the elites of eighth century Japan and Silla.

Below, I will introduce some of the phenomena peculiar to written culture in its mature form in the eighth century. These phenomena have precedents in the sixth and seventh century material discussed in Chapters 1-4, but are unique in their

focus on the power of script itself. In both Silla and Japan, the material form of script began to be utilized—albeit in very different ways—to extend the power of a text beyond its oral performatory dimensions. In addition, as literary writing acquired cultural value among the elite, inscription itself was also increasingly an aesthetic endeavor in both Silla and Japan, but again in quite different ways. I will conclude by returning to evaluate the phenomenon of *belles lettres* in the context of written culture in Pen/Insular East Asia throughout the early historic period.

Supplementing and Supplanting the Oral

The year was 737 and King Hyosŏng 孝成王 (r.737-742) had just ascended the throne of Silla. While he set about promoting and assigning favorable posts to those close to him, he forgot to recognize one individual with whom he had spent many days playing *paduk* underneath a pine tree in his days as crown prince. Unable to approach the king directly, this man, Sinch'ung 信忠, penned a *hyangga* verse[1] and attached it to that very pine tree in the palace garden. Immediately the tree withered and turned yellow, catching the king's attention and prompting swift action in granting Sinch'ung a title. Sinch'ung's verse, expressing his resentment at having been left behind by his king and former friend, was as follows:[2]

> This noble pine--
> Even in autumn, it fails to dry up and scatter;
> "I will keep you close," you had promised,
> But alas, that countenance, which I had so admired, has changed to winter!
> On the shore of the pond where the moon casts its light
> The sands are swept up in the waves--
> I gaze at your silhouette
> But at this point, the world has bereaved me of everything.
> (*Hugu* has been lost)[3]

Unlike most Silla *hyangga*, Sinch'ung's inscription of the verse, more than its composition or incantation, is what renders it efficacious: through giving the verse physical form, and attaching it to a tree, Sinch'ung is able to solicit the attention of the king. He compares the king to the tree itself, which as an evergreen, does not change with the seasons—while the king himself has wintered over. While others (the sands) are embraced by the moon's reflection (the king), Sinch'ung himself can only gaze upon him from afar. The verse breaks down clearly into two stanzas—the

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[1] *Hyangga* 鄕歌 were Silla vernacular verses, composed primarily by members of the *hwarang* 花郎 youth and the Buddhist clergy, often to miraculous effect. Extant *hyangga* include the fourteen examples preserved in *Samguk yusa* (ca. 1285) and an additional eleven, a series known as "Songs on the Ten Vows of Samantabhadra," found in *Kyunyŏjŏn* (1075), a biography of the early Koryŏ period Hwaŏm sect priest Kyunyŏ (923-973).

[2] I have summarized the content of the anecdote that appears along with the verse in *Samguk yusa*, a thirteenth century work of mostly Buddhist miracle tales from the Three Kingdoms (ca. 300CE-668CE) and Unified Silla (668-935CE) periods. The translation of the verse is my own.

[3] *Hugu* were short two-line envoys to a longer verse, usually with a more personal or emotive spin on the content of the main verse. Since there is apparently a need to note its absence, it would seem to have been a required component of a long-form *hyangga* verse.

first featuring the comparison between the king and tree, and the second the thrust of Sinch'ung's grievance. However, the transmission of its message transcends the words as they are written; in causing a physical transformation in the tree, the verse transcends its material form. Among extant Silla *hyangga*, it is usually oral performance that is able to directly affect the external world; in the Silla imagination, such performance clearly had the capacity to translate human will into supernatural effect. In the story of Sinch'ung, however, we find something of an evolution in the magical efficacy of language: whereas previously incantatory performance of verse was required, here the act of inscription is substituted. This might be said to mark a new moment in the history of the reception of script in Silla, elevating the value of the written vernacular as a ritual mode. In other words, that inscription was now on par with incantation, is a remarkable development in the history of writing in Silla. However, it should be noted that Sinch'ung's case is somewhat of an outlier; even in those *hyangga* dated later than his time, oral performance is still the primary means of enacting the power of *hyangga* verse. Nevertheless, the fact that Sinch'ung's "performance" was an inscriptive, and not an incantatory one, is noteworthy.

While Sinch'ung's "Song of Resentment" is an outlier among the *hyangga* from *Samguk yusa* in that it features inscription as a mode of delivery, a *mokkan* recovered from Kyŏngju may serve as additional evidence of the ritual efficacy of inscription in the eighth century. This example, a *mokkan* unearthed from the Kyŏngju National Museum Annex site[4] in 2000 features the following inscription:

Side 1: 万本□〔來?〕 身中有史音□〔叱?〕| 今日□三時爲□〔從?〕 □〔支?〕

Side 2: □〔財?〕□〔叢?〕□〔旀?〕放賜哉[5]

Side 1: The ten thousand must naturally be in the body. Today, taking as □, does follow

Side 2: Gathering together riches, distributes them![6]

Figure 1. Kyŏngju National Museum Annex Site Mokkan No. 279 (*NSAM*, 192)

Yi Sŭngjae (2013; 2017) has deciphered the text spanning the front and back surfaces of this *mokkan* as vernacular inscriptions.

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[4] This site appears to have been either within the boundaries of the southern part of the royal palace in the mid-eighth century, or was a site closely associated with the palace. See *RHKM,* 193.

[5] Identifications based on original deciphering by Lee SeungJae (2013) and updated in Yi Sŭngjae (2017).

[6] This translation modified from Yi Sŭngjae (2017).

Further, he argues that the inscriptions can be interpreted as the final three lines of a *hyangga.* Indeed, there are similarities between the transcription style seen here and that typical of *hyangga* (a system commonly referred to as *hyangch'al* 鄕札); further, there are expressive similarities between the inscription on this *mokkan* and the final line + *hugu* (envoy) structure that round out a long-form "ten-line" *hyangga*.[7] Specifically, there appears to be a clear sentence-final in the verb –*isimsta* 有史音□〔叱?〕| ["be in" *isi*- + assumptive pre-final suffix –*ms*- + affirmative sentence-final suffix -*ta*; "is certainly located in"]. Such finals do indeed occur at the end of each stanza (consisting of four "lines") of a long form *hyangga*; a *hugu*, on the other hand, is a two-line supplement that works to "echo" the entirety of the verse and usually ends in an exclamatory manner that prefigures the desired outcome of the verse's performance. While the second side (back surface) of the *mokkan* is considerably less legible than the front, the fact that it concludes with the exclamatory particle 哉 suggests that the inscription beginning with 今日 may indeed fit the parameters of *hugu*. Here, the speaker has already proclaimed the benevolence of the verse's addressee—which is likely either the sovereign or a deity—thus prefiguring and ensuring the desired outcome through appeal to the magical efficacy of language. That is, once such benevolence has been proclaimed in speech, the entity in question would certainly be compelled to follow suit.

The fact that this *mokkan* was found deliberately split into several pieces at the bottom of a stone well (*RHKM,* 193), suggests that its deposition was ritualized in nature, and indeed that the enacting of the power of the language in the inscription might have been predicated on the ritualized destruction and deposition of the *mokkan*. This ritual may or may not have included oral performance. The fact of its deposition in a well suggests a possible connection to water rituals where prayers were offered to the Dragon King (K. *yongwang* 龍王). The use of inscription to communicate with and ensure cooperation from deities was seen in the King Muryŏng epitaph steles in Chapter 1; surely, this *mokkan* embodies a similar belief in the power of written language, given physical form, to open channels of communication with the spirit world. However, compared with the Muryŏng epitaphs, in this case it is an inscription in the vernacular language that possesses the power to evoke a divine response.[8] While oral performance may have still accompanied the ritualized inscription and destruction of the *mokkan*, it appears that inscription was an important source for authorizing the power of such rituals by the eighth century.

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[7] The idea of a "ten-line" *hyangga* is a modern scholarly category, based on the segmentation of longer form examples, which includes seven of the fourteen *hyangga* from *Samgyuk yusa* and all eleven of the "Songs of the Ten Vows of Samantabhadra." One of the three "eight-line" examples in *Samguk yusa*, "Song of Resentment" (*Wŏnga* 怨歌), cited above, mentions a *hugu* (final two-line envoy) that has been lost, suggesting it was originally a "ten-line" verse. A "ten-line" verse typically divides into two stanzas plus a *hugu* (envoy); the first stanza sets the scene of the verse, the second develops that scene/contains the main thrust of the poem, while the *hugu* is an echo of the verse as a whole that often focuses on emotive experience.

[8] The tree's response to Sinch'ung's verse above might be seen in a similar vein—that is, the deity of the tree can be seen as responding to the verse empathically, in a manner that cannot but attract the attention of the king.

The use of inscribed *mokkan* in water-based rituals is also a commonly observed phenomenon in eighth century Japan; a large number of so-called "amulet" (J. *jufu* 呪符) *mokkan* dated to the eighth century have been excavated from throughout the archipelago. However, these usually contain very standard incantations, and no known examples feature a full verse in the vernacular; neither are these found ritually destroyed in the manner of Kyŏngju National Museum Annex Mokkan No. 279. Indeed, the deposition of Naniwa Palace Site Mokkan No. NW-06-2-1 (see Chapter 3) is perhaps most similar of all Japanese examples, despite its being found completely intact, in that it was probably intended as a vehicle of communication with the spirit world.

The Aesthetics of Written Language

In Japan in the eighth century, written forms of the vernacular language were ascendant as both ritual and aesthetic modes. The *senmyō* style of transcription, seen already in *mokkan* inscriptions from the late seventh century, was used to transcribe imperial edicts both so that they might be performed on the sovereign's behalf and so that they would have enduring impact. The importance of accurately transcribing the words of the sovereign led to the standardization of this style of transcription, which was also extended to transcribing ritual prayers said to Shintō deities, known as *norito* 祝詞. In the case of *norito*, as with *senmyō*, both the repeatability and the perpetuation of performance seem to have been the initial goals of inscription; unlike in the case of Sinch'ung's verse, however, these texts probably needed to be 're-animated' in order to tap into their efficacy—i.e., their inscribed form alone lacked sufficient ritual power. Nevertheless, the existence of a textual referent that was "re-incanted" was a relatively new aspect of ritual practice; however, as we have seen, the supplementation of oral performance with an inscription that could perpetuate and ensure the efficacy of the performance possibly dates back to the era of the Naniwa Palace (see Chapter 3, Naniwa Palace Mokkan No. NW-06-2-1). Moreover, an emphasis on inscription over performance in ritual contexts is apparent in Buddhist practice in Japan from at least the seventh century (see discussion of Tenmu's sutra-copying project in Chapter 4).

Meanwhile, the practice of transcribing vernacular poetry also became standard by the early eighth century. In some instances, the standardization of transcription resulted in orthography becoming yet another expressive tool in the poet's arsenal. In other words, oral performance and inscription of verse were increasingly equal parts of a verse's conception and reception. This fact is evidenced in the ways poets (or compilers of poetry anthologies) would select particular phonograms for their resonance with the content of their poem. Through the process of inscription, a verse's effects were no longer confined to the moment of performance, and indeed could be enhanced and perpetuated through the expressive qualities of script itself. For example:

朝獦尓　今立須良思　暮獦尓　今他田渚良之[9]

asakari ni 　　　　For his morning hunt,

[9] *MYS* I.3 (*SNKBZ* 7: 25).

ima tatasu rasi	it looks like he sets out now—
yupukari ni	For his evening hunt,
ima tatasu rasi	it looks like he sets out now.

This is an excerpt from a *chōka* (long verse) that appears as the third verse in the first volume of the monumental collection *Man'yōshū* (c. 759). This excerpt consists of two parallel 5-7 pairs, which except for the modifiers of "hunt" (*kari*), *asa* (morning) and *yupu* (evening), are identical in pronunciation. However, the orthography, while keeping the transcription for *kari ni* (for the hunt) identical, deliberately distinguishes the two transcriptions of *ima tatasu rasi* that appear in rhythmic parallel. In the first instance, the line is rendered 今立須良思, combining the logographic use of 今 ["now"] and 立 ["stand"] (which is used for the homonymic verb *tatu,* "to set out") with a string of phonograms, 須良思, which represent the honorific auxiliary –*su* plus the suppositional auxiliary *rasi*. In the second transcription, the same line is represented as 今他田渚良之, which repeats the logographic use of 今 "now" but then transcribes the remainder of the line in phonograms. However, these phonograms are not arbitrary representations of sound: the first two mora (*tata*) of the verb *tatasu* are rendered 他田, literally "another (paddy) field," then uses the character 渚 ["beach; water's edge"] for *su*, all of which suggest a change in landscape/a different location for this evening hunt, despite the repeated action of "setting out" (*tatasu*). Further, while the phonogram used for the sound *ra,* 良 ["good; pure"] is kept the same in both renderings—perhaps because of its auspicious meaning—*si* is rendered as 思 ["think; long for"] and then as 之 [nominalizing particle]. In the former case, 思 hints at the speculation/supposition that is implicit in the word *rasi*; in the latter case, 之 suggests a sentence break (as we have seen, the character 之 was often used as a particle indicating the end of a sentence in both Korean and Japanese transcriptive practice). Indeed, the poem picks up a new topic after this point, moving on to describe the sounds created by the bow of the sovereign.

Given the effort expended here to distinguish the second instance of the line *ima tatasu rasi* from the first, it is clear that the scribe in this case was manipulating specific aspects of orthography for aesthetic purposes. While the repetition is evocative in oral performance, it was apparently considered excessive in transcribed form, and so either the poet himself or the compiler of the *Man'yōshū* sought to create this subtle variance. However, this variance is not just about avoiding the repetition of the same characters—attention to which would have been inspired primarily by visual concerns (because an inscribed poem is one that is *viewed*)—but serves to enrich the poem's meanings beyond what would be available in an oral context. In other words, through the manipulation of orthography, the scribe has created a written poem-text that possesses "textual features far in excess of the oral" (Pollock 2006, 4).

This sort of technique shows a developing awareness of script's expressive potential, which allowed for the creation of additional layers of meaning belonging exclusively to the written realm. This practice would later be extended to almost

parodic extremes, with elaborate orthographies that almost undermine the effect of a verse in their excess:

垂乳根之　母我養蚕乃　眉隠　馬声蜂音石花蜘蟵荒鹿　異母二不相而[10]

taratine no	Provider of sustenance,[11]
papa ga kapu ko no	my mother—the silkworms she raises
mayogomori	have retreated into their cocoons;
ibuseku mo aru ka	how sealed off I too feel,
imo ni apazu site	unable to meet my beloved.

The first three lines of this verse consist of a *jo* [preface] that is meant to set up via the metaphor of silkworms' cocoons the speaker's own feelings of enclosure. Unable to meet his/her love, the speaker is overcome with the feeling of being sealed off—that is, his/her chest is clogged with emotion (*ibuseku*). This is perhaps a very standard verse whereby "feelings are described through things" (寄物陳思), but the peculiar orthography of the fourth line has brought this poem considerable attention. It is almost as if the poet (or scribe who transcribed the poem) was challenged to include as many names of organisms as possible in the orthography—although other than silkworms, no organisms appear in the content of the verse. Read according to its literal meanings, the fourth line would be: horse voice 馬声 /i/ bee sound 蜂音 /bu/ goose barnacle 石花/se/ spider 蜘蟵 /kumo/ ruined deer 荒鹿 /aruka/. Other than *aru* 荒 ["ruin"], which seems to be used strictly for its sound, this line consists of rather overwrought "riddle"-like orthography. A sound like *i* might be represented by a number of simple phonograms, including 伊 and 異, but the transcription here asks the reader to provide the "voice of a horse" 馬声—that is, an onomatopoetic rendering of a horse's cry; the same is true of the second mora, which might be written simply with the phonogram 夫 /*bu*/, but instead the reader is asked to produce an onomatopoeia for "the sound of a bee" 蜂音. The following mora *se* is written as 石花, read by gloss as /*se*/ , the name of a species of goose barnacle, and then the two mora *kumo* are written as 蜘蟵, "spider." The final mora, *ka*, is written with the character for "deer" 鹿; although this is indeed common as a phonogram, it fits well with the "creature" theme of the orthography. There is nothing particularly unusual about the orthography in the remainder of the poem; this suggests that the fourth line alone was selected as sort of a transcriptive challenge, perhaps in a similar vein to verse 3833 in Volume 16, where the poet, Sakaibe no Ōkimi, was challenged to include the names of a number of "things" in his

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[10] *MYS* 12.2991 (III: 327).

[11] While the characters used to write this *makurakotoba*, *taratine* 垂乳根, indicate "of the drooping breasts," this is though to be an instance of certain characters being chosen for their aesthetic resonance, rather than have any bearing on the meaning of the phrase itself, which is thought to derive from the verb *tarasu*, "fulfill; satisfy." This *makurakotoba* always precedes either *papa* ["mother"] or, later, *oya* ["parents"], and is generally interpreted as being related to the parents' role in raising/cultivating the child (an extension of the meaning of *tarasu*).

verse.[12] Such poetic games seem to have been relatively commonplace, but such exercises on the level of transcription do not seem to have been as frequent; this particular verse from volume 12 is famous for its unique *gisho* 戯書 [“playful inscription”].

We are given little more information about this poem than that it is part of a series of poems where “feelings are described through things” (寄物陳思) and so we do not have more context for understanding why the poet and/or compiler transcribed it in this manner. The content of the poem hardly seems to have been intended as comical, and the remainder of the transcription is ordinary; perhaps there was something about this particular line that the poet/scribe sought to obscure, or perhaps this was a “challenge” in the same vein as 16-3833. However this particular orthography came to be, it is clear that its composer was aware of the peculiar ways in which script could convey “textual features far in excess of the oral”—indeed, the litany of “creatures” following the silkworms who have retreated into their cocoons creates an impression of a speaker who, in his distraught state, is feeling increasing animal-like, unable to release his tension but through animalistic cries (like that of a horse or a bee), is stuck clinging to a rock or a web like a barnacle or a spider, and is finally left feeling as if a “ruined deer.” An oral recitation of this poem contains no such layers, but the peculiar orthography of the fourth line is able to heighten the emotion at the poem’s climax in a compelling manner.[13]

Figure 2. Heijō Palace Eastern Administrative Area Mokkan No. 440-97 (*HJKGH* 39, Plate 7)

These sorts of maneuvers in orthography appear to be methods peculiar to Japan for the creation of additional aesthetic layers in written poetic compositions in the vernacular. By contrast, the transcriptions of Silla vernacular verse discussed above are generally more utilitarian in nature, aimed at the successful communication and/or re-animation of the vernacular text contained therein. Outside of the transcription of vernacular poetry, examples of “aesthetic” inscription

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[12] The poem reads: 虎尓乗　古屋乎越而　青淵尓　鮫龍取將來　劍刀毛我

tora ni nori	Riding on a tiger
puruya wo koete	I pass by an old house—
awoputi ni	if only I had a blade
mituti torikomu	with which I might slay
turugi tati moga	the serpent in the blue pool!

[13] This poem, slightly modified, is provided in the *kana* preface to the early tenth century imperial *uta* anthology *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905), as an example of a “comparison poem” なずらへ歌. Transcribed entirely in *kana*, the additional layer of meaning provided here by the orthography is excised, and the poem is simply appreciated as an example of the technique of likening one’s emotion experience to a natural phenomenon (feeling of gloom/enclosure as analogous to the silkworms’ cocooning).

in Japan might also include the practice of adorning of ordinary objects with inscriptions that were both visually and semantically appealing. The following inscriptions adorn the surfaces of the panels of a *hinoki* fan recovered from the Heijō palace in Nara:

Panel 1: 雲上[14]行雁負露飛
Panel 2:
Panel 3: □
Panel 4: □人世何
Panel 5: □[15]
Panel 1: ~~Above~~ the clouds go geese, bearing dew on their backs as they fly
Panel 2:
Panel 3: □
Panel 4: □ As for the human world, what should be done?
Panel 5: □

This particular fan was found alongside four others, all of which are decorated with calligraphic practice; however, this particular fan is the sole example to feature a clear instance of composition practice. There is some additional calligraphic practice on the reverse surfaces of these fan panels. Indeed, the two panels with legible writing on this side appear to be in different hands/styles, and so the inscriptions are probably unrelated. However, on this side we have two clear instances of "literary" composition practice: an evocative line of what could be Literary Sinitic verse, and the fragment of an existential question. In the former case, both the calligraphy and syntax are slightly clumsy; indeed, the placement of the verb "fly" at the end of the line would seem to betray a vernacular inflection and perhaps an inexperienced composer. The author of this inscription clearly sought to use the open surface of the fan to practice his or her skills at literary composition, and the result is a fan decorated not just with calligraphy but with poetry. Although the attempt here remains imperfect, it suggests a movement toward the appreciation of script as both visual art and as text. Moreover, the status ascribed to literary writing by the eighth century meant that the ability to compose was increasingly valued, resulting in composition practice appearing on any and all such surfaces.

[14] This character has been blotted out with ink, but is still easily identified.
[15] I am grateful to Inoue Miyuki of Nabunken for first pointing this *mokkan* out to me.

Because of the ostensibly cosmopolitan appearance of the text, this inscription cannot be interpreted as a direct transcription of oral performance or as a supplement to ritual; rather, it is a composition produced as a written text first and foremost. This sort of "direct-to-text" process of composition, with oral performance assuming a secondary role, would gradually become the norm hereafter in the context of Japanese vernacular verse, as practices came to be modeled after cosmopolitan standards. In Silla, the composition of cosmopolitan verse would not have a commensurate effect on vernacular verse, as a sharp distinction appears to have persisted between cosmopolitan and vernacular forms of inscription. The vernacular retained its exclusive sway in ritual contexts, while cosmopolitan literary forms were the only legitimate aesthetic mode of writing. While the aesthetics of orthographic practice were being finely tuned by poets and compilers of *Man'yōshū*, elites at Silla's court appear to have been uninterested in intricate methods for transcribing their vernacular language; however, they did seek to compose verse in Literary Sinitic as evocatively and effectively as possible. Or, it might be more appropriate to say, they composed verse that was inscribed entirely in Sinographs, because the linguistic identity of this text, from a *mokkan* recovered from the ruins of Anapchi (part of the Eastern Palace of the Silla royal complex), remains indeterminate:

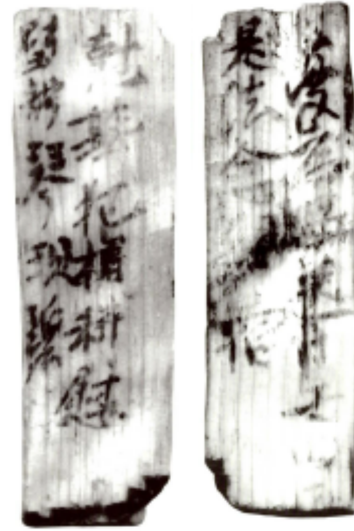

Figure 3. Anapchi Pond Mokkan No. 206 (*NSAM,* 154)

Side 1: 剋熟犯指耕慰／璧□琴現碧

Side 2: 憂辱□送日壬／是法念□宿[16]

Side 1: Conquering the familiar bandits, consoling the ploughmen/gem □ the zither a clear blue

Side 2: Grief and shame, □ bearing the setting sun/these incantations, I recite □ lodge[17]

The layout of the text on this *mokkan* suggests an effort to compose in a manner worthy of "viewing," although the first side betrays a lack of foresight in the alignment of the first line of text in the center of the wood surface, forcing the scribe to squeeze the second line of text in on the margin. The second side shows more balance and planning between the two columns of text, despite the less carefully constructed characters, and so perhaps it is appropriate that this should be considered the "back" surface, while the first side, which was likely inscribed first, is probably the "front." The shape of the *mokkan* itself, with its wider surface area,

[16] These identifications are taken from Lee SeungJae (2012).
[17] This translation modified from Lee SeungJae (2013).

recalls the unique shape of Nŭngsan-ni Mokkan No. 305 (see Chapter 1). Given that the content here again appears to be an ostensibly Literary Sinitic verse, this visual similarity may suggest a certain type of *mokkan* was used for the transcription of verse, especially for presentation/display. Even despite the scribe's mistaken alignment of the first line of text on the front surface, this may well have been intended for presentation to a superior or display in some public or semi-public context.

The content of the verse itself suggests an individual working on behalf of the state, or perhaps even the sovereign himself, who is responsible for suppressing bandits and consoling farmers—a peacekeeper/lawman of sorts. The verse then jumps to a zither whose music is synaesthetically apprehended as "blue"; the connection between these first two lines is thus not readily apparent. The inscription on the back sides shows slightly more consistency between the two lines of text, with the speaker's grief being channeled into incantations of Buddhist prayers as he lodges somewhere for the night. Indeed, this *mokkan* provides no context for the verse and so we have very little means by which to interpret the meanings of what appear to be metaphors: the zither, the setting sun.

Given the inconsistency within the "couplets" on the front and back sides, and between them, it is indeed possible that there is no connection between them and these inscriptions were not meant to be taken as part of a single quatrain. However, there is consistency in its peculiar meter—an initial line of six sinographs paired with a second line of five on both sides—which does not appear to correlate with any known standard Sinitic verse form. This may suggest this was a poetic form particular to Silla (Lee SeungJae 2013, 14-16), and indeed the apparent lack of clear connections within and between the couplets may also be the product of our lack of understanding of Silla poetic practices and tropes. Thus, while the aesthetics of written verse in Silla may have been rooted in a Literary Sinitic-esque appearance, the format of inscriptions may have been governed by conventions specific to Silla.

Nevertheless, these inscriptions were clearly not "vernacular," and unlike the aesthicized orthographics of the *Man'yōshū,* which depended on the interplay of cosmopolitan and vernacular, the aesthetic value of this inscription is clearly tied to its cosmopolitan façade, perhaps not unlike the inscribed *hinoki* fan from the Heijō palace discussed above.

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These disparate examples from eighth century Silla and Japan suggest a divergence in written practice characterized by a focus on the ritual power of inscription on the one hand versus a trend toward increasingly aesthetic apprehension of script and texts on the other. Scribes in Silla used the written vernacular as a tool for supernatural communication, relying on the efficacy of the written word as both a supplement and substitute for oral incantation, while scribes in Japan created increasingly innovative inscriptive styles that relied on an interplay between the cosmopolitan script and the vernacular language. That is, while writing was increasingly an aesthetic mode in Japan, likely spurred by the influence of cosmopolitan models of literariness, in Silla writing began to displace the oral as a

ritual mode, and only in more standard "cosmopolitan forms" did it take on aesthetic value.

The emergence of these sorts of "literary cultures" in both Silla and Japan in the eighth century can be seen as a natural extension of the forms of written culture which developed in the sixth and seventh centuries as responses to political crisis, as well as a product of a massive shift toward "the civil" that occurred in the aftermath of the end of the Unification Wars in the third quarter of the seventh century. Both the elites at Japan's court and the *hwarang* youth order of Silla, in the absence of a pronounced external threat, shifted their attention away from martial concerns and began cultivating their lettered abilities, considered the best way to serve the state in time of peace. Because literature was an effective means of embodying sovereignly virtue, the goal of lettered competence was gradually extended to literary competence, and elites came to value writing for its ability to do so both ritually and aesthetically.

Texts that both perform and communicate, while incorporating "textual features" specific to a written context and framing content in meaningful ways in order to invite an interpretative act—that is, "literary writing"—are observed in sixth and seventh century Paekche, and from mid-seventh century Japan. While such texts are not identified from pre-unification Silla, there were significant innovations in transcribing the vernacular language during this time, that set the stage for a "literary culture" to emerge in Unified Silla. Further, in Japan, many of those producing "literary writing" in the mid- and late seventh century may have been allochthons or Paekche refugees; in other words, the early onset of literary writing in Japan as compared to Silla may be due to the influence of individuals from Paekche, where written culture had a longer history and deeper roots.

While the types of literary writing that would emerge throughout Pen/Insular East Asia were based on Chinese precedents, they often took new forms and were composed in new registers derived from the interplay of the cosmopolitan written language and the spoken vernacular languages. Literary cultures in Pen/Insular East Asia, then, despite their Sinographic surfaces, were equally products of their specific vernacular environments. The continued development of literary practice in the eighth century and beyond, then, should be seen as less about reversion to a cosmopolitan mean than about the persistent re-negotiation of the relationship between the cosmopolitan and vernacular as written modes. It is through this process that countless new literary styles and genres would emerge, giving rise to literary worlds unique to the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago.

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