

# Examples and Origin of Ancient Royal Documents in Korea\*

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This paper puts forward the concepts of “king’s words” and “king’s documents” and takes as its primary goal the extraction of a corpus of such “documents” from extant sources. In identifying and classifying primary sources found within epigraphic inscriptions and compiled texts, this paper investigates clues within that suggest the original format of “king’s documents.” Among “king’s documents” from ancient Korea, those that were disseminated for a domestic audience include *ryǒng* 令 “mandate,” *myǒng* 命 “order,” *sǒ* 書 “document; letter,” *kyo* 教 “decree,” *chemun* 祭文 “sacrificial address,” and *yujo* 遺詔 “final testament.” *Ryǒng* were used for amnesties or calls for recommendations of talented individuals, while *myǒng* was used for matters such as the construction or repair of ceremonial facilities. *Kyo* were used to promulgate important policies or implement measures related to maintaining basic public order.

Before the *kyo* document form was adopted in the peninsular kingdoms, there was a type of “king’s document” known simply as *sǒ*. *Sǒ* appear to have been diplomatic documents originally, but their function was expanded as they were increasingly used in internal administration. In the mid-second century, *kyo* and *ryǒng* became the basic forms of “king’s documents,” but *sǒ* continued as lower-level correspondence or as diplomatic documents exchanged between kingdoms of equal status. Sacrificial addresses and king’s final injunctions existed since the beginning of the all three kingdoms, but these appear to have been performed orally until a certain point when they were “document-ized” in middle and late period Silla.

**Keywords:** Koguryō, Paekche, Silla, king’s documents, mandate 令, order 命, document 書, decree 教, sacrificial address 祭文, final injunction 遺詔

## Introduction

In the field of Korean history, the term *wangǒn* 王言 “king’s words” is not an especially familiar expression.<sup>1</sup> To date, in scholarship the term *wangmyǒng* 王命

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\* This article is a revised and supplemented version of the article, “Han’guk kodae kukwangmunsǒ ūi kich’o kōmt’o–kungnaeyong munsǒ ūi sarye wa kiwǒn,” *Mokkan kwa munja* 27 (2021): 235-261.

<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: I have gone with the most literal and semantically loose translation of the term *wangǒn* in order to fit in with the larger argument the author is making. I have gone with “king” over “prince” for *wang* because this best fits the Silla context. Below, when the author discusses different types of official documents, which are distinguished by different Sinographs, I have followed Endymion Wilkinson’s translations where possible (see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*,

“king’s order” has been generally preferred to “king’s words,” largely because there are many more examples of the term “king’s order” being used in extant sources. Meanwhile, in Japanese scholarship, the term “king’s words” has been widely used, but because the term “forms of the king’s words” 王言之制 appears in the *Da Tang liudian* 大唐六典 [Six Statutes of the Great Tang] it does not appear to be a word invented in Japan.<sup>2</sup> In ancient Korean epigraphic sources, *wangŏn* does in fact appear as an independent term in the inscription on the Memorial Stele for Great Priest Chin’gyŏng of Pongnimsa Temple in Ch’angwŏn 昌原鳳林寺址眞鏡大師塔碑 (924).<sup>3</sup>

Because the term “king’s words” might encompass not only the king’s orders but also broadly such disparate genres as his declarations, regular speech, and diplomatic missives, although it is not a term for which we have many examples in the Korean context, we can use it as an overarching concept for which we might also identify a number of sub-categories, enabling us to better understand the system of governing directives that centered on the king’s orders.

In a broad sense, “king’s words” encompasses all the king’s speech acts, expressions of his will, invocations of transcendental beings, and orders that are enacted through administrative processes. Among these different speech acts, there are those that go no further than his mouth, and there are those that are “document-ized”<sup>4</sup> and disseminated broadly. While in a narrow sense we might say that the king’s speech that goes no further than his mouth is literally the “king’s words,” for the purpose of avoiding confusion in this paper I will refer to these as “king’s oral speech acts.” King’s words that have been “document-ized” are herein called “king’s documents,” because the speaking subject in them is the king himself and they are issued in his name. King’s documents can be further divided into those intended for domestic dissemination and those intended for diplomatic use. In this paper I will primarily consider those king’s documents that were intended for a domestic audience.

At present, research on Korean “king’s documents” has not been well developed. There has been some abbreviated discourse on the relationship between *kyo* 敎 “decree” and *cho* 詔 “edict” in the Silla context as a “prehistory” for Koryŏ-era king’s

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Fifth Edition, 299-301) Unfortunately, many of these documents have the same English translations (“edict”; “decree”; “order”) because there are not as many distinct terms available in English for different types of “king’s documents.” However, I have generally provided the original term and Sinograph for clarity.

<sup>2</sup> *Da Tang liudian* 大唐六典, j. 9, The excerpt reads: “The position of Palace Writer... generally, as for the forms of king’s words there are seven types, the first is called a *ceshu*... the seventh is called a *chidie*” 中書令之職...凡王言之制有七 一曰冊書...七曰勅牒.

<sup>3</sup> This excerpt reads: “Great Queen Chinsŏng urgently sent a letter requesting he visit the royal palace. The Great Priest was reticent to receive the king’s words” 眞聖大王遽飛睿札 徵赴彤庭 大師雖猥奉王言. In this case, it should be noted that the king’s words are in fact the “queen’s words,” but such a gendered distinction does not exist in the original.

<sup>4</sup> Translator’s note: This translates the term *munsŏhwa*, “to change or convert into a document.” Because of how frequently the author uses this term in this paper, I have opted for this coinage over more conventional equivalent terms.

documents,<sup>5</sup> and an attempt to reconstruct the style of Silla decrees based on reference to extant Documentary Codes of the Tang dynasty and Japan.<sup>6</sup> The present author has conducted a classificatory study of Koguryō king's orders, in order to explore the state administrative system that would have made the implementation of decrees possible.<sup>7</sup> However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that there has not been a comprehensive study of the content and types of ancient Korean king's documents.

The lack of research is inevitably a result of the fact that neither original copies of king's documents from ancient Korea nor transmitted texts featuring such documents have survived until the present. Therefore, because studies have been severely limited by the lack of sources, this study takes as its primary goal the extraction of appropriate materials from extant sources that allow for the definition of and development of a classificatory schema for "king's words" and "king's documents." By identifying and collecting primary sources contained within epigraphic sources and compiled texts, we can then begin to consider how to reconstruct the original form of these documents. With this as a foundation, we will be able to glimpse the content and types of king's documents, and through these 'documents' understand better the 'origin point' (the king's words) underlying king's documents.

The king's oral speech acts and diplomatic documents that are not treated here will be the subject of a future study. Once this preliminary research is complete, I hope to explore both the literary style of king's documents as well as the administrative processes involved in their production and implementation.

### Examples of 'King's Documents' Inscribed on Stone Steles

Genres of ancient Chinese "king's words" such as *ceshu* 冊書 "edict" and *zhishu* 制書 "proclamation" are extant as stone-carved inscriptions and found among the Turfan fragments, allowing us to glimpse their original forms. Moreover, among the Dunhuang manuscripts there are fragments not only of the Tang Documentary Code but an official certificate of appointment for a high-ranking official. In such cases, it is quite a simple matter to understand the original formats of "king's documents." Examples of decrees and orders can also be found among the materials used to compile the *Tang da zhaoling ji* 唐大詔令集 and *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華, and some are also included within individuals' private collected works.<sup>8</sup> In Japan, directions for the

<sup>5</sup> Ch'oe Yönsik, "Koryō sidae kugwang munsō ūi chongnyu wa kinūng [Types and Functions of King's Documents from the Koryō Period]," *Kuksakwan nonch'ong* 國史館論叢 87 (1991): 147-171.

<sup>6</sup> Yang Chöngsöik, "Silla kongsingnyōng ūi wangmyōng munsō yangsik koch'al [An Investigation of the Style of King's Orders Documents Produced According to Silla Documentary Codes]," *Hanguk kodaesa yōn'gu* 韓國古代史研究 15 (1999): 149-184.

<sup>7</sup> Kim Ch'angsöik, "5 segi ijōn Koguryō ūi wangmyōng chegye wa Chib'an Koguryōbi ūi 'kyo'·'ryōng' [A Systematized Understanding of King's Orders in pre-5<sup>th</sup> century Koguryō and 'kyo' and 'ryōng' on the Chib'an Koguryō Stele]," *Hanguk kodaesa yōn'gu* 韓國古代史研究 75 (2014): 265-303.

<sup>8</sup> Nakamura Yūichi 中村裕一, *Zui Tō ōgen no kenkyū* 隋唐王言の研究 [Research on King's Words of Sui and Tang] (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2003).

format of edicts is included in the Documentary Code section of the *Yōrō Ritsuryō* 養老律令, and there are original examples of decrees and orders found among the Shōsōin 正倉院 documents.<sup>9</sup> Recently, an order issued by a provincial official of the Liu Song 劉宋 (420–479) has been discovered carved into a stone stele erected in memory of Tao Huang 陶璜 (d. 290) found in the village of Thanh Hoái, Bac Ninh province in Vietnam.<sup>10</sup>

In the Korean case, there are very few artifacts from the ancient period that transmit the original form of the “king’s words.” There are no such cases among either extant paper documents or *mokkan* 木簡 “wooden documents.” Instead, we do find a few fragments of “king’s words” in some epigraphic texts. Among these, I am going to focus particularly on *kyo* 教 “decrees.” Decrees and the documents which contain them were established as one type of document format in China. This format was transmitted as one part of the larger Chinese-style governing system which was adopted across northeast Asia, including in what is now the Korean peninsula. Therefore, as they were in China, ancient Korean *kyo* can also be understood as the king’s words inscribed in document form. The below are examples of *kyo* as found on three different Koguryō steles:

#### A-1. Chib’an Koguryō Stele Inscription<sup>11</sup>

a. □□□□□王曰 自戊子定律 教內發令 更修復

□□□□□ King said, “From the *muja* year when [we] established the law, we issued a royal decree and promulgated a mandate. Herein again We restore it.

b. 各於□□□□立碑 銘其烟戶頭廿人名數 示後世

At each □□□□ erect a stele, inscribe the names of those twenty tomb guardian households,<sup>12</sup> and show them to later generations.

c. 自今以後 守墓之民 不得□□ 更相轉賣 雖富足之者 亦不得其買賣 □若違令  
者 後世□嗣□□ 看其碑文 与其罪過

<sup>9</sup> Iikura Harutake 飯倉晴武, “Kōshikiyō monjo(1) Tennō monjo 公式様文書(1) 天皇文書 [Public Documents (1): Imperial Documents],” in *Nihon komonjogaku kōza 2: kodaihen I* 日本古文書學講座 2 古代篇 I (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1978).

<sup>10</sup> Le Huy Pham, “Pet’ūnam ūi 10 segi ijōn sōkpi e tachayō –saeropke palgyōn toen To Hwang myobi rūr chungsim ūro [On Pre-10<sup>th</sup> Century Steles from Vietnam –With a Focus on the Newly Discovered Tao Huang Memorial Stele],” *Mokkan kwa munja* 17 (June 2017): 161-188.

<sup>11</sup> Translations of these excerpts from the stele inscription are original but completed in consultation with those found in Lee Jong-rok, “An Analysis on the Contents of the Stele of Koguryō in Ji’an with Regard to Koguryō’s Reorganization of *Sumyoje*,” *International Journal of Korean History* 22.2 (2017): 56-58.

<sup>12</sup> The compound *yōnho* 烟戶 is seen elsewhere in this inscription and on the Kwanggaet’o stele, where it is clear it refers to tomb guardian households. See Lee Jong-rok, “An Analysis of the Contents of the Stele of Koguryō in Ji’an,” 53.

Henceforth, those among the people assigned to be tomb guardians shall not □□. Further, they shall not be transferred or sold. Even those persons who are well-off shall not buy or sell them. □ If anyone should transgress against this mandate, then later generations □ continue □□ look at this stele inscription and know their crimes.

#### A-2. Kwanggaet'o Stele Inscription

a. 國□□上廣開土境好太王 存時教言 祖王先王 但教取遠近舊民 守墓洒掃 吾慮舊民轉當羸劣 若吾萬年之後 安守墓者 但取吾躬巡所略來韓穢 令備洒掃

When Great King Kukgangsang Kwanggaet'o Kyōngho was alive, he decreed, my ancestors the previous kings, although they had decreed to take people of old<sup>13</sup> from near and far for the guarding and cleaning of tombs, I fear that these people of old have become impoverished and weak. Therefore, for the care and guarding of my tomb for ten-thousand years hence, simply take the Han and Ye who I myself captured and brought back, and make them care for and clean my tomb.

b. 言教如此 是以如教令 取韓穢二百廿家 慮其不知法則 復取舊民一百十家 合新舊守墓戶 國烟卅看烟三百 都合三百卅家

His words were decreed as above. Therefore, in accordance with this We decree: We take two-hundred twenty households of the Han and Ye [and make them tomb guardians]. But because We fear they do not know our laws and customs, we take with them one hundred ten households of the people of old and combining them [with the Han and Ye households] we have new and old tomb guardian households. *Kugyōn* are thirty and *kanyōn* are three-hundred. Altogether there are three-hundred thirty households.

c. 自上祖先王以來 墓上不安石碑 致使守墓人烟戶差錯 唯國□□上廣開土境好太王 盡爲祖先王 墓上立碑 銘其烟戶 不令差錯

From the time of the ancestral kings of old to the present, stone steles have not been placed before tombs. As a result, the [matter of the] *yōnho* of the tomb guardians has become confused. Only Great King Kukgangsang Kwanggaet'o Kyōngho exhaustively had steles erected at each of the ancestral kings' tombs and inscribed the name of their *yōnho* so that there would be no confusion.

d. 又制守墓人 自今以後 不得更相轉賣 雖有富足之者 亦不得擅買 其有違令 賣者刑之 買人制令守墓之

We also compel the tomb guardians from this point forward to not transfer or sell themselves, and even those who are well-off shall not willfully buy them. Those who transgress this mandate and buy them shall be punished. Anyone who buys [such persons] will be forced to guard the tomb himself.

<sup>13</sup> This is a literal translation of the compound 舊民, which in context appears to mean people belonging to traditional Koguryō territory, as opposed to people captured from elsewhere (Han and Ye).

A-3. Ch'ungju Koguryō Stele<sup>14</sup>

a. 教食在東夷寐錦之衣服建立處尹者賜之隨恭諸夷古奴客人等

The king issued a decree that a meal should be eaten at the place where the robes of the *maegŭm* of the Eastern Barbarians had been prepared and had the Chief bestow them [upon the *maegŭm*]. [The *maegŭm*] then there assembled the various barbarians who had been our vassals...

b. 教諸位賜上下衣服

The king issued a decree to his various officials and had them bestow robes on upper and lower [of Silla].

c. 教東夷寐錦還來節教賜寐錦土內諸衆人□支

The king issued a decree that when the *maegŭm* of the Eastern Barbarians should return back [to Silla] it be decreed that the *maegŭm* shall bestow □支 upon his various subjects in his realm.

d. 告[大]王國土大位諸位上下衣服兼受教跪營之 .....

It was reported in the realm of the Great King to the nobles and various officials, high and low, that they should don their robes and together receive the decree at Kweyōng.<sup>15</sup>

e. 教來前部大使者多于桓奴主簿貴[德]□土境□募人三百

The king issued a decree that the *taesaja* of the Former District, Tauhwanno, and Chubu Kwidōk □ should come and gather three hundred people at Togyōng □.

Decrees issued by King Kwanggaet'o and his successor King Changsu are quoted in A-2. Those of Kwanggaet'o are in two parts, A-2a and the underlined portion of A-2c plus A-2d. Because A-2a contains the line “when he was alive he decreed” 存時教言, we can assume this decree was a sort of final injunction. The decree appears to be a transcription of the king's outlining of the problems of the tomb guardian system as it had existed previously and the need for new tomb guardians, and then systematically providing for the appointment of those new tomb guardians. This record, even within the context of the larger document, appears to be a concise summary of the portions about tomb guardians. Within this section, “My ancestors the previous kings, although they had decreed to take people of old from near and far for the guarding and cleaning of tombs,” suggests we are looking at a response to some of the main points of tomb guardian policy as found in decrees of previous kings.

<sup>14</sup> The transcription of the Ch'ungju Koguryō Stele provided here and the interpretations are on which the translation is based are from Yō Hōgyu, “Ch'ungju Koguryō pi ūi tallak kusōng kwa kōnnip sigi [Paragraph Structure and Dating of the Erection of the Ch'ungju Koguryō Stele],” *Hanguk kodaesa yōngu* 98 (2020): 97-140.

<sup>15</sup> This interpretation follows Yō Hōgyu in taking *kweyōng* 跪營 as the name of a place, or perhaps the name of a building.

In the case of the latter part of A-2c plus A-2d, we can see that the “king’s words” have been transformed into a document outlining regulations related to the erection of stone steles at royal tombs, the prohibition of the buying and selling of tomb guardians, and the appropriate punishment when this prohibition was violated. We see similar content in the inscription on the Chib’an Koguryō Stele (A-1). In the underlined portion of A-1b and A-1c, with the exception of a few characters, the content is identical to the underlined portion of A-2c plus A-2d. Therefore, it seems likely that both have quoted from the same decree originally issued by King Kwanggaet’o. In comparing the two, the Chib’an Koguryō Stele has more detailed information on matters such as the *yŏnhodu* 烟戶頭 and contains lines such as “look at this stele inscription and know their crimes” 看其碑文 与其罪過, which suggest it may be closer to the original format of the king’s decree than the Kwanggaet’o Stele inscription.

The first of King Kwanggaet’o’s decrees concerns the problem of appointing tomb guardians for his own tomb, while the second appears to have been a separate decree concerning the erecting of steles at royal tombs and the prohibition of the buying and selling of tomb guardians. However, it is impossible to know whether this second decree is the same as that mentioned on the Ji’an Koguryō Stele in A-1a or yet another decree issued later. Moreover, everything in this inscription from “from the *muja* year” to “know their crimes” is what the “king said” 王曰, and is not anywhere directly called a “decree,” and so we do not know exactly what form of “king’s words” this inscription may constitute.

The portion of the Kwanggaet’o Stele that we might call a decree of King Changsu (Kwanggaet’o’s successor) reads “We take two-hundred twenty households of the Han and Ye [and make them tomb guardians]. But because We fear they do not know our laws and customs, we take with them one hundred ten households of the people of old and combining them [with the Han and Ye households] we have new and old tomb guardian households. *Kugyŏn* are thirty and *kanyŏn* are three-hundred. Altogether there are three-hundred thirty households.” This appears to be the document-ized form of “king’s words,” wherein Changsu concretely discusses the tribal origins of the tomb guardians and the number of their households, the reason for the appointment of some “people of old” to supplement the Han and Ye tomb guardians, and the proportionment of the tomb guardian households between *kugyŏn* and *kanyŏn*.

Some scholars have taken the *che* 制 “proclaim” that begins A-2d as an abbreviation of *che-sŏ* 制書 “proclamation,” a term for a type of “king’s words” issued by the Chinese emperor. In such an interpretation, what follows this character is understood to be part of a *che-sŏ* issued by King Kwanggaet’o. If we consider the fact that Kwanggaet’o had promulgated the reign era known as Yŏngnak 永樂, it is indeed possible that the Koguryō of his day saw itself as an imperial state and therefore used an imperial document form such as *che*. However, later on this character appears again in the line “Anyone who buys [such persons] will be forced to guard the tomb himself” 買人制令守墓之. In this case *che* clearly means “to force; to compel.” Therefore,



where it appears above in the sequence *uje* 又制, it should likewise be taken as “compel,” yielding an interpretation of the full line as “We also compel the tomb guardians from this point forward to not transfer or sell themselves.”<sup>16</sup>

In the Ch’ungju Koguryō Stele inscription (A-3), there appear several decrees issued by the Koguryō king, but it is difficult to fully grasp their meaning. A-3a concerns a feast and the bestowal of robes, A-3b concerns further bestowals of robes, A-3c concerns the bestowal of something unknown 支, and A-3e appears to be a decree about the assembly of people. A-3d concerns the announcement that the nobles and various officials, high and low should gather and receive the king’s decree. In the case of A-3d, it is possible that the agent who announced the need for officials to receive the king’s decree is different from the agent who did the decreeing (the king). It remains difficult to judge whether the various decrees included on the Ch’ungju Koguryō Stele had been “document-ized” or if the original form of the decrees (the “king’s words”) have been transcribed as is.

Epigraphic sources from Koguryō include other tomb steles and the Moduru Epitaph 牟頭婁墓誌, which features a section which reads “The king issued a decree to dispatch...” 教遣 and the inscription on a silver bowl recovered from the Sōbongch’ong tumulus in Kyōngju, which reads “The great king decreed to make this bowl...” 太王教造合杆.<sup>17</sup> In these instances, the term *kyo* appears to refer to the king’s orders or instructions. Other types of kingly discourse below the level of *kyo* may convey the central content of an order of the king, but we cannot confirm that they are “king’s words” that have been “document-ized.” Here, when I say “king’s words that have been document-ized,” I do not simply mean king’s words that have been transcribed in writing. There were set document formats that must be used according to the state system. The words of the king had to be drafted into an appropriate document format in order to be disseminated or enacted. This is what I mean by “document-ization.”

Sources from Silla that fall in a similar time frame include the Chungsōng-ni Stele (found in P’ohang; dated 501 CE), which is the earliest of Silla steles. In this inscription, the *kalmunwang* Chidoro and the *aganji* Sūpchi of Hwebu and the *aganji* Sadōkchi of Sahwe collectively issue a decree, which begins: “Ponmoja and Sariisari of Hwe reported...” 本牟子 喙 沙利夷斯利白 and continues through “...if in later generations there is someone who again brings up this matter, they shall receive a harsh punishment” 若後世更導人者 与重罪. This decree contains not only the report of Ponmoja and Sariisari, but an order outlining how the ruling in the decree should be carried out, a list of interested parties, steps that should be taken after the ruling,

<sup>16</sup> Kim Ch’angsōk, *Wanggwōn kwa pōp: Hanguk kodae pōpche ūi sōngnip kwa pyōnch’ōn* [Royal Power and the Law: The Establishment and Evolution of Ancient Korean Legal Systems] (P’aju: Chisik sanōpsa, 2020), pp. 133-134.

<sup>17</sup> This bowl was recovered from a Silla tomb, but aspects of its inscription, particularly the reign name *yōnsu* 延壽, have been interpreted by some scholars as referring to the Koguryō King Changsu (r. 413-491).



and warnings for the future. Given the variety of information contained therein, it appears that the original decree's content has been transcribed in this stele inscription. However, it is impossible to know whether this is the entirety of the decree or just a piece of it.

It has long been noted that the decreeing parties in the Chungsŏng-ni Stele include not just the king but other powerholders. Therefore, we cannot call this decree the “king's words” in the strictest sense. The Naengsu-ri Stele (found in P'ohang; dated 503 CE) and the Pongp'yŏng-ni Stele (found in Uljin; dated 524 CE) likewise are not sources that contain the “king's words” in the narrowest sense. However, these stele inscriptions do show us what form decrees took at this point in early Silla history. If we consider the Naengsu-ri stele, while it is similar to the Chungsŏng-ni stele in its content being focused on the resolution of a dispute, the order in which the decree is written, as well as the general format differs considerably. This is surely because there was not yet a “decree system” (and therefore a standard format for such documents) in place.

Comparatively speaking, the Naengsu-ri Stele and the Pongp'yŏng-ni stele have more in common, with the king's words in response to a given matter taking the form of a *kyo* 敎 “decree” and then as a *pyŏlgyo* 別敎 “separate decree.” This phenomenon—the king's words in response to a single matter being listed as *kyo* and then *pyŏlgyo*—is also seen on the Chŏksŏng Stele from Tanyang (c. 550s CE). However, the decree on the Chŏksŏng Stele is in the voice of the king alone.

#### B-1 Chŏksŏng Stele (Tanyang)<sup>18</sup>

a. □□□□月中 王敎事大衆等 喙部伊史夫智伊干□ ... 喙部助黑夫智及干支

In the □□□□ month the king decreed to all the grandees : the *iganji* Isabuji of Hoe-bu... the *kŭpganji* Chohŭkpuji of Hoe-bu<sup>19</sup>

b. 節敎事 赤城也余次□□□□中作善庸懷懃力 使死人 是以後 其妻三□□□□□□□□許利之 四年小女 師文□□□□□□□□ 公兄鄒文村□玠婁下干支 □□□□□□□□者 更赤城烟去使之 後者公□□□□□□□□異葉耶 國法中分与 雖然伊□□□□□□□□子刀只小女 烏礼兮撰干支 □□□□□□□□使法赤城佃舍法爲之 別官賜□□□□弗兮女 道豆只 又悅利□小子 刀羅兮□□□□□ 合五人之

On this occasion it was decreed, Yaich'a of Chŏksŏng praised □□□□, saying he was someone who used his whole heart and expended all his strength in his work, and therefore died. Therefore, hereafter his wife and three □□□□□□□□□□

<sup>18</sup> Translations of portions of this stele inscription can also be found in Richard D. McBride II, “Can the *Samguk sagi* Be Corroborated through Epigraphy? An Analysis of the Capital-Rank System and Councils of Nobles,” *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 29.1 (June 2016): 76-77.

<sup>19</sup> A long list of “grandees” has been abbreviated here, with just the first and last names included. For the complete list, see McBride, “Can the *Samguk sagi* be corroborated through epigraphy,” 76-77.

□ are granted the yield. Four-year-old young girl master' s letter □□□□□□  
 □□□ the lord' s elder brother the *haganji* □chinnu of Ch'umun village, as for  
 □□□□□□□□□, have him go again to Chōksōng-yōn. As for hereafter, the  
 lord □□□□□□□□□ even if they are of a different leaf, divide them up  
 according to the law of the country. However, I□□□□□□□□□ja, the young  
 girl Toji, the *ch'an'ganji* Ohyere, □□□□□□□□□ because it was made law,  
 carry out the Chōksōng paddy field hut law. Separately, the Chief should grant □  
 □□□□ Pulhyenyō and Toduji. Also to the child Yōlli□ and Torahye □□□□  
 □ all together five persons.

c. 別教 自此後 國中如也余次 □□□□□□懷懃力使人事 若其生子女  
 子年少□□□□□□兄弟耶 如此白者 大人耶 小人耶 ...  
 Separately the king decreed that from this point forward, in matters such as those of  
 Yaich'a who □□□□□□ used their whole heart and expend all their strength in  
 work, if they should have sons or daughters who are young in age □□□□□□□  
 or should have [young] siblings, then anyone who reports thusly, whether they be  
 adult or child, ...

#### B-2 Mt. Nam New Fortress Stele No. 1 (Kyōngju)<sup>20</sup>

辛亥年二月廿六日 南山新城作節 如法以作後三年崩破者 罪教事 爲聞教令 誓  
 事之

*Sinhae* year (591 CE), second month, twenty-sixth day. We have completed the  
 construction of the new fortress on Mt. Nam. When the new fortress on Mt. Nam is  
 constructed, according to the law 'if after construction three years hence it crumbles  
 or is destroyed, there will be punishment.' Having received this decree, we now vow.

Among epigraphic sources from Silla, the oldest *kyo* is found on the Naengsu-ri  
 Stele from P'ohang. At the top of this inscription is quoted a decree issued in the time  
 of the kings Sabuji (Silsōng, r. 402-417) and Naeji (Nulji, r. 417-458). However, this  
 decree, like those that follow it in the same stele inscription, appears to have been  
 discussed among several powerholders and then disseminated among the people. A  
 decree promulgated by the single person of the king alone is found for the first time  
 on Chōksōng Stele, which is dated approximately forty to fifty years after the  
 Naengsu-ri stele.

The Chōksōng Stele is thought to have been erected sometime in the 550s. The  
 names of several high-ranking officials who received the decree issued by King  
 Chinhūng (r. 540-576) are listed in B-1a. The content of the decree is found in B-1b  
 and B-1c. Because the inscription lays out in great detail first Yaich'a's distinguished  
 service and the rewards due his remaining family, establishes that the basis for those

<sup>20</sup> For the text of the Chōksōng Stele and the Mt. Nam New Fortress Stele No. 1, I have followed that  
 from the Database of Korean History, found in their epigraphic sources database at  
<http://db.history.go.kr/item/level.do?itemId=gskh>.

rewards is the so-called *chönsaböp* 佃舍法 “paddy field hut law,” and then describes the manner in which this law should be applied going forward, it appears the main content of the original decree has been transcribed here. However, it is unclear whether the timing of the decree and the identities of those to whom it was issued as listed in B-1a would have been part of the original decree, and if they were, where and in what position they might have been included.

The relationship between the *kyo* in B-1b and the *pyölgyo* in B-1c remains a problem. There are many unidentifiable characters and it is therefore difficult to discern the exact content of each, but B-1b appears to be concerned with matters directly related to Yaich’a and his bereaved family, while B-1c discusses how similar matters should be handled thereafter. Therefore, the points in time being addressed by the decree and the “separate decree” are different. However, the content of the two is intricately connected. Therefore, we cannot say that the decree and the separate decree are wholly distinct decrees, but were probably originally delineated within a single *kyo*. In B-1c, the character *ch’a* 此 “this” in the sequence “from this point forward” 自此後 refers back to the matter concerning Yaich’a and his family. If B-1c were a wholly distinct decree, then this character could not be used in this way.

It appears that in middle-period Silla (514-654)<sup>21</sup> the term *pyölgyo* referred to one part of the decree, distinguished from the main body of the decree in terms of content. For instance, on the Naengsu-ri stele a “separate decree” is bestowed upon Mich’u and Sasinji, to the effect that if these two were to bring up the matter again a severe punishment would be inflicted upon them.<sup>22</sup> A similar warning is seen on the Chungšöng-ni stele inscription, as quoted above: “if in later generations there is someone who again brings up this matter, they shall receive a harsh punishment” 若後世更導人者 与重罪. Although this is not labeled as a ‘separate decree’ in this inscription, this warning is included in the larger text of the decree, and therefore is informative for understanding the relationship between a ‘separate decree’ and the ‘main decree.’

On the Pongp’yöng-ni Stele (524), a *pyölgyo* appears which features largely the same content as the main decree: the incident caused by Köbölmora and the *Noin* 奴人 “subordinates” of Nammiji village, the punishment administered and its basis in the law, and a list of the names and titles of the concerned parties. Later, in the sequence “at this time it was decreed that if this [happens again], then it should provoke a punishment from heaven” 于時教之 若此者 獲罪於天, we again have the term *kyo*, but this appears to be a warning about recurrence, similar to the *pyölgyo* of the Naengsu-ri Stele. Therefore, it is possible that in the Pongp’yöng-ni Stele inscription, the content of the main decree was abbreviated in favor of a direct focus on the

<sup>21</sup> “Middle-period Silla” refers to the period during which the royal state reached maturity, beginning from the reign of Pöphüŋg (r. 514-540) through the reign of Queen Chindök (647-654).

<sup>22</sup> For a complete translation of this stele inscription, see Hashimoto and Burge, “Epigraphy of Early Korea (third century BCE to eighth century CE), in *Handbook of World Epigraphic Cultures*, (Berling: DeGruyter-Brill, forthcoming).

“separate decree” whose content was concerned with *Noin*. If this was not the case, then perhaps the “separate decree” here is the *de facto* decree, while the portion of the inscription which follows “at this time it was decreed” functions as the “separate decree.” In the latter scenario, it appears the concept of a main decree with “separate decrees” existed by the time of the Pongp’yŏng-ni Stele, but perhaps the distinction was not yet systematically maintained. In any case, through the first half of the sixth century, decrees issued in the name of several individuals were divided into ‘decrees’ and ‘separate decrees’ on the basis of content, and this approach to decrees carried over into the latter half of the sixth century even when the decreeing party became the king alone.

B-2 transmits the vow made by the workers enlisted to build the new fortress at Mt. Nam in Kyŏngju that had built up strong fortress walls. It is a relatively short piece of text, but because it mixes standard Literary Sinitic and sentences composed in Silla-style syntax, interpretation is difficult. The vow is written in Silla-style syntax 以作後三年崩破者 罪教事, which can be glossed as “after we have built it, if three years hence it crumbles or is destroyed, we will receive punishment.” From this inscription, we can understand that within Silla’s *yullyŏng* 律令 “Civil and Penal Codes,” there were laws related to fortress construction, and King Chinp’yŏng (r. 579-632) had issued a decree based on these laws about the construction of the new fortress on Mt. Nam. Having received this decree, the laborers tasked with constructing the fortress vowed that their work met the standards of the decree. The entire inscription can be glossed as, “When the new fortress on Mt. Nam is constructed, according to the law ‘if after construction three years hence it crumbles or is destroyed, there will be punishment.’ Having received this decree, we now vow.” It would seem that King Chinp’yŏng’s decree must have included the words “according to the law, if after construction there years hence it crumbles or is destroyed, there will be punishment.”

In this case, remarkably, the “king’s words” take as their basis a corresponding passage from the Civil and Penal Codes in directing the building of sturdy fortress walls. Similar warnings about what may happen in the event of recurrence can be found in the Chungŏng-ni Stele, Naengsu-ri Stele, and Pongp’yŏng-ni Stele inscriptions, but because the Chungŏng-ni and Naengsu-ri stele inscriptions were erected prior to the promulgation of the Civil and Penal Codes, such warnings as found in those inscriptions cannot have been based on specific articles from the codes. It appears that regulations meant to prevent the recurrence of similar events were established within “decree law,” and these were later reflected in the text of the codes when they were promulgated.<sup>23</sup> And then, as we can see in the citation of the *noinbŏp* 奴人法 on the Pongp’yŏng-ni Stele and the *chŏnsabŏp* 佃舍法 on the Chŏksŏng Stele, once the Civil and Penal Codes had been promulgated, they were generally cited as the basis for directives issued as “king’s words.”

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<sup>23</sup> On the relationship between decree law and the Civil and Penal Codes, see Kim Ch’angsŏk, *Wanggwŏn kwa pŏp*, pp. 205-214.

There are two instances of the character *kyo* 教 among the inscriptions on the Wölsöng Moat *mokkan*.<sup>24</sup> These include Wölsöng Moat No. 149 which reads: "...bestowed a letter and it was ordered [decreed]. Thereafter matters were all handled according to the order" 牒垂賜教在之後事者命盡 and No. 153 which reads: "Fourth month, first day. The Manager Grandee decrees..." 四月一日 典大等教事.<sup>25</sup> No. 149 is a 'decree' related to the acquisition of paper necessary for sutra copying, and is therefore likely to have been a 'decree' issued by some official related to temple administration, perhaps someone in a high official position such as a *söngjŏn* 成典 "department manager."<sup>26</sup> These 'decrees' are likely to have been issued after the range of those who could issue 'decrees' was expanded after the end of the middle period (i.e., after 654), and therefore should not be understood as "king's words." The Bronze Bell Inscription from the Mujinsa 无盡寺 monastery, dated to the fourth year of King Kyöngdök's reign (745), also features the character *kyo* 教, but this also appears to be a decree issued by a party other than the king.

There are also several instances of 'king's words' which appear on memorial steles dedicated to venerated Buddhist clerics from the Unified Silla period.

#### C-1. Memorial Stele for Master Pojo at Porimsa Temple in Changhŭng (884)

教下望水里南等宅 共出金一百六十分 租二千斛 助充裝饒功德 寺隸宣教省

A decree was issued to the Mangsu and the Inam houses<sup>27</sup> that they should together put up gold in the quantity of one hundred *pun* plus two thousand *kok* of grain, to help complete the adornment of [his] meritorious virtue. The temple shall be subordinated to the Department of Instruction.

<sup>24</sup> On the Wölsöng Moat *mokkan*/Korean *mokkan* in English, see Kim Ch'angsök, "Ancient Korean *Mokkan* (Wooden Slips): With a Special Focus on Their Features and Uses," *Acta Koreana* 17.1 (2014): 193-222.

<sup>25</sup> The translation "manager grandee" for *chöndaedŭng* 典大等 originates with Richard D. McBride II, "The Evolution of Councils of Nobles in Silla Korea," *Tongguk sahak* 59 (December 2015): 284-285.

<sup>26</sup> On the *söngjŏn*, which were directors of managerial offices for prominent Buddhist monasteries with royal connections, see Kim Sang-hyun, "Buddhism and the State in Middle and Late Silla," in Richard D. McBride II, ed., *State and Society in Middle and Late Silla, Early Korea Project Occasional Series*, (Cambridge, MA: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 2010): 112-114. These directors were always *chin'gol* [true bone] nobles usually appointed from among members of the king's own inner circle. Translation as 'department manager' comes from the proposed list of Silla office translations found in this same edited volume, pp. 209-216.

<sup>27</sup> These are thought to designate two of the so-called "gold-covered houses" of the true-bone nobility in Silla's capital. Mangsu 望水 is elsewhere transcribed instead as Sumang 水望 while Yinam 里南 is also written 李南.

C-2 Memorial Stele for the High Priest Nanghye of Sōngjusa Temple in Poryōng (890)<sup>28</sup>

聲聞玉京 菩薩戒弟子 武州都督蘇判鑑 執事侍郎寬柔 貝江都護咸雄 全州別駕英雄 皆王孫也 維城輔君德險道賴師恩 何必出家然後入室 遂與門人 昭玄大德 釋通賢 四天王寺上座釋慎符 議曰 師云亡 君爲慟 奈何 吾儕忍灰心木舌 缺緣飾在三之義乎 迺白黑相應 請贈諡暨銘塔 教曰可 旋命王孫夏官二卿 禹珪 召桂苑行人 侍御使崔致遠 至蓬萊宮 因得竝琪樹上瑤墀 跼蹐命珠箔外 上曰 .....

...one hears of this even in the Jade Capital. The disciples who have received the lay precepts, the commander-in-chief of Muju the *sopan*<sup>29</sup> Il, the attendant gentleman of the Chancellery Kwan'yu, the protector-general of the P'aegang Garrison Ham'ung, and the deputy governor of Chōnju, Yōng'ung, are all royal grandsons. In the four corners of the realm, they supplement their lord's virtue, and when met with difficulty they all relied upon the Master's grace. How can it be said then that only after one takes the tonsure that they then become a disciple? It was such that the master, when speaking with his followers the priest of great virtue from the Office for the Clarification of Buddhist Profundities and the dean of Sach'ōnwangsa temple Sōksinbu, they said, "When the master died, even the king too wept mournfully for him; however shall we conceal our troubled hearts and keep our tongues quiet, and fail to pursue the Three Duties left to us?"<sup>30</sup> Thus they together comisserated over right and wrong, and requested that he be granted a posthumous name and an inscribed memorial stele. The Queen decreed this request be granted, and then ordered that the royal grandson, the attendant gentleman of the Ministry of War,<sup>31</sup> Ugyu summon the Kyewōn messenger the Attendant Secretary<sup>32</sup> Ch'oe Ch'iwōn. When [Ch'oe] arrived at the Penglai Palace, he followed a palace attendant<sup>33</sup> and ascended a jade staircase. He kneeled and waited outside the bejeweled curtains. His Majesty said...

C-3 Memorial Stele for the Great Priest Chijūng of Pongamsa Temple in Mun'gyōng (924)<sup>34</sup>

a. 贈大師景文大王 心融鼎教 面謁輪工 遙深爾思 覬俾我卽 乃寓書曰 伊尹大通 宋纖小見 以儒辟釋 自邇陟遠 旬邑巖居 頗有佳所 木可擇矣 無惜鳳儀 妙選近

<sup>28</sup> Translation provided here relies on the interpretation with notes provided by Nam Tongsin in the epigraphic sources section of the Database of Korean History at [https://db.history.go.kr/ancient/level.do?levelId=gskh\\_005\\_0010\\_0180\\_0030](https://db.history.go.kr/ancient/level.do?levelId=gskh_005_0010_0180_0030)

<sup>29</sup> The equivalent of *chapch'an* 迎飡, the third of Silla's seventeen capital ranks.

<sup>30</sup> The "three duties" of a Buddhist cleric were to his father, his teacher, and to his king.

<sup>31</sup> The original text's *hagwan yigyōng* 夏官二卿 refers to an equivalent post from the Zhou dynasty corresponding to Silla's *pyōngbu sirang*.

<sup>32</sup> This was the highest of Ch'oe Ch'iwon's titles that he held during his time in Tang.

<sup>33</sup> Literally *kisu* 琪樹 is a type of bejeweled tree found in the realm of the immortals, but is interpreted here to mean a beautiful palace attendant at the Silla royal palace.

<sup>34</sup> Translation provided relies on the annotations and glossing provided by Nam Tongsin in the epigraphic sources section of the Database of Korean History at [https://db.history.go.kr/ancient/level.do?levelId=gskh\\_005\\_0010\\_0160\\_0020](https://db.history.go.kr/ancient/level.do?levelId=gskh_005_0010_0160_0020).

侍中可人 鵠陵昆孫立言爲使 既傳教已 因攝齊焉 答曰 修身化人 捨靜奚趣 鳥能之命 善爲我辭 幸許安塗中 無令在汶上 上聞之 益珍重 .....

Great King Kyōngmun (r. 861-875), who had promoted him to Great Priest, in his mind thinking him to be one who harmonized all three teachings,<sup>35</sup> sought to personally meet him.<sup>36</sup> From afar he deeply thought of him, and he wished that he might have him serve more closely. Therefore he dispatched a letter, saying, “Yi Yun is someone who remains unbothered by things, while Song Sōm is one who sees to even the smallest matters; if we liken this to Confucianism as compared to Buddhism, this is like travelling from a close place to a distant one. Even among the hermitages in the outskirts of the capital there are extraordinarily beautiful places, so it would be like a bird concealing the tree on which it lands. Do not regret the coming of the phoenix.” From among those who served him closely he carefully chose a capable person, making Ipōn, sixth generation descendant of King Wōnsōng (r. 785-799), his messenger. When the decree had thus been conveyed, he found a disciple for the task [of conveying his answer]. [The Great Priest] answered, “I have cultivated myself and taught others; where would I go, abandoning my quiet hermitage? Your words about the ‘bird concealing the tree’ are well-said, so please in your grace allow me to stay as I am, do not make me have to go elsewhere to avoid your further summons.” The king heard this and thought him all the more worthy.

b. 太傅大王 以華風掃弊 慧海濡枯 素欽靈育之名 渴聽法深之論 乃注心鷄足 灑翰鶴頭 以徵之曰 外護小緣 念踰三際 內修大惠 幸許一來 大師 感動琅函言及 勝因通世 同塵率土 懷玉出山 .....

乃命十戒弟子宣教省副使馮恕行 援送歸山

Great King T'aebu (Hōn'gang, r. 875-886) eradicated bad customs by means of Chinese practices, and with the ocean of his wisdom soaked the dessicated world. He showed great respect for the name of Xuangao (402-444),<sup>37</sup> and he listened intently to the lectures of Zhuqian (286-374).<sup>38</sup> Therefore he poured his heart into Kukkutapāda,<sup>39</sup> and sent [the great priest] a royal summons<sup>40</sup> requesting his presence, saying, “From the outside I have protected our small karmic bond, and without realizing it a year has gone by. So that I might cultivate supreme wisdom<sup>41</sup> from inside the palace, I wish that you would come just this once.” The Great Priest was moved by the words in his esteemed letter which read, “Good karmic connections abound in this world because [boddhisattvas] mingle with sentient

<sup>35</sup> The “three teachings” refers to Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

<sup>36</sup> Literally, “one adept at turning the wheel of the Dharma.”

<sup>37</sup> A Buddhist priest of the Northern Wei dynasty who was killed in the anti-Buddhist suppression carried out by Emperor Taiwu (r. 423-452).

<sup>38</sup> A Buddhist priest of Eastern Jin dynasty who gave a series of lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* for the emperor.

<sup>39</sup> “Cock’s Foot Mountain.” This is a mountain in Magadhā in India where one of Shakyamuni Buddha’s disciples, Mahākāśyapa, is said to have died.

<sup>40</sup> These four characters literally read “sprinkled feathers on a crane’s head letter”; “crane’s head letter” refers to a type of royal summons.

<sup>41</sup> *Taehye* (Ch. *dahui*) translates Sanskrit *mahā-prajñā*, a wisdom which arises from an awareness of the emptiness of all things and the necessity of detachment; such “supreme wisdom” is thus a precursor to enlightenment.



beings in the human realm,” and so he left the mountain grasping a piece of jade... Hereupon he ordered the lay disciple the vice commissioner of the Department of Instruction P’ungsōhaeng to accompany [the great priest] back home to the mountain.

The Memorial Stele for Master Pojo at Porimsa Temple in Changhŭng was erected in the tenth year of King Hōn’gang’s reign (884). In 859, after Kim Ōn’gyōng (dates unknown) dedicated an image of Vairocana to Kajisansa Temple (Porimsa Temple), King Hōnan (r. 857-861) issued a decree to the Mangsu and Yinam households that they should present offerings to the temple, and further ordered that the temple be brought under the control of the *sōn’gyosōng* 宣敎省 “Department of Instruction.” The stele inscription appears to cite the decree directly in listing the exact amounts of gold and grains ordered. There is the text of yet another decree cited on the stele, in which the king requests that Chejing 體澄 (Master Pojo; 804-880) relocate to Kajisansa Temple.<sup>42</sup>

While the words of the decree itself are not included in the stele inscription in C-2, it is notable that the content and style of the decree are both inferrable. As High Priest Nanghye’s name became widely known after his death, officials and Nanghye’s disciples requested that Queen Chinsōng (r. 887-897) bestow him a posthumous name and erect a memorial stele. Queen Chinsōng’s reply is given as literally, “the decree said yes” 敎曰可, indicating that the monarch had granted the request of the petitioners. When proclamations 制書 of Sui and Tang and official edicts 詔書 of Japan were authorized by an emperor, he would himself inscribe the character *ka* 可 “yes” at the bottom.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, at the bottom of decrees 敎, the emperor would instead write the characters “in consultation with (one’s advisors)” 依諮.<sup>44</sup> However, in this case it appears Queen Chinsōng wrote 可, following instead the style of an official edict. Surely, the content of the document would have been related to the granting of a posthumous name and the erection of a memorial stele for Nanghye, as had been formally requested by the group of officials and clergy.

C-3a tells us that King Kyōngmun had sent a letter inviting Great Priest Chijŭng to the royal palace. The main content of this letter reads “Yi Yun is someone who remains unbothered by things, while Song Sōm is one who sees to even the smallest matters; if we liken this to Confucianism as compared to Buddhism, this is like traveling from

<sup>42</sup> The text of this “decree” reads 敎又遣道俗使靈巖郡僧正連訓法師 奉宸馮瑄等 宣諭綸旨 請移居迦智山寺 “We decree that again the *tosoksa* [officials from the *chōngbōpchōn*, the Office for Administration of the Dharma] the *samgha* rectifier priest Yōnhun of Yōngam district and P’ungsōn of the *pongsin* office shall be dispatched to proclaim the king’s edict that he request [the Master] relocate to Kajisansa temple.”

<sup>43</sup> Nakamura Yūichi, *Zui Tō ōgen no kenkyū*, pp. 43-44; Iikura Harutake, “Kōshikiyō monjo(1) Tennō monjo” 13-22.

<sup>44</sup> Nakamura Yūichi, “Kyō –Shōrinji Mutoku hachi nen (625) Shinō ‘kyō’ wo chūshin ni” 敎–少林寺武德八年(六二五)秦王‘敎’を中心に in *Tōdai kanbunsho kenkyū* 唐代官文書研究 (Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1991), p. 93.

a close place to a distant one. Even among the hermitages in the outskirts of the capital there are extraordinarily beautiful places, so it would be like a bird concealing the tree on which it lands. Do not regret the coming of the phoenix” 伊尹大通 宋纖小見 以儒辟釋 自邇陟遠 旬邑巖居 頗有佳所 木可擇矣 無惜鳳儀. This section appears to have been transcribed verbatim. After this, however, the inscription features the sequence “when the decree had thus been conveyed” 既傳教已, which suggests the letter sent by King Kyōngmun was understood to be a royal decree. In C-3b, Great King T’aebu is King Hōn’gang, Kyōngmun’s son and successor, who like his father sends a letter to Great Priest Chijūng inviting him to visit the palace. The section of the inscription which reads “From the outside I have protected our small karmic bond, and without realizing it a year has gone by. So that I might cultivate supreme wisdom<sup>45</sup> from inside the palace, I wish that you would come just this once” 外護小緣 念踰三際 內修大惠 幸許一來 again appears to be directly quoted from the original letter.

Outside of these three examples, there are a limited number of cases in which the character *kyo* 教 appears in Buddhist inscriptions of the Unified Silla period, but none of them suggest anything concrete about the content or style of royal decrees. For instance, if we look at the Memorial Stele for the High Priest Such’ōl of Silsōngsa Temple in Namwōn (905), a special decree was issued to Princess Tanūijang (sister of King Kyōngmun; dates unknown) to have the Master stay at Simwōnsansa temple.<sup>46</sup> In this case, the intent of the decree issued by Queen Chinsōng was recorded, but nothing of the original text has been transmitted. In the Memorial Stele for the Great Priest Chijūng of Pongamsa Temple (C-3) there is another section which describes how in 881, by a decree of King Hōn’gang a *sūngt’ong* 僧統 “*samgha* overseer” and other officials were sent to establish the boundaries of the temple, and to name it Pongam 鳳巖.<sup>47</sup> This too is an example of a description of the intent of the decree and its execution, but without any hints of the original text.

### Examples Included in Compiled Texts

In compiled texts such as *Samguk sagi*, there are some instances of the king’s words or directives being recorded directly, preceded by phrases such as “the king said” 王曰 or “an edict was passed down saying” 下令曰. These “king’s words” are the oral speech of the king, written down by court scribes, and then collected in later ages and

<sup>45</sup> *Taehye* (Ch. *dahui*) translates Sanskrit *mahā-prajñā*, a wisdom which arises from an awareness of the emptiness/impermanence of all things and the necessity of detachment; such “supreme wisdom” is thus a precursor to enlightenment.

<sup>46</sup> The original text reads 特教勅端儀長翁主 深源山寺 請居禪師 (“A special decree was issued to Princess Tanūijang that she should request the Master stay at Simwōnsansa temple.”)

<sup>47</sup> The original text reads 教遣前安輪寺僧統俊恭 肅正史裴聿文 標定疆域 芸賜榜爲鳳巖焉. (“A decree was issued that the former *samgha* overseer (*sūngt’ong* 僧統) of Annyunsa 安輪寺 temple Chun’gong and the Censorate Secretary (*sukchōngsa* 肅正史) Pae Yulmun be sent to plot out the boundaries of the temple and then to bestow upon it a tablet naming it Pongam [Phoenix Cliff].”)

included in compiled texts. These are king's words recorded and passed down, but they were not first "document-ized," and so they cannot be considered king's documents.

Beyond these, compiled texts also include a variety of genres of "king's words," including *chemun* 祭文 "sacrificial addresses," *kyosō* 教書 "decree texts," *isō* 移書 "correspondence," *yujo* 遺詔 "final testaments," and official diplomatic correspondence. Diplomatic documents issued in the king's name are also found scattered about Chinese histories, comprehensive histories such as *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 and *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, as well as in the six official histories of Japan.<sup>48</sup> These sorts of documents were composed for the purposes of performing state rituals and are generally in unabbreviated form, and therefore we might take them to be 'document-ized' forms of king's words. Some of these sources preserve expressions and turns of phrase that suggest the style of the documents, and can thus be quite helpful in considering the original format of "king's documents."

In compiled texts, it is extremely difficult to conceal the presence of "king's documents." Diplomatic texts like the below examples often feature mentions of the document formats, such as *p'yo* 表 "memorial," *kye* 啓 "disclosure," which makes the classification of these documents relatively simple. However, for "king's documents" intended for internal dissemination, it is less clear whether they have been "document-ized" or whether they are simply transcriptions of the king's oral speech, or if they have indeed been document-ized whether they can be called "king's documents" or if they were composed and enacted by officials in the bureaucracy.

D-1. *Koguryō Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 16: King Sindae<sup>49</sup>

春正月 下令曰 寡人生忝王親 卒非君德 向屬友于之政 頗乖貽厥之謨 畏害難安 離羣遠遯 泊聞凶計 但極哀摧 豈謂百姓樂推 羣公勸進 謬以眇末 據于崇高 不敢違寧 如涉淵海 宜推恩而及遠 遂與衆而自新 可大赦國內 國人既聞 敕令 無不歡呼 慶抃曰 大哉 新大王之德澤也

[Year two (166)], spring, first month. The King issued an edict declaring, "I was born as an unworthy member of the royal family, having from the start no kingly virtue. Although previously we allowed the fraternal succession of a younger brother to the throne, [the King] mismanaged the government he inherited. Fearing destruction [as I did], it was hard for me to feel secure. And so I withdrew from others and took refuge in a remote spot. When I heard of the King's death, I felt nothing but utter sadness in my heart: how could I imagine that the people would happily endorse me? Or that many ministers would urge me to accept the throne? Inadequate as I am, yet occupying the highest position, how could I dare to relax,

<sup>48</sup> These six official histories were compiled in Japan from 720 to 901, beginning with the *Nihon shoki* [Chronicles of Japan]. Collectively, they cover the mythical "age of the gods" through the year 887.

<sup>49</sup> Translations from the *Koguryō Annals* follow Edward Shultz and Hugh H.W. Kang, eds., *The Koguryō Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, 2nd. ed., (Seongnam: Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012), with some minor modifications.

feeling like one crossing a vast sea. Now I ought to promote benevolence and extend it even into remote places; thus, together with the people, I shall reform myself to bring about a great amnesty throughout the kingdom.” When the people heard about this amnesty decree every one of them shouted for joy, clapping their palms with delight, and exclaimed, “Great indeed is the new King’s virtuous grace!”<sup>50</sup>

D-2. *Koguryō Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 16: King Kokgukch’ōn

夏四月 聚衆攻王都 王徵幾內兵馬平之 遂下令曰 近者 官以寵授 位非德進 毒流百姓 動我王家 此寡人不明所致也 今汝四部 各舉賢良在下者 於是 四部共舉東部晏留

[Year thirteen (191)], summer, fourth month. Chwagaryō and others mobilized people and attacked the capital. The King enlisted troops and horses in the capital area and pacified them. He then issued the edict, “Recently as offices were granted through special favors, and ranks were given without regard to merit, they harmed the people and threw our royal family into disarray. This is because of my ignorance. I command the four tribes to each recommend capable and worthy underlings.” Thereupon the four tribes together recommended Allyu from the Eastern district.<sup>51</sup>

D-3. *Koguryō Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 17: King Sōch’ōn

冬十月 肅慎來侵 屠害邊民 王謂羣臣曰 寡人以眇末之軀 謬襲邦基 德不能綏 威不能震 致此鄰敵猾我疆域 思得謀臣猛將 以折遐衝 咨爾群公 各舉奇謀異略 才堪將帥者 羣臣皆曰 ...

[Year eleven (280)], winter, tenth month. The Sushen invaded, slaughtering and harming the people on the frontier. The King addressed his officials saying, “Being of little worth and in error inheriting the kingdom, my virtue has been unable to soothe the people and my authority unable to wield influence [far and wide], and so hostile neighbors have invaded our territory. I believe I must obtain resourceful officials and brave generals to break the far-reaching enemy lines. Each of you recommend a talented general who can produce singular plans and unusual strategy.” The officials all said...<sup>52</sup>

In D-1, King Sindae (r. 165-179) issues an edict 令, the content of which runs from “I was born as an unworthy member of the royal family” through “bring about a great amnesty throughout the kingdom.” The edict begins with the humble first person pronoun *kwain* 寡人, and so it is clear these are the “king’s words.” However, is it possible that these words are not a mere transcription of an oral directive but have indeed been “document-ized”? Like D-1, D-2 also takes the form of an “edict.” The content of the edict begins with “Recently” and continues through “each recommend capable and worthy underlings.” In the edict, the king commands that the four tribes

<sup>50</sup> Shultz and Kang, eds., 101-102.

<sup>51</sup> Shultz and Kang, eds., 107-108.

<sup>52</sup> Shultz and Kang, eds., 131.

recommend capable individuals within the capital, and so we might call it a “recommendation edict.” The same edict is included in the biography of Ŭl P’aso (d. 203) found in the biographies section of *Samguk sagi*.

However, while the same sort of command for “recommendations” appears in D-3 it is prefaced instead as “the king addressed his various officials” 王謂羣臣. King Sŏch’ŏn’s (r. 270-292) “address” begins with “Being of little worth and in error inheriting the kingdom...” and continues through “...each of you recommend a talented general who can produce singular plans and unusual strategy.” It is difficult to see this as a “king’s document” precisely because it is immediately followed by officials responding to the king’s address, presumably orally, by recommending the king’s younger brother Talga. It appears in this case that the oral speech of King Sŏch’ŏn at a gathering of his court officials was recorded by a scribe and thus preserved; it is therefore difficult to call this a “king’s document.” However, in the case of the examples in D-1 and D-2, the answers of the addressees do not immediately follow the “edicts.” In both cases, the addressees who respond to the edicts are large groups, “the people” and “the four tribes,” who cannot possibly have been present in the same space as the king when he announced the edicts. Therefore, we might imagine that the edicts issued in D-1 and D-2 had been composed as documents to convey the “king’s words.” The fact that the king’s words in D-1 are referred to as an *saryŏng* 赦令 “amnesty edict” also strongly suggests this was an actual “king’s document.”<sup>53</sup>

There are also many *myŏng* 命 “orders” from the king included in compiled texts such as *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*. Most of these do not include the “original text” of the royal order but rather summarize its contents. There are especially frequent records along the lines of “So-and-so was ordered to lead troops to such-and-such a place.” These records do suggest much about the process of appointing commanders for leading armies, but they are not equivalent to official letters of appointment.

However, the below two examples do deserve further examination.

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<sup>53</sup> In the *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, there are also several instances of ‘edicts’ being issued in the reigns of King P’asa (r. 80-112) and King Ilsŏng (r. 134-154), but these consist of general orders about cultivation, fortress construction, and admonishments against luxury. Moreover, anachronistic terms such as ‘provinces and districts’ appear in these ‘edicts,’ undermining the credibility of these as sources for this period of Silla history, and making a judgment about the extent of ‘document-izing’ the king’s speech impossible in these cases. In the *Paekche Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, there are also several entries in the time of King Koi (r. 234-286) concerning the king establishing sartorial codes for the court and punishments for officials who took bribes or stole government property that are presented in the text as edicts 令. Because these are dated to the mid-third century and do not otherwise accord with what we know of historical reality in Paekche at the time, they are excluded from consideration here. For these edicts, see Jonathan Best, *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche, together with an annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk sagi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006): 244-245.

E-1. *Koguryŏ Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 16: King Kokgukch'ŏn

仍命内外所司 博問鰥寡孤獨老病貧乏不能自存者 救恤之 命有司 每年自春三月 至秋七月 出官穀 以百姓家口多小 賑貸有差 至冬十月還納 以爲恒式 内外大悅

he ordered all government authorities to search out widely for those aged widowers, widows, orphaned, old and alone, and those sick and poor and unable to support themselves and to aid them. He also ordered that the agencies every year, from the third month in the spring to the seventh month in the autumn, should distribute government grain according to the number of people in households and distribute relief aid and loans accordingly. When the tenth month arrives, the loans should be repaid. This shall become the established procedure. The people all over were very pleased.<sup>54</sup>

E-2. *Koguryŏ Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 18: King Kogugyang

三月 下教 崇信佛法求福 命有司 立國社 修宗廟

[Year eight (391)] Third month. The King decreed, “Believe in Buddhism to seek blessings.” He ordered the authorities to erect national shrines and repair royal ancestral temples.<sup>55</sup>

E-1 concerns the implementation of Koguryŏ's so-called *chindaebŏp* 賑貸法 “aid and lending law.” Here, two different “orders” appear, the first being a one-time measure for the aid of needy, including the “widowers, widows, orphaned, old and alone.” The second order here concerns the timing of aid, standards for making loans, and the season when those loans should be repaid. It also stipulates that these new measures would be enacted yearly, as established by law. It appears that some officials had raised the matter of the *chindaebŏp* with the king, who gave it his official sanction, whereupon his approval was “document-ized,” and the document was then conveyed to government officials tasked with carrying it out. However, it is unclear whether this document had its own peculiar form as a *myŏng*.

The entries called ‘orders’ in compiled texts are a mix of those that appear to be the oral speech of the king and those that appear more ‘document-ized.’ Even if we say they have been document-ized, it is unclear whether just one portion of the drafted document was included in the entry, or if the main content of the document was summarized by the compilers within the context of their own narrative. In the case of E-2, the king orders the responsible agencies to erect national shrines and repair ancestral temples. While this might have been a document-ized version of the king's order, only the main content of it has been concisely recorded within *Samguk sagi*.

The case of *kyo* (Ch. *jiao*) “decrees” is similar. From the Han through the Tang dynasties, a *jiao* was one type of king's words found in the Chinese context, among other document forms such as *zhi* 制, *zhao* 詔, and *chi* 勅. A *jiao* was usually a

<sup>54</sup> Shultz and Kang, eds., 112.

<sup>55</sup> Shultz and Kang, eds., 151.

document issued by lords, provincial governors, princes, or princesses. However, the term *jiao* might also refer to a prince's will as expressed in oral speech, or a prince's will that had not been "document-ized."<sup>56</sup> Therefore, while the term *kyo/jiao* as found in compiled texts generally refers to a specific document form, we must remember that there is always the possibility that it is merely the oral speech of the king. For example, when the "old officials" came to resent Ŭl P'aso for his swift rise to the position of Prime Minister, King Kogukch'ŏn (r. 179-197) issued a decree, "Regardless of status, noble or humble, eliminate those who cannot follow the Prime Minister of State and exterminate their clans."<sup>57</sup> The same decree appears in the Ŭl P'aso biography in the biographies section of *Samguk sagi*. Although the text reads "the decree said" 敎曰, perhaps since it is a matter concerning Ŭl P'aso the individual, the language of the decree is notable for its relatively spoken-language-like quality. The above examples appear to be instances in which the oral speech of the king was transcribed as a "decree" by either the scribes of the Koguryŏ court at the time or by the compilers of the *Samguk sagi*.

What remains problematic are the cases like E-2 above in which the term 'decree' or "issue a decree" 下敎 is used but what follows is only a very brief description. The following examples also fall into this category.

F-1. *Samguk yusa* Book 3, Propagating the Dharma 3: Nant'a Opens Paekche to Buddhism

百濟本記云 ..... 又阿莘王即位大元十七年 二月 下敎崇信佛法求福

In the *Paekche Annals* it says... Then in the second month of the seventeenth year of Taiyuan,<sup>58</sup> when King Asin (r. 392-405) ascended the throne, a decree was issued, "venerate the Buddhadharma and thereby seek contentment."

F-2. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 4: King Pŏphŭng<sup>59</sup>

春正月 敎許外官携家之任

[Year Twenty-five (538)]. Spring, first month. [The king] decreed to allow officials receiving appointments to the provinces to take their families.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Nakamura Yūichi, "Kyō - Shōrinji Mutoku hachi nen (625) Shinō 'kyō' wo chūshin ni," 98.

<sup>57</sup> Koguryŏ Annals of *Samguk sagi* 16: Kogukch'ŏn-wang 13<sup>th</sup> year. Shultz and Kang, eds., 109.

<sup>58</sup> This is an Eastern Jin (317-420) reign era name, the seventeenth year of which corresponds to 392 in the western calendar.

<sup>59</sup> All translations from the *Silla Annals* follow Edward Shultz, Hugh H.W. Kang, and Daniel C. Kane, trans., *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi* (Seongnam: Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012), with some minor modifications.

<sup>60</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 122.



F-3. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 4: King Chinhŭng

十一月 至自北漢山 敎所經州郡 復一年租調 曲赦除二罪 皆原之

[Year sixteen (555)]. Eleventh month. On returning from Mount Pukhan, he decreed that the provinces and districts that he passed through should be exempt from one year of taxes and to pardon all those in prison except for those charged with crimes of the second degree.<sup>61</sup>

F-4. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 5: Queen Chindŏk

下敎 以眞骨在位者 執牙笏

[Year four (650), Summer, fourth month]. [The Queen] decreed that *chin'gol* [true bone] officials in government positions should carry a staff of office.<sup>62</sup>

F-5. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 6: King Munmu

下敎 婦人亦服中朝衣裳

[Year four (664), spring, first month]. A decree was issued also permitting women to wear Chinese court garments.<sup>63</sup>

F-6. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 6: King Munmu

秋七月 十六日 王行次漢城州 敎諸摠管 往會大軍

[Year eight (668)]. Autumn, seventh month. The King proceeded next to Hansŏng province where he decreed that to the various commanders that they go and meet the great [Tang] army.<sup>64</sup>

F-7. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 8: King Sinmun

五月 敎賜文武官僚田有差

[Year seven (687)]. Fifth month. A royal decree was issued to grant emolument land to all civil and military officials according to rank.<sup>65</sup>

F-8. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 8: King Sinmun

春正月 下敎 罷內外官祿邑 逐年賜租有差 以爲恒式

[Year nine (689)], spring, first month. A royal decree was handed down to abolish the system of stipend villages for both the central and provincial officials and instead a graded system of annual grain rents was established.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 126-127.

<sup>62</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 162.

<sup>63</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 190.

<sup>64</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 198.

<sup>65</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 258.

<sup>66</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 258.

F-9. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 9: King Kyōngdōk

二月 下教 内外官請暇滿六十日者 聽解官

[Year seventeen (758)]. Second month. A royal decree was handed down saying, “Officials in the central or local offices who have requested and completed sixty days of leave shall be [subject] to review to remove them from those offices.”<sup>67</sup>

F-10. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 9: King Hyegong

春正月 下教 百官之號 盡合復舊

[Year twelve (776)], spring, first month. [The King] decreed that the former names of all the government offices shall be restored.<sup>68</sup>

These decrees are all matters related to orderly functioning of the state—the veneration of Buddhism, the ability of provincial officials being able to be accompanied by their families on their appointments, amnesty, sartorial codes, the allowance system for officials, the dismissal of officials from their posts, the restoration of the names of government offices—and so cannot be seen simply as instances of orally-issued orders being called “decrees.” In particular, F-6 is a military order handed down to provincial commanders, and so is different from the others. However, since the target of the meeting is the great army (the Tang army), we cannot hastily conclude whether it was an oral military command or something that would have taken the form of a document. The remaining decrees only transcribe the intent or the result of the policy being enacted, and therefore even if we allow, they may have been “king’s documents” we must remain doubtful of the extent to which the original words of the decree are reflected in these entries. Nevertheless, it is certain that the main content of those once extant “king’s documents” is preserved within these entries, and so in this paper I count them among examples of “document-ized” king’s words.

Allow me to now move to examples of entries which directly quote from “king’s documents.”

G-1. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, Book 6: King Munmu

二月 二十一日 大王會羣臣 下教 “往者 新羅隔於兩國 北伐西侵 暫無寧歲 ..... 可赦國內 自總章二年二月二十一日昧爽已前 犯五逆罪死已下 今見囚禁者 罪無小大 悉皆放出 ..... 更無財物可還者 不在徵限 其百姓貧寒 取他穀米者 在不熟之地者 子毋俱不須還 ..... □□三十日爲限 所司奉行”

[Year nine (669)]. Second month, twenty-first day. The Great King met with his ranking officials and handed down a decree: “In the past, Silla was cut off by two states. The North attacked and the West invaded, frequently leaving [Silla] with no peace... Now there can be an amnesty throughout the country. Before dawn on the twenty-first day of the second month in the second year of the Zongzhang period,

<sup>67</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 302.

<sup>68</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 310.

all those imprisoned, other than for the ‘five great crimes’ who received the death sentence, will be released, regardless of the severity of their crimes... and there will be no deadline for the collection of recompensations for those who lack resources. As to those impoverished people who obtained grains from others, should they be from poor crop areas, they need return neither the original amount nor any interest... The [amnesty terms] are in effect for the next thirty days □ □ . The offices concerned shall dutifully carry them out.”<sup>69</sup>

G-2. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 8: King Sinmun

十六日 下教曰 “賞有功者 往聖之良規 誅有罪者 先王之令典 寡人以眇躬涼德 嗣守崇基 ..... 賊首欽突·興元·眞功等 位非才進 職實恩升 ..... 然尋枝究葉 並已誅夷 ..... 所集兵馬 宜速放歸 布告四方 令知此意”

[Year one (681), eighth month], sixteenth day. A decree was handed down, saying: “To reward the meritorious is a laudable custom of the ancient sages and to punish the criminal was the exemplary law of former kings. By my paltry body and through my insignificant virtue I have sought to preserve the lofty dynastic foundation... The rebel leaders, the officials Hūmdol, Hūngwōn, Chin’gong, and others, did not rise to their offices from ability but rather through acts of favor... Now I have searched out remnants who were less important and gotten rid of them all by execution... I have ordered the demobilization of the mustered soldiers and cavalry. Let the pronouncement of these developments be promulgated in the four directions.”<sup>70</sup>

G-3. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, Book 8: King Sinmun

二十八日 誅伊滄軍官 教書曰 “事上之規 盡忠為本 居官之義 不二為宗 兵部令伊滄軍官 因緣班序 遂升上位 ..... 乃與賊臣欽突等交涉 知其逆事 曾不告言 ..... 軍官及嫡子一人 可令自盡 布告遠近 使共知之”

[Year one (681), eighth month], twenty-eighth day. *Ich’an* Kun’gwan was beheaded. A decree document was issued, saying: “The role of serving the King has loyalty as its fundamental principle. The basic principle of being an official is that one cannot have two minds. The Minister of Military Affairs *Ich’an* Kun’gwan, in accordance with set orders of rank, was eventually promoted to the highest office... Growing intimate with the traitor Hūmdol and others, he learned of their plans for rebellion yet did not let this be known... Kun’gwan and one of his legitimate sons shall be forced to commit suicide. Let this pronouncement of these matters be promulgated throughout so that all will know it.”<sup>71</sup>

G-4. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi* Book 10: King Aejang

下教 “禁新創佛寺 唯許修葺 又禁以錦繡為佛事 金銀為器用 宜令所司 普告施行”

<sup>69</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 202-203.

<sup>70</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 250-251.

<sup>71</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 251-252.

[Year seven (806), spring, third month]. The King decreed, “The new construction of temples is prohibited but the repair of [existing] temples is permitted. Also the use of elegant silk in Buddhist functions and utensils made of gold and silver is forbidden. Accordingly, this decree shall be made widely known and implemented by the offices concerned.”<sup>72</sup>

G-5. *Samguk sagi* Book 33: Treatise on Clothing

興德王即位九年 太和八年 下教曰 “人有上下 位有尊卑 名例不同 衣服亦異 俗漸澆薄 民競奢華 只尚異物之珍奇 却嫌土產之鄙野 禮數失於逼僭 風俗至於陵夷 敢率舊章 以申明命 苟或故犯 固有常刑 眞骨大等 幘頭任意 表衣·半臂·袴 並禁罽繡錦羅 …… 外眞村主 與五品同 次村主 與四品同”

In the ninth year of King Hŭngdŏk's reign, the eighth year of Taihua,<sup>73</sup> a decree was passed down, saying, “Among people, there are those above and those below, and among ranks there are those that are high and those that are low. The names for each are not the same, and their clothes are therefore also different. But customs have gradually deteriorated and even the people compete for luxury and extravagance. They only hold in high regard the rare charm of foreign objects, and they hold contempt for the quaintness of local products. Manners appropriate to one's rank have been lost to an extraordinary extent, and customs have reached the point of irreversible decay. Therefore, following the old laws, since I now proclaim by means of a bright order [the following], should there truly be one who willfully defies this, then there shall be an invariable punishment hereafter. The *grandees* of *chin'gol* status shall have free choice of headgear, while their outer jacket, half-sleeved jacket, and trousers are all prohibited from being of net-embroidered brocade or gauze silk... Provincial true village chiefs, same as fifth-head rank. Junior village chiefs, same as fourth head rank.

G-6. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 11: King Munsŏng

八月 大赦 教曰 “清海鎮大使弓福 嘗以兵助神考 滅先朝之巨賊 其功烈可忘耶” 乃拜爲鎮海將軍 兼賜章服

[Year one (839)]. Eighth month. There was a general amnesty. The King decreed, saying, “The commander of Ch'ŏnghae Garrison, Kungbok,<sup>74</sup> once raised troops to help my late father and destroy a major rebel in an earlier reign. How could I forget his outstanding merit?” Thereupon he conferred upon him the title of General of Chinhae [Calming the Seas] and presented him with ceremonial dress.<sup>75</sup>

While there are some subtle differences between the expressions *hagyo* 下教, *hagyo wal* 下教曰, *kyosŏ wal* 教書曰 and *kyo wal* 教曰, in all four cases it appears that the content of a decree document issued by the king has been directly cited. In the case of

<sup>72</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 330-331.

<sup>73</sup> Taihua is a Tang reign era name during the tenure of Emperor Wenzong corresponding to 827 to 836.

<sup>74</sup> This is the real name of Chang Pogo (d. 841).

<sup>75</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 355.

G-1, after having succeeded in destroying both Paekche and Koguryō, King Munmu ordered a general amnesty for criminals and the forgiveness of the people's debts. It is a decree document intended to help render aid to the people and thereby appease public sentiment as part of post-war recovery efforts. That just twelve days after G-2 had been handed down King Sinmun issued another decree in G-3 is a direct result of the rebellion of Kim Hūmdol (d. 681) that took place immediately following King Sinmun's accession to the throne. In G-2 the decree is centered on a delineation of the crimes committed by the rebels and an order for the dispersal of the troops mustered to suppress the rebellion, but the fundamental purpose here is to formalize Sinmun's own succession and demonstrate the stability of the royal authority. In the case of G-3, the decree takes as its starting point the punishment of the minister Kim Kun'gwan (d. 681) for his crime of failure to report the conspiracy of Hūmdol and others despite his knowledge of it, in order to demand absolute loyalty from the king's officials going forward.

G-1 and G-4 are both instances of delegating the carrying out of some policy to appropriate government bureaus, and so therefore end with the phrases "the offices concerned shall dutifully carry them out" 所司奉行 and "accordingly, this decree shall be made widely known and implemented by the offices concerned" 宜令所司 普告施行. By comparison, G-2 and G-3 end with "let the pronouncement of these developments be promulgated in the four directions" 布告四方 令知此意 and "let this pronouncement of these matters be promulgated throughout so that all will know it" 布告遠近 使共知之. While these differences suggest that decree documents were directed at either officials or the people more broadly, in both cases they took the form of proclamations meant to be disseminated widely.

G-2 is both a proclamation and a decree document meant to spread the word about the fact of Sinmun's accession to the throne. In D-1 examined above, the details of King Sindae's succession are delineated, and so we might call it a "succession decree" that takes the form of a general amnesty order. In all three kingdoms, it appears that often upon the succession of a new king, after a ceremonial visit to the royal ancestral shrine a general amnesty order would be issued. On these occasions, a "succession decree" document including such an amnesty order would be promulgated; D-1 is an example of just such a phenomenon. G-6 is a decree meant to bestow official commendation on Chang Pogo (d. 841), who had helped ensure Munsōng's (r. 839-857) succession. However, because this commendation is recorded alongside a general amnesty, it is possible this was also a succession decree for King Munsōng which included an amnesty order.

G-4 is a decree that prohibits the construction of new temples and ostentatious Buddhist functions. G-5 is a decree document issued in the ninth year of King Hūngdōk's reign (834) concerning the prohibition of luxury. This particular decree appears as an entry in the treatise section of *Samguk sagi*, with the content divided into sections on Clothing, Carts and Horses, Utensils, and Houses. Because in the Clothing section information on the dress of Paekche and Koguryō is also included, it is unclear until where in the treatise King Hūngdōk's decree document is being cited. At the

beginning of this section, prior to the citation of Hŭngdŏk's decree, the history of sartorial codes in Silla is narrated, beginning with the regulations established under King Pŏphŭng (r. 514-540) within the new Civil and Penal Codes, the transitions to wearing Chinese-style garments that came under Queen Chindŏk (r. 647-654) and King Munmu (r. 661-681), and the observation that the dress of women even during the Koryŏ period (at the time of the compilation of *Samguk sagi*) continued to follow standards established in Silla. After this introductory section, Hŭngdŏk's decree is cited. I propose that the section which begins "Among people, there are those above and those below, and among ranks there are those that are high and those that are low" 人有上下 位有尊卑 and ends "...should there truly be one who willfully defies this, then there shall be a invariable punishment hereafter" 苟或故犯 固有常刑 is a preamble, while the various regulations that start with the True Bone nobles and ends with the matters of the true village chiefs and junior village chiefs are the main content of the decree. An edict 詔書 issued by Tang emperor Wenzong a few years prior clearly was issued with a similar intent and takes a similar format.<sup>76</sup> This *zhaoshu*, found in *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, quotes from the Code on Ceremonies and Regulations, and includes regulations on matters such as court dress, carts and horses, and houses according to rank and gender.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, Hŭngdŏk's delineation in his decree of regulations according to bone rank suggests he may have been drawing on a section of Silla's Civil and Penal Codes that dealt with such matters. The term *kujang* 舊章 "old laws" that appears in the text of the decree surely refers to just such a subsection of Silla's Civil and Penal Codes.

In addition, we can also count correspondence, sacrificial addresses, and final testaments among "king's documents" intended for domestic dissemination.

#### H-1. *Samguk sagi* Book 42: Biographies 2, Biography of Kim Yusin II

王以手書告庾信“出疆之後 賞罰專之 可也”

The King by means of a letter told Yusin, "After you have left our borders, you may decide rewards and punishments as you see fit."

#### H-2. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 7: King Munmu

大王報書云“先王貞觀二十二年入朝 面奉太宗文皇帝恩勅 ..... 天兵未出 先問元由 緣此來書 敢陳不叛 請摠管審自商量 具狀申奏 雞林州都督·左衛大將軍·開府儀同三司·上柱國·新羅王 金法敏白”

[Year eleven (671), Autumn, seventh month, twenty-sixth day]. The Great King in a letter replied: "In the twenty-second year of Zhenguan, the Former King entered the Imperial Court, had an audience, and personally received the gracious decree of

<sup>76</sup> Takeda Yukio 武田幸男, "Siragi · Kōtokuōdai no sekifuku · kiba · kiyō · okushasei – toku ni Tōsei to no kanren wo chūshin ni" 新羅・興德王代の色服・車騎・器用・屋舎制——とくに唐制との關聯を中心に," in *Enoki Kazuo hakase kanreki kinen tōyōshi ronsō* 榎一雄博士還曆記念東洋史論叢 (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1975), pp. 311-328.

<sup>77</sup> *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, j. 24, zhi 14, "Chefu" 車服.

Taizong, the Wen emperor, which stated... And before the imperial troops are set forth, you have first [a letter] inquiring into reasons. Through this letter to you, we dare set forth [the facts to prove] we are not rebellious. We beg you, Grand Commander, to seriously consider it yourself, then explain the situation [to the emperor] in a memorial.” Submitted by Kim Põmmin, Area Commander-in-Chief of Kyerim Prefecture, Grand General of the Left [Militant] Guard, Commander Unequaled in Honor, Supreme Pillar of State, King of Silla.<sup>78</sup>

In H-1, King Munmu gives his general Kim Yusin (595–673) the authority to hand out rewards and punishments at his discretion while he is out delivering provisions to the Tang army across the Koguryō border in 662. This authority is conveyed to Yusin by means of a *susō* 手書 “personal letter” from the king. A *susō* was either a piece of correspondence or a document written in the one’s own hand; however, we cannot confirm that King Munmu in fact wrote this particular letter himself. In Chinese contexts, the term *shouzhao* 手詔 “hand edict” was sometimes used as a synonym for an *zhaoshu* 詔書 or *chishu* 勅書, but in these cases it did not mean that the document was in the emperor’s own hand. Rather, it was called “hand edict” to reflect the emperor’s strong feelings about its content.<sup>79</sup> The biography of Kim Yusin found in *Samguk sagi* is based on “Kim Yusin haengnok” 金庾信行錄 written by Yusin’s descendant, Kim Changch’ōng 金長淸 and so the description of King Munmu as sending a hand-written letter to Yusin may very well be an exaggeration. However, among king’s documents one does find correspondence sent to individuals, and so it is also possible that a personal letter from the king was called a “hand-written letter” in this manner.

We can confirm this by looking at H-2. This is the response sent by King Munmu to a letter sent by the Tang commander Xue Rengui 薛仁貴 (614–683). Therefore, it is not in fact a king’s document intended for domestic dissemination, and it is called in context a *posō* 報書 “response letter,” but for the sake of convenience I include it here because correspondence might also come from a “foreigner” such as Xue. In other words, Xue’s letter was not an official diplomatic document, and neither was Munmu’s response to it; rather, it is more appropriate to consider it a letter between individuals.<sup>80</sup> At the end, when Munmu asks Xue “We beg you, Grand Commander, to seriously consider it yourself, then explain the situation [to the Emperor] in a memorial,” (請摠管審自商量 具狀申奏), he is requesting that Xue tell Gaozong about the content of his letter on his behalf. This suggests that Munmu sent this letter as a last resort as tensions were mounting between Silla and Tang and he was unable to directly correspond with the Tang emperor. At the end, after the listing of Munmu’s title of

<sup>78</sup> Shultz et.al, trans., 219–232.

<sup>79</sup> Nakamura Yūichi, *Zui Tō ōgen no kenkyū*, pp. 328–329.

<sup>80</sup> There is also the case of King Munmu sending a letter to Su Dingfang, found in the Biography of Kim Yusin (*Samguk sagi* Book 42): “The Great King had earlier dispatched the *taegam* Munch’ōn to deliver a letter to General Su” 大王前遣大監文泉 移書蘇將軍.



investiture and his name, the fact that the character *paek* 白 appears is consistent with the style of a piece of correspondence.

Above, I discussed the example of a piece of correspondence sent by King Kyōngmun to Great Priest Chijūng included in the inscription on the Memorial Stele for the Great Priest Chijūng of Pongamsa Temple (C-3). When Silla's final king, King Kyōngsun (r. 927-936), sent a document requesting surrender to Wang Kōn (877-943), founder of the Koryō dynasty by means of an *sirang* 侍郎 “attendant gentleman,” this was called a *wangsō* 王書 “king’s document,” meaning a piece of correspondence sent by the king.<sup>81</sup> I believe this ‘document’ shows the origins of king’s documents in early Korea, and I will discuss it further below.

Next, allow me to cite some examples of sacrificial addresses.

#### I-1. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi* Book 6: King Munmu

六日 率文武臣寮 朝謁先祖廟 告曰 “祇承先志 與大唐同舉義兵 問罪於百濟·高句麗 元凶伏罪 國步泰靜 敢茲控告 神之聽之”

[Year Eight (668), eleventh month] On the sixth day he led his military and civil officials, and paying respects at the shrine of his forebears, reported, saying, “Respectfully following the intentions of my honored forebears, with the Great Tang, we mobilized righteous troops to challenge the crimes of Paekche and Koguryō. The arch villains, bowing down, pled guilty, making peaceful the destiny of the country. We hereby make this report, may the gods listen to it.”<sup>82</sup>

#### I-2. *Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi* Book 8: King Sinmun

遣大臣於祖廟 致祭曰 “王某稽首再拜 謹言太祖大王·真智大王·文興大王·太宗大王·文武大王之靈 某以虛薄 嗣守崇基 ..... 垂裕後昆 永膺多福 謹言”

[Year seven (687), Summer, fourth month]. [The Court] sent high officials to the Royal Ancestral Shrine to offer sacrifices stating: “I, as King, respectfully speak to the souls of Great King T’aejo, Great King Chinji, Great King Munhūng, Great King T’aejong, and Great King Munmu. Though lacking both ability and virtue, I have been made heir to your most lofty and unfinished work...that the way leading to our descendants will be full of good fortunes. Respectfully I beseech you.”<sup>83</sup>

In the case of I-1, King Munmu leads his various officials and reports to the royal ancestors the successful conquest of Paekche and Koguryō. His ceremonial address of his ancestors, which begins *chewal* 祭曰 “offered sacrifices saying,” should be considered a “king’s document.” This text is a sacrificial address that doubles as a

<sup>81</sup> This section reads: 乃使侍郎金封休 實書請降於太祖...太祖受王書 送大相王鐵等迎之 (“Then he had the attendant gentleman [*sirang*] Kim Ponghyu take a letter requesting submission to T’aejo...T’aejo received the King’s letter and sent high state councilor Wang Ch’ōl and others to welcome him.”) See *Samguk sagi* Book 12, King Kyōngsun, Year Nine [935]; Shultz et.al, trans., 402.

<sup>82</sup> Shultz et.al, trans., 201.

<sup>83</sup> Shultz et.al, trans., 256-258.

victory report. The main content of the report begins immediately, with “Respectfully following the intentions of my honored forebears, with the Great Tang, we mobilized righteous troops.” Because some sort of preamble is expected, we might assume this was not the original beginning of the address. In other words, it appears the compilers of *Samguk sagi* may have abbreviated some parts of the original document. However, that at the end we have “...may the gods listen to it” 神之聽之 suggests that this address would have been recited by the king within the ancestral shrine. In both the annals of the founder of Koguryō, Chumong (r. 37-19 BCE), included in the *Koguryō Annals* of the *Samguk sagi*, and in the Kwanggaet’o Stele inscription, we find prayers and appeals to the gods of heaven being described with the verbs *ko* 告 “report” and *ōn* 言 “say.”<sup>84</sup> The same phenomenon is seen in I-1 with the sequence *ko wal* 告曰 “reported, saying,” but in this case it no longer describes the mere oral speech of the king but its format suggests the king reading aloud a document that had been composed ahead of time.

The passage cited in I-2 features King Sinmun paying respects to his four immediate ancestors and the dynastic founder.<sup>85</sup> Because political affairs of the time were unstable and had been accompanied by celestial anomalies, this sacrificial address was intended to request the ancestors restore stability and peace. The text of the address reveals that King Sinmun did not go himself to the royal shrine but dispatched some senior officials to oversee the sacrificial offerings. While we cannot know if the officials read the text of the address in the king’s stead, the beginning “I, as King, respectfully speak to the souls of...” 王某稽首再拜 makes clear that the agent of the sacrificial ceremony was meant to be the king. Among the diplomatic “king’s documents” extant from Silla is a memorial that opens in its first line with *sin mo* 臣某 “I, as your servant.” *sin* 臣 was a term required to be used by Silla kings within the context of their investiture by Tang. The above *wang mo* 王某 “I, as King” mirrors this usage, but perhaps because the ancestral gods were also once kings who served at the same rank as King Sinmun, Sinmun is able to refer to himself as king rather than servant. The inclusion of this humble opening, followed by the closing *kūnōn* 謹言 “respectfully I beseech you” after the main content of the prayer, shows some of the unique features of a sacrificial address designed to beg forgiveness and request good fortune from the ancestral deities.

Finally, allow me to cite a few examples of kings’ *yujo* 遺詔 “final testaments.”

<sup>84</sup> Kim Ch’angsök, *Wanggwōn kwa pōp*, p. 110.

<sup>85</sup> There is some debate about who is designated by the title T’aejo, usually reserved for dynastic founders. There are a number of possibilities, including Pak Hyōkkose, Kim Alchi, King Mich’u, or King Naemul.

J-1. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 7: King Munmu

王不豫 降遺詔曰 “寡人運屬紛紜 時當爭戰 西征北討 克定疆封 伐叛招携 聿寧遐邇 上慰宗祧之遺顧 下報父子之宿冤 ..... 律令格式 有不便者 即便改張 布告遠近 令知此意 主者施行”

He handed down a final testament, saying, “Encountering a time of disorder and facing wars, I campaigned to the west and battled to the north. I secured the land, smote the traitorous, summoned the cooperative, and, in the end, brought peace to all both near and far. Above, I consoled the concerns bequeathed by my ancestors and below, avenged the long-borne hatred of two generations [my father and his sons]... And if there be inapplicable law codes or procedures, correct them immediately. Inform all far or near so that my intent will be known while those in charge will carry it out.”<sup>86</sup>

J-2. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 9: King Söndök

王寢疾彌留 乃下詔曰 “寡人卒惟菲薄 無心大寶 難逃推戴 作其即位 ..... 死生有命 顧復何恨 死後依佛制燒火 散骨東海”

[Year six (785), spring, first month]. As the king was sick and remained in bed for a long time not getting up, he issued the [following] testament, saying: “From the start I have lacked talent and virtue. I had no wish to take the throne but, as it was difficult to decline the invitation, I became King... Life and death are fated. In looking back why should I have regrets? After I die please follow Buddhist practices, cremate my remains, and scatter my bones in the Eastern Sea.”<sup>87</sup>

J-3. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 11: King Munsöng

王不豫 降遺詔曰 “寡人以眇末之資 處崇高之位 上恐獲罪於天鑑 下慮失望於人心 夙夜兢兢 若涉淵冰 ..... 顧惟舒弗郎□□靖 先皇之令孫 寡人之叔父 孝友明敏 寬厚仁慈 久處古衡 挾贊王政 ..... 伊爾多士 竭力盡忠 送往事居 罔或違禮 布告國內 明知朕懷”

[Year nineteen, autumn, ninth month]. The King was ill and sent down his last testament, saying, “In spite of my insignificant ability, I have occupied the highest office. Above I have feared committing crimes against Heaven and below I am anxious about disappointing the people. Day and night I live in fear like crossing a deep stream on thin ice... Reflecting upon this, I believe *söburhan* Ūijong, a grandson of the former King and my paternal uncle, is filial and fraternal, bright and witty, and generous and humane. For a long time, he has held high offices and assisted in royal governance... You, my many officials, exert your utmost to fulfill your loyalty. Send off those who have died, respect those who live, and without fail do not deviate from what is right. Please proclaim my cherished ideas, making them known throughout the kingdom.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 244-246.

<sup>87</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 312-313.

<sup>88</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 360-361.

J-4. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 11: King Hōnan

王寢疾彌留 謂左右曰 “寡人不幸無男子有女 吾邦故事 雖有善德·真德二女主 然近於牝雞之晨 不可法也 甥膺廉年雖幼少 有老成之德 卿等立而事之 必不墜 祖宗之令緒 則寡人死 且不朽矣”

As the King was ill in bed with no sign of recovery, he summoned his confidants and said, “I, unfortunately, have no sons but only daughters. Although our country does have the earlier history of two female queens, Sōndōk and Chindōk, because of the dangers of a hen who cries in the morning, this cannot be the rule. My son-in-law Ŭngnyōm, even though he is young, is endowed with the virtue of maturity. If you enthrone and serve him, certainly he will not harm the continuation of the excellent royal undertaking. When I die, do not let this go to waste.”<sup>89</sup>

Above, I argued a final injunction is found within the King Kwanggaet'o Stele inscription, introduced with the phrase “when he was alive he decreed” 存時教言. Here, J-1, J-2, and J-3 are all explicitly called *yujo* 遺詔 “final testament; edict left behind.” During his reign, King Munmu created the short-lived state of Podōk 報德 (674-684) and invested An Sŭng 安勝, a descendant of Koguryō's royal house, as its king, thereby elevating Silla to the level of an imperial state. He also raised the king to a supreme position within the aristocratic coalition government that presided over late-period Silla, thereby allowing the royal authority to preside above everyday politics.<sup>90</sup> The very fact that the king's final words are called a *cho* 詔 in these cases is a result of these developments. While the final injunction of King Kwanggaet'o was inscribed on the Kwanggaet'o Stele, erected during his successor Changsu's reign, as *kyoōn* 教言 “decreed, saying,” this same injunction might have been called a *yujo* “final edict” when the document was first composed during Kwanggaet'o's reign.

However, it appears that in middle and late Silla the *cho-sō* “edict” form did not follow that of China. Extant examples of ‘final edicts’ from the Tang dynasty show that the opening line should contain the character *chi* 勅 “command” or *menxia* 門下 “chancellery.” In the case of J-1, J-2, and J-3, it may be that the first line has been omitted, but because there are indeed no extant examples of the character *chi* 勅 being used in Silla king's documents, and there was never a chancellery established within the Silla government, it is likely that different terms would have been used in such a hypothetical omitted line. Rather, it is worth noting that all three opening lines of J-1, J-2, and J-3 feature the term *kwain* 寡人 “my humble person.” While J-4 appears to be the oral speech of the king, it also begins with *kwain* and thereby accords with the other examples of final injunctions. Therefore, it may be that *kwain* as an opening had become typical for the final injunction format as used in Silla.

<sup>89</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 364.

<sup>90</sup> Kim Ch'angsōk, “T'ongil Silla ūi ch'ōnhagwan kwa taeil insik [Unified Silla's Understanding of *tianxia* and Their Attitude Toward Japan],” *Yōksa wa hyōnsil* 56 (2005): 156-158. “Late-period Silla” refers to Silla after 654 through the end of the dynasty in 935.

The closing lines of these final injunctions are all distinct, however: “Inform all far or near so that my intent will be known while those in charge will carry it out” 布告遠近 令知此意 主者施行, “After I die please follow Buddhist practices, cremate my remains, and scatter my bones in the Eastern Sea” 死後依佛制燒火 散骨東海, and “Please proclaim my cherished ideas, making them known throughout the kingdom” 布告國內 明知朕懷. Both J-1 and J-3 ask that their final injunctions be known in both the center and the provinces, “far and near,” “throughout the kingdom.” The final line of J-1, “those in charge will carry it out” matches the final line of Chinese *zhishu* 制書.<sup>91</sup>

### The Birth and Development of *sō* 書: The Origins of “King’s Documents”

In addition to “king’s documents” intended for domestic dissemination, there are a number of extant documents that were composed for diplomatic purposes. These are documents composed in the king’s name and transmitted to other countries through formal envoys, and so they are indeed one type of “king’s documents.” While a detailed examination of their contents will have to wait for a future study, I would like to take this opportunity to consider the aforementioned problem of the origin of “king’s documents” through a consideration of the term *sō* 書.

In compiled texts, *sō* appears as a term for documents in both domestic and diplomatic contexts. Let us consider the term as it is used in the following two examples (K-1 and K-2).

#### K-1. *Koguryō Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 14: King Taemusin

貽書曰 “寡人愚昧 獲罪於上國 致令將軍 帥百萬之軍 暴露弊境 無以將厚意 輒用薄物 致供於左右”

[The King] also sent a letter in which he declared, “In my stupidity I became guilty of a fault towards your exalted country with the result that you, General, leading your army of a million men, had to expose yourself [to the hardship of] camping [in] my border land. Having no [other way] to respond to your good will, I have unceremoniously sent you these few poor things to give to your staff.”<sup>92</sup>

#### K-2. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 3: King Naemul

百濟王移書曰 “兩國和好 約爲兄弟 今大王納我逃民 甚乖和親之意 非所望於大王也 請還之”

<sup>91</sup> On the rear face of the King Munmu Tomb Stele 文武王陵碑, thought to have been erected during the reign of Sinmun, there is the line “[end as mounds] on which shepherds and woodcutters sing while foxes and rabbits are burrowing in the sides...cremate me” 牧哥其上 狐兔穴其傍...燒葬. This matches a line found in Munmu’s final injunctions in the *Samguk sagi*, and so it appears at least part of his injunctions were directly quoted in the stele inscription. Shultz et.al, trans., 246.

<sup>92</sup> Shultz and Kang, eds., 70.

The Paekche king sent a letter saying, “Our two countries enjoy peace and friendship and have promised to be brothers. Now Your Majesty has accepted deserters. This truly transgresses the idea of friendly relations and is not what I expected from Your Majesty. Please return them.”<sup>93</sup>

K-1 is a letter sent by King Taemusin (18-44) to the general of the invading Han Chinese army. It appears to be of a similar character to the letters sent in the name of Silla King Munmu to figures such as Su Dingfang (592-667) and Xue Rengui. K-2 is a letter from Paekche’s King Kŭnch’ogo (r. 346-375) requesting the return of people who had fled to Silla with the chief of Mount Toksan Fortress. King Naemul’s (r. 356-402) (presumably oral) response to this letter follows; it reads: “People’s minds are not unchanging and therefore they come and go as they please. Truly this is what they do. Your Majesty blames me instead of worrying about the people’s peace of mind. How can you criticize me so harshly?” 民者無常心 故思則來 數則去 固其所也 大王不患民之不安 而責寡人 何其甚乎.<sup>94</sup> There is a clear echo of Confucian-style consideration for the people that suggests these are probably not the “original” words of King Naemul. However, although this entry appears in the *Silla Annals* and is from Silla’s point of view, Naemul refers to himself as *kwain*, while Paekche’s King Kŭnch’ogo refers to himself with the neutral first-person pronoun *a* 我 and respectfully calls Naemul *taewang* 大王 “great king” (translated above as ‘Your Majesty’). This deferential language suggests that at least parts of the original exchange are preserved here.

The question here is what exactly the word *sŏ* signifies, and what the function of such a piece of writing may have been. Within *Samguk sagi*, we see the word *sŏ* in entries beginning in the earliest time periods and through the end of Silla. The earliest example is the entry for the eleventh year of the reign of Koguryŏ King Taemusin as cited above. For Paekche, the earliest *sŏ* is that sent to King Naemul by King Kŭnch’ogo in K-2, while the earliest Silla *sŏ* is found in an entry for the fourteenth year of King Chima’s reign.<sup>95</sup> The dating of these entries needs further consideration, but it is notable that in the case of all three kingdoms, the term *sŏ* predates the appearance of terms such as *kyo* 教 and *p’yo* 表.

The term *sŏ* as used to refer to diplomatic documents appears also in texts related to Old Chosŏn. When King Ugŏ 右渠 (d. 108 BCE), grandson of Wi Man 衛滿 (Ch. Wei Man), refused to pay tribute to the Han, he also allegedly prevented surrounding

<sup>93</sup> Shultz et. al, trans., 89.

<sup>94</sup> Shultz et.al, trans., 89.

<sup>95</sup> King Chima allegedly reigned from 112CE-134CE, but alongside many other early Silla kings, the historicity of his reign is suspect. The entry in question reads: 秋七月 又襲大嶺柵 過於泥河 王移書百濟請救 百濟遣五將軍助之 賊聞而退. ([Year fourteen] Autumn, seventh month. The [Malgat] again attacked the defense barricade at Taeryŏng and crossed the Iha River. The King wrote to Paekche asking for help. Paekche sent five generals to assist. The invaders, on hearing this, retreated). Shultz et.al trans., 51.

smaller polities from “offering up *sō*” 上書 to the Han emperor.<sup>96</sup> In this instance it is difficult to speculate what sort of format or content such a *sō* might have featured, but they were undoubtedly diplomatic documents being sent by the chiefs of small polities to the Han empire. This established tradition likely would have continued into the earliest *sō* composed in the three peninsular kingdoms. Therefore, I posit that the origin points of “king’s documents” in the three kingdoms of Koguryō, Silla, and Paekche can be found in these *sō*.

Outside of the examples cited above, we can point to several more instances of *sō* in compiled texts:

K-3. *Silla Annals* of the *Samguk sagi* Book 5: King Muyōl

百濟王子使佐平覺伽 移書於唐將軍 哀乞退兵

The Paekche Prince *chwap'yōng* Kakka sent a letter to the Tang general pleading they withdraw their troops.<sup>97</sup>

K-4. *Samguk sagi* Book 41: Biographies 1, Biography of Kim Yusin I

春秋聞其言 喻其意 移書於王曰 二嶺本大國地分 臣歸國 請吾王還之 謂予不信 有如皞日 王迺悅焉

When Ch'unch'u heard those words, he became aware of their meaning and sent a letter to the [Koguryō] king, saying, “The two passes are originally the land of your great country. After I return home to my country, I will request my queen to return them. If you cannot believe me, then I shall vow upon the white sun.” The King was pleased at this.

K-5. *Samguk sagi* Book 42: Biographies 2, Biography of Kim Yusin II

遂與壯士仇近等十五人 詣平壤 見蘇將軍曰 庾信等領兵致資糧 已達近境 定方喜 以書謝之

Finally, with a company of fifteen strong men including Kugūn and others, [Yōlgi] went to P'yōngyang. There, he met General Su and said to him, “Yusin and the others are leading troops with provisions and have arrived nearby.” Dingfang was overjoyed and by means of a letter conveyed his thanks.

K-6. *Samguk sagi* Book 47: Biographies 7, Biography of Yōlgi

距唐營三萬餘步 而不能前 欲移書而難其人

<sup>96</sup> *Shiji* 115, *Account of Chosōn* 朝鮮列傳: “The line passed to [Wi Man’s] son and then to his grandson Ugō. The number of Han refugees invited [to Chaoxian] steadily increased. He also had not yet been to see the Emperor. When those small countries in the area surrounding Zhenfan sought to offer up a letter to the Emperor, they were all prevented from passing through” 傳子至孫右渠 所誘漢亡人滋多 又未嘗入見 眞番旁衆國欲上書見天子 又擁闕不通.

<sup>97</sup> Shultz et.al, trans., 172.



The Tang army camp was at a distance of thirty thousand *po*, and unable to advance further. [Yusin] wanted to send a letter [to their general] but could not find an appropriate person.

K-7. *Samguk sagi* Book 50: Biographies 10, Biography of Kyŏn Hwŏn

故十二月日 寄書太祖曰 ..... 三年正月 太祖荅曰 .....

Therefore one day in the twelfth month he sent a letter to T'aejo [Wang Kŏn] saying. .... Third year, first month, T'aejo replied, saying....

K-3 refers to a letter from a Paekche prince to the Tang general, K-4 to a letter from Kim Ch'unch'u to Koguryŏ's King Pojang (r. 642-668), K-5 to a letter of thanks from Su Dingfang to Kim Yusin (or to King Munmu), K-6 to a letter sent by Kim Yusin to Su Dingfang, and K-7 refers to an exchange of letters between Kyŏn Hwŏn and Wang Kŏn. The letters between Kyŏn Hwŏn and Wang Kŏn are dated to 927 and 928, and so at the time were exchanged between two equals, the kings of Later Paekche (900-936) and of Koryŏ. However, the remainder are not precisely "king's documents," but rather letters sent by princes, high nobility, and military commanders. The letter sent by Su Dingfang to the Silla general and/or king is also called a *sŏ*, just as Xue Rengui is said to have sent a *sŏ* to King Munmu in 671 (to which Munmu replies in H-2 above).

It is possible that the term *sŏ* does not refer to a particular genre of document within the *Samguk sagi* but was used as a general term for correspondence and written documents. However, as has been noted, the term *sŏ* appears in the text well before specific genres such as *kyo* and *p'yo*, and it is important to note that these early *sŏ* were used by the king. Furthermore, these *sŏ* were primarily external correspondence. The decree and mandate system were established in Koguryŏ sometime around the mid-second century,<sup>98</sup> and then spread to the other peninsular kingdoms. However, it appears that prior to this introduction of Chinese-style established document forms, king's documents took the form of *sŏ*. In compiled texts, these documents are only referred to with this ambiguous *sŏ* and therefore we cannot know what they may have been called or what style they may have been written in, but it is clear that some written document was composed in each of these instances, and that prior to the introduction of the *kyo* form, king's words were document-ized as *sŏ*.

*Sŏ* was not a standardized document form like the *kyo*, but as we can see at the end of Munmu's reply to Xue Rengui, it appears that at least there were some minimal standardized elements such as including the sender's name at the end of the letter. The matter of the king's approving of petitions is something we cannot know based on extant sources, but it is likely there was a procedure of such documents being promulgated by means of the king's signature. We can imagine that in early times the king may have delegated the composition of correspondence to a literate official, and then after the content was confirmed a clean copy would be made and implemented.

<sup>98</sup> Kim Ch'angsŏk, *Wanggwŏn kwa pŏp*, pp. 121-124.

It is notable that based on extant sources, it appears that *sŏ* began with the king's diplomatic documents. Because it was necessary to compose documents in Sinographs, and the main targets of diplomatic exchange were the dynasties of the Chinese Central Plains and their commanderies, the fact that diplomatic *sŏ* are the first to appear in the textual record is not merely a product of the scarcity of sources but a reflection of the reality of the age in which writing was first being used on the Korean peninsula. By comparison the king's words meant for domestic dissemination would have been primarily orally delivered in the early Three Kingdoms period. Thereafter, as the administrative utility of king's documents that took the form of *sŏ* became recognized, they would have begun to be produced for domestic purposes as well. While we cannot know exactly when this was based on the sources we have, it is likely that this was sometime prior to the importation of the *kyo* as a document form.

On the other hand, the use of *sŏ* spread among the official class. It is for this reason that after the seventh century we begin to see princes, nobles, and military commanders appear as the originators of such documents. While the new document form *p'yo* was required when composing diplomatic correspondence addressed to the Chinese court, between "equals" such as Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla, or between high-ranking Chinese officials and the kings of these kingdoms, it was acceptable to exchange *sŏ*. When Japan first receives a mission from Parhae in the tenth year of King Mu's reign (r. 719-737), in the context of the ceremony for the establishment of diplomatic relations, the document sent by King Mu is referred to as a *wangsŏ* 王書, reflecting the "equal" relationship perceived to exist between the two kingdoms. The opening line of this document is *mye kye* 武藝啓 "Mye relates the following."<sup>99</sup> It is notable in this context that *kye* 啓 "disclosure" is a type of document only exchangeable between rulers who have been invested by the Chinese court.

King's documents were later reorganized around the genres *kyo* and *p'yo*, but even then the term *sŏ* continued to be used, and its semantic range expanded to include correspondence sent to officials or clergy, diplomatic documents sent to states of "equal" status such as the other peninsular kingdoms or Japan, or for correspondence among officials.

## Conclusion

Among what we can call "king's documents" of ancient Korea, we can confirm the existence of documents in the genres of *ryŏng*, *myŏng*, *sŏ*, *kyo*, *chemun*, and *yujo*. If we look at how each of these was used, there are examples of *ryŏng* used for amnesties or calls for recommendations of talented individuals, while *myŏng* was used for the implementation of the so-called *chindaebŏp* and for the construction or repair of ceremonial facilities for the state. However, it is unclear if *myŏng* was necessarily a distinct type of document. *Sŏ* were originally a type of diplomatic document, but this term gradually came to refer to the king's correspondence and even to documents

<sup>99</sup> Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫 et al., eds., *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1990), II:188.

composed by officials. *Kyo* were used in order to promulgate important policies or implement measures related to maintaining basic public order, and among them we find subgenres such as consolation decrees and succession decrees. Sacrificial addresses and final injunctions are extant only for middle and late period Silla.

Prior to the importation of the decree format into Koguryŏ and then into the other peninsular kingdoms, the term *sŏ* is found to refer to “king’s documents” that circulated, especially in diplomatic contexts. The term *sŏ* can be found even in the Account of Chosŏn in the *Shiji*, can be confirmed also for the Samhan period, and over the course of time transitions from being a term mainly applied to diplomatic documents to gradually taking on internal administrative functions. In the mid-second century, *kyo* and *ryŏng* became systematized as king’s documents, but *sŏ* continued as lower-level correspondence or as diplomatic documents exchanged between equals. Sacrificial addresses and king’s final injunctions existed since the beginning of the all three kingdoms, but these appear to have been performed orally until a certain point when they were “document-ized.” Thereafter, from middle and late Silla, we find extant examples of textual versions. King’s documents from late Silla also include a decree document banning luxury and pieces of correspondence sent to Buddhist clergy.

King’s documents from ancient Korea were fossilized within contemporary epigraphic sources and in the compiled texts of later ages. However, because they are mixed in with other sources, there has not been much research on them to date. The primary aim of this paper has been to attempt to excavate “king’s documents” from these conditions. However, it is possible that I have been unable to identify all relevant sources, and I am limited by the fact that documentary sources from later ages will inevitably embellish or omit information according to their compilers’ own aims. Going forward, I promise to update and revise what I have collected here, and I hope that this initial study may spark further research on this topic by others.

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