

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Textile Society of America Symposium  
Proceedings

Textile Society of America

---

2008

## Traditional Textile Materials of Baekje Kingdom

Mi Young Suh

*Chungnam National University*, s\_mysuh@cnu.ac.kr

Kil Soon Park

kspark@cnu.ac.kr

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf>



Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

---

Suh, Mi Young and Park, Kil Soon, "Traditional Textile Materials of Baekje Kingdom" (2008). *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*. 225.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/225>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Textile Society of America at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

# Traditional Textile Materials of Baekje Kingdom

Mi Young Suh and Kil Soon Park  
[s\\_mysuh@cnu.ac.kr](mailto:s_mysuh@cnu.ac.kr) & [kspark@cnu.ac.kr](mailto:kspark@cnu.ac.kr)

This analysis includes the kinds, colors, and patterns of textile materials, and shows *Baekje* attained a high level of weaving culture. *Baekje* was one of three kingdoms of ancient Korea (B.C.18-A.D.660). The territory of Baekje (Fig. 1) was included current *Seoul*, *Gyeonggi-do*, *Gangwon-do*, *Chungcheongnambuk-do* and *Jeollanambuk-do* during the fourth century. Also, Baekje influenced Japan many things about textiles including weaving technique. The study analyzed the documentary records of Baekje, such as literature, historical works, excavation reports, and preceding studies.



Figure 1. Territory of Baekje in prosperous period (4C). Map by the author.

The kinds of the textile materials of *Mahan*, pre-country of Baekje, and Baekje were obtained from historical documentations. The textile materials of Mahan were bast fiber fabric (*Po*), three kinds of silks (*Geum*, *Myeon* and *Gyeom*), woolen fabric (*Gae*) and leather. *Geum* is compound woven silk (Fig. 2). *Myeon* is plain weave. *Gyeom* is a kind of rib tabby. The name of Baekje textiles was variously described more than Mahan's. Bast fiber fabrics were the *Po* of fine fabric and the *Ma* of coarse fabric. The various kinds of silks were described *Geum*, *Gyeon*, *Sa*, *Yeon*, *Baek*, *Ra* and *Gyeom*. And there were woolen fabrics (*Topdeung* like carpet) and leather (Fig. 3).

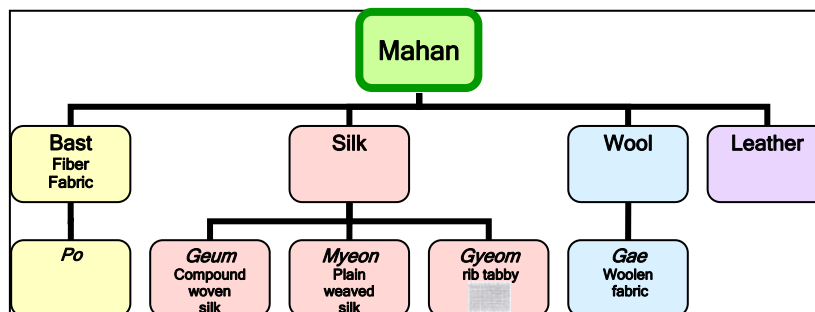


Figure 2. Kinds of Mahan textiles from historical documentations. Diagram by the author.

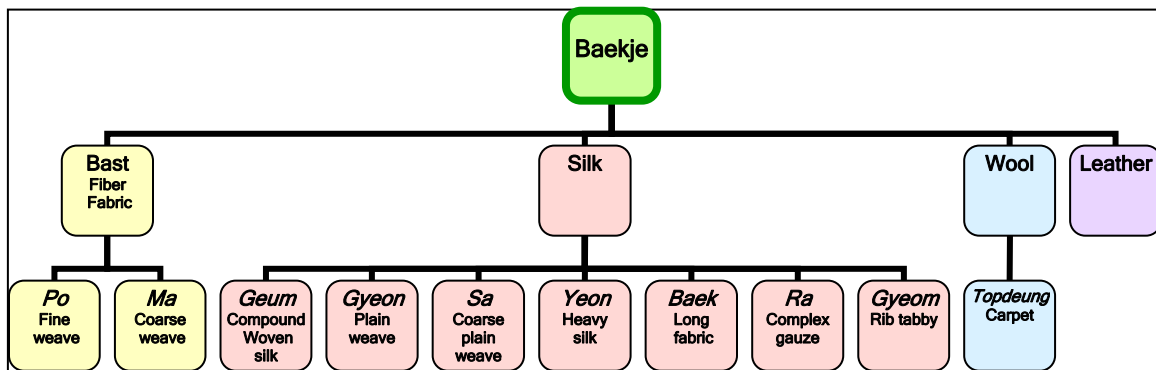


Figure 3. Kinds of Baekje textiles from historical documentations. Diagram by the author.

The textiles of Baekje were also described as trade items between countries, Baekje and Japan, Baekje and *Wei* or *Dang* Dynasty of China (Fig. 4). Baekje introduced silks (*Geum*, *Gyeon*, *Gyeom* and *Baek*) and wool (like *Topdeung*) to Japan. Hemp and Ramie in the dotted line on the left side of figure 4 were stated fabrics delivered from Baekje to Japan by a researcher who studied on the beginning of fabric of Japan. Besides, Baekje delivered silkworm culture, weave and sewing of clothes to Japan. The textiles exchanging between Baekje and China was described Baekje presented *Geum* to *Wei* Dynasty, and *Dang* Dynasty presented *Geum* and *Baek* to Baekje (Fig. 5). But, real exchanging seems to be taken place more often.

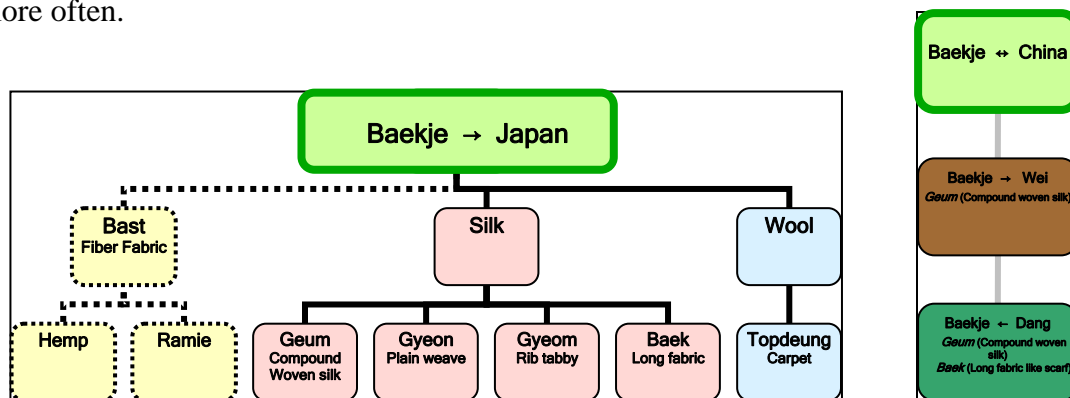
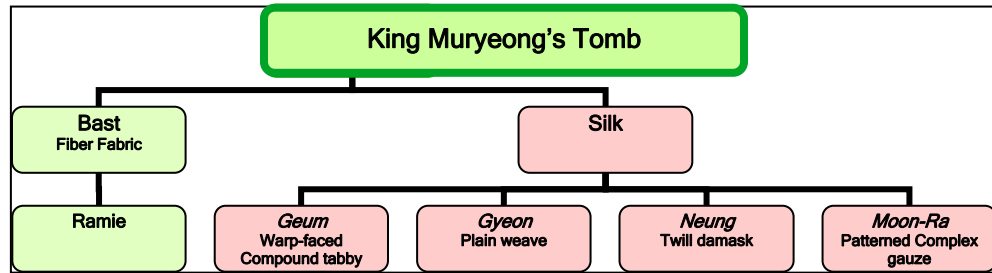


Figure 4 (above). Kinds of textiles as trade items from Baekje to Japan.  
Figure 5 (right). Kinds of textiles as trade items between Baekje and China.  
Diagrams by the author.

The fragments of fabric were excavated from King *Muryeong*'s tomb, *Neungsanri*'s 36<sup>th</sup> tomb and the back of *Wajeon* (tile). The fabric fragments (Fig. 6) of King *Muryeong*'s tomb are bast fiber fabric (Ramie; Fig. 7) and silks (*Geum*, *Gyeon*, *Neung* and *Moon-Ra*). The densest ramie (left of Fig. 7) has the density of 125 strands per inch for the warp and the weft. It is so fine fabric which never got from around countries. *Geum* is the warp-faced compound tabby of plain weave and its density is various from high to low one. *Gyeon* shows different kinds according to density. *Neung* is a variation of twill damask woven with a six strand warp thread. *Moon-Ra*, complex gauze made patterns as a set of 2 strand, 4 strand, 6 strand or 8 strand warp threads, was woven alternately with the weft.



**Figure 6.** Kinds of fabric fragments excavated from King Muryeong's tomb. Diagram by the author.

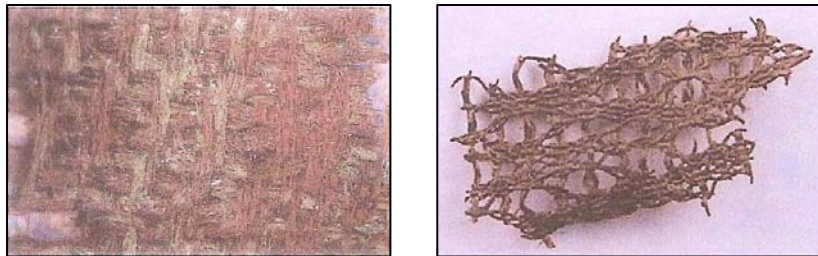


**Figure 7.** Various weave of ramie fragments from King Muryeong's tomb. Gongju National Museum, King Muryeong's Tomb: Analysis Report of Excavated Relics, p. 154. GNM, 2005.



**Figure 8** (left image). Geum (warp-faced compound tabby) fragments from King Muryeong's tomb. Gongju National Museum, p. 145. 2005.

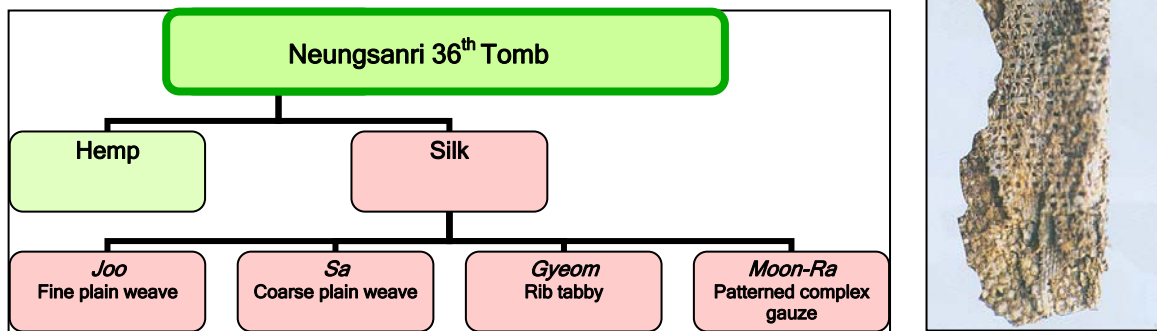
**Figure 9** (right, 3 images). Gyeon(plain weave) fragments from King Muryeong's tomb. Gongju National Museum, p. 151. 2005.



**Figure 10** (left). Neung (twill damask frag.,) King Muryeong's tomb. Gongju National Museum, p. 148. 2005.

**Figure 11** (right). Moon-Ra (patterned complex gauze, frag.) King Muryeong's tomb. Gongju National Museum, p. 149. 2005.

The fragments of fabric (Fig. 12) from Neungsanri 36<sup>th</sup> tomb were excavated with decoration parts of a crown, which verified that a Ra-crown was worn, similar to the historic record. The Moon-Ra (patterned complex gauze; Fig. 13) made patterns as a set of 2 strand or 4 strand warp threads were woven alternately with the weft. Two kinds of plain weave silks (Joo and Sa) and hemp were also discovered underneath the Ra fabric.



**Figure 12 (left).** Kinds of fabric fragments from Neungsanri 36<sup>th</sup> tomb. Diagram by the author.  
**Figure 13 (right).** Moon-Ra (patterned complex gauze) fragment from Neungsanri 36<sup>th</sup> tomb.  
 Buyeo National Cultural Properties Research Institute, Neungsanri. p. 392. BNCPRI, 1998.

The textile traces on the back of *Wajeon* (tiles) were notified the existence and weave of bast fiber fabric, Hemp.

Hemp and the various kinds of silks were mainly used in the three kingdoms of ancient Korea. Besides, *Silla* had various weave of hemp. This suggests possibility Baekje weaved various fabrics of hemp.

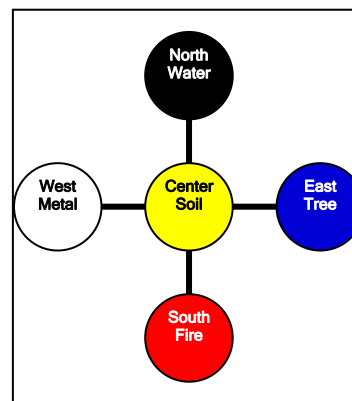
The colors of textile materials of Baekje were described in the historical documentations. The colors of king's costume were *Ja*(purple), *Cheong* (green), *Oh* (the color of crows; black), and *Baek* (white). The colors of official costume were *Ja* (purple), *Jeok* or *Bee* (red), *Cheong* (green), *Hwang* (yellow), *Jo* (black), and *Baek* (white). Table 1 presents a comparison and arrangement of the color system of official costume according to records. It includes colors of dress, cap and belt, and prohibition of the use of official colors by commoners. This confirms that the contents of the official costume system were primarily concerned with color. A system of dress color based on official rank seems to have been instituted during the reign of King *Goi*(A.D.260) in the third century from the *Samguk sagi* report.

The real colors of official costume were shown from excavated data, reproduced two paintings of Baekje envoy traveled to the *Yang* Kingdom in the first half of the sixth century. Nothing has been found in historical works to confirm the colors of Baekje costume without these paintings. The colors delineated from two paintings (Fig. 14, 15) were *Cheong* (green), *Hwang* (yellow), *Bee* (red), *Heuk* (black), and *Baek* (white).

The primary factor, influencing the color system of Baekje, was the ideology of Yin-Yang and the five natural elements. The five natural elements are matched with five colors and directions (Fig. 16). The second factor was the ideology of Great Absolute concerned with the emergence and origin of the Creation. Purple was considered the most precious color based on this ideology.

Class	<i>Samguk sagi</i>	<i>Juseo .Booksa</i>	<i>Suseo</i>		<i>Gudangseo</i>	<i>Shindangseo</i>	
	Dress Color	Belt Color	Belt Color	Cap	Dress Color	Dress Color	
1	6 Persons      Purple	5 Persons	Purple		Red	Red	
2		30 Persons					
3							
4							
5							
6							
7	Red	Purple	Black	Follows Belt System			
8		Black					Black
9		Red	Red				
10		Green	Green				
11		Yellow	Yellow				
12		Green					
13							
14							
15	White		White				
16							
Common People					Taboo Red & Purple	Taboo Red & Purple	

*Table 1. Color system of official costume of Baekje. Table by the author.*



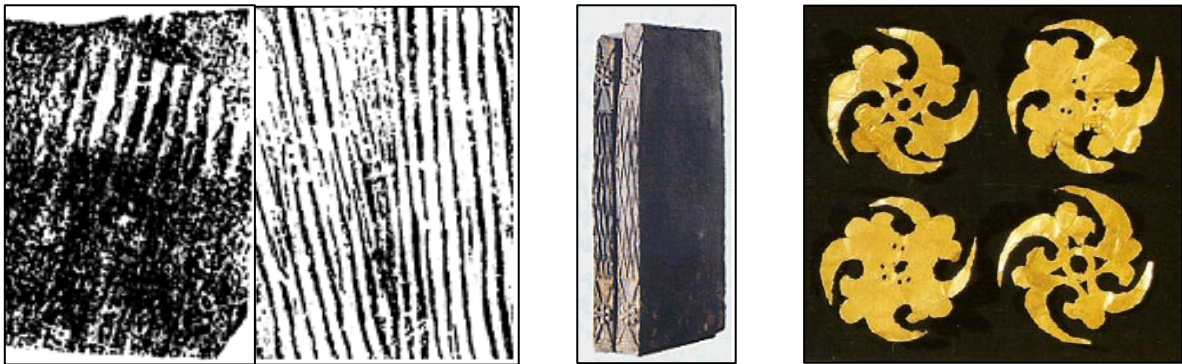
**Figure 14 (left).** Baekje envoy of Yang-jikgongdo. Hi Kyung You, Moon Ja Kim, *Cultural History of Traditional Korean Costume*. second edi. fig. 5. Kyomunsa. 1998. **Figure 15 (center).** Baekje envoy of Wanghoido. Yeon Ok Sim, *5,000 Year of Korean Textile Design*. p. 292. Ancient Textile Research Institute, 2002. **Figure 16 (right).** The ideology of Yin-Yang and the five natural elements. Diagram by the author.

The patterns of textile materials of Baekje were confirmed through excavated data such as crown, gilt bronze shoes, accessories, Wajeon, painting, and so on. It is caused by the rarity



of fabric relics. The pattern types were classified four groups, geometrical pattern, floral pattern, animal pattern, and others.

Slanting lines and Cross stripes patterns among geometrical pattern group were simply expressed on the Wajeon (tiles). Slanting line patterns show large or thin stripes (Fig. 17). Cross stripes express more polished pattern with flower on the cross point (Fig. 18). *Pa* (similar Buddhist emblem) patterns were expressed on the Wajeon and accessories as a kind of lighting. It was so simple in the early days of Baekje, but it was changed more complex and special feature in late Baekje. *Guigab* pattern was used as dividing pattern. It is open worked hexagon on the gilt bronze shoes. T-character pattern was used on the gilt bronze shoes by openwork. Also, wave and zigzag patterns were expressed as the border line of cap, belt, and others.



**Figure 17 (left).** Wajeon (tiles) with Slanting pattern of Baekje. Maeng Sik Choi, *A Study of Technique and Design of Roof - tile in Paekje and Unified Shilla*. p. 159. Honamgogohakbo, Vol.13, 2001.

**Figure 18 (middle).** Wajeon with Cross stripes of Baekje. Seong Gu Kim, *Old Tiles*. p. 47. Daewonsa, 1999.

**Figure 19 (right).** Golden slices of *Pa* pattern of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, *Paekche*. p. 86. Tongcheonmonhwasa, 1999.



**Figure 20.** *Guigab* patterns of gilt bronze copper shoes of Baekje. Drawings by the author.

Floral patterns were popular in Baekje. The honeysuckle pattern of Baekje has elegant lines, and shows artistic technique by completing exquisite beauty of symmetry on the basis of splendid form (Fig. 22). Figure 23 is a tile with S-curve honeysuckle. This pattern of Baekje has the most rhythmical and liberal sense among three ancient kingdoms of Korea. And the Buddhism of South Dynasty of China influenced this pattern of Baekje. There are two types of lotus patterns, front and side view, in Baekje. Most of front view lotus shows on the Wajeon. The shapes of lotus leaf are various. Especially, lotus petal with flower pattern in late Baekje shows the feature of Baekje (Fig. 24). Side view lotus put in the vase was

arranged with honeysuckle. Holy tree pattern of crown decoration shows magic pearl shape on the top and honeysuckle on the lower part (Fig. 25).



**Figure 21 (left).** Gilt bronze shoes with T-character pattern of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, p.134. 1999.

**Figure 22 (middle).** Crown decorations of King Muryeong of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, Myeongpumdogam, p. 42. 1986. **Figure 23 (right).** Wajeon with S-curve honeysuckle pattern of Baekje. Hayashirouichi, Ornament Pattern of Oriental Art –Floral-. Fig. 341. Tomosyashootban, 1992.



**Figure 24 (left).** Wajeon with lotus pattern of Baekje. Buyeo National Museum, Puyo National Museum. p. 110. Samhwa Samhwa Publishing Company, 1997. **Figure 25 (center).** Crown decorations of Queen Muryeong of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, Myeongpumdogam, p. 42. NMK, 1986.

**Figure 26 (right).** Holy tree pattern of gilt bronze crown decorations of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, Paechae. p. 78. 1999.

Dragon pattern among animal pattern group symbolized the highest authority. Dragon patterns are two types. One is a face turned toward back, and the other one it is a face looked toward front. Dragon of figure 28 is similar to a dragon of wall painting in the late Goguryeo and the North and South Dynasty of China. Phoenix pattern was mainly expressed with a dragon pattern as one of the most important patterns. Phoenix is spreading its wings expressed like honeysuckle. It gives a feeling of soft and light exercise. Toad pattern was used at the end of belt decoration. The shape of toad is similar to one of wall paintings of Goguryeo Kingdom of Korea and Han Dynasty of China. But, toad of Baekje shows a point of difference having a heart turned upside down.

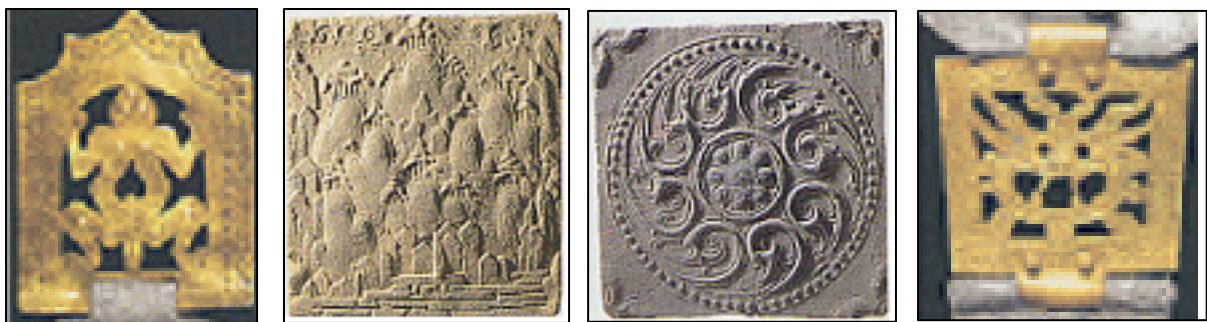




**Figure 27 (left).** Dragon pattern of belt decoration of King Muryeong of Baekje. Drawing by the author.

**Figure 28 (center).** Wajeon with Dragon pattern of Baekje. Buyeo National Museum, p. 109. 1997.

**Figure 29 (left).** Wajeon with Phoenix pattern of Baekje. Buyeo National Museum, p. 108. 1997.



**Figure 30 (left).** Toad pattern of belt decoration of King Muryeong of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, Paeché. p.123. 1999.

**Figure 31 (center, left).** Wajeon with Mountain pattern of Baekje. Buyeo National Museum, p. 106. 1997.

**Figure 32 (center, right).** Wajeon with Cloud pattern of Baekje. Buyeo National Museum, p. 110. 1997.

**Figure 33 (right).** Goblin pattern of belt decoration of King Muryeong of Baekje. National Museum of Korea, Paeché. p.123. 1999

Mountain and Cloud patterns among natural patterns were expressed on the Wajeon. Mountain pattern is included mountains, pine trees and clouds as a distant view (Fig. 31). Cloud pattern is two types. One is C-character shape, and the other one it is magic pearl shape. The C-character cloud pattern of figure 32 is arranged with lotus on the center, encircled beads on the border, and clockwise cloud patterns between center and border.

In addition, goblin patterns were carved on the decoration part of belt or on the Wajeon. Goblin has mane, teeth, and horn.

Ritual parasol, one Buddhist pattern, was expressed on the left arm of Baekje envoy (see Fig. 15). This shows significant meaning as unique pattern expressed on the textile materials. Also, this means Buddhist 8 patterns seem to be used as textile patterns.

The conclusions of this study are as follows. First, the textile manufacturing technique of Baekje had been developed since Mahan era greatly prospered in Baekje era, and quality silks, hemp, wool, and leather were used as dress materials. Second, six basic colors of Baekje costume were Five Colors (blue, red, yellow, white, and black) based on the ideology

of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements plus purple based on the ideology of Great Absolute. Third, the honeysuckle pattern of Baekje has elegant lines, and shows artistic technique by completing exquisite beauty of symmetry on the basis of splendid form. Especially, floral arabesque used as the decoration of crown is the characteristic of the pattern of Baekje. We can assume that Buddhist and Wajeon patterns were used as textile patterns. The patterns of Wajeon in late Baekje era show that Baekje's own pattern was developed. Fourth, Baekje gave a critical influence to the textile weaving of Japan.

Consequently, from an historical viewpoint, the most important characteristics of textile materials of Baekje are that Baekje was the first to establish a governmental organization using six colors of textiles, and that the textile patterns show the esthetic sense and the mild disposition of Baekje.

## References

- History Books, *Samguk-sagi* of Korea and *Ju-seo, Book-sa, Su-seo, Gudang-seo, Shindang-seo* of China.
- Buyeo National Cultural Properties Research Institute. *Neungsanri*. BNCPRI, 1998.
- Buyeo National Museum. *Puyo National Museum*. Samhwa Publishing Company. 1997.
- Choi, Maeng Sik. A Study of Technique and Design of Roof - tile in Paekje and Unified Shilla, *Honamgogohakbo*, vol. 13. 2001. 113-175.
- Gongju National Museum. *King Muryeong's Tomb: Analysis Report of Excavated Relics*. Gongju National Museum, 2005.
- Kim, Seong Gu. *Old Tiles*. Daewonsa, 1999.
- Kim, Young Sook. *Study on the Traditional Colors Expressed in the History of Korean Costume*. Doctoral Dissertation, Sookmyeong Woman's Univrsity. 1988.
- Management Office of Korean Relics. *King Muryeong's Tomb*. MOKR, 1974.
- Min, Kil Ja. Study on the Weaving Technique of Textiles of Korea –Focus on the Hemp and Ramie in Ancient Three Kindom and Goryeo Periods-, *Educational Paper Collection (Kookmin University)*, no. 4. 1985. 123-132.
- National Museum of Korea. *Paekche*. Tongcheonmonhwasa, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Myeongpumdogam(Pictorial Book of Korean Fine Articles)*. NMK, 1986.
- Rouichi, Hayashi. *Ornament Pattern of Oriental Art –Floral-*. Tomosyashootban, 1992.
- Sim, Yeon Ok. *5,000 years of Korean Textiles*. Institute of Ancient Textile, 2002.
- Suh, Mi Young. A Study on the Patterns of Baekje Accessories. *Boksik(Journal of Korean Society of Costume)*, vol. 58, no.8. 2008: 13-29.
- You, Hi Kyung and Kim, Moon Ja. *Cultural History of Traditional Korean Costume*, 2nd ed. Kyomunsa, 1998.