

Emergence of Sociopolitical Differentiation in Korean Prehistory

—focusing on the Boseong River Valley in Southwestern Korea—*

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This paper explores the development of sociopolitical complexity in southwest Korea's Boseong River Valley. One of the main archaeological tasks currently being pursued in Korea is charting the emergence of complex society there. This paper attempts to embark on an analysis of the trajectory towards complexity in a selected region of southwest Korea. A large scale archaeological project in the Boseong River Valley during the 1980s rescued a huge corpus of data threatened by the construction of the Juam Dam project. I draw on this corpus, organizing and analyzing the data it yields on burial practices, because the categories of information from the data are particularly useful in examining key research issues.

The burial excavations were of unprecedented scope, with 381 dolmen graves identified in twenty-three locations. Many dolmens have been observed and investigated in Korea, but an excavation sample of this size is unique and presents a rare analytical opportunity. An analysis of burial furnishings from these dolmens identifies five categories that reflect differing social statuses. Charting the distribution of such burials within the region allows the mapping of zones differentially occupied by persons of varying social status and of the places on the landscape where elite personages were situated. These patterns illustrate a picture of a class-differentiated society within the region. Based on this analysis, I conclude that the dolmen period society of the Boseong River Valley had advanced to an intermediate level of sociopolitical complexity. In conclusion, the archaeological evidence is discussed with reference to historical events in the region, as these are known from ancient Chinese and Korean chronicles, to propose an interpretation of the growth of cultural development in the Boseong River Valley in relation to broader developments in southern Korea.

Keywords: Boseong River Valley, burial furnishing, chiefdom, class-differentiation, complex society, dolmen.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of the Research

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate certain developmental processes of sociopolitical complexity in prehistoric Korea. This research is mostly based on archaeological data from the area submerged by the Juam Dam in the Boseong River Valley, South Jeolla Province. In particular, 381 dolmen burials at twenty-three locations investigated in this region were selected as the main archaeological data to be analyzed in detail for interpretation and inference.

In the middle of the 1980s, a large scale archaeological project in the Boseong River Valley accompanied a multipurpose dam construction project. In total, four field campaigns over a four-year period (1986-1989) provided a large corpus of archaeological data. Thanks to the new archaeological data, it became possible to reconstruct the archaeological culture of the Boseong River Valley where available archaeological information had been extremely limited, preventing comparative research with other regions. Choi M. L. (1984) carried out an extensive regional study on the Yeongsan River Valley in South Jeolla Province focusing on the growth of sociopolitical complexity in the region. This study is another attempt to explore developmental processes of sociopolitical complexity in another part of South Jeolla Province, specifically in the Boseong River Valley.

As a preliminary step in this research, I reviewed and synthesized Korean archaeological and historical literature on the sociopolitical development of ancient Korea (Kim G. T. 1995, 1997, 2002; Choi M. L. and Kim G. T. 1999). Briefly, the Sindonga Symposium in 1971 prompted scholarly discussion on the emergence of the state in ancient Korea. Thereafter, there were various attempts to apply anthropological models and theories to ancient Korea, in particular, the neo-evolutionary developmental model proposed by E. R. Service (1962, 1975). However, Korean historians were reluctant to accept the capability of anthropological models and theories to deal with the Korean situation. Regardless of the historians' objections, however, the use of the term "chiefdom society" to characterize an intermediate form of complex society in Korea became more popular, and reached the public in a newly revised official high school history textbook. Today, archaeologists do not hesitate to characterize Korean Bronze Age or Iron Age sites as the remains of chiefdom societies.

In this study, a large corpus of archaeological data from southwest Korea's Boseong River Valley in South Jeolla Province is used to address the question of early sociopolitical development, especially as it may be illuminated through the analysis of dolmen burials and associated artifacts found there. South Jeolla Province, selected for my research, is quite an appropriate region to study the local development of sociopolitical complexity in ancient Korea as has been quite well illustrated in Choi M. L.'s work on the Yeongsan River Valley Culture (1984).

2. Working Hypothesis

I believe the Juam Dam Project data quite well demonstrate that the phenomenon known in Korea as "dolmen society" had already reached quite an advanced level of sociopolitical complexity, both in the Boseong River Valley and elsewhere. Although we still lack sufficient archaeological evidence to reconstruct a detailed cultural history of the Boseong River Valley, the enormous amount of archaeological data from the Juam Dam project helps to provide a sound baseline for a cultural history and offers important insights into the development of sociopolitical complexity in southwestern Korea.

Germane to the study of prehistoric socio-cultural development is the role of a society's economic base, and as a working hypothesis it is posited here that prehistoric societies based on a sound subsistence economy could evolve into complex societies, but only to a certain point unless their natural environment allowed continued economic expansion commensurate with a growing population. Specifically, for prehistoric societies of an intermediate level of complexity to evolve into state-level societies, they would need an economic base strong enough to provide sufficient surplus with which to support a large number of emerging elite persons. Those societies that lacked such an economic base would stagnate or become absorbed into state-level societies emerging nearby (Rhee S. N. 1998, 2002).

In prehistoric Korea, agriculture, specifically cereal production, was the primary base of economic wealth. In particular, at the beginning of the Iron Age I (or the Former Iron Age, around 300 B.C.), wet-rice or paddy rice cultivation became increasingly important in this regard (Rhee S. N. 2002). C. M. Aikens (1981: 261-262) pointed out that increasing societal complexity creates a demand for expansion and control of the food supply, and that the development of an agricultural economy comes as a response to this demand. His model

could work in the case of the Boseong River Valley, which is the region to have the most amount of rainfall in the Korean Peninsula, as much as 1,316.7 mm per year (Song J. H. and Lee Y. M. 1988a: 126). It would be no exaggeration to state that the last two thousand years of Korea's economic history, until the emergence of the industrial economy in the twentieth century, was one of continual expansion of paddy fields for wet-rice cultivation. There is not even the slightest doubt that the element most essential to paddy rice cultivation is well-watered river plains.

In relation to the Yeongsan River Valley, which lies to its west, the Boseong River Valley is much more mountainous and lacks wide river plains, unlike the Yeongsan River Valley (National Geography Institute 1982: 495-499, 504-508). In terms of its natural environment, the Boseong River Valley is better suited to dry-land farming than wet-rice cultivation. Consequently, its agricultural potential was limited, ultimately rendering sociopolitical development of the region stagnant, especially in relation to the nearby Yeongsan River Valley, where dolmen societies continued to successfully evolve into highly advanced state-level societies, as indicated in the archaeological remains such as huge mound tombs found in the Bannam area, specifically Sinchon-ri, Daean-ri, Deoksan-ri and Bog-am-ri, Naju (Choi M. L. 1997; Seo and Seong 1988; Institute of Cultural Properties 2001).

Archaeologically, a prehistoric complex society may be reflected in certain material remains including "differentiated burials, large or monumental structures, valued goods, chiefly centers, intensive agriculture, and artifacts requiring craft specialization" (Rhee S. N. and Choi M. L. 1992: 54). These inform of the presence of "organized behavior, concentration of energy and wealth, and the existence of elite leaders within a community or region" (Rhee S. N. and Choi M. L. 1992: 54; also Peebles and Kus 1977; Carneiro 1981; Steponaitis 1981). Accordingly, for the purpose of drawing inferences relative to the prehistoric sociopolitical complexity of the Boseong River Valley, this research focuses mainly on monumental burials and status goods buried in them.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN THE BOSEONG RIVER VALLEY

The Yeongsan River (northwest), the Tamjin River (southwest), and the Seomjin River (including the Boseong River, an upstream tributary of the Seomjin River,

southeast) are the three major rivers of South Jeolla Province, and they are substantial features in the industry and life of the people. The valleys developed by these streams have been the main cultural centers in both prehistoric and historic periods.

Before the 1980s, overall scholarly attention to South and North Jeolla Province archaeology had been quite restricted; furthermore, extremely unbalanced archaeological attention had been paid to the different areas within South Jeolla Province. Archaeological field projects had been carried out mostly in the Yeongsan River Valley. Only a few dolmen sites such as Gongbuk-ri (Kim J. W. and Yun M. B. 1967a), Gwangcheon-ri (Kim J. W. and Yun M. B. 1967b), and Wolsan-ri, Janghak-ri, and Changrang-ri (Choi M. L., Lee Y. M., and Jo H. J. 1982) were investigated in the Boseong River Valley. Consequently, a relatively sufficient and reliable archaeological database had been established in the Yeongsan River valley, but archaeological data for the other South Jeolla regions were extremely insufficient and incomplete. This exceptionally unbalanced scholarly accumulation did not allow comparative analysis of the whole of South Jeolla Province, and consequently, comprehensive understanding of prehistoric and historic cultures of the region was not possible.

In the middle of the 1980s, a monumental project, the construction of Juam Dam, the large-scale multi-purpose dam, provided an opportunity to rewrite South Jeolla Province archaeology. Because of the dam construction, a total of 49 villages (*Ri*), which were distributed over nine townships (*Myeon*) within

Table 1. Site Survey Results in the Boseong River Valley (Choi and Lee 1985)

County(Kun)	Township(Myeon)	QODR	QODS	LOSA	Burial
Seungju	Juam	107	12	1	0
Seungju	Songkwang	338	338	5	0
Seungju	Ssangam	197	69	0	0
Seungju	Sangsa	9	0	0	0
Boseong	Mundeok	201	148	0	0
Boseong	Bognae	229	122	3	1
Boseong	Yuleo	285	18	1	0
Boseong	Kyeombaek	82	4	0	0
Hwasun	Nam	141	81	1	0
Total		1,589	792	11	1

LOSA: Loci of scattered artifacts, QOD: Quantity of dolmens, R: Reported, S: to be submerged.

three counties (*Kun*) were to be submerged along with their numerous cultural relics. In order to identify and preserve cultural relics in the area to be submerged, a large-scale site survey was planned and carried out. The survey located and identified a number of new and already-known cultural relics both in the area that was to be submerged and in neighboring areas (Table 1).

The archaeological site survey and subsequent field campaigns provided archaeological resources significant both in quantity and quality. The new data gave a critical opportunity to reconsider the archaeological culture of South Jeolla Province, especially that of the Boseong River Valley, which had been neglected for a long time. The Juam Dam project thus provided a basic archaeological database that could serve dynamic comparative research in South Jeolla Province and beyond.

As shown in Table 1, the survey reported 1,589 dolmens and 11 loci of scattered artifacts in the submergence area and neighboring areas. Some loci of scattered artifacts were potential residential sites that had been occupied over multiple archaeological periods (Choi M. L. and Lee Y. M. 1985: 5-6). The dam construction schedule and available human and financial resources did not allow field investigations of all archaeological sites that were to be submerged; however, a large sample of sites was investigated. Based on consideration of physical

Table 2. The First Field Campaign of the Juam Dam Project Executed in 1986

	Sites	Features and Quantity	Institutes (Univ.)	References
1	Singi	19 Dolmens	Jeju	Lee C. G. 1987
2	Sinwol C	16 Dolmens	Jeonbuk	Yun D. H. 1987
3	Sinwol D	16 Dolmens	Koryo	Ji and Park 1987
4	Sinwol H	15 Dolmens	Seoul	Choi M. L. et al. 1987
5	Geumbyeong	12 Dolmens	Sungsil	Lim and Choi 1987
6	Dolong	15 Dolmens	Gyowon	Jeong Y. H. 1987
7	Gokcheon	14 Dolmens & 1 Pit House	Chungbuk	Lee Y. J. et al. 1988
8	Naeu	58 Dolmens	Jeonnam	Song and Lee 1988a
9	Banwol	10 Dolmens	Hanyang	Kim and Yi 1988
10	Sabi	20 Dolmens	Seonkyunkwan	Son and Lee 1988
11	Dolong	3 Pit houses	Kwangju Museum	Seo and Seong 1989
12	Hansil	1 Pit house	Kwangju Museum	Seo and Seong 1989
13	Naksu	2 Pit houses	Seoul	Choi M. L. et al. 1989
	Total	195 Dolmens & 7 Pit houses		

circumstances, including academic significance and condition of preservation, a large-scale excavation project was designed.

In the excavations of the first year (November 3 - December 28, 1986), 195 dolmens and seven semi-subterranean houses were identified and investigated (Table 2). In the second year excavation (June 30 - September 15, 1987), 166 dolmens were investigated (Table 3). While initially a field study of 260 dolmens was planned during 1986 and 1987, in fact 361 dolmens were investigated during that period. The disparities came about from a variety of reasons. First of all, a dolmen capstone identified on the surface ground did not always guarantee the existence of an underground burial chamber that belonged to the capstone. Some capstones identified on the surface had been already dislocated from their original locations, and some items identified as capstones turned out to be merely large rocks. Conversely, dolmen burial chambers were often found under the ground without any indication of capstones on the surface, and occasionally multiple burial chambers were built under a single capstone.

Table 3. The Second Field Campaign of the Juam Dam Project Executed in 1987

	Sites	Features and Quantity	Institutes (Univ.)	References
1	Singi	15 Dolmens	Jeonbuk	Yun D. H. 1988
2	Hajuk A	11 Dolmens	Kyeonghui	Hwang Y. H. 1988
3	Hajuk B	13 Dolmens	Seonggyunkwan	Son and Han 1988
4	Hajuk C	31 Dolmens	Jeonnam	Song and Lee 1988b
5	Gosuwol	15 Dolmens	Chungnam	Yun M. B. 1988
6	Salchi A	14 Dolmens	Geonguk	M. J. Choi 1988
7	Salchi B	17 Dolmens	Mokpo	S. R. Choi 1988
8	Bokgyo	8 Dolmens	Gyowon	Jeong Y. H. 1988
9	Daejeon	16 Dolmens	Chungbuk	Lee Y. J. et al. 1988
10	Jangseon	9 Dolmens	Hanyang	Kim and Lee 1988
11	Juksan	8 Dolmens	Koryo	Ji and Park 1988
12	Yucheon	9 Dolmens	Jeju	Lee C. G. 1988
	Total	166 Dolmens		

In addition to the 361 dolmens actually excavated in the first and second field campaigns of 1986 and 1987, twenty dolmens or burial chambers isolated from their capstones were identified and investigated in the third and fourth field campaigns. These later field campaigns were designed and executed primarily for

the study of Paleolithic culture or the semi-subterranean houses of Neolithic and later times but some additional dolmen features were identified and excavated in the midst of the excavations. Eventually, a total of 381 dolmens including 307 burial chambers were identified and investigated by the end of the Juam Dam archaeological project.

In addition to the initially planned two field campaigns, unpredicted circumstances and discoveries called for extension of the field studies. Lithic implements that belonged to the Upper Paleolithic Age, or Mesolithic Age, were identified in the midst of two dolmen site excavations, Geumpyeong at Sinpyeong-ri and Gokcheon at Usan-ri in Seungju County during the first year field studies. Further, the archaeological significance of the Naksu site at Naksu-ri and the Dolong site at Daegok-ri in Seungju County, turned out to be much greater than predicted. Thus in addition to the originally scheduled excavations of 1986 and 1987, a third field campaign was arranged for more detailed investigation of the Naksu and Dolong settlement sites and the two newly identified Paleolithic sites, the Gokcheon site at Usan-ri and the Geumpyeong site at Sinpyeong-ri. The third field campaign was conducted from May 25 to September 17 in 1987 (Table 4), and this schedule overlapped with that of the second field campaign planned in advance.

During the 1987 fieldwork, which overlapped with the rainy season of the Korean summer, weather conditions were extraordinarily hostile. Warnings of typhoons and heavy rain were issued quite a few times from the middle of July to early August. Heavy rain flooded most of the sites under investigation, and

Table 4. The Third Field Campaign of the Juam Dam Project Executed in 1987

	Sites	PL	DO	MPH	MPF	IAH	IAF	TKH	Sum	References
1	Dolong-K	0	0	34	29	25	0	11	99	Seo and Seong 1989
2	Hansil-K	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	Seo and Seong 1989
2	Dolong-S	0	0	26	22	25	1	0	74	Choi, Kwon and Kim
3	Naksu-S	0	0	0	0	16	2	0	18	1989
4	Gok-C	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	Choi, Lee and Lee 1989
5	Geum-Su	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	Lee, Woo and Ha 1988
	Total	2	5	62	51	66	3	11	200	Lim and Yi 1988

C : Chungbuk University, DO: Dolmen, F: Feature, Geum: Geumpyeong, Gok: Gokcheon, H: House, IA: Iron Age II, K: Kwangju Museum, MP: Mumun Pottery Period, PL: Paleolithic location, S: Seoul University, Su: Sungsil University, TK: Three Kingdoms Period.

Table 5. The Fourth Field Campaign of the Juam Dam Project Executed in 1988-1989

	Sites	PL	DO	MPH	IAH	IAF	TKH	Sum	References
1	Juksan-S	1	5	0	0	0	0	6	Yi S. B. et al. 1990
2	Gok-C	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	Lee and Yun 1990
3	Hajuk A-G	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	Hwang and Shin 1990
4	Hajuk B-Se	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	Son and Lee 1990
5	Hajuk C-J	0	8	2	4	0	0	14	Song J. H. et al. 1990
6	Hansil-K	0	0	2	4	1	6	13	Lee, Seong and Son 1990
7	Dolong-S	0	0	8	23	1	0	32	Choi, Lee and Kim 1990
	Total	2	15	12	34	2	6	71	

C: Chungbuk University, Gok: Gokcheon, DO: Dolmen, F: Feature, G: Gyeonghui University, H: House, IA: Iron Age II, J: Jeonnam University, K: Kwangju Museum, MP: Mumun Pottery Period, PL: Paleolithic location, S: Seoul University, Se: Seonggyunkwan University, TK: Three Kingdoms Period.

the fieldwork had to be discontinued for more than a month. Ironically, the heavy rain that halted the excavations also unveiled previously unidentified archaeological features. In particular, eight Jeulmun Pottery shards and some stone implements were exposed at the Hajuk dolmen site (Lee Y. M. 1988). This unexpected discovery of Jeulmun Pottery shards was enough to make the Korean archaeological circle excited about the hope of discovering the first inland Neolithic site in South Jeolla Province.

The fourth and last field campaign was arranged for the investigations of residential features of the Hajuk site at Juksan-ri, Boseong and a Paleolithic deposit at Juksan in Deoksan-ri, Seungju. Also, more detailed investigations of two Paleolithic sites, Gokcheon and Geumpyeong in Seungju, and two residential sites, Dolong and Hansil at Daegok-ri in Seungju were included in the plan of the fourth field campaigns. This fourth and last field campaign of the Juam Dam archaeological project was implemented from December 22, 1988 to March 14, 1989 (Table 5).

Along with four upper Paleolithic or Mesolithic localities over a four-year period from 1986 to 1989, these four field campaigns uncovered 381 dolmens at twenty-three locations, and over 250 residential features from five sites, including almost 200 semi-subterranean houses dating from the Bronze Age to the Three Kingdoms Period. The descriptive results of the four-year campaign were published in seven volumes of excavation reports under the title *Research Reports on the Excavation of Cultural Relics in the Area Submerged by the*

Juam Dam (I) - (VII) (Jeonnam University Museum 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1988d, 1989, 1990).

DOLMENS AND THE BURIAL FURNISHINGS

The study of sociopolitical complexity and its development over time has become one of the dominant research concerns of Korean archaeology. In my study, the main interest is the trajectory toward sociopolitical complexity that took place in southwestern Korea. In the period of written history, this area of Korea was a part of the Baekje Kingdom, one of Korea's famed Three Kingdoms. In this chapter, I bring together substantial archaeological evidence to show that prior to its late incorporation into a dominant neighboring kingdom, the Boseong River Valley underwent its own evolutionary development of social complexity, and was already a society with an intermediate level of sociopolitical development before the time of Baekje incursion and domination.

As mentioned, the Juam Dam Project provided an enormous and unprecedented amount of new archaeological information and data on the Boseong River Valley, a region which had been neglected in Korean and South Jeolla Province archaeology for a long time. The preliminary site survey for the area to be submerged by the Juam Dam identified and located over 1,500 dolmen burials along with 11 loci of scattered artifacts indicating potential residential sites (see Table 1). In total, four field campaigns conducted over a four year period (1986-1989) identified and investigated four Paleolithic locations, 381 dolmen burials at 23 locations and over 250 residential features at five locations (see Tables 2-5). The temporal range of these archaeological features spread from the Mesolithic or Upper Paleolithic to the Three Kingdoms Period.

1. Dolmens in the Korean Peninsula

As mentioned, the dolmen was the most dominant archaeological feature found and investigated in the Juam Dam archaeological project. This project provided a significant opportunity to understand dolmen society not only in South Jeolla Province and but also throughout the Korean Peninsula. Before the excavation of 381 dolmens at twenty-three locations, there had been only a few actual dolmen excavations even in South Jeolla Province, where dolmens are known from field surveys to be extremely abundant.

Recently, there was a comprehensive research project on Korean dolmens, and this study systematically compiled enormous dolmen data from primarily surface observations. As of 1999, a total of 29,510 dolmens had been identified in Korea, and as many as 19,068 dolmens among them, or about 64.6 % of the total, were identified in South Jeolla Province alone. The total quantity of dolmens in North Korea is reported to be 3,160, but this number seems to count

Table 6. Regional Dolmen Distribution in South Korea (after Choi M. L. et al. 1999)

	Provinces	QID	Ratio	Land Size	QED	QI/QE(%)
1	South Jeolla	19,068	72.4 %	12.4	3,290	579 %
2	North Gyeongsang	2,800	10.6 %	20	5,307	53 %
3	North Jeolla	1,597	6.1 %	8	2,123	75 %
4	South Gyeongsang	1,238	4.7 %	12.3	3,264	38 %
5	Gyeonggi	502	1.9 %	11.7	3,105	16 %
6	South Chungcheong	478	1.8 %	8.9	2,362	20 %
7	Gangwon	338	1.3 %	16.8	4,458	8 %
8	North Chungcheong	189	0.7 %	7.4	1,964	10 %
9	Jeju	140	0.5 %	1.8	478	29 %
	Total	26,350	100.0 %	99.3	26,350	100 %

Dolmens in North Korea are excluded. Land Size: Actual size of each province (measurement unit is 1,000 km²). QE (D): Quantity of Expected Dolmens. QI (D): Quantity of Identified Dolmens.

Table 7. Regional Dolmen Distribution in Korea (1) (after Choi M. L. et al. 1999)

	Provinces	Dolmens	Ratios	Land Size	QED	QI/QE(%)
1	South Jeolla	19,068	64.6 %	12.4	1,665	1145 %
2	North Korea	3,160	10.7 %	120.5	16,178	20 %
3	North Gyeongsang	2,800	9.5 %	20	2,685	104 %
4	North Jeolla	1,597	5.4 %	8	1,074	149 %
5	South Gyeongsang	1,238	4.2 %	12.3	1,651	75 %
6	Gyeonggi	502	1.7 %	11.7	1,571	32 %
7	South Chungcheong	478	1.6 %	8.9	1,195	40 %
8	Gangwon	338	1.1 %	16.8	2,256	15 %
9	North Chungcheong	189	0.6 %	7.4	994	19 %
10	Jeju	140	0.5 %	1.8	242	58 %
	Total	29,510	100.0 %	219.8	29,510	100 %

only those officially recognized in South Korean academic circles rather than the actual quantity of dolmens distributed in North Korea (Tables 6-8). Based on data and information obtained via other countries such as China and Japan, or unofficial sources, it has been estimated that there are at least 14,000 dolmens in North Korea (Choi M. L. et al. 1999: 1207). Thus, dolmens are a truly major feature of the Korean archaeological record, but the number of recorded dolmens hugely outstrips the number that has actually been studied through excavation. The Juam Dam sample of excavated dolmens as of this writing, still affords us the best available set of quantitative information on excavated dolmen contents available from a compact region.

The quantity of dolmens in the North Korea: 3,160. Land Size: Actual size of each province (measurement unit is 1,000 km²). QE (D): Quantity of Expected Dolmens. QI (D): Quantity of Identified Dolmens.

Table 8. Regional Dolmen Distribution in Korea (2) (after Choi M. L. et al. 1999)

	Provinces	QID	Ratio	Land Size	QED	QI/QE
1	South Jeolla	19,068	47.3 %	12.4	2,276	838 %
2	North Korea	14,000	34.7 %	120.5	22,121	63 %
3	North Gyeongsang	2,800	6.9 %	20	3,672	76 %
4	North Jeolla	1,597	4.0 %	8	1,469	109 %
5	South Gyeongsang	1,238	3.1 %	12.3	2,258	55 %
6	Gyeonggi	502	1.2 %	11.7	2,148	23 %
7	South Chungcheong	478	1.2 %	8.9	1,634	29 %
8	Gangwon	338	0.8 %	16.8	3,084	11 %
9	North Chungcheong	189	0.5 %	7.4	1,358	14 %
10	Jeju	140	0.3 %	1.8	330	42 %
	Total	40,350	100.0 %	219.8	40,350	100 %

The quantity of dolmens in the North Korea: 14,000. QED (D): Quantity of Expected Dolmens. QI: Quantity of Identified dolmen. Land Size: Actual size of each province (measurement unit is 1,000 km²).

2. Dolmens in the Boseong River Valley

In the Juam Dam archaeological project, as mentioned, a total of 381 dolmens at twenty-three locations were investigated. The quantity of dolmens and dolmen burial chambers investigated at each of the 23 dolmen locations is listed in Table 9. The dolmen investigation of the Juam Dam submergence area was the largest

scale of dolmen investigation not only in South Jeolla Province but in the entire Korean Peninsula. As of 1993, a total of 16,369 dolmens of 1,991 groups had been identified in South Jeolla Province, but only 716 dolmens of sixty-three groups had been officially excavated, including 381 dolmens excavated in the Juam Dam archaeological project (Lee Y. M. 1993: 18-19, 25-25).

While in total, 307 burial chambers were identified and investigated, fifty-five burial chambers were already isolated from their original capstones. Out of total 326 capstones, 247 capstones retained underground burial chambers, and paired burial chambers were identified under five single dolmen capstones as follows—Dolmen No. 6 at the Hajuk C site, Dolmen No. 7 at the Geumpyeong site, Dolmen No. 3-1 at the Gokcheon site, and Dolmens No. 6 and No. 7 at the Banwol site. In total, seventy-nine capstones not associated with burial chambers are assumed to have been dislocated from their original places by unknown processes and/or some were merely huge rocks rather than being proper dolmen capstones.

Along with Mumun Pottery, the dolmen burial chambers were furnished with Red burnished pottery, earthen net-sinkers, jades, bronze daggers and arrowheads, and diverse stone implements such as grooved adzes, arrowheads, chisels, grinding stones and pestles, plane blades, spears, saw blades, daggers, stone knives, spindle whorls, and whetstones. Considering that no artifacts, or only a few artifacts such as stone implements and Mumun pottery shards, have been uncovered from the dolmens investigated in the Yeongsan River Valley and other regions of Korea, the dolmens of the Juam Dam submergence area are believed to yield relatively rich artifacts both in quantity and quality.

In particular, four bronze implements, three Liaoning style daggers (Singi Dolmen No. 1, and Naeu Dolmens No. 8 and No. 38), and an arrowhead (Singi Dolmen No. 15) draw special attention. Shortly after the Juam Dam archaeological project, more than 10 bronze implements that drew scholarly attention had been uncovered from a few dolmens sites located in the South coast, such as the Bonggye-dong (Lee Y. M. 1990), Jeokryang-dong (Lee Y. M. and Jeong G. J. 1993), Pyeongyeo-dong (Lee Y. M. et al. 1993), and Orim-dong (Lee Y. M. and Jeong G. J. 1992) dolmen sites. Before the Juam Dam dolmen excavations, however, a Liaoning style bronze dagger known to be uncovered from a dolmen at Wundae-ri in Goheung (Lee Y. M. 1993: 39) was the only bronze implement reported from dolmen sites in South Jeolla Province, and less than ten bronze implements had been reported from dolmen sites on the Korean Peninsula. These artifacts furnished in dolmen burial chambers as burial goods and the

Table 9. Dolmens and Dolmen Burial Chambers

Sites		Dolmens		Capstones			Burial Chambers		Kinds of Burial Chambers		
		QD	D/B	QC	C/B	QB	B/C	SC	CI	PG	UC
1	Bokgyo	8	5	8	5	3	0	2	1	0	0
2	Gosuwol	15	7	14	7	8	1	8	0	0	0
3	Dolong	15	3	11	3	12	4	12	0	0	0
4	Hansil	3	0	2	0	3	1	3	0	0	0
5	Singi A	19	0	10	0	19	9	12	7	0	0
6	Singi B	15	1	11	1	14	4	13	1	0	0
7	Juksan	13	3	8	3	10	5	9	0	0	1
8	Jangseon	9	1	9	1	8	0	8	0	0	0
9	Hajuk A	11	6	11	6	5	0	0	0	5	0
10	Hajuk B	15	4	10	4	11	5	9	0	2	0
11	Hajuk C	39	0	37	0	40	2	17	15	3	5
12	Sinwol C	16	10	14	10	6	2	6	0	0	0
13	Sinwol D	16	0	16	0	16	0	14	0	2	0
14	Sinwol H	15	11	15	11	4	0	4	0	0	0
15	Daejeon	16	1	14	1	15	2	12	0	0	3
16	Salchi A	14	1	14	1	13	0	10	0	3	0
17	Salchi B	17	2	16	2	15	1	5	8	0	2
18	Geumpyeong	12	5	12	5	8	0	6	0	1	1
19	Gokcheon	16	0	11	0	17	5	17	0	0	0
20	Naeu	58	8	52	8	50	6	45	4	1	0
21	Banwol	10	3	10	3	9	0	8	0	0	1
22	Sabi	20	8	13	8	12	7	12	0	0	0
23	Yucheon	9	0	8	0	9	1	4	5	0	0
Sum		381	79	326	79	307	55	236	41	17	13
Ratio 1 (%)								76.9	13.4	5.5	4.2
Ratio 2 (%)								80.3	14.0	5.8	

B: burial chamber, C: capstone, CI: stone circle, D: dolmen, PG: pit grave, Q quantity, SC stone cist.
 /B: without burial chamber, /C: without capstone, UC: unclear.
 Ratio 1: to all the burial chambers (307).
 Ratio 2: to all the burial chambers excluding 13 unclear ones (294).

meaning of these combinations of artifacts will be analyzed and discussed in the following Chapter comprehensively.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: REFLECTIONS OF COMMONER AND ELITE STATUS AMONG DOLMENS

As noted several times above, despite the huge quantity of dolmens known from surface evidence in Korea, the number of excavated dolmen burials has been very small. Thus, the question of what all these graves may have contained in the way of burial furniture that could indicate their occupants' status has never been well-answered. Here lies the special importance of the Juam Dam corpus of 381 dolmens. There is a substantial number of excavated dolmens from a quite compact area affording a reasonable sample that can be analyzed to assess the range and relative richness of grave furnishings that dolmens as a class contained. Such data are greatly needed to inform archaeological inferences about the levels of social status represented by dolmen burials, and offer the hope of placing earlier, inadequately supported interpretations on a firmer basis.

Within the Boseong River Valley corpus of evidence, few dolmens have yielded exceptionally abundant objects, or rich furnishings such as bronze artifacts. All artifacts found from burial chambers, except Mumun pottery shards, are listed in Table 10. A few dolmen sites such as the Singi (at Deokchi-ri), Hajuk C, and Naeu dolmen sites yielded quite large amounts of artifacts, distinguishing them from other sites or locations. In general, however, the amounts and kinds of artifacts from the dolmens in the Juam Dam area are not much different from those found at other dolmen sites in South Jeolla Province, and even throughout Korea as a whole except for the cases of a few dolmen sites just noted.

Some lithic implements were found such as burial furnishings, including axes, grooved adzes, chisels, pestles, grinding stones, maces, plane blades, saws, spears, semi-lunar knives, triangular knives, and whetstones. Also found were earthen specimens such as Mumun pottery, spindle whorls, and net-sinkers. All of these are recognizable as primarily utilitarian items, apparently reflecting the occupations of farmers, artisans, and householders. In contrast, five kinds of artifacts, consisting of polished stone arrowheads and daggers, jades, red burnished pottery (including eggplant design pottery) and bronze artifacts were found in fewer than half of the burial chambers investigated. These five kinds of artifacts

Table 10. Artifacts from Dolmen Burial Chambers

	Sites	BA	BD	AH	JA	RB	SD	Other Artifacts	Sum
1	Bokgyo	0	0	0	0	0	0	Ws 1	1
2	Gosuwol	0	0	3	0	0	0	Sk 1,	4
3	Dolong	0	0	4	0	0	0	Ns 1, Sk 1	6
4	Hansil	0	0	1	0	0	0		1
5	Singi A	0	0	17	0	4	0	Gs 1, Ws 2	24
6	Singi B	1	1	34	0	1	3	Ad 1, Ch 1, Sp 4,	46
7	Juksan	0	0	2	0	0	2		4
8	Jangseon	0	0	1	1	1	0		3
9	Hajuk A	0	0	0	0	0	1		1
10	Hajuk B	0	0	0	0	0	1		1
11	Hajuk C	0	0	24	0	10	10	Ax 3, Ad 1, Gp 2, Gs 2, Ns 8, Pb 2, Sk 2, Sw 2	66
12	Sinwol C	0	0	1	1	0	2	Sk 1	5
13	Sinwol D	0	0	3	0	3	2	Ax 1, Pb 1	10
14	Sinwol H	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
15	Daejeon	0	0	1	0	0	1	Gs 1	3
16	Salchi A	0	0	0	0	0	1		1
17	Salchi B	0	0	6	0	4	1	Ns 1	12
18	Geumbyeong	0	0	1	0	0	2	Ch 1, Sw 1, Sk 1	6
19	Gokcheon	0	0	5	0	3	2	Ax 1, Ad 1, Ch 1, Ws 3	16
20	Naeu	0	2	21	10	9	19	Ma 1, Ns 1, Sa 1	64
21	Banwol	0	0	0	1	0	0		1
22	Sabi	0	0	1	0	0	2	Ax 1, Ns 1, Sw 1	6
23	Yucheon	0	0	2		1	2		5
	Sum	1	3	127	13	36	51	Ax 6, Ad 3, Ch 3, Gp 2, Gs 4, Ma 1, Ns 12, Pb 3, Sa 1, Sk 6, Sp 4, Sw 4, Ws 6	286

Singi A: at Daegwang-ri. Singi B: at Deokchi-ri. Ad: grooved adz, Ah: arrowhead, Ba: bronze arrowhead, Bd: bronze dagger, Ja: jade, Ch: chisel, Gp: grinding pestle, Gs: grinding stone, Ma: mace, Ns: net sinker, Pb: plane blade, Sp: spear, Sb: saw blade, Sd: stone dagger, Sa: saw, Sk: stone knife, Sw: spindle whorl, Ws: whetstone.

Table 11. Dolmen Burial Chambers and Artifacts (1)

	Sites	QBC	NA	AA	MP	NM	MPP	KA
1	Bokgyo	3	2	1	0	2	1	0
2	Gosuwol	8	6	2	0	6	2	1
3	Dolong	12	6	6	1	7	5	3
4	Hansil	3	1	2	1	2	1	1
5	Singi A	19	4	15	4	8	11	9
6	Singi B	14	2	12	1	3	11	6
7	Juksan	10	4	6	2	6	4	4
8	Jangseon	8	3	5	2	5	3	3
9	Hajuk A	5	4	1	0	4	1	1
10	Hajuk B	11	10	1	0	10	1	1
11	Hajuk C	40	7	33	5	12	28	20
12	Sinwol C	6	1	5	1	2	4	4
13	Sinwol D	16	3	13	4	7	9	6
14	Sinwol H	4	4	0	0	4	0	0
15	Daejeon	15	7	8	5	12	3	1
16	Salchi A	13	12	1	0	12	1	1
17	Salchi B	15	1	14	7	8	7	7
18	Geumpyeong	8	2	6	1	3	5	2
19	Gokcheon	17	1	16	7	8	9	7
20	Naeu	50	9	41	7	16	34	33
21	Banwol	9	7	2	1	8	1	1
22	Sabi	12	7	5	0	7	5	3
23	Yucheon	9	4	5	0	4	5	5
Total		307	107	200	49	156	151	119
*/307	Ratio 1	100 %	34.9 %	65.1 %	16.0 %	50.8 %	49.2 %	38.8 %
*/200	Ratio 2			100%	24.5%	78%	75.5%	59.5%

Singi A: at Daegwang-ri in Seungju. Singi B: at Deokchi-ri in Boseong. QBC: Quantity of burial chamber, AA: Any kinds of artifacts, KA: Key artifact, MP: Mumun pottery only, MPP: more than Mumun pottery, NA: No artifact, NM: no artifacts or Mumun pottery only.

Ratio 1: to the total number of burial chambers (307).

Ratio 2: to the total number of burial chambers yielding any artifacts (200).

clearly signify the higher sociopolitical status of the people buried with them. In particular, the number of dolmens furnished with any kinds of bronze implements is extremely limited, which implies their special importance within dolmen society.

As shown in Table 11, 107 burial chambers (34.9%) did not yield any artifacts, and forty-nine burial chambers (16%) yielded only Mumun pottery shards. These represent the first two social categories that may be recognized on the basis of burial associations; people found with no possessions or offerings, and people found with only minimal and utilitarian possessions or offerings. Taken all together, these people of relatively low status comprised slightly more than half of all the interments (50.8 %).

Polished stone daggers and arrowheads, red-burnished pottery, jades, and bronze implements have long been recognized as more significant artifacts, or “key artifacts” in reflecting higher wealth and social status. Items named as “key artifacts” were found in 119 burial chambers (38.8%). This group is quite large, representing more than a third of all burial chambers in the sample, and it shows significant internal variation. Within this group, eighty-five burial chambers (71.4%) yielded only one kind of key artifact, but a significant percentage (28.6%) of thirty-four burial chambers yielded multiple kinds of key artifacts (Table 12). Here then are two more recognizable levels of social status, subdivisions within a more elite class.

Table 12. Dolmen Burial Chambers and Artifacts (2)

	Sites	QBC	NA	AA	0 KA	KA	1 KA	2 KA	3 KA
1	Bokgyo	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
2	Gosuwol	8	6	2	1	1	1	0	0
3	Dolong	12	6	6	3	3	3	0	0
4	Hansil	3	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
5	Singi A	19	4	15	6	9	6	3	0
6	Singi B	14	2	12	6	6	3	2	1
7	Juksan	10	4	6	2	4	4	0	0
8	Jangseon	8	3	5	2	3	3	0	0
9	Hajuk A	5	4	1	0	1	1	0	0
10	Hajuk B	11	10	1	0	1	1	0	0
11	Hajuk C	40	7	33	13	20	13	5	2
12	Sinwol C	6	1	5	1	4	4	0	0
13	Sinwol D	16	3	13	7	6	4	2	0
14	Sinwol H	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Daejeon	15	7	8	7	1	0	1	0
16	Salchi A	13	12	1	0	1	1	0	0
17	Salchi B	15	1	14	7	7	5	2	0
18	Geumbyeong	8	2	6	4	2	1	1	0
19	Gokcheon	17	1	16	9	7	5	2	0
20	Naeu	50	9	41	8	33	20	11	2
21	Banwol	9	7	2	1	1	1	0	0
22	Sabi	12	7	5	2	3	3	0	0
23	Yucheon	9	4	5	0	5	5	0	0
	Sum	307	107	200	81	119	85	29	5
*/307	Ratio 1	100 %	34.9 %	65.1%	26.4 %	38.8%	27.7 %	9.4 %	1.6 %
*/200	Ratio 2			100%	40.5%	59.5%	42.5%	14.5%	2.5%
*/119	Ratio 3					100%	71.4%	24.4%	4.2%

Singi A: at Daegwang-ri in Seungju. Singi B: at Deokchi-ri in Boseong. QBC: Quantity of burial chamber, AA: Any kinds of artifacts, 0 KA: non Key artifact, 1 KA: 1 kind of key artifacts, 2 KA: 2 kinds of key artifacts, 3 KA: 3 kinds of key artifacts, NA: No artifact.

Ratio 1: to the total burial chambers (307).

Ratio 2: to the Burial chambers yielding any artifacts (200).

Ratio 3: to the burial chambers yielding any key artifacts (119).

Table 13. Dolmen Burial Chambers Yielding Key Artifacts (1)

Sites		AH		BA		BD		JA		RB		SD		Sum	
		QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA	QB	QA
1	Bokgyo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Gosuwol	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
3	Dolong	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
4	Hansil	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
5	Singi A	8	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	9	21
6	Singi B	4	34	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	3	6	40
7	Juksan	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	4
8	Jangseon	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	3
9	Hajuk A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
10	Hajuk B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
11	Hajuk C	12	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	10	8	10	20	44
12	Sinwol C	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	4	4
13	Sinwol D	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	2	6	8
14	Sinwol H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Daejeon	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
16	Salchi A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
17	Salchi B	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	1	7	11
18	Geumpyeong	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	3
19	Gokcheon	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	2	7	10
20	Naeu	16	21	0	0	0	2	3	10	8	9	19	19	33	61
21	Banwol	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
22	Sabi	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	3
23	Yucheon	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	5	5
Sum		65	126	1	1	3	3	6	13	34	36	49	51	119	230
/307	Ratio 1 (%)	21.2		0.3		1.0		2.0		11.1		16.0		38.8	
*119	Ratio 2 (%)	54.6		0.8		2.5		5.0		28.6		41.2		100	
*230	Ratio 3 (%)	54.8		0.4		1.3		5.7		15.7		22.2		100	

Singi A: at Daegwang-ri in Seungju. Singi B: at Deokch-ri in Boseong. AH: polished stone arrowhead, BA: bronze arrowhead, BD: bronze dagger, JA: jade, RB: red burnished pottery, SD: polished stone dagger. Ratio 1: to the total number of burial chambers (307). Ratio 2: to the total number of burial chambers yielding at least one key artifact (119). Ratio 3: to the total number of key artifacts (230).

Table 14. Dolmen Burial Chambers Yielding Key Artifacts (2)

	Sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	31	BC YMKA	Sum of KA	Sum of BCYKA
1	Bokgyo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Gosuwol	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1
3	Dolong	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
4	Hansil	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
5	Singi A	3	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	6	21	9
6	Singi B	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	40	6
7	Juksan	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
8	Jangseon	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
9	Hajuk A	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
10	Hajuk B	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
11	Hajuk C	7	7	4	0	1	1	0	0	13	44	20
12	Sinwol C	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
13	Sinwol D	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	6
14	Sinwol H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Daejeon	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
16	Salchi A	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
17	Salchi B	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	7
18	Geumpyeong	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
19	Gokcheon	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	10	7
20	Naeu	19	9	1	3	0	0	1	0	14	61	33
21	Banwol	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
22	Sabi	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
23	Yucheon	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
	Sum	73	26	11	4	2	1	1	1	46	230	119
*/307	Ratio 1 (%)	23.8	8.5	3.6	1.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	15.0		38.8
*/119	Ratio 2 (%)	61.3	21.8	9.2	3.4	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	38.7		100

Singi A: at Daegwang-ri in Seungju. Singi B: at Deokch-ri in Boseong.

BC: burial chamber, KA: key artifact, M: multiple, Y: yielding.

Ratio 1: to the total number of burial chambers (307).

Ratio 2: to the total number of burial chambers yielding at least one key artifact (119).

Table 15. Dolmen Burial Chambers Yielding Multiple Kinds of Key Artifacts

	Sites	Ah +Rb	Ah +Sd	Bd +Rb	Bd +Ja	Rh +Sd	Sum Ah,	Ba, & Sd	Ah, Rh,	& Sd Ah,	Ja, & Sd	Sum Total
1	Bokgyo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Gosuwol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Dolong	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Hansil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Singi A	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
6	Singi B	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	3
7	Juksan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Jangseon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Hajuk A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Hajuk B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Hajuk C	3	2	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	2	7
12	Sinwol C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	Sinwol D	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
14	Sinwol H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	Daejeon	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
16	Salchi A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Salchi B	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
18	Geumpyeong	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
19	Gokcheon	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2
20	Naeu	1	6	0	1	3	11	0	1	1	2	14
21	Banwol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22	Sabi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	Yucheon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sum	11	12	1	1	4	29	1	3	1	5	34
* /307	Ratio 1 (%)	3.6	3.9	0.3	0.3	1.3	9.4	0.3	1.0	0.3	1.6	11.1
* /29	Ratio 2 (%)	37.9	41.4	3.4	3.4	1.4	100					
* /5	Ratio 3 (%)							20.0	60.0	20.0	100	

Singi A: at Daegwang-ri in Seungju. Singi B: at Deokch-ri in Boseong. AH: polished stone arrowhead, BA: bronze arrowhead, BD: bronze dagger, JA: jade, RB: red burnished pottery, SD: polished stone dagger.

Ratio 1: to the total number of burial chambers (307).

Ratio 2: to the total number of burial chambers yielding two kinds of key artifact (29).

Ratio 3: to the total number of burial chambers yielding three kinds of key artifact (5).

Tables 12-15 provide complete data on all the burial chambers yielding artifacts, and Table 16 condenses this information to compare burials based on the quantities of “key artifacts” they contained. These numbers illustrate a significant degree of social status differentiation among dolmen burials in the Juam Dam area. Although the data must be treated with some caution, they make it reasonable to hypothesize that we can recognize six sub-levels of status differentiation in the area, including a class of people who were unable to participate in dolmen burial at all.

Table 16. Quantity of Dolmen Burial Chambers Yielding Artifacts

	No or Only MP	MP plus but No Key	One Key	Two Key	Three Key
Q of BC	156	32	85	29	5
Ratio (*/307)	50.8 %	10.4 %	27.7 %	9.5 %	1.6 %

Q of BC: Quantity of burial chamber. Key: Key artifact. MP: Mumun pottery.

At the bottom of the social hierarchy of the dolmen period were people who were unable to be buried in dolmen, which at its simplest nevertheless involved a significant degree of family and community labor. How numerous such people were is not known, of course, since their burial sites have not been found, but their number was probably not insignificant. Above them were people who were buried in dolmen, but who were buried with no, or only minimal possessions or offerings. Over half of all the people buried in dolmens fit into this group. These two sets of people might reasonably be hypothesized as representing a “commoner” level of society, a level that contained within itself a perceptible degree of social status variation.

Above the “commoner” level, the burials of a “social elite” may be recognized in the last three columns of Table 16. It is a substantial group overall, totaling almost 40% of the dolmen burial sample. The relative quantities of “key artifact” social status indicators allow, however, a ready subdivision into three subclasses. As among the “commoners,” a perceptible degree of social status variation also existed among the “social elite.” Most of the burials in this group represent a level of prosperity (and presumably influence) that would have placed them above the “commoners.” But it is the people represented in the “two key” and “three key” columns of Table 16 who can reasonably be judged farthest up the hierarchy of social influence or control. Expectably also, the richest burials, representing the peak of the social hierarchy, are the fewest in num-

ber by a significant margin.

Some have opposed the idea of viewing dolmen burial in Korea as an indicator of sociopolitical class distinction, pointing out that there are simply too many dolmens in the Korean peninsula. If only a chief or his close kin were able to adopt the dolmen for their burial, too many elite persons would be implied as existing in the same time period. My analysis, however, suggests a way out of this dilemma.

If only those dolmens yielding at least two key artifacts are considered as burials for a leader or members of a dominant elite group, the idea that dolmens represented a chiefdom society or a society having an equivalent intermediate level of sociopolitical complexity comes to have a quite reasonable archaeological base. In particular, those dolmens containing three key artifacts may be seen as those of a leader of a superior social stratum who has the political strength to maintain himself as the leader of a community. Along the 307 dolmen burial chambers investigated in the Boseong River Valley area, only five (1.6%) were furnished with three key artifacts. This is a realistically small number of chiefly burials, and obviates the too many dolmens argument cited above.

My analysis confirms that we would certainly be mistaken to think that all the dolmens of the Korean peninsula represent chiefly burials. We would be equally mistaken, however, to assert that none of them did. As the invaluable quantitative sample of excavated dolmens from the Boseong Valley shows clearly, dolmen burials are significantly patterned in a way that reflects a graded hierarchy of social statuses, with a very small number of dominant positions at the top.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The excavations carried out in the Juam Dam submergence area comprised the largest archaeological project in the history of the South Jeolla Province as well as in the Boseong River Valley. Thanks to the Juam Dam archaeological data, we can suggest that there was continuous cultural development from the upper Paleolithic Age to Iron Age II, or the Three Kingdoms Period, in the Boseong River Valley. They also provided important new data on the emergence and development of complex society in the region, the point of main emphasis in this study.

In particular, bronze daggers, polished stone daggers, and jades from a few

dolmens, as well as less spectacular evidence from many more, may well be regarded as quite reliable archaeological evidence showing the existence of social differentiation. The appearance of larger pit houses yielding more household equipment than other small and middle size houses also indicates the existence of social stratification, or at least more than one socio-economic social class. Furthermore, differences in the house size and the quantity and quality of household belongings became more evident in the Iron Age II houses, indicating a trend toward more complicated and stratified social organization (Kim G. T. 2002: Tables 45–49). Various kinds of pottery that have different specific functions such as the steamer for cooking rice, and iron implements for craft work

Table 17. Classification of Dolmen Burial Chambers

	Non-Key Artifacts			Key Artifacts			
	NA/ MP		MP+/0KK	1 KK	2 KK	3 KK/BI	
	NA	MP				3KK	BI
	QBC	107	49	32	85	29	5
	34.9 %	16.0 %	10.4 %	27.7%	9.5 %	1.6 %	1.0 %
Ratio (*/307)	50.8 %		10.4 %	27.7 %	9.5 %	2.6 %	
Ratio (*/307)	61.2%			27.7 %	12.1 %		
Ratio (*/307)	61.2%			38.8 %			

QBC: Quantity of burial chambers. KK: Kind of key artifact. MP+/0KK: More than Mumun pottery but no key artifact. NA: No artifact. MP: Mumun pottery only. /BI: not 3KK but a bronze implement 3KK/BI: 3KK or BI.

Table 18. Dolmen Burial Chambers Yielding Bronze Artifacts or 3 Kinds of Key Artifacts

Burial Chamber	AH	BA	BD	JA	RB	SD	Sum	KOKA
1 Singi B No. 1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2
2 Singi B No. 15	29	1	0	0	0	1	31	3
3 Hajuk C No. 9	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	3
4 Hajuk C No. 13	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	3
5 Naeu No. 8	0	0	1	8	0	0	9	2
6 Naeu No. 22	2	0	0	0	1	1	4	3
7 Naeu No. 38	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
8 Naeu No. 53	2	0	0	1	0	1	4	3

AH: arrowhead, BA: bronze arrowhead, BD: bronze dagger, JA: jade, RB: red-burnished pottery, SD: stone dagger, Q: Quantity. KOKA: Kind of key artifacts.

further suggest at least the beginning of craft specialization exempted from food production.

Tables 17 and 18 represent another classification of the 307 burial chambers based on the contents of burial furnishings therein, and also illustrate six categories of social differentiation of the dolmen society in the Juam Dam submergence area. As shown in Tables 17 and 18, combinations of the three kinds of key artifacts were found in only five dolmen burial chambers. If burial chambers containing any bronze implement are treated as equivalent to those with three kinds of key artifacts, the burial chambers affiliated with the highest rank would number eight, or 2.6 % of the total dolmen burial chambers. Eight out of 307, or 2.6 %, seems to be a reasonable ratio to represent a privileged class in a society. While an extreme position that all dolmens were built for privileged chiefs and their close kin members is clearly not supportable, there is no doubt that the limited number of dolmens furnished with such precious items were not built for common people.

Under the subsistence economy of the Mumun Pottery Period, the population of the Boseong River Valley seems to have been quite successful in adapting itself to dry land farming sufficient to support the whole society. With intensified production, they could reach a chiefdom level of society that could furnish the dolmens of a chosen few elite persons with Liaoning style bronze daggers, polished stone daggers, and jades. However, they were not so successful in changing their production mode to paddy field farming, which would have guaranteed enough production to support a greater population and a more advanced society.

In contrast, the population of the Yeongsan River Valley was quite successful in adapting itself to paddy field farming, which has continued to the present as a major agricultural production mode in modern Korea. The successful shift to paddy field farming is no doubt what made it possible for the Yeongsan River Valley society to advance to an ancient state level society as illustrated in the huge tombs at Bannam-myeon, Naju (S. H. Seo and N. J. Song 1988). Basically, the divergence between the two areas grew out of their differing geographical conditions. Whereas relatively large-scale plains adequate for paddy field agriculture were well developed in the Yeongsan River Valley, the Boseong River Valley has by comparison quite limited arable land.

In post-dolmen periods, there was a significant shift in the level of sociopolitical complexity between the two regions, especially during the Three Kingdoms Period around A.D. 300. This is manifested in the emergence of huge mound tombs in the Yeongsan River Valley, in particular, in the Bannam-myeon area of

Naju County, one of which even contained a gilt-bronze crown. Meanwhile, nothing similar appeared in the Boseong River Valley. From archaeological data, it is clear that the prehistoric dolmen society of the Yeongsan River Valley continued to increase its sociopolitical complexity and by the end of the fifth century A.D. reached the level of incipient state society. However, the dolmen society of the Boseong River Valley failed to advance beyond the chiefdom level until it was finally incorporated into the expansionist Baekje Kingdom during the middle of the sixth century A.D.

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