

Articles

# The Inscription on the Inariyama Tumulus Sword Revisited: Lord Ko Served Baekje King Gaero

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What is in a name? In what follows, I contend that the entire dynamic history of immigration and military campaign across the Strait of Korea and the Seto Inner Sea is hidden in the nine proper names written in ancient Chinese characters discovered in Saitama Prefecture, Japan.

The Inariyama Tumulus sword (稲荷山古墳出土鉄剣) is considered one of the three most important Japanese archaeological findings<sup>1</sup> since the Second World War. Discovered 56 kilometers north of Tokyo in 1968, the sword's inscription<sup>2</sup> refers to one of the earliest periods of Japanese history, a period that has few surviving written records. In this paper, I will examine the inscribed text and present the standard interpretation. Then I will critically evaluate the interpretation and offer my own interpretation employing a new method. Even though my interpretation is not without fault, I hope to show that it fares far better than its traditional alternative. In fact, if my view is correct, the entire dynamic of the fifth-century politics that shaped both Japan and Korea should be comprehensively revised.

## 1. The Traditional Interpretation of the Inscribed Text

The history of pre-Buddhist Japan is still largely shrouded in mystery. The discovery of the Inariyama sword caused such an uproar, among professional historians and laymen alike, because it dramatically ignited hopes that it could perhaps unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the uncharted territory of ancient Japanese history. In this section, I will describe the dominant, traditional interpretation of the inscription popular in the literature. First, here is the entire text:

The front of the sword:

- 1:<sup>3</sup> 辛亥年七月中記乎獲居臣(巨?)上祖名意富比埵
- 2: 其兒多加利足尼其兒名弓(互?)已加利獲居
- 3: 其兒名多加披次獲居其兒名多沙鬼獲居
- 4: 其兒名半弓(互?)比

1. The other two discoveries are the epitaph on a bronze plate of Oh Yasumaro and the Takamatsuzuka tumulus with murals.

2. See, e.g., Saitama Ken Kyoiku Iinkai [Saitama Education Committee], ed. *Reports on Inariyama Tumulus Sword with Golden Inlaid Inscription*.

3. The numbers here indicate the lines in the inscription of the sword.

## The back of the sword:

- 5: 其兒名加差披余其兒名乎獲居臣(巨?) 世世爲杖刀人  
 6: 首奉事來至今  
 7: 獲加多支鹵大王寺在斯鬼  
 8: 宮時吾左治天下令作此百練利刀記吾  
 9: 奉事根原也

The above was written in Classical Chinese. Syntactically and morphologically, most of the characters are recognized without difficulty. The most serious challenge stems from how to give the formally correct and historically relevant semantics of the proper names of individuals (which are given in bold italics together with their official titles) in the above inscription. However, the controversial characters are italicized with alternatives in parenthesis.

The traditional interpretation, which is offered by influential historians,<sup>4</sup> is as follows:

1. Written in the seventh month, in the year of xinhai<sup>5</sup> [AD 471], I am a subordinate, Wowake. The first ancestor was Ohohiko.
2. His son was Takarinosukune, his son was Teyokariwake,
3. His son was Takahishiwake, his son was Tasakiwake,
4. His son was Hatehi,
5. His son was Kasahiyo and his son was a subordinate, Wowake. For generations, as a sword-bearer,
6. My family has served the kings until now.
7. When Great King Wakatakeru presented at the palace of Shiki, I helped the king govern the world
8. And I ordered this sword, forged 100 times, to be made as a record of my service.

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4. Toshio Kishi 1979 and 1982. This view is sympathetically presented or endorsed by Wada, 1988; Anazawa and Manome, 1986; Delmer M. Brown, 1993; Piggot, J. R., 1997, *inter alia*.

5. There is indeed a controversy about exactly which year this sexagenary year should refer to. Alternative suggestions include Year 411 and Year 531. For the details of the controversy, see Anazawa and Manome, 383-4. Cf. Murayaman and Miller, 412-3; 423-4. See also the next footnote.

## 2. The Problems with the Traditional Interpretation

Both the syntax and semantics of the text present a challenge to the contemporary reader but it is the semantics of the proper names of individuals that gives rise to the most formidable challenge. Thus far, studies of the Inariyama Tumulus sword have assumed that the names inscribed on the sword are personal names with no obvious connection to geography.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, such a reading has limited the range of the inscription's exact meanings. This paper will show that a revised reading of the inscription, taking into account the practice of associating an important individual's name with a geographic location, will not only yield a more comprehensive meaning but also provide new insights into the history of, and the relationship between, Wa Japan and Baekje, one of the ancient Korean kingdoms.

At the center of my reinterpretation of the Inariyama inscription is the decisive phrase “Wakatakeru (獲加多支鹵)” in Japanese or “Hwakatakiro” in Korean. The accepted view among the most historians on this issue in Japan is that Wakatakeru (King the great) in the inscription can be identified with the Japanese-style name Wakatake (幼武) of Emperor Yuryaku (雄略),<sup>7</sup> despite the lack of the corresponding syllable “ru” at the end. Emperor Yuryaku was the twenty-first emperor of Japan (tr. reign AD 457 to 479), ascended to the throne by killing his elder brother who killed their father Emperor Inkyo. These historians also identify Yuryaku with Wa King Bu (武: in Japanese it is read as “take”) who sent an epistle to Sung China

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6. The exception is Ono Susumu, who, relating the names to the events and place names in *Nihon Shoki*, claims that the great king referred to in the sword is not Yurayku but Emperor Ankan, according to Anazawa and Manome, 383-4 (See also Murayama and Miller, 423-4). So, on this unorthodox view, the event must have taken place on AD 531 not 471

7. *Nihon Shoki*, ch. 14., Yurakyu (c. 418 – c. 479) was the 21st emperor of Japan, according to the traditional order of succession. Actually, no firm dates can be assigned to this emperor's life or reign. Yuryaku is considered to have ruled the country during the mid-5th century, but there is a paucity of information about him. Scholars can only lament that, at this time, there is insufficient material available for further verification and study. According to the *Kojiki*, he is said to have ruled from the Thirteenth Day of the Eleventh Month of 456 until his death on the Seventh Day of the Eighth Month of 479. According to both *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, Yuryaku was named Prince Ohatsuse Wakatake (大泊瀬 幼武) at birth. Yuryaku is just a name posthumously assigned to him by a much later era. He was the fifth and youngest son of Emperor Inkyo. After his elder brother Emperor Anko was murdered, he won the struggle against his other brothers and became the new emperor. His title in his own lifetime was certainly not tenno, but presumably Okimi or Sumeramikoto (治天下大王 - ameno shita shiroshimesu okimi, or sumera no mikoto, Great King who rules all under heaven) and/or king of Yamato (ヤマト大王 / 大君 - yamato okimi, Great King of Yamato). He had three wives (including his consort Kusahahatahi). His successor, Prince Shiraka (Emperor Seinei), was his son by his wife Kazuraki no Karahime.

in AD 478, seeking China's recognition of his title as Wa King.<sup>8</sup> Our conjecture on the basis of the contemporary Chinese records, Bu began his rule around 477, was recognized as the ruler of Japan by Liu Sung and Qi in 479, and by the Liang dynasty in 502, and continued his rule until 501. Bu sent envoys to the Liu Sung dynasty in 477 and 478.

However, this identity would seem gravely misguided as the epistle to Sung China implies that Bu's father and brother died suddenly in AD 475, while Yuryaku's father Inkyo died in AD 453 according to the *Nihon Shoki*. Also, Yuryaku is recorded to have died in AD 479, while Bu requested the recognition of the title Wa king in 478. Customarily, the request for the recognition by a new king is lodged after the preceding king has died. One of the reasons for identifying Yuryaku with Bu is that the Japanese reading of Bu could be "Takeru," justifying the identification of Yuryaku with the great king of the inscription. Otherwise, there is hardly any clue whatsoever as to how the proper names in the inscription are to be interpreted properly. In particular, no chronological or geographical considerations of the inscription are made in the past resulting in a seriously incomplete historical interpretation.

Furthermore, the traditional interpretation cannot explain why two of Wowake's ancestors—Hatehi and Kasahiyo—lack the titles that are believed to be hereditary.<sup>9</sup> If the great King was indeed Emperor Yuryaku and Wowake was really one of the royal guards who helped him rule the world according to the dominant political custom among the royals and noblemen at the time, how is it that Wowake's immediate ancestors lacked hereditary titles such as *Wake* or *Sukune*? In view of this, it seems rather natural to speculate that Wowake was, powerful as he may have been, rather an unconventional figure, perhaps a descendant of an immigrant family, who moved, relatively recently, to the Sakitama region in the Kanto plain.

### 3. An Alternative Interpretation

I believe that the hidden history behind the names of the eight generations

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8. *Sung Shu*, vol. 4, 2395.

9. Anazawa and Manome express their puzzlement over this in the following way: "It is strange that Wowake's grandfather Hatehi and his father Kasahiyo lack *kabana* titles. Did these men, for some reason or other, lose the honorable family ranks? Were the ranks recovered by Wowake's generation?" (Anazawa and Manome, 385).

contained in the inscription can be revealed when the geographical association of the names is carefully studied through the proper decipherment of a few ideograms in the text.

Part of the problem facing the traditional, dominant interpretation is that it does not provide any historical contents as to the origin of the family in the inscription or their political roles in the proper international geopolitical framework. Indeed the inscription turned out to be fraught with rich historical implications once one approaches it in *Idu*. Accordingly, instead of the dominant, familiar interpretation, I will suggest an alternative interpretation, employing an *Idu* method. *Idu* is a method for expressing Korean language or thought by employing Chinese characters.<sup>10</sup> It is well known that Chinese ideograms were introduced to Wa Japan by Baekje scribes who must have learned them through China from Han to Wei to Sung and other southern Chinese dynasties of the fourth and fifth centuries. Accordingly, the place names of Baekje in her words must have been transcribed in ideograms on records through pronunciation or meanings of ideograms at the time, which is the *Idu* way of writing.

For example, some of the components in the names such as “Dagari” (多加利) as in “Takarinosukune” or “Kasa” (加差) as in “Kasahiyo” are still used in modern Korean to mean “head” and “new” respectively.<sup>11</sup> The writer of the inscription then must have used the Chinese characters to express their thoughts, largely ignoring the original meaning of those characters. Some of the words like “hiko” or “oho” are still used in modern Japanese, although they have now changed into “hiko” (彦), in a personal name and “oh” (大), meaning “big”.

The application of the *Idu* method here for the study of the Inariyama inscription is all the more sensible because of its “blatant Old Baekje Koreanisms,” as Murayama and Miller call it.<sup>12</sup> The inscription, as is clear now, begins with the sentence: “Written in the seventh month, the Year of Xinhai (AD 471). I am a

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10. By around AD 400, classical Chinese was used exclusively for writing in Japan and Korea. This immediately gave rise to the problem of how best to express one’s native thoughts in the foreign characters. In Korea, for example, to accommodate such expression, three separate systems were developed for writing Korean with Chinese characters: *Hyangchal*, *Gugyeol*, and *Idu*. Similar to those developed later in Japan, all three attempted to adapt Chinese writing for Korean use. The *Hyangchal* system used various Chinese characters to represent phonetically all the sounds of the Korean language, but never gained widespread use, and was mainly used in poetry. The *Idu* system, on the other hand, readily gained acceptance, and was used for several centuries, even after the invention of Hangeul, the Korean native alphabet system, in the fifteenth century.

11. See Section 5 below for details.

12. Murayama and Miller, 424. n. 3 et passim.

subordinate, Wowake. The first ancestor was Ohohiko...” The employment of the letter “in” or “middle (中)” between the lunar month designation and “written (記)” is a well-established usage in Korean epigraphical materials from the middle of the fourth century on. For example, the *Nihon Shoki* record on the 46th year of Jingo (tr. 246) presents the same usage of the letter in a passage of an obvious Korean origin: “Hereupon Malkeum Kanki, king of Takshun states, informed Shima no Sukune, saying: — “In the course of the year Kinoye Ne (甲子年七月中), three men of Baekje ....”<sup>13</sup> In addition, the usage of “其兒” is “totally ungrammatical for Chinese, but it is a usage that is remarkably well attested from early epigraphical specimens of Chinese as it was written in Korea.”<sup>14</sup>

As for the employment of the proper name “Ohohiko,” this name contains two remarkably Baekje-style letters in their orthography, namely, “Oh” (意) and “Ko” (塙). Beginning with “意,” *Nihon Shoki*'s record on the 7th year of Emperor Keitai speaks of “Oshiyama, Hodzumi no Omi (副禾惠積臣押山)” and immediately comments that the *Baekjebongi* (Baekje Original Record) (百濟本記) states, “Commissioning Lord Oshiyama (委意斯移麻岐彌).”<sup>15</sup> The letter “意” for “Oh” here then seems to be a direct citation from the Baekje record by way of rendering a Japanese name. As for “塙,” the *Nihon Shoki* record on the 62nd year of Empress Jingo (tr. 262) speaks of “Sotsuhiko” (襲津彦) as it directly quotes its Korean counterpart, “Sachihiko” (沙至比塙) from the Baekje record.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the letter “塙” has been described as “the single most striking Koreanism in the entire text,” as Murayama and Miller put it.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, the second phonogram, “居,” in writing “wake” first appears as a writing for the final syllable of *miyake* (彌移居 meaning “domain”) as preserved in the written prayer that was sent from Baekje with an image of Buddha sixteen feet high in the 6th year of Emperor Kimmei (tr. 545).<sup>18</sup> This then also strongly suggests that the letter represents a highly distinctive Koreanism in the orthography.

Accordingly, there is a strong possibility that the writer of this inscription is Korean (of Baekje extraction) as it is now virtual common sense in the literature

13. *Ibid.*, Jingo, Vol. I, 246.

14. *Ibid.* 417.

15. *Nihon Shoki*, Keitai, Vol. II, 9; Murayama and Miller, 427.

16. *Ibid.*, Jingo, I, 252

17. Murayama and Miller, *op. cit.*

18. *Nihon Shoki* Vol. II, 59-60. I owe this reference to Murayama and Miller, 424.

that most of the scribes in the royal court in Japan at the time were immigrants from Korea. Wa Japan had yet to master the art of literacy in Chinese characters.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, in an important work, Ryu made a comprehensive study of place names in *Idu* of the three ancient Kingdoms of Korea, which provides a general guideline in understanding some of the place names in the inscription. My contention then is simply that the ideograms on the sword are thus best interpreted in terms of *Idu*, a system of Korean writing in ideograms exactly as explained by Ryu.<sup>20</sup>

It turns out that, in our *Idu* interpretation of the inscription, “Waka” (or “Hwakka in ancient Korean: 獲加”) as in “Wakatakeru” (or “Hwakatakiro”) is the Baekje word for a great king and “Giro” is an alternative spelling for the Baekje king Gaero. “Wakatakeru” (or rather “Hwakatakiro”) would then simply mean the great King Gaero (of Baekje).<sup>21</sup>

King Gaero, also referred to as “Geungaeru,” was the twenty-first king of Baekje who reigned over the country from AD 455 to 475. During his reign, he had many diplomatic contacts with China (Liu Sung and Northern Wei), importantly due to the northern Korean kingdom of Goguryeo’s aggression toward Baekje. In 457, he sent tribute to Liu Sung and asked for military assistance to confront Goguryeo. The attempt failed, but as a result, he was recognized as the king of Baekje and was conferred the title of “Great General Stabilizing the East”.<sup>22</sup> During his reign, he was hailed as a great king, but unfortunately, in the ninth lunar month of AD 475, King Jangsu of Goguryeo invaded Baekje with thirty thousand troops and besieged its capitol, Hanseong. In a desperate move, Gaero sent Munju to seek aid from Silla, a neighboring Korean kingdom in the southeast, but before the Silla troops reached Baekje, the city was sacked. Gaero was then captured, publicly humiliated, and slaughtered along side his son by Goguryeo.

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19. For example, the writer of the Eta-funayama sword, known as Choan (長安), must have been a Korean, according to Anazawa and Manome, 392. Maruyama and Miller says, “The use of Chinese script in Japan, like Buddhism that followed closely upon it, came about almost entirely, at least in the earliest stages of the process, through Korean intermediaries – and the most important of these intermediaries were those from the Old Korean kingdom of Baekje” (416).

20. Ryu, 1983. This work of Ryu is a resource book with the most comprehensive information on the place names of Korea during the Three Kingdoms Period as an outcome of his detailed philological study.

21. Note that the ancient Korean pronunciation of “獲加多支鹵,” i.e., “Hwakatakiro” is different from the current pronunciation “Hwoekatachiro.” A more detailed analysis of the phrase will be offered below in section 5, especially subsections (1) and (9).

22. For the details of this activity, see Jonathan Best 1982, 456-60.



Now the phrase “Hwakatakiro” is also inscribed on the sword excavated at the Eta-funayama tomb in Kyushu,<sup>23</sup> where a golden crown with a tail decoration was found. Five similar golden crowns were recently unearthed at various archeological sites in the former territory of the ancient Baekje kingdom. It is now generally believed that a Baekje king bestowed these golden crowns upon provincial lords. On this and other accounts, it is also reasonable to assume “Ko Hwakko” (乎獲居), another important phrase in the Inariyama inscription, to be Baekje’s lord.<sup>24</sup> In fact, as we shall see shortly, there are persuasive reasons to believe that the ancestors of Lord Ko (or Ho) in the Gaya region<sup>25</sup> may be inferred to have served Baekje from their names, which were taken from the names of the lands that they conquered for Baekje.

All of these amazing historical implications can be corroborated by carefully identifying the names on the inscription by means of the place names of the Gaya region ran over by Baekje during the middle of the fourth century. Specifically, the names of the sword’s owner and his seven ancestors on the inscription are mostly derived from the place names of the Gaya region. A further study of this inscription will enable us to understand a series of historical events in Korea and Japan from a period of sparsely written records in the fourth and fifth centuries.

#### 4. Some Controversial Characters in the Inscription

Before we move on to discuss the semantics of the proper names in the inscription, we need to examine some controversial characters there. Our new interpretation of the inscription is crucially based on the new identification of the ideograms in the

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23. “Eta-funayama Tumulus,” Editorial Committee, Kumamoto Prefecture, Tamana, Kikusui-Cho, Heibonsha, 1989. According to Kishi 1979, 1982, two almost identical characters refer to the same great king both in the Eta-funayama sword and the Inariyama sword. He thus assumes that the same king has been described on both. Murayama and Miller (1979) are of the same view. They further note that Yi Chinhui has long held that the “great king” in the Eta-funayama sword refers to a Baekje king, and not to a Japanese emperor partly on the basis of what Seok-hyeong Kim (1966: 243-245) calls the “Korean *Idu* system” found in the inscription of the Eta-funayama (and later in the Inariyama sword as well). Now, if Seok-hyeong Kim is indeed right about his contention that the name on the Eta-funayama inscription refers to King Gaero of Baekje, it, together with Kishi’s speculation, logically entails that the great King referred to in the Inariyama sword is also King Gaero.

24. Needless to say, I proceed with its ancient pronunciation. See Section 5 below for more on this.

25. The Gaya region (or Mimana (任那) in Japanese) roughly refers to the southeastern part (Kyeongsang) of the Korean peninsula, including the area along the Nakdong river. In this region numerous small Gaya states existed from the first century to the sixth century beside Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla kingdoms. Formerly, the Gaya states are known by such names as Gana Gaya, Azi Gaya, Oh Gaya, etc.

inscription by W. I. Sohn,<sup>26</sup> which differs from the traditional readings offered by Fukuyama and others.<sup>27</sup> Sohn made a thorough study on the writing styles of the characters “互,” “工,” and “巨” in Fushimi’s *Grand Dictionary for Calligraphy* and other sources extensively to draw his conclusion on the correct decipherment of these ideograms in the inscription.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Sohn noted that the ideogram for “ho” (互)(“go” in Japanese) has two strokes in the middle that hug together and normally the middle strokes are disconnected as in the sword inscription. So this must be the letter that was used instead of “deh” (𠄎). As to the ideogram for “Geo” (巨), it typically has no dot stroke in the middle, which is the case for its ideogram in the sword inscription. So it must be “Geo,” not shin (臣) (or “omi” in Japanese) that is found on the sword.

Reading the character “互” instead of “𠄎,” the name “Bara Gobi” in the text makes more sense in that now “gobi” can be understood as *kawa*, the modern Japanese word for a river with “b” replaced by “w”. In the case of “omi” (臣), it makes more sense with “geo” meaning great, while “omi” does not fit grammatically.

For the purpose of a precise interpretation, the whole inscription is presented as follows: We will put down the Korean reading of names spelled with the Korean Government Romanization system of ideograms. We will then include the Japanese pronunciation.

## 5. The Ancestors’ Names and the Lord Titles with Place Names

It is often a dominant ancient Korean custom to derive the private names of individuals from the place names associated with the individuals one way or another. For example, the names of Goguryeo kings such as “Dongcheon” (東川) and “Jungcheon” (中川) refer to the place names “Saina,” and “Gabana,” respectively, of their burial places.<sup>29</sup> The names of the founding kings of Baekje, “Biryu” (沸流) and “Onjo” (溫祚) refer to the name of the river Biru and the name of the kingdom Baekje respectively. We realize also that King Dongseong of Baekje in the later fifth century lists the titles of his enfeudated lords with the titles made of place name and lord’s rank in the state letters to China where this way of naming

26. Sohn 2007, 331.

27. Saitama Ken Kyoiku Iinkai, 1988, op. cit.

28. Fushimi, 160, 906, 1021, 2144.

29. Ryu, 213-4.

titles was practiced since the *Book of Rites*. Following these precedents, we make the assumption that the names without title in the inscription refer to places as well.

Now we will study the nine names of individuals appearing in the text and proceed to identify them as place names:

### (1) **Ho Hoekgeo** (乎獲居: **Wo Wake**)

This name has the title “Hwakko.” It suggests that Ko (or Ho) was appointed to rule the land as a lord. Now the name “Ko” (or “Ho”) is a place name, which could mean a son or descendant in Baekje or Gaya just as in the name of King of the Huns, Tangri Ko To or Heavenly Son the Great. There are many names such as “Ho” or “Ko” (as in the name of “Hokauhko” 或加優呼) in the records of the third century Wei China in reference to a Mahan king’s name, among others.<sup>30</sup>

As for “Hwakeo,” Murayama and Miller point out that its last syllable should be read as “keh,” so the whole word should be read as “wakeh,”<sup>31</sup> which means a feudal lord in the Altaic language. Thus it must be so as a Baekje word as well (as the Baekje language is Altaic). It turns out the correct pronunciation for the character “獲” in the third and fourth centuries is “Hwak.”<sup>32</sup> As will be explained shortly, there is a word “Hwakka,” which means, “supreme lord” as we shall all later. Thus, we believe this word for a lord in its original Baekje word is to be pronounced “Hwakko.”

### (2) **Uibubigwe** (意富比垓: **Ohohiko**)

“Uibubigwe” is the present Korean pronunciation while “Ifuhiki” is the present Japanese pronunciation, and part of what we are searching is the credible pronunciation of these characters in the fifth century. How should we understand this phrase? As it stands, the phrase consists of two parts, “Uibu” and “Bigwe.” The first word “Uibu” is usually understood to represent the concept great or “Oho” as in “Oho Gaya” for great Gaya. As for the second part, the old Altaic word “Beki” for a king or ruler is believed to have become the Baekje word “Bikko,” which in time changed into

30. This history book, *San Kou Chi*, was written by Chin Su toward the end of the third century. As a part on the history of East Barbarians, it deals with the history of three Hans in Korea and many Wa states in Japan.

31. Murayama and Miller, 418

32. *Chinese Grand Dictionary*, Vol. 6, 245

“Hiko” in Japanese.<sup>33</sup> One of the Goguryeo kings was named “Baekgo,” which sounds quite similar to Bikko. Therefore “Uibubigwe” presumably stands for Oho Bikko or “great ruler.”

### (3) **Dagari Jokni** (多加利足尼: **Takari Sukune**)

This is a compound of two words, “Dagari” and “Jokni.” A Korean etymology dictionary includes a detailed comment on the word “Dagari.”<sup>34</sup> At present, this is a pejorative Korean word for “head.” But “Dagari,” used to be a respectable word for head. “Da” and “Gari” both mean head and “Dagari” is a compound of these two words. We find the pronunciation for “足” could be tsok in the fifth century. An old Altaic word “Dekin” for “a king to be” perhaps became Tsokni in Baekje and Sukune in old Japanese.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the “Dagari Tsokni” is highly likely to stand for “head prince” or “head Tsokni.”

### (4) **Goi Gari Hoekgeo** (互已加利獲居: **Goi Kari Wake**)

This phrase is composed of three parts: “Goi,” “Gari” and “Hoekgeo.” According to Ryu, “Gari” is a variant of “Gara” an ancient name for small states in the southeastern region of Korea.<sup>36</sup>

As to the word “Goi,” we will read it as “Gori” again after Ryu, who proves that *Idu* writing for “Dari” is “Dai” (多已).<sup>37</sup> As a whole, the phrase can be read as “Gori Gari Hwakko”. Now “Gori Gari” is the original name for Goryeong Gaya (古寧加耶),<sup>38</sup> an *Idu* place name. Therefore, we interpret this phrase to mean the feudal lord at Gori Gari, which was located at present Hamchang, in the southern Gyeongsang province in Korea. As for “Hwakko,” it has been already explained in Part (1).

33. Watanabe 1993, 65.

34. Suh 2000, 174

35. Watanabe 1993, 65 Tsok is probably correct pronunciation for 足.

36. Ryu, 540

37. Ibid

38. One of the Gaya states in Goryeong

**(5) Dakapicha Hoekgeo (多加披次獲居: Takahishi Wake)**

The ancient name for the Gangwha (江華) island, about 50 km to the northwest of Seoul, Korea, is “Gabi Gosi” (甲比古次).<sup>39</sup> This suggests Picha (披次) may be read “Pishi” or “Bishi,” which was the ancient place name for the present Changnyeong (昌寧).<sup>40</sup> Near Bishi, there was a state called Tak (卓), which refers to an old state Daga located at the present Yeongsan.<sup>41</sup> So probably “Daga Bisi” is the compound name for Daga and Bishi. Therefore, we may take this name to refer to the feudal lord who ruled the Daga-Bishi area.

**(6) Dasagwi Hoekgeo (多沙鬼獲居: Tasaki Wake)**

“Dasa” means “warmth” with the connotation of east. “Dasa” turns out to refer to the place name for the present Hadong (河東) or East of River.<sup>42</sup> It is also well known that “Gwi” or “Gi” is the Baekje word for a fortress. Therefore, Dasagwi Hwakko may be interpreted as the name of the lord of the Dasa fortress. Hadong is a port located near the estuary of the Seomjin River and provides a convenient departure port from the southern coast of Korea for Japan by making use of the Kuroshio Current offshore.

**(7) Banhobi (半互比: Hangohi)**

From the point of view of the Japanese traditional interpretation, this is “surely the most puzzling word in the entire inscription”<sup>43</sup> as it simply does not have the linguistic resources to deal with it. I think the *Idu* method that I employ fares much better particularly in this case. There is no title (Hwakko) attached to this name. Therefore, the bearer of this name was not a lord. In *Idu*, Saban (沙伴) stands for Sabara (i.e., “ban” for “bara”), while the ancient pronunciation for “Ho” (互) is “Go.”<sup>44</sup> So the whole name may be read as “Bara Gobi” or “Bana Gobi,” “Bana” being a variant of “Bara.” If I may venture, “Gobi” could be “Gabi” for a river as in “Gabi Goshi,” an old name

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39. Ryu, 69

40. Ryu, 532. See the Map of Ko (Ho)’s ancestor’s at the end of this paper.

41. Kim T. S., 1993, 175

42. Ryu, 466.

43. Murayama and Miller, 429.

44. Ryu, 337

for the present day Ganghwa (江華) in Korea. In Japanese, a river is called “Kawa” and perhaps this name “Bara Gobi” refers to the present Arakawa (荒川) river in Tokyo. If this argument is correct, then this suggests that the ancestors of Lord Ko must have migrated to Tokyo area in Japan from the Korean peninsula around this period.

### (8) Gacha Piyeo (加差披余: Kasa Hiyo)

The first part “Gacha” surely represents the Korean word “Gasa,” which means “new.”<sup>45</sup> As for the second part, it is known that Buyeo (夫余)—which is an ancient kingdom in southern Manchuria—should be read as Puri.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, “Piyeo” may be read as “Piri” or “Biri” (meaning a village). Therefore, this name may be pronounced as “Gasa Biri” or a new village. This individual does not yet bear the title *Hwakko* or lord. Perhaps, he was still struggling to settle down in this new land. We believe the name “Gasa Biri” is still retained as Kasahara (笠原), a village name near the Inariyama tumulus.

### (9) Hoekka Da Jiro (獲加多支鹵: Waka Takeru)

The ancient reading of this name is “Hwakka Da Giro” as we have already discussed. This is the most important phrase to understand. First, we note the word “Hwakka” (獲加) which differs from “Hwakko” in the last vowel. The Baekje word for a king is “Araga,” while the word for a queen is “Arigo.”<sup>47</sup> The last vowel differs from *a* to *o*. This is very suggestive in understanding the word “Hwakka.” Usually “Ka” was used to denote the highest-ranking person in Goguryeo as well as in Baekje. It is most interesting that we find the word “Hokka” (或加) for an overlord, which turns out to have the ancient sound “Hwakka,” in the original Chinese record on the Mahan state as a part of the name “Hokgauho” (或加優呼) found in the chronicle of Wei (魏) China (AD 220–265).<sup>48</sup> “Hwakka” may then be interpreted as the supreme among lords. We find two differing ideograms, 獲加 and 或加, for the identical Baekje word “Hwakka,” a supreme lord, as it often happens in *Idu*.

45. *Ibid.*, 68.

46. *Ibid.*, 417.

47. Ryu.

48. *San Kou Chi*.

In the *Samguk Sagi*, the Baekje King Gaero has another name “Geun Gaeru (近蓋婁),” where “Geun (近)” may not only mean “recent” but also mean “great” or kana in Korean. Therefore, we may read “Da Giro” in the King’s name as “Great Giro.”<sup>49</sup> According to Murayama and Miller, “支” in the name could have been read either as “Ki” or “Ke.” It is also pointed out by Ryu that Giro or Garo may be identified with Gaero.<sup>50</sup> As we pointed out with the name “Dagari,” “Da” could mean a head as well. So “Da” could be understood to be either great or head. So this great King’s name may be interpreted as “Supreme ruler great King Gaero.”

We can now translate the whole inscription as follows, according to the new interpretation:

“In July, 471, we record that Ko Hwakko had ancestors, Oho Biko, his son Dagari Tsokni, his son Gori Gari Hwakko, his son Daga Bisi Hwakko, his son Dasagi Hwakko, his son Bara Gobi, his son Gasa Biri and his son Ko Hwakko. Until this day we, as military commanders, have served the supreme ruler great King Gaero with his office at the Sagi Palace, generation after generation, in governance of the nation. We recorded our deeds and roots on this excellent sword wrought a hundred times.”

We note that the location of Sagi Palace (斯鬼宮) referred to in the inscription may be identified as the palace associated with the fortress Sagi which is mentioned in the *Samguk Sagi*. In the twenty-first year of the reign of King Gaero, a dike was built from the east of Saseong (蛇城) fortress to the north of Mt. Songsan. We believe Saseong is the *Idu* way of writing “Sagi” where “gi” or “ki” is the Baekje word for “seong” or fortress.<sup>51</sup> This presumably is in lower Han River valley in Gyeonggi Province, close to Seoul and close to the capital Ganaguru or Hanseong of Baekje.<sup>52</sup>

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49. Ibid. 398.

50. Ibid. 338.

51. Indeed, Old Japanese word “ki (castle)” is an old loan into Japanese from Old Baekje (Maruyama and Miller, 429)..

52. Jonathan Best conjectures that this is possibly equivalent to the present-day archaeological site of Pungnaptoseong in Seoul (Best, 510)

## 6. Historical Significance

The inscription declares that Ko and his ancestors, generations after generations, served Hwakka or the supreme King as military commanders. Now we know “Hwakka” to mean the supreme among *Hwakko* or lords. Associating Ko’s ancestor’s names with place names, we conclude that five of them were in the Baekje land in Korea and three of them in Wa Japan. Those without the title Hwakko were perhaps preoccupied with fighting or settling and had not yet been appointed as rulers of the occupied land. Three of them were the feudal lords at Gori Gara (or the present Hamchang area); Daga Bisi (or the present Yeongsan-Changnyeong area); and Dasagi (or the present Hadong area in Korea). These are the lands which were subjugated by Baekje during the war of conquest<sup>53</sup> along the Nakdong river around AD 369.

By studying the following periods, we can see the historical significance of the inscription. Taking AD 471 as the year the sword was fabricated (counting twenty-five years as one generation of Ko’s ancestors), we find the periods of the lifespan of eight generations as follows:

In this table, we see that Oho Biko and Dagari Tsokni and Bara Gobi and Gasa Biri do not have the official title *Hwakko* and this could be because they were probably busy with military campaigns for the first two. Baekje and Silla were engaged in many battles in this era. According to *Samguk Sagi*, battles took place between Baekje and Silla sixteen times during the period AD 167 and 283, mostly

**Table 1.** The Approximate Time Table for the Ko Family Genealogy

Generation	Name	Approximate Year
1	Oho Bikko	Circa 295
2	Dagari Tsokni	Circa 320
3	Lord Gori Gari	Circa 345
4	Lord Daga Bisi	Circa 370
5	Lord Dasagi	Circa 395
6	Bara Gobi	Circa 420
7	Gasa Biri	Circa 445
8	Lord Ko	Circa 471

53. Cheon, 23



in northern Gyeongsang province.

*Samguk Sagi* records that Silla took the Sangju (尙州) area away from Baekje in AD 250. Baekje fought at Mosan fortress (Jincheon) in 189, at Yeonsan fortress (Yecheon) in AD 191, at Bongsan fortress in 267, and at Gwegok fortress in AD 273. Therefore, during the third and early fourth centuries, Ko's ancestors were busy fighting as military commanders until around the middle of the fourth century when lord Gori Gari was finally appointed to rule the Gori Gari area in about AD 345.

By AD 366, Baekje made a contact with Wa through the good office of the lord Makimi of the Gara State at Taksoon<sup>54</sup> to consult a joint assault against Silla according to the *Nihon Shoki*.

By 369, Baekje subjugated seven small states along the Nakdong River most likely with the support of the Wa troops in Kyushu or Tsushima area<sup>55</sup>. Consequently, Lord Daga Bisi was appointed as a *Hwakko* to rule these two states, Daga and Bisi, which were subjugated in 369 by Baekje during this campaign. At about this time, Dasagi became a part of Baekje territory when Lord Dasagi was appointed as its ruler or *Hwakko*. According to the above timetable, Lord Dasagi was *Hwakko* of Dasagi around in 395.

In the early fifth century, there was a massive immigration of people from the Korean peninsula to the Japanese islands, largely due to the pressures from the Goguryeo aggression, whose forces overran most of Baekje in 396.<sup>56</sup> Now we can understand why Bara Gobi and Gasa Biri did not or could not become lords. Together with their troops they fled to Wa Japan during this Goguryeo invasion and made their own war of conquest. My contention is that Lord Ko's ancestor, Dasagi, fled out of Korea and moved further on to the northeastern part of Wa Japan near Tokyo to settle down at a new territory. Wa was then not a centralized and unified state but still an aggregate of some sort of loosely associated, politically independent petty states.<sup>57</sup> It is against this geo-political backdrop that the activities of Ko's ancestors' should be understood. Ko's ancestors Bara Gobi and Gasa Biri could not be appointed as *Hwakko*, or feudal lords, probably because they were just too preoccupied with securing the new territories right after they fled their mother

54. Taksun (or Tokushoon in Japanese) may be indentified whit Seongju, Kyeongsang Bukdo, Korea, which has an ancient name "Doksan."

55. Notice, however, that the *Nihon Shoki* recorded this conquest as the deed of Empress Jingo of Wa instead of Baekje.

56. Y. D. Kim 2006, 117.

57. According to *Hu Han Shu*, Wa was divided into more than a hundred small states. For a relevant discussion, See, e.g., Best 2007, 65-69.

county, and out of touch with the struggling Baekje. But Ko was apparently back into grace and appointed as one some time around by a great King in Baekje.

I believe the chronological match between the timetable of Ko's ancestors' lifespan and historical events in *Samguk Sagi* and *Nihon shoki* are not mere coincidences but accurately reflect historical events.

## 7. Beyond Names: Lord Ko's Family Served Baekje

We now observe that the place names suggested by the lords' titles in the inscriptions such as "Gori Gari," "Daga Bisi," "Dasagi" all refer to the well-known names of Gara (or Gaya) states which were recorded in various *Idu* ways<sup>58</sup> in the *Samguk Sagi*. It is no accident that the two place names "Daga" and "Bishi" match with two Gara states Toku (啄) and Hishiho (比自Ho) among the seven Gara states allegedly conquered in AD 369 by Jingu Kogo according to the *Nihon Shoki*.<sup>58</sup>

It is evident that those lords who ruled the Gara states in the Korean peninsula must have served a Korean kingdom, which could only be Baekje in the geopolitical situation at the time. As such, the Ko's family must have served Baekje King Gaero, not Wa King Yuryaku whose Japanese name was "Wakatake."

We note that the names of Baekje lords consist of place names of their enfeuded lands followed by *Hwakko* or lord, just as in China.

Now we find that the Japanese name "Homuta Wake" ("品陀和氣" in *Kojiki* and alternatively "譽田別" in *Nihon Shoki*) for Ojin Tenno provides us with yet another clue for the fact that Wakatake cannot be Hwakka Da Giro for the following reason. Since Wake is a variant of Hwakko or an enfeuded lord, Homuta may be the place name of his enfeuded land (of which we will study more in detail in the future.) At the moment, I want to make the point that an enfeuded land was not inherited in Baekje as in the case of Ko's family who were shifted around in their appointments, generation after generation. However, in the case of Homuta Wake, his land was inherited by Wakatake in breach of Baekje's practice. What I am arguing is that Wakatake's family does not share the tradition of Ko's family as enfeuded lords.

58. For Jingu Kogo's campaign, see *Nihon Shoki*, p. 248. Note the various *Idu* writings for the following names:

Gori : 互己, 古寧

Gari : 加利, 加良, 加儞, 加羅

Daga : 多加, 卓, 啄己吞

Finally, I offer a list of some archeological evidence that Ko's family served Baekje. Recently, a woolen tablet (木簡) with the ideogram "Ro" (鹵) written on it was retrieved from an early-sixth-century Baekje temple site.<sup>59</sup> Surprisingly, the writing style of the character "Ro" turned out identical to that of the same ideogram in the Inariyama and Eta-funayama inscriptions for the name of Gaero. This also lends additional support to the view that the swords were most likely related to the royal Baekje family.

Other archeological connections linking the Ko family to Baekje are the terracotta figures with Baekje costumes, horseback flag holders, terracotta Sumo wrestlers with bells around their waists which were found near the Inariyama tomb.<sup>60</sup>

We have already pointed out about the golden crown (which was the symbol of a Baekje lord) and other Baekje treasures found at the Eta-funayama tomb, which link the occupant of the tomb to Baekje. As both the Inariyama and Eta-funayama tomb are associated with Hwakka Da Giro, these artifacts may also provide evidence for the Inariyama tomb occupant's connection to Baekje, albeit indirectly.<sup>61</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

The inscription on the Inariyama Tumulus sword reveals amazing historical facts when studied properly. Reading the text of the inscription in accordance with the *Idu* method, we discover that the sword was crafted in AD 471, during the reign of King Gaero the Great, whose kingdom Baekje was served by eight generations of Ko's ancestors. By tracing the place names and title *hwakko* associated with their names, we found them to be military commanders under Baekje. They ruled at Gori Gari, Daga Bisi, Dasagi in Korea and moved to Wa Japan where Ko became *hwakko* of Baekje in Wa. These areas must have been under the influence of Baekje during the later half of the fourth century in Korea and in the middle of fifth century in Japan.

The presence of Dasagi Hwakko at Hadong at the estuary of the Seomjin River in the border between the Jeolla province and Gyeongsang province of Korea at the time must have made their flight possible. Otherwise, the fleeing force from

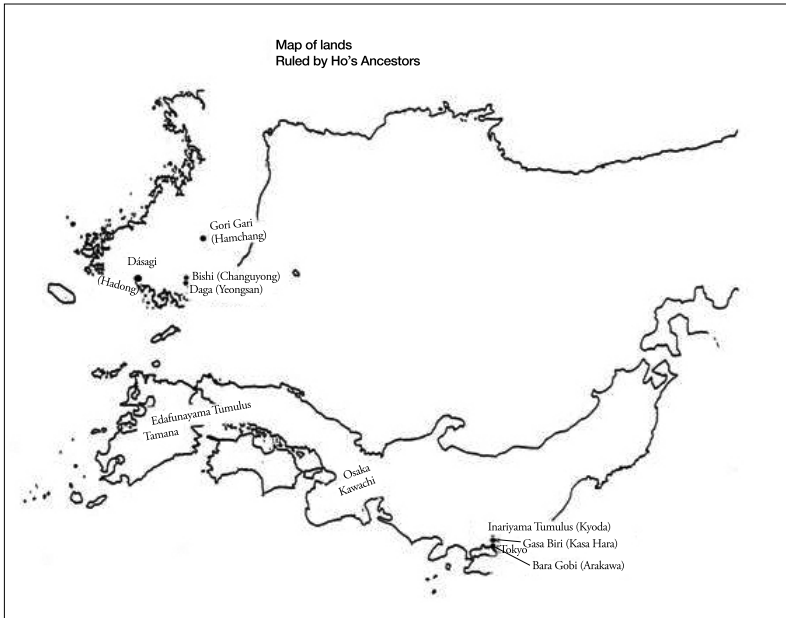
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59 Buyeo Museum, ed. *Baekje Mokkan* [Wooden Tablet], p. 21.

60. Kyoda City Museum, ed. *Umio Watate Kita Bunka* [Culture Brought Over the Sea], 1991.

61. Y.D. Kim, 2008.

Map 1. The Lands Ruled by Ko (Ho)'s Ancestors



the peninsula would not be able to assemble enough ships and supplies, to venture in a military campaign in Wa Japan.

The *Idu* interpretation of the inscription on the Inariyama Tumulus sword provides decisive evidence to a consistent understanding of history, linking a series of historical events in Baekje and Wa Japan, including the amazing conquest of seven Gaya states along the Nakdong river by Baekje, the final conquest of Mahan (馬韓) states in Jeolla province by Baekje, and the military campaign of the Baekje immigrants in the establishment of a Damuro<sup>61</sup> by Lord Ko's family in the Kanto plain of Japan. These are all momentous events in the history between Baekje and Wa Japan in the fourth and fifth century.

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