

# A study of Baekje-Yamato relation changes with a focus on Baekje's capitals

## Introduction

Historical evidence of a special relationship of cooperation and exchange between the polities of Baekje in Korea and Yamato Japan can be found in both historical records and archaeological findings. Historically this research has been full of controversies. As I understand this is partly caused by a heritage of distorted histories and partly because of the own nationalist feelings of Korean and Japanese historians. First of all we have to consider who and with what purpose compiled the historical records that have survived until today. For example, the compiler of the Annals of Samguk Sagi<sup>1</sup>, Kim Busik (1075-1151), may have had little interest in the relations between Baekje and Yamato due to his Silla-related heritage and confucian background, after all in the Silla Annals of Samguk Sagi the Wa were repeatedly depicted as a piratical scourge. At the same time we have to take in consideration the political reasons of the compilers of Kojiki and Nihongi<sup>2</sup> who pursued the enhancement of the emperor and thus often described the position of Japan as having the right and capacity of influence over the Korean kingdoms. The same can be said of some archaeological evidence such as the content of the King Gwanggaeto Stele. Due to its panegyric style and to the fact that part of the content has been erased by time it is not possible to use it as an accurate historical account. Another famous example cause of several controversies is the case of Mimana (believed to be a Japanese designation for one of the Gaya confederacy states in the Korean peninsula). Based in some references made in Nihon Shoki about a supposedly “colony” of Japan under the name of Mimana in Korean territory many scholars have tried to find proof of the nature of this place and it has been object of several debates among historians. Even though there was an active exchange between Baekje and Japan, the center of Japanese influence in the peninsula was in fact the Gaya area. The territory of Gaya was not a single political entity, but a confederation of states. Because of its geographical proximity to the Japanese island of Kyushu, there was much commercial contact between the inhabitants of these regions and

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1 Samguk Sagi is a historical record of the three Korean kingdoms of Goguryo, Baekje and Silla written in classical chinese and compiled in 1145 during the period of the Goryo kingdom (918-1392).

2 Nihongi (also known as Nihon Shoki) is considered the second oldest book of classical Japanese history. It was compiled in 720 and contains both mythological and historical information. Compiled a few years earlier, Kojiki is the title of the oldest chronicle of Japan containing myths and semi historical accounts among others. In its preface the purpose of its compilation is stated as follows: “to erase falsehoods and establish truth”.

it is known that many Gaya and Baekje people have relocated to Kyushu where the inhabitants were also known under the name of Wa<sup>3</sup>. Besides its strategic importance, the Gaya region was very rich in resources and the Japanese were mainly interested in their iron works. Archaeological evidence of this active trade has been found in both Gaya and Kyushu territory. By monopolizing the maritime route along the southern coast, Gaya was able to exercise great influence over the traffic between Baekje and Wa and the trade between Wa and China<sup>4</sup>.

It is believed that the Gaya states did not consolidate themselves into one great state before the territory was overtaken in year 532 by Silla<sup>5</sup>. Nihongi chronicles mention an outpost of Yamato located in this territory and called “Mimana Nihonfu” (an anachronism of the Nihongi compilers since at that time the name “Nihon” was not used to designate Japan yet). Nowadays many scholars recognize the existence of this place. However, there is still disagreement concerning to whom this headquarter belonged and how it functioned<sup>6</sup>. Some scholars argued that this headquarter belonged to Wa aristocracy and some others to Baekje or even to an international delegation of Baekje-Silla-Yamato. In any case this outpost disappeared after the Silla annexations of Gaya territories in 532 and 562 and there is no evidence besides the quotation in the Nihongi to believe that it was a colony of the Japanese state.

We can assert that the studies on the relations between Baekje and the archipelago have focused mainly on two areas: 1) political relations including 4th century Yamato-Baekje alliance and the 5th century “horserider theory” proposing the Baekje conquest of Yamato; and 2) the transmission of Buddhism from Baekje to Yamato and the Baekje contribution to Buddhist material culture in Japan<sup>7</sup>. Through this paper I will attempt to clarify the nature of Baekje-Yamato relations paying a special attention to the different capitals of Baekje as the change of the center of power in one Kingdom is very significant of its political status and will be as well reflected in its relations with the outside world. For that I will divide the essay in three main periods: A brief introduction about the origins of Baekje, followed by its expansionist period and an analysis on the subject after the destruction of its first capital in the Han River basin area.

## The Establishment of Baekje

According to the Baekje Annals of the Samguk Sagi, the Kingdom of Baekje was founded by Onjo, one of the sons of Jumong, the legendary founder of Goguryeo. Jumong had two sons Onjo and Piryu. However, one day another son who Jumong had begotten earlier appeared in the court and became the crown successor. For this reason Onjo and Piryu fearing that their presence would not

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3 Woo, Han Young: *A Review of Korean History. Vol. 1 Ancient/Goryeo Era*. Kyeongsaewon. 2010. Page 139.

4 Park, Cheun Soo: *Kaya and silla in Archaeological Perspective*. In: (Ed.) Byington, Mark E: *Early Korea. Reconsidering Early Korean History Through Archaeology*. Volume 1, 2008. Harvard University. Page 150.

5 Barnes, Gina L: *State Formation in Korea. Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. Curzon Press, 2001. Page 37.

6 Idem. Page 39.

7 Idem. Page 36.

be tolerated by the prince moved to the south to found a new kingdom<sup>8</sup>. Whereas Piryu failed to establish his settlement, Onjo was successful and became the first king of Baekje. The Baekje annals account two other versions of the foundation of the kingdom. Although the annals of Samguk Sagi account the creation of the kingdom in 18BC, it is not possible to contrast this mythical narrative with external sources such as Chinese historical records.

Even though it is difficult to establish an accurate date for the formation of Baekje as a kingdom it is known that initially weak, Baekje was a victim of repeated attacks from the Lelang Commandery and the Malgal tribe, they also had a vassal relation with Mahan kingdom. However, from the first century onwards, Baekje successfully attacked Mahan. According to the annals of Samguk Sagi Baekje destroyed the strongest state of Mahan in the early part of the 1st century which means that it managed to become the most powerful among the small states of Manhan<sup>9</sup>. However, some historians remain skeptical regarding the early years since little is recorded from that time. During the reign of King Goi (234-286) Baekje expanded northwards and its establishment of six minister positions (jwapyeong), 16 official administrative ranks, and the adoption of official uniforms suggest that at that time Baekje had already reached a short of centralized rule. Official positions were granted to the leaders of conquered settlements<sup>10</sup>. Under the rule of Goi, Baekje expanded and consolidated its power. By the late third century Baekje had absorbed territories of the neighboring minor polities and had developed into a state called Baekje 百濟. The fall of the Lelang and Daifang commanderies opened up a new phase of development for Baekje. In 371 according Qin Shu, the Chinese emperor “sent an envoy to appoint King Yu-Ku of Baekje General of the East and Prefect of Lelang”<sup>11</sup>. Since the commandery had disappeared this seems as an effort to secure an ally in the peninsula more than to continue Chinese claims on the Korean territory and this was beneficial for Baekje because with the fall of the commanderies it became the importer of advanced Chinese culture to the peninsula acquired through direct interchange with mainland China<sup>12</sup>. To summarize, at some point between the Mahan embassy of 290 and the royal Baekje embassy of 372 to Jin China, Baekje developed as one of the three Kingdoms (Goguryeo, Silla and Baekje) that would dominate and dispute the Korean peninsula for much part of the first millennium. According to Sui Shu, a vassal state called Tanmenlo was tributary to Baekje. It is believed that this region could have been Jeju Island where metal artifacts suggest connections with the peninsula.

## The Hanseong period and early relations with Japan

King Geun Chogo, who reigned between 346 and 375 is the first Baekje king quoted in both, Chinese and Japanese historical records. These non-Korean sources credit him diplomatic activities with Japan and China. In addition to this, the historical records in Samguk Sagi assert that he leaded a

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8 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 206.

9 Lee, Chong-Wuk: *The Formation and Growth fo Paekche*. In: *Korea Journal*. Volume 18 No10, 1978. Page 35.

10 Woo, Han Young: *A Review of Korean History. Vol. 1 Ancient/Goryeo Era*. Kyeongsaewon. 2010. Page 127.

11 Nelson, Sarah Milledge: *Archaeology of Korea*. Cambridge World Archaeology. 1992.

12 (Ed.) Byington, Mark E: *The Han Commanderies in Early Korean History*. Early Korea Project Korea Institute, Harvard University. 2013. Page 196.

campaign to the north against Goguryeo in 369 capturing five thousands of soldiers<sup>13</sup>. In the year 371 the King together with the Crown Prince launched an attack on Pyeongyang that resulted in the death of the Goguryeo's king Gogukwon. This action is recognized and recorded in the Goguryeo annals as follows:

Year forty-one [371], winter tenth month. The Paekche King, leading thirty thousand troops, came and attacked P'yöngyang Fortress. The King deployed soldiers to resist them but was hit by a stray arrow. He died on the twenty-third day of this month and was buried in a field at Koguk. {Paekche's King Kaero sent a piao [royal letter] to Wei claiming they had beheaded Soe [the King] and publically displayed it but this is an exaggeration.<sup>14</sup>

From this information we can infer that Baekje was already by that time a well-established kingdom and a relevant power in the Korean peninsula. Through military power, Baekje reached its maximum extension during this time. In fact, the Jin-shu annals record an embassy of Baekje to Eastern Jin court in 372 and after that a Jin embassy sent to Baekje that granted king Geun Chogo the title of "General stabilizing the East and governor of Le-lang"<sup>15</sup>. Another proof of Baekje's power is the ceremonial sword Chiljido, also known as seven branched sword sent to the King of Wa by the King of Baekje. This sword is today housed in the Iso-no-kami Shrine in the city of Tenri in Nara prefecture in Japan<sup>16</sup>. The sword has an inscription that may read as follows:

On May 16th, the 4th year of Tae-hwa [or on April 16th, the 4th year of T'ai-ho], the day of Byeong-O at noon this seven-branched sword was manufactured with hundred-times-wrought iron. As this sword has a magical power to rout the enemy, it is sent [bestowed] to the king of a vassal state. Manufactured by xxxx. Never has there been such a sword. Tinking of longevity, the king of Paekche [or the Crown Prince of Paekche who owes his life to the august King] had this sword made for the king of Wa [or the king of vassal state]. Hope that it be transmitted and shown to prosperity.<sup>17</sup>

According to the inscription, Wa seems to have been addressed as a vassal state to Baekje. Naturally, the content of this inscription has been matter of controversy and some Japanese historians refused this reading that would suppose a vassal relationship of the Wa towards Baekje and advocated other interpretations. Some scholars tried to turn Baekje the vassal state while others advocated a respectful relationship between both kingdoms reading the inscription as: "respectfully presenting the sword to the Emperor by the Baekje king." One exception among them is the historian Ueda Masaaki who believes that the sword was "bestowed" to the ruler of Wa by the king of Baekje<sup>18</sup>. In any case it is believed that this is the sword also mentioned in Nihongi as follows: "52nd year,

13 Hong, Wontack: *Paekche of Korea and The Origin of Yamato Japan*. Kudara International, 1994. Page 183.

14 Kim Pusik: *The Koguryö Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. (Translated by Edward J. Shultz and Hugh H.W. Kang) The Academy of Korean Studies, 2011 Page 138.

15 Hong, Wontack: *Paekche: An Offshoot of the Puyeo-Koguryeo in Ma-han Land*. In: *East Asian History. A Korean Perspective*. Vol 1 (15). 2005. Pages 2-3.

16 Covell, Jon Carter; Covell Alan: *Korean Impact on Japanese Culture. Japan's Hidden History*. Hollym Corporation. 1984. Page 22.

17 Translation from: Hong, Wontack: *Paekche of Korea and The Origin of Yamato Japan*. Kudara International, 1994. Page 251.

18 Idem. Page 252.

Autumn, 9th month 10th day: Kutyö and the others came along with Chimuka Nagahiko and presented a seven-branched sword, and a seven-little-one mirror, with various other objects of great value"<sup>19</sup>. The fact that Baekje presented such an elaborated sword as a gift together with the above mentioned records about Baekje's conquests northwards suggest that the kingdom was undergoing a golden age. Buddhism was introduced to Baekje in 384 (about twelve years after its introduction in Goguryeo) and the Baekje court was literate in Chinese language in the fourth century and probably earlier.

In fact, the reign of King Geun Chogo is mentioned by the historian Han Young Woo as the "heyday of Baekje"<sup>20</sup>. At the same time, there is not much information about the Wa, but according to the early Chinese record of Hou Han shu (445), the Wa were divided into more than a hundred small states<sup>21</sup>. This account also mentions that the Wa had established commercial relations with the people of the peninsula from earlier times. At some uncertain point, a political entity that united a sizeable part of territory in the center of the Japanese archipelago was formed and they exercised influence in the Korean peninsula during the late fourth and fifth century<sup>22</sup>, especially in the area of Gaya where they looked for iron. For this reason, while it is reasonable to believe that the king of Baekje could refer to the king of Wa as a vassal at the peak of Baekje's military power, it is also important to note that the establishment of relations was also initiated partly because Baekje rulers found military and politically useful to ally themselves with the archipelago's leadership.

In addition to this, it is important to note that the Yamato state emerged at some point in the mid fifth century and the degree to which it developed an organized state and a particular identity among the archipelago inhabitants is open to question. Before this Yamato state, some Wa rulers are quoted in the Chinese historical texts, one prominent ruler among them is the third century queen Himiko, whose capital may have been located in the Yamato area. However, there is no way to confirm continuity between these earlier rulers and the later established Yamato state<sup>23</sup>. For this reason, as the translation of the seven branched sword suggests, it is possible that the Wa initially maintained a vassal relationship with Baekje that may have changed after the decrease of Baekje's military power and with the emergence of a more defined political entity in Japan that gained a major control over its territory.

Another significant event in this relation occurred during the Goguryeo King Gwanggaeto's attacks on Baekje. In year 397 Baekje sent the crown prince Jeonji to the Yamato court as a hostage. The Baekje annals of Samguk Sagi account this fact as follows: "397: 6th year, Summer, 5th month. The king established friendly relations with the Yamato court [in Japan] and sent the crown prince Chŏnji to serve there as a hostage"<sup>24</sup>.

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19 According to a previous entry of Nihongi, Kutyö was one of the men that Paekche sent to Japan. See: Bancroft, John Chandler: *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from Earliest times to A.D. 697*. Volume 1. The Japan Society. London. 1896. Pages 250-251.

20 Woo, Han Young: *A Review of Korean History. Vol. 1 Ancient/Goryeo Era*. Kyeongsae-won. 2010. Page 129.

21 (Ed.) De Bary, Theodore: *Introduction to Oriental Civilizations. Sources of Japanese Tradition*. Volume 1. 1958 Columbia University Press. Pages 5-9.

22 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 68.

23 Kiley, Cornelius J: *State Dynasty in Archaic Yamato*. In: *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol XXXIII, (1). 1973. Page 26.

It is important to note that in this period Baekje was weakened by constant fight against Goguryeo and in this sense its relation with the Japanese was very important for the survival of the kingdom since they needed military assistance and the early decades of the fifth century marked the zenith of Japanese influence in the peninsula. The historical context justifies the tone that Nihongi accounts use to refer Baekje as a subservient state during this time. However in sharp contrast to the Goguryeo-Silla relations of that time which were characterized by a forceful subordination of Silla to Goguryeo<sup>25</sup>, the relationship between Baekje and Wa seem to have been more in equal terms.

Another interesting passage is contained in the Nihongi. After the death of King Asin, the crown prince came back to assume power. In year 404 Ajik was sent from Baekje to Japan as Nihongi accounts:

15th year, Autumn, 8th month, 6th day. The King of Pèkché sent A-chik-ki with two quite horses as tribute. So they were fed in stables on the acclivity of Karu. Accordingly A-chik-ki was appointed to have charge of their foddering. Therefore the place where the horses were kept was named Mumaya-saka. Moreover, A-chik-ki was able to read the classics, and so the Heir Apparent, Uji no Waka-iratsuko, made him his teacher...<sup>26</sup>

Ajik was the first man of letters sent to the Japanese court by Baekje and he began a trend of culture/military exchanges between Baekje and Yamato that would characterize their relations in later stages. This story is also contained in the Kojiki. The same year Koguryo's army defeated a Japanese fleet sent to aid Baekje<sup>27</sup>. If initially Baekje had been the most powerful force in the peninsula, a new period opened with the conquests of King Gwanggaeto and later his son King Jangsu. As a proof of the increasing power of Goguryeo, its capital was moved once again to Pyeongyang in year 427 and in year 433 Baekje sent an envoy to Silla in order to look for an ally to counterbalance the growing power of Goguryeo in the peninsula<sup>28</sup>. This period of successful Goguryeo attacks would end with the destruction of Baekje's capital and their expulsion of its center of power in the Han River basin. This victory is presented in the Goguryeo annals of Samguk Sagi as follows:

Year Sixty-Three [475]: spring, second month. The King sent an envoy to Wei to present tribute.

Ninth month. The King led thirty thousand troops to attack Paekche and occupy Hansǒng, the royal capital. They killed Puyǒ Kyǒng (King Kaero), captured eight thousand men and women, and returned with them.<sup>29</sup>

24 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 270.

25 (Ed.) Byington, Mark E: *The Han Commanderies in Early Korean History*. Early Korea Project Korea Institute, Harvard University. 2013. Page 212.

26 Bancroft, John Chandler: *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from Earliest times to A.D. 697*. Volume 1. The Japan Society. London. 1896. Page 262.

27 Nelson, Sarah Milledge: *Archaeology of Korea*. Cambridge World Archaeology. 1992 Page 221.

28 Barnes, Gina L: *State Formation in Korea. Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*. Curzon Press, 2001. Page 58.

29 Kim Pusik: *The Koguryǒ Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. (Translated by Edward J. Shultz and Hugh H.W. Kang) The Academy of Korean Studies, 2011.

It is also recorded in more detail in the Baekje annals:

[475] 21st yer, Autumn, 9th month. The King of Koguryō Kōryōn (King Changsu), leading a force of thirty thousand soldiers came down and surrounded the royal capital at Hansōng. Our King secured the gates of the citadel and would not come out to give battle. Therefore, the men of Koguryō divided their army into four parts and attacked from all sides. Taking advantage of favorable wind to fan the flames, they burned down the gates of the fortress. The people then became fearful, and some even wanted to go out and surrender. The king, in his distress did not realize that [the city] was completely surrounded and led several dozen mounted soldiers out of a gate and fled west. The men of Koguryō, however, chased them down and killed them.<sup>30</sup>

Nihon Shoki account the event as follows:

A.D. 476, 20th year, Winter: The King of Koryō raised a great army and utterly smote Pèkché. There was but a small remanent left, which assembled and occupied Chhang-ha. Their victuals became exhausted, and deep was hereupon the weeping and lamentation. Upon this the Koryō generals addressed their King saying: "There is something extraordinary in the temper of Pèkché. Whenever thy servants observe them, they seem unaware of their own ruin. It is to be feared that they will again spread forth and revive. We pray that they may be a length got rid of". The King said: "No! I, the unworthy one, have heard that the Land of Pèkché is under the jurisdiction of the Country of Japan, and that this connection is of old standing. It is also known to all the neighbouring countries that their King repairs to Japan and serves the Emperor." Ultimately it (the proposal to exterminate the Pèkché people) was abandoned.<sup>31</sup>

Here Nihon Shoki addresses a Baekje-Yamato relation in which the Japanese were holding a stronger position. To conclude this chapter it is possible to say that if initially Baekje expanded through the peninsula and during the golden era of its military power that we can identify with the rule of king Geun Chogo probably maintained a dominant position in its relations with Japan, as Goguryeo forces advanced this relation may have changed with Japan becoming the dominant power.

## The Ungjin period: The revival of the kingdom and cultural development

After the destruction of Baekje's first capital Hanseong, the kingdom would never recover the military power that had enjoyed in previous times. The capital was moved to Ungjin (actual Gongju) and surprisingly even under a constant pressure of Goguryeo there was a significant revival of the kingdom during this period. For the period between year 479 and 504 Nihon Shoki does not account any envoy from Baekje. For that reason when diplomatic relations were restored there was a misunderstanding related in Nihon Shoki as follow:

[504] Winter, 10th month: The Land of Pèkché sent Lord Mana with tribute. The Emperor, considering that for many years Pèkche had not sent tribute, detained him, and would not let him go.<sup>32</sup>

30 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 194.

31 (Ed.) Routledge Library Editions: *Nihongi. Chronicles of Japan From the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*. Translated from the Original Chinese and Japanese by W.G. Aston. 2011. Page 366-367.

32 Idem. Page 406.

However, Baekje maintained diplomatic relations with Southern Ch'i (479-502). According to the Nan shih (compiled ca. 630) Baekje presented tribute and its king was confirmed in the titles of "Great General Stabilizing the East" and "King of Baekje" by the court of southern Ch'i<sup>33</sup>. This relationship was maintained with some difficulties as for example in year 484 a Baekje embassy was prevented of crossing the Yellow Sea by a naval force from Goguryeo. From the last mission in 495 a full decade would pass until King Dongseong's successor, King Muryeong (who reigned from 501 to 523) sent Baekje's first tribute to the Liang court in 512. A delay that Liang shu seems to attribute to the military reverses that the kingdom had suffered at the hands of Goguryeo. Muryeong was son of King Gaero and he was born in Japan<sup>34</sup>. However Chin clan had planned to put in the throne Dongseong who was living in Japan before the death of the previous King Samgeun. There is a debate among historians about the causes and the possible Konji's faction (brother of King Muju) influences from Japan in this decision<sup>35</sup>. The reasons why King Muryeong could not ascend to the throne in favor of two other kings remains unclear. However, according to the historical accounts it seems that during the reign of King Muryeong Baekje began to recover from the decline that started in 475. During the first years of his rule he successfully repressed a rebellion caused by Baek Ga, a minister who is held as the responsible for the assassination of King Dongseong. He seized an important fortress and revolted against the authority of the court<sup>36</sup>, but he was executed after a campaign in which King Muryeong actively participated. At that time he also achieved some military success against Goguryeo (after a series of defeats) as its record in the Chinese Liang shu. King Muryeong is said to have strengthened the monarchy and his reign together with the reign of King Seong seem to represent a golden period after the first capital fell. The beginning of King Muryeong's rule also marked the decline of Japanese influence in the peninsula as it can be inferred by the fact that the last coastal raid from Japan recorded in the Silla annals of Samguk Sagi dates from year 500.

Fortunately for the historians of Baekje, the tomb of King Muryeong was found intact and excavated. Its brick style is modeled after the tombs of mainland Liang Dynasty (502-56), this style was later introduced by Baekje elites to Japan marking the end of mounted tombs homogeneity in the archipelago. The goods discovered in the tomb were from Korean origin and can say much about the advanced culture that Baekje had acquired at that time, they include lacquered coffins, footrest, painted wooden pillows, gold hairpin, silver and gold bracelets and other ornaments, a silver wine cup, bronze chopsticks, comb and bowl<sup>37</sup>. The coffin of King Muryeong made of golden pine is said to have come from Japan<sup>38</sup> and proof the relationship maintained between these two powers. Another evidence of this relation is that from 507 to the fall of Imna in 562, there were 38

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33 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 461.

34 Yoon, Yong-Hyuk: *King Muryŏng's Ascension to the Throne*. In: *International Journal of Korean History*. Vol 6, 2004. Page 31.

35 Idem. Pages 33-34.

36 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 116.

37 Barnes, Gina L: *China, Korea and Japan. The Rise of Civilization in East Asia*. Thames and Hudson, 1993. Page 227.

38 (Ed.) Notheast Asian History Foundation: *The Foreseen and the Unforeseen in Historical Relations between Korea and Japan*. 2009. Page 27.

reciprocal exchanges between Japan and Baekje in contrast to only 4 exchanges with Silla, and 2 with Goguryeo<sup>39</sup>. Baekje migrants (scholars and technicians) would settle in many cases in Japan and contributed to the development of Yamato culture and state in many different spheres. Marriage based ties were also established between Baekje and the rulers of Japan<sup>40</sup>.

The successor of King Muryeong was King Seong (523-554), important historical facts occurred during his reign: The capital moved from Ungjin to Sabi with a change in name of the kingdom from Baekje to South Puyo<sup>41</sup> (to increase the legitimacy of the kingdom by linking it with its roots), second the introduction of Buddhism to Japan year 552 which is usually quoted as one important example of Baekje's cultural influence in Yamato and third the alliance between Baekje and Silla designed to counterbalance the power of Goguryeo. The betrayal of Silla is probably the most famous betrayal of Korean ancient history. In year 551 Nihon Shoki records:

This year King Syöng-myöng of Pëkché, commanding an army in person, together with troops from the two countries [by the two countries Sila and Imna are meant], invaded Koryö and conquered the territory of Hansyöng. Thence he again moved forward his army and attacked Phyöng-yang. Six districts in all were ventually restored to their formed territorial dependence.<sup>42</sup>

Baekje forged an alliance with Silla to recover the Han River basin. However, it is well known that Silla took advantage of the fact that Baekje's combatants were exhausted after defeating the Goguryeo army and attacked them occupying the territories by themselves. This betrayal seems to have been a turning point for the Kingdom of Baekje that would start a new period of decline in terms of political power. Nihon Shoki records requests of military aid from Baekje and Gaya states to defend of Silla's threat, but some years later Silla ended annexing Gaya's territories. Surprisingly, there is an entry in the Baekje annals of Samguk Sagi referring to a marriage proposal between a daughter of the king and someone in Silla but some scholars have argued that it may be a fabrication if we consider that this comes after the betrayal of Silla. Only one year later the annals record the death of the king when he was trying to make a surprise attack on Silla<sup>43</sup>.

Park Hyun Sook summarizes in his article all the exchanges accounted in the historical records between Baekje and Japan during King Seong's reign<sup>44</sup>. By examining these exchanges, one can realize that basically the relation was characterized by an export of advanced culture from Baekje to Yamato (that included groups of scholars, specialists, Buddhist goods, books and medicines) in

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39 Park, Hyun-Sook: *Baekje's Relationship with Japan in the 6th Century*. In: *International Journal of Korean History*. Vol. 11, 2007. Page 106.

40 Woo, Han Young: *A Review of Korean History. Vol. 1 Ancient/Goryeo Era*. Kyeongsaewon. 2010. Page 129.

41 (Ed.) Lee, Peter H: *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization. Volume 1. From Early Times to the Sixteenth Century*. Columbia University Press, 1993. Page 23.

42 (Ed.) Routledge Library Editions: *Nihongi. Chronicles of Japan From the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*. Translated from the Original Chinese and Japanese by W.G. Aston. 2011. Page 65.

43 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 336.

44 Park, Hyun-Sook: *Baekje's Relationship with Japan in the 6th Century*. In: *International Journal of Korean History*. Vol. 11, 2007. Pages: 97-115.

exchange of military aid and equipment (such as horses, ships, bows and arrows, etc). Despite the attempts from Silla to take Baekje's role of advanced culture export in its foreign relations with Yamato, Baekje enjoyed a close relationship with Yamato until the collapse of the kingdom. Another crucial point in Baekje foreign relations came with the Sui invasion of Goguryeo in 612. Baekje had promised to support the invasion but when it happened they just reinforced their frontiers without actively taking part on Sui's side. Years after, this policy would influence the view of Baekje that Tang dynasty had. As expressed by Ku Daeyeol<sup>45</sup> Baekje was slow in perceiving and understanding foreign policy orientations of their potential partner in China (For example, Baekje allied with Goguryeo that was at that time the biggest concern or threat for China in the peninsula) and finally was destroyed by a Tang-Silla alliance in year 660. Today a pavilion stands at the so called "Rock of the falling flowers" commemorating Baekje's defeat and the suicide of the kingdom's court ladies and concubines who preferred to jump to the cliff rather than being captured by the enemies. Three years later, an army of Yamato arrived to help their ally but it was too late. Tang was well aware that the joint action against Baekje would upset the Japanese and thus they retained the members of Yamato's envoy in China using false charges as a pretext until one month after the Tang-Silla attacks had conquered Sabi<sup>46</sup>. Short after the capitulation, a restoration movement emerged and requested help from Japan. The prince Pung (who was in Yamato) was returned to the peninsula and proclaimed king. Yamato sent a float of 400 ships and 10000 troops to assist Baekje but they were defeated by the Tang navy. This is narrated as follows:

The latter (Puyo Yung) proceeded from the Ungjin River into the Paek River where they joined the infantry and together they advanced upon Churyu Fortress. While executing this maneuver, they also encountered a flotilla carrying Japanese reinforcements at the mouth of the Paek River and, engaging them in battle four times, were victorious on each occasion. In this action, they burned four hundred of the Japanese vessels –the flames and smoke rose to scorch the heavens while the ocean's waters turned as red as cinnabar.<sup>47</sup>

An account on the event can be found in Chinese sources and also in Nihon Shoki. However, there is no reference of this important battle in Kojiki, probably because it did not suit the political interests of its compilers at that time. With the fall of both Gaya states and Baekje the Japanese influence in the political affairs of the peninsula disappeared completely.

## Conclusions

During the first period whose maximum exponent can be King Geun Chogo, Baekje enjoyed a period of military power, it is known that it established some colonies in the Chinese coast and archaeological founds of Baekje origin have been found as far as in Vietnam. Since its early stage of development it also established foreign relations with China and Japan which allowed Baekje to act as an intermediary between the two states starting a pattern that would repeat during centuries and

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45 Daeyeol, Ku: *The Failure of Baekje's Prudential Diplomacy. Revisiting the Samguk Sagi from an International Relations Perspective*. In: *Korea Journal*. Volume 50, No2, Summer 2010. Pages 158-181.

46 Brown, Delmer M: *The Cambridge History of Japan Vol. I*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Page 205.

47 Best, Jonathan W: *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche. Together with annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi*. Harvard University, 2006. Page 402-403.

which consisted in the import of advanced Chinese culture and its export to Japan. In my opinion at this point Baekje was clearly dominant in Baekje-Wa relations and I base this supposition in the military achievements of Baekje and in the fact that it is not well known to what extent a centralized political entity had or had not been created in the archipelago which can be interpreted at least as a clear sign that none of the peninsular states could have been a vassal of the Japanese state. Another important testimony that support this theory is the seven branched sword which is a symbol of the degree of development that Baekje had reached in blacksmith techniques at that time. As we have seen, things in war turned for Baekje and a period of decline ended with the destruction of its first capital in the Han River basin. This fact is very significant because analyzing the contest of the three kingdoms for the peninsula one can realize that the strategic location and resources of the Han River basin constitute an essential advantage for the control of the peninsula.

However, it is to some degree surprising that Baekje could not only maintain its power, but also developed its culture to the maximum in a second period in which the capital was located in Ungjin. From this period to the end of Baekje's existence the pattern seem to be much clearer, usually there was an exchange of culture for military aid with Japan. The degree in which Baekje's aristocracy was key in the creation of the Yamato state is matter of discussion. However, through the study of the sources it is possible to confirm that Baekje was credited with the introduction to Japan of such important cultural elements as the Chinese characters or Buddhism. Evidence of human exchange and migrations is also recorded and fine artisans settled in Japan and formed part of the aristocracy, it is also known that the famous Japanese Prince Shotoku had a Korean teacher and some scholars have seen the influence of Buddhism in the constitution attributed to him. Probably the huge force that Yamato sent to support Baekje's rebels could not be explained only in terms of their foreign policies or their political aspirations in the peninsula without the existence of a long tradition of exchanges and blood ties between the royalties of both political entities. Even the emperor of Japan has publicly recognized the existence of such blood heritage in his lineage raising controversies<sup>48</sup>. To conclude even though archaeological findings have helped in a great degree to improve our understanding of Baekje and Yamato there are many unknown things about both the Kingdom of Baekje and Yamato to further define in a better way the nature of its relations. One problematic issue that has not been analyzed through this paper is the identity of the Wa quoted in various historical accounts. To what extent the Wa represented an organized political entity remains obscure as the terms has been used to describe a variety of people from inhabitants of the Kyushu to pirates of Japanese origin.

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