

A Study on the Comparison on the Korean and the Mongolian Petroglyphs

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I. Preface

Petroglyphs, including the incantation and pray of prehistory and ancient people, are distributed all over the world including Europe, Siberia, Mongolia and China etc. The Korean Peninsula also is included in this distribution scope. In this paper, various carving paintings, discovered at the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, are compared each other to grasp their meaning, and also compared to those of Mongolia. Furthermore, the meaning of those petroglyphs was studied to understand the atmosphere of the societies when they were made.

* Petroglyphs are classified into carvings (graving) and paintings according to their expression techniques, but, in this paper, they are all called as petroglyphs for convenience. All rock arts in this paper are carved ones.

II. The features of Petroglyphs

1. Geographical features

1) Korea

About 20 remains have been discovered at the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. Most of them were carved at the vertical rock surfaces near rivers. At the same time, most remains are located at isolated mountain peaks remote from the mass of mountains. That is, petroglyphs are closely related to water (river or stream) and isolated peaks. When sightseeing from the locations of petroglyphs, normally seen is a river or stream rather than a wide plain. Considering the geographical conditions of the times when those petroglyphs were carved, those sites were not easy for people to approach. It means that the sites of those petroglyphs were selected among locations where people couldn't approach easily.

From the fact that the locations of those remains are covert and the front space of those petroglyphs are very narrow, carving activities must have been done for a few specific persons

rather than for the mass of people. At the same time, from the fact that those sites are located on isolated peaks, those sites might be special areas where ordinary people seldom approach.

2) Mongolia

The most of Mongolian petroglyphs are distributed in the Altai Mountains, the western part of the country. Though there are remains in the middle and the northern parts of the country, their petroglyphs are not carvings but paintings, different from those of the Altai areas.

Considering the remains of IkhDörölj and Paaluu at Övörkhongai Aimag Gochin-us Sum, the locational features of those petroglyphs are as follows.

- ① There are small valleys or the evidences of streams around remains.
- ② Most of them are located at the southeast areas of isolated hill areas in the edges of wide plains.
- ③ They are located at corners, uphill paths, with many passers-by, and the locations of tombs also.
- ④ In many cases, there are cattle pens near petroglyphs, because those sites are with plenty sunlight, and protected from winds.
- ⑤ There are tombs, made at the same time of petroglyphs. The reason is unclear whether it is easy for them to obtain rocks for tombs or whether there are some kinds of special meanings at those sites.

The geographical features such as near water, good sunlights and corners mean that those locations were not completely isolated from ordinary people.

2. The Composition of Petroglyphs

1) Korea

There are largely three groups according to the expressional methods and content of carvings.

- ① Realistic expression: Those are discovered at Bangu-dae. Their features are such as realistic and vivid expression of animals, full size figures or hunting shapes of people, their figures of hunting whales, and the expression of sexual organs in human figures, etc. In particular, hunting shapes of people with bows or a vivid expression of animals, are frequently shown in petroglyphs found at the grasslands of the northern China, Mongolia and Siberia, showing the living styles of hunting communities. The features of fishing communities can be seen from pictures describing hunting whales or of sea animals such as whales, turtles and fur seals. At Ban-gu dae, figures expanding their arms and legs are notable. Those figures are similar to shamans shown at the petroglyphs of Mongolia grasslands.
- ② Geometrical design: Those are composed of various geometrical designs such as consecutive diamond shapes etc. And discovered only at Chonzon-ri, Ulsan. They seem related to good harvests including richness or strong forces for life etc.
- ③ Human faces or the images of deities: Those are shown at remains discovered from Yangjun-dong (Goryoung), Anhwa-ri (Goryoung), Chilpo-ri (Youngil), Daekok-ri (Namwon), Bosung-ri (Youngcheon), Sekjang-dong (Gyoungjoo), Sangsin-ri (Gyoungjoo) and Kahung-dong (Youngjoo). They are composed of the images of deities, a

concentric circle, and cup-mark, expressed diagrammatically. The details of images of deities are different to remain by remain.

2) Mongolia

Most of them are humans and animals, and some are tools for living and symbols. Expressions are mostly realistic, but, in some cases, horns or sexual organs are exaggeratedly expressed. They can be classified into several groups, if considering each rock surface as one independent unit.

- ① When only humans are carved: Their social positions can be distinguished from their shapes. Shooting an arrow (hunters or warriors, battle scenes), stock raising (?), sex, family and shaman.
- ② Humans and animals: hunting figures, riding a carriage etc.
- ③ Carved animals only: the kinds of animals can be distinguished from their shapes. Single or group, sex scenes or hunting a fierce animal
- ④ Others: symbols and characters etc.

III. Social structures shown from petroglyphs

The human figures of the Bronze Age or farming societies are expressed in abstract and diagrammatical shapes, composed of the most basic features. But, in contrast, the clay dolls or human figures of the Neolithic Age are realistic. The realistic expressions shown at the clay dolls of the Neolithic Age seems to have roots equal to the petroglyphs of Ban-gu dae remains.

The carvings of the Northern China or Altai

areas, in and around Inner Mongolia, are mostly describing the figure of hunting animals, reflecting the shapes of hunting communities. On the contrary, paintings discovered at the Guangxi Province or the Winnan Province show farmers' settlements, wars, stock raising, dancing and religious services etc. Carvings in northern grasslands are similar to those found at Ban-gu dae, Ulsan, Korea. Those of Ban-gu dae also focused on fishing and hunting such as hunting sea or land animals, reflecting the social structure of the communities who made those petroglyphs.

The appearances of human faces in China are similar to those found in Korea. Furthermore, the clay dolls of humans excavated from Seo-po hang remains or Lidovka remains are similar to the images of deities excavated from Chilpo-ri. Therefore, various images of deities shown at several remains such as Yangjun-dong (Goryoung) etc. seem diagrammatized and abstract human figures.

The clothes of Siberia shamans show the appearance of shamans, lived in those times, when being possessed by a spirit, and they themselves can be regarded as human bodies. Shaman' clothes are one of the most important shaman tool, and related to the images of deities on petroglyphs because it has the meaning of a suit of an armor or a shield protected from evil spirit.

Finally, the images of deities of farming societies are extremely diagrammatized human figures, and clearly distinguished from the realistic expressions of hunting and collecting communities. The direction from realistic expression to abstractive and diagrammatized one is confirmed from archeological data such as clay dolls etc.

When considering the times of remains such as

Table 1. The comparison of clay dolls and petroglyphs

Division	Ban-gu dae - the Neolithic Age	The Bronze Age - Yangjun-dong etc.
Clay dolls	Realistic body, detailed body description, distinguishable sexes	Omitted concrete expressions. Diagrammatic, undistinguishable arms or legs, and standing or seating
Facial expression	Concrete expressions (eyes, mouth, eyebrows and hairs etc). The mask of Ban-gu dae.	Describing eyes or mouth as a hole or nothing
Petroglyphs	Focusing on hunting animals, full of life, realistic expression. Fishing and Hunting.	Nearly abstract expression. Diagrammatic and geometric. Concentric circle, cup-mark
Features	Hunting or fishing communities-describing hunting targets	Farming communities-describing worship targets

clay dolls, the equality as in 'realistic expression = the features of hunting and collecting societies; abstract and diagrammatized = farming societies' can be made. The content above is summarized in the table below.

IV. The Meaning of Producing Petroglyphs

In hunting societies, direct hunting targets were carved, and incantational and praying ceremonies using them were normal ones. There was no meaning other than the practical purpose of obtaining foods, because pictures were achieving hopes as well as the reappearance of targets, target itself and the expression of hopes. Carvings in grasslands such as Siberia and Mongolia etc. are included in this category. Regardless of the Neolithic Age or the Bronze Age, they reflected the structural features of the societies when they were made.

However, in the Korean peninsula, living styles were greatly changed due to the introduction of farming and settled living forms. Humans inevitably depended upon the absolute power, as they recognized supernatural existences and the principle of the nature. Therefore, they needed

stronger, concrete and comprehensive gods which they could shares and worship in their total community form, rather than a primitive belief that there is a spirit in a natural object, or personal incantations and prays.

Several researchers agree that the meaning of an image of a diety is the target of worship and a divine existence. Most of human faces excavated at various remains in China are understood as having divinity and the meaning of a concentric circle or cup-mark. The image of a diety was in a humane shape, but expressed a divine existence, the God. Short feathers around the image of a diety are shown at various human faces found in the Northeast Asia, and understood as the expression of light, meaning the dignity of the God. The viewpoint of considering those images of a diety as the expression of the face of the God or masks also is understood in the same way. Because, masks express mythological humans (ancestors, mythological animals and the God), and the clothes of shamans also did the role of a mask, and those two roles were interchangeable. The clothes of a shaman changed a shaman into a supernatural existence. It is very appropriate that the clothes of shamans were from masks, and clothes themselves were masks.