

A Deciphering of Two Silla Poetry Fragments Inscribed on Wooden Tablets*

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Identification and decipherment of the writings on Gyeongju Anapji Pond Wooden Tablet no. 20 and Gyeongju National Museum Wooden Tablet no. 1 reveal that these tablets contain fragments of Silla poetry. Thus, there is a need to designate tablets containing poetry as a distinct category of poetry *mokgan* 木簡 (wooden tablet).

Gyeongju Anapji Pond Wooden Tablet no. 20 contains a poem expressing the emotional agony of a general who successfully suppressed a revolt. This poetry fragment is typified by its rhythm (syllable count) consisting of the transposition of six-character lines and five-character lines, along with mixed Chinese and Korean word order, and can thus be categorized as an irregular form of *hansi* (classical Chinese poetry). Therefore, there is a need to designate a phase of irregular verse as a distinct stage in the developmental process of *hansi* in Korea that occurred prior to the advent of regular form *hansi*.

The identification of the writings on Gyeongju National Museum Wooden Tablet no. 1 reveals the prevalence of many graphs often used in Sino-graphic orthography including *hyangchal*, *idu*, and *gugyeol*. Since most of the graphs on this tablet are also used in *hyangchal*, it is hypothesized that the text on this wooden tablet is written in *hyangchal*. Based on this hypothesis, line segmentation of the text on this tablet is compared to that of *hyangga*. Results show that both the structure and content of the poem resemble Silla *hyangga*. Thus, it is concluded that this tablet contains lines 8-9-10 of a ten-line Silla *hyangga*. In the poem, the speaker is applauding the king who is gathering and distributing wealth under a standardized system.

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