

Koguryō instruments in Tomb No. 1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan, Manchuria

SONG BANG-SONG

This paper investigates paintings of musical instruments contained in a fifth century Koguryō tomb at Ch'ang ch'uan. A report on the tomb prepared by Chinese local government officials is critically examined and more extensive examination of the evidence is undertaken in the light of Chinese and Korean literary sources and of recent archeological evidence from other Koguryō tomb excavations.

1 Introduction

In August 1970, the Chinese government repaired an ancient Koguryō tomb near the mid-Yalu riverside at Ch'ang-ch'uan, Chi-an Prefecture of Chi-lin Province, Manchuria. A general report on this ancient tomb, called Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan, was published in 1982 in a Chinese archeological journal, *Tung-pei k'ao-ku yü li-shih* (Chi-an-hsien wen-wu pao-kuan-so 1982),¹ by government officials of Chi-an Prefecture. Tomb No.1 is located about 20 kilometers northeast of Chi-an Town, Chi-lin Province. According to the general report, it is believed to have been constructed by Koguryō people around the late fifth century.²

The murals of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan contain ten examples of musical instruments, including new instruments previously undiscovered in Koguryō tomb excavations. Of the ten instruments, all of which are depicted in the front room of the tomb, seven appear in the ceiling paintings and three in wall paintings. The general report on Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan gives only simple descriptions and commentaries on the musical instruments, but even these contain probable errors. This paper is an attempt to correct those mistakes and to provide a more extensive examination of the evidence in the light of recent archeological evidence from other Koguryō tomb excavations.

2 A general description of musical instruments in Tomb No.1

The general report identifies only eight of the ten instruments depicted in the murals of the front room, as follows: six instruments on the east, south and north sides of the ceiling painting; two instruments in the wall painting on the

- ¹ The romanization is based upon the Wade-Giles system for Chinese, the McCune-Reischauer system for Korea, and the Hepburn system for Japanese. Korean, Chinese and Japanese names are spelled in their indigenous fashion, namely, with the family name first.
- ² The Japanese scholar, Nishitani Tadashi, estimates the date for the construction of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan as around the early fifth century (*Kyōngnyang sinmun* (Seoul) 24 April, 1984).

north side (Chi-an-hsien wen-wu pao-kuan-so 1982: 163-68). The deva musicians on the east side of the ceiling are shown in figure 1 (upper panel): there are three distinguishable figures, all of which are apparently playing instruments. The general report considers these instruments to be a transverse flute (*heng-ti*), a round-bodied lute (*yüan-hsien*), and a zither (*ch'in*). As shown in figure 2 (upper panel), there are three deva musicians playing musical instruments on the north side of the ceiling. According to the general report, the three instruments are identified as a long horn (*ch'ang-chio*), a round-bodied long-necked lute (*yüan-hsien*), and a long vertical flute (*shu-ti*).

The general report describes the wall paintings on the north and south sides of the front room, which depict the folk customs of Koguryō. Although the painting on the south side has not been well preserved and is mostly erased, that on the north side is relatively clear (see figure 5; figure 4 is a detail from this painting). In the latter painting there are, according to the general report, two interesting instruments: one is evidently a zither (*ch'in*) played by a female musician to accompany a dance (figure 5), and the other, a five-stringed zither (*wu-hsien-ch'in*) carried by a female servant following a noble lady (figures 4 and 5).

The simple descriptions and commentaries in the report contain several mistakes. First, the south side of the ceiling (figure 3) appears to show a deva musician playing a vertical wind instrument. The general report, however, considers the flying deva musician not to be playing a vertical wind instrument, but to be holding a cylindrical stick (1982: 168). In view of the performing position of deva musicians on the east and north sides of the ceiling, however, it is unquestionable that the deva musician on the south side is playing a vertical wind instrument, which seems to be a double-reed pipe (*p'iryul* or *p'iri*) like that recorded in Chinese historical records of Koguryō.³

A second mistake in the general report concerns the round-bodied long-necked lute (*yüan-hsien*) identified on the east side of the ceiling (figure 1). The painting on the north side of the ceiling (figure 2) clearly depicts a deva musician playing a round-bodied lute (*yüan-hsien*) with four pegs. The lute in the east side of the ceiling painting is unlikely to be a *yüan-hsien* but another type of lute. Secondly, paintings at contemporary sites such as that at Tung kou (see p.10) show that *yüan-hsien* would consist of four strings with four pegs (figure 11). The lute in figure 1, however, has five pegs. It is therefore reasonable to presume that this is not a *yüan-hsien* but the five-stringed lute known as *ohyōn* (*wu-hsien* in Chinese) or *ohyōn-pip'a* (*wu-hsien-p'i-p'a*).

Thirdly, the general report describes the zither depicted on the east side of the ceiling painting (figure 1) as a *ch'in*. It is more likely, however, that the zither is a prototype of the four-stringed zither known as *kōmun'go* in Korean or *hyōn'gūm* in Sino-Korean. The zither depicted in figure 1 appears to be identical with the four-stringed zither (figure 6) in the mural of the Tomb of the Dancers (*Muyongch'ong*). This view will be supported below by literary evidence.

Fourthly, the general report describes the zither played by a female musician (figure 5) depicted on the northern wall as a *ch'in*. This zither may also, however, be explained as a prototype of the *kōmun'go*, since the performing position is similar to the traditional performing position of present

³ *Pei-shih*, *chüan* 94.8a6 (hereafter *Pei-shih*, 94.8a6); and *Sui-shu*, 81.2a10. In this paper, the Kan-lung edition (1739) of *Erh-shih-wu-shih* (Taipei: Yee Wen Publishing Co., 1956, 50 volumes) is referred to.

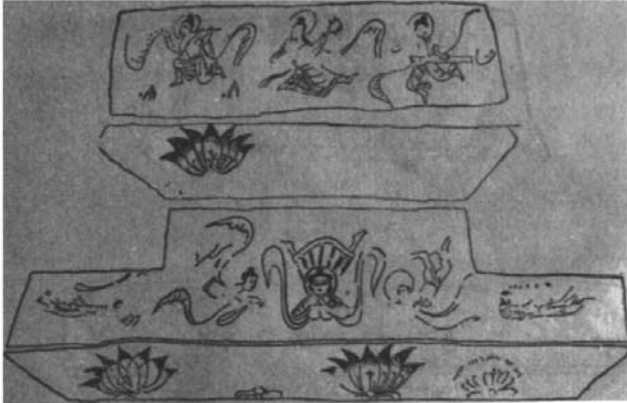


Figure 1: Transverse flute (*Hoengjök*), five-stringed lute (*Ohyön-pip'a*), and zither (*Kömun'go*) on the east side of the ceiling painting

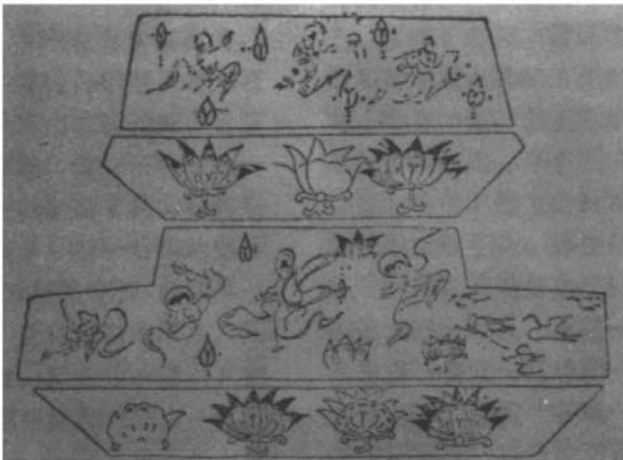


Figure 2: Long horn (*Taegak*), round-bodied lute (*Wanham* or *Yüan-hsien*), and long vertical flute (*Changso*) on the north side of the ceiling painting

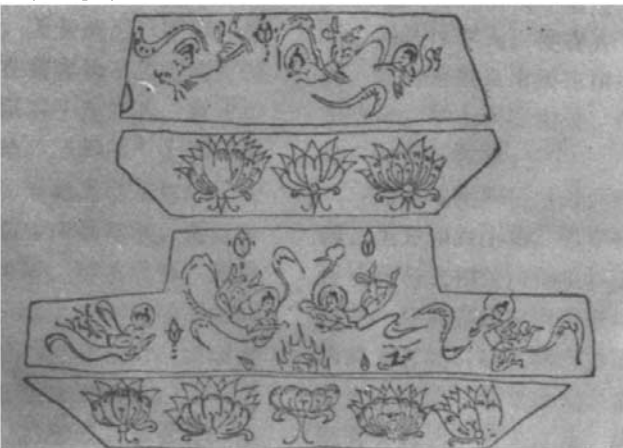


Figure 3: Double-reed pipe (*P'iri* or *P'iryul*) on the south side of the ceiling painting

kōmun'go player.⁴

Finally, the wall-painting of folk customs on the north side (figure 5) clearly depicts a large drum carried by two persons which has not been mentioned in the general report. It is in the top centre of the painting. According to Chinese literary sources,⁵ this kind of suspended drum found in Koguryō music was called *tango*, literally meaning 'bearing drum'. In summary, a careful examination of the paintings leads us to conclude that not eight but ten musical instruments can be recognised from the murals of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan. These are summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Ten musical instruments of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan

| Front Room of Tomb No. 1 | Musical Instruments | Chinese Report | Author's Examination | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|--|--|
| Ceiling Painting | East side | transverse flute five-stringed lute zither | <i>heng-ti</i> <i>yüan-hsien</i> <i>ch'in</i> | <i>hoengjök</i> or <i>hoengch'wi</i> <i>ohyön-pip'a</i> or <i>ohyön</i> <i>kōmun'go</i> or <i>hyön'gūm</i> |
| | North side | long horn round-bodied lute long vertical flute | <i>ch'ang-chio</i> <i>yüan-hsien</i> <i>shu-ti</i> | <i>taegak</i> <i>wanham</i> <i>changso</i> |
| | South side | double-reed pipe | - | <i>p'iryul</i> or <i>p'iri</i> |
| Wall Painting | North side | five-stringed zither | <i>wu-hsien-ch'in</i> | <i>ohyön'gūm</i> or <i>ohyönakki</i> |
| | | zither | <i>ch'in</i> | <i>kōmun'go</i> or <i>hyön'gūm</i> |
| | | large suspended drum | - | <i>tango</i> |

3 An historical examination of the musical instruments in Tomb No.1

It was King Kwanggaet'o (r. 391-413) who vigorously pursued the task of adding new domains to Koguryō by conquest. The great military campaigns of this king are recorded in detail on the huge stone stele which still stands at his tomb in Kungnaesōng, then the capital of Koguryō. Kwanggaet'o was succeeded by King Changsu (r. 413-491), who continued his father's enterprises and brought Koguryō to its height. In 427 he transferred the Koguryō capital to P'yōngyang, creating a new epicenter for the nation. With its greatly expanded frontiers, Koguryō adopted a policy of friendly relations with the more distant Chinese states and military confrontation with those closest to its borders. Thus the bitter struggle with the nearby Northern Dynasties of China

⁴ For the traditional performing position of present *kōmun'go* players, see Chang 1969: pl.69; Pratt 1987: 71.

⁵ *Sui-shu*, 15.33b6; *Chiu-T'ang-shu*, 29.11a4; and *T'ang-shu*, 21.12b2.

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Figure 4: Five-stringed zither (*Ohyon'gum* or *Ohyonakki*) in the northern wall painting



Figure 5: Five-stringed zither (*Ohyon'gum* or *Ohyonakki*), zither (*Kömun'go*), and suspended drum (*tamgo*) in the folk customs of Koguryö, northern wall painting

continued, while Koguryō at the same time sought diplomatic contact across the sea with China's Southern Dynasties. Koguryō also formed ties with the nomadic peoples on China's northern frontier as a further means of holding China at bay (Lee Ki-baik 1984: 38-39).

Already in 372 Koguryō had established a National Confucian Academy (*T'aehak*) at which Confucianism was taught. The widely used date for the initial acceptance of Buddhism is the year 372, when the monk Sundo came to Koguryō from the Earlier Ch'in (then in control of northeastern China) and transmitted images of the Buddha and Buddhist sutras. In all Three Korean Kingdoms, the principal initiative for the acceptance of Buddhism came from the royal houses. The best known paintings of the Three Kingdoms period are, of course, the murals of the old tombs of Koguryō. The Koguryō tombs are customarily named after the theme of the paintings that adorn their walls: for example, the Tomb of the Dancers (*Muyongch'ong*), the Tomb of the Four Spirits (*Sasinch'ong*), and the like. Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan is a tomb in the area of Kungnaesōng, then the capital of Koguryō, on the Manchurian side of the mid-Yalu River.

From the historical point of view, the ten musical instruments in the ceiling- and wall-paintings of Tomb No.1 can be divided into two groups: one comprises Koguryō instruments from before the fifth century; the other, new Koguryō instruments from the fifth century. The pre-fifth century instruments are: the zither (*hyōn'gūm* or *kōmun'go*) on the east side of the ceiling-painting; the long horn (*taegak*), round-bodied lute (*wanham* or *yūan-hsien*) and vertical flute (*changso*) on the north side of the ceiling painting; the zither and suspended drum (*tamgo*) on the northern wall-painting. New Koguryō instruments from the fifth century are: the transverse flute (*hoengjōk* or *hoengch'wi*) and five-stringed lute (*ohyōn* or *ohyōn-pip'a*) on the east side of the ceiling painting; the double-reed pipe (*p'iri* or *p'iryul*) on the south side of the ceiling painting; the five-stringed zither (*ohyōn'gūm* or *ohyōnakkki*) on the northern wall painting.

Koguryō instruments from before the fifth century

Of the Koguryō instruments from before the fifth century, the zither (*kōmun'go*) and long horn (*taegak*) are considered by Korean musicologists to have originated in Koguryō; these instruments are recorded in Korean and Chinese literary sources.⁶ The wall paintings of musicians in such Koguryō tomb excavations as Tomb No.3 at Anak (A.D. 357), Hwanghae Province,⁷ suggest however, that one may be able to trace the origin of the other three instruments to China and Central Asia.

Let us now turn to historical evidence from literary sources and recently excavated archeological sites.

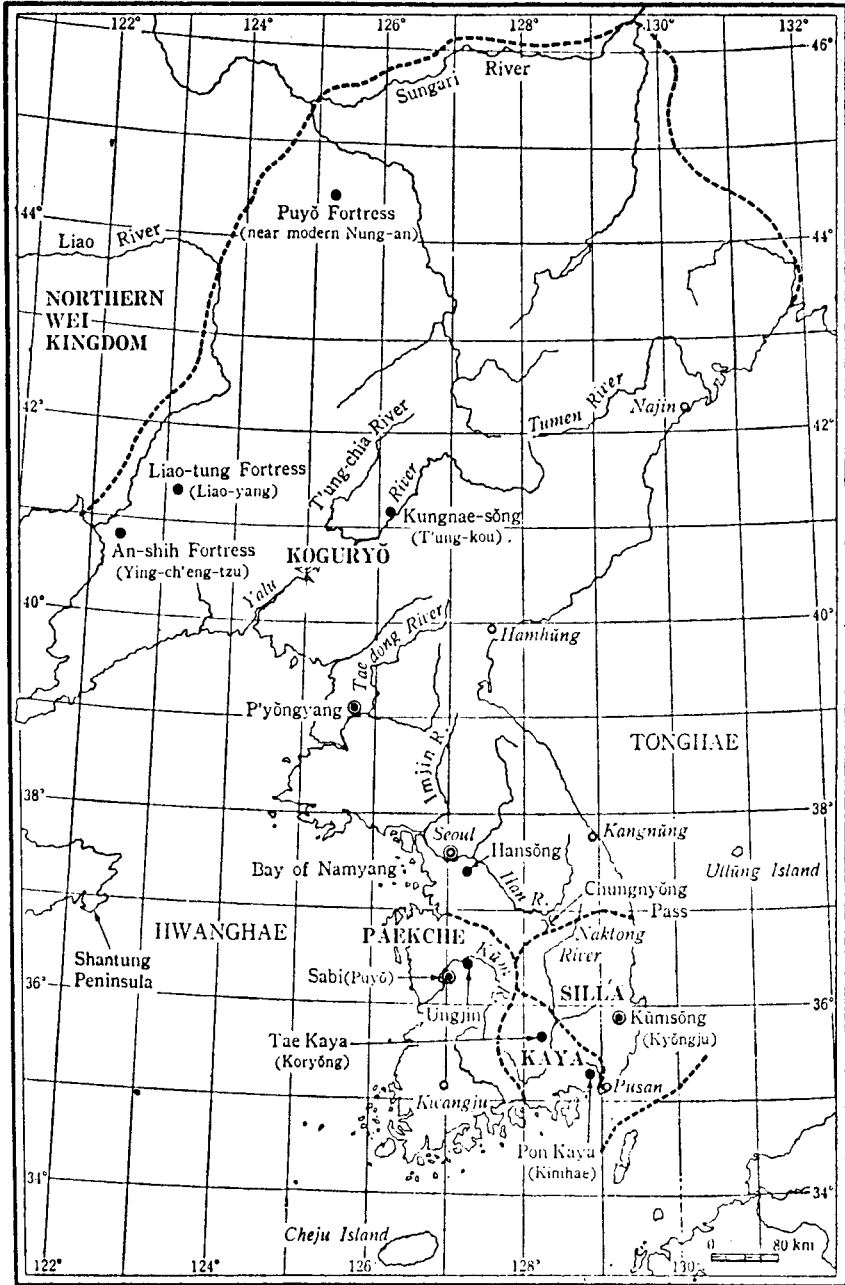
According to the Korean history, *Samguk sagi* (1145)⁸ by Kim Pu-sik

⁶ *San-kuo-chih*, 30.42b5; *Samguk sagi*, 32.6a1-7a8. This study is based upon the facsimile *Chōngdōk* edition of *Samguk sagi*, Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1973.

⁷ For an intensive study of musical instruments in the murals of Tomb No.3 at Anak, see Lee Hye-ku, 1967: 1-31, 463-83 ('Musical Paintings in a Fourth Century Korean Tomb', trans. by Robert C. Provine).

⁸ *Samguk sagi*, 32.6a8-6b4. For an English translation of its text, see Song 1980: 26-28.

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Map: Korea at the height of Koguryŏ expansion in the fifth century (Lee Ki-baik 1984: 46)

(1075-1151), and the Chinese historical record, *San-kuo-chih*⁹ by Ch'en Shou (233-279), Minister Wang San-ak invented a *kōmun'go* during the fourth century. It is said that he based this instrument on the Chinese *ch'in*, which had been officially introduced to Koguryō from the Eastern Chin State (317-419) (Song 1986: 5-15), and a zither that already existed in the ancient tribal states of Korea. It is uncertain, however, what type of zither was invented by the Minister. Whether the instrument was similar to the present *kōmun'go* or whether it was like the zithers depicted in several Koguryō tombs is a matter of speculation.

Several zithers have so far been reported in historical remains from the Koguryō Kingdom (B.C. 37-A.D. 668). These appear in the murals of the Tomb of the Dancers at T'ung-kou (figure 6), Tomb No.4 at Chi-an (figure 7), Tomb No.12 at T'ung-kou, and Tomb No.17 at Chi-an, all of which are located on the Manchurian side of the mid-Yalu River. Other instruments similar to the above-mentioned zither are represented in the wall paintings of Tomb No.3 at Anak County, Taesōngni Tomb No.1 at Kangsō County, and the Great Tomb at Kangsō County, South P'yōngan Province.¹⁰ It has been suggested that these Koguryō tombs were built between the fourth and seventh centuries.¹¹ The best examples of ancient Koguryō zithers are perhaps the four-stringed zither with more than ten frets in the mural of the Tomb of the Dancers at T'ung-kou (figure 6), or the five-stringed zither of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan (figure 4) which will be discussed later.

In the early Koguryō period, horn and drum were important wind and percussion instruments, playing an essential role not only on battle fields but also in court ceremonies. This can be confirmed from the love story of Prince Hodong of Koguryō and the princess of Nangnang State during the reign of the third King Taemusin (A.D. 18-43) of Koguryō,¹² and from the historical record concerning court ritual ceremonies during that of the first King Tongmyōng (37-20 B.C.).¹³ In addition to literary evidence, there are similar horns depicted in the murals of such early Koguryō tombs as Tomb No.3 at Anak County, Hwanghae Province; Kamsin Tomb (ca. 4th C.) at Yonggang

⁹ *San-kuo-chih*, 30.42b5. For an annotation and discussion of its text, see Song 1985: 156-58 and Song 1986: 6.

¹⁰ For bibliographical information on old Koguryō tombs, see Song 1985: 319-32. In this essay, discussion of recent archeological materials from North Korea relies on *Koguryō munhwa*, 1975. For the illustrations of the *kōmun'go* in the murals of Tomb No.12, Taesōngni Tomb, Tomb No.17, Tomb No.3, see *Koguryō munhwa* 1975: 67 (pl.5-8), 154 (pl.100-3); Lee Hye-ku 1967: 24; Umehara Sueharu 1966: pl.16-30 and Song 1985: pls.7, 22, 23.

¹¹ Different opinions about the estimated dates for the construction of old Koguryō tombs are held by Korean scholars. For instance, Tomb No.17 at Chi-an, Manchuria, is thought to have been constructed around the sixth century by Chu Yōng-hōn and Chang Sa-hun, but around the early seventh century by Kim Wōn-yong (Chu 1972: 151 (Table 29); Chang 1969: pl.17; Kim Wōn-yong 1960: 54-5). This study will be based upon the date presented by Chu Yōng-hōn, for Chu's work contains a great number of archeological reports of recent excavations in North Korea.

¹² *Samguk sagi*, 14.6a2-6b2. For the legendary story of the automatically sounding drum and horn in an English translation, see Song 1980: 14-15.

¹³ According to Yi Kyu-bo 1982: 3.7a5-7, drum and horn were essential instruments particularly for military processions (*koch'wi* in Sino-Korean, and *ku-ch'ui* in Chinese) from an early stage of the Koguryō Kingdom. *San-kuo-chih*, 30.26b1 and *Hou-Han-shu*, 85.6a7-9 state that *koch'wi* musicians were sent to Koguryō during the reign of Emperor Wu Ti (B.C. 140-87) of the Han Empire. It is uncertain, however, what kind of percussion and wind instruments might have been introduced to Koguryō from the Han period.

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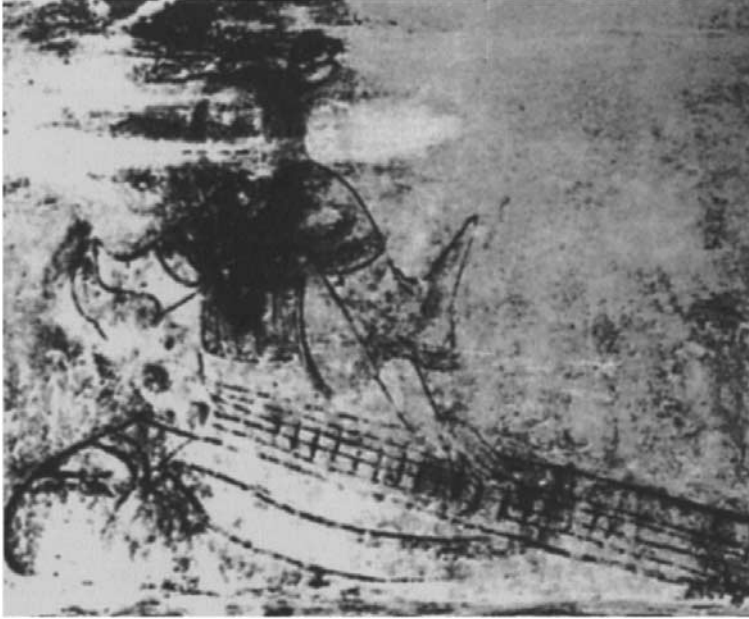


Figure 6: Four-stringed zither (*Kōmun'go*) in the mural of Tomb of the Three Dancers at T'ung-kou, Manchuria



Figure 7: Four-stringed zither (*Kōmun'go*) in the mural of Tomb No.4 at Chi'an, Chi-lin Province, Manchuria

County, South P'yŏngan Province; Tŏkhŭngni Tomb (407 A.D.) at Taean City, South P'yŏngan Province; the Tomb at P'yŏngyang Station (ca. 4th C.) (figure 10); the Tomb of the Dancers (ca. 4th-5th C.) at T'ung-kou, Manchuria; Susanni tomb (ca. 5th C.) at Kangsŏ County, South P'yŏngan Province; Yaksuri Tomb (ca. 4th-5th C.) at Kangsŏ County; and P'alch'ŏngni Tomb (ca. 5th C.) at Taedong County (figure 9), South P'yŏngan Province.¹⁴ From the available historical records and early archeological remains it may be safe to conclude that the long horn played a continuously important role in the ancient society of Koguryŏ before the fifth century.

The lute known as *yüan-hsien*,¹⁵ an example of which is preserved at the Shōsōin, Nara, Japan, has a distinctive round body and slender neck with four pegs and strings (see figure 12). The Chinese *yüan-hsien* seems to have been very popular in the musical life of Koguryŏ society before the introduction of the *p'ip'a* from Central Asia around the fifth century,¹⁶ since the *yüan-hsien* of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan closely resembles the other *yüan-hsien* painted in Tomb No.3 at Anak County (figure 8); Tŏkhŭngni Tomb (407 A.D.) at Taean City; P'alch'ŏngni Tomb (ca. 5th C.) at Taedong County, South P'yŏngan Province (figure 9); and the 'Three Chambers' Tomb (ca. 5th-6th C.) at T'ung-kou (figure 11), Manchuria.¹⁷

The long vertical flute (*changso*) of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan is very similar to that of Tomb No.3 at Anak County (figure 8). The vertical flute is likely to have been an important wind-instrument in the Han period and in the period of the Northern Dynasties of China.¹⁸ The long vertical flute may also have played a significant role in the musical life of Koguryŏ society before the fifth century, before being gradually replaced by the transverse flute. This may be the reason why the vertical flute (*hsiao* in Chinese and *so* in Sino-Korean) was recorded as one of the Koguryŏ instruments in early Chinese historical documents,¹⁹ but was not recorded in later Korean historical records.

The suspended drum (*tamgo*) was one of the most important percussion instruments in the processional music known as *koch'wi* in Sino-Korean or *ku-ch'ui* in Chinese (see above, p.8, n.13). The *tamgo* painting of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan is quite similar to that of Tŏkhŭngni Tomb (407 A.D.) at Taean City (figure 13), South P'yŏngan Province, in which a large drum is suspended

¹⁴ For the illustrations of long horns depicted in the murals of Koguryŏ tombs, see *Koguryŏ munhwa* 1975: 156 (pl.101-2), 160 (pls.104-1,2,3); Kim Ki-ung 1982: 86; Ikeuchi 1940: pl.28-1; Chang 1969: pl.14; Song 1985: pls.7,8,11,16, 19; Pratt 1987: pls.73 and 108.

¹⁵ The *yüan-hsien* (*wanham* in Sino-Korean) was also called *ch'in-p'ip'a* or *ch'in-han-tzu* in olden times in China. Because the instrument was frequently played by Yüan Hsien, one of Seven Convivial Worthies of the Bamboo Grove (*Chu-lin ch'i-hsien*) during the Chin (265-419) period, it was later known as *yüan-hsien* (Tu Yu 1959: *chüan* 144, *szu* 5; Hayashi Kenzō 1973: 319).

¹⁶ Before the discovery of the murals of Tomb No.1 at Ch'ang-ch'uan, it was believed that the *p'ipa* might have been introduced to Koguryŏ around the sixth century. For an essay on the Korean *p'ipa*, see Song 1973.

¹⁷ See *Koguryŏ munhwa* 1975: 168 (pl.108-1); Ikeuchi 1940: pl.60-1; Lee Hye-ku 1967: 24; Chang 1969: pl.13; Kim Ki-ung 1982: 260; Song 1985: pls.7,9,15; Song 1984a: pls.2 and 6.

¹⁸ For bibliographical information, see Lee Hye-ku 1967: 480. For illustrations of a long vertical flute, Yi Hang-sŏng 1962: 100; Song 1985: pl.41.

¹⁹ The *hsiao* (*so* in Sino-Korean) is recorded as one of the Koguryŏ instruments in such Chinese histories as *Pei-shih*, 94.8a6; *Sui-shu*, 15.33b5, and 81.2a10; *T'ang-shu*, 21.12b1; and *Chiu-T'ang-shu*, 29.11a3. Although it is unclear whether the *hsiao* or *so* is a kind of panpipe or a kind of vertical flute, according to archeological evidence and other literary sources it is likely to have been a kind of vertical flute. For details, see Song 1985: 16-8.