

Rediscovery of Ancient Korean Philosophy-Focusing on Star Hole Dolmens, Bronze Mirrors, and Star Charts Carved in Tomb Murals

Prof. Dr. Yun, Byeong-Yeol

Univ. Hongik in Seoul Korea

ABSTRACT: The attitude to drag down what happened in prehistoric times from the horizon of philosophy simply because it was not written in letters, or it is related to the "uncivilized" prehistoric times, exposes both ignorance and arrogance at the same time. In the light of H. Rombach's statement that "People have never been 'savage,'" we cannot read the philosophy and spiritual worlds of prehistoric people, but rather make a great mistake of the hasty conclusion that they were 'savage.' However, we have groundbreaking clues that enable us to approach the ancient philosophy of Korea, that is to say, we have prehistoric relics that can be read clearly. They include the star hole astronomical charts carved in the dolmens, the four guardian deities (四神圖) engraved on bronze mirrors, and the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations(四宿圖), in Goguryeo ancient tomb murals. When looked into carefully, they present messages as good as text messages. They are "talking stones" that reveal what they are, and "mirrors" and pictures that reflect their identity. It is well known that prehistoric people were very interested in the celestial world, and gave special meanings to various constellations, and developed a calendar earlier on. Through the star charts, especially the drawings of the four constellations, they revealed thoughts about worshipping heaven, immortality, and the philosophy of returning home, and gave birth to a system of philosophy to care for and protect the whole world.

KEYWORDS: Korean ancient philosophy; star hole dolmen; paintings of the four guardian deities (四神圖); drawings of the four constellations (四宿圖); ancient tomb mural; philosophy of care

1. Introduction (Travel to Ancient Korean Philosophy)

When people travel anywhere on the Korean Peninsula, they will unexpectedly encounter several dolmens or dolmen groups. In such cases, people will generally overlook them unconcernedly, considering them unnamed old tombs or stone tombs. Even if they look at them more closely, they may think that the dolmens just exist on the ground quietly and take no regard of them.

However, their attitude may change if they learn the fact that not only are those dolmens remains from prehistoric ages (from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age), but also more than half of the dolmens in the world are on the Korean Peninsula and in the former Gojoseon region, and that the star holes carved in the cover stones of the dolmens are star charts or astronomical charts with special meanings. The dolmens in Gochang and Hwasun, as well as those in Ganghwa, were registered as World Heritage Sites and are attracting great attention from academia around the world, but quite pitifully, we are passing by them, thinking that they are just stone tombs scattered in the hills.

However, given that dolmens or menhirs are cultural relics that reveal something spiritual from prehistoric ages, evidence that unfolds the solar megalithic culture of early human civilizations, and something marked with the noble and profound "stamp of spirit" (H. Rombach, 1977), or that the star charts on the star hole dolmens are "the truth of being" that reveal what they are (A-letheia, Heidegger), we must change our attitude to remove ignorance and the "oblivion of the being" of dolmens.

The star charts carved in the cover stones of the dolmens, the paintings of the four guardian deities (blue dragon, white tiger, black tortoise, and red phoenix) on bronze mirrors, and the four constellations (sun, moon, Big Dipper, and South Dipper) on ancient tomb murals are relics that have been passed down vividly to us. From them, we can prepare not only historical and cultural data, but also clues that will enable us to read noble spiritual archetypes. When these prehistoric and post-prehistoric relics become informative, a tremendous flash of light will be emitted, and a new field of ancient Korean philosophy will be opened.

More than 50,000 dolmens and menhirs on the Korean Peninsula, that is, those that are scattered across the entire peninsula such as Ganghwa Island, Gochang, Hwasun, Andong, Pyongyang, and Hwanghae-do, as well as Manchuria and Northeast China, which were the territory of Gojoseon, are handed down as the relics of the Korean prehistoric age, like the Stonehenge in the Salisbury Plain in England, which appears as if it is a pronoun of the megalithic culture, the dolmens in Ardara in Ireland, in Scotland, and in Bretagne, the stone rows in Carnac in France, the megalithic shrines in Malta in the Mediterranean, the dolmens in Java and Nias Islands in Indonesia, and in Marayoor in India, and the Moais staring in a certain direction on Easter Island in

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Chile, etc. are sometimes mysterious and sometimes become a source of inspiration. Furthermore, it can be inferred that such structures contained apparent expressions of intentions, purposes, and intents, but regrettably, it is very difficult to read from them a clear philosophy that fits the level required by the concept of philosophy today. Since philosophy is just speculated, guessed, and imagined, it is difficult to read a clear philosophical message.¹

Of course, although no clear philosophical messages can be read from all these menhirs, dolmens, and stone rows, the meaning of their existence is not weakened because they can still be sources of inspiration, mysterious beings that keep the secrets of eternity, objects of awe, or beings that keep with sanctity. In his book 『In Search of Stones: A Pilgrimage of Faith, Reason and Discovery』, M. Scott Peck (1996) brilliantly reveals the meaning of the existence of dolmens and menhirs, which keep sanctity, although uncertain. He experienced the incarnation of God while searching for megaliths that keep sanctity, and diagnoses that the megaliths keep at least a great art soul.²

However, unlike all these prehistoric relics, in which only traces are left, we have prehistoric relics that can be read clearly, so that we can read the spiritual and philosophical messages at that time! They are not only the paintings of the four guardian deities and four constellations on the ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo, but also the star holes for the sun, moon, Big Dipper, and South Dipper carved in dolmens or rocks, and the paintings of the four guardian deities engraved on bronze mirrors from the Bronze Age. The star charts left by them went far beyond the level of traces and have been established as talking stones and mirrors.

The inherited relics enable us to witness clear philosophical messages—which can be read without any difficulty and can be sympathized by anybody — as if they are “talking stones.” Furthermore, these philosophical messages are never insignificant, but are literally such traces that are “marked with a stamp of a great spirit” (Rombach, 1977) and are evidential materials of deep philosophy. The star hole dolmens as “talking stones” that tell us what they are through the star charts, the bronze mirrors with the paintings of the four guardian deities, and the ancient tomb murals with the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations are the “Truth of Being” (die Wahrheit des Seins: Heidegger) that tell what they are without the need to draw any unnecessary theories.

The fact that the star holes carved in the cover stones of prehistoric dolmens are in the form of constellations, without the need to draw a lot of theoretical grounds, shows what they are, like the truth of unconcealment of Heidegger, because they are in the form of constellations connected by lines, and these constellations are in the same structure as that of the astronomical charts shown in the ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo. The constellations engraved and drawn are not any opaque traces, but are **intellectual records** left by prehistoric people.

Reading ancient philosophy from dolmens, bronze mirrors, and tomb murals may sound a bit strange. What philosophy is in the prehistoric megalithic culture and the Bronze Age culture? For so long, we have seen prehistoric people only as less-evolved humans who lived in the coarse Stone Age and only knew how to use stones as tools. However, they used stones and bronze not only as coarse tools, but also as a means of expressive humanities, in an era when there were no letters (!), to reveal highly spiritual things through cave paintings, bronze mirrors, and astronomical charts on star hole dolmens.

Although Goguryeo's ancient tomb murals and prehistoric dolmens were registered as World Heritage Sites,³ and great cultural meanings can be found there, it is only very difficult to find the philosophical meanings that presuppose the high degree of

¹ Scott Peck introduces two scholars who tried to unravel the mystery of the megaliths, and the ending at which the scholars were frustrated and lamented because they failed to unravel the mystery (Scott Peck, Translated by Kim Hoon, 『In Search of Megaliths, and My Soul』, Koreawon Media 1996, p. 395).

² See Scott Peck (Translated by Kim Hoon), 『In Search of Megaliths, and My Soul』, Koreawon Media 1996, Chapters 4, 6, 11, and 18. Scott Peck recalls that he felt “the manifestation of God” as he stared at a dolmen overlooking the sea while standing in the middle of a farm field in Longhouse, on the west coast of Wales (see above book, pp. 50-51, 56-57).

³ The Korean peninsula alone has about two-thirds of the world's dolmens to the extent that it can be said to be a literally a kingdom of dolmens, and the number of dolmens reported to the academia reaches nearly 50,000 (see Chang-Beom Park, 『Astronomy』, Ewha Womans University Press 2009, p. 19). If the dolmens distributed in the old territory of Gojoseon, including the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, and Liaodong, and in the Shandong region of China, where the Dongyi people lived, are combined, a tremendous dolmen civilization will be formed. Among the dolmens, those in Ganghwa-Gochang-Hwasun were registered as World Heritage Site in 2000. Ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo were also registered as World Heritage Sites in 2004.

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scientific characteristics of today. We can never ignore the warning, “One must be silent about what he/she cannot say.”⁴ (last sentence) of Wittgenstein's 『*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*』. We cannot insist that ridiculous personal opinions, preposterous arguments, or mythical and literary imaginations about the silent prehistoric sites, are literally philosophy. On the contrary, however, if we are silent about what we can say, and even what we have to say, it is unforgivable neglect and ignorance.

By the way, Wittgenstein's phrase “what you cannot say” generally means something that cannot be logically valid or verified, something far from reality, that is, something metaphysical in his words. However, if things that truly cannot be said should be referred to, those that cannot be captured as a concept and cannot be represented in language, for example, Heidegger's “being”, Wittgenstein's “the mystical (das Mystische)”⁵ and furthermore, “Tao (道)” of Taoism, are literally “what you cannot say.”

But what is surprising is that there are philosophical horizons to which Wittgenstein's yellow card is not applicable at all. They are those situations and events that obviously occur before the yellow card is applied. They are those for which even Wittgenstein's propositions cannot but presuppose, for instance, things that exist and that give meanings to such things that exist. Are there any areas where Wittgenstein's yellow card is not applicable? Of course!

For instance, the naked fact that some beings exist and the fact that we give these or those or unique meanings to some beings (for example, countless many beings such as certain constellations, mountains, rivers, milky way, lighthouses, gold, silver, rocks, etc.) leave no room for the application of the Wittgenstein's yellow card, not only because they are natural and inevitable, but also because they are situations that occurred before they are judged to be true or not or logically verified. We cannot but verify whether things are suitable only after giving them these or those meanings.

What is even more surprising is that although the act of giving these or those meanings (sinngaben, sinnverleihen) and accepting the meanings given is not objective, but is subjective, as Kant stated in his book 『*Critique of Judgment (Kritik der Urteilskraft)*』, such an act is based on ‘sensus communis’ and has a basis for acquiring universality.⁶ Those that were given some special meanings (for example, the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations) were never entirely arbitrarily or discretionally selected but were selected based on ‘sensus communis.’ Moreover, those that arouse sympathy and resonance with certain special meanings do so because the reasons for giving such meanings are presupposed and it is also true that some beings trigger us in advance to the extent that such meanings are given to them (think of the meanings given to beings such as gold and silver, things such as flowers and lighthouses, friends, lovers, the sun, and the moon).

As Professor Chang-Beom Park(2004), an archaeoastronomer also points out, dolmens are of great value as historical materials for our history and are a great clue to uncovering the origins and contents of hidden ancient civilizations: “I think that dolmens are the steppingstones that will lead us to the origin of our civilization. If we use the dolmens well as materials of our history, we can set a great milestone in uncovering the origins and contents of hidden ancient civilizations. This will directly convey to us not only the scientific and religious aspects, but also the overall content of Bronze Age culture that encompasses society and politics.”⁷

2. Science and Philosophy Starting From Prehistory

The birth of philosophy is generally regarded as about the 6th century BC. It is the general view of philosophical historians that the transition from the mythical worldview to the logos was clearly made at that time, and books of philosophical history were written so. Therefore, the so-called Miletus school including Thales is mentioned and philosophers such as Parmenides and Heraclitus are cited as examples.

However, the philosophical historical view is superficial and cannot be said to be an absolute measure. These philosophers never denied myths at face value or rejected them far away from the logos, and the myths were even accommodated in their philosophical content (even Parmenides, who used strict logic, presented the goddess Dike in his short stories). Not all myths are low-level genres that were condemned by modern seekers of enlightenment as superstitions, “uncivilized” or “non-scientific.”

⁴ Original text: Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt a.M. 1971.

⁵ As Professor Seung-Jong Lee points out, “The ‘existence’ mentioned by Heidegger or the ‘mysterious things’ mentioned by Wittgenstein are not represented in language” (Seung-Jong Lee, 『*Crossover Heidegger*』, Tree of Thought, 2010, p. 345). See Wittgenstein, above book (*Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, 6.522).

⁶ See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, hrg. von Wilhelm Weischedel, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt a.M. 1977, §40.

⁷ Chang-Beom Park, 『*Our History Carved in the Sky*』, Gimm-Young Publishers, Inc. 2004, p. 97.

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Some myths are packed with highly spiritual things seeking understanding and the logos.⁸ For instance, Plato frequently presented myths, metaphors and ‘apocalypse myths’ in his dialogues and suggested to infer solutions for problems that cannot be solved with the logos through myths or metaphors. (You cannot solve all the mysteries of all things with Logos!) Therefore, “the primal problem of philosophy was to preserve exactly what myths knew in times when the power of myths began to decline.”⁹

However, although philosophical historians regard the 6th century B.C. and Thales as the points of birth of philosophy, it should not be considered as a genealogy of philosophy. The philosopher Weischedel(1973) clearly mentions the fact that this philosophical historian's division in time should never be absolute: “If someone traces the time of the birth of philosophy, they will be immediately embarrassed. That is because there is no family register office that enables tracing back to remote antiquity to searching for records about the birth of philosophy, that is, no family register office that organized and archived the events that occurred in the mental world. Nobody knows for certain when philosophy really began. The beginning of philosophy has fallen into the darkness of antiquity.”¹⁰

Of course, we clarify that the interpretation of the star hole dolmens in the prehistoric ages, the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations on bronze mirrors and tomb murals in the Bronze Age is by no means based on myths, legends, or literary imagination because they are, above all, historical and archaeological sites that are empirical data, and their interpretation is also based on these data.

The “solar megalithic culture” of menhirs and dolmens, which are said to have begun to be built in the late Neolithic Period and have bloomed in the Bronze Age, cannot be tied to the category of simple civilization development history. This is because those dolmens, star hole dolmens, and menhirs are not ways for acquiring tools or materials as a means of living. They have highly cultural, spiritual, and metaphysical meanings completely different from the dimension of material civilization. Hence, the phenomenologist H. Rombach reads the metaphysics at the time of the beginning of the world from megaliths that have supernatural meanings, and sees the culture of prehistoric ages, in which dolmens were built, as part of “high-level cultures (Hochkulturen).”¹¹

The establishment of a system of care with the paintings of the four guardian deities that are the guardian deities for the entire cosmos and protect and care for humans, and the drawings of the four constellations in the age of megalithic culture ranging from the Neolithic Age to the Bronze Age is definitely based on a sort of logos-based interpretation of the cosmos. It expresses a high-level philosophy that humans are never insignificant or meaningless beings, that they should not end with a fall or an eternal end, and that the cosmos should not be meant to (sein-sollen) fall into chaos. In addition, it strongly expresses that the cosmos never exists just to be present irrespective of humans but is significantly related to humans.

As noted by Professor Chang-Beom Park, our nation has had a “long-standing relationship”¹² with the sky. Yet, it seems obvious that we have “forgotten or deliberately avoided this tradition and asset.”¹³ However, the observation of the sky that began in prehistoric times may be inexperienced in some cases in the light of today's science, but enables us to witness “scientific acts” that are by no means inferior, not only in the aspect of science, but also in any other aspects.¹⁴ As Professor Park points out, “Our ancestors thoroughly observed and recorded all kinds of phenomena occurring on the earth and in the sky. This was the most basic natural science practice that must be done indispensably for human survival and knowledge expansion.”¹⁵

Giving special meanings to the drawings of the four constellations, the Weaver Girl and the Cowherd, or the Milky Way, establishing a system, or having them have meanings with special contents is by **the natural and free act of giving meanings** that humans can conduct. For example, the fact that the sun and the moon and Canopus have special meanings is a matter that transcends the category of logical and scientific determination of truth or falsehood. If prehistoric people gave a special meaning to the sun that it was absolute for human life and destiny, there is no reason to judge it to be false.

Humans are beings that live while conducting the act of giving meanings. Whether it is the calendar, jewelry, money, friends or lovers, our daily lives are overflowing with countless things to which meanings are given. For example, O. Henry's <The

⁸ If we appreciate the myth of Oedipus, the myth of Sisyphus, and the myth of Dionysus, which we easily encounter, we can easily discover that highly spiritual things, that is, philosophies are immanent in them.

⁹ Wilhelm Weischedel, *Die philosophische Hintertreppe*, dtv: München 1973, p. 17.

¹⁰ Wilhelm Weischedel, *Die philosophische Hintertreppe*, dtv: München 1973, p. 11.

¹¹ H. Rombach, *Leben des Geistes*, Herder: Freiburg·Basel·Wien 1977, p. 104.

¹² Chang-Beom Park, 『Astronomy』, Ewha Womans University Press 2009, p. 8.

¹³ Chang-Beom Park, the above place.

¹⁴ For instance, the creation of a calendar is a good example.

¹⁵ Chang-Beom Park, the above place.

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Last Leaf>, N. Hawthorne's <The Great Stone Face>, and Alphonse Daudet's <Les Etoiles> plainly reveal their validity. Those beings that were given special meanings (“The Last Leaf,” “The Great Stone Face,” and “Les Etoiles”) are different from those that were not.

3. Schelling, Heidegger and Rombach's Philosophy of Art and Expressive Humanities (Ancient Tomb Murals, Dolmens, and Bronze Mirrors)

Needless to say, since the astronomical charts on prehistoric star hole dolmens and the paintings of the four guardian deities in ancient tomb murals and bronze mirrors were both a language that expressed spiritual content and works of art at that time, we can approach them today from the level of hermeneutics and expressive humanities.

In this era of postmodernism and globalization, where diversification and diversity are respected, letters are not the only means of expressing humanities, and the ‘classical humanities’ that have been passed down by no means represent ‘humanities.’ In particular, in the information age, there are countless means of humanistic expression, which are diverse and range from computer languages to symbols and videos. Therefore, the means of expression of philosophy or spiritual humanities should also be expanded beyond the dimension of letters.

The art philosophy of Schelling, Heidegger and Rombach, which we will discuss below, can definitely converge on the category of the expressive humanities, and in particular, the philosophy of paintings of Rombach is considered to be a very appropriate style of expressive humanities because paintings, which began earlier than the tradition of letters in human history, include rock wall paintings and cave paintings in which the traces of the human spirit have permeated, myths and legends, fairy tales and literary works, poetry and the contents currently present in rituals.¹⁶ Regardless of the expressive styles, if human spiritual messages have been carved, they must be accepted as a horizon of the humanities. In this sense, our interpretations of the prehistoric dolmen constellations, bronze mirrors, and ancient tomb murals are excellent materials that enrich the garden of the humanities.

Therefore, since non-literal expressions, cultural activities, and various efforts to seek expressions of humanity are also included in the field of expressive humanities, the paintings and artistic activities, the paintings of the four guardian deities on ancient tomb murals and bronze mirrors, the star charts on star hole dolmens, buildings such as the Greek temples mentioned by Heidegger, and Van Gogh's <A Pair of Shoes> are also materials that can help expressive humanities to blossom.

The following introduces the extraordinary world of thought of some philosophers who give particularly groundbreaking meanings to expressive humanistic endeavors. I interpreted the ancient tomb murals, dolmens, and bronze mirrors based on the expressive humanities and artistic philosophy of these philosophers and was greatly helped by them methodologically to approach the expressive humanities because the philosophical depths of the star hole dolmens and their star charts can be read from their world of thought, as they did not rely solely on letters or expanded the horizon of epistemology.

First is the case of the modern German philosopher F.W.J. Schelling, who opened a groundbreaking phase of artistic philosophy in his time. He strongly resisted the treatment of art as low-grade aesthetics in his time for the reason that it relies on sensibility. To him, the status of art occupied an important place, completely differently from the case of Hegel, and art was not far away from philosophy, but rather was established as a special organism that reveals the essential things of philosophy to the outside. That is, art is an organ that faithfully performs the tasks of philosophy. **In the light of the mirror of the philosophy of art, the ancient tomb murals, star charts on star hole dolmens, and the carvings of the four guardian deities on bronze mirrors from Goguryeo are organisms that never stay at the level of ancient art; that is, they are messages containing a spirit, philosophies of art, and organisms whose philosophies are revealed to the outside.**

If art is not separate from philosophy but is an organ that reveals the contents of philosophy, in other words, “revealed philosophy (die geoffenbarte Philosophie)” to Schelling, the thesis of Rombach indicating that a living spirit (philosophy) is dissolved in a work of art in any way seems to be similar to the case of Schelling. If the ancient tomb murals, the star charts on the dolmens, and the drawings on the bronze mirrors are examined from the horizon of works of art, the expressive humanities containing the spirit of philosophy can be read.

Since art is an organ that reveals the essence of philosophy, according to Schelling, art is a concrete evidence and organon of the ability of philosophy to faithfully carry out its tasks.¹⁷ Philosophical historian HJ Störig(1981) points out the peculiar status of Schelling’s philosophy of art as follows: “Therefore, art is an eternal organon that always and constantly reveals the very things that

¹⁶ See H. Rombach, *Leben des Geistes*, page 8. H. Rombach (translated by Dong-Jin Jeon), 『Apollonian World and Hermesian World』, Seogwangsa 2001, p. 340 and thereafter.

¹⁷ F.W.J. Schelling, *Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst*, Reclam: Stuttgart 1986. Refer to pp. 112-121.

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philosophy cannot express through any external form, that is, so to speak, an eternal organon that reveals the original meaning of philosophy.”¹⁸

Second is the case of M. Heidegger, who instilled the soul of thinking of being into art. To him, works of art reveal the truth of “unconcealment (Unverborgenheit).” For Heidegger, art is where the truth of being takes place, as with philosophy. He thought that art is where “the truth establishes itself in the work (das Sich-ins-Werk-setzen-der Wahrheit)”¹⁹, and the work of art is “establishing the truth of the being in the work (das Sich-ins-Werk-setzen-der Wahrheit des Seienden).”²⁰

Through Van Gogh’s “A Pair of Shoes,” Heidegger reveals what the pair of shoes of a rural woman really is, and how it exists. This work of art by Van Gogh shows that the being called the pair of shoes of a farmer reveals the truth of its existence. This tool, so to speak, called “A Pair of Shoes”—without the need to draw in any aesthetic theory—is revealed as the unconcealment of its existence. Therefore, if what a being is and how it exists are revealed in a work of art, it will enable us to witness the fact that the truth as unconcealment manifests itself in the work of art.²¹

In the worn-out shoes of the farmer persists the rigor of the course of labor. It is also revealed that while moving along the plowed rows of a field countless times, the farmer has sometimes endured nasty weather and severe storms on lonely farmlands and not only has met the hard land, but also has fought silently (such as hard labor and rest) with this land. In the course of this, ripe grains are given as a gift, as if responding to the call of the earth. Therefore, the existence of the tool “A Pair of Shoes” bears the cares and worries of farmers to prepare stable food and is infused with the joy of family well-being and overcoming poverty.²²

Heidegger discusses Greek temples in the horizon of works of art (architecture) along with “A Pair of Shoes” in his book 『The Origin of the Works of Art』 and this similarly provides an implication that enables us to understand dolmens (which are cultural products, works, and buildings). Dolmens, like the ancient Greek temples, are buildings that built a historical world. These architectural works unite the sky and the divinity, the human and the earth around them, as Heidegger’s concept of things as ‘the quarter (das Geviert’ clarifies and combine all the paths and relationships in human life. This is also the case with dolmens as places for meetings (community gatherings) or tombs.

Third is the case of the phenomenologist H. Rombach. He carefully examined the relationship between paintings (especially cultural relics) and philosophy and sublimated the findings in the “Philosophy of Painting” to pioneer a new horizon of philosophy. He deplores that “the pictorial tradition (Bildtradition), which is older and more comprehensive than the textual tradition” in the history of mankind “has not yet become a subject related to philosophical analysis in the history of philosophy.”²³

Not to mention paintings as artistic works, Rombach also attempted a philosophical analysis of the world of thinking (Bilddenken), which is more primitive and fundamental, and furthermore, unfolded with paintings, rock wall paintings and cave paintings infused with traces of the human spirit, myths and legends, fairy tales and literary works, poetry and rituals, symbols and signs, customs, and even the contents present in common goods, and pioneered the field of “philosophy of paintings” with the foregoing.²⁴ He discovered the concealed mind through “High interpretation (Hochinterpretation)”²⁵ with a view to ‘saving’ the forgotten world through the mind.²⁶

Therefore, ‘paintings’ for Rombach are not only works of art, but also, as enumerated above, “all formations that form (bilden) themselves”²⁷ and those that have their own world and truth, and directly and “auto-genetically (autogenetisch)” speak of themselves. According to Rombach (2004), such paintings are not at the level of simple replications (Abbild) as they have been traditionally understood, for instance, in Aristotle’s Theory of Art, but are rather the real presence (Realpräsenz des Ganzen) of

¹⁸ Hans Joachim Störig, *Kleine Weltgeschichte der Philosophie 2*, Fischer: Frankfurt a.M. 1981, pp. 122-123.

¹⁹ M. Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Reclam: Stuttgart 1988, p. 31, 34, 74.

²⁰ M. Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Reclam: Stuttgart 1988, p. 30.

²¹ See the above book, p. 30.

²² See the above book, p. 27 and thereafter.

²³ H. Rombach, *Leben des Geistes*, p. 8.

²⁴ See H. Rombach (translated by Dong-Jin Jeon), 『Apollonian World and Hermesian World』, Seogwangsa 2001, p. 340 and thereafter. H. Rombach, *Leben des Geistes*, p. 8.

²⁵ H. Rombach (translated by Dong-Jin Jeon), 『Apollonian World and Hermesian World』, p. 268.

²⁶ See Dong-Jin Jeon, 『Philosophy of Creation』, Seogwangsa 2008, p. 36.

²⁷ See Dong-Jin Jeon, 『Philosophy of Creation』, the above book, p. 24.

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“something stamped with spirit,” the whole, or the “the postmark of the spirit,” the real presence of the whole (Realpräsenz des Ganzen), or the direct presentation (Präsentation) of the whole.²⁸

Here, “direct presentation” means that paintings present their world directly, like Heidegger's truth of “unconcealment,” and not through the mediation of anything else. In other words, paintings do not have the relational structure of texts that require analysis (Auseinanderlegen) or interpretation (Auslegung.), but directly show the whole (world of paintings), which is alive and breathing, and “directly present the whole without reducing, limiting, or weakening.”²⁹ Paintings do not go through a theoretical mediation or relational intermediate process, but unfold with directness and direct seeing (Sehen).³⁰

In light of Rombach's view, the life-world and cultural style of Korean prehistoric people, **that is, a sort of “world of thinking unfolded with paintings (Bilddenken)” revealed through the star holes carved in the cover stones of the dolmens, show the “fundamental philosophy” as it is. Here, the mental world that can be known without undergoing any process of speculation, imagination, analysis, or interpretation can be read. The Big Dipper and the South Dipper, the sun and the moon, and numerous stars engraved on the cover stones of the deceased are the fundamental philosophy expressing the thought of return to heaven and heaven-oriented thought, and furthermore, the thought of heaven worship, the philosophy of care, and immortality.** Even if the Big Dipper, the South Dipper, the sun, the moon, and numerous stars engraved on the cover stones of the dolmens are not unreasonably interpreted, the contents revealed by the star holes already have clear messages of fundamental philosophy, and show the deep world of spirit, culture, and art.

4. The philosophical systems of the paintings of the four guardian deities and the drawing of the four constellations, focusing on ancient tomb murals, bronze mirrors, and star hole dolmens.

1) Paintings of the four guardian deities and of the four constellations in Goguryeo tomb murals

As is generally known, the back of the 10,000 won bill issued since 2007 is decorated with the history of Korean astronomy. The celestial planisphere map is laid as the basis, and a celestial globe is designed on the Armillary Clock, which is National Treasure No. 230. Not only is it the opinion of experts that the original copy of the map was produced during the Goguryeo period, but also the fact is specified in the additional explanation (a sort of footnote) of a rubbed copy of this map.³¹

Numerous constellations embroider the sky in the celestial planisphere map, and among them, those shown in the paintings of the four guardian deities occupy important positions. Professor Seok-Jae Park (2009), who is director of the Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute, also greatly highlights this concept of the paintings of the four guardian deities: “The constellations on the celestial planisphere map are no other than the four guardian deities that had religious statuses during the Goguryeo period, that is, Blue Dragon, White Tiger, Red Phoenix, and Black Tortoise.”³²

As pointed out by Professor Park, among the drawings of the four constellations in the celestial planisphere map, those of the South Dipper and the Big Dipper are the spirits of Goguryeo engraved on the astronomical map: “... In the north, the Big Dipper, in the south, the South Dipper, and /The astronomical map was engraved containing the spirit of Goguryeo/ ... Blue Dragon and Red Phoenix fly up and White Tiger and Black Tortoise roar./ The way for the heavenly descendants to go are seen in the distance.”³³

In the ancient tomb murals, the paintings of the four guardian deities (East Blue Dragon, West White Tiger, North Black Tortoise, and South Red Phoenix) and the system of drawings of the four constellations, the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper are drawn in enormous sizes as main themes. In a word, these drawings profess a philosophical world view

²⁸ See Dong-Jin Jeon, 『Rombach's Philosophy of Painting』 『Heidegger Study』 Vol. 7 (Philosophy and Reality Publishing Co., 2002), pp. 20-21. See H. Rombach (translated by Dong-Jin Jeon), 『Living Structure』, Seogwangsa 2004, p. 217.

²⁹ Rombach, Heinrich, *Strukturontologie*, Freiburg-München: Alber 1988, p. 372.

³⁰ See Rombach, Heinrich, the above book, p. 321.

³¹ With regard to the process through which that the celestial planisphere map of Goguryeo, which is a celestial planisphere carved in a stone slab, disappeared due to the war with the Tang Dynasty in about 668, and the celestial planisphere map of Joseon began to be born by the rubbed copy of the foregoing, and the fact that the fact is conveyed in detail in the 『Yangchon Collection』 of Kwon Geun and 『Daedong Yaseung』 that quoted the foregoing, see, Il-Seong Na, 『The History of Korean Astronomy』 (Seoul National University Press, 2002, pp. 75-77. According to the Chinese Confucian concept of the son of Heaven and Sinocentrism, in the case astronomical maps and calendars, etc. different ones were not allowed under one dynasty. Therefore, if Goguryeo was defeated in the war, such astronomical map and calendar should have been discarded.

³² Seok-Jae Park, 『The Descendants of Heaven Who Forgot Heaven』, Science Dong-A Books 2009, p. 22.

³³ Seok-Jae Park, 『The Descendants of Heaven Who Forgot Heaven』, the above book, p. 25.

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as a system to “protect and care for everywhere in the world.”³⁴ Needless to say, the four guardian deities are defense gods that protect and care for humans and the world. “The people of Goguryeo put up the four guardian deities as sacred and inviolable beings and beings like tutelary deities that protect their ‘safety’ and tried to guarantee the safety of their ‘souls’ even after death by drawing them in tomb murals.”³⁵ The four guardian deities are on the ancient tomb murals in the form of sort of superterrestrial mystical creatures

The Goguryeo's system of paintings of the four guardian deities is a philosophical world view that is comparable to those of yin and yang dualism, that of yin, yang, and the five elements, the moral worldview of the Taoist, the dialectical worldview constructed by Heraclitus of ancient Greece and the German philosopher Hegel, Leibniz's optimistic worldview, and the pessimistic worldviews of Schopenhauer and Buddhism. What is even more surprising, however, is that the system to protect and care for the world, drawn on the tomb murals, also appears in the celestial planisphere carved in the stone slabs of prehistoric star hole dolmens.

In Goguryeo's ancient tomb murals,³⁶ the four guardian deities and of the four constellations including the sun and the moon that represent and protect four directions are drawn together with many patterns and other drawings, and **astronomical charts and drawings of stars have been found in 25 ancient tombs thus far.**³⁷

Although there are many murals with the four guardian deities, as pointed out in the footnote above, let us first refer to the paintings of the four guardian deities in Gangseodaemyo³⁸, which expressed the spirit and vigorousness of Goguryeo well and are well known to us(see Fig.1~Fig.4).

³⁴ Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, p.81.

³⁵ Seung-Taek Choi, 『The Faith of Goguryeo People in the Four Guardian Deities and the Characteristics of the Paintings of the four guardian deities in Ancient Tomb Murals from Goguryeo,』 『Chosun Archeological Study』 2012-2, p. 9.

³⁶ Ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo were registered as World Heritage Sites on July 1, 2005 to become to receive attention from the world. Since ancient tomb mural studies are not inferior to Dunhuang studies or Gandara studies when seen from the aspect of cultural and historical value and scale, it seems necessary to expand psychocultural and historical studies of ancient tomb murals. In particular, as Professor Il-Kwon Kim points out, “On comparison of the histories of astronomical charts in the entire East Asia in the same period, it can be found that no relic of astronomical charts per se has been passed down from ancient Japan and no more diverse and clearer star chart materials than those in the tomb murals from Goguryeo have been found in relics from Wei and Jin Southern and Northern Dynasties of China. Therefore, the historical significance of the mural astronomical data from Goguryeo is very high” (Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin Publishing Co., 2008, p. 85).

³⁷ Prof. Il-Kwon Kim and Professor Chang-Beom Park stated that astronomical charts and drawings of stars were found in 25 ancient tombs in the 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo 』 (Four Seasons 2008, p. 39-41, p. 50), and the 『Astronomy』 (Ewha Womans University Press, 2009, p. 35), respectively. In particular, Professor Il-Kwon Kim drew detailed schematic diagrams of the 25 tombs in the above book (pages 176-188) so that the astronomical charts with constellations from Goguryeo can be well understood. In addition, Seung-Taek Choi of North Korea considered the number of mural tombs with astronomical charts as 27 units and the number of mural tombs with the paintings of the four guardian deities as 38 in (『Regarding the Excellence of Astronomical Charts Goguryeo Tomb Mural Astronomical Maps,』 『The Chosun Archeological Study』 2013-2, p.43) (『Goguryeo people's faith in the four guardian deities and the characteristics of the paintings of the four guardian deities in Goguryeo murals,』 『The Chosun Archeological Study』 2012-2, p. 9). In addition, Joon-Geol Lee considered the number of ancient tombs with drawings of stars as 28 in 『Development of Astronomy in Goguryeo』 (『The Chosun Archeological Study』 89-3, p. 16), and In-Ho Han stated that among ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo, about 30 were mural tombs related to the four guardian deities in 『Regarding the Paintings of the four guardian deities in Goguryeo Mural Tombs,』 (『The Chosun Archeological Study』 88-1, p. 13). Although different experts suggest ancient tombs with astronomical charts differently, that is not a big problem because if mural tombs with the drawings of astronomical charts, four guardian deities, or four constellations are newly found from among so many ancient tombs from Goguryeo, the number can naturally increase.

³⁸ <https://blog.naver.com/ij3kwak/220867583057>.

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Fig.1. West White Tiger



Fig. 2. East Blue Dragon



Fig.3. North Black Tortoise



Fig.4. South Red Phoenix

Modern people are no better for having forgotten the meaning of their existence, but ancient Koreans had a system in which the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper in the drawings of the four constellations in the sky would guard, protect, and care for everywhere. Along with the paintings of the four guardian deities, the system to care for and protect the world and cosmos cannot but be said to be literally a magnificent worldview

The drawings of stars of the four constellations appear in most of the tomb murals with drawings of constellations. Below, a schematic diagram of Deokhwari ancient tomb No. 2 in which 28 constellations are illustrated well together with the drawings of the four constellations (see Fig.5)³⁹ and Deokheung-ri ancient tomb in which the constellation system of Goguryeo can be manifestly observed will be referred to (see Fig.6).⁴⁰

³⁹ <http://kids.hankooki.com/lpage/study/200507/kd2005071414350045730.htm>. <http://tadream.tistory.com/27927>

⁴⁰ Regarding the importance of the Deokheung-ri ancient tomb, the Deokhwa-ri ancient tombs, and the Jinparis ancient tombs, Professors Chang-Beom Park and Hong-Jin Yang explained as follows: "Along with the murals of the Deokhwa-ri No. 2 and the Jinpari No. 4 ancient tombs, the murals of the Deokheung-ri ancient tomb contains the most important and interesting content among all ancient tomb murals with drawings of constellations. In addition, since not only the date of construction of it is known and it was constructed the earliest among the ancient tombs but also the drawings of stars are in good conditions and are relatively abundant, it can be said to be one of the most valuable works for the study of the history of ancient astronomy in Korea through Goguryeo ancient tomb murals." (Chang-Beom Park and Hong-Jin Yang, 「The Constellations and Astronomical System of Ancient Tomb Murals from Goguryeo」, 『The Journal of the Korean History of Science Society』, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2009, p. 11). The 28-constellations are the primitive form of the drawings of the four constellations and refer to seven stars in the east (blue dragon), seven stars in the west (white tiger), seven stars in the south (red phoenix), and seven stars in the north (black tortoise).

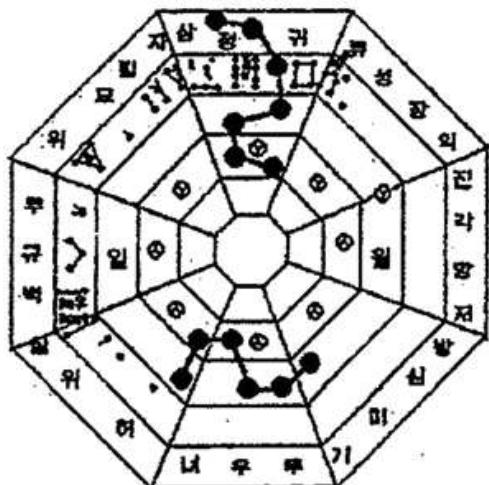


Fig.5. Drawings of four constellations and 28 constellations in Deokhwari ancient tomb No. 2

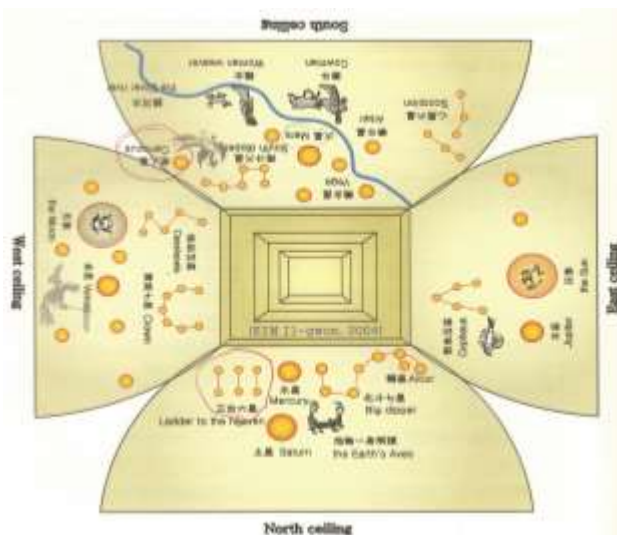


Fig. 6. Deokheung-ri ancient tomb (schematic diagram by Prof. Il-Kwon Kim)⁴¹

The actual Deokhwa-ri ancient tomb No. 2, not a schematic diagram, literally shows the “star world.” Along with drawings of the four constellations the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper, about 72 stars are drawn on the ceiling with octagonal props, and the names of 28 constellations among the 72 stars are engraved in letters. The astronomical concept of 28 constellations was firmly established in ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo.

Stars of the four constellations appear in almost all ancient tombs with drawings of constellations, and the sizes of individual constellations are shown differently by class, not much differently from those of modern astronomy. The sun and the moon, drawn the largest, are located in the east and west, respectively, followed by the five planets, with Saturn drawn a bit larger. It seems that the rings around Saturn were considered. The next largest ones are stars such as Altair, Vega, and Canopus, followed by the Big Dipper, the South Dipper, the three terrace stars, Cepheus, and Scorpius, in order of precedence. As shown in the above schematic diagram, the blue-colored Milky Way flows in the southern sky, and the South Dipper and Canopus, which keep immortality and pour out the blessings of life, are located along with the phoenix, a divine beast.

The South Dipper, which has had the meaning of its existence highlighted since prehistoric times, and which has the status of a patron constellation in the south in the ancient tomb murals of Goguryeo, is a transcendental being who cares for and protects the whole world together with the Big Dipper in the north, the sun in the east, and the moon in the west. The South Dipper “that can hardly be found in Chinese murals and is specially emphasized in Goguryeo murals to capture Goguryeo-style astronomical characteristics”⁴² not only reveals well the aspect that Korean astronomical geography, passed down from ancient times, is different from that of China, but also plays a great role in completing the system of the drawings of the four constellations that can hardly be found China or any other country in the world. In the thinking about stars and constellations by the people of Goguryeo, the South Dipper was magnified as one of the most meaningful “constellations in four bearings” in Goguryeo tomb murals, as Professor Il-Kwon Kim(2000) points out.⁴³

⁴¹ The schematic diagram reorganized in detail by Professor Il-Kwon Kim provides a lot of help and milestones for ancient tomb mural researchers. Although the paintings of the four guardian deities are often drawn in any common ancient tomb murals, this schematic diagram shows the sizes of stars by class are shown in detail and shows the Milky Way well drawn in colors. For this schematic diagram of the Deokheung-ri ancient tomb, see Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 177; the same author, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, p. 92.

⁴² Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, p. 95. Similar to Professor Il-Kwon Kim, Dr. Jong-Ho Lee also pointed out that the South Dipper rarely appears in Chinese ancient tomb murals unlike the Big Dipper and indicated that the South Dipper is the uniqueness of the Goguryeo style way of expression of the southern sky (see Jong-Ho Lee, 『Seven Wonders of Korea』, Morning of History 2007, p. 55). See Jung-Yang Moon, 『Science Travel in Our History』, East Asia, 2008, p. 60.

⁴³ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Goguryeo People’s Faith in Constellations』, 『Religious Culture Study』, No. 2, 2000, p. 6.

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The South Dipper looks like a ladle, similarly to the Big Dipper, but has a special meaning because it is close to the southern end of the Milky Way. It has the nickname “ladle for the milk of the Milky Way, a river in which milk flows.”⁴⁴ In primitive Taoism, the Big Dipper is believed to leave the souls contained in its ladle for a while along the Milky Way to the south, and the South Dipper, which is the protector of life, holds these souls for a while and then lets them go down to the world. The thought of immortality of the soul (perpetuity) is expressed through the South Dipper, the Big Dipper, and the Milky Way.

The South Dipper is a constellation believed to be in charge of eternal youth and “human longevity.”⁴⁵ Canopus also has properties similar to those of the South Dipper: “This star, drawn the largest, is the second brightest in the whole sky, and it was also a longevity star because it was believed that those who saw this star would have good health and a long life.”⁴⁶

The belief that the South Dipper is not only responsible for the good health of humans, but also “a department in charge of the birth and death due to causes and conditions in heaven,” and that the Big Dipper takes care of the afterlife of humans, as Professor Il-Kwon Kim notes, is a “Taoist astrological perspective.”⁴⁷ Since the system of the drawings of the four constellations dates back to the prehistoric dolmens, it can be said that **primitive Taoism** originated from the remote prehistoric era and sublimated the drawings of the four constellations, which were patron constellations, into a system that cares for the whole world.

Surprisingly, however, in the southern sky of the Deokheung-ri tomb mural, the shape of an auspicious animal was drawn right next to Canopus, and it has a beast’s head and a bird’s body and looks like a red phoenix or a pterosaur. Since the characters “吉利之像” (fortunate and favorable shape) were engraved on this auspicious creature, it seems that a literally fortunate (吉) and favorable (利) shape was shown. The South Dipper was drawn right above it, and Canopus was drawn on the right side of it, so that all the drawings formed a “combination of auspicious symbolics that give good health and longevity.”⁴⁸ As symbolized by the system of the combination of symbols on the south that literally pours out the blessings of life, the south is indeed a place where life phenomena are shown.

The drawings of the four constellations, which are the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper, had been already engraved on the covers of the prehistoric dolmens. Goguryeo's tomb murals, which carefully transferred the world of the drawings of the four constellations, expressed the constellations grandly and magnificently on the walls and ceilings so that we can witness them at a glance. As already generalized into a system of thought in the Goguryeo society at that time, the four constellations were drawn very magnificently and grandly in most of the tomb murals. The worldview that the constellations care and protect all things in nature in the whole world, including humans, was completed.

In the sun that brightens the day, a three-legged crow, which is the spirit of the sun, spreads its wings, and in the moon that brightens the night lies a jade toad that lives eternally. It is a well-known fact that in addition to the toad, a jade rabbit and a cassia bark tree are located as symbols in the moon. The jade toad is also an immortal mystical creature, and the jade rabbit, which was personified and stands on its two feet, is the symbol of Hang-a, the wife of Lee Ye, a master of archery, who stole the elixir of life and went to the moon in the myth of the ancient Dongyi people. As can be also seen from the fact that a large amount of jade was recently excavated in the Hongsan civilization in the north of the Gulf of Pohai, “jade is a material that has been noted as a symbol of eternal life since ancient times.”⁴⁹

However, experts diagnose that the sublimation of the Big Dipper, the South Dipper, the sun, and the moon into a system that protects and cares for the whole world by corresponding to the north, south, east, and west, respectively, is a form that can be hardly found in Chinese ancient tombs. They say that compared to Goguryeo, Chinese drawings of stars were more often meant for decoration.⁵⁰ I believe that the prototypes of the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations are in the celestial

⁴⁴ Written by Gyeong-Deok Lee, 『The East and West Myths Met Around Us』, Four Seasons 2006, p. 104.

⁴⁵ See Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 67, Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History』, Gozwin 2008, p. 96. See Sang-Hyeon Ahn, 『Our Constellations』, Hyeonamsa 2000, p. 298.

⁴⁶ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 67.

⁴⁷ Il-Kwon Kim, (The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, pp. 108, 262. Professor Chang-Beom Park expresses a similar view: Chang-Beom Park, (Astronomy』, Ewha Womans University Press 2009, p. 39.

⁴⁸ See Il-Kwon Kim, (Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 72, Il-Kwon Kim, (The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, p. 96.

⁴⁹ Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, p. 230.

⁵⁰ See Il-Kwon Kim, 『A Study on the Astronomical Notion System of Goguryeo Ancient Tomb Murals』, 『The Journal of Diagnostics』, No. 82 (1996), pp. 1-34. See Chang-Beom Park, 『Astronomy』, Ewha Womans University Press 2009, p. 37. See

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planispheres carved in the stone slabs of dolmens from Gojoseon. The composition of the astronomical system with four bearings, that is, the East Blue Dragon, West White Tiger, North Black Tortoise, and South Red Phoenix, is “much different from Chinese tomb murals.”⁵¹ Furthermore, according to Professor Il-Kwon Kim's comment, the South Dipper rarely appears in the composition of the drawings of the four constellations in China.⁵²

The professor's comment is not just about the South Dipper and the difference between the astronomical systems. In the case of Goguryeo, the meaning of the existence of the South Dipper was greatly magnified along that of the other constellations with four bearings and was sublimated into such astronomical thought and cosmology that the constellations protect and defend the entire cosmos. Unlike the cosmology that regards the whole world as meaningless or any other cosmologies, the philosophical world view that regards the constellations as something that cares for the world was magnified.

The astronomical system with the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations is associated with the thoughts of immortality and eternity. The Goguryeo people built houses made of stone, that is, ancient tombs, with burial goods, and revealed their thoughts on immortality because they believed in the afterlife and immortality. In particular, the ancient tomb murals, which show celestial beings and Taoist hermits with miraculous powers flying up to the sky, scenes of making the elixir of life, and a utopia in the heavenly world, can of course be said to be pictorial expressions of the afterlife and immortality.

The paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations engraved on the star hole dolmens, bronze mirrors, and ancient tomb murals are the expressions of the philosophy of care to protect and care for the entire cosmos and the thought of immortality, which can be said to be a noble and unique philosophy in the history of our philosophies. The philosophy of immortality is a theme that is dealt with in depth in the history of philosophy. (Immortality is regarded as “the fundamental task of philosophy” by many philosophers, including Plato and Kant, who stated that deity, freedom, and immortality are the three inevitable major tasks of metaphysics.)

The concept of the four guardian deities seems to have already been formed in the 28 constellations passed down from prehistoric times because the number 28 was embodied in the models of the paintings of the four guardian deities. The seven stars in each of the four bearings (4x7=28) represent the East Blue Dragon, West White Tiger, North Black Tortoise, and South Red Phoenix, respectively. The 28 constellations are shown well in Deokhwa-ri No. 2 tomb and Jinpari No. 4 tomb, which is called the whole sky astronomical map (全天天文圖), among of Goguryeo's ancient tomb murals.⁵³ According to Professor Il-Kwon Kim, Jinpari No. 4 tomb is “the mural astronomical map that surprised the astronomical circle the most.”⁵⁴ As the phrase “whole sky astronomical map” implies, the whole sky was drawn on one ceiling slab stone so that the entire sky can be witnessed at once.

Since the South Dipper and the Big Dipper are constellations engraved on the star stone dolmens along with the sun and the moon that constitute the drawings of the four constellations in the period of Gojoseon in prehistoric times, several thousand years before the period of Goguryeo, the philosophical system of the drawings of the four constellations and the paintings of the four guardian deities cannot but be said to be an independent thought system. The philosophical system did not come from any shamanism or primitive superstition.

2) Carvings of the four guardian deities on bronze mirrors

Indeed, the bronze mirrors — containing wonderful secrets to the extent that they are called one of “the seven wonders of Korea” by Dr. Jong-Ho Lee(2007) — well reveal the civilized world of Gojoseon, which built the Bronze Age up high in world history: “The fine-patterned mirror (多紐細紋鏡; National Treasure No. 141) found in Chungcheongnam-do in the 1960s was made around the 4th century B.C. in the Bronze Age and is included in the ‘wonders of the Bronze Age.’”⁵⁵ This bronze mirror, called 多紐細紋

Seung-Taek Choi, 「The Faith of Goguryeo People in the Four Guardian Deities and the Characteristics of the Paintings of the four guardian deities in Ancient Tomb Murals from Goguryeo」, 『Chosun Archeological Study』 2012-2, p. 11.

⁵¹ Jong-Ho Lee, 『Seven Wonders of Korea』, Morning of History 2007, p. 55.

⁵² Jong-Ho Lee, the above book, p. 55,

⁵³ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 26 and thereafter, pp. 35-36, 38-39. Joon-Geol Lee, 「Development of Astronomy in Goguryeo」, 『Chosun Archeological Study』, 89-3 (See p. 17), Institute of Archeology, Academy of Social Sciences 1989.

⁵⁴ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』, the above book, p. 35.

⁵⁵ Jong-Ho Lee, 『Seven Wonders of Korea』, Morning of History 2007, p. 122. The bronze mirror from the 4th century B.C referred to in this quotation seems to be that from the period of the Three Han States before the period of the Three Kingdoms. Since this bronze mirror is with so super-scientific fine patterns, bronze mirrors should not have suddenly appeared at that time

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鏡 (Danyusemungyeong) or fine-patterned mirror, might have been used in religious or shamanistic rites according to an article in the Encyclopedia Britannica. The intricate and elaborate stripes engraved on the mirror give a glimpse of the remarkable casting techniques of the time.⁵⁶

“Fine-patterned mirrors have been found not only in the northeastern region of China (which was formerly the Gojoseon region), but also in the Maritime Territory of Russia and the entire area of the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the same type is found in Japan, which means that the fine-patterned mirrors are excavated anywhere in areas where the ancient Korean people lived. About 100 pieces of fine-patterned mirrors have been excavated so far. However, although the mirrors are found in such a vast area, mirrors with extremely fine patterns have never been found in China or Japan and have only been excavated on the Korean Peninsula.”⁵⁷

According to Dr. Jong-Ho Lee, the production of bronzeware dates back to about 3000 BC.⁵⁸ Quite a few bronze products are found in relics excavated from dolmens. As is well known, bronze mirrors with the design of the four guardian deities seem to have already been universalized and passed on. They have often been excavated from the ancient tombs of kings. A bronze mythical beast mirror was found in the tomb of King Muryeong of Baekje and bronze mirrors were excavated from the southern mound of Hwangnam Daechong and Geumnyeongchong, the royal tombs of Silla. The mirror from Hwangnam Daechong is engraved with the design of a mythical beast and the mirror from Geumryongchong is a Baekyugyeong (百乳鏡) with dozens of bumps expressed on the back.⁵⁹ The bronze mirror excavated from the Hwangryongsa Temple site clearly shows the images of the four guardian deities, and it can be inferred that the images were generalized from before that rather than being made suddenly at the time (see Fig.7).



Fig. 7. Bronze mirror excavated from the site of Hwangnyongsa Temple (Gyeonggi National Museum collection)



Fig. 8. The four guardian deities, which are the Blue Dragon [寅], Red Phoenix [巳], White Tiger [申], and Black Tortoise [亥] are engraved (Busan Metropolitan Museum collection)

The following checkered rule mirror with four guardian deities (方格規矩四神鏡), was excavated in Yangdong-ri, Gimhae, Gyeongsangnam-do (see Fig.8). It is said to have been produced during the Three Han period in ancient Korea. The bronze mirror with four gods is engraved with the East Blue Dragon, West White Tiger, North Black Tortoise, and South Red Phoenix. The astronomy of the four constellations and the paintings of the four guardian deities in the ancient tomb murals of Gojoseon and Goguryeo are directly connected, thereby reminding us of the deep meaning of astronomical thought and cosmology.⁶⁰ Most of the mighty beast bronze mirrors have engravings of the four guardian deities.

but should have been passed down from before that time. Therefore, it is believed that bronze mirrors should have been activated before that time because. The fact that bronze mirrors are often excavated from the burial accessories of dolmens well explains the historical connection.

⁵⁶ "Bronze Mirror," South Korean Britannica Online (http://premium.britannica.co.kr/bol/topic.asp?article_id=b20c2480a).

⁵⁷ Jong-Ho Lee, the above book, pp. 124-125. Parentheses were supplemented by me.

⁵⁸ See Jong-Ho Lee, the above book, p. 124 and thereafter.

⁵⁹ See Yeong-Hun Lee and Gwang-Seop Shin, 『Rediscovery of Korean Beauty』, Vol. 14, Sol Publishing House 2004, pp. 131-132.

⁶⁰ Naver Knowledge Encyclopedia: “Checkered rule mirror with four guardian deities possessed by the Busan Metropolitan City Museum (釜山廣域市立博物館 所藏 方格 規矩 四神鏡)” (The Digital Local Culture Encyclopedia of Korea, The Academy of Korean Studies).

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As is well known, bronze mirrors have existed since the Bronze Age, but their uses were entirely different from tools to reflect the face for dressing up or makeup today, and not everybody could have them. These bronze mirrors could be owned only by tribal chiefs, chief priest, warlords, kings, or their equivalents in the Bronze Age.⁶¹ Given the “solar megalithic culture,” it seems that people in the Neolithic and Bronze Age worshiped the sun that illuminates the whole earth.⁶² Therefore, they made bronze mirrors, and considered the light of the sun shining dazzlingly after being reflected by the mirrors as mysterious and thought that the light contained messages from heaven.

“The thin stripes engraved on the bronze mirrors symbolize the sun. By reflecting the sunlight with a bronze mirror, the chief priest was able to show off his mysticalness as a being like the sun. The appearance of a chief priest performing a rite for the heavens holding a bronze weapon in his hand and hanging a bronze mirror and a bell on his neck, and the sunlight reflected by the mirror had a mysticalness that conveyed the will of heaven.”⁶³

Of course, such shining bronze mirrors seem to have a stronger character as beings that must (take the responsibility to) care for and brighten the tribe rather than as tools that symbolized the authority of the warlord (tribal chief, king). It seems certain that the aspect to brighten and the images of the four guardian deities were in harmony to contain the desire to illuminate and care for the tribe in four bearings. People in prehistoric times, who believed that the mysterious sunlight contained messages from heaven, viewed the bronze mirrors as a sort of medium that connects heaven and earth. The nature of the mirrors seems to have carried over until the Three Kingdoms period and thereafter.

The fact that the system of care to protect the whole world was designed on bronze mirrors cannot but be surprising because the foregoing system (the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations), which was passed down from the star hole astronomical map on dolmens to the Three Kingdoms period and later generations, clearly contains a philosophical message that sees the whole world as a system of care. It is by no means an aesthetic decoration, but is a message containing the philosophical worldview of ancient Koreans.

3) Star holes engraved on dolmens as an astronomical map

I went on field surveys across the country to collect evidence for the star hole dolmens. The field surveys seem to have played a great role for me to gain confidence in the study, as well as good evidential materials. The star holes (星穴) engraved on the cover stones of dolmens are globally unique relics, and the constellations maps formed by them provide a major clue that enables us to read their highly spiritual meaning. The areas where field surveys were carried out are as follows:

1. Ganghwa Dolmen 2. Gochang Dolmen 3. Dumulmeori Dolmen 4. Maengol Village Dolmen 5. Yonghari Menhir and Yanggu Prehistoric Relic Museum 6. Wonju Jongburi Dolmen 7. Norim-ri Dolmen 8. Samcheok Jukseoru Yongmunbawi Dolmen 9. Dolmen in Hari, Mungyeong, Gyeongbuk 10. Waryongsan Dolmen 11. Dolmen in Yachon Village, Haman, Gyeongnam 12. Dohang-ri Dolmen 13. Dongchon-ri Dolmen 14. Icheon “Namjeong-ri Dolmen” and Jiseok-ri Dolmen 15. Jonam-ri Dolmen 16. Hwasun Jeolsan-ri Dolmen 17. Star Hole Dolmen in Yeosu

Professor Chang-Beom Park identifies the dolmen with the following four propositions.⁶⁴

First: Dolmen are rocks.

Second: Dolmens are tombs.

Third: Dolmens are archaeological relics.

Fourth: Dolmen are astronomical relics.

In the above identification, the first and third propositions are already well known as natural ones. In the case of the second proposition, since some dolmens made for purposes other than tombs (for example, places for public gatherings or rituals) are also

⁶¹ See Yeong-Hun Lee and Gwang-Seop Shin, 『Rediscovery of Korean Beauty』, Vol. 14 (Ancient Tomb Art II), Sol Publishing House 2004, p. 131.

⁶² Dr. Yeong-Hun Lee and Dr. Gwang-Seop Shin also said, “The people in the Bronze Age were worshiping the sun that brightly lit the whole earth. The sunlight reflected in the mirror and shining dazzlingly was considered a mystery, and the light was thought to contain the message of the sky, and to be capable of carrying the wishes of those living on the earth.” (Yeong-Hun Lee and Gwang-Seop Shin, above place)

⁶³ Written by Jong-Ho Lee and Yoon Seok-Yeon/illustrations by Jin-Gyun Ahn et al., 『Dolmens Containing the Secret of the Formation of an Ancient State on the Korean Peninsula』, Open Museum 2006, p. 35. Pages 33-34 of this book reproduce the figure of a chief with a bronze mirror reflecting off light hanging around his neck, although it may be an imagination-reflecting a lot of historical data and historical evidence. □

⁶⁴ Chang-Beom Park, 『Our History Carved in the Sky』, Gimm-Young Publishers, Inc. 2004, p. 106.

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found, it seems a little uncertain to say that 100% of the dolmens are tombs.⁶⁵ The fourth proposition is considered valid as long as it has been found today that the star hole dolmens revealed constellations and astronomical maps.

However, I want to add a fifth proposition, which is, **“Dolmens are the remains of the spiritual culture in which the spirits of prehistoric people are embedded.”** This is because, above all, the dolmens are regarded as the remains of the megalithic culture in world history, and the soul and spirit cannot be left out from the purpose and motive for the construction of dolmens. Moreover, the words symbolized by the astronomical maps on the star hole dolmens can be deciphered today. The following photographs are the South Dipper(see Fig.9, Fig.11), the Big Dipper(see Fig.10), and the Sun, the Moon, the South Dipper, the Big Dipper(see Fig.12) engraved on the dolmen's cover stones.



Fig. 9. The South Dipper on Yongmunbawi Rock in Jukseoru, Samcheok, Gangwon-do



Fig. 10. Ganghwa Island Three-way Intersection Dolmen engraved with the Big Dipper and North Star



Fig. 11. Recently discovered tombs in Malisan, Haman-gun, Gyeongnam

Constellations such as the South Dipper and Scorpio are engraved on the 13th tomb (provided by the Cultural Heritage Administration)

⁶⁵ For instance, the natures of dolmens other than tombs can be reviewed in the following papers: See Moon-Sik Ha, 「A Study on the Dolmen Worshipping Rituals」, 『Comparative Folklore Studies』, Vol. 35, 2008, p. 108. See Yung-Jo Lee and Moon-Sik Ha, 「A Study on the Different Types of Korean Dolmens」, 『東方學志』, No. 63, 1989, pp. 46-50. Yeong-Mun Lee, 「Review of the Functional Character of Dolmens」, 『Korean Dolmen Society Study』, Hakyoun Cultural Co., 2002, pp. 217-236.



Fig. 12. Dolmens with the drawings of four constellations in Mang-ri (Yongin, Gyeonggi-do)

With regard to the transmission of tomb murals and their association with prehistoric dolmens, Prof. Chang-Beom Park and Hong-Jin Yang appropriately mention that: “The constellations drawn on the Goguryeo tombs are (...) associated with the constellations found on the cover stones of dolmens built before the Three Kingdoms period. The Big Dipper, the South Dipper, the Hairy Head (Pleiades star cluster), and the Three Stars (Orion or Scorpio σ star) were already favorite constellations in the megalithic culture era and were often engraved on dolmens. (...) Constellations such as the Big Dipper and the South Dipper were carved on the dolmens on the Korean Peninsula several thousands of years before the Goguryeo period.”⁶⁶

That those drawings of stars that frequently appear in ancient tomb murals were passed down from the prehistoric period seems to be a quite natural conclusion because the constellations in ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo also appear on the cover stones of prehistoric dolmens. “In domestic studies of dolmen, constellation pattern grooves for the Big Dipper, the South Dipper, the Hairy Head (Pleiades), and the Three Stars, etc. have been found on many dolmen cover stones. These constellation grooves were passed down to Goguryeo tomb murals, indicating that the drawings of stars have been handed down on the Korean Peninsula since the Bronze Age.”⁶⁷ However, since the South Dipper, the Hairy Head, which is also called Pleiades, and the Arctic Three Stars⁶⁸ are entirely different from constellations in the Chinese astronomical system, it is believed that the star hole dolmens have inherited their own astronomical system since prehistoric times.

The following is a menhir in Yonghari, Yanggu-gun, Gangwon-do (see Fig.13). As anyone can see, the stone holes in it form the shape of a certain constellation. “In what appears to be a male menhir, there are large grooves carved in the shape of the Big Dipper. There are also large grooves in the female menhir, but their meaning is not clear.”⁶⁹ However, Professor Chang-Beom Park said in 『Our History Carved in the Sky』 that the grooves engraved on this Yonghari menhir “appear to be the Big Dipper and the South Dipper.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Chang-Beom Park and Hong-Jin Yang, 「The Constellations and Astronomical System of Ancient Tomb Murals from Goguryeo」, 『The Journal of the Korean History of Science Society』, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2009, p. 38.

⁶⁷ Hong-Jin Yang and Gi-Dae Bok, 「Archaeological Astronomical Study on Dolmens and Rock Drawings in the Surroundings in Haicheng, China」, 『Eastern Asia Archaeological Studies』, Volume 29 (2012. 12), P. 311.

⁶⁸ As Professor Il-Kwon Kim properly explains, whereas Goguryeo regarded the three North Stars as a constellation of North Stars neighboring the Big Dipper, China expressed the five North Stars as a constellation of North Stars (See Il-Kwon Kim, 「Goguryeo People's Faith in Constellations」, 『Religious Culture Study』, No. 2, 2000, p. 17). In fact, the three North Stars neighboring the Big Dipper can be seen in the cover stones of dolmens and can be easily found in the ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo (Yaksuri ancient tomb, Ji'an Wuhui no. 4-5 Tombs, Tonggu four guardian deities tomb, Jiǎodǐ tomb, Dance tomb, etc.).

⁶⁹ Chang-Beom Park, 『Astronomy』, Ewha Womans University Press 2009, p. 29.

⁷⁰ Chang-Beom Park, 『Our History Carved in the Sky』, Gimm-Young Publishers, Inc. 2004, p. 102.

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Fig. 13. Menhir in Yonghari, Yanggu-gun, Gangwon-do (Chang-Beom Park, <Astronomy>, p. 28)

However, on carefully reviewing this lying menhir, it can be seen that although the leftmost star holes seem to represent the South Dipper with the clear shape of a ladle formed by six star holes, it is engraved with small star holes and the two large star holes between the South Dipper and the Big Dipper seem to be the sun and the moon. Therefore, this menhir seems to have already been equipped with the composition of the four constellations consisting of the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper from astronomical thought. It is only surprising that the astronomical system of the four constellations was understood to protect and care for the entire cosmos in the prehistoric period.

* The sun and the moon

The fact that the sun and the moon were passed down with a great weight of existence, not only in the constellation maps on star hole dolmens, but also in the drawings of the four constellations and the paintings of the four guardian deities is imprinted well in the concept of “the people of baedal (배달).” Baedal is no other than the sun and the moon as a modification from the origin of the word ‘balkdal (밝달).’ It is almost a self-evident truth that in the “people of baedal,” which means people of the sun and the moon, these beings are imprinted in the paintings of the four guardian deities, the drawings of the four constellations, and the constellation maps on star holes dolmens.

Comb-patterned pottery is often mentioned as a representative relic of the Neolithic period in Korea. It has often been excavated on the Korean Peninsula and the northeastern part of China, which was an area of Gojoseon (see Fig.14). This pottery has countless patterns like the teeth of a comb on its surface. As is already well-known, the comb patterns symbolize the light of the sun. Since prehistoric times, the Dongyi tribe and the Gojoseon people worshiped the sun very much and looked at it with eyes full of reverence.



Fig. 14. Comb-patterned pottery excavated in the Niheliang area of the Hongshan civilization (from about 6000 to 5000B.C)

However, comb-patterned pottery is often excavated everywhere in the region where the Dongyi tribe that cultivated the Northern Culture was distributed. In 『Dongyi Korean History』, Dr. Ki-Hoon Lee introduces comb-patterned pottery from about 8500 to 7000 years ago, excavated in the northeastern region of China where the ancient Dongyi tribe lived, and clarifies that this pottery is in the same class as that of the Korean Peninsula.⁷¹

⁷¹ See Ki-Hoon Lee, 『Dongyi Korean History』, Book Future 2015, pages 23-27.

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This sun worship also continued in the Bronze Age, so that round bronze mirrors that symbolize the sun were made and countless comb teeth patterns were designed and added, as shown by the fine-patterned mirrors. Those who reflected the light with bronze mirrors were warlords, chief priests, or tribal chiefs that literally played the role of an “agent of the sun.” The slashes engraved on the bronze mirrors were no other than a pattern that symbolizes light.⁷²

The cave mural below⁷³ expresses scenes where people in the Neolithic period harvest grain that appears to be sorghum or millet, and they work very strenuously and make joyful cheers. Surprisingly, the sun and the moon are clearly drawn in the upper center of the mural. They recognized that the sun and moon play a central role in this amazing harvest, as well as the plants and their own efforts (see Fig.15).



Fig. 15. Harvest in the Neolithic period

This cave mural is a scene in which inhabitants living in the southern part of the Han River harvest sorghum or millet. This shows well the fact that people who settled in one place succeeded in growing and harvesting grain, that is, in the food procurement method called farming. The success of farming brought about tremendous changes to life culture as a whole. Since it was possible to procure winter food, travel for hunting and harvesting became unnecessary. People began to settle in one place, form tribes and villages and concentrate on farming.

The process of farming must have been a mystical experience made through communion between nature and humans. The Neolithic people realized that the help of heaven was as important to the success of farming as human strength and effort. They learned that the sun, moon, rain, and amount of sunshine were crucial. Therefore, it seems that they held grand offerings of thanksgiving to heaven in autumn when they harvested. This tradition seems to have been passed down for a long time, leading to the Yeonggo of Buyeo, the Dongmaeng of Goguryeo, the Mucheon of Dongye, and various thanksgiving festivals of the Three Han States.

The great meaning of existence of the sun and the moon is revealed in the ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo. According to Professor Il-Kwon Kim, “Not all mural tombs have constellations, but all constellation tombs have the sun and the moon. If you review the 29 murals with the sun and the moon, you will see that the sun was placed in the eastern sky and the moon in the western sky. Why was the moon placed in the west? If you go outside at night and look at the sky, the question will be easily resolved. Of course, the full moon becomes visible in the eastern sky, but most often it is visible in the western sky. Since the sun rises in the eastern sky, the sun and the moon were represented in the azimuthal symmetry of east and west.”⁷⁴

The sun was usually configured with a three-legged crow,⁷⁵ and the moon with a jade rabbit, toad, or cassia bark tree. The “three-legged crow with 12 beads” excavated from Jinpa-ri No. 7 tomb⁷⁶ decorated with gilt bronze has excellent aesthetics of

⁷² See Ki-Hoon Lee, 『Dongyi Korean History』, Book Future 2015, pages 24-25. Here, Dr. Ki-Hoon Lee presents comb-patterned bronze mirrors made in the Shang Dynasty (Yin Dynasty), which is in the Dongyi line, in the 16th century BC.

⁷³ History Newspaper Compilation Committee, 『History News』 (Primitive times~Unified Silla), Four Seasons Publishing House, 2001, p. 13.

⁷⁴ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 74.

⁷⁵ The myth that a crow lives in the sun appears in the 『Classic of the Mountains and Seas』, a mythography of ancient Dongyi.

⁷⁶ <https://blog.naver.com/hongrumong/222545095994>.
<https://blog.naver.com/eoruddl1234/222523485965>

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curves and 12 spoke beads to hold the wheel to add to its mystery. These 12 beads seem to be the configuration of the wheel of time that rotates 12 months in one year.⁷⁷



Fig. 16. The shapes of the sun god and the moon god painted in the fourth grave of the Wūkuī tomb.⁷⁸

In addition, there is a scene in the Gaema tomb in which the jade rabbit and the toad, which are the spirits of the moon, grind the elixir of life in a mortar. Here, the jade rabbit is personified as a bipedal animal and the toad next to it is looking at the elixir of life carefully, like a human being. “Since jade is a mineral that helps longevity, the letters attached with jade (here, the jade rabbit) are all related to the myth of eternal youth. Even today, we see the myth of eternal youth created by immortal spirits in the moon.”⁷⁹

The no. 4 grave of the Wūkuī tomb in Jiān shows the sun god and the moon god flying up carrying the sun and the moon, respectively, on their heads (see Fig. 16). The shapes of the sun god and the moon god originate from Bok-hee and Yeo-wa, the mythical figures of the ancient Dongyi tribe. The tribe are ethnic Koreans, and their top clothes are clearly in the form of traditional Korean clothes. Since the sun and moon they worship also represent the cosmic order of heaven, earth, yin and yang in Eastern thought, they must be important mythical characters.

The sun and the moon occupy key positions in Goguryeo's astronomical worldview, and in the astronomical system of the four bearings of the tomb murals, they are in charge of east and west. Regarding the one extraordinarily large star hole in the celestial planisphere carved in the stone slabs of many dolmens as the sun, it seems to be a natural conclusion corresponding to the era of “solar megalithic culture.”

As we have considered above, the moon is by no means an insignificant being compared to the sun in oriental astronomy. The sun and the moon, which stand straight as natural-supernatural beings that illuminate the sky and the whole world, led to the development of the yin-yang hypothesis in the ancient Orient. Therefore, it can be seen that their philosophical significance is deep and old. The meaning of the existence of the moon is a symbol of the lunar calendar that is comparable to the solar calendar.

The reason why people in prehistoric times gave the moon a special meaning is that they read some absolute, supernatural, and divine meanings from it, similarly to the case of the sun. These meanings could have been sufficiently sensed only from the fact that the moon plays the role of a large lamp to brighten the world and cosmos in the night sky and drive out evil spirits. Furthermore, prehistoric people developed a precise calendar from the constantly changing appearance of the moon and the relevant changes on the land and sea.

In addition to the calendar, as M. Eliade (1996) said in “Metaphysics of the Moon,”⁸⁰ it is believed that the ontological fate of human beings must certainly have been read from the moon. It was sufficiently possible to read the birth, death, and even resurrection of humans in the changing rhythms of the moon, thereby understanding the integration with nature of the moon's rhythms and humans. M. Eliade wrote that based on their rhythms, which coincided with those of the moon, humans should have even been able to be reconciled with their death:

“Through the various phases of the moon—birth, death, and rebirth—humans came to know their mode of being in the midst of the universe and gained hope that they could survive or resurrect even after death. (...) Furthermore, the grant of religious

⁷⁷ See Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』 Four Seasons 2008, p. 75.

⁷⁸ https://blog.naver.com/lubere_love/221024148780.

<https://blog.daum.net/jayslee/18120708>

⁷⁹ Il-Kwon Kim, the above book, p. 76. See the picture of the Jade Rabbit and Toad that mill medicine drawn in the Gaema tomb.

⁸⁰ M. Eliade (translated by Dong-Ha Lee), 『The sacred and the profane』, Hakminsa 1996, p. 140.

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value to the rhythm of the moon may have probably enabled primitive man to carry out the first great integration of mankind and the universe. (...) We can even talk about the metaphysics of the moon in the sense that it is a consistent system of 'truth' related to living creatures, all things that share life in the universe, that is, everything in the process of creation-growth-shrinkage-death-resurrection. It should not be forgotten that what the moon reveals to religious men is not only that death is inseparably entangled with life, but also above all the fact that death is not the end, but a new birth always follows a death. The moon grants religious value to cosmic creation and reconciles humans with death.”⁸¹

* The Big Dipper and the South Dipper

The shape of the constellation that appears most often on the cover stones of dolmens and tomb murals is the Big Dipper. The astronomical thought about the Big Dipper seems to have originated from a prehistoric era so remote that the origin is unknown, and although the meaning of the existence of the Big Dipper has faded as modern and contemporary science and technology dominated since Confucianism in the Joseon Dynasty, it is believed that the foregoing thought is still deeply rooted in people, consciously and unconsciously.

The Big Dipper is a constellation that is easily found in star hole dolmens and tomb murals along with the North Star, which decorates the northern sky, the Arctic Three Stars, the Pleiades cluster, which are also called Hairy Head, and Orion. “The most prominent constellations in the northern hemisphere night sky are the Big Dipper, the Pleiades cluster, and Orion, and these constellations have long been drawn on tombs and rocks in Korea.”⁸²

By the way, many prehistoric petroglyphs in which a yut-pan was drawn are found throughout the Korean Peninsula,⁸³ and opinions are divided among experts as to why the yut-pan was engraved on rocks, but the outline was clearly revealed by Professor Il-Kwon Kim's excellent analysis.⁸⁴ The game of yut using a yut-pan is played by modeling the movement of the Big Dipper(see Fig.17).

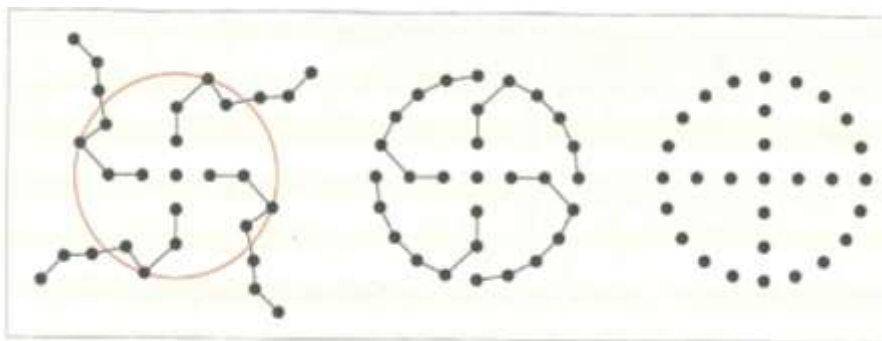


Fig. 17. A model of the one-day rotation of the Big Dipper in four bearings on yut-pans composed by Professor Il-Kwon Kim

A yut-pan is a board for the game of yut, with a total of 29 marks including one point in the center, and the marks are made into four Big Dippers with seven stars each. **The shape of the Big Dipper rotating around the North Star at the center was precisely drawn. The circumstance where the constellation had been so revered from prehistoric times was embodied by the yut-pan. It is believed that eternity was inferred from the North Star, which is a fixed star, and eternity and immortality were inferred from the Big Dipper, which eternally transmigrates the North Star. Furthermore, the fate of humans on earth might have been associated with the Big Dipper, which revolves around the North Star once in a day in which a day and night pass, similar to the Earth.**

The great importance of the South Dipper and the Big Dipper is also shown in the 『History of Taoism in Joseon』 written by Neung-Hwa Lee (1981). He mentions that the South Dipper are among the constellations that occupy important positions in the star family and points out that “the South Dipper and the Big Dipper control the fates of all persons on earth such as poverty,

⁸¹ M. Eliade, the above book, pp. 139-140.

⁸² See Hong-Jin Yang and Gi-Dae Bok, 『Archaeological Astronomical Study on Dolmens and Rock Drawings in the Surroundings in Haicheng, China』, 『Eastern Asia Archaeological Studies』(The Association of East Asian Ancient Studies), Volume 29 (2012. 12), pp. 327-328, 332-333.

⁸³ Examples are drawings in Sugok-ri, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do and Nongbaljae, Jingol Village in Yeongil-man, Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea. For these yut-pan drawings, see 『Korean Prehistoric Petroglyphs』, Kookmin University Museum, 1993, p. 113.

⁸⁴ Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, pp. 28-45.

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prosperity, success, and failure,”⁸⁵ and adds that these constellations are closely related to Taoism. Similarly, Professor Jae-Seo Jeong(2006) said, “The Big Dipper is a place where the souls of the dead return and is a constellation that oversees death. In contrast, the South Dipper is a constellation that oversees life. All of these ideas originate from Taoism.”⁸⁶

Professor Il-Kwon Kim noted that traces of the Taoist astrological notion that the Big Dipper and the South Dipper were established as the landmark constellations of the north and the south and oversee death and life, respectively, can be read from ancient tomb murals, and that the constellations “respond to each other from the north and the south.”⁸⁷ In addition, while interpreting these constellations in the Yaksu-ri ancient tomb, Professor Kim also said, “The Taoist astrological notion that the South Dipper oversees the health and longevity of humans and the Big Dipper cares for the afterlife of humans are projected on them.”⁸⁸

Therefore, “the guardian constellations in the four bearings,” the east, west, south, and north, together with the sun and the moon,⁸⁹ is a worldview completed as a system that protects and cares for the entire world. Then, the special meaning of the South Dipper and the Big Dipper seems to have already been carved in the cover stones of prehistoric dolmens as the philosophy of care or the idea of protection of the world. How unjust the prejudice of human history that people in further ancient times were more savage and less evolved was plainly revealed.

What on earth does the system of the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations, which are an unfamiliar culture today, tell us? What do the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations in ancient tomb murals from Goguryeo, the engravings of the four guardian deities in bronze mirrors, and the four constellations carved in the prehistoric star hole dolmens profess to us? Above all, the paintings of the four guardian deities “**protect heaven and the whole world**”⁹⁰ as with the drawings of the four constellations. The guardian deities in charge of the four bearings “repel evil spirits and lead the souls of the dead to the heavenly world.”⁹¹ **The system of the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations that were passed down from prehistoric dolmens through ancient times is a meaningful philosophy to care for and protect the entire cosmos.** The philosophical system that protects and cares for all things is the spiritual archetype of the Korean people passed down from prehistoric and ancient times.

5. Philosophical justification of the system of the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations-justification with the “sensus communis” by Kant’s “reflective judgment” and the grant of ontological meaning

1) Modern epistemology and the sun, moon, and stars

In cases where nature is simply regarded as an object of experience and recognition as in the ideology of modern philosophy and even in the case of Kant, who regards nature only as an object of recognition according to the innate principle of regularity, nature is not fully understood to fit its status. Of course, no matter how coldly we perceive and understand nature, the whatness (Washeit) of nature will never be fully grasped. However, it is quite crude to see nature only as an important object of recognition, matter, “extended entity (res extensa)” (R. Descartes) or phenomena that are revealed to the outside.

Of course, the sun, moon, stars, earth, sky, and nature can never be put into the “world behind us,” that is, the world of metaphysics or myths, for the reason that they cannot be approached with human knowledge or recognition ability because they can be witnessed in other places than the world of notions or abstractions, that is, above us and around us. However, nature can never be regarded as simple external phenomena or matter because the reason, sensibility, and even understanding possessed by humans cannot capture or grasp all of it, because the sun, moon, stars, and sky are so vast and far away.⁹² Under these conditions, ‘lucidity’ and ‘ascertainment’ (especially from Descartes), which are the ideology of modern epistemology, cannot be expected. Moreover, because aesthetic feelings for nature belong to the realm of sensible truth, they are neither lucid nor ascertained, and are in a state of chaos and fusion.

Even if Kant crushes “dogmatic metaphysics” through a “revolution of mindset (Revolution der Denkart),” the lack of ability still remains. The thinking abilities (sensibility, understanding, and reason) used by Kant for accurate epistemology are also

⁸⁵ Lee Neung-hwa (annotation Jong-Eun Lee), 『History of Joseon Taoism』, Boseong Culture Co., 1981, p. 290.

⁸⁶ Jae-Seo Jeong, 『The Origin and History of Korean Taoism』, Ewha Womans University Press 2006, p.183. Parentheses are supplementation by me.

⁸⁷ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Goguryeo People’s Faith in Constellations』, 『Religious Culture Study』, No. 2, 2000, p. 23.

⁸⁸ See Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, pp. 108, 262.

⁸⁹ Il-Kwon Kim, 『The Sky and Constellations in Our History,』 Gozwin 2008, p. 263.

⁹⁰ Il-Kwon Kim, 『Constellations and Myths of Goguryeo』, Four Seasons 2008, p. 153. The emphasis was made by me.

⁹¹ See “World Cup Special Project History Special,” Part 2, Ancient Tomb Murals, KBS, broadcast on June 8, 2002.

⁹² B. Pascal says that compared to this vast and unchanging universe, humans are no more than nothing.

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no more than very insignificant tools in capturing and grasping the world of nature. Even if the phenomenologist Husserl shot an arrow of consciousness, the return (noema) is extremely insignificant.

The fact that approaching the universe through epistemology alone has limitations was already professed by Plato in 『Timaeus』. Since the cosmos is a “prototype as an eternal idea” and an image of a “paradeigma of design” by Demiurge, the cosmology that fits it does not “ascribe logos” or *alēthēs logos*, but only “*eikos logos*” (probable explanations).⁹³

Philosophical endeavors since the modern era have been so skewed toward epistemology that they have not been able to see other forms of nature and are concentrated only on the recognizing subjects such as regarding nature as an object standing opposite to the recognizing subject, as materials, or as an “extended entity” that has meaning only when it is represented. However, the most primitive way we associate with the world and nature are feelings formed through emotions, sentiments, sensibility, and intellect prior to theoretical recognition or practical actions, and a sense of wonder about the existence of beings (without existing), or an aesthetic and sublime feeling.

Unlike in the 『Critique of Pure Reason (Kritik der reinen Vernunft)』, where the presence of sensibility is lower compared to that of understanding or reason, sensibility is newly reevaluated in Kant's 『Critique of Judgement (Kritik der Urteilskraft)』. Sensibility is a way to give the objects of recognition and to face the objects and is a more innate condition than reason or understanding. Most importantly, it acts before understanding that conceptualizes and theorizes objects, that is, before the tyranny of understanding is applied.

2) “Reflective judgment” and “*sensus communis*”

In Kant's strict philosophy of reason (whether theoretical or practical), it is difficult to read the sun, moon, stars, earth, and nature. However, the aesthetic and sublime aspects of beings can be read with the ‘judgment (Urteilskraft)’ in his 『Critique of Judgement』

, which literally means the ability to accurately judge and decide individual events, facts, or things or objects. Then, judgment and the ability to judge are inevitably placed in a mutual relationship network between external things, facts, or objects on the one hand and humans who judge on the other hand. Therefore, judgment has its own mediating function.

In other words, judgment is the thinking ability placed between understanding and reason and the ability to reflect and intervene in special and universal things. While the ability to recognize the universal is understanding, judgment is, above all, the thinking ability to embrace the special in the universal. While understanding inherently grants the law of nature and reason grants the law of freedom, judgment is the ability to mediate the relationship between the two. However, unlike understanding that can be taught and reinforced by rules, judgment has a unique character in that it is polished only by intellectual and personal maturity.

Understanding is the ability to recognize by concept and planning ability is the innate intuitive ability, while judgment is the ability to relate intuition to concepts. If judgment can relate intuition to concepts, i.e., if natural and aesthetic objects enable understanding and planning ability to freely interact and harmonize with each other, these objects are considered purposeful for judgment while giving aesthetic pleasure. This process, called aesthetic judgment (*ästhetisches Urteil*), does not depend on theoretical knowledge of the cause or concept of the object, but is related to the representation of the object, and questions whether this representation is liked (causes aesthetic pleasure).⁹⁴

Kant divided judgment into “the determining power of judgment (*die bestimmende Urteilskraft*)” and “reflexive judgment (*die reflexierende Urteilskraft*).” The former is the thinking ability that was highlighted in the 『Critique of Pure Reason』 and the latter in the 『Critique of Judgement』. “Reflective judgment” is the ability to discover the universal from the special, even if certain recognition is not acquired, through *sensus communis*⁹⁵ or resonance.

The *sensus communis*, then, transcends the dimension of simple emotions and plays the role of an objective principle, rule, norm, and ideology. Special beings, such as the sun, moon, stars, sky, and earth, were accepted as beings that arouse a sense of awe and that protect the whole cosmos, not by private feelings or arbitrary ways, but (accepted as the universal) through construction by *sensus communis*, sympathy, and resonance.

Moreover, if everybody in a cultural area has a *sensus communis* that in the drawings of the four constellations, the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper are guardian deities that are in charge of their respective bearings, they will acquire universality within that culture. Unlike intellectual judgment, aesthetic judgment is the ability to naturally judge and universally convey the emotions we feel about a given representation without mediation by concepts or logic.⁹⁶

⁹³ See Platon, übersetzt von F. Schleiermacher, *Sämtliche Werke VIII(Timaios)*, Insel: Frankfurt a.M. Leizig 1991, 29c-d.

⁹⁴ See I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §40.

⁹⁵ See I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §20.

⁹⁶ See I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §40.

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Although aesthetic judgment is subjective, it does not remain at the private level and can acquire universal and inevitable consequences.⁹⁷ The universality and necessity obtained are of course not derived from theoretical or logical consequences but are based on “sensus communis” (Gemeinsinn). That is to say, they are achieved from communal judgments supported by universal agreement, sympathy, and inevitable approval. Since they are based on a sensus communis made by communal judgments, they have the property of being universally transmissible.⁹⁸ In other words, communal judgment is the rule, norm, and ideology pursued by the community, is the judgment shared by the community, and at least gives universal satisfaction to the members of the community.⁹⁹

Thus, reflective judgment can arouse sensus communis (Gemeinsinn), sympathy (Mitgefühl), and resonance (Mittönen, Nachklang) so that universality can be built. Purposefulness opens up the possibility to build such universality. That is to say, the principle of purposefulness, not arbitrary attitude, or randomness—although it has no certain concept—enables building sympathy with the sensus communis and producing aesthetic judgments with subjective universality.

All people in the prehistoric age sympathized and resonated with the fact that the sun, moon, stars, sky, and earth were not ordinary beings, but great beings with a very large weight of existence. In the process through which the sun, moon, South Dipper, and Big Dipper in the drawings of the four constellations were established as guardian deities of four bearings, at least within a cultural area, the belief was accepted as being universal through sensus communis and the process of sympathy and resonance, and not by personal judgment or arbitrariness. Sensus communis and sympathy were premised when people build something, which is meaningless or in a state of naked objects, into some special thing, and this aesthetic judgment is achieved through universal acceptance and transmission, rather than the possibility of proving it theoretically.

3) Justification of giving ontological meaning

Epistemology is not the only material for building a house of philosophy. The realms of existence, the will, language, and life are core elements and keys in building the house of philosophy, as much as is the realm of awareness. In other words, these are the beginnings of philosophy and are as important as epistemology. Perhaps they can be seen as more important and more essentially premised than epistemology. For example, the reverse of Descartes's proposition that “I think; therefore, I am.,” that is, “I exist; therefore, I think,” is a very valid proposition, and existence is a prerequisite for being able to think. One can think because one exists.

Likewise, ‘will’ is also the beginning of philosophy, and the act of giving meaning is related to a sort of will, and we naturally give one or another meaning while living a life (sinngaben, sinnverleihen). Of course, the granting of meaning is not just done arbitrarily without any basis. Mankind has been leading its life while granting these or those meanings to the sun, moon, stars, sky, earth, and even to fixed stars, planets, and numerous constellations, and it is no exaggeration to say that there are no exceptions to this no matter how much history has flowed. There are no exceptions to the numerous beings around us, as well as literary and artistic works.

The reason why a literary work or a work of art is judged to be excellent is that a special meaning, which is never arbitrary, was given and established by accumulated “sensus communis” (Kant), sympathy, and resonance of people. We take such acts of giving meaning as almost natural. It is even more so because the meaning was given by an autonomous act and not by any coercion.

For example, we give meanings to the works of C.D. Friedrich, Van Gogh, Homer, Goethe, or Shakespeare, or < The Old Man and the Sea > by Hemingway, indicating that they are great. The meanings are given not only by attitudes, which are not arbitrary or random, but also because there is something that triggers the act to give special meanings to the works. We even lead a realistic life while giving countless meanings to things such as hometown, friends, lovers, money, lighthouses, nature, mountains, rivers, seas, studies, art, and so on.

Some people might demand the reasons why we gave meanings to the sun, moon, Big Dipper, and South Dipper. Although it can be said that the celestial world is a very special being and has already triggered these suggestions so that we can give such meanings, it can also be said that we freely gave the meanings with our will because of some “sensus communis”, sympathy, and resonance.

Of course, the granting of meaning did not happen without any basis, nor was it arbitrary. For instance, people should have known from the beginning of human history that the sun or the moon directly has tremendous influences, and in the era of solar megalithic culture, the influence should have been more powerful, as the name meant.

Our acts of giving meanings so freely resulted from the use of free will and are quite natural. Our possession of these and those wills is the absolute motive and beginning of which the reason cannot be thought after reduction. That is to say, the fact

⁹⁷ See I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §21.

⁹⁸ See I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §21.

⁹⁹ See I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §38- §39.

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that I have this or that will (das Ich-will) is one of the grounds of which the grounds cannot be asked as with the fact that I exist (das Ich-bin), I think (das Ich-denke), and I live (das Ich-lebe), and G. Schmidt(1979) identifies these as “four basic certainties.”¹⁰⁰

Humans give meaning to things and also to spiritual and abstract things. **The act of giving meanings is an undeniable philosophical act of man, similar to the act of thinking.** If an object has been specially given a meaning, it will be literally reborn as a meaningful or valuable being. In particular, although the world that is simply in the objective world is just a world of ‘thereness’, when a meaning or value is given to this world, it is reborn as a world with a certain special meaning. Of course, although being in this or that way can be also said to be in the realm of mysterious miracles, people are usually unaware of the fact that beings exist and the mystery of that existence.

Humans are beings that lead their lives while giving meanings (to things) and learning meanings by experience. When approaching the world of nature and things, **humans identify the fact that beings exist before judging whether it is true or not and give the meaning of existence based on the beings that exist**, and such granting of meaning is always communal granting of meaning because the act of giving meanings is not possible unless such beings are not only given in advance, but also exist in this or that way to trigger meanings.

The constellations are not the objects of truth and falsehood, but they can sufficiently be objects of the meaning of existence, and not only the sun and the moon, but also the seven stars in the northern sky that came to have the name Big Dipper and the six stars in Sagittarius in the southern sky that were reborn as the South Dipper were selected as such objects. These constellations have the status and weight of existence not because of any theory or coercion, but because they were learned through communion with us, and mankind sympathized and resonated with them.

Besides the constellations, which are surrounded by mysteries and are supernatural, there are many cases where a certain being has a great meaning of existence by just existing. Examples include the meaning of existence of O. Henry's “The Last Leaf,” N. Hawthorne's “Great Stone Face,” fairy tale villages, lighthouses, etc. and if only the existence of your lover in the vicinity of you becomes the power for you to exist and live, it goes without saying that the lover per se has a great meaning of existence.

The four constellations have profound and huge meanings of existence not because of epistemology, which cannot reveal the meaning of such existence in any case because of its own limitations, but because of the status and weight of existence of the beings as such. The meanings were given not by any change, theory, or epistemology, but by the communion, sympathy, and resonance that occurred between these beings and humans.

6. Dialectic in the West and the system of care

In the Western mind, the principle of dialectic has been deeply established since ancient Greek times, and Hegel’s dialectic and Darwin’s theory of evolution can be seen as thoughts that blossomed that dialectic. In other words, they well reflect the model of Western thought. The principles of Western dialectic imprinted in Hegel’s philosophy of history and Darwin’s theory of evolution are faithful to the foundation laid down by Heraclitus of ancient Greece, and generally pursue the development of history (Hegel) or the survival of the fittest (Darwin) through the process in which confrontations and conflicts are gradually accumulated, synthesized, and resolved.

As the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus called struggles (Polemos) “the father of all things” and “the king that rules the world,”¹⁰¹ these struggles are regarded as the fundamental axis that enables the principle of dialectic to exist. Therefore, in order for this principle to be activated, struggles and conflicts must be built up between and against it, in principle. However, Hegel regarded the phenomena that occurred after these struggles and conflicts only as the synthesis (Synthese) of advanced patterns and did not see ruin and decline.

Darwin's theory of evolution is almost identical to the foregoing. Expanding the jungle law or the law of survival of the fittest in the animal world as if they are universal and inevitable laws and applying them to the historical dialectic itself is irrational. The characteristics of dialectic revealed by Heraclitus, Hegel, and Darwin—as if they form the basis of Western thought—are opposition, collision, conflicts, and division.

Their dialectical thought is well reflected in people’s acts of encouraging the monopolization of the strong regardless of means and justifying the dying out of the weak in an “era of infinite competition” that appeared in today's capitalism and neo-capitalist systems. This thought, originated and activated by Western dialectic, was globalized to reign over the whole world. As

¹⁰⁰ See G. Schmidt: *Subjektivitaet und Sein*, Bouvier Verlag: Bonn 1979, pp. 69, 89, 127, 155, especially p. 60 and thereafter. G. Schmidt identifies the undeniable certainty as “the four fundamental certainties” (vier fundamentale Gewissheiten).

¹⁰¹ Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Rowohlt: Hamburg 1957, 27(Herakleitos 53). The original text reads: πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς.

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the West controls the paradigms in all fields such as politics and economy, culture and society, science and technology civilization, and commercial capitalism, the principle of dialectic is solidifying into an ideology that dominates the world.

Regrettably, in the wholeness and totalitarian philosophy constructed by Hegel, the individual, the concrete, and variety are nothing more than parts of a totalization, and in this context, philosophy cannot escape the situation of a prisoner trapped in a closed system. However, modern thinking, in which diversity is respected, rejects such a grandly built system, wants to be an activity that constantly breaks down such a system and standardized frameworks, aims at semi-closed and open attitudes instead of such a closed system, and wants to solve vivid problems in many different ways.

Maturity, ascension, and synthesis, however, are not given by the Western dialectic struggles (Heraclitus, Hegel), the animal principles of survival of the fittest and winner takes all (Darwin), the ruthless hammering of existing values (Nietzsche),¹⁰² the Cold War ideology of “you die and live,” Eurocentrism, white-centrism, and colonialism.

On the contrary, the world goes one step further toward evolution, development, and perfection under the principles of convergence, harmony, and fusion, and in the midst of acknowledging each other's existence and caring for each other. As H. Rombach noted, “At a high level, the worlds no longer enter into relations while fighting each other, but do so while helping each other, and history becomes human only in such cases.”¹⁰³

Rather than the Western Darwinian principle of survival of the fittest, meaning “You should die so that I can live, ¹⁰⁴ Hegel's dialectical principle of setting those who won in struggles as the fittest, and the culture of winner take all generalized from these principles, harmonious coexistence and mutual help will lead to the rise of the world. The convergence and fusion of the West and the Orient, Apollonian and Hermes worlds, brightness and darkness, order and creation, and existence and creation leading to the philosophy of accompanied performance to voice together and harmoniously resonate together to create symphony music (Sym-phonie : συμ-φωνία) is the task for our future.

The philosophical worldview of care identified through the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations is to care for and protect the entire cosmos, including humans. The four constellations carved in star hole dolmens, the four guardian deities engraved on bronze mirrors, and the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations in tomb murals cover ultimate human problems, such as thoughts about immortality, about worshipping heaven, and the philosophy of returning home along with the “philosophy of care.” Protecting, caring for, and guarding the entire world—which will be identified as the “philosophy of care” — is in stark contrast to Western philosophy, in which even ‘wars’ or ‘struggles’ become factors of the dialectic for development. That is to say, since the philosophical worldview to care for and protect the whole world through the paintings of the four guardian deities and the four constellations is fundamentally different from the Western dialectic system (Heraclitus, Hegel) based on conflicts and war (polemos), it is believed that it should be newly illuminated in the history of human minds.

8. Concluding remarks

The attitude to bring down what happened in prehistoric times from the horizons of humanities and philosophy simply because they were not recorded in letters or because they are related to the “uncivilized” prehistoric age, shows both poor intelligence and arrogance. Rombach's observation that “People have never been ‘uncivilized’” reveals the mistake of failing to read the philosophical and spiritual worlds of prehistoric people, but rather making a hasty conclusion that they were “uncivilized.” Of course, most prehistoric relics are almost silent because they have not been handed down in letters. Therefore, it must be very difficult to plan to read ancient Korean philosophy from prehistoric dolmens because we cannot speak of our ancient philosophy while presenting farfetched allusions that cannot be proved or by bringing literary imagination or myth.

However, we have groundbreaking clues to approach the ancient philosophy of Korea. They are the four guardian deities carved in the dolmens and the drawings of the four guardian deities engraved on bronze mirrors, which are “talking stones” that tell what they are and “reflecting mirrors” that reflect their identity. These are “the truth of being” (A-letheia: Heidegger), which reveal their identity to the world of unconcealment and tell us that they are “things marked with the brand of the spirit” (Rombach).

People in prehistoric times revealed their thoughts about worshipping heaven, about returning home, and about immortality through the celestial planisphere carved as star holes on stone slabs, especially the drawings of the four constellations (sun, moon, Big Dipper, and South Dipper), and sublimated the foregoing into a system of philosophy of caring for and protecting the whole world. Why are the drawings of the four constellations and the paintings of the four guardian deities a system that protects and cares for the world? It is because the system was not established arbitrarily by them but with sympathy and resonance through *sensus*

¹⁰² For example, Nietzsche's “Revaluation of all values (Umwertung aller Werte).”

¹⁰³ H. Rombach (translated by Dong-Jin Jeon), 『Apollonian World and Hermesian World』, p. 270.

¹⁰⁴ The phenomena that occur in the animal world or in the process of animal evolution must not be bound by universal laws of man and the universe. The claims of the sophists, including Trajimakos (see Plato, 『State,』 Vol. 1), who shouted “Justice is the interest of the strong,” cannot be established as a universal law.

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communis (Kant), and was given meanings based on the powers triggered by the drawings of the four constellations and the beings in the paintings of the four guardian deities.

Here, the acts of giving meaning are the same type as ‘we think (wir denken)’, ‘we exist (wir sind)’, ‘we live (wir leben)’ or ‘we have this or that will (wir wollen),’ and are primitive situations the grounds of which can no longer be said by reducing, and the legitimacy or authenticity can no longer be asked. To say it more precisely, they are events that have nothing to do with “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” or pre-logical, pre-propositional events occurring before the situations of what can or what be said.

Humans are beings that lead their lives while giving meanings (to things) and acquiring meanings. When humans approach the world of nature and things, they identify the fact that beings exist before judging whether it is true or not and give the meaning of existence based on the beings that exist, and such granting of meanings is always communal granting of meaning.

Can we indeed affirm that prehistoric people were savage? Against this provocative common idea, we regard that not only were they never savage, but they also led their lives with a high level of mental culture. They viewed the cosmos as a beautiful, living, soul-bearing organism, as did Plato, and revealed through the stars and constellations on the celestial planisphere carved in stone slabs that the earth, stars, sky and humans have organic relationships.

However, the constellations were not just the dimensions of a work of art, but a star chart carved with a great spirit. The star chart contains not only reverence for nature and thoughts about worshipping heaven, but also heaven-oriented thought and thoughts about immortality and the philosophy of care to love and care for all things is concentrated through the drawings of the four constellations and the paintings of the four guardian deities.

Recalling H. Rombach's statement that “People have never been ‘barbaric’” again, we cannot but admit the fact that prehistoric people had a high level of spiritual culture. Filled with humble reverence for the sky and the celestial bodies, they gave special meanings to the constellations through the star hole dolmens and established a symbol system to protect and care for the whole cosmos. They viewed the sky and celestial bodies as being full of meaning and connected that with their lives. This view of the world was sublimated into the coexistence and win-win of humans and nature.

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