Adaptation and Transmission in Early East Asian Funerary Arts: The Three Goguryeo Four Spirits Tombs in Ji'an, China

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Abstract

ABSTRACT

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Heather B. Sutherland

Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 located in Ji’an, China are the subject of this dissertation. The tombs’ structures and the main theme of their pictorial programs, the Four Spirits (the Green Dragon, the Red Bird, the White Tiger, the Dark Warrior, and, sometimes, the Yellow Dragon), identify them as belonging to the late Goguryeo Kingdom (37 BCE-668 CE), one of the Korean Three Kingdoms. However, the interior decoration displays a multitude of regional variations making them unique among Goguryeo tombs with murals. Stylistically, the tomb paintings clearly belong to the sixth or early-seventh century. However, the main images and ideology the Ji’an murals represent can be traced to developments that occurred in Han China (202 BCE-220 CE) and demonstrate an affinity for and deep understanding of ancient Chinese mythology and cosmology. This study attempts to identify and analyze the myriad images within the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

This dissertation utilizes a variety of textual and visual sources. A combination of primary and secondary historical texts, both Korean and Chinese, are used to understand the period in which these tombs were created. Mythological and religious texts from the Zhou and Han periods of China are also important resources; concepts and creatures referred to in these texts permeated the funerary cultures of the later time periods, even on the Korean peninsula. In addition, funerary contracts and epitaphs as well as mirror inscriptions offer insight into the images found in the three Ji’an tombs. Mirrors are particularly important artifacts because, as portable objects, they demonstrate how images and concepts traveled to distant lands. Objects found in China, Korea, and Japan are evidence of the cultural interaction that the texts describe. Through these sources, many of the images within the three tombs can be identified. The imagery within the tombs can be interpreted as a symbolic recreation of the universe as well as aids for the deceased’s ascension to the immortal realm.

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ADAPTATION AND TRANSMISSION IN EARLY EAST ASIAN FUNERARY ARTS:

THE THREE GOGURYEO FOUR SPIRITS TOMBS IN JI’AN, CHINA

Heather B. Sutherland

A DISSERTATION

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Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2009

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ADAPTATION AND TRANSMISSION IN EARLY EAST ASIAN FUNERARY ARTS:

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HEATHER B. SUTHERLAND
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The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 located in Ji’an, China are the subject of this dissertation. The tombs’ structures and the main theme of their pictorial programs, the Four Spirits (the Green Dragon, the Red Bird, the White Tiger, the Dark Warrior, and, sometimes, the Yellow Dragon), identify them as belonging to the late Goguryeo Kingdom (37 BCE-668 CE), one of the Korean Three Kingdoms. However, the interior decoration displays a multitude of regional variations making them unique among Goguryeo tombs with murals. Stylistically, the tomb paintings clearly belong to the sixth or early-seventh century. However, the main images and ideology the Ji’an murals represent can be traced to developments that occurred in Han China (202 BCE-220 CE) and demonstrate an affinity for and deep understanding of ancient Chinese mythology and cosmology. This study attempts to identify and analyze the myriad images within the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

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<td><strong>Jomon</strong> &lt;br&gt; (c. 14000 - c. 400)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Western Zhou</strong> &lt;br&gt; (c. 1050 - 771)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern Zhou</strong> &lt;br&gt; Spring and Autumn Period &lt;br&gt; (c. 770 - 450)</td>
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<td><strong>Kofun</strong> &lt;br&gt; (c. 250 - 538)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Western Han</strong> &lt;br&gt; (202 BCE - 9 CE)</td>
<td><strong>Three Kingdoms</strong> &lt;br&gt; (108 BCE - 300 CE)</td>
<td><strong>Asuka</strong> &lt;br&gt; (538 - 645)</td>
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<td><strong>Hakuho</strong> &lt;br&gt; (645 - 710)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern Han</strong> &lt;br&gt; (25 - 220)</td>
<td><strong>Three Kingdoms</strong> &lt;br&gt; (57 BCE - 668 CE)</td>
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<td><strong>Northern and Southern Dynasties</strong> &lt;br&gt; (420 - 589)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tang</strong> &lt;br&gt; (618 - 907)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unified Silla</strong> &lt;br&gt; (668 - 935)</td>
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<td>原三國時代 (108 BCE - 300 CE)</td>
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<td><strong>Asuka</strong> 飛鳥時代 (538 - 645)</td>
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<td>(221 - 263)</td>
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<td><strong>Kofun</strong> 古墳時代 (c. 250 - 538)</td>
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<td><strong>Liu Song</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Southern Qi</strong></td>
<td><strong>Northern Wei</strong> 北魏 (386 - 534)</td>
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<td>(618 - 907)</td>
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<th>Notes</th>
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<td>King Guqyang 國壤王</td>
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<td>King Jangsu 長壽王</td>
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<td>King Munjamyeong 文咨明王</td>
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<td>King Yangwon 阳原王</td>
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<td>King Yeongnyu 榮留王</td>
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<td>King Bojang 寶臧王</td>
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<td>• Defeats Tang invasion in 645</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Yeon Gaesomun dies 665</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Falls to Tang-Silla forces in 668</td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Tens of thousands of tombs belonging to the Goguryeo Kingdom (c.37 BCE-668 CE),¹ one of the Korean Three Kingdoms, are scattered across the Yalu River² from North Korea just inside the border of China in Ji’an 集安, Jilin Province. (figs 1-2) Of these thousands, thirty-eight contain mural paintings. The subject of this dissertation is three such tombs with murals—Donggou Four Spirits Tomb³ and Five Helms Tombs 4 and 5⁴—the so-called Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.⁵ These tombs exemplify the heights obtained in the sixth and early-seventh-century funerary arts in Goguryeo as well as in East Asia as a whole.

In 1968, Laurence Sickman stated that tombs with murals in Korea preserve some of the best examples of Chinese Northern and Southern Dynasty style painting.⁶ However, these paintings did not belong to the Northern and Southern Dynasties, but rather to the powerful Northeast Asian nation of Goguryeo. From the fifth century until its fall to the Tang in 668 CE, Goguryeo was fiercely independent. The three tombs

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¹ 高句麗 (C: Gaogouli [or sometimes Gaojuli]; 고구려 K: Goguryeo, or Koguryŏ in McCune-Reischauer.)
² 鴨綠江. In Korean, Yalu River is Amnok gang 압록강.
³ 洞泃四神墓 (C: Donggou sishen mu; 통구사신묘 K: Tonggu sasin myo.) The name “Donggou Four Spirits Tomb” will be used in this dissertation. The area now known as Donggou was called Tonggou 通溝 when the tomb was first excavated in the 1930’s. Korean scholarship often still utilizes the old name 通溝四神塚 (C: Tonggou sishen zhong; K: Tonggu sasin chong.) Chinese scholars often call it either the “Four Spirits Tomb” 四神塚 or the “Ji’an Four Spirits Tomb” 集安四神塚. In order to avoid confusion with terminology used consistently throughout this thesis (e.g. Four Spirits tombs and Ji’an Four Spirits tombs), I use an updated form of its old name, i.e. Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. For the tomb’s various names see Table 1.
⁴ 五盔墳四號，五號墓 (C: Wukuifen 4hao, 5hao mu; 오회분 4 호, 5 호묘 K: Ohoebun 4ho, 5ho myo.)
⁵ Over the years the three Ji’an tombs have been given a variety of names. See Table 1.
speak to the power of the Goguryeo as well as to their engagement with and knowledge of the world around them.

In their totality, the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are distinctly late period Goguryeo creations. Structurally, the tombs are stone chambers with *lanterndecke* ceilings covered with large, earthen mounds, which follows the model of the typical late period Goguryeo tomb with murals. The interior paintings center around the Four Spirit\textsuperscript{7} animals—a trait of late Goguryeo tombs also created in the capital of Pyongyang (fig. 3). The Four Spirits are the Green (also translated as Azure or Blue) Dragon,\textsuperscript{8} the Red Bird,\textsuperscript{9} the White Tiger,\textsuperscript{10} the Dark Warrior,\textsuperscript{11} and, sometimes, the Yellow Dragon.\textsuperscript{12} These animals are also often referred to as the Four Directional Animals or the Animals of the Four Cardinal Directions, owing to their consistent placement: the Green Dragon in the East, the Red Bird in the South, the White Tiger in the West, and the Dark Warrior in the North. However, identifying them with the four cardinal directions is too simplistic, since the animals are also associated with time, the elements or phases (metal, earth, fire, wood, and water), and colors. These Goguryeo tombs illustrate a knowledge and understanding of an ancient cosmology that originated in China.

This study attempts to identify and analyze the myriad images within the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Stylistically, the tomb murals can be considered *au modern* in sixth and early-seventh-century East Asia. I shall compare the images to contemporary

\textsuperscript{7} 四神 (C: sishen; 사신 K: sasin.)
\textsuperscript{8} 青龍 (C: qinglong; 청룡 K: cheongnyeong.)
\textsuperscript{9} 朱雀 (C: zhuqiao; 주작 K: jujak.)
\textsuperscript{10} 白虎 (C: baihu; 백호 K: baekho.)
\textsuperscript{11} 玄武 (C: xuanwu; 현무 K: hyeonmu.)
\textsuperscript{12} 黃龍 (C: huanglong; 황룡 K: hwangnyeong.)
sixth and seventh-century objects from China, the Korean Three Kingdoms, and, to a lesser extent, Japan. However, I argue, fundamentally, the main images and the ideology the Ji’an murals represent can be traced to developments that occurred in Han China. The people who constructed these late period Ji’an tombs chose a particularly sinified and retrospective cosmological representation centered on the Four Spirits and mythological beings.

In this Introduction, I shall briefly address the historiography of Goguryeo tombs with murals and the methodology used for this study. Then, I shall give a concise overview of the history and development of Goguryeo tombs with murals. Finally, I shall also concisely address the ideological leanings of the late Goguryeo people and how these leanings are represented in the Four Spirits tombs in both Ji’an and Pyongyang.

Some notes on practical matters: English translations for tomb names will be used if the name is descriptive. For tomb names that are derived from locations, they will be in pinyin if in China and in the government approved system of Romanization if in Korea. All Korean names follow the new system of Romanization, unless commonly used in English, like Pyongyang.

1.2 Historiography

The historiography of Goguryeo tombs with murals is generally divided into five phases.¹³ The first stage, roughly 1907 to 1945, is work completed during the Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria. During this early period a total of 27

tombs were excavated. Fifteen are in Pyongyang, and twelve are located in Ji’an. \(^ {14} \)

Seminal works from this period include Chavannes’ 1908 “Les Monuments de l'Ancien Royaume Coréen de Kao-Keou-Li” and the Japanese publications \( T’ung-kou \) and \( Chōsen koseki zufu \). \(^ {15} \) This was a tumultuous era, but the scholarship of the period serves as a foundation for later studies.

The second stage, 1946 to 1961, began after World War II and continued through the Korean War. During this period, Chinese scholars worked independently and published several significant studies of Goguryeo tombs. Generally, Chinese scholars focused on tombs found in China, but in 1952 Su Bai published an article on Anak Tomb 3, \(^ {16} \) excavated in North Korea in 1949. \(^ {17} \) In 1958, Yang Hong wrote a seminal study of Goguryeo tombs delineating their chronology and stylistic classifications. \(^ {18} \) During the second period, work on the Korean Peninsula declined, but in North Korea, Chu Yonghon published several significant studies. \(^ {19} \) After Anak Tomb 3’s excavation, Anak Tombs 1 and 2 \(^ {20} \) were also uncovered in 1949. \(^ {21} \)

The third stage, 1962 to 1980, is defined by the numerous excavation reports published about Goguryeo tombs in China by Chinese archaeologists. In the third stage,

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\(^ {16} \) 安岳3號墳 (C: Anyue 3hao fen; K: Anak 3ho bun.)

\(^ {17} \) Su Bai “Chaoxian Anyue suo faxian de Dong Shou mu,” *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 1 (1952): 101-104.


\(^ {20} \) 安岳1, 2號墳 (C: Anyue 1, 2hao fen; K: Anak 1, 2ho bun.)

\(^ {21} \) Jeon  *Goguryeo gobun pyeokhwai ui saegye*, 307.
there is also increased participation of South Korean scholars, particularly Kim Wonyong who published a general survey of Goguryeo tombs with murals in 1980. This stage also marks the revival of interest in Japan.

The fourth stage began in 1981 and continues to approximately 2000. During the fourth stage, enormous advances occur in the field. During the Cold War, South Korean research on Goguryeo was restricted due to the inability to visit sites in China and North Korea and the inaccessibility of research from these countries. However, from the 1980s onward, relations between these countries began to normalize and the availability of the necessary resources for South Korean scholars increased. Top scholars from the nations of China, South Korea and Japan came together on several occasions to share information and ideas. In 1993, an international academic conference took place in Ji’an. Notable scholars from this period are Li Dianfu from China, Jeon Ho-tae from South Korea, and Azuma Ushio from Japan. North Korea also produced two significant catalogs of Goguryeo tombs murals, the 1985 *Murals of Koguryo Tumulus* and the 1990 *An Illustrated Book of Relics and Artifacts of Choson*.

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25 This early conference was titled “高句麗文化國際學術會” (The Goguryeo Culture International Academic Conference.) There was some controversy surrounding some of the presentations, but this conference signaled a change in the mode of Goguryeo scholarship. It was the beginning of scholars reaching beyond the borders of their own countries to share their ideas and unique perspectives.
The last stage began in 2001 and continues to today. This period is characterized by the years leading up to and following the tombs’ inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2004 and by more direct contact between scholars from various countries and different fields. In 2003, the Sejong Center in Seoul hosted an international symposium called “The World of Goguryeo Murals.” “The International Conference on Koguryŏ History and Cultural Heritage” was held at the Seoul Museum of History in March 2004, and Harvard’s Korea Institute hosted “The Harvard Conference on Koguryŏ History and Archaeology” in April 2005. These meetings were designed to bring together scholars from a variety of nations to discuss their work. This last stage of research signaled a new spirit of cooperation among scholars of various nationalities that had been lacking in previous stages.

A significant event also occurred during the last stage; in 2004 the Goguryeo tombs with murals in China and North Korea were included on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

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28 Jeon Goguryeo gobun pyeokhwa ui saegye, 310.
30 “고구려의역사와문화유산” (Goguryeo ui yeoksa wa munhwa yusan), March 26-27, 2004.
31 Cooperation among academics is necessary element for broadening global understanding of Goguryeo and its culture. Prior to the Cold War scholarship in East Asia had been fragmented by conflict, both internal and external, among the nations of China, Japan and the Koreas. The discord not only caused disruptions of excavations but also created nationalistic sentiments that were sometimes evident in the scholarship. (For discussion see Peter Hays Gries, “The Goguryeo Controversy, National Identity, and Sino-Korean Relations Today,” East Asia vol. 22, No.4 [2005]:3-17, and Pak Contested ethnicities.) Unfortunately, with the increased global interest in the Goguryeo relics surrounding the 2004 inclusion on the World Heritage list, the kingdom gained a spotlight on the political stage, something that has echoed beyond East Asia and was even picked up by news outlets here in the United States. (For examples, see Anthony Faiola, “Kicking Up the Dust of History,” The Washington Post. [updated 22 January 2004; cited 18 September 2006.] Available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A36733-2004Jan21. James Brooke, “Seeking Peace in a Once and Future Kingdom,” The New York Times. [updated 25 August 2004, cited 22 May 2009] Available from http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/25/world/seeking-peace-in-a- once-and-future-kingdom.html) However, cooperation among international scholars has greatly increased, and old animosities and barriers are breaking down, especially as new generations of scholars arise. An example of the eroding animosities is North Korea’s opening tombs for the Japanese media in 2005.
Heritage Site list.\textsuperscript{32} The World Heritage Committee declared, “The tombs represent a masterpiece of the human creative genius in their wall paintings and structures.”\textsuperscript{33} The tombs’ inclusion on this esteemed list broadened interest in the Goguryeo tomb murals among scholars as well as among laypersons. Before that time, only a handful of scholars outside of East Asia were familiar with Goguryeo and their striking murals. Around the time of the tombs’ inclusion on the list, an explosion of interest in Goguryeo occurred both in the scholarly and popular world. Interest, especially in the East Asian nations, reached new heights.

In China, there has been renewed interest in studying this Northeast Asian kingdom. Since the inclusion on the World Heritage list, there has been a rise in the attention paid to these sites, mostly due to the predicted increase in tourism as well as meeting the standards of care required by the UNESCO committee. There has also been a rise in published materials, such as the Cultural Relics Publishing House’s 2004 four volumes on the Wunü Mountain City, the Guonei City, the Wandu Mountain City, and the Imperial Tombs of Goguryeo.\textsuperscript{34}

In South Korea, the Goguryeo Kingdom has gained newfound popularity in both the academic and the popular worlds. Scholars, such as Jeon Ho-tae of the University of Ulsan, have published prolifically on the Goguryeo tombs with murals. With the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} The sites in China and North Korea were added to the list separately.
\end{itemize}
increased interest in the Goguryeo Kingdom and the availability of materials, many
scholars in South Korea have only recently begun to realize the importance of Goguryeo.

For example, the art historian Kang Woobang 강우방, who spent most of his career
studying Silla and Unified Silla, stated he had underestimated the importance of
Goguryeo in the history of Korean art, and he equated the importance of the paintings in
the Gangseo Great Tomb\(^{35}\) with that of the impressive Silla sculpture found in
Seokguram 石窟庵.\(^{36}\)

In South Korea, Goguryeo has gained recognition in popular culture as well.\(^{37}\) In
addition to his scholarly publications, Jeon Ho-tae has written books meant to reach a
wider audience including a children’s book.\(^{38}\) The murals found in the tombs have also
inspired works in the visual and theatrical arts as well as popular dramas like Legend,\(^{39}\)
which was based on the legends of Goguryeo’s king Gwanggaeto 廣開土, and the
importance of the Four Spirits—the Red Bird, the Green Dragon, the White Tiger and the
Dark Warrior. Understanding of the relationship between the Four Spirits and the
Goguryeo people has come from the Goguryeo tombs with murals.

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\(^{35}\) 江西大墓 (C: Jiangxi damu; K: Gangseo daemyo.)


While East Asian interest in the tombs with murals has been persistent, Western scholarship of the Goguryeo tombs with murals has been scant. Frequently throughout the last century, the Goguryeo tomb murals are mentioned in publications in comparison with Chinese monuments of art historical worth, signifying that Western scholars have been vaguely aware of the tombs and their importance, but few sources about the tombs address the tombs in depth.\(^{40}\) This scarcity is interesting because one of the first sources about the tombs available to both Western and Asian readers was produced by a French scholar. Edouard Chavannes published an article describing his harrowing 1907 journey to the Donggou region in what is today Ji’an, Jilin Province, China. He produced the first Western account of a Goguryeo mural tomb.\(^{41}\)

After Chavannes, Asian scholars produced some publications in English targeting Western scholars. In the 1930s, Japanese archaeological publications recounting their explorations often included English translations.\(^{42}\) Chinese archaeological reports also often include brief English summaries.\(^{43}\) During the late twentieth century, a handful of materials from North and South Korean scholars appeared in English.\(^{44}\) Especially

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\(^{43}\) For example see Archaeological Team of Jilin Province “Jilin, Ji’an Wukuiyen Sihao mu,” *Kaogu xuebao* No. 1 (1984): 121-136. Sometimes the English summary includes information not found in the report. This report on Five Helmets Tomb 4 includes identifications for some of the ceiling figures, names not found in the Chinese text.

during the years leading up to the inscription of the tombs on the UNESCO World Heritage list a flurry of brief materials appeared from South Korea.\textsuperscript{45}

Interest in the Goguryeo tomb murals among Western scholars also has gradually increased in recent decades, although it has not nearly reached the levels found in East Asia, particularly in the two Koreas. In the past two decades, a handful of materials has been produced in English by scholars in the United States and Great Britain. Two dissertations have been written on Goguryeo tombs with murals. One is by Mihwa Lee Stevenson from Columbia University called \textit{Webs of Signification}, and the other is by Ah-Rim Park from the University of Pennsylvania titled \textit{Tomb of the Dancers: Koguryŏ Tombs in East Asian Funerary Art}; she later published a book of a similar title.\textsuperscript{46}

Another handful of important articles has also been written in the West for an English speaking audience. One of the first was “Buddhist Themes in Goguryeo Murals” by Youngsook Pak, professor of Korean art at the University of London’s SOAS.\textsuperscript{47} Nancy Steinhardt of the University of Pennsylvania has published significant articles. One is comparative, focusing on the funerary and worship space in North Asia during the fourth to seventh centuries. Others focus on specific tombs: Changchuan Tomb 1 and the Twin Pillars Tomb. A few other articles and chapters have appeared in English. J.P.

\textsuperscript{45} In 2004, the autumn issue of \textit{Koreana} focused on Goguryeo. (\textit{Koreana} vol. 18 no. 3, 2004.) In 2004, ICOMOS-Korea and the Cultural Properties Administration published \textit{Koguryo Tomb Murals} honoring the tombs’ addition to the to the World Heritage list; it was edited by Lena Kim. Other publications in English: Jeon Ho-tae, \textit{The Dreams of the Living and the Hopes of the Dead: Goguryo Tomb Murals} (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2007); \textit{Goguryo: In Search of Its Culture and History} (Seoul: Hollym, 2008). Park, \textit{Koguryo Tomb Murals}.


\textsuperscript{47} Pak Youngsook, “Buddhist Themes in Koguryo Murals,” \textit{Asiatische Studien} vol. 44, No.2 (1990): 177-204.
Park from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, wrote about the Deokheung-ri Tomb. Marylin Rhie of Smith College briefly discusses a variety of Goguryeo tombs that exhibit Buddhist elements in her book *Early Buddhist art in China and Central Asia*.48

The inclusion of the Goguryeo tombs on the World Heritage list placed the Goguryeo tombs with murals on the global stage and has led to greater exposure in the West. In 2005, the Museum of East Asia Art in Berlin (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) held an exhibit called “Art of Ancient Korea,” focusing on Goguryeo tomb murals. It was produced in cooperation with the Korea Foundation, the National Museum of Korea and the Seoul National University Museum and was meant to promote awareness of Goguryeo culture in Europe.49 In May 2007, the Korean Culture Center in Los Angeles hosted an exhibition of photos from Goguryeo tombs.

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs often get lost within the breadth of scholarship discussing Goguryeo tombs with murals. With the myriad disruptions on the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia that have only ended within the past few decades, global study of the Goguryeo murals can be considered in its infancy or, at the very least, lately reenergized.


49 Jeon Ho-t’ae, et.al., Kunst aus dem Alten Korea, Goguryeo- Art of Ancient Korea, Goguryeo. (Seoul: The Korea Foundation, 2005.) This catalog is in German and English.
the three Ji’an Four Spirits Tombs have only been briefly mentioned and discussed in excavation reports or as a part of general surveys of Goguryeo tombs with murals. Chinese excavation reports for the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 were published in 1964 and 1984.\textsuperscript{50} Then, in 1995, Geng Tiehua published an article discussing the ceiling of Tomb 5 in Chinese.\textsuperscript{51} In 2003, the year before the tombs’ inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list, Kim Jin-soon published an article discussing Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 in Korean.\textsuperscript{52}

The various East Asian publications mentioned above give the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs the attention they deserve, but, as of yet, little has been written in English about the subject of this dissertation.\textsuperscript{53} Japanese scholars in the early twentieth century produced the majority of the material in English. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb was analyzed in \textit{T’ung-kou}, and Umehara Sueji 李開佐治 discussed Five Helmets Tomb 5 in the 1952 article "The Newly Discovered Tombs with Wall Paintings of the Kao-kou-li Dynasty."\textsuperscript{54} These magnificent tombs and their paintings have not yet been properly introduced to the English speaking world. Hopefully, this dissertation can serve as a beginning.

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\textsuperscript{53} Ah-Rim Park dedicates a chapter to them in her book \textit{Goguryeo Tomb Murals}.
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\textsuperscript{54} In this article Umehara calls Five Helmets Tomb 5 “Tomb No. 17 at Wu-k’uai-fên,” (Umehara Sueji, "The Newly Discovered Tombs with Wall Paintings of the Kao-kou-li Dynasty." \textit{Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America} vol.6 (1952): 10-17.)
\end{footnotesize}
1.3 Methodology

A variety of sources are used in this study. The most fundamental resource will be the tombs themselves. The paintings and structures will be thoroughly analyzed and discussed. However, because these objects were not created in a vacuum, a combination of primary and secondary historical sources are used to understand the period and culture in which they were created. The fullest extant Korean resources for studying Three Kingdoms’ history are the *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 by Kim Busik (金富軾, 1075-1151) and the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 by Ilyeon (一然, 1206-1289). Unfortunately, because these two books were compiled several centuries after the kingdoms existed, they are not wholly reliable. The *Samguk sagi* is a Confucian history, so it describes historical occurrences. The *Samguk yusa* was written by a Buddhist monk, and it records many of the myths and legends from the Korean Three Kingdoms period. However, Ilyeon tends to have a bias against non-Buddhist beliefs and practices, asserting that the adoption of Daoism led to Goguryeo’s downfall.\(^{55}\) Other textual sources available are the Goguryeo stelae, such as the Gwanggaeto Stele\(^{56}\) in Ji’an. The Gwanggaeto Stele offers a celebratory view of historical events in the fourth century as well as a recount of the legendary founding of the kingdom.\(^{57}\)

The histories written in China often include sections on the Goguryeo people. These chapters frequently concern the *dongyi* 東夷 or “eastern foreigners.” The Chinese

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\(^{56}\) 廣開土大王碑 (C: Guangkaitu dawang bei; K: Gwanggaeto daewang bi.) It is also known as the 好太王碑 (C: Haotaiwang bei; K: Hotaewang bi.)

\(^{57}\) Maurice Courant, "Stele Chinoise de Royaume de Koguryô" *Journal Asiatique* March-April (1898): 210-238.
histories include: the *Shiji* 史記 (Sima Qian 司馬遷, 109-91 BCE), the *Hanshu* 前漢書 (Ban 班 Family, first century CE), the *Sanguozhi* 三國志 (Chen Shou 陳壽, 233-297 CE), the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Fan Ye 范晔, 398-445 CE), the *Weishu* 魏書 (Wei Shou 魏收, 506-572), the *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Liu Xu 劉昫, 887-946), and the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Ouyang Xiu 欧陽修, 1007-1072). The Chinese histories include remarkable accounts of customs and practices of the Goguryeo people, and oftentimes the chronological sequences in the Chinese records are more accurate than those found in the two Korean histories. However, these histories must be approached cautiously since they are written from the perspective of an outsider. The Chinese often conveyed an exaggerated sense of superiority over the foreign polities they described in their records.\(^{58}\)

Mythological and religious texts from the Zhou and Han periods in China are also important resources utilized in this study. Texts such as the fourth-century BCE *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and second century BCE *Huainanzi* 淮南子, are important for understanding the Five Phases thought and the cult of immortality. Well known mythologies, like the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 and the *Chuci* 楚辭, are important texts scholars often turn to when attempting to identify weird and strange creatures in sixth- and early-seventh-century funerary arts. It appears as though the concepts and creatures referred to in these texts permeated the funerary cultures of the later time periods, even in distant lands. Other written sources that are often utilized in this dissertation are funerary

\(^{58}\) Pak “Contested ethnicities and ancient homelands,” 614.
contracts and epitaphs as well as mirror inscriptions, specifically those from the Han. The mirrors are particularly important artifacts because they demonstrate how images and concepts traveled to distant lands. Inscribed Han mirrors have been excavated in what eventually became Goguryeo territory near Pyongyang.

While an understanding of the historiography of Goguryeo tomb murals is necessary, visual resources are of equal, if not greater, importance. The Goguryeo tomb paintings are the product of a series of adoptions and adaptations of aspects of visual culture from surrounding civilizations as well as naturally occurring evolutions of their own customs. Additionally, after the creation of these tombs, the spread of the stylistic trends did not halt but rather can be traced further into the southern portion of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago. Objects found in China, Korea, and Japan are evidence of the cultural interaction that the histories describe. Comparisons of art objects, both funerary and non-funerary, further elucidate the extent of the contact between the East Asian cultures in the early centuries CE and will, therefore, have a position of great importance in this study.

1.4 History of Goguryeo Tombs with Murals

Early Chinese records report the lavishness with which Goguryeo funerary customs were carried out. The Sanguozhi reported, “They buried their dead with full ceremony; their treasure of gold and silver is consumed in funeral expense.”59 The

Chinese history goes on to describe the burial practice of piling stones and planting trees in front of them. Early Goguryeo tombs were simple stone cairns, a style which eventually evolved into stepped stone pyramids for the elite, like the fourth-century Tomb of the General in Ji’an. The pyramid style had small chambers located in the upper portion of the structure.

In the fourth century, a new type of tomb appeared. These tombs had stone chambers covered with earthen mounds. With a few exceptions, it is the earthen mound tombs that contain murals. Of the over ten thousand tombs identified as belonging to the Goguryeo Kingdom only a little over one hundred contain murals, and all but two have earthen mounds. These tombs, belonging to the elite, are located near three mountain cities, with the majority located near the Wandu Mountain City and Guonei City in Ji’an, Jilin, and near the ancient capital in Pyongyang. There is one excavated tomb with murals near Wunū Mountain City in Huanren, Liaoning, China.

Ikeuchi Hiroshi in the 1930’s connected the appearance of mounded tombs with murals with the Goguryeo conquest of the Han commandary of Lelang (R.O.K.:

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60 Yang Hong “Gaogouli bihua shimu,” 12.
61 Two stone, “square base platform style” 方形基壇式 tombs in Ji’an have paintings on the inside, Yushan Tomb No.41 (禹山下 41號墳 K: Usanha 41hobun) and the Zhetianjing Tomb (折天井墓, K: Jeolcheonjeong myo) at the base of Wandu Mountain. (Stevenson, 50; Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 365-366, 372-373.
62 These numbers do not include any Goguryeo period tombs found in the Yunfeng Reservoir in 2006.
63 丸都山城 (C: Wandu shancheng; K: Hwando sanseong.)
64 国內城 (C: Guonei cheng; K: Gungnae seong)
65 五女山城 (C: Wunū shancheng; K: Onyeo sanseong)
66 There may also be a few tombs outside of Goguryeo territory proper associated with Goguryeo. For example, there are two tombs with murals in Yeongju, South Korea in what would have been northern Silla territory. The Sunheung 順興 mural tombs (Gimi mugseomyeong myo 己未墨書銘墓, 539 CE and Oesuk jisulgan myo 於宿知達墓, 595 CE) are strongly linked to Goguryeo tombs’ structure and painting. (Lee Eun-chang, “Goguryeo gobunpyeokhwa wa Silla, Baeje, Gaya gobunpyeokhwa e gwanhan bigyo yeongu,” Goguryeo gobun pyeokhwa (Seoul: Hagyeon munhwasa, 1997): 218-251.) Silla’s tomb structures located in the capital of Gyeongju were vastly different than Goguryeo’s, and did not allow for murals.
낙랑 Nangnang, D.P.R.K.: 락랑 Langlang) in 313 CE and the movement of the capital to Pyongyang in 427. The earthen mound tombs retained some aspects that were familiar to Goguryeo tomb builders. The tomb chambers were constructed of stone blocks, the most common material in Goguryeo tomb building from its earliest periods. The simplified structure also appears to adhere to Goguryeo traditions; early Goguryeo tombs were simple cairns or stone pyramids with solitary chambers. Goguryeo tomb builders never showed a desire to create complex, gargantuan tomb structures paralleling those found in Han China. Even the few Goguryeo tombs that have more than two chambers never approach the Han complexity. That being said, the layouts of the Goguryeo earthen mound tombs match the pattern of contemporary funerary construction found in northern China, trends that continued well into the Tang and beyond. The appearance of the earthen mound tombs with their simple, open-chambered plans perhaps have as much to do with the influx of foreign ideas as they do with native traditions.

When discussing “influence,” the term implies that one more powerful polity is acting upon a weaker polity, which connotes a secondary status for the kingdom of Goguryeo compared to what we now call “China.” However, when the Goguryeo began producing the earthen mound tombs with murals in the fourth century, China was not a monolithic power. For well over a century, “China” no longer existed as it had during the Han. The country had broken into several smaller struggling polities: some that were ruled by the ethnic Chinese, generally found in the South, and those that were ruled by northern peoples, such as the various Xianbei tribes. During the centuries between

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the end of the Han and the beginning of the Tang, the Goguryeo Kingdom rivaled the power of the surrounding kingdoms and dynasties and was often more powerful. At its peak during the late fourth and fifth centuries, Goguryeo ruled a vast territory occupying most of northeastern China and parts of southeastern Russia to the Han River on the Korean peninsula. It was also militarily strong enough to remain in conflict with powers like the Northern Wei rather than submitting as a vassal state.68

The period of military greatness in the fourth and fifth centuries also matches the inception of the Goguryeo tomb wall paintings. Looking at the strength of the Goguryeo during that time, it is too simplistic to chalk the changes in tomb building up to the influence of “China” or the “Central Plain” (zhongyuan, 中原). Goguryeo was deeply involved in the politics of the region, sending envoys to foreign polities and actively participating in the international stage (fig. 4), as demonstrated by the depiction of Goguryeo envoys in Afrasiab murals in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (fig. 5).69 Rather than interpreting the tomb construction and decoration as emulating “Central Plain” style, the researcher should look to the wide range of forces at work during the periods of their construction. Buddhism was one of the most influential forces, which was sweeping across Asia.

One of the aspects of Buddhism that had the greatest impact was its internationalism. Monks and pilgrims promoted Buddhism, carrying its messages across

Asia as well as inducing people to travel and visit important sites for worship (fig. 6). Buddhism in northern Asia during the post-Jin period was the impetus for a vast catalog of visual material; some of the most important sites being cave temples that were available for worshippers from far and wide. Interestingly, single- and double-chambered cave temples were being created at the same time that similar simple plans were used for tomb construction. Cave structures used for worship have appeared from India to China. In India, two styles of Buddhist cave structures are known: the vihāra and the caitya. The vihāra were modeled after monasteries with worship niches on the sides. The caitya often was a shrine-like structure with an antechamber and a rounded chamber with the object of worship towards the back. Caves modeled after the Indian caitya can be found in Central Asia and China.

Goguryeo tombs, similar to the tombs in Xinjiang, Gansu, and elsewhere, were not Buddhist edifices. Only a handful of Goguryeo tombs contain Buddhist imagery, and those mix such images with other popular motifs, such as the Four Spirits. However, there appears to be a uniformity found throughout the architecture of East Asia during the third to seventh centuries in religious, palatial, and funerary construction, a uniformity that would be unimaginable without the acceptance and spread of Buddhism.

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70 There appear to be depictions of Korean pilgrims on the north wall of Binglingsi 炳靈寺 Cave 169 (c420). (Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, Monks and Merchants : Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China (New York: Harry N. Abrams with the Asia Society, 2001): 130) Although, other sources say these figures are in Xianbei garb. (Gansu sheng bowuguan and Binglingsi shiku baoguansuo, Binglingsi shiku, [Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982]: 5.)


73 Steinhardt “From Koguryo to Gansu and Xinjiang,” 181-195.
Goguryeo earthen mound tombs in many ways adhere to the structural trends of northern China; they also retain many unique traits: the stone construction and the complex corbelled ceilings being two examples. The mural decoration offers a more complex mix of trends that can be traced to Han traditions, images that were preferred in Northeast and Northwest China, as well as images that have been identified as native to Goguryeo.

1.5 MURAL EVOLUTION

The Goguryeo tomb murals can be roughly divided into three types of compositions: genre scenes and occupant portraits, a mixture of genre scenes with the Four Spirits, and the Four Spirits dominating the walls without any genre scenes. Scholars often translate these types of compositions into evolutionary stages from earliest to latest.

Over the past century, scholars have developed a general timeline for the development of Goguryeo tombs with murals. Different generations of scholars have added small changes to the order of progression and sometimes disagree with the dates of each stage, but the order has remained generally consistent. Dating of the tombs with murals is difficult since there are few dated inscriptions and the majority of the materials inside have been plundered. However, over time, as more tombs have been excavated,
scholars have been able to use the murals to help create a system of general periodization.74

The basis for later scholarship regarding the tombs’ periodization was developed by Japanese scholars who excavated in the 1930s. The sampling of tombs with murals the Japanese had to analyze was not large, but they categorized and did basic analysis on the examples they had. In the second volume of T’ung-kou, Umehara classifies the tombs by the subjects of their murals into three groups: those with the Four Spirits, those with daily life scenes, and those with decorative designs.75 The first two classifications became stages two and three in later scholarship. While lacking a variety of examples, the early Japanese excavators did attempt rough dates for some of the tombs.76

Umehara stated that by comparing the tomb murals in Pyongyang and Ji’an, it was agreed that the Gangseo Great Tomb (fig. 7-9) and Middle Tomb77 (figs. 10-11) were the latest. He argued that the The Three Chamber Tomb78 in Ji’an, and Tomb of the Hunting Scene79 (figs. 12-13), located in Nampo near Pyongyang were “decidedly old.” He further stated that Sekino Tadashi and Naitō Torajirō believed the Gangseo Great and Middle Tombs, which have sophisticated paintings of the Four Spirits on their walls, were late Goguryeo, from roughly the end of the sixth to the early

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74 For full analysis see Stevenson, 59-101; Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwaw o segye, 335-360, and Ah-Rim Park Koguryo Tomb Murals, 3-13.
75 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 23-27.
76 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 25.
77 西大中墓. (C: Jiangxi da, zhong mu; K: Gangseo dae, jung myo.) In T’ung-kou these tombs are called “the two tombs at Kôsai.”
78 三室墓 (C: Sanshi mu; K: Samsil myo.)
79 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.II, 25. Umehara called the Tomb of the Hunting Scene the “Tomb of the Four Deities at Baisanri” 梅山里四神塚 (K: Maesanri sasin chong; C: Meishanri sishen zhong). The North Korean name is Sanyang mudeom 사남무덤. Tomb of the Hunting Scene 狩獵塚 (C: Shoulie zhong; 수렵총 K: Sulyeop chong) is the most common name today. (Jeon Goguryeo kumbyeokhwaw yeongu, 415)
seventh century during the Sui period in China, a supposition that continues to be held today.  

The Tomb of the Hunting Scene, which has the Four Spirits and genre scenes on its walls, and the Three Chamber Tomb (figs. 14-15), which has a variety of genre scenes and strongmen on its walls and the Four Spirits and immortals on its ceilings, were thought to belong to the period of King Jangsú 長壽王 (r.413-491), roughly the fifth century. The Japanese classifications and periodizations of the tombs with murals were superficial. The small number of archaeological materials from Korea and China during the early twentieth century was a handicap for these scholars, but their work provided a base which later scholars built upon.

Yang Hong was the first scholar to offer a clear-cut periodization. The rubric he created had three phases of tomb decoration, and his dating system relied on Chinese dynastic periods. According to Yang, the early period tombs had genre scenes on the walls and the heavens with mythical beasts, immortals and stars on the ceilings. These were created during the end of the Eastern Han through the Wei and late Western Jin, approximately 170-317 CE. His examples were the Tomb of the Dancers (figs. 16-17) and the Tomb of the Wrestlers (fig. 18-19).

Yang’s middle stage was a transition period between the early and late periods. He argued there were two styles available at that time: Style 1 is illustrated by the Three Chamber Tomb, which has daily life scenes and atlas-like strongmen on the walls, pillars

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81 The tomb considered to be the earliest muraled tomb in Goguryeo territory, Anak Tomb 3, was excavated in 1949. This tomb had an inscription with the date 357 CE giving scholars a solid beginning date for Goguryeo mural tomb production.
82 Yang Hong Gaogouli bihua shimu, 15-16.
painted in the corners, and depictions of the heavens on the ceilings. Style 2, as seen in the Tomb of the Hunting Scene, has the Four Spirits on the walls with hunting and horseback riding scenes on a smaller scale above them and occupant portraits of equal size on the back wall, pillars painted in the corners and the heavens painted on the ceiling. He believed these tombs began in the early Northern Dynasties period.

Yang Hong’s late phase was the period of the Four Spirits tombs. In these tombs, the Four Spirits dominate the walls, and there are no longer any daily life scenes; the corners no long have paintings of wooden pillars and bracket sets. These ceilings are dominated by immortals, fabulous animals, heavenly beings, and constellations. He subdivided the late period tombs into three styles exemplified by the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, and the Gangseo Great Tomb, in that order.83

Comparing the Donggou Four Spirits tomb to Northern Dynasty cave temples, Yang posited that it could not have been constructed prior to the early Northern Wei; therefore, it had to be mid-Northern Wei or later. Looking at the Chinese-style garments of the figures in the Five Helmets tombs, particularly Tomb 4, Yang stated they must have been painted after the Northern Wei Emperor Xiaowen 孝文帝 implemented an edict in 495 CE requiring people to wear sinified clothing, since the figures are comparable to those in late Northern Wei and Northern Qi Buddhist cave temples. The

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83 Yang calls the tombs by different names. He calls the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Tonggou Four Spirit Tomb (通泃四神塚 C: Tonggou sishen zhong; K: Tonggu sasin chong); Five Helmets Tomb 5, Tonggou Tomb No.17 (通泃第十七號墓 C: Tongggou di 17hao mu; K: Tonggu 17 hoe myo); Five Helmets Tomb 4, is Tonggou Tomb No.8 (通泃未編號墓 C: Tonggou wei bianhao mu; K: Tonggu mi byeonhomyo), and Gangseo Great Tomb, Usan-ri Great Tomb (遇賢里大墓 C: Yushan-ri damu; K: Usan-ri daemyo.) (Yang Hong Gaogouli bihua shimu.)
trees are also similar to those found in the cave temples from the Northern Qi. Therefore, he argued these tomb murals date from the end of the Northern Wei to the Northern Qi. The last stage has the Four Spirits painted on empty ground, and there are no atlas-like beasts in the corners. The lively, flying immortals are comparable to those from the late Northern Dynasties. Yang dated this last stage to the end of the Northern Dynasties.\(^{84}\)

Similar to the previous Japanese scholarship, Yang Hong mainly relied on comparisons with Chinese visual materials. Therefore, he was also hindered by the limited availability of objects. As seen above, he focused his comparisons on Buddhist cave temples. This is not a coincidence as many of the funerary monuments from post-Han China were not excavated until later. The number of excavated materials on the Korean peninsula, both from Goguryeo and the other Korean Three Kingdoms, were also few. The lack of available material also meant he did not have enough evidence to delineate specific regional variances between tombs in Ji’an and Pyongyang. Although the breadth of examples was limited, Yang Hong created a general framework which is still used today.

Most scholars agree with the three stages Yang Hong posited in his 1958 article, although there is some disagreement as to the periodization and his model for the stylistic influences on the tomb murals. Yang Hong believed that the tombs with murals had their origins in native Goguryeo and Chinese Han period funerary cultures. He argued that while the tomb murals did exhibit aspects of native Goguryeo life, in many ways they

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\(^{84}\) Yang Gaogouli bihua shimu, 16.
imitated the funerary arts of the Chinese “Central Plain” and Sichuan, reaching back to
the Han.

Yang Hong diagrammed two starting points from which all Goguryeo tombs with
murals stemmed: Goguryeo native tomb construction and Han dynasty tomb
construction. According to Yang, the early period Goguryeo tombs at Donggou evolved
from the combination of native Goguryeo tomb construction and the style of Eastern Han
tombs built in Liaodong. Dong Shou’s 冬壽 tomb, Anak Tomb 3, (fig. 20-22) was the
evolution of Eastern Han tombs in Pyongyang and the influence of Eastern Han tombs in
Liaodong. Pyongyang early period Goguryeo tombs with murals were the combination
of native styles with the addition of the Pyongyang/Liaodong hybrid, Eastern Han style
tomb construction. Yang’s last stage of development occurred when all of these styles
combined with the style of tomb construction and decoration that had occurred in post-
Han and Northern and Southern Dynasties China. The late period tombs were also
heavily influenced by the religions of Buddhism and Daoism and their arts.85 While
Yang Hong acknowledges the importance of native Goguryeo tomb construction in the
evolution of Goguryeo tombs with murals, he tends to use an exogenous model centering
on the Chinese “Central Plain” to explain the development of the tomb murals. Some
scholars have taken exception to this construct.86

In 1960, the North Korean scholar Chu Yonghon offered his own periodization
for the Goguryeo tombs. His model basically follows the rubric Yang Hong developed of
three periods of mural tombs. Chu began his chronology with a period of pre-mural

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85 Yang Gaogouli bihua shimu, 13.
86 Stevenson, 78-81.
tombs of similar construction. Then he divided his middle period into two parts, which parallel Yang’s early and transitional phases. Chu’s dates for these stages are slightly later than Yang’s, 300 to 450 CE for the first tombs with murals and 450-500 CE for the second stage. Chu’s late period tombs are also the Four Spirits tombs, which he dates from 550-668 CE. These dates are more congruent with the periodization most scholars use today.

When discussing the development of Goguryeo tombs with murals Chu completely abandoned the diffusionist model that the previous scholars had developed. Chu argued that the murals were not derived from Han styles, and that the murals reflected Goguryeo daily life and native beliefs and customs. He further posited that the Liaodong tombs were hybrids of Han and Goguryeo tomb styles. As for the Four Spirit images in the late tombs, he argued they demonstrated the sophistication of the late Goguryeo and a hybridization of indigenous religious beliefs with those of Daoism and Buddhism. However, he neglected to mention the Chinese origins of these beliefs and images. During the second stage of scholarship, Kim Wonyong followed Chu Yonhong’s chronology, although he was more open minded about the question of how much was borrowed from China.

The basic evolutionary chronology stands today of the three stages of tomb murals shifting from daily life scenes to, finally, the Four Spirits. It is believed the tomb decoration follows shifting ideologies and reflects changing expectations for the afterlife. With more Goguryeo tombs excavated and additional archaeological finds in China,

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87 Stevenson, 68-67.
88 Stevenson, 88.
Korea, and Japan, great strides have been made in understanding Goguryeo tomb murals and their chronology. A broader base of comparison among the Goguryeo tombs allows scholars to discuss regional as well as temporal differences between the tombs; for example, the Four Spirits tombs in Ji’an differ from those in the Pyongyang region. The expanded foundation of material from China, Korea and Japan has allowed cross comparisons bolstering or slightly altering the general timeline. However, without materials from the tombs enabling specific dating scholars still tend to rely on the general framework of three evolutionary periods.

Today, most scholars tend to agree that Goguryeo tombs were first painted around the mid-fourth century and definitively ended with the fall of the Goguryeo Kingdom in 668 CE. Anak Tomb 3 is considered one of, if not the, earliest of the Goguryeo tombs with murals, and scholars use it as a reference point for their periodizations. Scholars attempt to create a chronology within this almost three-century span with little more than the murals and the structures of the tombs to guide them.

The earliest tomb murals, beginning in the early to mid-fourth century, are dedicated to scenes of daily life and occupant “portraits” while the ceilings depict the heavens with immortals and asterisms. Possibly the earliest example of this style of tomb with murals, as already mentioned, is Anak Tomb 3 (fig. 20-22), believed to have
belonged to Dong Shou, an immigrant from the state of Yan.\(^\text{89}\) As a tomb belonging to an immigrant, it may illustrate the connection between Goguryeo tomb construction and that of Northeastern China, disputing the connection between Han culture retained at Lelang and Goguryeo tombs with murals.

Anak Tomb 3 is constructed of stone slabs organized in a fairly complex manner. It is oriented on a north-south axis with the rear chamber located to the north. There were two side chambers located to the east and west of the front chamber.\(^\text{90}\) Elements similar to those found in Dong Shou’s tomb appear in later Goguryeo tombs, but this complicated structure in its totality is an anomaly in the Goguryeo tomb-building

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\(^{89}\) The occupant identification stems from an inscription found in the tomb. However, the identification of the occupant is sometimes debated. Some scholars believe that the occupant was not Dong Shou but rather a Goguryeo king. (K.H.J. Gardiner, *The Early History of Korea. Oriental Monograph Series No.8.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 56.) There seems to be some confusion over whether he was a Yan general or a Zhao general. Audrey Spiro claims he was one of the generals involved in the Yan civil wars after the death of Huang Murong’s father, Hui. (Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990): 42) Other sources ally him with the Zhao. (Richard R. Hollenweger, “The Evolution of Early Buddhist Architecture in Korea,” diss. Federal Institute of Technology [1997]: 71-72.) The inscription found in Anak Tomb 3 is:

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\begin{align*}
\text{(泳?)} & \text{和十三年十月戊子朔廿六日} \\
\text{(?) (?) 使持 都督諸軍事} \\
\text{平東將軍撫夷校尉樂浪} \\
\text{(?) (?) 廟黎玄菟帶方大守} \\
\text{(?) (?) 幽州遼東平郭} \\
\text{(?) 鄭敬上里冬壽字} \\
\text{(?) 安年六十九} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Which has been translated as:

On the twenty-sixth day of the tenth month of the thirteenth year of the *yonghe* era (of the Eastern Jin: November 24th, 357 AD), the Supreme Commander with Special Authority, General Pacifying the East, Commandant-Protector of the Barbarians, Governor of Lelang, and of the (former?) colonies of Changli, Xuantu, and Daifang, the *duxiang* (?) Lord, Dong Shou, whose name was …an, died in office at the age of sixty-nine. He was from Jingshangli, in the *xiang* in which were the administrative headquarters of Pingguo prefecture in the region of Liaodong in Youzhou. (From Hollenweger (p.71) based on Gardiner’s translation in *The Early History of Korea* (p.56.).)

\(^{90}\) Hong Qingyu, “Guanyu Dong Shou mu de faxian he yanjiu,” *Kaogu* no.1 (1959): 27.
repertoire. There are several structural elements found within this tomb that are found in later Goguryeo tombs, such as the *lanterndecke* roof and stone construction. Many of these elements were at one time thought to have come from Western Asia, but are also found in earlier Han examples. The structure of Anak 3 is most often compared to the late Eastern Han-early Jin Yi’nan Tomb 1 in Shandong (figs. 23-25). Anak Tomb 3 contains a formal, static portrait of the occupant and his wife as well as a variety of daily life scenes, including cooking and wrestling.

Another example of the early period tomb decoration is found in the Deokheung-ri Tomb near Pyongyang (fig. 26-27). This tomb, dated 408 CE, is believed to belong to a Chinese emigrant with the surname Zhen 鎮 (K: Jin). It is a two chamber tomb with daily life scenes and an occupant portrait on its walls, and it has heavenly imagery—auspicious creatures, mythological figures, and asterisms—decorating the ceiling. There are paintings of pillars in the corners, and V-braces similar to wooden architecture in the back chamber.

In Ji’an, the Tomb of the Wrestlers is considered an early style tomb. This is a single chamber tomb with daily life scenes, such as wrestling, on the walls (figs. 18-19). There are stars and constellations on the ceiling, and pillars and bracket sets are painted

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93 德興里古墳 (C: Dexing-li fen; K: Deokheung-ri bun.)
94 Park “Nostalgia for Homeland”; Stevenson, 113-134.
95 角抵塚 (C: Jiaodi zhong; K: Gakjeo chong.)
in the corners. This tomb is also believed to date to the early-fifth century. The paintings of wooden architecture possibly create a house-like feeling for the tombs.

In the most recent scholarship, the middle period tombs are still considered to be a transition between the early period tombs that focus on the occupant’s life and imitate wooden architecture and those focused solely on the supernatural. Genre scenes and occupant portraits still appear on the walls, and paintings of pillars generally appear in the chamber corners. Constellations, depictions of immortals, and lotus flowers covered the ceilings of middle period Goguryeo tombs. These paintings are often compared to Chinese painting of the Six Dynasties period (285-589). Tombs, such as the Tomb of the Dancers, the Three Chamber Tomb, and Changchuan Tomb 1 in Ji’an, are examples from this phase, as is the Yaksu-ri Mural Tomb in Pyongyang.

The Tomb of the Dancers is often considered to be paired with the Tomb of the Wrestlers. They are placed next to each other and are of a similar size and structure. However, the Tomb of the Dancers, in addition to the genre scenes and paintings of wooden architecture, includes the White Tiger, the Green Dragon, and a pair of Red Birds on its ceiling (fig. 28). Since the Tomb of the Wrestlers does not include the Four Spirits, it is possible this is a transitional tomb that signals the inception of Four Spirit

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96 Jeon Goguryeo byeokhwa yeongu, 417.
97 Kim Wonyong Art and Archaeology of Ancient Korea, 390-397. The term “Six Dynasties” refers to the six Chinese dynasties between the Han and the Sui that located their capital in Nanjing—Eastern Wu (222-265), Jin (265-420), Liu Song (420-479), Qi (479-502), Liang (502-557), Chen (557-589). (Dien Six Dynasties, 1.) This term is somewhat limiting as it only refers to Southern, ethnically Chinese dynasties. Generally, I will use the term “post-Han” to refer to the Chinese Three Kingdoms (Shu, Wei, Wu) and the Jin periods, roughly 221-420. The term Northern and Southern Dynasties refers to the dynasties in the period beginning with the Northern Wei (386-534) and ending with the Sui (581).
98 舞踊塚 (C: Wuyong zhong; K: Muyong chong)
99 長川1號墓 (C: Changchuan 1hao mu; K: Jangcheon 1ho bun)
100 藥水里壁畵古墳 (C: Yaoshui-li bihua gufen; K: Yaksu-ri byeokhwa gobun)
images in Goguryeo tombs, at least those in Ji’an. It is believed to date slightly later than the Tomb of the Wrestlers, approximately mid-fifth century.\(^{102}\)

The Three Chamber Tomb (fig. 29) and the Changchuan Tomb 1 (fig. 30) also display the Four Spirits on their ceilings. Both multi chamber tombs, the Three Chamber Tomb is notable for having three rooms. Changchuan Tomb 1 displays a mixture of Buddhist imagery. Interestingly, of the tombs excavated to date, those with the Four Spirits painted on the ceilings are located in the Ji’an region.\(^{103}\)

In Pyongyang, the tombs with mixed imagery have the Four Spirits portrayed on the walls. The Yaksu-ri Mural Tomb, generally dated from the mid to late-fifth century, has the images of the Four Spirits animals painted on the upper layer of the walls with depictions of the sun and moon and constellations (fig. 31). These images are placed above paintings of wooden beams and pillars. Below these architectural elements are genre scenes. Therefore, while the images of the Four Spirits technically appear on the walls, they are placed in what can be considered the heavenly realm with the images on the ceiling.

The tombs with the Four Spirits on the ceiling or upper walls are often considered early transitional period tombs (Table 2). In Ji’an, genre scenes still have a dominant place on the walls, and the Four Spirits are relegated to the ceiling with the other unearthly images. However, in Pyongyang the Four Spirits began to move downward, eventually taking a dominant position on the walls. These tombs may be the final stage

\(^{102}\) Ah-Rim Park *Koguryo Tomb Murals*, 54.

\(^{103}\) Jeon says the Four Spirits found in the Liaodong City Tomb (*遼東城塚* C: Liaodong cheng zhong, K: Yongdongseong chong) near Pyongyang are placed on the ceiling of the antechamber. (Jeon *Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu*, 411.) Park says they are on the walls. (Ah-Rim Park *Koguryo Tomb Murals*, 54.)
of tombs with genre scenes before the inception of the Four Spirits tombs. An example of this later transitional style tomb is the Tomb of the Hunting Scene located in Nampo City near Pyongyang. In Yang Hong’s chronology, this tomb is classified as style two of his middle phase. The Four Spirits are placed on the lower portion of the wall below scenes of horseback riding and hunting. On the north wall, the Dark Warrior is placed next to the occupant portrait, and they are of equal size. It has abstract patterns scrolling along its ceiling corbels. This tomb is considered to be from the late-fifth century, owing to the combination of imagery and the structure of the ceiling.\footnote{Yang “Gaogouli bihua,” 16.}

A similar style tomb also excavated in Nampo City is the Twin Pillars Tomb (figs.32-33),\footnote{雙楹塚 (C: Shuangying zhong; K: Ssangyeong chong.)} a two chambered tomb notable for the two ornate pillars placed between the front and back chamber. In this tomb, the Green Dragon and White Tiger dominate the east and west walls of the front chamber, and the Red Birds and Dark Warrior appear on a smaller scale on the south and north walls in the back chamber. The Twin Pillars Tomb has ornate paintings of wooden architecture in both chambers. There are pillars with bracket sets painted in the corners and wooden beams painted between them recreating a worldly edifice for the afterlife. In this tomb, the Four Spirits (other than the Red Birds) appear below the painted beams. This style tomb shows the growing importance of the Four Spirits and the changing perception of the afterlife. There is no longer a distinction between the worldly images and the supernatural. The Twin Pillars Tomb also illustrates a hodgepodge of imagery and ideologies. It includes daily life
scenes and occupant portraits with scenes of Buddhist rituals and the Four Spirits illustrating that, for the afterlife, there was no dominant belief system.

From the tombs excavated thus far, one can see a probable stylistic evolution from tombs without the Four Spirits to those with the Four Spirits on the ceiling and upper walls to those with the Four Spirits as either dominant to or equal to genre images on the lower walls to, finally, those where the Four Spirits dominate the walls without genre scenes. This evolution is likely not this clear cut, since the occupant chose which images decorated his eternal abode, but it can be considered the general progression.

Interestingly, in Ji’an the transitional period tombs are exemplified by those tombs with the Four Spirits on the ceiling. In the Pyongyang region, the animals move down the walls, eventually taking a dominant position. Beginning in 427 CE, Pyongyang was the capital of Goguryeo. With the concentration of wealth and power in the capital, the innovation seen in the tomb murals in the Pyongyang region is expected. It is around the time of this move that the tombs with the Four Spirits begin to appear.

The last stage of Goguryeo tomb decoration had no connection to daily life but instead focused on the Four (sometimes five) Spirits. The label “Four Spirits Tomb” is used for a type of tomb closely associated with the Goguryeo Kingdom and the regions of Ji’an and Pyongyang. Of the over one hundred excavated Goguryeo painted tombs, a total of ten have the Spirit animals as the main subject of their chamber wall paintings and no genre scenes. Seven of these are located in Pyongyang (Table 3): the Four Spirits Tomb at Honam-ri, the Armored Horse Tomb, Nae-ri Tomb 1, Jinpa-ri Tomb 4, 106-109

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106 湖南里四神墓 (C: Hunan-li sishen mu; K: Honam-ri sasin myo)
Jinpa-ri Tomb 1,\textsuperscript{110} and the Gangseo Great and Middle Tombs; the other three are in Ji’an: the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, and Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5.\textsuperscript{111} Four Spirits tombs were also constructed in Baekje and Japan, but the majority are found in Goguryeo territory.\textsuperscript{112}

The Four Spirits tombs found in Pyongyang and Ji’an all have similar single chamber structures and compositions, although they also have varying secondary elements that speak to regional variances as well as personal preferences of the occupants and their relatives. Regional variances will be explored later. The general pictorial program in the ten Four Spirits tombs is walls dedicated to the Four Spirits and ceilings decorated either with ornamental or heavenly motifs. References to wooden architecture have all but disappeared. The three Four Spirits tombs found in Ji’an—Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, Five Helmets Tomb 4 and Five Helmets Tomb 5—are the focus of this study.

1.6 Daoism and the Goguryeo Four Spirits Tombs

One cannot discuss the Four Spirits tombs of Goguryeo without addressing their ties to religion. These tombs are often described as “Daoist.” Daoist is a term that is

\textsuperscript{107}铠马塚 (C: Kaima zhong; K: Gaema chong.)
\textsuperscript{108}奈里1号墓 (C: Nai-li 1 hao mu; K: Nae-ri 1 ho myo.)
\textsuperscript{109}真.subtract(90,0)汳里4号墓 (C: Zhenbian-li 4 hao mu; K: Jinpa-ri 4 ho myo.)
\textsuperscript{110}真.subtract(90,0)汳里1号墓 (C: Zhenbian-li 1 hao mu; K: Jinpa-ri 1 ho myo.)
\textsuperscript{111}Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 235; Ah-Rim Park Koguryo Tomb Murals, 53. The Armored Horse Tomb has genre scenes painted in its entrance corridor and ceiling, and it also has paintings of pillars, which indicates this is a late transitional tomb.
\textsuperscript{112}Two are in what was Baekje territory: Songsan-ri Tomb 6 (송산리 6 호묘, 宋山里 6 号墓) in Gongju and Neungsan-ri Tomb 1 (능사리 1 호묘, 陵山里 1 号墓) in Buyeo. There are also two excavated tombs in Japan: Takamatsuzuka 高松塚古墳 and the Kitora Tomb キトラ古墳.
sometimes used to blanket belief systems that differ from Buddhism and Confucianism, such as the shamanistic and popular beliefs found in China and Goguryeo. However, by the sixth century Daoism refers to a structured religion. This section explores what the term “Daoist” means when referring to sixth and early-seventh-century Goguryeo.

Although records such as the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* state that Daoism became officially recognized in the early-to mid-seventh century in Goguryeo, most of the Four Spirits tombs are believed to date to an earlier period, beginning in the early-sixth century. The Four Spirits were the symbols used to represent the fundamental cosmology of Daoism. Therefore, their appearance and popularity indicates Daoism had taken root within Goguryeo society well before its official acceptance.

Several elements within the pictorial programs of the late period Goguryeo tombs can be tied to Daoist beliefs: the Four Spirits animals, depictions of immortals, and celestial bodies. The Four Spirits are consistent motifs in all the late period Goguryeo tombs. Depictions of immortals and constellations appear more sporadically. It is important to note that while these motifs were a focus in the later period tombs, they were present in middle period tombs as well, tombs that are not specifically labeled as “Daoist.”

As already mentioned, the Four Spirit animals, which will be discussed in further detail later, consistently appear in Goguryeo tombs with murals beginning in the early-fifth century (Table 2). During the fifth century, the animals were small images among various scenes of daily life and immortality. They generally appear on the upper walls or

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on the ceiling. While the animals did not have a commanding role at this time, it is
noteworthy that these animals were a persistent presence two centuries prior to Daoism’s
official acceptance.

The Four Spirits animals were known on the Korean peninsula as early as the Han
occupation of the Lelang commandery. The Han Emperor Wu 漢武帝 established the
commandery in 108 BCE as a part of his push to expand the empire. Part of Emperor
Wu’s impetus for expanding his Empire was the quest for immortality and his desire to
find the land of the immortals. The Four Spirits reached their full popularity during the
reign of Han Emperor Wu. They were important symbols of the Five Phases
(sometimes referred to as the “five elements”), the basic components that create the
universe. The principles of the yin and yang and the Five Phases which developed
during the Han and became the foundation for cosmological understanding upon which
later forms of Daoism relied.

While the Four Spirits were known within the Han territory that later fell to
Goguryeo, they do not become popular until the early-fifth century signifying an
ideological shift and a new perception of the universe. The reappearance and growing
popularity of these symbols of the Five Phases indicate that beliefs associated with

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114 A bronze mirror with the Four Spirits was excavated from a Lelang tomb. (Gungnip jungang
bangmulgwan, Nangnang. [Seoul: Sol chulpansa, 2001]: 40.)
116 五行 (C: wuxing; K: ohaeng) Loosely, the Five Phases are defined as earth, wood, metal, fire, and
water. However, defining the “Five Phases” as material elements ignores their other various meanings.
They are also associated with other concepts such as the changing seasons and the cardinal directions.
117 阴陽五行 (C: yinyang wuxing; 음양오행 K: eunyang ohaeng. The principles of yin and yang and the
Five Phases and the Four (Five) Spirits are discussed further in Chapter 3.
118 Robinet Taoism, 7.
Daoism were present during this period, although they may not have been the main belief system within the kingdom.

There are snippets in the historical record regarding early Goguryeo Daoism. For example, the early-sixth-century *Lives of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan*) records that the Chinese monk Daolin (314-366) discussed contemporary famous Chinese monks with a Goguryeo Daoist priest. The thirteenth century *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* (*Haedong kosung cheon*) states the Chinese Daoist monk Tamsi relocated to Liaodong in the fifth year of King Gwanggaeto (395), and the Goguryeo monk Uiyeon (c.576) was familiar with Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The pictorial evidence from the middle period Goguryeo tombs along with the snippets found in literature tells one that while Daoism was not officially accepted until the early-seventh century, it had made inroads well before.

Tombs in which the Four Spirits were the main focus of the pictorial program supplanted the middle period tombs where the animals had a secondary role, demonstrating an ideological shift. The simplicity of focusing the compositions on the Four Spirits reflects an orderly perception of the universe. The tombs no longer include cluttered imagery pertaining to the mundane world. Instead, they portray an organized replication of the universe based upon the symbols of the Five Phases. This replica reflects the fundamental cosmology of Daoism, which had been growing more systematized in the post-Han period.

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120 Robinet *Taoism*, 23.
Outside of the tomb imagery, there is little evidence explaining an ideological shift in the late Goguryeo period before its official acceptance of Daoism in the early-seventh century. However, it is suggested that by the beginning of the seventh century, a form of Daoism related to the northern school of the Five Pecks of Rice Sect,\textsuperscript{121} or the Way of the Celestial Masters,\textsuperscript{122} in China was already popular in Goguryeo.\textsuperscript{123} While records are thin regarding Daoism during this period, it is believed that the growing power of the Goguryeo noble class enabled Daoism to flourish without the official sanction of the court. A series of uprisings and revolts occurring in the early-sixth century empowered the Goguryeo aristocracy and took much of the king’s power away. Another explanation for the sudden shift in ideology may be the influx of refugees from the Chinese Northern and Southern Dynasties. The post-Han period in China was a tumultuous age. Large populations were often relocated after conquest, bringing with them new beliefs.\textsuperscript{124}

It is recorded that in the seventh century Daoism became the officially sanctioned religion of Goguryeo. In the twelfth century text \textit{Samguk yusa} (\textit{Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms}), the Buddhist monk Ilyeon explains that the Goguryeo rulers invited Daoist priests from Tang China to visit their country and teach their religion’s doctrine. The first recorded transmission occurred in the seventh year of King Yeongnyu 榮留王 (624). That winter Tang Emperor Gaozu 唐高祖 sent two Daoist priests to Goguryeo to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} 五斗米道 (C: Wudoumi dao; K: Odumi do.)
\item \textsuperscript{122} 天師道 (C: Tianshi dao; K: Cheonsa do.)
\item \textsuperscript{124} Jeon \textit{Goguryeo byeokhwa yeongu}, 301.
\end{itemize}
teach Daoist doctrine.\textsuperscript{125} Later in the second year of King Bojang 寶藏王 (643), the king’s father, General Yeon Gaesomun 淵蓋蘇文 (603 - 666), induced him to promote Daoism, lamenting that Confucianism and Buddhism were flourishing while Daoism was not, and to send to the Tang for more resources. Tang Emperor Taizong 唐太宗 sent eight Daoist priests and a copy of the \textit{Daodejing 道德經}.\textsuperscript{126}

There is some debate as to the origins of Goguryeo Daoism. Some Korean scholars argue that the appearance of immortals and other “Daoist” motifs in the tombs demonstrates how Daoism was ingrained with local tendencies.\textsuperscript{127} Many believe that Daoism was first and foremost a religion native to Goguryeo, and that when the Tang first sent Daoist priests to Goguryeo, they simply built upon a foundation of beliefs that already existed. They argue that the importance of Baekdu Mountain\textsuperscript{128} in native Goguryeo beliefs demonstrates this.\textsuperscript{129} They further argue that the Daoist beliefs of the surrounding peoples, like the Yan, were influenced by Goguryeo beliefs, not Chinese.\textsuperscript{130}

It is true that native Goguryeo beliefs sometimes parallel Daoist ideology. The Goguryeo people worshipped mountains, an important element in Chinese Daoism. They

\textsuperscript{125} Samguk sagi, Goguryeo bongi, fascicle 8, 播留王: “七年，春二月，王遣使如唐。請班曆遣刑部尚書沈叔安，策王為上柱國遼東郡公高句麗國王，命道士，以天尊像及道法，往為之講老子，王及國人聽之。冬十二月，遣使者入唐朝貢。” (Kim Busik, Sinpyeon Samguk sagi, sang (Seoul: Doseo chulpahn sinseowon, 2004): 454-455.)

\textsuperscript{126} Jung Jae-Seo, 795. Samguk sagi, Goguryeo bongi, fascicle 9, “二年春正月，封父為王。遣使入唐朝貢。三月，蘇文告王曰，三教譬如鼎足，闕一不可。今儒釋並興，而道教未盛。非所謂備天下之道術者也。伏請遣使於唐，求道教以訓國人。大王深然之，奉表陳請。太宗遣道士叔達等八人，兼賜老子道德經。王喜，取僧寺館之。” (Kim Busik, Sinpyeon Samguk sagi, sang, 458-459.)

\textsuperscript{127} Kim Jin-soon 103-4; Jung Jae-Seo, 794-795.

\textsuperscript{128} 白頭山 or 택두산. In Chinese, Mt. Baekdu is called Changbaishan 長白山. It straddles the border between North Korea and China.

\textsuperscript{129} It is also believed that Mt. Baekdu was important in the beginnings of Daoism in China as well. (Kim Jin-soon, 130.)

\textsuperscript{130} Jung Jae-seo, 794.
also believed in wandering spirits similar to the Daoist immortals found on earth. However, the imagery within the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs reconstructs the universe, utilizing symbols that were proto-Daoist constructs most commonly associated with the Han. Little visual evidence links the tombs’ pictorial program to native Goguryeo faith, although the mode of representation is closely tied to Goguryeo. Goguryeo is known for its Four Spirits tombs, and only a handful is found outside of this kingdom. Therefore, while the Four Spirit images have roots in a different culture, it can be argued that the Goguryeo modified their representation to fit their own funerary culture.

The images found in the late Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs can be traced to the Han development of the principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases. While images of the Four Spirits, symbols of those principles, were present in what later became Goguryeo territory, they appear to have been reintroduced into the peoples’ consciousness, first in the fifth century and fully evolving in the sixth (Tables 2-3). The changes in the Goguryeo tomb imagery more concretely evidence changes in Goguryeo ideology than do the historical records. They demonstrate an evolution in the perception of the universe that parallels what is seen in China as Daoism becomes more systematized. Over time, the replication of the universe became more orderly and simplified, each symbol imbued with a multitude of meanings. The late period tombs also demonstrate the elites’ movement away from Buddhism.

The Four Spirits tombs are particular to Goguryeo, although the main compositions within the Four Spirits tombs are rooted in beliefs developed in a foreign

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131 Jung Jae-seo, 794.
132 Ahn Goguryeo hoehwa, 39; Jung Jae-seo, 795.
culture. The pictorial programs parallel artistic and religious trends found in contemporary China, but they are not rote imitations. As a powerful nation in Northeast Asia that often rivaled or surpassed its Chinese neighbors, understanding how Daoism was changed in the Goguryeo Kingdom may be an important component to understanding how Daoism evolved in the fifth and sixth centuries.

1.7 Summary

Thus we shall see that murals of the three Four Spirits tombs in Ji’an expand our knowledge of Goguryeo beliefs and cultural interactions occurring in sixth-century Northeast Asia. These three tombs adhere to the paradigm of late period Goguryeo tombs, but the most prominent paintings in these tombs are closely related to the ideologies of Han China. In these Goguryeo tombs, images from ancient Chinese myths and philosophies are revived. The combination of contemporary, regional construction techniques and decorative themes along with retrospective subjects makes these three tombs unique. Understanding what is depicted in these tombs offers a glimpse into the world of sixth-century Goguryeo nobility in Ji’an and their desires for the afterlife.

The remaining three chapters explore the three Ji’an tombs more deeply. Chapter 2 introduces the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. I begin by briefly discussing the circumstances regarding their excavations. I then describe the location and structure of each tomb. Then I describe the interior painting programs, discussing features unique to each of the three tombs. Finally, I address the problems of dating the three tombs and identifying their occupants.
Chapter 3 covers, in depth, the primary image types shared between the three Ji’an tombs, which are briefly described in Chapter 2. I have divided the images according to their placement within the tomb and then subcategorized them according to type; for example, the Four Spirits animals that appear on the walls are discussed together. I endeavor to compare each subtype to contemporary East Asian visual material in an attempt to locate its stylistic impetus. Then, I discuss the image’s possible ideological and visual roots in ancient Chinese mythology and Han period cosmology as well as its possible meaning within the context of the tomb.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I shall synthesize the ideas presented in the previous chapters and explain what exactly is represented in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. It has been said that representations of the Four Spirits in funerary settings create a “diagram of the universe.” The Four Spirits are symbols of a cosmology that arose in the Zhou period and fully evolved in Han China. In Chapter 4, I discuss how the compositions within the three tombs represent the universe as it was conceived according the the principles of yin and yang, the Five Phases, and the cults of immortality. The images work together to facilitate the occupants’ journeys to the land of the immortals in a manner similar to how it was conceived in Han representations found in tombs and on mirrors and incense burners.

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CHAPTER 2: TOMB DESCRIPTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Three late period Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs lie in Ji’an, Jilin Province, China: Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are located in the fertile Donggou Plain close to the Yalu River, a stone’s throw from Manpo, North Korea. These tombs are part of what is known as the Yushan Area Tomb Group (fig. 34), so named because they are located at the base of Mt. Yu. The fourth-century Tomb of the Great King, thought to belong to King Gwanggaeto, and the fifth-century Tomb of the General, thought to belong to Gwanggaeto’s son King Jangsu, are visible from these tombs. The three tombs are slightly northeast of the ancient remains of what is believed to be the second Goguryeo capital, the Guonei City. They are also a short distance from the Wandu Mountain fortress and its tomb group.

The number, three, of Four Spirits tombs in Ji’an contrasts with the seven known Four Spirit animal tombs in the Pyongyang, North Korea, area and can be explained by Ji’an’s use as a secondary capital after 427. The three tombs in Ji’an are similar to the Pyongyang tombs, both structurally and in their main images, which are those of the Four Spirits. Yet, the three Ji’an tombs exhibit major differences compared to these in Pyongyang; the decoration includes monstrous beasts painted in the chamber corners and

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134 For alternate names see Table 1.
135 禹山貴族墓地. (C: Yushan guizu mudi; K: Usan gwijok myoji)
136 太王陵 (C: Taiwang ling; K: Taewang leung)
137 將軍塚 (C: Jiangjun zhong; K: Janggun chong)
138 國內城 (C: Guonei cheng; K: Gungnae seong)
Chinese-style mythical beings, leading one to conclude there were regional differences between the Four Spirits tombs in the two areas.

As regional anomalies, the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs should be discussed together. They were constructed next to each other in the Yushan tomb group and are placed in a triangular configuration no more than 55 meters apart from one another. It is widely thought that they were built around the same time. Most importantly, similar or virtually identical images appear in the three tombs, images that do not appear in Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs and that seem to be closely related to Chinese beliefs, specifically the principles of yin and yang, the Five Phases, and the cult of immortality. Even the choice in pigments adheres to those philosophies. The paintings consist of five pigments—red, green, white, yellow, and black. The remaining images are connected to the land of the immortals. The images clearly break from representations of mundane existence.

This chapter focuses on the background of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. After briefly explaining the circumstances behind their discoveries and excavation, the chapter is dedicated to describing the tombs’ geographical situations, structures, and pictorial program. This chapter includes some analysis of imagery particular to each tomb while Chapter 3 focuses on image types shared between the tombs. The last two sections of this chapter discuss the problems of dating the tombs and identifying the occupants.
2.2 Brief Excavation History

All three Ji'an Four Spirits tombs were first mentioned in Japanese reports from the 1930's. They were not mentioned in Edouard Chavannes' article of 1908. In T'ung-kou, Ikeuchi and Umehara discuss the close proximity of the three tombs. They mention a rumor in the area that one of the Five Helmets Tombs contained painting, but by the time of that publication only the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb had been excavated.\(^{139}\)

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb was the first of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs to be officially investigated. During the fall of 1935, Jin Yufu 金毓黻, an employee of the Education Department of Manchukuo 滿州國, followed information gleaned from local residents and discovered this tomb. In October 1936, Umehara Sueji and Mikami Tsugio 三上次男 excavated the tomb at the behest of the Manchukuo authorities. In 1938, Oba Tsunekichi 小場恒吉 was brought in to preserve and copy the mural paintings. They published their findings in the second volume of T’ung-kou.\(^{140}\)

Five Helmets Tomb 5 was the next to be excavated, also investigated during the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. In 1937, Dr. Kuroda Genji 黒田源次, a professor of the Medical University of Hōten (Fengtian), first surveyed Five Helmets Tomb 5. Kuroda’s curiosity was piqued because deterioration of half of the tomb mound exposed the internal stone chamber. Kuroda and his assistants initiated their work in October of that year. Subsequently, researchers working for the Chōsen Government-General copied the paintings before the walls were too severely damaged. The Educational Department

\(^{139}\) Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol. 1, 21. Instead of calling these tomb the Five Helmets Tombs, the Japanese scholars called them the Five Mounds Tombs 五塊塚.

\(^{140}\) Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol. 1, 3-4 and vol. 2, 15-17.
of Manchuria attempted to maintain the integrity of the wall paintings and again hired Oba Tsunekichi to copy parts.\textsuperscript{141} Publication of the findings was delayed due to World War II.\textsuperscript{142}

Unlike the other two tombs, Five Helmets Tomb 4 was not thoroughly investigated until the mid-twentieth century. Like Five Helmets Tomb 5, the Japanese scholars mentioned Tomb 4 in their publication \textit{T'ung-kou}. However, unlike the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 5, they did not open Tomb 4. After the Japanese occupation, in 1950 local authorities opened Tomb 4 to briefly survey it. They then resealed the tomb for preservation. Only in 1962 did a group from the Jilin Provincial Museum formally investigate and excavate the tomb. Wang Chengli 王承礼 and Li Dianfu led the excavation. At the same time, they reexamined and cleaned up the Five Helmets Tomb 5.\textsuperscript{143}

The tombs have been well preserved, but the paintings have deteriorated slightly since the tombs’ first openings. Therefore, the original reports from the Japanese and Chinese archaeologists are imperative for the study of these tombs. They describe the original conditions of the tombs and include photographs and copies of the tomb murals. Currently, only Tomb 5 is open to the public. However, since the tombs’ inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the local authorities have been working to both preserve the murals and allow more access for visitors.

\textsuperscript{141} Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 12.  
\textsuperscript{142} Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 10.  
\textsuperscript{143} Jilin sheng bowuguan, 59; Li Dianfu \textit{Jungguk ui Goguryeo yujeok}, 213.
2.3 **DONGGOU FOUR SPIRITS TOMB**

**LAYOUT/CONSTRUCTION**

Adhering to the pattern of late period Four Spirits tombs, the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is a single chamber stone structure with an earthen mound (fig. 35). The tomb mound has a square base and appears as though it once had a pyramidal shape. The lengths of the four sides are approximately twenty seven meters, and the height of the mound is approximately eight meters tall. The southern portion of the tomb mound is damaged, which affects the appearance of the tomb path.

When Japanese scholars first excavated the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, they described a scattering of rocks found around the base of the tomb. This is something they also found around the bases of some nearby stone tombs, such as the Tomb of the General and the Tomb of the Great King. They also found such material around the bases of some of the Five Helmets Tombs, specifically Five Helmets Tombs 2 and 5. Unfortunately, the evidence of a possible stone pavement has disappeared since the original excavation.\(^{144}\)

Also in the manner of late period construction, the stone structure is divided into three parts: tomb path, entrance corridor, and main chamber (fig. 36). The builders placed the entire structure slightly off the north-south axis on a more northwest-southeast axis, similar to the other Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.\(^{145}\) The tomb path is trumpet-shaped with an entrance that is wider than the end connected to the 2.13 meters long entrance

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\(^{144}\) Li Dianfu *Jungguk ui Goguryeo yujeok*, 210.

\(^{145}\) Ji’an tombs are often off the direct north-south axis. It is believed that the tombs with murals follow the southwest orientation that was used in the earlier stone tombs. The Pyongyang mural tombs tend to follow the direct north-south axis. (Ah-Rim Park “Tomb of the Dancers,” 14-15)
corridor. Builders placed a large protective stone at the narrow end blocking the entrance of corridor. The walls are all constructed of stacked blocks of blue-grey calcareous shale.146

The tomb itself has a simple, one room chamber with a corbelled ceiling, the type of structure that dominated late Goguryeo tomb building. The four walls of the main chamber—which are 3.63 meters long and 1.52 meters tall—lean in slightly, and the components of the roof are placed on top.147

The overall structure of the ceiling is similar to a step pyramid with each layer diminishing in size. The first layer of the lanterndecke148 ceiling—a ceiling constructed of two layers of stones placed in square and diamond formations—is a diamond, which has corners cut off by four flat stones. This creates an eight-sided shape with four sides that are much longer than the others. The second layer is a square, twisted so its corners bisect the long sides of the first layer. This creates the appearance of a three dimensional square within a truncated diamond. A large capping stone is placed over the second layer.

Inside the chamber lie two stone funerary beds as well as three smaller platforms that once held burial objects.149 The two longer funerary beds are placed in the center of the room and along the eastern wall; they are slightly longer than two meters and wider than one meter. They are oriented north to south. The bed located in the center of the room is broken into two pieces. A smaller stone platform is located along the western

146 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 29.
147 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 29.
148 Some lanterndecke ceilings, like that in Five Helmets Tomb 5, have a step-pyramidal shape. See: Alexander C. Soper, “The ‘Dome of Heaven’ In Asia.”
149 The burial objects were gone by the time of excavation.
wall, as well as two platforms located along the north wall, both oriented from east to 
west. (The smaller platforms are approximately 1.6 meters long and 0.75 meters wide.) 
The interior of the tomb had been thoroughly plundered; however, excavators found 
fragments of objects, such as lacquer coffins.  

**Painting Program**

The painting program found inside the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb contains rich 
imagery, although the technique has been considered slightly inferior to those of the other 
two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The Japanese excavators, knowing that the murals of this 
tomb were in danger of rapidly deteriorating, hired Oba Tsunekichi both to oversee their 
preservation and to create copies of the paintings. Through his copies, one sees that 
around the time of its opening this tomb’s heavy murals differed stylistically from the 
lithe paintings of the other two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Looking at photos from later 
explorations, observers still see remnants of the heavy, rich painting that once filled the 
walls.  

The stone blocks used to build the walls were polished until they presented an 
ideal surface for painting, meaning this tomb did not require a white-lime surface applied 
as a ground for the painting as is found in some Goguryeo tombs. The painters used a 
palette of five colors—muddy black, green, yellow, red, and white—to create images of 
the Four Spirits as well as other fantastical representations.

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150 Ikeuchi *T’ung-kou* vol.2, 15.  
151 Ikeuchi *T’ung-kou* vol.2, 15.
When examining the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb’s painting, the Japanese scholars declared it clumsy even though they believed the colors were beautiful and the technique was full of vigor. Umehara stated, “In composition these paintings bear a remarkable resemblance to those painted in similar fashion on the two tombs decorated with the Four Deities in Sanbo-ri, Kōsai-gun, Chōsen [the Gangseo Great and Middle Tombs in Pyongyang]. But in the mode and art of expression the painting in this tomb may be considered inferior, as lacking refinement.” He goes on to say, “The whole design lacks the easy flow of the buoyant spirits. Not only so but there is something heavy in the colour scheme used which makes it oppressive to the eye.”152 The painters of this tomb used thick paint applied directly to the wall. The black brush strokes used to denote details are delicate but lack the refinement of the strokes used to depict the feather-garments of the immortals and the dragons’ scales found in the Five Helmets Tombs. There is also a heavier reliance on thick outlines and thick, flat color. This is seen especially in the floral border where the paint was thick and the blossoms are not uniformly rendered. While the painting technique used may have been heavy handed in applying pigment, the figures are quite lithe.

Similar to the painting program of the two other Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb’s painting program begins directly outside the tomb entrance. Painted on either side of the corridor are half-nude guardian figures holding weapons and running toward the tomb entrance (fig. 37).153 Scholarly studies includes line drawings and reproductions of the figure on the west side of the corridor. This figure

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152 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 16.  
153 Jeon Goguryeo gobunbyeokhwui segye, 269.
runs, one foot placed in front of the other, toward the entrance. He is aggressive, holding a spear in front of his body; behind him he holds what could be interpreted as a stupa. One of the most notable features of his attire, in addition to the fact that he is shirtless, are the streamers wrapped around his head, legs, waist and spear. He wears trousers that appear tucked into some sort of shin guard as well as shoes that have upturned toes. Although the viewer cannot see the details of his face, his attire and hairstyle are distinctly foreign.

If the guardian carries a stupa in his back hand, then it is possible he is the Buddhist Heavenly King of the North, whose attribute was a stupa and a spear. Although the Four Spirits tombs are considered Daoist, some of the images were borrowed from Buddhism. The clearest example of Buddhist style guardians in a Goguryeo tomb is found in the Jinpa-ri Tomb 1 (fig. 38), a Four Spirits tomb located in the Pyongyang vicinity. Scholars date this tomb to the first half of the sixth century. The door guardian figures, known from line drawings, are located in the entrance corridor of the tomb. They stand frontally on lotus pedestals; the one figure whose feet are still intact has each foot placed on a lotus, another common prop in Buddhist art. Both figures have haloed heads, something that is seen in the Changchuan Tomb 1’s depictions of Bodhisattvas and apsaras. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb guardian lacks the halo and

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154 Frédéric, 243.

155 The positioning of the legs and the placement of each foot on a lotus pedestal is remarkably similar to later paintings dated to the Tang found at Dunhuang that are currently in the Pelliot and Stein collections, specifically a sketch executed on an old sutra scroll. While these paintings date later than the Goguryeo tomb paintings, it is possible that such images circulated during previous periods, but are lost to scholars today. The cache of artists’ practice materials is rare as such materials were generally not held as valuable. Paintings on silk from the period contemporary with these tombs are equally rare. (Sarah Fraser, “Formulas of Creativity: Artist’s Sketches and Techniques of Copying at Dunhuang,” Artibus Asiae. vol. 59, 3/4 [2000]: 189-224.)
a lotus pedestal is not visible, but his head gear is similar to that of the Jinpa-ri Tomb 1 guardians. The figures appear to wear a crown similar to those in Central Asian Buddhist Cave paintings, like those found in the Kizil caves. 156 The Jinpa-ri Tomb 1 is a late Goguryeo Four Spirits tomb with Buddhist style guardians, allowing for the possibility that the guardians in the Ji’an tomb were also borrowed from Buddhism.

These fearsome figures served as protection for the tomb interior. Unfortunately, they were not effective against earthly intruders. Before excavators attempted to enter the tomb, its contents had been completely plundered. 157

As its name implies, the main images found on the interior of the tomb were the Four Spirits. Similar to the other Four Spirits tombs, each animal’s placement corresponds to the cardinal direction that it represents—the Dark Warrior of the North, the Green Dragon of the East, the Red Bird of the South, and the White Tiger of the West. The Dark Warrior is the first image one sees on the north wall upon entering (fig.39). This combination of tortoise and snake stands firmly on its four feet. The snake wraps itself around the tortoise, its tail and head knotted together near the tortoise’s tail. The two animals’ heads are twisted in space, looking at one another with their mouths gaping and tongues protruding. Both animals are fairly realistically depicted with the scales and ridges of their bodies carefully delineated. The tortoise is a muddy brown color, while the snake is a combination of black, red, yellow, green, and white.

156 Several of the Kizil caves have similarly attired figures along their corridors, as in Cave 4, or flanking niches, like in Cave 14. (Beijing Daxue kaoguxue xi and Kezier Qianfo dong wenwu baoguansuo, Xinjiang Kezier shiku kaogu baozhao. [Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997]: 287 and 291)
157 Ikeuchi T'ung-kou vol.2, 15.
This image of the Dark Warrior is noteworthy due to its similarities to the majority of the Dark Warrior images in late Goguryeo tombs. It is a self-contained composition. The bodies of tortoise and snake are intertwined, and their heads are turned toward one another inside the circle their bodies create. They have no interaction with the viewer and seem solely self-possessed. The tortoise’s feet are also firmly planted, giving no sign of movement. The only notion that the Dark Warrior is not static is the portrayal of the wispy clouds as background.\(^{158}\) Here the clouds flit downward on either side of the animals’ bodies rather than swirling in one direction. The other three directional animals move toward the entrance. Therefore, compositionally the Dark Warrior creates a fixed point from which the movement on the chamber walls originates.

On the east and west walls are the Green Dragon (fig.40) and White Tiger (fig.41), respectively. The long bodies of both these animals stretch across the wall surface facing toward the door, and their mouths gape. Their bodies are nearly identical; they are long and narrow with their tails outstretched, and they have wispy, flame-like wings protruding from their shoulders and legs. Their colors vary; the tiger is painted white, and the dragon is mainly green with yellow and red accents. Their heads are different as well. The dragon has a long, narrow face and snout with antenna-like protrusions coming from its head. The tiger’s head is rounded, and it has a stunted snout

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\(^{158}\) These wispy, swirling clouds are thought to be depictions of “vital energy” 魄 (C: qi; K: ki.) (Kang Woo-bang, "A New Theory: Ki as represented in Koguryô Murals and Buddhist Haloes from the Three Kingdoms Period" *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan.* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003]: 107-113.)
that is similar to that of a real tiger.\textsuperscript{159} Their legs are lifted, and their bodies are placed on a slightly downward sloping angle in an attempt to show movement. The wispy clouds swirl in the same direction that the animals face, further emphasizing the motion.

The last of the Four Spirits is actually represented as a pair. The Red Bird generally represents the south. On the south wall in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, two birds, believed to be male and female, flank the entrance (fig.42); one is white, and the other is red. Both birds face the doorway and stand on lotus pedestals, and both have their wings outstretched, their tails lifted, and their beaks open (fig.43). They give the impression they are greatly agitated.

In addition to the Four Spirits, each of the four corners of the main chamber has an animal headed figure wearing a loin cloth (fig.44). These beastly figures raise their arms as though they are supporting the weight of the ceiling. In previous Goguryeo tombs, pillars and bracket sets were often painted in these corners; the beasts in the corners of this chamber replace these architectural elements. These slender figures with bear-like faces are shown running with one leg outstretched behind them and one knee lifted. The painter included a swirling line on the knee, further emphasizing movement. In addition, flame-like emanations trail behind its back. The composition of the painted walls creates a flurry of movement that is focused toward the entrance and originates with the self-contained image of the Dark Warrior.

Above the paintings of the animals is a narrow, ornamental floral border (fig.45). This border differs from the other two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, which have dragon

\textsuperscript{159} The artists in northeast China and Korea were familiar with tigers. The Siberian tiger is sometimes called the Korean tiger and is native to that area. It can sometimes be found in hunting scenes such as that in the Tomb of the Dancers.
borders. The floral motif of flowers, leaves and vines is painted in a repeated pattern. The main component is a three-petal white flower placed between two ochre colored leaves. The pattern consists of a repetition of leaves that open upwards, alternating with inverted mirrored images interconnected by a reddish vine. The ornamentation is slightly irregular with the floral components varying in size. The painters also appear to have been heavy handed in their color application. They used thick reddish-brown outlines and shadowing. The technique used in this portion of the decoration contrasts with the elegant appearance of the animals on the walls. This border visually separates the interior space of the tomb into two parts: the ceiling and the walls.

The next layer of the tomb is the first layer of the corbelled ceiling (fig.46). This layer of the ceiling is divided into eight sides: four long sides and four smaller ones. When a viewer stands in the entrance and looks up, this layer has the appearance of a truncated diamond. On the north and south, small panels are monstrous faces with gaping mouths. On the west corner is the moon with a toad, and on the east side is the crow in the sun. Similar to the animals on the chamber walls, the figures on the long sides also move toward the south, where the entrance is located. This level contains ten figures all riding mythical animals. They can be divided into two groups: those figures on the western panels that have antenna-like hairstyles and wear feather-garments and those on the eastern panels that wear mortarboard style hats and elegant robes. The three figures on the northwestern panel each rides a hybrid creature with four legs and a long tail. On the southwestern panel, there are two figures; each rides a crane. They all face forward in the same direction toward the door. On the northeastern panel, three figures
wearing hats that resemble mortarboards ride dragons. The southeastern panel has two similar figures riding dragons as well as a solitary phoenix. They are on a background of swirling clouds. Twisting dragons are placed on the underside of the corbels.

The demon-like beast images painted on its ceiling corbels make Donggou Four Spirits Tomb different from the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The three beasts on the ceiling are divided between the two layers corbels. On the first level of corbels, monstrous faces are painted on the small north and south panels (fig. 47). Japanese scholars called these images “Beast Faces”; Li Dianfu later referred to them as taotie 貔貅. Taotie most often refers to the abstract, zoomorphic faces found on Shang and Zhou bronzes. This designation stems from a quote in the Lüshi Chunqiu 吕氏春秋, which states “The tripods of Zhou are decorated with the Taotie. It has a head but no body. It devours people, but since it can never swallow them, its actions bring harm to itself.” This description resembles the beast faces seen in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb.

At first, it appears as though the beasts on the corbels are merely disembodied heads. Examined closely, however, they are atlas figures similar to those in the chamber corners. Their gruesome faces are placed centrally on their panels. Their mouths gape, and in the center are pearl-like objects. They have antennae-like protrusions from their heads, small ears, and flame-like fur on both sides of their heads. Below the heads,

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160兽面. Ikeuchi T'ung-kou vol2., 33.
161 Li Dianfu Jumguk ui Goguryeo yujeok, 211.
163 Ikeuchi T'ung-kou vol.2 17.
they have voluptuous chests and stubby legs with the feet/paws turned inwards. Stylistically, the faces are more similar to the corner beasts found in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 than to the faces of the corner beasts in the same tomb. They have the fearsome bear-like faces with large teeth rather than the benign countenance of the slender beasts found in the chamber corners. Although it is difficult to discern with the painting’s current condition, the creatures have arms that extend to either side of the panel, so they appear to support the corner slab above. Part of the painting also seems to stretch into the above corner space. In this way, the images take on a symbolic structural function.

The second layer of the ceiling has a square shape (fig.48), and also has figures painted on each side, oriented to the cardinal directions. On the west panel, two human figures appear alongside a hybrid-bird eating a snake. The human figures both have long hair and wear feather-garments. The figure on the left crouches before a low table. He appears to be writing with an ink-stone and a brush. The figure on the right stands in front of a tree, and it looks as though he is starting a fire by rubbing a stick between his hands. On the south side of this level, a bird figure sits on the left side along with a demon-like face with legs (fig.49). Between them are stars.

One of the most compelling elements of the south panel is the brief inscription placed to the right of the monstrous beast. It reads: “宍 宅不知 [足],” which Umehara
translated as “Insatiable Hunger for Meat.” The inscription certainly is related to eating, and appears to apply to the gruesome face. This is the only inscription found in all of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

At first glance, the beast face on the top corbel appears to be the same as the two lower beasts. It has the same squat appearance, as though the demon-like beast is a head resting on two clawed legs, and it has flame-like fur. Its mouth gapes open like the other two, but instead of a round object placed in its mouth, it has a long, protruding tongue. It also lacks the voluptuous chest and arms of the other two beasts.

The designation of *taotie* may be more appropriate for this beast than the lower two. In addition to being a motif found on ancient bronzes, *taotie* is a specific figure referred to in texts. The inscription implies gluttony, and in many ways the image matches the description of the beast found in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. Like the beast that appears on the second layer of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb ceiling, the beast

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164 One of the characters is difficult to decipher and has been identified as an obsolete character from the Six Dynasties Period. In *T’ung-kou*, it is interpreted as 足, and they therefore translate the inscription as “Insatiable hunger for meat” (Ikeuchi *T’ung-kou* vol.2, 17). It has alternately been translated as “[I] eat and eat but am still hungry” (Junghie Lee, “The Evolution of Koguryo Tomb Murals” *Korean Culture* vol.13, no.2 [1992]: note 34). It is possible that the inscription is a later addition, but the characters used are contemporary with the supposed date of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb.

165 Protective monster imagery with long protruding tongues has a long tradition in China, dating as far back as the Eastern Zhou (722-221 BCE). (Alfred Salmony, “Antler and Tongue: An Essay on Ancient Chinese Symbolism and its Implications” *Artibus Asiae Suplementum* vol.13 [1954]: 43; Cortney E. Chaffin, “Strange creatures of Chu: Antlered Tomb Sculptures of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods,” diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2007.) However, the Goguryeo Kingdom was distant in both time and space from the Eastern Zhou and, therefore, cannot be directly linked to these antlered sculptures. Furthermore, it seems the practice of using long tongues beasts faded in the Han. In the post-Han period long-tongued images reemerged. A striking example of a long-tongued beast is also found in the Northern Wei stone epitaph for Lady Yuan. Carved on this stone is a monster with the name *Long Tongue* 長舌. This figure has a head and body that looks like the other creatures on the epitaph, except that it has a long protruding tongue. (Shi Anchang, “Beiwai Feng Yong qi Yuan shi muzhi wenshi kao,” *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* vol.2 [1997]: 79; Susan Bush, “Thunder Monsters and Wind Spirits in Early-sixth-century China and the Epitaph of Lady Yuan” *Boston Museum Bulletin* vol.72, no.367 [1974]: 32.)

described is missing a large portion of its body; only his head and legs remain. Other texts refer to the taotie’s gluttony. A biography in the Zuozhuan 左傳 says that a man “had a descendant who was devoid of ability and virtue. He was greedy in eating and drinking, craving for money and property. All the people under heaven called him Glutton (taotie).”\textsuperscript{167}

The taotie was also associated with warding off evil. He appears again in the Zuozhuan in conjunction with the legendary emperor Shun while he was still a minister. Shun “expelled the families of the four evil ones, Hundun, Qiongqi, Taowu and Taotie, and threw them [into the areas] of the four boundaries to repulse evil demons.”\textsuperscript{168} This reference in the Zuozhuan can be aligned with the apotropaic function of the Donggou tomb image. It states there that Shun exiled taotie to repulse demons, another function that would have been desired for a tomb interior.\textsuperscript{169}

Identifying the figure on the second layer of ceiling corbels as taotie is conjectural and tenuous. However, the creature’s monstrous appearance and association with an insatiable desire for meat makes it a fearsome image, likely meant to protect the deceased in the afterlife. Thus far, there is no explanation for this divergence in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb.


\textsuperscript{169} Harrist, 257. The inclusion of Taotie as one of the “four evil ones” also appears in the Classic of History. (Birrell Chinese Mythology, 99.)
The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has other images unique to it among the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, beyond the beast faces found on it corbels. Of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, birds without riders appear only on the ceiling corbels of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. This tomb has five such birds. One, a phoenix, is located on the first layer of corbels. Four birds identified as “strange birds”\textsuperscript{170} in the original Japanese report are painted on the second layer of ceiling corbels; it will be these birds that will be discussed presently.

Each bird has its own unique physical appearance, which should lend itself to specific identification. On the north panel of the second layer of ceiling corbels in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb are two birds (figs.50-51). They face one another and are placed on either side of the Northern Dipper constellation. The bird on the left side is placed under the handle of the dipper. It has a three-plume tail and short wings; its body is mainly red and white. The avian creature on the right is less identifiable. It has an odd looking head,\textsuperscript{171} short wings, and a multitude of tail plumes. It stands on one leg and raises the other. Its body also appears to be mainly red and white.

The bird on the left has been identified as a \textit{luanniao} 鴞鳥, a mythical bird that resembles a phoenix.\textsuperscript{172} The \textit{Shanhaijing} says, “There is a bird here [Lady’s-Bed Mountain] whose form resembles a pheasant with five-colored markings. It is called the Luanniao [Luan bird], and if seen by people, it is an omen that the world will enjoy peace

\textsuperscript{170}怪鳥 (Ikeuchi \textit{T’ung-kou} vol.II, 33-4.)
\textsuperscript{171}It has been described as having the head of a “strange beast” 怪獸. (Wu Guangxiao, 211.) I believe it is possible it has the head of an immortal. Such images were popular in contemporary China and in earlier Goguryeo tombs as seen below.
\textsuperscript{172}Wu Guangxiao, 211.
and tranquility.”

The luan bird is also described as mostly red with markings in five colors and sometimes as grasping or standing on snakes. This bird was considered second in importance only to the phoenix and is described as appearing in paradises or as a mount for the Queen Mother of the West or other immortals. Elsewhere in the Shanhaijing the luan bird is paired with the phoenix. This pairing is of interest to us when considering the identities of the two birds on the north panel. The luan bird was said to sing on impulse, and when it did this, the phoenix would dance. Perhaps the bird on the right is a dancing phoenix. However, without a clear description of this bird, these identifications remain tenuous.

On the west panel, to the right of the figures who are writing and making fire, is a bird standing on and eating a snake (fig.52). Thus far, this image is unusual among the avian illustrations in the Goguryeo tombs. This image can be interpreted in a variety of ways. From the perspective of Buddhist art, the figure could be a garuda, an avian being who eats snakes. However, it seems more likely that this image is derived from Chinese mythology since it is placed with the legendary creators of fire and writing.

The Shanhaijing is full of descriptions of birds that tread upon and consume snakes. The two birds mentioned above, the luan bird and the phoenix, are described as standing on and eating snakes. Another possible identification is a huangniao 黃鳥 or “yellow birds,” phoenix-like birds found in the Shanhaijing. “There is a Shaman

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173 Strassberg, 102; Shanhaijing, fascicle 2 (Xishan jing 西山經) “西南三百里，曰女床之山…。有鳥焉，其狀如翟而五采文，名曰鸞鳥，見則天下安寧。” (Yuan Ke, ed., Shanhaijing jiao zhu. [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980]: 35.)
174 Strassberg, 102 and 193.
175 There is a Tang example of a garuda in Dunhuang Cave 171. It has a human head and a bird’s body. (Reza with Jacques Giès, Laure Feugère, and André Coutin, Painted Buddhas of Xinjiang: Hidden Treasures from the Silk Road. trans., Ian West. [Chicago: Art Media Resources, Ltd., 2002]: 154.)
Mountain. On its western side are found the Yellow-Birds, the herbs of the Supreme
God, and his eight chambers of purification. The Yellow-Birds control these Black-
Snakes on Shaman Mountain. These birds ate snakes in order to protect the herbs that
promoted immortality. Interestingly, these snake-eating birds reside on the west side of
the Shaman Mountain. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb snake-eating bird is placed on
the west panel of the ceiling corbels.

There is a multitude of snake-eating birds mentioned in the Shanhaijing, so
further investigation is required. However, perhaps one can infer the function of this
image by examining past depictions of snake-treading and -eating birds. By the fourth
century BCE in China, birds attacking snakes appear on ritual bronzes and among
protective images in tombs. It is possible the Han adopted birds as protective images
from those early depictions. This unusual snake-devouring bird may be executed in
the same vein as the pre-Han images. Scholars often attempt to link the fantastical
images from the pre-Han era to creatures described in the Shanhaijing. Similar
comparisons are attempted for the images found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb; and
in fact, it is possible that they arose from the same body of literature.

On the south panel of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is a horned bird (fig.53).
The Japanese report states it is a “beast headed strange bird.” It is placed to the left of
the Northern Dipper. Its wings are outstretched, and it has one leg lifted. Its tail is one
large plume.

176 Strassberg 212; Shanhaijing, fascicle 10 (Hainei nan jing 海內南經) “有巫山者， 西有黃鳥，帝藥，

八齋， 黃鳥于巫山， 司此玄蛇。” (Yuan Ke Shanhaijing, 366.)
177 Rawson Chinese Ornament, 99; Chaffin, 122-3.
178 Chaffin, 2-3.
179 “獸首の怪鳥” (Ikeuchi T'ung-kou vol.II, 33.)
In the Han dynasty, deer-headed birds were thought to be wind gods. Later, horned birds appear to join a pantheon of auspicious animals meant to assist the deceased and give luck. These figures often had inscriptions of wishes for prosperity and longevity and were closely associated with immortality. Two birds that are similar to the horned bird in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb appear in the earlier Deokheung-ri Tomb (fig.54). There the figures are accompanied by cartouches. The one bird that is definitively horned is called Luck, the other similar bird is called Wealth.

Horned birds were popular in China. One appears in Liaoning, which bordered Goguryeo territory, in the Eastern Jin Yuantaizi Tomb with murals (fig.55). It is placed above the White Tiger. This horned bird is shown in flight. In the Northern and Southern Dynasties, horned birds became even more popular in the funerary arts, especially in the north. Such animals often appear with rodent-headed birds. Examples are found on the sixth-century Northern Wei Yuan Mi 元謐 sarcophagus (fig.56) and Gou Jing 荀景

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180 Juliano T'eng-hsien, 45; Karlgren, 323-324.
181 吉利 (C: Jili, K: Kiri)
182 富貴 (C: Fugui; K: Bugui.) Seoul Daehakgyo bangmulgwan, 43.
A horned bird with hooves was painted on the ceiling of Lou Rui’s 廞叡 tomb dating to the Northern Qi (fig.58). Bird images like those found in the Donggou Four Spirits were often accompanied by inscriptions of well wishes and longevity. In addition to Lucky and Wealth, two human-headed birds labeled as the images of a “Thousand Autumns” and “Ten-Thousand Years” appear in the Deokheung-ri Tomb (fig.59). A “Thousand Autumns” was also inscribed near a human-headed bird in the Tomb of the Heavenly King and Earthly Spirit in Pyongyang (fig.60), and similar auspicious birds without inscriptions appear in the Three Chamber Tomb in Ji’an. Clearly these avian images symbolize immortality and longevity. Human-headed birds are seen paired outside

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183 In the Yuantaizi Tomb report, the horned bird located above the White Tiger is identified as the Red Bird 朱雀. The bird image above the Green Dragon is also identified as the Red Bird, although only the feet are still visible. (Liaoning sheng bowuguan wenwu dui, “Chaoyang Yuantaizi Donghan bihua mu,” Wenwu no.6 (1984): 40.) However, this bird has a hybrid appearance that depictions of the Red Bird lack. Curiously, a similar horned bird is also paired with the White Tiger on the Northern Wei Yuan Mi (524) sarcophagus. This bird-like creature is also identified as the Red Bird even though it has both horns and hoofs. The rat-headed bird accompanying the Green Dragon is identified as a feilian 飛廉, a flying beast with the head of a stag, (He Xilin, 358) or as another Red Bird (Zheng Yan, 104.) Interestingly, the rat-headed bird and horned bird with hoofs appear paired on the Gou Jing epitaph cover flanking a flaming alter. They are across from two human-headed birds. (Shi Anchang compares these birds to beastly birds found in Western and Central Asia, beasts like the Persian Senmurv (Simurgh). Shi Anchang “Beiwei Gou Jing muzhi ji wenshi kao,” Gugong bowuyuan yuan kan vol.2 [1998]: 28.) These birds appear to have a specific association, perhaps identical to Luck and Wealth in the Deokheung-li Tomb.

184 The report calls this creature a xiezhi 獬豸. (Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo and Taiyuan shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhu, “Taiyuan shi Beiqi Lou Rui mu fajua jianbao,” Wenwu no.10 [1983]: 18-19.) A similar hoofed creature appears on the Northern Wei Yuan Mi sarcophagus near the White Tiger, and a rodent-headed bird appears near the Green Dragon. (For a closer view see: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Sarcophagus of Prince Zhen Jing [Yuan Mi] at http://www.artsmia.org/viewer/detail.php?v=2&id=738 (1 Aug. 2009).)

185 千秋 (C: Qianqiu; K: Cheonchu)
186 萬歲 (C: Wansui; K: Manse)
187 Stevenson Lee, 128.
188 天王地神塚 (C: Tianwang Dishen zhong; K: Cheongwang Jisin chong)
Goguryeo as well, as is seen on the Northern Wei epitaph cover belonging to Gou Jing (fig. 61).  

Human- and rodent-headed birds inscribed with “Thousand Autumns” and “Ten-Thousand Year” are also found in abundance outside Goguryeo in China. The Southern Dynasty Dengxian 鄧縣 Tomb has a human-headed bird that also has the inscription of a “Thousand Autumns” with a rodent-headed bird inscribed “Ten-Thousand Years” (fig. 62). The same pair with the same inscription appears in a late Southern Dynasties, early Sui tomb in Changzhou, Qijia Village (fig. 63). These images demonstrate the commonality of using bird images as symbols of longevity in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Birds in tombs can be interpreted as having a protective function. Stories involving similar birds in the Shanhaijing often depict them as defenders, like the Yellow Birds defending the Supreme God’s herbs. They also serve as aids and intermediaries to the heavens and the realm of the immortals. In mythology, birds were used as messengers and mounts, and they are closely related to immortals, who often wear feather-garments. In tombs they are often shown in conjunction with constellations, demonstrating their ability to ascend. Lastly, they also functioned as auspicious omens. These were traditional roles that began in the pre-Han era and gained popularity as time continued.

189 Shi Anchang “Beiwei Gou Jing muzhi,” 28.
190 Juliano Teng-hsien, 45.
193 Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 75-6.
The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is the only one of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs with rider-less bird images on its ceiling. Similar to the demon-like faces found in the ceiling corbels, the birds separate this tomb from the others. This variation may show the transitional nature of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. It is believed to be slightly earlier than its neighboring tombs. Perhaps because of its supposed earlier date, it still retained images from earlier nearby tombs. As a whole, the ceiling images in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb are thus far unique.

The east panel of the top layer of corbels has hybrid dragon-human figures. These images are shared images among the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The male holds the sun, and the female raises the moon above their heads; both of those figures face one another with their dragon legs stretched out as though moving.

Unlike the images on the chamber walls and those on the first layer of the ceiling, the images on the second layer of the ceiling are not moving in a unified direction (fig.48). Each panel has its own individualized composition, which is independent from the other panels. Even some of the images placed on the same panels, such as the beast face and the bird, may be arbitrarily paired. On both layers of the ceiling, the figures are placed on a background of wispy clouds.

The last section of the ceiling should be discussed in relationship to the paintings on the walls. Here one finds what can be considered the fifth directional animal, the representation of the center: the Yellow Dragon. Aptly, it was painted on the ceiling.

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194 Although, the Gangseo Great Tomb also has bird images on its ceiling, and it is dated to the end of the sixth century. These images are anomalous among Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs.

195 The Yellow Dragon appears in two other Four Spirits tombs—Five Helmets Tomb 4 in Ji’an and Gangseo Great Tomb. Technically, these three tombs can be considered “Five Spirits” tombs.
capping stone, so it hovers in the middle of the tomb. This dragon twists its body in a circular motion and looks downward with its mouth gaping. Its body is mainly painted yellow, but it also has layers of green and red scales. A few stars encircle it.

The images on the ceiling of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb can be categorized into several groups: anthropomorphic figures, monstrous beast faces, birds, and celestial bodies. The human-like figures can be broken down further into four groups: dragon-riding figures wearing mortarboard-style hats, figures with antenna-like protrusions from their heads riding various animals, the two figures with long hair, and the two half dragon-half human figures. Each of the avian figures is different.

The organization of the imagery is one of the most notable aspects of the tomb painting in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, as well as in the other Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Each wall is dedicated to one large directional animal, and each corner has a running demon-like figure. Then, the floral border, which is painted on the last layer of rectangular stones that construct the walls, signifies a clear division of space. Next the painter used the triangular space created by the first layer of corbelling in the ceiling to depict a singular dragon twisting in space; these dragons are repeated in the second layer as well. The faces of the corbels are also highly organized. On the first layer, each side has a series of figures placed in a row, one after the other, all moving in the same direction. The images in the second layer lack the directional organization of the first,

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196 The figures on the ceiling corbels are less organized in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb versus the two Five Helmets tombs. For example, in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb the flying riders appear on the first ceiling layer, and the earthbound figures appear on the second layer. In the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, the earthbound figures are on the first layer, and the flying figures appear on the second.
but again the painters utilized the rectangular surface to organize the composition; the figures are all placed in a row within the defined area of space.

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is similar to the other two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. They are structurally analogous, all displaying the characteristics of late-period Goguryeo tomb construction. They also share some motifs—the five directional animals, some dragons, and the earth bound and celestial spirits. However, the painting style is more heavy-handed in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb than the other two Ji’an tombs, and compositionally the elements are not as highly organized. These factors lead scholars to give the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb an earlier date.

2.4 The Five Helmets Tombs

As already stated, the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are similar in structure and decoration; however, the two Five Helmets Tombs are remarkably so. These two tombs share nearly identical iconography and painting styles. Some Goguryeo tombs, like the Tomb of the Dancers and the Tomb of the Wrestlers, are considered to be paired.\textsuperscript{197} The two Five Helmets Tombs are similar enough that they could be considered a pair, or it is possible they were part of a series since no one knows what was in the other three Five Helmets tombs.

The Five Helmets tombs lie behind the Ji’an train station. They received their current name because their tomb mounds resemble the shape of a helmet. The two tombs

\textsuperscript{197} Ah-Rim Park \textit{Tomb of the Dancers}, 117-118.
are in a line with Five Helmets Tomb 3 to the south of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. Both tombs’ interior paintings display numerous dragon images. In addition, the paintings of the ceilings, while not completely alike, display nearly identical iconography. They share a handful of the same figures as the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, but the majority of the figures in these two tombs are the same. Further, the organizations of the two tiers of the ceiling are equivalent. The figures in the two s are carefully arranged; and unlike in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the earthbound spirits appear on the lower ceiling corbel, and the flying figures appear above on the upper corbels.

These two tombs are remarkably similar, but not completely identical. Therefore, they can be seen as individual structures rather than as a pair. The paintings are so closely related it must tell us something about the chronology, occupants, and/or the painters. It seems reasonable to assume that painters from the same workshop executed the paintings in these two tombs. The organization and painting techniques are too similar for two different groups to have executed them. It is also reasonable to assume that they were roughly contemporary. As for the social status and relationship between the occupants, they appear to belong to people of similar social stature, and their placement next to one another leads one to believe that perhaps there was a familial relationship between the occupants. The tombs could have belonged to one family.

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198 This tomb may also have contained Four Spirit paintings; however, the wall paintings are gone, leaving no traces behind.
2.5 Five Helmets Tomb 4

Layout/Construction

Today, Five Helmets Tomb 4 is perhaps the most spectacular of the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. The murals are the most complete and well preserved of the three tombs. Similar to many of the tombs in the area, Tomb 4 has an impressive exterior with a large earthen mound. The most notable aspect of this tomb, however, is the vibrant, skillful painting excavators found on the interior walls and ceiling that is still in excellent condition.

One immediately notices the large earthen mound of Tomb 4 (fig.64). It is eight meters tall, and the perimeter is 160 meters. The base of the mound is squarish, all four sides of which are well preserved, which leads scholars to believe that it once had a pyramidal appearance.¹⁹⁹

Similar to the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Five Helmets Tomb 4 was constructed in what has come to be known as the typical late Goguryeo stone tomb style, consisting of a tomb path, small corridor, and a main chamber (fig.65). The extant portion of the tomb path is approximately three meters high and formed from piled stones. The interior surface is covered with four to five centimeters of lime, the majority of which has fallen off.²⁰⁰

The back of the tomb path connects to the entrance corridor that leads to the main chamber; the corridor has a length of 1.88 meters. The tomb’s entrance is located on the east side of the chamber’s south wall, slightly off center, which is different from the other

¹⁹⁹ Li Dianfu. *Jungguk ui Goguryeo yujeok*, 213.
²⁰⁰ Li Dianfu. *Jungguk ui Goguryeo yujeok*, 213.
two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Those tombs’ entrances are placed in the center of the south wall. The entrance’s height and width are each 1.75 meters. The interior of the corridor is constructed of four tightly sealed stones. The gaps between the stone blocks are filled with lime and gravel.\footnote{Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 122.}

As with all known Four Spirits tombs, Tomb 4 is a simple, one chamber tomb constructed of hewn stone. The structure sits 30 degrees off the north-south axis and contains coffin beds for multiple occupants.\footnote{Ah-Rim Park \textit{Koguryo Tomb Murals}, 30.} Also, like the majority of those tombs, Tomb 4 has what has been labeled a \textit{lanterndecke}-style ceiling. The four walls of the chamber and the ceiling are entirely painted.

**Painting Program**

The painting program for Tomb 4 begins directly outside the chamber entrance in the corridor. Here there are two guardian figures painted on either wall, each standing holding a weapon (fig.66). While these figures are fairly intact, damage over time makes several of the main features, such as their faces, difficult to discern.\footnote{Chinese sources say that these images are illegible, but they appear in \textit{Jiban Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa} 62-63.} Both figures appear to be highly stylized, relying on thick outlines to depict details such as folds in their clothing and musculature in their legs.

The east wall figure holds a staff-like object diagonally across his body, and he appears to wear a helmet. The figure on the west wall holds a sword pointed downward directly in front of him, with his hands clasping the hilt. The guardian turns his
grotesquely rendered head with his protruding eyes, thick lips, and bared teeth. His face is distinctly foreign. He wears an elaborate garment with wing-like protrusions extending from above his elbows. Both he and his companion wear garments adorned with streamers and angular folds flaring out behind them. Their attire stands in stark contrast to the half nude figures found in Donggou Four Spirits Tomb.

The guardians in the Five Helmets Tomb 4 are alternately referred to as Door Guardians and Heavenly Guardians. For example, Jeon Ho-tae variously identifies them as tomb door guardians and Heavenly Guardians. The weapon the figure on the east wall holds could lead one to identify them as figures tied to Buddhism. The pointed shapes of both ends do not resemble the swords and spears seen previously. It could be a vajra or a lightning bolt that is held by the Buddhist guardian Vajrapani. There is no reason to believe, however, that these figures are Buddhist in origin. They may simply be apotropaic martial guardians styled after nomadic mercenaries.

Inside the chamber, there is a clear division in Tomb 4’s interior decoration between the ceiling and the walls. The ceiling is the domain of the immortals and the heavens. On the chamber walls, the painters show the division of the four cardinal directions. In between, there is a layer of entwined dragons that act as a border between the realms.

After passing through a short hallway, one immediately sees the Dark Warrior—the combination of a tortoise and snake—dominating the back wall (fig.67). To the right one sees the Green Dragon (fig.68) and to the left is the White Tiger (fig.69). Beside the

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204 Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 383.
205 Jeon Dreams of the Living and the Hopes of the Dead, 97-8
entrance on the south wall is the Red Bird (fig.70). These images are standard for tombs of this period, but Tomb 4 includes some distinct background images behind the animals.

Tomb 4 is one of two tombs (the other being Tomb 5) where the Four Spirits are placed on a background of lotus netting. The pattern has been described as many things such as “lotus and flame netting,”207 and “turtle shell shaped arabesque pattern.”208 The pattern of the decorative background is complex. Undulating vine-like lines intersect to create rounded, diamond-shape openings. On the interior of the spaces, fan-like palmettes, lotus flowers, or what appear to be leaves open into a V-shape (fig.71).

Interestingly, and unlike in Tomb 5, within some of the open spaces are figures, ten in all, placed on lotus pedestals. The ten figures are unique to Tomb 4 and will, therefore, be discussed here rather than later in Chapter 3.

The north wall has four figures: two on the upper layer above the Dark Warrior, one behind the Dark Warrior, and one in front of the Dark Warrior (figs.72). The two figures on top hold fans, stand on their lotus pedestals, and look to the right. The first figure, behind the Dark Warrior, faces left and stands. He wears a basket hat209 and a yellow collared, brownish closed robe garment, a green belt, and black shoes. He stands on a lotus pedestal. His right hand grasps a fly-whisk, and his left hand is inside his sleeve. The figure in front of the Dark Warrior sits with the right leg bent upwards and with his arm resting on his knee as he crouches on a red lotus pedestal. He is barefooted, with his forearms and calves exposed with red ornaments around his ankle. His forehead

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207 “蓮花火焰狀網” Jilin sheng bowuguan, 60 and 63.
208 “龜甲形唐草紋” Kim Jin-soon, 100.
209 龍冠 (C: longguan, K: longgwan)
is bare, and his long hair drapes over his left shoulder. He wears a red collared, green feathered garment. With his left hand he points at the eight trigrams with a stick.\textsuperscript{210} The figure in the mid-netting layer wears a basket hat. His facial features are delicate and pretty, and he wears a green collared, red, closed robe. His left hand holds a fan, and his right hand is inside his gown. His upper arm is missing. He wears a wide belt and black shoes, and stands on a lotus pedestal with a solemn expression.

The best preserved figure in Tomb 4 is the figure on the upper right of the north wall. He wears a basket hat and a red collared, green robe, a red belt, and black shoes. He stands on a lotus pedestal and holds a fan in his left hand. His right hand is extended forward, with his palm facing out in a position that looks similar to a Buddhist mudra. His voluminous sleeves hang down. He has a white face with red lips and high arcing eyebrows.\textsuperscript{211} There are also traces of facial hair. His head is bent slightly forward toward his fan. This figure is one of the best preserved out of the ten. Here the delicate painting style used in this tomb is evident. Thin, calligraphic strokes outline the figure, including each individual finger. The facial features and the lines in the drapery are delicately rendered.

The east wall has one figure placed above the downward curve of the Green Dragon’s back (fig.73). He stands on a lotus pedestal holding a fan in his left hand, and he raises his right arm with his long sleeve draped over the hand. The figure wears a

\textsuperscript{210} Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 127.
\textsuperscript{211} Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 125-127.
basket hat, a white undergarment, a green collared, multi-colored, long robe, a white belted girdle, and black shoes.\textsuperscript{212}

Three figures adorn the west wall (figs.\textsuperscript{74-75}). One figure is located above the White Tiger’s shoulders. He wears a basket hat, a white undergarment, a red-edged, closed, long green robe, a wide red belt, and black shoes. He stands on a lotus platform. A second figure sits on his pedestal under the White Tiger’s tail, wears his hair in a bun and, with rapt attention, holds a book in front of his face; his left hand rests lightly on his knee.\textsuperscript{213} He wears a white collared brown robe with a white belt. The third figure, which is under the White Tiger’s hind legs, wears a basket hat, a yellow round collared brown robe, a white belt, and black shoes. In his left hand he holds a fan, and his right hand is behind his body. The painting of his torso is heavily damaged.\textsuperscript{214}

There are two figures on the south wall: one placed above the Red Bird and the other placed below (figs.\textsuperscript{76-77}). The figure above the bird has an elaborate garment, no hat, and no fan. This figure appears to have the most elaborate garment. It is voluminous with several blowing streamers, although many of the details have disappeared over time. The figure faces east, its hair in a tall bun, and he wears a yellow round collared, brown robe with a white belt. Its right arm stretches out with its hand inside its sleeve. The feet have deteriorated, but the figure stands on a lotus pedestal.\textsuperscript{215} Another figure crouches under the Red Bird’s head. He has a transcendant’s tall, antenna-like hairstyle and long,

\textsuperscript{212} Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui 125.
\textsuperscript{213} The archaeological report says that this figure has his hair piled in a bun on top of his head. (Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 127.) Geng Tiehua states that the report is incorrect and that this figure has a shaved head. (Geng Tiehua, “Gaogouli bihua zhongde zongjiao yu jisi,” \textit{Liaohai wenwu xuekan} no.2 [1988]: 82) From images, it appears as though he does have hair.
\textsuperscript{214} Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui 127
\textsuperscript{215} The voluminous garment and hairstyle make it difficult to identify this figure as a man or a woman.
pointy ears. Wearing a white, feathered garment, his right leg has a plate resting on it, and he squats on his left heel. The left arm is extended as though flinging something. His right arm rests on his knee.

These figures on Tomb 4’s walls are similar in many ways to what some Southern painters, such as Gu Kaizhi (顧愷之, Eastern Jin, c.345-c.406), Lu Tanwei (陸探微, mid-fifth to early-sixth centuries) and Zhang Sengyou (張僧繇, Liang, 502-557), would have produced. Unfortunately, no works directly from the hands of these artists exist. The few pieces that are extant today are later copies or compositions. Paintings by these artists are believed to have influenced funerary art.216

The figural style of Gu Kaizhi’s painting Luo shen fu 洛神賦 or Nymph of the Luo River can be compared to the figures on the walls of Tomb 4 (fig.78).217 The figural
representations in the *Nymph of the Luo River* are strikingly similar to those in Tomb 4, although the compositions are completely divergent. The prince in the scroll is dressed in a manner nearly identical to the standing figures in Tomb 4—long, closed robe with a different colored collar, white undergarments, and long shoes curling up beneath the garment. In addition, the headgear of the figures surrounding the prince also resembles the basket hats found on several of the Tomb 4 figures. The figures in the *Nymph of the Luo River* and Tomb 4 also share a similar otherworldly tone. The nymph wears elaborate robes with streamers and ribbons fluttering in the air; a similar technique is used to depict the garments of the Tomb 4 figures, specifically the standing figure on the east wall. The clothing style indicates a close relationship to Jin period figural painting.\(^2^{18}\)

Another important silk painting comparison from the Southern Dynasties is the copy of Zhang Sengyou’s painting, *The Five Planets and the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions*, located in the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art (fig.79).\(^2^{19}\) Compositionally, this painting, which is a much later copy than the original, is the most similar to the Tomb 4 paintings. Each figure is meant to be viewed as a solitary portrait, separated by text. This roughly corresponds to Tomb 4’s depiction of individual figures inside their own space cells.

\(^{218}\) Li Dianfu *Gaogouli minzu wenhua yanjiu*, 153.

\(^{219}\) “五星二十八宿神形圖” This painting is thought to be a Tang or Song copy. (Little Taoism, 132-137); See also: at The Five Planets and Twenty-eight Constellations (part.) Attributed to Zhang Sengyou, Osaka Municipal Museum of Art at http://www.city.osaka.lg.jp/contents/wdu020/museum/english/selection_e/ccal/e_ccal_01.html (1 Aug. 2009).
Similar figures were found in some Southern Dynasty tombs. These examples are brick and stylistically a bit different, but they appear to illustrate post-Han style figures. One example is from a Southern Dynasty tomb from Nanjing (fig.80). It has a series of figures that are either attired in long robes or in feather-garments. Each figure is placed on its own brick, so while they may be interpreted as a group, they are individualized.\textsuperscript{220} A tomb found in Xiangyang, Hubei, contains a series of images that are even more similar to those in Tomb 4 (fig.81). This tomb also has figures impressed on individual bricks, and the figures stand wearing either a long robe or a feathered garment.\textsuperscript{221} Floral ornamentation emphasizes the self-containment of each image to one brick. Remarkably, for analytic purposes, is that each figure stands on a lotus pedestal, similar to the figures on Tomb 4’s walls. These figures, both the feather-garment wearing ones and the others, are mostly identified as giving offering. They hold dishes and incense burners in their hands.\textsuperscript{222}

Sickman said that some Goguryeo tomb paintings echo the highest quality of paintings from the Northern and Southern Dynasties.\textsuperscript{223} It was to masters such as Gu Kaizhi, Lu Tanwei and Zhang Sengyou that tomb painters would have referred.\textsuperscript{224} Their influence was far reaching, as seen by the imitations of such painting in Northern and Southern Dynasty tomb decoration. The delicately rendered figures on the walls in Five Helmets Tomb 4 are superior examples that support Sickman’s assertion.

\textsuperscript{221} One figure sits and has a mandorla behind its head. This figure is identified as a Buddha. (Cui Xinshe “Xiangyang Jia jia chong huaxiang zhuangmu,” \textit{Jianghan kaogu} vol.1 [1986]: 24.)
\textsuperscript{222} Cui, 24.
\textsuperscript{223} Sickman \textit{Art and Architecture}, 140
\textsuperscript{224} In the eighth century, Zhang Huaiguan 張懷瓘 linked these three painters as Gu-Lu-Zhang 顧陸張, masters of the Six Dynasties. (Max Loehr, \textit{The Great Painters of China}. [Oxford: Phaidon, 1980]: 26-27.)
The figures on the walls of Tomb 4 are sometimes compared to imperial Buddhist donor images. Buddhist donor imagery went through a transformation during the Northern Wei. In early imagery, donors often appear in Xianbei garb, long straight coats and either pantaloons or pleated skirts. As time passed, the Northern Wei embraced more sinified styles of clothing. During the late-fifth century, Emperor Xiaowen passed edicts requiring the Xianbei to wear Chinese-style clothing, and this change is witnessed in the style of clothing depicted in donor imagery. Two examples of sinified images are found in the Longmen Binyang and Lianhua Caves (fig.82).225 The figures in the Emperor’s group wear tall basket-hats and long flowing robes, similar to those many of the Tomb 4 figures wear. Similarly dressed donor figures also appear in the Gongxian Caves, such as caves 1 (fig.83), 3 and 4. The long robes can be seen in other venues as well, such as the Northern Wei stone pedestal at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (fig.84). This imagery carried over into the funerary realm and is found on the wall of the Northern Qi General Cui Fen’s tomb (fig.85).226

While the figural style found in Tomb 4 can be traced to the south, the compositional technique of scattering the figures throughout the lotus netting can be traced to the north. Metalwork and lacquer painting are the most prominent examples to utilize this type of composition. These objects, such as crowns and shoe soles excavated on the Korean peninsula, often have patterned space cells with beasts or other mythical

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226 Wu Wenqi 68-9; Shandong sheng wenwu yanjiusuo “Shandong Linqu Beiqi Cui Fen bihuamu,” 24-5.
creatures placed within them. The most strikingly similar example of lotus netting to that found in the two Five Helmets Tombs was found on the Northern Wei lacquer coffin also found in Guyuan, Ningxia Autonomous Region (fig. 86-87). The sarcophagus cover is filled with the undulating lines, creating a diaper-like pattern. Each of the spaces contains opening leaves and other floral ornamentation as well as a mythical creature. This diaper pattern creates a backdrop for the main images, which are the immortals King Father of the East and Queen Mother of the West. 227

Similar ornamentation is also found in Yungang Cave 10 (fig. 88). This late-fifth-century cave has a doorway decorated with the lotus netting pattern. The doorway is surrounded by scrolling vines. Along the sides is a vertical strip of marquise-shaped openings formed by similar undulating lines. Within the spaces are opening leaves that support mythical creatures. 228 None of the above examples includes human figures, but they show that the concept of using the netting as a compositional framework was ingrained in Northern Dynasties and Korean Three Kingdoms culture.

The figures on Tomb 4’s walls lack identifying cartouches and attributes, which makes elucidating their identity difficult. Geng Tiehua argues that these figures demonstrate the syncretism of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. 229 However, while they display the visual and the conceptual syncretism that developed between Buddhist, Confucian and Daoist imagery, it is more likely that the figures themselves are Daoist in

229 Geng Tiehua. “Gaogouli bihua zhongde zongjiao yu jisi,” 79.
nature, adhering to the Daoist themes throughout the tomb. Aspects of the images can be linked to Buddhism and Confucianism, but these appear to be visual tropes. Geng Tiehua links the formal attire and the accoutrement of the fans and whisks to Confucianism, but as already shown, these garments and accessories bring to mind sinification rather than Confucian norms. The possible links to Buddhism are more prominent with the use of lotus pedestals.\(^\text{230}\) However, the inclusion of two figures wearing feather-garments, one of whom points at the eight trigrams, shows an association with Daoism.\(^\text{231}\)

By the sixth and seventh centuries, religious Daoism included a vast number of deities, and without identifying cartouches, the identities of the figures on the walls of Five Helmets Tomb 4 may be unattainable. Out of the hundreds of deities, it may well be impossible to determine which deities are being represented. However, there may be clues as to their identities, starting with the number ten. One possible identification of the ten figures found on Five Helmets Tomb 4’s walls is the ten transformations of Laozi. Contemporary religious Daoism had firmly codified what came to be known as the manifestations of Laozi. During the Han, Laozi had begun to undergo deification, and then in the post-Han period his transformations became standardized. In those periods he

\(^{230}\) The figures stand or sit on lotus pedestals, which automatically evoke thoughts of Buddhism. In some sources the term 花生 (C: huasheng, K: hwasaeng), becoming something from nothing or, literally, being born from a blossom, is used to describe these figures. (Kim Jin-soon, 103.) However, the full bodied figures standing on the lotus pedestals do not invoke this concept any more than the guardian figures in the passageway. Daoist art of this period was known to borrow heavily from Buddhist art, to the extent that some pieces, such as sculpture of Laozi, are almost visually indistinguishable from their Buddhist counterparts. The use of the lotus pedestals in Tomb 4 appears to follow this trend.

\(^{231}\) The third seated figure’s activity is not as clear. The archaeological report (Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 121-36) states that this figure has his hair piled in a bun on top of his head and is reading. Geng Tiehua states that this figure has a shaved head, and that the report is incorrect. Because of this, Geng identifies him as a Buddhist monk holding a sutra. (Geng “Gaogouli bihua,” 82.) Looking at the image, it appears as though he does have hair. Additionally, his elaborate, gilded robe that looks the same as the other figures’ disputes his identification as a Buddhist monk.
is associated with ten ancient rulers. Laozi is described as manifesting himself as the
teacher of each of the historical rulers. He is credited with teaching skills that advanced
civilization. One is the inclusion of the eight trigrams. In one of his manifestations,
Laozi was Fuxi’s teacher. Fuxi is the legendary Emperor credited with creating the eight
trigrams. Of course, without supporting evidence, this is a tenuous supposition.

These exquisite figures are of secondary importance within the wall compositions.
The human figures are miniscule in comparison with the Four Spirits animals; and with
their placement on the lotus netting background, the painter purposefully put them in the
background. The Four Spirits energetically dominate the walls.

The Four Spirits animals are placed on the walls of Tomb 4 in frenzied motion.
The Green Dragon and White Tiger face toward the south wall; the Dark Warrior faces
west, and the Red Bird is turned toward the entrance. In front of each animal, a beastly
strongman appears in the four chamber corners. The monstrous figures’ fanged mouths
gape, and their legs are lifted as though running. Their fur flies behind them in a manner
similar to the feathered garments of the immortals. They hold their arms over their
heads, supporting a dragon that is biting its own tail. From their implied movement and
facial expressions, the beasts look as though the four animals are chasing them. These
stocky figures have a ferocious appearance lacking in the creatures of the Donggou Four
Spirits Tomb.

The animals in the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs are dynamic figures, and those in Tomb 4 are no exception. The dragon and tiger are shown as though in mid-leap, with their legs lifted and their bodies placed diagonally across the walls. Short, flame-like wings extend from the shoulders of both animals. The Dark Warrior—a two-headed snake knotted around a dragon-like tortoise—also shows some animation. The tortoise’s legs are placed one in front of the other, the front lifted the highest. His head is raised so that it confronts the serpent face-to-face, again creating a dynamic, albeit self-contained, composition. The Red Bird on the south wall next to the entrance has its wings spread and legs lifted as though in flight. The combination of the four large animals and the strongmen painted in the corners is intense.

Between the walls and ceiling of Tombs 4 and 5 is a border of eight entwined dragons. The dragons encircle the chamber, biting and knotted around one another. They are painted with a palette of white, yellow, red, green and black. Thin calligraphic lines depict details such as scales. Above and below the dragons is a repeated diamond pattern.

The ceilings of the Four Spirits tombs are the realms of the immortals (fig.89). There, one finds a veritable pantheon of mythological personages. The caisson ceiling of Tomb 4 is divided into two layers placed above the entwined dragon border. The first layer contains immortals among trees, and the second layer shows immortals flying in the midst of the stars.

The first layer of the ceiling, showing the earthbound spirits, contains eight mythical figures; trees and dragons playing with pearls separate these supernatural beings...
(fig.90). On each of the four panels a dragon with its head twisting under its body and holding a pearl in its mouth is placed in the center. Thus far, these dragons are unique to the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The backward looking dragons are similar in appearance to the other dragons found in these tombs. They have serpentine bodies created by stripes of five colors (that echo the Five Phases), large horned heads, and feet with four claws. Thin black lines create the details, such as the individual scales. The central point of the image is the pearl-like orb hovering in their mouths. While today these orbs look like white pearls, they are really indentations in the slabs where stones were inlaid. The stones are long gone, so scholars cannot say what they were. This makes determining their meaning more difficult. Two of the dragons in Tomb 4 have all four legs firmly planted on the ground, their back feet facing forward and their front feet turned backwards. Two of the dragons have one front leg lifted. Also, the dragons’ tails wriggle behind them, and in Tomb 4 some of the tails are stunted. It appears that these were adjustments made to help the dragons fit the spaces between the figures.

The orbs are sometimes referred to as wish granting jewels, cintamani, that were taken from Buddhism. (Kim Jinsoon, 108.) In India it was believed that a naga carried a cintamani in its mouth. In East Asia this translated into a dragon protecting a pearl-like orb in its mouth. There are no literary texts tying the cintamani to Goguryeo beliefs, but there is a story from Silla that is said to be roughly contemporary to the late Goguryeo. In Ilyeon’s Sanguk yusa he recounts the story of the famous Silla Monk Uisang 義湘 (c.650 CE) founding the Naksan Temple. The Dragon King’s associates helped Uiseong find the cave where the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was residing. After directing him to the cave, the dragon from the East Sea gave him a cintamani. (Peter Lee Sources of Korean Tradition, 53; Ilyeon, Overlooked Historical Records of the Three Korean Kingdoms. trans. Kim Dal-Yong. [Seoul: The Asia Foundation, 2006]: 249-250.) This story offers us the possibility that during the Three Kingdoms period the dragon and the cintamani were associated, and more specifically the jewel connected to the Dragon King of the East.

The concept of the dragon grasping a cintamani does not explain why there are four dragons in the two Goguryeo tombs. However, in Buddhist cosmology, nagas ruled each of the four seas surrounding Mount Sumeru, and in East Asia these nagas became Dragon Kings, like the one in the Silla story. These Dragon Kings eventually expanded beyond the realm of Buddhist beliefs and were absorbed by popular religion and Daoism. (Angela Falco Howard, “The Monumental ‘Cosmological Buddha’ in the Freer Gallery of Art: Chronology and Style,” Ars Orientalis vol.14 [1984]: 54; Frédéric, 276-279.)
figures flank the dragons and can be discussed as pairs, according to which corner they occupy.

In Tomb 4, two half-human, half-dragon figures holding the sun and moon, respectively, above their heads are placed in the north corner. The moon above the female contains the toad; the sun above the male’s head has the three-legged crow. The figures have the torsos of humans and the legs and tails of dragons. Their clawed legs are outstretched as though running. The female wears a red, high-waisted jacket and a green, short skirt. The jacket flares out behind her, and the sleeves have a flame-like appearance. Her skin is pale, and her hair is long. The male wears a now grayish jacket with a yellow-gold undergarment. The flaring sleeves of his jacket are painted with feather-like details. His hair is shorter, and his skin is darker. Trees with fan-like foliage surround them, as do a couple of stars.

On the northeast panel with the male dragon-human hybrid figure is another hybrid figure with the head of a bull and the body of a human. Each flanks one of the four backward-looking dragons with pearls in their mouths. In this depiction, the bull-headed figure’s arms are outstretched and legs are lifted in a manner that implies motion; adding to this effect, his reddish robe’s feather-like attachments flare out behind him as though he stands in gusting wind. His feet do not touch the ground. The bull-headed figure is paired in the eastern corner with a flying deity holding fire. The fire figure’s voluminous purple robes fly behind him, and his feet do not touch the ground, as though he, too, is flying. His free hand is lifted above his head and is engulfed in his voluminous sleeve.
His hair is close to his head like the male hybrid figure, but his is long and straight. He carries a flame in his right hand. The trees with fan-like foliage frame both figures.

The other immortals are portrayed doing mundane activities, such as blacksmithing and making a wheel. The blacksmith, seated while working metal with his hammer, is placed across from the wheelwright, who is also practicing his craft. The blacksmith wears a feathered jacket and pants; his hair is piled on his head in a top-knot. The wheelwright stands and hammers a nail or a peg into the wheel. He also wears a top-knot and feathered garments. On the same panel as the wheelwright is another figure standing next to a tree. This figure appears to wear a feathered jacket and short pants. He is identified by the object, possibly a sharpening stone, he holds in his hand. Across from him is a figure with an antenna-like hairstyle sometimes identified as the “transcendent’s hairdo” and what appear to be pointed ears; he rides a dragon. These attributes designate him as an immortal. In the flat, triangle-shaped spaces created by the overlapping layers of ceiling stones, backward-looking dragons fly among the clouds and stars.

On the next layer of ceiling stones, flying musicians intermingle with the celestial bodies and other immortals (fig.91). On the southern panel of Tomb 4 one kneeling figure with streamers flying behind his body looks as though he is kneeling on a cloud. In front of him, holding some sort of container, a figure with long ears rides a peacock. It seems that he is feeding the bird something in the pot. He holds his hand out flat, and the

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bird’s head twists around as though pondering some offering. In between these figures are the wispy clouds and constellations, stars with lines connecting them.

There are three figures on the northern wall. None of them is rides a mythological creature, but each has clothes streaming behind and legs tucked up underneath them. Their appearance is similar to that of “flying heavenly beings” found in Buddhist cave paintings in China. They play instruments. Also worthy of note is that they have mustaches. In this instance, perhaps painting these celestial figures with mustaches was an established type taken from Buddhist art, or perhaps they reflect some popular facial-hair style found in Goguryeo.

Both figures on the east panel play instruments and ride creatures. The one on the left plays a panpipe and rides a dragon. His hair is piled onto his head in a topknot. He twists in space and looks behind, holding a pole with a streamer in one hand. The figure accompanying him on the other side of the sun rides a phoenix and plays a flute. His ears are long and round like a deer’s, and it appears as though he has a conical-shaped head.

On the west panel, a musician plays to a plump man riding a crane. The crane rider’s animal and clothing are less fantastical than those of the other figures. He wears a simple robe and dome-shaped hat. He neither has facial hair nor does he have odd ears or hair. His animal looks upwards, while the other figures’ mounts look down or behind. The figure on the left rides a dragon and plays a U-shaped horn. His clothes are also fringed, and he either has antenna-like protrusions on his head or wears ribbons. He turns back to look at the figure on the bird.
The content of the painting and execution are similar to its neighbor, Five Helmets Tomb 5. Although the paintings inside Tomb 5 have been damaged over time, looking at Tomb 4 and the size of Tomb 5, one can imagine what the interior looked like in its former splendor.

2.6 Five Helmets Tomb 5

Layout/Construction

Five Helmets Tomb 5 is considered to be the final, easternmost tomb in Five Helmets tomb grouping. It is located 44 meters east of Tomb 4.²³⁶ Similar to the other two Four Spirit animal tombs, Tomb 5 was placed on an approximate north-south axis. It is 22 degrees off the north-south axis, oriented toward the northwest.²³⁷

From their investigations, scholars were able to ascertain that Tomb 5’s mound was once the largest of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs (fig.92). When scholars first investigated this tomb, its exterior was heavily damaged with only a fraction of its mound remaining, and a portion of the interior stone structure was exposed, which led to damage of the tomb path and corridor (fig.93).²³⁸ Even so, of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the Five Helmets Tomb 5 is the most dominant. From the remains, scholars deduce that its mound was once comparable in size to that of the large Five Helmets Tomb 2. These factors make it the most grandiose of the remaining Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

The structure of the tomb adheres to the formula of late Goguryeo stone tombs—rough north-south orientation and simple construction—yet a few points differ

²³⁷ Jilin sheng bowuguan, 62; Li Dianfu Jumgguk ui Goguryeo yujeok, 230.
significantly between this tomb and its neighbors. One point of note is the monumental size of its tomb mound. Another point of note is its subterranean structure. The chamber is placed three to four meters below ground level; it is the only earthen-mound, stone-chambered, tomb with murals among the Yushan group to have this type of construction. The others are placed roughly at ground level with the mound piled above.\textsuperscript{239}

According to the records of the Japanese surveyors, the earthen mound was 50 meters square in its original state, and an area of cobblestone-like rocks surrounded the mound, which is similar to the pavement found at the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. The cobblestone area on the south side measured 29 meters wide and 30 centimeters thick. In addition to the laid stones, there were also two stone pillars located at a distance in a straight line from the tomb’s entrance, resembling a \textit{que} or the beginnings of a spirit path. This construction designated Five Helmets Tomb 5 as one of the larger Yushan burials.\textsuperscript{240}

One of the traits of this tomb that prompted Japanese scholars to excavate was the considerably damaged exterior. Half of the tomb mound had deteriorated, leaving the inner stone chamber exposed. This tomb, like the majority of late Goguryeo stone chambered tombs, consisted of three parts: the tomb path, the entrance corridor, and the main chamber. Because of the damage to the exterior, the majority of the tomb path was destroyed, leaving only traces of its former funnel shape.\textsuperscript{241}

While the tomb path could not be thoroughly investigated owing to its state of disrepair, the entrance corridor did remain fairly intact because of a monumental stone placed between the tomb path and the corridor. This stone, which was 3.35 meters tall,

\textsuperscript{239} Li Dianfu \textit{Jungguk ui Goguryeo yujeok}, 230.  
\textsuperscript{240} Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 12.  
\textsuperscript{241} Jilin sheng bowuguan, 62.
was meant to protect the interior of the tomb from intruders. However, by the time scholars first investigated this tomb, a crevice had appeared on one side of the stone. The opening was large enough to allow one person through.\textsuperscript{242} This stone was later removed to allow easier access to the interior.\textsuperscript{243}

The stone chamber was located in the middle of the earthen mound and faces south. The damaged passageway was originally three meters long by 1.7 meters wide. This led to a single burial chamber that is 3.55 meters long on the north-south axis and 4.4 meters long on the east-west. The walls were two stacked, smooth stone blocks. The walls are approximately two meters tall. The ceiling is corbelled, each layer 70 centimeters high.\textsuperscript{244} A person can easily stand inside the chamber without bending.

Inside the chamber are three coffin beds placed side-by-side from east to west. Each once held a lacquered wooden coffin. The protective stone, however, did not do its job properly; and the interior of the tomb was pillaged and left in shambles. When the Japanese team investigated the interior, the remains of the coffins were heavily damaged and in disarray. The western-most coffin bed still held an adult human skull in a position that indicated the person was buried with the head pointing north. The coffins appeared to have been painted red and black. The fragments on the western bed were painted red along the southern side, and the middle bed held a coffin bottom, which was painted black. The fragments on the eastern bed were also black. It also appeared that they were adorned with bronze ornaments (fig.94). Looking at the remains left on the eastern bed, it appeared as though the coffins were remarkably similar to those in Lelang, dating to the

\textsuperscript{242} Jilin sheng bowuguan, 62.
\textsuperscript{243} Li Dianfu Jungguk ui Goguryeo yujeok, 231.
\textsuperscript{244} Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 12.
Han dynasty. The tomb had been pillaged, and the only remains were fragments of a bronze ornament, gilt bronze beads, and some small remnants of jades. It is believed that some of these remain may have once adorned the walls.\(^\text{245}\)

**Painting Program**

As already described, the painting inside Tomb 5 was like new when the Japanese scholars opened the tomb. It has deteriorated over time, but is still impressive. When the Chinese investigated the tomb in 1962, they discovered thin red lines on the walls used as outlines for the artisans, and black calligraphic lines were used to add details. These were then filled with color. This technique was used throughout the tomb.\(^\text{246}\) Another impressive element of Tomb 5’s interior decoration is the rich materials used. In addition to the colorful paints and delicate brush strokes, Tomb 5 has objects such as gold elements placed on the walls and jewels used for eyes, which Japanese excavators found on the dragon and tiger on the ceiling.\(^\text{247}\)

The Five Helmets Tomb 5’s guardian images are different from those of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4. On each of the corridor walls is painted a crouching guardian figure (fig.95). They face south, watching the door, and placed on lotus pedestals. The figure on the east wall has his hair piled high on his head in a bun, and he holds a bow and arrow in his hands. On the west wall crouches another guardian; he holds a dagger. In addition to the paintings of the guardians, paintings of honeysuckle pattern the door frame and lintel. The painters used green for the branches

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\(^{246}\) Jilin sheng bowuguan, 63.  
\(^{247}\) Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 15.
and a combination of red, yellow, green, and white to depict the leaves. The most complete imagery the scholarship has is of the figure crouched on the east wall. A large portion of his face and chest are completely obliterated, but the rest of his body is still in decent condition. The figure wears elaborate clothing with his sleeves pushed up and his one calf bare. He wears long shoes that have upturned toes. Again, there is no evidence of a halo. However, the lotus pedestal implies Buddhist influence.

While painting remains on the corridor walls, the majority of Tomb 5’s paintings are found on the interior of the tomb chamber. The entire interior from the walls to the highest part of the ceiling and also including the platforms for the coffins is covered with painting.

Similar to the other Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the Four Spirits animals dominate the walls of Tomb 5 (figs.96-97). The Dark Warrior sits on the rear wall. Because the combination of the serpent and the tortoise is self-contained with its ovular composition, it cannot be said to be looking at anything but itself; the serpent and tortoise gaze only at each other. On the east wall is the Green Dragon, and on the west is the White Tiger; both face the entrance. In Tomb 5 the entrance is placed on the center of the south wall; therefore, two Red Birds on either side of the doorway face the opening.

In addition to the Four Spirits animals that are the main focus of the wall paintings, there are also monstrous, hybrid figures placed in each of the four corners. These figures appear to be running with their knees lifted high and their mouths gaping. They hold their hands above their heads, with coiled dragons resting in their hands.

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248 Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 14; The Jilin sheng bowuguan, 63.
Again, these figures’ placement creates a correlation to the portrayal of columns and bracket sets found in earlier tombs.

Similar to Five Helmets Tomb 4, Tomb 5 has flaming lotus netting painted as background for the main images. The difference between the two is that Tomb 4 includes ten human figures on lotus pedestals; Tomb 5 does not have these. However, Tomb 5 did have floral gilt ornaments added throughout the netting. At the base of some of the space cells are flames, and within the top points there are sometimes portions of lotuses. Throughout the spaces are floating flowers. Similar to Tomb 4, a border of entwined dragons and an abstract diamond pattern separate the walls of the tomb chamber from the two layers of ceiling (fig.98).

On the first layer of the ceiling, Tomb 5 has figures almost identical to those in Tomb 4, although their arrangement is different (fig.99). In Tomb 4, the figures are placed in the corners and paired with the figure across from them—as seen by the placement of the male and female hybrid figures. In Tomb 5, figures are paired on the same panel. Similar to the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the first layer of Tomb 5’s ceiling is divided into eight flat panels by intersecting the corners of the diamond shape—four long panels and four short. The immortal figures are painted on the long panels, whereas the dragons playing with pearls are located on the short sides (fig.100). In Tomb 5 the dragons are placed on their own individual panels, so such adjustments were not necessary, and the dragons seem less cramped.

Of the backward-looking dragons in Tomb 5, each has peculiarities that differentiate them from those in Tomb 4 and the other dragons in the same tomb. In Tomb 5, the dragons’ front feet face each other rather than both turning to the back feet. Also, the dragon on the west panel is curling his tail rather than simply wriggling it. The freedom that appears to have been used in the representations seems to indicate the dragons have the same model but were not exact copies.

The majority of the figures found on the first layer of Tomb 5’s ceiling are nearly identical to those on the same level in Tomb 4. It only lacks the seated blacksmith and the dragon rider is different. In the place of the dragon-riding immortal, Tomb 5 has a pair of men riding mythical creatures. The larger one rides a dragon. His robes are ornate, and he wears a headdress that is a flat board with strings of beads suspended in the front and back, a style of hat associated with Chinese emperors since the Han. With one hand he holds onto his mount, and in the other he grasps a fan.

Behind this dragon rider is a figure wearing a tunic and short pants with feathery fringe. The creature he rides has a body like a deer, with a long tail and a beast head with pointy ears and some sort of horn-like protrusion. The rider’s hair is on top of his head in the horn-like “transcendant’s hairdo.” He holds a staff with streamers in one hand and a flower in the other. He gazes at the flower. Due to the smaller size of this figure, its position behind the dragon rider, and its occupation holding the flag, he can be identified as an attendant. This figure is similar to the dragon rider in Tomb 4. He wears similarly feathered clothing, and his hair is swept up like the figure in Tomb 4; but the Tomb 4 figure rides a dragon and does not hold anything in his hands.
Unlike in Tomb 4, in Tomb 5 celestial bodies intermingle with the trees; this creates a blurring of the separation between the two levels of the ceiling. There are two stars on the panel with the dragon rider and his attendant as well as a tree. Two wispy clouds behind the dragon rider emphasize the movement of the figures. The dragon has one of his back legs in front of the other, which connotes movement on solid ground. The attendant’s deer-like creature leaps through the air, while the dragon appears to be running.

The figures on the second layer of Tomb 5’s ceiling are less varied. They all ride dragons that are leaping through space (fig.101). The figures are shirtless with baggy pants. Their immortal topknots and ribbons, which wrap their arms, stream behind them, echoing the stripes on their mounts. Each figure energetically plays an instrument. On the southwest panel, the one figure plays a two-sided drum, and the other plays a long stringed instrument. This layer of Tomb 5 is incredibly dynamic with the streamers and hair soaring, the figures twisting in space and moving their arms, and the dragons leaping and straining their head upwards. These figures also seem to be looking downwards, perhaps upon the figures on the layer below or upon the tomb occupants.

Tomb 5 is the most grandiose of the Ji’an Four Spirits Tomb. It has the largest structure and earthen mound, and appears formidable even in its damaged state. These factors, as well as its location within the group, are taken into consideration when attempting to date these tombs and to figure out who their occupants were.
2.7 Dates

Traditionally, scholars have put the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs into this chronological order: Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, Five Helmets Tomb 4, and then Five Helmets Tomb 5. The dates range from the early-sixth to the early-seventh centuries, contemporary with the majority of the Four Spirits tombs in Pyongyang. Scholars examined several factors to arrive at this conclusion: quality of the painting, placement within the tomb group, tomb structure, and use of ornamentation. However, owing to the lack of supporting evidence, the dates are loosely applied and not firmly established.

The earliest Japanese scholarship places the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 5 in a general time period corresponding to the appearance of similar motifs in China. Looking at the painting and the few ornamental metal objects found in the tombs, Ikeuchi and others stated that the tombs were likely built during, roughly, the second half of the sixth century. While they noted that the Five Helmets Tomb 5 was more grandiose than the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, they did not specify which they thought came first.\(^{250}\)

The later scholarship of Korean, Chinese, and Japanese experts is no less vague. Researchers from all three countries generally place the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs in the sixth to early-seventh centuries—except for Li Dianfu, who placed all three in the late-fifth to late-sixth centuries. Scholars seem to agree that all three pre-date the Gangseo Great Tomb.\(^{251}\)

\(^{251}\) Jeon *Goguryeo gobunpyeokhwaghwa yeongu*, 417; Li Dianfu *Gaogouli minzu*, 153.
The subjects and motifs found in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are comparable to the religious and funerary arts of sixth-century East Asia. This was a transitional period in China between the end of the Northern Wei and the unification of the Sui. It was also a period of reorganization within the Goguryeo as the nobles rose to power. In both China and the Goguryeo there appears to be a shift towards religious Daoism. In Goguryeo tombs, murals shifted from being a mixture of subjects—genre, Buddhist, and Daoist—to purely Daoist motifs.\(^{252}\) Similar shifts are seen in the arts of China. Funerary arts became heavily reliant on Daoist imagery, including the Four Spirits.

The identifiable combination seen in the Ji’an tombs is the juxtaposition of the Four Spirits and the monstrous figures. This combination does not appear in Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs, but it was popular in the arts of sixth-century China. These images are found in the south, one of the best examples being the stele found on the tomb path of Xiao Hong’s 蕭宏 stele in Nanjing (c.526), a relative of the Liang emperor (fig.102). However, this combination is more prevalent in the Northern Dynasties and continued into the Sui.

The Four Spirits reemerged as a popular subject in the sixth-century funerary arts of the Northern Dynasties. The majority of the examples are found carved into stone burial objects, such as sarcophagi and epitaphs, along with myriad images like beastly figures. Examples include the Northern Wei sarcophagus belonging to prince Yuan Mi (524) now located in the Minneapolis Art Institute (fig.103) and, more crudely, the Sui

\(^{252}\) Ahn Goguryeo hoehwa, 39.
sarcophagus of Li He 李和 (d. 582) (fig. 104). This combination of demon-like beasts is also found on stone epitaphs, such as the stone epitaph cover of Erzhu Xi 爾朱喜 (c. 529) (fig. 105). This combination also appeared in tomb murals. The upper walls of the Northern Qi tomb of General Cui Fen 崔芬 in Shandong dated 551 appears to replicate the composition found on the sarcophagi mentioned above including depictions of the Four Spirits and demon-like beasts (fig. 106).

The combination of the Four Spirits and beasts was not confined to the sixth-century funerary arts. Two remarkable Buddhist cave temples in Dunhuang evidence the growing popularity of Daoist motifs. Mogao Caves 249 and 285, both dated to the Western Wei (535-556), include images of immortals, monstrous figures, and the Four Spirits on their ceilings (figs. 107-108). These images are mingled with the more typical Buddhist motifs, but their appearance in this Buddhist site demonstrates the growing influence of Daoism and its imagery in the mid-sixth century.

Comparing the above sixth-century works with the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs allows us to comfortably place them in the sixth century, most specifically the mid to late-sixth century and possibly the early-seventh century. The three Ji’an tombs display a similar choice in subject matter to the mid to late-sixth-century arts of north China, more so than the Pyongyang tombs. While parallels exist, it is important to remember these magnificent paintings are not rote imitations of compositions found elsewhere. These tomb murals evidence full engagement in the artistic and ideological happenings in sixth-

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253 Kim Jin-soon, 129.
century Northeast Asia. The murals are a product of Goguryeo, and specifically Ji’an, sharing in the shifting ideologies.

While the dates assigned to the tombs are not specific, some scholars, as mentioned above, have ventured to propose the order in which the tombs were built. For example, in their 1964 article on the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, the Jilin Provincial Museum team concluded these two tombs were later period tombs, dating to the end of the sixth century during the Northern Dynasties’ last years. Their dates were based on analysis of the tomb structures and the skillful paintings. They also surmised that the Five Helmets Tombs were placed in chronological order, the earliest placed in the north and the latest, Tomb 5, placed in the south. The authors also note a difference in the painting quality, leading them to surmise that either the artisans for Tomb 4 were slightly less skillful than those for Tomb 5 or that Tomb 4 was built earlier than its counterpart.

In their 1984 article, the Jilin Archaeological Team dated Tomb 4 as later than the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the same as Tomb 5. They agreed that the placement of Tomb 4 and 5 in the group meant a later date. After comparing the imagery of the tombs to the Dengxian Tomb in Henan and Buddhist cave temples of the central plain from the Northern Wei period, they arrived at a range of dates from the end of the fifth century to the beginning of the sixth. Most scholars, however, date the tombs to slightly later.

Kim Jin-soon in her article argues that the tombs' structures and paintings indicate that the tombs were constructed in this order: Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, Five Helmets

254 Jilin sheng bowuguan, 66.
255 Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 134-135.
Tomb 5, and Five Helmets Tomb 4. She believes that the Five Helmets Tomb 4 dates to the early-seventh century. According to Kim, the similar structures of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 5 ceilings lend themselves to comparison. The first layer of both tombs has an octagonal shape. As for the paintings, Kim argues that the hybrid figures holding the sun and moon, generally identified as Fuxi and Nüwa are more similar in these two tombs, while the ovular faces of those in the Five Helmets Tomb 4 are later stylistically. Lastly, she states that the five dragon-riding figures in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb are congruous with the dragon riders found in Tomb 5. Taking these elements into consideration, she argues that Tomb 4 is the latest.\footnote{Kim Jin-soon, 127-128.}

Kim makes some interesting points; however, certain factors dispute her chronology. First, it is true that the ceilings of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Tomb 5 both have octagonal shapes; however, this does not imply that Tomb 4’s ceiling indicates a later date. The square within a diamond construction of Tomb 4’s ceiling is the most standard structure for Goguryeo mounded tombs. This construction is seen in the fourth-century Anak Tomb 3 as well as in the Gangseo Great Tomb, believed to belong to the early-seventh century. In fact, the orientation of the corbels, with one twisted within the other, is more similar between the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Tomb 4. Tomb 5 is unusual in that the corbels are parallel. Another element she fails to address is that the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 both have Yellow Dragons painted on their ceilings. This seems to be an element that argues in
favor of these two tombs being closely related, similar to the depiction of imperial dragon riders in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb.

The majority of chronologies for the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs appear to center on the idea that the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb pre-dates the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. There are several factors that argue for this idea. The Japanese excavators commented on the baroque and almost crude style of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb’s painting. It is true that the painting style is less fluid than that of the Five Helmets Tombs. Also, the pictorial program within the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is more jumbled. The figures on the Five Helmets Tombs’ ceilings are clearly separated between those flying in the heavens and those on earth. There is no clear separation between these realms in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. Generally, painting styles are thought to develop from crude to elegant and refined. Compositions are believed to evolve and become more organized over time. However, it seems risky to state that these criteria indicate an earlier construction date with any certainty. Comparison between the Gangseo Great Tomb and the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb may even suggest that the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has a later date.

Several pictorial elements within the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb parallel what is seen in the Gangseo Great Tomb in Pyongyang. The Gangseo Great Tomb, as already mentioned, is believed to be one of the latest Goguryeo tombs with murals. Scholars date it from the end of the sixth to the beginning of the seventh century. While the Gangseo Great Tomb has one more layer of ceiling corbels, the general structure is a square within

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257 Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 417.
a diamond within a square (figs.109-110). The stones with the border imagery are in an octagonal shape similar to the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb’s first layer of corbels. Even more remarkable is the similar imagery on the two tombs’ ceilings. In both tombs, the border imagery is a scrolling vine with alternating leaves and flowers. The layer above the border imagery in both tombs depicts flying immortals, and the second layer has a variety of auspicious birds. The last element for comparison is the Yellow Dragon, found on the capping stone of both tombs (fig.110, bottom).

The above elements found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Gangseo Great Tomb indicate a possible connection between these two tombs. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has many elements similar to those found in the Five Helmets Tombs, such as the sinified figures likely connected to Chinese mythology. However, it appears to straddle the thematic trends of the Five Helmets Tombs and those of the Gangseo Great Tomb. Therefore, I posit that the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb may post-date the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The changes in the painting style and the confusion within the composition may indicate a temporal distance between the Ji’an Tombs.

If this tomb was constructed in the late-sixth, early-seventh century the painting quality may be due to the political and military upheaval of the time. During the Sui and early Tang, Goguryeo was under almost constant threat. Guonei City was a military fortress used during this period to help support the border outposts. The military upheaval could have adversely affected the quality of the painting, and the confusion within the composition may show the collision of differing styles and an attempt to replicate a past thematic preference. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb depicts the corner
beasts in conjunction with the Four Spirits, and it depicts sinified mythological figures and immortals. However, on a whole, the images differ from those in the Five Helmets Tombs and show a certain amount of confusion. This confusion can be likened to a painter attempting to copy a master but not quite “getting it.” Perhaps in an attempt to combine images popular in Ji’an with those popular in later Pyongyang tombs, the result was a hodgepodge of imagery, including its own unique depiction of beasts.

The similarities in the painting style and pictorial programs of the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 make it virtually certain that they were executed within a few years of each other, likely by the same artisans. The mixture of imagery seems to indicate they were completed sometime around the mid-sixth century. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb structure and murals have elements that are parallel to the two Five Helmets Tombs, but it also displays elements similar to the late Gangseo Great Tomb. Therefore, I suggest that the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb may date to the late-sixth, early-seventh century, after the two Five Helmets Tombs. Of course, without supporting evidence, this chronology is purely conjectural.²⁵⁸

2.8 Occupants

The largest hindrances in the study of Goguryeo tombs with murals are the lack of contemporary textual sources as well as the absence of much of the material record, an obstacle that affects research of the Ji’an Four Spirit animal tombs. For the most part, all that researchers have to work with is the tombs themselves—their structures and

²⁵⁸ Modern scholars often rely on the Japanese scholarship of the 1930’s. While Ikeuchi and others thoroughly investigated this tomb and provided a sound foundation for later scholars, their findings and suppositions need to be reexamined.
paintings. The style of the paintings leads scholars to estimate a broad timeframe of the sixth to seventh century, and the scale of the structures as well as the richness of the interior decoration speaks to the high ranking status of the occupants.

While the Jilin Provincial Museum authors do not conclude who exactly were the occupants of the two tombs, they hypothesize that because of the grandiose construction in comparison to the neighboring tombs and the elaborate, rich painting, the tombs must have belonged to members of the royal family.\textsuperscript{259} Ji’an was the capital prior to its movement to the Pyongyang vicinity (427 CE). While this may not have been the official location of the Goguryeo government in the sixth and seventh centuries, it acted as a secondary capital. The ornateness and refinement of these three tombs support this hypothesis. The rich materials must have reflected the occupants’ wealth, and the domineering quality of the tomb mounds shows that the persons had prestige. Perhaps we can go further by examining the individual tombs.

As seen above, all three of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are ornately decorated and well constructed. However, they are not all equal in those respects. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is described as having rich but heavy-handed painting. The Japanese scholars note how oppressive the painting seemed to them, while the Five Helmets Tombs’ painting is delicate and refined. The Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 have similar iconography, but Tomb 5 is larger and has more detailed paintings that included inlays and appliqués of jewels and gilded objects.

\textsuperscript{259} Jilin sheng bowuguan, 66.
Some scholars believe that the tombs with Yellow Dragons painted on their capping stones belonged to kings, not nobles. There are three Goguryeo tombs with Yellow Dragons: the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 in Ji’an and the Gangseo Great Tomb in Pyongyang. However, there is no indication that the Yellow Dragons were associated with the king. Interestingly, the Five Helmets Tomb 5 in Ji’an is the only Ji’an Four Spirits tomb without the Yellow Dragon, and this tomb is much larger and ornate than the other two, which appears to negate that its occupants were lower ranked. During the late-sixth and early-seventh century, the Goguryeo nobles were more powerful than the king, and therefore, it is likely they did not view dragon imagery as taboo. The Yellow Dragon completes the full set of symbols representing the Five Phases.

The differences in Tomb 4 and 5’s structures and decoration could be because of the differing social statuses of the occupants. There are notable differences in the two tombs, such as size, structure, and the richness in material. Also, the ceiling configuration of Tomb 5 is slightly more elaborate, with an octagonal shape for the first layer. Additionally, rather than including a turning dragon on the capping stone, Tomb 5 has a Dragon-Tiger motif. On the walls of Tomb 5, the artisans included jewels and rich materials, like gilding. The use of these materials in Tomb 4 appears to be less prevalent. Therefore, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that the occupants of both tombs were at the highest echelon of Goguryeo society in Ji’an, but the occupants of

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260 Kim Jin-soon, 128; Ahn Goguryeo hoehwa, 40-42.
261 It is roughly the same size as Five Helmets Tomb 2.
262 There are mentions of small gold pieces found in Tomb 4; however, Tomb 5 is described as having gilding and jewels incorporated into the painting. (Umehara “The Newly Discovered Tombs,” 15.)
Tomb 5 were of higher rank than those in Tomb 4. While these hypotheses are reasonable, without textual evidence it is not possible to make any definitive conclusions.

The sinified figures and subjects found in the Goguryeo tombs could indicate a connection between the occupant and China. For example, the Deokheung-li Tomb (c.408) is the tomb of a Chinese immigrant, and on its ceiling are painting of figures wearing Chinese garb that represent the Oxherd and the Weaver Maid, figures from Chinese mythology. The representation of this story has been interpreted as demonstrating the occupant’s yearning for the land he left behind. It is true that the paintings in the three Ji'an Four Spirits tombs demonstrate a close relationship with Chinese-style figure paintings and Chinese mythological themes, but it is not likely that the three latest tombs in Ji'an belonged to Chinese immigrants. They clearly belong to people of great status and wealth. During the period of their construction, it is unlikely that Chinese immigrants in Ji’an would have such high status since the Northern Dynasties and the Sui had an often antagonistic relationship with Goguryeo. Another theory is that the paintings were executed by Chinese craftsmen. This is highly possible since during the mid to late-sixth and early-seventh centuries Northeast Asia was in turmoil, and with that turmoil came movements of people. It is fathomable that Chinese artisans could have been working in Ji'an.

The opulence of the structures and painting indicates that the occupants of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs were members of the upper echelons of Goguryeo society. They were wealthy and powerful, and during this period of time nobles in Goguryeo

264 Kim Wonyong *Art and Archaeology,* 259.
society had all the power and wealth, more so than even the king. Without supporting evidence, one cannot determine more than this.

2.9 Conclusion

Above, arguments are made placing the tombs and their paintings in the sixth century, and possibly early-seventh, century. The paintings of three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs were stylistically and thematically parallel to movements seen in the arts of sixth-century China. They were also in accord with artistic and structural trends seen in the late period tombs in Pyongyang. The choice of imagery seen in these works is remarkable because the sixth century was a period in which non-Chinese peoples took control of northern China, but the Four Spirits and even the fearsome beasts were firmly rooted in the visual language of traditional China, namely the Han. They represent what can be considered a fundamentally Chinese conception of the universe and the afterlife rooted in the principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases. The universe as represented by the was revived in the sixth century and was the foundation for Daoist cosmology. The artisans of the sixth century modernized the ancient cosmology.

The tomb murals of the Ji’an Four Spirits Tombs, like the other sixth-century works mentioned, present this revitalized ideology. However, the world presented in these three tombs is a complete representation of the universe as laid out in the yin and yang and Five Phases cosmologies. They demonstrate a complete balance of yin and yang and include the Yellow Dragon or Dragon-Tiger to completely represent the Five Phases. The use of Five Spirit animals is unusual in sixth-century China and Pyongyang,
and is most readily seen in the arts of the Han. Also, unlike the other sixth-century works, the Goguryeo tombs revive images of gods and spirits from Chinese mythology. The murals represent a stylistically modern but ideologically retrospective mixture of images that make these tombs completely unique unto themselves.
CHAPTER 3: PAINTING PROGRAM ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs—the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5—contain a variety of images that link them together. Much of their shared imagery separates them from the Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs and harkens back to beliefs developed in ancient China. This chapter explores, in depth, the Ji’an images compared to the funerary ideology and imagery developed in late Zhou and Han China. Many of these images, such as the Four Spirits and running beasts, were having a renaissance in sixth-century East Asia. Other images, such as the figures from Chinese mythology, are thus far unique to these three tombs even among the numerous materials excavated from the sixth century.

In this chapter, I start with the walls and end with the ceiling, discussing the main, shared image types in depth. I have divided the images according to their placement within the tomb and then subcategorized them according to image type. I begin with the Four Spirits that appear on the walls and move to the beasts in the chamber corners. Next, I discuss the first layer of the ceiling, the borders that visually divide the space of the chamber into two parts, walls and the lanterndecke ceiling. Then I talk about the images on the triangular spaces beneath the corbels, the circling dragons and the lotuses. Lastly, I talk about the images on the ceiling corbels: the mythological figures, flying immortals and the celestial bodies (the sun, moon, and stars).

I attempt to identify each image, discuss its ideological origins and significance, and make comparisons with past and contemporary visual materials. I endeavor to
compare each image type to contemporary East Asian visual material in an attempt to locate its stylistic impetus. For this, materials from the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui, the Korean Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla, and, to a lesser extent, contemporary Japan are examined. Then, I discuss the image’s possible ideological and visual roots in ancient Chinese mythology and late Zhou and Han period cosmology. For this, I examine the funerary arts of these periods. Finally, I discuss each image’s possible meaning within the context of the Goguryeo Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

3.2 THE FOUR (FIVE) SPIRITS

The compositions of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tomb murals adhere to the paradigm of Four Spirits tombs found throughout Goguryeo, yet, at the same time, the depictions of the animals in the Ji’an tombs display regional and individual differences. Similar to the Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs, the main pictorial element in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are the Four Spirits. Each animal was painted on the wall corresponding to a proscribed cardinal direction. The three Ji’an tombs also have images on the apexes of their ceilings that correspond to the images on the walls. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 4 have the Yellow Dragon in the center painted on their ceiling capping stones,265 while the Five Helmets Tomb 5 has a Dragon-Tiger painted on its ceiling. This ceiling imagery is something that is thus far unique among the Goguryeo murals.

265 The Gangseo Great Tomb is the only other tomb to have a Yellow Dragon painted there.
Although the Four Spirits were a common motif in late period Goguryeo tombs and became popular in the Korean Three Kingdoms and Japan, the Red Bird, the White Tiger, the Dark Warrior, and the Green/Blue Dragon originated in China. In East Asia the animals were a popular motif in everyday life found in both religious and secular architecture and objects. They were also an important motif in the tombs found in China, Korea, and Japan. The Four Spirits appear to have become less popular right after the Han period, but regained popularity in the late-fifth and early-sixth centuries along with the reformation of religious Daoism. The paintings of the animals in the Ji’an tombs are evidence of the importance of the Four Spirits in the sixth century.

Technically, the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs can be considered “Five Spirits” tombs. Inside these tombs the Spirit animals fully represent the conception of the universe according to the principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases. Depictions of the Four Spirits create a cosmograph, a symbolic representation of the universe that had fully evolved in the Han period. These Goguryeo tombs recreate this ancient cosmology more completely and expertly than anything thus far found from sixth-century China.

3.2.1 THE FOUR (FIVE) ANIMALS

The animals are most often referred to as the Four Spirits or Four Deities. The animals are also sometimes referred to as the “Four Directional Animals.” That name is not a translation of their Chinese name, but rather a reference to one of their many

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266 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 34.
267 四神 (C: sishen, 사신: sasin). They are also referred to as the siling 四靈 or sigong 四宮. Siling can also refer to another group of animals: the unicorn qilin 麒麟, phoenix fenghuang 凤凰, Dark Warrior and dragon. (Juliano T’eng-hsien, 35.)
functions. The Four Spirits have many associations: spatial, temporal, and elemental, to name a few. They were also linked to divine kings, the twenty-eight celestial mansions, and natural phenomena. The animals can also be associated with yin and yang.\textsuperscript{268}

**RED BIRD**

The Red Bird \textsuperscript{269} is a composite animal, although it is closely related to birds found in nature. Except when the Red Bird appears with the other directional animals, it is often used interchangeably with the fenghuang 鳳凰 or phoenix, and in appearance they are identical.\textsuperscript{270} Red Birds are sometimes described as having the short, round beak of a bird of prey. They often have the combs and wattles of a rooster, and some even have decoration on their tails resembling that of a peacock. Their long necks and legs are similar to a crane’s.\textsuperscript{271} Even though they are composite animals akin to the dragon, their appearance is not as weird and imaginative as the dragon’s. They are still relatable to animals found in nature. The Red Bird is associated with the south, summer, and fire, which have a yang nature. Sometimes, though, the bird is shown in a pair, which may be a male and female again showing yang and yin together.\textsuperscript{272}

In the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, one other variation is found in the depictions of the Red Birds. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 5 both have

\textsuperscript{268} Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 300.
\textsuperscript{269} (C: zhuqiao, K: 주작 jujak)
\textsuperscript{270} Rawson Chinese Ornament, 99. There have been studies trying to discern the differences between these birds, and while many of the birds have varying tails, there are no consistencies. (Juliano T’eng-hsien, 38.)
\textsuperscript{271} Juliano T’eng-hsien, 39; Rawson Chinese Ornament, 99.
\textsuperscript{272} The appearance of two birds, male and female, across from the Dark Warrior perhaps balances the yin-yang associations in the tomb. With male and female birds, the Green Dragon, the White Tiger, and the Dark Warrior the division between yin and yang would be equal.
two birds painted on their southern walls (figs.111-112). Five Helmets Tomb 4 only has one bird, since its entrance is placed on the far side of the wall (fig.113). In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb there are two birds placed on the south wall flanking the entrance; one is white and the other is red. Both birds face the doorway and stand on lotus pedestals, and both have their wings outstretched, their tails lifted, and their beaks open. They give the impression that they are greatly agitated. In Tomb 5, there are two Red Birds on either side of the doorway both facing toward the opening. They have their wings extended, and they have three plumed tails. In Tomb 4, the Red Bird is on the south wall next to the entrance and facing it. Its wings are spread, and its legs are lifted as though in flight. It flaps its wings and has a small round head, but its tail has only one plume. This bird flies with its legs drawn upward to its body toward the tomb entrance, perhaps attacking any intruders.

**WHITE TIGER**

The White Tiger 白虎 is a derivative of an animal familiar from nature. Tigers exist both in the north and the south of East Asia, and they appear in material culture as far back as the Shang (1600-1100 BCE), where they are mentioned on oracle bones. The tigers found in Northeast Asia are the standard orange with black stripes. The White Tiger is an animal based from nature, but the white color is rare, making it seem more mystical. The White Tiger is the West, the fall and metal and has a *yin* nature. It is consistently paired with the Green Dragon.

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273 (C: baihu; 奉寶 K: baekho)
274 Rawson *Chinese Ornament*, 99.
The tigers in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs resemble the depiction of the Green Dragon except in color and in the shapes of their heads (figs.114-116). The tigers have white sinewy, serpentine bodies that are angled across the western walls facing the entrance. The tiger’s heads are rounded, and they have stunted snouts that are similar to that of a real tiger. Their claws are out, and their mouths gape menacingly.

**Dark Warrior**

The Dark Warrior is the only animal that is a combination of two distinct beasts rather than a hybrid. The Dark Warrior consists of a tortoise and a snake. These two animals often appear as though they are in combat, with their hissing faces turned toward each other. However, the tortoise and snake are often described as mates, so they may be in the throws of passion. The Dark Warrior is North, winter and water. As the direction North and the element of water it seems as though it has a *yin* nature. However, as a composite animal it is made up of a snake and a tortoise. The snake has a *yang*, male nature, and the tortoise is *yin*, female nature.

The Dark Warrior is the first image a visitor sees upon entering the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs (figs.117-119). It is a self contained composition. The bodies of tortoise and snake are intertwined, and their heads are turned toward one another inside the circle their bodies create. They have no interaction with the viewer and seem solely

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275 The artists in what is today northeast China and Korea were familiar with tigers. There is a small tiger native to that area, and it can sometimes be found in hunting scenes such as that in the Tomb of the Dancers.

276 *(C: xuanwu; 혼무: hyeonmu)*. This animal is often called the Black Warrior, keeping in line with the color association. Dark Warrior is a usual translation.

277 Juliano *T’eng-hsien*, 37; Jeon *Goguryeo iyagi*, 117.
self-possessed. The snake wraps itself around the tortoise, its tail and head knotted together near the tortoise’s tail. The two animals’ heads are twisted in space looking at one another, with their mouths gaping and tongues protruding. The other three directional animals move toward the entrance. Therefore, compositionally the Dark Warrior creates a static point from which the movement on the chamber walls originates. For example, in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb the Dark Warrior is static; the portrayal of the wispy clouds flit downward on either side of the animals’ bodies rather than swirling in one direction emphasizing the immobility of the Dark Warrior. In the three tombs, both animals are fairly realistically depicted with the scales and ridges of their bodies carefully delineated. The tortoise is a muddy brown color, while the snake is a combination of red, yellow, green, and white.

GREEN DRAGON

The most imaginative of all the animals is the Green Dragon 青龍. This animal is a composite of many different animals such as a tiger, a serpent, a lizard, and an eagle. As one of the Four Spirits, the dragon is associated with wood, the east, and the spring. Separately, the dragons are often associated with water and rain, which is possibly how they became associated with the spring, the season of growth.

The images are on the east walls of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are the Green Dragons (figs.120-122). Their long bodies are angled across the wall surface and their

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278 (C: qinglong; 청룡 K: cheongnyeong)
279 There are records of different mixtures of animals.
280 Cohen, 62.
mouths gape. The bodies of the three dragons are nearly identical; they are long and narrow with their tails out-stretched, and they have wispy, flame-like wings protruding from their shoulders and legs. They are mainly green with yellow and red accents. The dragon all have long, narrow faces and snouts with antenna-like protrusions coming from their heads.

**YELLOW DRAGON / DRAGON-TIGER**

A fifth animal is sometimes included in the group of Four Spirits, the Yellow Dragon 黃龍.\(^{281}\) This animal is the Center and the element earth; it has no seasonal association. The Yellow Dragon is not associated with *yin* or *yang*. This image completes the symbolic representation of the Five Phases.\(^{282}\)

The Yellow Dragon image is rare compared to the other Four Spirits.\(^{283}\) The other Four Spirits have a long history, both together and separately. The fifth animal was necessary to correspond to the fifth phase, earth, and came to represent the ruler and the capital in China. It has been hypothesized that the Yellow Dragon was a later development than the other Four Spirits since it is the same form as the Green Dragon. Because it is the same animal, but simply a different color, it may have been an afterthought needed to match with the Five Phases.\(^{284}\) The Yellow Dragon was important

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\(^{281}\) (C: huanglong; 황룡 K: hwangnyeong)
\(^{282}\) Kim Jin-soon, 198.
\(^{283}\) This animal is often used to represent the Chinese emperor. Ahn *Goguryeo hoehwa*, 40.
\(^{284}\) Cohen, 67.
in Goguryeo. On the Gwanggaeto Stele, it mentions how the Yellow Dragon accompanied the Goguryeo King Jumong on his ascension into the afterlife.\textsuperscript{285}

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 have a Yellow Dragon painted on their ceiling capping stones (figs.123-124). The only other Goguryeo tomb with the Yellow Dragon depicted on its ceiling is the Gangseo Great Tomb. As the representation of the center, the Yellow Dragon was painted on the ceiling capping stone, so it hovers in the middle of the tomb. This dragon twists its body in a circular motion and looks downward with its mouth gaping. Its body is mainly painted yellow, but it is also has layers of green and red scales. A few stars are placed around it.

The image on the chamber capping stone in Tomb 5 is different from that found in the other Donggou tombs. Tomb 5 has an intertwined dragon and tiger image called a dragon-tiger 龍虎 (fig.125).\textsuperscript{286} This image is not a part of the directional animals, but, similar to the image of the Dark Warrior, it represents yin and yang together.\textsuperscript{287} The combination of the Dragon and Tiger can possibly be traced to the neolithic period; shell sculptures of a Dragon placed in the east and a Tiger placed in the west appears to have been uncovered in a Yangshao grave in Henan, Puyang (fig.126).\textsuperscript{288} The images on the ceiling capping stones mean that it is reasonable to consider the three Ji’an tombs (and the Gangseo Great Tomb) to be “Five Spirits” tombs.

\textsuperscript{285} So Gil-su, 274-5; Courant 20 and insert.
\textsuperscript{286} (C: longhu; 龍 K: yongho)
\textsuperscript{287} Kim Jin-soon, 98. The tiger and dragon were the precursors for the \textit{taiji} symbol that uses black and white tear drop shapes to represent the balance of yin and yang. (Little \textit{Taoism}, 130.)
3.2.2 Origins and Meaning

The concept of the Four Spirits and their depiction began in China and later gained popularity in other East Asian nations. Examples of the animals, both funerary and non-funerary, are found in Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla, and Japan as well as in China.

The concept behind the Four Spirits dates at least as far back as the Shang in China. Oracle bones mention concepts such as the four territories (situ, 四土), the four directions, the four winds, the four rains, and the four shamans. These Shang oracle bone inscriptions discuss the division of the known and unknown universe into groups of four. During the Zhou (1122-256 BCE) the model of four continued to be popular, and images of four animals begin to appear. The earliest examples of directional animals were found on an eighth-century BCE mirror from Shangcunling 上村嶺, Henan. This mirror had a dragon, tiger, bird and a qilin 麒麟 decorating its surface.

One theory is that the animals were originally related to depictions of the cosmos. A fifth-century BCE chest from the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng portrays the dragon and tiger among the stars, illustrating the connection between the heavens and the animals (fig.127). Another theory about the origins of the Four Spirits, one that does not necessarily refute their association with the cosmos, is that they were originally totems of tribes. As time went on, the animals became an important visual element for

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290 Jeon Ho-tae “Goguryeo ui ohaeng sinang gwa sasindo,” 44.
291 Kim Jin-soon, 89.
293 Sun Zuoyun “An Analysis,” 63.
the cosmology of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases, a system that developed in the Zhou but was used for centuries afterward to help explain the framework of the universe.\(^{294}\)

**THE FOUR (FIVE) SPIRITS, YIN AND YANG, AND THE FIVE PHASES**

The schema of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases developed in the Zhou period, a system of thought to which the four (five) animals were closely related. *Yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases are the basis for what has been called a “correlative” or “categorical” cosmological system.\(^{295}\) The underlying theory is that once upon a time, the universe consisted of nebulous mass. This chaos was then divided into opposing entities, *yin* and *yang*. This division created female and male, dark and light, et cetera. After dividing into these dual natures, the substance of the universe was further divided by the Five Phases. These Five Phases each have the ability to both destroy the previous phase and nurture the subsequent phase. This creates a cycle of generation and destruction, as shown in this chart:\(^{296}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rising <em>yang</em></th>
<th>yields to</th>
<th>Rising <em>yin</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood Spring East Green</td>
<td>Fire Summer South Red</td>
<td>Earth Transition Center Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Autumn West White</td>
<td>Water Winter North Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in one direction, wood creates fire; fire creates earth, et cetera. However, viewed in another way, each phase defeats the previous one. Fire destroys wood; earth destroys

\(^{294}\) Jeon *Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu*, 300-301.


\(^{296}\) Chart is taken from: Michael Nylan *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, 370.
fire, and so on. This cycle of nurturing and destruction was the underlying principle for all things.\textsuperscript{297}

The \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} and the Five Phases cosmology is believed to have existed prior to the Zhou, but it was in the late Zhou and early Han that this cosmology became fully developed. The first true evidence of this cosmology is found in the third-century BCE \textit{Lüshi Chunqiu}, and it reached its maturity in the Western Han during the first century BCE.\textsuperscript{298} According to this way of thinking, everything in the universe, such as colors, directions, and sacred mountains, happens in fives.\textsuperscript{299} The principles of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} and the Five Phases also became a driving force in politics. Each dynasty was associated with an element. The element of a dynasty always overcame the element of the previous; the association was used to legitimate a new rule.\textsuperscript{300}

The correlative system of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} and the Five Phases was accepted in the Qin. The Qin Emperor liked the principles’ immortality techniques, such as consuming elixirs, and employed \textit{fangshi} 方士, or “recipe master”\textsuperscript{301} to help in his practices. There are records of rituals carried out for the “gods of the four directions” in the Qin.\textsuperscript{302} Then,
in the Han, the correlative system flourished and grew, and the images for the concepts abounded. The theories permeated the religion, literature, science, and art of the time.

In the Western Han, Emperor Wu (140-87 BCE) shared the Qin Emperor’s obsession with immortality. He carried out rituals and participated in inner alchemy in order to reach his goals. The Four Spirits reached their full popularity during the reign of Han Wudi, when mirrors, tomb tiles, tomb paintings, roof tiles, and gate towers (to mention a few examples) displayed them. In the Han, the animals also appeared in literature. As already mentioned, in Han texts the Yellow Emperor appears accompanied by a heavily armed monstrous beast surrounded by the Four Spirits. During the Warring States and Western Han period they came to represent protectors for the tomb occupants as he or she journeyed into the afterlife. This protective function also applied to the world of the living. Alliance with the Four Spirits kept the world well ordered and balanced, so there were prolific representations of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases, which were embodied by the animals.

The principles of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases permeated all aspects of life during the Han, especially the life of the elite. The Five Phases were represented in architecture and influenced construction of everything from solitary buildings to entire cities. Some of the earliest representations of the animals are found on roof end tiles. During his interregnum, Wang Mang built a series of temples dedicated to the Five Emperors of the Five Phases. The temple in the southwest was dedicated to the Yellow

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303 Rawson *Chinese Ornament*, 90.
305 Cheng, 180.
Emperor who was assisted by the Yellow Dragon; the temple in the east was dedicated to the Green Emperor, Fuxi 伏羲, who was assisted by the Green Dragon; the temple in the south was dedicated to the Red Emperor, Shennong 神農, who was assisted by the Red Bird; the White Emperor, Shaohao 少昊, was in the west temple and was assisted by the White Tiger; the Black Emperor, Zhuanxu 轉頥, was in the north temple and was assisted by the Dark Warrior. The construction of these temples and the rituals carried out within the buildings were meant to bring peace and prosperity to the empire. In the Eastern Han, the capital at Luoyang was also based on the geomantic principles of the Five Phases. The city was oriented to the Five Phases, and gates and palaces were dedicated to the Four Spirits.306

With the adoption of Buddhism in China in the late third and fourth centuries, representations of the Four Spirits lost popularity, but in the late-fifth–early-sixth centuries there was a reemergence of such images as well as a shift towards beliefs in religious Daoism.307 The Four Spirits once again became a popular motif. The dominance of these images in late period Goguryeo tombs can be interpreted at Daoism’s defeat of Buddhism.308

3.2.3 MATERIAL RECORD

The majority of extant material evidence depicting the Four Spirits is found in tombs, which may detract from our understanding of the animals’ importance in the

306 Cheng, 170-173.
307 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 36.
308 Ahn Goguryeo hoehwa, 39.
world of the living. Objects discovered outside burial settings have been found in China, Korea, and Japan, but the number pales in comparison with the literary records regarding the animals. The temples that Wang Mang built no longer exist today, but the animals have been found in the remnants of the Han capitals. Objects depicting the Four Spirits vary from tiles from official buildings to bases for Buddhist sculpture.

Evidence of Han usage of the animals to decorate buildings has been excavated, even though none of its architecture stands today. Roof tiles depicting the Four Spirits were common on official buildings in the Han (fig.128).\textsuperscript{309} Roof tiles from Han Chang’an depict all Four Spirits in a more static and typified way. On these tiles, the Red Bird and Green Dragon are depicted in the vein of composite animals, but the White Tiger resembles a tiger and the Dark Warrior resembles a tortoise with a snake wrapped around it. In the tiles, the Red Bird and the Green Dragon often appear less naturalistic than the other two animals; for hybrid animals, the artisans would have had to rely on their imaginations to depict them.

The material evidence supports the idea that in the post-Han period the animals fell out of favor, but around the fifth century they reemerged. The \textit{Weishu} (the standard history of Wei) records that the official carriages displayed a myriad of auspicious images, including the Four Spirits of the cardinal directions.\textsuperscript{310} While objects from everyday life are sparse, records such as these show that the Four Spirits were invoked. If the animals were properly arranged it meant good fortune and longevity, something the

\textsuperscript{309} Little \textit{Taoism}, 129.
living desired. Inscribed mirrors, most of which were found in tombs, had phrases that could be interpreted as auspicious wishes for the living.

Mirrors straddled the world of the living and the dead. They were important accoutrements for tombs, often being placed directly on the deceased’s body. However, mirrors were also important for everyday life. They were small and portable, which made them an easy trading commodity. They also had important functions in daily life, as seen in Gu Kaizhi’s *Admonitions* scroll where one lady gazes into a mirror as her hair is being done. Mirrors are an important medium for understanding the advancement of Four Spirits imagery. Looking at the development of these mirrors offers a glimpse of how the imagery and concept of the Four Spirits evolved over the centuries. The evolution of these mirrors parallels the development found in funerary structures.

One of the earliest pieces suggesting the concept of animals and the four quadrants is a seventh century BCE mirror from Shangcunling, Henan. This mirror does not have the Four Spirits one sees later, but rather one tiger, one dragon, a *qilin* and a bird.\textsuperscript{311} It was not until the Han that the four traditional animals took form. As already stated, they appeared on official buildings and became a popular visual facet of the principles of the Five Phases. They also appeared as decoration for bronze mirrors and in their inscriptions.

Some of the earliest references, both literary and visual, to the Four Spirits occur on Han TLV mirrors (fig.129).\textsuperscript{312} This style of mirror first became popular in the Western Han and continued to be popular in the later Han and early post-Han periods.

\textsuperscript{311} Kim Jin-soon, 89.
\textsuperscript{312} TLV refers to the reoccurring patterns that appeared on these mirrors. (For the origins of the name see: Sidney M. Kaplan, in “On the Origin of the *TLV Mirror,*” *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* vol.11 [1937]: 21-24.)
This style of mirror displaying the Four Spirits evolved into a type that was popular in the Sui and early Tang periods, roughly contemporary with the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs.

The meaning of the TLV pattern has long been debated, and theories range from it being simply an ornamental pattern that became popular to the TLV having cosmic meanings and functions. The mirrors have been equated with sundials, a game called *liubo*, and a diviner’s or cosmic board (*shi*), all of which are endowed with cosmic meanings. They were placed in a special position in tombs, often in the coffin with the occupant; they are usually found away from the other burial goods near the deceased.\(^{313}\) Although they were found in tombs, the inscriptions include messages of good wishes, which seem to be geared toward the living.\(^{314}\)

Michael Loewe associated the mirrors with diviner’s boards (fig.130). The diviner’s boards were found in Han and Six Dynasty tombs. It was a round disk placed over a square board, representing heaven and earth. The board was aligned with the four cardinal directions and the disk was aligned with either the Northern Dipper or the sun. Loewe suggests that the TLV mirror was a stylized version of this board.\(^{315}\)

Brashier argued against the TLV mimicking the *shi*. The boards and the TLV mirrors both appeared during the Western Han, which makes it difficult to conclude that the mirror imitated the board since they were contemporary. Additionally, the *shi* also lack the TLV decoration, making it difficult to associate them stylistically. He argues that the TLV mirrors also share similarities with a game board identified as *liubo* (fig.131).

\(^{313}\) Brashier “Longevity,” 213.
\(^{314}\) Seidel “Tokens,” 98.
\(^{315}\) Loewe *Ways to Paradise*, 71-85.
These game boards predate the mirrors and divining boards making it more likely to be a precursor for either.\textsuperscript{316} A scholar familiar with Han cosmology and astronomy, M. Kalinowski, believed that the \textit{shi} and the TLV expressed similar cosmological views, but the one did not lead to the other.\textsuperscript{317}

More recently excavated evidence supports the relationship between TLV mirrors and \textit{liubo} game boards. Since the 1980s, evidence has been building, connected TLV mirrors with \textit{liubo}. In 1986, a mirror inscription from the Tokyo National Museum was introduced. It states “engraved is the \textit{bo} board so as to expel the inauspicious.”\textsuperscript{318} A TLV mirror excavated in Yinwan, Jiangsu in 1993 has an inscription that closely connects the decoration on its surface to \textit{liubo} (fig.132). Part of the inscription says “Engraved is the \textit{liubo} [board] at the center...”\textsuperscript{319} Because of the close relationship between the \textit{liubo} boards and the TLV mirrors, Chinese scholars now often refer to the TLV mirrors as \textit{boju jing} 博局鏡, \textit{bo} board mirrors.\textsuperscript{320}

\textsuperscript{316} Brashier “Longevity,” 212.
\textsuperscript{317} Seidel “Tokens,” 89.
\textsuperscript{318} “刻姪[鏤]博局去不羊” (The translation is a slight adaptation of Lillian Tseng, 167.)
\textsuperscript{319} “刻治六博中” (Lillian Lan-Ying Tseng, 169.) Interestingly for our purposes, after mentioning engraving the \textit{liubo} onto the mirror, the Yinwan mirror inscription continues with the standard invocation of the Four Spirits. “漢有善銅出丹陽, 卒以銀錫清而明, 刻治六博中兼方, 左龍右虎主四彭, 朱爵玄武順陰陽, 八子九孫治中央, 當葬父母利弟兄, 應隨四時合五行, 浩[如]天地日月光, 照神明鏡相侯王, 眾[德]良美好如玉英, 千秋萬世長樂未央兮。” (Cheng Zhijuan, “Handai guijujing yu liubo,” \textit{Dongnan wenhua} no.4 [1997]: 124.) “The Han has fine copper which is drawn from Danyang. Your servant has mixed it with silver and tin, and the mirror is pure and bright. Engraved is the \textit{liubo} at the center and also a square. The dragon on the left and the tiger on the right control the four quarters; the Red Bird and the Dark Warrior accord with yin and yang. The eight sons and nine grandsons control the center. [May your] parents long be preserved, and [may] your brothers profit. [This mirror] complies with the four seasons and combines the Five Phases. Vast [like] heaven and earth, [it has] the sun and moon's brightness. Reflecting spirits, this bright mirror will assist [its owner] to become a nobleman or king. All the immortals [engraved on this mirror] are as beautiful and good as the essence of jade. [May you have] a thousand autumns and ten thousand years, and [may you have] long happiness without end.” (This translation is an adaptation of Lillian Tseng, 205.)
\textsuperscript{320} Lillian Lan-Ying Tseng, 167.
Liubo is a board game that is recorded in literary sources as well as visually. One of the earliest mentions of the game occurred in the third-century BCE poem, Zhao hun. In this poem, the author mentions playing the game in order to entice a soul to return. It is also mentioned in Han sources as a game the immortals play. Liubo was more than just a game, however, and was also a tool for divination. Playing the game would forecast auspicious and ominous events. According to the Tokyo National Museum mirror, the game board could also repel the inauspicious.

While scholars over the years have not agreed on the origins of the TLV pattern found on the mirrors, they do agree that they have cosmological significance. In this way they can be related to all of the above objects: the sundial, the diviner’s board, and the liubo board. All four objects have cosmological associations, so which precipitated which may be irrelevant. The overall meaning may be what is most important.

Schuyler Cammann argued that one of the functions of the TLV mirrors was to diagram the universe. The Vs were used to delineate the boundaries of the universe. He claimed,

They serve to give the central portion of the mirror the appearance of a square placed in the middle of a cross, which forms a simple illustration of the Ancient Chinese concept of the Five Directions—North, South, East

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321 Lien-Sheng Yang, 203; Hawkes, 229.
and West, and Center—with additional connotations involving the Five Elements and the Four Seasons.  

The mirrors often connoted those concepts (the Five Directions, the Five Phases, and the seasons) through the inclusion of the Four Spirits.

The TLV mirrors sometimes included images of the Four Spirits—sometimes five including the center—as well as a myriad of mythical creatures and immortals (fig.133). The Four Spirits plus four more were called the bashen 八神. On the mirrors, the four areas defined by the V shapes were divided in half by the Ts. On each side, one space would contain one of the Four Spirits and the other would hold one of a number of different animals. The mirrors also sometimes had the twelve earthly branches inscribed on them. The branches were usually lined up with the corresponding directional animal—for example zi (子) was aligned with the north.

Mirrors are often inscribed with good wishes for the living, but they clearly had great importance for the dead. The mirrors were placed in tombs near the corpse, a place of great significance. Inscriptions indicate that the mirrors, and more specifically the literary and visual representations of the animals, had protective powers. An example of a common inscription is “Azure dragon on the left, White Tiger on the right, Red Bird in

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323 Cammann “‘TLV’ Pattern”, 161. He also notes that in later mirrors the Ts and Ls disappear, but the Vs remain.
324 Camman argued that the Ts may have represented the four gates of the Ming Tang, or ritual hall and that the T shape continued to be used to represent a gate in later mandalas. (Cammann “‘TLV’ Pattern,” 163)
326 Sometimes the branches are not aligned with the correct animals, e.g. zi 子 is aligned with the tiger even though it is usually connected to the north, but with some manipulation—similar to a diviner’s board—sometimes they can be properly aligned. (Seidel “Tokens,” 90) This is interesting because in Goguryeo the animals are not always properly aligned with the cardinal directions. In Changchuan Tomb 1, the animals appear on the four walls but not in synch with the four directions. This creates a manipulation of space creating a false orientation. Many other tombs also are oriented slightly off the proper north-south axis. The animals on the interior properly orient the tomb.
front, and Dark Warrior behind." This is interpreted as placing the owner of the mirror in the center of the universe. The inscriptions also mention that the Four Spirits were guards against malevolent spirits. The TLV mirrors oriented the owner of the mirror into the center, a place of power according to the Huainanzi and others. The Four Spirits also offered protection.

Many of the mirrors use the animals to display yin and yang and the Five Phases to bring good luck, prosperity, and long life. The mirrors were also believed to assist the individual’s flight to the land of the immortals. The animals on the mirrors created balance of the Five Phases and the universe as well as protection. A mirror in the British Museum evidences the protective powers of mirrors. The mirror has the inscription, “The fine copper which the Xin Dynasty possesses which is drawn from Danyang has been mixed... the dragon on the left and the tiger on the right protect from

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328 This also matches a passage from the Liji “When (the army) is marching, it has in front the Red Bird, and at the rear the Dark Warrior, to the left the Azure Dragon, and to the right the White Tiger, with the chao yao (a star in the Big Dipper) overhead, strengthening its power.” (Cammann “‘TLV’ Pattern,” 166. Legge 91.) The Taipiing yulan, fascicle 334 quoting the Li ji “行前朱鳥而後玄武，左青龍而右白虎，招搖在上急繡．” (Taiping yulan. Ed. Li Fang (925–996 CE) in Si bu congkan san bian vol. 43. [Shanghai: Shanghai shudian], 1985.)
331 Cheng, 175-177.
harm; the Red Bird and the Dark Warrior accord with yin and yang.”

The animals in the quadrants mean protection and balance.

The practice of placing the Four Spirits on mirrors within a defined grid occurred during the Han, but this TLV style mirror diminished in popularity during the post-Han period. However, it reappeared several centuries later in the Northern and Southern Dynasties through the Tang. In Chinese mirror design, the Four Spirits went out of vogue around the first century CE but later regained popularity. During the late-fifth and early-sixth centuries in China, the animals reemerged as a popular subject although there is little evidence they were popular decoration for mirrors during that time. In the sixth and seventh centuries a new style of mirror decoration developed: the so-called

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332 Rawson Chinese Ornament, 92. The whole inscription reads, “The Shang-fang made this mirror to avert all harm. The fine copper which the Hsin [Xin] dynasty posseses and which is drawm from Tan-yang [Danyang] has been refined and mixed with silver and tin, and the mirror is pure and bright. Skilled craftsmen have engraved it [i.e. the mould], forming its inscription and decoration. The dragon on the left and the tiger on the right forfend all evil; the scarlet bird and the black...accord with Yin and Yang. May children and grandchildren be provided for you in full number and may you be present in the centre. Long may you preserve your two parents, and may you have joy, wealth and prosperity. Long life be yours, excelling that of metal and stone as fit for a nobleman or king.” “尚方作竟大毋傷。新有善銅出丹陽，熔治銀錫清而明。巧工刻之成文章。左龍右虎避不羊，朱鳥玄[武]順陰陽。子孫備具居中央，長保二親樂富昌，壽敝金石如侯王兮。” (Loewe Ways to Paradise, 196-197.)

333 Some TLV mirrors with the Four Spirits were produced in the decades after the fall of the Han. In 1994, such a mirror with the inscribed Wei Dynasty reign date of “青龍三年” (“Green Dragon Year 3,” or 235 CE) was discovered in Japan. There is some discussion as to whether this mirror was produced in China or Japan, but either way it demonstrates that TLV mirrors with the Four Spirits did not completely disappear. (Chen Hong, “Riben chutu de ‘qinglong san nian’ guiju sishen jing,” Wenbo no.4 [1996]: 51-52; Wang Zhongshu, “Lun Riben chutu de qinglong san nian min fangge guiju sishen jing—jian lun sanjiao yuan shenshou jing wei Zhongguo Wu de gongjiang zai Riben suozuo,” Kaogu no.8 [1994]: 727-735.) In the period between the Han and the late Northern and Southern Dynasties, the TLV style seems to have faded away. The Four Spirits continued to appear, but they were secondary to images of mythological beings and immortals, which were bunched onto the mirror surface in tiers. (Zhongguo tongjing shi, 157-161.)

334 Nancy Thompson, 28.

335 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 36
Sui style mirror, which displayed the Four Spirits as their main images.\textsuperscript{336} Even though there appears to have been a centuries long gap in production of this style mirror, the late-sixth and seventh-century mirrors appear to follow the pattern of late Han TLV mirrors that prominently displayed the Four Spirits.\textsuperscript{337}

Scholars believe that the TLV mirror evolved into a style of mirror that became popular in the late Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui and early Tang periods. Instead of using the TLV elements to define the space, the creators of these mirrors used simplified Vs placed to delineate the four “corners.”\textsuperscript{338} Similar to the TLV mirrors, animals filled the four sides. The central portion of the mirror was divided into four. In each of the four quadrants one of the Four Spirits appears. Sometimes these animals were the animals of the four directions; sometimes they were other auspicious animals, such as the \textit{qilin}, and later lions filled the spaces. The Four Spirits gained a prominence that they had not had in previous periods. They were the main subject of the mirrors.

Two types of Four Spirits mirrors were popular in the Sui and Tang. Both types had the central portion of the mirror divided into four quadrants; each quadrant contained one of the Four Spirits. The differences occurred in the decoration found on the outer rims. In one style, a decorative band separated the images from an auspicious inscription.

\textsuperscript{336} Juliano \textit{T'eng-hsien}, 36. The use of the animals on the so-called Sui mirrors may have actually begun in the Liang. According to Soper, the Sui dynasty inherited a great deal from the later Liang through their conquest of the Zhou and the Chen. He believed that the style of mirror with the Four Spirits that became popular in the Sui and Tang likely originated in the Liang. (Soper “Jen shou,” 59.)

\textsuperscript{337} Perhaps the revival demonstrates a certain retrospection in mirror production. Such antiquarianism is seen later. For example, a Ming Dynasty mirror located in the Palace Museum, Beijing imitates a Han TLV mirror decorated with the Four Spirits. (He Lin, ed. \textit{Ni yingai zhidao 200jian: tongjing} [Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2007]: 238-239.

\textsuperscript{338} Wenley, 142; Nancy Thompson, 30.
In the other type, that outer rim also included images of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac.\footnote{Nancy Thompson, 31.}

A good example of the first style mirror is found at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City (fig.134). The center of the mirror is cordoned off in a square around a central knob. It appears as though some mythical, scaly creature has been flattened under the knob.\footnote{It is not unusual for there to be a flattened animal under the knob. Some of the animals are closer to lions in appearance.} Outside the square are the four spaces defined by the Vs. In each of the four spaces is one of the Four Spirits.\footnote{In this mirror the animals have the slender, attenuated appearance similar to the animals found on the Northern and Southern Dynasty and Goguryeo funerary representations.} Around the Four Spirits are decorative flourishsh, floral patterns and swirling clouds. A monstrous beast head is placed in each of the Vs. This is of particular interest to this study; if these represent the “corners” of the mirror, then they are very similar to the corner beasts found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The next layer of the mirror is a decorative band separating the images from the inscription. Stylistically, Thompson dates this mirror to the Sui.

An example of a mirror of the second type is found at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich (fig.135). This mirror is similar to the Nelson-Atkins mirror, with a few changes. In the central square, this mirror has four monstrous beast faces rather than the flattened lion. Again, the Four Spirits are surrounded by ornate decorations, and there are beast faces placed in the Vs. A decorative border separates the images and the inscription, but the decoration does not end there. Beyond the inscription is a ring with the twelve animals from the Chinese zodiac, and then another decorative border.
There has been much debate over these post-Han Four Spirits mirrors. The dates given have been uncertain. Strong arguments exist that these mirrors belong to the Sui. The reasoning behind this argument is the consistent use of renshou in the inscriptions. The first Sui Emperor used renshou as the name of his palace and his last reign name, so some argue that this ties the mirrors firmly to the Sui. Soper, however, argued that this is not conclusive. Four Spirits mirrors with renshou in their inscription continue into the Tang, and the conquering regime would not have mimicked a phrase so closely associated with the previous rulers. Soper believed that the mirror type did not originate in the Sui but rather in the Liang, and the Sui adopted many stylistic changes absorbed from the Liang. Several of the mirrors have inscriptions naming south China as their place of origin, further evidence of the mirror types’ connection to the Liang.342

The sixth and seventh-century Four Spirits mirrors are the next stage in the stylistic evolution of the Han TLV mirrors. Computationally they are similar and still retain the use of the central square and the V. While the meaning of the Han TLV mirrors remains under debate, it is undeniable that, in addition to their auspicious significance, these mirrors depict the structure of the universe as first defined in the Warring States and the Han.343 The mirrors clearly lay out the spatial and temporal underpinnings of the universe using the simple imagery of the Four Spirits. Some mirror decoration breaks the universe into more elements with the inclusion of the twelve zodiac animals and lunar lodges.

342 Soper “Addendum,” 55, 59-60; Little Taoist 140. Funerary objects and descriptions of items from daily life show the renewed interest in the Four Spirits in the Northern and Southern Dynasties. It seems unlikely, looking at those sources, that the Four Spirits mirrors would have suddenly sprung into being during the Sui. However, there is no evidence that these mirrors existed before the Sui.
343 Little Taoism, 140.
How are Chinese mirrors relevant to Goguryeo tombs? Compositionaly, the post-Han mirrors are remarkably similar to the Four Spirits tombs. It is almost as though the tomb chamber is a three-dimensional conception of the imagery on the mirrors. If one imagined that each of the four quadrants was a wall propped up and the Vs were corners, you would have the basic structure of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Including the monstrous faces often found in the Vs, the mirrors resemble two-dimensional versions of the chamber of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.344

Traditionally, Chinese bronze mirrors have found their way across Asia. As small, portable items, they were easily transported, and they were also a sought after commodity. Chinese bronze mirrors found their way to the Korean peninsula from early times, and there are a few mirrors worthy of note for this study. Several dragon-tiger (longhu) mirrors—some with other animals such as the Red Bird and tortoise—were found in the Korean Peninsula (fig.136). Many of the Han and post-Han mirrors with images of immortals and animals were found in tombs near Pyongyang, which had once been the Han commandery of Lelang. For example, a Han style TLV mirror with the Four Spirits was excavated in what was Lelang (fig.137).345 One so-called Sui style Four Spirits mirror was found on the Korean Peninsula. This mirror was uncovered in a Buddhist monastery, Hwangnyong-sa 皇龍寺, in Gyeongju (fig.138). This mirror is the simplified version with the Four Spirits, Vs, and an inscription. This mirror was buried

344 The similarities have been noticed by other scholars: Chu Yonghon, Kokuri no hekiga kofun, (Tokyo: Gakuseishi, 1972): 96-97, pl.2; Nancy Thompson, 28. Previously, A. Bulling went as far as comparing the decoration on mirrors to the structure of Goguryeo tomb ceilings. (A. Bulling, "The Decoration of Some Mirrors of the Chou and Han Periods" Artibus Asiae vol.18, no.1 [1955]:30-31.)
345 Gungnip jungang bangmulgwang Nangnang, 40.
under the wooden pagoda as a part of the “offering objects to suppress the earth.”

These objects were meant to protect the edifice and repulse evil spirits. This mirror has a terminus ante quem of 645, and was likely imported from China prior to that.

The Hwangnyong-sa mirror is interesting, especially since it is considered to be roughly contemporary to the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. While it does not solve the problem of how the late period mirrors with the Four Spirits and the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs came to be so similar, the Silla mirror does open the door to the possibility that such mirrors may have been available to those who constructed the Goguryeo tombs, since this mirror did make its way to the peninsula. One cannot argue that the mirrors were a model for the Goguryeo tomb paintings, since no such mirrors have been found in Goguryeo territory, and most are dated later than the tombs. However, the compositions are parallel. It is possible that such an item was available in Goguryeo. Still, since almost all materials of any value were looted, there is no direct evidence to prove the case.

There is some certainty that the evolution of that particular mirror style and the mural decoration in the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs arose at roughly the same time from the same ideological conception of the Five Phases.

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347 *Kobun misul* 1, 132-3.
348 The inscription on the Hwangnyong-sa mirror reads “靈山孕寶，神使觀爐，形圓曉月，光清夜珠，玉臺希世，紅妝應圖，千嬌集影，百富來扶。” (Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan *Tongil Silla*, 69.) An identical inscription has been translated as “The ores come from the heavenly mountains and the kilns were attended by a messenger of the gods. A mirror made this way is like the moon at dawn with light as bright as a jewel in the night. Set it on an exquisite stand and groom yourself. Your beauty will increase and your life will be full of happiness.” (Nakano Toru, *Bronze Mirrors from Ancient China: Donald H. Graham, Jr. Collection*. [Honolulu: Donald H. Graham, Jr., 1994]: 41.) This is a common inscription for Sui mirrors of all types. One such mirror with four lion like beasts is located in the Palace Museum in Beijing. (Gugong bowuyuan, 96-97.) A mirror with the same inscription and abstract floral decoration is located in the National Museum of China. (Yang Guirong “Guancang 4,” 112.)
3.2.4 THE FOUR SPIRITS IN EAST ASIAN TOMBS

FOUR SPIRITS IN HAN TOMBS

In China, as early as the Western Han, the Four Spirits appeared as decoration on tombs, in mural form as well as carved. They also appeared on funerary objects such as sarcophagi. They often appeared in tombs which had decoration dedicated to the supernatural, but they also appeared in tombs with more mundane themes.349

In the Han, the Four Spirits were most often an insignificant part of a larger composition, and they did not attain the place of importance seen in later Goguryeo tombs. Some of the earliest known representations of the animals (minus the Dark Warrior)350 in tomb painting are in the Bu Qianqiu tomb in Luoyang (fig.139).351 This Western Han tomb—dated to sometime between 86-49 BCE—has images of immortals and spirits along its tiled roof. The Bu Qianqiu tomb’s tiger has the massive, feline body of a real tiger. The Red Bird has its wings extended, and its head is round with a short curved beak and regal plumage. The Red Bird in Bu Qianqiu’s tomb has one leg placed in front of the other as though it is flapping its wings and running at the same time, showing some animation. These traits continue in later depictions of the Four Spirits.

The Green Dragons in Bu Qianqiu’s tomb both have serpentine bodies, long attenuated heads with gaping mouths, four legs, and ridges on their backs and wings. Bu

349 Jeon Ho-tae has an extensive list of Han tombs that use the Four Spirits in their decoration. (Jeon Jungguk hwasaeng charts 5-1 through 5-6.)
350 It is not uncommon for the Dark Warrior to be absent in these earlier representations. It is not clear when the Dark Warrior first appeared, although it is present on roof tiles dated to the Han, some from Chang’an. Also, the Dark Warrior is sometimes simply a solitary tortoise. (John S. Major, “New Light on the Dark Warrior” Journal of Chinese Religions no.13/14 (1986): 69-70; Jeon Jungguk hwasaeng, charts 5-1 through 5-6.)
351 Huang Minglan, 66 and 71.
Qianqiu’s tomb has two dragons, one smaller than the other, which could possibly be a male and female.\textsuperscript{352} One of his dragons has scale-like ridges on its back, and the artist depicted each individual scale on its body. The bodies of Bu Qianqiu’s dragons are also very serpentine. It resembles a snake with superfluous legs. The body has an S-like curve as though it is slithering instead of walking.

The Western Han Tomb Number 61 in Luoyang serves as a contrast to the Tomb of Bu Qianqiu. These two tombs date to approximately the same period, and they are geographically close to each other. However, the contents of their murals are thematically incongruent. The murals in Bu Qianqiu’s tomb are filled with numinous scenes, while in Tomb 61 the majority of the murals are concerned with stories from history and parables. One scene is thought to be the feast at Hongmen, and another represents the fable Two Peaches Kill Three Knights.\textsuperscript{353} Even though the focus of this tomb’s paintings is worldlier, auspicious animals and beasts are included. Above the depiction of the fable is a litany of beasts—three of which are a dragon, a White Tiger, and a Red Bird (fig.140).\textsuperscript{354} They are incorporated into the mélange of auspicious and protective animals. They form a frame around a larger human-like monstrous beast. The directional animals here are similar to those in Bu Qianqiu’s tomb, although the White Tiger is more slender.

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\textsuperscript{352} Sun Zuoyun “Luoyang Xihan,” 20.
\textsuperscript{353} Huang Minglan, 87-100; Barnhart \textit{Three Thousand Years}, 28-29
\textsuperscript{354} It is unclear when the image of the Dark Warrior appeared in the history of Chinese tomb art. It is not included in Bu Qianqiu’s tomb, and yet it does appear on roof tiles from the Han dynasty. Roof tiles from Han Chang’an depict all Four Spirits in a more static and typified way. On these tiles, the Red Bird and dragon look like composite animals, but the tiger resembles a tiger and the Dark Warrior looks like a tortoise with a snake wrapped around it. (Little \textit{Taoism}, 129.)
The animals gained more popularity in the Xin Dynasty during the Wang Mang interregnum. He relied heavily on the Five Phases and their representatives when building his ritual complex called the Mingtang 明堂. With his use of the Five Phases came more representations of the Four Spirits. The Four Spirits and the Yellow Dragon are painted on the ceiling of a Xin period tomb in Jinguyuan, Luoyang (figs.141-144). Here the animals have attained more prominence than those in the Western Han tombs. Compositionally the mural is more structured than the previous cosmological paintings. Each animal is given its own space defined by a short pillar. All of the animals are clearly represented among other auspicious creatures. The overall composition is representative of the ideology which had become popular at the time, an ideology that focused on the Five Phases and cosmology.

During the Eastern Han, the Four Spirits were still used in funerary contexts. While a great number of the earlier examples of the Four Spirits were found in northern areas, there was a boom of representations in the south, especially in Sichuan.

In Sichuan, the Four Spirits tend to appear in stone carving. A good example of a Sichuan sarcophagus with representations of the Four Spirits is the Wang Hui 王晖 stone sarcophagus from Lushan dated 212 CE (fig.145). Here, the animals are presented carved in relief on the four sides. The Red Bird is placed above a panel with a person peeking through a partially opened door. On this sarcophagus the Dark Warrior is the most naturalistic looking of the animals. It has the squat round body of a tortoise with a

355 Jeon Jungguk hwasang, chart 5-1.
356 Huang Minglan, 106-120; Barnhart Three Thousand Years, 30.
357 Jeon Jungguk hwasang, chart 5-6;
snake wrapped around it. The tiger has evolved into a more mystical looking creature. Both the Green Dragon and the White Tiger have elongated bodies and wings.\(^{359}\)

In the late Eastern Han and Wei-Jin periods, the Four Spirits appeared in greater numbers in outlying areas. In Gansu, there are a handful of tombs from the late Han and Wei-Jin that use the animals in its decoration and mural painting.\(^{360}\) Bricks found in the Jin period Foyemiaowan 佛爷庙湾 Tomb 1 in Dunhuang have depictions of the Four Spirits decorating the screen wall of the tomb chamber (fig.146).\(^{361}\) These animals still portray some of the stouter, more realistic animal qualities found in the Han depictions. Although, with the inclusion of flame-like wings, the the Foyemiaowan Four Spirits are beginning to show the lithe, supernatural qualities of later Northern and Southern Dynasties depictions.

Digengpo Tomb 1, discovered in Gansu in 2002, is a Jin period tomb with the Four Spirits painted on the ceiling of its back chamber (fig.147). The placement of the animals and their size resembles the depictions of the Four Spirits seen in the middle period Goguryeo tombs in Ji’an. The calligraphic lines and attenuated appearance evidence their post-Han date.\(^{362}\)

The Yuantaizi 袁台子 Tomb in Chaoyang, Liaoning, also contains examples of the Four Spirits and is located outside the “Central Plain” area of China (fig.148). This is an important example of a Jin period tomb which prominently depicts the Four Spirits.

\(^{359}\) Rawson “Tombs and Tomb Furnishings,” 265.

\(^{360}\) Jeon Jungguk hwasang, chart 5-3.


Here three of the Four Spirits—the Green Dragon, the White Tiger and the Dark Warrior—appear on the walls. Each is assigned a wall facing approximately in their respective cardinal directions. The murals in this tomb are a combination of daily life scenes, portraits, as well as auspicious animals. The Four Spirits are not the main focus of the tomb murals, but they are given a significant role.

The painting style and appearance of the animals in Yuantaizi is of significance for this study. While the overall quality of the paintings is somewhat crude, the tiger and dragon images are executed in a masterly style with a great deal of movement and lightness imbued in the brush strokes. The painters used sweeping calligraphic lines to show the hairs on the backs of the legs and the heads. They also put a great amount of care in showing each scale on the dragon’s body. However, the same masterly style does not appear to have been used in showing the Dark Warrior. It is heavy and awkward with thick dark outlines showing the body. Stylistically, the images are similar to those found in Goguryeo late period tombs, and the close proximity of the northeastern Chinese locale to Goguryeo territory leads one to question whether there may be a regional connection.

FOUR SPIRITS IN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN DYNASTY TOMBS

With the adoption of Buddhism in China in the late third and fourth centuries, representations of the Four Spirits lost popularity, but in the late-fifth–early sixth

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364 Chu Yonghon argued tombs were influenced by Goguryeo tombs. (Chu Yonghon Goguryeo byeokhwa mudeom, 30; Stevenson Lee, 85.)
centuries there was a reemergence of such images as well as a shift towards beliefs in religious Daoism. Not surprisingly, it was during this period that the Four Spirits tombs also begin to appear in Goguryeo.

In South China, the Four Spirits reappeared in fifth- and sixth century funerary contexts. Some examples of such imagery were found in two brick tombs in Danyang County, Jiangsu, as well as the Dengxian Tomb in Henan. The Danyang tombs have portrayals of the animals created from impressed bricks placed together, an example of which is the Huqiao Tomb dated to the late-fifth century (fig. 149). The animals in this tomb have the slender, mythologized appearance of those found in the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. These animals are also in frenzied motion. For example, the White Tiger found on the wall of the Huqiao tomb has his front legs lifted as he chases an immortal placed in front of him. His positioning behind the immortal in feathered garment, as well as the addition of the flame-like wings, is similar to the White Tigers found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

The Four Spirits in the Dengxian Tomb in Henan also embody the energy and supernatural spirit found in the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs (fig. 150). The animals in the Dengxian tomb are presented on a smaller scale and are placed among a bevy of otherworldly creatures. Each animal is placed on its own tile, several of which are

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365 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 36
367 Juliano T’eng-hsien. Chen Dazhang, “Henan Dengxian faxian Beichao qi se caihui huaxiang zhuanshu,” Wenwu no.6 (1958):55-56. Chen said that Dengxian was a Northern Dynasties tomb, but Juliano later states it may be a Southern Dynasties tomb in a border area. (Juliano T’eng-hsien, 3.)
contained within their own floral frames. Mode of presentation aside, the images are stylistically similar to those in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The dragon and White Tiger have attenuated bodies with flame-like wings. The Dengxian Green Dragon’s head is elongated with two antennae added to the top of its head, similar to the three Ji’an dragons. The Dengxian White Tiger has a rounded, monstrous face similar to that in Tomb 4, and the Red Birds in all four tombs have one plumbed tails and their wings extended. The Dark Warriors in the tombs also look very similar. The ferocious tortoise and snake head confront each other face to face with their mouths gaping. While examples of the Four Spirits found in the South are similar to those in Goguryeo, examples can also be found in the North.

In the North, many examples of stone carvings portray the Four Spirits. Several stone epitaphs from the Northern Wei bear images that are comparable to those found in Goguryeo, which is significant considering the Northern Wei is the dynasty with which the Goguryeo Kingdom had the most official contact. Two Northern Wei examples are the epitaph covers of Yuan Hui 元勰, 520 CE (fig.151), and Erzhu Xi 尉遲暐, 529 CE (fig.105).

Yuan Hui’s epitaph cover from Luoyang has the Four Spirits placed in pairs around the carved stone. On each panel, two of the same animals are placed as though they are mirrored images facing one another. This duplication is found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs only among Red Birds. Similar to the Ji’an images, the dragons, birds, and tigers are shown with their legs extended as though they are in motion. The dragons and

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368 The Goguryeo Kingdom sent 79 official embassies to the Northern Wei court. (Ah-Rim Park “Tomb of the Dancers,” 313.)
tigers have the flame-like adornments; the dragon has the elongated head with the two antennae similar to those on the Southern examples, and the tiger has a ferocious, monstrous beast-like head. The panel with the Dark Warrior included two other mythical beasts, but the Dark Warriors themselves are nearly identical to the southern examples and those in Goguryeo; the larger tortoise confronts the dragon headed serpent wrapped around it. The tortoises’ legs are securely planted on the ground.\textsuperscript{369}

The Yuan Hui epitaph presents the animals in a fairly simple, uncluttered manner. The animals are placed on a background of swirling clouds with some floral decoration. The Erzhu Xi epitaph cover’s composition, however, is much more complex.

The appearance and the style of representation of the Four Spirits found on the Erzhu Xi epitaph cover are similar to those of the examples already mentioned, but the background and additional figures create significant differences. The cover is arranged with one animal on each of the four sides of the square stone. Lotus blossoms adorn each of the four corners separating the images, and the settings that the animals are in are varied. The Green Dragon, Red Bird, and White Tiger all seem to fly through an ethereal combination of clouds and foliage. However, the Dark Warrior stands on a rock formation, and there are trees placed before him. A beast runs behind him. On this epitaph cover, there is a clear separation between earth and sky. The Dark Warrior stands on earth while the other three animals fly through the clouds. A more significant difference found between these images and those already discussed is that figures ride the dragon, tiger, and bird.

\textsuperscript{369} Shi Anchang “Beiwei Feng Yong qi Yuan shi muzhi wenshi kao,” 73-85.
Immortals riding fantastical beasts are not unusual in the funerary imagery of this period. As already mentioned, immortals riding dragons, cranes, or phoenixes are found in Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs’ ceilings. On the Erzhu Xi epitaph cover it is implied that the immortals ride the directional animals through the heavens while the Dark Warrior stands on the earth.

The Four Spirits were also carved into Northern Dynasty sarcophagi. In 2005, another Northern Dynasty sarcophagus was excavated near Xi’an. This sarcophagus belonged to Li Dan 李誕 (fig.152) who emigrated from Central Asia during the Northern Wei and died during the Northern Zhou (d.564). His sarcophagus was adorned with the Four Spirits on the four sides of his sarcophagus. The Four Spirits were combined with Central Asian religious motifs such as a fire altar.\(^{370}\) A late-sixth-century sarcophagus found in Shaanxi Province fifty miles from Xi’an belonged to Li He (d.582). Li He died during the second year of the Sui several years before they unified the country.\(^{371}\) The Shaanxi sarcophagus displays all Four Spirits (fig.153). These sarcophagi are similar in the business of their compositions and their depiction of “teasing immortals.”

The images from the Northern and Southern Dynasties mentioned above were all impressed into bricks or tiles, carved into stone, or cast into bronze. There are, however, examples of the Four Spirits painted onto tomb walls from the same period. A good example is the tomb of General Cui Fen in Shandong. While the Four Spirits animals are not the main subjects of the tomb murals, they are prominently presented on the appropriate walls. Although this tomb is painted, the compositions on the upper walls

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\(^{370}\) Guojia wenwu ju “Xi’an beijiao Beizhou Li Dan mu,” 123-127
\(^{371}\) Shaanxi sheng wenwu guanli wenyuanhui, 31; Karetzky “The Engraved Designs,” 81.
resemble those found on Northern Dynasty sarcophagi. The animals run on the ground among depictions of trees. Stars and the sun and moon decorate the upper portions of the panels. Beasts run in front of and behind them. Similar to the majority of the Northern Dynasty depictions of the Four Spirits, the Cui Fen animals have riders. The paintings of the Four Spirits on the upper walls of General Cui Fen’s tomb, similar to the Northern Dynasty sarcophagi mentioned above, conflate images found on the walls and ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

In addition to the paintings in General Cui Fen’s tomb, the Green Dragon and White Tiger are often found painted in the entrance ramps of other Northern Chinese tombs. For example, depictions which are similar in style to the Goguryeo beasts are found in the murals of the tombs of Lou Rui (570 CE) and the Ruru Princess (550 CE). (fig.154) While these two animals are part of the Four Spirits and they are depicted on the wall corresponding to their conventional direction on the compass, the combination of the tiger and dragon has special associations.

The combination of the Dragon-Tiger (longhu) appears early on in Chinese visual culture, thus far predating depictions of the Four Spirits. The earliest known example is on a chest from the Marquis Yi of Zeng’s tomb. This chest has depictions of constellations as well as a dragon-tiger pair. Images of the Dragon-Tiger continued into the Han. It was a popular image on mirrors and was also found in tombs. A good example of a Dragon-Tiger pair in a tomb setting is found at the chamber entrance of a Western Han tomb in Xi’an. Tomb 1 at the Institute of Technology displays a tiger and
dragon painted on either side of the door (fig.155). Both animals are shown vertically, holding a staff. They stand in place of guards.

This pairing continued to appear on the walls of tomb entrance corridors in the Northern Dynasties continuing into the Sui-Tang period. While the images are connected to the Four Spirits animals—the tiger is on the western side and the dragon is on the east—they appear to be a pairing that predates what came to be known as the standard Four Spirits. For a long time the dragon-tiger pairing was representative of the combining of *yin* and *yang*. It was later replaced by the black and white image that is familiar today, the *taiji* symbol. While these images are connected to the Four Spirits, often they appear to work independently and have a different meaning than all Four Spirits together.

Although some Northern Dynasty tombs with murals include images of the Four Spirits, none has the Four Spirits as the main subject of the paintings; the animals have the same significance or less than genre scenes. Some funerary objects from this time do have the animals as the main subject, but these are carved into smaller items lacking the command that wall murals attain. Tombs that give the animals almost equal significance to the genre scenes are also rare. Oftentimes painters included large renderings of the dragon-tiger on the tomb path, but this pairing seems to have arisen from a slightly different tradition and to have a slightly different function from the Four Spirits.

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373 Little *Taoism*, 130.
374 The *longhu* pair is significant for studying the Ji’an four directional animal tombs. In the center of Five Helmets Tomb 5 is the Dragon-Tiger, whereas the other two tombs have a Yellow Dragon.
The Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs display elements that are similar to both the Northern and Southern Dynasty styles of depicting the Four Spirits in tombs. One trend in the Northern Dynasties is distinct from the Southern and Goguryeo examples. Northern Chinese examples, both painted and carved into stone, often have the addition of riders on the animals. This seems to be a Northern invention that was not in vogue in the South.\(^{375}\) It was also not popular in the Goguryeo tombs. In the ceilings of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs and several of the Pyongyang tombs, immortals riding animals sometimes appear in the ceiling, but riders are not depicted on the Four Spirits placed on the walls. This is a curious trend, since politically Goguryeo had closer ties to the Northern Dynasties. The Southern Dynasties appear to have impacted the depictions of the Four Spirits in Goguryeo. The two Four Spirits tombs in Baekje may evidence this link.

**Four Spirits in Baekje Tombs**

There are two examples of Baekje tombs with the Four Spirits painted on their walls: Songsan-ri 宋山里 Tomb 6 in Gongju 公州 and Neungsan-ri 陵山里 Tomb 1 in Buyeo 夫餘. Scholars date the Songsan-ri Tomb 6 to the early-sixth century or the late Ungjin Period of the Baekje Kingdom (fig.156). It is located in front of the famous King Muryeong 武寧王 tomb, which dates to 523 CE. King Muryeong’s tomb construction is stylistically related to Liang Dynasty tombs found in Southern China, a fact stated in an inscription found in the tomb. It is one long chamber with a vaulted ceiling built from

small impressed bricks. Songsan-ri Tomb 6 was looted, and no inscribed materials were found inside, but the construction technique is nearly identical to that of King Muryeong. However, there is one key difference. In addition to the impressed bricks, the traces of Four Spirits paintings are on the walls. The remains of the paintings illustrate the outlines of the long, slender animals found in China and Goguryeo.\textsuperscript{376}

Neungsan-ri Tomb 1 is in Buyeo, the last capital of the Baekje Kingdom (figs.157-158). This painted tomb is different than the Gongju tomb; it is constructed from stone slabs rather than impressed bricks. The use of stone slabs is more similar to Goguryeo’s tomb construction than to the Southern Dynasty’s. Similar to the late Goguryeo tombs, Neungsan-ri Tomb 1 is a simple structure with one chamber, but it has a flat ceiling rather than the \textit{lanterndecke} style. Traces of the Four Spirits were also found on the appropriate walls in this tomb; the tiger and dragon are the most distinct after the damage the murals incurred over time. Lotus and cloud motifs decorate the ceiling. Scholars date this tomb sixth-to-seventh century.\textsuperscript{377}

Scholars question which came first, the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs or the Baekje painted tombs.\textsuperscript{378} While the appearance of the animals on the Gongju Songsan-ri Tomb 6 walls leads one to wonder which came first, some scholars date a handful of the Goguryeo Four Spirits to slightly earlier. In the Songsan-ri tomb there may be a combination of Southern Chinese and Goguryeo tomb styles rather than a solely Southern Chinese influence transmitted through Baekje. The same can be said for the Neungsan-ri

\textsuperscript{376} Wang Zhigao, 28-39.
\textsuperscript{377} Gungnip Buyeo bangmulgwan, 22.
tomb; the later date, stone construction, animal and floral paintings suggest interpretation as a synthesis of Goguryeo and Southern Chinese-styles. Rather than seeing styles flowing from one place and in one direction from China, most likely these tombs display a stylistic discourse that was occurring in East Asia in the fifth through seventh centuries. Motifs developed, traveled, and evolved in various locations.

**GOGURYEO FOUR SPIRITS TOMBS**

The label “Four Spirits Tomb” is used for a type of tomb closely associated with the Goguryeo kingdom and the regions of Ji’an in Jilin Province—the capital of Goguryeo until 427 and a secondary capital after the move south—and Pyongyang—the location of the final capital. There are a total of ten tombs in which the Four Spirits are the main subject of their paintings and in which there a no genre scenes. Seven of these are located in Pyongyang; the other three—Dongggou Four Spirits Tomb, Five Helmets Tomb 4, and Five Helmets Tomb 5—are in Ji’an.379

As mentioned above, the Four Spirits became the main subjects of murals in later Goguryeo tombs, that is not how they began. The Four Spirits were introduced into the visual culture on the Korean peninsula early, and they appear mixed in with other images in the early Goguryeo tombs. In Ji’an and Pyongyang, one recalls, approximately twenty-

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379 Jeon *Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu*, 244-254 and 282-299.
four tombs include evidence of the Four Spirits with their other images.\textsuperscript{380} Five of these are located in Ji’an. Four are discussed below.\textsuperscript{381}

The Ji’an tombs that include the Four Spirits mixed with myriad other images share similar traits. These tombs are: Changchuan Tomb 1, the Tomb of the Dancers, the Three Chamber Tomb, and the Tomb of the Concentric Circles. They have all traditionally been dated to the fifth century. All but one of the early Ji’an tombs with evidence of the Four Spirits are multi-chamber tombs; all have partially subterranean structures.\textsuperscript{382} The tombs are also all placed on an east-west axis or a northeast-southwest axis.\textsuperscript{383} Changchuan Tomb 1 is a two chamber tomb; the Tomb of the Dancers is a two chamber tomb with a narrow entrance chamber; the Three Chamber Tomb has three chambers, and Tomb of the Concentric Circles has one chamber. The Tomb of the Dancers, Changchuan Tomb 1 and the Three Chamber Tomb have \textit{lanterndecke} style ceilings, while the Tomb of the Concentric Circles has a vaulted ceiling. They all have the Four Spirits painted on their ceilings.

The interior decoration of the middle period Ji’an tombs with the Four Spirits is also diverse. The walls of the Tomb of the Dancers are filled with daily life scenes—

\textsuperscript{380} Jeon \textit{Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu}, 281. There may be more tombs with the four directional animals included in their images, but many of the Goguryeo tomb murals have been damaged or stolen.
\textsuperscript{381} Two of the tombs, the Tomb of the Dancers and the Three Chamber Tomb, are in the Yushan Area Tomb Group. The Tomb of the Concentric Circles is located in the Xiajiefang Tomb Group (下解放古墳群, Ch: Xiajiefang gufenqun; K: Hahaebang gobungun) near the village of Xiajiefang. Tomb #983 Below the Mountain Fortress (山城下 983號墳 Ch: Shanchengxia 983haofen, K:Sanseongha 983hobun) is located near the Wandu Mountain Fortress. This tomb only has evidence of two Red Birds, so it is not discussed above. (Jeon \textit{Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu} 235-244.) Changchuan Tomb 1 is located in the Changchuan tomb group.
\textsuperscript{382} Jeon \textit{Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu}, 253. This may be significant in terms of dating the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Of the three, Five Helmets Tomb 5 is the only one to have a partially subterranean structure. (Li Dianfu \textit{Jungguk}, 230.)
\textsuperscript{383} The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are also off of a north-south axis, but they are skewed in a northwest-southeasterly direction.
especially of entertainment—and portraits. The ceiling, separated from the wall images by paintings of wooden architecture, is filled with auspicious imagery—mythical creatures, heavenly musicians, flora, and directional animals. Not all the Four Spirits are depicted in the Tomb of the Dancers. Instead of the Dark Warrior, the tomb has two wrestlers. Also, it is questioned whether the pair of birds on the south side are Red Birds or simply a pair of roosters.\textsuperscript{384} In this tomb, the animals and their substitutes are placed on their proper walls—albeit slightly off center—on the lower layers of the ceiling. They blend with the other auspicious images and lack the dominating size they later attain.

Changchuan Tomb 1 has images of daily life mixed with religious imagery. On the ceiling corbels of the back chamber are a series of Bodhisattvas with haloes, and on the corbels directly below these figures are the Four Spirits. There is also a painting of a seated Buddha.

The Tomb of the Concentric Circles has one of the most unusual and abstract interior decorations. Lion-like figures guard the entrance, and paintings of concentric circles cover the chamber walls. Paintings of pillars and brackets in the corners as well as paintings of beams separate the wall space from the ceiling. Although it is difficult to discern, there are remnants of paintings of the Four Spirits on the ceiling: on the west side was a White Tiger and on the east side was a Green Dragon.\textsuperscript{385}

The Three Chamber Tomb, other than having three chambers, is more typical of a middle period tomb. The tomb paintings show the transitional period between the more

\textsuperscript{384} Park “Tomb of the Dancers,” 100. I believe these are meant to be the birds of the south. Early representations of phoenixes and the Red Bird often have rooster-like appearances.

\textsuperscript{385} Lien-Sheng Yang, 147; Jeon \textit{Goguryeo gobun byeokhwagyeongu}, 365. It is nearly impossible to make out these images now. The other sides of the ceiling are heavily damaged.
staid early tombs that depict the life of the occupant and the fantastical tombs that illustrate the world of the immortals. The tomb paintings include the occupant portraits, images of servants and warriors, and paintings of wooden architecture. In addition, there are lotuses, mythical creatures and beings, as well as the unusual image of a strongman handling a snake. The Four Spirits are included on a small scale on the ceilings of the two back chambers.

Similar to the pure Four Spirits tombs, more tombs with a mixture of images are located near Pyongyang. (See Table 2) These tombs tend to have the Four Spirits on their walls, unlike the Ji’an mixed tombs that have the Four Spirits on their ceilings. These tombs date from the early to late-fifth century.386

One example of such a tomb near Pyongyang is the Yaksu-ri Mural Tomb. This is a two chamber tomb often dated to the early-fifth century. The ceiling structure is similar to the vaults one finds in the Tomb of the Concentric Circles, although the apex is fashioned in a lanterndecke style. Here the Four Spirits are said to be on the ceiling, although they are technically placed on the walls of the back chamber. Similar to the animals in the Tomb of the Concentric Circles, these animals are positioned above paintings of wooden beams that divide the chamber walls from the ceiling. In the back chamber, the architectural elements create a separation between the everyday imagery—

386 Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 333. Jeon dates Nosan-dong Tomb 1 and Anhak-dong Tomb 9 to the late fourth century. Anhak-dong Tomb 9 is a single chamber tomb with remnants of the Four Spirits on the walls. Nosan-dong Tomb 1, also is heavily damaged, but it has been determined that the Four Spirits are on the walls. Their chambers are somewhat crudely constructed of piled stones rather than stone slabs and lack the lanterndecke style roof, instead having a flat roof. Because of their construction style Jeon believes that the tombs date to a very early period. Azuma Ushio, on the other hand, dates Nosan-dong Tomb 1 to the early-sixth century. (Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu 392, 418) The dates of these tombs require further investigation.
such as scenes of hunting—and images of the cosmos. On the four walls, the animals appear surrounded by constellations and scrolling “clouds.” The Dark Warrior appears next to one of the formal occupant portraits.\textsuperscript{387}

A remarkable tomb of this period is the GosanJri Tomb 1 (fig.159).\textsuperscript{388} This tomb is of significance because it has inscriptions placed in front of the dragon and tiger images. In front of the Green Dragon “□神光難□□□□□□□□□□” is written. Before the White Tiger it says “白神□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□.” Many of the characters are missing, which makes the inscription difficult to interpret. However, it seems the inscriptions refer to the Green and White spirits and possibly their apotropaic and auspicious abilities.\textsuperscript{389}

Over the fifth century, the position of the Four Spirits in the Goguryeo tombs changed. In the Ji’an tombs and some of the earlier tombs near Pyongyang, the Four Spirits appear in a small size on the ceiling. Over time, the animals grew in size and moved down to the walls, and, eventually, they became the dominant images on the walls. This evolution is not seen in tombs with murals in China.

DeokhwaJri Tomb 1 in the Pyongyang region is an example of the later evolution of the mixture of daily life images and the Four Spirits (fig.160-162). This tomb is dated to the late-fifth century to early-sixth century.\textsuperscript{390} It is a single chamber tomb with an elaborate lanterndecke-style ceiling that almost takes the form of a dome. DeokhwaJri Tomb 1 can be seen as a transitional tomb. Here the images of the Four Spirits are larger

\textsuperscript{387} The man and his wife are placed under the conventional canopy with smaller servants at their side.
\textsuperscript{388} Sometimes this is called the Gosan-dong Tomb 1 高山洞 1 号墳.
\textsuperscript{389} Jeon “Goguryeo ui ohaeng,” 72.
\textsuperscript{390} Jeon Ho-tae dates it to the late-fifth century; Azuma Ushio dates it to the early sixth century. (Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 417)
and clearly placed as the main subject on the chamber walls. However, the animals are not the only images; there are pictures of daily life scenes and the Four Spirits. The tomb is a south facing tomb with the animals placed on their appropriate walls; two Red Birds flank the entrance on the southern wall. The animals are framed by paintings of wooden architecture and surrounded by figural images; the animals themselves are painted in a heavy style, utilizing heavy lines.

Despite the Deokhwa-ri Tomb 1 paintings’ style, the bodies of the animals are slender and elongated. The dragon has a fantastic head with many elaborate antennae and a huge gaping mouth; its body is covered in flame-like wings. The appearance of the tiger is far removed from its natural counterpart. It has a long, slender serpentine neck with a bulbous round head. A great deal of the painting is damaged, but one can still make out the tiger’s wings. Above the Dark Warrior is what appears to be a procession—perhaps of the occupants and servants or servants paying homage to the occupants. The figures are dressed in Goguryeo-style attire. The painting of the Dark Warrior is somewhat faded, but one can still make out its general form. An exceedingly long snake is wrapped around the tortoise; they face each other head to head. The Dark Warrior tends to be the most static of the four animal paintings, but in Deokhwa-ri Tomb 1 the snake’s twisting, bowing body adds movement. The south wall is also heavily damaged, and the two bodies of the Red Birds are barely visible. Both of the birds have their wings outstretched and their bodies tensed.
Around the same time as the Deokhwa-ri Tomb 1, it is believed purely Four Spirits tombs were also being produced. Scholars tend to date the Four Spirits tombs from the early-sixth to the early-seventh centuries. Like the tombs with murals containing the mixtures of daily life scenes and the Four Spirits, more Four Spirits tombs have been excavated around Pyongyang than Ji’an.

Four Spirits tombs appeared earlier and were more prolific in the Pyongyang area versus the Ji’an area. In the Pyongyang region the Four Spirits tomb evolved. The style of painting became more sophisticated and the subjects of the tomb murals became simplified, abandoning any connection to daily life and focusing on the Four Spirits. The earlier appearance of the Four Spirits tombs in Pyongyang may indicate that the impetus behind the change came up from the south from Baekje and possibly from South China.

There are distinct differences between the Four Spirits tombs in Ji’an and those near Pyongyang. The later Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs, similar to the Ji’an tombs, had the Four Spirits displayed largely on the four walls. There are embellishments on the walls, such as the curling clouds, trees, and mountains; and the Gangseo Great Tomb has flying immortals on its ceiling. However, none of the Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs has the elaborate accoutrements found in the Ji’an tombs—especially the figures found

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391 Jeon Ho-tae dates two Four Spirits tombs as belonging to the late fourth century. Anhak-dong Tomb 9 is a single chamber tomb with remnants of the Four Spirits on the walls. The other, Nosan-dong Tomb 1, also is heavily damaged, but it has been determined that the Four Spirits are on the walls. These two tombs, located near Pyongyang, are structurally different than the other Four Spirits tombs. They are somewhat crudely constructed of piled stones rather than stone slabs and lack the *lanterndecke* style roof, instead having a flat roof. Because of their construction style Jeon believes that the tombs date to a very early period. Azuma Ushio, on the other hand, dates Nosan-dong Tomb 1 to the early-sixth century. These tombs are anomalies that require further investigation. (Jeon *Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu* 392, 418)
on the walls and ceilings. They also lack the corner beasts and beast faces as well as the Five Helmet Tombs’ abundance of dragon imagery.

One of the earlier examples of a pure Four Spirits tomb in the Pyongyang region is the Four Spirits Tomb at Honam-ri (fig.163). Scholars fairly consistently date this one chamber tomb to the early-fifth century. The murals have faded with time, but one can still clearly make out the Four Spirits. Two Red Birds flank the entrance, and the other three animals are located on their appropriate walls. These animals are painted with a heavy hand and lack the finesse of the later four animal tomb paintings. The Dark Warrior is a good example of the difference in painting between this tomb and the other tombs. The tortoise is heavy and static, and the snake is firmly wrapped around the tortoise although they lack the connectivity often found in Dark Warrior images. The snake’s head is located at the tail end of the tortoise facing away from the other beast. This diminishes the connection between the two and therefore detracts from the combination’s yin and yang association. They do not appear to be two beasts mating. Overall, this tomb’s murals lack the sophistication found in other Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs.

A significant comparison to the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, especially the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, is Jinpa-ri Tomb 1 (figs.164-167). Scholars have dated this tomb anywhere from the mid-fifth to the early-seventh century. This tomb lacks the stark quality found in the Four Spirits Tomb at Honam-ri. Here, the animals are placed on the walls, but they are embellished with flitting clouds and trees. This is very similar to

392 Azuma Ushio dates it to 559. (Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 418.) 559 was the year King Yangwon (陽原王, r.545-559) died.
393 Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 418.
images found on Northern Dynasty sarcophagi and epitaphs. It is also similar to the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb; the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has flitting, curling clouds located around the Four Spirits. Both tombs also have a heavy reliance on floral decoration. The Jinpa-ri Tomb 1’s ceiling consists of a variety of scrolling vines and lotus decoration, similar to the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. However, it lacks the beastly imagery and the mythological figures found in the Ji’an Tomb.

Two tombs located near Pyongyang are considered to be the pinnacle of the Four Spirits tomb styles: the Gangseo Great Tomb and the Gangseo Middle Tomb. Both one chamber tombs, they are dated from the late-sixth to early-seventh century. The Middle Tomb is thought to postdate the Great Tomb.394

The Gangseo Great Tomb was executed in a sophisticated style not yet seen in the other Goguryeo Tombs. The painters did not use the heavy outline found in previous tombs, but rather a delicate painterly style that also relied on shading. Next to the entryway are two birds, one red and one white. They have their wings extended, and their tail feathers are lifted, creating the illusion of a flurry of movement. Interestingly, these birds hover over a minuscule mountain range. This device of using landscape painting as background is seen in previous Goguryeo tombs, but it is rare in Four Spirits tombs. In the Gangseo Great Tomb, the landscape background had reached a high level of sophistication. The White Tiger and Green Dragon practically prance across the wall toward the entrance; and the Dark Warrior is a self contained image with the snake coiled

394 Azuma Ushio dates them to 590 and 618 respectively. (Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 419.) According to his presentation titled “高句麗墓制の変遷と王権” at The Harvard Conference on Koguryo History and Archaeology (Harvard University, April 5-7, 2005), he believes the Gangseo Great Tomb belongs to King Pyeongwon (平原王, r.559-590) and, possibly, the Gangseo Middle Tomb belongs to King Yeong-yang (婴陽王, r.590-618).
around the tortoise and their heads face to face. The ceiling images are an elaborate mixture of mythical creatures, flying immortals, mountain landscapes, and floral decoration. While the mythical creatures and flying immortals appeared regularly on the ceilings of previous Goguryeo tombs, many of the later Four Spirits tombs tend to have floral and cosmological motifs. Also, this is the only tomb near Pyongyang known to have a Yellow Dragon in the apex of its ceiling.

The Gangseo Middle Tomb is thought to perhaps date later than the Gangseo Great Tomb, but in many ways it lacks the complexity of its neighboring tomb. The painting techniques are advanced, and the images are vibrant; however, they lack the elaborateness of the Great Tomb’s animal paintings (figs.168-171). The Red Birds flank the entrance, but their feathers seem somewhat stunted in comparison to the Great Tomb’s birds. The White Tiger and Green Dragon both display great energy, but the Dark Warrior in the Middle Tomb seems small and cartoonish in comparison. The poor quality of that painting is curious because the rocks on which the Dark Warrior stands are painted in a masterly style, using shading to show depth and form. The ceiling imagery consists of floral decoration and the cosmological symbols of the sun and the moon.

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs seem to be stylistically comparable to the later Four Spirits tombs in Pyongyang. They have the Four Spirits on their walls, although they have the added embellishments of the corner beasts, scrolling clouds or lotus netting, and, in the case of Five Helmets Tomb 4, human figures. They do not include the genre scenes of the previous tombs, but they also do not starkly display the Four Spirits. In

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395 The Gaema Tomb has heavenly beings on its ceiling. The Nae-ri Tomb 1 has landscape placed there. (Jeon Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu, 413)
addition, as with the Gangseo Great Tomb, their ceiling decoration includes a variety of ornamental motifs as well as auspicious animals and heavenly people. However, the three tombs in Ji’an go beyond the generic representations of heavenly beings and show figures that seem to represent figures from mythology.

Four Spirits in Japanese Tombs

The last stage in the development of Four Spirits tombs took place in Japan. Thus far, two have been uncovered in there. In 1972, archeologists uncovered Takamatsuzuka 高松塚古墳 in Asuka, and later in 1984 archeologists sent an endoscope into the nearby Kitora Tomb キトラ古墳. After an earthquake in 1998, they finally were able to excavate. The Four Spirits are on the four walls of these two tombs. While scholars do not have exact dates for either, it is thought that people built them after the Silla-Tang alliance defeated the Goguryeo Kingdom in 668. After the Kingdom’s fall, many refugees found a new home on the archipelago.

Takamatsuzuka shows the synthesis of Goguryeo, Japanese, and Chinese elements (figs.172-173). It contained a mirror with the lion and grape decoration associated with the Tang dynasty. Therefore, Takamatsuzuka most likely dates to the late-seventh to early-eighth centuries. Inside this tomb, there are paintings of the Four


397 In size and structure these tombs seem more similar to the Baekje Neungsan-ri Tomb in Buyeo. They are much smaller than the Goguryeo tombs, and they are almost coffin-like with flat stone ceilings.

Spirits and human figures as well as constellations on the ceiling. The female figures wear Goguryeo-style dress, but the men wear Chinese-style robes. The combination of the various styles of dress, the Goguryeo-style Four Sprits paintings, and the Tang mirror demonstrates the meeting of various artistic styles and their popularity in Japan. The Kitora Tomb might date to a slightly earlier period; the central focus of the wall paintings is the Four Spirits and twelve hybrid zodiac figures, and there is a celestial map on the flat ceiling (figs.174-175).

3.2.5 THE FOUR (FIVE) SPIRITS CONCLUSION

From the evidence available, the concept and the imagery for the Four Spirits originated in China. However, over time the theories and images were disseminated across East Asia. Cultures that adopted these principles and created Four Spirits images followed the paradigm, both visual and ideological, that developed in the Han, but they displayed these beliefs in new and creative ways. Goguryeo accepted the concept of the Four Spirits and displayed them beginning with the middle period tombs, but as time went on, they retooled their depictions and created the “Four Spirits tomb.”

Goguryeo had close ties to the Han dynasty through the Han commanderies in Liaoning and the Korean Peninsula. The Shiji states that in 108 BCE Han Wudi’s forces conquered territory in the northern portion of the Korean Peninsula called the Kingdom of

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399 Kidder “The Newly Discovered,” 249
of Chaoxian. He divided the area into four jun, or commanderies, of which Lelang was one of the most dominant in Northeast Asia. From the perspective of the history of Wudi’s reign, the establishment of a commandery is worth little note. Han Wudi expanded the Han Empire outwards in almost all directions, and in many territories he established commanderies. However, in 313 CE, Goguryeo conquered this Han colony. In all likelihood, after its defeat many Chinese were absorbed into the Goguryeo kingdom.

After the Han fell, these commanderies continued to be centers of Han culture. The example of Lelang, the Han commandery in what is now Pyongyang, illustrates how Goguryeo continued to foster Han elements, as demonstrated through the presence of the tomb belonging to Dong Shou, an immigrant from Yan. It has been posited that the commandery continued to be an enclave of Chinese culture within the realm of Goguryeo.\(^{401}\) The eventual adoption of the Lelang area as its capital in 427 greatly impacted the tomb building culture of Goguryeo. Around that time there was a shift towards using tomb murals as decoration and towards earthen mound tombs. What role the Four Spirits played in Lelang is unclear, but Chinese bronze mirrors depicting the animals have been excavated there.\(^{402}\)

Chinese mirrors are likely an important link for the dissemination of the Four Spirits imagery and the concepts of yin and yang and the Five Phases. Han TLV mirrors diagrammed the universe, separating it into quadrants; sometimes the quadrants contained the Four Spirits, such as the TLV mirror found in Lelang. In the late Northern

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\(^{402}\) Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan *Nangnang*, 38-41.
and Southern Dynasties and Sui-early Tang periods the Four Spirits became the predominant imagery on a type of mirror that had evolved from the Han TLV mirror. Although no late Four Spirits mirrors have been found in Goguryeo territory (although one was found on the Korean peninsula in Silla territory) the concepts behind the later bronze mirrors parallel those behind the late period Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs, as both diagramed the universe.403

Sixth-century, early-seventh-century tombs contemporary with the Four Spirits mirrors and the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs do not demonstrate the same focus on the Four Spirits. The animals are carved into stone on epitaph covers and sarcophagi, and when the animals do appear on tomb walls, either impressed into brick or painted, they are not the central imagery. However, the style of the animals that appear in Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs is more similar to the lithe, ethereal animals depicted in the Northern and Southern Dynasty tombs, and more specifically the Northern Wei and Liang Dynasties, rather than the heavier, static images seen in the Han. The Goguryeo images’ similarities to those from these dynasties are important for two reasons: Goguryeo was politically well connected with the Northern Wei and to a certain extent the Liang, and the nearby Kingdom of Baekje was close to the Liang.

Chinese and Korean historical sources show that the Kingdom of Goguryeo had official contact with the Northern Wei a total of eighty-four times. This is sixty-one more

times than with any other kingdom.\textsuperscript{404} As already seen, the Northern Wei people incorporated the Four Spirits in their funerary art, and scholars know these people also explored religious Daoism with imperial support.\textsuperscript{405} Possibly through contact with the Northern Wei and the Northern Dynasties that followed, Goguryeo came in contact with textual and pictorial models, and they then molded these images into their own visual representation for use in their funerary structures.

It is also possible that this style of tomb came to Goguryeo indirectly from the Southern Dynasties. Baekje had close ties to the Southern Kingdoms and was Goguryeo’s neighbor and rival. Baekje also had two tombs decorated with the Four Spirits. These tombs may predate the Goguryeo examples. It is possible that the Four Spirits style came up from the Southern Dynasties to Baekje and then to Goguryeo. This movement from the south could explain how the Four Spirits tombs in Ji’an seem to begin later than in the Pyongyang region.

Curiously, in many ways, the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs seem to be more of an amalgamation of northern and southern styles than the tombs near Pyongyang. The Pyongyang tombs are lacking the chasing element found in the southern Danyang tomb and in several Northern Dynasty stone examples. In the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, Four Spirits are running behind the corner beasts. The southern Danyang tomb depicted immortals teasing the animals, and in the north there are illustrations of grotesque beasts being chased, as discussed in the corner beast section of this chapter. The Ji’an tombs’ Four Spirits lack the riders, but the tomb paintings include these monstrous beasts.

\textsuperscript{404} Ah-Rim Park “Tomb of the Dancers,” 313.
\textsuperscript{405} Little \textit{Taoism}, 20.
The concept of surrounding a tomb occupant with the Four Spirits can be traced to the Han in China. The Wang Hui stone sarcophagus from Sichuan dated 212 CE is conceptually similar to the Northern Dynasty sarcophagi found in Luoyang as well as those belonging to Li He and Li Dan and the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. As demonstrated, the concept of using the Four Spirits to diagram the universe and to place the occupant(s) in the center has early roots in Chinese territory; but the Goguryeo artisans used a mode of representation not seen in China, thereby creating a form of tomb decoration that was identifiably their own.

The Ji’an Four Spirits Tombs’ depictions of the Four (Five) Spirits replicate the concept of the cosmos according to the principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases, the correlative system that fully developed during the Han in China. All five animals (and the Dragon-Tiger motif) work together to form a perfect balance of yin and yang and the Five Phases.

3.3 Corner Beasts

Running demon-like beasts decorate the corners of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. These creatures are unique pictorial elements not seen in any other Goguryeo tombs thus far excavated. In the reports these beastly figures are called: Demon-like Beasts⁴⁰⁶ and Monstrous Deities.⁴⁰⁷ They are also sometimes called Demon-like Beast Strongmen.⁴⁰⁸ The above terms are general and

⁴⁰⁶ “怪兽” Jilin sheng bowuguan 61,64; Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 127.
⁴⁰⁷ “怪异神人” Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 32.
⁴⁰⁸ “怪兽力士” Kim Jin-soon, 119.
descriptive, and give little sense of what the figures’ role was in the tombs. The most interesting label for these figures is *fangxiangshi* 方相氏, a type of bear-like exorcist that appears in Han tombs.\(^{409}\)

Stylistically, they appear to be related to the demon-like beasts popular in the sixth-century China. However, the roots of these beasts can be traced backward to Han China and are connected to the exorcistic practices utilized in burial rites of that time. In the three Ji’an tombs the beasts have two functions. They are symbolic structural elements, atlas figures that replace the paintings of pillars found in earlier Goguryeo tombs. They are also ferocious apotropaic figures likely related to the *fangxiangshi* of ancient China.

### 3.3.1 Description

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb corner beasts, slender and animated, have a more benign appearance than those in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 (fig. 176). The Donggou beasts’ arms are stretched over their heads, seeming to support the ceiling. They raise one knee as though running; a swirling line emphasizes the bending of the knee and the musculature of the calf. While now difficult to discern, the figures appear to wear pantaloons and the remains of lines that depict fur surround their bodies. The faces are turned in profile. They have a large round eye and a soft round nose. Their faces are

\(^{409}\) Wu Guangxiao, 138. An example is Western Han Tomb 61 in Luoyang, which will be discussed below.
more similar to a cow or a hybrid cow-bear. Strikingly, these images lack the fearsome appearance of their counterparts in the Five Helmets Tombs.\footnote{From the beast imagery on the ceiling available of the tomb, we know that the artists working on the tomb were capable of painting ferocious faces.}

The corner beasts in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 are stylistically more sophisticated and ferocious than the monstrous beasts in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb,\footnote{The faces of the Five Helmets Tombs’ demon-like figures closely resemble the beasts found on the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb ceiling.} and the painting is more complex compositionally (fig.177-178). The Five Helmets Tombs’ beasts hold their arms upward, but instead of touching the next layer of the tomb ceiling, they support two entwined dragons that rest their clawed legs on the first layer of the ceiling.

The corner beasts in the Five Helmets Tombs exhibit a close attention to detail and a refined use of line and color. The Five Helmets corner beasts are in three quarters pose and lack the ethereal slenderness of the Donggou Four Spirits corner beasts; they are shorter and stockier. The artists clearly depicted the clawed arms of the beasts and used a similar swirling line as found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb beasts’ legs to emphasize movement. From the elbow to the shoulder, the Five Helmets Tomb beasts have long fur that flares outward. The artist took the time to clearly delineate the individual strands. The faces do not have the benign appearance similar to those in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb; they are ferocious hybrids. The heads are large and furry; and they have huge round, bulging eyes and wide gaping mouths with fangs. Below, their chests are bare, and they have well-defined musculature. They wear short pants that end at the knees; their calves have long, flame-like fur. They have one knee lifted, as do
the demon-like beasts in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. The lower bodies of the Five Helmets Tomb beasts, minus the fur, are distinctly human looking.

Earlier Goguryeo painted tombs often had pillars and brackets painted in their corners, a practice that disappeared in the latest stage of Goguryeo tomb decoration. In the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the beastly figures replace these architectural elements. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, they stretch their arms upward as though they are supporting the ceiling corbels. In Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 the beasts lift entwined dragons that support the ceiling with their clawed feet. They replace the pillars and brackets often depicted in earlier Goguryeo tombs with murals and perhaps offer a slightly new twist on the sixth-century Chinese monstrous beast. While parallels exist, no examples are identical to the images found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, showing regional innovation.

3.3.2 Northern and Southern Dynasties Comparisons

Stylistically, the monstrous figures found in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are related to beastly figures that gained popularity in sixth-century China. These figures, which appeared in the art of both the Northern and Southern Dynasties, are related to excorcistic concepts that originated in the Han. The demon-like figures appear in both Buddhist and funerary arts of the sixth century in China.

412 Robinet Taoism, 51.
ATLAS-LIKE Figures

As noted above, one of the pictorial functions of the corner figures in the Goguryeo tombs is as atlantes; they stretch their arms upward as though supporting the ceiling corbels. The use of demon-like figures as atlantes was a common practice in the arts of sixth-century China, both in Buddhist and funerary sculpture.

Some of the most striking images of beastly atlantes can be found in the Gongxian and Xiangtangshan cave temples dated from the Northern Wei to Northern Qi periods. Monstrous figures in these cave temples materialize below the niches, holding up the bases with their arms, like those at Gongxian, or at the base of pillars, supporting the weight on their backs, like those from Xiangtangshan. For example, a series of demon-like beasts are depicted on the north wall of Gongxian Cave 1 (fig.179). These beastly figures are each participating in distinct activities, such as shooting a bow and arrow, although several raise their arms as though supporting the platform above. They are thought to belong to the Northern Wei.

In the Xiangtangshan caves, the beasts are incorporated into the architecture as pillar bases. The Xiangtangshan North Cave of the Northern Cave group has an example of such a pillar base (fig.180). The pillar rests on the beast’s back. These beasts are more squat than those found in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, but they have similarly ferocious faces, wing-like emanations, and clawed hands and feet. While these images are static, they demonstrate the popularity of using monstrous beasts as architectural

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413 Several of the monster atlantes from Northern Xiangtangshan are currently found in US museums, such as the Freer Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC, and the Cleveland Museum of Art.
elements. Interestingly, this beastly pillar base is also seen in the funerary arts of the Northern Dynasty. The end of the Yuan Mi sarcophagus (Northern Wei, 524) now located in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts depicts two pillars flanking the door (fig.181). The etched pillars rest on the backs of two beasts nearly identical to those from Xiangtangshan.

The similarities between the pillar bases from Xiangtangshan and the Yuan Mi sarcophagus demonstrate the fluidity of motifs between Buddhist art and the non-Buddhist funerary arts of sixth-century China. The beasts found in the Northern Dynasty Buddhist cave temples appear to be directly related to those found in the contemporary funerary arts. In Buddhist settings, the demon-like beasts can be identified as Buddhist demons. However, the models for the beasts are believed to originate with native Chinese mythology and cult beliefs. During this period, the syncretism between Buddhist and funerary arts is tremendous.

Examples of atlantes figures similar to those in the Buddhist cave temples also appear on the legs of some Northern Dynasty funerary couches. For example, a Northern Wei coffin bed found in Luoyang has running, demon-like figures placed in the corners supporting the bed (fig.182). The Luoyang beasts are slightly stouter and more stylized than those found in the Ji’an tombs, but they have similar monstrous, fanged heads, flame-like wings and hair, clawed hands and feet, and all wear pantaloons and no shirt (fig.183). The figures supporting the Luoyang funerary couch are also placed in the corners, similar to those in the Ji’an tomb chambers.

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415 Rawson _Creating Universes_, 134.
Beast atlantes also appear on the funerary materials belonging to non-Chinese immigrants, such as the Northern Zhou couch belonging to An Qie 安伽 (d.579).\textsuperscript{417} An Qie was a sabao 蕭寶, a Sogdian leader. Similar to the demon-like figures supporting the Luoyang funerary couch, An Qie’s demon-like beasts are in motion and have their arms raised as though supporting the bed of the couch (fig.184). Many of the motifs of his couch are associated with Zoroastrianism, and it has been hypothesized that that the beasts were images of Zoroastrian deities.\textsuperscript{418} However, similar to the beasts’ appearance in Buddhist art, it is possible these are native Chinese figures derived from popular lore. The inclusion of the monstrous beasts on a funerary couch associated with a foreign religion illustrates how pervasive these beastly images were in the sixth century.

Beastly atlantes appear in the funerary arts of the Southern Dynasties as well. Three stout beasts seem to support the inscribed tablet above a pillar on the spirit path leading to the tomb of Xiao Jing 蕭景 (d.523), the first cousin of the Liang Emperor Wudi (fig.185).\textsuperscript{419} One stands frontally, and the other two are turned in three quarters pose. Their appearance further demonstrates the popularity of such images throughout sixth-century China.

The beasts in the corners of Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 are distinct from the above mentioned monstrous beasts. Rather than directly supporting the ceiling, they hold entwined dragons, which hold the ceilings with their claws. There is one Chinese

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\textsuperscript{417} Han Wei “Beizhou An Qie,” 90-101.
\textsuperscript{419} Dien Six Dynasties, 173.
example of atlas beasts holding dragons; it is found on the epitaph cover belonging to Lady Yuan 元氏 (c.522), a relative of a Northern Wei Emperor.420 Her epitaph displays a variety of beasts along the sides, and this theme continues on the cover (figs.186-187). There, four beasts are placed in the corners with their arms raised, supporting entwined dragons, similar to the corner figures in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. They are also depicted in the same rapid motion as the corner monsters found in Tombs 4 and 5. One key difference is the beasts on Lady Yuan’s epitaph cover have identifying cartouches. They are Tuo Yuan 拓遠 (Carry Afar), Jue Tian 擰天 (Seize Heaven), TuoYang 拓仰 (Carry with Head up), and Han Qin 挟 (Hold in Mouth).421

The above examples demonstrate the pervasiveness of demon-like beasts as atlantes in sixth-century China. The corner beasts in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs parallel the popular images of their nearby neighbors and link the Goguryeo tombs to the visual dialog occurring in sixth-century East Asia. However, the Goguryeo beasts’ use as symbolic architectural supports is only one facet of their role within the overall composition. These monstrous figures are placed in the chamber corners between the Four Spirits animals and are roughly proportionate to those creatures. Therefore, the demon-like beasts must also be examined in conjunction with the Four Spirits.

420 Kim Jin-soon 121.
421 Shi Anchang, “Beiwei Feng Yong qi Yuan shi muzhi wenshi kao,” Gugong bowuyuan yuankan vol.2 (1997): 76-77. Attempts have been made to locate these figures in literary sources like the Shanhaijing, however, as of yet, they have not been found. The names may be fabricated and partially descriptive. (Susan Bush, "Thunder Monsters and Wind Spirits in Early-sixth-century China and the Epitaph of Lady Yuan" Boston Museum Bulletin vol.72, no.367 [1974]: 34-5.)
MONSTROUS BEASTS PAIRED WITH THE FOUR SPIRITS

The juxtaposition of the Four Spirits animals and demon-like figures is commonly associated with Han beliefs; however, this combination attained renewed popularity in the funerary arts of the sixth century. Illustrations of demon-like figures running in front of or behind the Four Spirits have been found in both Northern and Southern Dynasty funerary objects and paintings. Many examples of similar beasts can be found.

In the North, the use of demon-like beast imagery is prolific, with findings of beasts “frolicking” with the Four Spirits animals. For example, running beasts are depicted along the sides and end of the Yuan Mi sarcophagus in addition to the etched monster-like pillar bases (fig.188). Another Northern Wei coffin from Louyang unearthed in 1977 includes both immortals and demon-like beasts gamboling with the Four Spirit animals (fig.189). A tiger and a dragon prominently grace the sides of the coffin. In front of the animals, immortals turn their heads, their legs lifted as though in motion. Small monstrous beasts are depicted behind the legs of the dragon, beasts similar in appearance to those in Five Helmets Tomb 4 and 5. Another stone coffin from the Northern Zhou found in Xianyang, Shaanxi also has a similar composition (fig.190). A demon-like figure is etched into the stone in front of the dragon. The

422 There are also beasts framed separately among other mystical creatures along the base of the coffin. (Luoyang bowuguan “Luoyang Beiwei huaxiang,” 229-241)
423 The placement of the immortals and monstrous beasts is reminiscent of the “frolicking immortals” and the Four Spirit animals found in the Southern Dynasty brick tomb from Huqiao, Danyang County, Jiangsu dated c.495. (Nanjing bowuyuan “Jiangsu Danyang Huqiao,” 44-56; You Zhenke, 1-17) There, a slender White Tiger chases behind an equally slender immortal. The immortal’s arms are lifted up, and his front knee is lifted with his back leg stretched out behind him, a pose that is nearly identical to those of the Ji’an corner beasts. The immortal is in no way ferocious, and his slender, benign appearance is most similar to the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb corner beasts.
composition of this coffin side is less complex than that of the Louyang coffin. Images of beastly figures with the Four Spirits also appear on the stone epitaph cover of Erzhu Xi 爾朱Xi (c.529); a monstrous beast chases behind the Dark Warrior. The popularity of this composition continued in the Sui. The late-sixth-century coffin of Li He 李和 has examples of a tiger and a dragon trampling demon-like beasts along its sides.  

One of the most striking examples of immortals and beasts cavorting with the four spirits is found in the Northern Qi tomb of General Cui Fen 崔芬 in Shandong dated 551 (figs.191-194). Similar to the northern stone coffin sides, the paintings on the ceiling of General Cui Fen’s tomb show three of the Four Spirits. Before the animals are immortals, turning their heads round to look at the animal Spirits. Behind the animals, or flanking them in the case of the Dark Warrior, are smaller fleeing monstrous beasts. This tomb echoes the compositions found in the Ji’an tombs more than any other Northern Dynasty tomb with murals. It may be a link between representations in stone found on northern stone sarcophagi and the Goguryeo paintings.

The compositional juxtaposition of the Four Spirits and monstrous figures also occurred in the South. Beastly figures play a prominent role on Xiao Hong’s 蕭宏 stele in Nanjing (c.526); the front demon-like beast holds a bow (fig.102, top), an image that is equated with the Han images of Chi You 蚩尤, the god of war and the inventor of

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425 Karetzky The Engraved Designs, 81-106; Shaanxi sheng wenwu guanli wenyuanhui, 27
426 This tomb is interesting when compared to the Southern tomb at Huqiao (Wenwu 2 [1980], 1-17). This tomb not only shows the frolicking immortals and directional animals, but also has paintings of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo grove, another popular theme from the south.
427 The red bird is depicted on the wall.
428 In the report, these beasts are identified as fangxiangshi, and identification that will be discussed further below. (Shandongsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, 8-9.)
metallurgy. On the sides reside images of fearsome beasts similar to those found in the
three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. These beasts are placed among other mystical creatures
including the Four Spirits. They are framed by a vine border and shown in an animated
pose. The imagery on this monument appears to derive from popular Han motifs and
offers a possible paradigm with which to interpret other demon-like images. This
monument can be interpreted as a link between the nearly identical beasts found in
contemporary funerary monuments and Han funerary arts.

3.3.3 ORIGINS AND MEANING

Tracing the origins of the beastly images to pre-Han and Han visual and literary
sources allows better understanding of their meaning. Two likely identifications for the
sixth-century beasts are rooted in pre-Han and Han dynasty popular beliefs. They are:
fangxiangshi (a type of exorcist) or associates of Chi You, God of War. These identities
both have apotropaic associations and often overlap.

In the Han dynasty, bear-like figures that could be the ancestors of the sixth-
century monstrous beasts began to gain popularity, especially in the funerary arts. These
creatures are often used as legs for vessels (fig.195-196) or depicted within a larger
composition (fig.197). Bear-like beasts continue to appear in post-Han tombs as well.
For example, the Eastern Jin tomb at Yuantaizi, Liaoning, has several depictions of bear-
like creatures (fig.198-199). These types of figures may be the visual and conceptual
ancestors of the atlas beasts of the sixth century.

429 Susan Bush "Thunder Monsters, Auspicious Animals, and Floral Ornament in Early-sixth-Century
The sixth-century beasts are imbued with more supernatural attributes, but they retain many bear-like features. The Han bear images may also relate to the non-atlas monstrous figures from the sixth century. Bears and more anthropomorphic creatures that resembled bears began to proliferate in Han art around the time of the Emperor Wu, whose search for immortality is widely known. Bears were one of the creatures the emperor collected to stock his garden, which was designed to replicate the land of the immortals. Therefore bears were seen as connected to immortality. Interestingly, bears also play a prominent role in the mythology of Goguryeo. The kingdom’s founder, Dangun 檀君, was the child of a bear-woman and the god Hwanung 桓雄. Bears were also given apotropaic functions. Bear-like exorcists (fangxiangshi) often appear in Han funerary settings. Oftentimes, these bear-like exorcists are identified as Chi You.

The term fangxiangshi 方相氏 refers to an exorcist who scares away evil spirits of pestilence. Fangxiangshi has been translated as “he who scrutinizes for evil in many directions,” “one who sees in all (four) directions,” and “direction-orienting master.” First mentioned in the Rites of Zhou 周禮, the fangxiangshi is described as wearing a four-eyed bear skin, black upper clothes, a red garment on its lower body, and

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431 Kim Chewon, "Han Dynasty Mythology and the Korean Legend of Tan Gun," Archives of Asian Art vol.3 (1948-49): 43-48. In his article, Kim Chewon argued that a Chinese version of Dangun story is represented on the ceiling slabs on Wu Family Shrine 2. However, the figure he interprets as the bear-woman and tiger from the Dangun story is now believed to be Chi You, the god of war.
432 Kinoshita, 414.
434 Dallas McCurley, “Performing Patterns: Numinous Relations in Shang and Zhou China,” The Drama Review vol.49, no.3 (Fall 2005): 137. (The first translation is Derk Bodde’s. The second is Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, and the last is McCurley’s literal translation.)
carrying a shield and a lance. These exorcists participated in seasonal rituals as well as in large funerals. They entered the chamber before the coffin and struck the four corners of the room with the lance, driving out the demons.

Depictions of fangxiangshi appear as early as the Western Han. A possible example is found in the Tomb of Bu Qianqiu 卜千秋, located in Luoyang. A creature identified as a fangxiangshi crouches on the back gable of Bu Qianqiu’s tomb, in a posture similar to the atlas-like figures mentioned above (fig.200). He has pointy ears and a feline face. He is spotted. Below him are the White Tiger of the West and the Green Dragon of the East. The Red Bird is found on the ceiling above. His frontal posture and positioning implies his apotropaic function. Another possible depiction of a fangxiangshi is seen on the back wall of Tomb 61 in Luoyang (fig.201). In the center of the painted panel sits a beast with a large bear-like head. He sits in the middle of what is often interpreted as the Feast at Hongmen. The posture of the bear-faced figure is like that of the beast in Bu Qianqiu’s Tomb; he faces frontally and sits on the ground. This

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435 “方相氏掌蒙熊皮，黄金四目，玄衣朱裳，执戈扬盾，帅百隶而时傩，以索室驱疫。大丧，先柩。” (Wu Guangxiao, 184 from the Zhouli.)

436 McCurley 138


438 In 206 BCE, Liu Bang and Xiang Yu met at Hongmen before their final battle. This painting is sometimes interpreted as this meeting, however scholars have found it difficult to explain who the bear-faced figure is meant to be. It is sometimes identified as a fangxiangshi. (Chaves “A Han Painted Tomb,” 23-4.) However, I believe this frontally positioned figure with the bear face may again be Chi You. Chi You is often depicted frontally in what has come to be interpreted as an iconic pose, and the figure’s larger than life size may indicate that it is more than a human dressed in a bear costume. Additionally, the interpretation of the figure as Chi You may further support that this scene depicts Liu Bang’s meeting with Xiang Yu. The Shiji reports Liu Bang made sacrifices to Chi You before his final battle against Xiang Yu. (Feng and Shan Sacrifices, Watson v.2, 18-19) Therefore, this scene could depict Chi You’s presence during Liu Bang and Xiang Yu’s meeting.
figure has a fearsome bear-like face is described in the *Rites of Zhou*, although it only has two eyes, but such representations of *fangxiangshi* were known by this time.⁴³⁹

Scholars continue to classify sixth-century beasts with bear-like features as *fangxiangshi*. For example, the excavation report of General Cui Fen’s tomb classifies the creatures that sprint before and behind the Four Spirits as *fangxiangshi*.⁴⁴⁰ In many cases this appears to be a generalized label for apotropaic bear-like beasts, referring more to their exorcistic function rather than their strict adherence to the ceremonial figure described in the *Rites of Zhou*.

The beasts found in the corners of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, similar to the beasts found in sixth-century funerary arts from China, can be interpreted as an evolution of the *fangxiangshi*. Physically, they continue to exhibit bear-like features similar to those found in the Han depictions. Also, the Ji’an beasts adhere to one fundamental aspect of the *fangxiangshi* exorcist’s nature, which is described in their name. As “he who scrutinizes for evil in many directions,” “one who sees in all (four) directions,” and “direction-orienting master,”⁴⁴¹ *fangxiangshi* exorcistic practices were oriented to the four directions. The *Rites of Zhou* describes the *fangxiangshi* as striking the four corners of the tombs to scare away malicious spirits.⁴⁴² In the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the demon-like beasts are presented in conjunction with the Four Spirits, which clearly connects them to the four cardinal directions. Further, they are placed in the four corners

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⁴³⁹ Chaves, 24.
⁴⁴⁰ Shandong sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, 8-9; Wu Wenqi, 61.
⁴⁴¹ McCurley 137.
⁴⁴² McCurley 138.
of the tomb, where fangxiangshi would have struck to drive out evil spirits. These two factors lend themselves to interpreting these beasts as fangxiangshi exorcists.

Identifying the Ji’an corner beasts as fangxiangshi does not rule out the other common identification of these sixth-century beasts as storm deities and members of Chi You’s entourage. During the Han there appears to be some overlap between the two, likely because both were considered to have a demon-like appearance and both were associated with protecting the deceased. In Han texts, the Yellow Emperor was often depicted as traveling in a caravan protected by Chi You, by the Four Spirits, and by a band of protective demons. Because of this association, monstrous figures were depicted in the Han funerary arts along with the Four Spirits and had apotropaic functions. It is believed that the sixth-century demon-like beasts may originate from this tradition.

Chi You was considered a war deity as well as the inventor of weapons. Oftentimes he is described as having the horns of an ox and hooves, although he more commonly takes on a fearsome bear-like appearance in Han representations. He was

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443 The Zhouli also mentions that the fangxiangshi had four warriors or “wild men” assist him. (Chaves, 24 from Zhouli 54, 13a.) This description is remarkably similar to descriptions of Chi You and his four attending warriors, which will be discussed further below.

444 These animals and demons were the prototypes for later Daoist protective demons that often participated in exorcisms. (Robinet Taoism, 50-51.)


446 Anne Birrell, Chinese Mythology: An Introduction (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993): 50-52. There is a horned human figure in the Three Chamber Tomb, which is likely Chi You. (Jeon Goguryeo: In Search of Its Culture and History, 83.)
worshipped by the Qin and Han armies. He was especially venerated as a local cult deity in Shandong. It was said Chi You was from Shandong and was buried there.  

Possible Han representations of Chi You and his army appear as early as the Western Han. One example is found in Tomb 61 in Luoyang. A triangular pediment placed in the center of the chamber depicts a series of fantastic creatures, bear-like beasts, wild men, and the Four Spirits (fig.201). An odd looking figure with a red lower garment and a fearsome bear-like face with bulging eyes sits in the center. To his left and right are the Green Dragon and the White Tiger, respectively, and above him is a peacock tailed Red Bird. Because of this figure’s demon-like appearance and his relationship to the Four Spirits animals, it is argued that this figure is Chi You. In the triangular sections beside the central panel are nearly identical compositions. The lowest level shows a hairy man chasing a horse. The next level depicts an anthropomorphic figure wearing red pantaloons and holding a knife chasing what appears to be a black and white bear. A deer stands on the bear’s head. Strikingly, the anthropomorphic knife wielder bears remarkable similarities to the centuries-later Ji’an figures. The ferocious animal-like features, garments, and rapid motion may be echoed in the much later images. The Tomb 61 figures are not clearly identified, but if it is Chi You who sits in the center, these anthropomorphic creatures may be his retinue.

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448 As mentioned above, figures interpreted as fangxiangshi in other Western Han tombs, like the tomb of Bu Qianqiu, may in fact be representations of Chi You.

449 Chaves argued that the figure must sit on an unarticulated Dark Warrior. (Chaves, 11.) However, as seen in other Western Han tombs, such as Bu Qianqiu’s Tomb, the Dark Warrior is usually absent.

450 Chaves, 12.
Chi You appeared in later Eastern Han monuments as well, especially in the Shandong region. Wu Family Shrine 2’s roof slabs illustrate supernatural battle scenes likely involving Chi You (fig.202). A bear-like creature holding five weapons faces outward. Behind this figure, similar to the scene in Tomb 61, beast-faced figures battle bear-like creatures. In the register above are Fengbo (Wing God) and Lei Gong (Thunder God), the nature deities who are a part of Chi You’s retinue.\textsuperscript{451} The late Eastern Han third-century Yi’nan 沂南 Tomb 1 depicts Chi You along with the Four Spirits animals on the north wall of the first chamber (fig.203). On the panel between the two doorways stands a ferocious, demon-like beast. Below him is the Dark Warrior, and above him is the Red Bird. The Green Dragon and White Tiger adorn separate panels to the left and right of the doorways. This figure’s appearance is very similar to that of the figure identified as Chi You in the Wu Family Shrine 2. He stands frontally and has a bear-like countenance. From his head sprouts what may be horns in a crossbow-like shape, and he holds a multitude of weapons. Similarly ferocious figures are scattered throughout the front chamber, including Fengbo 風伯, the God of Wind. The figures likely ward off evil spirits.\textsuperscript{452}

While the above representations of Chi You predate the sixth-century beasts by several centuries, a connection between them can be made. The most obvious comparison showing the relationship between these images is found on the sixth-century Liang Dynasty stele belonging to Xiao Hong found near Nanjing (fig.102). The central figure on the front of this stele is a squatting demon-like figure with a bare chest and

\textsuperscript{451} Cary Liu \textit{Recarving}, 164.  
\textsuperscript{452} Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 255.
flame-like emanations coming from his body. Like the Han representations, he is
presented frontally and a crossbow-like appendage is rooted in his head. The Xiao Hong
representation embodies many elements that are identifiable with the sixth century, such
as a lotus pedestal and flowery adornments, but fundamentally this beast parallels those
found in Han venues. The identification of the figure on the front of the stele as Chi You
is important because he is accompanied by demon-like figures that are nearly identical to
those found in the north and by the Four Spirit animals. The appearance of Chi You
surrounded by his demon-like army and the Four Spirits on Xiao Hong’s stele illustrates
that this protective combination was known and utilized in the sixth century. With this
evidence, it is likely that the sixth-century monstrous figures, which are often interpreted
as storm deities, were related to earlier Chi You cult beliefs and were imbued with
apotropaic connotations.

3.3.4 Corner Beasts Conclusion

Even in the Han there appeared to be overlap between the fangxiangshi and Chi
You’s army. Both are interpreted as exorcists and demon-quellers. Both are also
associated with the four cardinal directions and their symbols, the Four Spirits. The

453 As of yet, no images of Chi You are identified in Northern Dynasty funerary objects. However, some
apotropaic crouching figures could possibly be interpreted as Chi You. For example, comparing the image
of Chi You from Xiao Hong’s stele (c.526) and the crouched figure on the end of the Northern Wei Yuan
Mi (524) sarcophagus reveals startling similarities. The crouched, frontal pose of both figures is nearly
identical; both have their knees bent and their arms raised. Even more notable is the open lotus-like
ornament that graces both figures’ knees. The figure on Yuan Mi’s sarcophagus does not have the
crossbow-like protrusion from his head, and his face is shaggier, but the resemblance between the two is
striking enough to offer the possibility that the Yuan Mi creature is also Chi You. If that is the case, the
other demon-like figures, which also resemble those on the Xiao Hong stele, may be interpreted as Chi
You’s army accompanied by the Four Spirits. It would also mean this composition was known and utilized
in the Northern Dynasties.

corner beasts in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs display characteristics that are associated with both the fangxiangshi and Chi You’s attendants. The Goguryeo beasts are related to the demon-like images found in sixth-century China, and can therefore be interpreted as an evolution of the exorcistic beasts that developed in the Han. The bear-like beasts in Han tombs were often oriented to the four cardinal directions, an element that is evident in the Ji’an tombs’ pairings of the Four Spirits and the corner beasts.

In the Han, bear-like beasts were also often used as supports for the realm of the immortals, another facet seen in the Ji’an corner beasts’ support of the ceiling corbels which illustrate the heavens and immortals. Under Han Emperor Wu, bears came to be associated with the cult of immortality. That connection appears in the art of the period, and over time more monstrous figures took their place. The exorcistic deities that evolved from the Han were protective both over the tomb and the deceased during their journey to the next realm. The demon-like figures placement within the overall composition, as supports for the realm of the immortals as well as scattered between the Four Spirits, illustrates their roots in Han ideology. These ferocious creatures, along with the Four Spirits, were meant to protect the deceased, both in this world and the next.

3.4 Borders

A layer of borders is situated between the walls and the ceiling in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the border motif is an undulating vine of flowers called a “honeysuckle arabesque pattern”455 in the original Japanese report

455 “忍冬唐草文[紋].” (Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 32.)
The borders in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 are a series of eight entwined dragons called a “joined dragon pattern” in the 1964 report (figs.205-206). These borders divide the structures and pictorial compositions of the tombs and create a symbolic base for the ceiling imagery.

Sometimes considered the first layer of ceiling, the borders are painted on their own stratum of stone blocks. These rectangular blocks physically resemble the stones used for the ceiling corbels; however, the paintings on the stones are particular to this level and create a pictorial boundary between the walls and the ceiling.

Although the motifs of the borders in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 differ, the concept behind them is comparable. The Donggou Four Spirits honeysuckle vine and the Five Helmets entwined dragons visually divide the space between the walls, where the Four Spirits are located, and the ceilings, which contain figural paintings of immortals. The borders’ visual function is unambiguous. However, the motifs can be interpreted as serving an additional symbolic function, that of a liminal boundary between this world and the realm of the immortals.

Undulating vines or cloud/wave-like motifs and entwined dragons long decorated representations of immortal realms in China. Pictorial specimens of these motifs can be found on Han objects depicting immortal mountains, such as Universal Mountain censers and mirrors. Both the immortal realms, Kunlun 崑崙 mountain in the west

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456 “交龍紋” (Jilin sheng bowuguan, 64.)
457 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 16-17 (in English) and 32-33.
458 博山爐 (C: boshanlu; 박산로 K: baksanno.)
459 Umehara mentioned the Han style scrolling “(strange) cloud pattern” 妙雲文 [紋] when discussing the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb honeysuckle vine. (Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2, 32.)
and the mountain island of Penglai 蓬莱 in the east, and the Buddhist *axis mundi* Mount Sumeru were thought to rise up from water—rivers, seas, or oceans. Depictions of these mythical locales include undulating, wave-like motifs or dragons used to depict their watery foundations.

It can be argued that the border motifs found within the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs parallel the symbolic boundaries found in depictions of the mountainous land of the immortals and the Buddhist *axis mundi*. Comparison with the Han depictions of immortal realms, such as Kunlun or Penglai, and depictions of Mount Sumeru elucidates the analogous nature of the paintings in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Both the floral and dragon borders in the three Goguryeo tombs can be interpreted as a threshold to, as well as a watery base for, the mountainous land of the immortals.

### 3.4.1 Donggou Four Spirits Tomb: Scrolling Vine Border

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has a vine border, which distinguishes it from the other two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, which have dragon borders. While this feature may be distinctive in the Ji’an region, the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb scrolling vine motif is similar to what is seen in some Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs, particularly the late-sixth, early-seventh-century Gangseo Great and Middle Tombs. Scrolling vines are a somewhat late invention appearing in the fifth and sixth centuries, and they are a common motif in Buddhist art, often decorating the interiors of cave temples and sculptured *mandorla* behind the heads of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In Goguryeo tombs, the scrolling vines take the place of abstract cloud-
like patterned borders seen in early and middle period tombs with murals. These borders, both the abstract clouds and scrolling vines, are analogous to the undulating boundaries seen in Chinese representations of immortal mountains, which date at least as far back as the Han.

**DESCRIPTION**

The scrolling vine between the walls and ceiling of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is described in the Japanese report as a scrolling “honeysuckle arabesque pattern.”°°° The main components consist of a three petal white leaf found in the center of two unfurling half-palmettes, not unlike the leaves found in the lotus netting found in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The leaves stretch upward with their tips wrapping around the supporting vine. The scrolling vine is thick with protruding nodes. The white petals are thickly outlined in red as is the vine. In each set there is both one green or yellow leaf and one red leaf. The flowers are painted in a repeating pattern of upright and inverted, mirrored images. Similar patterns are found in Xiangtangshan Cave 3 decorating the platform of the main Buddha and in the mandorla of the Buddha in the Longmen, Binyang Middle Cave, which indicates this pattern’s popularity in the sixth century (fig.207).

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°°° Ikeuchi T'ung-kou vol.2, 32
EARLY AND MIDDLE PERIOD GOGURYEO TOMB BORDERS

Painters in early and middle period Goguryeo tombs often employed a similar technique to separate the space between the walls and ceilings. Instead of a scrolling vine, the artisans utilized an abstract cloud-like pattern (fig.208). These patterns often decorated pillars placed in the chamber corners as well as paintings resembling wooden beams. The scrolling motif separates the chamber walls from the ceiling. They also sometimes divide the layers of ceilings.

Anak Tomb 3, considered one of the earliest Goguryeo tombs with murals, displays wispy, curling lines on each layer of ceiling in the main chambers (fig.209). These corbels rest upon a series of pillars and are placed above scenes from daily life that are painted on the chamber walls. In this fourth-century tomb, the swirling calligraphic lines can be interpreted as heavenly ether rising above the mundane world.461

In later Goguryeo tombs, the scrolling cloud motif becomes less numinous, becoming a thick, abstract pattern. While the cloud pattern still sometimes appears on the layers of corbels, rather than connoting the heavens, it often is a distinct band around the chamber. The belt of scrolling clouds divides the walls with the daily life scenes from the heavens full of immortals. A good example of this style of border is found in the Deokheung-ri Tomb, dated 408. The band of clouds wraps around the front and back chambers and down the paintings of wooden pillars (fig.210). The belt of the scrolling nebulae rests atop the pillars in the vein of wooden beams, and without the otherworldly decoration it would appear as though the painting imitates mundane wooden architecture.

461 Kang Woo-bang interprets these types of swirling lines as qi (K: ki), the vapor from which all matter is formed. (Kang “A New Theory,” 109-110.)
Instead, the scrolling clouds indicate a division between this world and that of the immortals. In the main chamber a series of auspicious creatures decorate the ceiling corbels above the scrolling clouds. In the front chamber, the unearthly pattern divides the walls, which are full of visiting ministers and processions, and the ceiling, where immortals reside. Jade maidens fly among the sun, moon and stars, a stark contrast to what is painted below the scrolling nebula.

The knobby vine-like scrolling clouds found in the Deokheung-ri Tomb continue in middle period Goguryeo tombs. For example, similar abstracted patterns also appear in the mid to late-fifth-century Three Chamber Tomb in Ji’an and the Susan-ri Tomb in Pyongyang (figs.211-212). Often in these tombs the pattern is repeated down the pillars painted into the chamber corners. While this pattern is sometimes described as “honesuckle patterns,” the dividing patterns in the middle period tombs are too abstract to describe as depicting vegetation. However, late-fifth and early-sixth-century tomb borders begin to take a more organic form. For example, Anak Tomb 2 displays a vine that more closely resembles actual vegetation (fig.213).

**Late Period Goguryeo Tombs: Scrolling Vines**

In the sixth and early-seventh-century Goguryeo tombs, the vines and foliage of the borders become more distinct (fig.214). In the sixth-century Jinpa-ri Tombs 1 and 4, the vine motifs appear to be transitional, somewhere between abstract and naturalistic (fig.215-216). The vines in Jinpa-ri Tomb 4 are rigid with thickly outlined leaf-like

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462 Goguryeo yeonguhoe, 81.
463 For examples of various border motifs in Goguryeo tombs see Li Dianfu *Dongbei kaogu*, 155.
additions. The floral motifs in the Jinpa-ri Tomb 1 closely resemble scudding clouds. The presumed early-seventh-century Gangseo Middle Tomb has two layers of vegetal motifs creating its border. The first is a scrolling half-palmette design. The second layer has a thin vine with wide, fan-like leaves.\(^464\)

Of the Goguryeo tombs with murals, the presumed late-sixth-century Gangseo Great Tomb has the scrolling vine pattern most similar to that found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb (fig.214).\(^465\) In that tomb there is a distinct scrolling honeysuckle vine motif. It has the unfurling leaves and three petal flowers found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb with the addition of some lotus flowers. All these vine borders divide the space of the ceiling from the walls, and all are found in late period Four Spirits tombs from the sixth and seventh centuries.

**Origins and Meaning**

Scrolling vines were a relatively late development in the ornamental motifs of East Asia. The presence of the scrolling vine pattern aligns the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb with artistic trends of the sixth century. However, the origins of the symbolic function of the scrolling vine can be traced back hundreds of years.

The scrolling vines function as a threshold to an immortal realm in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is evidenced by its placement within the tomb between the walls and the ceiling. The ceiling is a celestial realm full of flying immortals and the sun, moon,

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\(^{464}\) Chu Yonghon *Kokuri no hekiga*, fig 30. The Gangseo Middle Tomb scrolling vine resembles the decoration around Five Helmets Tomb 5’s entrance. (Li Dianfu *Dongbei kaogu*, 262 and Goguryeo yeonguhoe, 166.)

\(^{465}\) Jeon *Goguryeo iyagi*, 104.
and stars. The vine in this later period Four Spirits tomb replaces the abstract cloud pattern used as a border in earlier tombs. The scrolling cloud motif has a long history as a boundary to the immortal realm, a model that matured in the Han period of China.

Scudding clouds are a common motif on the ceilings of Han tombs (fig.217). They are used to depict the heavens. These depictions are slightly different than the bands of scrolling clouds used as a liminal boundary to the edge of the realm of the immortals. A good example of the scrolling cloud boundary is found on the east and west walls of the late Han Wu Family Shrine 3 in Shandong (fig.218). A band of abstract rolling clouds crosses the top of the walls creating a triangular space under the sloping roof. The walls are filled with Confucian paragons and historical legends. However, the triangular spaces above the cloud pattern are the realm of the immortals presided over by the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East. The band of clouds both creates a boundary as well as a base for the immortal realm.

An image of the immortal realm equivalent to that of the Wu Family Shrines 3 is found in the early-fifth-century Goguryeo Tomb of Niche Spirit (fig.219). This tomb has what is thought to be the only depiction of the Queen Mother of the West in a Goguryeo tomb. The image of the deity is painted on the west ceiling corbel of the front chamber. A zigzagging band of abstract clouds rises up creating a platform for the Queen Mother. She sits in her usual iconic frontal pose in the middle of the uppermost band. On the different layers of the cloud band are a series of undulating, red and yellow

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466 For a full discussion of the Wu Family Shrine 3 gables and the immortal realms of the Queen Mother of the West and her consort see Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine*, 108-141.
467 龕神塚 (C: Kanshen zhong; K: Gamsin chong)
mountain peaks, four ranges in all. A figure rides a bird up to the platform. The scrolling cloud bands create various levels reaching up to the Queen Mother of the West as well as her platform.

The combination of the mountain peaks and levels created by the zigzagging band of clouds can be interpreted as Mount Kunlun, the residence of the Queen Mother of the West. Kunlun was considered the *axis mundi* in proto-Daoist immortality cults and was considered to be a massive mountain. John Major has argued that Kunlun can be visualized as a ziggurat, and if one climbs the various levels, he reaches the “dome of heaven” and gains immortality. Such journeys are depicted on the bases of Han money trees. Figures striving for immortality climb the levels of the mountain peaks and struggle to reach the Queen Mother of the West. The zigzagging band of clouds in the Tomb of the Niche Spirit creates the fundamental structure of the mountainous base for the Queen Mother of the West. Each level creates a threshold one must pass through in order to attain immortality.

**Comparative Analysis: Mirrors**

In the Han, objects associated with depicting the immortal realm often display a band of scrolling, abstract clouds. As mentioned in the Four (Five) Spirits section, Han TLV mirrors are thought to diagram the universe and also depict an immortal realm. TLV mirrors from the Han generally have a band of scrolling clouds as their outermost decoration (fig.220). These clouds have been interpreted as the sky which was thought to

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469 Major *Heaven and Earth*, 158-159.
cover the world. It is also possible the abstract scrolling pattern could be interpreted as the watery base from which the immortal realm rises. (Sometimes fish and birds are included in the scrolling band on Han mirrors supporting the dual interpretations as sky and water).(fig.221) These bands encompass the central decoration of the mirrors, which can be interpreted as a diagram of the universe. There are generally either four or eight raised bosses that are interpreted as cosmic pillars. The four cardinal directions are often emphasized through the depiction of the Four Spirits. At the very center of the mirror is a central knob that is thought to represent the cosmic pivot, likely Kunlun. In addition to the Four Spirits, various immortals and auspicious creatures surround the center creating a veritable land of the immortals.

Some of the Han TLV mirrors’ inscriptions refer to the immortal realm found upon their surfaces. For example, one Eastern Han TLV mirror with the Four Spirits and immortals discusses the immortals who are on the mirror. According to the inscription, they wander through the mountains gathering herbs for the elixir of immortality and the move through the four seas. The description resembles what is illustrated on the mirror’s surface. Another type of inscription states that a great mountain with immortals decorates the surface of the mirror. They eat jade flowers and drink from springs.

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470 Cammann “Significant Patterns,” 45-47.
472 “尚方作竟真大好，上有仙人不知老，渴飲玉泉飢食棗，徘徊名山採芝草，浮游天下遨敖四海，壽蔽金石為國保。” (Gugong bowuyuan, 120-121.) “The Shangfang made this mirror and truly it is very fine. Upon it are immortal beings who do not know age. When thirsty, they drink from jade springs; when hungry, they eat dates. They wander to and fro among the famous mountains gathering mushrooms and herbs of immortality. They float and swim through all under heaven and wander the four seas. May you have longevity like metal or stone and be the nation’s protector.” (For a nearly identical inscription and translation see Loewe Ways to Paradise, 198-199.)
473 “上大山，見神人，食玉英，飲靈泉，駕文龍，乘浮雲，宜官秩，樂未央，貴富昌，保子孫兮。”
This description echoes a portion of a poem from the *Chuci* called “Crossing the River.” It describes a man’s ascent of Kunlun. “I rode with Zhong Hua in the Garden of Jasper; Climbed Kunlun and ate the flower of jade, and won long life lasting as heaven and earth.”

Examining the mirror inscription and the poem, the similarities are clear. What decorates the mirrors can be considered analogous to the realm of the immortals and even considered as representing Kunlun.

If considering the mirrors to be illustrations of the realm of the immortals, one can consider them to be a *mandala* or guide to how to reach that realm. Looking at these mirrors and moving from the outside in, one must pass through the belt of clouds before reaching the center. This decorative band of clouds can be considered the liminal boundary between this world and the world of the immortals and the foundation from which it rises up.

**Comparative Analysis: Depictions of Immortal Mountains**

As mentioned previously, the scrolling cloud décor on the mirrors is sometimes considered to represent the sky. However, these abstract patterns may instead represent an amorphous substance that can be interpreted as sky or water. The immortal mountains are considered the cosmic pillars or pivots; they connect heaven and earth. For that reason, it can be assumed that they are surrounded by clouds. However, the mountainous immortal realms are also considered to rise up from water, either rivers or oceans, and

(Yang Guirong “Guancang tongjing 3, 112.” “Upon this mirror is a great mountain. You can see immortals there. They eat jade flowers and drink from *li* springs. They harness gentle dragons and ride wandering clouds. May you attain suitable official rank. May your happiness be without end. May your wealth flourish, and may you protect your children and grandchildren.”

474 *Chuci*, Jiu zhang second poem. (Major *Heaven and Earth*, 154; Hawkes, 160.)
because of this the abstract scrolling clouds can also be interpreted as waves. One must pass though the watery boundary before accessing the immortal realm. Universal Mountain censers, which first grew popular in the Han, may provide the best examples supporting the scrolling cloud’s interpretation as water.

Universal Mountain censers are some of the clearest examples available of depictions of the immortal mountains. What is described and likely depicted on mirrors comes to life in the three dimensional, sculptural renderings of the mountains. Mountainous peaks rise up from a rounded base which rests on a pillar-like pedestal. Immortals and auspicious creatures move throughout the mountain crests. A good example of the ambiguity surrounding the scrolling cloud motif can be observed on the Universal Mountain censer from the tomb of Liu Sheng 刘胜 a Han prince, excavated in Hebei (fig.222). The bowl shaped base of the incense burner is decorated in a flowing, gold cloud-like pattern. The abstract cloud pattern swirls around the bowl in the manner of water and even crests into wave-like peaks that seem to lap the shore of the mountain.\(^{475}\) The abstract pattern makes it difficult to discern whether this is meant to be air or water, and perhaps that is intentional. Either way, the scrolling pattern forms a base for the mountain and can also be interpreted as the threshold to the land of immortality.

The use of a band of abstract, scrolling clouds to denote the boundary to an immortal realm was well established, and this practice was adopted by the painters of Goguryeo tombs with murals. As already seen, middle period Goguryeo tombs often

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used a band of scrolling cloud patterns to create the boundary between the walls, which contained scenes from daily life, and the ceilings, which depicted the heavens full of immortals and celestial bodies such as constellations. The question is, how do the abstract bands of clouds relate to the scrolling vines found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb?

Over time, the scrolling cloud motif began to transform into a more vegetal form. Already in the Han one can see traces of this transformation. The border design around the edge of one Han Shangfang TLV mirror already shows vegetal-like traits (fig.223). The scrolling clouds appear to evolve naturally into a vine pattern. This can be seen on some Sui mirrors, mirrors that are considered to be an evolution of the Han TLV mirror. References in some inscriptions still associate the mirrors and the land of the immortals. A common Sui inscription starts with, “The immortal mountains together are reflected,” again implying that the mirrors echo the realm of the immortals. These mirrors retain the large knob that was thought to be the axis mundi, likely Kunlun. A Sui mirror found in the Palace Museum in Beijing is a good example of this style (fig.224). The cosmograph is reduced to a square with a large knob in the center and Vs remain in the same location.

The Sui mirror from the Palace Museum in Beijing, which is not inscribed, has what appear to be small mountain peaks within the Vs. The diagram of the large central knob, possibly Kunlun, and the four surrounding peaks could be interpreted as the Five Sacred Peaks, positioned within the four cardinal directions and the center, that had

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476 “仙山並照” For examples see Yang Guirong “Guancang jingtong 4,” 110.
477 Gugong bowuyuan, 94-95.
been worshipped in China since as far back as the Shang.\textsuperscript{478} The peaks parallel the symbolism of the Four Spirits, which now have a prominent place on the mirror surface. Again, surrounding this *mandala* of the immortal realm is a band of an abstract motif. However, on this late-sixth to early-seventh-century mirror, the motif has metamorphosed into a vine and leaf style pattern.\textsuperscript{479} This pattern resembles the scrolling vine and wide leafed pattern seen on the ceiling of the Gangseo Middle Tomb near Pyongyang.

The evolution in Chinese objects of the abstract cloud/wave-like pattern delineating the boundary on an immortal realm is paralleled in Goguryeo tomb murals. As already shown, early and middle period tomb murals utilized abstract scudding cloud motifs to separate their walls and ceiling. In the late period tombs, the abstract patterns became more vegetal, eventually becoming distinctive vine motifs. While the borders evolved stylistically, they retained their purpose as a symbolic representation of the heavens. Furthermore, examples such as the middle-period Tomb of the Niche Spirit show that Goguryeo tombs used border motifs to specifically define the mountainous realm of the immortals. This tomb portrays the Queen Mother of the West sitting on her mountain abode, Kunlun.\textsuperscript{480}

It can be argued that the ceilings of late Four Spirits tombs can also be interpreted as replicating the immortal mountain. The best support for this case is found in the Gangseo Great Tomb, one of the latest Goguryeo tombs with murals. As already stated the Gangseo Great Tomb utilizes a scrolling honeysuckle pattern to divide its walls and ceiling. On its walls are the Four Spirits, and immortal beings and auspicious creatures

\textsuperscript{478} Little *Taoism*, 147-148.  
\textsuperscript{479} Gugong bowuyuan, 94-95.  
\textsuperscript{480} Jeon *Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa yeongu*, 90-91.
decorate its ceiling. The creatures and beings that are painted on its ceiling resemble those that appear on objects that replicate the immortal realm, such as some Han TLV mirrors with the Four Spirits and the Universal Mountain censers. Adding to the analogy of this Goguryeo tomb’s ceiling and those replicas of the immortal mountain is the addition of small, undulating mountain peaks. The immortals and creatures move through the mountain crests, and Jeon Ho-tae has even identified the mountain peaks as immortal mountains, possibly Kunlun (figs.225-226).481 The Gangseo Great Tomb ceiling composition rests upon and is separated from the walls by a border of scrolling honeysuckle vine. The honeysuckle vine can be interpreted as the sixth-century equivalent of the scrolling cloud depiction of a liminal boundary.

CONCLUSION

The ceiling of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb may lack implicit imagery of an immortal mountain, but it is analogous to what is depicted in the roughly contemporary Gangseo Great Tomb. It has a scrolling honeysuckle vine that is remarkably similar to that in the Gangseo Great Tomb. The scrolling vine separates the walls, with the Four Spirits, from the ceiling. Above the scrolling vine is a variety of immortals and auspicious beings depicting an immortal realm. While paintings of mountain peaks do not adorn the ceiling corbels, it may be because the artisans did not think that was necessary. They may have believed the mountain peaks were implied by the stepped structure of the lanterndechce ceilings.

481 Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 70.
Mountain worship was a native practice among the Goguryeo. Early tombs were built as stone step pyramids, and trees would be planted on them. Structurally those tombs resembled the ascending layers of a mountain. While tomb construction changed, the shape of the interior of the tomb reflected the past stone structures. The lantern deck ceiling is nothing more than a step pyramidal structure. The ascending layers also resemble what is described in ancient texts such as the Huainanzi when describing the immortal mountain of Kunlun. John Major has written that Kunlun can be imagined as a ziggurat shaped mountain. The worshipper must ascend each level before reaching heaven. Therefore, while there may not be mountain peaks decorating the ceiling corbels of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, they may be implied by the tomb’s structure. The scrolling vine border in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is a sixth-century version of the scrolling cloud motif and a threshold one must past to reach the land of the immortals.

3.4.2 Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5: Dragon Border

Dragons connote a variety of meanings. The variety of dragons and their meanings is illustrated in the numerous types of dragons found in the Five Helmets Tombs. Dragons were considered good omens and were able to travel between this world and the next. Dragons have long been associated with water in East Asia, hence their yin nature. They can be bringers of rain or water deities living in oceans and

482 Jung Jae-seo “Daoism in Korea,” 794-795
483 Ah-Rim Park Koguryo Tomb Murals, 21.
484 Major Heaven and Earth, 159.
rivers. It is this association that appears to be most relevant in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. While the scrolling vine border in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is somewhat ambiguous as to whether it symbolizes water or vaporous clouds, the dragon borders in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 can clearly be interpreted as water, and it can be argued that the dragon borders in Tombs 4 and 5 represent a watery base from which an immortal mountain arises.

**DESCRIPTION**

Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 both have eight intertwined, serpentine dragons painted between the walls and the ceilings, two on each wall. In Tomb 5, the eight dragon pattern is repeated under the second layer of the ceiling corbels. The pattern created by the dragons is quite complex, and the manner in which they are painted is sophisticated. The dragons are literally tied together; each dragon’s tail is tied around the dragon behind it, and each dragon bites the dragon in front of it. This creates a continuous ring of dragons encircling the tomb chamber. The bodies flow into one another and the details of the skin and features are exquisitely rendered.\(^{486}\)

The dragons are painted in a combination of white, green, red, and yellow. These colors form rings and bands that create the dragons’ bodies. The dragons’ heads are large and attenuated with bulging eyes, gaping mouths, and two horn-like antennae. Their

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\(^{486}\) As for the origins of this intertwining, biting dragon motif, perhaps it is among the north Asian nomads. These images seem to be related to the animal styles found in northern nomadic art, but that will not be explored here. Interestingly, one possible explanation for the origins of the Goguryeo people is that they are Yemaek, a northern nomadic group. Kim Wonyong believes that because of these origins, aspects of Goguryeo art have similarities to Scythian art. (Kim Wonyong *Art and Archaeology*, 110)
extended limbs have three claws. The entwined dragons are framed by repeated green, yellow, red and white diamond patterns. Colorless round shapes also fill in some of the empty spaces.

The entwined dragon border is not found in other Goguryeo tombs. The closest example is the dragons painted on the pillars in the fifth-century Pyongyang area Twin Pillars Tomb. There, the dragons wrap their serpentine bodies around the columns. They also have large, horned heads and gaping mouths. However, this tomb and the other Goguryeo tombs all lack the prolific nature of the dragons represented in the Five Helmets Tombs.

**Origins and Meaning**

Bands of dragons, similar to the cloud and vine motifs, have a long history within the depictions of immortal mountains. Since the Han, they have been a consistent motif decorating illustrations of the realm of the immortals. Dragons frequently decorate the bases of Universal Mountain censers, the most clear-cut depiction of the immortal mountain. The practice of using bands of dragons to delineate the watery base of immortal realms and the cosmic axis continued in the Northern and Southern Dynasties. This motif became even more widespread with the aid of Buddhism.
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: DEPICTIONS OF IMMORTAL MOUNTAINS

As already mentioned, Universal Mountain incense burners are thought to create a land of the immortals, perhaps Kunlun or Penglai.\(^{487}\) It is common to find coiling dragons depicted on the bases of these incense burners. The coiling dragons and the wave designs often depicted on these incense burners appear to represent water. The *Huainanzi* describes four rivers that flow from the four corners of Kunlun, and the *Shanhaijing* describes Kunlun rising from a sea.\(^{488}\) Another immortal realm, Penglai, was considered to be a mountainous island, or series of islands, in the sea. The *Shanhaijing* simply states that “Mount Penglai is in the sea.”\(^{489}\) Either of these immortal mountains would have water depicted at its base.

Dragons encircling the base of a Universal Mountain censer to depict a watery foundation for the immortal mountain arose in the Han and were a dominant motif on mountain censers from their inception during the reign of Han Wudi.\(^{490}\) The dragon patterns could be abstract, similar to that decorating the base of the censer from the Han Prince Liu Sheng. As already mentioned, gold wave-like clouds decorate the bowl of the censer. Dragons adorn the stem as though rising up to support the mountain. A clear example of dragons encircling the base of an immortal mountain is found on an Eastern Han ceramic censer now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

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\(^{487}\) Mountain worship also has a long history on the Korean Peninsula. Throughout history Mount Baekdu (Mount Changbai), which straddles the border between China and North Korea today, is considered a mythical place of origin for the Goguryeo people. Mount Baekdu is one of the few tourist areas in North Korea.

\(^{488}\) Major *Heaven and Earth*, 156-158; Srassberg, 192-193.

\(^{489}\) Srassberg, 204; *Shanhaijing*, fascicle 7 (*Haiwaixi jing* 海外西經) "蓬萊山在海中。" (Yuan Ke *Shanhaijing*, 324.)

\(^{490}\) Erickson “Boshanlu,” 6.
The snake-like dragons wind themselves around the base of the censer. They appear as though they are meandering through a sea or river at the base of an immortal mountain. The snake-like dragons resemble those found in the Five Helmets Tombs.

Dragons continued to appear in post-Han depictions of immortal mountains even outside of China. Two such examples were excavated in the former territory of Baekje on the Korean Peninsula. An incense burner found in Buyeo is a good example of a Universal Mountain censer from the sixth to early-seventh century (fig.228). The base of the gilded incense burner is a dragon. He holds up the mountain with his mouth, grasping a pearl-like nub at the base. The mountain rests on a lotus flower separated only by a belt of scrolling cloud pattern. There are men and animals frolicking through the mountains, and on the topmost peak a phoenix sits grasping a pearl under its chin. Here again the dragon motif can be interpreted as representing water. The bowl of the censer is a large lotus, which the dragon holds in its mouth. Lotuses are also often associated with water as that is their natural habitat. Immortals and auspicious creatures frolic over the lotus petals and through the undulating mountain peaks. The Baekje incense burner was uncovered at the remains of a Buddhist monastery in Neungsan-ri.

A less explicit representation of an immortal mountain was found in the tomb of the Baekje King Muryeong (d.523). The decoration on a silver cup excavated in the tomb of Muryeong and his wife is analogous to the imagery one finds on a Universal

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491 Liu Recarving, 408-409.
493 Park Kyung-eun, 87. Neungsan-ri is also the site of one of the Baekje Four Spirits tombs.
494 Lee Yeong-Hun Gobun misul I, 209-210. An inscribed stone with the dates of the King and Queen’s deaths and burials was found in the tomb.
Mountain censer and is similar to what is sometimes diagrammed on mirrors (fig.229).\textsuperscript{495} The bottom of the cup is etched with lotus petals. Above the petals, snake-like dragons encircle the cup. The rim of the cup is decorated with scrolling cloud-like patterns. The mountain portion of the composition is illustrated on the lid. Deer and birds frolic through four undulating mountain peaks. Another lotus decorates the peak of the lid.\textsuperscript{496} The dragon pattern base and the mountain peaks with animals are easily compared with the sculptural representations of the Universal Mountain. However, there are elements that can also be paralleled to features found on the so-called Sui mirrors,\textsuperscript{497} mirrors that are arguably diagrams of the universe and the realm of the immortals.

While the cup does not display the square placed in the center and the Vs placed in the corners of the sixth-century adaptation of Han TLV mirrors, there are several motifs that echo the mirror structure. One of the first elements is the ring of scrolling clouds etched above the dragons on the cup. This resembles the outer band of decoration found on the mirrors. The next element is the four mountain peaks. Again, looking at the example of the mirror from the Palace Museum in Beijing, one can see small mountain peaks inside the corner Vs. Their placement on the mirror resembles the regular spacing of mountain peaks on the silver cup. As already mentioned, these four peaks can be interpreted as pillars placed in the corner of the universe to support the heavens. They

\textsuperscript{495} In her article comparing decorative patterns of China and Korea, Susan Bush briefly noted the cup’s similarities to a Universal Mountain censer. See Susan Bush, “Some Parallels between Chinese and Korean Ornamental Motifs of the Late-fifth and Early-sixth Centuries A.D.” \textit{Archives of Asian Art} vol.37 (1984): 72-73.

\textsuperscript{496} Gungnip Gongju bangmulgwan, 47-49.

\textsuperscript{497} Soper disputed dating all these mirrors to the Sui. He believed that they may have begun in the Liang. (Soper “Addendum.”) Interestingly, King Muryeong was a friend to the Liang and it was recorded that his brick tomb was built in the Liang style. (Gungnip Gongju bangmulgwan, 13-14.) Therefore, it may not be accidental that this cup displays parallels to the mirror cosmographs. The concept for both may have the same origin.
surround the fifth sacred mountain, the *axis mundi*. Comparing the center of the mirror and the cup there are further parallels. As already discussed, the knob of the TLV mirrors and their sixth-century manifestations are thought to represent Mount Kunlun, the *axis mundi* and an immortal realm. It is common for the large bosses to be placed over lotus-like decorations, like what is seen on the sixth-century Palace Museum mirror. From the placement of the petals and boss on the mirror and the lotus and finial on the cup, one can infer that the lotus and finial may represent the *axis mundi*.

Further supporting that the Baekje King and Queen would have been familiar with the mirror cosmographs is the presence of a TLV type mirror in their tomb (fig.230). While the raised figures around the mirror are incongruous with Han TLV mirrors, the use of the large central knob within a square with the heavenly stems written on it is the same. The inscription also is the same as what is seen on some Han TLV mirrors. It says, “The Shangfang made this mirror. It is truly great. Upon it are immortals who do not know age. When thirsty, they drink water from the jade spring; when hungry, they eat dates. May your longevity [be like] metal and stone.” This is nearly identical to the inscription found on the Eastern Han TLV Mirror mentioned previously. The mirror evidences that the Baekje King and Queen were familiar with the Han cosmology and the land of the immortals.

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498 Little “Daoist Art,” 712-713. For discussion of cosmic pillars see Major Heaven and Earth pages 37 and 40.
499 One might assume that the lotus-like decoration on the mirrors is related to Buddhism. However, such designs appear on Han mirrors as well starting in the Western Han. For examples see Gugong bowuyuan pages 40-55 and Yang Gui Rong “Guancang tongjing 3,” pages 120-121.
500 “尚方作鏡真大好，上有仙人不知老，渴飲玉泉飢食棗，壽[知] 金石兮。” (Gungnip Gongju bangmulgwan, 61.)
If one interprets the cup found in King Muryeong’s tomb as a depiction of the land of the immortals and the cosmic pivot, then once again circling dragons, similar to those seen in the Five Helmets Tombs, decorate the base. The dragons create a symbolic watery base from which the immortal mountain or mountains arise.

**Comparative Analysis: Depictions of Mount Sumeru**

As seen above, dragons symbolizing a watery base for the land of the immortals continued in the sixth century. This trend was not hindered by the acceptance of Buddhism, and in actuality may have become more widespread. Buddhism had an equivalent mountainous *axis mundi* called Sumeru. It also rose from four oceans and in those oceans were serpent deities called *naga*. In China, the *nagas* became dragons and depictions of Sumeru were remarkably similar to illustrations of the Chinese cosmic pillar. The two were seen as parallel to the extent that the *Shi yi ji* said “Kunlun, those in the west call it Sumeru.”

Buddhism during the Northern and Southern Dynasties developed imagery similar to the Universal Mountain to depict its version of the *axis mundi*, Mount Sumeru. In Buddhist cosmology the universe is structured in rings around Mount Sumeru, which rises above the Great Ocean. In the Great Ocean live nagas, serpentine spirits. In Indian folklore, nagas are snakes, but they were reinterpreted in East Asia as dragons.

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501 Taiping yulan, fascicle 8 quoting the *Shi yi ji* “崑崙者西方曰須彌山.” (Taiping yulan in *Si bu congkan san bian* vol.36.)

The concept of a mountainous universe rising above a body of water resonates with the Chinese model of the mountain or island residences of immortals. Depictions of Mount Sumeru in China often display the parallels. One of the earliest depictions of Mount Sumeru is carved above the entrance of Yungang Cave 10 (Northern Wei c.480). There it is depicted as a series of undulated mountain peaks inhabited by birds and various other animals, such as deer (fig.231). This parallels depictions of the Universal Mountain dating back to the Han, which also had small mountain peaks inhabited by various creatures. The Yungang Cave 10 depiction of Mount Sumeru also shows two serpentine dragons wrapped tightly around the base. Their front limbs are lifted, supporting the mountain above. The Yungang dragons have thin, sinewy bodies, large heads with gaping mouths, and horns; which is all similar to the dragons that create the border in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5.

The depiction of Mount Sumeru on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 in Dunhuang shows two dragons coiling around the base (fig.232). They are wrapped around a pillar-like structure that supports a series of small mountain peaks. The compositional structure of the Buddhist axis mundi is parallel to the structure of a Universal Mountain censer. A thin base with coiling dragons supports a bowl shaped range of small, undulating mountain peaks. The largest difference is the giant asura standing in front of the mountain peak. Of course, the depiction in this cave temple may actually represent both Kunlun and Sumeru. It is painted on the west side of the ceiling. To the left and right, depictions of the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East move toward
the mountain, which supports a fortress-like structure on its peak. This Buddhist cave temple has numerous images linked to the immortality cult and Daoism, so it is possible in this instance Kunlun and Sumeru are actually depicted as the same mountain.

Images of Mount Sumeru also adorned Buddhist sculpture that was roughly contemporary with the Goguryeo Five Helmets tombs. A Southern Dynasty sculpture depicting Mount Sumeru was excavated at Wanfo Monastery 萬佛寺 in Chengdu, Sichuan (fig.233). The front of the Liang (502-557) stele illustrates Mount Sumeru as a giant tree with mountains as its branches. The dragons wrap around the trunk and support the mountain peaks above. Instead of being inhabited by animals, the Liang stele shows small buildings and groups of people scattered throughout the peaks. Beside the mountain peaks, seeming to float in air, are animals and flying heavenly beings.

Similar depictions of Mount Sumeru also appeared on the front of the robes of a type of Buddha popular in the sixth century sometimes deemed the “Cosmological Buddha.” An example of such a Buddha is found in Mogao Cave 428 in Dunhuang, which is dated to the Northern Wei (fig.234). A later example, dated to the Northern Qi or Sui (550-618), is currently located in the Freer Gallery (fig.235). This Buddha has Mount Sumeru carved into its chest. Again, the mountain has a trunk with two serpentine dragons encircling it. They hold the miniature mountain peaks with their three clawed

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504 Compositionally, this tree-like depiction of Mount Sumeru is curiously similar to some depictions on mirrors of the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East. On these Han mirrors, they are seated on a platform supported by a tree that is wrapped in a serpent-like vapor. In 1989, one such mirror was excavated from Hejiashan Tomb 1, an Eastern Han cliff tomb in Mianyang, Sichuan. The report describes the platform base as a “twined spirit tree” (缠绕的神树). (He Zhiguo, “Sichuan Mianyang Hejiashan 1 hao Donghan yamu qingli jianbao,” Wenwu no.3 [1991]: 5.)
505 Howard “Cosmological Buddha,” 53.
hands. They have long, attenuated heads and gaping mouths. Human figures and small buildings occupy the mountain.

The dragon border and ceiling images in the Goguryeo Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 do not depict the Buddhist Mount Sumeru, however the concepts may be parallel. In the contemporary illustrations of Mount Sumeru, it is common for dragons to encircle the base, connoting the mountain rising from the ocean. This is similar to depictions of the Universal Mountain, which also often uses dragons to depict a body of water at the base of the realm of the immortals. In Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, one can translate the Buddhist and Daoist visual representations of their cosmic axis. In the Buddhist and Daoist depictions, dragons denote water from which the mountains arise. On the mountains live a myriad of supernatural creatures or beings.

**CONCLUSION**

The border of entwined dragons in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 is unique to these sites. The other Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs use abstract cloud or floral borders to visually separate the walls from their ceilings. While the intertwined dragons may not appear in other Goguryeo tombs, this motif is common in depictions of the immortal mountain and the *axis mundi*. From the Han, dragons encircled the base of the realm of the immortals as depicted on Universal Mountain censers. This trend continued into the sixth and early-seventh centuries, as demonstrated by the gilt censer and cup from Baekje. The dragon as a watery foundation was also utilized in depictions of Mount Sumeru, the Buddhist *axis mundi*, in sixth-century compositions. The creators of the two
Ji’an tombs appear to have been aware of those traditions. As argued previously, the structure of the *lanterndecke* ceiling may have lent itself to being interpreted as a mountain-like structure. The paintings of the entwined dragons in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 may create a symbolic watery base from which the immortal mountain arises.

### 3.4.3 Borders Conclusion

The motifs used to render the borders in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs may differ, but their symbolic import is analogous. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has a scrolling honeysuckle vine, and the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 have eight intertwined dragons. However, looking at the history of representations of immortal mountains and cosmic pivots, their similar functions within the tombs become clear. The scrolling vine is a sixth-century evolution of the abstract cloud pattern seen on the rims of Han TLV mirrors and Universal Mountain censers. And in some instances, such as the censer from the tomb of Prince Liu Sheng, the cloud pattern takes on the appearance of water. These bands of decoration create a symbolic boundary around the base of the immortal mountain, separating this world from the heavenly realm.

The scrolling cloud motif, which in the sixth century begins to take on a vine-like appearance, often appears in conjunction with dragons. The combination of the two is seen on the bases of Han incense burners, like Liu Sheng’s, and is even seen on the sixth to early-seventh-century Universal Mountain censer and cup from Baekje. From the Han, dragons encircling the base of a mountain censer implied water, either rivers or oceans,
that surrounded the immortal mountains. The water surrounding the immortal mountains was viewed as a real, physical barrier. According to the Shiji, since the Warring States expeditions were dispatched to the three divine islands of Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou. They were said to lie in the Gulf of Bohai not far from where men dwelled. Unfortunately, whenever anyone approached them, winds would arise and blow his boat off course.…

Before some reached these places, they appeared from afar like clouds, but as they arrived, the three divine islands submerged in the sea. As the people approached, winds suddenly arose and carried their boats farther away so that in the end, none of them were able to get there. Every ruler has yearned for these places.506

After many failed attempts, people gave up the notion of physically traveling to these immortal lands and instead turned to more metaphysical journeys.507 For these travels, people would utilize the mandala-like representations of immortal mountains, an important part of which was the liminal boundary of water and vapor that had been such an obstacle in physical journeys. The border decoration in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs may symbolically represent that fluid threshold.

3.5 Decoration in the Triangular Spaces Under the Corbels

Coiling dragons and lotus flowers are painted on the underside of the corbels in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, paralleling the dragon and floral patterns of the borders.

506 Strassberg, 205.
507 Robinet Taoism, 138-139.
Five Helmets Tomb 4 has entwined dragons for its border and coiling dragons under its corbels. However, while the Five Helmets Tomb 5 has an entwined dragon border, it has lotus blossoms painted in the triangular spaces under its corbels. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has a scrolling honeysuckle border, but it has coiling dragons under its corbels. The two types of decoration in the triangular spaces beneath the ceilings corbels appear to have differing visual symbolism.

3.5.1 Five Helmets Tomb 5: Lotus Motif

Looking up, the lotuses in Five Helmets Tomb 5 appear in conjunction with the entwined dragon pattern, which is painted on the long underside of the second layer of corbels (fig.236-237). Examination of the visual functions of the lotus in Han as well as sixth-century funerary art reveals that the lotuses in Tomb 5 may be imbued with a multitude of meanings. One concept aligns the lotus with water. Since dragons also symbolize water, together they may represent the body of water that surrounds the mountain axis mundi. The placement of the lotuses in the four corners of the tomb may lend itself to another layer of meaning as symbolic cosmic pillars, a visual trope that can be paralleled to cosmographic mirrors and similar compositions found on items such as sixth-century epitaph covers.

Lotuses As Water / Liminal Boundary

In the Han, the lotus symbolized water. Textual sources describe how during the Han open lotuses were depicted on the ceilings of wooden architecture in order to control
Eastern Han tombs like Dahuting Tomb 2 in Mixian, Henan (fig.238) and the Yinan Tomb 1 in Shandong (fig.239) depict opened lotuses in the center of their ceilings. The lotuses in these tombs are confined to a square space, so their shapes are slightly stunted. They have pronounced centers and eight main petals. In the post-Han period, this style of configuration continued, both in religious and funerary architecture.

The Han practice of placing a lotus in the apex of a ceiling likely hastened its acceptance in Buddhist architecture in later periods. The Northern Wei Cave 1 in Gongxian has a similarly paneled ceiling with lotuses and figures being born from lotuses (fig.240). The lotuses are similar to those in the Han tombs and Five Helmets Tomb 5; they have eight main petals around a large, circular center. Similar to the lotuses in Tomb 5, the Gongxian lotuses have vines and foliage extending outward, filling the space. The lotuses in this cave closely resemble the standard lotus design that developed in the sixth-century Goguryeo tombs with murals. Lotuses in decorative lanterndechestyle ceilings also appear in Northern Dynasty caves at Dunhuang, like the Western Wei Cave 285 (fig.241) and the Northern Zhou Cave 428 (fig.242), although, stylistically, those painted lotuses are more abstract than those in Gongxian Cave 1 or Five Helmets Tomb 5.

Open lotuses also appear in Northern and Southern Dynasty tombs. The sixth-century Dengxian Tomb has a plethora of lotus imagery (fig.243). Several of the lotuses

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509 Interestingly, the painted Dahuting Tomb 2 and carved Yinan Tomb 1 also have decorative lanterndechestyle ceilings with configurations similar to the Goguryeo-style ceilings. Perhaps the Han decorative ceilings were meant to imitate wooden architecture of the period.
decorating the bricks have eight spiky petals and vines extending outward. They are
confined to a square space similar to those in the Han tombs and the Gongxian Cave 1.
This style carried over into the funerary arts of the Northern Dynasty. An eight petal
lotus is painted on the floor of the Northern Qi Imperial Tomb at Wanzhang (fig.244).
The open lotus is confined to a central space defined by a painted brown frame. It is
difficult to tell if this lotus also has the vine flourishes.

Lotus motifs had a long tradition in Goguryeo tomb murals (fig.245), one that was
likely inherited from Han practices and then further popularized by Buddhism. The lotus
flowers in Tomb 5 are a late evolution of the lotuses, a type that became popular in the
mid-sixth to early-seventh century. Lotus flowers consistently appear in the apex of
ceilings. One of the earliest Goguryeo examples of the lotus appearing on the capping
stone is found in the 357 Anak Tomb 3 (fig.246). Anak Tomb 3’s lotus is located in the
apex of its corbeled ceiling. The ceiling configuration with the lotus in the center recalls
the ceilings of Dahuting Tomb 2 and Yi’nan Tomb 1, and it can be interpreted as a three
dimensional rendering of what is seen painted on the ceilings of the Mogao Caves 249
and 285 in Dunhuang. The practice of painting a lotus in the apex of the tomb ceiling
continued into the Four Spirits tombs, ending with the presumed latest tomb, the Gangseo
Middle Tomb. Paintings of lotuses in the triangular spaces under the corbels were also
seen in Four Spirits tombs from the sixth century, as seen in Jinpa-ri Tombs 1 and 4.
Depictions of lotuses in the Five Helmets Tomb 5 were in accord with Goguryeo tomb
with murals tradition.

511 Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiu suo and Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, *Ci xian Wanzhang Beichao bihuamu* (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2003.)
Presumably, lotus appeared in the apex of the ceilings of Han tombs in an attempt to mimic wooden architecture and perhaps to protect the tomb interior. That visual trope continued in later tombs, like those found in Goguryeo, and Buddhist cave temples. Therefore, it was utilized in these locales as symbol of water, which stems from the lotus’ natural habitat in bodies of water. In Buddhist venues and later tombs, the lotus may have had an added layer of meaning as the concept of the Pure Land, a type of paradise, was promulgated. Visually, the lotus was often used to delineate the boundary to the Buddhist Pure Land.

A depiction of the Pure Land of the Western Buddha appears on a Liang Dynasty stele found at the Wanfo Monastery in Sichuan (fig.247). This representation illustrates the entrance to the Pure Land as a large lotus pond with little figures swimming through the water. Visually, one must first cross over this lotus pond full of souls being reborn before arriving in paradise.\(^{513}\) The concept of crossing though a boundary of a lotus pond was carried out in the Korean Three Kingdoms as well. In a physical reproduction of this model, the Silla monastery Bulguk-sa (originally from the sixth century, it was rebuilt in 751) once had a lotus pond located in front of its entrance. One had to cross over this pond to reach the “Buddha Land” for which the temple was named.\(^{514}\) This concept also appears in a more closely related site, the entrance of Jinpa-ri Tomb 4.

Jinpa-ri Tomb 4 is a sixth-century Goguryeo Four Spirits tomb located in the Pyongyang area. As a Four Spirits tomb, the major motifs are considered to be Daoist. However, the painting in the entrance corridor depicts a lotus pond (fig.248), a theme that

\(^{513}\) Watt *China*, 221.

\(^{514}\) McCune, 92-93. This lotus pond was not included in the twentieth century reconstruction.
appears to have been appropriated from Buddhism.\textsuperscript{515} There are no depictions of souls being reborn, but the lotus pond’s location at the entrance of the tomb parallels what is seen in depictions of the entrance of the Buddhist Pure Land. One must cross through the lotus pond in much the same way one physically entered the Buddha Land at Bulguk-sa or the way one visually crosses over a lotus pond in depictions of the Pure Land, such as the illustration on the sixth-century Wanfo Monastery stele. The lotus pond in the entrance corridor of Jinpa-ri Tomb 4 offers an example of the concept of crossing the boundary of a lotus pond to enter another realm, which is depicted on the walls of the tomb. The interior of this heavily damages tomb depicts the Four Spirits and flying immortals on its walls.\textsuperscript{516} Therefore, by traversing the passageway with the lotus pond, one enters an immortal realm.

As seen in the example from Jinpa-ri Tomb 4, the concept of the lotus pond as a liminal boundary to the world of the immortals was present in sixth-century Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. The presence of this concept adds a possible second layer of meaning to the lotus motif. Not only was the lotus a symbol of water, but it was seen as a threshold to paradise or the immortal realm. Lotuses and dragons together creating a watery base for the immortal mountain are seen on the sixth or early-seventh-century Universal Mountain censer from Baekje. This juxtaposition is also seen on the silver cup excavated from the sixth-century tomb of King Muryeong, which was discussed in the previous section. The bowl of the cup has a lotus etched on the bottom below a ring of

\textsuperscript{515} A similar lotus pond also appears in the Deokheung-ri Tomb dated to 408. (Jeon \textit{Goguryeo gobun byeokhwaeui saegye}, 251-251.) However, this composition is on the east wall of the back chamber, which visually makes it dissimilar to a liminal boundary.

\textsuperscript{516} Jeon \textit{Goguryeo gobun byeokhwae yeonggu}, 394.
dragons. From these contemporary examples, it is possible to view the lotus flowers on the underside of the ceiling corbels as working in conjunction with the dragon imagery to create a boundary to the immortal realm. This is one possible symbolic meaning for the four lotus flowers. However, the flowers’ placement within the corners of the tomb may add another layer of meaning. As a tomb that rigidly adheres to a proscribed cosmology, the flowers’ situation in the overall composition may be telling.

LOTUSES AS COSMIC PILLARS

If the paintings in Five Helmets Tomb 5 are symbolic representations of the universe, then it appears as though the paintings of the lotuses in the four corners of the tomb should have a cosmological function. To understand the lotus’ role, it is useful to once again turn to mirrors. Beginning in the Han, mirrors often displayed bosses that have been interpreted as cosmic pillars. TLV mirrors generally display eight bosses that are interpreted as the “eight cosmic pillars.” However, Han mirrors that have the face of the mirror divided into four areas use four bosses to delineate the space. In Han cosmology, the sky was seen as supported by either eight or four pillars. These symbolic pillars appear to have metamorphosed into lotus motifs in the sixth century.

TLV mirrors were not the only mirrors used to replicate the universe in Han China. Some mirrors from that period do not have the TLV pattern, but they use symbols like the Four Spirits to define the four cardinal directions. They use four small bosses to further define the four areas, bosses that are identical to those on the TLV mirrors. One

517 Major Heaven and Earth, 37.
type of Han mirror has elements similar to a TLV mirror, such as a square placed in the center around a large knob, which often interpreted as Kunlun. A smaller boss is placed at each of the four corners. Han mythology vacillates between describing eight and four pillars holding up the sky. It appears as though the notion of eight pillars was popular during the Warring States period, but during the Han the notion of four pillars began to take hold. One popular myth recounted how the goddess Nüwa repaired the four sky pillars after they broke.\textsuperscript{518} Another story tells how after a battle for supremacy, the water god Gonggong butted his head against Mount Buzhou, one of the four cosmic pillars, and in his rage, he broke it.\textsuperscript{519} These stories are sometimes associated to explain why Nüwa had to fix the pillars.\textsuperscript{520} So, it is not a stretch of the imagination to connect the four bosses used to divide Han mirror surfaces to the four cosmic pillars.

The four bosses on the Han mirrors divide the mirror surface into four parts and are often placed in between the Four Spirits or their substitutes. While these symbolic pillars are generally simple and round, there are instances when they take on a more floral

\textsuperscript{518} “往古之時，四極廢，九州裂，天不兼覆，地不周載；火爁焱而不滅，水浩洋而不息；猛獸食顓民，鷙鳥攫老弱。於是女媧鍊五色石以補蒼天，斷鼇足以立四極，殺黑龍以濟冀州，積蘆灰以止淫水。蒼天補，四極正；淫水涸，冀州平；狡蟲死，顓民生；背方州，抱圓天。” (Yuan Ke \textit{Gu shenhua} 23, after the \textit{Huainanzi} the \textit{Lanming} chapter.) “In remote antiquity, the four poles collapsed. The nine regions split up. Heaven could not cover all things uniformly, and earth could not carry everything at once. Fires rages fiercely and could not be extinguished. Water rose in vast floods without abating. Fierce beasts devoured the people of Chuan [Zhuan]. Violent birds seized hold of the old and weak in their talons. Then Nü Kua [Nüwa] smelted the five-color stones to mend the blue sky. She severed the feet of a giant seat turtle to support the four poles and killed a black dragon to save the region of Chi [Ji]. And she piled up the ashes from burned reeds to dam the surging waters. The blue sky was mended. The four poles were set right. The surging waters dried up. The region of Chi [Ji] was under control. Fierce beasts died and the people of Chuan [Zhuan] lived. They bore the earth’s square area on their backs and embraced the round sky….” (Birrell \textit{Chinese Mythology}, 71. I have added the pinyin transcriptions.)

\textsuperscript{519} This story is recounted in the \textit{Huananzi} Tianwen chapter. (Yuan Ke \textit{Gu shenhua}, 30. Birrell \textit{Chinese Mythology}, 98.)

\textsuperscript{520} Lihua Yang, 124. Yuan Ke quotes the Tang text the \textit{Bu Shiji Sanhuang benji} 補史記三皇本紀 which recounts how it was because of Gonggong that Nüwa had to repair the sky. (Yuan Ke \textit{Gu shenhua}, 30.)
shape, which is reminiscent of the lotuses painted in Tomb 5. One such Han mirror, now located in the National Museum of China, has a large boss in the center with a square around it, similar to a TLV mirror (fig.249). A small boss in each corner divides the mirror surface into four parts. It is described as having a dragon-riding immortal placed across from a tiger riding immortal. Instead of a bird and Dark Warrior, there is an immortal riding a bear-like creature placed across from an immortal riding a stag with large antlers.\(^{521}\) The four corner bosses on this mirror have the appearance of a flower with four spiky petals.

While mirrors from the Northern and Southern Dynasties and Sui periods appear to lose the symbolic pillars, another medium from the sixth-century seems to echo the structure of the cosmic diagram seen on Han mirrors.\(^{522}\) Northern Wei epitaph covers often have four lotus flowers in the corners, dividing their stone surfaces into four sections. These sixth-century works may be the link between the four cosmic pillars represented on Han mirrors and the lotus flowers in the corners of Tomb 5’s chamber ceiling.

On the Northern Wei epitaph covers, a lotus is in each corner dividing the surface into four quadrants. One example of such a composition is the epitaph cover belonging to Yuan Mi (524) now located in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (fig.250). It has four open lotus flowers in its corners. In the four spaces are a descending dragon and tiger as

\(^{521}\) Yang Guirong “Guancang tongjing 3,” 118.
\(^{522}\) As already mentioned, it appears as though the cosmic pillars found on Han TLV mirrors are replaced by the V decorations on their sixth-century descendants. On some mirrors one sees what may be small mountain peaks. These could be interpreted as the four mountain pillars.
well as a human-headed bird opposite a rodent-headed bird.\textsuperscript{523} Another example of an epitaph cover divided into four spaces by lotus flowers is the epitaph cover belonging to Hou Gang 侯刚 (526). The grid-like spaces on its surface are filled with running beasts similar to those in the corners of Tomb 5’s chamber (fig.251). The most analogous example bridging the Han mirrors and the Goguryeo Five Helmets Tomb 5 is the epitaph cover belonging to Erzhu Xi (fig.252).\textsuperscript{524} This epitaph cover has four lotuses prominently placed in its corners. The Four Spirits and their immortal riders fill the four spaces. Compositionally, this epitaph cover is similar to the Eastern Han mirror in the National Museum of China with the beast riding immortals filling the four spaces. The placement of the four lotuses and the decoration of the spaces created is analogous to the Han mirror. Their parallel structure lends itself to conjecturally identifying the four lotuses on the epitaph cover as the four cosmic pillars, holding up the sky and dividing the four cardinal directions.

The symbolic division of space on the Han mirrors and on Erzhu Xi’s epitaph cover is paralleled in the Five Helmets Tomb 5. If one takes the imagery on the mirrors and epitaph cover and places them in a three dimensional configuration, it resembles the composition of Tomb 5’s wall and ceiling paintings. The four lotus flowers in this tomb hover over the corners between the depictions of the Four Spirits, similar to their positioning on Erzhu Xi’s epitaph cover. Viewing the corner lotuses in Tomb 5 as

\textsuperscript{523} The Minneapolis Institute of Arts says there is a pair of dragons and a pair of phoineses. The two descending creatures do look like dragons; however, one has rings on its neck, so it may be a tiger. As for the birds, their hybrid appearance clearly means they are not phoineses. For a more detailed look see: http://www.artsmia.org/viewer/detail.php?v=12&id=740 (2 Aug. 2009).
\textsuperscript{524} He died at the age of 18. (Fong Antecedents, 157 note 66.)
representing the cosmic pillars, perhaps in conjunction with the corner beasts below, fits with already known cosmological models.

**CONCLUSION**

Thus, the lotus flowers painted under the corbels in Five Helmets Tomb 5 can be interpreted as having many layers of meaning. One possible meaning for the lotus works in tandem with the dragon border. Since the Han, open lotus blossoms had decorated architecture and tombs as a symbol for water. After the introduction of the concept of the paradisiacal Buddhist Pure Land, lotuses were also used to delineate a liminal boundary one’s soul had to cross in order to be reborn in paradise. These two symbolic meanings appear to have been appropriated in sixth-century images of the immortal mountain. Together the depiction of dragons and lotuses can be interpreted as creating a watery base for the immortal realm. This interpretation does not exclude another possible meaning for the four lotuses as depictions of cosmic pillars. In Han cosmology, four pillars were thought to hold up the sky, a concept that appeared on mirrors that diagram the universe. The pictorial trope used to portray these four pillars appears to have evolved into lotus motifs in the sixth century. Therefore, the lotuses in Tomb 5 may represent a watery boundary for the land of the immortals and/or the four cosmic pillars that hold up the heavens where the immortals reside.
3.5.2 Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4: Coiling Dragons

Similar to the lotus paintings under the corbels in Five Helmets Tomb 5, the yellow dragons painted in the triangular spaces created by the ceiling structure in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb (fig.253) and Five Helmets Tomb 4 (fig.254) can be interpreted as having many layers of meaning. As already discussed, the dragon was a symbol of water. Because of that association, coiling dragons often appear on ceilings in Chinese architecture. Similar to the lotus, they were thought to prevent fire.\textsuperscript{525} Coiling dragons were also auspicious omens; they brought rain and good fortune. Yellow dragons\textsuperscript{526} also were known to bring good fortune. Additionally, dragons were intermediaries between heaven and earth. They were commonly used as mounts by immortals and assisted the deceased to ascend to the immortal realm. In Goguryeo, there appears to have been a tradition linking the Yellow Dragon in particular with assisting in ascension. I have already discussed dragons association with water in previous sections. Therefore, in this section I shall focus on coiling dragons and yellow dragons as auspicious omens and intermediaries between heaven and earth.

Coiling and Yellow Dragons As Auspicious Signs

Coiling dragons were popular motifs on mirrors as far back as the Eastern Han, and they gained in popularity during the Sui and Tang periods. These mirrors appear to have auspicious and protective functions. One example from the Chinese Three


\textsuperscript{526} Here, I shall discuss non-specific “yellow dragons.” These dragons often overlap with the “Yellow Dragon” of the Five Spirits, but the meaning of multiple yellow dragons in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 diverges slightly from the Five Phases symbol.
Kingdoms period has a coiling dragon trying to grasp a coin in its mouth (fig. 255).\textsuperscript{527} This mirror does not have an inscription, but the inclusion of a coin may imply good wishes for wealth and prosperity. In later periods, mirrors decorated with dragons were thought to have great powers. In 719, a Daoist priest at the behest of Tang Emperor Xuanzong invoked a dragon that decorated a mirror to come to life and end a drought by bringing rain. A similar story tells of the emperor painting dragons on the walls of a hall near the palace’s Dragon Pond, after which a dragon appeared and rain came, ending the drought.\textsuperscript{528} The dragon decoration was considered powerful and able to avert natural disasters such as drought. The dragons was also thought to provide the holder with deep insight into his own nature.\textsuperscript{529} Some eighth-century mirrors with coiling dragons are identified as “Thousand Autumn Mirrors;” these mirrors were given as favors at the Thousand Autumn Festival celebrating Xuanzong’s birthday (fig. 256).\textsuperscript{530} The invocation of the term “Thousand Autumns” was thought to bring longevity.

Inscriptions on mirrors that do not display coiling dragons also allude to coiling dragons bringing auspiciousness. One such example of an inscription often found on mirrors dated to the Sui describes a dragon or dragons coiling around “five auspicious

\textsuperscript{527} Ju-hsi Chou, 57.
\textsuperscript{528} Eugene Wang “Mirrors, Moon, and Memory,” 44.
\textsuperscript{529} A mirror from the Sui now located in the Palace Museum in Beijing bears an inscription related to the concept of reflecting one’s own nature. It reads “赏得秦王镜，判不惜千金，非关欲照胆，特是自明心。” (Gugong bowuyuan, 93.) “I received a gift: the mirror of the King of Qin. For this, I would have paid willingly a thousand teals of silver. In no way would I use it to unveil your hidden desires. Verily, I only wish to lay bare my own heart.” (Ju-hsi Chou, 62-63.) This translation is from an identical inscription found on a mirror with four animals located in the Cleveland Museum of Art. While the inscription on the coiling dragon mirror does appear to be generic, it relates to a later story from the Tang. In 736, on the occasion of Xuanzong’s birthday, an official named Zhang Jiuling gave the emperor a treatise called “Record of the Thousand-Autumn Bronze Mirror.” In it he begged the emperor to use a mirror to reflect on his nature and the deeds of past dynasties and learn from them. Zhang Jiuling’s tomb had a coiling dragon mirror in it. (Eugene Wang “Mirrors, Moon, and Memory,” 46-47; Ju-hsi Chou, 78.)
\textsuperscript{530} Eugene Wang “Mirrors, Moon, and Memory,” 45-46; Ju-hsi Chou, 74 and 78.
Two mirrors with this inscription, one located in the Palace Museum and one found in the Cleveland Museum of Art, are decorated with the Four Spirits in the so-called Sui or renshou style. While coiling dragons do not decorate the mirrors’ surfaces, the inscription does invoke the image of a coiling dragon in the viewer’s mind.

While the general coiling dragon was thought to have protective and auspicious abilities, yellow dragons were even more favorable. Textual sources from the Shiji and the Hou Hanshu report sightings of a yellow dragon as a good omen. The Shiji states that “The Yellow Emperor ruled by the element earth, therefore a Yellow Dragon and Earth Worm appeared.” The Shiji and Hanshu state that in the fifteenth year of Han Emperor Wen, a yellow dragon appeared. Emperor Wen interpreted it as a good omen and performed sacrifices to the Emperors of the Five Directions. These reports still ally the Yellow Dragon with the Five Phases and the element of earth, but that was not always the case. The Yellow Dragon also appears as an omen in the Eastern Han Wu Family Shrine.

531 五瑞 (C: wurui; K: oseo.) Ju-hsi Chou translates this as “jade ring” because wurui literally refers to five jade rings given to officials. The whole inscription reads: “仙山并照, 智水齊名, 花朝艷采, 月夜流水, 龍盤五瑞, 鴛舞雙情, 傳聞仁壽, 始驗銃兵。” (Gugong bowuyuan, 99; Ju-hsi Chou, 62.) “The Immortal Mountains together are reflected. It has the wise river’s same fame. Flowers in the morning have gorgeous colors. The moon at night flows like water. Dragons coil around the five auspicious things. Luan birds dance in pairs with affection. It is said that the Renshou period finally witnessed the melting down of weapons.” The last line is somewhat confusing. The “melting down of weapons” indicates period of peace. (Victor Mair, e-mail to author, 5 Nov. 2009.) Ju-hsi Chou translates it as “It is said the Renshou era, was when the war began to end.” (Ju-hsi Chou, 62.) Toru Nakano has a strikingly different translation for what appears to be a similar inscription: “This mirror shines as brightly as the sagely mountains and sheds light as pure as the spring waters in Buddha’s paradise. The colours of morning flowers will show vividly and the pale light of the moon will purify you. Adorned with the likeness of the dragon and the phoenix, your love will shine deeply. When the great mirror of the Three Kingdoms palace was cast, they say weapons were melted down to provide the metal. Peace reigns over our land.” (Toru Nakano, “Ancient Chinese Bronze Mirrors,” 41.)


located in Shandong. In the Wu Family Shrine illustration, the connection between the
Yellow Dragon and the element earth is not stated. The cartouche in a sideways manner
says that a Yellow Dragon will appear when a ruler provides for his people.\textsuperscript{534} This
reference alludes to the favor a ruler will receive if he rules beneficently.

Accounts of the Yellow Dragon appear elsewhere on the Korean Peninsula as
well. The \textit{Samguk sagi} and the \textit{Samguk yusa} say that in the fourteenth year of the Silla
King Jinheung 順興王 (553), a yellow dragon appeared at the building site of a new
palace; because of the creature’s sighting, the plans were changed, making the palace into
a monastery named Hwangnyong-sa or Yellow (or Imperial) Dragon Monastery.\textsuperscript{535} The
yellow dragon was thought to be protective. The link between sighting a yellow dragon
and building a Buddhist monastery appears to demonstrate a religious syncretism
between popular religion and Buddhism during its early acceptance in Silla. The
connection between the Yellow Dragon Monastery and dragon sightings continued. The
\textit{Samguk yusa} recounts that during the reign of Queen Seondeok (善德女王 r.632-47) a
monk named Jajang 慈藏 went to study in China. During his search for enlightenment, a
guardian spirit of the dharma emerged as he passed lake Taihe. The guardian told Jajang
his son was the dragon who protected the dharma at the Yellow/Imperial Dragon
Monastery. The guardian ordered Jajang to build a nine-story wooden stupa that would
cause the surrender of Silla’s enemies and bring peace to his country. The recount goes

\textsuperscript{534} Cary, et.al. \textit{Recarving}, 181; “不漉池如漁，則黃龍淤於池。” “The Yellow Dragon. It swims in a
pond when [a ruler] does not dry up the pond to fish.” (Wu Hung \textit{Wu Liang Shrine}, 237.)
\textsuperscript{535} Park Youngbok, “The Monastery Hwangnyongsa and Buddhism in the Early Silla Period,” Transmitting
the \textit{Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan}. (New York: Harry N. Abrams , 2003):
141. “十四年，春二月，王命所司，築新宮於月城東，黃龍見其地。王疑之，改為佛寺，賜號曰皇龍。” (Kim Busik \textit{Samguk sagi (sang)}, 100-101.)
on to say that the pagoda was indeed built after Jajang’s return and the peninsula was soon unified.\(^{536}\) Therefore, the dragon’s appearance had an auspicious outcome.

As seen above in both pictorial and literary sources, coiling and yellow dragons had protective and auspicious meanings, something that would have been desired in tomb decoration. The Goguryeo people likely shared their neighbors' views of these dragons, and the cascade of yellow dragons painted in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 4 probably would have brought protection and good fortune. While the previous examples come from outside Goguryeo, they reflect beliefs held about these creatures in East Asia during the time of the Ji'an tombs' construction. Other examples, including records from Goguryeo, depict an additional function of dragons as immortal mounts. This reflects another long held tradition of dragons traveling between heaven and earth.

**Dragons as Intermediaries Between Heaven and Earth**

The coiling dragons in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 may have been designed to assist the occupant. Rather than symbolizing a static barrier or structural support similar to the lotuses in Tomb 5, the cascade of coiling dragons appears to have been painted in order to actively participate in the deceased’s ascension. Dragons were well known intermediaries between heaven and earth and were often used as immortal mounts.

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A dragon assisting a person’s ascension was a frequent motif in Han funerary arts.\(^{537}\) One of the earliest possible depictions of ascension on a dragon is a painting found in a Warring States tomb from the state of Chu. This painting on silk discovered in Changsha, Hunan, depicts a man hovering above back of an abstracted dragon (fig.257). It is thought to show a man riding a dragon to heaven. The dragon has a long curved body, and its limbs are abstracted swirls. It has a stunted head and a gaping mouth. In this depiction, the man rides the dragon as though it is a boat. They are moving through the water as demonstrated by the fish below the dragon. In the report, it was postulated that he is moving to the immortal realm, which is always in water.\(^{538}\) A similar abstract dragon is stamped on a Western Han tomb tile found near Luoyang. This dragon has a male rider armed with a shield and sword placed in the curve of its back.\(^{539}\) This style dragon may show the transition from the abstract dragon imagery found in the pre-Han periods to the more zoomorphic images that developed in the Han.

Depictions of ascension or travel on dragons continued to appear in the Eastern Han. The Wu Family Shrines 1 and 2 in Shandong depict scenes of immortals riding dragons or riding dragon-drawn chariots (fig.258). The dragon images in the Wu Family Shrines have a stouter, more animal-like appearance than those found in the earlier Han examples. From their placement on the ceiling slabs which is the immortal realm these images can be tied to ascension. It is believed that the deceased is depicted on his

\(^{537}\) Dragon-like creatures appeared on burial objects predating the Han, but these dragons were stylistically dissimilar to the serpentine images that developed in the Han.


\(^{539}\) Cary Liu Recarving, 252-4.
journey in a horse drawn carriage. The immortals riding dragons are traveling with the deceased.

Riders persisted in ascending to the realm of the immortals in the post-Han period and expanded beyond the territory of China proper.\textsuperscript{540} While the dragon riders continued to appear in funerary contexts, the concept crossed over into Buddhist art as well. A dragon rider appears on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 in Dunhuang dated to the Western Wei (fig.259). This scene is in a Buddhist cave temple, but it depicts a scene from the immortal realm. In Yungang Cave 38, a series of dragon riders circle a central point on the ceiling. In this case it shows ascension towards the Buddhist Pure Land (fig.260).\textsuperscript{541} Depictions of dragon riders were more common in the funerary arts of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, but the two examples from Buddhist cave temples show how widespread the notion of using dragons for ascension had become in the sixth century.

While depictions of figures riding dragons emphasized the concept of dragons assisting one’s ascension, the depictions of the coiling dragons on the ceilings of Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 4 do not have riders. They appear as though they descend towards where the tomb occupants would have lain, therefore leading one to conclude they were there to assist the deceased. This type of descending dragon was popular in the post-Han period, both in the funerary arts and in Buddhist art of the period.

\textsuperscript{540} Dragon riders are discussed in more detail in the “Riding Figures” section.
\textsuperscript{541} “騰神昇昇浄土.” In the dedicating inscription, a family who has lost a son wishes for him to ascend to the Pure Land. The figure of the deceased is most likely shown ascending on an elephant. The dragon riders are attendants. (Eugene Wang “Grotto-Shrine as Chronotope,” 283.)
The Ji’an coiling yellow dragons are painted on horizontal surfaces under the ceiling corbels. This configuration is made possible by the use of corbelling to create the *lanterndecke* ceilings used in Goguryeo tomb construction. In his 1980 article, Li Dianfu drew parallels between the coiling dragons on the undersides of the ceiling corbels in Five Helmets Tomb 4 and two dragons found on the west face of the central pillar of Gongxian Cave 3 (fig.261). While the viewer looks up at the dragons in the two Goguryeo tombs, the dragons in Gongxian are depicted vertically with their heads down. Remarkably, side by side, the dragons have nearly identical poses with their long, sinewy backs arched and their claws outstretched. The Gongxian descending dragon is a type that is common in the post-Han period, both in funerary and religious settings. A similar type of descending dragon is also found in the Guyang Cave at Longmen (fig.262).

Descending dragons are found in both the north and south in the post-Han funerary arts. One early example is on a molded brick from an Eastern Jin tomb, dated 398 CE, in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu (fig.263). This brick depicts a descending dragon with its back arched so that its body forms a backward C shape. It is confined to the rectangular space of the brick. While this dragon is presented in a different medium, it is similar to the coiling Yellow Dragons found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4. They all have serpentine bodies with outstretched legs, and they all have attenuated heads with large gaping mouths and horns. The dragons also all have three claws and flame-like wings emanating from their shoulders.

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542 Li Dianfu “Ji’an Gaogouli mu yanjiu,” 182-3; Henan sheng wenwu yangjiusuo Zhongguo shiku: Gongxian, 228.
543 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 43.
545 Kim Jin-soon, 99.
The Zhenjiang dragon is similar to the descending dragons portrayed on a tomb brick in a Southern Dynasty tomb in Dengxian, Henan (fig.264-265). One of the Dengxian bricks shows a pair of descending dragons. The Dengxian dragons have arched backs, but their appearance is less circular than the Ji’an ceiling dragons or the dragon in Zhenjiang. The Dengxian dragons are physically more substantial and less serpentine. However, like the Ji’an dragons, careful attention was paid to depicting each individual scale. The Dengxian dragons also have long attenuated heads with horns, gaping mouths, and three claws. They also have flame-like wings and appear to fly among swirling clouds. Nearly identical descending dragons are found on Xiao Hong’s stele in Nanjing dated 526.546

The above examples demonstrate the popularity of the descending dragon in the southern areas of China in the post-Han period. These areas were thought to be a repository for Han culture. These images likely show a continuation and advancement of the Han concept of dragon intermediaries between the heavens and earth.

Descending dragons are also found on Northern Dynasty funerary objects. The Northern Wei epitaph cover belonging to Yuan Mi displays such dragons (or perhaps a dragon and a tiger). This epitaph cover dates to 526 and is roughly contemporary to Xiao Hong’s stele. The top of the epitaph cover depicts two dragons flying among clouds. Like the dragons from the Dengxian brick and Xiao Hong’s stele, these dragons are more arched rather than coiling like the Ji’an dragons. However, similar to the Ji’an depictions, the Yuan Mi dragons would have been presented horizontally, so their

546 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 43.
“descending” would have been inferred. The Yuan Mi dragons are stockier yet more stylized than their southern counterparts. Scrolling adornments radiate from the dragons’ bodies, causing confusion in regard to discerning their limbs. The dragons also have slight stunted snouts, which contrast with the southern and the Ji’an examples.

While the yellow dragons in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 4 appear as though they may be descending toward the deceased, this does not preclude them from assisting with the deceased’s ascension. The dragons would have to come down to the occupants before leading them back up to the realm of the immortals. The concept of a yellow dragon descending to help with ascent is found in native Goguryeo mythology.

The dragons in the two Goguryeo tombs appear to replicate in miniature the coiling Yellow Dragon found on the ceiling capping stone. As already mentioned in the Four Spirits section, a yellow dragon had a special function in Goguryeo mythology, assisting the founder, Jumong, to heaven. It is recorded on the fifth-century Gwanggaeto, or Haotaiwang, Stele that Jumong “[ritually] summoned the Yellow Dragon to come down and ‘meet the king.’ The King was on the hill east of Cholbon, and the Yellow Dragon took him on its back and ascended to Heaven.” As shown above, the concept of ascending to heaven with the assistance of a dragon dates back at least as far

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547 I cannot help but compare the composition of the descending yellow dragons to the swift raigō of late twelfth century Japan. In those Buddhist paintings, Amida and a number of bodhisattva come down to meet the deceased and take him or her to the Pure Land. (For more explanation of raigō and Japanese pictures of transcendence see: Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, “Visions of a Transcendent Realm: Pure Land Images in the Cleveland Museum of Art,” The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art vol.78, no.7 [1991]: 284-291.) It seems as though a similar concept of “welcoming descent” is utilized in the Goguryeo paintings of descending dragons.

548 On the Gwanggaeto Stele he is called 鄭牟 (C: Zoumou, K: Chumo.) (Courant insert.)

549 Peter Lee Sources of Korean Tradition, 24. “因遣黃龍來下迎王，王於忽本東岡，黃龍負昇天。” (Courant insert.)
as the Han in China and continued into the Northern and Southern Dynasties. The story of Jumong’s ascension with the assistance of a dragon could be connected to similar Chinese myths. For example, according to the *Shiji*, at the end of his life the Yellow Emperor rode a dragon into heaven. The recount is similar to that of Jumong’s ascension, and it is possible that the idea of ascension with a dragon was adopted from China.

It is important to note the location of the text discussing Jumong’s ascension. This story was carved into the face of the Gwanggaeto (Haotaiwang) Stele, a huge stone monument located a short distance from the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The stele is so close to the tombs that one can practically see it from them. This means that the tomb builders would have known this story. Therefore, one can only assume the occupants chose to depict yellow dragons with this specific reference in mind. Yellow dragons descending to help the occupants enter the realm of the immortals appear to have been a concept particular to Goguryeo and more specifically the Ji’an region.

**CONCLUSION**

Similar to the lotuses found in Five Helmets Tomb 5, the coiling dragons painted under the ceiling corbels in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 have multiple meanings. In addition to their association with water, which was previously discussed, coiling dragons had further connotations that illustrate their functions within the Ji’an tombs. Going back as far as the Han dynasty, coiling dragons

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550 Yang Lihua, 144.

were regarded as auspicious. These beliefs were represented in textual sources as well as pictorial sources such as mirrors. The coiling dragons in the Ji'an Four Spirits tombs also functioned as intermediaries between heaven and earth. In this role, the dragons assisted the deceased on their ascension to heaven. For the Goguryeo people, yellow dragons in particular were associated with this role.

3.5.3 Decoration in the Triangular Spaces Under the Corbels Conclusion

The triangular spaces created under the ceiling corbels in the Five Helmets Tomb 5 and the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 are decorated in vastly different ways. The lotuses that occupy the four spaces under the corbels in Tomb 5 have a passive role in the tomb. They are interpreted as symbolizing water similar to the dragon border below. In the sixth century, lotus ponds were depicted as a liminal boundary to the Buddhist Pure Land, a concept that was carried over into non-Buddhist tombs such as Jinpa-ri Tomb 4. Acting as water and a threshold to another realm, the Tomb 5 lotuses can be interpreted as combining with the entwined dragons below to create a watery base one must cross through in order to reach the immortal mountain. In another interpretation, I examined the four lotuses’ placement in the tomb. Comparing their location in the four corners of the tomb, it appears as though they are analogous to representations of the four sky pillars found in cosmological diagrams, such as those found on mirrors and stone epitaphs. The placement of the lotuses cum cosmic pillars facilitates the diagramming of the universe in Tomb 5’s painting program. The use of pillars in the Goguryeo painting echoes the cosmology that developed in the Han. This
cosmology continued to evolve in the sixth century with the appropriation of Buddhist motifs, which is seen in Five Helmets Tomb 5.

The dragon motifs in the triangular spaces in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4 have a more active role. As dragon images, they can also be associated with water, like the lotus. Therefore, they can be interpreted as protective images. Dragons, both coiling and yellow, also have auspicious connotations. As seen from mirror inscriptions and other funerary art works, even after death good fortune was sought after for one’s descendants and for one’s life in the next realm. However, the energetic movement of a cascade of yellow dragons descending towards the occupants connotes an additional meaning. Dragons had long been used as mounts for the immortals. They assisted people on their ascension. This function was adopted by the Goguryeo, as seen by the story of Jumong mounting a yellow dragon to ascend to heaven, a story that was recounted in fist sized characters not more than a stone’s throw away from the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 4. It appears as though the descending yellow dragons in the two Ji’an Four Spirits tombs had special meaning for the Goguryeo occupants. The yellow dragons are descending to assist the occupants to heaven much in the same way one came down to assist their first king.

While the motifs in the triangular spaces in the three tombs may vary, they do have a common thread. The tradition of the lotus as water or cosmic pillars can ultimately be traced to beliefs that developed in the Han and before, as can the dragon motifs as auspicious signs or immortal mounts. The lotus and dragon motifs can be
interpreted as later evolutions, both sixth century and Goguryeo, of ideas developed in the Han.

3.6 Mythological Figures

On the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are a series of figures that can be linked to Chinese mythology. These figures are not found in any other Goguryeo tomb, making them a regional variation. Stylistically, the paintings belong to the sixth or early seventh century, but the subject matter is rooted in Han China. The compositional organization used to depict the mythological figures in the three Ji’an tombs parallels what is often seen in the Eastern Han, a type Wu Hung called the “cataloguing style” when discussing the Wu Family Shrines.\(^{552}\) The mythological figures in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are painted in pairs, but beyond the pairings the images are isolated and do not interact with one another. They read almost as a list of individual or paired characters. The paintings of mythological figures, both the subject matter and method of portrayal, harken back to a period of antiquity, though it is not to the ancient times of the Goguryeo.

The figures located on the first and second ceiling layers in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the first ceiling layer of Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 appear to be connected to the mythological history of China. The figures are consistently identified as culture bearers and ancient rulers related to the Chinese concept of the development of its civilization. Several of the figures are identified as the ancient Three Sovereigns or

\(^{552}\) Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine*, 84-5. The largest difference between the style of the Han compositions and that of the Ji’an tombs is lack of identifying texts in the Goguryeo tombs.
Sanhuang 三皇 and Five Emperors or Wudi 五帝 of China. \(^{553}\) Below I discuss each figure and its likely identity and significance.

### 3.6.1 FUXI AND NÜWA

Half-dragon, half-human figures are painted on the east panel of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the north corner of Tomb 4, and the northeast panel of Tomb 5 (fig.266-271). One is male and the other is female, and they hold the sun and the moon respectively. They are identified as Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧, \(^{554}\) the Chinese primogenitors of the people. Together they can also be interpreted as the first of the ancient Three Sovereigns. In textual sources Fuxi is generally considered to be the first of the Three Sovereigns, but in the visual arts Fuxi and Nüwa are painted together. These ancient rulers appear in all three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. They do not, however, appear in any other known Goguryeo tombs with murals. Depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa became popular in the Han dynasty and continued to appear in the post-Han period. Of the mythological figures in the three Ji’an tombs, Fuxi and Nüwa are the ones most commonly found elsewhere in contemporary China.

\(^{553}\) Below I discuss two types of Five Emperors, which can be considered the “historical” Five Emperors and the Five Emperors of the Five Phases. While there is overlap between the two groups and they are both referred to as the “Five Emperors,” they are somewhat distinct concepts. Therefore, I use the terms “Five Emperors of Antiquity” for the historical group and “Five Emperors of the Five Phases” to refer to the other in an attempt to distinguish the two.

\(^{554}\) Kim Jin-soon, 107; Li Dianfu Gaogouli minzu, 149; Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 43; Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 37-38. However, Jeon sometimes insists on their identities as Sun and Moon deities not related to Fuxi and Nüwa. (Jeon Dreams of the Living, 102.)
DESCRIPTION

In all three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the hybrid figures are positioned within the ceiling compositions as pairs. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and in the Five Helmets Tomb 5, the two figures are painted on the same panel, facing each other. In Five Helmets Tomb 4, they are painted on different panels but in the same corner, also facing one another. In all three tombs, the figures are human from the waist up and dragon from the waist down. All hold either the sun with the crow or the moon with the toad lifted over their heads. Their dragon legs are stretched out as though running, and they wear a combination of feather-garments and short robes. They have long hair and delicate faces. The figures holding the moon are female, and those holding the sun appear to be male.

FUXI AND NÜWA IN CHINA

Fuxi and Nüwa are important deities and legendary rulers in the mythology of China. Nüwa is the supreme female deity in Chinese mythology. She is considered to be the primogenitor of the human race, sculpting people from yellow earth,\(^{555}\) as well as the powerful protector who saved the world by repairing the sky.\(^{556}\) Fuxi—who by the Han dynasty texts had become Nüwa’s consort\(^{557}\)—was the first sage king who taught humans

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\(^{555}\) “女媧搏黃土作人” from Taiping yulan, fascicle 18. (Yuan Ke Gu shenhua xuanshi. [Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1979]: 20.) Translation: “Nüwa beat the yellow earth to make people.”

\(^{556}\) Yuan Ke Gu shenhua, 16-22; Yang Lihua 170-176.

\(^{557}\) They were siblings as well as husband and wife. (Yuan Ke Gu shenhua, 42-44; Rawson Creating Universes, 261.)
how to hunt and fish and created writing and the trigrams. In some accounts he and Nüwa created humanity together.⁵⁵⁸

In Han art they most often appear as half-human, half serpent. They often appear with the sun and the moon and with the architectural tools of the carpenter’s square and compass. Two unusual features of the Ji’an Fuxi and Nüwa are often noted, sometimes in order to disassociate them from their Chinese roots.⁵⁵⁹ The Fuxi and Nüwa in the three Ji’an tombs have dragon legs instead of serpent tails, and they do not hold their architectural tools. While the Ji’an representations are not the standard, as seen below, they are not completely atypical.

**Han**

In the Han, representations of Fuxi and Nüwa gained popularity in the funerary arts. Both can be found on the ceiling of the Western Han tomb of Bu Qianqiu found near Luoyang (fig.272-273). The serpent-tailed Fuxi and Nüwa are placed on opposite ends of the ceiling. They lack the building tools. They do not hold the sun and the moon, but they are placed next to those celestial orbs implying their connection. Similar images also appear in the in a late Western Han or Wang Mang interregnum era tomb in the town of Cijian near Luoyang (fig.274-274).⁵⁶⁰ An even more noteworthy comparison between the Goguryeo Ji’an Four Spirits tombs’ images and those from early China is found in the carved images of Fuxi and Nüwa on the Baozishan 寶子山 sarcophagus from Sichuan.

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⁵⁵⁸ Yuan Ke *Gu shenhua*, 62; Yang Lihua, 120-121.
⁵⁵⁹ Jeon *Dreams of the Living*, 102.
dated to the mid-to-late Eastern Han (fig.276).\textsuperscript{561} Here the traditionally serpent-tailed figures hold the sun and moon high above their heads in a manner similar those in the Ji’an Goguryeo tombs; again, the serpentine primogenitors also lack the architectural tools.\textsuperscript{562}

During the Eastern Han, one also sees depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa with dragon bodies. Generally, the two spirits are depicted with the bodies of serpents, but in the three Ji’an tombs they have legs with claws attached to their serpentine bodies. While this feature is unusual in Chinese representations, it is by no means nonexistent. An example of similar images is found on a tomb tile from Eastern Han Sichuan (fig.277). Here Fuxi and Nüwa hold tools for creation—possibly a carpenter’s square and compass—as well as the sun and the moon.\textsuperscript{563} Similar to the figures in Tomb 4, their scaly tails have clawed legs positioned as if in motion; they prop the sun and moon above their heads, and inside these celestial bodies are the crow and the toad. The representations in both locations also wear similar garments: the feathered robes of the immortals.

For the purposes of understanding the Ji’an tomb ceiling paintings, the most notable example of the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa appears in the Eastern Han Wu Family Shrine 3 (fig.278). The west wall of the Wu Family Shrine 3 depicts images of the ancient Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors, beginning with the depiction of

\textsuperscript{561} Lim, 156.
\textsuperscript{562} The lack of the identifying architectural tools is one piece of evidence sometimes used to argue that the Ji’an figures are sun and moon deities rather than Fuxi and Nüwa. (Jeon \textit{Dreams of the Living}, 102.) However, in Han depictions the figures often appear without these tools. Their nearly identical postures (see figs.276 and 277) and the consistent depiction of the sun and moon alongside the figures with and without tools is evidence in favor of them being Fuxi and Nüwa.
\textsuperscript{563} Rawson “Creating Universes,” 296.
Fuxi and Nüwa. The Wu Family Shrine depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa is stylistically divergent from those found in the Ji’an tombs. The heavy, static image shows Fuxi and Nüwa with their tails intertwined, and Fuxi holds a carpenter’s square. Between Fuxi and Nüwa hangs a child. The inscription found in the shrine solely discusses Fuxi, signifying that in this instance he is depicted as an Ancient Sovereign, not as the consort to Nüwa. In the Wu Family Shrine 3, Nüwa is relegated to the role of the consort. The same could be said of the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Ji’an tombs.

The comparison of the Wu Family Shrines and the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs paintings of mythological figures is noteworthy. In the Wu Family Shrine, one finds Fuxi and Nüwa together representing the first of the Three Sovereigns. They are then followed by two Sovereigns and the Five Emperors. While the depictions of the mythological rulers in the three Ji’an tombs are not as clear cut and regimented as the Wu Family Shrine 3 depictions, they do appear to follow a similar structure. The parallels between Han examples such as the Wu Family Shrines and the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs ceilings will become more evident as the remaining Ji’an figures are discussed.

**Northern and Southern Dynasties**

While illustrations of the ancient Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors and other mythical culture bearers appear to have been less prevalent in the post-Han period,
images of Fuxi and Nüwa continued to be fashionable. For example, Fuxi and Nüwa are found in the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 in Dunhuang, dated to the Western Wei (535-557). The Dunhuang depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa are sixth-century paintings roughly contemporary with the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The majority of materials depicting Fuxi and Nüwa from the Northern and Southern Dynasties are carved into stone, so a painted example is an important comparison with the Goguryeo murals. Adding to importance of the example of Fuxi and Nüwa in Cave 285 is Dunhuang’s importance as a location for Buddhist pilgrims. Pilgrims and envoys from Goguryeo and the Korean peninsula traveled through this western region and have been documented visiting important Buddhist worship sites. It is possible Goguryeo visitors saw those very paintings.

Many similarities occur between the depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa found in the Ji’an Spirits tombs and those found in Mogao Cave 285 in Dunhuang. The hybrid figures appear on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 among a myriad of other creatures and mythological characters such as the Queen Mother of the West. Similar to the paintings in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, Fuxi and Nüwa in Cave 285 are half-human and half-dragon with their legs stretched out as though running. They also hold the sun and the

564 While depictions of the mythological Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors are thus far lacking in Northern and Southern Dynasties art, there are abundant depictions of Confucian filial piety scenes found in the funerary arts, often in the Northern Dynasties. These filial piety scenes can also be traced to Han funerary traditions. Examples of Northern Dynasty filial piety scenes can be found on the Northern Wei Guyuan sarcophagus (Guyuan xian wenwu gongzuozhan, 48-56), the 524 CE Yuan Mi sarcophagus in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (found at http://www.artsmia.org/viewer/detail.php?v=2&id=738 [24 Aug 2009]), and the 525 CE sarcophagus with filial piety scenes at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City (found at http://www.nelson-atkins.org/art/CollectionDatabase.cfm?id=18383&theme=China [24 Aug 2009]).

565 A mural painting at the Sogdian Afrasiab palace in Samarkand, Uzbekistan depicts Goguryeo envoys, and a painting at Binglingsi depicts what have been ided as Korean (possibly Goguryeo) pilgrims. See figs. 5 and 6.
moon. The Cave 285 figures wear garments that flare out behind them and could be interpreted as feathered garments. The most obvious difference between the figures in the three Ji’an tombs and those in Mogao Cave 285 is that the Dunhuang figures hold tools in their hands, which indisputably identifies them as Fuxi and Nüwa. Looking at nearby tombs from the Wei and Jin periods, it appears that depicting dragon-bodied Fuxi and Nüwa grew in popularity in northwest China in the post-Han period. A similar example is found in Foyemiaowan Tomb 1 (fig.280).566

In the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Fuxi and Nüwa also appeared in the funerary arts. Notably, appearances of the Chinese primogenitors appear more frequently in Northern Dynasty tombs, often without their building tools. For example, the two hybrid figures appear without their architectural tools in the Northern Wei Tomb 7 in Shaling near Datong (fig.281). This tomb is dated by inscription to 435 and belongs to the mother of a high ranking Xianbei general.567 Another later example of Fuxi and Nüwa without architectural tools is found on the sixth century sarcophagus of Li He (fig.282), who belonged to the Northern Zhou and Sui courts.568 Fuxi and Nüwa are engraved on the sarcophagus’ cover, and similar to the figures in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, these figures have clawed feet. In the original report, Li He’s Fuxi and Nüwa bodies are described as bird-like,569 but the clawed feet are reminiscent of the dragon bodies. Again, these figures on the sarcophagus do not hold the building tools normally

566 Yin Guangming, 99.
568 Shaanxi sheng wenwu guanli wenyuanhui, 32; Karetzky “Engraved Designs,” 81.
569 “人首禽身” (Shaanxi sheng wenwu guanli wenyuanhui, 32.)
associated with the primogenitors, but they do hold orbs that are presumably the sun and the moon. The above Northern Dynasty examples demonstrate that Fuxi and Nüwa appeared in various forms throughout the sixth century, often without their typical attributes and often with feet.

**Conclusion**

Illustrations of Fuxi and Nüwa in China could have easily been encountered by the Goguryeo people. However, it does not explain why they appear in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs and not other Goguryeo tombs. To understand their appearance in those tombs one needs to view the figures in conjunction with the other mythological characters that appear on the first layer of the ceiling corbels. Similar to the depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Eastern Han Wu Family Shrine 3, in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs Fuxi and Nüwa can be understood as a starting point from which to view the remaining figures. They can be interpreted as the genesis for the mythological rulers and culture bearers that follow in the composition. This differs from the representations in sixth-century Chinese funerary depictions where they are solitary figures.

It is telling that these figures, which epitomize Chinese mythological beings, appear on the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. As seen below, the figures on the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs work together to illustrate a sinified view of the development of culture. Goguryeo had its own creation mythology, but the builders of the Ji’an tombs purposefully chose to depict the Chinese creators of people.
The remaining figures painted on the Ji’an Four Spirits tomb ceilings further support the sinified mythology.

3.6.2 Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5: Shennong and Fire Figure

In the east corner of Tomb 4 and the southeast panel of Tomb 5, there is a human with a bull’s head, next to a figure holding fire (fig.283-284). The bull-headed figure is identified as Shennong 神農, the Divine Farmer, the god who invented agriculture and the second of the ancient Three Sovereigns of China. The figure holding fire is alternately identified as Suiren 颛人, Yandi 炎帝, or Zhurong 祝融. All were creators of fire, and all are cited as ancient sovereigns in various texts.

The bull-headed figures in Tombs 4 and 5 are similar in appearance, although not identical (figs.285-286). The figure in Tomb 4 wears a pink garment. The top half looks like a closed Chinese-style robe with a yellow collar and a white tied belt. The bottom looks like short pants, and flares out behind him with the appearance of a pink feathered garment. The figure in Tomb 5 wears a similar garment, although brown rather than pink. Both figures have bare calves and wear black shoes. The figure in Tomb 5 had

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570 This figure is almost universally identified as Shennong. (Kim Jin-soon, 110; Li Dianfu Gaogouli minzu, 149; Jeon Goguryeo iyangi, 47; Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 38-39.)
571 Li Dianfu Gaogouli minzu, 149; Jeon Goguryeo iyangi, 45 and Goguryeo gobun byeokhwa, 339 (Jeon calls him Suishen 焚神). The Archaeological Team of Jilin Province’s 1984 report identifies the figure as Suiren in the English abstract. (Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 136.) In her article, Kim Jin-soon acknowledges that this figure is generally identified as Suiren. (Kim Jin-soon, 111.)
573 Kim Jin-soon, 110.
574 Of course, one cannot be certain how time has affected the pigments.
turquoise stone inlaid into his eyes, although the stones are now gone. This figure also holds what is described as a grain stalk.\textsuperscript{575}

The figures holding fire have pale, delicate facial features and long hair. In both Tombs 4 and 5, they wear long robes and seem to float over the ground (figs.287-288). They hold flames in their right hands. Similar to the depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa, the fire figure’s clothing imitates traditional Chinese dress, connecting the images to the sinified world. These delicate, ethereal figures recall descriptions of immortals found in literature. For example, Zhuangzi described immortals as beings “whose skin and flesh are like ice and snow, who is gentle as a virgin” and who “does not eat the five grains but sucks in the wind and drinks the dew.”\textsuperscript{576} The original Chinese reports are not specific as to their identities and simply call them \textit{feitian} 飛天, which are \textit{apsara} or flying heavenly beings.\textsuperscript{577}

While the bull-headed and fire figures found in the two tombs are not identical, their poses are. The positioning of the figures is reversed in the two tombs. In Tomb 4 the figures face each other; the bull-headed figure is on the right, and the fire figure is on the left. The two figures in Tomb 5 are reversed, so they face away from each other. Further, the color palettes are slightly different. Even so, the individual figures’ poses in the two tombs are nearly identical. The bull-headed figures’ heads are in the same position; their arms are outstretched, and their legs are lifted. There are superficial differences between the two, but fundamentally they are the same. The drapery of their

\textsuperscript{575} Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 128; Jilin sheng bowuguan 61, 64.
\textsuperscript{577} Jilin sheng bowuguan 61, 64
garments is almost identical, as well. The figures holding fire in Tombs 4 and 5 are also
nearly identical. They fluidly turn backwards to look at their hands as their left sleeves
flutter dramatically behind their heads. Looking at the similarities leads one to conclude
that these figures were copied from the same model. Slight variations often occur when
copying an image from another source.

The bull-headed figure and the fire figure follow the paintings of Fuxi and Nüwa,
and together they can be interpreted as illustrations of the Three Sovereigns of China.
The bull-headed figure is almost universally recognized as Shennong, the god of
agriculture. The fire figure is less unanimously identified as Suiren, Yandi, or Zhurong.
These characters appear in early Chinese literature and gained status in the Han dynasty.
Below is a discussion of their probable identifications and their meanings, both in China
and Goguryeo.

**Bull-Headed Figure: Shennong**

The human-bodied, bull-headed figures on the east corner of Tomb 4 and the
southeast panel of Tomb 5 are identified as Shennong, the god who invented agriculture
and the second of the ancient Three Sovereigns of China. In literature, Shennong is
sometimes described as having the head of a cow. However, in Han depictions of
Shennong he generally does not have cow-like features. Illustrations of Shennong are
lacking from the sixth century. There are no other examples of such figures in other

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578 He is represented in the *Wu Liang Shrine* complex Offering Shrine 3 with what appears to be horns.
Goguryeo tombs with murals, but there are numerous examples of Shennong available from the Han. The bull-headed figures in the two Goguryeo tombs closely match the descriptions of Shennong found in Chinese literature.

**Comparisons**

Shennong gained popularity during the Han dynasty in China, although his roots likely date to the Shang. His first appearances are in literary sources from the fourth through the second centuries BCE. He appears in *Mencius*, the *Lüshi chunqiu*, the *Shiji*, the *Yi Zhoushu*, the *Yijing*, the *Liji*, and the *Huainanzi*. Four out of the seven sources place Shennong as the second of the ancient Three Sovereigns after Fuxi. One places him first. However, in the pre-Han texts, Shennong has only a minor role. During the Han and later, he gained prominence.

Literary descriptions of Shennong often match the depictions found in Tombs 4 and 5. In the *Shiji* he is described as having the body of a human and the head of a cow. Clearly, the figures in the Ji’an tombs have human bodies and the horned heads

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579 There is a horned human figure in the Three-chambered Tomb, which is sometimes identified Shennong. (Jeon *Goguryeo iyagi*, 47) However, that figure holds a weapon, which means it is more likely Chi You, the god who created weapons and also had horns. (Jeon Goguryeo *In Search of its History and Culture*, 83.)


581 Birrell *Chinese Mythology* 47; Karlgren “Legends and Cults,” 207.

582 “人身牛首” Geng “Wukuifen wuhao,” 38, originally from *Shiji*, fascicle 1, *Wudi benji*.
of cattle. In Gan Bao’s fourth-century *Sou shen ji*, his first entry is Shennong. It says

The Farmer God [Shennong] thrashed every single plant with a rust colored whip. In the end he learned their characteristics—the bland, the toxic, the cool, and the hot, taking their smell and taste as a guide. He sowed the hundred grains. And so all under Heaven called him the Farmer God.  

This passage is of interest, not only because of the post-Han date of the text, but also because of what it describes. Rather than mentioning the plow that is Shennong’s attribute in the Wu Family Shrine, Gan Bao mentions a rust colored whip. In the depictions of the cow-headed figure in the two Ji’an tombs, Shennong holds what is described as a grain stalk, but it could be the whip or flail that is described here, further solidifying the image as Shennong.

While the bull-headed figures found in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 match the literary descriptions of Shennong, the visual depictions from the Han tend to be more humanistic. A clearly identified image of Shennong appears in the Wu Family Shrine complex, Shrine 3 (fig.289). The inscription accompanying him reads, “Shennong: He taught the advantage of farming; he opened up fields and cultivated cereals in order to raise up the myriad people.”

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584 "神農氏: 因宜教田，辟土種穀，以振萬民。” （Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine*, 248.) My translation is a modification of Wu Hung’s.
shown as one of the Three Sovereigns and the creator of agriculture. He wears short pants similar to those in Tombs 4 and 5, but that is where the similarities end. In the Wu Family Shrine, Shennong is depicted with the plow he invented and has the appearance of a human, not a hybrid.

Shandong is the location for another possible late Han illustration of Shennong executed in stone. One of the stone slabs flanking the entrance to the central chamber of Yi’nan Tomb 1 has several paired figures carved in relief. The two figures kneeling on the ground below overhanging tree branches are identified as Cangjie, the inventor of writing, and Shennong (fig.290). Unlike the Shennong found in the Wu Family Shrine, the figures in Yi’nan Tomb 1 wear the feather-garments of immortals. Shennong holds a plant, but there is no evidence of horns or cow-like facial features.

Shennong appeared elsewhere in Han China as well. In Sichuan, a Han stone coffin from Xinjin 新津, similar to the Yi’nan Tomb 1 carving, depicts Shennong and Cangjie (fig.291). Here, again, the figures are depicted as immortals. They are engrossed in the plants they hold. This contrasts from the humanistic depiction of Shennong the sovereign seen in the Wu Family Shrine, but they are still dissimilar from the hybrid figures found in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5.

In the post-Han period, depictions of Shennong appear to have lost their popularity, although he regained esteem in later times. While the illustrations of Shennong described above do not resemble the hybrid figures found in the Goguryeo

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585 The original report identifies the figures as Cangjie and Ju Song 沮誦, but later scholarship identifies him as Shennong. (Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 24, note 75.) The cartouche identifying Cangjie is still legible, but his partner’s is not. 586 Wu Hung “Myths and Legends,” 78.
tombs, the Tombs 4 and 5 bull-headed figures are clearly parallel Shennong as described in literary texts. They appear to follow the earlier examples of depictions of Shennong as a feather-garment wearing immortal as seen in the Yi’nan Tomb 1 and the Xinjin stone coffin. The depictions in Ji’an Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 continue Shennong’s transformation from being not only a human sovereign but to also being an immortal. In the Ji’an tombs he transcends his humanity and becomes a full blown hybrid divine being.

**Shennong Conclusion**

Shennong fits the criteria of a culture bearer and Ancient Sovereign. As the farming god he also possesses similarities to an agricultural deity worshiped in Goguryeo. The Goguryeo section of the *Hou Hanshu* records that on the tenth month the Goguryeo people met to worship Sheji 神稷, God of Land and Grain, along with other spirits.\(^{587}\) Shennong is traditionally tied to drought, fire, and rain, as well as other agricultural elements,\(^{588}\) and Geng Tiehua associates the pairing of the bull-headed figure and figure holding fire as representations of slash and burn agriculture.\(^{589}\) Although not

\(^{587}\) *Hou Hanshu*, fascicle 85 “好祠鬼神, 社稷, 騎星。以十月祭天大會, 名曰東盟。 其國東有大穴, 翳神, 亦以十月迎而祭之。” (Fan Ye (398–445). *Hou Hanshu*. Ed.Xu Jialu in *Ershisi shi quanyi* vol. 7. [Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 2004].) “[Goguryeo] had proper ancestral temples dedicated to the ghosts and spirits, the God of Grain and the Ling star. And on the tenth month they worshipped heaven, held a big meeting, and called it the Dongmeng [Eastern Alliance, K: Dongmaeng]. In the country’s east there was a large cave, there they called to Suishen, also on the tenth month they gathered and worshipped it.” Instead of 燒, Li Dianfu uses “Fire Driller” 燒 and states Suishen was important because he brought people fire. (Li Dianfu *Dongbei kaogu*, 305.) This would mean Goguryeo’s Suishen would be parallel to Suiren. Sui 燒 generally appears in *Hou Hanshu* texts, which appears to negate Li Dianfu’s assertion, however the use of the clothing radical instead of the fire radical is likely an error. (Victor Mair, e-mail to author, 5 Nov. 2009.)

\(^{588}\) Henricks, 103.

\(^{589}\) Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.
much is known about the Goguryeo deity Sheji, it was related to farming, similar to Shennong, which demonstrates that the Goguryeo people already had a foundation for worshipping agriculture.

The bull-headed figure in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 can be interpreted as having several layers of meaning. As shown above, he is a culture bearing deity who brought agriculture to the people. He is also one of the first legendary rulers of China. He often followed Fuxi as the second of the Three Sovereigns. Furthermore, at the most fundamental level, the depiction of Shennong in Tombs 4 and 5 completes changes observed in the Han depictions when Shennong became an immortal. In the Wu Family Shrine depiction, he is shown as a human ancient sovereign. In the Yi’nan Tomb 1 and Xinjin depictions, Shennong wears feather-garments which identify him as an immortal but one who still retains some of his humanity. In the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs, as a hybrid Shennong completely transcends humanity; he is an immortal living in the realm of the immortals.

**Fire Figure**

The figures holding fire that are paired with Shennong are identified alternately as Suiren 燃人, Yandi 炎帝 or Zhurong 灶融, depending on the source. All three are considered fire deities in China, and each is sometimes considered a legendary ruler. Considered together with Shennong, it is thought perhaps they work in tandem as

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590 See notes above.
agricultural deities. All three identifications for the fire figures are plausible, so each will be investigated.

**Suiren**

Li Dianfu and Jeon Ho-tae identify the fire figure as Suiren, literally “Flint Man,” legendary creator of fire. Suiren is also often considered one of the Three Sovereigns.

The *Baihu tong* 白虎通, *Qian fu lun* 潛夫論 and *Shangshu dazhuan* 尚書大傳 list the Three Sovereigns as Fuxi, Shennong, and Suiren. The listing of Suiren after Shennong was a Han modification, so sometimes Suiren comes before Shennong. Suiren therefore would fit into the Ji’an Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 compositions as one of the Three Sovereigns.

Birrell describes Suiren as straddling the world of the gods and the humans, as though he were not one or the other. He was a sage-like being who could cross over between the worlds. The fourth-century text *Shi yi ji* 拾遺記 (Researches into Lost Records) by Wang Jia recounts how Suiren learned to make fire when visiting a mythical land called Suiming, where a tree called a Sui tree could produce fire. He watched a bird peck at the tree and create fire. Seeing that, he took a twig from the tree to drill for fire,

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591 Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.
592 As mentioned in note above, a figure similar to Suiren may be mentioned in the *Hou Hanshu*. However, various characters are used for Sui when reproducing this quote, including 燧 (Fire Driller) and 隧 (Tunnel), therefore it is not clear who this deity is. Li Dianfu uses “Fire Driller” 燧, which would mean Goguryeo’s Suishen is parallel to Suiren. (Li Dianfu *Dongbei kaogu*, 305.)
593 Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine* 245; Karlgren“Legends and Cults,” 232.
and hence was called the Fire Driller. Suiren also became a sage king who saved humanity from starvation by bringing them fire to cook.

Suiren is a logical possibility for the identity of the fire figures in Tombs 4 and 5; however, the neighboring Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has the best evidence against this identification. Suiren in the texts is described as creating fire from rubbing a stick. His very name is often translated as Fire Driller. The figures in Tombs 4 and 5 create fire from thin air in the palms of their hands. Donggou Four Spirits Tomb also has a figure creating fire; that figure rubs a stick, drilling to create fire. It seems likely that the figure in the Donggou Tomb is Suiren, which will be discussed further in the next section. Since an example of Suiren that diverges from the figures in Tombs 4 and 5 exists in a roughly contemporary, nearby tomb, it is likely the figures in Tombs 4 and 5 represent a different fire deity, possibly Yandi or Zhurong.

YANDI

Yandi, or the Flame Emperor, is another identity posited for the figures holding fire. He was often considered one of the Five Emperors of the Five Phases. Yandi was the Emperor of the south, summer and fire. He mastered fire and was even said to be the sun. While not generally considered one of the Three Sovereigns of ancient antiquity, Yandi does have a close association with Shennong. They became so closely

594 Birrell *Chinese Mythology*, 42-44.
595 Watson *Basic Writings: Han Fei Tzu* 96; *Hanfeizi The Five Vermin*, section 49.
596 Yang Lihua, 225.
597 Henricks 119; “炎帝者，太陽也。” from *Baihu tong*, fascicle 5 (Yuan Ke *Gu shenhua*, 83.)
identified with one another that, beginning in the Han dynasty, the two were often confused, melding into one being called “Shennong Yandi shi” 神農炎帝氏. 598

In his 1993 article, Geng Tiehua argues that the fire figure in Tomb 5 represents Yandi. Geng argues it was because of their agricultural associations that these two figures, Shennong and Yandi, would have been represented together. He posits that together Shennong and Yandi represent the development of slash and burn farming, and therefore represent a stage in the development of society. 599

There are several arguments that can be made against identifying the fire figure in Tombs 4 and 5 as Yandi. For example, unlike Fuxi/Nüwa and Shennong, Yandi is not traditionally considered one of the Three Sovereigns, which would break the progression. However, in the Shiji, Yandi is cited as following Shennong in the list of early emperors or possibly the last ruler in Shennong’s line of descendants. 600

Another argument against the identification of the fire figure as Yandi concerns his melding with Shennong in the late Han into one being. In earlier texts, such as the Lüshi chunqiu and the Huainanzi, Yandi and Shennong are seen as separate entities. 601 However, the late Han texts often confused these two figures, and they were seen as being one in the same. Yandi and Shennong both relate to agricultural myths and legends that likely date back to the Shang, so it appears as though they later overlapped in people’s minds. 602 However, in the Goguryeo Tombs 4 and 5 there are clearly two separate characters: one associated with farming and one associated with fire. Therefore,

598 Henricks, 115. Shi 氏 is a polite title for spirits.
599 Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.
600 Henricks 115 from the Shiji, fascicles 1 and 28.
601 Henricks, 115.
602 Henricks, 103.
it is likely the fire figures in Tombs 4 and 5 are not Yandi. That leaves Zhurong, a fire deity who is also often considered one of the Three Sovereigns.

**Zhurong**

While the other identifications of the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 fire figures have merit, Zhurong seems the most likely contender. The fire figures in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 are placed either after or between Fuxi and Shennong, who are both consistently cited as two of the Three Sovereigns. That leads one to conclude that the fire figure is also one of the Three Sovereigns. Unlike Yandi, Zhurong was sometimes considered one of the Three Sovereigns, either proceeding or following Shennong. Additionally, Zhurong was a fire deity, and therefore it is possible he could control fire without the use of tools, unlike Suiren. Even more importantly, there also exists material evidence depicting Zhurong along with Fuxi/Nüwa and Shennong as the Three Sovereigns in the late Han Wu Family Shrine 3 in Shandong (fig. 292).

There are some overlaps in the historical records between Zhurong and Suiren and Yandi. Zhurong is sometimes considered one of the Three Sovereigns. The first-century BCE Han *Baihu tong* places Zhurong after Fuxi and Shennong. A quote of an earlier text in the third-century BCE *Fengsu tong* 風俗通 places Zhurong between Fuxi and Shennong. The inconsistent placement of Zhurong in the line of rulers could explain the different positioning of the figures in Tombs 4 and 5. Perhaps the placement of the

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603 While the Wu Family Shrines date to the Han Dynasty it is possible that these images or others like them were known to the artists during the sixth and seventh centuries. Some portions of such stone monuments were even “reused” in the post-Han periods. (Barbieri-Low, 503.)

604 Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine*, 245.
A legendary figure that produced fire was seen as interchangeable, coming either before or after farming.

In addition to being one of the Three Sovereigns, Zhurong is sometimes considered one of the Five Emperors of the Five phases, replacing Yandi as the Emperor of fire and the south.\textsuperscript{605} The \textit{Huainanzi} and \textit{Mozi} claim Zhurong ruled the south and controlled fire.\textsuperscript{606} In chapter six of the \textit{Shanhaijing}, the Jin Dynasty commentator Guo Pu 郭璞 noted Zhurong “is the god of fire.”\textsuperscript{607} Information regarding Zhurong is often confused and conflicting, but his identity as a thearch became established in the Western Han and in religious Daoism.\textsuperscript{608}

The clearest visual extant example of an early depiction of Zhurong is found in the late Han Wu Family Shrine 3. In the shrine, Zhurong appears as one of the Three Sovereigns following the order mentioned in the \textit{Fengsu tong}; he is placed after Fuxi and before Shennong.\textsuperscript{609} In the Han carving, Zhurong wears the same jacket and short pants as Shennong, indicating an earlier, simpler time.\textsuperscript{610}

\textbf{Fire Figures Conclusion}

The conjectural nature of the evidence for the identity of the fire figure in the Goguryeo Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 leaves the question open. However, it is clear that the figure making a flame appear in his hand is a deity. He follows Fuxi and Nüwa

\textsuperscript{605} Yang Lihua, 248; Karlgren “Legends and Cults,” 222.
\textsuperscript{606} Yang Lihua. 248; Watson \textit{Basic Writings: Mo Tzu}, 57; Major \textit{Heaven and Earth}, 259.
\textsuperscript{607} Strassberg 167; \textit{Shanhaijing}, fascicle 6 (\textit{Haiwainan jing 海外南經}), Guo Pu’s commentary, “火神也。” (Yuan Ke \textit{Shanhaijing}, 206.)
\textsuperscript{608} Strassberg, 168.
\textsuperscript{609} Liu \textit{Recarving}, 170-1.
\textsuperscript{610} Wu Hung \textit{Wu Liang Shrine}, 158
and follows or precedes Shennong, all of whom are considered ancient Chinese
sovereigns. The most popular contender is Suiren; however, as seen in the following
section, evidence from the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb may refute this
identification. The neighboring tomb contains a prototypical depiction of Suiren creating
fire with a stick, which lends itself to the argument that the figure in Tombs 4 and 5 is not
the "Fire Driller." Scholars have also identified the figure as Yandi, or the Flame
Emperor, although there are two key points that argue against this position. First, unlike
Fuxi/Nüwa and Shennong, Yandi is not generally considered to be one of the Three
Sovereigns. Second, from the Han dynasty on, Yandi's identity had merged with
Shennong as "Shennong Yandi shi," making it unlikely that Yandi is represented in
Tombs 4 and 5.

The remaining possible identity for the fire figure is Zhurong. Unlike Suiren,
who used a stick to create fire, Zhurong was a fire deity who had the ability to control fire
without the use of tools. This is consistent with the depiction of the figures in Tombs 4
and 5, who hold fire in their palms. Unlike Yandi, Zhurong was considered one of the
Three Sovereigns. In fact, the late Han Wu Family Shrine 3 provides a visual example of
Zhurong appearing as one of the Three Sovereigns, placed after Fuxi and before
Shennong. While the absolute identity of the fire figure is uncertain, Zhurong appears to
be the best fit.
CONCLUSION

In the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, Shennong and a fire figure, likely Zhurong, are paired similarly to Fuxi and Nüwa. Their pairing may indicate that their intrinsic meaning is tied together. It has been stated that the farming god and fire god together have strong ties to agriculture. Geng Tiehua states that together the farming deity and the fire god represent “slash and burn” agriculture. Fuxi and Nüwa were paired because they created man. Shennong and the fire deity were paired because they represent similar cultural advancements, farming and fire, both important tools in the development of society.

In the Goguryeo Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, the illustrations of Shennong and the fire deity transcend humanity. Shennong has the head of a bull, and the fire figure makes fire appear in the palm of his hand as though by magic. Both figures float in the air in a supernatural manner. These two figures in conjunction with Fuxi and Nüwa represent the deification of past legendary figures seen in the Han funerary arts. In the Ji’an tombs, Shennong and the fire figure are no longer simply legendary emperors who affected change on earth but immortals who exist in a different realm.

3.6.3 DONGGOU FOUR SPIRITS TOMB: SUIREN AND CANGJIE

The Donggou Four Sprits Tomb depicts two figures that do not appear in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The west panel on the second ceiling layer has two immortals wearing feather-garments alongside a bird figure eating a snake; one makes fire with a

611 Henricks 103.
612 “刀耕火種” Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.
stick, and the other is writing (fig.293-294). The Donggou fire figure is recognized as Suiren, who, as already mentioned, was an inventor of fire. He appears to be paired with another mythological figure, Cangjie 倉頡, the inventor of Chinese characters.

**Suiren**

The fire figure in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb—appearing in the middle of the western panel—has a less ethereal appearance than the fire figures in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. He stands before a tree, creating fire with a stick. He wears a dark feather-garment with a white collar and belt. His calves and feet are bare. This contrasts markedly with the figures in Tombs 4 and 5, which seem to make fire appear from nowhere and wear long formal garments. As already discussed, Suiren is often considered one of the ancient Three Sovereigns in Chinese history. However, the representation of Suiren in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb seems to focus more on Suiren as the creator of fire.

The fire figure in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb seems to be a different mythological person than the figures in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. As discussed above, the fire figures in Tombs 4 and 5 are often identified as Suiren, but they do not match the literary description nor the figure in the Donggou Tomb. The Donggou figure’s appearance and actions closely match those of the figure found in Chinese mythology called Suiren, or the Fire Driller Man. He wears the feathered garment of an immortal, although he wears his hair long like a human. He holds a stick that he is drilling to create fire.
Birrell describes Suiren as straddling the worlds of the gods and the humans, as though he were not one or the other. He was a sage-like being, who could cross over between the worlds. The fourth-century text Shi yi ji by Wang Jia recounts how Suiren learned to make fire when visiting a mythical land called Suiming.

Ten thousand miles from the capital of the Shenmi kingdom there is Suiming Country. It knows nothing of the four seasons, or day or night. Its people never die. When they get tired of life, they ascend to Heaven. There is a fire tree called Sui-wood. Twisted and gnarled, it spreads ten thousand hectares. Clouds and fog drift out of it. If twigs broke from it and rubbed together, they produced fire. After many generations there was a sage who traveled beyond the sun and the moon. He provided food to save all living creatures. He came to Nanchui. He looked at the tree and saw a bird like an owl, and when it pecked the tree with its beak, fire came out in a blaze. The sage realized what had happened, so he took a small twig to drill for fire, and so he was called Suiren, the Fire Driller.

Therefore, Suiren obtained his name from the country, Suiming, and the Sui tree.

This account of the Fire Driller bears many similarities to the representation found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. Suiren’s straddling of the worlds of the gods and humans could explain his appearance. His garment is somewhat rustic looking, but it is

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613 Birrell Chinese Mythology, 42
614 Taiping yulan, fascicle 869 quoting the Shi yi ji “申彌國去都萬里有燧明國。不識四時晝夜。其人不死，厭世則升天。國有火樹名燧木，屈盤萬記。雲霧出於中間。折枝相鑽則火出矣。後世聖人腥臊之味，遊日月之外，以食救萬物，乃至南垂，目此樹表，有鳥若鴞，以口啄樹，粲然火出。聖人成焉，因取小枝以鑽火，號燧人氏。” (Taiping yulan in Si bu congkan san bian vol.53.)
Translation adapted from Birrell Chinese Mythology, 44.
the feathered garment of an immortal. The story of how he discovered fire is also parallel to the image seen. The figure in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb stands before a tree and uses a twig to drill for fire.

Suiren was considered a great culture bearer who saved humanity. *Hanfeizi* states in the ancient past:

> The people lived on fruits and berries, mussels, and clams—things rank and evil smelling that hurt their bellies, so that many of them fell ill. Then a sage appeared who drilled with sticks and produced fire with which to transform the rank and putrid food. The people were delighted and made him ruler of the world, calling him the Drill Man.⁶¹⁵

Suiren became a sage king and culture bearer who saved humanity from starvation by teaching them how to cook.

**CANGJIE**

To the right of Suiren in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is a figure who is writing. This figure crouches in front of a tree before a low table where he is writing. A stool like table holds a bowl, and he dips a brush into a container. Like Suiren, he wears a feather-garment and has long, straight hair. The figure is identified as Cangjie, mythological inventor of Chinese characters.⁶¹⁶

Cangjie appears in texts as early as the Warring States period and continues to grow in popularity during the Han. He was said to have had four eyes and been born able

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⁶¹⁵ *Hanfeizi* The Five Vermin, section 49 in Watson *Basic Writings: Han Fei Tzu*, 96.
⁶¹⁶ Wu Guangxiao, 204-5.
to write. He invented writing by observing nature. By looking at animal prints and other
occurrences in nature, he was able to create pictographs.\(^{617}\) The creation of writing
caused millet to fall from heaven and ghosts to cry at night.\(^{618}\)

Cangjie is depicted in several Han tombs. As already mentioned, one of the stone
slabs flanking the entrance to the central chamber of Yi’nan Tomb 1 has two figures
kneeling on the ground below overhanging tree branches. They are identified as Cangjie,
the inventor of writing, and Shennong.\(^{619}\) Like the figure writing in the Donggou Four
Spirits Tomb, Cangjie in Yi’nan Tomb 1 wears the feather-garment of an immortal. He
does not write, but instead interacts with the figure across from him. His identity is
certain, not only because of the identifying cartouche, but also because he has four eyes.

Illustrations of Cangjie appear in Sichuan as well. As already mentioned the Han
dynasty stone coffin from Xinjin, Sichuan also depicts Shennong and Cangjie. Here,
again, the figures are depicted as immortals. Cangjie, similar to Shennong, holds a plant
instead of writing. His individual facial features are difficult to discern, and the carving
of the lower half of his body is missing.\(^{620}\) He is identified in a cartouche.

The writing figure in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb parallels the Han
depictions. They are all depicted as immortals wearing feather-garments. They all
appear to crouch or sit as well. It is difficult to discern whether the figure in the Ji’an
tomb has four eyes, but it is possible. Interestingly, only the Goguryeo depiction shows
him writing.

\(^{617}\) Yuan Ke Gu shenhua, 72-73; Yang Lihua, 84-86.
\(^{618}\) "倉頡作書而天雨粟﹐鬼夜哭。" from Huainanzi, Jingshen bian. (Yuan Ke Gu shenhua, 72.)
\(^{619}\) The cartouche identifying Cangjie is still legible. (Shandongsheng Yi’nan Hanmu bowuguan, 186-187.)
\(^{620}\) Wu Hung "Myths and Legends," 78.
Cangjie may have a particular apotropaic function in tombs connected to his invention of writing. In 1999, Lydia Thompson posited that Cangjie is able to ward off evil. As already mentioned, the *Huainanzi* states that when Cangjie invented writing, “ghosts wailed at night.” The third-century commentator Gao You explained that the ghosts cried because they feared men documenting their accusations against them. Therefore, Cangjie and his invention can be viewed as an anathema to evil ghosts. Another feature that can be interpreted as having an apotropaic effect is Cangjie’s four eyes. The *Rites of Zhou* report of *fangxiangshi* exorcists describes them as having four eyes to search the four directions for evil spirits. While difficult to tell now, it is possible that the figure of Cangjie in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb may have four eyes. In addition to being a mythological culture bearer similar to Fuxi/Nüwa and Suiren, it is possible his depiction was also meant to ward off evil. However, his pairing with Suiren seems to indicate that his main significance is as the culture bearer who invented writing.

**CONCLUSION**

Suiren and Cangjie are not represented in the funerary arts of Goguryeo outside the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, but they are important characters in the art and literature of China. The depictions of the two figures in the Donggou Four Spirits tombs echo illustrations of culture bearers from the Han dynasty. As shown above, there was a tradition of depicting legendary figures in the funerary arts throughout Han China, from

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621 Yuan Ke *Gu shenhua*, 72; Wu Guangxiao, 205; Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 24.
622 Yang Lihua, 84.
623 Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 24.
Confucian Shandong to the more Daoist Sichuan. These legendary figures transcended their humanity and became immortals which may have been painted in order to accompany and protect the deceased during their ascension. It appears as though the images in the Goguryeo Donggou Four Spirits Tomb utilized the inventors of fire and writing in that vein. The feather-garment wearing figures are not only legendary creators; they are also immortals accompanying the deceased on their ascent and, perhaps, already occupying an immortal realm.

3.6.4 Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5: Laboring Immortals

The first layers of ceiling corbels in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 display a number of figures who are generally identified by their activities. They are a blacksmith, wheelwright, and another figure standing before a tree that is usually identified as either a “sharpening stone spirit” or another blacksmith. These figures may best be described as inventor deities, and are more difficult to identify than the previously discussed ceiling figures. That has not prevented scholars from making tentative identifications or discussing their generalized meaning.

Of the three figures, only the wheelwright and figure standing before a tree appear in both Tombs 4 and 5. The blacksmith only appears in Tomb 4. In Tomb 4, the blacksmith and wheelwright appear on the south corner. The figure standing before the tree is placed on the west corner across from a dragon-riding immortal. The blacksmith appears on the same panel as the figure holding fire, separated by a backward looking

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624 Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 25-6.
dragon. In Tomb 5, the wheelwright and figure standing before a tree are both on the southwest panel.

Unlike the other pairs of figures found in Tombs 4 and 5, these figures are not believed to be ancient sovereigns. They are believed to be legendary figures who invented things such as the chariot.\textsuperscript{626} Texts like the \textit{Shanhaijing} mention a number of minor culture bearers related to the gods who were inventors.\textsuperscript{627} As religious Daoism absorbed these figures into its pantheon, many were reduced to simple descriptive titles.\textsuperscript{628} What follows are tentative identifications of the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and the figure standing before a tree.

**BLACKSMITH**

Appearing only in Five Helmets Tomb 4, the blacksmith figure sits working metal with his hammer and is placed across from the wheelwright (fig.295-296). He sits in front of a tree before a tall anvil. Holding a hammer in his right hand, he hammers the object with his left. He wears an open-necked robe with a yellow collar, a white belt, and wide sleeves. The garment is knee-length, leaving his calves exposed. His shoes are long and curled up at the toes. He wears his hair in a topknot.

One possible identification for the blacksmith figure is the mythological figure Chi You. Chi You, the war deity discussed previously, was said to have invented

\textsuperscript{626} Kim Jin-soon, 112; Wu Guangxiao, 170-173.
\textsuperscript{627} Birrell \textit{Chinese Mythology} 65
\textsuperscript{628} Robinet \textit{Taoism}, 18.
metallurgy and metal weapons. However, from all accounts, Chi You had a fearsome appearance with horns like a bull, which does not match this figure.\textsuperscript{629}

James Watt identifies the blacksmith figure as possibly being Ji Kang 傅康, one of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove. Ji Kang was known for his metal work.\textsuperscript{630} However, this is unlikely because Ji Kang was a historical Daoist philosopher from the third century. Therefore, Ji Kang would not fit thematically with the mythological culture bearers and rulers depicted in the tomb.

Similar to the mythological figures already discussed, clues as to the blacksmith’s identity may lie with whom he is paired and his actions. He is paired with the wheelwright who is hammering a nail into a wheel. In his article on Tomb 5’s ceiling, Geng Tiehua discussed how the figure standing before a tree may also be in the process of creating parts for a carriage.\textsuperscript{631} This connection has also been made between the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and the figure standing before the tree in Tomb 4.\textsuperscript{632} It has been suggested that these figures either represent one person doing multiple jobs to create a carriage, or they each represent a member of a mythological inventor family. The Shanhaijing recounts a family that starts with Di Jun 帝俊.\textsuperscript{633} This lineage is credited

\textsuperscript{629} Birrell Chinese Mythology 52-3. Chi You likely appears in the Three Chamber Tomb. There he has horns and carries a spear.\textsuperscript{630} Watt “Art and History,” 28.\textsuperscript{631} Geng “Ji’an Wukufen wuhao,” 39.\textsuperscript{632} Kim Jin-soon, 112.\textsuperscript{633} Shanhaijing, fascicle 13 (Hainei dong jing 海外東經) “帝俊生禺號, 禽號生淫梁, 淫梁生番禺, 是始為舟。番禺生奚種, 奚種生吉光, 吉光是始以木為車。” (Yuan Ke Shanhaijing, 465.) “Di Jun gave birth to Yu Hao, Yu Hao gave birth to Yin Liang, Yin Liang gave birth to Fan Yu, who was the first to create boats. Fan Yu gave birth to Xi Zhong, Xi Zhong gave birth to Ji Guang, and Ji Guang was the first to use wood to make carriages.” [names have been changed to pinyin.] (Birrell Chinese Mythology, 66.)
with creating boats and the carriage. Perhaps the blacksmith in Tomb 4 represents one of these inventors.

**Wheelwright**

There are two wheelwright figures: one in Five Helmets Tomb 4 and one in Tomb 5 (fig. 297-300). These figures differ in appearance from Shennong and the fire figure in their attire and the banality of their actions. For those reasons, they appear to be minor culture bearers akin to the blacksmith in Tomb 4.

The wheelwright figure in Tomb 4 appears on the south corner, opposite the blacksmith. He wears a dark feather-garment with a white belt tied around his waist. His calves are bare, and he wears long, curled, black shoes. In his right hand, he holds a hammer. His left hand is placed on a sixteen spoke wheel. The wheelwright in Tomb 5 appears on the southwest corner. He also wears a feather-garment with a tied belt. His calves are also bare, and he wears long-toed, black shoes. Same as the figure in Tomb 4, he holds a hammer in his right hand and holds the wheel with his left. Both figures have *bodhi* trees before and behind them. Similar to the other paired figures in Tombs 4 and 5, these figures are fundamentally identical. They wear almost identical garments, and have the same posture and pose, which suggests they are copies from the same source.

These figures can be identified as minor culture bearers in comparison to the elegantly dressed images of the Three Sovereigns. Their feathered short pants and jackets are ethereal but more rustic than the Chinese-style robes. The figures are also engaged in manual labor, while the Three Sovereigns figures are simply floating on
air. As for who these figures are, there are two theories. Geng Tiehua argues that the wheelwright figures represent Xi Zhong 西仲, a mythological inventor who is a part of a long lineage of inventors. Geng cites several sources that recount how Xi Zhong created the chariot. The wheel is an important part of the chariot and therefore could symbolize the entire vehicle. *Mozi* and the *Lüshi chunqiu* all state that Xi Zhong created the chariot. Another possible identification exists for this figure, also related both to carriage making and to Xi Zhong. The *Shanhaijing* recounts how Ji Guang 吉光, Xi Zhong’s son, created the carriage from wood.

Unfortunately, because they were minor figures, not much information about their appearance is revealed. Therefore, one cannot identify these figures as either Xi Zhong or Ji Guang with any certainty. Geng argues that perhaps their importance is in their actions. These figures are representative of woodworking and, most likely, the creation of woodworking. Therefore, their import is not in who they are, but rather that these figures are the culture bearers representing the creation of a chariot. The chariot was an important invention in the advancement of civilizations.

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634 From *Mozi*, Feiruxia 非儒下 fascicle “奚仲作車，巧垂作舟。” (Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.) Translation: “Xi Zhong made chariots, Qiao Chui made boats.” From *Lüshi chunqiu*, junshou 君守 fascicle “奚仲作車，倉頡作書，後稷作稼，皋陶作刑，昆吾作陶，復鯀作城…” (Knoblock Annals of Lü Buwei, 413; Wu Guangxiao, 172.) Translation: “Xi Zhong made chariots, Cangjie made writing, Houji made the grains, Gao Tao made punishments, Kun Wu made pottery, Fu Gun made cities…”

635 Kim Jin-soon, note 85; Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.

636 Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 40.
The most difficult figures to identify are those standing before trees on the first ceiling layer of Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 (figs. 301-304). In Tomb 5, this figure appears on the same panel as the wheelwright. In Tomb 4, it is placed in the same corner as a dragon rider.\textsuperscript{637} There is some debate as to what these figures are doing, and they are described as doing a variety of activities including: working a millstone,\textsuperscript{638} creating a sword,\textsuperscript{639} or smelting.\textsuperscript{640} These are all actions similar to those of the blacksmith and wheelwright.\textsuperscript{641}

These currently undetermined figures appear to be minor culture bearers in the vein of the blacksmith and wheelwright above. The original 1964 report describes the figure in Tomb 4 as standing before a millstone. However, the report continues to say that the same figure in Tomb 5 is associated with smelting.\textsuperscript{642} It is difficult to discern what the figures are doing, but they are definitively participating in the same action. When discussing the figure in Tomb 5, the authors state that because this figure is paired with the wheelwright, the panel is dedicated to “smelting and building a wheel.”\textsuperscript{643} Such

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\textsuperscript{637} This signifies a change in the composition. Instead of the paired figures appearing in the same corner of Tomb 4 and on the same panel in Tomb 5, the wheelwright and figure standing before a tree are separated in Tomb 4. This change was brought about by the addition of the blacksmith figure in Tomb 4.

\textsuperscript{638} 磨石 (C: moshi; K: maseok). Jilin sheng bowuguan 64; Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 129.

\textsuperscript{639} 造剑 (C: zao jian; K: jo geom). Wu Guangxiao, 173.

\textsuperscript{640}冶铁 (C: ye tie; K: ya cheol). Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61.

\textsuperscript{641} Kim Jin-soon identifies the figure as “creating an immortality elixir out of cinnabar” 丹砂精鍊. (Kim Jin-soon, 112.) There is little evidence of this.

\textsuperscript{642} Jilin sheng bowuguan 64; Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.

\textsuperscript{643}治輪 (C: ye lun; K: ya ryun) Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61.
an association is not made for the figure in Tomb 4, since it is paired with a dragon rider. They are both described as standing before a *bodhi* tree.\(^{644}\)

The image of the figure in front of the tree in Tomb 5 is damaged, but by comparing it with the figure in Tomb 4, one can elucidate that this figure is the same. These images are nearly identical. Both figures stand under a canopy of branches, which curves over their heads in the same manner. The figures also have the same posture and positioning of their arms and legs.

The figures in the two tombs are the same, and it can be assumed that they are engaged in the same activity, whatever that may be. Geng Tiehua posits that the figure in Tomb 5 is assisting with the building of a chariot. Perhaps the figure before the tree and the wheelwright are both Xi Zhong engaged in different stages of wheel making or perhaps they are Xi Zhong and his son Ji Guang building a chariot together.\(^{645}\) Unfortunately, because the figure standing before the tree’s actions are unclear, all that can determined is that he is laboring in a manner similar to the blacksmith and wheelwright.

**CONCLUSION**

From their arrangement within the composition, it seems likely that the two or three images of laboring immortals are meant to be interpreted together. In Tomb 4, the blacksmith and the wheelwright are paired in the same corner. The figure standing before the tree is painted on the same corner as an immortal riding a dragon, but he is on

\(^{644}\) Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61 and 64; Kim Jin-soon, 111.  
\(^{645}\) Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 39.
the same panel as the wheelwright, separated by a backward looking dragon. So, he
directly follows the wheelwright and the blacksmith. In Tomb 5, the figure standing
before the tree is on the same panel as the wheelwright. Therefore, it seems plausible that
all three figures are connected.

Tomb 4’s south corner displays the blacksmith and wheelwright. The blacksmith
sits and hammers something out of metal. The wheelwright is then shown hammering a
nail into a wheel. Looking at the series of images it is not too difficult to imagine the
blacksmith and wheelwright working in tandem; perhaps the nail the wheelwright
hammers just came from the blacksmith’s anvil. The standing figure is also likely
connected to the blacksmith and wheelwright, although his role is as of yet unclear. If all
the figures are working together, it may be an illustration of a chariot workshop full of
immortals. As noted previously, there is a lineage mentioned in Chinese legends
connected to the creation of chariots. As Geng Tiehua posited, perhaps these figures are
Xi Zhong in the different stages of creating a chariot, or perhaps it is Xi Zhong along
with other relatives, his son Ji Guang and perhaps another ancestor. He was descended
from a long line of inventor gods. 646

The identities ascribed above are tenuous at best. Without identifying cartouches,
one may never know who the laboring immortals are supposed to be. It is therefore
important to discuss the one clear action which is taking place, creating a chariot or cart,
and its possible significance within the tomb.

646 Yuan Ke Shanhaijing, 465; Birrell Classic of Mountains and Seas, 194.
What significance do these figures have following the great culture bearers that created humanity, farming, and fire? Geng argues that the illustrations of metal and woodworking perhaps signify the next stages of development of society. These were important inventions for the evolution of humanity.\textsuperscript{647} In a broad sense, the artisans could symbolize the next step in the advancement of society. Of course, they may also have a meaning specific to a funerary setting.\textsuperscript{648}

Depictions of chariots or carts often appear in tombs to signify the deceased’s journey into the afterlife. This practice appears in Goguryeo tombs as well as in Chinese tombs from the Han onward and was used to depict immortals traveling from one realm to another (fig.305). Early Goguryeo tombs—such as Anak Tomb 3, Deokheung-ri Tomb, and the Yaksu-ri Mural Tomb—often depict the deceased riding in a chariot (fig.306). These processions may depict scenes from daily life, or show the occupant crossing over to the next realm. Examples of chariots and carts being pulled by beasts of burden ascending to the next realm are a common depiction in tombs from the Han and later. For example, Wu Family Shrine 2 shows a person ascending towards the King Father of the East in a horse drawn cart driven by a pointy eared immortal (fig.307). The chariot is shown ascending as it drives over the tops of trees.

Depictions of chariots and carts being pulled by mystical creatures shown traveling between the realms also appear. The ceiling panels of Wu Family Shrine 2 depict a series of beings ascending or descending, riding cloud chariots drawn by

\textsuperscript{647} Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 41.
\textsuperscript{648} Kim Jin-soon, 112.
dragons. Similarly, several tombs from Sichuan have bricks showing figures traveling to the next realm in dragon drawn carts. A later example of beings ascending with the use of chariots is found in the Western Wei Mogao Cave 249 in Dunhuang. The King Father of the East and the Queen Mother of the West ride their chariots across the ceiling (fig.308). He rides in a dragon-drawn cart, and she rides in a cart drawn by mystical birds. As seen, there is a long tradition of using chariots to travel between the earth and the land of the immortals. Therefore, it is plausible the figures in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 were creating a chariot to assist the deceased in their ascension.

3.6.5 Five Helmets Tomb 5: Imperial Dragon-Rider and Attendant

Placed on the northwestern panel of the first layer of ceiling corbels in Five Helmets Tomb 5 is a figure wearing a Chinese imperial beaded cap and ornate robes followed by a smaller immortal riding a feilian (figs.309-310). In the original report, the figures are simply identified as “two immortals,” but from their appearance one knows these last figures are a dragon-riding emperor and an attendant. The imperial figure is identified in the broadest terms as a Heavenly Emperor (diwang tianzi) and sometimes specifically as the Yellow Emperor, Huangdi.

The imperial figure rides a dragon. His robes are ornate, with an apron-like belt, and he wears a flat board headdress with strings of beads suspended in the front and back,
the official headgear of a Chinese emperor. With one hand, the royal figure holds onto
his mount, and in the other he grasps a fan.

The figure behind the emperor has the attributes of an immortal. Like many of
the previously mentioned figures, he wears an immortal’s feather-garments: a tunic and
short, fringed pants. Unlike the other figures on the same layer of ceiling corbels, he has
pointy ears and an antenna-like protrusion for hair, also attributes of an immortal. The
immortal holds a staff with streamers in one hand and a flower in the other. He gazes at
the flower. The creature he rides has a body like a deer, a long tail, and a monstrous
head. Due to the size of this figure, its position behind the dragon rider, and its
occupation holding the flag, he can be identified as an attendant.

Scholars generally agree at the least that the dragon rider can be considered a
Heavenly Emperor. From his appearance, the figure in Tomb 5 is an emperor, and he
is riding a dragon, which makes him a heavenly being. Going one step further, perhaps
this figure is the mythical Yellow Emperor.

The *Shanhaijing* states that “Mount Kunlun within the sea is in the northwest and
is the earthly capital of the Supreme God Di.” Geng argues that the placement of the
imperial image within Tomb 5 matches this passage. The emperor and his attendant are
painted on the northwestern panel, which corresponds to the Supreme God Di’s residence

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654 In the *Hou Hanshu*, Emperor Ming designated this style headwear as the official crown of the emperor in 59 CE. (Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine*, 159.)
655 Kim Jin-soon, 113; Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 40.
656 Kim Jin-soon, 113; Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 40.
657 Strassberg 192; *Shanhaijing*, fascicle 6 (*Hainei xi jing 海内西經*), “海內崑崙之虛，在西北，帝之下都” (Yuan Ke *Shanhaijing* 294.)
on Mount Kunlun 崑崙 in the northwest.\textsuperscript{658} The term \textit{di} which is used as god in this passage is nonspecific, used for a variety of male deities.\textsuperscript{659} However, Geng further argues that other texts state it is Yellow Emperor’s palace which is on Mount Kunlun in the northwest, therefore the \textit{di} mentioned in the \textit{Shanhaijing} is actually the Yellow Emperor.\textsuperscript{660}

The Yellow Emperor is a prominent figure in Chinese history and mythology. He is often included in the list of the ancient Three Sovereigns.\textsuperscript{661} He is also sometimes considered the first of the Five Emperors who followed the Three Sovereigns. He was also the god of the earth and center, one of the Five August Emperors who reign over the five directions and phases. The Yellow Emperor is considered the preeminent ancestor of the Chinese people, and it was under his reign that civilization reached its pinnacle. The Yellow Emperor is considered a great culture bearer, often receiving credit for inventing the most significant tools for civilization. He is sometimes credited with the inventions mentioned previously that are ascribed to other culture bearers, such as creating fire and the carriage, as well as weapons and statecraft. He became an important figure in religious Daoism.\textsuperscript{662}

The Yellow Emperor appears in the Wu Family Shrine 3 (fig.311). There, he is represented as the first of the Five Emperors, following Shennong (fig.312). In the Wu Family representation, the costumes of Shennong and the Yellow Emperor diverge. Wu Hung believes the changes in garments show the difference between the earlier, simpler

\textsuperscript{658} Geng “Ji’an Wukuien wuhao,” 40.  
\textsuperscript{659} Birrell \textit{Classic of Mountains and Seas}, 224.  
\textsuperscript{660} Geng “Ji’an Wukuien wuhao,” 40.  
\textsuperscript{661} Geng “Ji’an Wukuien wuhao,” 40.  
\textsuperscript{662} Yang Lihua, 138-9.
times of the Three Sovereigns and the more complex times of the Five Emperors. The inscription next to the Yellow Emperor in Shrine 3 says:

He created and improved so much!

He invented weapons and regulated fields.

He had upper and lower garments hang down,

And erected palaces and [people’s] dwellings.\footnote{Wu Hung \textit{Wu Liang Shrine}, 158.}

With the Yellow Emperor came a new strata of civilization. The attire of the figure in the Wu Family Shrine and that of the figure found in Tomb 5 is similar; yet, again, with the addition of the dragon, the figure in the Goguryeo tomb is less humanistic than the figure in the Han shrine.

The dragon-riding emperor depicted in Five Helmets Tomb 5 differs from the Wu Family depiction in all but dress. The late Han illustration depicts the Yellow Emperor as a sage ruler. The Goguryeo figure is depicted on a dragon, a mount used by deities. The two representations show different facets of the same figure found in literature. There is mention of the Yellow Emperor riding on a dragon accompanied by the defeated Chi You and his entourage.\footnote{Yang Lihua, 143.} Therefore, it would not be unusual to see a representation of the Yellow Emperor riding a dragon.

The Yellow Emperor fits thematically with the previously mentioned culture bearers and mythological rulers of China that appear on the same layer of ceiling corbels in Tomb 5. As already mentioned, the Yellow Emperor was sometimes considered the third of the ancient Three Sovereigns. However, this designation does not quite fit here
since it appears as though Fuxi and Nüwa are considered the first rulers followed by, most likely, Zhurong and Shennong. This order matches that which is shown in the Wu Family Shrine 3, the order recorded in the Fengsu tong. In Tomb 5’s composition, the illustrations of the inventor gods separate the figure of the Yellow Emperor from the Three Sovereigns.

In the Wu Family Shrine 3, the Yellow Emperor is also depicted after the Three Sovereigns. He is included as the first of the Five Emperors. The emperors in the Wu Family Shrine follow the order established in the Han of the Yellow Emperor followed by Zhuanxu, Ku, Yao, and Shun. The era of the Yellow Emperor was considered to be the pinnacle of civilization. Therefore, in the Five Helmets Tomb 5, the Yellow Emperor may appear after the Three Sovereigns and the inventor gods in order to symbolize the peak of the cultural heights achieved in antiquity.

The Yellow Emperor was also considered one of the Five Emperors representative of the Five Phases principles. The Yellow Emperor was the thearch of the center and earth. Huainanzi states:

The Center is Earth. Its god is the Yellow Thearch.

His assistant is Hou Tu [Sovereign of the Soil].

He grasps the marking cord and governs the four quarters.

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665 Wu Hung Wu Liang Shrine 245
666 Liu Recarving, 170-1; Wu Hung Wu Liang Shrine 245. They are the historical Five Emperors, and will be discussed further in the following section on the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb’s five dragon riders.
667 Bokenkamp Early Daoist Scriptures, 104.
668 Geng “Ji’an Wukuien wuhao,” 41.
669 The other “Five August Dieties” recorded in the Huainanzi were: Tai Hao, Yandi, Shao Hao, and Zhuanxu. (Major Heaven and Earth, 71.) There is some overlap between the historical Five Emperors and the Five Emperors of the Five Phases, although the Five Emperors were not consistent in the records. This will be discussed further in the section on the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb Five Dragon Riders.
His spirit is Quelling Star [Saturn].
His animal is the yellow dragon.\textsuperscript{670}

Considering the presentation of the Four Spirits on the walls, it is possible that the Yellow Emperor as ruler of the center was one of the facets of this depiction. The immortal following the dragon-riding emperor in Tomb 5 may be the Yellow Emperor’s assistant, perhaps Hou Tu as mentioned in the \textit{Huainanzi}.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

Similar to the other representations of mythological beings depicted in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the depiction of the Yellow Emperor can be interpreted as having layers of meaning. He may represent the pinnacle of civilization achieved in high antiquity. He could illustrate the Supreme God who lived on the mountain paradise, Kunlun. The dragon-riding emperor may also have cosmological significance, another addition to the depiction of the universe that is represented through the Four Spirits on the walls. Any or all of these connotations may be applicable to the representation of the dragon-riding emperor. One does not know what possible added meanings the figure may have had for the Goguryeo occupants.

\textbf{3.6.6 DONGGOU FOUR SPIRITS TOMB: FIVE EMPERORS AND ATTENDANTS}

The first layer of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb ceiling is dedicated to five dragon riders and five immortals that resemble the dragon-riding emperor and attendant

found in the Five Helmets Tomb 5 (figs.313-315). Similar to the Tomb 5 figure, the
dragon riders are dressed as Chinese emperors and are paired with immortals who may be
interpreted as attendants. Five emperors⁶７¹ are consistently discussed in literature and
appear in the arts of early China, although who they are individually is not always
consistent. Two groups of such emperors can be divided into what I shall call the Five
Emperors of Antiquity and the Five Emperors of the Five Phases.

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb riding figures on the second layer of its ceiling
corbels are more thematically organized than the second layer, which holds a hodgepodge
of imagery (including the depictions of Cangjie and Suiren, which were discussed
previously). The northeast and southeast panels have five figures riding dragons, led by a
bird. Two figures appear on the southeast panel behind the bird. The northeast panel
depicts three riders. All five figures face toward the south, where the entrance is located.
These figures wear mortarboard-style hats and long, formal robes, attire that is
traditionally worn by a Chinese emperor.

Five immortals riding mythical beasts and birds are painted on the west side of the
ceiling. While these immortals are painted on different panels than the dragon-riding
emperors (unlike the figures in Tomb 5, which are on the same panel), the Donggou
immortals are matched one to one with the figures directly across from them. The
southwest panel portrays two figures riding cranes. The northwest panel shows three
figures riding four legged mythical beasts.⁶７² They wear feathered garments and have the

⁶７¹五帝 (C: wǔdì, K: ojae)
⁶７² The Japanese report says they are riding a tiger 虎, a deer 鹿, and a horse 馬. (Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.2,
33.)
antenna-like hairstyle of immortals. The two immortals riding cranes appear to be paired with the emperors on the southeast panel. The three beast riding immortals are directly across from the three emperors on the northeast panel. All ten figures face south as though moving to the entrance.

There are two offered possibilities for who these figures are; both come from Chinese traditions. One is the Five Emperors of Antiquity, who are mythological figures recorded in histories. Another possibility, one that partially overlaps with the Five Emperors of Antiquity, is the Five Emperors of the Five Phases. The latter emperors are related to the principles of the Five Phases and are associated with the elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water as well as seasons and the cardinal directions plus the center.

The Five Emperors of Antiquity are consistently mentioned in Chinese historical texts as the rulers of antiquity. They are: the Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu 頓顼, Di 御, Yao 尧, and Shun 舜. All emperors ruled before the legendary Xia dynasty, which is considered to be the first. As already mentioned, the Yellow Emperor was the first ruler after the ancient Three Sovereigns that are discussed in the previous sections.

The Five Emperors of Antiquity are displayed in the late Han Wu Family Shrine 3, after the Three Sovereigns. Unlike the ancient Three Sovereigns, the Five Emperors are portrayed in their formal robes and imperial caps; their attire similar to that of the dragon riders in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. The Wu Family Shrine depictions of the Five Emperors are more humanistic than the dragon-riding emperors, and they appear
to be closely related to the descriptions found in the *Shiji* chapter on the Five Emperors. The majority of the cartouches are identical to passages found in that text.\(^{673}\)

In the Han, as the principles the Five Phases developed, associations between ancient emperors and the Five Phases became codified. Before the Han, attempts had been made to correlate legendary emperors with specific elements. During the Han, the correlations became more systemized, although inconsistencies still occurred. In various Han texts, scholars identify five legendary emperors with the Five Phases, usually derived from the Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors of Antiquity. For example, the *Shiji* lists the emperors as: the Yellow Emperor was earth, Zhuanxu was wood, Ku was metal, Yao was fire, and Shun was water.\(^{674}\) Those were the Five Emperors of Antiquity, as seen in the Wu Family Shrine 3, correlated with an element.

This system gives each of the ancient rulers an element; each element was thought to have overcome the previous reign. In the histories, the ancient rulers were tied to elements to help explain the order of succession. Dynasties were all associated with specific phases. The succeeding dynasty was then associated with the phase thought to overcome that of the previous reign. The *Hanshu* reports that Fuxi was wood, Shennong was fire, the Yellow Emperor Huangdi was earth, Shaohao 少昊 was metal, Zhuanxu was water, Ku was wood, Yao was fire, and Shun was earth. In the *Hanshu’s* system, the Three Sovereigns—Fuxi, Shennong, and the Yellow Emperor, in this case—were included in the succession of elements. The Five Emperors—Shaohao, Zhuanxu, Ku,

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\(^{673}\) Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine* 249-51.

\(^{674}\) According to Karlgren, the inconsistencies were due to clumsy attempts by later scholars to adhere historical and mythical emperors to the Five Phases. (Karlgren “Legends and Cults,” 222)
Yao, and Shun—continued the sequence of elements, each element overcoming the previous. As the thought developed, legendary emperors became deities of specific phases.

The *Huainanzi* lists each emperor deity along with his associated direction, color, et cetera. It first lists Tai Hao 太皞, who later became identified with Fuxi, as the god of the east and wood; his animal was the Green Dragon. Next was Yandi, god of the south and fire; his animal was the Red Bird. The Yellow Emperor was the center and earth; his animal was the Yellow Dragon. Shao Hao was the god of the west and metal; his animal was the White Tiger. Finally, Zhuanxu was the god of the north and water; the Dark Warrior was his animal. In the *Huainanzi* passage, each deity is also associated with an assistant: Gou Mang, Zhu Ming, Hou Tu, Ru Shou, and Xuan Ming, respectively.

As one can see, there was some overlap between the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors of Antiquity and the Five Emperors of the Five Phases recorded in the *Huainanzi*. There were various systems used in the Han to correlate emperors with the Five Phases. Han Wudi created a simplified classification where the emperors were identified by color: Green, Red, White, Black, and Yellow Emperors. When Wang Mang of the Xin Dynasty built his temples to the Five Emperors, he did so thusly: The temple in the southwest was dedicated to the Yellow Emperor; the temple in the east was dedicated to the Green Emperor, Fuxi; the temple in the south was dedicated to the Red

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676 Major Heaven and Earth, 70-2 from Huainanzi fascicle 3.
677 Cheng 170.
Emperor, Shennong; the temple in the west was dedicated to the White Emperor, Shaohao; the temple in the north was dedicated to the Black Emperor, Zhuanxu.678

The exact identity of which of the mythical Three Sovereigns or Five Emperors of Antiquity was the god of which phase remained inconsistent, although there was generally overlap between the lists. For the purpose of this study, the exact identity of each deity may not be relevant. The concept of the “Five Emperors” may be what is most important to understanding the figural paintings on the first layer of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb.

In the late Han and Chinese Three Kingdoms period, the Five Emperors were known as protective figures (fig.316). A type of Eastern Han bronze mirror depicted the emperors along with the Four Spirit animals, and the inscriptions indicate that the emperors should be viewed as protecting against evil:

In the tenth year of Jian’an [205 CE] the Zhu family fashioned [this mirror] and wishes you great luck and fortune. ⫸⫸⫸ In seclusion I have refined the gong [earth] element and the shang [metal] element. Around the periphery I have arranged images of the Five Emperors and the Heavenly Emperor. Boya plays the zither and the Yellow Emperor expels evils. There are the Red Bird, Dark Warrior, White Tiger, and Green

678 Cheng 170, 172.
Dragon. May you attain high office and a position among the three ministers. May your sons and grandsons be numerous and prosperous.  

There are two elements present in the Han mirrors that are also present in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb: the Five Emperors and the Four Spirits. This mirror inscription makes it clear that the Five Emperors, along with the Four Spirits, are meant to avert evil. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the combination of the Four Spirit animals and the five dragon-riding emperors may have the same effect.

**CONCLUSION**

While it may not be possible to identify each of the dragon-riding emperors as a specific mythological ruler, it is evident that the concept of “Five Emperors” is depicted on the ceiling corbel in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. Akin to the Five Emperors of Antiquity in the late Han Wu Family Shrine 3, each figure is depicted in the garb of a Chinese emperor, a long robe and a mortar-board hat. Parallel to the passage from the *Huainanzi*, each figure appears to be paired with an attendant figure. Similar to the other mythological characters already discussed, the unlabeled five dragon-riding emperors and their immortal attendants closely match examples from textual and visual sources from 

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679 “建安十年朱氏造，大吉羊(祥)，□□□幽煉宮屬，周體容皂，五帝天皇，白牙單(彈)琴，黃帝除凶，朱鳥玄武，白虎青龍，君宜高官，仕至三公，子孫貴(藩)昌” (Liu Yongming, 36.) This translation is based on a translation of a nearly identical mirror inscription found in Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 6 (1934): 63-4, 78. There appears to be a discrepancy in the mirrors’ dates. Lydia Thompson’s inscription begins with “Jian’an fifth year” 興安五年 while the one above says “Jian’an tenth year.” However, she begins her translations with 205 AD, which is the same as “Jian’an tenth year.” They also appear to be missing the same characters. Therefore, they may be the same mirrors being discussed.
the Han dynasty. From those sources, one can glean a plethora of possible meanings for the Goguryeo images.

The five dragon-riding emperors connect to two important trends already discussed that appear in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb: depictions of legendary figures from Chinese history and depictions of the Five Phases. As shown above, the Five Emperors were important figures in the mythologized history of China’s period of antiquity. Mentioned previously, the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has other figures from Chinese mythology depicted on its top layer of ceiling corbels, Fuxi and Nüwa as well as Suiren and Cangjie. Therefore, it is logical that the five dragon-riding emperors continue the theme of illustrious figures from Chinese legends. Of course, the illustrations of the Five Emperors are also connected to the images on the walls and ceiling. As mentioned in *Huainanzi*, each of the Emperors of the Five Phases is also associated with one of the Four Spirits. Each of the Four Spirits and the Yellow Dragon appears in the tomb. Similar to the figures mentioned on the Han mirror, the Five Emperors in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb could have a powerful protective function while accompanying the deceased on their ascent to the next realm.

### 3.6.7 Five Helmets Tomb 4: Dragon-Riding Immortal

The last figure left to discuss on the first layer of ceiling corbels in Five Helmets Tomb 4 is a dragon rider located in the west corner across from the figure standing before a tree (figs.317-318). This figure is somewhat of an anomaly, as it does not appear to be a legendary figure. He rides a dragon, similar to the imperial figures in Five Helmets
Tomb 5 and the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, but his physical appearance matches that of the attendant immortals. The Tomb 4 dragon-riding figure has an antenna-like hairstyle and what appear to be pointed ears, physical attributes that have thus far not been seen on any of the other figures tied to mythology. That hairstyle has been sometimes identified as the “transcendent’s ‘hairdo’.”

He wears a dark feather-garment that is tied around the waist, like the other immortals. The original reports identify him as a “dragon-riding feathered person” or a “dragon-riding immortal.”

At first glance, the dragon-riding figures on the first ceiling layers of Tombs 4 and 5 seem completely divergent, but upon closer inspection, one notices some startling similarities (fig. 319). For example, the heads and the postures of the dragons they ride are nearly identical. Both dragons hold their heads in a similar position, with their tongues protruding in exactly the same manner. Also, the dragons’ limbs are outstretched in the same way, with their left hind legs parallel to their tails. The figures riding the dragons also exhibit striking similarities. They wear different garb, but their positioning on the dragons as well as the placements of their heads and limbs make one wonder if they were not derived from the same model. For example, the figure in Tomb 4 has his arm outstretched as though he, too, could be grasping a fan. It seems as though these figures could be variations of the same original source.

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681 “乘龍羽人” (Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61); “乘龍仙人” (Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 129).
682 Kim Jin-soon also mentions their strikingly similar appearance. (Kim Jin-soon, 113.)
683 There actually seems to be some confusion around the lines of the dragons’ hind quarters. Shifts in lines often occur when copying from an original model, which is one of the ways connoisseurs determine if a painting is a copy.
The reasoning behind an imperial figure gracing the ceiling of Tomb 5 and specifically being excluded from the ceiling of Tomb 4 may lie with the occupants. As already noted, Tomb 5 was larger than Tomb 4, and it was decorated with richer materials. Perhaps the occupant of Tomb 4 was not of a high enough rank to deserve the image of an emperor. Instead, an immortal that more closely resembles the non-specific celestial immortals on the top layer of the ceiling corbels was substituted. This anomalous figure is more similar to the flying figures on the second layer of ceiling corbels, which will be discussed in later section.

3.6.8 Mythological Figures Conclusion

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, Five Helmets Tomb 4, and Five Helmets Tomb 5 all display figural paintings from Chinese mythology. These figures are unique to the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs and show a regional variation that deviates from the Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs. Moreover, these images differ from those found in contemporary Chinese funerary settings, and, although stylistically parallel to Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasty figural representations, thematically the Goguryeo figures tie more closely to the visual culture and ideology of the Han dynasty.

To summarize, each of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs displays illustrations of Chinese mythological personages on their ceiling corbels. There is some overlap in all three tombs, although the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 are the most similar, while the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb shows the most deviation. The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, similar to Tombs 4 and 5, has dragon-bodied depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa; they are
placed on the first layer of corbelling. Across from Fuxi and Nüwa in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb is a figure who is writing and a figure creating fire by drilling a stick; they are believed to be Cangjie, the mythological creator of writing, and Suiren, the Fire Driller Man. On the first layer of corbels, there are five dragon-riding emperors on the west side and immortals riding birds and mythical beasts on the east side. These are likely the Five Emperors, either of Antiquity or the Five Phases (or both), and their attendants, figures found in Chinese literature.

The Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 also have paintings of dragon-bodied Fuxi and Nüwa, although they grace the first layer of corbels. From there, the images deviate from the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. Moving clockwise from Fuxi and Nüwa, the figures in Tomb 4 are: Shennong, a fire figure who is most likely Zhurong, a Blacksmith, a Wheelwright, a figure standing before a tree, and, lastly, a dragon-riding immortal. In Tomb 5 the figures are: the fire deity (likely Zhurong), Shennong, a wheelwright, a figure standing before a tree, and, finally, a dragon-riding emperor and attendant, most likely the Yellow Emperor and his assistant. The immortals doing manual labor are possibly Xi Zhong and his lineage, who were associated with creating the chariot.

The figures in the tombs have layers of meaning. One possible interpretation is that they represent the evolution of culture and society as described in Chinese mythologies. Fuxi and Nüwa created people. As seen above, in pre-Han and Han records they are consistently recorded as the first of the ancient Three Sovereigns. The two figures accompanying Fuxi and Nüwa in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb are considered important culture bearers; fire and writing were important creations for the
evolution of human society. The lower corbels have the Five Emperors, who, if approached from a historical standpoint, contributed greatly to the advancement of civilization.

Tombs 4 and 5 appear to follow a stricter system recorded in texts, which also delineates the advancement of society. Following Fuxi and Nüwa are the creators of farming and fire, Shennong and most likely Zhurong. The farming and fire gods were also considered to be the second and third of the Three Sovereigns. Following the Three Sovereigns are the illustrations of inventor gods. The most clearly illustrated pursuit is the creation of a wheeled chariot or cart. The invention of the cart, as well as the creation of metal and wood working, was an important development in the history of civilization. The last two figures in Tomb 5 are the dragon-riding emperor and attendant, likely the Yellow Emperor and his assistant. These two figures can be interpreted as following the cultural progression of the Three Sovereigns. The Yellow Emperor represents the peak of cultural achievement and the creator of the state.684 This is where Tomb 4’s composition deviates; in place of a dragon-riding emperor and attendant, it displays a dragon-riding immortal. This figure does not appear to fit the progression of cultural achievements, and instead seems to parallel the figures depicted on the second layer of corbels; it is a more generalized immortal being.

The mythological figures can also be interpreted as having a protective function. As seen on late Han mirrors, mythological figures often were used in an apotropaic manner. One mirror mentioned above had an inscription that listed Boya and the Five

684 Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 41.
Emperors as decorating the mirror. Other inscriptions sometimes add the Three Sovereigns to the list of protective and auspicious figures. A mirror dated to 205 CE (fig.320) states

I made this brilliant mirror, In seclusion I have refined the gong [earth] element and the shang [metal] element. Around the periphery I have arranged images of the Five Emperors and the Three Sovereigns. Boya plays the zither and the Yellow Emperor expels evils. There are Boya, the Red Bird, the Dark Warrior, the White Tiger, and the Green (Dragon).

Made in tenth year, fifth month, and sixth day of Jian’an, may you have sons and grandsons, and may they attain government office.685

This mirror illustrates a tradition of evoking the Three Sovereigns and the Five Emperors acting as protectors. Cangjie was also associated with protecting against ghosts. The Huainanzi states that ghosts were afraid his invention of writing would mean accusations against them would be recorded, so they wept.686

The most basic interpretation of the figures is as deities depicted to accompany the deceased on their ascent. In the Han, characters that were closely allied with a Confucian understanding of the development of society were adopted into immortality cults. They transcended their humanity and became celestial beings who inhabited the land of the immortals.687 The mythological figures in the Goguryeo tombs appear to

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685 "吾作明竟(鏡)。幽煉宮商，周羅容象，五帝三皇，白(伯)牙單(弾)琴，黃帝除凶。白牙朱鳥，玄武白虎青。建安十年五月六日作，直子孫，君宜官。" (Liu Yongming, 33) The translation is adapted from Lydia Thompson’s “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” page 24.

686 "倉頡作書而天雨粟，鬼夜哭。" Wu Guangxiao, 205; Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 24.

687 Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 25-6.
embody this transcendence; they appear as immortals wearing feather-garments, floating above the ground, or riding mythological creatures. Therefore, if, as discussed in previous sections, the ceiling can be interpreted as a mountain paradise, such as Kunlun, then the mythological figures are its inhabitants. Their presence is meant to assist the deceased as they ascend to the realm where they reside.

The Ji’an mythological figures are stylistically similar to figural styles of the Chinese Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties. The figures in the tombs are depicted wearing clothing from those periods, and there are similarities in the overall painting style. However, thematically they more closely resemble imagery popular in the Han dynasty. As mentioned above, late Han mirrors and funerary monuments abounded with mythological figures. These depictions ranged from Confucian paragons, humanistic portrayals of culture bearers, the immortals, and celestial beings belonging to immortality cults. Wu Family Shrine 3, located in Shandong, is filled with examples of the former type of depiction. The west wall displays the Three Sovereigns—Fuxi/Nüwa, Zhurong, and Shennong; the Five Emperors—the Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu, Di, Yao, and Shun, as well as the first and last emperors of the Xia. Each figure (other than Fuxi and Nüwa, whose tails are joined together) is depicted in its own space cell defined by an identifying inscription (fig.321). The figures are displayed in their historical order, which is similar to the figures found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, especially Tombs 4 and 5. Also similar is the “cataloguing” style of composition. While the figures in the Ji’an tombs

\[688\] See the “Dragon Border” section.
\[689\] Wu Hung *Wu Liang Shrine*, 84-5.
have the addition of rocks and trees to their background, most can be seen as solitary representations. The images can be interpreted as a visual list of mythological figures.

This style of “listing” mythological personages can also be seen in the late Han Yi’nan Tomb 1, another stone monument also located in Shandong (fig.322). While the Yi’nan Tomb interior is covered in low relief carvings of all types—mythological figures, strange beasts, Confucian paragons—focus will be on one specific panel found on the south wall of the central chamber. The lower section of this panel depicts two of the Five Emperors, the Yellow Emperor and Zhuanxu. Like the emperors in Wu Family Shrine 3, they stand, dressed in their imperial garb. However, in Yi’nan Tomb 1 the figures face one another, apparently engaged in dialogue. The Yi’nan imperial figures show the emperors as Confucian paragons, and therefore, unlike the figures in the three Goguryeo tombs, they retain their humanity. Above the two emperors on the same panel are depictions of Cangjie and Shennong. These two figures are discussed at length above, but there are two points that deserve further emphasis. One, these figures are depicted as paired. This is the same compositional technique that is used in the Ji’an tombs, specifically on the upper corbels of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the lower corbels of Tombs 4 and 5. More importantly, Cangjie and Shennong in Yi’nan Tomb 1 are removed from their humanity, like the figures in the three Ji’an tombs. The Yi’nan Tomb 1 figures are not depicted as Confucian paragons, but rather as immortals dressed

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690 Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?”
691 Lydia Thompson delves further into the similarities of these two Shandong monuments: Lydia Thompson “Confucian Paragon or Popular Deity?” 14-23.
in feathered garments. It is the tradition set by these types of portrayals that the figures on the ceilings of the Ji’an tombs seem to follow.692

Depictions of mythological Confucian paragons who have crossed over into the realm of the immortality cults is not confined to Shandong. As mentioned, depictions of Cangjie and Shennong are also found on a Sichuan coffin in Xinjin. These figures are portrayed with other renowned characters, such as Laozi and Confucius (fig.323). Similar to the same figures depicted in Yi’nan Tomb 1, the Xinjin Cangjie and Shennong appear to be paired together. They face one another and appear to be engaged in discussion over the plants they hold. They are also portrayed as feather-garment wearing immortals.

Han mirror decoration also demonstrates the popularity of figures like the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors. A multitude of Eastern Han mirrors have inscriptions alluding to the legendary rulers warding off evil and bringing good fortune. As mentioned in discussions of the Four Spirits paintings, mirrors are an important element to understanding how ideas and images were transmitted. First of all, mirrors are highly portable and durable. In the Han dynasty, they were an important export item. Han

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692 Other similarities between these tombs must be noted, as well as the relatively close geographical proximity between Shandong and the territory of the Goguryeo Kingdom. Yi’nan Tomb 1 is a large, complex tomb, but there are structural similarities between it and the tomb building of Goguryeo. Yi’nan is a stone edifice, like the Goguryeo Tombs. More notably, the ceiling is a series of *lanterndecke* style corbelling. While only a few of the images can be compared to those in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the depictions of daily life scenes and entertainment are often compared to those in earlier Goguryeo tombs with murals. Yi’nan Tomb 1’s structure and decoration is often compared to the fourth-century Anak Tomb 3, located near Pyongyang. (See: Shih “I-nan and Related Tombs,” 277-312)
mirrors have been excavated in territory far beyond its borders. Because they were portable, such items were important tools in the transmission of images and ideas.

While mythical figures are not found in the Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs, depictions of Han mythological figures are found in early period Goguryeo tombs with murals in Pyongyang and Ji’an. The early-fifth-century Pyongyang area Tomb of the Niche Spirit has an image of the mythical Queen Mother of the West painted above the niche on the west wall of the front chamber (fig.324). The Queen Mother of the West was a popular deity in the Han cult of immortality. The fifth-century Three Chamber Tomb in Ji’an may have a depiction of Chi You, the Chinese god of war (fig.325). These earlier tombs may have been impacted by newly arriving Chinese immigrants as well as the absorption of Lelang. Anak Tomb 3 belonging to Dong Shou and the Deokheung-ri Tomb belonging to a man named Zhen illustrate the impact of new immigrants.

The most distinctive depiction of Chinese mythology is the Oxherd and the Weaver Maid, a famous myth that continues to be popular in China even today, found in the Deokheung-ri Tomb near Pyongyang (fig.326). This tomb dates to 408 CE and is believed to belong to a Chinese immigrant named Zhen. In this story, the Oxherd and Weaver Maid, the daughter of God in Heaven or Tiandi 天帝, are allowed to marry, but because she then neglects her weaving, they are forced apart, each living on a different side of a river. These figures are personifications of constellations. The Oxherd is Altair

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693 Han mirrors were found in tombs near Pyongyang where the Han commandery of Lelang was situated. (Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan Nangang, 38-41.)
694 神塚 (C: Kanshen zhong; K: Gamsin chong.)

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and the Weaver Maid is Vega, and the river that separated them was the Milky Way.\textsuperscript{695} In his article on Deokheung-ri Tomb, J.P. Park argues that the depiction of these images represents the occupant’s longing for his home. The deceased’s desire for his home is represented by the Oxherd and Weaver Maid’s longing for each other.\textsuperscript{696} The choice to depict these images in his tomb shows the occupant’s connection to the Chinese cultural sphere and can be interpreted as his desire to carry this connection into the afterlife.

Other tombs have brief allusions to Chinese mythology. This poses an important question: what do these images tell us about the tomb occupants? It is known that the owner of the Deokheung-ri Tomb was a Chinese immigrant, which helps explain his choice of imagery. However, as far as one can tell, the owners of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs were not immigrants. These tombs most likely belong to the noble elite who dominated the Ji’an region toward the end of the Goguryeo Kingdom.\textsuperscript{697} How did these images arrive in this location outside of China proper, and why, then, did the occupants choose these images for their tomb decoration?

Geng Tiehua argues that these images manifest themselves in these Goguryeo tombs because of a longstanding connection to the Han through Goguryeo’s conquest of the former Han commanderies, including Lelang.\textsuperscript{698} It is true that the former Han territories, such as Lelang, did remain as pockets of Han culture, even after the Han fell. This explains the attraction Lelang held for Chinese immigrants, such as Dong Shou in Anak Tomb 3 and Zhen in the Deokheung-ri Tomb.

\textsuperscript{695} Birrell \textit{Chinese Mythology}, 165-166.
\textsuperscript{696} J.P. Park, 32-37
\textsuperscript{697} Jilin sheng bowuguan, 66.
\textsuperscript{698} Geng “Ji’an Wukuifen wuhao,” 41.
Han imagery appears to have been adopted and adapted throughout the evolution of Goguryeo tomb murals. Some examples are the sun and moon with the three-legged crow and the toad, popular funerary images in the Han. However, the connection to the Han through the absorption of Han territories does not explain why specific, and very advanced, paintings appear only in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Rather than coming directly from a Han source and evolving in Goguryeo territory, these images appear to have developed outside of the Kingdom and been adopted in their advanced form. The similarities between the same images depicted in the three tombs may help explain this phenomenon.

A side-by-side comparison of some of the figures drives home how similar the figures are. Different pigments may be used, and minor details, like hairstyles, may have been changed; but structurally, all of the figures are nearly identical to their counterparts in the other tombs. The figures’ gestures, positioning, and accoutrements, including the placement of some of the trees, are virtually indistinguishable. The similarities lead one to wonder if the figures are copied from the same model.

In East Asia, there is a long history of painters copying the paintings of masters, and some of the discrepancies observed in the Ji’an Four Spirits tomb paintings are sometimes seen in copies: the awkward placement of limbs or confusion over where a line begins and ends. It has already been posited that the painters of the tombs may have been Chinese; it also seems likely that those painting the interiors were following models, perhaps paintings. That does not mean, however, that there is a lack of innovation in the paintings. Obvious changes occur, such as in the juxtaposition of the figures. For
example, even though the figures of Shennong and Zhurong face the same direction in both Tomb 4 and Tomb 5, Shennong is on the right in one tomb and on the left in the other. Also, the dragon-rider figures were changed between Tombs 4 and 5. In Tomb 5, the dragon-rider is an Emperor, and in Tomb 4, it seems as though that figure is transformed into a simple immortal.\textsuperscript{699} These figures may have been copies, possibly executed by Chinese artisans and possibly from an original painting imported from China. Of course, this does not explain why these images were chosen to decorate these tomb interiors.

In the late Goguryeo, the centralized structure of the government was crumbling, and nobles were gaining power, especially away from the capital. An indication of the rift in authority is the adoption of Daoism by the nobility before it was chosen as the official religion under King Bojang. It was Bojang’s father Yeon Gaeseomun, a powerful noble himself, who pushed his son to adopt Daoism as the state religion and invited Tang Daoist emissaries to Goguryeo.\textsuperscript{700} However, before this occurred, Daoism was already being followed by the nobles.

The mid-sixth century saw a huge shift in the power and politics of Goguryeo, and Northeast Asia as a whole. In 531, King Anjang 安藏王 was assassinated, and when his successor fell ill in 544, approximately two thousand people were killed during the conflict that arose. In 557, Commander Ganjuri 干朱理 led a rebellion in Guonei City, near where the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are located; although he was quickly defeated, his uprising was symptomatic of the times. The kingship of Goguryeo never regained true

\textsuperscript{699} Kim Jin-soon also notes the similarities between the two dragon riders. (Kim Jin-soon, 113.)
\textsuperscript{700} Jung “Daoism in Korea,” 795; Kim Busik, Sinpyeon Samguk sagi sang, 458-459.)
power after these events, and it was the aristocracy who rose to power. To limit the 
struggles of power between the nobles, they developed a system called daedaero 大對盧, 
under which the nobles elected a leader every three years. If someone could not be 
chosen peaceably, then the leader was chosen through armed conflict. The king was not 
allowed to interfere.\footnote{Yeo, 143-44.}

The world outside of Goguryeo was also rapidly changing the sixth century. In 
534, Northern Wei fell apart and became Eastern and Western Wei. Eastern Wei fell and 
became Northern Qi in 550. Western Wei became Northern Zhou in 557. Goguryeo’s 
allies the Rouran 柔然 fell to the Turks in 552. Northern Zhou eventually defeated 
Northern Qi, only to fall to the Sui in 581. While many of the swiftly changing Chinese 
dynasties threatened the Goguryeo, the Sui unified the Chinese territory and then turned 
their roving eyes to the border areas. The Sui battled the Goguryeo until they fell to the 
Tang in 618.

During this period of unrest in Northeast Asia, Goguryeo developed a system of 
defense that further empowered the nobility. They constructed a series of fortresses 
located in secluded valleys surrounded by mountains. The nobles who ruled over the 
fortresses were given great power as both military leaders and governors. The fortresses 
varied in size, and, of course, the leaders of the largest fortresses had the greatest 
power.\footnote{Yeo, 143-44.} As the former capital of Goguryeo, Guonei City together with the nearby 
mountain fortress of Wandu was a formidable locale. It was outside Guonei City where 
the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs were built.
The paintings of the mythological figures are one illustration of the regional autonomy displayed in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The divergence from the Pyongyang tombs indicates the power of the occupants. Why, though, did they choose imagery displaying a foreign concept of the rise of civilization? While the Deokheung-ri Tomb may show an immigrant’s cultural yearning, the Goguryeo occupants of the Ji’an tombs may be trying the associate themselves with a culture and period of great power, not to mention stability. By depicting these mythical figures, the paintings illustrate the golden age of antiquity. They are also replicating ideological models from one of the greatest periods of Chinese history, the Han. Han was a period of great power and expansion, the last great empire East Asia had known. Goguryeo was intimately aware of the Han’s vastness and supremacy, since the Han had occupied the majority of its territory. Perhaps as centralized power crumbled, the nobles looked to a model outside their current weakened government and beyond its neighbors who were a constant threat.

The illustrations of legendary figures may purposefully refer to a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous time. The Ji’an Four Spirits tomb figures appear to allude to the golden period of antiquity. Similar to the Han mirrors, these mythological illustrations likely served to protect the deceased on their ascension as well as confer stability and prosperity, the qualities of a different age, on their descendants.

3.7 Flying Celestials

In the original reports, the authors call the figures on the uppermost second layer ceiling corbels in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 “musicians” or “heavenly
However, these terms are too narrow and simplistic to describe the flying figures since not all of them play instruments, and there is a variety of beings depicted. They are, for the most part, non-specific celestial immortals. Some ride mythological beasts, others fly with the aid of clouds. Some are depicted as traditional immortals with their antenna-like hairstyles, feather-garments, and pointy ears that can be seen as early as the Han. Other figures resemble sixth-century Buddhist *apsara* or “flying heavenly beings” with their topknots, fluttering streamer laden garments, and human-like facial features. However, all these figures are meant to depict heavenly immortals, a concept that took form in the proto-Daoist cult of immortality that grew to the height of its popularity during the Han. The figures on the second layer of ceiling corbels in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 fly among the stars above the land-bound immortals depicted below.

### 3.7.1 Traditional Celestial Immortals

Many of the celestial immortals depicted on the top layer of Tombs 4 and 5 share traits of both traditional immortals and Buddhist-style “flying heavenly beings,” but three figures on Tomb 4’s top corbels are distinctly of the “traditional immortal” type. The

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703 Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61 and 65; Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 131. Heavenly musicians are known as *gandharva* in Sanskrit.
704 The first layer of ceiling corbels in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb also displays flying celestials riding mythical beasts. However, these figures were discussed in the section on Mythological Figures.
705 Kim Jin-soon refers to these figures as *jeontong seonin* 정통 선인 or “traditional immortals.” (Kim Jin-soon, 115) Several terms are used when discussing these types of figures, the most common being an “immortal person” 仙人 (*C*: xianren; *K*: seonin) or “spirit immortal” 神仙 (*C*: shenxian; *K*: sinseon). The figures in these tombs belong to a specific type of an immortal that belongs in the heavens, rather than an earthbound human who has attained immortality. Other terms used are: “feathered person” 羽人 (*C*: yuren; *K*: uin), as many of the figures wear feather garments signifying their transcendence.
706 飛天 (*C*: feitian; *K*: bicheon).
fourth-century text, *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, describes immortals as having square pupils and large ears, wearing feather-garments, and riding cranes or dragons. While this account is written after the Han dynasty, depictions of immortals from the Han parallel this description (fig.327-328). Several of the figures on the second layer of the ceiling corbels in Tomb 4 adhere to this portrayal. They are a type of long eared, feather-garment wearing immortal that first appeared in the Han dynasty and continued to appear in the art of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. These figures ride a dragon, a phoenix, and a peacock.

The figure on Tomb 4’s top west panel adheres to the traditional immortal type (fig.329). The dragon he rides is similar to another dragon on the east panel, but the east figure’s appearance is divergent. It is more similar to the dragon-riding immortal on the layer of corbels below. The west dragon rider has long ears and an antenna-like hairstyle. He wears a feather-garment, which ends below the knee, and he also wears long, curled black shoes. He is placed to the left of the moon with the toad. The figure plays a long U-shaped horn.

Dragon-riding immortals have a long history in the art of China. Dragon-riding immortals appeared as early as the Han in China, and were often depicted traveling in the land of the immortals or in the heavens. The Eastern Han Wu Family Shrine 2 in Shandong has examples of immortals riding dragons (fig.330). Feathered people ride stocky, horned dragons accompanying other immortals riding in cloud chariots. The

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707 Robinet “The Taoist Immortal,” 87; *Baopuzi* ch.2,4.
708 胡角 (C: hujiao, K: 뿔피리 ppulpiri). (Kim Jin-soon, 115.) This U-shaped horn is found in a multitude of Goguryeo tombs, beginning with the fourth-century Anak Tomb 3 and spanning to the late-sixth, early-seventh-century Gangseo Great Tomb.
dragon-riding feathered people adhere to the tradition style of immortal that was popular
during the Han. They have wings and feathered garments, long ears, and antenna-type
hairstyles. These figures were the precursors to the traditional-style immortals found in
the Northern and Southern Dynasties and Goguryeo.

Dragon-riding immortals similar to those from the Han appeared later in the
funerary arts of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, as well. Examples of such riders
can be found on a Northern Wei sarcophagus excavated in Luoyang (fig.331). These
dragon-riding attendants play music like the figure in the Five Helmets Tomb 4. They
have large pointed ears and antenna-like hairstyles similar to the Han and Tomb 4 dragon
riders. However, the Luoyang dragon riders wear long, flowing robes rather than feather-
garments. In comparison, the feather-garment wearing dragon rider in Tomb 4 appears
evocative of the Han-style immortal.

On the east panel in Tomb 4 is a traditional-style immortal riding a phoenix
(fig.332). Birds were thought to be able to travel between the heavens and earth, and
therefore they are often used as steeds for immortals. Immortals also often display avian
characteristics, like feathers, which enable their ascendance.709 The Tomb 4 phoenix
rider’s ears are long and round like a deer’s and his head is cone shaped. He wears a dark,
feather-garment with a wide, white belt and long, curled black shoes. He plays a bamboo
flute710 and faces forward. The phoenix has mostly green wings with red layered on the
top portion and a white body. It also has the typical rooster-like appearance with a bright

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710 笛 (C: di, K: jeok or 피리 piri). (Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61.)
red comb and wattle. The phoenix has a two-plumed tail. The phoenix and rider fly to the right of the sun with the three-legged crow.

Similar to the dragon riders, phoenix riders are closely associated with the immortality cult and ascension. They also appear in Buddhist venues in non-Buddhist ways, as well on funerary items associated with themes immortality. Mogao Cave 249 in Dunhuang depicts phoenix riders (fig.333). On the ceiling of this cave, the phoenix riders accompany the Queen Mother of the West who rides in a chariot pulled by phoenixes. They wear long robes and carry banners, which contrast with the Tomb 4 phoenix rider’s traditional immortal appearance. The phoenixes are similar in appearance to that in Tomb 4. They have rooster combs and short, rounded beaks. The Tomb 4 phoenix and those in Mogao Cave 249 also have puffed chests, the front of which is decorated with a dotted pattern. The depiction in Tomb 4 is much more detailed. The phoenix being ridden in Tomb 4 more closely resembles the riderless phoenix in the Western Wei Mogao Cave 285 (fig.334). The Cave 285 phoenix has the head of a rooster, similarly sized wings, and a two-plumed tail. It does not have a rider, but it appears opposite a figure riding a peacock.

Phoenix riders appear on sixth-century Northern Dynasty funerary items as well. The Northern Wei Yuan Mi sarcophagus located at the Minneapolis Institute of Art also depicts phoenix riders as a part of a retinue (fig.335). These bird riders fly at the end of the eastern panel which contains depictions of the Green Dragon and an animal headed bird, as well as myriad other images. Like the attendant images in Mogao Cave 249 in

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711 For a closer view see: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Sarcophagus of Prince Cheng Ching (Yuan Mi), 524 CE at http://www.artsmia.org/viewer/detail.php?v=2&id=738 (2 Aug. 2009.)
Dunhuang, the figures carry banners. Phoenix riders also appear on a roughly contemporary sixth-century sarcophagus found in Luoyang. Phoenix riders appear behind the White Tiger and its rider. These figures wear long robes and have their hair in buns. They are led by a riderless rooster-like phoenix. 712

Phoenix riders appear in other Goguryeo Tombs, as well. The early to mid-fifth-century Tomb of the Heavenly King and Earthly Spirit located near Pyongyang has depictions of figures riding birds. A reproduction shows a “heavenly king” riding a phoenix (fig.336). 713 His hair is in a high chignon and he holds a banner streamer. Unlike the Tomb 4 phoenix rider, the heavenly king wears a long robe. The phoenix also lacks the long tail-plumage and does not have a rooster like head.

Another phoenix riding immortal appears in the early-seventh-century Gangseo Great Tomb, a Four Spirits tomb also located near Pyongyang (fig.337). 714 The rider in the Gangseo Great Tomb more closely resembles the figure in Tomb 4. He is a traditional immortal with long ears who wears a feather-garment. The phoenix he rides is less rigid than that in the Tomb of the Heavenly King and Earthly Spirit. The bird’s wings and feathers are depicted with fluid strokes. The bird’s head, however, lacks the rooster-like appearance of that in Tomb 4.

The depiction of the phoenix rider in Tomb 4 more closely resembles the fluent depiction in the Gangseo Great Tomb than that of Tomb of the Heavenly King and Earthly Spirit. The rooster-like appearance also resembles depictions on the sixth-

713 天王 (C: Tianwang; K: Cheonwang) inscribed above the figure identifies it as a “heavenly king.” (National Museum of Korea, Goguryeo Tomb Murals: Replicas in the National Museum of Korea. [Seoul: Jujaso, 2007]: 140-141.)
714 Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 70.
century Mogao Caves 249 and 285 in Dunhuang and Northern Wei tombs, although representing phoenixes with the attributes of roosters had occurred at least as early as the Han dynasty. The physical appearance as well as the advanced skill of the painting of the Five Helmets Tomb 4 phoenix rider places this figure in the mid-sixth to early-seventh centuries.

The last traditional celestial immortal also straddles the imagery of the past and the present. On the southern panel of Tomb 4, a figure rides a peacock towards the cup portion of the Southern Dipper (fig.338). This figure, like the phoenix rider, has the appearance of a traditional immortal. He has long pointed ears and a tall antenna-like hairstyle and wears a feather-garment and long, curled shoes. He holds a bowl with reddish brown contents. The bird twists his head towards him. The peacock’s body is mainly green, and the tail is fanned with the yellow eye-like spots clearly visible.

Peacocks were important creatures when depicting the heavens in Han tombs. Early representations of the Red Bird seem to be partially derived from peacocks (fig.339). Examples from Western Han painted tombs in Luoyang show birds with plumed heads and three tail plumes that display the eye-like decoration found on peacocks.

While the peacock was used in Han funerary art, the peacock rider in Tomb 4 is remarkably similar to a figure painted on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 in Dunhuang (fig.340). The Dunhuang figure also rides a peacock, and although the body of the peacock is slightly different, the pose of the immortal and the peacock is similar to that in

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715 Rawson Ornament, 99.
Tomb 4. The Dunhuang rider also has the appearance of a traditional immortal, with large ears and an antenna-like hairstyle, and he holds a bowl-like container in his right hand. Unlike the Tomb 4 peacock rider, the Dunhuang figure holds a banner in his left hand, and the rider and the peacock face different directions. Despite their differences, their resemblance is uncanny.

Painters of the traditional immortals on the topmost corbel in the Goguryeo Five Helmets Tomb 4 masterfully depicted a type of being that arose centuries before. The appearance of these bird and dragon riders echoes what is seen in the funerary arts of the Han dynasty. They have the peculiar appearance with large ears and feather-garments. They also have the antenna-like hairstyle of an immortal. However, the traditional-style immortals in Tomb 4 are executed with a fluency not seen in the Han examples. The sixth-century painters combined the notion of the traditional immortal and the creatures that can ascend into the heavens, birds and dragons. They also play musical instruments, something more commonly seen in Buddhist heavenly retinues as seen below.

The Tomb 4 figures are more stylistically in tune with the depictions of heavenly celestials seen in the funerary and religious arts of sixth-century China. However, their roots are firmly connected to the Han celestial immortal. The Tomb 4 traditional immortal is possibly more closely linked to the ancient illustrations of immortals than the sixth-century Chinese depictions since they also wear feather-garments. The sixth-

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717 While one can easily find Han examples of immortals riding dragons, it is more difficult to find Han immortals riding birds. One such example in the Western Han Bu Qianqiu Tomb in Luoyang shows a woman standing on the back of a three-headed bird. Depicting a person riding astride on a bird may have been difficult for the Han artists.
century Chinese immortals discussed above wear long flowing robes that are seen on Buddhist “flying heavenly beings.” In the sixth century, the Buddhist-style figures deeply impacted portrayals of immortals, an impact that is seen in the other celestial immortals in Tomb 4 and in Tomb 5.

3.7.2 *Apsara*-Style Immortals

While some of the figures painted on the ceilings of Tombs 4 resemble the type of immortal that had gained popularity in the Han, others in this tomb and Tomb 5 are purely contemporary, borrowing heavily from depictions of Buddhist *apsara* or “flying heavenly beings.” The *apsara* style figures lack the weird appearance of the Han style immortals and instead demonstrate their otherworldliness through their elaborate garments that flutter in the wind and through flight. In the Ji’an tombs, traits from traditional immortals and *apsara*-style figures are often combined.

In the discussion below, I will divide the *apsara*-like figures into two basic groups: those riding animals and those flying without animals. In Tomb 4, there are four figures flying without the aid of a mount and one *apsara*-like dragon rider; all wear long robes. In Tomb 5, there are seven *apsara*-like dragon-riding figures; four wear long robes, and three are bare from the waist up. All these figures are attendants and entertainers that are stylistically linked to similar figures found in sixth-century Buddhist cave temples.
DRAGON-RIDERS

The figure on the top east panel in Tomb 4 more closely adheres to the Buddhist style figure than to the traditional immortal type (fig.341). Placed to the left of the sun with the three-legged crow, he plays a panpipe\textsuperscript{718} and holds a streamer-banner in his right hand. Unlike the traditional immortals, his hair is piled onto his head in a topknot and he wears a long elegant robe along with long, curled black shoes. He twists in space and looks backward. His dragon is similar to the dragon mount painted on the lower corbel. Its body is five colors, and each detail is meticulously rendered. The dragon leaps through space with its large mouth gaping. It has red flame-like wings and a horned head.

The figures on the second layer of Tomb 5’s ceiling are less varied than the celestial immortals in Tomb 4. Eight dragon riders are depicted on the top layer of Tomb 5’s ceiling, and seven of these are \textit{apsara}-like entertainers (fig.101). (The eighth appears to be a regal figure; he is being entertained.) These figures closely adhere to the \textit{apsara}-style of figure, even more so than the panpipe-playing figure in Tomb 4. None of the figures demonstrates traits associated with traditional depictions of immortals. They either wear long, elaborate robes or are bare from the waist up. Their garments are more elaborate than those of the Tomb 4 panpipe player with the addition of fluttering and billowing streamers.

On the northeast panel are two figures wearing long robes; the figure on the left plays a long, curved horn similar to the dragon rider on the west panel in Tomb 4. This figure twists in space and overlaps the cup portion of the Northern Dipper. The figure on

\textsuperscript{718} 響 (C: xiao, K: 통소 tongso). (Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 131; Kim Jin-soon, 115.)
the right plays a panpipe, similar to the dragon rider on the east panel in Tomb 4. They wear long-sleeved, elaborate robes, and their hair is piled into topknots. Akin to all the second layer dragon riders in Tomb 5, their feet are not visible; their legs appear to end in wispy tendrils.

The two figures on the southeastern panel are painted layered over the sun with the three-legged crow. The figure on the left wears a long robe with incredibly long sleeves. This figure, likely a female, lifts her arms up with her long sleeves draped downward as she twists in space. The garment and posture is that of a dancer, adding another type of entertainment to the retinue. The back half of this figure’s dragon covers the top half the sun. The posture of the dragon is also complex; it twists its neck backward with its mouth gaping and its long, red tongue protruding. The figure on the right appears to be bare-chested and plays a long flute. He wears a long skirt-like garment and has his hair piled high on his head. The flute player’s dragon holds his head high. They are placed to the left of the Southern Dipper.

On the southwest panel, one figure plays a two-sided drum, and the other plays a long-stringed instrument. The figures on this panel are incredibly dynamic with their streamers and hair soaring; the figures twist in space and move their arms, and the dragons leaping and straining their head upwards. These figures also seem to be looking downward, perhaps upon the figures on the layer below or upon the tomb occupants. The figures on the southwestern panel also are bare-chested. The bare chests of these
heavenly musicians firmly identify them as Buddhist in style. The *dhotī* style garment came from India with Buddhism; it is not native to China or Korea.\(^719\)

The northwest panel contains what may be considered the main image, a crowned figure that will be discussed in the next section, as well as another musician. Behind the crowned figure is another musician playing a stringed instrument resembling a banjo.\(^720\) This figure wears a long robe. In the report this musician is identified as female.\(^721\)

As mentioned previously, dragon-riding immortals were popular in the funerary arts of the Han period. However, after the introduction of the Buddhist *apsara*, immortals changed. They often had human facial features and elaborate, sumptuous garments with a multitude of streamers. But, although immortals in the post-Han period often portray traits similar to *apsara* found in Buddhist sites, it is unusual to see *apsara* riding animals.

Many of the depictions of dragon riders in Buddhist venues from the Northern and Southern Dynasties period are not related to Buddhism. Often times the figures are illustrations of figures from popular religion and Daoism. One example is found outside the Northern Wei Huoshao 火燒 Cave at Longmen (fig.342). There is a dragon rider carved above the entrance on the left side. This figure is identified as the Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu 西王母, a popular deity who can be traced to Chinese popular religion. She is one of the most important figures in the Chinese cult of immortality. She

\(^719\) These half-nude figures can be found in the early Northern Wei cave temples at Yungang. Kim Jin-soon asserts that only in Goguryeo tombs does one see half-nude figures used in a Daoist context. (Kim Jin-soon, 117.)

\(^720\) 阮 (C: ruan; K: wan)

\(^721\) Jilin sheng bowuguan, 65.
is depicted above a decidedly Buddhist image of a person born from a lotus. The Queen Mother of the West wears a long, elegant Northern Wei-style robe without the elaborate streamers fluttering behind her. She carries a banner-streamer.

Other dragon-riding figures appear in Mogao Cave 249 in Dunhuang. These figures accompany the King Father of the East, Dongwanggong 東王公, the Queen Mother of the West’s consort. The Dunhuang dragon riders wear long robes, similar to that of the panpipe player in Tomb 4. They do not have the elaborate streamers of the Tomb 5 figures. Also like the Tomb 4 panpipe player, they hold streaming banners. Similar to the Ji’an dragon-mounts, the Mogao Cave 249 dragons leap across the ceiling, their bodies outstretched. However, the Dunhuang dragons are slightly stockier and less lithe than the Goguryeo examples, and the Dunhuang dragons’ wings are fleshier and less flame-like.

Dragon riders can also be found at Yungang. Yungang Cave 38 depicts a series of dragon riders circling around the center of a lotus flower (fig.260). These figures wear Northern Wei-style robes rather than the usual Indian style garb of the *apsara*. Around the dragon riders are a series of *apsara* playing instruments and wearing elaborate robes with streamers. Also nearby is a depiction of a figure riding an elephant. This scene perhaps represents the deceased traveling to the Buddhist Pure Land accompanied by a

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722 Dongwanggong, the King Father of the East, is depicted on the left. He rides a tiger. (Ryūmon Bunbutsu Hokanjo, 197.)
723 In this Western Wei cave temple, the King Father of the East rides in a dragon chariot, while Queen Mother of the West rides in a chariot drawn by phoenixes. (Dunhuang yanjiuyuan Dunhuang shiku yishu: Mogao di 249, 201 and 204.)
musical retinue and dragon riders. Here it appears that visual representations of Buddhist and Daoist ideas concerning transcendence and the afterlife converged.

Dragon riders continued to be popular in the funerary arts of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. During this period, it became fashionable to depict immortals riding Four Spirits, the Green Dragon included. (While the Four Spirits are riderless in the Goguryeo tombs, some of the depictions of the Green Dragons with riders are similar to the immortals.) An example is found in a Southern Dynasty brick tomb in Wuhan, Hubei (fig.243). The lithe dragon with the attenuated, horned head and wispy wings is remarkably similar to the dragons in the Five Helmets Tombs. The rider wears its hair in a tall chignon and its robe is long and flowing. This style of figure is also found in the north. The Northern Wei epitaph belonging to Erzhu Xi depicts a similar figure. Although the dragon rider is carved into the epitaph rather than painted, the minute details are still rendered. The dragon has a similarly lithe body with wispy wing-like appendages on its limbs. The wings are more stylized and less delicate, but still have a slight flame-like appearance. The Erzhu Xi figure wears a long robe with streamers and a lotus crown, similar to the figure on the northwest panel of Tomb 5 (fig.344).

The above examples are immortals riding the Green Dragon, which are conceptually different than the multitude of attendant dragon riders found on the Five Helmets Tomb ceilings. However, examples of attendant immortals are also found in Northern and Southern funerary art. Examples of dragon riders can be found on a

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726 Kim Jin-soon, 118.
Northern Wei sarcophagus found in Luoyang. This sarcophagus has depictions of the Four Spirits as well as a myriad of immortals. As is common in Northern Dynasty depictions, immortals ride them. Behind the animals, a group of dragon-riders wear long robes with their hair in high chignons. These images are smaller than the Four Spirits, and they appear to be attending to the larger immortal, carrying trays and playing music. The dragons bear resemblance to those on the Erzhu Xi epitaph, and they have similarly stylized wings.

The dragon riders on the second layer of the ceiling corbels in Tomb 4 and 5 are depicted with a fluidity and spirit that surpasses that of the examples mentioned above. They reflect the changes that occurred as the depiction of dragon-riding immortals evolved from the Han to the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Stylistically, they are more in tune with depictions found in the southern tombs, such as that from Wuhan, Hubei. The southern dragon rider and the dragon were depicted with a suppleness that is not quite achieved in the northern depictions. The agility of the paintings in Tomb 4 is analogous to the southern depictions. However, the dragons and riders in Tomb 5 surpass all of the above examples in elasticity and fluidity. The dragons especially bend and turn in space almost as though they have no bones. Therefore, it seems that while the Ji’an dragon riders follow the examples of dragon riders from the Northern and Southern Dynasties, they went a step further, perhaps owing to the presumed slightly later dates, late-sixth or early-seventh century.

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Mountless Apsara-Like Immortals

In addition to the immortals riding animals, there are four figures in Tomb 4 that fly without animal mounts (fig.345). These figures are closely related to depictions of apsara and lack the attributes of the traditional immortal. They all wear long robes with billowing streamers. Three of the figures play instruments, and one appears to carry a plate.

On the top southern panel of Tomb 4, a figure kneels under the handle of the Southern Dipper (fig.346). He wears a long, dark robe with golden, billowing streamers. His hair is tied in a high chignon, and his feet and calves are bared revealing long black shoes. This is one of the only examples in which the figure’s facial features are still clearly depicted, showing he has a mustache. The reports describe him as playing a mouth organ, although this is no longer clear.

There are three figures on the northern panel (fig.347). They all wear long robes and have fluttering streamers. They are placed among the stars that form the Northern Dipper. The figure on the far right plays a zither. He is the only one of the three who exposes his feet and his long, curled shoes, and he is the only one who wears a lotus crown. His streamers form an arch over his head. The middle figure wears a long robe and plays a double-sided drum. He appears to kneel on wispy clouds. The figure on the left holds a bowl in his right hand and scroll in his left.

728 竽 (C: yu; K: u). It is similar to a Korean saenghwang 생황.
729 Jilin sheng bowuguan, 61; Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 132. The photographs and line drawings do not depict a mouth organ.
730 Jilin sheng wenwu gongzuodui, 132.
Apsara-like figures do appear in other Goguryeo tombs from the middle and late periods. Some are likely representations of Buddhist figures, and others, similar to the figures in Tomb 4, appear only heavily influenced by Buddhist heavenly beings. For example, the fifth-century Three Chamber Tomb has flying heavenly musicians on its ceiling (fig.348). They wear long robes or are bare from the waist up with fluttering streamers. Some have mandorlas around their heads connecting them to Buddhism. Similarly haloed heavenly musicians found in Changchuan Tomb 1 are located near a depiction of Buddha and bodhisattvas and can therefore be definitively identified as apsara (fig.349). These tombs, both located in the Ji’an region, lack the long, elaborate robes of the Tomb 4 heavenly immortals.\textsuperscript{731}

The Gangseo Great Tomb in the Pyongyang area illustrates the last Goguryeo evolution of these heavenly musicians (fig.350). Apsara-like musicians that are bare from the waist up fly between mountain peaks. They have a multitude of streamers that fly behind them, and their hair is in high chignons. These figures are more closely related to the figures in Tomb 5 that ride dragons but are bare from the waist up. Similar to the figures in Tomb 4, these riderless musicians are non-Buddhist celestial immortals. They are borrowed images from Buddhist art.

Heavenly musicians and attendants similar to those on Tomb 4’s northern panel are ubiquitous in Buddhist art of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and they crossed over into the funerary arts. Each of the mountless immortals in Tomb 4 can be paralleled

\textsuperscript{731} Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 96-99.
to a figure type found in sixth-century Buddhist cave temples as well as contemporary funerary art.

A figure type similar to the kneeling figure on Tomb 4’s southern panel, without musical instrument, appears in the Guyang Cave at Longmen (fig.351). Two of the early-sixth-century niches depict *apsara* flying on clouds above the main Buddha images (and above these figures two kneeling figures). They wear elaborate long robes with the flying ribbons, and their hair is in high chignons. The most interesting aspects are the posture of these figures the positioning of the drapery, which parallel those of the Tomb 4 figure. Similar kneeling figures also appear in the sixth-century brick tomb at Dengxian, a tomb that, similar to the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, combines both Buddhist and non-Buddhist style images (fig.352).

Figures resembling the celestial immortals on Tomb 4’s north panel can also be located in the Guyang Cave and Dengxian Tomb. The Guyang Cave at Longmen has depictions of *apsara* musicians placed above some of the niches. Similar to the middle figure on the north panel of Tomb 4, these figures kneel on scrolling clouds, which flit beneath them (fig.353). They wear similar garments as well. They wear long robes and have their hair in high chignons.

*Apsara* musicians appear in Yungang Cave 38 in a ring around the dragon riders (fig.354). Similar to the cloud riding *apsara* in the Guyang Cave at Longmen, these carvings date to the early-sixth century. Significantly, the ceiling of the cave contains depictions of both dragon riders and heavenly musicians, similar to Tomb 4.

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732 Ryûmon Bunbutsu Hokanjo, 181.
733 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 53-54.
*Apsara*-like musicians and attendants also appear in contemporary funerary arts. The sixth-century southern tomb at Dengxian has *apsara*-like figures both painted and impressed into brick. On the entrance to the tomb is a painting of an *apsara*-like figure that is similar to the figure holding the bowl and scroll on the left side of the north panel in Tomb 4 (fig.355). Both figures arch their backs and have their legs placed behind them. They wear long robes and have high chignons. Similar figures are also found in the Southern Dynasty tomb at Huqiao.\(^{734}\)

Dengxian also has depictions of *apsara*-like musicians on the interior of the tomb impressed into bricks. These figures play instruments similar to those in Tomb 4. They similarly wear long robes and kneel on wispy clouds. *Apsara*-like immortals without animal mounts appear to have been particularly popular in the funerary arts of the Southern Dynasties.

It appears as though the flamboyant *apsara*-style figures without mounts were less popular in the Northern Dynasty funerary arts. However, the Yuan Mi sarcophagus has flying attendants in front of the Green Dragon and White Tiger (fig.356). They wear long robes similar to those worn by the *apsara*. One looks similar to the Buddhist flying heavenly beings while the other has the head of a traditional immortal. The Yuan Mi sarcophagus also depicts Confucian filial piety scenes, so perhaps this sarcophagus echoes stylistic trends from the more sinified south.\(^{735}\)

The *apsara*-like figures in Tombs 4 and 5 are similar to examples found in early-sixth-century Buddhist and funerary arts of China. It seems clear that the artists who

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\(^{734}\) The figure in the Huqiao Tomb also wears a lotus crown.

\(^{735}\) He Xilin, 357-359.
executed these images were familiar with the paintings and carvings executed in this period in China. The figures were borrowed from Buddhism and took the place of or accompanied the traditional immortals as flying celestial immortals.

### 3.7.3 Other Celestial Immortals

There are two celestial immortals in Tombs 4 and 5 that do not quite fit the label of “traditional immortal” or “apsara-like” immortal. These figures ride beasts and wear long robes and distinctive headdresses. In both instances, it appears as though they are the main figures and the musicians and attendants are catering to them. Their posture and appearance make them stand out as possibly the main figures on the top layers of corbelling.

On the west panel in Tomb 4, the dragon-riding horn player plays to a plump man riding a crane (fig.357). This figure differs from the other figures on the same layer of ceiling because he neither plays an instrument nor carries anything. Similar to the crowned dragon rider on the northwest panel of Tomb 5’s ceiling, it appears as though this may be the main figure of the composition and the others are in attendance. To further emphasize this, the horn player in front of him twists backward as though playing directly to this figure as does the first figure on the next panel. The crane rider wears a long robe, although his calves and long black shoes are bared. He wears a white cap.

Cranes appear as mounts in other Goguryeo tombs as well. As already mentioned, there are two crane-riders painted on the southeast panel of the Donggou Four Spirits.

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736 It is worth noting that this figure is on the northern portion of the west panel. In Tomb 5 the northwest direction appears to be an important location. As Geng Tiehua notes, the northwest is believed to be the direction of Mount Kunlun. (Geng Tiehua “Ji’an Wukuifen wu hao,” 40.)
Tomb. A figure that may be riding a crane also appears in the Tomb of the Dancers (fig. 358). These figures look like traditional immortals and appear to be attendants while the crane-riding figure in Tomb 4 stands out as the main image.

Perhaps the figure riding the crane in Tomb 4 is meant to be Wangzi Qiao, an immortal who called to cranes. Wangzi Qiao was a popular cult figure from the Han dynasty. He was believed to be a Zhou prince who ascended to the heavens on a crane. He is mentioned in a variety of places, including the Chuci poem *Yuanyou* as well as a late Han (165 CE) stele inscription to Wang Qiao (another name for Wangzi Qiao). The (presumably) late Han text *Liexian zhuan* says of him,

Wangzi Qiao was the heir apparent, named Jin, of King Ling of the Zhou (r. 571-545 BCE). An adept at imitating the song of the phoenix on a reed pipe organ, he wandered between the Yin and the Luo rivers. The Daoist master Lord Fuqu introduced him to Mount Songao. When thirty years later he was being sought out on the mountain, he met with Bo Liang and said to him, “Tell my family to expect me on the seventh day of the seventh month on the peak of Mount Goushi.” On the appointed day he did indeed alight on the mountain peak, riding a white crane. They saw him from afar but were unable to reach him. He raised his hand to take

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737 Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 71.
738 Hawkes, 195.
Wangzi Qiao continues to be worshipped from the Han dynasty until today. He is strongly linked to ascension, which was obviously an important theme in the composition of the Tomb 4 ceiling murals. Dengxian has an example of this story. The two bricks at Dengxian show Wangzi Qiao playing his pipe to a phoenix (fig.359).

Crane-riding immortals had a long tradition in Goguryeo tomb murals, but those depictions differed from that of the Tomb 4 crane rider. While one cannot definitively identify the figure as Wangzi Qiao without an identifying inscription, like the one found in the Dengxian Tomb, it appears as though the Tomb 4 crane rider was more important than those in Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and in the Tomb of the Dancers. The traditional immortal figures seem to have a secondary status as attendant figures. This figure wears a long gown and a white cap, likely connoting his status. Also, the surrounding musician and attendant turn toward this figure, drawing one’s attention to him. Observing his importance within the composition, another possible identification is as the tomb occupant.

On the northwest panel in Tomb 5 there is a robust man riding a dragon in front of the moon (fig.360). The rider playing the banjo-like instrument sits behind him.

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741 Juliano T’eng-hsien, 59.
742 It is worthy of note that all three of these tombs—Five Helmets Tomb 4, the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, and the Tomb of the Dancers—were built in the Ji’an region. The crane rider may depict a regional variation.
stout man sits somewhat rigidly, facing forward, and he wears a long robe and a “lotus crown.” He is the only figure on this layer of ceiling who is not performing.

The stout man and his attendant musician appear to be associated with the dragon-riding emperor and the immortal attendant directly below. The attendant on the lower corbel twists his head, appearing to look above at the musician, and the stately dragon rider is strikingly similar to the dragon-riding emperor below. Their dragons have almost identical outstretched postures. Both the crowned rider and the emperor rigidly face forward. However, their garments are dissimilar. They both wear long, formal robes, but the crowned figure on the second layer has an elaborate garment with streamers flying behind giving him a more ethereal appearance.

The Tomb 5 figure’s location may be worthy of note. The emperor below, who is thought to perhaps be the Yellow Emperor, and the crowned figure on the top layer are both positioned on the northwest panels. Geng Tiehua argued that the northwest has special significance as the location for Mount Kunlun, the land of the immortals. The positioning of these key figures in the northwest may further emphasize their importance. Perhaps this is another important immortal or perhaps it is the occupant on his journey to the realm of the immortals accompanied by a retinue.

3.7.4 **Comparative Analysis: Yungang Cave 38**

The figures on the top layer of corbelling in the Five Helms Tombs 4 and 5 illustrate celestial immortals flying through the clouds and stars. Their function, however,

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743 莲花冠 (C: lianhua guan; K: yeonhwa gwan). (Jilin sheng bowuguan, 65)
744 Geng Tiehua “Ji’an Wukuifen wu hao,” 40.

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is not completely clear. Are they meant to welcome the tomb’s occupant to the immortal realm? Are they meant to accompany the deceased on their journey? Perhaps it even illustrates the deceased on his journey. An analogous example of what is portrayed on top corbel of Tombs 4 and 5 is found in the unlikely place of the Buddhist cave temple, Yungang Cave 38. Examining this composition may help one to understand what is shown in the Goguryeo tombs.

The early-sixth-century grotto at Yungang was not a tomb, per se, but it was constructed in memoriam. Outside the cave temple is an inscription stating that the Wu family, patrons of the cave temple, had lost a son. In that inscription they wish for their son to “ascend to the Pure Land,” a Buddhist version of a heaven.745 Focusing on the ceiling, as already mentioned it is embellished with a ring of *apsara* musicians surrounding a layer of dragon riders. Among these images is a figure riding an elephant.

While the ceiling images in Yungang Cave 38 are Buddhist (fig.361), unlike the images in the Goguryeo Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, it can be argued that fundamentally the construct of ascension seen in these roughly contemporary locales is similar. It is believed that the figure riding the elephant is the deceased. He is traveling to heaven accompanied by the heavenly musicians and dragon riders on his ascent. However, the ending is different than what is seen in the Ji’an tombs. In Yungang Cave 38, the deceased travels to heaven to be reborn. This is shown through the depictions of figures being born from lotuses, which are placed in the center of the ceiling’s composition.746

In the two Goguryeo tombs, it seems that the land of immortals where the flying figures

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745 "騰神浄土" (Unkō Bunbutsu Hokanjo, 220; Eugene Wang "Grotto-Shrine as Chronotope," 283.)
746 Eugene Wang "Grotto-Shrine as Chronotope," 296.
reside is the final destination. The ceiling images in the Goguryeo Tombs 4 and 5 can be interpreted as both a replication and guide to the land of the immortals.

3.7.5 **FLYING CELESTIALS CONCLUSION**

The figures found on the top layer of corbels in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 are sixth-century versions of the Han proto-Daoist celestial immortals. Some of the immortals are the traditional type with antenna-like hair styles, pointy ears, and feather-garments. Others wear long robes or dhōti and are stylistically similar to *apsara* or “flying heavenly beings” found in sixth-century Northern and Southern Dynasty Buddhist cave temples; although, in the Ji’an Five Helmets Tombs, these figures are removed from their Buddhist origins. Both the traditional immortals and the *apsara*-like figures are celestial immortals who fly among the stars. They are also entertainers, likely meant to entertain and welcome the occupants on their ascension.

3.8 **CELESTIAL BODIES**

The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Five Helmets Tomb 4, and the Five Helmets Tomb 5 all have astronomical diagrams on their ceiling. These ceilings specifically display five celestial bodies: the sun, the moon, the six stars of the Southern Dipper,\(^747\) the seven stars of the Northern Dipper,\(^748\) and the Three Northern Polestars.\(^749\) These heavenly bodies are closely aligned within these tombs with the four cardinal directions

\(^{747}\) 南斗六星 (C: Nandou liuxing; K: Namdu yukseong).
\(^{748}\) 北斗七星 (C: Beidou qixing; K: Bukdu chilseong).
\(^{749}\) 北極三星 (C: Beiji sanxing; K: Bukgeuk samseong).
and the center. They create a type of “sky map” that appears particular to the Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs located in Ji’an.

Goguryeo tombs with murals are known for their complicated astronomical diagrams. Almost twice as many Goguryeo tombs have star charts as Chinese tombs from the Wei-Jin to Tang periods. Some early and middle period tombs display complicated systems of constellations together with the sun and the moon. In the early-fifth century, Goguryeo tombs developed a type of astronomical diagram that Kim Il-Gwon calls the “four directional constellation system.” This system was unique to Goguryeo and consisted of the Northern Dipper, the Southern Dipper, the Sim-Bang Six Stars (a portion of Scorpius) in the east, and the Sam-Beol Six Stars (a portion of Orion) in the west (fig.362). These stars are sometimes joined by the Three Northern Polestars in the center. These stars appear in tombs with and without the Four Spirits. Their appearance oriented the tomb to the four (five) directions.

Many of the early and middle period Goguryeo tombs with murals diagram a complicated star map, adding constellations to the direction orienting ones. One of the earliest examples of an elaborate astronomical map is found in the Deokheung-ri Tomb in the Pyongyang region (fig.363). Dating to 408 CE, this tomb included many astronomical elements on its ceiling including the Milky Way as well as myriad

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752 心房六星 (C: Xin-Fang liuxing; K: Sim-Bang yukseong).
753 参伐六星 (C: Shen-Fa liuxing; K: Sam-Beol yukseong).
constellations. Many of the star charts are quite complicated like those found in Deokhwa-ri Tomb 2 (figs.364-365) and Jinpa-ri Tomb 4 (fig.366), which also include the twenty-eight lunar mansions. The star charts painted on the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are simple in comparison.

In the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs a new, simplified system developed (fig.367). The straightforward arrangement orients the tombs and reinforces the depictions of the Four (Five) Spirits. In these tombs, the sun and moon are placed in the east and west, respectively. They are placed above the Green Dragon and White Tiger. The seven stars of the Northern Dipper (Ursa Major) are placed above the Dark Warrior. The six stars of the Southern Dipper (a portion of Sagittarius) are located above the Red Birds. Finally, the Three Northern Polestars are painted in the center on the capping stone. This late-developing astronomical diagram appears to not only be particular to Goguryeo, but it also seems to be a regional development centered in the Ji’an region.

The five celestial bodies painted on the ceilings of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are a mixture of those that have appeared in funerary arts as far back as the Han and those that appear to be unique to Goguryeo. The images that can be traced to the Han are: the sun with the crow, the moon with the toad, and the Northern Dipper. The other two motifs, the Southern Dipper and the Three Northern Polestars, are unusual outside of

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755 There are also images of the stars Altair and Vega in their human forms as the Oxherd and Weaver Maid. (J.P. Park, 32.)
757 Kim Il-Gwon describes this astronomical diagram as appearing in late period Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. However, he only mentions the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs as examples. The Gangseo Great Tomb, the only other tomb with a fifth spirit animal does not appear to have the Three Northern Polestars painted on its ceiling. (Kim Il-Gwon “Byeokhwa cheonmundo,” 1051-1053.) There is one known Chinese tomb with the same configuration of stars, the Northern Qi Majiazhuan Tomb belonging to Dao Gui. This will be discussed later in this section.
Goguryeo. Therefore, the system of the five celestial bodies in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs is a conflagration of traditional motifs that can be traced to the Han and constellations that developed in Goguryeo, which creates a unique astronomical diagram.

I shall now discuss the celestial bodies in pairs. The pairs can be viewed as embodying complementary forces, *yin* and *yang*. The Three Northern Polestars in the center are neutral. The *yin* or *yang* nature of each celestial body echoes its corresponding spirit animal.

### 3.8.1 Sun and Moon

Images of the sun and moon appear in all three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. A three-legged black crow in profile is painted in each of the red suns, and a top down view of a toad appears in the moons. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb the sun and moon are painted on the small east and west panels, respectively, on the first ceiling layer. In Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, the solar and lunar disks appear on the second layer of the ceiling. In Tomb 4 they appear on the east and west panels, and in Tomb 5 they are placed in the east and west corners.

Images of the sun and moon appear in Goguryeo tombs with murals from all three periods and in both Ji’an and Pyongyang. Representations of the sun and moon are almost ubiquitous, and they follow similar patterns. The images always appear on the ceiling corbels or capping stones. The sun has a three-legged black crow portrayed in profile (fig.368-369). The moon has either a toad or a toad accompanied by a hare (fig.370). In one representation, in the Armored Horse Tomb, the hare is pounding an
elixir of immortality (fig.371). A similar depiction is found in Changchuan Tomb 1.\textsuperscript{758} These images appear in the earliest Goguryeo tombs, such as Anak Tomb 3 (fig.372), to the latest, the Gangseo Middle Tomb (fig.373).\textsuperscript{759} Remnants of the sun and moon also appear in the Baekje tombs with murals of Songsan-ri and Neungsan-ri, which demonstrates how ingrained these images were in the funerary culture of the Korean peninsula.

Long before the images of the sun and moon appeared in Goguryeo tombs with murals, they appeared in the funerary arts of China. The images were inexorably linked with ancient myths. In the \textit{Shanhaijing}, the crows carried suns through the sky and placed them on a mulberry tree.\textsuperscript{760} The \textit{Huainanzi} described a crow that lives in the sun.\textsuperscript{761} In his commentary to the \textit{Shanhaijing}, Guo Pu mentioned that according to earlier texts, the crow had three legs.\textsuperscript{762} The toad myth was altogether different. This story was about Chang E 嫦娥 and her husband Archer Yi 后羿.\textsuperscript{763} The Queen Mother of the West gave Archer Yi the elixir of immortality. Chang E stole the elixir and escaped to the moon where she turned into a toad.\textsuperscript{764}

Images of the crow in the sun and the toad in the moon gained popularity in the Western Han and continued into the period contemporary with the Goguryeo Four Spirits.

\textsuperscript{758} Jeon \textit{Goguryeo iyagi}, 61-3
\textsuperscript{759} The three-legged crow’s popularity in Goguryeo extended beyond tomb murals. A portion of a gilded crown that was found in Jinpa-ri Tomb 7 had the image of a three-legged crow incorporated into the open metalwork. (Lee Yeong-hun \textit{Gobun misul I}, 97-98.)
\textsuperscript{760} Birrell \textit{Chinese Mythology} 38; Strassberg, 208-209.
\textsuperscript{761} Major \textit{Heaven and Earth}, 200.
\textsuperscript{762} Strassberg, 208-209.
\textsuperscript{763} Archer Yi was also associated with the sun. It was said that there were ten suns, which were carried by the birds and placed in the mulberry tree. Archer Yi shot them down to keep the earth from burning up. (Birrell \textit{Chinese Mythology}, 139-140.) This is mentioned in Qu Yuan’s poem “Heavenly Questions.” (Hawkes, 129.)
\textsuperscript{764} Birrel \textit{Chinese Mythology}, 144-145.
tombs. During the Han, depictions of the crow in the sun and the toad in the moon appeared on funerary shrouds, tomb paintings and carvings, family shrines, and mirrors. Representations of the toad from the Han and Jin periods are remarkably similar to those in the Goguryeo tombs; however, the crows are somewhat varied.

The majority of examples from the Han show the sun with the crow in flight or with only two legs. Famous examples of crows in the sun appear on the coffin shrouds belonging to the wife of the Marquis of Dai and her son found in Mawangdui, Hunan (figs.374-375). A similar sun is depicted on the Han painting found in Linyi, Shandong (fig.376). Those paintings show a two legged crow standing in the sun. Another famous example is in Bu Qianqiu’s tomb in Luoyang (fig.377). That bird is shown in-flight, so its legs are not visible.

Depicting the crow with three legs was the preference in post-Han northern representations of the sun and crow. One of the earlier post-Han depictions of the three-legged crow bears a strong resemblance to those found in the Goguryeo tombs. The sun in the Yuantaizi Tomb in Chaoyang, Liaoning, has a crow standing on three legs that are distinctly depicted (fig.378). Its wings are outstretched. This bird is similar to those found in the Goguryeo tombs.

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765 Shang Zhi, “Mawangdui 1 hao Han mu 'feiyi' shishi,” Wenwu no.9 (1972): 45; Hunan sheng bowuguan and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, “Changsha Mawangdui 2,3 hao Han mu fajue jianbao,” Wenwu no.7 (1974): 42. Archeologists found these paintings draped over the inner coffins with bamboo poles inserted across the tops. Records in the Shiji and Hanshu as well as later funerary practices have led many scholars to call these paintings “banners.” (Loewe Ways to Paradise, 30.) However, all that is certain is that the paintings covered the coffins like a shroud.


767 Seoul Daehakgyo bangmulgwan, 15. This tomb is probably Jin period, although it is sometimes dated to the Eastern Han.
A remarkable example of Jin Dynasty depictions of the three-legged crow and the sun and moon can be found painted on the ceiling in the Dingjiazha Tomb 5 in Gansu (fig.379). Gansu was a western region on the periphery of the Central Plain culture, similar to Chaoyang, Liaoning, in the east. The ceiling of the front chamber in the Dingjiazha Tomb 5 depicts an immortal mountain overseen by the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East. Interestingly, the three-legged crow is standing next to the Queen Mother of the West’s dais, while the crow in the sun is located above the King Father of the East’s head. The toad in the moon is painted above the Queen Mother of the West. This image of the Queen Mother of the West, minus the moon, echoes an Eastern Han depiction of the deity found on a tomb tile (fig.380). In these instances, the three-legged crow is not associated with the sun or yang. In the Gansu tomb, the flying crow in the sun above the King Father of the East is a yang symbol.

Images of the sun and moon continue to be popular in the Northern Dynasties. They are depicted on the lids of stone sarcophagi and in tomb murals. The Northern Wei lacquer sarcophagus from Guyuan, Ningxia Autonomous Region, has a three-legged crow in the sun painted above the image of the King Father of the East. The moon with the bug-like toad was depicted over the Queen Mother of the West (fig.381). Images of the sun and moon found on sarcophagi, both lacquer and stone, were placed on the lids. The lid is analogous to the roof of a tomb, a place for celestial imagery. Often stars

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769 Rawson “Tombs and Tomb Furnishings,” 294. In Han Sichuan, the Queen Mother of the West was not associated with yin. (Wu Hung, “Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West,” *Orientations* vol.18, no.4 [1987]: 26.)
accompanied the sun and moon, and it is believed that the Milky Way divides the sun and moon on the lid of the Guyuan sarcophagus.\textsuperscript{770}

Three-legged crows also appeared in Northern Dynasty tombs with murals. In the Northern Qi tomb of Lou Rui, the east side of the ceiling has the remnants of a three-legged crow in the sun (fig.382). The head is missing, but the legs are still clearly apparent. The west side also has a depiction of the moon with the toad.\textsuperscript{771} The Northern Qi mural tomb of General Cui Fen also has depictions of the sun and moon (fig.383). On the upper portion of the east wall near the Green Dragon sits the sun in a tree.\textsuperscript{772} On the west wall in front of the White Tiger, the moon with the toad and the hare making the elixir of immortality float between two branches.

The suns and moons in Goguryeo tomb murals and those from China helped define the heavens, which is always in the upper portion of the composition. In the Han shrouds, the sun and moon are in the uppermost portion. In the sarcophagi, the sun and moon are placed on the lid. In tomb murals, both in China and in Goguryeo, the sun and moon either appear in the upper portion of the walls or on the ceiling. More often than not, the sun and moon also appear with stars and constellations.

The sun and the moon with their animal occupants were closely connected to immortality. The stories behind the images were closely linked with spirits and immortality. The crows carried the suns that were placed on the mythical Leaning

\textsuperscript{770} Guyuan xian wenwu gongzuozhan, 49.
\textsuperscript{772} Shandongsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo “Shandong Linqu Beiqi Cui Fen bihuamu,” 4-26. The positioning of the sun in the tree may allude to the story of the crows placing the suns in the leaning mulberry tree.
Mulberry tree, which was associated with the immortals. The moon contained the toad, Chang E, who flew there after stealing the elixir of immortality, or the hare who actively made the elixir with a mortar and pestle. This connection is especially obvious when the sun with the crow is positioned above the King Father of the East and the moon is positioned over the Queen Mother of the West, as seen in the Dingjiazha Tomb 5 and the Guyuan sarcophagus. The King Father of the East was a later invention who was meant to balance the Queen Mother as the yang nature to her yin nature. This balance of yin and yang also occurred with the pairings of Fuxi and Nüwa which were seen in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. From the Han, like the King Father of the East and the Queen Mother of the West, Fuxi and Nüwa were paired with the sun and moon respectively. The sun and moon further emphasized their yang and yin natures.

The sun and moon individually represented the east and west as well as the balance of yang and yin. One theory is that the Han images of the sun and moon may represent the two parts of the soul, the po 魂 and the hun 魂. The po was thought to be the yin portion of the soul; the part that was dark and female. The hun was the portion that was bright and male. It is possible that in Han funerary arts the sun and moon represented this division.

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773 The crow is also linked with immortality due to its very nature. Birds were closely linked with ascension.

774 The King Father of the East was the consort of the Queen Mother of the West, who was the most popular figure in Han immortality cults. Herself an immortal, she was the ruler of the western land of the immortals. She also controlled the elixir of immortality that Chang E stole. (For a full explanation of the Queen Mother of the West see: Loewe Ways to Paradise, 86-126.)

The sun and moon also were important components in representing the heavens. In almost all tomb murals, the sun and moon were placed on the upper portions of the tomb on the east and west sides, respectively. Along with the Northern and Southern Dippers, their placement created a symbolic order of the universe.

The sun with the crow and the moon with the toad were long-standing traditions in the funerary arts of China and the Korean Peninsula. Both celestial bodies were closely linked to mythology, and, later, they became persistent symbols linked to immortality. The sun and moon representations found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs on their ceilings followed a tradition of painting the sun and moon in Goguryeo tombs with murals. The Ji’an images are analogous to the Han depictions. The pairing of the sun and moon with the Dragon and Tiger can also be found on TLV mirrors from the Wang Mang Interregnum that depict the Four Spirits. One such mirror from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London shows the Tiger and Dragon holding the orbs in their paws (fig.384). This mirror demonstrates how early the pairings of the celestial bodies and animals were within *yin* and *yang* and Five Phases cosmology.  

One difference between the Goguryeo depictions and those from the Han is the preference for the standing three-legged crow in the sun. In the Han, the standing three-legged crow is often an attendant figure standing by the side of the Queen Mother of the West. There appears to have been a preference in the Han to depict the crow in the sun flying, rendering its legs invisible. A three-legged crow in the sun was popular in the post-Han funerary arts, especially in the northern regions and dynasties as seen by the

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776 Loewe *Ways to Paradise*, 129.
777 Loewe *Ways to Paradise*, 129.
Yuantaizi Tomb sun and moon in Liaoning and the Dingjiazha Tomb 5 depictions in Gansu.

Depictions of the crow in the sun and the toad in the moon were popular funerary imagery as far back as the Han. The three-legged crow often accompanied images of the Queen Mother of the West, and the crow with the sun and the toad with the moon were also often seen, either with or without their immortal pairings. It is also during the Han that early pairings of the sun and moon and the dragon and tiger appear on objects such as TLV mirrors. The crow in the sun and the moon with the toad were also popular in Goguryeo tombs with murals throughout all three stages. However, it is only in the late-period Four Spirits tombs, and particularly those in Ji’an, that the sun and moon are placed with the Northern and Southern Dippers and the Three Northern Polestars in order to create a simplified astronomical map orienting the tomb to the four directions and the center.

**3.8.2 THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN DIPPERS**

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs have the seven stars of the Northern Dipper and the six stars of the Southern Dipper painted on their ceiling corbels. While there is a scattering of what appears to be stars throughout the ceiling layers, lines connect the stars that create these constellations, making them stand out. These constellations are often found in Goguryeo tombs with murals throughout the three periods. The appearance of the Northern Dipper is common in tombs throughout East Asia, but the Southern Dipper

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is an element that appears more commonly in Goguryeo tombs. While the Northern and Southern Dippers are common in earlier Goguryeo tombs with murals, their placement with only the sun, moon, and Three Northern Polestars is distinctive to the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

Differences in the structures of the tombs’ ceilings and their overall pictorial programs mean slightly different placements of the constellations in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Northern and Southern Dippers are placed on the north and south panels of the second layer of the ceiling, respectively. This configuration is similar to those found in the two Five Helmets Tombs as well. Five Helmets Tomb 4 has the seven stars that form the Northern Dipper painted on the northern panel of the second layer of corbels. The six stars of the Southern Dipper appear on the southern panel of the same layer. The stars and constellations in the Five Helmets Tomb 5 are painted in the north and south corners. For the Northern Dipper, the first and second stars are placed on the northeast panel, and the other five are on the northwest panel. The Southern Dipper’s first two stars are on the southeast panel, and the other four are on the southwest panel.

Constellations in East Asia rarely match Western constellations, the Northern Dipper being a rare exception. The Northern Dipper corresponds to Ursa Major (the Great Bear) which is also often called the Big Dipper. The Southern Dipper does not

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780 In the drawing of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb ceiling it looks as though there is a seventh star placed under the monster face on the south panel. This is not the case. (Kim Il-Gwon, “Li Jungeol,” 577.)
have a corresponding constellation in Western astronomy. It is a portion of the constellation Sagittarius (the Archer).  

The Northern Dipper is the most common constellation found in Goguryeo tombs. It does not always appear with the Southern Dipper, as seen in the Yaksu-ri Mural Tomb (fig.385) and Changchuan Tomb 1 (fig.386). The Northern Dipper is also commonly found in the funerary arts of early China. One of the earliest representations of a star diagram including the Northern Dipper is found on a lacquer chest found in the Warring States Period (c.433 BCE) tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng in Hubei. The lid of this chest has the character for dipper (斗) painted with the twenty-eight lunar mansions circling it (fig.387). The dipper continued to appear on mirrors and on star charts as well as in some tombs.

Dipper worship had a long history in the Chinese cultural sphere. As early as the late Shang, the Northern Dipper was worshipped as a deity. Several centuries later, the Northern Dipper only grew in popularity. By the Han, the Northern Dipper was a cult object. It was mentioned in the Chuci and appears in the Huainanzi along with mention of male and female deities who reside there. It was worshipped by the Han Emperor

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782 Changchuan Tomb 1 has an interesting configuration. Instead of having the Northern and Southern Dippers paired on its back ceiling, it appears to have two seven star dippers, which would make them both the Northern Dipper. This is further supported by the inscription found between them which reads 北斗 “Northern Dipper.” However, it is possible that the two dippers represent the Southern and Northern Dippers. Later images sometimes show the Southern Dipper with seven stars, perhaps to visually balance it with the Northern Dipper. (See Steinhardt “Changchuan,” 255; Little Taoism, 63 Note 4.)
784 Little Taoism, 128
785 Robinet Taoism 142; Major Heaven and Earth, 126 and 132.
Wu. Sima Qian recorded that during the battle with Southern Yue “a banner was made with representations of the sun, the moon, the Northern Dipper, and a descending dragon.”

By the Han, the Northern Dipper was considered the chariot for the deity Taiyi 太一, the Supreme Unity. Sima Qian said

*Beidou* serves as the chariot of the emperor and effectuates its control over the four cardinal points by revolving around the center; it separates the yin and the yang and regulates the four seasons; it maintains balance between the Five Elements (*Wuxing*); it regulates the moving of the celestial objects; it determines the epoch of the calendar.

This can be seen on the roof of the Wu Family Shrine 1, where there is a representation of Taiyi sitting in the Northern Dipper (fig.388).

Later, in religious Daoism, the Dipper became an important symbol. It became a “temporal and cosmic” destination for practitioners. A practice known as “Pace of the Dipper” began under the Celestial Masters and was fully developed by later Shangqing practitioners. These journeys involved an adept traveling to the stars and moving through the Dipper. The Dipper also had apotropaic uses; adepts could wrap themselves in the Dipper to ward off evil.

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787 Little *Taoism*, 143.
789 Robinet *Taoism*, 140.
791 Isabelle Robinet, "Shangqing—Highest Clarity" *Daoism Handbook, Volume I*. ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden:
While the Southern Dipper seems to have been known in Early China, it did not appear to gain popularity until later centuries. The Northern Dipper was dominant, representing both *yin* and *yang* and forming a triad with the sun and moon. Depicting the Northern and Southern Dippers together was unusual in China during the period contemporary with Goguryeo tomb with murals construction. It appears to have been a Goguryeo cosmological development.

In China, the Northern Dipper formed a triad with the sun and moon and embodied both *yin* and *yang*. Goguryeo cosmology expanded this triad conception of the universe to include the Southern Dipper and sometimes the Three Northern Polestars. Goguryeo astronomical charts found in tombs designate at least four points that correspond to the four cardinal directions and sometimes the center. In addition to their space-orienting functions, the Northern and Southern Dippers also represent *yin* and *yang*. In this way, *yin* and *yang* are balanced without the need for one constellation representing both.

In the Goguryeo astronomical diagram, the Northern Dipper controlled death, and the Southern Dipper controlled life.

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792 Robinet *Taoism* 144,172; Robinet "Shangiing—Highest Clarity," 220.
793 There are abundant representations of the Southern Dipper God from the Ming Dynasty. For examples see Little *Taoism* catalogue entries no. 63 and no.77.
794 Robinet *Taoism*, 146.
795 Kim Il-Gwon “Li Jungeol,” 578.
796 The Red Birds and the Dark Warrior depicted on the tomb walls seem to embody both *yin* and *yang* with their pairings of male and female, even though the south is generally more *yang* in nature, and the north tends to be more *yin*. The same may be true for their paired constellations. (Kim Il-Gwon “Astronomical and Spiritual Representations,” 32.)
797 Kim Il-Gwon “Astronomical and Spiritual Representations,” 28; This same belief regarding the Southern and Northern Dippers was held in later China. (Little *Taoism*, 219.) Jeon states that this concept of each dipper controlling life and death was a part of Wei-Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties Daoist beliefs. (Jeon *Goguryeo iyagi*, 66.) However, depicting both seems to be particular to Goguryeo.
The paintings of the sun, the moon, and the Northern and Southern Dippers in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs orient the tombs to the four cardinal directions and create a symbolic balance of *yin* and *yang*. This type of celestial map is a simplification of astronomical diagrams found in earlier Goguryeo tombs, and appears to be particular to these three tombs. Thus far, only one other sixth-century tomb has been excavated with this type of cosmic diagram, the Northern Qi tomb in Majiazhuang, Shandong, belonging to Dao Gui 道貴 (d.571).

Dao Gui was originally from Nanyang and moved to Shandong to become Zhu’s county magistrate. He is buried in Majiazhuang, which is in Ji’nan, Shandong today. The painting on the walls of Dao Gui’s tomb follows the model found in other Northern Qi tombs (fig.389). There are a number of large figures painted on the walls and a painting of a cart. On the north wall is a formal, frontal portrait of the occupant seated on a dais. The overall pictorial program of this Northern Qi tomb in no way resembles the symbolic cosmographs painted in the sixth-century Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. However, above the genre paintings in Dao Gui’s tomb, there are paintings of the sun with the three-legged crow, the moon with the toad and the hare, the Northern Dipper, and the Southern Dipper. According to Kim Il-Gwon, these astronomical depictions are executed in the Goguryeo-style and may indicate Goguryeo influence over the cosmology depicted. The location of the tomb makes Goguryeo influence entirely

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possible as the Shandong peninsula is closely situated to Goguryeo territory across the Bohai Sea.

The astronomical diagram of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs is closely linked to the depiction of the Four Spirits on their walls. Together, the paintings of the celestial bodies and the animals create a cosmograph that orients the interior of the tomb to the four cardinal directions and balance yin and yang.\(^800\) Thus far, the simplified astronomical system of the two Dippers and the sun and moon is seen in only one other tomb, the Northern Qi tomb belonging to Dao Gui located in Shandong. However, Dao Gui’s tomb lacks the association with the Four Spirits, which dilutes the strength of the tombs orientation. Dao Gui’s tomb also appears to be lacking the Three Northern Polestars, which signify the center in the Ji’an tombs. The Three Northern Polestars are the final element of the three Ji’an astronomical diagrams.

### 3.8.3 The Three Northern Polestars

The Three Northern Polestars appear to be a grouping of stars unique to Goguryeo. In China, early periods documented a singular Polestar, and then during the Sui and Tang periods they instead used a “Five Polestars” configuration.\(^801\) The Three Polestars are part of early and middle period Goguryeo astronomical diagrams found in tombs, but depictions of these three stars gained prominence in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.\(^802\) Kim Il-Gwon associated the predominance of the Three Northern Polestars

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\(^800\) Ji’nan shi bowuguan, 66.
\(^801\) Kim Il-Gwon “Astronomical and Spiritual Representations,” 29; Robinet _Taoism_, 143 and 145. (According to Robinet, the Polestar never had a large role in Daoism.)
\(^802\) For more explanation see Kim Il-Gwon “Byeokhwa cheonmundo,” 1049-1053.
with the appearance of the “Five Spirits” in the late period tombs. The paintings of the
Three Northern Polestars are closely connected to depictions of the Yellow Dragon and
the Dragon-Tiger used in the tombs to signify the “center.”

The placement of the Three Northern Polestars in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs is
identical on the ceiling capping stones. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Three
Northern Polestars are painted on the north side of the capping stone. The three stars
appear have identical positioning in Tomb 4; the Three Northern Polestars are painted on
the capping stone above the Northern Dipper. In Tomb 5, the ceiling capping stone is
rotated so the corners correspond to the cardinal directions, and the Three Northern
Polestars are painted on the north corner. While these stars are sometimes called a
constellation, and appear as such in some earlier Goguryeo tombs, the Three Northern
Polestars are a loose grouping of stars in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Unlike the
Northern and Southern Dippers, the three stars are not connected by painted red lines.
They are, however, positioned together with the central Northern Polestar painted slightly
larger.

These Three Northern Polestars delineate the “center,” and augment the painting
of the fifth Spirit animal. Like the Yellow Dragons in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb
and Five Helmets Tomb 4 and the Dragon-Tiger in Five Helmets Tomb 5, the Three
Northern Polestars are placed directly above where the occupants would have lain. The

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804 Ikeuchi T’ung-kou vol.II, 33-34.
805 Kim Jin-soon, 85.
806 The archeological report recounts two stars, but there are three. (Jilin sheng bowuguan, 65.)
combination of the Three Northern Polestars and the fifth animal properly orients the occupant to the center of the universe, a place of power.\textsuperscript{807}

The concept of the Three Northern Polestars, like that of the Yellow Dragon, seems to be rooted in Chinese proto-Daoist beliefs, often relying on the handle of the Northern Dipper.\textsuperscript{808} Goguryeo developed a different configuration of stars to delineate the center of the universe. The depiction of the Three Northern Polestars indicates that while the Goguryeo view of the universe paralleled that of the \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} and the Five Phases cosmologies, they altered its cosmography by incorporating native elements.

\textbf{3.8.4 Celestial Bodies Conclusion}

The representations of the constellations found in the ceilings of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs mirror the orientation of the cardinal directions created by the five animals: the Green Dragon, the Red Birds, the White Tiger, The Dark Warrior, and the Yellow Dragon or Dragon-Tiger. The tomb ceilings augment the orientation of the animals and the balance of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}. The connection between the Four (Five) Spirits and constellations is a long standing one. The Four (Five) Spirits are believed to have first been derived from constellations that changed into various shapes with the different seasons, and they are closely linked to the twenty-eight lunar mansions.\textsuperscript{809} Therefore, the

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\textsuperscript{807} Desire to be placed within the center of the cosmos is an ancient one. As discussed in previous sections, Han mirrors often include inscriptions that state a desire to be in the “center.” Major has argued that to be in the center meant to reach the \textit{axis mundi}, which is often taken to be Kunlun, an immortal mountain. (Major “The Five Phases,” 157.)

\textsuperscript{808} Robinet \textit{Taoism}, 142.

simplified astronomical diagrams found in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs can be seen as complementing the paintings of the Four (Five) Spirits.

The question, of course, is to what end? The astronomical diagram oriented the occupants and placed them in the center. This placement meant that they were harmonized within the universe, and within the cosmic diagram they were aligned with the *axis mundi*, thought to be an immortal mountain, likely Kunlun.\(^{810}\) As for the astronomical diagram alone, it was also thought to aid in obtaining immortality. Visualization practices of sixth-century Daoist adepts included “travels” to the stars. Through these journeys, they gained access to different deities that inhabited the celestial body and obtained substances meant to aid in becoming immortal.\(^ {811}\) Therefore, both orienting the occupant to the center of the diagram of the universe and depicting cosmic destinations was meant to aid in attaining immortality. The combination of the Four (Five) Spirits and the celestial bodies creates a guide to the realm of the immortals.

\(^{811}\) Robinet *Taoism*, 140-143; Schafer “A Trip to the Moon,” 28.
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs—the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the Five Helmets Tombs 4, and the Five Helmets Tombs 5—are unique among the tombs with murals of Goguryeo. The tombs’ structures and the main theme of their pictorial programs, the Four Spirits, are identifiable as belonging to the sixth and early-seventh-century Goguryeo. However, the interior decoration of these three tombs displays a multitude of regional variations. These tombs include images, beyond the Four Spirits, that demonstrate an affinity for and deep understanding of ancient Chinese mythology and cosmology. Stylistically, the paintings in these three tombs belong to the sixth century and early seventh centuries, but they are thematically congruent with beliefs that developed in the late Zhou period and matured. It is a desire to understand the rich iconography of these tombs that drew me to the subject of these tombs for this thesis.

The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the images within the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs and to trace their ideological and visual origins. In previous chapters, I have discussed each individual image within the compositions, attempting to identify them and explain their significance. Now I will discuss the sum of the parts, how the images fit into a unified composition, and their overall significance. I will begin by discussing what I believe are the two main compositions within the tombs: the chamber walls and the ceiling corbels. These two spaces contain differing compositions that can be interpreted independently. Then, I will discuss how these two
spaces and differing pictorial programs work together to facilitate the occupants’ ascension to the immortal realm.

### 4.2 Chamber Walls: Recreation of the Universe

Pictorial compositions centering on the Four Spirits are thought to symbolically replicate the universe. The main subjects on the chamber walls of the Three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs adhere to this concept. Together the Four (Five) Spirits and the four corner beasts symbolically diagram the universe and orient the occupants to the center.

The main images within the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are the Four (Five) Spirits. These are key symbols utilized in diagramming the universe. The Four Spirits have a multitude of meanings that break down the universe into geographical, temporal, and elemental parts. The animals are representative of the cardinal directions (and the center), seasons, and the five elements. These were important symbols of the yin and yang and Five Phases cosmologies. The correlative system of yin and yang and the Five Phases developed in the Zhou period and matured in the Han. This ideology was based on the Yijing’s concept of the universe. It states that the universe was once undefined, and the two forces of yin and yang (the polar opposites of male and female, light and darkness, heat and cold, to name a few) created the five elements or phases—earth, wood, fire, metal and water—out of the nebulous mass. Everything in the universe happened in

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812 Rawson *Creating Universes*, 139.
fives, such as colors, directions, and sacred mountains. The principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases were the foundation for sixth-century Daoist cosmology.

In the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs the Four Spirits are placed in alignment with the cardinal directions they represent. The Dark Warrior is on the north wall; the Green Dragon graces the east wall; the White Tiger is on the west, and the Red Birds are placed on the south wall. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and Five Helmets Tomb 5, two Red Birds flank the entrance on the south wall, likely a male and female. These birds balance the yin and yang elements of the Dark Warrior placed opposite them. The Dark Warrior is a combination of yin—the tortoise—and yang—the snake, female and male. The off center placement of the entrance in Tomb 4 allowed only one Red Bird.

In the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, a fifth image placed on the ceiling capping stone joins the Four Spirits. The capping stones of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 4 contain a coiling Yellow Dragon, which is replicated on the undersides of the ceiling corbels. The Yellow Dragon was understood to represent the center, hence the placement above the center of the tomb. Curiously, the Five Helmets Tomb 5 has a depiction of a Dragon-Tiger on its ceiling. The combination of a Dragon and Tiger was long used to represent the combination of yin and yang, a precursor to the taiji, the black and white yinyang symbol that is so well known today. Therefore, in

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813 Cheng, 164.
814 Robinet Taoism, 7.
815 Although, the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are aligned approximately 30 degrees off the north-south axis. This is a peculiarity present in Goguryeo tombs in Ji’an. (Ah-Rim Park “Tomb of the Dancers,” 14-15.)
816 To further emphasize the tombs adherence to the principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases, the color palette utilized throughout the tombs focuses on the five colors: black, green, red, white and yellow.
817 Little Taoism, 130. The Dragon-Tiger was an important theme in Celestial Masters Daoism. Their headquarters were based at Dragon-Tiger Mountain, Jiangxi. (Little Taoism, 79.) The Celestial Masters sect
Tomb 5 there is an absolute balance in *yin* and *yang* among the animal images. The Green Dragon represents *yang* while its counterpart, the White Tiger, represents *yin*. The paired Red Birds and the Dark Warrior both illustrate a combination of *yin* and *yang*, as does the Dragon-Tiger painted on the ceiling.

In the section on the Four (Five) Spirits, I stated that three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs are analogous to three-dimensional representations of cosmic diagrams found on the sixth and early-seventh-century mirrors from China that depict the Four Spirits. These mirrors are considered to be late evolutions of Han TLV mirrors, which are almost universally recognized as cosmographs. Comparative analysis with these mirrors aids understanding the overall compositions found in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

Han TLV mirrors are thought to diagram the universe. It is believed the TLV mirror “forms a simple illustration of the Ancient Chinese concept of the Five Directions—North, South, East and West, and Center—with additional connotations involving the Five Elements and the Four Seasons.” 818 They used the T, L, and V shapes, from which they get their name, to divide the mirror surface. These abstract motifs divided the interior of the mirror into eight or four spaces. These spaces generally contained the Four Spirits and other immortal creatures. These spaces are thought to represent the four cardinal directions, which the illustration of the Four Spirits emphasizes. The Vs define the corners of the world. The TLV mirrors also often have four or eight small bosses, that are believed to be the “cosmic pillars” that hold up the

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818 Cammann "‘TLV’ Pattern," 161.

had a presence in Goguryeo prior to Daoism’s official acceptance. (Jung Jae-Seo, “Daoism in Korea,” 795.)
sky. They are placed around a central square. Inside the square is a large boss, thought to be the *axis mundi* Kunlun.\textsuperscript{819}

In the Eastern Han, the complicated diagrams with the TLVs and myriad creatures accompanying the Four Spirits began to simplify. One such example that once belonged to the collector Moriya Kōzō no longer has the L motif. Instead, the surface is divided into four distinct areas with the Vs defining the corners (fig.390). On this mirror, the four or eight bosses no longer exist. The Vs can be interpreted as taking their place as the cosmic pillars that hold up the sky. (Another example also from the Moriya collection demonstrates the interchangeability of the Vs and the four bosses/cosmic pillars. On this Eastern Han mirror, the surface is divided into quadrants by four small bosses (fig.391). Gone are the Ts and the Vs.) Each of the four spaces defined by the Vs holds one of the Four Spirits. A square surrounding a large boss still decorates the center. This mirror shows a simplified cosmology that uses the Four Spirits to define the four cardinal directions. The Four Spirits orient the mirror to the central point, the knob that is interpreted as Kunlun.

Han TLV mirrors are some of the best sources for understanding the fundamental reason for displaying the Four (Five) Spirits on the walls of a tomb. They were an important accoutrement for tombs, often being placed directly on the deceased’s body. Inscriptions often allude to the Four Spirits and indicate that the mirrors were used to orient the deceased to the cardinal directions as well as place them in the center of the cycle of the five elements and the four seasons. Proper alignment to the universe was

\textsuperscript{819} Major “Five Phases,” 157.
important to proto-Daoist and Daoist practitioners. The center was considered a place of power.\textsuperscript{820} Aligning one’s self within a \textit{mandala}-like diagram of the universe allowed one to position oneself in relationship to the “axis of the world.”\textsuperscript{821}

While the TLV cosmological mirrors appear to have fallen out of favor shortly after the fall of the Han, there appears to have been a revival of this style of cosmograph in the sixth century. A type of mirror often identified as belonging to the Sui or early Tang symbolically replicated the universe using many of the visual tropes utilized on the Han TLV mirrors. One such example was excavated from the Silla Hwangnyong Monastery, buried during the temple’s founding as a part of a cache meant to repel evil. It was buried during the fifteenth year of Queen Seondeok’s reign (645).\textsuperscript{822} This mirror retains several elements seen in the Han TLV mirrors. The interior space of the mirror has four Vs that divide the space into quadrants. Gone are the Ts, the Ls, and the small bosses. Between the Vs are the Four Spirits. On this Tang period mirror, the animals are oriented to the central square. That square contains four flower petals surmounted by a central knob. The petal design can be interpreted as indicating either the base or peak of the \textit{axis mundi}.\textsuperscript{823}

The four Vs of the Hwangnyong Monastery mirror contain what appear to be small undulating peaks. It appears that the mountain-like decorations on the Hwangnyong Monastery mirror may replicate the four cosmic mountain pillars that were

\textsuperscript{820} Cammann “‘TLV’ Pattern,” 166.
\textsuperscript{821} Robinet \textit{Taoism}, 17.
\textsuperscript{822} Park Youngbok \textit{Gyeongju: Art Hall}, 202.
\textsuperscript{823} Cammann “Significant Patterns,” 50. Interestingly, the Baekje Universal Mountain censer depicts the mountain rising from a lotus flower. If one interprets the incense burner as replicating the Mount Kunlun. (Erickson “Boshan,” 16), then this is another example of the axis mundi rising from flower petals.
thought to hold up the sky. In other mirrors of the same style the Vs contain beast-like heads (Fig. 392). Cammann interpreted these heads as dragon-monsters that guarded the four seas.\textsuperscript{824} Looking at the beast-faced decoration in the Vs of some mirrors side-by-side with the decoration of the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs as well as the mountain decoration in mirrors such as the one found at Hwangnyong Monastery, a different interpretation may be offered. As already stated, the four small mountain peaks on the mirrors’ surfaces possibly represent the four mountain pillars that hold up the sky. In Chinese mythology, it was these mountain pillars that Gonggong once broke and that Nüwa had to repair.\textsuperscript{825} The placement of these four mountains in the symbolic four corners of the world on the mirrors parallels the concept of those mountain pillars. It appears as though the interchangeability of the mountain peaks and the beast faces within the Vs indicates similar symbolic function. Comparison with the chamber murals in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs may further elucidate that function.

As already stated, if one took the decoration on these sixth and seventh-century mirrors and placed them in three dimensional space, it would look remarkably similar to the chamber paintings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. The Four Spirits take up the central position on the walls just as the Four Spirits fill the quadrants on the mirrors. The corners of the chambers divide the animals and are decorated with running beasts. This structure parallels the Vs placed in the corners of the mirrors and the beast faces. As mentioned previously, the Goguryeo corner beasts had apotropaic functions and were likely derived from Han exorcistic imagery. This function somewhat parallels

\textsuperscript{824} Cammann “Significant Patterns,” 49.  
\textsuperscript{825} Yuan Ke \textit{Gu shenhua}, 30.
Cammann’s belief that the beast faces on the mirrors guarded the “Four Seas.”

However, the beasts appear to have had the added purpose of acting as pillars. In the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs the beasts act as atlantes; they hold their arms up bracing the sky. This is analogous to what is depicted on the sixth and seventh-century mirrors. While the bodies of the beasts are not shown, the beast heads on the mirrors do take the place of the small mountain peaks that can be interpreted as sky pillars. The substitution of the beast faces for the mountains and the analogous structure of the atlantes corner beasts in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs indicates that perhaps these beast faces were symbolic pillars. They may have had the dual purpose of protecting the four corners as well as supporting the sky. These mirrors appear to be two dimensional illustrations of the same cosmology that is represented on the chamber walls of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

As diagrammed on the mirrors, the murals on the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs chamber walls symbolically replicate the universe in a simplified manner. The Four (Five) Spirits are imbued with a multitude of meanings. They represent the Five Phases, which include the seasons, colors, elements, et cetera. However as cosmological symbols, the Four Spirits can be interpreted as simply representing the four cardinal directions. Therefore, similar to the mirrors, the Four Spirits painted on the walls of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs delineate the four directions. The corner beasts can be interpreted as cosmic pillars holding up the sky. Together they create a structured universe that surrounds the center or the *axis mundi*.

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826 Cammann “Significant Patterns,” 49.
In the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, the *axis mundi* is represented as an immortal realm on the ceiling. The overall composition of the tomb walls and ceiling is parallel to a Western Han Universal Mountain censer excavated from the tomb of Dou Wan, consort to Prince Liu Sheng, in Macheng, Hebei (fig.393). The mountain portion of the censer is a fairly typical representation with the undulating peaks and various figures and creatures. However, at the base of the mountain is a band depicting the Four Spirits (although a camel replaces the Dark Warrior).\(^{827}\) This composition is parallel to those of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs chamber murals. The immortal mountain rises up from a base defined by the Four Spirits.

**4.3 Chamber Ceilings: Land of the Immortals**

The paintings found on the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs can be discussed independently from the depictions of the Four Spirits and the corner beasts found on the chamber walls. In all three tombs a decorative border (a scrolling vine in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and entwined dragons in Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5) separates the walls from the ceiling, creating two independent spaces and compositions. The compositions found on the ceilings of the three tombs show similarities, although the majority of the images found on the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb ceiling and their placement varies vastly from those in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. (See Table 4) The Donggou Four Spirits Tomb has apotropaic figures and auspicious creatures that do not appear on the ceilings of the Five Helmets Tombs. However, all three Ji’an Four Spirits

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\(^{827}\) Rawson *Mysteries*, 172-173.
tombs depict what appear to be Chinese mythological figures and heavenly beings. This shows regional variation from the Four Spirits tombs in Pyongyang.

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs all contain images that can be interpreted as figures from Chinese mythology. Some of the figures can be identified as rulers from antiquity and others were great culture bearers, inventing writing, fire, et cetera. In the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, the five dragon riders and their attendants can be interpreted as the Five Emperors, ancient rulers who can also be associated with the Five Phases. Above these figures are Fuxi and Nüwa, the first rulers and primogenitors of the Chinese people, and Suiren and Cangjie, inventors of fire and writing. The remaining images on this tomb’s ceiling are demon-like faces and auspicious birds. The mythological figures are mainly located on the first layer of ceiling corbels of the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. The Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 also have paintings of dragon-bodied Fuxi and Nüwa, although they grace the first layer of corbels. From there, the images deviate from the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb. Moving clockwise from Fuxi and Nüwa, the figures in Tomb 4 are: Shennong, a fire figure who is most likely Zhurong, a Blacksmith, a Wheelwright, a figure standing before a tree, and, lastly, a dragon-riding immortal. In Tomb 5 the figures are: the fire deity (likely Zhurong), Shennong, a wheelwright, a figure standing before a tree, and, finally, a dragon-riding emperor and attendant, most likely the Yellow Emperor and his assistant. The immortals doing manual labor are possibly Xi Zhong and his lineage, who were associated with creating the chariot.
There are many interpretations of what these beings signify. One interpretation is that the figures represent the evolution of (Chinese) society.\textsuperscript{828} They may also be aligned to the Five Phases, which ties them to the depictions of the Four (Five) Spirits. In the Han, legendary sovereigns and emperors were aligned with the five directions and their corresponding elements, colors, etcetera.

The mythological figures can also be interpreted as having a protective function. As seen from late Han mirrors, mythological figures often were used in an apotropaic manner. The Five Emperors and the Three Sovereigns often decorate mirrors and are listed as protective and auspicious figures.\textsuperscript{829} Cangjie was also associated with protecting against ghosts. Ghosts were afraid his invention of writing would mean accusations against them would be recorded, so they wept.\textsuperscript{830}

The most basic understanding of the figures is as deities who inhabit the land of the immortals. In the Han, characters that were closely allied with a Confucian understanding of the development of society were adopted into immortality cults. They transcended their humanity and became celestial beings who inhabited the land of the immortals.\textsuperscript{831} The mythological figures in the Goguryeo tombs appear to embody this

\textsuperscript{828} Geng Tiehua “Ji’an Wukuifen,” 41.
\textsuperscript{829} A mirror dated to 205 CE states “吾作明竟（鏡），幽煉宮商，周羅容象，五帝三皇，白（白）牙單（彈）琴，黃帝除凶。白牙朱鳥，玄武白虎青。建安十年五月六日作，宜子孫，書直言。” (Liu Yongming, 33.) “I made this brilliant mirror. In seclusion I have refined the gong [earth] element and the shang [metal] element. Around the periphery I have arranged images of the Five Emperors and the Three Sovereigns. Boya plays the zither and the Yellow Emperor expels evils. There are Boya, the Red Bird, the Dark Warrior, the White Tiger, and the Green (Dragon). Made in the tenth year, fifth month, and sixth day of Jian’an. May you have sons and grandsons, and may they attain government office.” (This translation is adapted from Lydia Thompson’s translation of a similar mirror inscription in “Confucian Paragons?” on page 24.)
\textsuperscript{830} Thompson “Confucian Paragons,” 24; From the Huananzi, fascicle 8 “倉頡作書而天雨粟，鬼夜哭。” (Wu Guangxiao, 205.)
\textsuperscript{831} Thompson “Confucian Paragons,” 25-26.
transcendence; they appear as immortals wearing feather-garments, floating above the ground, or riding a mythological creature. Their inhabiting the land of the immortals also explains their placement with auspicious creatures, in the case of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, and with flying heavenly beings, as in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5.

The mythological figures and immortal beings can be interpreted as inhabitants of the immortal land. Their presence seems to parallel images found on replicas of the Universal Mountain censers. In Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5, the first layer of the ceiling shows an earthly environment. There are trees and rocks depicted. However, the wispy clouds and periodic depictions of stars signals to the viewer that this is not the mundane world. The second layer of the ceiling shows what can be called “flying celestials,” a type of immortal that can fly among the heavens. They also have the ability to move between the immortal paradise and earth. In the Five Helmets tombs these celestials play music, perhaps entertaining the other immortals or welcoming the transcendent.

Mythological figures and sovereigns were understood to reside in the realm of the immortals. As already mentioned, the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors often decorate mirrors, especially those from the Chinese Three Kingdoms period. During the post-Han period a new type of mirror developed which showed a stratified depiction of the immortal realm (figs.394-395).\footnote{832 Guan Weiliang, 158-161.} The central portion of the mirror is divided by architecture-like elements that resemble beams and pillars. Immortals such as the Queen Mother of the West, the King Father of the East, as well as the Five Emperors and Fuxi are depicted on these mirrors. The step-like architectural framework of the mirrors is
similar to the structure of the Ji’an Four Spirits ceilings, and it is believed that some of
the same immortals, such as Fuxi and the Five Emperors, are illustrated there. The Four
Spirits are often depicted around the perimeter of the immortal realm on the post-Han
mirrors.

The inclusion of mythological figures in the immortal realm adheres to sixth-
century Daoist practices. One type of Daoist visualization technique involved the
practitioner traveling to immortal mountains and meeting the residents. The adept would
travel the universe in their own minds, and meet various immortals including those from
mythology such as the Five Emperors. These immortals would feed the traveler various
elixirs to obtain immortality. The practitioners used various maps and talismans to guide
their journeys. The lands visited sound remarkably similar to the immortal realm
depicted on the post-Han mirrors and the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs’ ceilings. It appears as
though the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs illustrate an immortal mountain
as a destination for the occupants’ ascension.

There are various immortal mountains described in the cult traditions. However,
the land depicted on the ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs is clearly placed in
the center. The center was seen as the location of the axis mundi and the immortal realm,
Kunlun.

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833 Robinet Taoism, 138-139.
4.4 Ji’an Four Spirits Tombs as Cosmic Guides

Above I discussed how the walls and capping stones of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs create a symbolic cosmograph orienting the occupants to the center and how the ceiling corbels create a virtual land of the immortals. I will now argue that together they define and represent the *axis mundi*, the cosmic pillar that connects the heavens and earth. In the cosmology of the Five Phases, the *axis mundi* is often Kunlun, one of the lands of the immortals.\(^{834}\) By climbing Mount Kunlun one could reach the heavens.\(^{835}\) In order to reach this pillar one had to be properly oriented to the center, its location within the universe.

In Chinese mythology Kunlun is the residence of immortals and the *axis mundi*. Early writings regarding Kunlun discuss it as a very real mountain or as a mythological location, but eventually those two concepts were united.\(^{836}\) It acted as both a pillar supporting heaven and type of cosmic ladder one climbed to reach heaven. The *Shanhaijing* says that “Mount Kunlun within the sea is in the northwest and is the earthly capital of the Supreme God Di… This is where a hundred gods dwell in the caverns of an eight-cornered cliff bordered by the Red River.”\(^{837}\)

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\(^{834}\) Major “Five Phases,” 134.

\(^{835}\) Heavens can literally mean outer space. Daoist practitioners often took spiritual journeys to the various constellations and other celestial bodies. With tongue in cheek, Schaffer has referred to these sky-travelers as “astronauts.” (Schaffer “A Trip to the Moon,” 27-37.)

\(^{836}\) Major *Heaven and Earth*, 155.

\(^{837}\) Strassberg 192-3; Yuan Ke *Shanhaijing*, 294.
The *Shanhaijing* states elsewhere that Mount Kunlun is the residence of the Queen Mother of the West and myriad protective beasts and birds.\(^838\)

Kunlun appears throughout the literature of the Han. The *Huainanzi* states:

If one climbs to a height double that of the Kunlun Mountains, (that peak) is called Cool Wind Mountain.

If one climbs it, one will not die.

If one climbs that a height that is double again, (that peak) is called Hanging Garden.

If one ascends it, one will gain supernatural power and be able to control the wind and the rain.

If one climbs to a height that is doubled yet again, it reaches up to Heaven itself.

If one mounts to there, one will become a god.

It is called the abode of the Supreme Thearch.\(^839\)

From this description, Major states that Kunlun can be visualized as a ziggurat. One climbs the many levels to reach heaven.\(^840\) Poets describing their spirit journeys in the *Chuci* often recount traveling to Kunlun. *Crossing the River* (*She jiang*), the second poem of the *Nine Pieces* (*Jiu Zhang*) recounts the author’s journey to Kunlun.

With a team of azure dragons, white serpents in the traces,

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\(^838\) Yang Lihua, 160-3; Strassberg 192-195; *Shanhaijing*, fascicle 11 (*Hainei xi jing* 海內西經) "西海之南，流沙之濱，赤水之前，黑水之前，有大山，名曰昆侖之丘。有神，人面虎身，有文有尾，皆白，處之。其下有弱水之淵環之，其外有炎火之山，投物輒然。有人，戴勝，虎齒，有豹尾，穴處，名曰西王母。此山萬物盡有。" (Yuan Ke *Shanhaijing*, 407.)

\(^839\) Major *Heaven and Earth*, 158.

\(^840\) Major *Heaven and Earth*, 159.
I rode with Chong Hua in the Garden of Jasper,
Climbed up Kun-lun and ate of the flower of Jade
And won long life, lasting as heaven and earth;
And the sun and moon were not more bright than I.\(^\text{841}\)

The author traveled on dragons to Kunlun where he gains immortality.

Kunlun was an important concept within the Five Phases cosmology and the cult of immortality in the late Warring States and Han periods of China. It represented the *axis mundi*, the central point of the universe according to the Five Phases system. It was a mountainous central pillar supporting heaven and separating it from earth. Early on, it was conceived as an actual geographical location believed to be an immortal paradise. Emperor Wu even funded expeditions seeking out the mountain paradise to the west. However, as the expeditions failed to find the land of the immortals, Kunlun came to be understood as a metaphysical location.\(^\text{842}\) I believe the paintings within the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs can be interpreted as illustrating both conceptions of Kunlun. The tomb images orient the occupants to the center, the location of the *axis mundi* Kunlun. The ceiling images also appear to vividly recreate an immortal paradise, the other understanding of what Kunlun is. In the Goguryeo tombs the two concepts appear to meld creating a supernatural map for the occupant’s ascension

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\(^{841}\) Hawkes *Songs of the South*, 160.

\(^{842}\) Major *Heaven and Earth*, 156.
HAN ROOTS AND COMPARISONS

The concept of Mount Kunlun as the *axis mundi*, like other aspects of the Five Phases cosmology, fully developed during the Han, particularly under Western Han Emperor Wu. Representations of Mount Kunlun appeared in architecture, ritual objects and tomb decoration during that period. During the Han the foundations were laid for the beliefs that influenced the production of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. Therefore, comparisons with Han examples help elucidate what is represented in the three Goguryeo tombs.

One of the most important ritual structures, the Mingtang 明堂 or “Bright Hall,” of the Han was constructed as a cosmic diagram with Kunlun in the center. The *Shiji* says:

> In the center of the Mingtang [Bright Hall] there was a temple, wall-less on all four sides and covered with rushes. It connected with water. Water encircled the boundaries of the structure. At the top of the path was a tower, which was entered by the southwest. It was called Kunlun. The Son of Heaven through there entered and performed sacrifices to the Supreme Deity here.843

The Bright Hall was a ritual structure that was first built in the era of the Han Emperor Wu, and it was encircled by water called a *biyong* 辟雍 or Jade Ring Moat. Inside there

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843 “明堂中有一殿四面無壁以芳蓋通水水圍桓為道上有樓從西南入名曰崑崙天子從之入以拜祀上帝焉。” (*Shiji* fascicle 28 from Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 165). Modification of translations found in Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan” pages 165 and Watson *Records* vol.2, 47. In comparison to the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, it is interesting to note that the tombs were placed on a northeast-southwest axis, so the tombs were also entered on the southwest side. This orientation is common among Ji’an area mural tombs, so the correlation is tenuous but interesting none the less.
was a square wall and in the center was a two storied edifice.\textsuperscript{844} The lower level connected to earth and the upper level connected to heaven (fig.396).\textsuperscript{845}

The structure of the Bright Hall is significant because some Eastern Han tombs are believed to follow a similar model. In her dissertation, Lydia Thompson argued that like a Mingtang, the late Eastern Han Yi’nan Tomb 1 was a structural replica of Kunlun. It was known that Eastern Han tombs were created on a central axis similar to a Mingtang, which seems to imply a connection to the world pillar, Kunlun. An Eastern Han, dated 161 CE, land contract found in a tomb in Henan states that “The boundaries are established at the four corners, a Mingtang in the center.”\textsuperscript{846} A contract dating to 179 echoes the multi-tiered structure of Kunlun that extends between the watery underworld and the heavens above.\textsuperscript{847} “Therefore, establish the four corners as the border, and extend the boundaries to the nine levels of heaven above, and the nine levels below earth.”\textsuperscript{848} The boundaries of the tomb extended in the four directions and along a vertical axis.

Thompson argues that Yi’nan Tomb 1 recreates the Kunlun \textit{axis mundi}. The pillar in the front chamber recreates the lower level of the immortal realm, which is inhabited by feathered beings who cannot yet fly (fig.397). On this pillar, Four Spirits animals and auspicious creatures move upward rapidly connoting ascension up the cosmic (and physical) pillar. This theme of ascending creatures carries through to the

\textsuperscript{845} Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 166.
\textsuperscript{846} “四角立封中央明堂.” Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 164.
\textsuperscript{847} \textit{Major Heaven and Earth}, 154-155.
\textsuperscript{848} “故立四角封界至九天上，九地下。” Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 164.
pillar in the central chamber, which depicts the peak of the immortal realm (fig. 398). At the top of the central chamber pillar sits the Queen Mother of the West, who resides on Kunlun, and her consort, the King Father of the East. Thompson further argues that perhaps the lanterndecke tiered roof suggests the pyramid-like structure of Kunlun as it is described in the *Huainanzi.*

Both the Mingtang and the Han tomb likely replicated Kunlun as the *axis mundi,* connecting heaven and earth and offering a cosmic ladder for the “traveler” to ascend. In the Yi’nan Tomb 1 it also offered a destination for the deceased.

The three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs were created centuries after the Han Mingtang and the Yi’nan Tomb 1, but they contain several striking similarities. The tombs were oriented to the four cardinal directions with emphasis on orienting the occupant to the center, the powerful location that connected heaven and earth. The Ji’an Four Spirits tomb images were also oriented on a vertical axis, with earth bound compositions on the walls and heavenly images on the ceiling. Similar to the pillars in the Yi’nan tomb, the walls of the three tombs depict the swiftly moving Four Spirits animals and beastly demon-quellers. Furthermore, if the ceiling in Yi’nan Tomb 1 evokes the stepped appearance of Mount Kunlun, then the Ji’an tombs do so blatantly. The ceilings in the Ji’an tombs have the lanterndecke appearance that is the norm among Goguryeo tombs with murals.

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849 Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 166-184.
850 As already mentioned, like the Mingtang these tombs were actually placed on a northwest-southeast axis with the entrance in the southeast. However, this was the common orientation for Ji’an Goguryeo tombs, so the orientation may have different origins.
851 This vertical arrangement is a trend that appears to have originated in the Han and was adopted by the Goguryeo. It is seen throughout the three periods of Goguryeo tomb murals.
It is not a stretch to interpret the lanterndecke ceilings of the three Ji’an tombs as replicating a mountain. They echo the shape of the stone pyramid-like tombs that were their forbearers, and as mountain worshippers it is possible the tombs were meant to replicate the shape of a mountain. Further supporting the ceilings’ identity as Kunlun are the pictorial programs. The three tombs have borders delineating the space between the walls and the ceiling which can be interpreted as the water that surrounds Kunlun. The water, represented by a scrolling vine or intertwined dragons in the Ji’an tombs, represents the liminal space between this world and that of the immortals. The realm of the immortals is then divided into two layers—that of the earthbound spirit (depicted as “feathered people” in the Yi’nan Tomb) and the celestial realm filled with flying beings. Compositionally, this is also similar to the Universal Mountain depicted on censers. The Universal Mountain censer found in Baekje replicates this division of space along a vertical axis. Similar to the Yi’nan Tomb 1 depiction of Kunlun, the Ji’an paintings represent the axis mundi with the realm of the immortals at the peak.

Another significant artifact further supports the theory that the Ji’an tombs are a cosmograph that represents Kunlun as the axis mundi in the center are mirrors. Throughout this thesis, examples of mirrors that display ideologies that appear to be similar to what one sees in the Ji’an tombs have been discussed. They may also help explain the compositions as a whole.

As already stated, the Han TLV mirrors were used to orient the deceased to the center, the “zone of the sacred…where there is perfect access to and harmony with the

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852 The separation of the two realms is more clear in the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5. They are somewhat muddled in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, where the first level of corbels is dedicated to beings flying on mythical creatures and then the second layer depicts the “earthbound” mythical figures.
The centers of the mirrors have a raised knob surrounded by the TLV design and, often, the Four Spirits animals. The TLVs and the four animals help define the center. It has been theorized that the center within the cosmic diagram is Kunlun.

An example of a Han TLV mirror with the Four Spirits animals was excavated from a tomb in Lelang, near Pyongyang (fig.399). This mirror is clearly of the same type produced in the Han (and Xin) Dynasties. The mirror décor consists of several rings of geometric ornamentation and an inscription. The next layer within the rings depicts a series of images including the Four Spirits animals, an immortal, and a horned animal. These figures appear in space cells created by the TLV pattern. They surround a square that contains a band with the twelve Heavenly Stems which then, in turn, surround a knob placed on what appears to be opened lotus petals. It is thought that the central knob is Kunlun.

The orientation of the Four Spirits animals to the twelve Heavenly Stems is consistent with the example John Major uses as well as most other TLV mirrors that also display the Four Spirits. Interestingly, when the Heavenly Stems are correlated to their cardinal directions and chambers within the Mingtang, the animals are slightly off axis. Two birds, presumably the Red Birds, flank the southeast corner, and the Dark Warrior is more closely oriented to the northwest. This is worthy of note because the Mingtang

Thompson quotes Sarah Allan. (Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan”164.) Major “Five Phases,” 156. This mirror is nearly identical to the Wang Mang Interregnum TLV mirror John Major uses as an example of a center orienting mandala, although the outer inscriptions are different. (Major “Five Phases,” 156.) “太山作竟真大巧 上有仙人不知老 渴飲玉泉飢棘 壽長如此兮。” (Gungnip jungan bangmulgwan Nangnang, 40.) “This mirror made on Taishan is indeed very clever. On it are immortals who don’t know age. Thirsty, they drink from the jade spring. Hungry, they eat jujubes. In this way they acquire longevity!” There may be another creature between the Dark Warrior and the White Tiger, but it is difficult to discern.
tower called Kunlun that was described in the *Shiji* appears to have been more closely aligned to a northwest-southeast axis. The Son of Heaven entered on the southeast. This orientation appears to correspond with the belief that Kunlun was in the northwest.\textsuperscript{858} This orientation off the north-south axis is interesting in regard to the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs’ orientations. As already noted, the tombs sit approximately thirty degrees off of the north-south axis, meaning the depictions of the Four Spirits are also off that axis. Similar to the mirrors, the Red Birds are on the southeast side and the Dark Warrior is in the northwest. If one lays the mirror over the floor plan of the tombs with the animals properly oriented (using the Red Birds as a guide), the central square has the same orientation as the first layer of ceiling corbels in all three tombs, square to the four cardinal directions. One cannot state that these mirrors were the model for the tombs, but one can safely say that the schema utilized to depict these cosmographs are parallel.\textsuperscript{859}

The northwest-southeast orientation of the mirror and tomb may further support the notion that it is Kunlun represented in the center. This orientation corresponds to the description of the tower that was called Kunlun in the ancient Mingtang. According to the inscription, within the circle, which may replicate the waters that surround Mount Kunlun,\textsuperscript{860} are immortals who eat and drink immortality-giving substances. The inscription sounds as though it may be describing an immortal realm. John Major argues

\textsuperscript{858} Yuan Ke *Shanhaijing*, 294; Strassberg, 192.
\textsuperscript{859} The orientation of the Four Spirits on the TLV mirrors differ from their descendants, the later Sui/Tang mirrors with the Four Spirits squarely oriented to the central square. The difference between these mirrors parallels the differences one sees between the Ji’an and Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs. In Pyongyang, like the Sui/Tang mirrors, the Four Spirits are squarely positioned within the four cardinal directions. Perhaps this indicates diverging cosmological beliefs.
\textsuperscript{860} The Xin Dynasty mirror Major discusses has scrolling lines that may indicate water. The mirror from Lelang has a decorative wavy line that may also indicate water. Recall, the edifice called Kunlun at the ancient Mingtang was said to be surrounded by water.
that the TLV mirror is a cosmic diagram replicating the cosmology of the Five Phases. According to the Five Phases view of the universe, Kunlun was interpreted as the center, and therefore the central boss can be interpreted as Kunlun.\textsuperscript{861} The similar orientation of the central square on the mirror and the first layer of ceiling corbels in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs may further support that the ceiling represents Kunlun.

Orientation to the center facilitated travel up the \textit{axis mundi} to the realm of the immortals and the heavens beyond.\textsuperscript{862} Once oriented, the occupant needed to pass through the liminal space, represented by the water surrounding the \textit{axis mundi}, and then climb the various levels of the mountain. The ceilings of the Goguryeo tombs are stepped, creating the ideal space for the levels of the mountain.\textsuperscript{863} The Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 most clearly depict the two levels of ascension: “Earthbound” spirits among rocks and trees on the first layer, and celestial beings flying among clouds and constellations on the second.\textsuperscript{864}

As mentioned in previous sections, comparison of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs with the Gangseo Great Tomb in Pyongyang further supports the theory that one is supposed to interpret the ceiling as the mountainous realm of the immortals. In this late period Goguryeo tomb, above a scrolling border similar to those found in the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb, are depictions of immortals and auspicious creatures; they run and fly

\textsuperscript{861} Major “The Five Phases,” 156.
\textsuperscript{862} Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 164.
\textsuperscript{863} The ceilings resemble the ziggurat shape Major imagines as depicting Kunlun. (Major \textit{Heaven and Earth}, 159.)
\textsuperscript{864} These can perhaps be compared to the \textit{yuren} and \textit{xianren} Thompson discusses as gracing the two pillars of the Yi’nan Tomb 1. She argues the bulkier \textit{yuren} or feathered people depicted on the front chamber pillar represent low level immortals who are not yet able to fly because they have not reached full \textit{xianren} or celestial immortal status. (Lydia Thompson “Yi’nan,” 171.)
among small, undulating mountain peaks that resemble those seen on the Universal Mountain censers. Above this layer are flying heavenly musicians similar to those in the two Five Helmets tombs. I propose that in the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs, depictions of mountain peaks could have been viewed as redundant as the lantern decke ceiling itself recreated the mountain’s levels.

The main images on the walls and ceilings of the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs created a cosmic pivot upon which the deceased could travel on his or her ascension. The iconography echoes the past and reflects the principles of yin and yang and the Five Phases that was developed in the Han period, but stylistically, the images are au courant with the religious and funerary arts of sixth-century China.

**4.5 YIN AND YANG AND FIVE PHASES COSMOLOGIES PERFECTED**

The pictorial program inside the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs can be considered a perfected illustration of yin and yang and the Five Phases cosmologies. The foundation for the universal diagram depicted in the three tombs may have originated in China, but from examining the murals one can see that the Goguryeo creators perfected the visual representation. These three tombs include images such as the Yellow Dragon that are often absent from Chinese representations. They also include their own natively developed cosmological symbolism, such as the astronomical maps. These elements create a completed and, one might say, perfected cosmograph.

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865 Jeon Ho-tae has identified these peaks as Kunlun. (Jeon Goguryeo iyagi, 70.)
In his 1986 article “New Light on the Dark Warrior” John Major addressed the apparent disconnect between the description of the Five Phases symbolism and its representation in the Han. In Han illustrations of the Five Phases symbolism, the fifth symbol, the Yellow Dragon, is often excluded. One reason he gave is that the symbol for the center often does not fit within the composition. Another possible reason is that as an already neutral and balanced symbol, the Yellow Dragon may have been deemed unnecessary. The Yellow Dragon could be imagined as lurking benignly under the center of the floor.\textsuperscript{866}

While the symbol of the Yellow Dragon was often excluded in illustrations of the Five Phases symbols, it gained a place of prominence in some late Goguryeo Four Spirits tombs. In Ji’an, the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb and the Five Helmets Tomb 4 have the Yellow Dragon painted on the apex of their ceilings.\textsuperscript{867} (The Five Helmets Tomb 5 does not have a Yellow Dragon, but the Dragon-Tiger can be considered an equally powerful, balanced symbol.) The physical structure of the Goguryeo lanterndecke ceilings lend themselves to appropriately depicting the fifth symbol. The flat capping stone creates an ideal surface for painting the Yellow Dragon directly in the center, where it belongs. The inclusion of the Yellow Dragon (and the Dragon-Tiger) creates a complete illustration of the Five Phases.\textsuperscript{868}

In addition to depicting the Yellow Dragon (and Dragon-Tiger), the Ji’an Four Spirits tombs also depict a natively developed astronomical diagram that works in

\textsuperscript{866} Major “New Light,” 71.
\textsuperscript{867} The Gangseo Great Tomb in Pyongyang is the only other tomb with the Yellow Dragon painted on its ceiling.
\textsuperscript{868} Kim Jin-soon, 128-129.
conjunction with the Four (Five) Spirits. The sun and the moon are placed on the east and west sides of the ceiling, respectively. The six stars of the Southern Dipper and the seven stars are the Northern Dipper are painted on the south and north, and the Three Northern Polestars appear on the ceiling near the Yellow Dragon and the Dragon-Tiger. Each celestial body is oriented with its corresponding Spirit animal. The astronomical map facilitates the tombs orientation to the cardinal directions. The symbols of the sun, moon, and Northern Dipper can be traced to Han cosmology. However, the Southern Dipper appears more rarely, and the Three Northern Polestars appear to be unique to Goguryeo. Therefore, the Goguryeo created a new astronomical system to aid in the orientation of the tomb. One can argue that this native astronomical system further perfects the symbolic cosmograph depicted inside the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs.

The murals inside the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs show a perfected and elaborated Five Phases cosmology. They depict a complete replication of the Five Phases symbols with the inclusion of the Yellow Dragon and the Dragon-Tiger. They also use natively developed astronomical maps to facilitate the symbols and aid in the occupants’ orientation. With these symbols working together within the composition, the occupants would be completely aligned with the center and able to ascend the *axis mundi*.

4.6 Limitations of the Study and Future Research

Researching the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs is a difficult endeavor, and in many ways this study has barely scratched the surface of understanding these monuments.

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869 See Kim Il-gwon “Byeokhwa cheonmundo” and “Astronomical and Spiritual Representation” for further explanation.
Many of the limitations in regards to understanding the murals inside these tombs comes from lack of materials, both written and visual, that would definitively identify the images or, at the very least, offer a glimpse of who is buried in them. The tombs had been plundered in the ancient past before they were opened by scholars. Nothing but the paintings remained, leaving no clues as to when the tombs were created and who was buried in them. Scholars utilize the tomb structures and the paintings to broadly date them to sometime in the sixth century, and while many scholars agree with the chronological order of the Donggou Four Spirits Tomb being built first and the Five Helmets Tombs 4 and 5 being built later (likely in that order), there is little hard evidence supporting this conjecture. There is little to nothing remaining from the Goguryeo Kingdom outside of these tombs. All architecture has long disappeared with only the remnants of stone walls remaining.

Historical records are of little help in understanding the Goguryeo Kingdom. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the majority of what is known about the Goguryeo people comes from Chinese texts. Even the later Korean histories, the thirteenth century *Samguk sagi* and the twelfth century *Samguk Yusa*, often relied on Chinese histories for their information. The Chinese texts often convey a sense of superiority over the peoples they describe. This sense of superiority is often inflated, skewing the records. The later Korean histories also have their limitations. For example, Ilyeon, the author of the *Samguk yusa*, was a Buddhist monk. His own biases creep into his work and are evident when he states the Goguryeo fell because of their acceptance of Daoism.\(^{870}\) The clearest

\(^{870}\) Kim Dal-Yong, 190-195.
extant records written from the perspective of the Goguryeo are found on stone monuments, such as Gwanggaeto’s Stele located in Ji’an.

The largest base of materials available offering a glimpse into the world of Goguryeo are the murals found inside one hundred plus tombs located near Ji’an and Pyongyang. These tombs offer a wealth of material for art historical analysis. Comparison between roughly contemporary materials found on the Korean Peninsula, in China, and in Japan offers some answers. From comparisons scholars can roughly date the tombs. From analyzing the changing motifs within the tombs, scholars have determined an evolution in the religious beliefs and beliefs regarding the afterlife. However, many of the answers come through cross-cultural comparisons, which implements its own limitations. For example, this thesis may seem somewhat Sino-centric.

My goal was to trace the origins and fundamental ideology of the images found in the three Ji’an Four Spirits tombs. This search for the iconographical roots generally led back to Han China and before. Most of the images in the three Goguryeo tombs in Ji’an have roots in the Han, and comparison with those Han materials offers a simplistic rubric from which to interpret the Goguryeo paintings. However, in my research I came across regional variations between the Ji’an and Pyongyang Four Spirits tombs that are difficult to explain. For example, I was able to satisfactorily identify many of the images appropriated from Chinese mythology found in the Ji’an tombs, but I cannot do more than surmise why these images appear in these three Goguryeo tombs or why they do not appear in the Pyongyang area Four Spirits tombs. Also, many of the images have roots in
ancient China, but the overall compositions and certain elements are unique to these Goguryeo tombs. I cannot explain what these changes or decisions reflect about the people of Goguryeo in the sixth century.
### TABLE 1: Ji’an Four Spirits Tomb Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name in Thesis</th>
<th>Most Common Name</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Donggou Four Spirits Tomb  | (Tonggou/Tonggu) Four Spirits Tomb  | • Ji’an West River 4 Spirits Tomb (K:집안서강사신분; C:吉安/通溝四神墓)  
• West River Tomb No.60 (K:서강 60호분; C:西崗 60號墳)  
• Tonggu/Donggou Tomb No.7 (K:통구 7호분; C:通溝7號墳)  
• Mt. Yu Grave No. 2112 (K:우산묘구 제 2112호묘; C:禹山墓丘 2112號墓; JYM2112)  
• (Jian) Four Spirits Tomb (K:집안사신묘; C:集安四神墓)  
• Tonggu Four Spirits Tomb (DPRK:통구사신무덤) |
| Characters: 洞泃四神墓 | K: 통구사신총 (Tonggou sasinchong)  
C: (通溝/通溝)四神墓 ((Tonggou) Sishen mu) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name in Thesis</th>
<th>Most Common Name</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Five Helmets Tomb 4  | Wuikufen Tomb 4  | • Five Mounds Tomb 4 (K:오회분 4호묘 C:五塊墳 4號墓)  
• Five Mounds Tomb 4 (J:五塊墳 4號墓)  
• West River Tomb No.61 (K:서강 61호분; C:西崗 61號墳)  
• Tonggu/Donggou Unclassified Tomb (K:통구미편호분; C:通溝未編號墳)  
• Mt. Yu Grave No. 2104 (K:우산묘구 제 2104호묘; C:禹山墓丘 2104號墓; JYM2104)  
• J’an Five Tomb’s Tomb No.4 (DPRK: 집안 다서무덤의 4호 무덤) |
| Characters: 五盔墳 4號墓 | K: 오회분 4호묘 (Ohoebun 4ho myo)  
C: 五盔墳 4號墓 (Wukuifen 4hao mu) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name in Thesis</th>
<th>Most Common Name</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Five Helmets Tomb 5  | Wuikufen Tomb 5  | • Five Mounds Tomb 5 (K:오회분 5호 묘 C:五塊墳 5號墓)  
• Tonggu/Tonggou Tomb No.17 (K:통구 17호*; C:通溝 17號墳)  
• West River Tomb No.62 (K:서강 62호분; C:西崗 62號墳)  
• Tonggu/Tonggou Tomb No.5 (K:통구 5호분; C:通溝5號墳)  
• Mt. Yu Grave No. 2104 (K:우산묘구 제 2104호묘; C:禹山墓丘 2104號墓; JYM2104)  
• J’an Five Tomb’s Tomb No.5 (DPRK: 집안 다서무덤의 5호 무덤) |
| Characters: 五盔墳 5號墓 | K: 오회분 5호 묘 (Ohoebun 5ho myo)  
C: 五盔墳 5號墓 (Wukuifen 5hao mu) |
### Table 2: Goguryeo Tombs with Four Spirits and Mixed Imagery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Tomb Name</th>
<th>Chambers</th>
<th>Four Spirits</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ji'an</td>
<td>Tomb of the Dancers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Chamber, Ceiling: Red Birds, White Tiger, Green Dragon</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji'an</td>
<td>Changchuan Tomb 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Front Chamber, Ceiling: Red Birds</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji'an</td>
<td>Three Chamber Tomb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Second, Third Chambers Ceiling: all Four Spirits</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji'an</td>
<td>Tomb of the Concentric Circles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chamber Ceiling: Green Dragon and White Tiger</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ji'an</td>
<td>Tomb Area Below the Mt. Fortress, Tomb No. 983</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Chamber, Ceiling: traces of two Red Birds</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Liaodong City Tomb*</td>
<td>Side Chamber +2</td>
<td>Side Chamber Ceiling (or Upper Walls): Green Dragon, White Tiger, Dark Warrior</td>
<td>Early 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Yaksu-ri Mural Tomb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Chamber, Walls: all Four Spirits</td>
<td>Early 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Gosan-ri Tomb 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Chamber, Walls: all Four Spirits</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Palchewon-ri Mural Tomb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Chamber, Walls: Green Dragon</td>
<td>Early 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Tomb of the Niche Spirit</td>
<td>Side Chamber +2</td>
<td>Front Chamber, Upper Walls: Red Bird</td>
<td>Early 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Daean-ri Tomb 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Main Chamber, Walls: all Four Spirits</td>
<td>Mid-5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Twin Pillars Tomb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Front Chamber, Walls: Green Dragon, White Tiger; Back Chamber, Upper Walls: Red Birds, Dark Warrior</td>
<td>Late 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Nosan-ri Tomb 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walls: all Four Spirits</td>
<td>5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Anhak-dong Tomb 9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walls: Red Birds?</td>
<td>Late 4th-5th Early 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Jangsang-dong Tomb 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walls: Dark Warrior</td>
<td>Early 5th cen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Jangsang-dong Tomb 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Early 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Usan-ri Tomb 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walls: Green Dragon, White Tiger</td>
<td>Late 5th cen.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tomb of the Hunting Scene</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walls: all Four Spirits</td>
<td>Late 5th cen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Gosan-ri Tomb 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walls: Green Dragon, White Tiger, Dark Warrior</td>
<td>Late 5th cen.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bosan-ri Mural Tomb</td>
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<td>Walls: Green Dragon, Red Birds, White Tiger</td>
<td>Late 5th cen.</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>End 5th cen.</td>
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<td>Deokhwa-ri Tomb 2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Unnyong-ri Mural Tomb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ceiling: Red Birds?</td>
<td>Late 5th cen.</td>
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* The Liaodong City Tomb has a much different structure than the other Goguryeo mural tombs.
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<th>Ceiling</th>
<th>Apex</th>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Four Spirits</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Early 6th century (Possibly 559, Tomb of King Yangwong)</td>
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<td>Strongmen</td>
<td>Four Spirits</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>End of the 5th - Early 6th century</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Four Spirits</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Mid-6th century</td>
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