
Gaya Tumuli (Republic of Korea) No 1666

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Gaya Tumuli

Location

Daeseong-dong Tumuli
Gimhae City
Marisan Tumuli
Haman County
Okjeon Tumuli
Hapcheon County
Gyeongsangnam-do Province

Jisan-dong Tumuli
Goryeong County
Gyeongsangbuk-do Province

Songhak-dong Tumuli
Goseong County
Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli
Changnyeong County
Gyeongsangnam-do Province

Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli
Namwon City
Jeollabuk-do Province

Republic of Korea

Brief description

Gaya Tumuli is a serial nomination that includes seven archaeological cemetery sites with burial mounds attributed to the Gaya Confederacy, which developed in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula from the 1st to the 6th century CE. Through their geographical distribution and landscape characteristics, types of burials, and grave goods, the nominated cemeteries attest to the distinctive Gaya political system in which affiliated polities existed as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities. The shared development of tumuli by Gaya polities benefited from the systematic trading network that closely linked the Gaya confederacy through diverse ocean, land, and river routes. The introduction of new forms of tombs and the intensification of the spatial hierarchy evident in the seven tumuli sites clearly reflect the structural changes experienced by Gaya society during its history.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of seven *sites*.

Included in the Tentative List

28 January 2019

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 23 September to 3 October 2021.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 6 October 2021 requesting further information about the Gaya Society in general terms, the selection of component parts, the private ownership, the legal protection, planned developments, monitoring, and the participation of local communities.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 15 November 2021.

An Interim Report was provided to the State Party on 20 December 2021 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: the selection of component parts, the excavation and exhibition of objects and the protection of the sites.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2022.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

9 March 2022

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

The Gaya Tumuli is a serial property consisting of seven cemeteries created by members of the Gaya Confederacy, which developed from the 1st through the mid-6th century in the southern section of the Korean Peninsula. The seven nominated cemeteries are: (01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli, (02) Marisan Tumuli, (03) Okjeon Tumuli, (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli, (05) Songhak-dong Tumuli, (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli, and (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli.

Through the geographical distribution of the component sites, the landscape settings of the cemeteries, the types of burial constructions, and grave goods, the nominated property attests to the distinctive Gaya political system in which affiliated polities existed as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities. The Gaya Confederacy responded flexibly to political shifts in ancient East Asia and contributed to maintaining the balance of power in the region by cooperating internally and taking part in exchanges with neighbouring States.

The seven nominated cemeteries are the burial grounds for the leaders of seven Gaya polities that developed independently across the southern Korean Peninsula. The cemeteries are all located on elevated terrain at the centre of a polity and have densely clustered tombs constructed over a long period of time. This dispersion of monumental and elaborate tomb clusters manifests shared funerary practices and testifies to the existence of multiple powerful and autonomous polities sharing the same culture.

The nominated cemeteries all feature a particular kind of stone-lined burial chamber and have produced a distinctive form of pottery, known as the Gaya type stone-lined chamber burial and Gaya-style pottery. These commonalities contribute to identifying the territorial bounds of the Gaya Confederacy. Individual variations can still be found within these two indicators, allowing the boundaries of each polity to be identified and testifying to their political autonomy. Other grave goods, such as iron weapons, reflect similar levels of military power, and trade goods imported into and exchanged within the Gaya Confederacy demonstrate how the seven polities existed as political equals and maintained a level of internal parity. This political organisation contrasts with the contemporaneous political entities in East Asia that had clearly centralised structures.

The area of the seven component parts totals 189 ha, with buffer zones totalling 964.8 ha.

Additional information on the Gaya Confederacy was requested by ICOMOS in October 2021. The State Party supplied information on the history of research on the Gaya Confederacy, the process of the spatial definition of the seven Gaya entities, the selection of the component parts of the nomination and the dating of the cemeteries. Further information was also provided about the private ownership, the legal protection, planned developments, monitoring, and the participation of local communities. In its Interim report, ICOMOS requested the State Party to further explain how the different sub-entities have been defined, what attributes or combination of attributes are used to identify a cemetery or a grave as belonging to one or another sub-entity. The detailed response improved the understanding of how the nominated property component parts were identified as the cemeteries of the leaders of the seven Gaya entities and what made them stand out from the other cemeteries (in quantitative and qualitative terms).

State of conservation

The generally hilly topography of the component parts has helped to protect the sites from urban development, which remained concentrated in the plains. Archaeological excavation has been kept to a minimum and performed only when absolutely required for academic or conservation purposes. Tombs archaeologically studied in the early 20th century undergo a process of re-excavation in cases where concerns exist about the structural stability of the burial facilities or the aboveground mounds. All these recent excavations within the nominated property have been thoroughly recorded and published so that their findings can be widely used as baseline data for academic study.

After tombs have been excavated, the pit is backfilled using the soil and stones removed from it. Mounds are rebuilt over the burial to the height and circumference of the original construction, as confirmed by the archaeological research. Grass is planted over the burial mound and in the surrounding areas to prevent soil erosion. Footpaths for visitors have been established on most of the sites.

Due to urban development in the past, most of the buffer zones of the component parts include some additional built elements, such as residential areas, apartment towers, school buildings, a theme park, religious facilities, county offices, power lines, roads or the alteration of the topography. At the (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli component part, the Daegaya Royal Tombs Exhibition Hall was constructed in 2000 within the boundary. In general, the State Party is in the process of removing or mitigating the impact of these elements. In some cases, trees screening out the view of intrusive buildings in the buffer zone or setting have been planted. At component part (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli a tunnel-bridge was built to reduce the impact of a road built in the 1910s; and a more recent and very busy road divides the (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli component part. At the (02) Marisan Tumuli heavy rains caused soil erosion in the buffer zone and a stormwater drain was installed.

In some component parts ((02) Marisan Tumuli and (03) Okjeon Tumuli) tombs suffered collapses due to previous excavations or looting trenches. These tumuli are progressively re-excavated and restored.

At all component parts, except (01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli, modern graves are located inside the boundary. Their removal is in progress, but it is a complicated and lengthy process.

Some component parts ((06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli and (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli) contain privately-owned plots of land that are used for agriculture. Other component parts ((03) Okjeon Tumuli and (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli) are in need of tree removal. Vegetation management plans have been established in consultation with experts for six of the nominated cemeteries. For the remaining cemetery, the (6) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli, a plan is under

preparation. After removing unwanted vegetation, grass is planted in the topsoil to prevent soil loss. Especially in or near wooded areas, animals like wild boars and moles can also cause damage to the tumuli. In response, facilities to prevent wild animals from accessing the tombs are being developed.

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the component sites is good.

Factors affecting the nominated property

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are linked to urban development that took place before the component parts were protected under the current law. The road at (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli is the most significant factor affecting the property, but the State Party has signalled that a solution is being sought. The privately-owned lands within the component parts are generally used for agriculture or as grave sites. While these uses do not seem to pose a direct threat, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party continue its efforts to acquire these areas.

As mentioned above, some intrusive buildings are located within the buffer zones and the State Party is proposing to relocate all public buildings outside the buffer zones. Privately owned buildings are more difficult to remove, but the municipal governments are actively encouraging residents to move outside the buffer zones. Any future development of privately-owned buildings must adhere to legislated height restrictions.

Other threats, especially in or near wooded areas, are linked to fire, vegetation growth (especially trees) and the activities of wild animals. Soil erosion, due to heavy rainfall, is also considered to be a potential threat.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is good and that factors affecting the nominated property are urban development that occurred before the beginning of the legal protection of the property. These are being addressed by the State Party. The most urgent factor affecting the property is the road within the (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli site.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The seven Gaya cemeteries provide eloquent information on this ancient Korean culture and its distinctive political system, a confederacy, which distinguishes it from other centralised East Asian polities.
- The seven cemeteries are all found in highly visible hilltop locations in the political centre of their respective polities, expressing the authority and power of the ruling class and nurturing a sense of belonging among the communities in the surrounding areas. The cemeteries include densely clustered tombs constructed over an extended period of time.
- The Gaya entities are differentiated from surrounding groups by the unique Gaya-type stone-lined elongated burial chamber topped with a circular burial mound made by alternating layers of soil with different qualities.
- The objects located in the high-status graves, especially the Gaya-style pottery found in all seven cemeteries, also testify to the cohesion of the Gaya Confederacy and mark its boundaries. Local variations highlight the autonomy of each one of the Gaya polities and help to mark the internal boundaries. The similar levels of wealth and external connections displayed through the burial goods indicate that the seven entities were political equals.

Based on the nomination dossier the key attributes of the nominated property are the spatial distribution and highly visible locations (hilltops and ridges), the burial mounds with the Gaya-type stone-lined elongated burial chambers and the grave offerings that denote very high social status, unity (e.g. Gaya-style pottery) and autonomy (different trade relations).

The argument developed in the nomination dossier and further supported by the additional information is coherent and based on well-founded investigations. ICOMOS recommends that the differences between the archaeological record left by the Gaya Confederacy and the centralised neighbouring entities be explored more thoroughly in future research that includes quantitative and qualitative data as well as analysis of spatial distribution. This could further highlight the specific status of the confederacy.

Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis has been developed around the following parameters: geographical distribution, location or setting, types of burial, and grave goods. It has examined properties within the region inscribed on the World Heritage List (13), and inserted in the Tentative Lists (2) of States Parties in East Asia. One other property nor on the World Heritage List or Tentative Lists was included.

The selected comparators represent tomb clusters and individual tombs inscribed or proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List under criterion (iii) by itself or in combination with other criteria. The properties are located in the Republic of Korea (5), China (6), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2) and Japan (3). After excluding properties that are different in terms of the date of construction or their attributes, the comparison concentrated on six sites: the Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom (China, 2004, criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v)), the Complex of Koguryo Tombs (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2004, criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)), the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan (Japan, 2019, criteria (iii) and (iv)), the Baekje Historic Areas (Republic of Korea, 2015, criteria (ii) and (iii), particularly the Songsan-ri Tombs and the Neungsan-ri Tombs), and the Gyeongju Historic Areas (Republic of Korea, 2000, criteria (ii) and (iii)), particularly, the Tumuli Park Belt and the Mount. Namsan Belt). Another site, not inscribed on the World Heritage List that was included in the comparative analysis was the Seokchon-dong Tombs, an ancient cemetery in the Republic of Korea. All of these tombs were for political leaders of centralised East Asian states contemporaneous with Gaya.

It is stated that tombs constructed in the Three Kingdoms of Korea (Goguryeo (Koguryo), Baekje, and Silla) and in Japan over the 1st through the 6th centuries attest to political centralisation and to a hierarchical relationship between the centre and the periphery. The comparison of the geographical distribution, location, types of burial, and grave goods of these sites with the nominated property demonstrates that the Gaya polities shared cultural commonalities but, in contrast to the other centralised political entities, maintained their individual autonomy and equitable relations and did not coalesce into a larger state. Gaya maintained a federated political system throughout its history, while responding flexibly to the political shifts taking place around East Asia and contributing to maintaining the balance of power within the region. The seven cemeteries are nominated as exceptional testimony to this distinctive political system.

ICOMOS considers that the argument put forth by the State Party is adequate. The additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2022 provided the quantitative data (e.g. tomb sizes and their distribution, quantities and types of grave goods) that were needed to substantiate the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the Gaya Tumuli as an expression of a distinctive political system.

The comparative analysis includes information on the selection of the seven selected sites from approximately 780 tomb clusters of Gaya origin. More than seventy excavated cemeteries have been evaluated according to standards such as the scale of the entire cemetery, the size of individual burial chambers and mounds, and the quality and quantity of burial goods. As a result, twenty cemeteries have been confirmed as pertaining to the ruling class of each of the seven Gaya polities. At this

point the sites were selected based on the amount of information that they offered, which had to be characteristic of the Gaya Confederacy, as well as on meeting the conditions of authenticity and integrity. The result of this process was the selection of the seven sites proposed in this nomination.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, in combination with the additional information mentioned above, explains the selection of the seven cemeteries.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Gaya polities are organised in a confederacy, unlike the other contemporaneous East Asian political entities that are centralised.

ICOMOS considers that the argument developed by the State Party is adequate. The Gaya Tumuli bear exceptional testimony to Gaya, a unique ancient East Asian civilisation that coexisted with its more strongly centralised neighbours but maintained a distinct confederated political system.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has been justified.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

Since the focus of this nomination is the existence of a confederacy of different polities of the Gaya culture, the evaluation of the property's integrity is based on the inclusion of all the elements necessary to support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the protection of the selected sites.

The boundaries of the component parts of the property contain the tombs and their settings, including the hilly areas in which they are located. The delineated sites are large enough to demonstrate the topographical and spatial characteristics of the nominated property and the process of its development.

Even though there are no written records from the Gaya culture itself, texts from other contemporaneous or later cultures describe the existence of a group of small polities in the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula from the 1st through the mid-6th century that loosely united to form a greater political entity known as Gaya. Archaeological remains of the culture known today include shell mounds, residential areas, and burial sites, with the latter sites

being the largest in number and the most thoroughly researched group of remains. No detailed reference is made to any of the other types of sites in the nomination dossier. Research at approximately 780 burial grounds as well as the historical records point towards the existence of seven polities belonging to the Gaya Confederacy: Geumgwangaya, Aragaya, Daraguk, Daegaya, Sogaya, Gimunguk, and Bihwagaya. The State Party states that the seven component sites comprising this nomination are each located in what used to be the political centre of the pertinent Gaya polity. It is also argued that the seven cemeteries represent all stages of development in Gaya burial traditions and bear witness to the extent of Gaya culture and influence.

ICOMOS considers that the impacts of intrusive built elements (e.g. roads, graves, modern buildings) within the component parts or their buffer zones are being addressed by the State Party.

The comprehension of the Gaya society as a whole would benefit from the inclusion of data from other types of Gaya archaeological sites (e.g. shell mounds, residential areas and commoner graves) as contextual information. Nevertheless, the cemeteries selected by the State Party support the argument for the Outstanding Universal Value and can be considered without this further contextual information. For that reason, ICOMOS considers that the integrity of the whole series as well as the integrity of each of the component parts has been demonstrated.

Authenticity

In the case of the Gaya Tumuli the State Party has concentrated the archaeological excavations on sites that needed intervention for reasons of conservation. When a damaged mound is identified, it is excavated and the mound, the burial chamber and the grave goods are recorded. Afterwards the structural remains are reburied and the mound is reconstructed, if sufficient information could be gathered to do so in an authentic manner. The excavated artefacts from the sites are recorded, conserved and stored by the relevant institutions. The archaeological explorations are conducted by expert institutions and the resulting data is published. Repair work at the nominated properties is only conducted by licensed heritage conservators.

The tumuli on the hills were constructed to be viewed from the residential areas below. While there were changes in the wider setting of the cemeteries, due to urban development, the location and topography of the sites themselves have changed little, presenting generally the same aspect as at the time of their construction. A threat to the authenticity of these views is the growth of trees on some of the cemeteries that obscure the tumuli. However, the State Party is in the process of addressing this problem.

ICOMOS considers that the condition of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts in terms

of the form, material, design, substance, location and setting have been met.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries

The proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the Gaya Tumuli is linked to the high-status burials of the seven Gaya polities. Archaeological test pits and, in some cases, geophysical surveys were used to identify the areas with graves. The boundaries for each component part were chosen to incorporate the area of burials and the extent of the raised landform upon which they are located. They are also designed to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the property. Nobody lives within the boundaries of the component parts.

On site, the boundaries are marked by fences (e.g. (05) Songhak-dong Tumuli), stormwater drains (e.g. (05) Songhak-dong Tumuli, (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli), or small red flags and rope fences (e.g. (01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli). In some cases, the component parts can be accessed from several points (e.g. (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli).

The buffer zones are defined to ensure the integrated protection of the component parts and their settings. The boundaries of the buffer zones have been established in accordance with the perimeters of surrounding natural features, such as ridges and rivers, as well as the limits of artificial structures such as roads and housing. The area comprising the buffer zones is also subject to government protection under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act and other pertinent laws. The buffer zones surround the property to ensure that activities in the adjacent areas will not negatively impact the proposed Outstanding Universal Value (e.g. through urban development). In the case of the Gaya Tumuli an important objective of the buffer zones is to maintain the visibility of the mounds. Due to the fact that some of the component parts are located in densely populated areas, the number of inhabitants of the buffer zones reached 39,719 in 2019. For the single components this number varies between 177 ((06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli) and 17,889 ((01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli) inhabitants. Apart from the buffer zones a 500 metres radius from the outer boundary of the Heritage Area is designated a Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area with different levels of development control. The buffer zones of the nominated cemeteries are mainly encompassed within the Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Areas.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated areas and the buffer zones are adequate.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the rationale for the selection of component parts has been established, and the comparative analysis together with the justification of criterion (iii) support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. No problems that are not being addressed already by the State Party have been detected concerning the integrity and authenticity of the property.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

There are no surviving historical records that reveal the full history of Gaya. However, there are fragments of information about the historical entity of Gaya that can be found in documents from contemporaneous or later states in East Asia.

The archaeological investigation of the Gaya Tumuli started in 1910 under Japanese rule. Several books were published on the subject and the National Museum of Korea holds more than 30,000 glass plates showing Korean historic sites. After the end of the colonial rule archaeological research was reinitiated in the 1970s and intensified in the 1980s. In the 1990s museums were built close to some of the Gaya sites, and in the 2000s the increased use of archaeometric methods enhanced the knowledge of the Gaya culture. The State Party highlights that all excavations at the nominated property have been thoroughly recorded and published, in order for the findings to be used as baseline data for academic study. Records on the management, conservation, monitoring, and repair activities that have taken place at the nominated property are also preserved.

At the moment the majority of the documentation seems to be distributed between the different institutions and organisations involved in the research, maintenance and management of the different component parts of the property. The conservation team of the Gaya Tumuli Conservation and Management Foundation (to be established after inscription) will be tasked to establish centralised archives of materials on the Gaya Tumuli.

Conservation measures

The State Party has established national standards on tomb management, contained in the Tumuli Conservation and Management Manual (2011) and the Act on Protection and Inspection of Buried Cultural Heritage (2010, revised 2019). The principles established in these documents have been used to develop site-specific Comprehensive Maintenance Plans (CMP) (or Comprehensive Conservation Management Plans (CCMP)) for each of the component cemeteries. The English versions of these documents do not exist, but they are considered to be detailed and fit for purpose. Revision of each CMP is periodically undertaken and the oldest plan is from 2013 ((02) Marisan Tumuli). The State Party commits to a three-yearly revision of each CMP.

In general, the principle of minimal intervention is applied at the sites. When necessary, e.g. due to deteriorating conditions, conservation activities are paired with archaeological investigation and documentation. *In situ* archaeological features are not left exposed. Remains are reburied and, if enough information was available, the mound over the burial is reconstructed and covered with grass.

The settings of the tumuli are conserved by actively pursuing the removal of intrusive elements from the buffer zones (e.g. modern structures and infrastructure) or the property (private modern graves, agricultural uses). In order to re-establish the visibility of the tumuli and avoid damage caused by root growth, trees and invasive vegetation are carefully removed from the properties (e.g. (03) Okjeon Tumuli, and (06) Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli). When trees are cut down, their stumps are left to rot naturally in the ground to ensure minimal impact to subsurface deposits. As a result, this process can take several decades.

Other activities concentrate on the prevention of soil erosion and the enhancement of rainwater drainage. In case of damages the local governments respond in accordance with the respective Heavy Rain Response Manuals.

In agreement with the Cultural Heritage Protection Act, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) and the pertinent local governments are making various institutional efforts at effectively preventing and responding to fires, e.g. fire-prevention drills and training programmes are held regularly.

The financial resources required for the management and protection of the nominated property are provided by both the CHA and the pertinent local governments. The funds are used in accordance with the CMPs. The management of the burial goods excavated from the cemeteries is funded by the annual budgets of the national and local museums holding them in their collections.

Generally speaking, the CMPs lay out the responsibility of the local governments for daily maintenance and management measures at each site, including dedicated on-site staff, monitoring protocols, and the ongoing implementation of the site's conservation strategies. The CMPs provide sufficient flexibility for the site managers to implement important management measures on a day-to-day basis.

Monitoring

The Cultural Heritage Administration's (CHA) National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage conducts surveys of the seven cemeteries and other Historic Sites every three years in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Article 44). The pertinent municipal governments and associated museums carry out daily or regular monitoring activities. The World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli also conducts regular monitoring of the seven nominated cemeteries to support their integrated management. As part of its efforts to further engage local

communities, the Nomination Office is operating monitoring squads composed of members of the residents' councils. These civilian observers monitor safety and environmental conditions around the seven cemeteries. At the (02) Marisan Tumuli a free mobile app is available for visitors, which allows the public to report issues or concerns. The records generated in the current monitoring activities are kept individually at the respective institutions. Establishing a digital system for integrated monitoring to facilitate the sharing of information and the reflection of monitoring results in the revision of management plans is foreseen for 2023-2024.

The State Party stresses that the indicators developed by the World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli are closely related to the proposed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, and integrity of the nominated property.

While modern technology is used (dedicated CCTV facilities with motion tracking, movement sensors, high-resolution video) most of the monitoring processes are based on the observations and judgments of the personnel implementing the monitoring.

The State Party is currently exploring options for making the monitoring process more objective. For example, an automatic drone monitoring programme is being established for (02) Marisan Tumuli, where the drones will make hourly flights across the site, capturing high-definition imagery of the site, which will then be interrogated by software designed to identify change in vegetation, ground surface, or elevation. Other options being considered by the State Party include the installation of moisture probes in tumuli to identify potential landslide, or equipment to monitor soil acidity.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring activities have supported the good state of conservation of the selected component parts. However, it is necessary to integrate the monitoring efforts at all the component sites as soon as possible. Furthermore, it seems necessary to develop quantifiable indicators (e.g. on soil movements, changes in soil acidity, number of rodent burrows, etc.) that are directly linked to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value but do not depend solely on the perceptions of staff members or experts. ICOMOS also recommends that the monitoring system is revised for easy integration of outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

In 1962, the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (CHP Act) was enacted as a framework law for heritage protection (last reviewed in 2020), laying a legal foundation for government-led research and conservation of heritage sites and artefacts.

All seven component parts are designated Heritage Areas with the title "Historic Site" under the CHP Act. Any activities within a Heritage Area that have the potential to impact its state of conservation are severely restricted and may only take place after review by the Cultural Heritage Committee of the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) and approval by the head of the CHA.

Under the same legislation another layer of protection is added by designating a Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area, defined through consultation between the CHA and the pertinent local governments. In consideration of the historic, artistic, academic, and landscape importance of the Heritage Area, the additional conservation area is defined to include a 500 metres radius from the outer boundary of the Heritage Area. This additional protection area can be subdivided into zones with nine different protection levels, a set of development restrictions called "standards for permitting the alteration of the current state of heritage". Special emphasis is given to height restrictions for new constructions and renovations of existing buildings.

All archaeological sites in the Republic of Korea fall under the Act on Protection and Inspection of Buried Cultural Heritage, which regulates when archaeological research can be undertaken (only at sites of the greatest academic significance or those that need emergency conservation interventions).

The Act on Cultural Heritage Maintenance (2010; reviewed in 2020) regulates maintenance, repair, and restoration projects at the nominated property.

Should the property be inscribed on the World Heritage List, it will also be protected by the Special Act on World Heritage Conservation, Management and Utilization (2021). This national law was developed in order to embed the requirements of the World Heritage Convention within the domestic legal framework. For the nominated property this means that all nominated component parts would be protected as a State Designated Heritage Area, overruling any previous and potentially smaller Heritage Area. The same will be true for the implementation of a 500 metres Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area, regardless of the original size of the buffer zones. The law also sets out provisions on the promotion of international collaboration in the World Heritage area, establishment of a national World Heritage plan, implementation of regular surveys and monitoring, compiling of World Heritage databases, founding of steering committees, and setting up of a process for collecting local opinions. The law provides financial support for the management of the nominated

property and prescribes the participation of local residents and other stakeholders in its conservation.

Additional ordinances and guidelines concerning the protection and management of the nominated property have been drawn up by the pertinent local governments and the CHA based on national laws. Other national laws affecting the nominated property include the National Land Planning and Utilization Act (2002; 2019), the Forest Protection Act (2009; 2020), and the Framework Act on the Management of Disasters and Safety (2004; 2020).

The nominated component parts are mostly under state ownership, and only a small portion is owned privately (14.57% in total, with the largest percentage of non-government owned land at the (03) Okjeon Tumuli component [42%]). The State Party advises that the land plots in private ownership are legally protected to the same degree as those in state ownership. Furthermore, the process of acquisition of the privately-owned plots is advancing, depending on the availability of funds. The buffer zones are mainly comprised of privately-owned land plots, but are protected as Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Areas that avoid uncontrolled development.

While looting seems to have been a problem in the past (as several looting trenches indicate), since the introduction of more severe penalties in the Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 1973 robberies have gradually diminished to reach almost none at present. This is probably also assisted by the CCTV coverage at the nominated component parts.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate. The additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2022 added important information and more details on legal protection and showed how the legislation evolved in order to avoid damages to undetected sites or features by introducing legislation for the compulsory excavation of a building site prior to the initiation of construction in the 2000s. Currently efforts are made to include Heritage Impact Assessments into the domestic legal protection system. Furthermore, the new World Heritage law (the Special Act on World Heritage Conservation, Management and Utilization, enacted in 2021), which will apply to the nominated property if it is inscribed on the World Heritage List, is designed to integrate World Heritage conservation principles and methods into domestic laws. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party should continue the process of acquisition of privately-owned lands and provide updated information.

Management system

The World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli was established in 2017. The Nomination Office consists of three sections: the Nomination Committee, a deliberation and decision-making organ; the Advisory Committee, which comprises experts in heritage conservation and utilisation; and the Secretariat. The Secretariat is made up of researchers and civil servants seconded from pertinent provincial governments.

As the cemeteries included in the nomination are all designated Heritage Areas at the national level, the role of supervising the protection and management of the property falls to the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA), which is the central government agency in charge of heritage conservation in the Republic of Korea. This administrative branch prepares the broadest level of plans for the conservation of cultural heritage: the five-year Master Plan for Heritage Conservation, Management, and Utilization (2017-2021) and the Medium and Long-term Comprehensive Research Plan of the Gaya Area (2019).

Based on these plans, the pertinent municipal governments, in close consultation with the provincial governments, draw up a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP) for each nominated cemetery, which has to be revised and approved by the CHA. Following the CMPs, the municipal governments then carry out on-site conservation activities. The activities at the sites are also directed by the existing manuals elaborated by the CHA: the Tumuli Conservation and Management Manual (2011), the Research on Tumuli Repair and Conservation Principles (2011), and the Repair Guidelines for Historic Sites (2011).

In the additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2022 the processes of conservation treatments, inventories, storage, management and public display of archaeological finds is detailed. Archaeological research as well as conservation and restoration efforts for the nominated property component parts are carried out by licensed groups and individuals, focused on maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the property. A report on the archaeological excavation has to be filed at the latest two years after its completion. Burial goods from the cemeteries are vested with the State and housed at museums and other research institutes. Part of the report mentioned above is an inventory of the excavated objects, entered into the Electronic Administration System for Cultural Heritage, a centralised online platform established by the CHA in 2011 for facilitating cooperation and sharing of information among the central government, local governments, and private partners such as archaeological research institutes. The management of the burial goods excavated from the cemeteries is funded by the annual budgets of the national and local museums holding them in their collections.

Disaster-prevention facilities have been installed at each component part, especially in preparation for forest fires and strong rains. All of the relevant organisations are linked in a network in order to facilitate cooperation. Heritage interpretation and monitoring activities at the cemeteries are carried out with the participation of local residents.

The CHA, together with the pertinent local governments, provides the financial resources required for the management and protection of the nominated property. Following the guidance provided by the Comprehensive Maintenance Plans the funds are used for carrying out such activities as purchasing plots of land currently under

private ownerships, implementing repair projects, and conducting academic research. The budget estimated until 2023 includes an annual rate of increase of five percent based on the 2020 budget.

At a more general level, the heritage protection and management are articulated with national land and tourism development plans prepared by the national government. Based on these federal plans, urban and tourism development plans have been prepared at the provincial level, which in turn provide a basis for relevant plans at the municipal level. In case of conflict between these development plans with the Cultural Heritage Protection Act the latter takes priority in all matters concerning the protection and management of the nominated property.

If the nominated property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli will be converted into the Gaya Tumuli Conservation and Management Foundation in order to improve the capacity for the implementation of the integrated management plan. This step is stipulated in the Special Act on the Conservation, Management, and Utilization of World Heritage (2021) as well as in the provincial and municipal ordinances on World Heritage.

The National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (the research branch of the CHA), the Korean National University of Cultural Heritage (the educational branch of the CHA), the National Museum of Korea, the Heritage Repair Association, and the Korea Cultural Heritage Association offer the expertise and training required for the management and conservation of the nominated property. Staffing levels at the component parts range from a minimum of sixteen ((05) Songhak-dong Tumuli) to a maximum of forty-one ((01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli).

ICOMOS considers that the management system effectively integrates the different levels of government, making coordinated action possible. While the management system is sufficient to ensure a common vision is shared by all actors, it allows for local differences. The planning instruments are already being implemented successfully at different levels of government and have proven to be useful tools in the effort to protect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Improvements, for example the inclusion of Heritage Impact Assessment processes in the legislation, are foreseen in the future.

Visitor management

The annual average number of combined visitors to the seven nominated cemeteries from 2015 to 2019 was around 650,000. Visitor facilities and infrastructure at the nominated component parts can be classified into five categories (specified in the Guidelines on the Design of Public Spaces at Cultural Heritage, prepared by the CHA in 2011). The visitor facilities established at the nominated cemeteries have the capacity to accommodate not only the current number of visitors, but also the number estimated in case of inscription (calculated at about 1.6

million annually). However, at present, there is a clear concentration of tourists at three of the component parts ((01) Daeseong-dong Tumuli, (02) Marisan Tumuli, and (04) Jisan-dong Tumuli), which together account for more than 85% of all visitors to the nominated property. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party consider the future development of strategies to promote the other sites, in order to disperse the visitor levels more evenly.

Community involvement

The Gaya period is an important part of Korean history, and children are taught about Gaya culture in school. Local residents at the nominated component parts are both proud and knowledgeable about the period.

In each of the seven municipal-level localities, a residents' council, sometimes referred to as 'Gaya Guardians', has been organised. These councils consist of local residents who volunteer to study the history of Gaya, care for the environment surrounding the nominated site, conduct promotional programmes, and participate in monitoring activities. This programme is aimed at placing heritage at the centre of community building. In August 2019, the World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli prepared a set of rules on the management and operation of these residents' councils.

With a slightly different objective from the Heritage Guardians, the Heritage Caretakers programme hires ordinary civilians for everyday conservation activities such as cutting grass, tidying up the natural environment, cleaning drains, and monitoring potential damage from various sources. Local residents also work as tourist guides at the heritage sites.

The pertinent municipal governments are implementing a range of educational, cultural, experience, and tour programmes for the cemeteries and their surrounding areas.

ICOMOS considers that the State Party is applying successful programmes for community involvement in heritage protection, maintenance and promotion. Nevertheless, greater efforts could be made to ensure that local communities are included in decision-making processes.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and the management of the proposed property are well organised and already operational. Visitors are well attended at the nominated component parts and the local community has embraced the heritage sites. ICOMOS recommends that further efforts are made to involve the members of local communities in the decision-making processes.

6 Conclusion

Gaya Tumuli is a serial nominated property that includes seven archaeological cemeteries with burial mounds placed in highly visible hilltop settings. Through their geographical distribution and landscape characteristics, types of burials, and grave goods, the nominated cemeteries attest to the distinctive political system, the Gaya Confederacy, in which affiliated polities were allowed to exist as autonomous political equals, while sharing cultural commonalities. This organisation contrasts with that of very centralised contemporaneous political entities in East Asia.

The legal protection, good state of conservation, and fully functional management system of the component parts are strengths of this nomination.

ICOMOS considers that the property meets criterion (iii). The selection of component parts is well described and the comparative analysis together with the justification for criterion (iii) support the argument presented for the Outstanding Universal Value of the serial property. No problems that are not being addressed already by the State Party have been detected concerning the integrity and authenticity of the property.

The monitoring activities have supported the good state of conservation of the selected component parts. However, it is necessary to integrate the monitoring efforts at all the component sites as soon as possible. Furthermore, it is recommended to develop quantifiable indicators that are directly linked to the Outstanding Universal Value but are not reliant on the perceptions of staff members or experts. The monitoring system should be revised for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

The legal protection and the management of the proposed property are well organised and already operational. Visitors are well attended at the nominated component parts and the local community has embraced the heritage sites. ICOMOS recommends that further efforts are made to involve the members of local communities in the decision-making processes.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Gaya Tumuli, Republic of Korea, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion (iii)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Gaya Tumuli are a serial property consisting of seven cemeteries created by members of the Gaya Confederacy, an ancient collection of several polities that

persisted from the 1st through the mid-6th centuries CE in the southern section of the Korean Peninsula. The seven cemeteries are the Daeseong-dong Tumuli, Marisan Tumuli, Okjeon Tumuli, Jisan-dong Tumuli, Songhak-dong Tumuli, Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli, and Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli.

Through its geographical distribution, locational characteristics, types of burials, and contents of grave goods, the property attests to the distinctive Gaya political system in which affiliated polities were allowed to exist as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities. The Gaya Confederacy responded flexibly to political shifts in ancient East Asia and contributed to maintaining the balance of power in the region by cooperating internally and taking part in exchanges with neighbouring states.

The seven cemeteries are the burial grounds for the top leaders of seven Gaya polities that developed independently at different sites across the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula. The cemeteries are all located on elevated terrain at the centre of a polity and are home to densely clustered tombs constructed over a long period.

This dispersed distribution of equally monumental and elaborate tomb clusters manifesting shared practices for locating and building high-status tombs testifies to the existence of multiple equally powerful and autonomous polities living under the influence of the same culture.

The cemeteries all feature a particular kind of stone-lined burial chamber and have produced a distinctive form of pottery, respectively known as the Gaya-type stone-lined chamber burial and Gaya-style pottery. These commonalities contribute to identifying the territorial bounds of the Gaya Confederacy. Individual variations can still be found within these two indicators, allowing the boundaries of each polity to be identified and testifying to their political autonomy. Other grave goods, such as iron weapons reflecting similar levels of military power and trade goods imported into and exchanged within the Gaya Confederacy, demonstrate how the seven polities existed as political equals and maintained a level of internal parity.

Criterion (iii): The Gaya Tumuli bear exceptional testimony to Gaya, a unique ancient East Asian civilisation that coexisted with its more strongly centralised neighbours but maintained a distinct confederated political system. The property is important evidence of the diversity found among ancient East Asian civilisations.

Integrity

The Gaya Tumuli comprehensively manifest the distinct political system of Gaya, incorporating within the boundaries of the component parts all the attributes necessary to convey its Outstanding Universal Value, such as geographical distribution, locational characteristics, types of burial and grave goods.

The archaeological attributes of the property are mostly conserved in good condition. The component areas are large enough to demonstrate the topographical and spatial characteristics of the property and the process of its development.

The property is under rigorous government protection according to the Cultural Heritage Protection Act and is unlikely to suffer from adverse effects of either development or neglect. Some of the cemeteries have been affected by nearby urbanisation, but not to an extent that would have an adverse impact on their attributes.

Authenticity

The seven cemeteries meet the conditions of authenticity in terms of form and design, materials and substance, and location and setting.

Excavation within the property has been conducted to the minimal possible extent and only for academic or conservation purposes by expert institutes. The excavations conducted to date have confirmed the authenticity of the burial structures, burial-mound construction methods and building materials. Repair work within the component parts' settings is conducted by nationally licensed heritage professionals and ensure that there are no impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value. It is based on the findings of archaeological research and takes place only after a thorough analysis of the original form, structure, material, and construction methods.

Although the wider settings of the property component parts have evolved to a certain extent, there has been little change in location and topography, the major attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value.

Management and protection requirements

The property is safeguarded by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act and other rules and regulations. Each of the seven cemeteries has been nationally designated as a Heritage Area with the title "Historic Site." The buffer zones are mostly included in the Historic and Cultural Environment Preservation Area for each cemetery (an additional layer of protection offered to a Heritage Area) and therefore benefits from strict development restrictions.

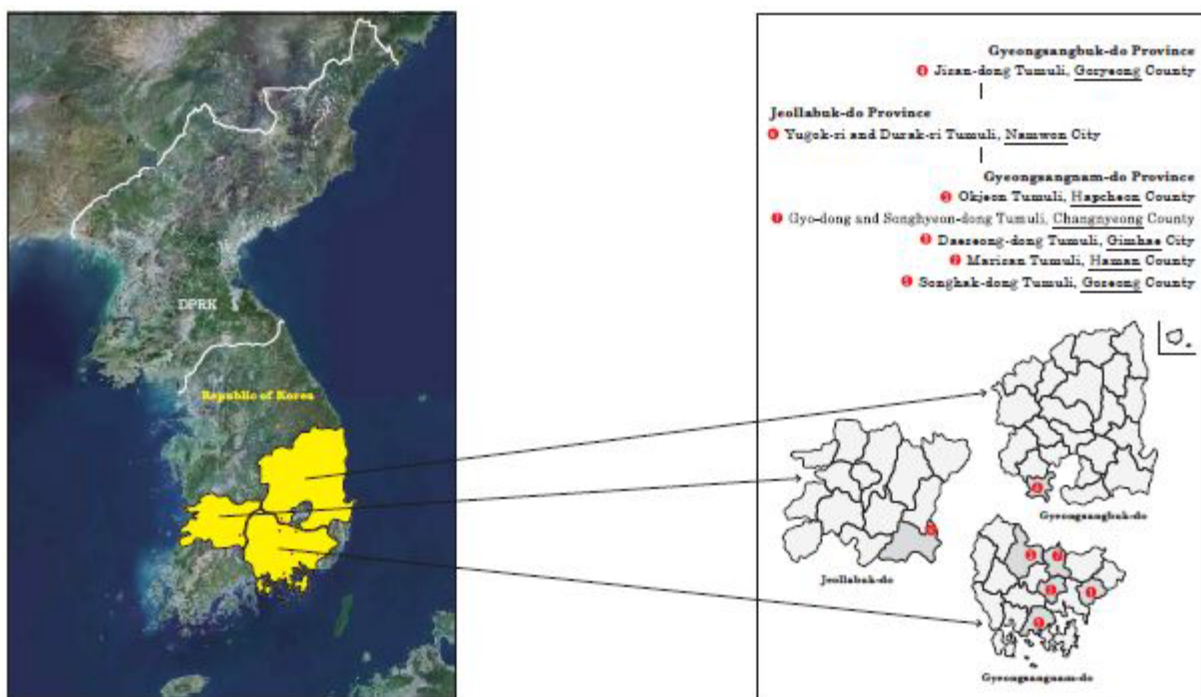
The authorisation of any change in the current state of the property falls under the responsibility of the Cultural Heritage Administration and on-site management is carried out by the pertinent local governments. Archaeological research and repair efforts on the property are conducted by professionally certified groups and individuals under the overriding principle of maintaining the authenticity and integrity. Grave goods from the property are vested with the State and housed at museums and other research institutes. Funds required for the management and conservation of the property are provided by the Cultural Heritage Administration and the pertinent local governments.

A conservation plan has been prepared for each cemetery. The World Heritage Nomination Office for the Gaya Tumuli is leading the efforts at monitoring the property in an integrated manner. The Nomination Office has also established an integrated management plan. Disaster-prevention facilities have been installed at each site. A network of close cooperation for disaster prevention has been established at each cemetery with relevant organisations. Local residents are participating in heritage interpretation and monitoring activities.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Continuing the process of acquisition of the privately-owned land plots within the component parts,
- b) Mitigating the impact of intrusive elements in the buffer zones and on the property, especially the road that is dividing the (07) Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli component part,
- c) Developing strategies to promote all the sites, in order to disperse the visitor levels more evenly amongst the component parts,
- d) Establishing an integrated monitoring system based at least partly on quantitative data,
- e) Further involving local communities in the decision-making processes;



Map showing the location of the nominated components