



Fall at Bulguksa (736, Gyeongju, Korea)  
(Picture by Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism)

# Silla

## Country of Gold, Water and Unification

Period	57 BCE - 935 CE	Government	Monarchy
Capital	Gyeongju	Population	2M (in 8 <sup>th</sup> c.)
Language	Ancient Korean	Religion	Buddhism



Silla at its height at 576 CE

## Location

Silla was located on the southern and central parts of the Korean Peninsula. Silla ruled most of the peninsula. However, the northern part was controlled by Goguryeo or Balhae.



Oreung (Gyeongju, Korea)  
The tomb of founding fathers of Silla

## Origin of Silla

In the 12th c. book, 'Samguksagi,' we can find the foundation myth about Silla.

One day, a horse was crying in the forest. When the village chief got closer to the horse, the horse disappeared, and a big egg was left there. The chief broke the egg and found a child. The child matured and became the king of Silla.

## Unification of Korea

Silla was the first unified country in Korean history. Through an alliance with Tang of China, Silla defeated Goguryeo and Baekje. However, because of the conflict with Tang, and lack of administration power, Silla lost northern Korea and Manchuria. There, Balhae was founded by Goguryeo refugees.



Tomb of King Munmu (Gyeongju, Korea)  
King Munmu unified Korea for the first time.

## The Gold Crown

The gold crown of Silla is famous. It is made of very thin gilt. It can be found in many tombs of Silla.

The crown is not appropriate for actual usage. Therefore it is believed that the crown was used for funerary purposes.



Golden Crown of Silla (5<sup>th</sup> c., Korea)

## Expertise of Water

Silla engineers were experts on controlling water and humidity. They constructed temples and tombs near lakes and the sea.

Seokguram is one of these. Silla controlled the humidity and maintained it well. However, because of thoughtless restoration, its humidity cannot be controlled in ancient ways any more, so it is dependent on air conditioners.

## Three Keys to the Silla

1. A well-known hypothesis suggests that 'Seoul' is from the Silla language, 'Seorabeol,' which means the capital.
2. Another hypothesis suggests that the origin of 'Seorabeol' is 'Silla', so there is a possibility that 'Seoul' and 'Silla' have the same origin.
3. Silla retained the same capital for a thousand years.



Seokguram (8<sup>th</sup> c., Gyeongju, Korea)