

Origin of Geum-silk and East-West Exchanges

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Geum-silk is a polychrome silk textile woven in a compound weave structure. The earliest geum-silk was discovered from the tombs of Western Zhou dynasty. According to Suk myung, geum is very valuable type of fabric in Han period, a fact which is reflected by the structure of the character, which consists of the elements geum(gold) and bak(silk).

1. Historical records of geum-silk in Korea

The earliest record of Korean geum-silk indicates that the people of the Booyo period(59B.C~494A.D.) wore geum-silk outfits when they travelled abroad. In the Goguryeo period (37B.C.~668A.D.), various geum, such as Jaji-heel-moon-geum, osak-geum(五色錦) and woonpo-geum(雲布錦) and so on, were produced.

Historical texts dating from the Backjae period reveal that the king had worn blue geum(靑錦) pants, and ho-geum(好錦) was sent to Japan. Japanese historical texts document that Ahn-na Jung, a geum weaver of the Backjae period, went to Japan in 463A.D., geum techniques were then handed down to Japan.

O-un-jik-sung-geum(五言織成錦) was sent to Tang China in 647A.D., during the reign of Queen Jin-duck of Silla period. Diverse kinds of geum were also sent to Japan in 682 A.D.

In Samgook-sagi, a history book of the Three Kingdoms, various kinds of geum textiles, such as seo-mun-geum(瑞紋錦), daeha-u-a-geum(大花魚牙錦), sohwa-u-a-geum(小花魚牙錦), Joha-geum(朝霞錦), and so on, were sent to Tang(618-966) China during the Silla period.

Geum was manufactured at the special workshop, geum-jun(錦典) in Shilla.

In Goryeo period, red geum(紅錦), white geum(白錦), gae-geum(woolen geum) and others were sent to the Song China. The national workshop of geum such as geum-jang(錦匠), geumjik-gabbang(織錦甲坊) operated to produce geum-textiles during the Goryeo period.

2. Classification of compound weave structure

warp-faced compound weave	warp-faced compound tabby
	looped warp-faced compound tabby
	warp-faced compound twill
weft-faced compound weave	weft-faced compound tabby
	weft-faced compound twill
	weft-faced compound twill on both sides
	weft-faced compound satin on both sides

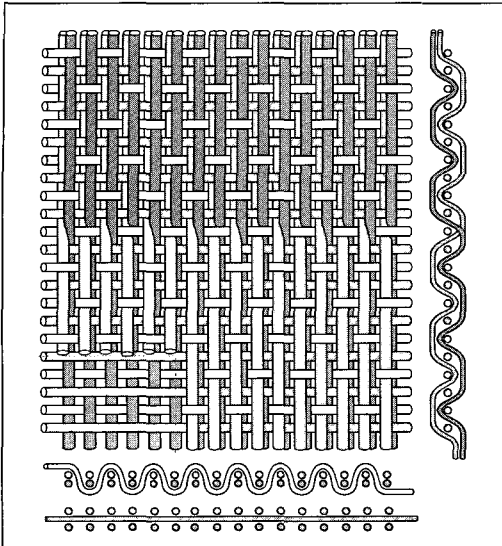


fig.1 Diagram of warp-faced compound tabby

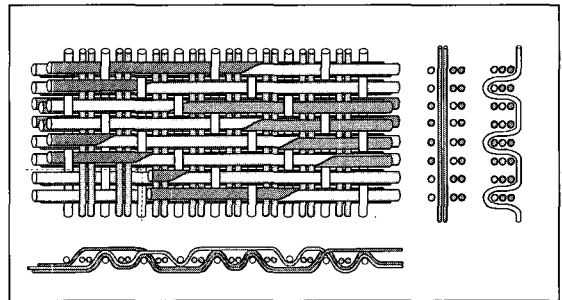


fig.2 Diagram of weft-faced compound twill

1. Warp-Faced Compound Weave Geum-silk

Warp faced compound weave is a typical type of geum in east asia. The earliest geum-silk was discovered from Joyang in Yeo-nyongsung province, China. This weave was very popular through the Warring States period, Han and the early Tang dynasty, but been replaced as a weft-faced compound weave in the middle Tang.

The technique of warp-faced compound geum is characterized by the two different roles of weft in one shuttle, named as main(inner) and binding(outer) weft.

A main(inner) weft hardly appears on either face of the fabric, but serves to separate the warps; one for front and others for back by the pattern.

A binding weft is visible on either face of the fabric as a role of binding warps with commonly tabby and rarely 2/1 twill. Warp-faced compound tabby had existed all along, and warp-faced compound twill, which became abundant from the late Northern Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty.

In 1994, by the request of the Changchun Archeology Institution in Gilin, China, the author me analysed and conserved the silk textiles excavated from Moa Mt. in Gilin. 1 geum-silk and 5 tabby were identified. The geum was already faded, however, it was warp faced compound tabby weave with two different colored thread. Three colored warp faced compound weave geum was also discovered from Jangchun tomb no.2 of Koguryo period in Jiban. In Chunmachong of Silla in Kyungju province, two colored(brown and red) plain-warp faced compound weave geum-silk was excavated.



fig.3 Warp faced compound tabby, Booyo period(1st century B.C.)

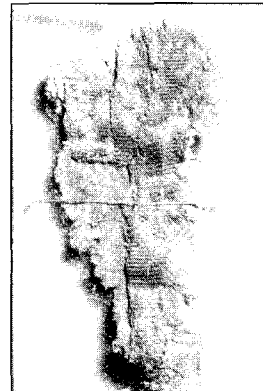


fig.4 Warp faced compound tabby, Unified silla(8th century)

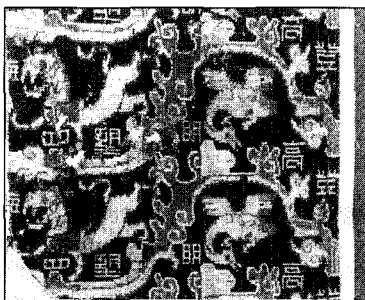


fig.5 Warp faced compound tabby, Eastern Han period, China

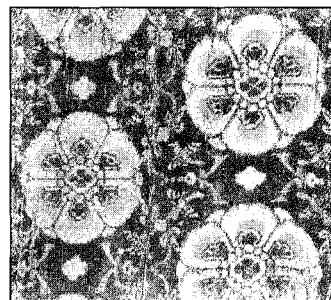


fig.6 Warp faced compound twill, Mid-8th century, Japan

2. Weft-Faced Compounded Weave Geum

Weft-faced compound weave is a product influenced by weaving techniques which was introduced from the West during the period between the Northern dynasty to Tang dynasty in China.

A weft-faced compound weave geum is the same structure of rotating a warp faced compound weave geum in a 90 degree. Weft-faced compound weave geum was mostly woven with silk, though some woolen geum were also produced. Two types of warps, main(inner) warp and binding(outer) warp, are required. A binding warp binds wefts in a tabby, 1/2 twill, 1/3 both sides twill, or 5-end both sides satin.

Weft-faced compound tabby, also called taquete, originated in western or central asia and came to east asia in 3th~5th century.

The most popular binding weave is a 1/2 twill. This weft faced geum in a 1/2 twill well known as samite, originated in western or central asia also and very popular during the 7th century through the 13th century.

Weft-faced compound twill in both sides and weft-faced compound satin in both sides

appeared in late Tang, popular during Liao dynasty.

Weft-faced compound weave geum of Koryo was discovered from the Bongsuri, weaved in a 1/2 twill with three colored threads.

Weft-faced compound weave geum replaced by lampas after the 13th century.

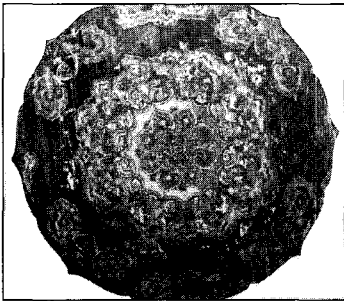


fig.7 Goryeo geum(warp faced compound twill), 8th century



fig.8 warp faced compound twill, Goryeo dynasty

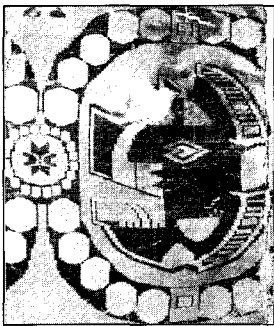


fig.9 Samit with boar's head from Turfan, Early Tang(7th century)



fig.10 Mural painting in Afraciab of samarkand, 7th century

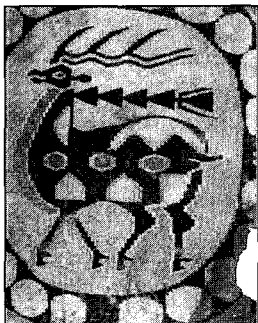


fig.3 Warp faced compound tabby, Booyo period(1st century B.C.)

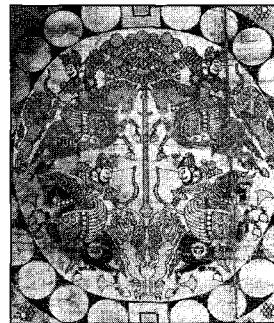


fig.4 Warp faced compound tabby, Unified silla(8th century)