This article analyzes the construction process and burial/funeral practices of Hwangnamdaechong Tomb in Gyeongju City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, South Korea, to provide a comprehensive picture of the burial process of large-scale wooden-chambered cairns in Silla in the fifth century and explain their characteristics and meaning. The analysis of Hwangnamdaechong Tomb indicates that the burial process of the large-scale wooden-chambered cairn was carried out in three stages. The first stage included the construction of the first burial mound and the main part of the tomb and the burial of the corpse along with grave goods. It is presumed that the wooden chamber, the cairn around the tomb, and the first burial mound were simultaneously constructed. Moreover, the soil profile of the first stage indicates that the construction was discontinued to inter the corpse. This suggests that large-scale wooden-chambered cairns fall into the category of concurrent interment tombs, where the corpse was interred under construction. In the second stage, the first burial mound was sealed. The soil profile of this stage shows that the construction was interrupted at the end of the stage to perform a ceremony and implies that the upper part of the first mound was considered important in the burial process. In the third stage, the second burial mound was constructed. It was the final stage of the tomb construction and funeral process. In the case of wooden-chambered cairns, the first burial mound had been completed when the corpse was interred, and therefore the burial and funeral rituals took place at a different place from that of typical preconstruction interment tombs, such as underground wooden-chambered tombs. The analysis of Hwangnamdaechong Tomb suggests that the corpses interred in its northern and southern burial mounds are unlikely to have been a married couple though they were certainly related to each other. It is therefore presumed that married couples were not generally buried together in Silla in the fifth century. Large-scale wooden-chambered cairns are considered as the final form of wooden-chambered tombs that emerged in the late Proto-Three Kingdoms period and as a top-ranked tomb for eminent figures. In particular, Hwangnamdaechong Tomb is much greater than others in terms not only of size of burial mounds and quality and quantity of grave goods but also of complexity in the burial process. The southern burial mound of Hwangnamdaechong Tomb implies the emergence of Silla kings’ tombs, while the northern burial mound implies their establishment.

Key words: Wooden-chambered cairn, Hwangnamdaechong, burial process