

NUMBER 3 2011 KOREAN BUDDHIST ART



KOREAN ART SOCIETY JOURNAL NUMBER 3 2011

Korean Buddhist Art

Publisher and Editor: Robert Turley, President of the <u>Korean Art Society</u> and <u>Korean Art and Antiques</u>

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About the Authors

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Please click on the links in the bios below to order each author's publications or to learn more about their activities.

Jonathan W. Best is Professor of East Asian Art History at Wesleyan University, and a specialist in Baekje culture. He has written numerous articles on Korean art and history, and is the author of:

A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche, together with an annotated translation of The Paekche Annals of the Samguk sagi (Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

Robert E. Buswell, Jr. is Distinguished Professor of Buddhist Studies in the UCLA Department of Asian Languages and Cultures and founding director of the Center for Buddhist Studies and Center for Korean Studies at UCLA. Since June 2009, he is serving concurrently as founding director of the new Academy of Buddhist Studies (Pulgyo haksurwŏn) at Dongguk University in Seoul, Korea. Buswell has published fourteen books and some forty articles on various aspects of the Chinese, Korean, and Indian traditions of Buddhism, as well as on Korean Religions more broadly, including:

<u>Currents and Countercurrents: Korean Influences on the East Asian Buddhist Traditions</u>;

Cultivating Original Enlightenment: Wonhyo's Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-Sutra;

Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean Way of Zen;

The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea; and

The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea.

He is widely considered to be the premier Western scholar on Korean Buddhism and one of the top specialists on the East Asian Zen tradition. Buswell also served as editor-in-chief of the two-volume <u>Encyclopedia of Buddhism</u> (Macmillan Reference, 2004), editor of <u>Religions of Korea in Practice</u> (Princeton, 2007), and coeditor (with Donald S. Lopez, Jr.) of the forthcoming one-million word <u>Dictionary of Buddhism</u> (Doubleday). In 2009, Buswell was awarded the Manhae Prize from the Chogye Order in recognition of

his pioneering contributions to Korean Buddhist Studies in the West. Buswell was elected president of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) for 2008-2009, the first time a Koreanist or Buddhologist has ever held the position, and will serve as past-president and past-past-president in subsequent years. For his profile in the UCLA *College Report*, see: http://international.ucla.edu/buddhist/article.asp?parentid=5231.

Lauren W. Deutsch is the executive producer and director of Pacific Rim Arts (www.pacificrimarts.org) through which she undertakes culturally-focused projects, including festivals, performances, exhibitions, conferences, media (public radio and television) productions, and other programs primarily of East Asia. She provides consultation to artists, arts organizations, scholars, NGOs and cultural commissions internationally, including the Korean Culture Center (Los Angeles), Gyeonggido Cultural Foundation, Lincoln Center (NYC) Festival, Festival d'Autumne a Paris, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Los Angeles Master Chorale. Her projects have included Contemporary Korean Short Stories, a public radio series funded by the Korea Foundation and California Council on the Humanities, and numerous presentations of the work of Korea's Important Intangible Cultural Asset #82, Kim Keumhwa's Seohean Pungeoje (Society for the Preservation of West Sea Fishing Boat Ritual). She serves as a contributing editor of *Kyoto Journal*, (http://www.kyotojournal.org/Korea/kindex.html) and has written articles and reviews in Parabola, Korean Culture, Journal of Korean Studies and WEDI Journal (World Ethnic Dance Institute of the Korean National University of the Arts). Lauren is also a licensed instructor of Urasenke tradition of chado, the Japanese Way of Tea. She has given lectures - demonstrations at numerous venues, including universities, museums and cultural events. Lauren Deutsch may be contacted at lauren@pacificrimarts.org.

Lena Kim has written several books and a number of articles, in Korean and Japanese as well as English, on the comparative analysis of Korea's Buddhist sculptures, including:

Arts of Korea (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974);

Korean Art Treasures (Seoul: Yekyong, 1988);

A Study on the History of Ancient Korean Buddhist Sculpture (Hanguk Godae bulgyojogaksa yeongu (Seoul: Iljogak, 1989);

Comparative Study on Ancient Korean Buddhist Sculptures (Hanguk Godae bulgyojogak bigyoyeongu) (Seoul: Munye Publishing Co. 2003);

Buddhist Sculpture of Korea (Seoul and Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym, 2005).

Professor Kim majored in History at Seoul National University, and studied Art History at the Graduate School of Harvard University and received her Ph.D. in 1972. A Professor of Korean Art and Buddhist Art at Hongik University, in Seoul, she has retired as of February 2007. Today, she actively participates in a variety of art history-related projects, along with serving as a member of the Advisory Committee of Cultural Properties Administration and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)-Korea.

Theresa Ki-ia Kim is a Fulbright Scholar and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Theatre Arts at SUNY Stony Brook and a specialist in the ritual performance origins of theatre. Her many pioneering activities of introducing Asian civilization, especially Korean culture, to the West include producing such American and world premieres as: Yangban-jeon on 59th St. and Broadway, NYC (1974); the US premiere and national tour of Bongsan Talchum Masked Dance-Drama (1977); Introduction of Korean National Court Music and Dance Institute performance at the Kennedy Center, commemorating the centennial celebration of US-Korea diplomatic relations (1982); introduction of Korean shamans (Kim, Keum-hwa, Living National Treasure, and her group) and their rituals at the International Symposium on Theatre and Ritual in New York City (1983); Introduction of Korean Shaman Cosmology from Jeju Island at the Yakutsk Siberian Conference (1992); publication of "Korean Shaman Song of Creation" (Oxford University Press, 1993); translation of Eunyul Talchum Masked Dance-Drama for the Lincoln Center premiere performance. Her private collection of masks from Korean Masked Dance-Drama are in a traveling exhibition presently in Washington, D.C. after a successful exhibition in New York City in Spring 2010 at the Korea Society Art Gallery. She produces, directs, and trains Western actors on Eastern acting method and vice versa, and translated important works of Korean theatre into English. Theresa Ki-ja Kim may be contacted at theresa.kim@sunysb.edu.

Dae Sung Kwon is Owner of the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art in Seoul (http://www.emuseum.go.kr/eng/museum/museum_03_10.jsp), next to Changdeok Palace, and the living Buddhist museum, Anyangam Temple, established in 1889 (http://www.buddhistmuseum.co.kr/).

Do Kyun Kwon is Curator of the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art. He received his Ph.D. from the Institute of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies in London. He is also Owner of Art Space H in Seoul, a gallery for Korean Contemporary Art.

Hyung Don Kwon is Director of the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art. In addition, he directs a public service educational program on Buddhist art, and manages a public service program and museum annex designed to promote Korean contemporary artists.

Youngsook Pak taught in the Department of Art and Archaeology in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. At SOAS, she was the first scholar to introduce Korean Art History as a degree subject in a Western university. Since her retirement in 2006 from SOAS as Reader Emerita, Professor Pak was invited by Yale University as the Korea Foundation Distinguished Visiting Professor. She has written many books and articles, including:

<u>Buddhist Sculpture: Handbook of Korean Art</u> (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2003)

<u>Earthenware and Celadon: Handbook of Korean Art</u> (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2003)

Arts of Korea (co-author) edited by Judith Smith (New York: Metropolitan Museum of art, 1998)

<u>Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment, 918 – 1392</u> (co-author) edited by Kumja Paik Kim (*San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2003*)

While at Yale, she organized a major international conference on Buddhist Art in East Asia. The conference papers were published by Yale University Press. She currently acts as academic advisor to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Kenneth R. Robinson is Senior Associate Professor in the Department of History at the International Christian University in Tokyo, and a specialist in Joseon history. He compiles the Bibliography of Korean History on the Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa website (http://hawaii.edu/korea/biblio/BiblioOpen.html).

Henrik Sorensen is Director and Co-Founder of the Seminar for Buddhist Studies (Copenhagen). He is the former Director of the Institute of Korean Studies and the former Director of the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies. He is the author of *The Iconography of Korean Buddhist Painting* (Leiden: Brill, 1989, reprinted 1997) and the editor of *Religions in Traditional Korea* (Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1995). In addition to his books, he has written numerous articles on Korean Buddhism and Korean Buddhist art.

Greetings Korean Art Lovers-

Welcome to the Korean Art Society Journal Number 3. We're happy to have you join us for our biggest issue yet, with twelve articles by some of the world's most renowned scholars. The size of this issue, three times the size of the first two issues, is commensurate with the size and scope of this issue's theme, Korean Buddhist Art.

Before the arrival of communism in China, Buddhism was the largest religion in the world. It has a unique place in Asian history as the single shared experience of most of the continent. Nothing else has equaled the degree to which it has affected Asian history and culture. So great is its presence in Korea that it is impossible to discuss Korean history and culture without considering Buddhism.

Twenty-three percent of Korea's population identify themselves as Buddhist, but over seventy percent of the items that are designated as national treasures are Buddhist artifacts. These government-designated treasures are official recognition of Buddhism's overwhelming influence on Korean culture. Even non-Buddhist Koreans keep many customs that are Buddhist in origin and continue to be deeply influenced by Buddhist philosophy, even in their practice of other religions, maintaining an inextricable link that continues to shape Korean culture and art.

As I put the final touches on this issue, I come out of this experience deeply humbled. I hope to share with you the feeling of awe and the ambience of tranquility and purity that rewards the observant viewer of Korean Buddhist art.

Thank you very much to all of the authors in this issue. You bring compelling passion and penetrating intellect to your illuminating articles. I have learned so much from all of you. I am deeply indebted to you, and we all are very lucky to have you.

Thank you to our readers for joining us for another issue. Your ongoing support has helped us grow into a publication that is now read by over one thousand subscribers, and is shared by them with hundreds more. As always, we hope the Korean Art Society Journal will brighten your day and stimulate your heart and mind.

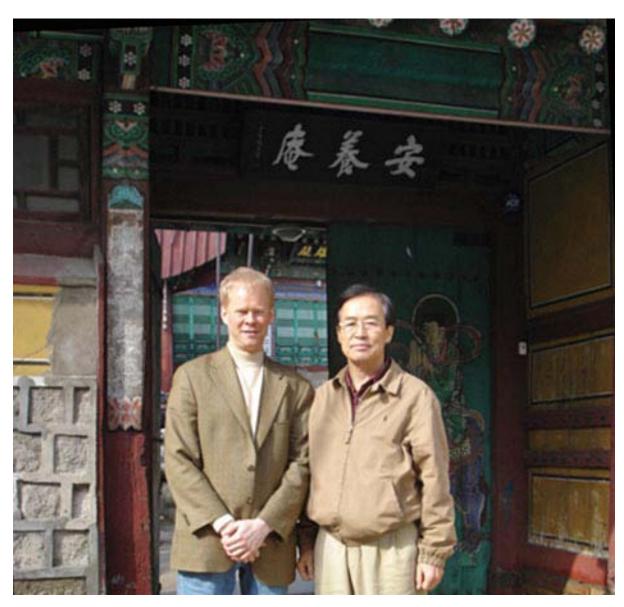
Robert Turley

P.S. The KAS Journal focuses here on the *art* of Korean Buddhism. If you're interested in reading more about the *history* of Korean Buddhism, Jong Myung Kim's critical essay, *A Search for New Approaches to Research on Korean Buddhist History*, recently published in the online journal, Korean Histories, is an excellent overview of the latest developments in research on this subject. It's online here: http://www.koreanhistories.org/files/Volume 2 1/KH 2 1%20Kim-%20Search%20for%20New%20Approaches.pdf. The rest of the Korean Histories online journal (www.koreanhistories.org) also makes for great reading. We're delighted to see that another publication on Korea has taken up internet distribution, with its many advantages and conveniences. It's an exciting new world. I hope you enjoy it!

P.S.S. Our next issue of the KAS Journal will be on Korean Contemporary Ceramics. Please email me to discuss ideas and articles on this subject (robert@koreanartsociety.org).

The Museum of Korean Buddhist Art

Right next to the grand and beautiful Changdeok Palace in Jongro-gu, Seoul, is a museum unlike any other, a must-see destination on any visit to Korea, the Museum Buddhist of Korean Art (please click here to see their website: http://www.emuseum.go.kr/eng/museum/museum 03 10.jsp). It is a privately owned museum that houses the greatest collection of Korean Buddhist art, over 6,500 pieces of sculpture, paintings, crafts, ritual items, and more. The collection also includes many fine works of Buddhist art from other countries. They also have a great collection of art that is not Buddhist, some of which will be on display in their upcoming exhibition of Joseon Dynasty porcelain. I always visit the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art whenever I go to Korea, not only for the rotating permanent galleries, but also to see what's on display in their special exhibition galleries.



The museum also owns a nearby Buddhist temple, Anyangam Temple, founded in 1889. Twenty years ago, Anyangam was slated for demolition, until the owner of the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art, Dae Sung Kwon (see photo on previous page) fought and won a protracted and self-funded legal battle to save it from the wrecker's ball and preserve it with its original antique paintings and sculpture intact. It is a living museum and a treasured oasis that is now a government designated and protected cultural property in the mountains of Seoul. Several works of art displayed in the temple are also government-designated cultural assets. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Dae Sung Kwon, a Korean hero. He and his two sons, Do Kyun and Hyung Don (see photos below) have always been gracious hosts whenever I visit. I am sure you will also experience the generosity of this proud and wonderful family when you visit their amazing museum and temple in Seoul. Please tell them that the Korean Art Society sent you.

-Robert Turley





Twenty Selections from the Collection of the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art

By Dae Sung Kwon, Do Kyun Kwon, and Hyung Don Kwon

I. About Buddhism

Buddhism is a philosophy of life expounded by Gautama Siddhartha (who is also called Sakyamuni Buddha), who lived and taught in northern India in the 6th Century B.C. The Buddha was not a god and the philosophy of Buddhism does not entail any theistic world view. The teachings of the Buddha are aimed solely to liberate sentient beings from suffering.

Gautama Buddha taught the <u>four noble truths</u>: that there is suffering, that suffering has a cause, that suffering has an end, and that there is a path that leads to the end of suffering. He saw that all phenomena in life are <u>impermanent</u> and that our <u>attachment</u> to the idea of substantial and enduring <u>self</u> is an illusion which is the principle cause of <u>suffering</u>. Freedom from self liberates the heart from <u>greed</u>, <u>hatred and delusion</u> and opens the mind to <u>wisdom</u> and the heart to <u>kindness and compassion</u>. (Please click on the links in this paragraph to learn more.)

II. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in Buddhism

① Buddha

The Indian spiritual leader and founder of Buddhism. The term Buddha (Sanskrit: "Enlightened One") is a title rather than a name, and Buddhists believe that there are an infinite number of past and future Buddhas (for example, Amitabha Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, and so on). The historical Buddha, referred to as the Buddha Gautama or Sakyamuni Buddha, was born a prince of the Sakyas, on the India-Nepal border. He is said to have lived a sheltered life of luxury that was interrupted when he left the palace and encountered an old man, a sick man, and a corpse. Renouncing his princely life, he spent seven years seeking out teachers and trying various ascetic practices, including fasting, to gain enlightenment. Unsatisfied with the results, he meditated beneath the bodhi tree, where, after temptations by Mara, he realized the Four Noble Truths and achieved enlightenment. At Sarnath, he preached his first sermon to his companions, outlining the Eightfold Path, which offered a middle way between self-indulgence and self-mortification and led to the liberation of nirvana. The five ascetics who heard this sermon became his first disciples and were admitted as bhiksus (monks) into the sangha or Buddhist order. His mission fulfilled, the Buddha died at Kusinara (present-day Kasia), after eating poisonous mushrooms served him by accident, and escaped the cycle of rebirth; his body was cremated, and stupas were built over his relics.

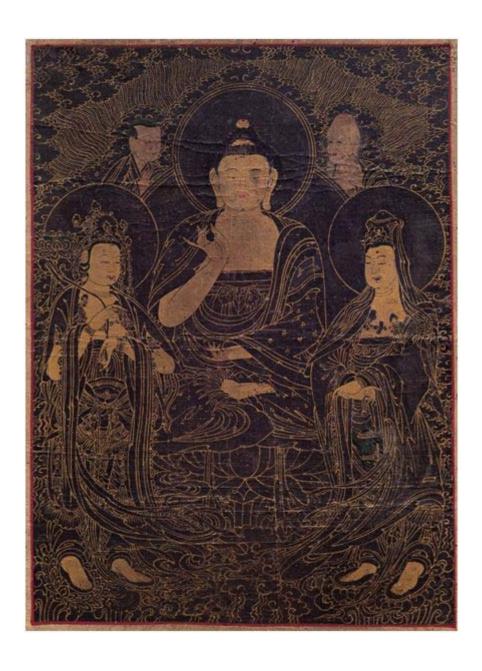
② Bodhisattva

Term for the historical Buddha Gautama prior to his enlightenment, as well as for other individuals destined to become Buddhas. The bodhisattva postpones attainment of nirvana in order to alleviate the suffering of others. The number of bodhisattvas is theoretically limitless, and the title has been applied to great scholars, teachers, and Buddhist kings. Celestial bodhisattvas (e.g., Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion) are considered manifestations of the eternal Buddha and serve as savior figures and objects of personal devotion, especially in East. Asia.

Amitabha Triad Painting mid 18th Century, 35×24 cm, gold on dyed silk

This painting shows the world of Amitabha Buddha, who governs the heaven in the western universe. Amitabha Buddha gets rid of every type of pain with his love of people. Amitaba Buddha is the most popular Buddha in Korea because believers of this Buddha will be led into Heaven in the western universe after death.

On the right side, there stands Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, who symbolizes mercy, and on the left side, there stands Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva, who symbolizes wisdom.

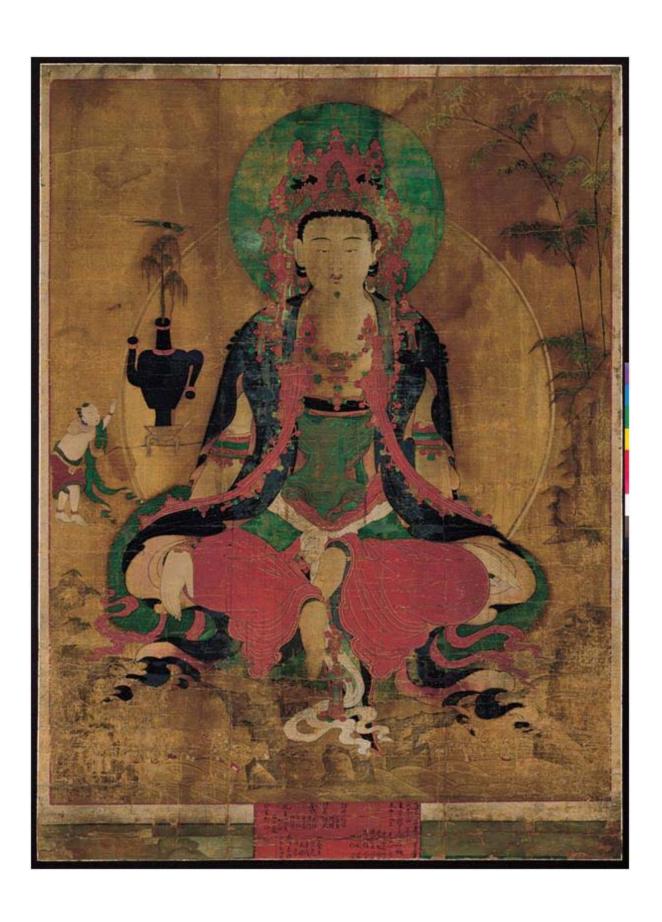


2. Painting of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva with Water and Moon 1730 (the 6th year of King Youngjo), 142 × 104 cm, colors on silk, Treasure No.1204

The popularity of depictions of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva with Water and Moon continued into the Joseon Dynasty, as attested to by this painting, which preserves the essential details of this deity's iconography: his rocky throne, the kundika pitcher with a willow branch, and the presence of the boy pilgrim, Sudhana. The bamboo stalk visible on the right side is another Goryeo Dynasty convention. Significant departures from the Goryeo style are the frontal pose, the elongated figure, and the small facial features, as well as the stylized abstract lines used to depict the deity's robes and the waves that surge beneath his feet. Sudhana is also in a more prominent position on the left side of the painting.

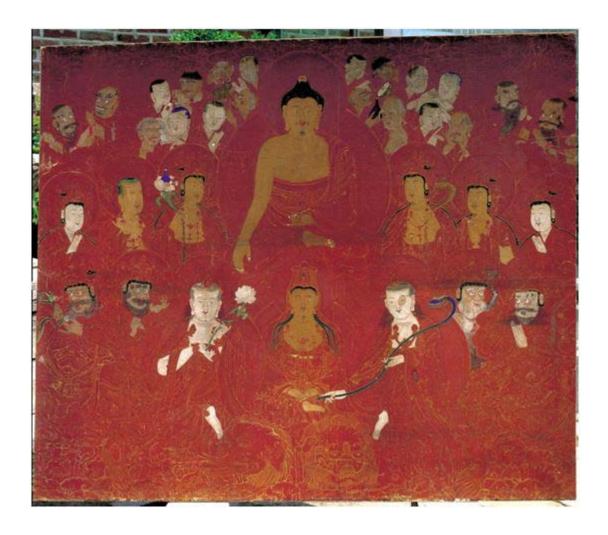
The inscription in the rectangular cartouche at the bottom of the painting provides information concerning the production of the painting. The wok was commissioned in 1730 by, among others, five married couples who donated the materials, such as the silk and pigments. The year is recorded using a Chinese Qing Dynasty reighn date (eighth year of Yongzheng), a customary practice in Korea until the mid-nineteenth century.

The inscription includes a felicitation to the reigning monarch, King Youngjo (r. 1724-1776), and also records the name of the Kumo, or monk-painters, including Ukyum and four other monk-painters, and the monks who supervised them, and ensures the iconographic accuracy of the painting as well as ritual propriety during its production. The last of these rituals, as with all Buddhist paintings, would have been the Chomansik, or eye-dotting ceremony, at which the eyes of the deity were painted, thus completing the composition as well as the process of consecrating the image as a devotional object.



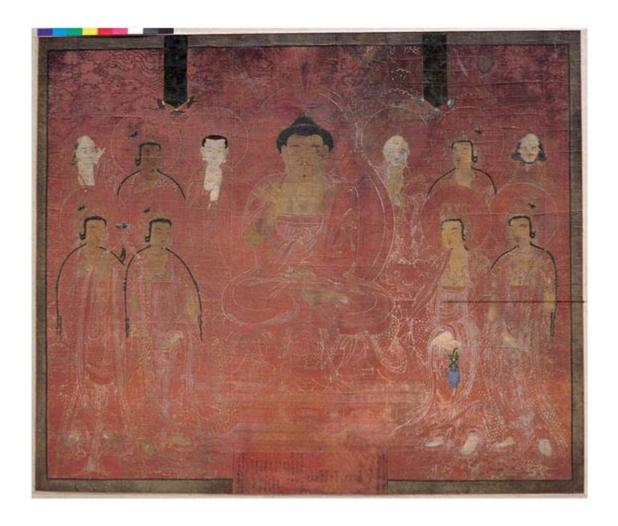
3.Sakyamuni Painting mid 19th Century, 140 ×164 cm, gold and silver on dyed silk

This painting was produced with gold and silver line on reddish-dyed silk. The Buddha in this painting is Sakyamuni Buddha, who was born in 563 BCE, and who became the founder of Buddhism. The typical feature of Sakyamuni Buddha shown in the statue of Buddha or in the Buddhist painting is that his right hand is always downward, touching the ground with his compassion, oppressing devils in the ground, and summoning the earth as his witness.



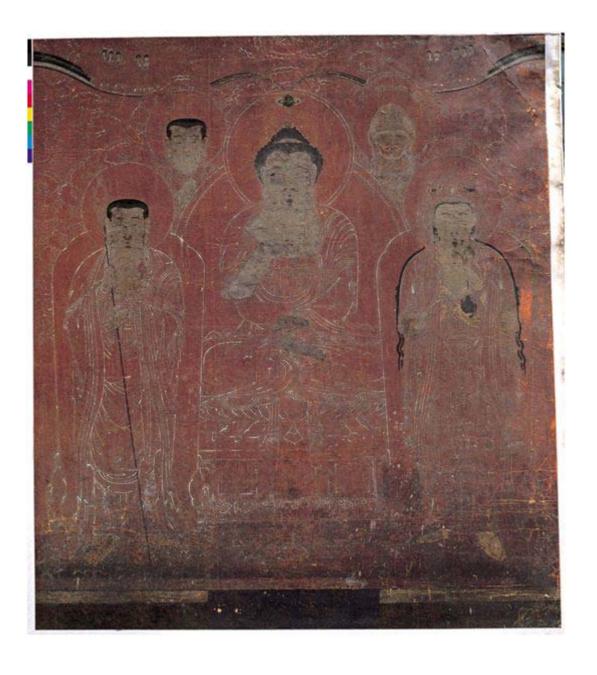
4. Amitabha Painting 1764 (the 40th year of King Youngjo), 115×138 cm, Silver on dyed silk

According to the painting record in the cartouche on the bottom, this painting was painted by 5 monk painters in 1764. The Buddha in this painting is Amitabha Buddha, who governs the heaven in the western universe. Beside Amitabha Buddha, there stand 6 bodhisattvas and 4 disciples out of the 10 disciples of Sakyamuni Buddha, listening to the sermon delivered by Amitabha Buddha.



5. Amitabha Painting mid 18th Century, 166 × 146 cm, silver on dyed silk

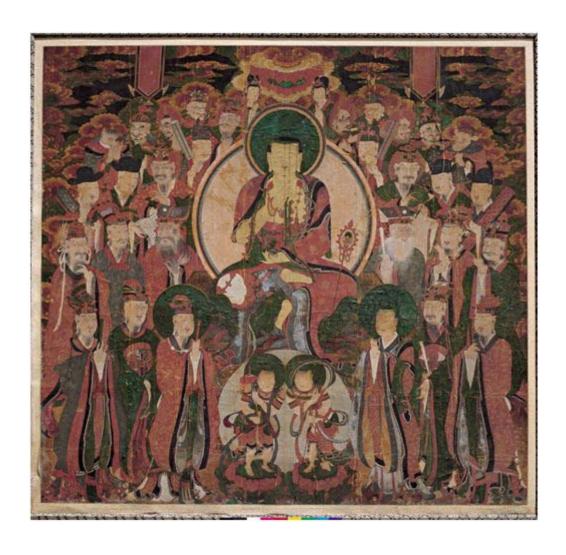
This painting was produced with silver line on reddish-dyed silk. Amitabha Buddha is in the middle and there stands Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva on the right, who always puts on garland and who has the vase with the purest water in the world, and there stands Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva on the left, whose wish is to lead people in hell into heaven. Behind the two bodhisattvas, there stand two disciples, Kasyapa (who is on the right side) and Aniruddha (who is on the left side) out of the ten disciples of Sakyamuni Buddha.



6. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Painting late 18th Century, 135 × 143 cm, colors on silk

The main character in this painting is Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, who takes care of all beings struggling in hell, and who leads them into heaven with compassion and love, until Maitreya Buddha (the future Buddha) descends into this world and makes the whole universe the land of Buddhism.

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has 10 servant kings. Among them, the 5th king called Yama (the king of hell) is well-known and stems from the old Indian Hindu Sutra, Veda.



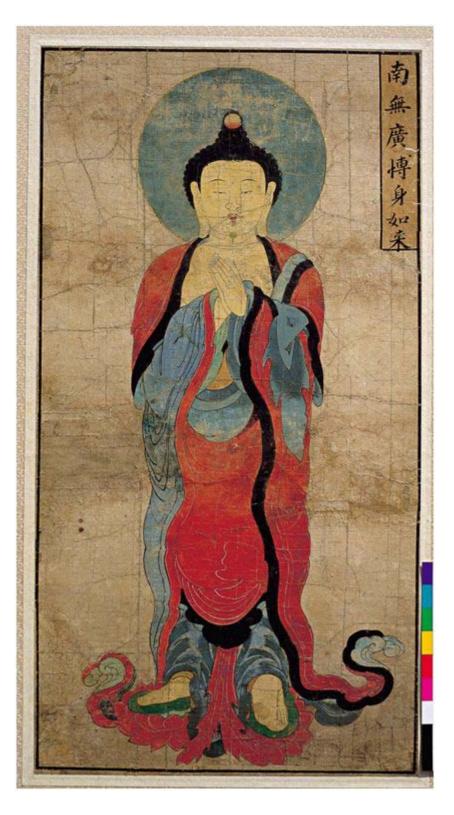
7. Big Dipper Buddha Panting 18th Century, 119 × 57.5 cm, colors on silk

The Buddha in this painting is called the Big Dipper Buddha. The special feature of this painting is that the Big Dipper Buddha here is not accompanied by the seven star gods, Chilsong, that you usually see in other Big Dipper paintings.



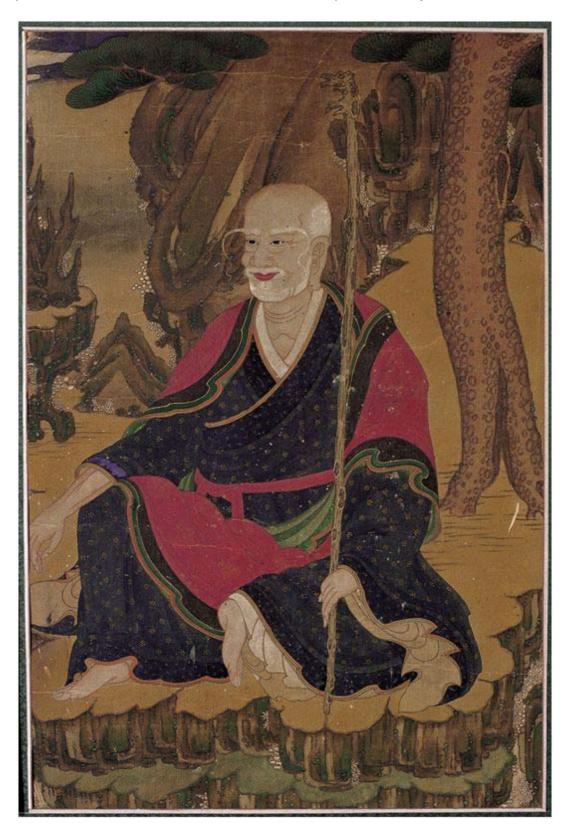
8. Tathagatha Banner Painting mid 19th Century, 124.5 × 64.5 cm, colors on paper

This painting was used as a banner when a temple conducted a Buddhist rite, especially when Yeongsan-jae, the Buddhist rite to help dead people go to heaven, is performed on the 49th day after death.



9. Hermit Painting mid 19^{th} Century, 65.5×43.5 cm, colors on silk

The Buddhist hermit, Doksong realizes Buddhism by himself. This painting depicts the quiet mental world of the Buddhist hermit in a peaceful way.



10. Portrait of the Great Master Cheongheodang early 19th Century, 112 × 74 cm, colors on silk

This painting is a portrait of the Great Master Cheongheodang (Seosan-daesa), who was the leader of monk troops, when the Japanese invaded the Korean peninsula in 1592. Many temples in Korea have worshiped the great master and his portrait was often painted for hundreds of years.



11. Portrait of the Great Master Donghwadang late 18th Century, 106.5 x 86.5 cm, colors on silk

This painting is a portrait of the Great Master Donghwadang. The style of this painting is much influenced by that of traditional Korean folk paintings. The most interesting point of this portrait is that this painting left the space in the upper part of the left side blank. This blank space was supposed to be filled with letters that deliver achievements of the great master. But the painter of this portrait couldn't express it in letters, because the achievements were too great to be defined in words. With this blank space, we can have a lesson of Zen Buddhism.



12. Indra Painting 1746 (the 22nd year of King Youngjo), 108.7 × 81.5 cm, colors on silk

Indra is the celestial god who governs heaven, according to Hinduism. Buddhism absorbed Indra, and Indra became a guardian of Buddha and Buddhism. Especially in Korea, where there have been many invasions from China and Japan, Indra was highly worshiped, owing to the omnipotent power to make devils surrender.

The painting record states that it was made in 1746, sponsored by soldiers in Jeolla Province.



13. Mountain God Painting early 19th Century, 103.5 × 86 cm, colors on silk

Koreans have long believed that each mountain belongs to its own owner who is called Sanshin, the mountain god. Temples in Korea were mostly located in the middle of mountains. Besides ordinary Korean people, even Buddhist monks worshiped the mountain god, who might be the owner of the mountain and could provide longevity and good health.

The tiger is the incarnation and the messenger of the mountain god. This tiger is not ferocious, but is a friendly animal, and the mountain god in this painting looks generous and warm-hearted.



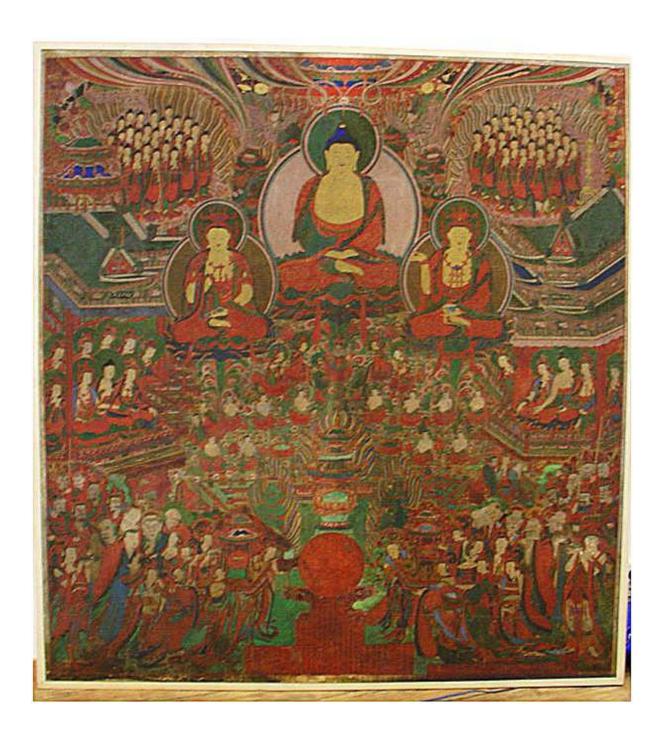
14. Painting of the Nine Grades of the Pure Land of Amithabha (from Simjeokam Temple)
1778, 192.5 x 180 cm, ink and colors on silk

This painting depicts the Pure Land (Sukhavati) of Amitabha (or Amitayus) located in the western heaven, where all living beings are reborn and divided into nine grades, depending on the activities of their previous lives. An earlier similar painting was made in 1465, which contains the artistic and stylistic features of the typical Goryeo Buddhist paintings. However, this painting can be evaluated as a masterpiece showing the particular style of Joseon Buddhist paintings.

At the top of the painting is the Buddha Amitabha in the center, sitting cross-legged on a lotus and forming the hand gesture (mudra) of meditation (samadhi). On both upper sides of him are positioned two birds with human heads, called Kalavinka. He is accompanied by the seated Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva on the right, and the seated Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva on the left. Avalokitesvara, who is the symbol of mercy and compassion, has the image of Amitabha in the center of his crown, and is holding a bowl in his left hand and making the hand gesture with his right hand. Mahasthamaprapta, who embodies the wisdom of Amithabha, holds a sutra with his left hand and makes the hand gesture with his right hand. In this of these three figures, i.e. Amitabha, Avalokitesvara Mahasthamaprapta, are individually endowed with two halos, one around their heads and the other behind their bodies. In the top left corner are standing twenty-six Buddhas of the Past, and in the top right corner are standing twenty-seven Buddhas of the Past.

Below Amitabha are bodhisattvas and human beings reborn in a lotus lake. On both sides of the lotus lake there are two palaces, at the halls of which Buddhas and bodhisattvas are shown. The rest of the painting is occupied by bodhisattvas, arhats, offering goddesses, guardians, and shaven-head monks, etc.

The short inscription written in classical Chinese underneath the center of the painting explains the sixteen steps of contemplation (dhyana) extracted from a Mahayana Buddhist text called Amitayur-buddha-anusmrti-sutra (or Amitayur-buddha-dhyana-sutra). Just above this inscription appears a small red circle, which probably indicates the sun used as the object for the first step of contemplation out of sixteen.



15. Votive Shrine of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha Triad 1689, height: 43 cm, wood

This wood-made Buddhist item representing a Buddhist shrine contains Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva together with his two accompanying bodhisattvas, Do-myung (Chinese, Dao-ming) and Mu-dok (Chinese, Wu-du), a popular configuration among the votive shrines of the 17th century. As a typical style of the time, this votive shrine consists of three niches, which are spread side by side when unfolded, and looks like an oval-shaped shell when folded.

Ksitigarbha as the main deity is placed into the central niche. He has a shaven head and sits cross-legged on a lotus while making the hand gestures. All the details of this figure show the manner and style characteristic of the late 17th to the early 18th Century. He is accompanied by two standing bodhisattvas, i.e. Do-myung on the right and Mu-dok wearing a crown on the left. These figures both stand while placing their palms of both hands together, and their smiling faces show a perfect harmony with the main figure, Ksitigarbha.



Three-Storied Stone Pagoda Unified Silla Period, height: 467.5 cm, stone

This Unified Silla Dynasty three-storied stone pagoda stands on a two-storied platform. The lower part of the platform is composed of four stones, and each of the four sides has a carved support pillar and a corner pillar. The cap stone is also composed of four stones. The main part of the pagoda consists of body stones and roof stones made with single stones. The corner pillars are carved on the body stones. There are four-storied bases under the roof stones, and two-storied bases of the central portion of a pagoda above the roof stones. The exposed roofs of the pagoda are very steep and their eaves sharply turn upward at the edges. The gradual decrease in size of body stones, the manner of exposed roofs, and the way of organizing stones are features of the later Unified Silla. This is a representative pagoda of the period, symbolizing elegant beauty.



17. Painting of the Eight Events of the Buddha Sakyamuni's Life late Joseon Dynasty, 168 x 192.5 cm, ink and colors on silk

This painting depicts the eight important events of the Buddha Sakyamuni's life. The title Buddha means one who has awakened, and Sakyamuni literally means the sage of the Sakya tribe. Sakyamuni's personal name is Gautama Siddhartha. He was born approximately twenty-five hundred years ago in a small aristocratic republic in the Himalayan foothills, in what is today the kingdom of Nepal.

This painting is divided into twenty-eight fragments. Each fragment has its own title written in Chinese on the small red square, which is now mostly unreadable.

The first event is illustrated at the sixth and seventh fragments from the left of the top row. Especially the sixth fragment shows that Queen Mahamaya, chief wife of King Suddhodana, dreams of a child riding a white elephant and descending from the Tusita (Joyful) Heaven.

The second event is illustrated at the sixth and seventh fragments from the left of the second row. In this sixth fragment, Sakyamuni is born from this mother's right side while she supports herself against a tree in the Lumbini Garden outside Kapilavastu. According to the Buddhist legend, as soon as Sakyamuni is born, he takes seven firm steps to the north, and surveying the four directions, he proclaims: "I am the chief in the world. I am the best in the world. I am the first in the world. This is my last birth. There is now no existence again."

The third event is illustrated at the fourth, fifth and seventh fragments from the left of the third and fourth rows. In this event, Sakyamuni encounters an old aged person, a diseased person, a corpse, and an ascetic outside of the palace.

The fourth event is illustrated at the fourth and fifth fragments from the left of the second row, and the sixth fragments from the left of the third and fourth rows. Here is described Sakyamuni's leaving the palace while riding on his horse Kanthaka with his groom Chandaka. In addition, Sakyamuni cuts his hair by himself and bids farewell to his groom and horse in the forest.

The fifth event is illustrated at the fifth fragment from the left of the first row, which depicts the scene of Sakyamuni's six years of life as an ascetic.

The sixth event is illustrated at the fourth fragment from the left of the first row, and also the first and second fragments from the left of the third and fourth rows. Here are the scenes of Sakyamuni's subjugation of Mara and his realization of perfect enlightenment under a pipal tree at Bodhagya.

The seventh event which designates Sakyamuni's preaching is illustrated at the second and third fragments from the left of the second row, and also two third fragments from the left of the third and fourth rows. The second fragment particularly depicts the Sakyamuni's first sermon in the deer park just outside Varanasi.

The final event is illustrated at the first fragment from the left of the second row, and the first, second and third fragments from the left of the first row. Here is Sakyamuni's final passing and his funeral ceremony at Kasia.

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18. Tripitaka Painting 1665 (the 6th year of King Hyunjong), 249.5 × 375.5 cm, colors on silk

This type of painting first appeared during the early Joseon Dynasty and apparently was derived from the Ksitigarbha (Bodhisattva of Hell) painting. Also, Chinese Ming Dynasty outdoor consolation ceremony paintings for those who lost their lives on land and sea included this triad of Bodhisattvas: Ksitigarbha for the hells, Sky Bodhisattva for the heavens, and the Earth Bodhisattva. This triad is also interpreted as a symbolic representation of the Buddhist Trinity (Trikaya) as well as the Buddhas of the Three Periods (past, present and future). And the name Tripitaka, or Three Baskets, refers to the sutras, the discourses, and the monastic precepts. The Sky Bodhisattva is centered with the precious gem and Great Precious Gem Bodhisattvas in attendance; Earth Bodhisattva is on the right and has numerous attendants, including Nagarjuna and Dharani Bodhisattvas; and on Sky Bodhisattva's right is Ksitigarbha, who, as found in his own Ksitigarbha paintings, is holding a staff in one hand and a gem in the other. His two main attendants, Tao Ming and the King of Harmless Ghosts, are also present



19. Seated Buddha Sculpture Joseon Dynasty, 50 x 43 x 68 cm, gilded wood

The head of this finely gilded Buddha image is relatively large and has two usnisa emerging from the curled hair, the protuberances symbolizing supreme wisdom. The face, exuding a certain dignity, has well-formed features, which attest to the expertise of the sculptor. The robe is first draped over the left shoulder, then drawn across the back and part of the right shoulder before falling down to the side of the right arm and then over knees. An undergarment covers the breast, over which a skirt is tied.

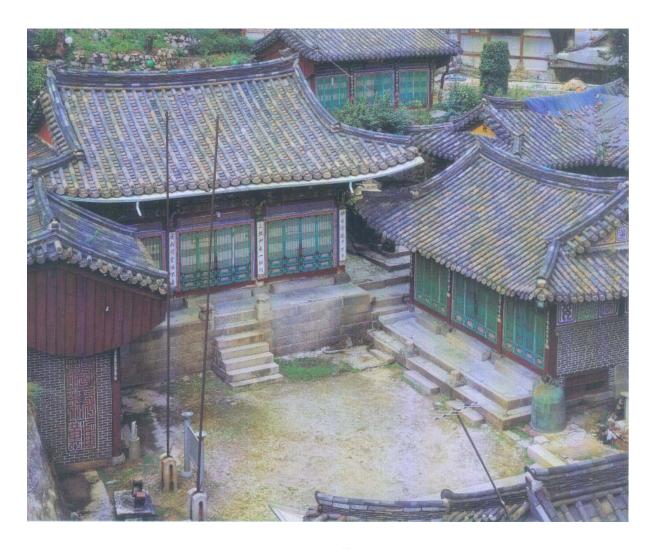


20. Amitabha Painting 1889 204x108 cm, colors on silk

This painting of the Buddha Amitabha is in the Main Hall of Anyangam Temple, the temple owned by the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art. This painting dates to 1889, the year the temple was founded. It is a rare treat to see an original painting that dates to the founding of a Joseon Dynasty temple. This painting has been designated a government-protected cultural asset by the city of Seoul.



Your visit to the Museum of Korean Buddhist Art will not be complete without also visiting their nearby Anyangam Temple. You'll see the above painting and many other treasures, including the greatest treasure, the temple itself, truly a living museum, with its seven Buddhist halls, stone carved Avalokitesvara (over 3.5 meters tall) and numerous works of art that date to the origin of the temple.



Anyangam Temple

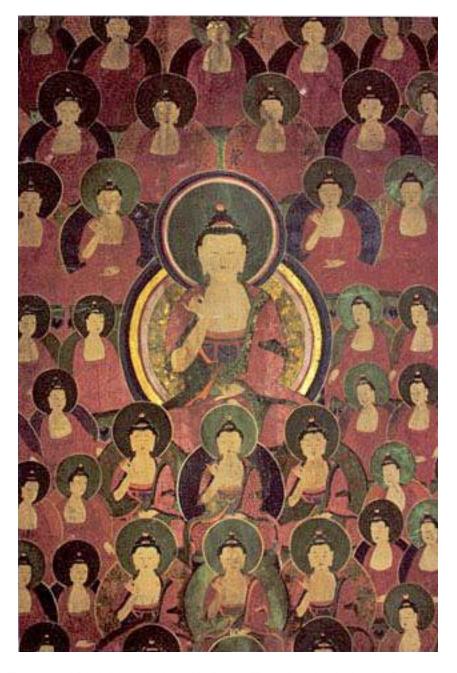


Anyangam Temple Gate

Korean Buddhism in the Far East

by Henrik Sorensen

Korean Buddhism can rightly be said to have occupied a prominent place in the history of Buddhism in the Far East.



Thousand Buddha painting; Kwibong Temple, North Jeolla Province.

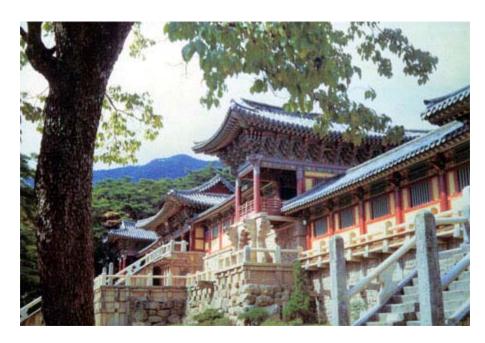


Plate 1. Bulguk Temple on the Western slope of Tohamsan Mountain, Gyeongju, South Gyeongsang Province, was built in the mid-eighth century. The temple has four staircases called bridges. The bridges in the east lead to the Tabotap, Sokkatap pagodas and Taeungjon (main hall) where an image of Sakyamuni Buddha is housed, in the west they lead to Kungnakchon, the hall in which an image of Amita Buddha is housed.

According to Korean tradition, Buddhism was introduced into the Korean peninsula from China by the monk Sundo (d.u.), who arrived in Goguryeo in 372 A.D. He was soon followed by other monks, and within a few years Buddhism achieved a prominent position in the kingdom. In 384 A.D. the Indian monk Malananda (d.u.) brought Buddhism from the Chinese state of Eastern Chin (317-420) to Baekje, where it also was favorably received. During King Nulchin's reign (417-458), Buddhism was introduced into Silla, but it was not until 527 A.D. that it was officially accepted. During this period, Buddhism was introduced by the competing kingdoms to Japan.

During the following century, Buddhism completely penetrated Korean art and culture, and by the time Silla united the country in 668 A.D., Buddhism had become the national ideology (pl. 1). During the succeeding Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), Buddhism continued to play a leading role as the national ideology, and achieved quite remarkable results, to which the Korean Buddhist canon bears witness. By the end of the dynasty, however, Buddhism had entered a general state of decline, which was the result of corruption of the Sangha through growing worldliness and of interference by monks with the political life in the capital. This led, in the following Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), to the suppression of Buddhism, which marked the end of the "Golden Age" of Korean Buddhism.

In the Joseon Dynasty, the national ideology was Confucianism, and as the sworn enemy of Buddhism, it delegated monks and nuns to the lowest position in society and even forbade them to enter the capital. Even though Buddhism did not die or lose its fundamental strength, it did lose contact with the people.

Not until the beginning of this century, when Japan made itself felt in Korea's internal affairs, was Buddhism able to raise its head once again. Even though almost half a century of Japanese occupation put heavy pressure on Korean Buddhism, it benefitted immensely and, paradoxically, from the Japanese occupation and was able to reorganize and rejuvenate itself. After the liberation of Korea in 1945, Buddhism emerged a strong and living religion, and has today the largest following in the country, with more than thirteen million adherents (pl. 2).

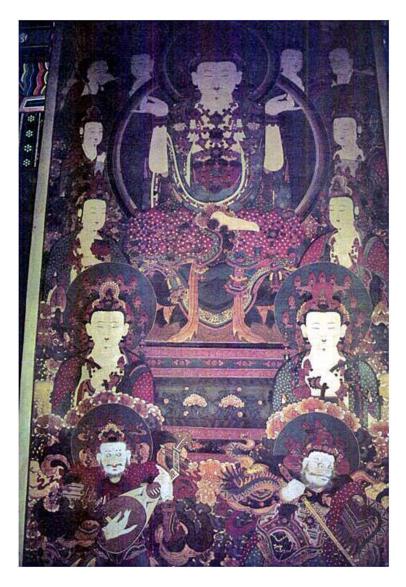


Plate 2. Vairocana Buddha painting (middle of the Joseon Dynasty) symbolizing the perfect and complete interpenetration between the relative and the absolute realms; Tongdo Temple, Gyeongsang Province.

Korean Buddhism

A misconception concerning the nature of Korean Buddhism commonly seen in Christian missionary writings is that it is no more than a shadow of Chinese Buddhism, and therefore does not contain much of interest. Another view current among more nativistic authors is that Korean Buddhism is very different from traditional Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. Both of these views are off the mark. It would be difficult for anyone to point out a characteristic that can be said to belong solely to Korean Buddhism that is not also found in Chinese Buddhism. This is not to say that Korean Buddhism does not contain any original features, which it certainly does, but the problem of its nature is more complex than that presented by either of the two mentioned viewpoints.

It is an undisputed fact that Korean Buddhism owes much of its doctrine and practices to Chinese Buddhism, but it is also a fact that the Korean Buddhists adapted the incoming religion to their own spiritual and geographical milieu, in the same way the Chinese themselves had transformed Buddhism. The two most distinctive characteristics of Korean Buddhism are: (a) synthesizing various Buddhist doctrines, and (b) Buddhism as a force for national protection.

Early Synthesis

The blending of various doctrines began quite early in the history of Korean Buddhism. In traditional Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, the synthesis of the doctrines of the different schools and scriptures is a common feature, a fact which can be most clearly seen in the Tien-tai (*Chontae*), Hua-yen (*Hwaom*), Mitsung (*Miljong*) and to some extent, in the Chan (*Seon*) schools (pl. 3).



Plate 3. The Hwaom Patriarch Songpa Tang (19th century portrait); Haein Temple, South Gyeongsang Province.

The syncretism of these schools, however, is usually focused upon one particular text or doctrine, which is regarded as the most perfect among the teachings of the Buddha. The idea that the vast array of scriptures could be viewed as various expedient descriptions of Buddhism was developed by the founder of the Tien-tai School, Chih-i (538-597), and is known as the Doctrinal Taxonomy (*Pan-chiao; pangyo*) system. Chih-i felt that while the various sutras sometimes differed in opinion they had all been spoken by the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, and were therefore all true. However, according to Chih-i, some of the sutras contained only provisional teachings, whereas a scripture like the *Lotus Sutra* (*Pophwa kyong*) contained the whole truth. For this reason, he placed this sutra above all other sutras, arranging them hierarchically according to depth of content (pl. 4).

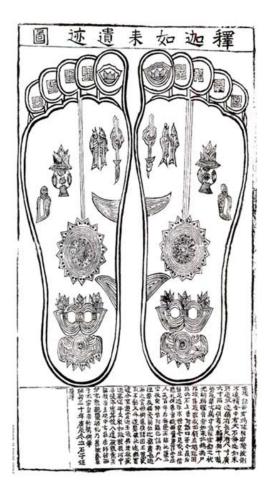


Plate 4. Print of the Buddha's foot soles showing some of the minor characteristics at sainthood.

Different Schools

As the different Buddhist schools were introduced to Korea during the late Three Kingdoms period, the monks adapted this idea of hierarchical synthesis of Buddhist doctrines. Under the monks Wonhyo (617-686) and Uisang (625-702), who were heavily influenced by Tien-tai and Hua-yen doctrines, there developed a "new" type of synthesis whereby all the doctrines were given equal importance (pl. 5). While this arrangement, which conveniently can be called the horizontal type, may have originated in either India or Central Asia, it was the Koreans who brought it to maturity. Wonhyo especially became famous outside Korea for his extensive use of this type of syncretism, and his commentary on the treatise *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana* (*Taesung kisillon*), is considered by many to be the best application of the horizontal mode of synthesis in Mahayana Buddhism.

Later, the Goryeo monk Chinul (1158-1210), the reviver of Seon Buddhism, also known under his posthumous title, Pojo *kuksa*, used the horizontal type of synthesis when he harmonized the doctrines of *Seon* and *Kyo*. That the horizontal understanding of syncretism has been a basic trend in later Korean Buddhism can further be demonstrated through the merger of the *Seon* and doctrinal schools in late Goryeo under master Taego (1301-1382), in 1424 during the reign of King Sejong (1419-1450), and in 1935 during the Japanese occupation of Korea as a means of resisting Japanese control of the temples (pl. 6).



Plate 5. Wonhyo (late Joseon Dynasty portrait); Pomo Temple, near Busan, South Gyeongsang Province.



Plate 6. Chinul's stupa (late half of the Goryeo Dynasty); Songgwang Temple, South Jeolla Province.

The role of Buddhism in protecting the nation is by no means confined to Korea. It is a feature of traditional Indian Buddhism that can be found in the *Mahayana sutras*, such as *Golden Light Sutra*, but the importance of this aspect, throughout the history of Korea, has no equivalent in any other Far Eastern country.

The attitude to Buddhism as a protector of the nation that the Koreans adopted during the Three Kingdoms period was an aspect of the so-called "Northern" type of Buddhism, which developed in the various "Barbarian" dynasties in North China during the fourth century, and which constituted a significant part of Tang dynasty Buddhism.

In China and elsewhere this aspect of Buddhism played a leading role only for strictly limited periods of time, whereas in Korea it became a continuous and dominant characteristic of Buddhism. Even under the Joseon Dynasty, when Buddhism was

suppressed, this feature played an important role in the protection of the kingdom against foreign invaders. In Silla, this protective aspect of Buddhism took the form of Maitreya worship and the establishment of the *Hwarang* order, a Buddhist military unit, whose purpose was to ensure for the nation the divine protection of the Buddha and to instill in its youth a "religious" fighting spirit for the defense of the country.

During the Goryeo Dynasty, the Korean Tripitaka (Buddhist canon) was carved as a means of protecting the country against nomad invaders like the Mongols, and during the Hideyoshi Invasion in 1592, the monks under the leadership of the *Seon* masters Sosan *Taesa* (1520-1606) and Samyong Yujong (1543-1610) fought against the *samurai* armies of Japan. Today all young monks in the Republic of Korea serve some time in the army. Through these examples we can see that the idea of Buddhism as a protective force has been a fundamental feature in Korean Buddhism since its introduction to the peninsula and constitutes one of its most important characteristics.

Korean Monks Abroad

One of Korean Buddhism's major roles was to introduce to Japan the Buddhist religion. While various sources give different dates for this transmission, it apparently began around the middle of the sixth century. According to information in the *Nihonshoki*, the Baekje King Song (532-554) sent a bronze statue of the Buddha and some sutras to Yamato (as Japan was then called) as part of a request for help in defending Baekje against Goguryeo and Silla invasions, and the following year a group of monks led by Tosim (d.u.) arrived to spread the faith in Japan. Soon, the Korean kingdoms were involved in fierce competition as to which one of them would establish a political alliance with Yamato, and many missionary monks from all three countries crossed the sea, thus bringing many important aspects of Buddhist learning and culture to Japan. All the early Buddhist temples in Japan were built personally by Korean craftsmen or under their close supervision.

In 602 A.D., the Baekje monk Kwalluk (active between 602-642) brought the San-lun (Samnon) doctrines to Yamato, and another Baekje monk Tojang (d.u.) together with Hyegwan (active ca. 625-672), introduced the Satyasiddhi (Songsil) teachings from Goguryeo. Hyegwan also founded the orthodox San-lun (Samnon) school in Japan. Silla monks were the last to arrive in Japan, but they established one of the most important of the early Japanese Buddhist schools, the Kegon (Hwaom), and were active in the propagation of Fa-hsiang (Popsang) teachings during the seventh and eighth centuries.

Buddhist Sculpture

In the field of Buddhist sculpture in Japan, one of the earliest and most famous types is the Miroku (*Miruk*), which shows the Future Buddha Maitreya seated in a relaxed posture with his hand under his chin, an example of which can be found in the renowned Horyu-ji statue. This type of sculpture, which in East Asia originated in the

Yun-kang cave-temple complex, enjoyed great popularity in Korea during the late Three Kingdoms period, where it was elaborated and refined.

There can be no doubt that the *Miruk* statue was characteristic of early Silla Buddhism, given the tremendous importance of Maitreya worship at that time. Several of the surviving *Miruk* images have been found in an area that formerly was part of the state of Goguryeo, indicating that *Miruk* was held in great esteem there as well (pl. 7).

Thus, Korean Buddhism exerted tremendous influence on the development of early Japanese Buddhism and paved the way for the all-out dominance of Buddhism in Japanese culture and art of subsequent periods.

During the Unified Silla Dynasty (668-935), all the major Chinese Buddhist schools were introduced into Korea and many of them took permanent root. Besides the imported Chinese schools, a native Korean Buddhist school, Wonhyo's *Popsong* school, was founded in this period.



Plate 7. Miruk Bul with attending bodhisattvas; (Joseon Dynasty, 19th century); Miruk Chon, Kumsan Temple, North Jeolla Province.

Throughout the history of Far Eastern Buddhism, Korean monks were involved in founding Buddhist schools in China and consequently played major roles in the evolution of Chinese Buddhism in general. One of the founders of the important San-lun school, the Goguryeo monk Sungnang (active in China ca. 466-512), and his successors left a lasting impression on the Chinese interpretation of Indian Madhaymika

thought, and secured the rapid transmission of these teachings to Korea. Later, when the illustrious Chinese pilgrim monk, Hsuan-tsang (596-664), established the Fa-hsiang school in the Tang capital of Chang-an, the Korean monk Wonchuk (613-696) became one of his chief disciples. It was through Wonchuk's commentary to a basic Yogacara scripture, the *Samdhinirmocana-sutra*, that a Korean thus came to exert considerable influence on Tibetan Buddhism. Another Korean monk active in China was Musang (694-762), also known as Kim *hwasang*. He belonged to the Chan denomination and founded his own sect, later known as the Pao-tang school, in Szechuan Province.

Temples in China

During the Tang dynasty, Korean Buddhist masters like Kim established a number of temples in China proper. These temples, which for the most part were situated along the north-eastern coast, including the Shan-tung peninsula, functioned both as monasteries and hostels for Korean and Japanese pilgrim monks. In these temples, scriptures of both a religious and secular nature were prepared for importation into Korea. These spiritual centers were also often involved in Korean embassies to Tang and took an active part in international trade. In short they acted as the focus of cultural exchange between the countries of the Far East.

From the writings of the Japanese pilgrim monk, Ennin (794-864), we have detailed information about the function and daily routine of these temples, and we know, for example, that their ceremonies and dharma-lectures were performed in Korean. When Buddhism in China suffered a heavy blow under the Hui-chang persecution of 842-45 A.D. and the vast majority of its great libraries were destroyed, most of the texts had already been transmitted to Korea and thus were spared from extinction. When the persecution ceased around 850 A.D., Korean monks re-introduced the lost scriptures and succeeded to a great extent in revitalizing the Chinese tradition.

Last but not least, mention should be made of those Korean pilgrim monks who braved the hardships of traveling all the way to India in search of the holy scriptures. Not much is known about these monks, but one stands out, Hyecho (d.u.). Hyecho lived during the eighth century and went to China to study Tantric Buddhism with the master Vajrabodhi (671-714) of the Esoteric school. Encouraged by his master, Hyecho left for India, where he made a pilgrimage to all the holy sites of Buddhism. In 727 A.D., he returned to China with a number of Buddhist texts and spent the rest of his life translating these scriptures. Like Hsuan-tsang, Hyecho wrote a record of his journey to the West called *Wang ochonchukku chon*.

Korean Buddhism and Printing

One of the major achievements in the history of Korean Buddhism was the development of woodblock printing and the later invention of movable metal type. Still disputed is whether woodblock printing began in China or Korea, but given the direction of cultural migration in the Far East, it appears that it was invented in China and soon after was transmitted to the Korean peninsula.

As woodblock printing is said to have originated with the seal, and later is known to have been used by the Taoists in making their magic charms during the Han (206 B.C.-

A.D. 220) and Six Dynasties Period (317-598), this author does not believe there can be any doubt that woodblock printing was an original Chinese invention. When it comes to actual evidence, however, the oldest extant woodblock print was found in Korea in the *Sokka Tap* (Sakya Stupa) in Bulguk Temple in 1966 (pl. 8). This print, which is a crude version of a *dharani* (a Buddhist spell used to invoke certain spirits), has been dated by experts to around 706 A.D., which makes it more than a century older than the famous Chinese *Diamond Sutra* block-print from Tunhuang, dated 868 A.D. and now in the British Museum library.

During the late Unified Silla Period, the demand for Buddhist scriptures increased, and as the books imported from China were not sufficient, the Koreans started their own printing houses. At this time most of the printed books were Buddhist texts, and there was much activity in the temples, or in Buddhist-sponsored printing shops.

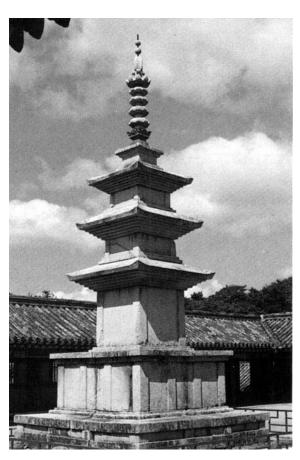


Plate 8. The Sokka Tap (Silla Period, 8th century), Bulguk Temple, Gyeongju, South Gyeongsang Province.

Woodblock Printing

In the Goryeo Dynasty, woodblock printing reached its zenith with the carving and printing of the entire Korean Buddhist canon in the first half of the eleventh century, an achievement which had to be repeated, as the first set of printing blocks was destroyed during the 1232 A.D. Mongol invasion. Today the woodblocks of the second edition—the world's oldest extant Buddhist canon—are preserved in Haein Temple at Kaya San (pl. 9).



Plate 9. Two ancient library halls in Haein Temple at Mt. Kayasan, North Gyeongsang Province, house the more than 80,000 wood blocks on which the Buddhist canon is engraved. The halls provide ventilation in all seasons, against dry rot, mold, and fire. The first Tripitaka carving was to rid the Khitan Tartars in 1011, and the second was intended to rid the Mongol invaders in 1231. The first set was burned by the Mongol invaders.

During the last half of the Goryeo Dynasty, Buddhist printing enterprises accelerated, and new and more practical methods for printing were sought. The natural alternative to woodblocks was to make a piece of type for each character, which could be re-used, and thus save much time. Based on Sung Chinese (960-1279) experiments with movable type in clay, the Koreans took up the idea, and after some experimentation, abandoned the fragile clay for a metal alloy made mostly of bronze, which was easy to

work with and far more durable. Thus, the first metal movable types were invented by the Koreans.

A Buddhist hymnbook, the *Nammyong chonsong chungdoga* dating from 1239 A.D., with a preface printed with movable type, indicates that the use of such type was already known in the first half of the thirteenth century. Needless to say, this Korean invention aroused great interest in China, and in 1305 A.D. the Yuan (1279-1368) court requested Goryeo to send monk-printers to help develop a printery using movable metal type.

A recently discovered Seon text dating from 1377 A.D., the *Pulcho chikchi simche yojol* (Excerpts from the Buddhas and Patriarchs' Direct Pointing to the Mind of Man), by the Seon master Paegun (1298-1374), shows a highly developed use of this printing technique. As a direct result of the growing popularity and influence of Buddhism in China and Korea, and the use of woodblocks and metal type for printing, Buddhist doctrines spread rapidly in East and Central Asia.

Japanese Occupation

Except for brief periods during the reigns of three kings, Sejong (1397-1450), Chongjo (1777-1800), and Kojong (1864-1906), and under Queen Munjong (d. 1565), Buddhism suffered grievously under the Confucian-dominated Joseon Dynasty. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Confucianism as an ideology of the intellectual elite began to wane and the worst pressure on the Buddhist ecclesia eased.

Coinciding with the Confucian decline, Buddhism under Kyongho Songu (1849-1912) began its revival. This remarkable monk lived during a period when Korean nationalism reasserted itself in the face of strong foreign influence, which, among other things, resulted in the isolationist policy of the Taewon'gun, the defacto ruler of the kingdom, the persecution of the Catholic community, and the ill-fated *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning) rebellion.

Kyongho, a disciple of the monk Manhwa (d.u.), became very influential and popular as he toured the country extensively teaching Seon Buddhism to the religious and the laity alike. When he died soon after the Japanese had taken control of Korea, his followers numbered in the thousands and the "injunctions" that he gave Korean Seon Buddhism has lasted to this very day (pl. 10).

Simultaneously with Kyongho's Buddhist revival movement, Japanese Buddhist missionaries in increasingly greater numbers arrived in Korea as part of the rising Japanese imperialism. Even though some of the Japanese priests went to Korea to care for the spiritual needs of the large number of Japanese immigrants who had come to the country after the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars, many of them worked to convert the Koreans to Japanese Buddhism—and by extension, to accept the Japanese hegemony.

In 1895 A.D., a Japanese priest of the Nichiren School succeeded in convincing the Korean government to lift the ban that forbade Buddhist monks and nuns to enter the capital of Seoul, an incident which clearly was a result of Japanese pressure. Soon, Japanese priests proposed that Korean Buddhism should merge with Japanese Buddhism, and to many Korean monks this proposal was not wholly disagreeable. What the Japanese really wanted was that Korean Buddhism should surrender its own national character and serve as a tool for the further glories of Japanese colonial power.

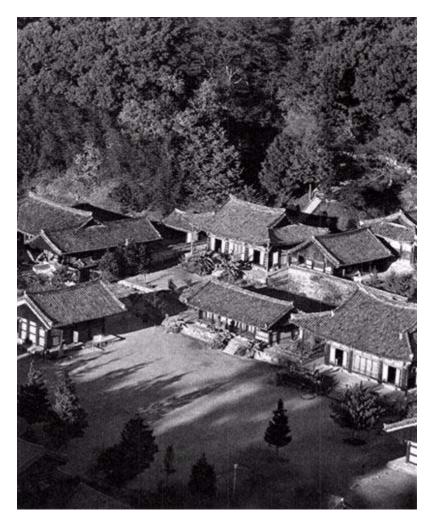


Plate 10. A panoramic view of Songgwang Temple, South Jeolla Province. The temple has been a Seon (Zen) center since the twelfth century.

Government Support

Since the Meiji suppression of Buddhism in Japan in the 1880s, Japanese Buddhism on the whole had become quite dependent on government support, and was easy therefore to manipulate for political ends. The Meiji suppression had, among other things, resulted in a general secularization of Japanese monks contrary to traditional Buddhist ethics and regulations, a fact which was not palatable to the majority of Korean monks.

Part of the Japanese plan for Korean Buddhism was to break its undisputed control over the country's temples by introducing the idea of married priests and hereditary temples under government control. Soon, the positive effects of Japanese Buddhist influence in Korea waned as Japanese priests through various "methods" tried to "Japanize" the Korean sangha and take over its temples. Eventually, the Korean monks were split into two factions, one for and one strongly against Japanese domination. By 1910, when Japan openly took possession of Korea, the Buddhist traditionalists joined ranks with the popular resistance against the aggressors. The Buddhist resistance culminated in 1922 with the New Revolution Meeting, when the monks unsuccessfully tried to remove Japanese control of the Buddhist community.

Even though the Japanese continued to exercise control over the selection of abbots and other important temple functionaries, Korean monks were nevertheless able to obtain better and freer conditions. As a result of Japanese restrictions on the order, the monks of the anti-Japanese party began to organize themselves and develop better internal communications, which eventually led to the merger of the Meditation and Doctrinal schools in 1935. This unified organization became known as the Jogye order, which had its headquarters in Seoul. After this merger, Korean Buddhism continued to strengthen its position, until Buddhism became a thriving religion with a growing following after the country was liberated in 1945 (pl. 11).

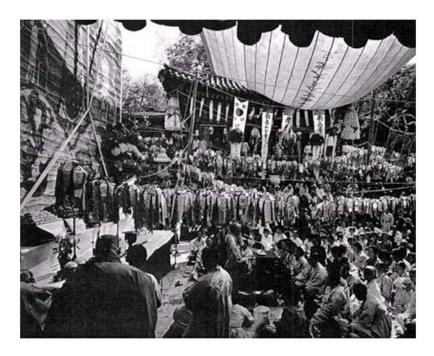


Plate 11. Koreans celebrate Buddha's Birthday (eighth day of the fourth lunar month) by hanging lanterns at Buddhist temples across the country. Every year, a lantern parade winds from Yoi-do to downtown Seoul's Jogye Temple, center of the largest sect of Korean Buddhism.

Korean Buddhism can rightly be said to have occupied a prominent place in the history of Buddhism in the Far East. Even though it has many points of similarity with the Chinese and Japanese traditions, its development is unique and reflects indigenous Korean thought. The hallmarks of Korean Buddhism are thus tradition and continuity, qualities that makes it a truly living religion.

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KOREAN BUDDHISM IN EAST ASIAN CONTEXT

by Robert E. Buswell, Jr.

The story of Buddhism that tradition tells us is of seemingly unremitting waves of missionaries breaking over the ever-expanding shores of the Asian continent, in what with little exaggeration we may call the world's first example of globalization. Soon after the inception of the religion in the sixth or fifth century B.C.E., the *Mahāvagga* tell us, the Buddha ordered his monks to "wander forth for the welfare and weal of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and weal of gods and men." This command initiated one of the greatest missionary movements in world religious history, a movement that over the next millennium would disseminate Buddhism from the shores of the Caspian Sea in the west, to the Inner Asian steppes in the north, the Japanese isles in the east, and the Indonesian archipelago in the south. Buddhist missionaries, typically following long-established trade routes between the geographical and cultural regions of Asia, arrived in China by at least the beginning of the first millennium C.E., and reached the rest of East Asia within another few hundred years. In the modern era, Buddhism has even begun to build a significant presence in the Americas and Europe.

But this account of a monolithic missionary movement spreading steadily eastward is just one part of the story. The case of East Asian Buddhism suggests there is also a different tale to tell, a tale in which this dominant current of diffusion creates important eddies, or countercurrents, of influence that redound back toward the center. Because of the leading role played by the cultural and political center of China in most developments within East Asia, we inevitably assume that regional developments within Buddhism would have begun first on the mainland of China and from there spread throughout the rest of the region where Buddhism also came to flourish and where literary Chinese was the medium of learned communication. Through sheer size alone, of course, the monolith that was China would tend to dominate the creative work of East Asian Buddhism. But this dominance need not imply that innovations did not take place on the periphery of East Asia, innovations that could have a profound effect throughout the region, including the Chinese heartland itself. These countercurrents of influence can have significant, even profound, impact on neighboring traditions, affecting them in manifold ways.

I am increasingly convinced, in fact, that we should not neglect the place of these "peripheral regions" of East Asia—Japan, Vietnam, Tibet, perhaps, but most certainly Korea—in any comprehensive description of the evolution of the broader "Sinitic" tradition of Buddhism. Korea was subject to many of the same forces that prompted the growth of Buddhism on the Chinese mainland, and Korean commentarial and scriptural writings (all composed in literary Chinese) were often able to exert as pervasive an influence throughout East Asia as were texts written in China proper. Given the organic nature I propose for the East Asian traditions of Buddhism, such "peripheral" creations could find their ways to the Chinese center and been accepted by the Chinese as readily as their own indigenous compositions. We have definitive evidence that such influence occurred with the writings of Korean Buddhist exegetes. In considering

filiations of influence between the traditions of East Asian Buddhism, we therefore must look not only from the center to the periphery, as is usually done, but also from the periphery toward the center, using the Korean case to demonstrate the different kinds of impact a specific regional strand of Buddhism can have on the broader East Asia tradition as a whole.

Looking at the patterns of influence that Korean Buddhism exerts in East Asia will also allow us to move beyond a traditional metaphor used in scholarship on Korea, in which the peninsula is viewed merely as a "bridge" for the transmission of Buddhist and Sinitic culture from the Chinese mainland to the islands of Japan. As enduring as this metaphor has been in the scholarship, it long ago became anachronistic, a Japan-centric view of Korea that should finally be discarded for good. In fact, most of the early transmission of Buddhism into Japan occurred along a current that led not from China, but straight from Korea. Much less well understood than even this Korean influence on early Japanese Buddhism is the impact of Buddhists from the Korean peninsula on several schools of Buddhism in China itself. Finally, Korean Buddhism was also able to exert substantial influence in regions far removed from the peninsula, even in areas as distant from Korea as Szechwan and Tibet. Korea was not a "bridge"; it was instead a bastion of Buddhist culture in East Asia, which could play a critical role in the evolution of the broader Sinitic Buddhist tradition.

Korea's Role in the Eastward Dissemination of Buddhism

Notwithstanding the regrettable "hermit kingdom" appellation that early Western visitors gave to Korea, we should note that throughout most of history Korea was in no way isolated from its neighbors throughout the region. Korea was woven inextricably into the web of Sinitic civilization since at least the inception of the Common Era. The infiltration of Chinese culture into the Korean peninsula was accelerated through the missionary activities of the Buddhists, who brought not only their religious teachings and rituals to Korea, but also the breadth and depth of Chinese cultural knowledge as a whole. To a substantial extent it was Buddhism, with its large body of written scriptures, that fostered literacy in written Chinese among the Koreans, and ultimately familiarity with the full range of Chinese religious and secular writing, including Confucian philosophy, belles lettres, calendrics, and divination.

Korea played an integral role in the eastward transmission of Buddhism and Sinitic culture through the East Asian region. Buddhist monks, artisans, and craftsmen from the Korean peninsula made major contributions toward the development of Japanese civilization, including its Buddhist culture. The role of the early Korean kingdom of Baekje in transmitting Buddhist culture to the Japan islands was one of the two most critical influences in the entire history of Japan, rivaled only by the nineteenth-century encounter with Western culture. Indeed, for at least a century, from the middle of the sixth to the end of the seventh centuries, Baekje influences dominated cultural production in Japan and constituted the main current of Buddhism's transmission to Japan. Korean scholars brought the Confucian classics, Buddhist scriptures, and medical knowledge to Japan. Artisans introduced Sinitic monastic architecture,

construction techniques, and even tailoring. The early-seventh-century Korean monk Kwallŭk, who is known to the Buddhist tradition as a specialist in the Madhyamaka school of Mahāyāna philosophy, also brought along documents on calendrics, astronomy, geometry, divination, and numerology. Korean monks were instrumental in establishing the Buddhist ecclesiastical hierarchy in Japan and served in its first supervisory positions. Finally, the growth of an order of nuns in Japan occurred through Korean influence, thanks to Japanese nuns who traveled to Baekje to study, including three nuns who studied Vinaya in Baekje for three years during the late-sixth century.

But even after cultural transmission directly from the Chinese mainland to Japan began to dominate toward the end of the seventh century, an influential Korean countercurrent reappeared during the Kamakura era (1185-1333), which affected the Pure Land movement of Honen (1133-1212) and especially Shinran (1173-1262). Shinran cites Kyŏnghŭng (d.u.), a seventh-century Korean Buddhist scholiast, more than any other Buddhist thinker except the two early Chinese exegetes T'an-luan (476-542) and Shantao (613-681). Indeed, a broader survey of Japanese Pure Land writings before Shinran shows, too, a wide familiarity with works by other early Unified Silla thinkers, including Wŏnhyo (617-686), Pŏbwi (d.u.), Hyŏnil (d.u.), and Ŭijŏk (d.u.). The influence of these Korean scholiasts led to several of the distinctive features that eventually came to characterize Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, including the crucial role that solerecitation of the Buddha's name, or *nenbutsu*, plays in Pure Land soteriology, the emphasis on the Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra (Sūtra on the Array of Wondrous Qualities Adorning the Land of Bliss) over the apocryphal Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching (Contemplation Sūtra on the Buddha Amitābha); the emphasis on the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth of the forty-eight vows of Amitabha listed in the Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra, which essentially ensure rebirth in the Pure Land to anyone who wants it; and the precise definition of the ten moments of thought on the Buddha Amitābha that are said in the eighteenth vow to be sufficient to ensure rebirth in the Pure Land. Hence, at least through the thirteenth century, Korea continued to exert important influence over the evolution of Japanese Buddhism.

Korean Influences in Chinese Buddhism and Beyond

Despite their apparent geographical isolation from the major scholastic and practice centers of Buddhism in China, Korean adherents of the religion also maintained close and continuous contacts with their brethren on the mainland throughout much of the premodern period. Korea's proximity to northern China via the overland route through Manchuria assured the establishment of close diplomatic and cultural ties between the peninsula and the mainland. In addition, during its Three Kingdoms (4th – 7th centuries) and Unified Silla (668-935) Periods, Korea was the virtual Phoenicia of East Asia, and its nautical prowess and well-developed sea-lanes made the peninsula's seaports the hubs of regional commerce. It was thus relatively easy for Korean monks to accompany trading parties to China, where they could train and study together with Chinese adepts. Ennin (793-864), a Japanese pilgrim in China during the middle of the ninth century, remarks on the large Korean contingent among the foreign monks in the T'ang Chinese capital of Ch'ang-an. He also reports that all along China's eastern littoral were

permanent communities of Koreans, which were granted extraterritorial privileges and had their own autonomous political administrations. Monasteries were established in those communities, which served as ethnic centers for the many Korean monks and traders operating in China. Koreans even ventured beyond China to travel to the Buddhist homeland of India itself. Of the several Korea monks known to have gone on pilgrimage to India, the best known is Hyech'o (fl. 720-773), who journeyed to India via sea in the early eighth century and traveled all over the subcontinent before returning overland to China in 727.

The ready interchange that occurred throughout the East Asian region in all areas of culture allowed indigenous Korean contributions to Buddhist thought (again, all composed in literary Chinese) to become known in China, and eventually even beyond into Central Asia and Tibet. Writings produced in China and Korea especially were transmitted elsewhere with relative dispatch, so that scholars throughout East Asia were kept well apprised of advances made by their colleagues. Thus, doctrinal treatises and scriptural commentaries written in Silla Korea by such monks as Ŭisang (625-702), Wŏnhyo (617-686), and Kyŏnghŭng (ca. 7th century) were much admired in China and Japan and their insights influenced, for example, the thought of Fa-tsang (643-712), the systematizer of the Chinese Hua-yen school. In one of my earlier books, The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea, I sought to show that one of the oldest works of the nascent Ch'an (Zen) tradition was a scripture named the Vajrasamādhi-sūtra (Kor. Kümgang sammae kyŏng; Ch. Chin-kang san-mei ching), an apocryphal text that I believe was written in Korea by an early Korean Sŏn adept. The Vajrasamādhi is the first text to suggest the linearity of the Ch'an transmission—that is, the so-called "mindto-mind transmission" from Bodhidharma to the Chinese patriarchs—a crucial development in the evolution of an independent self-identity for the Ch'an school. Within some fifty years of its composition in Korea, the text is transmitted to China, where, its origins totally obscured, it came to be accepted as an authentic translation of a Serindian original and was entered into the canon, whence it was introduced subsequently into Japan and even Tibet. This ready interchange between China, Korea. Japan, and other neighboring traditions has led me to refer to an "East Asian" tradition of Buddhism, which is something more than the sum of its constituent national parts.

Korean Buddhist pilgrims were also frequent visitors to the mainland of China, where they were active participants in the Chinese tradition itself. Although many of these pilgrims eventually returned to the peninsula, we have substantial evidence of several who remained behind in China for varying lengths of time and became prominent leaders of Chinese Buddhist schools. A few examples may suffice to show the range and breadth of this Korean influence in China, and beyond. The first putatively "Korean" monk presumed to have directly influenced Chinese Buddhism is the Goguryeo monk Sŭngnang (Ch. Seng-lang; fl. ca. 490), whom the tradition assumes was an important vaunt courier in the San-lun school, the Chinese counterpart of the Madhyamaka branch of Indian philosophical exegesis; issues remain, however, regarding his ethnicity and his contribution to Chinese Buddhism. (Sŭngnang may in fact have hailed from a family of Chinese ancestry from the Liaodong region.) Less controversial is the contribution of the Silla monk Wŏnch'ŭk (Ch. Yüan-tse, Tibetan Wentsheg; 613-696) to

the development of the Chinese Fa-hsiang (Yogācāra) school. Wŏnch'ŭk was one of the two main disciples of the preeminent Chinese pilgrim-translator Hsüan-tsang (d. 664) and his relics are enshrined along those of Hsüan-tsang himself in reliquaries in Hsi-an. Still today, Wonch'uk remains perhaps better known in Tibet than in his natal or adopted homelands, through his renowned commentary to the Samdhinirmocana-sūtra (Sūtra that Reveals Profound Mysteries), which the Tibetans knew as the "Great Chinese Commentary." Wonch'uk's exegesis was extremely popular in the Chinese outpost of Tun-huang, where Chösgrub (Ch. Fa-ch'eng; ca. 755-849) translated it into Tibetan at the command of King Ralpachen (r. 815-841). Five centuries later, the renowned Tibetan scholar Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) drew heavily on Wŏnch'ŭk's work in articulating his crucial reforms of the Tibetan doctrinal tradition. Wonch'ŭk's views were decisive in Tibetan formulations of such issues as the hermeneutical strategem of the three turnings of the wheel of the law, the nine types of consciousness, and the quality and nature of the ninth "immaculate" consciousness (amalaviiñāna). Exegetical techniques subsequently used in all the major sects of Tibetan Buddhism, with their use of elaborate sections and subsections, may even derive from Wonch'ŭk's commentarial style.

Later, during the Sung dynasty, Ch'egwan (Ch. Ti-kuan; d. ca. 971) revived a moribund Chinese T'ien-t'ai school and wrote the definitive treatise on its doctrinal taxonomy, the *T'ien-t'ai ssu-chiao i* (*An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings according to the T'ien-t'ai School*), a text widely regarded as one of the classics of "Chinese" Buddhism. Several other Korean monks were intimately involved with the T'ien-t'ai school up through the Sung dynasty, including Ŭich'ŏn (1055-1101), the Goryeo prince, Buddhist monk, and bibliophile.

Such contacts between Chinese and Korean Buddhism are especially pronounced in the case of the Ch'an or Sŏn tradition of Sinitic Buddhism. Two of the earliest schools of Ch'an in China were the Ching-chung and Pao-t'ang, both centered in what was then the wild frontier of Szechwan in the southwest. Both factions claimed as their patriarch a Ch'an master of Korean heritage named Musang (Ch. Wu-hsiang; 684-762), who is better known to the tradition as Reverend Kim (Kim *hwasang*), using his native Korean surname. Musang reduced all of Ch'an teachings to the three phrases of "not remembering," which he equated with morality, "not thinking," with samādhi, and "not forgetting," with wisdom. Even after his demise, Musang's teachings continued to be closely studied by such influential scholiasts in the Ch'an tradition as Tsung-mi (780-841).

Korean influence over Chinese Buddhism was won not only through religious practice, doctrinal expertise, scholarly erudition, or spiritual charisma, but also through hard cash. Indeed, the financial support of the Goryeo dynasty for the activities of Hui-yin Monastery in the Southern Sung capital of Hang-chou was so substantial and continuous that the monastery came to be better known by its nickname of Korea Monastery (Kao-li ssu). The Goryeo royal family provided Uich'ŏn's Chinese teacher Ching-yüan (1011-1088) with funds to publish and distribute his Hua-yen writings. Goryeo tribute to the Sung court for many years also included funds specifically

earmarked for Hui-yin ssu's support. Other funds were designated for construction of a pavilion for storing Hua-yen scriptures, to cast images of Vairocana, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī, and to purcha se offerings for the pavilion. After Ŭich'ŏn's death, the monastery hung his portrait in a shrine at the temple, turning the shrine into the virtual equivalent of a merit cloister for the Goryeo royal family and thus effectively requiring that the Goryeo government maintain it. Goryeo's financial power was so dominant that the Goryeo king even retained the authority at certain points in the monastery's history to appoint its abbot.

The Self-Identity of Korean Buddhists

The pervasive use of literary Chinese in the names of these Korean expatriate monks sometimes masks for us today the fact that the men behind these names were often not Chinese at all, but monks from the periphery of the empire. Many of the expatriate Koreans who were influential in China became thoroughly Sinicized, but rarely without retaining some sense of identification with their native tradition (e.g., through continued correspondence with colleagues on the Korean peninsula). In the case of Ùisang, for example, despite assuming control of the Chinese Hua-yen school after his master Chih-yen's death, the *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) tells us that Ùisang still decided to return to Korea in 670 to warn the Korean king of an impending Chinese invasion of the peninsula. The invasion forestalled, Ùisang was rewarded with munificent royal support and his Hwaeom school dominated Korean Buddhist scholasticism from that point onward. Fa-tsang (643-712), Ùisang's successor in the Hua-yen school, continued to write to Ùisang for guidance long after his return to Korea and his correspondence is still extant today.

Even where these Korean monks were assimilated by the Chinese, their Korean ethnicity often continued to be an essential part of their social and religious identity. I mentioned above that Musang was best known to his contemporaries as Reverend Kim, clear evidence that he retained some sense of his Korean ethnic identity even in the remote hinterlands of the Chinese empire, far from his homeland. The vehement opposition Wŏnch'ŭk is said to have endured in cementing his position as successor to Hsüan-tsang—through a defamation campaign launched by followers of his main rival, the Chinese monk K'uei-chi (632-682)—may betray an incipient racial bias against this Korean scholiast and again suggests that his identity as a Korean remained an issue for the Chinese. Therefore, even among Sinicized Koreans, the active Korean presence within the Chinese Buddhist church constituted a self-consciously Korean influence.

Why would monks from Korea have been able to exert such wide-ranging influence, both geographically and temporally, across the East Asian Buddhist tradition? I believe it is because Buddhist monks saw themselves not so much as "Korean," "Japanese," or "Chinese" Buddhists, but instead as joint collaborators in a religious tradition that transcended contemporary notions of nation and time. These monks' conceptions of themselves were much broader than the "shrunken imaginings of recent history," to paraphrase Benedict Anderson's well-known statement about nationalism. Korean Buddhists of the pre-modern age would probably have been more apt to consider

themselves members of an ordination line and monastic lineage, a school of thought, or a tradition of practice, than as "Korean" Buddhists. If they were to refer to themselves at all, it would be not as "Korean Buddhists" but as "disciples," "teachers," "proselytists," "doctrinal specialists," and "meditators"—all terms suggested in the categorizations of monks found in the various *Kao-seng chuan* (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*), which date from as early as the sixth century. These categorizations transcended national and cultural boundaries (there are, for instance, no sections for "Korean monks," "Japanese monks," etc.), and the Chinese compilations of such *Biographies of Eminent Monks* will subsume under their main listings biographies of Koreans, Indians, Inner Asians, and Japanese. Hence, although the Biographies might mention that Buddhists as being "a monk of Silla" or "a sage of Haedong"—both designations that are attested in the *Biographies*—they are principally categorized as "proselytists," "doctrinal specialists," and so forth, who may simultaneously also be "disciples of X," "teachers of Y," or "meditators with Z."

But, unlike many of the other peoples who lived on the periphery of the Sinitic cultural sphere, Koreans also worked throughout the premodern period to maintain a cultural, social, and political identity that was distinct from China. As Michael Rogers so aptly described it, Koreans throughout their history remained active participants in Sinitic civilization while also seeking always to maintain their "cultural self-sufficiency." There are several anecdotal examples that illustrate this sense of simultaneous participation in the Sinitic world while maintaining an independent identity for Korea. During the Goryeo Period, for example, in the fourth of Wang Kon's "Ten Injunctions" to his descendants on how to assure the continued success of his new dynasty, he reminds his subjects that Korea is distinct from China and that it must continue to maintain its own independent cultural and social traditions: "In the past we have always had a deep attachment for the ways of China and all of our institutions have been modeled upon those of T'ang. But our country occupies a different geographical location and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Hence, there is no reason to strain ourselves unreasonably to copy the Chinese way." In his entreaty to support Buddhism, Wang Kon also hints that there are uniquely Korean versions of important rituals that should be maintained. This nascent sense of a distinctive Korean practice of Buddhism is discussed in the sixth injunction, where Wang Kon notes: "I deem the two festivals of Yondung [Lamplighting] and P'algwan [Eight Prohibitions] of great s piritual value and importance. The first is to worship Buddha. The second is to worship the spirit of heaven, the spirits of the five sacred and other major mountains and rivers, and the dragon god. At some future time, villainous courtiers may propose the abandonment or modification of these festivals. No change should be allowed." The P'algwan ritual is, in fact, known in India and China, where it was a Buddhist fortnightly ritual in which laypersons would take the eight precepts. But the Korean interpretation of this ritual as a naturalist ritual seems to be otherwise unknown in Asia, and may be a uniquely Korean innovation. Paralleling this concern with maintaining Korea's separate identity, Kim Pusik (1075-1151) in the preface to his Samguk sagi (Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms; ca. 1122-1146) laments the ongoing neglect of Korea's own indigenous history and cites this neglect as one of the principal reasons for compiling his new history.

Simultaneous with their recognition of their clan and local identity, their allegiance to a particular state and monarch, their connection to Buddhist monastic and ordination lineages, and so forth, Buddhist monks of the pre-modern age also viewed themselves as participating in the universal transmission of the dharma going back both spatially and temporally to India and the Buddha himself. With such a vision, East Asian Buddhists could continue to be active participants in a religious tradition whose origins were distant both geographically and temporally. East Asians of the premodern age viewed Buddhism as a universal religion pristine and pure in its thought, its practice, and its realization; hence the need of hermeneutical taxonomies to explain how the plethora of competing Buddhist texts and practices—each claiming to be pristinely Buddhist but seemingly at times to be almost diametrically opposed to one another were all actually part of a coherent heuristic plan within the religion, as if Buddhism's many variations were in fact cut from whole cloth. This vision of their tradition also accounts for the persistent attempt of all of the indigenous schools of East Asian Buddhism to trace their origins back through an unbroken lineage of "ancestors" or "patriarchs" to the person of the Buddha himself. Once we begin tracing the countercurrents of influence in East Asian Buddhism, however, we discover that the lineages of these "patriarchs" often lead us back not to China or Japan, but instead to Korea.

For Further Reading

Much of the material in the article is adapted from Robert Buswell, ed., <u>Currents and Countercurrents: Korean Influences on the Buddhist Traditions of East Asia</u>. Editor and contributor. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005. 294 pp.

For further information on Korean Buddhism and its place in the East Asian tradition, see the following books by Robert Buswell:

<u>Religions of Korea in Practice.</u> Princeton Readings in Religions series. Editor. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. 542 pp.

<u>Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean Way of Zen</u>. Classics in East Asian Buddhism, no. 2. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, A Kuroda Institute Book, 1991. 232 pp.

<u>The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea.</u> Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. 245 pp.

<u>Cultivating Original Enlightenment: Wonhyo's Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-Sutra</u> (Kumgang Sammmaegyong Non). The Collected Works of Wonhyo, vol. 1. University of Hawaii Press, 2007. 429 pp.

BUDDHIST ART IN KOREA

by Youngsook Pak

Buddhism, over the one and a half millennia since its introduction to Korea in the fourth century, has inspired the creation of uniquely Korean traditions in Buddhist art. Korean monarchs and members of the ruling class from the sixth to the fourteenth centuries were patrons of the Buddhist religion and supported the creation of artistic and ceremonial objects and the construction of the most famous Buddhist monasteries and pagodas in Korea. Buddhism lost these influential patrons during the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), but thereafter gradually permeated among ordinary folk, a change that is reflected in the country's Buddhist art.

Buddhist monastery architecture

Korea's Three Kingdoms—Goguryeo (37 B.C.E.–668 C.E.), Baekje (18 B.C.E.–660 C.E.), and Silla (57 B.C.E.–935 C.E.)—built great monasteries in their capitals or nearby, judging by the historical records and the architectural remnants. The latter include Kumgangsa near Pyongyang (probably from the early sixth century); Hwangnyongsa (founded in 553) with its legendary nine-story wooden pagoda (destroyed in 1234 by the Mongols, except for the foundation stones, now visible after excavation) and Punhwangsa (built in 634, only three stories survive of the original nine-story pagoda built of brick imitating stone), both in the Silla capital of Gyeongju; and Miruksa (built by King Mu of Baekje in the early seventh century) in Iksan.

Korean Buddhist monasteries feature architectural elements similar or identical to those of secular buildings introduced from China. In general, there is little difference in architectural style between sacred and secular buildings in East Asia. The monasteries of the Three Kingdoms consisted of a lecture hall, a main hall with Buddhist images (also known as kumdang, or Golden Hall, the focus of worship), a pagoda, and a temple gate arranged along a north-south axis. Later, many more image halls (peoptang) were added to the complex according to the scale of the monastery. These ceremonial halls are dedicated to a specific Buddha or bodhisattva and other Buddhist deities—thus Piro cheon for Vairocana; Taeung cheon (Hall of the Great Hero) and Yeongsan cheon (Hall of Vulture Peak), both for Śakyamuni Buddha; Muryangsu cheo Infinite Life) and Kuun cheon (Hall of Utmost Bliss), both for AMITABHA Buddha; Yaksa cheon for the Medicine Buddha, Bhaisajyaguru (Yaksa Yeorae); Miruk cheon for MAITREYA; Gwanum cheon for Avalokitesvara; Jijang cheon for Ksitigarbha; Sipwang cheon for the Ten Kings; Nahan cheon for ARHATS; and Chosa dang for a monastery's founding teachers. Sometimes three Buddhas, who embody past, present, and future, are enshrined in one hall. Besides the bell and drum pavilions, there were additional buildings for the storage of Buddhist scriptures, lecture and meditation halls, monks' living quarters, and kitchens.

Pagodas and reliquaries

Multistoried pagodas (*tap*), built in the center of the monastery's courtyard for daily circumambulation, were originally reliquaries of the historical Buddha Śakyamuni, but increasingly came to serve as commemorative monuments. Simple, monumental granite stone pagodas were built with minimal adornment. The finial was designed in the form of an ancient Indian stupa. The relic chamber in wooden pagodas was located in the foundations beneath the central pole, while in stone pagodas it was located above ground just below the central mast. From the late seventh century "twin pagodas," a Chinese innovation introduced for the sake of symmetry, began to appear. King Sinmun built Kamunsa (twin pagodas) in 682 in memory of his father King Munmu, who unified the Three Kingdoms under the rule of Silla. STUPAS (*pudo*), mostly octagonal single-story stone monuments, served to enshrine the relics of eminent monks.

RELIQUARY containers were exquisitely crafted in ceramic, gilt bronze, silver, gold, and glass. The outer container is usually a square or rectangular box. The innermost reliquary, which contains the relic of the true body of the Buddha (the remains after cremation), is a tiny crystal or glass bottle with an exquisite gold or openwork stopper. Gilt-bronze images and written Buddhist sutras, both representing the dharma body, were also deposited in reliquaries. In the five-story granite stone pagoda in Iksan Wanggung-ni was found a copy of the DIAMOND SUTRA in seventeen gold sheets, on which is embossed the entire text in majestic regular script style, the only known example in East Asia. Reliquaries from the unified Silla period (668–935) were often in the shape of a miniature pagoda or palanquin with a bejeweled canopy and musicians or guardian kings at the corners. Stupas of eminent monks from the Joseon period (fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) yielded white ceramic and brass reliquaries in the form of simple covered bowls.

Buddhist paraphernalia

Bronze bells, censers, incense boxes, *kuṇḍika* (water bottles), and flower vases can all be categorized as Buddhist RITUAL OBJECTS and ceremonial paraphernalia; such objects were executed with considerable craftsmanship since the Three Kingdoms period. A Baekje gilt-bronze censer from the late sixth century, excavated in the Nungsan-ri site in Puyeo, shows a superb combination of traditional ideas in its dragon support and its lotus bowl and cover in the shape of the legendary Penglai paradise mountain surmounted by a phoenix. During the Unified Silla period, magnificent bells were cast in bronze as seen in the huge Pongdeoksa bell. The refinement of design, with floral bands and elegant airy *apsaras* kneeling on clouds, as well as the profound sound and superb casting technique, is unmatched in East Asia. In the Goryeo period (918–1392), incense containers and bottles for private use and for altars were made of lacquer or bronze. They were often decorated with tiny and elegant inlaid designs executed with mother-of-pearl on lacquer vessels or with silver on bronze vessels.

Buddhist sculpture and painting

Buddhist images of Sakyamuni, Amitabha, the Medicine Buddha Bhaisajyaguru, and the Universal Buddha Vairocana, who were enshrined in the kumdang, are the focus of worship. No large bronze images, prior to the ninth century, have survived, but small votive gilt bronze images (ten to thirty centimeters in height and dated between the seventh and ninth centuries) have been excavated from temples, residential sites, and pagodas. These images were for personal altars or for ritual offering. From the earliest period (sixth century), Buddha images portrayed characteristically Korean broad faces with high cheekbones, while the drapery styles, which show influence from the Six Dynasties in China, are characterized by the symmetrical arrangement of garments and an emphasis on frontality. Maitreya Bodhisattva (Miruk bosal), the Future Buddha, was worshiped in royal and aristocratic circles in the early seventh century in all of the Three Kingdoms. Some of the finest images demonstrate Korean mastery of the lost-wax bronze-casting technique and refinement in every detail. Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva (Gwanum Bosal) was one of the most popular images throughout history in Korea. The Avalokitesvara image excavated from Seonsan, a small bronze masterpiece, effortlessly conveys a gentleness in facial expression, a gracefully raised right hand with lotus bud, and the fluent style of sashes and skirt.

A new style of thin monastic garment worn with the left shoulder bare appears in most eighth- and ninth-century Buddha images in Korea, after Korean monks began traveling to Tang China, Central Asia, and as far as India. Monumental granite stone images (all their original coloring is now lost) were carved from the seventh century and enshrined in cave temples (e.g., the Amitabha Buddha triad in Kunwi in North Gyeongsang Province); during the seventh to ninth centuries they were also placed in natural environments, such as Namsan, the sacred Buddhist mountain in Gyeongju. The SEOKGURAM Buddha image from the mid-eighth century is unquestionably one of the great masterpieces of the world in its outstanding concept and execution in rough textured granite.

In the Goryeo and Joseon Dynasties, Buddhist images wearing heavy garments covering both shoulders were made in all kinds of materials, in particular bronze, clay, and wood. Especially in the Joseon period, large carved wooden altarpieces depicting the pantheon of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, and guardian kings in high relief were frequently placed behind three-dimensional main Buddhas in the worshiping halls.

The paintings of sacred images on the walls of monasteries must have been practiced in Korea at the same time the sculptured images were executed, but despite written records in the SAMGUK YUSA (MEMO-RABILIA OF THE THREE KINGDOMS), no visual material has survived.

Sagyeong (handwritten and hand-painted Buddhist scriptures) flourished during the Goryeo Dynasty. The most frequently copied sutras of the Goryeo Dynasty were the HUAYAN JING (Korean, *Hwaomgyeong*), *Amitabha Sutra* (Korean, *Amitagyeong*), and LOTUS SUTRA (SADDHARMAPUNDARIKA-SUTRA; Korean, *Peophwagyeong*).

Sagyeong took the form of precious illuminated manuscripts in which the title, the exquisite miniature paintings of the dazzling frontispiece, and the text were decorated and written in gold or silver on dark indigo-dyed paper made from the inner bark of the mulberry. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Goryeo became the center of illuminated manuscript production in East Asia.

In the Goryeo period, when Buddhism prospered under royal and aristocratic patronage, Pure Land Buddhist paintings of Amitabha, Water Moon Avalokitesvara, and Ksitigarbha flourished. These paintings were rendered on hanging silk scrolls in various sizes, depending on their use; smaller scrolls were for private altars, and larger ones for temples. The images are outlined in red or black ink and painted with mineral colors, including cinnabar red, malachite green, and lead white. These principal colors, finely ground and prepared with a binder, were first applied on the back of the silk, then on the front, in order to ensure the durability of the colors and to intensify the hue. Gold for exposed parts of the Buddha's body and decorative motifs were applied on top of this. Facial details were drawn and the image would be completed during an eye-dotting ceremony. In the Joseon Dynasty Buddhist, paintings of large figural groups were often executed on hemp. Mineral pigments on such paintings were applied only to the front surface. As a consequence, some colors, especially red and green, have been lost from paintings dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A new type of painting, in which Buddhist images were mixed with native Korean spirits and deities, began to emerge in the second half of the Joseon Dynasty.

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Imagery, Iconography and Belief in Early Korean Buddhism

By Jonathan W. Best



Figure 12. Standing Avalokitesvara
Bodhisattva (Important Cultural Treasure
#195). Three Kingdoms period, Baekje,
early 7th century; gilt-bronze, height 21.1 cm;
Seoul National Museum. Reproduced
from Hwang Suyong ed., Kukpo, v. 2
(Seoul, 1984), pl. 20.

Most scholars agree that for the half millennium following Buddhism's foundation in the fifth century B.C.E., the religion prospered in its Indian homeland without resorting to the use of anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha. It is also commonly agreed that the religion would never have been able to spread across the Asian continent and to establish a permanent niche for itself in Korean culture had it not opted in the first century of the common era to permit the symbolization of its profound beliefs through such iconic representations. From the time of their first use in India, it is true, Buddhist images have been subject to a wide spectrum of pious interpretation. Acceptable views held concurrently within the same society have ranged from the icon being construed a purely instructive symbol bearing no reference to actually existent supernatural entities to the individual icon being itself regarded as a vital and conscious manifestation of a cosmically active divinity. Logically antithetical as these two perspectives may be, they share important common ground in acknowledging that the icon serves the valuable religious purpose of providing a concrete focus of belief. In both views, the image is deemed a visually accessible revelation of religious truth, and as such, icons proved powerful tools of conversion throughout Asia. Substantial segments of the populations of China, Korea and Japan for whom abstract philosophy and ascetic meditation held little appeal were induced onto Buddhism's Eightfold Path by the visual assurance of the unlimited power and responsiveness of the religion's divinities provided by their glowing golden images.

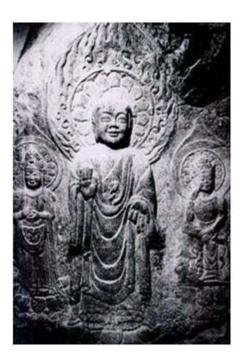


Figure 1. The Sosan Triad (National Treasure
#84). Three Kingdoms period, early 7th
century; granite, height 2.8 meters (buddha figure);
Sosan, Chungcheongnam-do. Reproduced
from Hanguk Munhwajae Pohohyophoe ed., Hanguk munhwajae taegwan, vol. 5, pl. 17.

The apprehension of Buddhist icons as revelations of religious truth was also an important factor in the development of a fixed iconography. For those who saw icons as symbolic expressions of complex, eternally valid understandings of the truth, it was essential that the symbolically meaningful aspects of an image be unchanging. It was equally essential for those who saw icons as true manifestations of eternally existent divinities that the divine beings' visual forms be sufficiently consistent so as to be individually recognizable. Devotionalism is most powerful when its object is conceived as a distinct personality. Whether one viewed the icons as symbols or as manifestations of divinities, the veracity of one's belief was warranted by the individualizing constancy of the imagery that resulted from an established iconography.

Use of Icons in Korea

The use of icons has held a central place in the Korean practice of Buddhism since the time of the religion's introduction to the peninsula in the late fourth century. All of the liturgical traditions of Korean Buddhism—with the partial exception of the Seon sect (the Korean "Zen" tradition)—have relied heavily on icons as focuses of ritual, meditation and adorational worship. Hundreds of the countless thousands of sculpted and painted icons produced over time by Korean Buddhists still exist today. It is the primary purpose of this article to provide an introduction to the iconography of the imagery, especially the sculpture, that survives from the first 550 years of Korean Buddhism. This period spans the last three centuries of the Three Kingdoms period (traditionally 58 B.C.E. to 668 C.E.) and the two and one half centuries of the subsequent Unified Silla period (668-935). Our discussion will treat, more particularly, the iconography and significance of those religious "beings" that were most commonly venerated in the Buddhist practice of these two, religiously distinctive periods. It is usual for historians of religion to characterize the Buddhism of the Three Kingdoms as being less sophisticated in its metaphysical understandings and less rigorous in its meditative practice than was the case in the later period. The Buddhism of Unified Silla also differs from that of the earlier era in that sectarian distinctions within the religion were much more pronounced. The enduring popularity of certain of these sects caused a marked increase in the number of iconic representations of those beings particularly associated with their doctrines. In other words, important changes that occurred in the sectarian affiliations of Korean Buddhists were, in some significant instances, directly reflected by a shift in the frequency with which certain Buddhist beings were artistically rendered.

Fifty years ago, the highly respected Japanese Buddhist historian, Tsukamoto Zenryu, produced an informative study of Chinese Buddhism that analyzed chronological fluctuations in the depiction of major Buddhist divinities in the great cave temple complex of Lungmen. To attempt a conceptually similar iconographic investigation of the Buddhist sculpture surviving from the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods, some comparably representative selection of Korean imagery is needed. For the purposes of the present study, this need will be met by the large sampling of Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla statues presented in the useful illustrated compendium, *Han'guk pulsang sambaekson* (A Survey of Three Hundred Korean Buddhist Images). Tsukamoto in compiling his data on Chinese Buddhist statuary had the advantage of

relying on inscriptions for the identifications of the images. In the case of early Korean sculpture, inscriptions are rare and, for the most part, the authors of *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson* had to use their knowledge of Buddhist iconographic conventions where they make specific identifications of the beings represented.

The vast pantheon of East Asian Buddhism contains two categories of beings that are the most common focuses of ritual and worship—and, accordingly, are the most frequent subjects of iconic depiction. These types of beings are Buddhas (Kor. *bulta*, or *yorae*) and bodhisattvas (Kor. *bosal*). As a matter of the most basic definition, a Buddha may be said to be a fully enlightened sentient being; but the term often has significantly different connotations when applied to the transcendental Buddhas encountered in East Asian art. Many of these Buddhas are more properly understood as particular manifestations of the one undifferentiated, universal and eternal Truth (Skt. *Dharma*; Kor. *Pop*)³ which constitutes the core and the essence of Buddhist teaching. To be in a continuous state of unity with this Truth is to be enlightened in the Buddhist sense. A bodhisattva is a being who, through eons of Truth-informed and compassionate behavior, has attained the insight requisite to enter this blissful state of liberation (Skt. *nirvana*; Kor. *yolban*), but who benignly forswears that privilege until all other sentient beings have also attained it.

Bodhisattvas, moreover, compassionately vow to utilize the tremendous knowledge and supernormal powers generated by their eons of meritorious endeavor to aid other sentient beings, the more readily to realize that glorious end. Thus, according to the tenets of those forms of Buddhism practiced in early Korea, bodhisattvas were powerful helpers ever accessible to all who had not yet achieved the liberating salvation of enlightenment, and Buddhas were personifications of different aspects of—or, approaches to—the Dharma. From the perspective of the average early Korean layperson, both Buddhas and bodhisattvas were conscious, omnipotent beings; Buddhas, however, were typically regarded as being more remote from the daily life of humans than the bodhisattvas. It should, perhaps, also be mentioned that both Buddhas and bodhisattvas were considered to be male in gender and were so represented in early Korean art.

The Buddha Sakyamuni

Siddhartha (Kor. *Siltalta*), the first mortal whose claim to the attainment of Buddhahood is recognized by Buddhists and whose earthly existence is recognized by history, is commonly known by the epithet of Sakyamuni (Kor. *Sokkamoni* or *Sokka-yorae*; 563-483 B.C.E.). This honorific epithet means literally "Sage of the Sakya Clan." Sakyamuni was a north Indian prince who renounced his royal birthright in favor of a celibate life of meditation and teaching. It was he who attained enlightenment, who enunciated the central doctrines of Buddhism, and who organized the orders of monks and nuns that perpetuated those teachings over time. When some 500 years after his lifetime it first became acceptable to represent the Buddha in anthropomorphic form, the primary features of that form were necessarily derived from verbal descriptions of Sakyamuni preserved in Buddhist texts. The most iconographically important of these features were

the thirty-two supernatural marks (Skt. *laksana*; Kor. *sang*) that were believed to have adorned his body from birth and that were perceptible to the eyes of the initiated. According to notions widely held in India well before the rise of Buddhism, an individual of genuinely epoch-making potential—a *maha purusa* ("Great Man"; Kor. *taejangbu*) or *cakravartin* ("Wheel-turning Conqueror"; Kor. *yunwang*)—was distinguishable by the possession of these thirty-two physical attributes. Sakyamuni was such a person, and consequently these sacred marks became fixed elements in his iconic representation. Among the most readily apparent of the marks are those found on the Buddha's head including the *usnisa* (Kor. *yukkye*, the rounded protuberance on top of the cranium), the *urna* (Kor. *paekho*, the circular tuft of hair at the center of the forehead that is commonly mistaken for a "third eye"), and the tight clockwise curling of his rough-shorn locks. Additional components of the representation of the Buddha that became part of the standard iconographic vocabulary of Buddhism were the gestures of the hands (Skt. *mudra*; Kor. *insang*) and the positioning of the legs (Skt. *asana*; Kor. *chwa*).

Other prominent iconographic elements in the Buddha's depiction are based on early Indian concepts of aristocratic male beauty. Features of this sort include the elongated earlobes and the presence of three parallel fleshy folds on the front of the neck. The Buddha's attire is also iconographically determined and, like the thirty-two sacred marks, originates ultimately from textual accounts relating to Sakyamuni. It is recorded that when he renounced his royal patrimony, Sakyamuni abandoned all but the most essential of material possessions. He is said, for example, to have replaced his princely raiment with the simplest and poorest of robes. This type of garment subsequently became the basis for the prescribed attire of his male disciples and, in turn, the humble monkish garb in later times constituted the model for iconic renderings of the Buddha's robe. For the most part, then, it was such textually enshrined information concerning Sakyamuni that half a millennium after his death provided the descriptive foundation for constructing the first anthropomorphic representations of him. His image, moreover, thereafter served as the model for depicting all of the other Buddhas that subsequently came to be honored in Buddhist text and ritual.

The iconic image of Sakyamuni is a form with multiple layers of symbolic meaning. As a representation of the sacred body of the historical Buddha, it is a reminder of his triumphal enlightenment and his compassionate teaching of the way whereby others could also attain the liberation of *nirvana*. Further, the major sacred marks that distinguished his body came to be associated with particular virtues and powers which he had acquired over the course of countless previous lives and which were instrumental in his final realization of enlightenment. Similarly, the gestures chosen for depicting the Buddha's hands and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the poses adopted for depicting his legs made symbolic reference to important Buddhist beliefs and practices or to critical moments in his biography. The sacred marks, gestures and poses thus not only served to make a Buddha image recognizable as such, but also served as discrete symbols of those Buddhist beliefs with which they were associated. Having thus become religiously sanctioned symbols in their own right, they were largely protected from idiosyncratic artistic variation in their representation.

The fact that textual descriptions of Sakyamuni provided the list of attributes which came to characterize the generic Buddha form causes the dilemma that it is frequently impossible to determine which particular Buddha an image was originally intended to represent. In fact, a definite identification is only possible in cases where distinguishing iconographic traits, an inscription, or some other definitive piece of relevant written or contextual evidence occurs. It is for this reason that less than one fifth of the Buddhas depicted in the Three Kingdoms section of the *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson* are specifically identified. It can also be said, however, that in view of what is known of Korean and Chinese Buddhism at this time, it is probable that a substantial percentage of these unidentified statues were intended as representations of Sakyamuni. Almost half of the more than 100 Buddhas dating from the period of 500 to 650 C.E. found at the Chinese cave temples of Lungmen whose identities, as well as whose dates of carving, Tsukamoto was able to establish from inscriptions were images of Sakyamuni.

The *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson* contains no Three Kingdoms Buddha images identified as Sakyamuni. It does, however, contain illustrations of a bronze nimbus bearing an inscription whose text indicates that the sculpted Buddha once attached to it was Sakyamuni. The volume also contains an illustration of the Baekje cliff-face relief triad at Sosan whose Buddha figure can be at least tentatively identified as Sakyamuni on several iconographic grounds, including the presence of three tiny seated buddhas in its nimbus (fig. 1).⁵ The central figure of the Buddha at Sosan is depicted with the right hand raised in the gesture known as the *abhaya mudra* (Kor. *simuoe-in*) that symbolizes "freedom from fear" or reassurance. The left hand is lowered in the *varada mudra* (Kor. *yowon-in*), a gesture of giving or wish-granting. Although both *mudras* have specific symbolic connotations, they—like the standing posture of the same figure—can be employed in the depictions of almost any Buddha, and thus are not sufficient evidence in themselves to determine the identity of the particular Buddha represented.

There are three Unified Silla Buddhas identified as Sakyamuni in the Hanguk pulsang sambaekson. Visually, the most impressive of these is the Kwallyong-sa's large granite seated Buddha majestically sited on the crest of Yongson-dae, "Dragon Boat Terrace," in South Gyeongsang Province (fig. 2). This Buddha is depicted seated with his legs crossed in the "lotus position" (Skt. padmasana; Kor. yonhwa jwa or kyolgabu-jwa), the standard posture of Buddhist meditation and an iconographically acceptable pose for the depiction of any Buddha. In the matter of the positioning of the Kwallyong-sa Buddha's hands, however, it will be noticed that the right is extended somewhat over his right knee with the fingers pointing downwards. This is the "earth-touching" mudra (Skt. bhumisparsa mudra; Kor. hangmachokchi-in), a gesture primarily associated with a critical moment in Sakyamuni's biography. It is recorded in Buddhist scriptures that during the course of the epochful night in which Sakyamuni attained nirvana and thus freedom from rebirth, Mara, the powerful deity who in Indian belief served as both the god of sensual love and the personification of evil, appeared where the soon-to-be Buddha was meditating. This deity attempted to sway Sakyamuni from his purpose, first by the blandishments of his beautiful daughters and then by the intimidation of loosening the demonic legions of hell against him. But Sakyamuni was unaffected by either assault and, having been alone during these trials, called on the earth—as

personified by the earth goddess—to bear witness to his steadfastness of purpose by touching the ground with his right hand as he continued to sit in meditation. At his touch, there was an earthquake and the earth goddess appeared out of the cloven ground and bore witness to the unsullied character of his mental state. Sakyamuni then resumed his meditations and at the dawn of the next day attained full enlightenment. Accordingly, although the "earth-touching" *mudra* is not entirely restricted to representations of Sakyamuni, its appearance on the seated Buddha at Yongsondae is wholly consistent with that image's traditional identification as this specific Buddha.

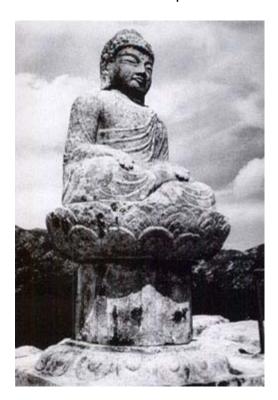


Figure 2. Seated Sakyamuni Buddha (Important Cultural Treasure #295). Unified Silla period, 9th century; granite, height 1.88 meters (buddha figure); Kwallyongsa, Gyeongsangnam-do. Reproduced from Han'guk Munhwajae Poho-hyophoe ed., Hanguk munhwajae taegwan, v. 5 (Seoul, 1986), pl. 35.

The Buddha Maitreya

Buddhism holds neither that Sakyamuni was the first to attain Buddhahood in this world nor that he will be the last. The names of earlier Buddhas are recorded in the *sutras*, and there are several sacred texts in the East Asian Buddhist canon devoted to descriptions of the advent of the next earthly Buddha, Maitreya (Kor. Miruk). It is believed that at the present time Maitreya is a bodhisattva passing his penultimate incarnation—as did Sakyamuni before him—in Tusita Heaven (Kor. Tosol-chon), one of a number of heavens known in Buddhist lore. It is foretold that Maitreya's final incarnation as the next Buddha will initiate a golden age on earth. For these reasons,

Maitreya is unique in the East Asian Buddhist pantheon in that he is celebrated in ritual and art both in his current manifestation as a bodhisattva and in his future manifestation as a Buddha.



Figure 3. Seated Maitreya Buddha. Three Kingdoms period, Silla, mid-7th century; granite, height 1.6 meters; Gyeongju National Museum.

Reproduced from C. Kim and L.K. Lee, Arts
of Korea (New York, 1974), pl. 48.

The iconic portrayal of Maitreya as bodhisattva is an important theme in Three Kingdoms Buddhist sculpture and will be treated subsequently. Representations of Maitreya as Buddha are much more unusual among the preserved corpus of early Korean sculpture. In fact, only one image identified as such is included among the Hanguk pulsang sambaekson's nearly two hundred statues dated to the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods. The image is a granite sculpture of a seated Buddha that is now in the collection of the Gyeongju National Museum, but that was acquired from a long-abandoned temple site on Samhwa-ryong ("Three Flower Ridge") on Namsan, just outside of Kyongju (fig. 3). It is widely believed that this statue is the very stone image of Maitreya Buddha whose miraculous discovery near Samhwa-ryong during the reign of Silla's Queen Sondok (632-47) is recorded in the Samguk yusa, a well-known thirteenth-century text by the monk Iryon. The iconography of the statue does support the designation of the Buddha as Maitreya. In this case, however, it is not the treatment of the Buddha's hands—the right displayed in a variation of the abhaya

mudra with the fingers curled and the left in a less common variation of the varada mudra in which the corner of the figure's robe is grasped against the upturned palm—that suggests a specific identification. Rather, it is the unusual sitting posture of this figure that provides the iconographic clue to its identity. The Buddha is depicted seated on a throne in the bhadra asana (Kor. uijwa-hyong), which means that he is sitting in the "Western" fashion with both legs pendant. This pose is quite rare in East Asian Buddhist art and is closely associated with the Buddha Maitreya.

The Buddha Amitabha

The Buddha Amitabha (Kor. Amita) differs from the Buddhas Sakyamuni and Maitreya in that, unlike them, the primary locus of his teaching is not on this earth. Instead, he is believed to be an infinitely compassionate immortal Buddha who presides over a celestial paradise, or "Pure Land" (Kor. Chongto), located in the western skies. Because of Amitabha's compassionate nature, all that is required to be reborn in his paradise is the devout recitation of the simple phrase, "Homage to Amitabha Buddha" (Kor. "Nammu Amita-bul"). This appealingly uncomplicated form of Buddhist belief was introduced to Korea during the latter part of the Three Kingdoms period and became tremendously popular during the Unified Silla period. The explosive growth of the cult's popularity during the seventh and eighth centuries parallels its developmental course in China and is directly reflected in the surviving corpus of Korean Buddhist sculpture. The Hanguk pulsang sambaekson contains, for example, only one Buddha image identified as Amitabha dating to the Three Kingdoms period and five dating to the Unified Silla period.

The single Three Kingdoms statue of Amitabha is the central standing figure in a small bronze triadic group in which he is flanked by two standing bodhisattvas (fig. 4). This sculpture, discovered at Koksan in Hwanghae-do and thus known to be of Koguryo manufacture, bears a dated inscription on the reverse of its boat-shaped nimbus which indicates that it was cast in 571. Were it not that the inscription identifies the central figure as Amitabha, however, it would be impossible to determine which Buddha is represented. Neither the Buddha's standing posture nor the symbolic gestures of his hands—again the *abhaya* and *varada mudras* ⁷ as in the cases of the Maitreya and the first of the Sakyamuni images treated above—provides any definitive information about his identity. Indeed, as indicated in the discussion of the Sosan triad, the representation of the three small Buddhas in the nimbus is most frequently found on Sakyamuni images. The inscription on the 571 triad is also revealing about the unrestrictive character of early Korean Buddhist belief.

Although the image is specifically identified as Amitabha and the filial hope is expressed that the donors' parents may be reborn in his western paradise, the inscription also makes explicit reference to the Buddha Maitreya and the virtue of his future earthly teaching. As such, the inscription serves as testimony of the Maitreya cult in early Korea and, more generally, to the nonexclusive nature of Buddhist cultic affiliation: active devotional participation in one Buddhist cult or sect did not at the time—nor does it now—necessarily preclude equally active devotional participation in another.



Figure 4. Amitabha Triad (National Treasure #85).
Three Kingdoms period, Goguryeo, inscribed cyclical date sinmyo likely coresponding to 571; gilt-bronze, height 11.5 cm.; private collection, Seoul. Reproduced from Hwang Suyong ed., Hanguk pulgyo misul (v. 10 in Hanguk ui mi series; Seoul, 1980), pl. 3.

Among the five Unified Silla statues of Amitabha in the *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson*, one of the seemingly best preserved and iconographically most interesting is the painted stone seated image of this Buddha belonging to the Piro-sa, a temple located in North Gyeongsang province (fig. 5). In this case the Buddha is seated in the "lotus position" of meditation and his hands are arranged in the peculiar version of the standard gesture of meditation (Skt. *dhyana mudra*; Kor. *chong-in*) that is characteristic of Amitabha. In this distinctive variant of the *dhyana mudra*, the index finger of each hand is curled up to touch the tip of the thumb of the same hand, whereas in the basic form of this *mudra* the hands are positioned one resting in the other, palms upwards and fingers extended, with only the tips of the two thumbs touching. Other notable features of the Pirosa's Amitabha are the arrangement of his robe so that one shoulder is exposed and the extraordinarily exaggerated elongation of his earlobes.

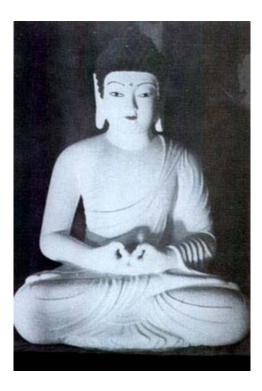


Figure 5. Seated Amitabha Buddha. Unified Silla period, 9th century; granite and paint, height 1.18 meters; Pirosa, Gyeongsangbuk-do. Reproduced from Mun Myongdae, Han'guk chogaksa (Seoul, 1984), pl. 87.

The Buddha Bhaisajyaguru

This buddha is closely associated with the curing of illness. In fact, Bhaisajyaguru (Kor. Yaksa) means literally the "Master of Medicine" and, as the Buddha to whom one ritually turned for healing, his cult—having been introduced to Korea at the end of the Three Kingdoms period—quickly achieved widespread popularity during the Unified Silla period. The rapid expansion of the worship of Bhaisajyaguru is reflected in the marked contrast in the numbers of surviving statues of him from the two periods: the Hanguk pulsang sambaekson, for example, contains only two images identifiable as Bhaisajyaguru from the Three Kingdoms era and eight dating to the years of Unified Silla rule. One of the former is a small bronze image of the standing Buddha from a private collection in which he is shown wearing a monastic robe that again only covers one shoulder (fig. 6). His left hand is lowered in the varada mudra, the gesture of wishgranting, while his right hand, upturned at waist level, holds a globe-like container of sacred medicine. This container, when appearing in the hand of a Buddha, is an iconographic attribute sufficient to establish the figure's identity as Bhasajyaguru. Among the eight Unified Silla sculptures of the "Healing Buddha", as he has been aptly called, is a visually striking image that dates to the eighth century (fig. 7). In this instance, the iconographically definitive medicine container is held in the left hand, which is its standard presentation among East Asian images of Bhaisajyaguru. The fact that the Three Kingdoms period statue holds the medicine container in the right hand may be indicative of the novelty of the Bhaisajyaguru cult at the time of its fashioning and the consequent uncertainty concerning the Buddha's orthodox iconography.

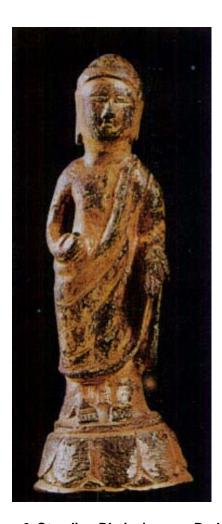


Figure 6. Standing Bhaisajyaguru Buddha. Three Kingdoms period, early 7th century; gilt-bronze, height 12.8 cm.; private collection, Seoul. Reproduced from Hwang Suyong ed., Hanguk pulgyo misul (v. 10 in Hanguk ui mi series; Seoul, 1980), pl. 20.



Figure 7. Standing Bhaisajyaguru Buddha (Important Cultural Treasure #328). Unified Silla period, early 8th century; gilt-bronze, height 29.6 cm.; Seoul National Museum. Reproduced from Kim Won-yong et al., Korean Art Treasures (Seoul, 1986), pl. 83.

The Buddha Vairocana

The emergence of Vairocana (Kor. Pirosana) as a major cultic figure in the East Asian Buddhist pantheon occurs quite late; in Korea the earliest extant images of this Buddha date to the Unified Silla period. Vairocana is honored as the supreme and all-embracing Buddha by several Buddhist sects whose doctrines reflect some of the last permutations of Indian Buddhist thought. One of these sects, the Avatamsaka sect (Kor. Wonyungchong or Hwaom-chong), came to enjoy the conspicuous patronage of the Korean aristocracy following its introduction to the peninsula in 670 by the monk Uisang (625-702), who had studied the teachings of the sect in China. In the sect's core text, the Avatamsaka-sutra (Kor. Hwaom-gyong or, more fully, Taebanggwangbul hwaom-

gyong), Vairocana is described as the absolute and ultimate Buddha in whom all other Buddhas are encompassed. As such, his image assumes a central position in the sect's ritual practices, and it is a measure of the popularity accorded his cult by the Korean elite that eleven, or more than forty percent of the twenty-seven identified Unified Silla Buddha sculptures included in the Hanguk pulsang sambaekson, are representations of Vairocana. Among these eleven statues is the magnificent, larger-than-life-sized, giltbronze Vairocana in the Bulguksa, Gyeongju's most famous still-existent temple of Unified Silla date (fig. 8). Like all of the other Unified Silla Vairocana images in the Hanguk pulsang sambaekson, the Bulguksa Vairocana is depicted wearing a simple monastic robe and seated in the meditative padmasana with his hands interlocked over his chest in the vajra mudra (Kor. chigwon-in), a gesture often identified in English as the "Diamond Fist" mudra. In this mudra the tip of the raised index finger of the right hand is inserted into the bottom of the clenched fist of the left hand. Although the symbolism inherent in this gesture is subject to multiple interpretations, a common idea reflected in these interpretations is the universal, all-liberating, diamond-like power of the knowledge of Vairocana as the supreme Buddha. Accordingly, the presentation of this mudra by a monastically clad Buddha is sufficient evidence to support the identification of Vairocana.



Figure 8. Seated Vairocana Buddha (National Treasure #26). Unified Silla period, late 8th century; gilt-bronze, height 1.77 m.; Bulguk-sa, Gyeongsangnam-do. Reproduced from Hwang Suyong ed., Kukpo, v. 2 (Seoul, 1984), pl. 57.

The Bodhisattva Maitreya

As was mentioned previously, Maitreya is the only member of the early Korean Buddhist pantheon to receive substantial cultic veneration in the guises of both Buddha and bodhisattva. He is believed to be presently a bodhisattva passing his penultimate existence in Tusita Heaven prior to his attainment of Buddhahood through a final rebirth on earth. During the Three Kingdoms period, cultic veneration of Maitreya - both as a Buddha and, seemingly, especially as a bodhisattva - was a prominent component of Korean Buddhist practice. The Hwarang, Silla's famous patriotic youth corps, took the bodhisattva Maitreya as their "patron saint." One of the largest and most important Buddhist monuments in Baekje was the Miruk-sa, or "Temple of Maitreya," built at royal command near the present town of Iksan in North Jeolla province. The Miruk-sa consisted of three separate, full-scaled ritual precincts, each with its own pagoda and icon hall, that were bound together to form a complex unity by a single circumscribing wall. The Samguk yusa informs us that the three precincts corresponded to the three great convocations for teaching that Buddhist scriptures foretold would be held by Maitreya following his appearance as the next Buddha of this world. The size of the Miruk-sa speaks to the importance of Maitreya belief in Baekje; and the building of the three parallel temple precincts would seem to express the hope that Maitreya's final rebirth would occur within the kingdom's boundaries.



Figure 9. Seated Maitreya Bodhisattva. Three Kingdoms period, likely Goguryeo, early 6th century; gilt-bronze, height 8.5 cm.; Seoul National Museum. Reproduced from C. Kim and L.K. Lee, Arts of Korea (New York, 1974), pl. 33.



Figure 10. Seated Maitreya Bodhisattva. Three Kingdoms period, likely Silla, early 7th century; gilt-bronze, height 16.5 cm.;
Seoul National Museum. Reproduced from C. Kim and L.K. Lee, Arts of Korea (New York, 1974), pl. 10.

The Hanguk pulsang sambaekson contains fifteen sculptures of Three Kingdoms date that are identified as the bodhisattva Maitreya. Included in this group—the largest single group of images depicting any single identified Buddha or bodhisattva from either the Three Kingdoms or the Unified Silla periods presented in the volume—are statues attributed to all three early Korean states. Although these images vary widely in terms of their style of representation (figs. 9-10), they bear the shared iconography of being crowned bodhisattvas seated in the distinctive "pensive pose." This is to say that they are portrayed with one leg crossed over the knee of the other pendant leg and

supporting the bent elbow of the corresponding arm which, in turn, supports the head of the contemplating being. This posture, which appears to be a variation of the Indian *lalita asana*, is known in Korean as the *pangasayu* pose, or literally, "the one leg crossed, contemplative" position. In both Korean popular understanding and scholarly interpretation, this pose is almost exclusively associated with the bodhisattva Maitreya. Since the "pensive pose" does not exercise this definitive iconographic role in the corpus of Chinese Buddhist sculpture, it may be surmised that it acquired this significance in Korea, whence it passed—together with Buddhism itself—to Japan.



Figure 11. Standing Maitreya Bodhisattva
(National Treasure #81). Unified Silla period,
dated 719; granite, height 1.83 meters; originally
from site of Kamsansa in Gyeongsangnam-do, presently in Seoul National
Museum. Reproduced from Kim
Won-yong et al., Korean Art Treasures
(Seoul, 1986), pl. 87.

The facts that the *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson* contains only three Unified Silla bodhisattva images identified as Maitreya and that all three are dated to the first fifty years of the Unified Silla reign speaks eloquently of the rapid waning of the bodhisattva's cult after the unification of the peninsula. The most recent of these

bodhisattvas (fig. 11) is an image with the inscribed date of 719 that was discovered at the site of the Kamsansa in Gyeongju. In this case, the bodhisattva is depicted standing, hips slightly swayed (Skt. *tribanga asana*), with his left hand raised in the familiar gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudra*) and his right hand lowered and grasping the hem of his robe in the variation of *varada mudra* seen previously in the image of the Buddha Maitreya from Samhwa-ryong (fig. 3). Were it not for the identification of Maitreya provided in the inscription on the back of the image's nimbus, it would be impossible to establish the bodhisattva's identity. The iconography of the statue is indeterminate. The unusual reversal of standard practice in displaying the *abhaya mudra* with the left hand and the *varada mudra* with the right seems to have been occasioned in this case by the intent to form a symmetrical pair with an extant standing image of Amitabha Buddha that is known from its inscription to have been commissioned by the same patron at the same time.

The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara

Judging from the extant sculptural evidence, just two bodhisattvas were widely and specifically revered by early Korean Buddhists: Maitreya and Avalokitesvara (Kor. Kwanseum or Kwanum). The marked devotional preference accorded these two bodhisattvas on the peninsula was paralleled throughout East Asia. It has been previously noted that the evidence of surviving Korean Buddhist imagery also suggests that the level of cultic veneration for the bodhisattva Maitreya dropped rapidly following the unification of the peninsula under Silla rule in the late seventh century. The same body of evidence indicates that, in contrast, Avalokitesvara's popularity suffered no such decline. In these respects, too, the patterns of Korean devotional belief appear to conform to the patterns of allegiance perceptible in the two bodhisattvas' cults in China and Japan, although the waning of the bodhisattva Maitreya's cult occurred somewhat earlier in China and, perhaps, slightly later in Japan. Everywhere in East Asia, however, the cult of Avalokitesvara continued to prosper, and it remains to this day one of the most pervasive and active forms of popular Buddhist devotionalism.

The enduring popularity of Avalokitesvara is readily understandable; the bodhisattva is understood as the pure embodiment of the fundamental Buddhist virtue of compassion. Accordingly, Avalokitesvara is described in the Lotus Sutra (Skt. Saddharmapundarika; Kor. Yonhwa gyong or, more properly, Myobop-yonhwa-gyong)—arguably the single most influential text in the East Asian Buddhist canon—as an omniscient being always willing to come to the aid of mortals in need, and the need can be anything from assistance in meditative practice to assistance in childbirth. The constancy of Avalokitesvara's high level of appeal among early Korean Buddhists is reflected in the numbers of identifiable statues of this bodhisattva that remain from the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods. In the sampling of Korean sculpture contained in the Hanguk pulsang sambaekson, there are five such images from the earlier period and seven from the later. Representative of the earlier group is the bronze standing Baekje image of Avalokitesvara excavated in Puyo (fig. 12, at the beginning of this article), and representative of the later group is an exquisite bronze standing image whose exact provenance is regrettably unknown (fig. 13). The Baekje figure holds the sacred, wish-

granting jewel (Skt. *cintamani*; Kor. *poju*) between the thumb and index finger of the right hand. During the Three Kingdoms period, the *cintamani* appears repeatedly, but not exclusively, as an attribute of Avalokitesvara. Similarly, the Unified Silla Avalokitesvara is depicted holding in his lowered left hand a *kundika* (Kor. *chongbyong*), the bottle-shaped ritual vessel that is often, but again not exclusively, displayed by this bodhisattva. The iconographic attribute present in both images that unmistakably marks them as Avalokitesvara is the representation of a small Buddha in the front of their crowns. The tiny Buddha is known from iconographic texts to represent Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite compassion and the Buddha upon whom Avalokitesvara is believed to be in regular attendance at his all-welcoming Pure Land in the western heavens. If there is a depiction of a Buddha in the crown of an East Asian bodhisattva image, then the image may be assumed to represent Avalokitesvara. The lack of such a decoration does not, of course, preclude the possibility that the image was intended to represent Avalokitesvara.



Figure 13. Standing Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Unified Silla period, 8th century; gilt-bronze, height 18.2 cm.; private collection, Seoul. Reproduced from Choi Sunu, 5000 Years of Korean Art (Seoul, 1979), pl. 237.

As this survey of early Korean Buddhist sculpture has shown, the iconography that plays such a significant role in determining the appearance of the religious imagery is itself determined by religious belief. The fixed visual symbolism of iconography allows for the perpetual wordless reiteration of essential Buddhist beliefs. Due to the wealth of meanings encoded in the symbolic language of iconography, Buddhist icons constitute dense symbols that offered-and continue to offer-the pious viewer deeper and deeper layers of religious understanding in accordance with his or her degree of educated insight. A thorough knowledge of iconography could allow one to move from the religious meanings inherent in the determination of what kind of being was represented (for example, a Buddha or a bodhisattva), to the meanings inherent in the determination of what specific being was represented (for example, Sakyamuni), and ultimately to the meanings inherent in all of the iconographically prescribed components of that being's representation (for example, the bump on his cranium and the gestures of his hands). For the multitudes of devout, if less fully informed, Buddhists, the fixed principles of iconography ensured a comforting degree of predictability in the representations of the powerful beings whom they worshiped and whose aid they sought. Iconography provided Buddhist images with the critical degree of constancy of appearance requisite to give simple devotional belief a satisfying object. The bodhisattva Maitreya at one temple looked sufficiently like the bodhisattva Maitreya at another temple to confirm the devotee's belief that such a compassionate, divine entity truly existed.

Thus, iconography served to enrich belief for both the comparatively few religious cognoscenti and the multitudinous pious but religiously unsophisticated among Korea's early Buddhists. It also provides historians of the present day with a useful investigative tool for determining changing patterns of belief among early peninsular Buddhists. As has been seen, the growth and decline of specific Buddhist cults and sects is not infrequently echoed in the numbers of surviving images of a particular iconographic type. Belief informed iconography, iconography shaped imagery and informs the historian concerning belief. When viewed through the eyes of devotion, imagery shaped by iconography informed—and continues to inform—the belief of the believer by constituting a visual statement of faith and, simultaneously, by providing a visual focus for belief.

Notes

- 1. See Tsukamoto Zeryu, "Ryumon ni arawaretaru Hokugi Bukkyo," in his *Shina Bukkyoshi kenkyu* (Tokyo, 1942), pp. 355-609. For an English summary of some of Tsukamoto's findings, see Kenneth K. S. Chen, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton, 1964), pp.170-76.
- 2. Hwang Suyong, Chin Hongsop, and Chong Yongho, *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson* (Seoul,1979).

- 3. Sanskrit is the standard language for expressing basic Buddhist terminology in most Buddhist scholarship written in the West. This allows for the recognition of common Buddhist terms whether the particular form of Buddhism being discussed occurs in Korea or Kashmir. In the present study, where both established Sanskrit and Korean versions of a term exist, both will be given.
- 4. Buddhism acknowledges the existence of mortals who attain Buddhahood prior to Sakyamuni, but history does not. For this reason, Sakyamuni is frequently referred to as the historical Buddha or, simply, the Buddha.
- 5. For the inscribed nimbus that once bore an image of Sakyamuni, see Hwang et al., *Hanguk pulsang sambaekson*, pl. 11 on p. 5. For a more detailed discussion of the iconography of the important sculpture at Sosan, see J.W. Best, "The Sosan Triad: An Early Korean Buddhist Relief Sculpture from Baekje," *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980), pp.89-108.
- 6. Choe Namson, ed., Samguk yusa Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea (Seoul, 1972), p. 214.
- 7. In this instance, yet another variation of the *varada mudra* is depicted; notice that the little and ring fingers of the lower left hand are folded up against the palm.
- 8. Choe, ed., Samguk yusa, pp. 98-99; Ha and Mintz, trans., Samguk yusa, pp. 142-44.
- 9. See Jung Hee Lee, *The Contemplating Bodhisattva Images of Asia* (unpublished doctoral dissertation; University of California, Los Angeles, 1984; University Microfilm International #842537).

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Early Korean Buddhist Sculpture

by Lena Kim

The introduction of the Buddhist faith to Korea marked a major turning point in the history of early Korean art. As is well known, Buddhism and its art forms originated in India, passed through various Buddhist centers in Central Asia and China, and then reached Korea during the Three Kingdoms period in the late fourth century, in Goguryeo (Koguryo) in 372 and in Baekje (Paekche) in 384.

The early formative stage of Korean Buddhist culture and art closely followed earlier Chinese models which were developed from multiple sources starting from India. Therefore, to trace back the origin of iconography and style of early Korean Buddhist images, one has to consider a variety of traits and changes from various regions and different periods. There was also an interaction among the Buddhist communities of the Three Kingdoms in Korea.

Often the propagation of the Buddhist faith and its artistic production were under the patronage of the royal court and ruling aristocracy, sometimes for the benefit of personal wishes but more often to ensure the well being and the protection of the state from foreign invasions. Not many examples of Buddhist images remain today of the once flourishing Buddhist culture and its art forms, however, many historic records and corresponding Buddhist sites, including temples, pagodas, and precious inscriptions bespeak the ardent Buddhist faith and rich artistic productions with which Korea played an important role in the development of East Asian Buddhist culture.

I would like to select major types and representative Buddha and bodhisattva images of the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla Dynasty and relate them with their historical background, if known. Then I will try to trace back their iconographical and stylistic origins with relevant Indian or Chinese models and look for their stylistic changes and Korean characteristics.

Images of the Three Kingdoms (57 B.C.-A.D. 668)

The earliest extant examples of Korean Buddhist images date from the fifth century. A seated gilt-bronze Buddha statue discovered at Ttukseom by the Han River in Seoul is considered to be an early fifth century piece following Northern Wei models. A painted version of a worshiping Buddha in a Goguryeo wall painting on the coffered ceiling of Jangcheon-ri Tomb Number 1 dates from the latter part of the fifth century and reveals that the ancient Goguryeo Buddhists' concept of the Buddhist paradise, where the soul is reborn after death, corresponded to the Chinese concept. The origin of the Ttukseom image, either Chinese or Korean, is yet to be determined. And if it is the latter, the question of whether it was made in Goguryeo or in Baekje arises, since the area around the Han River was an ancient Three Kingdoms battleground. It is however, certain that when Buddhism was first introduced to Korea in the latter part of the fourth century, the

Buddha image types with a meditative hand gesture, seated on a rectangular base with two lions on either side, were among the first introduced to the Korean Buddhist community, since it was also the first image type popularly made in China.

Several variations of the seated Buddha image of the Three Kingdoms period developed, such as the clay figure from the temple sites at Wonon-ri, or Toseong-ri, Pyeongyang of Goguryeo, or the gilt bronze seated Buddha from Sin-ri Buyeo, or the soapstone Buddha from Gunsu-ri Buyeo, all from the Backje Kingdom. The Gunsu-ri statue finds its closest Chinese counterparts among Chinese seated Buddha images of the late fifth to early sixth centuries, such as the one at Xixia-si in Nanjing or those of the very late phases of Yunkang or the early period of the Longmen caves. A large clay pedestal found at Cheongyang, in old Baekje territory also shows that such seated images were popular in the Three Kingdoms Period.

When Baekje introduced Buddhism to Japan in 538/552, the popularity of this type of seated Buddha image was already out of fashion. But the complex treatment of the garment folds falling over the dais still followed earlier patterns, as we see in the famous Buddha Triad at Horyuji or several other related Asuka period images.

Silla was the last of the Three Kingdoms to recognize the religion, in the second quarter of the sixth century. At the ruined temple site of Hwangnyongsa, Gyeongju, there still remain the three stone pedestals of a now lost sixteen-foot Buddha triad cast in the late sixth century. Historic records claim that the model for the Hwangnyongsa temple triad was sent by King Asoka of India, the great patron of Buddhism in its early establishment.

The earliest datable statue from sixth century Goguryeo is the gilt bronze Buddha inscribed with the year 'the 7th year of Yeon'ga, in the cyclical year of Gimi, most probably corresponding to the year 539. It is especially important since the inscription records that it was made at Dongsa Temple, in ancient Pyeongyang, of the Goguryeo Kingdom. One finds that this Yeon'ga statue follows the early sixth century style of Northern Wei Buddha images. It seems another Buddha image type like the gilt bronze Buddha from Gatap-ri was popular in Baekje and this fashion was influential in early Japanese images like the Buddha Triad in the Horyuji, Treasure no. 143, generally considered to be a piece brought from Baekje.

In the second half of the sixth century, Buddhist triads composed of a central Buddha and two bodhisattva attendants were popularly made. Some gilt bronze triads bear inscriptions dating from 564, 571, and 596. Rock-cut Buddha triads are also important since they are in-situ and represent the sculptural style of the kingdom that once occupied the area. Among the rock-cut images of Baekje, the Taean Buddha triad is important, since it has a bodhisattva statue in the center holding a jewel with both hands. It was an iconography popularly worshipped in Baekje and was introduced to early Asuka Japan. The famous wooden Yumedono Kannon at Horyuji also follows this type. It seems that this iconography was popular in Baekje, probably with a connection to Southern Chinese images. Clearly, Baekje introduced the type to Japan, since

several gilt bronze examples are known, among them the bodhisattva from Sekiyamajinja, Niigata, believed to be of Baekje origin. Another well-known Baekje rock-cut relief is the famous Buddha Triad at Seosan. The central Buddha has attending bodhisattvas, the one on his right holding a jewel with both hands and the left attendant in the pensive bodhisattva posture, which was also popularly worshipped during the Three Kingdoms. This Seosan Buddha image represents a style from around the year 600, reflecting Sui influence, but the softness in modeling and warmth of their inviting smiles is often encountered among many Korean Buddhist images.

The pensive bodhisattva image was another popular type that appeared during the Three Kingdoms period. Its iconographical source is seen in Gandhara images, but the closest comparative images are found among Chinese images from the late sixth century. The most famous pensive bodhisattva images are the two large gilt bronze statues in the National Museum, known as National Treasures 78 and 83. Since their provenance is not known, it is difficult to ascribe to them the specific kingdom of their manufacture. In general, Treasure No. 78 follows earlier Chinese patterns in the mode of wearing the scarf and the ornaments, while No. 83 certainly follows Northern Chi models in its simplicity and roundness in the modeling. On the basis of a large fragment of a pensive bodhisattva discovered at Bukji-ri, Bonghwa, in the ancient territory of Silla, and Silla's historical connection with the Koryuji Pensive Bodhisattva of pine wood, it is assumed that No. 83 is from the Silla Kingdom.

The iconographic source of the pensive images is Prince Siddharta contemplative before his enlightenment, and developed from the cultic belief in Maitreya, who is waiting in the Tushita Heaven to descend to this world to deliver the dharma and become the future Buddha Maitreya. It is assumed that the importance of the youth group Hwarangdo, a socio-military organization unique to Silla society, seems to be related to the Maitreya cult and contributed to the popularity of large size pensive images as the main statue of worship in a temple.

In the seventh century, types of images and their stylistic connections became diverse. Chinese comparisons can be made with Sui sculptures which combined various local traits after its unification. Several workshops were active in making images displaying their regional differences, and Korea received such diverse models and gradually developed its own types. Goguryeo yields no important images to be considered during this period, while Baekje traditionally had close contacts with Southern Chinese dynasties which contributed to the diversity of Sui sculptures. Silla became more active in the propagation of Buddhist teachings and artistic production and was successful in applying the religious faith to the foundation of a stronger state and unification of the Three Kingdoms.

Representing a late phase of Three Kingdoms images are several gilt bronze bodhisattva statues. Some of them have a known provenance indicating where they were made. From the Baekje area, a gilt bronze bodhisattva from Gyuam-ri, Buyeo, and one from Uidang, Gongju are both Baekje products related to Sui Chinese images and to Japanese images of the late seventh century. The two fine gilt bronze bodhisattvas

found at Seonsan, from the old Silla region, also show the influence of the diverse styles of late Sui and early T'ang.

Many stone Buddhist images remain today in and around the city of Gyeongju, and those numerous images carved on the rock-surface at Namsan are the most famous. Every valley and mountaintop of sacred Namsan was filled with temples and images, and historic records tell us of Buddhist miracles related to the Namsan images. These records describe how deeply the Buddhist teachings affected the thought and everyday life of the Silla people. Two Buddha triads from Namsan represent the Silla sculptural style of the seventh century. The Samche seokbul, three Buddhist images still standing at the western side of Namsan, represent Silla's counterpart to Baekje's Seosan Buddha Triad, and the Samhwaryeong Buddha Triad in the Gyeongju National Museum, brought from the top of Namsan, is related to a Samgukyusa record and was probably Maitreya worshiped as the main Buddha, made in the year 644.

Images of the Unified Silla Period (A.D. 660-935)

King Munmu was successful in uniting the Three Kingdoms by 668 A.D. During his reign (660-681), several important Buddhist monuments were constructed, yielding various kinds of Buddhist art. The construction of palace buildings and Anapji garden yielded many secular objects together with Buddhist images, including two important sets of Buddha triads and bodhisattva images. The foundation of Sacheonwangsa Temple, built in 679 for the purpose of expelling the T'ang army with Buddhist power, left us precious glazed wall tiles representing the Directional Guardian Kings. Gameunsa Temple and two pagodas were constructed in 682 near the great rock Daewangam on the east coast where the ashes of the deceased King Munmu were scattered after his wish to become a sea dragon to protect the nation from the eastern enemies. From the excavations of these two Gameunsa pagodas, the west one in 1959 and the east one in 1996, a set of exquisitely made Buddhist reliquaries were found with Four Directional Guardian Kings attached to the reliquary boxes.

Artifacts discovered from the above sites, commissioned with royal support during the reign of King Munmu, reveal that the Silla Buddhist community received Tang Buddhist culture with no time lag. Images follow contemporary iconography and style freshly introduced from India, Central Asia and China. Workmanship also shows that Silla artisans now acquired fine skills and refinement that would exceed Chinese counterparts. Several Silla monks made difficult trips to India and many went to China to study Buddhist teachings, and they brought back newly translated Buddhist texts along with new types of Buddhist images. Silla played an important role in the development of East Asian Buddhist culture and it was indeed an era of internationalism in which Tang China, Silla Korea and Tenpyo Japan shared common Buddhist teachings and modes of images.

As to Buddhist images around the year 700, the two Buddha images found within the sarira reliquary from a three-story pagoda from Hwangboksa is important. We know from the inscription on the sarira box that the pagoda was built in 692 by Queen Sinmok

and King Hyoso after King Sinmun died, and the reliquary was installed in 706 by King Seongdeok when the Queen mother and King Hyoso died. Therefore, these two objects, made of pure gold, would represent the finest workmanship commissioned by the royal family and also conform to the international style that was prevalent in China and Japan.

As to the important stone images from Gyeongju, the two standing statues of Amitabha and Maitreya at Gamsansa are important since they have dates 719-720 inscribed on the back of their mandorlas and follow the high international style shared with Tang and Japanese Tenpyo examples. The balanced proportion of their bodies, the tightly clinging treatment of the garment folds revealing the voluminous bodies of the images, the mode of wearing jewelry all reflect common stylistic and iconographical elements. The same interpretation can also be made of the group of images carved on four sides of the Sameyon seokbul, a four-sided stone with Buddhist images, at the Gulbulsa temple-site. These images are dated to the second quarter of the eighth century, based on the Samgukvusa record that they were discovered during the reign of King Gyeongdeok (742-764), and the period style of the images which also accords to this period. This monument was made from the concept of the Buddha's world of four directions, and among the carved figures, the incised one on the northern side was identified as a six-armed, eleven-headed Avalokitesvara, indicating an aspect of esotericism in Silla Buddhist imagery prevalent already in the mid-eighth century.

Some important images at Namsan are the Chilburam group of eight images, including a Buddha triad with the central Buddha in the earth-touching hand gesture, bhumisparsa mudra, the Borisa Seated Buddha, and the rock-cut seated Buddha at Yongjangsa, also with the bhumisparsa mudra. We know from these examples that the seated Buddha type with the bhumisparsa hand gesture was popular at this time, and this fashion was exemplified with the main Buddha of the cave temple of Seokguram (Sokkuram), which shows the same hand gesture.

In Seokguram, one finds the finest group of stone sculptures from the eighth century Unified Silla. Located on top of Mount Toharn, Gyeongju, this artificially built cave was carefully assembled with cut stone panels according to a precisely calculated architectural scheme. Records inform that it was started in 751 after a wish of the high official Kim Dae-seong, but when he died in 774, the government took over the project, thus placing the images to the third quarter of the eighth century.

The images in the cave represent various deities in the Buddhist pantheon; the Buddha, bodhisattvas, devas and arhats. They accompany the Buddha at his sermon, and this assemblage of selected members from the Buddhist pantheon symbolize the Seokguram cave as a replica of the Buddha's land. Each figure in the temple shows the finest carving skill and technical refinement achieved by Silla sculptors. The submovement of the bodies, delicately overlapping garments and ornaments, and graceful lines of the figures' silhouettes suggest that the iconographical model for Seokguram grotto was probably a fine drawing brought from China, transformed by Silla artisans into a fine sculptural form. Each figure of the Seokguram grotto offers an important

source for iconographical and stylistic studies and served as the model for later developments of Silla Buddhist imagery.

In the late Unified Silla period, that is after the Seokguram images were made and during the ninth century, a new type of Buddha statue appeared, the Buddha Vairocana with bodhyagri mudra, or wisdom-fist hand gesture. The earliest datable image of the type appeared in 766 in a seated stone statue originally from Seoknamsa. Most of the remaining statues of this type date from the mid-ninth Century, represented by the Borimsa iron statue of 858, the Dopiansa iron statue of 865, and two datable stone images from Donghwasa and Chukseosa, respectively from 864 and 865. This iconography of the Vairocana Buddha represents him as the Supreme Buddha of the Diamond World in the Esoteric Buddhist mandala, but in Korea this esoteric sect of Buddhism did not flourish as an established sect. Instead, the teachings of the Avatamsaka were most popularly read and practiced in Buddhist rites in the Unified Silla, and thereafter Vairocana Buddha with the bodhyagri mudra is considered to represent the supreme Buddha in the Avatamsaka teachings. This aspect reflects a characteristic feature of Silla Buddhism which emphasized the Avatamsaka Sutra. The general trend turned gradually to Zen teachings in late Silla Buddhist practice. It is to be noted that in the temples where Buddha Vairocana was worshipped, no other attending bodhisattvas or directional Buddhas were placed beside him.

Major Korean Buddhist Sculptures

Three Kingdoms Period (57 B.C.- 668 A.D.)

- *Jangcheon Tomb no. 1, Mural Painting, Goguryeo
- *Ttukseom Gilt-bronze Seated Buddha, early 5 c.
- *Gilt-bronze Standing Buddha, Uiryeong, 7th year of Yon'ga, year of Kimi, 539?
- *Soapstone Seated Buddha, Gunsu-ri, Buyeo
- *Gilt-bronze Buddha Triad, year of Gyemi (564?), Kansong Museum coll.
- *Gilt-bronze Buddha "Triad, year of Sinmyo (571?), Leeum Samsung Museum coll.
- *Gilt-bronze Standing Bodhisattva, Gyuam-ni, Buyeo
- *Rock-cut Buddha Triads at Taean and Seosan, Chungcheong Prov.
- *Stone Buddha Triad at Namsan, Kyongju (Samcheseokbul)
- *Two Gilt-bronze Bodhisattva statues from Seonsan
- *Bunhwangsa Pagoda and Four Pairs of Door Guardians, ca. 634
- *Samhwaryeong Buddha Triad from Namsan, Gyeongju, ca. 644
- *Two Gilt-bronze Meditating Bodhisattva Statues, National Treasures Nos. 78, 83

Unified Silla Dynasty (668-935 A.D.)

- *Stone Amitabha Buddha Triad at Gunwi, Palgong-san
- *Sacheonwang-sa, Glazed Tiles of Guardian Kings, 679 A.D.
- *Gameun-sa Pagoda Reliquaries and Four Guardian Kings, 682 A.D.
- *Anapji Pond and Buddhist Images, ca. 680 A.D.

- *Hwangbok-sa Reliquary and Two Buddhist Statues, 692, 706 A.D.
- *Gamsan-sa Stone Amitabha and Maitreya Statues, 719 A.D.
- *Gulbul-sa Temple-site Four-sided Stone with Buddhist Reliefs, ca. 730-750 A.D.
- *Seokguram Cave Buddha and Relief Images, 751-774 A.D.
- *Gilt Bronze Buddha of Medicine from Baengnyul-sa, 2nd half of 8th C.
- *Naewon-sa Stone Vairocana Buddha Statue, 756 A.D.
- *Bulguk-sa Gilt bronze Statues of Amitabha and Vairocana, 2nd half of 8th C.
- *Vairocana Buddha Statues, from Borim-sa (858), Donghwa-sa (864), Dop'ian-sa (865) and Chukseo-sa (866)

The Taenghwa Tradition in Korean Buddhism

by Henrik Sorensen



Plate 9. Sinjung Painting (first half of 19th century); ink and color on hemp; 100 x 60 cm. Hwaom Temple, Jeolla Province.

When entering a Korean Buddhist temple hall for the first time, one is likely to be struck by the profusion of colors and patterns (*dancheong*) painted on the beams, walls and ceiling. Directly opposite the front entrance of the hall, one finds the main altar, and above this altar, behind its Buddha statue or statues, hangs a large multicolored painting. Depending on the type of hall, one may find several altars within the same building, each dedicated to a particular deity or group of deities and each with their respective paintings. These religious paintings, called *taenghwa* in Korean, meaning "scroll-painting," constitute a genre of their own within Korean Buddhist art.

First Used

It is not know when taenghwa first were used in Korean Buddhist history, but a glance at the development of Buddhist paintings in China suggests that the taenghwa tradition originally was part of the Buddhist heritage transmitted to the Korean peninsula during the Three Kingdoms period. However, no extant paintings date back further than the late 13th century, that is to the late Goryeo dynasty (936-1392).

Today, the great majority of Goryeo taenghwa are preserved in Japanese collections. The most notable is the treasure house of Chion-in, the famous Pure Land temple in Kyoto, which holds a significant number of very fine paintings. Other Goryeo and early Joseon taenghwa are scattered throughout Japan, with at least one important private collection in Kyushu. A smaller quantity of paintings can be found throughout the world, with museums in Berlin, Cologne and Boston owning some of the best. Unfortunately, the number of extant Goryeo paintings in Korea itself is limited to a mere handful. It is estimated that there are less than 200 Goryeo and early Joseon taenghwa extant all told, making them extremely rare and precious.

Oblong Scrolls

Most of the early taenghwa were painted in mineral colors on fine silk-gauze which was mounted on paper, often in several layers. Nearly all the Goryeo paintings are in the form of oblong hanging scrolls and, when compared with the later developments, usually are of more modest size. These early taenghwa, without exception, show a high degree of sophistication both with regard to composition, subtlety of brush strokes and use of colors. Often gold has been applied generously to highlight the paintings, indicating that considerable cost went into their production. Indeed the inscriptions on a number of these early taenghwa indicate that they were commissioned by the Korean court (pl. 1).

Compared to the highly refined works of the Goryeo and early Joseon periods, the later Joseon taenghwa do not come up to the same high standard with regard to materials, technique and composition. However, what the Joseon paintings generally lack in subtlety and skill they compensate for in terms of variation and size. From the social point of view, the Joseon paintings also reflect the changing status of Buddhism, which from its noble position as the national faith during the Goryeo was relegated to the lowest status in the Confucian society of the Goryeo dynasty. Except for the early years

of the period, when taenghwa still were made with costly materials, the Goryeo paintings use less gold and the silk gauze to a large extent is substituted with hemp gauze or even coarse hemp cloth. The use of colors becomes much more liberal and, one may say, in some cases even glaring.

Several Layers

The vast majority of Joseon taenghwa are painted on a heavy canvas made of several layers of cotton gauze which is mounted onto a wooden frame and treated repeatedly on both sides with a mixture of glue made from oxhide and alum. The canvas is then taken off the frame and painted. Finally five layers of paper are pasted on the back of the taenghwa. Although many of the Joseon paintings are done in the form of hanging scrolls, with wooden poles at either end, most of them have been remounted on the square wooden frame and in appearance are much like the canvases of traditional Western oils.

Taenghwa painting never was considered an art in the same way scholarly painting was, but has always been a craft handed down from master to pupil like cloth-dyeing or carpentry. As is also the case with Korean traditional architecture, there exist no manuals for taenghwa. The tradition has preserved its models through the transmission of paper stencils. A stencil is made by drawing the desired image on fine rice paper which then is perforated along the lines of the image. When the taenghwa painter wishes to commit the desired image to his canvas, he simply places the stencil on top of it and pours fine charcoal dust on the perforated lines. When the stencil is removed the trace of its image is left on the canvas. Then the lines are traced in black ink and the image is ready to be filled out with color. Large paintings or complex compositions may be made up of several such stencils. Whereas many of the Goryeo paintings do not seem to have been based on stencils, with most Joseon taenghwa it is the norm. Actually, it is possible to trace the popularity of certain stencils in a given area and time, and although regional differences certainly abound, the basic composition is nearly always the same.

From the information gathered from the few present-day masters of taenghwa painting, it appears that most painters belonged to the secular world during the Goryeo and early Joseon Dynasties, and transmitted their craft from master to pupil. Probably around the end of the 16th century, monk painters apparently took over the transmission of the tradition, and with few exceptions it has remained thus down to the present. Today there are very few real masters of taenghwa painting remaining, and unfortunately it seems as if this time honored tradition shall fade within the next one or two generations.

Wide Range

The subjects depicted in the taenghwa all come from the world of Buddhism with the possible exception of the Mountain Spirit, and include all the various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods, protectors, and major themes from the Buddhist canonical scriptures as well as paintings of famous monks and patriarchs. These subjects can be

divided into typological groups and subgroups as well as placed into a chronology. Dating the paintings has sometimes posed serious problems for scholars, as few of the taenghwa are dated. However, most paintings generally bear one or more inscriptions which give both the year and even month and day on which the painting in question was Completed, and in most cases also the name of the painter and those who commissioned it.



Plate 1. Nosana Triad (Goryeo Dynasty, 14th century); ink, color and gold on silk; 123 x 82 cm. Courtesy of Museum of East Asian Art, Cologne.

Major Group

The major group of taenghwa which we shall discuss here pertain to the Buddhas. In addition to paintings of the historical Buddha Sokkamuni (Sakyamuni), the Mahayana tradition to which Korean Buddhism belongs venerates a large number of other Buddhas. Most popular among these other Buddhas are Amita (Amitabha), the Buddha of the Western Pure Land, Yaksa (Bhaisajyaguru), the Medicine Buddha, and last but certainly not least, Nosana (Vairocana) Buddha, the Cosmic Buddha and hero of the Hwaom (Avatamsaka) Sutra. Plate 1 shows a seated Vairocana Buddha on a lotus throne, flanked by the Bodhisattvas, Munju (Manjusri) and Pohyon (Samantabhadra). This painting is a good example of a classic Goryeo taenghwa. Noted are the delicate lines in the garments of the figures, the abundant use of gold, the transparent halos and the intricate patterns in the various adornments. Like many of the Goryeo paintings, the silk has darkened considerably, causing the lines to become indistinct in several places.

Celebrated Theme

One of the most celebrated themes depicted in the Buddha group of taenghwa is that of Yong San (Vulture Peak). According to tradition, Yong San was the mountain on which Sokkamuni gave many of his famous sermons. Plate 2, painted in 1725, presents one such Yong San assembly in which the Buddha sits in the center of the painting surrounded by the eight groups of beings, i.e. humans, gods, semi-gods, dragon-spirits, eagles, demon-protectors, etc. in addition to monks, Bodhisattvas and other Buddhas. Plate 3 is a detail of the three larger Bodhisattva figures in the right-hand side. Although figures in this painting are rather stereotyped, they nevertheless are executed in very fine detail. Below the three Bodhisattvas in Plate 2, there is a band playing celestial music honoring a Buddha.



Plate 3. Three Bodhisattvas. Detail of Plate 2.



Plate 2. Yong San (18th century); ink and color on silk; 214 x 186 cm. Songgwang Temple, Jeolla Province.

Plate 4, a Joseon taenghwa from the late 18th century, shows the Buddha Amita in his Western Paradise. His hand gesture (mudra) indicates that he is instructing the assembly. Again the majesty and grandeur of the composition is amplified by the powerful play of colors and patterns, making it almost impossible to take in the whole painting. Focusing on one particular figure in the painting, the choice falls on Kwanseum (Avalokitesvara) Bodhisattva at the bottom of the throne to the right (pl. 5). Kwanseum, undoubtedly the most popular Buddhist figure in Korea, is standing in a serene mood holding before him the kundika, the water pitcher, and in the crown he has a miniature figure of Amita, another of his characteristics. Like the other figures in this remarkable taenghwa, the Kwanseum figure is executed in firm yet delicate lines, and despite its gaudy and colorful attire succeeds well as an image of transcendence.

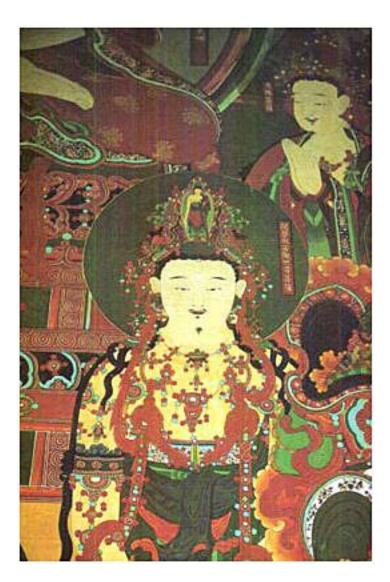


Plate 5. Kwanseum Bodhisattva. Detail of Plate 4.



Plate 4. Amita Buddha (late 18th century); ink and colors on silk.

Celebrated Form

Among the many forms which Kwanseum takes in East Asian iconography, none is more celebrated than the "Willow Kwanseum." Plate 6 shows one such painting from the late Goryeo or early Joseon dynasty. It is interesting to note that most Goryeo renderings of this Bodhisattva are in the form of the "Willow Kwanseum." All the details in the painting are done with the utmost skill, and the transparency of the robes and veils makes the figure purposefully ethereal and subtle. Also worthy of notice is the glass bowl in which the kundika with the willow branch is placed. The scene depicts Kwanseum Bodhisattva in his abode on the mountain-island Potala in the South Sea being visited by the youth Sudhana in his quest for enlightenment. As such the taenghwa recaptures a cherished episode from the Gandavyuha Chapter of the Hwaom Sutra.

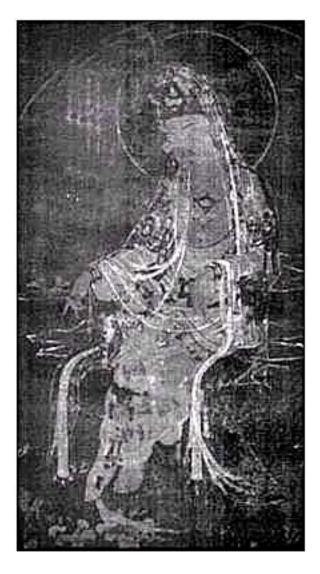


Plate 6. Willow Kwanseum (Late Goryeo to early Joseon Dynasty); ink, color and gold on silk; 98 x55 cm. Courtesy Museum of East Asian Art.

Extremely Popular

Next to Kwanseum, Jijang (Ksitigarbha) Bodhisattva is also an extremely popular figure among Korean Buddhists. This Bodhisattva devotes all his activities to saving sentient beings destined to the sufferings of hell. In Plate 7, he is shown in an early 18th century version with his attending host of Hell Kings (10 in number) and minor officials. The painting is in subdued colors and is a fine example of this type of taenghwa, which often tends to be a bit uninspired in terms of composition.



Plate 7. Jijang with Assembly (18th century); ink, color and gold on hemp; 140 x 180 cm. Songgwang Temple, Jeolla Province.

Huge Banners

Not all the Buddhist paintings are meant to be hung in temple halls. Some are actually made as huge banners to be displayed in the open on Buddhist holidays and on special occasions. Shown in Plate 8 is one such banner painting, normally called kwaebul (Hanging Buddha). It depicts the Bodhisattva Miruk (Maitreya), who is destined to become the future Buddha. This painting is displayed in connection with death ceremonies, as it is the wish of many Buddhists to be reborn in the assembly of the Future Buddha.

Another large group of taenghwa is that of Dharma Protectors (lokapalas). In the Korean taenghwa tradition, this group is perhaps the most varied and confusing, as many of the figures shown in these paintings are difficult to identify. These paintings, usually known as Sinjung (Host of Spirits), come in many different versions, each containing from 10 up to 108 figures. Traditionally the Four Heavenly Kings are the protectors par excellence in Buddhism. However, in the taenghwa tradition, they occur rarely as individual paintings, and are usually found as part of the various Buddhas' retinue. The main figure in the Sinjung paintings is the god Indra, usually depicted as a Bodhisattva with a halo and a richly adorned crown and wearing long flowing robes. Sometimes he is accompanied by the other god Brahma and a host of celestial officials and heavenly fairies (apsaras).



Plate 8. Miruk Bodhisattva Banner Painting second half of 19th century); ink and color on coarse hemp cloth; 1500 x 400 cm. Chikji Temple, Gyeongsang Province.

Spirit Protectors

The spirit protectors in the paintings which constitute the actual sinjung are headed by the Bodhisattva Tongjin, a warrior clad in Chinese Tang Dynasty uniform and wearing a winged helmet on his head. As an iconographic model, he may be identified with Wei-to of the Chinese Buddhist pantheon. The other spirit generals or demon kings are usually made up of the eightfold host, i.e. humans, gods, titans (asuras), heavenly eagles (garudas), dragons (nagas), demons (rakshas), great snakes (mahoragas), and heavenly musicians (gandharvas), or sometimes instead in groups of various spirits according to a particular scripture in the Buddhist canon. Plate 9 (at the beginning of this article) shows one such Sinjung painting of a more modest kind. Here Indra is flanked by two celestial officials clad in the garb of Confucian ministers and above are four divine youths. On each side of the officials are, to the left, an earth spirit, shown as an old man with a short coat of leaves around his neck, and on the right is a dragon king with the bristles of the creature he really is. Below is T'ongjin Bodhisattva with his characteristic winged helmet and warrior's armor surrounded by three spirit generals with drawn swords.

General Types

In addition to these three major groups of taenghwa, there exist a number of other general types which are connected to a particular theme or doctrine in the canonical literature. One of the most famous of these groups is the set of eight paintings, the so-called Palsang, which depict the life and career of the historical Buddha. Plate 10 shows the fourth painting of this series. The subject there is Sokkamuni's life as a prince before he decides to leave the home life. The main scenes of this painting are, of course, devoted to a rendering of the four important episodes in his life which led to his final renunciation.



Plate 10. Set of Palsang (eight) Paintings (18th century), ink, color and gold on silk; 123 x 120 cm. Songgwang Temple, Jeolla Province.

Shown in Plate 11 is a detail of the fourth painting, and shows the scene where the prince journeys out through the palace gate and meets a funeral procession. The prince is seated in his carriage, a kind of palanquin, about to leave the palace. It is interesting to see the Korean costumes worn by the figures in the scene.

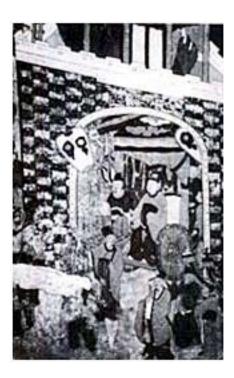


Plate 11. Sokkamuni as a prince beholds Death.
Detail of Plate 10.

Plate 12, which is a detail taken from the seventh painting in the series, shows Sokkamuni right after his enlightenment, when manifesting as Vairocana or Rocana Buddha. The Buddha with his hands in the characteristic mudra of Vairocana is flanked by the Bodhisattvas Munju and Pohyon. Note that Vairocana as an iconographical model is repeated in the painting shown in Plate 13.

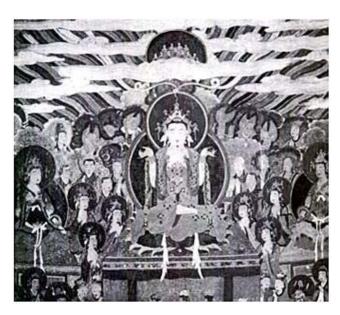


Plate 12. Sokkamuni manifesting as Nosana after his enlightenment. Detail of 7th painting.

Universal Panorama

The importance of the Hwaom Sutra in Korean Buddhism is firmly reflected in the taenghwa tradition. While it is relatively common to find paintings with Vairocana Buddha, the main Buddha of this scripture, there exists a type of taenghwa which is devoted to a presentation of the entire universal panorama according to the teaching of the Hwaom Sutra. This type of painting is known as "Hwaom-kyong pyonsangto," which may be rendered as the Transformation Chart of the Avatamsaka Sutra. In effect, it is a veritable mandala or "cosmic diagram." This kind of taenghwa is quite rare and no more than four paintings are known today. The most famous examples are those of Songgwang Temple and Sonam Temple, situated close to each other in Jeolla Namdo near the town of Sunchon. The painting reproduced in Plate 13 is that from Sonam Temple, dated to 1780. Being an orgy of minute details and colors, this mandala is an attempt at recreating the major episodes following the narrative of the Hwaom Sutra. These episodes occur in nine teaching assemblies which take place in seven different locations, including the Buddha's place of enlightenment, Mt. Meru, the axis of the universe and various celestial realms.



Plate 13. Hwaom-kyong pyonsang-to (18th century); ink, color and gold on silk; 280 x 250 cm. Sonam Temple, Jeolla Province.

Each assembly is focused around a main image of Vairocana Buddha, flanked by the Bodhisattvas Munju and Pohyon, and surrounded by a host of other Bodhisattvas and other beings. In this particular painting, the repeated use of stencil "modules" is evident. Often the main figures only deviate in such minor details as adornments or lightrays, etc. Deviating from this stereotype is the section which depicts the Gandhavyuha Chapter (lower left-hand corner) mentioned in the discussion of Plate 6.

Plate 14 shows the Bodhisattva Munju as a youth sitting within a "magic" stupa. Standing outside to the right, the Bodhisattva is repeated in his "normal" attire. Below this scene seated in rows, each with a tiny figure of Sudhana in front, are all the other Buddhist teachers, from whom he takes instruction on his way to enlightenment.



Plate 14. The youthful Munju in the Stupa.

Detail of Plate 13.

Pictorial Guide

While it seems evident that a taenghwa such as the "Hwaom-kyong pyonsang-to" was devised with the purpose of presenting the faithful with a pictorial guide to the voluminous Hwaom Sutra and in a sense also to its teachings, other types of paintings have an explicit didactic function. The most obvious of this type of taenghwa are those which represent the hells and their inmates. The overt purpose of the hell paintings is to imbue in the believers a dread of committing evil karma, which is said to lead to unfortunate rebirths, ultimately represented by the Ten Great Hells. In the traditional Buddhist literature, quite a number of scriptures describe the sufferings awaiting a "sinner" in these hells. The taenghwa as a visual representation of such teachings is particularly well suited. In the taenghwa tradition, the hells are conceived of as being ten in number, each headed by a Hell King or Judge.

The concept of hell in the East Asian tradition, of course, reflects the judicial procedures originally taken from medieval Chinese culture. Plate 15 reproduces one taenghwa out of a set of two, containing five of the Ten Hell Kings. Each king is seated behind a table presiding over his department of punishment and attended by various minor hell officials and scribes. The officials bring the kings the records containing a description of the demerits of the new "arrivals" in hell.



Plate 15. Hell Kings. One painting out of a set of two (first half of 18th century); ink, colors and gold on hemp; 180 x 280 cm. Hwaom Temple, Jeolla Province.

Salvation Possible

However, a deceased person, despite his or her bad karma, need not necessarily go to hell. If his relatives pray for his future rebirth in a fortunate state and make substantial offerings to the Buddhist community, the person may be able to avoid hell. The monks in turn recite sutras and hold ceremonies there by creating merit on behalf of the dead person. The power of the ceremonies and offerings alleviates or cancels out his evil karma. According to popular belief, he will then be able to be reborn in one of the Buddhist paradises.

Plate 16 is a taenghwa generally known as the "Kamno-wang pyonsang-to" or "Sweet dew" painting and depicts the teaching of the Urabon Sutra, which describes how to avoid hell. The center of the painting is occupied by the altar which holds the offerings to the Buddhas, and above that floating in the sky is the host of Buddhas to whom the offerings are directed. At the same time, the Buddhas represent the state of pure rebirth beyond the world of suffering (samsara).



Plate 16. Kamno-wang (18th century); ink and color on silk; 260 x 300 cm. Ssangye Temple, Gyeongsang Province.

The two large demon-like figures below the altar are pretas or hungry ghosts who also receive a special part of the offerings. To the left of the altar is a gathering of Buddhist monks in the process of carrying out the ceremony for the deceased, Plate 17. In front of the monks painted in smaller scale are the mourning male relatives of the dead person. Note the characteristic hats worn by men for mourning. Opposite the two large pretas to the right are the female mourners including friends, etc. The rest of the kamno painting shows various scenes from samsara, depicting various aspects of human

occupations. In effect, these scenes combine to make out life in the mundane world. The idea is to imbue the viewer with a respect and awe of death to such an extent that he does not waste or ruin his life with either nonessential or evil activity.



Plate 17. Mourners and the Two Pretas. Detail of Plate 16.

Buddhist Masters

Another large group of taenghwa is devoted to the various historical and semi-historical Buddhist masters throughout the ages. This group may include both Indian, Chinese and Korean masters. Shown in Plate 18 is one such painting out of a series of ten, depicting the thirty-four patriarchs of Son (Chan) Buddhism. According to tradition, the first twenty-eight of these masters were Indians and the remaining six were Chinese. Talma (Bodhidharma) and Hyenung (Hui-neng) are the twenty-eighth Indian and the sixth Chinese patriarch, respectively. The three patriarchs in Plate 18 are the fourth Chinese patriarch Tao-hsin, the fifth patriarch Hung-jen, and the sixth and final patriarch in the line, Huineng. The scene to the left shows an attempt on Tao-hsin's life. However, the ordinary accounts of the life of this patriarch do not mention such an incident.



Plate 18. Pojo Kuksa (18th century); ink,, colors and sparing gold on silk; 135 x 77 cm. Songgwang Temple, Jeolla Province.

Perhaps the taenghwa painter has confused this with Tao-ming's attempt at killing Huineng in order to get the patriarch's robe and begging bowl, the symbols of transmission. The scenes in which the two other patriarchs are placed are neutral with regard to episodic representation. Again, the less important figures are painted on a smaller scale than the important ones. The background on which the figures are placed is a stylistic garden with bamboo, old trees and strange rocks. Despite the dramatic incident in the left part of the painting, the taenghwa as a whole breathes an air of detachment and serenity. The round cluster pattern on the robe of Hui-neng is characteristic of patriarch paintings from the first half of the nineteenth century.

National Master

Plate 19 also belongs to this group of Buddhist masters, and is a portrait of National Master Pojo of Chinul (1158-1210), who is one of the most important Son monks in the history of Korean Buddhism. This kind of taenghwa is closely connected with ancestral portraits in terms of function, but only rarely do they reproduce the original features of the master in question. The "religious protrait" is foremostly intended to invoke the master's spiritual attainments and to serve as a paradigm for the tradition. As it is, it is in this group of taenghwa that the largest number of stereotypes occur. Despite this, once in a while one comes across very fine individual patriarch portraits such as the one shown here.



Plate 19. Set of 11 Son Patriarch Paintings (18th century); ink and colors on hemp. 141 x 135 cm. Sonam Temple, Jeolla Province.

The Pojo portrait is the first out of a set of sixteen taenghwa depicting the line of masters at Songgwang Temple. Pojo is shown in the way most Buddhist masters appear in the taenghwa, namely seated in a large chair. In his hand he holds a staff shaped as a dragon, a sign of spiritual authority. His face is serene, bespeaking his lofty attainment of the Buddhist truth. The little gold which has been applied to the painting enhances the dark and solemn figure to a considerable extent.

Mountain Spirit

Included in the Korean Buddhist pantheon are a number of figures which originally belong to indigenous Korean shamanism. The most important of these "borrowed" figures is the Sanshin, or Mountain Spirit. Plate 20 shows a typical rendering of this popular deity in the shape of an old man. Attended by a boy and a girl, the Mountain Spirit takes a stroll outside his cavernous abode accompanied by his faithful tiger. Most of the extant taenghwa showing the Mountain Spirit have a strong folkloristic flavor to them, often being painted in a very naive and stylistic manner. The example shown here, however, is of rather fine quality and may well be relatively early. It is not known exactly when this type of taenghwa began to occur in Buddhist temples, but is does not seem to have been common before the eighteenth century.



Plate 20. Mountain Spirit (ca.1800); ink and colors on hemp; 90 x 90 cm. Ssangye Temple, Gyeongsang Province.

Conclusion

The above is a brief survey of a highly interesting and time-honored Korean tradition. A fair number of taenghwa can still be found in temples throughout the peninsula, where they represent a valuable cultural heritage.

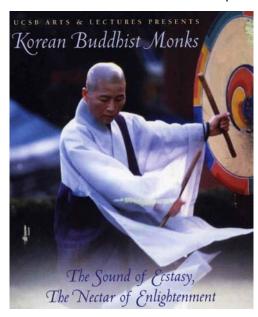
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Korean Divas and Devas: The Sound of Ecstasy and Nectar of Enlightenment: Buddhist Ritual Song & Dance from Korea

by Lauren W. Deutsch

The sound of women praying is not a sound most of us have experienced. Hollywood gave us the "Song of Bernadette", "The Sound of Music" and "Sister Act". The "Singing Nun" of the late 60s made a living with her pop but nonetheless devotional hum-and-strum-alongs. But in the end, all of these were less liturgical, more entertainment.

I first clearly heard women praying at the women's section of the Western Wall in Jerusalem and learned why it's nickname, "Wailing Wall", is so fitting. The sound seems to emanate from an ethereal place, which is not to say virginal or diva-



Monk Dong Hee's performance of Buddhist ritual songs and dances with the Young San Preservation Group took one back to the golden age of Korean Buddhism in the Koryo dynastv.

esque. And yet it's rather earthy and, like the ancient "om", deeply and perhaps critically essential.

It is with these ears that I witnessed the presentation of "The Sound of Ecstasy and Nectar of Enlightenment" by Yeongsanjae¹ Preservation Group. The group is headed by Monk Dong Hee, the first female monk of the <u>Taego</u> lineage of Korean son (Japanese: Zen) order based in Seoul. Dong Hee, Seongsunim (an honorific title) is considered one of the most venerable religious leaders in Korea today.



¹ There are many possible spellings of this group's name. I have chosen the one used by the group itself. Another spelling is Youngsan-jae.

The Yeongsanjae Ceremony is the most elaborate of the Korean Buddhist rituals, involving offerings of flowers, fragrances, music and sacred dance over three days in honor of the Lord Buddha. In the past, this ceremony was performed for the well-being of the nation both on joyful occasions and in times of disaster. Today it is also offered in hopes of leading both the living and the departed into the joy of enlightenment and perpetual peace. (A sample of the ritual may be viewed here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdU44Z3bees&feature=player_embedded - !)

Over the centuries, many of Korea's traditional ceremonial rituals fell into relative obscurity, due to the policy of suppressing Buddhism during the Choson Kingdom (1392-1910) and the outright prohibition of the performance of elaborate Buddhist ceremonies during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). Fortunately the late Venerable Song-am Park, the group's founder, had the strength to maintain and preserve the forms. Monk Dong Hee began her 40 years of study with him when she was 13 years old.

The current <u>Yeongsanjae ritual</u> presented at <u>Bongweonsa</u> (Bongweon Temple) in Seoul dates back to the 17th century and is presented on June 6 annually to accommodate audience attendance (formerly held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, Tano Day). Korean Buddhist rituals unify performance of rituals and practice of self-discipline, unlike Ching Buddhists, who kept these two elements separate. Similarly, while attractive to onlookers, the ceremony is conducted with utmost formality whether onstage or in the temple precincts, and serves as an important space for transmission of values and art forms and for meditation, training and enlightenment.



Yeongsanjae's beompae, the Buddhist chanting form, earned its original recognition in 1973 as the Republic of Korea's Important Intangible Cultural Asset #50; in 1987, when the preservation group was formed, the recognition was expanded to the the entire rite. Beompae, originating in India, is considered one of the three elements of traditional

Korean vocal music, along with *gagok* (Korean lyric songs) and *pansori* (Korean narrative songs).



The Yeongsanjae Preservation Group and *yeongsanjae*, was inscribed in 2009 by UNESCO on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, along with *Ganggangsuwollae*, *Namsadangnori*, *Jeju Chilmeoridang Yeongdeunggut*, *Cheonyongmu* and Royal Cuisine of the Joseon Dynasty. Included in this designation are the individuals who are the key practitioners as well as students of the Okcheon Buddhist Music College who are learning the ritual. Like many of the key intangible cultural "properties", the work is traditionally conducted without "benefit" of a written score, and the "lessons" are delivered orally and received mentally.



The ritual itself is a re-enactment of Buddha's delivery of the Saddharma Pundarika (Lotus) Sutra on the Vulture Peak (Mt. Grdhrakuta) in India some 2600 years ago, and in reenactment, the presentation has the formality of the court of the transmundane world. The word "yeong-san" refers to the location on the mountain where the sutra was pronounced for the first time.

As presented overseas by the <u>Korea Society</u>, its main touring sponsor, the program samples both the ritual itself and the daily life at the monastery. The latter is represented by the Toryangsuk, a simple chant offered around the Bongwon Temple grounds before the pre-dawn service designed to awaken all the forces of the natural world. (For more visual images, see the UNESCO recognition file at: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00011&RL=00186.)



In situ, the rites are performed in an open courtyard. The formal event, composed of 12 sections in total, begins with a reception for all the saints and spirits of heaven and earth and concludes with a farewell ritual representing manners of the otherworldly realm of Buddha. Sections include singing, ceremonial adornment, instrumentation and varied ritual dances, such as the cymbal dance, drum dance and ceremonial robe dance. There were chants to the protecting Devas and Vajra guardians, chants for offerings

and supplications for the blessings of the Buddha for national prosperity and world peace.



Other components include a ritual cleansing of the dirt surface where the rite is held, a tea ceremony, the dedication of a rice meal to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, a sermon inviting the audience to the door of truth and a ritual meal for the dead to congratulate them on their entry into heaven. (The full sequence of events may be reviewed here: http://bongwonsa.or.kr/eng/sub3/sub3_2.html.)

As the program states, "The group's virtuoso vocal techniques are marked by a special timbre, complex patterns and a pure, solemn tone color." Sung without measured rhythm and harmony, they form almost surreal, audible fruits for the Gods.

For many of the pieces, the five women and two male monks/celebrants at the staged performance sat with their backs to the audience for eight *bompae* chants and three *chakpop*, ritual dances. Together, celebrants and "congregation" faced a simple set of colorful tapestry images of various Buddhas. (Samples of the ritual's brilliant visual images, recorded by the late photo-journalist Kim Soo-nam, may be seen here: http://issuu.com/irvinebarclay/docs/pompae_1987_olympics.)

While seeming diminutive in stature, Monk Dong Hee's *popgochum*, drum dance, was nonetheless breathtaking. Its religious and artistic purpose was to express her wish that "all the creatures will obtain wisdom and enlightenment by listening to the sounds of the drum." A popular element of traditional Korean "folk" performances, seongsunim offered 100 percent of her practice, her life. Like Bae Yong-Kyun's exquisite film "Why Has Bodhidharma Left for the East?" (see http://www.kyotojournal.org/kjback/kjback/69.html),

it was meditation in action: the seamless embrace of mind and no mind, form and no form, of monk and drum without distinction in any of the 10,000 ways to hit a drum.



In contrast to the glorification and offertory of the *popgochum*, the *parachum* cymbal dance was performed "to instruct the evil-minded in the ways of Heaven and to save creatures form suffering in hell." Yet this was not the percussion outburst in a thunderous Russian symphony.

Finally, the elaborately costumed *nabichum* "Butterfly Dance" offered the compelling fragrance of flowers to the Triple Gem of Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma and Sanga, and is in fact a refuge-taking exercise in "creating the dharma", the literal translation of the term for Korean ritual dance.

Through the program, the monks were attired in the typical grey Korean Buddhist jacket/pants ensemble and stole, or the more elaborate costumes with conical, flower-festooned hats used for the Butterfly Dance. Their musical accompaniment was limited to a *moktak* (wooden metronome), large and small gong, large cymbals, and conical oboe, instruments found in many traditional "performing arts" programs, such as shaman *gut*.

Buddhism has inspired other more contemporarily created rituals and performing art pieces, including narrative themes from history, the scriptures and everyday life of mortals. (For a description sample see:

http://www.nunghwa.org/bbs/view.php?id=english&page=1&sn1=&divpage=1&sn=off&s s=on&sc=on&select_arrange=headnum&desc=asc&no=1227&PHPSESSID=ade0e615 7b638a2a1727d8db77645da2.)

In its' formal documentation for nomination to the UNESCO ranks, the Yeongsusanjae Preservation group noted, "As a cultural icon created as an intrinsic part of Korean history, Korean Buddhist culture is a treasure-house of Korean cultural contents which retain the essence of the nation's culture. Elements symbolizing the consciousness and culture of the Korean people, the wide diversity of Buddhist cultural contents, including Yeongsanjae, food and narrative literature, play an important role in communicating culturally with other countries and promoting traditional Korean culture around the world. It is our hope that an inscription of Yeongsanjae on the Representative List will serve as an opportunity for the traditional Buddhist culture to be explored and safeguarded on a continuous basis, thus propagating spiritual Korean culture globally."

It is truly a sight to behold and preserve.

The Korean Buddhist Rite of the Dead: Yeongsan-jae (Sasipgu-jae) 49th Day Death Rite

by Theresa Ki-ja Kim

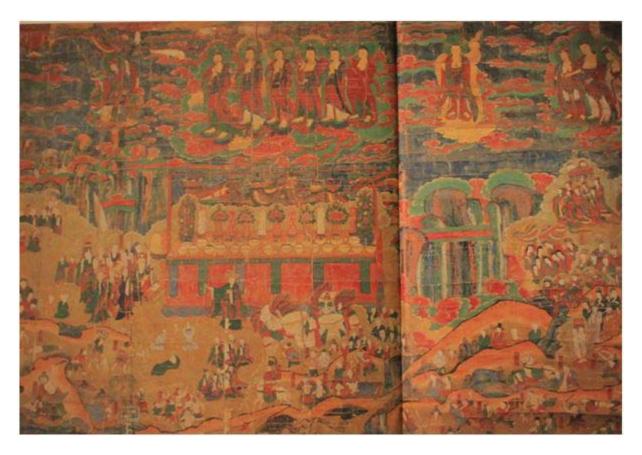


Plate 1. This taenghwa, Gamrodo, depicts the three-tiered Buddhist cosmology:
The Upper World for the Buddhahood, the Middle for the humans,
and the Lower for the Hell denizens. Heungguk Temple,
Jeollanam-do.

There is nothing more revealing than the Buddhist anecdote about the essence of human life and the basic tenets of Buddhist teachings. The anecdote is written in eight Sino-Korean characters: Sim Saeng Beop Saeng. Sim Myeol Beop Myeol. Three key words utilized here are: sim meaning the mind/consciousness; saeng meaning birth, being born, rising; and myeol meaning death, dying, disappearance, extinction, etc. The anecdote can be translated as: "When the mind is born, the dharma is born. When the mind is dead, the dharma is dead." or "The mind rises, so does the law of the universe. The mind dies, so does the law of the universe." In terse eloquence, the anecdote strikes the core of human existence as the "mind/consciousness" in one's body. When one's mind determines it is so, then, it will be so. Everything is only a creation of the mind.

Upon a person's death, this mind/consciousness leaves the body. The mind and body become a separate entity for the first time in one's life. The most terrifying perspective everyone must face! Afterward, the body disintegrates and returns to the atomic level, voidness / nothingness / everythingness. "I" or "Self," "a mass" no longer occupies space and time. In Buddhist ideology, the mind, after leaving the body, becomes a dead soul and wanders about for forty-nine days, not fully aware of the nature of the state of death. This state is called *jung- eum,* in Korean meaning "in-between darkness" or *jung-yu*, "in-between existence."

Buddhists are, in a sense, better prepared to meet death, since the Buddha-Dharma teaches that life is impermanent. Man is born to die and repeat the karmic cycle of birth/death until one is liberated from this cycle. The Buddhist ideology of "Self" is "No-Self," which considers selfhood as a fluid process, since it depends on everything else, such as air to breathe. From this fact, another ideology of "Interdependent Arising" rises. However, for the dying and the dead, and the surviving family members, the cerebral understanding of the teachings is one thing and actually facing it is another. Help is needed for all touched by this tragic event of termination. For this, a death ritual called *cheondo-jae*, the funeral service, is offered. The ritual takes place upon request of the surviving family members and performed by Buddhist clergies.

Cheondo-jae means, "sending the dead soul on (to Nirvana) - funerary ritual" or "transporting the dead soul to Nirvana - death rite." There are several different kind of cheondo-jae and Yeongsan-jae, the Korean Buddhist Ritual of the Dead, is one kind of cheondo-jae funeral services, and is one of the most grand, most elaborate, complex and costly of the memorial services. It is way beyond the ordinary in its scale. Traditionally spread out over three days, these days the service typically lasts one day.

Yeongsan-jae is also called Sasipgu-jae, "the forty-ninth day mass." The significance of this name is that the mass is performed on the forty-ninth day of death within the traditional three year mourning service system: the forty-ninth day mass, one hundredth day service, first year anniversary day service (chosang, the small memorial service), and finally, the third year anniversary day service (daesang, the big memorial day service). The journey of the dead soul through purgatory takes three years from the moment of death and ends in rebirth in a designated abode in Hell or Nirvana. After the third-year memorial service, the surviving family members return to their normal life, no longer observing the restrictions of a mourner. Death is considered a form of pollution, and some taboos are to be honored.

During the three year mourning service system (time element-duration), the dead soul is believed to move from one court of *jiok*, or Hell, to another (space element-topography of Hell) within the Buddhist cosmology, the highest being Buddhahood sphere, the middle where humans reside, and the lowest, where the Ten Kings of Hell reign. *Jiok* in Korean means the "subterranean prison." This indicates the location of Hell from a vertical point of view. The other view is "a far, far away place," a horizontal point of view. After death on every seventh day (7 day unit), the dead is to appear in front of *si-wang*, the Ten Kings of Hell. Traveling to one court after another, the dead come to receive the

judgment on their meritorious or sinful deeds committed while alive. Each King, almighty and official, presides over his own Hell, holds his own court, and performs his own duties and judges the dead according to his own formula. Retinues of Clerks, Messengers, and the Boys of Good and Evil assist them.

However, one major difference of the Buddhist Hell distinguishing it from other religions is that the judgment of the Ten Kings is not a permanent, one shot deal for the dead. Even after the sentence is given and one is reborn a respective denizen to one Hell, the dead still has a chance to upgrade one's abode to the utmost *seobang jeongto*, the Amitabha's Pure Land in the West. This is made possible by hearing Buddha's name and his teachings during the memorial services offered to the dead by the surviving family members. Therefore, this is a transitory state of potential spiritual realization where one may be freed from being reborn again into *samsara*, and repeating the birth/growth/death cycle. Another distinction is that the death ritual is also for the living during which time one's belief is affirmed by learning Buddha's teachings throughout the service. In return, the living will receive blessings.

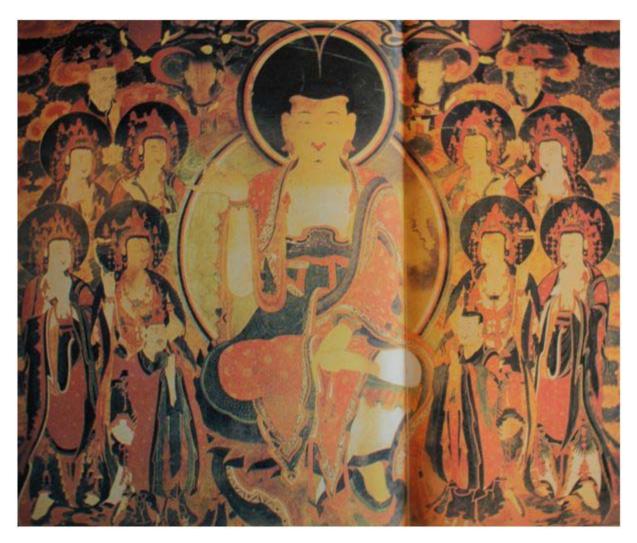


Plate 2. Jijang Bosal, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, taenghwa painted in 1798. Tongdo Temple, Gyeongsangbuk-do.

This soteriological practice is based on the notion that Ten Kings govern each Hell. However, they are presided over by *Jijang Bosal*, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, who vows to stay among sentient beings, especially those who are in Hell, for their salvation by holding his final entry into Nirvana. He remains a bodhisattva from the time of Buddha's demise up to the appearance of the future Buddha *Maitreya*. (This ideology of bodhisattva seeking enlightenment while being devoted to the salvation of sentient beings is the main tenet of Mahayana Buddhism.) Therefore, the main purpose of offering *Yeongsan-jae* is for the salvation of the dead as well as the living.

For this, each of the Ten King honors a bodhisattva. This means that Kings are responsible for not only punishing the sinners but also for bestowing blessings to those awakened from ignorance. This wrathful and blissful aspect of contradicting nature in all Ten Kings represents the very core of *Yeongsan-jae*; the promotion of the dead to a higher realm to be reborn solely depends on the mass offered by the surviving family members. The dead are also allowed to appeal the decision during this time if the dead believes that the decision is not fair.



Plate 3. The Knife Mountain Hell. 1926. Heungcheon Temple, Seoul.

The Ten Kings of Hell:

The first court: on the seventh day after death (the first seventh), the dead soul stands in front of *Jin-Gwang Daewang*, the Great King of Jin, who governs the *Dosan Jiok*, the Knife Mountain Hell where the standing sharp knife ends cut through the flesh of sinners. This king honors Aryacalanatha Bodhisattva and passes his judgment on those who were born in the years of *gap-ja*, year of the Rat. It is the first sign in the sexagesimal cycle. A combination of the first sign of both the ten celestial stems "sibgan" and the twelve earthly zodiac signs "jiji"), gap-in (Tiger), gap-jin (Dragon), gap-o (Horse), gap-sin (Monkey) and gap-sul (Dog).

The second court: On the fourteenth day (7 times 2, the second seventh) after death, the dead soul stands in front of the second king, *Cho-gang Dae-wang*, the Great King of the First River, who governs the First River of Boiling Lava Hell, a great hell beneath the sea. This king honors Sakyamuni Buddha and passes judgment on those who were born in the years of *ul-juk* (year of the Ox) a combination of the second sign in the sexagesimal cycle of both the ten celestial stems and the twelve earthly zodiac signs), *ul-myo* (Hare), *ul-sa* (Snake), *ul-mi* (Sheep), *ul-yu* (Chicken), and *ul-hae* (Pig). The sentenced are then to cross over the River Nai (Nai-ho in Chinese) with a wooden collar around their neck. The depth of the water is divided into three levels: the deepest water is for the worst sinners and drowning is possible, then there is the middle level depth, and then the shallow ford for those whose sins are comparatively less.



Plate 4. The Boiling Lava Hell. Hwaeom Temple.

The remaining eight kings must be visited within three years for the journey through Hell to be completed. No individual journey is similar. They are, in brief:

The third court: On the twenty-first day (7 times 3) after death, the dead soul stands in front of the third king, Song-Je Dae-wang, the Great King of Sung (Chinese dynasty), the king of Frozen Hell where sinners are buried in ice. This is the court where the sinners' preliminary judgments are handed down. This king honors Manjusri Bodhisattva.

The fourth court: On the twenty-eighth day (7 times 4), the dead soul travels to the court of the fourth king, *O-gwan Dae-wang*, the Great King of the Five Offices, who governs over the Knife Tree Hell, where all trees have knives for branches and leaves, punishing those who needlessly butchered living beings and animals. When all the flesh is cut off, a cool breeze restores it so the torture may repeat endlessly. This king honors Samantabhadra Bodhisattva and determines the ways of suitable punishment.

The fifth court: On the thirty-fifth day (7 times 5), the dead soul reaches the fifth king, *Yeom-na Dae-wang*, the Great King Yama Raja of Hindu origin, who rules over the Tongue-Pulling Hell. With the highest ranking of the Ten Kings, he honors *Jijang Bosal* Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.



Plate 5. The Tongue-Pulling Hell. Heuncheon Temple, Seoul.

The sixth court: On the forty-second day (7 times 6) the dead soul meets the sixth king, *Byeon-seong Dae-wang*, the Great King of Transformations, who reigns over the Poison Snake Hell. Here he ensures that no sinners have been overlooked. Those who are sent here are turned into all manner of animal. This king honors Maitreya Bodhisattva.

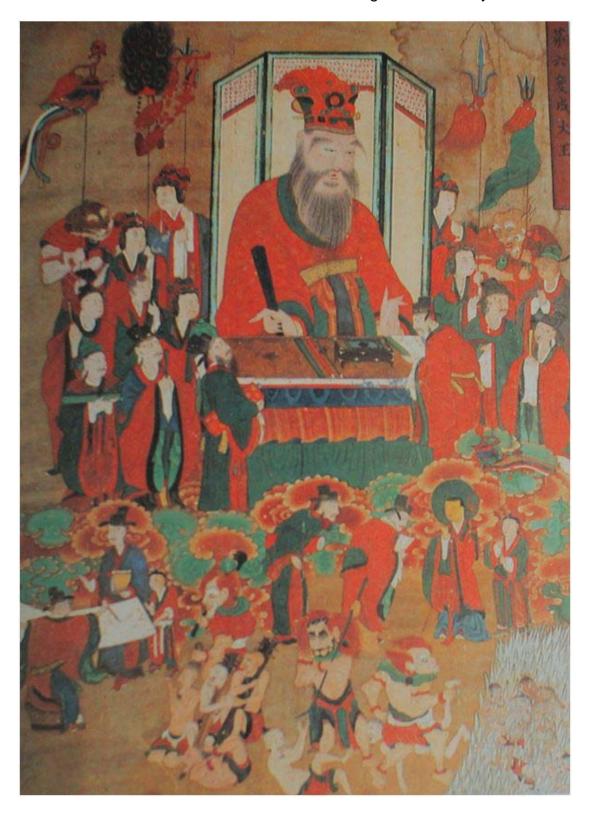


Plate 6. Byeonseong Daewang, the Great King of Transformations.

The seventh court: On the seventh seventh day, forty-ninth day (7 times 7), and the final day of the judgment cycle, the dead soul visits *Dae-san Dae-wang*. This is the Great King of Mount Tae who presides over the Bone Cutting Hell. The dead are then sent to be reborn in various places based on final judgment. This king honors Bhaisajyaguru Bodhisattva. On this very day, the **Yeongsan-jae** is performed.

The remaining three Kings of Hell are: on the one hundredth day of death, *Pyeong-deung Dae-wang*, the Great King of Impartiality of the Iron Bed Hell, *honors* Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, with the scale of karma for administering the impartial judgment. On the one-year or thirteen months after death, *Do-si Dae-wang*, the Great King of the Capital of the Wind Hell, honors Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva. Customarily, the largest square in the capital is where the executions are carried out, thus the king's name. Lastly, on the third year after death, *Jeon-ryun Dae-wang*, the Great King Who Turns the Wheel of Rebirth in the Five Paths, who governs the Dark Hell, honors Amitabha Buddha. This king determines the rebirth of the dead in five possible realms of existence: heavenly being, human being, hungry ghost, animal, and hell inhabitant.

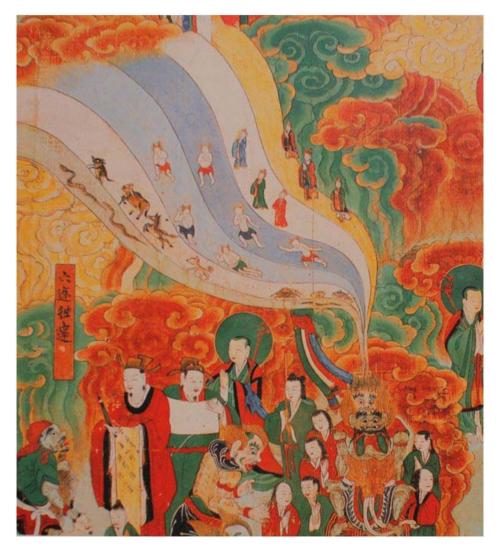


Plate 7. Jeon-ryun Dae-wang, the Great King Who Turns the Wheel of Rebirth in the Five Paths. 1862. Hwaeom Temple.

Yeongsan-jae

The name of the Buddhist mass, **Yeongsan-jae** is made of three Sino-Korean words: young-san and jae. Yeong-san, means "Yeong-Mountain," and Jae, service/mass." Yeong-san is a name of a mountain in India, Mount Grdhrakuta. This mountain, it is believed, is inhabited by many immortal spirits and vultures, thus the name yeong-san, "the spirit mountain" (Chinese translation). The mountain is also called Vulture Mountain. It became significant when Sakyamuni Buddha delivered his teachings to his disciples there on one of the two most important scriptures of Buddhism, the Beophwa-gyeong, in Korean, meaning the Lotus Sutra. The other is the Hwaeom-gyeong, the Avatamska Sutra. The former expounds the ideology that "Buddhahood can be achieved by all", and the latter, the "No-Self" "Interdependency Arising," and "Voidness," to put it simply. In the Lotus Sutra, the main tenet is clearly written: "Among those who hear this dharma, there is not one who shall not attain Buddhahood." The Lotus Sutra's main tenet is important to the dead, since even the dead can achieve Buddhahood by hearing the dharma and awaken from the Ignorance, thus, the profound significance of offering Yeongsan-jae through the chanting of liturgical texts, songs, recitations, and readings with musical accompaniment.

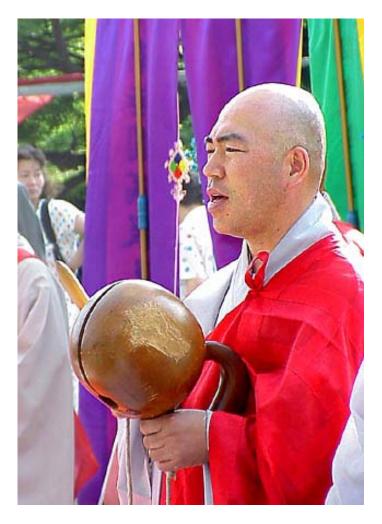


Plate 8. A monk singing a sutra while striking a moktak, a round and hollow wood resonator, with a wooden stick.

The gathering on Mount Yeong became known as Yeongsan Hoesang, "Buddhist Lecture Meeting by Buddha on Mount Yeong" or "Vulture Peak Assembly." The gathering is considered to be one of the most blissful events in Buddhist history. Yeongsan-jae is to offer food to Sakyamuni Buddha, to the bodhisattvas, and to all the disciples who gathered to listen to Buddha's sermon. Through this offering, all participants of this memorial service are connected to the blissful event as if they themselves were one of those at Mount Yeong to be so blessed by hearing Buddha's teachings. It is a symbolic recreation of this event beyond space and time. For the living, it is a chance to attain daegak, the Great Awakening from Ignorance. It is a meritmaking act which will lead them to the reward of the good-deed karma. However, the food offerings extend beyond humans to demons, hungry ghosts, wandering spirits, etc., for their salvation as well.

After the introduction of Buddhism to China, the Buddhist teachings absorbed many traditional belief systems and practices: the Daoist notion of pantheon (which eventually gave rise to the formation of the Ten Kings at the end of the Tang Dynasty); and the practice of Confucian ancestral worship and the filial notion of piety. Confucius said, "It is not till the child is three years old that it is allowed to emerge from the arms of its parents. That is why children must reciprocate with the three-year mourning." The timing of the seven-seven system is believed to be Buddhist in its origin. As a result of collaboration between Indic and Chinese civilizations, a syncretistic funerary custom was formulated around the sixth century.

When the death ritual was imported to Korea, the amalgamation of the native shamanic belief systems and practices and the emphasis of the Confucian notion of filial piety, *hyo*, gradually gave rise to a new ideology on afterlife. Thus, *Yeongsan-jae*, uniquely Korean, the Korean and Buddhist Ritual of the Dead, evolved into what we know today. Some scholars argue that *Yeongsan-jae* may be traced back to 2,600 years. Some elements of the Buddhist death ritual practice, especially the Ten Kings of Hell, gradually made its way into the shamanic pantheon.

The offering of Yeongsan-jae becomes most paramount for the surviving family members to accomplish: sending on the dead soul to the Pure Land Paradise in the West. Its purpose is to fulfill their filial duty to the dead ancestors; and in return, for their meritorious acts, to receive, from the dead ancestors and Buddha, protections and blessings. It is believed that out of seven parts of the Sasipgu-jae, the deceased will receive only one; six parts of the merit will profit the living. The tragic event is thus transformed into a compassionate event and a great psychological relief for the surviving family members is achieved.

There are two Buddhist schools in Korea which adopt the Mahayana tradition: the *Jogye* order, a celibate monk order, which is the largest, and the smaller *Taego* order, which is a married monk order. *Yeongsan-jae* is performed by the married monk order, and their main temple *Bongweon-sa* in Seoul houses the *Bongweonsa Youngsan-jae* Preservation Association. The *Jogye* order has also established the Eosan Buddhist Ritual School in order to preserve Buddhist rituals and ceremonies which include *Yeongsan-jae*.

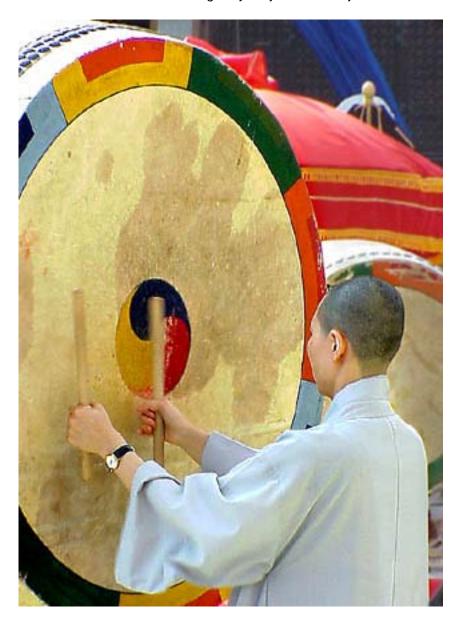


Plate 9. A monk playing a buk, a gigantic drum.

Yeongsan-jae is a treasure house not only of the Korean Buddhist ritual performances, but also Korean traditional performing arts, fine arts, and architecture: the event features the most exquisite and magnificent dances. In the category of jak-beop, dances like the bara-chum cymbal dance (the sound of cymbals keeps miscellaneous demons away from the ritual site, good karma to good sentient beings, and praise to the Deva King of the Four Directions for their protection), jakbok-mu dharma dance, taju-mu striking the eight-sided standing pillar dance, beobgo-mu the drum dance, all dances with prescribed costumes and headgears; the Buddhist music category of beom-pae, wherein both voices and instruments supports a full orchestra of samhyun yukgak, a drum, an hour-glass drum, two flute, a large transverse flute, and a fiddle; the Buddhist arts of sculpture and painting; Buddha statues and a gigantic hanging taenghwa painting of Buddha flanked by his two bodhisattvas which is hung on a temporary scaffolding in the courtyard of a temple; such paraphernalia as banners, streamers, a

gigantic hanging gold paper money and silver money, richly decorated sedan chairs, and other ritual objects; the performance takes place within the Buddhist temple compound, the architectural element, generally called *doryang* (bodhi-mandala, or a place of enlightenment) with many halls and pagodas; the liturgical text exemplifies the Buddhist literature which is sung, chanted and acted out with *mudras* or hand gestures and physical actions. All these are to convey the true teachings of Buddha.



Plate 10. Nabi-chum, the Butterfly Dance. known for its feminine quietude and peace of mind needed for the attainment of Buddhahood.

Another important element of *Yeongsan-jae* is *gongyang*, the various offerings and commensal activities that take place during the rituals. Among many different kinds of offerings (body, speech, mind), however, the food offering adds another dimension. After realizing that the self-mortification did little for his spiritual quest, Sakyamuni had a bowl of gruel offered by a peasant girl, and he regained his strength to achieve his enlightenment. From this came the practice of nurturing the body and spirit at the same time, in order to achieve Buddhahood. And so, the practice of offering food to others became one of the greatest ways of building merit. During *Yeognsan-jae*, food is offered to: 1) Buddha and all the participants at the Mount *Yeong* event, symbolically, 2) the image of Buddha and bodhisattvas, monks, the dead, and all people assembled at the

funeral service, and 3) hungry ghosts and wandering spirits. This food offering is called *daejung gongyang*, the communal offering. Flowers, incense and tea are also offered.

All these different elements of liturgy, performing arts, fine arts, paraphernalia, and food create an organic whole of sound, sight and smell that, together, invokes mental activity. This organic whole, performed by monks and attended by participants, moves in a prescribed manner in space and time. Through this spiritual and corporeal experience, all involved learn the basic tenets of Buddha's teachings of the impermanence of life, the interdependent arising, and the voidness /nothingness while sending the dead soul to Nirvana.

Youngsan-jae Performance:

Preparation. A gigantic scroll *taenghwa* painting of Buddha flanked by Manjusri Bodhisattva on his left and Samanthabhadra Bodhisattva on his right (the event is Buddha delivering his teachings on Mount *Yeong*) is hung on a temporary scaffolding across the large courtyard of *Daewung-jeon* or the Great Dharma Hall, the main sanctuary hall of the temple, for an outdoor service (usually carried out the night before). The *taenghwa* is drawn either on a cloth, silk or paper for easy transportation from the temple to the courtyard. In front of the scroll painting an altar called the "upper altar" is prepared. On it incense, tea, flowers, fruit, rice and lanterns are offered. To the left of this altar the "middle altar" is set up to conduct the meal services, and to the right, the "lower altar" is prepared in front of which the actual memorial ceremony for the dead soul will be performed.

Progression. The entire event moves through three stages: beginning with the preparatory offering, followed by the memorial service proper, *Yeongsan-jae*, and ending with the post offering. Contained in these three stages are the purification of the ritual site, invocation of all Buddhist deities, offerings, performance of symbolic actions, merit transfer, and sending off of all the invoked and dead souls. Each stage is divided into many sub-stages conveying very sophisticated Buddhist philosophical discourses imbedded in liturgical texts. The atmosphere is solemn with an underlying sense of compassion. Leading the entire procedure is *Beopju*, the dharma master, or principal monk. He is chosen for his high spiritual attainment. Many monks assist him. They will dance, sing, chant, and perform all ritual actions and duties for the *jae-ga*, the chief mourner of the dead and the surviving family members. The following is a short description of the stages.

1. Siryeon

The Buddha statue and the dead soul are ushered in on *yeon*, richly decorated sedan chairs, from outside of the temple. They are taken to *doryang*, the temple ground. There they honor Buddha on the upper altar of a prepared three-leveled dais. Other protective deities are placed on the middle altar. Led by *beopju*, the leading monk and followed by other monks, the chief mourner enters accompanied by the surviving family members and friends. Symbolically, this invokes the dead soul to appear in front of Buddha. After the offering of a chorus of *ongho-gye* by everyone in attendance, the *bara-chum*, the cymbal dance, is then offered. The *nabi-chum*, butterfly dance, follows, accompanied by the playing of musical instruments.

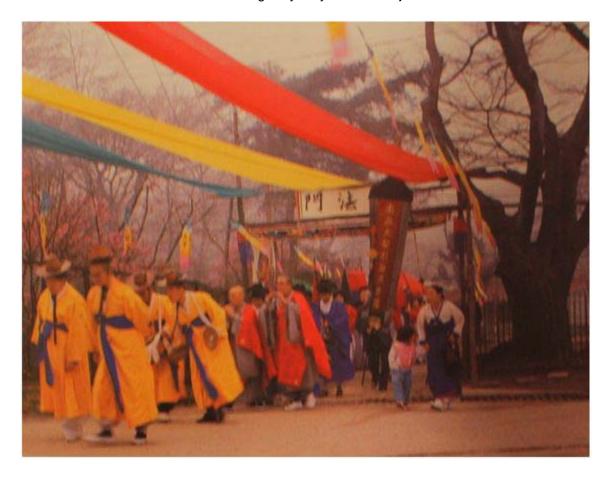


Plate 11. Buddha, bodhisattvas and the dead soul are ushered in to the temple grounds from the outside of the gate to begin the Yeongsan-jae performance.

2. Daeryeong

A nameplate of the dead, or mortuary tablet, is ushered in and enshrined on the lower altar. An offering table is prepared in front of the altar. It is adorned with rice wine and tea. Chanting is offered. "Why we hold this Buddhist mass," and "Whence the dead soul is to embark on a journey to be reborn," are pronounced so that the dead soul is ready and may appear in front of Buddha. With utmost sincerity, the noodle/rice dishes and the rice wine are offered by the chief mourner and the surviving family members.

3. **Gwanyok**

The ritual bathing of the dead soul, the central action of the mass, symbolically cleanses the dead soul from all karmic afflictions. Of primary concern is the suffering inflicted upon the dead in the cycle of death-birth. The mind of the dead is to return to the original pure mind to appear in front of Buddha and to hear Buddha's teaching. The act of cleansing is performed behind the standing screen on one side of the dharma hall or in a separate room. Only the principal monk may perform this, assisted by three other monks. Two water basins and a set of paper clothes are among the items prepared. After the cleansing action, the paper clothes are burned on a prepared tile or a rectangular box. A new set of clothes, a *haetal-bok* emancipation dress, is prepared to clothe the dead soul who is now reborn in original pure mind.



Plate 12. The ritual bathing of the dead soul.



Plate 13. The ritual bathing, utilizing the mudra, the hand gestures.

4. Jojeon Jom'an

The ritual offering for the dead. Gold and silver paper money are presented to the dead by the chief mourner. This is done so the dead soul will be able to pay back any debt accumulated during his lifetime, and also the tolls during the journey in purgatory to the gate keepers of each Hell, especially of the Ten Kings of Hell; it is also to pay for the salvation of the deceased ancestral spirits in hopes that they go to the "good place."

5. Sinjung Jakbop

The bara-chum or cymbal dance, is offered first. Vibrating the air invokes the 104 deities, the protectors of the Buddhist teachings, and the believers to the ritual site. Also included are the Ten Kings of Hell and *Jeseok Cheonwang*, the Lord of Heaven. The chief mourner offers prayers along with food and tea to the manifestations of all invoked, asking them to oversee the entire procedure of *Yeongsan-jae* and protect the ritual, the space and all involved from harm.

6. Kwaebul I-un

In front of the gigantic hanging scroll *taenghwa* of *yeongsan hoesang*, many *beompae* music selections and cymbal and butterfly dances are offered. The *taenghwa* depicts the scene of Buddha giving a sermon on Mount *Yeong*, thus symbolically transforming the temple *doryang* site into Mount *Yeong* and the funeral service into a blissful event of the *Yeongsan hoesang*, "Buddhist Lecture Meeting by Buddha on Mount *Yeong*" or "Vulture Peak Assembly."



Plate 14. The yeongsan hoesang taenghwa.

7. Yeongsan Jakbop

Buddha and Manjusri and Samanthabhadra Bodhisattvas are invoked along with a myriad of other deities in five sub-stages. This is the most important stage for the dead. Prayer is offered along with food to usher the dead to Nirvana, and for the protection and blessings of the living. All this is done in the name of the dead and the chief mourner. The boundless mercy of Buddha is also pronounced to illuminate the world.



Plate 15. Bara-chum, the Cymbal Dance, known for its masculine vigor needed for the attainment of Buddhahood.

8. Sikdang Jakbop

Meal Offering. The chief mourner offers food to the attending monks and in return they receive the Buddhist sermon for enlightenment. The food offering not only extends to all who attend the mass but also to the denizens of Hell: devils, hungry ghosts, and beasts.

The Yeongsan-jae performance is complex and diversified, therefore it must follow a coded prescribed order. The eighth step, an eating ritual, a short description, out of twenty-four sub-sections, is given below as an example, since this step employs all forms of dances, music and ritual chanting of scriptures during and after the ritual eating.

In front of the gigantic hanging scroll *taenghwa* of Buddha, large straw mats are spread out on the ground. Monks sit on both sides of the mat facing each other in rows, leaving the center space for dance performances. Before they sit down to eat, monks strike four dharma instruments: a large bronze bell for dead spirits; *mog-eo*, a gigantic hanging hollow fish-shaped woodblock for the creatures of the waters; *un-pan* a suspended cloud-shaped vane for the creatures of the air; and a large drum on a wooden stand for the creatures of the earth, humans and animals.

Monks sit in their designated place. A monk sings *eo-san*, a sacred song. *Beompae* music intones the Five Reflections on Eating. This is regarded as a verbal offering.



Plate 16. The ritual eating of the meal offering.

Two dances are featured to portray the meaning of Buddha dharma through body movement (the bodily offering): Nabi-chum the Butterfly Dance by two (sometimes four or six monks) simulates the movement of a butterfly. Special headgear is worn over their white robes with flowing wide rectangular sleeves;

Taju-mu, the Dance of the Eightfold Path follows. Two monks at a time, using long thin bamboo wooden-tipped mallets, strike one side of the eight-sided white paper pillar stand called *baekchu*, the white pillar, at a time. On each side of the pillar, one activity of the Noble Eightfold Path, such as "Right Thought" "Right Action," etc., is inscribed in Chinese characters. During the dance, the participants recite a part of the Heart Sutra (a mental offering).

All chant *Hoehyang Euirye*. By chanting the words *Hoehyag Euirye*, this ritual spreads pure merit among all sentient beings that participate. *Hoehyag Euirye*, is the ritual of sharing merit with others by chanting *Hoehyang gye*, so that the pure merit acquired by the participants is shared by all sentient beings. At the end of this step, the two dancers of the Taju-mu kick the eight-sided pillar stand to the ground, symbolically connoting the attainment of the eightfold path.

9. Unsu Sangdan Gwogong

This offering is dedicated to the Ten Kings of Hell for their mercy.

10. Jungdan Gwongong

In the name of the chief mourner, the food offering is dedicated to all assembled entities for the safe conclusion of the service and prayer for all the participants' blessings in life.



Plate 17. The surviving family members offer the final food offering to the dead soul.

11. Gwanum Sisik

Holding the mortuary tablets with the deceased name on the surviving family members offer food to the dead soul, newly cleansed of all karmic afflictions by the magical divine power of *Gwanum* Bodhisattva, the One Who Observes the Sound of the Universe. The family members wish the dead not be hungry during the journey. The link between the dead, who is now to embark to the *guknak segye*, the Ultimate Land of Bliss, and the living family members who gained Buddhist dharma, is praised. For this, all attended pay homage to the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha).

12. Hoehyang.

It is time to send off the dead soul along wth all the Buddhist deities invoked. *Hoe-hyang* literary means, "the returning" back to the beginning." It is also to transfer all the learning and the merits from this memorial service to all others, thus transferring the personal merit to others. This transforms a private funeral service to a communal event. *Hoehyang* signals the end of the entire procedure of *Yeongsan-jae*.

13. The Burning

All ritual items of paper paraphernalia, flowers, gold and silver money, paper clothes for the dead and the mortuary tablet on which the name of the dead is written, etc. are piled up and burned. In the dark night air, the flames rise, signaling the finale of the *Yeongsan-jae* service. Fire is considered the "mouth" of heaven and the dead soul is to ride the rising flames to enter the "good place." This brings the *Yeogsan-jae*, one of the most important traditional Korean Buddhist rituals funeral services to a close.

Conclusion

Yeongsan-jae is based on the infinite compassion of Jijang Bosal, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, bestowed upon both the dead and the living. Yeongsan-jae unites the dead and the living under this compassion to awaken both from ignorance according to the teachings of Buddha. This awakening leads the dead to the Pure Land of Amitabha in the West, and to the living the spiritual, ethical, and moral guidance and assurance of blessings. The vivid images of sinners' sufferings in each Hell serve as a model on how to conduct oneself in everyday life. This dual accomplishment is made possible by juxtaposing one of the most tragic events of human life, dying and the death, with the most blissful event of Buddhism, the gathering on Mount Yeong. A uniquely Korean way of dealing with death, Yeongsan-jae is a Korean cultural expression of afterlife with dance, music, art and liturgy. It transforms the most traumatic event of human life into a celebratory event. Nowadays, Yeongsan-jae is also staged to pray for the reunification of South and North Korea.

Yeongsan-jae is designated as *The Important Intangible Cultural Property of Korea, No. 50* and is also declared an *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* by UNESCO.

For cross-cultural references on the afterlife, see:

Tibetan Book of the Dead: Bardo Thordrol. The term bardo literally means "liberation upon hearing in the transitory states." The Tibetan book vividly describes the forty-nine days of after-death experiences on this Bardo plane. (The exhibition, Bardo, is now on display at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City.)

Another example is the *Egyptian Book of the Dead: Coming Forth by Day.*" This book illustrates how the dead travel all night through the realm of the dead and rise again in the morning with the sun. (Exhibition on "*The Book of the Dead of the Goldworker of Amun, Sebekmose,*" a papyrus book, is now on display at the Brooklyn Museum in Brooklyn, N.Y.)

For the Christian concept of afterlife, see *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Cantica I Hell, Cantica II Purgatory, and Cantica III Paradise.*

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Dado: The Korean Way of Tea

by Lauren W. Deutsch

No conversation about Korean culture is complete without tea ... drinking it and discussion about it. Not many people understand the "way" of tea, the "do" of da, much less understand that Korea has its own wonderful tradition and practice of enjoying tea, *cha*.

History explains that tea plants entered Korea with the Buddhist monks who traveled from China some 1500 years ago. Because of Korea's harsh climate and unfavorable soil, not much of the species *camelia sinensis*, *the* tea plant, has been successfully cultivated on the peninsula, compared to other regions in Asia. But what domestic green tea can be found, either growing wild in the mountains or cultivated from Jeonju (North Jeolla Province) southward, is of exceptional quality. While it has remained closely connected with Buddhist monasteries, it fell out of favor for a very long time, long enough for Koreans to prefer coffee, and only recently has come back into favor by a broad section of the public.

In the last three years, <u>Seoul Selection</u> has published two wonderful books by Brother Anthony of Taizé (aka An Sonjae) and Hong Keyong-Hee, in English about Korean tea culture, of which one volume has had the benefit of collaboration by renowned tea historian Steven D. Owyoung. Both are indispensable for every library on Korean culture, not to mention for the extended enjoyment of tea lovers. Both books include lovely color photographs and other illustrations and seem companion to each other in design.



Every cup of tea begins with two leaves and a bud, hand picked at the Panyaro plantation.

The Korean Way of Tea: An Introductory Guide, is a wonderful primer and is an extension, not to mention physical manifestation, of <u>Brother Anthony's extensive website</u> (also in English). It includes introduction to the history, virtues, processing and brewing of tea as well as a little bit of tea literature and a brief history of tea in China. It further discusses a prominent, decidedly Seon (a.k.a. Zen) Buddhist approach to tea practice as codified by the Panyaro Tea Institute for the Way of Tea.



Panyaro Tea Institute's Master Chae in the Insadong Training Center.

Photograph by Lauren W. Deutsch.

Won-Hwa Chae Jeong-bok owns and operates this tea plantation in the Jirisan area and the tea school in the Insadong section of Seoul. Master Chae was a disciple in the way of tea of Venerable Hyodang, who was for many years the head monk of Dasolsa (Dasol Temple) near Hadong. I offered a review of this book for <u>Kyoto Journal's special issue on Tea (No. 71)</u>, including photographs.

The latest book is *Korean Tea Classics*, the first translation into English of ancient and essential texts by Hanjae Yi Mok and The Venerable Cho-ui. While Korea's soil may not be so forgiving to the plant, its literary culture has nurtured extraordinary poetry and a long-held practice of contemplative life.

According to the authors, "A legend claims that tea was first brought to Korea early in the Second Century CE by a princess from Ayodhya in India who married King Suro, the first king of Garak, a small kingdom at the far south-east tip of the peninsula." There is an overview of history as it relates to the rise and decline of Buddhism in the Joseon Dynasty (1392 – 1910), noting that in the present generation, the transmission of the Way of Tea "has been the work of the Buddhist community".

As its title states, the book covers prose, poems, letters, and reflections by two of Korea's most significant men of tea. Hanjae Yi Mok (1471 – 1498), the "Father of Korean Tea", is represented here by his *ChaBu (Rhapsody to Tea)*, considered the "most sophisticated and delicate of the Korean tea classics". As a scholar who went to study in China, he was familiar with the Daoist dimensions of tea, too; tea has always been considered a medicinal herb and figures in the pharmacopoeia of traditional Oriental medicine. Centuries later, tea enjoyed a revival among groups of Korea's famed literati class, and the Venerable Cho-ui Ui-sun (1786 – 1866) penned *ChaSinJeon (Chronicle of the Spirit of Tea)* and *DongChaSong (Hymn in Praise of Korean Tea)*, both included in this book. Each section includes the original Chinese as well as the translations. In total, the texts extol tea's virtues, explain proper ways of preparing and enjoying, and reflect on the history of tea as a precious commodity in the esteemed legacy of high culture that flowed from China and blossomed in Korea.



Hong Kyeong-Hee sharing tea at home with a guest from Taiwan.

Photograph by Lauren W. Deutsch.

A note about the authors:

Oxford educated Brother Anthony arrived in Korea in 1980, invited by Cardinal Kim Sou-Hwan, and has lived and practiced his vocation as a brother in the Community of Taize in Seoul for over 28 years. Emeritus Professor, Department of English Language and Literature at Sogang University in Seoul, he is also an author and prolific, honored translator of Korean literature, especially the contemporary poetry of Ko Un. He has dedicated a scholar's capacity for extensive research and writing about tea, as his website demonstrates. He allows time to enjoy the annual cycle of tea production and daily enjoyment of its preparation, often with Hong Kyeong-Hee, a high school history teacher and graduate of the Panyaro Institute, for which he is an instructor. Mr. Hong lives in the Anguk-dong neighborhood of Seoul in a *hanok*, traditional architecture, in which he has created unique spaces for the enjoyment of various types of green tea. Like his mentor, Master Chae, he <u>makes his own tea on the slopes of Jiri-san every spring</u>.

Steven D. Owyoung, a native of the USA and a retired museum curator of Asian art, has dedicated himself fully to the study and the history of tea in East Asia. He is currently writing a long-anticipated book of the translation of the *ChaJing*, Lu Yu's Book of Tea, circa Tang Dynasty.



An Insadong Tea Room. Photograph by Lauren W. Deutsch.

Other Information on Korean Tea

Kyung Hee University Professor <u>David Mason's</u> growing body of writing and research on tea in Korea, especially as it relates to Buddhism, is also worth noting.

Fortunately, Korean tea is becoming more available outside of Korea. In Los Angeles, for example, <u>Chasaengwan</u>, a branch of the Hangook Tea Company that operates several plantations, including the Honam Tea Estate for over 50 years, exclusively sells fine tea as well as the appropriate utensils for casual and ritual preparation.

The Korean Tea Ritual Association of Los Angeles offers classes and demonstrations regularly. A search online has also uncovered <u>Franchia</u>, a stunningly beautiful Korean tea shop and cafe in New York City.

Seoul's Insadong area has many, many tearooms, more like hidden nooks and warrens that accommodate very tiny groups (or maybe only one tiny group!) who will stop and spend a bit of time away from the otherwise frenzied pace of the city. While they may serve *nokcha*, green tea, many also serve the popular herbal and fruit teas.



An Anguk-dong Tea Room. Photograph by Lauren W. Deutsch.

When I'm in Seoul, I usually meet up with Brother Anthony at one of <u>Kwichon's</u> two locations in Insadong. Among the smallest of all of the area's cafes, both are under the watchful eyes of Mok Sun-ok, devotee and later wife of the late poet Ch'on San-pyong, and are famous for fresh persimmon tea, a library of poetry books, and loyal patrons.



Mok Sun-Ok, Hong Kyeong-Hee and a worker during springtime tea picking and processing in Jirisan. Photograph by Brother Anthony of Taize.

Note: We have learned from Brother Anthony of Taize that on August 26th Mok Sun-Ok passed away unexpectedly. Brother Anthony wrote the following obituary:

In 1985, the widow of the poet Chon Sang-Pyong opened the little cafe "Kwichon" in Seoul's Insa-dong and had kept it open every day of the year until very recently. (The original shack was demolished and replaced by a concrete bunker several years ago, with loss of most of the original charm.) Her niece operates a second "Kwichon" cafe in Insadong, serving the same home-made fruit teas, but for many people Mok Sun-Ok was a unique witness to a bygone Seoul, expressed by the flow of older writers, artists, musicians and younger workers and students coming to pay their respects to the family. Mok Sun-Ok's autobiography chronicling her life with Chon Sang-Pyong, translated from Korean into English as "My Husband the Poet", is a remarkable tale. Having survived the Hiroshima atom bomb which killed her father, she agreed to become the wife / caretaker of the poet, her brother's friend, after the latter's 1971 breakdown, and shared his poverty until he died in 1993. After that, she played the leading role in maintaining and promoting his memory, which finally resulted in the annual arts festival bearing his name held in Uijeongbu (Metropolitan Seoul) each April.

KOREAN ART SOCIETY EVENTS



KAS at the Newark Museum, February 19, 2010



KAS at the Brooklyn Museum, April 30, 2010



KAS at the Philadelphia Museum, June 25, 2010



KAS at the Harvard Art Museum in Cambridge, Mass., August 17, 2010



KAS at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Mass., August 18, 2010



KAS at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Mass., August 19, 2010

KAS 2010 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Please see our site's Events page (<u>www.koreanartsociety.org/Events</u>) for the most up-to-date Events Calendar.

Free Feast & Film

Friday, January 29, 2010 at 6pm

Please join members of the Korean Art Society along with the Korean Spirit and Culture Promotion Project on January 29th at 6pm for a gourmet feast of traditional Korean cuisine and a fascinating English-language film on cultural and scientific achievements from Korea's history, 'Fifty Wonders of Korea'. The film is fifty minutes in length, and will be followed by a twenty minute film on recent advancements and discoveries from Korea. This will be followed by conversation and a dinner that will be even more delicious than what you'll find in the restaurants of Korea Town. We'll also be distributing free books on Korean history and culture at this event. Come have a good time with us and enjoy the good company of your fellow Korean Art Lovers!

Curator-led Tour of the Newark Museum's Korean Art Collection

Friday, February 19, 2010 at 11am

Just 20 minutes away from Midtown Manhattan, there is a beautiful collection of Korean art featuring a renowned collection of folk paintings and fine ceramics, including a maebyong vase that has been in the museum's collection for over a hundred years and is widely regarded as one of the greatest examples of inlaid celadon in existence. Please join us for a tour of the collection conducted by the Newark Museum's Curator of Asian Art, Katherine Paul, in one of the first Korean galleries in an American museum. As an extra special treat, Katie, whose specialty is Himalayan art, will also lead us on a tour of the museum's famous Tibetan collection. Attendees of this event are in for a real treat.

Korean Masterpieces in the Brooklyn Museum Storage Rooms

Friday, April 30, 2010 at 11am

The Brooklyn Museum, with one of the most extensive Korean collections in the West, has agreed to give the Korean Art Society a private viewing of the Korean masterpieces in its storage area. The Brooklyn Museum has been collecting Korean art for 100 years, and was the first museum outside of Asia to open a permanent Korean gallery. The Korean government recently spent five years cataloging Brooklyn's important Korean collection. When you see this catalog, you will understand why the government decided that it was necessary to catalog this comprehensive and very important collection. Because of space and budget limitations, only a very small percentage of the collection is on view, and most of it rarely ever gets displayed. So this is a unique opportunity for lovers of Korean art.

Korean Art Day at the Philadelphia Museum

Friday, June 25, 2010 at 11am

The Korean Art Society and the Philadelphia Museum of Art have planned for you an exciting Korean Art Day in Philadelphia, only about a one-and-a-half hour train ride from New York. After viewing a special exhibition on contemporary Korean art, we'll be treated to a tour of the PMA's Korean art galleries by Hyunsoo Woo, Curator of Korean Art. PMA is one of only 4 American museums to have their important Korean collections cataloged by the Korean government. This is a rare opportunity to see fine antique and contemporary Korean art all at one time, and promises to be a lot of fun.

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Korean Art Society Tour of Boston Area Museums

Monday thru Wednesday, August 17 - 19, 2010

The curators of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the Harvard Sackler Museum have planned for us a very special tour of their Korean collections. Further details will be announced.

Korean Masterpieces in the Mary Griggs Burke Collection

Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 11am

The Mary Griggs Burke Collection, one of the largest and finest private collections of Asian art, has been exhibited at New York's Metropolitan Museum and other major museums. The Asia Society once had an exhibition based on a single very important early Korean Buddhist painting from this collection. The Korean Art Society is very fortunate to be invited to Ms. Burke's Manhattan home to view rare and famous masterpieces in Korean sculpture, painting, and ceramics.

Korean Masterpieces in the Brooklyn Museum Storage Rooms

Friday, October 29, 2010 at 10am

The Brooklyn Museum, with one of the most extensive Korean collections in the West, has agreed to give the Korean Art Society a private viewing of the Korean masterpieces in its storage area. The Brooklyn Museum has been collecting Korean art for 100 years, and was the first museum outside of Asia to open a permanent Korean gallery. The Korean government recently spent five years cataloging Brooklyn's important Korean collection. When you see this catalog, you will understand why the government decided that it was necessary to catalog this comprehensive and very important collection. Because of space and budget limitations, only a very small percentage of the collection is on view, and most of it rarely ever gets displayed. So this is a unique opportunity for lovers of Korean art.

The Lee Young Hee Museum of Korean Culture

Friday, November 19, 2010 at 11am

You're really missing out if you haven't seen the fine collection in this museum. Their collection of hanbok (traditional Korean clothing) is unmatched. In addition to antique and contemporary hanbok, you will see Korean furnishings, ornaments, and much more. We'll be generously treated to a private tour by the director, Jong Suk Sung. We'll have lunch after the tour in one of the many fine Korean restaurants in Korea Town.

KOREAN ART SOCIETY PRESS

KAS continues to receive extensive press coverage. Here are just a few examples. Much more can be seen on our site's Press page (www.koreanartsociety.org/Press).

치우천황을 발굴해 낸 민속학계의 거인 고 조자용 박사



한국일보매거진

JAN 25, 2010

커버스토리



1 속리산 예밀레 마술관 내 한 전시물, 2 기인의 풍모 를 가졌던 고 조자용 박사의 강의 모습. 3 조자용 박사

그는 우선 외모에서부터 기인의 분위기를 물씬 풍겼다. 180cm가 넘는 우 람한 체격에 백발과 긴 수염을 기른 그가 그 큰 몸에서 뿜어져 나오는 열 정으로 민속 예술에 대한 강연을 할 때는 모두 빨려 들어갈 수밖에 없었 다. 평생에 걸쳐 민속을 연구하고 사재를 털어 속라산내에 박물관을 세우 는 등 한국민속 예술 발전에 큰 업적을 남겼으면서도 일반인들에게 거의 알려지지 않은 고 '조자용' 박사다. 10주기를 맞는 올해 뉴욕의 코리아 아 트 소사이어티(회장 로버트 털리)가 뉴욕에서 조자용 박사 알리기 활동을 활발하게 펼치고 있다. 1,200명이 넘는 회원들을 대상으로 하는 월간 저널 에 66페이지에 달하는 소개글을 싣고, 1월 30일 속리산에서 열리는 추모 행사에도 참가한다.

뉴욕에서 한국 고미술을 가장 넓게 거래하고 있는 아트 달러이기도 한 로 버트 털리 회장은 "한국 민속 예술을 공부할 때마다 그가 얼마나 중요한



인물인지 재삼 발견한다. 신기한 건 내 주위 의 한국인 대부분 그에 대해 들어본 적도 없 남긴 저서를 모두 소개하기에는 지면이 한정 된 관계로 "어떻게 이런 인물을 전혀 모르고 있었지"라고 생각할 만한 사항만 간단하게 정리한다면, 영정 사진만 보면 영락없이 도 닦은 사람 분위기지만 조자용 박사는 하버드 대(구조공학)음 나온 엘리트 건축가다. 해방 후 한국 건축학계에 큰 족적을 남겼다. 그는 우리에게 친숙하기 그저없는 호랑이(사진 3)

를 비롯한 민화를 대중에게 적극 알린 장본인이다. 그는 73년 '한화 호랑 도'라는 책자를 발간하고 속리산내에 에밀레 미술관을 열어서 '한국 민중 그림(민화) 을 전시했다. 지금은 헌책방에서만 만날 수 있다. 조자용 박사 는 민화뿐 아니라 민예품과 한국의 토박이 도깨비 문양을 캐내서 전시회 를 하고 알리는 데에도 애를 썼다. 2002년 한일월드컵 때 붉은 악마가 혼 들던 깃발에 새져진, 그 유명한 치우천황 문양도 조자용 박사가 모아서 세 상에 다시 알린 것이다. 어떤 이들은 그래서 그를 '도깨비 박사' 라고 부르 며 "2년만 더 사셨어도 당신이 온 삶을 바쳐 해온 일이 젊은이들에게 새로 운 문화로 거듭 태어난 모습을 보며 기쁨의 눈물을 흘릴 수 있었을 것"이 라고 아쉬워한다.

그와 가까웠던 감기자(테레사 김)박사는 조자용 박사를 이렇게 회상한다. "그는 절대 건조한 학자풍이 아니었습니다. 예술에 대해 말할 때는 옆 사 람을 전염시키는 열정으로, 단지 글쓰고 책 읽는 것이 공부가 아니라고 늘 강조했습니다. 예술 안에서 숨쉬고, 느끼며 살아야 한다는 것이죠. 그래서 다는 것이다"라고 아쉬워했다. 그의 활동과 속 좁고 자신이 아는 것만을 내세우는 엘리트 학자와 관료들을 정말로 싫 어했습니다. " 그는 엘리트 문화에 비해 천대받던 무속과 민속의 숨겨진 가치를 알아봤다. 이를 알리고 전파하기 위해 자신의 열린 예술관이 담긴 에밀레 미술관을 사재를 털어 만들었다. 이 공간이 "제대로 관리되지 않고 지방자치단체에서도 전혀 관심을 두고 있지 않고 있다"고 한 방문자는 안 타까워했다. 대한민국에서 늘 접하는 풍경이다.

> 그에 대한 특집 자료와 사진을 원하는 독자는 robert@koreanartsociety.org 로 요청하면 된다.

The Segye Times

제 72

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20 2010

코리아 아트 소사이어티 회원들

뉴저지 뉴왁 미술관 단체관람

뉴욕시 소재 문화예술단체들이 소 장중인 한국 고미술품 관람행시를 주기적으로 갖고 있는 코리아아트 리)는 19일(금) 뉴저지주 뉴왁미술 관 단체관람회를 가졌다.

뉴왁미술관 아시안아트 담당 큐레 날 행사에는 한국고미술품 관련 전 문가 및 한국고미술품 애호가 30여

명이 참석했다. 뉴왁미술관은 특히 귀중한 한국민속화와 도자기를 다 수 소장하고 있는 곳으로 유명하다. 소사이어티(KAS, 관장 로버트 털 가장 유명한 것은 고려상감청자매 병. 미술관이 100년 이상 소장해 온 이 고려청자는 수많은 서적에 실려 많은 이들이 눈에 익숙할 뿐만 아니 이터인 캐터린 폴 박사가 안내한 이 라, 고미술품 전문가들로부터 상감 청자 가운데 세계에서 가장 빼어난 것으로 평가받고 있다.



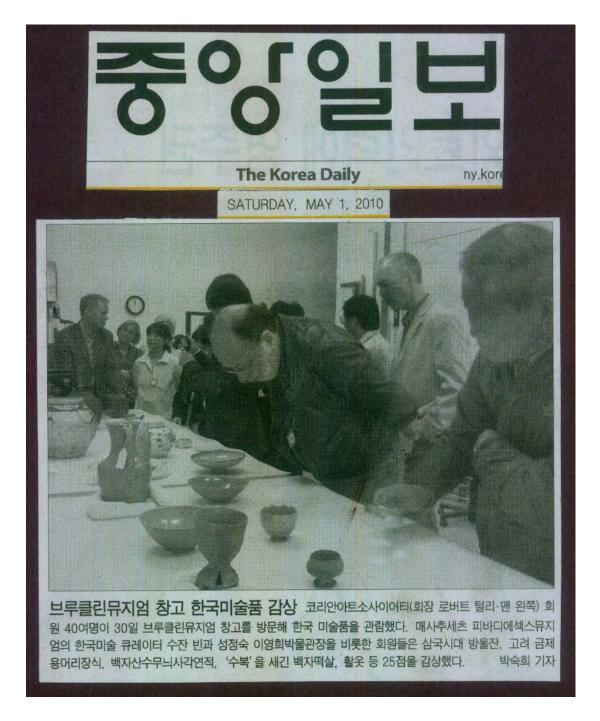
코리아아트 소사이어티는 19일 뉴저지 뉴왹미술관 단체관람행사를 가졌다.

제

THE KOREAN NEW YORK DAILY



코리안 아트 소사이어티 방한 코리안 아트 소사이어티(회장 로 버트 털리)는 최근 한국을 방문, 코디크리아 파운데이션과 파트너십을 맺고 한국 아트와 문화를 증진하는 일에 협력을 다짐했다. 코리아 파운데이션은 세계 곳곳의 주요 박물관에 한국 갤러리들이 영구적으로 오픈될 수 있도록 노력하고 있다. 관계자들이 서울 중구에 위치한 코리아 파운데이션 문화센터에 함께하고 있다. 〈사진제공=코리안 아트 소사이어티〉





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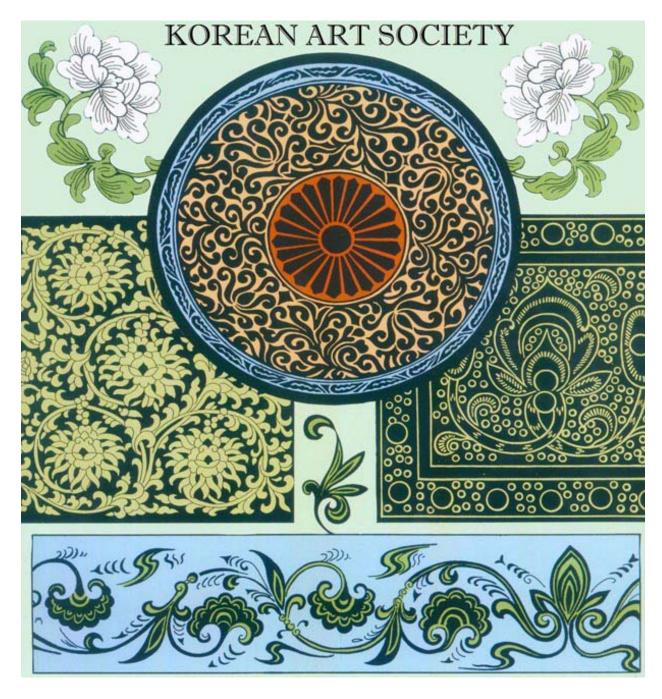
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