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**SABANGBUL DURING THE CHOSŎN
DYNASTY**
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST IMAGES
AND RITUALS

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in History of Art

2011

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Declaration for PhD thesis

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ABSTRACT

This research features the motif of *sabangbul* in Chosŏn Buddhist art, visualized in elaborate relief sculptures and paintings as well as complex interior/exterior structural designs integrated into monastic precinct. This research is also dedicated to studying rituals and ritual performance as well as artistic representation in Korean Buddhism by examining the prevalence and the significance of the Four Directional Buddhas. *Sabangbul* consistently changes its face and appears in diverse forms of Korean Buddhist art including paintings, sculpture, architecture, relic veneration, and ritual implements, revealing its manifold meanings in Korean Buddhist art. The motif was also able to take on a different meaning depending on the activity being performed in Korean Buddhism over the centuries. From the reasons the images of the Four Directional Buddhas connote more diverse meanings than any other Buddha images do in Korean Buddhist art.

This study aims at an appreciation of historical diversity and local difference in Buddhist thought and practice in Korea, while at the same time drawing upon textual sources and art historical and archaeological evidence across many cultures for the broader interpretation of the motif. In this process, this research includes materials examined neither in Korea nor in the West. This paper will demonstrate the interesting comparisons between Korean Buddhism moulded by the natives into the particular religion and Buddhism as a religion more generally defined.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the time Buddhism was introduced into Korea, Buddhism has been subject to regionalization there. Because Korea practised different forms of Buddhism, it developed distinct regional characters. Accordingly, Korean Buddhist art has developed distinctly Korean forms which reflect native artistic traditions and cultural differences. The theme of *sabangbul* 四方佛, or Four Directional Buddhas, which basically symbolizes the four cardinal directions, presents itself as a fascinating case study of the evolution of the Buddhist religion as a regional development in Korea. Because of their specific icons, *sabangbul* have a particular significance in the study of Korean Buddhist art.

1. Definition of the Term: Innumerable Buddhas in Mahāyāna Buddhism

At the outset, it might be of some value to discuss the term *sabangbul*. Since its usage has varied over the centuries its concept needs to be defined. Throughout the history of Korean Buddhist art, there have been various periods when *sabangbul* were represented. The iconography of four Buddhas assembled in a group first appeared during the Three Kingdoms period (57BCE-668CE). It enjoyed popularity as a cult image, particularly in state Buddhism, from the sixth century onward. During this period, the typical configuration of the *sabangbul* iconography was a group of four Buddhas—in most cases, Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Amitābha, and Bhaiṣajyaguru, the most popular Buddhas in Korea—on a stone pillar facing towards the four points of the compass (figs. 1-2). In this study, however, *sabangbul* is broadly used to mean an assembly of four Buddhas and its general varieties without reference to any particular Buddhist sect. The concept of *sabangbul* can be applied to various assemblies of multi-Buddhas which include the typical Four Directional Buddhas of the Three Kingdoms period. Variations in the iconography of *sabangbul* images continued

throughout the Chosŏn dynasty 朝鮮 (1392-1910). I have adopted the term for the title of this study since *sabangbul* is the first emerging example and the most frequently expressed format of multi-Buddha assemblies in the history of Korean Buddhist art. Since, in Korea, the majority of multi-Buddha gatherings with more than four Buddhas have originated from the concept of the Four Directional Buddhas, a further confined category of multi-Buddha assemblies can be included within the term *sabangbul*. Buddhas varying in number and identity were gathered, dispersed, and reorganized in the assemblies over the course of history. Furthermore, the term has acquired different implications over the course of history. The shift in the meaning of the term is closely related to the formation and growth of the concept.

A. Buddhist Cosmology

As the term indicates, the image of *sabangbul* principally provides multiple images for worship and prayer. Thus *sabangbul* icons constitute dense symbolism and offer multiple layers of religious meanings inherent in the object in question. Without a doubt, the various divinities in these assemblies reflect the complicated pantheon of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mahāyāna thought posits not just one Buddha, but many Buddhas throughout the universe.¹ Śākyamuni is the primary figure in Buddhism and the founder of the religion. However, the idea that the Buddha meant Śākyamuni alone was soon negated, even in pre-Mahāyāna tradition.² The uniqueness of Śākyamuni Buddha is denied first by the idea of the Seven Buddhas of the Past who preceded the historical Buddha: Vipāśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni.³ In the Buddhist cosmology, this is presented in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions.

¹ Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins*, trans. Gaynor Sekimori, (Tōkyō: Kōsei Publishing Co., 1997), 114.

² Akira Sadakata, 127.

³ Alexander Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1959), 198.

Along with Buddhas of the past, we can also conceive of Buddhas of the future, the most important of which is Maitreya, who appears in this world 5.6 billion years after Śākyamuni's death.⁴ Twenty-eight previous Buddhas are mentioned in a Pāli canon, and Śākyamuni Buddha is simply the Buddha who has appeared in our world age.⁵ These revered Buddhas include the twenty-eight Buddhas plus Maitreya Bodhisattva, the future (and twenty-ninth) Buddha. Furthermore, the twenty-eight Buddhas are not the only Buddhas believed to have existed. The *Larger Sukhāvāṭī-vyūha Sūtra* mentions fifty-three Buddhas who made their appearance while Amitābha Buddha was still training.⁶ As Mahāyāna developed, the Buddhas of the past grew in number.⁷ Theoretically, the number of Buddhas who have existed is enormous, and they are often collectively known under the name of "Thousand Buddhas."⁸ In Buddhist texts the word thousand is taken to represent a countless multitude. The doctrine of the Three Thousand Buddhas, one thousand for each of the past, present and future aeons, is a reference to the same concept: there have been innumerable Buddhas in the past, and other Buddhas will arise in the future. Crucially, according to this view, there are not only multiple Buddhas but also innumerable Buddhas in the infinite course of time.

Another key element of Mahāyāna cosmology is the premise that the Buddha is omnipresent in our own realm.⁹ The multiplicity of the Buddhas illustrates the concept of the universal nature of enlightenment. Here the historical Śākyamuni Buddha is just

⁴ Akira Sadakata, 128.

⁵ The *Buddhavamsa*, for example, is a text which describes the life of Gautama Buddha and the twenty-seven Buddhas who preceded him. It is a fairly short work in verse, in 28 chapters, detailing aspects of the life of Gautama Buddha and the twenty-four preceding Buddhas. Chapter 27 of this text summarizes all twenty-five of these Buddhas; it also mentions three Buddhas that preceded Dīpankara as well as the future Buddha, Metteyya. Horner, I.B. (trans.), *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon (Part III)*: 2nd edition (Bristol: Pali Text Society, 1975; reprinted 2000), 96-97.

⁶ *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter T.) 360. 266c24-267a.

⁷ Akira Sadakata, 127.

⁸ Akira Sadakata, 128.

⁹ Akira Sadakata, 143.

one of innumerable enlightened beings throughout the cosmos.¹⁰ This process produced a world extended through the infinity of space. According to the Mahāyāna “cosmology of innumerable,” as W. Randolph Kloetzli terms it in *Buddhist Cosmology*, there are countless Buddhas presiding over infinite universes, and these are often represented as the ten quarters of universe.¹¹ Kloetzli argues, “Just as the appearance of the Buddhas in the pre-Mahāyāna period was linked to the passage of time, the Buddhas which appear in the cosmology of innumerable are associated with the directions or points of space and are referred to as the Buddhas of the ten regions.”¹² This coincides with the fundamental principle of Mahāyāna Buddhism that Buddha exists everywhere and always.¹³ The *Lotus Sūtra*, which speaks of an eternal Buddha of whom the historical Buddha is no more than a single manifestation, illustrates a sense of timelessness and the inconceivable, and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* expresses the idea that numerous Buddhas exist simultaneously in the universe, often using large numbers and measurements of time and space.¹⁴ In the vision set out in Buddhist cosmology which deals with space-time relationships, the eternal Buddha in a ceaseless cycle is portrayed as having various other emanations, which are the Buddhas of various realms, and the powers of the Buddha are repeatedly described as being immense, incalculable, and inconceivable.¹⁵

B. *Trikāya*: Three Bodies Doctrines

Various other aspects of the Buddha also developed within Buddhism. The profusion of Buddhas made some kind of systemization necessary. These speculations

¹⁰ J. Ph. Vogel states, “A very remarkable development in the early history of Buddhism” is what we may call the multiplication of its founder. J. Ph. Vogel, “The Past Buddhas and Kaa’syapa in Indian Art and Epigraphy,” *Asiatica* 65 (1954): 808.

¹¹ W. Randolph Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology: From Single World to Pure Land: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light* (Dehli; Varanasi; Panta: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 5.

¹² Kloetzli, 92.

¹³ Akira Sadakata, 143.

¹⁴ Akira Sadakata, 143.

¹⁵ Kloetzli, 91.

led to differing theories of *buddhakāya*.¹⁶ The early Indian Buddhist schools had formulated the two-body theory (*rūpakāya* and *dharmakāya*) earlier than *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* by Nāgārjuna.¹⁷ While the *rūpakāya* portrays the physical aspect of the Buddha, *dharmakāya* refers to the Buddha's spiritual attainments.¹⁸ In Mahāyāna the idea of the Buddha and his dhārma evolved into a more elaborate system called the *trikāya* (K: *samsinbul* 三身佛, three bodies of Buddha) which describes the Buddhas as having three bodies: the body of manifestation (*nirmāṇakāya*) which manifests itself in time and space; the reward body (*saṃbhogakāya*) which is a body of bliss; and the absolute, or Law, body (*dharmakāya*) which embodies the very principle of enlightenment and knows no limits or boundaries.¹⁹ The *trikāya* theory is one of the fundamental Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings.

***Dharmakāya* (K: *pöbsin* 法身)**

The Sanskrit *dharmakāya* is defined as “Buddha-body of Reality...the ultimate nature or essence of the enlightened mind.”²⁰ The *dharmakāya* is a central idea in Mahāyāna Buddhism forming part of the *trikāya* doctrine that was possibly first expounded in the earliest Mahāyāna literature the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñā-pāramitā* (*The perfection of insight in eight thousand verses*), composed in the first century BCE. On the basis of Mahāsāṃghika Buddhology, Mahāyānists totally accepted the

¹⁶ Ruben L. F. Habito, “Trikāya Doctrine in Buddhism,” *Buddhist Christian Studies* 6 (1986): 54. (53-62).

¹⁷ Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from early Buddhism to the trikaya theory* (Oxon, UK; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 19, 21. Guang Xing's outstanding research analyzes a Buddhist development from the historical Gautama Buddha, a human being, to the philosophical concept of *trikāya*, particularly the *saṃbhogakāya*, within India.

Among the early Indian Buddhist schools, the Sarvāstivāda formulated the concept of the two-body theory: the *rūpakāya* and the *dharmakāya*. In the early Pāli canon, especially Sarvāstivāda texts, the historical Buddha is closely identified with the dhārma which he realized through and taught. Habito, 54; Guang Xing, 35-6.

¹⁸ Guang Xing, 52.

According to the Sarvāstivādins, although endowed with perfect, physical attributes of the Buddha, the *rūpakāya* is impure. On the contrary, the Mahāsāṃghikas, another early Indian school, whose religious philosophy was more based on faith than on reason, viewed the *rūpakāya* of the Buddha pure.

¹⁹ Akira Sadakata, 128.

²⁰ Padmasambhava (composed), Karma Linga (revealed), Gyurme Dorje (translated), Graham Coleman (Editor) and Thupten Jinpa (Associate), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2006), p.452.

transcendental concept of the Buddha.²¹ The eternal aspect of Buddha is the *dharmakāya* as a personified being of wisdom and compassion.²² Since the dhārma is transcendental, totally beyond space and time, the *dharmakāya* is the essence of buddhahood itself. In the Mahāyāna concept of the Buddha, the true and eternal Buddha who pervades the entire cosmos is the fundamental Buddha, transcending all forms and limits, pure abstraction.²³ This concept of the *dharmakāya* became the embodiment of an all embracing principle of the Mahāyāna philosophy. The *dharmakāya* is the source of other bodies; it takes shape in the manifestation and reward bodies.²⁴

***Nirmāṇakāya* (K: *hwasin* 化身)**

Buddhas who are manifestations of the “inconceivable” *dharmakāya* are called *nirmāṇakāya*. It was only in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* that the term *nirmāṇakāya* became widely used.²⁵ According to the *Avataṃsaka*, the *buddhakāya* is depicted as having two aspects: first, *dharmakāya*, the real Buddha pervading the cosmos; second, it includes the various kinds of manifested bodies, of which the *nirmāṇakāya* is one, in accordance with the inclination of sentient beings.²⁶ According to the *Avataṃsaka*, the Buddha can manifest an ocean of *nirmāṇakāya* as atoms of infinite Buddha lands even from one pore of his bodily hairs, which fill up the whole universe.²⁷ The *nirmāṇakāya*

²¹ Like some Indian schools, Mahāsāṃghika had a view of an idealized, deified, and transcendental Buddha with superhuman character. The doctrinal formulations of these schools were the basis for subsequent development of the *trikāya* doctrine by the Mahāyānists. Guang Xing, 53, 59-61.

²² Habito, 55.

²³ Akira Sadakata, 154. Mahāvairocana is the Law body and the supreme existence, especially for followers of the Japanese Shingon sect. The body of manifestation is the Buddha in humane form.

²⁴ Akira Sadakata, 129.

²⁵ T. 9, 726c. The development of the concept of the Buddha in the early and middle Mahāyāna literature reached its climax in the *Avataṃsaka* before the formulation of the *trikāya* theory.

The idea of *rūpakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* is expressed in early Mahāyāna sūtras such as *Prajñāpāramitā*, however the terms were rarely used. It was not until the third century with Dharmarakṣa’s translation of the *Rulaixingxian jing* [*Sūtra on the Appearance of the Tathāgata*], which corresponds to chapter 32 (on the appearance of the Ratnarājā Tathāgata) of the *Avataṃsaka* in which that the term *nirmāṇakāya* with full connotations appeared. Guang Xing, 139-140.

²⁶ Guang Xing, 139-140.

²⁷ T. 278, 726c.

is a mere manifestation for the sake of sentient beings,²⁸ and the historical Śākyamuni Buddha is the earthly embodiment of this transhistorical Buddha.²⁹ It is in the *Brahmajāla Sūtra* that Śākyamuni is considered the *nirmāṇakāya* of Vairocana while Vairocana is considered the *saṃbhogakāya*.³⁰

The development of the concept of the *dharmakāya* in later Mahāyāna sūtras has emphasized two aspects: philosophical and salvific.³¹ The religious aspect of the *dharmakāya* is emphasized through its salvific power. The eternal *dharmakāya* can deliver sentient beings from their suffering due to its numerous manifestations.³² For the purpose of saving sentient beings, the supernatural power of the Buddha is further emphasized. According to the Mahāsāṃghika concept of the Buddha, the true Buddha who is omniscient and omnipresent liberates sentient beings by means of manifested forms with skilful means.³³ This idea of the salvific aspect of the *dharmakāya* is repeatedly expressed throughout many Mahāyāna texts, especially *Avataṃsaka*.³⁴

***Saṃbhogakāya* (K: *posin* 報身)**

The salvific aspect of the *dharmakāya* is later assigned to the *saṃbhogakāya* and the *nirmāṇakāya*. The transition from two-body theory to the three-body theory was made possible by the doctrine of the multifarious Buddhas of different realms whose

²⁸ T. 278, 726c.

²⁹ Habito, 55.

³⁰ Guang Xing, 141.

The *Brahmajāla Sūtra* (K: *Pōmmang kyōng* 梵網經) states that Śākyamuni was originally named Vairocana, abiding in a lotus platform with a thousand petals in which there are a hundred million Sumerus (Mt. Meru), a hundred million suns and moons, and a hundred million Śākyamuni is sitting under *bodhi* tree preaching the bodhisattva doctrine. T. 1484, 997c.

³¹ Habito, 56.

³² Guang Xing, 83.

³³ Guang Xing, 53.

The Mahāsāṃghikas are the originators of the idea of the *nirmāṇakāya*, and the manifested forms can have many embodiments (the theory of numerous Buddhas existing in other worlds.). Thus Mahāsāṃghikas believed that Śākyamuni was not the real Buddha but a manifestation through skilful means for the sake of sentient beings. Mahāsāṃghikas had already conceived of the idea of *nirmāṇakāya* at a very early stage although they never used the term. Many scholars, thus, look to the Mahāsāṃghika branch for the initial development of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Paul Williams, *Buddhism: Critical concepts in religious studies*, vol. 3, *The Origins and Nature of Mahāyāna Buddhism: Some Mahāyāna religious topics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 182; Guang Xing, 65-6, 141.

³⁴ Guang Xing, 83.

existence is already assumed in the various Mahāyāna sūtras.³⁵ As a result, numerous contemporaneous Buddhas came into existence, each one presiding over their own particular world.³⁶ The supernatural qualities of the physical body (*rūpakāya*) were further developed in the Mahāyāna sūtras when the Mahāyānists attributed the Buddha's immeasurable merit to long and arduous bodhisattva practice, another major development in Mahāyāna Buddhism.³⁷ A good example of the reward body is Amitābha who made 48 vows to save beings, including one that promised salvation to any person who called his name. He practiced as a bodhisattva in life after life until he eventually attained buddhahood. Another example of the reward body is Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Healing, who also makes vows and has his own Pure Land. An infinite number of suffering sentient beings necessitate innumerable Buddhas and innumerable bodhisattvas who are about to become Buddhas throughout the infinite universes.³⁸ Consequently, the *saṃbhogakāya* encompasses "celestial" Buddhas of different realms who are venerated by all Mahāyāna schools, in particular Pure Land Buddhism. These *saṃbhogakāya* realms known as Buddha-fields or Pure Lands (*buddhakṣetra*) refer not only to the Pure Land in which Buddhas reside, but also the land in which the Buddha performs his Buddha activities to liberate sentient

³⁵ Habito, 56. The term *saṃbhogakāya*, denoting the body of enjoyment of the Buddha, not found in the early Buddhist literature, but first appeared in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*. According to Habito and J. Makransky, it was in this text that the earliest systematic explanation of the *trikāya* doctrine was formulated. Habito, 58.

³⁶ Belief in the simultaneous existence of many Buddhas in different lands came into being very early, predating the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and was probably developed by the Mahāsāṃghika school. In the Mahāsāṃghika *Lokānuvartana Sūtra* (a text ascribed to the Mahāsāṃghikas), it is stated, "The Buddha knows all the dhārmās of the countless Buddhas of the ten directions." Mahāyānists further developed this idea and formulated the concept of *saṃbhogakāya*. Guang Xing, 62-66; Terensina Rowell, "The background and early use of the Buddhakṣetra concept," *The Eastern Buddhist* 6, no.4 (1935): 414-431.

³⁷ The Mahāsāṃghikas idealized the Buddha and attributed many supernatural qualities to him over the course of time. Mahāyānists accepted the transcendental and superhuman aspects of the Buddhas already advocated by the Mahāsāṃghika, one of the early Indian Buddhist schools. Guang Xing, 53-4, 101; Bibhuti Baruah, *Buddhist Sects and Sectarianism* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2008), 48.

³⁸ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge 1989), 224.

beings.³⁹ Among many scholars who have discussed the origins of Buddha-lands, Jan Nattier states that it was a “logical” necessity of the bodhisattva ideal.⁴⁰

The concept of *saṃbhogakāya* probably originated with the Mahāyāna emphasis on the merit of the Buddha as a reward for the meritorious deeds of bodhisattva practice through countless lives. Based on this speculation, the Buddha (*saṃbhogakāya*) was sanctified and deified with all the supernatural attributes as a reward for his bodhisattva practice.⁴¹ Here the formulation of the notion of *saṃbhogakāya* is a decisive element, and it takes an important and central position in the *trikāya* theory.⁴² The introduction of the *saṃbhogakāya* conceptually fits between the *dharmakāya* and the *rūpakāya*, now renamed *nirmāṇakāya*.⁴³ The double character of *saṃbhogakāya*, as Nagao Gadjin has pointed out, is most probably a solution to the complex problem concerning the physical body (*rūpakāya*) of the Buddha, and it also concretizes the absolute (the theory of *dharmakāya*).⁴⁴ The soteriological power of the Buddha has been further enlarged through the important and fundamental doctrinal developments of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Habito is of the opinion that, with the rise of the Mahāyāna, prominent celestial Buddhas like Bhaiṣajyaguru, Akṣobhya, Amitābha, and Vairocana Buddha emerged to fulfil a salvific role on behalf of suffering living beings.⁴⁵ The Buddha is now viewed as an omnipresent divinity endowed with numerous supernatural attributes and qualities.⁴⁶

In the course of time, the emergence of these various views of Buddhas, including postulation of Buddhas into the past and future, deification of Buddhas with

³⁹ Guang Xing, 171.

⁴⁰ Jan Nattier, “The Realm of Akṣobhya: A Missing Piece in the History of Pure Land Buddhism,” *Journal of International Buddhist Studies* 23, no. 1: 89-90.

⁴¹ Guang xing, 103; Habito, 54.

⁴² Habito, 56.

⁴³ Guang Xing, 101.

⁴⁴ Nagao Gadjin, “On the Theory of Buddha-body (Buddhakāya),” *Eastern Buddhist* 6, no. 1: 25-53.

⁴⁵ Habito, 1986, 54.

⁴⁶ Guang Xing, 1.

superhuman qualities, and multiplication of Buddhas of different realms, made it necessary to have a theoretical formulation such as the *buddhakāya* doctrine.⁴⁷ The *trikāya* theory is a result of the complex development of Mahāyāna thought in the third or fourth century. As with earlier Buddhist thought, all three forms of the Buddha teach the same dhārma, but take on different forms to expound the truth.⁴⁸ These new concepts added new dimensions to the notion of the Buddha and expanded its connotations. From early to middle Mahāyāna sūtras we can see that the concept of the Buddha developed considerably, acquiring many transcendental qualities and attributes such as magical light and salvific power.⁴⁹ Habito relates the historical development and the theoretical structure of this doctrine of the threefold-body of the Buddha to the soteriological dimension of Buddhism.⁵⁰ These qualities were expanded and strengthened as Mahāyānist theories developed.

We shall now turn our attention to the Mahāyāna cosmology that consists of innumerable Buddha-lands throughout the universe.⁵¹ One of the most important Mahāyāna doctrines is the concept of innumerable Buddhas in an infinite universe to save sentient beings.⁵² The evolution of the Mahāyāna pantheon and proliferation of Buddhas are typified in the Mahāyāna teachings of the plurality of Buddha-lands through the ten quarters of universe, each of which is ruled over by a Buddha.⁵³ Major Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*,⁵⁴ *Lotus Sūtra*,⁵⁵ and *Amitābha Sūtra*⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Habito, 54-55.

⁴⁸ The Three Bodies of the Buddha from the point of view of Zen Buddhist thought are not to be taken as absolute, literal, or materialistic; they are expedient means that “are merely names or props” and only the play of light and shadow of the mind. Irmgard Schloegl, *The Zen Teaching of Rinzai* (Berkeley: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1976), 21.

⁴⁹ Guang Xing, 181.

⁵⁰ Habito, 54-55.

⁵¹ Akira Sadakata, 113-114.

⁵² Chang Ch’eng-chi, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1972), 48.

⁵³ Kloetzli, 4, 23, 56, 99; Takaaki Sawa, *Art in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism*, trans. Richard L. Gage (Tōkyō: Waetherhill; Heibonsha, 1972), 9.

⁵⁴ T. 293 (40 fascicles *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*), 844b-848b; T. 278 (60 fascicles *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*), 677c-679a; T. 279 (80 fascicles *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*), 320c-322b. Interestingly, the names of the Buddhas in the ten quarters of the infinite universe are different in the three sūtras.

teach that there are innumerable Buddhas and Pure Lands.⁵⁷ The most prominent and best known of all is the Pure Land of Sukhāvātī of Amitābha.⁵⁸ The Saha world seems to be the Buddha-land of Śākyamuni. It is not, however, a “pure land,” but rather a defiled realm quite distinct from the Buddha-lands, in which Śākyamuni manifests himself in human form to sentient beings.⁵⁹ The fifth chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* titled “Lotus Matrix World (*Hwajang segye pum* 華藏世界品)” discusses the Mahāyāna conception of the universe as a lotus flower containing countless realms, each with its own Buddha (fig. 3).⁶⁰ The cosmology of the Lotus Matrix World graphically depicts the Buddha’s multiplicity and all-pervading presence.⁶¹

Not only do Buddhas have their Pure Lands: bodhisattvas have them also.⁶² Similar to Buddha-lands, though not strictly identical, is the Tuṣita heaven, one of the six heavens of the realm of desire and the dwelling place of bodhisattvas prior to their appearance on earth as Buddhas.⁶³ At present Bodhisattva Maitreya, the future Buddha, now resides in the Tuṣita heaven, waiting to appear on earth. His cult, which grew for those who sought rebirth in that heaven, was extremely popular in East Asia. Another place resembling Buddha-lands is Mount Potalaka, said to be located in the sea south of

⁵⁵ T. 262, 33b, 34a.

⁵⁶ T. 366, 346c, 347b-348a.

⁵⁷ Often, the terms “dust-mote” and “grains of sand in the Ganges River” are used as a simile to represent the infinite number of Buddhas in these sūtras.

⁵⁸ Although there are numerous discussions in Mahāyāna sūtras concerning the plurality of Buddha-lands throughout the universe, the Western Pure Land (Skt: *sukhāvātī*) of Amitābha Buddha is the most prominent among all the various Buddha-lands. However, the sūtras of Pure Land Buddhism continually emphasize that Amitābha’s Western Pure Land is one among a limitless number. Despite this monotheistic trend in the development of Pure Land Buddhist idea, the followers of the esoteric school of China and Japan regard Vairocana as the supreme and universal Buddha. William Montgomery McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy: Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 2000), 71.

⁵⁹ Kloetzli, 6.

⁶⁰ T. 279, 39a.

According to the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, for example, Vairocana is said to reside in the “Lotus Matrix World” (K: *yōnhwajang segye* 蓮華藏世界), which is surrounded by one thousand petals, each constituting a separate world with its own emanation of Vairocana in the form of Śākyamuni; each of these one thousand worlds further contains ten billion worlds, each again with its own Śākyamuni.

⁶¹ Akira Sadakata, 144.

⁶² Akira Sadakata, 130.

⁶³ Akira Sadakata, 114.

India, where Avalokiteśvara dwells. Local versions of this name are to be found in many places in China, Korea, and Japan.⁶⁴ Kṣitigarbha, known for his vow to deliver all sentient beings from their suffering until all hells are emptied, is regarded as the supreme lord of the Underworld.

It is difficult to overstate the role which the plurality of *buddhakṣetra* plays throughout nearly every phase of the development of the Korean *sabangbul* idea. The advent of *sabangbul* and its popularity are not unrelated to the popularity of Pure Land Buddhism in Korea. Kim Hongnam has powerfully argued that the concept of the Pure Lands of the four directions of Mahāyāna Buddhism is the most persuasive and critical doctrinal base in support of the identification of the four Buddhas of the *sabangbul* objects.⁶⁵ Since the term *buddhakṣetra* refers to the land in which the Buddha performs his Buddha activities to liberate sentient beings, as well as the Pure Land in which Buddhas reside,⁶⁶ the coalition of numerous Buddhas in an assembly may enhance the magical aspect and salvific power of the Buddhas with transcendental qualities and attributes.

In the Mahāyāna sūtras, not only are Buddhas innumerable, but the universe encompasses realms of bodhisattvas, minor gods, devas, and other mythological beings, requiring numerous dimensions to contain them. One interesting feature, as we shall see in the following chapters, is that bodhisattvas or even minor deities can even replace the position of prominent Buddhas in Korean *sabangbul* groups. Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other deities with their superior power and qualities are available and willing to relate to human being and human concerns. This is the most interesting and unusual feature of Korean *sabangbul* works. The Guardians of the Directions (Skt:

⁶⁴ For example, Mount Futara (also called Nikkō) in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, is a form of Potalaka, and Lhasa, Tibet, the palace of the Dalai Lama, is called Potala. Akira Sadakata, 130.

⁶⁵ Kim Hongnam, *The Story of a Painting: A Korean Buddhist treasure from the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1991), 20.

⁶⁶ Guang Xing, 171.

Dikpāla) are the deities who rule the specific directions of space according to Hinduism. In Indian mythology, the four Lokapālas, or Four Heavenly Kings (Skt: Cāturmahārajika),⁶⁷ are the guardians of the four directions, each of whom dwells in and protects one of the four continents surrounding Mt. Meru (K: *sumi-san* 須彌山) which is at the centre of the universe (henceforth known as the Cosmic Mountain, the axis of the universe).⁶⁸ Originating in India, the four guardians were later adopted into the Buddhist pantheon and moved to China and elsewhere in Asia around the sixth century CE.⁶⁹ The four appear in numerous scriptures, including the popular *Lotus Sūtra*, translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva 350-410, and the *Golden Light Sūtra* (K: *Kūṃgangmyōṅ kyōṅ* 金光明經, also known as *Kūṃgangmyōṅ ch'oesūngwang kyōṅ* 金光明最勝王經), translated by Dharmakṣema (385-433) in the early fifth century, by Baogui 寶貴 in the late sixth century, and by Chinese monk Yijing 義淨 (635-713). In the *Lotus Sūtra*, they vow to protect those who believe in the dhārma.⁷⁰ The *Golden Light Sūtra* teaches that rulers who worship this sūtra will win the protection of the four guardian kings in safeguarding the nation and benefiting its people.⁷¹ The *Golden Light Sūtra* was one of three texts of great influence for protecting the nation in ancient Korea and Japan. The so-called “three scriptures for

⁶⁷ For the symbolic meaning of the Cāturmahārajikas, see Adalbert J. Gail. “Cosmical Symbolism in the Spire of the Ceylon Dagoba,” in *The Stūpa: its religious, historical, and architectural significance*, ed. Anne L. Dellapiccola and Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980), 262.

⁶⁸ Akira Sadakata, 114; Kloetzli, 24, 43.

The single, circular world system, or the “*cakravāla* cosmology,” found in the Pāli texts as well as the Buddhist Sanskrit literature, is a prominent feature of the Hindu and Jain cosmologies, though with many important differences in detail. The mountain located in the centre of this single world is Mt. Meru, with which a series of seven circular mountain ranges are arranged concentrically, and in the ocean surrounding the mountain there are four continents inhabited by humans.

⁶⁹ One of the earliest representations of the four in China, dated to the late sixth century, coinciding with an increased acceptance of Buddhism, is from the Dunhuang Caves (Cave 428). Another early example is a gigantic stone statue of Vaiśravaṇa (K: Tamunch'ōnwang 多聞天王) located at the Longmen Grottoes (Fengxian Temple 奉先寺) in China, completed circa 672-675 CE.

⁷⁰ In the *Lotus Sūtra*, they appear in the “Dhāraṇī” (Chapter 26), with Dhṛtarāṣṭra of the east (K: Chigukch'ōnwang 持國天王) and Vaiśravaṇa of the north pledging on behalf of all four to protect those who embrace the sūtra's teachings.

⁷¹ T. 663, 340c-344c; T. 665, 427b-432c; T. 1788, 287c-296b.

protecting the state” are the *Golden Light Sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (K: *Inwang kyōng* 仁王經).

Since Lokapālas safeguard the Buddha and his realm, in East Asian countries, they are also venerated as temple guardians. Referring to representations of the Lokapālas within a monastic setting, Robert Linrothe argues that, “since each sanctuary represents a ‘realm of the Buddha,’ they also serve to protect the temple in which they are situated, and especially the central group of Buddhas in the main hall, against inimical forces.”⁷² Images of the Lokapālas in full armour, usually placed in pairs at the entrance to the Buddhist monasteries, symbolize their protective function.⁷³ In Korea they are also frequently represented on *śarīra* containers as well as stone pagodas, guarding the Buddha’s relics (fig. 4). However, since Lokapālas, fairly low-ranking gods, are considered to be samsāric beings like many of the worldly protective deities, they are not worshiped or considered as objects of refuge. In contrast to the saintly images of the Buddha and bodhisattva, images of the Buddhist guardians are ferocious and menacing. Their threatening postures and facial expressions are designed to subdue evil spirits and convert nonbelievers. These worldly protectors are invoked to protect monasteries and Buddhist practitioners and to remove obstacles to practice.

In Buddhism, Lokapālas are one of two broad categories of Dharmapāla (protectors of the Buddhist religion). The other category is the Eight Guardians of the Law (Skt: *Dikpāla*; K: *p'albujung* 八部衆). As their collective name suggests, they rule the eight quarters (the cardinal and intermediate directions) of the universe. Originating in earlier Hindu mythology, the Eight Guardians are eight classes of

⁷² Robert Linrothe, *Ruthless compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art* (London: Serindia Publications, 1999a), 20; Dietrich Seckel, *The Art of Buddhism* (New York, 1968), 248.

⁷³ In China and Korea, statues of the four are often placed near temple entrances, but in Japan, effigies of the four are more commonly placed around the central deity on the main altar, e.g. those in Lecture Hall (Kō-dō) at Tō-ji.

celestial deities⁷⁴ who were assimilated into the Buddhist pantheon as protectors of the Buddhist Law. As a group, the Dikpālas, like Lokapālas, are not objects of Buddhist worship but guardians of territory and the directions.⁷⁵ In Korea, representations of the eight figures in stone sculpture can be found in Sökkul-am and the stone pagoda of Chinchön-sa site from the Unified Silla period. They are depicted as protectors of territory as well as of the Buddha's teachings, and often shown in wrathful form with weapons (figs. 5-6).⁷⁶

It is significant that the word four has a spatial symbolism. The four directions can be often used symbolically as an expression of totality. The four directions are highly symbolic and in their condensed form they represent the idea of all the space in the universe. When people worship a *sabangbul* object, they pray not only to the deity in front, but also to the divinities in every direction around them. The concept of *sabangbul* symbolically denotes that Buddha is everywhere and in every direction and that, no matter in what direction you proceed or offer your worship, you will ultimately find him. Such a deliberate positioning of the four Buddhas on the four surfaces of a Silla stone monument can represent a gathering of countless numbers of Buddhas in the universe of infinite expanse. Thus the four Buddhas of the four directions represent the innumerable Buddhas in the infinite universe. The concept of *sabangbul* based on the notion of the infinities of space is a unique Buddhist speculation intended to extend the limit of the universe.

The notion of *sabangbul* originally refers to an assembly of four Buddhas of

⁷⁴ They appear in many texts, including the *Lotus Sūtra*. The names are not fixed so are their attributes depending on Buddhist sūtras. The names of the Dikpālas vary slightly, but generally include the following: 1. Deva. Celestial beings, 6th level of existence; 2. Naga. Serpent-like creatures, including dragons; 3. Yakṣa. Warriors of Fierce Stance, Nature Spirits. Protect Bhaiṣajyaguru; 4. Gandharva. Gods of music, medicine, children; 5. Asura. Demigod, 4th level of existence; 6. Garuḍa. Bird-man, enemy of dragons; 7. Kiṁnara. Celestial musicians and dancers; human form with bird's head; 8. Mahoraga. Serpentine musicians. T. 262,49c; T. 262, 35c; T. 901,799b; T. 380,964b; T. 1024,717c.

⁷⁵ Linrothe, 1999a, 22.

⁷⁶ They are also included in the outer regions of some Esoteric Buddhist maṇḍala, including Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala as it appears in Japan. Linrothe, 1999a, 22.

cardinal directions, but later extended to include numbers other than four. Typically, a centre direction is added in order to make up a total of five, and Vairocana is located to the centre.⁷⁷ In addition to the centre, intermediate points between the four cardinal directions are also taken into consideration in multi-Buddha groups. The four points of the compass are extended into six cardinal directions: north, south, east, west, up (zenith) and down (nadir). The four directions are expanded to include intermediate points of the compass, plus the zenith and nadir, as in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. Here they are referred to as the ten directions. Ten directions is a figurative term referring to all directions, all space in a general sense.⁷⁸ Kloetzli states that “The numerology of tens, hundreds, and thousands is related to speculations regarding the dimensions or limits of the universe.....Just as pre-Mahāyāna cosmology is dominated by the temporal categories of the *kalpa*, the Mahāyāna cosmology is dominated by spatial categories whose focus is the ten regions.”⁷⁹ The expressions of four, five, six, eight and ten directions are interchangeable and represent “everywhere.” In studying the concept of the Four Directional Buddhas, it is necessary to examine the notion that *sabangbul* can be extended into groupings of five, six, eight, ten, twelve Buddhas (and so on) as evidenced in extant *sabangbul* objects.

The notion of *sabangbul* embraces the infinite—the eternity of time and the infinity of space. The question of the omniscience and omnipotence of divine power for salvation occurs naturally within the context of this speculation.⁸⁰ This speculation relied heavily on the multiplication and division of the universe to an unlimited extent of space and time. Accordingly salvation is unlimited by the notion of time and space;

⁷⁷ See pp. 54-56, 60-63 of this thesis.

⁷⁸ Soper argues the idea of infinite space is summarized by ten directions pervaded by an incalculable numbers of Buddhas, one of the bases of Mahāyāna theology. In *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, for example, the number ten signifies an absolute value. In the philosophy of *Avataṃsaka* the number ten is regarded as a perfect number and represents the whole or the innumerable. Soper, 1959, 199-200; Chang Wōn-kyu, “Hwaōm-kyōng ūi sasang ch’egye wa kū chōn’gae,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 7 (1970): 19-22, 51-61.

⁷⁹ Kloetzli, 91, 92.

⁸⁰ Kloetzli, 138.

the unlimited nature of the universe, countless Buddhas, and their unbounded salvation without restrictions of time and space. The view of the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, transcendental Buddha is probably one of the essential factors behind the development of multi-Buddha assemblies. Taken in its broadest sense, the central idea related to *sabangbul* objects produced in Korea explains that Buddha has always and will always exist to lead sentient beings to their salvation. In the formation of *sabangbul*, the power and salvation of the Buddha is limitless and omnipresent, temporally and spatially with no discontinuity.

2. Methodology

Previous studies on *sabangbul* in Korean Buddhist history have focused on a particular period, specific texts, or a single doctrinal concept. Even though details of *sabangbul* iconographies from diverse areas and historical periods have been available, *sabangbul* art has received concentrated attention solely in the study on the remains from the Three Kingdoms (57BCE-668) and Unified Silla 統一新羅 (668-935) periods to which the oldest extant objects of *sabangbul* were dated.⁸¹ Renowned Korean scholars such as Kim Lena, Mun Myongdae, and Chin Hongsop have led the initial interest in the *sabangbul* objects of the Three Kingdoms period. Various studies have described the context, layout, and iconography of the *sabangbul* pillars discovered mainly in the territory of Silla Kingdom 新羅 (57 BCE-935), but less attention has

⁸¹ The following materials have been of use in constructing the outlines of the concept of *sabangbul* of the Chosŏn dynasty:

Mun Myŏng-dae, “Paekche *sabangbul* ūi kiwŏn kwa Yesan sŏkchu *sabangbul* sang ūi yŏn’gu” in *Han’guk pulgyo misulsaron*, ed. Hwang Su-young (Seoul: Minŭm-sa, 1987), 37-71; idem, “Silla *sabangbul* ūi chŏn’gae wa Ch’ilbul-am pulsang chogak ūi yŏn’gu—*Sabangbul* yŏn’gu II,” *Misul charyo* 27 (December, 1980): 1-23; idem, “Silla *sabangbul* ūi kiwŏn kwa Sinin-sa ūi *sabangbul*—Silla *sabangbul* yŏn’gu I,” *Han’guksa yŏn’gu* 18 (1977b): 49-75; Kim Lena, “Kyŏngju Kulbul-sa chi ūi samyŏn sŏkpul e taehayŏ,” *Chindan hakpo* 39 (Apr. 1975): 43-68; Chin Hong-sŏp, “Sabul-san sabul-am kwa Myojŏk-am mae yŏrae chwasang—Silla oak chonghap haksul chosagi 7,” *Kogo misul* 7, no. 9 (Sep. 1966): 225-227; idem, “Yŏngju Sŏkp’o-ri samyŏn sŏkpul,” *Kogo misul* 1, no.1 (Aug. 1960): 1-2; Hwang Su-young and Kim Kil-woong, *Kyŏngju Namsan T’apkok ūi sabangbul-am* (Yangsan, Korea: T’ongdo-sa Sŏungbo Museum, 1990); Kim Kil-woong, “Namsan T’apkok chosanggun e taehayŏ,” *Silla munhwa* 5 (1988): 129-160; Lee Suk-hee, “T’ongil Silla sidae obangbul ūi tosang yŏn’gu,” *Misulsa yŏn’gu* 16 (2002): 3-153; Cho Wŏn-young, “Silla *sabangbul* ūi hyŏngsik kwa chosŏng paegyŏng” *Pudae sahak* 30 (Aug. 2006): 381-421.

been paid to explaining the belief in *sabangbul* in the wider spheres of artistic and religious movements throughout the long period of the Chosŏn dynasty. This is partly due to the rarity of extant works from the period. In addition to the ruthless suppression of religion during the Chosŏn period, a great number of distinctive and valuable early Chosŏn Buddhist works of art were destroyed, while others were dispersed in collections in Japan after the Japanese invaded Chosŏn at the end of sixteenth century. Among the extant Buddhist paintings of the early Chosŏn period, some of which have been rediscovered, are some distinguished representations of directional Buddhas juxtaposed within a single frame or painted separately for a set. Thus more recent studies of Korean Buddhist iconography of the early half of Chosŏn period include discussions of the individual images of the Four Directional Buddhas, in particular of those produced during the regency of the Queen Dowager Munjŏng (1501-1565) in the mid-sixteenth century.⁸² But in practice, there have been few comprehensive and systematic studies on the historical processes of the *sabangbul* imagery from its origins, with the intention of evaluating the iconography of the Four Directional Buddhas in Chosŏn Buddhist art from an integrated point of view.

The composition of a certain group of Buddhas or bodhisattvas and the explicit depiction of the directions in placing the deities may suggest doctrinal significances that should not be overlooked. In this study I shall also examine relevant textual materials in conjunction with the pictorial imagery in order to uncover as many meanings as

⁸² Hong Yun-sik, "Chosŏn ch'ogi Simyun-sa sojang obul hoesangdo e taehayŏ," *Pulgyo hakpo* 29 (Nov. 1992a): 397-413; Pak Eun-kyŏng, "Sin charyo: Chosŏn purhwa," *Munmul yŏn'gu* 2 (Jan. 1999): 109-127; idem, "Chosŏn chŏn'gi ūi kinyŏmbi chŏk in sabang sabul-hwa," *Misulsa nondan* 7, 2/2 (1998): 111-139; idem, "Chosŏn chŏn'gi sŏnmyo purhwa—sun'gŭmhwa," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 206 (June 1995): 5-27; Kim Jung-hee, "Munjŏng wanghu ūi chunghŭng pulsa wa 16 segi ūi wangsil palwŏn purhwa," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 231 (Sep. 2001): 5-39; Noh Se-jin, *16 segi wangsil barwon purhwa ūi yŏn'gu—Munjŏng wanghu sigi ūi purhwa rŭl chungsim ūiro* (MA thesis, Dongguk University, 2001); Kong Kyudŏk, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi simnyun-sa ojon pulhoedo yŏn'gu* (MA thesis, Dongguk University, 2001); Kumagai Nobuo, "Chŏsen butsuga shiryŏ shŭi," *Bukkyŏ geijutsu* 83 (1972): 60-73; idem, "Ryūjō-in zō Yakushi sanzonzu ni tsuite," *Bukkyŏ geijutsu* 69 (Dec. 1968): 56-62; Yamamoto Taiichi, "Richō jidai Buntei ōgō shogan no butsuga ni tsuite," *Kinko sōsho* 2 (1975): 541-560; Takeda Kazuaki, "Hyōgō Jūrin-ji no gobutsuzon zōzu ni tsuite," *Mikkyō zuzō*: 9-22; Horioka Chimyō, "Boston Bijutsukan zo Chōsen butsuga ni tsuite," *Bukkyŏ geijutsu* 83 (1972): 53-59.

possible in the imagery of the Four Directional Buddhas, and to discuss how they are conveyed. I shall re-examine some canonical and non-canonical texts and investigate how they throw light on the meaning of *sabangbul* within the Chosŏn Buddhist history. Here, however, there is one major initial difficulty. The study of the iconography of Korean *sabangbul* is complicated by a common methodological problem. Since many of its images have no clear relationship to texts that might explain their meaning, it is hard to find any correspondence between text and object. To date there is no known Buddhist text that conforms in more than miscellaneous details to the overall iconography of the images of *sabangbul*. Accordingly, no literary sources are available to explain Buddhist practices surrounding *sabangbul* icons. For example, the term *sahoe-t'aeng* 四會幀 (painting of assemblies of four Buddhas) emerges not in any known textual sources but in the votive inscription on a Chosŏn painting of the Four Directional Buddhas commissioned by a member of the royal family in the mid-sixteenth century. Various compositions juxtaposing multiple Buddhas are known in such Buddhist paintings commissioned by the Chosŏn royal court during the same period. Assemblies of various Buddhas within a single frame are designated by the general term, *pulhoedo* 佛繪圖 or *hoebulto* 會佛圖, both of which mean “a painting of an assembly of various Buddhas.”

There seems to be no particular order or formula in the practice of worshipping an assembly of various divinities. The assortment of the Four Directional Buddhas appearing in Korean Buddhism was not informed by any single sūtra but decided by contemporary historical circumstances, beliefs, practices, and needs of the people of each period.⁸³ Hence one is forced to consider the grouping of the Buddhas as their

⁸³ Jonathan Best remarks on the iconography and belief: “iconography served to enrich belief for both the comparatively few religious cognoscenti and the multitudinous pious but religiously unsophisticated among Korea’s early Buddhists.....Belief informed iconography, iconography shaped imagery and informs the historian concerning belief.....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.” Jonathan W. Best, “Imagery, Iconography and

own text. The images of *sabangbul* of the Chosŏn period display the full range of the iconographies of various Buddhas employed by patrons to meet their social, political, and cultural demands. The absence of any systematic iconographic relationships between these examples of Chosŏn *sabangbul* has also deterred scholars from discussing the images in the broader context of Buddhist art in Korea. Many studies by Korean scholars were devoted to the resolution of sectarian debates and apparent doctrinal inconsistencies of *sabangbul* icons. When examining the examples of *sabangbul*, it is occasionally necessary to put the text-based approach to one side and search for an internal unifying principle in the grouping itself. The images of *sabangbul* in Korean Buddhist art reveal not only the historical realities of contemporary society but also the intimate relationship between religion, faith, art, and politics in Chosŏn society over the years. When examined from the point of view of the social and political circumstances, the iconology of *sabangbul* takes on an added importance transcending the details of specific iconographic problems. Here it is necessary to consider the political and social context as well as the religious context in order to explore the complexity of the dynamics of social and political changes in which *sabangbul* art was actually conceived. In many cases political changes and social upheavals resulted in the development of distinctive artistic traditions for the motif. In the light of their importance I shall discuss at some length the socio-political and religio-cultural circumstances related to the iconographic programs of *sabangbul* and their evolution through the Chosŏn dynasty, in order to highlight the way they changed to suit the needs of the patrons.

I shall use a number of important examples from different periods to demonstrate and discuss the issue of representation and historical reality. With every example new ideas illustrate the creative integration of the old and the new as well as the indigenous

and the foreign. Objects containing the Four Directional Buddhas were widely dispersed throughout Buddhist cultures in East Asia. Whenever necessary, this study will include occasional references to comparative materials from China and Japan in order to highlight the phase of transformation and the application of Buddhist iconography in Chosŏn Korea against the particular socio-political background and underlying thought. It is not possible to discuss every instance of its occurrence, though reference will be made to a variety of *sabangbul* themes in the course of this thesis for purposes of illustration and comparison.

Although I recognize the function of the image of *sabangbul* as essentially religious and iconic, a detailed description and stylistic analysis of *sabangbul* iconography involved will be limited. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate in depth all the individual histories of the images of *sabangbul*. While the primary focus in this study is to illustrate the development of their context, I will pay more attention to viewing *sabangbul* as an independent form of worship within Korean Buddhism. Instead of taking an individual iconographic approach to single images, a brief description will suffice, and the primary religious function of the works will be examined. It is not my goal to record all the variations in detail of the *sabangbul* and its variations in chronological order through the centuries, but rather to provide an overview of Chosŏn Buddhism by investigating the evolution of *sabangbul* structure and imagery during the period. This focus will not only define the thematic and temporal parameters of my thesis but also help to provide a comprehensive framework which serves as a basis to illuminate the significant aspects of Korean Buddhism throughout the Chosŏn dynasty. With these limitations in mind, I shall try to attempt a comprehensive analysis of the iconographic and iconological relationships among the *sabangbul* examples in the broader context of Chosŏn Buddhist art.

In this study I shall also offer a broad overview of Chosŏn Buddhist imagery of

sabangbul from the fifteenth to the early twentieth centuries, a period which contains various trends in Buddhist thought and practice in Korea. The various representations of Chosŏn *sabangbul* throughout the centuries provide a rich source for the study of popular culture and religious practices in traditional Korea. By placing various works of *sabangbul* in a more comprehensive perspective, I hope to provide a framework within which it is possible to view Chosŏn Buddhism as a cohesive whole, whilst at the same time examining regional, individual tastes and different factors. Such a framework will explain many questions such as: why the earlier *sabangbul* icon of the Silla period re-emerged in early Chosŏn Buddhist art; how the pattern of worshipping *sabangbul* changed over the centuries; and how new elements replaced the old patterns. In my attempt to investigate the revival and development of *sabangbul* imagery I hope to outline the historical course of the evolution of the Four Directional Buddhas during the Chosŏn dynasty. My research will trace the process by examining texts, extant sculptures, paintings, architecture, relic deposits, rituals, and ritual arts. In doing so I intend to identify major philosophical and ideological tendencies—*aesthetic, cultural, art historical and functional*—embedded in *sabangbul* works. The thesis will also cover a number of significant themes that are regarded as characteristic aspects of Korean Buddhism during the Chosŏn period, such as *hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教 (nation-protecting Buddhism), *kibok pulgyo* 祈福佛教 (Buddhism for good fortune), *ch'ima pulgyo* (Buddhism as women's religion). Finally I shall offer a reconsideration of the concept of "Chosŏn Buddhism" that includes a new approach and a better acknowledgement of the position and role of Buddhism served for Chosŏn society.

3. Contents

After the initial emergence and great popularity enjoyed by *sabangbul* in the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods, the early Chosŏn period witnessed the re-emergence of the same iconography of the Four Directional Buddhas—Śākyamuni,

Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Maitreya—and the rise in prominence of the four Buddhas once more during this period. In Chapter I, I shall investigate the origin of *sabangbul* images from the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods, these are mainly found in the form of sculpture. This study attempts to trace the line of relationship between Buddhism and politics and social circumstances against the background of the beginning of the *sabangbul* and its far-reaching impact in the later period. The investigation of the origins of the representation of the Four Directional Buddhas in Korea will provide an answer to the question as to why Buddhist iconography acquired such great popularity among the royal sovereigns during the first half of the Chosŏn period.

During the Chosŏn dynasty Buddhism was replaced by Confucianism as the state religion. State patronage of Buddhism was inevitably reduced in scale. Despite the decline of official patronage, there was a notable increase in the production of *sabangbul* art under the royal patronage over a relatively short period of time. In Chapter II, I shall closely investigate a possible explanation as to why and how the iconography of the Four Directional Buddhas was revived and enjoyed great popularity in the royal court during the first half of the Chosŏn dynasty. It was during this period that the production of various groups of *sabangbul*, both in painting and sculpture, was concentrated under royal sponsorship. This chapter explores the interactions between Buddhism and the royal court. The anti-Buddhist policy of the new dynasty did little to change royal adherence to Buddhist belief and practice. *Sabangbul* art patronized by members of the royal family during this period had distinct chronological phases. To explain the special attraction exerted on the royal house, I shall investigate the socio-political aspects of the worship of the Four Directional Buddhas and the background of the patrons in order to look for any specific significance which the objects may have held for the patrons. To do so, this chapter introduces the reorganization of structure of

political power in the new dynasty and seeks to analyse this process in order to explain any potential socio-political influence on the renaissance of the particular iconography and historical viewpoints of Buddhist thought and art.

In the second half of the Chosŏn period, especially after the invasions by the Japanese and the Manchus, Buddhist rituals became a major aspect of Korean monastic practice. The widespread practice of Buddhist rituals, mainly funerary and salvific rituals, known collectively as *ch'ōndo-jae* 薦度齋 (the ritual for sending off the dead spirits), resulted in the popularization of Buddhism in society. Changes also took place in the development of Chosŏn Buddhist art. During this period various groups of *sabangbul* are mainly found in the several different types of ritual art. This thesis deals with multi-Buddha assemblies and their relationships with the medium of large-scale outdoor ritual painting. The group of the Four Directional Buddhas has undergone various changes in its iconography in ritual art produced for outdoor ceremonies. Chapter III and the following chapters will discuss the characteristics of Buddhist rituals during the Chosŏn dynasty, and include a discussion of the types and functions of these rituals as well as an introduction to some of the most important ritual images and their contents. My purpose is to discuss the symbolic meanings and the roles of *sabangbul* in the outdoor ritual. This will enable us to establish a firmer connection between such practices and Buddhist imagery. The formation of the group of the Four Directional Buddhas evolved and transformed to fit in with outdoor rituals and the changing needs of the populace during this period.

In Chapter III, I shall trace how *sabangbul* imagery of the earlier period is iconographically linked to multi-Buddha assemblies in *kwaebul* 掛佛 (literally “hanging Buddha” but referring to colossal Buddha-paintings hung outside for the outdoor ceremony) of the later period. However the same group of *sabangbul* in ritual painting reflects a change in the Buddhist faith of the day, and also contains some

stylistic and formal implications. An exploration of *sabangbul* imagery on *kwaebul* will reveal that changes in meaning cannot necessarily be inferred from changes in iconography.

In Chapter IV, I shall discuss the identity and origin of the Five Tathāgatas (K: *oyōrae* 五如來)⁸⁴ in *Kamno-t'aeng* 甘露幀 (literally meaning “painting of Sweet Dew”) as a variant of *sabangbul* types under the influence of esoteric Buddhist elements. In examining the process of the assimilation of the iconography of the Five Tathāgatas in this ritual painting, this chapter will investigate the salient features of esoteric Buddhist elements with special emphasis on the Five Tathāgatas in the context of the *sisik* 施食, a special mortuary rite for “feeding the hungry ghosts and the dead.” In recent years the importance of this ritual and its texts in Chosŏn Buddhism has become better appreciated and more fully explored. This chapter will address the way in which esoteric Buddhist elements were assimilated into Korean Buddhism, by examining the textual evidence. In order to trace the doctrinal foundation and appearance of the new *sabangbul* iconography of the Five Tathāgatas in *Kamno-t'aeng*, I shall investigate liturgical manuals both imported from China and also originating in Chosŏn, as well as esoteric canonical scriptures related to the *sisik* rite. In the textual comparison, I shall explore the doctrinal dimension and the cultural attributions of *sabangbul* art.

Chapter V examines the transformative process of the ritual site into the sacred realm by means of *toryang changŏm* 道場莊嚴, a ritual adornment of ritual sites. According to the practice of orientation the ritual site is adorned with ceremonial banners along with *kwaebul* and *Kamno-t'aeng* in order to create a sacred space for performing religious practices. I shall discuss the imagery of *sabangbul* and other

⁸⁴ Among other terms besides “Buddha” used to refer to fully enlightened beings, Tathāgata, rendered *yōrae* 如來 in Korean, is an honorific Sanskrit term for Buddha. The ten honorary titles of Buddha, for example, reflect the Mahāyāna idea that the Historical Buddha is just one among many Buddhas. For all practical purposes, the terms Buddha, Tathāgata, and *yōrae* are synonymous in this thesis.

related images on the ritual banners which are involved in the construction of the sacred realm. To date no thorough scholarly attention has been given to the ceremonial banners and the spatial arrangement of the directional Buddhas and other divinities to their corresponding directions. This study will offer some preliminary comments on the spatial arrangement of the ritual images within the ritual site. It will provide some useful insights into the Buddhist definition of orientation and its meaning in Korean Buddhist ritual. In this chapter I shall also explore the interplay between belief, iconographic programs, ritual adornment, and the performative genres, (i.e. ritual chant, dance and music), all of which work together to consecrate the ritual site into a sacred space.

Sabangbul art not only takes up an important place in the history of Chosŏn Buddhist art but also offers us a useful and unique opportunity to analyse Chosŏn Buddhist art as a whole. The aim of this thesis is to examine the wider art historical, religious, political, and cultural meaning of the Four Directional Buddhas which have appeared in various media throughout the history of Chosŏn Buddhist art. To establish a broad context in which *sabangbul* worship can be viewed and explained, the study on *sabangbul* art requires an examination of its location in social, political and religious spheres. This study analyzes not only their form and content but also the nexus of complex issues surrounding this art form—from cultural symbolism to the interrelations between religious doctrine and artistic expression, economic production, patronage, and the synthesis of indigenous and foreign art styles. Such an approach, using a study of numerous *sabangbul* objects exemplified by various transformations in extant sculptures, paintings, architecture, relic deposits, ritual, and ritual arts, will allow us to gain a better understanding of the motives which guided the development of *sabangbul* before and during the Chosŏn dynasty. It will also permit us at times to challenge the received tradition.

CHAPTER I

The Formation of *Sabangbul* and its Evolution before the Chosŏn Dynasty

The unique gathering of four Buddhas located in the four cardinal directions is commonly known as *sabangbul* 四方佛 in Korea. The concept of *sabangbul* is a recurring motif in Korean Buddhist art from the Three Kingdoms period. There are various groups of the four Buddhas extant in Korea dating from the sixth century onwards. Among the earliest monuments that have survived are pillars with skilfully carved Buddhas on the four surfaces (figs. 1-2). The recently excavated four-sided pillar in Yesan, South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, a site of the Paekche Kingdom 百濟 (18BCE-668CE), is the oldest extant example of this iconography. It dates back to the mid-sixth century (fig. 7).¹ The production of *sabangbul* pillars was particularly popular in the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla 統一新羅 (668-935) periods. Numerous *sabangbul* images can be found at Silla sites. Besides the *sabangbul* pillar in Yesan, all extant rock-cut images of *sabangbul* have been recovered from the area of the Silla Kingdom. The *sabangbul* examples dated to the Three Kingdoms period in this chapter mostly deal with those of the Silla (57BCE-935CE). Information on *sabangbul* relics from the other two kingdoms, Koguryŏ 高句麗 (37BCE-668CE) and Paekche (18BCE-660CE), is so scant or non-existent that I have singled out Silla *sabangbul* objects as my main examples from the Three Kingdoms period. Other early monuments are Buddhist pagodas made after the eighth century, the four surfaces of which are decorated with the images of four Buddhas in relief sculpture (fig. 5).²

It is crucial to examine the *sabangbul* images produced in earlier periods in order

¹ The same group of the Four Directional Buddhas—Śākyamuni, Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Maitreya—is represented on this earliest *sabangbul* pillar. For a discussion of this Paekche *sabangbul* relic, see Mun Myong-dae, 1987, 37-71.

² The earliest representation of the Four Directional Buddhas on the surface of stone pagoda, dated to the late eighth century, remains on three-storey stone pagoda at Chinjŏn-sa site, Yangyang, Kangwŏn Province. Chŏng Young-ho et al., ed. *Sŏkt'ap, Han'guk ūi mi*, vol. 9 (Seoul: Chungang ilbosa, 1995), 225; idem, "Yangyang Chinjŏn-sa chi samch'ŭng sŏkt'ap kwa sŏkcho pujo," *Kogo misul* 8, no. 6 (June 1967): 3-7; Mun Myong-dae, "Silla *sabngbul* ūi kiwŏn kwa Sinin-sa ūi sabangbul," *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 18 (1977b): 68.

to understand to what extent the *sabangbul* conception eventually prevailed. A brief summary of the historical and political background of the images will provide an insight into the formation of the *sabangbul* pillar in Silla, its evolution through the course of the unification of the Three Kingdoms and its position during the Later Three Kingdoms 後三國 (892-936) and Koryŏ 高麗 (918-1392) periods. These discourses will shed light on the role Buddhism played in the history and culture of Silla before and after its unification, and on the process of adaptation and transformation by which the foreign religion was assimilated into Silla society and became part of its civilization. By giving careful attention to the particular features of *sabangbul* objects in its initial phase we may be able to gain a greater understanding of the Chosŏn *sabangbul* art works.

1. Four Directional Buddhas

Sabangbul began to appear from the sixth century onwards in Korea; and *sabangbul* in the form of stelae and statues were made between the mid-seventh century and mid-eighth century.³ Its Chinese counterpart had been widely produced between the Eastern Wei (534-550)/Western Wei (535-556) and the Northern Qi (550-577)/Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581) over a half century since it first appeared during the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534).⁴

The earliest representation of the Four Directional Buddhas is probably found on the surfaces of the Great Stūpa (Stūpa I) at Sanchi (fig.8).⁵ The Great Stūpa at Sanchi is famous in the world for its austere grandeur and the exquisite carvings on the doorway. When Emperor Aśoka (ca. 304-232 BC) laid the foundation-stone and erected the Great Stūpa at Sanchi along with several other stūpas all over the country in order to spread Buddhism, this stūpa was originally a low structure of brick, half the diameter of the present edifice, hemispherical in shape with raised terraces at the base.

³ Mun Myong-dae, 1977b, 68.

⁴ Mun Myong-dae, 1977b, 68.

⁵ Yamada Kōji, "Gyaraspur no sibutsu ni tsuite," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 156 (1984): 98.

Over the subsequent periods the Aśokan stūpa was enlarged and decorated with balustrades, staircases, a harmika on the top, and a railing with four elaborately carved gateways facing the four directions of the compass. The final addition to the Great Stūpa, dating back to the fifth century during the Gupta period, shows the four Buddhas seated in meditation with an identical posture and mudrā.⁶

In China some of the earliest representations of the Four Directional Buddhas are found on the stūpa-pillars carved in the caves of the Yungang Grottoes (Caves 1, 2, 3, 6, 11, and 39) near the Northern Wei capital of Pincheng (present-day Datong) in Northern Shanxi Province (fig. 9).⁷ The feature of a central pillar in the caves can also be found in the eight caves at Dunhuang made during the Northern Wei period.⁸ In the main chambers, there is a pagoda-pillar carved in the centre with a tunnel dug into the stone behind this image, which allows the faithful to walk around the pillar in procession, a rite of worship called circumambulation or *pradakṣiṇa* in Sanskrit. Undoubtedly, the floor plan of the Northern Wei stūpa-pillar caves for circumambulation is of Indian origin: *chaityas* (temples or assembly-halls containing stūpas).⁹ However, the architecture of the pillars here features square multi-storey pagodas with Chinese gable roofs, unlike pillars in the Indian examples, which tend to be round. In the fifth century Yungang Cave 6 (470-493), for example, the stūpa-pillar was sculpted in the form of a pagoda, and the Indian origins of the floor plan are no longer necessarily self-

⁶ Yamada Kōji, 98; Michael Willis, *Buddhist Reliquaries from Ancient India* (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 67.

⁷ The caves at Yungang in phase II (from 470 to 494) include Caves 1 and 2, Caves 5 and 6, Caves 7 and 8, Caves 9 and 10, forming four pairs, as well as Caves 11, 12 and 13. Geographically, the first group (including Cave 1, Cave 2, Cave 3 and Cave 4) are at the eastern end separated from others. Cave 1 and Cave 2 that form a pair of Buddhist cave temples have suffered from rigors of time and the weather. Cave 3, an afterthought after the Northern Wei dynasty, is the largest grotto among Yungang caves. The second group ranges from Cave 5 to Cave 13. See Seiichi Mizuno and Toshio Nagahiro, *Yun-kang: The Buddhist Cave Temples of the 5th Century in the North China* (Kyōto: Jimbun Kagaku Kenkyusho; Kyōto University, 1952), vol. 1 (Plates), pls. 31-39 (Cave 1), 53-62 (Cave 2), 70-71 (Cave 3), 108-110 (Cave 4); vol. 3 (Plates), pls. 121-212 (Cave 6); vol. 8 (Plates), pls. 54-62 (Cave 11); vol. 15 (Plates), pls. 91-95 (Cave 39).

⁸ Ning Qiang, "The Emergence of the Dunhuang style in the Northern Wei Dynasty," *Orientalism* 23 (May 1992): 45. The eight caves were 251, 254, 257, 259, 260, 263, 265, and 487.

⁹ Alexander Peter Bell, *Didactic narration: Jataka iconography in Dunhuang with a catalogue of jātaka representations in China* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2000), 76.

evident. In the Yungang Cave 6 the pagoda is not only square but also complete with overhanging eaves. Unlike the free-standing Indian prototype, in the centre of the back chamber stands a square pillar in the shape of a multi-storey pagoda, which reaches up to the ceiling. *Pradakṣiṇa* is now performed around a Chinese pagoda instead of the earlier Indian stūpa.¹⁰

The entire surface of the pillar was carved with various devotional images including Buddha figures located within niches as well as the eaves to reproduce an actual pagoda building. Niches were cut on the four sides of each storey to house the statues of Buddhas. When walking round the stūpa, worshippers follow the exquisite carvings/paintings on the pagoda-pillar and the side walls that depict in detail the significant episodes and miracles from Buddha's life from his birth to the attainment of enlightenment, as well as events in the Buddhist Jātaka tales. The fragility of the rock-cut caves in China carved in sandstone only allowed for this use of the stūpa, which simultaneously functioned as a structural support in the form of a massive pillar.¹¹ Since the stūpa pillar is integral to the entire architectural plan, the four Buddhas carved in high relief on its surface fulfil both its architectural as well as its devotional function.

No painting of the Four Directional Buddhas is extant from this period. Probably the most famous example featuring the same iconography of Śākyamuni, Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Maitreya presiding over their Paradise is the mural in the Golden Hall (*kondō*) of Hōryū-ji, dating back to the 680s and 690s. This was however lost in a fire in 1949 (fig. 10). The mural was possibly painted by an artist from either Paekche or Koguryō at the end of the seventh century.¹² The inner walls of this

¹⁰ Alexander Soper, "Northern Liang and Northern Wei in Kansu," *Artibus Asiae* 21, no. 2 (1958): 162.

¹¹ Bell, 76.

¹² Naitō Tōichirō argues, based on a document he found, that an artist named Kuratsukuri from Paekche painted the Buddhas on the four walls of the Hōryū-ji following the so-called Kudara (an alternate name for Paekche) pattern. However, some scholars of Japan and Korea argue Hōryū-ji was entirely destroyed by the fire in 670 and reconstructed in c. eighth century. For this reason, Hong Yun-sik argues the murals in *kondō* were not painted by Tamjing 曇徵 (579-631) from Koguryō who has

sanctuary show the Paradises of the Four Buddhas: on the west wall is the Pure Land of Amitābha; on the east wall, the Paradise of Śākyamuni; on the north wall, the heavenly dwellings of Maitreya; and again on the north wall, the Bhaiṣajyaguru since the south side of the hall consists mainly of door openings.

Most of the relics of the four directional Buddhas in Japan are found inside pagodas like the five-storey pagoda (593) of Gangō-ji 元興寺 in Nara, the five-storey pagoda of Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 (730) in Nara, the three-storey pagoda of Kiyomizu-dera 清水寺 in Kyōto, and the three-storey pagoda of Sōfuku-ji 崇福寺 in Oumi 近江, etc.¹³ For example, the five-storey pagoda, or Gojū-no-tō 五重塔, of Kōfuku-ji, which is supported by a central post and four pillars at the four cardinal directions, enshrines four Buddha triads (the Buddha and two attendants) around the four pillars on the first floor:¹⁴ the Bhaiṣajyaguru triad (eastern side), the Śākyamuni triad (southern side), the Amitābha triad (western side) and the Maitreya triad (northern side).¹⁵

A typical *sabangbul* pillar from the Silla period is adorned with images of four Buddhas: Śākyamuni in the south, Maitreya in the north, Amitābha in the west, and

been believed as the artist of the murals in Korea. Nevertheless, Hong Yun-sik suggests its artist might have come from one of the Three Kingdoms or strongly influenced by one from Korea. However, Mun Myong-dae is skeptical about the reconstruction of the monastery and argues the murals might have been produced by Tamjing. Naitō Tōichirō, *The Wall Paintings of Hōryū-ji*, trans. and ed. W.R.B. Acker and Benjamin Rowland, Jr. (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1943), 45; Mizuno Seiichi, *Asuka Buddhist Art: Hōryū-ji* (New York; Tōkyō: Weatherhill, 1974), 124-125; Mun Myong-dae, “Pōmnyung-sa kumdang pyōkhwa wa pulsang chogak yōn’gu ūi munje,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 16 (March, 2001a): 12-20; Hong Yun-sik, “Ilbon Pōmnyung-sa Kumdang pyōkhwa e poinūn han’guk munhwa ūi yōnghyang,” *Kogo misul* 185 (1990): 139-162.

¹³ Mochizuki Shinkō, *Mochizuki bukkyō daijiten*, vol. 10 (Kyōto: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, 1955-1963), 1987 (四方佛條).

¹⁴ The original Five-Storeyed pagoda was completed in 725 by the Empress Kōmyō (光明皇后 701–760), a member of the Fujiwara clan. It burned down five times and current structure was restored in 1426. Empress Kōmyō was the Nara period consort of Japanese Emperor Shōmu (701–756). Her father was Fujiwara no Fuhito, a powerful member of the imperial court of Japan during the Asuka and Nara periods. Richard Arthur Brabazon Ponsonby-Fane, *The Imperial House of Japan* (Kyōto: Ponsonby Memorial Society, 1959), 57-58; Delmer M. Brown, and Ichirō Ishida, eds. *Gukanshō: The Future and the Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 274. For the influence and relationship between Fujiwara clan and Kōfuku-ji, see Seiroku Noma, *The Arts of Japan: Ancient and Medieval* (Tōkyō: Kodansha International, 1978), 84-85; Royall Tyler, “Kōfukuji and the Mountains of Yamato,” *Japan Review* 1 (1990): 155-160.

¹⁵ John M. Martin and Phyllis G. Martin, *Nara: A Cultural guide to Japan’s ancient capital* (Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 1993), 59.

Bhaiṣajyaguru in the east, who are depicted on the four surfaces. This explains why they are called the Four Directional Buddhas. The popularity of each individual cult in Silla varied over the years. It will be crucial to investigate the iconographic and iconological meaning of the Four Directional Buddhas carved in relief on the stone pillars.

Śākyamuni

Since Śākyamuni the historical Buddha is the Buddha of Present and once lived among living beings, this Buddha is always linked with the Saha World, where all sentient beings reside.¹⁶ Accordingly, the depiction of the Buddha connotes the dual meanings of time and space. The Śākyamuni Buddha as the historical Buddha and the founder of the religion was the paradigm of the Buddha and preached the dhārma to save all sentient beings. His popularity transcended the confinements of space and time as well as all doctrines and scriptures.

Maitreya

Maitreya, one of the foremost bodhisattvas, is believed to reside in a celestial realm, Tuṣita Heaven, where he waits to descend to earth to become the Future Buddha.¹⁷ During the Three Kingdoms period, cultic veneration of Maitreya was a salient feature of Korean Buddhist practice. In the Silla period the Maitreya cult enjoyed great degree of popularity. Silla people believed that Maitreya would bring about peace and unification of the Three Kingdoms under Silla rule when the Buddha

¹⁶ T. 405, 648a.

¹⁷ According to the *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa-sūtra* (*The Advent of Maitreya Sūtra*, 彌勒下生成佛經), Maitreya is a bodhisattva and will attain buddhahood under the Dragon Flower tree (Skt: Nāgapuṣpa; K: yonghwasu 龍華樹) in Ketumati as the Future Buddha in 5.6 billion years, foretold by the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. He will preach the Law at three assemblies under the Dragon Flower tree as Śākyamuni's successor, hence called Dragon Flower Assembly (K: yonghwahoe 龍華會. In Maitreya's Dragon Flower Assemblies, all sentient beings will be completely delivered. Until then, Maitreya remains a bodhisattva and resides in the Tuṣita Heaven. In many sūtras, including the chapter 15 (從地涌出品) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Maitreya is said to be in the Tuṣita Heaven waiting to enter into the Saha world as the next Buddha. See chapter 15 of *Lotus Sūtra* and *Madhyama Āgama Sūtra* for this description. T. 454; T. 262, 41a; T. 26, 510b.

descends to earth from the Tuṣita Heaven to become the Future Buddha.¹⁸ Iconic images of Maitreya flourished in Silla for a period of about 150 years from the late-sixth century until the mid-eighth century.¹⁹ This roughly coincides with the period of *sabangbul* pillars before and shortly after the unification.

The belief in Maitreya, who was worshipped as the saviour of the turbulent world, explains the great popularity of the Maitreya cult both in Korea and in China during this period.²⁰ Maitreya was well-suited to be one of the Four Directional Buddhas during

¹⁸ This devotion was manifested in the establishment of the *hwarang* 花郎 (“Flower Boys”) organization, Silla’s famous patriotic youth corps. The *hwarang* consisted of virtuous youths selected from aristocratic families. *Hwarang*, also called *Yonghwa hyangdo* 龍華香徒 (Followers of the Dragon Flower), took the bodhisattva Maitreya as their patron saint. It was also believed that *kuksōn* 國仙, the chief of the *hwarang* corps, was reincarnation of the Maitreya as well. Its members later played a major role in the forming of ancient Silla and the unification of the Three Kingdoms. In viewing the political significance of the cult of Maitreya in early Silla, Peter Lee has pointed out that the order of *hwarang* represented the process of indigenization of Maitreya cult in Silla. The combination of the Maitreya cult and the order of *hwarang* developed into a unique and indigenous Silla religion. Peter H. Lee, *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization I: From Early times to the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 89-91; Richard D. McBride, II, *Buddhist Cults in Silla Korea in the Northeast Asian Context* (PhD diss., UCLA, 2001), 179-180, 281-287; Kim Young-t’ae, “Silla Chinhŭngwang tae ūi sinbul kwa kū sasang yōn’gu,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 5 (1967), 66-71; idem, “Mirūk Sōnhwa ko,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 3, 4 (1966): 140-148; idem, “Sūngyō nangdo ko,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 7 (1970): 257-259, 268.

¹⁹ Youngsook Pak and Roderick Whitfield, *Handbook of Korean Art: Buddhist Sculpture*, (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2002), 126.

²⁰ In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Chinese Buddhist iconography appears dominated by this figure of Maitreya. During the period of China, the images of Maitreya and Sākyamuni dominated the decorations on the caves while images of Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara played minor roles. During the mid-sixth century in particular, the worship of Maitreya reached at its apex in Northeast Asia. In the Northern Dynasties, the Maitreya cult enjoyed comparable degree of popularity. A number of Maitreya images made during the Northern Liang and Northern Wei dynasties on the Dunhuang, Yungang, and Longmen caves testify to the strength of the cult of Maitreya as the Future Buddha. The rulers of Northern Wei desired to be the *cakravartin* king (the ideal of Buddhist kingship) who would rule when the Future Buddha, Maitreya, was supposed to descend to earth from the Tuṣita Heaven after the “Latter Days.” Huge seated Maitreya Buddhas hewn from the rock at Yungang testify to their zeal for the cult. Also, in Cave 22 of the Longmen cave temple site, popularly known as Guyang Cave, 29 Maitreyas are represented as Bodhisattva seated in cross-ankle, and many votive inscriptions found are addressed to Maitreya. Roderick Whitfield, *Dunhuang: Caves of the singing sands* (London: Textiles & Art Publications, 1995), vol. 1, 10, 13, 18, 28, 41; Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism: Their History, Iconography, and Progressive Evolution through the Northern Buddhist Countries* (Oxford: The Clarendon press, 1914), 20-22; Etienne Hauttekeete, “Buddhism and Chinese Society,” in Jan Van Alphen, ed. *The Buddha in the Dragon Gate: Buddhist Sculpture of the 5th-9th centuries from Longmen, China* (Ghent: Etnografisch Museum Antwerpen; Snoeck-Ducaju&Zoon, 2001), 41, 162, 168-169; McBride, II, 2001, 291. For Maitreya images in Yungang Caves 10, 13, and 17, see Mizuno Seiichi and Nahahiro Tosiho, vol. 6 (Text), 109; vol. 10 (Text), 89, 93; vol. 12 (Text), 102; vol. 7 (Plates), pl. 66 (Cave 10); vol. 10 (Plates), pl. 42 (Cave 13); vol. 12 (Plates), pls. 65-68 (Cave 17). For Longmen, see Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio, *Ryūmon sekkutsu no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: The Zayuhō Kankokai; Tōhō bunka kenkyūsho, 1941), 16 (English text), 223-231 (Japanese text).

This practice is similar to the cult existing in Silla that Maitreya would bring about peace and unification of the Silla kingdom. During the Silla period, for example, King Chinhŭng (r. 540-576) also aimed to be the ideal king. The ardent patronage of Buddhism and military conquests more fully

the period of the political conflicts between the Three Kingdoms.²¹ Buddhism seems to have played an important role in making Silla society more cohesive. National unity under a centralized administrative structure and spiritual solidarity of Silla was made possible by Buddhist ideology,²² especially a belief in Maitreya. This later became the major driving force behind the unification of the Three Kingdoms under Silla. The Maitreya cult was the motivating force in developing the idea that Silla was the Buddha-land per se of Maitreya.

Amitābha

In China, under Tang domination, the belief in Amitābha's Pure Land would gradually supplant the devotion to Maitreya from the seventh century onwards.²³ It was during this period that the cult of Amitābha and recitation of the name of the Buddha Amitābha began to emerge as the dominant form of Buddhist practice. This led to the golden age in Pure Land Buddhism in China and the increased popularity of Pure Land deities like Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara.²⁴ The belief in rebirth in

demonstrate his adherence to the concept of an ideal *cakravartin*. The king named his sons Kūmyun 金輪 (golden wheel) and Tongyun 銅輪 (bronze wheel) after the different wheels of the *cakravartin*'s chariot as a symbolic representation of this idea. Many of following rulers and their family members adopted Buddhist names, as it did in the Northern Wei and other Northern Dynasties, seeking Buddhist sanctification of the royal house. Kim Ch'öl-jun argues the *cakravartin* concept was exemplified in the Buddhist names adopted by the Silla kings and their family members of the early Silla period. T. 1558, 64b-64c; *Samguk sagi* 三國史記, vol. 4, Silla pon'gi 新羅本紀 4, "Chinhūngwang 眞興王 33," "Chinjiwang 眞智王," "Chinp'yōngwang 眞平王"; Ahn Kye-hyōn, "Introduction of Buddhism to Korea," in Lewis R. Lancaster and C.S. Yu, ed. *Introduction of Buddhism to Korea: New Cultural Patterns* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 15; Kim Ch'öl-jū "Silla sangdae sahoe ūi dual organization 2" *Yōksa hakpo* 2 (1952), 91-95. For more study of King Chinghūng's faith in Buddhism and political use of *cakravartin* ideology, see Kim Young-t'ae, 1967: 71-83; idem, 1966: 145; Lee Ki-baik, *Silla sasangsa yōn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1986a), 80-83.

²¹ Youngsook Pak and Roderick Whitfield, 2002, 126.

²² Lee Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University Press, 1984), 43, 59-61.

²³ Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), 172. For the Amitābha cult in Silla during the seventh century, see McBride, II, 2001, 432-442.

²⁴ During this period the number of images of Amitābha produced was ten times more than that of Śākyamuni or Maitreya. Throughout the sixth century, however, the number of images of Amitābha produced at Longmen was only 9 as against 50 images of Śākyamuni and 35 images of Maitreya. During the Tang dynasty, the enormous impact of Pure Land ideas had on Chinese laymen. In conformity with the believers' hope of rebirth in the Western Paradise after their death, for instance, the sheer numbers of caves at Dunhuang were decorated with the theme of the Pure Land with Amitābha in presence to accommodate the new popularity of the Pure Land Buddhism, replacing the episodes of the Buddha's life and the *Jātaka* tales. Such representations of the Western Pure Land characterize Tang art

Amitābha's Western Pure Land soon overtook the popularity of Maitreya, and this was reflected in Buddhist art.²⁵ The great popularity of Pure Land Buddhism, principally among the common people, was due to the simple creed and easy path of Pure Land Buddhism.²⁶ Due to his special function as the Buddha for the attainment of eternal life in his paradise, Amitābha has been greatly cherished by Korean Buddhists throughout history, as it has in other Buddhist countries.

Bhaiṣajyaguru

Since the advent of his cult in Korea in the seventh century, Bhaiṣajyaguru as a healing Buddha has enjoyed an enormous popularity that has never declined.²⁷ Between the late eighth and mid-ninth centuries, when natural disasters and the subsequent threats of famine and epidemics were prevalent throughout the country, there was a considerable upsurge in the production of this Buddha.²⁸ Due to his healing powers, Bhaiṣajyaguru is typically depicted with a medicine jar in one hand and the other hand held up in the *abhāya* mudrā meaning no fear. Apart from the Buddha's efficacy in healing all kinds of illness, Bhaiṣajyaguru is known to have dispensed all kinds of mundane benefits to his follower. These include warding off such calamities as famine, drought and plague, relieving all suffering, granting longevity and wealth, and the protection of the state. They are well described in his Twelve Vows.²⁹ The secular benefits from believing Bhaiṣajyaguru made this Buddha greatly popular. Unlike the Amitābha, however, the belief in the Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha is based more on

at Dunhuang and also reflect the development Buddhist belief in China. Tsukamoto Zenryu, *Shina Bukkyōshi kenkyū: Hokuji hen* (Tōkyō: Kōbundō, Shōwa 17[1942]), 377-8; Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 69, 72.

²⁵ Jonathan W. Best, "Imagery, Iconography, and Belief in Early Korean Buddhism," *Korean culture* 13, no. 3 (Fall. 1992): 29-30.

²⁶ Kim Young-t'ae, "Silla ūi Mita sasang," *Pulgyo hakpo* 12 (1975): 70-77.

²⁷ The earliest document concerning this Buddha's cult is found in *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) by Iryōn 一然 (1206-89). According to a narrative in *Samguk yusa*, Priest Milbon 密本 cured the illness of Queen Sōndōk 善德女王 (r. 632-647) by reciting *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra*. *Samguk yusa*, vol. 5, Sinju 神呪 6, "Milbon ch'oesa" 密本摧邪條.

²⁸ Yu Kūn-ja, "T'ongil Silla Yaksa pulsang ūi yōn'gu," *Misul sahak yōn'gu* 203, 1994: 81-82.

²⁹ T. 450, 405a-405b; Kim Lena, "T'ongil Silla sidae Yaksa yōrae sang ūi han yuhyōng," *Pulgyo misul* 11(1992): 92.

the secular benefits the worshippers expected from the Buddha rather than the belief in the Lapis Lazuli Eastern Paradise, the abode of the Buddha.³⁰ While Bhaiṣajyaguru is notably absent from the Mandala of the Two Worlds, the popularity of the Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha meant that the image of the Buddha was included as the Eastern Buddha in the unique grouping of *sabangbul* in Korean Buddhist art.³¹ He can be identified by the round medicine ball in the Buddha's hand. Once Bhaiṣajyaguru was allotted to the east, the position could not be changed. For this reason, this particular Buddha became the image of a popular cult in Korea during the Unified Silla period (668-935), along with Śākyamuni Buddha.

Although the exact identification of the four Buddhas, especially of Maitreya, cannot be verified for sure, it is generally agreed that they represent this particular group of the Four Directional Buddhas. Due to the obvious direction of their Pure Lands over which they preside, Amitābha of the Western Pure Land and Bhaiṣajyaguru of the Eastern Pure Land Lapis Lazuli were fixed to the west and the east respectively. The positioning of Śākyamuni and Maitreya back to back facing the south and the north on the *sabangbul* pillars symbolically spatializes a temporal scheme, as can be seen in the Kulbul-sa 掘佛寺 (Temple of Excavated Buddha) site and the Ch'ilbul-am 七佛庵 (Hermitage of Seven Buddhas) Buddha groups (figs. 1-2). Since Śākyamuni presides over the Saha World and Maitreya over the Tuṣita Heaven, the arrangement of the two Buddhas conveys dual concepts of space and time at the same time. In its totality, the idea of the infinity of space is combined with temporal cosmology.³²

The cults of these four Buddhas were prevalent at all times in East Asian countries.

³⁰ Chang Ch'ung-sik, "Chikchi-sa Taeung-jōn samsebul t'aenghwa ūi tosang," *Han'guk ūi purhwa*, vol. 8 (Seoul: Sōngbo munhwajae yōn'guwōn, 1995-2000b): 241; Kim Hye-wan, "Silla ūi Yaksa sinang," in *Ch'ōn Kwan-woo sōnsaeng hwallyōk kinyōm Han'guk sahak nonch'ong* (Seoul: Chōmūm munhwasa, 1985), 318-319

³¹ Kim Lena, 1975, 56-7; Rhi Ki-young, "7, 8 segi Silla mit Ilbon ūi pulgukt'o sasang: Sanak sungbae wa *sabangbul*," *Han'guk chonggyosa yōn'gu* 2 (1973): 31-33; Mun Myong-dae, 1980: 20; Kim Hye-wan, 329.

³² Kloetzli views that the idea of innumerable Buddhas in ten directions heavily relies on the temporal framework and spatial category at the same time. Kloetzli, 137.

The phenomenon of *sabangbul* pillars in Silla lasted for a brief period of about a hundred years, from the late-sixth through to the mid-eighth centuries. Yet this brief period yielded unique sculptural monuments featuring the four Buddhas, monuments that reflect the mainstream of East Asian Buddhism of the period. Scholars have tried to illuminate the doctrinal background of Silla *sabangbul* by introducing all possible canonical sources.³³ However, the assembly of the Four Directional Buddhas may vary since their gatherings are complicated and depend on Buddhist sects and scriptures.³⁴ When the Four Directional Buddhas are represented in maṇḍalas, they may not always have the same colour or be related to the same directions.

Nomenclatures of the Four Directional Buddhas vary depending on scripture and sect. For example, in the *Golden Light Sūtra* (Skt. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa(uttamarāja)sūtra*), an early Mahāyāna sūtra translated by Dharmakṣema (Tammuch'am 曇無讖, 385-433) of the Northern Liang dynasty (397-439), and *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經 (Skt: *Buddha-dhyāna-samādhisāgara-sūtra*), translated by Buddhahadra between 420-423, the four figures are Akṣobhya (K: Ach'okpul 阿閼佛) (E), Dundubiṣvara (K: Mimyosōngbul 微妙聲佛) (N), and Ratnaketu (K: Posangbul 寶相佛) (S), Amitāyus (K: Muryangsubul 無量壽佛) (W).³⁵ This *sabangbul* formation continued in China until the early seventh century.³⁶ Mun Myong-dae argues that *sabangbul* in China was formed according to the codification of the *Golden Light Sūtra* and *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* before the emergence of the esoteric maṇḍalas of the Two Realms based upon Vajrayāna scriptures from the mid-seventh century, as evidenced in the *sabangbul* pillar of 535 at Shaolin Si

³³ See Mun Myong-dae, 1980, 18-20; idem, 1977, 73; Kim Lena, 1975, 46-48; Kim Kil-Woong, 132-133; Lee Suk-hee, 2002: 4-9.

³⁴ For a list of various groups of the Four Directional Buddhas in different scriptures, see Rhi Ki-young, "Sangjing chök p'yonhyōng ūl t'onghae pon 7-8 segi Silla mit Ilbon ūi pulgukt'o sasang," in Hong Soon-ch'ang and Tamura Encho, ed. *Hanil kodae munhwa kyosöp sa yōn'gu* (Seoul: Ūryu munhwasa, 1974), 111-141; Kim Lena, 1975, 46-47 note 7.

³⁵ T. 663, 335; T. 643, 688c.

³⁶ Wai-kam Ho, "Notes on Chinese sculptures from Northern Ch'i to Sui, Part I: Two seated stone Buddhas in the Cleveland Museum" *Archives of Asian Art* 22 (1968-1969): 44-45.

少林寺 in Dengfeng, Henan Province.³⁷ While the *Golden Light Sūtra* does not confirm that there is a clear connection between the four Buddhas and their Buddha-lands at the four cardinal directions they preside over, *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* has established such a connection.³⁸ Since *Mahāmāyūri(vidyārājñī)-sūtra* (K: *Kongjakwang chu kyōng* 孔雀王咒經) places Bhaiṣajyaguru to the east,³⁹ some Korean scholars argue that the introduction of this scripture might have influenced the invariable designation of Bhaiṣajyaguru to the east in Silla *sabangbul* formations by providing a doctrinal basis.⁴⁰

Ekāksara-buddhosnīsa-cakra-rāja-sūtra (K: *Ilcha puljōng yun wang kyōng* 一字佛頂輪王經, often abbreviated as *Obuljōng kyōng* 五佛頂經) translated in 708, marks an important turning point in the transition from a quartet of Four Directional Buddhas into a formation of five with the addition of Śākyamuni as the Buddha in the centre.⁴¹ In the mid-seventh century, this formation was continued in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*,⁴² in which Vairocana (a personification of the Dharmakāya who is referred to as Mahāvairocana in Vajrayāna Buddhism), takes over the central position and provides an important formula for Vajrayāna maṇḍalas in the shape of the Five Celestial Buddhas. Even within Vajrayāna Buddhism, the nomenclatures corresponding to the four celestial Buddhas are different in the Vajradhatu Maṇḍala and Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala respectively, namely the Maṇḍala of the Two Realms. The central assembly (K: *sōngsin hoe* 成身會) of the Diamond Realm Maṇḍala based on the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*

³⁷ Mun Myong-dae, 1977b, 71.

This pillar at Shaolin Si has the following inscription on its surface:

南方寶相如來，東方阿閼，北方微妙聲佛，崔進合家 西方無量壽。

Ratnaketu of south, Akṣobhya of east, Dundubishvara of north, Choe Chin works together with his family to dedicate this, and Amitāyus of west.

³⁸ T. 643, 688c-689a.

³⁹ T. 988, 482c in which Four Directional Buddhas are Dīpaṃkara (定光佛) (S); Ch'ilbodang (七寶堂) (N); Amitayus (W); Bhaisajyaguru (E).

⁴⁰ Kim Lena, 1975, 47.

⁴¹ T. 951, 247c.

⁴² The date of this sūtra is generally agreed upon the mid-seventh century as Shōun Toganoo suggested. Toganoo Shōun, *Himitsu Bukkyō shi* (Tōkyō: Ryūbunkan, 1977), 36.

depicts Mahāvairocana (K: Taeil yōrae 大日如來) at the centre, Akṣobhya in the east, Ratnasambhava in the south, Amitābha in the west, and Amoghasiddhi in the north.⁴³ On the other hand, the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala based on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, places Mahāvairocana at the centre, Ratnaketu (K: Podang yōrae 寶幢如來) in the east, Samkusumita-rajā (K: Kaebuhwawang yōrae 開敷華王如來) in the south, Amitāyus (K: Muryangsu yōrae 無量壽如來) in the west, and Divyadundubhi-megha-nirghoṣa (K: Ch'ōn'goroeūm yōrae [天]鼓[雷]音如來) in the north.⁴⁴ Thus early Mahāyāna scriptures like the *Golden Light Sūtra* and *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* not only stipulate the schematization of the Four Directional Buddhas but also provided a prototype for the Five Dhyāni Buddhas in the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas. The relationship between the nomenclature of the Four Directional Buddhas and their corresponding scriptures is summarized in the following table:⁴⁵

⁴³ T. 865, 208b.

⁴⁴ While this disposition of the Five Celestial Buddhas in the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala is described in volume 5 of this sūtra, volume 1 of the same sūtra places a different set of four directional Buddhas: 東方號寶幢 南方大勤勇 北方不動佛 西方仁勝者. T. 848, 5a; T. 848, 36c; Kim Young-dōk, “T’aejanggye Mandara chungdae p’alyōpwōn ūi pangwi e kwanhan munje,” *Han’guk pulgyohak kyōlchip taehoe nonjip* (上), 3, no. 1 (2006/4/22-23): 722-725.

Maṇḍalas of the Two Worlds of Shingon Buddhism are graphically complex. The Matrix Realm Maṇḍala is composed of twelve divisions (halls) containing a total of 414 deities. These five Buddhas are located on the lotus of eight-petalled mansion of inner court of the maṇḍala.

⁴⁵ There is a variety of Four-Directional-Buddha sets depending on Buddhist scriptures, both Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism. For more details, see Kim Lena, 1975, 46-8.

	<i>Golden Light Sūtra / Guanfo sanmei hai jing</i>	<i>Mahāmāyūri(v idyārājñī)- (sūtra)</i>	<i>Wu fo ding jing</i>	<i>Vajrasekhara Sūtra</i>	<i>Mahāvairocana Sūtra</i>
C			Śākyamuni	Mahāvairocana	Mahāvairocana
E	Akṣobhya	Bhaiṣajyaguru	Ratnaketu	Akṣobhya	Ratnaketu
S	Ratnaketu	Dīpaṃkara	Samkusumita-raja	Ratnasamṃbhava	Samkusumita-raja
W	Amitāyus	Amitāyus	Amitābha	Amitābha	Amitāyus
N	Dundubishvara	Ch'ilbodang 七寶堂	Akṣobhya	Amoghasiddhi	Divyadundubhi-megha-nirghoṣa

As can be seen from this table, the evolution from the Four Directional Buddhas to the Five Directional Buddhas was closely related to the rise of esoteric Buddhism in China. By the mid-seventh century, *sabangbul* groups with a presiding, central deity began to appear in the Unified Silla. Although their nomenclatures do not correspond to those in the Vajrayāna scriptures, it seems obvious that the transition heavily reflects the introduction and influence of esoteric Buddhism.

As scholars have already admitted, a single source cannot throw a light on the particular formation of Silla *sabangbul*. Undoubtedly the formation of groups of various Buddhas in Korean Buddhist art did not originate from a single dogma. Some studies have associated Silla *sabangbul* with the introduction of Tantric ideas.⁴⁶ In some cases, Vairocana holding *bodhyagri* mudrā (wisdom-fist mudrā) was incorporated into the groupings to replace Maitreya, one of the traditional figures in earlier *sabangbul* pillars (figs. 14-15). In any case there is no clear scriptural and doctrinal basis for such particular formations of Silla Four Directional Buddhas. The groups contained the

⁴⁶ Mun Myong-dae, 1977b, 73; Suh Yoon-kil, *Han'guk milgyo sasang sa* (Seoul: Unjusa, 2006), 95-96; Lee Suk-hee, 2002: 34-35.

four Buddhas that were most widely worshipped by the populace at that time.⁴⁷ The arrangement of the four Buddhas at the four cardinal directions is not based on any known sutra but probably represents the Silla people's own concept of Buddhist cosmology.

2. *Sabangbul* and *Cakravartin* Ideology

As in China, Buddhism in Korea also had a political value by being closely associated with the royal court during the Three Kingdoms period.⁴⁸ The process of strengthening royal authority and centralizing the nation's political structure in Silla was a result of a special tie between the royal house and Buddhist saṅgha.⁴⁹ Buddhism probably came to be strongly supported and promoted by the royal house because of its appeal to stabilize royal authority.⁵⁰

The history of early *sabangbul* art has largely been shaped by the ideology of the ruling elite. The *sabangbul* concept during the Silla period appears to have laid stress on depicting the Buddhas on the pillars as a symbol of power and dominance.⁵¹ These representations of the Buddhas in the four cardinal points are directly linked to the characteristic features of a *cakravartin*, "the turner of the wheel," the ideal of Buddhist kingship.⁵² The monarch as *cakravartin* is the universal sovereign whose dominion extends in all directions as far as the chariot wheel can reach.⁵³ The *sabangbul* pillars produced in the period around the unification of the Three Kingdoms is often seen in terms of Silla's military force as well as the monarch's absolute authority in centralized government.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Kim Lena, 1982, 246, 248 note 14.

⁴⁸ Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 59. For a discussion on Buddhism in China in its early period, see Kenneth Ch'en, 1964, 204.

⁴⁹ Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 59.

⁵⁰ Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 59.

⁵¹ Mun Myong-dae, 1977b, 74.

⁵² Mun Myong-dae, 1980, 9, 13, 21.

⁵³ Kim Ch'ol-jun, 91-95.

⁵⁴ Ahn Kye-hyōn, 1989, 15-17; Lee Ki-baik, "Early Silla Buddhism and the Power of the Aristocracy," in Lewis R. Lancaster and C.S. Yu, *Introduction of Buddhism to Korea* (Berkeley, CA:

Beginning in the sixth century, the construction of such pillars at various locations was concentrated around the unification of the Three Kingdoms under Silla (figs. 1-2, 11-13). The theme of the *cakravartin* myth which signifies military prowess, probably explains the changes in the geographical locations of the *sabangbul* pillars during the period. *Sabangbul* relics built before unification can be found on the northern reaches of Silla's conquest dominion. For example, Taesŭng-sa 大乘寺 *sabangbul* (587), situated on top of Sabul-san 四佛山 in Mun'gyŏng 聞慶, North Kyŏngsang Province, is located at the northern border of the Silla Kingdom (fig. 11). Silla shared its border with Paekche and Koguryŏ in Mun'gyŏng. Mun'gyŏng was a strategic location for Silla's marching north and, at the same time, an important stronghold for defending the territory from foreign invasion from the north. The historical setting of the *sabangbul* monument in Sŏkp'o-ri (seventh century) in Yŏngju 榮州, another northern border between Silla and Koguryŏ, should be also seen in the same context of Silla's military campaigns for unification (fig. 12).⁵⁵

It is not an overstatement to say that the war between the Three Kingdoms was actually a war to occupy Han River area.⁵⁶ The geographical location of Silla was disadvantageous with respect to advancing towards the Han River area. In 551 Silla joined forces with Paekche to attack the Koguryŏ domain in the Han River basin region.⁵⁷ In the course of military campaign led by King Chinhŭng 眞興王 (r. 540-576), Silla came to hold sway over the whole territory of Han River area. After King Chinhŭng expanded Silla's territory to the north of Han River, Mun'gyŏng and Yŏngju played an important role as gateways to the Yŏngnam area 嶺南, the south-eastern part of Korea beyond Sobaek-san 小白山 (fig. 14). The deep ridges of Sobaek-san meant

Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 166-168; Mun Myong-dae, 1977b: 74; idem, 1980, 9, 13, 21.

⁵⁵ Chin Hong-sŏp dates Sŏkp'o-ri *sabangbul* in Yŏngju to the seventh century, if not earlier. Chin Hong-sŏp, 1960, 2.

⁵⁶ Lee Pyŏng-do, "Han'gang yuyŏk ūi yŏksa chŏk ūimi," *Tugye chapp'il* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1956), 52-57.

⁵⁷ *Samguk sagi*, vol. 4, Silla pon'gi 4, "Chinhŭngwang 12."

that Silla was confined within the Yŏngnam area. On the other hand, it was to prove a perfect defence from attack by the other two kingdoms. Mun'gyŏng and Yŏngju were the strategic points for armies marching north and traffic beyond Sobaek-san. Mun'gyŏng in particular was a place on which Silla kept a continual grip until the Later Three Kingdoms (892-936) period, after Silla claimed its territorial sovereignty in the place and constructed numerous mountain fortress walls in the city. This testifies that Mun'gyŏng was a point of strategic importance.

The narrative in *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms] by Iryŏn 一然 (1206-89) clarifies the location of the Taesŭng-sa *sabangbul* to the east of Chungnyŏng 竹嶺 Pass on Sobaek-san, linking modern North Kyŏngsang and North Ch'ungch'ŏng Provinces.⁵⁸ Kyerimnyŏng 鷄立嶺 Pass, another important pass on Sobaek-san, links Mun'gyŏng in North Kyŏngsang Province with North Ch'ungch'ŏng Province (fig. 14). Yŏngju and Mun'gyŏng are both checkpoints in the two passes from Ch'ungch'ŏng Province to the Yŏngnam area. Thus, by securing for itself the whole of the Han River basin, Silla came into sharp confrontation with both Paekche and Koguryŏ.⁵⁹ The *sabangbul* pillars erected in Mun'gyŏng and Yŏngju apparently proclaim Silla's seizing the two strategic points in a process of the territorial expansion, and its advance toward the Han River basin.⁶⁰ Mun Myong-dae argues that

⁵⁸ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T'apsang 塔像 4, "Sabul-san, Kulbul-san, Manbul-san cho" 四佛山, 掘佛山, 萬佛山條

⁵⁹ *Samguk sagi*, vol. 44, Yŏlchŏn 列傳 4, "Kŏch'ilbu 居柴夫"; *ibid.*, vol. 45, Yŏlchŏn 列傳 5, "Ondal 溫達"; *ibid.*, vol. 24, Paekche pon'gi 百濟本紀 2, "Koiwang 古爾王 7, 22, 33, 45, 50"; *ibid.*, vol. 2, Silla pon'gi 2, "Chobun Isagŭm 助賁泥師今 11," "Ch'ŏmhae Isagŭm 沾解尼師今 9," "Mich'u Isagŭm 味鄒泥師今 5, 17, 22"; *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* (hereafter TYS), vol. 14, Ch'ungju-mok nujŏng cho Hong Kwi-dal ki 忠州牧樓亭條 烘貴達記. For a study on the importance of the places as strategic points during the period, see Kim Hyŏn-kil, "Rimnyŏng ko," *Chuktang Lee Hyŏn-hui kyosu hwagap kinyŏm han'guksa nonch'ong* (Seoul: Tongbang tohwa, 1997); Pak Sang-il, "Sobaek sanmaek chiyŏk ūi kyot'ongno wa yuchŏk (Traffic Points in the Sobaek-san Area and its Relics)," *Kuksagwan nonch'ong* 16 (1990): 155-160.

⁶⁰ In this sense, the Silla *sabangbul* relics mark a parallel with the Chinhŭngwang *sunsubi* 眞興王巡狩碑, referred to the four stone stelae erected by King Chinhŭng when the king toured the new frontiers of his kingdom to commemorate the king's military achievements and expansion of Silla border. King Chinhŭng advanced Silla's frontier to the north upto the Hamhŭng Plain including Han River basin. The sites of four monument stones are Maun Pass, Hwangch'o Pass, Pukhan-san, and Ch'angnyŏng.

This was not an exception in Paekche. Yesan where the earliest *sabangbul* relic is located was

Silla *sabangbul* images reveal the will of the Silla kings to expand their territory and to achieve the unification of the Three Kingdoms under Silla rule.⁶¹ King Chinhŭng's great military campaign laid the groundwork for the future unification of the Three Kingdoms. The *sabangbul* stone monument on the top of Sabul-san, built in the reign of King Chinp'yŏng 眞平王 (r. 579-632), seems to represent the will of the king to defend the territory expanded by his grandfather King Chinhŭng, and unify the Korean Peninsula under Silla's leadership by subjugating the other two kingdoms.⁶²

The same arrangement of the four Buddhas continued in *sabangbul* assemblies in the Unified Silla period. Later, however, *sabangbul* were erected in the centre of Silla capital, Kyŏngju 慶州. Post-unification monuments like, for example the Kulbul-sa 掘佛寺 site *sabangbul*, the Ch'ilbul-am 七佛庵 *sabangbul* relic, and the T'apkok 塔谷 (or Sinin-sa 神印寺 site) *sabangbul*, can all be found in the capital area of Kŭmsŏng 金城 ("City of Gold," present Kyŏngju), the capital of the Unified Silla (668-935), which was a metropolitan centre for the nation's political, economic, and social life (figs. 1-2, 13).⁶³ The shift of the location of *sabangbul* pillars may testify to the change in the nature of the erection of the monuments after unification. The unification of the

also a strategic outpost for the country to advance to the north of the Han River and to defend the attack of Koguryŏ from the north. In 548, according to *Samguk sagi*, King Yangwŏn 陽原王 (r. 545-559) of Koguryŏ attacked the Fortress of Toksan (獨山城=馬津城) in Yesan, built to defend the invasion from Koguryŏ, but King Sŏng 聖王 (r. 523-554) of Paekche successfully defended the invasion and secured the area of the Han River basin. Dating Yesan *sabangbul* to c. 550, Mun Myong-dae argues this relic was produced in the reign of King Sŏng of Paekche (r. 523-553) who had successful military conquests and recovered the Han River area by attacking Koguryŏ in alliance with King Chinhŭng of Silla during this period. Later when Paekche collapsed, restoration movement was based on Imjon Fortress in Yesan by restoration forces. *Samguk sagi*, vol. 19, Koguryŏ pon'gi 高句麗本紀 7, "Yangwŏnwang 陽原王 4"; *Samguk sagi*, vol. 26, Paekche pon'gi 4, Sŏngwang 26; TYS, vol. 20, Ch'ungch'ŏng-do Taehŭng-hyŏn chojŏk" 忠清道 大興縣 古跡條; Noh Jung-kuk, *Paekche puhŭng undongsa* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2003), 108, 174-176; Mun Myong-dae, 1977b, 68, 70.

⁶¹ Mun Myong-dae, 1977b: 74-75.

⁶² According to *Samguk sagi*, in 603 King Chinp'yŏng 眞平王 defeated the Koguryŏ army which pushed southward and attack the Fortress of Pukhan-san 北漢山城 (present Fortress of Ach'a-san) to seize the territory back. *Samguk sagi*, vol. 4, Silla pon'gi 4, Chinp'yŏngwang 25.

⁶³ While Mun Myong-dae dates the T'apkok monuments to the mid-seventh century, Kang Woo-bang views they were made after the unification and suggests ninth century for their date. Mun Myong-dae, 1977b: 69-70; Kim Wŏn-yong and Kang Woo-bang, "Kyŏngju Nam-san non," *Kyŏngju Nam-san* (Seoul: Yŏlhwadang, 1987), 173-175; Kang Woo-bang, *Wŏnnyung kwa chohwa* (Seoul: Yŏlhwadang, 1990), 396; Kim Kil-woong, 1988: 139-145. For more discussion on its date, See Lee Suk-hee, 2002: 22-23.

whole peninsula in the mid-seventh century marks the opening of a glorious Silla era centred on its capital Kyōngju. In the two *sabangbul* relics at the Kulbul-sa site and Ch'ilbul-am, the main Buddha triads may signify the locus of the king's dominion in the capital. The construction of the Ch'ilbul-am complex on Kowi-san 高位山, the highest peak on Nam-san 南山 in the capital, probably represented the culmination of the golden age of Unified Silla in the early half of the eighth century.⁶⁴ The change in the geographical location probably reflects a gradual evolution in the character of the monuments.

The cultural environment which produced the *sabangbul* works during the Unified Silla was the result of a major change in the political and social situation after unification. A growing authoritarianism in the power exercised by the throne was the most important change resulting from the unification of Silla.⁶⁵ Buddhism, which had contributed greatly to unification by being the spiritual prop of Silla, continued to provide the nation with spiritual unity during the time of its greatest development and prosperity, and this received strong support from the royal court. Buddhism provided a powerful supporting basis for the new governing structure of the Unified Silla, which was centred on the authority of the throne.⁶⁶ The arrangement of the Buddhas facing toward the four points of the compass along with the central Buddha triad, as shown in the Ch'ilbul-am and Kulbul-sa relics, signifies the strengthening of the centralized governmental structure.⁶⁷ The huge central Buddha triad presiding over the *sabangbul* pillar may represent the Silla rulers' interest in the absolute authority and internal cohesion of the unified country in the eighth century.⁶⁸ What appears to be evident is

⁶⁴ Mun Myong-dae dates the Ch'ilbul-am *sabangbul* relic to the mid-eighth century (c. 750) during the reign on King Kyōngdōk (r. 742-765) based on its stylistic analysis, but Kim Lena has dated this group of Buddhas to the early half of the eighth century (c. 730-750). Mun Myong-dae, 1980: 1, 13, 21; Kim Lena, 1992: 96; Lee Ki-baik, 1972: 8, 20, 22.

⁶⁵ Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 36, 74.

⁶⁶ Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 59.

⁶⁷ Mun Myong-dae, 1980: 9, 13, 21.

⁶⁸ Mun Myong-dae, 1980: 9, 13, 21.

that Buddhism continued its support of the government after unification and suited the needs of a centralized monarchical state.⁶⁹

Mun Myong-dae has said that the evolution of *sabangbul* into *obangbul* 五方佛 (Five Directional Buddhas) coincided with the change in the pattern of the mountain worship from worshipping three mountains (*samsan* 三山) to five mountains (*oak* 五岳) in the Unified Silla period.⁷⁰ The groupings of the four and five Buddhas traditionally represent the cosmological concept of the four cardinal directions, which basically embody the universe as a whole, while five adds the centre to these.⁷¹ The arrangement of the five Buddhas in the five directions was also associated with a very ancient cosmic symbol and an important element of East Asian cosmology even before the advent of Buddhism.⁷² The monuments in the capital city representing the radiation of the four points of the compass outwards from the centre probably refer to the centralized character of the governmental authority in Unified Silla. After unification the *cakravartin* concept retained its influence, and the kings of Unified Silla continued using the theme in order to unify the people of the conquered kingdoms. Furthermore the idea of an undefeatable *cakravartin*, king of the universe, was used to validate Silla's conquest in a cosmological dimension. When Silla kings extended

⁶⁹ Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 60; idem, *Silla chǒngch'i sahoesa yǒn'gu* (Seoul; Ilchogak, 1974), 194-215.

⁷⁰ Lee Ki-baik, 1972: 7; Rhi Ki-young, 1973: 2; Mun Myong-dae, 1980: 13-18; idem, 1977, 74.

⁷¹ It is significant that four and five had a spatial symbolism. The four directions can be often used symbolically as an expression of totality. Arrangement of the five Buddhas on the five directions was also associated with a very ancient cosmic symbol and an important element of East Asian cosmology even before the advent of Buddhism.

⁷² In the past, as evident in imperial city planning of ancient Chinese culture, the nation was conceived as a microcosm of the universe with its own four quarters and the monarch at the centre of this universe. The Womb World Maṇḍala bears a striking visual similarity to a map of ancient Chinese culture showing the radiation outward from the imperial metropolitan centre. King Kogukch'ŏn 故國川王 (r. 179-196) of Koguryŏ Kingdom (37 BCE-668), to which Buddhism was introduced in 372 at the very first among the Three Kingdoms, restructured the earlier traditional society into five provinces (*pu*) of the four cardinal directions with centre. According to Lee Ki-baik, "This signifies the strengthening of the centralized governmental structure." Michele Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *Living Architecture: China* (Macdonald & Co.: London, 1971), 39-56; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), v. 3, 502; Rhi Ki-yŏng, "Brief remarks on the Buddha-land Ideology in Silla during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in *Tang China and Beyond*, ed. by Antonino Forte (Kyōto: Instituto Italiano di cultura scola di studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1988), 164; Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 36.

their powers in all possible directions, the expansions were seen as a manifestation of the sacred Buddha-*kṣetra* thought. This indicates that there is a reciprocal relationship between *cakravartin* ideology, military campaigns and absolute authority of king in the political sphere.⁷³

Samguk yusa provides some anecdotes on the construction of *sabangbul* pillars in Silla. According to one narrative, in the ninth year of King Chinp'yōng 眞平王 (587), a mountain shook with a thundering sound, and a great rock, carved with four Buddhas on its four facades, fell from the heavens onto a mountain to the east of Chungnyōng Pass. Hearing of this miracle, the king ordered his subjects to build a temple nearby, and named it Taesūng-sa 大乘寺 (the Temple of the Great Vehicle). From then on the mountain was called Sabul-san 四佛山 (the Mountain of Four Buddhas).⁷⁴ Another narrative tells that one day King Kyōngdōk 景德王 (r. 742-765) travelled to Paengnyul-sa 栢栗寺 (the Temple of Peanuts and Chestnuts) where he heard the sound of chanting Amitābha's name beneath the ground. The king and his retinue began digging and eventually unearthed a great rock carved with four Buddhas facing in the four directions. The king ordered a temple to be built on the site and named it Kulbul-sa 掘佛寺 (the Temple of Buddha-Digging).⁷⁵

Although erected in separate geographical locations with a gap of 160 years between the two stone monuments, Taesūng-sa and Kulbul-sa relics feature the same iconography. The two narratives in *Samguk yusa* also show a common affinity in their framework and content. In particular, both narratives feature similar supernatural ways of presenting the monuments. It is clear that the tales of a lithic Buddha-image falling from the sky and unearthed from beneath the ground were added later to emphasize the

⁷³ Kang Woo-bang, "Pulsari changōm non" in *Pulsari changōm*, ed. National Museum of Korea, (Seoul: National Museum of Korea, 1991), 134-136.

⁷⁴ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T'apsang 塔像 4, "Sabul-san, Kulbul-san, Manbul-san cho" 四佛山, 掘佛山, 萬佛山 條.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

religious and mysterious atmosphere surrounding the accidents. These tales highlight the complexity of Buddhist rulership. Buddhism legitimates the regal authority of two Silla kings in a supernatural way in the form of stone monuments either falling from the sky or hidden beneath the ground, each complete with the carvings of four Buddhas. This testifies that the ruling sovereigns of the Unified Silla period were well aware of the power of Buddhism in legitimising their divine kingship. The miraculous events were probably used by the Silla kings as a political tool to prove that Buddhism had given them a Mandate of Heaven. The tales were a clear statement from the Silla kings to proclaim their rule and legitimise it with the supernatural powers of Buddhism. Moreover, according to the tales, Silla kings promoted the building of a state-monastery in addition to the *sabangbul* monuments, not only in the capital area but also in such remote provincial areas as Mun'gyōng. During this period the state monasteries built on the orders of the kings became outposts for the imposition of royal authority. By setting up vast national temple complexes for the well-being of the states the kings were illustrating Buddha's acknowledgment of their mandate, an idea typical of Buddhist kingship. The Silla kings strategically used the *cakravartin* concept in the *sabangbul* pillars to legitimate their divine kingship. Both the *sabangbul* relics and the miraculous narratives suggest that Silla kings acted as a true *cakravartin* in their conquest of the Three Kingdoms and their pacification of the unified peninsula.

3. *Hwaōm Odae-san* Belief (華嚴 五臺山 信仰)

The practice of worshipping *sabangbul* was later transformed into Buddhist thought as *Hwaōm Odae-san sinang* 華嚴 五臺山 信仰 (*Hwaōm* Worship of Mount Odae). This Buddhist belief system centring on Odae-san originated from the belief as practiced in the T'ang dynasty. It was the National Patriarch in seventh-century Silla, Chajang 慈藏 (590-658) who transplanted the belief in Wutai Shan 五臺山 (the Five Terrace Mountain) to Silla from Tang China. During his travels in China (636-643) he

visited Wutai Shan where he had a vision of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. In the narrative entitled “The Fifty Thousand True Bodies on Mount Odae-san” in the *Samguk yusa*, the Bodhisattva told Chajang to travel to a mountain on the border of Myōngju 溟州 (present-day Kangnūng) in the northeast of Silla to see ten thousand Buddhas who had made their permanent abode there.⁷⁶ After the master returned to Silla, he also encountered the same bodhisattva on the mountain in Silla’s northern borderland of Myōngju. Henceforth the mountain became a holy site closely related to the Mañjuśrī cult in Korea, and eventually became known as Odae-san (the Korean transcription of Wutai Shan).

This anecdote describing the miraculous encounter of the master Chajang with Mañjuśrī at Wutai Shan and again at Odae-san signifies the process of legitimizing the Silla Odae-san by divine prophecy. Furthermore this narrative is of the highest importance as the document concerns Silla’s efforts to protect its northern border by establishing a Buddhist sacred place in the area. Myōngju was located in Silla’s northern borderland and shared its border with the neighbouring kingdom Koguryō. Chajang was active during the reign of Queen Sōndōk 善德女王 (r. 632-647), the eldest daughter of King Chinp’yōng 眞平王 who erected the *sabangbul* pillar on Sabul-san in Mun’gyōng. It is interesting to note that, in order to administer the northern territory, Queen Sōndōk set up *puksogyōng* 北小京 (“the secondary capital in the north”) in Myōngju in 639, only a few years before Chajang’s return. During her reign national spirit was so strong that it was possible to lay the foundations for unifying the Three Kingdoms. This was the political background and the motive which led to the worshipping of Odae-san on Silla’s northern border, thereby elevating the mountain to the status of a sacred precinct. The supernatural encounter between the eminent monk and Mañjuśrī helped the process of legitimisation.

⁷⁶ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T’apsang 塔像 4, “Taesan [Odae-san] oman chinsin” [五]臺山五萬眞身條.

That said, the veneration of Odae-san initiated by Master Chajang during the reign of Queen Söndök was neither in accordance with formalities nor was it systemized during his lifetime. It was later organized into the devotional association of Avataṃsaka (*Hwaö̃m kyölsa* 華嚴結社) during the Unified Silla period. Indeed the belief system, by which the five peaks of Mount Odae (one each for the four directions and one for the centre) were believed to have been inhabited by five different Buddhas and bodhisattvas, was only really established by Crown Prince Poch'ön 寶川 and his younger brother Prince Hyomyö̃ng 孝明, two sons of King Chö̃ngsin 淨神王.⁷⁷ In the course of time, during which each plateau was recognized as a Buddha abode, the worship of Wutai Shan 五台山 in China, originally founded on Avataṃsaka thought by Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839),⁷⁸ was greatly influenced by the esoteric doctrines and practices of Amoghavajra (C: Bukong K: Pugong 不空, 705-774), who founded Jinge Si 金閣寺 (the Gold Pavilion Monastery) on the mountain and placed the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu within the shrine in 766-767.⁷⁹ Following the

⁷⁷ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, “Myö̃ngju Odae-san Pojilto t'aeja chön'gi” 溟州五臺山寶叱徒太子傳記條 (Biography of the Crown Prince Pojilto of Odae-san in Myö̃ngju). While this tale is somewhat more detailed than “The Fifty Thousand True Bodies on [O]dae-san,” the contents of the two passages are largely the same.

Iryön inquired in the identities of King Chö̃ngsin and his two sons, the Crown Prince Poch'ön and his younger brother Hyomyö̃ng who would later succeed his father. Iryön has suggested that Chö̃ngsin was actually King Sinmun 神文王 (r. 681-691), while the names Hyomyö̃ng and Poch'ön refer to King Hyoso 孝昭王 (r. 692-701) and King Sö̃ngdök 聖德王 (r. 702-736) respectively. However, this assumption by Iryön has been into a question by some scholars as Rhi Ki-young and Mun Myong-dae. According to the narrative in *Samguk yusa*, Poch'ön did not ascend to the throne. Moreover, there was no contest for accession to the throne between the princes during the period of King Sinmun unlike the note by Iryön which records King Chö̃ngsin was ousted after the event. Mun Myö̃ng-dae argues it happened between the reigns of King Hū̃ngdök 興德王 (r. 826-836) and King Munsö̃ng 文聖王 (r. 839-857), especially during the reign of King Sinmu 神武王 (r. 839) who killed King Minae 閔哀王 (r. 838-839) and ascended to the throne. In addition, according to Mun, the full-establishment of the Hwaö̃m Odae-san Belief in which the five deities correspond to the five directions and five colours was not possible in the period of the reign of King Sinmun (681-691). Rhi Ki-young, 1988, 173; Mun Myong-dae, “Sangwön-sa Munsu tongja sang ũi yön'gu,” in *Wö̃lchö̃ng-sa sö̃ngbo pangmulgwan haksul ch'ongsö* II, ed. Wö̃lchö̃ng-sa Sö̃ngbo Museum (Kanwö̃ndo: Wö̃lchö̃ng-sa Sö̃ngbo Museum, 2001b): 38-39.

⁷⁸ Pak Ro-jun, “Tangdae Odaesan sinang kwa Chinggwān,” *Kwandong sahak* 3 (1988a): 102-119; idem, “Odae-san sinang ũi kiwön yön'gu,” *Kwandong munhwa* 2 (1986): 61-64.

⁷⁹ It is supported by Ennin's diary of travels in China, *Ru Tang qiufa xunli xingji* 入唐求法巡礼行記, which describes Five Directional Buddhas of Vajradhātu Maṇḍala enshrined on the second and third stories of Gold Pavilion Monastery built by Amoghavajra in Mount Wutai in 766 with a grant from the Emperor Taizong to enhance the esoteric teachings and the belief in Mañjuśrī throughout China.

precedent of Tang, the five plateaux on Odae-san of Silla are marked by an arrangement of five deities in the five directions with the five colours.⁸⁰ This is summarised in the following table..

Direction	Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhatu	Colours of the Maṇḍala	Five Deities of Odae-san	Colours of Odae-san	Colours of Five Elements
Centre	Mahāvairocana	White	Vairocana	Yellow	Yellow
East	Akṣobhya	Blue	Avalokiteśvara	Blue	Blue
South	Ratnasambhava	Yellow	Kṣitigarbha	Red	Red
West	Amitābha	Red	Amitāyus	White	White
North	Amoghasiddhi	Green (Black)	Śākyamuni	Black	Black

It may be that the spread of esoteric Buddhist ideas provided an impetus for the formation of this belief in Silla. It is clear that the arrangement of the five deities of Silla Odae-san *kyōlsa* 結社 (association or society) was based on the veneration of the

According to the diary, on the second storey there were the five Buddhas of the *Kumgangjōng yuga* 金剛頂瑜伽, a variant name for *Kumgangjōng kyōng* 金剛頂經 (*Vajrasekhara Sūtra*), an important scripture of esoteric Buddhism on which the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is based. See Edwin Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), 253-4; Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 79-83; Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Manjusri: A group of East Asian Mandalas and Their Traditional Symbolism* (Boulder, Colo.: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983), 30. For an in-depth study on the relationship between the belief in Wutai Shan and the esoteric doctrines propagated by Amoghavajra, see Pak Ro-jun, "Tangdae Odaesan sinang kwa Pugong samjang," *Kwandong munhwa* 3 (1988b): 25-36; idem, 1986, 64-67; idem, "Odae-san sinang kwa milgyo," *Silk Road ūi Munhwa, Odae-san* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1993), 218-231.

⁸⁰ Rhi Ki-young, "Pulgyo suyong ūi wōnch'ŏ hyōngt'ae," *Han'guk minjok sasang sa taegyŏ* (Seoul: Asea haksul yōn'guhoe, 1973), v. 2, 141.

In Buddhism, especially in Tantric Buddhism, the five primary colours are associated with the Five Transcendental Buddhas and the five compass directions. Black, white, red, blue and yellow are not a simple assortment of five colours; but the basic principles of the universe. Likewise, there are many groups of five associated with the five Buddhas. Further associations between the Five Transcendental Buddhas and the five colours, directions, natural elements, seasons, planets, internal organs, and a host of other attributes can be found. These attributes vary in textual sources and among the different sects. For the table summarizing the meaning of the main colour symbols in Buddhism, see Adrian Snodgrass, *The Matrix and Diamond World Mandalas in Shingon Buddhism* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 213; idem, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1985), 288, 374; Louis Frederic, *Buddhism: Flammarion Iconographic Guide* (Paris; New York: Flammarion, 1995), 311.

five main peaks of Wutai Shan as a sacred place for worshipping the Five Directional Buddhas of the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*; and this reflects the influence of Amoghavajra and his tantric ideas.⁸¹ In spite of the disparity in their nomenclatures, it is evident that the directional arrangement and corresponding colour scheme of the five Buddhist deities of Odae-san belief conform to the characteristics of an esoteric maṇḍala. The four Buddhist deities of the four directions surround Vairocana on the central peak in a mandalic pattern. This is particularly emphasised by the attempt to allocate five colours to the five directional deities. Thus the underlying philosophy of the cult of Odae-san and the five Buddhist deities of the corresponding directions can be understood as a maṇḍala in its widest sense.⁸²

Although it undoubtedly reflected the various stages of Chinese influence, the worshipping of Odae-san began to undergo indigenization into a peculiarly Silla type both in framework and content. Unlike the Chinese archetype based on the tantric idea, in its association of the five directions with the five colours, Silla Odae-san belief demonstrates the influence of the traditional colours of the Five Elements, or *ohaeng* 五行 (C: *wuxing*), one of the dominant concepts in ancient Chinese philosophy.⁸³ *Wuxing*, often translated as Five Elements, Five Movements, Five Phases, or Five Stages,⁸⁴ refers to wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, which are regarded as the basic principles of the universe. The structure of the cosmos mirrors the five phases.

⁸¹ Soper also has pointed out, “A group of five Buddhas is an anomaly in Chinese Buddhist art prior to the introduction of Tantric iconography in mid-T’ang.” Soper, 1595, 197; Mun Myong-dae, “Chigwŏn-in Pirojanabul ūi sŏngnip munje wa Sŏngnamam-sa Pirojanabul ūi yŏn’gu,” *Han’guk pulgyohak yŏn’gu ch’ongsŏ*, vol. 16, *Pulgyo misul 1 (Pulsang)* (Koyang-si: Pulham munhwasa, 2003), 253.

⁸² Suh Yoon-kil, *Han’guk milgyo sasangsa yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Pulgwang ch’ulp’ansa, 1994), 270.

⁸³ Rhi Ki-yŏng, 1988, 164, 175; Kim Tu-jin, “Silla hadae ūi Odae-san sinang kwa Hwaŏm kyŏlsa,” in *Han’guk pulgyo munhwa sasangsa*, vol. 1, ed. Kasan Yi Chi-gwan sŏnim hwagap kinyŏm nonch’ong kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Kasan pulgyo munhwa chinhŭngwŏn, 1992), 674-5; idem, *Silla Hwaŏm sasangsa yŏn’gu* (Seoul National University Press, 2004), 253; Sin Tong-ha, *Silla pulgukt’o sasang ūi chŏn’gae yangsang kwa yŏksa chŏk ūiŭi* (PhD diss., Seoul National University, 2000), 122-123; Hong Yun-sik, “Silla Hwaŏm sasang ūi sahoe chŏk chŏn’gae wa mandara,” in *Ch’ŏn Kwan-woo sŏnsaeng hwallyŏk kinyŏm Han’guk sahak nonch’ong* (Seoul: Chŏngŭm munhwasa, 1985a), 295-297.

⁸⁴ In Chinese, *wu* refers to five categories of things in the natural world, namely wood, fire, earth, metal and water; *xing* means movement and transformation. Thus *wuxing* (the five elements) actually refers to the movement and transformation of these five elements as well as their interrelationships.

Wuxing theory was generally dominant in the East before the import of Buddhism: it holds that all things in the universe are derived from the five basic elements. In this way, everything contains the basic properties of these five elements, thereby maintaining a harmonious balance through the constant inter-promotion and inter-restraint among the five elements.⁸⁵ The system of five phases is used to describe interactions and relationships between phenomena.⁸⁶ Each phase has a complex series of associations with different aspects of nature: colours, seasons, directions, heavenly creatures, and shapes all interact with each other.⁸⁷ The theories of the five elements and *yin-yang* 陰陽 were a part of ancient Chinese cosmogony and formed a special

⁸⁵ See Vitaly A. Rubin, “The Concepts of Wu-Hsing and Yin-Yang,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 9 (1982): 131-157; Steven J. Bennett, “Patterns of the Sky and the Earth: A Chinese Science of Applied Cosmology,” *Chinese Science* 3 (March 1978): 1-26; Chan Wing-tsit, ed. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 245; Kiyosi Yabuuti, “Chinese Astronomy: Development and Limiting Factors,” in *Chinese Science: Explorations of an Ancient Tradition*, eds. Shigeru Nakayama and Nathan Sivin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973), 91-103.

⁸⁶ The book *Shangshu* [Book of Documents], written during the Western Zhou dynasty, contains the earliest textual reference of *wuxing* (five elements). It states,

Water moistens downwards. Fire heats upwards. Wood is both crooked and straight. Metal can be changed into various shapes. Earth is for planting crops. Moistening downwards makes the salty taste. Heating upwards makes the bitter taste. Crookedness and straightness make the sour taste. Changing into shapes makes the pungent taste. Crops make the sweet taste.”

Kong Yinda, et al., *Shisanjing zhengyi*, vol. I, reprint (Beijing: Zhonghua Bookshop, 1980), 188.

⁸⁷ The interrelation between the elements and the natural aspects is as follows:

Movement	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Colour	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Shape	Rectangular	Triangle	Square	Round	Curve
Direction	East	South	Centre	West	North
Planet	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Heavenly creature	Azure Dragon	Vermilion Bird	Yellow Dragon	White Tiger	Black Tortoise

world outlook in ancient China.⁸⁸ Koreans have likewise been conscious of the five colours and the corresponding directions since ancient times. There have been numerous attempts at codifying the colours of the directions according to the ancient East-Asian cosmological principles which had become an integral part of Korean life. This is evidenced by the Koguryŏ tomb murals in which special animals are painted in the cardinal directions with corresponding colours to sanctify their tombs.⁸⁹

The cult of Odae-san is indisputable evidence that Silla people adapted the Mañjuśrī cult at Wutai Shan and transformed the Chinese prototype into their own independent devotional practice through a unique interpretation of the original. In Silla's Odae-san *kyŏlsa*, we first notice the unusual arrangement of the Buddhist deities: Avalokiteśvara in the east instead of Akṣobhya, and Kṣitigarbha in the south instead of Ratnasambhava. This also testifies to the fact that the placements of the Four Directional Buddhas are not fixed but variable. Avalokiteśvara is a bodhisattva who embodies the mercy and compassion of the Buddha.⁹⁰ He was widely revered as a "Goddess of Mercy and Compassion." Because of his vows to save all sentient beings, Kṣitigarbha, like Avalokiteśvara, also embodies compassion, universal salvation, and supreme spiritual optimism. By virtue of their infinite compassion for the salvation of suffering beings Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha were the most popular bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna Buddhism. During the eighth century, Amitābha worship, including chanting the name of the Buddha Amitābha, spread widely throughout Unified Silla, where it began to emerge as the dominant form of Buddhist practice.⁹¹ While the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra* have been the main focus of Buddhist academic study, Pure Land Buddhism has been one of the most popular and effective forms of

⁸⁸ Chan Wing-tsit, 245.

⁸⁹ Chŏn Ho-t'ae, *The Dreams of the Living and Hopes for the Dead: Goguryeo Tomb Murals* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2007), 30-32, 46-50, 62-68, 86-98, 140-146.

⁹⁰ The meaning of the bodhisattva's name (觀世音菩薩; Kwanseŭm posal in Korean) is literally "Bodhisattva who looks world's sound" (i.e., the prayers and lamentation of sentient beings in need of his help). Red Pine, *The Heart Sutra: The Womb of the Buddhas* (Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 44-45.

⁹¹ McBride, II, 309.

practice concentrating on Amitābha. The worship of Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara characterized Korean Pure Land Buddhism during the Unified Silla period.⁹² As a result of his compassionate association, Kṣitigarbha was also assimilated into the Pure Land faith, and a version of the Amitābha triad evolved with Amitābha flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha, instead of Mahāsthāmaprāpta (K: Taeseji posal 大勢至菩薩). Kṣitigarbha, whose popularity is second only to that of Avalokiteśvara, took over the position of Amitābha's main attendant and, like Avalokiteśvara, became one of the most popular deities in Pure Land sects. Although sharing many overlapping functions, both Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha had become important forms of Buddhist belief and practices in Silla by the time the Odae-san cult developed.

Kim Tu-jin has argued that this specific formation of the five deities may also suggest the increased popularity of the Avataṃsaka school led by the lineage of Master Ŭisang 義湘 (625-702) instead of the lineages of Chajang 慈藏 and Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617-686) during the Unified Silla period.⁹³ For example, the inclusion of Avalokiteśvara in this belief suggests the influence of the Avataṃsaka school of Ŭisang's lineage in Yangyang, Kwangwŏn Province where Naksan-sa 洛山寺 (the Temple of Potalaka Mountain of Avalokiteśvara) was founded by the master.⁹⁴ We may get a better understanding of the cults of two bodhisattvas within the Odae-san *kyŏlsa* by examining how the cultic practices of the deities within Silla Buddhism during the period developed through the deeds of eminent Korean practitioners.

⁹² As the Pure Land became widely accepted by the public, the cults of Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara began to be mingled. Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 270; Mun Myong-dae, "P'och'ŏn-san sŏkkulgo," *Tongguk sahak* 11 (1969): 123.

⁹³ The efforts of Ŭisang and his disciples, at times numbering three thousand, helped developed Hwaŏm school to become the most influential in Silla. Peter Lee, *Source Book of Korean Civilization: From early times to the sixteenth century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 159; Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 19-20, 87-91, 239-243; idem, "Ŭisang ũi Kwanŭm sinang kwa chŏngt'o," *Chindan hakpo* 71 (Dec. 1991), 14-15; idem, 1992, 681-685. See also Kim Ji-kyŏn, "Silla Hwaŏm ũi churyugo," *Sungsan Pak Kil-jin Hwagap kinyŏm Han'guk pulgyo sasangsa* (Iri: Wŏnggwang taehakkyo yŏn'guwŏn, 1984), 265-268; Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 109.

⁹⁴ Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 239-243.

Ŭisang won great acclaim for founding the Hwaŏm school in Korea. The school's many monasteries include the famous Pusŏk-sa 浮石寺 (built in 676 on the order of King Munmu), Hwaŏm-sa 華嚴寺, and Haein-sa 海印寺 (802). Naksan-sa 洛山寺 (the Potalaka Temple) was another of the Hwaŏm temples established by Ŭisang to show his devotion to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Naksan-sa was the very first monastery built by Master Ŭisang on his return from Tang China in 670.⁹⁵ Just as Mañjuśrī was said to reside at Odae-san, Nak-san 洛山 was regarded as the abode of Avalokiteśvara in Silla.⁹⁶ Nak-san is an abbreviated term of Potarak-san 補陀洛山 in Korean. It refers to Mount Potalaka (補怛(or 陀)洛迦), the mythical dwelling of Avalokiteśvara located in the seas south of India as detailed in the Gaṇḍavyūha chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.⁹⁷ The name Nak-san in Silla obviously derives from Mount Potalaka. Just as the Chinese worked on the sinicization of the deity into a compassionate saviour on their native soil from the earliest times,⁹⁸ Mount Potalaka was transformed into [Pota]Nak-san 補陀洛山 in Silla by Ŭisang. Designated as the abode of Avalokiteśvara in Silla by Ŭisang, it was then regarded as the holy place of the Silla Hwaŏm school.

Numerous Mahāyāna scriptures are connected with Avalokiteśvara: these include the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Heart Sūtra*, and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. In particular, the *Heart Sūtra* (Skt: *Prajñā-pāramitāh-ṛdaya-sūtra*; K: *Panya para milda sim kyŏng* 般若波羅蜜多心經), often cited as the best known and most popular of the Mahāyāna

⁹⁵ It is believed Naksan-sa was built sometime between the year of 670 when Ŭisang returned from China and 676, the year when Pusŏk-sa was built. Chŏng Pyŏng-sam, "T'ongil silla ūi Kwanŭm sinang," *Han'guksaron* 8 (1982): 38; Kim Tu-jin, "Ŭisang ūi Kwaŭm sinang kwa chŏngt'o," in *Ŭisang: kŭ ūi saenge wa Hwaŏm sasang* (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1995), 230.

⁹⁶ According to an anecdote narrated in *Samguk yusa*, Master Ŭisang heard a divine revelation that the abode of the dhārma body of the "Great Compassion" was to be found in a cave by the sea. *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T'apsang 塔像 (Pagodas and Buddhist Images) 4, "Naksan ideasŏng Kwanŭm chŏngchwi Chosin" 洛山二大聖 觀音正趣調信 條 (The Two Buddhas of Naksan and Chosin, the Lovesick monk).

⁹⁷ T. 279, 366c03-366c04.

⁹⁸ Helmut Brinker, *Zen in the art of painting* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Inc., 1987), 57.

In China, Avalokiteśvara's Potalaka has been traditionally identified with Mt. Putuo (普陀山), a little island off the Zhejiang coast near Ningbo.

canon,⁹⁹ is ascribed entirely to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. That said, the most influential literary portrait of Avalokiteśvara was provided by the *Lotus Sūtra*,¹⁰⁰ generally accepted as the earliest literary teaching on the doctrines of Avalokiteśvara.¹⁰¹ The image of the compassionate saviour mainly derives from chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sūtra*, *The Universal Gateway of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*. This is devoted to the Buddha's glowing praise of the salvific powers of the compassionate bodhisattva. It also describes a total of thirty-three different manifestations of Avalokiteśvara, including female manifestations, all to suit the needs of various beings.¹⁰² This chapter is now regarded as the earliest source of the widespread worship of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as a "Goddess of Mercy and Compassion" and, more importantly, of the boundless salvific nature of Avalokiteśvara.¹⁰³ Because of his ability to solve a number of different practical problems, Avalokiteśvara was one of the most popular and most venerated deities during this period.¹⁰⁴

Although the *Lotus Sūtra* is regarded as the Buddhist scripture on which the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara's belief is mainly based, it does not say where the deity resides. In the final section of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* (*Ippōb kyep'um* 入法界品, Entering the Dhāma Realm) chapter, Avalokiteśvara is portrayed as being seated on the summit of Mount Potalaka where he is visited by the youth Sudhana, who

⁹⁹ Red Pine, 16, 18; Jan Nattier, "The Heart Sūtra: A Chinese Apocryphal Text?," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, no. 2 (1992): 153.

¹⁰⁰ Wilt L. Idema, *Personal Salvation and filial piety: Two precious scroll narratives of Guanyin and her acolytes* (The Kuroda Institute, 2008), 6.

¹⁰¹ John Huntington and Dina Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art* (Columbus, OH: The Columbus Museum of Art and Serindia Publications, Inc., 2003), 188.

¹⁰² T. 262, 57a-b.

The *Lotus Sūtra* shares this distinctive feature with the *Surangama Sūtra* in that it also enumerates the thirty-two response bodies in which Avalokiteśvara manifests.

¹⁰³ This chapter devoted to Avalokiteśvara became so popular that it often circulates separately as its own sūtra, called the *Avalokiteśvara Sūtra*. Helen J. Baroni, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Zen Buddhism* (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2002), 15.

¹⁰⁴ Chōng Pyōng-sam, 22-26; Lee Chi-kwan, "Kyōngsōng sang ūi Kwanūm sinang," *Han'guk kwanūm sinang* (Seoul: Dongguktae pulgyo munhwa yōn'guwōn, 1997), 11-22; Kim Young-t'ae, "Silla ūi Kwanūm sinang," *Pulgyo hakpo* 13 (1976): 63-86; Hong Sūng-ki, "Kwanūm sinang kwa Silla sahoe," *Honam munhwa yōn'gu* 8 (June, 1976): 44-55; Chōng Pyōng-cho, "Ūisang ūi Kwanūm sinang," *Tonguk sasang* 10, 11, (1978): 47-55.

is visiting fifty-three teachers in his quest for wisdom. Sudhana's pilgrimage to Mount Potalaka became a popular subject in Buddhist iconography from an early date. The concrete evidence of the earthly abode of the deity detailed in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* provided a momentum to crystallise the cult of Avalokiteśvara.¹⁰⁵ *Paekhwa toryang parwŏn mun* 百花道場發願文 [The Vow Made at the White Lotus Enlightenment Site],¹⁰⁶ usually attributed to Ŭisang,¹⁰⁷ demonstrates the master's devotion to Avalokiteśvara. In Sanskrit the word Potalaka literally means "little white flower [lotus]" (小百花). Since *toryang* 道場 (Skt: *bodhimaṇḍa*) refers to the sacred site for enlightenment but is also a common term for monastery, the white lotus *bodhimaṇḍa* of the title of Ŭisang's document represents Mount Potalaka, described in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, as well as Naksan-sa as the site for worshipping Avalokiteśvara. While strongly supporting the cult of Amitābha, Pusŏk-sa was one of the ten representative Hwaŏm monasteries in Silla, namely *hwaŏm sipch'al* 華嚴十刹 (ten great Avataṃsaka monasteries in Silla), associated with Ŭisang and his lineage. Likewise, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* is accepted as the root instruction for the tradition in which Ŭisang and his disciples stressed their belief in Avalokiteśvara in their effort to propagate Buddhism in Yangyang area.¹⁰⁸

A variety of Avalokiteśvara beliefs and prayers have been developed on the basis of a number of different Buddhist scriptures: these include esoteric scriptures as well as the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, and the *Heart Sūtra*.¹⁰⁹ In

¹⁰⁵ Pyŏn Tong-myŏng, "Silla ũi Kwanŭm sinang kwa pada," *Han'gukhak nonch'ong* 34: 421-22.

¹⁰⁶ *Han'guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ* (hereafter HPC), vol. 2, 9a. For a full English translation of this, see Peter Lee, 164-5.

¹⁰⁷ However, Chŏng Pyŏng-sam and Hae-ju (Chŏn Ho-ryŏn) argue the vow-text must have been authored by Ŭisang's disciple in a later period. For the discussion on this issue, see Chŏng Pyŏng-sam, "Paekhwa toryang parwŏnmun yakhae ũi chŏsul kwa yut'ong," *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 151 (2010): 34; Hae-ju, "Ŭisang hwasang parwŏnmun yŏn'gu," *Pulgyo hakpo* 29 (1992): 338-345.

¹⁰⁸ Kim Tu-jin, *Silla Hwaŏm sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Seoul University Press, 2002), 20, 241, 263, 269.

¹⁰⁹ Chŏng Pyŏng-sam, "Chŏnmun Paekhwa toryang parwŏnmun yakhae wa Ch'ewŏn ũi Kwanŭm sinang," *Pulgyo yŏn'gu* 34 (2011): 85, 100-1.

For example, Avalokiteśvara is plainly associated with the notion of non-duality in the *Heart Sūtra*, in which Avalokiteśvara teaches that the ultimate Buddhist truth is that there is no difference between

addition to the Hwaŏm philosophy, several methods of worshipping Avalokiteśvara are discussed in Ŭisang’s vow-text.¹¹⁰ With specific reference to Avalokiteśvara as a “Goddess of Mercy and Compassion” and a saviour, his devotion is based upon the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*.¹¹¹ Some terms Ŭisang used in his text—such as the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara’s Great Perfect Mirror-like Wisdom (大圓鏡智) and the sea of the *samādhi* of complete penetration (圓通 三昧性海)—derive from the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*.¹¹² The Pure Land practice of the cult of Avalokiteśvara is most conspicuous in the vow-text.¹¹³ At the beginning Ŭisang invites us to visualize (*kwan* 觀) the Great Perfect Mirror-like Wisdom of Avalokiteśvara,¹¹⁴ just as the Buddha advised Queen Vaidehi to visualize the bodhisattva in the *Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra* (K: *Kwan muryangsu kyŏng* 佛說觀無量壽佛經) which outlines the sixteen mental visualization exercises for rebirth in the Western Paradise.¹¹⁵ The meditative practice centring on visualization is a Pure Land Buddhist practice focused on achieving birth in the Pure Land of the West. Ŭisang cultivates the practice by recalling the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (念菩薩名) and taking refuge in Avalokiteśvara.¹¹⁶ According to the anecdote listed in *Samguk yusa*, *Ukmyŏn the slave girl who entered the Western Paradise*, by the mid-eighth century we know that both Buddhist monks and the common people set up societies to recite the names of Buddhas and bodhisattvas together for ten thousand days (*Manil yŏmbulhoe* 萬日念佛會), and pray for rebirth in Pure Land.¹¹⁷ The vow-text focuses on Ŭisang’s hope of rebirth in the Pure Land,

emptiness and form. T. 251, 848c.

¹¹⁰ McBride, II, 2001, 385.

¹¹¹ In both scriptures the deity appears in numerous manifestations to save beings from suffering and ignorance. Chŏng Pyŏng-jo, “Ŭisang ũi Kwanŭm sinang,” *Tongguk sahak* 10, 11 (1978): 48.

¹¹² T. 19, 123c. Chŏng Pyŏng-sam, 2011, 101.

¹¹³ Pulgyo munhwa yŏn’guwŏn, *Han’guk chongt’o sasang yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1985), 453.

¹¹⁴ The first line reads:…觀彼本師 觀音大聖 大圓鏡智 亦觀弟子 性靜本覺 所有本師….

¹¹⁵ T. 12, 343c13-344a5; Chŏng Pyŏng-sam, 2011, 100.

¹¹⁶ McBride, II, 2001, 544.

¹¹⁷ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 5, Kamt’ong 感通 (Tales of Devotion) 7, “Ukmyŏn the slave girl who entered the Western Paradise” 郁面婢念佛西昇 條; Sin Chong-wŏn, “Samguk yusa ‘Ukmyŏn

especially that of Avalokiteśvara, Mount Potalaka.¹¹⁸ Although Ŭisang was the founder of the Hwaōm school in Silla, the belief in rebirth in the Pure Land holds a great importance in his Hwaōm tradition.¹¹⁹

Kim Sang-hyōn has argued that this vow-text attests to the syncretism between Buddhist cults in Silla and the Hwaōm tradition.¹²⁰ Ŭisang’s text also includes esoteric practices such as chanting the Great Compassion Spell (誦大悲呪)—an abbreviated title for *The thousand-handed and thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva’s vast, perfect, unimpeded, great compassionate heart dhāraṇī Sūtra* (Skt: *Nīlakaṇṭha Sūtra*)¹²¹—and the devotion to an esoteric type of Avalokiteśvara with thousand arms and eyes,¹²² an artistic form common in Tibet and Japan.¹²³ According to the narrative *Punhwang-sa Chōnsudaebi maeng’a tūgan* 千手大悲盲兒得眼 (The great compassion of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara restores a blind child’s eyesight) in *Samguk yusa*, during the reign of King Kyōngdōk (742-765), a woman named Hūimyōng 希明 prayed on behalf of her blind son in front of the painting of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara located at Punhwang-sa in the capital.¹²⁴ As the Avalokiteśvara statue in Sōkkuram Grotto testifies, the veneration of the eleven-headed version of

binyōmbul sōsūng’ cho (郁面婢念佛西昇 條) e taehan ilgoch’al (A Study on “Ukmyōn the slave girl who entered the Western Paradise” in *Samguk yusa*),” *Sach’ong* 26, (1982): 1-21.

¹¹⁸ Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 110, 271.

¹¹⁹ Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 110, 268.

¹²⁰ Kim Sang-hyōn, “Ŭisang ūi sinang kwa palwōnmun,” *Silla Hwaōm sasangsa yōn’gu* (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1993), 173; McBride, II, 2001, 535.

¹²¹ T. 1060 (千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無崖大悲心大陀羅尼經).

¹²² T. 1057 (*Nīlakaṇṭha Sūtra*, 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神呪經), 84a-c; and *Nīlakaṇṭha Sūtra* (千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經) T. 1060, 107b-c.

¹²³ In Chinese Buddhism, practices of an eighteen-armed form of Avalokiteśvara called Cundī are very popular. The popularity of Cundī is attested by the three extant translations of the *Cundī Dhāraṇī Sūtra* from Sanskrit to Chinese, made from the end of the seventh century to the beginning of the eighth century. In late imperial China, these early traditions of esoteric Buddhism are known to have been still thriving in Buddhist communities. Robert Gimello has also observed that in these communities, the esoteric practices of Cundī were extremely popular among both the populace and the elite. Alexander Studholme, *The Origins of Oṃ Mañipadme Hūṃ: A Study of the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*: (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 175; Wu Jiang, *Enlightenment in Dispute: the Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in 17th century China*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), 146.

¹²⁴ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T’apsang 塔像 (Pagodas and Buddhist images) 4, “Chōnsu taebi maeng’a tūk an” 千手大悲盲兒得眼 條 (Great compassion of thousand armed Avalokiteśvara restores blind child’s eyesight).

Avalokiteśvara is also first mentioned in Silla in the mid-eighth century.¹²⁵ This evidence suggests that the cult of Avalokiteśvara in the Silla capital included the veneration of various forms of the bodhisattva. The vow-text also shows that the verbal recollection of the name of Avalokiteśvara and the recitation of the Great Compassion Spell may have been common practices in religious communities established by Ŭisang, or associated with the Ŭisang's Hwaōm tradition.¹²⁶ Avalokiteśvara was easily accessible through supplication, particularly when people were in danger; the recollection of Avalokiteśvara's characteristics and the recitation of his name were the basic practices of the cult.

Although the Avalokiteśvara belief began with the introduction of Buddhism to Korea during the Three Kingdoms period, at this early pre-unification stage the faith had not fully taken root amongst the common people.¹²⁷ The cult of Avalokiteśvara only blossomed after the unification of Silla.¹²⁸ It has been suggested that the popularity of the belief during the seventh century was limited to a confined circle of the nobility.¹²⁹ The cult of Avalokiteśvara won royal recognition during this period, as is evidenced in the construction of Naksan-sa by Ŭisang with the help of royal sponsorship.¹³⁰ The construction of Naksan-sa in Yangyang in Kangwōn Province helped the Avalokiteśvara faith led by Ŭisang to take root and infiltrate into local areas.

¹²⁵ Richard D. McBride II, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and the Hwaōm Synthesis in Silla Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 78.

¹²⁶ McBride II, 2001, 535.

¹²⁷ Pyōn Tong-myōng, 419; Hong Sūng-ki, "Kwanūm sinang kwa Silla sahoe," *Honam munhwa yōn'gu* 8 (1976): 45, 56; Kim Tu-jin, "Ŭisang ũi Kwanūm sinang kwa chōngt'o (Avalokiteśvara of Ŭisang and Pure Land)," in *Ŭisang: kŭ ũi saenge wa Hwaōm sasang* (Ŭisang: His Life and Avatamsaka Philosophy) (Seoul: Minūmsa, 1995), 230. 229-230; McBride, II, 2007, 62.

Although not comparable to the Unified Silla, Avalokiteśvara cult was fairly appealing to the people during the Silla period. See Hong Sūng-ki, 44-55; Chōng Pyōng-sam, 1982, 29-32; So Eun-ae, "Silla pulgyo ũi sinang kwa sahoe: Silla Munmuwang tae ũi Nak-san Kwanūm sinang," *Han'gukhak nonch'ong* 30 (2008): 47-51.

¹²⁸ Kim Young-tae, "Samguk sidae Mit'a sinang ũi suyong kwa kŭ chōn'gae," in *Han'guk chōngt'o sasang yōn'gu*, ed. Pulgyo munhwa yōn'guwōn (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1985), 35.

¹²⁹ Hong Sūng-ki, 44-55; McBride, II, 2007, 62.

¹³⁰ For the royal sponsorship of the construction of the monastery, much like Pusōk-sa located in the border area of Silla, several scholars explain this in nationalistic viewpoint. See Pyōn Tong-myōng, 427-429, 432-433; Kim Tu-jin, 1995, 229-230; Hong Sūng-ki, 45, 56; Kim Jae-kyōng, *Silla t'och'ak sinang kwa pulgyo ũi yunghap sasang yōn'gu* (Seoul: Minjoksa, 2007), 156.

Avalokiteśvara worship also expanded with the extensive spread of the faith in Amitābha in the mid-Silla period (654-780).¹³¹ In Korea, as in China and Japan, one very popular form of Mahāyāna Buddhism is the Pure Land school, which focuses on faith in the salvific power of the Buddha Amitābha.¹³² In the Pure Land scriptural tradition, Avalokiteśvara serves as an attending bodhisattva to Amitābha and appears to faithful supplicants prior to their rebirth in *Sukhāvātī*.¹³³ The Avalokiteśvara and Amitā beliefs promoted by Ŭisang met the needs of the Unified Silla society. By the first half of the eighth century, Ŭisang's Avalokiteśvara belief, with Naksan-sa at its centre, was being propagated to the general public in Silla and it flourished increasingly with the rise of Hwaŏm Buddhism.¹³⁴ Evidence, such as the extant works depicting the deity and narratives listed in *Samguk yusa*, suggests that the cult of Avalokiteśvara was widely disseminated and domesticated throughout all social strata in Silla society, and was common among elites and non-elites alike.¹³⁵ During this period the scope of the Avalokiteśvara belief widened and became more developed. Because of their belief in his salvific, miracle-working powers, for example, people prayed to Avalokiteśvara to save them from earthly dangers, which also included rescuing overseas traders at sea.¹³⁶ It is likely that the location of Naksan-sa in Yangyang, located on the east coast and overlooking the sea, is related to this tradition.¹³⁷ Numerous extant Avalokiteśvara works are visual depictions of prayers for blessing and help in any kind of threat. Sculptural evidence from this period demonstrates that

¹³¹ McBride, II, 2001, 399.

¹³² Brian Peter Harvey, *An introduction to Buddhism: teachings, history, and practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 129-130, 152-3, 163-5.

¹³³ T. 365, 344c-345a.

¹³⁴ McBride, II, 2007, 62.

¹³⁵ Hong Sŭg-ki, 45, 56; McBride, II, 2001, 399-400;

¹³⁶ The 25th chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* states that Avalokiteśvara would rescue people whose boat was met by a violent storm if among them there is even one person who calls out the name of the bodhisattva. T. 262, 56c. See also Kim Mun-gyŏng, "Haesang hwaldong kwa sinang," in Kim Mun-gyong et al, *8-II segi Silla muyŏk sŏndan kwa kangnam* (Seoul:Haesangwang Chang Po-go kinyŏmsaŏphoe, 2007), 88; Pyŏn Tong-myŏng, 417-442.

¹³⁷ Pyŏn Tong-myŏng, 433-437.

Avalokiteśvara gradually outshone the popularity of Maitreya following Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms, and that this greatly appealed to Korean Buddhists.¹³⁸

The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara fulfills many roles as a goddess of mercy, bringer of sons, protector of travelers, general advocate for sinners, and so on. The Avalokiteshvara belief came to occupy an important position amongst folk beliefs. Although the Avalokiteśvara faith tended to emphasize worldly blessings and good fortune, Ŭisang's text does not enumerate the miracles and efficacy associated with the deity. Ŭisang's worship of Avalokiteśvara apparently involved the strict observance of monastic precepts and a seven-day fasting for purification in order to behold the true form of the bodhisattva.¹³⁹ This short vow-text encapsulates the central theme of Ŭisang's faith in Avalokiteśvara: Ŭisang's aspiration for rebirth in the White Lotus *bodhimaṇḍa* (百花道場), the Pure Land of Avalokiteśvara.¹⁴⁰ Kim Tu-jin has pointed out that Ŭisang turned his attention to the people at large and offered them salvation in the form of the Avalokiteśvara's Pure Land belief.¹⁴¹ Ŭisang apparently composed and circulated the vow-text for lay believers to prescribe practices associated with the cults of Avalokiteśvara,¹⁴² to emphasize the prayer for rebirth in the Potalaka, and to lead them to enlightenment as a substitute for the vulgar faith in the deity's ability to fulfil mundane wishes.¹⁴³ Ŭisang and his disciples supported large sections of the local populace and hoped the people would understand the true wisdom and mercy of the deity, over and above temporal blessings (generally referred to as *kibok pulgyo* 祈福佛

¹³⁸ Best, 32-33.

¹³⁹ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T'apsang 塔像 4, "Naksan ideasōng Kwanūm chōngchwi Chosin" 洛山二大聖 觀音正趣調信 條 (The Two Buddhas of Naksan and Chosin, the Lovesick monk). McBride, II, 2007, 74

¹⁴⁰ Chōng Pyōng-sam, 2011, 85-86, 100, 103; Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 344-5; Hea-ju, "Ŭisang's view of Buddha in the Silla Period," *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 7 (Sep. 2006): 96-97.

¹⁴¹ Kim Tu-jin, 1995, 244-246.

¹⁴² McBride, II, 2001, 535.

¹⁴³ Kim Sang-hyōn, "Ŭisang ũi sinang kwa parwōnmun," in *Ŭisang ũi sasang kwa sinang yōn'gu*, ed. Ŭisang kinyōmgwan (Seoul: Pulgyo sidaesa, 2001), 159.

教).¹⁴⁴ Ŭisang, who stressed practice and monastic life,¹⁴⁵ probably sought a balance between practical theology and the wish-fulfilling function of Avalokiteśvara faith.¹⁴⁶

Like Avalokiteśvara, Kṣitigarbha, one of the two assistants of the Buddha Amitābha, was often depicted along with Amitābha and shared in his widespread veneration.¹⁴⁷ However, during the mid-eighth century in Silla, the cult of Kṣitigarbha was most closely linked to divination practices led by Chinp'yo 眞表 (fl. 752). Chinp'yo held Chōmch'al Dhārma Masses (*chōmch'al pōbho* 占察法會) which featured a unique method of throwing 189 wooden sticks, meant to symbolise 189 kinds of retributions in the *Chōmch'al sōnak ōbpo kyōng* 占察善惡業報經 [*Sūtra for divining good and evil retribution*], or simply *Chōmch'al kyōng* 占察經, where people could divine their karmic retribution as well as indulge in cultic practices, mainly repentance, in order to obtain a better retribution.¹⁴⁸

The practice of divination was an important characteristic of Chinp'yo's religious practice, using divination as a means of conversion. In performing the Chōmch'al Buddhist Mass the master emphasized and propagated the Buddhist conception of rebirth among the people. He emphasized the rules of prohibition and confession by divining good and evil karma—his way of assimilating Buddhism with indigenous beliefs and practices. His teaching spread far and wide, even extending to the

¹⁴⁴ Kim Sang-hyon, 2001, 159; Chōng Pyōng-sam, 1982, 39; McBride, II, 2001, 403.

¹⁴⁵ Peter H. Lee, *Source Book of Korean Civilization: From early times to the sixteenth century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 159.

¹⁴⁶ Chōng Pyōng-sam, 2011, 86, 103.

¹⁴⁷ Chōng Pyōng-sam, 2011, 6

¹⁴⁸ T. 839; *Samguk yusa*, vol. 4, Ŭihae 義解 5, “Chinp'yo cho'n kan 眞表傳簡 條 (Chinp'yo transmits the *kanja* 簡子 (inscribed slips); Pak Mi-sōn, “Chinp'yo chōmch'al pōbho ūi sōngnip kwa sōngkyōk,” *Han'guk kodaesa yōn'gu* 49 (March 2008): 234-5.

Although the theoretical basis of the Chōmch'al Dhārma Mass was provided by the *Sūtra for divining good and evil retribution*, according to the anecdote in *Samguk yusa*, the Chōmch'al Dhārma Mass carried out by Chinp'yo was different from one prescribed in the sūtra. This sūtra accounted by Kṣitigarbha includes a list of 189 possible fates, not the practice of casting the wooden sticks to divine one's karmic status. Chinp'yo's ritual made use of the 189 *kanjas* alleged to have been given by Maitreya as a reward for his austere practice for receiving the precepts from the Buddha.

For a study on the authentic author of the apocryphal text, *Chōmch'al kyōng*, see Whalen Lai, “The Chan-ch'a ching: Religion and Magic in Medieval China,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. R. E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 175–206.

Diamond Mountains (Kūmgang-san 金剛山), in present-day North Korea; in the Koryŏ period it was continued by his disciples.¹⁴⁹ The cult of Kṣitigarbha was propagated throughout Silla thanks to Chinp'yo's activities in areas remote from the capital like Kūmsan-sa 金山寺 in Northern Chŏlla Province, Songni-san 俗離山 in Southern Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, Myŏngju 溟州 in Kangwŏn Province, and Kūmgang-san 金剛山 in Kangwŏn Province, where Chinp'yo and his disciples held a mass for starving people and saved them by giving them precepts.¹⁵⁰ Hence we know that such prominent monks as Ŭisang and Chip'yo travelled to distant provinces to convert the people and lead them to salvation.¹⁵¹

The cult of Kṣitigarbha was wide-spread in Silla by the latter part of the eighth century.¹⁵² Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva is often referred to as the Bodhisattva of the Hell, because of his vow not to achieve Buddhahood until all the Hells are empty. Like Avalokiteśvara, he is also regarded as the saviour of souls who have to suffer in the underworld. The cult of Kṣitigarbha was associated with devotees' wishes for personal attainment. Furthermore, during the reign of King Sŏngdŏk 聖德王 (r. 702-737) and King Kyŏngdŏk 景德王 (r. 742-765) there was a long period of natural disaster which resulted in widespread starvation and suffering.¹⁵³ Under these circumstances people must have prayed to Kṣitigarbha for relief in this world and mundane blessings, and Chinp'yo's divination ritual was popularized. However, we need to understand that "divination" is not a vulgar means of avoiding disaster and pursuing secular blessings but an opportunity to repent one's transgressions by acting in

¹⁴⁹ Kim Young-mi, "Buddhist Faith and Conceptions of the Afterlife in Koryŏ," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 21, no. 2 (Dec. 2008): 215; Peter Lee, 1993, 198.

¹⁵⁰ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 4. 義解5 "Chinp'yo chŏnkan" (眞表傳簡); Kwandong-P'ungak Paryŏn susŏkki 關東楓岳鉢淵藪石記 (The stone monument at Paryŏn temple in Kwandong-P'ungak); Pak Mi-sŏn, 237-240, 247; Kim Young-mi, 214-5.

¹⁵¹ Peter Lee, 1993, 198.

¹⁵² Chŏng Pyŏng-jo, 1978, 343.

¹⁵³ Yun Son-tae, "Silla chungdae mal-hadae ch'o ũi chibang sahoe ũi pulgyo sinang kyŏlsa," *Silla Munhwa* 26 (Aug. 2005): 113-135; *Samguk sagi*, vol. 8, Silla pon'gi 新羅本紀 8, "Sŏngdŏkwang" 聖德王 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15; *Samguk sagi*, vol. 9, Silla pon'gi 9, Kyŏngdŏkwang 景德王 4, 6, 13, 14, 15.

accordance with religious precepts.¹⁵⁴ Unlike various worldly fortune-telling practices, the Buddhist divination ritual is not obsessed with the greedy pursuit of mere happiness.¹⁵⁵ Although it cannot be denied that postulants expected mundane benefits from divination, the overall structure of the *chōmch'al* ritual is oriented to the doctrine of salvation.¹⁵⁶ The objective of the followers of Chinp'yo's *chōmch'al* practice was to enter Pure Land, probably that of the West, even though the *Chōmch'al kyōng* they followed for their practice and discipline did not mention the reward of being reborn into Amitābha's Western Pure Land.¹⁵⁷

The fact is that divination rituals based on the *sūtra* were accompanied by austere repentance practices.¹⁵⁸ In order to seek the precepts, for example, Chinp'yo underwent various physical ordeals such as knocking his head on rocky ground and even risking his life by falling from a cliff over a period of twenty-one days, famously known as *mangsin ch'amhoe* 亡身懺悔 (repentance by forgetting the body). In Chinp'yo's *Chōmch'al* Buddhist Mass, the method of divination involves a careful penance which enabling a postulant to eradicate his defilements and receive the precepts. In his study on *Chōmch'al kyōng* Whalen Lai points out that “it would be misleading to assume that the *sūtra* is predominantly concerned with such worldly concerns.....Far more important than the divination itself, however, is the cult of penance that is presupposition.”¹⁵⁹ The *Chōmch'al kyōng*, as recounted by Kṣitigarbha, emphasizes the practice of repentance and keeping the precepts.¹⁶⁰ Repentance practice is the essence of the cult of Kṣitigarbha during the period.¹⁶¹ Chinp'yo and his disciples used the divination ritual, not only as an opportunity for penance, spiritual cultivation and

¹⁵⁴ Chōng Pyōng-jo, “Silla sidae Chijang sinhaeng ūi yōn'gu,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 19 (1982): 335.

¹⁵⁵ Whalen Lai, 182.

¹⁵⁶ Whalen Lai, 182.

¹⁵⁷ Kim Young-mi, 216.

¹⁵⁸ Whalen Lai, 185.

¹⁵⁹ Whalen Lai, 182.

¹⁶⁰ Hong Yun-saik, “Silla sidae Chinp'yo ūi Chijang sinang kwa kŭ chōn'gae,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 34 (1998): 355.

¹⁶¹ Pak Mi-sōn, 240.

meditation, but also to give the precepts to the people.¹⁶²

The designation of Kṣitigarbha and Avalokiteśvara as directional deities in Silla Odae-san worship illustrates the contemporary cults of the two bodhisattvas and reflects their popularity during this period.¹⁶³ Instead of Akṣobhya and Ratnasambhava of the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, it is said that Kṣitigarbha and Avalokiteśvara—both more familiar with and widely revered by the people in Silla—were located to the south and east respectively.¹⁶⁴ However, the inclusion of the two bodhisattvas in the Silla Odae-san cult, instead of the scriptural-based Buddhas according to the orthodox pattern, may require deeper consideration. It is noteworthy that the two bodhisattvas are closely related to Ratnasambhava and Akṣobhya whom they replace in the Odae-san cult. The major clear evidence on the esoteric connection of Kṣitigarbha can be found in the context of the Odae-san cult itself. The Vajra society (Kūmgangsa 金剛社), a devotional society assembled for the veneration of Kṣitigarbha, held Chōmch'al rituals at night in the “Kṣitigarbha hermitage” (Chijang pang 地藏房) on the southern plateau of Mount Odae. These were preceded by the chanting of the the *Sūtra of the fundamental vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva* (*Chijang posal ponwōn kyōng* 地藏菩薩本願經) and *The perfection of wisdom in three hundred lines* (*Kūmgang panya paramil kyōng* 金剛般若波羅蜜經).¹⁶⁵ Kṣitigarbha also appears in the Diamond World Maṇḍala where he takes the form of Vajra-ketu (K: Kūmgangdang posal 金剛幢菩薩) in the retinue of Ratnasambhava Buddha of the south among the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas.¹⁶⁶ Rhi Ki-young has suggested that the deployment of the

¹⁶² Pak Mi-sōn, 239-240

¹⁶³ Peter Lee, 1993, 159.

¹⁶⁴ Lee Suk-hee, “T'ongil silla sidae obangbul ūi tosang yōn'gu,” *Misulsa yōn'gu* 16 (2002): 20.

¹⁶⁵ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, “Taesan oman chinsin cho.” The scriptures are the *Kṣitigarbha-pranidhana sūtra*, T. 13.412; and the *Vajracchedika Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*, T. 8.235~237; the latter is more commonly known as the *Diamond Sūtra*.

¹⁶⁶ Brian Douglas Ruppert, *Jewel in the ashes: Buddha relics and power in early medieval Japan* *Harvard East Asian monographs*, vol. 188 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ Asia Center, 2000), 119, 420 note. 45.

In the Diamond Maṇḍala, each of four celestial Tathāgatas is attended by four of the sixteen “vajra bodhisattvas.” Ratnasambhava is surrounded by four attendant bodhisattvas: Vajra-tejas (K:

five deities to the centre and four cardinal points displays a specific example of the esoteric development of Silla Odae-san belief.¹⁶⁷ Recognizing the close relation between the Diamond World Maṇḍala and Silla Odae-san Maṇḍala, Hong Yun-sik argues that Ratnasambhava of the south is transformed into Kṣitigarbha in his Silla counterpart.¹⁶⁸

In Vajrayāna Buddhism, the Five Dhyāni Buddhas, also known as the Five Wisdom Tathāgatas, are representations of the five qualities of the Buddha. Each Dhyāni Buddha embodies one of the five transcendent wisdoms and transmutes the five poisons into his wisdom. For example, Amitābha is known as the Buddha of the wisdom of discernment (K: *myokwanch'al chi* 妙觀察智) as well as the Buddha of infinite light. Akṣobhya, the Buddha of the Eastern quarter in the Diamond World Maṇḍala, represents the mirror-like wisdom (K: *taewōnkyōng chi* 大圓鏡智) and is known as the Immovable One. The mirror-like wisdom is also shared with Avalokiteśvara who, in the Silla cult of Odae-san, replaces Akṣobhya in the east.

The tradition of Tantric Buddhism is clearly reflected in the Silla pentad of Buddhas and bodhisattvas in association with the five directions and the five primary colours. However, the belief in Odae-san in Silla is based more closely on Mahāyāna than Vajrayāna themes, especially the Hwaōm 華嚴 tradition.¹⁶⁹ As the narratives from *Samguk yusa* testify, the Odae-san cult is schematically embodied in the maṇḍala-world in the shape of Vairocana, the supreme Buddha of the Avataṃsaka school, in the centre, surrounded by Avalokiteśvara in the east, Kṣitigarbha in the south, Śākyamuni in the north, and Amitābha in the west. The earliest temple to practice the Avataṃsaka

Kūmganggwang posal 金剛光菩薩); Vajra-ketu (K: Kūmgangdang posal 金剛幢菩薩); Vajra-hāsa (K: Kūmgangso posal 金剛笑菩薩); Vajra-ratna (K: Kūmgangbo posal 金剛寶菩薩). Moreover, Kṣitigarbha also appears in the Womb World Maṇḍala as the central figure in the Kṣitigarbha Court (K: *chijangwōn* 地藏院).

¹⁶⁷ Rhi Ki-young, 1973, 141.

¹⁶⁸ Hong Yun-sik, *Mandara* (Seoul: Taewōnsa, 1992). 109.

¹⁶⁹ Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 231; Sin Tong-ha, 2000, 134-136; Hong Yun-sik, “Chosōn ch’ogi Sangwōn-sa munsu tongjasang e taehayō,” *Kogo misul* 164 (1984): 14, 22, in which Hong defines this mandalic development of Odae-san Belief of Silla as “*Hwaōm milgyo* (esotericized Avataṃsaka)”

belief was Chinyō-wōn 眞如院 (The Temple of True Thusness) on the central peak of Odae-san.¹⁷⁰ The two princes Poch'ōn and Hyomyōng were initially said to have built Chinyō-wōn in the Mount Odae to worship Vairocana and Mañjuśrī of the Avataṃsaka school, and not Mahāvairocana of Vajrayāna Buddhism. The narrative indicates that Silla Buddhists attached great importance to the worship of the Hwaōm deities by locating the temple on the central peak of Mount Odae.¹⁷¹ The apparent association of the Silla royal court with the Avataṃsaka school is demonstrated in the narratives. According to *Samguk yusa*, Chinyō-wōn was later rebuilt in 705 mostly by the order of the royal court. According to the narrative, King Sōngdōk 聖德王 (r. 702-737) attended the inauguration ceremony of the temple along with his retinue and ordered an altar to be built to enshrine a statue of Mañjuśrī. At the same time the king had five erudite monks to chant and transcribe *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* by day and night at the temple, and ordered the organization of a group of *hwaōmsa* 華嚴社 (Avataṃsaka Society).¹⁷²

The narrative of *Samguk yusa* suggests that the Avataṃsaka doctrine in Silla had gained adherents by the turn of the early eighth century. The Hwaōm doctrine, in full flourish during the mid-Silla period (Silla *chungdae* 新羅中代, 654-780), might have been responsible for the inclusion of Vairocana, the main Buddha of the Avataṃsaka school, into the centre of the Odae-san cult. Some scholars of the state appropriation of Buddhism in Silla have argued that the Hwaōm doctrine of all encompassing harmony was utilized to unify society in the Unified Silla with a centralized power structure.¹⁷³ It is said that Silla exploited Hwaōm metaphysics as a unifying ideology, not only in order to assimilate the subjugated states and peoples of Koguryō and Paekche into the process of unification, but also to provide a religious legitimisation for

¹⁷⁰ The temple was later renamed as Sangwōn-sa 上院寺 (Temple of the Upper Cloister).

¹⁷¹ *Samguk yusa*, vol. 3, T'apsang 4, "Taesan oman chinsin cho."

¹⁷² Ibid. According to the narrative, King Sōngdōk granted land to the temple for supplying and ordered provinces located nearby the temple to share the expenses for maintaining the temple.

¹⁷³ Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 305-315; Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 81.

a centralized administration under royal authority.¹⁷⁴ The Buddhist communities on Mount Odae had close links with the ruling house during the process of unification and the political struggles that later took place in the capital.¹⁷⁵ The Avataṃsaka school was the centre of the activities of the Odae-san cult. It enjoyed the active support of the state which promoted its spread among the nobility.¹⁷⁶ The unifying doctrine of the Hwaṃ school played an important part in establishing the centralized authority in the unified country, and its significance is clearly depicted in a number of Hwaṃ-related art objects, including that of the Vairocana Buddha.¹⁷⁷ The promotion of the Avataṃsaka school by King Sōngdōk in the narratives of *Samguk yusa* might be understood in the same context.

This study of the Hwaṃ Odae-san cult will not only cast light on the historical development of people's faith in the two bodhisattvas but also the theoretical synthesis of various Buddhist cults and devotional practices of the cult during the period. The cults of the five deities emerged as the mainstream of devotional practice within Silla Buddhism.¹⁷⁸ Rhi Ki-young has argued that the people of Silla regarded the assembly of the five deities in Odae-san *kyōlsa* as being a part of the pantheon of the Avataṃsaka

¹⁷⁴ Peter Lee, 1993, 160; Kim Jae-kyōng, 2007, 153-157; Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 305-316.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Lee, 1993, 159-160.

¹⁷⁶ Peter Lee, 1993, 160.

¹⁷⁷ See Kang Woo-bang, "The Art of Avatamsaka Sutra in the Unified Silla Period: The Sanctuary of Sōkkuram and Hwaṃ-gyōng pyōnsang-do," in Washizuka Hiromitsu, et al., *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan* (New York: London: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 168-170.

Some scholars of the 1970s such as Ahn Kye-hyōn, Kim Mun-kyōng, and Lee Ki-baik, argued such a role of Hwaṃ school in support of the centralized government and monarch's authoritarianism in Silla *chungdae*. However this theory has been criticised by the Buddhologists of the 1980s, in particular Kim Sang-hyōn and Kim Pok-soon. The assertion by Lee Ki-baik is succeeded to scholars as Kim Tu-jin and Kim Jae-kyōng while scholars as Nam Tong-sin and Chōng Pyōng-sam inherit the confutation by Kim Sang-hyōn. Ahn Kye-hyōn, "Silla Pulgyo," in *Han'guksa 3: Minjok ūi t'olil*, ed. Kuksa p'yōnch'an wiwōnhoe (Seoul: Kuksa p'yōnch'an wiwōnhoe; T'amgudang, 1984), 197-247; Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 81; idem, "Silla sidae ūi pulgyo wa kukka," *Yōksa hakpo* 111 (Sep. 1986b): 199-218; idem, "Silla oak ūi sōngnip kwa kŭ ūi," *Chindan hakpo* 33 (1972): 5-24; Kim Sang-hyōn, "Silla chungdae chōnje wangkwōn kwa Hwaṃ-jong," *Tongbang hakchi* 44 (1984): 59-91; idem, "T'ongil Silla sidae ūi Hwaṃ sinang," *Silla munhwa* 2 (1985); idem, *Silla Hwaṃ sasangsa yōn'gu* (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1991), 263-269, 275-280; Kim Pok-soon, "Silla chungdae Hwaṃ chong kwa wangkwōn (Avatamsaka School and Monarchical Authority during the Mid-Silla)," *Han'guksa yon'gu* 63 (Dec. 1988): 97-128; Nam Tong-sin, "Ūisang Hwaṃ sasang ūi yōksa chōk ihae," in Ūisang kinyōm'gwan, ed. *Ūisang ūi sasang kwa sinang yon'gu* (Seoul: Pulgyo sidaesa, 2001); Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 198-199; Kim Jae-kyōng, 1992: 1-22.

¹⁷⁸ Chōng Pyōng-jo, 1982, 342.

school.¹⁷⁹ Oae-san *kyōlsa* demonstrates that the people of Silla were not so much devoted to a single sect or school and its dogma but rather embraced all the teachings of Buddhist practice which they accepted as a single vehicle of Buddhism leading to enlightenment.¹⁸⁰ Several scholars suggest that Hwaōm Single Vehicle teaching (*ilsūng pulgyo* 一乘佛敎) not only reconciled conflicting religious ideas and schools but also harmonized religious discrepancies between theory and practice without dissolving their distinctions.¹⁸¹ The Silla Hwaōm Odae-san *kyōlsa* illustrates the theory with a specific case.

The cults of Buddhas and bodhisattvas were united into the belief system using Hwaōm philosophy to form the “Odae-san Hwaōm maṇḍala,” which reflected the Silla perception of the Avataṃsaka pantheon.¹⁸² Buddhist cults developed and worshipped by Silla people at various different times were unified under the the Hwaōm tradition. Although the formation of the five deities allocated to five directions must have reflected the heavy influence of esoteric Buddhism and its maṇḍalas, the substitution of different Buddhist deities facing in each direction for the Five Directional Buddhas from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala indicates that the people of Silla developed their own original Hwaōm maṇḍala centring on Odae-san. This particular view led to the realization of the idea of Buddha-land in their homeland.¹⁸³ The system of worshipping Mount Odae signifies the Hwaōm ideal of the Lotus Flower Paradise (K: *yōnhwajang* 蓮華藏), a Buddha-land presided over by Vairocana, the prime deity of Avataṃsaka school, at the centre.¹⁸⁴ Silla’s *sabangbul* relics and the belief in Odae-san led by Hwaōm *kyōlsa*

¹⁷⁹ Rhi Ki-young, 1982, 516.

¹⁸⁰ Chōng Pyōng-jo, 1982, 343.

¹⁸¹ Hong Yun-sik, 1992c, 105, 110, 114; Kim Young-jae, “Hwaōm milgyo chōk wōnhyōng ūirosō ūi Odae-san mandara,” *Hanguk pulgyohak* 25 (Dec. 1999): 591-624; Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 246, 252.

¹⁸² Suh Yoon-kil, 1994a, 269; idem, 2006, 109; Rhi Ki-young, 1988, 175; Kim Young-jae, 591, 612.

¹⁸³ Chōng Pyōng-jo, 1982, 342; Kim Young-tae, 1986, 32-42.

¹⁸⁴ Kim Young-t’ae, 1986, 32, 38-39; Rhi Ki-young, 1988, 174.

The Buddhist sacred places may be related with the traditional veneration of sacred mountains deeply rooted already before the import of Buddhism and exemplified by the notions such as “three divine mountains” and “five holy peaks.” By assimilating indigenous belief with Buddhist thought, Silla

reflect the Silla people's unique interpretation of Buddhism and their aspiration for a Buddha-land manifested on their own soil.¹⁸⁵ Pak Youngsook and Roderick Whitfield have written that: "The Buddha group of Kulbul-sa site and the Ch'ilbul-am complex show how Silla people transformed their country into a true Buddha-land with these impressive images."¹⁸⁶ Due to the influence of the esoteric Buddhist idea of maṇḍala, the Hwaōm ideal of a Buddha land was firmly established in the Unified Silla Kingdom.¹⁸⁷

The belief system of Odae-san *kyōlsa*, inaugurated by the national patriarch, was first launched sometime between the reign of King Sinmun (681-692) and King Sōngdōk (702-737) when the paramount authority of the throne in Silla reached its zenith at the royal court.¹⁸⁸ By the late-Silla period (*Silla hadae* 新羅下代, 780-935) this form of worship had become the state religion.¹⁸⁹ The royal cultic practice of Mount Odae had a close association with the Avataṃsaka school. Such systematization was, however, a gradual process. Kim Tu-jin has argued that the Silla Odae-san belief was organized by *hwaōm kyōlsa*, and the *kyōlsa* was not formed at any one time.¹⁹⁰ The lineages of Hwaōm developed a new movement for the school as a result of *hwaōm kyōlsa* 華嚴結社 (Hwaōm Society). The Odae-san belief system was a reorganization of the doctrines and philosophies which were regarded as important at that time. It is clear that the Silla Odae-san belief was not complete until the Chinese archetype was introduced sometime in the later eighth century, i.e. the late-

became the ideal "Buddha-land." Mun Myong-dae, 1977b: 74; Lee Ki-baik, 1972: 8.

¹⁸⁵ Sin Tong-ha, 2000, 171-177, in which Sin argues the crucial importance of defending the northern borders in the north-eastern part of Silla's territory (present Kangwōn Province) results in the development of the Buddhist concept of Buddha-land theory as evident in the Odae-san Belief.

¹⁸⁶ Pak Youngsook and R. Whitfield, 2002, 182.

¹⁸⁷ Suh Yoon-kil, 1994a, 269.

¹⁸⁸ For a discussion on the relationship between the belief in Wutai-shan and the imperial authority in Tang China, see Nakata Mie, "Godai-san monju shinkō to ōken-Tōtsō Taisō ki ni okeru Chin-ko-ssu shūchiku no bunseki o tsujite," *Tōhōgaku* 117 (Jan. 2009): 40-58.

¹⁸⁹ The belief in Odae-san as the state religion is testified by Poch'ōn's instruction at the time of his death to observe a list of annual rituals on the mountains for the protection and prosperity of the state. Rhi Ki-young, 1988, 175; Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 243-247, 254; Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 103, 106-108.

¹⁹⁰ Kim Tu-jin, 1992, 686.

Silla period. Thus Kim Tu-jin argues that although Chinyŏ-wŏn was built sometime in the middle-Silla period (*chungdae*), the Hwaŏm Odae-san belief was not completed until the late-Silla period (*hadae*).¹⁹¹ Silla's Avataṃsaka Society was then reorganized to adapt to the changing conditions in the late-Silla. The final development of the cult occurred between the late period of Unified Silla and the early Koryŏ period, reaching its completion during the reign of T'aejo Wang Kŏn 太祖 王建 (r. 918–943), the founding father of the Koryŏ dynasty.¹⁹²

4. Hwaŏm *kyŏlsa* in the Koryŏ Dynasty and Omission of Maitreya

In 918 Wang Kŏn 王建 founded the Koryŏ dynasty after Kungye 弓裔 (r. 901-918) had been ousted from power. By doing so he intended to sever the important connection between the Maitreya cult and Kungye, who had claimed to be the incarnation of Maitreya who would save the “Latter Days” of the Later Three Kingdoms period (892-936).¹⁹³ This may explain the omission of Maitreya from the *hwaŏm kyŏlsa*. It also suggests that the belief in Mount Odae, which began during the middle period of Silla and developed through the Later Three Kingdoms period, was finally completed after the founding of the Koryŏ dynasty under the influence of the ideas of Wang Kŏn.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, the connection between the Maitreya cult and royal power, particularly in the old Paekche territory, helps to explain why Wang Kŏn excluded Maitreya from the system.¹⁹⁵ The process of organizing and reorganizing the

¹⁹¹ Kim Tu-jin, 1992, 686; Kim Pok-soon, “Silla hadae Hwaŏm ūi il ye: odaesan sajeŏk ūl chungsim ūiro,” *Sachong* 2 (June. 1988): 1-24.

¹⁹² Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 251-254.

¹⁹³ Kim Tu-jin, 2004, 247-254; Ch'oe Sŏng-eun, “Namal yŏch'o Poch'on ch'ult'o ch'ŏlbul chwasang yŏn'gu,” *Misul charyo* 61 (1998): 17-18.

¹⁹⁴ Kim Tu-jin, 1992, 692-3.

¹⁹⁵ Based on the record that Chinpy'yo 眞表 (fl. eighth century) was a monk from the conquered Paekche territory, Lee Ki-baik views the declarations of Kungye of T'aebong 泰封 (or Hu-Koguryŏ 後高句麗, Later Koguryŏ, one of the Later Three Kingdoms) and Kyŏnhwŏn 甄萱 (r. 900-935) of Hu-Paekche 後百濟 (Later Paekche) as Maitreya were influenced by the belief in the Maitreya under Chinpy'yo's leadership in the old Paekche areas as the anti-Silla movement for building an ideal nation. The areas where the two persons were active were overlapped with the area where Chinpy'o was active. *Song gaoseng zhuan* [Lives of Eminent Monks compiled in the Song] 14, T. 2061. 793c-794c, “The Biography of Chinpy'yo of Kŭmsan Monastery in the Tang Dominion of Paekche”; Lee Ki-baik,

devotional society of Hwaom belief clearly mirrors contemporary social and political situations.

Depending on the circumstances Maitreya was omitted from the formation of *sabangbul*. Vairocana frequently replaced Maitreya as one of the four Buddhas in the *sabangbul* group. This is evident in the four gilt-bronze plates from a *śarīra* deposit, dated 863, from the stone pagoda of the Unified Silla period in Piro-am 毘盧庵 (the Hermitage of Vairocana) at Tonghwa-sa 桐華寺, Taegu, North Kyongsang Province and the Yonbok-sa 演福寺 bell of the Koryŏ dynasty, dated 1346, now in Kaesŏng, North Korea (figs. 8-10). The four gilt-bronze plates, which form the outer casket for a soapstone *śarīra* reliquary container, are engraved with triads of four Buddhas respectively.¹⁹⁶ Given their mudrā and attributes, the Four Directional Buddhas on the panels may be identified as Śākyamuni in the south, Vairocana in the north, Bhaiṣajyaguru in the east, and Amitābha in the west.¹⁹⁷ The relief sculptures of

“Chinp’yo ūi Mirūk sasang,” *Silla sasangsa yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1986), 265-276; Kim Sam-yong, *Han’guk Mirūk sinang ūi yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Tonghwa ch’ulp’an kongsa, 1983), 82-91.

Ch’oe Sŏng-eun, 1998:18; Sin Ho-ch’ŏl, “Kungye ūi chŏngch’i chŏk sŏngkyŏk—t’ŭkhi pulgyo wa ūi kwan’gye rŭl chungsim ūiro,” *Han’guk hakpo* 29 (1982): 15; Lee Ki-baik, *Silla chŏngch’i sahoesa yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1974), 264-265, 274.

¹⁹⁶ There are four tiny holes pierced on the edges of the four panels for fastening each other. When these four panels are fastened to form a casket, the sides on which the Buddha triad is inscribed become to face inward. Inside this gilt-bronze casket, the soapstone *sarira* reliquary was placed. Ch’oe Ŭng-ch’ŏn and Kim Yŏn-su, *Kŭmsŏk kongye* (Seoul: Sol, 2004), 240-241.

According to a votive inscription engraved on the surface of the soap-stone container, King Kyŏngmun 景文王 (r. 861-875) commissioned this *sarira* reliquary to be produced in 863 for the repose of King Minae 閔哀王 (r. 838-839) who was killed at his age of 23 by King Sinmu 神武王 (r. 839). For its full text, see Hwang Su-young, “Silla Minae-wang sŏkt’apki—Tonghwa-sa Piro-am samch’ŭng sŏkt’ap ūi chosa,” *Hwang Su-young chŏnjip 4-Kŭmsŏk yumun* (Seoul: Hyeon, 1999), 549-557.

¹⁹⁷ It has been generally agreed that the Buddha on the north wearing a crown and taking the wisdom-fist mudrā is identified as Vairocana (see fig. 16 of this thesis); the Buddha with *bhūmiśparśa* mudrā (earth-witness mudrā) located to the south as Śākyamuni; the Buddha on the west with *anjali* mudrā (hand gesture of adoration) as Amitābha; the Buddha on the east holding a medicine bowl in one hand as Bhaiṣajyaguru respectively. *Arts of Korea*, ed. Judith Smith G. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 112; Choe Ŭng-ch’ŏn, “Tonghwa-sa Piro-am sŏkt’ap ch’ult’o napsŏkche sariho wa kŭmdong sabangbul sari woeham, in *P’algong-san Tonghwa-sa*, ed. National Museum of Korea, Taegu, (Seoul: Graphic Net, 2009), 235-237; idem, 2004, 240-241.

However, Hwang Su-young, who has written on these Tonghwa-sa *śarīra* reliquary deposits for the first time, has argued the four plates represent Vairocana in the north, Amitāyus in the west, Ratnasambhava in the south, and Akṣobhya in the east in order. Hwang Su-young, 1999, 558-562.

Meanwhile, scholars as Suh Yoon-kil and Lee Suk-hee view the four gilt-bronze plates reflect the influence of esoteric Buddhism of the period. They argue the four Buddhas represent Vairocana of the north, Amitābha of the west, Ratnasambhava of the south, and Akṣobhya of the east respectively. Suh considers this arrangement is based on the esoteric idea of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Although Kim Lena

Buddha triads within the four rectangles located on the four facades of the Koryŏ bell might represent the same four Buddhas.¹⁹⁸

A stone statue of Vairocana seated on a pedestal with four carved Buddhas, and dating back to the Koryŏ dynasty, is now displayed at Kansong Art Museum in Seoul (fig. 18). The Vairocana Buddha with his wisdom-fist *mudrā* is seated on a pedestal composed of three parts. The pedestal, which is quite high in proportion to the size of the Vairocana statue seated above, might have been a part of a stone pagoda. The Vairocana statue is currently facing toward the north-west. The Buddha depicted on the pedestal just below the Vairocana statue is also identified as Vairocana due to the same wisdom-fist *mudrā*. Śākyamuni with his *bhūmiśparśa* *mudrā* faces towards the north-east. The Buddha with the *dhyāna* *mudrā* (the gesture of meditation) facing towards the south-west must be Amitābha. The deity facing towards the south-east is holding either a medicine bowl or a cintamani (wish-fulfilling jewel) in both hands. There is some dispute as to the exact identity of this last figure, who is seated back to back with Vairocana on the pedestal. If the figure is indeed holding a medicine bowl, it must be Bhaiṣajyaguru.

also recognizes the four gilt-bronze panels “offer evidence of esoteric Buddhist imagery in Unified Silla in the second half of the ninth century, Kim identifies the Buddha holding a medicine bowl as Bhaiṣajyaguru of the east by including this panel depicting the deity in her study on Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha of the Unified Silla period. Suh Yoon-kil, 1994a, 272-3; Lee Suk-hee, 2002: 34-35; Kim Lena, “Tradition and Transformation in Korean Buddhist Sculpture,” in *Arts of Korea*, ed. by Judith Smith (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 282; idem, 1992: 99;

If this group of the five Buddhas represents the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu, it must have been closely related with a gilt silver casket bearing the images of Forty-five deities from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala on each of its sides and on the lid unearthed from a recent excavation at the site of the historical Famen-si, Fufeng, Shanxi. This Buddhist reliquary box from the set of five containers excavated in the secret niche underneath the rear wall of the innermost chamber was offered by the Tang imperial court in 874. Following the traditional view on the identification of the four Buddhas as Vairocana, Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Amitābha instead of the esoteric idea, Chu Kyŏng-mi suggests a possible influence in style from this Tang reliquary art on the Tonghwa-sa casket. Since there has been no precedent this specific arrangement of these four Buddhas as a group was ever recovered or cited in a text, it is difficult to identify the Buddhas depicted. Therefore, it needs further study on this *śarīra* reliquary in depth for exact direction and identification of the Buddhas. I-Mann Lai, *The Famen-si Reliquary Deposit: Icons of Esoteric Buddhism in Ninth-century China* (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2006), 119-120, 141-142, 157; Chu Kyŏng-mi, *Chungguk kodae pulsari changŏm yŏn’gu* (PhD diss. Seoul National University, 2002), 166-173, 253-254.

¹⁹⁸ Ch’oe Ŭng-chŏn, “Tongmunsŏn kwa Koryŏ sidae ũi kongye,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 1 (Oct. 1988): 158; Tsuboi Ryōhei, *Chosen gane* (Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten, Showa 49 [1974]), 234; Nagakichi Kō, *Kaidō no bukkyō* (Tōkyō: Kobusho kankō kai, 1973), 258-262.

We may gain a better understanding of the formation of the four Buddhas by relocating this pedestal and placing Amitābha to the west, the immovable direction for the Buddha. If Amitābha on the pedestal faces towards the west, Vairocana faces north; Śākyamuni east; and the last deity, whose identity is in question, faces south, it is possible that the latter deity is not Bhaiṣajyaguru with a medicine bowl but rather Ratnasam̐bhava with a wish-fulfilling jewel, one of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas residing in the south of the Diamond World Maṇḍala. Unlike usual Buddha iconography, however, this figure wears a headscarf and is depicted without the unique protuberance on the Buddha's cranium, one of the thirty-two marks of a great being. Since the figure wears a headscarf, a typical iconographic feature of Kṣitigarbha, this deity might be identified as Kṣitigarbha holding a wish-fulfilling jewel, a typical attribute of the bodhisattva. We have already observed that Kṣitigarbha replaced Ratnasam̐bhava and appeared as the deity of the south in the Hwaōm Odae-san belief. Kṣitigarbha who began to be widely worshipped among the population in Unified Silla enjoyed an even higher level of popularity during the Koryō dynasty.¹⁹⁹ This is most clearly evidenced by the amount of Kṣitigarbha paintings from this period which were found among a handful of extant Koryō paintings.²⁰⁰ In my opinion, the Kṣitigarbha image wearing a headscarf, which began to be produced during the Koryō dynasty,²⁰¹ depicts the deity on this pedestal facing towards the south.

The new *sabangbul* objects reflect the decline in popularity of the Maitreya cult after the unification of the Three Kingdoms. The Maitreya tradition underwent a historical development in Korea, as it did in other countries in East Asia.²⁰² In Silla the development of the Maitreya belief is evidence of the nation's attempt to overcome the

¹⁹⁹ Kim Jung-hee, "Han, Chung Chijang tosang ūi pigyo koch'al: tugōn Chijang ūl chungsim ūro (A comparative study on the Ksitigarbha images with headscarf between Korea and China)," *Kangjwa misulsa* 9 (1997): 69-70; Kim Young-mi, 215.

²⁰⁰ Kim Jung-hee, 1997a, 70.

²⁰¹ Kim Jung-hee, 1997a, 74.

²⁰² Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, ed., *Maitreya: the Future Buddha* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 93.

catastrophes it had endured. The cult of Maitreya first flourished as a result of aristocratic and royal patronage in association with state protection. Its decline was partly caused by the rise of the Pure Land school in Korea, especially among the common people.²⁰³ While the belief in the Future Buddha contained nationalist features before the unification of the Three Kingdoms, the faith in the popular deities of the Pure Land school such as Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, and Kṣitigarbha, played a role in making Buddhism popular among the mass of people and satisfying their down-to-earth worldly needs.²⁰⁴ Some of Maitreya's role was taken over Bhaiṣajyaguru as well as Amitābha's two attending bodhisattvas, Kṣitigarbha and Avalokiteśvara. Nonetheless we should not forget that the faith of the masses in the Maitreya Buddha remained constant. Even after unification in the mid-seventh century when the cult of Amitābha was on the rise along with the increasing popularity of Pure Land Buddhism in Silla, McBride has argued that the cult of Maitreya was still one of the most important cults in the country.²⁰⁵ From the eighth century, the cult of Maitreya in Silla began to transform "from a locus in the monastery-based institutional religion to lay-based popular religion, gaining there new representations in popular art and literature and showing an ever greater degree of assimilation and adaptation under the influence of local traditions."²⁰⁶ The Maitreya cult still remained strong right through the Koryŏ dynasty, and many monks continually proclaimed themselves as the Maitreya.²⁰⁷ During this period, however, the faith in the deity was not as elevated or refined as it was in the earlier period, and bordered on popular superstition.²⁰⁸ The Korean

²⁰³ Kim Sam-yong, 42-43, 63; Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins*, trans. Gaynor Sekimori (Tōkyō: Kōsei Publishing Co., 1997), 132-133.

²⁰⁴ Kim Young-t'ae, 1976, 81-83; idem, "Samguk sidae Mit'a sinang ūi suyong kwa kū chŏn'gae," in *Han'guk chŏt'o sasang yŏn'gu*, ed. Pulgyo munhwa yŏn'guso (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1985), 48; Ahn Hwi-joon, ed. *Kukpo* 10 (Seoul: Yekyong Publications Co, 1983), 278; McBride, II, 2001, 400-1.

²⁰⁵ McBride, II, 2001, 291

²⁰⁶ Sponberg, 93.

²⁰⁷ Peter Lee, 1993, 397.

²⁰⁸ Kim Sam-yong, 157-169.

Maitreya faith was assimilated into a folk religion, popular among the common people of Korea. This established him, for example, as a god of fertility who grants children to barren women.²⁰⁹ The veneration of the Future Buddha was the most prominent type of cultic practice during the Silla period, but the Maitreya cult never gained its former glory after the early Unified Silla period.

The emergence of Vairocana with his wisdom-fist mudrā to replace Maitreya also indicates the change in the focus of worship. By the ninth century, the Vairocana Buddha of the Hwaōm school was increasingly being worshipped in the main hall of the monastery.²¹⁰ The appearance of the Buddha in the quartet of the *sabangbul* is testimony to the rise of Avataṃsaka teaching and its prime Buddha, Vairocana, in Korea. Most of the Vairocana Buddhas with a wisdom-fist mudrā produced in Korea stem from the Hwaōm sect. While Mahāvairocana, the principal deity in Japanese esoteric Buddhism, richly adorned with the dress and ornaments of a bodhisattva, is very rare in Korea, Tathāgata types of Vairocana of the Avataṃsaka school in a plain monastic robe were popular in Korean Buddhist art. One of these is the stone Vairocana Buddha at Sōngnam-sa 石南寺 dated 766, the earliest extant seated Buddha statue with a wisdom-fist mudrā. The Vairocana with a wisdom-fist mudrā and a plain monk's robe was utterly different from Mahāvairocana of esoteric Buddhist tradition. It thus constitutes a unique iconography in Korean Buddhist art. In other East Asian countries like Japan and China the Vairocana Buddha of the Avataṃsaka sect has an *abhāya* mudrā (the hand gesture of no-fear) in his right hand and a *varada* mudrā (the gesture of wish-fulfilling) in the left hand. Dwijendra Nath Bakshi has argued that Mahāvairocana must be regarded as a further development of the Vairocana Buddha.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Kim Sam-yong, 158-160. Assimilated into the folk belief, this trend was an important focus of the cult of Maitreya, commonly found in China and Japan. Idem, 158.

²¹⁰ Mun Myong-dae, "Han'guk Hwaōmjong misul ūi chōn'gae," *Han'guk Hwaōm sasang yōn'gu* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1986), 326-7.

²¹¹ Dwijendra Nath Bakshi, *Iconography of the Buddha Images in Japan* (Calcutta: Centre of Japanese Studies, 1987), 56.

Nevertheless, Mun Myong-dae is of the opinion that the emergence of the iconography of Vairocana of the Avataṃsaka school with the wisdom-fist mudrā was indebted to the influence of esoteric school, and that it did not appear until the mid-eighth century when esoteric sūtras like the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* were translated into Chinese.²¹² Furthermore there is no mention of Vairocana's hand gesture in either *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* or *Brahmajāla's net Sūtra*, while esoteric sūtras like the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, stipulate a *bodhyagri* mudrā for the Mahāvairocana Buddha. This hand gesture is attributed to Mahāvairocana of the Diamond Realm Maṇḍala, but from an early period in Korea Vairocana of the Avataṃsaka school has this mudrā. Indeed the earliest example of the Vairocana Buddha holding the wisdom-fist mudrā in Korea appears on the frontispiece of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* scroll dating back to 754-755, and now in the Ho-Am Art Museum in Seoul.

The reliquary casket provides important material evidence to show that Maitreya had been replaced by other prominent Buddhas of the time in the composition of *sabangbul* by the mid-ninth century, in this case Vairocana.²¹³ As exemplified by the Yōnbok-sa bell and the pedestal at Kansong Art Museum, it had become the universal style during the Koryō period. The material evidence suggests that Buddhas who were popular in any given period were assembled in *sabangbul* groupings. The Four Directional Buddhas were also assembled on the surfaces of pagodas. According to *Tongmunsŏn* 東文選 [An Anthology of Korean Literature, 1478] and *Sinjŭng Tongguk yōjisŭngnam* 新增東國輿地勝覽 [A Revised and Augmented Gazetteer of Korea,

²¹² Mun Myong-dae, "Chigwŏn-in pirojana ūi sŏngnip munje wa Sŏngnam-sa pirojana pulsang ūi yŏn'gu," *Pulgyo misul* 11 (1992): 57-58, 66. Also see Mun Myong-dae, "Silla hadae Pirojana pulsang chogak ūi yŏn'gu," *Misul charyo* 21 (1977a): 16-40.

²¹³ It is very interesting to find the Vairocana replacing Maitreya in the plates along with a stone statue of Vairocana Buddha (863), enshrined at the Piro-am hermitage, since Tonghwa-sa was established based on the teachings of the Pōpsang 法相 school. This Buddha statue is one of the earliest Vairocana Buddha statues made during this period. Chŏng Jae-kyu points out that this phenomenon reflects the popularity and strong influence of Avamamsaka School and esoteric Buddhism in the Silla society during the period. Chŏng Jae-kyu, "Silla hadae Pōpsang chong ūi sŏngkyŏk kwa kŭ pyŏnhwa," *Sahakchi* 25 (July. 1992): 33.

1530] when the seven-storey pagoda at Anyang-sa 安養寺 was repaired in 1381 by Ch'oe Yŏng 崔瑩 (1316-1388), its interior walls were decorated with murals of Assemblies of Bhaiṣajyaguru on the east, the Great Nirvana of the Śākyamuni on the south, the Western Paradise of Amitābha on the west, and the Assembly of Buddhist Guardians of the *Golden Sūtra* (金經神衆會) on the north.²¹⁴ The pagoda was originally built by King T'aejo (Wang Kŏn, r. 918-943) during the Koryŏ dynasty.²¹⁵ Although neither the monastery nor its pagoda now exists, the seven-storey brick pagoda has attracted special attention amongst many scholars. In the Koryŏ assembly of *sabangbul*, it is particularly noteworthy that the Buddhist guardians, collectively known as *sinjung* 神衆, are depicted on the north, the usual location of the Buddha Maitreya in earlier periods.²¹⁶ It is obvious that the *Golden Sūtra* refers to the *Golden Light Sūtra* which expatiates on the benefits of protecting the nation.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ *Tongmunsŏn* (hereafter TMS), vol. 76, *ki* (記), Yi Sung-in, “Kŭmju Anyan-sa t'ap chungsin ki 衿州安養塔重新記 (Record on the Rebuilding of Anyang-sa Pagoda)”; *Sinjŭng tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* (hereafter TYS), vol. 10, “Kyŏnggi Kŭmch'ŏnhyŏn puru Anyang-sa 京畿衿川縣 佛宇 安養寺.”

According to the records in TMS and TYS, when the pagoda was reconstructed, the walls of the twelve *kan* 間 (a Korean traditional measure of length, approximately six feet) corridor of the first storey were decorated with *sibi haengnyŏn pul* 十二行年佛 (“twelve yearly Buddhas”). Since *sibi haengnyŏn* is related to twelve months and a year, Kim Jung-hee suggests the twelve figures most likely designate the twelve zodiac guardians. The twelve zodiac guardians, who are important protective deities in many Buddhist contexts, are to make the evil surrender and protect Buddhist Law. Along with other Buddhist guardian *deities*, the relief sculpture of twelve animal signs is usually located on the platform of the pagodas. Chŏng Woo-t'eak, “Pulgyo hoehwa,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 1 (Oct. 1988): 114; Kim Jung-hee, “Tongguk yŏjisŭngnam kwa Chosŏn chŏn'gi kkaji ūi purhwa,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 2 (1989): 10-11; Kim Ji-sŏk, “Anyang-sa 7ch'ŭng sŏkt'ap e taehan koch'al (A study on the Seven-storey Stone Pagoda in the Anyang-sa site),” *Munhwa sahak* 27 (June, 2007): 675-695.

²¹⁵ According to the records in TMS and TYS, when the pagoda was constructed originally by King T'aejo, its roof was tiled and the lowest storey with twelve-*kan* corridor was filled with murals of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and heavenly devas.

²¹⁶ Before the Chosŏn dynasty, such guardian deities as Four Heavenly Kings or vajra deities in warriors' outfit, who were believed to repel demons and protect Buddhism, Buddhist Law, and Buddhists, were often carved on the four facades of the stone pagodas, below the relief sculptures of the Four Directional Buddhas.

²¹⁷ The *Golden Light Sūtra*, also referred to as *Sovereign Kings Golden Light Sūtra* (K. *Kumgangmyŏng Choesŭngwang kyŏng* 金光明最勝王經) had long been esteemed in Korea through the Silla and Koryŏ periods as a powerful spiritual protector of the nation from calamities. Along with *Benevolent Kings Sūtra* (K. *Inwang hoguk panya kyŏng* 仁王護國般若經) and *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Golden Light Sūtra* was revered as one of the “three state-protecting sūtras” (*hoguk sambu kyŏng* 護國三部經). According to *Koryŏsa* 高麗史 [History of Koryŏ dynasty], *Kŭmgwang myŏnggyŏng toryang* 金光明經道場, a Buddhist ritual dedicated to *Golden Light Sūtra*, was held 31 times through the Koryŏ dynasty, beginning from 1041. The Buddhist rituals revering the sūtra were held for the protection of the state and political legitimation both in China and Japan. Kenneth Ch'en, 1964, 199; Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism* (Los Angeles and Tōkyō: Buddhist Books

During the Koryŏ dynasty, when Buddhism was regarded as the spirit behind the birth of the nation, and received supreme pious support in order to ensure the well-being and protection of the nation from disaster and foreign invasions, *sinjung* deities were given the role of protecting the nation. This can be seen from the abundant historical evidence clearly showing that numerous *sinjung* Buddhist rites were held for that purpose.²¹⁸ The Koryŏ dynasty suffered from Mongol invasions and intervention in its internal politics during its *de facto* occupation which lasted for over hundred years (1231-1350). It must have been natural for Ch'oe Yŏng, the prime minister and commander in chief of the armed forces, to choose *sinjung* guardians as part of the *sabangbul* assembly during the restoration of the Anyang-sa pagoda, which was originally built by the national founder.²¹⁹ The assembly of *sinjung* deities that assume a protective function in the Anyang-sa pagoda was probably intended to represent the supernatural power of Buddhism in protecting the nation from foreign invasions, as well as the guardianship of the contents in the centre of the pagoda. Ch'oe's efforts to resuscitate national prestige during the decline of the Koryŏ dynasty were reflected in his pious wish to restore the pagoda.

The arrangement of multiple Buddhist images on the pagoda may reflect the wishes of the donor as well as the popular Buddhist cults and doctrines of the time. The decisions were made by Koreans' preference for having directional protectors for sacred art objects and places. The iconic figures depicted on the *sabangbul* objects—

International, 1974-1976), vol. 1, 23, 78, 112, 120.

²¹⁸ According to Suh Yoon-kil's categorization of Buddhist rituals held during the Koryŏ dynasty based on the textual record of *Koryŏsa*, the ritual dedicated to *sinjung* first appeared in the reign of King Kojong 高宗 (r. 1192-1259), and *sinjung toryang* 神衆道場 (Ritual in honour of the *sinjung* guardian deities) was held 40 times during his reign. Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 502, 546.

²¹⁹ Ch'oe Yŏng, greatly respected for his loyalty and patriotism, achieved distinguished exploits in the protection of the country against the invaders and was promoted to the highest minister of state. According to the textual records, Ch'oe Yŏng considered the repair of Anyang-sa pagoda to be a sacred task that would remind the people of the spirit of national foundation by King T'eajo, and he even regarded that it was a crime against the spirit of King T'eajo to hesitate the renovation task. He appropriated enormous expense for the restoration of the stupa and even disbursed from the army expenditure to raise funds. TMS, vol. 76, "Kŭmjju Anyang-sa t'ap chungsin ki" 衿州 安養寺 塔重新記; TYS, vol. 10, "Kŭmch'ŏnhyŏn puru Anyan-sa 衿川縣佛宇安養寺 條; Kim Ji-sŏk, 675-695.

Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha, Maitreya, Vairocana, Avalokiteśvara, Kṣitigarbha, *sinjung*, etc.—are all motifs prevalent in Korean Buddhist art. Such compositions of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and minor deities allocated to the four cardinal points in one group cannot be explained in doctrinal terms alone. Sometimes the inclusion of one or the other deities in a *sabangbul* formation is more oriented towards the search for secular merits. The various Buddha and bodhisattva figures appearing on early *sabangbul* relics, however, not only demonstrate the wishes of the devotees but also the devotional practices and patterns of belief among early Korean Buddhists, i.e. the growth and decline of specific Buddhist cults and sects, and the particular iconographic images at any given period.

5. Conclusion

This brief study of the concept of *sabangbul* and its development during the Old and Unified Silla periods shows that Buddhism was an integral part of unification and state-building in the newly centralized Silla state. From the evidence provided by *sabangbul* stelae produced between the late sixth century and the middle of the eighth centuries, as well as the doctrinal development of Silla Buddhism, it is possible to detect certain elements or changes in society which may have been conducive to the growth of *sabangbul* devotion. The *sabangbul* pillars offer important insights into the role played by Buddhism in accomplishing the huge task of unifying the whole peninsula and in the Silla kings' claim to legitimacy. From this point of view, the construction of *sabangbul* monuments in Silla was both an act of faith and a manifestation of the Silla's political and military strategy and royal authority. The *sabangbul* relics found in Silla can scarcely be understood without the knowledge of such historical, political, and religious background.

The origin and development of *sabangbul* ideology during the Silla and Unified Silla periods demonstrate the process of the assimilation and indigenization of

Buddhism in its early years in the Korean peninsula. The concept of the four cardinal directions and the centre associated with the *sabangbul* groups was an important element in Silla's unique representation of Buddhist cosmology, as well as in the politico-cosmology of the Silla monarchy. The Hwaŏm Odae-san cult, for example, demonstrates that the people of Silla positively embraced the foreign religion and established the belief that their country was a Buddha-land located at the centre of the world using Buddhist cosmology. This viewpoint demonstrates the assimilation and integration of Buddhism into the fabric of the state and into Silla's political and social order. Even after the Silla period, *sabangbul* ideology constantly underwent cultural modifications as a result of Koreans' efforts to establish their own Buddhist tradition.

This chapter has mainly examined the political use of Buddhism and its *saṅgha* for the promotion of national development and social integration as well as royal authority in Silla. The state appropriation of the *sabangbul* concept shows the importance of Buddhism as a political ideology and the nature of state power in Silla. This theme will recur later during the Chosŏn period, and will be invaluable in understanding how following generations sought national security and the stability of the royal authority by exploiting Buddhism and earlier examples of *sabangbul* relics.

CHAPTER II

The Revival of the Worship of *Sabangbul* in the First Half of the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1592)

The implementation of Neo-Confucianism as the state ideology marked a distinct shift in the policies of governance in the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910) away from Buddhism. The authority of the Neo-Confucian state bureaucrats expanded and in the centralized administration it was dominant to an unprecedented degree. In the early Chosŏn period, there was a constant struggle between the monarch and the state bureaucracy as to who was ultimately responsible for governing the country. There were disagreements in the matters of monarchical succession and the designation of the crown prince, and this led at times to a *coup d'état*. There were inherent conflicts between the interests of the monarch and the central aristocratic body, known as *yangban* 兩班 (officials of the two categories—civil and military), in the early Chosŏn political arena. The uneasy tension that had existed between the Chosŏn monarchs and their Neo-Confucian bureaucrats since the adoption of the Neo-Confucian social and political system was to prove a great problem, as can be seen in many historical records and textual sources.¹

This study will examine the formation and role of the new power structure between the elite literati and the monarch in the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty from the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1392 to the reign of King Myŏngjong (r. 1545-1567); in doing so it will attempt to clarify the background of the extant works of *sabangbul* from this period. It is interesting to note that the extant works produced during this relatively short period were all commissioned by royal patrons who were at the centre of the political affairs and power struggles of the age. As such they provide a sensitive reflection of the political atmosphere of the period. This chapter

¹ For the records see, Yang Ch'ŏl-jong, "Yijo pulgyo chunghŭng undong kwa kŭ sŏngkyŏk," *Chŏnbuktae nonmunjip* 2 (1958): 41-65.

concentrates on the changes in the power structure of central government and the monarchy. The historical re-emergence of the assembly of *sabangbul* occurred against a background of weak regal authority and powerful bureaucratic rule. Knowledge of the relationship between the kings and the new elite is important in helping us to understand how the *sabangbul* works were conceived and comprehended during this period. By looking at the changes in the power structure that were evolving at the time the dynasty was founded and during the violent struggles for succession that occurred throughout the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty (in particular with Sejo's and Myŏngjong's accession to the throne), we can get some insight into the contemporary conditions in which *sabangbul* works were created.

This chapter puts forward the hypothesis that the attempt to revive the theme of the Four Directional Buddhas by the Chosŏn rulers may be based on the ancient but eloquent demonstration of the symbiotic relationship between the royal court and Buddhism shown in Silla *sabangbul* pillars. We can witness the recurring phenomena of the political patronage of Buddhism by the ruling sovereigns reflected in *sabangbul* art, something which continued well after several hundred years.² Since this research will play an important part in understanding the renaissance of the iconography of the *sabangbul* assembly in the early Chosŏn period, I shall discuss at some length the power struggle and the tension between the kings and the state bureaucrats in order to highlight the power structure of the age. Further in-depth research will be devoted to revealing the context in which the early Chosŏn kings and royal members attempted to bolster monarchical authority by the patronage of Buddhism. This study intends to decipher the multiple layers of meaning—aesthetic, cultural, art historical, political, and philosophical—embedded in the works of a series of the assemblies of various Buddhas, mainly produced in the early Chosŏn era and commissioned solely by the royal house.

² Keel Hui-sŏng, "State Sangha in Korean History," *Korea Journal* 21, no. 8 (Aug. 1981): 41-48.

The discussion on the power structure with regard to the creation and function of the *sabangbul* works of the early Chosŏn period will provide a comprehensive understanding of the events of the period, as well as of the revival of this particular iconography. I shall then discuss the dynamic relationship between the early Chosŏn monarchical structure and Buddhism, and the political milieu of the Chosŏn court with regard to the production of the *sabangbul* works.

1. The Historical Background and the Shift of Political Ideology in the Early Chosŏn Period: Powerful Bureaucratic Structures and the Change of Kingship

As the Chosŏn dynasty embraced Neo-Confucianism as the principal doctrine for governance of the state, the members of the Neo-Confucian literati elite—or *kaeguk kongsin* 開國功臣 (Founding Merit Subject), such as Chŏng To-jŏn 鄭道傳 (1337-1398)—who were the leading participants in the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty, set up the political ideology and governing structure of the new dynasty. A centralized bureaucracy under the new scholar-officials was one of the most salient features of the Chosŏn dynasty. As Confucian civil bureaucracy was implemented and maintained in government, the bureaucracy grew vastly and challenged the royal authority in its use of the rhetoric of moral rule.³ The crucial factor of the age was the shifting concept of sovereignty. The combination of the dual roles of king and religious leader had long been accepted by the kings of the past periods, i.e. the Three Kingdoms, the Unified Silla, and Koryŏ periods. The religious leadership of the king and the imperial patterns of kingship upheld in the earlier dynasties were now rejected by the Neo-Confucian officials. The philosophy behind the ruling Neo-Confucian ideology of the state administration was to check the absolute authority of the king. The new elite were empowered to criticize and oversee the activities of the monarch.⁴ The king

³ Jahyun Kim Haboush, *The Confucian Kingship in Korea: Yŏngjo and the Politics of Sagacity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 2.

⁴ In the early period of the dynasty, Founding Merit Subjects predominated the State Council (Ŭijŏng-bu 議政府), the supreme administrative organization, and the Office of Royal Lecturers

would receive advice on all questions of state by the prime minister, who would have the concrete authority to make decisions on the majority of matters.⁵ Thus the authority of Chosŏn kings was constrained by powerful bureaucratic forces.

Buddhism, which lost its position as the official state religion with the downfall of Koryŏ, was in a very prominent position when things began to change: and the Neo-Confucians' rise to power was also accompanied by a campaign of persecution against Buddhism.⁶ The new Neo-Confucian bureaucrats viewed Buddhism as the root of all evil in Koryŏ society and government. Here it is important to understand that the antagonism of the officials of the new dynasty was not merely moral but political. Koryŏ represented the very ideas of kingship that the new elite now wished to remove. The ruling class consisted of the members of the royal family and the newly promoted Neo-Confucian literati, and the two sides struggled over issues of political ideology as to whether to maintain the Buddhism of the old Koryŏ dynasty alongside the new Neo-Confucianism. This struggle was intimately linked to the insistence of the royal family on the supremacy of the kingship based on the old Buddhist idea of *cakravartin*, namely that secular kings, being the conquerors of the world, ruled through the power of the Buddha dhārma. But the newly risen literati class, who occupied most of the higher echelons of government, insisted on the Neo-Confucian idea of a wise king, namely that

(Kyŏnggyŏn 經筵) which was devoted to indoctrination of the monarch and ideological checks upon the monarchy. In this connection the Office of Royal Lecturers and the State Council were of prime importance. It was through these consultative councils that the Confucian bureaucrats had power to interfere with the monarchical administration and decision-making procedures. Edward Willett Wagner, *The Literati Purges: Political Conflict in Early Yi Korea* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), 13; Sohn Po-kee, *Social History of The Early Chosŏn Dynasty: The Functional Aspects of Governmental Structure (1392-1592)* (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 2000), 25, 58 note 156.

For a discussion about the role of the Office of Royal Lecturers, see Sohn Po-kee, 25-47; Jahyun Kim Haboush, "The Education of the Yi Crown Prince: A study in Confucian Pedagogy," in William Theodore de Bary and Jahyun Kim Haboush, ed. *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 161-222.

⁵ Under Confucian precepts, the monarch had to heed the advice of Confucian scholars who were to act as the agents of the monarch's will. Following the Neo-Confucian emphasis on rule by righteous ministers, Chŏng To-jŏn, the most prominent figure among the *kaeguk kongsin*, wished to see the State Council as the real seat of power and did not want the monarch to rule directly. John Isaac Goulde, *Anti-Buddhist Polemic in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Korea: The Emergence of Confucian Exclusivism* (PhD. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 217.

⁶ Peter Lee, 1993, 551.

kings should rule not on the authority of the Buddha dhāma but should run a perfect government by morally edifying their subjects and constantly cultivating themselves to become virtuous and sage rulers. Thus the Confucian officials' position required the destruction of the older forms of Buddhist kingship and the religion that it had supported.⁷ They brought to the political debate a strong and consistent argument that the royal house and the social structure must be reformed. Thus the establishment of the Chosŏn dynasty represented not only a dynastic change, but also entailed a major intellectual transformation in which Buddhist ideas of politics, culture, and religion which had formed the foundation of the previous dynasty were to be replaced.

Furthermore, Buddhism was too closely identified with the former Koryŏ royal house: hence the new rulers of the Chosŏn dynasty rejected any tradition that might give legitimacy to their predecessors. To distance themselves from the former Koryŏ court, they suppressed the Buddhist establishment which was associated with Koryŏ. However, the suppression of the Chosŏn government of Buddhism was in no way a systematized form of persecution as was the great persecution of 845 in China. The kings of the early Chosŏn dynasty who remained devout adherents of Buddhism, were not so much active anti-Buddhists but rather passive participants in the suppression of Buddhism.⁸ Being resistant to large-scale social changes, their anti-Buddhist measures were restricted to such activities as readjusting the monastic estates and dismissing temple slaves with the aim of reforming the economic base of Buddhism.⁹ Hence the

⁷ Most of the anti-Buddhist memorials submitted during the late Koryŏ and the early Chosŏn dynasties were from personalities of non-aristocratic background, who may have wished to advance their career through the advancement of Confucian exclusivism. Goulde, 194.

⁸ King T'aejo 太祖 (r. 1392-1399), the dynastic founder, and King Chŏngjong 定宗 (r. 1399-1400), the second monarch of Chosŏn, were strong believers in Buddhism and continued to patronize and support the monasteries. In the early Chosŏn period court-sponsored Buddhist practices and rituals were widely held, following the patterns of the Koryŏ period. Han U-gŭn, "Yŏmal sŏnch'ŏ ūi pulgyo chŏngch'aek," *Seoul taehak nonmunjip* 6 (1957), 50-54; idem, "Policies toward Buddhism in Late Koryŏ," *Buddhism in the Early Chosŏn: Suppression and Transformation*, ed. by Lewis R. Lancaster and Yu Chai-shin (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1996), 52.

⁹ While monarchs and members of the Neo-Confucian elites shared the need of the elimination of Buddhist institutions for economic and political reasons, they did not share the view that Buddhism itself was evil. For example, King T'aejong 太宗 (r. 1400-1418), the third monarch of Chosŏn, unlike in the

measures taken against the Buddhist establishment were economic rather than philosophical.

2. Belief in Buddhism with reference to King Sejong 世宗

It is widely known that Chosŏn kings like Sejong (r. 1418-1450) and his son Sejo (r. 1455-1468) retained their belief in Buddhism on a non-political, personal level. Scholars have argued that King Sejong supported Buddhism after his wife, Queen Sohŏn 昭憲王后 (1395-1446), passed away, and that King Sejo came to regret his earlier violence and supported Buddhism in repentance for usurping the throne of his young nephew King Tanjong 端宗 (1452-1455). However this interpretation needs to be reconsidered. Just as the harsh policies against Buddhism were enforced by the Neo-Confucian literati for political and socio-economic rather than philosophical reasons, so the kings adopted a policy of supporting Buddhism in an attempt to shore up their power against the powerful central bureaucracy.¹⁰ In doing so they aimed to check the power of the Confucian officials and, ultimately, to consolidate their own authority. The kings adopted Buddhism as a symbolic measure to legitimate their autocratic policies and elevate their status above that of their Confucian bureaucrats. During the early period of Chosŏn the kings sought to restore their monarchical authority and power by adopting the Buddhist concept of ideal kingship, *cakravartin*.

reigns of the first two kings, was committed to the idea of centralized monarchical authority. Part of his consolidation process involved the reduction of Buddhist sects and temples, the nationalization of Buddhist lands and slaves, and the laicisation of clergy. However T'aejong's attitude towards Buddhism began to change from 1407, and his patronage of Buddhism increased dramatically from 1409. The chief reasons for the change in the king's attitude seem to have been that he had accomplished what he had set out to do and reduce the number of temples without necessarily rejecting belief in Buddhism. This testifies that the anti-Buddhist policies of T'aejong were, too, in large part motivated by economic and political concerns. Meanwhile, the king's sponsoring of Buddhist establishment is viewed as his move to consolidate royal power in central government. *T'aejong sillok*, 2(1402)/4/22(*kapsul*) (year/month/date), 5(1405)/11/21(*kyech'uk*); Hwang Sŏn-myŏng, *Chosŏn cho chonggyo sahoesa ui yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Iljisa, 1986), 69; Han Chong-man, *Han'guk pulgyo sasang ūi chŏn'gae* (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1998), 290; Han U-gŭn, 1957, 59-61; Goulde, 231; Kim Young-t'ae, "Chosŏn T'aejong cho ui pulsa wa ch'ŏkpul," *Tongyanghak* 18 (Oct. 1988): 138-148.

¹⁰ Han Chong-man, 1998, 289, 292; Robert E. Buswell, JR. "Buddhism under Confucian Domination: The Synthetic Vision of Sŏsan Hyujŏng," in Jahyun Kim Haboush and M. Deuchler, *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 138.

This philosophy was prominent during the reigns of King Sejong and, more especially, King Sejo.¹¹ Buddhism seems to have been restored during King Sejo's reign, as he openly supported Buddhism and commissioned various large-scale Buddhist projects including the reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries. All the various members of the royal family who kept their faith in Buddhism emphasised their strong support by commissioning and disseminating Buddhist art.

King Sejong, the grandson of the dynastic founder, was the fourth monarch of the Chosŏn dynasty and helped give it a strong foundation. Sejong was a renowned Confucian king and he restored the active role of the State Council which had previously been weakened by King T'aejong. In 1420 Sejong founded a royal research institute called Chip'yŏn-jŏn 集賢殿 (the Hall of Worthies), staffing it with talented officials who were encouraged to conduct a variety of research projects. However, during this period secular power was growing fast and eventually it began to challenge royal authority. Confucian bureaucrats, especially the royal scholars appointed to research posts in Chip'yŏn-jŏn, were now in a position to restrain the king's authority. Whilst strongly supporting Confucian ideology and implementing his Neo-Confucian vision in government, the king succeeded in dealing with the *yangban* officials to such an extent that he was able to offset their challenge.

Though Sejong, in the early part of his reign, was far more positive than his father T'aejong in his attitude to Buddhism, his policies vacillated between suppression and encouragement.¹² Both these extremes were characteristic of the early Chosŏn period. One of major acts of anti-Buddhist persecution under Sejong was to reduce the number of Buddhist schools that had existed until then from seven to only two, namely Sŏn 禪

¹¹ Han Sang-sŏl, *Chosŏn ch'ogi Sejong, Sejo ūi pulgyo sinang kwa sin'kwŏn kyŏnje* (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 1981), 40-62; Lee Bong-ch'un, "Chosŏn chŏn'gi hŭngbulchu wa hŭngbul saŏp," *Pulgyo hakpo* 38 (Dec. 2001): 44-47.

¹² Han U-gŭn, "Sejong-jo e issŏsŏ ūi taebulgyo sich'aek," *Chindan hakpo* nos. 25, 26, 27 (Dec. 1964): 71-150.

(C: Ch'an; J: Zen, Meditation) school and Kyo 教 (Study) school. The result was that only 36 monasteries remained.¹³ Most of the temple lands were confiscated or taxed, just as anyone who wished to become a monk was also subject to taxation.¹⁴

Despite his decrees to suppress Buddhism, King Sejong had an ambivalent attitude towards the religion. Each of the two remaining schools was under a main monastery in the capital city: Hŭngch'ŏn-sa 興天寺 for the Sŏn school and Hŭngdŏk-sa 興德寺 for the Kyo school.¹⁵ The two monasteries had been set up by the Chosŏn founder King T'aejo 太祖 (r. 1392-1398) and were run with the support of the royal court.¹⁶ In the process of linking the royal ancestors with Hŭngchŏn-sa, King Sejong tried to use Buddhism to strengthen his authority by holding a memorial service for his royal ancestors.¹⁷ For example, when Sejong held the Water-Land ritual (K: *suryuk-chae* 水陸齋, a service to console the souls of water and land) as a memorial service for T'aejong, he ordered Hŭngch'ŏn-sa to be repaired and placed the newly printed *Taejanggyŏng* 大藏經 (Great Collection of Buddhist Scriptures) in the monastery.¹⁸ Despite the state policy of suppressing Buddhism, Sejong aimed to enhance the authority of the royal household and protect the belief of its members in Buddhism by recognizing the two royal temples, Hŭngch'ŏn-sa and Hŭngdŏk-sa, both of which had been built by the founder of the dynasty as the official headquarters of their respective

¹³ *Sejong sillok* 世宗實錄, 6(1424)/4/5(*kyŏngsul*).

¹⁴ Kim Kap-ju, *Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyŏngje yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tonghwa ch'ulp'ansa, 1983), 26-30.

¹⁵ *Sejong sillok*, 6(1424)/4/5(*kyŏngsul*); TYS, v. 1, 429, "Hansŏngbu puru Hŭngch'ŏn-sa 漢城府佛宇興天寺", and "Hansŏngbu puru Hŭngdŏk-sa 漢城府佛宇興德寺."

¹⁶ *T'aejo sillok* 太宗實錄, 7(1398)/8/9(*imja*), 7/813(*pyŏngjin*); *T'aejong sillok* 太宗實錄, 7(1407)/1/22(*chŏngch'uk*), 7/1/24(*kimyo*), 10(1410)/5/19(*ŭlyu*); *Sejong sillok*, 19(1437)/7/18(*pyŏngo*). See also Kim Yong-guk, "Sŏul ch'ŏndo ch'ogi ŭi pulsa ch'anggŏn (The Establishment of Buddhist Monasteries in the Early Years after the Relocation of the Capital to Seoul)," *Hyangt'o Seoul* 5 (1959): 58-81.

¹⁷ King Sejong began to devotedly accept Buddhism by holding Buddhist services at Hŭngch'ŏn-sa from 1425 to 1432 of his reign. A series of policies toward Buddhism after the celebration of Buddhist memorial services in the temple shows a significant change from his attitude in the early years of his reign. Sejong ordered the repair of Hŭngch'ŏn-sa whenever necessary, and Buddhist services were held to celebrate its renovation every time since its establishment by T'aejo. *Sejong sillok*, 17(1435)/5/20(*sinmyo*), 19(1437)/7/18(*pyŏngo*), 21(1439)/4/18(*ŭlmi*), 22(1440)/5/4(*ŭlsa*), 22(1440)/7/3(*kyemyo*), 23(1441)/11/25(*muo*), 24(1442)/3/24(*ŭryu*), 28(1446)/3/36 (*kyesa*), 21(1439)/4/14(*sinmyo*).

¹⁸ *Sejong sillok*, 22(1440)/9/12(*sinhae*).

sects.¹⁹ Simultaneously, by designating the private royal temples as the official headquarters of the two main sects, the monarch was able to exercise effective control of the Buddhist institutions. Henrik Sørensen sees the major reasons behind the early Chosŏn kings' decrees to merge the various Buddhist schools as an attempt to control Buddhism and gain economic and administrative control of the Buddhist saṅgha including their extensive temple lands.²⁰

A series of subsequent friendly policies toward Buddhism came under strong attack from the Neo-Confucian scholars who insisted on the suppression of Buddhism. Sejong took a step further: at this period Sejong was determined in his intention to support Buddhism.²¹ This can be seen in his edition of Buddhist literature which was translated into the Korean writing system, *Hunmin chŏngŭm* 訓民正音 meaning "Correct Sounds to instruct the People," the original name for *Han'gŭl* as it became known in the twentieth century. There has been much speculation about King Sejong's reasons for inventing the Korean writing system in 1443. In his brief preface to *Hunmin chŏngŭm*, the promulgation document published in 1446 with the name of the script as its title, he claimed that the primary purpose of creating the indigenous script *Han'gŭl* was to meet the needs of the Korean people. However, the Korean script was first propagated among members of the royal household who remained pious Buddhists.²² Furthermore, ensuing efforts were mainly devoted to translate and propagate Buddhist literature into *Han'gŭl*.²³ Here we should consider how it was

¹⁹ *Sejong sillok*, 19(1437)/7/18(*pyŏngo*).

²⁰ Henrik Sørensen, "On Esoteric Practices in Korean Sŏn Buddhism during the Chosŏn period," *Han'guk chonggyo sasang ūi chaejomyŏng*, 1, ed. by Chinsan Han Ki-du paksa hwagap kinyŏmhoe (Iri: Wŏngwang University, 1993b): 526-7.

²¹ According to the *Sejong sillok*, in 1446, as officers at Sahŏnbu 司憲府 (the Office of the Inspector-General) presented a memorial regarding Sejong's supporting policy for Buddhism, the king was enraged at it and let Ūigŭmbu 義禁府 (State Tribunal) imprison them. Scholars at Chipyŏn-jŏn withheld from submitting their memorials due to Sejong's anger. A week later, although his anger was not appeased, Sejong released some people of them at cabinet members' supplication to spare their lives. *Sejong sillok*, 28(1446)/10/9(*kyemyo*); 28/10/10(*kapjin*); 28/10/13(*chŏngmi*).

²² Han Sang-sŏl, 42.

²³ After the publication of *Hunmin chŏngŭm* in 1446, Sejong proceeded to use Korean alphabet to translate and print *Sŏkbo sangjŏl* 釋譜詳節 [Episodes from the Life of the Buddha] composed in 1447

possible for Buddhist sūtras to be translated ahead of the Confucian canon in the predominantly Neo-Confucian society of the Chosŏn dynasty.²⁴ Many of the scholars who have raised questions concerning Sejong's intentions, believe that Sejong was advocating something more complex in the creation of *Han'gŭl*.²⁵ Following their argument it may be possible to claim that the writing system mainly served the purpose of propagating Buddhism through the Buddhist sūtras translated into the vernacular script to help the people understand them easily.²⁶

A. Naebul-tang 內佛堂 and the Worship of Five Buddhas

King Sejong's different attitude toward Buddhism is principally shown in his building of Naebul-tang 內佛堂 (literally "the inner Buddhist shrine"), a special Buddhist hall of worship inside the palace compound. In 1448, in spite of strong protests and memoranda issued by literati-officials, and protest strikes by university students, the king ordered the construction of Naebul-tang for his dead wife Queen Sohŏn.²⁷ *The Worship of Buddha in the Palace*, dating back to the mid-sixteenth

by his second son, Great Prince Suyang, who later became King Sejo, at Sejong's order in memory of his deceased Queen Sohŏn who had passed away in 1446. *Sejong sillok*, 28(1446)/12/2(*ŭlmi*).

King Sejong also made an important contribution in promoting the religion by composing a collection of odes, called *Wŏrin ch'ŏn'gang chi kok* 月印千江之曲 [Songs of the Moon's Reflections on Thousand Rivers], a eulogy cycle praising the greatness and merits of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

²⁴ Although Confucian scholars raised considerable opposition to the king's support of the new writing system and protested that the use of Korean script would retard Confucian studies, Sejong persisted in his determination to promote the Korean script. Some wielders of power even deemed it dangerous to put such a politically important tool as writing in the hands of the people. Enraged at their memorials, King Sejong ordered to imprison the Confucian scholars of Chipyŏn-jŏn including Ch'oe Man-ri and others when they vehemently remonstrated against the invention of the new script, different from Chinese characters. In the twenty-eighth year of his reign (1446), the king designated *Hunmin chŏngŭm* as an obligatory subject of examinations for promotion of civil servants. These facts reflect Sejong's determination to encourage the use of the Korean alphabet. *Sejong sillok*, 26(1444)/2/20(*kyŏngja*); Peter H. Lee, "King Sejong and Songs of Flying Dragons," in Young-Key Kim-Renaud, ed. *King Sejong the Great: The Light of 15th Century Korea* (Washington, D.C.: International Circle of Korean Linguistics, 1992), 66; S. Robert Ramsey, "The Korean Alphabet," in *King Sejong the Great: The Light of Fifteenth century Korea*, ed. Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Washington DC: The International Circle of Korean Linguistics, 1992), 49.

²⁵ Kim Min-ju, "Hunmin chŏngŭm ch'angje ŭi ŭimi: Sejong ŭi kukkwŏn hwangnipch'aek ŭil chungsim ŭiro," in *Kim Chae-wŏn paksa hoegap kinyŏm nonch'ong* (Seoul: Ŭryu munhwasa, 1969), 780-783, 792-794.

²⁶ Kwŏn Kee-jŏng, "Buddhism undergoes Hardship: Buddhism in the Chosŏn Dynasty," in *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, ed. the Korean Buddhist Research Institute (Seoul: Dongguk University, 1993), 182.

²⁷ *Sejong sillok*, 30(1448)/7/17(*sinch'uk*).

century and now in the Ho-Am Art Museum, depicts a Buddhist shrine containing statues of a Buddha triad in the upper central part of the painting (fig. 19). This painting gives us an insight into Buddha worship within the royal palace at the time.

Here it is important to mention Kim Su-on (1409-1481), a talented scholar who worked in Chip'yŏn-jŏn.²⁸ Kim's *Śarī yŏngŭng ki* 舍利靈應記 [The Divine Response of Śarīra, 1449] was a sort of report written at the order of the king recording a miraculous event: that the *śarīra* spontaneously divided itself at the inauguration ceremony of Naebul-tang.²⁹ King Sejong completed the casting of the *trikāya* (Three Bodies of Buddhas; K: *samsinbul* 三身佛) in gold for the shrine which had been initiated by King T'aejo.³⁰ According to *Sari yŏngŭng ki*, Bhaiṣajyaguru and Amitābha were also created in addition to the Buddha triad. The five Buddhas with bodhisattvas and arhats were enshrined in the hall of worship. Sejong also ordered Kim and the priest Sinmi 信眉, who happened to be Kim's elder brother, to compose a prose work called *Sambul yech'am mun* 三佛禮懺文 [The Confession to the Three Buddhas]. Moreover, Sejong himself wrote seven songs for the ceremony of enshrining the five Buddha statues. Here he glorifies each of the five Buddhas enshrined in the hall.³¹ These historical records have great importance because they verify the enshrinement of the five Buddhas in the shrine as well as the re-establishment

According to *Sejong sillok*, Naebul-tang was established by T'aejo for the first time. However, it was closed at the order of Sejong himself sometime when the king enforced the unification of various Buddhist sects into the two main sects in 1424. *Sejong sillok*, 1(1419)/8/23(*ŭlmi*); 20(1438)/7/6(*muja*). For more details on the establishment and closing of the shrine and architectural details of the building, see Mun Myong-dae, "Naebultang-do e nat'an an Naebul-tang kŏnch'ukko," *Pulgyo misul* 14 (1997): 154-158.

²⁸ Serving successively under six monarchs from the reign of Sejong and until the reign of Sŏngjong the ninth ruler of Chosŏn, Kim Su-on was accorded special favour by Sejong and Sejo. Kim Su-on, despite being a noted Confucian scholar, firmly believed in Buddhism, probably from the influence of his brother Sinmi, who was a prominent monk then. Kim's merit is distinguished in his service for Sejong and Sejo by participating in their project to translate the Buddhist canon into Korean script.

²⁹ The shrine was completed and accompanied with a ceremony for its inauguration in December of the same year (1448). *Sejong sillok*, 30/12/5(*chŏngsa*).

³⁰ *Sejong sillok*, 30(1448)/12/5(*chŏngsa*).

³¹ Kim Su-on, *Sari yŏngŭng ki* (1449), 9a-b; *Sejong sillok*, 30(1448)/12/5(*chŏngsa*); Pak Pŏm-hun, *Han'guk pulgyo ūmaksa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Changgyŏnggak, 2000), 323-325. Kim Su-on's *Sari yŏngŭng ki* (1449) is available in Dongguk University library and its whole text is also included in appendix to Pak Pŏm-hun's *Han'guk pulgyo ūmaksa yŏn'gu*.

of Naebul-tang inside the royal palace during the Sejong's reign. The specific names of the five Buddhas recorded in *Sari yŏngŭng ki* clearly show the worship and popularity of the five Buddhas in the royal court during the early Chosŏn period.

B. The Five Buddhas in Taejŏkkwang-jŏn 大寂光殿 at Kŭmsan-sa 金山寺

During the Chosŏn period, the *trikāya* was often united with the four directional Buddhas, and even more frequently with the three directional Buddhas (more commonly referred to as *samsebul* 三世佛, lit: the Buddhas of Three Worlds or Realms) to create new types of *sabangbul*. Although neither Naebul-tang nor the statues of the five Buddhas enshrined in the hall exist any longer, a similar assembly of the five Buddhas from the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty enshrined in Taejŏkkwang-jŏn 大寂光殿 (the Hall of Great Tranquil Light of Vairocana) at Kŭmsan-sa 金山寺 may allow us to comprehend the image of the five Buddhas enshrined in Naebul-tang (figs. 20-21).³² The five Buddhas are horizontally aligned on the altar, and their matching paintings (here called *hubul t'aeng* 後佛幀, literally the painting behind Buddhas, or the scroll painting hung behind the Buddhist altar) are hung on the back wall. This unique example, enshrining images both in the form of statues of the five Buddhas and of their corresponding paintings, has no parallel at other temples.

Taejŏkkwang-jŏn at Kŭmsan-sa was entitled originally as Taeung taekwangmyŏng-jŏn 大雄大光明殿 (Hall of Great Hero [Śākyamuni] and Great Lights [Vairocana]).³³ According to *Taejŏkkwang-jŏn chungsu sangyang yangmun nok* 大寂

³² The Five Buddhas enshrined at the altar are the production of the 20th century since Taejŏkkwang-jŏn was completely destroyed by fire in 1986. However, based on textual documents, it is known that the statues of the five Buddhas had been enshrined on the altar even before the Japanese Invasions in 1592.

³³ Lee Kang-kŭn, *17segi pulchŏn changŏm e kwanhan yŏn'gu* (PhD dissertation, Dongguk University, 1994), 92-93.

It has been generally accepted that Taeung taekwangmyŏng-jŏn is the unification of three or five different Buddha halls which once separately existed but were merged when the monastery was rebuilt in 1635 after the second invasion by the Japanese (丁酉再亂). It has been known that Taeung taekwangmyŏng-jŏn, which had housed *samsinbul*, incorporated Yaksa-jŏn 藥師殿 (Hall of Bhaisajyaguru) and Kŭngnak-jŏn 極樂殿 (Hall of Ultimate Bliss *Sukhāvātī* [Amitābha]) at the repair of 1635. Han'guk pulgyo yŏn'guwŏn, *Kŭmsan-sa* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1990), 71; Munhwanjae kwallikuk,

光殿重修上樑樑間錄 (the Record of the Celebration of Putting up the Ridge Beam of the Hall of Tranquil Light at its Repair, 1882), the building was repaired in 1686 under the sponsorship of the royal court, and renamed as Taejökkwang-jŏn after reconstruction had been completed.³⁴ The patrons who enabled the construction of the Buddhist hall in 1686 were the royal family and government officials who prayed for the birth of a crown prince. This record is undoubtedly an important historical document since the names of numerous magistrates including Min Yu-jung 閔維重 (1630-1687), the father of Queen Inhyŏn 仁顯王后 (1667-1701), are listed as the major donors for the enterprise (“初創大施主秩”). Even though the name of Queen Inhyŏn does not appear on the list of the donors, Lee Kang-kŭn is of the opinion that the queen must have been the greatest donor to this grand enterprise because her father’s name heads the list.³⁵ It is a well-known fact that the Chosŏn royal court relied on the power of Buddhism to pray for the wellbeing of the royal household and the country. It is stated in historical records and related documents (such as the calligraphy written on the beam and other epitaphs), that the royal court vigorously supported large-scale Buddhist projects like the reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries for this reason.

As shown in the scale and organization of the five statues, Taejökkwang-jŏn of Kŭmsan-sa was built as a major national enterprise to pray for the birth of male heirs to

Kŭmsan-sa silch’ŭk chosa pogosŏ (Seoul: Munhwa kongbobu munhwajae kwalliguk, 1987), 232.

However, *Kŭmsan-sa sajŏk* 金山寺事蹟 (1635), written by Chungwan Hean 中觀 海眼 (1567-?) in 1635 when the repair of the monastery was completed, provides positive evidence that the five Buddhas with their attending bodhisattvas enshrined in *Taeung taegwangmyŏng-jŏn* predates the Japanese invasion in 1592. This record testifies the five Buddhas were enshrined in the hall from the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty. In addition, the original title of the hall signifies the dual meanings of Śākyamuni and Vairocana the Great Illuminator. Thus the generally accepted idea that Taejökkwang-jŏn is the unification of various Buddhist halls on the occasion of the reconstruction is not plausible. Lee Kang-kŭn, 1994, 93; *Kŭmsansa-ji* 金山寺誌 (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1982), 65-78. The full text of Chungwan Haeon’s *Kŭmsan-sa sajŏk* is also included in Appendix to *Pulgyo hakpo*, no. 3, 4 (1966): 3-12.

³⁴ *Taejökkwang-jŏn chungsu sangyang yangmunnok* 大寂光殿重修上樑樑間錄, compiled in *Kŭmsansa-ji*, was originally written on the ridge beam and found when the hall was dismantled for repair in 1969. This text reveals Taejökkwang-jŏn was first built in 1686. “*Taejökkwang-jŏn chungsu sangyang yangmunnok*” in *Kŭmsansa-ji* (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1982), 221-224; Munhwanjae kwalliguk, 1987, 232-233.

³⁵ Lee Kang-kŭn, 1994, 134.

the throne.³⁶ The reconstruction of Taejökkwang-jŏn with the five Buddhas under royal patronage testifies that the tradition of worshipping the five Buddhas in the royal court continued from the very early period of the dynasty until the later period of Chosŏn. The importance of the five Buddhas in the royal court, and their continued popularity were a significant influence in the later development of this theme in the *Assembly of the Five Buddhas* in Jūrin-ji 十輪寺 (fig. 47) and the Five Buddha-Assembly enshrined within Taejökkwang-jŏn at Kūmsan-sa.³⁷

3. Sejo's Consolidation of the Monarchy

In his efforts to promote Buddhism, Sejong gave shape to the Buddhist idea of kingship and legitimacy to the Chosŏn dynastic line through the Buddhist memorial service at Hŭngch'ŏn-sa, and strengthened royal authority by publicly overcoming any opposition raised by state ministers.³⁸ Unfortunately, Sejong's legacy of stability and prosperity was not sustained by his short-lived successors King Munjong 文宗 (r. 1450-1452) and King Tanjong 端宗 (r. 1452-1455). Munjong's death in 1452 after only two years on the throne resulted in the reign of an eleven-year-old prince who ruled as King Tanjong. Because the boy Tanjong was personally unable to assume direction of the government, state affairs were left in the hands of State Councillors.³⁹ This meant that the general supervisory power of the State Council was strengthened and monarchical power declined at that time. In 1455, Great Prince Suyang, Sejong's second son, usurped the throne by murder and regicide after suppressing attempts to

³⁶ Lee Kang-kūn, 1994, 133-136.

³⁷ This tradition of worshipping the five Buddhas in the main shrine has continued to the present and is found in contemporary daily monastic liturgies. Its possible impact on the contemporary Korean Buddhist rituals and liturgies, in particular the main sanctuary ritual, is shown in *Hyangsu haerye* 香水海禮 (literally "fragrant water rite"), the liturgy for worshipping the five Buddhas. This liturgy is found in the important standard Buddhist ritual manual *Sŏngmun ũibŏm* 釋文儀範 [Ritual Codex of Buddhism], compiled by An Chin-ho in 1931, to which most of contemporary rituals and ceremonies held in Korean monastery can be traced. The first chapter "Yegyŏng" 禮敬 (Liturgical Texts) of *Sŏngmun ũibŏm* instructs to offer devotion and homage to the five Buddhas at the main sanctuary, Taeung-jŏn. An Chin-ho. *Sŏngmun ũibŏm* (Seoul: Pŏmnyunsa, 1983), vol. 1, 1-2; National Museum of Korea, ed. *Pusŏk-sa Kwaebul* (Seoul: Yŏlin pangmulgwan, 2007), 28.

³⁸ Han Sang-sŏl, 34, 39.

³⁹ Wagner, 14.

restore Tanjong's control over state affairs. The usurpation, unforgivable in terms of Confucian standards of morality, is usually attributed to Sejo's commitment to the restoration of the monarchy.⁴⁰

None of the earlier Chosŏn kings were stronger in their defiance of the *yangban* officials than King Sejo (r. 1455-1468). Hence the rise of monarchical power and authority during Sejo's reign was remarkable. Sejo saw that the monarchy had been eroded by the rise of a bureaucracy whose growing power was the result of Sejong's patronage of scholars.⁴¹ His first act in defence of the monarchy was to close the Chip'yŏn-jŏn in 1456, which was regarded as a centre of anti-monarchical plots.⁴² Sejo also abolished the State Council with the result that the Six Ministries (K: Yukcho 六曹) would be directly under his control. He eliminated some posts in the Censors Office and crippled the Office of Royal Lecturers.⁴³ Furthermore he acted decisively in the matter of recruitment of new officials, increasing the number of military graduates to further strengthen the power of the monarchy and bringing the civil examination system under the sway of the monarch.⁴⁴ All these measures were designed to weaken ideological restraints on the monarchy.

Sejo's success in subduing the *yangban* class was also due to his reform of the land-tax collection. Land, the major form of wealth during the pre-modern era, was in the hands of a few *yangban* officials who held the reins of political power.⁴⁵ In 1466, to limit their economic power, Sejo abolished the rank-land system (*kwajŏn-pŏp* 科田

⁴⁰ Chŏng Doo-hee, *Chosŏn ch'ogi chŏngch'i chibae seryŏk yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1983), 183.

⁴¹ Haboush, 1985, 184.

⁴² *Sejo sillok*, 2(1420)/6/6(*kapjin*).

Chip'yŏn-jŏn was replaced by the Office of Study Promotion (Hongmun'gwan 弘文館) ostensibly as a means of promoting Confucianism, however, in fact, it was used merely as a royal library rather than an organization designed to promote and propagate Confucian ideals.

⁴³ *Sejo sillok*, 2(1420)/6/6(*kapjin*); Sohn Pokee, 25-6.

⁴⁴ Sejo offered interim civil and military service examinations more often, in addition to regular examinations given every three years. Since the number of successful candidates in the interim examinations exceeded those from fixed examinations by a ratio of two to one. He gave the title of Merit Subject (*kongsin* 功臣) to various officials on three different occasions to widen the base of loyal support.

⁴⁵ Hwang Sŏn-myŏng, 1986, 68.

法) by which the *yangban* enjoyed a life-time tenure, and introduced a new office-land system known as *chikchŏn-pŏp* 職田法.⁴⁶ According to Sejo's office-land system, land could only be held by officials while they were in office, and taxes were to be paid directly to the king's government. The system therefore served as a way for the government, especially the royal house, to raise tax revenues. The limitation of land grants to incumbent officials was aimed at keeping the *yangban* under the control of the royal house, while the latter sought to retain its privileged status.

To defy the orthodoxy of the Neo-Confucian scholars, Sejo defended Buddhism and loosened the restrictions that had been imposed on the religion.⁴⁷ In the face of increasing protests against Buddhism by the rising powerful scholar-bureaucrats, Sejo established Kan'gyŏng togam 刊經都監 (the Royal Bureau of Buddhist Publications) in 1461 to ensure the translation and publication of Buddhist scriptures in Korean script and make them available for distribution.⁴⁸ The king even employed a group of Buddhist monks to translate Buddhist canons. Sejo even took part in the translation project, along with a monk called Sinmi and pro-Buddhist Confucian literati like Kim Su-on, Kang Hee-mang, and Han Kye-hŭi. The project was magnificent in scale,⁴⁹ and had an important political significance. Indeed both the project to translate the Buddhist canon and the series of policies supporting Buddhist establishments are evidence that Sejo's intentions went far beyond his private devotion to Buddhism.

⁴⁶ *Sejo sillok*, 12(1430)/8/25(*kapja*).

When General Yi Sŏng-gye and his faction seized power in 1389, rank or status-land law (*Kwajŏn-pŏp*) was instituted to carry out land reforms. Under the terms of the status-land system, land was ordinarily distributed for life only, on the basis of one's status or rank. During the reigns of T'aejong and Sejong the Chosŏn dynasty imitated Ming China and would not confiscate granted land except as punishment for a serious crime so that the lands of the *yangban* class of officials and of the military became hereditary.

⁴⁷ *Sejo sillok*, 3(1421)/3/23(*pyŏngsul*), 3(1421)/9/89(*kisa*), 3(1421)/9/23(*kapsin*), 4(1422)/2/13(*imin*), 4(1422)/2/15(*kapjin*).

⁴⁸ With the establishment of Kan'gyŏng togam in 1461, a major Mahāyāna sūtras as *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* 楞嚴經 (1462), *Lotus Sūtra* 法華經 (1463), *Diamond Sūtra* 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (1464), *Amitābha Sūtra* 阿彌陀經 (*The Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtra*, 1464), *Heart Sūtra* 般若心經 (1464), *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* 圓覺經 (1465), and so on were translated into *Han'gŭl* and published in succeeding years. Kwŏn Kee-jŏng, 1993, 185.

⁴⁹ Kim Mu-bong, "Pulgyo ŏnŏ yŏn'gu (1443-late 16th century) (A Study of Buddhist Language)," *Han'guk munhak yŏn'gu* 22 (2002): 92.

The translation of Buddhist sūtras and their distribution contributed greatly to the revival and popularisation of Buddhism and its thought among the populace. By propagating Buddhism Sejo intended to eliminate the checks exercised by Confucian statecraft. Hence it is all the more remarkable that the Buddhist King Sejo used *Han'gŭl* in his translation of the major Mahāyāna scriptures into vernacular Korean.⁵⁰ His commitment both towards *Han'gŭl* and Buddhism encountered strong opposition from the Neo-Confucian scholars. Here it cannot be emphasised too strongly that bureaucratic powers could only be restrained if the population at large believed in Buddhism, as it was conveyed by Sejong and Sejo. To sum up, Sejo's support of Buddhism was an effort to weaken the orthodox Confucian ideology as well as to promote the power of the kingship.⁵¹ He viewed Buddhism as means of ruling the country on the one hand and of strengthening the royal authority on the other.⁵² This political milieu formed the background for the establishment of Wŏn'gak-sa 圓覺寺 (the Temple of Perfect Enlightenment) and its pagoda which will be considered in the following section.

A. The Group of the Four Directional Buddhas in the Early Chosŏn Dynasty: The Ten-storey Pagoda at the Wŏn'gak-sa Temple Site

Buddhist rituals that had previously been privately supported by earlier Chosŏn kings received state-support during Sejo's reign. In addition to the publishing and distributing the Buddhist scriptures, the government also bore the cost of magnificent rituals and the construction and repair of major temples. The Buddhist monastery

⁵⁰ On the observance of Sejo's effort to propagate the religion and *Han'gŭl*, see Kim Mu-bong, "Chosŏn sidae Kan'gyŏng togam kanhaeng ui han'gŭl kyŏngjŏn yŏn'gu," *Han'guk sasang kwa munhwa* 23 (2004): 376-385.

In addition to Buddhist canons, the office compiled *Wŏrin sŏkpo* 月印釋譜, a combined publication of King Sejong's *Wŏrin ch'ŏn'gang chigok* and King Sejo's *Sŏkpo sangjŏl*. The project to compile *Wŏrin ch'ŏngang chigok* by his father and *Sŏkpo sangjŏl* by Sejo himself into one volume was initiated by Sejong and finished in the reign of Sejo thirteen years after it was begun. *Wŏrin sŏkpo* was the first Korean annotation of Buddhist literature published after the invention of the Korean script. *Sejo sillok*, 7(1425)/6/16(*ŭlyu*).

⁵¹ Lee Bong-ch'un, 52-54; Han Sang-sŏl, 51-62.

⁵² *Sejo sillok*, 10(1438)/3/15(*mujin*).

Wŏn'gak-sa 圓覺寺 was founded by Sejo in 1465.⁵³ According to *Sejo sillok* 世祖實錄 [The Annals of King Sejo of the Chosŏn Dynasty], when Great Prince Hyoryŏng 孝寧大君 (1396-1486), the second son of T'aejong, who had abdicated to become a Buddhist monk, was giving a court-sponsored Wŏn'gak *pŏphoe* 圓覺法會 (The Buddhist Assembly of Perfect Enlightenment) at Hoeam-sa 檜巖寺 in the presence of Sejo and his retinue, they had a vision of the Buddha during which they witnessed a miraculous division of the *śarīra*. Inspired by the miracle, Sejo ordered the renovation of Hŭngbok-sa 興福寺 (originally built by T'aejo in the capital), and after its completion the monastery was given a new name, Wŏn'gak-sa.⁵⁴ The king also ordered the construction of a ten-storey pagoda in the monastery grounds (fig. 22). A Buddhist ceremony celebrating the completion of the pagoda was held in 1467.⁵⁵

The ten-storey stone pagoda from the Wŏn'gak-sa temple site now standing in the grounds of Pagoda Park is representative of the stone pagodas of the Chosŏn period. However the style of this pagoda is unique among Korean pagodas because of the Buddha assemblies carved in relief on its surface. The earliest existing example of the various assemblies of the four Buddhas produced in the Chosŏn period can be found on this stone pagoda. Since the ninth century of the Unified Silla period there had been a long tradition of placing different Buddhas on the four cardinal directions of a stone pagoda.⁵⁶ Thus the sets of various assemblies carved on the Wŏn'gak-sa stone pagoda

⁵³ *Sejo sillok*, 11(1465)/4/7(*kyemi*).

⁵⁴ *Sejo sillok*, 10(1464)/5/2(*kapin*); TYS, v. 3, "Hansŏngbu puru Wŏn'gak-sa 漢城府佛宇圓覺寺."

Hŭngbok-sa had received particular interest and support from the royal court. King T'aejo designated the monastery as headquarter of Chogyŏ Order. The king appointed the monastery *wŏnch'al* (votive monastery) of the royal court and held the funerary service of his late Queen Sindŏk. Along with Hŭngch'ŏn-sa and Hŭngdŏk-sa, *kisin-jae* 忌晨齋 (the royal ancestral rites) were also held in Hŭngbok-sa. During the reigns of the early Chosŏn kings, rain rituals were held at the monastery several times. *T'aejo sillok*, 7(1398)/8/13(*pyŏngjin*), 7(1398)/5/3(*kiyu*), 16(1416)/5/16(*chŏngmi*), 18(1418)/7/1(*kiyu*); *Sejong sillok*, 1(1419)/5/29(*kyeyu*), 2(1420)/4/17(*ŭlmyo*).

⁵⁵ *Sejo sillok*, 13(1467)/4/8(*kyemyo*).

⁵⁶ Chin Hong-sŏp, "Sŏkt'ap p'yomyŏn ŭi changsik chogak (Sculptural Decoration on the Surface of Pagoda)," in Chŏng Young-ho, ed. *Sŏkt'ap, Han'guk ŭi mi* 9 (Seoul: Chungang ilbosa, 1990): 192-199; Lee Suk-hee, 2002: 4.

are little more than an extension of the Four Directional Buddhas found on the four sides of earlier stone pagodas.

The same complex layout and identical iconographic programme can be found in the Kyōngch'ōn-sa 敬天寺 site ten-storey stone pagoda of the Koryō dynasty (fig. 23). It is no coincidence that the architectural and sculptural layout of the Wōn'gak-sa pagoda shows close affinity to that of this earlier pagoda. The Kyōngch'ōn-sa ten-storey pagoda, originally erected on the temple site of Kyōngch'ōn-sa near the Koryō capital, Kaesōng, but now standing in the National Museum of Korea in Seoul, was built by Yuan artisans in 1348, as stated in a votive inscription on the first storey of the pagoda.⁵⁷ The Kyōngch'ōn-sa site was closely associated with the royal house in the early Chosōn period.⁵⁸ It was chosen by King T'aejo as a private residence for his second wife, Queen Sindōk 神德王后 (1356-1396), and the king frequently visited the monastery.⁵⁹ A short distance away from Kyōngch'ōn-sa, there was another royal monastery called Hūnggyo-sa 興教寺, which was the guardian temple for the tombs of the second monarch Chōngjong and his wife Queen Chōngan 定安王后 (1355-1412).⁶⁰ Hūnggyo-sa had a stone pagoda which was similar in appearance to that at Kyōngch'ōn-sa.⁶¹ On its completion the Hūnggyo-sa pagoda was moved to

⁵⁷ The first line of its votive inscription beginning with “大華嚴敬天寺” reveals the monastery and its pagoda were dedicated to the Avataṃsaka practice. Mun Myong-dae, “Kyōngch'ōn-sa sipch'ūng sōkt'ap 16 pulhoedo pujosang ūi yōn'gu,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 22 (Jan. 2004), 27-28; TYS, v.13, “Kyōnggi P'ungdōkkun Puru Kyōngch'ōn-sa 京畿豐德郡佛宇敬天寺.” For the inscription, see Hwang Su-young, 1976, 186-187.

⁵⁸ *Koryōsa* [History of Koryō Dynasty] and *Chosōn wangjo sillok* [Royal Annals of the Chosōn Dynasty] provide numerous records that kings of Koryō and Chosōn dynasties visited this monastery, and they often held the memorial rite for the royal ancestors. This suggests the status of the monastery which had been closely connected with the royal court since the Koryō dynasty. For the records see Sin Eun-jeong, “Kyōngch'ōn-sa sipch'ūng sōkt'ap chosōng kwa chosōng changin ui yōn'gu,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 26, no. 1 (2006): 479.

⁵⁹ *T'aejo sillok*, 2(1393)/10/19(*sinmyo*); 2/10/28(*kyōngja*); 2/11/5(*pyōngo*); 2/12/18(*kich'uk*); 2/12/29(*kyōngja*); 3(1394)/4/29(*musul*); 3/5/1(*kihae*); 6(1397)/3/4(*chōngsa*).

⁶⁰ *Sejong sillok*, *Chiriji* 地理志, “Kyōnggi Pup'yōng Tohubu, Haep'ung-gun”; TYS, vol. 13, “Kyōnggi P'ungdōkkun puru Hūnggyo-sa 京畿豐德郡佛宇興教寺”

⁶¹ So Jae-ku, *Wōn'gak-sa chi sipch'ūng sōkt'ap ūi yōn'gu* (MA Thesis, Han'guk chōngsin munhwa yōn'guwōn, 1986), 17; Ko Yu-sōp, *Songdo ūi kojōk* (Seoul: Yōlhwadang, 1977), 132, in which Ko describes fragments from the Yōn'gyōng-sa pagoda and argues they are similar to those of Kyōngch'ōn-sa pagoda.

Yŏn'gyŏng-sa 衍慶寺 on the orders of King T'aejong. Yŏn'gyŏng-sa, located close to Kyŏngch'ŏn-sa, was founded by King T'aejong in memory of his dead mother, Queen Sinŭi 神懿王后 (1337-1391), and became a guardian temple for the tomb of the queen.⁶² All three monasteries located nearby were closely associated with and protected by the royal court in the early Chosŏn period. A historical record from *Sejo sillok* verifies that Sejo had visited Yŏn'gyŏng-sa in 1460 before he ordered the building of Wŏn'gak-sa.⁶³ The Yŏn'gyŏng-sa pagoda moved from Hŭnggyo-sa was allegedly very similar in height, width, and style to the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda. In this case the king would have had direct knowledge of both the Kyŏngch'ŏn-sa pagoda and the Yŏn'gyŏng-sa pagoda, and they were clearly used as models for the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda and the iconography of the Buddhist image carved in relief on its surface.

B. Iconographic Scheme

The Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda is unique among extant Chosŏn pagodas in that it enshrines a total of twelve assemblies of various Buddhas, carved in relief on each of the four facades of the first three storeys.⁶⁴ The relief images of the twelve assemblies are identified by an inscription to each assembly (fig. 24). The inscriptions on the relief panels are identical with those on the Kyŏngch'ŏn-sa pagoda. According to the inscriptions, the first storey features assemblies of Amitābha, Śākyamuni, Maitreya, and

⁶² *T'aejong sillok*, 9(1409)/8/9(*musin*), 10(1410)/4/8 *kapjin*); TYS, vol.13, "Kyŏnggi P'ungdŏkkun Puru Yŏn'gyŏng-sa 京畿豐德郡佛宇衍慶寺"; Ko Yu-sŏp, 1977, 20.

⁶³ *Sejo sillok*, 6(1460)/10/7(*kiyu*).

⁶⁴ TYS, vol. 1, "Hansŏngpu puru Wŏn'gak-sa 漢城府佛宇圓覺寺."

The fourth storey is also adorned by relief panels on its surface. Except for Wŏnt'ong-hoe 圓通會 (Assembly of Avalokiteśvara) on the panel of the south, however, the rest three panels have no inscription that identifies each panel. Even so, based on the iconography, they are identified as assemblies of Kṣitigarbha, Śākyamuni, and Śākyamuni entering *Nirvana* respectively. From this reason, Mung Myong-dae views this pagoda depicts sixteen Buddha assemblies, while Wu Jŏng-sang and Hong Yun-sik regard only the thirteen relief panels of Buddha assemblies with identifying title into account. Mun Myong-dae, "Wŏn'gak-sa sipch'ŭng sŏkt'ap 16 pulhoe ŭi tosang t'ŭkching, *Kangjwa misulsa* 19 (2002): 6-7; Wu Jŏng-sang, "Wŏn'gak-sa t'ap'a ŭi sasangchŏk yŏn'gu—t'ŭkki 13hoe e taehayŏ," *Tongguk sasang* 1 (1958): 49-57; Hong Yun-sik, "Wŏn'gak-sa chi sipch'ŭng sŏkt'ap ŭi chogak naeyong kwa kŭ yŏksajŏk wich'i," *Wŏn'gak-sa chi sipch'ŭng sŏkt'ap silch'ŭk chosa pogosŏ* (Seoul: Munhwajae kwanlikuk, 1993), 133. Since Wŏnt'ong-hoe depicts the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and other three relief panels on the fourth storey do not have titles on their assemblies, I take only the twelve Buddha assemblies up to the three storey into consideration here.

samsebul 三世佛 (The Buddhas of Three Periods or Worlds) at the centre of which is Vairocana (fig. 25).⁶⁵ On the second storey are depicted assemblies of Prabhūtaratna, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment*, and the *Lotus Sūtra* (fig. 26).⁶⁶ On the third storey are assemblies of Bhaiṣajyaguru, Tejaprabha, the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (K: *Nūngōm kyōng* 楞嚴經), and *chōndan sōsang* 梅檀瑞像 (literally “[Buddha’s] auspicious image made of sandalwood”) (fig. 27).⁶⁷

The four assemblies on each of the three storeys consist of different groups of *sabangbul* with distinct characteristics which enable us to categorize each group. The four assemblies on the first storey are related to the Buddhas who enjoyed great popularity among the general public in the history of Korean Buddhism. Vairocana, Śākyamuni, Amitābha, and Maitreya were popularly worshipped in traditional Korea.

⁶⁵ The assemblies of the first storey are *Mit’a-hoe* 彌陀會 (Assembly of Amitābha); *Yōngsan-hoe* 靈山會 (Assembly of *Yōngsan*, the Chinese translation of Vulture Peak where Śākyamuni preached the *Lotus Sūtra*); *Yonghwa-hoe* 龍華會 (Assembly of Dragon Flower, the Chinese translation of the Tuṣita Heaven, where the Maitreya Bodhisattva awaits his descent to earth); and *Samsebul-hoe* 三世佛會 (Assembly of Buddhas of Three Periods or Worlds).

The Buddhas of Three Periods usually refer to Śākyamuni, the Buddha of present who appears as the supreme Buddha of the triad, Maitreya the future Buddha, and Dīpankara Buddha of the past as mentioned in the *Lotus Sūtra*. However sometimes Amitābha replaces Dīpankara as the Buddha of Past. From this reason, Wu Jōng-sang views the Assembly of the Buddhas of Three Periods on this pagoda as Śākyamuni (present), Amitābha (past), and Maitreya (future). However, in this case the Buddha in the centre appears to be Vairocana, judging from the wisdom-fist *mudrā*, instead of *bhūmisparsa mudrā*, the earth-touching gesture that is the standard pose of the Śākyamuni the historical Buddha.

⁶⁶ The inscriptions are *Tabo-hoe* 多寶會 (Assembly of Prabhūtaratna), *Hwaōm-hoe* 華嚴會 (Assembly of *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*), *Wōn’gak-hoe* 圓覺會 (Assembly of *Wōn’gak-kyōng* 圓覺經), *Pōphwa-hoe* 法華會 (Assembly of *Lotus Sūtra*).

⁶⁷ The inscriptions are: *Yaksa-hoe* 藥師會 (Assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru), *Sojae-hoe* 消災會 (Assembly of Calamity-solving, referring to Assembly of Tejaprabha, K: *Ch’isōnggwang yōrae* 熾盛光如來), *Nūngōm-hoe* 楞嚴會 (Assembly of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*), and *Chōndan sōsang-hoe* 梅檀瑞像會 (Assembly of Auspicious Image [Śākyamuni] in Sandalwood, referring to one of the two statues representing the Buddha made by the Indian Kings Prasenajit and Udayana).

Names and directions of the Buddha assemblies on each storey of the pagoda are as follows:

Direction	First storey	Second storey	Third storey
South	Samsebul-hoe	Hwaōm-hoe	Sojae-hoe
West	Yōngsan-hoe	Wōn’gak-hoe	Chōndan sōsang-hoe
North	Yonghwa-hoe	Pōphwa-hoe	Nūngōm-hoe
East	Mit’a-hoe	Tabobul-hoe	Yaksa-hoe

Throughout history the four Buddhas were traditionally brought together to form a set of Four Directional Buddhas. On the second storey, the assemblies mainly relate to Buddhist schools and their doctrines. The four-Buddha assemblies on this storey are based on the Buddhist sūtras which had been widely read since their introduction into Korea. They are the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* of the Hwaḏm sect, the *Lotus Sūtra* of Ch'önt'ae 天台 (C: Tiantai) sect,⁶⁸ and the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* (K: *Wōn'gak-gyōng* 圓覺經),⁶⁹ which gave its name to the monastery. In particular, the *Lotus* and *Avataṃsaka Sūtras* are the principal texts in Mahāyāna Buddhism as well as the two most frequently copied sūtras in Korea.⁷⁰ These sūtras are now on the academic curriculum of Korean Buddhist seminaries. Hong Yun-sik has argued that the assemblies on the third storey reflect the influence of esoteric Buddhism,⁷¹ and its promise to fulfil the worldly wishes of the populace—eliminating disaster and illness and promoting prosperity. Bhaiṣajyaguru and Tejaprabha were particularly popular because of their respective powers of healing and solving calamities. Instead of the arrangement of the Four Directional Buddhas—Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha,

⁶⁸ The Assembly of Prabhūtaratna on this storey which may refer to the famous parable “Appearance of the pagoda in the air” is also related with the chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sūtra* in which Prabhūtaratna, one of the Seven Buddhas of Past, is said to have come down from heaven in a pagoda when Śākyamuni began to preach the *Lotus Sūtra* on the Vulture Peak. T. 262, 32b-34b.

⁶⁹ King Sejo had the major Mahāyāna sūtras including *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (1462), *Lotus Sūtra* (1463), *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* (1465) translated into *Han'gūl* at Kan'gyōng togam and kept in Wōn'gak-sa pagoda. Kim Mu-bong, 2002: 92 note. 12; Kwōn Kee-jōng, 1993, 185; Hong Yun-sik, 1993, 115.

The *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* has been popularly read and believed in Korea since the great Sōn master Chinul 知訥 (1158-1210) had faith in the sūtra. *Wōn'gak-gyōng* was not only revered by the Sōn School as its seminal text but was also popular in the royal house. In addition to including this sūtra in the list of the Buddhist sūtras translated into Korean script, Sejo held its court-sponsored Buddhist assembly in the royal temple. Sejo celebrated the completion of proofreading of *Wōngak-gyōng* by the Great Prince Hyoryōng in 1465, and on this occasion Han Kye-hūi and Kang Hee-maeng were promoted as reward for their translation service of the sūtra. An inscription on *Tae Wōn'gak-sa chi pi* 大圓覺寺之碑 [Stone Monument of Great Wōn'gak-sa] written by Kim Su-on validates the *Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment* translated into Korean script was enshrined within the pagoda along with Buddha's śarīra. *Sejo sillok*, 11(1429)/3/9(*pyōngjin*); Chosōn ch'ongdokpu, *Chosōn kūmsōk ch'ongnam* (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1976), vol. 2, 748; Hong Yun-sik, 1993, 142.

⁷⁰ Pak Youngsook, “Metropolitan Collection,” in *Arts of Korea*, ed. by Judith Smith (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 437.

⁷¹ Hong Yun-sik, “Wōn'gak-sa chi sipch'ūng sōkt'ap ui chogak naeyong kwa kū yōksa chōk wich'i,” in Kungjung yumul chōnsigwan, *Pora! igōsi t'apgolt'ap ūi nolaun chogakdūl: Wōn'gak-sa 10 ch'ūng taeri sōktap t'ūkpyōjōn* (Seoul: Kungjung yumul chōnsigwan, 1993), 112, 114-115.

and Maitreya—usually found on Silla stone objects, the Vairocana Buddha, who is identified with dhārma relics (Buddhist scriptures) deposited in a pagoda, joins to form a new set of *sabangbul* in the first storey of the Wŏn’gak-sa pagoda, while Bhaiṣajyaguru is relocated to the upper storey. It seems probable that the assemblies on the pagoda have been grouped in this way in order to convey special blessings.

The pagoda body is organized into distinct illustrations of sculpted Buddha assemblies, each serving a different practice or school of thought. These images represent the major groups of Buddhas in the Korean Buddhist system. It is clear that Mahāyāna Buddhist sects like the Avataṃsaka, the Ch’ont’ae, the Pure Land (K: *Chŏngt’o*), and the esoteric (K: *milgyo* 密教) sects are harmoniously incorporated into the relief programme of the Buddha assemblies in the pagoda. The iconographical scheme of the sculptures in the pagoda may embody refined Buddhist concepts as well as all the popular Buddhas during the period. The deities chosen for the surface of the pagoda had been different at times. The pagoda containing numerous Buddha figures on its surface provides a unique testimony to the history of the Buddhist tradition of the early Chosŏn dynasty. Overall, these assemblies summarise Korean Buddhist philosophy and the people’s belief system of the people which continued the tradition of “Hwaŏm maṇḍala” of the Silla period.⁷²

Sejo’s attempt to propagate Buddhism and strengthen the royal household was strongly supported by other members of the royal family. In 1466, the same year in which Sejo ordered the construction of the Wŏn’gak-sa pagoda Princess Ŭisuk 懿淑公主, the second daughter of Sejo, and her husband Chŏng Hyŏn-jo 鄭顯祖 dedicated a wooden statue of Mañjuśrī as a boy at Sangwŏn-sa 上院寺 in order to pray for the well-being of the king and the royal house, and the birth of a son (fig. 28).⁷³ Two

⁷² Hong Yun-sik, 1993, 114-116.

⁷³ Mun Myong-dae, 2001b, 37-49; Hong Yun-sik, “Chosŏn ch’ogi Sangwŏn-sa Munsu tongjasang e taehayŏ,” *Kogo misul* 164 (1984): 9-22.

dedicatory inscriptions, *parwŏnmun* 發願文, can be found inside the wooden image of Munsu *tongja*. The former was deposited when the statue was enshrined by Princess Ŭisuk and her husband in 1466; the latter was located inside the statue by a group of monks from the monastery when the Mañjuśrī statue was repaired in 1599. The votive inscription dating back to 1466 reads as follows:

願文 朝鮮國 河城尉 鄭顯祖 懿淑公主李氏 伏爲 主上殿下 王妃殿下 世子
邸下 萬歲萬歲萬萬歲 亦願己身 速得智慧之男

Votive inscription: Hasŏngwi Chŏng Hyŏn-jo and Princess Ŭisuk Lady Yi wish for ten thousand years of life for the king, queen, and crown prince as well as the birth of a wise son for themselves soon⁷⁴

敬成釋迦如來 藥師如來 阿彌陀佛 文殊菩薩 普賢菩薩 彌勒菩薩 觀音菩薩
地藏菩薩 十六應真 天帝釋王 伏安于五臺山文殊寺 伏願 衆聖 各運慈悲
同加攝受 以遂弟子區區 懇願 成化二年 二月日誌

Respectfully commissioned the statues of Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Maitreya (Bodhisattva), Avalokiteśvara, Sixteen arhats, and Indra at Munsu-sa [Sangwŏn-sa] on Mount Odae. All the laity participated out of their mercy and finally follow the Buddha's disciples and eagerly dedicate these statues on a day in the second month of the second year of Chenghua (1466).

The Buddha statues dedicated by the princess and her husband are interesting. Although Maitreya was made in the form of a bodhisattva, the assembly of the Buddhist deities worshipped by the early Chosŏn royal court was almost identical to the four Buddhas on the Silla *sabangbul* pillars. If we exclude Maitreya, Śākyamuni the Buddha of the Saha World, Amitābha the Buddha of the Western Pure Land, and Bhaiṣajyaguru the Buddha of Lapis Lazuli in the east form the assembly of *samsebul* 三世佛, the incarnation of the Three World Buddhas.⁷⁵ The *samsebul* triad frequently enshrined in the main sanctuary (Taewung-jŏn 大雄殿) was one of the important objects of worship during the Chosŏn period.

⁷⁴ Hasŏngwi is the title conferred to Chŏng When he got married to Princess Ŭisook in 1455.

⁷⁵ Mun Myong-dae argues the image of *samsebul* became popular at least from the latter half of the sixteenth century. Mun Myong-dae, "Pirojana *samsinbul* tosang ũi hyŏngsik kwa Kirim-sa samsin pulsang mit purhwa ũi yŏn'gu," *Pulgyo misul* 15 (1998): 15.

The second votive inscription written in 1599 on blue fabric in red ink reads:

皇明 萬曆 己亥五月日 緣化比丘智雲 本寺大衆 普明等同發菩提之心 重修
童子文殊一尊 老文殊一尊 十六聖衆 華嚴會圖 西方會圖 圓覺會圖 彌陀會
圖 毗盧會圖 靈山會圖 達磨真儀 懶翁真儀

On a day of the fifth month of the *kihae* year (1599) during the reign of the Ming Emperor Wanli (r. 1572-1620), *karma* monk Chiun, Pomyōng of this temple [Sangwōn-sa] and other laities found enlightenment and dedicate repair of Mañjuśrī as a boy, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, the Sixteen arhats, paintings of Hwaōm-hoe (Assembly of Avataṃsaka), Sōbang-hoe (Assembly of Western Pure Land), Wōn'gak-hoe (Assembly of Perfect Enlightenment), Midot'a-hoe (Assembly of Amitābha), Piro-hoe (Assembly of Vairocana), Yōngsan-hoe (Assembly at the Vulture Peak), and portraits of Bodhidharma and Master Naong.....

It seems that Munsu *tongja*, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, and the Sixteen arhats repaired in 1599 refer to the same statues that Princess Ŭisuk dedicated in 1466. The latter inscription provides an interesting testimony to the fact that paintings of such various Buddha assemblies repaired on this occasion had been enshrined at the monastery. Here we should note that identical groups of Buddha assemblies can be found on the paintings at Sangwōn-sa and the relief sculptures on the Wōn'gak-sa pagoda. This may reflect the important fact that the assembly paintings due for repair might have been enshrined in appropriate shrines within the halls, and the monastery must have housed various Buddhist halls within its precinct. In turn this may mean that various major Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism must have been practiced within the monastery. At the very least, based on the assembly paintings mentioned in the inscription, Avataṃsaka, Pure Land, Sōn, Chogye 曹溪 and Ch'ōnt'ae schools, and the belief in *Lotus Sūtra* were practised in Sangwōn-sa.⁷⁶ This might be a reference to the enforced abolition and merger of the Buddhist schools in the earlier period. Simultaneously, this document indicates that the monastery had sufficient funds to afford a large-scale

⁷⁶ The inscriptions of different dates testify there were at least 35 Buddhist statues and paintings of 19 different kinds. Mun Myong-dae, 2001b, 48.

refurbishment only two years after the devastating *Imjin waeran* (Japanese invasion of the *imjin* year, 1592).

Odae-san Sangwŏn-sa chungch'ang gwŏnsŏnmun 五臺山上院寺重創勸善文 [The Document of Solicitation for Contribution of Restoring Sangwŏn-sa on Odae-san, 1464] written by Sinmi states that Sangwŏn-sa was restored by Sinmi, Hagyŏl 學悅, and Hakcho 學祖 in order to pray for Sejo's longevity in 1464, the same year in which the construction of Wŏn'gak-sa was ordered.⁷⁷ The period of its construction overlapped with that of Wŏn'gak-sa and its pagoda in the capital. In response to the restoration project, Sejo donated a major contribution along with a royal gift featuring the king's own writing, later compiled within the Sinmi's document.⁷⁸ Although Sinmi and other monks in the document devised the restoration project, there is no doubt the project was led by King Sejo and reflected his wishes. Queen Chasŏng 慈聖王后 (1469-1477, later Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi 貞憲王后), Sejo's queen, also provided the same grant that the king donated. Most of the royal family and their relatives, both male and female, and even literati scholars had their names placed on the list of donators. Princess Ŭisuk and her husband probably dedicated the wooden statue of Mañjuśrī and a number of other Buddhist statues, mentioned in the votive inscription above, for the inauguration ceremony of the monastery in 1466. According to *Odae-san Sangwŏn-sa chungsugi* 五臺山上院寺重修記, written by Kim Su-on, Lady Han, the Great Prince's wife, later Insu *taebi* 仁粹大妃 (Queen Mother Insu, 1437-1504), donated 500 straw sacks of rice and 1000 rolls of silk for the restoration, and subsequently gave an additional 150 straw sacks of foxtail millet for dedication of

⁷⁷ Yi Nŭng-hwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa* (Seoul: Sinmun'gwan, 1918), vol. 1, 422.

This soliciting document by Sinmi was written in 1464 and King Sejo grants royal sanction and large sum of property in the same year. The construction had begun in next year 1465, and its inauguration ceremony was held in 1466 when the restoration was complete. Also see Kim Su-on, "Odae-san Sangwŏn-sa chungsugi" 五臺山上院寺重修記 (A Record of the Repair of Sangwŏn-sa at Odae-san), in Yi Nŭng-hwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa* (Seoul: Sinmun'gwan, 1918), vol. 1, 422-423.

For the support of Sangwŏn-sa by the royal court during the reign of King Sejo, see Kim Kap-ju, 42-48.

⁷⁸ *Sejo sillok*, 11(1465)/2/20(*chŏngyu*).

t'aenghwa 幀畫 (a Buddhist hanging scroll as an altar painting) to the monastery.⁷⁹ This record may support a hypothesis that the seven paintings restored later in 1599 may have been produced in 1464 for enshrinement in Buddha halls. The historical documents do not specify the Buddha halls built during restoration work in 1464. However, based on the huge sums of money donated by the royal patrons and Neo-Confucian bureaucrats—Sinmi's document indicates that King Sejo probably solicited them for contributions—the restoration must have been extensive, and the monastery could afford to build so many different Buddha halls.⁸⁰ The dedicatory inscriptions of 1466 and 1599 testify to the popularity of enshrining various Buddha assemblies under the patronage of the royal court, as can be seen in the sculptural scheme of the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda, and this tradition continued into the later Chosŏn period.

C. The Pagoda as a maṇḍala and Cakravartin Ideology

The Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda is an important monument for the study of a new form of pagoda, as well as of early Chosŏn sculptures. Owing to the protruding central panel on the four sides, when the pagoda is viewed from above it seems to extend into the four cardinal directions in a clear cross shape (fig. 29-30).⁸¹ The four facades of the pagoda, each running at right angles to the central axis, extend towards the four directions in their function and are tied into a uniform pattern to preserve an overall cohesion. Both in its secular and religious sense, the architectural idea of using a projecting central block is closely associated with cosmic ideas in many cultures. In particular, the principle of the axial arrangement of the four sides originated from the cosmology of the universe in ancient India and China. The structural principle of a

⁷⁹ Kim Su-on, 1918, vol. 1, 425.

⁸⁰ Kim Kap-ju, 42-48.

⁸¹ The three-tiered base and the first three storeys of the pagoda are built on a plan that resembles a Chinese character 亞, and the remaining seven smaller storeys on a plain square plan. From the first to the third storeys the relief panels on each side are five in all: the central panel protrudes the most; the next pair, called *chungdan* 中段 (middle platform), consists of two relief panels at right angles to the central panel; and the last two panels are at right angles to the second pair.

projecting surface on the four sides of the pagoda is derived from Indian cosmology and was applied to the building of Indian stūpas (fig. 31). This same principle was applied to the arrangement of the imperial palace in ancient China in terms of the centre of cosmos.⁸² According to Dietrich Seckel, the protruding faces on the four sides symmetrically flanking the centre reflect “ancient Chinese world views in spatial-symbolic form.”⁸³ The structural plan of East Asian Buddhist temple precincts consisting of an arrangement of main building joined by side buildings lining the central axis, shares the same origin.⁸⁴

The main object of worship are the individual Buddha assemblies set in niches in the pagoda. To worship the assemblies of the Buddhas located on the four facades it is necessary to perform a ritual circumambulation, or *pradakṣiṇa*, of the pagoda. In monasteries, pagodas enshrining relics of the Buddha along with various Buddha assemblies on their exterior served as a focus for veneration and ritualised devotion to the Buddha.⁸⁵ A pagoda with Buddhas on its surface extends the Mahāyāna idea that the Buddha pervades the universe.⁸⁶ The pagodas with depictions of *sabangbul* on the four cardinal points were constructed architecturally on the same cosmological principles of the maṇḍala, invoking design correspondence. According to Śubhakarasiṃha (637-735 CE), “Maṇḍala is called assembly because all Tathāgatas with all their merits are gathered at this sacred spot.”⁸⁷ Just as the maṇḍala is divided into a number of smaller squares, with individual squares assigned to individual deities,⁸⁸ the protruding facade of an assembly of Buddhist deities is integrated into the

⁸² So Jae-ku, 33-34.

⁸³ Dietrich Seckel, *Buddhist Art of East Asia*, trans. Ulrich Mammitzsch (Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, 1989), 39.

⁸⁴ Seckel, 1989, 39-40.

⁸⁵ For a discussion about the Buddhist ritual and stūpa, see Kevin Trainor, “Constructing a Buddhist Ritual Site: Stupa and Monastery Architecture,” *Marg* 47 no.3 (March. 1996): 33-35.

⁸⁶ Akira Sadakata, 156.

⁸⁷ Ulrich H.R. Mammitzsch, *Evolution of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991), 18.

⁸⁸ Mammitzsch, 1991, 18

whole relief schema of the pagoda. When conceived overall, the relief schema of the pagoda was probably intended to form a type of maṇḍala. The protruding four facades further strengthen the hypothesis that the Won'gak-sa pagoda is itself an architectural maṇḍala. Seen from above, the stūpa enshrining the Buddha's relic in its centre and images of the Buddha assembly on the four facades is a maṇḍala. If this three dimensional pagoda is converted into a flat two-dimensional pattern, it is not unlike the Womb World or the Diamond World Maṇḍala.

Here we should keep an important point in mind: the pagoda is a reliquary enshrining holy relics of the historical Buddha in its centre and thus, in a sense, representing the Buddha. Blessed relics like the bodily relic of the true body of Śākyamuni and dhārma relics of sūtra scriptures, which represent the historical Buddha and Vairocana as dhārma bodies respectively, are placed in the centre. As Kevin Trainor has pointed out, "The concern to locate the Buddha on a macrocosmic level (geographically and historically) is paralleled by an analogous concern to locate the Buddha in the microcosm, that is, within the confines of particular monastery complexes."⁸⁹ Furthermore the central plan of a pagoda represents the cosmic mountain, whose centre is connected to the Cosmic Centre or World axis (*axis mundi*) and whose four facades exit in each of the four cardinal directions. There is a symbolic equivalence between the Buddha images in the pagoda and the king, ultimately *cakravartin*, the world ruler. The king, a zealous supporter of Buddhism, is easily equated with the golden-wheel *cakravartin*, the ruler of the four continents which extend in the four cardinal directions around the Buddhist World Mountain, Mount Meru. Pagodas reflect a fundamental macrocosmic structure at a microcosmic level⁹⁰ through the symbolic correspondences between the state and the cosmos, between the

⁸⁹ Trainor, 22.

For the notion of the centre, see Puay-Peng Ho, "Paradise on Earth: Architectural Description in Pure Land Illustrations of High Tang Caves at Dunhuang," *Oriental Art* 41 (Autumn, 1995): 26-27.

⁹⁰ Mammitsch, 1991, 21.

monarch and Śākyamuni, Vairocana, and the Buddhas of the Four Directions in the pagoda. King Sejo subtly encouraged people to equate kings with the Buddha in his role as *cakravartin* whose rule extends in all directions. The *sabangbul* imagery on the pagoda was equated with the king and his power, thereby virtually assuring the apotheosis of Sejo. By exploiting *cakravartin* ideology the king probably sought to emphasize the dual aspect of the Buddha and the universal ruler.

It is known that Sejo ordered the construction of the ten-storey pagoda in the monastery grounds as an act of repentance for usurping the throne of his young nephew, Tanjong. When we examine the function and services offered by the temple to the royal court upon its completion, it becomes clear that Sejo's repentance was not the major reason for supporting Buddhism. The actual intention behind the building of the monastery and its pagoda was to popularise Buddhism and strengthen support for the royal house. *Sejo sillok* provides the evidence that the function of Wŏn'gak-sa as a state monastery sponsored by the royal house was to pray for the prosperity of the royal house, especially the kings, as well as for the peace and protection of the country.⁹¹ King Sejo thus established the state monastery and its pagoda to strengthen the centralized authority of the monarch. King Sejo virtually and visually assured his position at the top of the hierarchical relationship by deliberately and effectively positioning the sculptures in the pagoda.

In addition to the king and his royal family, some Neo-Confucian scholars and Buddhist monks such as Kim Su-on and his brother Sinmi may also have willingly participated in these legitimisation schemes in order to promote the Buddhist concept of *cakravartin* as the universal monarch. Kim Su-on states that the peace and well-being

⁹¹ From its inauguration ceremony in the Sejo's reign up to the early years of Sŏngjong's reign, the records regarding Wŏn'gak-sa as a state temple frequently appear in *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*. See *Sejo sillok*, 14(1432)/8/12(*kihae*), 14/8/24(*sinhae*); *Yejong sillok*, 1(1469)/1/6(*sinju*), 1/5/17(*kyŏngja*), 1/7/10(*sinmyo*), 1/7/11(*imjin*), 1/11/26(*pyŏnggo*); *Sŏngjong sillok*, 1(1419)/3/6(*ŭlyu*); 1/4/19(*chŏngmyo*), 1/4/20(*mujin*); 3(1421)/4/4(*kyŏnggo*); 5(1423)/4/11(*ŭlch'uk*); 5/6/25(*musin*).

of the country and the longevity of the Confucian sage king can be achieved by the king's belief in Buddhism.⁹² Kim's eclectic attitude towards Buddhism must have been responsible for Sejo's practical attitude towards the religion. Kim argues that the monarch and the Buddha should be regarded as the same since the ruler as the secular lord takes care of his people just as the Buddha aims at the salvation of all sentient beings from the Saha World.⁹³ It is obvious that Kim has in mind the concept of the *cakravartin* in this writing. Indeed, some Neo-Confucian bureaucrats at the time also thought that Buddhist beliefs made a good foundation for governing the country to ensure an era of peace. They also identified the king's role with that of the Buddha.⁹⁴ At Sejo's death, for example, Kang Hee-maeng 姜希孟 (1424-1483), Sejo's merit subject, stated that the king was enthroned on the *kūmnyun* 金輪 (meaning "golden-wheel"), one of the different wheels on the *cakravartin*'s chariot.⁹⁵ Kang's posthumous eulogy elevated Sejo from the status of a mere secular king to that of a universal ruler. Such an understanding was only made possible by the popularisation of Buddhism, for this resulted in the acceptance of the traditional identification of the king with the Buddha.

Sejo's patronage of Buddhism included, amongst other things, the publication of Buddhist sūtras translated into Korean vernacular script, stūpa constructions, re/constructions of Buddhist monasteries and the holding of Buddhist ceremonies. The Wŏn'gak-sa temple and its pagoda marked the culmination of Sejo's Buddhist projects. To justify his biggest project, the establishment of the Wŏn'gak-sa temple, he used the miracle story of the vision of the Buddha and the emergence of Buddha's *śarīra* and interpreted it as a divine response. The miraculous event along with the numerous

⁹² Yi Nŭng-hwa, 1918, vol. 1, 426; Lee Ho-young, "Koeae Kim Su-on ūi munmyōng kwa sungbul sōnggyōk," *Tan'gukdae nonmunjip* 10 (1976): 144.

⁹³ Yi Nŭng-hwa, 1918, vol. 2, 684-685.

⁹⁴ Lee Ho-young, 144.

⁹⁵ TYS, vol. 11, Kyōnggi Yangjumok Puru Pongsōn-sa "京畿 楊州牧 佛宇 奉先寺."

auspicious signs witnessed before and after the construction of the temple was plausible enough for the king to justify his new temple project.⁹⁶ Simultaneously they were the measure of the miracle-working power attributed to the religion that boosted the king's increasingly generous sponsorship and, ultimately, the popularisation of Buddhism among the people at large. Here one needs to recall the similar miraculous event regarding Naebul-tang: this helped Sejong in the same context to justify his establishment of a Buddhist shrine within the palace complex, as a sign of religious recognition and propagation.⁹⁷ Sejong and Sejo probably sought to buttress their authority by invoking Buddhist approval with an additional supernatural lustre provided by miracles and auspicious signs.

Most of the early Chosŏn kings exploited Buddhism for political or personal reasons. It is only with the reign of the King Sejo that it becomes truly difficult to separate the king's personal beliefs from his political actions. In the early period of the Chosŏn dynasty King Sejong's and King Sejo's belief in Buddhism shows their covert intention to curb Neo-Confucian power and strengthen the monarchy by reviving and popularising Buddhism.⁹⁸ The official patronage of Buddhism not only provided a basis for monarchical centralism, but was also believed to provide divine protection for the state and the king. The purpose of promoting Buddhism was to change the theory of sovereignty from the Confucian Mandate of Heaven to the *cakravartin*, Buddhist ideal kingship.⁹⁹ The huge project of building a monastery and pagoda drew people's attention to the central role of the king in sustaining the nation by his sponsorship of imposing Buddhist establishments intended for universal benefit. Given all the historical and material evidence it seems certain that Sejo made a great effort to

⁹⁶ For the records of the auspicious signs, see *Sejo sillok*, 10(1428)/5/2(*kapin*), 10/9/11(*sinju*), 10/9/25(*ülhae*), 10/10/8(*mujin*), 10/12/23(*imin*), 11(1429)/5/6(*imja*), 11/12/24 (*chŏngyu*), 12(1430)/4/12(*imja*), 12/10/16(*kapin*), 13(1431)/4/7(*imin*), 13/4/11(*pyŏngo*).

⁹⁷ Lee Bong-ch'un, 47 note 5.

⁹⁸ Han Sang-sŏl, 63-66.

⁹⁹ Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the end of the seventh century* (Napoli: Istituto universitario orientale, seminario di studi asiatici, 1976), 137.

propagate Buddhism in order to use the belief as a means of bolstering his regime. Thus state supremacy reached its peak during his reign.¹⁰⁰

D. The Sujong-sa Buddha group, 1493

After the death of King Sejo, state support for Buddhism gradually diminished. Heavy Neo-Confucian indoctrination was the order of the day. But this is not to say that support in the royal court for Buddhism came to a halt completely. Despite all the harsh anti-Buddhist measures, members of the royal family, especially the queens and royal consorts, prayed to Buddha to protect them and guarantee the safety and prosperity of the royal house.

In 1493 three court ladies, all of them concubines of King Sōngjong 成宗 (r. 1469-1494), dedicated a group of small Buddha images and a portable shrine inside the five-storey octagonal stone pagoda in Sujong-sa 水鐘寺, not far from the capital. Even before the extensive renovation undertaken by King Sejo in 1459,¹⁰¹ Sujong-sa had been closely connected with the royal house since the early Chosŏn period.¹⁰² According to a *pokchang parwŏnmun* 腹臟發願文 (a dedicatory inscription concealed within a Buddhist object),¹⁰³ the pagoda was repaired in 1493, and three statues enshrined within the miniature shrine were dedicated inside the pagoda at the request of three consorts of King Sōngjong in order to promote the longevity and

¹⁰⁰ Lee Bong-ch'un, 47.

¹⁰¹ Yu Mari, "Sujong-sa kŭmdong pulgam purhwa ūi koch'al," *Misul charyo* 30 (June, 1982): 42-44.

¹⁰² In 1439 relic stūpa for Princess Chōngŭi 貞懿翁主, the fifth daughter of King T'aejong, was built within Sujong-sa, and the votive inscription on her stūpa reveals that Prince Kŭmsōng 錦城大君 (1426-1457), a younger brother of King Sejo, was involved in the donation of her stūpa. Although the princess was a devout believer of Buddhism during her lifetime, it must have been unusual that the funerary rite of a member of the royal family followed Buddhist-style cremation and relic stūpa of a lay person was enshrined within the precinct of monastery. This suggests Sujong-sa was already closely connected with the royal household, and the monastery was probably considerable in size befitting its status of *wŏnch'al* 願刹 (votive monastery of the royal court) before the renovation in 1459. See Ch'oe Wŏn-jōng, "Sujong-sa ūi Chōngŭi ongju pudo wa sari changŏmgu," *Yŏsōng pulgyo*, no. 267 (Aug. 2001): 32-35.

¹⁰³ Three seated statues of Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, and Kṣitigarbha were enshrined inside the portable shrine when they were recovered from the first storey of the pagoda. This dedicatory inscription was found inside the Śākyamuni Buddha statue.

happiness of the king and their children.¹⁰⁴ Twelve gilt-bronze statues, all from the year 1493, were recovered from the second- and third-storey eaves (fig. 32).¹⁰⁵ They consist of six Buddhas, four bodhisattvas—three Avalokiteśvara and one Kṣitigarbha—and two statues of monks. The six small Buddha statues from the second storey, unearthed along with two Avalokiteśvara and one statue of a monk, are squat and slightly bent.¹⁰⁶ Their bodily proportions deviate from the usual representation of Buddhas because their heads are too large in comparison with their plump bodies. The Buddhas are variously identified as Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha, and Vairocana based on the mudrās they make. Two Buddhas who bare one shoulder and make *bhūmisparśa* mudrā, represent Śākyamuni Buddha. One Buddha holding a medicine bowl in both hands may represent Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Healing Buddha. It is not easy to identify one Buddha with a *dhyāna* mudrā (meditation hand gesture) and two Buddhas with *abhāya* (no-fear) and *varada* (wish-granting) mudrās.¹⁰⁷

During this period it was not uncommon for members of the royal family to dedicate assemblies of various Buddhas. This demonstrates that the harsh suppression of Buddhism by the government during the reign of pro-Confucian King Sōngjong did not stop royal patronage of the religion and the promotion of Buddhism for their own prosperity.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Yun Mu-byōng, “Kūllae e palgyōndoen sari kwan’gye yumul,” *Misul charyo* 1 (1960): 6.

For the full text of the inscription, see Yun Mu-byōng, “Sujong-sa p’algak och’ūng sōkt’ap nae palgyōn yumul,” *Kim Chae-wōn paksa hoegap kinyōm nonch’ong*, (Seoul: Kim Chae-wōn paksa hoegap kinyōm saōp wiwōnhoe, 1969): 961-962, in which, in addition to the three ladies, seventeen names of *ongju* 翁主 (Concubine’s daughter) and *kun* 君 (prince), the children of the three ladies, are listed.

¹⁰⁵ The date of these twelve statues is based on an inscription “弘治 六年” (the sixth year of Hongzhi, 1493) written in ink inside the round hole dug in the roof stones where they were found. Chōng Young-ho, “Sujong-sa sōkt’ap nae palgyōn kūmdong yōraesang,” *Kogo misul* 106/107 (Sep. 1970): 23.

¹⁰⁶ For the measurement of each Buddha figure from this group, see Chōng Young-ho, 1970, 24-26.

¹⁰⁷ Viewing the mudrā as *pōpkye chōngin* 法界定印 (meaning *dharmadhātu* mudrā, referring to the meditation mudrā held by Vairocana), Chōng Young-ho identifies this Buddha as Vairocana. Chōng Young-ho, 1970, 25

¹⁰⁸ Pak and Whitfield, 2002, 408.

4. The Regency of Queen Dowager Munjōng 文定王后 (1501-1565) and the Revival of Buddhism

Members of the royal household, especially court ladies, continued to give their active support to Buddhism and patronize Buddhism and Buddhist art throughout the period. Their support was an important factor in rescuing Buddhism in Chosŏn. Queen Dowager Munjōng was most notable of the female supporters and a crucial figure in Chosŏn Buddhism. She was the third queen of King Chungjong 中宗 (r. 1506-1544), whose harsh repressive measures against Buddhism followed the policy of his predecessors, Sŏngjong 成宗 (r. 1469-1494) and Yŏnsan'gun 燕山君 (r. 1494-1506).¹⁰⁹ As a result of the early deaths of King Chungjong and his son and the queen's stepson King Injong 仁宗 (r. 1544-1545), who ruled for only one year, Queen Dowager Munjōng's own eleven-year-old son Myōngjong 明宗 (r. 1545-1567) acceded to the throne in 1545. The queen became her young son's regent and administered state affairs from behind the veil for eight years. The mid-sixteenth century under Queen Dowager Munjōng's regency was one of the most prosperous periods in the history of Chosŏn Buddhism. The period was characterized by the predominance of pro-Buddhists in the court, who controlled the government and its policy towards Buddhism.

A. A Set of Four Hundred Paintings of *Sabangbul* commissioned by Queen Dowager Munōng in 1565

Although it is generally true that Buddhism and Buddhist art stagnated in Korea during the period following the collapse of the Koryŏ dynasty, early Chosŏn Buddhist art clearly reveals a development in Buddhist doctrine and creative expression. This is testified by various high quality fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *sabangbul* paintings which were sponsored by the royal court. Perhaps the most significant of these is a set

¹⁰⁹ Queen Munjōng was a daughter of P'asan Puwŏn-gun 府院君 (an honorific title for king's father-in-law whose native place, P'asan in this case, precedes his title) Yun Chi-im 尹之任 (1475-1534) and became queen in 1517.

of four hundred paintings commissioned by Queen Dowager Munjōng during the mid-sixteenth century (figs. 33-38). Six scrolls of Buddha triads recovered are known to have come from this set. Thanks to these discoveries, Japanese and Korean scholars have carried out considerable research and published papers on this set of paintings.¹¹⁰

Many of the images worshipped in Korean monasteries today date from the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty. Since the queen's set can be dated very precisely in the first half of the Chosŏn dynasty, and it has many aspects important in the history of Buddhist paintings and painting in general, it is highly valuable. It reveals the style of contemporary Buddhist paintings patronized by the royal court and contemporary aesthetic sensibilities. A thorough investigation of these paintings allows us to significantly improve our general understanding of early Chosŏn artistic achievements.

The dedicatory inscription is as following:

嘉靖四十四年 正月日

惟我聖烈仁明大王大妃殿下 爲主上殿下 聖躬萬歲

One day in the first month in the forty-fourth year of the Jiajing reign (1565)

Our Majesty, Great Queen Dowager Sōngyŏl Inmyōng *taewang taebi*, wishes that His Noble Majesty the King will enjoy a life of ten thousand years.

仁踰解網 治踵結繩 羽蟲蟄蟄 麟趾振振

王妃殿下 頂娠生知 脇誕天縱

How boundless is the King's benevolence! It surpasses [that of Emperor Wu who] "let loose all trapped animals."

How great is the King's [wise] rule! It aspires to the [ancient sages' art of governing by the] recording method of "knotted cords" [from the time of the legendary Chinese emperors Yao and Shun]. Blessed will be with countless children.

How noble is Her Majesty's birth! She understood [everything] from the time of her birth.

How divine is Her Majesty the Queen's birth!

Heaven endowed her with brightness.

恭捐帑寶 爰命良工 釋迦 彌勒 藥師 彌陀 百 補處 俱各 金畫五十 彩畫五十 併四百幀

¹¹⁰ See p. 34 note 82 of this thesis.

莊嚴畢備 謹當檜岩修慶席 依法點眼

[Thus the Great Queen Dowager] released a fund from the royal treasury to order *yangong* (skilled artists) to paint Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Amitābha, [all with attendant] bodhisattvas, fifty of each in gold and fifty in colour, totalling four hundred in number.

They were all splendidly assembled for the ceremony celebrating the restoration of the Hoeam-sa, accompanied by the “eye-dotting” rite.

領諸道人使之禮敬於朝夕 常以華封之 祝堯爲山家 務免墮之坑

其聖德化海可勝(or朦)蠡測 於戲至歟

清平山人 懶庵敬跋

All were ordered to worship them day and night and to offer incense to aid all the people of the kingdom to avoid falling into the trap of being disloyal subjects.

Her Majesty’s virtue is like the unfathomable ocean. It is truly immeasurable.

How admirable!

Respectfully inscribed by Ch’ōngp’yōng san’in Na’am.¹¹¹

All the extant Buddha triads bear the same votive inscription written in gold which tells us that the scrolls were part of a set of four hundred triads. In short, the dedicatory inscription states that in 1565 Queen Dowager Munjōng dedicated four hundred paintings of the Four Directional Buddhas in praying for the prosperity of the royal household and the nation. The author, Ch’ōngp’yōng san’in, Na’am, whose name appears at the end, can be identified from his style name, Ch’ōngp’yōng san’in, and his studio name, Na’am, as the famous priest Pou 普雨 (1509-1565).¹¹² Pou’s dedicatory inscription is full of allusions and ancient literary euphemisms. The third section of the inscription praises the peaceful and benevolent reign of Myōngjong, alluding to Emperor Wu (r. 502-549), founder of the Chinese Liang dynasty (502-556) as well as the legendary Chinese emperors Yao and Shun. In this section, the allusion to the pious Buddhist Emperor Wu is particularly significant. The Liang dynasty was one of the Southern Dynasties, in the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties

¹¹¹ English translation of the inscription is provided in Kim Hongnam, 17.

¹¹² Pou’s style name derives from his court appointment in 1555 as the abbot of Ch’ōngp’yōng-sa, a Sōn monastery in Ch’unch’ōn, Kangwōn Province. He stayed at Ch’ōngp’yōng-sa from 1555 to 1557. Yamamoto Taiichi, 548.

(420-589). In contrast to the non-Chinese dynasties in North China where Buddhism was adopted as a means of extending social and political control over the native Chinese population, Confucianism, the traditional Chinese philosophy, flourished as the state ideology in the native Chinese dynasties of South China.¹¹³ That said, Buddhism thrived under the Liang dynasty because it was favoured in the court and by the great noble families. Since Emperor Wu of Liang, who converted from Confucianism to Buddhism in about 511 and became an ardent Buddhist, was the greatest Buddhist ruler in Chinese history, his prestige was conveniently exploited to promote the religion.

B. The Political Background during the Regency of Queen Dowager Munjŏng: Government by Royal In-law Families

Chosŏn politics of the sixteenth century came to be characterized by factional conflict between the newly emerging local *sarimp'a* 士林派, or the literati group of Neo-Confucian scholars, and the *hun'gup'a* 勳舊派, the group of old meritorious retainers, most of whom were composed of meritorious officials, or *kongsin*.¹¹⁴ Different factions were often embroiled in the problems of royal succession and competed among themselves for exclusive hegemony in the bureaucracy. From the time he was installed on the throne in 1506 at the age of nineteen after a successful *coup d'état* of merit subjects to depose Yŏnsan'gun, the tyrannical tenth ruler of Chosŏn, King Chungjong never exerted powerful regal authority during his reign. The decline of state supremacy resulted from a powerful bureaucratic structure and this led to constant power struggles among rival members of the ruling class, the upshot of which were social disturbances and governmental chaos amid a total disarray of the state administrative system.

¹¹³ Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), 136.

¹¹⁴ The *sarimp'a* as a united political group and an admitted rival force in opposition to the established ruling clique of *hun'gup'a* did not exist until the reign of Sŏngjong (r. 1469-1494) when the king appointed a number of scholars from the literati group to official posts in order to strengthen the regal authority and check the *hun'gup'a* officials who assumed the exclusive hegemony in the government. Yi Pyŏng-hyu, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi Kiho sarimp'a yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1983), 34-47.

Later the political scene worsened as conflicts within the queens' families increased in severity, leading to so-called "in-law government." As noted above, King Injong, Chungjong's son by his second Queen Changgyōng 章敬王后 (1491-1515), died after ruling for only a year and was succeeded by King Myōngjong, son of Chungjong's third Queen Munjōng. Immediately after Myōngjong came to the throne, confusion ensued. The struggle between two Yun factions, the so-called Taeyun 大尹 (Greater Yun Group) and Soyun 小尹 (Lesser Yun Group), was over the issue of the succession. Taeyun, headed by Yun Yim 尹任 (1487-1545), the uncle of King Injong, refers to the relatives of Queen Changgyōng; Soyun was led by Yun Wōn-hyōng 尹元衡 (?-1565), the brother of Queen Munjōng and uncle of King Myōngjong. In 1545 when Injong died and Myōngjong came to the throne, the Soyun faction on Queen Munjōng's side replaced Greater Yun as the majority in the royal court and brutally ousted their opposition in the Fourth Literati Purge (*ŭlsa sahwa* 乙巳士禍, Literati Purge in *ŭlsa* year).¹¹⁵ The conflicts between the queens' relatives to decide on issues of succession, and the concentration of power in the hands of a string of royal in-law families gravely disrupted the governing process.

C. The Consolidation of Administrative Power through the Support of Buddhism

While powerful bureaucrats were fighting with the throne and each other for political power, Chosōn suffered from a weak kingship. After the purges, the Soyun faction's one-party autocracy established an oppressive rule, and the Queen Dowager as

¹¹⁵ The factional conflict between *sarimp'a* and *hun'gup'a* became complicated during the reign of King Yōnsan'gun (r. 1494-1506) which was marked by ceaseless factional conflicts. The existing and new factions were engaged in political struggles which have come to be known collectively in Korean history as *sahwa* 士禍, or the "Literati Purges," culminating in the Four Great Literati Purges (*sadae sahwa* 四大士禍 in Korean) in 1498 (*muo sahwa*), 1504 (*kapja sahwa*), 1519 (*kimyo sahwa*), and 1545 (*ŭlsa sahwa*). The outbreak of the purges of literati in the early years of Myōngjong's reign resulted from the matter of royal succession, rather than the confrontation of the old and new factions with different political views as the preceding incidents. Because the *sarimp'a* forces had supported the deceased King Injong and the Taeyun faction, the Neo-Confucian scholars brought calamity upon themselves. This purge was even more cruel and bloody than the three preceding *sahwa*. For discussions on the three preceding purges before 1545, see Wagner, 1974, 23-50 (1498), 51-69 (1504), 70-120 (1519).

regent took over the reins of government and exerted real power.¹¹⁶ In her efforts to re-establish the authority and supremacy of the royal court during her regency, the queen abolished the land-holding system, or *chikchŏn-pŏp*, which allowed land grants for officials in lieu of salary, and adopted a monthly stipend system, called *nokpong-je* 祿俸制.¹¹⁷ Central bureaucrats now received a stipend instead of a land grant. The struggle between the state and various elite groups for control of land and its yield was a major theme in Chosŏn history and the source of much tension between the monarch and bureaucrats. The new policy was intended to ensure the complete control of the bureaucrats by the state.

During Queen Dowager Munjŏng's regency there was a lull in the suppression of Buddhism. She tried to stabilize the government and consolidate the monarchical authority for the young king, Myŏngjong, and the royal house by promoting Buddhism.¹¹⁸ The queen and the Soyun faction not only exerted almost total influence on the administration but also began to play an important role in bringing about the revival of Buddhism.¹¹⁹ In 1550 she restored the monastic examination system, which had been completely abolished in the reign of Yŏnsan'gun (the tenth year), and re-

¹¹⁶ However the legitimacy of Myŏngjong and the queen's regency were questioned as a rumour spread that the Queen Dowager had poisoned Injong. More literati purges ensued in following years. In 1547 a poster, criticising the queen's regency and the corrupt conditions of society caused by the abusive exercise of power by the Soyun faction, was posted on a wall at the government-run post-stage in Yangjae, Chŏlla Province. A number of scholars were accused of being implicated in the poster scandal, the so-called "Pyŏksŏ ūi ok" (壁書獄) and there ensued another calamity (*chŏngmi sahwa*). In 1549 (the year of *ũlyu*) many literati-scholars faced a spurious charge of treason and there was another literati purge (*ũlyu sahwa*). Thereafter the Neo-Confucian literati did not dare to speak up on state affairs, and powerful groups acted according to their own will and without scruples.

¹¹⁷ *Myŏngjong sillok*, 12(1557)/2/13(*chŏngmi*).

¹¹⁸ Lee Bong-ch'un, 47.

¹¹⁹ During the regency of Queen Dowager Munjŏng, Yun Wŏn-hyŏng and his cabinet members became devoted supporters of the queen's state administration and were actively involved with the revival of Buddhism. For instance, after Yun Ch'un-yŏn, Yun Wŏn-hyŏng's relative, held the post of Taesahŏn 大司憲, Censor-General of the Office of the Censor which submitted memorials and remonstrances to the monarch, the number of censoring memorials for impeaching Pou or for abolishing pro-Buddhist policies obviously decreased. As soon as the queen died in 1565, there were nearly one thousand letters of complaint written by Confucian scholars, even calling for the execution of Pou. However, as Kim Sang-young points out, it should be noted that they embraced Buddhism not for their religious belief but for their political stability and personal purpose. *Myŏngjong sillok*, 5(1550)/4/16(*kyŏngsul*), 6(1551)/8/24(*kimyo*), 17(1562)/1/8(*kyesa*), 17(1562)/7/4(*pyŏngsul*), 17(1562)/9/9(*kyŏngin*); Kim Sang-young, "Pou ūi pulgyo puhŭng undong kwa kŭ chibae seryŏk," *Chungang sŭnggadae nonmunjip* 3 (November 1994): 145-162.

established two central temples, Pongün-sa 奉恩寺 as the main temple of the Sŏn school and Pongsŏn-sa 奉先寺 of the Kyo school.¹²⁰ Sponsored by the royal court, both temples were appointed as royal guardian temples for royal cemeteries dedicated to Sejo and Sŏngjong respectively.¹²¹

The period of the Queen Dowager's regency produced a number of Buddhist paintings including the magnificent set of the four hundred Buddha triads, a further testimony to the Queen Regent's dedication to revive Buddhism and her patronage of Buddhist art. Queen Dowager Munjŏng had the belief in Buddhism and its efficacy as a means of overcoming all the problems surrounding the royal household, such as the illness of King Myŏngjong, the literati purges following the enthronement of the king, the *Ŭlmyo* War provoked by the invasion of Japanese pirates into Yŏn'am in South Chŏlla Province in 1555,¹²² and the frequent appearances of a group of bandits led by Im Kkŏk-jŏng.¹²³ This is well evidenced in the votive inscriptions in the 1565 set, as well as in other Buddhist paintings produced under her patronage like the *Assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha* now in the Entsū-ji 圓通寺, Wakayama (fig. 39). To quote excerpts from the inscription:

嘉靖四十年 三月日

聖烈仁明大王大妃殿下 謹竭悰別爲 主上殿下 聖躬萬歲

On a day in the third month in the forty-fourth year of the Jiajing reign (1561)

¹²⁰ *Myŏngjong sillok*, 6(1551)/1/15(*kyemyo*), 7(1552)/4/12(*kapja*).

The Queen Dowager also appointed the priest Pou as the head abbot at Pongün-sa in 1551, so Pou became the actual head figure of the Chosŏn Buddhist *sangha*, which was dominated by the Sŏn sect.

¹²¹ *Yejong sillok*, 1(1469)/9/8(*muja*); *Myŏngjong sillok*, 6(1551)/4/13(*sinmi*); *Yŏnsan'gun ilgi* (Diary of Yŏnsan-gun Period), 7(1501)/3/17(*ülch'uk*).

In 1498 Queen Chŏnghyŏn 貞顯王后 (1462-1530), Sŏngjong's wife, renovated Kyŏnsŏng-sa 見性寺 and renamed it as Pong'ün-sa ("Temple of Honouring the Favour [of Sŏngjong]").

The Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi appointed Pongsŏn-sa as a royal guardian temple for the tomb dedicated to the late King Sejo, located nearby the temple. The temple, originally built in 969 and named Wŏn'gak-sa, was greatly renovated and renamed as Pongsŏn-sa ("Temple Honouring the Late King [Sejo]") by the queen. *Yejong sillok*, 1(1469)/2/22(*chŏngch'uk*), 1/2/23(*muin*); TYS, vol. 6. "Kyŏnggi Kwangjumok puru Pongün-sa 京畿廣州牧佛宇奉恩寺," vol. 11, "Kyŏnggi Yangjumok puru Pongsŏn-sa 京畿楊州牧佛宇奉先寺."

¹²² *Myŏngjong sillok*, 10(1555)/5/16(*kiyu*), 10(1555)/5/18(*sinhae*).

¹²³ *Myŏngjong sillok*, 14(1559)/3/27(*kihae*), 16(1561)/10/6(*imsul*), 17(1562)/1/8(*kyesa*).

Our Majesty, Great Queen Dowager Söngyöl Inmyöng *taewang taebi*, wishes that His Noble Majesty the King will enjoy a life of ten thousand years.

仁踰解網 治踵結繩

... 聖子神孫之不盡益承

...特狼煙永息而兵革

How boundless is the King's benevolence! It surpasses [that of Emperor Wu who] "let loose all trapped animals."

Noble descendants succeed [royal lineage] without cease.

In particular, invasion by barbarians never occurs again and disturbance vanishes.

...敬捨儲帑之財 純金畫成 東方滿月世界 藥師琉璃光如來會圖五幀 眞彩畫成二幀并 七幀掛安金殿永奉香火

[Thus the Great Queen Dowager] released a fund from the royal treasury to commission to paint seven assemblies of Bhaiṣajyaguru of Lapis Lazuli Pure Land in the east, five of them in pure gold and two in colour. [She ordered] these seven paintings are enshrined in a main hall and worshipped forever with burning incense.¹²⁴

This inscription reveals the queen's utter reliance on Buddhism and its power to protect the country and the royal household. In addition to the usual wishes for the longevity of the king (Myöngjong) and the prosperity of the country, the queen prayed to the Buddha for royal succession and, in particular, that the country be protected from the invasions of "barbarians." Under male, Confucian-oriented Chosön social norms, the necessity of bearing sons was a particularly pressing problem for the royal family, due to royal succession. Following Pou's suggestion, in 1565 the queen held the grand ceremony of *much'a taehoe* 無遮大會 ("Great Limitless Assembly") to pray for a new royal prince to succeed to the throne.¹²⁵ The Queen Dowager was worried about another feud over the issue of royal succession and wanted to settle the royal lineage since Crown Prince Sunhoe (1551-1563), Myöngjong's son, had recently died from illness at an early age. In the midst of the ceaseless factional battles Queen Dowager Munjōng wanted to accrue merit for Myöngjong and to secure the dynastic line by

¹²⁴ For the full text of the inscription see Yamamoto Taiichi, 555.

¹²⁵ *Myöngjong sillok*, 20(1565)/4/5(*sinmi*).

praying for the birth of a new prince.¹²⁶ It is clear that the Queen Dowager ultimately prayed for the stability of the royal court—the well-being of the king, peace in his realm, and the continuation of the dynastic lineage—by making and disseminating a large number of Buddhist paintings.

The remains of the set of four hundred paintings are important visual evidence of the revival of Buddhism and its art by the royal court in the mid-sixteenth century. The set of the four hundred paintings was assembled for a ceremony to celebrate the restoration of Hoeam-sa, a major Sŏn monastery and the royal cemetery dedicated to King T'aejong (r. 1400-1418), located near the capital city, in Yangju, Kyŏnggi Province.¹²⁷ The commission of the set of four hundred triads along with the reconstruction of the Hoeam-sa monastery was the grandest national Buddhist enterprise sponsored by the royal court.¹²⁸ The sheer scale of this set and the luxury and grace of the execution of the extant paintings are unmatched in Chosŏn history. This indicates that the Queen's intention was to re-establish the authority of the royal court by acknowledging its belief in Buddhism and at the same time to restore the country's traditional social and religious practices.

The paintings attest to both the Queen Dowager's concern for the royal house and the ambitions of a priest called Pou to revitalise Buddhism on a national scale.¹²⁹ The painting entitled *Worship of Buddha in the Palace* (fig. 19), dating back to the mid-

¹²⁶ Pak Eun-kyŏng, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi purhwa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Sigong Art, 2008), 416-421.

¹²⁷ In spite of contraction under the government's oppression policy, Hoeam-sa had not severely suffered under the state persecution of Buddhism in the early Chosŏn dynasty and continued to be patronized by the royal family during the period. This monastery was greatly renovated again under the regency of Queen Dowager Chŏnghŭi, Sejo's wife, in 1472. TYS. vol. 11, "Kyŏnggi Yangju puru Hoeam-sa 京畿楊州牧佛宇檜巖寺."

According to *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, the Chosŏn royal court frequently held Buddhist services in the temple. A representative Buddhist service sponsored by the royal court was the Wŏn'gak *pŏphoe* held in 1465 by King Sejo. For the records from the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* see Park Eun-kyŏng, "Chosŏn chŏn'gi ūi kinyŏmbi chŏk in sabang sabulhwa," *Misulsa nondan*, 7 (1998): 125-128.

¹²⁸ Kim Hongnam, 20.

¹²⁹ The priest Pou as the chief advisor to the Queen Dowager Munjŏng also played a key role at this critical period. Since 1551 when he was assigned as abbot of Pongŭn-sa, Pou had been given important responsibilities in encouraging and revitalizing Buddhism for many years until the queen died in 1565. Kim Jung-hee, "Munjŏng wanghu ūi chunghŭng pulsa wa 16 segi wangsil parwŏn purhwa," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 231 (September 2001): 7; Sørensen, 1993b, 529.

sixteenth century, is a special example because it recounts the active revival of Buddhism during her reign.¹³⁰ As a result of the efforts to revitalize the belief, Buddhism spread to achieve widespread popularity throughout the country, although only briefly. Thus the set of four hundred triads is a work of historical significance as well as of artistic merit.

D. The Revival of the Koryŏ Style

Stylistic analysis suggests that the surviving paintings from the set of four hundred hanging scrolls are typical of sixteenth-century court-sponsored paintings. The paintings provide evidence of an extraordinary display of royal sumptuousness in Buddhist art during the period of Chosŏn. In particular, a taste for extravagant expenditure and prodigality and the passion for grandeur are among the general features of the paintings patronized by the Queen Dowager. Gold is generously employed to cover all the exposed parts of the figure bodies, textile patterns, and details of ornaments as well as for the inscription of the works. The exquisite style and refined execution of the remaining paintings are evidence that the queen commissioned her set to be painted by *tohwawŏn* 圖畫員, the professional painters working at *tohwasŏ* 圖畫署 (The Royal Bureau of Painting).¹³¹ The fine craftsmanship of the remaining triads from the queen's set reverts to the courtly tradition of Koryŏ Buddhist paintings which excelled in depicting delicate details like the texture of the trceries of transparent garments.

The organizational principles of frontality, centrality, and symmetry as well as the two-tiered structure in these images are characteristics of the iconic mode in Koryŏ Buddhist imagery (fig. 40). The composition of each painting is divided in strictly

¹³⁰ For its date from the mid-sixteenth century based on the stylistic analysis, see Ho-Am Art Museum, ed. *Masterpieces of the Ho-Am Museum of Art II* (Seoul: Samsung Foundation of Culture, 1996), 215.

¹³¹ The existing *tohwawŏn* 圖畫院 of the Koryŏ dynasty was demoted to a lower rank and succeeded by *tohwasŏ* in Chosŏn. *Tohwawŏn* continued to be used until the reign of King Sejo, and *tohwasŏ* appears for the first time in a record from *Sŏngjong sillok* in 1471. *Sŏngjong sillok*, 2(1471)/06/08(*kiyu*).

hierarchical fashion (as is shown in their Koryŏ predecessors), in contrast to the circular, multifigural composition of contemporary Chosŏn Buddhist paintings (fig. 41). The triadic composition of the remaining *sabangbul* paintings focuses on the enthroned Buddha attended by the two bodhisattvas. Although the central figure of the Buddha is less dramatically emphasized than that of the Koryŏ Buddha triad, the central Buddha is distinguished by his size from the attending bodhisattvas who are shown in a much reduced scale below the level of the Buddha's knees. However, some significant stylistic departures should be noted, such as the small face, its characteristic features like the rosebud-like tiny mouth and narrow, sharp eyes,¹³² the pointed *uṣṇīṣa* (the cranial protuberance),¹³³ the separation of aureole and halo,¹³⁴ and the more dynamic and expressive rendering of brushwork, especially in the depiction of the textile patterns.¹³⁵ All of these are characteristics of Chosŏn Buddhist images patronized by the royal court in the sixteenth century.

It has been suggested that the stylistic features heavily influenced by Koryŏ Buddhist painting can be interpreted as representing the desire of the Queen Dowager and Pou to revitalize Buddhist worship in the Koryŏ period when the religion flourished.¹³⁶ Just as the inscription deliberately alludes to the era of the Liang dynasty under Emperor Wu, a golden age of Buddhism in China, the decision by the royal court to continue the traditional Buddhist style of Koryŏ, the golden age of Korean Buddhist painting, was also intentional.

¹³² Mun Myong-dae, "Chosŏn cho purhwa ūi yangsik chŏk t'ŭkjing kwa pyŏnch'ŏn," *Chosŏn purhwa, Han'guk ūi mi* 16 (Seoul: Chungang ilbosa, 1990), 178.

¹³³ This feature in depicting Buddhas, which began to appear in Korea from the 16th century, is from the influence of Lamaist Buddhist art. Mun Myong-dae, 1990, 178; Kim Hongnam, 42; Pak Eun-kyŏng, 1998: 134.

¹³⁴ Large circular aureoles often enclose the entire configurations as well as the halos of central images in Koryŏ works. Mun Myong-dae, 1990, 178.

¹³⁵ Mun Myong-dae, 1990, 179.

¹³⁶ Kim Hongnam, 1991, 22; Pak Eun-kyŏng, 1998b, 132-139.

E. The Iconography of *Sabangbul* and its Political Symbolism

If we examine the six remaining paintings from the set more closely, it becomes clear that the paintings preserve not only the stylistic features but also much of the iconography and form of earlier periods. The inscription of the paintings, which facilitates the identification of the scenes, records that the set originally consisted of four hundred paintings, each featuring one of four major Buddhas—Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha, and Maitreya. The identity of the Buddha on the four paintings now in the National Museum of Korea, Tokugawa Art Museum (Nagoya), Hojū-in (Hiroshima), and Ryūjō-in (Kōchi), is definitely Bhaiṣajyaguru because of the medicine bowl held in one hand and his two attending bodhisattvas, the Moonlight Bodhisattva and the Sunlight Bodhisattva respectively. The identity of the two Buddhas now in the Mary and Jackson Burke Collection and Kōzen-ji (Hyōgo) can be determined as Śākyamuni from his right hand in the earth-touching *bhūmisparśa* mudrā. Since all the six extant paintings of Bhaiṣajyaguru and Śākyamuni are triads, it is assumed that the paintings of the two other Buddhas Amitābha and Maitreya were also painted triads.

Each triad associated with one of the Four Directional Buddhas could combine to form the traditional iconographic grouping of *sabangbul*. It is a subject of speculation as to why a special selection of Buddhist iconography was employed for the court-sponsored Buddhist icons and how the special motif of the four Buddhas fits new social and political situation. Several factors contributed to the infusion of political significance into the worship of the Four Directional Buddhas. The dedicatory inscription on the paintings is significant in understanding the nature of the worship of the Four Directional Buddhas among the contemporary royal household. There are a hundred paintings devoted to each of the Four Directional Buddhas in the queen's set, making a total of four hundred in all. Since the number hundred can mean "all,"

“infinite,” “complete,” or “extensive,” the four hundred paintings of the Four Directional Buddhas may have been intended to represent the infinite Buddha-lands omnipresent in the universe.¹³⁷ The combination of these Four Directional Buddhas, each in a hundred paintings, is a metaphor for the whole universe, in which all things are in a state of balance and perfection.

In dedicating the set of four hundred paintings, the Queen Dowager Munjŏng projected her wishes for the prosperity of the royal house, especially her blessings for her son, King Myŏngjong. According to the inscription, in addition to her wish that heaven applaud the regime, the queen inserted a special line to warn subjects against being disloyal. The production of *sabangbul* objects is a reflection of the uneasy tensions and inherent conflicts between the *yangban* and the monarch. In the strictly hierarchical two-tier composition of the six remaining paintings, for example, the Buddha is enshrined on a high altar above his attendants, and clearly marked off from them. The religious hierarchy in this composition seems to depict the ideal power relationship between the king and his bureaucrats and to extol the unified, centralized, and hierarchical state of the government. The queen’s ardour to maintain and consolidate dynastic well-being and monarchical power is evident in the set of four hundred triads.

The queen’s set of four hundred paintings, ranging between the Koryŏ and Chosŏn-dynasty style, contains important information on the political and social situation of the era. This is what makes the remaining paintings so remarkable and exceptional. The iconographical significance of the four Buddhas can be found in *sabangbul* images from the Three Kingdoms period. While following the style and iconography of the previous periods when Buddhism flourished, the Queen Dowager and the priest Pou intended to return to the former glory of Buddhism in the preceding

¹³⁷ Pak Eunkyung, 1998b, 132.

dynasties by choosing this politically significant iconography from the Silla period and the traditional style of the Koryŏ period. In this respect, the choice of style and iconography, recalling the Buddhist art of earlier periods, had a special significance for them. The iconography of the Chosŏn *sabangbul* can be viewed as a conscious and intentional return to the tradition of Silla Buddhism on the part of the royal patrons who commissioned the works with the aim of retrieving the centralized power of the monarch.

The period of the Queen's regency marks one of the most flourishing phases in Chosŏn Buddhist history. Like the Silla kings, the Chosŏn queen must have been aware of the importance of supporting Buddhism. Indeed, very few changes had occurred in *sabangbul* iconography since the Silla period. As the *sabangbul* concept received royal patronage in the Silla period, the queen employed the ideological setting of the *sabangbul* theme as a political ploy, and this is demonstrated by various concomitant circumstances and historical evidence. In her convincing interpretation of the iconographical symbolism of the Four Directional Buddhas of the queen's set, Kim Hongnam argues that the re-emergence of this iconography in the set "as a symbolic acknowledgement of the need to seek Buddhism's protection of the state" makes its use in this commission particularly significant.¹³⁸ The set of four hundred paintings is therefore a testimony to the continuation and vitality of the belief in the *sabangbul* in the sixteenth century.

The *sabangbul* images that were concentrated in the early Chosŏn period astutely convey a clear political message: the close relationship between the production of the specific iconography of *sabangbul* and the power structure, especially the royal authority of this period. The queen's set is evidence that she desired to consolidate royal authority by reviving Buddhism, in a similar fashion to the Silla kings who had

¹³⁸ Kim Hongnam, 22.

made use of the relation between the political support of Buddhism and its attachment to kingship since the sixth century. In its totality and potency as an image, the set of four hundred triads is a vision of Buddha-land on earth that materializes the religious tradition of the *sabangbul* inherited from the time of the Silla period onward, and manifests a huge number of different planes of political reality and religious tradition. Queen Dowager's patronage of the large number of the Buddha paintings on the occasion of the restoration of the royal votive temple is similar to the release of the *Han'gŭl* scriptures in the translation project of major Buddhist sūtras in order to popularise Buddhism at the time of the construction of Won'gak-sa and its pagoda.¹³⁹ In this sense, the *sabangbul* works produced under royal sponsorship during this period illuminate the mentality of the Chosŏn rulers of the era and their quest for political supremacy.

F. The Assembly of the Four Directional Buddhas in the National Museum of Korea, Seoul

Another royally sponsored painting depicting the group of four Buddhas is also meticulously executed in gold and colours on silk (fig. 42). This work is all the more valuable because the grouping of all four Buddhas is rarely found in a single frame of a painting. Again, the identification of the four Buddhas is critical to understanding the meaning of the painting. The dedicatory inscription written in gold on a red cartouche at the bottom of the painting reads:

嘉靖 壬戌 六月日 豐山正 李氏 謹竭 伏爲 先考 同知事權贊靈駕 淑媛李氏靈駕 牧使朴諫兩位靈駕 女億春靈駕 男李氏靈駕 共脫生前 積衆愆之因 同證 死後修九品之果現

On a day in the sixth month in the year of *immu* of the Jiajing reign (1562), P'ungsanjŏng [title] Yi [Chong-lin] sincerely prays for Tongjisa [title] Kwŏn Ch'an, his deceased father, Lady Sukwŏn Yi, Moksa (title) Pak Kan and his wife

¹³⁹ Noh Se-jin, *16segi wangsil palwŏn purhwa ui yon'gu: Munjŏng wanghu sigi ūi purhwa rŭl chungsim ūro* (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 2001), 37-38.

(Pungsanjǒng's parents-in-law), Pak Kan's daughter Ōk-ch'un, and his son-in-law Mr. Yi to be released from the retribution for the deeds in their life time and to reborn in the nine levels of Amitābha's Buddha's Pure Land

存祖母貞敬婦人 尹氏保體 德陽君兩位保體 成詢兩位保體 小主朴氏保體
李氏伯春保體 李氏敬春保體 李氏連春保體 各?災殃俱崇福壽 亦爲己身時
無百害之災一有 天祥之慶壽 不中夭黃耆

[Yi also prays for] the well-being and longevity of his grandmother, *Chǒngkyǒng puin* Lady Yun, Prince Tōkyang and his wife, Sǒng Sun and his wife, young master Mr. Pak, Yi Paek-ch'un, Yi Kyǒng-ch'un, Yi Yǒn-ch'un, and himself (Yi Chong-lin).

無疆以眞黃金新畫成 西方阿彌陀佛一幀 彩畫四會幀一面 彩畫中壇幀一面
送安咸昌地 上院寺 以奉香火 云爾願雙此 功德普及 於一切 我等與衆生皆
共成佛道

Hereupon he commissions to paint one Amitābha painting in gold, one painting of the assembly of the Four [Directional] Buddhas and one painting of second level sanctity (referring to a painting of Buddhist guardian deities to be enshrined at the Middle Altar) in colour.

The paintings are enshrined in Sangwǒn-sa, Hamch'ang, with burning incense. We are obliged to wish the merits to reach to all of us and other laity everybody to be worshipped by the populace for attaining buddhahood.

Sahoe-t'aeng 四會幀 (literally the hanging scroll of the assemblies of four Buddhas) which designates this work in the votive inscription, guarantees that this painting represents the Four Directional Buddhas, because four Buddhas in a group are traditionally thought to represent the Four Directional Buddhas. For instance, literary sources like *Samguk yusa* traditionally used the term *sabangbul* or Sabul-san (Mountain of Four [Directional] Buddhas) to refer to the Four Directional Buddhas. Although the dedicatory inscription does not identify the four Buddhas, they can be identified by such important characteristics as hand gestures, attributes, and accompanying retinues. Each of the depictions portrays a central Buddha enthroned among an assembly of bodhisattvas and other beings. The Buddha on the upper left can be identified as Amitābha, surrounded in his Pure Land by the Eight Bodhisattvas. The two bodhisattvas in the front row are Avalokiteśvara on the right, identified by the vase held

in his left hand, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta on the left, identified by the book held in his left hand. The Buddha on the upper right can be identified as Bhaiṣajyaguru due to the medicine bowl held in the left hand. He is surrounded by the Twelve Generals and two attendant bodhisattvas, Bodhisattva of Moonlight, in the front row on the left, identified by the rabbit in the moon disk, and Bodhisattva of Sunlight, in the front row on the right, identified by the crow in the sun disk. The Buddha accompanied by the Ten Disciples on the front left holds the *bhūmiṣparsi* mudrā, traditionally associated with the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. Maitreya Buddha on the front right is also surrounded by the identical Ten Disciples and attending bodhisattvas. Due to generic features for the iconography of this Buddha, who possesses no distinguishable attributes, it is not possible to give him a specific identity. However, it is possible to identify him in association with the Śākyamuni Buddha on its right. In the Silla *sabangbul* pillars, like the polarized Amitābha-Bhaiṣajyaguru pair, Śākyamuni the Buddha of present and Maitreya the future Buddha are placed back to back as a pair, as shown in the Ch'ilbulam and Kulbul-sa Buddha groups. The identification of this Buddha as Maitreya may be further supported by the Queen Dowager's set of the Four Directional Buddhas, which was commissioned in 1565, only three years after this scroll painting. Since the three other Buddhas match in their identification, it is highly possible that Maitreya is the fourth Buddha as he is in the queen's set.

As in the Queen Dowager's set, the painting is given a specific historical and temporal context in the votive inscription which contains important information on the donor. The inscription states that this painting was commissioned by P'ungsanjōng Yi Chong-lin (1536-1611), a member of the royal family, on behalf of six deceased people, including his maternal grandfather Kwōn Ch'an (?-1560) and his grandmother Lady Sukwōn Yi, and nine living people, including his parents and Lady Yun (Kwōn Ch'an's wife), all presumably the donor's own relatives. The names cited in the inscription

were pious Buddhists.¹⁴⁰ The list of people in the votive inscription includes a number of members of the royal family and high-ranking officials closely related to the government of the time. Yi Chong-lin was the son of Prince Tökyang 德陽君 (1524-1581), a step-brother of King Myöngjong. Prince Tökyang was born to Lady Sukwön Yi, a royal concubine of King Chungjong (r. 1506-1544), as the king's fifth son. P'ungsanjöng Yi Chong-lin, the donor of this painting, is the grandson of King Chungjong and Queen Dowager Munjöng. Kwön Ch'an, Yi Chong-lin's maternal grandfather, had a close relationship with Yun Wön-hyöng and was thus regarded as one of the Soyun faction. He was repeatedly promoted and appointed to important government posts.¹⁴¹ Kwön was more closely related to the royal court by the marriage of his daughter to Prince Tökyang. Lady Yun, Kwön Ch'an's wife, was the daughter of Yun In-bo who was appointed Prime Minister during King Chungjong's reign.¹⁴² Her title *Chönggyöng puin* 貞敬夫人, an honorific title for the wives of officials of junior first rank and above, testifies to Kwön's status as an official.¹⁴³ According to *Myöngjong sillok* 明宗實錄, when Kwön died in 1560, at the request of Prince Tökyang and according to Kwön's will, King Myöngjong granted Yi Chong-lin the right to hold Kwön's funeral service since he had no son to carry on his family line.¹⁴⁴ This painting was dedicated in 1562 at Sangwön-sa in Hamch'ang, North Kyöngsang Province, Kwön Ch'an's native place.¹⁴⁵

The painting displays a refined style identical to the paintings in Queen

¹⁴⁰ *Myöngjong sillok*, 6(1551)/11/2(*pyöngsul*).

¹⁴¹ In 1557 Kwön was appointed as the Chief Magistrate of Seoul Magistracy (*Hansöngbu p'anyun* 漢城府判尹) and in next year became the Minister of Board of Taxation (*Hojo p'ansö* 戶曹判書). In 1559 just a year before his death, he was appointed the Third Minister of Office of Ministers-without-Portfolio (*Chijungch'u pusa* 知中樞府事). *Han'guk Minjok munhwa tae paekkwä sajön* [Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Korean People and Culture, hereafter HMTS] (Songnam-si, Korea: Han'guk Chöngsin Munhwa Yön'guwön, 1991), "Kwön Ch'an."

¹⁴² HMTS. "Yun In-bo."

¹⁴³ *Chijungch'u pusa* was an official of senior second rank, but Kwön Ch'an was promoted *Ch'ansöng* 贊成, an official of junior first rank, as posthumous conferment of honours.

¹⁴⁴ *Myöngjong sillok*, 15(1560)/9/27(*sinmyo*), 15/ 9/28(*imjin*).

¹⁴⁵ *Myöngjong sillok*, 6(1551)/11/2(*pyöngsul*), 14(1559)/7/16(*ülyu*), 15(1560)/9/27(*kyöngin*).

Dowager's set. Judging from the same iconography and the meticulous manner of execution, it appears that this painting was also executed by the professional painters from the Royal Bureau of Painting who worked on royal commissions. Besides the fact that Yi Chong-lin had sufficient means to finance such a large project, it was his status as a royal clansman and his family connections to the royal court and the Soyun faction that ensured that Yi Chong-lin could secure the court painters for his project. It is highly likely that the royal court helped with Yi Chong-lin's private commission because he stood high in the favour of Queen Dowager Munjŏng and the royal court.¹⁴⁶

Along with the queen's set of four hundred triads, the painting entitled *Four Assemblies of the Buddhas* is undoubtedly a representative work in a critical period in Chosŏn Buddhist art. Both were commissioned almost at the same time, and both appear to be based on the same iconography of the Four Directional Buddhas. This indicates that the iconography of *sabangbul* became important in royal commissions of Buddhist art during the period. Therefore the queen's large-scale commission, which chose the unique iconography of the Four Directional Buddhas, is almost certainly related to the painting. The extensive use of the *sabangbul* iconography is fascinating evidence of the spread of the *sabangbul* cult among the members of the royal family in the sixteenth century.

However the assembly of the four Buddhas, commissioned strictly for private worship, adds new material and dimensions for further discussion on this important topic. The *cakravartin* myth in the queen's set has retained its discourse of hegemony, but a different explanation should be sought for the private commission by a member of the royal family. While the queen's set was made with the political intention of

¹⁴⁶ When Yi Chong-lin was sixteen in 1563, he was appointed to a post managing the funeral service of King Myŏngjong's son, Crown Prince Sunhoe (1551-1563). When the Queen Dowager passed away in 1565 just days after the ceremony of dedication of the four hundred *sabangbul* paintings in Hoeam-sa, he was again appointed to a post guarding the *honjŏn* 魂殿 ("Hall of spirit") enshrining the queen's mortuary tablet for three years after her funeral. In recognition of his services, he was conferred with the title of *kun* (prince) and thereafter called Prince P'ungsan.

bolstering the royal house and restoring Buddhism, by commissioning this painting Yi Chong-lin was relying on the power of the Buddha to pray for the rebirth of his close relatives in the Pure Lands of the four major Buddhas, and also hoping for Buddha's limitless, all-encompassing protection and blessing for the well-being of the living.¹⁴⁷ This may be the reason why Yi choose the group of the Four Directional Buddha for his commission. Its unique iconography and the important information contained in the inscription make it an invaluable piece of evidence for the study of Korean Buddhist painting in general, as well as *sabangbul* of the Chosŏn period. The re-emergence of *sabangbul* iconography seen in the extant paintings from the mid-sixteenth century testifies to the renewed vigour and short-lived renaissance of Buddhism under the regency of the Queen Dowager Munjŏng.

5. Assembly of Six Buddhas in Seirai-ji 西來寺, Mie, Japan

In recent years, as new paintings of the assembly of four, five or even six directional Buddhas are being discovered, our understanding of *sabangbul* worship continues to grow and change. The *Assembly of Five Buddhas* now in Jūrin-ji, Hyōgo (fig. 47) and the *Assembly of Six Buddhas* in Seirai-ji, Mie, (fig. 43) and the Twelve Buddha Assemblies on the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda belong to this category during the early Chosŏn period.

According to its votive inscription, the *Assembly of Six Buddhas* now in Seirai-ji was produced during Hongzhi, a Chinese reign that lasted from 1488 to 1505.¹⁴⁸ Following the manner of execution in orthodox devotional Koryŏ Buddhist painting, the style and meticulous details painted on silk confirm that this painting was commissioned under royal sponsorship. In keeping with the practice of Koryŏ Buddhist painting, the use of the conventional compositional principles of symmetry

¹⁴⁷ National Museum of Korea, *Saech'ŏnnyŏn saeyumul* (New Millennium and New Relics) (Seoul: The National Museum of Korea, 2000), 184.

¹⁴⁸ Takeda Kazuaki, 12.

and frontality is employed in the iconic image of the group of six Buddhas.

The Seirai-ji painting adopts the representational mode of grouping six Buddhas in two rows, a unique feature in Korean Buddhist painting. The present painting is the only known example of a *sabangbul* representation within a single frame whose iconography is positively identified in the inscription in a cartouche on the upper-right corner. A composition of six Buddhas in a horizontal, symmetrical arrangement consists of two parts: the upper part depicts Amitābha, Śākyamuni, and Bhaiṣajyaguru from left to right; and the lower part portrays Kṣitigarbha, Maitreya, and Tejaprabha in the same order. Notably, this assembly depicts Tejaprabha and Kṣitigarbha in addition to the established iconography of the Four Directional Buddhas.

We shall now turn our attention to the five assemblies named in a dedicatory inscription of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Assembly* currently in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (fig. 44). Again the pictorial images and identifying inscription are the first clue to the historical dimensions of the painting.

大妃殿下 伏爲 主上殿下 壽君福國之願
爰命良工願成 彩畫釋迦鋒修道會圖二幀 彩畫藥師一幀 地藏一幀 純金熾盛
光會圖一幀.....

Great queen prays for the longevity of His Noble Majesty the King and the blessing for the nation.

[The queen] commissioned skilled painters to paint two assemblies of Śākyamuni, one assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru, and one assembly of Kṣitigarbha in colour. [She ordered] one assembly of Tejaprabha in pure gold.¹⁴⁹

According to this inscription, the *Bhaiṣajyaguru Assembly* was commissioned by *taebi* (queen mother) of the royal family as part of a set of five paintings representing different Buddhist assemblies.¹⁵⁰ In commissioning the five assemblies, the queen

¹⁴⁹ The rest of the inscription includes the customary prayer for the protection of the country. For the full text, see Horioka Chimyō, 54

¹⁵⁰ Horioka Chimyō, 54-55.

During the 16th century there were three queens with the title of *taebi* in the court: the Queen Dowager Munjōng (1501-1565) on whom the title was conferred, following the death of King Chungjong

mother wished for the longevity of the king and well-being of the nation. The sumptuous materials like gold, the exquisite details of the painting, and the distinguished quality of the icon all testify to the elevated status and ability of the donor, the queen mother. Although the exact date of the scroll cannot be ascertained due to damage on the inscription, this work can be assigned to the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁵¹ The stylistic details and quality of execution are comparable to the remains of the Queen Dowager's set of four hundred triads. It is also worthy of note that the donor commissioned the set of five assemblies to be painted in both paints and gold like Queen Munjōng's four hundred triads and other paintings of Buddha assemblies sponsored by the royal court during the same period. Here we should note that Kṣitigarbha and Tejaprabha are equally featured in the set commissioned by the queen mother as they are in the Seirai-ji Assembly.

A. A Note on Kṣitigarbha

Kṣitigarbha (K: Chijang posal 地藏菩薩) is the supreme lord of the underworld and is often represented alongside the Ten Kings of hell.¹⁵² It is said that the sins of

in 1544; Queen Insōng following the death of her husband King Injong in 1545; and Queen Insun following her husband King Myōngjong's death in 1567.

Kim Jung-hee argues that the inscription of this painting was written by Pou, judging from its similar content and order shared with those of other contemporary, royal-sponsored paintings. Yamamoto Taiichi, 557; Kim Jung-hee, 2001, 18-19.

If the author of the inscription was Pou, painting was produced after his appointment in 1548 and before 1565 when Pou was assassinated. Then the donor of this painting could be either Munjōng or Insōng. However Queen Dowager Munjōng remained as *taebi* until 1545 for only one year, and Pou was not appointed until 1548 by the Queen Dowager. In 1545, as her step-son King Injong died and her own son King Myōngjong succeeded the throne, the title *taewang taebi*, seen in the inscription of the queen's set of the four hundred paintings, was conferred on the Queen Munjōng. Thus Kim Jung-hee argues this painting must have been commissioned by Queen Insōng between 1548 and 1565 during the time when the queen remained as *taebi*, and Pou was also still alive.

¹⁵¹ Although the Boston Museum argues that this painting should be dated to the Koryō dynasty, the dating to the mid-16th century is supported by several stylistic features as the faces of the Twelve Generals painted black, the robes of the Buddha, and the pedestal on which the Buddha sits, similar to those of the Kṣitigarbha painting, commissioned by Pou in 1562 and formerly enshrined by him in Ch'ōngp'yōng-sa but now in Kōmyō-ji, Hiroshima and other Buddhist paintings commissioned during the same period. Horioka Chimyō, 55; Yamamoto Taiichi, 556-557; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, ed. *Asiatic art in the Museum of Fine Arts* (Boston, Mass: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 84.

¹⁵² For the origin and popularity of Kṣitigarbha cult in Korea, see Pak Youngsook, "Kṣitigarbha as Supreme Lord of the Underworld: A Korean Buddhist Painting in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Berlin," *Oriental Art* 23 (Spring 1977): 96-104.

the deceased are examined in the presence of the deity. As a compassionate saviour Kṣitigarbha made a vow to deliver all the dead from hell until no one remained. In the Seirai-ji Assembly, the position of this deity beneath Amitābha appears to be related to the concept of the Buddhist *naraka* (netherworld), ruled over by the Bodhisattva, by contrast to the concept of the Western Pure Land of Amitābha.¹⁵³ The cult of Kṣitigarbha was widespread in the early period of Chosŏn. Numerous paintings of the Bodhisattva commissioned by the royal court during the period provide visual evidence of the popularity of the Kṣitigarbha cult in the royal court during the early Chosŏn period (figs. 45-46).¹⁵⁴

B. A Note on Tejabrabha

Tejabrabha Buddha (K: Ch'isŏnggwang yŏrae 熾星光如來), also known as the Golden Wheel Buddha *suṅṅiṣa*,¹⁵⁵ is the lord of the constellations and the heavenly bodies, including the Seven Stars of the Great Dipper. For this reason, the Buddha in control of the Seven Stars is believed to be the master of fate and destiny and the one to whom people pray for good fortune, success and long life.¹⁵⁶ The ritual of Tejabrabha Buddha known as *sojae toryang* 消災道場 (the calamity-solving ritual) was frequently held under state sponsorship at the time of national crisis during the Mongol invasions

¹⁵³ In Koryŏ Buddhist paintings, this bodhisattva is frequently depicted with Avalokiteśvara as an attendant to the Amitābha Buddha, indicating that he was closely connected with the doctrine of the Pure Land. In Korea the popularity of the Kṣitigarbha cult seems to have coincided with that of Amitābha. Pak, 1977, 96-98.

¹⁵⁴ Kumagai Nobuo, 1972, 60-73; Mun Myong-dae, "Chosŏn Myŏngjong tae chijang siwang-do ūi sŏnghaeng kwa kajŏng 34 (1555) nyŏn chijang siwang-do yŏn'gu," *Kangjwa msulsa* 7 (Dec. 1995): 7-19.

In the *Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings* now in Kōmyō-ji, Japan, the priest Pou, the single donor of the painting as well as the author of the inscription, wished for the longevity of the royal members including Queen Dowager Munjŏng. Lady Sukbin Yun, a concubine of King Sŏnjo, commissioned *Illustration of Kṣitigarbha Sūtra* now in Chion-in, Japan, dated to 1575-1577 in her praying for the rebirth of the Queen Insun (King Myŏngjong's queen) in the paradise, for the longevity of King Sŏnjo and his queen, for the birth of prince for them, and for the longevity of the Queen Insŏng (King Injong's queen) and Tŏkbin (the wife of Prince Sunhoe). *Kṣitigarbha with Ten Kings of Hell*, now in Saihō-ji, Japan, is produced during the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries under the patronage of the royal court. Kim Jung-hee, 2001, 17-18, 20-21.

¹⁵⁵ The iconography of his assembly features the Buddha seated on a carriage holds a small golden wheel in his hand, derived from his name.

¹⁵⁶ Henrik H. Sørensen, "The Worship of the Great Dipper in Korean Buddhism," in Sørensen, ed. *Religions in Traditional Korea* (Copenhagen: The Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1995), 78.

(1231-1257) during the Koryŏ dynasty.¹⁵⁷ In the course of the Chosŏn dynasty, the popularity of the cult of Tejaprabha Buddha spread among the general population and became an important cult for the prosperity of the individual and his household.¹⁵⁸ The Seirai-ji Assembly, the Boston Assembly from the queen mother's set, and the relief panel dedicated to the Buddha on the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda are visual evidence that the cult continued as a popular element in Chosŏn Buddhism.

By including Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva and Tejaprabha Buddha in their prayers the votive inscriptions clearly show that the donors prayed for the longevity and prosperity of the royal family. It appears that Tejaprabha and Kṣitigarbha attained much importance in the royal court because its members believed in the immediate response and efficacy of these deities. In this respect Tejaprabha and Kṣitigarbha are logical choices for both the artist and the patron. The addition of Kṣitigarbha and Tejaprabha probably reflected the contemporary belief system of the royal household. Whilst the ultimate Buddhist goal of enlightenment was held to be unworldly and beyond the limits of human feeling, their worldly expression was projected into the new groups of *sabangbul*. The popularity of their cults among members of the royal household caused the Buddha and the Bodhisattva to be fully embraced into the iconography of *sabangbul*. Just as Śākyamuni is again paired with Maitreya, Kṣitigarbha is located underneath Amitābha; and Tejaprabha with the calamity-solving power is paired with Bhaiṣajyaguru, who was well-known for his powers of healing and his efficacy in meeting secular demands. Probably for the same reason, Tejaprabha and Bhaiṣajyaguru were grouped together on the third storey of the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda.

This painting of the assembly represents the Buddhist deities presiding over the four cardinal directions of space, zenith, and nadir respectively. The result is a

¹⁵⁷ Kim Jongmyung, *Buddhist Ritual in Medieval Korea (918-1392)* (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1994), 89-97.

¹⁵⁸ Sørensen, 1995, 72.

presentation of infinite paradises that challenges the imagination of the viewer. Thus it is clear that the *sabangbul* icon and its varieties involve more than just a new set of numbers, and that the groups which include the presence of Buddhas/bodhisattva follow the most consistent and ubiquitous characteristic of the “Mahāyānist cosmology of the innumerable,” centred around the significance of the ten quarters and the innumerable Buddhas whose paradises are located in boundless space. In the *Six-Buddha Assembly* of Seirai-ji, the juxtaposition of the Buddhas of the ten directions, integral to the “cosmology of the innumerable,” represents the scope of dhārma realms encompassing all dimensions of space in the universe. The idea of multiple Buddhas is closely related to their divine, miraculous powers and efficacy which permeate the universe.

The self-consistent world is presented in this Buddhist cosmological description which can be interpreted in a symbolical sense. According to Mahāyāna philosophy, the Buddha pervades everywhere,¹⁵⁹ and the Buddha is the universe itself with no distinction between himself and the universe.¹⁶⁰ By adding Tejaprabha and Kṣitigarbha to the group of the Four Directional Buddhas, the Chosŏn royal family created a painting embodying a perfect Buddhist cosmology of their own: the Buddhas of the four cardinal directions, Tejaprabha in control of the heavenly bodies (zenith), and Kṣitigarbha in control of the underworld (nadir). They translated a religious ideology and politico-cosmology into the pictorial form of *sabangbul* object. The divinities appear to have been arranged according to Korean belief that favourable and unfavourable omens were associated with different compass directions and high and low positions. Although considerably influenced by Buddhist cosmology, this should be seen as a persistent tendency on the part of Korean Buddhists to interpret their faith from the standpoint of indigenous beliefs.¹⁶¹ This tendency creates a Buddhist parallel

¹⁵⁹ Akira Sadakata, 127.

¹⁶⁰ Akira Sadakata, 127.

¹⁶¹ Inoue Hideo, “The Reception of Buddhism in Korea and Its Impact on Indigenous Culture,” in Lewis Lancaster and Chai-shin Yu, eds. *In Introduction of Buddhism to Korea: New Cultural Patterns*

to the indigenous belief system.

6. *The Assembly of Five Buddhas in Jūrin-ji, Hyōgo, Japan*

Judging from its iconography and style, it is assumed that the *Assembly of Five Buddhas* now in Jūrin-ji, Hyōgo in Japan is another painting of a multi-Buddha assembly probably commissioned by the royal court in the mid-sixteenth century under the regency of Queen Dowager Munjōng (fig. 47).¹⁶² As with other assembly paintings sponsored under royal patronage, this assembly is meticulously painted in rich colours and gold, and displays a wealth of decorative details.

The original set of *sabangbul* was often dismantled and reorganized through the centuries to suit new manners of worship. The Jūrin-ji Assembly is a further step in the tendency of dismantling the traditional set of the Four Directional Buddhas. Here the iconography is more complex. This assembly shows two groups of *samsinbul*—Vairocana, Locana, and Śākyamuni—and *samsebul*—Śākyamuni, Amitābha, and Bhaiṣajyaguru—in a crosswise composition, which has no precedent. Despite the sectarian and doctrinal differences, their coexistence within one painting indicates the syncretic form of Korean Buddhism which is typical of the period. Takeda Kazuaki is of the opinion that the tendency of gathering various Buddhas within one frame was apparent after the forced unification of Buddhist schools into Sōn and Kyo in 1424.¹⁶³

(Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 55-56.

¹⁶² See Takeda Kazuaki, 11-14. Hong Yun-sik dates this painting to the early Chosōn dynasty, and Kong Kyu-dōk dates it to mid-15th century. Hong views this painting was produced in the transitional period between the Koryō and Chosōn dynasties. Kong Kyu-dōk, *Chosōn chōn'gi Shimyun-sa ojon pulhoedo yōn'gu* (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 2001), 47-49; Hong Yun-sik, "Chosōn ch'ogi Shimyun-sa sojang obul hoesangdo e taehayō," *Pulgyo hakpo* 29 (Nov. 1992a): 408-409.

Because most of its inscription is damaged, the exact time point is impossible to ascertain. Due to a few characters still remaining in the inscription as *chi* (治) and *samnyōn* (三年), it is sometimes assumed this painting was produced in 1490, the third year of the Hongzhi (弘治) reign (1488-1505). However, since it is not certain that the character *chi* is part of Hongzhi, there remain many problems in dating this painting to the period. Besides the line of "治**三年十月," however, a line with "崇禎" may support the dating that the painting was produced during the reign of Hongzhi and repaired later during the reign of Sungjōng (Chongzhen). Mun Myong-dae, "Samsinbul ūi tosang t'ūkching kwa Chosōn sidae samsinpurhoe-do ūi yōn'gu: Pogwanbul yōn'gu I," *Han'guk ūi purhwa*, vol. 12 (Seoul: Sōngbo munhwa yōn'guwōn, 1995-2000), 221.

¹⁶³ Takeda Kazuaki, 1990: 19-20.

This can be considered as a step taken to remove the differences that existed between different

As the result, the Buddhas revered by each sect—for example, Vairocana, the supreme Buddha of Avataṃsaka school, and Śākyamuni, the principal Enlightened One of Ch’ōnt’ae school—were gathered within a temple sanctum and enshrined together within the main sanctuary.¹⁶⁴ The Jūrin-ji *Assembly of Five Buddhas* was the earliest painted work of this category and later greatly influenced the formation of the iconography of huge outdoor ritual paintings, or *kwaebul* 掛佛. Composed of five Buddhas, *kwaebul* paintings like this are usually represented in a crossed or triangular composition, as they are in this painting (figs. 50, 55-56).

This assembly painting is the earliest extant example of the formation of *samsinbul* 三身佛 (Skt: *trikāya*) within a frame.¹⁶⁵ *Samsinbul* refers to the Buddhas representing the Three Bodies of the Buddha nature: *pōbsin* 法身, the Dhārma body (Skt: *dharmakāya*), the embodiment of the ultimate reality; *posin* 報身, the Reward body (Skt: *saṃbhogakāya*), in which Buddha enjoys the reward of his labours; and *hwasin* 化身, the Manifestation body (Skt: *nirmāṇakāya*), the dhārma’s bodily manifestation form.¹⁶⁶ In the iconography of *samsinbul* aligned vertically, Vairocana as *dharmakāya*

Buddhist sects in Korea. Moreover, monk examinations were abolished under the reign of King Yōnsan’gun (r. 1494-1506) to discourage men and women from becoming ordained as monks and nuns. Although the monastic examinations were reinstated later under the regency of Queen Dowager Munjōng, the distinction between Meditation and Doctrinal monks became tenuous since the examination system had been, in the past, the only mechanism to distinguish one from the other. Mu Soeng, *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen—Tradition and Teachers* (Cumberland, Rhode Island: Primary Point Press, 1991), 128.

¹⁶⁴ Takeda Kazuaki, 19-20; Kim Young-t’ae, *Han’guk pulgyosa kaegwan* (Seoul: Kyōngsōwōn, 1968), 167.

¹⁶⁵ For there is no existing painting of the three Buddhas produced earlier than the Chosōn dynasty, Hong Yun-sik argues that Koreans began to create paintings of Buddhas of the Three Bodies in the Chosōn dynasty. Hong Yun-sik, *Han’guk pulgyo ūi milgyo chōk t’ūksaek* (Esoteric Characteristics of Korean Buddhism) (Seoul: Mandara, 1995), 191.

Although it is not yet defined when the assembly of the Three Buddhas of Vairocana, Locana, and Śākyamuni started to be made in Korea, it is possible to estimate it was about the 10th century, for there is a historical record that the three Buddhas were enshrined at Changan-sa 長安寺 of Kūmgan-san 金剛山 in 982. For the historical records of constructing the sculptures of *samsinbul*, see Yi Kyu-bo, “Wangnyun-sa changyuk kūmsang yōnghōm susūp ki” in TMS, vol. 6, 147-153; Yi Kyu-bo, “Changyuk pirojana sosang ch’an pyōngsō” in TMS, vol. 5, 125; Yi Sung-in “Yōhūngun Sillūk-sa taejanggak ki,” in TMS, vol. 6, 407-410.

See also Kwak Tong-sōk, “Tongmunsōn kwa Koryō sidae ūi misul: Pulgyo chogak,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 1 (1988): 59-62; Hwang Kyu-sōng, “Choson sidae samsinpurhoe-do e kwanhan yon’gu,” *Misul sahak yon’gu* 237 (March 2003): 107.

¹⁶⁶ K. Krishna Murthy, *A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms and Terminology* (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1991), 63-64.

seated beneath a splendid canopy with a number of attending bodhisattvas is placed on the upper level, probably a representation of the heavenly place. Vairocana holds his particular hand gesture, the *bodhyagri* mudrā. In the middle of the frame, surrounded by two bodhisattvas, Locana as *saṃbhogakāya* is represented as a bodhisattva figure wearing luxurious robes and a crown and raising both hands to shoulder height with the palms facing upward. On the lower level we see Śākyamuni holding the *bhūmisparśa* mudrā and depicted as *nirmāṇakāya*.

From the time of the Chosŏn dynasty Śākyamuni, Amitābha and Bhaiṣajyaguru formed a popular trinity called *samsebul*, the Buddhas of Three Realms. This triad was often enshrined in the main hall of the monasteries of the Chosŏn period (fig. 48). *Samse* (三世) in this painting refers to Three Worlds or Realms: the Saha World, where the historical Buddha was born and gained Enlightenment among living beings; the Eastern Paradise of Bhaiṣajyaguru; and Amitābha's Western Paradise.¹⁶⁷ This triad of Śākyamuni, the founder of the religion and Buddha of the present, Amitābha who promises devotees rebirth in the Western Pure Land after their death, and Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Healing Buddha, satisfied popular longing for happiness free from suffering in this world and eternal life after rebirth in paradise.¹⁶⁸ In Chosŏn, there was a need for Korean Buddhism to adjust itself to external changes and transform itself. Hence an earthly, secular worldview was synthesized with transcendental Buddhist ideas to suit believers' needs. It was in this context that the masses actively embraced Buddhism in

¹⁶⁷ Since the Chinese character *se* (世) mean both period and world, *samsebul* can be referred to two groupings: the one is Buddhas of Three Periods, i.e., Past, Present, and Future; the other is Buddhas of Three Realms evolved from the former. The Buddhas of Three Realms follow a strict directional concept in their arrangement. Although the arrangement and choice of personages in this triad vary from temple to temple, when the three Buddhas are enshrined on the altar of Taeung-jŏn (Hall of Great Heroes, dedicated to Śākyamuni) the main sanctuary, Śākyamuni Buddha is seated in the centre; Amitābha, presiding over the West Pure Land, to the right side of Śākyamuni, i.e., west; Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of the Eastern Paradise, to the left side of Śākyamuni, i.e., east. Mun Myong-dae, 1998: 89; Chang Ch'ung-sik, "Chikchi-sa taeung-jŏn samsebul t'aenghwa ūi tosang," *Han'gik ūi purhwa*, vol. 8 (Seoul: Sŏngbo munhwajae yŏn'guwŏn, 1995-2000), 252; Sim Ju-wan, "Imjin waeran ihu ūi taehyŏng sojo pulsang e kwanhan yŏn'gu," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 233, 234 (June 2002): 101; Takeda Kazuaki, 1990, 17.

¹⁶⁸ Mun Myong-dae, "Chosŏn cho sŏkga purhwa ūi yŏn'gu," *Chosŏn cho purhwa ūi yŏn'gu—samsebulhwa* (Sŏngnam-si, Korea: Chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1985), 16; Sim Ju-wan, 2002, 102.

the Chosŏn dynasty, because they were more concerned with their personal welfare and happiness than with any concerns for the nation as a whole. This tendency was already detected in early-Chosŏn paintings. In this type of assembly paintings, Buddhas were selected according to the requirements of the worldly wishes of the royal patrons, such as the longevity and well-being of members of the royal household. In Chosŏn Buddhist art, Maitreya, who was excluded in the formation of the new group of “wish-fulfilling” Buddha triads, is more often treated as a bodhisattva than a Buddha.¹⁶⁹ Thus this painting may be interpreted as an ecclesiastical gathering of Buddhas who were in demand by royal patrons because they satisfied their various needs and prayers.

While Vairocana, as the embodiment of the absolute and conceptually non-graspable reality, is located in the heavenly space on the upper level, Śākyamuni is depicted in the bottom section which probably represents the Saha World. Such an arrangement seems to establish the vertical hierarchy of the Buddhist world. It is in the Saha World that the Buddha manifests himself in a physical body to correspond to the different needs and capacities of all sentient beings. In contrast to the heavenly bodhisattvas surrounding the throne of Vairocana, Śākyamuni is surrounded by numerous earthly figures—kings, queens, king’s consorts, their attendants, and musicians—probably the royal family and their suite, all in the *añjali* mudrā (gesture of adoration) (fig. 47-b, c). There is minimal characterization to distinguish between these retinue who are featured as an addendum in the lower parts of the painting. Royal donors are probably depicted in the painting as worshippers listening to Buddha preaching the dhārma. They are probably presented as a class rather than as individuals.

Locana as *sambhogakāya*, is expressed as a bodhisattva wearing a crown and jewellery, and describes the attainment of buddhahood as a reward for the vigorous

¹⁶⁹ Hong Yun-sik, “Chosŏn Myŏngjong cho ūi purhwa chejak ūl t’onghae pon pulgyo sinang,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 19 (1982): 362.

cultivation of the faith (fig. 47-a). Amitābha and Bhaiṣajyaguru of *samsebul* cross the vertical axis of *samsinbul*. The Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha on the left of Locana made Twelve Vows, which are symbolized by the Twelve Generals, in his aspiration to cure the physical and mental diseases of all sentient beings. Likewise, in various stages of a bodhisattva's career, Amitābha also became Buddha through labour and accruing merits by completing his 48 vows to lead all the dead to the Western Pure Land and promise them eternal life in paradise. Thus the gathering of the three Buddhas aligned horizontally across the composition can be understood as the conception of *saṃbhogakāya*, the Reward Body.

Apparently there was an increased interest in the worship of and state-sponsored rituals concerning these five Buddhas during the early Chosŏn period. The *Assembly of Five Buddhas* in Jūrin-ji is the representative example of such works. As Kim Su-on's *Sari yŏngŭng ki* records, the tradition of the royal house worshipping the five Buddhas, enshrined together inside the Naebul-tang, was already practised during the reign of King Sejong. The assembly of the five Buddhas as a complex mixture of *samsinbul* and *samsebul* offers itself as suitable for iconic use. It suggests that the layout of the assembly of the five Buddhas had become more or less standardized by the fifteenth century. The balance and stability of the composition of the painting exemplify the fact that the combined icons of *samsinbul* and *samsebul* within a single composition was well-established by the time this painting was produced, and had become popular in the royal court by this time at the latest.

The type of assembly of Buddhas possesses a strong sense of symmetrical, geometrical composition which creates balance and harmony in the painting. No hierarchical order among the Buddhas was intended in the composition of the painting, and the figures are simply arranged in two rows as seen in the Seirai-ji Assembly. While the rigid symmetrical composition resulting from the simple alignment of the

Four or Six Directional Buddhas in the previous paintings lacks a special pivot, there is a clear tendency of convergence and concentration in the composition of the Jūrin-ji Assembly. The Locana Buddha who appears to be the main figure in the composition is placed at the central point of the axial cross and diagonal lines. The axial lines running crosswise and diagonally through the painting converge on the decoration on the chest of Locana. The central Buddha functions as the centripetal figure bridging and accommodating the complex mixture of *samsebul* and *samsinbul*. This notion of concentric axially seems to have been adopted as a focus of power by the Chosŏn court painters and their royal patrons. When we recall the fact that the gathering and parting of the directional Buddhas in the formation of an iconography were never meaningless or accidental but highly contrived, this composition with its centripetal tendency may have reflected the wish for centralized power and the royal control of the central government. This was the coherent desire of the Chosŏn kings which was reflected in the icons of the Four Directional Buddhas and their variations.

7. Conclusion

One feature of Chosŏn Buddhist art during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the dominance of the various assemblies of *sabangbul*. We should not overlook the underlying distinctive feature that all the extant *sabangbul* works of this period were commissioned by the royal court at a time when Buddhism was officially suppressed. A series of royal commissions during this period chose the unusual iconography of a group of various directional Buddhas which once prevailed during the Three Kingdoms period. Apparently Buddhism and the specific icons of the *sabangbul* of the Silla period were intimately linked with Silla's sovereign power and with social and state affairs. In the emerging Chosŏn dynasty, the Silla-inspired *sabangbul* tradition was also used in a political domain. An observation can also be made on the relationship between the strong bureaucratic structures set up by the state ministers and the weak

regal authority of the monarchs. By patronizing *sabangbul* worship, the royal patrons, who were frequently involved in conflicts with state ministers in their bid for supremacy, inextricably tied court-sponsored art of the early Chosŏn period to Silla *sabangbul* imagery. The extant works reflect the will and desire of the rulers of the Chosŏn royal household to consolidate their power against the powerful bureaucrats of government by spreading Buddhism and the *sabangbul* iconography. Looking at the dynamic relationship that existed between them, it is possible to conclude that the renaissance and popularity of the *sabangbul* iconography in the royal household in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries resulted from the long-standing antagonism between the state ministers and the Chosŏn kings who wished to keep the bureaucrats in check by promoting Buddhism.

Traditionally scholars have been of the opinion that Buddhism was mainly suppressed and even degenerated in the Chosŏn period as a result of the implementation of anti-Buddhist policies such as the confiscation of monastic estates and servants, the reduction in the number of temples and monks, and the removal of Buddhist rituals from national rites. However generous sponsorship by members of the royal family, including the monarchs, was one of the main driving forces which helped the religion to continue to flourish despite the limitations imposed by the power of Neo-Confucianism. Many of the Chosŏn rulers actively supported Buddhism, most notably in the reigns of King Sejo and Queen Dowager Munjŏng. The royal authority to rule the country was extended through Buddhist belief. In their aim to protect the royal household, the early Chosŏn kings and succeeding rulers remained ardent Buddhists and continued to foster Buddhist culture and its art. The attempt of the royal court to expand its power became a source of the production of *sabangbul* works. As a result Buddhist images of *sabangbul* sponsored by the royal court in the early Chosŏn period were formidable both in quality and quantity. Buddhist scriptures were published in great quantities,

and Buddhism was elaborated into a sophisticated philosophy. The monastic orders of Chosŏn Buddhism received lavish support from the royal household. But, at the same time, the court increased its tax revenue from the control of monastery lands. During this period Chosŏn Buddhism offered secular benefits to the royal court, and in return Buddhism secured socio-political and economic stability thanks to the tacit approval and protection of the court. I have found this evidence particularly useful for understanding Buddhism during the Choson dynasty. It helps to view Chosŏn Buddhism from a different angle and recognize a new dimension of the role of Buddhism as a source of political power. The popularization of Buddhism and the checks on Confucian vassal power through a belief in Buddhism would bring about a new understanding of the religion in the early Chosŏn dynasty. The primary purpose of religious practice and the rituals performed with the support of the court was to enlist the assistance of spiritual powers to enhance royal authority rather than the interests of the nation. This also negates the existing “nation-protecting” Buddhism, a key characteristic in understanding the history of Korean Buddhism.

The *sabangbul* objects created under royal sponsorship reflect contemporary socio-political situations and provide an opportunity to interpret the multivalent meanings of the assemblies of the directional Buddhas. Changes in *sabangbul* iconography follow changes in doctrines and reflect changes in socio-political circumstances and patronage. The union of various Buddhas within a single frame reflects the contemporary situation of Korean Buddhism which had earlier undergone the enforced unification of its schools and doctrines. The *Five-Buddha Assembly* in Jūrin-ji is significant because the iconography of the painting influenced the later development of the iconography of *kwaebul* 掛佛, popularized in later period of Chosŏn. This iconography of the five-Buddha assembly reflects a transition between the early Chosŏn *pulhoedo* 佛會圖 and the later *kwaebul*. In the next chapter, I shall

discuss the emergence of *kwaebul* painting and the continuation of the same iconography in this medium as a means of helping people to recover from the catastrophic hardships caused by the repeated invasions of the Japanese and Manchus during the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER III

The Transformation of *Sabangbul*: the Prevalence of Outdoor Ritual and *Kwaebul*

Royal patronage reached its height with Queen Dowager Munjōng's lavish expenditure on Buddhist projects, but this also seems to have marked the end of active royal patronage on a grand scale in the history of Chosŏn Buddhist art. The variation of the monarchs' oppression and encouragement of Buddhism ended after the middle of the Chosŏn period. Neo-Confucian scholars led the Korean academic community, and they became more and more powerful from this time on. Buddhist politics was terminated after the Japanese invasions and official patronage of Buddhist art was thereafter inevitably reduced in scale, and more or less limited to individuals.

The Chosŏn dynasty can be divided into two periods: before and after the Japanese invasion in the *imjin* year of 1592 (*Imjin waeran* 壬辰倭亂). In the *chōngyu* year of 1597 (*Chōngyu chaeran* 丁酉再亂) the Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi launched a second invasion into Chosŏn. Whilst still recovering from the previous Japanese invasions, Chosŏn was again invaded in 1627 (*Chōngmyo horan* 丁卯胡亂) and 1636 (*Pyōngja horan* 丙子胡亂) by the Manchus. Subsequent natural disasters increased the suffering of the people and frequent unrest led to dramatic social and economic changes. The development of various secular cults and rituals during the period can be explained in terms of these changes. Buddhist mortuary rituals to console the souls of the dead, called *ch'ōndo-jae* 薦度齋 (ritual for the salvation of the dead), played a major part in the course of the recovery efforts after the wars.

As Buddhist ritual practices became widespread during the second half of the Chosŏn period, they developed various kinds of new forms of ritual art. New sets of directional Buddhas began to appear first in *kwaebul* 掛佛 (lit: "hanging Buddha"), colossal banner paintings hung out for outdoor rituals. *Kwaebul*, like Buddhist pictures in general, are treasured in Buddhist monasteries: they demonstrate distinct

styles in painting and provide important data for the study of Buddhist paintings of the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty. *Kwaebul* produced in the later period of Chosŏn succeeded the iconography of the multi-Buddha assembly of the first half of the Chosŏn period. An analysis of specific *kwaebul* images with the iconography of *sabangbul* and the study of its evolution will illuminate the various religious, secular, political, and functional aspects related to Buddhist rituals, the new iconography of *kwaebul*, and the patrons. This chapter will also attempt to examine the particular aims behind the production of *kwaebul* and the particular functions it served in outdoor rituals. It will also illuminate the function of Buddhist rituals function in legitimizing the existence of Chosŏn Buddhist saṅgha and maintaining its status within the Confucian society. Furthermore this chapter will make some observations on the way in which Buddhist saṅgha attached a new significance to pre-Buddhist rituals concerning ancestor worship, and transformed existing rituals to suit more pragmatic Buddhist attitudes under particular historical and cultural circumstances.¹ In doing so, I shall explore the interactive relationship between faith and ritual activity, and its meaning and function within society.

1. Historical Background: Prevalence of Buddhist Ritual and *Kwaebul*

Despite the fact that royal members believed in Buddhism, the religion was mainly oppressed and persecuted. The monasteries underwent terrible hardships which including the confiscation of temple property and the enforced merging of Buddhist schools into a mere two—Sŏn and Kyo. Anti-Buddhist policies were intensified after the middle period. Throughout the reigns of Sŏngjong (r. 1468-94), Yŏnsan'gun (r. 1494-1506), and Chungjong—apart from a brief respite during Queen Dowager Munjŏng's regency—the suppression of Buddhism intensified and the religion

¹ P.D. Premasiri, "Offerings to Ancestors in Theravada Buddhism," in David J. Kalupahana, ed. *Buddhist Thought and Ritual* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 152.

suffered severe setbacks.² Following the dismissal of Buddhism from the capital and other major cities, ordained Buddhists were banned from entering the walled city, and temples within the capital were closed and prohibited by the edicts issued under the oppressive regimes of the Chosŏn kings.³ Isolated from both state and society, the saṅgha took refuge in mountain monasteries far from urban communities.⁴ The total ban on Buddhist monks entering the cities meant a cessation of all official Buddhist activities, and these were now exclusively confined to activities in the seclusion of the mountains. Kwŏn Kee-jŏng has defined the Buddhism of the Chosŏn dynasty under this situation as follows: “The Korean saṅgha became neither Sŏn nor Kyo nor Chŏngt’o nor Vinaya nor exoteric nor esoteric, but merely “mountain Buddhism” of no particular school.”⁵

As a result of official and urban rejection Buddhism was assimilated into the rural

² King Sŏngjong, an ardent Confucian ruler, even banned the recitation of the Buddha’s name in the cities and prohibited the founding of new monasteries. Under Sŏngjong’s reign, the complete abrogation of the monk registration system (*toch’ŏpche* 度牒制) led to a total ban on entering the priesthood.

Buddhism met a further crisis in the reign of the tyrannical Yŏnsan’gun (r. 1495-1506), whose reign was also noted for his unscrupulous suppression of the literati. During the rule of Yŏnsan’gun, Hŭngdŏk-sa and Hŭngch’ŏn-sa, the headquarters of the Sŏn and Kyo Schools, were burned down and the two remaining monasteries in the capital were closed. The king is reputed to have turned Buddhist temples into places of pleasure, i.e. he ordered to move Chang’agwŏn 掌樂院 (Bureau of Music) and *gisaeng* (female entertainer) to Wŏn’gak-sa which was later named Yŏnbang-wŏn 聯芳院 (literally “House full of flowers”).

The restricted form of two orders, temporarily abolished due to the conflagrations during the reign of Yŏsan’gun, were abolished again during the reign of King Chungjong and later completely dissolved. During the reign of King Chungjong, the national ecclesiastical examination system (*sŭnggwa* 僧科) was abolished and the official way to be an ordained monk was obstructed.

Sŏngjong sillok, 7(1476)/10/12(*imo*); 23(1492)/1/30(*sinch’uk*); *Yŏnsan’gun ilgi*, 2(1496)/1/03(*imo*); 10(1504)/12/9(*ŭlch’uk*); 11(1505)/2/21(*chŏngch’uk*); 11(1505)/9/30 (*sinhae*); Robert E., Jr. Buswell, “Buddhism Under Confucian Domination: The Synthetic Vision of Sŏsan Hyujŏng (1520-1604),” in Jahyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuschler, ed, *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999) 140; Lee Ki-baik, 1984, 199.

³ In the early years of his reign, for example, King Sejong banished Buddhist monks from the capital, complying with a memorial submitted from the Office of the Inspector General. *Sejong sillok*, 27 (1445)/7/14(*pyŏngsul*), 31(1449)/1/29(*kyŏngsul*); *Sŏngjong sillok*, 6(1475)/7/7(*kapin*), 11 (1480)/5/28(*chŏngmi*); *Yŏnsan’gun ilgi* 燕山君日記, 1(1495)/11/12(*sinmyo*); Takahashi Tōru, *Richō bukkyō* (Seoul, 1929), 733-757

⁴ Buswell, 1999, 140; Sørensen, 1993a, 90.

Traditionally, Sŏn temples are found deep in the mountains. However, this phenomenon of the total blockade of the entry of Buddhist monks into the cities had no parallel in history. From this reason, Buddhist monks and nuns could not enter the capital for several hundred years.

⁵ Kwŏn Kee-jŏng, “Chŏngt’o Thought,” in *Buddhist Thought in Korea*, ed. by The Buddhist Research Institute (Seoul: Donnguk University Press, 1994), 245.

Kim Yong-t’ae also defines the religion of this period “*mujong sansŭng*” 無宗山僧 (“mountain monks of no Buddhist school”). Kim Young-t’ae, “Kŭndae pulgyo ŭi chongt’ong ch’ongmaek,” *Han’guk kŭndae chonggyo sasangsa* (Iri: Wŏn’gwang University Press, 1984), 186.

life of the common people.⁶ Mountain monasteries received support from devout followers in the locality during anti-Buddhist oppression.⁷ Having been rejected by the small but powerful ruling group, later-Chosŏn Buddhism was based on its wide appeal and its main support group and public image changed dramatically.⁸ It is generally accepted that Chosŏn Buddhism was a religion of the common people in marginal positions of Chosŏn society, and it is probably true that Buddhism was espoused by a great number of common people during this period. Nonetheless, it must be understood that Chosŏn Buddhism had deep roots in all sections of Chosŏn society and, from the advent of the Chosŏn dynasty, it was practiced by everyone from the lowliest peasant to the king.⁹ The early Chosŏn rulers used Buddhism to bolster the supremacy of the royal household despite strong objections from powerful courtiers. It challenges the conventional view that the religion was mainly accepted and believed among women and low-class people, both isolated in an increasingly hostile Neo-Confucian social milieu. Rejecting this conventional view on Chosŏn Buddhism as a “degenerated” religion restricted to the lower ranks of society and women, Walraven recounts that: “the social basis on which Chosŏn Buddhism depended for its survival was perhaps broadened, but did not radically shift from the elite to the commoners.”¹⁰ Because the implementation of various measures to suppress Buddhism was vigorously pursued by the Neo-Confucian literati, it may be assumed that the religion had a broad influence throughout the society, and this is why it had to be eliminated from the public sphere all at once.¹¹

⁶ Nam Tong-sin, “Chosŏn hugi pulgyo-gye tonghyang kwa *Sangpŏp myŏlŭi-gyŏng* (佛說像法滅義經) ŭi sŏngnip,” *Han’guksa yon’gu* 113 (2001): 115-6.

⁷ Cho Eunsu, “Re-thinking late 19th century Chosŏn Buddhist society,” *Acta Koreana* 6, no. 2 (July 2003): 92-3.

⁸ Hong Yun-sik, Chosŏn sidae Chinŏn-jip ŭi kanhaneg kwa ūisik ŭi milgyohwa, *Han’guk pulgyosa ui yon’gu* (Seoul: Kyomunsa, 1988), 277; Lee Sŭng-hee, “Chosŏn hugi sinjung t’aenghwa tosang ŭi yŏn’gu,” *Misul sahak yon’gu*, 117-119.

⁹ Cho Eunsu, 92-93.

¹⁰ Boudewijn Walraven, “A Re-Examination of the Social Basis of Buddhism in Late Chosŏn Korea,” *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 20, no. 1 (June 2007): 4.

¹¹ See Cho Eunsu, 92; Walraven, 8.

This view of Buddhism unquestionably casts doubt on conventional perceptions and descriptions of “Chosŏn Buddhism” as a degenerated and decadent religion. Although the Buddhist saṅgha underwent vicissitudes of fortune, the influence of Buddhism on the state and society continued, primarily in the symbiotic relationship between the royal house and the monastic orders. There has been less recognition of the fact that society underwent major social, cultural, and intellectual transformations that might have stimulated the emergence of positive developments within Buddhism. Despite the ongoing bureaucratic anti-Buddhist policies, it is worth noting that the social status of Buddhist monks increased during this period as a reward for their distinguished military contributions in repelling the Japanese invasions.¹² Furthermore, after the wars there were enormous reconstruction projects, and these included the restoration of Buddhist monasteries. To ensure that Buddhist saṅgha continued helping in post-war restoration projects, the Chosŏn government revived the official titles and positions of Buddhist monks—*sŭngjik* 僧職 (monk’s title) and *sŭnggye* 僧階 (monk’s position).¹³ Extensive projects to reconstruct Buddhist monasteries devastated by the Japanese invasions were approved or even carried out by the government after the wars.¹⁴ Buddhist saṅgha were involved in the overall restoration and this helped their revival from stagnation.¹⁵ Buddhist philosophy continued to thrive and develop intellectually. Eminent thinkers like Kihwa 己和 (1376-1433), Sŏsan 西山 (1520-1604), and Kŭngsŏn 巨璇 (1767-1852), who were also engaged in

¹² Cho Eunsu, 93; Rhi Ki-young, 1993, 205.

¹³ Nam Tong-shin, 2001b, 117-118.

Whenever necessary, Buddhist monks were mobilized to do forced labor such as the construction project of royal palace or mountain fortress. Cho Eunsu, 93.

¹⁴ Lee Kang-kŭn, 1995, 49-64.

According to *Han’guk pulgyo ch’ansul munhŏn mongnok* [The List of Published Buddhist Literature of Korea], while there are found only 15 entries of re/construction of monastery or hermitage in the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty, they increased to 197 in the later Chosŏn after the foreign invasions. Oh Kyŏng-hoo, “Chosŏn sidae sach’al sajŏk e kwanhan kŏmt’o,” *Kyŏngju sahak* 24/25 (Aug. 2006): 354.

¹⁵ Chŏng Pyŏng-sam, “Chin’gyŏng sidae pulgyo ūi chinhŭng kwa pulgyo munhwa ūi palchŏn (Promotion of Buddhism and Development of Buddhist Culture during *chin’gyŏng sidae*),” *Chin’gyŏng sidae 1: uri munhwa ūi hwanggŭmgi*, ed. Ch’oe Wan-su, et al. (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1998), 155-8.

Confucian and Daoist studies, emerged and wrote important treatises defending Buddhism against the vehement ideological opposition from Korean Neo-Confucianism.

Although elite patronage was greatly reduced, Buddhism enjoyed a different type of success during this period. Hong Yun-sik is of the opinion that the Buddhist rituals which became a major aspect of Korean monastic practice, made the religion popular among the people during the Chosŏn period.¹⁶ The prevalence of Buddhist rituals at mountain monasteries as a result of government persecution, ironically resulted in the popularization of Buddhism among the common people who became fervent supporters, devotees, and practitioners.¹⁷ Indeed, Buddhism was never more Korean than during the Chosŏn time. Furthermore, patronage from royalty and the *yangban* elite did not cease completely. This is manifested clearly in official ceremonies like those conducted at royal monasteries, or *wŏnch'al* 願刹 (royal memorial temples), where Buddhist rites were performed as memorial services for deceased ancestors of the royal family.¹⁸ This evidence again challenges conventional opinions that Chosŏn Buddhist traditions had degenerated to become the religion of the lower echelons of society.

The post-war period of the seventeenth century in Korea witnessed a great social and economic upheaval. As well as suffering from warfare during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the people had to endure the long-term natural disasters which occurred during the “Little Glacial Age.”¹⁹ Buddhism in Chosŏn society also

¹⁶ Hong Yun-sik, “Chosŏn sidae chinŏn-chip ūi kanhaeng kwa ūisik ūi milgyohwa,” *Han'guk milgyo sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Dongguk University, 1986), 418.

¹⁷ Nam Hee-sook, *Chosŏn hugi pulsŏ kanhaeng yŏn'gu: chinŏn-jip kwa pulgyo ūisik chip ūl chungsim ūiro* (PhD diss., Seoul National University, 2004), 112-119.

¹⁸ Kwŏn Sang-no, *Han'guk sach'al chŏnsŏ*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1979), 107, 448, 646; Pak Pyŏng-sŏn, “Wŏndang ūi sŏllip chŏlch'a mit kujo,” *Yŏksa kyoyuk* 61 (1997): 60-70.

In Chosŏn dynasty, *wŏnch'al*, founded or designated by the royal household to pray for royal ancestors and its heavenly bliss and prosperity, was the only temple type to be protected under the Confucian rule. They were designated as the guardian temple for a royal tomb as well as the royal praying chapel mainly in the capital region. Kim Pong-ryŏl, “Chosŏn wangsil wŏndang sach'al hyŏngsik ūi kusŏng hyŏngsik,” *Taehan kyŏnch'un hakhoe nonmunjip* 1, no. 7 (July 1996): 97-98.

¹⁹ For conditions in Korea at this time, see Lee T'ae-jin, “Changgichŏk in chayŏn chaeae wa chŏnran ūi p'ihae (Long-term Natural Disasters and Damages from Foreign Invasions),” *Han'guksa* 30 (1998): 31; William S. Atwell, “Volcanism and Short-Term Climatic Change in East Asian and World History, c. 1200 and 1699,” *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 60-66; Nam Hee-sook, 2004, 114-116.

underwent a drastic change in orientation. The majority of religious activities practiced at different social levels were intended for private purposes during the period rather than for the purpose of ensuring national security.²⁰ Now Buddhist rituals began to be practised on an individual and local level. Various Buddhist rituals of the earlier period were reduced in both number and content. Owing to local cultural influences, Buddhist rituals, or *chae* 齋, were concentrated on *ch'ōndo-jae*. Mortuary rituals developed into elaborate public ceremonies aimed at relieving the suffering of both living and the dead. This phenomenon which was lacking in variety marks a large contrast with Koryŏ Buddhism which features various different rituals in categories like *sojae* 消災 (calamity solving), and various dhārma meetings for preaching sūtra and discourses like *Hwaŏm toryang* 華嚴道場, *Panya toryang* 般若道場, *Pŏbhwa toryang* 法華道場, etc.²¹ The primary purpose of Buddhist rituals was now to guide lay believers in the proper conduct of their lives in the present world rather than to preach to them transcendent knowledge and enlightenment for a remote future.

After the succession of foreign invasions and natural disasters, the main function of Buddhist monasteries in Korea was to conduct mortuary rituals for the dead. By providing support during these very hard times Buddhist saṅgha used these rituals as an effective instrument in enrolling lay believers.²² Buddhism attempted to recover its social status through the propagation of special type of rituals. They satisfied some of the practical needs of the people who were constantly threatened by invaders and calamities and, thus, more interested in the salvation of the dead and the well-being of the living rather than enlightenment. At the same time, the severe loss of material

²⁰ Cho Eunsu, 102.

²¹ See Kim Jongmyung, *Buddhist rituals in Medieval Korea (918-1392)* (PhD. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1994); Kim Hyŏng-woo, *Koryŏ sidae kukka chŏk pulgyo haengsa e taehan yŏn'gu* (PhD. diss., Dongguk University, 1992a), 31-35; idem, "Koryŏ chŏn'gi pulgyo haengsa ūi chŏn'gae yangsang (Development of Buddhist Ceremony in the early half of the Koryŏ Dynasty)," in *Pulgyo munhwa sasangsa 1*, ed. Kasan Yi Chi-kwan sūnim hwagap kinyŏm nonch'ong kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Kasan pulgyo munhwa chinhŭngwŏn, 1992b), 867.

²² Suh Yoon-kil, "Esoteric Buddhism," *Buddhist Thought in Korea*, ed. The Buddhist Research Institute (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1994), 291; Kwŏn Kee-jŏng, 1993, 180.

support led to a deterioration in the economic conditions of saṅgha life and this became a serious challenge to the sustainability of institutional monasticism. Deprived of support from the rich elite, mountain monasteries were forced to depend on the donations of their lay congregations in order to survive. Thus the religious practices held at the monasteries represent a search for a reliable means of subsistence.²³

A. The Functions of Large-scale Outdoor Rituals in Chosŏn Society

Rituals have multiple functions in society and culture. Buddhist rituals acquired specific functions in an East Asian philosophy based on Confucian notions. Particularly, those performed to execute Confucian obligations at funerals and memorial services permeated East Asian societies. Buddhism always embraced “secular” ethical values as Confucian filial piety. The establishment of Buddhist rituals and ceremonies in Chosŏn, which mainly consists of funerary and salvific ritual, was closely related to the systematic organization of Confucian rites and their broad spread in society in the mid-Chosŏn period.²⁴ In their effort to transform Chosŏn Korea into a Confucian society, the Neo-Confucian scholars pointed out the importance of proper observation of elaborate rituals,²⁵ in which ancestor worship played an especially important part.²⁶

²³ See Lee Gwang-su, *Buddhist Ideas and Rituals in Early India and Korea* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), 163.

²⁴ The ritual system of Chosŏn dynasty was reformed. Chosŏn restructured state rituals and their contents based on *Chosŏn kyŏngkuchŏn* 朝鮮經國典 [Administrative Code of Chosŏn], *Kukcho oryeŭi* 國朝五禮儀 [The National Codes of Five Rites], *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典 [Complete Code of Law] to keep up with the growing acceptance of the Neo-Confucian ideology. Kim Chŏl-wŏong, “Chosŏn Ch’ogŭi sajŏn ŭi ch’egyeŭhwa kwajŏng,” *Munhwa sahak* 20 (Dec. 2003): 189-190; Lee Young-joon, “Chosŏn hugi sajŏn ŭi chaep’yŏn kwa kukka chesa (On the Reformation of Ritual Code and the National Memorial Rites of the Late Chosŏn Period),” *Han’guk sa yŏn’gu* 118, (Sep. 2002): 196-204.

²⁵ A renowned figure of the Neo-Confucian literati of the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty, Sŏng Hyŏn (1439-1504) states:

Rites must be cultivated. If they are not cultivated, the human mind is unstable, laws and orders are numerous, and the way of good rule cannot emerge. It is comparable to curing a man’s sickness: if one tried to remedy it hastily in one morning with poisonous medicine, would his constitution not also be harmed? One should first provide the taste of the five grains; thereafter his body naturally regains vitality, and the sickness disappears.

Sŏng Hyŏn, “The Fundamental Role of Rites” in *Hobaektang-jip*, vol. 10, 12a-13b.

²⁶ Robert Moes, *Korean Art from the Brooklyn Museum Collection* (New York: Universe Books, 1987), 13.

Failure to do so would amount to a serious breach in filial obligations.²⁷ The mortuary ritual and memorial service must have been the Buddhist reaction to decorum and etiquette regulated by the Confucian ethic of ancestor worship in order not to lose its place as a religion in the society. The Confucian virtue of filial piety must be a dominant driving force by which many Chosŏn people were willing to take part in the outdoor ritual. In a social context where Buddhist salvation was deemed as a filial responsibility, Buddhist rituals harmonised with Confucian principles and served as a means to express Confucian virtue.²⁸ In order to become palatable to a Chosŏn society heavily indoctrinated by Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism had to adapt itself to Confucian ideas of a strong filial ethic and the perpetuation of ancestor worship.²⁹ Buddhist texts like *Pumo ūnjung kyōng* 父母恩重經 [Parental Benevolence Sūtra] and apocryphal stories in Buddhist scriptures like *Ullambana Sūtra*, both of which were widely read through the Chosŏn period, expressed the merits of filial piety. *Yōngga ch'ōndo-jae* 靈駕 薦度齋, which refers to rituals presenting offerings to the spirits of the deceased, had grown around the ritual of ancestor worship, and this indicates its importance in Chosŏn society. Nowhere is this reflected more clearly than in official state ceremonies, where Buddhist rites were performed as memorial services for deceased members of the royal family called *kisin-jae* 忌晨齋.³⁰ This was generally regarded as one of the most important national rituals. From a sociological perspective, the observance of the ritual by the king must have been viewed as a public endorsement.

²⁷ See Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1973), 53-55.

²⁸ The prevalence of Buddhist mortuary ritual had grown around the ritual of ancestor worship, indicating the importance attached to this ritual in the Confucian-oriented Chosŏn society. Henrik Sørensen states, "In the Sino-Korean cultural context, this ceremony has gradually taken on strong overtones of filial piety, although the doctrines on which this ritual is based are essential features of Mahāyāna Buddhism." In this sense, it can be interpreted that Buddhist dominance, maintained throughout the Silla and Koryŏ dynasties, finally yields to Neo-Confucian supremacy with the foundation of the worldly-oriented Confucianism in Chosŏn dynasty. Sørensen, "A Bibliographical Survey of Buddhist Ritual Texts from Korea," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 6 (1991-1992): 191.

²⁹ Walraven, 3-4.

³⁰ *Sejong sillok* 4(1422)/4/5(*pyōngin*); Chōng Jae-hoon, Chosŏn hugi wangsil *kisin-je* ūi sŏlhaeng kwa unyōng," *Kyujanggak* 31 (Dec. 2007): 2201-214.

Sōn monastery became a social institution actively participating in communal aspirations with the approval of the royal family.

This requirement of Confucian filial piety was strengthened by Buddhist beliefs in the destiny of the soul at death. Buddhists believed that when a person died the soul passed into an intermediate state lasting between seven and forty-nine days. The dead were thought to have some influence on the living, and this was another reason to observe funerary rituals. Failure to do so was not only considered an act of negligence on the part of the decedents of the deceased, but was also believed to result in the deceased turning into hungry ghosts or *preta*,³¹ malevolent spirits who were driven to terrorize the living because of their insatiable desires.³² The mortuary ritual incumbent upon the living relatives of the deceased was conceived as a means of appeasing these desires and preventing their occurrence.³³ The descendents believed that the careful observance of due process in burial, mourning practices, and annual commemorative rites for ancestors would assure their continued aid. During Buddhist rituals like the Hungry Ghost Festival, the living also showed their concern for the dead. The rationale for promoting the ritual was directly related to concerns about the fate of departed ancestors, a fate based on the Buddhist belief in the “transfer of merit.” But Buddhist scriptures also put an eloquent emphasis on opportunities for living persons to accumulate merit for themselves by assisting the course of the departed ancestors in the afterlife.³⁴ The outdoor rituals frequently held during the Chosōn period should thus

³¹ Several circumstances can cause the dead spirit becoming a hungry ghost: for example, an improper burial is one factor, since the burial represents the first stage in sending the ancestor to the underworld; Typically, this occurs when people are killed *en mass*, or executed, or die away from home and subsequently have been forgotten; Other spirits become ghosts because of anger. Perhaps they were violently murdered or unjustly executed and now long for vengeance. Stephen Harell, “When a Ghost Becomes a God” in Arthur P. Wolf, *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 146-8.

³² Arthur P. Wolf, “Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors” in, *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, A. Wolf (ed.) (Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 175-176; Emily M. Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village* (Stanford University Press, 1973), 224 - 225.

³³ Ahern, 211.

³⁴ The *Sūtra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* uniquely expanded this idea. In the chapter 7 “Benefiting the Living and the Dead” (利益存亡品) of the sūtra, the Bodhisattva instructs

be viewed as popular rituals that served the dual function of fulfilling Confucian filial piety and safely delivering the dead spirits through their intermediate existence to prevent the deceased from becoming a disruptive force to the living.

The performance of rituals is an integral part of all religions. The function of rituals is also closely linked to their references. For example, the Buddhist mortuary rituals frequently held after foreign invasions and natural disasters are described as referring not only to perfidious realities but also to timeless Confucian values in Chosŏn society. Scholars have shown a constant interest in the meanings and functions of rituals, as shown by the innumerable books and collections they have published. The scholarly disputes that have arisen over the functions of rituals centre around the exact relationship between rituals and their references.³⁵ From a sociological perspective, as Catherine Bell has suggested, individual beliefs and practices in a society are viewed as “social activity” in general.³⁶ Such activities are integrative and lead to more harmonious and coordinated relationships between individuals, families, and communities. Using the term “ritualization” to describe and contextualize rituals, Bell defines it as a culturally “strategic way of acting.”³⁷ Bell’s argument follows the French socialist Émile Durkheim who recognized the social origin of religion and asserted that “religion is an eminently social thing”, and that “religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities”³⁸; “rites are ways of acting that are born only in the midst of assembled groups and whose purpose is to

that after one’s death, should his/her relatives perform, on their behalf, all the blissful and beneficial sacraments, then one out of every seven parts of the meritorious virtue gained will go to the dead person, while six parts will go to the living themselves. T. 412, 784b.

³⁵ Frits Staal, *Rules Without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras, and the Human Sciences* (New York: Lang, 1989), 127-9, 131, 134, 137, 140, 330.

³⁶ Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 81-82; Nick Crossley, “Ritual, body technique, and (Inter)Subjectivity,” in Kevin Schilbrack, *Thinking Through Rituals: Philosophical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 41, 257.

³⁷ Bell, 1997, 81-82.

³⁸ Social functionalism was initiated by William Robertson Smith and most influentially exemplified by Emile Durkheim’s contention that religion is “an eminently social thing.” Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. K. E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995 [1912]), 9.

evoke, maintain, or recreate certain mental states of those groups.”³⁹ In this sense, ritualized collective conduct was intimately related to social structures and social integration.

Durkheim argues that, for individuals within a society, religion contributes to solidarity and identification.⁴⁰ Rituals are an effective agent in promoting unity and well-being when the entire community is involved. In his study of ritual activities and other expressions of religion that can serve constructive social ends, Durkheim emphasized the social impact of rituals and the various ties connecting individuals to society.⁴¹ His monumental work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), argues that the most important function of funerary rites and religion in general is to reaffirm societal bonds and the social structure itself. Durkheim regarded rituals as a means to facilitate individuals to create a cultural unity, capable of strengthening the social bonds between members of a community.⁴² According to Durkheim, rituals integrate society through their contribution to the moral unity of society: “The true justification of religious practices does not lie in the apparent ends which they pursue but in their invisible influence over consciousnesses and in their manner of affecting our states of mind ... in awakening or reawakening the sentiment of the moral comfort attained by the regular celebration of the cult.”⁴³ Greatly influenced by Durkheim’s sociological orientation and his theory that the primary significance of rituals lies in the expression and promotion of collective sentiments and social solidarity,⁴⁴ Alfred

³⁹ Durkheim, 9.

⁴⁰ Durkheim, 239.

⁴¹ Émile Durkheim and his followers, including Robert Hertz and Marcell Mauss, studied human behaviour in a “sociological framework” and focused their attention primarily on the question of societal solidarity. Graham Cunningham, *Religion and Magic: Approaches and Theories* (University of Edinburgh, 1999), 43.

⁴² Bell, 1997, 25, quoting Durkheim.

⁴³ Durkheim, 364.

Many subsequent structural-functional studies of rituals have been indebted to Durkheim’s discussion that ritual was a mechanism by which societies could sustain and reproduce themselves, see Cunningham, 42; Walter Goldschmidt, *Functionalism*, in *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 2, eds. David Levinson and Melvin Ember (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 510.

⁴⁴ Robert H. Winthrop, *Functionalism*. In *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, ed.

Radcliffe-Brown, a British social anthropologist and the founder of Structural Functionalism, also argued that religion functions to integrate and maintain a society. He describes how religious rituals “regulate, maintain and transmit from one generation to another sentiments on which the constitution of the society depends.”⁴⁵

Rituals are vehicles which delineate the identity of individual members of society and transmit them to future generations. Buddhist-style *ch'ondo-jae* that mark changes in the ongoing social structure are significant markers of the identity of Choson society. By being repeated over time, they also contribute to the identification of society and its stability by re-establishing order. Since they possess a symbolic meaning, the salvation rituals cherished by the participants involve most members of the community and are continued into the future. Mortuary rituals were broadly observed by the community and performed regularly and consistently to give it a group identification and restore its unity. For instance, in acknowledging the importance in the choice of death rituals, the underlying meanings contained in the ritual, and the intensity of family involvement, the cultural anthropologist James Watson has argued that death rituals provide one of the clearest windows through which one can look into Chinese society.⁴⁶

A further function of rituals is their provision of support for the members of society. The therapeutic function of rituals is immediately evident in a chaotic situation. Durkheim also notes the prominence of ritual activity in times of crisis when the life of the group is in some way threatened, for example, by a death, a food shortage, or the natural environment.⁴⁷ Ritual becomes an important part of the healing process

Robert H. Winthrop (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 129.

⁴⁵ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (London: Cohen and West, 1952), 157.

⁴⁶ James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China. Studies on China*, v. 8 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), xv, 37.

⁴⁷ Crossley, 41.

Bronislaw Malinowski considered the anxiety caused by the rationally uncontrollable happenings as the basic motivation for the emergence of religious faith. He suggested that religion was not born of speculation and illusion. “But rather out of the real tragedies of human life, out of the conflict between human plans and realities. . . . The existence of strong personal attachments and the fact of death, which of all human events is the most upsetting and disorganizing to man’s calculations, are perhaps the main

during periods of mourning like funerals.⁴⁸ It may have been designed to satisfy the needs of the person suffering the loss. As well as having a religious significance mortuary rituals confer psychological relief and have a therapeutic effects. They help relieve social fears and anxieties in the face of hardships. Buddhist rituals became the most popular form of cure for social chaos and other subsequent tragic conditions. The general population shared the overall concern to cope with national crises by means of ritual manipulation. In particular the salvific *ch'ōndo-jae* was a therapeutic ritual which provided an important experience in restoring personal wholeness and facilitating healing following traumatic losses, as well as offering a spiritual path out of that suffering. Mourning rituals may facilitate personal integration and a feeling of safety and security among the participants. During activities like large-scale funerary rituals, groups of people assemble to bear each others' burdens, share food, wear prescribed clothes, show a certain way of behaviour to express their grief, and express certain words of comfort. The grieving participants go through a process of therapeutic experience and overcome the tragedy collectively through the medium of ritual.

Combined with religious justifications, these sociological factors must have induced the laity to actively participate in large-scale outdoor rituals. The rituals were conducted as a collective enterprise serving the broader social needs of the community, as well as for personal reasons of reverence. They were intended to fulfil a more basic social function in expressing, maintaining, and reasserting shared values and beliefs. The primary role of large-scale outdoor rituals at monasteries regarded as social institutions, was to accommodate collective concerns at a societal level. In addition to satisfying individual needs, i.e. caring for the repose of the souls of the deceased, the

sources of religious belief.” Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Role of Magic and Religion,” in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 71.

⁴⁸ Thomas J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Dharma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 118-9.

function of Buddhist rituals in the face of national crises was to serve the common purposes and values that helped restore social homogeneity and solidarity. The social function of rituals has often been manipulated for political ends. Whilst helping to overcome crises, the Buddhist saṅgha that proved its religious virtues and social leadership at the communal level, also presented itself as a critical institution bolstering social bonds and national integration. By virtue of a shared communal activity, Buddhist saṅgha prescribed the ritualistic form of ancestor worship and thus influenced social behaviour and values based on Confucian filial piety. By reinforcing social norms, rituals can provide a basis for powerful, dynamic forces in society. This may have provided a major justification and even political spur for the government to tolerate large-scale outdoor rituals frequently held in an open, public sphere during the period. In short, the communal understanding and the approval of the state and monarchy of the collective effect of the rituals at Buddhist monasteries were major underlying factors in the revitalization and durability of Buddhism during the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty.

B. The prevalence of *kwaebul*

Ritual processions in monasteries drew great crowds. A common factor behind these rituals was the establishment of a special outdoor altar to act as a focus for the spiritual powers which were invoked. A large-scale image of Buddha was the centre of the ritual performance. *Kwaebul* is a huge Buddhist painting over 10 meters high and 7-8 meters wide. This had a unique function in outside ceremonies during the latter part of the Chosŏn period. It has no Chinese or Japanese counterpart, except in Tibetan *tangkas*.⁴⁹ At a popular level, the production of large banner paintings was

⁴⁹ It is estimated that there are almost 100 *kwaebul* paintings throughout South Korea, executed mostly between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although new ones are occasionally done even today. It is not sure how and when the *kwaebul* tradition began in Korea due to a lack of references on the subject. It is likely that *kwaebul* were not produced before the *Imjin waeran*. Since there are no *kwaebul* predating the Hideyoshi invasions, perhaps the tradition began at this time. Lending support to

primarily meant to attract large crowds, and the spectacular images located above a high platform in an outdoor space helped to draw people to the faith. The banners were attached to a tall pole so that they could be seen by as many people as possible during temple ceremonies.⁵⁰ They were often stunning in their elegant detail and excellence of execution, not forgetting their awe-inspiring size. As mentioned above, Koreans held outdoor Buddhist rituals because they wished to console the souls of the dead and cope with the aftermath of long wars and frequent natural disasters. The prevalence of large-scale outdoor rituals during this period was probably also the prime motive behind the production of *kwaebul*. The Chungnim-sa 竹林寺 *kwaebul* which dates back to 1622, is the earliest surviving *kwaebul* (fig. 49).

2. Ch'iljang-sa 七長寺 *Kwaebul*, 1628 (fig. 50)

The iconographies of the *kwaebul* which appeared in the early stages of its evolution, include a mixture of *samsinbul* and *samsebul*, the so-called iconography of *samsin-samsebul* 三身三世佛. It was already foreshadowed by the multi-Buddha assembly shown in Jūrin-ji painting produced in the first half of the Chosŏn dynasty.

this theory is that none have shown up in Japan unlike many other Koryŏ-dynasty masterpieces that evidently were carried off during the Hideyoshi invasions. All existing *kwaebul* were produced in the period when Buddhist rituals became popularly performed. Being evident from the extant materials, *kwaebul* began to be produced from the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty after the Japanese invasions, probably for mass-tragedy spirit consolation ceremonies. A multitude of *kwaebul* was produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The *kwaebul* comprises the majority of all the Buddhist paintings produced during the reigns of Hyojong 孝宗 (r. 1649-1659), Hyŏnjong 顯宗 (r. 1659-1674), and Sukchong 肅宗 (r. 1674-1720). In terms of category, *kwaebul* amount to more than a half of the total Buddhist paintings produced between the reigns of King Hyojong and King Sukchong. Kim Jung-hee, "Hyo, Sukchong sidae ūi pulgyo hoehwa," *Kangjwa misulsa*, 6 (Dec. 1994): 14-15.

Among the studies on *kwaebul*, there is a view that *kwaebul* might have been produced from the Koryŏ dynasty, based on the fact that outdoor rituals such as *chae* 齋, *toryang* 道場, and *pŏpsŏk* 法席 (dhārma assembly) were frequently held during the dynasty. According to this theory that *kwaebul* predates the invasions, the idea for *kwaebul* might have come from the Mongolians during the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368) since Mongolian Lamaism was heavily influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, which has huge outdoor *tangka*s. Indeed, the use of *tangka*-style huge outdoor ritual paintings is limited to Central Asia and Korea. However, that leaves a gap of a couple of centuries, unless any earlier ones were all destroyed or lost. See Chang Ch'ung-sik, "Chosŏn cho *kwaebul* ūi koch'al: ponjon myŏngch'ing ūl chungsim ūiro," *Han'guk ūi purhwa* 9 (Seoul: Sŏngbo munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1995-2000), 249-250; idem, "Chosŏn cho *kwaebul* ūi yangsik chŏk t'ŭkching," *Sahak nonch'ong* (Seoul: Chich'on Kim Kap-ju kyosu hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong wiwŏnhoe, 1994), 250-252; Yun Yŏl-su, *Kwaebul* (Seoul: Taewŏn-sa, 1990), 10-14.

⁵⁰ The pole is called a *tanggan* 幢竿 (flag pole), and the two pillars supporting the *tanggan* are called *tanggan chiju* 幢竿支柱 (flag pole supporter).

The painting was the first sign of the importance and role of the new set of *sabangbul* which was to become popular in the latter half of the Chosŏn period. Enthusiasm for this specific iconography of multi-Buddha assembly continued for over two hundred years, from the middle of the fifteenth century until well after *Imjin waeran*. Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* (1628) and Pusŏk-sa 浮石寺 *kwaebul* (1684) are representative examples (figs. 55-56).

One of the earliest surviving *kwaebul* paintings is enshrined at Ch'iljang-sa 七長寺 in Ansŏng, Kyŏnggi Province. The Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* painting, divided into three sections, features the same five Buddhas of *samsin-samsebul* located in the upper and middle sections. In the lower section Kṣitigarbha's assembly on the left harmonises well with the illustration of the Avalokiteśvara on Mount Potalaka adored by the young pilgrim Sudhana who is shown with an *añjali* mudrā on the right. Between the two Bodhisattvas there is a palace with two pavilions on the top of mountain. Besides this lower section, the overall composition is not unlike that of Jūrin-ji painting.

Vairocana, the supreme Buddha of the Avataṃsaka school as the *dharmakāya*, appears in the centre of *samsinbul* on the top. The Vairocana Buddha surrounded by the Ten Disciples has a special aureole decorated with an intricate floral cluster and S-shaped honeysuckle vines scattered across the field. This makes it clear that Vairocana was the main Buddha presiding over the whole assembly of the five Buddhas and the focal point of worship. Śākyamuni is seated on his right, with his typical *bhūmiśparśa* mudrā. To his left sits Locana Buddha as *saṃbhogakāya* wearing sumptuous jewellery and a crown on his head. Below the three Buddhas sit Amitābha and Bhaiṣajyaguru of *samsebul*. Amitābha on the left is attended by his Eight Bodhisattvas. On the right, Bhaiṣajyaguru holding a medicine jar is attended by the Moonlight Bodhisattva and Sunlight Bodhisattva below his knees and the Twelve Generals on his left.

A dedicatory inscription written in gold within a red cartouche at the very bottom of the *kwaebul* provides detailed information. It reads:

崇禎元年戊辰三月初一日始作四月日畢造也

This painting was begun on the first day of the third month in the *mujin* year, the first year of Chongzhen (1628), and completed on a day in the fourth month.

當來龍華會中隨喜等盡同受記者也

Everybody who enjoys *Yonghwa-hoe* 龍華會 (Assembly of Dragon Flower) to come in the future will attain buddhahood.

...畫員法洞比丘...

畫寫[畫師]善玄比丘...

[Painted by] *hwawŏn* Pŏphyŏng *pigu* (Skt: *bhikṣu*, monk)...*hwasa* Sŏnhyŏn *pigu*....⁵¹

This inscription does not state the title of the *kwaebul* or the place where the *kwaebul* was dedicated. Based on the second line of the inscription, this *kwaebul* is commonly known as *Yonghwahoedo* 龍華會圖 (“the painting of the Dragon Flower Assembly”).⁵² Despite the lack of information regarding its title, it at least shows that

⁵¹ For full text of the inscription, which includes long lists of donors, see appendix to Yun Yŏl-su, 117-118.

⁵² While Hong Yun-sik views this *kwaebul* depicts the Assembly of Dragon Flower of Maitreya, Chang Ch’ung-sik argues the painting is based on the chapter 18 “*Suhui kongdŏk-p’um*” 隨喜功德品 (The Merits of a Person who Rejoices in accord at Hearing the Sūtra) of *Lotus Sūtra*. Yu Ma-ri also argues that this phrase refers to the chapter 18 of the *Lotus Sūtra*. At the same time, Yu Ma-ri suggests this painting reflects the belief in Maitreya and his Tuṣita Heaven based on the Assembly of Dragon Flower in the inscription. Hong Yun-sik, “*Kwabul ūi yurae*,” in *Kwaebul chosa pogosŏ* I, ed. Munhwajae kwanriguk (Seoul: Munhwajae yŏn’guso, 1992), 71-78; Chang Ch’ung-sik, “*Yongju-sa ponmalsa ūi purhwa* II” in *Han’guk ūi purhwa*, vol. 29 (Seoul: Sŏngbo munhwa yŏn’guwŏn, 2003), 186; Yu Ma-ri, “*Chosŏn hugi* Seoul, Kyŏnggi chiyŏk *kwaebul t’aenghwa ūi koch’al*,” *Kanggwa misulsa* 7 (Dec. 1995), 24; Kungnip munhwajae yŏn’guso, ed. *Kwaebul chosa pogosŏ* II (Seoul: Kungnip munhwajae yŏn’guso, 2000), 81.

However, the content of the chapter 18 of the *Lotus Sūtra* is not related to the Dragon Flower Assembly of Maitreya in the future. In the chapter the Śākyamuni Buddha preaches that the merits of a person who rejoices at hearing the teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* are unlimited. From the chapter 17 to chapter 20 of the sūtra, the Buddha preaches the merits and virtues of upholding the *Lotus Sūtra* in faith. *Suhui kongdŏk* 隨喜功德 refers to the merit of rejoicing at others’ merits and virtues. Indeed, many Buddhist sūtras mention the virtue and the merits of joyful acceptance as a Buddhist. Among them, chapter 40 “*Pohyŏn haengwŏn p’um*” 普賢行願品 (The Practices and Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra) of *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the last chapter of the sūtra, is best known. In the chapter, *suhui kongdŏk* is also mentioned as the fifth of Samantabhadra’s Ten Great Vows, the quintessence of this sūtra. Accordingly, the special link between the chapter 18 of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the inscription of this painting seems not appropriate. For example, in *Ŏjemun* 御製文 [Document written by King [Sejo]] that was written by King Sejo in response to *Odae-san Sangwŏn-sa chungch’ang gwŏnsŏnmun* 五臺山上院寺 重創勸善文 [Document of Solicitation for Contribution of Restoring Sangwŏn-sa on Odae-san], apparently no relation is revealed with the *Lotus Sūtra*, the king used *suhui* 隨喜 in his reference to the donors of the restoration. T. 262, 46b-47c; T. 293, 844b; Yi Nŭng-hwa, 1918, vol. 1, 422-423.

this painting was produced on the basis of the belief in the *Yonghwahoe* of Maitreya. The palace on the mountain between the two Bodhisattvas is viewed as Maitreya's inner court in Tuṣita Heaven, a paradise located on the top of Mount Meru in the sacred centre of the world. The mountain is wound around by a dragon in the lower half of the centre. The bodhisattva standing just above the palace is regarded as Maitreya Bodhisattva waiting in the Tuṣita Heaven to be born on earth as the Buddha of the Future.⁵³ The devotees attired in courtly dress below the palace in the lowest part of the painting look upwards to worship the Bodhisattva with utter devotion, joining their palms together in *añjali* mudrā. The devotees appear to be the earnest worshippers of Maitreya and his paradise and are praying fervently to be welcomed by Maitreya into the Tuṣita Paradise.⁵⁴ The dragon wound around the mountain and reaching up to the palace where the Future Buddha resides may be symbolically related to the dragon-flower beneath which Maitreya was to attain buddhahood in the future.

The five assemblies in the upper section represent the infinite world of the Buddhas and Buddha-lands. In the lower section there are three further Buddhist Lands—Kṣitigarbha's Underworld, Mount Potalaka upon which is seated Avalokiteśvara, and Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven. Since Maitreya is the Future Buddha and his Tuṣita Heaven has a spatial concept, the depiction of Maitreya Buddha/Bodhisattva may have dual meanings of space and time, just as that of Śākyamuni does. To sum up, this *kwaebul* depicts dhārma realms as a combination of all dimensions of space and time in the universe.

Yonghwa-hoe mentioned in the inscription seems closely associated with the history of the monastery and the city. Ch'iljang-sa was affiliated with belief in Maitreya, and along with Kūmsan-sa and Pöpchu-sa 法住寺, it was one of the three

⁵³ Yu Ma-ri, 1995, 25; Hong Yun-sik, 1992b, 81.

⁵⁴ Although Yu Ma-ri argues they are the *cakravartin*, or world ruler, and his wife with a vast retinue listening to the Bodhisattva's dhārma, Yu does not provide enough explanation to validate her interpretation. See Yu Ma-ri, 1995, 25.

main monasteries of the Pöpsang school (C: Faxiang; J: Hossō, 法相宗, Dharmalakṣaṇa school) in Korea.⁵⁵ Ssangmirük-sa 雙彌勒寺 in Ansöng is currently the headquarters of the school. During the Koryö dynasty Hyeso 惠素 (972-1054), the Pöpsang *chongsa* 法相宗師 (spiritual leader of Pöpsang school) and National Preceptor, who was born in Ansöng, practised in Ch'iljang-sa until his death.⁵⁶ Ch'iljang-sa had prospered in the Koryö dynasty since Hyeso renovated the temple on a royal order in 1014.⁵⁷

The city of Ansöng, which contains the largest number of scattered Maitreya stone sculptures, is generally acknowledged as the centre of the belief in Maitreya. Throughout the history of Ansöng there are records of three popular uprisings led by various figures. Kungye 弓裔 (?-918) claimed to be the Maitreya Buddha and to save the people from distress caused by the social and political disorder during the Later Three Kingdoms period. He proclaimed the Later Koguryö, one of the Later Three Kingdoms, in 901. The stronghold of his kingdom was Chuksan (Ansöng) as evidenced by a stone Maitreya statue, Kungye Mirük, named after him, which is still standing in Chuksan-myön in Ansöng.⁵⁸ Later, the uprisings of Im Kkök-jöng 林巨正 (?-1562) and Chang Kil-san 張吉山 (?-?), robbers active during the reigns of King Myöngjong (r. 1545–1567) and King Sukchong (r. 1674-1720) respectively, were provoked by the abuse of government practices and the incapacity of the hypocritical

⁵⁵ The *kwaebul* of 1766 in Pöpchu-sa features the Maitreya Bodhisattva in the centre.

⁵⁶ Ch'oe Wan-su, *Myöngch'al sullye*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Taewönsa, 1994), 161.

The epitaph (贈諡慧炤國師碑銘) on the stone monument in Ch'iljang-sa erected for Hyeso (安城七長寺惠素國師碑) after his death include a mention of *yuga kyomun* 瑜伽教門 which refers to the Yogācāra school, testifying to the relation of the monastery and the National Preceptor with the Pöpsang school. Chosön ch'ongdokpu, ed. *Chosön kümsök ch'onnam*, vol. 1 (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1976), 274.

⁵⁷ Although the date of the construction of Ch'iljang-sa is uncertain, judging from its renovation in the early eleventh century, it is believed that Ch'iljang-sa was already extant in the tenth century. Munhwajae kwanriguk, ed. *Kwaebul chosa pogosö* II (Seoul: Munhwa kongbobu Munhwajae kwalliguk, 2000), 292-293.

⁵⁸ For a discussion a close relation between Kungye and Ansöng, see Ch'oe Söng-eun, "Namal yöch'o chungbu chiyök e taehan koch'al," *Yöksa wa hyönsil* 44 (2002): 52.

ruling class.⁵⁹ The numerous Maitreya statues, mostly coarsely produced, reflect the popular, dynamic, and reformative energy of the city.

A. Donors

The dedicatory inscription includes a long list of donors' names, but details about their class and titles are not specified.⁶⁰ Although she is not included in the list of the donors, it is known that Queen Mother Inmok 仁穆大妃 (1584-1632) commissioned Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* on behalf of her late son, Prince Yŏngch'ang 永昌大君 (1606-1614) and her late father, Kim Che-nam 金悌男 (1562-1613); and because Ch'iljang-sa was also closely related with Queen Inmok. Kim Che-nam and Prince Yŏngch'ang were executed in 1613 and 1614 respectively at the time of the usurpation of the throne by Kwanghaegun 光海君 (r. 1608-1623) in the tragedy known as *kyech'uk oksa* 癸丑獄事 (the crime of the *kyech'uk* year).⁶¹ In 1618 the king deposed Queen Inmok and incarcerated her in Sŏgung 西宮 ("the West Palace").⁶² However Kwanghae'gun was forced to step down in 1623 following a coup d'état called Injo *panjŏng* 仁祖反正 ("Restoration of King Injo"), orchestrated by political opponents who included the prince who would succeed him as King Injo (r. 1623-49).⁶³

Queen Inmok stayed near the capital at Ch'iljang-sa, at sometime during her deposition by Kwanghaegun. After she was restored in 1623, when she became the

⁵⁹ *Kukcho pogam*, vol. 23, "Myŏngjong cho 2," 17(1562)/1; Yi Ik, *Kukyŏk Sŏngho sasŏl*, vol. 14 (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa ch'ujin wiwŏnhoe, 1986), Insamun (人事門), Im Kkŏk-jŏng (林巨正); *Sukchong Sillok*, 18(1692)/12/13(*chŏnghae*).

⁶⁰ Numerous donors listed in the inscription offered various materials that are necessary for this *kwaebul* project such as *pat'ang* 婆蕩 (literally meaning "(back)ground" thus referring to the fabric, i.e. silk or hemp for *kwaebul*), *hubaeji* 後排紙 (papers for backing the painting), fish glue (魚膠), various pigments, and mirror (圓鏡) which is offered for ritual. It is noteworthy that most of the donors in the list dedicated colour pigments (彩色), such as gold (黃金), two kinds of yellow (水土黃, 石紫黃), two kinds of green (唐荷葉, 三綠), two kinds of blue (中清, 青花), and red (朱紅 cinnabar). Since it was only a year after *Chŏngmyo horan* in 1627, it must have been difficult to import and supply pigments. For various materials and their use see Lee Eun-hee, "Kwaebul hwagi e nat'an an purhwa chosŏng e kwanhan siron," *Munhwajae* 31 (1998), 111-112.

⁶¹ Kwanghaegun 光海君 demoted the Great Prince Yŏngch'ang, King Sŏnjo's (r. 1567-1608) only legitimate son by Queen Inmok, to the status of a commoner and killed him in 1614. *Kwanghaegun ilgi*, 6(1614)/1/13(*pyŏngin*); *Kwanghaegun ilgi*, 6(1614)/2/10(*imkin*).

⁶² *Kwanghaegun ilgi*, 10(1618)/1/28(*muja*).

⁶³ *Injo sillok*, 1(1623)/03/13(*kyemyo*).

Queen Mother, a major renovation of the monastery was carried out at the queen's order.⁶⁴ The Queen Mother appointed Ch'iljang-sa the *wŏnch'al* 願刹 for a service in memory of her late father and son. The ten-volume *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* which she copied herself, and her own poem written in her own calligraphy were donated to Ch'iljang-sa and are still kept in the monastery.⁶⁵ This evidence and the historical and personal situation of Queen Mother Inmok during the period support the idea that the queen patronized the *kwaebul* painting which was produced only five years after this restoration.⁶⁶

This *kwaebul* was dedicated in 1628, only a year after *Chŏngmyo horan*. Although the assembly of the five Buddhas is depicted as the focal point of worship in the upper section, it was natural to dedicate the *kwaebul* to Maitreya Buddha, perhaps in an attempt to cope with the pessimism of the *malpŏp* 末法 (C: *mofa*; J: *mappō*, The Latter Day of the Law) age after the war. Since Maitreya signifies salvation and a better future, the "Coming of the Buddha" was eagerly awaited in the era of turbulence throughout East Asia. Belief in Maitreya and his depiction in the *kwaebul* speak of hopes for a better world in the tumultuous era. The turbulent process of succession to the throne and the devastating wars with Japan and the Manchus must have deeply influenced Queen Inmok's attitudes. The Queen might have dedicated this *kwaebul* to the repose of her late father and son, as well as to all those people killed during the war. More specifically, the Maitreya in the ritual painting represents the donors' hope that the deceased would be reborn into Maitreya's paradise. In this sense, the depiction of Maitreya on the ritual painting may fit in with the purpose of *yŏngga ch'ŏndo* 靈駕薦度 (the deliverance of the dead spirit to the paradise). Like other previous powerful female members of the royal family, the Queen Dowager Inmok as a devout Buddhist

⁶⁴ Ch'oe Wan-su, 1994, 161.

⁶⁵ The sūtra has been kept in Dongguk University Museum since one volume of it was stolen from the monastery.

⁶⁶ Ch'oe Wan-su, 1994, 162.

relied upon the power of Buddhism and dedicated this image to pray for the rebirth of the dead in the Buddha's paradise. Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* makes clear that members of royal household expressed their emotional, social, and political concerns through the mode of ceremonial ritual.

Despite the official oppression of Buddhism, royal patronage of Buddhism at a private level continued into the early twentieth century. The sponsorship of large-scale outdoor rituals by the court also lasted until the end of the Chosŏn dynasty. This is demonstrated by the fact that many of those who offered Buddhist banner painting dedicated to the temples near the capital were royal families and court ladies. Based on the dedicatory inscriptions, a variety of *kwaebul* paintings during this period were sponsored by *sanggung* 尙宮 (an official title for lady-in-waiting in the royal palace) on behalf of members of the royal family: for example the Kaeun-sa *kwaebul* of 1879.⁶⁷ During the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the production of *kwaebul* for *wŏnch'al* was concentrated in Kyŏnggi Province and the capital city.⁶⁸ This suggests that Buddhist projects, including large-scale outdoor rituals, were promoted by the royal house at the monasteries located in and around the capital. We may relate this to the success of Buddhist institutions in the process of urbanization led by the royal house during this period.

B. The Sujong-sa 水鐘寺 Buddha Group, 1628, the National Museum of Korea, Seoul (figs. 51-52)

In addition to the group of Buddha statues enshrined in 1493 during King Sŏngjong's reign,⁶⁹ another group of gilt-bronze statues dedicated by Queen Inmok in 1628 have been recovered from the stone pagoda of Sujong-sa. These are small seated images of twelve figures. Two Buddhas and two bodhisattvas come from the eaves of

⁶⁷ Lee Eun-hee, "Chosŏn malgi *kwaebul* ūi saeroun tosang chŏn'gae," *Munhwajae* 38 (2005): 265.

⁶⁸ Kim Jung-hee, "Chosŏn malgi ūi chŏngt'o sinang kwa Amitā kye *kwaebul* hwa," *Kangjwa misulsa* 33 (2009): 157.

⁶⁹ See pp. 132-133 of this thesis.

the first storey (fig. 51). Eight gilt-bronze statues of four Buddhas, three bodhisattvas, and one monk come from the middle section of the octagonal base of the pagoda (fig. 52). The largest figure in the group represents the Vairocana Buddha holding his hands in the *bodhyagri* mudrā, or wisdom-fist mudrā.⁷⁰ The image of Vairocana bears a dedicatory inscription on the bottom punched in dots (fig. 53). The inscription reads:

崇禎元年戊辰 昭聖貞懿大王大妃發願
 鑄象二十三尊容安于寶塔 後貽濟衆爾
 畫員 性仁

In the *mujin* year, the first year of Chongzhen (1628) Queen Dowager Sosōng Chōngŭi dedicates twenty-three cast images in the precious pagoda.⁷¹ These images in the pagoda will ensure the salvation of all beings. *Hwawōn* (court painter) Sōngin”

According to the inscription, the twelve images now in National Museum of Korea, Seoul, belong to a set of twenty-three figures. The remainder were not recovered from the pagoda. The hand gestures of each Buddha vary. The Buddha from the first storey of the pagoda, wearing a crown and raising both hands up to his shoulder displays the iconographical features associated with the Locana Buddha.⁷² The Buddha holding the earth-witness mudrā is Śākyamuni. These three Buddhas form a *samsinbul* like that shown in the Ch’iljang-sa *kwaebul*. The remaining three Buddhas have the same hand gestures — the *abhāya* (fear-not) mudrā and *varada* (wish-granting) mudrā. For this reason it is not possible to identify their names. As the Vairocana Buddha in the Ch’iljang-sa *kwaebul* presides over the five-Buddha assembly, the focus of the Buddha set from the middle section of the octagonal base of the stone

⁷⁰ The Vairocana measures at 11.9 cm in height.

⁷¹ Affronted by Chosōn court’s open pro-Ming and anti-Manchu policy, the Manchus launched their first invasion in 1627 (*chōngmyo horan*). The humiliating peace treaty concluded in the same year (*chōngmyo choyak* 丁卯條約) stipulated that Chosōn would stop using Tianqi (r. 1620-1627) reign name of the Ming China and send princes as hostages. The use of Chongzhen (r. 1628-1644), the last reign name of Ming, in the inscription testifies that the Chosōn court continued its loyalty to Ming China in spite of the peace treaty with the Manchus.

⁷² Yun Mu-byōng views this figure represents a bodhisattva. Yun Mu-byōng, 1969, 952-953.

pagoda is Vairocana, the tallest of the surviving six Buddha images and the only figure seated on the pedestal which bears the dedicatory inscription at the bottom.

The important information given by this inscription tells us that the images were commissioned by the Queen Mother Inmok in 1628, the same year in which the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* was painted. The status of the Queen Dowager accounts for the inclusion of the official court artist *hwawŏn* from the Royal Bureau of Painting. When King Injo succeeded to the throne, the title of Queen Inmok, Sosŏng Chŏngŭi Myŏngnyŏl 昭聖貞懿明烈, was restored, and she became *taewang taebi* 大王大妃 (Queen Dowager).⁷³ As the inscription clarifies, Queen Inmok dedicated these images for the salvation of the people who were suffering from the devastating invasion.⁷⁴ It seems clear that the royal donor intended to conduct invocations and prayers to the assembly of multiple deities for the memory of the deceased in time of warfare and natural disaster.

It is interesting to see that the Queen Mother commissioned another assembly of various Buddha figures which are closely connected to the type of Buddhist images of the earlier period, thereby continuing the tradition of the royal court. The Queen Dowager must have been fully aware of the group of statues dedicated by the court ladies in the earlier period. Stylistically, the images are rather squat and heavy in appearance, revealing some common features. The slightly bent pose and body proportions are very similar to the 1493 Buddha groups enshrined in the same pagoda. The common characteristics in composition and style between the two groups of multi-Buddha assembly appear to have been intended by the Queen Dowager. This also provides important evidence that the royal household had a particular interest in Sujong-sa and that it must have prospered as a result of continual patronage of the royal court

⁷³ *Kwanghaegun ilgi*, 15(1623)/3/14(*kapjin*); *Injo sillok*, 1(1623)/3/13(*kyemyo*).

⁷⁴ Youngsook Pak and Whitfield, 2002, 434.

which lasted for over two hundred years.⁷⁵ The Sujong-sa Buddha groups provide important material for the study of the type of Buddhist images dedicated by the royal court at different times, and of the tradition that continued over two hundred years within the royal household.⁷⁶

Just as the group of Buddha statues dedicated by Queen Inmok closely follows the stylistic characteristics of those from the earlier period, so the graceful facial features and elegant brushwork on the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* are reminiscent of the court art tradition shown in the preceding examples. This is one of the earliest *kwaebul* yet to emerge from Korea, and it is certainly one of the finest examples of its kind. As a *kwaebul* painting, it is exceptional in its subject and icon. The painting has a composed and natural symmetry with the orderly arrangement of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the lower deities. The five Buddhas in the upper sections and the three Bodhisattvas make up a harmonious, balanced and sophisticated composition. Early *kwaebul* paintings display numerous bodhisattvas and various lower ranking deities surrounding the Buddha figure in a circular format (fig. 54). The circular composition with large numbers of attending figures became popular after the seventeenth century.⁷⁷ However, the two-tier composition, a characteristic of the iconic mode in Koryŏ and the early half of Chosŏn Buddhist imagery, was employed for each Buddha assembly in Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul*. For instance, the assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru with his two attending bodhisattvas and the Twelve Generals shows a close affinity to Queen Munjŏng's Bhaiṣajyaguru triads (figs. 39, 44).⁷⁸ Kṣitigarbha on the bottom left is flanked by a monk and a judge attired in court dress. The same attendants are seen in the Kshitigarbha assembly on the Seirai-ji painting (fig. 43).

⁷⁵ The close relationship between the royal court and the monastery seems to have continued until the end of the dynasty. In 1890 P'unggye Hyeil 楓溪慧一, the head abbot of Sujong-sa, renovated the monastery again at the donations of Emperor Kojong (r. 1863-1907).

⁷⁶ Pak Youngsook and R. Whitfield, 2002, 434.

⁷⁷ Mun Myong-dae, 1985a, 8, 18-20; Chang Ch'ung-sik, 1995-2000a, 252.

⁷⁸ Yu Ma-ri, 1995, 25.

The Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* distinguishes itself in many ways from contemporary *kwaebul* paintings. The minute and detailed panel on the painting is a rare example among surviving *kwaebul*. Generally speaking, stylistically it has fluid lines and bright colours. The colours of red, green, and blue are harmonious and simple. Although the patterns on the robes are concise they are also complicated. The figures are exquisitely rendered with subtle characterization, elegant body proportions, and finely rendered details such as the curling tendrils on the fluttering robe and complex designs on the garments and jewellery. The refined style is probably more evidence that this *kwaebul* was produced under royal patronage. The same stylistic features such as the small, round face, tiny mouth, narrow and sharp eyes, and the pointed *uṣṇīṣa* can also be found in this *kwaebul*. The generous use of gold to cover the figure bodies and golden lines for fine pieces of robe and the sash may also suggest that this *kwaebul* was made by the order of the royal household. Ch'oe Wan-su has argued that, although the Queen Dowager is not mentioned directly in the donors' list, the sumptuous silk and gold materials used for the painting, and the style and composition which closely followed the tradition of royal court art may testify to the queen's association with the production of this *kwaebul*.⁷⁹ The suppression policies of the government were unable to prevent the belief in Buddhism and patronage of its art by female members of the royal court. The sophisticated depiction of the figures, the flowing, elegant style of brushwork, the splendid juxtapositions of vivid green and red, the well-organized composition, and the exquisite and meticulous brushwork surpass any other contemporary paintings.

The continuation of the iconography of the multi-Buddha gathering shown in the Jūrin-ji painting is prominent in the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul*.⁸⁰ A complex mixture of *samsinbul* and *samsebul* inherited from Buddhist painting of the earlier period offers

⁷⁹ Ch'oe Wan-su, 162.

⁸⁰ Kong Kyu-dök, 24.

itself as being suitable for iconic use on *kwaebul*.⁸¹ This painting is an excellent example of the transition from the early Chosŏn style, greatly influenced by Koryŏ Buddhist painting, to the later Chosŏn style. The transition of the professional court artists to amateur monk artists is patently clear in this *kwaebul*, completed by the group of local monk-painters led by the skilled monk-painter Pŏphyŏng. The similar iconography and the superb quality of Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* as shown in the Jūrin-ji painting of courtly tradition, may suggest the help and supervision of the court artists. If the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul* was commissioned by Queen Inmok, the iconography of the five Buddhas from the early half of Chosŏn was inherited by the large-banner painting commissioned by the royal household in the later Chosŏn period. The iconographical and stylistic affinity between the two works may answer questions on the origin and formation of *kwaebul* painting.

3. *The Pusŏk-sa Kwaebul* 浮石寺 掛佛

A. *The Pusŏk-sa Kwaebul*, 1684, National Museum of Korea, Seoul (fig. 55)

The multi-composition of *samsin-samsebul* was perpetuated in the earlier period of *kwaebul* production. Another example with a similar iconography can be found in the Pusŏk-sa *kwaebul*. This *kwaebul*, now in the collection of the National Museum of Korea in Seoul, was originally dedicated at Pusŏk-sa in Yŏngp'ung in North Kyŏngsang Province in 1684, and moved to Sillŭk-sa 神勒寺 in Ch'ŏngp'ung in North Ch'ungch'ŏng Province. Like the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul*, this *kwaebul* was painted on silk in colours with a dedicatory inscription written in gold within a red cartouche below the dais of Śākyamuni, the central icon.

⁸¹ While the iconography of mixture of two compositions is seen on *kwaebul*, it rarely appears on *hubul t'aenghwa* 後佛幀畫 of the latter half of the Chosŏn period. *Samsinbul* and *samsebul* are separately located in the main Buddha hall. *Yŏngsan hoesangdo* 靈山會相圖 (painting depicting the scene of Śākyamuni preaching to the assembly at the Vulture Peak) and *samsin pulhoedo* prevailed as the form of *hubul t'aenghwa* in the main Buddha hall during this period.

主上殿下壽萬歲 王妃殿下壽齊年 世子邸下壽千秋⁸²

[We wish] His Noble Majesty the King and Her Noble Majesty the Queen will enjoy a life of ten thousand years, and the Crown Prince will enjoy a life of thousand years.

康熙二十三年甲子七月日浮石寺 掛佛一坐 及 佛像三尊造成記

On a day of the seventh month in the *kapcha* year of the twenty-third year of Kangxi (1684) this *kwaebul* is produced together with sculptures of a Buddha triad for Pusök-sa.

畫寫[畫師]雲宵比丘

Hwasa Unso pigu.

願以此功德普及於一切我等與衆生皆共成佛道....

We wish this merit spreads to all the populace who may attain Buddhahood....

The inscription above is followed by another inscription written in black ink within a white cartouche.⁸³ The last part of the inscription was added later when this *kwaebul* was repaired in 1745.

乾隆拾年乙丑四月 重修移安于 忠清道清風地..... 神勒寺.....

In the fourth month in the *ülch'uk* year of the tenth year of Qianlong (1745) this *kwaebul* is repaired and moved to Sillük-sa in Ch'öngp'ung, Ch'ungch'öng Province.

引勸 包員 祖玄....

In'gwön, P'owön, and Chohyön.

Again, there is a long list of donors, both laity and monks. From this inscription we know that 120 people donated various goods to complete this huge Buddhist project.⁸⁴ The fact that many lay believers including monks and nuns contributed to

⁸² The same prayer for the longevity of the royal family makes introductory remarks in the inscription of Buddhist art of the later period of Chosön even when they are not related with the royal court. It is said this custom was started by Hyujöng 休靜 (1525-1604), better known as the Great Master Sösan 西山大師, who included remarks to promote loyalty to the country in the beginning of his writing. Lee Young-sook, *Chosön hugi kwaebul t'aeng koch'al* (PhD diss., Dongguk University, 2003), 101.

⁸³ For its full text, see Yun Yöl-su, 1990, 122.

⁸⁴ The donors on the list offered various materials such as *tüngch'ok* 燈燭 (candles), *sigyöm* 食鹽 (salt), and *ch'öngmil* 清蜜 (honey) as well as *pat'ang* 婆蕩 and *hubaeji* 後背紙. According to D. Seckel, "The sacrificial offerings may take the form of practical help—food, clothing, medicine, and money—or of enjoyable and decoratively effective but, above all, symbolically significant items—flower, incense, scented water, lamps, jewellery, banners, canopies and, of course, especially images." The items included in the list satisfy all of them. Seckel, 1989, 192.

The chapter 17 "Discrimination of Merit and Virtue" (分別功德品) of the *Lotus Sūtra* praises limitless and boundless merit and virtue in offering flowers, incense, beads, banners, flags, silk canopies,

the production of the large-scale banner painting tells us that religious practice was in a state of change, revolving around local centres, in the later Chosŏn period. Many scholars have often interpreted this phenomenon as proof that Buddhism degenerated to embrace a large number of common people in marginal positions of society—women and the lower classes—during the later Chosŏn period, whilst the wealthy but limited number of patrons of Buddhist art during Koryŏ and up to the early half of Chosŏn consisted mainly of persons from the royal family and aristocrats. However, this may also represent that along with the continued patronage of the royal household, Buddhism during this period reached a great number of commoners and revealed the raw vigour of rural life. Long inscriptions featuring a large number of patrons and attached to the *kwaebul* paintings tell us that, despite the hardships as a result of the lengthy wars and natural disasters, the idea of delivering the dead spirits was enthusiastically greeted by the public. This reflects the interest of the laity in the immediacy and localization of Buddhism through Buddhist rituals that is the hallmark of Korean Buddhism at the time. The memorial ceremony could be sponsored for a particular deceased relative, but it was more often held for the benefit of both the living—in that it was believed to disperse impending calamities—and their deceased ancestors. The religious activities of lay people, who exclusively lived in the world of reality, was concentrated on collecting virtuous merits by partaking in the rituals and prayers of the monasteries on special occasions, and giving donations to religious institutions.⁸⁵

fragrant oils, or butter lamps as well as in receiving, upholding, reading, and reciting the sūtra. In the chapter, it is made clear by the Buddha that the avowed purpose of almsgiving is to accumulate merits and to gain a passage to heaven. This concept gave followers a logical reason to make contributions to Buddhism. Trusting in the virtue of donation, followers competed among themselves to achieve ever greater heights of beauty and virtue in ceremonies of the later period of Chosŏn. T. 262, 44a-46b.

⁸⁵ In addition to the costly production of *kwaebul*, according to the inscription, statues of a Buddhist triad were also made along with the Pusŏk-sa *kwaebul*. The *Lotus Sūtra*, paid special reverence during the Chosŏn period, stipulates the high virtue of such activities as copying Buddhist sūtras, making Buddhist statues, and building pagodas, and even links them directly to Buddhist enlightenment. T. 262, 44a-46b; Ko Ik-jin, “Pŏphwa-kyŏng Kyehwanhae ūi sŏnghaeng naeyŏkkŏ,” *Pulgyo hakpo* 12 (Nov. 1975): 180-184. For an in-depth study on the tradition of copying and

B. *The Pusök-sa Kwaebul, 1745, Pusök-sa* 浮石寺

A new *kwaebul* was produced for Pusök-sa in 1745 when the old one was repaired and moved to Sillük-sa in North Ch'ungch'öng Province (fig. 56). The purpose of dedicating this new *kwaebul* to Pusök-sa in 1745 was apparently to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the old *kwaebul* according to the Oriental zodiac cycle. Completing a full zodiac cycle is no doubt an auspicious occasion. However, the old *kwaebul* was apparently damaged since it was repaired and moved to Sillük-sa, according to the following inscriptions:⁸⁶

乾隆拾年乙丑四月日掛佛幀安于浮石寺.....

On a day in the *ülch'uk* year of the tenth year of Qianlong (1745), *kwaebul t'aeng*, a hanging image of Buddha, is produced and enshrined in Pusök-sa

.....畫員秩 良工引勸謙瑞氣[金魚/畫師]保體 比丘祖玄保體

Monk-painters: skilled craftsman In'gwon *kyömsögi poch'e* and monk Chohyön *poch'e*.....⁸⁷

The inscriptions on the two *kwaebul* testify that, despite the government's policy of suppressing Buddhism, numerous people were pious enough to become donors for the production and repair of the huge-scale paintings on several occasions. In addition, it demonstrates Pusök-sa flourished enough to raise funds for the costly repairs as well as for another new *kwaebul* at the same time.⁸⁸ Pusök-sa had flourished since the time the monastery was founded by Silla Master Ŭisang 義湘 in 676 and become the centre

dedicating the sūtra, see Pak Youngsook, "Goryeo Illuminated Buddhist Scriptures: Transmission of Text and Image," *Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment 918-1392* (San Francisco : Asian Art Museum-Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture in cooperation with the National Museum of Korea and the Nara National Museum, 2003), 96-105. For the publication of the *Lotus Sūtra* during the Chosön period, see Pak To-hwa, "Chosön cho Myopöp yönhwa kyöng p'anhwa üi yön'gu (Study on the woodcut prints of the Lotus Sūtra)," *Pulgyo yön'gu* 12 (1994): 181-182.

⁸⁶ For full text, see Mun Myong-dae, "Pusök-sa *kwaebul t'aenghwa üi koch'al*," in *Misul sahak nonch'ong* (Seoul: Ch'ou Hwang Su-young paksa kohi kinyöm nonch'ong kanhaeng wiwönhoe, 1988), 768-770.

⁸⁷ *Kyömsögi* 謙瑞氣, literally meaning "modest and auspicious atmosphere," is an honorific title for monk artist. *Poch'e* 保體, literally meaning "protecting body," is usually added to the name of a living person in a dedicatory inscription of Buddhist artwork.

⁸⁸ Mun Myong-dae, 1988, 759-760.

of Hwaōm school.⁸⁹

A change on the later painting shows a shift in decorative focus away from sumptuous materials such as gold towards vivid colours, and a rich multiplicity of new designs widely ranging from floral motifs to geometric patterns.⁹⁰ Such ideas are clearly illustrated by the decorative designs of the haloes and aureoles. The haloes and aureoles on the Buddhas are elaborate and flamboyant, exquisitely rendered with curling tendrils of floral motifs and vine patterns, and greatly accentuated by the *hwayōmmun* 火焰紋 (flame design) on the outer ring. A further area of decorative evolution is in the costumes which reveal beautifully woven, complicated brocade designs. The evolution of costume design can be clearly seen in the painted clothes of the bodhisattvas (fig. 55-a). The intricate designs and patterns are augmented by the colour scheme which, although simplified, remains vivid with much red and green. There was a clear reduction in the use of gold in the Buddhist paintings of the latter half of the Chosōn dynasty. It was now limited to details like diadems, collars and canonical dress. Although gold was still used it was replaced by yellow pigment for textile patterns and ornamental details. This might be interpreted as visual evidence that the common people were main patrons of Buddhist art during the period.⁹¹

The two *kwaebul* paintings of 1684 and 1745 offer an interesting comparison. It is clear that the 1745 *kwaebul* faithfully followed the preceding *kwaebul* of 1684 in composition.⁹² This is explained by the fact that Inkwōn, whose name appears as the leading monk painter in the inscriptions on both paintings, participated in the repair of the old *kwaebul* and the simultaneous production of the new *kwaebul*. Starting at the bottom, about two-thirds of the painting is taken up by the Śākyamuni Buddha

⁸⁹ TYS. vol. 3, 487-488, “Kyōngsang-do Yōngch’ōng-kun puru Pusōk-sa 慶尙道永川郡佛宇浮石寺.”

⁹⁰ Yun Yōl-su, 1990, 20-21,

⁹¹ Kim Jung-hee, 1994, 13.

⁹² Yu Ma-ri, “Pusōk-sa kwaebulhwa (Pusōk-sa Kwaebul Painting),” *Misul charyo* 36 (June, 1985), 70.

surrounded by numerous Buddhist deities, whilst the remaining top third is taken up by three Buddhas—Amitābha, Vairocana in the centre, and Bhaiṣajyaguru. This triad is foreshadowed by an earlier example, the Assembly of *samsebul* in the niche on the first storey of the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda (fig. 25). The same grouping can be found on the main altar in the Vairocana Hall of Kirim-sa 祇林寺 (1718) and in the Śākyamuni Hall (Taeungbo-jŏn 大雄寶殿) of Sŏnun-sa 禪雲寺 (1840) (figs. 57-58). Vairocana, Locana, and Śākyamuni are considered to be the same entity according to the concept of *trikāya*, and the Three Bodies of Buddha are interchanged in visual art. For example, Locana Buddha, instead of Śākyamuni, once made a *samsebul* triad with Bhaiṣajyaguru and Amitābha in the Jūrin-ji painting.⁹³

It is noteworthy that a depiction of the standing Locana as *saṃbhogakāya* surrounded by an aureole was added to the 1745 *kwaebul* in the centre of the bottom section. The artist perhaps intended to satisfy the composite form of *samsin-samsebul* within one frame by cramming Locana on a small scale into the composition in the bottom section. The inclusion of Locana to form a *samsinbul* composition must have been a suitable choice for the new *kwaebul* enshrined at Pusŏk-sa, one of the representative monasteries of Hwaŏm school in Korea.

C. *Yŏngsan hoesang* 靈山會相

While *trikāya* is the focus of reverence and clearly reflects a strong Hwaŏm influence in the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul*, the historical Buddha Śākyamuni is revered as the main Buddha in these two *kwaebul* paintings. The Śākyamuni Buddha in the centre of the composition is attended by Samantabhadra to his right and Mañjuśrī to his left along with three additional bodhisattvas on either side and Ten Disciples around them. This shows Śākyamuni preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* to the Dhārma Assembly on

⁹³ Chŏng Myŏng-hee, *Chosŏn hugi kwaebul t'aeng ūi yŏn'gu* (MA Thesis, Hongik University, 2000), 69.

the peak of Mount Vulture (Skt: Gr'dhrakūṭa. Also known as *Yōngsan-hoe* 靈山會 or *Yōngsan hoesang* 靈山會相 in Sino-Korean). The Dhārma Assembly of Śākyamuni on the Mount Vulture was a favourite subject in Buddhist art during the Chosŏn dynasty and also appeared as a main theme on *kwaebul*.⁹⁴

Belief in Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, and the *Lotus Sūtra* was widespread and popular beyond the boundaries of individual schools and their doctrines during the Chosŏn period.⁹⁵ Representations of Śākyamuni preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* on the summit of Mount Vulture are some of the most important images associated with this text. The appearance of *Yōngsan-hoe* as the preeminent iconography on the *kwaebul* signifies the people's widespread belief in *Yōngsan-hoe* and their reverence for the *Lotus Sūtra* during this period. *Yōngsan-hoe* also refers to the *Yōngsan-jae* 靈山齋 ritual of reenacting the Buddha's delivery of the *Lotus Sūtra* on the peak of Mount Vulture. The production of *kwaebul* paintings featuring the preaching scene of *Yōngsan hoesang* as the main theme is concentrated in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, which coincide with the increased popularity of *Yōngsan-jae* 靈山齋.⁹⁶ The prevalence of *Yōngsan-jae* rituals during the period must have influenced the increased production of *kwaebul* paintings which principally featured *yongsan*

⁹⁴ Among many themes in scroll paintings, or *t'aenghwa* 幀畫, the Śākyamuni Buddha preaching to the congregation in Vulture Peak was the subject most often depicted in *hubul t'aenghwa* throughout Chosŏn Buddhist history.

Although Śākyamuni makes the *bhūmiśparśa* mudrā, the mudrā of Śākyamuni's Enlightenment, this iconography was mainly associated with the Buddha's preaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* to the assembly at the Vulture Peak in Buddhist art through the Chosŏn period, e.g. the relief panel representing *Yōngsan-hoe* on the surface of Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda.

⁹⁵ The *Lotus Sūtra*, the principal text for the Ch'ŏnt'ae (C: Tiantai) School from the 6th century China, together with the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* for Huayan sect, occupied a position of enormous importance in Buddhist communities throughout the Far East. In Korea the *Lotus Sūtra* became the doctrinal base for the Ch'ŏnt'ae sect, which was founded by Monk Ŭich'ŏn (1055-1101) in 1097 during the Koryŏ period. *Lotus Sūtra* was also revered by other sects of Buddhism and occupied a position of enormous importance in Buddhist communities in Korea as well as in other East Asian countries. Its worship and study are believed to provide not only universal enlightenment but also the benefits of longevity, health, and prosperity in everyday life. Ian Reader and George Tanabe Jr., *Practically Religious* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 73-77; Hong Yun-sik, "Han'guk purhwa ũi kibon kujo wa yuhyŏng punhwa," in *Hobul Chung Young-ho kyosu chŏngnyŏn t'oeim kinyŏm nonch'ong* (Seoul: Han'guk munha sahakhoe, 1999), 827-840; Mun Myong-dae, 1985a, 4.

⁹⁶ Munhwajae kwalliguk, 1992, 59.

hoesang as their main theme. The popularity of the *Yōngsan hoesang* theme during the period is supported by the fact that the majority of ritual texts holding *Yōngsan-jae*, such as *Yōngsan taehoe chakpōp chōlch'a* (1634), *Ojong pōmūm-jip* (1661), and *Sanbo pōmūm-jip* (1694), were published during this period.⁹⁷ The chapter entitled *Yōngsan chakpōp* 靈山作法 in *Ojong pōmūm-jip* 五種梵音集 [the Collection of the Five Categories of Sanskrit Sounds], compiled in 1661, prescribes that the *Yōngsan hoesangdo* 靈山會相圖 (painting of *Yōngsan hoesang*) needs to be hung during the *Yōngsan-jae* ritual.⁹⁸ The ritual manuals were concentrated in the period, and testify to the prevalence of *Yōngsan-jae* rituals and the concomitant significance and role of the *Yōngsan-hoe* theme within them. Although originally signifying the Dhārma Assembly at the peak of Mount Vulture, *Yōngsan-jae*, which had incorporated the memorial ceremony for dead people, was recognized as a representative *ch'ōndo-jae*.⁹⁹ It shows that the theme of *Yōngsan hoesang* on *kwaebul* paintings was essential in *ch'ōndo-jae* rituals, in order to console the souls of the dead.

The shift of the focus of worship from Vairocana as *dharmakāya*, to Śākyamuni preaching to the Dhārma Assembly led to a stylistic change in depicting the Buddha assembly. According to the first chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, every time Śākyamuni

⁹⁷ Kim Jung-hee, 2009, 144.

⁹⁸ *Han'guk pulgyo ūiryē charyo ch'ogsō* [The Collection of Korean Buddhist Ritual Texts, hereafter HPUC], vol. 2, 182.

⁹⁹ It is now in most cases done as a funerary ritual for solacing the spirits of the dead. Kim Hyōng-woo, 1996, 35.

During the early Chosōn dynasty, the primary concern for publishing and dedicating the *Lotus Sūtra* was to console the dead soul. *Lotus Sūtra* was also widely used for the salvation ritual. Yi Nung-hwa, *Chosōn pulgyo t'ongsa*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Pakyōngsa, 1981), 561.

There is abundant documentary evidence that the *Lotus Sūtra* was written and dedicated at memorial services for the royal family in the early Chosōn period. *T'aejong sillok*, 8(1408)/6/9 (*pyōngsul*); TMS, vol. 113, So (疏) “Yōn'gyōng-sa pōphwa pōpsōk so 演慶寺法華法席疏” (Memorial of Lotus Dhārma Meeting at Yōn'gyōng-sa) by Pyōn Kye-ryang; TMS, vol. 113, So (疏) “Kaegyōng-sa Kwanūm-jōn hang pōphwa pōpsōk so 開慶寺觀音殿行法華法席疏” (Memorial of Lotus Dhārma Meeting at Kwanūm Hall in Kaegyōng-sa) by Pyōn Kye-ryang; TMS, vol. 113, So (疏) “Chol Sōngnyōng taegun pōphwa pōpsōk so 卒誠寧大君法華法席疏” (Memorial of Lotus Dhārma Meeting at the Death of Prince Sōngnyōng) by Pyōn kye-ryang; TMS, vol. 111, So (疏), “Ch'o ipwōn ch'uk sōngsu chaesomun 初入院祝聖壽齋疏文” (Prayer for the longevity of king) by Sōkch'ōnin (1205-1248); Sim Hyo-sōp, Chosōn chōn'gi *Yōngsan-jae ūi sōngnip kwa kū yangsang*,” *Pojo sasang* 24 (Aug. 2005): 255-256.

preached the *Lotus Sūtra* on the summit of Mount Vulture, Buddhas from foreign lands, bodhisattvas, his monastic disciples and *arhats*, along with incalculable numbers of lower deities including Indra, Brahma and the Four Heavenly Guardians, and other sentient beings would gather to listen attentively.¹⁰⁰ This huge and extraordinarily diverse gathering of countless numbers of beings reveals the complicated pantheon of Mahāyāna Buddhism. To represent this scene the artist attempted to change from a traditional two-tiered, strictly symmetrical composition to a crowded assembly in a circular composition, in which the congregation of Buddhist deities surrounds the main Buddha figure, a typical Buddha gathering of the later Chosŏn-period paintings. In the 17th century this circular composition completely replaced the two-tier composition which ceased with the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul*.¹⁰¹

While the preaching Buddha is prominently depicted in the centre, the three Buddhas in the top section have a reduced scale when compared to the main Buddha. In the Ch'iljang-sa *kwaebul*, the five Buddhas are depicted as being more or less equal in size and importance, except for the special aureole given to Vairocana. The three Buddhas in the upper part play a supplementary role to the central theme, *Yŏngsan hoesang*. Since the historical Buddha is the chief personage of the *Lotus Sūtra*, special reverence is paid to him. The other Buddhas and bodhisattvas are considered to be manifestations of various aspects of Śākyamuni. This shows the importance and role of *Yŏngsan hoesang* in Buddhist rituals.

Since Locana is included in the frame at the bottom of the 1745 *kwaebul*, the combination of *samsinbul* and *samsebul* is clear (fig. 56-a). The power and influence of the iconography of the Jūrin-ji *Five-Buddha Assembly* were succeeded by the emergence of the *samsin-samsebul* composition in *kwaebul* paintings of the later Chosŏn era. The Pusŏk-sa *kwaebul* provide interesting materials for examining the

¹⁰⁰ Mun Myong-dae, 1985a, 8.

¹⁰¹ Kim Jung-hee, 1994, 9.

transition from the theme of the five-Buddha assembly to *Yöngsan hoesang*. In this composition, Śākyamuni not only presides over the Dhārma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture but also unifies the assembly schema of the five Buddhas. A comparison between the Ch'iljang-sa and Pusök-sa *kwaebul* paintings demonstrates the transition of the focus of worship from Vairocana of *trikāya* to Śākyamuni's Dhārma Assembly. At the same time it shows the close relationship between the theme of *Yöngsan-hoe* and Buddhist mortuary rituals. This type of *kwaebul* depicting the Śākyamuni's Dhārma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture Peak as the focus of outdoor mortuary rituals and ritual paintings performs a dual role as an object of worship for the congregation present at the ritual, and an illustration (*pyönsang-do* 變相圖, literally "transformation pictures") of the story of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is again a textualization of the dhārma meeting of the assembly on the Vulture Peak.

4. *Kap-sa Kwaebul*, 1650, *Kap-sa* 甲寺 (fig. 59)

While the Dhārma Assembly at the peak of Mount Vulture was the predominant type of outdoor ritual painting during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,¹⁰² *kwaebul* themes became diversified in the ensuing two centuries and included *samsinbul*, *samsebul*, *Locana*, *Amitābha*, and *Maitreya*.¹⁰³ The *Kap-sa kwaebul* features *samsinbul* as its theme.

The inscription reads:

順治七年歲次 庚寅六月日鷄龍山甲寺 奇掛佛造成于奉安

On a day of the sixth month in the *kyöngin* year of the seventh year of Shunzhi (1650) this *kwaebul* is produced and enshrined at *Kap-sa* in *Kyeryong-san*.

畫員秩 山人 敬岑比丘 華雲比丘 守玄比丘 應悅比丘 海明比丘 學能比丘

¹⁰² Yun Yöl-su, 1990, 54, 56.

¹⁰³ Munhwajae kwalliguk, 1992, 57-64.

In the seventeenth century, early types of *kwaebul* paintings present different main themes including *trikāya*, Buddha of the Adorned Body (K: *changömsin kwaebul* 莊嚴身掛佛), and assembly of five Buddhas in addition to *Yöngsan hoesang*. Yet in the eighteenth century, they tended to integrate into Dhārma Assembly on the Vulture Peak, and it became the most prevalent type of iconography throughout the period.

道元比丘

The order of painters: mountain people monk Kyōngjam, monk Hwaun, monk Suhyōn, monk Ŭngyōl, monk Haemyōng, monk Hahnŭng and monk Towōn.¹⁰⁴

Three Buddhas of *samsinbul* on a huge scale, surrounded by ten bodhisattvas between them, occupy the central section of the painting. The upper section is crowded with four small Buddhas, two seated and two standing, Avalokiteśvara wearing a white robe, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and the Ten Disciples (fig. 59-a-d). In addition two small Buddhas, both seated, are situated between the three huge Buddhas. These small Buddha figures make a perfect symmetry in their arrangement. As regards their identity, there is an interesting inscription *Kap-sa kwaebul rokki* 甲寺掛佛緣起 (a record on *Kap-sa kwaebul*) posted on the surface of the *kwaebul* casket used for safekeeping the painting when it was not in use (fig. 60). This provides us with invaluable information to help us understand the composition of this painting.

The record reads:

順治七年六月日造成 三身佛 六方佛 菩薩十日位 十大弟子 四天王 四金剛
諸合 三十六位

On a day of the sixth month in the seventh year of Shunzhi (1650), this *kwaebul* was produced, depicting *samsinbul*, Six Directional Buddhas, eleven bodhisattvas, Ten Disciples, Four Heavenly Guardians, Four *vajras*, in a total of thirty six [thirty eight].

長四十一尺五寸 廣三十尺

This *kwaebul* measure 41 Korean feet 5 Korean inches in length and 30 feet in width.

同造人一百十日人內 畫敬岑等九人證明信換住持

111 persons partook in this *kwaebul* project as donors. Nine monk-painters led by Kyōngjam participated in producing the painting, supervised by Sinhwan the head priest of Kap-sa.

瓊還化主 信士吳應邦

Hwaju (main donor) Kyōnghwan and *sinsa* (Skt: *upāsaka*, laity) Oh Ŭng-pang.

¹⁰⁴ This rather short inscription is also followed by a long list of donors. More than a hundred laymen and monks participated in the project of *Kap-sa kwaebul* as patrons. For its full inscription, see Yun Yōl-su, 1990, 123.

世尊應化二九四五二月十五日.....年陰二月十五日拜觀

We have the honour of seeing this *kwaebul* on the fifteenth day of the second month of the lunar calendar in the year 2945 of the Buddha era (corresponding to 1918).

According to this record, the small Buddhas between and above the *samsinbul* were meant to represent Six Directional Buddhas as a collective, although the inscription does not identify the Buddhas. That said, I am inclined to the opinion that the two standing Buddhas in a gesture of adoration in the upper section may not be directional Buddhas since, unlike the four small seated Buddhas, they have no aureoles. This becomes clear when we compare the figures with other Buddhist paintings in which unidentifiable Buddhas, often referred to as *hwabul* 化佛 (literally “transformed Buddha,” manifestations of the Buddha or Manifestation Buddhas, Skt: *nirmāṇakāya*) or *pyōkchibul* 僻支佛 (Skt: *pratyekabuddha*),¹⁰⁵ are shown in a gesture of adoration near the halo of the main Buddha (fig. 61).

Huge *samsinbul* figures which take up the whole frame in a horizontal layout overwhelm all the other figures on the painting. The directional Buddhas are subordinated to the main theme of *trikāya*. The teaching of the Avataṃsaka school, the mainstream of Korean Buddhism, emphasizes the doctrine of the Three Bodies of Buddha. The imagery of *trikāya* was another prominent iconography in Buddhist art during the later Chosŏn period even though representations of other Buddhas continued to appear. In the iconography of the almost 100 existing *kwaebul* paintings, *Yōngsan hoesang* is as popular as the *trikāya* from the Hwaŏm doctrines. The Kap-sa *kwaebul* is the earliest *kwaebul* painting which has the *trikāya* as its main theme. The composition of this *kwaebul* resembles a number of *samsin hubul-t’aeng* 三身後佛幀 (altar paintings of *samsinbul*) of the later Chosŏn period, created either in one or three separate panels. The popularity of *samsinbul* during the period may have been

¹⁰⁵ T. 125, 814a.

reflected as the central theme in *kwaebul* paintings. In the lower section Śāriputra, showing his back, is depicted at the centre beneath the pedestal of Vairocana. He is accompanied by Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and Four Heavenly Guardians. Śāriputra, one of Śākyamuni's Ten Disciples, is often found in *Yōngsan hoesang* paintings, in which he appears to be asking the Buddha to preach the Law (fig. 54). Although the painters depicted *trikāya* as the main theme in the Kap-sa *kwaebul*, it is interesting to note that the main iconography of *trikāya* incorporated a part of a *Yōngsan-hoe* scene in its composition. In other types of *kwaebul* with various iconographies including Maitreya, the focus was laid on the Dhārma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture, as we shall see from the Changgok *kwaebul* in the following section.

5. *Yōngsan Kwaebul-t'aeng*, 1673, Changgok-sa 長谷寺 (fig. 62)

In the later *kwaebul* the number of figures attending the Dhārma Assembly at the peak of Mount Vulture Peak was reduced. The composition of *kwaebul* paintings was now simplified, and an enormous standing Buddha took a predominant place. The Changgok-sa 長谷寺 *kwaebul* features a standing Buddha figure in a simpler composition than other preceding examples. The huge main Buddha at the centre is sumptuously adorned with a crown and jewellery and holds a flower stem.

A votive inscription on the back of the *kwaebul* reads:

王妃殿下壽齊年 主上殿下壽萬歲 世子邸下壽千秋

We wish that Her Noble Majesty the Queen will enjoy long life, that His Noble Majesty the King will enjoy a life of ten thousand years, and that the Crown Prince will enjoy a life of thousand years.

祝文: 七甲山上 康熙十二年癸丑五月日青陽地東嶺 長谷寺大雄殿庭中 靈山大會掛佛幀 上檀幀一坐 觀音殿上中檀帝釋幀三坐 畫像已畢.....

Written Prayer: *Yōngsan kwaebul t'aeng* is dedicated on a day of the fifth month of the *kyech'uk* year of the twelfth year of Kangxi (1673) for *Yōngsan taehoe* (*Yōngsan-jae*) held in the courtyard of the main Buddha Hall in Changgok-sa on Ch'ilgap-san in Ch'ōngyang.

Along with this *kwaebul*, a painting [of Buddha] for upper altar and three

paintings of Indra for the upper middle altar of the Hall of Avalokiteśvara are painted. The production of the paintings is now completed.

願以此功德 普及於一切我等與衆生 皆共成佛道.....

We wish the merit from producing the painting reaches to all of the populace so that we attain the Buddhahood together.

畫師秩: 畫圓 哲學比丘 天勝比丘 信密比丘 一湖比丘 海宗比丘

The order of painters: *hwawŏn* monk Ch'ŏlhak, monk Ch'ŏnsŭng, monk Sinmil, monk Ilho, monk Haejong.

The inscription begins with the customary wish for the longevity of the royal family. As the inscription clearly states, this *kwaebul* depicts the *Yŏngsan hoesang*, and it was created for the *Yŏngsan taehoe* held in the courtyard of Changgok-sa in South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province.¹⁰⁶ Thus the huge Buddha in the centre holding a flower stalk in his hand is thought to represent Śākyamuni holding a lotus flower, a feature deriving from the tale of the Flower Sermon.¹⁰⁷ The Flower Sermon was wordless, hence encapsulating ineffable dhārma. In the original Sino-Korean, this story is known as *yŏmhwa miso* 拈花微笑 (literally “pick up flower, subtle smile”) or *yŏmhwa sijung* 拈花示衆 (pick up flower and proffer to the assembly), and is ascribed to the origin of Ch'an Buddhism. In this sense, the iconography might be an intelligent interpretation of *Yŏngsan hoesang* by the Chosŏn Buddhist saṅgha exclusively in the service of Sŏn Buddhism. *Yŏmhwabul* 拈花佛, Śākyamuni Buddha showing a lotus flower to the Dhārma Assembly on the Vulture Peak,¹⁰⁸ seems to have been a perfect choice for the subject of this *kwaebul* which was hung out for the *Yŏngsan-jae* ritual held in a Sŏn monastery.

Unlike the inscription, however, the red cartouche label next to the halo indicates

¹⁰⁶ *Yŏngsan-jae* is the 20th century denomination of the ritual. It was referred to as *Yŏngsan hoe* 靈山會, *Yŏngsan taehoe* 靈山大會, or *Yŏngsan chakpŏp* 靈山作法 (literally, “creating the dhārma of the Vulture Peak”) during the Chosŏn period.

¹⁰⁷ Chŏng Myŏng-hee, “Chosŏn hugi *kwaebul t'aeng ũi yŏn'gu*,” *Misulsahak yŏn'gu*, 242,243 (Sep. 2004): 172-175; idem, 2000, 85-90; Chang Ch'ung-sik, 1994, 669-670.

This story of the Flower Sermon, according to William Harmless, may have been created by Chinese Ch'an Buddhists. William Harmless, *Mystics* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 192.

¹⁰⁸ *Sanbo pŏmŭm-jip* 刪補梵音集, *sang* (上) (Pohyŏn-sa, 1713), 1b, 5a, 11b.

that the Buddha is not Śākyamuni Buddha but Maitreya Buddha (彌勒尊佛). Based on this cartouche label, scholars are of the opinion that this iconography denotes “The Coming of Maitreya” after his descent from Tuṣita Heaven and his preaching under the Dragon Flower tree. This is signified by the flower stalk he is holding in his hand.¹⁰⁹ Because of the discrepancy between the cartouche label and the votive inscription, Chang Ch’ung-sik has questioned the identity of the central Buddha. Chang claims that all *kwaebul* paintings represent *Yōngsan hoesang* of the Śākyamuni Buddha’s sermon on the *Lotus Sūtra* on the peak of Mount Vulture, as is made clear by the inscription on the Changgok-sa *kwaebul*.¹¹⁰ This is also because the main Buddha on the Maggok-sa 麻谷寺 *kwaebul* (1687), which is identical in composition and iconography with the Changgok-sa *kwaebul*, is identified as Śākyamuni the *nirmāṇakāya* (千百億化身釋迦牟尼佛) by the cartouche label (fig. 63). Furthermore, since Locana and Vairocana stand on either side of the main Buddha to form the *trikāya*, Chang has argued that the main Buddha on the Changgok-sa *kwaebul* represents Śākyamuni (see (2), (3) of the diagram in fig. 64). While the Buddha is traditionally attired in a plain and unadorned monk’s robe, the Buddha in this *kwaebul* is heavily adorned with a crown, jewels and sumptuous robes—the long *dhōṭī* and sheer patterned trousers—associated with bodhisattvas.¹¹¹ Chang Ch’ung-sik believes that the Śākyamuni in this painting symbolically represents the concept of the Reward Body of

¹⁰⁹ Benoyto Bhattacharya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, mainly based on the Sadhanamala and cognate tantric texts of rituals* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1987), 93-94.

¹¹⁰ Chang Ch’ung-sik, 1995-2000a, 254-255.

In spite of Chang’s view, however, *Ojong pōmūmjip* records an incidence of Maitreya *kwaebul* hung at *Yōngsan-jae* ritual.

¹¹¹ Y. Krishan, *The Buddha Image: Its Origin and Development* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd., 1996), 132.

Although Krishan identifies the crowned and bejeweled Buddhas as *sambhoga-kaya*, he argues this identification is not strictly canonical and not in conformity with the concept of *sambhoga-kaya*. Rather than theoretical or sectarian significance, the possible origin of the crowned and bejeweled Buddha image “has to be sought in the tendency among the Buddhists to proclaim his sovereignty after his spiritual consecration in every conceivable manner.” Thus the crowned Buddha images do not represent any particular school of Buddhism. These were a natural product of the evolution of Buddhist art which employed every conceivable artifice to proclaim the Buddha’s sovereignty. Krishan, 1996, 133, 138.

the Buddha, or *saṃbhogakāya*.¹¹² He argues that the cartouche label, identifying the main Buddha as Maitreya, must have been a mistake on the part of the monk-painter, and that the flower held by the Buddha is not the Dragon Flower at all but a lotus, which represents Śākyamuni's silent transmission of the dhārma to his disciple Mahākāśyapa.¹¹³

That said, the cartouche labels next to the attending bodhisattvas identify the bodhisattvas as Taemyosang posal 大妙相菩薩 and Pöp[hwa]rim posal 法[花]林菩薩.¹¹⁴ The Maitreya Buddha attended by these two Bodhisattvas can be found in several visual examples, like those in the Mogao cave 194 at Dunhuang and the Hall of Maitreya in Kūmsan-sa in North Chōlla Province (figs. 65-66). Since the Maitreya triad in Kūmsan-sa was created in 1635, the painter must have been aware of the two Bodhisattvas attending Maitreya.¹¹⁵ It is clear that the depiction of Maitreya in the Changgok-sa *kwaebul* was not a mistake made by the painter arising out of his confusion of doctrine and iconography, as Chang Ch'ung-sik insists, but an intentional arrangement. In addition, in an actual *Yōngsan-jae* Maitreya is praised together with the *trikāya*, and this is confirmed by the chapter entitled “Yōngsanhoe chakpöp” 靈山會作法 in *Sanbo pōmūm-jip* 刪補梵音集.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Chōng Myōng-hee and Chang Ch'ung-sik consent that the Buddha wearing a luxurious robe and heavily adorned with jewelry and crown, a unique iconography that appears only on *kwaebul*, is Śākyamuni as *saṃbhogakāya*. Meanwhile Kim Ch'ang-kyun views this type of Buddha holding a flower stem and wearing jeweled-crown as in Changgok-sa *kwaebul* represents Maitreya based on the *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa-sūtra* (K: *Mirūk hasaeng kyōng* 彌勒下生經). Chōng Myōng-hee, 2004, 179-185; Chang Ch'ung-sik, 1995-2000a, 255; Kim Ch'ang-kyun, “Piam-sa kwaebulhwa rūl pirotan 17-18 segi Ch'ungch'ōng chiyōk kwaebul hwap'a yōn'gu, in *Han'guk ūi sach'al munhwajae*, comp. by Taehan pulgyo chogyejong (Seoul: Chogyejong ch'ulp'ansa, 2007), 58.

¹¹³ Chang Ch'ung-sik, 1995-2000a, 256.

¹¹⁴ See Tonko Bunbutsu Kenkyūjo, ed. *Tonkō Bakkōkutsu*, vol. 4, (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1980-1982), 252.

Textual description of this triad is found in an esoteric text *Hugat'aya ūigwe* 吽迦陀野儀軌 [Manuals of Hugat'aya] which states Maitreya in the centre is attended by Pōpūmyun *posal* 法音輪菩薩 on the left and Taemyosang *posal* 大妙相菩薩 on the right with Four Heavenly Kings. “中央彌勒菩薩 左方 法音輪菩薩, 右 大妙相菩薩, 四方四大天王.” T. 1251, 245c.

¹¹⁵ This tradition has continued to the present time, and the statues of this Maitreya triad are enshrined in the Mirūk-chōn 彌勒殿 (Maitreya Hall) on the third storey of the three-storey wooden pagoda at Pot'ap-sa, North Ch'ungch'ōng Province, built in 1996.

¹¹⁶ *Sanbo pōmūm-jip*, 1713, 7a.

The whole composition of this *kwaebul*, which features an enlarged standing Maitreya as the central figure, is greatly simplified by contrast with earlier examples. The monumental standing Buddha overwhelms the viewer. By contrast with the customary composition, in which an immense circular group of figures surround the seated Śākyamuni at the centre, there are fewer figures here, and they are symmetrically lined up alongside the standing Buddha. The standing Buddha is magnified so as to fill the entire frame, and the composition becomes as solemn as it is simplified.¹¹⁷

The increase in size of the main Buddha, now depicted standing instead of being seated, is worthy of close attention. As the inscription states, the *kwaebul* was produced for the sake of *Yǒngsan-jae*. A *Kwaebul* is stored in a large casket in normal times and unveiled in the temple compound for outdoor rituals. The procedure of transferring and raising the huge Buddha painting onto an outdoor altar for ritual worship, known as *kwaebul iun* 掛佛移運 (literally “moving *kwaebul*”), is the greatest symbol of the re-enactment of Śākyamuni’s sermon on the *Lotus Sūtra* on the peak of Mount Vulture. The *kwaebul iun* symbolizes the presence of the Buddha in invoking the spirit of the Buddha and his retinue during the ritual. The presence of a Buddha of awe-inspiring size informs worshippers that the ideal Buddha world on the peak of Mount Vulture is being manifested. The depiction of the Buddha as standing rather than seated was probably made to create a “stage effect” in the ritual at later times. It enables a more dramatic scene, illustrating the arrival of the Buddha at the ritual site, to be enacted on the spot.¹¹⁸ The importance and role of the main Buddha in *kwaebul* as a venerable image at outdoor rituals seems to have increased.

The Changgok-sa painting is well-balanced with symmetrical groups of Buddhist figures centred around the main Buddha. The main Buddha is surrounded by six

¹¹⁷ Yun Yŏl-su, 1990, 19-20.

¹¹⁸ Lee Yong-yun, “Pulsa sǒnggokrok ūl t’onghae pon Namjang-sa *kwaebul*” *Sangju Namjang-sa kwaebul t’aeng* (Yangsan, Korea: T’ongdo-sa Sǒngbo Museum, 2001), 4.

Buddhas and six bodhisattvas. The names of the respective deities within the cartouches immediately adjacent to the images make the iconography more explicit (fig. 64). Locana (2) holding the teaching mudrā as *saṃbhogakāya*, and Vairocana (3) holding the wisdom-fist mudrā as *dharmakāya*, are standing next to Maitreya. They cannot be seen in full scale due to the Taemyosang posal (8) and the Pōprim posal (9) who stand in front of them. Locana, who is usually heavily adorned to represent his status as the Reward Body of the Buddha, appears here as a Buddha in a plain monastic robe. Maitreya, Vairocana and Locana comprise a special triad of *samsinbul*, in which Maitreya, a unique figure combining the roles of the Buddha-to-be and a Bodhisattva waiting to be born as a Buddha, perhaps represents the future successor of Śākyamuni. His exceptional position as the Future Buddha and the present Bodhisattva Maitreya may explain this pantheon. The splendid crown of the Buddha, a symbol of royalty, reiterates Maitreya's regal stature as a spiritual ruler. The Maitreya figure appearing in the *Yōngsan hoesang* in place of Śākyamuni seems to emphasize Maitreya's role in the lineal succession of buddhahood after Śākyamuni, from whom Maitreya received the prediction of enlightenment (Skt: *vyākaraṇa*; K: *sugi* 授記).¹¹⁹ The Dhārma lineage is the most important aspect in the Sōn tradition. The Maitreya *kwaebul* in Changgok-sa is a particular type of iconography that combines the Dhārma Assembly on Mount Vulture with the cult of Maitreya.

Samantabhadra (11) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (13) are seated above Vairocana, balanced by Avalokiteśvara (12) and Mañjuśrī (10) on the opposite side, and depicted in the same position and scale. The top section contains Sōkkamun yōrae 釋迦文如來 (Śākyamuni) (5) and Amitābha (7) seated on the right,¹²⁰ with Prabhūtaratna (4) and

¹¹⁹ T. 455, 426a.

¹²⁰ Sōkkamoni 釋迦牟尼 is the Sino-Korean transcription of Śākyamuni in Sanskrit. Sōkkamun 釋迦文 is one of abbreviated names of Śākyamuni. He is entitled Śākya 釋迦, Sōkmun 釋文, Sōkjon 釋尊 and so on. *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3 (Kyōto-shi: Hōzōkan, Shōwa 44-45 [1969-1970]), 1041.

However, *Kwaebul chosa pogosō* argues the name of this Buddha has been chosen to differentiate

Bhaiṣajyaguru (6) on the left. Amitābha's right hand is placed naturally on his right knee and he is holding the seal of lower-grade middle birth (下品中生印) in the other hand. Corresponding to Amitābha in the west, Bhaiṣajyaguru in the east is depicted holding a medicine jar in his hand. Śākyamuni displays the *bhūmiśparśa* mudrā. Prabhūtaratna is holding a pagoda in his hand, reminding the viewer of the famous tale from chapter 11 of the *Lotus Sūtra* in which he appears in a pagoda rising into the heavens from the earth to witness the greatness and legitimacy of Śākyamuni and his preaching of the sūtra. His appearance once again emphasises *Yōngsan hoesang*, the main theme of this *kwaebul*. Just as the Dhārma Assembly of countless beings has gathered at the peak of Mount Vulture from the universe of infinite expanse in order to participate in verifying the “ultimate truth” delivered by Śākyamuni, the emergence of this Buddha confirms the greatness of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the Śākyamuni Buddha who delivers it.

Śākyamuni the Buddha of Present, Prabhūtaratna the Buddha of Past and Maitreya at the centre make up the *samsebul* of time.¹²¹ This painting that depicts the *samsebul* of time within a single frame encapsulates a temporal scheme of past, present, and future at the same time. Śākyamuni, Amitābha and Bhaiṣajyaguru compose a different *samsebul* of space. The assembly of these Buddhas within a single frame is a representation of universal time and space. Moreover, in esoteric Buddhism, Śākyamuni, who is identical with Amoghasiddhi (north) of Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and Divyadundubhi-megha-nirghoṣa (the thunderous sound of the celestial drum Buddha, north) of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala,¹²² is often placed on the north, whereas Prabhūtaratna is identical with Ratnasambhava of the south.¹²³ Whatever the case, the

this Buddha, whom the Maitreya Buddha leads to enlightenment, from Śākyamuni. Munhwajae kalliguk, 1992, 145.

¹²¹ T. 262, 32c. Chapter 11 (見寶塔品) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, in which Śākyamuni introduces Prabhūtaratna as a Buddha of Past, who enlightened in the remotest past.

¹²² *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3, 1041; vol. 4, 1905.

¹²³ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3, 1561.

four Buddhas seated on the top make an interesting set of the Four Directional Buddhas with a multifaceted meaning of time and space as well as esoteric connotations. When Maitreya is added to this gathering, the whole composition takes on a strong future reference: a gathering of Buddhas representing the past, present and future from all the cosmic compass points. The depiction of these Buddhas on the *kwaebul* corresponds to the chapter entitled “Yuch’i” 由致 (Written Prayer) in the *Chakpŏp kwigam* 作法龜鑑 (Manual of Essential Ritual Procedures, compiled by Paekp’a Kŭngsŏn 白坡巨璇 (1767-1852) in 1826), in which a practitioner prays for the descent of the Buddhas—*samsinbul*, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha, and Maitreya—to the ritual site.¹²⁴

The configuration of six Buddhas and a central Buddha satisfies complicated multi-compositions of the *samsebul*, *samsinbul*, and the Four Directional Buddhas simultaneously within a single frame. This unusual and fascinating *kwaebul* thus features the world of the Buddha in both infinite time and limitless space. In other words, the teaching of Buddha is expounded uninterruptedly in the universe and through the time.

6. *The Yŏngsan Kwaebul-t’aeng*, 1749, Kaeam-sa 開巖寺 (fig. 67)

Later on the composition of *kwaebul* becomes even simpler, and there are fewer numbers of attendants around the main Buddha. In the Kaeam-sa *kwaebul* only seven figures, including the central Buddha, are depicted in the painting. In contrast to the simple format of the whole composition, the complex but beautiful decorative patterns on the painting, predominantly in red and green, exude a fascinating overall atmosphere.

The dedicatory inscription reads:

乾隆拾肆年己巳六月日 扶安縣地西領 楞伽山 靈山掛佛幀 奉安于開巖寺
奉爲 主上殿下壽萬歲 王妃殿下 壽濟年 世子邸下壽千秋……

¹²⁴ *Han’guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [A Comprehensive Anthology of Korean Buddhist Works, hereafter HPC], comp. Dongguk Taehakkyo pulgyo munhwa yŏn’gu (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1979-2005), 10: 584a.

On a day of the sixth month in the *kimi* year of the fourteenth year of Qianlong (1749) *Yöngsan-hoe kwaebul-t'aeng* is enshrined in Kaeam-sa on Mt. Nüంగా-san, Puan. We pray His Noble Majesty the King, Her Noble Majesty the Queen will enjoy a life of ten thousand years, and the Crown Prince will enjoy a life of thousand years.

金魚尊宿義兼比丘 永眼比丘 敏熙比丘 好密比丘 印影比丘 冠性比丘
太聰比丘 色敏比丘 覺岑比丘 奉靈比丘 定仁比丘 好靈比丘 宇恩比丘
丘.....

Kūmō (literally, “gold fish,” an honorific title of Buddhist painter) *chonsuk* (literally, “honourable resident,” an honourable title for Buddhist painter who reaches a maturity)¹²⁵ monk Ŭigyōm, monk Yōngan, monk Minhui, monk Homil, monk Inyōng, monk Kwansōng, monk T'aech'ong, monk Saengmin, monk Kakcham, monk Pongnyōng, monk Chōngin, monk Horyōng, monk Uūn.

The inscription makes it clear that this *kwaebul* depicts *Yöngsan-hoe* as its main theme. Despite the various types of *kwaebul* featuring *trikāya* (Kap-sa), the Maitreya Buddha as the Adorned Body (Changgok-sa), and multi-Buddha assemblies (Ch'iljang-sa and Pusōk-sa) in the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century provides evidence to show that the Dhārma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture now emerged as the main theme of *kwaebul* painting. For instance, Ch'iljang-sa dedicated another *kwaebul* “*Yöngsan-hoe kwaebul-t'aeng*” 靈山會掛佛幀 in 1710, hence making a clear distinction from the earlier *kwaebul* of the assembly of the five Buddhas (fig. 68). The depiction of the Dhārma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture no longer contains the typical circular grouping with numerous figures. Instead the enlarged Buddha is shown standing on a floating lotus in iconic fashion with wide and fat shoulders, an extraordinarily long and stiff right arm, and an open palm aimed downwards. The unreal ratio of the body of the Buddha and the complex design patterns are characteristics of eighteenth-century Buddhist art.¹²⁶

It is noteworthy that the importance of *samsinbul*, compared to the much enlarged

¹²⁵ Hong Yun-sik, “Chōlla nam, puk-do chiyōk ũi kwaebul hyōnhwang kwa t'ūnkching,” *Kwaebul chosa pogosō* II (Seoul: Munhwajae kwalliguk, 2000), 121.

¹²⁶ This tradition was already predicted in Changgok-sa *kwaebul* in which Buddha's right arm holding the bottom of the flower stem was depicted abnormally.

central image of the Śākyamuni Buddha, is considerably reduced in the Kaeam-sa *kwaebul*. This phenomenon was already foreshown in the *kwaebul* paintings of Pusök-sa (1664) and Changgok-sa (1673). This was not an unusual iconography in contemporary *kwaebul* paintings such as the Magok-sa *kwaebul* (1687) in which the seated figures of Vairocana and Locana are not only smaller but are now located near the halo of the Śākyamuni, almost like *hwabul*. This is more obvious in the Kaeam-sa *kwaebul* which features Vairocana and Locana as tiny, almost unnoticeable, figures seated around the halo of the Śākyamuni Buddha (fig. 67-a-b). Although the addition of Vairocana and Locana is doubtless intended to compose a Hwaõm *samsinbul* with Śākyamuni at the centre, the role of Śākyamuni who presides over the Dhārma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture is much more emphasized than that of Śākyamuni as *nirmāṇakāya*. They perform only an auxiliary role in the composition. Vairocana as *dharmakāya* (the body of essence) and Locana as *saṃbhogakāya* (the Reward body) are aspects of the Śākyamuni and the Buddha, signifying the Buddha's complete attainment of enlightenment and the union of wisdom and compassion. Their appearance emphasizes the greatness and virtue of Śākyamuni as an object of veneration in this depiction that features *Yõngsan-hoe*.

The *Yõngsan-hoe* in this composition does not appear in *kwaebul* paintings from other areas. It was popular in the Chõlla and Kyõngsang Provinces near the Chiri-san.¹²⁷ According to its inscription, the *kwaebul* was painted by twelve monk-painters headed by Ŭigyõm 義謙, one of the greatest Buddhist monk-painters of the Chosõn period who was mainly active in Kyõngsang and Chõlla Provinces around the area of Chiri-san.¹²⁸ Ŭigyõm and his group produced several *kwaebul* in the area based on a similar

¹²⁷ Munhwajae kwalliguk, 1992, 53.

¹²⁸ Lee Eun-hee, 1991, 203; An Kwi-sook, "Chosõn hugi pulhwasung ui kyebo wa Ŭigyõm pigu e kwanhan yõn'gu I (A Study on the Lineage of Monk-painters and Ŭigyõm during the Second Half of the Chosõn Dynasty)," *Misulsa yõn'gu* 8 (1994): 65.

composition.¹²⁹ His surviving cartoon for the Kaeam-sa *kwaebul* testifies that a series of similar *kwaebul* paintings faithfully followed the same composition and style (figs. 69-70).¹³⁰

The Naeso-sa *kwaebul*, produced in 1700 by a group of monk-painters including Ch'önsin 天信, Ŭigyö'm's senior, also depicts the same deities in an identical composition (fig. 71).¹³¹ By comparing the cartouche labels to the deities in the Naeso-sa *kwaebul* we are able to identify each deity in the Kaeam-sa *kwaebul*son.¹³² The standing Śākyamuni is attended by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra at the centre. In the upper section behind the aureole of the Śākyamuni, we see Prabhūtaratna attended by Avalokiteśvara on the right, and Amitābha attended by Mahāsthāmaprāpta on the left. The assembly of Śākyamuni, Prabhūtaratna, and Amitābha was also produced as a sculptural triad during this period. For example, the portrayal of the Buddha triad attended by four bodhisattvas was prominently displayed in sculpture and enshrined in Kakhwang-jön 覺皇殿, Hwaö'm-sa 華嚴寺 in the Chiri-san in North Chölla Province, in 1702 (fig. 72).¹³³

The Buddha triad with the four Bodhisattvas seems to have been a popular subject in this area during the eighteenth century. There are no extant canonical texts for this grouping. Instead, it emerges in ritual texts of Chosön origin compiled during the latter half of the Chosön period. According to the ritual texts, the three Buddhas and

¹²⁹ Munhwajae kwalliguk, 2000, 45.

At least four out of 100 surviving *kwaebul* paintings were executed by Ŭigyö'm and his group. They are enshrined in Ch'önggok-sa 靑谷寺 (1722), Unhüng-sa 雲興寺 (1730), Anguk-sa 安國寺 (1741), and Kaeam-sa 開巖寺 (1749), concentrated mainly in the mountains of the Chiri-san area of south-western Korea. In addition to these four paintings, Lee Eun-hee includes Tabo-sa 多寶寺 *kwaebul* (1745) to his oeuvre. Lee Eun-hee, 1991, 203.

¹³⁰ Munhwajae kwalliguk, 2000, 45; Lee Eun-hee, 1998, 109.

¹³¹ Ch'önsin, who participated in producing Anguk-sa *kwaebul*, one of the four *kwaebul* paintings attributed to Ŭigyö'm, must have influenced the latter's style. Munhwajae kwalliguk, 2000, 35; An Kwi-sook, 1994, 73, 98-99, 108.

¹³² Munhwajae kwalliguk, 2000, 35.

¹³³ It was known that the Buddha on the right was Bhaiṣajyaguru according to the inscription on the altar painting hung behind the statue. However, according to *pokchang-ki*, or record for concealed objects, the statue is Prabhūtaratna not Bhaiṣajyaguru. Han'guk pulgyo yön'guwön, ed. *Hwaö'm-sa, Han'guk üi sach'al*, vol. 8 (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1982), 91

four Bodhisattvas in this assembly are the deities invoked in the procedure of *kōbul* 舉佛 (literally, “raising Buddha,” but referring to Entreating Buddhist Deities) during *Yōngsan-jae*, in which the names of the deities are recited and they are invited to the ritual site.¹³⁴ More specifically, this procedure is called *yōngsan yuk kōbul* 靈山六舉佛 (Entreating the Six Main Deities of *Yōngsan-jae*).¹³⁵ They are Śākyamuni (南無靈山教主釋迦牟尼佛), Amitābha (南無極樂導師阿彌陀佛), Prabhūtaratna (南無證聽妙法多寶如來佛), Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta (南無觀音勢至大菩薩), Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra (南無文殊普賢大菩薩), and *Yōngsan hoesang pulbosal* (南無靈山會上佛菩薩).¹³⁶ The procedure of *yōngsan yuk kōbul* 靈山六舉佛, signifies the descent and presence of the Buddhist deities at the ritual site, and the Śākyamuni Buddha presides over the ritual and delivers the dhārma. This testifies to the fact that the iconography favoured by certain group of monk painters in certain areas was based on the ritual procedure specified in *Yōngsan-jae* ritual texts of Chosŏn origin.¹³⁷ It is no surprise that the iconography of *kwaebul* painting produced for the performance of outdoor rituals closely corresponds to the ritual procedure and its text.

In this iconography, the depiction of Prabhūtaratna (K: Tabo yōrae 多寶如來, Buddha of Many Treasures) in *Yōngsan-hoe* was inspired by the famous parable of the “Jewelled Stūpa” from the *Lotus Sūtra*. Chapter 11 entitled “The Apparition of the Jewelled Stūpa,” recounts the time when Śākyamuni preached the *Lotus Sūtra* on the summit of Mount Vulture, and the pagoda of seven treasures of Prabhūtaratna emerged from the bowels of the earth as witness to the validity and truth of his teaching.¹³⁸ The narration of the chapter begins with the story of the Prabhūtaratna Buddha as told by the Śākyamuni Buddha as follows:

¹³⁴ Chōng Myōng-hee, 2000, 145.

¹³⁵ *Yōngsan taehoe chakpōp chōlch'a* 靈山大會作法節次 (1634) lists this procedure of “*pōphwa kōbul*” 法華舉佛. HPUC. 2, 133a.

¹³⁶ HPC, vol. 11, 467b-467c; HPC, vol. 12, 158a, 160a; An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 1, 120-121.

¹³⁷ Chōng Myōng-hee, 2000, 145.

¹³⁸ T. 262, 32b-34b.

There lived a Buddha called “Abundant Treasures” many *kalpas* ago in a world called Treasure-Purity, which was located far to the east of the Saha World. The Buddha knew the Wonderful *dharmā*, but did not expound it by himself. He thought that the Wonderful *dharmā* should be expounded by a Buddha who would emanate from himself as many Replica-Buddhas as there are worlds in the universe, dispatch them to those worlds, and then expound the Wonderful *dharmā* in a *sūtra* called the *Lotus Sūtra*. The Buddha decided to wait for the advent of such a Buddha, and to approve the truthfulness of the *Lotus Sūtra* expounded by that Buddha.¹³⁹

A review of the story in the chapter on the appearance of Prabhūtaratna while Śākyamuni was preaching on the mountain helps explain the placing of the Buddha in the *Yōngsan-hoe kwaebul*. More than this, we also learn that Prabhūtaratna lived in the World of Treasure Purity in an eastern part of the universe (東方 寶淨世界) long time ago.¹⁴⁰ The Pure Land to the east where Prabhūtaratna was enthroned is separated from our world by innumerable Buddha-lands. Prabhūtaratna is one of the countless numbers of Buddhas whose paradise is located in the east, such as Bhaiṣajyaguru of the Land of Crystal and Lapis Lazuli and Akṣobhya of Abhirati.¹⁴¹ In its fabulous manner, the parable conveys the Mahāyāna idea that the universe is populated with infinite Buddhas and that one Buddha succeeds another. If the painter depicted Prabhūtaratna based on this chapter, he must have been aware of the World of Treasure Purity in the east of universe, the abode of the Buddha.

The gathering of Śākyamuni, the Buddha of the present and the Saha World, Amitābha, the Buddha of the west, and Prabhūtaratna, the Buddha of the east in the past, forms an interesting triad which connotes the mixed conception of both time and space. Prabhūtaratna appears in *kwaebul* in order to attest to the greatness of the Śākyamuni Buddha and the validity of his preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* to the dhārma gathering on the peak of Mount Vulture. The role of the other deities, including Vairocana and Locana, is to emphasize the greatness and infinity of the Śākyamuni Buddha as a superior entity

¹³⁹ *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, trans. by Bunno Kato (New York: Weatherhill; Kosei: Tōkyō, 1975), 196.

¹⁴⁰ T. 262, 32c.

¹⁴¹ T. 451, 409b-413a.

and the main image of veneration in the *Yōngsan-jae* ritual.

7. Conclusion

The second half of the Chosŏn dynasty saw the intensification of Buddhist outdoor rituals. While forced unification played an important role in the subsequent development of Korean Buddhist doctrines and devotional aspects, rituals were the main representations during which all aspects of social and cultural driving forces behind the religion could be identified. During the period rituals were a practical way of appealing to a broad cross-section of the population and, as such, they became an essential part of Korean Buddhism. Because they served a communal purpose as well as personal psychological needs, the Buddhist rituals played a crucial role in society. During the second half of the Chosŏn period, the main function of Buddhist monasteries in Korea was to conduct mortuary and salvific rituals for the dead, a synthesis of traditional funeral rites and Buddhist practices. Regarding the worship of ancestors Buddhism gave a new significance to the existing ritual of *Yōngsan-jae* to fit in with the Confucian values of the Chosŏn society. Just as the *Yōngsan-jae* ritual had assimilated the memorial ceremony for the dead, the Dhāma Assembly of Śākyamuni on the peak of Mount Vulture was one of the most popular subjects depicted on *kwaebul* throughout the Chosŏn dynasty. The rituals led to the complete internalization and popularization of Buddhism during the period. The assimilation of Korean Buddhism into local cultures added a new meaning and significance to contemporary rituals and the existing iconography, and gave them a novel character.

During the latter half of Chosŏn, various groups of *sabangbul* appeared in Buddhist rituals and art. The *sabangbul* assembly showed significant changes in its iconography in the *kwaebul*. In response to social circumstances, a new type of *sabangbul* imagery showing Śākyamuni's Dhāma Assembly on the peak of Mount Vulture emerges as the central iconography on the *kwaebul* of the period. Continuing

the tradition of the mixed composition of *samsin-samsebul* of the early Chosŏn period, *kwaebul* paintings of the *Yŏngsan-hoe* theme of the later Chosŏn period emphasize the importance of the Śākyamuni Buddha as the ultimate and eternal entity and object of worship in *Yŏngsan-jae*. The *kwaebul* paintings with the iconography of a double composition of *Yŏngsan hoesang* and *samsin-samsebul* reflect the influence of contemporary Buddhist doctrines and the prevalent rituals of the day.

Kwaebul painting is the visual manifestation of Buddhist practices and the pattern of the belief system at the time. The large number of patrons of *kwaebul* demonstrates that Buddhist rituals were a communal activity based on the sponsorship of lay believers drawn from all sections of society in local communities in the later period of Chosŏn. The various sets of the Four Directional Buddhas assembled to meet the wishes of the devotees had a political and religious significance for patrons, and reflected the belief system of the era. *Kwaebul* paintings devised their complex compositions in order to accommodate the new belief system and the wishes of a large number of new lay patrons, as well as conforming with the new state policies towards Buddhism. This reflects the close interactions of Buddhist saṅgha with their local religious communities, and the adaptation of rituals within local societies. It is possible to understand the devotional and emotional concerns of the laity from the rituals performed to cope with the series of national crises. Salvation rituals at mountain monasteries were regularly committed to religious goals and moral principles in accordance with social and political expediency. They not only dealt with personal concerns with suffering and happiness, death and rebirth, but also served to ensure that Buddhist institutions and saṅgha were tolerated by the government. The Buddhist rituals and *kwaebul* paintings provide one of the clearest windows into Chosŏn society if we wish to understand the cultural dynamics by which the people lived and responded to the social, political, religious and cultural circumstances of the Chosŏn dynasty. The examination of

Buddhist rituals and *kwaebul* painting enables us to explore the interplay between special historical and cultural circumstances, government policies, patrons, and the beliefs and religious practices of Chosŏn society.

CHAPTER IV

The Esoterization of *Sabangbul*: The Five Tathāgatas and the *Sisik* Rite in *Kamno-t'aeng*

Ritual became an important component of Korean Buddhism during the later Chosŏn period. In particular, Chosŏn witnessed a tendency of expansion, variation, and elaboration in Buddhist mortuary rituals.¹ Variant types of *sabangbul* groups featured in both the ritual representations and the imagery for worship within the main sanctuary, i.e. altar painting (K: *hubul-t'aeng* 後佛幀), have survived from the period. *Sabangbul* during the later Chosŏn period might be evaluated more productively in the context of the ritual as a whole. The latter half of the Chosŏn period marked a wide spread of esoteric elements in Buddhist ritual.² Evidence of the worship of *sabangbul* in Buddhist rituals under significant esoteric influence during this period can be found in such important liturgical texts as *Chinŏn-jip* 眞言集 [The Collection of Mantras, 1569], *Chebanmun* 諸般文 [Miscellaneous (Ritual) Texts, 1694], *Ojong pŏmŭm-jip* 五種梵音集 [The Collection of the Five Categories of Sanskrit Sounds, 1713], *Chakpŏp kwigam* 作法龜鑑 [A Manual of Essential Ritual Procedures, 1826], etc.: these fall into the category of esoteric Buddhist traditions. During this period the imagery of *sabangbul* was depicted in a variety of forms with esoteric elements. Five Tathāgatas

¹ *Yŏngsan-jae* is one of the three funerary rituals—*Yŏngsan-jae*, *Sangju kwŏn'gong-jae* 常住勸共齋, *Siwang kakpae-jae* 十王各拜齋—regularly held to send the spirits of the dead to paradise at every seventh day for 49 days after death. The religious object of these rituals is the same but their procedures are varied. Among them, *Yŏngsan-jae* is the biggest ritual and requires several days to complete. *Suryuk-jae* 水陸齋 (literally meaning “Water-land Ritual,” a Buddhist rite to console the spirits on both land and water) is ritual for lonely, wandering spirits in the water and land. While the funerary ritual as *Yŏngsan-jae* was held for the dead ancestors by the descendants at regular intervals, *suryuk-jae* was originally the ceremony that was held whenever necessary to appease the souls wandering over land and water and not having descendents. Although *suryuk-jae* is originally held for consoling uncared-for dead souls whenever necessary, the ritual is widely used for funeral and memorial services at regular intervals at the rites of forty-ninth day (K: *sasipgu-jae* 四十九齋), hundredth day (K: *paekil-jae* 百日齋), and the anniversary of death (K: *kiil* 忌日). In Korea *Yŏngsan-jae* and *suryuk-jae* were Buddhist rituals most often held for the deliverance of the soul at the level of the folk Buddhism. Kim Hyŏng-woo, 1996, 37-38.

² During the Chosŏn dynasty, esotericized Buddhist rituals considerably developed, and it “may have attained an even highest stages in general Buddhist practices than it had under the Koryŏ.” Henrik Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism in Korea,” in *Esoteric Buddhism in Asia: SBS Monographs 2*, ed. Henrik Sørensen (Copenhagen, Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1993a), 91.

with strong esoteric connotations illustrated in the upper part of sanctuary of *Kamno-t'eang* 甘露幀, lit: “the painting of Sweet Dew” (*kamno* 甘露, lit: sweet dew, Skt: *amṛta*, meaning without death, corresponding to ambrosia), were prominent among the many different images of *sabangbul* representations in Buddhist mortuary rituals (fig. 73).

This chapter covers important aspects of esoteric influence on Chosŏn ritual art. It focuses on the *sabangbul* image in *Kamno-t'aeng* and its organic relation with Chosŏn funerary rituals during the latter half of the Chosŏn period. In this chapter I propose to examine the assimilation of the esoteric elements into the *sabangbul* imagery, with special emphasis on its imagery in *Kamno-t'aeng*. To do this, I shall discuss various textual sources for the doctrinal origin that led to the creation of the visual representation of the Five Tathāgatas in the ritual painting. In exploring the uniqueness of the iconography, this chapter will address the meaning, roles, and characteristics of the Five Tathāgatas in the mortuary rituals. Thus an examination of the special imagery of *sabangbul* in the context of the rituals will illuminate the assimilation of esoteric beliefs and practices in Korean Buddhist tradition during the period.

In addressing the way in which esoteric ideas adapted themselves to Korean Buddhism, I shall investigate ritual texts of Chinese origin related to esoteric mortuary rituals and compare them with Chosŏn editions in circulation later. Special attention will be paid to the discrepancy between the original texts and the Chosŏn editions in their procedures, their pantheon, and the altar settings of the rituals. The textual comparison will also reveal the assimilation and transformation of the Five Tathāgatas as well as the esoteric elements which were in the process of being incorporated into the Chosŏn Buddhist tradition. An analysis of the textual and artistic evidence traces not only the doctrinal origin but also the historical development of the multifarious

Tathāgatas in *Kamno-t'aeng*. It also explores the close correspondence between written and visual ritual traditions: this reveals the process of transformation of the text into vocal recitation and visual images. A close correspondence can also found between the *kwaebul*, the ritual manuals, and *Yōngsan-jae* performance.

Under the persecution of the early and middle Chosŏn period, various Buddhist sects were merged and lost their special features. As a result, esoteric Buddhist schools as Sinin 神印宗 and Ch'ongji 摠持宗 were eventually absorbed into either the Sŏn 禪 or the Kyo 教 School.³ Although esoteric Buddhist traditions did not develop into fully fledged schools like the Shingon sect in Japan, esoteric doctrines and practices became pervasive in Chosŏn Buddhism as a natural sequence of the syncretic amalgamation between Buddhist schools.⁴ During the Chosŏn period, there was an exceptional spread of esoteric rituals, mortuary rituals for the dead in particular. *Suryuk-jae* 水陸齋 (C: *shuiluzhai*, the Water-Land ritual), an esoteric ritual performed for the salvation of wandering, neglected dead souls, was one of the most popular Buddhist rituals held during the Chosŏn dynasty.⁵ It was remarkable that *suryuk-jae* was continuously performed as a Buddhist ceremony in spite of persecution during the

³ The original twelve schools that had come down from the Koryŏ were merged into seven denominations in 1407 (the seventh year of King T'aejong's reign). In 1424 (the sixth year of King Sejong's reign), the seven Buddhist schools, including the two tantric schools, Sinin and Ch'ongji, were regrouped into two, Sŏn and Kyo. For the specific denominations of the twelve and seven Buddhist schools, see Sørensen, "On Esoteric Practices in Korean Sŏn Buddhism during the Chosŏn Period," in *Han'guk chonggyo sasang ūi chaejomyŏng*, vol. 1, ed. Chinsan Han Ki-du paksa hwagap kinyŏmhoe (Iri: Wŏngwang University, 1993b), 526-7; idem, "On the Sinin and Ch'ongji Schools and the Nature of Esoteric Buddhist Practice under the Koryŏ," *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture*, 5 (Feb. 2005): 70-73

⁴ The influence of the integration of the Ch'ongji school into the school of Sŏn is clear in the Buddhist writings by numerous Sŏn masters in which the esoteric element begins to show up from the 15th century onwards. The phenomenon was expounded by the masters' harmonious approach toward Sŏn and Kyo. Sørensen, 1993b, 528-537

⁵ *Suryuk-jae* was one of large-scale Buddhist ceremonies frequently held for variable purposes during the Chosŏn dynasty. In addition to the consolation of the dead spirits, the ritual was also held for calamity-solving, healing, and praying for rain. Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 820-824; Nam Hee-sook, 2004, 112; Han U-gŭn, *Yugyo chŏngch'i wa pulgyo—Yŏmal sŏnch'o taepulgyo sich'aek* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1993), 62; Kim Hee-jun, "Chosŏn chŏn'gi *suryuk-jae* ūi sŏlhaeng," *Hosŏ sahak* 30 (2001): 30-34; Sim Hyo-sŏp, "Chosŏn chŏn'gi *suryuk-jae* ūi sŏlhaeng kwa ūiui," *Tongguk sahak* 40 (2005): 238-242.

early Chosŏn period.⁶ The demanding needs of *suryuk-jae* rituals during the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty require large compilations of liturgical texts incorporating a complex esoteric procedure—the preparation of the altar, mantras, invocations, mudrās, and offerings for the ritual.⁷ The importance of esoteric influence within the larger tradition of Chosŏn Buddhism is clear from the proliferation of esoteric practices and the extensive publication of esoteric Buddhist texts (especially liturgical texts) concentrated within the period.⁸ According to Eda Toshio, 254 kinds of Buddhist texts were published 464 times throughout the 500 years of the Chosŏn dynasty.⁹ This outnumbers the number of contemporaneous publications from China and Japan.¹⁰ The periods between 1470 (King Sŏngjong) and 1567 (King Myŏngjong) and King Hyojong (r. 1649-1659) and King Chŏngjo (r. 1776-1800) witnessed the publication of many *chinŏn* 眞言 apocryphal texts and Pure Land Buddhist scriptures.¹¹ In particular, esoteric ceremonial texts, like mantra collections and dhāraṇī sūtras familiar to the public, were frequently published among the *Han'gŭl* texts published during the

⁶ In 1420 King Sejong ordered various memorial services as *ch'il-jae* 七齋 (rite of the forty-ninth day) ceremonies and *kisin-jae* 忌晨齋 (memorial rite held for the royal ancestors at the anniversaries of their death) should be merged with *suryuk-jae* for the memorial worshipping of the royal ancestors. The issue of this edict brought about the confusion of *suryuk-jae* with the memorial services. Although *suryuk-jae* was originally held for lonely spirits of the uncared-for, sometimes for the sake of thousands of souls whenever necessary, later it incorporated the memorial rite and was regularly performed on behalf of recently-deceased relatives and family members. As a result, ironically, *suryuk-jae* became to be institutionalized in spite of contraction under the government's Buddhism oppression policy. Stressing ancestral remembrance, *suryuk-jae* was maintained in the first half of the Chosŏn dynasty by the state until *kisin-jae* was abolished finally in 1516. *Sejong sillok*, 2(1420)/8/22(*muo*), 2/9/22(*chŏnghae*), 2/10/1(*pyŏngsin*); Sørensen, 1991-1992: 191. For the records of the performance of *suryuk-jae* appearing in *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* during the Chosŏn dynasty, see the Appendix included in T'ongdo-sa Sŏngbo Museum, ed. *Kamno: Special Exhibition Chosŏn Dynasty Buddhist Painting of Nectar Ritual* (Yangsan, Korea: T'ongdo-sa Sŏngbo Museum, 2005), 238-310.

⁷ It is clear that the popularity of large-scale mortuary rituals like *suryuk-jae* was the religious reaction to the devastating natural disasters and foreign invasions. Publication of the ritual manuals for *suryuk-jae* concentrates in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the warfare during the reigns of King Sŏnjo and King Injo, in which *Imjin waeran* and *Pyŏngja horan* broke out respectively, and drastically cut in the eighteenth century which marked relatively stable period of Chosŏn society. Nam Hee-sook, 2004, 57-73, 91-93; Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 903; Chŏng T'ae-hyŏk, "Han'guk pulgyo ūi milgyo chŏk sŏngkyŏk e taehan koch'al," *Pulgyo hakpo* 18 (1981): 54-56; Yang Ji-yun, *Chosŏn hugi Suryuk-jae yŏn'gu* (MA thesis, Dongguk University, 2003), 10, 16.

⁸ Sørensen, 1993a, 92-3; idem, 1993b, 526-545; Nam Hee-sook, 2004, 91-94.

⁹ Eda Toshio, "Bussho kankō yori mita Richō dai Bukkyō," *Indo gaku bukkyō gaku kenkyū* 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1956): 249-251.

¹⁰ Eda Toshio, 249-251.

¹¹ Eda Toshio, 249-251.

period.¹² The esoteric liturgical texts were published in large volumes and widely distributed during the period. The majority of the published esoteric texts received special support from the royal families, and the categories and the amount of copies published were enormous, and this also reflected monarchical help and interest.¹³ Members of the Chosŏn royal family built temples, made offerings to monastic communities, participated in ceremonies, and sponsored the study and duplication of Buddhist texts. Irrespective of their political outlook they frequently held Buddhist ceremonies which required the printing and copying of the necessary texts.¹⁴ During the Chosŏn dynasty the publication of liturgical texts (more than 36 categories were printed over 100 times) was probably made possible by the devotion of the royal family.¹⁵ To sum up, royal sponsorship of Buddhist ceremonies and esoteric liturgical texts was, thus, religious, political, and secular.

The spread of esoteric rituals gave rise to a new form of ritual painting known as *Kamno-t'aeng*. This exists only in Korea, and is thus probably the most Koreanized of all forms of temple painting. It is an extraordinarily interesting iconography that illustrates the actual scene of *sisik* 施食 (C: *shishi*; J: *segaki*, literally distributing food), a minor rite of feeding the dead and the hungry ghosts, performed as part of seasonal festivals like the *Ullambana* festival of the seventh lunar month and other salvific rituals such as *suryuk-jae*.¹⁶ The *sisik* has served as the ritual core of the mortuary rituals

¹² Suh Yoon-kil, "Esoteric Buddhism" in *Buddhist Thought in Korea*, ed. The Buddhist Research Institute (Dongguk University Press, Seoul, Korea, 1994), 294.

¹³ For example, *Chinŏn kwŏn'gong* 眞言勸供 was printed in 400 copies and distributed at the order of Queen Dowager Insu in 1496. *Great Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Avalokiteśvara* (佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經, KS7) was printed in 1,000 copies at one time in 1644. Suh Yoon-kil, 1994b, 294, 296.

¹⁴ Suh Yoon-kil, 1994b, 295.

¹⁵ Suh Yoon-kil, 1994b, 296.

¹⁶ *Kamno-t'aeng* is widely used for funeral and memorial services such as the rites of forty-ninth day as well as the *Ullambana* festival, the *suryuk-jae*, and *Yŏngsan-jae*. Despite the obscure origin of *Kamno-t'aeng*, it seems to be closely associated with the prevalence of *suryuk-jae* ritual due to the depiction of the actual ritual scene of *suryuk-jae* in the middle section of the painting. In addition, recent studies that closely examine a relationship between *suryuk-jae* and *Kamno-t'aeng* suggest ritual texts compiled for *suryuk-jae* provide iconographical foundation of the painting. Kim Sŏng-hee, *Chosŏn hugi Kamno-do ūi tosang yŏn'gu* (MA Thesis, Hongik University, 1989), 19-20; Yun Eun-hee, *Kamnowang-do tosang ūi hyŏngsŏng munje wa 16, 17 segi Kamnowang-do yŏn'gu: Suryuk-jae ūigwe-jip*

which aimed to lead dead souls to the Buddha's Pure Land. In practice *sisik*, in which a special meal is offered to the dead souls and the hungry ghosts, corresponds to a memorial service for dead ancestors.¹⁷ For this reason, a *Kamno-t'aeng* was usually enshrined on the spirit platform (K: *yöngdan* 靈壇, also known as *hadan* 下壇, meaning lower platform), located within either the main sanctuary or Judgment Hall (K: *myöngbu-jön* 冥府殿), and used mainly for individual funeral rites and memorial services (fig. 74).¹⁸ Whereas a *kwaebul* was a ritual painting produced for special large-scale outdoor rituals attracting large crowds, a *Kamno-t'aeng* illustrating an actual scene from such rituals was permanently enshrined at the memorial platform for individual mortuary rituals.

1. Ritual Texts for the *Sisik* Rite

There is a close correspondence between canonical sūtras and the ritual manuals related to *sisik* and *suryuk-jae*. An examination of old canonical scriptures and *suryuk* ritual manuals is crucial if we are to understand the doctrinal origins and the special role of the Five Tathāgatas depicted in *Kamno-t'aeng*. Various ritual texts identify the Five or Seven Tathāgatas who perform an important and crucial role in releasing tormented

kwa kwallyön hayö (MA thesis, Dongguk University, 2003), 14-32; Chöng Myöng-hee, "Posök-sa Kamno-t'aeng," in *Kamno: Special Exhibition Chosön Dynasty Buddhist Painting of Nectar Ritual*, vol.1 (T'ongdo-sa Söngbo Museum, 2005), 18-20; idem, *Chosön hugi kwaebul t'aenghwa üi yön'gu* (MA Thesis, Hongik University, 2000), 65; Pak Eun-kyöng, 2005, 279-295.

¹⁷ Hyun-kee Kim Hogarth, *Syncretism of Buddhism and Shamanism in Korea* (Edison, NJ: Jimundang International, 2002), 330.

¹⁸ Hong Yun-sik, "Hadan t'aenghwa" *Munhwajae* 11 (1977): 143.

The Buddhist altars of the Chosön period are divided into *samsan* 三檀 (three altars—upper, middle, and lower). While the upper and middle altars are allocated to the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and minor tutelary deities of the Buddhist pantheon, *hadan* 下壇 (the lower altar), also called *yöngdan* 靈壇 (memorial platform), is allocated for ancestor worship for which memorial tablet and *Kamno-t'aeng* are enshrined at the altar. Thus the painting is also called *hadan t'aenghwa* (painting of the lower altar). In preparing altars for Buddhist rituals as *suryuk-jae* and *Yöngsan-jae*, the hierarchy of three levels of sanctity was observed. In the mortuary rituals, after making offerings to the Buddhas and other deities, the dead soul receives offerings from the bereaved family performed at the lower altar (*hadan*). Hong Yun-sik, "Han'guk pulgyo üisik üi samdan pundanpöp" *Munhwajae* 9 (1975b), 30-37; idem, "Chosön sidae Chinön-chip üi kanhaeng kwa üisik üi milgyohwa," in *Han'guk milgyo sasang yön'gu* (Seoul: Dongguk University, 1986), 429-431..

The earliest records regarding the hierarchy of three altars of Buddhist ritual are found in Kwön Kün, *Yangch'on-jip* 陽村集, vol. 12, "Chin'gwan-sa suryuk-sa chosöng-gi 津寬寺水陸社造成記"; *Yönsan-kun ilgi*, 9(1503)/1/28 (*pyöngsin*).

souls and granting them salvation. The oldest text that mentions the method of invoking the deities is a Buddhist canonical text dating back to the Tang dynasty: the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Saving the Burning-mouth hungry ghost* (C: *Foshuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經; K: *Pulsöl kubal yöngu agwi dhāraṇī kyōng*, hereafter *Dhāraṇī Sūtra*) was translated by Amoghavajra between 757 and 770.¹⁹ In this text a Burning-mouth hungry ghost (*yöngu agwi* 焰口餓鬼) appears to Ānanda while he is meditating.²⁰ He is told that he will die within three days and become a hungry ghost. Ānanda consults Buddha, who advises him to chant a single *dhāraṇī*, *Namo sarva Tathāgata avalokita samvara hum* (無量威德自在光明殊勝妙力, literally meaning The Wondrous Victorious Power of Unlimited Awesome Self-Existent Light) seven times and offer food to all hungry beings. Afterward, the names of the Four Tathāgatas—Prabhūtaratna (K: *Tabo yörae* 多寶如來),²¹ Surūpakāya (K: *Myosaeksin yörae* 妙色身如來),²² Vipulakāya (K: *Kwangbaksin yörae* 廣博身如來),²³ and Abhayaṅkara (K: *Ip’owoe yörae* 離怖畏如來)²⁴—are invoked. The practitioner and the audience recite the respective names and prayers of the Four Tathāgatas, and visualize the holy figures radiating light towards the spirits:

Namo Prabhūtaratna Tathāgata, the Abundant Treasures Buddha who is able to break the hungry ghosts *karma* of greed so that they may receive perfect blessings and merits.

Namo Surūpakāya Tathāgata, the Fine Form Body Buddha who is able to remove the hungry ghosts form of ugliness so that they may receive wholesome features and forms.

Namo Vipulakāya Tathāgata, the Broad Extensive Body Buddha who is able to enlarge the hungry ghosts throats so that they may consume the offered food.

Namo Abhayaṅkara Tathāgata, the Freed-from-Fear Buddha who is able to remove all the hungry

¹⁹ T. 1313.

²⁰ A hungry ghost (Skt: *preta*; K: *agwi*) is a being with a huge stomach, but an oesophagus is as thin as a needle. Even if they are offered food, it turns into burning coal once it reaches their mouth. They suffer tremendously from hunger, representing the insatiable nature of greed and desire. T. 1313, 464b-c.

For various kinds and the classes of the hungry ghosts, see Adrian Snodgrass, *The Matrix and Diamond World Mandalas in Shingon Buddhism* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 99-100.

²¹ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 4, 1905.

²² *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 5, 2117.

²³ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 2, 528.

²⁴ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 4, 1905.

ghosts fears so that they may leave the realm of ghosts.²⁵

The invocations and prayers in honour of the Four Tathāgatas indicate that each deity holds a specific role and power in the performance of the rite. The method of reciting a special dhāraṇī and the invocation of the Four Tathāgatas in a regular sequence embodies a ritual purification in which evil is dispelled, food is offered to hungry ghosts, their throats are widened for them to eat the food, and suffering beings are liberated.

Although the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* provides a somewhat short ritual structure for performing a whole range of *sisik* rites, it is a major text that provides a doctrinal basis for performing such rites.²⁶ This simple procedure would later become the basis of more complicated esoteric scriptures and liturgical texts used for *sisik* rites. The exemplary method outlined in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* was continued in the more elaborate structure and procedures of the *Rite for Distributions of Food and Water to Hungry Ghosts* (C: *Shizhugui yinshi jishui faping shouyin* 施諸餓鬼飲食及水法(并手印), hereafter *Yinshi jishuifa*), also translated by Amoghavajra sometime in the late eighth century.²⁷ Instead of the single mantra found in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* this scripture incorporates five mantras, before reciting the names of the Tathāgatas.²⁸ Together with the addition of new mantras, there is an increase in the number of Tathāgatas and Five Tathāgatas are invoked for the rite: Ratnasambhava (K: Posūng yōrae 寶勝如來),²⁹ Surūpakāya, Vipulakāya, Abhayaṅkara, and Amṛtarāja (K: Kamnowang yōrae 甘露王

²⁵ This chant is quoted from Charles D. Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism and the *Shishi* in China,” in Henrik Sørensen ed. *Esoteric Buddhism in Asia: SBS Monographs 2* (Copenhagen, Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1993), 67-68.

²⁶ Okazaki Jōji, *Butsugu daijiten* (Tōkyō: Kamakura shinsho, Shōwa 57[1982].), 392.

²⁷ T. 1315. The account of Ānanda, the origin of the *sisik* rite, is not incorporated into this scripture.

²⁸ Mantra for assembling all ghosts (善集印); Mantra for opening the hells and throats (開地獄門及咽喉); Mantra to empower offerings (無量威德自在光明勝妙之力加持飲食陀羅尼); Mantra of the sweet dew method (甘露法味真言); Mantra of Vairocana’s single-character-water-disk (毘盧遮那一字心水輪觀真言). T. 1315, 467c-468a.

²⁹ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3, 1041.

如來).³⁰ Alongside the Four Tathāgatas in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra*, Ratnasam̐bhava and Amṛtarāja are added (but Prabhūtaratna excluded) in *Yinshi jishuifa*.

The Seven Tathāgatas first appear in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Saving Ānanda and Distributing Food to the Burning Mouths from the Essentials of the Yogacara* (C: *Yuqieji yaojiu anan tuoluoni yankou guiyi jing* 瑜伽集要救阿難陀羅尼焰口軌儀經, hereafter *Guiyi jing*),³¹ which is also attributed to Amoghavajra. This scripture is followed by a Yuan scripture of outstanding importance, the *Rites for Distributing Food to Burning Mouths from the Essentials of Yogacara* (C: *Yujia jiyao yankou shishi yi* 瑜伽集要焰口施食儀, hereafter *Shishi yi*),³² on which all subsequent versions of the *sisik* rite from Yuan to contemporary China are based. Compared to earlier texts, *Shishi yi* has a most complicated method. First the text has a significant increase in mantra sequences, over thirty in number. The rite is also more regularized and complex, and includes highly diversified mantras and corresponding mudrās (fig. 75). The addition of new mantra sequences for confession, repentance, and the elimination of sins that are concentrated in the early stages of the rite is particularly worthy of note. The appearance of the Seven Tathāgatas featuring two extra Tathāgatas in *Guiyi jing* and *Shishi yi* is also significant. The Seven Tathāgatas in these scriptures are Ratnasam̐bhava, Abhayaṅkara, Vipulakāya, Surūpakāya, Prabhūtaratna, Amitābha, and a Tathāgata bearing the title *Loka visuddhi ratna tisri pravaya tathāgata* (世間廣大威德自在光明如來, literally meaning World-vast-virtuous dignity-self-existing-bright Tathāgata).³³ The increase in the number of the Tathāgatas along with the new mantra sequences in the scriptures perhaps signifies

³⁰ Unlike the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (T. 1313) which incorporates a prayer to each Tathāgata, there is no mention on the special powers and merits of the Tathāgatas in the “Recitation of the Mantras of the Five Tathāgatas” of this sūtra.

For an explanation of Amṛtarāja, see *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 1, 37.

³¹ T. 1318.

³² T. 1320.

The *Shishi yi*, attributed to the Yuan dynasty, follows the order of *Guiyi jing* (T. 1318) and covers the same material of the earlier text. From this reason, on occasion *Shishi yi* is attributed to Amoghavajra, although this text does not incorporate the Ānanda story into the text. Orzech, 1993, 56.

³³ T. 1318, 471a; T. 1320, 479a.

that the Tathāgatas had more elaborate and specific roles and that, by performing the rite, practitioners and audiences alike expected stronger powers from the Tathāgatas. The addition of the new mantras to eliminate sins and two extra Tathāgatas in the scriptures may also indicate a newly added function to the *sisik* rite to absolve the sins of the dead spirits. The emphasis here is laid upon the fact that sins could be absolved through the rite by chanting mantras and naming specific Buddhist deities. This was not only powerfully efficient in spiritual terms but also a way of paying homage to the deities.

Although esoteric texts of Indian origin preserved in the Buddhist canon slightly vary in the way mantras are chanted and Tathāgatas solicited, the structure of the ritual is broadly the same. The ceremonial focus is on the ritual transformation and distribution of food for the salvation of dead spirits. According to the scriptures, it is necessary to go through due formalities of the combined recitation of certain dhāraṇī or mantras and of the names of the numerous Tathāgatas to magically multiply the offerings of food and water, turn the offerings into *amṛta* (the sweet dew of immortality), and alleviate the suffering of the countless beings in the lower realms “by the merits and effect of the mantras powered by the Tathāgatas at the esoteric ritual.”³⁴

2. Korean Ritual Texts for *Suryuk-jae*

The Tang and Yuan texts form the basis of the esoteric *sisik* rites in the Buddhist tradition, and these texts also served as the key scriptures of the *sisik* practice in Korea. *Guiyi jing* (T. 1318) and *Shishi yi* (T. 1320) provide the doctrinal basis of the Seven Tathāgatas of *Kamno-t'aeng*. Kim Sung-hee, a leading expert in the study of *Kamno-t'eang* painting, argues that *Guiyi jing* became the doctrinal basis of the iconographical foundation of *Kamno-t'aeng* and reflected the original form of the *suryuk-jae* ritual.³⁵ While recognizing the importance of the canonical texts, recent studies in Korean generally agree that the Seven Tathāgatas of the *Kamno-t'aeng* owe a more direct debt

³⁴ Orzech, 1993, 53.

³⁵ Kim Sŭng-hee, 2005a, 28; idem, 1989, 5, 9.

to the *suryuk* ritual manuals compiled in Chosŏn during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.³⁶ These ritual manuals, in circulation during the second half of the Chosŏn period, were greatly influenced by the ritual texts imported from China between the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn period. The compilation of various liturgical texts for the *sisik* rite in Korea from this period began with the import of *Zengxiu chanjiao shishi yiwen* 增修禪教施食儀文 (K: *Chŭngsu sŏn'gyo sisik ūimun*, the Revised and Augmented Ritual Manual for the Performance of Food Offerings in Sŏn and Kyo, hereafter *Shishi yiwen*) by the Southern Song Ch'an master Mengshan De-I 蒙山德異 (1231-1308).³⁷ Most of the ritual manuals compiled for *suryuk-jae* and the *sisik* rite during the Chosŏn dynasty derive from the Mengshan's *Shishi yiwen*. Its general format and order were mostly followed in the Korean texts.³⁸ Perhaps Mengshan's text was most influential in shaping Chosŏn *sisik* ritual manuals from this period.

Mengshan's text distances itself from other Ming and Qing recensions for the rite,

³⁶ Kim Sŭng-hee, 2005a, 42-43; idem, "Kamno-t'aeng ūi tosang kwa sinang ūirye," in Kang Woo-bang and Kim Sŭng-hee, *Kamnot'aeng: The world of nectar ritual painting* (Seoul: Yegyŏng, 1995), 400; Yun Eun-hee, 2003, 72-73; Pak Eun-kyŏng, 2005, 288-289; Hong Yun-sik, *Han'guk purhwa ūi yŏn'gu* (Iri: Wŏn'gwang University, 1980), 185-188; Lee Yong-yun, "Koryŏ taehakkyo pangmulgwan chang Kamno-t'aeng," in *Kamno: Special Exhibition Chosŏn Dynasty Buddhist Painting of Nectar Ritual*, ed. T'ongdo-sa Sŏngbo Museum, vol. 1 (Yangsan, Korea: T'ongdo-sa Sŏngbo Museum, 2005), 223, in which Yi specifies *Chinŏn kwŏn'gong* 眞言勸供 (1496) or *Kwŏngong chebanmun* 勸供諸般文 (1574) becomes the doctrinal basis of the iconography of the Seven Tathāgatas on *Kamno-t'ang*.

³⁷ We find historical evidence that *Suryuk ūimun* 水陸儀文 [Text for the Water-Land Ritual] was brought from Song China during the reign of King Sŏnjong 宣宗 (r. 1083-1094) of the Koryŏ dynasty. However, *Taejang mongnok* 大藏目錄 [The List of the Collection of Koryŏ *Tripitaka*] of 1236-1251 includes only a few scriptures for the ritual of feeding the hungry ghosts as the *Foshuo tuoluoni jing* (T. 1313) and *Foshuo jiumianran egui tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說救面然餓鬼陀羅尼神呪經 (T. 1314), another version of T. 1313, translated by Siksanda between 695 and 704. This may indicate the import of ritual manuals of feeding the hungry ghosts from China was not active until the mid or even the late Koryŏ dynasty. *Koryŏsa*, vol. 10, sega 世家 10, Sŏnjong 宣宗 3; *Koryŏsa chŏryo*, vol. 6, Sŏnjong Hyomyŏng taewang 宣宗思孝大王 7 (1090) 庚午; Kamata Shigeo, *Han'guk pulgyo sa*, trans. Shin Hyŏn-sook (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1994), 134-135; Chŏnggak (Mun Sang-yŏn), "Pulgyo cherye ūi ūimi wa haengpŏp-siagwihoe rŭl chungsim ūiro," *Han'guk pulgyohak* 31 (Feb. 2002): 331.

³⁸ *Chinŏn kwŏn'gong* 眞言勸供 (1496), *Kwŏn'gong chebanmun* 勸供諸般文 (1574), *Unsudana kasa* 雲水壇歌詞 (1627, published at Panyong-sa), *Chebanmun* 諸般文 (1694, compiled at Kŭmsan-sa), and another version of *Chebanmun* 諸般文 (1719, republished at Haein-sa) follow the general format and rules of procedure of the Mengshan's text for the most part. Especially, *Unsudana kasa* by Hyujŏng 休靜 is almost identical in its format and order. The chapter 23 "Taerye sisik 大禮施食 (Rite of Offering Food in Main Ritual)" of *Chakpŏp kwigam* 作法龜鑑, probably the most comprehensive and important ritual manual of the later Chosŏn period before the compilation of *Sŏngmun ūibŏm* 釋門儀範 in 1931 by An Chin-ho, also closely follows the format and structure of the Mengshan's text. HPUC, vol. 3, 426a-430a (*Chakpŏp kwigam*); HPUC, vol. 2, 11-27 (*Unsudana kasa*).

which adhere to the formalities of the Yuan canonical text *Shishi yi*.³⁹ When we compare the Yuan scripture and Mengshan's text, we find the latter adapts important elements of the earlier text but significantly modifies the sequence of the ritual. The most significant alteration in Mengshan's text is the replacement of the seventh Tathāgata *Loka visuddhi ratna tisri pravaya tathāgata* with Amṛtarāja. Moreover, this text changes the roles of the Seven Tathāgatas. In the Tang and Yuan scriptures, the dhāraṇī of Vipulakāya (K: Kwangbaksin yōrae 廣博身如來, Buddha of "Broad-wide-body" form) opens the narrow throat of hungry ghosts, thereby enabling them to swallow food.⁴⁰ However, the deity in Mengshan's manual and the liturgical texts of Chosŏn compilation embodies the all-encompassing nature of the Buddha as its name indicates.⁴¹ Here Vipulakāya's powers of opening narrow throats is imposed upon Amṛtarāja.⁴² This alteration is followed by all of the Chosŏn liturgical texts related to *suryuk-jae* and *sisik*. Unlike the ritual manuals in which the names of the Seven or

³⁹ After the Yuan text *Shishi yi* (T. 1320), there were numerous recensions of *shishi* manuals dating from the Ming and Qing dynasties headed by *Xiuxi yujia jiyao shishi tanyi* 修習瑜伽集要施食壇儀 [Cultivating Altars and Rites for Feeding (the Burning Mouths According to) the Essentials of Yoga, ZZ. 1083] by Tianji 天機 (fl. sixteenth century), the Chan master of the Ming dynasty. Tianji's work was followed by Yunqi Zhuhong's *Xiushe yujia jiyao shishi tanyi* 修設瑜伽集要施食壇儀 [Preparation of Altars and Rites for Feeding (the Burning Mouths According to) the Essentials of Yoga, ZZ. 1081], a most influential recension of the rite in China. However, no significant modification in the order of the Yuan scripture is made in Zhuhong's text. In particular, *mantra* sequences and the nomenclatures of the Seven Tathāgatas of the Yuan scripture (T. 1320) continue in the Ming and Qing recensions of the text. Most of Zhuhong's additions, composed of interpolated hymns and *gathas*, are added at the beginning of the rite. ZZ. 1081; ZZ. 1083; Orzech, 62.

⁴⁰ T. 1313, 465a; T. 1318, 471a; T. 1320. 478a, 478c.

In the *Shishi yi* (T. 1320), for instance, the Mantra of opening the throats (廣博身如來開咽喉印 *Om namo bhagavate vipula-gatraya Tathāgataya*), inserted before the invocation of the Seven Tathāgatas, is identical with the dhāraṇī of Vipulakāya Tathāgata recited to summon the Buddha. T. 1320, 478a-478b.

⁴¹ In *Sŏngmun ūibŏm* 釋門儀範, the prayer to Vipulakāya recites:

南無廣博身如來 願諸孤魂 捨六凡身 悟虛空身

I take refuge in Vipulakāya Tathāgata. I pray all lonely dead souls desert bodily form of the Six Paths and perceive the greatness of the body of Vairocana which fills the universe.

An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 1, 253-254; vol. 2, 74.

⁴² The prayer to Amṛtarāja recites:

南無甘露王如來 願我各各 列名靈駕 咽喉開通 獲甘露味

I take refuge in Amṛtarāja. I pray the throats of all lonely dead souls are open and they taste the sweet dew.

An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 2, 74.

Five Tathāgatas are specified for recitation, *Kamno-t'aeng* paintings do not usually have cartouche labels to verify their names. It is extremely difficult to identify each Buddha in the gatherings unless they are designated in the cartouche label. For this reason, despite the coarse manner of execution, the *Kamno-t'aeng* now in Onyang Folk Art Museum (attributed to the early twentieth century), composed of separate panels of the deities with their names inside a cartouche, is considered important (fig. 76). The nomenclatures specified in the painting help us to identify the Seven Tathāgatas depicted in *Kamno-t'aeng* and also clarify their textual origin.

The Mengshan tradition appears to have had a far-reaching impact on the development of the liturgical text for the *sisik* rite in Korea. Mengshan's *Shishi yiwen* provides the practitioner with explicit instructions and detailed procedures for performing the *sisik* rite. Most of all, this text completes the formalities of contemporary practices of the *sisik* rite in Korea. The structure and regulations (K: *haengpōp* 行法) outlined in this text are still operative in contemporary *sisik* practice.⁴³ The *sisik* rite consists of offering food and drink to hungry ancestor ghosts in a long sequence to satisfy their needs, along with various mantras recited by the priests. In Mengshan's manual, for example, the food offering undergoes a process of transformation both in quality and quantity when four special mantras are chanted. The four major mantras are the mantra to multiply food (K: *pyōnsik chinōn* 變食眞言), the mantra to transform water into *amṛta* (K: *si-gamrosu chinōn* 施甘露水眞言), the mantra to help eat and drink moderately (K: *iljja suryun'gwan chinōn* 一字水輪觀眞言), and the mantra to transform the food into milk for digestion (K: *yuhae chinōn* 乳海眞言). These four mantras collectively called *sa-dhāraṇī* 四陀羅尼 (The four dhāraṇīs of the *sisik* rite) in current Korean Buddhist tradition, are recited in order before supplicating the Seven Tathāgatas. Although their sequence and names vary in the Tang and Yuan esoteric

⁴³ Most part of Mengshan's *Shishi yiwen* is included in *Sōngmun ūibōm* 釋門儀範 of the twentieth-century compilation without mentioning on its authority. See An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 2, 49-88.

scriptures, the four-dhāraṇī chants had already been introduced in the scriptures. Nevertheless, the first appearance of the four dhāraṇīs in due order was in Mengshan’s text, and only after that was it faithfully followed by the Chosŏn ritual texts. Mengshan’s text established another variant of the rite which became the standard form of the *sisik* rite in Korea.

The orderly recitation of *sa-dhāraṇī* is followed by “*ch’ingyang sŏngho*” 稱揚聖號 (The Incantation of Divine Names of Buddhas) or “*sŏnyang sŏngho*” 宣揚聖號 (The Proclamation of Divine Names of Buddhas) in which the solemn nomenclatures of the Five or Seven Tathāgatas and prayers to the deities are chanted to greet the deities. This heightens the respect and homage paid to the Five/Seven Tathāgatas by the practitioner and the audience, and merits and virtues are accrued from the recitation of their nomenclatures in the *ch’ingyang sŏngho* procedure. *Sa-dhāraṇī* and *ch’ingyang sŏngho*, observed in every *sisik* rite, are usually performed in tandem to make them more effective.⁴⁴ Reciting the Four dhāraṇīs and visualising the Tathāgatas in tandem activates the divine protection and power of the Tathāgatas to cause the magical multiplication of the offerings, open the narrow throats of hungry ghosts, enable them to eat food, which turns into *amrita* by the *sa-dhāraṇī*, and release the suffering beings: the essence of the *sisik* ceremony. This segment uses numerous mantras, dhāraṇīs, specific instructions for mudrās, and contemplations to visualize the Five/Seven Tathāgatas (fig. 77). The recitation of exact dhāraṇī and mantras in regular sequence empowered by the combined blessings and powers of the deities in the esoteric ritual seems to indicate its importance in saving suffering beings. The basic sequence of

⁴⁴ There are some structural differences among some of the texts, but their basic contents are the same with slight local variations. For instance, in *Suryuk much’a p’yŏngdŭng chaeüi ch’waryo* 水陸無遮平等齋儀撮要 (1470), the names of the Five Tathāgatas from the chapter 23 *sŏnyang sŏngho* 宣揚聖號, interestingly, come before chanting the Four *dhāraṇīs* included in the chapter 26 “*chusik hyŏn’gong*” 呪食現供 (Mantra of offering food). On the other hand, the Four dhāraṇīs in the chapter 33 “*kisŏng kaji*” 祈聖加持 (Empowerment of divine power) of *Ch’ongji myŏngyang suryuk chaeüi ch’anyo* 天地冥陽水陸齋儀纂要 are recited before the recitation of the names of the Five Tathāgatas in the chapter 36 “*sŏnmil kaji*” 宣密加持 (Empowerment to unfold secret method).

four dhāraṇīs and a new set of Seven Tathāgatas in a specific order gives more systematic characteristics to the *sisik* rite of Korea.

Another important manual imported from China during this period is *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 [The Rules of the Excellent Assembly for the Observation of the Feast for the *Dharmadhātu*'s Holy and Worldly in Water and on Land], composed by the Southern Song (1127-1278) cleric Zhipan 志磐 (fl. thirteenth century) in ca. 1265-1274 and reedited by Yunqi Zhuhong (1535-1615), the eminent Ming master.⁴⁵ This ritual text in six volumes, listed in *Zokuzōkyō* 續藏經, gives instructions on reciting and visualizing the Four Tathāgatas, the same deities who appear in the *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* (T. 1313).⁴⁶ It was published several times during the Chosŏn dynasty, and the 1470 and 1573 editions still exist.⁴⁷ A comparison between the original Song text and Chosŏn recensions reveals a considerable discrepancy in the order and structure of the rite.⁴⁸ This becomes clearer when we examine the nomenclatures of the Tathāgatas. While the Song original incorporates the Four Tathāgatas, the Korean edition of the same title, compiled in 1470 at Songgwang-sa in South Chŏlla Province, includes the Five Tathāgatas—Prabhūtaratna, Surūpakāya, Vipulakāya, Abhayaṅkara, and Amṛtarāja—by adding Amṛtarāja to the Song material.

⁴⁵ ZZ. 1497. This text is also referred to as *Zhipanwen* 志磐文 (Zhipan's Text) after the original author.

⁴⁶ ZZ. 1497, 814b.

⁴⁷ The edition dated to 1470 published at Songgwang-sa is the earliest recension extant, and it is now only available at Dongguk University Library. This Songgwang-sa edition from 1470 is identical with that from 1573 published at Kongnim-sa 空林寺 in Northern Ch'ungch'ōng Province in its contents, except for an epilogue composed by Kim Su-on. The epilogue reveals the text was published in the first year of King Sŏngjong's reign (1470) at the order of *taewang taebi* 大王大妃, who refers to Chŏnghui *taewang taebi* 貞熹大王大妃 (Queen Dowager Chŏnghui, 1418-1483), Sejo's queen.

⁴⁸ The Buddhist altars of the Chosŏn Buddhist rituals including *suryuk-jae* are categorized into *samsan* 三壇 (three altars—upper, middle, and lower). This is observed in the Chosŏn editions of Zhipan's text. However, according to the original Zhipan's text listed in *Zōkuzōkyō*, the inner shrine (內壇) for the Water-Land rite in China is divided into an "upper altar" (上堂) and a "lower altar" (下堂). ZZ. 1497, 787c, 798a, 798b, 823a; Marsha Weidner, "The Water-Land Ritual," in Marsha Weidner, ed. *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas in association with University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 280; Hong Ki-yong, "Chungguk Wŏn, Myōng-dae suryuk pŏphoe-do e kwanhan koch'al," *Misul sahak yon'gu* 219 (Sep. 1998): 46, 56-59; Sim Hyo-sŏp, 2004, 238-242.

The invocation of the Five Tathāgatas in the Korean recensions of Zhipan's text is observed in various Chosŏn ritual texts like *Kwŏn'gong chebanmun* 勸供諸般文 (1574), *Chebanmun* 諸般文 (Haein-sa edition 1719), *Chakpŏp kwigam* (1826), *Ojong pŏmŭm-jip* 五種梵音集 (1713), *Suryuk much'a p'yŏngdŭng chaeŭi ch'waryo* 水陸無遮平等齋儀撮要 [The Abbreviated Ritual for the Water and Land Unobstructed, Equal Feast, 1470], *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chaeŭi ch'anyo* 天地冥陽水陸齋儀纂要 (1562), and *Sŏngmun ūibŏm* 釋門儀範 [The Ritual Codex of Buddhism, compiled by An Chin-ho in 1931].⁴⁹ In addition to the names of the Five Tathāgatas, the Chosŏn editions of Zhipan's text composed of 44 chapters are largely similar in their general order and structure to a number of other liturgical texts of the *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk* 天地冥陽水陸 type, the *suryuk* ritual manuals of Chosŏn origin.⁵⁰ During this period, Sørensen writes: "Not only were many Chinese works on ceremonial practices printed in several editions, but many new and original Korean compositions and compilations were produced."⁵¹ A comparison of the original Song text with the Chosŏn *suryuk* texts would provide a better understanding of the changes and differences of emphasis in the rite from the early to late Chosŏn.

The disparity between the original materials from China and the Chosŏn recensions indicates that two different types of *sisik* ritual texts with the same title circulated concurrently for a certain period of time, and that the indigenous recensions by Chosŏn compilers eventually replaced the Chinese originals. There is a distinct possibility that, after Mengshan's extant *Shishi yiwen* was imported, it may have been

⁴⁹ HPUC, vol. 2, 496b-497a (*Chebanmun*); HPUC, vol. 1: 659b-660a, 668a (*Kwŏn'gong chebanmun*); HPUC, vol. 3, 388b-389a (*Chakpŏp kwigam*); HPUC, vol. 2, 240a-b (*Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chaeŭi ch'anyo*); HPUC, vol. 1, 636a-637a (*Suryuk much'a p'yŏngdŭng chaeŭi ch'waryo*); An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 1, 253-254; vol. 2, 74.

⁵⁰ In particular, *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suryuk chaeŭi ch'anyo* 天地冥陽水陸齋儀纂要 is identical with the Chosŏn editions of the Zhipan's text. From this reason, the 1573 edition is also titled as *Suryuk chaeŭi ch'anyo* 水陸齋儀纂要 while the Songgwang-sa edition of 1470 as *Chibanmun* 志磐文 (Zhipan's text).

⁵¹ Sørensen, 1991-1992, 163. Sørensen has investigated Korean Buddhist ritual texts and completes a list of the texts available in Songgwang-sa library. See Sørensen, 1991-1992.

also modified by the Chosŏn compilers. This is because the original Mengshan's text is not included in the *Xuzanjing* 續藏經 which lists various other Ming- and Qing-dynasty *sisik* texts by such masters as Yunqi Zhuhong.⁵² Furthermore Yuan-, Ming- or Qing-dynasty recensions of the Mengshan's text have not so far been recovered from China.⁵³ The earliest recension still extant today dates from the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty.⁵⁴ Indeed, Korea serves as a rich repository of Mengshan's works which were widely read and had considerable influence in Korea, but rarely remained in other countries, not even in China.⁵⁵ This fact seems to confirm the assumption that Mengshan's original was considerably modified by Chosŏn compilers when it was edited. Hŏ Hŭng-sik has argued that Mengshan's *Shishi yiwen* was reedited in Chosŏn and tailored to the need of Koreans.⁵⁶

According to Hŏ Hŭng-sik, the Chosŏn recension of the Mengshan's text was re-exported to China when the Ming army came to Korea during the *Imjin* War to help Chosŏn.⁵⁷ The new Mengshan tradition has been preserved in Taiwan in the contemporary *sisik* ritual in which the combined recitation of the *sa-dhāraṇī* and the nomenclatures of the new set of the Seven Tathāgatas in same order are identical with that in the Chosŏn ritual manuals.⁵⁸ It is interesting that this tradition is also observed in Japan. In the "Prayer on the Occasion of Feeding Hungry Ghosts" from D. Suzuki's

⁵² See ZZ. 1081 and ZZ. 1083.

⁵³ Hŏ Hŭng-sik, *Koryŏ e namgin Hyuhyuam ūi pulpit* (P'aju, Korea: Ch'angbi, 2008), 86, 188.

⁵⁴ The earliest recension of the text dating from 1600 was published at Kwanghŭng-sa 廣興寺 in North Kyŏngsang Province.

⁵⁵ Mengshan had an active interchange with Koryŏ masters, in particular, National Preceptor Hyegam (Manhang 萬恒, 1249-1319) and National Preceptor Pogam (Hon'gu 混丘, 1251-1322). Mengshan's esteem for his *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (C: *Liuzu Tan Jing*, K: *Yukjo dan-gyŏng* 六祖壇經). Since the collection of his sermons was held in high esteem that the texts were circulated most popularly among the written works by Chinese masters in Korea. The fact that most works by Mengshan except for his Zen sermon (*pushuo* 普說, general preaching of Zen sermons) exists only in Korea may support Ho's suggestion. See Hŏ Hŭng-sik, 2008, 40-41, 69-74, 150-151.

⁵⁶ Hŏ Hŭng-sik, 2008, 84.

⁵⁷ Hŏ Hŭng-sik, 2008, 52-53, 86.

Yunqi Zhuhong cites this Chosŏn recension of Mengshan's text in his *Changuan Cejin* 禪關策進. See T. 2024, 1099.

⁵⁸ <http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/jason226633/article?mid=1700&prev=1774&next=1569>, which presents the contemporary *shishi* ritual in Taiwan held according to the Mengshan's tradition including the recitation of *sa-dhāraṇī* and the names of the Seven Tathāgatas.

Manual of Zen Buddhism, Loka visuddhi ratna tisri pravaya tathāgata is replaced by Amṛtarāja.⁵⁹ Hō Hūng-sik’s investigation supports studies made by several other scholars who argue that the set of the Seven Tathāgatas depicted in *Kamno-t’aeng* is directly based on the Chosŏn ritual texts. The liturgical elaborations and the alterations to the Mengshan tradition made by the Chosŏn compilers may reflect a localization of the esoteric *sisik* rite in different Korean ritual traditions.

3. Ritual Texts and *Kamno-t’aeng*

The content of *Kamno-t’aeng* is much the same. This painting usually features three major sections. The upper part, which symbolizes the world of heaven, includes the Bodhisattva Illojang 引路王菩薩 (Guiding Bodhisattva), the Five or Seven Tathāgatas, and the Amitābha triad (the Amitābha Buddha with two attendant bodhisattvas).⁶⁰ The centre section shows the actual ceremony held for feeding the hungry ghosts. The bottom third depicts various scenes from hells and human life on earth, embodying the Six Realms of existence in their totality.⁶¹ While the centre section includes the food-offering rite as the method of releasing spirits and hungry ghosts, the upper section of the painting unfolds a sequence of scenes featuring ritual procedures in the course of time from left to right.⁶² Auspicious, coloured clouds separate the scenes from one another. The painting begins with the arrival of the newly dead souls led by Bodhisattva Illojang, who leads them to the ceremonial site

⁵⁹ Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (Kyoto: Eastern Buddhist Society, 1935), 6-8, in which the *sa-dhāraṇī* is not included but are the nomenclatures of the Seven Tathāgatas and their prayers.

⁶⁰ In the *sisik* rite, after the *siryŏn* procession, the descent of Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta is entreated to the ritual site in the procedure of *kōbul* 舉佛 (literally “lifting or raising Buddhas,” referring to a procedure of “Entreating Buddhist Deities”). Accordingly, the two Bodhisattvas attending Amitābha in the painting originally refer to Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, but often the latter is replaced by Kṣitigarbha. HPC, vol. 10, 562c; HPUC, vol. 4, 166a; An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 2, 56.

⁶¹ For a study on a close correspondence between the various scenes depicted in the lower section of *Kamno-t’aeng* and the *suryuk* ritual texts, see Yun Eun-hee, 2003, 14-32.

⁶² Chang Kyŏng-hee, “Han’guk pulgyo ūisik pŏpku ūi misulsa chŏk ūimi,” *Pulgyo misul* 13 (1996): 85.

(fig. 78).⁶³ This represents *siryōn* 侍輦 (the Procession, lit: “accompanying in palanquin”), the first procedure of the mortuary rituals inviting the dead spirits and the Buddhist deities to participate in the rite. In *Kamno-t’aeng* painting the Illowang Bodhisattva is depicted symbolically, by contrast with his banner which heads the *siryōn* procession of banners and paper lanterns in actual rituals (fig. 79).

During the *siryōn* procession, the Five Tathāgatas, represented by colourful silk banners denoting the direction in which each Tathāgata resides, enter the temple precinct together with other Buddhist deities and the dead souls (fig. 80).⁶⁴ The correspondence between the liturgical text and the ritual painting is evidence that ritual manuals for *sisik* rites provide an important clue in helping us to interpret *Kamno-t’aeng* painting.⁶⁵ Conforming to the ritual procedure of *ch’ingyang sōngho*, in which the practitioner and the audience invoke the Five/Seven Tathāgatas and implore their descent, in *Kamno-t’aeng* the Five or Seven Tathāgatas who oversee the method of rescuing suffering beings are symbolically represented above the altar setting. Their presence and supervision throughout the ritual are confirmed by the ritual implements of

⁶³ The Bodhisattva Illowang leads the spirits from outside the temple grounds to the ceremonial site in a processional with the palanquin symbolically carrying the spirits. The Bodhisattva Illowang is supposed to lead the dead souls to the Buddha’s Pure Land. However the bodhisattva does not designate a certain deity. It is very rare to find the term, Bodhisattva Illowang, in the *Koryō Tripitaka*. For this reason, Pak Youngsook argues the bodhisattva represents a universal idea of leading the dead to the Buddha-land. The role can be performed by other deities according to location or purpose of the Buddhist ritual. For instance, in *Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra*, the eight bodhisattvas, who lead the dead spirits to the paradise of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha (示其道路), perform the role of the Bodhisattva Illowang. T. 450, 406b; Pak Youngsook, “Koryō sidae Chijang tosang e poinūn myōkkaji munjehōm,” *Kogo misul* 157 (1983): 22; Yim Young-ae, “Chosōn sidae kamno-do e nat’anan Illo posal yōn’gu,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 7 (1995): 57-59.

⁶⁴ Sim Sang-hyōn, 2003, 80.

⁶⁵ Various captions within the red cartouches that allow the viewers to identify the genre scenes depicted in the lower section elucidate *Kamno-t’aeng* is more closely related with *suryuk* ritual texts in circulation at the time rather than *Ullambana Sūtra*. In the earlier period of *Kamno-t’aeng* study, however, some scholars as Kumagai Nobuo argues *Kamno-t’aeng* is based on the story of Mahāmaudgalyāyana and his saving of his mother. They view that the *Ullambana Sūtra* is the theoretical basis of the painting, and the deep-rooted ancestral worship became the motivation to produce the *Kamno-t’aeng*. Kumagai titles *Kamno-t’aeng* as the “transformation tableaux of the *Ullambana Sūtra*” (盂蘭盆經變相圖) but, at the same, he gives an explanation that *Kamno-t’aeng* depicts *sisik* rite. Although the *Ullambana* Festival assimilated the ancestral worship and went through the esoterization by confusion with the *shishi* tradition, the *Kamno-t’aeng* is not limited to the narration of the *sūtra*. Moreover, the *Ullambana Sūtra* includes no mention on neither the Five/Seven Tathāgatas nor the method of releasing the spirits and hungry ghosts, the most important elements of the iconography of *Kamno-t’aeng*. Kumagai Nobuo, “Chōsen butsuga chō,” *Chōsen gakuhō* 44 (July 1967): 63-4.

oyōrae to 五如來圖 (the banner paintings of the Five Tathāgatas), which sometimes increase to seven, in this case *ch'ilyōrae to* 七如來圖 and *ch'ilyōrae pōn* 七如來幡 (the banners of the Seven Tathāgatas) (figs. 81-82). In an actual *suryuk-jae* ritual, the ritual banners of the Five/Seven Tathāgatas are hung from a rope to adorn the outdoor ritual site and the main sanctuary or Myōngbu-jōn 冥府殿 (Hall of Judgment) in which the memorial altar is enshrined (fig. 83).⁶⁶ In Japan *segaki bata* 施餓鬼幡 (banners of feeding hungry ghosts) are used for the same purpose (fig. 84).⁶⁷

4. The Roles and Merits of the Five Tathāgatas in the *Sisik* Rite

A large variety of esoteric divinities began to be worshipped during this period. The Five Tathāgatas comprise one of the most important groups of esoteric Buddhist deities worshipped in Chosŏn Buddhist traditions. Judged by the large number of *Kamno-t'aeng* paintings that have survived from the latter half of Chosŏn, the cult of the Five Tathāgatas must have been particularly popular during that period. Worship of the Five Tathāgatas, regarded as indispensable in relieving the suffering of wandering souls of the dead, must have been established in conjunction with the prevalence of *suryuk-jae* in Chosŏn society, and this resulted in the adoption of *Kamno-t'aeng* iconography which had originated in Indian esoteric scriptures.⁶⁸ Its esoteric features can be seen in things like the frequent use of mantras, dhāraṇīs, and mudrās related to the Five/Seven Tathāgatas throughout the rituals.⁶⁹ The deities' direct response to the participants' prayers, and their divine intervention to rescue suffering beings were

⁶⁶ Sim Sang-hyŏn, 2003, 81.

When the temporary altar for the dead is not set up at outdoor, the *sisik* rite is held at the memorial platform established permanently within the main Buddha hall. Sim Sang-hyŏn, 2003, 322.

⁶⁷ Okazaki Jōji, 444, 526.

For *segaki* ritual, banners of five colours (五色幡, J: *gosiki bata*), which make use of the five primary colours, can be also used as *segaki bata*. In esoteric Buddhism *gonyorai bata* 五如來幡 (Banners of Five Tathāgatas) on which the name of the Five Celestial Buddhas (Five Directional Buddhas) of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala is written, and in Zen Buddhism the banners of the Seven Tathāgatas are used. Ariga Yōen, *Bukkyō hōgu zukan* (Tōkyō: Bukkyō kankōkai, 1993), 66, 72; Okazaki Jōji, 1982, 102, 104, fig. 46; Suzuki Daisetz Teitaro, 1935, 5.

⁶⁸ Chŏng Myōng-hee, 2005, vol. 1, 17-18.

⁶⁹ Sørensen regards the use of mantras as the main esoteric element among the multifarious aspects of esoteric Buddhist practices held in Sŏn temples in Korea. Sørensen, 1993b, 545.

enhanced by the supernatural power of the mantras and a variety of other esoteric formalities.⁷⁰ *Kamno-t'aeng* visualizes the fundamental idea of saving or delivering suffering beings from a horrendous fate in the Hells by the salvific power of the Five Tathāgatas as contained in the esoteric texts. The appropriation of ritual formulae (mantras), gestures (mudrās), and visual imagery during the ritual was probably intended to augment the divine role of salvation. Cynthia Bogel has noted that, at the time of its introduction into Japan in the early ninth century, Mikkyō 密教 (the Japanese esoteric Buddhist tradition) “transformed the range of salvific and visual possibilities presented to the devotee by an image or icon.”⁷¹ In a like manner the new Vajrayāna pantheon had a significant influence on the development of *Kamno-t'aeng* and the procedures of *suryuk-jae*. Their active roles in ensuring that suffering spirits were reborn in the Buddha’s Pure Land indicate the importance of esoteric practices in Chosŏn Korea.

Depending on the Buddhist scriptures and ritual manuals, the Tathāgatas vary in number, denomination, and role. The esoteric denominations and mantras of the Seven Tathāgatas, recited when they offer merciful nectar (*amṛta*) to suffering beings, are intimately related to their roles. The prayers to the Seven Tathāgatas, representing mercy and compassion, reveal that each deity holds a specific role and power. Each of the Seven Tathāgatas performs an independent role and these are organically related with each other in the *sisik* rite. The names of the Seven Tathāgatas and their prayers chanted in the *sisik* rite are as follows:⁷²

1. Prabhūtaratna (K: Tabo yōrae 多寶如來, Buddha of Many Treasures)

南無多寶如來 願諸孤魂 破除慳貪 法財具足

I take refuge in Prabhūtaratna. I pray that all lonely dead souls desert greed and

⁷⁰ Hong Yun-sik, “Han’guk pulgyo ūrye ū milgyo sinang chök kujo, *Pulgyo hakpo* 12 (1975): 108.

⁷¹ Cynthia J. Bogel, *With A Single Glance: Buddhist icon and early Mikkyō vision* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009), 181.

⁷² An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 2, 74.

Buddhist dhārma is abundant for them.

2. Ratnasam̐bhava (K: Posaeng yōrae 寶生如來, Buddha of Jewel-born, the same entity as Posūng yōrae 寶勝如來, Buddha of Treasure and Victory)⁷³
南無寶勝如來 願諸孤魂 各捨惡道 隨意超昇
I take refuge in Ratnasam̐bhava. I pray that all lonely dead souls desert vice and pursue virtue.
3. Surūpakāya (K: Myosaeksin yōrae 妙色身如來, Buddha of Fine Form)
南無妙色身如來 願諸孤魂 離醜陋形 相好圓滿
I take refuge in Surūpakāya. I pray all lonely dead souls emerge from the filthy and the vulgar and become peaceful and satisfied.
4. Vipulakāya (K: Kwangbaksin yōrae 廣博身如來, Buddha of Broad-Wide-Body Form)
南無廣博身如來 願諸孤魂 捨六凡身 悟虛空身
I take refuge in Vipulakāya. I pray that all lonely dead souls desert the bodily form of the Six Paths and perceive the greatness of the body of Vairocana which fills the universe.
5. Abhayañkara (K: Ip'owoe yōrae 離怖畏如來, Buddha of Leaving the Fear)
南無離怖畏如來 願諸孤魂 離諸怖畏 得涅槃樂
I take refuge in Abhayañkara. I pray that all lonely dead souls leave their fear and gain the pleasure of Nirvana.
6. Amitābha Buddha (K: Amitā yōrae 阿彌陀如來, Buddha of Infinite Light)
南無阿彌陀如來 願諸孤魂 隨念超生 極樂世界
I take refuge in Amitābha. I pray for the rebirth of all lonely dead souls in the Western Paradise.
7. Amṛtarāja (K: Kamnowang yōrae 甘露王如來, Buddha of Nectar-King)
南無甘露王如來 願我各各 列名靈駕 咽喉開通 獲甘露味
I take refuge in Amṛtarāja. I pray that the throats of all lonely dead souls be open and that they taste the sweet dew.

It is important to examine each of the Seven Tathāgatas to understand their esoteric characteristics and the relationship between the groups of the Five and Seven Tathāgatas who often alternate in the *sisik* rite.

1. Prabhūtaratna and 2. Ratnasam̐bhava

In Mahāyāna art, Prabhūtaratna replaces Ratnasam̐bhava,⁷⁴ just as Śākyamuni

⁷³ Instead of Posaeng yōrae 寶生如來, this Buddha is more often referred to as Posūng yōrae 寶勝如來 in Korean Buddhist tradition.

⁷⁴ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3, 1041, vol. 4, 1905.

replaces Amoghasiddhi.⁷⁵ In Vajrayāna Buddhism, Prabhūtaratna is identical with Ratnasam̐bhava,⁷⁶ the Buddha located to the south of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁷⁷ In *Yinshi jishuifa* (T. 1315), Ratnasam̐bhava replaces Prabhūtaratna, who is excluded from the grouping of the Five Tathāgatas. When the mantra of Ratnasam̐bhava is invoked in the scripture, it becomes clear that his name is indeed the same as Prabhūtaratna: *namobha gavate prabhuutaratnaa* (曩謨 薄伽筏帝 鉢囉步多囉怛曩).⁷⁸ The two Buddhas correspond to the “Wisdom of Equality” (*p’yōngdūngsōng chi* 平等性智; Skt: *samatā-jñāna*) and share the esoteric vajra-name “Equality” vajra.⁷⁹

3. Surūpakāya

In Vajrayāna Buddhism, Surūpakāya is identical with Akṣobhya, the Buddha of the east in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁸⁰ Surūpakāya is the embodiment of the “Wisdom of the Great Perfect Mirror” (*taewōn’gyōng chi* 大圓鏡智; Skt: *adarsa-jñāna*), which also belongs to Akṣobhya, who is believed to transform the human weakness of anger into clear mirror-like wisdom.⁸¹

4. Vipulakāya

Vipulakāya is identical with Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha of Great Illumination, whose body is infinitely large and whose life is infinitely long.⁸² He was often depicted as the Cosmological Buddha whose body contains the Six Realms of the

⁷⁵ According to *Besson zakki* 別尊雜記 [Miscellaneous Record of Classified Sacred Images], the four names of Amoghasiddhi, Akṣobhya, Divyadundubhi-megha-nirghoṣa, and Śākyamuni are referred to one same Buddha (“不空成就如來 ...或北方阿闍佛 鼓音妙聲 不空釋迦 一佛四名也”). T. Zuzō 圖像, vol. 3 *Besson zakki* 別尊雜記, vol. 1, “Ryōkai gobutsu zō 兩界五佛條,” 70; *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3, 1041, vol. 4, 1629.

⁷⁶ T. 951, 247c.

⁷⁷ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 3, 1561.

Based on the chapter 11 “Apparition of the Jewelled Stūpa” of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the Prabhūtaratna, who appears within the stūpa of treasures to testify to the truth of what Śākyamuni Buddha has been preaching as a great Buddha of the distant past, represents all the Buddhas of the past. In the Chapter 9 “Recitation of the Buddhas’ Name” of the *Sūtra of Fundamental Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva*, the Ratnasam̐bhava appears as one of the Buddhas of the past along with Krakucchanda and Vipāśyin, two of the Seven Buddhas of the Past. T. 412, 786a. See also *Ojong pōmumjip* 五種梵音集, in which Ratnasam̐bhava is recognized as the Buddha of the past (“南無過去寶勝如來”). HPC, vol. 12, 184

⁷⁸ T. 1315, 467c.

⁷⁹ See T. 872, 298a.

⁸⁰ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 5, 2117; William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A dictionary of Chinese Buddhist terms: with Sanskrit and English* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 235.

⁸¹ See T. 18, 298a.

⁸² *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 2, 528.

universe.⁸³ The image of Buddha containing the elements of the entire universe in his divine body represents the Buddha as a personified cosmos, whose body is identical with the universe. For this reason, his denomination is translated into Chinese as 廣博身如來 the Buddha of the “Broad-Wide-Body.”⁸⁴ This designation embodies the all-encompassing nature of the Buddha. Vipulakāya shares the “All-Encompassing Dharmadhātu Wisdom” (*pöbkyesöng chi* 法界(體)性智; Skt: *dharma-dhātu-svabhāva-jñāna*) of (Mahā)Vairocana, the central Buddha of the Two World Maṇḍalas. This is probably the reason why the name of Vipulakāya literally takes the central position among the Five or Seven Buddhas in Chosŏn ritual manuals and distinguishes his imposing character (fig. 85).⁸⁵ In Posök-sa *Kamno-t’aeng* (寶石寺 甘露幀, 1649), for instance, the Tathāgata in the centre is depicted as larger than the others, and the Tathāgatas on each side become increasingly smaller to form an arch (fig. 86). The size and position of the deities might possibly reflect a hierarchy of ranks among the Seven Tathāgatas.⁸⁶

5. Abhayañkara

In Vajrayāna Buddhism, Abhayañkara is identical with Śākyamuni (Amoghasiddhi; K: Pulgong sŏngch’wibul 不空成就佛) of the north.⁸⁷ This designation tells of the time when the Śākyamuni Buddha was tempted by Mara and his army of evil forces. Buddha remains in a state of serene meditation, overcomes these temptations, and enters Enlightenment. The designation symbolizes the eradication of any fear of being tempted by the devils, as well as entering the stages of Enlightenment. This Buddha embodies the “Wisdom of Accomplishment that is to be Done” (*sŏngsojak chi* 成所作智, Skt: *kr̥tyānuṣṭhāna-jñāna*), and is also associated with Amoghasiddhi, meaning “infallible success” in Sanskrit, located to the north in the Vajradhātu

⁸³ Snodgrass, 1988, 232.

⁸⁴ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 2, 528.

⁸⁵ HPUC, vol. 1, 659, 668; HPUC, vol. 2, 496b-497a

⁸⁶ Kim Sung-hee, 1995, 1, 38-39.

⁸⁷ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 4, 1905.

Maṇḍala.⁸⁸ As a Buddha of action, Amoghasiddhi represents the practical achievement of results. The entire presence of Amoghasiddhi removes terror and fear, and this is indicated by the hand gesture of the *abhāya* mudrā which also means fearlessness in Sanskrit.⁸⁹ Thus this mudrā, representing protection, peace and the dispelling of fear, symbolizes Śākyamuni’s defeat of Mara and his achievement of Enlightenment.

6. Amitābha and 7. Amṛtarāja

In essence the Amitābha Buddha of the west in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and Amṛtarāja are the same. Just as Ratnasambhava and Prabhūtaratna are identical and interchangeable, so are Amitābha and Amṛtarāja. *Kamno* 甘露 (lit: “sweet dew,”) is the Sino-Korean translation of *amṛta*, the elixir of immortality. Hence *Amrita* is associated with Amitāyus, the Buddha of Infinite Life, located to the west in the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala.⁹⁰ Amitāyus is better known by his alternative name Amitābha (Immeasurable Light), which is his name in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. *Amṛta* is transliterated into Chinese as Amitā 阿彌陀. The two forms of his name, Amitāyus and Amitābha, are translated into Sino-Korean as Muryangsu 無量壽 (Skt: Amitāyus, Immeasurable Life) and Muryanggwang 無量光 (Skt: Amitābha, Immeasurable Light) respectively. In East Asian countries, however, the two Sanskrit names, *yus* and *bha* are omitted and usually replaced by “Amitā yōrae” 阿彌陀如來 who is thought to be endowed with both virtues, Light and Life.⁹¹ Thus the correct translation of “Amitā” is “Immeasurable Light and Life.” In esoteric texts, Amitā yōrae is used interchangeably with Amṛtarāja to indicate the same deity. Amṛtarāja embodies the “Wisdom of Wondrous Observation,” also known as the All-Distinguishing Wisdom (*myogwan ch’al chi* 妙觀察智, Skt: *pratyavekṣaṇa-jñāna*), which represents the profound observing

⁸⁸ T. 872, 298a.

⁸⁹ T. 868, 276a; T. Zuzō, vol. 3, *Besson zakki*, vol. 1, “Ryokai gobutsu zou,” 65.

⁹⁰ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 1, 37. This connection between *amrita* and Amitāyus is apparent in his “*dhāraṇī* of ten *amritas*.” See Snodgrass, 1988, 232-3.

⁹¹ Snodgrass, 1988, 232.

wisdom of Amitābha whose enlightened mind sees the uniqueness of things and their differences.

The examination of the characteristics of each deity confirms that the Seven Tathāgatas are essentially based on the Five Tathāgatas, with a special emphasis on the role of the Buddha Amitābha of the Western Pure Land. For this reason the Five Tathāgatas were often augmented to seven, and the Seven Tathāgatas were also reduced to five. As a matter of fact the Seven Tathāgatas appear in the latest version of the esoteric scriptures (T. 1318 and T. 1320) through the Four and Five Tathāgatas. Apparently, the Seven Tathāgatas evolved from the Five Tathāgatas who are no different from the esoteric Five Directional Buddhas in their entity and character.⁹² Here is a table showing the relationship between the two sets of Buddhas:

Direction	Wisdom	Five Directional Buddhas of Vajradhātu Maṇḍala	Five/Seven Tathāgatas (*)
East	Mirror-like	Akṣobhya	Surūpakāya
West	Discriminating	Amitābha	Amṭtarāja
South	Equality	Ratnasambhava	Ratnasambhava
North	Accomplishment	Amoghasiddhi	Abhayaṅkara
Centre	All-encompassing Dharmadhātu	Vairocana	Vipulakāya
			* Prabhūtaratna
			* Amitābha

This table shows that the traits of the Five Tathāgatas correspond to those of the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu. The two groups are essentially the same, but only the Five Tathāgatas are entreated to perform the specific roles and function in salvific ritual. It is important to recognize that most of the Chosŏn liturgical texts incorporate the set of the Five Tathāgatas, not the Seven Tathāgatas. The Yŏngwŏn-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* (1759) and the Hŭngch'ŏn-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* (1939) are exemplary

⁹² Each wisdom or “Enlightened Mind” belonging to these Tathāgatas are representations of the five qualities of the Five Wisdom Buddhas (J: *gochi nyōrai* 五智如來).

paintings depicting the Five Tathāgatas above the *sisik* altar (figs. 73, 87). It is interesting to note that, in addition to the Seven Tathāgatas, the *Kamno-t'aeng* at Ssanggye-sa (1728) presents five additional Buddhas and these might represent the Five Directional Buddhas (fig. 88).

Although the cartouche label reads that the *Kamno-t'aeng* in the collection of Korea University depicts the Seven Tathāgatas, only the Five Tathāgatas are seated above the altar (fig. 89).⁹³ The Five Tathāgatas seated above the altar shrine remind us of the statues of the five Buddhas enshrined inside the Vairocana Hall at Kūmsan-sa (figs. 20, 89-a). The Tathāgata seated in the centre on a higher lotus throne with a special aureole, is emphasized as the focal point of the group. On the basis of his hand gesture of the earth-touching *mudrā* and a bare shoulder, this deity can be identified as Śākyamuni.

The Hūngch'ŏn-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* and Ilsŏp's underdrawing for the *Kamno-t'aeng*, both executed in the twentieth century, show the Five Buddhas in a row (figs. 87, 90). An elegant drawing by Ilsŏp (1900-1975) clarifies some of the iconography: each of these five Buddhas is quite different from the Tathāgatas in earlier *Kamno-t'aeng* who have the same hand gestures, and are identified by their individual *mudrā*—wisdom-fist, teaching, earth-touching, etc.⁹⁴ Based on their *mudrās*, it is highly likely they are the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.

The Five Directional Buddhas occupy an extremely important position within the Vajrayāna schools of Buddhism. In China, the Five Directional Buddhas were retained to perform their role in the salvific rituals. A Dunhuang manuscript from the ninth or tenth century recording “the ritual of praying for the deceased by distributing food” to the various deities, mentions the Vairocana Buddha and the Buddhas of the Four

⁹³ There are two other Tathāgatas standing below the altar on each side in smaller scale, attended by Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha respectively.

⁹⁴ Kang Woo-bang, 1995, 11.

Directions in addition to numerous Buddhist deities such as major bodhisattvas, arhats, and all heavenly beings.⁹⁵ The ritual on this manuscript seems to indicate the *sisik* (C: *shishi*). According to Puay-peng Ho, the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala were invoked along with other deities to make the offerings complete, and this would give bliss to the deceased in the Pure Land.⁹⁶ In this sense, the Five Directional Buddhas of the ritual are no different from the Five Tathāgatas. Although it is not clear if the images of the deities were presented to accompany the ritual based on the manuscript, Puay-peng Ho suggests that sculpted images or painted images might have been used on banners presented on a ritual platform.⁹⁷

The Ming-dynasty set of Water-Land ritual paintings (ca. 1460) from the Baoning-si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Precious Tranquility) in Northern Shanxi is not very different in nature.⁹⁸ An elaborate suite of images either in the form of a hanging scroll or mural painting accompanied the Water-Land ritual, and this was an essential component of the ritual in China.⁹⁹ A set of 139 Water-Land ritual scroll paintings from Baoning-si represents all the classes of being in the Chinese universe.¹⁰⁰ The paintings were hung on the occasion of Water-Land Rituals. The first nine scrolls, consisting of the Five Meditation Buddhas of the Vajradhātu (Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnaśāmbhava, Amitāyus, and Amoghasiddhi), together with Locana, Śākyamuni, Amitābha and a ninth, unidentified Buddha, form a group of Buddhas (fig. 91).¹⁰¹ The

⁹⁵ Dunhuang manuscript S3427 kept in British Library, vol. 5, 86-87.

⁹⁶ Puay-peng Ho, "Setting for the Faith: Icons in Space in Early Chinese Monasteries," in *In the Footsteps of the Buddha: An Iconic Journey from India to China*, ed. by Rajeshwari Ghose with the collaboration of Puay-peng Ho and Yeung Zhun-tong (Xianggang: Xianggang Daxue Meishu Bowuguan, 1998), 132.

⁹⁷ Ho, 1998, 132.

⁹⁸ It was the Ming dynasty when the Water-Land Ritual was most popularly held. Kenneth Ch'en, 1964, 282-283.

⁹⁹ Patricia Berger, "Preserving the Nation: the Political use of Tantric art in China," in *Latter days of the Law* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas in association with University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 95.

¹⁰⁰ See Shanxisheng bowuguan bian, *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988).

¹⁰¹ According to Berger, "They were most likely augmented by a tenth Buddha image, now lost, to make a set of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions." Berger, 96.

Five Directional Buddhas in the sets of Water-Land ritual images are part of a large pantheon forming the entourage for the Water-Land Ritual.¹⁰²

5. The Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu in Chosŏn Buddhist Art

A. *The Thirty-seven Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Vajradhātu* (1845), Hall of Great Light, Taehŭng-sa 大興寺

The Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu appear not only on ritual paintings but also on *hubul-t'aeng* 後佛幀 during the second half of the Chosŏn period (fig. 92). The Five Directional Buddhas occupy the whole composition of *The Thirty-seven Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Vajradhātu* (1845) enshrined in the Hall of Great Light in Taehŭng-sa in Haenam county in South Chŏlla Province.

A part of the votive inscription reads:

道光二十五年己五月二十六日 大菴寺新畫成法身中圍會三十七尊 奉安 于
大光明殿

On the twenty sixth day of the fifth month in the twenty fifth year of *Daoguang* (1845), Taedun-sa (old name of Taehŭng-sa) commissions a new Buddhist painting, with Thirty-seven Honourable Deities of the Central Assembly of *Dharmakāya* [of Vajradhātu Maṇḍala], and consecrates this painting at the Hall of Great Light.

基綉彩色獨當 金魚 圓潭乃圓 海雲益贊 大施主 時任水軍節度使申觀浩 證
師聞庵永愈 誦呪策活 化主艸衣意恂 鏡月寧敖 萬休自欣 別座無爲安益 都
監前行粲榮.....

Monk-painters Naewŏn and Ikch'an are responsible for this painting. Shin Kwan-ho, Navy Commander-in-Chief, is a great donator.

Munam Yŏngyu supervised the production of this painting and Ch'aekwal recited *dhāraṇī* for this occasion. Ch'oŭi Ŭisun commissioned this painting along with Kyŏngwŏl Yŏngo, Manyu Chahŭn, Muwi Anik the assistant proctor, and Chŏnhaeng Ch'anyŏng the provost.....

As clearly stated in its votive inscription, the layout of this painting follows the central Perfected Form Assembly (K: Sŏngsin-hoe 成身會, also known as Karma

¹⁰² Berger, 96; Hong Ki-yong, 1998, 48-50.

Assembly) of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala in which the Thirty-Seven deities reside.¹⁰³ Therefore the canonical base for the spatial arrangement of the five Buddhas—Vairocana at the centre and the Four Directional Buddhas seated at the cardinal directions—surrounded by thirty two bodhisattvas, is the *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha* (Symposium of Truth of All the Buddhas, hereafter STTS), also known as the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, in which the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is described.¹⁰⁴ The Five Directional Buddhas are Vairocana in the centre, Akṣobhya (east) in the upper left, Ratnasambhava (south) in the upper right, Avalokiteśvara-rājā (west) in the lower right, and Amoghasiddhi (north) in the lower left.¹⁰⁵ The cartouche label inside the halo of each deity identifies the Thirty-Seven deities and specifies this mandala proper. According to STTS, the Thirty-Seven deities are composed of Five Celestial Buddhas and Thirty-Two Bodhisattvas—Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas and Sixteen Offering Bodhisattvas—of the Vajradhātu. In this painting Vairocana Buddha, who sits on an

¹⁰³ The Diamond Realm Maṇḍala, one of the two main maṇḍalas of the Shingon tradition, consists of nine maṇḍalas, eight peripheral and one central, each of which is an assembly of Buddhas. The central maṇḍala is called the Perfect Body Assembly because it represents the “Perfected Body” of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata. Snodgrass, 1988, 147.

¹⁰⁴ *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha Sūtra* or *Kūmgangjōng kyōng* 金剛頂經 (J: *Kongōchō-kyō*) generally refers to the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, of which the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is the opening part.

¹⁰⁵ According to the cartouche labels that identify the figures depicted on the painting, the Buddha of the west, seated on the south in the picture, is designated as *Kwanjajaewang yōrae* 觀自在王如來 (meaning “Spontaneously Contemplating King,” Skt: Avalokiteśvara-rājā Tathāgata), one of various denominations for Amitābha. Avalokiteśvara-rājā (魯計濕婆羅阿羅婆惹), translated as *Kwanjajaewang* 觀自在王, appears as the Buddha of the west in place of Amitābha Buddha in esoteric Buddhism. Symbolizing the west, this Buddha is one of the Five Buddhas of Wisdom in STTS. T. 865, 208b. See also T. 862, 189c; T. 871, 294a; T. 882, 342b.

The nomenclatorial uniformity between this painting and the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, in which Avalokiteśvara-rājā is designated as the Buddha of the west and one of the Five Wisdom Buddhas of the Vajradhātu, is distinguished. Nevertheless, many Korean scholars have claimed the identification of the Western Buddhas as *Kwanjajae(wang) yōrae* is based on the Korean ritual text *Chebanmun* 諸般文 published in the latter half of the Chosŏn period, following the interpretation of Suh Yoon-kil, a prolific author on esoteric Buddhism of Korea. Although the choice of this rather exceptional nomenclature of *Kwanjajaewang*, instead of the more familiar *Amitābha*, is unusual in the tradition of Chosŏn Buddhist painting, *Chebanmun* is neither the distinctive nor the original text identifying the Buddha of the west as Avalokiteśvara-rājā. For instance, *Chakpōp kwigam* also recognizes *Kwanjajaewang yōrae* as the Buddha of the west after the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*. This nomenclature is recognized as the Buddha of the west in the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, thus it would be erroneous to suggest the appearance of Avalokiteśvara-rājā Tathāgata as a distinctive phenomenon reflecting a regional tradition of Chosŏn esoteric Buddhism. HPC, vol. 10, 584c (*Chakpōp kwigam*); Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 462; Kim Jung-hee, “Taehŭng-sa pōpsin chungwihoe samshipch’ilchon to ko,” *Misul sahak yŏn’gu* (Sep. 2003), 253; Park Il-Woong, *Chosŏn hugi purhwa e poinŭn milgyo kye tosang yŏn’gu* (A study on the esoteric iconography in Buddhist painting of the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty) (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 2003), 51, 53.

elaborate five-tier throne, is surrounded by the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas—Sattva-vajri (east), Ratna-vajri (south), Dharma-vajri (west), Karma-vajri (north). The Four Directional Buddhas are flanked by the standing bodhisattvas, the Four Prajñā Bodhisattvas of each compass direction, referred to as the Sixteen Great Bodhisattvas of the Perfected Body Assembly (the so-called sixteen “vajra-bodhisattvas”):

1. Akṣobhya Buddha is accompanied by the Four Prajñā Bodhisattvas of the East: Vajra-sādhu, Vajra-rāga, Vajra-sattva, Vajra-rāja.
2. Ratnasambhava Buddha is accompanied by the Four Prajñā Bodhisattvas of the South: Vajra-tejas, Vajra-hāsa, Vajra-ketu, Vajra-ratna.
3. Avalokiteśvara-rājā is accompanied by the Four Prajñā Bodhisattvas of the West: Vajra-dharma, Vajratīkṣṇa, Vajra-hetu, Vajra-bhāṣa.
4. Amoghasiddhi Buddha is accompanied by the Four Prajñā Bodhisattvas of the North: Vajra-yakṣa, Vajra-karma, Vajra-rakṣa, Vajra-saṃdhi.

Twelve more bodhisattvas are arranged in three rows just above the nimbus of the Vairocana Buddha:

1. The Four Inner Pūjā Bodhisattvas: Vajra-lāsī, Vajra-māla, Vajra-gītā, Vajra-nṛta
2. The Four Outer Pūjā Bodhisattvas: Vajra-dhūpa, Vajra-puṣpā, Vajrālokā, Vajra-gandhā
3. The Four Saṃgraha Bodhisattvas: Vajrāṅkuśa, Vajra-pāśa, Vajra-sphoṭa, Vajrāveśa

These twelve bodhisattvas together with the Four Pāramitā Bodhisattvas constitute another group of the Sixteen Great Offering Bodhisattvas.

The Five Directional Buddhas with their retinues of Vajradhātu Realm also suggest a close connection between esoteric traditions and Priest Ch’oūi Ŭisun 艸衣意恂 (1786-1866), the head-monk of Taehūng-sa and the main person who commissioned the painting. Ch’oūi himself also seems to have been an active painter. Two surviving Avalokiteśvara works are known to have been painted by Master Ch’oūi:

Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara (the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara with Forty Arms, 十一面觀音) and Cundī Avalokiteśvara (Mother Goddess Avalokiteśvara 准提觀音) (figs. 93-94). The two esoteric bodhisattva paintings arouse our attention because Cundī and Ekādaśamukha are not popular deities in Korean Buddhist art. Each image of the Bodhisattva is one of the six forms of Avalokiteśvara of the Tantric schools. Such rare examples enable us to suppose that Ch'oŭi who was a renowned Sŏn master was also proficient in esoteric practices. Two surviving works of the esoteric Bodhisattva painted by the master present further evidence that the priest was familiar with esoteric Buddhist practice and its doctrine.

P'yoch'ung-sa chungsu sangyangmun 表忠祠 重修 上樑文, written by Ch'oŭi on the occasion of the repair of P'yoch'ung-sa in 1860, clarifies the Sŏn master's syncretic attitude toward esoteric practice.¹⁰⁶ A part of the text reads:

.....The sea where the Eastern Sun bathed was covered with vicious gang
that gathered like crawling ants (Japan).....
Divination was portentous.....
At this exigency the King (Sŏnjo 宣祖 (r. 1567-1608) took refuge.
The whole nation was at great danger.
The teachings of Buddhism ought to be beneficial to mankind.
How can [Master Hyujŏng 休靜] defer salvation of the country?
[The master] solicited for help in front of the Buddha with sincere allegiance.
The rules of maṇḍala are rigorous.
Dharma's cane leans on the sky.
Divine blade of vajra is sharp.....

The text is evidence that Ch'oŭi may have employed esoteric doctrine and its practices in the various contexts. As the votive inscription of the altar painting with Thirty-Seven deities suggests, a proper esoteric ritual including the recitation of

¹⁰⁶ This document, written by Ch'oŭi on October 25 of the tenth year of Xianfeng reign (咸豐十年, 1860), has been kept on the crossbeam along with P'yoch'ung-sa *igŏn'gi* (Document for the Reconstruction of P'yoch'ung-sa in a New Location) for 148 years until it was discovered in 2007 when P'yoch'ung-sa was dismantled for the reconstruction.

dhāraṇīs accompanied the enshrinement of the painting at the altar. Ch'ōui was a liberal Sōn master, whose open and harmonious spirit of non-dualism turned him away from dogmatic limitations and probably allowed him to play an active role in commissioning such painting.

This distinctive fully-fledged esoteric Buddhist painting occupies a unique position in the history of Korean Buddhist art. The representation of the thirty-seven honourable deities with Vairocana at the centre of the five Buddha families, based on the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, in an altar painting marks the first known depiction of this concept in the visual arts.¹⁰⁷ The painting takes features from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala: however it is not a schematic diagram portraying deities in a set order, i.e. a completely integrated maṇḍala. Nevertheless, it was a matter of great importance to install the Perfected Form Assembly, the centre of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, as the main icon of worship in the sanctuary of the Sōn monastery.

B. *Samsinbul* and the Five Directional Buddhas, Pulcho-jōn, Songgwang-sa 松廣寺 (fig. 95)

The Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu can also be found in an altar painting in Songgwang-sa, a prominent Sōn monastery in Sunchōn in South Chōlla Province. The painting with *trikāya* and the Four Directional Buddhas in its composition forms a part of seven sections of fifty-three Buddhas enshrined in the central section as the main icon of worship in the Hall of Fifty Buddhas, also known as Pulcho-jōn 佛祖殿 (Hall of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs).¹⁰⁸ Its dedicatory inscription provides a definitive answer concerning the identity of the Buddhas depicted

¹⁰⁷ According to *Samguk yusa*, a mural of thirty-six manifestations on a yellow ground centred by Vairocana was enshrined in Chinyō-wōn 眞如院 (present-day Sangwōn-sa) on the Central Terrace of Mt. Odae. It is viewed this mural, not extant anymore, depicted the central assembly of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Suh Yoon-kil, 2006, 159.

¹⁰⁸ In addition to the central section with the seven Buddhas, the Fifty-three Buddhas were originally depicted on six sections and symmetrically arranged on either side of the hall, but now only five sections remain. There are a total of fifty one Buddhas remaining, including the *trikāya* and the Buddhas of the Four Directions.

in the central section. It reads:

松廣寺 五十殿 五十三佛幀

.....清淨法身毘盧舍那佛 圓滿報身盧舍那佛 千百億化身釋迦牟尼佛 西方
阿彌陀佛 東方阿閼佛 南方寶生佛 北方不空成就佛.....

Paintings of Fifty-three Buddhas at Hall of Fifty Buddhas at Songgwang-sa.....
Vairocana *dharmakāya*, Locana *saṃbhogakāya*, Śākyamuni *nirmāṇakāya*,
Amitābha of the west, Akṣobhya of the east, Ratnasambhava of the south and
Amoghasiddhi of the north.

As the inscription says, this painting is composed of seven Buddhas arranged in two rows: *trikāya* in the lower section and Four Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu in the top. Similarly to the Taehŭng-sa maṇḍala painting, the name of each Buddha is written inside the red cartouche on his aureole. In the lower section, Vairocana as *dharmakāya* is seated in the middle with Locana to his left and Śākyamuni to his right. The four upper Buddhas are, from left to right, Amitābha of the west, Akṣobhya of the east, Ratnasambhava of the south, and Amoghasiddhi of the north. Together with the Vairocana Buddha below, this group of the four Buddhas may well be connected to the Five Meditation Buddhas of Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.

The composite form of the *samsinbul* and *samsebul* is already signaled in Jūrin-ji paintings from the early Chosŏn period. However, this type of composite composition of *trikāya* of Avataṃsaka and esoteric *sabangbul* seems to have been influenced by *Chebanmun* 諸般文, one of the most important ritual manuals of the later Chosŏn period, along with the *Chinŏn-jip* 眞言集, the *Pŏmŭm-jip* 梵音集 [The Collection of Sanskrit Sounds, 1709], and *Chakpŏp kwigam* 作法龜鑑.¹⁰⁹ Each of the Five Directional Buddhas heads one of the five families of Vajrayāna: the Tathāgata family is headed by Vairocana, the Vajra family by Akṣobhya, the Ratna family by Ratnasambhava, the Padma family by Amitābha, and the Karma family by

¹⁰⁹ Pak Il-Woong, 2003, 47-48, 54.

Amoghasiddhi. Interestingly enough, the *Chebanmun* manual recognizes *trikāya* as the central deity of the Tathāgata family as well as the Five Directional Buddhas in place of Vairocana.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, when we examine the altar program of Pulcho-jŏn, this painting has been placed behind the seated statues of *trikāya*, the main images of worship in the hall (fig. 96).

The *samsinbul* images both in the painting and statues in Pulcho-jŏn manifest the Three Bodies of the Buddha nature of Avataṃsaka School. Likewise, the central Buddha holding the wisdom-fist *mudrā* from the Taehŭng-sa painting represents Vairocana the cosmic Buddha of the Avataṃsaka sect, not Mahāvairocana of the Diamond Realm Maṇḍala. Vairocana is honoured as the supreme and all-embracing Buddha by the Hwaŏm sect, which enjoyed conspicuous popularity from the time it was introduced to Korea in 670. The numerous Vairocana Buddhas with a wisdom-fist *mudrā* and the related creation of images as *trikāya* during the period are testimony to the flourishing Avataṃsaka teaching and its prime Buddha, Vairocana.¹¹¹ In this altar painting the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala seem to have been reinterpreted according to a ritual text in wide circulation during the period. As a result, the union of the traditional Mahāyāna theory of *trikāya* and the esoteric ideology of the Five Directional Buddhas is in perfect balance and harmony within a single

¹¹⁰ According to *Chebanmun*, a chart of the correspondence between the five deities and Buddha-family traits is as follows:

Deity	Direction	Buddha-family Traits	Enlightened Mind
Trikāya	Centre	Tathāgata Family (佛部)	All-encompassing Dharmadhātu Wisdom
Akṣobhya	East	Vajra Family (金剛部)	Mirror-like Wisdom
Ratnasambhava	South	Ratna Family (寶生部)	Wisdom of Equality
Avalokiteśvara-rājā	West	Padma Family (蓮華部)	Discriminating Wisdom
Amoghasiddhi	North	Karma Family (羯磨部)	Wisdom of Accomplishment

Also, see the chart in Sŏ Yun-kil, 2006, 838-9.

¹¹¹ Hwang Kyu-sŏng, *Chosŏn sidae samsinbul hoedo e kwanhan yŏn'gu, Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 237 (March 2003): 103, 130; Lee Yong-yun, *Chosŏn hugi Hwaŏmgye purhwa yŏn'gu* (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 1999), 26-27.

frame.¹¹²

6. The Transition of the Iconography of the Five Tathāgatas in *Kamno-t'aeng*

The ritual manuals for performing the *sisik* rite manifest an obvious connection with esoteric practice. Especially, the Five/Seven Tathāgatas are directly related to the esoteric scriptures and ritual manuals, and their names recited during the rite are only found in the texts. Hence the characteristics of the Seven Tathāgatas are definitely esoteric. Nevertheless it must be pointed out that the general philosophical background to the ritual can be found in the belief in the Amitābha Buddha of Pure Land Buddhism.¹¹³ Pure Land Buddhism has not only influenced various belief systems but also the methods of practice in Korea.

The development and special features of Pure Land Buddhism in Chosŏn Buddhism are evident in *Kamno-t'aeng*. In particular, the belief in Amitābha plays an important role in the ceremonies for sending on the spirits.¹¹⁴ The importance of the Buddha is testified by his repeated appearance within the set of the Seven Tathāgatas in different nomenclatures, Amṛtarāja and Amitābha. In *Kamno-t'aeng*, in addition to his appearance within the esoteric group, the Amitābha triad depicted as being separate

¹¹² Songgwang-sa, one of the five *ch'ongnim* 叢林 (training monasteries), operated as major monastic centres, is known as a site for Sŏn meditation. Since its founding by the National Priest Pojo 普照國師 (Chinul 知訥, 1158-1210), nevertheless, according to Robert Buswell, "Songgwang-sa has been the central sanctuary of not only Sŏn practice but also Kyo doctrines, especially Hwaŏm doctrine, Pure Land recitation of the Buddha Amitābha, and Vinaya (monastic discipline, K: *yul* 律) observance so that the distinctive practices and doctrines of each of the main schools of the Korean Buddhist tradition are to be maintained." Robert E. Buswell, *The Zen Monastic experience: Buddhist practice in contemporary Korea* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), 54.

Kwŏnsu chŏnghye kyŏlsamun 權修定慧結社文 [*Exhortations to Practice for Samādhi and Prajñā Society*], Chinul's first work, written in 1199 to commemorate the formal establishment of the "Samādhi and Prajñā Society," gives us the picture of how the Society was formed and what kind of practices Chinul promoted as well. For example, Master Pojo recommended Pure Land recitation in the centre of Songgwang-sa as well as to its followers. See HPC, vol. 4, 698.

See also Kwŏn Kee-jŏng, "Koryŏ sidae sŏnsa ūi chŏngt'o kwan," in *Han'guk chŏngt'o sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Dongguk University, 1985), 117-131; idem, "Han'guk pulgyo e isŏsŏ Sŏn kwa Chŏngt'o ūi kwan'gye," *Pulgyo hakpo* 26 (Nov. 1989): 74-80; Mun Myong-dae, "Han'guk ūi misul," *Han'guk chŏngt'o sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Dongguk University, 1985), 347.

¹¹³ Hong Yun-sik, "Han'guk pulgyo ūisik e nata'nan Chŏngt'o sinang," *Pulgyo hakpo* 13 (1976): 193-203.

¹¹⁴ Chŏnggak (Mun Sang-yŏn), "Pulgyo sang, chaerye rŭl t'onghae pon chugŭm kwa sahu insik," *Pojo sasang* 28 (Aug. 2007): 415-416, 425.

from the Seven Tathāgatas welcomes the deceased souls to the Buddha's Pure Land (figs. 97-98). The appearance of this triad may represent the procedure of *kōbul* 舉佛 in the *sisik* rite.¹¹⁵ This is a good indication of the close correspondence between the iconography of *Kamno-t'aeng* and the ritual texts of the period.

The importance of Amitābha stands out in the early examples of *Kamno-t'aeng* dating back to the sixteenth century (figs. 99-100). Reflecting the popularity of the belief in the Buddha, the whole composition of the scene is dominated by the Amitābha triad depicted in the top centre just above the altar. The Amitābha triad is depicted in a larger scale to emphasize the importance of the Buddha when compared to the grouping of the Seven Tathāgatas lined up in a row in a smaller scale on the right-hand side. The Amitābha triad in the centre, usually depicted as separate from the group of the Seven Tathāgatas in contemporary *Kamno-t'aeng* paintings, is surrounded by the Seven Tathāgatas in the *Kamno-t'aeng* at Seikyō-ji dating back to 1590 (fig. 99). The inclusion of the Amitābha the prominent Buddha in exoteric Buddhism may have helped to combine the familiar with the new and make the esoteric deities more acceptable.

Some time afterwards a noticeable transition of the main icon in the upper part—from Amitābha Buddha to the Seven Tathāgatas—occurred during the second half of the 16th century and the first half of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁶ The *Kamno-t'aeng* now in the collection of the Uhak Cultural Foundation (1681) painted in this period of transition shows Amitābha and the group of Seven Tathāgatas dividing the upper section equally (fig. 100).¹¹⁷ From the eighteenth century onwards, however, the Seven Tathāgatas predominate. Due to the importance of their roles and divine power

¹¹⁵ See note 60 of this chapter.

¹¹⁶ Kim Sūng-hee, "Uhak munhwa chaedan Kamno-t'aeng," in *Kamno: Special Exhibition Chosŏn Dynasty Buddhist Painting of Nectar Ritual*, ed. T'ongdo-sa Sōngbo Museum, vol. 1 (Yangsan, Korea: T'ongdo-sa Sōngbo Museum, 2005), 37-38.

¹¹⁷ Kim Sūng-hee, 2005b, 37-39.

The right of the painting, where usually the Amitābha triad is depicted, perhaps signifies his Western Paradise. The triad greets the deceased souls and welcomes them into the paradise. The triad is often seated within a palatial building located next to a pond with lotus flowers. In this painting Amitābha forms a triad with two other Buddhas instead of his attending bodhisattvas.

within the *sisik* rite, a special emphasis is now put on the Seven Tathāgatas who appear on the top above the altar, whilst the Amitābha triad is moved to the right-hand side in a smaller scale, as can be seen in the Haein-sa *Kamno-t'eang* (1723) (fig. 101). Amitābha is even omitted from the triad frequently during this period (fig. 102). The recognition of the importance of the Seven Tathāgatas is further heightened in the Chikchi-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* (1724), the Sōngju-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* (1729), and the An'guk-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* (1758) (figs. 103-105).¹¹⁸ In these paintings the actual ritual scene with the altar setting in the middle section is omitted, and the depiction of the Seven Tathāgatas takes up the whole of the upper and central spaces.

From the nineteenth century onwards, the Seven Tathāgatas emerge in an even more majestic pose as the focal point of the whole composition of the upper section. After the mid-nineteenth century, the stereotyped composition, in which the Amitābha triad is attached to the right-hand corner in a much smaller scale with the group of the Seven Tathāgatas standing in a majestic pose and filling almost the whole space of the upper section, is shared by the *Kamno-t'aeng* produced during this period (fig. 98).¹¹⁹ The transition in the iconography reflects the fact that the *sisik* rite, which was based on the belief in Amitābha's Western Pure Land in the early years, has been further esoterized, and this is why the group of the esoteric Tathāgatas now took over the central position. Kim Sūng-hee divides the development of *Kamno-t'aeng* into three phases based on the transition of the iconography of the upper section in accordance with their dates. Kim views the emergence of the Seven Tathāgatas in the centre of the upper section as an important factor in nineteenth-century *Kamno-t'eang* by contrast

¹¹⁸ The votive inscriptions of the two paintings at Chikchi-sa and Sōngju-sa reveal that same monk painters participated in the production of these two paintings, which share the same composition and iconographical arrangement.

¹¹⁹ In particular, *Kamno-t'aeng* made in Kyōnggi Province, dated to the second half of the nineteenth century, such as those at Hūngguk-sa, Kyōngguk-sa, and Pongūn-sa, were produced based on a same underdrawing. This phenomenon is not limited only to *Kamno-t'aeng*, but applied also to other categories of Buddhist paintings produced in the Kyōnggi Province during the same period. Kang Woo-bang and Kim Sūng-hee, 1995, 242; Chang Hee-jōng, "Chosŏn mal wangsil parwŏn purhwa ūi koch'al," *Tongak misuk sahak* 2 (2001): 121-144; Chōng Myōng-hee, 2000, 65.

with the Amitābha triad which was the important factor in the eighteenth century.¹²⁰ The transition may indicate that Buddhist rituals came under the dominant influence of esoteric (rather than Sōn or Pure Land) traditions during the period.

Another peculiar feature of nineteenth-century *Kamno-t'aeng* paintings is the emergence of *trikāya* banners (K: *pŏn* 幡) on the altar setting (fig. 106). It became customary for *samsinbul pŏn* to appear on *Kamno-t'aeng* produced during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fluttering paper banners of *trikāya* hanging on the rope above the altar setting added realistic descriptions of the actual ritual scene (fig. 107). In addition to the paper *pŏn*, *trikāya* on *kwaebul* painting emerges as a central theme during this period.¹²¹ The *dharmakāya* holding a wisdom-fist *mudrā* makes his appearance as the central figure in the Yongju-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* (1790) (fig. 108).¹²² This shows the increased importance and general popularity of *trikāya* of Avataṃsaka philosophy during the period as the icon of worship not only in outdoor rituals but also within the main sanctuary.¹²³ Together with the altar paintings of the Five Directional Buddhas mentioned above, this *Kamno-t'aeng* may provide convincing evidence that esoteric elements within Chosŏn Buddhism developed under the dominance of the concept of *trikāya* of Avataṃsaka school.

¹²⁰ Kim Sŭng-hee, 1995, 401-402.

Since the nineteenth century, however, the belief in Amitābha's Pure Land prevailed and this resulted in the creation of many *kwaebul* paintings with Amitābha as the main figure. The popularity of Amitābha *kwaebul* paintings in the late Chosŏn dynasty, distinct from the popularity of the *kwaebul* paintings with *yŏngsan hoesang* theme in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, suggests a change in the pattern of Buddhist belief in the given period. Kim Jung-hee, "Chosŏn malgi ūi chŏngt'o sinang kwa Amitā-kye *kwaebul*-hwa," *Kangjwa misulsa* 33 (2009): 144, 157-162.

¹²¹ Virtually *trikāya* was the most popular theme in *kwaebul* painting next to Śākyamuni preaching at Vulture peak (*yŏngsan hoesang*). While the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are dominated by *kwaebul* painting with the theme of *Yŏngsan-hoe*, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the increased popularity and production of *kwaebul* with *trikāya* as its main theme. In particular, the production of *trikāya kwaebul* is the salient feature in the areas of the capital and Kyŏnggi Province during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is interesting to note the emergence of the depiction of the *trikāya* banners in *Kamno-t'aeng* in the same period. Yu Ma-ri, "Chosŏn sidae Seoul, Kyŏnggi chiyŏk *kwaebul t'aenghwa* ūi koch'al," *Kangjwa misulsa* 7 (1995): 30, 36, 38.

¹²² Kim Sŭng-hee, 1995, 173.

¹²³ Chang Hee-jŏng, "Kuryong-sa Kamno-t'aeng," in *Kamno: Special Exhibition Chosŏn Dynasty Buddhist Painting of Nectar Ritual*, ed. T'ongdo-sa Sŏngbo Museum, vol. 1 (Yangsan, Korea: T'ongdo-sa Sŏngbo Museum, 2005), 86; Mun Myong-dae, 1995-2000, 209-210; Kim Jung-hee, "17segi In, Sukjong tae ūi pulgyo hoehwa," *Kangjwa misulsa* 31 (2008): 33; Hwang Kyu-sŏng, 2003: 103, 130; Lee Yong-yun, *Chosŏn hugi Hwaŏmgye purhwa yŏn'gu* (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 1999), 26-27.

The Buddhist *saṅgha* of the Chosŏn period was dominated by the Sŏn School as the mainstream of traditional Buddhism of Korea. Nevertheless, there was a noticeable esoterization of the rituals of the dominant Sŏn tradition in Chosŏn Buddhism. In Korean Buddhist tradition, the esoteric elements were closely related to the Pure Land belief and the teaching of the Hwaŏm philosophy, as presented in the above examples of *Kamno-t'aeng*.¹²⁴ This probably addresses the eclectic origins of Korean Buddhist rituals in Hwaŏm, *Lotus Sūtra*, Avalokiteśvara, Pure Land, and Tantric beliefs, which satisfy and deliver the dead spirits to the Western Pure Land.¹²⁵ The multifarious beliefs in Buddhist ritual reflect doctrinal trends in “Korean Buddhism” as well as its synthetic nature. Sørensen, who has investigated the amalgamation of various Buddhist doctrines and beliefs in a syncretic view of Sŏn practice, provides the following summary: “the ritual manuals of the Chosŏn dynasty reflects the norms of a syncretic and essentially non-sectarian Buddhism, in which the practices and doctrines of the dominant Sŏn tradition were fully integrated with those of Pure Land and esoteric

¹²⁴ Although Chosŏn Buddhism was theoretically then divided into Sŏn 禪 and Kyo 教 schools, the sectarian distinction between the two schools had rarely existed. Sŏn constituted the mainstream of Chosŏn Buddhism, however, it constantly embraced traditional Study schools as Avataṃsaka, Lotus Flower, Pure Land, and esoteric Buddhism. As a natural sequence, the doctrinal teachings, especially those of Pure Land and Hwaŏm, infiltrated the Sŏn community. Many of Chosŏn Sŏn masters promoted harmonization and reconciliation of doctrinal studies and Sŏn meditation for their practice. Eminent Sŏn masters of the contemporary period integrated doctrines and practices of Pure Land, e.g. the practice of *nyōmbul* 念佛, rebirth in Pure Land, and repentance of Pure Land Buddhism, as well as esoteric Buddhism, e.g. *mantra* and *mudrā*, in their Sŏn manuals. For instance, Hyujŏng 休靜 (1525-1604), a highly reputed Sŏn master, advocated the harmonization of Sŏn and Kyo approach and encompassed both teaching of Pure Land Buddhism and various esoteric elements in his representative liturgical writings as *Sŏn'ga kwigam* 禪家龜鑑 [The Paragon of the Sŏn Tradition, 1579], *Sŏlsŏnūi* 設禪儀 [The Ritual for Explaining Sŏn, (the oldest extant edition, 1634)], and the *Unsudān* 雲水壇 [The Cloud and Water Altar, 1607]. The esotericized rituals held at Sŏn monastery during the later Chosŏn period emphasize the teaching of rebirth in the Pure Land along with the doctrines of the Avataṃsaka sect as a part of ritual. See Lee Chae-ch'ang, “Chosŏn sidae Sŏnsa ūi yōmbulgwan,” in *Han'guk chŏngt'o sasang yŏn'gu*, ed. Pulgyo munhwa yŏn'guwŏn (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1985), 259-270; Lee Chi-gwan, “Chŏsŏ rŭl t'ŏnghae pon Chosŏncho ui chŏngt'o sasang,” in *Han'guk chŏngt'o sasang yŏn'gu*, ed. Pulgyo munhwa yŏn'guwŏn (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1985), 200-224; Sørensen, 1993b, 528-537; idem, 1993a, 91; idem, 1991-1992, 164; Hong Yun-sik, 1976, 191-205; idem, “Nyōmbul ūirye rŭl t'ŏnghae pon Han'guk ūi chŏngt'o sasang,” in *Han'guk chŏngt'o sasang yŏn'gu*, ed. Pulgyo munhwa yŏn'guwŏn (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1985), 313-324.

¹²⁵ Hae-ju (Jeon Ho-ryeon), “Elements of Hwa-eom Faith and Philosophy in Korean Buddhist Ritual Invocations: Emphasis on the Main Hall Liturgy,” *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 9 (Sep. 2007): 41.

Buddhism.”¹²⁶

The analysis of the iconography of the upper section of *Kamno-t'aeng* testifies that the painting was formalized by a combination of various Buddhist beliefs and traditions, e.g. esoteric mortuary practices, the *trikāya* concept of Kṣitigarbha, and the faith in the Pure Land and its chanting, etc. The gradual change in the main icon in the upper section of the painting may denote a shift in the doctrinal emphasis of Korean Buddhism during the period, reflecting its selective preference across sectarian divisions.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to an exposition of a specific aspect that helps to elucidate the influence of esoteric Buddhist elements on the development of the *sabangbul* iconography in the upper section of *Kamno-t'aeng* and *sisik* culture. The influence of esoteric Buddhist tradition can be better appreciated and more fully explored by investigating the significance of esotericized mortuary rituals under the social context of Chosŏn society. I have examined how esoteric elements infiltrated Korean Buddhism during the Chosŏn period by undertaking an examination of the Five Tathāgatas in *Kamno-t'aeng*, whose appearance reflects one aspect of the esoterization of Chosŏn Buddhist funerary ritual. The icons illuminate the change marked by the esoteric influence in Chosŏn ritual art. This examination may throw some light not only on the esoterization of the Buddhist ritual but also on the development of a unique *sisik* tradition within the ritual. The textual comparison reveals the process whereby the original ceremonial tradition from China was replaced by the *sisik* rite established by regional developments within Korean religious contexts. The Chosŏn *suryuk-jae* manuals are clear evidence that the content and sequence of the *sisik* rite were continuously modified by Chosŏn Buddhist tradition in response to the interest and need of the community. The textual comparison and the iconographical analysis of *Kamno-*

¹²⁶ Sørensen, 1991-1992, 164.

t'aeng reveal the efforts of the Chosŏn compilers and artists to assimilate and localize esoteric practices within Chosŏn monastic traditions.

This study summarizes the origin and the remarkable process of assimilation of the Five Tathāgatas in different Korean Buddhist monastic practices. The emergence of the Five Tathāgatas in *Kamno-t'aeng* contains various aspects of doctrine and belief. At the same time, the esotericized rituals frequently held in the Sŏn monasteries during the latter half of the Chosŏn period testify to a thriving esoteric Buddhist tradition under the domination of the Sŏn school. The monastic centres apparently sponsored a significant share of the surviving esoteric Buddhist art. The ample textual and artistic evidence of the worship of the Five/Seven Tathāgatas in Buddhist rituals demonstrates the complex esoterization of Chosŏn Buddhist rituals and the important role rituals played in shaping the integrating view of Chosŏn Buddhism. The *sabangbul* iconography in *Kamno-t'aeng* is a visual testimony to the complex nature of Chosŏn Buddhist rituals which combined the Avataṃsaka philosophy and the devotional Pure Land recitation as well as Sŏn meditation within the esotericized ritual performance. The visual examples of *Kamno-t'aeng* lead us to a better understanding of the integration and compatibility of Sŏn and Kyo doctrines and practices.

CHAPTER V

Toryang Changŏm 道場莊嚴: The Ritual Construction of Sacred Space

Various new forms of ritual images developed with the spread of Buddhist rituals during the later Chosŏn period. A variety of different *sabangbul* images appear in the Buddhist rituals. Groups of *sabangbul* can frequently be found in the form of *kwaebul* 掛佛, *Kamno-t'aeng*, and other sets of ritual banners, or *pŏn* 幡 (figs. 80-83). In recent years scholars have paid growing attention to Chosŏn Buddhist rituals and their prominent paintings, such as *kwaebul* and *Kamno-t'aeng*. That said, less specific attention has been paid to the icons on ritual banners.¹ The variety and uses of ritual banners in adorning a ritual site deserve special emphasis as one of the defining elements of Korean Buddhist ritual. Ritual implements, including ritual banners, used to adorn the sanctuaries are not only beautiful and interesting works of art but also possess great religious and symbolic significance.² Ritual icons on the banners are not mere graphic images to decorate the ritual; they represent the spiritual presence of divine beings who descend onto the ritual ground and transform the ritual site into a sacred realm. In constructing ritual sites, ritual icons on banners are as important as the central devotional image on *kwaebul*, in most cases the Śākyamuni Buddha, for whose worship they are employed. The banners act as important spatial markers delineating the ritual site as the sacred realm of the Buddha-land. Each such object is pregnant with symbolic meaning and frequently imbued with magical power and potency.

This chapter analyzes the role and symbolic meaning of ritual banners in

¹ There are a few articles and books devoted to studying the subject of Korean ritual banners. Yim Yong-ae, *Pŏmnyung-sa pŏn ūi wŏllyu*,” *Kangjwa misulsa* 16 (March. 2001): 193-211; idem, “Kodae Chungguk pulgyo *pŏn ūi yangsik pyŏnch’ŏn’go*,” *Misul sahak yŏn’gu*, 189 (Mar. 1991): 69-108; Chang Kyŏng-hee, “Han’guk pulgyo ūisik pŏpku ūi misulsa chŏk ūimi,” *Pulgyo misul* 13 (1996): 79-120. The most helpful source on Buddhist ritual arts of Korean Buddhism in general is found in Hong Yun-sik’s *Pulgyo ūisikku* (Seoul: Taewŏn-sa, 1996), in which Hong introduces various kinds of Buddhist ritual implements, including the banners, and their function within Buddhist ritual.

² Seckel, 1989, 161.

constructing ritual sites for *Yōngsan-jae*, using spatial terms. In this chapter the term Buddhist ritual, taken in a broader sense, also refers to the various preparatory conditions that must be met in order to undertake the ritual practice detailed in the ritual texts. In this sense, this study will focus on the “ritualized activities,” which Glenn Wallis uses to define “practice” in far wider terms, involved in constructing ritual sites with images, including those of *sabangbul*.³ The activity of adorning the ritual site is the preparatory part of the ritual and involves the construction and purification of the ritual site and its altar. This chapter explores how this preliminary procedure purifies the ritual place and how ritual imagery may contribute to ritual practice and efficacy.

While some ritual arts have been interpreted outside their original context, the visual media discussed in this chapter have retained their ritualistic meanings and are conceived as integrated elements of the ritual rather than as separate categories. For this purpose I shall argue that the icon should be studied in its totality and its original context and environment. In doing so, my aim is to explain both the world envisioned in the ritual and the way in which ritual adornments and worship act within that world, e.g. how each image contributes to ritual practice and its efficacy, how the ritual site turns into a sacred space and sustains sacredness, and how the practitioners and attendees move around and respond to the sacred space, both real and imagined. This chapter will further explore the function of the ritual space as *maṇḍalas*. The ritual space delineated by a series of iconographical programmes and other ritual arts should be mentally visualized as a three-dimensional *maṇḍala* entity representing the place where Śākyamuni sat and preached the dhārma in a marked-off, sacred precinct on the Vulture Peak. The comprehensive combination of belief, imagery, and ritual creates a three-dimensional depiction of a Buddha-land. Thus I will discuss how the space is envisioned as a “mental” or visualized meditated space with immaterial representations

³ Glen Wallis, *Mediating the power of Buddhas: Ritual in the Manjusrimulakalpa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 2.

and ritual performances. In doing so, I shall explore the relationship between the religious concept and its artistic expression within Buddhist rituals in order to grasp the underlying changes in the doctrines and practices of Korean Buddhism during the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty.

1. Sealing-off the Ritual Site: the Protection and Purification of the Ritual Site

Yŏngsan-jae 靈山齋, a ceremony that commemorates Śākyamuni Buddha's preaching on the Vulture Peak of is conducted to lead all spirits to rebirth in the Buddha's Pure Land. *Yŏngsan-jae* is the oldest, most elaborate, and expansive of traditional Korean Buddhist rituals and still remains the largest mortuary ritual performed within Korean Buddhism. In order to symbolize the ritual site as a sacred realm and emphasize the greatness of the Buddha's preaching, *Yŏngsan-jae* contains every possible form of adornment (Skt: *vyūha*): *kwaebul*, the primary image for worship, sets of banners, and other paraphernalia including paper flowers, lotus lanterns, and mantra-flags associated with adorning the ritual site, as well as a variety of intricate ritual music, chanting (or *pŏmp'ae* 梵唄), and dance (figs. 109-110).⁴ The ritual requires many compulsory procedures, and these are carried out in a strict order of liturgical processes from the preparation to the end of the ritual.

This chapter will examine *toryang changŏm* 道場莊嚴 (the Adornment of the sanctuary), a ritual adornment of a ritual site. Before the main ritual is performed, *toryang changŏm* delineates the ritual space and creates the conditions for the success of the ritual by using evocative symbolism. *Toryang* 道場 (lit: the place of the way) is the translation of *bodhimaṇḍa*, the Sanskrit term for the place of awakening.⁵ The original *bodhimaṇḍa* lay underneath the bodhi tree where Śākyamuni achieved

⁴ T. 279, 1b-c; Kim Ŭng-ki (Pöphyŏn), "Yŏngsan-jae ūi kusŏng kwa kŭ ūiŭi e kwanhan yŏn'gu (A Study on the Structure of Yŏngsan-jae and its Meaning)," *Pulgyo taehagwŏn nonch'ong* 3 (1996): 274-277; Dongguk University, ed. *Pulgyo ūisikku* (Seoul: Sinyu, 1995), 54.

⁵ Vimalakīrti, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: a Mahāyāna Scripture*, trans. Robert A.F. Thurman (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 120

Enlightenment. By metonymy, *bodhimaṇḍa* also generally refers to a holy place of enlightenment, a place—often a monastery—used for teaching and learning the dhārma.⁶ In this sense, the ritual site of *Yōngsan-jae* is the *bodhimaṇḍa* that reproduces the Vulture peak where Śākyamuni delivered the *Lotus-Sūtra* dhārma for the enlightenment of the assembly. The ritual site is a sacred ground onto which the Buddhas are invited to descend. In *Yōngsan-jae*, the ritualized action of *kwaebul iun* 掛佛移運 (Moving *Kwaebul* to the outdoor shrine), the procedure of moving *kwaebul* to the ritual site, is the “ideation” of the descent of the Buddhas on the ritual ground. The outdoor space where *kwaebul* is installed on the special altar and the ritual is performed must first be purified and protected. The importance of this preliminary procedure is recognized as a symbol of purification and transformation. Ritual manuals published during the Chosŏn period explain that before the practitioner begins the ritual, it is necessary to adorn the sanctuary and its altar. It means that *kwaebul* is moved to the ritual place only after the ritual site, or *toryang*, has been purified by the procedure of *vyūha*.

The preparation is composed of the sequences for the protection and purification of the ritual space before the ritual begins. Prior to this, the practitioner follows detailed directions to prepare the ritual site and the altar setting in a carefully prescribed manner.⁷ At the very start of the process, a simple upright pole is placed at each of the four cardinal points of the compass to create a square. A series of procedures is undertaken to prepare the ritual site by stretching out ropes to demarcate the sanctuary. This procedure is called *kyōlgye* 結界 (Binding the ritual site). Here the entire sanctuary is surrounded by ropes in the shape of a square to ritually seal it off and protect it from the outside world.⁸ According to Śākyamuni Buddha’s account of a

⁶ *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, compiled by William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous (Gaoxiong: Fojiao wenhuafu wuchu, Minguo 83 [1994]), 389a.

⁷ HPUC, vol. 2, 509a-b; vol. 3, 414a-415b.

⁸ In Korean Buddhist monasteries every morning *kyōlgye* is conducted to protect and purify the

Buddha-land in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the Buddha-land is clean, pure, devoid of impurities, and adorned with jewel-trees, and it is set off with golden ropes.⁹ The golden rope symbolizes the borders of the pure realm separated from the outside world.¹⁰ The series of ropes on the periphery of the ritual site symbolizes protection from external influences. The outermost ring is protected by hanging mantras, or *chinŏn* 眞言 (lit: true words), used as “spells” (fig. 111-112).¹¹ In addition to the mantra flags, banners such as *hangma pŏn* 降魔幡 (Banners for repelling evils) and similar banners of Buddhist scriptures are used for repelling evil spirits (figs. 113-114).

The procedure of protecting and purifying the ritual site is in accordance with procedures found elsewhere in the Vajrayāna tradition.¹² The sealing-off procedure recalls the preparatory drawing ritual used in Tibetan colour-sand maṇḍala ceremonies.¹³ Before starting to make a colour-sand maṇḍala, monks use wet white cords to draw vertical and diagonal lines on the base to delineate it (fig. 115). The drawing of these lines corresponds to the procedure of sealing-off with ropes. Additionally, in esoteric maṇḍalas, a “rainbow-border” or “boundary path” of five

monastery ground before the rite of worshipping the Buddha is performed inside the main sanctuary. This purifying process, called *toryangsŏk* 道場釋 or *mokt'aksŏk* 木鐸釋, is the first rite observed every morning in the monastery. For its procedure see, An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 1, 80-83.

⁹ T. 262, 20c-21b.

¹⁰ Koreans traditionally surround the restricted area to be protected with *kŭmjul*, meaning rope for restriction. In shamanist tradition of Korea, sealing off such sacred area as an altar for ritual or a house after childbirth is a means to protect the designated area from evil forces and interference of outsiders. HMTS, “*kŭmjul*.”

¹¹ Dongguk University, 1995, 54.

The adornment of Buddha hall and its altar with mantras for purification and protection is a common phenomenon during the second half of the Chosŏn period. In place of the usual decoration *tanch'ŏng* 丹青 (literally “red and blue,” meaning multi-coloured decorative painting of cosmic designs applied to Korean traditional architecture), for example, the consecratory mantras and seed syllables in the Siddhaṃ script, each of which is surrounded by a five-coloured circle, bedecks the ceiling over the main altar of Taeungpo-jŏn 大雄寶殿 at Mihwang-sa 美黃寺 in Haenam, South Chŏlla Province. See Hŏ Il-bŏm, “Koryŏ, Chosŏn sidae ui pŏmcha munhwa yŏn'gu,” *Hoedang hakpo* 5 (2000): 46.

¹² For instance, the procedures of preparing the ritual site and its altar for the Shingon ritual Jūhachidō (Eighteen Methods Practice), the first major esoteric rite to be mastered by Shingon initiates, shows a close affinity to those of *Yŏngsan-jae*. See Robert H. Sharf, “Visualization and Maṇḍala,” in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 158-161.

¹³ R. Kohn, “The Ritual Preparation of a Tibetan Sand Maṇḍala,” in *Maṇḍala and Landscape*, ed. by A.W. Macdonald (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1997), 365-399; Martin Brauen, *The Maṇḍala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Serindia Publications, 1997), 75-76.

colours—white, yellow, red, blue, and black—frames the central section (Court of Eight Petals) of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala (fig. 116).¹⁴ When the maṇḍala is being laid out on the ground, a five-coloured cord is stretched between vajra-spikes to demarcate its boundaries.¹⁵ The laying out of the Perfected Body Assembly, the central section of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, creates a boundary around the pure realm by adorning it with silk banners, beautiful ropes, vajra, and other decorations in similar order and structure.¹⁶ The main altar of Tantric Buddhist practice in Japan, often constructed on a raised platform in a square designed as a maṇḍala, is marked off by stretching a rope braided with five different coloured strands around the altar (fig. 117).¹⁷

Laid out in this way, the colour scheme plays the same role in the protection and purification of the ritual site. In *Yōngsan-jae* narrow bands of the five colours are stretched around the ritual site and the main altar to delineate the boundaries of the sacred area (fig. 118-119). The protecting square of the maṇḍala creates the border of the dhārma world (Dharmadhātu) where the Five Directional Buddhas reside. The bands of the five colours enclosing the site are also described as a boundary of a sacred realm within which the practitioner performs the ritual and invites the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.¹⁸ In the colour-sand maṇḍala, filling the sections divided by lines of white sand with various colours can be compared to *toryang changōm*, or ritual adornment. In this application, colourful grains are painstakingly and meaningfully filled in their intended areas within the circle of designs (fig. 120). Likewise, once the ritual ground is sealed off, numerous sets of ceremonial banners and other ornaments are hung on the ropes to adorn the grounds in a bright ceremonial atmosphere.

¹⁴ Snodgrass, 1985, 290-291.

¹⁵ *Mikkyō daijiten*, vol. 2, 674.

¹⁶ Toganoō Shōun, *Mandara no kenkyū* (Wakayama-ken Kōyasan: Kōyasan Daigaku Mikkyō Bunkaa Kenkyūjo; Kyōto-shi: Sōhatsubaimoto Rinsen Shoten, Shōwa 60 [1985]), 204.

¹⁷ Richard Karl Payne, *The Tantric Ritual of Japan: Feeding the Gods: The Shingon Fire Ritual* (Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991), 82-84.

¹⁸ Snodgrass, 1985, 289-290.

2. Ritual Banners

Põn 幡, or Buddhist banners (Skt: *patāka*), originated from Indian military flags used to mark the boundary or to symbolize victory on a battlefield.¹⁹ The victory banner was adopted by early Buddhism as an emblem of the Buddha's Enlightenment and triumph over Mara, who personifies hindrances on the path to spiritual realization.²⁰ In Buddhist cultures it presents the symbol of sovereignty and victory.²¹ The banner's meaning as a symbol of victory expanded until it adorned ritual sites, intended for the enlightenment and salvation of those present, and in order to repel evil spirits.²² In Buddhist rituals, it is used as a solemn symbol to mark a sacred site. The earliest historical evidence of the use of *põn* in Buddhist rituals in Korea can be found in the *Annals of King Chõngjong* (r. 1398-1400) of the Chosõn dynasty.²³

Many large-scale monasteries in Korea have a complete set of ceremonial banners to accompany the *kwaebul*. The banners, made of silk, hemp, cotton, or even paper, illustrate classes of beings ranging from the various Buddha assemblies and bodhisattvas to lower Buddhist deities. The various types of *põn* employed in *Yõngsan-jae* are *samsinbul põn* 三身佛幡 (Banners of *trikāya*), *oyõrae põn* 五如來幡 (Banners of the Five Tathāgatas), *ch'ilyõrae põn* 七如來幡 (Banners of the Seven Tathāgatas), *obangbul põn* 五方佛幡 (Banners of the Five Directional Buddhas), *isipsambul põn* 二十三佛幡 (Banners of the Twenty-Three Buddhas), *p'algũngang põn* 八金剛幡 (Banners of the Eight Vajra Guardians), *sabosal põn* 四菩薩幡

¹⁹ In Sanskrit, the banner is also known as *dhvaja* (K: *tang* 幢) meaning standard, flag or ensign. Although *tang* and *põn* are distinguished in textual records, the two are confused in their styles and usage of the definitions even in India where the two originated. While *tang* generally designates the flag or banner attached to the flag post (Skt: *dhvaja-stambha*; K: *tanggan* 幢竿) standing at the entrance of a temple, *põn* as an inclusive term refers to all kinds of banners or flags used as ritual implements to adorn the Buddhist ritual. Yim Yõng-ae, "Kodae Chungguk pulgyo *põn* ùi yangsik pyõnch'õn'go," *Misul sahak yõn'gu*, 189 (Mar. 1991): 70-72; Ariga Yõen, 1993, 77.

²⁰ Frederick W. Bunce, *A Dictionary of Buddhist and Hindu Iconography* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1997), 82-83; Ariga Yõen, 1993, 57.

²¹ Yim Young-ae, 1991, 70.

The victory banner is one of the eight auspicious symbols (Skt: *ashtamangala*) associated with the Buddha. Bunce, 1997, 21.

²² The adornment of stupa by *põn* and *tang* is recorded in the *Lotus Sūtra*. T. 262, 3b.

²³ *Chõngjong sillok*, 1(1399)/3/13(*kapsin*).

(Banners of the Four Bodhisattvas), *obang chewi pŏn* 五方帝位幡 (Banners of the Five Directional Emperors), *sibiji pŏn* 十二支幡 (Banners of the Twelve Zodiac figures), *hangma pŏn* 降魔幡 (Banners of Repelling Evils), and so on.

These banners are similar in their type and iconography to numerous silk banners from the so-called “library cave” at Dunhuang that range from Buddhas and bodhisattvas to guardian deities (figs. 121-123).²⁴ The *pŏn* paintings of these divinities are collectively known as *toryang changŏm hwa* 道場莊嚴畫 (paintings for adorning bodhimaṇḍa). As the term indicates, the sets of banners and other ornaments are made and used solely for performing rituals. Thus they do not exist as mere splendour for their own sake.²⁵ In this respect the function of the ritual banners is same as that of *kwaebul* in outdoor rituals. Even so, whilst *kwaebul* represents the presence of the Buddha as the primary object of worship presiding over the ritual, the banners depicting a variety of Buddhist deities are not so much objects of worship in their present setting as worshippers. The main role of the banners is to protect and sanctify the sanctuary during the ritual.

The complete array of Buddhas, bodhisattvas and minor deities in the ritual displays the respective gods of specific levels and directions. The symmetrical arrangement of the sets of banners and other ornamentations around the ritual site defines the specific, organic, and hierarchical relationship of the deities, both among themselves and in relation to the central deity, in this case *kwaebul*. The ritual site in the symmetrical, ordered arrangement that we associate with a maṇḍala shows the deities of various Buddhist schools as well as of shaman altars on various levels in all

²⁴ The banners might have used for the Buddhist rituals. According to Roderick Whitfield’s explanation on the numerous banners from the Dunhuang cave, “It is therefore likely that the paintings were not hung on a wall but in some place where they could twist and turn freely. In fact the wall paintings show banners hanging from the tops of pagodas or high canopies.....the banner is carried hanging from a hook at the top of a staff.” Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Kodansha International in co-operation with the Trustees of the British Museum, 1982-1983), 325.

²⁵ Chang Kyŏng-hee, 1996, 80.

four directions of the compass.²⁶ Each maṇḍala has its own presiding deity housed in a four-sided palace, symbolizing the complete cosmic diagram of the god surrounded by a number of deities of a lower rank in a hierarchical order.²⁷ While the maṇḍala is the cosmic diagram of the various divinities of the esoteric Buddhist pantheon arranged in order, the ritual site being a sacred space constructed and consecrated by ritual adornment, is a symbolic representation of the Korean Buddhist pantheon.

3. The Sacred Colours of the Ritual Art

Ritual banners cover a wide range of objects beyond the mere depiction of the “image” of the deities. They include non-iconic works of art as symbolic substitutes for the deities, such as calligraphic banners inscribed with the names of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas (fig. 124). Colour symbolism plays an important role in enabling these non-figurative banners to symbolize the sacred “images” of the deities. The Chinese character *se* 色 (K: *saek*), which is translated as “colour,” also designates *rūpa*, the Sanskrit term for “form.” Adrian Snodgrass has stated that, “colour and form are coincident; the world of colours is the world of form...in the same way that the figures of the maṇḍala are nothing other than the colours with which they are painted.”²⁸ Just as form is crucial to the maṇḍala, so are colour and its symbolism. In the esoteric sūtras one often comes across references to the five primary colours—white, yellow, red, blue, and black (green)—which correspond to the five directions of the compass.²⁹ One variation on the theme of the colours and their directions can be found in the Vajrayāna maṇḍalas, which are divided into five regions and employ five primary colours to distinguish the centre and the four quarters of the world.³⁰

²⁶ Hong Yun-sik, 1975b, 36.

²⁷ Ulrich H.R. Mammitzsch, *Evolution of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991), 20; Robert Fisher, *Art of Tibet* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 70; Brauen, 1997, 11.

²⁸ Snodgrass, 1988, 24; Snodgrass, 1985, 289 note 97.

²⁹ Snodgrass, 1988, 213; Snodgrass, 1985, 288.

³⁰ An early Buddhist tantric text, the *Hevajra-tantra* believed to have originated in the late eighth century CE, suggests using the “five sacred writing-colours” or powder made from the five gems for the

The colour symbolism of the maṇḍala is maintained in ritual sites, and colour symbolism is used in a wide variety of fascinating ways in Buddhist rituals and art. Expanding the correlation between forms and colours, all adornments used in rituals are based on these five primary colours (fig. 125). Various *pŏn* reveal an awareness of direction planning in their selection of colours. The banners signify each direction of the compass designated by deities in terms of specific colours corresponding to the traditional Chinese cosmological principles. The east is indicated by blue, the west by white, the south by red, and the north by black while the centre is painted yellow.³¹ This colour arrangement, which is different from the codified colour system of esoteric maṇḍalas, forms the basis of Korean ritual arts.³² Although the assimilation of the Vajrayāna tradition into Chosŏn Buddhist rituals is explicit, Koreans did not follow any particular colour scheme used in Vajrayāna maṇḍalas. Whatever the colour association with the directions is, however, the colour symbolism remains five. The ritual arts for adorning sites relates to the spatial symbolism by way of their five primary colours. Here it is appropriate to note that the deities and their associated colours and directions are correlated to form a sacred area as a whole. Many of the

practice of making maṇḍalas. David L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra tantra: A Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), v. 1, x, 4, 81; v. 2, 35.

Maṇḍalas have five primary colours to distinguish the centre and the four quarters of the world. The order of the colours in drawing the interior of Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala based on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is white at the centre, red in the east, yellow in the south, blue in the west, and black in the north. The *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*, however, prescribes a different color scheme to indicate different directions. In Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, each of the five Buddhas is endowed with a different colour: Vairocana (centre) with white, Akṣobhya (east) with blue, Ratnasambhava (south) with yellow, Amitābha (west) with red, Amoghasiddhi (north) with green (or black). T. 892, 601b; T. 848, 911b-c; Snodgrass, 1988, 213; Brauen, 1997, 108; Kim Young-dök, 2006, 722-725.

A further investigation into the five colours takes us to Tibetan maṇḍalas. In Tibetan Buddhism in which about a hundred of maṇḍala exist, colour arrangement changes according to each sect. Among the various Vajrayāna schools of Tibet, for example, Gelug order, commonly known as the Yellow Hats, employs white for the east, yellow for the south, red for the west, and green for the north. In colour symbolism, maṇḍalas of Nyingma and Jonang Orders are in accordance with those of the Gelug. Maṇḍalas of Śākya Order feature blue for the east, red for the west, yellow for the south, and green for the north. Kālacakra Maṇḍala draws blue for the east, yellow for the west, red for the south, and white for the north. Denise Patry Leidy and Robert A.F. Thurman, *Maṇḍala: The Architecture for the Enlightenment* (London: Thames & Hudson in association with Asia Society Galleries and Tibet House, 1997), pls. 16, 25, 28; Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A.F. Thurman, *Worlds of Transformation: Tibetan Art of Wisdom and Compassion* (New York: Abrams, 1999), pls. 172, 174.

³¹ Sim Sang-hyŏn, 2003, 80; Hong Yun-sik, 1998, 45-51.

³² Yu June-sang, "Light and Color in Korean Art," *Koreana* 9, no 2, (1995): 10-12.

ritual texts compiled during the Chosŏn dynasty, such as *Chebanmun* 諸磬文 and *Ch'ŏnji myŏngyang suruk chaeüi pŏmüm sanbo chip* 天地冥陽水陸齋儀梵音刪補集 [The Excerpted and Augmented Text for Ceremony of the Heaven and Earth, Day and Night, Water and Land Ritual with the Sanskrit Sounds], link colours and directions with Buddhas.³³ According to *Tabi* 茶毘 (cremation), chapter 12 of the *Sŏngmun üibŏm* 釋門儀範, it is necessary to allocate a corresponding directional colour to each of the Five Directional Buddhas on the *pŏn* in order to properly perform *obangye* 五方禮 (the Rite of Five Directions), a procedure to invoke and worship the Five Directional Buddhas.³⁴ *Obulye* 五佛禮 (the Rite of Veneration of the Five Directional Buddhas) performed after the recitation of *osaeksa chinŏn* 五色絲眞言 (the Mantra of the Five-coloured Thread) in *Chakpŏp kwigam* 作法龜鑑 reveals the intimate relationship between the five primary colours and the Five Directional Buddhas in the ritual.³⁵ The adornment of the ritual site with appropriate colours for each direction is said to further the transformative process whereby demonic forces are cast out and the site is sanctified. Since esoteric traditions place much emphasis on the spiritual significance of colours, the aims of “purification” and “transformation” of *vyūha* can be best attained by the use of the primary colours on the adornments.

4. *Obangbul* 五方佛: The Five Directional Buddhas

The ritual site is divided into four quarters and a central area. Each direction corresponds to a colour and one of the Five Directional Buddhas. The five Buddhas represent innumerable Buddhas ruling over Buddha-lands of limitless extent. In this sense, the ritual site becomes an abstraction of the entire cosmos filled with innumerable Tathāgatas. The calligraphic banners of the Five Directional Buddhas, or *obangbul pŏn*, refer to Vairocana for the centre, Bhaiṣajyaguru for the east, Ratnasambhava for

³³ HPUC, vol. 2, 487a; HPC, vol. 11, 471b.

³⁴ An Chin-ho, 1983, v. 2, 133.

³⁵ HPUC, vol. 3, 419.

the south, Amitābha for the west, and Āryācalanātha (“Immovable,” K: Pudongjon yōrae 不動尊如來) for the north (see fig. 124).³⁶ The names of the five Buddhas, with the exception of Bhaiṣajyaguru, are generally associated with esoteric Buddhism, and reflect the growing influence of Buddhism during the Chosŏn period. The distinctive Pure Lands of the Mahāyāna Buddhism include the Amitābha Buddha’s Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss (or *sukhāvātī*), and the Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha’s Pure Land of Lapis Lazuli Radiance.³⁷ The position of Amitābha is always fixed to the west, both in esoteric and exoteric Buddhism.³⁸ In the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, this Western Buddha is counterbalanced by Akṣobhya (meaning immovable or imperturbable in Sanskrit), who is said to reside in the eastern paradise of Abhirati.³⁹ Although Akṣobhya is a principal Buddha within Vajrayāna Buddhism residing in the eastern quarter of a maṇḍala, in Korean Buddhism Bhaiṣajyaguru (K: Yaksa yōrae 藥師如來) is usually found in place of Akṣobhya, counterbalanced by Amitābha.⁴⁰ Since the advent of his cult in Korea in the seventh century, Bhaiṣajyaguru has enjoyed enormous popularity through his fame as Healing Buddha, and his popularity has never declined. Replaced

³⁶ The Buddha Āryācalanātha must not to be confused with Āryācalanātha Vidyā-rājā, “Immovable Mantra King,” better known by his Japanese name, Fudo Myō-ō 不動明王. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* gives Āryācalanātha the name of Divyadundubhi-megha-nirghoṣa Tathāgata (Buddha of “Thunderous Sound of the Celestial Drum,” K: Ch’ŏn’go roeūm yōrae 天鼓雷音如來) who sits on the northern petal of the lotus in the Central Mansion of the Matrix World Maṇḍala and whose secret name is “Immovable Diamond (不動金剛).” This Buddha is identified with Akṣobhya, also meaning “Immovable” in Sanskrit, the Buddha in the east of the Diamond World Maṇḍala. T. 865, 208b.

³⁷ Dunhuang caves nos. 220 and 156 offer two great examples in which Bhaiṣajyaguru’s Paradise is made a pair with *sukhāvātī*. Roderick Whitfield, *Dunhuang: Caves of the Singing Sands: Buddhist Art from the Silk Road* (London: Textiles & Art Publications, 1995), vol. 2, 303-305, 326; vol. 1, pls. 75-84; Sir Marc Aurel Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921), vol. 2, 885, 1053; vol. 4, pl. LVII.

³⁸ Amitābha remains invariably fixed to the west in both the Matrix and the Diamond World Maṇḍalas, whereas the Buddhas of the other three cardinal directions take different forms in the two maṇḍalas. Although a better known account is the one that appears in the Mahāyāna Buddhist canons associated with Pure Land Buddhism, many other exoteric sūtras, *Pihwa kyōng* 悲華經 (Skt: *Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*) and *Taesūng-pibundari kyōng* 大乘悲分陀利經 (Skt: *Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*), for example, similarly describe Amitābha/Amitāyus as the Buddha of the western direction. T. 157, 174-186; T. 158, 249-256; T. 366, 347a-c.

³⁹ T. 313, 751b-755a; Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), n. 152, 580-581, pl. 185.

Akṣobhya is generally associated with esoteric Buddhism. However Akṣobhya is also mentioned in several Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* being the most famous. T. 474, 534b-535b.

⁴⁰ T. 450, 405a.

by Bhaiṣajyaguru in the east, Akṣobhya, who is less familiar to the general populace, assumes a variety of guises. The Buddha is moved to the north in the guise of Pudongjon yōrae (Skt: Āryācalanātha), who is iconographically identical with Śākyamuni, the earth-witness posture.⁴¹

This new Buddha assembly that was gradually systematized into a set of Five Directional Buddhas for centuries came to be recognized as *obangbul* or Five Directional Buddhas in Korean Buddhism.⁴² The relationships between the Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and the *obangbul* in Korean Buddhist tradition and their correspondences with colours and directions are shown in the following table:

Direction	Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu	Colour	Five Directional Buddhas of Korean Buddhist tradition	Colour
Centre	Mahāvairocana	White	Vairocana	Yellow
East	Akṣobhya	Blue	Bhaiṣajyaguru	Blue
South	Ratnasambhava	Yellow	Ratnasambhava	Red
West	Amitābha	Red	Amitābha	White
North	Amoghasiddhi	Green (Black)	Āryācalanātha	Black

Again, the arrangement of Bhaiṣajyaguru, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Pudongjon (Akṣobhya) around Vairocana in the centre is not described in any single Buddhist text. In referring to the set of the five Buddhas in Korean Buddhist art, it may be preferable to adopt the term “maṇḍala” from its more familiar usage in esoteric Buddhism: the set of these five Buddhas is then often referred to as the “Koreanized maṇḍala.”

5. *Sinjung* 神衆: The Tutelary Divinities

Mahāyāna Buddhism is characterized by a huge pantheon of Buddhas,

⁴¹ Akṣobhya, meaning immovable, unshakable, or imperturbable in Sanskrit, is thus translated into *pudong* (不動, “Immovable”) in Chinese. T. 951, 247c; T. 665, 423c; *Mikkyō daijiten*, 4: 1953.

⁴² HPC, vol. 8, 238b, 281a, 399c-400, 404a; HPC, vol. 10, 599c; HPC, vol. 10, 600c.

bodhisattvas, and lower deities. The host of guardian deities in the Buddhist pantheon, who vowed to protect the Buddha, the dhārma and the Buddha’s followers from danger, are collectively known as *sinjung* 神衆 (the Host of Guardian Deities).⁴³ Their traditional role as protectors of the dhārma is correctly observed in the ritual site. *Toryang changŏm* consists of various layers of purification and protection of the outdoor space. In *Yŏngsan-jae*, before the start of the procedures of *kwaebul iun* and *yŏngsan chakpŏp* 靈山作法 (literally meaning creating the dhārma at the Vulture Peak, referring to Ritual Offering to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas), *sinjung chakpŏp* 神衆作法 (literally creating the dhārma of guardian deities, referring to the Ritual Invocation of Guardian Deities) is performed to invite the assembly of 104 *sinjung* deities to protect the ritual ground so that the ritual can be held without malicious intrusion. *Sinjung chakpŏp* is again used as the purification rite to prepare for Buddha’s descent, and as an invitation to the *sinjung* godheads to come onto the altar to expel all negative influences from the ritual place. The site is sanctified by their presence and divine protection, and is now ready for the presence and blessing of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The guardian deities depicted on the ritual banners are Four Bodhisattvas, Eight Vajra Guardians, Ten Great Vidyā-rājā, Twelve Oriental zodiac animals, and Emperors of the Five Directions etc. (figs. 126-131).⁴⁴ *Ojong pŏmŭm-jip* 五種梵音集 clearly states that *kwaebul* is installed in the outside altar only after Four Bodhisattvas and Eight Vajra Guardians guard the precincts, and that the ritual performance of *Yŏngsan chakpŏp* then

⁴³ Hong Yun-sik, “Pulgyo ūisik e nat’anan chesin ūi sŏngkyŏk: Sinjung chakpŏp ūl chungsim ūiro,” *Han’guk minsok hak* 1 (1969): 40.

⁴⁴ Although the saintly images of the bodhisattva are not usually involved in the responsibility of protection of the minor deities, their inclusion into *sinjung* deities seems to be relevant to their location to the four cardinal directions. The names of the Four Bodhisattvas—Vajra-saṃdhi (K: Kūmgang-gwŏn posal 金剛眷菩薩 or 警物眷菩薩) of the north, Vajra-pāśa (K: Kūmgang-saek posal 金剛索菩薩 or 定業索菩薩) of the south, Vajra-rāga (K: Kūmgang-ae posal 金剛愛菩薩 or 調伏愛菩薩) for the east, Vajra-bhāṣa (K: Kūmgang-ŏ posal 金剛語菩薩 or 群迷語菩薩) for the west—and their virtues and efficacy are extolled after those of Eight Vajra Guardians in *sinjung chakpŏp*. These four bodhisattvas are from the Thirty-seven honourable deities of Perfect Body Assembly, the central court of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Sim Sang-hyŏn, 2003, 97.

follows this procedure.⁴⁵ This means that the ritual site must first be purified by going through due formalities before the Buddha presides over the ritual and delivers the dhārma.

The ritual banners are categorized according to their subject matter, whether this is depictions of Buddhas, bodhisattvas or lesser deities. *Sinjung* constitutes the third category in the iconography of the Korean Buddhist pantheon, the first two being Buddha and bodhisattva who are enshrined on the upper altar, or *sangdan* 上壇. The *sinjung* deities are enshrined in the middle altar, called *chungdan* 中壇 or *sinjungdan* 神衆壇. The altar for ancestors is located at *hadan* 下壇 (the lower altar). The ritual altar of *Yōngsan-jae* is also characterized by the special *samdan* 三壇 (three altars) structure—upper, middle, and lower. The ritual practice consists of various offerings (K: *kongyang* 供養) to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, *sinjung* deities, and ancestors in that order, with the aim of praising the inconceivable merit and virtue of the Buddha and leading the spirits of the deceased to his paradise.⁴⁶ *Yōngsan chakpōp*, the core of the *Yōngsan-jae* ritual, is also known as *sangdan kwōn'gong* 上壇勸供 (the Ritual Offering to the Upper Altar [of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas]). Here, paying the highest respect to the Buddha is articulated by elaborate ritual performances like *chakpōp* dances, music, *pōmp'ae* singing, and the “six dhārma offerings.”⁴⁷ *Sangdan kwōn'gong* is generally considered to be the most meaningful procedure within *Yōngsan-jae* and the dramatic culmination of the ritual. The attendees visualize Buddha as now being present in the ritual along with the other invited deities. Apart from *sinjung chakpōp*, the previous purification procedure in which the assembly of

⁴⁵ HPC, vol. 12, 157c.

⁴⁶ The main part of the ritual consists of *kwōnggong* 勸共, which means supplicating the deities and making offerings to them, to make merit for the dead soul as well as the bereaved family members. In contrast to the order of entreating the deities to the ritual, *sangdan kwōn'gong*, offerings and prayers directed to the Buddhas placed at the upper altar (上壇), is performed at first and followed by offerings to the middle altar (*chungdan kwōn'gong*) and lower altar (*hadan kwōn'gong* or *sisik*).

⁴⁷ These six offerings are known as *yukpōp kongyang* 六法供養: incense (*hyang* 香), light (*tūng* 燈), flower (*hwa* 花), rice (*mi* 米), tea (*ta* 茶) and fruit (*gwa* 果).

sinjung deities are entreated to protect the ritual site, *chungdan kwŏn'gong* 中壇勸供 (the Ritual Offering to the Middle Altar) is a ritual offering dedicated to *sinjung* deities.⁴⁸ *Hadan kongyang* (the Ritual Offering to the Lower Altar) refers to the *sisik* rite offered to dead ancestors and hungry ghosts.⁴⁹

A. The Assembly of 104 *sinjung*

The aspects of subduing the evils and protecting the sanctuary with guardian deities were further emphasized and expanded during this dynasty. By extension, *sinjung* came to be recognized as benevolent deities related to the role of averting calamities and blessing, rather than the practice of a faith assuring the well-being of the state in earlier periods.⁵⁰ The quasi-magical powers of Buddhism seem to have been amplified in the belief in *sinjung* during the Chosŏn period. The new function and role of the guardian deities not only matched the interest and needs of the common people, but also resulted in a new iconography in nineteenth-century *sinjung t'aenghwa*, which feature the multitude of the guardian deities assembled in one composition (fig. 132).⁵¹

⁴⁸ The separate establishment of and offering to the middle altar for the guardian deities are one of the peculiar characteristics of Korean Buddhist ritual different from those of Chinese rituals. There are two altars (上堂, 下堂) within the inner shrine (內壇) for the *shuiluzhai* 水陸齋 of China. See p. 237 note 48 of this thesis.

⁴⁹ Kim Su-hyŏn, "Chosŏn chung-hugi Kwanŭm kyŏngjŏn kanhang yŏn'gu," *Munhwa sahak* 24, (Dec. 2005): 150.

⁵⁰ When the *sinjung* deities are invoked in the ritual, according to *Sŏngmun ũibŏm*, they are designated as the "Assembly of Protecting Benevolent Deities" (護法善神衆). In this sense, Hong Yun-sik views *sinjung* the "calamity-solving assembly." An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 1, 58; Hong Yun-sik, "Sinjung t'aenghwa tosŏl naeyong kwa sŏngkyŏk," *Munhwajae* 12 (1979): 85; Kim Jung-hee, "Chosŏn sidae *sinjung t'aenghwa ũi yŏn'gu I*" *Han'guk ũi purhwa* 4 (Seoul: Sŏngbo Munhwajae Yŏn'guwŏn, 1997), 211, 216-217.

⁵¹ Most of surviving *sinjung t'aenghwa* was produced after the seventeenth century. 7 *sinjung* paintings produced during the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty have survived, and most of them are now in Japan. More than 250 *sinjung* paintings were produced during the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. More than 50 percent (20 out of 38 paintings) of the Buddhist paintings produced after the nineteenth century in the Chogye-san area of South Chŏlla Province fall into the category of *sinjung t'aenghwa*. This phenomenon is also found in Kyŏnggi area near the capital in the same period: 111 of total 229 paintings produced for 45 monasteries were *sinjung t'aenghwa*. Kim Jung-hee, 1997b, 231; Lee Sŏng-hee, "Chosŏn hugi *sinjung t'aenghwa* tosang ũi yŏn'gu," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 228, 229 (March 2001): 116; Ko Hae-sook, 19 segi Kyŏnggi chibang purhwa ui yŏn'gu (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 1994), 57; Chang Hee-jŏng, "18, 19 segi Chogye-san chiyŏk purhwa yŏn'gu," *Misul sahak yŏn'gu* 210 (1996): 71-104.

This reflects the widespread belief in *sinjung* among the population during the second half of the Chosŏn period.

Depending on the scale or type of the ritual, reverent chanting recognises either 39 or 104 deities in *sinjung chakpŏp*.⁵² Large-scale rituals such as *Yŏngsan-jae* entreat the 104 *sinjung*. The recognition of the 104 guardian deities is especially interesting. Whereas the 39 guardians are enumerated in the *Hwaŏm kyŏng* 華嚴經, hence called *Hwaŏm sinjung* 華嚴神衆 (the guardian deities of *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*),⁵³ the assembly of the 104 guardians, which evolved from the 39 guardians, is not based on any known canonical sūtras but originated in Korea.⁵⁴ The 104 *sinjung*, first introduced in the nineteenth century, include the Buddhist deities revered by the laity solely in Korea.⁵⁵ *Hwaŏm* guardians, which had become the subject of worship since the Silla period,⁵⁶ were transfused with shamanism and esoteric Buddhist elements during the Chosŏn dynasty.⁵⁷ The 104 *sinjung* incorporate a large variety of divinities

⁵² *Chakpŏp kwigam* 作法龜鑑 introduces both 104 *sinjung* and 39 *sinjung*. *Sŏngmun ūibŏm*, which is largely based on the *Chakpŏp kwigam*, also includes the list of the two types of *sinjung*. HPC, vol. 10, 569c-570b; An Chin-ho, 1983, vol. 1, 58-68; Hong Yun-sik, 1969, 40-45.

⁵³ T. 279, 2b-21b.

⁵⁴ *Hwaŏm kyŏng yakch'an-ge* 華嚴經 略纂偈 [Abridged Chant of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*] is a chant that introduces the 104 *Hwaŏm sinjung* as well as the structure of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* of eighty fascicles (T. 279). As mentioned above, during the daily morning chanting practice, called *toryangsŏk*, *Yakch'an-ge* is usually recited in the monastery precinct to purify the monastery ground with the help of the guardian deities. Nāgārjuna (c. 150-250 CE), revered as the patriarch of the *Avataṃsaka* school, has been said to be responsible of this chant as presented in its full title, *Taebanggwang pul Hwaŏm kyŏng Yongsu posal yakch'an-ge* 大方廣佛華嚴經 龍樹菩薩略纂偈 [Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna's Chant for Key Passage of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*]. Its title seems to confirm the strong connection with Nāgārjuna as well as the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. However evidence that testifies this chant was not composed by Nāgārjuna is clear. First, the eighty-fascicle *Hwaŏm kyŏng*, of which the chant describes the structure, was not compiled in Nāgārjuna's time yet. The publication of the eighty-volume *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* appeared much later, sometime between 250 and 350 CE. This sūtra was translated into Chinese by Siksanda in 695-699 CE. Moreover, *Hwaŏm kyŏng yakch'an-ge* has been circulated only in Korea, so have the 104 *sinjung* guardians from the chant been worshipped by the Korean people only. Its oldest edition is included in a dhāraṇī book published in 1885. The *Hwaŏm kyŏng yakch'an-ge* must have been composed in Korea in the nineteenth century and circulated only in Korea. Hae-ju (Jeon Ho-ryeon), "Hwaŏm-gyŏng yakch'an-ge ūi koch'al," *Sŏngnim nonch'ong* 31 (1997): 7-8; Lee Sŏng-hee, 2001, 120, 138.

⁵⁵ Han Chŏng-sŏp and An T'ae-hee, *Pulgyo sinjang yŏn'gu: Hwaŏm sinjung ūl chungsim ūiro* (Seoul: Han'guk pulgyo t'ongsin taehak, Taehagwon, 1992), 265-269; Hong Yun-sik, 1969, 50-51; idem, 1979, 86.

⁵⁶ Hae-ju, "Samguk yusa e poinŭn sinjung e taehan koch'al (A Study on *sinjung* in *Samguk yusa*)," *Pulgyo hakpo* 37 (2000): 59-76.

⁵⁷ Hong Yun-sik, 1979, 80-81, 86; Chŏng Pyŏng-ho, *Chosŏn hugi sinjung t'aenghwa ui yon'gu* (MA Thesis, Dongguk University, 1985), 14, 16.

such as esoteric deities, a number of Hindu divinities like Indra, Daoist figures, and Korean indigenous shaman gods like Sansin 山神 (the Mountain god) and Chōngsin 井神 (the Well god).⁵⁸ Buddhist rituals have accommodated all these new deities since the nineteenth century.

The banner paintings of the guardian deities reveal the distinguishing qualities of Chosŏn Buddhism. The assimilation of esoteric, Daoist deities and Korean indigenous gods to the assembly is important. The assembly of Indian, Chinese and Korean indigenous deities probably represents Koreans' own synthetic concept of tutelary deities. Religious syncretism, especially the mixture with folk religion, was an important element in the development of Buddhism in Korea during the Chosŏn dynasty.⁵⁹ The syncretic approach to Buddhist and shaman divinities has been reflected throughout Korean history in the close institutional association—almost to the point of merger—of Buddhist temples and shaman shrines. For example, the Five Directional Emperors depicted on the ritual banners are important shamanist guardians (fig. 131). After Buddhism had fallen from governmental favour, in order to find favour with the population as a whole, it became an eclectic mixture of religious practices, including a large measure of shamanism. It seems that the ritual arts assimilated a host of Korean indigenous shaman gods and esoteric guardian deities during this period to fit in with the wishes of the grown number of lay believers.⁶⁰ As

⁵⁸ Hong Yun-sik, 1969, 49.

The principle of the three levels of sanctity dominates the entire monastery which consists of numerous shrines with the altars of the deities. The assembly of 104 *sinjung* deities is also divided into three levels: upper, middle, and lower. The esoteric deities as Yejök kūmgang 穢跡金剛 (Skt: Ucchuṣma) and the Four Bodhisattvas belong to the upper level. Generally, the Indian-derived Hindu deities such as Indra, Brahman, Four Heavenly Kings, and Eight Devas and Chinese Daoist deities as Seven Stars and Ten Kings of Hell belong to the middle altars; indigenous deities of either Indian or Korean origin assimilated into Buddhism such as Wind god and Well god belong to the lower. An Chinho, 1983, vol. 1, 56-65; Hong Yun-sik, 1969, 39-51; Kim Hongnam, 1991, 34.

⁵⁹ Hong Yun-sik, 1975b, 36.

⁶⁰ Hong Yun-sik argues the system dividing into three altars has accelerated the indigenization and popularization of Buddhism in the period by assimilating indigenous beliefs to serve better the popular desire for their mundane wishes. At the same time, Hong Yun-sik views Korean Buddhist rituals have taken on an esoteric character by this *samdan* 三段 structure because numerous deities are arranged in a hierarchical order centring around the prominent god as in an esoteric maṇḍala. Hong Yun-sik, 1975b,

a result of including a number of popular deities widely worshipped by the masses, faith in *sinjung* became the most indigenous type of Korean Buddhism. This shows that the eclectic use of esoteric Buddhist elements and indigenous beliefs inherited throughout the Chosŏn period for mundane purposes like healing and eliminating calamities, played an important role in forming a new form of practice within the Chosŏn Buddhist tradition. Their existence in Korean Buddhism indicates that deep-rooted beliefs in Daoist or autochthonous shaman deities were incorporated into Buddhist contexts, especially into Hwaŏm thought from which the faith in *sinjung* guardian deities originated. The gradual assimilation of native deities into Buddhist pantheon resulted in a distinctively Korean Buddhist tradition with a well-defined iconographic hierarchy. The set of *toryang changŏm hwa* 道場莊嚴畫 became one complete icon of Chosŏn Buddhist tradition.

6. Orientation

A strict directional concept is applied to the protection and purification of the ritual site and its altar. When the ritual site is constructed it must be aligned with the four cardinal points of the compass. This preparatory activity further increases the importance of the directions and locality. Centred around *kwaebul* on the altar, the banners of the deities are divided and hung on each side, and this also implies a sense of direction.⁶¹ The ritual banners depicting guardian deities are closely associated with the orientation plan of the ritual site, and take the roles of protecting and purifying the ritual arena in all four directions. As suggested by the numbers of the guardian deities of each group, they are closely associated with the direction and division of the site. The deities of the directions are the guardians who rule the specific directions of space. When this consists of eight deities, as Eight Vajra Guardians (K: P'algŭmgang 八金剛)

35-36; idem, 1986, 429-431.

⁶¹ Yun Yŏl-su, 1990, 37.

or Eight Guardian Devas (K: P'albujuṅg 八部衆), they protect the four cardinal and four intermediate directions from the compass. They are often augmented with extra deities for the ten (the two extra directions being zenith and nadir) and twelve directions (four further intermediate points between the eight directions) as shown in the Ten Great Vidyā-rājā and the twelve signs of the zodiac. The guardian deities placed at all four directions to protect the sacred precinct express the idea that the cardinal points need to be protected and regulated.⁶²

It is important that banners and other ornamentations hung on the ropes are at the correct sides of the ritual site. There have been many attempts to emphasize and arrange these banners within the appropriate sections of the ritual site. The emphasis is given to protecting the cardinal points. The spatial layout of the ritual according to the orientation plan in which the deities face the four cardinal points of compass is of importance in assuring the effectiveness of the activities in a sacred place. In an apotropaic application, each individual *pōn* painting and flag might work as a talisman as well as an instrument for consecration. The ritual site as an ordered, sanctified space provides talismanic and merit-bestowing functions. The Buddhist sūtra *Pulsōl kwanjōng kyōng* 佛說灌頂經 (C: *Foshuo guanding jing*; T. 1331) emphasizes that adorning the ritual site into a pure realm is intended as a way of accruing incalculable merits and blessings as well as expelling evil spirits.⁶³ Maṇḍala-like in form and function, the ritual site from which all disordered and distracting influences have been expelled is certainly a talismanic whole and becomes a sanctified and meritorious space.⁶⁴

⁶² Julia Shaw, "The Sacred Landscape," in Michael Willis, *Buddhist Reliquaries from Ancient India* (London: British Museum, 2000), 36.

⁶³ T 1331, 532b; Lee Jōng-mo, "Chōngt'o sasang e nat'anang changōm" *Chungang sūnggadae nonmunjip* 3 (Nov. 1994): 42.

⁶⁴ Tsongkapa, the founder of the Gelug order, claimed that one's merit will be multiplied by the number of grains of sand by drawing a maṇḍala of sand. Kohn, 1997, 367.

7. The Ritual Site as a Maṇḍala: Experiencing the Maṇḍala

The orientation of the ritual site with its ordered alignment of banners further increases the importance of the directions and the locality, because it forms a “dynamic maṇḍala.” The ritual banners of the guardian deities are placed at the four entrances, which give access from the four directions to the Center of the World, to protect the sacred precinct, just as in a maṇḍala four gateways enclose geometrically ordered assembly of deities.⁶⁵ Based on the design and purpose of the maṇḍala, the ritual site is built into a grand maṇḍala incorporating cardinal elements by using ritual images.

Adorned by Buddhas, bodhisattvas and the lesser deities, the ritual site in a maṇḍala pattern shows the respective gods of specific levels and directions. The maṇḍalic feature representing the hierarchical order between the divinities on the banners is further emphasized by the order of ritual chants to entreat them, the ritual dances offered to the deities, and the physical arrangement of the banners. In their performances of *sinjung chakpöp*, *yöngsan chakpöp* (*sangdan kwön’gong*), *chungdan kwön’gong*, and *sisik* (or *hadan kwön’gong*), in which both *pömp’ae* 梵唄 (ritual chant) and *chakpöp* 作法 (ritual dance) are performed to ritual music, the practitioners enumerate the names and efficacy of the deities in hierarchical order and entreat them to descend and offer divine protection during the *Yöngsan-jae* ritual (figs. 133-135).⁶⁶ During *Yöngsan-jae* rituals incorporating a variety of aesthetic genres, the vocal invocations, music, and ritual dances offered to the assemblies of deities at various levels are visually enacted by the arrangement of the banners within the square enclosure.

It is not surprising to find that the maṇḍala is explicitly present in the exoteric Buddhist traditions of Mahāyāna. For example, many stūpas or even entire monastery

⁶⁵ Similarly structured and ordered, pagoda sometimes has a door on its four facades, each of which is protected by the guardian deity of that particular direction.

⁶⁶ In most cases *chakpöp* 作法 (literally, “creating the dhārma”) is used to refer to the Buddhist ritual dance. However, it includes both dance and chant when we refer to *sinjung chakpöp* or *Yöngsan chakpöp* as a procedure within *Yöngsan-jae* ritual

complexes belonging to non-Tantric Mahāyāna schools function as maṇḍalas. Through the symbolic assimilation of the centre of the universe, the colossal construction of Buddhist monasteries, stūpas, and maṇḍalas are directed to the same end, the creation of the Buddha-land. The more familiar painted or colour-sand maṇḍalas are “a two-dimensional rendering of something that is, essentially, beyond form,” as Robert Linrothe calls it, “exalted reality” in symbolic, geometric designs.⁶⁷ This particular maṇḍalic notion is projected onto the outdoor Buddhist ritual and transforms it into a sacred site. Maṇḍalas link people to divine presence and evoke visions of Buddha’s Pure Land and personal salvation. The ritual site, a visual representation of Buddha-land, takes the form of a highly abstract maṇḍala. Arranged in the same manner, the architectonic elements and scheme of a maṇḍala are reduced to an essential pattern and transferred to the construction of the ritual site.⁶⁸ In the process, deities and other various offerings complete the three-dimensional maṇḍala. The three-dimensional nature is enhanced by the physical arrangement of huge *kwaebul* in the central altar and the ordered alignment of the *pōn* flags and paintings around the ritual site in meaningful ways and specific relationships to one another. The architectural arrangement of the ritual banners plays a crucial role in making the paradisiac and maṇḍalic milieu of the ritual site credible to the devotees and enhancing its efficacy.

8. The Ritual site as Cosmos

The metaphorical link between a maṇḍala and the *Yōngsan-jae* ritual site is enhanced by the fact that the ritual adornments employed to lay out the ritual site are in accordance with the cosmic order. A maṇḍala is a diagram intended to symbolize the

⁶⁷ Rob Linrothe, “Talisman, Reliquary and Instrument of Enlightenment: The Alchi Sumtseck as a Maṇḍalic Site,” *Orientalism* 30, 1 (Jan. 1999): 28.

D. Leidy points out, prior to the rise of Buddhism, “the maṇḍala already signifies a sacred enclosure and is, at times, understood to mean a place created for the performance of a certain ritual or practice.” Leidy, 1997, 17.

⁶⁸ Lokesh Chandra, *A Ninth Century Scroll of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1986), 24.

cosmos. The structure of the maṇḍala is projected onto the ritual site in a unique way that displays the ritual ordering of space and the primary significance of a cosmological notion. Because it evokes the entire maṇḍalic site, the ritual site should be understood fully in its cosmological perspective.⁶⁹ While many aspects of constructing the ritual site are played out in spatial terms, the banners of Four Messengers, supposedly dispatched from the other world to collect the soul of the dead, represent the year, month, day, and hour respectively and thus are charged with the length of life (fig. 121).⁷⁰ The twelve zodiac signs correspond to twelve regions and offer a multifaceted view of the direction and time (fig. 129). Each of the twelve animals is placed around the square ritual site in a clockwise direction, beginning with *cha* 子 (rat) which corresponds to the north. As well as being associated with directions, they also denote time. Serving as time symbols, they designate each year, month and day, as well as the twelve divisions of a day. This clearly indicates their function as temporal and spatial demarcations within the ritual site. Thus the animals show at which time and from which direction the protector offers defence from enemy intrusion.

The spatial-temporal correlations of the twelve zodiac series demonstrate that the site is imbued with the cosmic elements of the universe. The imagery of the duodenary series as supernatural beings further invokes powerful deities and spirits to control such cosmic forces. The duodenary series based on an ancient system for the divisions of the day, month, years, and directions was introduced into Buddhist rituals to evoke a certain religious sense of ideal space and time.⁷¹ The ritual site embodies the spatial-temporal cosmos in which the cycle of time and orientation are completely integrated. When completed by adornments and integrated with all the entities of the

⁶⁹ Lee Kwang-su, *Buddhist Ideas and Rituals in Early India and Korea* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), 146.

⁷⁰ Hong Yun-sik, 1996, 86-87.

⁷¹ Judy Chungwa Ho, "The Twelve Calendrical Animals in Tang Tombs," in *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China*, ed. by George Kuwayama (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), 80.

cosmos, the ritual site is a “mirror of cosmos.”⁷² The cosmic elements are not only integrated and concentrated, but emanate simultaneously within the ritual sphere. By extension the ritual space becomes an “actual mimesis of the cosmos,” conveying its spatial and temporal aspects at a visionary level. The religious historian Mircea Eliade states that the construction and consecration of the sacred space with a cosmological metaphor reproduces the creation of the world, and the site itself becomes a microcosm.⁷³ The ordering of a sacred space permeated with cosmological notions is a ritual re-enactment of the creation of the universe.⁷⁴ The interplay between outdoor rituals and the visual symbolism inherent in its arts can be understood as a symbol of cosmic totality, representing universal time and space.

9. Transformation

The ritual site replete with iconographic imagery with polymorphic symbolism in a cosmic dimension is the sanctified space in which both practitioners and attendees visualize elaborate maṇḍala designs and realize the divine power within the site. Mircea Eliade explains how the practitioner undergoes a transformative experience and mystic union by meditating the maṇḍala as a tool for spiritual growth within himself:

As soon as he has entered the maṇḍala, he is in a sacred space, outside of time; the gods have already ‘descended’ into the...insignia. A series of meditations, for which the disciple has been prepared in advance, help him to find the gods in his own heart. In a vision, he sees them all emerge and spring from his heart; they fill cosmic space, then are reabsorbed in him....By mentally entering the maṇḍala the yogin approaches his own ‘center.’...The yogin, starting from this iconographic ‘support,’ can find the maṇḍala in his own body.⁷⁵

Just as the meditator (Skt: *yogin*), who particularly seeks to integrate with ultimate

⁷² M. Brauen states, “a maṇḍala that depicts and provides a way for humans to reach the center of the cosmogram becomes a ‘mirror of the cosmos.’” Brauen, 1997, 21.

⁷³ Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (Mission, Kansas: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, Inc., 1961), 51-52.

⁷⁴ Richard Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshiping Siva in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1991), ix.

⁷⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series, no. 56 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 225.

reality at the centre of the maṇḍala, mentally proceeds through a two-dimensional maṇḍala through visualization and identification, the worshipper can literally walk through the ritually ordering space—the ritual site itself.⁷⁶ It is in the metaphysical place that the practice becomes an aid to the processes of involution and identification.

The purpose of *toryang changōm* is to bring about a *parisuddha* (utterly purified) state into the ritual that involves some form of symbolic purification and transformation. The whole process of preparing the ritual expresses this symbolically. The ritual site is transformed into a spiritually pure place conducive to meditation and enlightenment in the minds of the audience. The sacred space full of all the innumerable merits of the Tathāgatas thus becomes the perfect realm for mystical experience and enlightenment. In this Pure Land the ritual simulates the Buddha’s teaching on the Vulture Peak and stimulates those present to experience spiritual transformation and enlightenment. Their meditative, imaginary trip into the envisioned Buddha-land is a metaphoric process of enlightenment. Simon O’Sullivan views *pūjā*, the Buddhist devotional worship, as an access point into other worlds as follows:

....we are interested in *affects* rather than meanings. In *experience* rather than understanding. And in *transformation* rather than representation....We return from the *puja* different from when we entered that sacred space.⁷⁷

The whole practice of *Yōngsan-jae* is a process of spiritual transformation. When the Śākyamuni Buddha expounded the *Lotus Sūtra* to the large assembly of devoted disciples on the Vulture Peak, his dhārma teaching transformed it into a transcendent space representing the pure state of perfect enlightenment. The people

⁷⁶ Blanche Christine Olschak and Geshe Thupten Wangyal, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), 36.

⁷⁷ Simon O’Sullivan, “Writing on Art (Case Study: The Buddhist Pūjā),” *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 118.

In his article, O’Sullivan uses *pūjā* (C: *gongyang*; K: *kongyang* 供養) as a collective term to represent Buddhist devotional practices centred on the shrine in general.

attending the ritual can sense the story of the *Lotus Sūtra* unfolding and feel themselves transported in ecstasy into the Buddha-land.

Although primarily held for the purpose of delivering the dead spirits, the *Yōngsan-jae* is not separate from ordinary life. From a social point of view, *Yōngsan-jae* is not intended simply for the salvation of the dead but also for the benefit of the living.⁷⁸ The ritual space is intended to embody the Pure Land where mortal beings are released from the suffering of life by following the teachings of the Buddha. We observe the fusion of the mortal sphere with the sacred space within a temple compound and the specific relationship between the living and dead, between the self and others. Just as a maṇḍala depicts the integration of the mundane nature with the divine, the outdoor ritual creates Buddha's Pure Land on earth and attempts to integrate the sacred and the mundane world.⁷⁹ The *Yōngsan-jae* is a ceremony that prays for the unity of the living and the deceased in the dhārma throughout the universe. The ritual site where the preparation is completed and the Buddha is entreated to deliver the dhārma becomes a place of enlightenment and salvation for both the living and the dead.

10. Conclusion

The process of the *Yōngsan-jae* ritual marks the complex assimilation of the Vajrayāna into Korean Buddhism. The symbolism in the ritual bears a particularly close relationship to esoteric practice. As in the Vajrayāna tradition, the maṇḍala concept is important in constructing the ritual site and its altar in the Korean Buddhist tradition. I have discussed the dynamic formation of a maṇḍala by considering the ritual site as a complete sacred sanctity. The perpetual issues of orientation and the significance of symbols and maṇḍala have been examined in the ritual arts and their adornment of the ritual site. Centred around *kwaebul* hung on the outdoor altar as the

⁷⁸ Hong Yun-sik, 1991, 31.

⁷⁹ Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1983), 117.

focus of the spiritual power invoked, the ordered alignment of a complete set of ritual banners delineates the ritual site as a sacred space in which a phenomenal creation of maṇḍala is envisioned.

Yōngsan-jae, a culturally meaningful event and a synthetic art form symbolically utilizing images, space, sound, and dance, evokes a symbolic cosmos. Korean cosmological notions of sacred space seem to emerge in the creation of the sacred precincts that represent the Buddha's Pure Land. Koreans applied their own architectural and the iconographical formulae of the maṇḍala pattern to the construction of the ritual site and therein represented the symbolism of the universe. The site represents an image of the cosmos through the meaningful and ritualized activity of *toryang changōm* using the symbolic contents of cosmic forces. The unifying principle of *buddhakṣetra* thought is extremely helpful in explaining the religious function of Buddhist ritual icons and the procedures followed in the ritual. The various ritual imagery of *sabangbul* invokes multifarious Buddhas who represent each direction in which the Buddha-land is located. The concept of *sabangbul* was extended into the production of banner sets containing other Buddhist deities. The deployment of this concept is important in the application of the ritual arts corresponding to the orientation plan used in constructing the ritual site. The spatial arrangement of the directional Buddhas and other divinities in their respective directions demonstrates the underlying principle that the Buddha's power persists in the ritual environment. The interplay between the ritual arts, popular beliefs, and religious practices performed in the sacred space may be explained by the extended notion of the Buddha's Pure Land. A comprehensive combination of belief, imagery, and ritual creates a highly abstract and phenomenal illustration of a Buddha Land.

Yōngsan-jae, commemorating Śākyamuni Buddha's preaching on the Vulture Peak as narrated in the *Lotus Sūtra*, is in turn a textualization of the historical event of

Śākyamuni's preaching on the mountain to the dhārma assembly. When *Yōngsan-jae* is performed, the *Lotus Sūtra* is ritualized. *Yōngsan-jae* is conducted to reenact the dhārma meeting of the assembly on the mountain using visual adornments and ritual performances. This also represents the close relationship between the sūtra and *yōngsan-hoe* theme on *kwaebul* paintings, where *yōngsan-hoe* is a pictorialization of the *Lotus Sūtra*. This type of *kwaebul* used as the focus of outdoor mortuary rituals, performs a dual roles: that of the object of worship for the congregation at the ritual, as well as functioning as an illustration (K: *pyōnsang* 變相, lit: transformation tableau) of the story of the *Lotus Sūtra*. At the same time, the Chosŏn liturgical texts to which the ritual and its painting closely conform are the archives of documentation of the actual Buddhist rituals prevailing at the time. In my future studies I intend to conduct an in-depth study based on the interrelationship between rituals, texts, and visual tradition.

CONCLUSION

The central theme of this study has been to research the development of a distinctive Korean style of Buddhist art found in *sabangbul* examples, which reflect the extraordinary cultural and historical background of each period. The images of *sabangbul* are historical documents and a faithful record of a particular historical moment in Chosŏn society. The determination of its iconographical significance is complicated by the relationship of Buddhism to social and political circumstances, the politics of the religion at governmental level, and various other conditions as well as the popularity of certain religious schools, cults, and sūtras. In Chapter 2, I examined the possibility of a link between the re-emergence of the *sabangbul* imagery and the political background, based on distinctive common characteristics in the *sabangbul* arts produced at the time. However the ideas I have put forward require more re/consideration and elaboration on the function of the religion in society. In Chapter 3 I examined the prevalence and role of Buddhist mortuary rituals in later-Chosŏn society. In Chapters 4 and 5, I included a wide range of icons that help to elucidate the influence of esoteric Buddhist traditions and its elements on Chosŏn Buddhist rituals.

While this thesis has mainly focused on the comprehensive study of the *sabangbul* lineage during the Chosŏn period, it has also aimed at demonstrating the remarkable resilience of Chosŏn Buddhism to the harsh government controls placed on monastic traditions. In doing so, I examined some discourses on the characteristics of Chosŏn Buddhism, discourses that are products of traditional studies of Korean Buddhist history. One conventional view of the social spectrum of Chosŏn Buddhists is that the religion was only embraced by women and members of the lower-class who were excluded by Confucian ideology. Having established a false idea with respect to the social classes of Chosŏn Buddhists, scholars holding this traditional view go on to validate their claim that there was a sharp dichotomy between the ruling class and the common people.

Although it is true that several policies intended to suppress Buddhism at an official level were intensified, Buddhist influence on Chosŏn society never totally disappeared, partially because of the tacit approval and generous support of the royal house. As we have seen, the early Chosŏn rulers' attitude towards Buddhism, both politically and personally, did not fit in with official government policies. The material evidence confirms that the productions of the *sabangbul* during the first half of the Chosŏn dynasty were heavily coloured with the political aims of the royal court. Chapter 2 threw light on the fact that the concept of *sabangbul* was closely related to the political ideology of the early Chosŏn kings and their successors in their struggle for power. The monarchs' devotion to Buddhism, in spite of the political risks inherent in a Confucian society and the vehement opposition amongst the literati, went well beyond personal piety. Members of the royal family also sponsored the establishment of major national temples and royal shrines within the precincts of royal palaces, as well as the publication of Buddhist scriptures on a grand scale. Such activities demonstrate the extent to which the royal court supported Buddhism: but we should not forget that the monarchs also controlled the religion by enforcing monastic economic reforms and its sectional divisions to suit their own political agenda. The strong bond between the Buddhist saṅgha and the royal household that continued throughout the dynasty until its demise is a good example of the cooperation between the ruling class and Buddhism. This phenomenon challenges the traditional view of Chosŏn Buddhism as the religion of the marginalized and recognizes a new dimension of the role of Buddhism as a source of political power. It also negates the typical view that presents Chosŏn Buddhism as the religion of women (*chi'ma pulgyo*, lit: "skirt Buddhism") who sought refuge from the hostility of Confucian values during the Chosŏn period. Seen from this point of view, the royal court's belief in Buddhism would bring about a new understanding of the religion in the Chosŏn period.

In this thesis I have attempted to challenge traditional presuppositions that characterize many interpretations of Korean Buddhist practices during the Chosŏn period. One of the prevailing assumptions that characterize Chosŏn Buddhism is the standard narrative of its “degeneration” under neo-Confucian state policies. Chosŏn Buddhism has often been discounted on the basis of the harsh governmental suppression policies, and this view has made it difficult to perceive what lay beyond the surface. One of the major misrepresentations of Chosŏn Buddhism comes from the failure to acknowledge the extent of the role played by Buddhism in the lives of the Chosŏn people. Despite its drastically reduced social status and government opposition, it may be said that Buddhism continued to exert a great influence on the daily lives and attitudes of the Chosŏn people, as well as on the formation of social and cultural values amongst the great majority of the Chosŏn population. The prevalence of Buddhist mortuary rituals in Chosŏn society offers insight into the meaning of Buddhist rituals in the religious and social life of Korean Buddhists. In Chapter 3, I offered some reflections on the reaction of Chosŏn Buddhism to both contemporary Korea and local communities who were trying to cope with the hardships ensuing from foreign invasions in later-Chosŏn society. Here it is possible to envisage changes in the saṅgha’s orientation, attitude, practice and values as a response to social needs. I also attempted to outline some of my basic assumptions regarding the possible roles of Buddhism in Chosŏn society: but more specifically I spoke about the possible positive roles which Korean Buddhism might have had in Chosŏn during its periods of hardship. Chosŏn Buddhism was likely to provide an integrated force and promote solidarity in the social and cultural life of the people. This fact stimulates us to reconsider the religion’s original contribution to society. It follows that conventional studies which claim that Buddhism degenerated socially and culturally during the Chosŏn dynasty need to be re-examined.

The third shift from the traditional mode of understanding Chosŏn Buddhism re-examines the existing theory of “nation-protecting Korean Buddhism” (*hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教). The notion of Buddhism as a state protector has been the standard interpretation of Korean Buddhism. However, as is evident from the extant materials of *sabangbul* objects from the early Chosŏn period, the primary purpose of religious practice and the rituals sponsored by the Chosŏn royal household was to enhance its political empowerment as well as to enlist spiritual assistance in order to protect their own interests and well-being. With regard to the function of Buddhism, I have criticized the conventional view that Korean Buddhism mainly played a role as a state protector.

All these considerations present powerful challenges to the existing scholarship of Chosŏn Buddhism, and force us to rethink and re-evaluate the traditional attitudes and structures that have sustained its nature and history down to the present day. This has already had a strong impact on the search for new approaches towards Chosŏn Buddhism. In recent years, scholarly criticism and demands to reshape views on Chosŏn Buddhism have expanded in scope to address issues of social and political significance. The research also suggests the need for an in-depth study of Buddhism’s relationship to social and political circumstances, its cultural role, and relationship to its adherents, in order to gain a better understanding of Korean society in the Chosŏn era, as well as the nature of Chosŏn Buddhism. If we fail to give careful attention to the social and political context of the time, our attempt to understand the role of the religion during the period will also fail to clarify the historical meaning of Buddhist beliefs and practices in the Chosŏn period. New approaches can only broaden the horizon of our understanding of Chosŏn Buddhism.

However my theses do not entirely argue against conventional views of Chosŏn Buddhism. Recent studies and investigations into Korean Buddhism have sharply

criticized the primary characteristic of Korean Buddhism, *t'ong pulgyo* 通佛敎, the Buddhism of total interpenetration. In my thesis, I have neither accepted nor denied the arguments of scholars who have rebutted a certain view of the syncretic nature of Korean Buddhism. When dealing with ritual as a central theme, it is crucially important to take account of the influence of esoteric Buddhist elements on Korean Buddhist tradition. Esoterized practices penetrated Korean Buddhism during the Chosŏn period, and its influence reached nearly all aspects of ritual practice and liturgy. The written and visual traditions of the mortuary rituals reflect the explicit esoterization of Korean Buddhism at a popular level during the second half of Chosŏn. Despite the fact that it has frequently been disregarded, its existence within Chosŏn Buddhism substantially contributed to the development of the ritual culture of Chosŏn Buddhism. Although it is known that Sŏn Buddhism became the dominant form of Buddhism in Chosŏn Korea, the monastic centres apparently sponsored a significant share of the surviving esoteric Buddhist art in the latter half of the Chosŏn period. As a result the unique phenomenon of the syncretic practice of the three approaches, i.e. Sŏn meditation, studying texts and esoterized Buddhist practices (the latter two generally considered to be the antithesis of the Sŏn approach), can be found in Chosŏn Buddhist rituals. From the Buddhist perspective the development of the *sabangbul* cult conforms to the reconciliation of Buddhism beyond sectarian restrictions during the Chosŏn period.

Various Buddhist schools and their doctrines, and also indigenous religious traditions have played an important role in shaping the multifaceted aspects of Korean Buddhist rituals. The *sabangbul* objects created for rituals reflect several religious beliefs and practices local to the Korean peninsula. For instance, there is evidence of a number of different sectarian perspectives and a considerable fusion between Buddhism and the popular religious elements of Daoism and shamanism that coexisted within

Yōngsan-jae.¹ The set of *toryang changŏm hwa* 道場莊嚴畫 is particularly fascinating for it provides the most complete record of the visual pantheon of Korean Buddhism in Chosŏn. This aspect clearly reflects the belief pattern of the period which combined various doctrines of several Buddhist schools and other religious traditions to fit the needs of devotees. The worship of *sabangbul* attests to the fact that Korean Buddhist practitioners embraced a wide variety of beliefs, both foreign and indigenous. Many points of intersection between the diverse traditions in the different *sabangbul* objects reflect the coherent framework of the Korean Buddhist tradition along with its assimilative integration and eclectic approach toward the diverse sectarian divisions and indigenous beliefs.

This study has shown that the development of the concept of *sabangbul* in Chosŏn Buddhist art can be divided into several stages through the centuries. There is no certain order or doctrine to characterize the variant types of *sabangbul* that appeared during the Chosŏn period. The important factor regarding the *sabangbul* assembly was that it manifested itself in different forms, and these depended on the inclinations of the devotee to be addressed and its context and not on a certain preaching of sect or scripture. The placement of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and minor deities in cardinal directions was believed to multiply their salvific powers and guarantee maximum protection for worshippers from the deities gathered on the spot. *Sabangbul* art represents a devotion or faith which deals with the organisation and arrangement of deities in a particular location to ensure more efficacious blessings from divinities. It seems that this faith became the basis for the evolution of traditional *sabangbul* design and construction in Korea. The patterns of Korean devotional belief play just as important a role in determining the iconography of *sabangbul* art. The gatherings of the multiple deities for *sabangbul* worship were Chosŏn Buddhist expressions of the

¹ Kim Su-hyŏn, 2005, 151.

omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of deities beyond space and time. Each quarter is assigned to a particular divinity who presides over it and acts as its chief guardian spirit, thereby ensuring the orderliness of the universe and the protection of its occupants. The formation of *sabangbul* reflects Mahāyāna beliefs that countless Buddhas residing in an infinite universe are gathered for the purpose of salvation of infinite beings. As an extension to this thought, a variety of bodhisattvas and minor Buddhist deities are also assembled in a group with countless Buddhas to provide the best means of salvation and response to prayers. The Mahāyāna idea of omnipresent and powerful Buddhas and compassionate bodhisattvas along with the Mahāyāna emphasis on their merit and salvific power might possibly have provided a foundation for the development of *sabangbul* in Korea as a form of Mahāyāna devotionism.

Although hardly any single devotional works of art depicting the image of *sabangbul* have been found during the Chosŏn period, by contrast with examples from the Silla period, this does not mean that the belief in *sabangbul* disappeared. Rather it became ubiquitous in Chosŏn Buddhist art throughout the centuries. Various sets of *sabangbul* assemblies not only reflect the iconography prevalent at any given period but also the visual expression of changing patterns of a religious belief. The inconsistency between the *sabangbul* images may also be due to the different needs of the patrons and the social and political conditions they had to face. The *sabangbul* of the Chosŏn dynasty was a social, political, cultural, and ideological product of Chosŏn society in each era. Accordingly this study on the *sabangbul* art has illuminated the meaning and function of the imagery as well as the social, religious and political circumstances in which the images of *sabangbul* were conceived and recreated during the Chosŏn dynasty. If we study the historical development of *sabangbul*, it seems clear that a close examination of its historical background is needed in order to understand it better. This development reflects the multifaceted social and political circumstances and

religious reactions which occurred during the 500-year history of Chosŏn Buddhism.

All the elements mentioned above played pivotal roles in characterizing the Koreanization of Buddhism in the Chosŏn period in a broader perspective. Many of the *sabangbul* objects found in Korea can be explained in terms of regional developments, which were considerably influenced by imported Buddhist iconography combined with various religious traditions such as Daoism, Confucianism, mountain worship, and even indigenous shamanism. The *sabangbul* cult offers a single but comprehensive overview embracing the multivalent religious and cultural assimilation of Buddhism into pre-modern Chosŏn society down through the centuries. The *sabangbul* cult allows us to better contextualize the patterns of Buddhist belief and practice in Chosŏn society, which have wider implications for the study of Chosŏn Buddhism. Depending on its era, its area and its historical background, Chosŏn Buddhism created different corresponding variations, different transformations of appearance, and different names and perceptions of *sabangbul* through its Koreanized outlooks. In this sense *sabangbul* belief is a distinctive Korean religious tradition with unique Korean iconographic features and types within the context of the development of Chosŏn Buddhist thought and practices. The cultural development of *sabangbul* cult facilitated by social and political necessities truly demonstrates the uniqueness of Chosŏn Buddhism. However, instead of simply promoting “unique” aspects of Chosŏn Buddhism and searching for celebrated *sabangbul* relics, a deeper investigation into Chosŏn Buddhism must go further and incorporate historical and cultural variables and philosophical and spiritual experiences, especially with regard to research into the Chosŏn *sabangbul* cult.

A study of *sabangbul* products is meaningful in art historical terms. It also illuminates the values and beliefs of society at any given period. The tradition of *sabangbul* worship was affected by the interaction of social circumstances, politics, and

religions, and these all created an important regional style that provides the key to understanding the development of Buddhism through the several centuries of the Chosŏn dynasty. Our understanding and interpretation of the nature and history of Chosŏn Buddhism may possibly be improved through a study of the *sabangbul* cult in social, political and cultural terms. I would like to think that this thesis has partially fulfilled the need for a fresh examination of Chosŏn Buddhist history and that it will inspire other scholars to pursue further research and throw up new perspectives. I look forward to reading their results.

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HPUC = *Han'guk pulgyo üirye charyo ch'ongsö* 韓國佛教儀禮資料叢書 [The Collection of Korean Buddhist Ritual Texts], comp. by Pak Se-min. Seoul: Samsöng-am, 1993.

HMTS = *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwä sajön* 韓國民族大白科事典 [Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Korean People and Culture]. Söngnam: Han'guk chöngsin munhwawön, 1997.

T = *Taishö shinshü daizökyö* 大正新修大藏經 [Japanese Edition of the Buddhist Canon]. ed. by Takakasu Junjiro, et al. Tökyö: Taishö Issaikyö Kankokai, 1924-35.

TMS = (Kugyök) *Tongmunsön* 東文選 [Anthology of Korean Literature], by Sö Kö-jöng (1478). Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1985.

TYS = (Kugyök) *Sinjüng tongguk yöji süngnam* 新增東國輿地勝覽 [Revised and Augmented Gazetteer of Korea 1530]. Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1986.

ZZ = *Zokuzökyö* [*Dai nihon zokuzökyö* 大日本續藏經]. Kyöto: Zökyö shoin, 1905-1912.

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Fig. 1. Kulbl-sa site *sabangbul* (west), c. 730-750.



Fig. 1-a. Detail of Fig. 1 (south).



Fig. 2. Ch'ilbul-am Buddha complex, c. 730-750.

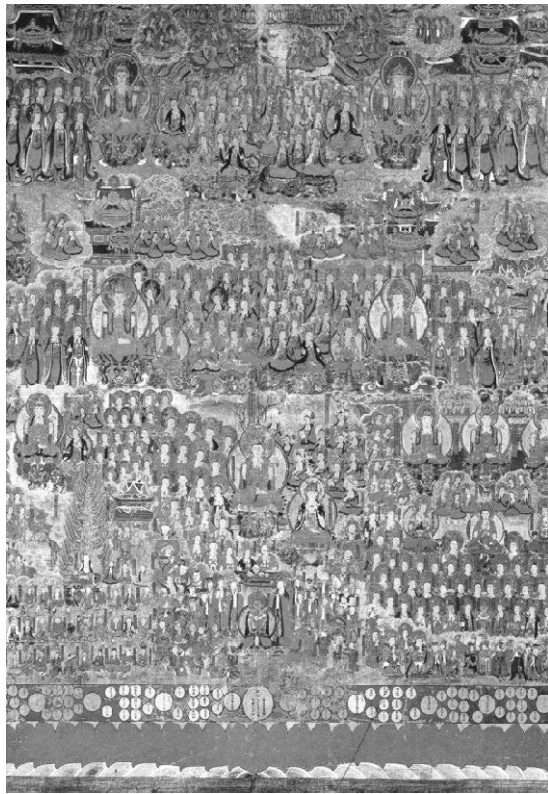


Fig. 3 *Avataṃsaka* painting,
Songgwang-sa, 1770.



Fig. 4. *Śarīra* box from Kamün-sa site,
Unified Silla ca. 682.



Fig. 4-a. Details of Fig. 4
(Four Heavenly Kings).

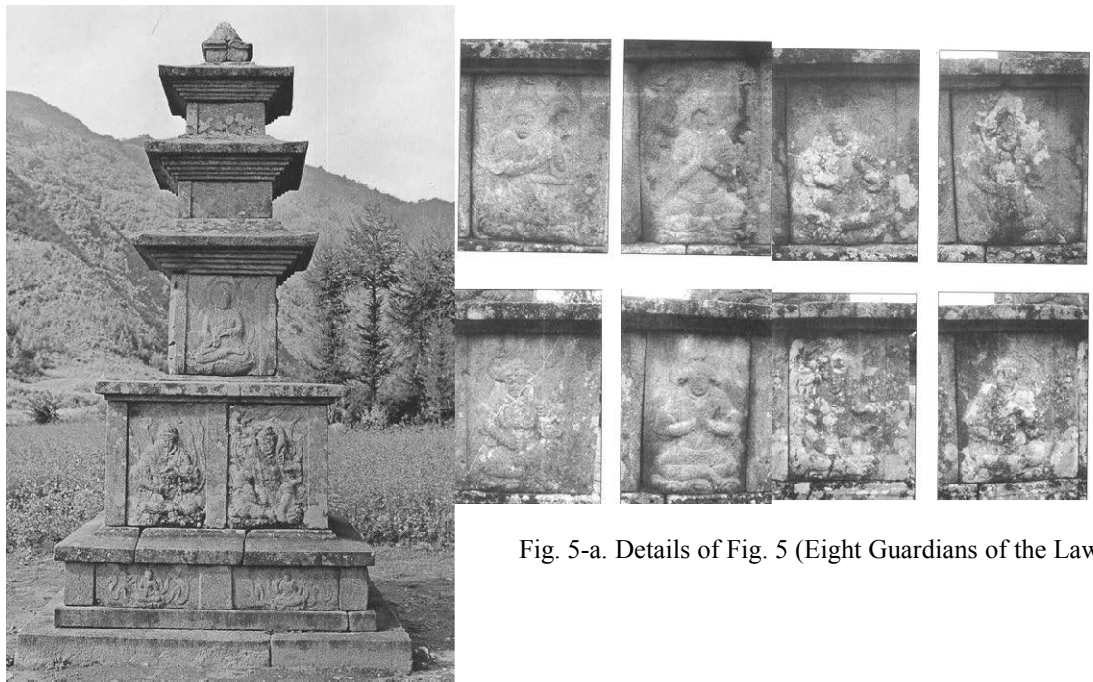


Fig. 5-a. Details of Fig. 5 (Eight Guardians of the Law)

Fig. 5. Chinjŏn-sa site stone pagoda, Yangyang, late 8th century.



Fig. 6. Eight Guardians of the Law, Sŏkkul-am, 751-774.



Fig. 7. *Sabangbul* pillar, Yesan, mid-6 century.

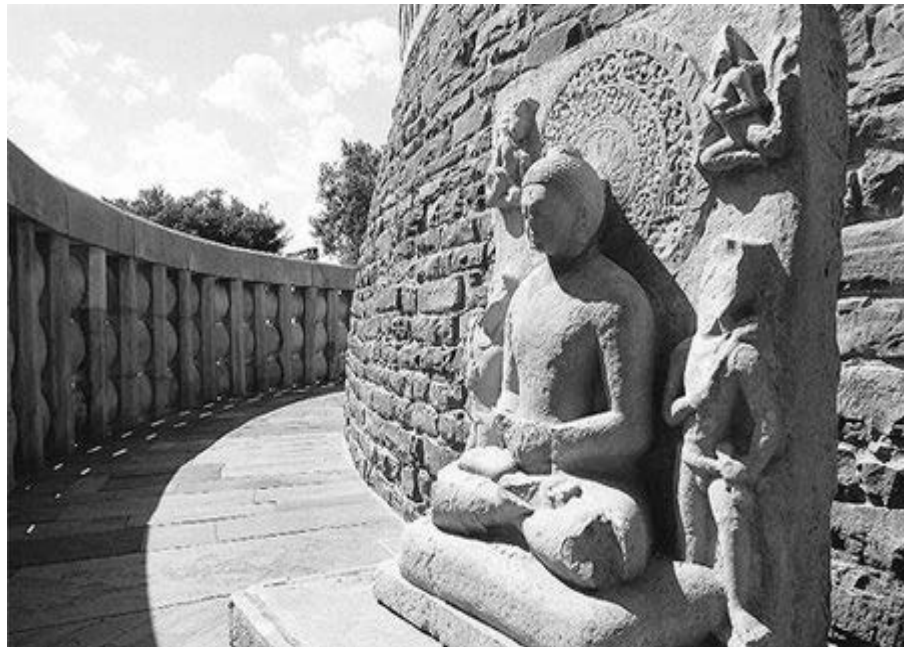


Fig. 8. Buddha of the East, the Great Stūpa at Sanchi, 5th century.

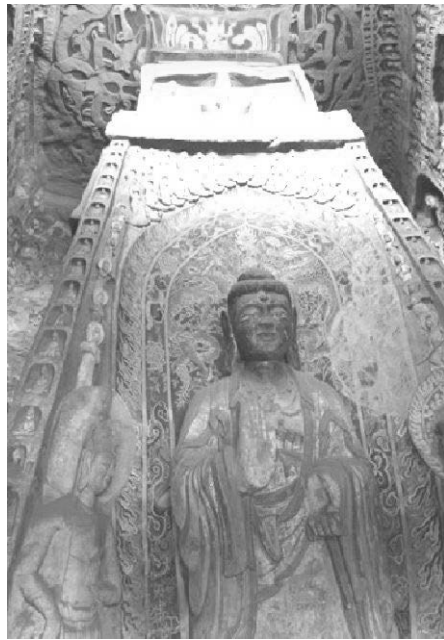


Fig. 9. Pagoda pillar of Yungang Cave 11, ca. 460-494.



Fig. 10-a. *Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha's Paradise*, Hōryū-ji Kondō Wall paintings, ca. 686-697.



Fig. 10-b. *Śākyamuni Buddha's Paradise*, Hōryū-ji Kondō Wall paintings, ca. 686-697.



Fig. 10-c. *Amitābha Buddha's Paradise*, Hōryū-ji Kondō Wall paintings, ca. 686-697.



Fig. 10-d. *Maitreya Buddha's Paradise*, Hōryū-ji Kondō Wall paintings, ca. 686-697.



Fig. 11. Taesŭng-sa *Sabangbul*, 587, Mun'gyŏng,

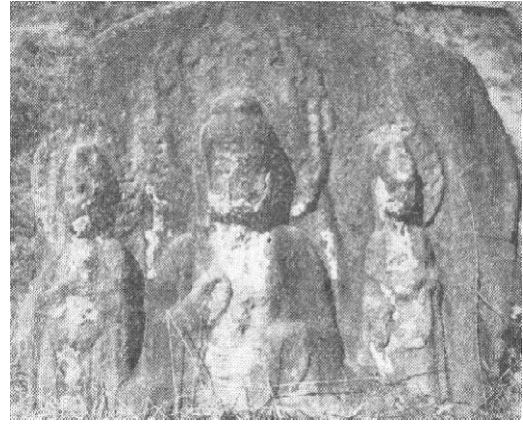


Fig. 12. Sŏkp'o-ri *Sabangbul*, 7th century. Yŏngju.

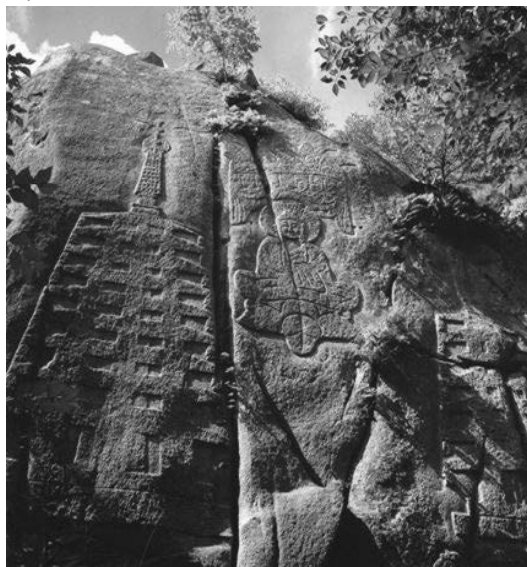


Fig. 13. T'apkok *Sabangbul* (North), 7th or 9th century. Namsan, Kyŏngju,.



Fig. 13-a. East of Fig. 13.



Fig. 13-b. South of Fig. 13.



Fig. 13-c. West of Fig. 13.

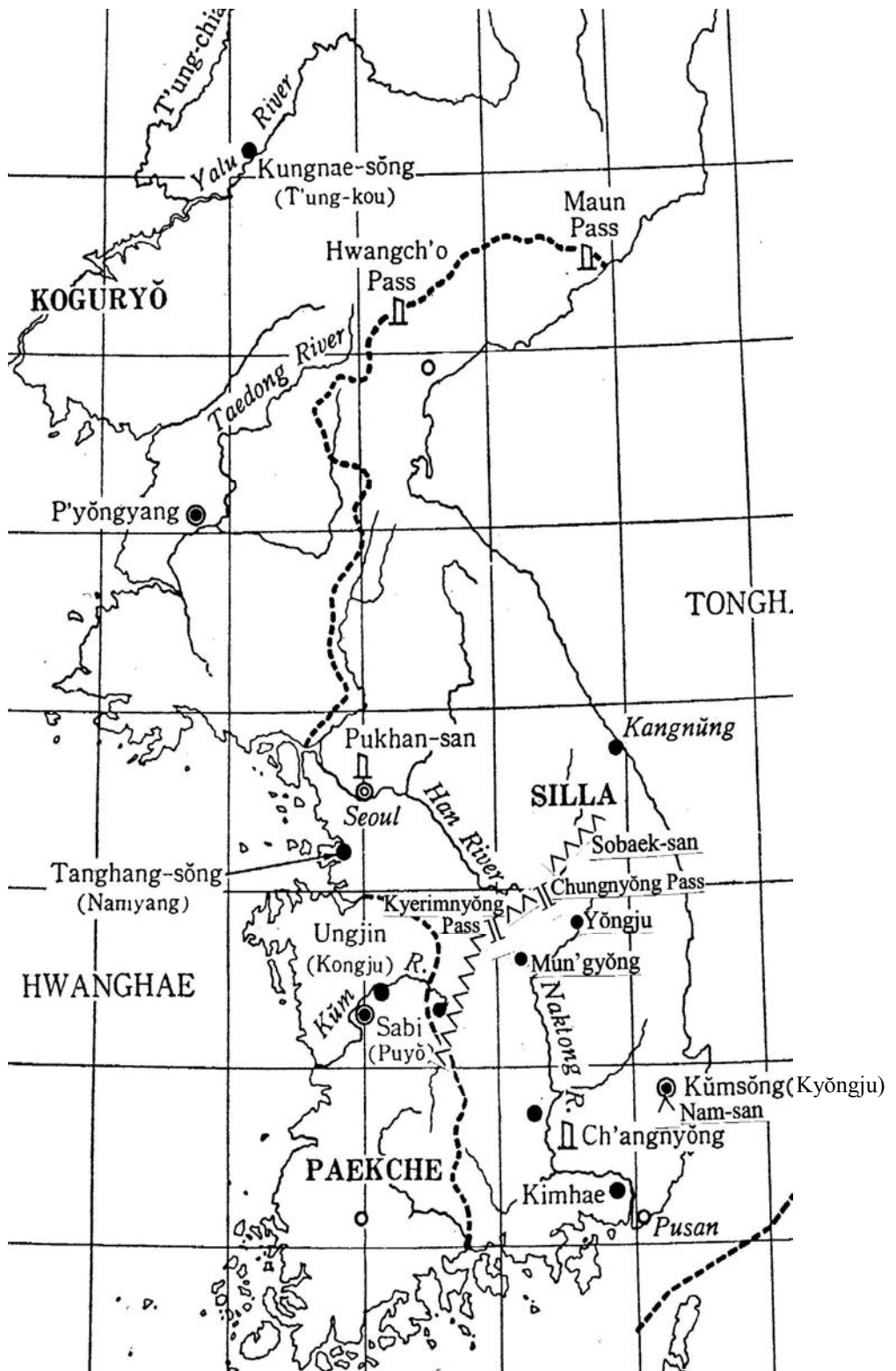


Fig. 14. Map with Silla under King Chinhung (540-576).



Fig. 15. Four panels of a *sarira* reliquary from the stone pagoda of Piro-am, Tonghwa-sa, Taegu, 863. National Museum of Korea, Taegu.



Fig. 16. Line Drawing of the panel with Vairocana. Detail of fig. 8.



Fig. 17. Yönbok-sa bell, 1346. Kaesöng, North Korea,.



Fig. 17-a. Detail of Fig. 17.



Fig. 18. A stone statue of Vairocana seated on a pedestal, mid-Koryŏ dynasty.

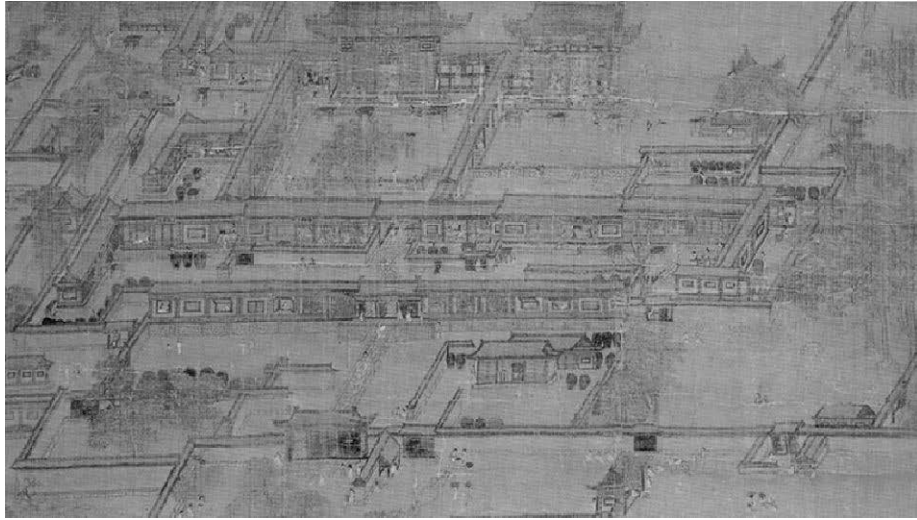


Fig. 19. *Worship of Buddha in the Palace*, mid-16th century. Ho-Am Art Museum.

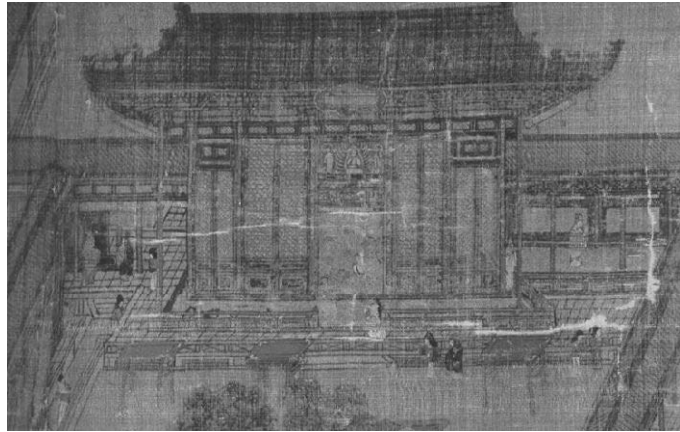


Fig.19-a. Detail of Fig. 19.



Fig. 20. Five Buddhas with attending Bodhisattvas in Taejōkgwang-jōn, Kūmsan-sa,



Fig. 21. Diagram of Fig. 12.



Fig. 22. Wŏn'gak-sa site ten-storey stone pagoda, 1467. Pagoda Park, Seoul.



Fig. 23. Kyŏngch'ŏn-sa site ten-storey stone pagoda, 1348. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 24. An Inscribed panel with the title of "Samsebul-hoe."



Fig. 25. Buddha Assemblies on the first storey of Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda (South-West-North-East from the left)



Fig. 26. Buddha Assemblies on the second storey of Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda (South-West-North-East from the left)



Fig. 27. Buddha Assemblies on the third storey of Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda (South-West-North-East from the left)



Fig. 28. *Mañjuśrī as a boy*, 1466. Sangwŏn-sa

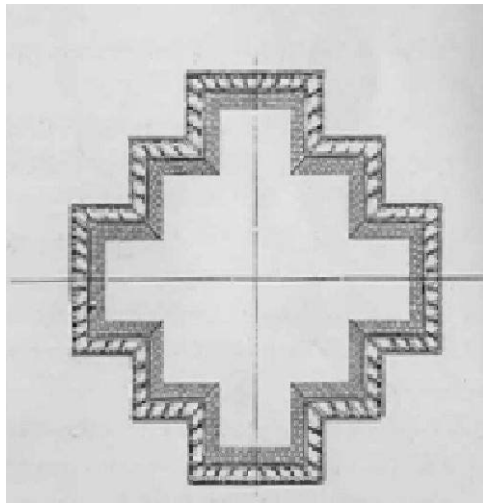


Fig. 29. Ground plan of the Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda foundation.



Fig. 30. Foundation of Wŏn'gak-sa pagoda.

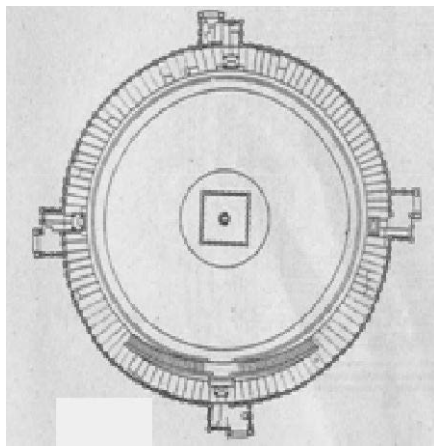


Fig. 31. Ground plan of the Great Stūpa (Stūpa I) with projections into the four directions.



Fig. 32. A group of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and a monk recovered from Sujong-sa stone pagoda, 1493. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 33. *Śākyamuni triad*, 1565. Kōzen-ji.



Fig. 34. *Bhaiṣajyaguru Triad*, 1565. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

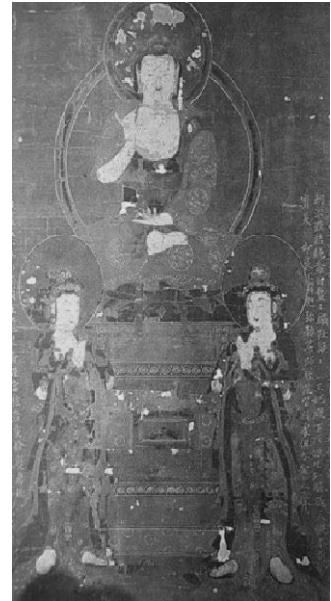


Fig. 35. *Bhaiṣajyaguru Triad*, 1565. Hojū-in.



Fig. 36. *Śākyamuni triad*, 1565. Mary & Jackson Burke collection.



Fig. 37. *Bhaiṣajyaguru triad*, 1565. Ryujō-in.



Fig. 38. *Bhaiṣajyaguru triad*, 1565. Tokugawa Art Museum.



Fig. 39. *Assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru*, 1561 .
Entsū-ji.



Fig. 40. *Amitābha Triad*, 13-14 century,
Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 41. *Śākyamuni preaching at the Vulture Peak*
1569. Hōkō-ji.



Fig. 42. *Assembly of Four Directional Buddhas*,
1562. National Museum of Art, Seoul.

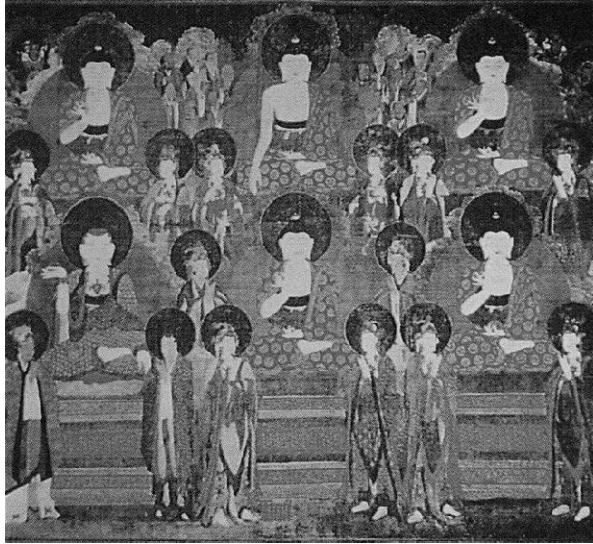


Fig. 43. *Assembly of Six Buddhas*, 1488-1505. Seirai-ji.



Fig. 44. *Assembly of Bhaiṣajyaguru*, mid-16th century. Museum of Fine Art, Boston.



Fig. 45. *Kṣitigarbha with Ten Kings of Hell*, 1562. Kōmyō-ji.

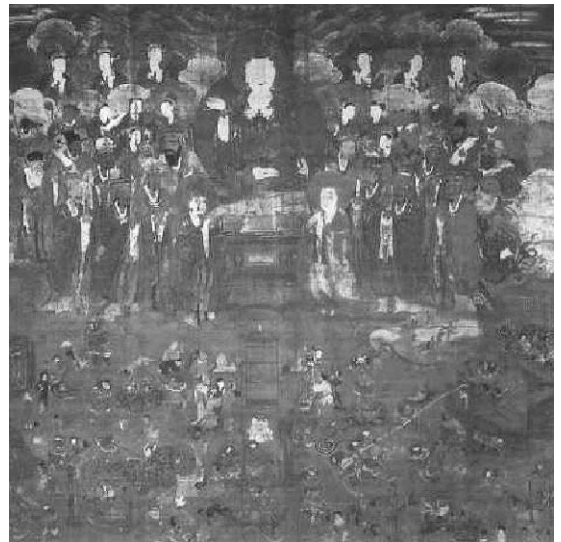


Fig. 46. *Illustration of Kṣitigarbha Sūtra*, 1575-1577. Chion-in.



Fig. 47. *Assembly of Five Buddhas, Jūrin-ji*



Fig. 47-a. Detail of Fig. 47.



Fig. 47-b. Detail of Fig. 47.



Fig. 47-c. Detail of Fig. 47.



Fig. 48. Three altar paintings of Chikchi-sa *Samsebul* (Śākyamuni, Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru), 1744. Chikchi-sa.



Fig. 49. Suin et al. Chungnim-sa *kwaebul*, 1622. Chungnim-sa.



Fig. 50. Pöphyöng et al., *Chiljang-sa Kwaebul*, 1628. Ch'iljang-sa.



Fig. 51. A group of Buddhist figures from the eaves of the first storey of Sujong-sa pagoda, 1628. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.



Fig. 52. A group of Buddhist figures from middle section of the foundation of Sujong-sa pagoda, 1628. National Museum of Korea, Seoul.

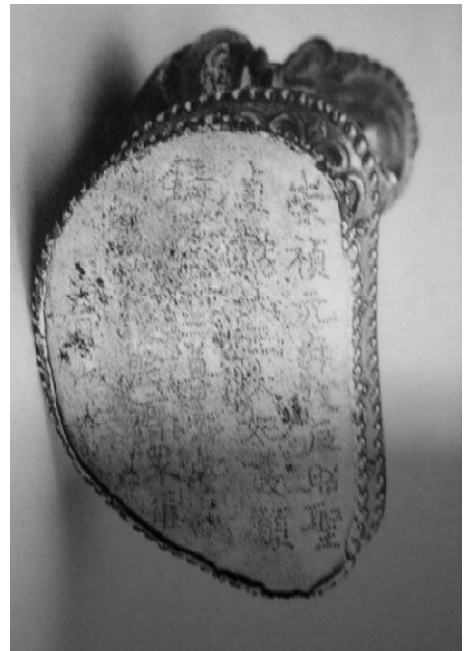


Fig. 53. Inscription on the bottom of the Vairocana Buddha.

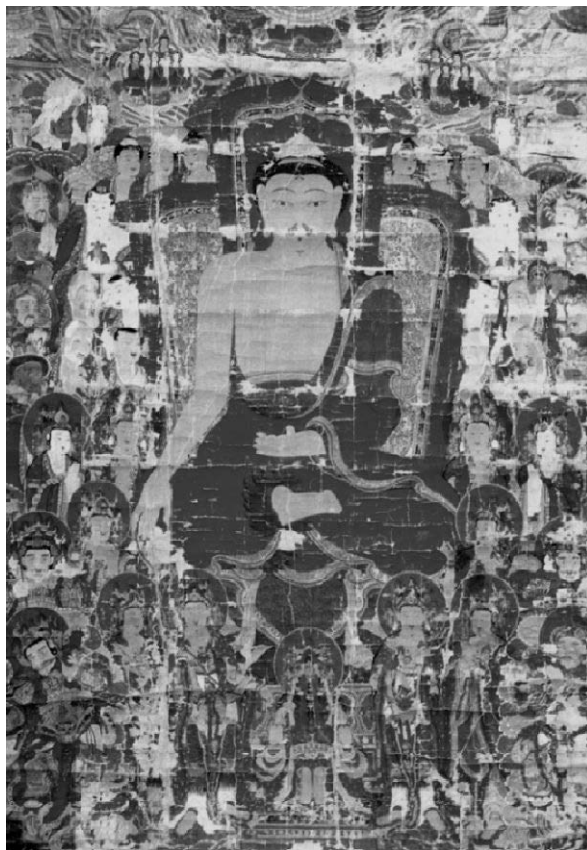


Fig. 54. Sin'gyōm et al., Posal-sa *Kwaebul*, 1649. Posal-sa.



Fig. 55. Pusök-sa *Kwaebul*, 1684.
National Museum of Art, Seoul.

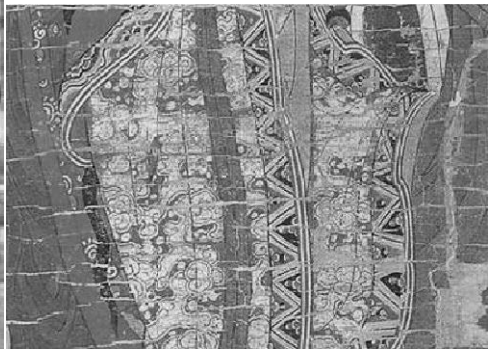


Fig. 55-a. Costume of a bodhisattva,
detail of Fig. 55.

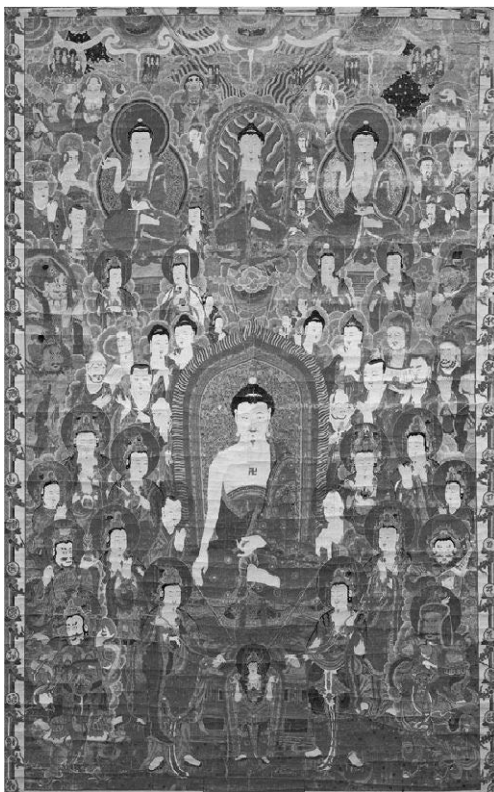


Fig. 56. In'gwön et al., Pusök-sa *Kwaebul*,
1745. Pusök-sa,.



Fig. 56-a. Locana Buddha,
detail of Fig. 56.



Fig. 57. Three altar paintings of *Samsebul* (Amitābha, Vairocana, Bhaiṣajyaguru from the left) behind the *Samsinbul* statues, 1718. Vairocana Hall, Kirim-sa.



Fig. 58. Three murals of *Samsebul* behind *Samsebul* statues, 1840. Taeung-pojön, Sön'un-sa.



Fig. 59. Kyōngjam et al., *Kap-sa Kwaebul*, 1650. *Kap-sa*.



Fig. 59-a. Detail of Fig. 59.



Fig. 59-b. Detail of Fig. 59.



Fig. 59-c. Detail of Fig. 59.



Fig. 59-d. Detail of Fig. 59.



Fig. 60. Casket for Kap-sa *Kwaebul* with “the Record of Kap-sa *Kwaebul*”



Fig. 61. *Śākyamuni preaching at the Vulture Peak*, 1734. T’ongdo-sa.



Fig. 61-a. Detail of Fig. 61.



Fig. 62. Ch'ŏlhak et al.,
Changgok-sa *Kwaebul*
(*Yŏngsan taehoe kwaebult'aeng*),
1673. Changgok-sa.



Fig. 63. Nūnghak et al., Magok-sa *Kwaebul*,
1687. Magok-sa.



- 1 彌勒尊佛
- 2 盧舍那佛
- 3 毗盧遮那佛
- 4 多寶如來
- 5 釋迦文佛
- 6 藥師如來
- 7 阿彌陀如來
- 8 大妙相菩薩
- 9 法琳菩薩
- 10 文殊菩薩
- 11 普賢菩薩
- 12 觀音菩薩
- 13 大勢至菩薩
- 14 迦葉尊者
- 15 阿難尊者
- 16 木蓮尊者
- 17 羅枯羅尊者
- 18 若矩羅尊者
- 19 半陀迦尊者
- 20 蘇頌羅尊者
- 21 阿伐多尊者
- 22 迦理羅尊者
- 23 資頌盧尊者
- 24 上方大梵天王
- 25 帝釋天王
- 26 多聞天王
- 27 東方持國天王
- 28 增長天王
- 29 廣目天王
- 30 諸大龍王
- 31 阿舍世王
- 32 龍女獻如來
- 33 韋提希子
- 34 普香天子
- 35 普光天子
- 36 日月天子
- 37 獻珠天女
- 38 上帝天童
- 39 天帝天童

Fig. 64. Diagram of Changgok-sa Kwaebul.



Fig. 65. West Wall of Cave no. 194 at Dunhuang.



Fig. 65-a. Pophwarim, posal, detail of Fig. 65.



Fig. 65-b. Taemyosang posal, detail of Fig. 65.



Fig. 66. *Maitreya Triad*, 1627. Hall of Maitreya, Kūmsan-sa,.



Fig. 67. Ŭigyŏm, et al., Kaeam-sa *Kwaebul*, 1749. Kaeam-sa



Fig. 67-a. Locana Buddha, detail of Fig. 67.



Fig. 67-b. Vairocana Buddha, detail of Fig. 67.



Fig. 68. Sŭngjang et al.,
Yŏngsan-hoe kwaebul,
1710.Ch'iljang-sa.



Fig. 69. Ŭigyŏm, *Underdrawing of Kaeam-sa kwaebul*



Fig. 70. Ŭigyom et al, *Unhŭng-sa Kwaebul*, 1730.
Unhŭng-sa.



Fig. 71. Ch'önsin et al., Naeso-sa *Kwaebul*, 1700. Naeso-sa.

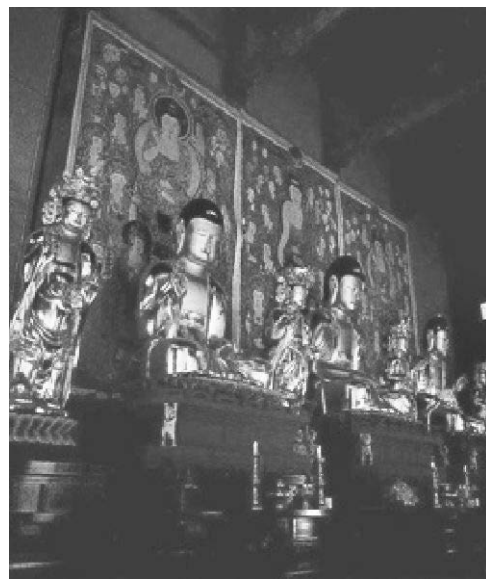


Fig. 72. *Śākyamuni triad* (with Amitābha and Prabhūtaratna), 1702. Kakhwang-jön, Hwaȫm-sa.

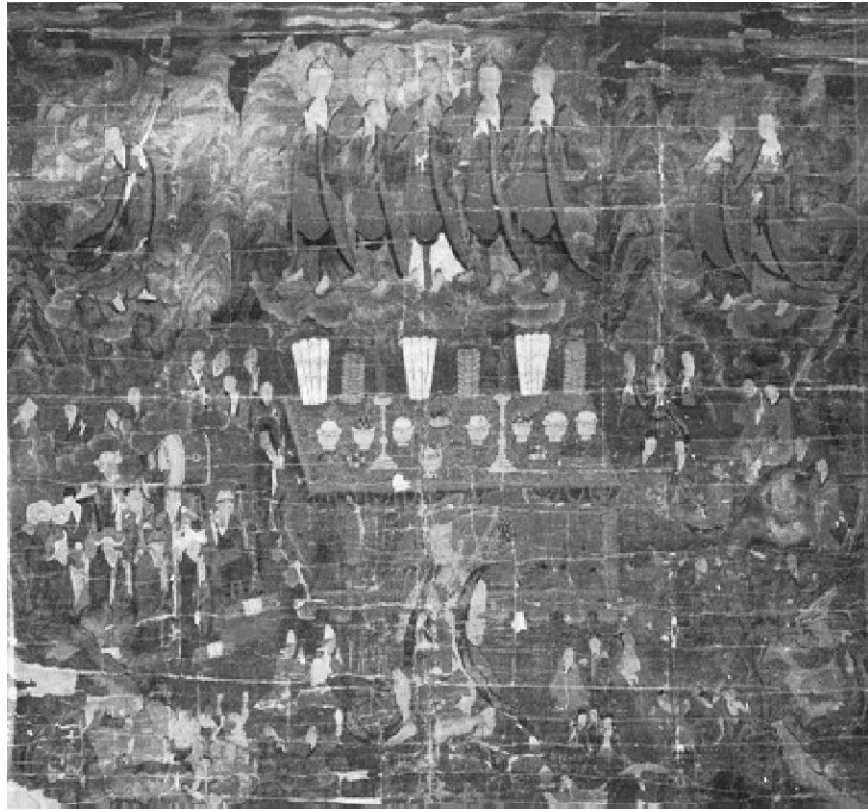


Fig. 73. *Kamno-t'aeng* in Yōngwōn-sa, 1759.



Fig. 74. Scene of Forty-ninth day Ritual at *yōngdan*, Taeung-jōn, Pongūn-sa.



Fig. 75. Mudrās and mantras of Seven Tathāgatas in *Shishi yi*.



Fig. 76. Kamno-t'aeng, 20th century, Onyang Folk Art Museum

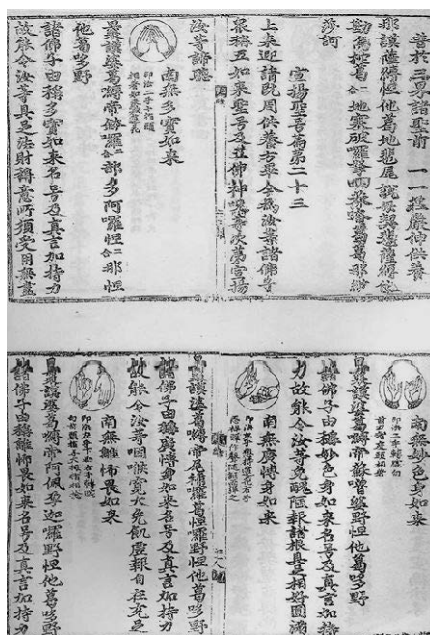


Fig. 77. Mudrās and mantras of Five Tathāgatas in “sōnyang sōngho” of *Suryuk much'a pyōngdŭng chaeüi ch'waryo*.



Fig. 81. Banners of the Five Tathāgatas: Prabhūtaratna, Surūpakāya, Vipulakāya, Abhayañkara, Amṛtarāja, the second half of Chosŏn dynasty. T'ongdo-sa.



Fig. 82. Banner Paintings of Seven Tathāgatas: Abhayañkara, Amitābha, Amṛtarāja, Ratnasam̐bhava, Prabhūtaratna, Vipulakāya (from the upper left), late Chosŏn dynasty. Namjang-sa.



Fig. 83. Banners Seven-Tathāgatas hung at Myōngbu-jōn for *Suryuk-jae*. Chin'wan-sa.

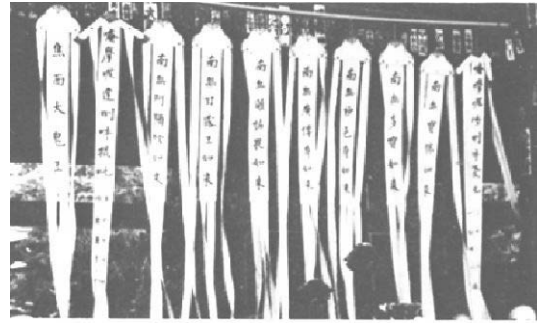


Fig. 84. *Segaki* banners.

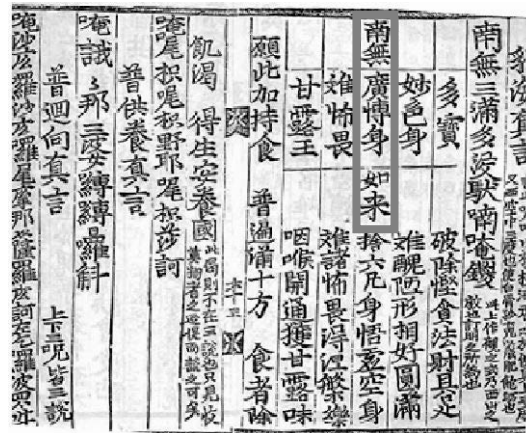


Fig. 85. Names of the Five Tathāgatas in *Chebanmun*.



Fig. 86. Posōk-sa *Kamno-t'aeng* 1649. Posōk-sa.



Fig. 87. Hŭngch'ŏn-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1939.
Hŭngch'ŏn-sa



Fig. 88. Ssanggye-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1728.
Ssanggye-sa.



Fig. 89. Korea University *Kamno-t'aeng*, late 18th century.
Collection of Korea University.



Fig. 89-a. Detail of Fig. 89.

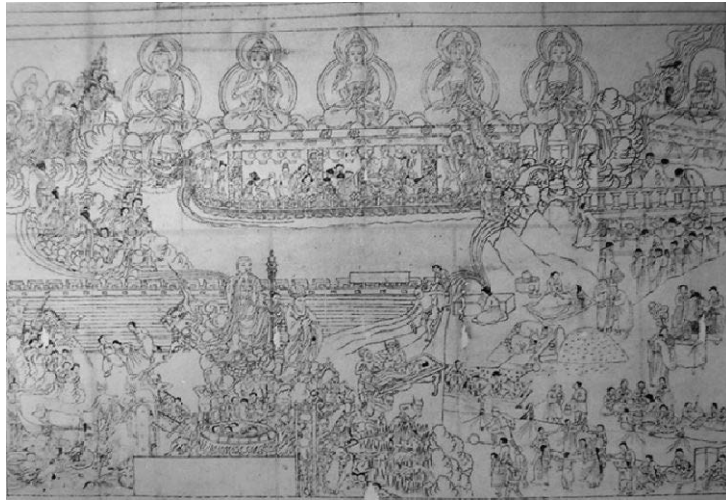


Fig. 90. Ilsöp (1900-1975), *Underdrawing of Kamno-t'aeng*, 20th century.



Fig. 91. Five Directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu, c. 1488. Baoning-si.



Fig. 92. Naewön and Ikch'an, *Thirty-seven venerable deities of the Vajradhātu*, 1845. Taejökkwang-jön, Taehŭng-sa.



Fig. 93. Ŭisun, *Cundī Avalokiteśvara* (left), early 19th century.

Fig. 94. Ŭisun, *Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara* (right), early 19th century.



Fig. 95. Seven Buddhas, 1725. Pulcho-jŏn, Songgwang-sa



Fig. 96. *Trikaya* statues.

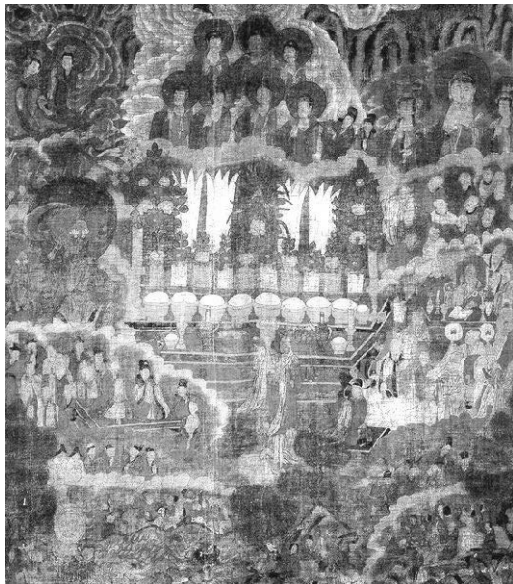


Fig. 97. Kōmyō-ji *Kamno-t'aeng*, 16th century.
Kōmyō-ji.

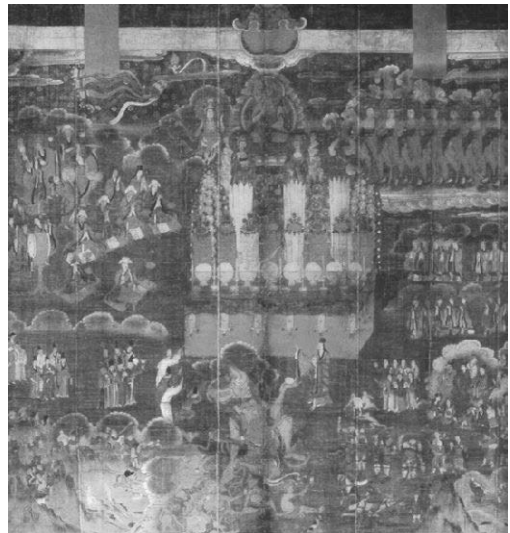


Fig. 98. Yakusen-ji *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1589.
Nara National Museum of Art.

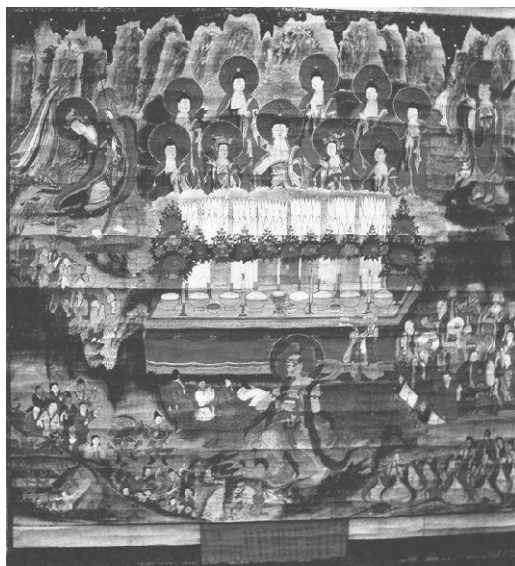


Fig. 99. Seikyō-ji *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1590. Seikyō-ji.

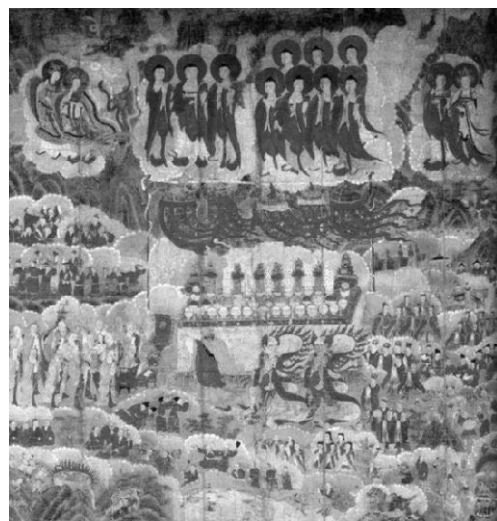


Fig. 100. *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1681. Collection of
Uhak Cultural Foundation

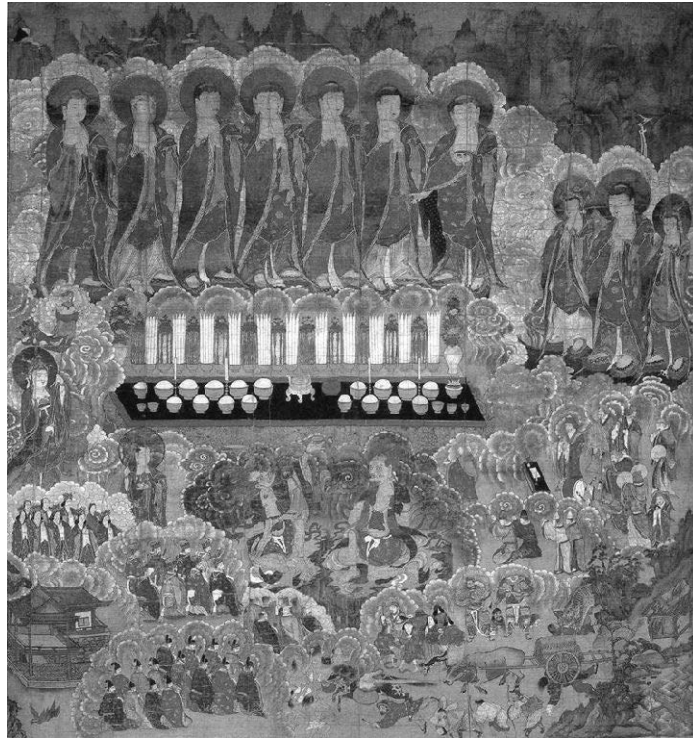


Fig. 101. Haein-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1723. Haein-sa.

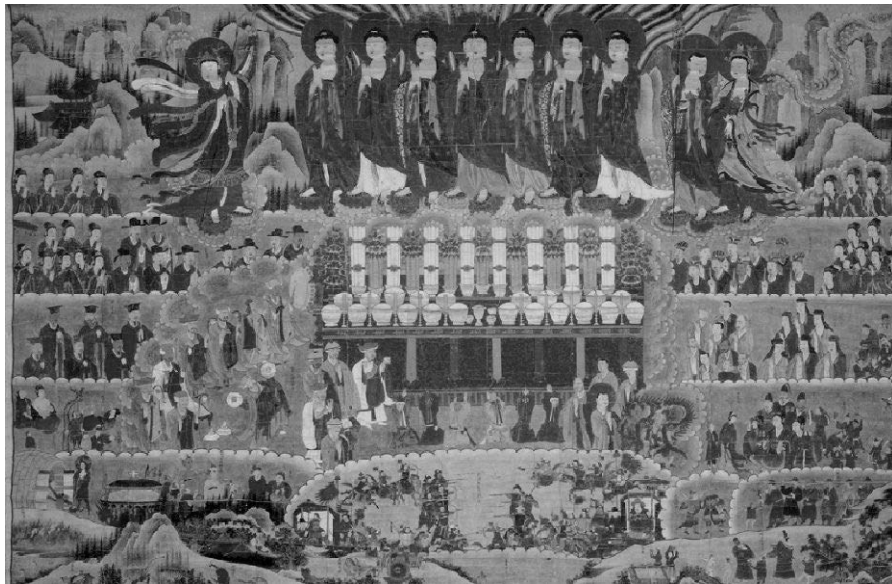


Fig. 102. Namjang-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1701. Namjang-sa.



Fig. 103. Chikchi-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1724. Chikchi-sa.



Fig. 104. Söngju-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1729. Söngju-sa.



Fig. 105. An'guk-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1758. An'guk-sa.



Fig. 106. Pongŭn-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1892. Pongŭn-sa



Fig. 107. A scene of *Yŏngsan-jae* with the banners of *Trikāya*. Pongwŏn-sa.

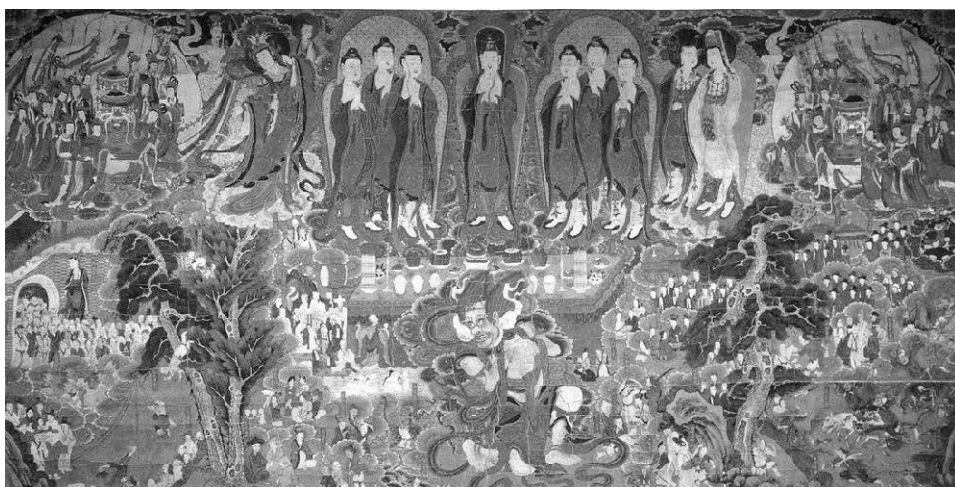


Fig. 108. Yongju-sa *Kamno-t'aeng*, 1790. Yongju-sa.



Fig. 109. Ritual site adorned before Yŏngsan-jae begins. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 110. Ritual site adorned before Yŏngsan-jae begins. Pongwŏn-sa.

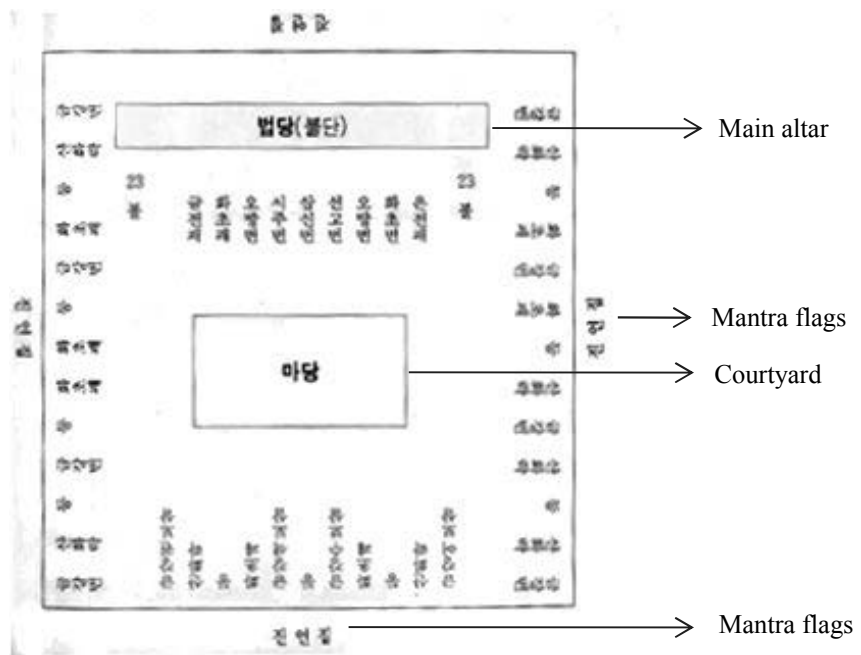


Fig. 111. Direction for setting the ritual site.



Fig. 112. Mantra flags hung on the ropes. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 113. *Hangma jŏn*. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 114. Sūtra flags hung on the rope. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 115. Drawing the basic lines: chalking the wet cord.

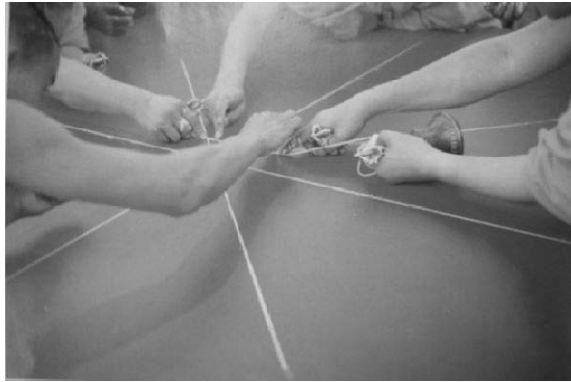


Fig. 115-a.



Fig. 116. Womb World Maṇḍala, 859-880. Tō-ji.

The five colour “boundary path”



Fig. 116-a. The Central Eight Petals, detail of Fig. 116.



Fig. 117. An esoteric ritual altar (Vajradhātu) for Shingon sect. Tō-ji.



Fig. 118. Five-coloured ribbons stretched around the ritual site. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 119. Five-coloured ribbons stretched around the ritual site. Pongwŏn-sa. .



Fig. 120. Monks sprinkling a Kālacakra sand maṇḍala.



Fig. 121. Long Banner of seated Buddhas (detail), mid-10th century. British Museum.

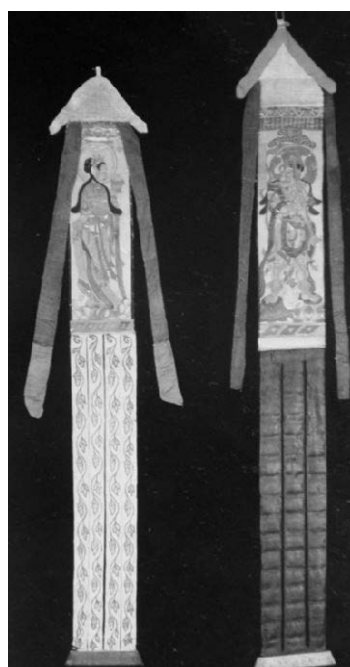


Fig. 122. Banner of bodhisattva (left) and Fig. 123. (right), Banner of Vajrapāṇi, late 9th century, British Museum.



Fig.124. *Obangbul pön*: Bhaiṣajyaguru (East-blue), Ratnaśambhava (South-red), Amitābha (West-white), Āryācalanātha (North-black), Vairocana (Centre-yellow). T'ongdo-sa.



Fig.125. *Siryŏn* carriage. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig.126. Four Bodhisattvas, second half of the Chosŏn dynasty. T'ongdo-sa.



Fig.127. Eight Vajra Guardians, 1736. T'ongdo-sa.



Fig. 128. Ten Vidyā-rājās, 1905. Pōpju-sa.

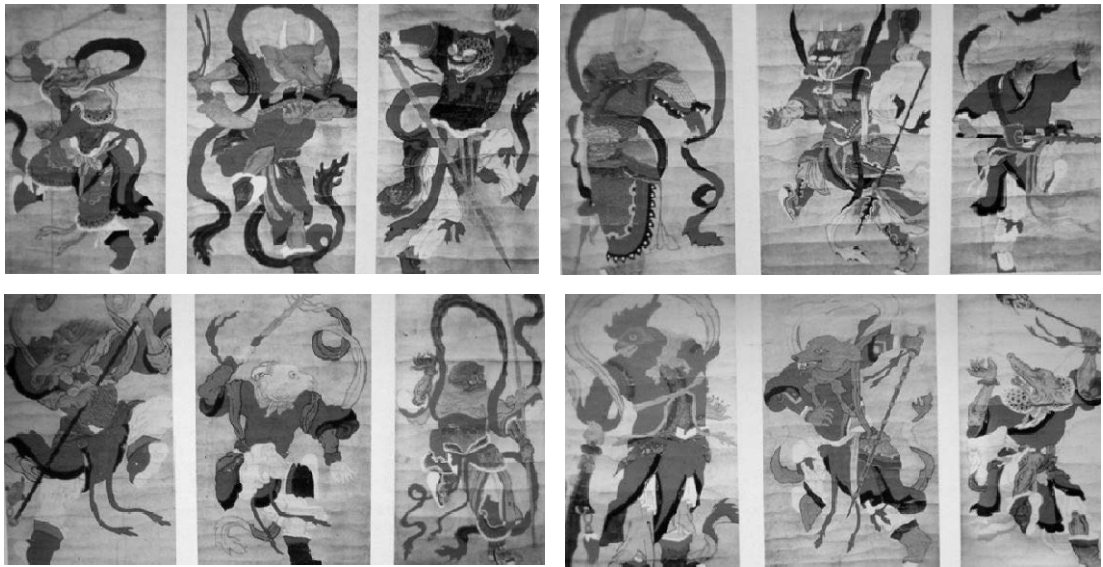


Fig. 129. Twelve Singers of Oriental Zodiac, second half of the Chosŏn dynasty. T'ongdo-sa.



Fig. 130. Four Messengers, second half of the Chosŏn dynasty. T'ongdo-sa.

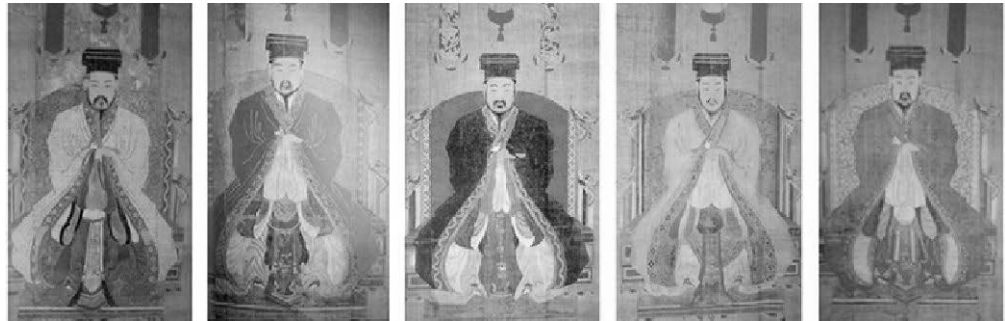


Fig. 131. *Obang chesin* (Five Directional Emperors), second half of the Chosŏn dynasty. T'ongdo-sa.



Fig. 132. *Sinjung t'aenghwa* depicting 104 *sinjung*, 1897. Pŏpju-sa.



Fig. 133. Monks performing *para* (ritual cymbals) dance to the ritual music. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 134. Monks chanting with music. Pongwŏn-sa.



Fig. 135. A monk performing drum dance with music and a group of monks chanting and playing gong. Pongwŏn-sa.

