

<ABSTRACT>

Iconographic and Stylistic Development of Vairocana in Bodhi-ri Mudr in Korean Buddhist Sculpture.

Kang, Woo - bang*

It is well known that there are two central Vairocanas in Esoteric Buddhism : one is the bodhisattva-form in dhy na mudr of Garbhadh tu 胎藏界定印毘盧遮那, the other is the bodhisattva-form in bodhi-ri mudr of Vajradh tu 金剛界智拳印毘盧遮那. The two together form Dharmadh iu 法界. The oldest extant example of the representation of Dharmadh tus is the mandala painting owned by the Jingoji Temple in Kyoto 京都神護寺 dated ca. 831. A. D. and the oldest extant example of the three dimensional representation is a group of five Buddhas owned by the Anshoji Temple(now on display in Kyoto National Museum) 京都安祥寺 dated around the second half of the 9th century. The central Buddha of five Buddhas of Vajradh tu 金剛界五佛 is the bodhisattva-form Vairocana in bodhi-ri mudr .

However, recently in Korea, the bodhisattva-form Vairocana in bodhi-ri mudr painted on the frontpiece of Avatamsaka s tra 新羅 華嚴經變相圖 dated 754 A. D. and a sculpture of Buddha-form Vairocana in bodhi-ri mudr from the S knamsa Temple site 石南寺址(now in Naew nsa Temple 內院寺 near Chinju city 普州市) dated 766 A. D. were discovered. As these two are now the oldest extant examples in the Far East, it is possible to attempt a new interpretation of the objects found in Korea in the context of East Asian art history.

The enlightened posture of Buddha image in the bh mispar a mudr 降魔觸地印成道像 may signify the concept of Vairocana, which means the universal truth itself. When kyamuni attained enlightenment, he got the absolute truth, or he became a wise man. Then, he became an absolute existence and, at the same time, he found that this world itself became paradise, or purified land, or Dharmadh tu. Furthermore, he became the truth itself. Thus, the enlightenment of kyamuni is a crucial moment not only in the history of Buddhist thought but also in the history of Buddhist art.

The concept of Vairocana is the core of Hwa m philosophy 華嚴思想. It means "the sun shining everywhere", that is, the omnipresence of truth. Although he is the hero of Avatamsaka s tra, he is always silent. The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra 普賢菩薩 preaches on his behalf. However, there arose a need to turn the important concept of Vairocana into an object of worship, and finally the new iconography was developed in Korea : that is, the Buddha image in the bodhi-ri mudr .

This kind of embodiment of originally formless Vairocana was achieved in China. Ko-

rea, and Japan respectively. Chinese examples are unknown before Sung. Koreans must have followed first Chinese iconography of the bodhisattva-form Vairocana. But Koreans transformed it and created new unique iconography : the Buddha-form Vairocana in the boshi- ri mudr 如來形智拳印 毘盧遮那三尊佛. This iconography had been popular in the development of Hwafm philosophy and Zen Buddhism which have been the main stream of Korean Buddhism throughout Korean history. Hwafm philosophy is the core of Zen Buddhism.

Since the 8th century many Korean monks went to T'ang China and eagerly learned Hwa m philosophy and Zen Buddhism, while Japanese monks tried to inherit Chinese orthodox Esoteric Buddhism T'ien -t'ai 天台 since the 9th century. As a result, the iconography of Buddha-form Ƨairocana as the main Buddha of Hwa m-Zen Buddhism was popular in Korea and the bodhisattva -form Vairocanas as the central Buddhas of Esoteric Buddhism were Popular in Japan, Thus, the Korean iconography of Vairocana was different from that in Japan due to the different religious background.

Particularly, since the 8th century the two kinds of iconography of the Enlightened the old one in the bh mispar a mud and the new one in the bodhi- ri mud -have been most popular throughout Korean history. It means that the popularity of the iconographies show the Korean eternal will to return to enlightenment. Finally Koreans created unique iconographic schemes . the Iconography of Enlightened one- Ƨyamuni -in bh mispar a mudr could embrace all the Buddhas such as Amitabha and Bhai ayyaguru, and another Enlightened one, the Vairocana in the bodhi- ri mudr also, could embrace all the Buddhas and even bodhisattvas, such as Eleven -headed Avalokite vara and Ksitigarbha bodhisattvas.

In the Unified Silla period, the type of statue without forming a group or without flanking figures was popular and, later, Vairocana triad flanked by Samantabhadra and Ma ju r was established. In the Kory period, the Trik ya Buddhas 三身佛, that is, the combination of Dharmak ya(Vairocana) 法身, SambhogakEya 報身, and Nirm nak ya (Ƨyamuni) 應身, which might be the embodiment of metaphysical trik ya concept of 記on Buddhism, began to be popular, and many examples of Trik ya Buddhas from the Chos n period remain, During the Kory period, without exception on the frontplece of Avatamsaka s tra was painted the iconography of Vairocana in the bosh ri mud without exception.

A unique development of iconography echoes the unique development of Buddhist doctrine.

* Kang, Woo-bang is a Curator, Dept. of Fine Arts, National Museum of Korea.