

Consecrating the Buddha: The Formation of the *Bokjang* Ritual during the Goryeo Period

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Introduction

In the Korean Buddhist tradition, “*bokjang*” (腹藏) refers to the ritual applied for consecrating Buddhist images in order to transform a crafted image into an object of worship.¹ The extant textual and visual evidence suggests that the consecration of Buddhist images as we know it today had been established by at least the mid-12th century during the Goryeo dynasty (高麗, 918–1392) (Jeong Eunwoo 2007, 55–56). A wealth of studies has noted that the distinctive composition of a *bokjang* deposit (腹藏物, *bokjangmul*) is based upon the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* (造像經, *Josang gyeong*), a ritual manual of Korean origin codified during the Joseon period (朝鮮, 1392–1910) (Taegyeong 2006; Lee Seonyong 2013). Although surviving editions and manuscript copies of the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* all postdate the 16th century, a prototype appears to have been formulated and circulated in the preceding Goryeo era. Taking a textual authority codified during Joseon as evidence for a Goryeo practice is clearly anachronous, as scholars have rightly pointed out. However, an analytical comparison of Goryeo *bokjang* deposits with this textual corpus

reveals a number of notable correspondences. The objects mentioned in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* and commonly found in Joseon *bokjang* deposits were already in use during the Goryeo period. Of particular interest are the five textile wrappings enshrined within the main container of a *bokjang* deposit since they correlate closely with the five treasure bottles (五寶瓶, *obobyeong*) described in the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching of Visualization Methods Which Are Auspicious, Universal, Secret, and Superlative* (妙吉祥平等祕密最上觀門大教王經, Ch. *Miaojixiang pingdeng mimi zuishang guanmen dajiaowang jing*; T 1192), one of the major texts invariably cited in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* and abbreviated here as the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*. However, the five treasure bottles do not appear there in a context of image consecration, but regarding the initiation of a human practitioner known as an abhiseka using the five bottles (五瓶灌頂, *obyeong gwanjeong*). This correspondence appears even more intriguing given that the sutra, translated sometime between 1062 and 1066 during the Liao dynasty (遼, 926–1125), is not included in either the Khitan Canon or the second edition of the Korean Canon.

This study examines this fascinating correspondence in light of the Buddhist cultural exchanges between the Liao

and Goryeo dynasties. It first examines when the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*, traces of which are rare outside the *bokjang* corpus in the Korean Buddhist tradition, might have been transmitted to Goryeo. It then considers what the *abhiseka* with the five bottles originally meant in the sutra and in the ritual repertoire of late Indian esoteric Buddhism. Next, it examines how Goryeo-era Buddhists appropriated this ritual for the consecration of Buddhist images. Admittedly, this line of research is unable to reveal the full picture of *bokjang*, a highly complex ritual consisting of myriad steps and replete with symbolic meanings, given that the sutra in question is only one of the various Buddhist sutras and writings cited in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images*. Accordingly, it focuses on the correlation between the five treasure bottles retrieved from Goryeo *bokjang* deposits and those explicated in the sutra. By doing so, it reconsiders the formation of the *bokjang* ritual within the historical trajectory of Buddhist thought and practices prevalent in the 11th and 12th centuries, a period in which new Buddhist elements, notably esoteric influences, were introduced to Goryeo from India via Liao and reformulated into uniquely Korean expressions.

the Naksan Avalokitesvara, the practice of enshrining objects inside images must have been performed by Goryeo Buddhists prior to the early 13th century. “Two heart-circle mirrors, five kinds of incense, five medicines, colored threads, silk pouches, and more” (心圓鏡二事及五香五藥色絲錦囊等) were reported by Yi to have been prepared in order to fill the belly and match what had been enshrined in the past. This list demonstrates the concept of pentad grouping, one of the prominent features of Korean *bokjang* deposits, which, notably, has not been found to date in objects retrieved from contemporaneous Chinese Buddhist statues (Lee Seunghye 2015). The absence of mock organs from Yi Gyubo’s list, perhaps the most distinctive feature among the objects yielded by Chinese Buddhist images, merits further attention. This lack is corroborated by the surviving deposits yielded by Goryeo Buddhist images (Lee Seunghye 2015, 40–47). The silk pouches mentioned in the list above appear to correlate with the five treasure bottles made of textiles and containing various pentads of objects that we will examine shortly.

The “Record of the Marvels of the Relics [Enshrined within] Sakyamuni, the Main Buddha of the Golden Hall of Gukcheongsa Temple” (國淸寺金堂主佛釋迦如來舍利靈異記, Gukcheongsa geumdang jubul Seokga yeorae sari yeongyi gi), composed by Min Ji (閔漬, 1248–1326) and included in fascicle 68 of the *Dongmunseon* (東文選, Anthology of Korean literature), merits particular attention for its use of the term “eight-petaled container” (八葉筒, *paryeop tong*). According to this record, in 1313, the patrons of the Sakyamuni triad at Gukcheongsa Temple wished to enshrine the various objects necessary for making a *bokjang*, among which only relics were difficult to obtain. Therefore, one of the devotees spread black silk in front of a painting of White-robed Avalokitesvara to which he had been offering daily worship. He burned incense and paid respects three times, and then a relic grain appeared. The number of relic grains increased as several people gathered to watch in wonder. Min Ji related that the relics so manifested were first encased inside eight-petaled containers and then enshrined within the Buddha triad.

When cross-checked with the material evidence, neither the text by Yi Gyubo nor that by Min Ji provides a complete list of enshrined items, which also included woodblock prints of dharanis and seed-syllable mandalas, Buddhist texts, clothes previously worn by their donors, and more. This indicates that both Yi Gyubo and Min Ji selectively recorded only those items deemed most important. Taken together, the two accounts indicate that a *bokjang* deposit was composed of heart-circle

Textual and Material Evidence for the Goryeo *Bokjang* Practice

Two textual accounts are important for understanding the issues of how *bokjang* was regarded and what types of objects were selected during the formative phase of its practice in Korea.² The earliest mention of the term *bokjang* appears in the “Eulogy and Record of the Repairs of the *Bokjang* of the Avalokitesvara at Naksan” (洛山觀音腹藏修補文竝頌, *Naksan Gwaneum bokjang subomun byeong song*) composed by Yi Gyubo (李奎報, 1168–1241) and contained in fascicle 25 of the *Collection of Yi Gyubo’s Writings* (東國李相國集, Dongguk Yi sangguk jip). This eulogy was composed to commemorate the repairs to the deposit placed inside a famous sculpted image of Avalokitesvara housed at Naksansa Temple (洛山寺) after their loss during the Mongol Invasions of Goryeo, most likely in 1235. Yi Gyubo lamented that although the overall form of the Water-moon Avalokitesvara image remained, the “treasures concealed in the belly” (腹中之珍藏) had been removed. Given that the eulogy was written for the rededication of the new *bokjang* deposit for



Fig. 1. Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple in Seosan, Chungcheongnam-do Province (current whereabouts unknown). Goryeo, 1346. Gilt bronze. H. 69.0 cm

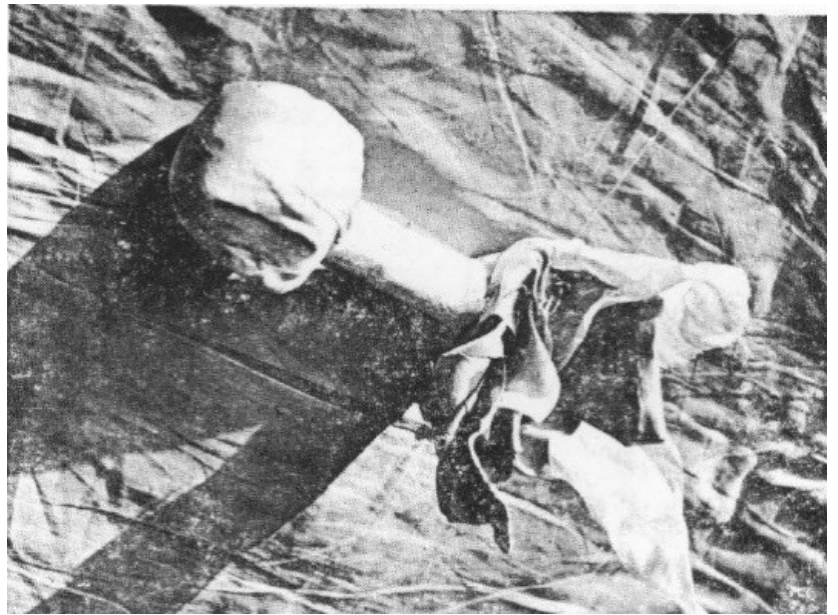


Fig. 2. Eight-petaled container from the Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple at the time of its discovery (before unpacking)



Fig. 3. Throat-bell. Goryeo, 1346. Bronze. H. 7.0 cm. Discovered inside the Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple in 1973. Sudeoksa Museum



Fig. 4. Eight-petaled container. Goryeo, 1346. Wood. H. 7.0 cm. Discovered inside the Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple in 1973. Sudeoksa Museum

mirrors, five kinds of incense, five medicines, colored threads, silk pouches, relics, and an eight-petaled container in which most of aforementioned objects were enshrined. These items are commonly found in *bokjang* deposits from the latter half of the Goryeo dynasty and correspond closely to those prescribed in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images*.³ Among the extant Goryeo examples, only two *bokjang* deposits have been found intact without any trace of repair or theft: one from the Amitabha Buddha image of Munsusa Temple (文殊寺) in Seosan (Figs. 1, 2) and the other from a Buddha image at Anjeongsa Temple (安靜寺) in Tongyeong (Lee Yongyun 2012, 20–21; Jeong Eunwoo and Shin Eunje 2017, 259–261). The *bokjang* deposit from the Munsusa Temple statue, which was

examined by a team of experts in 1973 and fully reported on in 1975, was removed from the statue and preserved at the Sudeoksa Museum in Yesan. Let us take the the deposit of Munsusa Temple as an example to illustrate the contents and configuration of *bokjang* deposits from the late Goryeo period (Kang Ingu 1975, 1–18; Sudeoksa Museum 2004, 13–67; Shin Soyeon 2015, 90–97).

The entire deposit was inserted through a hole in the bottom of the statue, which was then sealed with a wooden plug. The wooden seal was affixed with iron nails, covered with several layers of hemp cloth, and finished with lacquer. A bronze bell called a throat-bell (喉鈴, *huryeong*) was wrapped in four pieces of dharani prints and set at the neck level of the statue (Fig. 3). A lidded wooden container holding a wide variety of objects was placed at the chest level (Fig. 4). At the time of discovery, this container was wrapped in five layers of cloth, with a yellow cloth wrapper (黃幅子, *hwangpokja*) outermost. The entire package holding the wooden container was tied with a folded band of paper (Fig. 2). The paper turned out to be another donor inscription recording the names of a group of patrons (Fig. 5). Line drawings on the surface of the wooden container transformed it into a representation of an eight-petaled lotus flower in keeping with its appellation “eight-petaled container” as recorded in a catalogue of objects enshrined together within the statue. The eight lotus petals are drawn with cinnabar on the exterior of the container’s body, and lotus seeds are painted on top of the lid (Fig. 4). The inner side of the lid is inscribed with five Siddham characters identified as the true-mind seed

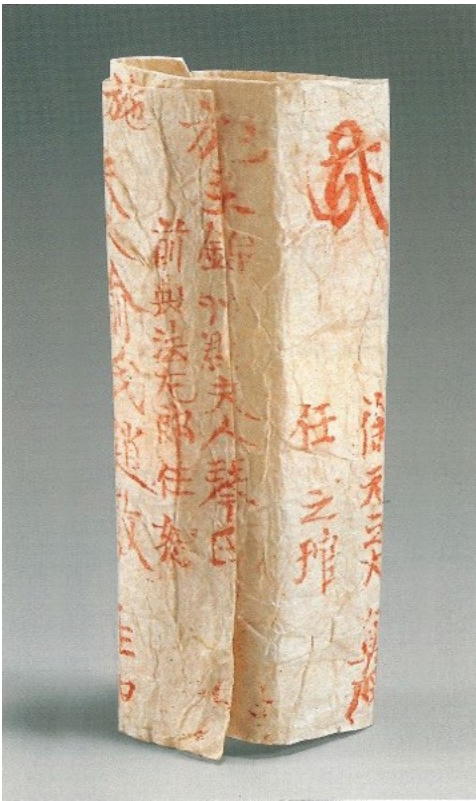


Fig. 5. Sealing band. Goryeo, 1346. Cinnabar on paper. D. 3.5 cm, H. 9.6 cm. Discovered inside the *Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple* in 1973. Sudeoksa Museum



Fig. 6. Imagery of an eight-petaled lotus flower painted on the body of the wooden container (left) and inscription of "true-mind seed syllables" on the inner side of a lid from the *Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple* (right). Sudeoksa Museum



Fig. 7. Texts retrieved from the *Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple* at the time of their discovery

syllables (真心種字, *jinsim jongja*) in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* (Fig. 6). Documents and copies of Buddhist sutras were inserted at the upper level of the belly, including three pieces of dedicatory prayers and a catalogue of objects (Fig. 7). Finally, fragments of textiles wrapped in two pieces of paper were inserted into the lower level of the belly. Several bunches of paper either left blank or printed with dharani were placed between the individual objects and also between the objects and the inner wall of the statue in order to protect them from damage and abrasion.

The "Catalogue of Objects Inserted in the *Bokjang* of Amitabha" (彌陀腹藏入物色記, *Mita bokjang ip mulsae* ggi; hereafter the Catalogue) merits detailed examination since it provides a complete list of more than thirty discrete objects inserted into the Buddha image (Fig. 8). The objects are listed from right to left across three registers. The listed objects are identified and categorized as follows: (1) the five kinds of incense (五香, *ohyang*); (2) the five medicines (五藥, *oyak*); (3) the five precious substances (五寶, *obo*); (4) the five yellow substances (五黃, *ohwang*); (5) the eight-petaled container and its contents, including silks of five colors (五色帛, *osaek baek*), threads in five colors each with a presumed length of five meters (五色糸 十五

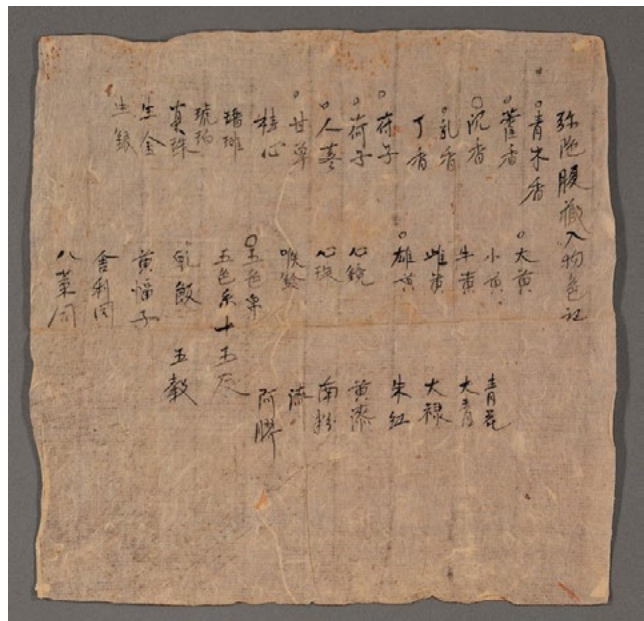


Fig. 8. "Catalogue of the Objects Inserted in the *Bokjang* of Amitabha." Goryeo, 1346. Ink on paper. 35.1 x 35.9 cm. Discovered inside the *Amitabha Buddha of Munsusa Temple* in 1973. Sudeoksa Museum

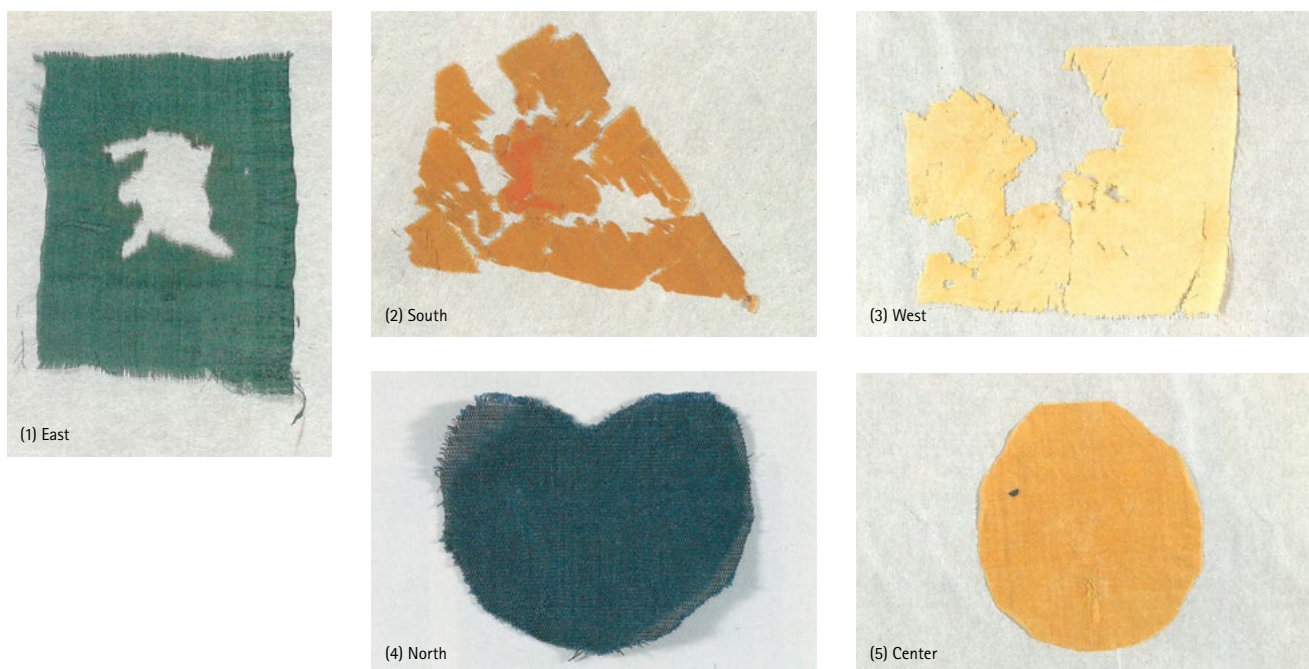


Fig. 9. Five treasure bottles (unfolded), Goryeo, 1346. Silk. Discovered inside the *Amitabha Buddha* of *Munsusa Temple* in 1973

尺, *osaek sa sibo cheok*), a yellow cloth wrapper, and reliquary (舍利同, *sari dong*), but not including the throat-bell; (6) pigments and other media used for decoration and inscription; and (7) the five different types of grain (五穀, *ogok*).⁴ A comparison of the Catalogue with the actual items found reveals that most of the objects listed were in fact used in the making of the eight-petaled container found at the chest level of the interior of the Buddha image (Figs. 4, 6). Of particular interest are the five silk pouches, referred to as the silks of five colors in group (5) of the Catalogue and corresponding to the five treasure bottles in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* (Fig. 9). Each pouch seems to have contained a share of the substances listed under groups (1), (2), (3), (4), and (7) in the Catalogue (Kang Ingu 1975, 8–9). Besides these objects, the eight-petaled container featured a single relic grain encased in a silver container (corresponding to the reliquary in the list), a glass bead (corresponding to the heart jewel [心珠, *simju*] in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images*), a mirror made of nickel (corresponding to the heart-circle mirror in Yi Gyubo's record), and a handful of dried rice.

A comparison of the Catalogue with the objects found within the eight-petaled container suggests that the items deposited outside it were deemed subsidiary at best. If the eight-

petaled container was meant to serve as the symbolic heart of the Buddha, then the five silk pouches and their contents are essential components of this heart. This core of the *bokjang* deposit—the eight-petaled container and its contents—have only been found in Korean examples to date, suggesting a model unique from earlier and contemporaneous Chinese images with deposits. Past scholarship has noted that the five treasure bottles, the crux of the eight-petaled container, were produced faithfully according to the instructions laid out in fascicle 1 of the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*. However, the five treasure bottles mentioned in the sutra do not appear in the context of enshrining consecrated deposits within Buddhist images, but in fact are found in a different ritual context, namely the abhiseka of an esoteric Buddhist practitioner. The issue is complicated by the fact that the sutra was brought from central India and translated under the Liao. The following section of this study examines the historical context in which this important text was received in the Liao dynasty and transmitted eastward to Goryeo.



Fig. 10. Dharma relic pagoda. Liao, 1049. Gilt wood. H. 28.5 cm. Discovered inside the White Pagoda of Qingzhou, Inner Mongolia, China. Bairin Right Banner Museum



Fig. 11. Dharani pillar. Liao, 1044. Stone. H. 5.26 m. Discovered inside the Chaoyang North Pagoda, Chaoyang, Liaoning Province, China

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Reception of Late Indian Esoteric Buddhism in the Liao and Goryeo Dynasties

The *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* is one of several Buddhist texts translated by the Indian monk Maitribhadra (慈賢, Ch. Cixian; fl. 11th century), who hailed from Magadha in central India and worked in Liao under imperial patronage during the reigns of Emperors Xingzong (興宗, r. 1031–1055) and Daozong (道宗, r. 1055–1011) (Ren Jie 1985, 34–37). Although little is known about Maitribhadra's life or thoughts, his translations of ten Buddhist texts preserved in the Fangshan Stone Canon (房山石經, Ch. Fangshan Shijing) reveal much about both the Indian Buddhism of the time and the Buddhism developed in Liao.

These ten texts can be categorized into two groups: 1) dharani sutras; and 2) an esoteric Buddhist sutra and esoteric ritual manuals engraved on stone slabs at Yunjusi Temple (雲居寺) around 1146 under the Jin dynasty (金, 1115–1234) (Chen Yanzhu 1995, 392–503). The first group indicates that

Maitribhadra selected texts to translate in response to the religious needs of his imperial patrons and Liao Buddhists in general. When Maitribhadra arrived in Liao, the practice of enshrining dharma relics (法舍利, Ch. *fa sheli*) within pagoda crypts as the textual equivalent of bodily relics of the Buddha was already widespread. For example, Liao Buddhists placed inscriptions of dharanis inside miniature pagodas and then enshrined them within pagoda crypts (Fig. 10). Similarly, they enshrined polygonal stone pillars (經幢, Ch. *jingchuang*) or metal plates engraved with dharanis and the *Verse of Dependent Arising* (緣起法頌, Ch. *Yuanqifa song*) within pagoda crypts (Shen 2001). Notably, Liao Buddhists engraved combinations of multiple short dharanis onto the surface of stone pillars or metal plates. This tendency had already appeared by the late Tang dynasty (唐, 618–907) with a number of dharanis promising postmortem benefits being engraved together on stone pillars. One crucial difference is that during the Liao dynasty these stone pillars were destined for pagoda crypts, unlike their Tang precedents that were mainly erected in temple courtyards or graveyards. The monumental stone pillar enshrined at the center of the base of Chaoyang North Pagoda (朝陽北塔, Ch. Chaoyang Beita) in Liaoning Province in China, for example, demonstrates the high correlation between Maitribhadra's selection of texts to translate and the cult of dharma relics in Liao (Fig. 11). The second and third registers of this stone pillar erected in 1044 respectively bear inscriptions of the *Mahapratishara dharani* (大隨求陀羅尼, Ch. *Da suiqiu tuoluoni*) and the *Vajravidaarana dharani* (佛說金剛大摧碎延壽陀羅尼, Ch. *Foshuo jingang da cuisui yanshou tuoluoni*) as translated by Maitribhadra (Fujiwara Takato 2011, 205–206). This clearly indicates how Maitribhadra's translations were put into practice.

The second group of translations represents the late period of the transmission of esoteric Buddhist texts into China (Sørensen 2011, 457–458). It includes the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*, the *Manual Outlining Homa of the Sutra of the King of the Great Teaching of the Visualization Methods Which Are Auspicious and Universal* (妙吉祥平等觀門大教王經略出護摩儀, Ch. *Miaojixiang pingdeng guanmen dajiaowang jing luechu homa yi*; T 1194), the *Ritual Manual for Secret Self-Visualization and Attainment of Buddhahood through the Yoga Which Is Auspicious and Universal* (妙吉祥平等瑜伽祕密觀身成佛儀軌, Ch. *Miaojixiang pingdeng yuqie mimi guanshen chengfo yigui*; T 1193), and the *Ritual of Cultivating Manicakra Lotus Heart Tathagata's Method of Visualization* (佛說如意輪蓮花心如來修行觀門儀, Ch. *Foshuo Ruyilun lianhua xin rulai xiuxing guanmen yi*; T 1090), all of which were translated into

Chinese for the first time by Maitribhadra. Given the nature of the rituals prescribed in these four texts, Maitribhadra seems to have been well-versed in the esoteric Buddhist thought and practices prevalent in eleventh-century central India. Indian esoteric Buddhism is conventionally divided into three phases in accordance with the development of major sutras and tantras (Matsunaga Yukei 1990, 19). The early phase corresponds to the fourth to sixth centuries; the middle phase refers to the more systematized thought and practices centering on the teachings of the *Mahavairocana-abhisambodhi Sutra* (大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經, Ch. *Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing*; hereafter *MVS*) and *Sarvatathagatatattvasamgraha* (金剛頂經, Ch. *Jingangding jing*; hereafter *STTS*); and the strand of esoteric Buddhism encompassing tantras, established from the eighth century onward, is considered the late phase. This late phase developed with a focus on the *STTS* corpus rather than the *MVS*. Notably, the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* pertains to a cycle of texts closely related to the *STTS* corpus (Lü Jianfu 2011, 590). This sutra was well-received by Liao Buddhists following its translation in the 1060s, providing a scriptural basis for new iconographic motifs that appeared on Buddhist pagodas built in present-day Inner Mongolia and the western portion of Liaoning Province (Hang Kan 2002, 587–595; Fujiwara Takato 2013, 95–96). It should be noted that the objects retrieved from the few Liao Buddhist images so far examined have yet to show a direct connection to the teachings of the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* (Lee Seunghye 2015, 49–51). The material evidence currently at our disposal for examining the issue of whether Liao Buddhists also appropriated some parts of the sutra in the consecration of Buddhist images remains scant and piecemeal at best.

The preceding analysis has explained the impact of newly translated esoteric Buddhist texts upon Liao Buddhism and its visual culture. The reign of Emperor Daozong was particularly momentous for the development of Liao Buddhism. He patronized the carving of the Khitan Canon and the doctrinal study of Avatamsaka (華嚴, Ch. Huayan) and esoteric Buddhist traditions (Tang Tongtian 1994, 96–97). In 1077, he ordered the monk Jueyuan (覺苑, fl. late 11th century) to compose the *Esoteric Extracts from the Presentations in the Abridged Commentary to the Vairocana-abhisambodhi-tantra* (大日經義釋演密鈔, Ch. *Dari jing yishi yanmi chao*; hereafter *Esoteric Extracts*), a commentary on Yixing's (一行, 683–727) *Commentary on the Mahavairocana-abhisambodhi-tantra* (大毘盧遮那成佛經疏, Ch. *Da Piluzhena chengfo jing shu*; T 1796). It is worth noting

that Jueyuan received instruction in esoteric Buddhism from a Kashmiri acarya by the name of Mani (摩尼, Ch. Moni; fl. 11th century) (Sørensen 2011, 458). Although a lack of textual evidence hinders the identification of Mani, he must have spread a distinctive type of Buddhist scriptures in the Liao empire, classified as the esoteric class (密部, Ch. *mibu*). The efforts of Indian acaryas such as Mani and Maitribhadra in combination with imperial support may have resulted in Buddhist pagodas being built in the former jurisdiction of Liao under the doctrinal influence of late Indian esoteric Buddhism. If this is the case, when and how was Liao Buddhism transmitted to the Goryeo dynasty?

The Liao and Goryeo dynasties maintained a close relationship during the 11th and 12th centuries. In particular, the transmission of Buddhist texts across their borders played a significant role in the cultural exchanges between the two states. The doctrinal studies of Avatamsaka and esoteric Buddhist traditions were introduced to Goryeo through the efforts of the monk Uicheon (義天, 1055–1011), who made a vow to collect commentaries on Buddhist sutras in 1073 and published his *Catalogue of the Newly Compiled Canon of Doctrinal Teachings of All the Schools* (新編諸宗教藏總錄, Sinpyeon jejong gyojang chongnok) in 1090. The Directorate General for Commentarial Canon (教藏都監, Gyojang dogam) established at Heungwansa Temple (興王寺) in the capital Gaegyeong (開京) published the commentaries collected by Uicheon up until his death in 1101. The manuscript copies of the eleven commentaries featured in Uicheon's Commentarial Canon and now preserved at Gozan-ji Temple (高山寺) in Kyoto, Japan, include Jueyuan's *Esoteric Extracts* and Daochen's (道殿, fl. late 11th–early 12th centuries) *Collection of the Perfect and Complete Buddha's Mind Essentials according to the Manifest and Esoteric Buddhist Traditions* (顯密圓通成佛心要集, Ch. *Xianmi yuantong chengfo xinyao ji*; T 1955), another influential text of Liao origin (Park Yong-jin 2008, 7, 17). Composed at some time between 1079 and 1089, Daochen's text left an enduring impact on the Buddhist visual and material culture of the time (Zhang Mingwu 2013, 102–125). Given that it is not listed in Uicheon's catalogue, he must have continued to collect and publish commentaries after completing the catalogue in 1090. Interestingly, Jueyuan and Daochen's texts are cited extensively in the preface to the *Collection of Spells in Indic Script* (梵書總持集, *Beomseo chongji jip*) published at Geumsansa Temple (金山寺) in 1218. The *Collection of Spells in Indic Script*, most likely a text of Goryeo origin, contains dharanis culled from the *MVS*, *STTS*, and other Buddhist texts deemed important in Goryeo

(Jeon Donghyeok 1990; Kim Soo-youn 2015, 2016; Nam Kwon-hee 2017). It is intriguing that the few known copies of the text were discovered within the *bokjang* of Buddhist statues. Considering that commentaries not included in the *Catalogue of the Newly Compiled Canon of Doctrinal Teachings of All the Schools* were published and circulated in Goryeo, the exchange of Buddhist texts between Liao and Goryeo must have been far more vigorous than what can be identified through historical records. For instance, the Liao court sent envoys with two cases of Buddhist sutras to Goryeo in the fifth lunar month of 1100. These two sutra cases seem to have held Buddhist texts translated and published after the completion of the Khitan Canon (Kim Young-mi 2002, 71).

All in all, the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* seems to have been transmitted to the Korean Peninsula sometime in the late 11th or early 12th century when the cultural interchange between Liao and Goryeo was peaking. Visual and material evidence, much of which has been retrieved from *bokjang* deposits, further indicates that the Liao esoteric Buddhist tradition was well received by Goryeo Buddhists and played an instrumental role in shaping the development of Buddhism in that country. The five treasure bottles in Goryeo *bokjang* deposits suggest that Goryeo Buddhists absorbed the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* among the newly imported Buddhist texts and appropriated its abhiseka with the five bottles for the creation of the *bokjang* ritual, as we will see shortly.

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The Appropriation of the Abhiseka with the Five Bottles

Among the five fascicles of the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*, the first is cited in its entirety in the various editions of the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images*. When cross-checked with the surviving *bokjang* deposits from the Goryeo era, these passages appear to have served as the scriptural basis for the five treasure bottles. Therefore, it is imperative to first examine the procedures and meaning of the abhiseka with the five bottles as explicated in the sutra in order to understand the implications of its appropriation into the context of the *bokjang* ritual.

The first fascicle of the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching*

Which Is Sublime and Auspicious opens with a preaching assembly where Sakyamuni Buddha mentions a secret method of great *samaya* (摩訶三昧耶祕密內法) apart from the incredibly profound and subtle method of the Three Vehicles (三乘甚深之妙法). When Maitreya Bodhisattva asked the Buddha how to practice this teaching, the Buddha told the congregation to receive the abhiseka with five bottles, and only then would he expound on esoteric teaching. Upon entering the adamantine absorption, the Buddha emitted five rays of light from between his eyebrows, manifesting Aksobhya, Mahavairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitayus, and Amoghasiddhi, the five wisdom buddhas of the Diamond Realm. Next, the Buddha manifested the five paramita bodhisattvas, eight great bodhisattvas, twelve offering bodhisattvas, four bodhisattvas, and ten guardian kings. The congregation sought to receive the abhiseka with five bottles after witnessing the great mandala altar manifested by the Buddha. The Buddha stated that he would empower (加持, *gaji*) the five bottles, powders of four precious things, water of five rivers, powders of five kinds of incense, five medicines, five types of grain, five seeds, five products of a cow, silks of five colors, leaves of five bodhi trees, five seasonal flowers, five auspicious grasses, five threads in different colors, five parasols, and three shares of rice. Of these various sets of pentads, the five bottles are deemed the most important. They are associated with the five directions, the five colors, the four precious things, the five bodhisattvas and their mantras, the five mudras, and the five transformative results of empowerment. For instance, regarding the rock crystal jewel bottle at the center, the Buddha reported that the color white symbolizes the Buddha and the bottle represents the Vajramula paramita bodhisattva (金剛根本波羅蜜菩薩). Next, the Buddha taught how to empower it by reciting the mantra of this bodhisattva one hundred eight times. When the ritual officiant finishes the empowerment of the treasure bottle and then gives the great abhiseka to an initiate along with it, the initiate can attain an adamantine body that that neither is born nor dies (*T* 1192, 20: 906c23–906c29). The procedures for empowering the four other bottles are structurally similar. The buddhas assigned to the center and each cardinal direction are not identified in the sutra, but they seem to have corresponded to the five buddhas of the Diamond Realm appearing at the beginning of fascicle 1.

Next, the sutra provides standardized instructions for empowering other groups of five substances. It instructs the ritual officiant to empower them by reciting mantras, to divide the empowered substances into five shares, and to place a portion of each within each of the five treasure bottles. While

instructing on these procedures, the sutra explicates the intricate symbolism associated with each material. Although there are variations in the mantras to be recited for empowerment and the merit to be gained as a result, the structure of each ritual step remains largely identical from the empowerment of the powders of the four precious things to that of the five seasonal flowers (*T* 1192, 20: 907b3–910a1). Subsequently, the sutra directs the ritual officiant to empower the threads in five colors to be used in demarcating the altar and the silks of five colors to be used in tying the openings of the five treasure bottles (加持界壇五色線 及繫瓶口五色綵) (*T* 1192, 20: 910a9). Having empowered the five parasols in a similar way, the ritual officiant is told to place vajras on the openings of the five treasure bottles and recite the mantras of the main buddhas and accompanying paramita bodhisattvas. When the one-hundred-eight chantings of the mantra are completed, the five treasure bottles, now fully empowered, are placed in accordance with their associated directions (*T* 1192, 20: 910b5–910b10). This is the only place in fascicle 1 of the sutra where it speaks of acaryas who officiate the abhiseka at the five directions. These acaryas are collectively referred to as the “dharma masters of the five directions” (五方法師, *obang beopsa*) in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images*. The lengthy description of the ritual concludes by providing instructions on empowering the three shares of rice through the recitation of mantras and the fire ritual.

The abhiseka with the five bottles is a type of abhiseka ritual in which the five bottles’ empowered contents are poured over the crown of an initiate’s head. Derived from an enthronement ceremony in ancient India, abhiseka was appropriated as the ritual for attaining the Buddhahood during the Gupta period (3rd century–543) and was reorganized into an esoteric Buddhist rite during the post-Gupta period (Mori Masahide 1999, 194–208; Davidson 2011, 71–75). In the ritual programs of esoteric Buddhism, the abhiseka addresses the idea of installing a deity within a person or an image through a sequence of ritual steps, which entails the sprinkling of water, use of mantras and mudras, and a fire ritual. Pouring water from the five bottles, which symbolize the five buddhas and the five wisdoms, over the crown of the head is interpreted as an act of endowing the initiate with the Buddhahood. The five buddhas and the five wisdoms are closely correlated in the *STTS* corpus translated by Amoghavajra (不空金剛, Ch. Bukong Jingang; 705–774). By the late phase of Indian esoteric Buddhism, the five bottles had become firmly established as symbols of the five buddhas and five wisdoms. Moreover, the ritual steps described in the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching*

Which Is Sublime and Auspicious is reminiscent of several Tang and Song ritual manuals prescribing the abhiseka with the five bottles (*T* 883, 18: 448b27–448b29).

Interestingly enough, the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* gives little explanation as to the eventual disposal of the five treasure bottles that are now fully empowered by the mantric power of acaryas. This lack of explanation may not seem surprising when it is taken into account that the ritual recipient in the sutra is not an image, but a human disciple. This issue should be considered with regard to another important ritual of late Indian esoteric Buddhism, the *pratistha* (Lee Seunghye, forthcoming). Originally, *pratistha* meant the construction (建立, Ch. *jianli*) of an image or stupa, but it came to connote causing the divine to reside within a receptacle, whether it be an image or stupa (Gonda 1954, 1–37). The latter is translated as “installation” (安立, *allip* or 安置, *anchi*) in Sinitic Buddhist literature but usually rendered as “consecration” in English-language scholarship. It is not a simple coincidence that the term “*allip*” is used consistently in the *Sutras on the Production of Buddhist Images* in the ritual steps of inserting empowered objects inside the five treasure bottles and, more importantly, in the final step of enshrining the completed *bokjang* deposit inside an image. This ritual practice is performed not only with an image, but also for religious edifices such as a monastery or stupa, or for ritual objects, including Buddhist scriptures and rosaries. Through the ritual, the image is converted into an eternal abode of the divine, or more appropriately, the divine itself. The *pratistha* of a Buddhist image as prescribed in the ritual manuals that appeared during the late phase of Indian esoteric Buddhism is a complex procedure consisting of multiple ritual steps including the acarya’s construction of a mandala, sprinkling water over an image, recitation of mantras, and visualization. Bottles symbolizing the deities of the mandala are placed around it and used in the performance of abhiseka for an image in order to purify and empower it.

The *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious* provides long and detailed instructions on the production of the five bottles to be used by acaryas to give a symbolic bathing to a disciple. However, Korean Buddhists from the late Goryeo period onward departed from these prescriptions by using cloth rather than precious substances in the production of the five bottles (Fig. 9). Given that the contents of the five bottles rarely deviate from the scriptural injunctions, bottles may indeed have been used instead of textile wrappings in the early phase of *bokjang* practice.



068 Fig. 12. Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Goryeo, 13th century. Gilt wood. H. 67.65 cm. National Museum of Korea

The *bokjang* deposits recently retrieved from a 13th-century Avalokitesvara statue in the collection of the National Museum of Korea (hereafter NMK) lends credibility to this supposition (Fig. 12). This new discovery is part of the ongoing research into Buddhist sculpture in the NMK collection (Shin Soyeon, Yi Yonghee, and Park Seungwon 2014, 11–107; Shin Soyeon 2015, 100–107).⁵ Results from this important survey have been published in 2014, 2016, and 2018, providing rich resources for students of Korean Buddhist art. The bodhisattva image yielded two groups of *bokjang*, a bundle of objects wrapped with a cloth inscribed with the true-mind seed syllables and five-wheel seed syllables (五輪種字, *oryun jongja*) and another bundle of printed texts and a skein of threads in five colors inside the lower portion of bodhisattva’s body (Fig. 13). A further group of *bokjang* objects appears to have been inserted at the time of production inside the head of the bodhisattva. The two groups of *bokjang* objects retrieved from the belly of the bodhisattva had already been disrupted by the time the image was acquired by the Yi Royal Household Museum (李王家博物館, Yi wangga bangmulgwan), whose collection of pre-modern Korean art was

merged into the NMK collection following the liberation of Korea. The first bundle from the belly of the bodhisattva turned out to contain five packets, each holding a miniature bottle with various contents along with a miniature mirror that symbolizes each of the five directions (五方鏡, *obang gyeong*) (Fig. 14). It also included a throat-bell container (喉鈴筒, *huryeong tong*), a new form of *bokjang* container that replaced the eight-petaled container from the Goryeo era during the Joseon dynasty (Fig. 15). It held a heart jewel that had been split into two pieces and relic grains wrapped in a sheet of blank paper, among other items. The five miniature bottles from the first bundle, most probably a remainder of the original *bokjang* items from the 13th century, seem to have been re-enshrined within the inner recess of the image when a new *bokjang* deposit was created and dedicated in the early Joseon period (Shin Soyeon, Yi Yonghee, and Park Seungwon 2014, 105) (Fig. 16). The four bottles symbolizing the east, south, west, and north were colored on their lacquered surfaces, whereas the lacquered surface of the bottle symbolizing the center was adorned with gold leaf (Fig. 17). The five wooden bottles, colored on their lacquered surfaces according to their corresponding direction, were reported to hold grains, seeds, and medicinal herbs wrapped in blank paper, and were sealed with a wad of cotton. These miniature bottles, which are faithful to the shape and function of a conventional bottle, indicate that Goryeo Buddhists were acutely aware of the meaning of the five treasure bottles as a ritual tool to install the Buddha within the ritual recipient through the acaryas’ attainment of the three esoterica (三密, *sammil*) via “a ritualized replication of the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha” (McBride, 2006 [2008], 305).

What differentiates Korean *bokjang* from consecration rituals performed in other parts of Buddhist Asia is that the five treasure bottles were permanently enshrined within an image. In other words, the key symbolic step of the ritualized watering or bathing of an image with the contents of the five bottles was entirely replaced by the installation of the five bottles inside it. When compared with the five bottles used in the *pratistha* from India or *abhiseka* of Japanese esoteric Buddhism, the function and meaning of the five treasure bottles becomes even more apparent. In the former, the five bottles are ritual tools only momentarily empowered, and they lose their capabilities outside of the temporal frame of the ritual. However, the five treasure bottles of the Korean *bokjang* tradition have a different ontological meaning. These five treasure bottles completed through acaryas’ making of mudras, recitation of mantras, and visualization of the unison of the Buddha and an image



Fig. 13. Two groups of *bokjang* objects found inside the lower part of the *Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva* in the NMK collection



Fig. 14. Five treasure bottles and a throat-bell container wrapped inside a yellow cloth wrapper. Discovered inside the *Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva* in the NMK collection



Fig. 15. Throat-bell container. Joseon, early 15th century. Lead alloy. H. 3.6 cm (body); 2.2 cm (lid). Discovered inside the *Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva* in the NMK collection



Fig. 16. Five treasure bottles yielded in the *Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva* in the NMK collection



Fig. 17. Treasure bottle symbolizing the center. Goryeo, 13th century. Wood. H. 4.2 cm. Yielded in the *Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva* in the NMK collection

are an embodiment of the Buddhist cosmos imbued with the five buddhas' empowerment. Therefore, the inner realm of the image becomes transformed into a microcosm of the Buddhist cosmos through the installation of a *bokjang* deposit.

Conclusion

This study has revisited the formation of the *bokjang* ritual in the context of cultural exchanges and the transmission of esoteric Buddhist teachings that took place across Northeast Asia during the Goryeo period. By examining textual records and *bokjang* deposits from the latter half of Goryeo period vis-a-vis the procedures of the *abhiseka* with the five bottles found

in fascicle 1 of the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*, it concludes that the heart of the image consecration ritual in Korea, which continues today, dates back to no later than the 12th to 13th century. It demonstrates that this sutra, absent from the second edition of the Korean Canon, was introduced to Goryeo from the Liao dynasty around the late 11th to early 12th century at a time when vigorous cultural interactions were occurring between the two states through the exchange of Buddhist texts.

Like the *pratistha* of late Indian esoteric Buddhism, the *bokjang* ritual addresses the concept of installing the divine within a material image through acaryas' attainment of the three esoterica. However, this ritual conception seems not to have been transmitted to Goryeo in the form of a complete ritual manual. Goryeo Buddhists appear to have instead appropriated the *abhiseka* ritual for an esoteric Buddhist practitioner as explicated in the sutra as a basis to formulate a

unique image consecration ritual. In the Indian *pratistha* ritual, the image becomes one with the Buddha as it is anointed with the contents of the five bottles through a ritualized act of pouring or sprinkling. In contrast, ritualized bathing was not adopted wholeheartedly in Korean Buddhism. Instead, Goryeo Buddhists installed the five bottles within an image that was then permanently sealed. This ritual act bears the symbolic meaning of transforming the empty inner space of a Buddha image into a sealed space empowered with the Buddha's grace and virtues. A microcosm of the image is thus made to correspond to the macrocosm of the Buddha through the enshrinement of the five treasure bottles symbolizing the five directional Buddhas of the Diamond Realm. This is a case where one of the central tenets of esoteric Buddhism, the unification of the practitioner and the Buddha through ritual practices, is appropriated for the creation of Buddhist images.

Translated by the author

This paper is a revised and abridged English version of “The Formation and Implications of the Consecration of Buddhist Images during the Goryeo Period” (高麗時代 佛腹藏의 形成과 意味), previously published in 2015 in *Korean Journal of Art History* (美術史學研究) 285.

- 1 *Bokjang* is often rendered as *pokchang* in English-language scholarship based on the McCune-Reischauer Romanization system.
- 2 The discussion in this section is abbreviated from Lee Seunghye, forthcoming.
- 3 A comprehensive analysis of the major Goryeo *bokjang* deposits is available in Jeong Eunwoo and Shin Eunje 2017.
- 4 The identification proposed here is tentative. The collective names, such as the five kinds of incense, and sub-divisions here are my own creation on the basis of Yi Gyubo's account as examined previously and on the *Sutra on the King of the Great Teaching Which Is Sublime and Auspicious*.
- 5 This noteworthy image and its deposit contents were the focus of the “Sacred Dedication: A Korean Buddhist Masterpiece,” a loan exhibition dispatched by NMK to the Smithsonian's Freer[Sackler, the National Museum of Asian Art from September 21, 2019 to March 22, 2020. The research report, co-written by curators of the NMK and published in 2014, was translated into English in lieu of an exhibition catalogue and made available at https://asia.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/NMK-Report_FINAL-2019-11-18.pdf (accessed November 26, 2019).

Image Sources

- Fig. 10: *The Splendor of the Khitan Dynasty*, 2011, 161, Fig. 114, Fukuoka: Nishinippon Shimbunsha
- Fig. 11: *Chaoyang North Pagoda: Report of Archaeology Excavation and Renovation Project*, 2007, Fig. 63-2, Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe

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