

PARK HYOUNGGOOK

Vairocana Buddha in Korea

Introduction

Statues of Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那佛 with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* (*jñānamuṣṭi-mudrā*: the *mudrā* of the summit of Enlightenment) are particularly rare in Korea, and are typically representations of Mahāvairocana (Vairocana) of the Vajradhātu *maṇḍala* based on the *Sūtra of the Compendium of Reality of All the Tathāgata* (*Sarvatahā-gatatattvasaṃgraha-sūtra*) of the middle period of Indian esoteric Buddhism. This figure was absorbed into the Silla 新羅 Hwaeom (華嚴, Ch. Huayan) school of Buddhism as its main deity.

Silla consolidated the three Korean kingdoms at the end of the 7th century, and accepted the Buddhist arts of the states it absorbed, Gogureo 高句麗 and Baekje 百濟. It also began frequent cultural exchanges with Tang China and with Nara, and later Heian, the successive capitals of Japan, and built Buddhist temples throughout the country, reflecting a determination to set up a new Buddhist state based on a new ideology.

The standard style of Silla Buddhist statuary differed from that in Japan, where wooden statues predominated from the end of the Nara period (710-784). Instead, stone Buddhas hewn out of granite (including those carved *in-situ* on cliff walls or in caves (Jap. *magai* 磨崖) and those carved round and three dimensionally (Jap. *marubori* 丸彫), were most common in Silla, although many gilt bronze statues were also made. The stone statues show a range of styles during the period of Unified Silla, including such examples as the standing Amitābha and standing Maitreya at Gamsansa 甘山寺 in Gyeongju 慶州 made in 719, which showed a marked influence derived from the Indian Gupta style accepted by Tang. Two distinct trends are observable among them: one characterized by Vairocana statues with the *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*, the *mudrā* for subjugating demons and touching the earth (Jap. *gōmashokuji* 降魔觸地印) represented by the stone Buddha at Sukgulam 石窟庵 in Gyeongju, and the other exemplified by statues with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* as represented by the gilt bronze statue of a seated Vairocana at Bulguksa 佛國寺 and a stone statue of a seated Vairocana at Biro-am 毘盧庵 in Donghwaso 桐華寺. These were introduced as the main Buddhist figures of the Silla Hwaeom school.

Initially, the principal Buddha of the Silla Hwaeom school established by Ŭisang 義相 (625–702?) was not Vairocana but Amitābha with the *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*. The principle Buddha at Sukgulam in Gyeongju, where Byohun 表訓 (?–?) – a disciple of Ŭisang – was the abbot was a statue with that *mudrā*. The background to this development was much the same as seen in the early Chinese Huayan school, where monks studied Huayan doctrines but practiced the Pure Land system focused on Amitābha. Although their fundamental emphasis was on the Huayan doctrinal teachings, they placed Amitābha in the forefront as the deity most suited to the ideas of universal salvation then popular, in an attempt to amalgamate Pure Land theory and practice with Huayan doctrines. Another factor was that the Chinese translation by Buddhahadra of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* in sixty fascicles used for doctrinal studies at the time does not clearly specify the preacher of the text.

Sinrim 神琳 (u.d.), a disciple of Ŭisang's disciple, went to Tang China to study under Rongshun 融順 (u.d.) in the tradition of Fazang 法藏 (743–712). Returning to Korea, Sinrim became the abbot of Bulguksa and Buseoksa 浮石寺. After his studies in Tang, he shifted from the Huayan of Ŭisang to that of Fazang. The Fazang tradition specifies Vairocana as the preacher of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, and emphasizes the Chinese translation of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* in eighty fascicles by Śikṣānanda. Thus, with Sinrim's shift to the Huayan of Fazang's lineage, the tendency in the Silla Hwaeom school to enshrine Vairocana as the principle Buddha began.

Images of Mahāvairocana of the Vajradhātu with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* representing the middle period of Indian esoteric Buddhism were introduced by the students of Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735) including Bulgasaui 不可思議, Uirim 義林 (u.d.), and Hyeoncho 玄超 (u.d.); Hyecho 慧超 (u.d.), the disciple of Vajrabodhi (670–741) and Amoghavajra (705–775); and such students of Huiguo 惠果 (746?–805?) as Hyeil 惠日 (u.d.), Ojin 悟眞 (u.d.) and Gyunryang 均亮 (u.d.).

Images of Vairocana with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, thought to have been made according to the iconography of the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana imported to Unified Silla around 740, had by the 9th century replaced Amitābha as the main Buddha of the Silla Hwaeom school and had become the primary form of Buddhist carving in Unified Silla. These Vairocana images of Unified Silla were influenced by the iconography of the middle period esoteric Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*. Nevertheless, while images of the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana in Japan were normally depicted in a bodhisattva-form wearing jewelled crowns (Jap. *hōkan* 寶冠), decorative scarves (Jap. *jōhaku* 條帛), neck and arm ornaments (Jap. *wansen* 腕釧), and so on, the images of Vairocana in Unified Silla appear as *tathāgatas* with curly hair (Jap. *rahotsū* 螺髮), wearing monastic robes (Jap. *hōe* 法衣), and with no bodily adornments. Because of differences in Japanese and Korean religious practices and doctrinal backgrounds, divergent forms of the same Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana emerged.

1. Classification and Overview of Extant Examples

The oldest extant statue of Vairocana in Korea is in a bodhisattva-form as depicted in the *Pictorial Representation of the Flower Ornament Sūtra of Silla* (*Silla Hwaeom-gyeong byeonsang do* 新羅華嚴經變相圖, completed in 755, preserved by the Samsung Museum of Art Leeum 三星美術館 Leeum 所藏, Figure 1). The oldest example in a *tathāgata*-form is the seated Vairocana of Seoknameomsa 石南巖寺 kept at Naewonsa 內院寺 in Sancheong 山淸, Gyeongsangnamdo 慶尙南道 (ca. 766, Figure 2). The oldest example of a crowned *tathāgata*-form Vairocana is the gilt bronze statue of a seated Vairocana formerly held by Sekino Tadashi 関野貞 (mid-8th century, present location unknown, Figure 3). Of these three earliest Korean examples two show influence from the *Mental Examination in Five Sections* (*Wubu xinguan* 五部心觀) and other Śubhakarasiṃha lineage iconographies. Including the oldest example of a left-handed *mudrā* is the gilt bronze statue of a seated Vairocana at Bulguksa in Gyeongsangbukdo 慶尙北道, Gyeongju 慶州 (late 8th century, Figure 4) and the oldest standing image excavated from Yeongyang 英陽, now preserved at the Daegu National Museum 國立大邱博物館 (early 9th century, Figure 5), nearly all the iconographic forms of Vairocana are represented in extant examples: examples in the *tathāgata*-form, crowned *tathāgata*-form, or bodhisattva-form; seated and standing examples; examples of the three forms of wearing the robe covering both shoulders (Jap. *tsūken* 通肩), exposing the right shoulder (Jap. *hentanūken* 偏袒右肩), or with decorative scarves; depictions of either the right-handed or left-handed *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, and so on. These are extremely valuable resources for researching the reception and transmission of images of the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana in Korea, as well as the iconography of extant examples in China and Japan.

1.1. Classification and Overview According to Basic Iconographic Styles

A threefold classification according to basic styles in the iconography of the head and garments can be made as follows:

- (1) a *tathāgata*-form with curly hair wearing a monastic robe,
- (2) a crowned *tathāgata*-form wearing a monastic robe, and
- (3) a bodhisattva-form with a crown, decorative scarves, and bodily adornments.

Extant early examples of Vairocana in Korea preserve all three forms: (1) the central deity in the *Silla Hwaeom-gyeong byeonsang do* 華嚴經變相圖 completed circa 755 in a bodhisattva-form; (2) the seated gilt bronze Vairocana thought to date from the mid-8th century formerly kept by Sekino Tadashi in the crowned *tathāgata*-form; and (3) the seated stone Vairocana of Seoknameomsa preserved at Naewonsa in Sancheong, Gyeongsangnamdo in the *tathāgata*-form assumed to have been made circa 766. It is clear that all three iconographic variants of the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana were accepted in Korea, but after the 9th century the *tathāgata*-form became the primary form.

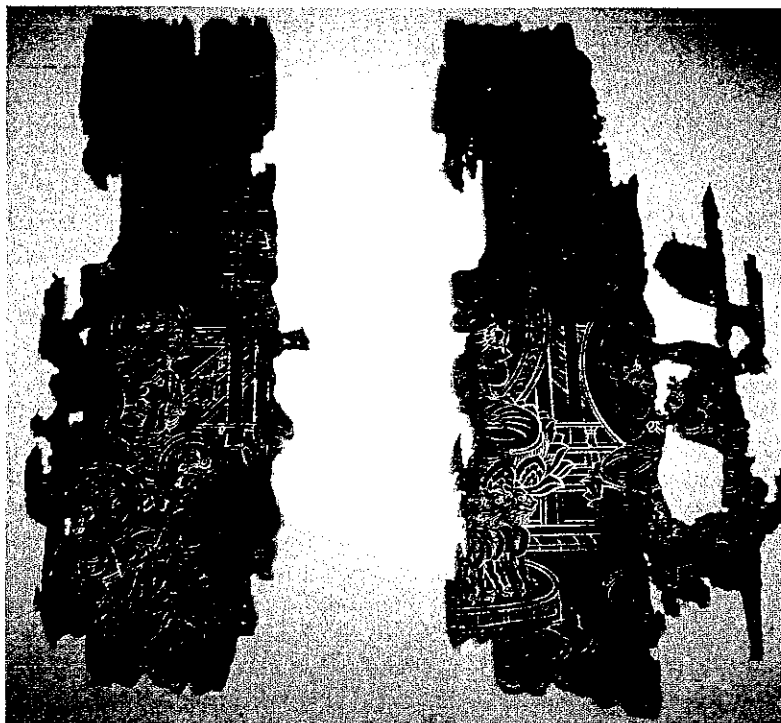


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

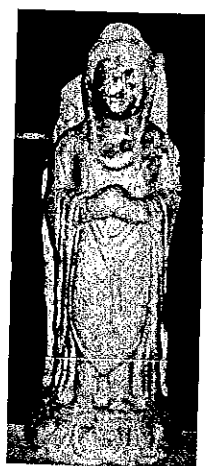


Figure 5.

Examining the extant statues of Vairocana in Korea indicates that the *tathāgata*-form with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* (including the left-hand version) became the main iconographic version. Furthermore, except for Tibet and Japan the majority of Vairocana or Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana statues with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* (including the left-hand version) are in the *tathāgata*-form rather than the bodhisattva-form throughout most of Asia. Extant examples in India depict the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana appearing among the Five Buddhas in aureoles in the *tathāgata*-form, and the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana preserved in Orissa is also mostly shown in the *tathāgata*-form. There are extant *tathāgata*-form examples from Tibet, and this form is overwhelmingly numerous in Indonesia. In China the *tathāgata*-form and crowned *tathāgata*-form are numerous and the bodhisattva-form rare. In consideration of the fact that the *tathāgata*-form would normally have appeared the earliest to represent a Buddha, this then should also be the case for the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana or Vairocana. In other words, the *tathāgata*-form of the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana or Vairocana was the commonest iconographic style throughout Asia with the exception of Tibet and Japan, and it was in Korea where the *tathāgata*-form was most widely used. The most significant factor in that development may have been the religious and doctrinal environment that accepted an iconographic shift in the principal figure of the pantheon of the Silla Hwaeom school. It is clear that middle-period esoteric Buddhism was imported to Korea, but no temples devoted purely to esoteric Buddhism can be confirmed there. Also, an examination of written records and extant examples shows that images with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* were primarily used in the Silla Hwaeom school, and that this iconography was then incorporated into the temples of the early Seon (Zen) as the principal central figure deity. Middle-period esoteric Buddhism never became established in Korea, but its iconographic forms alone seem to have been accepted by the prevalent Hwaeom school of the time. From the point of view of the Silla Hwaeom school, from among the three possibilities of the *tathāgata*-form, the crowned *tathāgata*-form, and the bodhisattva-form the iconography least at variance with what had been accepted previously would have been the *tathāgata*-form. It remains unclear if they simply imported the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, or the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana in the *tathāgata*-form. It is nevertheless clear that from about the mid-8th century statues of Vairocana in the *tathāgata*-form with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* were made as the most important religious images principal deities in Silla Hwaeom temples, and that by after the 9th century the *tathāgata*-form became predominant.

An examination of the various iconographic features of *tathāgata*-form Vairocana statues in which fine details can be confirmed reveals first of all that the seated form is most common (eighty-four seated examples and nine standing), and that the most numerous seated style is the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost (Jap. *kishōza* 吉祥坐) with seventy-eight examples. Although variations appear after the 9th century, including three examples seated in the full-lotus position with the left foot uppermost (Jap. *gōmaza* 降魔坐), three examples in the half-lotus position (Jap. *hankafuza* 半跏趺坐), and nine standing examples, the main form remained

the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost. Seventy-six examples have the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* and thirty-three have the left-handed variant. The *bodhyagrī-mudrā* style was the mainstream style, and within all of Asia the left-handed variant was most popular in Korea. The robe worn on both shoulders appears in eighty-six examples, and twenty-one examples expose the right shoulder, therefore the style with both shoulders covered by the robe was most common. Regarding the combinations and arrangements of the statues, most are solitary statues but starting from the latter half of the 9th century it appears in a triad arrangement. The arrangements of the *trikāya* (Jap. *sanshinbutsu* 三身佛), the Buddhas in three bodies, and the *trailokya* (Jap. *sanzebutsu* 三世佛), the Buddhas in the three time periods appear after the 14th century, and particularly after the 15th century in the late Koryo period. The author will return to this point subsequently, but this development is thought to derive from the influence of the Chinese Liao (916–1125) and Mongol Yuan (1271–1368) period preference for *trikāya* arrangements.

Of interest is an example of the *tathāgata*-form with the heads of ten transformational bodies (*nirmāṇa-buddhas* 化佛) surmounting the head. This is the seated Vairocana illustrated in the *Hwaeom-gyeong byeonsang do* 華嚴經變相圖 preserved by the National Museum of Korea 國立中央博物館 (Figure 6). This image is a variation based on the “Inconceivability of the Buddha” (*Fo busiyifa pin* 佛不思議法品) chapter in the forty-seventh fascicle of Śikṣānanda’s translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and wears the robe on both shoulders and forms the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* seated in the full-lotus position (Jap. *kekkaфуza* 結跏趺坐) on a lotus throne. This image depicts the inconceivable nature of Vairocana, and his majestic power of transformation, as described in the *Fo busiyifa pin* chapter and is the form he manifested to all living beings in worlds in the ten directions. The iconography is thought to have absorbed features from that of Ekādaśamukha, the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara (Jap. Jūichimen Kannon bosatsu 十一面觀音菩薩). Incidentally, in the work said to be composed by Fazang in the Tang entitled *Xiu Huayan aozhi wangjin huanyuan guan* 修華嚴奧旨妄盡還源觀 there is the following passage elucidating the significance of the Vairocana image with ten heads surmounting the image’s head.¹

The ten bodies of Vairocana function reciprocally and without obstruction or hindrance. The *Sūtra* says, “With his own body he transforms into the bodies of living beings, of the state, of the fruits of *karman*, of *śrāvakas*, of *pratyekabuddhas*, of *bodhisattvas*, of *tathāgatas*, of the body of knowledge (*jñānakāya*), of the body of Law (*dharmakāya*), and of empty space (*ākāśa*). These ten bodies arise from one another, and in each body the other nine are contained.”

1 謂毘盧遮那十身。互用無有障礙也。經云。或以自身。作衆生身。國土身。業報身。聲聞身。緣覺身。菩薩身。如來身。智身。法身。虛空身。如是十身隨舉一身攝餘九身。T 1876, 45: 640b¹³⁻¹⁶. Concerning the posterior character of this work attributed to Fazang, see Ishii Kōsei 石井公成: ‘Kegonshū no kangyō bunken ni mieru Zenshū hihan: Enō no sankā hōmon ni ryūi shite’ 華嚴宗の觀行文獻に見える禪宗批判——慧能の三科法門に留意して, *Matsugaoka bunko kenkyū nenpō* 松ヶ丘文庫研究年報 17, 2003, p. 60 and n. 17.



Figure 6.

There are few extant examples of Vairocana in the crowned *tathāgata*-form, but it is clear that this type was made in each period. Although it is possible that the crowned *tathāgata*-form with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* comes from an Indian source, no Indian example of a crowned *tathāgata*-form Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana can be confirmed at this point (although statues of other *tathāgatas* in this form exist). Many examples of the crowned *tathāgata*-form with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* were made in China, and examples of the crowned *tathāgata*-form in Korea are probably the result of Chinese influence. There are only seven examples known from Korea including the gilt bronze seated Vairocana formerly held by Sekino Tadashi (circa mid-8th century) and the stone seated Vairocana in the Daejeokgwangjeon 大寂光殿 of Sudoam 修道庵 in Cheongamsa 靑岩寺 located in Gimcheon 金泉, Gyeongsangbukdo (early 9th century, Figure 7), but these continued to be made into later periods.

An examination of the various iconographical features of the crowned *tathāgata*-form Vairocana statues in which fine details can be confirmed reveals first of all that there is a crown on the head, but examples with the Five Buddhas depicted on the crown are rare. This is possibly due to the religious pattern in Korea in which Vairocana was used as the central figure of the Hwaom school, but further study is needed to confirm this point. Seated images are most common (three out of six images are in the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost), and a standing stone Vairocana (second half of the 10th century, Figure 8) formerly in the grounds of Buseok Elementary School 浮石初等學校 at Yeongju 榮州 in Gyeongsangbukdo was later reworked into a *tathāgata*-form and is now enshrined in Buseoksa. Both *mudrā* styles exist, and four statues have the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* and three the left-handed variant. Until the 8th to 9th century the standard *bodhyagrī-mudrā* became most common (all three examples have this *mudrā*), but after the 10th century the left-handed *mudrā* became more numerous (of four examples, three have the left-handed *mudrā*). Regarding robes, only the gilt bronze seated Vairocana formerly belonging to Sekino Tadashi (mid-8th century) has the right shoulder exposed. The six examples from after the 9th century all have the robe covering both shoulders, which seems to have become the predominant style. Other than the example of the gilt bronze triad on the lid of a reliquary (Jap. *sharigan* 舍利盒) excavated from three-storied stone *stūpa* 三層石塔 at Biroam of Donghwasa in Daegu 大邱 (dated 863, Figure 9), all known examples are of a single Vairocana. From the above it is clear that the crowned *tathāgata*-form Vairocana was made in several iconographic styles.

The statue in the *stūpa* at Sajabinsinsa 獅子頻迅寺 in Jecheon 提川, Chungcheongbukdo 忠清北道 (dated 1022, Figure 10) and the statue at the site of Yongamsa 龍岩寺 at Chinju 晉州, Geongnam (early 11th century) have the robe covering both shoulders, the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* or its left-handed variant, and the crown shaped like a head covering. In particular, although there is a possibility that the figure seated in the lotus position in the first story of the *stūpa* at Sajabinsinsa is an image of a *pūjā* patron or of Kṣitigarbha or an *arhant* forming the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, this is not clear. In passing, there are examples from the Joseon Dynasty 朝鮮時代 (1392–1910) of *arhants* such as Kāśyapa forming the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* or its left-handed variant.



Figure 7.

The bodhisattva-form was not popular in Korea, with the only examples being the one shown in the *Silla Hwaeom-gyeong byeonsang do* completed in 755 and the gilt bronze seated Vairocana excavated from Jagangdo 慈江道 in North Korea (13th or 14th century, Figure 11). Both examples are seated images with the *bodhyagri-mudrā*.

1.2. Classification by Posture

Images of Vairocana may be broadly classified according to their seated or standing posture. The seated posture may be subdivided into the full-lotus or half-lotus positions, and the full-lotus position can be further subdivided into a position with either the right foot uppermost (Jap. *kishōza* 吉祥坐) or the left (Jap. *gōmaza* 降魔坐).

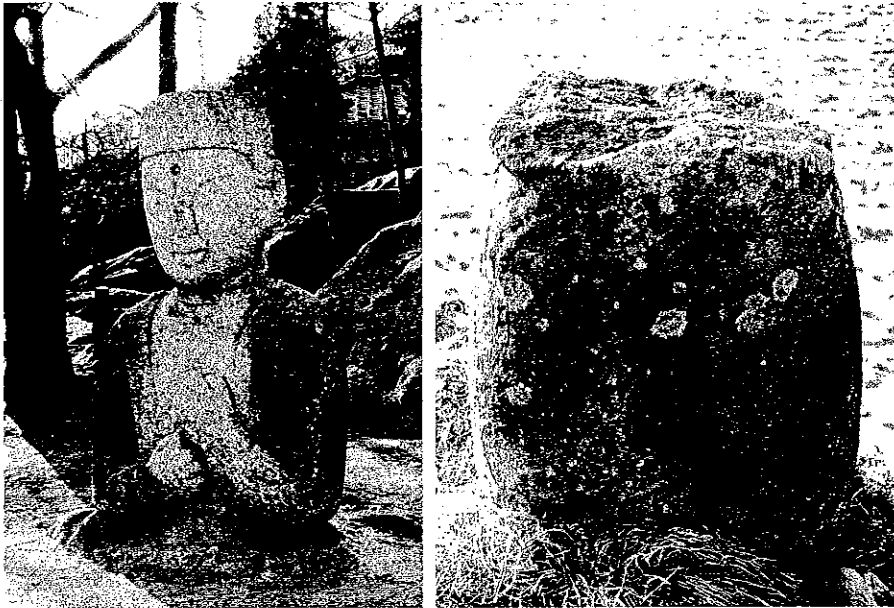


Figure 8.



Figure 9.

In total, the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost is the most common (there are ninety-five examples of this posture, along with three examples with the left foot uppermost, three examples of the half-lotus position, and eleven standing examples). Based on the period of their manufacture, the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost is seen from the mid-8th century while the other three types appear after the beginning of the 9th century. The right foot uppermost posture was the commonest form for Vairocana in all periods, as is true of other Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

The oldest extant example of Vairocana seated in the full-lotus position with the left foot uppermost is the stone statue at Hongcheon Mulgeolli 洪川物傑里 in Gangwondo 江原道 (latter half of the 9th century, Figure 12). All three extant examples of this posture share the same iconographical features indicating they come from the same tradition, including the *tathāgata*-form, both shoulders covered by the robe, and as a solitary image.



Figure 10.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.

The oldest extant example of Vairocana in the half-lotus position is the stone statue (latter half of the 9th century) held by the National Museum of Korea. The three examples share the same characteristics of *tathāgata*-form, *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, and are solitary images. However, the robes of two of them cover both shoulders (latter half of the 9th century and latter half of the 10th century), while that of the other exposes the right shoulder (late 18th century).

The oldest extant example of a standing Vairocana among the eleven known is the stone statue excavated from Yeongyang in Gyeongsangbukdo and held by the Daegu National Museum (early 9th century). The mainstream iconography can be ascertained as: *tathāgata*-form (nine examples), *bodhyagrī-mudrā* (nine examples), robes covering both shoulders (eleven examples), and solitary images (eleven examples).

An example of the crowned *tathāgata*-form is the stone statue of a standing Vairocana (second half of the 10th century) formerly in the grounds of the Buseok Elementary school. As already mentioned, the left-handed *bodhyagrī-mudrā* is the main form. All the examples dating after the 11th century have the left-handed *mudrā*, and the right-handed *bodhyagrī-mudrā* is typically seen in early examples.

The salient point regarding classification by posture is the connectivity between the seated position and the *mudrā*. Specifically, the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* appears mainly with the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost and with the half-lotus position, while the left-handed version of the *mudrā* appears with the full-lotus position with the left foot uppermost and with the standing posture.

1.3. Classification by Mudrā

Classification of Vairocana images by *mudrā* consists of either (1) the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* or (2) the left-handed variant of the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*. Of all the examples, ninety-four have the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* while forty have the left-handed version. It is worth noting that the left-handed variant is rare in Asia, but in Korea roughly 30% of the examples have it. Additionally, this percentage increases in later periods, and the left-handed variant occurs in some 52% of the extant examples from the 13th and 14th centuries.

Mudrā	8th c.	9th c.	10th c.	11th–12th c.	13th–14th c.	15th c. on
<i>Bodhyagrī-mudrā</i>	7 (87%)	30 (79%)	12 (63%)	9 (60%)	12 (48%)	24 (83%)
Left-handed version	1 (13%)	8 (21%)	7 (37%)	6 (40%)	13 (52%)	5 (17%)

As seen in the gilt-bronze statue from the late 8th century of a seated Vairocana at Bulguksa in Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbukdo with the left-handed *mudrā*, the left-handed *mudrā* variant was imported to Korea at roughly the same period as the standard *bodhyagrī-mudrā*. Like the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, images with the left-handed version continued to be produced until the Joseon Dynasty as the *mudrā* of Vairocana

of the Hwaeom school. Extant examples with the left-handed *mudrā* mostly have the *tathāgata*-form, wear the robe on both shoulders, and are solitary images, which is conjectured to be the same tendency as in Vairocana images with the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*. However, as noted above, the *mudrā* has a close relationship with the posture. Specifically, seventy examples (approximately 80%) of the images seated in the full-lotus position with the right foot uppermost have the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* while twenty examples (approximately 20%) have the left-handed *mudrā*, so the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* style was clearly the mainstream. Examples in the half-lotus position all have the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, and all examples in the full-lotus position with the left foot uppermost have the left-handed *mudrā*. Among standing examples, two (about 20%) have the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* while nine (about 80%) have the left-handed *mudrā*, which seems to have been preferred for standing examples.

There are other variations of the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*. In one variation found in the seated Vairocana in the Piludong chamber 毘盧洞 of Dazu cave 大足石窟 in Sichuan, China (12th century, Figure 13) the right fist has descended into the left fist, and is enclosed within the left hand. This variation was quite popular as the *mudrā* for Vairocana after the late Koryo period (the author will discuss this at greater length below), but after the late Koryo period Vairocana appearing in triads often has the Dazu variant *mudrā* for the *dharmakāya* form of Vairocana in the center, flanked on the right and left by the retributive-body (*sambhogakāya*) form of Vairocana with the seal of explanation of the Law (*vyākhyāna-mudrā* 說法印) in the *feilaifeng* 飛來峰 style and the manifestation-body (*nirmāṇakāya*) Śākyamuni forming the seal of touching the Earth (*bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*). The Dazu variant became popular in China beginning in the 12th century, and an example of an earlier example is the seated Buddha excavated at Ali Masjid in Pakistan (7th century, in the British Museum, Figure 14). The Ali Masjid statue has a Law-Wheel (Skt *dharmacakra*; Jap. *hōrin* 法輪) and a deer depicted below the throne in an image of Śākyamuni giving his first preaching, the First turning of the Wheel of the Dharma (*dharmacakra-pravartana* 初轉法輪). Because of the connection between the *dharmacakra-pravartana* and Huayan, this *mudrā* was likely adopted as that of Vairocana.

1.4. Classification by Garments

Garments can be shown in three distinctive styles: (1) the monastic robe covering both shoulders, (2) the monastic robe exposing the right shoulder, and (3) with decorative scarves.

The decorative scarves only occur in the bodhisattva-form images of Vairocana, and there are two such examples extant. The monastic robe can be worn over both shoulders or exposing the right shoulder, and in Korea both styles appear with roughly the same frequency among 8th-century examples, although after the 9th century the robe covering both shoulders becomes more common (108 examples have both shoulders covered and 23 examples have the right shoulder exposed). Notably, all



Figure 13.



Figure 14.

examples of either the full-lotus position with the left foot uppermost or the standing position have both shoulders covered.

1.5. Classification by Combinations with Other Statues

Finally, images of Vairocana can be classified relative to other Buddha and bodhisattva statues as follows:

- (1) as a solitary statue (Jap. *dokuson geishiki* 獨尊形式),
- (2) as the central figure of a triad flanked by two bodhisattvas (Jap. *sanzon geishiki* 三尊形式),
- (3) as part of a group of three Buddhas (Jap. *sanbutsu geishiki* 三佛形式) representing the three bodhies (*trikāya*) or the Buddhas of the three times (*trailokya*), or
- (4) in an illustrated form (Jap. *hensō-zu* 變相圖), or in a *maṇḍala*.

Solitary statues and illustrated forms were created at the beginning of the 8th century. The examples in a triad appear from the 9th century, and examples as part of a

group of three Buddhas are seen from the 14th century. In general, the extant sample indicates that the solitary format is the most numerous throughout all periods, and is conjectured to have been the most common form.

The oldest example of Vairocana as the central figure of a triad is the gilt bronze plate Buddha on the lid of the reliquary excavated from the three-storied stone *stūpa* at Biroam of Donghwasan in Daegu (863). There are only a few examples following this one, but they continued to appear until the Joseon Dynasty. Similar to the format as part of a group of three Buddhas discussed below, Vairocana in this arrangement appears in the *tathāgata*-form, seated in the full-lotus position with the right leg uppermost, holding the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, and with the robe covering both shoulders. A notable grouping of this type is that of Vairocana flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra as two attendant bodhisattvas. This grouping originated in the Chinese Huayan school, and is assumed to have been popular from the late Tang. This selection of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra from among all of the bodhisattvas appearing in the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* as representative bodhisattvas for understanding the *sūtra* is known from the *Ten Mysteries of the One-Vehicle* (*Yicheng shixuanmen* 一乘十玄門) by Zhiyan 智嚴 (602–668). This tendency continued in Fazang's *Tanxuanji* 探玄記 and was finalized in the *Mental Examination on the Fusion of the Three Saints* (*Sansheng yuanrong guanmen* 三聖圓融觀門) by Chengguan 澄觀 (737–838). In this single-fascicle work Chengguan explained the melding of Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī and Vairocana as a way of elucidating a part of the meaning of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. Early examples have not been identified (triads with Vairocana exist from the Northern Qi, but the two attendant bodhisattvas cannot be identified as Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra), but the first fascicle of the Song period *Origins of Qingliangsi* (*Guangqingliang chuan* 廣清涼傳) by Yanyi 延一 (u.d.), contains this remark:

The temple Wentangsi was constructed by five kings. Of old, five princes of an unknown period ... Within the temple precincts is a brick *stūpa*, possibly two *zhang* in height, in three stories. Inside are statues of Vairocana, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. The remainder of the place is extravagant but is not completed. During the Wansui Tongtian period of the Tang dynasty, the monk Ciyun made and enshrined the statues.²

It is therefore clear that a triad of Vairocana with Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra as attendants was made in the Wansui Tongtian period (696). The only Korean examples from the Unified Silla period are the triad with a stone Vairocana in the center at Kyungpook National University Museum 慶北大學校博物館 in Daegu 大邱 (mid-9th century) and a triad with Vairocana cast at Bulguksa at Gyeongsangbukdo, Gyeongju (after 885; only the pedestal of the central image, and the elephant thrones of the two attendants and the lion throne remain extant, and all made of stone, Figure 15). Documentary evidence shows there was a triad arrangement with a round-

2 溫湯寺。五王之所造。昔五王子者。不知何代。... 寺內有塔一所。可高二丈。層給三重。中有盧舍那像。文殊普賢。及餘部從摩不畢具。唐萬歲通天中。有僧慈雲。創此安龕。(T 2099, 51: 1108b²⁵–1108c³).

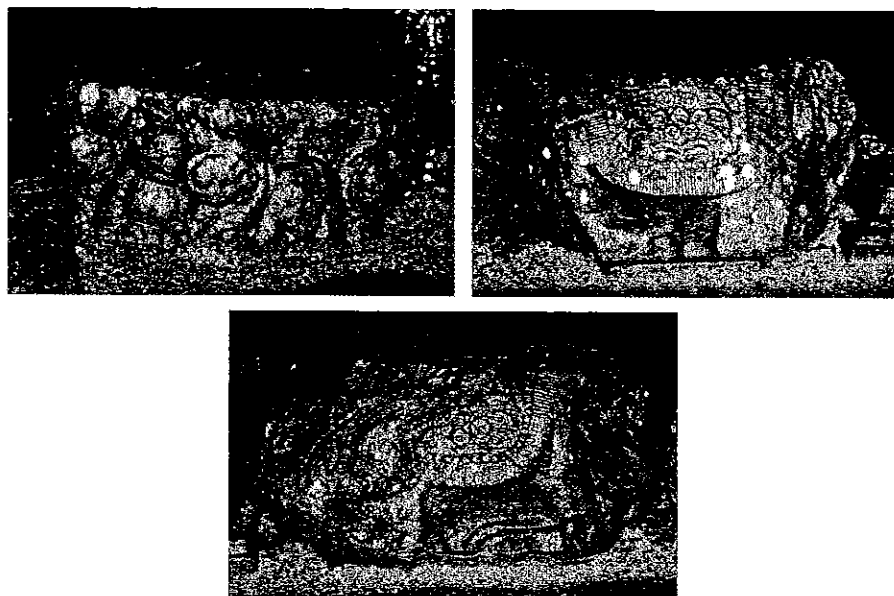


Figure 15.

carved Vairocana at Hwajangsa 華藏寺 on Odaesan 五台山 in Gangwondo. Although extant examples are few, the triad arrangement with Vairocana continued to be made until the Joseon Dynasty.

No example of Vairocana as part of a group of three Buddhas is extant, but the Stele of Jungheung at Geumgangsang Jang'ansa (*Geumgang-san Jang'an-sa jung-heungbi* 金剛山長安寺重興碑) notes that the 14th century Jang'ansa statue was part of a group in the following way:

Statues are erected, with a Vairocana flanked by Rocana and Śākyamuni to the right and left. They tower in the main shrine among fifteen thousand Buddhas and the fifty-three Buddhas who surround them. Avalokiteśvara as Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra along with Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Maitreya, and Kṣitigarbha are in the meditation hall, and Amitābha, the fifty-three Buddhas, and Dharmodgata attend Rocana, all adorned in the finest way residing in the Ocean Treasury palace.³

It is clear that Vairocana was flanked by Rocana Buddha 盧舍那佛 and Śākyamuni Buddha. This arrangement of three Buddhas including Vairocana is described in the ninth fascicle of Zhiyi's 智顗 (538–597) *Phrases and Words of the Wonderful Law Lotus Sūtra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句) in the "Chapter of the explanation of the life duration of the Buddha" (*Shi shouliang pin* 釋壽量品).

³ 像設則有毘盧遮那左右盧舍那釋迦、巖然當中、萬五千佛五十三佛、周匝圍繞、居正殿焉、音大士千手千眼、與文殊普賢彌勒地藏、居禪室焉、阿彌陀五十三佛法起菩薩翊盧舍那、居海藏之宮、皆極其莊嚴...



Figure 16.

The Law-body (*dharmakāya*) is called Vairocana, which translates as “extending everywhere”. The retributive or reward-body (*sambhogakāya*) is Rocana, which translates as “fully pure”. The manifestation-body (*nirmāṇakāya*) is Śākyamuni, which translates as “saving from the fire”.⁴

This is based on a clear differentiation between the *dharmakāya* Vairocana, the *sambhogakāya* Rocana, and the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni. A well-known example among those extant is the line engraving on the eastern wall of the stone box excavated from Tiangong 天宮 of the northern *stūpa* at Yanchangsi 延昌寺 located at Chaoyang 朝陽 in Liangning prefecture, China (circa 1043). In this example the *dharmakāya* Vairocana has the *bodhyagrī-mudrā*, the *sambhogakāya* wears a robe on which Mt. Sumeru is depicted and is in the so-called *feilaifeng*-style *vyākhyāna-mudrā* in which both hands are flexed with the wrists facing outward, and the *nirmāṇakāya* Śākyamuni with the *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*. Many examples of a similar iconography exist in Korea from the 14th century and later, in other words the extant examples show that this was widespread at the end of the Goryeo 高麗 dynasty and during the Joseon 朝鮮 period (Figure 16).

Among Chinese examples of Rocana Buddha in the center of an arrangement of the Buddhas of the three time-periods, a famous one is the statue in the Dazhusheng Cave 大住聖窟 at Lingquansi 靈泉寺, located in Anyang 安陽 in Henan prefecture, founded by Lingyu 靈裕 (518–605) in 589. The record of its construction reveals that it was an image among the Buddhas of the three time-periods:

Dazhusheng Cave was opened in the ninth year of the Kaihuang era of the Great Sui dynasty. Properly constructing the caves required the labor of 1,624 people, and 900 people for the statue. It contains an image on Rocana in a shrine, Amitābha in a shrine, and Mai-

4 法身如來名毘盧遮那。此翻遍一切處。報身如來名盧舍那。此翻淨滿。應身如來名釋迦文。此翻度沃焦。(T 1718, 34: 128a¹⁶⁻¹⁹).



Figure 17.

treya in a shrine, the thirty-five Buddhas in thirty-five shrines, the seven Buddhas in seven shrines, and twenty-four patriarchs and senior monks.⁵

Lingyu was a monk of the Nandao sect 南道派 of the Dilun school 地論宗, and as is evident through his authorship of the nine-fascicle *Commentary and Doctrinal Principles of Huayanjing* (*Huayanshu ji zhigui* 華嚴疏及旨歸), he also had a thorough knowledge of Buddhahadra's translation of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. The Dazhusheng Cave that Lingyu was involved with focused on Rocana as the Buddha of the present age as mentioned in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapter, "Chapter on the entry in the world of the Law" (*Rufajiepin* 入法界品) in Buddhahadra's translation of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* and was flanked by Amitābha for the past and Maitreya for the future. In Korea such an arrangement of the Buddhas of the three times has not been reported before the 13th century. The oldest instance occurs in the relief on the ten-story stone tower at Gyeongjeonsa 敬天寺 established in 1348, and there are some later examples such as the *Samsebulhwa* 三世佛會 in relief on the stone tower of Wongaksa 圓覺寺 established in 1468 (Figure 17).

5 大住聖窟。大隋開皇九年己酉歲、敬造窟用功一千六百廿四、像世尊用功九百。盧舍那世尊一龕。阿彌陀世尊一龕。彌勒世尊一龕。三十五佛世尊三十五龕。七佛世尊七龕。傳法聖大法師廿四人。



Figure 18.



Figure 19.

An arrangement of three Buddhas other than those of the *trikāya* or *trailokya* was notably represented by the statues of Rocana flanked by Amitābha and Bhaiṣajyaguru enshrined at Yongmunsa 龍門寺 in Yechon 醴泉, Gyeongsangbukdo (early 16th century), which burned down in 1984. It is impossible to identify the deities in most other Joseon period examples of arrangements of three Buddhas, and further studies are needed.

Illustrated forms were made from the mid-8th century, and there are many examples from the Goryeo and Joseon periods.

2. Seven Lions with a Lotus Throne

A characteristic seating arrangement with examples found throughout Asia for Mahāvairocana of the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala* is on a lotus throne with seven lions.

Examples from northwestern India include the gilt bronze seated Mahāvairocana of the *Vajradhātu* (8th century) preserved in Sōjiji temple 總持寺 in Yokohama that is conjectured to have been unearthed in the Kashmir or Swat regions, the copper Mahāvairocana of the *Vajradhātu* (late 8th to 9th centuries, Figure 18) believed to have been excavated from Swat, and the Metropolitan Museum image excavated is Gilgit (10th century). Although these examples are sculpted in the round, the seven lions of the pedestal all face forward and are arranged linearly. This facing forward of the lions is not found in other regions, and is considered to be a characteristic of examples from northwestern India.

As proof of the transmission of this northwestern Indian style to China there are Śubhakarasiṃha's *Vajradhātu* practice, "Ritual on the practice of the Yoga method by

the Buddha Sinciput of the Victory of the Venerable" (*Zunsheng foding xiuyunqifa guiyi* 尊勝佛頂修瑜伽法軌儀) and the "Mental examination in Five Sections" (*Wubu xinguan*, Figure 19). Unlike the northwestern Indian examples, the central lion is positioned in front of the pedestal facing the front, and the three lions on either side are positioned diagonally. The lions are below the petals of the lotus throne, and later examples follow this style, but are limited to paintings and *mandalas*, as this style is an illustrative technique.

Statues following the style found in such works as the *Wubu xinguan*, with the lions carved in the round and facing out in all directions are found in Indonesia, China, Korea and Japan. This is the basic pattern for sculpture. Some relief images from China show an arrangement with only the three lions visible from the front.

The characteristic arrangement of the lotus throne with seven lions of Mahāvairocana of the Vajradhātu had been introduced to Unified Silla by the middle of the 8th century as the *Silla Hwaeom-gyeong byeonsang do* shows. The lotus throne with seven lions adopted in Unified Silla was of four types (Table 1) appropriate to the already existing octagonal pedestal designs.

To date, however, none of the early examples of Vairocana found in the temples of the Silla Hwaeom school as the main image are seated on a lotus pedestal with seven lions, and the reason for this remains uncertain. Extant examples seated on lotus pedestals with seven lions in Korea are concentrated within a certain limited period and place. They are a limited number of seated stone Mahāvairocana statues made in the region of Nakdonggang 洛東江 in central and northern Gyeongsangbukdo 慶尙北道, which was a center for Buddhist sculpture that replaced the capital Gyeongju area in the 9th century and later, and to the period of the mid-9th to early 10th centuries. This region was a center of the Hwaeom school of Uisang's lineage focused on Buddhahadra's translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* from the second half of the 7th century on, but from the middle of the 8th century, Fazang's lineage introduced by Sinrim using Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* became popular there. New elements differing from the Hwaeom of Uisang and Wonhyō 元曉 were introduced and became central. Entering the 9th century, the royal family and nobles in this region began to build private temples (*gyan-je* 願刹), and through exchanges with the Faxiang 法相 and Seon schools created a unique form of Hwaeom religious practice. As the region was located along the main route connecting China and Gyeongju, and also as this area was the center of the Hwaeom school represented by Buseoksa temple and others, it was the first to receive new ideas from China, and was the quickest to adapt them. Another factor was that this region was just one of many undistinguished regions of the time, and the temples there were more able to introduce changes than the government controlled temples of the Gyeongju area. As these temples developed new forms of Hwaeom worship, it was natural that they would require new images different from the ones they had used previously. Thus, they created a version of the *bodhyagrī-mudrā* with the little finger of the right hand extended, while placing three transformation Buddhas in the halo, as had already been done in China with the seated Vairocana at Fengxiansi 奉先寺 in the Longmen

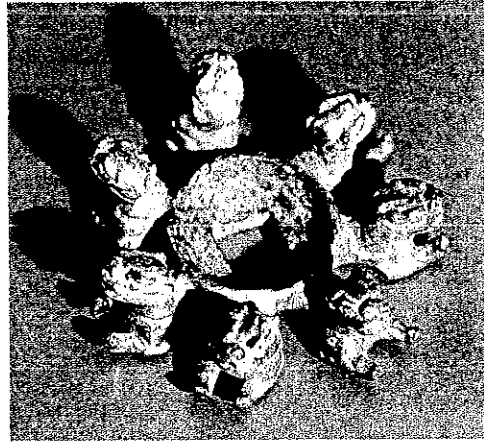


Figure 20.

Caves 龍門石窟. Along with that they incorporated the seven lions of the lotus throne of Mahāvairocana of the Vajradhātu, which had already been introduced, to make a new form of iconography. Because of these local circumstances, they introduced to seated stone images in the Vairocana tradition of Śubhakarasiṃha the lotus throne with seven lions, and innovatively positioned them around the middle stone dais of the octagonal base or on the sides of the lower part of the lower stone dais. This type of Vairocana seated on a lotus throne with seven lions appears mainly at the end of the Unified Silla, especially at the end of the 9th century, and not in the central Gyeongju area but in central and northern Gyeongsangbukdo (the Nakdonggang basin).

Looking over the important examples extant in this region, the styles can be differentiated into two categories depending on where the lions are placed. The first group of statues has the seven lions arranged on the middle stone dais, while the second group has offering bodhisattvas and the like arrayed on the middle stone dais with the seven lions positioned below the lower stone dais. Both groups have further subdivisions.

Stylistically, the examples of the first group depict the lions carved in the round and placed on the middle dais facing outwards in all directions. Unfortunately, however, only the middle stand of a gilt bronze pedestal is extant and now preserved at Dongguk University Museum 東國大學校博物館 (*circa* 9th century, Figure 20). This middle dais is 1.5 cm high and 5.2 cm in width at the largest point, and is thought to have originally been part of a small iron or bronze seated Vairocana. It is comparable to the middle stand of, for instance, the bronze seated Mahāvairocana of the Vajradhātu preserved by the Djakarta Central Museum in Indonesia (*circa* 9th century).

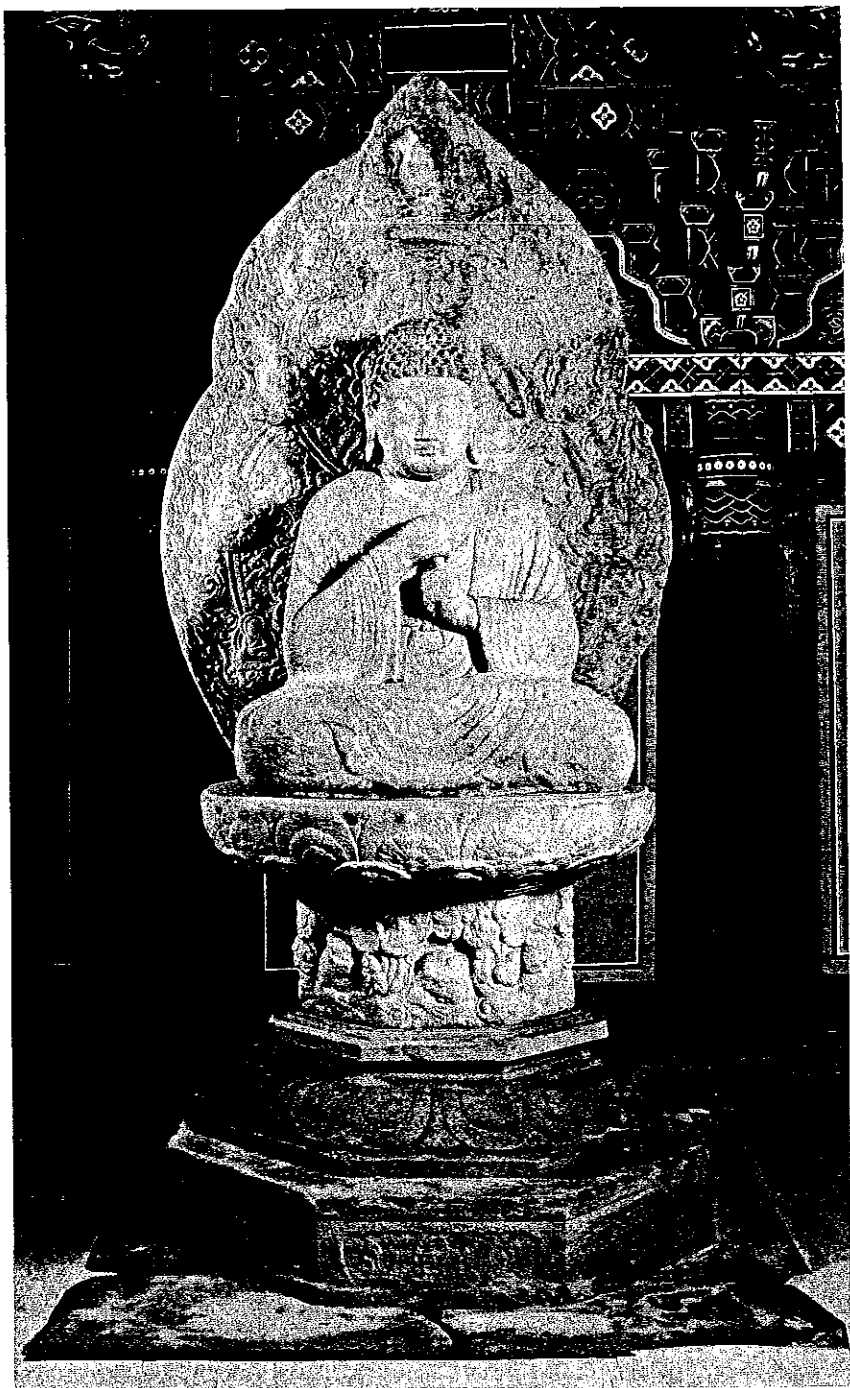
Among the examples in the first group are those which have the seven lions carved in the round on seven of the sides of the octagonal middle dais. The remaining eighth side at the rear of the statue has a lotus. This type can be found, for instance, in the stone seated Vairocana from the Biroam of the Donghwasa located in Gwangyeonsi

in Daegu. Among the examples with this type of pedestal, the earliest known is the statue dated to around 863 in Biroam (Figure 21). This statue is important because of its boat-shaped full-body mandorla and octagonal lotus throne, which are both characteristic of Unified Silla period stone seated statues. Moreover, although partly in the Gyeongju style, the statue also exhibits partial features of differing styles of transformation Buddhas in the mandorla and seven lions on the lotus throne. The base of this statue is octagonal and consists of lower, middle and upper daises and is more complex than earlier examples in its iconography. The upper dais is circular and has a double-layered lotus of sixteen distinct petals with floral patterns in between. The lower dais is octagonal and has eight simple double petals. The structure and expression of these upper and lower daises are common among the pedestals of the later Unified Silla period. However, the middle dais incorporates a cloud pattern, and the upper bodies only of the lions on seven sides are merging from the clouds, while on the remaining eighth side at the rear there is a haut-relief of lotus flower and leaves. Lotuses and lotus petals are arranged in the corner of each side. The lions have a three-dimensional, lively appearance and are shown in a variety of positions, but they all face in the same forward direction. This is the finest example of this style.

The middle stone dais of the second group is decorated with the offering bodhisattvas among others, with seven lions represented on the sides of the lower part of the lower stone dais. The lions are positioned on the seven sides of the lower part of the lower octagonal base, with the eighth side having two sorts of representation. One group has an incense burner on the remaining side, positioned in the front with the bodies of the lions all facing forward. The other group has a triple floral pattern on the eighth side positioned in the rear. The lions again all face forward, which is the same in both groups irrespective of the positioning.

Among the representative examples of the second group, the two stone seated Vairocanas at the Ja'indang 慈忍堂 of Buseoksa in Yeongju 榮州 (Figure 22), Gyeongsangbukdo from the second half of the 9th century have an incense burner on the remaining side (the front). These two statues are overall identical in style, and exhibit the iconography of Vairocana characteristic of northern Gyeongsangbukdo at the end of Unified Silla. Perhaps because these two statues were long exposed to the weather, they are badly eroded and are missing both arms. However, since the mandorlas and pedestals are complete their characteristics are observable. The pedestals of both statues are three-layered and octagonal. The upper dais is circular with a double-layered lotus of sixteen distinct petals, the middle octagonal dais has eight offering seated bodhisattvas among the tusk shapes, and the octagonal lower dais has eight reversed lotus petals, and among the tusk shapes there is an incense burner in the front and lions on the other seven sides. The whole figure is comparable to the stone seated Vairocana preserved by the National Museum of Korea 國立中央博物館 (second half of the 9th century, Figure 23), though their carvings are rather flat.

Representative of the triple floral pattern positioned at the back of the pedestal is the seated stone Vairocana (second half of the 9th century) held by the National Museum of Korea. The lotus throne of this statue is, like at Donghwasa, three-layered



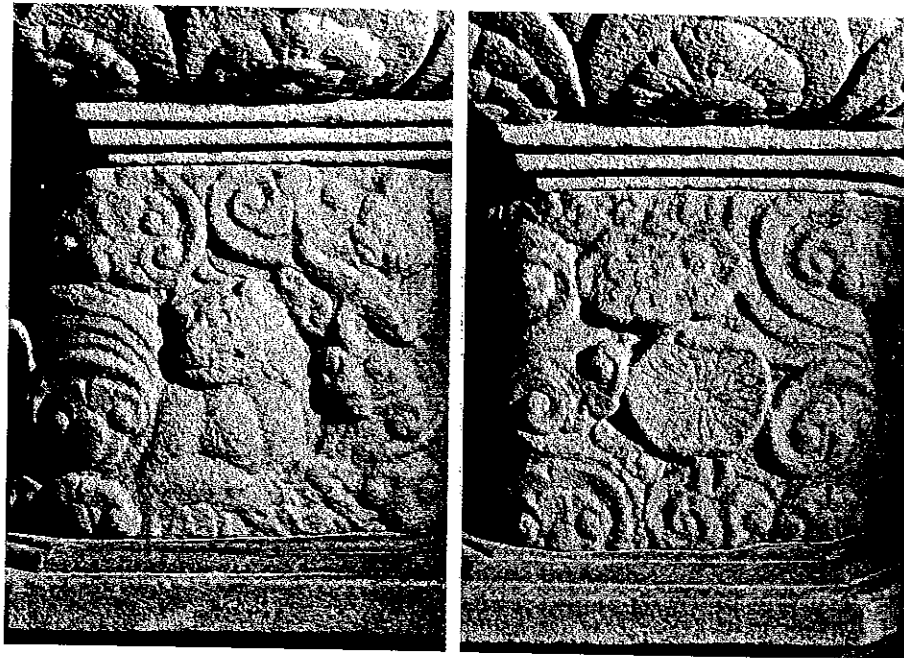


Figure 21.

and octagonal. The upper dais has a double-layered lotus consisting of sixteen single petals with floral patterns, and the lower dais has a simple reversed eight-petalled lotus. On each side of the octagonal middle dais are the eight offering bodhisattvas with round haloes on lotus pedestals without foliate designs. The seven lions arranged on the middle dais in the pedestal for the Vairocana in Donghwasa are now located on seven sides of the lower part of the lower dais with a triple floral pattern on the remaining side to the rear. Each lion is positioned to face front. This statue is identical with that in the Donghwasa in the style of its *mudrā*, while the body proportions, the facial expression, and the style of halo and pedestal are comparable to those of the seated stone Buddha at Cheongyongsa 靑龍寺 of Yechon 醴泉, Gyeongsangbukdo (mid- to late 9th century). Although this statue has seven lions on the lotus throne as is often seen in Vairocana statues created at the end of Unified Silla in central and northern Gyeongsangbukdo, it is thought to be roughly contemporaneous or slightly later than the Vairocana at Donghwasa.

In addition, there are some statues with the *mudrā* for subjugating demons and touching earth created at the end of Unified Silla that incorporate the seven lions on the lower portion of the lower dais of the pedestal. Examples include the two seated stone Vairocanas at the Ja'indang of Buseoksa and a seated stone Buddha at Sujeonggam 水晶庵 of Beopjusa 法住寺. These may have been influenced by seated stone statues of Vairocana.



Figure 22.

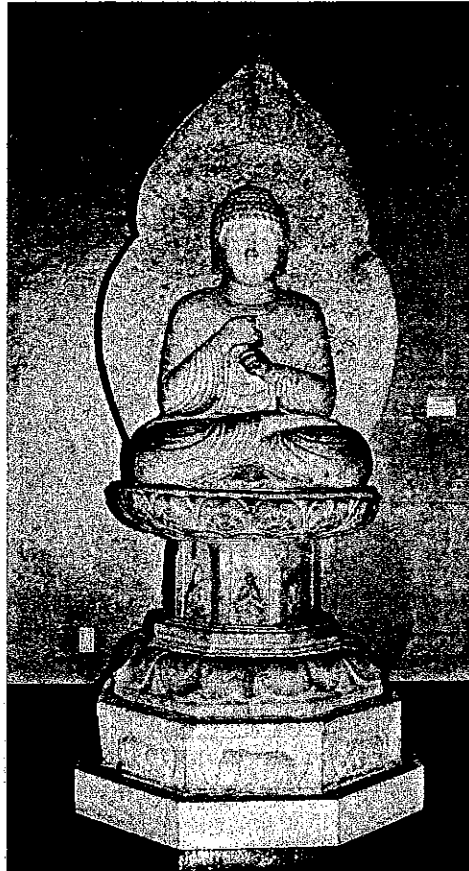


Figure 23.

In conclusion, the positioning of the seven lions on the lotus throne, characteristic of Mahāvairocana of the Vajradhātu beginning in India, was transmitted to China. In China the iconography as clearly established by Śubhakarasiṃha's Vajradhātu practice spread and was introduced to Korea by Śubhakarasiṃha's disciples. At the end of Unified Silla, particularly during the second half of the 9th century, the Vajradhātu Mahāvairocana iconography was introduced into seated stone Vairocana images in central and northern Gyeongsangbukdo (Nakdonggang basin), and a new pattern suited to the existing octagonal base was created. A further classification can be made depending on whether the middle or lower dais was used, and on whether an incense burner was depicted in the front or a triple floral pattern in the rear. These are not seen in the Goryeo period, therefore the seven lions on the lotus thrones of Vairocana images is characteristic of the Unified Silla period, and is typical of central and northern Gyeongsangbukdo and unique to Vairocana.

The iconography transmitted to Japan and Korea was that clearly formulated by Śubhakarasiṃha and those around him in China concerning Vajradhātu practice. It is the iconography of such texts as the *Zunsheng foding xiu yuqiafa guiyi*, *Zunsheng mantuluo tu* 尊勝曼荼羅圖, and *Wubu xinguan* 五部心觀. In Japan, this iconography was used for the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala*, and for "Cranial Protuberance (Sinciput)" (Jap. Butchō 佛頂) *maṇḍalas* for deities such the Single-syllable Golden Wheel (*Ekāksara-uṣṇīṣacakra*; Jap. *Ichiji kinrin* 一字金輪) and Uṣṇīṣavijayā (Jap. Sonshō butchō 尊勝佛頂). Among the latter, the positioning of seven lions on the lotus throne was directly influenced by the translation by Dharmasena 達磨栖那 of the *Great Sublimity Sūtra* (*Damiaojing* 大妙經).