



동아시아 불교문화

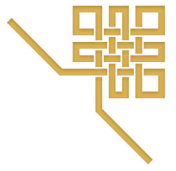
East Asian Buddhist Culture

[lecture 1]

Transmission of East Asian Buddhist Culture

Prof. Nam-lin Hur





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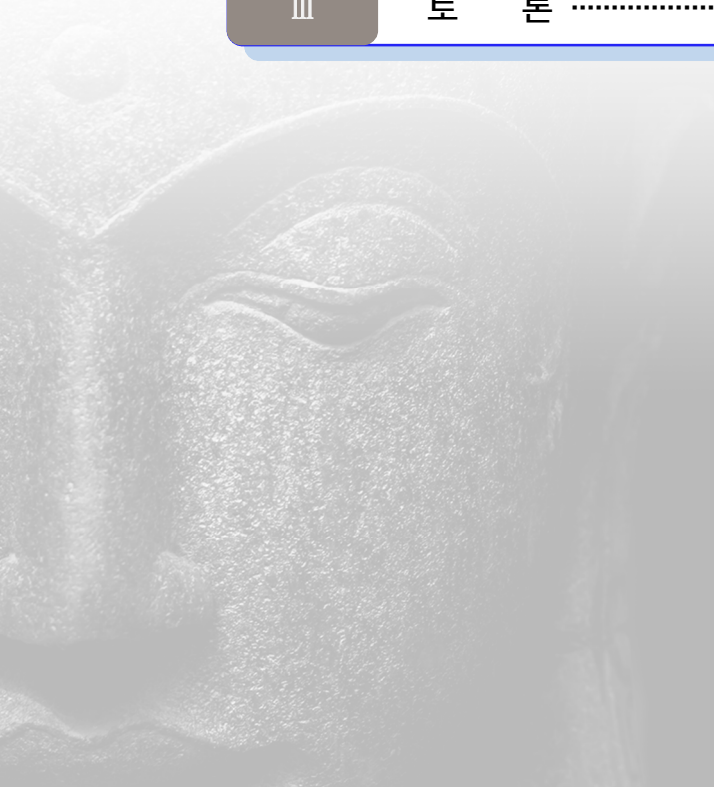
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I. 학습안내

1

강의개요

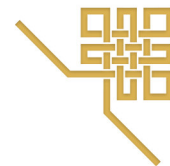
This lecture series highlight how Buddhism was practiced in East Asia with an emphasis on Korean and Japanese Buddhist cultures in the context of East Asian Buddhism. For that, a select group of following topics are discussed: transmission of Buddhist culture, power and wealth, the afterlife, Buddhism and Confucianism, death rituals, prayer, play, transition into the modern age, violence, and reform movements.

2

학습목표

Given that there are other similar lecture series, including “Korean Buddhism seen from China” and “Korean Buddhism and East Asia,” in this lecture series more weight is given to the comparison of Korean and Japanese Buddhist cultures. In understanding characteristic features of each country’s Buddhist culture in the context of Buddhism in general, as well as in the context of East Asian Buddhist culture, a comparative and border-crossing approach is emphasized. It is expected that this lecture series which defy a one-country focus offer insights that would help one gain an in-depth understanding of “our” culture and “their culture.”





3

주차별 강의주제

1주차	Transmission of East Asian Buddhist culture
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II. 강의

1-1

Approaches to Buddhist studies

Before discussing each topic in my lecture series, I want to share my thoughts on Buddhist studies with you, particularly regarding how I approach Buddhist studies, my perspective on Buddhist culture pertaining to the topics I deal with in my lecture series.

In Buddhist studies, in my view there are three distinctive areas of study:

There are so many scholars working on so many different topics, and they are all different in terms of emphasis, interest and research.

So number one, textual studies or doctrinal studies which focus on Buddhist scriptures and texts;

There are so many Buddhist texts and many scholars working on Buddhist scriptures that were written in many different languages, Sanskrit, Pali and classical or Chinese and so on, so it's like a study of the Bible itself, the Old Testament or the New Testament.

Number two, monastic history which deals with eminent Buddhist priests, their life stories, their biographies, their writings, their organizations and institutions. This is sangha history.

Number three, social history which pays attention to how lay people practiced Buddhism while making a living in society.

It's about the lay people, the ordinary people, how they practice Buddhism, how they understand Buddhism.

In terms of Christian studies, textual or doctrinal studies can be compared with "theology" ;

This is a study of the God, the Bible, and monastic history with a church history, the history of churches, the history of Christianity.

So this is also an important range of Christian studies.

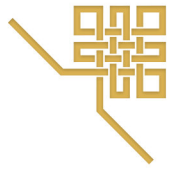
And then, social history; this is a history of how people believe and practice their religion.

In my lectures, I discuss the social history of Buddhist culture, neither doctrinal studies nor sangha history, but the social history of Buddhist culture in East Asia from ancient times to the modern age.

So this is my key interest, not in doctrinal studies or in Sanga history, but paying attention to how ordinary people, lay people understand and practice Buddhism.

For this, I am interested in examining how Buddhist ideals were put into practice, or more precisely, how lay people practiced Buddhism in search of what.





So with what goals they have practiced Buddhism, so just ordinary practice and ordinary understanding.

I can say that it is a discussion of theory and practice, or the dynamics of theory and practice.

The dynamics between theory and practice is a fascinating issue in Buddhist studies simply because there have been a huge variety of practices in the name of Buddhist ideals or teachings,

say, Buddhist ideals and teachings are somewhat unified, but what people practiced based on those teachings are so diverse.

In Buddhism, people practiced what they needed in a selective manner for what they wanted; they did so throughout the history.

In other words, Buddhist teachings or ideals and Buddhist practices were like two different things, not identical are very different, two different wheels if you like.

Some Buddhists might argue that there are a set of essential issues that must be studied and taught to students.

I do not buy that kind of argument, because people do many different things in the name of Buddhism.

We have to embrace those diverse practices, people can do anything for themselves.

So given this, the argument that there are some essential issues in Buddhism is premised on the assumption that Buddhism is such-and-such a religion, that there is a right or correct form of Buddhism, and that, therefore, any discussion of Buddhism should be about it.

So this is a very powerful premise saying that this is what people should understand, this is what people should follow.

But as I said moments ago, people do things very differently according to their needs and with the means of which they have.

So all the time, this premise doesn't really hold to the truth.

So I do not follow such an argument simply because theory and practice are not that identical.

Again, theory and practice are quite different, not identical.

Buddhist culture is what people have practiced in the name of Buddhism.

What people practice in the name of Buddhism often runs against some normative Buddhist teachings.

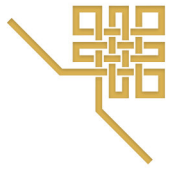
But I would suggest that whatever they do in the name of Buddhism, that is also a part of Buddhist culture.

So not based on theory, but rather on the basis of practice, let's look at Buddhist culture in a broader context.

So, I do not buy this argument that this is a form of Buddhism that must be followed by all others.

So how to approach Buddhist culture?





This is an important question.

And depending on how to approach, depending on what perspective you employ, the outcome, the understanding would be quite different.

So you need to be sensitive to the diversity of Buddhist practices.

And one good way to understand those diverse aspects of Buddhist culture is to look at how people behave, try to understand the human behavior, the factors that are involved in human behavior.

Because People do what is beneficial to them.

People avoid what is harmful to them.

This is applied to everybody, human behavior.

In other words, people practice Buddhism for gain, not for loss; they practice in order to fulfil or satiate their desires and wishes.

for gain, not for loss, again.

So, Buddhist practice is geared to benefit its practitioners,
not so different from other types of human behavior.

It's not exceptional, everything is the same. According to their principle, people behave.

So, people do something for gain, not for loss whatever it might be.

so here, as you see in the diagram, we've got a theory
and the practice.

They have to move or to practice, and then practice is allied with human behavior. And in order to understand human behavior, that is a key question; what kind of approach we need and apply.

It means that, as far as its practitioners are concerned, Buddhism is a tool for gain, no matter how it is identified or defined.

So, we deal with human desires and means for achieving those desires. Religion is associated with human desires.

Sometimes people try to avoid the term 'desire' in understanding religion, because assuming that religion is not closely associated with vulgar or mundane desires.

But I consider religious culture a part of human behavior that shows similar goals, similar attitudes, and similar principles.

We are all clear that human desires are geared for survival and prosperity and happiness; to be happy as long as possible.

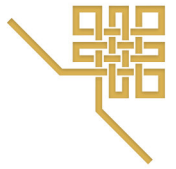
Buddhism, and any other religion for that matter, is a tool for these goals; to be happy, to be positive.

At the same time, we should be clear that what sustains life is material more than anything else.

We need food for survival, we need clothing and shelter for survival. So material is the most important element for life.

All others, including religion or Buddhism, or philosophy, or whatever, are all secondary.





Buddhism is a secondary matter for survival, which depends on a material.

So in other words, Buddhism is a secondary, this is in my position.

Buddhism is not at the center of human survival and prosperity, but it is one of the tools we have to achieve our goal of being happy and eternal happiness.

Buddhism is a secondary, a distant secondary, means of life.

Then, how to secure material? It is determined by power.

Power relations determines the ways in which material is distributed;

in premodern society, the social status system which was based on the power relations of its own held the key to the ways in which material was distributed.

In other words, any discussion of religious practice or Buddhist practice cannot be separated from material and power relations in society, or in the country, because religion is a secondary means of life or survival which was locked into the governing structure of material and power.

Thus, I will discuss Buddhist culture in the context of material, power, and governance pertaining to Korea, Japan, and China.

So this is what I call social history of Buddhism, and that is my own approach and perspective. Based on that, I try to deal with a set of topics in my lecture series.

Finally, I will pay attention to the issue of what constitutes “Korean-ness” in Korean Buddhism?

Because it's a lecture series organized by Dongguk University and a lot of audience, I assume, would be in Korea, and they might be interested in some distinctive features of Buddhism that has been unfolded in Korea.

This is a question which many scholars of Korean Buddhism love to pursue; they want to identify or locate elements that make Korean Buddhism distinctive.

It sounds like an easy task, but it is not so simple because it involves more than Korea.

Here, Korean Buddhist culture is compared with Buddhist cultures in other countries.

otherwise you cannot really clearly see some distinctive features of Korean Buddhist culture.

When you compare that with other cultures, you can see some differences.

The real issue lurking in this question has to do with the ways in which Buddhism has been adapted or transformed according to the Korean environments.

This question requires examining Korean Buddhist culture from a comparative perspective.

Korean elements lie in the intersections between Buddhism practiced in Korea and Korean society which sustains such a Buddhism.

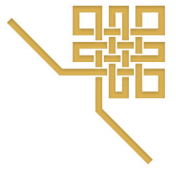
So, we need to understand two elements; one is Buddhism and the other is Korean society, and actions between these two elements.

How can we find these Korean elements?

Before getting into this issue, I should stress that the question of Korean-ness in Korean Buddhist culture does not assume that there is original/authentic Buddhism somewhere else.

There has not been, nor will there be, an original or authentic form of Buddhism. There is





no such a thing.

So, Buddhism practiced in Korea is none other than a “Koreanized” form of Buddhism, but that does not mean it is distinct or strays from the original/authentic form of Buddhism, simply because there is no authentic/original form of Buddhism in the first place.

So, every Buddhist culture has its own citizenship in the world of Buddhism.

Likewise, Confucianism practiced in China can be seen as a form of Confucianism which evolved within the context of Chinese society and culture over time and across space.

In my lectures, I suggest that one good way to explore Korean-ness in Buddhism practiced in Korea is to compare it with Buddhism practiced in Japan.

Japanese Buddhism is often regarded as being marginal, sidetracked, or even distorted from the more original or authentic modes of Buddhism that supposedly flourished in China or Korea.

That is not the case, that is not the case at all.

Worse yet, some scholars even rush to assume that Buddhism was all transmitted, albeit erroneously, from Korea to Japan only and, for this reason, they often snub the latter.

Out of this snubbing attitude, when it comes to Korean Buddhism, people tend to compare it with Chinese Buddhism, not with Japanese Buddhism.

Thinking that Chinese Buddhism was the origin of Korean Buddhism and it might be more authentic and closer to Orthodox Buddhism, but that is what I denied, do not accept.

I am not saying that comparing Korean Buddhism with Chinese Buddhism has no merit.

What I suggest is that Japan is a forgotten trove of comparative study which might greatly benefit scholars who are interested in trying to identify and evaluate Korean-ness in Korean Buddhism.

We have many works on comparing Korean Buddhism with Chinese Buddhism, in other lecture series.

We have similar topics dealt with in which Korean Buddhism is compared with Chinese Buddhism,

but not many works on comparing Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism.

Buddhism might always be the same Buddhism in Korea but when it is seen from without, particularly from Japan, it reveals itself more clearly as a form of Buddhism associated with the Korean environments.

So, you cannot understand Korean Buddhism without studying the Korean environments in which Buddhism has been developed and been flourishing.

That is why in my lecture I compare, more often, Korean and Japanese Buddhist cultures. It will be Korean Buddhism seen from the periphery, so to speak.

It will be Korean Buddhism seen from the periphery, so to speak.

not from China, from the center,

some people assume that way, but I do not consider China is located at the center of East Asian Buddhism.





I have two leading questions in discussing East Asian Buddhist culture, as a whole from lecture 1 to lecture 10, guiding and watching questions.

Number 1 is: How did people in East Asia project their desires into their practices of Buddhism in society?

So, here emphasis on desire and practice, not on theory, not on some spiritual pursuit, but just ordinary human desires.

And number 2: What Buddhist ideas were associated with the ritual behaviors of people in East Asia who sought to fulfill their desires?

So here, key emphasis is placed on behavior and the rituals; rituals, a means of achieving the goal of their religious crest.

And that crest is based on the realm of desires, so all combined to produce some sort of social history.

So here, again, you're not gonna see any element of doctrinal studies or textual studies.

The overarching thesis of my lecture series is this: under these leading questions, I will try to examine Buddhist practices in East Asian history in the context of the governance of material and power that helped to shape the contours of people's religious behavior.

I will try to connect Buddhist culture to material, power, and governance.

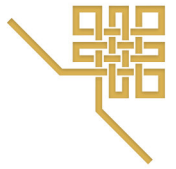
In other words, I will try to trace Buddhist practices observed in East Asia by relating them to human desires associated with the governance of material and power relations.

So, this constitutes a social history of Buddhist culture in East Asia.

Along the way, in particular, I highlight some distinctive features of Buddhist culture found in Korea and Japan, why?

They are distinctive and sometimes different from each other because their material conditions are different, their power conditions are different, and their governance, systems of governance are different.





1-2

What do we mean by transmission of Buddhism?

In Lecture 1, by moving 2, a specific topic varying in mind what I have discussed so far; social history, and emphasis on environments, and material, power, and governance, so relate Buddhism to those elements.

So here in lecture 1, I specifically deal with issue of transmission of Buddhist culture from one place to another.

When we discuss how Buddhist culture was transmitted from one country to another, the conventional narratives have a trap of understanding that places too much emphasis on scriptures and traveling monks, and saying that ‘Oh, there were a couple of Buddhist attacks were transmitted to another place so that in their place, Buddhism just started to blossom.’ that is not the case, too much emphasis on scriptures and monks.

About that, I try to change that perspective.

Somewhat differently, in Lecture 1, I would like to offer a new perspective that might help us rethink what we can mean by the ‘transmission’ of Buddhism, the notion of Buddhism.

So, how was Buddhist culture transmitted from the Korean peninsula to Japan?

And how was it nurtured in ancient Japan?

So here, I focus on the transmission of Buddhism from the Korean peninsula to Japan, not from China to Korea, it’s a different question, in a different context.

Then here, another big question would be: who were involved in developing what kind of Buddhist culture at its initial stage of transmission?

So here, I deal with the notion of transmission because it is quite intriguing.

Now, I turn to the issue of the transmission of Buddhism.

For this issue, I want to pay attention to the notion of transmission or introduction.

As I said, moments ago, when we say that Buddhism was introduced from China to Korea, what do we mean by that introduction or transmission?

Literally, the term ‘transmission’ or ‘introduction’ means that something was brought or conveyed from one place to another.

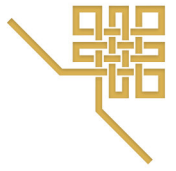
So, when we say that Buddhism was introduced from China to Korea, does it mean that a package called Buddhism was delivered or brought to Korea?

What package of Buddhism are we talking about?

A common story goes like this, it is what we hear all the time about the transmission of Buddhism from China to Korea, saying that Buddhism was introduced to Kokuryō in 372 during the reign of King Sosurim.

It says, in the sixth month of 372, a Chinese monk Shundao visited Kokuryō, bringing with him some statues of the Buddha and some Buddhist texts.





In response, in 375, King Sorurim built a Buddhist temple for Shundao.

Of course, there are more stories different from this one regarding the introduction of Buddhism from China to Kokuryō.

In all cases, these stories are not so easy to verify.

There are not many evidences that might make the story real.

In the case of Paekche, it was 384.

In that year, going to conventional narrative, an Indian monk arrived in Paekche through China.

In the following year, a temple was built in Hansan and ten monks were ordained.

Similarly, this story still lacks some tangible evidence.

As you see in the map, people love to draw that kind of indications in terms of transmission of Buddhist culture.

But let me try to see from a different angle.

In Silla as well, the story has it that King Pōphŭng recognized Buddhism in 527 after Ich'adon had been martyred.

Likewise, regarding the initial introduction of Buddhism to Silla, there are a few different versions as well.

In any case, regarding the issue of Buddhism's transmission or introduction, what we have as a point of argument is that one or a couple monks visited Korean kingdoms from China or India.

And they brought some Buddhist texts and Buddhist material items such as Tantrism or ritual tools.

And some rulers and kings turned kind or sympathetic to these alien elements.

So, does it mean that Buddhism is represented by a few books, a few images, or some friendly attitude?

Some texts are what Buddhism is all about?

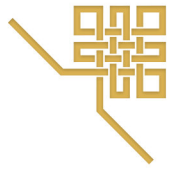
Even so, does it mean that people in Kokuryō, for example, who saw some Buddhist texts understood them and practiced Buddhism according to them?

So, a text was transmitted, and people understood it and practiced it?

There are so many questions we can ask about what we mean by introduction of Buddhism.

Why are scholars so obsessed with a first date of introduction?





1-3 How did people nurtured a Buddhist culture of their own from scratch?: The case of Hōryūji

Here, I try to offer a different perspective regarding the transmission of Buddhism or Buddhist culture.

I would like to take a different perspective.

It is not about some Buddhist texts; it is not about some monks who traveled from one place to another; it is not about how compassionate a king was toward alien visitors or Buddhist texts, somewhat different questions and somewhat different perspective.

Rather, I want to look at how people nurtured a Buddhist culture of their own from scratch, so people, not a few individuals, but people, how they were involved in nurturing a Buddhist culture from scratch.

And then, what factors were involved in the process of developing a Buddhist culture of their own along the way, so the society itself, cultural traditions, and native customs; out of those elements, what kind of Buddhist culture was born and nurtured.

And how did they come up with a new way of understanding Buddhism in the context of their cultural tradition and social conditions.

So, as a whole, we need to be more sensitive to the agency, lay agency, who built up their own version of Buddhist culture.

For these questions, I will take two Japanese examples that somehow show different trajectories of Buddhist culture emerging and unfolding from scratch.

One is the case of one particular Buddhist temple that is Hōryūji in Nara Prefecture in Japan.

And the other is two specific Buddhist images that have played a key role in nurturing Buddhist piety in Japan.

These two Buddhist images involve an issue of imaginary transmission, not a real transmission as I'll explain soon.

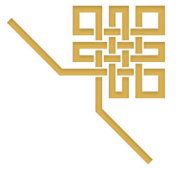
So, two somewhat different examples; one is about temple the other is about images, and one is real and the other is imaginary.

And all these two examples have stories of their own in terms of transmission of Buddhist culture.

And in any case, both the case of Hōryūji and the two Buddhist images are all related to the Korean peninsula in terms of origin, which means that they were all from, or influenced by, Korean Buddhist culture in ancient times.

So, this is somewhat different; the story of transmission of Buddhist culture, not from China to Korea, but rather from Korea to Japan, and it's not about particular Buddhist texts or some





Buddhist monks.

But it's about what did the people, lay people, and then images that existed in the imagination of people in Japan, so this is somewhat different examples.

But interestingly, all these two stories, examples are related to the Korean peninsula.

But, at the same time, it should be reminded that these two examples also carry Japan's own features in Buddhist culture.

It means that, say, these two examples are associated with the Korean peninsula, but what happened afterwards in Japan has its own history, has its own story, in which Japan's own features are primary and that is how they developed and nurtured Buddhist culture transmitted from other places.

Now, the example of Hōryūji, I think some people may have visited this place, a well-known and famous temple.

The Hōryūji Buddhist Temple which is located in Nara Prefecture is the oldest wooden structure in the world.

And it is considered a major cultural achievement at the turn of the seventh century.

It was erected in 607, probably a small structure, but afterwards more buildings were added, and more land was added to it, so a huge complex afterwards.

It was called Ikarugaji at that time of construction, initial construction.

This temple is a national pride of Japan, why?

The Hōryūji is famous because it has a number of national treasures.

They include the Shaka triad, which is Northern Wei-style statue of Shaka and two attending bodhisattvas made in 623, and a standing wooden statue of Kannon, in Japanese Avalokiteshvara, in Korean 관음, and this Kannon statue is known as the Kudara Kannon, here, the Kudara is the key.

This statue was made in the first half of the seventh century.

And then, paintings on the sides of a small lacquer altar, and a statue of the healing Buddha which was completed in 607.

And the Nihon Shoki tells that in 609 a ship from Paekche was storm-driven to a western Japanese port.

On board were a number of Buddhist monks; they informed the Japanese authorities that they had originally been dispatched to China but encountered a fierce storm and drifted to Japan.

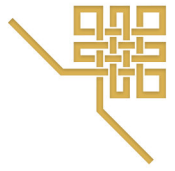
Anyhow, the monk-bearing Paekche ship was welcomed to Japan.

So, this story implies that there were monks from Paekche to Japan and the Japanese authorities welcomed them.

In addition, there were a stream of monks and people from the Korean peninsula to Japan in ancient times and they were carriers of Buddhist culture to Japan.

So here, not particular few individual monks, but a stream of monks, a stream of people who moved from the Korean peninsula to Japan.





Indeed, the Hōryūji had to do with immigrants from Paekche in the Korean peninsula.

Among the treasures of Hōryūji, the standing wooden statue of Kannon denotes that.

This particular statue was called the Kudara Kannon.

Kudara refers to Paekche, the Japanese in ancient times called Paekche, Kudara; Kokuryō, Koma; and Silla, Shiragi.

Not only the Kudara Kannon, other artifacts of Hōryūji were also made by the hands of immigrants from Paekche and other places in the Korean peninsula, and, possibly, by some people from the Chinese continent.

Thanks to their skills and knowledge, during the seventh century, about 50 Buddhist temples were founded in Japan.

So, the seventh-century Japan or Asuka Japan is often compared to the years of the Meiji Restoration in the 19th century, when Japan opened its door to the West, and began a modernization process.

Asuka-period Japan flourished with Buddhist culture thanks to the roles of immigrants from the Korean kingdoms and China.

Asuka Japan represented a watershed in Japanese history, along with Meiji Japan which embraced a zeal for westernization.

So, in understanding the introduction and rise of Buddhist culture in ancient Japan, we need to look at migrants from Korea and China.

They were an important channel of the transfer of alien civilization, including Buddhism, to the Japanese archipelago.

Korean migrations to Japan after the Tang invasions of Korean kingdoms in the 660s were particularly significant.

Once settling in Japan, Korean artisans, builders, administrators, and various specialists were mobilized in strengthening the state.

They were also an integral part of the emerging Buddhist culture in Asuka Japan.

So, this is what I mean by transmission of Buddhist culture, which was promoted by a large number of people, not by a few monks or a few Buddhist texts.

For examples, two distinct waves of Korean migrations catch our attention, we can see on the map, a stream of people coming from the Korean peninsula to Japan in ancient times.

So, one from Paekche after its demise in 663, and another from Kokuryō after it had collapsed in 668.

Not many from Silla or Shiragi, but when the kingdoms collapsed, people in Paekche and Kokuryō tried to move to other places for survival and prosperity.

So here, some records we find on Nihon Shoki say, in 665, one high-placed Paekche refugee was granted court rank in Japan, and 400 Paekche commoners were settled in the province of Ōm.

In the following year, 2,000 more men and women from Paekche were settled in provinces to the east.





And in 669, two former Paekche ministers of state arrived in Japan with more than 700 men and women, they were settled in the Kamō district of Ōmi Province.

So, what it means is that a lot of people from Paekche to Japan, when they moved to Japan, they carried their own culture that included Buddhism.

That is what I mean by the notion, the transmission of Buddhist culture.

And then, about Kokuryō migrants, a chronicle entry says that 56 persons from Kokuryō were settled in the Province of Hitachi that is in Northern Japan.

Another entry reports that 1,799 more were placed in Suruga, now current Shizuoka Prefecture, as well as in other provinces to the East.

In this way, waves of immigrants from the Korean peninsula to Japanese archipelago, they were carriers of Buddhist culture.

The Korean peninsula was a major source of the advanced technology and high culture, including Buddhism.

In addition, Korean immigrants to Japan played an important role in the transmission of political ideas and administrative methods.

Many Korean immigrants were members of the elite who had lost their positions.

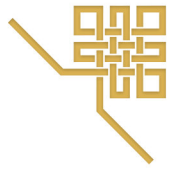
Once arriving in Japan, they were assigned to high positions of the government, and others worked in various areas.

So, in understanding Asuka Buddhist culture, we need to pay attention to the grassroots contribution of these Korean immigrants although Asuka Buddhist culture is Japan's own in many respects, and distinguishable from Buddhist culture in the Korean peninsula.

Here again, transmission of Buddhism not by a few monks, not by a few Buddhist texts, but many people from the Korean peninsula were involved in transmitting, developing, and also nurturing Buddhist culture in the environments of Japan.

That is what I mean by the real transmission of Buddhist culture.





1-4 How did people nurtured a Buddhist culture of their own from scratch?: The case of Buddhist images transmitted

Now, I'm moving to Buddhist images, and this is something imaginary.

Buddhist images were from the Korean peninsula to Japan and nobody knows how they ended up in Japan.

But the stories go about the transmission of Buddhist images, in fact, Buddhist images in the Korean peninsula were well-known from ancient times.

Silla is famous for Buddhist statues, Paekche, too.

The Paekche King Sōng made a huge Buddha statue in 545.

The story has it that he also sent a Buddha statue to Japan when he introduced Buddhism to Japan.

It means that Japan in ancient times acquired Buddhist statues from the Korean peninsula.

And some statues are clearly identified and known, but some of them are not, so here, Buddhist statues.

In this connection, I would like to pay attention to two famous Buddhist statues in Japan: one is the Amitabha (or Amida in Japanese) statue housed in Zenkōji in Nagano; it is known as the Zenkōji Triad, Amida statue in the middle, and then two statues beside, Kannon, and Seishi; and the other is the Avalokitesvara (Kannon in Japanese) statue of Sensōji in current Tokyo.

So, as you see in the photo, this is Zenkōji Amida.

But the story has it that this statue was from other country to Japan by flying, so that's what I mean by imaginary.

The origin of the Zenkōji Triad was first described in the Fusō Ryakki, a record in Japan, this is the record of the late Heian period although it came to have some different versions.

The most commonly known version goes like this: In ancient India there was a wealthy man named Gakkai who had a beautiful daughter named Nyoze.

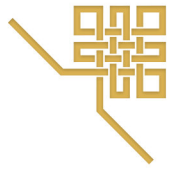
Nyoze died suddenly but was resurrected thanks to the intercession of Amida Buddha.

Out of gratitude, Gakkai, the father, sculpted an image representing the Amida Triad and worshipped it.

Nearly one thousand years later, the story evolved into a scene in Paekche in the Korean peninsula, now from India to Paekche, where Gakkai was reincarnated as King Sōngmyōng, and the Amida Triad flew to preach to him the way of Buddhist compassion.

So, this particular statue flew from India to Paekche by itself, and it's imaginary, it cannot fly by itself any case.





King Sōngmyōng, a son of King Muryōng, is the 26th king of Paekche and ruled the country in 523-554.

He was better known as King Sōng in Korea and China, but known as Sōngmyōng in Japan.

Another time, the Amida Triad traveled to Japan, where Gakkai and King Sōngmyōng were now reincarnated as Honda Yoshimitsu.

Now, the statue moved to Japan from Paekche along with the person, King Sōngmyōng, in the form of reincarnation, King Sōngmyōng was reincarnated as Honda Yoshimitsu

And his first name reads as 'Zenkō', so Zenkōji's Zenkō, who would bring the Triad to Shinano (current Nagano), enshrine it in a newly built temple that is Zenkōji, and venerate it.

So here, we have a very interesting story of transmission of a famous Buddhist statue.

But Yoshimitsu soon encountered a tragedy: His son Honda Yoshisuke and his wife Yayoi suddenly died and fell to the other world, where they suffered agonies.

However, through the compassionate power of the Triad, they were saved from hell and ensured rebirth in paradise.

This particular statue exhibited the compassion, supernatural grace and power.

Upon hearing this, Empress Kōgyoku awarded father and son with governorships and provided them with funds to build a grand temple named Zenkōji to house the Triad.

So, this is Zenkōji in Nagano, and its name, statue Amida Triad, was from Paekche.

As Gakkai, Nyoze, King Sōngmyōng, and the Honda family all experienced, the Zenkōji Amida was able to rescue the dead from hell and to ensure their rebirth in paradise.

The central theme is death, the other world, and rebirth, all in association with the salvific power of the Zenkōji Amida.

In this story of the Zenkōji Amida, Paekche King Sōngmyōng is involved, but in an imaginative way.

So, that is what I mean by an imaginary transmission, it is an imaginary transmission of a Buddhist statue from Korea to Japan.

Now, another example is the Asakusa Kannon.

This is about Asakusa Sensōji and its main Buddhist statue known as Asakusa Kannon.

According to Sensōji chronicles, the Asakusa Kannon statue was found in the Sumida river by two brother fishermen in 628.

This painting shows how they found the statue.

In the quiet morning of that day, the two brothers were casting nets in the Sumida River in the Asakura area.

They tried in seven different places to catch fish, but, to their disappointment, every time they drew up their net, it contained the same small statue.

That is the statue we see in the painting.

And in order to venerate the statue, they set up a structure and people began to pay respect to this statue, so the story goes on and on.

And then, the village head was involved and he realized that this is an unusual image of





Avalokitesvara.

And eventually from this story, the current Sensōji was founded and developed.

So, this is about particular Kannon statue discovered in 628.

But what is insisting is that this statue originated from Korea and it somehow ended up hidden in Sumida River.

Random fisher brothers found the statue which was hidden in the Sumida River, later people realized that this statue was actually from the Korean peninsula.

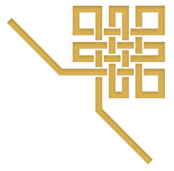
And nobody knows how it ended up being in the Sumida River.

So, this is a transmission of Buddhist statue which is somewhat imaginary, but it played a crucial and a very important role in the Buddhist culture of Sensōji.

So, this is also an imaginary connection with Korea; a Buddhist statue from Korea to Japan that involved a mysterious transmission but played a decisive role in attracting popular Buddhist piety to Sensōji.

So here, we see again the different type of transmission of Buddhist culture from the Korean peninsula to Japan.





1-5

Buddhist transmission as a process of acculturation

Now, what we can learn from these examples that inform the transmission of Buddhism from Korea to Japan?

The common story about the transmission of Buddhism from China to Korea includes elements that involve Buddhist texts and foreign monks.

Again, for example, does it mean that some Buddhist scriptures were brought to Silla and the Silla people read them, understood them, and practiced Buddhism according to those scriptures?

What scriptures, written in what language, did the Silla people read and understand?

Were they able to read Classical Chinese?

How widely?

So, about the transmission of Buddhist texts or the visits of some monks, it raised many interesting questions that we cannot easily answer.

As we all know, the Korean vernacular scripts, Hangul, were created in the fifteenth century.

It means that in ancient Korea, the vernacular language and the written language were different, totally different.

There was no way for those who were not educated in Classical Chinese to read and understand Buddhist texts.

The Japanese Kana were invented in the ninth century.

Even so, it does not mean that Buddhist texts were translated into vernacular Japanese and that people in Japan were able to read those texts.

That must not be the case at all.

When Christianity was introduced to Japan and China in the sixteenth century, in the case of Korea, it was somewhat later, no translation of the Bible was available even in classical Chinese.

So, in the sixteenth century, seventeenth century, no Bible, but there were Christian missionaries working in Japan and China spreading their religion.

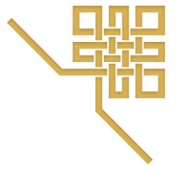
It had taken a few more centuries until it was finally translated into vernacular languages in the late nineteenth century.

Even so, it does not mean that people could understand the Bible by reading it.

In the same manner, some people could bring some Buddhist scriptures to alien place, but people in that place could see those texts, but it doesn't mean that they understood those scriptures and practiced the Buddhism based on their understanding.

Possibly some monks or priests who understood some scriptures tried to educate people





and spread their ideas to their lay followers, but still, it is in the realm of imagination.

We do not know how Buddhist culture actually transmitted from place to another.

So, all this means that the rise of Buddhist culture that involves what we commonly understand in terms of ‘transmission’ or ‘introduction’ is a slow and fragmented process of acculturation between some elements of Buddhist ideas and native culture.

That’s what we see in the examples of Japanese Buddhist culture in ancient times.

Even though all of their activities are connected with Korean peninsula, it is hard to pinpoint some specific texts or some monks involved in the process.

So, as a whole, we see many people were involved and some believes and ritual activities were helping shape the transmission of Buddhist ideas into their daily practice as we have seen in the cases of Buddhist images.

People who encounter some alien ideas and rituals interact with them in a selective manner according to their own understanding, needs and desires.

For them, Buddhism carried no universalistic messages, but particularistic attractions.

And they choose what they need, and they practice some elements they choose for what they need to get.

Along the way of interaction, Buddhist culture was shaped and molded in negotiation with native ideas and rituals, all serving the needs of the people involved.

For example, the Samguk yusa (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) tells many stories about the Silla people were interested in Buddhism.

They found in Buddhism a way of healing or exorcism, or a ritual means of comfort.

They were mostly far away from the ideals of Buddhist enlightenment, say, the ultimate ideal of Buddhist practice, which might require a different set of training and discipline.

There is a well-known sutra called the Humane Kings Sutra, Inwang-gyōng in Korean.

As Buddhist scholars note, this sutra’s key message is the practice of perfection of wisdom (prajñāpāramitā) as the main source of Buddhist merit.

It stresses the inner cultivation of wisdom as the real source of happiness.

But there is little evidence that the Silla people read this sutra and practiced what it taught, probably not.

Probably not, they did in a selective manner, and they chose some elements, what they felt what were good and afford means of achieving their desires.

People were more attracted to the salvific power of a deified Buddha, not to the perfection of wisdom.

So, when people say that this particular scripture was brought from China to Korea, it doesn’t mean that its ideas were transmitted.

It would take a lot more time for people to read, understand and practice, because understanding, it is something that might happen far later.

So, it was similar in Japan as well.

People were attracted to Buddhism from without because of the exotic appeal of Buddhist





ritual and the belief that Buddhist rituals had a mysterious power to produce some spectacular benefits.

So, this type of transmission can be identified in temple buildings or popular worship of some statues happened in other countries.

So, when we discuss all these issues, we might need somewhat different perspectives.

For them, most commonly, the Buddha and Buddhist deities were associated with the wishes of physical benefits, not with the goal of spiritual enlightenment or the achievement of nirvana.

Maybe some people, but very rare, and it's hard to verify.

So, at the same time, as I discuss later in this lecture series, whether Buddhist ideas, rituals, or statues, all were not free from the process of acculturation.

To sum up, what do we mean by the 'transmission of Buddhism' from one country to another?

In place of the conventional storyline of the transmission of Buddhism in ancient times, in Lecture 1, I have paid attention to the issue of how Buddhist culture was nurtured in ancient Japan at the grassroot level with two specific examples.





Ⅲ. 토론

□ 다음에 대해서 생각해보자.

1. How was Buddhist culture transmitted from the Korean peninsula to Japan, and how was it nurtured in ancient Japan?
2. Who were involved in developing what kind of Buddhist culture at its initial stage of transmission?
3. Are there similar cases in which Buddhist culture was reversely transmitted to China from Korea?
4. What about Buddhist culture transmitted from Japan to Korea in premodern times?
5. In addition to scriptures, monks, material objects, and rituals, what elements played a role in the transmission of Buddhist culture from one place to another?

