

Special Feature

Dhāraṇī, Maṇḍala, and Talisman: The Rediscovery of Buddhist Faith in the Goryeo Dynasty

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Introduction

The classical research material of the history of Korean Buddhism has been text. This is the result of the preconception that research material, be it Buddhist scriptures, the precepts, commentaries, or stories of miracles, should be the written form of thought, doctrinal study, or faith. Written documents indeed help us clearly grasp what the people in the past were thinking. Among the many artifacts of faith, however, other forms of material besides text exist. Can non-textual material still contribute to the research of Buddhist history? How can we approach non-textual material in a meaningful way? The present article asks these questions as a point of departure.

This article attempts to explore the information in and utilization of dhāraṇī, maṇḍala, and talisman, which have not received much attention in previous studies on the history of Buddhism in the Goryeo dynasty. The introduction of this material, given that they are related to Esoteric Buddhism, has been led by researchers of that area. During the early stage of research on the history of Buddhism of Goryeo, dhāraṇī was evidence showing the diversity of the dhāraṇī faith. Several dhāraṇī including Immaculate and Pure Light Dhāraṇī (Mugu-jeonggwang Dhāraṇī 無垢淨光陀羅尼), Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī (Buljeong-jonseung Dhāraṇī 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼), and Precious Casket Seal Dhāraṇī (Bohyeobin Dhāraṇī 寶篋印陀羅尼) were studied as specific cases showing the contents of the scripture and the form of faith. In most cases besides the aforementioned dhāraṇīs, however, the studies made use of dhāraṇī simply to comment on just how many different dhāraṇīs there had been published during the Goryeo dynasty, instead of looking at the historical and cultural context of the dhāraṇī itself.

The research on maṇḍalas and talismans started somewhat later than the research on dhāraṇīs. Maṇḍalas and talismans were not in the Buddhist canon or published in the form of books. The first people to show interest in this material were bibliographic scholars. They organized the list of the material enshrined in the abdominal cache of Buddha (*bokjang* 腹藏) and filled them with life as historical material for research.¹ Researchers of Esoteric Buddhism, however, were unable to immediately start research. Until the early 2000s, the task of

researchers of Esoteric Buddhism was to build the framework of the history of Esoteric Buddhism during Goryeo and arrange a structural explanatory frame. The job of inquiring deep into the actual contents of the material was passed on to the next generation of researchers.

Maṇḍalas and talismans were only recently summoned into this field. Studies attempting to understand the form and meaning of everyday faith contained in material lacking content or logic has been showing progress. The textual material that was examined in previous studies made it possible to logically understand thought and doctrinal study, but they were limited in that they did not reveal the raw faith of the people as it was. To capture the faith that could be intuitively accepted by illiterate people and to understand its meaning in intellectual history is an important task that could fill in the blanks in the research on the history of Buddhism in Goryeo. In that sense, dhāraṇī, maṇḍala, and talisman are keywords for the rediscovery of the Buddhist faith during the Goryeo dynasty.

The present article will thus examine the current status, nature, and characteristics of the artifacts of dhāraṇīs, maṇḍalas, and Buddhist talismans, and consider what kind of research can be possible with these materials. Finally, the article will consider how these materials, which have been close by but have not received the attention they deserved, will broaden the horizons of research.

Dhāraṇī: The Elaboration of the Contents of Faith

Among the material related to Esoteric Buddhism, dhāraṇī² has received attention from early on. Scholars have focused on history books or stone epigraphs that briefly mentioned a certain dhāraṇī being chanted or traced a certain dhāraṇī used during an Esoteric Buddhist ritual based on records of the procedure. These methods, which tended to be centered on the material, were not wrong, but they risked being a reconfirmation of the so-called facts

2. Many different words indicate spells in Buddhism including spell (*ju* 呪), the words of Buddha (*jineon* 眞言), dhāraṇī (*chongji* 摠持), and dhāraṇī (*darani* 陀羅尼). All of these terms have different etymologies but were used to indicate the same meaning during the Goryeo dynasty. The present article does not distinguish between these terms and refers to all of them as dhāraṇī. However, when referring to the original title of the historical material, the original word included in the title was used.

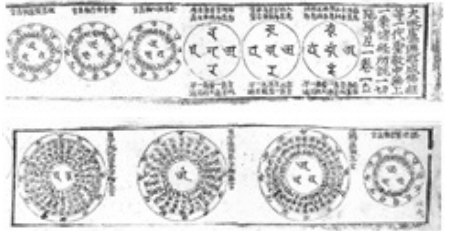
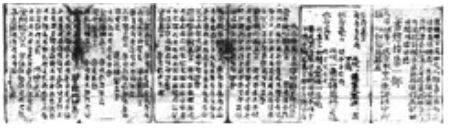
1. The studies of Nam KwonHee are representative examples. See Nam 1999a, 1999b, 2002.

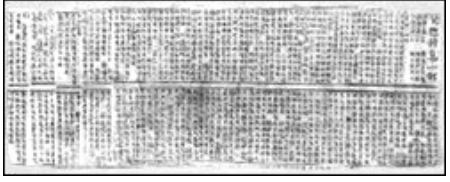
described in the historical material. It was at this moment when the research on dhāraṇī faith felt as if it had come up against a wall that the collection of dhāraṇīs provided a breakthrough.

The collection of dhāraṇīs was literally the printout of a collection of many dhāraṇīs. From as little as 30 to as many as over 600 dhāraṇīs were included in one large, printed material. Although this material also showed the historical fact of how many different dhāraṇīs were believed in during the Goryeo dynasty, it has been drawing attention as material that reveals the thoughts underlying the structure formed by the arrangement of the dhāraṇīs. The collection of dhāraṇīs also revealed the specific contents of the faith as well as their transformation.

The most representative dhāraṇī collection of the Goryeo dynasty is the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham* (*Beomseo chongji jip* 梵書摠持集). The name of the dhāraṇī is written in Chinese characters and the dhāraṇī phrases are written in Siddham script alongside it. The collection was published several times during the Goryeo dynasty, and many editions remain until today.³ Below are the most representative editions.

Table 1. Types of the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham* published during Goryeo

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdominal Cache of Seated Vairocana Buddha of Haeinsa, Hapcheon – Created in 1156 and 1166 – Ten circular dhāraṇīs – A total of 47 pages |
| 2 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of Yonsei University Library, Min Yeonggyu Korean Classics Collection – Created in 1218 – With preface – No circular dhāraṇī – Folded edition |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdominal Cache of Wooden Seated Amitabha Buddha of Bongnimsa, Hwaseong – Created in 1228 – No circular dhāraṇī – Ten pages existing (two pages printed on one side; overall composition unverifiable) |
|---|---|---|

The existing collections published during the Goryeo dynasty can be grouped into three types as Table 1 above shows. The images in the table show the very first page of each of the three editions to make them easier to compare. The first difference that stands out is the existence of circular dhāraṇī in the edition no. 1 and the absence of them in editions no. 2 and 3. This is due to the difference in the objective or the intellectual background. Edition no. 3 was printed under the influence of Zen Buddhism. In the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, or *Diamond Sūtra* (*Geumgang banyabaramil gyeong* 金剛般若波羅密經) written in small letters that was retrieved along with the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham*, there were publishing notes written by Muuija 無衣子 Hyesim 慧謙 (1178-1234). According to these notes, the monk Hyegwi 惠歸 was asked to write the “Sacred Spell from Buddhist Sūtra Written in Siddham” (Beomsea daejang sinju 梵書大藏神呪). This “Sacred Spell from Buddhist Sūtra Written in Siddham” is the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham*. Muuija Hyesim was a Zen Buddhist monk and the second leader of the Suseonsa 修禪社 faith society that is considered to have led Buddhism reform during late Goryeo. Because Hyesim led the publication of *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham*, it is regarded to be related to an objective necessary for Zen meditation. This leads to the question about the relationship between Zen meditation and dhāraṇīs written in Siddham.

The key to this question lies in the preface of edition no. 2 in the table above. The preface explains why dhāraṇī is superb and refers it as dhyāna-piṭaka (*seonjeong jang* 禪定藏). It then goes on to explicate why it must be in Siddham and what the effects are. Note that it is dhāraṇī as dhyāna-piṭaka. In other words, because numerous samādhi (*sammae* 三昧) constantly appear before one’s eyes through the use of dhāraṇī, it is called a storeroom (*jang* 藏) of the dwelling in tranquility (*seonjeong* 禪定). This sentence originally comes out in *The Thousand Eyes and Hands Sutra* (*Cheonsu gyeong*). According to the *Collection of*

3. See Kim 2012b, 2015, 2016; Nam 2017 for more on the editions and an outline of the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs ritten in Siddham* published during Goryeo.

Essentials for the Attainment of Buddhahood (Xianmi yuantong chengfo xinyaoji 顯密圓通成佛心要集), which is a book of the Liao dynasty, Siddham should originally be visualized, but if this was unfeasible, one could attain the samādhi just by reciting dhāraṇī.⁴ For this reason, the preface states that dhāraṇī was the foundation of Zen Buddhism. Those of Zen Buddhism including Hyesim likely developed an interest in dhāraṇī as a means to reach the state of dhyāna.

Let us return to the circular dhāraṇī in edition no.1 and their absence in editions no. 2 and 3 in Table 1. Edition no. 1, which was the earliest in its making, is markedly esoteric compared to editions no. 2 and 3. In edition no. 1, the circular arrangement of su-siddhi Dhāraṇī (So silji jineon 蘇悉地真言), entering siddhi Dhāraṇī (Ip silji jineon 入悉地真言), leaving siddhi Dhāraṇī (Chul silji jineon 出悉地真言) are featured at the very first. Siddhi (*silji* 悉地) refers to the transcendent state attained by practice following the teachings of Esoteric Buddhism, or the state of Buddha itself. In other words, siddhi itself is an Esoteric Buddhist term. In editions no. 2 and 3, however, the Dharma- kāya Dhāraṇī (Beopsin jineon 法身真言), Sambhoga-kāya Dhāraṇī (Bosin jineon 報身真言), Nirmāna-kāya Dhāraṇī (Hwasin jineon 化身真言) are featured first. The three siddhi dhāraṇī and the three Buddhist-body (*bulsin* 佛身) dhāraṇī are the same dhāraṇī with different names. In other words, the first three dhāraṇīs of editions no. 2 and no. 3 are the dismantled version of the three circular dhāraṇīs that appear first in edition no. 1 under different names. From the perspective of Zen Buddhism, which focus on the recitation of dhāraṇī as a means to enter the dhyāna, the circular arrangement of the dhāraṇī would have been an inconvenient tool. The term siddhi, which was specific to Esoteric Buddhism, would have also been a problem. Thus, the name of the same dhāraṇī was changed to the three body dhāraṇī, and the circular arrangement was changed into a linear arrangement. The three body (samsin) was a term that was used across the Buddhist community, unlike siddhi.

Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham is also material that make it possible to trace when a certain dhāraṇī was popular in Goryeo. A case in point is the Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī (Pajiok jineon 破地獄真言). This dhāraṇī is listed in edition no. 1. under the title “Jigeo yeorae sim pajiok jineon 智炬如來心破地獄真言” and as “Pajiok jineon 破地獄真言” in edition no. 2. It is

not in edition no. 3. Comparing where the Shattering Hell dhāraṇī is listed in editions no. 1 and 2 with edition no. 3 will likely show that it was in the pages of no. 3. that have been lost.

Although the title of edition no. 2 does not include the letters “Jigeo yeorae” 智炬如來, the dhāraṇī phrase shows that it is “Jigeo yeorae sim pajiok jineon.” There were, however, two Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī that were widely used in China and Korea during that time (Lee 2019, 364-68). One was the Tathāgata Zhiju’s Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī (Jigeo yeorae sim pajiok dhāraṇī), and the other was Om karadeya svāhā. The former is a dhāraṇī in scriptures translated around the late 7th century.

The latter, Om karadeya svāhā, is closely related to illustrated record of state rites that have to do with food bestowal (*sisik* 施食). Research to date, however, shows that the book of ritual protocols (*uisikseo* 儀式書) related to food bestowal for starving ghosts (*siagwi* 施餓鬼) was not introduced in Goryeo until the mid- to late period of the dynasty (Lee 2019, 365-67). This leads to the conclusion that until edition no. 2, the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham* published in 1218, the Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī of Om karadeya svāhā was not well known in Goryeo.

Notably, however, the Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī of Om karadeya svāhā is included in the collection of dhāraṇī discovered in the abdominal cache of the Amitabha Buddha statue at Wondang’am of Haeinsa, Hapcheon. This collection of dhāraṇīs includes over 50 types of dhāraṇīs beginning with Mahā-pratisarā Dhāraṇī (Seongbul sugu daedarani 成佛隨求大陀羅尼) and including Great Compassion Mantra (Gwanjaebosal daebisim darani 觀自在菩薩大悲心陀羅尼) as well as Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī (Buljeong jonseung darani 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼) and 18 types of talismanic seals (*buin* 符印). Records of its publication show that it was published in the Eulmyo 乙卯year of Hongwu 洪武, that is, the 8th year of the reign of the Hongwu Emperor, which corresponds to the first year under the reign of King U, or 1375. The 27th dhāraṇī that is listed is “Pajiok jineon” 破地獄真言 of Om karadeya svāhā, and the 39th dhāraṇī is “Jigeo yeorae sim pajiok ju” 智炬佛心破地獄呪 (Haeinsa Museum 2017, 36-43). In other words, new dhāraṇī had appeared.

The Om karadeya svāhā dhāraṇī appears in other artifacts during late Goryeo. In the ancient tomb of Nongso, Wullim-ri, Jeokseong-myeon, Sunchang-gun of North Jeolla Province, a wooden coffin that had dhāraṇī written in golden letters was discovered. Although no information exists

4. Daozhen, *Xianmi yuantong chengfo xinyaoji* 顯密圓通成佛心要集 (T1955, 46: 996b25-28): “或有不能想得梵字者 但只專心持誦亦具一切三昧 故大悲心經云 陀羅尼是禪定藏 百千三昧常現前故。”

regarding the individual who was buried, it appears to be the tomb of an upper-class individual that was made during late Goryeo. On the lacquered exterior of the wooden coffin, the phrases “Om maṇi pad me hūṃ” and “Om karadeya svāhā” are written over and over. These dhāraṇīs were to wish for the wrongdoings of the deceased to disappear and for the individual to break free from the cycle of reincarnation in the six realms of existence. The fact that it was created with this clear aim indicate that the person who commissioned the work clearly understood the effect of the dhāraṇī. Thus, the Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī of Om karadeya svāhā had received attention as a new object of faith amid the tradition of the Tathāgata Zhiju’s Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī faith.

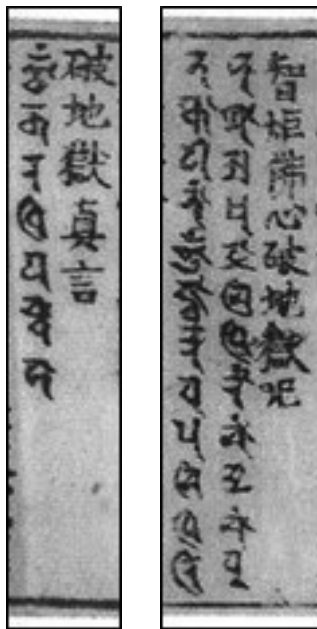


Figure 1. The Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī in the Collection of dhāraṇīs Discovered in the Abdominal Cache of the Amitabha Buddha Statue of Wondang’am, Haeinsa (left: “Pajjok jinoen”; right: “Jigeo bulsim pajjok ju”)

The collection of dhāraṇīs is not a book that can be comprehended by the meaning of the text itself. However, by examining arrangement of the dhāraṇī or comparing several editions, it is possible to recreate the Buddhist faith during the Goryeo dynasty in detail. Instead of narrated textual material whose meaning is unclear or multifold behind the rhetorical expressions, these

materials face us in a more intuitive and primary manner. It is the task of the researchers to draw out a meaningful interpretation from them.

Maṇḍala: The Expansion of the Horizon of Thought

Maṇḍala is the expression of the truth into the form of a symbolic diagram. Precisely because it is an image, it has been understood as a type of drawing instead of textual material. This section will discuss how the maṇḍala of Goryeo possesses significance beyond as an picture.

In order to understand the meaning of maṇḍala within Buddhist faith during the Goryeo dynasty, we need to first understand the concept of maṇḍala itself. Mandara 曼荼羅 is the Korean reading of the Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit term “maṇḍala.” The term is the combination of the term “maṇḍa,” which means the essence 精髓, and the suffix “la,” which means to possess or achieve. Maṇḍala thus means to achieve the purest essence, or quintessence. Later annotations have interpreted “la” as the perfect tense of the past passive participle and have interpreted the term as what has the essence, or the essence that has been drawn into a diagram. Maṇḍala originated from the ancient religions of India. At that time, it was used to refer to the sacredness of the Vedas or the area of the transcendence of the gods, or the area in which the gods were worshiped.

The meaning of Buddhist maṇḍala are largely fourfold. The first is essence, which refers to the state of the enlightenment of Buddha; the second is the Enlightenment Sites (*doryang* 道場), which is the site where enlightenment was attained; the third is platform (*dan* 壇), which refers to the altar of the rites,⁵ and the fourth is collection (*chwijip* 聚集), which means the possession of the genuine wisdom and virtues of the Tathāgata (Lee 1987, 85; Jang 2007, 9-23).

Maṇḍala is believed to have emerged in Buddhism for the following reasons: first, because of the need to methodologically integrate all of the

5. Originally, maṇḍalas were not expressed on paper or walls but established with sand that had been died in five colors to express the Five Great Elements (*odae* 五大) of earth, water, fire, wind, and voidness (*ji su hwa pung gong* 地水火風空) on top of a platform built by earth that was erected following the protocols of ritual (Heo 1994, 184). This is why maṇḍalas came to mean altars and also why maṇḍalas are said to be established, not drawn.


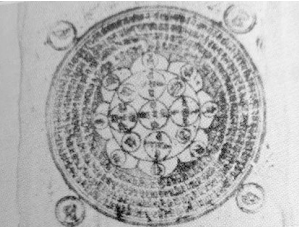
countless Buddhas and bodhisattvas appearing in the scriptures into a regular system. Second, because the crystallization of the Buddhist thought in which the vows and virtues of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas condensed in a regular composition was sought (Heo 1994, 182). In short, Maṇḍala is the manifestation of the truth by the expression of numerous Buddhas and bodhisattvas in a specific composition.

Some see maṇḍala as the same as Buddhist sutra illustrations (*byeonsangdo* 變相圖) or Buddhist paintings, as these are the expression of key contents of a certain scripture into an image. However, Maṇḍala are not simply the expression of the entity to which Buddhist rituals are performed, nor are they expressions of the world of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Instead, they are established to fulfill a specific aim of the practitioner, which is as a means to attain Buddhahood or eliminate disasters and summon good fortune. The expression of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in establishing Maṇḍala are to express their bodies, the expression into *bija* (*jongja* 種子/種字), or seed syllables, is to express the language of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and the expression into the various instruments used in Buddhist rituals are to express the vows of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas (Heo 1994, 191-92). Seed syllables are used to express the Buddhas and bodhisattvas into a single character in Siddham. It means that the character condenses the quintessence of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas inside it as if the stem or leaf comes from a seed of a plant. Maṇḍala expressed in these seed syllables are also called dharma-maṇḍala (beop mandara 法曼茶羅) to refer to how they contain the truth as it is (Heo 1994, 207; Jang 2007, 35).

Because of Tibetan Buddhism and Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, the term maṇḍala evokes a specific image of either a Tibetan maṇḍala filled with brilliant colors and geometric images, or the solemn Japanese maṇḍala where the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are arranged in an orderly manner, such as the Womb World, or Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala (Taejangye 胎藏界), the Diamond Realm, or Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (Geumganggye 金剛界). Unfortunately, there are no such maṇḍalas among Korean premodern artifacts. Among the artifacts of the Goryeo dynasty discovered in the abdominal caches of Buddhas, however, there are those called maṇḍala. These are in the form of dharma-maṇḍala as an arrangement of seed syllables.


The table below shows a few representative examples.⁶

Table 2. Maṇḍala of the Goryeo Dynasty

| | Types ⁷ and Name | Size (cm) | Main Site of Discovery |
|---|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | Samsipchil jon jongja mandara palyeop illyun 三十七尊種字曼陀羅八葉一輪  | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abdominal Cache of Dry-lacquered Seated Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha of Cheongnyangsa, Bonghwa Abdominal cache of wooden seated Amitabha Buddha of Suguksa, Seoul |
| 2 | Palyeop simnyeon samsipchil jon mandara 八葉心蓮三十七尊曼茶羅  | 24.5×27.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abdominal Cache of Dry-lacquered seated Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha at Cheongnyangsa, Bonghwa Abdominal Cache of Wooden Seated Amitabha Buddha of Gaeunsa, Seoul Abdominal Cache of Gilt-bronzed Seated Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva of Buseoksa, Seosan Abdominal Cache of Amitabha Buddha of 1302 (Year 5 of the Dade 大德 era, or the 5th year under the reign of Chengzong of Yuan dynasty, created in 11th month of 1301, Possession of Onyang Folk Museum) Abdominal Cache of Avalokiteśvara with One Thousand Arms of 1322 (only the photograph remaining at Onyang Folk Museum) |

6. Jeong and Shin 2017; Nam 2002; Son 2021 were referenced for choosing the representative examples. The maṇḍala that had been called the Womb World, or Garbhadhātu, Maṇḍala (Taizōkai maṇḍala) was discovered to be Mahāpratisarā Dhāraṇī (Aja wonsang sugu darani 阿字圓相隨求陀羅尼) arranged in circle with the letter Ā by Son Huijin and was thus excluded in the list of maṇḍalas (Son 2021, 88-97).

7. Although the present article classifies the maṇḍalas of Goryeo into three types, the expressions in each type show subtle differences. The classification used above was based on the diagram added to the circle in the center.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | <p>Geumganggye mandara 金剛界曼荼羅</p>  | <p>42×39</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdominal Cache of Gilt-bronzed Seated Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva of Buseoksa, Seosan • Abdominal Cache of Amitabha Buddha of 1302 (Year 5 of the Dade 大德 era, or the 5th year under the reign of Chengzong of Yuan dynasty, created in 11th month of 1301, Possession of Onyang Folk Museum) • Abdominal Cache of Avalokitesvara with One Thousand Arms of 1322 (only the photograph remaining at Onyang Folk Museum) |
|---|---|---|

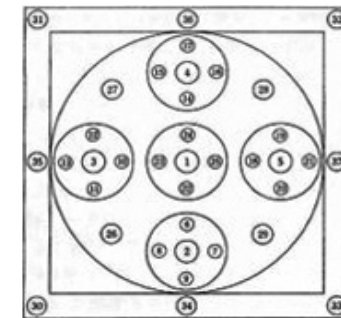
* In the case where the name of the maṇḍala was not specified, the name commonly used among academic circles was written in brackets.

These maṇḍalas are understood to be the expression of the essence of the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism in seed syllables. Interestingly, all three of them are Vajradhātu maṇḍalas. It is apparent from the names of no. 1 and 2 in Table 2, which include the 37 honorable ones (*samsipchil jon* 三十七尊), that they are Vajradhātu maṇḍalas, and no. 3 is also a Vajradhātu maṇḍala in that it expresses the 29 honorable ones without the external 8 honorable ones, namely, the 4 outer-offering bodhisattvas and the 4 saṃgraha bodhisattvas, out of the 37 honorable ones. While the 37 honorable ones form the basic structure, the types can be grouped based on whether there are dhāraṇī around it or the external decorations stand out more.

The 37 honorable ones refers to the 37 honorable ones of the Assembly of the Perfect Body (Seongsin hoe 成身會) that are key to the Vajradhātu maṇḍalas. They comprise the 5 Buddhas (*bul* 佛) which are the Mahāvairocana (Daeil yeorae 大日如來) in the center, the Akṣobhya (Achok yeorae 阿閼如來) in the east, the Ratnasambhava (Bosaeng yeorae 寶生如來) in the south, the Amitābha (Amita yeorae 阿彌陀如來) in the west, and the Amoghasiddhi (Bulgongseongchwi yeorae 不空成就如來) in the north, and the 16 great bodhisattvas that are positioned on four sides of the 5 Buddhas, which are the 4 pāramitā bodhisattvas (*baramil bosal* 波羅蜜菩薩), 4 inner-offering bodhisattvas (*naegongyang bosal* 內供養菩薩), 4 outer-offering bodhisattvas (*oegongyang*

bosal 外供養菩薩), and the 4 saṃgraha bodhisattvas (*seopbosal* 攝菩薩).⁸ The 37 honorable ones of the Vajradhātu are a way presented to the practitioners of Yogācāra who had not yet acquired the highest siddhi 悉地. In other words, the practitioner aimed to attain the wisdom of the 37 honorable ones through Yogācāra practice and the wisdom symbolized by the 37 honorable ones (Kim 1997, 52). These Buddhas and bodhisattvas were the infinite extensions of Mahāvairocana and aimed to illuminate the unique innate nature of each living being (Kim 1997, 213).

Maṇḍalas in East Asia are said to be extremely focused on the center and consequently do not give much attention to the external elements that support the center overall (Heo 1994, 199). The Assembly of the Perfect Body stands at the center of the Vajradhātu maṇḍalas and is the key point where all things start or end, which is why it is also called the Basic Assembly (Geunbon hoe 根本會). The maṇḍalas of Table 2, which also express the Assembly of the Perfect Body, share this characteristic.



- 1-5: 5 Buddhas
- 6-21: 16 great Bodhisattvas
- 22-25: 4 pāramitā bodhisattvas
- 26-29: 4 inner-offering bodhisattvas
- 30-33: 4 outer-offering bodhisattvas
- 34-37: 4 saṃgraha bodhisattvas

Figure 2. The Assembly of the Perfect Body of Vajradhātu maṇḍalas (Ven. Jongseok 2000, 180)

The maṇḍalas of Table 2 are collectively called Eight-petaled Lotus Maṇḍala of Thirty-seven Honorable Ones (Palyeop samsipchil-jon mandara 八葉三十七尊曼荼羅).⁹ They display the following unique characteristics of

8. See Kiyota 1968, 41-45; Lee 2008, 353-84 for more on the characteristics of the 37 honorable ones as well as the structure of the Assembly of the Perfect Body of Vajradhātu maṇḍalas constituted by the 37 honorable ones.

9. Son Heejin, who studied the maṇḍalas discovered in the abdominal cache of Buddhist statues of the Goryeo dynasty called these maṇḍalas “Palyeop sansipchil jon mandara,” albeit with some omission and addition, since the 37 honorable ones formed the central element and they commonly expressed

maṇḍalas of Goryeo.

First of all, they are round. As Figure 2 above shows, the Assembly of the Perfect Body of Vajradhātu maṇḍalas is expressed as a square. The maṇḍala of Goryeo, however, are composed in a circle, and the 8 bodhisattvas inside the outer square in Figure 2 are placed inside the 8 petals and encircled. Second, they adopted the eight lotus petals, which is the feature of the Garbhadhātu maṇḍala. Because of this characteristic, this maṇḍala had been understood as the consolidation of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala and the Garbhadhātu maṇḍala. The lotus petals in the maṇḍalas of Goryeo show the efforts to faithfully follow the description of the eight petals in the explanation of establishing a maṇḍala in *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra* (*Daeilgyeong* 大日經). In this sense, this characteristic can be seen as the visualization of the eight lotus petals of the Garbhadhātu maṇḍala inside the elements of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala (Son 2021, 17-31). Third, as no. 2 and 3 of Table 2 show, dhāraṇī may be added around the maṇḍala. The various dhāraṇīs encircling the border, such as Precious Casket Seal Dhāraṇī or Shattering Hell Dhāraṇī, are different depending on the artifact (Son 2021, 98-99).

Although specific details show the influence of the Garbhadhātu maṇḍala, the maṇḍalas above are primarily Vajradhātu maṇḍalas. Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism is believed to have spread to Silla by the monk Hyeil 惠日. Hyeoncho 玄超 received both the teachings of Śubhakarasiṃha (Seonmuoe 善無畏), who translated the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra*, the basic scripture of the Garbhadhātu Esoteric Buddhism, and of Amoghavajra (Bugong 不空), who translated the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Geumgangjeong gyeong* 金剛頂經), which is the basic text of the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism. Hyeil inherited the Buddhist dharma lineage of Hyeoncho and disseminated the teaching he received in Silla.¹⁰ Faith related to *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* later was confirmed in the Mount Odae faith, which revered the Buddhas and bodhisattvas believed to reside in each of the five peaks of the mountain. The faith contains the belief that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas resided in the land of Silla. The arrangement of

the five Buddhas and bodhisattvas are regarded to be based on the Vajradhātu maṇḍalas and the popular faith at that time. In particular, Jinyeowon 眞如院, which was located in the middle, is said to have enshrined 36 incarnations (*hwasin* 化神) led by Vairocana. That would make it a total of 37 honorable ones, which recalls the 37 honorable ones of the Vajradhātu (Kim 2012a, 30-31; 2017, 104-05).

After the Goryeo dynasty is founded, however, any trace of the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism, including faith related to *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* or doctrinal study, become obscure. This is in contrast to how material related to *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra* is not hard to find. While commentaries on the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra* are introduced in the *New Catalog of the Teachings of All the Schools* (*Sinpyeon jeonggyojang chongnok* 新編諸宗教藏總錄), there is no commentary on the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* or any scripture of the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism. In addition, it is possible to draw out the structure of the Garbhadhātu maṇḍala from the aforementioned *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham*, that is, the dhāraṇīs of the honorable beings that comprise the Garbhadhātu maṇḍala are listed vividly exposing the form of the maṇḍala (Kim 2016, 159-61). The structure of the 37 honorable beings or the Vajradhātu maṇḍala, however, cannot be read in them. The writings of the monk of Goryeo Hyeyeong 惠永 quote a passage from the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, but it is only a citation of the dhāraṇī. Based only on the textual material, then, it is easy to conclude that there was not much interest in the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism during the Goryeo dynasty. Looking at the maṇḍalas, however, it is obvious that the Buddhist circles of Goryeo were well versed in Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism. In other words, the maṇḍalas are historical material that fills in the blanks of the history of Buddhism of Goryeo and expands the intellectual landscape.

These maṇḍalas, which tend to be discovered in the abdominal cache of Buddhist statues, were mainly used to fill in the empty space. Some, however, were attached inside the statues and some were used to wrap the *huryeongtong* 喉鈴筒 (Son 2021, 108-11). The *huryeongtong*, which was the key object enshrined in the abdominal cache, blew life and sanctity into the wooden or metal statue. The core of the *huryeongtong* was the five treasure/precious vases (*obobyong* 五寶瓶), which is thought to have originated from the Esoteric Buddhist ritual of abhiṣeka, the consecration with the water of the five vases (*obyong gwanjeong* 五瓶灌頂). The consecration with the water of the five vases

the eight lotus petals. The present article follows this example.

10. Unknown author, *Datang qinglongsi sanchao gongfeng dade xingzhuang* 大唐青龍寺三朝供奉大德行狀 (T2057, 50: 295b19-24): “建中二年 新羅國僧惠日 將本國信物 奉上和上 求授胎藏金剛界蘇悉地等 并諸尊瑜伽三十本 已來授訖 精通後時 卻歸本國 廣弘大教 精誠絕粒持念 悉地現前 遂白日沖天竺國王宮中瞻禮 求乞其法 空中言西大唐國 有祕密法法有青龍寺。”

was a ritual that filled vessels symbolizing the colors and materials of the four cardinal directions and the center (*obang*) with medication, grain, and minerals according to the ritual procedures and sprinkled the holy water on the top of the head. These five vessels symbolized the five Buddhas (*obul* 五佛) and the five Wisdoms (*oji* 五智). As a ritual performed by the master to the disciple, it is interpreted as the symbolic act of passing on the place/status of the Buddha to the disciple. Placing the five precious vases inside the *huryeongtong* enshrined in the abdominal cache of the Buddhist statues was the mirrored version of this ritual. Five precious vases were made by the same protocol and same material as the five vases used in the ritual of abhiṣeka and were placed in the statue, and the statues now carried the sanctity as the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, just as the disciple had accepted Buddha.¹¹ However, in the gilt-bronzed Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and the gilt-bronzed Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva of Haeinsa that was dismantled in January of 2020, the *huryeongtong* was wrapped in the 37 honorable ones of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala. The creation of the five precious vases was based on the *Sutra of Triumphant Meditation of Secrets of the Auspicious Sameness, Great King of Tantras* (*Myo gilsang pyeongdeung bimil choesang gwanmun daegyo wang gyeong* 妙吉祥平等秘密最上觀門大教王經), which is categorized as a Vajradhātu Yogācāra Esoteric Buddhism scripture. In this sense, the fact that the Vajradhātu maṇḍala with the arrangement of 37 honorable ones was wrapped around the *huryeongtong* is significant in terms of doctrinal study. The maṇḍala is the clue as to how the doctrinal study of the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism and the faith based on it unfolded in Goryeo.

Talisman: The Diversification of the Landscape of Research

Despite their foreign nature, it is worth paying attention to the Buddhist talismans (*bulbu* 佛符), or Talismanic seals (*buin* 符印), among the material of Buddhist faith during the Goryeo dynasty. These are talismans featured in Buddhist scripture or Buddhist texts.

The Chinese character of talisman (*bu* 符) refers to what is auspicious, verification, or reliable, and it originally derives from how wooden tablets or

split bamboo stems match each other and form a complete whole, which is an auspicious event that can also be used for verification (Han 1976, 103). Talismans derive from Daoism and is formed by changing the shape of the letters into seal script and combining it with images of constellations or lightening. It was regarded as the coming down of the characters used by the gods in the heavens to the ground (Kang 2020, 119). That is why the Daoist text, *True Talismans of the White Numen from the Supreme Mysterious Cavern of the Lingbao* (*Taishangdongxuan lingbaosu lingzhenfu* 太上洞玄靈寶素靈真符) writes that “all phrases in talismans are all text. It is only that humans cannot decipher them. One could rule all deities and spirits if the letters of talismans were to be deciphered” (Kang and Kwon 2018, 429). Because they were written in the letters of the gods, talismans defeated evil spirits and made wishes come true.

The goals of early talismans were to heal illnesses, to drive away evil spirits, and to protect oneself from disasters. The oldest verifiable talisman to date was found in an Eastern Han tomb in a village called Zhujiabao 朱家堡 in the Huxian County 戶縣 of Shaanxi Province and dates to the 2nd year of the Yangjia 陽嘉 period during Emperor Shun 順帝 of Eastern Han, or 133. In addition, in the *Book of the Master who Embraces Simplicity* (*Baopuzi* 抱朴子) which was written by Ge Hong 葛洪, who lived during the late 3rd to early 4th centuries, there is an entry on talisman. After listing the names of several talismans, Ge Hong writes that “These are the larger talismans. The smaller ones are too numerous to record all of them here.” This indicates that talismans were quite developed during the Jin dynasty. Talismans further developed when the Way of the Celestial Masters (Tianshidao 天師道) of Daoism was made the official state religion during the Northern and Southern dynasties later.

Although it is unclear when the talismans or talismanic seals of Daoism became associated with Buddhism, a document of the Tang dynasty discovered in Dunhuang show that a Daoist master drew a talisman (*jufu* 呪符) for the Daoist master and a Buddhist monk (Sakade 1999, 158-60). This leads to the conclusion that there was exchange between Buddhism and Daoism in terms of talismanic seals. Talismanic seals frequently appear in Esoteric Buddhist scriptures in particular and seem to have been largely influenced by Chinese Daoism before Esoteric Buddhism became systematized during its middle period (Kang and Kwon 2018, 431). The talismanic seals were added to Esoteric Buddhist scriptures, thus providing transcendent power to the training methods

11. See Lee 2015 for more detail.

of Esoteric Buddhism. This was invented in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism and was spread to Korea and Japan (Kang 2020, 125).

The Buddhist community in Goryeo also accepted talismans. The oldest talismanic seal of the Goryeo dynasty is thought to be the three types of talismanic seals discovered in the silver bracelet decorated by lotus flower and scroll design (*eunje yeonhwa dangchomun cheon* 銀製蓮花唐草文釧) currently at the Leeum Museum of Art, Korea. The three talismanic seals were to prevent going to hell, to erase all sins, and to be loved and respected by one's surroundings (Moon and Kim 2021, 128-30).

In late Goryeo, printed material that compiled various types of talismanic seals started to appear. As of date, there are four of this material. The oldest one, which was created in 1287, is “This is a printout of an excerpt of the Dahuashou-jing translated by Amoghavajra” (cha inchul bugong yeok daehwasugyeong 此印出不空譯大華手經), discovered in the abdominal cache of the gilt-bronzed Tathāgata of Munsusa, Seosan. The title is the first sentence of the material, which is typically how printed material without a title are called. There are 14 talismanic seals in this material. Next is the collection of dhāraṇīs dating to 1306 at the National Museum of Korea, which is also called by the first dhāraṇī listed in the printed material, “Uṣṇīṣa-cittā Dhāraṇī” (Buljeongsim ju 佛頂心呪). The last part features 7 talismanic seals. Then there are the 10 talismanic seals featured in the last volume of the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* published in 1311, which was found in the abdominal cache of the wooden seated Amitabha of Bongnimsa, Hwaseong. Finally, the “Mahā-pratisarā Dhāraṇī” (Seongbul sugu darani 成佛隨求陀羅尼), which is also called by the first dhāraṇī listed in the text and was discovered in the abdominal cache of the wooden Amitabha triad of Wondang'am, Haeinsa, was published in 1375 and features 18 types of talismanic seals.

The talismanic seals in these materials have a variety of effects. Some are to attain Buddhahood or be reborn in the pure land without falling into hell; some are to protect one from febrile diseases or infectious disease; some are not to be subject to rumors or gossip; some are to prevent the invasion of spirits; and some are to save one from a difficult childbirth.

The sources of these talismanic seals are unknown except for the one to prevent a difficult childbirth, which derives from the *Sutra of Aryavalokiteśvara Great Dhāraṇī of the Uṣṇīṣa-cittā* (*Buljeongsim Gwanseeumbosal daedarani gyeong* 佛頂心觀世音菩薩大陀羅尼經). This scripture is not seen in the list of



Figure 3. Mahā-pratisarā Dhāraṇī and the Talismanic Seals (1375, artifacts from the wooden Amitabha triad of Wondang'am, Haeinsa, 7.2×459.8 cm)

the Chinese Buddhist Canon before the Fangshan Stone Tripitaka (Fangshan shi jing 房山石經) nor is it included in the Goryeo Tripitaka. It was, however, widely believed in the Song and Liao dynasties. The scripture comprises three volumes. The first volume introduces dhāraṇī, the second details the way to resolve difficult situations using dhāraṇīs and talismanic seals written in secret characters (*bijain* 秘字印), and the third writes of the stories of miracles experienced by people who possessed the scripture and overcame hardships. The last part of the scripture features dhāraṇīs and talismanic seals, which appear to practice the methods described in the second volume. The scripture seems to have been particularly effective for women experiencing difficult childbirth, as the talismanic seals written in secret characters were later separately popular under the title of “Talismanic Seal to Save One From Difficulties in Childbirth” (Gu sannan bu 救產難符).

The prescriptions in the scripture, however, instruct the reader to write the talismanic seal in *jingmian zhusha* 鏡面朱砂 a type of cinnabar, and mix it with perfume, which is identical to the traditional way of writing Chinese talismans. In general, talismans are written on paper dyed yellow (*huaihuangzhi* 槐黃紙) by the fruits of *Styphnolobium japonicum*, or what is known as the Chinese scholar tree, in red characters using cinnabar (*zhusha* 朱砂). In the Five Elements, yellow symbolizes the center and thus is the middle of all directions, and red symbolizes south and fire. The form of writing red characters on yellow paper

was used to suppress the energy of improper *yin* all around by the energy of yang (Han 1976, 119). None of the discovered talismanic seals of the Goryeo dynasty as of the present, however, are in this form. Since they are in the form of an appendix to printed dhāraṇīs or scriptures, the seals are written in black characters on white paper. Even if they are written on yellow paper, this is because the paper used for printing the scripture was that color and not because it was intentionally chosen to write the talismanic seal. Even the Talismanic Seal to Save One From Difficulties in Childbirth that says to write the characters in red cinnabar is in the form of black characters on white paper, like Figure 3 above. This suggests that the people of Goryeo did not meticulously approach talismanic seals based on the accurate instructions of its use as written in the scripture. In other words, it means that the faith in talismanic seals became more perfunctory.¹² At the same time, however, printing was an easy way to produce many copies of the same contents, which shows that the demand for Buddhist talismans increased and that the faith spread.

What is worth noting is the characteristics of the printed material featuring these talismanic seals. With the exception of the talismanic seals discovered with the bracelets and the single-page of “This is a printout of an excerpt of the Dahuashou-jing translated by Amoghavajra,” all three of the aforementioned printed texts are pocket-sized versions. In other words, they were created small to make it handy to carry around. Additionally, gilt-bronzed cases or felt covers were also discovered. What does it mean that talismanic seals were attached to such forms of printed material? By carrying around a collection of talismanic seals that guaranteed a variety of effects, the person likely aimed to drive away bad things all together.

Finally, the relationship between Buddhism and Daoism felt by the people living during the Goryeo dynasty warrants an examination. After Buddhism spread to China, talismanic seals, which were influenced by Daoism, were incorporated into Buddhism. This indicates that Daoist talismanic seals existed separately. Would the people of Goryeo have distinguished Buddhist talismanic

seals from Daoist talismanic seals? Although Buddhism and Daoism are clearly distinct as two different schools of thought or faith from today’s perspective, would this distinction have applied as well to the people living during the Goryeo dynasty?

In terms of faith, the boundary between Daoism and Buddhism, particularly Esoteric Buddhism, seems to have been vague during the Goryeo dynasty. Consider the faith in the stars (*seongsu sinang* 星宿信仰) surrounding the Hall of the Nine Luminaries (Guyodang 九曜堂), for example. In 924, the 9th year during the reign of King Taejo of Goryeo, the Hall of the Nine Luminaries was built along with the Temple of Indra outside of the palace (Oe Jeseokwon 外帝釋院) and the Temple of Divine Warriors (Sinjungwon 神衆院). Because the Hall of the Nine Luminaries was constructed with these Buddhist temples, it was also regarded as a Buddhist temple to worship the nine celestial bodies.¹³ But during the abolishment of Daoist temples except for the Bureau of Daoist Rituals (Sogyekseo 昭格署), there are records that Hall of the Nine Luminaries was also abolished together with other Daoist temples.¹⁴ This had led some scholars to consider the Hall of the Nine Luminaries as a Daoist temple. Currently, the consensus is that the Hall of the Nine Luminaries encompassed both Buddhism and the Daoist faith in the stars. It is clear that two religions existed in this single religious temple. Sojae doryang (the ceremony to extinguish calamities 消災道場), which was one of the rituals of wishing upon the stars, is categorized as either being a Buddhist ritual or a Daoist ritual depending on whether the object of worship was the Nine Star Spirits (*guyo*) or Eleven Star Spirits (*sibilyo*), respectively. Because the Eleven Stars were the addition of the fictional celestial bodies of Daoism of Jagi 紫氣 and Wolpae 月孛 to the Nine Stars, Sojae doryang that worshiped the Nine Stars were seen as a Buddhist ritual and Sojae doryang to the Eleven Stars were seen as a Daoist ritual (Kim 2012b, 165-67).

12. I was unable to confirm whether this was a unique characteristic of Goryeo or whether it was a common East Asian trait shared by China and Japan. Comparative studies with the talisman faith of China and Japan are needed in order to more clearly understand the meaning of talismans in the history of Buddhism in Goryeo. The present article was not able to conduct such comparative research. I look forward to the superb work of another researcher.

13. This refers to the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Rahu, and Gyedo. Rahu and Gyedo are two fictional celestial bodies that refer to the two points where the orbit of the Sun and the orbit of the Moon meet. Because the solar eclipse and the lunar eclipse occur frequently at these points, eclipses were often perceived as celestial bodies.

14. *Taejo-sillok* (*Veritable Records of King Taejo* 太祖實錄), vol. 2, first day of the first lunar month during the first year of King Taejo’s reign, 1392: “禮曹啓 道家星宿之醜 貴於簡嚴 盡誠敬而不瀆 前朝多置醜所 瀆而不專 乞只置昭格殿一所 務要清潔 以專誠敬 其福源宮 神格殿 九曜堂 燒錢色 太清觀 清溪 拜星所等處 一皆革去 上從之。”

This is not to say that the people of Goryeo were unable to perceive Buddhism and Daoism as two separate religions with different lines of thought. However, the difference in thought does not directly connect to the difference in the form of faith. Most religions probably seek to present an easier and more powerful way to more people to attract them. Talismanic seals exist at the intersection of Buddhist and Daoist faith. Directly confronting the mutual interference and exchange between forms of faith will be one way to elucidate the state of Buddhist faith during Goryeo as well as broadening the landscape of its research.

Conclusion

Dhāraṇī, maṇḍala, and talisman are material that stands at a delicate boundary. Although they are unique and attractive as material of Buddhist faith, they themselves do not articulate logical contents. Many researchers thus had to come up with a different way to approach them altogether. The accumulation of such research has made it possible for the material itself to start sharing its own stories.

By comparing different editions, the collection of dhāraṇīs shows that even the same dhāraṇī could be expressed differently depending on the thought that formed its background. In addition, by comparing when a dhāraṇī absent in one edition started to appear in another collection, it is possible to estimate when a certain faith was introduced into Goryeo. As for maṇḍalas, which condense and express truth into a diagram, are an important material which shows that the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhist faith was also spread in Goryeo. Considering how there is barely any material showing the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhist Faith in Goryeo, maṇḍala contributes to the deeper and broader understanding of the Esoteric Buddhist faith of Goryeo. Finally, talismanic seals, which are the result of exchange and interference between Buddhism and Daoism, show how everyday faith developed into a more intuitive and direct form and that the strict boundary between the two religions had become vague. In other words, the talismanic seals are a realistic manifestation of Buddhist faith during Goryeo.

Most of the remaining dhāraṇī collections, maṇḍalas, and talismanic seals date to late Goryeo. Two reasons may explain this: first, the way in which the

artifacts and material from the Goryeo period were transmitted to the present. Most of the remaining Buddhist textual material that was published during the Goryeo dynasty was created during late Goryeo. In addition to the fact that it is difficult for older material to remain up until the present, there is also the historical circumstances that Goryeo suffered many invasions from foreign states. Such elements would have affected how the dhāraṇīs, maṇḍalas, and talismanic seals were transmitted to the present. Second, the relationship with the flow of Buddhism during late Goryeo, which is commonly referred to as the spread of the trend of mystical thought (*sinbi sajo* 神秘思潮). Around the 13th century, the aristocratic Buddhist tradition based in Gaegyeong 開京 changed into a locally based folk tradition. The religious tendencies also changed from doctrine to mystical acts.¹⁵ The relatively large number of historical material related to Esoteric Buddhism during late Goryeo was likely because of the expansion of their production in relation to the spread of the trend of mystical thought. This tendency also contributed to the perception among people that Esoteric Buddhism was similar to shamanism or Daoism. At the same time, this also blew life into Esoteric Buddhism so that it could survive as the underlying faith. The remaining maṇḍalas show that even amid this tendency, Esoteric Buddhism had not lost its key elements of thought. The doctrinal study evident in protocols of rites of the Joseon dynasty can also be thought as a continuation of the doctrinal study of Esoteric Buddhism during Goryeo.

In addition, most of these materials were discovered in the abdominal caches of Buddhist statues. This indicates that the objectives behind their creation should be considered. For instance, were they created to be enshrined in the abdominal cache in the first place or were they what the followers of the faith had carried around? As for maṇḍalas, they were printed in large numbers in order to be stored in the abdominal cache. This applies to the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham* discovered in the abdominal cache of the Vairocanan of Haeinsa as well. These were produced as sacred printouts to fill in the empty space inside the Buddhist statues. On the other hand, the Mahā-

15. See Heo 1997, 454-58. The largest event that demarcates the early and late period of Buddhist thought in Goryeo was the movement of the Meditation Cultivation Community (Suseonsa) and the White Lotus Society (Baengnyeonsa). There are various opinions as to whether these movements were for the local areas and the people and thus were reformative or not. It is undeniable, however, that these movements led to the transformation of Buddhist circles during late Goryeo.

pratisarā discovered in the Wondang'am of Haeinsa and the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* published in 1311 are thought to be scriptures that the followers carried around and were placed inside the abdominal cache as a Buddhist merit-making act. These materials have dhāraṇīs and talismanic seals and thus vividly portray the everyday faith of the people of Goryeo.

The largest characteristic of dhāraṇīs, maṇḍalas, and talismanic seals is that they are intuitive. Without the cover of narrative and explanation, they directly plead to the gods or illustrate truth. Therefore, they must be approached in a more nuanced way. These materials do not explain themselves. Thus, in researching them, their structure must be understood and compared among themselves internally, while externally, they should be examined for traces having been combined with other thoughts or faiths. It is also crucial not to forget the people who were living ordinary everyday lives. For them, wishing for something and avoiding pain was more important than to pursue the truth. Imagining the comfort that dhāraṇīs and talismanic seals would have provided them will help understand this somewhat unfamiliar material in more depth.

These materials are not traditional research material. They were also not discovered recently. But they are materials that can tell us about the Buddhist faith of Goryeo from a new perspective. The rediscovery of these materials will be the first step in enriching our understanding of Buddhist faith during the Goryeo dynasty.

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Abstract

The current article proposes the potential of information in and utilization of dhāraṇīs, maṇḍalas, and talismanic seals during the Goryeo dynasty in order to understand the faith illiterate people could accept intuitively and to assess its significance in intellectual history. The examination of dhāraṇī was based on the *Collection of Dhāraṇīs Written in Siddham*, which has received much attention after the 2010s. The comparison of different editions revealed that even the same dhāraṇī could be expressed differently based on the thought forming the background. The estimation of when a certain faith entered Goryeo was also possible. Maṇḍala, which is a condensed illustration of the truth, is not material easily seen in the history of Korean Buddhism. The material of Goryeo is mainly Vajradhātu maṇḍalas, which, given the lack of material showing the Vajradhātu Esoteric Buddhism, contributes to a deeper and wider understanding of Esoteric Buddhism during Goryeo. Talismanic seals, which appeared as a result of the exchange with and influence of Daoism, show that the everyday faith had developed into a more intuitive and direct form and that the strict boundary between religions was vague, thus resulting in a more realistic manifestation of the Buddhist faith during Goryeo. These materials are not traditional research sources, nor were they recently discovered. However, they tell us about Buddhist faith during Goryeo from a new perspective. The rediscovery of these materials will be the first step in enriching our understanding of Buddhist faith during the Goryeo dynasty.

Keywords: Goryeo, Esoteric Buddhism, abdominal cache of Buddhist statues, dhāraṇī, maṇḍala, talismanic seal