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From Sacral to Popular in East Asian Civilizations: Popularization of the Images of the Founder of Chan Buddhism in Japan and in Contemporary South Korea

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Introduction

Anyone who visits Korea soon encounters images of an old Indian-looking man with glaring eyes. He has a beard and usually has a serious, but at the same time very humorous, appearance. This bearded man is called Bodhidharma and he is believed to be the founder of meditational (Dhyāna in Sanskrit, Chan in Chinese, Sŏn in Korean, or its more commonly known Japanese name, Zen) Buddhism. Bodhidharma, who traveled to China around the sixth century to propagate Buddhism, is known as *Putidamo* or *Damo* in Chinese, *Boridalma* or *Dalma* in Korean and *Bodai Daruma* or *Daruma* in Japanese; the second two syllables of his name are usually written as the Chinese characters 達磨. He crossed the Yangzi River on a single reed, spent nine years in constant meditation near the famous Shaolin monastery in Songshan, China, where his legs and arms atrophied and fell off, according to the legend. Bodhidharma is also thought to be the founder of martial arts, Shaolin kungfu, and the inventor of the custom of drinking tea.

His figure and legend are usually represented in Buddhist temples, but a recent phenomenon has seen his image represented more and more frequently in secular and semi-secular contexts, such as in souvenir shops, not only at the vicinity of temples but in other tourist areas. In addition, his image can be seen in other frequently visited locations, such as rest stops near highways, or even in subway stations and in restaurants. In popular women's magazines and on the television we often find advertisements for Bodhidharma-painters, offering health and happiness to their customers. Until recent times, the appearance of Bodhidharma-images outside the walls of Buddhist monasteries was not as common as today. Therefore, we attempt to look at the phenomenon from the perspective of the popularization of

Bodhidharma-images as compared to Japan. Japan is an area which is better known to the wider public; however it has not yet been juxtaposed with developments in Korea. The importance of pictures in relation to religious texts, and their relationships will be discussed in the following pages.

The Popularization and Commercialization of Bodhidharma: Differences in Korea and Japan

The crossing on a reed-motif is still very popular as a means of representing Bodhidharma, especially in South Korea. Therefore, a study has to how certain models were used in reproducing new objects with the intent of selling them to the wider public, a phenomenon which flourishes in contemporary South Korea, but has much longer traditions in Japan, also warrants the attention of scholars of the visual arts. The background motive is similar in both Korea and Japan; however, their choice of sources for promoting this saintly figure is very different.

In addition, the way in which Bodhidharma-images entered the secular world differs considerably between the Japanese islands and Korea. In Japan, Bodhidharma entered the secular world quite early, and enjoyed continuous popularity.¹ However, in Korea, from the beginning of the 15th century the Chosŏn Confucian hardliners began to make their eventually successful attempts at promulgating their world-view at court, thus marginalizing Buddhism. In Korea, the Chan school never had such an important influence over the secular world as compared to Japan. However, Mahayāna Buddhism, which became the mainstream version in this part of East Asia, always emphasized the participation and involvement of lay people. The images of Bodhidharma in Korea always remained within this religious content. The pre-modern images of Dalma, often depicted on monastery walls, and paintings of him made by contemporary painters and monks, have the common intention, at least in part, of popularizing Buddhist beliefs among the wider population.

Korean Bodhidharma Paintings

Ever since Chan Buddhism was introduced to the Korean peninsula, visual representations connected to this school have continued to appear. Unfortunately, there are no existing images from these earlier times, only a few references in written sources. In the collection called the *Tongguk Yi-sanggukchip* 東國李相國集 (*Collection of Minister Yi of the Eastern Country*), two pictures of Bodhidharma are mentioned, made by anonymous painters in the first half of the 13th century and bearing the inscriptions of the Korean poet Yi Kyu-bo 李奎報 (1168-1241, pen-name *Paegun kōsa* 白雲居士 or “White Cloud Hermit”).² From the second

half of the 14th century we have a reference to a painting of Bodhidharma's crossing of the Yangzi River by the Koryŏ ruler, King Kongmin 恭愍王 (r. 1351-1374), and another Bodhidharma painting by Yi Tu-jŏm 李斗帖, dated to 1380. Unfortunately, these texts do not include descriptions of the styles of these painting.

The earliest existing pictures of Bodhidharma made by Korean masters are from the 17th century and have a strong connection with Japan. Without a doubt, the most famous Korean Bodhidharma painting is the half-body representation by Kim Myŏng-guk 金明國 (1600- after 1662), now in the collection of the National Museum of Korea, Seoul. This representation served and still serves as a model for the later artists on this theme.³ In 1636 and 1643 Kim Myŏng-guk visited Japan as a member of an official delegation. He was probably drawn to Zen Buddhist figure painting through commissions from Japanese patrons, who generally preferred Buddhist themes. Many of the paintings by him, which are held in Japan, are of this genre, whereas contemporary painting in Korea was mainly dominated by secular themes.

The style of both Kim Myŏng-guk's landscapes and his figure paintings is very similar to that of the Chinese Zhe School, particularly the works of the eccentric Wu Wei 吴伟 (1459-1508). The most impressive example of this affinity is his famous painting of Bodhidharma, which depicts the patriarch with a few forceful, yet delicate, brushstrokes. Among Kim Myŏng-guk's Bodhidharma paintings there is a Triptychon preserved in the Collection of the Tōkyō University of Arts. On the central panel we can see Bodhidharma's crossing on a reed. His head is covered with a dark hood, which is quite unique in this kind of representation, but we can find its source in the famous Ming Chinese printed book the *Sancaituhui* 三才圖會 (Kor. *Samjaedohwi*, *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms*)⁴, showing the famous Daoist and Buddhist masters with illustrations, each page providing important background information on the artists.

In this book, the sixth Zen patriarch Huineng 慧能, has a dark hood and similar facial expressions. We can surmise, therefore, that Kim Myŏng-guk made use of this pattern-book, making some adjustments to the actual topic. Use was made of Huineng's iconography, given by the *Sancaituhui*, the *Xianfoqizong* 洪氏禪佛奇蹤 [Kor. *Hongssi sŏnbulgijong*, *Marvelous tales of immortals*]⁵, printed in 1602, in which the hood is no longer darker than the robe itself. We can also find similar depictions in other representations of Bodhidharma.

The wall painting of the Paradise Hall of Taewŏn Temple (*Taewŏnsa* 大原寺) in South Chŏlla Province shows Bodhidharma with the same features as we saw in the model books presenting images of Huineng. However, we can be sure that this wall painting represents Bodhidharma as he is shown with his disciple Huike 慧可. They are depicted at the moment of their famous encounter, when Huike cut off his arm in devotion to the master and presented it to Bodhidharma. Earlier paintings showing Bodhidharma with Huike are quite different from this one. One of Korea's three most famous temples, the *T'ongdosa*

通度寺, has a wall painting dating from around 1670, in which a bearded and large-eyed person can be seen in profile, sitting on a straw mat under a pine tree. The figure is holding a begging bowl and a young monk, noticeably smaller in size than the seated man, is holding a book and bowing in front of him. There is no allusion to the cutting off of an arm so how do we know then that this person is Bodhidharma?

Our search leads us back to China and to the model preserved at the famous Shaolin monastery, which is a place strongly associated with Bodhidharma himself. The image preserved here shows the main figure in the same posture as in the wall painting. This type of face was used as a model for the recent commissioning of a Bodhidharma sculpture from a Chinese artist for the Waujōng Temple (*Waujōngsa* 臥牛精舍) in Yōngin, Kyōnggi Province, Korea, erected in 1992.⁶ The use of pattern books can be traced back to many of the Chosŏn architectural temple paintings, as well as to paintings on paper and silk.

Bodhidharma's nine-year meditation before a cave wall is a very widely used theme adopted by painters. In Korea this event is usually represented showing the patriarch from behind. In the colored roll of 14 masters by Un Lim-ja 雲林子, dated 1698, the depiction of Bodhidharma follows the tradition of the *Sancaituhui* and the *Xianfoqizong* (Marvelous tales of immortals) but as the painter used green color for the rock wall, his depiction of Bodhidharma looked like as if he was not looking at a wall but sitting in front of a green meadow.

On temple architecture we can find similar representations but again with a revised interpretation of the story through the use of color. For example, the wall painting from the mid-18th century in the main hall of the Mihwang Temple (*Mihwangsa* 美黃寺) in Haenam, South Chōlla Province and the one from the beginning of the 19th century in the Paradise Hall of Hyōntūng Temple (*Hyōntūngsa* 懸燈寺) in Kap'yōng, Kyōnggi Province, depict the patriarch as looking out of the cave rather than contemplating the wall. This composition is used again in the silk painting dating from 1753 in Sōn'amsa 仙巖寺, South Chōlla Province. Indeed, there are many more examples of this, such as in the main hall of Pulgapsa 仏甲寺, Yōnggwang, South Chōlla Province; Bōm'ōsa 梵魚寺 in Pusan.

With regard to the Korean Bodhidharma images, the tradition of Arhat paintings and the Daoist immortals made a great contribution and evidence of reference to certain models and pattern books is very clear. However, they were not always the primary source and a certain degree of license was used in interweaving the models, as we have already witnessed in the use of the figure of Huineng when depicting Bodhidharma.

Differences of Popularization in Japan and Korea

When we look at the ways in which Bodhidharma-images have been popularized in modern and

contemporary East Asia, we can find some basic differences between China, Korea and Japan. In China, the wide scale popularization of Bodhidharma has only occurred recently, but here the visual appearance does not play such an important role as in Japan or contemporary South Korea. Here, particularly in the vicinity of the Shaolin monastery the cult flourishes, mainly among practitioners of martial arts, and Bodhidharma is venerated here as the founder of Shaolin kungfu. Among the three countries, Japan was the first one to popularize Bodhidharma on a large scale. On simplified ink paintings, usually executed by monk painters, as well as in popular color prints, he was also frequently portrayed in the form of a rōyō doll called Daruma Bodhidharma and, as such, became a very “Japanese” figure throughout East Asia. The presence of his figure is so pervasive in Japan that it resulted in literary sources having a tendency to deal with Bodhidharma as a typically Japanese phenomenon, regardless of his presence in other East Asian countries.

For instance, Neill McFarland handles Daruma as a typically Japanese phenomenon.⁷ This was one of the main reasons for us to start collecting information about Korean Bodhidharma representations in order to present them within the context of the Bodhidharma images of East Asia. The aim was to record their features and draw attention to a recent phenomenon, which has seen Korean Bodhidharma images become more visible than ever before. However, Bodhidharma images in Japan and China are more in evidence and we have much more information about them when compared to Korea. This makes the discussion of Korean images a little unbalanced in comparison with the discussion on Japanese material. So far, to our knowledge, no accessible materials about Korean Bodhidharma images and legends have been available in any Western languages. This paper attempts to present available Korean material on Bodhidharma within the context of the abundant Japanese sources to fill in the gaps and partially correct the Japan-centered view. The aim is to achieve this by adding the Korean material to the wider international body of work and also to the non-Zen related mass-produced images of Bodhidharma.

The Popularization of Bodhidharma in Japan

The transformation of the image of the founder of a religion into a doll is an interesting phenomenon. It occurred only in Japan, and this form of representation reached Korea only as a symbol of “Japaneseness” rather than as a representation of Bodhidharma himself; for example as a sign in Japanese restaurants, alongside the image of the waving cat. Scholars of ethnography failed to fully emphasize the fact that customs surrounding the use of a doll as part of the cult of Bodhidharma are closely related to religious practices from earlier times. We should search for the ties between popular customs and ancient aesthetics and religious practices if we are to fully understand this aspect of the cult. For example, we should

consider customs such as the “opening of eyes” ceremony and the symbolism associated with the use of such dolls in 19th century silk farms in Japan.

One interesting aspect is the appearance of professional doll-makers and the so-called Darumamarkets, mostly in the Kantō district. It reveals a connection between the post-war economic situation, and the fund-raising plans of Buddhist temples, where the establishment of new cults with a minimum of effort was seen as a means of surviving hard times. There is also an international aspect to this story, in relation to the migration of such images. It is interesting how this essentially Japanese toy was able to evolve into the national symbol of Russia, the famous Matryoshka doll.

Although the story of Bodhidharma has its origins in China and later spread to most East Asian countries, it is in Japan that he became the most popular and most visible figure, seen not only in the temple compounds but in everyday life as well, in the streets, in homes, offices, restaurants, public buildings and many other places. His name in Japanese is Bodai Daruma, but he is usually referred to as Daruma, sometimes with honorific titles such as Daruma *daishi* (“great master Bodhidharma”), which refers to the exemplary founder of the Zen tradition or simply Daruma *san* (“Mr. Bodhidharma”), a name which refers to his familiarity with everyday life. In contrast with Korea, a special textual tradition in Japan connects Bodhidharma with Prince Shōtoku, thus making him a part of Japanese culture and linking him to a geographical location where his presence had not been identified in earlier sources.⁸

Thus the legend of Bodhidharma became embedded within contemporary awareness and the image of Bodhidharma became identified with Japan as if the Indian missionary had stepped off the walls of the monasteries and merged into the life of everyday Japanese people in order to become a figure of popular culture. In a small temple at Ōji, in the Nara prefecture, a site is identified as the burial place of Bodhidharma, and two large stones represent the supposed meeting place of Bodhidharma and the Prince. According to tradition this temple was founded by Prince Shōtoku who, in remembrance of their meeting, carved the Daruma image which is currently enshrined at Empuku-ji 円福寺, a Zen temple near Kyōto. This statue is part of the Important Cultural Properties and is considered to be the oldest Daruma statue in Japan, but in fact it dates no earlier than the 13th century.⁹

The appearance of Bodhidharma in many different forms and roles is remarkable in Japan. It not only exists in paintings, but has been sculpted in different media, formed from clay or papier-mâché, or produced in plastic. Its role also varies: it ranges from being a venerated icon to a piece of art, a decoration, a talisman or a toy, or a combination of all of these. Bodhidharma performs several roles in Japan: he is a symbol of Zen practice and experience, a paradigm of perseverance, a popular god of luck, a patron saint of the martial arts, and an object and inspiration for satire and humor.¹⁰

Though Buddhism was introduced to Japan around the sixth century via Korea, and Chan Buddhism was to flourish from the ninth century onwards in China, it was only in the Kamakura period (1185-1333)

that Zen as a distinct school emerged in Japan. The monks who transmitted the Zen teachings studied in China in different schools: Eisai 栄西 (1141-1215) introduced Rinzai Zen in 1191 and Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253) brought Sōtō Zen to Japan. It is usually believed that due to its simplicity Zen attracted the samurai elite who ruled much of the country during that period, and that it was as a result of their patronage that Zen acquired its power and endurance. One of the earliest Zen schools was named after Bodhidharma and called *Daruma-shū* (Daruma-school) and thus Daruma became a nickname for Zen.¹¹ In the late Kamakura period, Zen Buddhism gained even more influence among military rulers, who themselves sometimes became practitioners of the Zen arts and painted Daruma-portraits. Zen monks served as their “spiritual guides and cultural mentors.”¹² In the ensuing Muromachi period (1336-1568), Zen Buddhism also enjoyed great patronage from the ruling elite and produced its most elevated masterpieces in ink paintings. The fourth Ashikaga shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshimochi 足利 義持 (r. 1392-1422), was a great devotee of Zen Buddhism and his Bodhidharma painting is a famous example of this.¹³ In addition, we know that the emperor painted Bodhidharma portraits, as testified by the existing example of the Emperor Go-Yōzei 後陽成天皇 (r. 1586-1611), which has survived at the Jishō-in 慈照院 of Shōkoku Temple 相国寺 in Kyōto.¹⁴

In popular imagination the continuous seated position adopted by Bodhidharma resulted in the loss of his legs and arms through atrophy, as they withered and eventually fell off. Sōtō Zen emphasizes the practice of sitting (*zazen* 坐禅), claiming that the centre of power and energy in the human body is located below the navel. Therefore, the legless and armless Bodhidharma figure can be explained as an illustration of concentrated meditative practice.¹⁵ Tōrei Enji 東嶺圓慈 (1721-1792), a famous disciple of Hakuin, painted Bodhidharma in 1781 through reference to the *Damoduolo chanjing* 達摩多羅禪經 (“Bodhidharma Zen Sūtra”).¹⁶ The picture shows him with an indication of the eighth, seventh and sixth levels of consciousness within his body, as well as the area under the navel being marked in dark red. This is explained in the inscription of the painting as an indication that “it is the crucial point where vital energy is gathered”.¹⁷ Thus the roly-poly Daruma dolls symbolize Bodhidharma’s balance and concentration, thus enabling them to right themselves, even though they are about to fall over or have already fallen over. The roly-poly Daruma dolls are known as *okiagari*, i.e. “eight-rising”, on account of the proverb: “seven times falls, eight times rises” (*nana korobi, ya oki* 七転び八起き). Thus the Daruma doll is a symbol of perseverance and resilience. The figure of Bodhidharma as a roly-poly doll is not only a toy for children, but also a talisman for adults and it is believed to possess real power against plagues and illnesses. From earliest times, Daruma dolls were used to protect children from illness, especially from smallpox. Consequently, Bodhidharma was regarded as the god of smallpox.¹⁸ This was partly because of their red color, a color which has held magical connotations throughout human’s history and which has been associated with magical and healing powers enabling it to absorb smallpox.

A well known custom is that when one receives such a doll, it usually has blank eyes and one should make a wish while painting one of the eyes. The other eye can only be painted when this wish has come true. The dotting of the eyes is an interesting counterpart of the traditional Buddhist ritual referred to as *kaigen kuyō* 開眼供養, “opening the eyes ceremony”, in which a new Buddhist image cannot be regarded as sacred until its eyes have been ritually indicated. This custom has its roots in ancient Chinese tradition and aesthetics. According to an old Chinese chronicle, a painter called Lie Yi (around the second century BCE) always left out the pupils of the dragons and phoenixes he painted, because if he had completed them, they might come to life and fly away.¹⁹ Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (ca 344-ca 407) is also said to have placed particular emphasis on “dotting the eyes”, sometimes refraining from dotting the pupils for several years.²⁰ For Gu Kaizhi “dotting the eyes transmits the spirit and pours forth (*hsieh*) [xie] the shining (*chao*) [zhao]. It permits the spirit to take up its abode in the image [...] which is to say that dotting the eyes *animates* the image, literally infusing it with life.”²¹ In silk farms in 19th century Japan, Daruma images were regarded as luck-bringers, maybe because the shape of the cocoons are like *okiagari* Daruma dolls. In some cases the cocoons themselves were used for making Daruma dolls (Jp. *mayu Daruma*), and sometimes a small weight was placed inside them so that they would work like a normal *okiagari* doll.²² The rite of filling the eyes was done in the following way: in spring, when the first silkworms hatched, they drew their first eye and when the second generation hatched in the fall they drew the other one. The set of five miniature Daruma dolls, painted in different colors, is also associated with silk production. The set of five colors invokes many associations, as the number five has great significance in ancient East Asian culture. McFarland explains it in relation to the five-colored streamers in Shintō shrine displays, and suggests a possible connections with the *gohei*, a vertical wand to which folded paper is attached. He suggests the supposition that “*gohei* is a relic of a time when pieces of cloth were presented in this fashion and *gohei* and the streamers had a similar origin in the ancient Shintō cults.”²³ He also thinks that it is probably connected with the Shintō prayer (*norito*), which refers to offerings to the *kami* of five types, or – as the language renders possible – five colored types of things (*itsu-iro no mono*), which are traditionally interpreted as thin coarse silk strips in five colors.²⁴ Japan, in a similar way to Korea, adopted the Chinese cosmological system with its sophisticated equivalences and connections between time, directions, qualities and senses. Bodhidharma was also accommodated into these correlations with his unique and caricature-like personage. As he is represented in red robes, and red is connected with the element of fire, Bodhidharma became associated with fire and consequently with the other qualities and directions presented in the table of equivalences, which forms part of the Chinese belief system.²⁵

Bodhidharma was also used in *ukiyo-e* parodies, where “Daruma has been not only removed from the temple, but recast as a figure in the Edo period demi-monde.”²⁶ In this role, Bodhidharma is paired with a courtesan, with whom he has exchanged clothes, and finally his figure is feminized, and he

becomes a woman.²⁷ The term “*daruma*”, in the late Edo period, was the slang term for a prostitute. Daruma with a courtesan can appear in two ways, either directly, with the courtesan as a second principal figure, with whom he exchanges clothes²⁸ and indirectly, as a picture on a wall, a decoration on a garment or as a tumbler placed somewhere in a room. As to the question of how Bodhidharma came to be represented as a woman, Kidō Chūtarō suggests that the model was a celebrated beauty of the Edo period called Han Tayū.²⁹ She was the highest ranking courtesan in the Yoshiwara pleasure district in the end of 17th century. Later on, she was redeemed by a wealthy merchant and became a Buddhist nun. While she was a courtesan, she heard the story of Bodhidharma sitting for nine years facing the wall. She laughed at it and said: “That is not such a big deal. Prostitutes have to spend every day and every night sitting and looking for customers – not facing a wall, but facing the street through the windows. After ten years in this world of misery, I have already exceeded Daruma by one year.” And according to the lore, when the painter Hanabusa Itchō (1652-1724) heard this anecdote, he conceived the idea of merging Daruma and the prostitute into a single figure.³⁰ Probably this was the first “*onna Daruma*” or “*woman Daruma*”, which then became a popular figure among the floating-world artists and throughout Japan.

The appearance of the *okiagari onna Daruma* dolls is also an interesting phenomenon. Their connection with the famous Russian Matryoshka dolls is already a proven fact.³¹ Daruma is a stimulus for childish fantasies and imaginatively included in children’s play activities. Apart from children’s games, there are different kinds of wooden toys which incorporate the Daruma image. These include puzzles and the popular “dropping Daruma” (*Daruma otoshi*), which consists of differently colored wooden rings on the top of a flat-based Daruma image. The player has to knock each ring under the column, with the Daruma figure remaining upright. In Japan, a snowman is called “snow Daruma” and its representation often appears in ink-paintings. Around New Year, in several locations, Daruma-markets are held, especially in the Kantō area. They are scheduled one after the other in order to permit vendors to move from one place to another from early January till early March. Many temples in Japan are called Daruma temples. Some of them have a long history of taking part in the popular Daruma cults. Others started to make such associations after the Second World War, in order to cope with their severe financial difficulties. They believed that by trading in Daruma dolls they would increase their visibility, income and popularity. It had been usual, before the war, for parishioners to gather at the temple with their own hand-made Daruma-images in order to pray for protection and prosperity. After the war, these events were formalized and became an official festival, the home-made images being substituted with professionally crafted figures, sold by the temple.³²

In conclusion, Daruma, in the form of a doll, was claimed as a symbol of Japanese identity. In none of the East Asian countries where his figure appeared was he to become such a part of the everyday lives of the people as in Japan. This relates to several associations and values: venerating the Indian source and

the Chinese development of Buddhism, the adaptation and “Japanization” of Chinese cultural elements and Japan’s own definition of the uniqueness of its ethos.³³ As McFarland aptly summarized it, “A great number of Japanese have been associated with Daruma. They have honored and emulated him. They have deified and worshipped him. They have humanized and played with him. They have trivialized and made sport of him.”³⁴ Bodhidharma in the form of a doll is much more highly regarded as a symbol of “Japaneseness”, and therefore the Japanese people popularized this figure on such a grand scale that even a city, Takasaki, has chosen the Daruma doll as its symbol. Not only is the temple – named after Daruma, of course – full of Daruma dolls, but the whole city is decorated with Daruma designs and the shops sell a diverse range of goods, all related to Daruma. There is even an association of Daruma temples and a German doctor and collector, Gabriele Greve, has launched a website for the study of Daruma, also establishing a small museum in the mountains of the Okayama prefecture.³⁵

The Popularization of Bodhidharma in South Korea: The “Dalma-Syndrome”

Although Bodhidharma became the most popular and most visible figure in Japan from the Kamamura period onwards, this did not occur in Korea until the 20th century. More noticeably, this has taken place in the last few decades as his image has become more visible, not only in the vicinity of temple-compounds, but – as in Japan – in everyday life as well: in homes, offices, restaurants, on T-shirts and even on socks and on people’s shoulders in the form of tattoos. You can also find his figure in popular women’s magazines and on television advertisements, offering health, happiness and wealth to the owners of such images.

This phenomenon is so pervasive that it has caused some Buddhist journalists to refer to this as a “Dalma-Syndrome” 달마신드롬, by which “Bodhidharma became no longer a monk, but a more familiar figure”.³⁶ These Buddhists have ambivalent feelings towards this phenomenon, claiming that by using Bodhidharma figures for more “secular” purposes, such as for obtaining wealth and longer lives, rather than enlightenment, the original meaning of Bodhidharma’s teachings is inevitable fading. On the other hand, they recognize the fact that his figure has become more visible in contemporary society, something that can be regarded as a good sign in relation to the popularization of Buddhism. For instance, Choi Sök-hwan sees the “Dalma-Syndrome” as a distortion of the tradition, and criticizes the Japanese for inventing new textual traditions, such as claiming that Bodhidharma actually visited Japan.³⁷ Since Koreans do not have any particular textual tradition connecting Bodhidharma with their country, these Buddhists are trying to find new channels to educate people about the “real roots” of Buddhist traditions, thus adding to the popularization. However, they are seeking to do this by other means, such as through building and

establishing new Zen centers for lectures and performances and, of course, through the use of exhibitions of various Bodhidharma paintings. The assumed relationship between this development and elements of Buddhist beliefs, namely the use of the Dalma paintings as a means of “finding the truth” or their offering as a way to “transcend fluctuation”, is clearly revealed in articles by Yi Chŏng-hwa and Yi Chu-yŏn.³⁸

Since Buddhism was marginalized during the Chosŏn era (1392-1910), images connected to Buddhism did not gain as much popularity among ordinary people as they did in Japan. During the colonial period (1910-1945), when Japanese ruled over Korea, representations of Bodhidharma – in the form of the red Daruma tumbler – became familiar to Koreans, but they were never to regard this as a symbol of the patriarch, but more as a typical Japanese toy. This is reflected in the exhibition at the Lotte World Museum History Exhibition Halls, where a cityscape representing the period of occupation includes the shop of a Japanese doll-maker, making Daruma-dolls.³⁹ These Daruma dolls have never been adopted by Koreans, who more readily turned to ink paintings when reviving their tradition of Bodhidharma representations in the early 20th century. In particular, the famous painting by Kim Myŏng-guk 金明國 (1600-after 1662), which is now in the collection of the National Museum of Korea, was to become a model for later representations. His inspiration is clearly seen in the drawings of Kim Tong-sŏng (monk Tong-sŏng, born in 1955) and many others,⁴⁰ while the work of some Japanese monk-painters – such as that of Sengai Gibon 仙厓義梵 (1750-1837) – have also had a great impact on several Korean artists, including monk Sŏk Chŏng (born in 1928), who is referred to as “the Kŭmgang-san genius”.

Another aspect of the popularization of Bodhidharma in South Korea is within the movie industry. The movie *Why Has Bodhidharma Left for the East?* (*Dalmaga tongchogŭro kan kkadaŭn*, 1989) was directed by Pae Yong-gyun 裴鏞均 (born in 1951), formerly known as a painter, between 1981 and 1989. It became the first South Korean film to win an international award. After receiving the Golden Leopard Award at the Locarno International Film Festival in 1989, the film enjoyed immense popularity in the early 1990s. Although it has Dalma in its title, it only refers to the *kung-an* 公案 (*kōan*, a riddle, a paradoxical question for meditation), and does not mention Bodhidharma in other respects. Another popular movie has this figure in its title. *Let's Play, Dalma!* (*Dalmaya nolja*, Pak Ch'ŏl-gwan, 2001) is a comedy dealing with a contest between gangsters and monks. Its success was shown by the fact that the monastery where the film was shot has since become a very popular tourist destination.⁴¹ Films have clearly played their part in popularizing Sŏn Buddhism and Bodhidharma.

In Korea, the production of objects associated with Bodhidharma has come into vogue over the last decades. This fashion started with the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, when the so-called golden cards were launched onto the market. These golden cards are small cards, painted with real gold paint and they usually incorporate some lucky image, such as the 12 Oriental zodiac animals, Taoist talismans, and, for Westerners, four-leaved clovers and images of Jesus Christ. More and more, however, the images are of

Bodhidharma. Contemporary painters have also turned towards the image of this saint, and we can find that not only monks, but also some professional painters have started to revitalize the image of Bodhidharma. This issue raises several problems in relation to the “authenticity” of Bodhidharma paintings in Korea. As a result of several conversations and from articles written in Buddhist magazines such as *Sŏn Munhwa*, it is clear that Bodhidharma paintings are regarded as being bearers of cosmic power (*ki* 氣), something which is only present in the work of a painter who is fully enlightened when he paints the picture.⁴² Monk Pŏpkong and the painter Sŏkchu Yi Chŏng-ch’ ōl are noted, among others, for their willingness to distribute their Dalma paintings for free to those who cannot afford to buy one. They usually cost a considerable amount of money.⁴³

We can clearly see the growing number of Bodhidharma representations in the art shops and exhibitions, as well as in the publication of several books and albums devoted exclusively to Bodhidharma paintings.⁴⁴ The structure of these books is basically the same, each painting (usually 100, or more often 108 pictures) being followed by a poem or an explanation related to the legend or a particular Buddhist teaching. These books often combine the pattern-book format with the drawing manual, explaining the methods used in drawing Bodhidharma. Korean painters of Bodhidharma generally use these pattern books, together with other publications focusing on Buddhist imagery, and in many cases the source of their models can be clearly seen. However, at the same time, spontaneous ink paintings require some expressive qualities from the artist, thus making them very personal and spiritually charged pieces.

Another fundamental aspect of contemporary popularization is the importance of major public events and their use in by certain artists in the propagation of Bodhidharma. In 2002, when Korea co-hosted the Football World Cup with Japan, the monk-painter Kim Tong-sŏng (monk Tong-sŏng 東愷스님) (born in 1955), exhibited his new works in both Korea and in Japan. He represented Bodhidharma with a football, actualizing the figure for the appropriate event. However, he also included a philosophical explanation for his paintings, referring to the basic qualities and the same pronunciation of the words “ball” and “emptiness”. While both words are pronounced as *kong* 空 in Korean, the latter is designated by the Chinese character 空 and is an important concept in Buddhism (Skt. *śūnyata*).⁴⁵ In 2005, on the occasion of the International Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Pusan, monk Pŏmju made a public performance as he produced an enormous Bodhidharma painting. There have been many similar events recently in a variety of locations. However, the painting of Bodhidharma images on such a huge scale for public events can be traced back to earlier traditions. It is recorded that the famous artist, Hokusai (1760-1849), also made a similar image in 1817.⁴⁶ Korean monk-artists often paint Bodhidharma paintings as a performance. One such artist, the “mad monk” Chunggwang 重光 (1934-2002, is also called “the Dirty Mop,” Kŏlle sŏnim 곁레 스님) and he gained an international reputation

for his daring Bodhidharma paintings and performances, events which were to have an influence on contemporary expressionist art, even in the West.

¹ In the Japanese context, for instance, Bernard Faure dealt with this issue, “The Daruma-shu, Dōgen and Sōtō Zen”.

² His poems were translated by Kevin O’Rourke, *Singing Like a Cricket, Hooting Like an Owl: Selected Poems of Yi Kyu-bo*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, East Asia Series, 1995.

³ Among the most recent acquisitions of the National Museum of Korea, Seoul there is a Bodhidharma painting by Fūgai Ekun 風外慧薰 (1568-1654), the famous Japanese monk painter, whose work is very close in style to Kim Myōng-guk’s 金明國 (1600-after 1662) famous half-body Bodhidharma-painting which is also in the National Museum of Korea. Placing the two pictures next to each other, one can clearly see the similarities.

⁴ Compiled by Wang Qi (1565-1614) and Wang Siyi in 1610.

⁵ Compiled by Hong Yinming.

⁶ In the Korean Zen Buddhist magazine, the *Sōn Munhwa*, we can read that erecting a sculpture made in China is an attempt to gain access to the “real” image of Bodhidharma, using the most authentic Chinese sources again. See Poun Jippu [“It was more than 1300 years since Grand Master Bodhidharma was enshrined in Korea”], 20-21.

⁷ See H. Neill McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 1987.

⁸ In the 22nd volume of the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*Chronicle of Japan*) we can read a story about Prince Shōtoku 聖德太子 (572-622), the famous propagator of Buddhism, as he met a hungry wanderer at the crossroads of Kataoka. The Prince gave him food and his mantle and wrote a poem about him. On another day he sent an envoy to have a look at the poor wanderer, but he was told that the man he met on the road had already died. Shōtoku Taishi became very sad and ordered the body to be buried at the place where they had met. Some days later he told one of his attendants that the man he had met on the Kataoka crossroads was not an ordinary man but a saint. He sent a servant again to the tomb to observe it, but the servant reported to the Prince that the body was missing; only the cloth which the Prince had given to him lay on the coffin neatly folded up. Shōtoku Taishi then sent the servant back for the cloth, and he continued wearing it, as before. People kept saying that “only a saint recognizes a saint,” and started to respect their Prince more than before. *Nihon shoki*, 98-99.

The association of Bodhidharma with the hungry wanderer appeared in a biography of Shōtoku Taishi, the *Ihon Jōgū Taishiden* いほんじょうぐう太子伝, written by Keimei in 771, which asks at the end of the story: “Could that starving man have been Bodhidharma?” See Kuranaka Susumu, [“The Formation of Prince Shōtoku’s Kataoka-tale”], 23. The tentative speculation in this text became an actual fact in the *Denjutsu Isshin Kaimon* 伝述一心戒文 (*The Record of the Precepts in a Mind*) composed by Kōjō in 834, which says that “the starving man was after all, Bodhidharma.” See Kōjō 光定 (“The Record of the Precepts in a Mind”), 653. The explanation for this was the story according to which Shōtoku Taishi (574-622) was the avatar of the famous Tendai Master Nanyue Huisi 慧思 (517-577) and a legend states that Nanyue had once been Bodhidharma’s disciple. For more on this, see Bernard Faure, “Bodhidharma as a Textual and Religious Paradigm,” 187-198. When they met for the first time on Mt. Tiantai 天台山, Bodhidharma predicted that they would both meet again in the next life in Japan. And this statement is followed by the story about the Prince and the beggar, where the Prince recognized his master in the poor man. See Kōjō 光定, [“The Record of the Precepts in a Mind”], 74.2379, 653b.

In the *Genkō Era Biographies of Eminent Priests* (*Genkō Shakusho* 元亨釈書, 1322) written by Kōkan Shiren 虎関師錬 (1278-1347) we also find the same story with the identification of the hungry wanderer with Bodhidharma. See Kōkan Shiren 虎関師錬, [“Buddhist history of the Genkō era”], Suzuki gakujuitsu zaidan ed. vol. 62, 66-230. Bodhidharma was also presented in other Tendai writings as well. In Kōshū’s *Keiran Shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 his teachings were contrasted with those of the Tendai school founder, Zhiyi 智顛 (538-97). See Kōshū 光宗, (“A Collection of Leaves Gathered in Stormy Streams”), T.76.2410, 532b.

⁹ Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 18.

¹⁰ Humor has a very important role in Chan Buddhism. Not regarding the his teachings as sanctified and ‘holy’, as referred to by Bodhidharma in his famous interview with the Emperor Liangwu and not taking things too seriously is seen as being at the core of Chan’s teachings. Laughing is something which cannot be planned, is a result of an unusual revelation, a realm outside utilitarian and logical perceptions. Showing Chan personalities laughing (like Hanshan 寒山 and Shide 拾得, Jp. Kansan and Jittoku) is a familiar scene in Chan art. Although Bodhidharma is not laughing, his very morose figure makes the viewers laugh. The satirical expressions and humorous elements in representing Bodhidharma were always present and have gained more and more space, especially in the popular

imagination and related art (Hyers, 1973). In accordance with the willingness to dare to make fun of these usually venerated objects and personalities in Chan Buddhism, the religious founder can be open to such treatment, even though sometimes the veneration and the humorous aspects are mixed together at temple sites and the devotees worship even the enshrined comic image. The comic expression of Bodhidharma comes from the depiction of the foreign-looking Arhats, whose efforts were regarded by the Mahāyānists as a kind of futile achievement when compared with the deeds of the wonderfully depicted Bodhisattvas, who are saving humankind. These Arhats were not taken away but given the role as protectors of Buddhist law, which was also influenced by their fierce and serious appearance. The description of Arhats derives from the Daoist immortals who were usually out of the ordinary and quite unusual in their appearance, as well as in relation to their behavior. Chan Buddhism was very much influenced by Daoist ideas, and the Chinese spirit of humor.

¹¹ Faure, Bernard. "The Daruma-shū, Dōgen and Sōtō Zen", *Monumenta Nipponica* 42, Issue 1 (Spring 1987): 25-55

¹² Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 35.

¹³ Now in the collection of the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln.

¹⁴ The 177th Emperor of Japan, Go-Yōzei, lived in a very critical period when Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) attempted to gain power, and devoted his time to the arts and lived as a scholar rather than a politician. See Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 22 and 36. Also see *Daruma ten* 達磨展, ["Bodhidharma Exhibition"].

¹⁵ Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 16.

¹⁶ Fo-jih Ch'i-sung (1007-1072) and Tōrei Enji *Damoduolo chanjing* 達摩多羅禪經 [*Bodhidharma Zen Sūtra*]. In *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Kankokai* 大正新脩大藏經 ["Tripitaka in Chinese"], T.15. No.618. A translation attributed to Buddhahadra (359-429), completed around 413. The title of the original text was, apparently, Yogacharabhumi, one of many treatises sharing the same title. The original Indian text is lost, but is attested in the preface by Huiyuan (334-416). See Michel Mohr's handout of his lecture held 16. 01. 2003 at SOAS, Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions, "Tōrei's Commentary on the Damoduolo chanjing". To be published as "Imagining Indian Zen: Tōrei's Commentary on the *Damoduolo chanjing* and the Rediscovery of Early Meditation Techniques during the Tokugawa." In *The Zen Canon*, edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ With the courtesy of Prof. Michel Mohr, through conversation with him, 2003.

¹⁸ Bernard Faure, the preliminary French version of the article "The Double Life of the Patriarch" kindly provided to me by the author in 2003.

¹⁹ Quoted by Pál Miklós. *A Sárkány Szeme. Bevezetés a Kínai Piktúra Ikonográfiájába* [*The eye of the dragon: introduction to the iconography of Chinese art*], Budapest: Corvina, 1973. Available in German as Pál Miklós, *Chinesische Malerei: Geschichte, Technik, Theorie*, Köln: Böhlau, 1982.

²⁰ Chen Shih-hsiang, *Biography of Ku K'ai-chih. Chinese Dynastic Histories Translations* 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961: 14-15. Also see Susan Bush and Hsio Yen-shih (eds.), *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985:14.

²¹ Audrey Spiro, "New Light on Gu Kaizhi", 12-13.

²² Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 65.

²³ Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 66.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Yoshino Hiroko, [*The folklore of Daruma: from Yin-Yang to the Five Elements Theory*], 114.

²⁶ Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 82.

²⁷ Neill H. McFarland, "Feminine Motifs in Bodhidharma Symbolism in Japan", 168.

²⁸ The same type of parody can be found with regard to Budai 布袋 (in Japanese Hotei), when he is depicted in a woman's dress while a woman is represented with a big sack: the attribute of Budai. See the painting by Furuyama Moromasa (fl. ca. 1704-1748), reproduced in *Christies New York*, 27. 10. 1998:48-49, lot. 21.

²⁹ Kidō Chūtarō, [*Bodhidharma and his representations*], 355-358.

³⁰ Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 82.

³¹ From the historical perspective, the dolls arrived in Russia relatively recently, in the 1890's, from Japan. It is said that somebody brought a wooden carving of a Buddhist saint as a surprise to the Mamontovs, a family of Russian industrialists and patrons of the arts. The doll that came from the island of Honshū could be broken into two halves, revealing a smaller one. By using the same technique, a total of five dolls were revealed. Ten years after Matryoshka had made its first appearance in Russia, it was awarded a gold medal as a typically Russian toy at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900. See Eva Katkova, "Matreshka," [last updated 01. 07. 2008] Siberian Vernisage: The site of Russian folk crafts art, Novosibirsk City: The Siberian Vernisage Fund, 2004-2008, http://www.sibvernissage.ru/en/goods/matr_240/ [accessed 31.07. 2008].

³² Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 99-100.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Neill H. McFarland, *Daruma: The Founder of Zen in Japanese Art and Popular Culture*, 54

³⁵ See her blog. Gabriele Greve, *Daruma San in Japan, Japanese Art and Culture*, [posted on 25. 12. 2007], Gabriele Greve “Daruma Museum and Gallery Pages” blog, Ohaga: G. Greve, <http://darumasan.blogspot.com/> [accessed 28.07. 2008].

³⁶ Choi Sök-hwan, [“Bodhidharma and Utopia”], 31.

³⁷ See Choi Sök-hwan’s article [“Bodhidharma and Utopia”].

³⁸ Yi Chöng-hwa, [“The fragrance of no-mind is within Bodhidharma-paintings. Through this fragrance we try to find the truth”], 54-55; and Yi Chu-yön, [“Offering Bodhidharma-paintings for transcending fluctuation”], 98.

³⁹ The exhibition was seen by the author in summer 1997. See, Lotte World official website:

http://www.lotteworld.com/Global_eng/04_FolkMuseum/Folk_History.asp?mn=Mn402 [accessed 31.07. 2008].

⁴⁰ See Tong-söng sünim’s official website: www.zenartist.com [accessed 31.07. 2008].

⁴¹ Choi Sök-hwan, [“Bodhidharma and Utopia”], 30.

⁴² See Koam, [“Hwabaek’s private exhibition of Bodhidharma-paintings: From one-attachment to no-attachment”], 55. This concept has strong connections with the influential ancient Chinese aesthetic theory of the painter Xie He (late 5th century CE.), who emphasized the “sympathetic responsiveness of qi 氣” as the very first of his six canons of painting. See Michael Kampen O’Riley, *Art Beyond the West*, 129.

⁴³ Yi Chu-yön, [“Offering Bodhidharma paintings for transcending fluctuation”]. And see the website HBMC Buddha News posted on [2005.04.28] <http://news.buddhapi.com/news/BNC000/BNC0004457.html>

⁴⁴ For example Hong Ip-yo, and Yi Byöng-gyo, [*Painting Bodhidharma: hundred great ways to achieve enlightenment through painting*]; Kim Ch’ang-bae [*Korean Bodhidharma paintings*] and [*The all Korean Bodhidharma*]; Kim Na-mi, [*Meeting Bodhidharma on pictures*]; Yu Hyöng-jae [*108 Bodhidharmas*].

⁴⁵ Kim Hye-jöng, [“Bodhidharma holds a football”], 22-25.

⁴⁶ Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), *Big Daruma*, ca. 1817 [ink on paper]. Reproduced in Kōriki Tanenobu 高力種信 著 *Hokusai taiga sokusho saizu* 北斎大画即書細図 [Drawing the Eyes on Hokusai’s Big Picture], Nagoya: Nagoya City Museum, 1817.