

Edited by Dorothy C. Wong

Dynamics of Interregional Exchange in East Asian Buddhist Art, 5th–13th Century

SERIES ON THE HISTORY OF ART

Summary

This volume examines the various patterns of trans-regional exchanges in Buddhist art within East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) in the medieval period, from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries. A traditional approach to the study of East Asian Buddhist art revolves around the notion of an artistic relay: India was regarded as the source of inspiration for China, and China in turn influenced artistic production in the Korean peninsula and Japan. While this narrative holds some truth, it has the implicit baggage of assuming that art in the host country is only derivative and obscures a deep understanding of the complexity of transnational exchanges. The essays in this volume aim to go beyond the conventional query of tracing origins and mapping exchanges in order to investigate the agency of the “receivers” with contextual case studies that can expand our understanding of artistic dialogues across cultures.

The volume is divided into three sections. In Section I, “Transmission and Local Interpretations,” the three chapters by Jinchao Zhao, Li-kuei Chien, and Hong Wu all address topics of transnational transmission of Buddhist imagery, their figural styles, and subsequent alterations or adaptations based on local preferences and interpretations. Buddhism had important impacts on East Asian countries in the political dimension, especially when the religion and certain Buddhist sutras and deities were believed to have state-protecting properties. The chapters by Dorothy C. Wong, Imann Lai, and Clara Ma in Section II, “Buddhism and the State,” attend to the political aspect of Buddhism in visual representation. Section III, “Iconography and Traditions,” includes chapters by Sakiko Takahashi, Suijun Ra, and Tamami Hamada that

closely study the cross-border transmission of and subtle variations in iconography and style of specific Buddhist deities, notably deities of esoteric strands that include the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara (Bodhisattva of Compassion).

About the editor

Dorothy C. Wong is currently Professor of Art and Director of the East Asia Center at the University of Virginia. She received her B.A. from International Christian University, Tokyo, M.Phil. from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Ph.D. from Harvard University. Specializing in Buddhist art of medieval China, Wong’s research addresses topics of art in relation to religion and society, and the relationship between religious texts/doctrine and visual representations. In addition to many articles on a wide range of Buddhist art topics, she has published ‘Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form’ (2004; Chinese edition 2011), ‘Hōryūji Reconsidered’ (editor and contributing author, 2008), ‘China and Beyond in the Medieval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-regional Connections’ (co-edited with Gustav Heldt, and contributing author, 2014), and ‘Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645–770’ (2018; Chinese edition forthcoming), and ‘Miraculous Images in Asian Traditions’, vol. 50 of ‘Ars Orientalis’ (editor and contributing author, 2020).

Wong previously taught at Florida State University from 1995 to 1997. As Visiting Professor, she has also taught at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and the Centre of Buddhist Studies at the University of Hong Kong. A former editor of the Asian art magazine *Oriental Art*, she currently serves on the editorial boards/advising committees of *Buddhist Art of China*, *Acta Via Serica*, *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Asian Interactions*, and *Wenxue yu tuxiang* (Literature and Image). She has received fellowships from the American Association of University Women, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, the Whiting Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and the National Humanities Center.

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