

Coming into existence of the Amitābha maṇḍala and some Problems

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The devout of the Amitābha Buddha who are most numerous in Japan are those who believe in the doctrine of the pure land. The main divinity of the sect, Amitābha Tathāgata is the appellation of the Buddha in China and Japan. The Buddha is called Amitābha, Buddha with limitless lustre, or Amitāyus, the Buddha with limitless life in India and Tibet. In view of the iconographic stand point, they belong to the same Amitābha. But Amitāyus has wider image. The original form of the sacred one means the one with immeasurable enlightenment. He is the Lord of the Sukhāvātī in the west. Amitābha Buddha who is in the west is believed to give delivery on the basis of his 48 original great vows. But is that all? Amitābha in Tibet does not seem to have only so much scope of the object of worship. He presents more familiar and yet more marvellous sense of reality.

Amitābha Buddha appears in the art of the esoteric Buddhism. As it was pointed out so far, Amitābha Buddha appears in the Amitābha maṇḍala and in portion of the pair of maṇḍalas. He is represented by Amitābha (in the west) among the four Buddhas in the quarter of the eight-petalled lotus in the Garbha-maṇḍala and Amitāyur-Buddha in the western circle of the Jōjinné in the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala. Both of them employ the Dhyāna-mudrā of the wisdom that inquires the dharmas properly and realizes everything in the world righteously. His virtue is said to spread in the time (lengthways) and in the space (crossways). He is depicted in the ordinary version of the maṇḍala as a seated statue meditating with dhyāna-mudrā and with both shoulders covered. According to Dr. Shōun Toganō (The studies in the maṇḍala) it is similar to the account of the "sūtra of Śāriputra's questions". This is hinted by the fact that the images

of Amitābha and Amitāyus are similar to the image of Śākyamuni in Enlightenment. The question is how to understand the aspect of the illuminating countenance of Amitābha who looks to be big in the maṇḍala. According to the *Shobutsu-Kyōkai-Shōshinjitsu-kyō* translated by Prajñā, a mystic image is sketched as follows. "Vairocana-Buddha having entered the Padmasamādhi in which all the dharmas of all the Tathāgatas are pure in their intrinsic nature, emits the colourful lustre of the reddish Padma out of the back and shines the countless worlds in the west." It suggests that Vairocana Buddha enters the Padma Samādhi in quietude and is in the process of transforming himself into Amitābha. In other words we can notice briefly the transformation of the image of Tathāgata.

The painting of Amitābha's paradise should be distinguished from the esoteric maṇḍala. It is after all the depiction of the scenes of the Buddha's land with pavilions with Amitābha Buddha in the center. The details give suggestion to the relation with other sacred beings. Dr. Bhattacharya relates in "An introduction to Buddhist esoterism 1932 trans by Kōjiro 1962). that this Amitābha is the Buddha who presides over Sukhāvati i.e. Aka- niṣṭha heaven and gave rise to Avalokiteśvara there." I-tsing (635-713) gives the names of Amitāyus and Amitābha. Amitāyus means one who has limitless life and Amitābha means one who has limitless lustre. The latter is one of the Dhyāni-Buddha in the Buddhist iconography in India. We can not find a statue or painted image of Amitābha Buddha who embodies such meaning in the history of Indian art.

The iconography of the Dhyāni Buddha that can be obtained now dates since the Pāla period. It was not unnatural that the sacred character of Amitābha Buddha was formed since the past time. It was a conclusion very natural from the side of the Esoteric Buddhism. It is suitable to the theory of maṇḍala that Amitābha gave rise to Avalokiteśvara who emphasizes the compassion. Let us remember the story of the former life of Amitābha. "The mahā Amitāyusūtra" gives the story of Amitābha in the past when he was called Bhikṣu Dharmagupta. His 48 vows suggest the very ardent belief. Amitābha as a Dhyāni Buddha is one of the 5 Buddhas.

He has attained the samādhi and is in the tranquil dhyāna. The 5 Dhyāni-Buddhas are. (1) Vairocana, (2) Akṣobhya, (3) Ratnasambhava, (4) Amitābha, (5) Amoghasiddhi. They are 5 Buddhas in the Vajradhātu according to Bhattacharya, a theory of Five dhyāni-Buddhas was given rise in early time but it was the Guhyasamāja-tantra-that was influential. The 5 mudrā of the 5 Dhyāni-Buddha were the reflection of those that were employed by Śākya Buddha. It was held sacred until very late time. The basis of the reflection was the pañca skandhas. They were organized in various forms of the Buddha statues in many schools of art in India. Besides the 5 Dhyāni-Buddhas, the sixth dhyāni-Buddha was established. This Buddha is supposed to be a prayer to the 5 Dhyāni Buddha. Consequently he holds a vajra and a bell. The 5 Dhyāni Buddhas are painted in the west side of stūpa. The 4 Buddhas other than Vairocana Buddha face toward the east, west, south and north and Amitāyus is disposed in the west. According to Dr. Lauf, collection of maṇḍalas of this sort (14-15 centuries) has been discovered (D. I. Lauf *Dar erbe Tibets*, p. 126).

Next I shall dwell on Amitābha in red robe. This is a seated statue of Amitābha Buddha, peculiar to the esoteric Buddhism. He is called so because of the red colour of his figure. It is supposed to have been represented into an image according to "the Muryōju-nyorai-kuyō-sahō-shidai (attributed to Kōbō-daishi). It says "He is crowned with a diadem of five wisdoms is in the dhyāna-mudrā. The figure is in the red colour. He limits the red colour from the top of the head to shine the innumerable worlds as the number of sands in the Gangā river." Brahmī scripts Hrīḥ in front of the figure transforms itself into the following samaya-attributes. "The Hrīḥ transforms into a vajra. A red open lotus flower is on it that stand on a five-pronged vajra crossways. The attributes are depicted beneath the figure which is an esoteric representation. The scrolls of the Buddha owned by Shōchiin and Yōchiin at Kōyasan, Hasedera (Nara) and Dōmyōji (Kawachi) are known. It was probably made with the center at Kōyasan in the Kamakura period when the recitation of the name of Amitābha was so prevalent. I shall not mention the maṇḍala of the particular sacred one and

Amitābha tathāgata. There are following maṇḍala of Amitābha.

- (1) Eight great Bodhisattva maṇḍala is based on "the disposition of maṇḍala of the eight great Bodhisattva" translated by Amoghavajra. In the center is Amitābha who is surrounded with Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin and Kṣitigarbha on the pedestal of eight petalled lotus. They are encircled with 4 Saṅgrahas and eight Pūjā Bodhisattvas thereby constructing the inner circle and the outer circle ("Bessonzakki", "Zuzōshō").
- (2) Maṇḍala with 9 categories in the square maṇḍala broght by Eun. It is described in the Sonyōshō and is called the Amitābha-maṇḍala of the Chinese version. Amitābha in the upper category and upper birth on the eight-petalled lotus an eight Amitābha of the 8 categories are in the circumference. Dharma, Tīkṣṇa, Hetu and Vāca are in the four corners of the inner circle and the twelve lustre Buddha four saṅgraha, four outer Pūjā are in the second circle and six Buddhas in one side, i.e. 24 Bodhisattvas and another make 25 Bodhisattvas in the third circle.
- (3) The maṇḍala with 9 letters is the mandala of sacred figures containing the Brahmī scripts of the "Gorin-Kujimyō-Himitsu-shaku" by Kakuban. The form is similar to (1) and (2).
- (4) The maṇḍala with five sacred ones is a maṇḍala with Amitābha in red robe in the center and the bīja letters of the 4 Bodhisattvas, Dharma, Tīkṣṇa, Hetu and Vāca "The Kakuzenshō" gives the maṇḍala of five sacred ones in the center of which are drawn Amitābha accompanying Avalokiteśvara Mahāsthāma prāpta, Kṣitigarbha and Nāgārjuna. The 5 Buddha with Amitābha that was closely affiliated with it was made in the period of T'ang. Priest Ennin saw a similar drawing.

A pair of maṇḍalas and Amitābha-Tathāgata. The figures of the 4 Buddhas drawn in the Jōjinné in the Vajrah dātu are described in the Hizōki" as follows." Akṣobhya Buddha is on the central pedestal of the eastern cicle. He is golden and makes the left hand in a fist and the right hand drops. Ratnasambhava is in the central pedestal of the southern circle. He is golden. The left hand is in fist and the right hand opens, bends the

anonymous finger and the small finger and the stretches the middle finger and the thumb. Amitāyur Buddha is on the central pedestals in the western circle. He is golden with the samādhi mudrā. Amoghasiddhi is in the northern circle. He is golden and the left hand is in fist and the right hand touches the chest with 5 fingers stretched”

Amitāyur Buddha in the Jōjinné of the maṇḍala with 81 sacred ones of the Vajradhātu (version Myōhōin) rides on the 7 peacocks. Each of the 4 familiar Bodhisattvas, Dharma, Tīkṣṇa, Hetu, and Vāca rides on peacock.

Concerning the creed of Amitābha in Tibet in connection with the Esoteric Buddha, those who wish to get wisdom take refuge in Amitābha and those who wish to obtain longevity and bliss adore Amitāyur Buddha. Also we find a profound character of dualism of Amitābha. It is the relation of the inside and the outside that can be noticed in human beings, the wisdom and compassion Vajradhātu maṇḍala and Garbha-maṇḍala at the same time the relation of the Dharmakāya and sambhogakāya, the infinite expanse of the microcosmos (human being) and the macrocosmos (the Dharmadhāta) are in Amitābha-Buddha.

〈Key Words〉 Amitābha maṇḍala

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(The notes omitted)

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