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Study of Buddha Statues of Gogurye, Baekje and Silla Kingdoms of Korea

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The origin and evolution of Buddha statues is distinctive in various parts of the world. Buddhism was originated in India and spread all over the world. It was transferred to Korea in the late 4th Century through Chinese monks. It is believed that Buddha statue and other sculptures were also introduced to Korea at the same period by the same Chinese monks who brought Buddhism to Korea. Therefore Buddha statues found in Korea were greatly influenced by the unique characteristics of Chinese Buddhist sculpture. In this study, a qualitative analysis has been done to examine about the Buddha statues in the three main kingdoms of Korean peninsula namely Gogurye, Baekje and Silla [Gogurye: 37 BC – 668 AD, Baekje: 18 BC – 660 AD, Silla: 57 BC – 935 AD]. At the beginning, the geographical influence of north Chinese Buddha statues was very high due to the geographical location of Korean peninsula. Few bronze Buddha statues were found which belongs to late Gogurye period. Those statues consist of “prabhā maṇḍalaya”, curled hair and thick robe. Oval shape face was also observed in both Chinese and the statues belong to Gogurye period. Even though, there is no significant sculptures were found in early Baekje era, collections of statues were found in latter period with Chinese characteristics. As compared to Gogurye and Baekje, Buddhist statues were found in Silla kingdom very hardly. This is due the fact that Buddhism was spread into Silla kingdom very lately. Only the Bodhisattva statues such as Maître bodhisattva were found which belongs to Silla kingdom. It can be concluded that Korean Buddha statues reflects a strong interaction with Chinese sculptures.

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