Article

Production and Enshrinement of Arhat Paintings during the Late Joseon Dynasty

Kwanghee SHIN

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Introduction

The profoundest elements of Buddhist doctrine are difficult to grasp and follow unless one has attained enlightenment. Therefore, from early in its history, Buddhism has visually depicted its doctrines and icons in an effort to promote understanding among believers and provide objects of worship. Among the diverse genres of Buddhist art, Buddhist paintings present the most extensive depiction of Buddhist doctrine. Since the introduction of Buddhism to the Korean Peninsula during the Three Kingdoms period 三國時代 (1C BCE-668 CE), Buddhist paintings have been continuously produced in the country. However, many such paintings have vanished due to wars or the internal circumstances of individual temples, and most remaining works date to the later period of the Joseon 朝鮮 dynasty (1392-1910)—i.e., after the Japanese Invasion of Korea, or Imjin War 壬辰倭亂, of 1592-1598. Contrary to examples from earlier periods which were commissioned by the royal family or members of the equally powerful ruling class, most Buddhist paintings of the late Joseon dynasty were produced upon commission from groups of ordinary people. They were often initiated by Buddhist monks and intended to be enshrined in Buddhist temples for the general public, rather than in Buddhist temples erected for private purposes by members of the royal family or the ruling class.

In terms of their initiators, patrons, and places of enshrinement, arhat paintings from the late Joseon dynasty share general similarities with contemporary Buddhist paintings on other themes. However, they are differentiated by the diverse categories of arhat paintings and also by the relatively loose iconography that allowed individual expression of artists. Unlike the general trend of Buddhist paintings of that era taking the form of hanging scrolls, arhat paintings were produced in the form of both hanging scrolls and murals. Further, along with those serving as objects of worship, many arhat paintings were intended to adorn Buddhist sanctums.

The arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty have been the subject of numerous studies, which have produced a wide range of scholarship. However, most of the previous research has been limited to specific categories of works or focused mainly on iconographic analysis. In this respect, this paper expands the scope of existing research by covering all the extant works that can be classified as arhat painting from the late Joseon dynasty and pursuing a more

comprehensive examination of the theme from a broader perspective. To this end, the concept of arhat and the wide range of arhat paintings will be introduced in the first section. Next, the working methods of Buddhist monk painters will be analyzed, and the places of enshrinement and the principles regarding the arrangement of arhat paintings inside temple halls will be examined.

Classification of Arhat Paintings from the Late Joseon Dynasty

Known as *nahan* 羅漢 in Korean and as *luohan* in Chinese, arhat (a Sanskrit term) is a Buddhist monk who has attained enlightenment through a continual practice of aestheticism. Arhats can gain a variety of supernatural powers which enable them to fly, transform themselves into other beings, extend their lifespan, emit fire out of their body, or emerge from or disappear into a sealed space.[1] Arhats are believed to protect sentient beings through these supernatural powers and are generally worshiped in groups of sixteen, eighteen, and five hundred. The sixteen arhats are the disciples of the historical Shakyamuni Buddha, who deferred their entry into nirvana until the arrival of Maitreya Buddha. Following Shakyamuni Buddha's order, they remained on earth to protect Dharma, or Buddhist law, and help people live in health and longevity.[2] The sixteen arhats represent the archetypal characteristics of arhats and thus form the basis for arhat worship which began after Monk Xuanzang 玄奘 of the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907) translated Nandimitravadana 大阿羅漢難提密多羅所說法住記 (*A Record of the Perpetuity of the Dharma Narrated by the Great Arhat Nandimitra*) into Chinese in 654.[3] The concept of the eighteen arhats was established during the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279)

1. "...阿羅漢者能飛行變化 住壽命動天地..." from *Sasipijanggyeong* 四十二章經; "...得阿羅漢者欲飛行變化即能 身中出水火即能 出無間入無孔亦能..." from *Ahamjeonghaenggyeong* 阿含正行經.
2. "十六大阿羅漢 一切皆具三明六通八通几解脫等無量功德 離三界染誦持三藏傳通外典 承佛勅故 以神通力延自壽量 乃至世尊正法應住常隨護持 及與施主作眞福田 令彼者得大果報" from *Nandimitravadana* 大阿羅漢難提密多羅所說法住記.
3. Regarding the formation of the concept of the sixteen arhats, see Visser 1923; Michihata 1983; Chen 1985.

by appending two to the original sixteen. The newly added arhats are believed to be the equal of the sixteen arhats in terms of supernatural powers. The five hundred arhats, which encompass Shakyamuni Buddha's disciples in India as well as revered monks of China and Korea, represent greatest supernatural powers of arhats. The ten disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha and the thirty-three Zen masters of India and China are also classified as arhats, since most of these enlightened beings are included in the sixteen, eighteen, or five hundred arhats.[4] Arhat paintings began to be produced from the late Tang dynasty in China, and they were produced continuously throughout the Goryeo (918-1392) and Joseon dynasties in Korea. Among the diverse categories of arhat paintings, sixteen arhats predominated in the late Joseon dynasty, whereas five hundred arhats were more favored in the Goryeo and early Joseon dynasties.[5] Such a shift may have been related to the conditions found in seventeenth-century Buddhist temples. After the end of the Imjin War, Buddhist circles strived to rapidly restore the temples that had been devastated or severely damaged during the war, and a number of halls dedicated to arhat worship were newly constructed as part of these efforts. In many cases, sculptures of the sixteen arhats rather than that of the five hundred arhats were enshrined in these new halls, most likely because they required less time for production while effectively representing their potent supernatural abilities with a smaller number of arhats.[6] It was customary to first install sculptures and then hang paintings of the same themes in the temple halls (Fig. 1). It is possible that this practice led to the increased production of arhat paintings in the late Joseon dynasty. The predominance of paintings of sixteen arhats may also have been related to a change in the nature of the patrons. As arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty were generally commissioned by Buddhist monks and a number of laypeople—who were much less affluent than royal family members and their associates or members of the powerful ruling class who sponsored Buddhism during the Goryeo and early Joseon dynasties[7]—it is likely that paintings of sixteen arhats which cost less to produce due to the smaller scale

4. For details on the composition of the sixteen, eighteen, five hundred arhats, the ten disciples, and the thirty-three Zen masters, see Shin 2010, 19-43.

5. For more about the five hundred arhat paintings of the Goryeo and early Joseon dynasties, see Shin 2010, 65-73; 125-28.

6. For more about the sculptures of the sixteen arhats of the late Joseon dynasty, see Kim 2012

7. For more about the patrons of Buddhist paintings of the early Joseon dynasty, see Park 2008.

requiring fewer materials (e.g., fabric, figment), were preferred to paintings of five hundred arhats. Around thirty sets of sixteen arhats from the late Joseon dynasty have survived to this day.

Figure 1. *The sculptures and paintings of the sixteen arhats*, the Late Joseon, Eungjindang of Songgwangsa Temple

Besides groups of arhats, a solitary saint, or *dokseong* 獨聖, was also worshiped as an arhat in the late Joseon dynasty. According to "Dokseong uimun" 獨聖儀文 (Manual for the Rites for the Solitary Saint) in *Yeongsandaehoi Jakbeopjeolcha* 靈山大會作法節次 (*Procedures for the Performance of the Vulture Peak Rite*), it is believed that Shakyamuni Buddha gave this saint the mission of practicing aestheticism alone in the mountains to become a revered figure among the people until Maitreya Buddha finally arrives.[8] The solitary saint is similar to the sixteen arhats in the nature of its functions, but differs in number, and was worshiped only in Korea among East Asian countries, and particularly during the late Joseon dynasty. Some scholars have suggested this solitary saint to be pindola-bharadvaja 賓頭盧, the first of the sixteen arhats, while others have argued that it does not refer to any specific

8. "...靈山當時 受佛咐囑 恒居天台山上 獨修寤寤 定惠雙修 不入涅槃 爲作福田 待後龍華..." from "Dokseong uimun" in *Yeongsandaehoi Jakbeopjeolcha.*

arhat, but rather to all Buddhist ascetics who have attained the status of arhat.[9] Further research is necessary on the identity of this solitary saint. However, he is definitely considered as an arhat, since the nature of solitary saint as described in Buddhist scriptures corresponds with those of the arhats. Paintings of the solitary saint were produced in large numbers from the nineteenth century, and more than a hundred examples remain today.[10] Portraying only a single figure, these paintings were made in small size with relatively simple composition, which must have facilitated production (Fig. 2). In many cases, they are enshrined alongside Buddhist paintings on other themes in a variety of types of temple halls.

Figure 2. *The Solitary Saint,* Joseon, 1862, Color on hemp, 87.0×65.0cm, Sudoam Temple, Gimchun

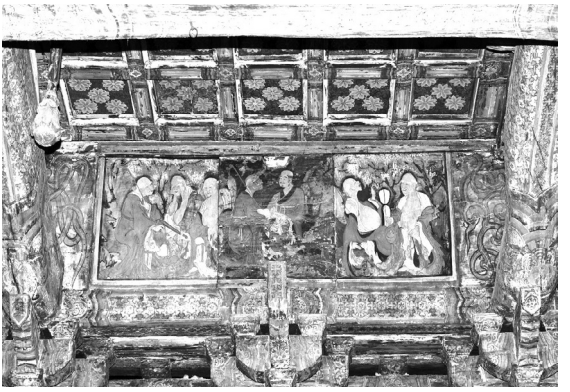

Figure 3. *Arhats*, Joseon, 1818, interior wall of Geungnakjeon of Baekheungam Temple, Yeongcheon

Mural paintings of arhats on the walls of Buddhist temple halls of the late Joseon Dynasty also merit scholarly attention.[11] They are generally found on the upper portion of the walls, including *pobyeok* 包壁 (Fig. 3), the triangular spaces between the bracket sets known as *gongpo* 栱包 below the eaves, and in the spaces over the bars known as *naemokdori* 內目道里 laid lengthways on top of the bracket sets. Hundreds of examples dating from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries featuring a variety of iconographies remain

9. For more about the concept of *dokseong*, see E. Shin 2014, 32-39
10. For the list of the paintings of the solitary saint, see K. Shin 2014a, 189-90.
11. Major research findings on the murals of arhats of the late Joseon dynasty include Cheon 1993; Jeon 2002; and K. Shin 2014b

today.[12] In general, murals of arhats in a temple hall are painted on multiple spaces within the walls and therefore do not form any specific composition as a whole. However, the diverse images depicting arhats practicing asceticism or exercising supernatural powers suggest that artists must have had knowledge on the nature of arhats. Also, these murals are significant for analyzing the relations between different iconographies of arhats from the late Joseon dynasty.[13]

Working Methods of Buddhist Monk Painters

Seeking and Sharing Novel Iconographies

Most arhat paintings feature a monk practicing asceticism. Outside of this fundamental rule for depicting an arhat, painters enjoyed considerable freedom in their representations, since there was no codified iconography for each arhat. Therefore, the most competent Buddhist painters in China, Korea, and Japan sought to establish new iconographies for arhats and applied them in a variety of ways in their works. This was also the case with arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty. For instance, *The Sixteen Arhats* (1723) at Heungguksa 興國寺 in Yeosu reflects the iconographies of arhats as featured in the illustrations of the Ming dynasty encyclopedia *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (first edition published in 1607 and an augmented edition published in 1609); *Arhats* (1818) on the interior wall of Geungnakjeon 極樂殿 (Hall of Paradise) of Baekheungam 百興庵, a small monastery affiliated with Eunhaesa 銀海寺 in Yeongcheon, illustrates various aspects of arhats in dynamic and organic ways using unprecedented iconography and composition; *The Sixteen Arhats* (1882) at Bohyeonsa 普賢寺 in Gangneung also displays novel iconographies through an unconventional composition; and *The Sixteen Arhats* (1897) at Buramsa

12. For the distribution of murals of arhats from the late Joseon dynasty and related images, see Cultural Heritage Administration & Research Institute of Sungbo Cultural Heritage 2006-2014.
13. Among the extant arhat paintings from the late Joseon dynasty, some examples take the form of a scroll or foldable painting, as exemplified in the works of the literati painters Yun Duseo and Yun Deokhui. However, most of these types of arhat paintings were made for appreciation. Therefore, they are excluded from the subjects of this study, since it focuses on arhat paintings that primarily served religious functions, such as those used in Buddhist temples for the purpose of worship or adornment.

佛巖寺 in Namyangju divides the picture plane in an unprecedented style.

Extant arhat paintings from the late Joseon dynasty also include a number of works that applied arhat iconographies of the existing works. This means that both creativity and conservatism underlay the production of arhat paintings, and that the creation of innovative arhat iconographies was challenging to most Buddhist painters, even though this genre allowed painters to freely showcase their creativity. It also suggests that preceding works served as models for later works due to the lack of Buddhist sutras specifying the images of arhats, contrary to the iconographies on other themes that are conventionally based on descriptions from Buddhist sutras.

As is well known, most Buddhist paintings from the late Joseon dynasty, including arhat paintings, were produced by Buddhist monk painters who, rather than being trained at one specific temple, learned painting in various temples. Monk painters therefore applied unique styles and iconographies they acquired through different channels.[14] Still, they were able to share a variety of iconographies through active exchanges with local monk painters, as well as with those from other regions whom they met through work. It is also possible that monks working in other fields in the temple delivered information they had acquired to monk painters. However, the most common and significant channel for sharing of iconography would have been exchanges among monk painters themselves, who certainly must have shown the greatest interests in iconography. Since diverse iconographies were necessary to produce paintings of the sixteen arhats, solitary saint, and murals of arhats, monk painters must have attempted to acquire as many iconographies as possible.

The most frequently consulted sources for iconographies of arhats were illustrated texts of the Ming dynasty, such as *Sancai tuhui* with 52 illustrations of arhats and *Xianfo qizong* 仙佛奇踪 (Marvelous Traces of Immortals and Buddhists) (1602) with 60 such illustrations.[15] Monk painters appear to have selected iconographies that appealed to their tastes from the numerous examples. The earliest paintings of arhats which applied the iconographies of the Ming texts are eighteenth century works from the Jeolla 全羅 region: *The*

14. For the genealogy of leading Buddhist monk painters of the late Joseon dynasty, see An 1994 and 1995; Jang 2003.

15. For existing studies of arhat paintings based on these Ming texts, see Choi 2006; Park 2011; Shin 2012.

Sixteen Arhats (1723) at Heungguksa in Yeosu, *The Sixteen Arhats* (1725) at Songgwangsa 松廣寺 in Suncheon, and *The Thirty-three Zen Masters* (1753) at Seonamsa 仙巖寺 in Suncheon are such examples. These works demonstrate distinct adaptations of the Ming originals, probably due to the unique tastes of their respective master monk painters. The Heungguksa painting mainly borrowed the main motifs from the *Sancai tuhui* while omitting most of the details from the originals (Figs. 4 and 5); the Songgwangsa painting faithfully imitated the original iconographies from *Sancai tuhui*; and the Seonamsa painting adopted iconographies from both *Sancai tuhui* and *Xianfo qizong*.[16] The iconographies from Ming texts first gained popularity in the Jeolla region and then spread to other areas, as demonstrated by *The Sixteen Arhats* (1867) at Pagyesa 把溪寺 in Daegu, *The Sixteen Arhats* (1905) at Beomeosa 梵魚寺 in Busan, and the murals of arhats from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries at Daeungjeon 大雄殿 (Hall of the Great Hero) of Mihwangsa 美黃寺 in Haenam, Daegwangmyeongjeon 大光明殿 (Hall of Great Light) of Tongdosa 通度寺 in Yangsan (Fig. 6), Geungnakjeon of Cheoneunsa 泉隱寺 in Gurye, and Geungnakjeon of Hyeondeungsa 懸燈寺 in Gapyeong.

Figure 4. *Gopaka*, 9th of the Sixteen Arhats, from a set of the Sixteen Arhat paintings, Joseon, 1723, Color on hemp, Heungguksa Temple, Yeosu

Figure 5. *Zen Master Huineng*, from Sancai Tuhui, Woodcut, Ming Dynasty, 1609

Figure 6. *Arhat*, Joseon, 18th Century, Color on clay wall, Daegwangmyeongjeon of Tongdosa Temple, Yangsan

16. For the details, see Shin 2006, 236-41 and Shin 2007, 82-91; 2010b, 156-59.

The iconography of *The Sixteen Arhats* (Fig. 7) at Heungguksa in Namyangju shows how the same iconography was adopted in multiple works. The production of this set of paintings was led by Monk Eungseok 應釋, one of the leading painters in the Seoul and Gyeonggi region. The set comprised of six paintings and each painting was divided vertically into four sections depicting an arhat in each section of the painting. Many of the sixteen arhats are seated facing forward at the center of his section accompanied by boy attendants or devotees. This iconography had a significant influence on later paintings of the sixteen arhats in the modern period; seven works from the nineteenth century—including *The Sixteen Arhats* (1892) at Gilsangam 吉祥庵, affiliated with Haeinsa 海印寺 in Hapcheon, *The Sixteen Arhats* (1895) at Bongeunsa 奉恩寺 in Seoul, and *The Sixteen Arhats* (1897) (Fig. 8) at Buramsa in Namyangju—show the iconographic succession of *The Sixteen Arhats* of Heungguksa. Even though the order of the presentation of the sixteen arhats and the method of dividing the picture plane differ slightly, these works demonstrate relatively identical iconographies.[17]

Figure 7. *The Sixteen Arhats*, detail, Joseon, 1892, Color on silk, 123.0×207.0cm, Heungguksa Temple, Namyangju

17. For the more about the sharing of iconographies of the paintings of the sixteen arhats, see Shin 2009, 91-96.

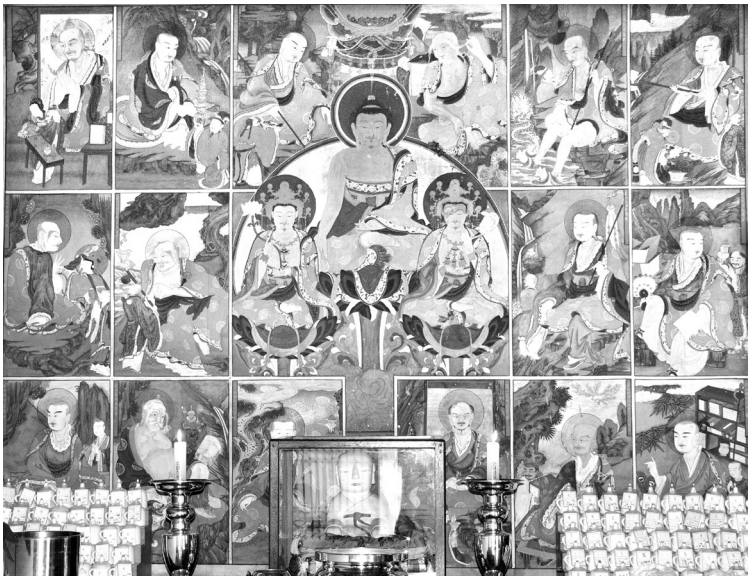

Figure 8. *The Sixteen Arhats*, Joseon 1897, Color on cotton, 179.0×235.5cm, Buramsa Temple, Namyangju

Paintings of the solitary saint also illustrate the practice of the sharing of iconographies. For instance, in *The Solitary Saint* (1859) (Fig. 9) at Ungyeam 雲溪庵, a small temple affiliated with Bomunsa 普門寺 in Yecheon; *The Solitary Saint* (1880) at Geungnakjeon of Gimnyongsa 金龍寺 in Mungyeong; and *The Solitary Saint* (1881) (Fig. 10) at Dorisa 桃李寺 in Gumi, the subject is seated in the mountains and dressed in formal attire 袈裟長衫 consisting of an inner robe and *kasaya*. Although the details of the landscape differ in each work, they all share the iconography of the solitary saint. The paintings of the solitary saint at Hwagyesa 華溪寺 in Seoul (1875), Daeungjeon of Bogwangsa 普光寺 in Paju (1898), Buramsa in Namyangju (1901), and Jingwansa 津寬寺 in Seoul (1907) also contain a common iconography of a solitary saint seated with one of his knees drawn up and assisted by a long staff.

Figure 9. *The Solitary Saint,* Joseon, 1859, Color on silk, 68.8×45.2cm, Bomunsa Ungyeam Temple, Yecheon

Figure 10. *The Solitary Saint,* Joseon, 1881, Color on hemp, 79.0×60.0cm, Dorisa Temple, Gumi

Certain murals present an image of an arhat which has yet to be found in any of the surviving arhat paintings. In the late-eighteenth-century murals at Yonghwajeon 龍華殿 (Hall of Maitreya Buddha) of Tongdosa and Daeungjeon of Bulguksa 佛國寺 in Gyeongju and in those from the mid-nineteenth century at Eunhasa 銀河寺 in Gimhae depicts a scene of an arhat bathing under a waterfall, inclining his exposed upper body (Figs. 11 and 12).[18] In some cases, iconography from murals was adopted in later paintings of the sixteen arhats or the solitary saint. Each painting comprising a set of *The Sixteen Arhats* (1862) at Yugasa 瑜伽寺 in Daegu depicts a pair of arhats reading scripture or engaged in a conversation. Similar iconographies are found in the early nineteenth century murals of arhats at Baekheungam (Eunhaesa) in Yeongchon and Daeungjeon of Eunhasa in Gimhae. Further, the image of a seated arhat resting his right elbow on a table in *The Solitary Saint* (1812)[19] (Fig. 13) at Geumseondae 金仙臺 in Mungyeong resembles the

18. For the more about the sharing of iconographies of the murals in the temple halls, see K. Shin 2014b, 97-98.

19. This painting is currently in the collection of Anyangwon 安養院 in Yeongju.

image of a monk depicted in the mural known as *Portrait of Zen Master Bogak* 普覺禪師圖 (c. 1809) (Fig. 14) at Geungnakjeon of Silleuksa 神勒寺 in Jecheon.[20] As indicated by these examples, the iconographies of arhats in mural paintings were widely shared among works in neighboring regions.

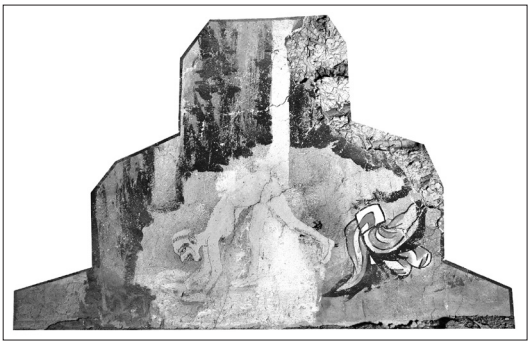

Figure 11. *Arhat,* Joseon, 18th Century, Color on clay wall, Yonghwajeon of Tongdosa Temple, Yangsan

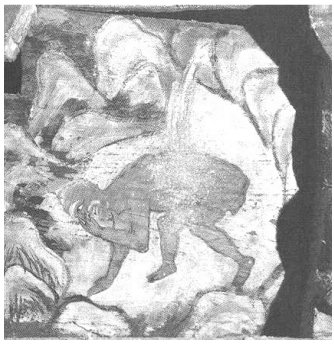

Figure 12. *Arhat,* Joseon, 18th Century, Color on clay wall, Daeungjeon of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

Figure 13. *The Solitary Saint*, Joseon, 1812, Color on paper, 93.2×64.0cm, Geumseondae, Mungyeong

Figure 14. *Zen Master Bogak*, Joseon, c. 1809, Color on clay wall, Geungnakjeon of Silleuksa Temple, Jecheon

20. Regarding the dating of murals of arhats at Silleuksa, see Yi 2007.

Monk painters in the late Joseon dynasty appear to have shared iconographies of arhats through preparatory sketches known as *chobon* 草本 or iconography books.[21] In particular, the iconographies of arhats found in Ming texts (e.g., *Sancai tuhui, Xianfo qizong*) are highly likely to have been distributed through iconography books since the original Ming texts would have been hardly accessible to most painters. The same must have applied to murals; since the area of the space allotted for murals differed for each project, painters would have preferred sharing small iconography books rather than specific preparatory sketches in order to select and apply iconographies which suit their tastes or seem appropriate for the space available for murals at the temple. In contrast, in the case of paintings of the sixteen arhats or the solitary saint, some sets were produced based on a single preparatory sketch, as exemplified by the sets of sixteen arhats that succeeded the iconographies of *The Sixteen Arhats* at Heungguksa in Namyangju. The depictions of the fourth arhat in paintings of Heungguksa, Gilsamgam (Haeinsa) and Buramsa show a striking similarity. In all of these works, the arhat is seated with his right knee drawn up, holding scripture in his right hand and exposing his swollen abdomen through his *kasaya* robe; a boy attendant is offering a drink to the tiger; an incense burner is placed on top of a rock next to the arhat; and foliage and a waterfall are seen behind the figures. Besides, the size of the motifs and the distances between them are nearly identical in all three examples (Shin 2009, 94).

Buddhist monk painters of the late Joseon dynasty appear to have shared iconographies of arhats regardless of themes and forms, and this trend grew more prevalent in the modern period as common iconographies expanded in each genre of Buddhist painting.[22] Among these, however, arhat painting was the most active in sharing and succeeding iconographies, perhaps since the genre had no principal sutra specifying iconographies, and also because the diversity of the iconographies allowed painters to freely select and apply those that best meet their needs.

21. Regarding the concept, types, and functions of preparatory sketches for Buddhist paintings, see Yun 2011.

22. For more about the sharing of iconographies in modern-period Buddhist paintings, see Choi 2012.

Display of Characteristic Styles of Master Painters

Buddhist paintings of the late Joseon dynasty are generally inscribed at the bottom with a list of the monk painters who participated in their production. Analysis of these lists reveals that in many cases a given painting effort was completed through collaboration among several painters rather than by a single artist. In collective productions, master painters known as *suhwasa* 首畵師 who oversee the overall painting effort played a significant role. As they determined the style and iconography, paintings well reflect the characteristics of a master painter. It is rather difficult to identify the role of each participating painter due to the lack of detailed information in the inscriptions, but it is likely that the one who appears first on the list served as the master.[23]

Arhat paintings were produced through either individual or group efforts. Paintings of the solitary saint were created in both manners, while paintings of the sixteen arhats were always produced collaboratively. The sixteen arhats were generally depicted in a set comprised of numerous paintings. The production must have been daunting for a single painter to carry out on his own and therefore requiring collaboration. Contrary to the paintings of the sixteen arhats and the solitary saint, which are usually inscribed with the list of painters at the bottom, murals of arhats rarely carry such lists. Murals in Buddhist temples were generally produced using *dancheong* 丹靑, the traditional Korean decorative coloring for wooden buildings. Since individual or groups of monk painters who were in charge of *dancheong* decoration are rarely identifiable, it is difficult to find the painters of any murals of arhats. The large scale of murals suggests that they were produced in collaborative manner, and written records on relevant buildings preserved in temples and the styles of murals enable us to speculate the participating monk painters.

Buddhist paintings made by a single monk painter are particularly significant in identifying participating painter in a group work, since they clearly reflect the painter's signature style. Among extant arhat paintings, works by a single painter are mainly paintings of the solitary saint, such as *The Solitary Saint* (1812) by Monk Singyeom 信謙 at Geumseondae 金仙臺; *The Solitary Saint* (1859) by Monk Jau 慈友 at Ungyeam, affiliated with Bomunsa

23. For findings of research on master painters of Buddhist paintings from the late Joseon dynasty, see Shin 2010a, 236-37 and note no. 368.

in Yecheon; *The Solitary Saint* (1862) by Monk Eungsang 應祥 at Sudoam 修道庵, affiliated with Cheongamsa 靑巖寺 in Gimcheon; and *The Solitary Saint* (1893) by Monk Yakhyo 若效 at Hogukjijangsa 護國地藏寺 in Seoul. The painting at Geumseondae is the earliest dated work among the extant paintings of the solitary saint. The long face, hollow cheeks, pointed chin, and small half-moon eyes of the saint demonstrate the characteristic style of Monk Singyeom (Fig. 15). The Ungyeam painting by Monk Jau and the Sudoam painting by Monk Eungsang are similar in depiction of facial expression, but each painter's style is revealed in the representation of the landscape and the use of brushwork.[24] Further, the long face, protruding forehead, small eyes, and a hand holding a *lingzhi* mushroom in *The Solitary Saint* at Hogukjijangsa represent common stylistic features of arhat painted by Monk Yakhyo as the master painter (Kim 2010, 89-91).

Figure 15. Monk Singyeom, *Detail of Fig. 13*, face

Among group productions, those that clearly reflect the artistic style of the master painter are *The Sixteen Arhats* (1723) (Fig. 16) by master painter Monk Uigyeom 義謙 and others at Heungguksa in Yeosu; *The Sixteen Arhats* (1892) at Heungguksa in Namyangju and *The Solitary Saint* (1898) at Bogwangsa in Paju, both by master painter Monk Eungseok and others; *The Solitary*

24. For more about the respective styles of painting of Monks Jau and Eungsang, see Yi 2014, 163-72.

Saint (1880) at Buryeongsa 佛影寺 in Uljin and *The Sixteen Arhats* (1901) at Daeheungsa 大興寺 in Haenam, both by master painter Cheolyu 喆侑 and others. Although produced by a group of painters, these works clearly show the distinct characteristics of their master painters demonstrating that they had a control over the overall style of the paintings. In *The Sixteen Arhats* at Heungguksa in Yeosu, for instance, Monk Uigyeom applied thick colors, drew the contours of the faces simply with ink, shaded the wrinkles, and splashed ink for the expression of the bald head. Such features are found throughout the six paintings comprising the set, as well as in other works created by Monk Uigyeom as the master painter (Fig. 17).[25]

Figure 16. Master Monk Uigyeom, *The Sixteen Arhats*, detail, Joseon 1723, Color on hemp, 164.0×216.5cm, Heungguksa Temple, Yeosu

Figure 17. Master Monk Uigyeom, *detail of Fig. 16*, face

Meanwhile, different painting styles also coexist in many of paintings of the sixteen arhats, mainly those produced with multiple master painters, most likely because rather than a single master painter directing the overall production, respective master painters took charge of one or more paintings in the set. *The Sixteen Arhats* (1790) at Namjangsa 南長寺 in Sangju, *The Sixteen Arhats* (1877) at Bogwangsa in Paju, and *The Sixteen Arhats* (1918) at Seonamsa in Suncheon offer such examples. Only two paintings have survived from the set at Namjangsa, one produced under master painter Monk Sangyeom 尙謙, and the other by master painter Monk Yeongsu 永修 and his

25. For more about the expressions and techniques of *The Sixteen Arhats* at Heungguksa in Yeosu, see Shin 2007, 77-82; for the paintings produced by Monk Uigyeom, see Yu 2009.

subordinates. The paintings are similar in composition, but differ in expressions and techniques. The use of ink stands out in Sanggyeom's work where arhats and other motifs are meticulously drawn in sharp ink lines, whereas Yeongsu's work shows a resolute contrast of deep colors and bold outlines (Shin 2015, 310-11). The four paintings comprising *The Sixteen Arhats* at Bogwangsa were produced based on preparatory sketches by two master painters, Monks Chehun 体訓 and Jeongtak 定濯.[26] As a result, the set can be divided into two pairs according to the expression of the arhats; the first and the fourth paintings resemble each other and the second and the third constitute a pair as well. The first pair (Fig. 18), based on preparatory sketches by Monk Chehun, feature arhats of strong physique set against a colorful landscape alongside books and an incense burner. In contrast, the second pair (Fig. 19), based on preparatory sketches by Monk Jeongtak, features arhats with long, slim faces and their bodies set against a simple landscape. In *The Sixteen Arhats* at Seonamsa, the first and the second paintings differ significantly in terms of style from the third and fourth paintings. The inscription on the set describes that Monk Chango 昌昨 directed the production of all four, but it is presumed that Monks Chukyeon 竺衍 and Sebok 世複 painted the first and the second (Fig. 20) while MonkChango and Jongin 宗仁 produced the remaining two (Fig. 21). These two pairs differ from each other in the representation of the figures as well as the backgrounds. The former pair applied the so-called "Western" style of painting (e.g., shading technique), while the latter pair strictly adhered to the traditional style that focuses on the use of lines.[27]

26. Monk Jeongtak appears to be Monk Jeongik 定瀷, who was actively engaged in the production of Buddhist paintings at the time. However, this paper uses the name "Jeongtak" as inscribed on the painting.

27. For more about the Western style of painting reflected in modern-period Buddhist paintings, see Choi 2012.

Figure 18. Model Drawing Master Monk Chehun, *The Sixteen Arhat*, detail, Joseon 1877, Color on silk, 137.0×146.0cm, Bogwangsa Temple, Paju

Figure 19. Model Drawing Master Monk Jeongtak, *The Sixteen Arhat*, detail, Joseon 1877, Color on silk, 137.4×147.7cm, Bogwangsa Temple, Paju

Figure 20. Master Monk Chukyeon and Sebok, *The Sixteen Arhats*, detail, 1918, Color on cotton, 150.0×219.0cm, Seonamsa Temple, Suncheon

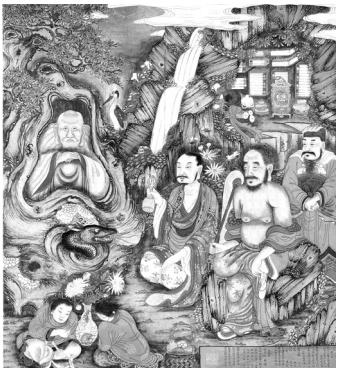

Figure 21. Master Monk Chango and Jongin, *The Sixteen Arhats*, detail, 1918, Color on cotton, 154.0×138.0cm, Seonamsa Temple, Suncheon

The aforementioned paintings of the sixteen arhats featuring the coexistence of several styles of painting reflect the division of labor in group productions. In other words, paintings of the sixteen arhats demonstrate the strong will of the Buddhist monk painters of the late Joseon dynasty who wished to reflect their personal style and artistic characteristics in their works despite the sharing of iconographies.

Enshrinement and Arrangement

Numerous buildings comprising Buddhist temples of the late Joseon dynasty, from major halls such as Daeungjeon to minor halls such as Samseonggak 三聖閣 (Shrine of the Three Saints), and Sansingak 山神閣 (Shrine of the Mountain Spirit), all serve particular purpose and follow strict hierarchical order. Arhat paintings were enshrined in different locations within a temple according to their theme. Paintings of the sixteen arhats were mainly installed in halls dedicated to arhat worship termed Nahanjeon 羅漢殿 or Eungjinjeon 應眞殿 (hereafter "Arhat hall") or Yeongsanjeon 靈山殿 (Hall of the Vulture Peak). Arhat halls rarely served as the main hall in Buddhist temples built in the late Joseon dynasty; most of them are placed below Daeungjeon and Geungnakjeon in the hierarchy.[28] In arhat halls, a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha or the Shakyamuni Triad occupies the center, backed by a painting of Shakyamuni Preaching to the Assembly. On both sides of the main statue stand statues of the sixteen arhats, eight to each side. Paintings of the sixteen arhats are installed behind the statues of the sixteen arhats. While sixteen statues were conventionally produced for the sixteen arhats, the number of paintings constituting a set of sixteen arhats varied according to the structure of the hall. For instance, the arhat hall of Heungguksa in Yeosu consists of seven *kans* 間 (cubical modular unit comparted by four pillars)—three on the front wall and two at each side. The painting of Shakyamuni Preaching to the Assembly is enshrined in the middle *kan* of the front wall, while six paintings comprising a set of sixteen arhats are placed in the remaining six *kans* (Fig. 22). *The Sixteen Arhats* at Seonamsa consists of four paintings; before being transferred to the temple's storage, two paintings were enshrined on the front wall of the arhat hall and one each at the sides. Due to the difference in width between the front and side *kans*, the pair of paintings on the front wall differed significantly in width from the pair on the side walls. Therefore, the

28. According to records, during the Goryeo dynasty arhat halls served as the main hall of some temples. In his *Xuanhe fengshi gaoli tujing* 高麗圖經 (*Illustrated Account of a Diplomatic Mission to Goryeo during the Xuanhe Era*) (1123), Xu Jing 徐兢 (1091-1153) wrote that the arhat hall 羅漢寶殿 was the main hall of Gwangtongbojesa 廣通普濟寺 in Gaegyeong (present-day Gaeseong in North Korea). In Joseon dynasty temples, however, no similar example is evident. Currently, the arhat hall in Gwangheungsa in Andong serves as the main hall, but this is because Daeungjeong and Geungnakjeon were destroyed in the 1940s and 1950s, respectively.

number of paintings constituting a set of sixteen arhats is closely related to the architectural structure of Buddhist halls.

Figure 22. *The Sixteen Arhats*, detail, Joseon, 1723, Eungjinjeon of Heungguksa Temple, Yeosu

A set of paintings of sixteen arhats enshrined in arhat hall reveals a specific system regarding its arrangement. With the painting of Shakyamuni placed at the center, odd numbered arhats, beginning from the first, are placed to the left (to the viewer's right), while to the right (to the viewer's left) are aligned the even numbered arhats, beginning from the second. Though its origin is not clear, this Korean system for the arrangement of the sixteen arhats differs from that found in China and Japan. Several systems may have existed for the arrangement of arhats in Chinese paintings of the sixteen arhats. In extant examples, however, the first to the eighth arhats are placed to the left of Shakyamuni, while the ninth to the sixteenth are to the right, as exemplified by *The Sixteen Arhats* dated to the Western Xia 西夏 dynasty (1038-1227) at Cave no. 97 of the Mogao Caves 莫高窟 in Dunhuang 敦煌, and *The Sixteen Arhats* of the Yuan 元 dynasty (1271-1368) at Dulesi 獨樂寺 in Hebei Province (K. Shin 2014b, 134-35). The systems of arrangement during the Goryeo and early Joseon Dynasties are now obscure, but all the remaining examples from the late Joseon dynasty follow the rule of odd numbered arhats to the left of Shakyamuni and even numbers to the right.

Paintings of the solitary saint from the late Joseon dynasty were hung in various temple buildings: major halls include Daeungjeon, Bogwangjeon 普光殿 (Hall of the Treasure Light), and Yeongsanjeon; minor halls include Samseonggak, Dokseonggak 獨聖閣 (Shrine of the Solitary Saint), and Seungdang 禪堂 (Hall of the Monks); and in *amja* 庵子, small monastery affiliated with the main temple. Although it is hard to generalize since

many paintings lack information in their inscriptions on their location of enshrinement or they are no longer placed in original place of enshrinement, records of inscriptions in extant works reveal that paintings of the solitary saint were enshrined in a variety of temple buildings without any specific rules being applied. For instance, *The Solitary Saint* (1873) at Heungguksa in Yeosu was enshrined in Bogwangjeon; *The Solitary Saint* (1880) at Gimnyongsa was hung in Geungnakjeon; *The Solitary Saint* (1898) at Bogwangsa was installed in Daeungjeon (Fig. 23); and *The Solitary Saint* (1901) at Daeheungsa was placed in Sansingak. Most of the earlier examples, including *The Solitary Saint* (1812) at Geumseondae 金仙臺, currently in the collection of Anyangwon, were enshrined in small monastery affiliated with main temples.[29] This diversity in places of enshrinement may be related to the size of the paintings. A painting of the solitary saint consists of one painting which depicts only a solitary figure. Thus, it must have been a simple matter to enshrine the painting alone or in combination with Buddhist paintings on other themes, even in a restricted space. Therefore, paintings featuring the solitary saint who is equally as powerful as the sixteen arhats required relatively less effort in terms of production as well as enshrinement.

Figure 23. *The Solitary Saint,* Joseon, 1898, Daeungjeon of Bogwangsa Temple, Paju

29. For more about the inscriptions and places of enshrinement of paintings of the solitary saint of the late Joseon dynasty, see Monk Songcheon et al. 2011, 1152-94.

Murals of arhats are generally found in the upper portions of the walls of main halls related to Buddha, including Daeungjeon and Geungnakgjeon (Fig. 24). Exceptions certainly exist, as demonstrated by the mural of the sixteen arhats painted on the wall behind the altar of the arhat hall 應眞殿 at Mihwangsa 美黃寺 in Haenam and the mural of Bodhidharma and Avalokitesvara painted on the back wall behind the altar of Birojeon 毘盧殿 (Hall of Vairocana) at Unmunsa 雲門寺 in Cheongdo. Apart from these examples, however, few exceptions are known to exist.

Figure 24. *Arhats*, detail, the Late Joseon,
interior wall of Geungnakjeon of Cheoneunsa Temple, Gurye

The murals in the upper areas of the walls of Buddhist temples feature diverse motifs, including Buddhas and bodhisattvas, arhats, flowers, the life of Shakyamuni Buddha, and figures from history or legends. Buddhas and arhats make up the greatest portion among these motifs (Son 2009, 375-80), with the former usually found in the triangular spaces between the bracket sets and the latter in such triangular spaces as well as in the spaces over *naemokdori bars*. It is not yet clear why arhats, disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha, were represented in the main halls dedicated to Buddha. Further research is required in this regard, but it is likely that arhats were painted across the upper walls of main halls as protectors of the Buddha and the Buddhist law in accordance with their nature as the protectors of the Dharma. Also, the murals of arhats in such spaces are

believed to have served as adornments rather than as objects of worship.[30] It is rather difficult to consider the murals of arhats painted on the spaces between bracket sets or over *naemokdori* bars near the ceilings to be primary objects of worship.

In sum, arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty were enshrined in different areas of Buddhist temples according to their themes. The representation of arhats in various parts of a temple suggests the enthusiastic worship of arhats at the time. It is also significant that arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty served multiple purposes, including both worship and adornment.

Conclusion

This paper examined arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty in terms of types, working methods of monk painters, and principles of enshrinement and arrangement. Most of the extant arhat paintings date to the late Joseon dynasty when paintings of the sixteen arhats and the solitary saint gained in popularity and murals of arhats came to adorn numerous spaces within a temple hall. Arhat paintings of the time were mainly produced by Buddhist monk painters, who were open to the sharing of iconography while representing their unique style. As a result, painters could freely demonstrate their signature styles in arhat paintings, which allowed a considerable freedom of expression. A set of paintings of sixteen arhats sometimes features a combination of different painting styles, indicating that several master monk painters participated in the production. In the late Joseon dynasty, paintings of the sixteen arhats were generally enshrined in arhat halls, while paintings of the solitary saint were installed in various halls within a temple. Most of the murals of arhats were painted in the upper portions of the walls of main halls dedicated to Buddha. Paintings of the sixteen arhats and the solitary saint served as objects of worship inside a temple hall while murals of arhats, especially those on the spaces between bracket sets or over *naemokdori* bars below the ceiling, are thought to have functioned as adornments to protect the Buddha and the Dharma.

30. For more about the functions of murals in Buddhist temples, see Yu 2006; Kim 2006.

Compared to contemporary Buddhist paintings on other themes, arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty encompass wide range of paintings and serve various functions. They are also significant in that they shed light on the working methods of the Buddhist monk painters.

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Kwanghee SHIN (bdkhshin@daum.net) is a lecturer at Korea National University of Arts. Her research interests include Korean Buddhist paintings and East Asian arhat paintings. Her publications include "Myeongdae hwaboryu nahan sapdo ui yutong: dosang ui jipseong gwa jeonpa" (A Journey of Arhat Illustrations of the Publications in Ming Dynasty: Collection and Propagation of the Iconographies) (2012) and *Hanguk ui nahando* (*Arhat Paintings of Korea*) (Seoul: Hangukmisulyeonguso, 2014), and so on.

Abstract

Arhats are those who attained arhatship, the highest level a Buddhist monk can achieve through the practice of asceticism. They have been worshiped by humans since the early period for their supernatural powers that served to protect Dharma and provide benefits to ordinary people. Paintings of arhats have long been popular in Korea, but most of the remaining examples date to the late Joseon dynasty. In the late Joseon dynasty, paintings of the sixteen arhats and the solitary saint were produced in large numbers and murals of arhats adorned many spaces inside a temple. At that time, arhat paintings were commissioned by Buddhist monks and laypeople and produced by Buddhist monk painters, who were open to the sharing of iconography but influenced the style of their works with personal artistic characteristics. As a result, painters could freely demonstrate their signature styles in arhat paintings, which allowed them considerable freedom of expression. A set of paintings of the sixteen arhats, in particular, sometimes features a combination of different painting styles, indicating that several master monk painters participated in the production. In the late Joseon dynasty, paintings of the sixteen arhats were generally enshrined in arhat halls, while in comparison paintings of the solitary saint were installed in relatively diverse areas around a temple. Most of the murals of arhats were painted in the upper portions of the walls of main halls dedicated to Buddhas. Paintings of the sixteen arhats and the solitary saint mainly served as objects of worship inside a temple hall, and murals of arhats, especially those on the spaces between bracket sets or over *naemokdori* bars below the ceiling, are more likely to have provided adornments to protect Buddhas and the Buddhist world. Arhat paintings of the late Joseon dynasty include several subcategories within the genre and served various purposes. They are significant in that they shed light on the working methods of the Buddhist monk painters of the time.

Keywords: Arhat painting, the late Joseon, Buddhist monk painter, iconography, style, enshrinement

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