UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Making a ‘Congregation of a Thousand Buddhas and a Million Bodhisattvas’: The Formation of Wŏn Buddhism, a New Korean Buddhist Religion

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Sung Ha Yun

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Making a ‘Congregation of a Thousand Buddhas and a Million Bodhisattvas’:

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Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

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Professor Robert E. Buswell Jr., Chair

This dissertation investigates the early formation of Wŏn Buddhism by situating it in the larger socio-cultural and religious contexts of early-twentieth-century Korea, such as the emergence of indigenous new religions and Buddhist reform movements. It analyzes the texts, practices, and belief systems created by this new Buddhist religion by drawing on archival materials, such as diaries, personal essays, daily reports, and other written documents that testify to the actual historical voices of people’s everyday experiences and beliefs. I examine how the new Tonghak movement’s notion of *sich’ŏnju* (revering God within one’s heart 侍天主), which encouraged egalitarianism in Korean society at the end of the nineteenth century, influenced both Buddhist reform movements and new religious movements. I focus my analysis on the novel concept of the “congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas” that the founder of Wŏn Buddhism, Pak Chungbin 朴重彬 (1891-1943), articulated. Pak proposes that his Pulpŏp Yŏn’guhoe (The Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma 佛法硏究會), which was later

renamed Wŏnbulgyo (Wŏn Buddhism 圓佛教), was a "congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas." This reconceptualization of the *saṃgha* captures a way of reforming Korean Buddhism from commoners' point of view by demonstrating how all living beings, including both male and female, ordained and lay, young and old, colonized and colonizer, and intellectual and non- intellectual, could become buddhas and bodhisattvas through the practices and teachings of Buddhism. In deploying this concept, Pak and his disciples laid out the fundamental teachings of Buddhism in a way that would be accessible to all classes of people and applicable to their daily lives, and sought to make their community a religious institution for realizing that vision. I argue that the new praxes and belief systems of Wŏn Buddhism developed through the complex interplay between East Asian Buddhist practices, colonial modernity, and contemporary interpretations of the concept of "religion." The new methods taught in Wŏn Buddhism, such as mindful "bean-counting" meditation (*t'aejosa* 太調査) and keeping spiritual journals, provided the tools for common people to attain greater agency in their Buddhist religious pursuits. My dissertation presents the stories of how nameless ordinary rural people, both male and female, created new identities for themselves by becoming Buddhist practitioners. I explore how they developed their insights to see the world in a new Buddhist way, how their worldview was shaped by Buddhism, and how they adapted in their own lives the "mind-praxis" that Pak taught within the Wŏn Buddhist community. My dissertation's detailed accounts of ordinary people's practice will expand the intellectual horizons of the field of Buddhist Studies to include more of the lived experiences of ordinary Buddhists. In this, my work makes a key contribution to the literature on East Asian new religions and Buddhist reform movements, Korean Buddhism, colonial modernity, and the lived religious experience of everyday people.

The dissertation of Sung Ha Yun is approved.

Namhee Lee

William Bodiford

Katsuya Hirano

Robert E. Buswell Jr., Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Yun Byŏngch'ŏn and Kim Yunja, who have treasured me with their unconditional support and love and

to my mentor, Ven. Pyŏn Sŏngmuk, who has believed in me even when I could not believe in myself.

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Vita

EDUCATIONS

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) 09/2014-Present
PhD candidate, Asian Languages and Cultures, Buddhist Studies

University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) 08/2012-05/2014
MA, Asian Studies

Won Institute of Graduate Studies (Glenside, PA, USA) 08/2005-08/2007
MA, Won Buddhist Studies

Wonkwang University (Iksan, Korea) 03/2003-02/2005
BA, Won Buddhist Studies

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (Seoul, Korea) 03/1999-02/2003
BA, Hindi Literature, English Literature (Double Major)

PAPERS

- "A Historical Survey of the Development of the Concept of *kliṣṭa-manas* (afflicted-mind) in Yogācāra Philosophy and its Implications in Spiritual Cultivation," 2014 (English, MA thesis)

AWARDS & GRANTS

The 2021-22 Korea Foundation Scholarship for Graduate Studies (declined)

The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies
09/2020-06/2021
The American Council of Learned Societies

The Dissertation Year Fellowship
09/2020-06/2021
The Graduate Division, University of California, Los Angeles

International Institute Dissertation Fieldwork Fellowship
07/2018-09/2018

Asian Languages and Cultures Departmental Research Fellowship
Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, UCLA
12/2017-09/2018

Center for Buddhist Studies Daehang Foundation Summer Award
Center for Buddhist Studies at UCLA
06/2017-09/2017

Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Award at UCLA
UCLA Graduate Division
06/2016-09/2016

Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Award at UCLA
UCLA Graduate Division
06/2015-09/2015

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship for Intensive Advanced Chinese Language at UCLA
U.S. Department of Education
06/2014-08/2014

TEACHINGS

Instructor for Introduction to Buddhism: Writing II (Summer 2020)
Completing the Graduate Certificate in Writing Pedagogy
Teaching Fellow at UCLA (2014-2020)

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- Conference Presentation: The 19th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS) at Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, "A Female Practitioner's Religious Experiences: The Diary of Pak Kilsŏn, an Early Adherent of Wŏn Buddhism in Korea," (Forthcoming August, 2022)

- UCLA-USC-Yonsei Korean Studies Graduate Workshop Presentation at UCLA, "Creating a New Standard of Authority: The Advent of New Heaven and New Religious Movements," (January 31-February 1, 2020)

- Conference Presentation: In Search of a New Paradigm for Early Modern and Modern Korean Buddhist Studies at Yale University, "Sot'aesan's Reformation of Korean Buddhism in the Context of Modern Daily Life," (April 19-20, 2019)

- Conference Presentation at Wonkwang University in Korea, "20 segi ch'ogi han'guk ŭi chonggyo kaehyŏk undong e issŏsŏ ŭi 'chonggyo' kaenyŏm ŭi suyong kwa pyŏnhyŏng: Wŏnbulgyo 'chonggyo' kaenyŏm ŭi ihae rŭl chungsim ŭro," (September 21, 2018)

- Workshop Presentation: The 14th Worldwide Consortium of Korean Studies Centers Graduate Student Workshop at Leiden University, "The Concept of Religion in the Context of New Religious Movements in Korea," (August, 2018)

- Conference Presentation: The 6th International Conference on Kanhwa Sŏn sponsored by Institute for the Study of the Jogye Order (Dongguk University) and Center for Buddhist Studies (UCLA) at UCLA, "Bringing Kanhwa Sŏn into Contemporary Society: Sot'aesan's Re-invention of Kanhwa Meditation in Wŏn Buddhism," (July 17, 2018)

- UCLA-Yonsei Korean Studies Graduate Workshop Presentation at UCLA (January 19-20, 2018)

- Conference Presentation: Mass Meditation: Practices and Discourses in Contemporary Global Buddhisms at Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, California, "Sot'aesan's Mindfulness Practice in the Context of Modern Korean Buddhist Reformation," (October 6, 2017)

- Conference Panel Presentation: Mindfulness Refreshed Joint Conference of the Wŏn Buddhist Studies Program of the Wŏn Institute and the Philosophy/Religion Department of Arcadia University, "A New Buddhist Path from a Wŏn Buddhist Point of View," (September 08, 2016)

- Ordained as a Wŏn Buddhist *kyomu* (priest), (December, 2007)

Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Korea's religious landscape underwent a remarkable transformation. A plethora of new religious movements emerged that were enthusiastically patronized by commoners in rural regions.[1] Buddhist reform movements gained momentum as the Confucian state's centuries-long official suppression of Buddhism ended. Scholars have attempted to place the complex socio-religious phenomena of these times into compartmentalized institutional categories—e.g. Buddhism, Confucianism, New Religions—as if these traditions had developed as independent entities that did not interact with one other and whose traditional forms remained unchanged. Challenging this treatment of traditions as individualized entities, this dissertation instead attends to specific historical moments in which religions adapted themselves to the modern era by absorbing new ideas and practices from other traditions, especially during periods of intense social change. Thus, in the pages that follow, I explore a new Buddhist movement that exhibited a complex interplay between indigenous spiritual praxis and beliefs, East Asian Buddhist practices, colonial

[1] According to Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教, the number of newly emerged religions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was sixty-seven and the total members of those religions numbered 172,858 as of 1935. See Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教, *Han'guk kŭndae minsok illyuhak charyo taegye: Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* (1935) (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2008). According to an archival report submitted by American Consul General Ransford S. Miller in 1924 to the American State Department, the members of Chŭngsan'gyo 甑山教 (the Religion of Chŭngsan, which was one of the main new religions and was founded by Chŭngsan 甑山 Kang Ilsun 姜一淳, 1871-1909) once numbered as high as six million. In his report, Miller stated, "For a time, it [Pocheonkyo or Hoomchikyo, which belong to Chŭngsan'gyo] enjoyed great popularity among the ignorant and superstitious (it is said to number some 6,000,000 but is now on the wane)." Considering that the total population of Korea at that time was estimated at about fifteen million, the membership count of just one of the many new religious orders equaled more than one third of the whole population. This amounts to a very significant social phenomenon. Even if Miller's report was exaggerated or not fully reliable, the mushrooming emergence of new religious movements at that time was certainly unprecedented in the history of Korea. See Ransford S. Miller, "Political and Social Condition and Organization in Chosen: The Public Safety Act," *National Archives of the United State of America*, (Date of Preparation, May 25, 1925, Date of Mailing, May 29, 1925).

modernity, and contemporary interpretations of religion, an interplay that led to the creation of a distinctively modern variety of Buddhism. This movement is the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe 佛法研究會 (The Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma; PYH hereafter), which arose in the Chŏlla provinces in the southwest of Korea. Pak Chungbin 朴重彬(1891–1943),[2] who later became known as Sot'aesan 少太山,[3] I have chosen to focus on the Society for the Study of the

[2] It is said that Sot'aesan gave himself the name Chungbin 重彬 after reaching enlightenment. Kim Hyŏng'o (1910-1985), who had worked as an ordained *kyomu* for over ten years during Sot'aesan's era, argued that the name Chungbin was derived from the phrase *pinbin sŏngdŏk* 彬彬聖德 from the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Great Eastern Scripture), which Sot'aesan perused after his enlightenment. See Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa* 4 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2008), 502. This phrase represents one of the most important ideas in the *Lunyu* 論語: 子曰 質勝文則野 文勝質則史 文質彬彬 然後君子。"The Master said, 'When native substance overwhelms cultural refinement, the result is a crude rustic. When cultural refinement overwhelms native substance, the result is a foppish pedant. Only when culture and native substance are perfectly mixed and balanced do you have a gentleman.'" (6:18, translation from *Confucius Analects with selections from traditional commentaries*, trans. by Edward Slingerland [Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003]) In this passage, Confucius stresses that one must strike a balance between both outward grace and internal spiritual worth. This idea is also implied in Ch'oe Cheu's discussion of how to cultivate virtue in the "Sudŏk-mun" 修德文 (Essay on the Cultivation of Virtue) chapter of his book *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*. However, Pak Yŏngdŏk suggests another possible referent for "Chungbin," pointing instead to the phrase *puril chunghwi* 佛日重輝, meaning "the Buddha's sun[light] shines once again." When Sot'aesan published the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* [The Correct Canon of Buddhism], he included the phrases *puril chunghwi pŏpmnyun sangjŏn* 佛日增輝 法輪常轉 on the first page. See Pak Yŏngdŏk, 502-503. The name Chungbin is recorded in Sot'aesan's family register.

Sot'aesan's genealogical name was Hŭisŏp 喜燮; his *amyŏng* 兒名 (childhood name: Korean people did not typically use their given genealogical names in this era since they considered them to be so precious; instead, they were called by their childhood names) was Chinsŏp 鎭燮. At that time, according to Confucian custom, an additional name, *cha* 字, was given to a man after he married. After Sot'aesan's marriage, people called him Ch'ŏhwa 處化. His genealogical name, which is recorded in *The Miryang Pak ssi Sebo: Kyujŏnggong-p'a kwŏn* 1 [The Genealogical Records of Surname Miryang Pak, vol. 1] (in the Wŏnbulgyo Museum's collection in Iksan) was Chongsŏp 鍾燮. However, while conducting an interview with Sot'aesan's cousin-in-law, whose name was in fact Chongsŏp, Pak Yongdŏk determined that the Miryang Pak record itself was incorrect (Pak Yongdŏk, 496). A few others, including Sot'aesan's childhood friend (Ko Hyŏnt'ae, 1890-?) and village residents (e.g., Chang Chongsŏng; Pak Kyech'uk), have confirmed this error. Ko Hyŏnt'ae has also concluded that Sot'aesan began to use his *cha* 字, which was Chŏhwa 處化, after his marriage. See Pak Yongdŏk, 498. All of these oral recordings are preserved in the main library at Wŏn'gwang University.

[3] Pak's cognomen (*pŏpho* 法號) is Sot'aesan, which consists of three Sinographs: *so-t'ae-san* 少太山. He gave himself this name after reaching enlightenment. The last character, "*san*," literally means "mountain," and was used by Sot'aesan as an honorific Dharma title for himself and his first nine male

Buddhadharma because it is representative of broader trends in several important ways. First, among the ten newly emergent religious groups categorized as "Buddhism-related new religions,"[4] or even among all of the newly emergent religions in the early twentieth century, as

disciples (*il-san* 一山, *i-san* 二山, *sam-san* 三山, *sa-san* 四山, *o-san* 五山, *yuk-san* 六山, *ch'il-san* 七山, *p'al-san* 八山, *ku-san* 九山). According to several historical documents and testimonies, Sot'aesan gave these names to his disciples in 1920 while staying in Pyŏnsan (where he penned many of his ideas about Buddhist reform). Sot'aesan used *t'awŏn* 陀圓 as an honorific for his female disciples. Sot'aesan also gave himself another sobriquet, Haejung-san 海中山, which has not yet been discussed in Western academe. See Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa* 4 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2009), 506-513. According to Pak Yongdŏk, a self-given cognomen is traditionally a toponym borrowed from the name of one's birthplace or of places near it, such as adjacent mountains, islands, or rivers. In this regard, "Sot'aesan" may refer to one of the islands known as "*sodŭrang-sŏm*" in the dialect of Chŏlla province; these islands are located near Sot'aesan's birthplace, Yonggwang. The phrase's literal meaning is "caldron lid island," which can be pronounced as "sot'aesan" in vernacular Korean. In fact, all of his nine disciples' sobriquets are taken from the names of islands in Sot'aesan's hometown. See Pak Yongdŏk, 506-507. Pak Yongdŏk also provides other possible interpretations of "Sot'aesan," such as "young-yet-great-mountain" and "small-yet-great-mountain." Bongkil Chung translates the name into "young-great-mountain" by taking each syllable as an independent Sinitic character in English. See Bongkil Chung, *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism: A Translation of the* Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn *with Introduction*, A Kuroda Institute Book (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003). However, I would interpret the first two syllables as the compound word *sot'ae*, referring to *yin* and *yang*. In the East Asian tradition, the Sinitic characters *sot'ae* 少太 or *t'aeso* 太少 are often used in compound together. In this expression, *so* refers to the state of "being smaller" while *t'ae* that of "being greater," which expresses "the dynamic change of *yin* and *yang*." (I would like to give credit to Tae Hyun Kim for helping me read the compound word *sot'ae* as *yin* and *yang*.) According to Pak Yongdŏk's field study, two islands can be seen from the top of Ongnyŏ, a peak to which Sot'aesan climbed every day for five years as a child out of a desire to meet the Mountain Spirit *sansin* 山神 in his village. The two islands' names are *k'ŭn-sodŭrang-sŏm* (lit. "great-caldron lid island") and *chagŭn-sodŭrang-sŏm*, (lit. "small-caldron lid island"), which people in Sot'aesan's village often understand as representing the state of *t'aegŭk* 太極, or *yin* and *yang* (Pak Yongdŏk, 507). As I pointed out above, since the last syllable "*san*" is used as an honorific rather than meaning "mountain" literally, I will therefore take the meaning of Sota'esan to be "Dharma Master of *Yin* and *Yang*." This interpretation might strike some as an example of syncretism between Daoist elements and the Wŏn Buddhist tradition. One of the main points in this dissertation, however, is that it is necessary to distinguish between "intentional syncretism" and "culturally inherent syncretism." As I will discuss in later chapters, Sot'aesan's cognomen should be understood as an instance of the latter. In this dissertation, I will use Sot'aesan's dharma title rather than his name or surname, in keeping with academic convention.

[4] The Buddhism-related new religions Murayama Chijun listed were Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, Kŭmgangdo, Pulgyo Gŭknakhoe, Kamnobŏphoe, Taegakkyo, Wŏnyungdo, Chŏngdogyo, Kwanghwagyo, Kwanghwa Yŏnhapdogwan, Yŏnggakkyo, and Wŏngakhyŏnwŏngyo. See Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo* (*Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō*), Korean trans. by Choe Kilsŏng and Chang Sang'ŏn (Taegu: Kyemyŏng taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 285-344; cf. Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō*, *Han'guk kŭndae minsok illyuhak charyo taegye: Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* (1935) (Seoul: Minsogwŏn,

reported by Murayama Chijun 村山智順 (1891-1968)[5] in the *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教 (*Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn*), only the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma has developed stably and grown into one of contemporary Korea's main religions. This fact itself makes the Society worthy of close historical examination from diverse perspectives. There is a direct lineage between the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma, established in 1924, and the most representative Korean Buddhist order today, the Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong (The Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism, established in 1962 as a continuation of the Chosŏn Pulgyo Chogyejong or the Chogye Order of Chosŏn Buddhism, founded in 1941).[6] Furthermore, through the lens of new religious movements, even though the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma began as a Buddhist reform movement, it developed in the cultural and social context of late Chosŏn in close relationship with other newly emergent religions. Therefore, examining the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma provides many insights into the religious landscape of early twentieth-century Korea.

Unlike the other new religious groups that emerged at that time, this Buddhist group successfully evolved within a century of its founding into one of the four nationally recognized major religions in contemporary Korea under the new name of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo 圓佛教).[7] Thus, investigating the early formation of Wŏn Buddhism will help us not only to clarify

[5] Murayama had worked as a researcher for the Governor-General of Korea from 1919 to 1941 and produced a wide range of reports about Chosŏn's folk beliefs, culture, and new religious groups.

[6] Kim Pangnyong, "Haebang chŏn ŭi sin chonggyo wa Pulgyo ŭi kwangye," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 66 (2015, 12), 210.

[7] Daniel J. Adams notes, "On August 23, 2009 the government of the Republic of Korea held an official state funeral for former president Kim Dae-Jung. Four religious traditions participated in the funeral rites, the assumption being that these four traditions were representative of the major religious movements in Korea. The four were Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Wŏn Buddhism." Adams also mentions that "unlike other new religious movements in Korea whose influence has waxed and waned

the nature of this tradition, but also to understand how "new religious movements," "modern Buddhist reform movements," and a new conception of "religion" changed the landscape of Korean religions in the early modern period. Based on this investigation, we can reappraise the complex socio-religious phenomena that underwent remarkable transformations in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Korea. Examining the emergence, development, and growth of Wŏn Buddhism as a religious and cultural phenomenon reveals how the interaction between the three categories mentioned above—Buddhist reform movements, indigenous religious movements, and colonial modernity—transformed the pre-modern form of Chosŏn Buddhism into a distinctly modern variety of Korean Buddhism in the early twentieth century.

1. Wŏn Buddhist Studies and the Identity of Wŏn Buddhism

As many scholars have pointed out that, Wŏn Buddhism is a sufficiently complex and established religion (possessing such features as doctrinal beliefs, ritual practices, and institutional systems) that it can be engaged with as an independent academic field. Wŏn Buddhist Studies began as an independent academic field in the early 1970s with the establishment of the Wŏnbulgyo Sasang Yŏn'guwŏn (Research Institute of Wŏn Buddhist Thought), a research organization affiliated with Wonkwang (Wŏn'gwang) University in Iksan, Korea. Since that time, many scholars have conducted research on the topic of Wŏn Buddhism from diverse perspectives: the faith's history and doctrines, comparative studies with Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and New Religions, interdisciplinary studies in philosophy, sociology,

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with the times, Wŏn Buddhism has experienced a slow but steady growth and its overall influence in Korean society has grown considerably" (Daniel J. Adams, "Wŏn Buddhism in Korea: A New Religious Movement Comes of Age," 1). Choi Junsik also recognizes that "Wŏn Buddhism continues to grow and remains one of the most solid national religions of Korea." See Choi Junsik, "New Religions," *Religious Culture in Korea* (Seoul: General Religious Affairs Division, Religious Affairs Office, Ministry of Culture and Sports, 1996), 116.

history, psychology, pedagogy, etc..[8] As early as 1983, Yun Yihŭm, a pioneering scholar in the discipline of Religious Studies in Korea, highly appraised the academic achievements that had been accomplished in the field of Wŏn Buddhism compared to other Korean New Religious orders that had emerged contemporaneously in the early twentieth century.[9] In studies on Wŏn Buddhism, however, the problem of how to situate, define, and characterize the tradition has seemed virtually intractable. This issue boils down to the question of whether Wŏn Buddhism should be viewed as one of several new religious movements that appeared in early twentieth-century Korea, or whether it was a specific instantiation of a broader Buddhist reform movement of that time.

The question that follows from this issue is whether Wŏn Buddhism is simply a strain of mainstream Korean Buddhist tradition or a new indigenous Korean religion.[10] Although many

[8] The most recent works published by the Institute suggest that these approaches to the field of Wŏn Buddhist Studies have not changed much. The main focuses of Wŏn Buddhist Studies continue to be on: 1) systemizations of its doctrinal and belief systems; 2) comparative studies with other religious or Buddhist traditions; 3) interpretative or hermeneutical studies using interdisciplinary approaches to explore the implications or significance of its teachings as responses to problems in contemporary society; and 4) thematic studies in relation to its doctrine or history. All of this research has served as the foundation of Wŏn Buddhist Studies, which is now recognized as an independent academic field, and the *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* is listed as a KCI (Korea Citation Index) Accredited Journal. However, the formation of Wŏn Buddhism has not yet been researched with extensive consideration of the socio-religious and cultural contexts of early twentieth-century Korea. See Yang Ŭnyong, "Wŏnbulgyo haksul hwaltong ŭi hyŏnhwang kwa kwaje: Wŏnbulgyo sasang yŏn'guwŏn ŭi haksul hwaltong mit yŏn'gu yŏpchŏk ŭi kŏmt'o," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang yŏn'guwŏn haksul taehoe* (2011): 81-105.

[9] Yang Ŭnyong, "Wŏnbulgyo haksul hwaltong ŭi hyŏnhwang kwa kwaje," 81-105.

[10] This issue recently became salient again in the context of the Han'guk Pulgyo Chongdan Hyŏpŭihoe (The Association of Korean Buddhist Orders). Wŏn Buddhists in Seoul, who often participate in the activities of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), were planning to host the 30th General Conference of WFB in September 2020. However, when the Wŏn Buddhists applied for government funding from the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST), the Association of Korean Buddhist Orders opposed this application, claiming that Wŏn Buddhism does not belong to the Association of Korean Buddhist Orders. See Kim Hyŏnt'ae, "Chongdanhyŏp Wŏnbulgyo WFB taehoe kukko chiwŏn pandae," *Pŏppo sinmun*, July 11, 2019. http://www.beopbo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=206183. Accessed on August 8, 2019.

scholars have delved into this question, their answers to it have varied widely. Most scholars who view Wŏn Buddhism as a form of Buddhism have situated the emergence of the tradition in the context of the reformation of Buddhism, or of the broader East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. These researchers have focused on understanding the close relationship between the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's reform ideas and activities and other concurrent Buddhist reform movements in the modern period. On the other hand, scholars who view Wŏn Buddhism as a new form of indigenous Korean religion have highlighted the ways in which Wŏn Buddhism's characteristics align with the ideas espoused by Ch'oe Cheu 崔濟愚 (1824-1864), the founder of Tonghak 東學 (Eastern Learning), and by Kang Ilsun 姜一淳 (1871-1909), the founder of Chŭngsan'gyo 甑山教 (the Religion of Chŭngsan).

Within the past half century, scholars have produced a substantial body of academic research on this subtopic.[11] There are several Western scholars who have worked on Wŏn Buddhism. For example, H. Byron Earhart's 1974 article "The New Religions of Korea: A Preliminary Interpretation" was the first in Western academe to treat Wŏn Buddhism as a new religion that emerged out of Sot'aesan's awakening and his reform of Korean Buddhism. However, at just two pages, Earhart's article could not provide a comprehensive evaluation of

[11] See Kim Hongch'ŏl, "Suun, Chŭngsan, Sot'aesan ŭi pigyo yŏn'gu," *Han'guk chonggyo* 6 (1981): 5-51; Kim Hongch'ŏl, *Han'guk sinjonggyo sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1989); Pak Kimin, *Han'guk sinhŭng chonggyo yŏn'gu* (Pusan: Hyerimsa, 1985); No Kilmyŏng, *Han'guk sinhŭng chonggyo yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Kyŏngsewŏn, 1996); Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Han'guk minjung chonggyo sasangnon* (Seoul: Si'insa, 1985); Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Kŭnhyŏndae Han'guk chonggyo sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Madang Kihoek, 2000); Chŏng Kyuhun, *Han'guk ŭi sinjonggyo* (Seoul: Sŏgwangsa, 2001); *Han'guk sinjonggyo silt'ae chosa pogosŏ* (Han'guk chonggyo hakhoe, 1985); *Han'guk sinjonggyo silt'ae chosa pogosŏ* (Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo Chonggyo Munje Yŏn'guso, 1997); Yun Sŭngyong, *Han'guk sinjonggyo wa kaebyŏk sasang*, Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo ch'ongsŏ 5 (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2017); Pak Kwangsu, *Han'guk sinjonggyo ŭi sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* (Seoul: Chipmundang, 2012); Bongkil Chung, *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism*; Don Baker, *Korean Spirituality*, Dimensions of Asian Spirituality 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

the religion.[12] Michael Pye in 2002 argued that Wŏn Buddhism should be regarded both as a new religion and as a form of Buddhism, while Don Baker maintained in 2011 that despite its apparently Buddhist dimensions, including its name, Wŏn Buddhism should be regarded as a new religion.[13] However, these writers' approaches are limited by the fact that their conclusions are based only on anthropological observation of the contemporary form of Wŏn Buddhism and thus lack substantial analysis of its religious tenets, its historical development, and the historical context in which this tradition emerged. In *The Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo) of Sot'aesan: A Twentieth-Century Religious Movement in Korea*, Kwangsoo Park (Pak Kwangsu) explored Sot'aesan's religious thought and activities through the symbol *Irwŏn* 一圓 (One Circle). This was the main symbol that Sot'aesan used in reference to the *dharmakāyābuddha* (dharma-body buddha) to signify the reformation of Korean Buddhism as well as Wŏnbulgyo's doctrinal basis of faith and practice.[14] Park does point out that Sot'aesan's religious thought involves the selective adoption, adaptation, and recreation of various religious thought and systems, such as Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism;[15] however, his book's primary goal is to show how the *Irwŏn* symbol can be situated in the broader context of mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhism. James

[12] H. Byron Earhart, "The New Religions of Korea: A Preliminary Interpretation," *Transactions of the Korea Branch* of *the Royal Asiatic Society* (1974)*,* XLIX: 19-20.

[13] See Michael Pye, "Wŏn Buddhism as a Korean New Religion," *Numen* Vol. 49, No. 2 (2002): 113-141; Don Baker, "Korea's Wŏn Buddhism: Is it Really a New Religion?" www.cesnur.org/2011/don-baker.pdf, (2011): 11 (accessed September 1, 2017); Kwangsoo Park, *The Won Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo) of Sot'aesan: A Twentieth-Century Religious Movement in Korea* (San Francisco, London, and Bethesda: International Scholars Publications, 1997).

[14] Kwangsoo Park, *The Won Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo) of Sot'aesan: A Twentieth-Century Religious Movement in Korea* (San Francisco, London, and Bethesda: International Scholars Publications, 1997).

[15] Later in this dissertation, I will explain the three-teaching syncretism of Sot'aesan's thought through the conceptual frameworks of "intentional syncretism" and "culturally inherent syncretism." Sot'aesan's syncretism, I argue, constitutes a case of "culturally inherent syncretism" rather than "intentional syncretism."

Huntley Grayson's 2002 book *Korea: A Religious History* provides an overall history of Korean religions from pre-modern to present times. In the section "*Sinhŭng chonggyo*: Korean syncretic Religions," Grayson frames Wŏn Buddhism as a tradition that does not fit neatly into existing definitions either of new religions or of orthodox forms of Buddhism. Pointing out that Wŏn Buddhism's "basic premises are clearly in line with traditional Buddhist concepts" and "do not have a shamanistic substratum," unlike other syncretic religions, Grayson argues that Wŏn Buddhism "must be seen as a genuine reform of Buddhism, but a reform movement which started outside the traditional orders."[16] He argues that two social factors—the general trend of the reformation of Korean Buddhism and the rapid development of Christianity—should be considered not as direct causes of but as indirect catalysts for the Wŏnbulgyo movement.[17] I agree with Grayson's basic approach to the study of Wŏn Buddhism, but this dissertation will explore in greater detail the historical background and complicated social factors that indirectly and directly inspired Sot'aesan's Buddhist reform movement.

More recently, Kang Ton'gu argues that Wŏn Buddhism identified itself as a form of Buddhism during the Japanese colonial period in an effort to more easily adopt itself to colonial policies and thereby alleviate the risk of being suppressed by that ruling power.[18] Furthermore, Kang criticizes the ambivalent position that views Wŏn Buddhism both as a form of Buddhism and as a new Buddhist religion.[19] He points out that while Wŏn Buddhism has not joined the

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[16] James Huntely Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*, revised edition (New York and London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 212.

[17] Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*, 212.

[18] Kang Ton'gu, *Ŏnŭ chonggyo hakcha ka pon Han'guk ŭi chonggyo chiptan* (Seoul: Pakmunsa, 2017), 297-298.

[19] Ibid.

Association of Korean Buddhist Orders, instead participating in the Association of Korean Religious Leaders as an independent religious order, Wŏn Buddhism is nonetheless an active independent member of the World Fellowship of Buddhism and is thus considered a representative form of Korean Buddhism.[20] Such a criticism, however, does not take past historical and sociopolitical events into account. It limits one's viewpoint to exclusively consider the present state of affairs without closely examining the pertinent historical, cultural, sociopolitical, philosophical, and doctrinal backgrounds.

The identity of Wŏn Buddhism has never been fixed, but has instead continually changed in response to shifting historical contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the dynamic historical process by which the religion's identity formed throughout its hundred years of history. First, let me briefly explain the recent sociopolitical background of the current debate over the identity of Wŏn Buddhism.[21] It was not until 1962 that the question of Wŏn Buddhism's status as a new religion came to the fore. The Supreme Council for National Reconstruction in 1962, formulated after Park Chung Hee became president of South Korea, enacted the "Buddhist property management law." This law was initially passed for political reasons (namely, to prevent conflict between unmarried monks and married monks) but it also had the effect of allowing the government to expand its power over monasteries and their finances.[22] Under this law, all Buddhist groups had to register with the government. The Chogye Order was the first

[20] Ibid.

[21] Kim Pangnyong, "*Kŭmganggyŏng* kwa Wŏnbulgyo sasang: Wŏnbulgyo wa Pulgyo ŭi saeroun kwangye mosaek ŭl chean hamyŏ," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* (2014): 1-54; Ko Pyongch'ol, "Wŏnbulgyo chŏngch'esŏng chŏngch'i wa wich'i," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 63 (2015): 97-132.

[22] Mark Andrew Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities: A History of Buddhist Propagation in Modern Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 94.

Buddhist group to register, but subsequently split into the Chogye and T'aego Orders in 1970.[23] Against this sociopolitical backdrop, the second and third successors of Wŏn Buddhism, Song Kyu 宋奎 (1900-1962, better known as his sobriquet, Chŏngsan 鼎山) and Kim Taegŏ 金大擧 (1914-1998, better known as his sobriquet, Taesan 大山) emphasized the distinctive identity of Wŏn Buddhism as a new Buddhist religion. They took this approach in order to protect the faith's institutional property and its rights of autonomous administration and practice.[24] One step they took towards this goal was to decline to join the Association of Korean Buddhist Orders; another, undertaken in 1962 by the third head dharma master, Taesan, was to submit a proposal to the government three times to request the exclusion of Wŏn Buddhism from the application of the "Buddhist property management law." Consequently, in November of that year, the government announced that Wŏn Buddhism was not a Buddhist order and would thus not be subject to the "Buddhist property management law."[25] This public declaration made it official that Wŏn Buddhism was not part of the Association of Korean Buddhist Orders. For this reason, the Chogye and T'aego orders argue that Wŏn Buddhism is not an orthodox form of Buddhism.

However, this view does not mean that Wŏn Buddhism has no relationship at all to mainstream Buddhist traditions. In a recent article, Ko Pyŏngch'ŏl positions Wŏn Buddhism's self-representation as the "identity politics of Wŏn Buddhism." In his view, Wŏn Buddhism has represented itself as having multi-layered identities—viz., as both a form of Buddhism and a new Buddhist religion—in response to the evolving sociopolitical situation in Korea since liberation

[23] Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities*, 94.

[24] Kim Pangnyong, "Sot'aesan Pak Chungbin ŭi Pulgyo kaehyŏk kwa Sŏn sasang," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 45 (2010): 342-343.

[25] Kim Pangnyong, "Kŭmganggyŏng kwa Wŏnbulgyo sasang: Wŏnbulgyo wa Pulgyo ŭi saeroun kwangye mosaek ŭl chean hamyŏ," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* (2014): 29-33.

in 1945.[26] In pursuing its own independence as a new Buddhist religion while simultaneously actively participating in the World Fellowship of Buddhism, the World Conference of Religions for Peace, the Korean Conference of Religions for Peace, and Religions for Peace in the United Nations, Wŏn Buddhism has evolved into an independent Buddhist religion in Korea. In this light, it is essential to consider Korea's sociopolitical situation when examining the nature of Wŏn Buddhism.

Now let us briefly look at how scholars' views on the identity of Wŏn Buddhism have changed over time.[27] In 1974, the first meeting of the Research Institute of Wŏn Buddhist Thought was held. That year, Song Chŏnŭn and Han Chongman, two pioneering Wŏn Buddhist scholars at that time (and who make up, along with Yu Pyŏngdŏk and Han Kidu, the so-called "Four Scholars in Wŏn Buddhist Studies") argued that although Wŏn Buddhism is a form of Buddhism because it shares the most fundamental Buddhist ideas, it should also be distinguished from the mainstream Korean Buddhist tradition.[28] In 1977, through the framework of homogeneity, reform, and future prospects, Han Kidu also highlighted the similarities between Sot'aesan and the Buddha's conception of enlightenment, while also noting Wŏn Buddhism's distinct qualities as a reformed variety of Buddhism.[29] Focusing on the Buddhist historical reform movements of the Chan/Sŏn patriarch Huineng 惠能 (638-713) and Sot'aesan, Kim Chigyŏn pointed out in 1981 that, despite their social, regional, and temporal differences, the

[26] Ko Pyongch'ŏl, "Wŏnbulgyo chŏngch'esŏng chŏngch'i wa wich'i," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 63 (2015): 124.

[27] In creating this chronology, I have relied Kwŏn Tong'u's article. See Kwŏn Tong'u, "Wŏnbulgyo wa Pulgyo ŭi kwangye chaego," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 50 (2011/12): 1-28.

[28] See Yi Yŏnggwan, "Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non e taehan yŏn'gu," *Chŏngsin kaebyŏk* 7, 8 (1989), 166.

[29] Han Kidu, "Sot'aesan ŭi Pulgyogwan," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang* 2 (1977): 183-192.

innovative spirit of these movements was identical. In 1982, Han Chongman argued that Wŏn Buddhism pursues the Buddhadharma, but it is not a form of Buddhism institutionally speaking. Han reaches this conclusion because, although Sot'aesan considered the Buddhadharma to be the unsurpassed and great way, he also regarded the systems and customs of Chosŏn Buddhism as being in severe need of reform. In 1987, Han further refined his argument by saying that Wŏn Buddhism shares the fundamental truth of the Buddhadharma, yet pursues its own administrative and doctrinal systems.[30] Since then, this view has been adopted by many other Wŏn Buddhist scholars, such as Yu Pyŏngdŏk and Chŏng Sunil. More specifically, Yu Pyŏngdŏk pointed out that what Sot'aesan adopted was not just general Buddhist teachings, but specifically *prajñāpāramitā*, the thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism as they appear in the *Diamond Sūtra*. In 1997, Kim Pangnyong pointed out the similarities between Sot'aesan's and Chinul's ideas as examples of religious reform movements. In 1997, Jin Y. Park (Pak Jinyŏng) examined the issue by looking closely at the connections and disconnections between Wŏn Buddhism and traditional Buddhism in terms of their respective 1) doctrinal systems, 2) religious practices, 3) relationship to new Buddhist movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[31] In summary, a primary approach to the question of Wŏn Buddhism's identity has been to compare its doctrines and practices with those of mainstream Buddhist traditions.

Many academic works have examined the doctrines of Wŏn Buddhism in the broader context of Mahāyāna Buddhism by comparing the teachings of Wŏn Buddhism with those of the East Asian Mahāyāna traditions, such as the Chan/Sŏn, Huayan/Hwaŏm, Tiantai/Ch'ŏnt'ae, and Tathāgatagarbha schools of thought. Most of the scholars utilizing this approach have advanced

[30] Han Chongman, "Pulgyo wa Wŏnbulgyo ŭi kwangye," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang* 13 (1990): 485-487.

[31] Pak Chinyŏng, "Pulgyo wa Wŏnbulgyo ŭi kwangye," *Wŏnbulgyohak* 3 (1998): 259-278.

the idea that Wŏn Buddhist doctrines were established based on the foundation of East Asian Mahāyāna traditions, and developed further through Sot'aesan's innovative interpretations and inventions. For example, Han Chongman proposes that the Hwaŏm concept of *dharmakāya*, which describes the omnipresence of the *dharmakāya* in the worlds of the ten directions, shares common ground with the Wŏn Buddhist notion of *ch'ŏch'ŏ pulsang* 處處佛像, which signifies that all things in the universe are *dharmakāya buddhas*. However, when it comes to putting these two beliefs into practice, the distinctions between them become clear.[32] The Hwaŏm belief system suggests that adherents engage in the contemplative practice of "universal inclusion," based on the idea that the *dharmakāya* refers to the light of the *tathāgata*'s wisdom. Wŏn Buddhist practice, by contrast, advises more concrete action, teaching through the notion of *sasa pulgong* 事事佛供 that one should make each and every act a buddha offering because all things in the universe are buddhas.[33] This kind of comparative examination that locates Wŏn Buddhist doctrines in the larger context of the East Asian Buddhist traditions further bolsters the idea that Wŏn Buddhism is a form of Buddhism that continues the East Asian Buddhist traditions, rather than a new religion. In addition, this analogous thinking has enriched the field of Wŏn Buddhist studies as an independent academic field and deepened our understanding of the teachings of Wŏn Buddhism. However, when we apply this comparative approach to the study of Wŏn Buddhism, it is also necessary to carefully differentiate between scholars' own interpretations and what the primary source texts actually state in order not to reach unfounded conclusions.

[32] Han Chongman, "Pulgyo wa Wŏnbulgyo ŭi kwangye," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang* 13 (1990): 485-487.

[33] Ibid.

One of the weaknesses in the above-mentioned arguments is that they uncritically assume that there exists an essential form of the mainstream Korean Buddhist tradition with which they then can compare Wŏn Buddhism. However, Buddhism has gone through an extended process of acculturation, transformation, re-creation, and reformation over the course of its transmission from India to Central and East Asia. In this regard, Bernard Faure's recent book, *Unmasking Buddhism*, is worth noting. Faure emphasizes the diversity and multiplicity of the Buddhist traditions that have developed and transformed in various cultural, social, and regional contexts, thus refuting the conventional idea that there is an essential or pure form of Buddhism.[34] Therefore, it is imperative for our historical scholarship to consider the diversity and multiplicity of the Buddhist traditions. Indeed, the ahistorical approach that dominated writing about Wŏn Buddhism for decades has recently begun to be challenged by other scholars. For example, Kim Pangnyong pointed out that, before discussing the relationship between Wŏn Buddhism and Buddhism, one must first identify what "Buddhism" itself means. In other words, if Sot'aesan is claimed to have reformed traditional Buddhism, it is first necessary to define the specific content of the Buddhism that Sot'aesan subsequently adopted and reformed.[35] More recently, Kwŏn Tong'u made a similar argument that the question of what the Korean Buddhist tradition is should be clarified prior to examining the relationship between Wŏn Buddhism and Buddhism.

In particular, Kwŏn points out that the largest contemporary Chogye Order in Korea, which most scholars have treated as representative of traditional Korean Buddhism, is in fact a *modern* form of Buddhism, established in the twentieth century just as was Wŏn Buddhism. The

[34] See Bernard Faure, *Unmasking Buddhism* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 7-11.

[35] Kim Pangnyong, "Sot'aesan Pak Chungbin ŭi Pulgyo kaehyŏk kwa sŏn sasang," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 45 (2010): 335-366.

Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong was established in 1962 as the successor of the Chosŏn Pulgyo Chogyejong (itself founded in 1941); the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma was established in 1924 as a modern form of Korean Buddhism.[36] Therefore, Kwŏn argues, the question of Wŏn Buddhism's identity must be examined in the historical context of an ever-transforming Korean Buddhism; we also should pay more attention to Wŏn Buddhism's relationship to contemporary Buddhist orders, rather than exclusively comparing the order to traditional forms of Korean Buddhism.[37] In this regard, the approaches taken by Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson are instructive: these two Western scholars put Wŏn Buddhism into conversation with the contemporary Chogye and T'aego orders in their book *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*.[38]

Among the few English-language scholarly studies dedicated solely to Wŏn Buddhism, Bongkil Chung's book, *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism: A Translation of the* Wŏnbulgyo kyojon *with Introduction* is one of the most comprehensive introductions to Wŏn Buddhism written to date.[39] Chung provides substantial religious and historical background for the teachings of Wŏn Buddhism, along with a full translation of its founder's canon and discourses, conjointly known as *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism.* The book also highlights the problems with identifying Wŏn Buddhism as a new religion and issues surrounding the 1962 revision of

[36] Kim Pangnyong, "Haebang chŏn ŭi sin chonggyo wa pulpy ŭi kwangye," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 66 (2015, 12): 210.

[37] Kwŏn Tong'u, "Wŏnbulgyo wa Pulgyo ŭi kwangye chaego," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 50 (2011,12): 1-28.

[38] Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction* (4th Edition) (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997), 231.

[39] Bongkil Chung, *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism: A Translation of the* Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn *with Introduction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* (*The Correct Canon of Buddhism*). Chung's is a pioneering piece of scholarship, as the first academic work to introduce the general history and teachings of Wŏn Buddhism to Western scholarship.

Despite the groundbreaking nature of Chung's book, however, there still remain many subjects that it does not examine. First of all, Chung argues that Wŏn Buddhism's identification as a form of Buddhism per se was diluted during the redaction of the canon in 1962. For that reason, Chung attempts to restore "some crucial points" based on the 1943 recension of the canon, which was published during Sot'aesan's lifetime. When Chung translated *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism* from Korean into English, he maintains that restoring those crucial points was the best way to preserve the original wisdom of Sot'aesan. However, Chung's selection of "some crucial points" from among the many substantial ideas in Sot'aesan's work remains questionable. Perhaps a more justifiable strategy would have been to translate the entire 1943 version, rather than translating only those points that he deemed "crucial" revisions of the current version of the scripture. Second, Chung does not fully consider the historical background of the early formation of Wŏn Buddhism, particularly the influential socio-political contexts of colonialism and modernity. Chung leaves these factors largely untouched in his book, which is primarily a translation. Third, his research did not incorporate other informative historical materials, such as diaries, the order's daily records, monthly magazines, and newspapers. It is therefore necessary to fill in these gaps in dealing with the subject of the formation of Wŏn Buddhism.

Thus far, we have reviewed previous scholarship on the relationship between Wŏn Buddhism and other forms of Buddhism while addressing both the scholarship's limitations and its contributions to our understanding of the nature of Wŏn Buddhism. The remainder of this

Introduction will outline some additional problems with the current scholarly categorization of new religions that I believe we must rectify.

2. The Categorization of "New Religions"

First of all, I maintain that the question of whether or not Wŏn Buddhism should be understood as a new religion or as a form of mainstream Buddhism derives from inadequate academic categorizations. Scholars have attempted to compartmentalize the complex socio-religious phenomena of the early twentieth century into categories such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity and New Religions—as if these traditions had developed as independent entities, each maintaining unchanging religious forms and failing to interact with one another. This approach tends to assume that continuous and universal forms of "Buddhism," "Confucianism," "Daoism," "Protestantism," and "New Religions" have existed throughout history.[40] Chang Sŏngman's book critically examines the ways in which the Western concepts of "world religions" and "religion" changed the Korean religious landscape in the early modern period. He argues that the Chogye and T'aego orders, which are often classed as "modern Korean Buddhism," should also be understood as part of the category of "new religious movements," along with such traditions as Ch'ŏndogyo, Chŭngsan'gyo, Taejonggyo and Wŏnbulgyo.[41] Chang problematizes the dominant models of religious continuity and discontinuity and the simplistic demarcation between traditional and modern religions. Chang suggests that Korea's established religions, such as Protestantism and Buddhism, should be understood as originating neither in the West nor in ancient Korea, but should instead be framed as "new religions" in Korea's modern historical context. As an alternative term for "new

[40] Chang Sŏngman, *Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo ran muŏsin'ga?* (What is modern Korean religion?), 13.

[41] Chang Sŏngman, *Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo ran muŏsin'ga?*, 180.

religions," Chang proposes a broader concept of *kŭndae chonggyo* (modern religions), a term that includes both Korea's established religions, such as Buddhism and Christianity, and "new religions" as they have previously been defined in academe. In the pages that follow, I use Chang's proposed concept of *kŭndae chonggyo* to examine how the notion of religion became naturalized in Korean society among intellectuals, religious leaders, and the public, and the impact that this concept had upon the emergence of "new religions" and the reformation of the so-called established religious traditions.

This dissertation proposes that it is necessary to reconsider the category of "new religions," which, as it stands, typically refers only to the newly arisen religions that the Japanese colonial government categorized as "pseudo-religions." I suggest we go about this reappraisal in three ways. First, we must reexamine the ways that new religious groups have historically been classified in Korea. Such groups have been referred to with myriad names, such as "*sinjonggyo* 新宗教 (new religion), *sinhŭng chonggyo* 新興宗教 (newly emergent religion), *minjok chonggyo* 民族宗教 (ethnic religion), *minjung chonggyo* 民衆宗教 (popular religion), *minsok chonggyo* 民俗宗教 (folk religion), *minjokchŏk chonggyo* 民族的宗教 (ethnic religion), *chasaeng chonggyo* 自生宗教 (indigenous religion), *kuksan chonggyo* 國産宗教 (native religion), *t'och'ak chonggyo* 土着宗教 (autochthonous religion), *poguk chonggyo* 保國宗教 (nationalist religion), *yusa chonggyo* 類似宗教 (pseudo religion), *saibi chonggyo* 似而非宗教 (pseudo religion), *ŭisa chonggyo* 疑似宗教 (bogus religion), and *misin chonggyo* 迷信宗教 (superstitious religion)."[42] Although all of these terms have somewhat different connotations,

[42] Lukas Pokorny, "Korean New Religious Movements: An Introduction," in *Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements*, Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, vol. 16, ed. Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), 231-233.

they all refer to the same group of religions that the Japanese ethnographer Murayama Chijun categorized as "pseudo-religions" in his work *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* (*The Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn*), published in 1935. During the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), the Japanese colonial government classified all religions not belonging to Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity as "pseudo-religions." The Japanese colonial government used the term "pseudo-religions" to weaken Koreans' national consciousness and to suppress religions that were based on indigenous Korean spirituality. As a Japanese government-hired ethnographer, Murayama conducted extensive research into Korean religions, customs, folklore, folk beliefs, and shamanism, and published the *Chōsen no kishin* 朝鮮の鬼神 (*Ghosts of Chosŏn*) in 1929 and the *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* in 1935. Murayama categorized all Korean native religious thinkers and founders into six lineage groupings: Tonghak (Eastern Learning); Hŭmch'i (Chŭngsan'gyo)[43]; Buddhism; Shamanism; Confucianism; Unidentifiable. Of particular note is the fact that although Buddhism was one of the colonial government's officially sanctioned religions, all Buddhist groups that were not sanctioned by the colonial government were simultaneously classed as pseudo-religions. This paradox stems from the 1911 Temple Ordinance, which the Japanese colonial government promulgated on June 3, 1911. This ordinance placed all Buddhist temples under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General, making all temples subject to the governor's approval in the event of a merger, relocation, or closure. In addition, religious activities themselves were controlled and restricted, as temples had to obtain permission from local authorities before performing ceremonies. Therefore, independent Buddhist communities and orders fell under the category of pseudo-religions. As Melton Gordon points out, the most common feature of new

[43] Since all followers of Kang Ilsun practice the T'aeŭl mantra, which begins with the two syllables *hŭm* and *ch'i* 吽哆 吽哆 太乙天上元君 吽哩哆啷都來 吽哩喊哩娑婆訶, the Chŭngsan'gyo is often called Hŭmch'igyo.

religions is "a common deficiency that pushe[s] them into contested space at the fringe of society."[44] Such a group's designation as a "new religion" is not defined by its actual features, practices, or beliefs, but by the voices of both dominant religious traditions and secular institutions, such as government officials and the media. Likewise, the Japanese colonial government's enforcement of this classification forced all religions except Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity to be classified under the derogatory term of pseudo-religion, which connotes superstition or fraud.

Kim Hongch'ŏl's book *Han'guk sinjonggyo sasang ŭi yŏn'gu* (*The Study of New Religious Thought in Korea*) summarizes in detail how scholars have defined and used these terms from the Japanese colonial period to the present times.[45] Kim divides these terminologies into three categories:

1) *yusa chonggyo* 類似宗教 (pseudo religion), *saibi chonggyo* 似而非宗教 (pseudo religion), *ŭisa chonggyo* 疑似宗教 (bogus religion), and *misin chonggyo* 迷信宗教 (superstitious religion);

2) *sinhŭng chonggyo* (newly emergent religion), *minjok chonggyo* (ethnic religion), *minsok chonggyo* (folk religion), *minjokchŏk chonggyo* (ethnic religion), *chasaeng chonggyo* (indigenous religion), *kuksan chonggyo* (native religion), *t'och'ak chonggyo* (autochthonous religion), and *poguk chonggyo* (nationalist religion);

3) *sinjonggyo* (new religion), *minjung chonggyo* (popular religion), and *saejonggyo* (novel religion).

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[44] Melton Gordon, "Perspective: Toward a Definition of "New Religion," *Nova Religio* (2004) 8 (1): 73.

[45] Kim Hongch'ŏl, *Han'guk sinjonggyo sasang ŭi yŏn'gu: Han'guk chonggyo yŏn'gu* 11 (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1989), 10-16.

Until now, scholars have attempted to explain the modern Korean religious phenomena that took place in the early twentieth century by using the various concepts that Kim lists. For example, Yi Kang'o considers all religions that were created by Koreans in modern Korea to be *sinhŭng chonggyo* (newly emergent religions). Within this rubric, he further categorizes Tonghak and Tangun'gyo as *minjok chonggyo* (ethnic religions).[46] By contrast, Yu Pyŏngdŏk sorts all religions into one of two categories: "new religions" or "newly emergent religions." According to Yu, "new religions" refers to all religions derived from existing established religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Therefore, Yu considers Suun's Ch'ŏndogyo, Kim Ilbu's Chŏngyŏk sasang, Chŭngsan's Chŭngsan'gyo, Na Ch'ŏl's Taejonggyo, and Sot'aesan's Wŏnbulgyo to be "new religions," and the sects that subsequently branched out of *those* religions to be "newly emergent religions."[47] Chang Pyŏnggil understands "new religions" to be the group of religions that emerged during the Japanese colonial period, while "newly emergent religions" are those religions that were born after liberation.[48] Mun Sanghŭi regards all religions except for the so-called "World Religions" (e.g. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity) to be "newly emergent religions." Chang also differentiates between *minjokchŏk chonggyo* (ethnic religions),

[46] Yi Kang'o, "Han'guk sinhŭng chonggyo ŭi kaegwan," in *Taegye Ch'oe Ilun paksa hoegap kinyŏm nonmunjip* (1975), 158.

[47] Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Han'guk sinhŭng chonggyo* (Iksan: Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1974), 89. Yu seems to be aware of the difference of the two terms that Japanese scholars have defined.
H. Byron Earhart indicates that while the Japanese term *shinkō shūkyō*, which means literally "newly emergent religions," carries the disparaging nuance of upstart religions, the term *shin shūkyō* is translated as "new religions" without any pejorative connotation. See, H. Byron Earhart, *The New Religions of Japan: A Bibliography of Western-Language Materials*, Michigan Papers in Japanese 9 (MI: The University of Michigan, 1983), 1.

[48] Chang Pyŏnggil, *Han'guk koyu sin'ang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Sŏul Taehakkyo Tong'a Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1970), 105-106.

which include a code of ethics, and *pseudo-religions*, which do not.[49] In a similar vein, No Kilmyŏng also considers all religions that lacked a code of ethics to be pseudo-religions.[50] However, regardless of the specific terminology that these scholars use, the actual set of groups to which they are referring falls into the same category of "pseudo-religions" that is a legacy of the Japanese colonial period. A scholar who makes use of any of these categories, even a seemingly neutral term like "new religions," is drawing on the very categories that the Japanese colonial government created.

Since the late 1960s, some Korean academics have used the term "new religion" in place of "pseudo-religion." In 1979, when the Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn (the precursor to The Academy of Korean Studies) compiled the *Han'guk minjok tae paekkwa sajŏn* [*Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*], it officially established "new religion" as the field's preferred term.[51] Since then, Korean scholars have made various efforts to overcome the negative associations of the phrase "new religions" by separating the term "new religions" from "pseudo-religions" and redefining the characteristics of "new religions." For example, Pak Kwangsu's recent book *Han'guk sinjonggyo ŭi sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* (*The Thought and Religious Culture of Korean New Religions*) explores the origins, ideas, religious culture, and rituals of the new religions in the early modern period of Korea with a focus on Chŏndogyo, Chŭngsan'gyo, Taejonggyo, and Wŏnbulgyo. Taking a broad-brush approach, Pak sketches out the historical

[49] Mun Sanghŭi, "Han'guk sinhŭng chonggyo ŭi kujo wa sasagn," *Yŏnse taehakkyo yŏnsinwŏn mokhoeja hagi sinhak semina kangŭi chip* (1981): 303-315.

[50] No Kilmyŏng, "Sinhŭng chonggyo," in *Sinhŭng chonggyo* 2. Han'guk minsok taegwan 3 (Seoul: Koryŏdae Minsok Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1982), 669-670; No, Kilmyŏng, "Sinhŭng chonggyo rŭl t'onghae pon ku han mal ŭi minjung sasang." *Kidok sasang* 20/8 (1976): 108-118.

[51] Kim Hongch'ŏl, *Han'guk sinjonggyo sasang ŭi yŏn'gu: Han'guk chonggyo yŏn'gu* 11 (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1989), 14.

background that informed these new religious movements as well as a wide range of related topics: each founder's religious experiences in relation to the establishment of each religious order; the new religions' main ideas and rituals; and their worldviews.[52] Yu Pyŏngdŏk's scholarship explores Korea's religious thought throughout the nation's history, particularly highlighting the origins and characteristics of the new religious phenomena that arose during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries in Korea. Among Yu's many publications, *Kŭnhyŏndae Han'guk chonggyo sasang yŏn'gu* (*Research on the Modern and Contemporary Religious Thought of Korea*) is particularly noteworthy for several reasons.[53] First, he identifies the distinctive characteristic of the new religions Tonghak, Chŭngsan'gyo, and Wŏnbulgyo as being expressions of *minjung-hon* (the spirit of the common people)[54] that had been beaten down by a despotic upper class during the late Chosŏn period and that was further suppressed by Western and Japanese colonial powers. Yu argues that new religious movements emerged among the common people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries due to the class's unique religiosity throughout history. This everyman religious sensibility, which Yu traces back to primitive Daoist thought, comprises a "respect for life, harmony with nature, and

[52] Pak Kwangsu, *Hanguk sinjonggyo ŭi sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* (Seoul: Chipmundang, 2012).

[53] Yu Pyŏngdŏk is a prolific writer on the issue of Korean new religions. See Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Han'guk minjung chonggyo sasangnon* (Seoul: Si'insa, 1985); *Han'guk sinhŭng chonggyo* (Seoul: Si'insa, 1973); *Kŭnhyŏndae Han'guk chonggyo sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Madang kihoek, 2000); *Wŏnbulgyo wa Han'guk sahoe* (Iksan: Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo Chonggyo Munje Yŏn'guso, 1977); *T'al chonggyo sidae ŭi chonggyo* (Iksan: Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anguk, 1985); *Han'guk sasang kwa Wŏnbulgyo* (Seoul: Kyomunsa, 1987); Sot'aesan kwa Wŏnbulgyo sasang (Iksan: Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anguk, 1995).

[54] Kenneth Wells assesses that Pak Ch'ansŭng's "Tonghak nongmin chŏnjaeng," implicitly signifies that the Tonghak movement is "the proper place to look for the minjung spirit and dynamic of Korean history." Quoted in Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), 56-57.

humanitarianism."[55] Such a distinctive religiosity, Yu explains, intermingled with eschatological Buddhist notions of the future buddha Maitreya and the ideology of *kaebyŏk* (great transformation), thereby developing into the revolutionary idea that "humanity is heaven" (*innaech'on* 人乃天). This latter phrase, for Yu, signifies that the common people had now emerged as historical subjects and masters of the world rather than as hapless objects.[56] In this way, Korean scholars like Pak Kwangsu and Yu Pyŏngdŏk have attempted to revise the negative image of the so-called pseudo-religions by rediscovering the social, historical, and religious significance of the new religious groups represented by Tonghak, Chŭngsan'gyo, Taejonggyo, and Wŏnbulgyo.

Yu Pyŏngdŏk also points out problems with each of the various terms associated with such religious phenomena: i.e., *minjok chasaeng chonggyo* (ethnic religions originating in Korea), *minjok chonggyo* (ethnic religions), *minjung chonggyo* (religions of the common people), *sinhŭng chonggyo* (newly emergent religions), *sin chonggyo* (new religions), and *yusa chonggyo* (pseudo-religions). First, he explains that the terms *sinhŭng chonggyo*, *sin chonggyo*, and *yusa chonggyo* reflect the legacy of colonial perspectives (*singmin sagwan*), having been coined by Japanese colonial apologists; we therefore cannot properly examine religious phenomena with these terms, which carry pejorative connotations. Next, Yu stresses that the so-called "native religions of the common people," which are comprised of Tonghak, Chŭngsan'gyo, and Wŏnbulgyo, do not confine their ideologies exclusively to nationalism or

[55] Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Kŭnhyŏndae Han'guk chonggyo sasang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Madang Kihoek, 2000), 15-21.

[56] Ibid., 83-85 and 116-123. Particularly, Yu evaluates the religious idea of Su'un, Chŭngsan, and Sot'aesan as revolutionary, which is fundamentally different from that of the movement of Communist revolution happened in the middle nineteenth century in the West. See Ibid., 120. Yu does not explain why the "distinct religiosity" gained such a momentum at the time. I will explain some historical factors that contributed to this phenomenon in Chapter One later.

national consciousness, but also pursue the universal ideas of equality, humanitarianism, and harmony with nature. Yu therefore proposes expanding the scope of the meaning of the term *minjok chonggyo* to refer to movements in which 1) the founder of the religion emerged from that religion's primary ethnic group; 2) its religious teachings agree with the traditional and cultural values of the people; and 3) its religious teachings develop from elaborations of traditional beliefs and religiosity. He further defines the term *minjung chonggyo* (religion for the masses) as referring to movements in which 1) the founder or reviver of the religion derives from the social class of the common people; 2) the followers of the religion are the common people; and 3) the objects of religious salvation are the common people. Based on these definitions, Yu suggests calling the religions that emerged during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Korea *minjokchŏk minjung chonggyo* (the ethnic religions of the common people). According to him, the *minjokchŏk minjung chonggyo* is any religion that originates from the self-awareness of the common people and their cultural and religious beliefs, and is further developed through a sophisticated philosophical system and profound religious thought.[57]

But I would like to raise a more fundamental question here: does our tendency to divide religious traditions into new religions versus officially sanctioned religions still bear traces of Japanese colonial prejudices? As mentioned above, during the Japanese colonial era, the Japanese colonial government issued a set of regulations in which only three legitimate religions—Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity—were recognized. The remainder of Korean religions were placed into the category of "pseudo-religion," which enabled them to be governed by the Bureau of Police instead of the Department of Religion. In particular, religious movements that were developed by indigenous Koreans were all placed into the category of

[57] Ibid., 113-114.

"pseudo-religion." After liberation, scholars implemented into their work the Japanese colonial government's classification of religions without questioning the classification system itself. Since then, researchers have focused on changing the term "pseudo-religion" to "new religion" or to "newly emergent religion" and to define these latter terms in a new way. But these scholars still use the same set of groups that the Japanese government had used to identify some faiths as "pseudo- religions." In a sense, to merely change the term "pseudo-religion" to "new religion" without considering the reasons behind the classification itself is to follow the legacy of epistemological colonialism that the Japanese government imposed upon the Korean people. In order to exorcise the negative connotations contained in the terms "pseudo-religions" and "new religions," Yu Pyŏngdŏk introduced the values of "truth, ethics, historicity, and popularity" into his conception of "new religions." But this is not enough. We have to rethink the categorization itself.

The second problematic dimension in separating religions between the categories of "new religions" or "established religions" is that this taxonomy overlooks the complex interplay among many religious traditions at that time by imposing upon them compartmentalized institutional categories like Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and New Religions. In this dissertation, I show that if we refrain from focusing all of our attention on whether Wŏn Buddhism is either a new religion or a form of Buddhism, we can begin to understand Sot'aesan's reformation of Korean Buddhism as a distinctly localized, Korean iteration of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. In addition to this, if we abstain from applying these categories to religious phenomena and instead examine the characteristics, formations, and doctrines of each religion that appeared in the early twentieth century, we will soon recognize how unnecessary these categories are. This is because, before the concept of religion was introduced to Korea,

virtually all religious traditions coexisted peacefully, without socially excluding other religions. It was perfectly natural at that time, for instance, for Koreans to perform Confucian rituals while also holding the Buddhist belief in the inevitability of karmic consequences. Confucian scholars were also free to read a variety of other religious texts, such as Daoist and Buddhist works, to help cultivate their minds. We should also be aware that most intellectuals who actively participated in the religious reform movements of early twentieth-century Korea were well-versed in Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism alike.

In explaining Sot'aesan's sobriquet, I briefly explained the importance of distinguishing between two conceptual frameworks: "intentional syncretism" and "culturally inherit syncretism." If we examine the history of the Koreanization of Christianity in the early twentieth century, we can observe that even Christian missionaries embraced shamanistic elements in their practices.[58] Among Koreans themselves, too, coexisting religious practices obviously affected one another. If a Korean child grew up reading Confucian textbooks in his private village school and singing the lyrics of Tonghak (which was widespread at that time), both of these cultural influences would naturally become a part of his life. Popular terms from Tonghak lyrics can be found in diary entries from this era. Even if one became a Buddhist monk, one might learn to understand a Buddhist concept by comparing it to related ideas from Zhuangzi or Mengzi. This is not an example of three-teaching syncretism, but is rather a cultural phenomenon, which I call "culturally inherent syncretism." Sot'aesan's Dharma sobriquet is an example of this. Sot'aesan actively treated the Buddhadharma as the heart of his reformation of Korean Buddhism. However, when giving Dharma titles to his disciples and himself, Sot'aesan followed the cultural customs practiced at the time, taking them from the toponyms of practitioners' birthplaces or

[58] See footnote, 341.

other nearby locations, such as mountains, islands, or rivers. My argument is that these examples are not necessarily examples of three-teaching syncretism. In Chapter One, I deal with this issue in more detail, examining the culturally widespread influence of Ch'oe Cheu's notion of *sich'ŏnju* (revering God within one's heart).

Finally, I argue that Sot'aesan's concept of a congregation (*saṃgha*) of "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas," the phrase that gives this dissertation its title, and his project to establish such a Buddhist community nicely sum up the main features of Sot'aesan's Buddhist reform movements in early-twentieth century Korea. Sot'aesan's innovation, in other words, was to posit that all living beings—male and female, ordained and lay, young and old, colonized and colonizer, intellectuals and non-intellectuals—can become buddhas and bodhisattvas through the practices and teachings of Buddhism. In deploying this concept of a "congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas," Sot'aesan and his disciples laid out basic teachings that were accessible to all people and applicable to daily life, and advanced a religious system for realizing that vision. This phrase, which had never appeared in Buddhist literature or history before Sot'aesan used it to describe his new Buddhist community, is key to understanding the identity of Wŏn Buddhism. Ever since Buddhism migrated to Korea, the belief in the advent of Maitreya Buddha has continued among the common people. In particular, in the late Chosŏn dynasty, many people had waited for a future Buddha, Maitreya, a savior who would deliver them from the suffering of that turbulent era. In the early twentieth century, however, Sot'aesan offered a different interpretation of the advent of Maitreya Buddha. According to Sot'aesan, the arrival of Maitreya does not mean that a single, unique savior comes to our world to establish a paradise on earth. Rather, it means that all living things in the universe become buddhas and bodhisattvas. Therefore, the concept of a congregation (*saṃgha*) of "a

thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" can explain the distinctive Wŏn Buddhist identity, which incorporated both Korean Buddhist reform and indigenous *minjung* (the masses) movements that had been initiated by the Tonghak (Eastern Learning) Uprising. The *minjung*, who had not played a significant role as historical agents up to that point during the Chosŏn dynasty, began to raise their voices and take action to realize their dreams for a new world with the emergence of Tonghak movement.[59] Sot'aesan's reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism can only be properly understood in relation to this *minjung* movement from below. Elite-oriented Buddhism and monastery-centered Buddhism did not resonate with the common people. Sot'aesan thus sought to transform Chosŏn Buddhism, which had previously been employed mainly in monastic orders, into the congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas in which many non-elite, rural, and common people could pursue becoming buddhas and bodhisattvas without leaving their everyday lives. This was the main reason why Sot'aesan sought to open a new Buddhist community that does not draw a dividing line between lay people and ordained monks, the sacred and the secular, or practice and work.

To conduct this examination, this dissertation draws on two major groups of original sources: 1) official Wŏn Buddhist scriptures, newspapers, and magazines published in the first few decades of the twentieth century in Korea; and 2) rich archival materials, such as diaries, personal essays, and daily retreat reports that have been preserved at the Headquarters of Wŏn Buddhism, and that give voice to the common Buddhist people's experiences and ideas during

[59] Cho Kyŏngdal points out that while the "Kabo Reform" (Kabo kaehyŏk) (1894-1896) represented reform from above, the Kabo Peasant War (1894) represented reform from below. Cho posits that the Kabo Peasant War was both a historical event declaring the dissolution of the past Chosŏn dynasty and the opening of a new era of a "modern *minjung* movement." The self-governing community and system that unfolded in Korea's southern rural areas were the only ones of their kind spearheaded by the *minjung* in the history of Chosŏn. See Cho Kyŏngdal, *Idan ŭi minjung pallan: Tonghak kwa kabo nongmin chŏnjaeng kŭrigo Chosŏn minjung ŭi nationalism*, trans. Pak Maengsu (Seoul: Yŏksa Pipyŏngsa, 2008), 15.

the colonial period. Through such sources, I seek to examine the intertwined cultural and socio-religious questions of 1) how the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe defined their identity in their everyday communal lives and records; 2) how rural, indigenous Koreans interpreted mainstream Buddhism in relation to a swiftly modernizing Korea; and 3) how they thereby created new Buddhist values, ideals, and practices that were relevant to their times and people. Sot'aesan's disciples, who consisted mainly of local non-elites, left detailed records of their daily lives. These records vividly describe how the disciples transformed themselves from ordinary people, who are often considered passive and inactive agents of history, into subjective agents who, in Buddhist terminology, carved out a path to becoming enlightened bodhisattvas and buddhas under the guidance of their teacher, Sota'esan.

This study will approach these questions through close examination of such topical issues as the reinvention of "*kanhwa* 看話 meditation" (also referred to as "questioning meditation") in relation to the East Asian traditional "*kanhwa* 看話 practice"; the "diary writing" (*ilgibŏp* 日記法) practice as a means of supporting mindfulness practice; and the construction of a new set of Buddhist ideals that drew on such modern concepts as "religion" (*chonggyo* 宗教), "civilization" (*munmyŏng* 文明), and "morality" (*todŏk* 道德). The exploration of these topics will contribute to the fields of both Buddhist Studies and Korean history by introducing Korean-originated practices, such as "mindfulness practice," which has heretofore been primarily addressed only in the context of modern Buddhism in Southeast Asia, and the innovative technique of "diary writing," which had never before been employed in the history of Buddhist practice. Probing the order's development of a Buddhist economic system will illuminate Buddhist strategies for managing the financial issues that the new order faced. Shedding light on

these novel practices and ways of thinking helps elucidate a distinctively Korean response to modernity, thus opening new chapters in the history of Korea and Korean Buddhism.

3. Overview of Chapters

In Chapter One, entitled "Historical Background: Creating a New Standard of Authority: The "Advent of New Heaven" and New Religious Movements," I survey the broad historical background of new religious reform movements in Korea with a focus on the emergence of commoners' new consciousness and belief systems. Many scholars have posited that Korean "new religious movements" began with the distinctive spiritual experience of the founder of Tonghak, Ch'oe Cheu 崔濟愚 (1824-1864). In this chapter, however, I argue that we need to highlight not only Ch'oe's putative encounter with God, but also how and in what ways he arrived at that experience. It is critical to examine the influence that the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* 正心要訣 (*Essential Secrets on Rectifying the Mind*), the only extant text that gives an account of indigenous religious praxis during this period, exercised upon new religious founders like Ch'oe, Kang Ilsun 姜一淳 (1871-1909), and Pak Chungbin 朴重彬 (1891-1943). I first examine correlations between the praxis described in Ch'oe's *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* 東經大全 (Eastern Scripture) and the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*. The few scholars who have examined the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* have focused on the influence of Daoist practice upon the text. However, my research suggests that the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, though mainly based in Daoist thought, also exemplifies the widespread trend of "three-teachings syncretism" in the late Chosŏn. As Neo-Confucian ideology lost its social authority, Ch'oe Cheu developed a new standard of authority based on both his experience of the advent of Heaven as well as this "three-teachings syncretism." I consider the practice of "three-teachings syncretism," which was widespread in the late Chosŏn dynasty, to be "culturally inherent syncretism." Elements of "three-teachings syncretism"

exercised a cultural impact not only on those who initiated new religious movements, but on virtually anyone who lived in that era.

Finally, I propose that Ch'oe Cheu's initial revelatory experience of God transformed popular beliefs presented in the divinatory text *Chŏng Kam nok* 鄭鑑錄 and in such millenarian movements as Waiting for the Future Savior Maitreya (Mirŭkpul 彌勒佛) into the notion that all human beings are equal. This idea resonated deeply with many of the new religious movements in early twentieth-century Korea. In this chapter, more specifically, I propose that Sot'aesan's novel idea of "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" needs to be understood in the historical context of Ch'oe's articulation of the universal new Heaven in all human beings (*sich'ŏnju* 侍天主, literally meaning "revering God within one's heart"). In other words, Sot'aesan received the idea of equality for all people as a cultural inheritance from Ch'oe Cheu. However, Sot'aesan further developed this idea from a Buddhist perspective, establishing a new Buddhist community called the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe (Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma) through which he attempted to realize the world of Maitreya Buddha where "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" will arise.

While Chapter One attempts to situate the formation of Wŏn Buddhism within the context of new religious movements in Korea, Chapter Two, entitled "Sot'aesan's Reformation of Buddhism in the Context of Buddhist Reform Movements," explores how the traditional *kanhwa* Sŏn ("questioning meditation") technique was understood, adapted, and re-invented by Sot'aesan in the context of his renovation of Buddhism. I suggest that Sot'aesan attempted to restructure Korean Buddhism in early twentieth-century Korea by problematizing *kanhwa* meditation. I examine the historical sources that Sot'aesan consulted as he sought to interpret the traditional *kanhwa* Sŏn technique. I first examine the *Sŏnyo*, which outlines a course for attaining

enlightenment that is similar to that of Sot'aesan; it is through reading this text that Sot'aesan may have first considered how *kanhwa* Sŏn practice might be adapted to his new doctrinal system. I also focus on the time during which Sot'aesan lived in Pyŏnsan, where he had established a close and supportive Dharma friendship with the renowned Sŏn master Paek Hangmyŏng. Indeed, Sot'aesan may have first learned how to engage in *kanhwa* contemplation through his interactions with Paek Hangmyŏng. Through his readings and discussions concerning the sense of inquiry engendered through *kanhwa* Sŏn, we can clearly see that Sot'aesan's reformed Buddhism was engaged in an active dialogue with the mainstream Korean Buddhist tradition of the time. Through an analysis of Sot'aesan's adaptation of *kanhwa* Sŏn, I show that Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism cannot be understood solely as a new religious movement, but rather, should be situated in the broader historical context of Buddhist reform movements.

In Chapter Three, entitled "The Concept of 'Religion' and 'New Religious Movements' in Korea," I first study how the concept of "religion," introduced from the West, was deployed across East Asia, and especially in Japan, to validate new Buddhist movements that developed during the early twentieth century. Religious leaders and intellectuals served as cultural interpreters in naturalizing the concept of religion for their own societies. In examining the concept of religion, I adopt Koselleck's categories of "space of experience" and "the horizon of expectation" and focus on the interplay between the two in framing the historical concept of "religion." Next, I review the historical contexts that informed both pre-modern and modern concepts of religion in Korea in order to delineate how Koreans' specific past influenced their expectations for the future. I then move on to discussing how the founder of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'gu Hoe, Sot'aesan, deployed the term "religion" in an indigenous religious milieu and from a

Buddhist perspective, and provided new denotations for the concept. In this chapter, I show how Sot'aesan sought to expand the horizon of expectations for a new Buddhist religion based on Buddhist teachings within a space of experience restricted by colonial surveillance and government policies.

Chapter Four, entitled "Buddhism and the Common People: Making a 'Congregation of a Thousand Buddhas and a Million Bodhisattvas,'" is a detailed study of how and why Sot'aesan initiated a Buddhist reform movement, how he laid out his teachings, and how he practiced Buddhism with his disciples. The main argument of this chapter is simple: that Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism should be viewed as a distinctively localized, Korean iteration of the broader Buddhist tradition. The chapter also includes historical details surrounding Sot'aesan's disciples, such as in-depth biographies and diary accounts in order to demonstrate that the main protagonists of the history of Wŏn Buddhism are not only Sot'aesan, the founder, but also each of his early disciples. I believe that presenting these detailed, individualized stories is the most appropriate way to show the true meaning of Sot'aesan's new concept of a "congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas." The Pulpŏp Yŏn'gu Hoe's defining traits, such as being a Buddhist community in which lay and ordained live in harmony, its democratic decision-making process, and its emphasis on Buddhism for the masses, all illustrate Sot'aesan's goal of creating a Buddhist community in which all people—regardless of their gender, status, class, or age—could access the essence of the Buddhist teachings and utilize those teachings in their daily lives. Material drawn from diaries, lectures, and discussions vividly illustrates the kinds of practices that Sot'aesan and his disciples employed to create a "congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas."

Chapter One. Historical Background: Creating a New Standard of Authority: The "Advent of New Heaven" and New Religious Movements

1.Introduction

2. The Emergence of a New Spiritual Book, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*

3. Comparison of the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* with the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* from the Perspective of Praxis

4. Historical Background of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*

5. The Significance of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* in Buddhism and Wŏn Buddhism

1. Introduction

Political and social upheaval in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Korea

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a chaotic and challenging era for the majority of Korean people, but particularly for commoners. The nation had been besieged since the sixteenth century by a series of severe famines and floods approximately every twelve years, and by nationwide epidemics approximately every fifty years.[60] It was also during this time that the Confucian social structures that had persisted for over 400 years began to disintegrate under the pressure of both domestic unrest and external political threats. For the first six decades of the nineteenth century, the Korean throne was held by underage monarchs, which meant that their in-law families controlled the seat of power.[61] This system of rule by royal in-law families paralyzed Chosŏn's bureaucratic and administrative systems, causing extreme nepotism and triggering political upheavals and social disorder throughout the country.[62] A

[60] William E. Henthorn, *A History of Korea* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 220-221.

[61] Ibid., 222-223.

[62] Ibid., 222.

particularly egregious manifestation of this domestic turbulence was the common practice of avaricious officials severely extorting rural commoners through heavy farmland taxes, military taxes and grain loans. The persecution of Catholics in 1801, 1839, and from 1866 to 1876 also augmented this social tumult.[63] In addition, the nation suffered naval incursions by Western powers, political interference by Qing China, and economic exploitation by Japan. As a result, the lives of Korean peasants became unbearable, leading to a series of countrywide peasant rebellions, uprisings, and revolts lasting from the Hong Kyŏngnae Rebellion of 1811 to the Tonghak Peasant Uprising of 1894.[64] These peasant uprisings, combined with unfair distribution of the tax burden and the corrupt behavior of magistrates and clerks, caused Chosŏn society, which had been maintained by the financial support of peasant taxes, to fall into an agrarian crisis.[65] Officials' rampant exploitation of their political power is described well in the book *Korea and Her Neighbors*, written by Isabella Bird Bishop while she visited Korea between January 1894 and March 1897. In 1894, Bishop visited Yŏju, a small town of 700 homes near Seoul, and recorded her unpleasant experience visiting the magistrate's *yamen* there. She writes that in the town, "the crowd was dirty, the streets were foul and decayed, and worst of all was the magistrate's *yamen*, to which we had occasion to go."[66]

> Poverty, neglect, and melancholy reigned supreme. Within the gates were plenty of those persons who suck the lifeblood of Korea. There were soldiers in Tyrolese hats and coarse

[63] Ibid., 220.

[64] James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft & Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty*, Korean Studies of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press), 1996, 367.

[65] Ibid., 367-368.

[66] Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, With an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country*, Classic Reprint Series 2017 (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), 86.

> cotton uniforms in which blue predominated, *yamen* runners in abundance, writers, officers of injustice, messengers pretending to have business on hand, and many small rooms, in which were many more men sitting on the floor smoking long pipes, with writing materials beside them.[67]

Bishop's travelogue characterizes the persons who worked in the magistrate's *yamen* as "those who suck the lifeblood of Korea." On another page, she similarly describes the Korean official as "the vampire which sucks the lifeblood of the people."[68] By the time she was traveling in Korea, class privileges had been abolished through the *Kabo* reform of 1894; however, her narrative makes clear that the corruption of officials and the *yangban*s's despotism had nonetheless continued.

We can thus see the many political and social crises into which the late nineteenth-century Chosŏn Dynasty had fallen due to its corrupt regime and the incursions of Western powers. Because it failed to provide practical support to the suffering people, Neo-Confucian ideology, which had been the foundation of the Chosŏn state and society for the past four hundred years, began to lose its dominance. Accordingly, Koreans, particularly fallen *yangban*s, began to question the validity of Neo-Confucianism as a ruling ideology and began to search for a new one to replace it.

New Authority: The Advent of New Heaven and New Religious Movements

During this chaotic time, Ch'oe Cheu 崔濟愚 (1824-1864), better known by his sobriquet Suun 水雲, received a revelation from *Sangje* 上帝 (Lord of Heaven) and established a new Korean religion called Tonghak 東學 (Eastern Learning), synthesizing Confucianism, Buddhist

[67] Ibid., 86.

[68] Ibid., 303.

and Daoist ideas.[69] Tonghak was also influenced by Catholicism and Western Learning;[70] in fact, Suun used the terms *sangje* and *ch'ŏnju*, which Catholic Koreans used to describe their God. One of the core features of Suun's thought was the doctrine of the equality of all people.[71]

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[69] Several monographs discuss the emergence of Tonghak as a religious reform movement from the perspective that it combined Western Catholicism with the main religious traditions of Korea (such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism). See Benjamin B. Weems, *Reform, Rebellion, and the Heavenly Way*, The Association for Asian Studies: Monographs and Papers, no. XV (Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 1964) and Yong Choon Kim, *The Ch'ondogyo Concept of Man: An Essence of Korean Thought*, Society for the Study of Korean Thought English Monograph Series Number 1 (Seoul: Pan Korea Book Corporation, 1978). Kiyul Chung places Tonghak's religious characteristics in relation to the social transformations of the 1894 Tonghak Peasant Revolution. He characterizes Suun's thought as a "holistic inclusion" of the Korean religious traditions, as well as a "a *minjung*-centered, liberation-oriented, and socially-transformative religion." See Kiyul Chung, *The Donghak Concept of God/Heaven: Religion and Social Transformation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007). Carl F. Young examines the roles that Tonghak played in the construction of Korean nationalism and the Korean independence movement during the Japanese colonial period. See Carl F. Young, *Eastern Learning and the Heavenly Way: The Tonghak and Ch'ŏndogyo Movements and the Twilight of Korean Independence* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'ii Press, 2014). One of the most recent books to focus on Tonghak is written by George L. Kallander. He examines Tonghak from a wide-ranging variety of perspectives: religious, cultural, socio-political, philosophical and historical. In particular, Kallander provides a full translation of the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*, along with several selected writings of *Yongdam yusan* and Ch'oe Sihyŏng. See George L. Kallander, *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013).

[70] Suun's ceremonies and rituals also resembled Catholic ones. In a Christian missionary report, William M. Junkin describes in detail an initiation ritual performed by the adherents of Tonghak: "When members are to be initiated, a master of ceremonies calls the candidates before him. Two candles are lit, fish, bread and sweet wine are placed before them. Then they repeat twenty-four times in concert the Tong Hak [sic] prayer, "Si Chun Chu" etc. Bowing before the candles completes the ceremony, when they rise and partake of the banquet--the expenses of which are paid by the newly initiated. They claim that they do not sacrifice, making a distinction between the words Chei Sa and Tchi Sung. They worship as follows: Cement, red clay and one smooth stone are taken and an altar is made. Upon this a bowl of pure water is placed and at night the worshipper bows before this with forehead on the floor praying the "Si Chun Chu" etc. When his prayers are over, he drinks the water, calling it the cup of divine favor." See William M. Junkin, "The Tong Hak," *Korean Repository* vol. II (1895): 57-58.

[71] According to the *Chŏndogyo kyosŏ ch'anggŏnsa*, after wandering throughout the country, Suun began to immerse himself in the spiritual life, pursuing enlightenment in 1854 in Yulsan. There, he received a heavenly book from a monk who hailed from the Kŭmgang mountains. At that time, Suun stayed in close contact with a follower of Catholicism, Ch'oe Yangŏp 崔良業 (1821-1861), who was the second-ever Korean ordained priest (the first was Kim Taegŏn 金大建 [1822-1846]). Ch'oe Yangŏp had been trained and educated by Father Jean Joseph Ferréol (1808-1853) in the Portuguese colony of Macao from 1837-1844. Through his encounter with Ch'oe Yangyŏp, Suun may have begun to understand not only Western Thought and Roman Catholicism, but also Western philosophy, especially a belief in the equality of all human beings. See Ch'oe Chŭnggan, *Haewŏl Ch'oe Sihyŏng ka ŭi saram tŭl* (Seoul: Ungjin Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 64; and Yu Hongryŏl, *Han'guk Ch'ŏnju kyohoesa sang* (Seoul: Ungjin Ch'ulp'ansa, 1962).

However, Tonghak was not just a passive receptacle of Western Learning: in most ways it was closer to the antithesis of Catholicism.[72] Suun's thought was anchored in a belief in God, but he severely criticized the way in which Western people understood the deity. He recreated God for Asian people by drawing on Eastern philosophical thought, which is why he named his teaching Eastern Learning as opposed to Western Learning. Most importantly, Suun's advent of an Eastern God found a receptive audience in the many Koreans who were searching for a substitute ideology.

Tonghak immediately spread throughout Chosŏn. Even after Suun, Tonghak's founder, was executed by the Chosŏn government under the pretext of "fostering heterodoxy" and "deluding the public" (*hoksemumin* 惑世誣民), Tonghak continued to attract many followers under the guidance of Suun's successor, Ch'oe Sihyŏng 崔時亨(1827-1898), known by his sobriquet Haewŏl 海月.[73] The followers of Tonghak, which included both men and women, both rural literati and commoners, came together and formed a faith-based community blind to social class.[74] Their reform movement culminated in the Tonghak Peasant Uprising of 1894, which in

[72] When Suun was asked to spread God's heavenly message to humanity, Suun replied, "Then, should I teach them with the Western Way?" This implies that, at that time when most people (including Suun himself) heard the word "*sangje*" or "God," they usually thought of the Western God. As a response to this, Suun opened a new religion in the tradition of Eastern Learning, one opposed to Western Learning. See Cho Sŏngun, "Tonghak kwa Tonghak nongmin undong ŭi kwangye: p'ojŏpche wa kwallyŏn hayŏ," *Yŏksa wa kyoyuk hakhoe*19 (2014): 105-130; George L. Kallander sees Tonghak as the antithesis of the elite Seoul Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. In this chapter, I posit that Tonghak can be also viewed as the antithesis of Catholicism. George L. Kallander, *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), xv.

[73] Carl F. Young, *Eastern Learning and the Heavenly Way: The Tonghak and Ch'ŏndogyo Movements and the Twilight of Korean Independence*, Hawai'i Studies on Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 13-18.

[74] In the "Podŏkmun" (Spreading Virtue) section of the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*, Suun states that the talisman he created worked for those who respected God sincerely while it did not work for those who did not.

turn helped to spark the Sino-Japanese War. When Japan defeated Qing China in this war, the China-centered traditional Korean worldview began to be displaced by Japanese imperialism, triggering the Japanese Protectorate period in 1905 as well as the Japanese Colonial period from 1910 to 1945. Even though the Tonghak Peasant Uprising failed due to military incursions by Japan and Qing China, the legacy of the revolutionary equality demanded by Tonghak carried over into the *Kabo* reforms from 1894 to 1897, as well as into the new religious movements that sprung up during the colonial period (1910-1945), such as Wŏn Buddhism.

Despite the new religious movements' political and cultural significance, however, they have received little attention from scholars in either Korea or the West. During the Japanese Colonial period (1910-1945), these religious movements were categorized under the name of "pseudo-religions" and repressed by the Japanese government. After independence was achieved in Korea, even though the term "pseudo-religions" was replaced with the category "new religions," many scholars' work took up either a hermeneutical approach to these religions' doctrinal teachings or a nationalistic framework. Recently, scholars have begun looking at these groups through the lens of *minjung* movements. Pondering the interrelationship between folk beliefs and indigenous thought, Yun Sŭngyong discusses the process and characteristics of the emergence of Korean new religions. He concludes that new religions can be understood as the sublimated manifestations of resistant energy inherent to the public sphere, and of the collective longing for a new utopian world in times of social crisis.[75] Most scholars who share this idea have argued that the new Korean religious movements responded to the *minjung*'s desires by

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This implies that Suun was attempting to create a faith-based community that could overcome the rigid class system of Chosŏn. See Ch'oe Cheu, *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Seoul: Mosinŭnsaramdŭl, 2014), 17.

[75] Yun Sŭngyong, *Han'guk sin chonggyo wa kaebyŏk sasang*, Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo ch'ongsŏ 5 (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2017), 68.

espousing the notions of the equality of all human beings and of *huch'ŏn kaebyŏk* (great transformation of heaven at a later time), thus merging elements of Maitreya belief and Korean indigenous Daoist praxis with the new cultural ideologies of the turbulent late Chosŏn.[76]

Building on this received historical narrative, I seek in this chapter to take a different approach to the study of such religious movements by examining new spiritual praxes. Beginning in 1860, with Ch'oe Cheu's historic spiritual awakening, the notion that one could obtain moral and social authority directly from Heaven through one's own spiritual experience became increasingly popular. This shift motivated many people to found new religions. I argue that the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* 正心要訣 (*Essential Secrets on Rectifying the Mind*), the only extant text through which we can examine indigenous religious praxis during this period, exerted a significant influence on new religion founders such as Ch'oe Cheu 崔濟愚(1824-1864), Kang Ilsun 姜一淳 (1871-1909), and Pak Chungbin 朴重彬 (1891-1943). I first examine correlations between the praxis described in Suun's *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* 東經大全 (Eastern Scripture) and that found in the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*. The few scholars who have examined the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* have focused on Daoist practice's influence upon the text.[77] However, my research suggests that although the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* is *mainly* based on Daoist thought, the text also exemplifies "three-teachings syncretism" and may have inherited the concept of inner alchemy that was in circulation among the reclusive Confucian intelligentsia from the beginning of the Chosŏn era

[76] Kim Yonghwi, "Han'guk sŏndo wa sin chonggyo ŭi suryŏn," *Togyomunhwa yŏn'gu* 34 (2011): 67-94.

[77] Pak Yongdŏk, "*Chŏngsim yogyŏl* ŭi yuhaeng e kwanhan yŏn'gu: *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, *Chŏngjŏng yoron*, *Susim chŏnggyŏng* taebi rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Journal of The Studies of Daoism and Culture* 7 (1993 December): 407-434; Pak Pyŏngsu, "Kyori hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng esŏ pon tanjŏnju Sŏn ŭi wisang," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang* 17 & 18: 12; Ko Siyong, "Wŏnbulgyo kyori hyŏngsŏn kwa togyo sasang, *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 24: 285-307; Kim Yungyŏng, "Chosŏn hugi mingan togyo ŭi chŏngae wa pyŏnyong: Tonghak Chŭngsangyo rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 39:99-123.

until the late Chosŏn. As Neo-Confucian ideology lost its social clout, Suun created a new form of spiritual authority based on his own experience of the advent of Heaven. I also propose that Ch'oe Cheu's initial revelatory experience of God transformed the popular beliefs presented in the divinatory text *Chŏng Kam nok* 鄭鑑錄 and in such millenarian movements as Waiting for the Future Savior Maitreya (*mirŭkpul* 彌勒佛) into the concept that all human beings are equal. This principle resonated deeply across many of the new religious movements of early twentieth-century Korea, including Wŏn Buddhism.

2. The Emergence of a New Spiritual Book, the *Chŏngsim Yogyŏl*

Tonghak, which was both spurred by the threat of Western Learning and deeply rooted in Korean indigenous thought and folk beliefs, represents the first of Korea's new religious movements at the turn of the twentieth century. Tonghak's significance in this regard cannot be overemphasized. The scholarly consensus is that Korean "new religious movements" were born with the distinctive spiritual experience undergone by Ch'oe Cheu, the founder of Tonghak.[78] In the spring of 1860, Suun received a divine revelation from the Lord-on-High or God (*sangje* 上帝). His experience of spiritual awakening was significantly different from those of his predecessors. In the fourth month of 1860, the Lord-on-High approached Suun and spoke to him. At that time, Suun was astonished and did not understand what was going on. Some scholars explain that Suun's experience of God in this moment and his earlier encounters with Western monotheism led him to reimagine the traditional polytheism that dominated the religious

[78] Kim Yonghwi, "Yugyo wa Tonghak: chonggyo ch'ehŏp ŭl t'onghae talajin yugyo wa ŭi ch'abyŏlsŏng," *Tongyang ch'ŏrhak yŏn'gu* 29: 31-56; Pak Maengsu, "Tonghak gye sin chonggyo ŭi sahoe undongsa," *Han'guk chonggyo* 38: 133-157.

landscape of the later Chosŏn.[79] Sŏng Haeyŏng considers Suun's experience to have been simultaneously an encounter with the deity that bears the traces of Catholic monotheism and "a mystical union with transcendental and impersonal ultimate reality, which is common in Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Daoism."[80] In this scholarly view, what Suun encountered was a personified, transcendental God like the Western Catholic deity. However, at the same time, all of his spiritual experiences occurred in his mind, in the tradition of an Eastern mystical experience: the mind of Lord-on-High merged completely with Suun's mind.[81] Even though Suun attained his spiritual awakening through revelation, then, he did not claim that the Lord of heaven came down to him to send his message, but rather, that he encountered God while he was in deep meditation with a focused mind.

Building on these points, I suggest that we need to highlight not only Suun's actual experience of encountering God, but also how and in what ways he had arrived at such an experience. There are several reasons for this. The first reason is that his revelation did not occur coincidently, but rather, was attained through his own long-term efforts in spiritual practice. Suun's method of searching for truth suddenly changed when he received a book from an unknown monk. According to the *Towŏn'gisŏ*, 道源記書 (*The Records of the Origin of the Way*),[82] in the spring of 1855, Suun received a book from a monk who was heading down from

[79] Myongsook Moon, "Donghak and the God of Choe Je-u through the Donggyeong Daejeon and the Yondam Yusa," *Sinhak kwa sasang hakhoe* (2017): 218-260.

[80] Sŏng Haeyŏng, "Suun chonggyo ch'ehyŏm ŭi pigyo chonggyohak chŏk koch'al: ch'ehyŏm-haesŏk t'ŭl ŭi sangho kwangye rŭl chungsim ŭiro," *Tonghak hakpo* 18-0 (2009): 271-306. 304.

[81] "吾心卽汝心." See Ch'oe Cheu, *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Seoul: Mosinŭnsaramdŭl, 2014), 27.

[82] According to Ch'ŏndogyo's historical records, the *Towŏn'gisŏ* was compiled and written under the guidance of the second successor of Tonghak, Ch'oe Sihyŏng. While the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* was published in a woodblock edition, the *Towŏn'gisŏ* was produced through a transcribed manuscript. The text was not revealed until the son of Kim Yŏn'guk, who was the founder of Sangjegyo, made it public.

Yujŏm Temple in the Kŭmgang mountains.[83] After receiving this book, Suun ceased seeking the truth purely through study and instead began seeking to attain an awakening experience through prayer. Suun discovered that the book the monk had given him recommended offering a prayer to heaven (*ch'ŏn* 天) for forty-nine days.[84] In April of the same year, he went to the Naewŏn hermitage of T'ongdo temple, located in Ungch'al, in the Ch'ŏnsŏng mountains, and prayed for forty-nine days. It was during this time that he received a divine response.[85] The next year, Suun prayed in Chŏkpyŏk Cave, in the Ch'ŏnsŏng mountains, and devoted himself to spiritual practice. He entered spiritual absorption (*sammae* in Korean, *samādhi* in Sanskrit) via prayer for over a hundred days.[86] After coming back to his hometown, Kyŏngju, Suun continued to devote himself to his practice, and finally received a second heavenly revelation from God. This series of events suggests that Suun followed an alternative blueprint of spiritual awakening after receiving the book from the monk.

In 1908, one of the members of Tonghak, Chŏn Sein, visited the headquarters of Sangjegyo in the Kyeryong mountains where the *Towŏngisŏ* has been archived and transcribed it for a few days. It is because of his efforts that we currently have two manuscripts of this text. See Ch'oe Sihyŏng, *Towŏngisŏ*, trans. by Yun Sŏksan (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2012), 5-7.

[83] According to the *Chŏndogyo kyosŏ ch'anggŏnsa*, Suun first lived an itinerant life, travelling throughout the country. In 1854, he began to immerse himself in spiritual life, pursuing enlightenment in Yulsan. It was there that he received a holy book from a monk coming from the Kŭmgang mountains. See Ch'oe Sihyŏng, *Towŏngisŏ*, trans. by Yun Sŏksan (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2012), 15-17.

[84] Even though the *Towŏngisŏ* does not explicitly prescribe a specific number of days, another record of Ch'ŏndogyo specifically mentions that the secret book teaches the way of offering a prayer to heaven for forty-nine days, so Suun decided to practice for this length of time. Ch'oe Sihyŏng, *Towŏngisŏ* trans. by Yun Sŏksan, 18; *Pongyoyŏksa* (1911), 53, in *Hanmal Ch'ŏndogyo charyo chip* 2 (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 2014), 141.

[85] See Ch'oe Sihyŏng, *Towŏngisŏ* trans. by Yun Sŏksan, 18.

[86] Murayama Chijun 村山智順, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教 (Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn), translated into Korean by Ch'oe Kilsŏng and others (Taegu: Kyemyŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 28.

My second rationale for examining the circumstances surrounding Suun's spiritual experience is that many other founders of new religions in the early twentieth century underwent similar mystical revelations. This suggests that these leaders were reading the same guidebook. According to Murayama Chijun 村山智順's *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教 (*Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn*), a total of sixty-seven new religious orders had been founded in Korea by 1935. Looking closely at the main motives that religious founders cited as their reasons for starting their sects, we can see that most claim attribute this decision to their own personal awakening experiences. For example, Kim Yŏn'guk 金演局 (1857-1944), who was initially a member of Tonghak, founded a new religion called Sangjegyo 上帝教 after having a special religious experience. He entered the Ch'ŏnsŏng mountains where Suun had stayed previously and meditated for a few days, after which he received a secret book from *sangje*. Upon perusing the book, forgetting to eat or sleep, he had a great awakening. After this experience, Kim founded Sangjegyo.[87] In the case of Paektogyo 白道教, Chŏn Chŏng'ye 全廷藝 who also got his start as a member of Tonghak, made up his mind to attain awakening through cultivating his mind. He went to the Kŭmgang mountains and practiced absorption in prayer there for three years. In 1899, he attained a spiritual awakening that allowed him to understand the mind of Heavenly God, and founded a new religious order; the latter had gained some ten thousand members by 1915. Yi Sangnyong 李象龍, the founder of Suun'gyo 水雲教, also opened a new religious order after attaining his awakening.[88] A few new religious orders, such as Ch'ŏnmyŏngdo 天命道, split off from the original Tonghak order due to personal disagreements

[87] Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō*, 159.

[88] Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō*, 202-203.

with that faith. However, many of the newly founded religious orders were rooted in their respective leaders' experiences of spiritual awakening, experiences similar to Suun's. We might pose a hypothetical premise that Suun and his followers arrived at these revelatory experiences by practicing a single kind of spiritual praxis.[89] What, then, was this praxis?

As other scholars have pointed out, there are no extant detailed documents that describe the specific practices that followers of Tonghak pursued, with one exception: the incantation of a twenty-one-letter *chumun* (mantra), as described in the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*.[90] As I mentioned briefly above, Suun's practice changed drastically in 1855, after he received "the secret book" from the monk in Ulsan. According to the *Towŏn'gisŏ*, Suun performed spiritual practices based on this book as he lived on Ch'ŏnsŏn Mountain in Yangsan. This book, however, disappeared without a trace, and therefore we know neither what kind of practices Suun enacted nor anything about its contents. Chapter II of the *Sich'ŏn'gyo chongyŏksa* (*Primary Commentarial History of Sich'ŏn'gyo*), which describes where "the secret book" came from, briefly mentions, "In the middle of the pillow there is a secret hidden treasure. Though it [the secret book] is similar to Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, it is none of them."[91] Therefore, we can only assume that this lost book must have contained synthesized teachings of the three main East Asian religions.

[89] Sot'aesan's process of searching for truth and his experience of enlightenment differed from the leaders of the new religious movements mentioned here. His enlightenment instead resembles that of Buddhist masters and the process of searching for truth, *kanhwa* Sŏn. This will be discussed further in the following chapters.

[90] Ch'oe Cheu, *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Seoul: Mosinŭnsaramdŭl, 2014), 33-37.

[91] 一枕中祕藏似儒似佛似仙而非者也。See *Sich'ŏnggyochong yŏksa* 侍天教宗繹史(Primary Commentarial History of Sich'ŏngyo), compiled by Pak Chŏngdong 朴晶東 (Kyŏngsŏng 京城: Sich'ŏngyo ponbu 侍天教本部, 1915), 4-5.

An Tongjun points out that the founder of Chŭngsangyo 甑山教, Kang Ilsun 姜一淳 (1871-1909) (better known by his sobriquet Chŭngsan 甑山), also received a small booklet from an old man in the spring of 1895,[92] six years after which Kang attained enlightenment at Taewŏn temple in Chŏnju. It is not certain whether Chŭngsan followed the instructions of the book he received from the elderly man. Scholars presume that the book must have taught Chŭngsan a type of sitting meditation other than the incantation practice of T'aeŭl, which is still practiced by disciples today.[93] Though Chŭngsan was born eight years after Suun's execution, Chŭngsan's teachings have notable commonalities with Suun's instructions.[94]

According to Pak Yongdŏk, the mysterious book appeared again to Song Kyu 宋 奎 (1900-1962) (better known by his sobriquet Chŏngsan 鼎山), who was Sot'aesan's successor in the Wŏn Buddhist tradition. Chŏngsan acquired this secret book, which had been handed down through the order of Chŭngsangyo, before he met his teacher Sot'aesan at Chŏngŭp (the birthplace of Kang Ilsun) in the late fall of 1917.[95] After this event, Chŏngsan visited Taewon temple in the Moak mountains where Chŭngsan had performed spiritual practices for three

[92] The *Taesun chŏnggyŏng* notes that the heavenly master (Chŭngsan) attended a poetry club meeting (*sihoe* 詩會) held by Confucian literati in the Kobu region to celebrate the repression of the Tonghak uprising at the Tusŭng mountains 斗升山 in Chŭngŭp in the spring of Ŭlmi year (1895). At that meeting, an old man took Chŭngsan to a quiet area and gave him a small booklet. The heavenly master perused it. See *Taesun chŏnggyŏng*, 14.

[93] An Tongjun, "*Susim Chŏnggyŏng* ŭi Togyo chŏk yŏn'wŏn," *Wŏnbulgyohak* 8 (June, 2002): 131.

[94] Kim T'ak hsa elucidated the ways in which Tonghak influenced Chŭngsan's teachings. See Kim T'ak, *Han'guk chonggyo sa esŏŭi Tonghak kwa Chŭngsangyo ŭi mannam* (Seoul: Han'nuri Midiŏ, 2000).

[95] Pak Yongdŏk, "*Chŏngsim yogyŏl* ŭi yuhaeng e kwanhan yŏn'gu: *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, *Chŏngjŏng yoron*, *Susim chŏnggyŏng* taebi rŭl chungsim ŭro," in *Journal of The Studies of Daoism and Culture* 7 (December, 1993): 412-415; Pak Yongdŏk, "*Chŏngsim yogyŏl* ŭi yuhaeng e kwanhan yŏn'gu: *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, *Chŏngjŏng yoron*, *Susim chŏnggyŏng* taebi rŭl chungsim ŭro," in *Journal of The Studies of Daoism and Culture* 7 (1993 December): 407-434.

months. The subsequent testimony of Yi Kongjŏn, who was the head editor in the project of compiling and editing the *Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn* (*The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism*), tells us that the book that Chŏngsan was consulting was the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*.[96]

Pak Yongdŏk notes that the first chapter of the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* 修養硏究要論 (*The Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry*), the *Chŏngjŏng yoron sang* 定靜要論 上,[97] was translated from the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, and that Song Kyu later composed the *Susim chŏnggyŏng* 修心正經 based on the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*.[98] Pak Yongdŏk also discovered that the *Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng py'ŏn* 靈寶局定靜篇, which is in the appendix to the *Saenghwa chŏnggyŏng* 生化正經 (the primary scripture of Samdŏkkyo 三德敎),[99] corresponds to the contents of both the *Chŏngjŏng yoron* and the *Susim chŏnggyŏng*.[100] According to published commentaries on the *Yŏngboguk*

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[96]Yi Kongjŏn, "Susim chŏnggyŏng e taehayŏ," *Wŏnkwang* 137 (January 1986): 63.

[97] The Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe published the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* in May 1927 and the first text of the *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe kyuyak* (*the Regulations of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe*) in March 1927. The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* was a total of seventy-four pages, using Korean and Chinese characters in combination. The *Suyang yŏn'guyoron* consists of seven chapters: (1) the *Chŏngjŏng yoron sang* 定靜要論 上; (2) the *Chŏngjŏng yoron ha* 定靜要論 下; (3) The Essentials of Inquiry; (4) The Articles to Develop during Inquiry; (5) The Articles to Forsake during Inquiry; (6) the List for Inquiry; and (7) the Procedure of Practice. See the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* 修養硏究要論 (*The Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry*), translated, edited, and composed by Sot'aesan (Kyŏngsŏng: Kidokkyo Yŏngmunsa Insoaso, 1927).

[98] Pak Yongdŏk, "*Chŏngsim yogyŏl* ŭi yuhaeng e kwanhan yŏn'gu: *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, *Chŏngjŏng yoron*, *Susim chŏnggyŏng* taebi rŭl chungsim ŭro," in *Han'guk Togyo munhwa hakhoe* 7 (1993 December): 407-434. Even though Pak could not offer a definitive conclusion as to the author of the text of *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, he deems Chŏngsan to have played a greatly significant role in the text's history through popularizing the text among the common people through his plain translation of it into vernacular Korean language. A closer examination of the relations between the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe and other indigenous religions is called for in order to clarify the nature and identity of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe.

[99] Samdŏkkyo is one of the Chŭngsangyo-lineage new religions founded by Hŏ Uk 許昱 (1887-1939) in 1920.

[100] Pak Yongdŏk, "*Chŏngsim yogyŏl* ŭi yuhaeng e kwanhan yŏn'gu: *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, *Chŏngjŏng yoron*, *Susim chŏnggyŏng* taebi rŭl chungsim ŭro," in *Journal of The Studies of Daoism and Culture* 7 (1993 December): 407-434.

chŏngjŏng py'ŏn, that text was composed and compiled by Yi Okp'o 李玉圃 (known by the sobriquet Sŏkpong 石峰), who is presumed to have lived in the early 1900s in the Chŏlla provinces.[101] The *Saenghwa Chŏnggyŏng* states that Yi Ch'ibok 李致福 (1860~1944) and Kim Hyŏngguk 金亨國 (?-1917) studied and practiced under the guidance of Yi Okp'o, who was an expert in the studies of *yin* and *yang.* At that time, Yi Okp'o gave his two disciples the booklet entitled *Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng py'ŏn*, remarking that he composed it in order to offer those who were lost in the maze of various spiritual paths a shortcut to cultivating the "capacity [house] of numinous treasure" (*yŏngboguk* 靈寶局). It is said that Yi Ch'ibok and Kim Hyŏngguk passed the book on to the founder of Samdŏkkyo, Hŏ Uk 許昱 (1887-1939), later in 1914.[102]

An Tongjun traces the origin of the *Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng py'ŏn* back to the *Taegŭk cheryŏn naebŏp* 太極祭 鍊內, written by Chŏng Sach'o 鄭思肖 (1241-1318).[103] An shows that the *Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng py'ŏn* was constructed based on excerpts from the *Taegŭk cheryŏn naebŏp.* He further suggests that Yi Okp'o drew on the practices of the Lingbao School 靈寶派 of religious Daoism to reinvent the Confucian spiritual guideline of "nurturing one's nature and

[101] Yi Pokhyŏn, "Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng pyŏn koch'al mit kanhaengsa," in the *Yŏngboguk Chŏngjŏng py'ŏn* (Kimje: Samdŏkkyo Ponbu), 50. (Published as a PDF file.)

[102] Yi Pokhyŏn, "Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng pyŏn koch'al mit kanhaengsa," 50-51.

[103] The *Taegŭk cheryŏn naepŏp* was published in 1270, republished in 1347, and republished again in 1406. This text is included in the *Dongxuan* 洞玄部 (*The Mystery from the Cavern*) in *The Daoist Canon* 道藏. See An Tongjun, "*Susim Chŏnggyŏng* ŭi Togyo chŏk yŏn'wŏn," *Wŏnbulgyohak* 8 (June, 2002): 134-136.

illuminating virtue" (*solsŏng myŏngdŏk* 率性明德).[104] Yi's two disciples Yi Ch'ibok and Kim Hyŏngguk later transmitted Yi's revision of solsŏng myŏngdŏk to Chŭngsan and Hŏ Uk. [105]

By framing the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* as a Daoist text, Pak Yongdŏk attempts to show the close relationship between the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe and Daoism.[106] He also advances the argument that the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's representation of itself as a form of Buddhism during the Japanese colonial period, despite its synthesized doctrines that drew from Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, was a way of eschewing Japanese suppression. Although Pak's research was certainly pioneering, before we accept his conclusion regarding the correlation between the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe and Daoism, we need to first clarify the nature of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* by situating it in the religious landscape of the late Chosŏn.

It is also necessary to prove that there exists a direct connection between the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* and the secret books that Ch'oe Cheu and Kang Ilsun received. However, if this book is the only extant text of the era's indigenous Korean religious practice, we cannot easily ignore its significance in understanding indigenous religious practice during the late Chosŏn. Moreover, it is clear that Tonghak and Chŭngsangyo do share several religious practices with the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*. Since the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* seems both to have guided Ch'oe Cheu and Kang Ilsun to spiritual awakenings and to have influenced Sot'aesan's adaptation of *tanjŏn* meditation in his Buddhist reform movement, from a cultural perspective, studying this text may help us to

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[104] The ideas of "nurturing the nature and illuminating virtue" are the main themes of the *Daxue* 大學 and the *Zhongyong* 中庸.

[105] An Tongjun, "*Susim Chŏnggyŏng* ŭi Togyo chŏk yŏn'wŏn," *Wŏnbulgyohak* 8 (June, 2002): 134-136.

[106] There are several other scholars who agree with Pak's assertion. See Kim Nakp'il, "*Susim chŏnggyŏng* ŭi sŏn'ga chŏk soŏnggyŏk," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 16 (1993): 479-487; Pak Pyŏngsu, "Kyori hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng esŏ pon tanjŏnju Sŏn ŭi wisang," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang* 17, 18 (1994): 12; Ko Siyong, "Wŏnbulgyo kyori hyŏngsŏng kwa tohyo sasang," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 24: 285-307.

understand important religious and cultural characteristics of this time period. I would therefore like to examine the primary characteristics of this book through both historical contextualization and textual analysis.

Many scholars have already examined the text of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* from the point of view of a specific religion, such as Confucianism or Daoism, but no one has yet conducted research on the cultural significance of the book itself.[107] Scholars have focused on comparative studies of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* with the three main religious teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism due to a few scattered terms from the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*. One thing that scholars have agreed upon is that Tonghak somehow inherited the Korean Daoist tradition of the cultivation of internal alchemy (K. *naedan*, C. *neidan*).[108] Considerable research has been conducted into indigenous Daoism's significant influence upon the doctrinal system of Tonghak.[109] Comparing the praxis of the new religions with that of Chinese Daoism, Kim Yonghwi suggests that the new religious movements can be understood as the first institutionalized Korean Daoist orders, and that these movements intended to provide salvation to the people by drawing on traditional Daoist practices.[110] Rather than undertaking a

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[107] Ko Namsik, "Ch'oe Suun kwa Kang Chŭngsan ŭi togyo chŏk yoso pigyo," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 49: 153-181; Yun Sŏksan, "Tonghak e nat'anan togyo chŏk yoso: Togyo sasang ŭi Han'guk chŏk chŏngae," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 3 (1989): 327-343; Chŏng Chaesŏk, "Han'guk mingan togyo ŭi keyt'ong mit t'ŭksŏng," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 7 (1993): 195-211; Chŏng Hyesŏng, "Tonghak Chŏndogyo ŭi kaehwa undong kwa hanal munmyŏngron," *Han'gukhak yŏn'gu* 66 (2018): 255-285; Kim Yonghwi, "Tonghak e nat'anan togyo chŏk yoso chaegŏmt'o," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 24 (2006): 221-249.

[108] Kim Yungyŏng, "Chosŏn hugi mingan togyo ŭi chŏngae wa pyŏnyong: Tonghak Chŭngsangyo rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 39:99-123; An Tongjun, "*Susim Chŏnggyŏng* ŭi Togyo chŏk yŏn'wŏn," *Wŏnbulgyohak* 8 (June, 2002): 128-129.

[109] Yun Sŏksan, *Yongdam yusa yŏn'gu*, dissertation at Hanyang University, 1986.

[110] Tonghak is usually understood to be a religion that Ch'oe Cheu created by synthesizing the three mainstream religious teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. However, Kim argues that Suun's synthesis is not an equal mixture of these three. Instead, Kim suggests, we need to remember that Suun was a Confucian literatus deeply associated with T'oegye's Confucianism, meaning that the

comparative study based on a handful of words, in this chapter, I will instead attempt to contextualize the contents of the text with a special focus on spiritual practice. After that, I will compare the core teachings and essence of practice in the text with those found in the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*. If we find strong correlations between the two, it should be possible to posit that the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* was one of the most influential spiritual texts on Korea's new spiritual movements of the early twentieth century.

3. Comparison of the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* with the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* from the Perspective of Praxis

Ch'oe Cheu composed two main Tonghak scriptures: *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (*Eastern Scripture*) and *Yongdam yusa* 龍潭遺詞 (*Fragmentary Songs of Yongdam*). These works were compiled and published by his successor, Ch'oe Sihyŏng.[111] After his first revelatory experience, Suun did not immediately begin to engage in missionary work, but instead first devoted himself to refining his teaching for about six months. Only in June 1861 did he embark on the dissemination of his teachings, naming them Tonghak. Suun's new ideas and original practice of incantation promised immediate remedy for people's sufferings and agonies, and thereby attracted a wide range of believers, including peasants, slaves, men and women, and even rural literati. In order to explain his main teachings to the many people who began to flock to him,

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Buddhist influence on his thought is insignificant. Regarding Daoist praxis, there is no indication that he employed Daoist meditation practices, such as Chosŏn internal alchemy. Kim points out, however, that after Suun's first mystical experience of God, he began to adopt many Daoist concepts and ideas in the process of systematizing Tonghak's praxis, such as *yŏngbu* 靈符, *chumun* 呪文, *changsaeng* 長生, *chisang sinsŏn* (earthly celestial deities) 地上神仙, *kungung* 弓弓, *muwi ihwa* 無爲而化, *pulsayak* 不死藥. See Kim Yonghwi, "Han'guk sŏndo wa sin chonggyo ŭi suryŏn," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 34 (2011): 67-94.

[111] The *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* was first compiled in 1880, while the *Yongdam yusa* was compiled in mid-1881 by Ch'oe Sihyŏng. The entirety of the former book and some selections from the latter are translated into English by George L. Kallander in his book *Salvation through Dissent*. I use his translations of these texts in this chapter.

Suun produced his pair of books. The *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* targeted the rural literati, so was composed in literary Chinese. For those who could not read literary Chinese, Suun wrote the *Yongdam yusa* in vernacular Korean, in a popular song style (*kasa*). The essential principles of practice described in the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* and the *Yongdam yusa* can be summarized as follows: first, the revolutionary realization of the innate presence of *sangje* or God within one's heart (*sich'ŏnju* 侍天住); second, a commitment to enshrining god within one's heart naturally and spontaneously (*muwi ihwa* 無爲而化); third, the cultivation of sacred vital energy in order to rectify the mind for its union with God (*susim chŏnggi* 守心正氣); fourth, belief (*sin* 信) and unremitted sincerity (*song* 誠). In other words, Suun's main belief is that one must realize the existence of God within one's heart by way of cultivating sacred vital energy and rectifying the mind. Once adherents practiced in this way, with utmost sincerity and firm belief, the force and power of heaven would manifest itself naturally and spontaneously.

These main themes also appear in the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl.* That text can be divided by topic into four sections. The first part concerns the definition of *chŏngjŏng* 定靜: how to make one's mind focused or calm (定 *chŏng)* and quiescent or serene (靜 *chŏng).* The second part discusses some taboos that practitioners should avoid. The third part outlines the proper method for spiritual development *chŏngjŏng*, viz., *tanjŏn* meditation. The fourth part describes the three essentials (great belief, great passion, and the experience of doubt) that practitioners should maintain. The text's main purpose lies in discovering and revering *sangje* or God within one's heart and body through practice. The attitudes of "sincerity" and "belief" are also highlighted throughout the text as tools important to achieving the goals of practice.

One main difference between the two texts is that while the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* merely notes the necessity of cultivating one's vital energy and rectifying one's mind for the union with

God without detailing the methods by which one can achieve these steps, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* fleshes such methods out in great detail. Let us now look more closely at these themes one by one, comparing the two texts' treatments of them.

In the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*, Suun reveals his intention to move away from the East Asian understanding of "revering Heaven" (*kyŏngch'ŏn* 敬天) towards what he identifies as a new path for salvation, that of receiving God's revelation directly. After experiencing a first divine revelation in the fourth month of 1860,[112] Suun continued to converse with God for about six months until he fully realized that his mind had become one with God's. In the section "Discussion on Learning," Suun describes his awakening to the innate God within himself.

> My body shuddered with cold, and from beyond there came a spiritual force. From inside of me, there came a teaching that was of divine instruction. I looked but did not see anything; I listened but did not hear anything; so my mind was rather astonished. I attended to my heart, corrected my life-force (*susim chŏnggi*), and asked, "How is this so?" A voice answered, "My heart is your heart. How can people know this? People know about heaven and earth, but they do not know the spirit (*kwisin*). I am the spirit! Because you have reached the limitless Way (*mugung*), you should cultivate and refine it. Write this down and teach people. If you firmly establish proper practices and spread virtue, then you will live a long life and illuminate the world![113]

Suun's revelation differs significantly from those of other, previously enlightened Korean masters in that his experience was akin to encountering a messianic God. However, when we examine the above passage more closely, we can observe that the God that Suun encountered is not an external God, but an internal divine message, a kind of nature that he was born with but had not recognized before. Suun notes that when he encountered God, "I looked but did not see anything; I listened but did not hear anything." This is because God was not an independent form

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[112] Ch'oe Cheu, *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (*Eastern Scripture*), translated by George L. Kallander, in *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), 158.

[113] Ibid. 159-160.

outside of Suun, but an internal voice that he had not previously heard. Suun was puzzled at the meaning of this unprecedented message, so he asked Heaven what it was. To this, the voice responded, "My heart is your heart." We can therefore conclude that the God Suun encountered was nothing but his inner, divine voice. That is why the voice tells the master that before he teaches others, he first must cultivate this inner voice and spirit. Based on this dramatic experience, Suun created the new, Tonghak path to salvation: revering God within one's heart (*sich'ŏnju*).

The main theme of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* resembles the notion of *sich'ŏnju*: it offers guidance in how to discover the innate calmness and serenity within one's body and mind, states that are considered to be equivalent to an encounter with *sangje*, or God. As the book's title suggests, its chief concern is the "essential secrets of rectifying the mind"; accordingly, the text repeatedly emphasizes how one can make one's mind focused or calm (定 *chŏng*) and quiescent or serene (靜 *chŏng*) by using Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist concepts. In describing the mental state of calmness and quiescence, the work uses Laozi's concept of "returning to one's root, which is quiescence" (*kuigŭnjŏng* 歸根靜)[114] and Mengzi's idea of "the state of unmovable mind" (*pudongsim* 不動心):[115]

> Here, "focus" means unitary focus; no other principles (道理) need be added to what I [the practitioner] is doing at that moment in time. Most of arts and techniques do not emerge from the discarded world of delusion. "Quiescence" means that by returning to this unitary focus, one will no longer be moved by anything. One will not be tempted by the luxuries (繁華) of wealth and honor and will not be swayed by gold, jade, and jewels (寶貝). With intense will, one establishes focus, and renders the five minds unmoving. This is the unmovable mind that Mengzi described. This is the returning to quiescence that Laozi explained.

[114] Chapter 16, *Daode jing*. The edition I follow is the *Daode jing*, with commentary by Wang Bi, collected in *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏 and accessed via ctext.org.

[115] *Mengzi* 2A/2.

定者 一定於此而諸他道理無加於吾之所做 許多法術 不出於渠之惑世而已
靜者 歸於一定而不復動於他 富貴繁華 不能誘心 金玉寶貝乇無可奪志
一志立定 五心不動則孟子之不動心 老子之歸根靜 皆是也。

The text also uses Buddhist and Daoist ideas to discuss a specific state of meditation and quiescence as follows:

> Externally, there is no material realm. Internally, there is no ocean of desires. One thought lasts as if for thousand years; eyes and ears both become clear and mind and body are both forgotten. Both your spirit and your energy become refreshed and both internal and external realms become empty. You will be steeped in profound calmness and quiet serenity. You will then reach oneness. Only after perfecting one's primal heaven (*t'aeil* 太一) [i.e. mind] will one's spirit and numinous energy become refreshed and clarified. Numinous light will shine brightly. There will be no place that is not illuminated. There will be no principle that is not penetrated.
> 上無色界 下無慾海 一念萬年 耳目俱淸 心身俱忘 神氣俱爽 內外俱空 泯於深定寂靜 湛然至一 先全我-太一之天而後 神氣冷冷然而淸 神光炯炯然而明 無地不燭 無理不通。

The work is primarily given over to explanations of how to make one's mind focused and quiescent by relying on religious concepts drawn from Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Suun's book uses the Buddhist concepts of the "material realm" and "realm of desire" to evoke a state of mind that is both focused and serene. Likewise, just as Daoism often focuses on both life-force (or energy) and spirit, the text also expresses that both energy and spirit become refreshed and illuminated through Tonghak practice. The book also uses the Daoist term *t'aeil* 太一 to refer to a state of mind both focused and serene. The passage that immediately succeeds the above-quoted one expresses that these are "the methods of encountering *sangje* or God."

Suun makes clear in the *Tongghyŏng taejŏn* that *Sangje*, or the Lord-on-High, is not the same as the external personified God in which many Western people believed in that era. Even though it would initially seem that the process of encountering God described in the book has been influenced by Western Catholicism, it depicts a divine nature that more closely resembles

the Eastern notion of an innate Daoist God. Therefore, Suun declares that those who can revere Heaven in their hearts are sages and men of virtue. In a similar manner, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* stresses that if one discovers and recovers the full capacity of the numinous treasures of one's mind and body, treasures with which everyone is endowed through the mandate of heaven, then one will become a sage or a divine being:

> Under heaven, there is one teaching that is exceedingly mysterious, remarkably precious, exceptionally holy, and ultimately venerated. This is only the "true capacity [house] of numinous treasure." Each and every human being is endowed with it in their bodies. This is what Heaven confers to them. Namely, this is one's original nature. If one accords with one's nature and cultivates the way, then his or her bright virtue will be displayed. One can thereby rule a state and pacify all Under Heaven. One can become a master of trillions of princes, and the saint of innumerable numbers of sages. One can become a divine immortal who attains eternal life.
> 曰一天之下 至妙至寶至聖至尊之法 唯一靈寶眞局也 靈寶之局 人人 各有稟賦於身內而天素命之 卽我之本性 率性修道 明德 發揮 可以治國而平天下 可以爲億兆之君師 可以得無量之壽仙。

This passage illustrates that the *sangje* described throughout Suun's text is nothing but a God inherent to all people. The *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* further explains the innate nature of the Way by quoting Confucian sages, such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130 -1200), Zisi 子思 (c. 481–402 BCE), and Zengzi 曾子 (505–435? BC).

> Now, the ultimate Way is profound and secluded, but is not located somewhere else. If people can expand [their capacity for] the Way, then the Way will never be far from them. Zhu Xi states, "The Way cannot be apart from the body even for a second."[116] Zisi says, "Being in accord with one's nature is called the Way."[117] Zengzi says, "After knowing the point to rest, one will be focused or settled. After being settled, one will be able to become serene. After being serene, one will be able to become comfortable. After being comfortable, one will be able to think. After thinking, one will be able to attain. All

[116] 君子曰 禮樂不可斯須去身, *Yueji* 樂記 (*The Record of Music*). Cf. https://ctext.org/liji/yue-ji.

[117] 第一章 天命之謂性 率性之謂道 修道之謂教, *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*The Doctrine of the Mean*). Cf. https://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong.

> of these are the ways for one to illuminate one's bright virtue. Since I already possess this bright virtue, how can I not illuminate it by cultivating it!"[118]
> 盖夫至道深窈 不在其他 人能弘道 道不遠人 朱子曰道也者 不可斯須去身 子思曰率性之謂道 曾子曰知止而後 有定 定而後 能靜 靜而後 能安 安而後 能慮 慮而 後 能得 此皆自明其明德之事也 我旣有此明德 豈不修煉而明之乎。

Elsewhere in the text, Suun points out two critical failings of Western civilization. The first of these is that members of such societies care exclusively about their own self-interests and personal gains at the expense of others', especially in with regard to other countries such as Korea. He applies this criticism to Western imperialism and colonialism:

> Coming to the cyclical year kyŏngsin [1860], there was a rumor that Westerners believe it is the will of God that they not pursue wealth or glory but instead should seize control of all under heaven in order to build their churches and promote their Way. Therefore, I also had such kind of thoughts. How puzzling I found it all.[119]

What the Westerners are doing in East Asia, in Suun's view, is nothing but self-centered greed, disobeying the principles and commands heaven. The West seizes control of other countries to expand their powers no matter how much suffering they cause those other nations. Suun's second criticism of Western learning was that it does not teach students how to attain the transformative power of the spirit (*kihwa*). Western Catholicism offers no guidance in cultivating one's mental and bodily vitality, which Suun considered to be essential to becoming one with the indwelling God.

After returning to his hometown Kyŏngju in 1862, Suun composed "Cultivating Virtue" while preaching to his followers over the course of several months. In this work, Suun further elaborated on a practical method for becoming a man of virtue (*kunja*) by "cultivating the heart

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[118] 知止而后有定 定而后能靜 靜而后能安 安而后能慮 慮而后能得, *Daxue* 大學 (*The Great Learning*). Cf. https://ctext.org/liji/da-xue.

[119] Ch'oe Cheu, *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Eastern Scripture), translated by George L. Kallander, in *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, 157-158.

and rectifying one's life force," stressing the importance of "sincerity" and "belief" in effectively connecting with one's divine power.

> My Way arises spontaneously, without any action [*muwiihwa* 無爲而化]. If you preserve your heart, rectify your life force, follow the disposition, and accept the instruction, then everything will be generated naturally. Westerners speak without order and they write without procedures. They have no clue how to serve God and pray only for their own well-being. Their bodies do not have the transformative power of the spirit [*kihwa*]. Their learning does not have the teaching of the Heavenly lord. There is form but no trace. It is like thought, but without the incantation. Their Way is close to emptiness. Their learning is not that of the Heavenly Lord. How can their Way be said to have no difference from mine?[120]

This passage's concept of *muwiihwa* 無爲而化, meaning literally "doing nothing, yet being transformed spontaneously," is adapted from the Daoist concept *muwi* 無爲, meaning "non-action," which appears in the *Dao de jing* 道德經. By applying this concept to his Way of teaching, Suun says that if people guard their minds, cultivate their life force, nurture their nature, and accept instruction, then they will be able to enshrine Heaven within their hearts "naturally, spontaneously, without any manmade action" (*muwiihwa)*. I posit that this idea is Suun's unique amalgamation of Daoist and Catholic thought. Suun understands in this passage that although Western Catholicism presents a path by which a worshipper can serve God, it does not contain teachings about the cultivation of bodily vitality or the transformative power of the mind. According to Kim Yonghwi, it is precisely the simultaneous practice of both mind and bodily vitality (*susim chŏnggi*) that is the main characteristic of Tonghak's practice. Suun taught his followers to feel the power of God within themselves through corporeal vitality as well as to cultivate the ability to act in accordance with that feeling of vitality. Ultimately, if one pursues this course of practice, one will reach the stage of sagehood by unifying one's vitality with the

[120] Ibid., 160.

ultimate power of God. This course of practice is what Suun called "*susim chŏnggi*."[121] The primary premise of this notion is that people should not search for Heaven externally, but rather, cultivate it internally. That is why Suun describes the state of receiving the divine message as occurring "naturally, spontaneously without any manmade action." Suun also highlights another technique for receiving the divine spirit: revering God wholeheartedly by "incanting" the twenty-one-character expression, a mantra (c*humun*) that he composed. He explains the mantra's meaning as follows:

> 'Ultimate' [*chi*] means the utmost extreme.
> 'Ultimate life force'[*chigi*] means the spirit [*hŏryŏng*] that is deep and vast. There is nothing that it does not interfere with. There is nothing that it does not control. Even so, it is as though it has shape but is hard to describe. It is as though it can be heard but is hard to see. It is the original animating force of the universe."
> 'Here and Now' [*kŭmji*] means entering the Way and knowing that you have connected with the life force. [i.e., the spirit of God].
> 'To pray' [*wŏnwi*] means praying and wishing.
> 'Within me' [*taegang*] means wanting to experience the great transforming power of the life force."
> "To serve with respect' [*si*] means having the Holy Spirit [*sillyŏng*] inside and participating in the transformative power of the life force outside. When people of the whole world know this, they will abide by it steadfastly.
> 'To serve the Lord' [*chu*] means venerating and respecting him like serving one's parents. 'To transform' [*chohwa*] means things changing without doing anything at all.
> 'To decide' [*chŏng*] means joining with God's virtue and deciding on his heart.
> 'Eternal' [*yŏngse*] means a person's whole life.
> 'To be constantly aware' [*pulmang*] means always keeping God in your thoughts.
> 'All that is going on around me' [*mansa*] means the fortune of many things.
> 'To become attuned' [*chi*] means recognizing God's Way and accepting his knowledge. Therefore, if you clearly know his virtue and always remember, then you will unite with the extreme life force. [i.e. God] and attain sagehood.[122]

In this explanation, we can begin to understand how Suun defined God and how he believed that one can recognize and be one with God. First, for Suun, God is nothing but "the life force"

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[121] Kim Yonghwi, "Han'guk sŏndo wa sin chonggyo ŭi suryŏn," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 34 (2011): 67-94.

[122] Ch'oe Cheu, *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Eastern Scripture), translated by George L. Kallander, in *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, 161

which exists both externally and internally. The external version of this force, which Suun called "the original animating force of the universe," permeates the universe, governing all things in it. But this universal life force also lies within all human beings. If one wishes wholeheartedly to be harmonized with the universe's animating force and reveres God as one does one's parents, one can then join with God's virtue and realize His will in this world. When one reaches such a state, one will attain sagehood. This is what Suun called receiving *mugŭk taedo* or "the ultimate great way." But his Way is different from the previously upheld Confucian Way of attaining sagehood. In the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* he writes,

> Humanness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom were taught by former sages. Cultivating the heart and rectifying one's life force are my only amendments. Delivering the ritual for the first time is a solemn oath of eternal commitment. Ending the myriad disillusions of the world is a result of maintaining sincerity.[123]

In other words, humanness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom are old moral codes that prior sages had taught. However, *sich'ŏngju* and *susim chŏnggi* comprise the new spiritual Way that Suun is teaching now.

> As for this Way, to truly believe with your heart constitutes sincerity. If one plays with the character "belief", it means that a person is taking. Within speech, there is something called "correct" and something called "wrong." Take up the correct and turn down the wrong. Consider this gain and make a decision. After deciding, if you say, "I don't believe what should not be believed," then it is to believe. If you cultivate it in this manner, you will bring sincerity to completion. As for sincerity and believing, their principles are not far from each other. Because it is achieved through people's words, first truly believe it and later achieve sincerity. I have not clearly proclaimed this, so how could my words not be truthful? Reverse them and sincerely practice them. Do not disobey these instructions.[124]

If one cultivates the heart and rectifies one's life force with "sincerity" and firm "belief," then anyone can become a sage. The *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*, however, does not clearly offer a concrete

[123] Ibid., 165.

[124] Ibid., 166.

method for cultivating the mind and rectifying one's energy. By contrast, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* presents more detailed suggestions as to how to do so.

> If you move turbulently, then your spirit (*sin* 神) and life force (*ki* 氣) become dimmer and dimmer, and eventually become befuddled. Numinous light becoming dark, your mind is like the night sky during a new moon. How do you benefit from dwelling in thought and imagination? Only when you constantly and meticulously (*myŏnmyŏn milmil* 綿綿密密) think without thinking, then "one mind" (*ilsim* 一心) will be unmoving and all of your blood flow will return to the source. Naturally, the fiery energy will descend and the watery energy will ascend. Your life force will become settled and your spirit will become pristine.
> 然若有喧動則神氣懵懵然而昏 神光 黯黯然而晦 何益於思想之 所存哉
> 唯綿綿密密 念而不念則 一心不動 百脈歸源 自然火降水昇 氣定神淸。

This passage displays the syncretic thought of the popular religious traditions of Chosŏn. The excerpt synthesizes the two main concepts of spirit (*sin* 神) and life force (*ki* 氣) from internal alchemy Daoism, the Buddhist concept of one mind (*ilsim* 一心), and the Daoist concept of the rising of watery energy and the descent of fiery energy (*susŭng hwagang* 水昇火降). According to Kim Nakp'il, the Confucian literati began to discuss internal alchemy at the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty, and its theoretical system was established by Kwŏn Kŭkchung (1585-1659) in the middle of the Chosŏn.[125] According to Kim Nakp'il, the school of Chosŏn internal alchemy Daoism has three main characteristics.[126] First, the overall structure of its texts is based on Daoist

[125] Kim Nakp'il, *Chosŏn sidae ŭi naedan sasang:Kwŏn Kŭkchung ŭi togyo ch'ŏlhak chŏk sayu wa kŭ chŏngae*, Han'guk sasangsa 7 (Seoul: Hangilsa, 2000).

[126] In the Chosŏn dynasty, one of the first scholars who discussed the Daoist notion of immortality was Chŏng Tojŏn 鄭道傳 (1342 - 1398). In the *Simgiri* 心氣理 (Mind, Vitality, Principle), he posits that the principle (*li* 理) is the fundamental basis that enables the existence of mind (*sim* 心) and vitality (*ki* 氣), thus criticizing both the Buddhist "technique of cultivating the mind" (*susimbŏp* 修心法) and the Daoist "technique of nurturing life" (*yangsaengbŏp* 養生法). Chŏng Tojŏn, particularly, understood Daoism as the pursuit of immortality (*pullo changsaeng* 不老長生), considering this to be a weakness of the faith. This criticism held sway in mainstream intellectual thought during the rise of Neo-Confucianism under the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910). Therefore, in the early Chosŏn period, the secluded intelligentsia formed a group called *tanhakp'a* 丹學派 (*tanhak* school) and practiced nourishing life (*yangsaeng*) and inner alchemy (*naedan*). There is no evidence that this group practiced external alchemy, but because they are known to have practiced inner alchemy, we can characterize Chosŏn Daoist thought as an inner

thought, but it tends to reject shamanistic elements and instead emphasizes self-cultivation, or recovering one's self-nature. Second, the tradition also adapts certain Sŏn Buddhist elements, such as sitting meditation and awakening to one's original self-nature. Third, Chosŏn internal alchemy Daoism tends to synthesize or harmonize the three mainstream Sinitic religious teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism.[127] All of the features shown in the above passage seem to verify that the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* carries forth the mantle of Chosŏn internal alchemy Daoism. Slightly later, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* continues:

> Those who practice this, then, should first focus their minds on the lower elixir field. A long time after becoming composed, the watery [energy] and the fiery [energy] interact together in the mouth, and the mouth generates water [i.e. saliva], which fills your mouth. When you swallow [the saliva], then your spirit soon ascends and reaches the gate of your forehead, which is called *nihwan*. If you do not move the water in your mouth downward, then the fiery energy will ascend and proceed to burn up the entire body's watery energy.
>
> Therefore, the literati who dedicate themselves to practice should always cultivate this internally every day in the early morning or evening by drawing their eyes' gaze in front of their chests and by focusing on the lower abdomen. Hold the back of your neck erect and keep the top of your head high. Let your mind contemplate the fiery energy as it descends and the watery energy as it ascends. If you let your consciousness harmoniously circulate between the spirit 坎 and the energy 离, then naturally the energies of water and fire will interact with each other. If you genuinely accustom yourself to this practice for a long time, your spirit will gather itself on the top of your head, the *nihwan*. Bright light will emit from the gate of the top of your head. This is the secret to transmitting the Way and the essential gist for cultivating the Way. This is the true secret to becoming enlightened to the Way.

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alchemy Daoism. Around the fifteenth or sixteenth century, these literati gave rise to a Chosŏn *naedan* school that is often called the Haedong sŏnp'a 海東仙派 (Lineage of Immortality in Korea). See Kim Nakp'il, Pak Yŏngho, Yang Ŭnyong, Yi Chinsu, "Han'guk sinsŏn sasang ŭi chŏngae," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 15 (2001): 79. "According to the *Haedong chŏndorok* 海東傳道錄 (Account of the Transmission of the Way in Korea), the main representatives of the Haedong sŏnp'a include Kim Kagi 金可紀 (fl. ca. 830), Kim Sisŭp 金時習 (1435–1493), and Nam Kungtu 南 宮斗 (1526–1620)." See Miura Kunio, "Taoism in the Korean Peninsula," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism A-Z*, edited by Fabrizio Pregadio (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 191. According to the *Haedong chŏndorok*, Chosŏn Daoism can be traced back to the Quanzhen School (Chŏnjindo 全眞道), a branch of Daoism that originated in Northern China under the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). See Kim Nakp'il, "Susim chŏnggyŏng ŭi sŏn'ga chŏk sŏnggyŏk," *Wŏnbulgyo sassing kwa chonggyo munhwa* 16 (1993): 479-487.

[127] Kim Nakp'il, "Susim chŏnggyŏng ŭi sŏn'ga chŏk sŏnggyŏk," 479-487.

> 行此者當先注意於下丹田 淡然良久 水火交媾 玉池水生 滿口嚥下 精靈乃昇上朝於泥丸頂門 若不運玉池嚥下則但炎上燼之焦之而已。
> 是故 行鑄之士 每日夜半淸晨 常行內煉 而必以雙眼 當我胸前 抵垂乎臍下 使項後 高於頂頭 心思火降水昇 意存坎离交媾則自然水火循環 轉久純熟精神 會朝於泥丸 火鈴 發出於頂門 此乃傳道之秘 修道之要 覺道之眞訣也。

This passage explains concrete methods for cultivating the mind and rectifying the life force through meditating on the elixir field (*tanjŏn*), which is located in one's lower abdomen. The quotation elaborates upon how to hold one's posture and how to concentrate one's consciousness on the elixir field through which one can have the fiery energy descend and the watery energy ascend. This *tanjŏn* meditation method can be traced back to Kim Sisŭp 金時習 (1435–1493). In the *Yongho ron* (*Discussion of the Dragon and the Tiger*), Kim Sisŭp had symbolically framed external alchemy as inner alchemy, interpreting the process of making an elixir with silver and mercury as the harmonious exchange of the two fire and water energies in the body.[128] In so doing, Kim developed his own theory of Chosŏn inner alchemy using the language of Neo-Confucianism.[129] His ideas were transmitted to Chŏng Yŏm 鄭磏 (1506-1549), who wrote the *Yongho pigyŏl* 龍虎秘訣 (*Secret Acroamata of the Dragon and the Tiger*). This text not only became the basic textbook of the period, but also had a great influence on the formation of the distinctively Daoist medical system represented in the Chosŏn medical text *Tongŭi pogam* 東醫寶鑑 (*Exemplar of Korean Medicine*) written by Hŏ Chun 許浚 (1539-1615).[130]

Interestingly enough, the idea of *tanjŏn* meditation also appeared in the *Yasenkanna* 夜船閑話

[128] Kim Nakp'il, Pak Yŏngho, Yang Ŭnyong, Yi Chinsu, "Han'guk sinsŏn sasang ŭi chŏngae," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 15 (2001): 80-83.

[129] Jung Jae-seo, "Daoism in Korea," in *Daoism Handbook*, edited by Livia Kohn (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2000), 800.

[130] Ibid.

(*Idle Talk on a Night Boat*), by the famous Japanese Rinzai monk Hakuin 白隱 (1685-1768), which mentions the Korean physician Hŏ Chun by name.

At least on the surface, Daoism during the Chosŏn period seems to have been enfeebled, with few adherents. However, closer examination reveals that folk Daoist beliefs, such as a belief in the *Ch'ilsŏnggyŏng* 七星經 (*Seven Stars [of the Big Dipper] Sūtra*)[131] and the *Okch'ugyŏng* 玉樞經[132] were popular among commoners.[133] In addition, from the middle Chosŏn period

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[131] According to Henrik Sørensen, "Buddhist worship of the constellation's seven stars played a prominent role in the legitimation of the Koryŏ 高麗 dynasty (918–1392), from the middle of the thirteenth century on …. In this context, the Chinese *Sūtra of the Great Dipper* had, in all likelihood, become a central text for Korean state Buddhism …. Subsequently, during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), the cult of the constellation spread among the Korean people as a highly regarded practice for the prosperity of individuals and their households. The irony of history was that, by the end of the seventeenth century, while the Buddhist version of the apocryphon continued to be used by Korean Buddhist communities, it so happened that it was the standard Taoist *Supreme Scripture of the Great Dipper of Mysterious Power* [*Guiding*] *Destiny and Prolonging Life* that was selected for publication by the Buddhist Songwang monastery 松廣寺 and incorporated into its liturgy." See Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 172-173.

[132] The *Okch'ugyŏng* has been preserved in several different versions in Korea. The oldest extant edition was printed at the Pohyŏn temple in the Myohyang mountains in 1831. The original title of the text was the *Kuch'ŏnŭngwŏnnoesŏngpohwach'ŏnjon Okch'ubogyŏng* 九天應元雷聲普化化天尊玉樞寶 經 (hereafter, the *Kuch'ŏn*) which was published during the Yuan Dynasty. It was retitled the *Okch'ugyŏng* in the Ming Dynasty. The versions of the text that have survived to present day can be divided into three groups: 1) the hand-transcribed edition from the original text of the *Kuch'ŏn*; 2) the xylographic print edition of the *Okch'ugyŏng chipju pon* (玉樞經集註本), which was reprinted in Buddhist temples during the Chosŏn Dynasty, and the hand-transcribed version of that xylographic print; and, lastly, 3) the version called "Kyeryong-san pon" 雞龍山本, to which the *Ch'ŏn'gyong* 天經, *Chigyŏng* 地經, and 人經 *Ingyŏng* were added. The *Okch'ugyŏng chipju pon* contains additional commentaries and episodic illustrations, such as "Sinsangdo" 神像圖, "Pyŏnsangdo" 變相圖, and "Pujŏn" 附箋. There are many different printings and editions of the *Okch'ugyŏng*. Six manuscripts of the *Okch'ugyŏng* have been preserved in the Pulpŏp Yŏnguhoe collection and are now kept in the Wonkwang University library in Iksan. See Yi Chŏngjae, "Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe sojang pon *Okch'ugyŏng* yŏngu," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 76 (2018):126-127.

[133] Scholars have agreed that the *Okch'ugyŏng* was widely used by commoners as a chanting book during Shamanistic *kut*. See Kim T'aegon, *Han'guk musok yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Chipmundang, 1895); Ku Chunghoe, *Okch'ugyŏng yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tongmunsŏn, 2006); Ku Chunghoe, *Okch'ugyŏng 48 sinjang ŭi pyŏnch'ŏn kwa tosang* (Seoul: Taejin Taehakkyo Taejin Sasang Haksulwŏn, 2015); Yi Chŏngjae, "Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe sojang pon *Okch'ugyŏng* yŏngu," 126.

onwards, many Confucian literati began to question the validity and efficacy of Neo-Confucianism in administering state affairs. After witnessing strife among the four factions of the scholar-officials, several massacres of scholars, and two wars, many intellectuals began to turn their attentions to Daoist thought. In response to this criticism of Neo-Confucianism, a movement arose among the literati to systemize and theorize Daoist thought; this, in turn, spurred the composition of new Korean Daoist texts, such as the *Yongho pigyŏl* 龍虎秘訣, the *Haedong chŏndorok* 海東傳道錄, the *Yangsim yogyŏl* 養心要訣, the *Ch'amdonggye chuhae* 參同契註解, and the *Chikchigyŏng* 直指經.[134] All of these texts demonstrate a tendency to interpret Daoist thought from a Neo-Confucian point of view, which, unlike previous interpretations, maintains a positive view of Daoism. The Confucian literati initiated a new approach to understanding Daoist thought, one that eventually influenced folk Daoist practices. The noninstitutionalized Daoism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—whose contours are evident in general Daoist books like the *Okch'ugyŏng* and the *Ch'ilsŏnggyŏng*, in Daoist books on morality such as *Kyŏngsin nok* 敬信錄,[135] and in p'ungsu (*fengshui)* geomancy—comprised a mixture of beliefs.[136] However, when we examine these texts more closely, we can

[134] Kim Nakp'il, "Chosŏn hugi mingan togyo ŭi yulli sasang," *Han'guk togyo munhwa hakhoe* 6 (1992): 357.

[135] The *Kyŏngsin nok* is a Daoist morality book (*shanshu* 善書, literally meaning "good books"), a genre of literature that became very popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in China. The *Kyŏngsin nok* was brought to Chosŏn from the Qing dynasty (1644-1912). It describes lists of good and bad deeds, encouraging readers to commit good deeds in order to gain rewards and to avoid bad deeds so that they may avoid punishment. After being translated into vernacular Korean, the text was published in 1796 in wood block format at the Puram temple (Pulamsa 佛巖寺) in the Ch'ŏnbo mountains, based on Hong T'aeun 洪泰運's calligraphy writings. The Chinese version was published at the same place in 1795. The wood blocks are still preserved at the Puram temple. See Sejong Taewang Kinyŏm Sayŏphoe, *Yokchu Kyŏngsin nok ŏnsŏk* (Seoul: Pongdŏk Inswae, 2015), 8-9.

[136] Kim Nakp'il, "Chosŏn hugi mingan togyo ŭi yulli sasang," 357.

observe that Buddhism had acculturated to the Daoist tradition. For instance, according to the *Okch'ugyŏng*, the text was preached by the Heavenly Lord of Universal Transformation (Pohwa ch'ŏnjon 普化天尊), who vowed before the Primeval Lord of Heaven (Wŏnsi ch'ŏnjon 元始天尊) to save all sentient beings and became an immortal god.[137] Pohwa ch'ŏnjon vowed that whoever called his name would be saved. This storyline is borrowed from the recitation of the name of Amitābha Buddha.

The *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* also characterizes the three essentials (which are, we'll recall, borrowed from the *Sŏnyo* 禪要 [*Essentials of Chan*]) as ways of combining the practices of *susung hwagang* and *kanhwa* Sŏn. This description demonstrates the influence that *kanhwa* Sŏn exerted in that era, suggesting that it was a quite popular meditation method not only in the monastery but also in the secular world.

> The *Sŏnyo* states, "There are three essentials: the first is the faculty of great faith; the second is great fury; and the third is the great sensation of doubt."[138] Doubt takes belief as its essence. A great awakening takes doubt as its application. "When faith is at 100 percent, so too will be doubt. When doubt is at 100 percent, so too will be awakening."[139] This is a short cut to becoming calm and still.
> 禪要云 大要有三 一曰大信根 二曰大憤志 三曰大疑情 疑者以信爲体 悟者以疑爲用 信有十分 疑有十分 疑得十分 悟得十分 此說 卽定靜之捷法也。

In instructing readers how to awaken to the original self-nature within themselves, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* borrows the rubric of the "three essentials"—great faith, great fury, and great doubt—from the *Sŏnyo*, which had played a cardinal role as a practical primer on *kanhwa* Sŏn in Korean

[137] Ibid., 362.

[138] Here, I adopt Robert E. Buswell's English translation, which he includes in the article "The 'Sensation of Doubt' in East Asian Zen Buddhism and Some Parallels with Pāli Accounts of Meditation Practice," in *Contemporary Buddhism*, 19:1 (2018): 73.

[139] Ibid.

monasteries since at least the fifteenth century.[140] Written by the Linji Chan master Gaofeng Yuanmiao (K. Kobong Wŏnmyo) 高峰原妙 (1238-1295), the *Sŏnyo* describes not only the fundamental premise and process of *kanhwa* meditation, but also offers a detailed account of Gaofeng's own enlightenment experiences. Its teachings are based on the fundamental Chan concept that all sentient beings are already endowed with Buddha-nature, and that "sudden awakening followed by sudden cultivation," if properly catalyzed by *kanhwa* meditation, is therefore possible for all practitioners. The *Sŏnyo* also explains two main obstacles that keep practitioners from reaching the stage of catalyzing enlightenment when they practice *kanhwa* meditation: torpor/lethargy and mental distraction. Gaofeng Yuanmiao suffered from both of these obstructions. According to Gaofeng, the main antidote to these two problems is to generate "the great sensation of doubt," which thus becomes the key to enlightenment. In order to generate the sensation of doubt, two other critical factors are required: great faith and great fury. The *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* also advises using the same essential attitudes to achieve enlightenment. However, since the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* relies on Daoist practice and ideas, it explains the three essentials as a means of achieving "the true capacity of numinous treasure" *yŏngbojin'guk* 靈寶眞局:

> It says, "Under heaven, there is one teaching that is exceedingly mysterious, remarkably precious, exceptionally holy, and ultimately venerated. This is the only true capacity [house] of numinous treasure." Each and every human being is endowed with it in their bodies. This is what Heaven confers to them. Namely, this is my original nature. If one accords with one's nature and cultivates the way, then bright virtue will be displayed. One can thereby rule a state and pacify all Under Heaven. One can become a master of trillions of princes, and the saint of innumerable sages. One can become a divine immortal who attains eternal life.

[140] Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark: The Korean Buddhist Master Chinul's Excerpts on Zen Practice*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 84.

曰一天之下 至妙至寶至聖至尊之法 唯一靈寶眞局也 靈寶之局 人人 各有稟賦於身內而天素命之 卽我之本性 率性修道 明德 發揮 可以治國而平天下 可以爲億兆之君師 可以得無量之壽仙。

However, if we compare Gaofeng Yuanmiao's explanation with the above passage, we can observe that both share the same premise: all sentient beings are already endowed with Buddha-nature, or "the true capacity of numinous treasure," which everyone may realize through practice. The difference between the two is that while Sŏn Buddhism uses the distinctive so-called *kanhwa* Sŏn technique, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* uses *tanjŏn* meditation instead.

As examined above, the main Tonghak themes of *sichŏnju*, *muwi ihwa*, *susim chŏnggi*, "sincerity," and "belief" similarly appear in the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*. Tonghak does not describe these teachings systematically, but the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* systematizes these detailed methods of cultivating the mind and rectifying the life force by drawing on various Daoist scriptures (including the *Ch'ŏnggwangyŏng* 定觀經, the *Okch'ugyŏg* 玉樞經, and the *Ŭmbugyŏng* 陰符經), and Buddhist texts such as the *Sŏnyo* 禪要 and the *Sŏnsŏ* 禪書.[141] This overlap evinces a synthesis of the three main religious teachings of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, with an especially strong presence of Daoist praxis. The *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* clearly illustrates the influence of *kanhwa* Sŏn praxis in the late Chosŏn period because it reflects the three essentials that are considered the most important constituents of *kanhwa* Sŏn practice.

4. Historical Background of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*

Beginning with the Tonghak religious movement in 1860, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Korea witnessed the mushrooming of new religions that were enthusiastically embraced by commoners. The 1917 census of religious populations in the early twentieth century

[141] Even though the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* quotes some passages from the *Sŏnsŏ,* the original text of the latter has not survived.

clearly shows that the majority of Korean people at that time followed these new religious worldviews. According to this census taken by the Japanese Government-General of Korea, the total number of followers of Buddhism in that year was 183,723. Among these, however, Japanese followers living in Chosŏn [*naeji-in*] totaled 103,800, while only 79,800 followers were Korean.[142] On the other hand, according to Yi Nŭnghwa, the number of members of the four branches of Tonghak (Ch'ŏndogyo, Sich'ŏngyodang, Sich'ŏngyo Ch'ongbu, and Chungang Sich'ŏn Kyohoe) had reached over 1.3 million in the early 1900s.[143] A report sent to the State Department of the United States in 1924 by Ransford S. Miller, the then-Consul General in Korea, stated that one of the new religious groups, known as "Chŭngsando," had around six million followers, or nearly one-third of the entire Korean population at that time.[144] Although Miller's report was based on hearsay, it is still significant that such new religious movements proved to be so popular that they radically transformed the religious imagination of the Korean people during the early twentieth century.

Despite their great numbers of followers, however, it was not so simple for these new religions to gain recognition in the public sphere. For example, on December 1, 1905, Son Pyŏnghŭi, the third successor of Tonghak, announced that his organization would no longer be called "Eastern Learning" but would instead be renamed Ch'ŏndogyo 天道敎, implying that

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[142] "Chosŏn kak chonggyo sindo su," *The Pusan Ilbo* [Pusan Newspaper], July 5, 1917, 1. This newspaper was published in the Japanese language.

[143] See Yi Nŭnghwa, *Chosŏn Togyosa*, trans. Yi Chongyŏk (Seoul: Posŏng Munhwasa, 1977), 331-332.

[144] Ransford S. Miller, "Political and Social Conditions and Organization in Chosŏn: The Public Safety Act," From Seoul (Miller) to FE, State Department, May 25, 1925, 3-004541-025-0056, 3, Han'guk tongnip undong chŏngbo system, accessed on January 20, 2020. http://search.i815.or.kr/subService.do. The report states, "For a time, it [Pocheonkyo or Hoomchikyo, which belong to Chŭnsando] enjoyed great popularity among the ignorant and superstitious (it is said to number some 6,000,000) but is now on the wane."

Tonghak had become a "Religion of the Heavenly Way."[145] By rebranding itself as a religion, Ch'ŏndogyo secured the legality of their missionary work and religious activity. However, it seems that it was not easy for Ch'ŏndogyo to find its own status as a religion in society at that time. According to an article in *Tong'a Ilbo* published on July 22, 1920, even though Ch'ŏndogyo was a religion with a large number of followers and had a relatively long history in Chosŏn, the Japanese Government-General did not recognize it as a religion like Christianity or Buddhism.[146] Therefore, the Government-General explained that the Police Administration and Planning Bureau would continue to supervise Ch'ŏndogyo practitioncers and police authorities would exercise control over them.[147] The press continued to warn the newly emerged religions not to cross the line that was supposed to separate religion and politics at that time. Newspapers also often reported on these new religions' supposed financial exploitation of peasants and putatively deceptive, superstitious, and strange religious activities. In this process, many newly emerging religions gained popularity once, but soon died out, especially after their respective founders passed away.

The small number of Buddhist followers counted during this period, 79,800, does not mean that Buddhism was unpopular among Korean people at the time. Chosŏn Buddhism of the last quarter of the nineteenth century has often been described as a type of "mountain-centered Buddhism" [*sanjung Pulgyo*], "evoking the image of a religion ensconced in the mountains and

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[145] According to Pak Maengsu, however, Ch'ŏndogyo is not the only faith that inherited Tonghak traditions. Tonghak tradition was also transmitted to five other groups in the early twentieth century according to each of their political positions. See Pak Maengsu, *Kaebyŏk ŭi kkum: Tong Asia rŭl kkaeuda, tonghak nongmin hyŏngmyŏng kwa cheguk Ilbon* (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2011).

[146] "Ch'aksaeng hanŭn chonggyo e taehayŏ: chonggyo tang'gukcha ŭi ch'ŏji nŭn ŏttŏ hanga: Ch'ŏndogyo ch'ori ga kajang ŏryŏupttago," *Tong'a Ilbo*, July 22, 1920, 3.

[147] Ibid.

cut off from society."[148] Many scholars have recently begun to dispute this received image of a "dormant" and "stagnant" Chosŏn Buddhism. Even though Buddhism appeared to have declined due to policies designed to suppress the religion, in the late Chosŏn period, Buddhism continued to be attractive to elite patrons.[149] In addition, while it may not have been possible for many people to be active patrons of Buddhism, Buddhism held sway over Koreans' minds as a popular belief. As Lewis Lancaster points out, when monastic institutions held less power, Buddhist beliefs tended to be incorporated into folk religious practices.[150]

Kim Samnyong has demonstrated that Maitreya Buddhism has been evolving in Korea ever since it was introduced to the Korean peninsula during the Three Kingdoms period in the fourth century. Based on an extensive field survey, conducted over the course of three years, he suggests that belief in Maitreya Buddha had permeated into the deepest stratum of Korean indigenous faith and culture. He shows that elements of Maitreya faith, including statues, symbols, illustrations, temples among others, are dispersed all across the country.[151] More than 371 Maitreya statues can be still found all over South Korea, not only in Buddhist temples, but

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[148] Mark A. Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 29-30.

[149] Walraven argues that we need to rethink the standard narrative of the decline of Chosŏn Buddhism, particularly in the late Chosŏn period. He provides several examples of elites' support of Buddhism, including the royal court, the *yangban* elite, and educated commoners. See Bouldewijin Walraven, "A Re-Examination of the Social Basis of Buddhism in Late Chosŏn Korea," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 20, no.1 (June 2007):1-20. By tracing the transformations that occurred in Korean Buddhist society from the 1870s up to 1910, Eunsu Cho also questions the narrative that late nineteenth-century Chosŏn Buddhist society lay dormant. See Eunsu Cho, "Re-thinking Late 19th Century Chosŏn Buddhist Society," *Acta Koreana* 6, no. 2 (July 2003): 87-109.

[150] Lewis Lancaster, "Maitreya in Korea," chap. 6 in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 145.

[151] Kim Samnyong, *Han'guk mirŭk sin'ang ŭi yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tonghwa Ch'ulp'angongsa, 1983).

also in mountains, fields, villages, and on seashores.[152] Collections of Korean oral folktales are another important indicator of the popularity of belief in Maitreya Buddha. In such archives, it is not difficult to find oral stories and folktales that are related to Maitreya Buddha,[153] testifying to how deeply elements of Buddhist faith in Maitreya have been embedded in Korean culture and belief systems.

Kim Samnyong also presents the belief in Maitreya Buddha as playing a crucial role in inspiring the emergence of new religious movements.[154] During tumultuous times, such as Korea's invasion by Japan in the sixteenth century and, later, by troops of the Qing dynasty, "Maitreya belief became more popular; people prayed to Maitreya to appear and to give aid and comfort."[155] Moreover, as the divinatory text *Chŏng Kam nok* 鄭鑑錄 became popular among people in the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries, the Koreans waited for a so-called perfect

[152] Paek Sŭngjong, *Han'guk ŭi yeyŏn munhwasa* (Seoul: P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2006), 264.

[153] In June 1978, Han'gukhak Chungang Yŏn'guwŏn (The Academy of Korean Studies) began to conduct a massive project of collecting oral folktales, folk songs, and traditional chants dispersed throughout the country. The project eventually published a total of 85 volumes of *Han'guk kubi munhak taegye* [*The Comprehensive Collection of Korean Oral Literature*], including three supplementary books, comprised of 15,107 oral folktales, 6,187 folk songs, 376 Shamanist chants, and 21 miscellaneous tales from over 4,000 people in 60 different cities and counties nationwide. All of them are digitized through the National Information Service Enhancement Projects and can be searched and listened to at the Korea History Information Integrated System. Among them, we can easily find folktales and folk songs that are related to either the Buddhist faith, the Maitreya faith, or famous monks such as Chinmuk and Wŏnhyo. See Han'gukhak Chungang Yŏn'guwŏn, *Han'guk kubi munhak taegye*, motified on July 30, 2018. https://gubi.aks.ac.kr/web/gubi_folk_eng.htm.

[154] See Kim Samnyong, *Han'guk mirŭk sin'ang-ŭi yŏn'gu* [Studies on the Maitreya Faith of Korea] (Seoul: Tonghwa Ch'ulp'angongsa, 1983), 212-217.

[155] Lewis Lancaster, "Maitreya in Korea," 145.

man [C. *zhenren*/K. *chinin* 真人] with the surname Chŏng 鄭 who would build a new utopian political order.[156]

Paek Sŭngjong suggests that faith in Maitreya was a major source of inspiration for works like the *Chŏng Kam nok*. In one of his book chapters entitled, "*Chŏng Kam nok* ŭi sasang chŏk ppuri, Mirŭk sin'ang ŭi yŏksa chŏk pyŏnch'ŏn" [The Root of *Chŏng Kam Nok* Thought: The Historical Change in Maitreya Belief], Paek shows how belief in Maitreya has taken shape among people throughout Korean history by analyzing legends, shamanistic chants, and folktales. He particularly examines these sources from an economic standpoint, arguing that faith in Maitreya resonated with people's wishes for economic prosperity. Paek outlines how the symbols of Maitreya used by Koreans indicate his role as a savior who can protect people from diseases, as an incarnation of fecundity and richness, as a guardian against wars and invasions, and as a human being who is reborn to build a paradise in this world.[157] He also presents examples of historical figures who pronounced that they were reincarnated as Maitreya Buddha, such as the Koryŏ period insurrectionist monk Kung Ye (869-918), several other monks, bands of robbers, Yŏ Hwan, and Kang Ilsun.[158] Unlike Paek, however, Jorgensen argues that "with the exception of Yŏhwan, there is no demonstrated connection of the themes in the *Chŏng Kam nok* corpus with Maitreya."[159]

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[156] John Jorgensen, *The Foresight of Dark Knowing: Chŏng Kam Nok and Insurrectionary Prognostication in Pre-Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 2018), 4.

[157] Paek Sŭngjong, *Han'guk ŭi yeyŏn munhwasa* (Seoul: P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2006), 263-304.

[158] Ibid., 283-296.

[159] John Jorgensen, *Foresight of Dark Knowing*, 134.

Even though we may not be able to find any direct connection between the themes in the *Chŏng Kam nok* corpus and Maitreya, as Jorgensen points out, one thing is very clear: people living through turbulent times were earnestly awaiting a future savior, whether it be one named Chŏng or Maitreya Buddha. In this chapter, I have proposed that Tonghak's teaching, which was based on Ch'oe Cheu's initial revelatory experience of God, transformed the popular beliefs presented in the divinatory text *Chŏng Kam nok* and in such millenarian movements as Waiting for the Future Savior Maitreya into the idea of equality of all human beings. According to orthodox Neo-Confucian ideology, only Confucian literati were able to become sages, through intensive study. However, Suun not only held out the prospect that anyone could become a sage, but also later in the *Yongdam yusa* stressed that whoever joins the way of Tonghak will immediately become a true gentleman of virtue [*kunja*] as follows:

> Correct your mind and cultivate the Way [*chŏngsim sudo*]. Perform as you are made to do. If you gradually teach it, leave aside eternal transformation [*mugung chohwa*], and you will spread virtue under heaven. This is the only method of the Way. Establish these rules and write them down. From this time forth, the people who find the Way will become true gentlemen of virtue [*kunja*]. Without effort, change is accomplished, so will you not become a terrestrial immortal [*chisang sinsŏn*]?"[160]

Through the cultivation of the mind and the Way, anyone can become not only a true gentleman of virtue, but also a terrestrial immortal. That Koreans had been searching for a savior for a long time is evident in people's beliefs in Maitreya or a true man who would come to this world to save them. But Suun stresses that any believer can become such a savior himself by correcting his mind and cultivating the Way. In addition, as Suun repeatedly highlights, anyone who follows his teaching can recover his or her God-like nature within their hearts and live as God. This idea deeply resonated across many of the new religious movements in early twentieth-

[160] Ch'oe Cheu, *Yongdam Yusa* [Song of Instruction], trans. George L. Kallander, in *Salvation through Dissent*, 179.

century Korea. For example, the prospectus of a proposed new religion called "Inch'ŏn'gyo" begins with the following statement:

> Who would be God? What would God do? Would God really be the one who deserves our veneration? Also, what is a human? Is it enough for us just to eat, wear clothes, speak, and talk? No, it is not. Since God has a spirit, He loves us. Since we human beings also have a spirit, we revere God. The sun's rays are glorious so that they shine over all things in the universe. However, to the blind, it is still night. The beady-eyed, who can clearly see even a strand of hair, still feel they are in darkness when they are in a cave. Therefore, it is clear that when we have the brightness of spirit, we can receive God's spirit. So, God is the one who rules the myriad spirits of human beings through his spirit. Human beings are those who revere God with their myriad spirits. Therefore, humans are truly noble and lovable.[161]

People began to believe that they are truly noble and worthy, beings who are endowed with God's spirit—that man is Heaven and man is God. This revolutionary idea rapidly spread throughout the country, resonating with people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Korea. This notion was not merely an abstract idea, but was accompanied by actual transformations of believers' mental states and bodies through practice. Unfortunately, we do not have any extant detailed documents that discuss the set of specific practices that the followers of Tonghak and other new religions observed, besides the practices of incantation and silent prayer.

The preceding examination of the texts of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* and *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* leads me to the following conclusions. First, while the procedure underlying Suun's experience of God's revelation resembles Western Catholicism, the contents regarding God's nature are more connected to Eastern thought. Second, the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* exemplifies "three-teachings syncretism," which has a long history across East Asia: Daoist primal heaven (Buddha-nature, and the Confucian heavenly Way were considered to be three different terms for the same notion. Third, these texts suggest that knowing of the existence of God within one's nature is not

[161] My translation from the vernacular Korean. Yi Huiryong, "Inch'ŏn'gyo ch'wijisŏ," in Murayama Chijun 村山智順, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教 (*Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn*), translated into Korean by Ch'oe Kilsŏng and others (Taegu: Kyemyŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 198.

enough; it should be attained through actual spiritual practice. In the case of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, the text introduces *tanjŏn* meditation as a practice to balance one's physical forces and transform one's state of mind into one of calmness and tranquility. Fourth, I suggest that Suun's training in *susim chŏnggi* 守心正氣 [to guard the mind and to rectify vital energy] may be related to the practice of *tanjŏn* meditation.

As an alternative ideology to the crisis in Neo-Confucianism, the *minjung* responded and were attracted to the new method of "cultivating the mind and rectifying the life force." The integral training of the mind and the body based on three-teachings syncretism promised immediate alleviation of people's suffering. I have also shown that the belief in a so-called true man who would, according to the *Chŏng Kam nok*, change the Chosŏn into a new utopian dynasty, was developed by Ch'oe Cheu into the idea that everyone would become a true man. Everyone can become a true man through the cultivation of the mind and the body regardless of one's inherited class. Suun's innovative idea had a considerable impact on new religious movements. Because Suun's writings do not offer detailed instructions in how to cultivate the mental and bodily forces, however, we can instead examine its detailed methods through the text of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*.

5. The Significance of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* in Buddhism and Wŏn Buddhism

In the preceding sections, I have established that Tonghak and the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* share the same idea of New Heaven, and that the concept of New Heaven constituted a significant moral and social authority for new religious movements in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Korea. However, this theme is not limited to new religious movements. It can also be

found in Buddhist reform movements, including the Wŏn Buddhist reform movement, and particularly in the distinctive Korean poetic genre of *kasa* ("sung lyrics").[162]

Scholars have called the nineteenth century "the era of religious *kasa* literature."[163] In the middle of the nineteenth century, when freedom of religion was first allowed in Korea, Father Ch'oe Yangŏp 崔良業 (1821-1861)[164] began to produce *kasa* expressing Catholic teachings. Ha Sŏngnae considers the emergence of Catholic *kasa* in the nineteenth century to be one of the most epochal events in the history of Korean literature because it introduced new themes and topics regarding God to Korean poetry.[165] As a response to Catholic *kasa*, Confucian literati also composed *kasa* called "*pyŏkwi kasa*" 闢衛歌辭 to defend orthodox Confucianism from Catholicism, which they considered to be a heresy.[166] During the resurgence of religious *kasa* in the 1850s, Ch'oe Cheu also composed Tonghak *kasa* through which the common people who were illiterate in Classical Chinese could become well versed in Tonghak teachings. In his *kasa* "Kyohun'ga" 敎訓歌 [Song of Instruction], "Ansimga" 安心歌 [Song of Reassurance],

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[162] *Kasa,* which consists of four syllables in a line of verse written in vernacular Korean, was a form of poetry popular during the Chosŏn Dynasty in Korea. *Kasa* were commonly sung, and were popular among *yangban* women. The form first emerged during the Koryŏ period. Scholars of Korean literature have agreed that the emergence of *kasa* in Korean literature is closely related to Buddhism. "Sŏwangga" 西往歌[Song of Going to the West (Pure Land)], which is presumed to have been written by Naong Hyegŭn 懶翁 惠勤 (1320-1376), is considered to be the first *kasa*. See Yim Kijung, "Pulgyo kasa wa Han'guk kasa munhak," *Pulgyohakpo* 37 (2000): 183-204 and Ch'oe Sangŭn, "Ch'oech'o ŭi kasa tŭl: Kasa munhak ŭi sijak, ch'oech'o ŭi Pulgyo kasa, Sŏwangga," *Onŭl ŭi Kasa Munhak* 12 (2017): 51-62.

[163] Pak Chongch'ŏn, "Chosŏn Hugo chonggyo kasa ŭi munhwa chŏk ihae," *Chonggyo yŏn'gu* 78 (2018): 41.

[164] See footnote 71.

[165] Ha Sŏngnae, "Ch'ŏnju kasa e taehayŏ: ch'och'o ŭi sŏyang sasang yiip," *Kugŏ Kungmunhak* 72-73 (1976): 286-290.

[166] Pak Chongch'ŏn, "Chosŏn Hugo chonggyo kasa ŭi munhwa chŏk ihae," 43-44.

"Yongdamga" 龍潭歌 [Song of Yongdam], "Mongjung noso mundapka" 夢中老少問答歌 [Song of Questions and Answers of the Young and Old in a Dream], "Tosusa" 道修詞 [Song of Training for the Way], "Kwŏnhakka" 勸學歌 [Song to Encourage to Learning], "Todŏkka" 道德歌 [Song of the Way and Its Power], and "Hŭngbiga" 興比歌,[167] Ch'oe Cheu articulated his joy in receiving *mugŭk taedo*, or "the ultimate great way," and asked his disciples to follow his instruction in a didactic, lyrical, and heuristic way.[168] In his poems, he earnestly asked his followers to practice until they were awakened to the God within them.

In the early twentieth century, Buddhist Sŏn masters also began to take part in the trend of writing in this popular literary genre to express Buddhist teachings. Leading Sŏn masters, such as Kyŏnghŏ 鏡虛 (1849-1912), Hangmyŏng 鶴鳴 (1867-1929), Yongsŏng 龍城 (1864-1940), Man'gong 滿空 (1871-1946), and Han'am 漢岩 (1876-1951), all focused in their Pulgyo *kasa* on the idea of discovering the true self or "self-nature"[169] a notion which we rarely find in popular song-style *kasa* from the early or middle Chosŏn. Scholar Yi Chin'o notes this simultaneous

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[167] The concepts of *hŭng* 興 [implied comparisons] and pi 比 [explicit comparisons] are two major literary devices employed in the songs of the *Classic of Poetry*. Suun applied these two literary devices in this song to teach about how to cultivate the Way in everyday life.

[168] I follow Kallander's translations of the titles. Among these *kasa*, Kallander translated "Song of Instruction," "Song of Reassurance" and "Song of Yongdam" in his book. See George L. Kallander, *Salvation through Dissent*, 177-188.

[169] The concept of the self-nature is a translation of the Buddhist technical concept of *chasŏng* 自性 [Sanskrit, *svabhāva*], which refers to "inherent-nature" or "intrinsic existence." If taken as unchanging essence, this notion is refuted by the Madhyamaka school. In Korean Sŏn Buddhism, however, this concept is often used in the context of being awakened to one's own nature [*chasŏng*] which is empty of such unchanging substantial self. See, Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., "*svabhāva*," in *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 879. Several scholars pay attention to this theme that all the Sŏn masters focused in their Pulgyo *kasa* on the idea of discovering the true self or "self-nature." See Yi Chŏngju, "Kŭndae ihaeggi chonggyo kasa ŭi sahoe hyŏnsil yŏn'gu," *Inmun sahoe* 21: 581-594; Pak Chongch'ŏn, "Chosŏn hugi chonggyo kasa ŭi munhwa chŏk ihae," *Chonggyo yŏn'gu* 78 (2018): 33-58; Yi Chin'o, "Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo kasa esŏ chasŏng ch'akki wa sidae ŭisik," *Han'guk minjok munhwa* 61 (November 2016): 397-430.

trend among these Sŏn masters, trying to explain why such a theme appeared in the popular Buddhist literature around the turn of the twentieth century. Examining these *kasa* in his paper, Yi Chin'o explains this tendency in relation to the formation of "modern Buddhism" [*kŭndae Pulgyo*] and the search for a "modern self."[170] According to Yi Chin'o, the trend of focusing on the theme of discovering the self-nature or the Buddha-nature in the Pulgyo *kasa* can be understood as a Buddhist response to the needs of the colonial and modern periods.[171] Kyŏnghŏ played a significant role in creating the basis for the essential notion of discovering the self-nature, revitalizing *kanhwa* Sŏn in the early twentieth century. Hangmyŏng and Yongsŏng attempted to lay the foundation for an independent monastic economy, arguing for a 'half labor and half meditation' movement for monks. Man'gong worked to establish the foundation for Korean national Buddhism. Yongsŏng and Han'am attempted to popularize Buddhism by translating Buddhist texts written in Classical Chinese into vernacular Korean. In their efforts to revitalize Buddhist teachings in society, all of these masters focused on the idea of discovering the self-nature. Yi Chin'o explains this trend as a form of Buddhist modernity, related to the concept of the search for a modern self in the early twentieth century.

I agree with Yi's conclusion; however, I think that this focus on self-nature can be also understood as part of the Tonghak notion of *sich'ŏnju* [revering God within one's heart] in the religious landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. If we replace God with Buddha-nature or self-nature (i.e. the idea of worshipping God within one's heart), it becomes the Buddhist concept of discovering the true self. Even though this theme is not novel to Sŏn/Chan Buddhism, as Yi Chin'o also points out in his paper, Buddhist Sŏn masters in the early

[170] Yi Chin'o, "Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo kasa esŏ chasŏng ch'akki wa sidae ŭisik," *Han'guk minjok munhwa* 61 (November 2016): 397-430.

[171] Ibid.

and middle Chosŏn did not express such a theme in popular song-style *kasa*. This is because the experience of ultimate enlightenment had never before been considered as applicable to the common people in the history of Korean Buddhism. Kyŏnghŏ composed three *kasa*: "Ch'amsŏn'gok" 參禪曲 [Song of Sŏn Meditation], "Kaga Kaŭm" 可歌可吟[Singable, Chantable], and "Pŏmmun'gok" 法門曲 [Song of Dharma-gate].[172] Hangmyŏng created eight *kasa*: "Wangsaengga" 往生歌 [Song of Rebirth (in the Pure Land)], "Sŏnwŏn'gok" 禪園曲 [Song of the Meditation Garden], "Wŏnjŏkka" or "Yŏlban'ga" 圓寂歌 or 涅槃歌 [Song of Nirvāṇa], "Sinnyŏn'ga" 新年歌 [Song of a New Year], "Haet'algok" 解脫曲 [Song of Liberation], "Ch'amsŏn'gok" 參禪曲 [Song of Meditation], "Mangwŏlga" 望月歌 [Song of a Full Moon], and "Paekyangsan'ga" 白羊山歌 [Song of Paekyang Mountain].[173] The main goal of all of these songs is to encourage the discovery of the original self-nature through Sŏn practice. Yongsŏng's *kasa* more explicitly and repeatedly encouraged the discovery of the self-nature, with lines such as "Let us clarify the mind," "let us be awakened to the original nature," "let us protect the self-nature," or "let us penetrate to the original-nature."[174] In the

[172] All of these *kasa* are in the *Kyŏnghŏ chip* [Collected Writings of Kyŏnghŏ]. Kyŏnghŏ's writings were collected and compiled by Kyŏnghŏ's chief disciple, Man'gong, with the assistance of Kim Yŏng'un and Yun Tŭng'am. Manhae copy-edited and published the *Kyŏnghŏ chip* by adding the preface and a brief history of Kyŏnghŏ in 1942. See Yi Chin'o, "Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo kasa esŏ chasŏng ch'akki wa sidae ŭisik," *Han'guk minjok munhwa* 61 (November 2016): 404.

[173] According to the *Han'guk minjok tae paekkwa sajŏn* [Encyclopedia of Korean Culture], Hangmyŏng had his own literary collection, *Paengnong chip* 白農集, but it was soon lost. Several monks collected Hangmyŏng's works and translated them into vernacular Korean, publishing *Hangmyŏng chip* [Collected Writings of Hangmyŏng] in 2006. All these *kasa* appear in the *Hangmyŏng chip*.

[174] There are five *kasa*: "Yongsŏng sŏnsa wangsaengga" 龍城禪師往生歌 [Song of Rebirth by Master Yongsŏng], "Kwŏnsega" 勸世歌 [Song of Encouraging/Entreating the World], "Taegakkyoga" 大覺敎歌 [Song of the Teaching of Great Enlightenment], "Segye kisiga" 世界起始歌 [Song of Buddhist Cosmology], "Chungsaeng sangsokka," 衆生相續歌 [Song of Interrelationship among Sentient Beings]. See Yim Kijung, *Pulgyo kasa wŏnjŏn yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Chu'lp'anbu, 2000), 804-826.

"Ch'amsŏn'gok" 參禪曲 [Song of Meditation], Han'am also uses terms referring to the self-nature or the original-nature, such as "pristine original face" [*ch'ŏnjin myŏnmok* 天眞面目], "genuine Buddha" [*chinbul* 眞佛], "mind" [*maŭm*], "self-nature" [*chasŏng* 自性], to encourage a reader to discover the Buddha-nature within oneself.[175] Why would Sŏn masters begin to popularize such a theme among the laypeople? We might hypothesize that the spread of the Tonghak idea of *sich'ŏnju* among the masses in the second half of the nineteenth century spurred the emergence of Pulgyo *kasa* focused on the discovery of the self-nature in the early twentieth century. These leading Sŏn masters were not the only authors of Buddhist *kasa*. Sot'aesan also composed *kasa* on the similar theme of discovering the true self.

After Sot'aesan's enlightenment in 1916, he composed many *kasa* and instructed his disciples by reciting them. However, in the 1920s, when he systemized his teachings, he asked his disciples to burn his *kasa*. After his death, the manuscript of his *Monggakka* was discovered among his effects by the third head Dharma master of Wŏn Buddhism, Kim Taegŏ 金大擧 (1914-1998), better known by his sobriquet Taesan 大山. The remaining papers included nine *kasa* and several essays written by Sot'aesan.[176] In these *kasa*, we can find a couple of phrases

[175] Han'am, "Han'am sŏnsa ch'amsŏngok," in *Pulgyo kasa wŏnjŏn yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Chu'lp'anbu, 2000), 874-875.

[176] The titles of songs and essays are as follows: 1) "Monggakka" [Song of Awakening from the Dream], 2) "Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe ch'wijisŏ" [The Purport of Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma], 3) "Ch'ŏmjung kido" [Prayer of Establishing the Society [for the Study of the Buddhadharma]], 4) "Yŏn'gu ch'wisin chemok," [The Title/Topic of Gaining Faith in Inquiry], 5) "Yŏn'gu sŏnggong chemok" [The Title of Success in Inquiry], 6) "Solsŏng yoron" [Essentials on Nurturing the Nature], 7)"Chaega Sŏn ch'a chebŏp" [Regulations for Lay Followers regarding Meditation Retreats], 8) "Ch'ulga Sŏn ch'a chebŏp" [Regulations for Ordained Followers regarding Meditation Retreats], 9) "Poŭn kyŏngch'ukga" [Celebratory Song for Requiting Gratitude], 10) "Pot'ongbu simmun ira" [These are ten precepts for the ordinary grade], 11) "T'ŭksinbu isim kyemun ira" [These are ten precepts for the grade of special faith], 12) "Pŏpma sangjŏnbu samsim kyemun ira" [These are ten precepts for the grade of the battle between Dharma and māra], 13) "Ch'ohak parwŏn chumun ira" [This is a *chumun* (we do not know what the concept of *chumun*, literally meaning "incantation," refers to here because it is used in an unconventional

that are similar to those in Suun's *kasa*. These verbatim suggests how popular Tonghak's *kasa* were among the people at that time. [177]

> After eating breakfast, Sot'aesan overheard a discussion between a few neighbors regarding the contents of the *Tonggyong Taejon* of Tonghak, as follows: "I [K. Ch'onje: Heavenly Lord] have a hallowed amulet charm. Its name is a Miraculous Medicine. Its form is the Great Ultimate [K. T'aegŭk]. Again, its form is a Kung-gung [a bow and a bow]." 吾有靈符其名仙藥其形太極又形弓弓. At the particular moment of hearing this passage, Sot'aesan understood its meaning very clearly and a strange feeling came over him.[178]

As *The History of Wŏn Buddhism* states, Sot'aesan realized his enlightenment by discovering that he understood the passages of the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn*. Notably, he did not encounter the phrase while reading a text, but rather, overheard the passage being discussed by his neighbors. This suggests that it was quite easy to hear the ideas of Tonghak in those days.

One of the Sot'aesan's *kasa* entitled "Yŏn'gu ch'wisin chemok" [The Title/Topic of Gaining Faith in Inquiry] says:

> Cultivation of the mind, inquiry into principles, and (mindful) choice in actions.
> To cultivate your mind, let your mind be calm and settled.
> Let your mind stay in the state of no mind that is beyond all words and speech.
> To inquire into the self-nature, let yourself delve into the [*hwadu*] of "The myriad dharmas return to one; where does the one return?" [*manbŏp kuiil ilguihach'ŏ* 萬法歸一 一歸何處].
> Let yourself delve into the [*hwadu*] of "What is it that is not associated with the myriad dharmas?" [*pulyŏ manbŏp wiryŏja sisimma* 不與萬法爲侶者 是什麼].

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way, but it seems that it stands for "mnemonic" for beginners' vow], 14) "Pulpŏp ŭl nŏlli t'onghanan chumun ira" [This is a *chumun* for understanding comprehensively the Buddhadharma], 15) "Pulpŏp p'oyang hanan chumun ira" [This is a *chumun* for publicizing the Buddhadharma], 16) "Puch'ŏ nim ŭi palgŭn kwangmyŏng ŭl yŏn'gu haya ŏnnan chumun ira" [This is a *chumun* for attaining the bright light of the Buddha through inquiry], 17) "Kunja t'ansik ka ra" [This is a song of the *kunja*'s lament], 18) (no title), 19) "Kim Tongsun i kŏrae mundapsŏ ra" [This is an elegy on Kim Tongsun], 20) "Kwŏnŏpga" [Song of Encouraging Vow], 21) "Chiroga" [Song of Guiding the Way], 22) "Naktoga" [Song of Enjoying the Way]. See Sin Sunch'ŏl, "Monggakka wa Sot'aesan kasa surok munhŏn yŏn'gu," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 29 (2005): 297-312.

[177] Yuk Kwanŭng compares Sot'aesan's *kasa* with Suun's and provides a table of the phrases that are used in both *kasa*. Yuk Kwanŭng, "Sot'aesan ŭi kasa yŏn'gu," *Chŏngsin kaebyŏk* 17, 233.

[178] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, (Iksan: Wŏn Buddhist Publishing Co., 2006), 21.

> To inquire into principles, let yourself see and understand broadly and deeply. To make a (mindful) choice in action regarding the human affairs of right and wrong, benefit and harm, let your mind be protected and let your life-force be corrected. Let yourself nurture the nature. In receiving this teaching, let yourself understand the affairs that are free from excessiveness or deficiency.[179]

This *kasa* is extremely important because we can see in it the origins of such foundational doctrinal teachings of Sot'aesan as the threefold study. This *kasa* in this passage would be the earliest statement of what would become the threefold study in Wŏn Buddhism. Particularly, we can detect the influence of both the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* and *kanhwa* [*hwadu*] Sŏn practice. Regarding the issue of the cultivation of the mind, Sot'aesan's *kasa* draws on a technique similar to one found in the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*: "To cultivate your mind, let your mind be calm and settled." It also shows the elements of Buddhist Sŏn teaching and *hwadu* Sŏn practice by directly using two of the most famous *hwadu*s: "The myriad dharmas return to one; where does the one return?" and "What is it that is not associated with the myriad dharmas?"

Among other of Sot'aesan's *kasa*, we can notice one clear thing: even though they highlight the idea of discovering the true self, all *kasa* quite straightforwardly focus on the teaching of the Buddha. For example, "Monggakka" [Song of Awakening from the Dream] tells the story of an ordinary person who falls seriously ill. In the beginning, he feels himself to be in a living hell because he did not know the origin of his illness or how to cure himself. He searches for causes and remedies, and fortunately, he meets a good doctor who informs him that the main

[179] This is in the manuscript of *Monggakka*, and the translation of this *kasa* is mine. According to Sin Sunch'ŏl, this short *kasa* may be written before 1924. See, Sin Sunch'ŏl, "*Monggakka* wa Sot'aesan kasa surok munhŏn yŏn'gu," 29, 266.

causes of his illness are three poisons [*samdok* 三毒][180] and five desires [*oyok* 五欲].[181] After discovering his original nature [*ponsŏng* 本性], which is pure and clear, and cleansing himself of the five desires, his illness is entirely cured. He then falls asleep. In his dream, he makes a trip around the high heavens by riding a yellow crane, enjoying the paradise of his original nature. Finally, he reaches the Tuṣita heaven [Tosolch'ŏn 都率天], which is free from harms and blessings. At that moment, he awakes from his dream. The main plot of this *kasa* reminds us of the first teachings of the Buddha when he "turns the wheel of the Dharma." Just as the Buddha is said to have first taught "the four noble truths"—the truth of suffering, the truth of the origination of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering— Sot'aesan tells a story about the four noble truths by composing a soteriological allegory. The main theme and ideas are all based on Buddhism. Through the examination of Sot'aesan's *kasa*, we can note that although he embraced contemporary new religious movements to some extent by incorporating aspects of the *Ch'ŏngsim yogyŏl*, his teachings were mainly concerned with Buddhism.

The primary influence of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* on Sot'aesan's thought can be found in his proposal to combine *tanjŏn* 丹田 [elixir field] meditation with *kanhwa* Sŏn meditation, the main meditation technique in the Korean Sŏn tradition. In his *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn*, Sot'aesan advocated

[180] In Buddhism, the three poisons, written more simply as *t'am* 貪, *chin* 瞋 and *ch'i* 癡, are the three primary afflictions from which all other afflictions are derived: (1) desire, or greed [*rāga*]; (2) hatred, or aversion [*dveṣa*]; and (3) delusion, or ignorance [*moha*]. See Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., "*triviṣa*," in *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 926.

[181] In Buddhism, the five strands of desire arise from attachment to the objects of five sense organs, such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. See Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., "*pañcakāmaguṇa*," in *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 614.

tanjŏn meditation as an alternative to *kanhwa* meditation based on his thorough examination of both Korean Sŏn and Japanese Zen techniques. However, Kim Nakp'il points out that *tanjŏn* meditation cannot be fully understood if we look at it only from a Buddhist perspective because it focuses on the method of *susŭng hwagang* 水乘火降 [the rise of watery energy and the descending of fiery energy], and the harmony between the mind and the life-force cannot be explained in exclusively Buddhist terms. Therefore, he concludes that Sot'aesan's meditation techniques embrace not only Buddhist meditation but also the Daoist meditation practice of inner alchemy [*naedan*], with its circulation and refinement of inner energies in a rhythm based on the principle of *yin* and *yang*.[182] Most Wŏn Buddhist scholars, such as Ko Siyong, Kim Nakp'il, Wŏn Yŏngsang, and Yi Sŏngjŏn[183] have attempted to trace the basis of Sot'aesan's meditation by focusing on the examination of its religious and doctrinal elements. However, I would argue that Sot'aesan did not intentionally incorporate into his teaching's elements drawn from Daoism or Confucianism; rather, such practices were widely known religious phenomena in the late Chosŏn, as demonstrated by the cases of Tonghak and Chŭngsando. The reception of the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl* in the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe should be understood in this context.

Lastly, I will discuss the idea of "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" (*ch'ŏnyŏrae manbosal* 千如來 萬菩薩), the phrase that gives this dissertation its title. This concept did not appear in Buddhist literature or history until Sot'aesan used it to describe his new

[182] Kim Nakp'il, "Naedan sasang kwa Wŏnbulgyo tanjŏnju sŏn pŏp," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 30 (2005): 85-112.

[183] Ko Siyong, "Wŏnbulgyo kyori hyŏngsŏn kwa togyo sasang," *Togyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 24 (April 2006): 285-307; Kim Nakp'il, "Naedan sasang kwa Wŏnbulgyo tanjŏnju sŏn pŏp," 85-112; Wŏn Yŏngsang, "*Pulgyo Chŏngjŏn* ŭi chwasŏn pŏp kwa Ilbon Sŏnjong," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 40 (December 2008): 31-55; Yi Sŏngjŏn, "Ch'ogi kyosŏ e nat'anan kyori ihae ŭi panghyang," *Wŏnbulgyohak* 4 (December, 1999): 37-61.

Buddhist community, the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe [Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma]. According to the early documentary materials of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, Sot'aesan once said:

> Śākyamuni Buddha's congregation in the past was that of *one buddha with one thousand bodhisattvas*; in the future *a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas* will arise in this congregation.[184] [emphasis mine]

Sot'aesan's words recall the story in the *Candragarbhaparipṛcchā* in which Śākyamuni Buddha predicts the demise of the dharma.[185] When the current Śakyāmuni Buddha's era would reach its end after passing through the eras of the true dharma, semblance dharma, and the final dharma, the next, so-called future Buddha, Maitreya, would descend from the Tuṣita heaven to undergo his final birth in India (Jambudvīpa) and to create a new Buddhist world.[186] What Sot'aesan implied by comparing the *Candragarbhaparipṛcchā* story with Śākyamuni Buddha's congregation is that he is intended to make a new Buddhist world in which "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" will arise.

In East Asia, the cult of Maitreya became popular beginning in the fourth century CE due to the release of several translations of scriptures associated with Maitreya, such as the *Sūtra on the Descent of Maitreya* (K. *Mirŭk hasaeng kyŏng*, C. *Mile xiasheng jing*) 彌勒下生經,[187] the

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[184] Cho Chŏngwŏn (1910-1976), who became the first celibate female Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe ordained minister (*kyomu*), recorded Sot'aesan's words as above. See *Kongt'awŏn chongsa munjip* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1984), 79. We do not know when and where Sot'aesan made this statement, but there are many other records about this expression. Sot'aesan once said, "when Pyŏnsan reveals in the world, there appear *a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas.*" See Yi Pyŏng'ŭn edit., *Taesan chongbŏpsa pŏmmun kwa irhwa*, (1963), 133.

[185] Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., "Candragarbhaparipṛcchā," in *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 165.

[186] Ibid.

[187] T 453.

Sūtra of Maitreya's Ascension (K. *Mirŭk sangsaeng kyŏng*, C. *Mile shangsheng jing*) 彌勒上生經,[188] and even the *Lotus Sūtra* (K. *Myobŏp yŏn'hwa kyŏng*, Skt. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra,* C. *Miaofa lianhua jing*) 妙法蓮華經.[189] While the *Lotus Sūtra* illuminates Maitreya's present residence in the *tuṣita* heaven, other sūtras discuss his future rebirth on earth or in heaven. The *Sūtra of Maitreya's Ascension* promised sentient beings the prospect of rebirth in *tuṣita* heaven alongside Maitreya. The *Sūtra on the Descent of Maitreya* emphasized the rebirth of Maitreya in this world, where he will attain buddhahood under the Dragon Flower Tree [Nāgapuṣpa] and save numerous sentient beings.[190] Therefore, the world that will come about through Maitreya's advent is called the Dragon Flower Order [K. Yonghwa hoesang 龍華會上].

In Korea, Maitreya worship developed based on the *Sūtra on the Descent of Maitreya*, and thus centered on waiting for the advent of Maitreya in this world, not in heaven. Based on this legend, the Maitreya cult that was awaiting the future Buddha had flourished among the Korean people ever since Buddhism migrated to Korea from China in the fourth century CE. During the late Chosŏn dynasty, millenarian tendencies where strong, as seen, for example, in *Chŏng Kam nok*, where prophets were waiting for a future new era, and cults that worshipped Maitreya as a savior who would save them from the suffering, turbulent era.[191] Maitreya cults

[188] T 452.14.418–421.

[189] T 262.9.1c1–62b.

[190] Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., "Maitreya," in *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 517.

[191] John Jorgensen, *The Foresight of Dark Knowing: Chŏng Kam nok and Insurrectionary Prognostication in Pre-Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 48.

played an important role in the establishment of the new Korean religions: Because of Maitreya formidable messianic associations, Chŭngsan, the founder of Chŭngsando, declared himself to be Maitreya Buddha. Several new religions in the Chŭngsan lineage, such as Mirŭk Pulgyo 彌勒佛教 and Yonghwagyo 龍華教, also take Chŭngsan to be Maitreya. However, Sot'aesan offered a different interpretation of Maitreya Buddha and his Dragon-Flower Order, saying: "What Mirŭkpul (Maitreya) literally means is that this whole world is filled with buddhas. It means that all the myriad things of the universe and the dharma-realm of empty space will be revered as living buddhas. This era will be the world of the advent of Mirŭkpul."[192] According to Sot'aesan, the advent of Maitreya does not mean that a special savior comes into this world to build a paradise on earth. Rather, it means that all living beings and all the myriad things of the universe become buddhas. One of Sot'aesan's disciples, Ch'oe Tohwa 崔道華 (1883-1954), asked Sot'aesan, "In this world there are many people who yearn for the advent of Maitreya Buddha and the establishment of his order of the Dragon-Flower. What kind of Buddha is Maitreya, and what kind of order is the Dragon-Flower Order?"[193] Sot'aesan replied:

> Maitreya Buddha refers to the wide manifestation of the truth of the Dharmakāya Buddha. The Dragon-Flower Order means that this world becomes greatly radiant. That is, the gist of 'Everywhere a buddha image, every act a buddha offering' will be widely practiced.[194]

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[192] This is a folk etymology and paranomastic gloss. Sot'aesan, "Murŭkpul ŭi segye," *Hoebo* 32 (February, 1937), transcribed by Sŏ Taewŏn in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan* 3 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 36.

[193] "XIV Prospects: 16," in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 465.

[194] Ibid., 465-466.

When another disciple, Sŏ Taewŏn 徐大圓 (1910-1945), asked Sot'aesan, "What will the world be like when the era of Maitreya Buddha has fully arrived and the Dragon-Flower Order has been for the most part established?" Sot'aesan more explicitly articulated that

> During that era, people's intelligence will become much more advanced, so that there will be no mutual harm in all things. By distinguishing pretense from substance and truth from falsity, the practice of praying before buddha images for longevity and blessings will gradually disappear. But we will be extended to include heaven and earth, the myriad things in heaven and earth, and the dharma realm of empty space. We will sow our merits according to situations and circumstances over the whole range of the myriad things in heaven and earth and the dharma realm of empty space, whether praying for wealth, honor, or longevity. Each and every person will become a living buddha and deliver one another; each and every person will realize that he or she possesses the authority of a buddha; and every household will have buddhas living among them. There will be no need to designate a specific place as the site of the Order, for one will come to the Dragon-Flower Order wherever one goes. How can such grandeur be fully described with words and letters? In a world where this order has been established, the buddhadharma will pervade everywhere under heaven, the differentiation between monk and layperson will vanish, secular laws and the Way and its power will not be mutually obstructive, spiritual practice and mundane life will not be mutually obstructive, and the myriad living things will all be edified through its virtue.[195]

In these two answers, we can clearly note that Sot'aesan's interpretation of Maitreya Buddha differed from other contemporary understandings of the figure. First, he believed that Maitreya Buddha is not singular, but plural: as he said, "Each and every person will become a living buddha." If people are awakened to the truth that Buddha is everywhere, and therefore one should respect and revere all as living buddhas, they no longer need to pray to God or Maitreya for what they wish to have and enjoy, such as longevity and blessings. This is because they will realize that each and every person possesses what they believe God or Maitreya Buddha has. Sot'aesan called such a world the advent of Maitreya, wherein the truth of the Dharmakāya Buddha is widely made manifest. Second, Sot'aesan envisioned that the distinction between the secular and the sacred will disappear in the world of Maitreya Buddha. Therefore, there will be

[195] "XIV Prospects: 18," in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 466-467.

no differentiation between monks and laypeople. People will be able to practice Buddhism in secular life, not just in the monastery. Third, in Korean Buddhism, faith in Maitreya had resonated with people's wishes for economic prosperity. However, Sot'aesan reoriented this tendency to rely on Maitreya's power to achieve secular prosperity into an individual's own efforts to use one's own talents to prosper according to situations and circumstances.

As I suggested earlier in this chapter, Ch'oe Cheu's revelatory experience of God transformed the popular beliefs embedded in such millenarian movements as Waiting for the Future Savior Maitreya into the idea of the equality of all human beings. I propose that Sot'aesan's novel idea of "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" needs to be understood in the historical context of Suun's articulation of the universal new Heaven in all human beings. However, Sot'aesan further developed this idea from a Buddhist perspective, and sought to establish a new Buddhist community called the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe through which he attempted to realize the world of Maitreya Buddha where "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" will arise. Sot'aesan's disciples, who consisted mainly of local non-elites, left detailed records of their daily lives; these records vividly described how they transformed themselves from ordinary people, who are often considered passive and inactive agents of history, into subjective agents who, in Buddhist terminology, carved out a path for becoming enlightened bodhisattvas and buddhas for themselves—all through the guidance of their teacher, Sota'esan. The following chapters will discuss in greater depth how Sota'esan sought to establish such a Buddhist community and to instruct the common people in order to make a congregation of *a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas*.

Chapter Two. Sot'aesan's Reformation of Buddhism in the Context of Buddhist Reform Movements

1. Introduction

2. Buddhist Reform Movements during the Colonial Period

3. The Reinvention of Kanhwa Sŏn for the Common People

3-1. How Sot'aesan Encountered Kanhwa Meditation

3-2. Sot'aesan's Re-invention of Kanhwa Meditation

4. Conclusion

1. Introduction

This chapter looks closely at the preliminary development of Sot'aesan's doctrinal teachings during the colonial period. Scholars have mainly examined Wŏn Buddhist doctrines via the completed *Wŏn Buddhist Scriptures*. This approach, however, has its limits in terms of helping us understand the characteristics of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe (The Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma) and of Sot'aesan's Buddhist reform movement. Keeping in mind the evolution of his teachings over time, I will draw on contemporary records and texts from the earliest period of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe to historically examine how Sot'aesan sought to reform Korean Buddhism during the early twentieth century. In particular, it is crucial to examine the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* 修養硏究要論 (The Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry),[196] one of the earliest doctrinal texts of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, in order to understand Sot'aesan's interpretation, incorporation, and creation of religious concepts of the era, particularly his reinterpretation of *kanhwa* Sŏn.

[196] The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* 修養硏究要論 (The Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry), translated, edited, and composed by Sot'aesan (Kyŏngsŏng: Kidokkyo Yŏngmunsa Inswaeso, 1927). All translations of this text in this chapter are mine.

The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* played a key role as a textbook for the followers of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe before the society's first official scripture, the *Pogyŏng yuktae yoryŏng* 寶經六大要領 (Six Essential Principles of Treasury Scripture), was published in 1932. The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* was later developed into the *Pogyŏng samdae yoryŏng* 寶經三大要領 (Three Essential Principles of Treasury Scripture) in 1934. Based on these preliminary versions, Sot'aesan finalized and published the *Pulgyo Chŏngjŏn* 佛教正典 (The Correct Canon of Buddhism) in 1943 before passing away later that year.

The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* was published in May 1927 by the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, followed by the first text of the *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe kyuyak* (the Regulations of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe) in March 1927. The manuscript totals seventy-four pages and uses Korean and Chinese characters in combination. It states "Sot'aesan sul" 少太山 述, which means "compiled by Sot'aesan," because Sot'aesan translated the first two sections in the text from the *Chŏngsim yogyŏl*, which I have examined in the previous chapter. The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* consists of seven parts: (1) the *Chŏngjŏng yoron sang* 定靜要論 上 (the Essentials of Calmness and Quiescence I); (2) the *Chŏngjŏng yoron ha* 定靜要論 下 (the Essentials of Calmness and Quiescence II); (3) the Essentials of Inquiry; (4) the Articles to Develop during Inquiry; (5) the Articles to Forsake during Inquiry; (6) the List for Inquiry; and (7) the Procedure of Practice.

The first two chapters introduce a method for making one's mind focused or calm (定 *chŏng*) and quiescent or serene (靜 *chŏng*) based on texts from various religions, such as Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The *Chŏngjŏng yoron sang* is the Korean translation of the *Yŏngboguk chŏngjŏng py'ŏn* 靈寶局定靜篇 written in Classical Chinese, and the *Chŏngjŏng yoron ha* is mainly translated from collected excerpts of Daoist texts, such as the

Chŏnggwangyŏng 定觀經, the *Sangch'ŏng chŏnggyŏng* 上淸定經, the *T'onggogyŏng* 通古經, and the *Taet'onggyŏng* 大通經, all of which are in *The Daoist Canon* 道藏 (*Daozang*) as practice-books of inner alchemy 內丹修練書 along with some Buddhist texts. As discussed in the previous chapter, the ideas of *sich'ŏnju* (revering God within one's heart), "three-teachings syncretism," and the "practice of inner alchemy" discussed in the *Chŏngjŏng yoron* were widely shared by the leaders of new religious movements in late nineteenth- and the early twentieth-century Korea.

A close look at the last five sections of the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* can help us to better understand how Sot'aesan restructured *kanhwa* 看話 meditation, the foremost meditation technique in the Korean Sŏn tradition from the last 800 years, while he reformed Chosŏn Buddhism. Through this examination, I will show that "the threefold training" *samhak* 三學 of Wŏn Buddhism was developed from the reinterpretation of *kanhwa* Sŏn technique by Sot'aesan. Yi Kongjŏn, who played a critical role in compiling and editing the *Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn* (*The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*) as a head editor, also points out that it is necessary to inquire into why the "the threefold training" described in the *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe kyuyak*, which is the earliest text of Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, is particularly focused on the second practice of "inquiry."[197] By exploring the ways in which "the threefold training" was established by Sot'aesan's reinterpretation of *kanhwa* Sŏn, I will show how Sot'aesan sought to reform Chosŏn Buddhism for the common people in the early twentieth century. First, let us look at how Sot'aesan's

[197] Yi Kongjŏn, "*Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe kyuyak* haeje," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 6 (1982): 243.

reformation of Buddhism can be situated in the context of Buddhist reform movements during the colonial period.

2. Buddhist Reform Movements during the Colonial Period

The initial turning point in the modernization of Korean Buddhism, as many scholars have pointed out, "began from the moment when Buddhist monks were allowed to enter the cities for the first time in some three hundred years in 1895 owing to Japanese lobbying to the Kojong (r. 1864-1907) government."[198] From that moment, Chosŏn Buddhism entered a new phase. For the first time, Chosŏn Buddhists were allowed to engage in missionary activities in the cities, which implied that Buddhism, which had been hanging by a thread in the mountains during the Chosŏn dynasty, now needed to reform itself according to the needs of contemporary people. However, at the same time, Chosŏn Buddhism was forced to accommodate its traditional practice to the Japanese Government-General's laws and regulations, particularly the regulations of the Buddhist Temple Ordinance (1911), which allowed Japanese Buddhists to manage the Buddhist temples and monks in Chosŏn under its control.[199] Faced with three options—being content with its current situation, resisting Japanese rule, or succumbing to internal conflicts—Korean Buddhism began to take the path of reformation. In such a situation, in which both

[198] Robert Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 24; Kim Yŏngt'ae considers the moment of the 1876 Korean-Japan Treaty of Kanghwa to be a watershed moment in the modernization of Korean Buddhism (Kim Yŏngt'ae, "Han'guk Pulgyosa ha," in *Han'guk munhwa taegye* 11 (Seoul: Koryŏdae Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1979), 339), while Kang Sŏkchu and Pak Kyŏnhun consider the 1895 establishment of Wŏnhŭngsa, the first administrative center of all Korean Buddhist temples, to be the starting-point of modern Korean Buddhism (Kang Sŏkchu and Pak Kyŏnhun, *Pulgyo kŭnse paengnyŏn: Chung'ang sinsŏ* 71 (Seoul: Chung'ang ilbosa, 1980), 11); See also Yi Chaehŏn, *Yi Nŭnghwa wa kŭndae Pulgyohak* (Seoul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 2007), 53; Kim Kyŏngjip, *Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo sa* (Seoul: Kyŏngsŏwŏn, 1998),17-21; Kang Sŏkchu and Pak Kyŏnghun, eds., *Pulgyo kŭnse paengnyŏn*, Kaejŏngp'an (Seoul: Minjoksa, 2002), 8.

[199] See Kim Yongt'ae, "Korean Buddhism's Efforts to Establish Itself as a Modern Religion, and Its Political Subjugation to Authorities in the Process," in *The State, Religion, and Thinkers in Korean Buddhism* (Seoul: Dong'guk University Press, 2014), 195-232.

positive opportunities and negative coercion coexisted, many Buddhist reformists explored different reform theories, which eventually evolved into actual Buddhist reform movements.

As Han Kidu, Yang Ŭnyong, and many other scholars have posited, the most prominent characteristic of Korean Buddhism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the development of reform movements, through which many Buddhist scholars and monks recognized Chosŏn Buddhism's limited ability to function as a dominant and pragmatic force in society and so sought to modernize the religion.[200] Scholars have divided these Buddhist reform movements into four camps: (1) reform movements in Buddhist education and Buddhist Studies led by Yi Nŭnghwa 李能和 (1869-1943), Kwŏn Sangno 權相老 (1879-1965), Pak Hanyŏng 朴漢永(1870-1948), and Kim Yŏngsu 金映遂 (1884-1967); (2) anti-Japanese nationalist movements represented by Han Yong'un 韓龍雲 (1879 - 1944) and Paek Yongsŏng 白龍城 (1864 - 1940); (3) Sŏn school promotion movements initiated by the establishment of the Sŏn Training Institute (Sŏnhagwŏn) in 1921;[201] (4) New Buddhist reform movements represented by Paek Yongsŏng's Taegakkyo 大覺教 (Religion of Great Enlightenment) and Pak Chungbin[202] (1891-1943)'s Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe.[203]

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[200] Han Kidu, "*Pulgyo yusin non* kwa *Pulgyo hyŏksin non*," *Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng* 11 (March 1976): 346-365; Yang Ŭnyong, "Sot'aesa Taejongsa ŭi *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non* kwa Pulgyo kaehyŏk inyŏm," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 32 (February 2006): 111-138; Yi Chaehŏn, "Kŭndae Han'guk Pulgyo kaehyŏk p'aerŏdaim ŭi sŏngkyŏk kwa hangye," *Chonggyo yŏn'gu* 18 (1999, 12), 67-70.

[201] The Sŏnhagwŏn movement tried to maintain and establish the Chosŏn Buddhist Sŏn tradition as a response to the Japanese Government-General's laws and regulations, particularly the regulations for the Buddhist Temple Ordinance (1911), which allowed Japanese Buddhists to manage the Buddhist temples in Chosŏn.

[202] There have been many scholarly works on Sot'aesan's thought, his Buddhist reform movements, and comparative studies of Sot'aesan's teachings with the East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions by Wŏn Buddhist scholars. See, e.g., Bongkil Chung, *The Scriptures of Wŏn Buddhism: A Translation of the* Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn *with Introduction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

[203] Yi Chaehŏn, *Yi Nŭnghwa wa kŭndae Pulgyohak* (Seoul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 2007), 8

The reformists who belong to the first group can be characterized as leading scholars who built the academic groundwork for Korean Buddhist Studies and reform theories, but they were not activists who attempted to start a social movement.[204] Yi Nŭnghwa was a pioneering scholar in the study of Korean religions, authoring many books on various religious traditions in the early 1900s: *Paekkyo hoet'ong* (Harmonizing the Hundred Teachings, 1912), *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa* (A Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism, 1918), the posthumous work *Chosŏn togyosa* (A History of Korean Daoism, 1959), *Chosŏn sinsa-ji* (Records of Divine Matters of Korea, 1924) among others. Particularly in his book *Paekkyo hoet'ong*, Yi Nŭnghwa compares a variety of religions including Daoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Brahmanism, Shamanism, and other new religious traditions with Buddhism, through which he presents the notions of religious tolerance and pluralism. His main conclusion is that all teachings were originally the same because they were all derived from one principle, and his inclusive attitude continued to be succeeded by following Buddhist reformists.[205] In the field of Buddhist Studies, he also wrote *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa* (A Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism) in 1918, which influenced later scholars' writings about the history of Korean Buddhism.[206]

Kwŏn Sangno is considered the first Buddhist scholar who attempted to systemize the Buddhist reform paradigm by publishing the first Buddhist monthly magazine, *Chosŏn Pulgyo*

[204] Yi Pyŏnguk, "Hanguk kŭn hyundae Pulgyo kaehyŏngnon ŭi chŏngae wa yuhyŏng," *Han'guk chonggyo* 37: 119-156.

[205] Sot'aesan also stands in the same line with Yi Nŭnghwa's inclusive and religious tolerant position.

[206] See Kim Yongsŏp, "Uri nara kŭndae yŏksahak ŭi sŏngnip," *Han'guk ŭi yŏksa insik ha* (Seoul: Ch'angjak kwa Pip'yŏngsa, 1983); Yang Ŭnyong, "Yinŭnghwa ŭi hangmunkwa Pulgyo sasang," *Sungsan Pak Kilchin paksa kohŭi kinyŏm Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo sasangsa* (Wŏnkwangdae Ch'ulp'an'guk, 1984); Yi Kyŏngmu, "Yi Nŭnghwa ŭi Han'gukhak," *Hosŏ munhwa nonch'ong* 16 (February 2002): 47-64; Yi Chaehŏn, *Yi Nŭnghwa wa kŭndae Pulgyohak* (Seoul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 2007).

Wŏlbo (Monthly Magazine of Chosŏn Buddhism), in 1912 and writing *Chosŏn Pulgyo yŏksa yaksa* (An Abridged History of Korean Buddhism).[207] Kwŏn Sangno publicized the issue of the reformation of Buddhism for the first time by publishing the *Chosŏn Pulgyo kaehyŏngnon* (Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism) serially in the *Chosŏn Pulgyo Wŏlbo* from April 1912 to July 1913. This incomplete work consists of four chapters: 1) Introduction, 2) Regarding reform: the need for reform, the characteristics of reform, our relation with reform, the understanding of reform, the public application of reform, 3) Examples of past reforms, and 4) Other reforms.[208]

Despite Kwŏn Sangno's pioneering work, however, his thoughts regarding the reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism fall far short of expectations, merely addressing the necessity of such reformation without any concrete diagnosis or remedy. Even though his work is meaningful as an example of pioneering Buddhist reform thought, as Kim Chong'in argues, Kwŏn's reform thoughts on Chosŏn Buddhism remain nothing more than an overly speculative word game.[209] Pak Hanyŏng was a learned monk, Buddhist educator at a Buddhist college, and a prolific writer who produced a large body of work including Buddhist philosophy, Korean

[207] See Yi Pyŏnguk, "Han'guk kŭnhyŏndae Pulgyo kaehyŏngnon ŭi chŏn'gae wa yuhyŏng," *Han'guk chonggyo* 37 (August 2014): 119-156.

[208] See Yi Pyŏnguk, "Han'guk kŭn hyŏndae Pulgyo kaehyŏngnon ŭi chŏngae wa yuhyŏng," *Han'guk chonggyo* 37 (August 2014): 119-156; Yang Ŭnyong, "T'oegyŏng Kwŏn Sangno ŭi 'Chosŏn Pulgyo kaehyŏng-ron' kwa Pulgyo kaehyŏk sasang," *Han'guk kŭndae sasangsa t'amgu* (Seoul: Nonhyŏng, 2012); Kim Kyŏngjip, "Kwŏn Sangno ŭi kaehyŏk non yŏn'gu," *Han'guk Pulgyohak* 25 (2001): 401-427; Kim Chong'in, "Kwŏn Sangno ŭi 'Chosŏn Pulgyo Hyŏkmyŏngnon," in *Pulgyo kŭndaehwa ŭi chŏngae wa sŏnggyŏk* (Seoul: Chogyejong Ch'ulp'ansa, 2006); Yi Chaehŏn, "Kwŏn Sangno: Injae yangsŏng mot hamyŏn Pulgyo ŭi mirae nŭn ŏptta" *Pulgyo p'yŏngnon* 50 ho (2012 spring).

[209] Kim Chong'in, "Kwŏn Sangno ŭi Chosŏn Pulgyo Hyŏkmyŏngnon," in *Pulgyo kŭndaehwa ŭi chŏngae wa sŏngkyŏk*, Pulgyosa yon'gu ch'ongsŏ 1 (Seoul: Chogyejong Ch'ulp'ansa, 2006), 135-159.

Buddhist history, and newspaper articles about the need for Buddhist reformation.[210] Kim Yŏngsu was one of the pioneering scholars who helped establish the foundation for modern Buddhist Studies in Korea. He wrote a wide range of philosophical textbooks, such as *Han'guk sasangsa* (The History of Korean Thought) and *Pulgyo kyori paltalsa* (The History of the Development of Buddhist Doctrines), all of which are considered foundational works for Korean Studies as well as Buddhist Studies. These reformists who belong to the first group can be characterized as leading scholars who built a foundational ground for academic Korean Buddhist Studies and reform theories, but they were not activists who attempted to start a social movement.

Unlike this first group, the reform movements led by Han Yong'un, Paek Yongsŏng, and Pak Chungbin were more concrete and practical.[211] Analyzing the many problems facing Buddhism at that time, Han Yong'un pointed out the urgent necessity of Buddhist engagement in social issues as well as of Taejung Pulgyo (Buddhism for the masses).[212] In the *Chosŏn Pulgyo yusin non* (*Treatise on the Revitalization of Chosŏn Buddhism*), written in September 1910 and published in May 1913, Han Yong'un discusses a wide range of critical issues that Chosŏn Buddhism was facing at that time: 1) the education of monks, 2) the meditation practice of *ch'am sŏn* (*kanhwa* meditation), 3) the abolition of Amitābha prayer halls (*yŏmbultang*), 4) Buddhist

[210] See Kim Sang'il, "Sŏkchŏn Pak Hanyŏng ŭi chŏsul sŏnghyang kwa kŭndae Pulgyohak-chŏk ŭiŭi," *Pulgyohakpo* (February 2007): 139 –159; Kim Sang'il, "Kŭndae Pulgyo chisŏng kwa Pulgyo chapchi: Sŏkchŏn Pak Hanyŏng kwa Manhae Han Yong'un ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Tong'ak ŏ munhak* 52 (February 2009): 5-30.

[211] See Kim Sunsŏk, "Han Yong'un kwa Paek Yongsŏng ŭi kŭndae Pulgyo kaehyŏknon pigyo yŏn'gu," *Han'guk kŭnhyŏndaesa yŏn'gu* 35 (December 2005): 68-91.

[212] Pori Park, "The Modem Remaking of Korean Buddhism: The Korean Reform Movement During Japanese Colonial Rule and Han Yongun's Buddhism (1879-1944)," (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles), 25.

missionary work, 5) the location of temples, 6) the images worshipped by Buddhists, 7) various Buddhist rituals, 8) the restoration of monks' human rights, 9) the modernization of Buddhist scriptures, 10) the advocacy of clerical marriage and a meat diet.[213] Han Yong'un argues that the revitalization of Chosŏn Buddhism should begin with the fundamental destruction of the status quo, stating that destruction is "the mother of reformation."[214] According to Han Yong'un, Chosŏn Buddhism mainly faced two critical issues: first, despite its Mahāyāna ideal, it lacked a bodhisattva spirit toward the people, being deeply steeped in the "self-centered Sŏn tradition" of Korean Buddhism; second, lay Buddhism fell into the trap of "fortune-seeking" (Kibok) Buddhism.[215] Because of these problems, Korean Buddhist teachings were not able to reach the populace, thus losing its salvific social potential.[216] Han argued that "tradition" should be realigned with modern rational thinking by destroying the status quo of Chosŏn Buddhism. With

[213] In 1910, Yi Hoegwang (1862-1933) attempted to merge the first modern sect of Korean Buddhism, the Wŏnjong 圓宗 (established in 1908), with a Japanese Buddhist sect called Sōtōshū without consulting his colleagues. As a response to this pro-Japanese Buddhist organization, Han Yong'un immediately formed a nationwide campaign to reinvigorate Korean Buddhism with a spirit of independence. To this end, Han wrote the treatise "On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism" in 1910. See Han Yong'un, "On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism," in *Selected Writings of Han Yongun: From Social Darwinism to Socialism with a Buddhist Face* (Global Oriental, 2008), 41-152. Regarding the historical context of these events, see Nam-lin Hur, "Han Yong'un (1879-1944) and Buddhist Reform in Colonial Korea," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2010): 76; Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, *Empire of the Dharma: Korean and Japanese Buddhism*, 1877-1919 (Cambridge and London, 2012), 1-3; Mark A. Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities: A History of Buddhist Propagation in Modern Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2018), 52-53.

[214] Han Yong'un, "On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism," 56.

[215] Nam-lin Hur reads Han Yong'un's treatise on "Chosŏn Pulgyo yusin non" by focusing on these two problems that Chosŏn Buddhism faced during the colonial period. Hur argues that even though Han Yong'un attempted to reform Korean Buddhism by bridging the gap between monastic-centered Buddhism and lay Buddhism, Han's reformation was not successful. See Nam-lin Hur, "Han Yong'un (1879-1944) and Buddhist Reform in Colonial Korea," 75-97.

[216] Han Yong'un states in his treatise, "The reason why Korean Buddhism is downtrodden is that it lacks strength, and this, in turn is due to the fact that its teachings are not being propagated." See Han Yong'un, "On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism," 74.

the Mahāyāna idea of the universal Buddha-nature immanent in all beings, ultimately, he pursued the popularization of Buddhism under the slogan of "Buddhism from the mountains to the streets, from the clergy to the public!"[217] Calling for Korean Buddhism to be transformed from a monastic-centered religion into Taejung Buddhism, Han Yong'un also compiled the *Pulgyo Taejŏn* (the Great Canon of Buddhism), which provides lay people with the essence of Buddhist teachings and a guide for their religious lives.[218]

Paek Yongsŏng, an anti-Japanese national activist, dedicated his life to popularizing Buddhism for the public by translating difficult Buddhist scriptures into vernacular Korean and composing Buddhist hymns and lyrics.[219] He also initiated the modern Buddhist purification movement by establishing the Hwalgu Ch'amsŏn Manil Kyŏlsahoe (Society for Meditating on the Live Word for Ten-Thousand Days) at Mangwŏlsa in the mountains of Tobong. Unlike Han Yong'un, Paek Yongsŏng disagreed with the idea of clerical marriage and a meat diet for monks. By establishing an independent order called "Taegakkyo," he called for Buddhism to engage with social issues, which could be achieved through means such as establishing an industrial factory and a consumer cooperative union. However, scholars have pointed out that Paek

[217] Han Yong'un, "Choson Pulgyo ui kaehyŏk an," in *Pulgyo* 88 ho, 10. In his book *From the Mountains to the Cities*, Mark A. Nathan notes that "the mountain Buddhist trope" (*sanjung Pulgyo*) signified both the spatial and social isolation of Chosŏn Buddhism in the late nineteenth century. Most Buddhist reformists, including Han Yong'un, shared this perception and attempted to overcome the spatial and social marginalization of the Korean Buddhist tradition through the new notion of *p'ogyo* (propagation). See Mark A. Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities*, 48-50.

[218] Pori Park, "The Modern Remaking of Korean Buddhism," 131-148; Vladimir Tikhonov, "Manhae Han Yongun's Attempt at Producing an All-Inclusive Modern Buddhist Compendium – Pulgyo Taejŏn," in *Zen Buddhist Rhetoric in China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Christoph Anderl (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 399-416.

[219] Kim Chŏnghŭi, "Paek Yongsŏng ŭi isang sahoe wa Pulgyo kaehyŏngnon: Kŭndae wa chŏngt'ong ŭi mannam," *Ch'ŏlhak sasang* 17 (December 2003): 6.

Yongsŏng's Buddhist reform movement basically pursued the restoration of traditional Buddhism, rather than the radical reformation of Buddhism.[220]

Sot'aesan entered the discourse on the reform of mainstream Buddhism by publishing the *Chosŏn Pulgyo Hyŏksin non* (*Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism*) in 1935, which he had drafted while staying at the Pongnae hermitage in the Southwestern province of Korea from 1920 to 1923. At that time, Paek Hangmyŏng 白鶴鳴 (1867-1929), who was senior to one of the leading Sŏn masters, was advocating for the "half labor and half meditation" movement for monks, and actively supported Sot'aesan's reform project in various ways. Not only did he help Sot'aesan stay in Pyŏnsan for four years, but when Sot'aesan shared with him the progress he had made in carrying out his vision, Hangmyŏng proposed to offer Naejang Monastery, where Hangmyŏng was to serve as abbot, as the new base for Sot'aesan's project, saying:

> The hermitage called 'Wŏnjŏkam' 圓寂庵 can be your main residential room. After establishing meditation halls and lecture halls in the old Naejang monastery, we can educate all the scholarly monks and meditation monks by encouraging them to "work during the day and practice (meditation) at night" and "cultivate both spirit and flesh in whole" as you (Sot'aesan) articulated. In front of the Wŏnjŏkam, we can build a reservoir by blocking off the water of the lake. We can turn the grass field below the reservoir into a rice field, which would be over one hundred *turak*s. Planting several thousand persimmon and chestnut trees in the mountains near the Naejang monastery can be the endowment fund for the education of the younger generation. The total income from the rice field, the persimmon trees in the mountains, as well as donations from the laity would be not inconsiderable and therefore they would be enough for food for about dozens of people. In addition to that, when the tideland field that you have made in Kilyong-li in Yŏnggwang is completed, the amount of harvested rice will be more than two hundred *sŏk*.[221] If we turn the grass field into a rice field, we can also harvest almost more than one hundred *sŏk*. The mountain field that we are cultivating at the monastery can produce several *sŏm*s. If we gradually work together in this way, we can even

[220] See Kim Chŏnghŭi, "Paek Yongsŏng ŭi isang sahoe wa Pulgyo kaehyŏngnon: Kŭndae wa chŏnt'ong ŭi mannam," (2003): 5-37; Kim Kwangsik, "Paek Yongsŏng kwa Sot'aesan ŭi tong'i e taehan myŏkkaji munje," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 69 (February 2015): 63-96.

[221] *Sŏk* is unit of volume for grains, liquids, etc. Amounts approximately to 180 liters.

> educate several hundred people. Please, don't worry about anything and let's go to the Naejang monastery.[222]

However, Paek's proposal was rejected by many of the monks residing at the monastery. Sot'aesan was aware of the limits inherent to reforming Chosŏn Buddhism based on the existing monastic system. In fact, by the time Hangmyŏng suggested him to use Naejang monastery as his base of operations, Sot'aesan had already launched his new project with his disciples, and he soon opened a new base called the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe in Iri (now Iksan), in the southwestern province of North Chŏlla province, in 1924.

Chŏng Sunil argues that Sot'aesan's Buddhist reform thought was influenced by both Han Yong'un and Paek Hangmyŏng, even though their respective ideas regarding Buddhist reform were quite different.[223] When we compare the two masters' opinions on the reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism, it becomes apparent that Sot'aesan accepted Han's *Chosŏn Pulgyo yusin non* in many respects and developed it into his own Buddhist reform thought.[224] Chŏng Sunil also suggests a very feasible possibility that the three reformists had a meeting at the Wŏlmyŏng-am 月明庵 (Wŏlmyŏng Hermitage) in 1923, which spurred both Hangmyŏng and Sot'aesan to

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[222] Song Kyu, "Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe ch'anggŏnsa: Pon hoe ŭi ch'angnip," *Hoebo che 46 ho* (1938, July and August), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'ŏnggan che 5 kwŏn*: *Wŏnbulgyo kibon saryo py'ŏn* [1973] (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 1994, 37-38.

[223] Chŏng Sunil shows that the three reformers of Chosŏn Buddhism met at the Wŏlmyŏng-am in 1923, which provided an important motivation for both Sot'aesan and Hangmyŏng to leave the Wŏlmyŏng-am to embark on their respective reform projects. After the meeting, Hangmyŏng launched his reform project at the Naejang temple while Sot'aesan established the Society for the Study of the Buddhadhama in Iksan in 1924. See Chŏng Sunil, "Sot'aesan ŭi Pulgyo kahyŏk undong kwa Hangmyŏng, Manhae kŭrigo Yongsŏng," *Wŏnbulgyo Sasang yŏn'guwŏn haksul taehoe* (2014, February): 7-36.

[224] There are several papers that compare Sot'aesan's Buddhist reform ideas with Han Yong'un's. See Chŏng Sunil, "Sot'aesan ŭi Pulgyo kahyŏk undong kwa Hangmyŏng, Manhae kŭrigo Yongsŏng," *Wŏnbulgyo Sasang yŏn'guwŏn haksul taehoe* (2014, February): 7-36; Bokin Kim, "Sot'aesan and the Reformation of Korean Buddhism," *Korean Studies* vol. 19 (1995): 51-61.

leave the Wŏlmyŏng-am to embark on their respective reform projects.[225] Sot'aesan also read Han Yong'un's *Pulgyo Taejŏn*.[226] By reading the book, he may have been aware of Han Yong'un's Buddhist reform ideas, particularly regarding the issue of making Buddhism accessible for the common people.

In *Chosŏn Pulgyo Hyŏksin non*, Sot'aesan proposed five agendas for reforming Korean Buddhism: "1) from Buddhism from abroad to Buddhism for Koreans; 2) from Buddhism of the past to Buddhism of the present and future; 3) from Buddhism of a few monks to Buddhism of the general public; 4) from sectarian Buddhism to a non-sectarian Buddhism; 5) from a devotional form of Buddhism to a Buddhism of practice by replacing Buddha images in the main Dharma hall with the circular symbol of Buddha-nature."[227] For Sot'aesan, the most urgent issue in reforming Chosŏn Buddhism was to revitalize Buddhist teachings for the general public, and Sot'aesan's reform directions were in line with Han Yong'un's and Paek Yongsŏng's. As Kim Kwangsik points out, Han Yong'un's Buddhist reform ideas emphasized the issue of how to make Buddhism more suitable and accessible to the general populace.[228] Namely, for Han Yong'un, Paek Yongsŏng and Sot'aesan, Buddhism should not remain in the mountains for monks, but should be relocated to the cities for the benefit of all people. In this regard, Sot'aesan, Han Yong'un and Paek Yongsŏng all shared the idea that Taejung Pulgyo was an important direction for the reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism.

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[225] Chŏng Sunil, "Sot'aesan ŭi Pulgyo kahyŏk undong kwa Hangmyŏng, Manhae kŭrigo Yongsŏng," 7-36.

[226] According to Pak Yongdŏk, it was in 1917 that Sot'aesan read the *Diamond Sutra*, which one of his disciples, Yi Chaep'ung, attained from the Pulgap temple. After that, Sot'aesan perused *Sŏnyo*, *P'alsangnok*, and *Pulgyo Taejŏn* in order. See Pak Yongdŏk, *Sot'aesan ŭi taegak pang'ŏn chohap undong ŭi chŏngae*: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 1 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 229.

[227] Sot'aesan, *Chosŏn Pulgyo Hyŏksin non*.

[228] Kim Kwangsik, *Manhae Han Yong'un yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2011), 182.

> Buddhism became a religion for a few when it was ill-treated and persecuted [during the Chosŏn dynasty]. The doctrine and system of traditional Buddhism were mainly structured for the monastic livelihood of the Buddhist monks who abandoned their secular lifestyle, and hence, were unsuitable for those people living in the secular world. Although there were faithful lay devotees in the secular world, they could not become central in their roles and status, only secondary. Accordingly, the lay devotee could not stand in the lineage of the direct disciples of the Buddha or become an ancestor of Buddhism easily except for those who made unusual material contributions or attained extraordinary spiritual cultivations. How can this doctrine and system be beneficial for the majority of ordinary people?[229]

For most of the common people, Buddhism remained merely a devotional form of practice. Unless they dedicated themselves to monastic life, the common people were not able to learn Buddhist teachings and further practice them in their lives. In order to make Buddhism more accessible to and suitable for all people, Sot'aesan attempted to provide new Buddhist practices for human life based on the Buddhadharma. When such new Buddhist ways of living were offered for the general public, Sot'aesan proposed, then the Buddhism that had been foreign to them in its 1500-year history would become a Buddhism for the Korean people. Sot'aesan considered Buddhism still to be a foreign religion to most Korean people because Buddhist scriptures in Classical Chinese cannot be read by Korean people, preventing them from accessing the essence of Buddhist teachings.

Despite the fact that Sot'aesan shared the same orientation as Han Yong'un and Paek Yongsŏng, however, Sot'aesan's reformation of Korean Buddhism was different from those of the other two reformists in two ways. First, while Han Yong'un paid more attention to the theoretical foundation for the development of popular Buddhism, Sot'aesan instead endeavored to realize such reform ideas in society by creating a Buddhist community called the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. Sot'aesan's movement was not concerned with monastic-centered reforms. His

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[229] Sot'aesan, "Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non," trans. by Kwangsoo Park in *The Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo) of Sot'aesan: A Twnetieth-Century Religious Movement in Korea* (San Francisco, London, Bethesda: International Scholarships Publications, 1997), 297.

focus was on developing new presentations of Buddhist doctrines and practices that could easily be taught to the people. While endeavoring to keep the essence of the Buddhadharma intact, Sot'aesan sought to transform the monastic-centered Chosŏn Buddhism into a practical, socially relevant, modernized Buddhism. What Sot'aesan argued is that Buddhism should be transformed in accordance with the times and the needs of the people.

Second, while Han Yong'un and Paek Yongsŏng focused on the issue of how to translate Buddhist texts written in classical Chinese into vernacular Korean in order to popularize Buddhism for the general public,[230] Sot'aesan's approach differed.[231] To make Buddhism more accessible and relevant for the people, Sot'aesan created a set of new practices and teachings. The main direction of his reformation lies in the hope that all people, regardless of their gender, status, class, and age, should be able to understand the essence of Buddhist teachings and practice it in their everyday lives, not just rely on devotional worship or on authoritative teachers. By taking this tack, Sot'aesan sought to enable both his lay and his ordained followers to be considered to fall within the lineage of the direct disciples of the Buddha, so that they could achieve enlightenment and apply that experience in their daily lives.

The establishment of the community was announced at the first general meeting for the foundation of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe on April 29, 1924 (Wŏn Buddhist year 9).[232] This was a

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[230] Han Yong'un, "Choson Pulgyo kaehyŏk an" (Project for the Reform of Korean Buddhism), in *Sŏn and Human Life* (Seoul: Dongsŏ Books, 1977), 209-210; Paek Yongsŏng, *Chosŏn kŭl Hwaŏm kyŏng: Yongsŏng Taejongsa chŏnjip kwŏn 12.*

[231] Bokin Kim also points this out in her paper by comparing Sot'aesan's reformation of Korean Buddhism with Han Yong'un's. See Bokin Kim, "Sot'aesan's Reformation of Korean Buddhism," *Korean Studies*, Vol. 19 (1995), 53; Kim Kwangsik also compares Sot'aesan's reformation of Korean Buddhism with Paek Yongsŏng's and concludes that So'taesan's idea of creating a new Korean Buddhist text rather than translating Buddhist texts in Classical Chinese into vernacular Korean is radical. See Kim Kwangsik, "Paek Yongsŏng kwa Sot'aesan ŭi tong'i e taehan myŏt kaji munje," 63-96.

[232] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 50.

Buddhist community that did not differentiate between lay followers and ordained ministers. Sot'aesan's means of reforming Buddhism was not purely hypothetical; instead, he formed a Buddhist community in which everyone could practice Buddhism together in their everyday lives. Sot'aesan provided two reasons for his decision to establish his new base in Iri (Iksan): "Since Iri and its vicinity are spacious and easily accessible from all directions, it seems to be a convenient location for those without property to live and for believers from various parts of the country to come and go."[233] Here, we can clearly see Sot'aesan' intention to begin his reform movement with a focus on the poor and the common people. Therefore, the main characteristic of Sot'aesan's Buddhist reform movement can be summarized in one of its founding mottoes: "Buddhadharma is daily life and daily life is the Buddhadharma" (*pulpŏp si saenghwal* 佛法是生活 and *saenghwal si pulpŏp* 生活是佛法).[234]

By orienting *Taejung Pulgyo* in this manner, Sot'aesan sought to create a Buddhism for the general public that emphasizes practice and daily life, while de-emphasizing sectarianism and monasticism. However, his reformation of Buddhism did not develop in a vacuum. His central issue in reforming Chosŏn Buddhism can be traced back to the Buddhist teachings and practices of that time, particularly *kanhwa* Sŏn.

3. The Reinvention of *Kanhwa* Sŏn for the Common People

Kanhwa 看話 meditation is conceived as a practical subitist technique by which one can not only catalyze enlightenment but also simultaneously perfect enlightened action. For the last 800 years, *kanhwa* has been considered the most important meditation technique in the Korean Sŏn tradition. In the more recent history of modern Korean Buddhism, in particular, since the

[233] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism: Wŏnbulgyo Yŏngŏ Kyosa* (Iksan: Wŏn-Buddhist Publishing, 2006), 49.

[234] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, vii.

Sŏn master Kyŏnghŏ 鏡虛 (1849-1912) revitalized *kanhwa* Sŏn in the early twentieth century, this meditation technique has taken become the emblematic Sŏn practice in Korean monasteries. Most of the leading Sŏn masters in early modern Korea, such as Yongsŏng, Mangong, Hangmyŏng, and Han'am, among others, practiced *kanhwa* meditation and instructed their disciples with this specific Sŏn technique. However, this meditation technique that is so central to Korean Buddhism has not yet been examined in relation to the Buddhist reformation led by Sot'aesan. This connection is especially worthy of attention because there appear to be close historical connections between the *kanhwa* technique and the methods of Sŏn training taught by Sot'aesan. I seek to examine Sot'aesan's re-structuring of *kanhwa* meditation by situating it in the historical context of Korean Buddhist reform movements during the early twentieth century. To this end, first of all, a close historical analysis is necessary to determine the sources from which Sot'aesan learned about *kanhwa* meditation, how he interpreted this technique, how he appraised its efficacy, and thereby how he restructured it in his reformation of Buddhism. When we situate his reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism in this broader historical context,[235] we will be able to perceive the influence that this revered Sŏn technique of *kanhwa* meditation had on the content and structure of Sot'aesan's reformation of Korean Buddhism.

3-1. How Sot'aesan Encountered *kanhwa* Sŏn

In the extant historical records of Wŏn Buddhism, there are several sources from which we can infer how Sot'aesan encountered the method of *kanhwa* meditation. The first was the *Sŏnyo* 禪要 (Essentials of Chan), an important primer on *kanhwa* meditation, which Sot'aesan perused after his enlightenment in 1916. The second was his series of meetings with famous Sŏn

[235] See Chŏng Sunil, "Sot'aesan ŭi Pulgyo kaehyŏk undong kwa Hangmyŏng, Manhae, kŭrigo Yongsŏng," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang yŏn'guwŏn haksul taehoe* (2014): 7-36.

masters in the early 1900s, specifically Paek Hangmyŏng 白鶴鳴 (1867-1929), abbot of Wŏlmyŏng-am, and Han Manhŏ 韓鍊虛 (1856 -1935), abbot of Silsang temple. Therefore, in this section, I will examine how these two sources of influence led to Sot'aesan's distinctive understanding and interpretation of the traditional *kanhwa* Sŏn technique.

1) *Sŏnyo* 禪要 (Essentials of Chan)

One of the routes through which Sot'aesan must have encountered the method of *kanhwa* mediation is through the *Sŏnyo*, which has played a cardinal role as a practical primer of *kanhwa* Sŏn in Korean monasteries since at least the fifteenth century.[236]

According to *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*,[237] Sot'aesan's spiritual journey was prompted by the manifold questions he had about natural and human phenomena. As he searched for answers through meeting with masters for over eleven years, his mind became completely absorbed in the contemplation of these subjects. All of his questions eventually coalesced, we are told, into a single one: "What shall I do with this?" Then, his concentration on this question continued single-mindedly from morning to evening and from evening to morning. Finally, Sot'aesan entered into a deeper *samādhi* in which even the question itself disappeared.

> Around the age of twenty-five, Sot'aesan abandoned the question of "What should I do in the future with this question of seeking the truth?" He then entered into a state of non-consciousness [unconsciousness], in which he was not conscious of his own actions.[238]

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[236] Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark: The Korean Buddhist Master Chinul's Excerpts on Zen Practice*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 84.

[237] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism* (Iksan: Wŏn Buddhist Publishing Co. 2006), 20. This is a translation of *Wŏnbulgyo Kyosa* (The History of Wŏn Buddhism), a text that was written based on the *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe ch'anggŏnsa* (The History of Establishment of the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma). The *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe ch'anggŏnsa* describes the first twelve years of the history of Wŏn Buddhism (1916-1927) and was written by Song Kyu 宋 奎 (1900-1962), better known by his penname Chŏnsan 鼎山, under the supervision of Sot'aesan and published serially in the *Heobo* (Monthly Magazine) vol. 34-47 from December 1937 to November 1938.

[238] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 20.

After this, he came to be regarded as a living corpse, a state of being that stirred much criticism and finally ostracism from his neighbors. Not long after, Sot'aesan began to come out of his deep *samādhi* and finally he attained enlightenment in the early morning of the twenty-sixth day of the third month of the lunar calendar (April 28, 1916).[239]

Upon his enlightenment in 1916, Sot'aesan perused a wide range of religious texts available to him at that time in an attempt to understand what he had experienced. The *Sŏnyo* was one of the texts he carefully scrutinized. According to *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, the texts Sot'aesan closely read include the *Sasŏ* 四書 (Four Classics)[240] and the *Hyogyŏng* 孝經 (Classic of Filial piety) of Confucianism; the *Kŭmgang kyŏng* 金剛經 (Diamond Sūtra), the *Sŏnyo* 禪要 (Essentials of Chan), the *Pulgyo taejŏn* 佛敎大典 (The Great Canon of Buddhism),[241] and *P'alsang nok* (Eight Episodes from the Buddha's Life) of Buddhism; the *Ŭmbu kyŏng* 陰符經 (Scripture of the Hidden Aggrement) and the *Okch'u kyŏng* 玉樞經 (Scripture of the Jade Pivot) of Daoism; the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* 東經大全 (Scripture of Eastern

[239] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 20-21.

[240] The Four Classics include the *Daxue* 大學 (*Great Learning*), the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*Doctrine of the Mean*), the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), and the Mengzi 孟子(*Mencius*).

[241] *Pulgyo Taejŏn* was published in 1914 at the Pŏmŏ-sa (Pŏmŏ monastery). Han Yong'un compiled the *Pulgyo Taejŏn* (the Great Canon of Buddhism) to provide lay people with the essence of Buddhist teachings and a guide for their religious lives. Sot'aesan lived in Yŏnggwang, a poor and remote village at that time. Yi Chŏngjae and Pak Yongdŏk have attempted to understand how it was possible for Sot'aesan to obtain the book so soon after it was published. Based on several extant oral records and historical documents, Yi Chŏngjae, Pak Yongdŏk, and Chŏng Sunil assume that it was Paek Hangmyŏng who sent the book to Sot'aesan. See Yi Chŏngjae, "Sot'aesan ŭi kusa ilhwa punsŏk kwa Paek Hangmyŏng ŭi kwangye yŏn'gu: Pŏp ilhwa puch'ŏ rŭl sihŏphan il chungsim ŭro," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 62 (December 2014): 91-116; Chŏng Sunil, "Ch'ogi Wŏnbulgyo kyodan ŭl para ponŭn saeroun sigak: Pulpŏp e taehan sŏnŏn kwa kwanryŏn hayŏ," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 62 (June 2014): 255-289; Pak Yongdŏk, *Sot'aesan ŭi taegak pang'ŏn chohap undong ŭi chŏngae: Ch'ogi kyodansa* 1 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1997), 144-145.

Learning) and the *Yongdam yusa* 龍潭遺詞 (Fragmentary Songs of Yongdam) of Tonghak; and the Old and New Testaments of Christianity.[242] After closely reading these scriptures, Sot'aesan stated, "Even though I have attained the Way without any teacher's guidance, upon reflecting on many points, I have come to realize that my former aspiration and the course of my ascetic practice for attaining the Way coincide with what Śākyamuni Buddha did and said. Hence, I choose Śākyamuni Buddha as the origin of my enlightenment."[243] Because of this specific description, scholars often compare the process of Sot'aesan's enlightenment with that of Śākyamuni Buddha.

However, when we read the story of Sot'aesan's enlightenment process in The History of Wŏn Buddhism and the enlightenment process of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295, K. Kobong Wŏnmyo), it quickly becomes clear that what Gaofeng Yuanmiao describes in the *Sŏnyo* is very similar to Sot'aesan's enlightenment process. In the description stating that "the course of my ascetic practice for attaining the Way coincides with that of Śākyamuni Buddha," the phrase "Śākyamuni Buddha" may not just refer to the historical Buddha, but also the source of all subsequent developments in Buddhism, including such Sŏn techniques as *kanhwa* Sŏn. Thus, when Sot'aesan talks about the parallels between his experience of enlightenment and that of the Buddha, he likely means that he noticed the affinities between the accounts of enlightenment across the Buddhist tradition in general.

Written by the Linji Chan master Gaofeng Yuanmiao, the *Sŏnyo* not only describes the fundamental premise and process of *kanhwa* meditation, but also offers a detailed account of Gaofeng's own enlightenment experiences. The *Sŏnyo*'s teachings are based on the fundamental

[242] "Wŏnbulgyo kyosa," in *Wŏnbulgyo Chŏnsŏ*, 1041.

[243] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 24.

Chan premise that all sentient beings are already endowed with the Buddha-nature, and therefore "sudden awakening followed by sudden cultivation," if properly catalyzed by *kanhwa* meditation, is possible for all practitioners. The book also explains two main obstacles that prevent practitioners from reaching the stage of catalyzing enlightenment in the course of practicing *kanhwa* meditation: torpor and mental distraction. Gaofeng Yuanmiao suffered from both of them. According to Gaofeng Yuanmiao, the main antidote to these two obstacles is to generate "the great sensation of doubt," and therefore generating "the sensation of doubt" becomes the key to enlightenment. In order to generate the sensation of doubt, two other critical factors are required: great faith and fury.

Let us look at some specific passages describing these subjects. Gaofeng Yuanmiao explains how he had reached his first enlightenment through *kanhwa* meditation by generating the intensive sensation of doubt:

> Unexpectedly in my sleep I began to doubt [the Ch. *huatou*, K. *hwadu*] "the thousand dharmas return to one; to what does the one return?" At that point, the sensation of doubt suddenly erupted. I stopped sleeping and forgot about eating. I couldn't distinguish east from west and couldn't tell day from night. Whether spreading out my sitting mat or laying out my bowls, whether defecating or urinating—finally whether active or still, whether speaking or silent, everything was just this "to what does the one return?" There wasn't the slightest extraneous thought. And even if I had wanted to think of something else, I was utterly incapable of doing it. [My mind] was exactly like something nailed or glued: no matter how hard you shook it, it would not move. Even if I was in a dense crowd of people, it was like no one was there. From dawn till dusk, from dusk till dawn, [my mind was] lucid and profound, lofty and imposing, pristine and flawless. One thought seemed to last for ten thousand years. The sense realms were tranquil and all sense of person was forgotten. It was as if I were stupid or senseless.[244]
> 忽於睡中。疑著萬法歸一。一歸何處。自此疑情頓發。廢寢忘餐。東西不辨。晝夜不分。開單展鉢。屙屎放尿。至於一動一靜。一語一默。總只是箇一歸何處。更無絲毫異念。亦要起絲毫異念。了不可得。正如釘釘膠粘。撼搖不動。雖在稠人廣眾

[244] Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "The Transformation of Doubt (Yijing/Ŭijŏng 疑情) in Chinese Buddhist Meditation: The Testimony of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)," in Halvor Eifring, ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004), 225-236.

中。如無一人相似。從朝至暮。從暮至朝。澄澄湛湛。卓卓巍巍。純清絕點。一念萬年。境寂人忘。如癡如兀。[245]

Here, Gaofeng Yuanmiao describes how the *hwadu* triggered his mind to produce the sensation of doubt. In such an intensive, dense sensation of doubt, he forgot that he even had a mind and a body, let alone the ideas of eating, sleeping, or knowing himself. But at the same time his mind was as clear, calm, and profound as if he were an insentient being. Gaofeng Yuanmiao proceeds to share the experiences that followed this event. He states that the subsequent six days passed without his realizing it. Under this deep meditative trance, he followed a crowd of people to Samt'ap temple. At the Samt'ap temple, while reciting scriptures, all of a sudden, he raised his head and saw the portrait of Fayan 法演 *hwasang*, the fifth patriarch. As soon as he saw the portrait, in that brief moment he came to complete explosive consciousness regarding the *hwadu* "what is *this* that carries this body," which Yangshan 仰山 *hwasang* had given him previously. He said that it was as if a mirror were reflecting a mirror, as he completely forgot the objective world and himself.[246] At that time, when he closely scrutinized all of the *hwadu*s that he had previously examined, such as Baizhang's wild fox, Zhaozhou's "no," Jingzhou's hemp-cloth, etc., there were none that were not clear to him.[247]

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[245] *Gaofeng Chanyao,* sect. 1, *Xuzangjing (Supplement to the Canon),* vol. 122: 257a ff. There is no standard edition of this text. Therefore, following Buswell's suggestion, I also cite it only by section number. See Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "The Transformation of Doubt (Yijing/Ŭijŏng 疑情) in Chinese Buddhist Meditation: The Testimony of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)," in Halvor Eifring, ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004). 225-236.

[246] Ibid., sect. 1. 不覺至第六日 隨眾在三塔諷經次。抬頭忽睹五祖演和尚真 驀地觸發日前仰山老和尚問拖死屍句子 直得虛空粉碎 大地平沉 物我俱忘 如鏡照鏡。

[247] Ibid., sect. 1. 百丈野狐 狗子佛性 青州布衫 女子出定話 從頭密舉 驗之無不了了。般若妙用 信不誣矣。

Sot'aesan's and Gaofeng's enlightenment accounts represent the process of attaining enlightenment through *kanhwa* meditation practice. Both of them had reached an intensive concentrated state of mind by profoundly engaging in a similar kind of spiritual questioning. Because they were deeply absorbed in such an intensive sensation of doubt, the question itself vividly occupied their body and mind, and later on they reached a deep *samādhi* in which all of the conventionally constructed objective world disappeared. Gaofeng realized he had reached enlightenment when he noticed that he had a perfectly clear understanding of all of the *hwadu*s that he had previously examined. In a similar way, Sot'aesan recalled all of the *ŭidu*s 疑頭 (questions or doubts) that he had previously struggled with, and "realized their meanings with perfect clarity in a single thought,"[248] thus completing a long spiritual journey. Through reading the text *Sŏnyo*, Sot'aesan may well have realized the similarity between *kanhwa* Sŏn technique and his own process of attaining enlightenment.

2) Dialogues with Paek Hangmyŏng and Han Manhŏ

The other way that Sot'aesan may have encountered the method of *kanhwa* mediation is through visiting Wŏlmyŏng-am and Silsang-sa 實相寺 (Silsang Monastery). Sot'aesan visited the Buddhist hermitage of Wŏlmyŏng in 1919 when he was searching for a place to rest after completing one of his first joint projects with his earliest disciples: the embankment project, through which he reclaimed twenty-five acres of riverside tidal land and turned it into rice paddies. During a dharma talk in December 8, 1941, Sot'aesan shared with his disciples his first experience of visiting Wŏlmyŏng-am:

> When I visited Wŏlmyŏng-am in Pyŏnsan, there was a Buddhist phrase attached to the wall, which said, "What is that thing which is not associated with the myriad dharmas?" (*pulyŏ manpŏp uiryŏja sisimma* 不與萬法爲侶者 是什麽). No matter how I parsed it, I couldn't understand its meaning. I was ashamed, so I went into the guest room and sat for

[248] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 21-23.

> a while. But that phrase was not leaving my head. I was served a cup of tea and, as I drank the tea, all of a sudden, I came to understand what it meant. After that, upon seeing the phrase, "The myriad dharmas return to one; where does the one return?" (*manpŏp kuiil ilguihach'ŏ* 萬法歸一 一歸何處), I immediately understood it.[249]

Sot'aesan candidly expresses his amazement upon encountering the *hwadu*: "What is that thing which is not associated with the myriad dharmas?"[250] When he first read it, he could not understand what this *hwadu* meant, but he continued to puzzle over it until he finally understood it clearly. According to the "Biography of Hangmyŏng" in *Hangmyŏng chip*,[251] when residing at Wŏlmyŏng-am at the age of forty-six, Hangmyŏng also encountered this same *hwadu.* At that time, he felt like he was in the dark, as if he had put his face up against a wall. Then, he devoted himself to this *hwadu* for several days without eating and sleeping. All of a sudden, he reached the same illuminating state that the buddhas and masters reached.[252] Hangmyŏng's own encounter with this *hwadu* must have been why this phrase was put up on the wall at Wŏlmyŏng-am when Sot'aesan visited.

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[249] Yi Kongju, "Sup'il Pŏpsŏl," in *Tol i sŏsŏ mulsori rŭl tŭnnŭnda: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa* 2, Pak Yongdŏk, (Iksan: Wŏnkwang University Ch'ulp'anbu, 1997), 13.

[250] This *hwadu* can be traced back to the Chan dialogue between Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709~788) and Pang Yun Jushi 龐蘊居士 (740~808), which is described in the *Recorded sayings of Layman Pang* 龐居士語錄. This particular *hwadu* seemed to be in popular usage among Korean monks at that time, and it is my assumption that the most popular *hwadu* "what is it?" (K. *imwŏt ko*, a contraction of *igŏsi muŏt ingo*, Ch. *shishenma* 是什麼) that has been used in Korean monasteries originated from this *hwadu*, *pulyŏ manpŏp uiryŏja sisima* 不與萬法爲侶者 是什麼 with an excerpt from the last part of the *hwadu.* As this phrase had been popularized, it seems that other variations of this form began to be used, such as "what is *this thing* that carries this body?" "what is *this thing* that consists of the essence of reality?" "what is *this thing* that allows one to see, hear, listen, smell, talk, and think?" and so on. See also Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Zen Monastic Experience* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 154-155.

[251] Paek Hangmyŏng, *Hangmyŏng chip*, compiled and translated by Yŏngwŏn (Seoul: Sŏngbo Munhwajae Yŏn'guwŏn, 2006), 108.

[252] Ibid.

Sot'aesan's teachings dealt more extensively with this *hwadu* later on. First, Sot'aesan added this *hwadu* as one of topics on the "the List for Inquiry" for instructing his disciples in *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* 修養硏究要論 (The Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry). It is also noticeable that the book opens with the *hwadu* "Illuminate the one mind through the myriad dharmas" (*t'ongmanpŏp myŏngilsim* 通萬法明一心). Sot'aesan also puts the phrase "that which is not associated with the myriad dharmas" (*pulyŏmanpŏp* 不與萬法) instead of an *inji* 印紙 (publication stamp)[253] on the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*.[254] It is also said that this particular *hwadu* was placed on the front portico pillar at many temples during the early years of Wŏn Buddhism.[255]

At Wŏlmyŏng-am, Sot'aesan realized he needed to retreat from the world in order to enhance his spiritual power. He also noticed that his wisdom had been dulled due to the exhaustive labor involved in the embankment project and having had no time to rest after his enlightenment. After the embankment project,[256] he decided to take some time in a quiet place to enhance his spiritual abilities and to prepare to start his new religious society. After a ten-day

[253] In modern-day Korea, such stamps were attached to the last page of a book to represent the copyright.

[254] See Pak Chungbin, *Suyang yŏngu yoron* (Kyŏngsŏng [Seoul]: Kidokkyo Yŏngmunsa insoaebu, 1927).

[255] Ryu Sŏngt'ae, *Kyŏnsŏng kwa Wŏnbulgyo* (Seoul: Hakkobang, 2013), 294.

[256] According to *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, there are several other reasons that Sot'aesan moved to Wŏlmyŏng-am in Pyŏnsan: "The motives behind Sot'aesan's entering the mountains were his desires to take a rest after several years of hard work, to draft the doctrine for the upcoming religious order, and to avoid attention from the public during turbulent times." See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 42. Around the time of completing the reclaimation project in March 1919, while the March First Independence Movement was spread out all over the country, Sot'aesan was taken to the Yŏnggwang police station on account of his involvement in the Independence Movement on two occasions. According to Pak Yongdŏk, the initial motivation for Sot'aesan to move to the mountains was in part to avoid the surveillance of Japanese policemen. See Pak Yongdŏk, *Tol i sŏsŏ mul sori rŭl tŭnŭnda: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa* 2, Wŏnkwang University Wŏnbulgyo charyosil, 1997, 9-13.

stay at the hermitage, Sot'aesan returned to Yŏngsan and guided his disciplines in a special 100-day-prayer.[257] In August of the same year, Sot'aesan sent Song Kyu, who would later become one of Sot'aesan's successors, to Wŏlmyŏng-am to learn about Buddhism in depth. Hangmyŏng warmly received Song Kyu as one of his disciples by giving him the Buddhist name, Myŏng'an 明眼 (Bright Eyes).

After completing the second round of the special 100-day-prayer in December 1919, Sot'aesan moved to Wŏlmyŏng-am, but there was no proper place for him to stay there. When Sot'aesan announced his intention to leave Wŏlmyŏng-am, Hangmyŏng, with the suggestion and financial support of his disciples Kim Namch'ŏn 金南天(186901941) and Yi Mangap 李萬甲 (1879-1960), arranged for Sot'aesan to stay at a house in a village not far from the temple. In February 1920, Sot'aesan moved into this new house, called "Silsang Ch'odang." One and a half years later, this small thatched cottage was no longer large enough to receive the many disciples who visited and stayed with him. In July (the seventh lunar month) of 1921, at the suggestion of Kim Namch'ŏn and Song Chŏkpyŏk 宋赤壁 (1874-1939), construction began on a new hermitage. At that time, Hangmyŏng helped them to select a site and provided lumber to build it. When they completed the building, Hangmyŏng also wrote the name of the hermitage, Sŏktuam, in calligraphy on a black board in white ink.[258] Sot'aesan called himself Sŏktu *kŏsa*, a reference to the name Sŏktuam (also known as Pongnae Chŏngsa). While staying in Pyŏnsan for about

[257] "They offered prayers three days of the month (on the 6th, 16th, and 26th) with ten days of ablutions in between the prayer days as directed by their master." See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 36.

[258] Pak Yongdŏk, *Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 2: Tol i sŏsŏ mul sori rŭl tŭnŭnda*, 48-49. It is not clear, however, whether Hangmyŏng named the hermitage Sŏktu by following Sot'aean's penname at that time, or whether Sot'aesan adopted that cognomen in reference to the hermitage's name. While Pak Yongdŏk takes the former position, *Hangmyŏng chip* takes the latter. See *Hangmyŏng chip*, 109.

four years, Sot'aesan engaged in dialogue with Buddhist monks and studied all the rules and regulations of conventional Buddhist temples; based on these conversations and research, he drafted the *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non* (Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism) as well as the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, both of which became the doctrinal basis for establishing the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe (Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma).

In particular, Sot'aesan and Hangmyŏng became close Dharma friends and shared the common goal of reforming Chosŏn Buddhism.[259] Several letters and poems exchanged between Hangmyŏng and Sot'aesan have been preserved, and illustrate their close and supportive relationship.

> Dear Pak Chungbin Sŏktu *kŏsa*,
> At the old temple deep in the mountain, I was lying down on a sickbed, giving a sigh. By favoring me [with this letter], which was beyond my expectation you have raised up the sick Crane [Hangmyŏng]. How pleased I am!
> Your visit to Seoul must have produced some substantial accomplishments. How envious I am! This old monk has only self-righteousness left, without any considerable accomplishments in this life. Regarding the statement [in your letter] that [you would] visit this mountain-gate (temple) someday, you expressed it for the sake of courtesy. As a responder, I also take it as a token of courtesy. So, how could I understand only a physical meeting as important? I only hope that the round moon is fully reflected its own image [on the surface of the water] without any distortion.
> Farmer, Paek Hangmyŏng [260]
> 示朴重彬石頭居士

[259] Scholars have recently suggested that the Dharma friendship between Hangmyŏng and Sot'aesan can be further traced back to the time of Sot'aesan's youth. When Sot'aesan searched for a master to guide him during the six years from 1906 to1912, he often visited the hermitages belonging to Pulgapsa, including one called Yongmun-am, where Hangmyŏng was dedicating himself to *chamsŏn*. See Yi Chŏngjae, "Sot'aesan ŭi kusa ilhwa punsŏk kwa Paek Hangmyŏng kwaŭi kwangye yŏn'gu: Pŏbilhwa 'puch'ŏ rŭl sihŏmhan il' chungsim ŭiro," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 62: 91-116, 2014; See Chŏng Sunil, "Sot'aesan ŭi Pulgyo kaehyŏk undong kwa Hangmyŏng, Manhae, and Yongsŏng," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang yŏn'guwŏn haksul taehoe*: 7-36, 2014.

[260] Paek Hangmyŏng, *Hangmyŏng chip*, compiled and translated by Yŏngwŏn (Seoul: Sŏngbo Munhwajae Yŏn'guwŏn, 2006), 91. I translated this letter with reference to both the Chinese and Korean translations in *Hangmyŏng chip*.

深山古寺 臥病而呻吟 料外呈惠 喚起病鶴 何喜如之. 京橋之一往 想必所得不小矣 何羨如之. 老衲平生 一無所得而只是獨善而已. 一仰山門之示 示說以例言示之 聞者亦以例言知之 然何以形骸相從勝事哉. 只希月輪相照無虧也.
白農鶴鳴

Dear Pak Chungbin Sŏktu *kŏsa*,
The sick Crane [Hangmyŏng] of Naejang temple unexpectedly heard about many sagacious friends at the Pongnae and visited [them]. The sagacious beings did not know the Crane, nor the Crane them. Alas! I merely breathed a deep sigh. When I came back, I found your letter. Reconnecting our heavenly affinities, I will visit you again by pushing the clouds aside. Thinking of when we will again hold each other's hands.[261]
示朴重彬石頭居士
內藏之病鶴 忽聞蓬萊之多仙伴以入 仙不知鶴 鶴不知仙. 嗽然徐嘯 以歸承惠. 仙緣復續 披雲更入. 相握計耳.

These two letters are in the "Collected Letters" section of *Hangmyŏng chip* (The Collection of Hangmyŏng). Hangmyŏng sent these letters to Sot'aesan while Sot'aesan was staying at Sŏktuam. Hangmyŏng, who was twenty-five years Sot'aesan's senior, presents his kind respects toward Sot'aesan. Hangmyŏng candidly shows both his admiration and support for the much younger Sot'aesan, who was working hard with his disciples at this time to accomplish their vision of reforming Chosŏn Buddhism. Though absent in body, Hangmyŏng dearly expresses his hope of being together with Sot'aesan in spirit.

Sot'aesan's own letters to Hangmyŏng also show his deep respect for the old Buddhist master:

Dear Ven. Master Crane (Hak),
When flying low in the air, you will not see this place. When flying high in the air, you will only hear the sound. At the thatched cottage [Sŏktuam], I fell into a deep spring slumber. In my dream, a "Jade-Steel Child"[262] came down from heaven and asked me, "Why are you sleeping deeply and not waking up?" Before long, Master White Crane flew low in the human world and looked all around at the good and evil actions being committed. Suddenly, he flew high up into the heavens. Waking up, I soon realized it was a mere dream. I opened the door and looked out the door, but I could not see anything there. Looking up into sky, I only heaved a sigh of despair. From the high sky, there

[261] Ibid., 92.

[262] The term here *okch'ŏl tongja* 玉鐵童子 literally means "a jade-steel child." I assume that this term was used as an expression of an auspicious boy who came down from heaven.

> came only sound. Grasping the Jade-Steel Child again, I slowly talked to him, "Where is the place to fly low? Where is the place to fly high? While you are flying high and low, please, go back to the place where you flew high again, and bring one phrase from where you flew high." Coming to a major realization in the dream, I said, "I humbly met a master sitting silently and peacefully on a late spring day while looking out over the southern sky."
> Sincerely,
> Pak Chungbin, living on Pongnae Mountain[263]
> 敬獻鶴禪師
> 低飛不見其處 高飛淮聞其聲 草堂春睡足 夢一玉鐵童子 自天上降臨 在傍謂予言曰 子何深睡不悟耶 俄白鶴道士 低飛人間 察其善惡 忽然高飛天上云云 覺之乃夢 開戶視之 不見其處 仰天嵯嘆 惟聞九 之聲 更挽玉童子 徐謂曰 低飛何處 高飛何處 低飛高飛之間 汝往其高飛處 更將高飛上一句來 吾夢大覺云 遙望南天 悠然見坐暮春
> 蓬萊山人朴重彬再拜

With the story of his own dream, Sot'aesan expresses his respectful yearning to see Hangmyŏng, just as Hangmyŏng's letter conveys his admiration for him. Sot'aesan also poetically expresses the same sentiment as Hangmyŏng: though absent in body, his mind is with him in spirit.

Even though only three of the letters exchanged between the two men are preserved in the "Collected Letters" section of the *Hangmyŏng chip*, they are quite significant. First, through these letters, we can see that as Sot'aesan was drafting his plans for the reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism, he was in active dialogue with Paek Hangmyŏng, one of the representative and best-known Sŏn masters of Korean Buddhism in the early 1900s. Paek Hangmyŏng's catchphrase for his Buddhist reform movement was "half agriculture, half Sŏn" (*pan'nong pan'sŏn* 半農半禪), by which he argued that Buddhist monks should pursue both meditation practice and agricultural labor in monasteries. It was quite a revolutionary idea at that time because most of his contemporaries presumed that Buddhist monks should not be engaged in productive labor.[264]

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[263] Paek Hangmyŏng, *Hangmyŏng chip*, compiled and translated by Yŏngwŏn (Seoul: Sŏngbo Munhwajae Yŏn'guwŏn, 2006), 93.

[264] See Paek Hangmyŏng's *Sŏnwŏn kok* 禪園曲 [Song of Sŏn Monastery], in *Hangmyŏng chip*, 59; "Naejang Sŏnwŏn kyuak," in *Hangmyŏng chip*,

More revolutionarily, Sot'aesan argues that Korean Buddhism at that time should be reformed in all respects: "1) from Buddhism from abroad to Buddhism for Koreans; 2) from the Buddhism of the past to the Buddhism of the present and future; 3) from the Buddhism of a few monks residing in the mountains to the Buddhism of the general public; 4) from the sectarian-oriented Buddhism to a non-sectarian Buddhism integrating separate teachings; 5) from the devotional form of Buddhism to the Buddhism of practice."[265] Hangmyŏng's main focus lay in the reformation of the Korean monastic administration as a Sŏn abbot in charge of a monastery. Sot'aesan, however, was not bound by any associations with Buddhist monasteries, and therefore his reform vision of Korean Buddhism took a broader view and considered various aspects of Korean Buddhism at that time. Despite their age gap, Hangmyŏng and Sot'aesan seemed to have had an appreciative Dharma friendship, sharing their revolutionary Buddhist reform ideas with each other.

Given that no other letters between Hangmyŏng and other Korean Buddhist monks are preserved in the *Hangmyŏng chip*, the depth of the Dharma-intimacy expressed in the letters is even more compelling. Among the five total letters in the section of "Collected Letters," two are short and formal New Year's greeting cards exchanged between Japanese Zen master Sōen Shaku 釋宗演 (1860–1919) and Hangmyŏng. The rest of the letters, which are introduced above, are exchanged between Pak Chungbin and Hangmyŏng. The depth of their Dharma amity and concern for one other seem to be quite unusual. In fact, Hangmyŏng actively supported Sot'aesan's reform project in various ways. After completing some preliminary preparations for the establishment of the Pulpŏp yŏn'guhoe (Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma), the original name of what would become known as Wŏn Buddhism, Sot'aesan shared with

[265] See Sot'aesan's *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non*.

Hangmyŏng the vision and progress he had made by that time. Upon hearing this, Hangmyŏng proposed to offer Naejang Temple, where he was serving as abbot, as a new base for Sot'aesan's project. His proposal, however, was never pursued, due to objections raised by the majority of the monks residing at the monastery, and eventually Sot'aesan opened the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe in Iri, in the southwestern province of Chŏlla-do, in 1924. These close connections between Hangmyŏng and Sot'aesan clearly suggest that Wŏn Buddhism was established through an active dialogue with mainstream traditional Korean Buddhism at that time.

Despite these close associations with traditional Korean Buddhism of the era, the specific emphases and methods of Sot'aesan's reformed Korean Buddhism were quite different from those of the mainstream. In particular, Sot'aesan's ideas regarding the pedagogical method of *kanhwa* Sŏn, and the manner in which enlightenment should be certified, diverged from those upheld in mainstream traditional Korean monasteries. The following story illustrates the extent of this divergence.

> Once Sot'aesan visited Silsang Monastery and witnessed two elderly monks (Paek Hangmyŏng and Han Manhŏ) harshly scolding a young novice who, they said, would not obey their instruction to practice "*ch'amsŏn.*" They said to Sot'aesan, "A person like him could not be delivered even if a thousand buddhas appeared right now. He's trash." Sot'aesan smiled and said, "Though you reverend monks have shown concern for him, you are also preventing him from ever practicing *ch'amsŏn*." One of the senior monks asked, "Why do you say that?" Sot'aesan said, "By demanding that a person do something he doesn't want to do, you are making him dislike it forever. If I told you that inside the Inchang rocks of this mountain there is gold and I demanded that you crack open those rocks and extract the gold, would you trust my words and immediately start mining?" Hangmyŏng *sŏnsa* thought for a while, and said, "It would be hard to believe you and immediately start mining." Sot'aesan said, "In the same way, if I demand that you go mining without first gaining your trust, what would you do? You would most likely think my words spurious. When a young disciple has no interest in *ch'amsŏn* or any such aspiration, if you demand that he practice *ch'amsŏn*, it would make him presume *ch'amsŏn* was spurious, and once he thinks so, wouldn't that keep him from ever practicing it? Thus, your approach is not a skillful means of guiding a person."
>
> Manhŏ *hwasang* said, "If this is the case, then what would be a skillful means of guiding him?" Sot'aesan said, "Knowing that there is gold inside the rock, if you first go and mine it yourself and then make splendid use of it, people will want to know how you

> became wealthy. If you tell them the details to suit the degrees of their desire to know, how gratefully they would then go and mine the gold! Wouldn't this be a skillful means of guiding others?" The senior monks sat up straight and said, "Your method of guidance is truly magnificent!"[266]

The main subject of this story is *ch'amsŏn* 參禪 (investigating Sŏn), a term that is used interchangeably with *kanhwa* Sŏn. At that time, the two great Sŏn masters Hangmyŏng and Manhŏ placed an emphasis upon the central importance of *kanhwa* Sŏn in Korean monasteries. In this anecdote, however, Sot'aesan points out the limitation of *kanhwa* meditation in relation to the issue of pedagogy: without proper motivation, ordinary people will not be able to pursue *kanhwa* Sŏn effectively.

In fact, this admonition is not unique to Sot'aesan. As is well known, the Koryŏ dynasty Sŏn teacher Pojo Chinul (1158-1210) also notes in his *Excerpts* (*Chŏryo*) that this radical method of *kanhwa* Sŏn cannot be readily taught to ordinary people. Therefore, he states, "for the average person to succeed in practice, he must instill in himself a correct understanding of nature and characteristics and of truth and falsity—in other words, he must generate an understanding-awakening. Only after such a sudden awakening should the *hwadu* then be used."[267] Those who cannot generate a fundamental sense of inquiry with regard to the *hwadu* will lose interest in meditation. This is one of the most common problems that *kanhwa* Sŏn practitioners encounter.

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[266] This anecdote is recorded by Song Tosŏng 宋道性 (1907-1946), better known by his pen name, Chusan 主山, a younger brother of Chŏngsan. Song Tosŏng also learned from Paek Hangmyŏng to make ink drawings of Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of the Chan school. With some modifications, this passage is included in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 387-389. See also Pak Yongdŏk, *Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa: Tol i sŏsŏ mulsori rŭl tŭnnŭnda*, (Iksan: Wŏnkwang University Ch'ulp'anbu, 1997), 68-71. *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 309-310.

[267] Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "Pojo Chinul and Kanhwa Sŏn: Reconciling the Language of Moderate and Radical Subitism," in *Zen Buddhist Rhetoric in China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Christoph Anderl (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 353.

In particular, lay practitioners may not easily be able to practice *kanhwa* Sŏn because the technique requires such intense and complete devotion.

Secondly, Sot'aesan was critical of the efficacy and process by which the achievement of enlightenment (*in'ga*) through *kanhwa* Sŏn was certified in mainstream traditional Korean Buddhism. The following anecdote occurred at Sŏktu-am.

> When Sot'aesan was staying at Pongnae Hermitage, the Sŏn master Paek Hangmyŏng would come to visit, and sometimes enjoyed conversing in an extraordinary religious argot on the subject of the principle of the nature [viz., awakening or enlightenment]. One day, Sot'aesan told a few things to the young female novice Yi Ch'ŏngp'ung. The following day the Sŏn master arrived from Wolmyŏng Hermitage. Sot'aesan greeted him and said, "It seems that the Way is ripening for Ch'ŏngp'ung, who is over there hulling rice in a mortar." The Sŏn master went right up to Ch'ŏngp'ung and said in a loud voice, "Without moving your feet, show me the Way!" Ch'ŏngp'ung stood perfectly still, raising the pestle up into the air. The Sŏn master went inside without saying a word, and Ch'ŏngp'ung followed him in. The Sŏn Master asked, "Can you make that Bodhidharma drawing hanging on the wall walk?" Ch'ŏngp'ung answered, "Yes, I can." The Sŏn master responded, "Then make him walk." Ch'ŏngp'ung stood up and walked several steps. The Sŏn master slapped his knee in amazement and sanctioned her enlightenment, saying that she had awakened at the age of thirteen! Seeing this sight, Sot'aesan smiled and said, "Seeing the nature (viz., awakening or enlightenment) neither does nor does not involve words. However, from now on, one will not be able to give the seal of approval to 'seeing the nature' by such a method."[268]

In the above story, Sot'aesan clearly demonstrates his critical view of the way in which traditional monks have certified enlightenment, particularly certifications carried out through the enigmatic Sŏn discourse. In the Chan tradition of East Asia, inscrutable acts and dialogues had been used as a way to assess and sanction a student's enlightenment. However, Sot'aesan problematizes the efficacy of this approach: such a method cannot guarantee what one has actually realized, he argues, and even if one could show one's level of enlightenment through this method, this should not be the central issue in Buddhist practice. In another talk, he places a

[268] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 309-310. Originally, the Scriptures use the term, "the founding Master" in reference to Sot'aesan. I have changed "the Founding Master" to "Sot'aesan" in order to maintain a consistent tone.

greater emphasis upon the importance of cultivating an initial sense of enlightenment through continuous practice and carrying out enlightened action in daily life. How, then, did Sot'aean reform the method of *kwanhwa* Sŏn?

3-2. Sot'aesan's Re-invention of *Kanhwa* Meditation

1) From Buddhism for the Elite to Buddhism for the Common People

Sot'aesan was mainly concerned with the issue of how to revitalize Chosŏn Buddhism, which he felt had lost its vitality in Korean society, and set out to do so by re-creating and re-structuring Buddhist doctrinal systems and practices so they would be more relevant and accessible to the common people. According to Sot'aesan, the potential of Buddhist teachings is limitless; if Buddhist instruction is effectively conveyed to the general public, they will be led to live a better life with tranquil minds, shrewd insights, and compassionate virtues, as well as the ability to pursue ultimate truth in their daily lives. The wisdom of Buddhist teachings had been enjoyed only by elite minorities such as monks and the literati. For most of the common people, Buddhism had remained merely a devotional form of practice. As briefly mentioned above, Sot'aesan suggested five agendas for reforming Korean Buddhism: "1) from Buddhism from abroad to Buddhism for Koreans; 2) from the Buddhism of the past to the Buddhism of the present and future; 3) from the Buddhism of a few monks residing in the mountains to the Buddhism of the general public; 4) from sectarian Buddhism to a non-sectarian Buddhism integrating separated teachings; 5) from the devotional form of Buddhism to the Buddhism of practice."[269] Sot'aesan's reformation of *kanhwa* Sŏn was also concerned with the question of how to make what he considered an elite-oriented meditation practice into a practice more easily accessible, applicable, and relevant to the common people. To this end, Sot'aesan modified the

[269] See Sot'aesan's *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non* [Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism].

"radical subitism" of *kanhwa* Sŏn into the soteriology of "moderate subitism," which I will explain in more detail below.[270]

2) Redefinition of *Kanhwa* Sŏn and the Development of the Threefold Practice

In the preface to the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, Sot'aesan explains his purpose in writing the text as follows:

> The essential way of life lies in the cultivation of [the mind], the purpose of which lies in inquiry and study, the purpose of which lies in searching for wisdom and virtue. People search for these things in the world, following various teachings. However, not knowing the fundamental source of these phenomena, people's suffering gradually becomes serious, and the variety of schools of thought adds more confusion. In order to elucidate the fundamental starting-point for the cultivation of the mind in the most simple and clear way, this book expounds "The Essential Treatise of Calmness and Stillness." In order to illuminate the methods of inquiry and study, it also explains "The Three Essential Practices," "The Eightfold Articles," "The List for Questions" and "The Procedure of Practice." I desperately hope that all members of our society will quickly gain the power of cultivation and work through the lists of inquiry and study in this text, so that they will become the leaders of unawakened human beings. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*)

This preface states that the purpose of the text that follows is to provide a brief yet essential guide to "the essential way of life." Sot'aesan proposes that the purpose of religious practice lies in searching for wisdom and virtue. This indicates that the text is pragmatically oriented, rather than focused on a supramundane, abstract goal, such as achieving enlightenment or attaining nirvana. It instructs that "the essential way of life lies in the cultivation of [the mind], the purpose of which lies in inquiry and study, the purpose of which lies in searching for wisdom and blessings." This proposal of sequential practices suggests that Sot'aesan is transforming the enlightenment-oriented practices of Buddhism into a living Buddhism for the common people by

[270] I borrow these terms from Buswell's article, "Pojo Chinul and Kanhwa Sŏn: Reconciling the Language of Moderate and Radical Subitism." Buswell argues that Chinul was also concerned about the true efficacy of *kanhwa* meditation, and therefore later changed his position of radical subitism to moderate subitism. See Buswell, "Pojo Chinul and Kanhwa Sŏn," 2012, 353.

which people can live out Buddhist practice in everyday life. In this regard, it can be said that the book's teachings are more lay practitioner-oriented, even though it is not restricted to laypersons. Sot'aesan's text essentially teaches methods for cultivating one's calm and tranquil nature and for to inquiring into human affairs and universal principles through questioning, all in the context of daily life. In order to help practitioners to progress in their inquiries, Sot'aesan teaches "the three essential practices: cultivating the mind, inquiry into principles, and choice in action" and "the eightfold articles: belief, fury, doubt, and sincere dedication; unbelief, greed, laziness, and foolishness." Indeed, it is based on the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* that Sot'aesan later developed one of the main practice pillars of the Wŏn Buddhist doctrinal system, along with the "Fourfold Grace and Four Essentials."[271]

Sot'aesan teaches "the threefold essentials of inquiry," which consist of "the cultivation of mind *chŏngsin suyang* 精神修養, inquiry into human affairs and universal principles *sari yŏn'gu* 事理硏究, [and] choice in action *chakŏp ch'uisa* 作業取捨." However, Sot'aesan's "three essentials of inquiry" are distinct from those of traditional Buddhism: first, in Sot'aesan's system, the Buddhist concept of "concentration" is integrated with the Daoist practice of remaining calm and tranquil. It is also clear that Sot'aesan's text integrates elements of the three main religious traditions in East Asia: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. For example, the work explains the Buddhist concept of concentration alongside Laozi's concept of "quiescence"

[271] In Wŏn Buddhism, the core teaching with regard to practice is "Threefold Practice and Eight Essentials" and the core teaching for belief is the "Fourfold Benevolence and Four Essentials." Together, these comprise the two main pillars of Wŏn Buddhist doctrine. "Threefold Practice" consists of "the cultivation of the mind, inquiry into human affairs and universal principles, and mindful choice in action." The "Eight Essentials" consist of "the four essentials to develop: belief, passionate anger, doubt, sincere unremitting dedication, and the four essentials to forsake: unbelief, greed, laziness, and foolishness." "Fourfold Benevolence" consists of "the benevolence of Mother Nature, of parents, of fellow beings, and of law." "The Four Essentials" include "developing self-power, the primacy of the wise, educating others' children, and venerating the public-spirited." See *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 25-52.

chŏng 靜 and Mengzi's concept of "imperturbable mind" *pudongsim* 不動心.[272] A similarly integrative approach to these three religious traditions, in fact, was widely practiced by intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Chosŏn. The *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* states:

> The Essential Practices of Inquiry: The Cultivation of the Mind; Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles; Making a Choice in Action
>
> [According to scripture] when you cultivate your mind, your numinosity of mind *simryŏng* 心靈 will become calm and still. Delve into this why it is so.
>
> When you delve into [human] affairs and [universal] principles, you will have a clear understanding of them. Delve into this why it is so.
>
> When you make a choice in action [with a sense of mindfulness in using your six sense organs], you will be able to balance between easiness and hastiness, to have a clear understanding of right/wrong and benefit/harm, and to have endless wealth and fame in many years of your future life. Delve into this why it is so. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 43)

This is the earliest form of the threefold practice in Wŏn Buddhism. In the finalized version of *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* (The Correct Canon of Buddhism) published in 1943, all of these definitions are articulated with greater clarity and sophistication.[273] One thing that we need to note is that the original form of the threefold practice of Wŏn Buddhism, in fact, was developed in response to the subject of "inquiry" (*yŏn'gu*), which Sot'aesan reinterpreted as the core essence of *kanhwa* Sŏn, as seen above in the title of the section; the three essentials of *chŏngsin suyang*, *sari yŏn'gu*, and *chakŏp ch'uisa* are the subdivisions of the subject of "the essential practices of inquiry." From this fact, it seems clear that *kanhwa* Sŏn was at the core of Sot'aesan's agenda when he began to undertake the project of reforming Korean Buddhism in the early 1920s. In other words,

[272] According to the *Suyang yŏngu yoron*, "When one's intention is settled in 'concentration' (chŏng 定), the five minds (sense bases) are not moved. Mengzi's 'imperturbable mind' and Laozi's "returning to one's root which is quiescence" (*kuigŭnjŏng*歸根靜) See *Suyang yŏngu yoron*, 2.

[273] See the most current translated version of *Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn*, *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 46-52.

Sot'aesan divides *kanhwa* Sŏn technique into three main features: calming the mind, questioning or inquiry, and maintaining a calm and wise mind in daily life. This initial form of "the three essentials of inquiry" developed into "the threefold training" *samhak* 三學 later based on the traditional Buddhist system of threefold practice: *sila*, *samādhi* and *prajñā.*

3) Transforming the Intellectual Obstacles of *Kanhwa* Sŏn (*Chihae* 知解) into Sources of Wisdom and Gradual Awakening

Sot'aesan believed the core essence of *kanhwa* Sŏn to be the faculty of inquiry (*yŏn'gu*) rather than the generation of a great sensation of doubt (*ŭijŏng*), and so placed special emphasis on the importance of "questioning" in the practice of Buddhism. Rather than merely relying on canonical authority and following the instructions of the scriptures, Sot'aesan wanted his students to question every single scriptural teaching based on their own rational reasoning and understanding. Through this process, he believed, his students would internalize and personalize the teachings, and create a right Dharma for themselves and others in accordance with a given situation.

This conception of *kanhwa* Sŏn is quite different from the conventional understanding. In the mainstream Korean Buddhist tradition, *kanhwa* Sŏn is intended to help practitioners shut down all kinds of intellectual and conceptual ways of understanding in order to lead them to a state of non-ratiocinative enlightenment. By considering the core efficacy of *kanhwa* meditation to be the faculty of questioning itself, however, Sot'aesan adopts the technique of *kanhwa* as a way of cultivating the power of inquiry, by which one can rapidly clarify one's understanding.[274] This is quite the opposite of the usual understanding of *kanhwa* Sŏn, in which one is encouraged

[274] See *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 49-50.

to abandon all kinds of intellectual understanding (*chihae* 知解).[275] However, Sot'aesan views intellectual understanding as necessary to achieving wisdom, internalizing teachings, and maintaining one's own rational reasoning.

In fact, seeking to clarify one's understanding and cultivate one's reasoning is one of the most important Buddhist values. Many schools of Buddhism, particularly within the Indian Yogācāra tradition, stress the importance of "valid knowledge" *pramāṇa* 量, which is technically defined as a consciousness that is not deceived with regard to its object.[276] The Yogācāra posit that there are two forms of valid knowledge: direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*), with the former deriving from correct sense perception and the latter deriving from correct reasoning.[277]

Similarly, Sot'aesan considers all of these capacities as the basis for the practice of "making a mindful and righteous choice in action" because they help one to perfect one's action by maintaining a calm and tranquil nature and clarifying one's understanding. For example, instead of inculcating certain religious regulations or teachings, Sot'aesan asks his disciples to inquire into the authoritative teachings of the scriptures by applying their own analysis or critical examination; this process of inquiry will ensure that they will use their own reasoning in making a choice in action based on their understanding of the teachings. Sot'aesan writes:

> [According to scripture,] when you cultivate your mind, your numinosity of mind *simryŏng* 心靈 will become calm and still. Delve into this why it is so.
>
> When you delve into [human] affairs and [universal] principles, you will have a clear understanding of them. Delve into this why it is so.

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[275] Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong p'ogyowŏn p'ogyo yŏn'gusil, *Kanhwa Sŏn Ipmun* (Seoul: Chogeyjong Ch'ulp'ansa, 2006), 166-167.

[276] See Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr. ed., "*pramāṇa*," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 660-661.

[277] Ibid., 661.

> When you make a choice in action [with a sense of mindfulness in using your six sense organs], you will be able to balance between easiness and hastiness, to have a clear understanding of right/wrong and benefit/harm, and to have endless wealth and fame many years into your future life. Delve into this why it is so. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 43)

Sot'aesan adds a phrase in each of his expositions of Dharma that encourages practitioners to arouse a questioning mind: "Delve into why it is so." This is a way to encourage practitioners to enhance the faculty of questioning or doubting by allowing them to think about each teaching with their own analysis and examination, rather than merely accepting all of the teachings out of deference to authority. Through the process of arousing doubt or questions regarding each teaching, practitioners indeed begin to internalize these ideas by either actually attempting to practice them or by coming to their own conclusions about it.

The above cases illustrate the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*'s tendency to encourage student to ask questions in the process of learning scripture. There are several other variations of this kind of question that ask students more specifically "to delve into the result of observing Buddhist teachings, or what is fundamental and what is secondary, or the cause and effect, or the principle or the nature of each question."

> Belief means to set your mind regarding favorable and unfavorable states of mind. Delve into the result of this belief.
>
> Enthusiasm means to arouse your mind regarding favorable and unfavorable minds so that you feel encouraged to accomplish something. Delve into the result of this passion.
>
> Doubt arises for those who do not know, so therefore whenever doubt arises in your mind, delve into that issue immediately. Delve into the result of this doubt.
>
> Sincerity means a remitting state of mind, so therefore delve into the result of this sincerity. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 44)

The above examples show us that questioning the results of each mental state motivates practitioners to actually practice these values in their lives in order to properly evaluate their results. Sot'aesan states that the objective of inquiry into human affairs and universal principles

is as follows: "Therefore, our aim is, by inquiring in advance into the unfathomable principles of heavenly creation and the multifarious affairs of humanity, to know them through clear analysis and quick adjudication when confronted by them in real life."[278] In this regard, it can be said that Sot'aesan transforms the intellectual obstacles of *kanhwa* Sŏn into sources of wisdom and gradual awakening in his teaching.

4) Redefinition of the Three Essentials of *Kanhwa* Sŏn into the Four Essentials

Another special characteristic of Sot'aesan's reinterpretation of *kanhwa* Sŏn is that Sot'aesan transforms "the three essentials of belief, fury, doubt" that Gaofeng Yuanmiao stresses in *Sŏnyo* into "Four Essentials: belief, fury, doubt, and sincere dedication."

> Belief means to set your mind regarding favorable and unfavorable states of mind. Delve into the result of this belief.
>
> Fury means to arouse your mind regarding favorable and unfavorable states of mind so that you are encouraged to accomplish anything. Delve into the result of this passion.
>
> Doubt arises for those who do not know, so therefore whenever doubt arouses in your mind, delve into that issue immediately. Delve into the result of this doubt.
>
> Sincere dedication means an unremitting state of mind, so therefore delve into the result of this sincerity. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 44)

To "the three essentials," with which practitioners keep motivating themselves to practice until they achieve their initial vow of enlightenment, Sot'aesan adds "sincere dedication." This unremitting dedicated mind is particularly important in achieving one's goal, for it becomes the driving force to push oneself forward despite the inevitable hardships and failures that people will encounter in the process of pursuing enlightenment. In order to ensure that these four essentials develop, he also adds four essentials to avoid:

> Unbelief arises when your mind is not settled regarding any issue. Delve into the cause and effect of unbelief.
>
> Greed means the excessiveness regarding any issue. Delve into the cause and effect of greed.

[278] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 49-50.

> Laziness means the aversion to act when you try to accomplish anything. Delve into the cause and effect of laziness.
>
> Ignorance is the basis of ruining for humankind. Delve into the cause and effect of ignorance. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 45)

By adding these essentials to avoid, all of which prevent practitioners from progressing in their practice, Sot'aesan allows his disciples to ponder the cause and effect of each factor, so that they naturally come to their own conclusions about how to propel themselves forward. They are to cultivate the attitude that they can transform the negative forces innate to human beings into positive forces that will help them progress in their practice, using questioning. Furthermore, Sot'aesan expands the usage of the eight essentials so that they apply not only to the threefold practice in general but also to solving all kinds of questions and problems that people may routinely encounter in their daily lives.

5) The New Role of Doubt in Practice: From Hwadu 話頭 to Ŭidu 疑頭

Before his students are to begin engaging in kanhwa contemplation, Sot'aesan instructs them to engage in a preliminary practice: studying some of basic teachings of Buddhism. Sot'aesan explains that the main purpose of studying scripture is for practitioners to learn the correct spiritual path so that they can pursue the right direction in their practice.[279] Once practitioners have to some degree familiarized themselves with the basic teachings of Buddhism, Sot'aesan then allows them to practice "examining the meditative topic."

> "Cases for questioning" (*ŭidu*) means to inquire into, and be evaluated on, topics that create doubt regarding the universal principles of great and small, being and nonbeing, and the human affairs of right and wrong, benefit and harm, as well as regarding the *hwadus* (meditative topics) enunciated by past buddhas and enlightened masters. This is intended to help practitioners who are engaged in a

[279] "'Scripture' refers to our designated texts and other scriptures used for reference, so that practitioners may know the road that goes in the right direction of practice." (*The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 58)

> profound stage of inquiry to attain a clear analysis of human affairs or universal principles.[280]

Kanhwa Sŏn is also often called *hwadu* practice because it is a meditation technique for concentrating on the meditative topics (*hwadu*) that derive from *kong'ans*. In his doctrinal teachings, however, Sot'aesan changes the name *hwadu* to *ŭidu* (lit., the head of doubt), which emphasizes the importance of the faculty of questioning itself rather than the doubt regarding the rhetorical phrases typically employed as Sŏn Buddhist meditative topics (*hwadu*). By changing this crucial term, Sot'aesan seems to place the focus more on the act of questioning itself rather than on a specific contemplative phrase. Maintaining a sense of doubt regarding whatever one perceives will challenge the way in which one conventionally views and perceives the world and thereby open up the possibility of seeing the world in a whole new way.[281]

The concept of "doubt" (Skr., *vicikitsā*, Ch. *yi* 疑, Kor. *ŭi*) did not have positive connotations in the Indian Buddhist tradition; instead, it was considered to be one of the negative mental hindrances counteracting meditative absorption. But in East Asian Chan Buddhism, the concept was turned into a positive concept that is necessary in order for practitioners to propel their meditation practice forward.[282] The sensation of doubt became the force motivating one towards enlightenment, "a palpable, conative sensation that ultimately serves to pervade all of one's thoughts, feelings, emotions, and eventually even one's physical body with the doubt

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[280] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 58-59.

[281] I have come up with this phrasing while discussing the subject with Professor Buswell. In the process of completing this dissertation, I have owed much to Prof. Buswell's insights and clarification.

[282] Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "The Transformation of Doubt (Yijing/Ŭijŏng 疑情) in Chinese Buddhist Meditation: The Testimony of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)," in Halvor Eifring, ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004), 226.

generated through *kanhwa* practice."[283] In the context of *kanhwa* Sŏn, therefore, the sensation of doubt connotes an understanding of belief as an affective phenomenon, rather than one of wisdom or intellect.[284]

Sot'aesan's doctrine and practice, however, imbued the concept of "doubt" with still more connotations. As Buswell explains in his article, even though the notion of doubt mainly refers to a negative hindrance in the Indian Buddhist context, in some other Indian religious texts such as the *Brāhmāṇa-s*, the term also suggests the positive function of promoting religious questioning or philosophical inquiry.[285] Sot'aesan's usage of the term "doubt" extends beyond this positive function of philosophical inquiry; it encourages all kinds of questioning regarding human affairs and universal principles, and thereby helps practitioners to sharpen not only religious wisdom or philosophical insight, but also knowledge or intellect that is necessary in their daily lives. Accordingly, Sot'aesan defines the concept of doubt or questioning in his scripture: "Questioning means wanting to discover and know what we do not know about human affairs and universal principles, which is the motivating force that reveals what we are ignorant of when we try to accomplish anything."[286]

His extended usage of the concept of doubt can be examined in more detail by closely looking at the "list for inquiry" in the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, which contains 137 examples of topics for questioning (*ŭidu*). In general, the questions in the list can be divided into two groups: one set of questions is designed to promote mental, verbal, and behavioral transformation in

[283] Ibid., 230-231.

[284] Ibid., 230.

[285] Ibid., 229.

[286] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 52.

accordance with Buddhist teachings; the other aims to foster or enhance practitioners' understanding regarding human affairs and universal principles. The former group includes thirty of the 137 questions, most of them encouraging practitioners to practice the Buddhist precepts or to regulate their conduct. In so doing, the practitioners are meant to prevent themselves from engaging in unfavorable intentional, verbal, and behavioral actions while cultivating pure and compassionate actions by examining why a certain precept or regulation is necessary in practice:

1. It is said that killing sentient beings is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
2. It is said that stealing is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
3. It is said that committing sexual misconduct is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
4. It is said that making impertinent remarks is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
5. It is said that speaking flowery and ingratiating words while having the opposite mind is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
6. It is said that being double-tongued is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
7. It is said that using harsh speech is a serious transgression. Delve into why it is so.
8. It is said that harboring anger beyond courtesy becomes the basis of transgression. Delve into why it is so.
9. It is said that consuming intoxicants excessively becomes the basis of transgression. Delve into why it is so.
10. It is said that being ostentatious in wearing discourteous clothes becomes the basis of transgression. Delve into why it is so.
11. Wishing to receive special treatment without doing something good that deserves such a treatment will produce the basis of transgression. Delve into why it is so.
12. It is said that improper singing or dancing and spending time idly become the basis of transgression. Delve into why it is so.
13. It is said that being obsessed by the pursuit of gold, silver, and precious gems without knowing the nature of them become the basis of transgression. Delve into why it is so.
14. It is said that the habits of eating and sleeping at improper times become the basis of transgression. Delve into this why it is so.
15. It is said, "Teach yourself day by day, hour by hour." Delve into why it is so.
16. It is said, "Do not exhort others to do anything they do not wish to do, lest they be offended; be concerned only with your own affairs." Delve into why it is so.
17. It is said, "If anything goes wrong, do not blame others, but examine yourself." Delve into why it is so.
18. It is said, "If you cannot tolerate a situation, neither can others." Delve into why it is so.
19. It is said, "Regarding any issue, respect each other and consider each other." Delve into why it is so.

20. It is said, "As a practitioner (*yŏn'guja*), even at the risk of your life, do not do what is wrong, no matter how much you may want to do it." Delve into why it is so.
21. It is said, "As a practitioner (*yŏn'guja*), even at the risk of your life, do what is right, no matter how much you may dislike doing it." Delve into why it is so.
22. While concealing their own faults, people try to reveal other's faults. Delve into why it is so.
23. While considering all regarding mine important, people do not consider other's less important. Delve into why it is so.
24. Why is it that people's conducts disagree with their words. Delve in to why it is so.
25. Why is it that honest advice is harsh to the ear. Delve into why it is so.
26. It is said, "Serve all sentient beings as if serving a living Buddha." Delve into the principle of this saying.
27. It is said that the Way is accomplished when you cultivate your innate nature by knowing it. Delve into how you accomplish it.
28. It is said that the way you teach others is to cultivate the Way on your own. Delve into why it is so.
29. It is said that merely external knowledge in fact prevents you from actualizing the Way. Delve into why it is so.
30. It is said that merely external good conduct in fact prevents you from knowing the Way. Delve into why it is so. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 46-70)

The second group of questions, which consists of 107 examples, can be divided into five sub-categories according to theme: 1) Buddhism, 2) Daoism, 3) Confucianism, 4) common ideas, both superstitious and cultural, regarding natural phenomena, and 5) the principle of human nature. There are a total of twenty-three questions that are related to Buddhism, including Sŏn *kong'an*s and general Buddhist teachings:

37. As for practitioners (*kongbuja* 工夫者), "What is not separated from one's self-nature is called practice" (*pulli chsŏng wal kong* 不離自性曰工). Delve into what this (what is not separated from the self-nature) means.[287]

[287] The phrase of *pulli chsŏng wal kong* comes from Pojo Chinul's *Susimgyŏl* (Secrets on Cultivating the Mind). The *Susimgyŏl* states, "In the case of a person who has awakened, although he employs the expedients of such countermeasures, each and every moment he is free of doubts and does not become tainted. As the days lengthen and the months deepen, he naturally conforms to the nature that is the impeccable and sublime. Naturally, he is calm and aware in all situations. Moment by moment, as he becomes involved in sensory experience in all the sense- realms, thought after thought he always eradicates the afflictions, for he is never separate from the self-nature." 悟人分上 雖有對治方便 念念無疑 不落汚染 日久月深 自然契合天眞妙性 任運寂知 念念攀緣一切境 心心永斷諸煩惱 不離自性. See *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* vol. 2: *Chinul Selected Works*, trans. by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Paju: Chunil Munhwasa, 2012), 239. The phrase "that which is not separated from the self-nature is called 'practice,' and that which is holding no-thought in the application [of the six sense organs] is called 'virtue'" *pulli chasing wal kong ŭngyong munyŏm wal tŏk* 不離自性曰工 應用無念曰德 appeared on the first page of

38. According to the Buddha's words, practitioners should repay the four great benevolences[288] above. In order to repay the benevolences, delve into what the benevolences are.
39. According to the Buddha's words, practitioners should save the sentient beings who have fallen into the three evil paths (*akto* 惡塗). Delve into how to save them.
46. Delve into why and with what vow the Buddha, as a crown prince of a kingdom, renounced the throne and entered into the mountains to search for the Way (*ipsan sudo* 入山修道).
47. It is said, "Illuminate the one mind through the myriad dharmas." Delve into what this means.
81. Even though it is said that being evil will be punished, sometimes we encounter a situation in which evil people live in honor and wealth. Delve into why it is so.
82. According to the Buddha's words, it is said that the world systems of the trichiliocosm exist. Delve into whether they really exist.
83. It is said that the Buddha will manifest himself in a hundred million transformations. Delve into whether he really will.
84. It is said that the Buddha is the great teacher of the Way throughout the triple world and the compassionate father of the four modes of birth. Delve into how he can be such a teacher.
85. It is said that the Buddha is the master of lifespan, happiness and wealth. Delve into how he can be such a master.
92. It is said that the Buddha was enlightened on the eighth of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar by watching a bright star. Delve into why it is so.
95. It is said that the myriad dharmas return to one. Delve into where the one returns.
96. Delve into what that thing which is not associated with the myriad dharmas is.
97. It is said that the Buddha descended to his royal family without leaving Tusita Heaven. Delve into why it is so.
98. It is said that the Buddha delivered all sentient beings while still in his mother's womb. Delve into why it is so.

Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe kyuyak (Regulations of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma) published in 1927, as well as on the last page of Sot'aesan's *Hoesŏng kok* 回性曲 (The Song of Returning to the Nature) in which Sot'aesan expresses the happiness of returning to the self-nature while staying in Pongnae hermitage in 1920. One day during the Winter Retreat in 1929, Sot'aesan asked his disciples, "It is said, 'Never leave the self-nature.' Is there someone whose mind never leaves the self-nature even for a moment?" At that time, Cho Songgwang replied, "It is breath that we cannot leave even for a moment. If we understand this principle and are mindful of it, then we can never leave the self-nature." See Ryu Sŏngt'ae, *Kyŏnsŏng kwa Wŏnbulgyo*, 192-194.

[288]According to *Taesŭng ponsaeng simji kwangyŏng* 大乘本生心地觀經 (T.3.159.2: 297a7), there are four benevolences: the benevolence of parents, of sentient beings, of the king, and of three treasures (世出世恩有其四種 一父母恩 二眾生恩 三國王恩 四三寶恩 如是四恩). According to *Zhengfa nianchu jing* (*Chŏngbŏmnyŏmch'ŏgyŏng*) 正法念處經 *Smṛtyupasthāna-sūtra* (T.17. 0721. 061: 0359b07), there are four benevolences: the benevolence of mother, of father, of *tathāgata*, and of the Dharma master 何等為四 一者母 二者父 三者如來 四者說法法師). According to *Sŏkssi yoram* 釋氏要覽 (T.54.2127. 02: 0289c01), it says that there are four benevolences: the benevolence of parents, of masters, of the king, and charity (恩有四焉 一父母恩 二師長恩 三國王恩 四施主恩).

99. In an assembly on Vulture Peak, the Buddha held up a flower and showed it to the congregation of 1,200 people. It is said that Venerable Mahākāśyapa's face broke into a subtle smile. Delve into what this means.
100. *The Song of Human Nature* 性理頌 says, "I have a volume of scripture that is written without paper or ink. It does not contain a single word yet always radiates light." Delve into what this means.
101. A monk asked the Chan Master Zhaozhou 趙州禪師, "Does a dog have Buddha-nature?" Zhaozhou answered, "No." Delve into why Zhaozhou answered, "No" despite the fact that the Buddha said, "All sentient beings, including even worms and insects, have Buddha-nature."
102. *The Sutra of the Six Patriarch* 六祖經 says, "There is *one thing*: its width is wide enough to cover the sky and the earth; its darkness is as dark as a lacquer case; its brightness is as bright as the sun. But *this thing* exists always in the function and use [of the six sense organs]." Delve into what *this thing* is.
103. A monk asked the Chan Master Zhaozhou, "What was the Bodidharma's intention in coming from the West to the East?" Zhaozhou said, "The cypress tree in the front garden." Delve into the meaning of this.
104. The Chan master Linqi 臨濟禪師 asked the Chan master Huangbo what the great, precise, and precisely accurate meaning of the Buddhadharma is. Then, without answering, the Chan master immediately stood up and hit him thirty times. Delve into the meaning of this beating.
105. Delve into this: When a person is in deep, dreamless sleep, where is the numinous awareness that makes one sentient?
106. One disciple asked the Buddha whether the Way exists or not. It is said that the Buddha answered, "'Were I to teach you it exists, it would be against the Way; were I to teach you it does not, it would be against the Way." Delve into why it is so.
107. The Chan Master Guishan 潙山 (771-853) said to his disciple, "After my death, I will be born in a certain house in a village down there as an ox with the name 'Guishan' carved into its right horn. Should you call it Guishan or an ox?" Delve into what is the correct thing to call it. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 46-70)

These questions include some of the most fundamental Buddhist teachings, such as the life of the Buddha, the principle of cause and effect, six destinies, the original self-nature (自性), the cycle of rebirth, the source of blessings and poverty, the trichiliocosm (Skt. *trisāhasra-mahāsāhasra-loka-dhātu* 三千大千世界), Buddha's compassion and enlightenment, and Chan *kong'an*s such as Mahākāśyapa's flower sermon, Zhaozhou's *wu* 無 *hwadu*, the purpose of the Bodhidharma's coming from the west, Huangbo's thirty strokes, etc.

Eight of the questions in the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* originate from the *Ŭmbu kyŏng* (Ch. *Yingu jing*) 陰符經 (Scripture of the Hidden Agreement).

> 41. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "When Heaven puts forth its power of putting to death, Heaven and Earth resume their (proper course)."[289] Delve into why it is so.
> 42. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "Man is the despoiler of all things."[290] Delve into why it is so.
> 43. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "The nature (of man) is here clever and there stupid; and the one of these qualities may lie hidden in the other."[291] Delve into what is clever and what is stupid in the nature of (man).
> 86. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "Heaven and Earth are the despoilers of all things."[292] Delve into why it is so.
> 87. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "All things are the despoilers of Man."[293] Delve into why it is so.
> 88. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "When Heaven puts forth its power of putting to death, the stars and constellations lie hidden in darkness."[294] Delve into why it is so.
> 89. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "When Earth puts forth its power of putting to death, dragons and serpents appear on the dry ground."[295] Delve into why it is so.
> 120. The *Ŭmbu kyŏng* says, "If one observes the Way of Heaven, and maintains Its doings (as his own)."[296] Delve into how you can do this.

One question is taken from each of these texts: the *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* (Scripture of Eastern Learning), the *Daode jing* 道德經, the *Lunyu* 論語, the *Yijing* 易經, and the *Mengzi* 孟子.

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[289] I found the Chinese parallel passage *tiandi fanfu* 天地反覆 in the *Huangdi yinfu jing* 黃帝陰符經, collected in *Dun huai tang yangwu cong chao* 敦懷堂洋務叢鈔. I adopt both English translation and Chinese phrase from ctext.org/yinfujing.

[290] *ren wanwu zhi dao ye* 人萬物之盜也. Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

[291] *xing you qiaozhuo keyi fu cang* 性有巧拙 可以伏藏. Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

[292] *tiandi wanwu zhi dao* 天地萬物之盜. Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

[293] *wanwu ren zhi dao* 萬物人之盜. Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

[294] *tian fa shaji douzhuanxingyi* 天發殺機 斗轉星移.Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

[295] *de fa shaji long she qi lu* 地發殺機 龍蛇起陸. Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

[296] *guan tian zhi dao zhi tian zhi xing* 觀天之道 執天之行. Cf. ctext.org/yinfujing.

108. “I [K. Chŏnje: Heavenly Lord] have a hallowed amulet charm. Its name is a Miraculous Medicine. Its form is the Great Ultimate (K. T’aeguk; C. Taiqi). Its form is a Kung-gung (a bow and a bow) 吾有靈符其名仙藥其形太極又形弓弓.” Delve into the principle of this.
40. A great person accommodates having the virtue of Heaven and Earth, the brightness of the sun and the moon, the sequence of the four seasons, and having the good and evil of the spirit 大人與天地合其德 與日月合其明 與四時合其序 與鬼神合其吉凶.” Delve into how this can work.
114. Kongzi said, “I string my Dao with one single thread.” Delve into how you can do this.
109. Laozi said, “The Dao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Dao.” Delve into this issue.
115. Mengzi said, “I cultivate my flood-like vital energy (氣運) well.” Delve into what this energy is. (*Suyang yŏn’gu yoron*, 46-70)

Some of the most intriguing questions are related to natural phenomena. There are a total of twenty questions asking about the principles of natural phenomena:

93. Examine the stars: what kinds of things they are.
118. Examine when all things in the universe first appeared.
119. Examine how many trees and plants exist in all of the mountains and streams on earth.
121. Examine how day and night change.
122. Examine the principle of how the ebb and flow of the tide occurs.
123. Examine the origin of the sun and the moon.
124. Examine the principle of how the four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter change.
125. Examine how clouds are formed.
126. Examine how fog is formed.
127. Examine the principle of what causes rain.
128. Examine the principle of what causes snow.
129. Examine how thunder and lightning are caused.
130. Examine how an earthquake occurs.
131. Examine the principle of what causes thunderbolts.
132. Examine the principle of what causes hail.
133. Examine the principle of what causes dew.
134. Examine the principle of what causes frost.
135. Examine the principle of what causes a rainbow.
136. Examine where the winds blow.
137. Examine the principle of what causes an eclipse of the sun and the moon. (*Suyang yŏn’gu yoron*, 46-70)

The origin of these questions can indeed be traced back to Sot’aesan’s own questions, which motivated his long spiritual journey during his childhood. Accordingly, it is quite understandable

to see these questions included in the list. However, these questions may have some other purposes: to develop a scientific understanding of and approach to natural phenomena, by which people can break down their superstitious understandings regarding natural changes. Most ordinary Korean people during the 1920s under Japanese colonial rule did not have access to public education. Therefore, their curiosity about these natural phenomena mostly relied on their superstitious understandings, which were a source of groundless fear and ignorance. By cultivating this kind of scientific approach, people could not only expand their scientific knowledge but also get away from their own unsubstantiated apprehensions and superstitions. In addition, they could cultivate a broadly experimental and scientific spirit in their everyday lives, rather than remaining ignorant about these phenomena.

There are several other unique questions, which ask practitioners to delve into two aspects of not only natural phenomena but also metaphysical concepts such as good and evil, or the way (Kor. *to*, Ch. *dao* 道) and its virtue/power (Kor. *tŏk*, Ch. *de* 德). The two traits expressed with the Chinese characters "great and small" (Kor. *taeso*, Ch. *daxia*o 大小) can be interpreted in various ways: fundamental and secondary, ultimate hidden universal principle and conventionally manifested phenomena, etc.

> 31. Even goodness (Kor. *sŏn*, Ch. *shan* 善) has two aspects, "great and small." Delve into why it is so.
> 32. Even evilness (Kor. *ak*, Ch. *e* 惡) has two aspects, "great and small." Delve into why it is so.
> 33. Even the way (Kor. *to*, Ch. *dao* 道) has two aspects, "great and small." Delve into why it is so.
> 34. Even the virtue (Kor. *tŏk*, Ch. *de* 德) has two aspects, "great and small." Delve into why it is so.
> (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 51)

Sot'aesan deploys this initial doctrinal concept of "great and small" in a more sophisticated manner later in *The Correct Canon* in a more sophisticated manner. "Great" means the original

essence of all things in the universe. "Small" means that the myriad phenomena of the universe are distinguished by their shapes and forms.[297] With these metaphysical and analytical, and ultimate and conventional, approaches to the truth, Sot'aesan seems to want his students to cultivate both macro and micro perspectives on the universal principle of human life, the world, and the universe.

By maintaining a sense of doubt in all circumstances, practitioners will not only have a chance to free themselves from their own habitual preconceptions and incorrect perceptions, but also to be free from their misbeliefs, superstitions, and conventional ways of thinking. This method is further developed later on in Sot'aesan's more systematized doctrine. There, Sot'aesan provides a new framework for inquiry: *tae/so yu/mu* 大小有無 (great and small, being and non-being). Through this framework, practitioners will examine their conventional ways of thinking and will thereby have a chance to step out of their habitual ways of thinking by bringing a holistic view to their vision of the world: the ultimate aspect of truth (great), the phenomenal aspect of truth (small), and the ever-changing aspect of truth (being and non-being). Sot'aesan provides another framework, that of *si/bi yi/hae* 是非利害 (right and wrong, benefit and harm) to be used for analyzing daily human affairs, so that practitioners will be able to understand where their suffering and happiness come from.[298]

6) Transforming *Kanhwa* Sŏn into *Sŏngni* 性理 Sŏn

In helping practitioners seek the ultimate awakening beyond conceptualization and rationalization that is supposed to be attained through *kanhwa* mediation, Sot'aesan provides

[297] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 48.

[298] See "The Objective of Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles," in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 48-51.

another practice method in addition to the "cases for questioning" discussed above: the "principle of the nature" (*sŏngni*). "The principle of the nature" is intended to enable practitioners to resolve and understand the original principle of all things in the universe and the fundamental principle of our self-nature."[299] While the practice of "cases for questioning" aims at attaining an analytical understanding of human affairs such as right/wrong and benefit/harm, based on which practitioners can more easily choose a right action in a timely manner when using their six sense organs, the practice of "the principle of the nature" aims to help the practitioner intuitively attain awakening, which then allows them to understand the nature of the mind from a perspective entirely beyond analytical intellect and conceptualization. Both of these methods seem to be in a symbiotic relationship, balancing analytical understanding with non-conceptual, non-intellectual understandings of reality.

Although Sot'aesan reinterpreted *kanhwa* Sŏn as a practice for cultivating a sense of inquiry and questioning, he still emphasizes the importance of the ultimate state of enlightenment. He says, "If the gateway of a religion does not elucidate 'the principle of the nature,' then that religion is not a consummate Way. That is because 'the principle of the nature' becomes the master of all dharmas and the foundation of all principles." Here, "the nature" is meant in the sense of the concept of "seeing the nature," which is one way of expressing "enlightenment" in the Sŏn Buddhist tradition. Sot'aesan also composed a verse for his disciples while staying at Pongnae hermitage:

> On the winding road up Pyŏnsan,
> A rock sits listening to the sound of a stream.
> Nothing, nothing, but not nothing either.
> Not, not, but not not either.[300]

[299] Ibid., 59.

[300] Ibid., 306.

邊山九曲路 石立聽水聲 無無亦無無 非非亦非非[301]

Then, he said, "If you understand what this means, you are a person who has awakened to the Way." This is a way in which Sŏn masters used to express their way of understanding reality, which is ineluctable and beyond conventional ways of thinking, and therefore is considered the most fundamental source of all dharmas and religious teachings. Sot'aesan expressed the importance of being awakened to *the nature* by giving his transmitted verse to the public one year before he passed away.

> Being into nonbeing and nonbeing into being,
> Turning and turning－in the ultimate,
> Being and nonbeing are both void,
> Yet this void is complete.[302]

And he supplemented this verse by saying,

> Being is a realm of change; nonbeing is a realm that is unchanging. But this realm is the locus that can be called neither being nor nonbeing. It is referred to as "turning and turning" and "ultimate," but these two are nothing more than mere expressions offered as a teaching device. So what is the point of saying that these are "both void" or "complete"? Since this realm is the true essence of the nature, do not try to understand it by ratiocination; rather, you should awaken to this realm through contemplation.[303]

Therefore, we can say that the ultimate state to which *kanhwa* Sŏn is designed to lead remains the practice of *the nature* in Sot'aesan's doctrinal system.[304]

7) Ways of Complementing *Kanhwa* Sŏn: Lecturing and Reflection

Sot'aesan believed there to be two main problems in *kanhwa* Sŏn: first, beginners without any basic understanding of Buddhist doctrinal teachings may have difficulties in generating a

[301] *Wŏnbulgyo kyojŏn*, 260.

[302] Ibid., 24.

[303] Ibid., 317.

[304] Chŏng Sunil, "Wŏnbulgyo 'sŏngni' ŭi sŏngripsa yŏn'gu," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 33: 54-76. (2006).

sense of doubt through *kanhwa* meditation; and second, even after an initial awakening through *kanhwa* meditation, practitioners will encounter various kinds of sensory stimuli that may cause their sensory perceptions to be tainted by greed, anger, and ignorance.

To address the first of these issues, Sot'aesan created an environment for practitioners to be able to initiate *kanhwa* Sŏn by helping them to engage in intensive concentration on certain Buddhist phrases or problems. As I mentioned earlier, the critical issue in *kanhwa* practice is whether or not practitioners can arouse an intense sensation of doubt, and the problem Sot'aesan saw with this technique was that ordinary people cannot usually generate the kind of intensive and extensive concentration that *kanhwa* Sŏn demands.

Instead of just giving them a question to produce a sense of doubt, Sot'aesan set up an environment that could help them both arouse intensive doubt and maintain this questioning mind: he made them deliver a formal lecture in a public space.

When they are asked to give a formal lecture on a specific topic in a public space, such as in a Dharma service, practitioners are naturally motivated to formulate a very intensive state of concentration, and in that concentrated mind for certain period of time, they delve into the question.

> "Lecturing" refers to settling on a certain issue regarding human affairs or universal principles and expounding on its significance, so that practitioners may hone their wisdom while exchanging opinions in front of the congregation with due formality.[305]

In addition, preparing a lecture on a certain Buddhist topic provides an opportunity for practitioners to systematically come to understand the basic nature and characteristics of reality through the process of studying Buddhist teachings. Finally, giving a formal lecture in front of

[305] Ibid., 58.

many other practitioners and masters provides a way for students to undergo a public evaluation of their own levels of understanding. In this regard, "lecturing" in accordance with Sot'aesan's teachings served as a way to supplement, or preliminarily practice, *kanhwa* Sŏn.

Sot'aesan was also concerned with "the true efficacy of *kanhwa* meditation." Even if practitioners attained awakening through *kanhwa* meditation, if the enlightened state that they achieved during meditation could not be maintained in everyday life, Sot'aesan considered it to be useless.[306] Particularly, the key point here is whether or not practitioners' sensory contacts and perceptions produced any greed, anger, or ignorance when their six sense organs came into contact with sensory objects. In this regard, both Chinul and Sot'aesan support the soteriology of "moderate subitism," which assumes the necessity of gradual cultivation even after initial awakening (*tonŏ chŏmsu*).

Sot'aesan designed specific methods that could frequently remind practitioners to be free from their value judgments and sensory encounters that were colored by their ignorance, negative emotions or thoughts. These methods were based in the belief that the universal existence of the Buddha nature within all living beings will only be disturbed when it comes into contact with sensory conditions. Therefore, it is necessary for practitioners to remind themselves to return back to their original nature whenever moments of disturbance, ignorance, and wrongdoing arise in their minds. According to "The Essential Dharmas of Daily Practice,"

> 1. The mind ground is originally free of disturbance, but disturbances arise in response to sensory conditions; let us give rise to the absorption of the self-nature by letting go of those disturbances.
> 2. The mind ground is originally free from delusion, but delusion arise in response to sensory conditions; let us give rise to the wisdom of the self-nature by letting go of those delusions.

[306] In *The Correct Canon*, Sot'aesan says that if we cannot implement the results of practice into daily life, "it would be like a tree that has good trunk, branches, flowers, and leaves, but that bears no fruit." (*The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 50-51).

> 3. The mind ground is originally free from wrong-doing, but wrong-doings arise in response to the sensory conditions; let us give rise to the precepts of the self-nature by letting go of those wrong-doings.[307]

Based on the general Mahāyāna belief that the Buddha-nature dwells within all living beings, Sot'aesan observes that people usually remain in the originally enlightened state of mind once they instigate their initial awakenings. The problem is that when they come into contact with sensory conditions without having fully perfected their awakening yet, their perceptions and cognitions can be tainted by delusions, disturbances, and wrongdoings. This idea is also based on the permeation theory (propensities of habit, *sŭpki* 習氣; Skr. *vāsanā*): even if people can achieve an initial awakening immediately, the habitual force or energy that they have accumulated throughout their many previous lives cannot be immediately purified with the mere force of the initial awakening. Therefore, at the very moment that their ignorant sensations, it is necessary for them to put their efforts into recalling their initial awakening perceptions, and wrongdoings arise by remembering the above statements, and then returning back to their original nature that is fundamentally pure, perfect, impartial, and selfless.

This method can also be connected to the method of "tracing back the radiance"[308] 返照 (Kor. *panjo*, Ch. *fanzhao*) from the Sŏn tradition, which is one of the key purposes of *kanhwa* meditation. Practitioners turn the cognitive radiance that had been oriented toward external objects to the source of their own minds instead by focusing on the critical phrases of the *hwadu*. While "counter-illumination," as McRae termed it, in *kankwa* meditation is taught implicitly so

[307] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 56.

[308] "Single-minded attention to the *hwadu* was claimed to create an introspective focus that would eventually lead the student back to the enlightened source of his own mind—a process referred to as "tracing back the radiance" (Ch. *huiguang fanzhao*/Kor. *hoegwang panjo* 迴光返照) emanating from the mind, or, in the translation John McRae has suggested, 'counter-illumination.'" (Buswell 2004, 226)

that it is something that students intuitively find by themselves in the continuing process of practice, the three statements above more explicitly guide practitioners towards formulating their introspective focus, by which they can frequently return back to the original source of the mind which is not stained by situational ignorance, negative feelings, judgments, or wrongdoings in everyday life. Based on this fact, therefore, it can be said that while Sot'aesan recognized the importance of both epistemological awakening and perfecting one's actions in accord with the awakening, he designed his teachings to have a greater focus on the latter. In this way, he suggested, people could approach Buddhist practice of enlightenment in a more forthright way and apply it directly in their everyday lives.

8) The Combination of Silent Meditation and *Ŭidu* Meditation

Sot'aesan also points out the physiological problems that may result from *kanhwa* meditation. He sees meditation practice as being important in both mental and physical respects.

> As a rule, seated meditation is a practice that, in the mind, calms deluded thoughts and manifests the true nature. It is also a method that, in the body, causes the fiery energy to descend and the watery energy to ascend. As deluded thoughts are calmed, the watery energy will ascend; as the watery energy ascends, the deluded thoughts will be calmed. Consequently, one's body and mind will remain serene in perfect harmony, and both the spirit and energy will be refreshed.[309]

From this point of view, the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique, which necessitates very intense concentration, can cause the fiery energy to ascend and thereby cause illness in a practitioner.

> The *Sŏn* of observing the *hwadu* may be a temporary expedient for certain persons, but it can hardly be prescribed to people in general. If one continues to practice just the *hwadu* for a long time, the fiery energy will ascend and one may well become ill. Moreover, people who cannot fundamentally generate the sense of questioning with regard to the *hwadu* will lose interest in meditation.[310]

[309] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 66-67.

[310] Ibid., 67.

Accordingly, as a way to compensate for the physiological disadvantage of *kanhwa* Sŏn, Sot'aesan separately schedules a time for seated mediation and a time for investigating the *hwadu* so that practitioners will gain the advantages of both *kanhwa* and silent meditation practices without either falling into absentmindedness during silent meditation or causing physical illness.

9) Sot'aesan's Soteriology: Sudden and Gradual Awakening followed by Gradual Cultivation

Finally, Sot'aesan established the soteriological system of *tono chŏmsu*, sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation, instead of *tono tonsu*, sudden awakening followed by sudden cultivation, the former of which is ideally achievable through the practice of *kanhwa* Sŏn. He established the eight progressive stages of gradual cultivation, starting with the "beginner's stage" and sequentially followed by "arousing aspiration," "establishing one's intent or will," "cultivation," "inquiry," "making a choice in action," "minuteness," and "entering into quiescence." These eight stages of gradual cultivation underwent several revisions and changes, until they finally developed into the more sophisticated and detailed six "Stages of Dharma Status" in the *Pulgyo Chŏngjŏn* later on.

> Annotated Footnotes of the Procedure of Practice
> 1. "Beginner's stage" (*ch'osim* 初心) means that you begin learning the regulations of practice by relying on others' help. You do not know yet how this order [referring to the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma] will develop and how you shall practice.
> 2. "Arousing aspiration" (*palsim* 發心) means you gradually resolve your doubts about the development of this order as well as the procedure of practice. You gradually gain a clear understanding regarding what is right and wrong, and what is beneficial and harmful. You begin to resolve what is not satisfactory, and to have basically positive thoughts. Regarding the issue of the establishment of this society, you begin to consider it to be your own business and begin to understand its purpose. You also pursue all issues with a lively and open mind.
> 3. "Establishing one's intent or will" (*ipchi* 入志) means that after the first two stages of beginner's stage and arousing aspiration, you will finally get to understand without any doubt that the source of what you want lies in this Dharma and in this place. Even if this order and teachers of this order disappear, you will not leave the teachings of this society. Even in undergoing a thousand hardships and myriad sufferings or facing the death of all

> living creatures, you will not leave this Dharma. You regulate all of your actions according to this Dharma and your emotions are in accordance with this Dharma.
> 4. "Cultivation" (*suyang* 修養) means that you clearly discerning between the two minds, understanding that a sound mind clarifies your mind while a deluded, vexed mind darkens your mind. Therefore, you begin to avoid the source that can darken and vex your mind while cultivating a sound mind.
> 5. "Inquiry" (*yŏn'gu* 硏究) means that you gradually gain a clarifying understanding of your doubts regarding all kinds of issues, so that you begin to have the brightness of wisdom.
> 6. "Making a Choice in Action" (*ch'uisa* 取捨) means that after having obtained the brightness of wisdom, you are able to understand what is ascension and what is descension, what is pure and what is dirty, what is thick and what is thin, what is right and what is wrong, and what is beneficial and what is harmful, so that you are able to avoid what is not proper and not reasonable, but you are able to progress towards what is proper and reasonable, and thereby you are heading toward the ultimate happiness by leaving the path to hell.
> 7. "Minuteness" (*semil* 細密) means that the brightness of your wisdom is vast and immeasurable, so you are not obstructed in your understanding of both principles and phenomena.
> 8. "Entering into quiescence" (*ipchŏng* 入靜) means that your mind is not separated from the original self-nature so that all of your actions are free from any self-centered thought. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 71-73)

In these stages of gradual cultivation, we can recognize Sot'aesan's quite distinctive soteriological orientation: he emphasizes "sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation," but at the same time his soteriological system is not something that one can accomplish all at once. Initial aspiration and initial awakening should be reinforced and cultivated until one reaches the stages of "'minuteness' (non-obstruction in understanding both principles and phenomena" [*isamuae sasamuae* 理事無碍 事事無碍], which is the ultimate goal of the Huayan school's teachings), and "entering into quiescence" (keeping the mind connected to the original nature in daily life [*pulli chasŏng* 不離自性], which is the ultimate goal of Chan Buddhism). In striving towards these two ultimate spiritual goals, the threefold practice of cultivating, inquiry, and choice in action should be practiced simultaneously and continuously. While balancing and perfecting these practices in daily life, in particular, Sot'aesan stresses the importance of "the

practice of inquiry" by which practitioners maintain the attitude of doubt and inquiry through which they gradually attain the brightness of wisdom.

One of the presumptions of *kanhwa* Sŏn practice as "radical subitism" is that the awakening experience generated through the *kanhwa* technique will simultaneously consummate both practitioners' understanding and action. Due to the immediacy of its awakening, *kanhwa* Sŏn is termed a "short-cut" to enlightenment.[311] Sot'aesan, however, recognizes the difficulty of universally applying the *kanhwa* technique to ordinary practitioners. He adopts it not in the "sudden awakening and sudden cultivation" soteriological system, but in the soteriological system of "sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation," thereby constructing a quite detailed guide to perfecting the initial awakening.

The regimen of "sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation," however, does not perfectly capture Sot'aesan's distinctive soteriology, because he proposes that it is necessary to attain multiple levels of awakening in the process of perfecting Buddhahood. For instance, in the final chapter of *The Correct Canon*, six different levels of awakening are described in "the six dharma stages": "the ordinary grade," "the grade of special faith," "the battle between dharma and Māra (personified evil)," "the ranks of dharma strong and Māra defeated," "beyond the household," and "greatly enlightened tathāgata.""[312]

First, practitioners begin their practice by receiving the ten precepts of the ordinary grade. This implies that it is required that they purify their general actions, including mental, verbal, and

[311] Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "Pojo Chinul and Kanhwa Sŏn: Reconciling the Language of Moderate and Radical Subitism," in *Zen Buddhist Rhetoric in China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Christoph Anderl (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 351.

[312] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 98-101.

behavioral ones, before pursuing awakening.[313] Once they have received the ten precepts, from the second stage up to the final one, they need to achieve a certain level of understanding and fulfill to a certain degree the requirements described in each stage, and the very first criterion for practitioners to advance to the next stage is whether or not they fully observe the precepts given to each stage. In this regard, we can say that Sot'aesan highlights the important role that perfecting one's actions plays in reaching the stage of the *tathāgata*,[314] and further suggests that epistemological or cognitive enlightenment does not necessarily induce enlightened actions in these dharma ranks. The transition from the third stage to the fourth stage is considered to be critical because those who advance to the latter begin to be understood as a sage. The critical difference between the two is that while in the former case, "even in minute matters, dharma wins more than half the time over māra," those who are in the latter stage, "in every application of their six sense organs, win victory for dharma a hundred times in a hundred battles." From this explanation, we can clearly see that in the soteriology of Sot'aesan, gradual cultivation of one's actions is necessary.

However, it is noteworthy that Sot'aesan's understanding of awakening is both sudden and gradual. He believes that most ordinary practitioners cannot perfectly attain the ultimate awakening all at once, as seen in his statement that "Nor is awakening and awareness completed

[313] "The ordinary grade is the rank of people who have first taken refuge in the gateway of the buddha and received the ten precepts of the ordinary grade, regardless of whether they are learned or ignorant, male or female, old or young, good or bad, or of high or low status" (*The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 98-99).

[314] "The stage of the greatly enlightened tathāgata is the status of people who, having practiced each and every item for advancement beyond the household and advanced to the preparatory status of the greatly enlightened tathāgata, embody myriad abilities in delivering all living creatures with great loving-kindness and great compassion; edify others by flexibly responding with myriad expedients, but without ever straying from the main principle and without revealing those expedients to the people who are being edified; and are free of attachment to discrimination even when active, and for whom discrimination is properly regulated even at rest" (*The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 100-101).

all at once but involve thousands upon thousands of insights."[315] However, he does leave open the possibility that some high-level practitioners can directly reach the final stage. Therefore, different levels of understanding and awakening are necessitated for practitioners in each of the six dharma stages that he describes. For example, when practitioners have a substantial understanding of doctrines and regulations, they can advance to the second stage of "special faith" from the first stage of the "ordinary stage." When practitioners can "elucidate each and every idea in scripture and master completely the principles of great and small, being and nonbeing, and gain liberation from birth, old age, sickness, and death,"[316] they deserve to be situated in the fourth of the six dharma ranks. However, these should not be regarded merely as gradual awakenings because practitioners in each stage cannot cultivate the path of awakening without the awakening and understanding that they are supposed to have in that rank. In this regard, Sot'aesan's soteriology is in general "sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation," but at the same time it can be called "sudden and continuing awakenings followed by gradual cultivation."

4. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explore how the traditional *kanhwa* Sŏn technique was understood, adapted, and re-invented by Sot'aesan in the context of his reformation of Buddhism. I have suggested that Sot'aesan attempted to reform and restructure Korean Buddhism in early twentieth-century Korea by problematizing *kanhwa* meditation. I examined the historical sources that Sot'aesan consulted in understanding and interpreting the traditional *kanhwa* Sŏn technique. I first examined the *Sŏnyo*, which outlines a course for attaining

[315] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 193.

[316] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 100.

enlightenment that is similar to that of Sot'aesan; it is through reading this text that Sot'aesan may have first considered how *kanhwa* Sŏn practice might be adapted to his new doctrinal system. I also focused on the times in which Sot'aesan lived in Pyŏnsan where he had established a close and supportive Dharma friendship with the renowned Sŏn master Hangmyŏng. Indeed, he may have first learned how to engage in *kanhwa* contemplation through his interactions with Hangmyŏng. Through his readings and discussions concerning the sense of inquiry engendered through *kanhwa* Sŏn, we can clearly see that Sot'aesan's reform Buddhism, in fact, was engaged in an active dialogue with mainstream traditional Korean Buddhism at that time.

However, while recognizing the potential value of *kanhwa* Sŏn in catalyzing an enlightenment experience, Sot'aesan also observed the potential limitations and difficulties in teaching *kanhwa* Sŏn to the general public and at the same time noted its potential to cause physiological illness. For these reasons, Sot'aesan re-structured *kanhwa* Sŏn technique in various ways. In this re-structuring, the central issue lies in the main goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism: how Buddhist teachings can catalyze enlightenment and enhance the happiness and wisdom of the general public. Sot'aesan did not deny the efficacy or the necessity of the subitist technique of *kanhwa* Sŏn, but he fully recognized that a subitist transformation generated by a powerful sensation of doubt is really only accessible to those who have the very highest spiritual capacity. Accordingly, he adapted a more gradualist type of soteriology by allowing practitioners to generate a sense of questioning during their everyday lives, which would enable them to overcome conventional ways of seeing the world and perceive the world in a new way. This is a way to challenge the manner in which they habitually see the world in their daily lives, leading them to react to the world in a new way. Through this method, people can gradually change their

perceptions and actions. Such a process may begin with a conceptual or intellectual awakening, but eventually it will lead to transformed perceptions and to authentic bodhisattva action.

Some of significant implications of Sot'aesan's re-invention of *kanhwa* Sŏn can be summarized as follows. First, he changed *kanhwa* Sŏn's emphasis on an epistemological/cognitive awakening, which was presumed to have occurred in only a few Buddhist masters throughout Sŏn history, into an emphasis on practically applicable awakenings in people's everyday life. Second, he expanded and developed the scope of the meanings of "doubt" and "questioning" in Buddhist practice from a factor instrumental in pursuing enlightenment into an essential attitude to adopt throughout all of one's life. Finally, he transformed the analytical, philosophical, metaphysical, and conceptual understandings, insights, and knowledge attained through the practice of questioning into an authentic Buddhist wisdom, which would eventually become the source of practitioners' enlightenment and liberation, and at the same time become the motivating force for accomplishing anything in their daily lives. By examining Sot'aesan's response to this mainstream Sŏn technique, we see that *kanhwa* Sŏn—which began in the Tang period and culminated in the Song, and which has been transmitted through Korean Sŏn as a living meditative tradition—is not an inert topic but a dynamic practice, one which can still take on new forms that may be even more relevant to contemporary people and society.

Lastly, through an examination of Sot'aesan's transformation of *kanhwa* Sŏn, I have shown that Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism cannot be understood only as a new religious movement, but rather, should be situated in the broader historical context of Buddhist reform movements. The Chapter Four will look more closely at how Sot'aesan's teachings were systemized based on the two receiving traditions of Sŏn and Kyo of Buddhism with his new

interpretation and invention. To this end, I will particularly analyze three texts: the *Yuktaeyoryŏng*, the *Samdae yoryŏng*, and the *Pulgyo Chŏngjŏn*. In these writings, Sot'aesan moves away from discussing new religions and focuses more on reforming Korean Buddhism based on the idea of Taejung Pulgyo (Buddhist for the general public).

Chapter Three. The Concept of "Religion" and "New Religious Movements" in Korea

1. Introduction

2. Translating "Religion" as *Shūkyō* in Japan

3. Discourses on Religion in Korea

4. The Concept of Religion as a New "Space of Experience" and "Horizon of Expectation" in New Religious Movements

5. Sot'aesan's Interpretations of the Concept of Religion

5-1. Responding to the Discourse on the Separation of Religion and State

5-2. Responding to the "Movement for Developing the Mind-Field" (*simjŏn* 心田) and the Suppression of Pseudo-Religions.

5-3. Responding to the "Discourse on Civilization"

5-4. The Pursuit of Religious Tolerance and Universality

6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

The introduction of Western concepts to Korea played a cardinal role in creating a new sociocultural landscape that was significantly different from that of Korea's pre-modern period. Among these modern concepts, which included "philosophy" (*ch'ŏrhak* 哲學), "science" (*kwahak* 科學), and "morality" (*todŏk* 道德), this chapter will particularly focus on how the Western concept of "religion"[317] (*chonggyo* 宗教) influenced the reconstruction of religious

[317] The Western concept of religion is also a historical concept, which means that its meanings and connotations have been developed in relation to sociocultural and historical contexts in the West. This issue was first raised within Western scholarship by Wilfred C. Smith in his book *The Meaning and End of Religion* (NY: New American Library, 1964), and began to be widely discussed in the late 1980s. See Russel McCutcheon, "The Category 'Religion' in Recent Publications," *Numen* 42 (1995): 284-309; Russel McCutcheon, "The Category 'Religion' and the Politics of Tolerance," in *Defining Religion*. Vol. 10: Investigating the Boundaries between the Sacred and Secular, ed. by Arthur L. Greil and David

traditions in early twentieth-century Korea.[318] In examining this process, two factors should be considered. First, it is necessary to explore how Japanese interpretations of "religion" impacted the conceptual restructuring of national traditions across East Asia, since the Japanese were the first to render the Western term "religion" using Sinographic characters (Ch. *zongjiao*; Jpn. *shūkyō;* Kr. *chonggyo* 宗敎), the lingua franca of East Asia.[319] At the same time, it is also important to examine the role that Korean intellectuals and religious leaders played in developing the concept of religion within Korean traditions. Therefore, by paying attention to this inculcation of "religion," this chapter will explore how the concept of religion impacted the reorganization of the religious landscape in early twentieth-century Korea.

In analyzing the concept of religion, I rely on a historical framework proposed by Reinhart Koselleck as an analytical lens on the historical concept of "religion" through which to examine this period. Koselleck provides us with useful ways of thinking about the dichotomy between pre-modern and modern ideas through his analysis of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe. Koselleck explains that, during this time, concepts from past epochs

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Bromley (New York: JAI Press, 2003), 139-162. Jonathan Z. Smith investigates the history of the concept of religion in terms of how its connotation and category have been developed according to scholarly definitions. See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269-284.

[318] Many scholars have pointed out that the new Western concept of religion had a great impact on the understanding of what constituted a religion in early twentieth-century Korea. See, Kang Ton'gu, "Kŭndae Han'guk sinjonggyo ŭi minjok kaenyŏm: Taejonggyo, Wŏnbulgyo, Mugyohoe rŭl chungsim ŭiro," in *Chonggyo wa yŏksa* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2006),187-212; Kim Chongsŏ, "Kŭndaehwa wa Han'guk chonggyo ŭi kaenyŏm," in *Chonggyo wa yŏksa* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2006),163-185; Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Kŭnhyundai Han'guk chonggyo sasangsa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Madang kihoek, 2000); Yun Haedong, "Chonggyo kaenyŏm kwa konggongsŏng," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndai: Han'guk ŭi chonggyo naemyŏnhwa, chŏngch'ihwa nŭn ŏddŏkke chinhaeng toeŏttna* (Seoul: Ch'aek kwa Hamkke, 2013), 391-399.

[319] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), x.

changed into the "historical concepts" of our own, modern epoch, opening two dimensions of the "space of experience" and "the horizon of expectation" in which people construct "a notion of a new human reality that is both continuously changing and ever more becoming itself."[320] As Koselleck points out, all human beings and human communities have a "space of experience out of which they act and build a notion of human reality, in which past things are present, but at the same time, they always act with reference to specific horizons of expectation."[321] By investigating this relationship between the past and future, or, more precisely, the relationship between specific experiences and expectations, we can get a grasp on historical time, which allows us to inquire into the convoluted issue of the development of modernity. By adopting Koselleck's categories of "space of experience" and "the horizon of expectation" and focusing on the interplay between the two in the historical concept of "religion," we may be able to better understand the intricate reconfiguration of religious traditions that took place in the early modern period in Korea.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will first discuss the discourse surrounding the concept of religion in Japan as a basis for comparison. This comparison is especially germane because the Japanese colonial power will soon transmit these same concepts to Korea. After that, I will review the historical contexts that informed both pre-modern and modern concepts of religion in Korea in order to understand how Koreans' specific past experiences influenced their expectations for the future. Based on this historical understanding of religion, I argue that the new concept of "religion" functioned as a new space of experience that expanded Koreans' horizon of expectations during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945). Many religious leaders

[320] See Reinhart Koselleck, *In the Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. by Todd Samuel Presner et al (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), xiv.

[321] See Reinhart Koselleck, *In the Practice of Conceptual History*, 111.

and thinkers experimented with various types of religious thought, ideas, practices and tenets, based on which they founded their own new religious orders by synthesizing the diverse teachings of "established religions," such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. The emergence of an abundance of new religious movements in the early twentieth century can partly be explained by looking at how the historical concept of religion functioned among these new religious movements. Among the new religious groups, I will particularly focus on the case of the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe* 佛法硏究會 (1924) by discussing how Sot'aesan responded to new religious discourses and how he, grounded in an indigenous religious milieu, used the term "religion" from a Buddhist perspective and provided new meanings for the concept.

2. Translating "Religion" as *Shūkyō* in Japan

In the West, scholars have approached the genealogy of religion by focusing on how the term "religion" emerged and was discussed among European intellectual thinkers, and how this term has subsequently been imposed on other cultures.[322] When we examine the process by which the concept of religion was naturalized in East Asia, however, we soon recognize that the concept of religion there cannot be understood in this manner. Many scholars have shown that the first translations of the term "religion" into Japanese were produced out of the practical necessity of translating diplomatic documents relating to treaties and other matters of foreign affairs.[323] According to Jason Ānanda Josephson, the term "religion," which appeared in official

[322] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 7.

[323] Aihara Ichirōsuke, "Yakugo 'shūkyō' no seiritsu [The Development of the Translation of "Religion"], *Shūkyōgaku kiyō* 5 (1938), 3; Isomae Jun'ichi, *Religious Discourse in Modern Japan: Religion, State, and Shintō*, trans. by Galen Amstutz and Lynne E. Riggs (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 32; Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 78-93.

diplomatic communications from Americans in the context of debates over freedom of religion in 1853,[324] was formulated as a legal, diplomatic term during the years of intense treaty negotiation from 1853 to 1872.[325] In those negotiations, Westerners called for religious freedom to be made part of their trading privileges, but their true goals were globalization and the spread of Christianity. However, because, during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), Christianity in Japan had been understood as a demonic heresy and as a deviation from Buddhism, the Japanese did their best to keep Christianity out in order to limit the perceived cultural contamination it caused.[326] In response, American and Dutch representatives attempted to attain concessions by threatening the Japanese government that "if their treatises [asking for freedom of religion] were not immediately signed, Britain and France would force even greater concessions from them."[327] Fearing that the foreigners would import opium into Japan, as they had in China, the Japanese government signed the treaties. However, Japanese translators and diplomats attempted to prevent Christian missionary activity as best they could by defining terms related to religion in a strategic manner.[328] For example, the term "Christian religion" was translated into *Yasoshū*, literally meaning "the sect of Jesus."[329] In so doing, the Japanese granted only one particular Dutch sect the right to practice its religion rather than granting religious freedom to Christians generally. Other examples include the terms "*shōho*" (sect law) and "*shūshi*" (sect doctrine).

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[324] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 1.

[325] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 72.

[326] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 84-85.

[327] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 85.

[328] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 73.

[329] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 87.

These words were both strategically deployed to allow American citizens to practice their religious traditions (*shōho*) "within their buildings and at the gravesites appointed for them" while simultaneously preventing them from proselytizing religious doctrine (*shūshi*) in society at large.[330] According to Josephson, the Japanese translations of "religion" were strategic interpretations that secured Japanese cultural identity by minimizing Christian cultural influence.

Isomae Jun'ichi, however, has a different interpretation of the same historical documents that Josephson uses in his book.[331] By pointing out that "the renderings of religion into Japanese had nothing to do with domestic religious realities or trends," he argues that Japanese officials of the day understood the translation of "religion" merely in "the vague sense of *shinbutsu no reihai* (lit. "worship of gods and buddhas") as expressed in the Japanese version of the 1858 treaty." Isomae points out that the Meiji Enlightenment intellectuals proposed many renderings of religion in the late nineteenth century, such as "*shūmon* 宗門 (lineage membership), *shinkyō* 信教 (teaching of faith), *shūshi hōkyō* 宗旨法教 (lineage principles, *dharma* teaching), *shintō* 神道 (path of gods), *hōkyō* 法教 (*dharma* teaching), *kyōhō* 教法 [doctrinal teaching], shūshi 宗旨 (a Buddhist term meaning lineage or dharma of a specific sect), *seijin no michi* 聖人の道 (path of sages), *seidō* 聖道 (holy path), and *kyōmon* 教門 (gate of teaching)." The term *shūkyō*, which was a Buddhist term meaning "the ultimate truth that cannot be shown in words and the teachings that communicate it to people,"[332] was one of the options proposed at that time for

[330] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 90-91.

[331] In this paragraph, Isomae's discussion appears in *Religious Discourse in Modern Japan: Religion, State, and Shintō*, trans. by Galen Amstutz and Lynne E. Riggs (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 31-34 et passim.

[332] Isomae Jun'ichi, *Religious Discourse in Modern Japan*, 33.

translating "religion." And during the process of removing the official notice boards prohibiting Christianity in 1873,[333] the term *shūkyō* began to be considered as the standard translation of "religion." Josephson captures the nuanced meanings of each term, by which he argues that the process of settling on the term *shūkyō* as the standard equivalency for "religion" was a diplomatic move to protect the country's sovereignty rather than one selected because of its academic or cultural considerations. By focusing on the literal meanings of the provisional terms, however, Isomae conceptualizes the terms as falling into two different lines of thought, one group conveying "a strong sense of practice," and the other, "belief." Based on this understanding, he suggests that *shūkyō*, which had been used in the context of religious freedom for Christianity in late nineteenth-century Japan, happened to carry strong connotations of "belief" in East Asia.

Isomae argues that a discrepancy between the concepts of "*shūkyō*" and Japan's indigenous forms of religious activity transformed the traditional religious landscape. According to Isomae, the word *shūkyō* was regarded as a matter of the inner life of the individual and mere "beliefs," separated from state and other sociocultural phenomena.[334] Under this definition, religion permits religious freedom in the private sphere. As a result of pressure exerted by the Western concept of religion, which asserted that individual religious freedom should be recognized, National Shintō was defined as a non-religious domain, and one that thereby belonged to the domain of public morality, a civic obligation that citizens must uphold to ensure

[333] As Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909) stated in his later recollections: "Foreigners generally saw the posting of notice boards [banning Christianity] as the sign of an uncivilized country that obstructs religious freedom; they liked to see allowance for equal rights, Therefore, the official prohibition notices were removed." See Isomae Jun'ichi, *Religious Discourse in Modern Japan*, 34.

[334] Isomae Jun'ichi, *Religious Discourse in Modern Japan*, 48; Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 233-234.

the unity of the nation.[335] Josephson, however, sees the word *shūkyō* as a more complicated matter. In his view, the concept of religion in Japan has a dual structure: it authorizes religious freedom in the internal sphere of the individual, but at the same time, it forcibly imposes a certain subset of beliefs.[336] For example, when individual religious conviction is not connected to a legally recognized community, it is considered madness or insanity.[337] The process of translating the concept of religion was a "boundary-drawing exercise that extensively reclassified the inherited materials of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto"[338] while also redefining "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*) against "primitive evil customs" (*shinko no heifū*) or "superstition"[339] as legal and political concepts. Through governmentality, under the name of religious freedom, the nation-state intervenes in the private life of the individual.

Both Isomae and Josephson perceptively direct our attention to the ways that the understanding of "religion" that we take for granted in the modern era has been shaped by specific historical events. With regard to the Korean term *chonggyo*, however, I think that Josephson's analysis of the invention of religion in Japan provides us with two particularly parallel points. First, Josephson suggests a new approach in examining the history of the concept of religion in East Asia. Scholars have attempted to understand the complex socio-religious phenomena of the early twentieth century by placing them into compartmentalized categories

[335] Katsurajima Nobuhiro, "Chonggyo kaenyŏm kwa kukga sindoron," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndai: Han'guk ŭi chonggyo naemyŏnhwa, chŏngch'ihwa nŭn ŏddŏkke chinhaeng toeŏttna* (Seoul: Ch'aek kwa Hamkke, 2013) 149-175.

[336] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 225.

[337] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 235.

[338] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 2.

[339] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 165.

such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity and new religions as if they had developed as independent entities that did not interact with each other and that maintained certain unchanging forms in each tradition under the universal blanket term of religion. However, Josephson's approach problematizes this essentialist approach by reminding us that the concept of religion was formulated, invented, developed, and transformed in the particular modern context of East Asia. This idea allows us to fundamentally rethink the category and meaning of the modern concept of religion in Korea.

Second, the politically charged and nuanced meanings of religion that Josephson highlights in modern Japan set an example by which we can consider how the Western concept of religion affected the formation of the Korean religious landscape in the context of the era's political landscape.[340] Japanese interpretations of the concept of religion both directly and indirectly influenced Koreans' perceptions of what religion was and should be in their own nation. However, in discussing the formation of the concept of religion in Korea, three main historical contexts should also be examined: contact with Christian missionaries, Japanese colonial policies regarding the promulgation of religion, and the reception and response of Korean religious leaders and thinkers.

As the concept of religion became naturalized in Korea, the established religious traditions in Korea at the time began to be reclassified and reinterpreted. Even Protestant missionaries modified their propagation methods, such as the Nevius method, by adopting

[340] Chang Sŏngman also points this out. See Chang Sŏngman, *Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo ran muŏsin'ga?* [What is Korean modern religion?], Han'guk kŭndae chonggyo ch'ongsŏ 1 (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2017), 77. Chang Sŏngman also wrote his dissertation on the formation of the concept of religion in modern Korea in 1992 by problematizing the essentialist approach towards religions in Korea. See Chang Sŏmgman, *Kaehang ki Han'guk sahoe ŭi chonggyo kaenyŏm hyŏngsŏng e kwanhan yŏn'gu* (Seoul National University Press), 1992.

Korean religiosity.[341] Newly emerging religious groups also began to adjust to a new understanding of religion, or attempted to provide new visions for the future of religion that would counter the perceived negative aspects of established religions.

As Taehoon Kim points out, therefore, the development of the concept of religion in Korea cannot be described merely as the transplantation of the concept of religion from the West to Japan and from Japan to Korea, nor as "the mutual influence that existed between the concepts of religion in the metropole and colony."[342] Rather, the development of the concept of "religion" in Korea is complexly entangled with issues such as the cultural milieu, Japanese colonial policies, the influx of Christian missionaries, and Korean thinkers' responses to all of these circumstances against the background of Korea's own distinctive religious traditions that had been developed and preserved over a half millennia. The confrontation with this term spurred many discussions, such as whether Buddhism and Confucianism fell under "philosophy" or "religion," and whether newly emerging religions should be considered as higher religions or pseudo-religions. In addition, religious leaders and intellectuals involved themselves in active interpretative operations from the perspective of adherents. Therefore, it is necessary not only to examine how the new conception of religion was received and transplanted and thereby impacted

[341] According to Sung-Deuk Oak, the Korean Protestant theology of spirits combined three elements: "American Biblicism, Chinese Protestant exorcism, and Korean shamanistic healing ceremony." "The first-generation Anglo-Saxon missionaries to Korea condemned shamanism as a 'primitive' and 'superstitious' form of spirit worship." However, "their field experiences led them to embrace John L. Nevius's theory of demon possession and Christian exorcism as spiritual and supernatural phenomena in modern East Asia, not just in first-century Palestine. Protestant missionaries adopted the premodern Korean view of spirits, and thus they practiced Christian exorcist rituals—burning fetishes and communal prayers for the patients—in contradiction to their home churches' official doctrines on demonic possession and miraculous faith healing." See Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions 1876-1915* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 148.

[342] Taehoon Kim, "The Place of 'Religion' in Colonial Korea around 1910: The Imperial History of 'Religion,' *Journal of Korean Religions* 2-2 (Seoul: Institute for the Study of Religion, Sogang University, 2011), 27.

the understanding of religion in Korea, but also how each religious leader at the time used the term and ascribed new connotations to the concept of religion.

3. Discourses on Religion in Korea

The historical attitudes toward "heresies" in East Asia created boundaries between different discursive fields, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The creation of these boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy often consolidated state ideologies.[343] According to Josephson, when Japanese people who did not possess the concept of religion encountered European Jesuits in the sixteenth century, they articulated cultural differences in two ways: "hierarchical inclusion" and "exclusive similarity."[344] The Japanese considered Christianity to be not a foreign religion but an aberrant variety of Japanese Buddhist practices.[345] Even though the concept of "religion" was not then known to them, the Japanese were able to interpret the presence of Christianity by using the preexisting category of heresy, which created out-groups by evoking a concept of demonism that had already existed in Japanese Buddhist practices.[346] Such "exclusive similarity" marked the other as heretical in Japan.

Korea's descriptions of Christianity before the concept of religion was available to them differed somewhat from that of the Japanese. Koreans engaged with Christianity in two realms: on a scholarly level and on a governmental level. Building on the two above-mentioned Japanese strategies that Josephson describes, I would characterize Korea's responses in two ways: "vertical inclusion" and "conflicting difference."

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[343] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 29.

[344] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 24.

[345] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 23.

[346] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 38.

Korean intellectuals used Sinographic suffixes such as *kyo* 敎 "teachings," *hak* 學 "learning," and *to* 道 "way" to refer to religious traditions in Korea. For example, in referring to Buddhism, the Koreans used three terms: the Buddha's teachings (*Pulgyo* 佛敎), the Buddha's way (*pulto* 佛道), and the Buddha's learning (*purhak* 佛學). Even though each of these suffixes has a slightly different meaning, all of these compounds were used interchangeably. With these terms, Koreans delineated paths to the faith's so-called spiritual goals, which include teachings, practices, moral cultivation, the process of perfecting one's character, ontological, epistemological, and psychological foundations, as well as transformative experiences and cultural expressions.[347] Therefore, the meanings of these terms were more inclusive and wide-ranging than the Western concept of religion. In accordance with this tradition, when Koreans first encountered Catholicism, they described the faith as Western teachings/learning/way (*sŏgyo* 西敎, *sŏhak* 西學, *sŏdo* 西道), or the teachings of Jesus (*Yasogyo* 耶蘇敎).[348] This indicates that they included Christianity among other doctrinal and cultivational teachings, a phenomenon that I would call "vertical inclusion" rather than "hierarchical inclusion." The term "the teachings of Jesus" is comparable with the Japanese translation of Christianity, *Yasoshū*, literally meaning

[347] Many Buddhist scholars also discuss the problematic nature of referring to the wide-ranging Buddhist tradition with the single term "Buddhism." See Donald W. Mitchell and Sarah H. Jacoby, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, third edition, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-2; Richard Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), 24; Paul Williams with Anthony Tribe and Alexander Wynne, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*, Second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-4.

[348] Before Catholicism was introduced in the Chosŏn period, the term *sŏgyo* 西敎 was also used to refer to Buddhism. See, *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (*Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty*): *Chungjong sillok 9 kwŏn* (the Kisa 己巳 year, eight month, 23rd day [September 7, 1509] [Chungjong Year 4]). The term *Yasogyo* 耶蘇敎 appeared in 1644 in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok: Injo sillok 45 kwŏn* (Kapsin 甲申 year, eighth month, eighth day [September 8, 1644]).

"the sect of Jesus," which shows that Christianity was "hierarchically included" as a sect of Buddhism in Japan while it was "vertically included" as a doctrinal teaching in Korea.[349]

On the other hand, from the outset, Neo-Confucian ideologues, who played a major role in establishing the Chosŏn dynasty, deemed all ideologies besides Neo-Confucianism to be heresies. They specifically excluded Buddhism, which had played an important role as the dominant spiritual and state power during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392).[350] In the years of the Koryŏ dynasty, Confucianism and Buddhism coexisted peacefully without hostility toward each other. In the early Chosŏn, however, Neo-Confucianism took up the political strategy of consolidating royal authority in order to make Neo-Confucian thought the state orthodoxy. The Neo-Confucian ideologues declared all other types of ideologies as heresies (*sagyo* 邪教 or *chwado* 左道, literally meaning deviant teachings), thus ostracizing them socially and politically. However, it took more than three hundred years for Confucian beliefs, norms, and practices to permeate the lowest levels of village life, and the majority of Koreans, particularly uneducated peasants, still widely practiced Buddhism, Daoism, shamanism, and other non-Confucian belief

[349] The *Chosŏn wangjo sillok: Hyŏnjong kaesu sillok 16 kwŏn* (the second month, 26th day of the lunar calendar, in 1667) reported a dialogue between a Chosŏn diplomat and a Japanese diplomat in which the Japanese diplomat used the term *Yasojongmun* 耶蘇宗門, the sect of Jesus. In that report, the Korean diplomat, Kim Sŏkchu defined *yaso* 耶蘇 as "a type of special type [of sect] found abroad in the West, which uses bewitching techniques that are able to deceive, confuse, and delude the people." 蓋耶蘇卽西洋海外別種, 而有妖術, 能誑惑愚民。

[350] Particularly, Chŏng Tojŏn 鄭道傳 (1342-1398), better known by his pen name Sambong 三峯, played a chief role in the development of the political structure of the new Chosŏn dynasty by taking a polemical, anti-Buddhist position. He wrote three critical essays on Buddhism: *Simmun chŏndap* 心問天答 (The Mind Asks, Heaven Answers; 1375), *Simgiri py'ŏn* 心氣理 (On the Mind, Material Force, and Principle; 1394), and *Pulssi chappyŏn* 佛氏雜辨 (Mr. Buddha's Array of Debates). In these essays, particularly in the *Pulssi chappyŏn*, he refuted the doctrines and practices of Buddhism by coloring it as heresy. See A. Charles Muller, *Korea's Great Buddhist-Confucian Debate: The Treatises of Chŏng Tojŏn (Sambong) and Hamhŏ Tŭkt'ong (Kihwa)*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

systems until the late Chosŏn.[351] In fact, most people of the era, regardless of their status or class, practiced some combination of Confucianism, Buddhism, shamanism, and Daoism. Despite the fact that Neo-Confucianism dominated Korean society as a state ideology, the religion's leaders were not able to convert most Koreans to their beliefs and practices until the late Chosŏn. This long delay also implies that the supposed heresies of non-Confucian faiths were in fact implicitly accepted in much of Korean society. Thus, we can say that the scope of heresy during the Chosŏn was much broader than that in Japan, and that heresy was more widely tolerated.

Given these circumstances, Christianity fell under the government's broader definition of heresy. According to the *Chŏngjo sillok*, "Yun Chich'ung 尹持忠 (1759-1791) and Kwŏn Sangyŏn 權尙然 (1751-1791), who relapsed into the Western heresy, Christianity, were executed in 1791."[352] In this report, we can observe that the term "heresy" was identified with the term "Christianity" (the teachings of Jesus). This is another example of "vertical inclusion" in the category of heresy as defined by the government. In other words, Christianity was one of the many heresies, alongside Buddhism, Daoism, shamanism, and geomancy, that the Chosŏn government attempted to attack.

Initially, the Chosŏn government's view on Christianity was not harsh, as the latter was considered a type of doctrinal teaching. In discussing the spread of Catholicism with his first and second vice-premiers, King Chŏngjo 正祖 (1752-1800; r. 1776-1800) stated in 1788 (eighth month, the third day, September 2):

> Generally speaking, how can it be only Western Learning 西學 that deploys heresies to confuse the people? China also has an array of deviant teachings, such as the Lu School

[351] James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1996), 5.

[352] The *Chosŏn wangjo sillok: Chŏngjo sillok 1 kwŏn* says: 誅習西洋耶蘇邪敎者尹持忠、權尙然。

> 陸學, the Yangming School 王學, the Buddha's Way 佛道, and Laozi's Way 老道. Have these ever been banned? When we delve into the root cause of [Catholicism's] propagation, we see that it is only occurring because Confucian scholars do not earnestly read books.
> 大抵挾左道而惑衆聽, 奚特西學而已? 中國則有陸學、王學、佛道、老道之流, 何嘗設禁者? 究其本則專由於儒生不讀書之致也。[353]

King Chŏngjo did not harshly persecute Catholicism. So long as Confucianism was correctly maintained, he thought that any deviant teachings (*chwado*) that arose would naturally disappear. In King Chŏngjo's view, Catholicism was just one among many heresies, and since many heresies had coexisted peacefully with Confucianism during Chosŏn, he did not intend to persecute it severely. However, this mild position had to be altered when Catholics' values came into conflict with Confucian norms and practices, because such conflicting values had the potential shake the basis of Chosŏn society. In my mind, these "conflicting differences" were what made Christianity an "impermissible heresy" in Chosŏn.

Roman Catholicism began to spread widely during the Chosŏn via Catholic texts that had been translated into Chinese in China.[354] Of the more than 350 volumes of translated texts that had been produced during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, 267 volumes were brought back to Chosŏn by envoys who had traveled to China.[355] Catholic texts got the most attention from scholars and from members of the middle class, particularly rising

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[353] *Chŏngjo sillok 26 kwŏn* (Musin 戊申 year, eighth month, third day [September 2, 1788]).

[354] Don Baker with Franklin Rausch, *Catholics and Anti-Catholicism in Chosŏn Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 3.

[355] Sin Poknyŏng, "Ch'ŏnju hak ŭi chŏllae wa Chosŏn cho chisik in ŭi konoe: Matteo Ricci rŭl yunyŏm hamyŏnsŏ," *Han'guk chŏngch'ihakhoebo* 31-2 (1997): 122; Pae Hyŏnsuk, "Chosŏn e chŏllae toen ch'ŏnju kyo sŏjŏk,"in *Han'guk kyohoe sa nonmun chip* 1, Han'guk chŏnjugyohoe ch'angsŏl 200 chunyŏn kinyŏm Han'guk kyohoesa nonmun chip 1 (Seoul: Han'guk Kyohoesa Yŏn'guso, 1984), 29.

intellectuals who were looking for new ideologies.[356] In 1779, a small group of Confucian literati formed a secret seminar called "Kanghakhoe" 講學會 to study these texts out of scholarly interest.[357] One of the representative texts that they studied was Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)'s *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義 (The True Meaning of God), in which he argued that Catholicism could be reconciled with Confucianism.[358] Since Ricci considered Confucianism to be a moral code and philosophy rather than a religion, in his mind it was possible for Catholicism to coexist with Confucianism. He allowed the followers of Catholicism, himself included, to practice all Confucian rituals and forms of ancestral worship.[359] By reading books like Ricci's, Korean readers of Catholic texts naturally formed a faith-based community. As a result, Chosŏn became the first country in the world in which a native Catholic Church was established without the help of missionaries.

However, this situation suddenly changed due to the "Chinese Rites controversies."[360] Yun Paoro (尹 Paul; given name Yuil 有一; 1760-1795) the Baptist, and U Yohan (禹 John) (?

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[356] Hŏ Namjin, "Chosŏn hugi sŏngnihak kwa sŏgu sasang (ch'ŏnju kyo) ŭi yuip," *Ch'ŏrhak kwa hyŏnsil* 35 (1997): 206-207.

[357] Gari Ledyard, "Killumba Kang Wansuk, an Early Catholic Activist and Martyr," in *Christianity in Korea*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 38.

[358] "He said that the Chinese culture and people always believed in God, and that Christianity is simply the completion of their Confucian faith. He borrowed an unusual Chinese term, Lord of Heaven *Tianzhu* 天主, which is based on the theistic Zhou term heaven, to use as the Catholic name for God." See Terence J Kelly, "Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)," in *The A to Z of People of Faith and Science: Short Biographies* (Australia Ltd. 2018), accessed on March 26, 2020 https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvh8r3tg.59.

[359] In 1692, Catholicism was granted permission to propagate its teachings in China. *Tian zhu shi yi* was finally included in the *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 by the Qianlong Emperor, the sixth Emperor of the Qing dynasty 乾隆帝(1711-1799), in 1781. See Sin Pongnyŏng, "Ch'ŏnju hak ŭi chŏllae wa Chosŏn cho chisik in ŭi konoe: Matteo Ricci rŭl yunyŏm hamyŏnsŏ," 117-120.

[360] The Jesuits successfully spread Catholicism in China by impressing the Chinese Confucian elite with their knowledge of astronomy and mechanics and by serving at the Imperial Court. The Jesuits "tried to argue, in Rome, that the 'Chinese Rites' were social, not religious, ceremonies, and that converts should

-?) the Baptist candidate, went to Beijing with a group of Chosŏn envoys in 1790 and asked the Bishop of Peking, Alexander de Gouvea (1751-1808), for sacred objects and texts.[361] One of the critical questions that the Chosŏn Catholic group put to him by letter concerned whether or not they were allowed to use and preserve ancestral tablets. Bishop Gouvea answered in the negative, based on 1715 and 1742 decisions by the Vatican. This event not only motivated many Chosŏn adherents to apostatize from the Catholic faith, but also caused the Chosŏn government to severely persecute them. When Bishop Gouvea's letter was delivered to Chosŏn, Yun Chich'ung and Kwŏn Sangyŏn did not offer ancestral rituals when they were bereaved of their parents and burnt the mortuary tablets of their families. In punishment for these acts, they were executed by decapitation in 1791. Severe religious persecutions continued for a century after that, producing over ten thousand martyrs, an unprecedented number worldwide.[362] The reason that Catholicism, which had once been considered a tolerable heresy, became an impermissible heresy was because its values and customs began to conflict with Confucian customs and cultures. Bishop Gouvea described the situation at that time as follows: "those who read my letter, answering to their *superstitions*, chose to abandon Christianity, which they once believed

be allowed to continue to participate." However, the Decree of Pope Clement XI: The Papal Bull of 1715 proclaimed that all ancestral worship and Confucian rituals were forbidden among Chinese Catholics, even as bystanders. The bull also banned the placement of ancestral tablets inside the house in accordance with Chinese custom. Disappointed by this proclamation, the Kangxi emperor, who was at first friendly to the Jesuit Missionaries working in China, banned Christian missions in China in 1721. See "Clement XI: The Papal Bull of 1715," in *China in Transition: 1517-1911*, edited by Dan. J. Li (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969), 22-24.

[361] Alexander de Gouvea, *Carta Do Excellentissimo E Reverendissimo Bisopo de Pekim D. Fr. Alexandre de Goubea Ao Illustrissimo E Reverendissimo Bisopo De Calandro* (1790), 196-197, 200, 223-224. Requoted from Sin Pongnyŏng, "Ch'ŏnju hak ŭi chŏllae wa Chosŏn cho chisik in ŭi konoe: Matteo Ricci rŭl yunyŏm hamyŏnsŏ,"129.

[362] Yi Wŏnsun, "Han'bul choyak kwa chonggyo chayu ŭi munje," *Kyohoesa yŏn'gu* 5 (1987): 64.

as a truthful religion, rather than forsaking their *wrong* customs" (emphasis mine).[363] As Sin Pongnyŏng points out, this description clearly evinces Western triumphalist and Orientalist attitudes.[364] Gouvea refers to Chosŏn's customs as "superstitious" and "wrong." This lack of understanding of one another's cultures produced conflicting values, which, in turn, made Catholic belief an "impermissible heresy" and led to the century-long persecution of the faith in Chosŏn.

Under these circumstances, Catholic followers clandestinely continued their religious activities. At the same time, they worked to end the government's persecution of them and to achieve religious freedom by sending petitions to the government and to the Beijing Catholic Church.[365] Their efforts were not successful; on the contrary, the persecution of Korean Catholics grew more severe as a result.[366] However, we can see that Chosŏn devotees were pursuing religious freedom even before the Chosŏn government was forced to sign unequal treaties with many Western powers.[367]

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[363] Alexander de Gouvea, *Carta Do Excellentissimo E Reverendissimo Bisopo de Pekim D. Fr. Alexandre de Goubea Ao Illustrissimo E Reverendissimo Bisopo De Calandro* (1790), 196-197, 200, 223-224. Requoted from Sin Poknyŏng, "Ch'ŏnju hak ŭi chŏllae wa Chosŏn cho chisik in ŭi konoe: Matteo Ricci rŭl yunyŏm hamyŏnsŏ,"129.

[364] Sin Pongnyŏng, "Ch'ŏnju hak ŭi chŏllae wa Chosŏn cho chisik in ŭi konoe: Matteo Ricci rŭl yunyŏm hamyŏnsŏ,"129.

[365] Yi Wŏnsun, "Han'bul choyak kwa chonggyo chayu ŭi munje," 64-66.

[366] One of the notable failed attempts was Hwang Sayŏng's *Silk Letter* incident. See Baker with Rausch, *Catholics and Anti-Catholicism in Chosŏn Korea*, 101-120.

[367] We can see another example of the quest for religious freedom in the Tonghak petition campaign and demonstration. After Ch'oe Cheu 崔濟愚 (1824–1864), the founder of Tonghak (Eastern Learning), was executed on trumped-up charges in 1864, his followers demonstrated and petitioned for over three decades to demand the exculpation of their founder and the freedom to practice their religion. See George L. Kallander, *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), 90-123; Mark A. Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities: A History of Buddhist Propagation in Modern Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 32.

As Mark A. Nathan points out, "religious propagation, missionary work, and proselytism came to be widely accepted as intrinsic components of a modern 'religion' in the period after Korean ports were forced [to] open to foreign trade and settlement though the signing of international treaties."[368] Starting with America (1882),[369] the Chosŏn government signed treaties with Western forces one after the other: Great Britain (1883),[370] Germany (1883),[371] Italy (1884),[372] Russia (1884),[373] Austria (1895),[374] and Denmark (1902).[375] The first treaty with America did not include any provision regarding religion. This provision was included in all treaties after the treaty with Britain: "from their teachings, liturgies, to their respective rites, they [missionaries] shall equally be allowed to practice as they wish."[376] In this provision, religious freedom was offered only to the missionaries from these treaty nations; Chosŏn Catholic believers were not allowed such freedom. However, beginning with the *Chobul suho choyak* 朝佛修好通商條約 (The Chosŏn-France Treaty of Amity and Commerce) in 1886,[377] the

[368] Mark A. Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities*, 39.

[369] *Kojong sillok 19* (The fourth month of the sixth day, 1882).

[370] *Kojong sillok 20* (The tenth month of the twenty-seventh day, 1883).

[371] *Kojong sillok 20* (The tenth month of the twenty-seventh day, 1883).

[372] *Kojong sillok 21* (The fifth month of the fourth day, 1884).

[373] *Kojong sillok 21* (The fifth month of the fifteenth day, 1884).

[374] *Kojong sillok 29* (The fifth month of the twenty-ninth day, 1892).

[375] *Kojong sillok 42* (July 15, 1902). Beginning from 1896, Chosŏn began to use the solar calendar.

[376] 至於本教典禮各儀, 均聽隨意自行. This phrase appears in the above-mentioned treaties.

[377] Yim Puyŏn, "Kŭndae yugyo chisik in ŭi 'chonggyo' tamnon," *Kŭndae Han'guk chonggyo munhwa ŭi chae kusŏng: Kŭndae song ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong* II, Han'guk chonggyo hak ch'ongsŏ 2 (Sŏngnam: Han'guk hak chungang yŏn'guwŏn, 2006), 63; Yi Manyŏl, "Segi rŭl nŏmŭn mannam: Han pul kwangye 120 nyŏn," in *Han pul sugyo 120 nyŏn sa ŭi chae chomyŏng*, Han'guk saron 45 (Kwach'ŏn: Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 2007), 6-7

missionaries were permitted to perform missionary works directly with Chosŏn Catholic believers.[378]

On November 10, 1883, the term *chonggyo* appeared for the first time in a Korean source: the *Hansŏng sunbo* (漢城旬報),[379] Korea's first modern newspaper, published in literary Chinese.[380] The word was used in a section explaining a wide array of topics pertaining to European countries, such as geography, population, topography, climate, language, religion, culture, education, and political systems:

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[378] Unlike the process by which other treaties were signed, the negotiation between Chosŏn and France was difficult and long because of the issue of religious freedom. The first negotiation came to a deadlock because Kim Yunsik 金允植 (1835-1922), Chosŏn's delegate, refused to accept France's demands regarding the issue of religious freedom, and resigned in the middle of the process. The French negotiator had been trying to secure the freedom of religious activities for both French missionaries and Korean believers. The France negotiators were seeking Chosŏn's agreement on a set of eleven detailed articles known as the "Christian articles" (see A-IRHEC. M-Mutel, 1886-28). These articles mainly requested the freedom of religious belief for Chosŏn Catholics, a request that likely troubled the Chosŏn diplomat, since Chosŏn had persecuted Catholicism for over a century as a heresy. The second group of Chosŏn negotiators also obstinately refused to insert the article allowing the freedom of religious activities and residence for the French missionaries. Eventually, the two sides found a middle ground by following the example of the Chosŏn-Britain Treaty and deleting several phrases in such a way that the concessions of the French negotiators would be met. English missionaries were not allowed to travel except for the purposes of touring and commerce. However, the provision laid out in article 4-6 did not specifically prescribe such limits, thus allowing French missionaries to visit Chosŏn Catholic followers more freely. Article 9-2 secures the missionary works of proselytizing Catholic teachings by adding the verb *professer*, meaning to teach. See Chang Tongha, "Kaehang ki chuhan France kongsa kwan kwa Catholic kyohoe kwangye," *Han pul sugyo 120 nyŏn sa ŭi chomyŏng*, Han'guksaron 45 (Seoul: Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 2007), 131-138.

[379] "Yurŏp chu 洲" *Hansŏng sunbo* 漢城旬報, November 10, 1883, *Taehan Minguk sinmun archives*, http://www.nl.go.kr/newspaper/, accessed on March 14, 2020. Song Hyŏnju also mentions this fact in his paper "Kŭndae Han'guk Pulgyo ŭi chonggyo chŏngch'e song insik: 1910 nyŏn tae put'ŏ 1930 nyŏn tae kkaji Pulgyo chapchi rŭl chungsim ŭro," 213. See also Chang Sŏngman, "Kaehanggi Han'guk sahoe ŭi 'chonggyo' kaenyŏm e kwanhan yŏn'gu" (Ph.D. dissertation, Seoul National University, 1992), 40-41.

[380] According to Albert A. Altman, it is difficult to ignore Japanese participation in the emergence of the press in Korea. Before *Hansŏn sunbo* was published by the Chosŏn government, the *Chōsen shinpō* was issued by the Japanese on December 10, 1881 in Pusan for both Koreans and Japanese. It was printed bilingually, in both literary Chinese and Japanese. By publishing the newspaper in Chinese, the Japanese sought to influence Kong Kojong's policy of reform. The newspaper's intended Japanese audience was Japanese traders living in Pusan. See Albert A. Altman, "Korea's First Newspaper: The Japanese *Chōsen shinpō*," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 43-4 (August 1984): 685-696.

> Regarding religion (*chonggyo* 宗敎), they [European people] practice Christianity (*Yasogyo* 耶蘇敎). Other European religions include Islam (*hoegyo* 回敎) and Judaism (*yut'aegyo* 猶太敎). In Turkey, they practice Islam, and Jewish people are living scattered all throughout Europe, practicing Judaism. Christianity is divided into three lineages: the Greek Orthodox Church (*hŭirapkyo* 希臘敎), Protestantism (*singyo* 新敎) , and Catholicism (*kugyo* 舊敎). People in Spain, France, Italy, and Austria, among others, practice Catholicism, and people in England, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, among others, practice Protestantism. Since Russian people belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church, there is constant religious conflict within the European countries. Those who have read the history of Europe will recall that past and present wars all began with religious differences.
> 宗敎則多奉耶蘇敎又有回敎及猶太敎今土耳其奉回敎猶太民散到居歐洲國家各處者奉猶太敎如耶蘇敎則分爲三派所謂希臘敎新敎舊敎是也西班牙佛蘭西伊太利澳大利等國奉舊敎英吉利荷蘭 日耳曼 瑞典嚏國等國奉新敎魯西亞奉希臘敎故歐洲諸國各宗其敎相抗不已讀歐洲史者必記古今戰爭之端多有於宗敎之異同也.[381]

Here, the term *chonggyo* was used two times as a translation of the English term "religion," in reference to Christianity and its sub-lineages. Even though the article used the term *kyo* 敎 (lit. "teachings") to refer to various religious groups, such as Islam, Judaism, and the Greek Orthodox Church, it is certain that the term *shūkyō* was coined in Japan and introduced from Japan to Korea with the same Sinographic term *chonggyo*. Yu Kil-chun 兪吉濬 (1856-1914) published the *Hansŏng sunbo* with the assistance of Inoue Kakugorō, a Japanese newspaper professional. Yu Kil-chun himself once studied at Fukuzawa Yukichi's academy at Keio University in Tokyo in 1881 with Inoue Kakugorō. In publishing the newspaper, they borrowed many modern terms from Japanese translations of Western concepts.

After the term *chonggyo* appeared in the *Hansŏng sunbo*, the concept began to be used more frequently by Confucian elites. However, the Confucians were not passive recipients of this new concept. Rather, they actively participated in creating new connotations for the concept of religion by drawing on their own religious traditions in Chosŏn. The Sinographic compound

[381] The English translation is mine. "Yurŏp chu 洲" *Hansŏng sunbo* 漢城旬報, November 10, 1883, 19.

chonggyo can be read in three different ways, depending on how we parse the Chinese characters. First, it can be understood as "sect's teachings," the sense in which the Japanese used the term in diplomatic treaties. Second, if we take the first character as a verb, the word can be read as "teachings that we respect." For example, after having travelled to Europe and the United States from July 1883 to December 1885, Yu Kil-chun wrote *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun* 西遊見聞 (Observations on a Journey to the West), one of the first books in Korean that gave a general introduction to the world outside Korea, particularly focusing on Europe and the United States.[382] One of the chapters in the book deals with the origins of European religions. In that chapter, Yu Kil-chun defines the concept of *chonggyo* as "the teachings that we honor and respect" by taking *chong* as a verb meaning "to respect, or to honor" and *kyo* as a noun referring to "teachings."[383] Yu Kil-chun also states that Europeans' religions express the same respect that Koreans express for the Way of Confucius or Mencius. Third, *chonggyo* can also be interpreted as "the ultimate teachings" if we take the first character as an adjective, meaning "ultimate," that modifies the latter character, *kyo*, meaning "teachings." Most Confucian elites adopted this third way of reading the term. Now, let us look at more specific usage examples.

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[382] Yu Kil-chun served as a secretary on the newspaper *Hansŏng sunbo* in February and March 1883. However, he resigned from this position in April of the same year. He went to the United States as an entourage when King Kojong dispatched Pobingsa (報聘使), the first official Korean delegation to the United States in July 1883. From September to October he visited many places in America. From November 1883, under the mentorship of Edward S. Morse, Yu Kil-Chun became Korea's first international student. He entered the Governor Dummer Academy in Byfield, Massachusetts in September 1884, studying there until December 1884. After several of Kil-chun's reformist friends were arrested for listening to the news about the Kapsin Coup, a failed three-day coup d'état, the Chosŏn government ceased providing Yu Kil-chun with financial support. Thus, he suddenly had to return to Korea. After visiting various countries in Europe, he came back to Korea via Singapore and Hongkong in December 1885. See Yu Kil-chun, *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun: Chosŏn chisik in Yu Kil-chun, sŏyang ŭl pŏnyŏk hada*, trans. Hŏ Kyŏngjin (Seoul: Sŏhae Munjip, 2004), 608. A translation by Sinwoo Lee, Hanmee Na Kim, and Min Suh Son is forthcoming in the Korean Classics Library: Historical Materials series, published by the University of Hawaii Press.

[383] Yu Kil-chun, *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun: Chosŏn chisik in Yu Kil-chun, sŏyang ŭl pŏnyŏk hada*, 356.

In 1895, Yi Chaegon 李載崐 (1859-?) made an appeal to King Kojong (r.1864-1897) to reform the Confucian Academy *Sŏnggyungwan* 成均館, the foremost educational institution of the Chosŏn dynasty.[384] During the Kabo Reform period (1894), one of the most important issues was the question of how to reform the *Sŏnggyun'gwan*, which had hosted royal shrines and functioned as an educational institution.[385] At that time, the reforms were directed towards retaining only the royal shrines while abolishing the *Sŏnggyun'gwan*'s educational function and establishing a separate educational institution elsewhere. In this situation, Yi Chaegon made an appeal to King Kojong on June 10, 1895 to restore the educational function of the *Sŏnggyun'gwan,* in which he used the term *chonggyo*:

> As for these *chongyo* that all [the countries of this world] have, I may not know what they teach, but each teaches its own teachings. It is not harmful to engage in the enterprise of building an independent and strong country as long as nations do not infringe on each other. Therefore, how can our country alone learn to become prosperous and strong after we have neglected our own *mun* 文 (meaning mainstream Confucian culture) as something useless when it is really the basis of all affairs?
> 皆有所謂宗教者, 臣所不知何教, 而各教其教, 不相侵禁, 亦不害乎自主自强之業。奚獨我邦, 不顧斯文關鍵, 一切弁髦而後, 始可學富强乎?

In this appeal, Yi Chaegon takes the concept of *chonggyo* literally, as meaning "the ultimate teachings." To him, the ultimate teaching is Confucianism, which had functioned as the basis of scholarship, government, ideology, and education in Korea during the Chosŏn dynasty. He first uses the word *chonggyo* in this passage, then uses "kyo" later in the same document in reference to the same concept. Through these usage examples, we can conclude that he did not distinguish between the two terms, which implies that he interpreted the term literally. Yi Chaegon argues

[384] *Kojong sillok 33* (the sixth month, 10th day of the lunar month, in 1895).

[385] Kang Myŏngsuk, "Kabo kaehyŏk i hu (1894-1910) Songgyungwan ŭi pyŏnhwa," *Kyoyuk sahak yŏn'gu* 10-1 (2000): 153-179.

that just as Western powers built a strong and independent nation with their own religions, it is also necessary for King Kojong to enhance Confucian education in Chosŏn.

King Kojong took Yi Chaegon's appeal seriously, and issued a promulgation in 1899 to promote Confucianism throughout the country:

> Every country of this world does its best to respect and encourage religion. This is because [religion] is that which purifies the human mind and renders good governance possible. Why is it that religion in our country is not respected and seen as something without benefit? Isn't it true that our country's religion is the Way of Confucius?
> 世界萬國之尊尙宗敎, 靡不用極, 皆所以淑人心而出治道也。 我國之於宗敎, 何其泛尊而無其實也。 我國之宗敎, 非吾孔夫子之道乎?[386]

Here King Kojong also uses the term *chonggyo* in reference to Confucianism. Unlike Japan, where the term *chonggyo* was used to refer to the teaching of a sect, in Korea the word was interpreted as meaning "the ultimate teachings," i.e., Confucianism. Kojong's promulgation demonstrates that he interpreted *chonggyo* as a way of both governing a country and cultivating the mind, and believed that Confucianism had taken on this dual role in Chosŏn.

On January 7, 1900, Yi Yuin 李裕寅 (1843-1907), who served as a special policy advisor to King Kojong, also resigned from his position because he was aggrieved by the Japanese assassination of Queen Myŏngsŏng in 1895. In his appeal, Yi Yuin suggested King Kojong undertake fifteen urgent governmental matters. Among the fifteen proposals, the first one was "to establish a *chonggyo*," which refers to Confucianism.[387] Kim T'aeje 金台濟 (1827- ?) also used the term *chonggyo* in an appeal to King Kojong. He stated that in order to make their

[386] *Kojong sillok 39 kwŏn* (April 27, 1899).

[387] *Kojong sillok 40 kwŏn*, (January 7, 1900). 特進官李裕寅上疏乞遞, 仍請復乙未之讎, 繼陳時務十五條。 一曰, 立宗敎 (儒敎)。

country civilized they needed to encourage learning and revere sages. He quoted the *Mengzi* to make this point:

> According to the tradition [Mengzi], "If the standard is correct, then the multitudinous people will be inspired. When the people are inspired, then there will be no evil or wickedness."[388] In a sage king's mission to edify his people, there is nothing more important than this. Though I am lowly, please do not abandon my words; take them to heart and carry out them immediately. If Your Majesty lays the groundwork for a religion that can be sustained throughout the ages, my happiness will know no bounds.
> 傳曰: "經正則庶民興, 斯無邪慝。"[389] 聖王作成之化, 恐無大於此也。 伏願聖明勿以臣人微而廢言, 亟加採試 爲千萬世宗教扶植之地, 不勝幸甚焉。[390]

Yi P'irhwa 李芘和 (?-?) made an appeal to King Kojong to establish schools in which Confucian teachings could be taught to the people, including lessons on such topics as self-cultivation, managing the family, governing the nation, and upholding virtue in the world. Yi P'irhwa argued that the reason his country had fallen on challenging times was the people's lack of education. Therefore, Yi P'irhwa proposed to King Kojong that their nation needed to establish Confucian schools. He also posited that other civilized countries were able to make their countries strong by putting efforts into educating their people. He suggested that the schools focus on both old and new fields of study:

> Generally speaking, wherever there are a country and its people, there will perforce be a religion. Therefore, if the religion is thriving, then the nation will thrive. If the religion is declining, then the nation will decline. This is the unchanging principle, an eternal truth, about the world. The only reason that our country has not progressed is because religion has not thrived. If we want our country to thrive and prosper, then we must work to make its religion thrive. Secondly, if we study contemporary teachings, then all will be well.

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[388] Bryan W. Van Norden, trans., *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2008), 196.

[389] *Mengzi* 7B37.13.

[390] *Kojong sillok 41 kwŏn* (September 23, 1901).

> 蓋有國有民, 必有宗教。 故宗教興則其國興, 宗教衰則其國衰, 天下萬古不易之典也。 惟我邦國不振, 由於宗教之不興, 如欲振興其邦國, 必懋興其宗教也。 然後學今之學, 則可以竝行而不悖矣。[391]

In this context, the term *chonggyo* again means "the ultimate teachings," or Confucianism. Specifically, Yi P'irhwa argues that religion can be perfected not through faith, but through Confucian education.

> King Kojong issued an order as follows:
>
> The reason for a country to have a national educational institution 太學 (*t'aehak*) is to revere religion and to educate wise literati. Since the rise and fall of Sage Learning 聖學 (*sŏnghak*), as well as the decline and advancement of popular morals 世道 (*sedo*) depend on a national educational institution, how could this not be crucial to the nation? This dynasty first established a national educational institution by treating education as an urgent priority. Generally speaking, when there is a nation, there must be a religion. The same is true for all other nations under heaven. As for our Way, it is a religion that has been transmitted for thousands of years in East Asia.
> 詔曰: 國之有太學, 所以尊宗教而養賢士也。 聖學之廢興, 由是焉; 世道之汙隆, 由是焉。 其關於國家者, 豈不重且大歟? 肆本朝開國, 以尊道重教爲急先務, 首建太學。 蓋有國則必有宗教, 實天下萬國之所同。 而吾道者, 卽我東方數千年相傳之宗教也。[392]

As this passage demonstrates, King Kojong interpreted the concept of *chonggyo* as "ultimate teachings," interpreting the term literally, rather than treating it as a Western notion of religion.

Sŏ Kŭngsun 徐肯淳 (1860-?) made an appeal to the King regarding Kojŏng's order promoting educational institutions. Fully agreeing with the King's order, Sŏ Kŭngsun expressed his delight. In his appeal, he used the term *chonggyo* many times. He stated that the Confucian Way is a religion that has been passed down for over three thousand years in Korea.[393] He

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[391] *Kojong sillok 47 kwŏn* (March 25, 1906).

[392] *Kojong sillok 47 kwŏn* (April 15, 1906).

[393] *Kojong sillok 47 kwŏn* (May 25, 1906). 雖然, 儒道者, 乃吾韓三千年相傳之宗教也。

considered establishing a religion to be a shortcut to making the country strong. In establishing a religion, he continued, the most important priority is to teach people the Confucian moral codes of humaneness, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, filial piety, and loyalty. Even though the term was first introduced to Korea by the Japanese through the translation *chonggyo*, as we have seen, unlike the Japanese interpretation of the term as "sect's teachings," Korean intellectuals understood it to connote the Confucian educational moral code, which had functioned as the "ultimate teachings" throughout the history of Chosŏn.

However, this usage of the term *chonggyo* started to change as the Japanese Colonial period began with the signing of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty on August 22, 1910. Terauchi Masatake 寺内 正毅 (1852-1919), who was appointed as the third and last Japanese Resident-General of Korea in May 1910, executed the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty in August of the same year, and thus became the first Japanese Governor-General of Korea. In his first declaration to the Korean public, on August 29 of the same year, Terauchi Masatake announced that based on the discourse of Western imperialistic civilization, the Japanese would approve and respect religious freedom as did all other Western countries[394]

> The freedom to have faith in a religion is uniformly recognized by all civilized nations. Based on the teachings that they respect and honor, they pursue the basis of spiritual peace and their proper course in life (安心立命). However, we will consider those who would create conflicts due to the differences of religious lineages, or those who discuss government and plot a rebellion under the name of belief and religion, to be violators of social morality and stability. In such cases, we have no choice but to deal with people as the law demands. However, the original purport of many religions, whether they be Confucianism, Buddhism, or Christianity, lies in the improvement of humanity and social conditions. Therefore, their activities indeed do not run counter to the purpose of government policy. In fact, I do not doubt that they would in fact help it. Therefore, we will not discriminate against any religion regardless of its teachings and we will be generous in giving proper protection and convenience to members of all religions with regard to their propagation and missionary works.

[394] *Sunjong sillok purok 1 kwŏn* (August 29, 1910).

信敎의 自由ᄂᆞᆫ 文明列國이 均認ᄒᆞᆫ 바ㅡ라。各人이 其崇拜ᄒᆞᆫ 敎旨를 倚ᄒᆞ야써 安心立命之地를 求ᄒᆞᆷ은 固雖其所ㅡ나 宗派의 異同으로써 漫히 試其紛爭ᄒᆞ며 又藉名信敎ᄒᆞ야 叩議政事ᄒᆞ며 若企異圖ᄒᆞᆷ은 卽荼毒良俗ᄒᆞ야 妨害安寧ᄒᆞᆫ 者로 認ᄒᆞ야 當히 按法處斷치 아니치 못ᄒᆞ리라。然이나 儒佛諸敎與基督敎를 不問ᄒᆞ고 其本旨ᄂᆞᆫ 畢竟人心世態를 改善ᄒᆞᆷ에 在ᄒᆞᆫ 故로 固히 施政之目的과 不爲背馳而已뿐아니라 도로혀 可히 此를 裨補ᄒᆞᆯ 者로 不疑ᄒᆞ니 以是로 各種宗敎를 待ᄒᆞᆷ에 毫無挾於親疎之念을 勿論ᄒᆞ고 其布敎傳道에 對ᄒᆞ야 適當ᄒᆞᆫ 保護便宜를 與ᄒᆞᆷ이 不吝ᄒᆞᆷ이라.

信敎의 自由는 文明列國이 均認한바ㅡ라。 各人이 其崇拜한 敎旨를 倚하야써 安心立命之地를 求함은 固雖其所ㅡ나 宗派의 異同으로써 漫히 試其紛爭하며 又藉名信敎하야 叩議政事하며 若企異圖함은 卽荼毒良俗하야 妨害安寧한 者로 認하야 當히 按法處斷치아니치못하리라。 然이나 儒佛諸敎與基督敎하 不問는고 其本旨를 畢竟人心世態함 改善한에 在한 故로 固히 施政之目的과 不爲背馳而已뿐아니라 도로혀 可히 此를 裨補할 者로 不疑하니 以是로 各種宗敎를 待함에 毫無挾於親疎之念을 勿論하고 其布敎傳道에 對하야 適當한 保護便宜를 與함이 不吝함이라。[395]

In this announcement, in the context of the separation of religion and state, Terauchi Masatake drew upon the Western discourse of religion. He emphasized that as long as Koreans practice their religious beliefs and teachings in the individual sphere, and not in that of governmental and political affairs, the Japanese Governor-General would be generous in offering assistance to religious activities regardless of their particular orientation. However, if religious activities intruded on, or interfered with, political matters, then they would be dealt with according to the law. This political enforcement gradually changed the understanding of the concept of religion in Korea.[396]

The main characteristic of the so-called religious traditions of pre-modern Korea was their involvement in multiple sociocultural spheres; depending on to the circumstances, religious

[395] Ibid.

[396] As Mark A. Nathan shows in his book, the Japanese colonial legal system influenced greatly the conception of what religion should be in Korea, by both providing a venue for religious groups to gain some legal entity status and giving the authorities the power to determine which groups could be considered legitimate religious organizations. See Mark A. Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities: A History of Buddhist Propagation in Modern Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018). 54-80.

teachings and practices could crop up in the spheres of government, medicine, ancestor worship, social customs, and education.[397] As we have seen, Confucian scholars specifically interpreted the term *chonggyo* as the fundamental basis of national education and government. However, Korean religious traditions began to undergo a process of compartmentalization during the Japanese Colonial period, which commenced in 1910.[398] The multiple roles that religion traditionally played began to be disassembled into distinctive spheres of activity, such as government, education, medicine and religion,[399] and thereby most importantly, the sphere of religion became circumscribed in the private and internal sphere of the human mind.[400] Confucianism, which had functioned as a state ideology during the five hundred years of the Chosŏn dynasty, was relegated to a philosophy due to its lack of faith or interest in the afterlife. As Yun Haedong points out, however, the essence of this relegation did not lie in Confucianism's inherent lack of religious features. Rather, the Western concept of religion did not allow Confucianism to be treated as a religion because it epistemologically imposed the separation of religion and state on Korean society at that time.[401]

After going through a period of transition at the turn of the twentieth century, the colonial-era Korean religious landscape began to be modified, administered, and controlled by

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[397] Kim Chongsŏ, "Kŭndaehwa wa Han'guk chonggyo ŭi kaenyŏm," in *Chonggyo wa yŏksa* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2006),164-165.

[398] Yi Uk, "Kŭndae kukga ŭi mosaek kwa kukgŭiryŏ ŭi pyŏnhwa," in *Kŭndae ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong* I (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005), 11.

[399] Kim Chongsŏ, "Kŭndaehwa wa Han'guk chonggyo ŭi kaenyŏm, 168-176.

[400] Yi Uk, "Kŭndae kukga ŭi mosaek kwa kukgŭiryŏ ŭi pyŏnhwa,"11.

[401] Yun Haedong, "Chonggyo rŭl t'onghae inmunhak ŭl tasi ponda," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndai: Han'guk ŭi chonggyo naemyŏnhwa, chŏngch'ihwa nŭn ŏddŏkke chinhaeng toeŏttna* (Seoul: Ch'aek Kwa Hamkke, 2013), 5.

political forces, namely, through exclusion and suppression. In 1915, the Japanese colonial government in Korea issued a set of regulations in which only three legitimate religions—Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity—were recognized. The rest of the Korean religions were placed in the category of "pseudo-religion" (Jpn. *ruiji shūkyō* /Kor. *yusa chonggyo*), which was governed by the Bureau of Police instead of the Department of Religion.[402] As Josephson argues, "the trinary of secular, superstition, and religion was put into place by force"[403] under the concept of religion. This led many religious traditions—both established and emerging religions—to modify their functions or to redefine their positions in society. Among the most peculiar of these modifications were religions' attempts to avoid the culpability of being superstitious, a concept imposed by Western missionaries. For example, in his *Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism* (*Chosŏn Pulgyo yusin non*), Han Yong'un, a representative Buddhist reformist, attempted to redefine the nature of Buddhism in two ways: as something religious in nature, and as something philosophical in nature.[404] By discussing the nature of Buddhism in these two ways, Han Yong'un argued that Buddhism is not superstitious, but rather, a religion pursuing enlightenment and wisdom. He further argued that while Christianity lacks a philosophical dimension, Buddhism pursues universal principles, meaning the Buddha was indeed a true philosopher. Han Yong'un's decision to frame Buddhism in this way can be understood as an effort to position Buddhism as a modern and civilized religion in accordance with the era's contemporary religious discourse.

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[402] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 262.

[403] Ibid.

[404] Han Yong'un, "On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism," in *Selected Writings of Han Yongun: From Social Darwinism to Socialism with a Buddhist Face*, trans. by Vladimir Tikhonov and Owen Miller (Global Oriental, 2008), 44-47.

In these unprecedented sociopolitical circumstances, just as traditional religions began to revise their roles in society, newly emerging religious traditions also began to modify their own positions. Chang Sŏngman highlights an example of the birth of a religion through the case of "Eastern Learning" (Tonghak 東學). This religion was established by Ch'oe Cheu 崔濟愚 (1824-1864) in the late nineteenth century as a reform movement and revival of Confucian teachings in response to "Western Learning" (Sŏhak 西學). As a religious leader, Ch'oe Cheu's successor, Son Pyŏnghŭi 孫秉熙 (1861-1922), had to overcome the negative public perception that "Eastern Learning" had the potential to cause political insurrection, which had occurred previously during the Tonghak Peasant Revolution (1894).[405] On December 1, 1905, Son Pyŏnghŭi changed the name "Eastern Learning" to Ch'ŏndogyo 天道教, which can be translated as either "Teachings" or "Religion" "of the Heavenly Way," thereby redefining Ch'ŏndogyo in alignment with the Western concept of religion and securing its position in society.[406] An article in the *Cheguk sinmun* reveals much about the situation that Son Pyŏnghŭi faced at the time:[407]

> Now Ch'ŏndogyo is characterized as a religion, in the same category as other religions…. As a rule, religion, in no matter what country, has a specific realm in which it can function…and a church should conduct its roles only within that religious realm.…Therefore, religion should not be involved in law and government. Once religion goes beyond its own scope and intervenes in government or law, the government will legally prevent it from exceeding the

[405] Chang Sŏngman, "Chonggyo kaenyŏm ŭi chedohwa wa naemyŏnhwa," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndai*: *Han'guk ŭi chonggyo naemyŏnhwa, chŏngch'ihwa nŭn ŏddŏkke chinhaeng toeŏttna* (Seoul: Ch'aek kwa Hamkke, 2013), 66.

[406] According to Pak Maengsu, however, Ch'ŏndogyo should not be understood as inheriting Tonghak's tradition as a whole. Tonghak tradition was separately transmitted to five other groups in the early twentieth century in accordance with each of their political positions. See Pak Maengsu, *Kaebyŏk ŭi kkum: Tong Asia rŭl kkaeuda, tonghak nongmin hyŏngmyŏng kwa cheguk Ilbon* (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2011).

[407] Chang Sŏngman, "Chonggyo kaenyŏm ŭi chedohwa wa naemyŏnhwa," 69.

> bounds of its religious territory. Therefore, it is a universal rule, the world over, that religion should not go beyond its own scope or role.[408]

This advertisement was not just about announcing the change of Tonghak's name, but was also a historical moment that signaled the birth of a modern notion of religion in Korea.[409] In redefining itself as a religion, Ch'ŏndogyo ensured the legality of their missionary work and religious activity. At the same time, Ch'ŏndogyo was attempting to enter into the so-called civilized world by observing international law. This meant confining itself to the sphere of religion, as per the Western concept of religion: that is, the notion that religion should not be involved in any political matters, but only should concern itself with personal salvation. The change of name was a significant shift because it indicated Ch'ŏndogyo's willingness to accept modern categories and meanings of religion and to receive the benefits that flowed therefrom. Korean people were beginning to draw clear boundaries between sacred and secular, religion and government. The field of religion now became a very specialized domain that the police force and the legal system controlled. Likewise, whatever was categorized as a religion could now be protected by the government.

Before publishing the above article, Son Pyŏnghŭi also placed an advertisement in the *Cheguk sinmun* and the *Taehan Mail sinmun* that ran in both Seoul and Tōkyō for fifteen days:

> The Great Announcement: The Advent of Ch'ŏndogyo
> The Way is "the Heavenly Way." Learning is "Eastern Learning." Therefore, what was in the past called "Eastern Learning" is now "The Religion (Teaching) of the Heavenly Way." Its general tenet is that man is Heaven. Its core teaching is the perfection of both spirit and flesh and the unity of church and state. Its purpose is to protect the country, to give relief to the people, to extend moral

[408] All translations of newspaper articles in this chapter are mine unless otherwise stated. "Mr. Son and Religion," *Cheguk sinmun*, January 31, 1906, quoted in Chang Sŏngman, "Chonggyo kaenyŏm ŭi chedohwa wa naemyŏnhwa," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndai: Han'guk ŭi chonggyo naemyŏnhwa, chŏngch'ihwa nŭn ŏddŏkke chinhaeng toeŏttna* (Seoul: Ch'aek kwa Hamkke, 2013), 68.

[409] Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ondogyo kaesingi chonggyo rosŏŭi chagi insik," in *Kŭndae ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong* I (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005), 109.

> virtue to the world, to save all beings under heaven, and to establish a kingdom of Heaven on earth. Its ethical system is to serve men as though one were serving Heaven. The tenets of moral practice are sincerity, respect, and trustworthiness. Religious Leader: Son Pyŏnghŭi.
> 大告天道敎出現
> 道卽天道 學卽東學 卽 古之東學 今之天道敎, 宗旨는人乃天이요
> 總領은 性身雙全, 敎政一致이요, 目的은 輔國安民, 布德天下, 廣濟蒼生,
> 地上天國建設이요, 倫理는 事人如天이요, 修行道德은 誠敬信이라.
> 교주 손병희.[410]

As the above advertisement indicates, Eastern Learning became a modern religion, resembling other modern world religions in having a systematic religious organization, tenets, purposes, and practices. It seems, however, that the modern concept of religion that Son Pyŏnghŭi used did not fall neatly within the bounds of the Western concept of religion. This was particularly the case with regard to the confinement of religion to the private sphere of the human mind and the separation of religion and state. The religious principles of Ch'ondogyo, as delineated in the advertisement, still teach the unity of church and state, claiming that the religion's main purpose is to establish a kingdom of Heaven in society through the teachings of Ch'ŏndogyo. Therefore, it can be said that even if Son Pyŏnghŭi attempted to bring Tonghak into the sphere of religion through this name change, his reformation of Tonghak into Chŏndogyo was not simply an instance of adapting the Western concept of religion. Son Pyŏnghŭi's equivocal position regarding the issue of the separation of religion and state continued. As Murayama Chijun points out, Son's contradictory attitude becomes clear in a sermon he gave in April 1912 in Ŭidong, Seoul, wherein he stated, "Since religion and government form the basis of life, these two are not to be separated."[411]

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[410] *Cheguk sinmun*, December 12, 1905, quoted in Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ondogyo kaesingi chonggyo rosŏŭi chagi insik," in *Kŭndae ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong* I (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005), 107.

[411] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo*, 58.

4. The Concept of Religion as a New "Space of Experience" and "Horizon of Expectation" in New Religious Movements

The new concept of "religion" was naturalized in early twentieth-century Korea and provided a new "space of experience" by opening up a new "horizon of expectation" regarding religion in the minds of the people. Because the concept of religion provided a new space of experience, it gave Koreans the opportunity to objectively examine both the advantages and disadvantages of established religions. Based on such examinations, religious leaders began to build their own new religious teachings that fit the needs of the people and did away with negative aspects of old religions. Of course, the concept of religion itself should not be given credit for creating this new space of experience. Revolutionary sociocultural changes and the distinctive religious backgrounds of the late Chosŏn should also be recognized as having enabled many religious leaders to create new religious teachings. What I would like to point out here is that the categorical concept of religion laid out an abstract space to critically think about existing religions. The introduction and naturalization of the concept of religion among the people played a cardinal role in deploying a new space of experience and generating hope among them for establishing a new utopia.

For example, Yi Tonhwa, one of the main figures who systemized the doctrinal teachings of Ch'ŏndogyo in the 1920s, opens his *Ch'ŏndo kyori tokpon* (A Reader on Ch'ŏndogyo Doctrine) with a rhetorical question: "Do you know why Ch'ŏndogyo had to be reestablished among many [established] religions in this world?"[412] He answers this question with the enlightenment song of Haewŏl 海月 Ch'oe Sihyŏng 崔時亨 (1827-1898), the second successor

[412] Yi Tonhwa, *Ch'ŏndo kyori tokpon* (Seoul: Ch'ŏndogyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe Chung'ang Ponbu), 1926, 7.

of Ch'ŏndogyo. The song declares that as the new era of the universe opened (*huch'ŏn kaebyŏk* 後天開闢), a new destiny of the ultimate truth (*mugŭk chi un* 無極之渾)[413] was delivered to us. This made it necessary to recreate ourselves as new human beings who can welcome and receive the new destiny of the ultimate truth by following the new religious teachings of Chŏndogyo. By quoting Ch'oe Sihyŏng's words, Yi Tonhwa highlights that all of the established religions of the old era of the universe (*sŏnch'ŏn* 先天) had lost their power to revitalize the people's spirits. It was therefore inevitable, in Yi Tonhwa's view, that the teachings of Ch'ŏndogyo would spread widely, reviving the people's spirits and establishing a paradise on earth.[414] A similar rhetorical question and answer was shared by most of the newly formed religious groups of the time. They argued that "the old era of universe," which had sustained old evils like class discrimination, irrationality, and poverty, had passed, but "the new era of the universe," which would enable the new values of equality, freedom, prosperity, and peace, had arrived. Therefore, new religions would inevitably appear to serve this new era.

As Yun Sŭngyong points out, the defining characteristic of the paradise conjured by these new religions was that paradise would be brought about by building a utopia in this world, not in other worlds, after death.[415] In a new religious utopia like this, people's hope for a world free of

[413] The term *mugŭk*, literally meaning limitlessness or endlessness, refers to the ultimate state, the essence of all things in the universe, according to Neo-Confucianism. Originally, this word appears in the passage: "it returns to the state of limitlessness" 復歸于無極 in *Daodejing* 道德經 . It also appears in the passage: "entering into the gate of eternity and wandering in the field of limitlessness" 入無窮之門 以游無極之野 in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. In the *Liezi* 列子, it says, "the beginning and the end of things are originally limitless" 物之終始 初無極已. In these passages of Daoist texts, *mugŭk* is used to mean "limitlessness." However, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) understood the term to denote a formless truth which only has metaphysical principles, referring to the transcendence of limitlessness. See Yugyo Sajŏn Py'ŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, *Yugyo tae sajŏn* (Seoul: Pakyŏngsa, 1990), 445-446.

[414] Yi Tonhwa, *Ch'ŏndo kyori tokpon* (Seoul: Ch'ŏndogyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe Chung'ang Ponbu, 1926), 8-9.

[415] Yun Sŭngyong, *Han'guk sin chonggyo wa kaebyŏk sasang* (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saramdŭl, 2017), 152.

poverty, disease, class discrimination and war could be realized. The following example in Ch'ondogyo demonstrates this line of thinking:

> Question: What are the lives of sagacious beings like on this earth?
> Ch'oe Cheu: A sagacious being is one who lives eternally. If this world becomes "the kingdom of Heaven on earth" (*chisang ch'ŏn'guk* 地上天國), no people will ever die. Death will not be death, but rather, the continuation of life, because even physical death will follow the principle that "the issue of life and death lies in the will of Heaven" *sasaeng chaech'ŏn* 死生在天, let alone the eternal life of the spirit. Death will not be considered as death because one will be born, live and die taking pleasure in life. It is in the kingdom of Heaven on earth that there is no death because a small-self is growing with the larger-self of society as a whole.
>
> Question: It is said that a sagacious being can live without eating. Is the same true for the sagacious being in the kingdom of Heaven?
>
> Ch'oe Cheu: There is no inequality in who gets to eat and there are no worries about eating. Isn't this same as one who can live without eating?
>
> Question: It is said that there is neither private war, nor war between nations. Is the same true for the sagacious beings on earth?
> Ch'oe Cheu: There is no worry about food and clothing. There is no worry about birth and death, much less war!
>
> Question: Is there any discrimination in the matter of who receives fortune and misfortune in the kingdom of Heaven?
>
> Ch'oe Cheu: All people in the kingdom of Heaven on earth are people of "one body returning together" *tonggui ilch'e* 同歸一體, which means the whole world becomes one. Therefore, if there is misfortune, all people will receive it together. If there is fortune, they will receive it together. Therefore, it can be said that there is no discrimination in the matter of who receives fortune and misfortune. *Ch'ŏndo kyori tokpon*[416]

The religious paradise described in the above example evokes a world of equality and prosperity, free from social discrimination and worries about daily life issues. The kingdom of Heaven is simply a world where everyone can equally enjoy life without any worries about basic necessities.

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[416] Re-quoted from Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo* (*Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教), Korean trans. by Choe Kilsŏng and Chang Sang'ŏn (Taegu: Kyemyŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 41. Murayama Chijun notes that this passage comes from the *Chŏndogyori tokpon* compiled and written by Yi Ton'hwa. The first edition of the book, published as a mimeograph copy in 1926, is not available. I was able to obtain the revised edition published in 1968, but I was not able to find this particular passage in it.

In establishing new religious orders, the past sociocultural thought of the *Chŏng Kam nok* and the notion of Opening a New Era of Heaven (*huch'ŏn kaebyŏk* 後天開闢) played an important role in opening up a new horizon of religious expectation. The prognosticatory book *Chŏng Kam nok*, which had been widely distributed among the masses during the late Chosŏn period, had offered its readers hopes and dreams of a new world.[417] The main theme of its prognostication was that there would soon come "a 'true man' surnamed Chŏng who would establish a new dynasty."[418] Many people had waited for the arrival of such a "true man" (*chinin* 眞人). As the founder of Tonghak (Eastern Learning) lay open a universal path for all people to become sages, the common people became increasingly attracted to this new religious possibility. The insuperable barrier between the common people and the *yangban* literati began to collapse ideologically, and the connotations of the concept of religion functioned as a new possibility for establishing a new utopia. The people were no longer able to rely on a sage king, but now they were able to themselves become sages by following new religious tenets. The rapid emergence of new religions can be explained by this fundamental ideological change among the common people.

In this new line of utopian thinking, the path to becoming a noble man (*kunja* 君子) is not determined by class, but instead can be achieved through spiritual cultivation.[419] For example,

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[417] Cho Kyŏngdal, *Minjung kwa Utopia: Han'guk kŭndae minjung undongsa*, trans. by Hŏ Yŏngnan (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 2009), 43-49.

[418] John Jorgensen, *The Foresight of Dark Knowing: Chŏng Kam nok and Insurrectionary Prognostication in Pre-Modern Korea*, Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018).

[419] "The process of attaining enlightenment tells us that it was not *ch'ŏnju* (the Lord of Heaven) who descended to Ch'oe Cheu to send new messages. Rather, it was Ch'oe Cheu who opened a new spiritual world by entering into a period of reflection, during which he received the way of *ch'ŏnju* in the state that his mind and the mind of *ch'ŏnju* became one." See Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類

Ch'eo Cheu states in *Kyohun-ga*: "Those who enter the Way! As soon as you enter this way, all of you will spontaneously become sages; therefore you are sagacious beings of this world!"[420] This new universal way allowed many people to become members of the religion.[421] In this way, many people began to search for a new inner world and the prospect of being reborn as a spiritual being. This method of cultivating an inner world did not conflict with mainstream Buddhism, Confucianism, or Daoism.[422] So, it was not difficult for followers to adopt multiple methods of spiritual cultivation. In this new spiritual teaching, whoever enters the profound spiritual dimension through practice will become a sage, or will be able to be a founder of a new religion.

Debating philosophy or discussing contemporary issues had previously been the sole provenance of the literati class in Chosŏn. Now, though, it became more universal, even spreading among the common people.

> While delving into the three main teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, even though I only hold the unsatisfactory position of branch office manager, I was able to easily and effortlessly comprehend the original meanings of each teaching by myself. [I've realized that] the old sages are human beings and so am I. The reason why the

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似宗教, in *Han'guk kŭndae minsok illyuhak charyo taegye: Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* (1935) (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2008) 29.

[420] Ch'oe Cheu, "Kyohun-ga," in *Tonggyŏng taejŏn Yongdam yusa* (Seoul: Chŏngminsa, 1985), 132.

[421] According to Murayama Chijun's report, the estimated number of members of the Eastern Learning line of new religious groups was 117,585 in 1935. Many scholars have pointed out that this number is an underestimate. Pak Ŭnsik 朴殷植 (1859-1925) stated in the beginning of the Colonial period that the adherents of Ch'ŏndogyo kept increasing and estimated the number of its members at about three million. Its rapid growth is unprecedented in the history of religions in all times and places. See *Han'guk tongnip undong chi hŏlsa* (Seoul: Sŏmundang, 1975), 126. *Sinhan minbo*, published in 1919 in America as an overseas Korean Newspaper, stated that, according to the official report surveyed by the Government General in December 1918, the number of followers of Ch'ŏndogyo, the main community supporting the independence movement, was 1,082,936. See *Sinhanminbo*, May 22, 1919.

[422] In fact, each tradition had developed its own way for followers to cultivate a spiritual world. These included *chwamang* 坐忘 (sitting in forgetfulness), inner cultivation in Daoism, *chwasŏn* 坐禪 (sitting meditation) in Buddhism, *chŏngjwa* 靜坐 in Confucianism.

> Buddha-mind and the Dao-and-Virtue mind have naturally arisen within me is that Heaven allows *me* to disseminate the Way.[423]

In this passage, Yi Sangp'il, the founder of Kŭmgang-do (established in 1926), demonstrates his confidence in his ability to understand the mainstream teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism and to act on the mandate of Heaven by founding a new religion. Likewise, Kim Yŏn'guk had a personal spiritual experience of enlightenment and received an order from the Lord Above (Sangje 上帝), through which he created a new religion called Sangjegyo in 1922.[424] One of the members of Sangjegyo, Hang Kidon, later established his own new religion, Ch'onyogyo by combining the teachings of Eastern Learning and Buddhism.[425] Yun Kyŏngjun went to Mt. Chiri and attained enlightenment by meeting with the sagacious persons (*sŏnin* 仙人). With the intention of destroying Ch'ŏndogyo, Yun Kyŏngjun became a member of Yonghwagyo, which is one of the denominations of Eastern Learning; however, he later became the founder of Tonghwagyo by changing the name of Yonghwagyo.[426] Even the concubine of Kang Ilsun (the founder of Chŭngsando), whose name was Ko Pallye 高判禮 (1880-1935), established an independent religious order called T'aeŭlgyo.[427] In the case of Paektogyo (白道教), one of the religious groups within Eastern Learning, a peasant named Chŏn Chŏn'un 全廷芸 became aware of his ignorance and attempted to attain the Way through the practice of

[423] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo* (*Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教), Korean trans. by Choe Kilsŏng and Chang Sang'ŏn (Taegu: Kyemyŏng taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 314.

[424] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo*, 160.

[425] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo*, 166.

[426] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo*, 180.

[427] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo*, 281.

"prayer samādhi" for three years in the Kŭmgang Mountains. Through this act, he obtained enlightenment and founded an independent religious order.[428] In this way, the emergence of new religions can be interpreted as the popularization of philosophy and spiritual practices among the common people. Local non-elites began to transform themselves from ordinary people, who are often considered passive agents of history, into active agents who carved out a path to enlightenment for themselves.

Murayama Chijun appraised the unprecedented emergence of new religious groups as follows:

> Originally most of the Chosŏn religions except Shamanism were transmitted from China as 'established religions' and therefore there had not been any Chosŏn-derived religions so far. In this regard, the emergence of *pseudo-religions* with their organized religious systems is a very interesting phenomenon as the first new religions in the cultural history of Chosŏn. It is said, in particular, that most of the newly emerged religions established their religious tenets by synthesizing the three main religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. The synthesized thought of the three religions had existed in Chosŏn previously. When the three teachings had lost their power in society, however, the emergence of *pseudo-religions* in great numbers with synthesized teachings of the three religions and with systematic religious systems is unparalleled in the history of Chosŏn.[429]

In this preface to *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō*, Murayama recognizes that, even though teachings that synthesized the three established religions had existed previously, the emergence of a great number of *pseudo-religions* with such syntheses was an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of Chosŏn.[430] Despite his recognition of the significance of the emergence of new

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[428] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo*, 196.

[429] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo* (*Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教), Korean trans. by Choe Kilsŏng and Chang Sang'ŏn (Taegu: Kyemyŏng taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991), 15; cf. Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教, in *Han'guk kŭndae minsok illyuhak charyo taegye: Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* (1935) (Seoul: Minsogwŏn, 2008).

[430] Even though scholars now use the term "new religion" instead of "pseudo-religion" in their survey reports on new religions after liberation, the phrase "new religion" still carries some of the negative connotations of "pseudo-religion," namely, an being association with superstition or false religion. In fact,

religions, however, Murayama disparaged the new religious groups as "pseudo-religions," which epistemologically imposed negative connotations on them.

In the beginning of the Colonial period in Korea, Korean intellectuals also maintained adverse and harsh attitudes toward the newly formed religious groups. Newspapers at the time expressed their strong expectations that religion could help the country overcome its crisis by enlightening and civilizing the nation and the people.[431] But the papers differed in their attitudes towards each individual religion. Many intellectuals expressed positive expectations for Confucianism, which had been a national ideology for five hundred years, and for Christianity, which was seen as the symbol of civilization and modernization.[432] These intellectuals' attitudes towards new religions and folk religions, however, were often adverse and harsh, treating them

this historical baggage still prevents us from evaluating the historical or religious significance of the new religious movements to this day. See *Han'guk sin chonggyo silt'ae chosa pogosŏ*, Wŏn'gwangdae chonggyo munje yŏn'guso p'yŏn, 1985; *Han chung il sam'guk sin chonggyo silt'ae ŭi pigyo yŏn'gu*, Wŏnkwangdae chonggyo munje yŏn'guso p'yŏn, 1992 and 1997.

[431] Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ondogyo kaesingi chonggyo rosŏŭi chagi insik," in *Kŭndae ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong* I (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005), 126, 110-111.

[432] Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ondogyo kaesingi chonggyo rosŏŭi chagi insik,", 110-119.

as merely pseudo-religions or 'superstition,'[433] and adamantly warning them not to get involved in government or law.[434]

The modern concept of religion under the colonial government created distinctive discourses in Korean society: the discourse of the separation of religion and state; the suppression of pseudo-religions; and the discourse of civilization. In particular, in relation to the suppression of pseudo-religions, the Japanese colonial government encouraged the Movement for Developing the Mind-Field 心田開發運動 (Simjŏn Kaebal Undong) in order to promote Buddhism as part of the internal assimilation policies between the two nations. In the following section, let us examine more closely how Sot'aesan interpreted the concept of religion, and thereby how he added new connotations to the concept of religion in establishing his new independent Buddhist faith.

5. Sot'aesan's Interpretations of the Concept of Religion

5-1. Responding to the Discourse on the Separation of Religion and State

[433] The concept of 'superstition' is another important keyword in examining the reconstruction of religious traditions in early twentieth-century Korea. The English term 'superstition' was translated into *meisin* 迷信 (Kr. *misin*) by the Meiji Enlightenment intellectuals during the Meiji period (1868-1912) and disseminated widely into East Asian countries. See Ch'oe Kilsŏng, "Misin t'ap'a e taehan il koch'al," *Han'guk minsokhak* 7 (1974), 39. During the colonial period in Korea, the concept of *misin* was also used as a cultural tool to repudiate Korean indigenous cultures, such as folk beliefs, geomancy, and shamanistic practices (*kut*) and beliefs, through the *misin t'ap'a undong* 迷信打破 (Movement to Overthrow Superstition) prompted by the Japanese colonial government. Inoue Enryō 井上円了(1858-1919) organized the Enigma Research Society (不思議研究会) in 1886 in the Tokyo University, by which he wanted to eradicate people's superstitions. During the colonial period in Korea, the concept of superstition became one of the critical terms in examining the cultural battle over the interpretation of 'civilization' and 'progress' between the colonized and the colony. However, the Movement to Overthrow Superstition was not deployed one-sided. An Sŭngt'aek and Lee Sijun show that some Korean intellectuals inversely formed a discourse paying attention to superstitious elements in the modernization and colonization. See An Sŭngt'aek and Lee Sijun, "Hanmal ilche ch'ogi minsinnon yŏn'gu: mihok toen midŭm iranŭn munhwa chŏk nakin ŭi chŏngch'ihak," *Hankuk Minjok Munhwa* 51 (May, 2014): 295-337; Miura Setsuo, "Inoue Enryo's Mystery Studies," *International Inoue Enryo Research* 2 (2014): 119-155.

[434] Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ondogyo kaesingi chonggyo rosŏŭi chagi insik," 112-119.

Sot'aesan's view on the relationship between religion and government became clear in his Dharma talk on the 26th day of the sixth month, the fifth year of the sexagenary cycle, Mujin 戊辰 (August 11, 1928), as the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe celebrated a summer anniversary.[435] It is worth taking a close look at this particular Dharma talk in order to understand Sot'aesan's discussion of the relationship between religion and government in a more nuanced, contextualized manner. The first notable aspect of the Dharma talk is that Sot'aesan did not simply speak himself, but engaged his disciples catechistically.[436] First Sot'aesan called four of his disciples to the front seats: Pak Taewan 朴大完 (1885-1958),[437] Cho Songgwang 曺頌廣

[435] This Dharma talk was transcribed by Song Tosong 宋道性 (1907-1946) and published in the Monthly Magazine, *Wŏlmal T'ongsin* 4. This Dharma talk was later summarized in the chapter of "II. Doctrine" in the *Taejonggyŏng* (Discourses of Master Sot'aesan). (See, "38. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 157-158.) Here, I will examine Sot'aesan's views on the relationship between religion and government on the basis of the more detailed talk recorded in the magazine here. I translated this talk with reference to "38. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 157-158. See, Song Tosŏng, transcribed, "Pŏphoerok," *Wŏlmal T'ongsin che 4 ho* (*Mujin* year, fifth year, sixth month, last day) (August 15, 1928), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan 1: Wŏlsin wŏlbo py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 25-29.

[436] Most of Sot'aesan's disciples were non-elite, local people who lacked general knowledge, particularly about matters of global affairs and politics. The dialogues between Sot'aesan and the four disciples in a Dharma service may have an educational effect on the audience, whom Sot'aesan hoped would be able to build a communal understanding of Korea's current political situations and develop an interest in such issues.

[437] Pak's given name was Chŏngnip 正立 and Taewan was his Dharma name, conferred by Sot'aesan. He was one of the most educated of all of Sot'aesan's disciples. At the age of 13, he won first place in a poetry writing contest in the city of Mokpo. After that, he went to Japan and graduated from both elementary and junior high schools in Osaka. At the age of 19, he returned to Korea and worked as an interpreter in the city of Kunsan for two years. He again went to the Central Meteorological Society in Japan and trained there for three years. Upon returning to Korea, he worked as a meteorological observer for the Japanese Resident-General of Korea in Inch'ŏn and Mokpo. At the age of 26, he went to Japan again and worked as a private tenant farming manager for five years, during which time he witnessed first-hand the oppression of the Korean people there. At the age of 31, he began travelling in southern and northern Manchuria, Siberia, Shanghai, and Nanjing. After participating in the Korean independence movement, he was arrested by Japanese police, and he was imprisoned for nine months without conviction and then for three years as a convicted prisoner. After being discharged from prison, he wandered around the Korean peninsula for four years. In 1927, he heard about the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe and visited Sot'aesan. As soon as he met Sot'aesan, he became his disciple and began to serve as an ordained

(1876-1957),[438] Song Man'gyŏng 宋萬京(1876-1931),[439] and Chŏn Ŭmgwang 全飮光 (1909-1960),[440] all relatively educated disciples at that time.

Sot'aesan began his talk by asking these men the following question: "Which country do people *recognize* as the most powerful country today?"[441] (emphasis mine) All of the four

kyomu at the age of forty-three. See Song Ingŏl, *Taejonggyŏng sok ŭi saram tŭl* (Iksan: Wŏlgan Wŏn'gwangsa, 1996), 326-327.

[438] Cho's given name was Kongjin 工珍 and Songgwang was his Dharma name, given by Sot'aesan. Before he met Sot'aesan, Cho was a Christian adherent and had worked as an Asian medicine doctor for twenty years. He was later selected as the president of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. He studied Confucianism, and participated in the Tonghak uprising. After that, he studied Asian medicine and became renowned as an excellent doctor. In 1902, at the age of 27, he converted to Christianity. In 1907, he established a Kubong church as well as a Christian school. At the age of 43, he became an elder at that church. He took part in the March First Independence Movement both as an active participant and as a financial supporter. He had prayed that he would meet Jesus Christ, putting faith in the Bible passage stating that Jesus will return during a degenerate age and will come like a thief in the night, and many signs of his return will appear at that time. When Cho met Sot'aesan, he was deeply impressed by him and became his disciple. See Song Ingŏl, *Taejonggyŏng sok ŭi saram tŭl* (Iksan: Wŏlgan Wŏn'gwangsa, 1996), 331-337.

[439] His given name is Sangmyŏn 相冕 and his Dharma name Man'gyŏng was conferred by Sot'aesan. He was born in Kimje in the Chŏlla province. He studied Confucianism and Classical Chinese and served as village mayor in Yongji. When Sot'aesan shared his plan to establish a Buddhist community with Master Hangmyŏng, Hangmyŏng attempted to transfer the Naejang monastery to Sot'aesan, but it was blocked due to the objection of many monks who lived in the monastery. At that time, Song Sangmyŏn practiced as a lay Buddhist at the temple. When he met Sot'aesan, he became a disciple of Sot'aesan's. Song Ingŏl, *Taejonggyŏng sok ŭi saram tŭl* (Iksan: Wŏlgan Wŏn'gwangsa, 1996), 368-369.

[440] Song's given name was Segwŏn 世權 and his Dharma name Ŭmgwang was conferred by Sot'aesan. He was born in 1909 in Jin'an in the northern province of Chŏlla. He studied Classcial Chinese at the age of six and married Kwŏn Tonghwa at the age of ten. He went to Maryŏng elementary school in 1922. With his mother's guidance, he met Sot'aesan and became his disciple. In the following year, he moved to Chŏnju and transferred to Cheil elementary school in Chŏnju. The inaugural meeting of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe was held in his house. He dropped out of school, vowing to become an ordained minister of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, and served as an ordained *kyomu* for over twenty years. He was particularly active in publishing the texts and magazines of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. Song Ingŏl, *Taejonggyŏng sok ŭi saram tŭl* (Iksan: Wŏlgan Wŏn'gwangsa, 1996), 187-188.

[441] This question is not simply asking about which country *is* the most powerful country in the world. By using the verb 'to recognize' rather than the copula "to be," we can presume the following: 1) the superior country is not fixed but can be changed; 2) and therefore if we understand the reasons why the U.S.A. is superior, Korea could instead become the world's leading power; 3) and in that case Chosŏn, now the colony of Japan after having lost its sovereignty, also had the prospect of becoming recognized as such a great country.

disciples answered that the most powerful country in the world was the United States of America. Sot'aesan then asked each of them to provide their reasons for making this judgment. First, Pak Taewan, who attended both elementary and junior high schools in Japan, answered it with two reasons: first, the U.S.A. was financially and economically prosperous, and was indebted to no other country; second, the national spirit was unified because the population was widely religiously observant. He continued that it was due to these two reasons that the U.S.A. had been able to become a world hegemon. Cho Songgwang, who had been an elder of a Christian church for twenty years before becoming a disciple of Sot'aesan, also answered that the U.S.A. derived its power from the religiosity of its people. He answered that ever since the Gospel of Christianity had been transmitted to America, the national spirit had been unified, which thereby amplified the country's economic power. Song Man'gyŏng, who had studied Confucianism for a long time, answered from the perspective of that tradition:

> In my view, the U.S.A. has practiced a republican system of government for a long time. They selected respectable persons as their leaders and have them undertake the tasks of political administration. It is therefore also for this reason that they have achieved such national power; and we cannot say that it is only due to the power of religion in that country.[442]

Sot'aesan asked him next, "In that case, was Christianity introduced to the U.S.A. before or after government was established there?" Song Man'gyŏng replied that he did not know the answer. Sot'aesan then posed this question to Pak Taewan, who answered, "Religion was introduced to America as soon as Christopher Columbus discovered the continent. After that, the national spirit was unified and America eventually liberated itself from Great Britain and established its own government." Sot'aesan again asked Chŏn Ŭmgwang, "Why do you think that the USA has

[442] Song Tosŏng, transcribed, "Pŏphoerok," *Wŏlmal T'ongsin che 4 ho* (The last day of the sixth month, 1928), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan 1: Wŏlsin wŏlbo py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 26.

become a global hegemon?" Chŏn said, "I think that internally America manages its people's minds well, through religion. Externally, government governs the people well. That is why they have become the world's leading power. However, there are still ways to go with regard to religion and government."

In this dialogue, the four disciples all agreed that the world's leading power at that time was the U.S.A., and their discussions about the main reasons why America had become a leading global power naturally led them to two topics: the influence of religion and the power of government. Now Sot'aesan gave his opinions on this issue, through which we can understand his views concerning the discourse of the separation of religion and state.

> The need for religion and government that all of you have talked about is correct. As a rule, the way religion and government steer the world is like to the two wheels of a carriage: if one of the two wheels is defective, then the world would not be complete. The role of religion, which helps people to obtain self-power and self-awareness, is to teach the mind of human beings to avoid committing transgressions. After people learn to conduct themselves with such self-power and self-awareness, government examines the results of a matter and then metes out rewards and punishments. Therefore, religion is the house that establishes the foundation while government is the organization that deals with the final product. When we elucidate both the first and the secondary together, the world will become a truly complete and civilized world. Therefore, religion and government are inextricably related, and it can be said that we cannot live without both for even a moment.[443]

In his answer, Sot'aesan uses the metaphor of the two wheels of a carriage to define the respective roles of religion and government. Framing the relationship between religion and government as interdependent and symbiotic, Sot'aesan understands religion to be a matter of dealing with the human mind; on the other hand, the role of government is to deal with the governance of a country. Religion is primary, the roots of the tree, whereas government is

[443] Song Tosŏng, transcribed, "Pŏphoerok," *Wŏlmal T'ongsin che 4 ho* (The last day of the sixth month, 1928), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan 1: Wŏlsin wŏlbo py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 26-27; c.f. "38. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 157-158.

secondary, like three's branches. In another Dharma talk, Sot'aesan also draws an analogy to a family: the cooperation between religion and government is like the synergy of a loving mother and a strict father, who work together to lead their family to happiness.[444]

One of the criteria for a civilized nation was that it observed international laws and regulations, and the separation of religion and state was a central idea in Western political discourse. In the 1910s, newspaper editorials, such as *Taehanmail sinbo*, *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, and *Tong'a ilbo*, often promoted the separation of religion and state, framing it as proof that a nation had become a civilized society.[445]

> Generally speaking, the position of religion in society lies in metaphysics while that of government lies in antimetaphysics. There is therefore a difference between the respective positions of religion and the state in human society. No interplay between the two is permitted by governmental laws in the contemporary, civilized world. [446]

However, many Korean intellectuals did not espouse the same rhetoric that Western missionaries promoted at that time. Even though the editorial above begins with the idea that no interplay between the two fields is permissible, it ends by emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between religion and government:

> When I explore the evolutionary history of all the world's countries, the improvement of government inevitably derives from religion. Why is that the case? It is so obvious that no one could mistake it: the power of government lies in the human body while that of religion lies in his mind and heart. This means that religion is the mother of government. Since, the mind is primary for a person while the body is secondary, in order to improve society, the human mind should come the first, and then the body can support whatever the mind is doing.[447]

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[444] "36. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 155.

[445] Editorials, *Taehanmail sinbo*, February 1, 1910.

[446] Editorials, "Chonggyo wa chŏngch'i ŭi kwangye," [The Relationship between Religion and Government], *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, November 20, 1909.

[447] Ibid.

Similar rhetoric can also be found in the *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, *Taehan mail sinbo*, and *Cheguk sinmun* at that time.[448] For example, Ch'oe Pyŏnghŏn (1858-1927), who was one of the Confucian scholars who embraced Christianity and became a Christian pastor, delivered his ideas on the discourse of civilization through many public lectures. Although he was a Christian leader, he also argued for the symbiotic relationship between religion and state in lecture that he delivered to the Hwangsŏng Christian Youth Group (Hwangsŏng Kidokkyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe) on September 27, 1906. This lecture received extensive media attention and later appeared in two newspapers: the *Hwangsŏng sinmun* and the *Taehan Mail Sinbo*.[449] In these articles, under the title of "The Relationship between Religion and Government," Ch'oe argues that Korea should embrace not only Western scientific techniques, but also the Western Spirit, namely Christianity, in order to make their country truly civilized. However, he states that religion and state are so inseparably related that they are like lips and teeth.[450] These examples show that many intellectuals had not fully internalized and adopted the idea of the separation of religion and state. Rather, they were more drawn to the position advocated by Confucian political philosophy, which holds that the cultivation of the mind becomes the fundamental basis of humane rule or benevolent governance, and therefore, religion and government are inseparable.

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[448] Pak Yŏngsŏp, "Nongsan Ch'ŏndogyo ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe kaech'oe: chonggyo wa chŏnggh'i ŭi kwangye," 豊山天道教青年會開催: 宗教와 政治의 關係 [Holding a Meeting of the Nongsan Ch'ŏndogyo Youth Group: The Relationship between Religion and Government], *Tong'a ilbo*, September 13, 1920; Mr. Erio, "Chonggyo wa chŏnggwŏn kubyŏl, pulguk susang, Erio ssi ŭi sŏngmyŏng" (宗教와 政權區別, 佛國首相 「에리오」氏의 聲明) [The Prime Minister of the Buddhist nation, Mr. Erio's Announcement: The Distinction between Religion and Government], *Tong'a ilbo*, October 2, 1924.

[449] Ch'oe Pyŏnghŏn, "Chonggyo wa chŏngch'i ŭi kwangye," [The Relationship between Religion and Government], *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, October 4-6, 1906; *Taehan mail sinbo*, "Chonggyo wa chŏngch'i ŭi kwangye," October 5-7, 9, 1906.

[450] Ibid.

Sot'aesan agrees with this basic understanding of government's and religion's respective roles: while religion edifies people by helping them to cultivate the mind, government prevents social evils by governing and enforcing laws. Asserting their mutual interdependent relationship, he also underlines that government is strongly influenced by religion's enlightening powers:

> Throughout the ages, there have been religions and governments. The issue here is whether such religions and governments have directors. For example, let's say that there are trains, ships, and flights that provide conveniences to us. However, without the proper operators who know how to run such machines, all of the world's convenient transportation facilities would be useless. Therefore, in addition to good religions and good governments, we need skilled people who can run them well.[451]

In this passage, Sot'aesan argues that since religion has responsibility for training good drivers through teaching humans how to cultivate their minds, religion is critical. He continues, "If each religion is improved, then the people's minds will be improved; and if people's minds are improved, then the governance in that nation and the world will be improved. Religion and government may address different areas, but at their core they are inextricably related, together influencing good and evil in the world."[452]

Sot'aesan's conclusion is that the main reasons for which the U.S.A. became a world hegemon is the fact that the essential triad of religion, government and their operators is well combined, balanced, and functional there. Therefore, he asked his disciples to strive to cultivate themselves through Buddhist practice, and then to take responsibility for making the world a better place.

> Since the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's role is in the field of religion, not that of government, we have a responsibility to bring about *a great religious revolution* as best we can. In fact, the two are not unrelated. If the principles provided by religion prove necessary and helpful in the field of government, then government will adopt those principles. Then,

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[451] Song Tosŏng, transcribed, "Pŏphoerok," *Wŏlmal T'ongsin che 4 ho* (The last day of the sixth month, 1928), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan 1: Wŏlsin wŏlbo py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 27.

[452] "39. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 158-159.

> wouldn't it be possible that those good principles would be practiced widely in both arenas, all over the world? Therefore, the role of religion cannot be emphasized enough, and we [the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe] have such a mission and duty to bring about a *great religious revolution*.[453] (Emphasis mine)

Sot'aesan encourages his disciples to strive together for *a great religious revolution* and further explains its principles. First, the core principle of revolution lies in transforming unreasonable systems and institutions into reasonable ones. As an example of a political revolution, Sot'aesan cited "The Three Principles of the People" (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義, or Tridemism), the political philosophy of the Chinese nationalists Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975): inherited as nationalism, democracy, and the livelihood of the people.

> Through these principles, it is said that Chiang attempted to unite the whole nation and embarked on a reform of state affairs to abolish all of the unreasonable systems and customs and make China a free, prosperous, and powerful state. It is thanks to this sound political philosophy as well as the character of Chiang himself that this effort succeeded. What he was trying to accomplish was a political revolution based on military power. However, what we are trying to bring about is *a spiritual revolution* of the whole world through the power of the mind, based on the principle of "the way and its virtue" *todŏk* 道德, which is not confined by national borders.
>
> The authority obtained through compulsory obedience and military power is temporary; however, the power obtained through voluntary obedience and moral influence is everlasting. As much as military force would be efficacious in obtaining power quickly, its span would not last long. Even if it takes a longer time to gain the people's voluntary respect through moral influence, that respect will last forever. After conquering the whole country, if Chiang had strengthened the solidarity of the nation with "the way and its virtue," his rule would have lasted long. Because his revolution remained a military revolution, though, its power will not last long. However, what we are teaching and practicing here is much more grandiose than Chiang's revolution. If there are only ten people who are fully enlightened to the true reality of the world and have consummated their personalities accordingly, they would be leaders of the ten directions of the whole world. Since I have this great community, I have no worries. The reason why I have told this story repeatedly is to highlight that each of you should work towards [*great spiritual revolution*].[454]

[453] Song Tosŏng, transcribed, "Pŏphoerok," 27.

[454] Ibid.

In his conclusion, Sot'aesan uses the terms "great religious revolution" and "spiritual revolution." What he meant by "great religious revolution" is, first, a reform of unreasonable systems and customs; second, to bring people a religion that enlightens their innate Buddha-nature, helping them to cultivate, sharpen, and apply it in their everyday lives. For this, Sot'aesan delineates Buddhist teachings as the "Threefold Practice, Eight Articles, Fourfold Graces, and Four Essentials,"[455] all of which eventually serve to enlighten one to the truth of *Irwŏn* (lit., "one-circle image"), referring to the Dharmakāya Buddha, the original buddha-nature of all sentient beings, and the interconnectedness of the world.[456] This was what Sot'aesan meant by a great religious revolution.

In the late Chosŏn, Buddhism had split into two extremes: to lay people, Buddhism was only for fortune-seeking, for the monastic elite, on the other hand, Buddhism had also become focused on distancing practitioners from the secular world. The result was the decline of the Buddhist ideas in Korea.[457] This being the case, Sot'aesan sought to re-establish a Buddhist community in which both lay and ordained members could practice together. In his spiritual revolution, the key word was "the mind." He emphasized that "the cultivation of the human

[455] The Threefold Study includes 1) Cultivation of the Spirit [Mind]; 2) Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles; 3) Choice in Action. The Eight Articles consists of two parts: the four articles to develop (belief, zeal, questioning, and dedication) and the four articles to forsake (unbelief, greed, laziness, and foolishness). The Fourfold Grace includes 1) The Grace of Heaven and Earth; 2) The Grace of Parents; 3) The Grace of Fellow Beings; 4) The Grace of Laws. The Four Essentials are 1) Developing Self-Power; 2) The Primacy of the Wise; 3) Educating Others' Children; 4) Venerating the Public-Spirited. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 25-55.

[456] Sot'aesan defines *Irwŏn* as "the Dharmakāya Buddha, the original source of all things in the universe, the mind-seal of all the buddhas and sages, and the original nature of all sentient beings." See "The Doctrinal Chart" in *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*.

[457] Nam-lin Hur, "Han Yong'un (1879-1944) and Buddhist Reform in Colonial Korea," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37/1:75-97.

mind" was the most fundamental issue in religion.[458] Sot'aesan also thought that Buddhist teachings surpassed all other religious doctrines in terms of the fact that they "illuminates the principle of the true nature [of the mind], solves the crucial matter of birth and death, elucidates the principles of cause and effect, [and] guide one through the paths of practice."[459] Therefore, he stated that "Buddhism will become the world's foremost religion"[460] in the near future. However, he clarified that this future Buddhism will not be an institutionalized religion as in the past. He states:

> The buddhadharma of the future, however, will not be the buddhadharma of institutions like those of the past; rather, it will be a buddhadarma that will allow everyone to practice without leaving the occupations of scholars, farmers, artisans, or merchants, and regardless of whether one has left the household life or not. In worshiping the buddhas, we will not limit ourselves to paying homage only to buddha images, but will realize that the myriad things of the universe and the dharma-realm of empty space are all buddhas, so that there will be no distinction between our work and our practice. Thus, if we handle worldly affairs well, we will be persons who practice the buddhadharma well, and if we practice the buddhadharma well, we will also be persons who handle worldly affairs well. Furthermore, as for the method of making buddha offerings there will not be a separately designated place for them nor will there be any separate buddha: in whatever matter and for whatever reason a person makes a buddha offering, that will make it an offering place and will ensure that a buddha is present. If this can be actualized, there will be no place without a dharma hall or a buddha, and the Buddha's grace will reach even grasses and trees and his virtue will extend in myriad directions, creating an unimaginable buddha land.[461]

In Sot'aesan's advocacy for a religious revolution, the key phrase was "the cultivation of the mind." Therefore what he means when he says "Buddhism will become the major religion of the world" is not that most people will be adherents of an institutionalized Buddhism. He means, rather, that regardless of the religion to which they officially belong, all people should strive to

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[458] "1. XI. Maxims," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 375.

[459] "3. I. Prologue," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 106.

[460] "15. I. Prologue," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 114.

[461] "15. I. Prologue," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 115-116.

enlighten the original true nature of their minds and to utilize it in an everyday-life setting. When Sot'aesan's religious revolution is fully accomplished, all people will realize that every place on earth is full of buddhas and that every action is thus automatically a buddha-offering. Each moment is for practice and therefore every place becomes a temple to practice.

Through this examination, we can notice that Sot'aesan was not just following the doctrine of the separation of religion and state that was common at that time. Instead, he was more emphatically highlighting the role of religion: religion should be in charge of enlightening humanity in their efforts to develop a spiritual civilization. Therefore, it can be said that Sot'aesan attempted to establish harmony between religion and government by highlighting the role of religion, which is to enlighten people's true, innate Buddha-nature.

5-2. Responding to the "Movement for Developing the Mind-Field" (*simjŏn* 心田) and the Suppression of Pseudo-Religions

In 1932, the Japanese colonial government embarked on the Rural Revitalization Campaign (*Nongch'on chinhŭng undong*) in order to mobilize human resources in Korea for "total war."[462] Japan attempted to mobilize for forces ---- the spiritual and economic resources of the nation---- for this state of "total war."[463] On April 28, 1934, Governor-General Ugaki Kazushige 宇垣一成 (r.1927; 1931-1936) proposed the Movement for Developing the Mind-

[462] See Chi Sugŏl, "1932-35 nyŏn gan ŭi Chosŏn nongch'on chinhŭng undong: singminji ch'eje yuji chŏngch'aek ŭrosŏ kinŭng e kwanhayŏ," *Han'guk sa yŏn'gu* 46 (1984); Yi Hyŏnok, "Ilche ha 1930 nyŏn tae nongch'on chinhŭng undong e kwanhan yŏn'gu," *Seoul taehakkyo sŏksa nonmun* (1985).

[463] "The Japanese launched the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. Four years later the Pacific War erupted, and subsequently Japan declared a national emergency in its colonies as well as in Japan." The concept of "total war" was "formulated in 1930s by Japanese military leaders, and the colonial government later took steps to support the idea." See Gi-Wook Shin, *Peasant Protest and Social Change in Colonial Korea*, Korean Studies of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1996),134-135.

Field 心田開發運動 (Simjŏn Kaebal Undong), which was undertaken in conjunction with the Rural Revitalization Campaign. The Governor-General of Korea Minami Jirō 南次郎 (r.1936-1942) planned to mobilize "spiritual resources" through a policy called *Naisen ittai* 内線一体 (Kr. *Naesŏn ilch'e*), which "attempted to obtain ideological hegemony over the Korean people by assimilating them into Japanese culture and identity."[464]

The term *simjŏn* 心田 (mind-field), which is also referred to as *simji* 心地 (mind-ground), is a Buddhist term, figuratively referring to "the source of the production of all phenomena" or more importantly, "the place where the seeds of Buddhahood are planted and cultivated, just as the ground or field becomes the source of all plants."[465] Based on this Buddhist concept, the Government-General attempted to mobilize the spiritual resources of Korea "by imposing Japanese world views, cultural norms, and values, thus compelling Koreans to adopt an alien system of thought as their own and thereby to disregard or disparage indigenous culture and identity."[466] As part of this project, the Japanese government established Shintō temples and asked Buddhist leaders at that time to cooperate by actively participating in the movement.

At the end of January, 1936, the Japanese Government-General declared the three goals of the Movement of Developing the Mind-Field: (1) to clarify the concept of national-polity, (2) to foster the practices of worshipping Shintō gods and revering ancestors, (3) to nurture the spirit

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[464] Gi-Wook Shin, *Peasant Protest and Social Change in Colonial Korea*,135.

[465] A. Charles Muller, "*simjŏn* 心田," *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BF%83%E7%94%B0; Charles Muller, "*simji* 心地," *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%BF%83%E5%9C%B0, accessed May 5, 2020.

[466] Gi-Wook Shin, *Peasant Protest and Social Change in Colonial Korea*,136.

of giving back to the nation, expressing gratitude, and self-reliance.[467] Through clarifying the concept of national-polity, the Government-General forced Koreans to accept the ideology of the Japanese Emperor system by eradicating Korean cultural identity. The second plan promoted the idea of "Japan and Korea as one body" by grafting the Korean custom of revering ancestors onto the worship of Shintō gods. The third strategy passed the blame for the impoverished conditions of the rural communities to the supposedly slothful and idle attitudes of the Korean people rather than pointing the finger at the failure of Japanese economic policies in Korea. The colonial government attempted to instill the Korean peasantry with a new consciousness reflecting the ideals of self-rehabilitation and gratitude toward Japan. The plan had two goals: first, to establish in Korea the Shintō system based on the ideology of worshipping Shintō gods; second, to derive voluntary and cooperative participation from various indigenous religious groups.[468] However, despite the expectations of the colonial government, the Movement for Developing the Mind-Field imposed by the Japanese was ultimately unsuccessful. The strategies of forced, intensive indoctrination in the rites of Japanese Shintōism and imperial rule had its limits in enticing the voluntary agreement and participation of the Korean people.

The concept of "pseudo-religion" derived from the name used by the Office of the Resident-General of Korea for "groups that look similar to religion" in the "Regulations on Religious Proselytizing" (*shūkyō no senpuni kansuru kisoku*). Taehoon Kim points out that "the administrative term "pseudo-religious group," entered Japan as a result of the Korean Independence Movement of March 1, 1919, where it developed as the concept of "pseudo-

[467] Aono Masaaki, "Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu ŭi sinsa chŏngch'aek kwa yusa chonggyo," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndai: Han'guk ŭi chonggyo naemyŏnhwa, chŏngch'ihwa nŭn ŏddŏkke chinhaeng toeŏttna* (Seoul: Ch'aek kwa hamkke, 2006), 187.

[468] Aono Masaaki, "Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu ŭi sinsa chŏngch'aek kwa yusa chonggyo," 188.

religion."[469] After that, the term came to be widely used in colonial Korea during the 1930s.[470] One of the challenges that newly emerging religious groups encountered at that time was to respond to the question of whether or not they should be categoryized as pseudo-religions. According to the first article of "Regulations on Religious Proselytizing," legitimated/authorized/sanctioned religions include Shintōism, Buddhism, and Christianity,[471] which implies that religions other than these three will fall into the category of pseudo-religions. As Article 15 clearly states, "in the case of unauthorized religious groups, they are considered as "pseudo-religious groups" The Police Administration and Planning Bureau will supervise them and police authorities will exercise control over them."[472] Regarding the group of pseudo-religions, Murayama Chijun suggested either compulsorily closing them or converting their members.[473] Since Murayama Chijun categorized the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe as a pseudo-religion,[474] it was necessary for the order to prepare a countermeasure. The order had to portray itself as neither in violation of Japanese colonial policies nor an organization secretly working for the national independence movement.

Under these circumstances, Sot'aesan also provided his own interpretation of the Movement for Developing the Mind-Field. The *Hoebo 20 ho* (October and November) reported

[469] Taehoon Kim, "The Place of 'Religion' in Colonial Korea around 1910: The Imperial History of "Religion," *Journal of Korean Religions* Vol. 2 No. 2 (Seoul: Institute for the Study of Religion, Sogang University, 2011), 42.

[470] Taehoon Kim, "The Place of 'Religion,' 42.

[471] Aono Masaaki, "Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu ŭi sinsa chŏngch'aek kwa yusa chonggyo," 202.

[472] Aono Masaaki, "Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu ŭi sinsa chŏngch'aek kwa yusa chonggyo," 202.

[473] Aono Masaaki, "Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu ŭi sinsa chŏngch'aek kwa yusa chonggyo,"196.

[474] Murayama Chijun, *Chosŏn ŭi yusa chonggyo* (*Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教), 1935.

that Sot'aesan gave a Dharma talk on the topic of *simjŏn kyebal* (cultivating the mind-field) on September 15, 1935 at the 289th Dharma service in Iri (currently, Iksan); this Dharma talk was transcribed by Sŏ Taewŏn and published in the *Hoebo 21 ho* (December).

> Dharma talk: *Simjŏn kyebal* 心田啓發
> I am going to talk about the issue of *simjŏn kyebal.* Ever since I founded this order, I have been working on *simjŏn kyebal.* Spending time on this issue seems to be nothing new. However, cultivating the mind-field cannot be accomplished within ten or twenty years, but is something that we should constantly and endlessly practice. Recently the Japanese government and society have encouraged the Korean people to engage in *simjŏn kyebal* (developing the mind-field), and so there are many opinions on the issue of *simjŏn kyebal* in newspapers and magazines. Given this situaion, we should devote ourselves more to *simjŏn kyebal*, which is our order's original goal. Since most scholars' essays are difficult to understand and to apply in our daily lives because of their convoluted writing styles, let me give my own concise and straightforward explanation as to what this phrase truly means so that all of you can more easily embark on cultivating your minds. What is *simjŏn*? And what does *kyebal* mean?

In Sot'aesan's Dharma talk, we can first observe that he changes the word *kaebal* 開發 (development) into *kyebal* 啓發 (cultivation).[475] According to the Korean dictionary, *kaebal* means 1) to reclaim land or exploit natural resources, making them useful; 2) to improve knowledge or talent; 3) to make an economy or industry grow; 4) to make new products or generate new thoughts. The word *kyebal* means to enlighten the mind with wisdom, talent, or thought. While the two words have the same connotation in terms of improving a certain situation or status, they are different in terms of the fact that while the former does not presume that any innate potential exists to be developed, while the latter supposes that this latent potential does exist. In this regard, when Sot'aesan tactically changed the word *kaebal* 開發 to *kyebal*

[475] The Korean pronunciations of the two words of *kyebal* 啓發 and *kaebal* 開發 are difficult to distinguish by their sounds. So, we can see that the Dharma talk transcribed by Sŏ Taewŏn mistakenly keeps using *kaebal* instead of *kyebal*. However, we can clearly recognize that Sot'aesan purposefully titled his talk with the Chinese characters *simjŏn kyebal* 心田啓發 instead of just using vernacular Korean spelling without Chinese characters.

啓發, he transformed the concept of *simjŏn kaebal* into a Buddhist concept (*simjŏn kyebal*), which presupposes that all living beings are endowed with the Buddha-nature and that it is therefore necessary for all living beings to cultivate their innate natures. Sot'aesan further argues that all people should practice the cultivation of their original Buddha-nature as follows:

> Since time immemorial, schools of religion have characterized the discovery of the mind-field as "seeing the nature," and cultivating the mind-field as 'nurturing the nature' or 'commanding the nature.' This training in the mind-field was considered by all the buddhas and sages to be their intrinsic mission, and was also the foundation for leading the world to goodness. Thus, in our order, we have designated the three principles of Cultivation, Inquiry, and Choice to be the specialized subjects for cultivating the mind-field, and have taught all the methods of daily practice for their implementation. Cultivation is the subject that clears the field in preparation for farming the mind-field. Inquiry is the subject that teaches you various farming methods and enables you to distinguish between crops and weeds. Choice is the subject that enables you not to fail at farming and to have an abundant harvest by putting into practice what you have learned. In the present world, with the development of scientific civilization, people's greed is surging day by day. Hence, if we do not engage in training that cultivates the mind-field, we will not be able to subjugate that greed; and if we do not subjugate that greed, it will be difficult for this world ever to find peace. Therefore, from now on, the minds of all people under heaven will naturally desire to cultivate the mind-field, and once cultivating the mind-field is desired, they will seek out true religions, which are the specialists in this, and among these, people whose practice has fully matured will receive immeasurable respect. Therefore, at this time you all must once again renew your determination and try to become exemplary farmers who will have great success in farming the mind-field.[476]

As mentioned above, the intent of the Government-General was to mobilize spiritual resources by imposing a Japanese world view upon the Korean people. However, there are no traces of the political dimensions of the mind-field movement in Sot'aesan's talk. Instead, he advocates the universal Buddhist values of cultivating the mind, sharpening wisdom, and enacting compassion in everyday life. On the surface, his strategy seems to show that the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe supported what the Government-General was promoting through the Movement for Developing the Mind-field. However, on the other hand, Sot'aesan translated the values of the mind-field

[476] "60. III "Practice," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 207-208.

movement into universal virtues based on Buddhist teachings that all human beings should follow, rather than retaining those values' associations with the Japanese policy of assimilation.[477]

Another example of the non-assimilationist nature of Sot'aesan's teachings is that we can find one of the main virtues of the mind-field movement, "developing self-power" in the Pulpŏp Yŏnguhoe's teachings. Sot'aesan taught "the Four Essentials" that people need to practice in society to make this world better and more equal: "1) developing self-power; 2) the primacy of the wise; 3) educating others' children; 4) venerating the public-spirited."[478] Sot'aesan stated that each of the Four Essentials becomes the basis of the equality of human rights, knowledge, education, and livelihood, respectively. In the past, people had focused on an individual buddha-offerings. However, Sot'aesan further highlighted that in order to cure the prevalent social diseases of inequality and injustice, people also need to practice at the societal level, namely, the Four Essentials mentioned above. He argued that "Unless we are helpless infants, decrepit oldsters, or seriously ill, in all other cases our aim is to develop self-power as a practice, so that while fulfilling the personal duties and responsibilities incumbent on human beings, we also, as

[477] Another example is Sot'aesan's response to the policy of *Sōshi-kaimei* (創氏改名), which was a policy of pressuring Koreans under Japanese rule to adopt Japanese names, including both the "creation of a family name" (氏, shi) and the "change of one's given name". As the colonial government forced the members of Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe to change their names, Sot'aesan asked his disciples to change their family names into *irwŏn* 一圓 (lit. "one circle image," referring to the Dharmakāyabuddha or the Buddha-nature which all sentient beings are endowed with and all enlightened masters are enlightened to), which Sot'aesan deemed as the core essence of Buddhist teachings. Through this, Sot'aesan expressed what he truly wanted to achieve: to promote the universal Buddhist teachings to people, rather than merely accede to the colonial government's request.

[478] According to the *Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe ch'anggŏnsa* [The Establishing History of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe] published serially by Chŏngsan in the *Hoebo*: 37- 49 beginning from August, 1936 to November, 1937, The Four Essentials were drafted before 1920 by Sot'aesan.

best we can, give succor to people who lack self-power."[479] He believed that the main strategy for achieving equality in society was not just to help those who lack self-power, but to encourage all people to cultivate their self-power, as a part of Buddhist practice.

Unlike the other three articles, however, we can see that the first principle of "developing self-power" went through several revisions. In the *Wŏlmal t'ongsin 20 ho* published in October 1929, the original form of the Four Essentials includes 1) the equal rights of husband and wife, 2) the distinction between the wise and the ignorant; 3) educating others' children; 4) venerating the public-spirited as the way of venerating one's parents. Sot'aesan changed "equal rights of husband and wife" later into "equal rights of men and women" when he published the main texts of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, the *Yuktae yoryŏng* (1932) and the *Samdae yoryŏng* (1934). When Sot'aesan finalized his main manuscript in 1943 under the title of *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn*, he again revised the phrase to read "developing self-power."

The expression of "developing self-power" first appeared in the *Wŏlmal t'ongsin 47 ho* (May) in 1933. In the section on each branch temple's activities, the newsletter reported that Kim Kwangsŏn, who was an ordained minister at that time, gave a lecture on the topics of "developing self-power and precepts" on May 17, 1933, at the Chin'an Chwap'o branch office.[480] However, since this lecture was not given by Sot'aesan and, moreover, its content was not recorded, we cannot examine its meaning. The expression of "developing self-power" officially appeared in the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's monthly magazine in 1935. We should also pay attention to the fact that 1935 was the year in which the Government-General initiated the Movement of the Mind-Field. Given the fact that even after the phrase "developing self-power"

[479] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism* (*Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn*), 39.

[480] *The Wŏlmal t'ongsin* 47 ho.

appeared, the expression "equal rights of men and women" was more commonly used among the members; thus, it would be possible to conclude that the change in usage was a response to the colonial government's promotion of the movement. In other documents and materials, we can find that the expression "equal rights of men and women" continued to be used. In fact, the expression "developing self-power," can be found only in 1935. One of the distinguished practices in the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe is to provide a regular opportunity for its members to lecture during Dharma services. The topic "developing self-power" was never given to its members as a possible subject for such talks, while the topic of the "equal rights of men and women" continued to be provided to its members for lecturing practice.

Then, let us also examine how the contents of the principle were altered by revising the title from "equal rights of men and women" to "developing self-power." The original agenda of "equal rights of men and women" states the following:

> Both men and women should fulfill together the personal duties and responsibilities incumbent on human beings. With this notion, our aim is to prevent mutual resentment from growing between the genders due to men thinking they cannot accomplish their ideals and aspirations due to women, and women thinking they cannot accomplish their ideals and aspirations due to men.[481]

This particular teaching reflects the social context of the late Chosŏn dynasty and the early colonial period. Opportunities for women in Korea had been limited and restricted due to the influence of Confucian ideology for over several centuries. In particular, according to Sot'aesan, female dependency had taken these forms in the past: 1) women were not able to fulfill their duties as their parents' children; 2) they even received discriminatory treatment even from their children; 3) they were not able to receive the education necessary for all human beings; 4) they were not able to enjoy the basic rights of social intercourse, though all human beings deserve

[481] *Yuktae yoryŏng* in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan 4: Ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 75.

such rights; 5) they did not have the right to inherit property; 6) they inevitably faced constraints in whatever they did or did not do with their own bodies and minds.[482] For these reasons, Sot'aesan clearly pointed out that there was a pervasive sense of mutual resentment between the sexes: while women resented men for depriving them of the aforementioned rights, men likewise resented women because men were left to take on all of the responsibilities for their families. This resentment not only prevented society from achieving social justice and equality, but also prevented an individual from pursuing enlightenment. Through espousing "equal rights for men and women," it seems that Sot'aesan sought to cure the resentment that had been deeply imbedded in Chosŏn society. As a solution for the treatment of such historically inevitable resentment, Sot'aesan created two agendas, one for each gender. First, for men, he suggested two things in an Agenda for the Encouragement of men for the realization of the Equality of men and women: 1) after marriage, each spouse should maintain financial independence; 2) if women are superior to men regarding the preparatory agenda for equality of men and women as described below, then men should receive guidance from women.[483] As for women, Sot'aesan listed this agenda for the preparation of women to bring about equality between men and women: 1) women, just like men, should receive an education that will allow them to take active part in human society; 2) women should all work diligently at their occupations to gain financial freedom in their lives; 3) they should also discharge their filial duties both during their parents' lifetimes and after their deaths, just as did the eldest son in the past; 4) they should not request special love and reliability from men based on their gender; 5) if they lack the ability to pursue

[482] *Yuktae yoryŏng*, 75-76.

[483] *Yuktae yoryŏng*, 76.

all of the suggestions listed here, and men are doing a better job at it, then they should accept guidance from men.[484]

In sum, the main idea of these teachings is that both men and women should equally share the responsibilities and duties incumbent on human beings as members of society, rather than being restricted by social customs. By changing the article from "equal rights for men and women" into "developing self-power," Sot'aesan expanded his teaching of equal rights for men and women into that of universal human rights, as follows:

> Unless we are helpless infants, decrepit oldsters, or seriously ill, in all other cases our aim is to develop self-power as a practice, so that while fulfilling the personal duties and responsibilities incumbent on human beings, we also, as best we can, give succor to people who lack self-power.[485]

In this description, the category of men and women has been changed into the categories of those who have self-power and who lack it. Through this revision, Sot'aesan changed the scope of human responsibilities and duties, added a critique of the lives of dependency that were rampant in Chosŏn.

> If parents, siblings, spouses, children, or other relatives lived better than oneself, one would propose to live idly, depending on them. And if they would not listen to demands for such support, one would propose to live in the same household with them. Also, if one borrowed money from someone and could not repay it, then one's entire family would be ruined trying to repay that debt.[486]

I mentioned above that one of the reasons that the colonial government promoted the virtue of "developing self-power" was because they were attempting to pass the blame for the impoverished conditions of the rural communities from failure of Japanese economic policies in

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[484] Ibid.

[485] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 39.

[486] Ibid.

Korea to the supposedly slothful and idle attitudes of the Korean people. Sot'aesan did not deny these factors. Rather, by recognizing and accepting the painful reality of Chosŏn, he sought to reform Chosŏn society to make it more equal and just. However, in the contents of the article of "developing self-power," it is still noticeable that the main emphasis falls on the equality of men and women.

All of these facts indicate that Sot'aesan's alteration of the first article may be partly due to the colonial government's promotion of the movement. Accordingly, Sot'aesan achieved both goals: to avoid the severe surveillance of the Japanese colonial government and to promote universal values for humanity in general, which go beyond nationalistic values. In this way, the order assumed a more stable status in society. Tosan 島山 An Ch'angho 安昌浩 (1878-1938), one of the most important nationalists to dedicate himself to the independence movement, came to visit Sot'aeasan and said,[487]

> What I am doing is small in scope and short in skill, bringing little benefit to the nation, and even leading to the persecution of many of my comrades under the colonial policy. But, what you, sir, are doing is vast in scope and proficient in its expediencies. While inwardly making great contributions to the multitude of our compatriots, you are not directly oppressed or intimidated much. Your ability, sir, is truly magnificent![488]

[487] It is not known when exactly Tosan visited the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe and met with Sot'aesan in Iksan. According to the *Maeil sinbo* published on February 26 in 1936, it reports that "while [Tosan] was touring the areas in northern Chŏlla province, in the afternoon of February 21 he toured Naejŏn and was heading toward Kŭmgu 金溝." Therefore, we can assume that he may have visited Iksan before he moved to Chŏnju on February 21, 1936. See Pak Yunch'ŏl, "Tosan An Ch'angho sŏnsaeng kwa Sot'aesan Taejongsa ŭi mannam," *Wŏnkwang* 531 (November, 2018), 78-79; "Tosan An Ch'angho ssi Chŏn nam buk sullyŏk" 島山安昌浩氏 全南北 巡歷, *Maeil sinbo*, February 26, 1935.

[488] "45. XII. Exemplary Acts," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 410-411. After An Ch'angho visited the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, Senshu Hideo 泉州秀雄, the police chief in the city of Iri, reported to the superior office that it was necessary to establish a police substation at the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe to surveil the group's activities. Two police officers were dispatched to the temporary police substation located at the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe and kept close watch on them from 1936 on. One of the policemen, whose name was Hwang Kabong (1910-1990) later on took up residence in the community in order to more closely surveil their activities. He was rather impressed by Sot'aesan and became his disciple by receiving the

Sot'aesan reinterpreted such discourse through his own interpretation and religious visions. His reinterpretation created a unique opportunity for pursuing humanistic universality, which was not subject to the acute tension between nationalism and pro-Japanese collaboration. Pursuing universalism based on Buddhist teachings enabled the order not only to escape the vigilant surveillance of the Japanese government, but also offered a justification for the order's existence.

5-3. Responding to the "Discourse on Civilization"

One of the main subjects of debate in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century East Asia was the "discourse on civilization" 文明論 (Kr. *munmyŏngnon*; Jp. *bunmeiron*) as delineated in Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉(1835-1901)'s *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*).[489] The main argument of this discourse was that East Asian countries needed to accept Western rationalism and liberalism in order to become fully civilized. Fukuzawa's theory of civilization introduced the idea of "progress" to East Asia, a notion that had not existed in the traditional Confucian view of history. In Fukuzawa's view, all countries in the world, if they were to thrive, needed to progress from a primitive from a primitive state into a semi-developed one, and finally into a highly civilized state.[490] To Fukuzawa and the followers of his thought, the most highly civilized nations were the nations of Europe and the United States and therefore civilization meant Westernization.

Dharma name Ich'ŏn 二天. His daughter later became an ordained minister of Wŏn Buddhism. See Song Ingŏl, *Taejonggyŏng sok ŭi saram tŭl*, 435-440.

[489] Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, trans. by David A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst III (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[490] Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 17.

Many scholars have pointed out that the term "civilization" was first translated in Japan into the Sinographic terms *munmyŏng* 文明(Jp. *bunmei*) or *kaehwa* 開化 (Jp. *kaika*), and that Yu Kil-chun played a key role in popularizing the term in Korea.[491] After touring European countries and the United States, Yu Kil-chun, who once studied at Fukuzawa's academy at Keio University, wrote *Sŏyu Kyŏmun* (*Observations on a Journey to the West*), in which he summarized the basic features of Western cultivation and laid out his vision of civilization and enlightenment for Korea.[492] He argued that Korea also needed to learn from the nations of Europe and the United States.[493] After the Japanese military's occupation of Kyŏngbok Palace on July 23, 1894,[494] the Kabo regime conducted a series of sweeping reforms, relying on Japanese

[491] See Kim Yunhŭi, "Munmyŏng kaehwa ŭi kyebo wa punhwa (1876-1905): kaenyŏm ŭi ŭimihwa kwajŏng ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Sach'ong* 79 (2013): 5; Chŏng Yonghwa, "Yu Kil-chun ŭi chŏngch'i sasang yŏn'gu: chŏnt'ong esŏ kŭndae roŭi pokhapchŏk ihaeng, (Ph.D. diss., Seoul Taehakkyo, 1998); Kim Hyŏnju, "Sŏyu kyŏnmun ŭi '(munmyŏng) kaehwa' ron kwa pŏnyŏk ŭi chŏngch'ihak," *Kukcheŏmun* 24 (2001): 229.

[492] See Yu Kil-chun, *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun: Chosŏn chisik in Yu Kil-chun, sŏyang ŭl pŏnyŏk hada*, trans. Hŏ Kyŏngjin (Seoul: Sŏhae Munjip, 2004). A translation by Sinwoo Lee, Hanmee Na Kim, and Min Suh Son is forthcoming in the Korean Classics Library's Historical Materials series, published by the University of Hawaii Press. It is well established that nine of the twenty chapters in the *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun* were translated from Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Seiyō Jijō* 西洋事情 (Conditions in the West). Through the *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun*, Yu introduced many Sinographic Japanese translations of Western terms into Korea for the first time. For a comparison of the two books, see Yi Kwangrin, *Han'guk kaehwa sasang yŏn'gu* (1979). In writing the *Sŏyu Kyŏnmun*, Yu Kil-chun also referred to *Man'guk kongpŏp* 萬國公法 (American missionary William A. P. Martin's 1864 translation of Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* [1836] into Chinese, and *Ch'ŏnghannon* 淸韓論: *China and Corea* (the first treatise declaring the independence of Chosŏn in accordance with international law, written by Owen Nickerson Denny). See Kim Hyŏnsuk, "Ku hanmal komungwan Denny (O.N. Denny: Tŏngni 德尼) ŭi *Ch'ŏnghannon* punsŏk," *Ihwa sahak yŏn'gu* 24 (1997): 113-140. However, when it comes to the issue of how to make Korea morally civilized, Yu Kil-chun still highlighted the importance of Confucian moral values—unlike Fukuzawa, who broadly criticized Confucian morality. See No Taehwan, "1880 nyŏn tae munmyŏng kaenyŏm ŭi suing kwa munmyŏngnon ŭi chŏngae," *Han'guk munhwa* 49, 238.

[493] Kim Tohyŏng, *Kŭndae Han'guk ŭi munmyŏng chŏnhwan kwa kaehyŏngnon* (Seoul: Chisik Sanyŏpsa, 2014), 262-263.

[494] See Naktsuka Akira, *1894 nyŏn Kyŏngbokkung ŭl chŏmnyŏng hara!*, trans. by Pak Maengsu (Seoul: P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2002).

military power in order to transform Chosŏn into a so-called civilized nation. This discourse regarding civilization was widely discussed in newspapers, including the *Tongnip sinmun* and the *Maeil sinmun*.[495] Most Confucian scholars proposed civilizing Chosŏn society by reforming Confucianism. The Enlightenment party of Chosŏn, the central figures of which included Kim Okkyun 金玉均 (1851-1894), Hong Yŏngsik 洪英植 (1856-1884), Sŏ Chaep'il 徐載弼 (1864-1951), and Sŏ Kwangbŏm 徐光範 (1859-1897), believed that through actively adopting the tenets of Western civilization and Christianity, Korea would be able to step into civilized society. Another popular concept at that time was the idea of *Tongdo Sŏgi* (Eastern morality with Western technology), which was promoted by a group of moderate enlightenment thinkers (*on'gŏn kaehwap'a*). Though the specifics of these group members' respective views on civilization differed, it is clear that the term civilization became a buzzword in this era.

From the late 1900s through the 1940s, many intellectuals discussed civilization along two different axes: the material/scientific aspects versus the mental/moral ones.[496] In the late 1890s, "civilization" had mainly referred to Westernization. But in the 1900s and 1910s, this

[495] As Andre Schmid argues in his book, *Korea between Empires 1895-1919*, newspapers played a critical role not only in circulating commodities that can alter consciousness but also in producing and disseminating specific modes of knowledge that enable and encourage certain types of activities. See Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[496] No Taehwan, "1905-1910 nyŏn munmyŏng non ŭi palchŏn kwa saeroun nunmyŏng kwan mosaek," *Yugyo sasang munhwa yŏn'gu* 39 (2010), 359. We can also find this dualistic understanding of civilization among Japanese intellectuals during the early Meiji period (1868-1912). For example, one of the pioneering thinkers of the Meiji period, Inoue Enryō (1858-1919), understood Western civilization in two ways: "a civilization of material things [有形]," and that of "non-material [無形] things." However, when it came to understanding what the latter—"non-material" or "mental" civilization—is, and to deciding how mental civilization should be enhanced, these Meiji thinkers' answers were quite different. Inoue Enryō argued that the Meiji Restoration was only half complete because it lacked the non-material and mental aspects of a developed civilization, which he defined as "learning, education, and politics." In order to complete the non-material aspects of this civilizing process, he suggested that Japan pursue two methods, both in the Western tradition: founding a school for youth and publishing books for the public. See Miura Setsuo, "Inoue Enryo's Mystery Studies," *International Inoue Enryo Research* 2 (2014): 129.

discourse subdivided the term into mental and material traits.[497] The Confucian literati, who had strived to civilize Chosŏn via Confucian ideology, watched the Korean empire become a protectorate of Imperial Japan through the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905. Deeply shocked by the treaty, they ascribed Chosŏn's failure to the fact that its leaders had only focused on cultivating the moral/mental elements of Confucian civilization while ignoring material development. In order to grow strong, they argued, Korea needed to reform by adopting Western achievements at every level of society. The members of the *TaeHan Chaganghoe* 大韓自強會 (The TaeHan Society for Self-Strengthening) even posited that Korea should accept support from Japan, arguing that Korea needed to take an active role in its own material development through education and social change. On the other hand, some groups of people, particularly those who studied the so-called "New Studies" in Japan[498] as opposed to the Confucian "Old Studies" in

[497] For example, in the early colonial period, Yi Kwangsu (1892-1959), one of the founding figures of modern Korean literature, also suggested replacing the standard conception of civilization with a theory of "spiritual civilization." Through this notion of spiritual civilization, he sought to give Koreans, who were not able to become subjects of a nation, a new sense of both individual and national identity. In particular, he attempted to concretize this theory by schematizing religion, academia, and the arts. See Kim Hyŏnju, "Singminji side wa 'munmyŏng' 'munhwa' ŭi inyŏm: 1920 nyŏn tae Yi Kwangsu ŭi 'chŏngsin chŏk munmyŏngnon' ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Minjok munhaksa yŏn'gu* 20-0 (2002), 91-116.

[498] Korean students in Japan founded several societies, such as Taegŭk Hakhoe 太極學會 (1905), Kongsu Hakhoe 共修學會 (1906), Naktong Ch'inmok 洛東親睦會 (1906), Kwangmu Hakhoe 光武學會 (1906), TaeHan Yuhaksaenghoe 大韓留學生會 (1906), Honam Hakhoe 湖南學稧 (1907), Tong'in Hakhoe 同寅學會 (1907), and Han'gŭm Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe 漢錦靑年會 (1907). In 1908, the TaeHan Hakhoe 大韓學會 was established by uniting all of these groups except the Taegŭk Hakhoe and the Kongsu Hakhoe. In January 1909, the TaeHan Hakhoe and the Taegŭk Hakhoe played a key role in establishing a new group called the TaeHan Hŭnghakhoe, which united all of the societies in Japan. They published monthly journals, such as the *Taegŭk hakhoebo*, the *TaeHan hakhoe wŏlbo*, and the *TaeHan hŭnghakhoebo*. Most of the groups began as places for Korean students in Japan to socialize and pursue academic study, but their monthly magazines gradually began to demonstrate elements of patriotic enlightenment. See Chŏng Kwan, "Taegŭk Hakhoe," in *Han'guk minjok munhwa tae paekkwa sajŏn*, accessed October 10, 2020. https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/SearchNavi?keyword=%ED%83%9C%EA%B7%B9%ED%95%99%ED%9A%8C&ridx=0&tot=1.

Korea, began to endorse a new movement for non-material civilization, emphasizing the importance of mental, spiritual, and ethical civilization.[499] Some Confucian scholars, who viewed Christianity as a symbol of civilization, attempted to transform Confucian moral codes into a religion in an effort to make Korea morally civilized.[500]

However, as No Taehwan notes in a paper analyzing the magazines published by Korean "New Studies" proponents, for such groups, mental civilization meant either Confucian morality or patriotic spirit.[501] They particularly criticized Confucian literati who rejected Western education and the hypocritical intellectuals who outwardly pretended to work for the nation and its people, but in fact betrayed their country by pursuing their own personal interests. The New Studies groups agreed that learning Western Studies was important. However, they also argued that Koreans' most urgent priority was to cultivate their personalities based on Confucian modes of morality, such as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. They also understood religion to be an aspect of mental civilization. Kim Yŏnggi 金永基 (1878-?),[502] a Buddhist monk

[499] See No Taehwan, "1905-1910 nyŏn munmyŏng non ŭi palchŏn kwa saeroun nunmyŏng kwan mosaek," *Yugyo sasang munhwa yŏn'gu* 39 (2010), 347-386.

[500] Confucian literati formed the Taedong Hakhoe 大東學會, a group that attempted to seek moral compromise between "Old Studies" and "New Studies."

[501] See No Taehwan, "1905-1910 nyŏn munmyŏng non ŭi palchŏn kwa saeroun nunmyŏng kwan mosaek," *Yugyo sasang munhwa yŏn'gu* 39 (2010), 364-374.

[502] Kim's given name was T'aeŭn 太垠. According to Kim Hwansoo, Kim Yŏnggi played a key role in one of the most infamous events in modern Korean Buddhist history, acting as a mediator and interpreter during the attempted alliance between the Japanese Sōtōshū (Sōtō Sect) and the Korean Wŏnjong (Complete Sect) in late 1910. See Hwansoo Kim, "A Buddhist Colonization?: A New Perspective on the Attempted Alliance of 1910 Between the Japanese Sōtōshū and the Korean Wŏnjong," *Religion Compass* 4/5 (2010): 287-299. See also Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, *Empire of the Dharma: Korea and Japanese Buddhism*, 1877-1912 (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London, 2012).

who studied in Japan, argued for educating the public with religious teachings taken from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity.[503]

After observing how highly developed and modernized Japan was during his exile there (1901-1906), Son Pyŏnghŭi, the third leader of the Tonghak community, also formed a theory of civilization and enlightenment.[504] He attempted to revive Tonghak by modernizing its doctrines, institutional systems, and practices, changing its name to Ch'ŏndogyo, or the Religion of the Heavenly Way. As part of the public debate about the Korean nation, Son wrote *Samjŏllon* 三戰論, or *Discussion on Three Challenges*, in which he argued that Korea needed religious (*to*, 道), economic (*chae*, 財), and diplomatic (*ŏn*, 言) reforms to establish a strong military, economy, and national identity.[505] To help Korea survive in a difficult international environment, Son proposed the nation make Tonghak a national religion, invest in developing its industries, and train diplomats. Criticizing the Confucian worldview, Son argued that Korea must work towards the goal of civilization by following models derived from Western culture and modern science.[506] Son accepted the discourse of civilization popular at that time, which argued that religion was both a symbol of civilization and the basis of development for strong nations

[503] No Taehwan, "1905-1910 nyŏn munmyŏng non ŭi palchŏn kwa saeroun nunmyŏng kwan mosaek," 372. See, also Kim T'aeŭn, "Sam'guk chonggyo yak non," *T'aegŭk hakpo* 7 (February 24, 1907).

[504] Yi Uk, "Kŭndae kukka ŭi mosaek kwa kukka ŭirye ŭi pyŏnhwa: 1894 nyŏn put'ŏ 1908 nyŏn kkaji kukka chesa ŭi pyŏnhwa rŭl chungsim ŭro," in *Kŭndae song ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong I* (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005); Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ŏndogyo kaesingi 'chonggyo' rosŏ ŭi chagi insik," in *Kŭndae song ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong I* (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005); Yim Hyŏngjin, "Kabo nyŏn ihu Ŭiam Son Pyŏnghŭi ŭi ŭisik pyŏnhwa wa kaehwa hyŏksin: Ilbon mangmyŏng sigi rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Tonghak Hakpo* 43: 7-44.

[505] George L. Kallander, *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, 129.

[506] Kim Tohyŏng, *Kŭndae Han'guk ŭi munmyŏng chŏnhwan kwa kaehyŏknon*, 341-344.

throughout the world.[507] However, Son also advocated for a *moral* civilization based on Tonghak's teachings. He states in the *Myŏngrijŏn* 明理傳 (*Illuminating Principle*):

> As the transformation of morality, or the Way and its virtue, has become more modern by the day and more prosperous by the month, public civility has become significantly more open and the Way of the world has become prosperous. Human affairs have been greatly refreshed. Material commodity is given and prosperous. This is called the thriving times of civilization.
> 道德之化 日新月盛 風氣大闢 世道隆盛 人事賁新 物品賦興 此謂文明之聖代也.

As described above, Son believed that the goal of civilization would be possible only when both public civility and material development were both complete and balanced. To him, this would include the successful presence of a religion like Ch'ŏndogyo, which would instill a sense of virtue in the people. The fundamental Ch'ŏndogyo conception of civilization was that in terms of material development, Chosŏn should follow models derived from Western culture and modern science, but with regard to moral civilization, Chosŏn should take Ch'ŏndogyo as its national religion.

According to this faith's central tenet, which is that "people are heaven" 人乃天 (*innaech'ŏn*), civilization will be achieved when people are enlightened to the Way of Heaven and implement the Virtue of Heaven in society.[508] To pursue this goal of making Chosŏn civilized, Son Pyŏnghŭi embarked on several important projects, such as education initiatives and the operation of a publishing house known as Pangmunguk 博文局, which led the modern publishing industry until the March First Independence Movement (1919). Through numerous

[507] Ko Kŏnho, "Ch'ondogyo kaesingi 'chonggyo' rosŏŭi chagi insik," in *Kŭndae ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chonggyo chihyŏng ŭi pyŏndong* I (Seoul: Han'gukhak Chung'ang Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005), 127.

[508] As George L. Kallander points out, "Catchphrases of the church evolved from 'serve god' (*sich'ŏnju*) to 'treat others as though they were heaven' (*sain yŏch'ŏn*) and finally 'people are heaven' (*innaech'ŏn*), showing [the] gradual abandon[ment] of hierarchical order for an egalitarian one." See George L. Kallander, *Salvation through Dissent: Tonghak Heterodoxy and Early Modern Korea*, 140.

publications and education campaigns, Sŏn attempted to cultivate the spirit of independence and to provide technical training and learning to the Korean people.[509]

Sot'aesan's proposal for a resurgence of spiritual civilization can be situated in this historical context wherein civilization was understood as possessing both material and spiritual dimensions. In the founding mission statement of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma, Sot'aesan provides both his diagnosis of the era and solutions to its problems. In the period that saw Korea undergo Japanese colonialism, agricultural commercialization, and industrialization, Sot'aesan laid out his vision for a new spiritual civilization, providing direction to the Korean people by stating, "With this Great Opening of matter, let there be a Great Opening of spirit."[510] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism* declares:

> Today, with the development of scientific civilization, the human spirit, which should be making use of material things, has steadily weakened, while the power of material things, which human beings should be using, has daily grown stronger, conquering that weakened spirit and bringing it under its domination; humans therefore cannot help but be enslaved by the material. How could they avoid having their lives become a turbulent sea of suffering under such circumstances? Consequently, our founding mission is to lead all sentient beings, who are drowning in the turbulent sea of suffering, to a vast and immeasurable

[509] See, No Taehwan, "1905-1910 nyŏn munmyŏng non ŭi palchŏn kwa saeroun nunmyŏng kwan mosaek," 39-40.

[510] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 1. The original Korean text says, "*Mulchil i kaebyŏk toeni chŏngsin ŭl kaebyŏk haja*." It is necessary to clarify the meaning of "Great Opening," in this motto. Here, "Great Opening" is meant to highlight the two Sinographs *kaebyŏk* 開闢, both of which mean "opening up." In the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*, when the term *kaebyŏk* is used to refer to the origin of the universe, or the creation of the cosmos, it is often used with the Sinographic compound *chŏnji* 天地 (heaven and earth). In the nineteenth century, when the people were overwhelmed by a fear of uncertainty due to both internal and external upheavals, Ch'oe Cheu's teachings of Tonghak (Eastern Learning) prophetically used the term *kaebyŏk* as a way to express that a hopeful, dramatic transformation of the world would soon arrive. In this sense, the term *kaebyŏk* can be understood as a "great transformation." The Sinographic compound is used as a noun. However, when it is used along with the passive verb, "to become" *toeda*, or the active verb, "to do" *hada*, its meanings change accordingly. In the founding motto, Sot'aesan distinctively uses the passive verb to refer to material development but uses the active verb to refer to spiritual development. Considering this, we can best understand the motto as follows: "Unprecedented material development is already underway, so let us accordingly enact a great spiritual development as well."

> paradise by expanding our spiritual power and conquering material power through faith in a religion based on truth and training in morality based on facts.[511]

Sot'aesan's commitment to a *spiritual civilization,* which would offer a worthy contrast to the scientific civilization typical of Western culture, might be said to resemble the theory of *Tongdo Sŏgi*. But Sot'aesan's advocacy for spiritual civilization is not an argument for maintaining dominant Eastern orders and ethics while admitting Western technology and science.[512] To Sot'aesan, spiritual civilization does not refer to a society's moral codes or its nationalist spirit. While many thinkers shared the belief that Korea still needed to develop in terms of material civilization, Sot'aesan was more concerned with the degeneration of humanity.

To Sot'aesan, the era's most critical problem derived from the choice of people all over the world to ignore the cultivation of humanity in favor of focusing only on the development of science. He did not deny the value of scientific and material development, but rather, stated that the ultimate purpose of his order was to make a truly civilized world by harmonizing material with spiritual civilization.[513] He argued, however, that if humans neglected to cultivate humans' spiritual power, eventually this would lead to a turbulent sea of suffering, causing the further

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[511] The first version of this founding mission was published in the *Yuktae yoryŏng* in 1932. In 1943, the current version was published, with some revisions, in the final edition of the scripture, the Pulgyo chŏngjŏn. The founding statement's main argument is that, as scientific development proceeds within a given society, that civilization's members must also cultivate their spiritual powers in order to establish a paradise in this world. This theme had already appeared in the prayer that Sot'aesan and his nine exemplary disciples had issued together from 1916 to 1917. We can say that Sot'aesan's observations on this era were particularly influenced by the period from 1916 to 1932. *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism* (*Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn*), 17.

[512] Paek Nakch'ŏng characterizes the early twentieth century as the era of material civilization and argues that the distinctive quality of Wŏnbulgyo lies in the fact that Sot'aesan called for *spiritual civilization*. See Paek Nakch'ŏng, *Munmyŏng ŭi tae chŏnhwan kwa huch'ŏn kaebyŏk: Paek Nakch'ŏng ŭi Wŏnbulgyo kongbu*, Chonggyo munmyŏng tae chŏnhwan kwa k'ŭn chŏkkong ch'ongsŏ 1 (Seoul: Mosinŭn Saram tŭl, 2016), 291.

[513] "31. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 150.

generation of humanity and global crisis. He compared this situation to "a careless child playing with a knife," explaining that "we will not know when we may meet with danger; we will be like a mentally handicapped person who is in perfect physical health. On the other hand, a world with only an advanced spiritual civilization but no material civilization is like a physically handicapped person in perfect mental health."[514]

Sot'aesan also pointed out that it was important for humanity to take up the proper relationship to material things. He admitted that technological and scientific innovation can bring an unprecedented degree of convenience to a given society. Even so, he warned, humanity faced a great challenge. Sot'aesan argued that the world was in a turbulent predicament because of six kinds of social illness: the illnesses 1) of money, 2) of resentment, 3) of dependency, 4) of a reluctance to learn, 5) of a reluctance to teach, and 6) of a lack of public spirit.[515] First, humans' greedy desire to endlessly accumulate money in order to procure various pleasures made them lose their integrity, honor, and moral sensibilities. Second, rather than reflecting on their own faults, each individual, family, society, and nation only paid attention to the faults of others, causing endless conflicts and a sense of resentment and hatred between people. Third, he pointed out that the illness of dependency was particularly serious in Korea because of the harmful effect of several hundred years of bookish enfeeblement in Chosŏn. Fourth, people were conceited, and thus refused to humbly learn crucial knowledge from others. Fifth, people—particularly those who had the privilege of being educated, but were conceited and arrogant—failed to kindly share their knowledge with others and thus transmit it to the next generation. Finally, Sot'aesan pointed out that human selfishness "has hardened in [people's] minds like a mountain of silver or

[514] "31. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 150.

[515] "34. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 152-154.

a wall of iron over many thousands of years."[516] Due to this selfishness, it was rare not only to find people who work for the benefit of the greater public, but also to see institutions of public service thrive. According to Sot'aesan, this all added up to a disturbing situation where "the human spirit, which should be making use of these material things, has become so weak that it cannot but be enslaved by the material, rather than the master of it."[517]

Therefore, Sot'aesan's concerns regarding spiritual civilization can be more broadly defined as the desire to cure these illnesses of the mind. He urged people to try to regain control over their own minds by realizing the full potential of their Buddha-nature, rather than being hypnotized by the social and material conditions of daily life. He suggested six remedies for the six social illnesses: "the Way of being content with one's lot in life; the Way of discovering grace at its very source; the Way of leading a life of self-power; the Way of learning; the Way of teaching; and the Way of leading a life of public benefit."[518] In order to help people put these remedies into action, he encouraged them to implement two methods based in Buddhist teachings and practices: "the Essential Way of Practice—the Threefold Studies and the Eight Articles—and the Essential Way of Human life—the Fourfold Graces and the Four Essentials."[519] He also described the two methods in a slightly different manner, as "*faith in a religion based on truth*" and "*training in morality based on facts*." By using these two methods, he believed, people could restore and enhance their spiritual power to the point where they could engage with the material side of civilization properly.

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[516] Ibid.

[517] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn),* 17.

[518] "35. II. Doctrine," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 154.

[519] See Appendix.

To understand these catchphrases, we must pay close attention to the adjectives he uses to describe "religion" and "morality." First, in the phrase "through faith in a religion based on truth," "religion" is modified by the clause "based on truth." As Yu Pyŏngdŏk has argued, it is important to pay attention to the particularities of the expression "faith in truthful religion" or "faith in a religion based on truth" (*chillijŏk chonggyo* 眞理的宗教), which is not the same as "religious truth" or "truth based on religion" 宗教的眞理.[520] By using this phrase, Sot'aesan seems to reflect his religious teachings' universal vision for cultivating not just one particular religious tenet, but all of humanity, a category that transcends the conventionally constructed boundaries of nation, ethnicity, class, and gender. More specifically, Sot'aesan further expands upon the notion of "faith in a religion based on truth" by defining "Faith in *Irwŏnsang*" in the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* as follows:

> 1) To have faith in *Irwŏnsang* is to believe in *Irwŏn* as the noumenal nature of all beings in the universe, as the original nature of all buddhas and patriarchs, as the Buddha-nature of all sentient beings, as the realm where there is no differentiation of noumenon from phenomenon or being from nonbeing, as the realm where there is no change of arising and ceasing or going and coming, as the realm where the karmic retribution of good and evil has ceased, and as the realm where verbal, audible, and visible characteristics are utterly void; 2) and to believe that, in accordance with the light of empty, calm, numinous awareness, the differentiation of noumenon from phenomenon and being from nonbeing appears in the realm of no differentiations, that the difference between good and evil karmic retribution comes into being, that owing to verbal, audible, and visible characteristics becoming clear and distinct, the three worlds in the ten directions appear like a jewel on one's own palm, 3) and that the creative wonder of true emptiness cum marvelous existence conceals and reveals through all things in the universe throughout the incalculable aeons without beginning.[521] (Numbering is mine)

[520] Yu Pyŏngdŏk, *Wŏnbulgyo wa Han'guk sahoe*: *Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo chonggyo munje yŏn'guso p'yŏn*, Han'guk chonggyo yŏn'gu 9 (Seoul: Si'insa, 1977), 88.

[521] Pak Chungbin, *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* (The Canon), trans. by Bongkil Chung, *The Scriptures of Won Buddhism: A Translation of the Wŏnbulgyo Kyojŏn with Introduction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 121.

This long sentence can be divided into three parts according to theme: 1) the ultimate characteristics of reality, 2) the conventional characteristics of reality, and 3) a conclusive statement regarding the harmonious interplay of these two characteristics. From the perspective of ultimate reality, the *Irwŏn*, which refers to the Buddha-nature shared by both enlightened and unenlightened sentient beings, is described as being bound to neither existence nor nonexistence, as neither ceasing nor arising, as entailing neither sensible and cognitive perceptions nor linguistic expressions. Based on this utterly empty aspect of reality, the conventional characteristics of the world (cognitive, karmic, and linguistic) reveal through the light of "empty, calm, numinous awareness" 空寂靈知 *kongjŏk yŏngji*. Sot'aesan describes this revelation as the "marvelous phenomenon of true emptiness cum marvelous existence" 眞空妙有 *chin'gong myoyu*, which is manifested "through all things in the universe throughout the incalculable aeons without beginning." It is also important to note that Sot'aesan adds the verb "to believe in" before each aspect of the truth that he lists, which implies that faith in *Irwŏnsang* excludes neither the ultimate nor the conventional aspects of the truth, but rather, embraces both aspects, which are not originally separate from each other.

The beliefs in the truth of *Irwŏnsang* that Sot'aesan delineates also include Buddhist ethics based on the understanding of the interconnectedness of the world: people should repay the "grace or beneficence" that they have received from nature, parents, fellow beings, and laws. Sot'aesan essentially defines this interconnectedness as "grace" (*ŭn* 恩). In his view, since no being can sustain its existence without other beings, everything in this world is fundamentally interconnected. Therefore, we must awaken to the ways in which we are interrelated with others and practice gratitude towards them for all the ways we are indebted to them. For example, to show gratitude to heaven and earth (*ch'ŏnji* 天地), from which one receives "the air in the sky,"

"the support of the ground," "the radiance of the sun and moon," and "the beneficence of wind, clouds, rain, dew,"[522] among others, one should not only have a grateful mind toward them, but should also emulate nature's ways of being: 1) its ultimate radiance, 2) its ultimate sincerity, 3) its ultimate justice, 4) its naturalness, 5) its vastness, 6) its eternity, 7) its imperturbableness regardless of good or ill fortune, and 8) its thought-free manner of being. In order to express gratitude to our parents for the all-embracing, unconditional love that we all receive from them when we are powerless, "we should offer protection as best we can to those who are powerless."[523] By realizing that we "can live alone in a place that has no people, no animals, and no plants," and at the same time deeply understanding that all fellow beings are indebted to each other in a way that simultaneously "benefit[s] themselves and benefit[s] others," we should repay our debt of gratitude by taking care to help others in whatever we do in our daily lives.[524] In sum, the main principle in this belief-practice is that people should practice gratitude by modeling themselves wholeheartedly on the Fourfold Graces. In other words, people should cultivate equanimity, wisdom, and compassion in their everyday lives by deeply believing both in the interconnectedness of the world as described by the Fourfold Graces, and in the innate Buddha-nature of all sentient beings under the ultimate truth of *Irwŏnsang* as described above.

To Sot'aesan, "training morality based on facts" refers to the "Practice of *Irwŏnsang*" defined in the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* as follows:

> One is to establish the model of practice by having faith in the truth of *Irwŏnnsang*. The method of practice is for one, being enlightened to the truth of *Irwŏnsang*, to know one's own mind, which is as perfect, complete, utterly fair, and unselfish as *Irwŏn*, namely, *prajñā*-wisdom; to foster one's own mind, which is as perfect, complete, utterly fair, and

[522] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 26.

[523] Ibid., 31.

[524] Ibid., 32-36.

> unselfish as *Irwŏn*, namely *prajñā*-wisdom; and to use one's own mind, which is as perfect, complete, utterly fair, and unselfish as *Irwŏn*, namely, *prajñā*-wisdom. Herein lies the practice of *Irwŏn*.[525]

In this passage, Sot'aesan describes the human mind as perfect, complete, utterly fair, and unselfish as *Irwŏn*, namely *prajñā*-wisdom. The Practice of *Irwŏnsang* includes four tenets: the first is to believe in the truth of *Irwŏnsang* and to put it into practice; the second is to realize that one's own mind is as perfect, complete, utterly fair, and unselfish as *Irwŏn*; third is to foster just such a perfect, complete, utterly fair and unselfish mind; the fourth is to use one's mind as *Irwŏn.* Namely, to Sot'aesan, "training morality based on facts" refers to cultivating the three main practices of Buddhism: cultivating the mind through meditation (*samādhi*), sharpening wisdom (*prajñā*), and making mindful choices in using the six sense organs in everyday life (*śila*) with an awareness of the fact that the original human mind is as perfect, complete, utterly fair, and unselfish as *Irwŏn.* Therefore, we can say that the phrase "based on fact" refers to nothing but the universal true nature of the human mind while morality refers to Buddhist ideals, *samādhi*, *prajñā*, and *śila*. Sot'aesan also more concretely described "the truth of *Irwŏnsang*" as the the practical beliefs and praxis of the Fourfold Graces, Four Essentials, and Threefold Studies.

However, there is another interesting aspect of the phrase "training in morality based on facts." According to the era's understanding of civilization, "religion" mainly referred to the private sphere, while "morality" referred to "the public sphere," and the boundary between these two was politically determined. The Japanese colonial government was able to force the Korean people to worship at Shintō shrines by making Shintō a matter of public morality instead of religion. In this context, by including modifiers in the phrase "training in morality based on facts," Sot'aesan seems to depart from the conventional meaning of morality. First, by adding

[525] Ibid., 121-122.

"based on facts" as a modifier of "morality," Sot'aesan attaches a new connotation to the concept of socially obligated morality. "Morality based on facts" changes "morality" from signaling obligatory social norms to a fact-based morality; one should decide one's own personal morality by analyzing one's cognitive perceptions, habitual tendencies, and external circumstances. Therefore, "training in morality based on facts" does not necessarily force an individual to follow social obligations, but rather, urges him to vigilantly balance his own cognitive analysis with his personal, social and situational circumstances.

As a way to support this fact-based practice, Sot'aesan instructed his disciples to record daily journals where they would objectively observe the functioning of their six sense organs with a sense of mindfulness and heedfulness. For those who were illiterate or not comfortable with documents, he set up the separate "bean-count" method for examination. With this approach, one can keep track of whether they are mindful or unmindful simply by counting one light-colored bean whenever they act with heedfulness in making choices and one dark-colored bean whenever they do not. The instruction also includes checking "whether or not one transgressed the precepts," "record[ing] for that day the number of hours they worked, meditated, practiced, and studied, their income or expenditures that day, their specific handling of the functioning of their bodies and minds, and their awakenings and impressions."[526] Through these practices, Sot'aesan sought to help his disciples 1) to use their time resourcefully, not frittering away even a moment of their time, 2) to prevent poverty and find happiness by keeping a record of income and expenditures for the day and finding a way to earn income and to work diligently to generate income, 3) to obtain the ability to make mindful and proper choices with a clear understanding of the right and the wrong and benefit and harm in every activity (they can

[526] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism* (*Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn*), 74-75.

calculate by themselves how many merits, blessings, or transgressions they have generated), 4) finally, to observe their own progress in understanding the reality of the world.[527] This is one example of Sot'aesan's detailed methods for enhancing humans' spiritual power in their everyday lives in order to prevent people from beeing enslaved by the material.

As we have examined above, Sot'aesan's response to the discourse on civilization can be characterized as follows: first, he partook of the era's dualistic understanding of civilization; second, he argued in favor of a civilization that balanced the material with the spiritual; third, although he believed both aspects of civilization should be developed together, Sot'aesan considered humans' spiritual advancement to take precedence above material things; fourth, Sot'aesan's methods for enhancing humans' spiritual power is primarily based on the Buddhist teachings of the Buddha-nature and co-dependent arising; finally, his methods for spiritual development are practical, pragmatic, and *minjung*-oriented praxis.

5-4. The Pursuit of Religious Tolerance and Universality

In outlining his teachings in *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, Sot'aesan points out that religious conflicts derive from people's ignorance of the fact that "the fundamental principles of all the world's religions are essentially one."[528] By pointing out the universality of all religions, Sot'aesan declared his religious vision in no uncertain terms: "Our aim is to become adherents of a broad and consummate religion by also incorporating and making use as well of the doctrines of all the world's religions."[529] Sot'aesan did not urge people to simply become a follower of his order; rather, he encouraged them to become religious in a way that transcended

[527] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism* (*Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn*), 75-77.

[528] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 18.

[529] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 19.

specific teachings, meaning they need not necessarily choose to join his particular order. By recognizing the principles common to all the world's religions, Sot'aesan suggested, people would be able to freely adopt other religious teachings into their practices of spiritual cultivation. Due to this ecumenism, religious tolerance thus became one of the order's most important teachings.

Furthermore, Sot'aesan's teachings included understanding the principles of all religions in his teachings as one of the requirements for both lay and ordained members to progress into the fifth of the six Dharma ranks: "the status of beyond the household."[530] Sot'aesan presents four conditions necessary to achieve "the status of beyond the household," one of which is that the person "should be intimately conversant with the principles of all contemporary religions."[531] This condition clearly implies that Sot'aesan advocated religious universality and tolerance, and believed that one of the most important issues facing the modern era, in which all kinds of religions came into contact with each other in the public space, was to find establish harmony among the religions. This view can also be seen as a future-oriented vision. Particularly for those who will be in a position to direct large groups of people in the capacity of religious leadership, the virtue of understanding not only one's own religious tenets but also those of other religions is crucial to one's ability to lead religions out of conflict and into a harmonious state.

Sot'aesan further develops the notion of the importance of religious understanding into a limitless compassion for all living beings in the universe. He notes that those who are in the status of beyond the household should go "beyond the limits of remoteness and closeness, intimacy and distance, self and others, [and] have no regrets even in undergoing a thousand

[530] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 100.

[531] Ibid.

hardships and a myriad suffering or facing death on behalf of all living creatures."[532] In other words, the pursuit of religious universality and tolerance mentioned above should be expanded into a limitless compassion toward all sentient beings. This development may be where Sot'aesan's innovative Buddhist reformation meets with modernity. The influx of Western scientific civilization into Korea was part of the inevitable tide of the times. It is also certain, however, that the accompanying infusion of Western technologies and modern institutions into Korea brought both new possibilities as well as a variety of unprecedented perils. Embracing both these great challenges and great possibilities, Sot'aesan argued that we need to cultivate our spiritual capabilities, which can use scientific advancement positively to develop *spiritual civilization.* To him, this was the most critical and fundamental matter for all religions to pursue.

Another example of this case is Sot'aesan's attempt to overcome a dualistic understanding of the world that was one of the legacies of modern civilization: e.g., the mind versus the body, the secular versus the sacred, etc. In his chapter on "the way to integrate spirit and body," Sot'aesan criticizes a religious tradition that pursued only the sacred, thereby neglecting the secular aspects of life.

> Looking especially at the Buddhism of the past, its institutions were organized mainly in terms of monastic orders, which were not well suited to people living in the secular world, so that anyone who wished to be a true Buddhist had to ignore one's duties and responsibilities to the secular life and even give up one's occupation. In such a situation, no matter how good the buddhadharma, it would be difficult for all the many living creatures in this boundless world to gain access to the buddhas' grace. How could this be the consummate, great Way?[533]

This analysis particularly criticizes the prevalent form of Buddhism at that time, which urged people to pursue the otherworldly realm by regarding this world as a samsara that one needed to

[532] Ibid.

[533] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 18.

escape. Therefore, the religious system and regulations of this version of Buddhism focused on a monastic life that was designed only for ordained monks and nuns. Overcoming such a dualistic understanding was one of Sot'aesan's main reformations of Buddhism of the era's Buddhism. According to Sot'aesan, future religions should not distinguish between the sacred and the secular because they are not two different realms, but one and the same. Therefore, Sot'aesan says, "the religion of this new world should be a living religion in which cultivating the Way and life itself are nondual."[534] This statement was also a call for a new concept of religion presuming that people can pursue the sacred in their everyday lives. Sot'aesan also foresaw that Buddhism had great potential to overcome many of the issues caused by scientific civilization.

> The teaching of the Buddhadharma is the supreme Way of all under heaven. It illuminates the principle of the true nature, solves the crucial matter of birth and death, elucidates the principle of cause and effect, commands the paths of practice, and thus surpasses all other religious doctrines.[535]

Sot'aesan suggests that the Buddhist principle of the true nature, which teaches clarity and stability of the mind, sharpened insightful wisdom, mindful choices in action, and, most importantly, the teaching of emptiness, has the great potential to become the world's foremost religion in the future. According to Sot'aesan, understanding the true nature of human beings will lead people to solve the most critical issue in life, that of birth and death. The principle of cause and effect will provide a moral guideline for all humanity by allowing them to take responsibility for their actions. The Buddhist meditation tradition that has been developed and cultivated for over two millennia will also provide modern people with the ability to skillfully manage their life challenges and difficulties, and at the same time help them to return to their

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[534] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism (Wŏnbulgyo Chŏngjŏn)*, 98.

[535] "3. I. Prologue," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 106.

original, silent, empty state of mind. For these reasons, Sot'aesan foresees that "Buddhism will become the major religion of the world."[536] He continues on to say that "the Buddhadharma of the future, however, will not be the Buddhadharma of institutions like those of the past."[537] Despite the fact that Sot'aesan initiated an institutionalized religious order, the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma, it seems that his ultimate goal was not to develop an institutionalized and modernized religion. As he clearly states above, the future religion that he envisioned is a religion that goes beyond the institutionalized modern forms of religion.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested that Koselleck's historical framework of the "space of experience" and "the horizon of expectation" helps us understand the intricate reconfiguration of religious traditions that took place in the early modern period in Korea. By focusing on the interplay between the two in the historical concept of "religion," I have examined the genealogical development of the concept of religion in Korea, revealing that a variety of factors—such as the historical and political situations of Chosŏn, colonial policies, and the way in which adherents interpreted the concept of religion during the colonial period—played a critical role in shaping the religious traditions in Korea around the turn of twentieth century.

First, the process of settling on the term *shūkyō*, among many other options, as the standard translation of "religion" in Japan was a diplomatic gesture in the process of negotiating with Western powers. In Korea, however, the same Sinographic term *chonggyo* was already available to Korean intellectuals in the late nineteenth century, and Korean thinkers understood the term, along the lines of the Korean Confucian interpretation, to mean "ultimate teachings"

[536] "15. I. Prologue," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 114.

[537] Ibid.

rather than "sectarian teachings." Under this interpretation, they understood "religion" to be a source of development for Western civilization, and therefore expressed their optimism that religion could serve as a means of overcoming the national crisis.

Second, the Japanese colonial government tried to introduce into Korea the Western legal concept of the separation of religion and state, but Korean intellectuals resisted this. As the colonial government embraced the modern discourse of the separation of religion and state and classified newly emerged religious groups as pseudo-religions, the Korean press warned these newly emerged religions not to cross the lines constraining religion's roles. Even though the colonial government applied this strict standard to the newly emerged religions, we can frequently see examples of Korean intellectuals and editorials arguing that religion and state are inseparable. This shows that Koreans' specific past experiences of Confucianism as a state ideology influenced their expectations in envisioning the modern relationship between religion and the state.

Third, based on this historical understanding of religion, I have argued that the concept of "religion" provided a new space of experience that expanded Koreans' horizon of expectations for religion. As the modern concept of religion became naturalized in early twentieth-century Korea, it laid out a new "space of experience" in which many Korean thinkers could critically examine religion. The spatial connotations of the concept of religion offered many indigenous thinkers the opportunity to establish a new utopia by synthesizing the diverse teachings of "established religions" in the context of the popular thought of the *Chŏm Kam Nok* and *huch'ŏn kaebyŏk*. The mushrooming emergence of new religions can be partly understood as a product of the naturalization of the modern idea of religion among the era's Koreans.

My final point is that colonial government policies significantly influenced the formation of new religions. As the Japanese colonial government in Korea categorized all of the newly emerged religions as "pseudo-religions" and used the Bureau of Police to control them, all of the new religions had to reframe their positions in society according to the colonial government's regulations. In particular, we need to consider new religions' efforts to survive during the colonial period by properly attending to the era's discourse on the separation between religion and state, the "Movement for Developing the Mind-Field," the suppression of pseudo-religions, and the "discourse on civilization."

The concept of religion imposed political pressure on new religious groups. As we have discussed so far in this chapter, there were a variety of factors that restricted the activities of new religions. Under these circumstances, in the case of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, I have shown that Sot'aesan sought to expand the horizon of expectations for a new Buddhist religion based on Buddhist teachings within a space of experience restricted by colonial surveillance and policies. While Sot'aesan accepted the principle of the separation of religion and state, and the colonial mental awakening movement, he fostered the universal values of spiritual awakening and religious tolerance based on Buddhism. Sot'aesan's directive to pursue universality allowed his order not only to overcome Japanese surveillance and categorization as a pseudo-religion, but also to develop into a modern religion. It is quite clear what Sot'aesan attempted to do within this space of experience: he viewed religion's main role as that of enlightening people from all walks of life based on Buddhist teachings, thus bringing about a metamorphosis in their minds as well as in their lives. In re-defining this concept of religion, Sot'aesan took "the mind-practice" or "the cultivation of the mind" to be the most important premise. With these keywords, Sot'aesan re-highlighted the universal role of religion as a means of restoring people's true nature, which

becomes a fundamental basis not only for spiritual civilization, but also for political, technological, and material civilization. Even if he depicted his vision for religion within the modern concept of religion, given his religious order's main characteristics of pursuing universality and religious tolerance, it can be said that what Sot'aesan really pursued was the establishment of a religion that would go beyond existing institutionalized forms of modern religion.

By situating Sot'aesan's teachings in the historical and social contexts of the genealogical development of the concept of religion, we have come to more clearly understand the doctrinal systems and teachings of Sot'aesan. Under colonial surveillance and policies, Sot'aesan also sometimes had to modify his teachings and his order's position in society. In a society where the discourse on civilization had been dominated by elites focused either on Confucianism or on Christianity, Sot'aesan's with his teachings and vision argued for the development of "spiritual civilization" as a response to the discourse of "material civilization." As for detailed methods for establishing a spiritual civilization, he proposed two approaches: "belief in religion based on truth" and "training in morality based on facts." Through examining these phrases, I have shown how they used Buddhist teachings to transform the conventional, colonial meanings of religion and morality. Sot'aesan established a Buddhist community in which both lay and ordained followers actualized his vision of making a truly civilized world by harmonizing the material with the spiritual aspects of civilization. In the following chapter, we will examine the daily records of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma to look more closely at how Sot'aesan's disciples actually practiced and changed themselves through "the mind-praxis" that he taught within that community.

Chapter Four. Buddhism and the Common People: Making a "Congregation of a Thousand Buddhas and a Million Bodhisattvas"

1. Introduction

2. Sot'aesan's Disciples

3. A New Buddhist Community in which Lay and Ordained Live in Harmony

4. Sot'aesan's Reformation of Buddhism

5. Doctrinal Re-invention of Buddhist Teachings for the General Public

5-1. Sot'aesan's New Buddhist Practices

1) Lecturing and Discussion

2) Diary Writing

6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on contemporary records and texts from the earliest period of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe (PYH) to examine the ways in which Sot'aesan sought to reform Korean Buddhism during the early twentieth century. I argue that Sot'aesan's movement must be understood specifically in the context of ongoing Buddhist reforms rather than as a generic Korean religious movement. In particular, the defining traits of Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism can be summarized as "Buddhism for the masses" and "reformation of Buddhism such that anyone can practice it in their lives." To demonstrate these points, I first analyze the characteristics of Sot'aesan's disciples, particularly his female disciples. I show that Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism was geared not only toward intellectuals, but also toward a non-elite populace that could not otherwise access the teachings and practices of Buddhism in that era. I describe the PYH by analyzing the organization's mode of operating in the years after its

establishment in 1924. By examining detailed examples of Sot'aesan's new Buddhist teachings, I illustrate the ways in which Sot'aesan developed distinctive Buddhist practices that members of the general public (*taejung*) could cultivate in their daily lives and the ways in which his early disciples practiced Buddhism. I seek to demonstrate that Sot'aesan's new Buddhist practices, such as "lecturing," "discussion," and "diary writing," were intended to create a new form of Buddhism that was both modern and reformist.

2. Sot'aesan's Disciples

In order to understand the main characteristics of Sot'aesan's disciples, first let us examine the group's demographics, based on data recorded during the first thirty-six-year term of Wŏn Buddhism.[538] In 1926, two years after establishing the PYH, Sot'aesan outlined three methods by which practitioners could assess their own practice, religious contributions, and merit.[539] In the same article, he explained how the PYH should record and evaluate the religious contributions of its members. At every twelfth-year commemoration of the founding of the order, the PYH conducted comprehensive evaluations of what each member had achieved in his or her practice and religious contributions.[540] All members' dharma ranks were calculated based on

[538] In 1918, the third year after Wŏn Buddhism's foundation, Sot'aesan proclaimed his timetable for establishing the new religious order. This history of the order was to begin with 1916, the year of his enlightenment, and to be marked by generations of thirty-six years thereafter. The first generation would consist of three periods of twelve years each. See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 31.

[539] The subjects of Wŏn Buddhist practice include 1) Cultivating the Mind, 2) Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles, and 3) Choice in Action. Mastery in each of these subjects is divided into five levels: *kap*, *ŭl*, *pyŏng*, *chŏng*, *mu*. After being tested, a given practitioner was graded across all three subjects. Sot'aean also established a system for grading dharma rank whereby a practitioner's level of study progressed through six stages: 1) ordinary faith, 2) special faith, 3) the battle between dharma and *māra*, 4) the status of dharma strong and *māra* defeated, 5) beyond the household, and 6) the greatly enlightened *tathāgata*. Each level also contained a preparatory stage before a practitioner advanced to the next level. See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 61-62.

[540] See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 62-63.

these merits and levels of practice; these dharma ranks and performance grades then determined the degree of veneration, funeral services, and memorial services the order would afford each member in old age and death. Because this method was established at the outset of the order, we can still access clearly recorded, detailed information about its members. In this chapter, I will particularly focus on the report issued during the first-generation term of three twelve-year cycles, or thirty-six years (1916-1953).

As shown below in Table 1, which I generated from data in the *Work Report* 事業報告書 (*Sayŏp pogosŏ*) published in commemoration of the order's first thirty-six-year generation, the number of both lay members and ordained members had gradually increased since its foundation in 1916.[541] The total number of followers in 1924 was only 130, sixty of which were male and seventy of which were female.[542] Thirteen followers were categorized as *chŏnmu ch'ulsinja* 專務出身者 (one who devotes himself fully to the order).[543] By 1928, when the first

[541] *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'ŏnggan che 5 kwŏn*: *Wŏnbulgyo kibon saryo py'ŏn* [1973] (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 1994, 215.

[542] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 52.

[543] According to documents recorded before the official establishment of the PYH, such as *Minutes of Councilors* and the draft *Regulations of the PYH*, members of the PYH consist of ordained members and lay members. According to the *PYH ch'anggŏnsa* (*The Founding History of the PYH*), Sot'aesan announced the meritorious supporters while he was staying at Pongnae chŏngsa for four years. In that document, he divided them into two groups: 1) *chŏnmu noryŏkcha* 專務勞力者 (full-dedicated practitioners); 2) *huwŏnja* 後援者 (sponsors or supporters). The former members include Kim Namch'ŏn, Song Chŏkpyŏk, Kim Hyewŏl, Yi Ch'ŏngp'ung, Song Tosŏng, O Ch'angŏn, and Song Kyu, all of who had stayed at Pongnae chŏngsa with Sot'aesan and fully dedicated themselves into the preliminary task of founding the PYH. The latter members include Kim Kwangsŏn, Yi Mangap, Ku Namsu, Kim Kich'ŏn, among twenty others, who occasionally visited the Pongnae chŏngsa and financially supported the task of founding the PYH while Sot'aesan and other disciples dedicated themselves to drafting the doctrinal systems of the PYH. It seems that these two terms *chŏnmu noryŏkcha* and *huwŏnja* respectively developed into the terms *chŏnmuch'ulsinja* (ordained full-devotee) and lay followers. The term *Chŏnmu ch'ulsinja*, which refers to an ordained member of the PYH, emerged with the establishment of the PYH in 1924. The *PYH ch'anggŏnsa* introduces the first dozen members who had devoted themselves to the establishment of the PYH since Sot'aesan attained enlightenment in 1916 as *chŏnmu ch'ulsinja*. The inaugural issue of *Wŏlmal t'ongsin* (May 1928) introduced terms for the four types of members in the PYH: 1) implementing members of *Chŏnmu ch'ulsin*; 2) preparatory members of *Chŏnmu ch'ulsin*; 3) the

commemorative general meeting was held, the total number of followers had increased more than threefold, reaching 438 (176 male, 262 female).[544] Of these members, over twenty were actively engaged in the activities of the PYH as ordained ministers.[545] According to Murayama Chijun's report, by the end of August 1934, members of the PYH totaled 822 (376 male, 446 female). However, this figure appears to be erroneous. The chart of Membership Growth by Year in chapter 8 of the report indicates that 822 is actually the number by which membership *increased* over the course of 1934.[546] Thus the total number of official members of the PYH was

members of *Kŏjin ch'ulchin* 居塵出塵 (meaning one who renounces secular desires through living in the mundane world); 4) ordinary members. The first group encompasses members who have devoted themselves to the public works of the PYH. The second group refers to people who vowed to become *Chŏnmu ch'ulsin* by going through the requisite training. The third group refers to lay members whose levels of Dharma practice and actual devotion are equivalent to those of *Chŏnmu ch'ulsin*. The last group refers to all ordinary lay members. The term *kyomu* 敎務, which was used interchangeably with the term *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* to refer specifically to ordained members of Wŏn Buddhism, was approved by Sot'aesan on the twenty-fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar in 1929 [the corresponding Western date, July 1, 1929]. On a regular Dharma meeting day, Yi Ch'unp'ung 李春風 (1876-1939) submitted two suggestions: 1) a proposal to unify the titles by which Sot'aesan was addressed; 2) a proposal to unify the titles used for fully devoted members (both lay and ordained) serving in retreat centers or branch temples. In this meeting, the titles "*chongsaju*" and "*kyomu*," referring respectively to Sot'aesan and to ordained members, were agreed upon. Later, Sot'aesan showed his high approval of these proposals by issuing them the grade *kap.* The occupation of *kyomu*, referring to those who dedicate themselves to the teachings and the order either as lay or ordained members, was established in 1925. However, "Section 4: *Pogyosa* 布敎師" (meaning "propagator") was added to the final revision of the *Regulations of the PYH* in 1942. According to article 110, this section states that "*pogyosa* shall be the term for those who vow to dedicate themselves to teaching [the Dharma] *ad vitam* with a firm conviction. They are appointed by the *chongbŏpsa* [the head Dharma master]." According to Pak Yongdŏk, this final addition was influenced by Japanese Government policies designed to reduce the scale of many religious groups by limiting the number of religious propagators. See Pak Yongdŏk, *Sillyongbŏl Todŏk Kongtongch'e t'ŏjŏn ŭi hwaknip: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa* 3 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2003), 72-75; see also "3 Yehoerok (1929)," *Wŏlmal t'ongsin 11 ho*. Mark Nathan shows that participation in religious propagation became one of the conditions for obtaining legal recognition as a modern religious group during the colonial period. It appears that the sudden insertion of the term *p'ogyo* into the regulations of the PYH in 1942 should also be understood from this perspective. See Mark Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities*, 52.

[544] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 68.

[545] Ibid.

[546] Murayama Chijun, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō*, 452-460.

in fact 1,499. This calculation is consistent with PYH records, which tally total membership by August 1934 at 1,449, a number equal to the total number of members who had joined from 1916 onward minus the number of member deaths since that year.

Thirty-six years later, by 1952, the total number of followers since the founding of the order had multiplied many-fold, reaching 322,440. Among these, 32,244 were "duty-lay followers," (*ŭimu kyodo* 義務敎徒)[547] 290,196 were ordinary lay followers,[548] and over 260 were ordained ministers.[549]

As is evident in the poster that was exhibited during the first commemorative ceremony for the first-generation term of thirty-six years (Figure 1), the order's members were spread out across the nation. However, most of its members were concentrated in the southern provinces of North Chŏlla, South Chŏlla, and South Kyŏngsang as well as in the capital area of Kyŏnggi province. The distribution of members in other areas, including South Ch'ungch'ŏng province, North Kyŏngsang province, North Ch'ungch'ŏng province, and Kangwŏn province, are less significant.

Table 1. Total Number of Lay Members from 1924 to 1952[550]

Year	Duty-Lay Members	Regular Lay Members	Total Lay Members	Ordained Members
1924			130	13

[547] I am not sure why it is named "duty-lay members." But, my assumption is that this term derives from the "Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits." I explain below that the duty-lay members are not simply those who have been admitted, but those who actively follow the teachings and practices of the PYH and continuously submit the progress of their practice to the PYH for evaluation. Therefore, "duty-lay members" may refer to those who sincerely observe all of the articles of the "Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits."

[548] All of these indexes are still available at the Headquarters of Wŏn Buddhism in Iksan.

[549] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 114.

[550] *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'ŏnggan che 5 kwŏn*: *Wŏnbulgyo kibon saryo py'ŏn* [1973] (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 1994, 215.

1928	422	3,798	4,220	20
1929	476	4,283	4,760	
1930	523	4,707	5,230	
1931	695	6,255	6,950	
1932	779	7,011	7,790	
1933	1,024	9,126	10,140	
1934	1,449	13,041	14,490	
1935	2,182	19,638	21,820	
1936	2,607	23,463	26,070	
1937	4,131	37,197	41,310	
1938	4,960	44,640	49,600	
1939	5,981	53,829	59,810	
1940	6,970	62,730	69,700	80
1941	8,514	76,626	85,140	
1942	9,883	88,949	98,830	
1943	10,780	97,020	107,800	
1944	12,191	109,728	121,920	
1945	14,162	127,458	141,620	
1946	17,764	159,876	177,640	
1947	21,918	197,262	219,180	
1948	24,390	219,510	243,900	
1949	26,138	235,242	261,380	
1950	27,048	243,432	270,480	
1951	29,625	266,625	296,250	
1952	32,244	290,196	322,440	260

Figure 1. The Regional Distribution of Members and Temples in 1952[551]

A notable consideration here is that the PYH recorded the numbers of its duty-lay members and regular lay members separately. According to the *PYH kyuyak* (*The Regulations of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma*)[552] published in March 1927, both duty-lay members and regular members joined the PYH by submitting an official application with an application fee of 1 *wŏn*. They subsequently received a membership card and the following teachings of the society: the "Ten Precepts," the "Threefold Practice and the Eight Articles," and the "Essential Discourse on Conducting One's Nature," the "Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications," "Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits," and the "Articles of Obligation for Ordained Practitioners."[553] In order to remain a member of the

[551] Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 Tae Sŏngŏp Pongch'anhoe, *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* vol. 7 (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), 43.

[552] Throughout this chapter, I translate quotations from this text into English. *PYH kyuyak* (*Regulations of the Society for the Study of the Buddha Dharma*) (Iksan: Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, 1927).

[553] See appendix.

order, an adherent was required to pay the annual membership fee (3 *wŏn* 40 *chŏn*), attend services, and follow the society's regulations. If a member failed to pay the membership fee for more than one year, failed to attend services for more than three months, or brings disgrace to the society by violating its regulations more than three times, he or she would lose their membership. The main difference between duty-lay membership and regular lay membership was that the duty-members took on more responsibilities as members: they were required to pay a maintenance fee on top of the annual membership fee, and thereby gained the right to vote on the society's officers, to run for election to those positions, and to read any of the order's documents and accounting books whenever they pleased.[554] In addition, the duty-lay members are not simply those who have been admitted, but those who actively follow the teachings and practices of the PYH and continuously submit the progress of their practice to the PYH for evaluation.

As a special production for the commemorative ceremony of PYH's first term, the order compiled a history of those individuals who had been significant in the foundation of Wŏn Buddhism and who had advanced into special dharma ranks through their practice and religious contributions (physically, materially, and mentally). The order published this history as *Wŏnbulgyo che 1 tae ch'angnip yugong'in yŏksa* (*The History of Persons Significant to the Founding of Wŏn Buddhism during the Order's First Period of Thirty-Six Years*), a work divided into seven volumes: *The History of Ordained Members* (vol. 1); *The History of Meritorious Lay Members: Special Ranks 1st through 4th* (vol. 2); *The History of Meritorious Lay Members: 5th Rank* (vol. 3); *The History of Meritorious Lay Members 5th rank* (cont.) (vol. 4); *The History of*

[554] "Chapter 4, Rights and Duties of Members, Section 15: Members of the society shall have rights and duties as follows:
1. the right to vote on the officers of the society and to be eligible to run for an election.
2. the right to read all documents and accounting books of the society at any time.
3. the duty of paying society maintenance fees.
4. the duty of observing the society's regulations." See the *PYH kyuyak*.

Meritorious Lay Members: 5th rank (vol. 5); *The History of Meritorious Lay Members: 5th rank* (vol.6); *Appendix* (vol. 7). Vol. 1 contains the brief history of all 258 ordained members through 1952. Vols. 2-6 comprise the brief history of 1,498 meritorious lay members according to their level of dharma practice and religious contributions. Lastly, Vol. 7 includes photos of Sot'aesan, important sacred sites, forty-two temples and each of those temples' members, and the first commemorative ceremony. By that time, there were fifty temples in both Korea and Japan, including one in Osaka, three at educational institutions (Wŏnkwang Middle School, High School and College), six at charitable centers such as the Seoul Pohwa Orphanage 普和園, six at Pohwa Oriental pharmacies, and one at Wŏnkwang publishers.[555]

As shown in Table 2 below, which reproduces a chart included in each volume of *Wŏnbulgyo che 1 tae ch'angnip yugong'in yŏksa*, each brief history contains wide-ranging information about each member, including his or her ID picture. These charts provide not only basic information on given members, such as their name, date of birth, family status, etc., but also their level of practice, religious contributions to the society, and a brief chronology of their works. In addition to this chart, each history provides two narrated biographies of each member: one pertaining to his life before he entered the PYH, and the other pertaining to his life after he entered the PYH. Each history concludes by stating the member's Dharma grade and the grade of his religious contributions at the end of the first thirty-six-year period. For those members who had already passed away by the time of the history's compilation, the work also provides a brief account of that person's final Dharma grade and grade of religious contribution after his death. Therefore, by analyzing these data, we can learn about the backgrounds of the members of the

[555] Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 Tae Sŏngŏp Pongch'anhoe, *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* vol. 7 (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), 63.

PYH, their motives for becoming members, and the transformations they have undergone since beginning to practice the teachings of the PYH.

Table 2. A **Brief History of PYH Members**

1. A Brief History of PYH Members						
	Dharma Title		Dharma Name		Given Name	
	Name of *Unit*		Direction of *Unit*		Gender	
	Date of Birth					
	Place of Birth					
	Current Address					
Photo	Date of Entering the Order					
	Date of Entering into Nirvana					
	Place of Entering into Nirvana					
First period (twelve years)	Practice		My Mentor		The number of people whom I have led to the order	
	Contributions		Father		Siblings	
Second period (twenty-four years)			Mother			
			Spouse		Children	
Third period (thirty-six years)	Practice		Education			
	Contributions		Health Condition		Command of One's Nature	
Original Total Grade						
Chronology of Works						
Position	Place		Work Period	Number of Years	Explanatory Note	

Drawing on these materials, I created Tables 4 and 5 below in order to review the education levels of the first generation of Sot'aesan's disciples. Tables 4 and 5 indicate that among a total of 258 ordained members, the rate of illiteracy is quite low, at only 7.75%. Usually, illiterate ordained members dedicated themselves to the PYH by doing chores, such as working in the kitchen and laundry room. 38.7% of ordained members did not receive any modern education, but were still able to read and write either in Classical Chinese or in

vernacular Korean. Table 4 also shows us that even the rate of elementary-school education was not high—just 13.95%—and the rate of middle-school education was even lower, at 9.3%.

During the years of Sot'aesan's leadership, the most educated female ordained disciples were those who graduated from high school, and this included only three women: Yi Kongju (1896-1991), Kim Yŏngsin (1908-1984), and Cho Chŏngwŏn (1909-1976). Yi joined the PYH as a married woman, and dedicated herself as an ordained *kyomu* during the rest of her life. Kim and Cho became the PYH's first female celibate ordained *kyomu*s.

During this era, the two meditation centers in Iri (present-day Iksan), and Yŏnggwang functioned partially as educational institutions, hosting three-month retreats in summer and winter. In addition to these centers, Sot'aesan wanted to establish a school named "Yuil Hagwŏn" where any of his disciples who had vowed to become ordained ministers could be officially educated. He submitted a petition for establishing such a school to the Japanese colonial government in 1940, but it was denied. Only in 1946, after liberation, was the PYH able to establish a school, naming it "Yuil Hangnim." The school's program consisted of two three-year curriculums, one in secondary and one in higher education. These were later developed into Wŏn'gwang middle and high schools, Wŏn'gwang women's middle and high schools, and Wŏn'gwang University. The establishment of the Yuil Hangnim school in 1946 is the reason why the percentage of PYH members who had received a college level of education is relatively high (29.05%).[556]

Pak Ch'ang'gi (1917-1950), the son of Yi Kongju, was a *kyomu* in charge of teaching ministers at the Iksan Headquarters and so had special interest in education and overseas edification. After liberation in 1946, Pak proposed that higher education be provided to the

[556] See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 124.

clergy and that they be dispatched overseas as missionaries. He selected a group of ordained ministers who were talented students and sent them to Seoul to receive higher education by using his own inheritance money. The scholarship that he donated was 100 *sŏkchigi* of rice paddy field, or approximately 163.38 acres. Many ministers were educated through this scholarship. For example, Chŏng Sŏngsuk (1922-1999, majored in Korean Literature at Sukmyŏng Women's University and transferred to the department of English Literature at Tongguk University), Chŏn P'algŭn (1929-, majored in English Literature at Seoul National University), Kim Taehyŏn (1926-2010, majored in Korean Literature at Ewha Womans' [sic] University), Yi Chaegyŏng (1929-2000, majored in Buddhist Studies at Tongguk University), Chŏng Chasŏn (1922-1974, majored in Buddhist Studies and transferred to the department of English Literature at Tongguk University), Hong Chaewan (1925-1950, majored in Buddhist Studies at Tongguk University), and Chŏng Kyŏngho (1925-2006, majored in Economics at Sŏnggyun'gwan University) received college educations in Seoul. In addition, Pak Ch'anggi himself studied Buddhism at Tongguk University and graduated on May 13, 1950 with a thesis entitled "The Principle of Karma." On June 25, 1950, when the Korean War broke out, Pak evacuated all of the students who had been studying in Seoul to the Iksan headquarters. At that time, Hwang Chŏngsinhaeng's only son, Kang P'ilguk, refused to go to Iksan because his mother, who had been abroad, came to find him in Seoul when she returned to Korea. Pak went to Yangju with Kang. Unfortunately, on September 27, the day before the re-conquest of Seoul was completed, he was arrested and poisoned by North Korean forces. However, through Park Ch'anggi's special dedication to the clergy's education, these ministers played an important role after graduating in the development of Wŏn Buddhism both in Korea and abroad.

As for lay members, the rate of illiteracy was quite high, at 22.89% of 1,498 members. 48.47% of lay members did not receive any modern education, but were literate in either in Classical Chinese or in vernacular Korean. It is also remarkable that the percentage of females among meritorious lay members was over 74%.

Table 3. Education Levels: Ordained Members

	Literacy in Classical Chinese	Literacy in Only Vernacular Korean	Literacy in Both Classical Chinese and Korean	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College	Yuil Hangnim	Wŏn'gwang University	None	Total
Male	13	7	24	17	10	0	12	18	7	4	112
Female	2	45	9	19	14	3	4	20	14	16	146
Total	15	52	33	36	24	3	16	38	21	20	258
Percentage	5.81%	20.1%	12.79%	13.95%	9.30%	1.16%	6.20%	14.72%	8.13%	7.75%	

Table 4. Education Levels: Lay Members

	Literacy in Classical Chinese	Literacy in Vernacular Korean	Literacy in Both Classical Chinese and Korean	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	College	Yuil Hangnim	PhD	None	Total
Male	82	61	22	63	72	11	34	2	1	41	389
Female	15	544	9	135	40	46	16	2	0	302	1,109
Total	97	605	31	198	112	57	50	4	1	343	1,498
Percent-age	6.47%	40%	2%	13.21%	7.47%	3.8%	3.33%	0.26%	0.06%	22.89%	

What we can tell from these educational levels is that among disciples in Sot'aesan's era even elementary-school graduates were rare. Those who graduated from middle or higher schools did so after liberation. Because he believed in the power of education more than most people, Sot'aesan made various efforts to establish a school even during the difficult period of Japanese colonial rule. Even though he could not obtain permission to build a school in his own day, Sot'aesan enacted a variety of methods to systematically educate and train his disciples and to regularly assess the levels of his disciples' practice and understanding from the beginning. His training methods will be discussed in more detail later.

So far, we have looked into the education levels of Sotaesan's disciples. In the next section, we will examine this group's characteristics in greater detail, looking specifically at female ordained members.

2-1. Female Ordained Disciples

One of the Sot'aesan's disciples, Pak Ŭn'guk (1923-2017),[557] describes as follows how challenging and unusual it was to attend middle school during the colonial period, particularly as a woman:

> I came to the Yŏngsan [Sŏnwŏn] [558] at the age of seventeen, which I felt I was not a very mature age. I lived in a small village called Pŏpsŏng, which is located near Yŏngsan. My family was suffering from poverty and various personal difficulties. People said that many women were gathering at the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn and that they were exempt from having to wed; instead, after being educated, they would become teachers. That was really appealing to me. I was chiefly attracted to this idea that I didn't have to get married, but could instead be a teacher. When I came to the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn, there were

[557] Pak was born on January 22, 1923 and raised in Changsŏng, a town located in the southwest region of Korea, Chollanam-do, not far from Yŏngsan—the district where the founding master Sot'aesan was born, raised, searched for the truth, and attained great enlightenment. In 1939, Pak came to the Yŏngsan center in order to join the PHY. Even though no relatives had guided or encouraged her to join the society, she was eager to practice and study, and submitted an application to become an ordained *kyomu* after studying at the Yŏngsan center for about one and a half years. After a long training period, she graduated from the Yuil Hangnim (which has grown into Wŏn'gwang University in contemporary Korea) and was ordained in 1949. Pak dedicated herself to life as a *kyomu* for a total of seventy-seven years and one month by serving at many temples and retreat centers, and raised her Dharma rank up to the degree of "beyond the household," which is just below the final rank of "the greatly enlightened tathāgata." She also played an important role as an elder supreme council member of Wŏn Buddhism and as a head minister of the Seoul and Pusan dioceses. Five years before she retired, Pak embarked on a project of establishing a youth retreat center in a deep mountain range whose nickname is "the Alps in Kyŏngsang province." Through her dedication, the retreat center became the first youth retreat center to be registered as a corporation in Korea.

[558] Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn (Retreat Center) was established in 1927, and many people were educated there under the guidance of Sot'aesan's disciples, Song Kyu and Song Tosŏng.

> many senior students living at the Sŏnwŏn, such as Hang-t'awon-*nim*, sister T'aesin, sister Sŏnyang, and so on. There were about forty to fifty students at the center. It was often said at that time that the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn educated female students well, so many people who were seeking a desirable marriage partner or daughter-in-law also visited the center from various places like Paeksu-myŏn, Pŏpsŏp-myŏn, and Yonggwang-myŏn. We lived there during the Japanese occupation period, so it was extremely difficult and rare for women to go to middle school after graduating from elementary school. Unless you went to the women's Asahi middle school in downtown Kwangju, there was no other way for us to go to middle school, so many good female students came to the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn.[559]

As this chapter has already noted, the fact that there were only three high-school graduates among ordained female members of the PYH prior to liberation supports Pak's testimony that it was extremely difficult for ordinary women to receive even a secondary education. Pak's story brings to light three important points. First, Korean women in rural areas rarely had the chance to receive higher education.[560] Second, entering into marriage was not a voluntary choice for women, but a mandatory part of life. Third, therefore, in Pak's era, joining the Yŏngsan center in Yŏnggwang or the Ch'ongbu Sŏnwŏn in Iksan at the time provided a way for women both to

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[559] On June 22, 2001, a reporter researching Wŏn Buddhism visited Pak at the Paenae Youth Retreat Center and recorded a video interview of about 50 minutes. Accessed on February 22, 2019. http://115.91.201.144:1935/streams/_definst_/mp4:30a95071-2878-4fb0-ab19-fd568dfc3561/2017/05/31/5ed1ed39-b295-4fe3-b2cf-1f3e0ef3d8ea/a953cf9d-908d-49fb-b364-3733a21ecb31.mp4/playlist.m3u8.

[560] According to the 1930 census taken by the Japanese Government General of Korea, 23% of the general population was literate in either Korean or Japanese. See, Ji Yŏn Hong and Christopher Paek, "Colonization and Education: Exploring the Legacy of Local Elites in Korea," *The Economic History Review*, no. 3 (2017): 938-964. However, the female literacy rate in North Cholla province was only 8.64%. See No Yŏngt'aek, "Ilche sigi ŭi munmaengryul ŭi ch'ui," *Kuksagwan Nonch'ong vol.51* (Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Ŭiwŏnhoe, 1994), 109.

escape the social norm of marriage and to pursue higher education for themselves. Pak's description of her motivations for joining the order at that time also suggest that the PYH served a crucial function as an educational organization in addition to its more obvious roles in religious practice and teachings. Particularly, the order gave women an unprecedented opportunity to overcome society's view of them as inferior beings and to forge their own identities as humans. Pak Ŭn'guk highlights several times in her remarks that her motivation for joining the group was like that of many females who joined: the educational opportunities it offered her as a woman. This interview makes clear that the PYH provided an alternative educational institution for the common people through its local branch temples and centers.

Before examining the biographies of the 146 female members who were ordained during the first thirty-six years of Wŏn Buddhism, let me provide some brief historical background as to Korean women's social status in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Until the late Chosŏn, Korean women held a low social status, and there were no official schools for girls. Though some women from the aristocratic class (*yangban*) learned to read the Korean vernacular script and attained some knowledge of Classical Chinese and Confucianism, most people considered it unthinkable to allow a female child to have an education. As British traveler and geographer Isabella Bird Bishop (1831-1904) stated in her travelogue, *Korea and Her Neighbours* (1898), "The literacy of Korean women at th[is] time is estimated at two in a thousand," an extremely high illiteracy rate among females.[561] She explained that the status of Korean women at the time was inferior and subordinate to men due to the social structures that discriminated against women, such as the absence of an education system for women and the

[561] Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbours* (New York: F. H. Revell Co., 1898), 342.

legal system, among others. According to Bishop, "Korean women are very rigidly secluded, perhaps more absolutely so than the women of any other nation."[562]

However, it was also during this time that Korean women's social identity began to shift as Western ideas were introduced to Korea. The era's newspapers, such as *Tongnip sinmun* (Independence News, 1896), *Hwangsŏng sinmun* (Capital Gazette, 1898), *Cheguk sinmun* (Empire News, 1898), and *Taehan maeil sinbo* (Korean Daily News, 1904) summoned women as members of the society into the public sphere through writing about the New Woman (*sinyŏsŏng*). These modern newspapers played a vital role in producing a new form of political subject by treating women as an integral part of the modern nation-state. The neologism *sinyŏsŏng* or "New Woman" emerged in newspapers and magazines; the term referred to elite Korean women who studied in Japan and the term was understood to be synonymous to "educated women" or "female students."[563]

However, recent cultural studies of New Women from the colonial period in Korea have defined this class not as individuals with fixed identities, but as "discursive subjects" that have been used to mean many things in modern discourse.[564] These studies portray the New Women, on the one hand, as activists for women's liberation, as comrades who worked alongside men to civilize their country, and as modern mothers. On the other hand, New Women have alternately

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[562] Ibid., 45.

[563] Sin Namju, "1920 nyŏndae sinyŏsŏng yŏn'gu," *Han'guk yŏsŏng kyoyang hakhoeji* 12, 136; See Kim Chiyŏn and Kim Kyun, "Singminji kŭndae sinyŏsŏng ŭi tamnon yŏn'gu:1920-1930 nyŏn tae Han'guk ŭi sinyŏsŏng kwanggo rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Han'guk kwanggo hongbo hakpo* 14 (4), 205; Jennifer Yum, "Suicide, 'New Women,' and Media Sensation in Colonial Korea," in *Transgression in Korea: Beyond Resistance and Control*, ed. Juhn Y. Ahn (Michigan: Michigan Press, 2018), 108.

[564] See Kim Chiyŏn and Kim Kyun, "Singminji kŭndae sinyŏsŏng ŭi tampon yŏn'gu:1920-1930 nyŏn tae Han'guk ŭi sinyŏsŏng kwanggo rŭl chungsim ŭro," *Han'guk kwanggo hongbo hakpo* 14 (4), 201.

been treated as harmful members of society, i.e., as modern decadents who pursued nothing but vanity and sexual indulgence.[565] Particularly, the emergence of New Women produced "a dualistic categorization of women: a newly emerging figure of the New Woman and its backward, negative counterpart, the Old-Fashioned Woman."[566] Moreover, the ideal woman of this era was still defined by the Confucian notion of the "good wife and wise mother"(良妻賢母 *yangch'ŏ hyŏnmo*),[567] and so New Women were often criticized for being so-called Mottŏen girls (bad girls).[568] As Michel Foucault notes, women's gradual entrance into the public sphere after having previously been confined to their homes meant that women were able to reach beyond a patriarchal norms; at the same time, their newfound visibility in public spaces also made them the objects of surveillance.[569]

[565] "Around the mid-1920s, representations of the New Women became more negative: the mass media manufactured claims of the extravagance of New Women (*Sinyŏsŏng*, July 1924), their tendency to be easily tempted (*Sinyŏsŏng*, Oct. 1925), as well as their frivolity (*Tonga ilbo*, June 17 1925/Aug. 8, 1925). "These negative images were mainly constructed by focusing upon and attacking the images of the consumption and sexual promiscuity of New Women." See Jiyoung Suh, "The "New Woman" and the Topography of Modernity in Colonial Korea," *Korean Studies* vol. 37 (2013), 20.

[566] See Jiyoung Suh, "The "New Woman" and the Topography of Modernity in Colonial Korea," *Korean Studies* vol. 37 (2013), 13. See also, Yi Haenghwa and Yi Kyŏnggyu, "Ilche kangjŏmgi Chosŏn sinyŏsŏng insik e kwanhan ilgoch'al: yŏsŏng chapchi *Sinyŏsŏng* ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Ilbon kŭndaehak yŏn'gu* 51, 203-206.

[567] See also, Yi Haenghwa and Yi Kyŏnggyu, "Ilche kangjŏmgi Chosŏn sinyŏsŏng insik e kwanhan ilgoch'al: yŏsŏng chapchi *Sinyŏsŏng* ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Ilbon kŭndaehak yŏn'gu* 51, 208.

[568] Ibid., 212.

[569] Yi Yunmi, "Kŭndae chŏk in kyoyuk konggan kwa sahoe chŏk in kŏri tugi," in *Han'guk singminji kŭndae wa yŏsŏng konggan*, ed. T'ae Hyesŏk (Seoul: Yŏiyŏn, 2004), 295-313.

As many scholars have pointed out, the mass media paid attention to women's every move as they navigated society publicly for the first time, producing a patriarchical discourse on women through gossips, rumors, and hearsays.[570]

Against this sociocultural background, Sot'aesan took the social issue of gender discrimination against women seriously, and did so ever since first drafting his teachings at the Pongnae hermitage in 1920. In the *Sayŏp pogosŏ* published in the fourteenth year of the Wŏn Buddhist Era (1929), Sot'aesan highlighted gender equality as one of the main teachings of the PYH:

> In the past, the world was exclusively male-oriented. The newly awakened New Women eagerly exclaim that the old social systems were only for the man. Indeed, that is right. Who else, besides women, are without basic rights and freedoms in this way? Women did not have the property rights they deserve as human beings. Women are not given the rights of social intercourse that even animals deserve. Women are not able to enact filial piety, no matter how much they respected their parents. They were discriminated against even by the children close to their heart. Where else could there be such people without rights and freedoms? Accordingly, women also do not have the obligations they should have as human beings. As a rule, obligations are given when rights are given. Likewise, rights are given when obligations are given. Therefore, there can be no rights without obligations, and there can be no obligations without rights. Therefore, it is natural that women who do not have rights will become irresponsible. When all women—a gender that makes up half of the population—become irresponsible and rely solely on men for everything, how great will be the loss to family, country, and society? This is equivalent to having the work that should be done by the power of two be done only with the power of one person. The stone that could be lifted by ten people is lifted only with the power of five. How merciless it is. Therefore, we will thoroughly give the same rights to husband and wife, recognize the rights of all women, and also share all duties equally so that no one has to rely on others for basic requests. In this regard, a man will not be unable to do his work because of a woman, and a woman will not be unable to do her work because of a man. In this way, we are trying to make equal rights between husband and wife our main tenet and to gradually realize it.[571]

Urgently preaching on the need for gender equality, Sot'aesan listed the equality of men and women as one of the Four Essential Rules of Social Reformation. One of his practical efforts in

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[570] Kim Chiyŏn and Kim Kyun, "Singminji kŭndae sinyŏsŏng ŭi tamnon yŏn'gu:1920-1930 nyŏn tae Han'guk ŭi sinyŏsŏng kwanggo rŭl chungsim ŭro," 205.

[571] *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan 5: Kich'o saryo p'yŏn*, "Sich'ang 14 nyŏn Sayŏp pogosŏ," 85-86.

this direction was to open the way for women to work as spiritual teachers without being bound by the social norm of marriage. The notion of *kyomu* 敎務 (clerics) emerged in the PYH community in the 1920s, offering a new religious model equally available to men and women, both of whom could be exempted from marriage, instead seeking to become an enlightened Buddhist master who instructs the general public.

A total of 146 female ordained members were born in this transitional period, during which women were beginning to gain some options for a social identity outside the home, even though the majority of Korean women were still living within Korea's entrenched patriarchal culture. These female members' given names help us understand women's status at that time. Among 146 women, twelve female ministers did not have given names; rather, they were known by their last names, such as Kim ssi, and Ch'oe ssi. There are four women who were called by the name Sŏngnyŏ 姓女, which means generically "gender female." Another name in these ranks was Malnyŏ 末女, and Malrye 末禮, meaning "the last female child," and "the last courtesy," respectively, implying that the woman's parents wanted thenceforth to have only sons. The rest of the names highlight the roles of virtuous women who are obedient to the men in their lives, such as their fathers, husbands, or sons: e.g., Sunnam 順男, Pongnam 福男, Chŏngsuk 貞淑, Sunim 順任, Oksun 玉順, Sundŭk 順得, P'alsun 八順, Yimhyo 任孝, Poksun 福順, Chaesun 在順, Sunnye 順禮, Kwisun 貴順, Sorye 小禮, Kwirye 貴禮, Namsun 南順, Kumsun 今順, Okrye 玉禮, Sonpok, Ilsun 一順, Yusun 柔順, Yang'im 良任, Myŏngae 明愛, Chongsuk 宗淑, Kyŏngsun 敬順, Chahŭng 子興, etc. Most of these names contain the Sinograph *sun* 順, which means "being obedient to." These names indicate that women were socially expected to have a son after marriage and to be obedient to men. Examining these given names helps us understand

what it meant to be born as a female child at that time. To put it bluntly, a female child was not welcomed by her parents and families. However, it is also noticeable that *yangban* families gave their daughters a special name, just as they would a boy.

Sot'aesan offered special Buddhist Dharma names to these female disciples, a few examples of which I will now discuss.

1) Cho Oksun 曺玉順 (1909-1976), Dharma name: Chŏn'gwŏn 專權

Cho Oksun came to the PYH in order to save her father, Cho Songgwang 曺頌廣 (1876-1957), from what she initially believed to be a heretical belief system (viz., Christianity). Initially a sincere Christian believer, Cho Songgwang became a disciple of Sot'aesan after meeting with the latter. Cho Oksun traveled to Iksan to bring her father back home to their Christian family. However, when Cho Oksun met with Sot'aesan, she, too, became his disciple. Sot'aesan asked her, "What is your wish?" to which she answered, "I want to do something great for the world. It distresses me greatly that I will not be able to do that because I was not born as a man." Sot'aesan then asked her to write her wishes on a piece of paper that he gave her. Cho Oksun wrote on the paper, "Even though I am a woman, and am therefore destined to sacrifice myself for family, I wish to become a great person who can do something great for the world." Sot'aeasan then conferred a name, Chŏn'gwŏn, which means "seizing all of the powers/rights." He further explained, "Please reveal your utmost value and assume all of the power in the world by becoming a mother to all sentient beings. In order to become a mother to all sentient beings, you need to be enlightened to the truth of all things in the universe. Only after being enlightened, will you be able to understand the relationship between you and me and to produce infinite compassion. After that, you can serve the whole world through the highest order of compassion,

which comes from having 'no-self.'"[572] Chŏn'gwŏn's Dharma name is symbolically significant because she became the first unmarried female *kyomu*, devoting her life to the betterment of all sentient beings. Sot'aesan allowed his female disciples to decide whether to marry or not. It is quite clear that Cho's decision to become an ordained *kyomu* without being married was a radical move from the perspective of her society at that time. By receiving this Dharma name, she was also transferred "all of the powers"—the power not only to become a mother to all sentient beings, but also the power to become a spiritual master for the world's benefit.

2) Sŏ Kŭmrye 徐金禮 (1914-2004), Dharma name: Taein 大仁

Sŏ Kŭmrye was the fifth daughter in a wealthy family with seven daughters and one son. Though her family was rich, her father did not educate his seven female children until he finally had a son. Although Sŏ's only wish was to study, she was utterly illiterate until she turned seventeen. With the help of her mother and her fourth elder sister, she was able to travel to the PYH, where her cousin was participating in the Kyŏng'o summer retreat (1930). Over the course of this three-month retreat, Sŏ became well versed in reading both vernacular Korean and Classical Chinese. Sot'aesan gave her a Dharma name, Taein 大仁, stating, "Your Dharma name is so great. I don't know whether you will be able to live up to your name. *Tae* 大 means a 'great justice' 大義. *In* 仁 means 'benevolence.' Both 'justice' and 'benevolence' are fundamental foundations for a great person of the Way. You decided to dedicate yourself to this work despite your father's stubborn objection. You should live up to your name, benefiting all human beings as well as all sentient beings whatever you do. Only then will your decision to become an ordained celibate *kyomu* be fruitful." Her father, who was Sot'aesan's elder sister's husband,

[572] Pak Yongdŏk, *Chŏngnyŏ sang: ch'ogi chŏngnyŏ iyagi: Wŏnbulgyo sŏnjin yŏlchŏn* 5 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2003), 86.

attempted to force her to marry. However, Sŏ Taein had made up her mind, and after completing four retreats, she finally became the third celibate *kyomu* in the PYH. Later, she posthumously became the first female *kyomu* who reached the final stage of Dharma rank, the rank of the greatly enlightened *tathāgata*, which is the same as the rank of Sot'aesan.

3) Yi Kyŏnja 李慶子 (1896-1991), Dharma Name: Kongju 共珠

Yi Kyŏnja 李慶子 (1896-1991) had worked as a private teacher to the Empress, Sunjŏnghyo (純貞孝, 1894-1991) from 1909 to 1913. She was one of the few female disciples who were well educated at that time, graduating from the Kyŏngsŏng Yŏja Pot'ong Hakkyo (Kyŏngsŏng Women's High school). Yi met with Sot'aesan on October 26, 1924. When she met the master for the first time, Yi shared with him her aspiration to work to liberate Korean women and improve their social circumstances. At that time, Sot'aesan encouraged her not to work for only half of the Korean population, but, after being enlightened, to see herself as a precious gem that could serve and be admired by the whole world. Sot'aesan said to her, "As long as you wish to work for Korean women, just half of the Korean people, why don't you also work for all of the world's sentient beings, regardless of their gender and nationality?" She became Sot'aesan's disciple and receiving a Dharma name, Kongju, meaning "the jewel of the public." Sot'aesan explained that after being enlightened, she would become the jewel of the world whom all sentient beings would admire to see. She decided to become an ordained member on April 1, 1930. Sot'aesan also called Yi Kongju "Pŏmnang" (法囊), meaning "Dharma Basket." since she had recorded many of Sot'aesan's Dharma words as well as important PHY events.[573]

[573] The first text issued by the PYH, *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* was published through Yi Kongju's financial support. Her collection of the *Wŏmal t'ongsin*, the PYH's monthly newsletters, also made it possible to publish *Kyogo ch'onggan* (Wŏn Buddhist Literary Collections), a compilation of those newsletters. Only five copies were issued of early issues of the *Wŏmal t'ongsin*, two of which were distributed to the Headquarters in Iri, and one of each of which was sent to the Yŏngsan, Sinhŭng, and Kyŏngsŏng temples.

Motives for joining the clergy

I examine 146 female ordained devotees' motives for joining the clergy. Among these 146 members of the PYH, the most common motive for becoming clerics was to get an education so that they could live a life that was, in their minds, more valuable both to themselves and to the world. This was the same reasoning that we encountered in the story that Pak recounted above. The PYH was an ideal place for girls who sincerely wanted to be educated, particularly those who, according to traditional customs, would have had to marry as teens if they had not gotten ordained, and for those who wanted to live a fuller life. Many female children were fascinated by Sot'aesan's teachings that women, too, can be educated and thereby become spiritual teachers. Below and throughout this section, I have included my summaries of biographical information found in *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* (vol. 1).[574] Based on these summaries, let us now examine 146 ordained women's motives for joining the clergy.

> Sŏ Taein (1914-2004) had a sense of sorrowin her early life because she was not able to receive an education. Following her cousin, who joined the PYH first, she traveled to Iksan and joined the PYH.[575]
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> Yang Tosin 梁道信 (given name: Sosuk 小淑, 1918-2005) had a special desire to do great work even though she was a woman. When she spoke of her aspirations to Kim Kich'ŏn 金幾千 (given name: Sŏnggu 聖久 1890-1935), who served as a *kyomu* at the Pusan branch office at that time, Kim told her that if she became a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*, she

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Yi Kongju had the only complete collection of these newsletters. She also kept a diary throughout her life. All of her diaries (1909 -1973) and her collections of PYH's documents are published in a facsimile edition of eight volumes: Yi Kongju and Kut'awŏn chongsa kinyŏm sayŏphoe, *Kut'awŏn Yi Kongju chongsa sojang Wŏnbulgyo kyodansa charyo chipsŏng* (Iksan: Kut'awŏn chongsa kinyŏm sayŏphoe, 2005):1. *Kut'awŏn ilgi* 1909-1926; 2. *Kut'awŏn ilgi* 1927-1932; 3. *Kut'awŏn ilgi* 1933-1936; 4. *Kut'awŏn ilgi* 1937-1948; 5. *Kut'awŏn ilgi* 1951-1959; 6. *Kut'awŏn ilgi* 1960-1973; 7. *Sŏnwŏn mit T'ongsinbu ilchi* 1936-1943; 8. *Kut'awŏn chongsa kakchong palp'yomun*.

[574] Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 Tae Sŏngŏp Pongch'anhoe, *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* (vol. 1) (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986).

[575] Ibid., 124.

would be able to realize this dream. As soon as she heard his words, she joined the PYH and immediately vowed to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*.[576]

Yi T'aeyŏn 李泰然 (given name: Pogim 福任 1914-1963) also had a sorrowful mind because she was not able to receive any modern education while she grew up in a poor village. Since her father, Yi Wanch'ŏl 李完喆 (given name: Chaesim 載心 1897-1965), was one of Sot'aesan's disciples, at his encouragement and guidance, Yi T'aeyŏn joined the PYH and vowed to become a *kyomu*.

Chŏng Yunjae 鄭潤才 (given name: Pongnye 福禮 1922-2007) was the eldest daughter of a family of two sons and five daughters. She desperately wanted to receive a modern education, but was not able to study because her a family had a strong patriarchal ideology. One day, she happened to pass by the Sinch'ŏlli branch temple of the PYH, where she witnessed male and female members gathering and studying together. At the age of sixteen, Chŏng joined the PYH and even made a vow to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*, despite stubborn opposition from her parents.[577]

Ko Hyŏnjong 高賢種 (given name: Chŏngnye 正禮 1925-present) was invited to join the PYH by her aunt, Chang Chŏngsu, and began to attend the Wŏnp'yŏng temple. One day Ko listened to Dharma talks given by young female Dharma teachers—Cho Chŏngwŏn, Cho Ilgwan, and O Chongt'ae—who had been invited to the Wŏnp'yŏng temple at that time. She thought at that time, "Will I be like them if I became a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*?" She was overjoyed at this thought. After fasting for three days to receive permission from her parents, she began training at the Nambumin branch office and became a *kyomu*.[578]

Song Chamyŏng 宋慈明 (given name: Tonim 敦任, 1926-2015) was inspired by the same Dharma talks given by three invited *kyomu*-s--Cho Chŏngwŏn, Cho Ilgwan, and O Chongt'ae--at that time at the Wŏnp'yŏng branch temple. In her bibliography, Song recounts that she was thrilled when she thought of becoming a *kyomu* like them. When she listened to their talks, she thought they were like angels from heaven. After those talks, Kim Kwangsŏn 金光旋 (given name: Sŏngsŏp 成燮, 1879-1939), who was in charge of the temple as a *kyomu*, encouraged Song to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*. At that time, she asked him what a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* is, and how she could do the work that they do. Kim replied that a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* is one who "saves all sentient beings through the cultivation of her own mind." Then, at the age of fifteen, after she lost her mother, Song made a vow to become a *kyomu*, with the support of Rev. O Ch'anggŏn.[579]

Kim Chihyŏn 金智玄 (given name: Chisun 智順, 1926-2003) graduated from elementary school in Chŏngŭp at the age of fifteen, but she was not able to continue studying because there was no upper-level school in her village. One day, after returning from a three-month winter retreat in Iksan, her father showed her a picture of where he'd been, and said, "If you go to the PYH, you will see that many girls study a lot there." Upon hearing this story, she

[576] Ibid., 141.

[577] Ibid., 181.

[578] Ibid., 214.

[579] Ibid., 210.

went to Iksan on December 6, 1939 and began to attend the Kyŏngjin winter retreat in 1940. After three months, she made a vow to become an ordained member of the PYH.[580]

At the age of ten, Sŏ Sein 徐世仁 (given name: Ŭllyŏn 乙年, 1925-present) entered Naktong Elementary School, but she had to quit studying due to her father's death. Her dream was to become a teacher and to remain unmarried. At the age of eleven, she was greatly touched when she met with Sot'aesan while he was visiting the Hadan branch office. When she heard from O Chongt'ae 吳宗泰 (given name: Hyosun 孝順, 1913-1976) that many female students study at the Iksan headquarters all their lives without getting married, Sŏ came to Iksan with O Chongt'ae and pledged to become a *kyomu* despite opposition from her family.[581]

Yi Sunsŏk 李順錫 (given name: Ŭnju 銀珠, 1922-2015) was born as the second daughter of a family with four boys and two daughters. Growing up under a strict grandfather from a young age, she had a sorrowful heart because she greatly wished to advance her learning as her brothers did, but was not permitted to because of her gender. At the age of fourteen, she met Sot'aesan when he visited the Shinhŭng branch temple, and made a vow to become his disciple. She attended a retreat at the Shinhŭng branch for two years, and at the age of nineteen, followed her younger brother Ŭnsŏk and began to study at the Yŏngsan Center.[582]

Yu Changsun 柳壯順 (given name: Sunja 順子, 1923-2016) lost her father at the age of sixteen and grew up under the care of her older brother. She was born into a strict Confucian family and she felt deeply sorry that she could therefore not receive an education. In 1941, a woman named Yi Sŏngsin moved to Yu's neighborhood, and told Yu that she could study if she joined the PYH. She pleaded with her brother for three days for permission to do so. He stubbornly opposed the request, despite the fact that Yu's mother, a member of the PYH at that time, granted her permission. With the help of her older sister-in-law, Yu secretly traveled to the Iksan headquarters with Yi Sŏngsin. Upon meeting with Sot'aesan she made a vow to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* by receiving the Dharma name Changsun, meaning "harmony between strength and weakness."[583]

A brief glance at the motives of these female ordained devotees helps us understand how eager these young girls were to study during this era, and how sincere their aspirations were to do something great for the world even though they had been told they could not do so because of their gender.

[580] Ibid., 212.

[581] Ibid., 309.

[582] Ibid., 342.

[583] Ibid., 348.

There are also many cases in which young female children decided to become ordained ministers because they were inspired by the students of the Yŏngsan Center.

> Yi Yongjin 李用眞 (given name: Ongnye 玉禮, 1925-2020) joined the PYH and vowed to become a *kyomu* after being inspired by Yi T'aeyŏn, who was studying at the Yŏngsan Center at that time.
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> Chang Kyŏngan 張景晏 (given name: Sunae 順愛, 1925-2016) could not study at a modern school due to her father's staunch Confucian beliefs, so instead attended Sŏdang (a private village school providing elementary education). Her strict family only allowed her to receive a traditional education, but she was deeply interested in human rights, equality, and social reform, yearning as she did to serve her own society and humanity as a whole. When she was seventeen, her mother passed away, which made her interested in the questions of life and death. This, in combination with the inspiring example of Chŏn Yich'ang 全二昌 (given name: Chaerye 在禮, 1925-present), who was studying at the Yŏngsan Center at that time, spurred her to join the Yŏngsan Center.
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> Chŏn Yich'ang was born in a countryside village in Yŏnggwang. At the age of sixteen, after graduating from elementary school in Pŏpsŏng, she began helping her mother around the house. Her paternal aunt, Chŏn Chŏnggwanok, encouraged her daughter, Yi Chŏngman 李正滿 (given name: Ogim 玉任, 1914-1987), who was studying at the Yŏngsan Center, to invite Chŏn to the Yŏngsan Center. After visiting the center, Chŏn made a vow to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*. Chŏn Yich'ang's biography states that in ordinary school education, she had not had much of an understanding of her own nation, but through a lecture on Korean history taught by Rev. Yu Hŏil 柳虛一 (given name: Sang'ŭn 相殷, 1882-1958) at the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn, her national consciousness and patriotism grew. In addition, while listening to Buddhist doctrines and Dharma teachings on cause and effect, Chŏn was filled with joy and made a vow to become a *kyomu* in order to share her joy with many others.[584]
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> In 1941, Chŏng Kyojin 鄭敎眞 (given name: Sunyŏng 順英, 1909-1950) also joined the Yŏngsan Center with the help and guidance of Yi Chŏngman.[585]
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> In 1942, under the guidance of Chŏn Yich'ang, Chŏng Kwangsun 光順 (given name: Poksun 福順, 1925-) joined the PYH and vowed to become a *kyomu*.[586]
>
> Chŏng Pokch'ŏn 鄭福天 (given name: Poksun 福順, 1929-2002) entered elementary school at the age of nine, but had to drop out two years later because her grandfather was opposed to her continuing her education. At the age of twelve, when her older sister Chŏng Yunjae traveled to the PYH, Chŏng Pokch'ŏn pledged to follow her sister so that she could study. Upon receiving a message from her sister, Chŏng Pokch'ŏn came to Iksan and met with Sot'aesan. Immediately, she joined the PYH and started to get involved in training to become a *kyomu*.[587]

[584] Ibid., 354.

[585] Ibid., 492.

[586] Ibid., 558.

[587] Ibid., 502.

Chŏng Kyŏngho 丁慶浩 (given name: Kirho 吉浩 1925-2006) also followed her cousin, Chŏng Nasŏn (1901-), in joining the PYH, and made a vow to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*.[588]

In addition, there were many cases in which a mother became a member of the PYH, then encouraged her daughter to also become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*.

First of all, Yŏ Ch'ŏngun 呂淸雲 (1896-1978), who was the wife of Song Kyu 宋奎 (given name: Togun 道君, 1900-1962) (the man who succeeded Sot'aesan and became the second Head Dharma master of the PYH), guided her two daughters Yŏngbong 靈鳳 (1927-present)[589] and Sunbong 順鳳 (1933-2013) in devoting their lives to the practice and to working for the public.[590]

Likewise, Pak Yujŏng 朴維正 (given name: Myŏng'ae 明愛 1928-1964), [591] Kim Taesim 金大心 (given name: Taedŏk 大德 (1927-2011),[592] Chŏng Yangjin 丁良珍 (given name: Pongsŏn 鳳善, 1924-?),[593] and Kim Pŏpchin 金法眞 (given name: Yŏnsu 季洙, 1934-present)[594] became members of the PYH and vowed to become *kyomus* under the guidance of their respective mothers.

Similarly, Yu Sŏng'il 柳聖一 (given name: Sunghŭi 順姬, 1927-2012) became a *kyomu* thanks to guidance and encouragement of her sister, Yu Changsun.[595]

Yun Sunbae 尹順培 (given name: Ch'asun 次順, 1917-1989) joined the PYH and became a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* under the guidance of her grandmother Yi Tong'inhaeng.[596] Pak Chehyŏn 朴濟現 (given name: Yŏnghŭi 英姬, 1931-1991) also made a vow to become a *kyomu* upon the encouragement of her grandmother, Chŏng Hyŏngsŏp.[597]

Pak Ŭnsŏp 朴恩燮 (given name: Ongnam 玉南, 1924-present) became a *kyomu* after meeting with So'taesan in Iksan. Her maternal grandmother, Kim Chŏnggak, who had

[588] Ibid., 506.

[589] Ibid., 438.

[590] Ibid., 38-39.

[591] Ibid., 556.

[592] Ibid., 484.

[593] Ibid., 374.

[594] Ibid., 585.

[595] Ibid., 558.

[596] Ibid., 198.

[597] Ibid., 581.

become an ordained devotee first, had recommended Pak come to Iksan when Pak was thinking about her own career path after completing elementary school.[598]

Yang Hyeryŏn 梁慧蓮 (given name: Poksun 福順, 1921-2003)'s mother, Kim Kirohwa, sent her daughter to the Wŏnpy'ŏng branch temple to study. Kim said to her daughter, "I hope you don't get married but instead go [to the PYH] and study, like Cho Chŏngwŏn, so that you may do the grand work of saving all sentient beings." Inspired by her mother's wish, Yang made a vow to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* in 1938. After studying at the PYH in Iksan, Yang was assigned to the Wŏnpy'ŏng branch temple as a *kyomu*, where she educated Chŏn Chongch'ŏl 田宗哲 (given name: Sunghwa 淳和, 1934-1993), Kim Hwagyŏng 金和景 (given name: Kŭmsun 錦順, 1939-2017), Yi Myŏng'in 李明仁 (given name: Kŭmhŭi 錦姬, 1938-2015) and Song Hyesŏng 宋慧聖 (given name: Hŭiil 熙一, 1932-present) so that they could become *kyomus*.[599]

The above-mentioned stories indicate that grandmothers and mothers actively encouraged their daughters and granddaughters to follow the path of becoming spiritual teachers to the world. When these women returned to their hometowns as *kyomu*, now in charge of running a temple and teaching people, they in turn inspired the youth in these hometowns, opening the way for them to become *kyomu*s as well. And it was not only female, but also male, students who took inspiration from these women's teachings and made vows to become *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*s. It is remarkable, for instance, that Song Hyesŏng, a male student at the Wŏnp'yŏng temple, found his life path after taking a female *kyomu* as his mentor.

There are also some cases in which a father or a grandfather who was a disciple of Sot'aesan guided his daughter or granddaughter towards becoming a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*.

Yi Chŏng'ŭn 李正恩 (given name: Chŏngbok 正福, 1923-2010) decided to become a *kyomu* at the age of nineteen. Her father, Yi Wanch'ŏl 李完喆 (given name: Chaesim 載心, 1897-1965), had begun working as a kyomu when Yi Chŏng'ŭn was fourteen, entrusting his five children to his wife's care. After helping her mother for five years, Yi Chŏng'ŭn followed in her father's footsteps.[600]

Another example is Yim Sŏnyang 林善揚 (given name: Sŏngnye 成禮, 1923-2013), who entered the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn at the age of fourteen with the guidance and support of her

[598] Ibid., 329.

[599] Ibid., 232.

[600] Ibid., 267-268.

father, Yim Sunmok. Four years later, when she was eighteen, Yim Sŏnyang traveled to the PYH in Iksan and vowed to become a *kyomu*.[601]

Chi Sŏng'in 池性仁 (given name: Sukhŭi 淑姬, 1932-1982),[602] Kim Posin 金普信 (given name: Pokch'ŏn 福田, 1934-present),[603] and Yi Chaun 李慈雲 (1934-?)[604] also took vows to become *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*s in part because their fathers encouraged them to do so.

Kim Kwangsŏn 金光旋 (given name: Sŏngsŏp 成燮, 1879-1939), who was one of Sot'aesan's first nine disciples, left a will indicating to his family that he wished for his grandchildren to become *kyomu*s. For this reason, his granddaughter, Kim Taegwan 金大觀 (1933-present) became a *kyomu* with the support of her parents and other relatives.[605] Her given name is the same as her Dharma name.

Yi Chŏngmu 李正務 (1932-present) also received her Dharma name from Sot'aesan when she was born. Both her maternal and paternal relatives, including her grandfather Yi Chaech'ŏl 李載喆 (given name: Chaep'ung 載馮, 1891-1943), who was one of the first nine disciples of Sot'aesan, were all members of the PYH. Therefore, she also became a *kyomu*.[606]

Pak Sŏnggyŏng 朴性敬 (given name: Kyŏngsun 敬順, 1928-present) entered the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn and naturally became a *kyomu* under the guidance of her grandfather. Though her grandfather had been a Confucian scholar, when he met Sot'aesan, he became his disciple and made all of his children and grandchildren do the same.[607]

In a deeply rooted patriarchal culture, it would have been difficult for mothers and grandmothers to encourage their daughters and granddaughters to deviate from social norms. It is noteworthy that, even in such a culture, these female disciples were encouraged by their fathers and grandfathers to become spiritual teachers dedicated to the public welfare of the world without getting married. In this way, PYH's teachings helped not only these girls' mothers and grandmothers, but also their fathers and grandfathers, to let go of the Confucian socio-cultural

[601] Ibid., 282.

[602] Ibid., 579.

[603] Ibid., 583.

[604] Ibid., 589.

[605] Ibid., 548.

[606] Ibid., 526.

[607] Ibid., 478.

ideology that they had cherished throughout their lives, and to instead assume the conviction that their daughters should be allowed to pursue a different life path, that of becoming a spiritual leader.

However, many young women instead encountered opposition from their parents and other relatives while trying to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* at a young age. Despite these obstructions, these girls secretly traveled to the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn or to the Iksan headquarters to pursue their dreams.

> Sin Chegŭn 辛濟根 (given name: Sunim 順任, 1923-2013) became a member of the PYH after graduating from Yŏnggwang Elementary School at the age of seventeen. She wanted to continue her studies so she traveled to Iksan. Nine days later, however, her father and uncle came to Iksan and took her back home. On November 4, 1940, she covertly traveled to the Yŏngsan center again to pursue her dream.[608]

Second, many women paid homage to the teachings of PYH and resolved to become a *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* because they were seeking solace during painful family events, such as divorce, a difficult marriage, the death of a spouse, the death of a parent. During such periods of turmoil, some soon-to-be female disciples became acquainted with the teachings of the PYH and became *kyomu*s with the hope that they could rely on the Buddhadharma to begin a new life.

> Kim Yŏngsin 金永信 (given name: Sundŭk 順得, 1908-1984), who along with Cho Chŏngwŏn became the first celibate female *kyomu* of Wŏn Buddhism, was Yi Kongju's niece. She had the good fortune to study at the Kyŏngsŏng Women's High School. However, an accident that occurred during a school running race left an indelible scar on her face. She asked Sot'aesan how she could help heartbroken people like herself.[609] At that time, Sot'aesan answered that if she learned about Buddhist teachings and practiced them, she could help many others with their grief and pain.[610] In this first meeting, Kim Yŏngsin

[608] Ibid., 208.

[609] Pak Yongdŏk, *Chŏngnyŏ sang: ch'ogi chŏngnyŏ iyagi: Wŏnbulgyo sŏnjin yŏlchŏn* 5, 115.

[610] Ibid.

received a Dharma name, Yŏngsin, meaning "eternal belief," and made a vow to become a *kyomu*.[611]

Yi Chŏngman 李正滿 (given name: Ogim 玉任, 1914-1987) lost her mother when she was eight years old, after which she was eager to leave home. Her father, Yi Tong'an, was a disciple of Sot'aesan, and after hearing him talk about the life of *chŏnmu ch'ulsin*, Yi Chŏngman excitedly decided to become a *kyomu*. At the age of fourteen, she went to the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn and studied there for four years. In order to be able to pay her tuition fee for retreats, she worked in a rubber factory in Chŏnju while she began her training as a *kyomu*.[612]

At the age of sixteen, Chŏng Sewŏl 鄭世月 (given name: Inhŭng 仁興, 1896-1977) married Sŏ Chung'an 徐中安, 1881-1930), a man who had already three children from a former, deceased wife. Sŏ Chung'an became a disciple of Sot'aesan and served as the first chairman for the PYH in Iksan. When her husband passed away in 1930, Chŏng Sewŏl sold all of her property and devoted herself fully to the PYH as an ordained devotee.[613]

Kim Sammaehwa 金三昧華 (given name: Poin 寶仁, 1890-1944) left her husband and returned to her parents' home at the age of twenty-five. Ten years later, while she was seeking a spiritual refuge, she met Sot'aean with the help of Yi Tongjinhwa 李東震華 (given name: Kyŏngsu 慶洙, 1893-1968), and decided to become an ordained devotee.[614]

Yi Sŏnggak 李性覺 (given name: Sunnam 順男, 1886-1983) married Kim Irhwan 金一還 at the age of seventeen and had two daughters, Hyŏnsin 顯信 and Yŏngsin 永信 (given name: Sundŭk 順得, 1908-1984). However, after Yi Sŏnggak's husband passed away when she was twenty-three so, she returned to her parents' home and took refuge in Buddhism. In 1924, Pak Sasihwa 朴四時華 (given name: Pak-ssi 朴氏 1867-1947) helped her meet with Sot'aesan. When she met with Sot'aesan for the first time, Yi Sŏnggak was overjoyed, feeling as if she had instantaneously fulfilled her wishes of many years at once, and became a disciple. Her second daughter, Yŏngsin became one of the first celibate female ordained *kyomu*s and Yi Sŏnggak herself became an ordained devotee.[615]

Han Kwijihwa 韓貴智華 (given name: Han-ssi 韓氏, 1890-1955) was the eldest daughter of five siblings, but she had no given name, being called by her last name, and was illiterate. She got married at the age of sixteen and had two sons and one daughter. Her husband passed away when she was thirty-one, so on the advice of her sister-in-law, Han Kwijihwa moved to Iksan to live close to the PYH and became an ordained devotee. She first worked in the kitchen of the Pohwadang and later grew vegetables to make side dishes for members who worked at the PYH. She also served as a cook for the Pohwa orphanage. While living this joyful existence as an ordained devotee, Han Kwijihwa began to learn the Korean

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[611] Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 Tae Sŏngŏp Pongch'anhoe, *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* vol. 1 (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), 83-84.

[612] Ibid., 155.

[613] Ibid., 157.

[614] Ibid., 166.

[615] Ibid., 168.

alphabet and was eventually able to read the scriptures. She was considered to be a hidden bodhisattva who accumulated great merit.[616]

Yi Tosinhwa 李道信華 (given name: Ch'unsan 春山, 1891-1985) was born the eldest child of a family with one son and one daughter. She married at the age of fifteen. But when she was twenty-three, her husband died of disease, causing her to reckon deeply with the impermanence of her life. When she turned forty-three, Yi Tosinhwa began to practice by joining three-month retreats at the PYH in Iksan. Three years later, she took a vow to become an ordained devotee.[617]

Hwang Chunam 黃周南 (given name: Kapnam 甲男, 1916-1982) married at the age of nineteen, but subsequently divorced her husband due to their personality differences. After returning to her parents' home, Hwang Chunam attended the PYH's Dharma services, and was filled with joy and hope. Eventually, she became an ordained devotee.[618]

An Hyesamhwa 安慧三華 (given name: An-ssi 安氏, 1895-1978) was born the eldest child of a family with three sons and one daughter. She married a man named Ch'oe Ŭngyŏl, but later parted ways with him because they did not conceive a son. At the age of forty-six, she met Sot'aesan in Iksan and attended a three-month retreat. After that, she took a vow to become an ordained devotee.[619]

Pak Tŏkchehwa 朴德濟華 (given name: Sunhŭi 順姬 (1893-1975) married at the age of seventeen and had four children. However, when she was thirty-eight, she left home due to what she called her husband's delusional jealousy. At the age of forty-four, Pak Tŏkchehwa became a member of the PYH and attended local temple's services in Chŏnju for four years. When she turned fifty, she went to Iksan and took a vow to become an ordained devotee.[620]

Kwŏn Uyŏn 權偶然 (given name: P'ilgyŏng 畢慶, 1918-2010) lost her eldest brother at the age of nineteen. She felt desolate and deeply disturbed by life's impermanence, and felt she had no direction in life. Upon the recommendation of a nun, Yi Taein of Sudŏk Monastery, Kwŏn Uyŏn decided to become a nun in the Buddhist faith. One day, she happened to attend a Dharma service at the Tonam Wŏn Buddhist temple in Seoul. With the encouragement of Chi Hwansŏn 池歡善 (given name: Chŏngch'an 貞燦, 1884-?), who was in charge of teaching there, Kwŏn Uyŏn went to Iksan and met with Sot'aesan. Deeply inspired by Sot'aesan, she participated in a three-month summer retreat and became a *kyomu*.[621]

Yi Chi'il 李智一 (given name: Sŏksun 錫順, 1915- 2003) married at the age of seventeen, but was not satisfied with her marriage. She returned to her parents' home and attended a night school in Chŏnju. Her mother had become a member of the PYH with the help of Yi Chŏngch'un 李靑春 (given name: Hwach'un 化春, 1886- 1955) and so Yi Chi'il

[616] Ibid., 178.

[617] Ibid., 180.

[618] Ibid., 186.

[619] Ibid., 190.

[620] Ibid., 196.

[621] Ibid., 265-266.

began to attend Dharma services at the Chŏnju branch temple under the guidance of Cho Kapchong 趙甲鍾 (1905-1971) *kyomu*. One day, Sot'aesan visited the temple and encouraged Yi Chi'il to become a *kyomu*. Two years later, in 1941, she began to work as an ordained devotee.[622]

Yu Kwanjin 柳寬眞 (given name: Okkŭm 玉今, 1916-1997) married at the age of sixteen, but was not satisfied with her marriage and left her husband's home. Because she was afraid of her strict father, Yu Kwanjin was unable to return to her parents' home. She instead went to another relative's house, where she learned about the lives of *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* through Pak Sasihwa, a PYH devotee. In 1940, she went to Iksan, was given a Dharma name (Kwanjin) by Sot'aean, and became an ordained devotee.[623]

On Pŏpchunghaeng 溫法中行 (given name: On-ssi 溫氏, 1873-?) married early, but had no children. She became a member of the PYH, she devoted herself to practicing, and eventually she took a vow to become an ordained devotee.[624]

Kim Inhyŏn 金仁現 (given name: Sukhyŏn 淑鉉, 1881-1957) lost her husband when she was twenty-six and later lost her son when she was fifty-two. Ch'oe Chejunghwa facilitated a meeting between Kim Inhyŏn and Sot'aesan, after which Kim Inhyŏn took a vow to become an ordained devotee.[625]

O Ch'ŏlsu 吳哲秀 (given name: Sunnye 順禮, 1878-1966) married at the age of sixteen and had three children. When she was thirty-three, she lost her husband and was consumed by sorrow. At the age of forty-eight, when O Ch'ŏlsu spoke with Sot'aesan, and was deeply inspired by him. The next year, when her first son returned from the United States, O Ch'ŏlsu moved to Iksan to be close to the PYH, and became an ordained devotee. Her two sons also became members of the PYH, and she later guided both of her granddaughters towards becoming *kyomu*s.[626]

An Chisuk 安智淑 (given name: Oksun 玉順, 1916-1991) married when she was nineteen, but her husband died two years later. She wanted to continue her studies, and she went to Seoul to attend Sŏngsin school; however, she soon had to drop out due to illness. At that time, when she decided to spend the rest of her life at Naejang Buddhist Temple, an old man appeared to her in a dream and told her to go to Chŏnju quickly. There, he said, her illness would be healed and she would find spiritual shelter. In Chŏnju, An Chisuk met with Kim Ponsuhwa, who helped her join the PYH. After meeting with Sot'aesan in Iksan, An Chisuk took a vow to become an ordained devotee.[627]

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[622] Ibid., 280.

[623] Ibid., 284.

[624] Ibid., 366.

[625] Ibid., 382.

[626] Ibid., 294.

[627] Ibid., 416.

There are also many examples of young women who got married at a young age and later become an ordained *kyomu*s. Sixty-one ordained devotees out of 148 had been married prior to taking their vows. This means that women could become *chŏnmu ch'ulsin* in the early period of the PYH regardless of their marital status. As they attended Dharma services regularly, these women adherents developed their devotion to and belief in the Buddhist teachings, and eventually pledged to live lives for the public good as *kyomu*. Women ministers included Yi Ch'unghwa 季忠和 (given name: Chongsuk 宗淑 1925-?),[628] Kim Hyŏnhŏ 金賢虛 (given name: Ilsun 一順, 1927-1967),[629] Kim Pongsŏng 金奉性 (given name: Ponggŭm 奉錦, 1890-?),[630] Chŏng Chŏngyŏl 鄭貞烈 (given name: Yusun 有順, 1929-?),[631] Ch'oe Yongsun 崔容順 (given name: Chŏngnam 正男, 1927-?),[632] Yang Pŏpkwan 梁法寬 (given name: Aewŏn, 1926-2003),[633] Chŏn Kyŏnghwa 全敬和 (given name: Kyŏngjae 京在, 1926-1999),[634] Chang Sŏngŏ 張善擧 (given name: Mallye 末禮, 1917-2013),[635] Kang Haksŏn 姜學善 (given name: Myŏnghak 明學, 1904-?), among others.[636]

[628] Ibid., 486.

[629] Ibid., 500.

[630] Ibid., 516.

[631] Ibid., 536.

[632] Ibid., 550.

[633] Ibid., 552.

[634] Ibid., 567.

[635] Ibid., 568.

[636] Ibid., 570.

So far, we have looked at the motives that 148 female ordained devotees had for joining the PYH. Although they all have unique stories, they share one common theme: all of these female devotees became *kyomu*s with the strong aspiration to do something special for the world at large in a society that did not often let women take on such social roles. However, even after these women took their vows to become ordained devotees, they were not able to participate immediately in the summer and winter retreats. Due to the difficult economic conditions that the order was facing at the time, only those devotees who worked in factories for more than four years and raised enough funds were able to study and practice at the PYH. Except for a few disciples who came from elite family backgrounds, or those who took vows to become ordained devotees as elderly women, most teenaged students had to earn money for their studies. Devotees with rich families, however, often covered the education costs of other students in accordance with one of the main tenets of Sot'aesan's Four Essential Rules of Social Reformation, that of "Educating Others' Children."

After earning enough money for their study expenses, devotees traveled to the Iksan headquarters or the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn and began to participate in the retreats. For example, Cho Ilgwan 曺一貫 (given name: Posun 寶順, 1912-1981), whose father was the second chairman of the PYH, had to work in factories in Chŏnju and Iksan uring the day and studied at night.[637] Chŏng Yangsŏn 丁良善 (given name: Yŏnhong 連弘, 1914-1986), Yi T'aeyŏn , O Chongt'ae, Yi Chŏngman, Yi Chŏnghwa, Cho Ilgwan, and Kim T'aesin worked in factories for more than four years. Most other female devotees, such as Yang Tosin, Chŏng Yunjae, Song Chamyŏng, Ko Hyŏnjong, and Kwŏn Chŏngŭm, worked in the kitchens of the PYH or of regional branch temples for three years and then were able to begin their practice. In 1939, Yi Sŏngsin 李聖信

[637] Ibid., 176.

(given name: Ongnye 玉禮, 1922-2012) became the first recipient of a PYH scholarship and was therefore able to begin studying immediately after taking a vow to become a *kyomu* rather than working in factories or at temples first. The PYH drew this scholarship funding from money it had received from the Founding Groups of Education and Industry run by the PYH.[638] [639]

PYH's policy of requiring female teachers to earn tuition for their own training and study during this period was not simply a means of making money for the organization. In Korea's Buddhist monastic systems, in order to become an ordained monk, "each monk [first] is required to begin his career with six months as a postulant (*haengja*), leaning the basics of monastic discipline and adapting himself to the rigorous daily schedule followed in the monastery."[640] During this postulancy, they work long hours of physical labor, such as preparing meals in the kitchen, working in the fields, and cleaning the latrines.[641] Likewise, for these young girls, the working period was a time during which they learned to humble themselves through inhabiting the lowest social positions, all while acquiring the basic foundation necessary to study and practice Buddhism. During this stage of hard labor, the women devotees suffered, but they also gained the opportunity to prepare for their own financial independence and to discover new ways

[638] In 1924, Sot'aesan established the PYH Cooperative Association to take over the affairs of the existing association and established a system for saving money for various needs. These various funds included the districts' fund, which comprised the unified savings of the assets of the General Headquarters and various districts; the dues fund, which was intended for the payment of dues needed for the upkeep of membership; the study fund, which went towards training fees for meditative retreats; the contributory fund, which covered commemorative memorial services for the Order's forefathers; the work fund, which could be used for members to carry out miscellaneous projects; the scholarship fund, which was intended to be used to educate the members' children; the living expenses fund, which meant to help provide good living conditions for the membership; and so forth. See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 47.

[639] Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 Tae Sŏngŏp Pongch'anhoe, *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* vol. 1 (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), 230.

[640] Robert E. Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 69.

[641] Ibid.

of living independently, rather than always relying on men. The inner strength they gained through this challenging period was key in preparing them to later administer temples and lead congregations.

Most early female devotees were powerfully influenced by Sot'aesan and received his teachings directly when they took their vows to become *kyomu*. Sot'aesan gave each woman a Dharma name that he thought would suit her. Here is one example:

> Kim Chŏnggak 金正覺 (given name: Kim-ssi, 1874-1952) married and had one daughter, but her husband passed away early. Kim, who was unable to find peace of mind, began practicing the Poch'ŏngyo faith with her acquaintances, who included Song Chŏkpyŏk and Kim Namch'ŏn. One day, Kim met with Sot'aesan in Chŏnju. She told him that she was suffering from three kinds of *han*:[642] 1) not having good parents; 2) not having a good husband; 3) not having a son. After hearing her story, Sot'aesan gave her the name of Samhan, which means "a person with three griefs." After receiving her Dharma name, Kim began to work at the Yŏngsan Sŏnwŏn, and she gradually underwent a religious change of heart. She eventually told Sot'aesan this: "I previously thought that I had three enormous griefs, blaming others and feeling pessimistic about myself. But, now I realized that all of my great grief is actually just my karma." Upon listening to her words, Sot'aesan said, "Now you truly understand my teaching. From now on, you are no longer a person with three great griefs, but a person who has realized the right path. So, let me give you a new name, Chŏnggak, which means 'correct enlightenment.'"[643]

Like Kim Chŏnggak, all of the *kyomu*-s in the early period of PYH had significant one-on-one encounters with their teacher Sot'aesan—not only their first meetings with him, but meaningful talks with him as they pursued their vocations. Personal interactions with their master gave these women a sense of special meaning that helped them more faithfully carry out their mission. Even though Sot'aesan's disciples were sometimes much older than him, their biographies often describe their first meetings with Sot'aesan as once-in-a-lifetime experiences:

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[642] The Korean term *han* means a deep sense of grief and sorrow in the face of overwhelming difficulties.

[643] Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 Tae Sŏngŏp Pongch'anhoe, *Wŏnbulgyo Che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa* vol. 1 (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), 296.

> "There is no way to express my happiness and joy [at meeting Sot'aesan]; it was as if parents and children who had parted ways without promise of reunion met again suddenly."[644]
>
> "I couldn't express my joy. It was as if I had experienced the Second Coming of Christ, and I didn't want to go back home again because I felt the PYH was like the place where the divine gods lived."[645]
>
> "I was as delighted as I would have been if I had encountered my parents after missing them for a long time; my joy was difficult to measure, and I immediately became a disciple."[646]
>
> "After completing the three-month retreat, joy sprang up in me as if I had found the right path for my life, and all of the pain I had suffered disappeared at once."[647]
>
> "Joy soared in me as if were a little girl meeting her mother."[648]

The activities of these women, who began their new spiritual journeys with these remarkable meetings with Sot'aesan, played a significant role in the development of Wŏn Buddhism. All of these female disciples devoted their lives to practicing the PYH's teachings and sharing their wisdom and compassion with many others. They cultivated priestly vocations without denying their gender, creating a new female role model for priesthood by preserving their traditionally female strengths, such as maternal love, compassion, and loving care. No longer dependent on male familial authority, they became mothers to the world. Whenever Sot'aesan met with young female disciples who made a vow to become *kyomu*s, he encouraged them to escape the cage that is a single family and to instead become a mother of the world who can love and cherish all living sentient beings of the world as her own dear children. [649] These women devotees' sermons have had an impact on many, helping people across the world leave lives of pain and suffering to

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[644] Ibid., 24.

[645] Ibid., 80.

[646] Ibid., 149.

[647] Ibid., 276.

[648] Ibid., 147.

[649] Ibid., 83.

pursue a path to true happiness. In doing so, these female disciples helped create Buddhist history.

It is true that over the course of this study of Wŏn Buddhism we have focused on its doctrine and the history of its founder. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the history of Buddhism has so far primarily been literally written from men's point of view. Of course, the founder's role in this history must be emphasized; all of these women were inspired by Sot'aesan and his teachings, and they clearly prized their encounters with him, as described above. But equally important are the female members who have participated in developing the faith alongside him. Each and every of these 146 ordained devotees made up the history of Wŏn Buddhism. They pioneered new temples, kept those temples running, and shared the training and knowledge they gained at the PYH with local people at regional temples. Most importantly, these poor and humble girls, despite having little education, became spiritual teachers who could teach others through Buddhist practice, earn respect from the public, and become buddhas and bodhisattvas at a level of Dharma power similar to that of their master, Sot'aesan. The PYH left us a detailed record of their personal histories and spiritual changes from the very inception of their religious practice, allowing us to learn about these women's lives and their spiritual evolution. In the next section, we will take a closer look at how these practitioners practiced at the PYH, how they changed their lives through Buddhist practices, and how they gradually developed the PYH into its present form of Wŏn Buddhism.

3. A New Buddhist Community in which Lay and Ordained Live in Harmony

The establishment of the PYH was announced at the first general meeting for the community's founding on April 29, 1924 (Wŏn Buddhist year 9). The meeting's attendees included fourteen delegates representing the regions of Yŏnggwang, Kimje, Iksan, and

Chŏnju.[650] According to the *Pulpŏp Yŏnguhoe Hoeŭirok* (*The Minutes of the Pulpŏp Yŏnguhoe*), all of the procedures followed therein were conducted in accordance with PYH regulations:

> Inaugural general meeting
> At 10:00 AM on April 29, the 13th year of Taishō (1924), the founding general meeting was held at the Pogwang temple, located at Iksan-myŏn, Iksan-gun, Chŏllabuk-do. Chairman Kim Sŏnggu 金聖久 (Dharma name: Kich'ŏn 幾千, 1890-1935) and Song Sangmyŏn 宋相曼 (Dharma name: Mangyŏng 萬京, 1900-1931) took a seat, declared the meeting open, and named the attendees, the total number of which was thirty-nine people. They encouraged the general members to establish this order in the spirit of public service, perseverance, and sincere belief, so that today's beginnings would not come to nothing. Then, with the consent of Yi Hyŏngch'ŏn 李亨天 (Dharma name: Tong'an 東安, 1892-1940) and the second consent of Kim Sŏngsŏp 金成燮 (Dharma name: Kwangsŏn 光旋, 1879-1939), the election of officers was held. According to the special proposal of O Chaegyŏm 吳在謙 (Dharma name: Ch'anggŏn 昌建, 1887-1953), they unanimously agreed to elect Mr. Pak Chungbin [Sot'aesan] to be the leader of the order. Subsequently, Sŏ Sang'in was elected chairman, and Pak Kŭmsŏk, Kim Sŏng'gu, Mun Chŏnghyŏn, Song Sangmyŏn, O Chaegyŏm, Yi Hyŏngch'ŏn, and Chŏn Segwŏn were elected ordinary committee numbers. The manager and secretary would be decided by the next council. The chairman took over the seat and all in attendance welcomed him with applause. The chairman appointed Chŏn Segwŏn 全世權 (Dharma Name: Ŭmgwang 飮光, 1909-1960) as the temporary secretary. There was no objection when the original draft of the regulations was reviewed and passed. Finally, the regulations were enacted. Maintenance fees were determined: each member would pay one *wŏn* at the end of the year and pay twenty *chŏn* monthly. These fees were approved in order to cover the anticipated shortfall in farm profits and donations.[651]

As recorded in the minutes of the inaugural general meeting, Sot'aesan was elected headmaster, and eight members, including the Chairman, Sŏ Chung'an (1881-1930), and O Ch'ang'gŏn (1887-1953), were elected as council members. Four primary agenda items were discussed and passed at that time. First, the attendees reviewed and passed each article of the draft of the *Regulations of the PYH,* whichwould regulate the operation of the organization from then on. Second, regarding maintenance fees, they determined that each member would pay one *wŏn* yearly and twenty *chŏn* monthly. The third agenda item involved the construction of a central

[650] *The History of Wŏn Buddhism*, 50.

[651] *Pulpŏ Yŏn'guhoe hoeŭirok* (1924).

headquarters. Recognizing that the construction of such a headquarters was not yet possible due to inadequate funds, the attendees agreed to build a few thatched houses in the fall of that year in the place where the headquarters would later be built. The duties of collecting donations were entrusted to Song Sangmyŏn and Mun Chŏnghyŏn. Lastly, the group decided to establish a branch temple in Yŏnggwang, where the Preliminary Association for establishing the PYH had been born.

First, let us take a moment to look at the historical precedent for religious groups to originate in this manner—that is, by the adoption of regulations. As discussed in Chapter One, the emergence of Ch'ŏndogyo signified the beginning of a new religion in Korea. On December 1, 1905, Son Pyŏnghŭi changed the religion's name from "Eastern Learning" to Ch'ŏndogyo ("The Religion of the Heavenly Way") and proclaimed the religion's new name widely through newspaper advertisements. After returning to Korea from Japan in 1906, Son began to reorganize the religious organization, promulgating the *Ch'ŏndogyo taehŏn* (Grand Constitution of Ch'ŏndogyo) and establishing a new religious denominational system. The *Ch'ŏndogyo taehŏn* stipulates that the central general headquarters are to be in Seoul, divides the province into seventy-two archdioceses, and holds that each parish is to be regulated by a set of laws. Son's use of the *Ch'ŏndogyo taehŏn* and his decision to operate the denomination according to the church constitution seems to have had a great influence on the development of new religions thereafter. *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* (*Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn*), the Colonial Governmental Report on Chosŏn's religions penned by Murayama Chijun, indicates that after the foundation of the Ch'ŏndogyo, each new religion in Korea adopted the practice of introducing rules or

regulations. It seems that this routine had apparently become a prerequisite for the establishment of a new religion.[652]

Secondly, one of the factors that most powerfully shaped the religious landscape of the 1920s was the 1915 Propagation Regulations (P'ogyo kyuch'ik 布教規則).[653] These regulations designated only Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity as legitimate religions, classifying Korea's native religions as pseudo-religions and thereby legally suppressing them. Article 2 of these Regulations stipulates that in order to be recognized as a religious institution, a group had to report to the Governor-General via documents certifying their qualifications, such as their organization's and denomination's names, their main points of doctrine, and their method of propagation. In addition, if any of these details changed, the group had to report this change to the Governor-General within ten days. Article 4 states that the Governor-General may order the group to change any of these aspects of their operations if he deemed them inappropriate. In this way, the Governor-General applied strict rules to manage and control indigenous religious groups, enforcing the regulations through the police management bureau. In this respect, it is no coincidence that the PYH adopted a set of regulations at the first general meeting. The regulations both functioned as a scripture that supplemented their main doctrines and practices and satisfied the requirements of the 1915 Propagation Regulations.

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[652] Murayama Chijun 村山智順, *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教 (*Pseudo-Religions of Chosŏn*), translated into Korean by Ch'oe Kilsŏng and others (Taegu: Kyemyŏng Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1991).

[653] In particular, Ko Pyŏngch'ŏl argues that in order to examine the relationship between Korea's religious landscape and legal system, we must attend to the period of Japanese occupation. See Ko Pyŏngch'ŏl, "Ilche kangjŏmgi ŭi chonggyo chihyŏng kwa chonggyo pŏbgyu," *Chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'gu* 40 (2): 7-38. In addition, Mark Nathan also points out that during the Japanese colonial period, propagation (*p'ogyo*) became an important part of the definition of religion, and many new religious groups, including modern forms of Buddhism, added propagation to their regulations in order to be legally recognized as religions.

However, while complying with these norms, the PYH also managed to enact an unusual practice: the group selected its religious leader through a democratic election. Park Maengsu points out that Sot'aesan is the only religious founder to have been elected as head master through a democratic election.[654] Ever since its founding general meeting, the PYH has consistently and systematically striven to harness the wisdom of its members through the practice of participatory democracy. Yi Kyŏngsun 李敬順 (given name: Kyŏnghwa 慶和, 1915-1978), one of the disciples from Sot'aesan's day, recalls that Sot'aesan employed the democratic method when he founded the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. In order to decide the name of the order, Sot'aesan discussed the topic with the first nine disciples.[655] In other ways, too, the PYH would continue to operate democratically throughout the course of the formation of Wŏn Buddhism, the details of which I will explain later.

First, let us examine the *PYH kyuyak*, which consists of a total of six chapters divided into twenty-two articles total, including general provisions, officers, meetings, members' rights and obligations, membership entry and withdrawal, accounting, and others. The *PYH kyuyak* begins with an "Exposition of the Purport of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe" which describes the hopeless and desperate state that the Korean people found themselves in at that time:

> We who have:
> lived in illusory dreams;
> been in a drunken state;
> not received proper education regarding how to fulfill our roles as members of the traditional four classes of society (scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants);
> lived in times governed by the powerful and the rich rather than by men of ability and talent;

[654] The founders of other new religions at that time, such as Ch'oe Cheu of Tonghak, Kang Ilsun of Chŭngsan'gyo, Kim Hang of Chŏngyŏk, and Nach'ŏl Hong of Taejonggyo, all became religious leaders themselves through a defining religious experience, not through a democratic process. See Pak Maengsu (Yunch'ŏl), "Ch'angnip ch'onghoe hoeŭirok e nat'anan Wŏnbulgyo ŭi konggongsŏng," *Wŏn'gwang* (January 2018), 76.

[655] *Hangt'awŏn chongsa munjip*, 37-38.

not taken heed of Western civilization and material development;
lived without aspiration and without inquiring minds;
lived idlely without an occupation;
lived in ignorance of how to use budgetary planning to deal with our daily income and expenditures;
not had access to a religion that all can believe in regardless of our status, inclusive of the learned and the ignorant, the male and the female, the old and the young, the good and the bad, and the high and the low;
been made to believe that only a man of high birth, a rich family, and intelligence could be a religious man;
We whose minds have been separated from each other;
We who have:
not experienced compassion, a cooperative mentality, or inspiration;
not understood what is fundamental and what is secondary in all things;
not understood the beginning and the end and the order of all incidents of all affairs;
held resentment and lamentation without knowing the roots of good/evil, high/low, right/wrong, and help/harm;
prayed for blessings to insentient beings as though they were human beings with awareness and consciousness;
led our family members into wrongness, being unable to save even ourselves;
become gray-haired old men incapable of being loyal to others, never having learned or practiced the principle of benefiting both oneself and others (*chari it'a* 自利利他): when our interests were in conflict with others', we harmed others while benefitting ourselves…."[656]

The above statement diagnoses the dark reality of the Korean people during colonial rule in the 1920s. The following provisions proceed to suggest a way to overcome this miserable reality in the following provisions.

To summarize these lengthy regulations, the purport of the society is essentially to help all people leave behind their prior lives of hopeless suffering and find eternal happiness and liberation by learning about the Buddhadharma and how to practice it in their everyday lives. In order to create a community that realizes this purpose, the PYH established seven departments: general affairs, edification, research, cooperative (mutual aid) association, farming, cooking, and laundry.

[656] See the *PYH kyuyak*.

> Section 5. The society shall establish the seven departments as follows, and each department shall take charge of its duties.
> Article 1. The duties of the department of **general affairs** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to safe keep seals; to receive visitors; to manage income and expense regarding necessary activities; to manage other general affairs that are not stated in other departments.
> Article 2. The duties of **the edification department** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to educate people about the objects, regulations, and scriptures of the society; to appraise the daily records of practices submitted by the practitioners of the society during the summer and winter retreats for six months; to teach lectures and arithmetic; to provide a basic history course.
> Article 3. The duties of **the department of research** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to guide members in cultivating their minds through chanting (reciting the Buddha's name) and meditation; to guide members in delving into the list of inquiry[657] and to provide feedback on their investigations; to guide members in delivering a lecture based in their own premeditated inquiries.
> Article 4. The duties of **the department of mutual aid** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to accumulate capital by purchasing lands with the collected membership fees so as to help members to participate in practice and study without any financial problems; to establish a school to educate members' children. However, these funds will not be disbursed until the collected funds reach the amount that the society so designates.
> Article 5. The duties of **the department of farming** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to work in agriculture; to save money in a cooperative union by managing annual income and expenses; to protect famers who do not have adequate capital.
> Article 6. The duties of **the department of cooking** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to provide meals to resident members of the seven departments and visitors from other branch offices.
> Article 7. The duties of **the department of laundry** shall be as mentioned hereunder: to make and wash clothes for resident members of the seven departments and visitors from other branch offices.[658]

Sot'aesan set up the PYH so that it was managed through a democratic process with a "ten-member unit" system. All important matters regarding the PYH were decided by two Head Circle Councils, each of which consisted of ten female members and ten male members.[659] The committee members of the Head Circle Councils were determined by a vote among those whose

[657] The list of inquiry has 137 entries, which are stated in the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*.

[658] *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak.*

[659] *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak.*

conduct, religious contributions, and understanding of the organization's teachings were considered superior.[660] Each committee member of the Head Circle Councils then became, in turn, the leader of a unit of nine members or fewer, serving as a mentor who advised those members' spiritual progress. Each of these small groups would then become the leader of another group of nine or fewer members. Sot'aesan states that this dharma system is "a quick and efficient system for training all people effectively with only a single teacher. Although we will be able to reach many billions of students through this dharma, a given teacher's efforts never need to be directed at more than nine members at once."[661] Within each unit, a member could put forward his opinions regarding any issues related to "practice, work, and daily life,"[662] ideas that would then be reported to higher-up units of members until they reached the Head Circle Councils. Sot'aesan also had the leader of each unit solicit other unit members' feedback on these suggestions: when approved by unanimous consent, an idea was considered *kap* 甲; with more than half consent, *ŭl* 乙; more than half consent conditionally, *pyŏng* 丙; less than half consent but the opinion was considered reasonable, *chŏng* 丁; logical in certain regards, but not adoptable, *mu* 戊; illogical and pointless, and not adoptable with non-consent, *pu* 不. In this way, all members had a responsibility to provide their own suggestions to the community, and their suggestions were solidified into regulations by the other members' consent. Through this system, each and every member could actively participate in maintaining and developing the order, rather than simply acting like a guest of the order.

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[660] *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak.*

[661] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 107.

[662] *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak.*

The "Unit Members' Grades Survey Method" 團員 成績調查法 (*tanwŏn sŏngjŏk chosabŏp)* was announced in the first issue of *Wŏlmal t'ongsin* 月末通信 (*Month-end Communication*), which was published on May 31, 1928. It states:

> On the sixteenth of each month, the head of each unit should evaluate each member's performance in his or her practice, and if the head member is absent, the vice head member should conduct the evaluation. The leader reports the annual results to the Ministry of Education on the twenty-sixth of the twelfth lunar month every year. The standard criteria according to which members are to be examined is as follows: 1) Date, 2) Attendance, 3) Practice Reports (Meditation, Chanting, Scripture Practice, and Mindful Choices in Action), 4) Work reports (mental work, physical work, financial donations), 5) Opinion submission (regarding practice, work, and life). The effective date is the sixteenth of the following month. The method of examination will beannounced later.[663]

The main function of this unit is to assist each member's spiritual development by mutually checking their progress and encouraging their practice. In the *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak* (1931), the methods of checking one's practices are described in detail. Every month, each member is given several daily checklists for his or her practices: 1) a daily checklist of "Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications"; 2) a checklist of "Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits"; 3) a checklist of "Religious Contributions"; 4) a checklist of "Beneficent Acts (both received and given)"; 5) a checklist of "suggestions"; 6) a checklist of ten precepts according to one's level of practice—ordinary grade, special faith, battle between dharma and *māra*; 7) a checklist regarding being mindful and unmindful.[664] Each member should record his or her performance via these charts, which are called "Daily Diaries," as delineated below:

> B. The Dharma of Keeping a Daily Diary
>
> 1. With regard to mindfulness and unmindfulness, you are to investigate and record the number of times you handled any event you faced in either a mindful or unmindful

[663] *Wŏnbulgyo Kyogoch'ong'gan vol.1* (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 12.

[664] See appendix.

> fashion. “Mindful” refers to acting with heedfulness in making choices with regard to items that you resolved either to do or not to do; “unmindful” refers to acting without heedfulness in making choices. In the beginning, you are to keep track of the number of times you acted with heedfulness or without heedfulness in making choices, regardless of how things turned out. As practice deepens, however, you are to keep track of the number of times the result was good or bad.
> 2. With regard to the state of your study, you are to record your calculations regarding the number of hours you studied each subject listed under Cultivation and Inquiry, and you are to review and record your attendance and absence at regular dharma meetings and Sŏn sessions.
> 3. Regarding the precepts, you are to review and record whether you kept or transgressed them; and when there was a violation, record the number of times you transgressed that specific item.
> 4. For people who are illiterate or not comfortable with writing, we have set up a separate “bean-count” method of examination, so that they may simply keep track of whether they are mindful or unmindful: they may calculate the number of times they are mindful or unmindful by counting one light-colored bean whenever they act with heedfulness in making choices and one dark-colored bean whenever they do not.[665]

After recording a Daily Diary in this way for a month, each member submitted this chart to the leader of the unit to which he or she belonged. Upon receiving this chart, the leader graded each member’s progress and reported it to the Headquarters of Pulpŏp Yŏn’guhoe. According to the *PYH t’ongch’i chodan kyuyak*, when a practitioner has practiced sitting meditation for two hours every day for more than twenty-five days, then it will be considered *kap* 甲; for twenty days, ŭl 乙; for fifteen days, *pyŏng* 丙; for ten days, *chŏng* 丁, for less than ten days, *mu* 戊. When a practitioner has upheld all of the “Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications” and ten precepts, then it will be considered *kap* 甲; five of the aforementioned items and eight precepts, ŭl 乙; four items and six precepts, *pyŏng* 丙; three items and four precepts, *chŏng* 丁; two items and two precepts, *mu* 戊; one item and one or no precepts, *pu* 不. Through such methods, Sot’aesan encouraged his disciples to continue to practice in their

[665] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism.*

everyday settings, and based on these records, the Headquarters determined each member's dharma rank every three years.

While traditional Buddhist communities had consisted mainly of ordained monks and nuns while lay followers functioned as supporters of the community, in the case of Sot'aesan's religion, both laity and clergy were equally participating in the creation and maintenance of the community. The community was opened to the public: whoever wanted to join was permitted to submit an application to the order with an application fee of one *wŏn*.[666]

Chapter 5. Entry and Withdrawal of Membership
Section 16. Anyone who desires to join the society shall fill out the application form below and submit it with an application fee of one *wŏn*.

Registration Form In compliance with PYH regulations, I pay an admission fee of one *wŏn* and join the PYH as a new member. Year Month Day Home address: Current address: Name Signature To Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe

Section 17. A member of the society shall pay an annual membership fee of three *wŏn* forty *chŏn*, half of which shall be paid on the tenth of the third lunar month during the spring season, the other half of which shall be paid on the tenth of the tenth lunar month during the fall season.
Section 18. The society confers to an admitted member a membership card as below.

Our Ref.# Address Name Membership Card Year Month Day Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe

[666] A one-month newspaper subscription cost one *wŏn* in 1926 in Korea.

> Section 19. When the membership card is conferred, the following instructions will be conferred: the "Ten Precepts," the "Threefold Practice and the Eight Articles," the "Essential Discourse on Commanding one's Nature," the "Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications," "Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits," and the "Articles of Obligation for Ordained Practitioners."[667]
> Section 20. One who falls into the following categories shall lose his or her qualification for membership and his or her name shall be removed from the list of the members.
> 1. One who does not pay the membership fee for more than one year.
> 2. One who does not attend services, without due cause, for more than three months.
> 3. One who brings disgrace to the society.
> 4. One who violates the regulations and goals of the society more than three times.
> (*PYH kyuyak*)

If one wanted specifically to become an ordained disciple, according to the regulations, one should first attend the three-month winter or summer retreat four times. Those who had attended the retreats more than four times and wanted to take a vow to dedicate themselves into the order as ordained members could submit an application with a surety from a personal guarantor. The designation of clergy member would be given to those who had trained by attending the intensive twelve-month retreats, which prepared them to guide themselves as well as others through mentorship.

> Chapter 14. Regulations Regarding the Process for Ordaining Ministers
> 1) Any person who wants to leave his or her household permanently to reside in the PYH community must undertake twelve months of training (comprised of participating in either the summer or winter retreats four times), then submit an application with the permission of the order.
> 2) When one submits this application, one should obtain a surety from a personal guarantor who is very familiar with the applicant's upbringing. In addition, the applicant should submit paperwork delineating his or her life plan and philosophy, which must also be accompanied by permission from a personal guarantor. The application will be returned if it is missing any of these necessary documents.[668]

After being ordained according to these regulations, the new clergy member should continue to attend the summer and winter retreats. However, it was rare for members to be able to attend the

[667] See Appendix.

[668] *PYH kyuyak*.

retreat for three months without having to worry about food expenses. Therefore, most of the members usually worked in their designated departments, in a private household, in a factory, or in a farm during the six months of the busy farming season to prepare for their six-month retreat fee. In particular, the order's Department of Farming allowed its members to contribute the money they made through their labors into the Mutual Aid Association, and helped those without enough money to attend the retreats.

"The Teachings of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications" were given to both lay and ordained members. These teachings were used by those who had not yet received intensive training and needed more instruction, or for those who needed to continue practicing in their daily life after completing a retreat.

> Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications
> 1. In all of your applications, be heedful to make choices with sound thought.
> 2. Before engaging in an application, be heedful to study for it in advance by observing the circumstances of the application.
> 3. If you have free time, be heedful to deepen your acquaintance with the purpose of the society, its regulations, and the scriptures.
> 4. People who have substantially achieved a deepened acquaintance with the purpose of the society, scriptures and regulations should be heedful to study "cases for questioning (*ŭidu*)."
> 5. Be heedful to practice reciting the Buddha's name or engaging in seated meditation in order to cultivate your spirit either during the time that is left before going to sleep and after completing any remaining household affairs after supper, or else in the early morning.
> 6. After handling any matter, while thinking about how you handled it, be heedful to assess whether or not you have successfully cultivated your mind, sharpened your insight with regard to human affairs and universal principles, and made choices in action through cultivating attitudes of belief, zeal, questioning, and dedication; assess, too, whether or not you have committed the violations of unbelief, greed, laziness, and ignorance, and whether you have upheld "the essential discourse on commanding one's nature" and the "precepts."[669]

These six articles help adherents enact the threefold practice (*samādhi*, *prajñā*, and *śila*) and in their daily lives, taking secular life as the basis for practice. The first article asks practitioners to

[669] *PYH kyuyak*. Cf. *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 60.

make mindful choices (*śila*) by using their six sense organs with a basis in sound thought (*samādhi* and *prajñā*). The second article proposes the practitioner investigate and prepare (*prajñā* training) in advance before engaging in a specific task (*śila*). The third article suggests that one take care to deepen one's understanding of both the scriptures and the order's regulations (*prajñā* training). In particular, this article is related to *prajñā* training in that adherents study the scriptures to gain wisdom as to how to behave when faced with difficulties in real life, just like studying a map before going to an unknown place. In addition, by instructing people who were illiterate to read, write, and memorize the scriptures and regulations, this article provided them an opportunity to become literate. The fourth and fifth articles are designed to cultivate both *prajñā* and *samādhi* through the practices of "questioning meditation," "sitting meditation," and "chanting meditation" in the early morning and late evening. The sixth article is intended to help practitioners evaluate and reflect on a daily basis upon how well they have performed in relation to the five articles above and to the accomplishment of other doctrines. Sot'aesan encouraged lay practitioners to go to a nearby temple at least three times a month after finishing their housework, and checked the progress of their practice through the six articles below.

> Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits
> 1. Whenever you come to the department of edification while practicing the above-mentioned items of heedfulness in daily applications, be heedful to engage in questions and answers about each and every aspect of those activities.
> 2. If you have awakened to some matter, be heedful to submit a written report about that awakening to the department of edification and to obtain its appraisal.
> 3. If you encounter a matter that raises a specific doubt, be heedful to submit it to a spiritual mentor and gain the awakening of understanding.
> 4. Be heedful to set aside in advance each year the training fees for the Sŏn-retreat (meditation-retreat) so that you may pursue specialized practice in a Sŏn center.
> 5. On the days of the regular dharma meeting, be heedful to come to temple and dedicate yourself exclusively to practice that day, after settling in advance any outstanding matters.

> 6. Once you have returned from temple, and after reflecting on whether or not you had some sort of awakening or had any specific doubt clarified, be heedful to actively utilize without fail those lessons in real life.[670]

Lay people were encouraged to apply those lessons they learned at temple to their real lives. At the same time, Sot'aesan encouraged them to save time and money for a three-month retreat so that they could eventually receive an intensive training during that period, through which they would discipline both body and mind according to the Buddhadharma.

The PYH community's life can be divided into two periods: off-farming season (six months) and the busy farming season (six months). During the off-farming season, the Winter (eleventh lunar month, the sixth day through second lunar month, the sixth day) and Summer Retreats (fifth lunar month six through eighth lunar month six) were held. During the retreat period, practitioners followed a very intensive and strict practice curriculum. Once practitioners entered the retreat, it was prohibited not only to visit any other households, but also to correspond with anyone, except in the case of a family emergency.[671] Their daily schedule was as follows:

> 1. Of the day's twenty-four hours, eight hours are to be used for sleep, eight hours for practice, eight hours for leisure time. During leisure time, one can either engage in physical exercise, go out to refresh oneself, or share reflections on practice with others.
> 2. Of the eight hours of practice, two hours are to be used for sitting meditation, two hours for studying scriptures (including the regulations and rules of the order), and two hours for recording and writing a diary. Particularly, during diary time, practitioners should check and record how they had spent their time that day, how they practiced each guidance in the regulations whenever they used their six sensory organs. When they experience special awakenings or reflections, they should record them. Two hours are to be used to give a formal lecture in regard to "questions" and "Buddhist doctrines." Even though this schedule is given to beginners, as they deepen their practices, they should not necessarily feel bound

[670] *PYH kyuyak.* Cf. *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 61.

[671] *Pulpŏp yŏn'guhoe kyuyak*, 37.

> by the arranged programs, but rather, should learn how to practice in a manner unconstrained by specific time limits.[672]

The retreat consisted of six main subjects: 1) sitting meditation, 2) chanting, 3) lecturing, 4) discussion, 5) studying scriptures, and 6) keeping a diary. The participants were asked to follow these programs strictly. Based on some participants' diary entries and the official record of the retreat, the retreat program was scheduled as follows:

5:00 – 7:00	Sitting meditation
7:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – 11:00	Study scriptures
11:00 – 12:00	Rest time
12:00 – 2:00	Lunch
2:00 – 4:00	Appraise diary & chanting practice
4:00 – 5:00	Rest time
5:00 – 7:00	Dinner
7:00 – 9:00	Lecture or discussion
10:00	Sleep

One of the special features of the retreat was that all people received the same training, regardless of whether they were lay members or ordained *kyomu* (ministers),. However, the retreat was forbidden to those who (1) did not have permission from his or her family, (2) did not submit the retreat fee, (3) did not have the ability to read some Chinese and Korean, (4) had committed a crime, or (5) had a contagious and malignant disease.[673] All attendees were required to properly fill out a permission form[674] before the retreat that confirmed his or her family

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[672] *PYH kyuyak,* 27.

[673] *Pulpŏp yŏn'guhoe kyuyak*, 37.

[674] The official form read as follows:
A Document of Permission:
I permit my (child, wife, or any _____ (family relationship in relation to the applicant) to leave her or his household for three months and attend the retreat. Therefore, I have no objection to the Society for the Study of the Buddha Dharma. Year/ Month/ Day, Address, Name, Signature
To the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe (*Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe kyuyak*, 37).

guardian's permission. The decision to dedicate one's life to the retreat for three months must have been difficult for both the applicant and his or her family, considering the busy lifestyle demanded by rural living. The illiterate were not able to participate in the retreat because they could not properly complete some of the subjects and programs that constituted the retreat, such as studying scriptures, keeping a diary, and lecturing.

Even though they could not fully participate in the retreat, there was still a way for the illiterate to practice with the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. According to the official record of the ninth summer retreat in 1929, there were a total of twelve participants who officially participated in the retreat from its beginning service onwards: Yi, Sŏngch'o, Pak Sasihwa, Yi Ch'ŏngch'un, Pak Kilsŏn, Ch'oi Sang'ok, Yi Tongjinhwa, Kim Taegŏ, Pak Kongmŏngsŏn, Kwŏn Tonghwa, Chŏng Nasŏn, Yi Mansŏnhwa, and Chang Chŏkcho,.[675] However, in Pak Kilsŏn's (1909-1994) diary, the total number of attendees of the lecturing program is estimated at approximately thirty people. In addition, according to the record of the retreat's opening and closing services, sixty-two people were sitting in the opening service and fifty-eight people in the closing service. Based on these facts, we can assume that even though the illiterate could not officially submit an application for the retreat, most of the retreat programs seemed to be open to the public.

Sot'aesan seemed to pay particular attention to ensuring that illiterate people could join the practice in the same way as could the literate. For example, according to the official scripture of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, as quoted above, "For people who are illiterate or not comfortable with writing, we have set up the separate 'bean-count' method of examination, so that they may simply keep track of whether they are mindful or unmindful: they may calculate the number of times they are mindful or unmindful by counting one light-colored bean whenever they act with

[675] *Wŏnbulgyo kyogoch'onggan vol.1* (Iri: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 142.

heedfulness in making choices and one dark-colored bean whenever they do not."[676] Those who were illiterate were also all encouraged to learn basic algebra and writing. In particular, when we look at the retreat schedule above, we see that diary practice and chanting are scheduled for the same timeslot. *The Sŏnwŏn ilchi* (Daily Record of Retreats) shows that elderly people, who were illiterate, practiced chanting while young people practiced writing in their diary at that time. Another example is that when practitioners were tasked with preparing a formal lecture, Sot'aesan formed groups of three or four people consisting of both the educated and the uneducated so that the former could help the latter, and the latter could benefit from the former's insight and guidance.

4. Sot'aesan's Reformation of Buddhism

Most scholars have studied the doctrinal development of Wŏn Buddhism through the lens of "three-teachings syncretism," placing the faith into a close relationship with the mainstream East Asian religions: Confucianism, Daoism, and other forms of Buddhism. However, it is worth discussing whether the doctrine of Wŏn Buddhism should truly be viewed as a synthesis of these three religions. To address this issue, I suggest that we distinguish between "intentional syncretism" and "culturally inherent syncretism." In the former case, the founder of a religion analyzes the scriptures of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism and deliberately integrates the three teachings into a new doctrine. However, "culturally inherent syncretism" is the result of a process of historical synthesis in which the three religious traditions organically coexist in East Asia. If Sot'aesan's doctrinal system was a case of "intentional syncretism," then Wŏn Buddhism's doctrinal system can be viewed as the integration of the three religions. However, if Sot'aesan's doctrinal system was "culturally inherent syncretism," then it should instead be

[676] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 76.

understood as encompassing characteristics common to all East Asian religious traditions in the pre-modern and modern periods. This is because from the moment that Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism began to flower in the region, these three religious traditions coexisted and developed through a process of both direct and indirect mutual influence.

In Chapter One, I discussed the important role that Ch'oe Cheu's revelatory experience of God played in transforming the popular beliefs embedded in millenarian movements such as Waiting for the Future Savior Maitreya into the idea that all human beings are equal. Ch'oe's idea of *sich'ŏnju*—"revering God within one's heart" through recognizing the innate divine nature within all human beings, regardless of social status and gender identity—brought about a great ideological change on the Korean peninsula between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This doctrine inspired many people to believe that all human beings are equal because all are endowed with divine nature in their hearts. In the landscape of Korean religion, religious leaders began to emphasize that it was possible for the common people to achieve enlightenment through cultivating their minds, a feat that had previously been considered the exclusive provenance of the elite *yangban*, or aristocratic, class. The recognition of the universal God in all human beings even led Buddhist Sŏn masters of the modern period to write numerous Buddhist *kasa*s (popular lyrics) for laypeople that encouraged commoners to practice so that they would also become enlightened. These Buddhist lyrics are an example of "culturally inherent syncretism" because they mix politics of the day with religion: many intellectuals of that era composed lyrics espousing egalitarian ideals, inherited from Ch'oe Cheu's *sich'ŏnju* ideology, through the lens of their own religious traditions.

In this chapter, I argue that Sot'aesan's new interpretation of the future Buddha, Maitreya, into multiple buddhas and bodhisattvas (*ch'ŏn yŏrae man posal*) was possible because

of the egalitarianism inherent to *sich'ŏnju*, an idea that was widely prevalent throughout the Korean peninsula. In this regard, the ideological correlation between Ch'oe Cheu and Sot'aesan can be understood as "culturally inherent syncretism." Based on this religious egalitarianism present throughout the culture, Sot'aesan used the main teachings of Buddhism to express his vision for a universal and popularized Buddhist enlightenment, that is, the concept of *ch'ŏn yŏrae man posal.* In this regard, Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism should understood as a distinctively Korean iteration of the Buddhist tradition.

The concept of *ch'ŏn yŏrae man posal* is significant in Buddhist history because, prior to Sot'aesan's use of it, this concept had never before appeared in Buddhist literature. In the doctrinal system of traditional Buddhism, it was extremely difficult for ordinary people to reach the level of buddhas or advanced bodhisattvas. According to the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the *bodhisattvayāna* (spiritual path of a bodhisattva), one must spend many years passing through all of the stages of the bodhisattva path in order to reach its consummation.[677] This achievement requires mastery of a variety of rigorous and time-consuming Buddhist practices, such as the six *pāramitā*s and the ten *pāramitā*s. Therefore, it was thought that only those who have taken a special vow at the inception of their training (the *bodhicittotpāda*, or aspiration for enlightenment) had the capacity to ascend to such an advanced bodhisattva stage. Of course, the formation of Chan Buddhism or Pure Land Buddhism in China opened up the possibility of "sudden awakening accompanied by sudden cultivation." But even Chan's method of sudden awakening accompanied by sudden cultivation is still considered to be difficult for ordinary

[677] "The numbers of stages of the bodhisattva path are inconsistent from *sūtra* to *sūtra* and from commentary to commentary. For example, the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* refers to the *daśabhūmi* (ten spiritual stages) of a bodhisattva, while the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* makes reference to twelve *vihāra* (abodes). In each of the ten stages of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, a distinct *pāramitā* is practiced so that the bodhisattva gradually elevates himself to the final goal of enlightenment." See Leslie S. Kawamura, "bodhisattvas," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, 58-60.

people. The *Platform Sūtra* describes the story of an ordinary person, the sixth patriarch, Huineng 慧能 (638-713), becoming immediately awakened by hearing a single phrase of the *Diamond Sūtra*. The fact that the enlightenment of this illiterate mill worker was so unusual that it warranted telling in an indigenous sūtra suggests how unusual it was for an ordinary person to achieve such a sudden awakening.

Sot'aesan further developed Ch'oe's notion of a universal God by applying a Buddhist perspective to it, and established a new Buddhist community called the PYH through which he attempted to realize the world of Maitreya Buddha wherein "a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" would arise. The term *ch'ŏn yŏrae man posal* describes the key features and direction of the Buddhist reforms that Sot'aesan and his disciples sought to bring about. In order to create a congregation of *ch'ŏn yŏrae man posal*, Sota'esan presented Buddhist teachings that ordinary people could easily practice in their daily lives, and created a monastic system that gave both lay and ordained practitioners equal opportunity to practice and to someday achieve the goal of enlightenment. The specific goals and methods of Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism are revealed in detail in the texts he wrote, such as the *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non* (*Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism*), *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* (*Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry*) and the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* (*Correct Canon of Buddhism*).

In the fifteen hundred years since the faith migrated to Korea, Buddhism continued to develop as a national religion during the periods of the Three Kingdoms (57 BCE- 668 CE), the Unified Silla (668-935), and the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392). During the Chosŏn dynasty, the religion lost its social dominance due to state suppression of Buddhism and became so-called "mountain Buddhism,". Sot'aesan, who was born in 1891at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, attained enlightenment as a twenty-six-year-old in 1916, after nine years of severe ascetic

practice. Upon attaining enlightenment, he happened to have a vision of the *Diamond Sūtra* in a dream. He obtained a copy of the *Diamond Sūtra* from a nearby temple, Pulkap-sa, and was deeply touched by the profound Buddhist teachings described in the text. After completing a year-long embankment project with his disciples from March 1918 to March 1919,[678] Sot'aesan was arrested by the Japanese police and was imprisoned for one week because of his suspected involvement in the March First independent movement.[679] After this event, Sot'aesan was no longer able to stay in Yŏnggwang with his disciples so he went to a Buddhist hermitage, Wŏlmyŏng-am, hidden deep in the mountains, and stayed there for four years.[680] During that time, Sot'aesan witnessed the realities of Buddhism firsthand, read a variety of Buddhist scriptures, and established a new framework for Chosŏn Buddhism. While staying there, Sot'aesan composed the *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non* (*Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism*), laying out his vision for the reformation of Korean Buddhism.

In his treatise, Sot'aesan first states that the profoundness of the Buddha's wisdom and power is indescribable:

> The profundity of his teachings is the same as that of the mountain Sumeru, the *axis mundi* of traditional Buddhist cosmology; the depth of his teachings is the same as that of Ganges

[678] In August, 1917, Sot'aesan established a savings union to raise the seed funds to found a new religious order. In March 1918, Sot'aesan suggested his disciples use the funds that they had earned through the union to undertake a project that could substantially benefit the public welfare. Sot'aesan proposed that they build a dam in the riverside tidal land in front of their village, Kilyong-ri, and turn the deserted tidal land into a rice field. See *The History of Wŏn Buddhism* (*Wŏnbulgyo kyosa*), Reference Edition in Korean and English (Iksan: Sŏnmyŏng munhwasa, 2009), 25. So'taesan's Savings Union was the first Korean-led savings union, having been founded ten years before Korean students studying in Tokyo established their cooperative (1926). But because So'taesan's union was not widely known to the world, it did not enter into official records (see Pak Yongdŏk, "Sot'aesan ŭi chohap undong kwa Kilyong-ni kanch'ŏk saŏp e kwanhan yŏn'gu," *Chŏngsin kaebyŏk* 7, 1989; Pak Yongdŏk, 132).

[679] Pak Yongdŏk, *Tol i sŏsŏ mul sori rŭl tŭnnŭnda: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa* 2 (Iksan: Wŏn'gwang Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1997), 12-15.

[680] Ibid.

> River; the number of his teachings is the same as the number of sands of the Ganges; the breadth of his teachings includes all the words of heaven, earth and space.[681]

For this reason, Sot'aesan continues on, his aim is for his disciples "to strive to attain the Buddha's wisdom and abilities and exert themselves to deliver all sentient beings."[682] However, although the Buddha's teachings were incomparably deep, broad, and great, Chosun Buddhism faced the following problems according to Sot'aesan. First, even though it had been some two millennia since Buddhism was introduced to Korea, Buddhism had not yet been Koreanized. For example, Sot'aesan's *Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism* states,"Since the Buddhist scriptures are full of language and terminology difficult for ordinary people either to learn or to understand, you could hardly teach them to a wide group encompassing the learned and ignorant, men and women, young and old."[683] In particular, it was impossible to expect all people to understand the existing scriptures because it would take most people over ten years to read the Buddhist scriptures written in Classical Chinese, and then it would take even more time to apply the truths of the Buddha's teachings to their everyday lives. Moreover, it was almost impossible for the poorer members of Chosŏn society, who were kept busy by their work, to secure such a large amount of time for study. Therefore, Sot'aesan compiled concise, easy-to-understand textbooks written in vernacular Korean, incorporating only the essential points of the Buddha's teachings. This way, everyone could learn easily and straightforwardly apply their new knowledge to their daily lives. After initially learning about Buddhism in this way, Sot'aesan

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[681] Sot'aesan, *Chosŏn Pulgyo hyŏksin non* (*Treatise on the Reformation of Chosŏn Buddhism*), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan: Chogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* 4 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 96-104.

[682] Ibid. See also "Chapter One Prefatory: 17," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 118.

[683] Ibid. See also "Chapter One Prefatory: 18," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 121.

thought, the general public could easily reach the level of the Buddha's profound enlightenment later, by accessing progressively more difficult scriptures.[684]

The second goal Sot'aesan sought to bring about was to transform Buddhism from the Buddhism of monks to the Buddhism of the general public.

> In the past, the doctrines and institutions of Buddhism were organized mainly in terms of monastic orders, which were not well suited to people living in the secular world. Adherents leading secular lives were guests rather than hosts, and except for lay persons who were particularly adept spiritually or who had accomplished a particularly important achievement, it was difficult for most everyone else to become a part of the Buddha's direct lineage or to be recognized as a Buddhist patriarch like the monks who trained by leaving behind the world. Furthermore, religions are concerned with people, but Buddhist temples are located in the mountains where there aren't many people….And in terms of sustaining life, the Buddhist monks have abnegated all occupations—from scholars, to farmers, to artisans, to merchants—and instead rely only on contributions from buddha offerings, almsgiving, and donations. Marriage, too, was strictly prohibited for those training by leaving behind the world; nor were any rules of propriety governing secular life articulated, only those for formal buddha offerings.[685]

Buddhism had not been popularized because it had been the exclusive property of a handful of monks and nuns in Korea. In particular, as Buddhism was suppressed by the state government, its doctrines and systems became centered on Buddhist monasteries located in the mountains. This allowed the faith to evade political authorities but made it difficult for ordinary people to become direct followers of Buddhism and disciples of the Buddha. Furthermore, the doctrine necessary for daily, non-monastic life was not specifically established. Sot'aesan proposed the following as solutions to these problems:

> 1) Let us be concerned only with the achievements of Buddhist practice and work rather than discriminating between laity and clergy, treating some like guests and others like hosts.
> 2) Let us not discriminate between laity and clergy in the matter of Buddhist lineage. We will allow anyone to become a part of the Buddha's direct lineage.
> 3) We will situate places of practice wherever adherents already reside, and make our doctrines accessible to all classes of people by choosing only the most essential points from existing sutras and using simple language.

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[684] Ibid. See also "Chapter One Prefatory: 18," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 122.

[685] Ibid. See also "Chapter One Prefatory: 18," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 120-123.

> 4) We will allow ordained members to choose an occupation so that their personal survival does not rely solely on contributions from buddha offerings, almsgiving, and donations. We will also leave to these adherents themselves the decision of whether to marry or not.
> 5) Let us formulate rules of propriety mainly in terms of practical buddha offerings that are more appropriate and beneficial to life in the secular world, rather than observing all of the complicated rituals of formal buddha offerings.
> 6) Even the ordained should learn to read in their youth, except in special situations; in the prime of their life they should engage in study of the Way and endeavor to deliver others; and in their old age they should retire to a place of quiet leisure and natural beauty, be rid of all attachments and cravings of the secular world, and further reflect upon the great matters of birth and death. In spring and autumn, they should make the rounds to different temples in cities and villages to exert themselves in the work of edification, returning in summer and winter to a life mainly devoted to spiritual cultivation.
> 7) In terms of the doctrine of Buddhism, let us harmoniously enact the threefold practice of meditation, wisdom, *and* morality, not focusing only on meditation and wisdom. Therefore, we will recapitulate the essence of Buddhist teachings in two ways: "the Essential Way of Practice, i.e. the Threefold Study and the Eight Articles; and the Essential Way of Human life, i.e. the Fourfold Grace and the Four Essentials." In this way, anyone—both laity and clergy—can easily practice Buddhism in everyday life.
> 8) Let us also create training courses so that everyone can receive training in the Essential Way of Practice and the Essential Way of Human Life. Let us make the organization that is in charge of this doctrine and institutions impeccable by bringing it into accord with the current age and with human needs.
> 9) Let us transform Buddhism from sectarian-oriented Buddhism into a non-sectarian Buddhism by unifying all divided practices into well-rounded and integrated Buddhist practices.
> 10) Let us transform Buddhism from a devotional form of Buddhism to a Buddhism of practice by replacing the images of Buddha in the main Dharma hall with the circular symbol of Buddha-nature and *dharmakāyabuddha*.[686]

Sot'aesan laid out all of these resolutions in order to promote the popularization of Buddhism and a more widespread access to Buddhist enlightenment. Sot'aesan's basic directions continued to be enacted from the founding of the PYH in 1924 until he passed away in 1943. Sot'aesan gradually systematized his doctrinal system while also training his disciples in his teachings in the community of the PYH. From these historical facts, we can conclude that what Sot'aesan actively sought to reform was not the doctrines of Confucianism, Daoism, *and* Buddhism, but

[686] Ibid. See also "Chapter One Prefatory: 15-19," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 114-124.

exclusively that of Buddhism. So why is it that many people still presume that the doctrine of Wŏn Buddhism derives from a combination of the three religions?

First, let us examine the following Dharma words from "Chapter Two: Doctrine" of the *Discourses of the Founding Master Sot'aesan*:

> All past founders of religions have appeared at their own proper time in order to instruct all sentient beings as to how to conduct their lives. However, the core principles by which these founders disseminated their teachings differed according to their respective eras and regions, just as there are different specialties within the field of medicine. Buddhism took the formlessness of all things in the universe as its core principle and taught the truth that is free from arising and ceasing and the principle of retribution and response and of cause and effect, elucidating principally the path whereby ignorance is transformed into awakening. Confucianism took the forms of all things in the universe as its core principle and taught the three duties, the five relationships, and the four constants of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge, elucidating principally the path whereby one cultivates oneself, regulates one's family, governs one's country, and brings about peace in the world. Daoism took the Way of the natural universe as its core principle and taught techniques for nourishing one's nature, elucidating principally the path of tranquility and nonaction. Although these three paths diverge from one another in some basic ways, they all share the common goal of rectifying the world and benefiting living beings. In the past, these three traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism mainly disseminated their own doctrines, but in the future it will not be enough to deliver the whole world through limited topics alone. Hence, we have synthesized all of these doctrines and established all classes on the basis of combining Cultivation, Inquiry, and Choice into the Il-Wŏn (One Circle), and on the basis of the wholeness of both spirit and flesh and the simultaneous practice of universal principles and human affairs. Whoever practices well in this manner will penetrate not only to the cardinal doctrines of those three teachings, but also to the doctrines of all religions in the world. And the dharmas under heaven will return to the one mind, so that we are able to attain the great Way that reaches everywhere.[687]

This particular passage, which is located at the beginning of Chapter Two: Doctrine, is widely used by scholars to define Wŏn Buddhism as a religion that integrates the teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. Such three-teachings synthesis has been an important factor in defining a new religion. However, there are several problems with this interpretation. First, if Wŏn Buddhism is a religion based on three-teachings synthesis, this characteristic should

[687] "Chapter Two Doctrine: 1," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 125-126.

consistently be found throughout the Wŏn doctrinal system, but it is not. Second, the placement of these Dharma words near the beginning of the *Discourses of the Founding Master Sot'aesan* causes some to mistakenly conclude that this passage outweighs the other teachings therein. *The Discourses of the Founding Master Sot'aesan* is a scripture that was complied, edited, and published by Sot'aesan's disciples after Sot'aesan's death, not by Sot'aesan himself. Suppose this passage were located at the end of the Chapter; how much significance would these Dharma words have then? Perhaps it would be considered less significant than it is now. In particular, an important consideration is that, with the exception of this section, the rest of the chapter is entirely about Buddhism, not about the integration of the three religions. If Sot'aesan's true intention was to synthesize the three religions, then at least one other interpretation of Daoism or Confucianism should have appeared, but indeed, it does not.

That being the case, how should the above-quoted passage be interpreted? It can be read in two ways. The first understands this passage as reflecting Sot'aesan's universal tolerance for other religious doctrines. Historically, there was a conflict between the Doctrinal (Kyo) and Meditation (Sŏn) schools of Buddhism, as well as an exclusionary atmosphere towards Buddhism and other religious traditions due to the Chosŏn dynasty's state ideology of Neo-Confucianism. Despite this context, Sot'aesan adhered to the ideal of tolerance, refusing to act in an exclusionary way towards any other religions or other approaches to human knowledge. Sot'aesan's spirit of tolerance is evident in various anecdotes of his life.[688] Therefore, the Dharma words above should be interpreted as reflecting his attitude of religious tolerance and open-mindedness.

[688] See "Chapter Three Practice: 29," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 148.

This point becomes particularly evident when we look at the original transcribed Dharma words of this section before it was summarized and incorporated into *The Discourses of the Founding Master Sot'aesan.* The original transcription can be found in the *Hoebo* (*Monthly Magazine*) No. 4 published in November 1933.[689] Therein, it becomes clear that Sot'aesan's main point was not to unify the three religions, but to highlight that, although the content of each religious doctrine is different, they share the same ethical essence. Sot'aesan pointed out that the morality behind Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism remains the same regardless of the differences in what the saints of these religions taught in the past. Sot'aesan defined "morality" with two Sinographs, Way and Virtue (*todŏk* 道德). The Way is the path that reveals what people should do and should not do and Virtue refers to the merits that people generate as they realize the Way in their lives. If merit is produced by people following the Way, that would be true morality. If evil deeds are produced after people follow the Way, then that would be evil morality. If we sincerely practice all of the teachings to be found in Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, that would produce merit for oneself as well as for others. Therefore, Sot'aesan concluded that the teachings of the saints of all three religions are all the same. What Sot'aesan emphasized here was not that the three teachings should be unified, but that "Although these three paths have core principles that differ from one another, they all have the common goal of rectifying the world and benefiting living beings."[690]

The second important consideration in interpreting the above-quoted passage from Sot'aesan is the context of the time in which Sot'aesan lived. The so-called Confucian scriptures,

[689] *Hoebo* No. 4, in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan: Hoebo py'ŏn* 2 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1994), 33-35.

[690] "Chapter Two Doctrine: 1," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 125-126.

such as *Lesser Learning* (Kr. *Sohak*; Ch. *Xiaoxue* 小學), *Great Learning* (Kr. *Taehak*; Ch. *Daxue* 大學), and *The Analects* (Kr. *Nonŏ*; Ch. *Lunyu* 論語), were the main textbooks used as educational materials in private village schools during Korea's Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties. Buddhist monks could also read and discuss the Confucian scriptures, such as the *Mencius* (Kr. *Maengja*; Ch. *Mengzi* 孟子) and the *Zhuangzi* (Kr. *Changja*; Ch. *Zhuangzi* 莊子), as part of their practice. The *Tonggyŏng taejŏn* 東經大全, which was very widely read at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, contains a new notion of Ch'oe Cheu's God, based in Confucianism. This is an example of the syncretic way in which people thought in those times. In other words, we cannot understand the religious phenomena of the era using a modern institutionalized Western framework of divisive sectarian religious traditions.

I have thus far contrasted the concepts of "intentional syncretism" and "culturally inherent syncretism" to argue that Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism should be understood in the context of Buddhist reform movements, not as a new religious movement. I believe the framework of these two forms of syncretism to be particularly useful when analyzing Wŏn Buddhism. However, this two-syncretism framework would also be useful for other scholars to apply to additional faiths in the future.

Let me now take a closer look at how Sot'aesan specifically presented a new framework for Buddhism reform for the masses.

5. Doctrinal Re-invention of Buddhist Teachings for the General Public

Sot'aesan expressed the essence of Buddhist teachings in two ways: "the Essential Way of Practice—the Threefold Study and the Eight Articles; and the Essential Way of Human life—the Fourfold Graces and the Four Essentials." "The Essential Way of Human life" refers to the path that all people as human beings should understand and follow, based on the core Buddhist

teaching of "interconnectedness." According to Sot'aesan, each being is inseparably part of a network of interdependent relationships with all other sentient beings. For example, "there are four categories of interdependent relationship: the relationships 1) between you and heaven and earth *ch'ŏnji*, 天地 (meaning Mother Nature), 2) between you and your parents, 3) between you and all fellow beings, 4) between you and the law. Sot'aesan states in the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* that if we wish to easily understand this inseparable relationship, we first must consider whether we could sustain our existence and live without Mother Nature, our fellow beings, our parents, and laws. All of us would acknowledge that we could not live without them. Sot'aesan asks, "If there is a relationship wherein we cannot live without the other, then how could there be a benevolence greater than that?"

Therefore, Sot'aesan says, our duty and responsibility is not only to be deeply grateful for this interconnected relationship, but also to actively express our gratitude to all the world's living beings. Furthermore, Sot'aesan teaches that we need to actively engage with the problems of the world through Buddhist practices. We especially need to work in a way that not only makes us individually happy, but also works towards a greater degree of happiness and sustainability for the wider world. Here, some of the most important ethical principles are non-attachment and selfless compassion.

Sot'aesan refers to this interconnectedness, without which we cannot sustain our existence and lives, as "grace" (*ŭn* 恩). According to him, since no being can sustain its existence without other beings, everything in this world is inextricably interwoven. We should therefore awaken to the ways in which we are interrelated and thereby we should repay the gratitude according to the ways we are indebted to them. For example, to repay the gratitude of heaven and earth from which one receives "the air in the sky," "the support of the ground," "the

radiance of the sun and moon," and "the beneficence of wind, clouds, rain, and dew,"[691] among others, one should practice by modeling oneself wholeheartedly on the Way that these entities are giving: the simplest way, that is, the way of selflessly serving the world. In order to repay our parents, from whom we receive all-embracing, unconditional love when we are powerless children, "we should offer protection as best we can to those who are lacking power."[692] By realizing that we "cannot live alone in a place that has no people, no animals, and no plants," and at the same time deeply understanding that all fellow beings are indebted to each other by simultaneously "benefiting themselves and benefiting others," we should repay this gratitude by following the way of benefiting both ourselves and others in whatever actions we take in our daily lives.[693]

In this way, to repay one's fundamental debt of gratitude, one should practice the Threefold Practice—the cultivation of the mind, inquiry into human affairs and universal principles, and choice in action. In this way, one can then achieve the Threefold Power: the power of cultivation, the power of inquiry, and the power of choice in action. Without the powers of cultivation and wisdom one cannot properly see and understand the interconnectedness of the world. Furthermore, without the power to realize one's wisdom through mindful choice in action, one cannot reproduce positive outcomes through one's speech and actions. Sot'aesan explains the relationship between the two ways as follows:

> As for the essential Way of human life, people will not be able to follow it without the essential Way of practice. As for the essential Way of practice, people would not be able to manifest fully the efficacious power of that practice without the essential Way of human life. To explain their connection through an analogy, the essential Way of practice

[691] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 26.

[692] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 31.

[693] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 32-36.

> is like the medical arts by which a physician cures a patient, while the essential Way of human life is like the medicine that cures the patient.[694]

In May 1920, Sot'aesan composed a *kasa* (lyrics) called "Hoesŏnggok." However, Sot'aesan did not distribute this *kasa* because he considered it not to be a proper document for instructing many people. In June of the same year, Sot'aesan officially announced his doctrinal draft, which is a more formalized version of the unpublished *kasa.* It includes "the Essential Way of Practice—the Threefold Study and the Eight Articles; and the Essential Way of Human life—the Fourfold Graces and the Four Essentials." In Chapter Two, we observed that Sot'aesan deemed the core essence of *kanhwa* Sŏn to be "inquiry" or "investigation"; we also noted that he gradually developed his doctrinal system into the soteriological system of *tono chŏmsu*, sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation, which first catalyzes enlightenment to one's original nature, then gradually perfects one's enlightened actions. More specifically, Sot'aesan focused the contents of his soteriological system into the Threefold Study, which includes "the cultivation of the mind," "inquiry into human affairs and universal principles," and "mindful choices in action." He suggested that anyone can achieve enlightenment and enlightened actions through the practice of these studies in daily life.

In the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* (Essentials of Cultivation and Inquiry), Sot'aesan delineates the eight progressive stages of gradual cultivation. The first of these is the "beginner's stage," sequentially followed by "arousing aspiration," "establishing one's intent or will," "cultivation," "inquiry," "making a choice in action," "minuteness," and "entering into quiescence." Of these eight stages, let us more closely look at the last two stages.

> 7. "Minuteness" (*semil* 細密) means that the brightness of your wisdom is vast and immeasurable, such that there is no obstruction to your understanding of both principles and phenomena.

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[694] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 53-54.

> 8. "Entering into quiescence" (*ipchŏng* 入靜) means that your mind is not separated from the original self-nature, such that all of your actions are free from self-centered thoughts. (*Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, 71-73)

These two stages suggest that Sot'aesan's reform of Buddhism did not only incorporate the *kanhwa* Sŏn that was popular at that time, but rather, more broadly inherited the historical tradition of Korean Buddhism that had passed down through the two strains of Sŏn (meditation) and Kyo (doctrinal) Buddhism. After authoring his first work, *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron*, Sot'aesan continued to develop his teachings by writing the major religious texts he would become known for. The first official text of his own creation that Sot'aesan used for his disciples was the *Yuktae yoryŏng*, which he would later develop into the *Samdae yoryŏng*, and finally into the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn*. This trio of texts are all structured around three main teachings: 1) the Essential Way of Practice—the Threefold Studies and the Eight Articles; 2) the Essential Way of Human life—the Fourfold Graces and the Four Essentials; and 3) the Detailed Training Methods.

These two essential ways of practice and of human life were reconceptualizations of the two main strands of Korean Buddhism, Sŏn and Kyo. One must cultivate one's initial aspirations and awakenings until one reaches the stages of "minuteness" (defined as "non-obstruction in understanding both principle and phenomena" [理事無碍 事事無碍], the ultimate goal of the Huayan school's teachings), and "entering into quiescence" (keeping the mind connected to original nature in daily life [不離自性], the ultimate goal of Sŏn Buddhism). In reaching these two ultimate spiritual goals, the threefold practice of cultivating, inquiry, and choice in action should be practiced simultaneously and continuously.

In order to instruct his disciples in walking these essential paths, Sot'aesan developed a variety of practices for them to pursue. He sorted these practices into three categories:

- The Cultivation of the Mind: (1) Sitting Meditation and (2) Chanting

- Inquiry into Human Affairs and Universal Principles: (3) Scripture, (4) Lecturing, (5) Discussion, (6) List of Inquiries, (7) the Principle of Nature
- Choice in Action: (8) Keeping a practice diary, (9) heedfulness, and (10) deportment[695]

According to Sot'aesan's interpretation and reformation, the primary Buddhist teachings can be condensed into the "threefold practice," which consists of cultivating clarity and stability of mind (*chŏng*, 定, *samādhi*); inquiring into human affairs and universal principles (*hye*, 慧, wisdom); and mindful choices in action (*kye*, 戒, precepts). The threefold practice, which encompasses all of the elements of the noble eightfold path and which is considered to be one of the Buddha's earliest teachings, is widely viewed as one of the most important Buddhist teachings in the religion's history.[696] The main goals of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma are articulated in the *PYH kyuyak*: "the purpose of our order is to cultivate the mind, to delve into (human) affairs and (universal) principles, and to make right choices in

[695] Sot'aesan developed the original form of the threefold practice of Wŏn Buddhism in response to the subject of "inquiry" (*yŏn'gu*), which he reinterpreted as the core essence of *kanhwa* Sŏn. He describes the three essentials of *chŏngsin suyang*, *sari yŏn'gu*, and *chakŏp ch'uisa* as subdivisions of the subject of "the essential practices of inquiry." Sot'aesan divides the *kanhwa* Sŏn technique into three main features: calming the mind, questioning or inquiry, and maintaining a calm and wise mind in daily life. This initial form of the "the three essentials of inquiry" later converged with the traditional Buddhist system of threefold practice (*śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā*) and developed into the framework of "threefold training" (*samhak* 三學). See *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* (1927), *Yuktae yoryŏng* (1932), *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* (1943).

[696] See, Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., "*triśikṣā*," *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 925.

actions through establishing the attitudes of firm conviction,[697] zeal,[698] questioning,[699] and sincere dedication,[700] while eliminating the attitudes of unbelief,[701] greed,[702] laziness,[703] and foolishness."[704, 705] And Sot'aesan designed summer and winter retreats to support disciples as they strove to understand and put these teachings into action. In order to allow practitioners to familiarize themselves with these teachings, Sot'aesan established the above subjects as retreat programs, such as sitting meditation, chanting, studying scripture, lecturing, discussion and keeping a diary.

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[697] I translate the term "belief" (信) as "firm conviction" because the English word "belief" has a Western connotation of faith in the divine, whereas the Buddhist use of "belief" does not. According to Vasubandhu, belief is defined as "Clarity of mind, firm conviction (belief), or aspiration toward karma and its results, the (Four Noble) Truths and the (Three) Jewels" (*karmaphalasatyaratneṣvmabhisampratyayo 'bhilāṣaś cetasaḥ prasādma*). In Sot'aesan's definition, "Belief means faith, which is the motive force that settles the mind when we try to accomplish anything." See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*: *Korean-English* (*Wŏnbulgyo Chongjŏn)* (Iksan: Wŏnkwang, 2000), 83.

[698] "Zeal" indicates a mind that moves forward heroically. This is the motivating force that pushes us along when we try to accomplish something. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 83.

[699] "Questioning" means wanting to discover and know what we do not know about human affairs and universal principles. This is the motivating force that reveals what we are ignorant of when we try to accomplish something. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 83-85.

[700] "Dedication" means an unremitting state of mind. This is the motivating force that ultimately helps us achieve our objective when we try to accomplish something. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 85.

[701] "Unbelief" means the lack of belief that is the opposite of faith. This makes us unable to reach a decision when we try to accomplish something. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 85.

[702] "Greed" means an excessive clinging to something, beyond to an unreasonable degree. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 85.

[703] "Laziness" means the aversion to act when we try to accomplish anything. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 85.

[704] "Foolishness" means acting as we please or stopping when we please, completely ignorant of great and small, being and nonbeing, as well as of right and wrong, benefit and harm. See *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 85.

[705] *PYH kyuyak*, 6.

Sitting meditation and chanting are designed to help practitioners cultivate clarity and stability of mind; studying scripture, lecturing, discussion, and keeping a diary are methods for sharpening people's wisdom by broadening their understanding of Buddhist tenets, sharing their awakenings with others, and receiving evaluations from masters. After attaining a deep knowledge of Buddhist teachings, students are asked to apply those teachings in their daily lives by closely observing their mental states as well as their behavior. The task of keeping a diary is designed as a tool to help practitioners remain mindful when they use their six sense organs in their daily lives. In order to do that, though, they first need to familiarize themselves with the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. The retreat programs devoted quite a large amount of time to helping practitioners acquire an understanding of basic Buddhist teachings through learning scripture, sharing their understandings with others, as well as lecturing. In particular, the process of writing their own lecture on a specific Buddhist topic and delivering the talk in front of many others allowed practitioners to sharpen their knowledge of Buddhism as well as to internalize and embody what they had learned.

Sot'aesan gradually revised these practices in the *Yuktae yoryŏng* and finally developed them into eleven training subjects, which he discussed in his *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* in 1943. These subjects were taught during both regular dharma services, which were held on every sixth, sixteenth, and twenty-sixth day of each lunar month, and the Winter and Summer retreats, of which thirty-six (Winter and Summer) were held between 1925 and 1943.

5-1. Sot'aesan's New Buddhist Practices

1) Lecturing and Discussion

Sot'aesan created the practice of "lecturing" (*kangyŏn* 講演) by combining the modern educational practice of speechmaking with Buddhism's Threefold Practice: cultivating the mind,

sharpening one's wisdom, and making mindful choices in action. The specific goal of Sot'aesan's lecturing practice was to help the student develop wisdom. The practice is mentioned in the earliest text of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, *PYH kyuyak*, as a means of learning the "list for inquiry" that appears in the *Suyang yŏn'gu yoron* and which consists of 137 examples of topics for questioning.[706] Later, the text of the *Yuktae yoryŏng* (1932) designated lecturing as one of the official goals of the PYH training. In the final version of his main scripture, the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn*, Sot'aesan added to the lecture routine a method for recording the number of hours that the adherent spent listening to others' lectures and rehearsing his or her own lectures. The purpose of this practice is defined in the 1943 edition of the *Pulgyo chŏngjŏn* as follows:[707]

> "Lecturing" refers to settling on a certain issue regarding human affairs or universal principles and expounding on its significance, so that practitioners may hone their wisdom while exchanging opinions in front of the congregation with due formality.[708]

According to this definition of "lecturing," the main goal of the practice is to hone practitioners' wisdom by giving them a chance to give a formal lecture on a certain issue. The *Yuktae yoryŏng* also states that "lecturing" helps members practice public speaking by developing their grasp of logic and social conduct while also teaching them to control the sound of their voice, speaking

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[706] *PYH kyuyak*, "Article 3. The duties of the department of research shall be as mentioned hereunder: to guide members in cultivating their minds through chanting (reciting the Buddha's name) and meditation; to guide members in delving into "the list of inquiry" and to provide feedback on their investigations; to guide members in delivering a lecture based in their own premeditated inquiries." Regarding "the list for inquiry," see Chapter 2.

[707] The development of the practice of "lecturing" is described in detail in the article "Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodan ŭi kang'yŏn yŏn'gu: Kigwanji *Wŏlmal t'ongsin*, *Wŏlbo*, *Hoebo* rŭl chungsim ŭiro." See Ryu Sŏngt'ae, "Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodan ŭi kang'yŏn yŏn'gu: Kigwanji *Wŏlmal t'ongsin*, *Wŏlbo*, *Hoebo* rŭl chungsim ŭiro," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 53: 35-79.

[708] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 58.

style, and bodily gestures.[709] Therefore, the practice of "lecturing" can be understood as a way to cultivate a practitioner's wisdom through formal expression.

In addition to lecturing, Sot'aesan offered practitioners an activity he called "discussion" (*hoehwa* 會話) as a second means of sharpening their wisdom and insight:

> "Conversation" [discussion] means allowing practitioners to talk freely about the impressions they have each received from among the various things they have seen and heard, so that they may hone their wisdom while exchanging opinions vigorously and without restriction.[710]

In the practice of "lecturing," practitioners are given a specific topic through which they can grow to better understand universal principles and human affairs through the lens of Buddhist teachings. In "discussion," by contrast, members can freely share their own awakenings or reflections as they have experienced them in daily life.

According to Sot'aesan, the two practices of "lecturing" and "discussion" are symbiotic, blending a looser, freer learning experience with a more restricted, formal one. Sot'aesan further states in the *Yuktae yoryŏng* that "the human mind, when overly restricted, does not develop properly due to the excessive pressure; on the other hand, when the mind is left solely in a loose condition, it will not be alert enough to develop insight. Therefore, practitioners should be given

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[709] *Yuktae yoryŏng* (1932), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 81.

[710] Here I am adapting the translation found in *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 58. In my opinion, however, the term *hoehwa* should be glossed as "discussion" rather than "conversation" because during the time designated for *hoehwa* practitioners are usually given certain topics to talk about rather than generating those topics naturally, as one would during conversation. For that reason, I use the term "discussion" rather than "conversation" here.

these two circumstances in a balance."[711] During the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's winter and summer retreat periods, all participants were expected to deliver a lecture each day on a designated topic. Sot'aesan assigned his students a subject drawn from "the precepts," "the essential discourses on commanding one's nature,"[712] or other teachings of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. Practitioners were then tasked with delving into that topic over the course of the day, putting it in relation to their actual lives, and presenting what they had come to understand at night during the "lecturing" period. In this way, practitioners were given a method by which to focus their distracted thoughts on a topic throughout the day or over another period of time, deeply honing their wisdom in the process. "Lecturing" was considered one of the most important practices not just of the intensive retreat periods, but also of weekly Dharma services. To the extent to which they had thoughtfully lived with the topic during the day, practitioners would be able to prepare the contents of their lecture well. In addition, according to the Iksan PYH record of August 1930, despite the fact that the peak farming season of the autumn harvest was about to begin, members decided to practice "discussion" at their own homes in the beginning of each month, to study scriptures in the middle, and to practice "lecturing" in the end. It is recorded that these practices produced emotions similar to those experienced by members at the retreats.

The practice of "lecturing" took various forms during the early period of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe: "free lecturing," "lecturing contests," "sharing reflections," and so on. While the lecture topic was assigned by Sot'aesan or other teachers most of the time, during "free lecturing," practitioners were asked to speak on a topic of their own choosing. During special events, such as the annual general meetings when all members from a given region gathered

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[711] *Yuktae yoryŏng* (1932), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1998), 81.

[712] See Appendix.

together, Sot'aesan also held "lecturing contests" in which each temple's representative gave a lecture and Sot'aesan ranked the contestants' speeches. At the end of the winter or summer retreats, a "sharing of reflection" would take place in which participants were asked to present what they had learned or realized during the retreat. The members of the PYH also took turns giving lectures at the regular Dharma meetings. Sometimes they would give formal lectures on a given topic. Other times, they freely shared any personal awakenings or reflections that had occurred to them in their day-to-day lives.

On the other hand, during "discussion" sessions, all participants gathered together in a circle and freely exchanged their opinions and reflections on certain topics; during such exchanges members inspired and were inspired by others' opinions, and thus honed their wisdom organically. According to the news bulletin of the headquarters of the PYH for December 12, 1928,

> The evening practice of lecturing, which has been ongoing thus far, is temporarily suspended. The evening meetings that provide lessons on the regulations of the order and on methods for examining one's mindfulness and unmindfulness, as well as the on the method of keeping a daily diary, are greeted with a packed house. In response to suggestions from some of our members, discussion time is extended from one hour to one and a half hours from 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. since one hour of discussion was too short. Following the sounding of the bell, both male and female members gather in the Great Dharma hall. After reflecting in silence on their days, attendees share with members and masters any special awakenings and reflections they've experienced, or any special accomplishments they've achieved in handling the functioning of the body and the mind. They ask the masters and members for their appraisals, freely asking and discussing with them any questions they have regarding their practice. If there is still remaining time, they discuss some issues in order and are then dismissed.
> (*Wŏlmal t'ongsin che 8 ho*, thirtieth day of the tenth lunar month of the year, *Sich'ang* 13)[713]

As described in this record, during each evening's discussion session, all members of the PYH gathered together and shared the practices or awakenings that they had experienced during the

[713] *Wŏlmal t'ongsin che 8 ho*, in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 1 kwŏn: Wŏlsin wŏlbo py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1998), 48.

day. Through this discussion, participants could not only reflect on their daily practice, but also learn from others' practices by listening to their progress. For example, the *Hoebo* (*Monthly Magazine*) No. 45, published in June 1938, provides an overview of one discussion session held at the Chŏngch'uk winter retreat. During the designated time, when it was time for Chŏn Ŭmgwang to speak, he began to talk about the differences between those who practice and those who don't:[714]

> Even people who don't engage in our practice end up using all aspects of our Threefold Study in various situations; but once those situations pass, they become careless and indifferent, and therefore make no progress in their practice over their entire lifetimes. However, because we practitioners continue to practice in the Threefold Study regardless of whether it is a time of action or rest and whether we have work to do or not, if we diligently continue in accordance with the dharma, we are sure to perfect our personal character.[715]

Upon listening to this point, Sot'aesan further elucidated it by presenting three hypothetical case studies:

> Suppose three people are sitting here, one inquiring into machines, one doing sitting meditation, and the last one just sitting idly. The one who is inquiring into machines will eventually have invented something; the one who is doing sitting meditation will have attained the power of absorption with regard to his spirit; the one who is passing the days idly will have accomplished nothing. In this way, there are great differences in the results that come from working continuously on something.

There are not many detailed records of the contents of what was said during discussion time, but this issue of the *Hoebo* indicates that everyone who attended that winter retreat freely shared their daily reflections in turn, thereby helping each other develop in the process of their practice. According to the July 2, 1929 newsletter of the Iksan Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, Sot'aesan was always

[714] *Hoebo* no. 45.

[715] *The Doctrinal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 3:11, 169.

present during the periods of lecture and discussion, evaluating the progress of each individual and providing supplemental Dharma talks.[716]

Traditionally, only male clerics are allowed to deliver a lecture from the podium. In other words, only those who were given authoritative rights to interpret and transfer the Buddhadharma were expected to give talks in public spaces. In this regard, the practice of giving a lecture is a means of allowing people to stand in the lineage of the direct disciples of the Buddha by offering their own interpretations of the Buddhadharma. By opening up this practice to all classes of people, Sot'aesan allowed everyone—the learned and the ignorant, men and women, young and old—to enjoy the special privilege of being the direct disciple of the Buddha. For example, even a young three-year old child and Sot'aesan's wife were offered this opportunity. According to the testimony of Kwŏn Tonghwa (1902 – 2004),

> All participants in the retreat, without exception, should give a formal lecture. Master Sot'aesan made everyone, including an old man, an old woman, a young child, and even his wife, Yang Haun (1890 – 1973), give a lecture. Despite the fact that her husband and her husband's disciples were nearby, when her turn approached, Mrs. Yang Haun pestered me, even though I was like her daughter-in-law, to teach her the way of giving a lecture by saying, "Tonghwa, please teach me how to give a lecture."[717]

In fact, Kwŏn Tonghwa, who was born into a poor family in the countryside in Changsu, North Chŏll province, never received any kind of education due to the social stricture against allowing women to be educated.[718] After joining the Pulpŏp Yŏn'hoe as a lay member, she never missed

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[716] According to the monthly newsletters of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, such as *Wŏlmal t'ongsin* 4, 5, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24-25, 28-29, 32,41,46, and *Hoebo* 11, 12, 13, 19, 21, 23-2, 23-3, 25, 39, Sot'aesan gave supplementary Dharma talks after his disciples delivered their lectures. See also Ryu Sŏngt'ae, "Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodan ŭi kang'yŏn yŏn'gu," *Wŏnbulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 53: 51-53.

[717] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 231.

[718] *Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphunnok*, (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Wŏn'gwangsa, 1999), 94.

participating in the summer and winter retreats, and later mastered not only written vernacular Korean and some classical Chinese, but also the practices of lecturing and discussion, and often helped other retreat participants succeed in their lecturing practice.[719] Her son, Chŏn P'allo (1924-2005), also participated in the retreat at the age of three and gave a lecture. According to Chŏn P'allo's testimony, the podium was so high compared to his short height that he had to step up onto a wooden pillow to lecture. His assigned topics were "Do not throw a shoe on the roof" and "Do not scribble on the wall."[720] For young children of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, there were several special children's precepts like the ones that Chŏn P'allo addressed:

1. Upon getting up in the morning, greet Master Grandfather (meaning Sot'aesan) after dressing neatly.
2. Upon encountering adults either on street or at home, greet them with palms joined.
3. Be good boys and girls to parents, and do not fight with friends but take care of each other with loving-kindness.
4. Do not scribble on the wall.
5. Do not touch either bicycles or handcarts in front of the offices.
6. Do not break the branches off trees, and do not kill bugs or insects.
7. Do not play with fire.
8. Do not climb a high tree, and do not go into deep water.[721]

These regulations were not just imposed on or drilled into the children of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. Instead, Sot'aesan allowed them to think about these regulations by themselves and to delve into relevant questions such as why they enjoyed the act of throwing a shoe on the roof, where the pleasure of their actions came from, and what kinds of consequences would follow their actions. Through such self-interrogations, children were able to sharpen their wisdom and insights. In this

[719] *Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphunnok*, (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Wŏn'gwangsa, 1999), 94-95.

[720] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 229.
[721] *Wŏnbulgyo che 1 tae ch'angnip yugongin yŏksa*, 109.

way, through the practice of giving a lecture in a public space, the members of the PYH began to discover their own agency as independent, authentic recipients of the Dharma.

Preparing a lecture on a certain Buddhist topic provided an opportunity for practitioners to systematically understand the fundamental nature of reality through the process of studying Buddhist teachings. In particular, when it was time for his students to prepare formal lectures, Sot'aesan assembled three or four people into a group consisting of the educated and the uneducated so that the former could help the latter, and the latter could benefit from the former's insight and guidance. Sot'aesan also regularly held "lecturing contests." One time, a disciple complained that the winner of a lecturing contest was assisted by another person while she was preparing the lecture. To this, Sot'aesan replied, "Why didn't you ask for help?"[722] Through this remark, we can see that the main purpose of Sot'aesan's lecturing contests was to encourage his disciples to help one other in deepening their wisdom and insight. At the same time, giving a formal lecture in front of many other practitioners and masters provided students with a means of undergoing a public evaluation of their own levels of understanding.

Not only does "lecturing" give practitioners a chance to develop a Buddhist way of understanding the world; it also helps them to live their daily lives in accord with Buddhist teachings. At the end of the lecturing period, Sot'aesan evaluated each speaker's lecture.[723]

> Students who had previous received a higher education delivered lectures that pretended to know everything, using words like "philosophically," "literally," and "scientifically." However, Sot'aesan evaluated the lectures based not on such displays of intelligence, but rather, on how the speakers actualized and practiced Buddhism in their daily lives. Sot'aesan used the grading range of *kap* 甲 to *chŏng* 丁. [*Kap* is equivalent to an A in the

[722] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 223.

[723] According to the report of the recent news of the Iksan Headquarters' Dharma meetings recorded in the *Wŏlmal t'ongsin 15 ho* in 1930, Sot'aesan was always present during lecturing or discussion sessions, evaluating his students' progress. See *Kyogo ch'onggan 1 kwŏn*, 214.

> Western grading system, while *chŏng* is a D.] No matter how informative an individual's lecture was, if his or her lecture lacked a core of "applying Buddhist teachings in one's daily life," Sot'aesan said, "it is like the dining table of Sonjŏng-*ri*. Even though there are many dishes, there is no dish worth eating. It is a lecture without substance, so it is *chŏng*." On the other hand, if a practitioner gave a lecture with unintelligible words that one might hear in the countryside, but delivered it based on his/her own practice and direct experience, then Sot'aesan praised it highly by saying, "It is 12 *kap*s!"
> (Sŏ Taejin's testimony)[724]

In order to deliver a lecture based in his own experience, a student had to try to live his life in accordance with what he had learned at the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. The lecture topics that Sot'aesan chose, such as "precepts," "the essential discourse on commanding one's nature," or "the essential Dharmas of daily practice,"[725] were all intended to help practitioners live their lives according to these teachings. For example, the precept of "Do not speak about the faults of others" was meant to encourage practitioners not only to think about why and how they should not talk about others' faults during the day, but should also to prevent them from actually speaking about the faults of others. The topics in "the essential discourse on commanding one's nature," for example are as follows:

> 4. A knowledgeable person should not neglect learning just because he or she has knowledge.
> 5. Do not indulge in wine and dalliance, but use your time to inquire into truth.
> 6. Do not cling to your biases.
> 7. When responding to any matter, maintain a respectful state of mind and fear the rise of covetous greed as if it were a lion.
> 8. Teach yourself day by day, hour by hour.
> 9. If anything goes wrong, do not blame others, but examine yourself.
> 10. Should you learn of another's fault, do not reveal it but use it instead to perceive your own faults.
> 11. Should you learn of another's achievements, proclaim them to the world and never forget them.
> (*The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 91)

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[724] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 234. There is a village called "Songjŏng." If you are invited to Songjŏng Village, you would be served many dishes on the dining table, but there are no dishes worth eating since all of the dishes are not tasty. Such a situation is said to be like "the dining table of Sonjŏng-*ri*."

[725] See Appendix.

Being assigned such lecture topics may motivate practitioners to move their minds from an unwillingness to learn to a willingness to learn, from clinging to detachment, from disrespect to respect, from a mentality of blame to one of self-reflectiveness.

In addition, Sot'aesan taught that one should try to grasp Buddhist teachings through genuine, original thinking. In other words, instead of merely memorizing teachings, practitioners had to study them thoughtfully. For example, when practitioners were given the topic of "Grace of Heaven and Earth," a student named Mo Sangjun (1923 – 2018) came out to the podium and said, "I am washing my stomach through my breath!" He probably said this in reference to one of the passages of "the Gist of Indebtedness to Heaven and Earth" in the *Yuktae yoryŏng*: "due to the air in the sky, we are to live by inhaling and exhaling," a passage that led him to think about the indispensable interconnectedness between himself and Mother Nature. His words caused the audience to burst out laughing, but Sot'aesan commented with a smile that "it should be recorded on a phonograph and listened to in the future!"[726] Mo Sangjun's lecture was simple and artless, yet contained his own honest words and thinking. It can also be said that he began to internalize the teaching of "the grace of nature" by discovering a new relationship between himself and the lesson.

The work of "lecturing" also seems to help practitioners engage in intensive concentration on certain Buddhist topics, which is the critical element in *kanhwa* Sŏn (questioning meditation). In *kanhwa* meditation, which was considered the main meditation technique at that time in traditional Buddhist monasteries, one should arouse a "sensation of doubt" in order to catalyze enlightenment; however, most ordinary people can hardly generate the kind of intensive and extensive concentration that *kanhwa* Sŏn demands. However, during

[726] *Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphunnok*, (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Wŏn'gwangsa, 1999), 146; Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 233.

the process of preparing a lecture, practitioners naturally partook in such intensive and extensive concentration. On some occasions, Sot'aesan had his disciples compete in lecturing, dividing them into two groups: men versus women. He instructed the losing team to give a big bow to the other team. One day, the woman's team won and the male team had to give a big bow to them. It must have been difficult for the men to bow to the women in such a male-dominated society, but they did it. According to testimony by Kim Yŏngsin (1908-1984), since the lecturing test mattered greatly to the disciples, they all practiced hard regardless of time and place. They even rehearsed in the restroom and the kitchen, while they were eating, sweeping the yard, and sleeping.[727] Yi Sŏngsin (1922 – 2012) remarked, "When my turn [to speak] came, no matter how delicious the food was in front of me, I lost my appetite. We practiced 'lecturing' behind the restroom or under a tree all together."[728] Because everyone was so invested in the practice, an environment of very intense concentration was fostered as the disciples prepared their lectures.

> According to the prior custom, after chanting the *Heart Sutra* one time, Song Tosŏng delivered a disquisition under the topic of "Our Great Aspiration." This was followed by Kim Kich'ŏn's dharma lecture on "Treatise on the Three Jewels." Whenever Kim's righteous Dharma club was wielded, all of the superstitious belief that had accumulated for thousands of years disappeared all at once like spring snow. When Chŏn Ŭmgwang gave an eloquent speech with the title of "My View on Modernity," the audience was filled with exultant joy and their intermittent bursts of applause seemed to shake the inside of the hall. Master lavishly praised today's speakers. Today's dharma service was an unheard-of great success.[729]

According to this record of the Dharma meeting held at the Iksan main Dharma hall on the sixth day of the twelfth lunar month in *Sich'ang* 13 (January 16, 1929), we can observe that

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[727] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 234.

[728] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 235.

[729] *Wŏlmal t'ongsin* 10 ho (December), "*Iksan pongwan yehoerok*," the sixth day of the twelfth lunar month, *Sich'ang* 13 (January 16, 1929)

the Dharma meeting's highlight was the lectures given by several different speakers, each on a different topics. The first two topics were related to Buddhism, while the last one pertained to the contemporary issue of modernity. From this, we can see that the lecture topics were not restricted only to Buddhist teachings, but could include a wide range of secular topics.

Although unfortunately most of the actual texts of most of the disciples' talks have not survived, we can sense the lively atmosphere that was created in the Dharma hall by the passionate, informed, and inspired speakers and the engaged audience's reactions. As they practiced "lecturing" in this way at every Dharma meeting and retreat, most of the members of the PYH seemed to discover their own abilities to study, interpret, and internalize the Buddhadharma. A year and a half later, we find the following record:

> Today is the 26th day of the 12th lunar month in the year of *Sich'ang* 14 (January 28, 1930). Today is the 63rd Monthly meeting day within the second period of the founding of the order and today is also New Year's Day, welcoming the new year of *Kyŏng'o* and leaving behind the past year of *Kisa*. Presided over by chairman Cho Songgwang, the Dharma sharing time was held for male and female retreatants at 10 AM.
>
> A dramatic scene was produced: everyone was striving to be the first to do their Dharma sharing. The days when even men, let alone women, were hesitant to come to even such a shabby platform to give a lecture have given way to today's service in which all members, regardless of whether they were men or women, were trying to go first. How can we not say that this is proof of the outcomes of years of our training? The thunderous applause shaking the inside of the hall continued endlessly. We cannot even count how many people were standing up throughout the hall, from east and west, from south and north, to volunteer to share their reflections. The relentless clock already informed us that it was 12:00, leaving multiple willing volunteers who had not yet been able to share. We decided that the rest of the speakers would go in the future and went into a recess.
> (*Wŏlmap t'ongsin* 22 ho, "*Kakchi hoehap iksan pongwan yehoeron*")

This record gives us a glimpse of how lively Dharma sharing time was. In the early years of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, practitioners had had a hard time delivering a formal lecture at the podium. For example, Kim Yŏngsin (1908 – 1984), who became one of the first female ordained disciples

of Sot'aesan, stated that even she—a woman who graduated from Kyŏngsŏng women's high school with honors—found it hard to give a lecture. Kim Haeŭn also shared the following story:

> There was a lecturing contest every year during the general meetings. Each temple selected its own representative to participate. In 1941, I entered the contest as a representative of the Chŏnju temple; however, I could not successfully deliver my prepared lecture because I was so nervous, and just kept saying, "Ah…Ah…." Fortunately, another member, Pak Chino, substituted for me.[730]

For female practitioners who were so afraid of standing in front of many people, Sot'aesan is said to have hung a bamboo blind before them and have them deliver their lectures from behind it. Min Sŏngyŏng said that even if she prepared her lecture with the help of the talented lecturer Yi Tongjinhwa (1893 – 1969), she often was not able to say anything because she would forget what she had prepared. In this sense, giving a lecture was not an easy feat for them. However, after the disciples practiced continuously, a "dramatic scene was produced: everyone was striving to be the first to do their Dharma sharing." Through this practice, Sot'aesan's disciples, including both the learned and the ignorant, men and women, young and old, gradually sought to transform themselves from ordinary beings into Buddhist practitioners who were independent, authentic Dharma receivers.

Finally, let us look at the entire text of a lecture delivered by Chŏn Yich'ang at the age of sixteen in 1941. In the lecture competition of the Iksan PYH, in which representatives from each temple participated, Chŏn gave a lecture and received a special award. The text of her speech was published in the *Wŏn'gwang Magazine* no. 2 in October of 1949.[731]

Life and death

Chŏn Yich'ang

[730] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kŭmgangsan ŭi chuin toera: Wŏnbulgyo ch'ogi kyodansa 4* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 236; Kim Haeŭn, "Taejongsa rŭl mamnan saram tŭl," in *Wŏnbulgyo sinbo* 653 ho.

[731] *Wŏn'gwang* 2 (October 30, Tangi 4282 (1949 C.E.), 34-36.

Let me tell you a few things about the matter of life and death. If a young person like me talks about such a big issue, many of you might laugh. However, when it comes to the issue of life and death, there is no difference between the young and the old, so I would like to tell you honestly about what I think, even though I don't know this issue deeply.

Before joining our congregation, I didn't know what the most important matters were with regard to human existence, and as it is commonly said in our society, I considered marriage between a man and a woman to be life's greatest thing. After listening to the Dharma words [of Sot'aesan] and attending his retreats, I realized that what really matters is the subject of life and death. I believe that this realization is all thanks to our great master Sot'aesan.

Why is it that the issue of life and death is the greatest issue? No matter how many great affairs humans participate in, they are all just fragments of dreams if they have not resolved the issue of life and death. Let's consider the following. No matter how rich and important you are, death cannot be avoided. No matter how strong and brave you are, you cannot defeat death. No matter how talented and wise you are, death is inevitable. No matter how many families and supporters you have, you can't resist dying. Don't many say that in the end you will mourn your own death with a sigh and the falling of tears? However, few people consider this to be a big deal before their own death is imminent. Most people think that pursuing one's own honor, rights, property, or a variety of desires is a great thing to do with their life, and they strive to achieve them with every effort. I don't mean to say that you don't need honor, rights, or property in life. People forget the mind, which is the foundation of each person, and do not strive to attain the power of freedom at all in life and death over the course of the six rebirth destinies. People are steeped in vain and groundless things of the world, and one day they will eventually die. In the last moments of their lives, they realize that all the property they have accumulated over their lifetimes is useless. They can't even take with them a handful of grain from their full barns. They can't even take a penny from their gold vaults. They have to give up the rights they have earned with all of their energies. They unavoidably have to part even from their family, whom they have loved as dearly as gold-jade. Even their own body, which they have cherished their entire life, has to leave. Who knows where a soul who is unable to distinguish between right and wrong, and just follows its attachments according to karmic force, will fall among the complex pit of the six destinies? At that moment, no matter how much he or she tries to be awakened, how could the soul who hasn't cultivated the power of the mind have the power of freedom?

In addition to that, such people have deceived and harmed others for the sake of themselves or of their wives for decades, accumulating resentment in the east, accruing complaint in the west, and being called the enemy. Everything that they have gained was due to the good work of other people. All of the sins committed to obtain these gains are on their shoulders. So, how can it not be terrible?

One man says, "I tried to live ten thousand years after building a house on the shore of the sandy river with all my energy. But one day, the rainy season floods left us with no place to live. The only thing left is my empty body and the debt that I accrued while building the house." Is this situation any different from the way that ordinary humans die? So, what must we do to avoid such vain things and completely solve the issue of life and death?

> First, we need to make an unwavering vow in our hearts and arouse strong belief. After clearly realizing that the true self is fundamentally neither arising nor ceasing in the course of life and death, we need to detach ourselves from the vain things of the world and instead cultivate the true and self-evident self. In so doing, our powers of cultivating the mind, of sharpening insight, of making mindful choices in our actions will gradually increase. Accordingly, if we have a mindset that cannot be shaken when faced with ten million difficulties, if we have a light of wisdom capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, if we make mindful choices in our actions with bravery, establishing justice and eliminating injustice without delay, all of these are the driving forces that transcend the matter of life and death and free us from the six destinies.
>
> Why is it so? If our mind were not shaken by anything, we would have no fear of flowing into evil-doing. Since we could clearly distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, we would not be deceived by a wicked temptation along the path of the spirit.[732] Since there is courageous power in establishing justice and ending injustice, what kind of limitation is there in coming and going? However, if you do not acquire these three great powers and instead merely talk about the true self that is neither arising nor ceasing only with words, it is not the case that you have solved the great matter of life and death.
>
> Lastly, I would like to quote the following words from the Buddha. The Buddha said that even if a practitioner has not yet been able to resolve the issue of life and death by himself alone, if his devotion to the Dharma is solid, he will avoid the path of evil in the course of birth and rebirth. Therefore, I would like to say that we must first strengthen our devotion to the Buddhadharma and then diligently cultivate the abilities of the threefold practice mentioned above, using them not only to guide ourselves, but also to guide others. According to the old sages' words, there is the beginning and end and the roots and branches of things. If you do not know what is primary and what is secondary, and if we think backwards, you will be said to be an ignorant person. The Buddha also considered this practice as the most fundamental and first thing to do, so wouldn't he have abandoned the king's throne and crossed the castle in the middle of the night? There are many things we can put off in this world. But we cannot just put off the life-and-death issue.

This lecture is a good example of the kind of speech that Sot'aesan's disciples delivered in the early period of the PYH. In the introduction, Chŏn Yich'ang urges people to pay attention by citing the story of the *Dhammapada*, which emphasizes why the matter of death is important. She stresses that both wealth and fame, which most people are obsessed with over their entire

[732] Chŏn Yich'ang explains that "In Buddhism, one's current body is called the "present being" and the body of one's next life is called the "later being." The interim period after the spirit has left the "present being" and before it receives the "later being" is called the "intermediate being." Here, "the path of the spirit" refers to the path that the spirit is transmitted from the "present being" into the "later being" as "intermediate being." See, Yich'ang Chŏn, *Getting Familiar with Death*, 133.

lifetimes, are like nothing more than a midday dream. After that, Chŏn explains the kind of attitude that people need to maintain in order to prepare for a matter as important as that of life and death. First, she stresses that people should take a great vow and hold a great belief in pursuing enlightenment by understanding that the true self is not subject to either arising or ceasing. Second, more specifically, Chŏn encourages us to practice the Threefold Practice (cultivating the mind, honing wisdom and insight, and realizing mindful choices in action), based on the great vow and belief that they forged in the beginning of their practices. Finally, she again quotes the Dharma words of the Buddha, encouraging sincere devotion to the Buddha's teachings and earnest practice of the Threefold Practice. Her lecture ends by again highlighting how crucial the matter of life and death is while evoking what is fundamental and what is secondary in life.

According to her testimony, Chŏn prepared this lecture script under the guidance of Song Kyu. Even though Chŏn was only sixteen years old, she was able to contemplate the great issue of life and death with the help of her teacher. Most of all, through this lecture, she likely realized that the Buddhist attitude toward birth and death is one that she must implement in her life most urgently.[733]

According to the timetable for the three-month winter and summer retreats, in the first ten days of each month (1-10) during the evening program, retreatants practice chanting; in the middle ten days of each month (11-20), they practice discussion; and in the final ten days of each month (21-31), they practice lecturing. From this, we can tell that they practice lecturing for at

[733] Perhaps because of her lecture, Chŏn took the issue of death very seriously in her practice throughout her life and published her book on death in 1996, *Chugŭm ŭi kil ŭl ŏttŏkke chal tanyŏ yolkka*. This was translated into English and published in 1999 under the English title *Getting Familiar with Death*. See Yich'ang Chŏn, *Getting Familiar with Death*, trans. Jin Young Park (New York: Won Publications, 1999).

least ten days per month and thirty days total during a given retreat. The topics of lecturing practice include all Buddhist matters that were substantially taught in the PYH, from the *Irwŏnsang* truth, Fourfold Graces, Four Essentials, and Threefold Practices to the thirty precepts. When they practiced lecturing in this way, most of the disciples would have had enough time to delve into each topic in depth and to enact those teachings in their actual lives.

In particular, one day, Sot'aesan preached the following points of caution to those who would give lectures during the retreat. First, the speaker should be careful about speaking flowery words with one's mouth without actually believing what one said. Sot'aesan warned that practicing lecturing with the aim of being exalted by others would harm rather than help them. Second, Sot'aesan also emphasized the importance of listening when one was in the audience. When the audience heard a good lecture, Sot'aesan said, some may think, "If I copy his or her words in my lecturing, then people will praise me." But if someone listens to the lecture with this state of mind, they would be like a stuffed scarecrow, not a real person. Instead, Sota'esan said, "If you listen carefully with sound spirit to whatever words you hear, assessing what you hear against your own practice and against your sensory observations, then you will gain much and, at the same time, will be naturally enabled to reflect upon the actual state of the world."[734] In other words, when listening to a lecture, one should reflect on oneself not with the goal of evaluating it, but with the goal of learning how to improve one's practice. Lastly, Sot'aesan encourage his disciples to share with others their most valuable experiences and understandings when they give a lecture.

These Dharma words are summarized in a daily journal from a retreat. What becomes clear from this talk is that although the content of a lecture is important, there is also a genuine

[734] *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 3:25.

lesson to be learned from sharing one's most valuable insights with others and from listening to others' lectures with a willingness to reflect on one's practice.

2) Diary Writing

"Diary Writing" (*ilgi* 日記) is another unique Buddhist practice invented by Sot'aesan. Given that most education was available only to privileged people in his era, Sot'aesan incorporated some of the modern writing training that non-elite uneducated people had not received into his organization's Buddhist practice and educational goals. The process of writing requires various other abilities, such as critical thinking, logic, and compositional skills. By adopting into Buddhist practices the act of keeping a diary, Sot'aesan aimed to help his disciples not only record their personal spiritual progress, but also to properly develop the comprehensive thinking, interpretive, and hermeneutical skills through which they could more clearly understand their own lives and the world.

The *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak* [Regulations for ruling the units of the Society for the Study of Buddhadharma] (1931) describes in detail the methods by which one should assess one's own practices. Every month, each member was given several daily checklists for his or her practice: 1) a checklist of "Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications"; 2) a checklist of "Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits"; 3) a checklist of "Religious Contributions"; 4) a checklist of "Beneficent Acts"; 5) a checklist of "suggestions"; 6) a checklist of ten precepts calibrated to one's level of practice: ordinary grade, special faith, battle between dharma and *māra*; 7) a checklist for being mindful and unmindful.[735] Each

[735] *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak* (Iri: PulbŏpYŏn'guhoe, 1931), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 59-67.

member should record these charts, which were called the "Daily Diary," according to his or her practice.

In addition to these checklists, each diary entry was expected to contain: 1) a record of how one spent the 24 hours of the day, 2) a record of income and expenditures for the day, 3) reflections on one's handling of the functioning of his or her body and mind. Sot'aesan explains the reasoning behind having adherents keep such records as follows:

> 3. The idea behind having practitioners keep a record of their handling of the functioning of their bodies and minds is so that we may appraise our right and wrong conduct for the day and see the balance of the transgressions or merits we have accrued; and to illuminate the right and the wrong, the benefits and the harms we have committed, and thus gain the ability to make choices whenever we engage in any kind of activity.
> 4. The idea behind having practitioners keep a record of their awakenings and impressions is that we may assess our progress in understanding the principles of great and small, being and nonbeing, involved in them.
> (*The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 76)

The above-mentioned writings are typical diary categories that each practitioner was instructed to write in accordance with their daily behaviors and revelations. The first type of diary entry was to write about the workings of one's mind and body when one encountered either favorable or unfavorable situations. In order to record this response, the practitioner first must learn to be mindful of the functioning of his mind and body. Then, after dealing with a given scenario, he or she needed to record exactly how he or she responded to the situation. After reading these entries, masters or ministers would provide the practitioner with advice to help her to understand what she should have done according to Buddhist teachings. Through this process, believers could learn to discern between what is right and what is wrong, and what is beneficial and what is not beneficial. This practice would eventually help them learn to make the right choices in the conduct of their minds and bodies, and to understand where their blessings and transgressions come from.

The second type of diary entry asked members to write about the awakenings and impressions they experience in their daily lives. According to Sot'aesan, Buddhist awakening becomes consummated when it embraces all three aspects of truth: the ultimate and absolute aspect, the relatively manifested phenomenal aspect, and the constantly changing aspect. This kind of diary entry is designed to build towards a comprehensive understanding of all three of these varieties of truth by sharpening the practitioner's attention to their close symbiotic relationship in everyday life. According to the explanation of "universal principles" in the *Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*,

> "Human affairs" (*sa* 事) means right and wrong, benefit and harm, among human beings. "Universal principles" (*ri* 理) means the great and small, being and nonbeing, of heavenly creation. "Great" (*tae* 大) means the original essence of all things in the universe. "Small" (*so* 小) means that myriad phenomena are distinguished by their shapes and forms. "Being and nonbeing" (*yumu* 有無) means the cycle of nature's four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter, as well as wind, clouds, rains, dew, frost, and snow; the birth, aging, sickness, and death of all things; and the transformations of creation and destruction, prosperity and decay. "Inquiry" (*yŏn'gu* 研究) means studying and mastering human affairs and universal principles.
> (*The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 48)

According to Sot'aesan, Buddhist awakening should embrace the three aspects of truth, and the second type of diary is designed to develop these three kinds of understanding: (1) an understanding of the essential nature of the world, or the ultimate aspect of truth (大); (2) an understanding of all kinds of phenomena that unfold in the world, or the conventional aspect of truth (小); (3) an understanding of the impermanent or constantly changing nature, or the changing aspect of truth (有無). The first understanding is categorized as "great," the second as "small," and the third as "being and non-being." The goal of having practitioners apply this new framework to their observations of the world was to encourage them to challenge their habitual, self-centered points of view. By breaking through their usual perspectives and habits, the

thinking went, they could observe the world from a new point of view and escape the sources of suffering—the three poisonous mental states of greed, hatred, and delusion.

Sot'aesan thought that keeping a diary would not only motivate believers to challenge their usual ways of viewing the world, but also to reflect on the way they were living. It was hoped that these daily records could transform their lives through the power of awareness, brought about as practitioners captured specific moments from the day that threatened to develop into unwholesome actions or speech or reinforce their usual patterns of thought. The writing itself might also allow the writers to reflect on themselves objectively, as if a third person were describing their lives or as if they were looking into a mind-mirror—thus allowing them to adjust their mental states accordingly. Diary writing was also a time for letting go of one's habitual karmic propensities, which has governed one's life unconsciously, as if she were to take off the colored glasses through which she had previously been seeing the world. Let us review some specific examples that illustrate these points.

The first essay we will examine was written by Pak Hyojin 朴孝盡 (1919–)[736] in 1992 at the age of seventy-three. The piece reflects on her experience at a retreat during Sot'aesan's time. Her daughter discovered this essay and submitted it to the Wŏn Buddhist magazine, *Wŏnbulgyo yŏsŏng*.

[736] Pak Hyojin was born in 1919 in Chŏlla Pukto. Her father was Pak Haech'ang 朴海昌 and her mother was Chŏng Hyŏngsŏp 鄭亨燮. Pak Hyojin wished to enter middle school, but her father stubbornly denied her request and instead forced her into an early marriage. When she visited her parents in 1935 (*Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphunnok*, 104), Hyojin happened to meet one of the members of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, Pak Sasihwa (1867–1946). The latter told her about the teachings of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, such as "equal rights for women and men," "the teaching of the primacy of the wise," and "the teaching of the veneration of the public-spirited," all of which deeply impressed her. After this occurrence, Pak Hyojin participated in the winter retreat meeting with Sot'aesan. *Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphun nok*, 104–105.

> I had complaints and dissatisfactions about my parents[737] because they did not allow me to go to school, imposing restrictions on all of my mental and physical actions in accordance with the lifestyle of a *yangban* family. While writing a reflection journal, I was able to look back on my life and deeply repent of the way I had lived a life that benefitted from the kindness of so many people. I was not able to control my endless tears. When Mrs. Kwanŭmhaeng told Master Sot'aesan that writing a reflection made me, Hyojin, cry, Master Sot'aesan said, "This is a moment of dissolving her resentful mind and engaging in a true repentance; please leave her alone so she can cry her heart out." After a few hours of being in tears, I deeply understood the meaning of cause and effect: how I have reaped the fruits of my past actions. I truly felt relieved. My heart was filled with the joy of meeting my master who led me to genuinely understand the great grace of the Fourfold Grace. I transformed my grudge over the fact that I was not permitted to go to school into a willingness to study Buddhism and to become a true disciple of the Buddha. As a result, I told Master Sot'aesan that I would like to become an ordained *kyomu* of this order. (Pak Hyojin, *Wŏnbulgyo yŏsŏng*, 1992)

This essay shows how the writing practice helped Pak recognize her resentment toward her parents and resolve it with sincere tears. Eventually the bitter grudge that she had been carrying up to that point was changed into a willingness to practice the Buddhadharma, which transformed her way of seeing the world from a resentful state of mind into grateful one. Her request to become an ordained *kyomu* was denied by Sota'esan because she was already a mother of two sons. Instead, Pak dedicated her life to Buddhist practice as a lay practitioner and eventually advanced to the Dharma rank of *ch'ulga*, which is the second-highest Dharma rank according to the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's Dharma ranking system.[738]

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[737] At the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, Pak Hyojin's father Pak Haech'ang 朴海昌 worked as a high-ranking government official (承政院 翰林). Because of her father's stubborn insistence, she was not able to enter middle school after graduating from elementary school and instead was forced to marry Ko Chŏngjin 高井振 in 1933, at the age of fourteen. (*Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphunnok*, 104)

[738] *Wŏnbulgyo Pŏphunnok*, (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Wŏn'gwangsa, 1999), 104–105.

I examined thirty-five daily entries written by Pak Kilsŏn 朴吉善 (1909-1994),[739] the eldest child of Sot'aesan, during the ninth summer retreat of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, which took place from May 8 to July 28, 1929. These entries display several fascinating characteristics.

The first notable information provided by Pak's diary is that she successfully completed the summer retreat, and participated in all programs that took place during that retreat. Her time management over three months was graded as excellent, receiving straight A's; she never failed to follow the basic instructions in this category. Of the twenty-four hours of the day, seven to eight hours were always used for sleep, eight to nine hours for practice and study, three hours for meals, six to seven hours for a break or relaxation. From June to July, two to three hours were used for communal labor instead of rest time. It seems that members were strictly monitored for attendance at each scheduled program, because when Pak arrived late to a lecture on one occasion, Sot'aesan subtracted points from what she had originally obtained based solely on her diary. Except for this one case, there were no other marks to indicate that Pak was late for or absent from any programs.

As for income and expenditures, Pak typically spent thirty *chŏns* per day, all of which went towards her three daily meals, at ten *chŏns* apiece.[740] Pak earned no income during the retreat. Over this three-month period, her diary indicates that her daily income and expenditure remained exactly the same. Although the repetitiveness of these income and expenditure entries

[739] Pak Kilsŏn's diary was left to her daughter, Song Kwanŭn, along with the information that Sot'aesan, the founder of Wŏnbulgyo, highly prized this diary. Pak's diary was originally written in her native Southern Korean dialect, but when it was published as a monograph in 2001, her grammar and style were slightly revised into the standard modern Korean vernacular. Pak Kilsŏn, *Pak Kilsŏn ilgi* (The Diary of Pak Kilsŏn), edited by Han Jingyŏng (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2001). All English translations from this work are mine.

[740] Pak Kilsŏn, *Pak Kilsŏn Ilgi* (The Diary of Pak Kilsŏn), edited by Han Jingyŏng, 155.

might make it seem somewhat unnecessary to record them, this was still considered an important item to write down every day.

Here is a table[741] of the main themes and general contents of Pak's diary, along with the grade that each entry was given *(Please noe that may summary of the contents is in italic).

Table 5. The Main themes and General Contents of Pak's diary

Date	Diary Category	Contents	Time management	Grade
May 8	Awakening	*The merit of observing the first item of heedfulness regarding daily applications and temple visits*.[742] *Pak notes that because she observed the items of heedfulness regarding daily applications and temple visits, she was able to begin the summer retreat with a more refreshed mind than she did at the last winter retreat.*	6.5 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 5.5 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲 (A) Writing: 戊 (F)
May 9	Reflection	*The necessity of the eighth item of the essential discourse on commanding one's Nature (if something goes wrong, do not blame others, but instead examine yourself).* *After observing those who suffered from blaming others' fault rather than learning from their mistakes, she reflected upon her own tendencies to do so.*	6.5 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6.5 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲 (A) Writing: 丁(D)

[741] In generating this table, I also referred to the table that is summarized by Jingyŏng Han in the book *Pak Kilŏn ilgi*; Jingyŏng Han, *Pak Kilsŏn ilgi* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2001), 158-167).

[742] "1. Whenever you come to temple while practicing the items of heedfulness in daily applications, be heedful to engage in questions and answers about each and every aspect of those activities." (*PYH kyuyak*, 1927, 24).

May 10	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*Handling the desire to spend money on ostentatious clothes.*	6.5 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 5.5 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 丙 (C) Reflection: 甲 (A) Writing: 丁(D)
	Reflection	*In observing the attitude of a haughty Japanese inspector, she reminded herself to uphold the precept, "do not be conceited."*[743]		
May 12	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*The social norm positing that men and women are indelibly different (full story below).*	6 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 丙 (C) Reflection: 甲 (A) Writing: 丙 (C)
	Reflection	*The difference between putting one's effort into false pursuits versus into valuable pursuits.*		
May 14	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*Helping mother with her work.*	6 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 乙 (B) Reflection: 甲 (A) Writing: 乙 (B)
	Awakening	*Analogical impressions: seeing an uncultivated field, Pak drew an analogy to her own mind-field. She reaffirmed her commitment to cultivating her mind-field by upholding precepts and removing delusion, greed and hatred from her mind.*		
May 17	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*How to deal with the other people stabbing you in the back.* *Pak advised a woman who had been betrayed by someone else, saying that if she reflected upon herself and found no shame in*	6 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditure: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲 (A)

[743] This is the first of ten precepts for those practitioners who attain the grade of the battle between Dharma and Māra. (*The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, 157).

		her mind, then it was better to simply take the situation as an opportunity for reflection.		Writing: 甲 (A)[744]
	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*The joy of practicing to become a Buddha (full story below).*		
May 19	A record of one's impressions	*The joy of practicing at the retreat. After receiving feedback on her journal during the retreat and listening to Dharma words, Pak was very refreshed and happy, and recommended that her friend, Sewŏl, join her for the retreat.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲 (A) Handling: 乙 (B) Writing: 乙 (B)
	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*No particular awakenings or problems.* *As Pak reflected on events from the day before yesterday, there were no problems in the functioning of her mind or body.*		
May 21	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Helping mother with work.* *When she saw her mother working in the pepper field in the rain, Pak went to help her with that work. However, when her mother instructed her to do other work, she complied.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 丙 (C) Handling: 乙 (B) Writing: 甲 (A)
	Awakening	*The joy of learning Buddhist teachings.*		
May 23	Awakening	*Analogical impression: upon seeing bugs gathering around a*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals	Time: 甲 (A)

[744] From this day onward, Pak's writing began to receive A's, and did not display any misspellings. Her essay structure and logical reasoning also improved.

		lamplight and dying, she analogized the sight to a human life that has been degraded by the five human desires.	7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Reflection: 3 甲(A+++) Writing: 乙 (B)
May 25	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Explaining the teachings of the order to another woman.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 甲(A) Writing: 乙 (B)
May 28	Awakening	*All things and events in the world are my teachers. Pak came to an understanding of the two kinds of living teachers: the so-called "right and wrong, benefit and harm," which teaches her what is right and wrong; and the "great, small, and being and non-being," which allows her to understand the fundamental principles of the world through presenting of nature's cycles.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 乙 (B) Writing: 甲 (A)
May 30	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Reflecting upon the harm of having laughed carelessly during a Dharma talk.*	6 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 乙 (B)
June 2	A record of one's handling of one's mental functioning	*The harmful influence of impatience in one's practice.* *When she could not clearly understand a Dharma talk by Sot'aesan, Pak became very impatient. But by recognizing the impatience of her mind, she found mental peace again.* *Restoring one's energy through exercising.*	6 hours: sleep 9 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 甲(A) Writing: 丙 (C)
June 4	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Doing laundry to help mother at home during rest time.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)

			Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	
June 7	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Missing shoes.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)
June 9	Reflection	*A reflection upon observing an elementary school principal who tried to harm others but instead underwent harm at their hands.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 7 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 丙 (C)
June 11	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Conflict with mother.*	6 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 3 hours: communal labor 4 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A) *Despite missing the record of expenditure, this is graded as A considering a lengthy essay without any errors.
June 13	Awakening	*A reflection upon seeing a fisherman.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 3 hours: leisure 3 hours: communal labor Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
June 15	Awakening	*An obstacle in her practice.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 3 hours: leisure 3 hours: communal labor Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
June 20	Awakening	*Observing a social issue related to Poch'ŏngyo.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 3 hours: leisure 3 hours: communal labor Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)
June 22	Awakening	*The purity of a lotus flower that is rooted in a dirty pond.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 3 甲 Writing: 甲 (A)

			6 hours: leisure Expenditure: 30 *chŏn*	
June 24	Awakening	*A reflection upon seeing a fly.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 3 hours: leisure 3 hours: communal labor Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A) *Letters are getting smaller. Be mindful.
June 28	Awakening	*Interconnectedness: one's faults affect others.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 3 hours: leisure 3 hours: communal labor Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 1	Awakening		7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 5	Awakening	*Three poisons and threefold practice.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 8	A record of the handling of the functioning of mind	*Compassion.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 2hours: communal labor 4 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 5 甲(A+++++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 10	A record of the handling of the functioning of body	*The differences between the times I followed the items of heedfulness and the times I did not.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 4 甲(A++++) * Subtracting 1A, this is graded as 4 A due to her late attendance. Writing: 甲 (A) *This entry is graded as an "A" because it is so long, even though it is not otherwise enough to equal an A.
July 12	Impression	*Desire for fame.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice	Time: 甲 (A)

			3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Reflection: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 14	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Desire to wear nice clothes.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 4 甲(A++++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 17	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*A vow to continue in her practice even after the retreat.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 19	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Dealing with her own complaining over an eye disease.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 21	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Dealing with suffering caused by an eye disease and headache.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 甲(A) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 23	Awakening	*The necessity of Dharma.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 25	A record of one's handling of the functioning of one's body	*Desire for education.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Handling: 2 甲(A++) Writing: 甲 (A)
July 28	Awakening	*The lamp of threefold practice.*	7 hours: sleep 8 hours: practice 3 hours: meals 6 hours: leisure Expenditures: 30 *chŏn*	Time: 甲 (A) Reflection: 3 甲 (A+++) Writing: 甲 (A) *Considering a long essay, this is graded as A.

It is also of note that Pak's writing grades gradually improved over the course of the three-month retreat. Her first diary entry was given the grade of *mu* (戊) which is equivalent to

an F in a Western grading system, but she later received *chŏng* 丁 (D), then *pyŏng* 丙 (C), and finally *ŭl* 乙 (B). Throughout, most of her mistakes derived from the fact that she spelled some words as they are pronounced in the local Chŏlla dialect (*sat'uri*). For example, the word for "last year" is "*kŏnyŏn*" in Korean; however, in Pak's home province, people often pronounce this word as "*kŭnyŏn*," the pronunciation of which sounds the same as the word for "that bitch" in standard Seoul dialect.[745] Another type of mistake she made was to write in a colloquial style rather than in literary language. For instance, we see in her entries many lengthy sentences without transitional markers, a single sentence sometimes comprising a whole paragraph. In the beginning, Pak's diary entries were usually very short and simple; however, as time went on, her writings not only become longer, but her style also becomes more sophisticated and analytical. After ten days of practice, Pak's entries show no misspelled words. Each diary entry becomes more structurally well organized and logically well narrated than the last, a steady improvement that eventually earned her writing the grade of *kap* 甲 (A).

Considering the significant improvement in Pak's writing skills over a short time of period, the development of her understanding about Buddhist teachings and the process of internalizing them are even more remarkable than the improvement in her writing. Pak's diary reveals that she slowly deepened her knowledge of Buddhist teachings and internalized them as her own insights, recording these under the category of "reflection" or "awakening." For example, she successfully understood most of the fundamental teachings that Sot'aesan taught during the retreat. The diary entries for May 8 and 9 and July 10 elucidate her understanding of "the items of heedfulness regarding daily applications and temple visits" and "the essential

[745] This kind of mistake often makes me laugh while reading Pak's diary. *Pak Kilsŏn Ilgi*, 7.

discourse on commanding one's nature,"[746] subjects that she learned about during various retreat programs. On May 14 and 23, she records realizations regarding the three poisonous states of mind: greed, hatred, and delusion. In the diary entry for June 24, she describes her revelation about "the thirty precepts."[747] . In the diary entries of July 5 and 28, she records her dawning awareness of the necessity of the threefold practice that Sot'aesan considered to be the essence of Buddhist teachings.

In addition to gaining these understandings of doctrinal teachings, Pak began to understand the subtle principles of her own mind by comparing her present diary to the past year's one.

> July 10, 1929
> Today's diary entry is about checking my mental state of good and evil. When I checked my mental state to see whether or not I had made a mistake on the thirty precepts,[748] I did not find that I had done so during the last winter retreat. However, I realized something strange. After learning, interpreting and practicing the thirty precepts for about forty-five days at the retreat, I was able to realize that I had indeed committed violations of the precepts. I had only checked half of the thirty precepts as committed. I was curious about this. "The reason why I am practicing Buddhism is to eliminate all of my bad habits. So why is it that I am now committing more of the errors descried in the precepts than before I began to practice? I will be more careful not to commit violations of the precepts from tomorrow onwards." With this in mind, I kept practicing. In the meantime, even though I realized that I had checked off fewer precepts this time, there were still many precepts that I was violating. Surprised, when I asked myself whether I was being mindful to practice "the items of heedfulness regarding daily applications and temple visits," or not, I found that I was indeed being more mindful of this precept than before.
>
> When I thought again of the previous instance in which I did not commit any precept errors at all, I realized why this was. The reason was that I had no idea at that time whether or not I was enacting precepts, even if I was indeed enacting many. First, I had not fully understood what each precept meant. Second, I had not been mindful enough to observe my states of mind while trying to

[746] See appendix.

[747] *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 89-92.

[748] Of the thirty total precepts, ten precepts are given to practitioners at a given time, according to their level of practice.

> maintain the heedfulness teachings. Third, I had not been wise enough to recognize whether or not I had encountered the bad or good situations described in the precepts. Fourth, I did not have any sense of how to evaluate my daily actions.

This capacity for being mindful in her habits and in her teachings allows Pak not only to quell her negative tendencies without allowing them to grow into states of greed, lust, or attachment, but also to grow her mind's capacity for positive qualities, such as compassion, right view and right understanding. The following lengthy entry clearly presents the ways in which Pak dealt with the anger she experienced as a result of a conflict with her mother:

> June 11, 1929
> Today, I encountered an unfavorable situation. The reason:
> After morning meditation, I went home. Mother told me, "After weeding out in the field, I will starch the clothes." Upon listening to her, I said:
> "Mother, the weather is sizzling hot. How can you weed out in the field and starch the clothes? Moreover, I am in a situation in which I cannot help you with these tasks. When I was writing in my diary yesterday during the journaling hour, I could not complete all of my journal topics because there were too many things to write. I was thinking that I would write during rest time. Today, I need to write the rest of yesterday's journal entry so that I can get feedback on it in the afternoon." Then, I said, "It is not urgent to do the starching, so I will do this task tomorrow during rest time after coming back from the retreat." Mother answered: "Let's do as the circumstances call for." Upon hearing this, I understood her to mean that she would not do the starching today, so I went back to the meditation center. After finishing studying scriptures in the morning, I began to write my diary during rest time. But at that moment, I heard from someone that my mother wanted me at home, so I had to immediately put down my pen and go back home. Mother seemed to have become angry while she was starching clothes. Encountering this situation, I asked her, "Mother, why did you do this job by yourself? I told you this morning that today I needed to finish writing in my journal during rest time." Then, mother said, "Does a [Buddhist] practitioner practice without even having a meal?"
>
> My mind after hearing this:
> This situation reminded me of other times when my mother has put me in unfavorable situations. "How can I finish writing my journal after doing all this work in such a limited amount of time?" In my hasty and angry frame of mind, I was thinking I would help her in that moment and go back to the meditation center without lunch. However, when I observed the situation, I realized that if I did not have lunch, mother would get even angrier. Moreover, in this sizzling weather, I would become ill from the summer heat if I did not have a proper meal. So, after having a quick lunch, I walked to the meditation center. While half of the

> practitioners' journal entries were being reviewed, I hastily finished my journal, too. Finding myself in this situation, I became sick at heart.
>
> Upon experiencing this event, one thought came to my mind: "What is practice? By not bearing this situation well, I had allowed anger to arise. If I keep letting this trait grow inside of me, what will my future be? I have no way of knowing whether I will encounter an unfavorable situation several times worse than this. If I find myself overwhelmed by anger in this trivial situation, how will I act when I encounter a worse one? Won't I die? If I do not fix this part of my nature, I will sabotage the original purpose of my practice. I am also worried[749] that I the problem may become even more serious [in the future]. The purpose of our practice is to learn to deal well with any unfavorable situation. The reason why I am spending money on this meditation retreat, practicing meditation for days, and listening to Dharma words, is to learn to deal with this kind of scenario correctly. If I do not deal with this situation well, that means that I am wasting my money, that I am not repaying my father with gratitude for all he has done for me, and that I will eventually fall into an evil path. Upon considering this, my anger gradually disappeared and my comfort was soon recovered.

Pak took a level-headed accounting of her state of mind and the circumstances in which she found herself. Her tone in this entry is calm and not overwhelmed by anger. She refrains from exaggerating the event with her own biased point of view, describing both her own mental state and her mother's position straightforwardly. First, she begins her diary entry by describing what had happened to her that day. After being scolded by her mother, Pak does not respond to her right away, but rather, begins to examine her own mind and to describe the new understanding that she had gained from this event. She is not judgmental towards the anger that has arisen in her, but rather, simply notes that anger has entered her mind. Then, Pak moves on to examining the situation from a practitioner's point of view. We can see that, through these processes, Pak not only soothed her own anger, but also reaffirmed her commitment to being mindful in the future at the end of the entry.

The entry from June 11 is categorized as "a record of one's handling of the functioning of one's mind and body," the type of entry through which Pak examined her daily experiences from

[749] Here, Pak's misspelling of the term "worry" (*yŏmnyŏ* in Korean) was corrected by Sot'aesan in the diary.

a practitioner's point of view. This kind of journal-writing cultivates the author's capacity to control her mind and body. Through this writing process, Pak is able to track her thinking process more clearly.

Another kind of diary entry, categorized as "awakening" or "reflection," demonstrates how Pak deepened her understanding of the nature of her mind.

> May 14, 1929
> This diary entry is about something I learned through observation.
> A certain woman has two pepper fields: one is located near her home, and the other far from it. Since the rainy season had been in progress for over a month, she often used her free time to weed out and spread manure in the nearby pepper field, but rarely took care of the far-away field. Consequently, the further field became overgrown with weeds, which in turn caused the peppers in that field to turn yellow, with thin, weak stems; they looked quite pitiable. On the other hand, the well-cared-for field, as anyone who saw it would agree, has become very desirable. The woman initially tried to weed out the further field, but the work took a very long time and was very difficult, making her fingertips hurt. So, she got mad and gave up on the field, saying, "Even though I cannot eat these peppers, I won't remove these weeds." As I have watched the field that is overgrown with weeds become utterly useless, I have realized that "if I do not take care of the mind-field of my mind, it will become the same as that neglected field."
>
> The weeds in our minds are the five desires[750] and all varieties of afflicting and distracting thoughts. If I do not examine and take care of these threats often, if I do not listen to the Dharma-words—depriving myself of fertilizer, just like the shoddy field—even my initially correct mindset will become like the peppers in the middle of weeds, the five desires and afflicting and distracting thoughts will be the weeds. Moreover, the woman abandoned the field in which all the peppers had become inedible because weeding out the weeds had itself become so challenging later on. By observing her, I have realized that when I take care of my deluded thoughts immediately as they arise rather than letting them become overgrown, it will be much easier to take care of them, and I will never get to the point of wanting to abandon them. Therefore, I have decided to observe my mind always with a sense of mindfulness by asking to myself, "What am I attached to? What is my mind heading toward?" Even if I do not conduct any transgressions against the thirty precepts, I also need to check and see whether or not I have any seeds of such transgressions in my mind, and if I find one, I need to immediately eradicate it. Also, when I listen to Dharma-words more often, my mind-field will become the well-taken-care field with good fertilizer.

[750] The five desires refer to the desires for food, sex, sleep, financial greed, and fame.

Pak analogizes the mind-field to the two pepper fields cultivated by the woman. If ordinary people saw the woman ruin her field out of carelessness, they would end up blaming her and using the situation as nothing but an occasion for gossip. However, Pak's commitment to mindfully observing all of her circumstances based on the guidance of Sot'aesan allowed her to see the world, including this situation, with a deep understanding of herself as well as others. First of all, Pak's observation of the scenario touches on not only the principles of the mind, but also upon her own five desires and mental afflictions. More importantly, her diary entry demonstrates her understanding of the impermanent nature of the world as well as the possibility that she could change in response to the functioning of her mind and body. This reflective state led Pak to understand the principles of her own mind, which eventually led her to decide to be even more mindful in observing her desires and afflicting thoughts later on.

Although Pak's diary deals with many diverse topics, the main theme throughout can be summarized as the question of how to become a Buddha or a sage. There is one diary entry that clearly presents the moment that Pak realized she had the opportunity to achieve Buddhahood in her own life.

> May 17, 1929
> Today, I unexpectedly had a delightful feeling. The reason I experienced such joy was that I have come to realize that I have now achieved what I have been wishing for. I am filled with happiness. I have often witnessed a deplorable attitude among other people in the world. They say, "With this body I've been given, I could never become a Buddha or a sage, so wouldn't it only be possible for me to wish to become such a person after my death?" In fact, I was one of the people who thought that way. However, I now have a different frame of mind after having received this special [Buddhist] training. When I contemplate whether or not my physical body will be able to become like the body of the Buddha or a sage, I have come to understand that this is not the correct way to think. Additionally, when I think about whether the Buddha and a sage are admired by people because of their good-looking faces, I have come to understand that that is not the case; rather, it is because they embody righteousness and morality they are admired by people and given such honorific titles. Since what I am learning and practicing is as same as what the Buddha and

> sages embody, if I follow the guidance of what [the Buddha] taught, why could I not also become a Buddha and a sage?
> When I came to this understanding, I felt that I had now achieved what I had wished for. Now I am sure that even I, one with such a humble body, could surely become a Buddha and a sage.

The moment when Pak came to this realization was a very critical one in the progress of her practice. From this moment on, her motivation to practice was reinforced by her great aspirations. After this revelation, Buddhism became for her entirely a question of how to become a Buddha or a sage. In fact, the question of whether women can attain enlightenment has been a problematic issue in Buddhist history, particularly in Mahāyāna Buddhism: there has long been a belief that woman cannot achieve Buddhahood in their present lives, but rather, need to practice sincerely in order to be reborn as men to achieve Buddhahood in their next lives. Therefore, the possibility of female enlightenment is one of the most important criteria determining women's position in Buddhist history. In this regard, considering social attitudes towards women at that time, as well as Buddhist beliefs, Pak's belief in the possibility of her own enlightenment within her lifetime is very significant.

For Pak, the most difficult obstacles to attaining Buddhahood are negative mental factors such as greed, anger, and ignorance. She thus attempts in her diary to discover what kinds of negative mental factors arise in daily life, and tries to suppress these tendencies without allowing them to grow into states of greed, lust, or attachment. For example, there are two diary entries[751] that touch on her desire to wear nice clothes, which is an understandable impulse, considered that she was twenty at the time. In the diary entry for May 10, Pak describes that, upon observing some people wearing fancy outfits, she also has become desirous to wear such clothes. However, at that moment she pauses her mind, recognizing that "this desire is caused by observing others

[751] May 10, July 14.

wearing fancy outfits!" After this realization, she reminds herself of the dharma talk of Sot'aesan and the precept that reminds her not to be attracted to fancy clothes, and draws the following conclusion:

> As I examined all of these teachings, I wondered, "How can I still feel attached to this desire?" However, even after examining this, I realized that there have been several other situations in which I felt compelled to spend money in order to feed my desires. In those moments where my mind was attracted to pursuing my desire, I reminded myself of the understanding that I had come to the other day [the precept about not being ostentatious in wearing clothes and the dharma words of Sot'aesan about being frugal in daily life], and this removed the desire which had been so hard for me to bear in that moment. However, I still feel the same desires again, not having eradicated the root of it. Wishing to listen to more dharma words, since the root of desire still remains in my mind, here I record my feelings honestly as they are.

In this diary entry, we can see her mind state as it truly was. As I described in my analysis of the previous diary entry, Pak's voice here is straightforward and she is not judgmental about her own desires; she is instead simply recording them as they really occurred in her mind. Through the process of reminding herself about the Buddhist teachings that she had learned previously, she soothed her desire. In his evaluation of this diary entry, Sot'aesan gave her *pyŏng* 丙 (C); however, in the later diary entry of July 14 that dealt with a similar topic, he gave her 4 *kap* 甲 (A++++). This apparently indicates that she was progressing in her practice. Unfortunately, the last several paragraphs of the July 14 diary entry have not survived, so we cannot fully observe this progression. From the first several sentences, we can infer why the entry received such a high score. She begins the installment as follows:

> After listening to what I heard today, one of thoughts that has been lingering in my mind arises. Those thoughts that have remained in my mind also have a reason to have remained. When I consider the reason for this, that reason is also derived from what I had seen before.

At this point Pak's writing style has become more analytical, rather than simply describing what has happened. She catches the moment in which a single thought arises in her mind, and when it does, she discerns the origin of the thought (listening). After this reflection, she also traces back the thought to its source, which suggests that her capacity for mindfulness has strengthened. Unlike in previous diary entries, she begins to analyze how her desire originated. Once she understands where her desire comes from, handling that desire becomes much easier than before. According to her description in the May 10 entry, the original source of her desire to buy nice clothes comes from her experience of living in Seoul for a year. At that time, she observed many people who wore fancy clothes. As she experienced this, she naturally compared her own situation with theirs, and from this, her desire began to form. However, as Pak was in charge of supporting her family, she reminded herself she was not in such a position to buy fancy clothes. In this way, we can see that her mindfulness practice had been progressing over the course of three months. Not only this entry, but also many others from later in the journal, illustrate her sophisticated but firm capacity for being mindful in her daily life, which enables her to see the resonances of all kinds of scriptures in what she sees, hears, feels, touches, thinks, and says. Sot'aesan states in his dharma talk, "If people look at this world 'in the right spirit,' there will be nothing in it that is not scripture. When you open your eyes, you will be seeing scripture; when you listen, you will be hearing scripture; when you speak, you will be reciting scripture; when you act, you will be applying scripture. Anytime and anywhere, this scripture will unfold without end."[752] It was in this same way that Pak Kilsŏn began to experience living scriptures unfolding right in front of her.

[752] "Chapter Three Practice: 23," *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 180.

In the simplest terms, the Threefold Practice is the path that leads to liberation and the achievement of buddhahood. Consequently, a practitioner is asked to attentively examine the psychological roots of his or her behaviors and motivations that lead to unhappiness and undesirable consequences. In the process, one quells one's negative tendencies without allowing them to grow into states of greed, lust, or attachment. This allows a practitioner to grow his or her capacity for positive mental qualities such as compassion, right view, and right understanding. However, no matter how well-designed a given theory, if that theory is not actually applied by a practitioner, the gap between prescriptive doctrinal teachings and descriptive human psychological states will never will be crossed, and the practitioner will never embody those teachings. In this regard, the method of keeping a journal under the guidance of a Buddhist master is groundbreaking, motivating practitioners not only to be mindful of the functioning of their minds and bodies but also to internalize the guidance of the Buddha through the process of recording their spiritual journey. Until the teachings of the Buddha are internalized, practitioners need to go through an experimental spiritual voyage. The first entries of their journals are merely their own "private pages." However, once their diary begins to reflect upon the functioning of their minds and bodies, and their understanding of others and the world, the journal becomes a personalized scripture demonstrating how they embody the teachings of the Buddha.

As we read Pak's diary, we watch what begins as a private journal change into a "personalized scripture": we stand witness as the writer's ordinary state of mind transforms into an enlightened mind through the process of practicing, writing, and receiving feedback on her writing. And once this personalized scripture is open to the public after being appraised by a

master, it becomes a "public scripture."[753] According the *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak* [Regulations for ruling the units, the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma], "all members are to submit individual opinions, reflections, questionings, and records of mindful choices in action with regard to practice, daily life, and public service, so that these records may become eternal Dharma guidance for others."[754] In other words, the organization's choice to make its members' diaries public means that the authority of formulating teachings is not confined only to ordained masters or the historical Buddha, but is open to everyone as long as they live their lives with a sincere practitioner's mind. When practitioners reveal their mental states to themselves and others in this way, they begin to change the way that they live, moving from their accustomed mental patterns towards the ways in which enlightened buddhas would respond to the world.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the ways in which the incipient Wŏn Buddhist Order reformed Korean Buddhism in the early twentieth century by looking at the formation of Sot'aesan's new movement, the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, and his new Buddhist practices, such as "lecturing," "discussion," and "diary writing." This chapter's analysis of Sot'aesan's disciples, and in particular of his female ordained disciples, shows how the PYH transformed socially marginalized women into Buddhist practitioners who, like men, were considered to have the potential to reach enlightenment. I also point out that it is necessary to distinguish between "intentional syncretism" and "culturally inherent syncretism" when analyzing Sot'aesan's

[753] In fact, in Wŏn Buddhist tradition, there were many cases in which such personal diaries, after being appraised by an enlightened master, were published for the purpose of public learning.

[754] *PYH t'ongch'i chodan kyuyak* [*Regulations for ruling the units, the Society for the Study of the Buddha Dharma*] (Iri: Pulŏp yŏn'guhoe, 1931), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 55.

doctrinal system. Through these two arguments, I suggest that the Sot'aesan's reformation of Buddhism was not, as other scholars have suggested, chiefly characterized by its integration of the three major East Asian religions (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism). Rather, I suggest that the PYH should be understood primarily as both carrying forward the main strands of Korean Buddhism (Sŏn and Kyo), and as revitalizing these traditions by enabling ordinary people to practice Buddhism in daily life.

Sot'aesan's reformation of Korean Buddhism occurred in conjunction with that of other major Buddhist reformers. Buddhist reformers in the early twentieth century all shared the same goal: the popularization of Buddhism and the restoration of what they considered to be its rightful place in Korean society. Sot'aesan endeavored to realize such reform ideas by creating a Buddhist community in which both lay and ordained followers would live in harmony. While striving to preserve the essence of the Buddhadharma, Sot'aesan sought to transform the traditional monastic-centered Buddhism of the Chosŏn dynasty into a practical, socially relevant, modernized Buddhism. To make Buddhism more accessible and relevant to the people, Sot'aesan created a set of new practices and teachings. The main direction of his reformation lies in the hope that all people, regardless of their gender, status, class, and age, should be able to understand for themselves the essence of the Buddhist teachings and then practice it in their everyday lives, not just rely on devotional worship or on authoritative teachers. By taking this tack, Sot'aesan sought to ensure that both his lay and ordained followers would be considered members of the lineage of the direct disciples of the Buddha, so that they could achieve enlightenment and apply that experience in their daily lives.

The characteristics that Sot'aesan posited for the PYH can be described as follows. First, the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's purport, similar to that of Śākyamuni Buddha when he initiated his

dispensation, is primarily to lead people from a world of suffering into a world of liberation. Second, the PYH was run by a democratic process. From the outset, the foundation of the PYH involved a set of regulations, and members of the order consisted of people who accepted and observed those regulations. Even the founder, Sot'aesan, became the leader of the PYH after being so appointed by the congregation during its first general meeting. All regular meetings and annual meetings were open to its members, as were its financial reports and work reports. The democratic decision-making process that maintained the order can be said to be radical in the context of its time. It allowed all members to fully express their opinions through a nine-member unit system. Through this system, Sot'aesan's teachings were delivered directly to each member of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, and vice versa: each member could make his or her opinions or suggestions known to the order. Third, the PYH was a Buddhist community in which lay and ordained lived in harmony. This ideal was one of the main reasons that Sot'aesan founded an independent Buddhist community rather than choosing to be associated with the traditional Buddhist *saṃgha*. While the traditional Buddhist *saṃgha* had relied on the economic support of lay people so that monks and nuns could focus on their own religious practice, the community of the PYH equally ensured that both lay and ordained followers would be able to practice and would be responsible for supporting the community. This self-supporting economy was another crucial characteristic of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe. Regardless of their positions as either lay or the ordained, each member's spiritual and economic contributions to the community were meticulously recorded, which served to determine their Dharma ranks (viz., their status within the Order). Finally, the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe's dharma meetings and retreat programs provided an alternative education for many people who were not otherwise able to receive one due to social or economic circumstances during the colonial period. Through these educational programs, the

members of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe—regardless of their gender, status, class, or age—gradually worked toward transforming themselves from ordinary people into Buddhist practitioners. Non-elites, and especially those who were illiterate, had previously been excluded from accessing directly the essence of the Buddhist teachings, having to instead rely upon Buddhist devotional worship without being able to stand, it was claimed, in the lineage of the direct disciples of the Buddha. From the standpoint of Buddhism for the masses (Taejung Pulgyo), the practices of "lecturing," "discussion," and "diary writing" were valuable tools by which commoners could incorporate Buddhist techniques into their daily lives.

The history of Buddhism has primarily been transmitted through monastic-centered traditions; furthermore, as Ko Yŏngsŏp points out, the field of Buddhist Studies, and particularly Korean Buddhist studies, has focused on the history of monastic doctrine, without paying equivalent attention to the history of lay Buddhists.[755] In this regard, Sot'aesan's new Buddhist teachings, practices, and institutional systems, which could be practiced and accessed by all classes of people regardless of gender, status, regional origin, and education, can be understood as a distinctively localized, Korean iteration of the Buddhist tradition.

[755] Ko Yŏngsŏp, *Hanguk Pulgyosa t'amgu* (Seoul: Pangmunsa, 2015), 57.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the early development of Wŏn Buddhism by considering the socio-cultural and socio-religious contexts of early twentieth-century Korea. First, I examined how the new Tonghak movement's notion of *sich'ŏnju* (revering God within one's heart), which encouraged egalitarianism in Korean society at the end of the nineteenth century, influenced religious reform movements in the early twentieth century, particularly Buddhist reform and new religious movements. This chapter's analysis focused on the novel concept of "a congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" articulated by Sot'aesan, the founder of Wŏn Buddhism. Sot'aesan proposed that his religious order, the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe (the predecessor of Wŏn Buddhism), constituted a "congregation of a thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas." This reconceptualization of the *saṃgha* (Buddhist congregation) represented a way of reforming Korean Buddhism from commoners' point of view: his new philosophy suggested that all living beings, whether male or female, ordained or lay, young or old, colonized or colonizer, intellectual or non-intellectual, could become buddhas and bodhisattvas through the practices and teachings of Buddhism. In deploying this concept, Sot'aesan and his disciples laid out the fundamental teachings of Buddhism in a way that would be accessible to all classes of people and applicable to their daily lives; it also sought to create a religious community that would be able to help people realize that vision.

I have attempted to demonstrate that the new praxes and belief systems of Wŏn Buddhism developed through a complex interplay between East Asian Buddhist practices, colonial modernity, and new interpretations of the concept of "religion." The novel methods taught under Wŏn Buddhism, such as mindful "bean-counting" meditation (*t'aejosa* 太調查) and keeping a spiritual journal, provided common people with tools to attain greater agency in their

Buddhist practices. My dissertation has presented the stories of how rural people, both male and female, otherwise nameless to history, created new identities for themselves by becoming Buddhist practitioners. I have explored how these disciples heightened their understanding of Buddhist beliefs, how their worldviews were shaped by Buddhism, and how they adapted within their own lives the "mind-praxis" that Sot'aesan taught within the Woň Buddhist community. My dissertation's detailed accounts of ordinary people's practices therefore expands the intellectual horizons of the field of Buddhist Studies to include more of the lived experiences of non-elite Buddhists. In this regard, my work makes, I believe, key contributions to scholarship on East Asian new religions and Buddhist reform movements, on Korean Buddhism, on colonial modernity, and on the lived religious experience of everyday people.

I would like to conclude this dissertation by discussing the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe practice of "Ha-ha big laugh meetings" (*kkal-kkal taesohoe* 呵呵大笑會) and summarizing the characteristics of Sotaesan's reformation of Buddhism in a few ways.

"Ha-ha big laugh meetings" were recreational times in which the members of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe shared their talents by singing, dancing, or performing theater. Such meetings also often included the playing of a gramophone recording of "*p'ansori*," traditional Korean musical storytelling performed by single vocalist and a drummer (including pieces such as *Ch'unyang-chŏn*, *Simch'ŏng-chŏn*, *Hŭngbu-chŏn*).[756] These meetings were held on a regular basis during the annual general assembly, dharma services, special celebratory events, and summer and winter retreats.[757] Even though these meetings were not considered official trainings, they were among

[756] "XII Exemplary Acts: 41," in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 409.

[757] *Wŏnbulgyo tae sajŏn Online*, Wŏnbulgyo Sasang Yŏn'guwŏn ed., s.v. "*kkal kkal taesohoe*," accessed May 24, 2021.

the most important parts of the PYH's religious practices. According to the records of the 1932 general meeting, the gathering concluded with a "Ha-ha big laugh meeting," in which all members took turns presenting at a talent show. The presider introduced Kim Kich'ŏn 金幾千 (given name: Sŏnggu 聖久 1890-1935), saying that "Next, we will welcome *Sipchang* Dharma master (*sipchang pŏpsa* 十藏法師)[758] to perform a Western dance." Then Kim performed a sluggish imitation of a Western dance style,[759] keeping the audience in stitches the whole time with his slow, exaggerated movements.[760] Kim Kich'ŏn was one of the masters who had taught participants during the retreat. For him to perform a wild, improvised dance in front of the people he had led in instruction (including his daughter, who was among the audience members) helped to soften his authoritative image as a teacher and father.

> Another record about this same "Ha-ha big laugh meeting" reads as follows:
> Following suit, at 6:00 p.m. a "Ha-ha big laugh meeting" was held. With Mr. Pak Taewan (1885-1958) presiding, Chŏn Ŭmgwang (1909-1960) broke the silence at the beginning of the event by performing a free-style wild dance. From this moment on, paroxysms of laughter began shaking the Dharma hall of Kŭmgang. Chŏn's dance was followed by performances of elegant traditional songs and lively dances. All of these performances made us think, "Can there be such excitement in those who previously looked so grave and innocent?"
> *Wŏlmal t'ongsin che 10 ho*, Twenty-sixth day of the twelfth lunar month, Tuesday (February 5), Sich'ang 10 (1925)

From this record, we can conclude that the "Ha-ha big laugh meeting" was not just a one-time event. In fact, this laugh-meeting tradition is still followed by Wŏn Buddhists on special

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[758] *Sipchang* Dharma master refers to one who accomplishes the ten "immeasurable treasuries" (K. *mujinjang*; C. *wujinzang* 十無盡藏) of a bodhisattva: (1) faith 信藏; (2) morality 戒藏; (3) conscience 慚藏; (4) shame 愧藏; (5) learning 聞藏; (6) generosity 施藏; (7) wisdom 慧藏; (8) memory or recollection 念藏; (9) memorizing the sutras 持藏; (10) eloquence 辯藏." See, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism Online*, Charles Muller ed., s.v. "*simmujinjang*," accessed May 23, 2021.

[759] Pak Yongdŏk, *Kususan kusip kubong 9 in sŏnjin iyagi: Wŏnbulgyo sŏnjin yŏlchŏn* 2 (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 2003), 135.

[760] Pak Yongdŏk, 135.

occasions, or at the end of retreats. It seems that the laugh meeting was a time for practitioners to discover a new self, unbounded by social norms and personal shyness, and more importantly, as the reporter described, to discover their own inborn senses of joy and excitement. In the talk below, Pak Ŭnguk (1923-2017) shares her memory of a "Ha-ha big laugh meeting" held at the Yŏngsan Sŏn Center in 1940.

> When Master Sot'aesan visited Yŏngsan, all members were deeply delighted and pleased to have him, and they were often moved to tears. Unfortunately, I cannot remember what he said at that time. But I do remember his voice. His voice sounded like the universal energy was resonating in him, overwhelming the world systems of the trichiliocosm. That evening, we performed a play. As I remember, more than a thousand people gathered to see our play at that time, and master Sot'aesan was sitting on a chair at the center of the crowd. I don't remember whether master Chŏngsan also sat on the chair, though. At our "Ha-ha big laugh meeting," we did not have a specific script for the play; we improvised our lines spontaneously during the performance by saying to each other, "You say this and that, and I will say this and that." Master Sot'aesan was so pleased and encouraged us to continue. These days, whenever I talk about the play with Ye-t'awon,[761] we still laugh out loud. One specific scene I remember is that a new bride was coming into our town, being carried in a palanquin. I was playing the role of her mother-in-law. I told her, "You are such a shorty…" Then, the bride replied, "This village has no stars in its sky." Then, I replied, "All the tall bitches picked and ate all the stars in the sky." Then, all the people burst out laughing and so did our Master. We were so pleased and happy.[762]

These special laughing meetings may have functioned as important channels for Sot'aesan's followers to release psychological stress and to achieve a sense of catharsis, particularly during the turbulent colonial period. As Frantz Fanon said, "[N]ational culture is the collective thought process of a people to describe, justify, and extol the actions whereby they have joined forces

[761] This woman's Dharma name is Chŏn Yich'ang (1925-present) and her Dharma title is Ye-t'awŏn. She currently lives at the Central Retired Retreat Center at the Headquarters of Wŏn Buddhism.

[762] On June 22, 2001, a reporter researching Wŏn Buddhism visited Pak at the Paenae Youth Retreat Center and recorded a video interview of about 50 minutes. Accessed on February 22, 2019. http://115.91.201.144:1935/streams/_definst_/mp4:30a95071-2878-4fb0-ab19-fd568dfc3561/2017/05/31/5ed1ed39-b295-4fe3-b2cf-1f3e0ef3d8ea/a953cf9d-908d-49fb-b364-3733a21ecb31.mp4/playlist.m3u8.

and remained strong."[763] Accordingly, the laughing meetings may have been a mechanism for the participants to freely express themselves, while also maintaining a critical eye towards the unjustified violence of colonial forces, thereby creating a new collective identity and way of thinking. For example, Pak Ŭnguk noted that there was no fixed script for the play, the theatrical performance instead being spontaneously improvised. Pak's recollection that there were a thousand attendees at the play would suggest that most of the village's inhabitants came to enjoy the play and the laughing meeting. In the improvised play, then, both the non-PYH audience and the PYH performers may have felt a great sense of liberation in expressing themselves through laughing out loud together. Specifically, let's look more closely at the play's conversation between the new bride and her mother-in-law. The new bride says, "This village has no stars in its sky." Then, the mother-in-law replies, "[a]ll the tall bitches picked and ate all the stars in its sky." This remark about "no stars in its sky" would seem to refer to Korea's situation at the time, in which there was no hope for the common people. When the new bride laments this hopeless future, the mother-in-law blames "the tall bitches," which might signify the colonizer. The ambiguity of this poetical language actually gives the performers a greater freedom to make such critiques. But most importantly, the play and the laughing meeting gave participants a chance to burst out laughing and thus to temporarily transcend the bondage of social mores and restrictions.

During an era of strict censorship and investigation, there were few opportunities for people in the countryside to laugh out loud in group gatherings because of the surveillance of the Japanese. The recurring "Ha-ha big laugh meetings" therefore seem to have served as special conduits for Korean commoners to express their true selves, free even from colonial surveillance,

[763] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 168.

because all of their recreational programs were spontaneously designed and performed. Through such opportunities, the members of the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe were able to enact a sort of personal liberation and to cultivate a childlike, playful nature.

When we think of Buddhist practice, we often envision only the quiet and serenity of sitting meditation. But how can we reconcile this vision with Buddhist "Ha-ha big laugh meetings"? The Buddha considered letting go of a sense of ego or self to be a core Buddhist practice. Various methods have been developed to help the practitioner cultivate this virtue. Sitting meditation is a typical example. Sometimes it focuses on mindfulness training. For example, the version described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya,* no. 10: The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) focuses on the four general foci of mindfulness: the contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), of feeling (*vedanānupassanā*), of state of mind (*cittānupassanā*), and of mental contents (*dhammānupassanā*). But the ultimate end of all of these means, as the Buddha's parable of raft [*Alagaddūpama Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 22] suggests, is to let go even of these skillful methods once liberation is achieved. In "Ha-ha big laugh meetings," therefore, Buddhists gained the chance to be released from some of the important restraints that were binding them, even though they were not consciously thinking about meditating. The first of these restraints is the framework that society imposes upon individuals. The gaps between pupil and teacher, between men and women, between young and old, disappear in the laughter generated at these meetings. All one needs there is the ability to entertain one other by letting go of all preconceptions of personal ego. Thus, we can deduce that the event functioned as a way to help practitioners let go of all kinds of social baggage, such as pride, superiority, authority, and shame, and to instead cultivate their pure natures.

This "Ha-ha big laugh meeting" illustrates one radical aspect of Sot'aesan's Buddhist reformation. I would now like to revisit other revolutionary traits of his reforms that I have outlined in this dissertation.

First, Chapter One carefully examined Sot'aesan's interpretation of Maitreya Buddha. Sot'aesan concluded that the advent of Maitreya Buddha does not mean the arrival of one special savior, but rather that the truth of the radiant light of the *dharmakāyabuddha* is revealed to the world. As this light appears, the principle that "[e]verywhere [is] a buddha image, every act a buddha offering" will be widely enacted.[764] According to Sot'aesan, in such a world, "the buddhadharma will pervade everywhere under heaven, the differentiation between monk and layperson will vanish, secular laws and the Way and its power will not be mutually exclusive, spiritual practice and mundane life will not be mutually exclusive, and the myriad living things of the cosmos will all be edified through its [buddhadharma's] virtue."[765] Sot'aesan's declaration suggests that the world of Maitreya Buddha refers not just to the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, but rather, to a time when people practice Buddhism in everyday life by declining to distinguish between the sacred and the secular, between lay people and ordained monks, between practice and work. Sot'aesan believes that when people realize the true meaning of the *dharmakāyabuddha*, "each and every person will become a living buddha and deliver one another; each and every person will realize that he or she possesses the authority of a buddha; and every household will have buddhas living among them. There will be no need to designate a specific place as the site of the Order, for one will come to the Dragon-Flower Order [of Maitreya] wherever one goes."[766]

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[764] XIV. Prospects: 16, *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 465-466.

[765] XIV. Prospects: 16, *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 466-467.

[766] XIV. Prospects: 16, *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 467.

Second, Sot'aesan transformed the "radical subitism" of *kanhwa* Sŏn into the soteriology of "moderate subitism." It was through the latter schema that Sot'aesan sought to help practitioners cultivate their minds until they achieved an initial awakening and an understanding of true nature; after this, they could gradually attain perfect Buddhahood. In the Pāli sutta's story of the Kālāmas, the Buddha tells the Kālāmas that one should not blindly accept teachings based on conventional customs, traditions, rumors, instructions from a scripture, surmises, axioms, specious reasoning, a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, another's seeming ability, even instruction from a respected teacher, or from any other sources without confirming these teachings through one's own experience.[767] Rather, one is encouraged to see for oneself that actions motivated by greed, hatred, or delusion are dishonorable, and that those motivated by the opposite of greed, hatred, and delusion are honorable.[768] Likewise, Sot'aesan adapted a more gradualist type of soteriology by allowing his students to cultivate an ethos of questioning during their everyday lives, which enabled them to overcome conventional ways of seeing the world and to perceive the world in a new light. Through this method, practitioners would gradually be able to change their own perceptions and actions. Such a process may begin with a conceptual or intellectual awakening, but that awakening would transform one's perceptions and make one capable of authentic bodhisattva action.

My dissertation has also attempted to forge a more nuanced understanding of Koreans' experiences during the colonial period. For Korean historians, the question of how to understand the Korean people's experiences of that era—which are complicated by many ideologies, such as

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[767] *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Tika Nipāta, Mahāvagga, sutta no. 65; discussed in Barbara Reed, "Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Volume One, Robert E. Buswell, Jr., editor-in-chief (New York et al.: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 261.

[768] Ibid.

colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, and modernity—is a crucial, sensitive, and elusive issue. The framework of nationalism in Korea, and particularly the national politics of division, has distorted many historical accounts of colonialism by making them too simple and homogenous.[769] On the other hand, the discourse of "colonial modernization" can easily gloss over the violent nature of colonialism and imperialism by focusing primarily on the economic developments that attended colonialism. In this regard, historical treatments of the colonial period shaped either by "nationalist narratives" or by the theory of "colonial modernization" have failed to do justice to the extremely complex nature of Korea's colonial period. Fortunately, this Manichaean approach to the colonial period has been revised by various new scholarly approaches such as "colonial modernity," "post-colonialism," "non-European historiography," "multipurpose lexicon," "Subaltern studies," and "East Asian-centered historiography."[770] The concept of "colonial modernity" seeks to depart from previous binary approaches by capturing a more dynamic portrait of the complicated experiences of the Korean people and of the transformation of colonial society over time. The goal of this framework is to reveal some of the richness and complexity of a Korean society that had been formulated by a complicated interplay between colonialism, nation, and modernity.[771] In particular, scholars in this vein adopt Antonio Gramsci's concept of "cultural hegemony" or Michel Foucault's notion of "disciplinary power" as theoretical frameworks and vocabularies for understanding historiographical problems that

[769] See Carter J. Eckert, "Exorcising Hegel's Ghosts: Toward a Postnationalist Historiography of Korea," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999): 363-378.

[770] Tanie Barlow, "Introduction: On Colonial Modernity," in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tanie Barlow (Durham and London: Duke University, 1997), 1-20.

[771] Shin and Robinson, "Rethinking Colonial Korea," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999): 1-18.

have surfaced within the dominant force of a nationalist binary paradigm during the last fifty years of scholarship. The lens of "cultural hegemony" focuses on the process by which the power of the state attracts voluntary participation or consent from subordinate groups through the institutional apparatuses that govern the daily life of the people, including politics, education, religion, medicine, family, and the factory.[772] In so doing, historians seek to grapple with the complexity of the organic relationships between colonialism, nation, and modernity, and to discover a variety of identities besides that of the nation, such as class, gender, region, and status.

Although my dissertation uses the historical interpretative framework of "colonial modernity" to give voice to colonized Buddhist practitioners themselves, it also points out that this paradigm, which is mainly based on "cultural hegemony," ultimately cannot expose the more structural violence inherent to colonialism. This dissertation has addressed the structural limits that the colonial situation placed upon indigenous religious leaders, restricting their ability to express their visions and teachings to the people. New religious movements and Buddhist reform movements in early twentieth-century Korea have often been depicted within the simplistic binary framework of nationalism. For this reason, even the undertakings of various religious movements, such as the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, have often been devalued as less patriotic forms of religion. In his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon explicitly states that the uniqueness of the colonial context is based on an imbalanced economic system, inequality, and enormous disparities in lifestyles; it is, in short, "violence" that ordered the colonial world.[773] Following upon this argument, my dissertation has further shown the extent to which a

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[772] Kim Chin'gyun and Chŏng Kŭnsik, ed., *Kŭnsik Chŏng, Kŭndae juch'e wa singminji gyu'ul gwŏllŏk* (Seoul: Munhak kwahaksa, 1997). Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson, ed., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 1999.

[773] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 5-6.

demanding colonial system limited religious expression, while also demonstrating how the colonized people found their own ways to live with, or escape from, those limits in expressing their religious ideas. Even though the colonized were able to engage in social, economic, and cultural activities during the colonial period, their power was insufficient to overthrow the colonial structure. Therefore, my dissertation has asked whether the historical paradigm of "colonial modernity" can provide an interpretive frame for critically examining orientalism and colonialism while also reviving the hidden stories of common people who lived under colonial rule. As Fredric Jameson states, focusing on the hybrid and heterogeneous identities of the colonized will eventually conceal the structural exploitation supporting the base of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.[774]

The persistence in scholarship of the classification system for "pseudo-religions" developed by the colonizers during the colonial period means that we have not yet fully recognized the invisible but violent cognitive legacy of Japanese colonialism. This dissertation has argued that now is the time to abandon that legacy. In the face of direct and indirect violence against the colonized, Sot'aesan's chosen form of resistance was to capitalize on the universal nature of the Buddhist teachings and to ensure that Japanese regulations had a minimal impact on the PYH, all without deviating from the regulations set by the Japanese colonial government. When *Sōshi-kaimei* (創氏改名), a Japanese policy of pressuring Koreans to adopt Japanese names, was enforced by the colonial government in 1939, both Sot'aesan himself and his disciples changed their family names to Irwŏn 一圓. Through this round circle symbol,

[774] Quoted in Junichi Isomae, "Cheguksa ro chonggyo rŭl nonhada," in *Chonggyo wa singminji kŭndae*, ed. Yun Haedong and Junichi Isomae (Seoul: Ch'ae kwa hamkke, 2013), 24. See also Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London and New York: Verso, 1998).

Sot'aesan nods towards his hopes for a world where the truth of the *dharmakāyabuddha* is widely revealed—a world where "a ten thousand buddhas and a million bodhisattvas" arise. I have suggested that this concept serves as an example of Sotae'san using the universality of Buddhism to challenge the violence committed by the colonial government.

A fourth example of the innovativeness of Sot'aesan's Buddhism was his inclusion of diary writing as one of his methods for practicing Buddhism, a truly unconventional and radical move. In order to cultivate the Buddha nature, Sot'aesan actively utilized diary writing, which had been introduced to Korea as a tool for forging modern subjectivity during the Japanese colonial period. In fact, modern Japanese school education actively taught and encouraged students to keep diaries.[775] From around 1920 onward, popular Japanese women's magazines included a "diary" column in the household account books that they would often publish in their appendices at the beginning of the new year. As a result, the household account book and housewife diary rapidly spread to the general public. On the one hand, this pressure to manage one's time and behavior through diary-keeping can be seen as an instance of Foucault's politics of state control. However, Sot'aesan was simply keeping pace with the trends of the era. Sot'aesan created a new form of Buddhist diary, which I introduced in Chapter Four, and in so doing reconciled two opposing concepts: a "liberated self" and a "controlled self" particularly adapted to modernization. Sot'aesan instructed his disciples to mindfully pay attention to their greed, anger, and ignorance, which Buddhists believe to be the most substantial stumbling blocks to liberation, and to record these shortcomings as they rose in the mind. At the same time, he also asked his students to record how many hours they practiced sitting meditation, chanting, and

[775] Nishikawa Yuko, "Kŭndae e ilgi rŭl ssŭndanŭn kŏsŭi ŭimi," trans. by Sŏ Mingyo, in *Ilgi rŭl t'onghae pon chŏnt'ong kwa kŭndae, singminji wa kukka* (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2013), 48-50.

studying scriptures. Through the standardized frame of the diary, the mind's invisible actions could be scientifically recorded and analyzed. This, in turn, allowed adherents to observe the evolution of their own minds as they practiced Buddhism and underwent the gradual transformation from common people to Buddhist practitioners. These diaries were also used as educational and practical tools for those who were not able to receive education. At the congregational level, the Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe recorded all of its members' contributions and the merits that the PYH's practitioners made and left behind for the benefit of future generations. However, when his followers reached a certain level of Buddhist practice, Sot'aesan instructed them to let go of any frameworks they had used previously in their training, much like one must discard a raft after crossing a river. To my mind, this analogy exemplifies the radical spirit with which Sot'aesan reformed Buddhism.

Appendices: List of Precepts; The Essential Discourse on Commanding the Nature; Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications; Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits

A. Ten Precepts for the Ordinary Grade

1. Do not kill without due cause.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not commit sexual misconduct.
4. Do not drink too much alcohol.
5. Do not gamble or play idle games.
6. Do not use harsh speech.
7. Do not frequent improper places where there is singing or dancing.
8. Do not embezzle public funds.
9. Do not speak groundless words.
10. Do not be untrustworthy.

B. Ten Precepts for the Grade of Special Faith

1. Do not make decisions about public affairs by yourself.
2. Do not borrow or lend money between members.
3. Do not be obsessed by the pursuit of gold, silver, and precious gems.
4. Do not be ostentatious in wearing clothes.
5. Do not associate with the wrong kind of people.
6. Do not talk while someone else is talking.
7. Do not smoke tobacco.
8. Do not eat the flesh of four-legged animals.
9. Do not sleep at an improper time.
10. Do not be double-tongued.

C. Ten Precepts for the Grade of the Battle between Dharma and Māra

1. Do not speak about the faults of others.
2. Do not have more than one spouse.
3. Do not be dependent on others.
4. Do not be lazy.
5. Do not be jealous.
6. Do not make impertinent remarks.
7. Do not speak flowery and ingratiating words while conceiving a delinquent mind.
8. Do not be greedy.
9. Do not harbor hatred and anger.
10. Do not be deluded.

(*PYH kyuyak* (*Regulations of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma*) (Chŏllabuk-do Iksan: Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, 1927), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 16-17, c.f. *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 89-90)

The Essential Discourse on Commanding the Nature

1. Having been born as humans among all the four types of birth, we should have a love of learning.
2. Do not cling to your biases.
3. Believe not just in the person alone, but in the dharma.
4. Teach yourself day by day, hour by hour.
5. Ponder the dharmas taught by various persons and believe in the very best of them.
6. Do not indulge in wine and dalliance, but use the time to inquire into truth.
7. Do not exhort others to do anything they do not wish to do, but be concerned only with your own affairs.
8. If anything goes wrong, do not blame others, but examine yourself.
9. So long as they are doing what is right, try to understand the palpable reality of others' situations by thinking of your own case.
10. When responding to any matter, maintain a respectful state of mind and fear the rise of covetous greed as if it were a lion.
10. Should you learn of another's fault, do not reveal it but use it instead to perceive your own faults.
11. A knowledgeable person should not neglect learning just because he or she has knowledge.
Should you learn of another's achievements, proclaim them to the world and never forget them.
12. Even at the risk of your life, do what is right, no matter how much you may dislike doing it.
13. Even at the risk of your life, do not do what is wrong, no matter how much you may want to do it.
14. Should you learn of another's fault, do not reveal it but use it instead to perceive your own faults.
15. Should you learn of another's achievements, proclaim them to the world and never forget them.
16. If you form a wish and want to see it fulfilled, compare everything you see and hear to that wish and study its fulfillment.
(Pulbŏp Yŏn'guhoe*, Pogyŏng yuktae yoryŏng* (Chŏllabuk-do Iksan: Chogwang Insŏi Chusik Hoesa, 1932), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa, 16-17, cf. *The Principal of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 90-91.)

A. Items of Heedfulness for Lay Practitioners in Daily Applications

1. In all your applications, be heedful to make choices with sound thought.
2. Before engaging in an application, be heedful to study for it in advance by observing the circumstances of the application.
3. If you have free time, be heedful to deepen your acquaintance with the purpose of the society, the regulations and the scriptures.
4. People who have substantially achieved a deepened acquaintance with the purpose of the society, scriptures and regulations should be heedful to study cases for questioning.

5. Be heedful to practice reciting the Buddha's name or seated meditation in order to cultivate the spirit either during the time that is left before going to sleep and after completing any remaining household affairs after supper, or else in the early morning.
6. After handling any matter, while thinking about how you handled it, be heedful to assess whether or not you have carried it out for cultivating the mind, sharpening the insight in regard to human affairs and universal principles, and making choices in action through cultivating the attitudes of belief, zeal, questioning, and dedication; whether or not you have committed violations of unbelief, greed, laziness, and ignorance, as well as of "the essential discourse on commanding the nature" and "precepts."

B. Duties of Lay Practitioners Regarding Temple Visits

1. Whenever you come to the department of edification while practicing the abovementioned items of heedfulness in daily applications, be heedful to engage in questions and answers about each and every aspect of those activities.
2. If you have awakened to some matter, be heedful to written report that awakening to the department of edification and to obtain its appraisal.
3. If you encounter a matter that raises a special doubt, be heedful to submit it to a spiritual mentor and gain the awakening of understanding.
4. Be heedful to set aside in advance each year the training fees for Sŏn-retreat (meditation-retreat), so that you may pursue specialized practice in a Sŏn center.
5. On the days of the regular dharma meeting, be heedful to come to temple and dedicate yourself exclusively to practice that day, after settling in advance any outstanding matters.
6. Once you have returned from temple, and after reflecting on whether or not you had some sort of awakening or had any specific doubt clarified, be heedful actively to utilize without fail those lessons in real life.

(*PYH kyuyak* (*Regulations of the Society for the Study of the Buddhadharma*) (Chŏllabuk-do Iksan: Pulpŏp Yŏn'guhoe, 1927), in *Wŏnbulgyo kyogo ch'onggan che 4 kwŏn: ch'ogi kyosŏ py'ŏn* (Iksan: Wŏnbulgyo Ch'ulp'ansa), 17-18, cf. *The Principal Book of Wŏn Buddhism*, in *The Doctrinal Books of Wŏn Buddhism*, 60-61)

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Hwangsŏng sinmun 皇城新聞 (1898-1910)

Maeil sinbo 每日申報 (1910-1945)

Pusan ilbo 釜山日報 (1946-present)

Taehanmail sinbo 大韓每日申報 (1904-1910)

Tong'a ilbo 東亞日報 (1920-present)

Wŏn'gwang 圓光 (1949-present)

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