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“The Future of Korean Buddhism Lies in My Hands”

Takeda Hanshi as a Sōtō Missionary

Was the work of Japanese Buddhist missionaries “evil,” as many historians have indicated? To problematize this view, this article revisits the most vilified of Japanese Buddhist missionaries of the pre-colonial and colonial period (1877–1945). Takeda Hanshi (1863–1911) was both a staunch imperialist and a Sōtō Buddhist priest. His infamy in politics derives from his participation in the assassination of the queen of Korea and enabling Japan’s annexation of Korea. For Buddhists, he is the mastermind behind the Sōtō sect’s attempt to control Korean Buddhism through an alliance with its first modern institution, the Wŏnjong. Scholars have focused on these three events, thus reinforcing the view that Takeda was the epitome of Japanese imperial aggression. However, a close examination of Takeda’s writings from 1907 to 1911 sheds new light on his missionary work. I argue that despite his imperial ideology, Takeda made strenuous efforts, until 1910, to promote the Wŏnjong and defend its autonomy. Based on overlooked primary sources, this article presents a case study that furthers recent scholarly calls to move beyond the imperialist/victim or hero/traitor framing of colonial Korean Buddhist history.

KEYWORDS: Takeda Hanshi—Yi Hoegwang—Sōtō sect—Korean Buddhist Wŏnjong—Buddhist missionary—sectarianism—Jōdo sect

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MANY Koreans and Korean Buddhists consider the Japanese ultranationalist Takeda Hanshi 武田範之 (1863–1911) to have been one of the worst of the imperialists in a dark chapter of modern Korean Buddhist history. In almost all Korean and Japanese scholarship, Takeda is condemned because of his involvement in the assassination of Queen Min (Myōngsōng Hwanghu 明成皇后, 1851–1895) of Korea in 1895. More notoriously, Takeda was one of the leading non-governmental actors who, in collusion with Korean leaders, directly contributed to Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910. These two heinous acts alone provide historians with sufficient evidence to charge Takeda as a villain. Takeda's infamy does not stop here. In the eyes of contemporary Korean Buddhists, he is remembered as the most iniquitous of Japanese Buddhist missionaries because he sought to take over Korean Buddhism altogether—a religious annexation paralleling the political one (PAK 1989, 16–18; KIM Kwangsik 1996, 63; CH'OE Pyōnghyōn 2001, 101; and 2003).

Because Takeda's actions were particularly contemptible, few scholars would venture to imply that Takeda may have made some positive contributions to Korean Buddhism or that he may have had motivations other than political. Moreover, to do so would undermine historiography's canonical characterization of Takeda as a staunch imperialist. This article is not about to dispute that Takeda deserves denunciation. Rather, this article takes on the challenge of finding complexity where there is apparently none. If a scholar can find multiple dimensions of an ultranationalist like Takeda, then such findings call into question the typecasting of other characters in the period as heroes, traitors, nationalists, or imperialists.

In the last decade, a growing number of scholars from the Korean and Japanese sides have discussed, in understanding the interplay between these two Buddhisms, the limitations of dichotomous themes. Scholars of modern Japanese Buddhism question the usefulness of framing all events as imperialism versus anti-imperialism, while scholars of colonial Korean Buddhism find the motif of nationalism versus collaboration insufficient. Both have suggested that using the emotionally laden undertones such as “guilt,” “hatred,” and “evil” (KIBA and KOJIMA 1992; FUJII 1999, SUEKI 2002 and 2004; KIBA and TEI 2007), and dividing Korean monastics into camps such as *ch'inil* 親日 (pro-Japanese) or *hangil* 反日 (anti-Japanese) (TIKHONOV 2003; RYU 2005; KIM Kwangsik 2006; CHO 2006; AUERBACK 2008), overlooks the complex and multiple dimensions of human relationships, thereby rendering the historical narrative linear, sweeping, and

emotional. This article joins the call of contemporary scholars for a new interpretative approach by examining one of the most controversial Buddhist figures in modern Korean and Japanese Buddhist history.

I will focus on Takeda's work as a Sōtō 曹洞 missionary in Korea in relation to his later efforts to mobilize an alliance between the Sōtō sect and the Wŏnjong 圓宗, the administrative center of Korean Buddhism, in 1910. There is ample scholarship on how the Sōtō–Wŏnjong alliance can be understood as one facet of Takeda's larger *political* agenda to further Japan's annexation of Korea (NAKANO 1976; PAK 1981; SŌ 1982; HAN 1988; YI 1989; KIM Kwangsik 1996; ISHIKAWA 1998; HUR 1999; CHŎNG 2001; CH'OE Pyŏngghyŏn 2001 and 2003; HA 2003; KIM Sunsŏk 2008). This article, however, privileges his *missionary* work in the events leading up to the alliance to reveal social and religious dimensions. Relying on overlooked primary sources, especially the *Kōchūiseki* (Collection of Takeda's Writings),¹ I intend to show that Takeda was a complex religious—and political—figure.

Background

Following on the heels of Japan's advances into Korea in the second half of the nineteenth century, Japanese Buddhists commenced what would become seven decades of missionary work. Just as the United States had forced Japan to end its seclusion by threatening an attack by its warships in 1854, Japan used gunboat diplomacy in 1876 to open Korea (GORDON 2003, 115). And, just as the West forced unequal treaties on Japan that opened the doors for Christian missions, Japan's unequal treaty with Korea provided Japanese Buddhists with the opportunity to missionize there (ISHIKAWA 1998, 97–98). Japanese priests soon began crossing the sea to care for Japanese residents settled primarily in Korea's southern port city of Pusan 釜山. Japan's victories in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 and the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–1905, which consequently made Japan the uncontested power in Korea, prompted more Japanese Buddhist priests to turn their eyes to Korea. Seeking to serve the Japanese immigrant communities, priests soon began establishing offices and temples in major cities throughout Korea as branches of their homeland sect.

Even though historiographies portray this missionary work as exclusively for the purpose of furthering the state's colonial agenda, it is clear that priests also pursued their own personal and institutional interests. In fact, often these interests ran counter to the state's needs. For example, during the pre-colonial and

1. These volumes were collected by one of Takeda's lay disciples, Kawakami Zenbē, and are preserved on microfilm; see *Kōchūiseki* under TAKEDA 1928. They contain Takeda's letters, diaries, poems, petitions, and treatises, and are the most comprehensive compilation of primary sources on Takeda's thought and work.

early colonial period (1876–1912), Japanese Buddhist priests were highly motivated to expand their own sect by converting Koreans not to “Japanese Buddhism” but to the Nichiren 日蓮 sect, the Jōdo 淨土 sect, the Sōtō sect, and so forth. Ultimately, each sect envisioned that it would become the official state religion of Korea. The resulting intense sectarian competition complicated the religious landscape of Korea and sometimes threatened the Japanese government’s tight grip on Korea.

Naturally, Japanese priests believed that Korean Buddhists would be the easiest to convert to their sect because they were Buddhist to begin with and they had inseparable historical affinities. Japanese priests thus reached out to the leadership in Korean Buddhism—temple abbots, masters, and prominent monastics—to begin forming relationships. Yet, Japanese Buddhists soon ran up against two major obstacles, among others: the rapid growth of Christianity in Korea and, more importantly, the impoverished state of Korean Buddhism. (Korean Buddhism was weakened by centuries of Neo-Confucian hegemony during the Chosŏn 朝鮮 dynasty, 1392–1910.) Nevertheless, Japanese Buddhist missionaries were confident that their tradition could resuscitate Korean Buddhism, curb the Christianization of Korea, and defend Eastern civilization from Western imperialism. It was their firm belief that Koreans and Korean monastics would ultimately embrace Japan’s paternalistic leadership.

For this purpose, each sect vied for political favor with the Korean court in the same way that they were accustomed to doing with the Japanese emperor (KIBA and KOJIMA 1992, 139). Priests ingratiated themselves to the Korean king and government officials by presenting their sect’s teachings as the best way to pacify subjects and glorify the king’s rule. At the same time, using their political connections, Japanese Buddhist missionaries challenged the anti-Buddhist policies of the Korean government that had been held over from the Neo-Confucian Chosŏn dynasty.

The most symbolic anti-Buddhist measure, implemented by the Chosŏn government in the fifteenth century, prohibited monks and nuns from entering the four gates that punctuated the wall enclosing the center of Seoul (*sŭngni dosŏng ch’urip kŭmjije* 僧尼都城出入禁止制). The purpose of this measure was to deprive Buddhist clergy from access to the Confucian government, which resided within those four gates, and thus cut off political, economic, and social benefits. Japanese Buddhist missionaries believed that abolishing this policy and returning access to central Seoul, the center of power, would be the key to revitalizing Korean Buddhism. Moreover, overturning the law would prove to Korean monks that a particular sect had power and should be considered for alliances or was worthy of joining through conversion. In 1895, Japanese priests succeeded in ending the policy and by then had formed substantial relationships with the Korean Buddhist leadership. Thus, while these Japanese priests unquestionably

furthered Japan's political expansion into Korea, they also helped return Korean Buddhism to the center of politics and society by assisting the restoration of the physical presence of Korean monastics in the capital.

For their part, Korean monks, who had lost much of their political, social, and economic foundation in the Chosŏn dynasty, appropriated the political and social influence of the Japanese Buddhist sects in order to ensure their safety and property, make institutional gains, staunch competition from Christian missions, and increase their social mobility. In sum, the relationship between Japanese and Korean Buddhists during this pre- and early-colonial period can be understood in the context that each side could fulfill important needs through alliances.

Takeda's Life

Takeda Hanshi, a Buddhist priest ordained in one of the largest Japanese Buddhist sects, the Sōtō, played an important role during this dynamic period between Korean and Japanese Buddhism. The Sōtō sect was a relative latecomer in the sectarian push into Korea, as was Takeda. Takeda was perhaps the most influential and effective of the missionaries in that he nearly succeeded in forming an unequal alliance between Korean Buddhism and the Sōtō sect (HUR 1999, 118–19). In fact, historiography asserts that Takeda's machinations caused the Japanese colonial government to wrest control of Korean Buddhism from Japanese Buddhists through the Temple Ordinance of 1911 (CHŒNG 2001).

Takeda was born on 23 November 1864, the third son of Sawa Shihei 澤四兵衛 (1837–1879), a retainer in the Kurume 久留米 fief in Fukuoka prefecture. His given name was Hanji,² he was ordained as Kōchū 洪疇, and his posthumous names were Zenrai 善来 and Jihō 自芳. His father was a staunch imperialist (*kinnōha* 勤皇派) and, due to his involvement in the 1871 “Meiji 4 Incident” (Meishi jiken 明四事件),³ was demoted on charges of treason by the newly-established Meiji government. Takeda's father died in 1878, when Takeda was eleven. He was adopted by Takeda Sadasuke 武田貞祐, a medical doctor and a devotee to the emperor, who intended to pass his medical occupation on to Takeda (ISHIKAWA 1998, 94). However, after attending local schools for eight years, Takeda left home at the age of nineteen. He traveled throughout Japan, encountering many others who were grappling with understanding the rapidly changing domestic and international situation. In the meantime, he became deeply interested in Buddhism and, at one point, determined that he would read the entire Buddhist Canon (Tripiṭaka

2. Although pronounced the same way, the Chinese letters of his name changed over time from 半治 to 範治 and 範之.

3. A group of imperialists who were critical of the Meiji government's Westernization policies attempted to overturn the regime. For more details, see TAKIZAWA 1996.



The last photo of Takeda taken before his death, during his recuperation at a hot spring in December 1910. Source: KAWAKAMI 1987.

or *Daizōkyō* 大藏經).⁴ At age twenty-one, in 1883, Takeda became a disciple of Nematsu Gendō 根松玄道, a Sōtō monk at Kenshō-ji 顕聖寺 in Niigata Prefecture (*Takada nippō*, 24 July 1911). Takeda became the head of this temple after his master's death, although he was away much of the time until his own passing from cancer on 23 June 1911 at the age of forty-nine.

Although he was a Sōtō monk, Takeda performed substantial work in the political arena. He spent significant time in Tokyo, active in the movement for freedom and people's rights (*jiyū minken undō* 自由民権運動). In 1885, he worked as a police officer in Fukushima. His political interests eventually led him to set his sights on Korea. In Korea, he was involved in a number of important events in the 1890s that changed the political relationship between Korea and Japan.

Takeda and Korea

Takeda was praised by Tōyama Mitsuru 頭山 満 (1855–1944), the de facto leader of the ultranationalist society Genyōsha 玄洋社 (Black Ocean Society) in Korea, as the “best of wanderers in Korea” (*Chōsen rōnin no hakumai* 朝鮮浪人の白米) (TAKIZAWA 1983, 59; CH'OE Pyōnghyōn 2001, 101), a term applied to its members. He was also a staunch imperialist, a chauvinist activist, and a pan-Asianist. These titles derived mainly from Takeda's adventures in Korea in the 1890s. In 1885, Takeda heard about the 1884 coup (*Kapsin jōngpyōn* 甲申政變)⁵ in Korea attempted by the reform-minded Enlightenment Party while he was residing at Kenshō-ji and determined to cross the sea to get directly involved in Korean politics. However, anti-Japanese sentiments and China's dominance in Korea in the aftermath of the failed coup deterred him from leaving. After eight years of waiting, he finally arrived in Pusan, commencing one of four major trips between 1892 and late 1910, until he returned permanently to his hometown Kurume for medical treatment of his laryngeal cancer.

4. Later, in 1910, Takeda launched a movement to preserve the Koryō Tripiṭaka at Haein 海仁 temple in Korea. He wrote several petitions to government authorities in Korea. In one petition, Takeda pressed Resident-General Sone Arasuke 曾禰荒助 (1849–1910) to officially designate the wooden canons as a cultural treasure and protect them from potential smuggling. His petition comprised six thousand words in which he articulated why, through its rare genealogy, quality, and preservation, the canon should be nominated as a world treasure (*Kōchūiseki* 1928, III 1–15). He accused the Japanese authorities of “disregarding religion,” and demanded that the Resident-General have the Ministry of Home Affairs be in charge of protecting national treasures (KAWAKAMI 1987, 511).

5. A coup attempted in the year of Kapsin, 1884, by the Enlightenment Party (Kaehwadang 開化黨), a reform party consisting of disenchanted Confucians and others that sought the modernization of Korea. In October, members attempted to topple pro-Chinese officials heading the Korean government and to bring about a political reform analogous to the Meiji Restoration in Japan. However, the coup failed when Chinese troops retook the palace three days later.

Takeda's first three trips to Korea were mostly for political rather than religious work. The first trip, from 1892 to mid-1893, was to raise funds for ultra-nationalist activities ultimately aimed at furthering "Asia's reform" (MATSUZAWA 1979, 50). Takeda started a fishery business along with thirty others, some of them members of the Gen'yōsha, with the assistance of Yi Chuhoe 李周會 (or Yi P'ungyōng 李豊榮, 1843–1895), the magistrate of Yōsu 麗水 in Chōlla 全羅 Province and a former member of the Enlightenment Party.⁶ Within six months, the business went bankrupt and Takeda had to abandon it. After a brief trip back to Japan, he returned to Pusan in late 1893.

When a peasant rebellion (Tonghak-nan 東學亂)⁷ broke out in Chōlla Province in 1894, he helped form the Heaven Helping Society (Tenyūkyō 天祐俠). This society consisted of fifteen Japanese "continent wanderers" (*tairiku rōnin* 大陸浪人),⁸ people who had been marginalized by the Meiji government (TAKIZAWA 1986, 76), and it included Uchida Ryōhei 内田良平 (1874–1937) who later became a key political figure in Korea, Yoshikura Ōsei 吉倉沓聖, Ōsaki Shōkichi 大崎正吉, and Tanaka Jirō 田中侍郎.⁹ In July of 1894, they met with Chōn Pongjun 全捧準 (1855–1895), the leader of the Tonghak rebellion, and volunteered to become members of Tonghak to fight against government troops and ultimately to topple the corrupt Korean government controlled by a faction loyal to Queen Min.¹⁰ They traveled extensively in Korea with the Tonghak rebels, often stay-

6. Yi Chuhoe was one of Takeda's closest associates. He was executed for his involvement in the assassination of Queen Min (EDA 1930, 8).

7. The Tonghak is an "Eastern Learning" society, established in 1860. The founder of this religious reform movement was Chōe Ch'e'u 崔濟愚 (1824–1864). Its doctrine included all the major religions—Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, shamanism, and Catholicism—and spread rapidly among oppressed peasants, in part as opposition to corrupt central and local officials. The members of Tonghak yearned to strengthen the country to curb the incursion of foreign powers, the equality of all classes, and for social reforms. Due to the political nature of the Tonghak movement, culminating in the Tonghak peasant rebellions of 1894, the government executed the leader Chōe in 1863 as well as the second-in-command Chōe Siyōng 崔時亨 (1827–1898). However, the Tonghak movement continued to develop throughout the colonial period as one of the most influential religions, playing a major role in the March First Movement of 1919. Under the leadership of Son Pyōnghui 孫秉熙 (1861–1922), its name was changed to the Chōndogyo 天道教 in 1905.

8. According to the *Kojong sidaesa* (The history of the Kojong Period), there were fourteen members (vol. 3, 17 June 1894).

9. The group consisted of four parties each from Seoul, Pusan, Fukuoka, and Tokyo. Takeda belonged to the Pusan party (YOSHIKURA 1981, 11–12).

10. According to Kim Pyōnsun in the *Pyōlkōngon* (Other World, issue 14, 1928), Chōn Pongjun, as General, allied with other Tenyūkai members. Takeda was in charge of the troops. The *Kojong sidaesa* (17 June 1894) reports that the fourteen, including Takeda Hanshi, formed the society to "attempt political reform in Korea" and thus were "ordered to be arrested and handed over to the Japanese consulate." As for records on the meetings of the Tenyūkai members, including Takeda, with Chōn, see YOSHIKURA 1981, 107–18.

ing in temples, the best places to hide. However, the Heaven Helping Society was voluntarily disestablished when its members realized that the prospects for achieving its goals looked bleak (Some members later joined the *Kokuryūkai* 黒龍会 [Amur River Society or Black Dragon Society], an ultranationalist group founded by Uchida in 1901).¹¹ Takeda went on to work as a spy for the Japanese government during the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. He became ill and returned to Japan for treatment.

The following year, in 1895, he made a third trip to Korea, during which he became involved in Queen Min's assassination. Colluding with the Taewŏn'gun 大院君 (1820–1898), the father-in-law and archenemy of Queen Min, Takeda and more than forty other Japanese, accompanied by a couple of hundred Japanese and Korean soldiers, invaded the palace at dawn on 8 October, murdered the Queen, and brought the Taewŏn'gun, nominally, back to power. Although those Japanese involved in the incident, including Takeda and the Japanese consul to Korea, Miura Gorō 三浦梧樓 (1848–1926), were arrested by the Japanese government and imprisoned in Hiroshima for a brief period, all of them were acquitted of charges for lack of evidence,¹² even though Westerners present at the time reported witnessing the direct involvement of the Japanese.

Whether Takeda was one of the Japanese wanderers who killed Queen Min is unclear in extant sources. Takeda wrote to his brother Saba Yasusuke 佐波保輔 from prison on 29 October denying his involvement: "As far as we [Takeda and Shiba Shirō 柴 四朗, 1852–1922] were concerned, we should not be considered as such [premeditated murderers or members of a ring of ruffians] as suspected by the court. Shiba and I had been ill and I had recovered enough to be able to go sightseeing [in Korea]. Thus, it is true that I went there [to Seoul], but I am almost irrelevant to the event" (KAWAKAMI 1987, 106). However, despite Takeda's alibi, Takizawa Makoto speculates that Takeda must have played an important role because of his close relationship with Yi Chuhoe, the leader of the Korean soldiers with whom Takeda started a fishery business two years previously and who also took part in the assassination. Inoue Tasuku goes as far as to say that the plan to eliminate Queen Min was Takeda's (INOUE 1994, 159). Even though Takizawa excludes the possibility of Takeda's direct engagement in action (TAKI-

11. The Kokuryūkai published the journal *Kokuryū* 黒龍 to which Takeda often submitted articles under the names Honei Sanjin 保寧山人, Shamon Kōchū 沙門洪疇, Taihei Dōjin 太平道人, Hokugaku Sanjin 北岳山人, and others. For more details, see HENSHŪ KAIDAI UCHIDA RYŌHEI BUNSHO KENKYŪKAI 1991.

12. Takeda was imprisoned for roughly five weeks. For more detail on Takeda's involvement in the assassination see INOUE 1994, 149–72 and TAKIZAWA 1986, 104–5. For a detailed account of the assassination of Queen Min and the Japanese' involvement, see KAZUU 1935, 511–47, and for the Japanese government's involvement in this incident see CH'OE Munhyŏng 2001.

ZAWA 1986, 104–5), it is highly likely that, based on the reports of others at the time, Takeda was in the palace that morning.

For the next ten years or so, until Takeda returned to Korea with Uchida¹³ and after Korea became a protectorate of Japan in 1905, Takeda immersed himself in work at Kenshō-ji, where he was the abbot, and poured his energy into reforming the Sōtō sect. His administrative skills were recognized by the Sōtō headquarters, which nominated him to become a member of the council of Sōtō branch temples in 1902. In 1904, he was elected to become a council member of the Sōtō headquarters and a director of the Sōtō mission in Korea.

Takeda and Korean Buddhism

Despite ten years' absence from Korea, when he returned in 1906 Takeda easily reconnected himself to the former Tonghak and pro-Japanese leaders, especially to Yi Yonggu 李容九 (1868–1912), the head of the Sichōngyo 侍天教 (Heaven Serving Religion),¹⁴ a religious faction of the Tonghak established in 1906, and Song Pyōngjun 宋秉峻 (1858–1925), the leader of the Ilchinhoe 一進會 (Advancement Society),¹⁵ a political party established in 1904 (TAKIZAWA 1986, 73–74). Takeda worked as a de facto advisor to both the Ilchinhoe and the Sichōngyo from 1906 onwards. In 1908, on the recommendation of Yi Yonggu and Uchida, Takeda was also nominated to become the advisor to the Wōnjong. From 1908 to 1910, Takeda's role as a Sōtō missionary and advisor to the Wōnjong became as significant as his political engagements with the Ilchinhoe and Sichōngyo.

Takeda emerged as a major player on the Korean scene in part because Uchida brought Takeda in to help push for Korea's annexation. One of the central reasons why Uchida picked Takeda in the first place is that Takeda had broad knowledge of Buddhist and Confucian texts and was able to write fluently in Chinese, an ability that was crucial to communicating with and befriending non-Japanese-speaking Korean leaders. Thus Takeda became the author of numerous petitions and memoranda regarding reforms and annexation, written on behalf of the Ilchinhoe (a political party), the Sichōngyo (a religious party), and the Wōnjong

13. In late 1905 or early 1906, Uchida was recommended to Itō by Sugiyama Shigemaru 杉山茂丸 (1864–1935), an ultranationalist, as the best person to control issues in Korea (CONROY 1960, 418–19; DUUS 1998, 201–44).

14. Yi established this religion after he had been excommunicated from the Ch'ondogyo (Tonghak) due to his collaboration with the Japanese. In tandem with the Ilchinhoe, the Sichōngyo worked closely with the Japanese, and especially with Takeda Hanshi.

15. This political organization was established with the aim of reforming and modernizing Korea. Under the leadership of Son Pyōngjun and Yi Yonggu, the Ilchinhoe played a leading role in fighting the corruption of central and local officials. It also collaborated with Japan during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and was instrumental in Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 (MOON 2005).

(the Buddhist institution). Takeda was indispensable to Uchida's political goals and, without him, Uchida might not have succeeded in getting Korea annexed to Japan (*Kongō* March 1930 and TAKAHASHI 1929, 934).¹⁶ And, without Uchida, Takeda would not have risen to prominence nor played a crucial role in several major colonial projects. Through Uchida, Takeda became involved with the Sichōngyo, promoting it as the best religion to bring reform and modernization to Korea, unite Asian religions (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism), curb the encroachment of Christianity, and oust the white race from Asia (TAKIZAWA 1986, 276).

Takeda's background as a Sōtō priest and missionary to Korea made it natural for him to turn his attention toward Korean Buddhism. In fact, he had witnessed firsthand the conditions of Korean Buddhism when, as a member of Tenyūkyō (Heaven Helping Society), he stayed at a number of temples, such as Kwanch'ok 灌燭 Temple and Sinwŏn 新元 Temple, from 1892 to 1894. It was at Sinwŏn Temple where the Heaven Helping Society spent some time disbanding itself (YOSHIKURA 1981, 189 and 193). Along with his visits to Korean temples as a member of the society, Takeda's understanding of Korean Buddhism expanded during a trip he made with Yi Yonggu in 1907 in which the two took an ethnographic survey of Korean Buddhism on behalf of the Resident-General's Office. Based on this experience, Takeda, writing as the advisor to the Wŏnjong in late 1908, drafted an essay the following year on the situation of Korean religion and Buddhism, which he later submitted to Korean and Japanese government officials in Korea and to the Sōtō headquarters. Given Takeda's particular Buddhist background, political connections, administrative skills, and knowledge of Korean Buddhism, it is not surprising then that Uchida recommended Takeda become the advisor to the Wŏnjong, newly created in early 1908.

Evolving Support for Korean Buddhism

Well before his nomination as advisor to the Wŏnjong, Takeda showed an interest in revitalizing Korean Buddhism (CH'OE Pyŏnghyŏn 2001, 108). However, in his earlier writings on the role of Korean Buddhism in larger projects, he was careful not to advocate too strenuously for Korean Buddhism since, at the time, he was working with the Tonghak and the Sichōngyo, for which Buddhism was of secondary importance. For example, in a letter to Chŏn Pongjun,¹⁷ the

16. Uchida later recalled, "It was due to our movement that annexation was finally realized." "Our" means his friends Takeda and Sugiyama Shigemaru, among others. Quoted from CONROY 1960, 381–82. The Japanese scholar Kamiya Jirō also indicates that Yi Yonggu, Song Pyŏngjun, Uchida, Sugiyama, and Takeda were the most instrumental in Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 (KAMIYA 1984, 235).

17. Chŏn was executed in March 1895 and thus did not receive Takeda's letter.

leader of the Tonghak movement, written in January 1895 from prison in Hiroshima, Takeda stresses the *unity* of the three traditions (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) and makes it clear that “it is not my intention that Korea should worship Buddhism” (TAKEDA 1913, 5). At this time, he was aware that the main tenets of the Tonghak movement treated Buddhism equally (at best) with Confucianism and Taoism. In addition, he was conscious of his identity as a Buddhist priest and knew that others would interpret whatever he said about Buddhism as revealing a preference for his own tradition. In sum, it may well be that Takeda early on had a vision for how Korean Buddhism could fulfill a pan-Asian Buddhist vision and other goals, but it is hard to know exactly what he thought because of the political constraints he had at the time.

After starting to work as advisor to the religious movement, the Sichōngyo, in 1906, Takeda began showing a clearer interest in Korean Buddhism. He wrote to Yi Yonggu, the head of the Sichōngyo, to receive some perspective on the status of Korean Buddhism. Although Takeda’s original letter is not available, a copy of Yi’s reply on 9 January 1907 reveals Takeda’s original questions. Yi wrote, “As for [Korean] Buddhism, one should ask the head monk of Wōnhūng temple [the quasi-administrative center of Korean Buddhism at the time] to inquire about the number of Korean monastics, other matters, and the historical records on Master Ch’egwan 諦觀 [d. 971]¹⁸ of the Koryō 高麗 dynasty [918–1392].” Another letter, dated 12 March 1907, details Takeda’s meeting with the Sōtō Master Hioki Mokuzen 日置黙仙 (1847–1920) who had been traveling in China and Korea for two months (18 January to 14 March 1907) to collect the bones of Japanese soldiers who died during the Russo-Japanese war, and to bring them back to Japan for placement in a pagoda. Takeda met Hioki on 5 March in Seoul and shared his ideas on how to revitalize Korean Buddhism. Hioki concurred with Takeda’s ideas (later, in his talk at T’ongdo 通度 temple, Hioki mentioned Takeda’s vision to the two hundred and fifty resident monks) (TANAKA and OKUMURA 1907, 199). On 11 March, Takeda shared the same thoughts with Han Kyōngwōn 韓景源, Yi Yonggu’s interpreter, who recommended Takeda write his ideas down and send them to Yi Yonggu for consultation. Takeda wrote “A Letter Suggesting the Revitalization of [Korean] Buddhism” (*Kan Bukkyō saikōsho* 勸佛教再興書) that Han translated and presented to Yi.

In this important letter, Takeda deplores the backward conditions of Korean monks, finding it unconscionable that monks “were prohibited from entering the capital,” and that “people considered the monk’s robe (*kesa* 袈裟) as nothing more than dirt and shit.” He observes that “Even after the prohibition law was lifted, monks were hesitant to even consider stepping into Seoul,” and that, when

18. As a Korean monk, he contributed to the Chinese Buddhist tradition by reintroducing lost T’ien-t’ai 天台 texts. For details see CHAN 2005.

Japan made Korea a protectorate in 1905, “Japanese monks were placed at the highest position of the human world while Korean monks were thrown down to the lowest” (TAKEDA 1913, 37).

To resuscitate Korean Buddhism, Takeda proposes that the first step be “to elevate monks’ status so as to eliminate people’s derogatory attitudes toward the monks.” To accomplish this, Takeda, quoting a teaching from the Buddha that “one who falls to the ground can use the same ground to stand up,” argues “If Seoul was the place where Buddhism perished, it should be where Buddhism rises again.” For this reason, he demands that “The central religious office [of Korean Buddhism] should be situated inside [the four gates] of Seoul and the leader, elected by likeminded monks, should administer it.” He adds that “They should invite eminent masters from Japan for dharma talks” so that “people and government officials can witness [and learn from] how these masters are received with respect.” At the end of his letter, Takeda reminds Yi that “Buddhism ... [is] contained in the Sichōngyo, and by helping Buddhism regain the glories of Shilla 新羅 (668–935) and Koryō Buddhism, these three religions [Buddhism, Sichōngyo, and Taoism] will be able to stop Christianity” (TAKEDA 1913, 39–40). This 1907 letter reveals that Takeda was beginning to shift his priorities toward revitalizing Korean Buddhism.

In another letter to Yi Yonggu, dated 18 March, Takeda draws on a letter from Hioki, after Hioki had visited T’ongdo temple. The master had observed that there were three groups of Korean monks at the temple: one group seeks protection from the Jōdo sect, another through the Jōdoshin sect, and yet another through the Sōtō sect. In order to resolve the problem of this disunity, Takeda argues in his letter to Yi that Korean Buddhists “should put an end to this proclivity for dependence [on Japanese sects] and establish a central religious office in Seoul” (TAKEDA 1913, 39–40). Takeda also criticizes Japanese Buddhist sects for the impulsive way in which they sought to take over Korean temples and for “making the major temples and mountains in Korea an arena of competition.” Takeda appears to take a non-sectarian position—at least when writing to Korean Buddhists—by stressing that:

Korean temples have their own [unique] tradition and they should not be matched to either the Jōdo or Nichiren sects, who are themselves only recently established as sects in Japan. It is as if Lamaism [Tibetan Buddhism] were to take over Tendai [天台] Mountain. This is what one who pursues the highest virtues should avoid.
(KAWAKAMI 1987, 340)

Along the same lines, Takeda sent a subtle poem of warning to Hioki prior to his visit to a Korean temple. It recommends that Hioki, a Sōtō master, not meddle in the temple’s matters: “If you by any chance dye one of your fingers in this distinguished place [T’ongdo temple], you, Master, would be instantly rendered the

head of thieves” (KAWAKAMI 1987, 340). Aware of the increasing aggressiveness of Japanese sects in Korea, Takeda took pains to keep the Sôtô sect out of the fray.

Takeda's growing interest in Korean Buddhism also led him to modify the hierarchy of the three religions of the Sichôngyo, although indirectly and subtly. In one of his lectures to the Sichôngyo members in 1907, he uses the metaphors of a bird and a chariot to emphasize the inseparable but hierarchical relationship among the religious traditions. He likens Buddhism to “the body of a bird” while the other two, Taoism and Confucianism, are its “two wings,” and Buddhism is “the main body of a chariot” while the other two are its “two wheels” (TAKEDA 1913, 47). What, then, is the role of the Sichôngyo in his typology? It merely needs to facilitate this unification, which implies that the Sichôngyo is ultimately the promoter of Korean Buddhism. Of course, Takeda did not articulate this so directly to the Sichôngyo members. One time, a Sichôngyo leader named Ch'oe Kinam 崔基南, who was deeply concerned about Takeda's seemingly outright promotion of Korean Buddhism, challenged him. Takeda evaded him by saying that Buddhism and Confucianism are “the engines of the Sichôngyo” (KAWAKAMI 1987, 234).

A close reading of his writings supports the idea that Takeda inevitably prioritized Buddhism over other religions (INOUE 1994, 127). As Takeda's relationship with the Wŏnjong and its elected leader Yi Hoegwang 李晦光 (1862–1933) deepened, his personal identity as a Buddhist priest gradually dominated his strategy on the role of Buddhism in Korea.

Takeda and the Wŏnjong

As mentioned earlier, Takeda was sensitive to how Japanese sectarian competition was causing Korean monks to feel uncertain about how to work with Japanese Buddhists. Up until 1907, the Jōdo sect was the most influential among Korean monks. It had control over Wŏnhŭng temple and the Myŏngjin School, the administrative and educational centers of Korean Buddhism, respectively. The Korean government established the Wŏnhŭng temple in 1902 and charged it with the responsibility of overseeing other Korean temples and, ironically, of preventing Jōdo missionaries from interfering in Korean temple affairs. The Myŏngjin School, located in the same complex, was established in 1906 as the first modern, central school of Korean Buddhism. When Japan took Korea as a protectorate in 1905, shifting Korea into a semi-colonial status, the Korean government lost control of the complex and Jōdo missionaries took over its operation. All Korean Jōdo members carried a Jōdo badge and paid membership fees. But when the Jōdo sect attempted to assume *legal* ownership of the facilities at the Wŏnhŭng temple, Korean monks resisted by severing their relationships with Jōdo missionaries, especially with the supervisor of the Jōdo mission to Korea, Inoue Genshin 井上玄真 (1861–1934).

With the Jōdo sect kicked out, Korean Buddhist leaders aspired to establish an administration, relatively independent of yet protected by the government, which could unite and govern Korean Buddhism. The Wŏnjong came into being as the first modern Buddhist institution in Korea (KIM Sunsŏk 2003, 18), and the Korean monk Yi Hoegwang was elected as its leader in March 1908. However, not long after the establishment of the Wŏnjong, the Wŏnjong had to seek support from the Sōtō sect (discussed later). Shortly after visiting the headquarters of the Sōtō sect in Japan, the Wŏnjong made Takeda its advisor, based on Uchida and Yi Yonggu's recommendation.

Upon accepting the invitation, Takeda took care to act not as a representative of the Sōtō sect but as an independent priest. He sensed that Korean monks were fed up with the sectarian competition among Japanese Buddhists and that, although Korean Buddhists sought the support and protection of Japanese Buddhists, they were wary of allying themselves with any one sect. He suggested four conditions before accepting the Wŏnjong monks' request: 1. the unity [of the sangha] should be solidified; 2. political support should be undertaken; 3. protection from other sects should not be sought; and 4. the advisor should serve in a personal capacity rather than as a Sōtō monk (*Kōchūiseki* 1928, VI 2–5). The Wŏnjong monks welcomed his conditions.

Takeda then asked Yi Hoegwang to convene a sangha meeting at Pohyŏnsa 普賢寺 in P'yŏng'an Province to discuss establishing a central office for the Wŏnjong.¹⁹ Interestingly, at that time the temple was under the protection of the Buddhist missionary Furukawa Taikō 古川太航 from the Rinzaï 臨濟 sect, and Takeda's suggestion of using it for the meeting may have been partly intended to alienate the Rinzaï sect from it. After the meeting, Yi, representing monks from forty-four temples, submitted a petition on 27 July 1908 to the Minister of Home Affairs of Imperial Korea, Song Pyŏngjun. The petition requests legal approval for the newly formed Wŏnjong. It is this petition that Takeda ends up spending his next three years fighting to get approved by the Korean and Japanese authorities in Korea.

Yi opens the petition by deploring the ruinous state of Korean monks, whose rights were not recognized and who could not enjoy the benefits of modern society (*Kōchūiseki* 1928, VI 2–5). He writes,

After witnessing the situation of Buddhism in other parts of the world, I, Hoegwang, and like-minded monks, intend to establish a central institution to make Buddhist teachings popular, and ultimately to make the Buddhist institution of our country comparable to the Buddhism of other countries.

(*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5)

19. Takeda wrote that he had leaders of the Ilchinhoe attend the sangha meeting (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5 and VIII 3–9).

The Wŏnjong's petition, which followed Yi's letter and which reflects Takeda and Yi's vision for Korean Buddhism, requests that the Korean and Japanese authorities approve and abide by nine items, as follows:

1. Create a central religious office for the Wŏnjong, have the Minister of Home Affairs directly supervise it, and have the office administer all the temples of the thirteen provinces.
2. Allow people to freely practice their belief in the three jewels [the Buddha, dharma, and sangha], and to not interfere with funerals and other public rituals.
3. Allow monks and nuns to publicly preach the dharma and to conduct rituals as requested.
4. Any administrative decision in the Wŏnjong should receive the approval from the Minister of Home Affairs.
5. The position for the head monk [*kanchō* 官長] of the central religious office requires the recommendation of the Minister of Home Affairs.
6. The head monk is responsible for the nominations of abbots for all the head temples, the departmental heads of the central religious office and other clerical positions, and the heads of the provincial branch offices.
7. The central religious office should guarantee the rights of each temple in the thirteen provinces to their treasures, forests, and other properties.
8. Each head temple of the thirteen provinces should be responsible for all the expenses of the central religious office.
9. In case the central religious office misuses its power, each temple can complain to the Minister of Home Affairs.

(*Kōchūiseki*, v1 2–5)

Significantly, the sixth clause requires that the power of nominating abbots for the major temples of Korea resides with the leader of the Wŏnjong and *not* with any authority in the Sōtō sect, Japanese Buddhism, or government. This is clear evidence that, even though the terms were drafted under Takeda's advisement, Takeda did not seek (at least not overtly) to control the Wŏnjong. Rather, the terms suggest that Takeda, working with the Wŏnjong leadership, sought to create a relatively independent Korean Buddhist administrative institution. The lack of mention of the Sōtō sect or Japanese Buddhists indicates that Takeda, at least at this point, was not making moves to get the Sōtō sect overly involved.

Without doubt, to Takeda Japanese Buddhism in general and the Sōtō sect in particular was a model for the modernization of Korean Buddhism, a perception shared by not a few Korean monastics as well. However, at least during this pre-colonial period in which Korea was nominally sovereign, Takeda did not push for Japanese Buddhism to control Korean Buddhism institutionally. Rather, at this point in time Takeda's petition on behalf of the Wŏnjong can be seen as an extension of his pan-Asian Buddhist discourse, rather than solely of his imperialist ambition. Many Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa Japanese Buddhists had

traveled not only to the West but also to other Asian countries, including India, Sri Lanka, China, and Korea. Through their firsthand encounters with Buddhists in these countries, they developed a strong sense of solidarity with other Asian Buddhists, and shared the feeling that they urgently needed to work to counter the advances of Christianity by revitalizing Buddhism across Asia (JAFJE 2004, 67). Takeda joined this pan-Asian Buddhist vision.

Takeda's Letter to the Korean and Japanese Officials

Yi sent the same petition to Prime Minister Yi Wanyong (李完用 1856–1926), as well as to the Resident-General's Office. Takeda and Yi, to their chagrin, did not hear back from either the Korean imperial government (Song Pyŏngjun and Yi Wanyong) or the Resident-General's Office. Two months later, in September 1908, Takeda resent the same petition, adding his own notes. These notes reveal much about Takeda's thinking in this pre-annexation period.

Takeda opens by expressing frustration that his and Yi's petition has not yet been approved. He writes that, assuming that the government takes careful consideration of this petition, he would like to help government officials understand the contents more clearly, and provides three principal reasons for the petition: 1. to obtain freedom of faith; 2. to reclaim human rights for Korean monks; and 3. to preserve national treasures and properties of temples. Using international lexicons such as freedom of faith and human rights, Takeda seeks to make his points more effective.

Takeda goes on to argue why the Korean government should extend itself to protect Korean Buddhism. He begins by revisiting the historical relationship between state and religion in Japan. During the Edo period, the government supervised Japanese Buddhism through sect regulations (*hatto* 法度) and supported sects "as if they were imperial families." In the wake of the Meiji Restoration, the government ended its support and protection of Buddhism when it adopted the Western concept of separation of church and state. But in the years that followed, the Meiji government changed this stance and brought Buddhism back into the state structure. Takeda likewise wanted the Korean government to protect Korean Buddhism by incorporating it into its government system. The American system of *laissez-faire* toward religion, argues Takeda, does not apply to the unique Buddhist tradition of Japan and Korea. Rather, modern Buddhism should receive special support from the state (*Kōchūiseki*, vi 2–5). Takeda's vision of how modern Buddhism would relate to the state was shared by many other Japanese and Korean monastics at the time. It conveniently combined a traditional element in which the state provided support and protection with a Western element in which Buddhism remained independent.²⁰

20. Such a relationship could be termed "Asian Buddhist modernity."

Accordingly, Takeda makes suggestions to the Resident-General regarding religious policies in order to get the government to support the Wŏnjong. He agrees that civilized countries such as the United States took an approach of non-interference (*hōnin shugi* 放任主義) toward religion on the basis of the separation of church and state. However, he provides two cases in which the state protects religion: Russia and England have their state religions, Greek Orthodoxy and Anglicanism, respectively. To Takeda, improving (*kōjō* 向上) Korean Buddhism requires the government's administrative protection. This protection would involve having the Minister of Home Affairs of the Korean government oversee the central religious office of the Wŏnjong, which in turn supervises the head temples. Under the wings of the government, Korean Buddhism, he believes, could gradually regain strength, which had been weakened from centuries of Confucian dominance. Takeda concludes his letter by adamantly stating, "It is the Korean government that should be responsible for compensating the usurpation of the human rights [of Korean monks] that occurred over the last three hundred years" (*Kōchūiseki*, vi 2–5). Approving the central religious office of the Wŏnjong, he maintains, is the first step toward that. Thus, although Takeda argues for government support for and protection of Korean Buddhism, he envisions Korean Buddhism as being fairly independent, controlling and determining most of its own internal affairs.

At the same time, Takeda did not want the government to be worried that the Korean Buddhism he and Yi envisioned was so independent that it would have extra-territorial rights. He assures the government that he and the Wŏnjong monks are well aware of their legal limits and that therefore there should be no reason the petition should not be approved.

Emerging Pro-Sōtō Views

While Takeda's points in this letter of 1908 are consistent with those he made to Yi Yonggu in letters a few years earlier, one section of writing represents a new line of argument. Here, Takeda provides reasons why the Wŏnjong sought assistance from the Sōtō sect over that of other Japanese Buddhist sects. Even though Takeda does his best to appear neutral, he cannot help but reveal a pro-Sōtō sect position. The following paragraph provides his rationale:

In order to set up a religious system in Korea, emulating Japan's is inevitable. If so, Korea should take the Zen sects as a model from among the others, because the Korean temple system has been traditionally founded upon Zen regulations. Among the Zen sects, it is the Sōtō sect that is most perfectly equipped to help them. I am not saying this just because I am a Sōtō priest. This spring, when Yi Hoegwang came to Japan [and visited the Sōtō sect], he was delighted to find similarities between the temples of the Sōtō sect and the Korean temples.

Therefore, he sought protection through the Sōtō sect when the guerrillas [Korean righteous armies, rampant as of 1905] were widespread.

(KAWAKAMI 1987, 334)

By saying that the Sōtō sect is the “most perfectly equipped to help” and that “he [Yi] was delighted to find similarity” between two traditions, did Takeda mean, as scholars have suggested, that in order for the Wŏnjong to be modernized it should seek to be fully incorporated into the Sōtō sect? No. Takeda was aware that the intense sectarian rivalry among Japanese sects was antagonizing Korean Buddhists, and he knew that to push a pro-Sōtō agenda outright would alienate the Wŏnjong. Thus, in the last part of this petition, Takeda writes that the Sōtō sect should exist as it is, as should the Wŏnjong, indicating that having the Wŏnjong emulate the Sōtō sect would not necessitate merger or annexation (KAWAKAMI 1987, 341). Rather, in light of the original petition’s nine items, which Takeda helped formulate, his intention in this explanatory letter was likewise to elevate the Wŏnjong such that it would be equal to the Japanese Buddhist sects.

In this review of Takeda’s writing so far, it is apparent that Takeda made a concerted effort to work beyond sectarian lines. He justifies the Wŏnjong’s emulation of the Sōtō administrative system by saying it was what the Wŏnjong monks themselves desired. At this point in his writings, contrary to what scholarship on this period maintains, Takeda did *not* show any clear signs that he intended to bring the Wŏnjong—namely, all of Korean Buddhism—under control of the Sōtō sect. Scholars tend to claim that even before annexation in 1910, Takeda sounded out Yi Hoegwang as to a possible merger of the two sects (PAK 1981; AHN 1982, 320; YI 1989, 40; CH’OE Pyŏngghyŏn 2001, 110; LIM 2005, 51). It is true that Takeda had a merger in mind and would have desired it to happen but one needs to wait for conclusive evidence to support the assertion he acted on it prior to Japan’s annexation of Korea. It is more likely that Takeda tried to think of himself as an independent agent and that he acted consciously and consistently with this position in his dealings with the Wŏnjong, at least up until when Japan annexed Korea in 1910.

Takeda’s Confrontations with the Jōdo Sect

In this same letter of September 1908, Takeda confesses that members of the Sichŏnggyo, Confucians, and Christians might oppose the petition aimed at elevating Korean Buddhism to a state-sponsored religion. Takeda argues, however, that the Sichŏnggyo, as a dominant religion in present-day Korea, would be more than happy to see Korean Buddhism revitalized, as it would need an ally in fending off Christianity. Neo-Confucians, although dismayed by Korean Buddhism’s reemergence, would not necessarily disrupt it, since the Korean emperor and the empress favor Buddhism. Though Christianity might interrupt the process,

it would hesitate to make too vigorous a challenge because of its need to quietly continue missionary work. What concerned Takeda the most was not external confrontation from these three but internal competition among *Japanese Buddhists* in general and interference from the “greedy” Jōdo sect in particular (*Kōchūiseki*, v1 2–5).

Takeda’s relationship with the Jōdo sect became increasingly antagonistic soon after he was appointed the advisor to the Sichōngyo and the Ilchinhoe,²¹ and later advisor to the Wŏnjong (Sŏ 1982, 94; CH’OE Pyōnghyŏn 2001). Three incidents gave rise to his animosity for the Jōdo sect, which ran in many ways as deeply as his hostility to Christianity. First, in late 1905 the Jōdo sect collided with the Ilchinhoe, the political organization Takeda advised. That December, in Saknyŏn Prefecture in Kyōngsang Province, there were a series of violent conflicts between hundreds of Korean Jōdo members and the Ilchinhoe. Lower local officials, who were Jōdo members, had imposed unauthorized taxes on each household. Ilchinhoe members, keen on eradicating illegal taxation as part of their anti-corruption program, united with villagers to protest (CHANDRA 1974, 55; MOON 2005).²² The sides clashed using bats, rocks, and even guns; the situation became serious enough that there was discussion about dispatching the army to secure the area (*Jōdo kyōhō*, 5 February 1906). Han Kyōngwŏn, Yi Yonggu’s interpreter, was one of the Ilchinhoe members who witnessed the violence escalated by the Jōdo members. Han informed Takeda of this conflict as well as of the Jōdo members’ meddling with the Ilchinhoe’s programs, causing Takeda to become further displeased with the Jōdo sect (*Jōdo kyōhō*, 10 February 1906).

Second, at the same time that Takeda was emerging as a key figure in Korea, the Jōdo sect was still expanding,²³ even though Inoue, the director of the Jōdo sect’s mission to Korea, had lost his influence over the Myōngjin School and the Wŏnhŭng temple in 1907. When Yi Hoegwang took over leadership of the school and the temple, Inoue attempted to retake them. Then, yet another Jōdo priest colluded with two Korean officials to oust Yi and the Wŏnjong (discussed later).

Third, Takeda’s enmity intensified when Jōdo sect missionaries attempted to usurp control of the important, wealthy T’ongdo temple. A Jōdo Buddhist missionary, Saimi Kōtan 最美光端, sought to make it an official branch of the Jōdo

21. The official advisor of the Ilchinhoe was Uchida Ryōhei and later Sugiyama Shigemaru 杉山茂丸. But it was Takeda who had worked most closely with Yi Yonggu and Song Pyōngjun. The Ilchinhoe called Takeda, as well as Uchida, “master” (*shihō* 師宝) (TAKIZAWA 1986, 57).

22. For discussion of the Ilchinhoe as a reform movement to resist taxes, see MOON 2005.

23. The Confucian scholar Ryu Sūnghūm 柳承欽 (1876–?) bemoans in an editorial that, “There are currently two religions, Chōndogyo and the Jōdo sect, which are becoming popular, having already acquired half of the national influence” (*T’aegŭk hakbo* 24 August 1906).

sect. A Wŏnjong monk, Kang Taeryŏn 姜大蓮 (1875–1942), allegedly rushed to the temple and had to use force to chase him away.²⁴

This background explains why Takeda rails against the Jōdo sect with such intensity in his petition on behalf of the Wŏnjong. In fact, he reminds government officials that Jōdo missionaries had created considerable headaches for the government itself. Takeda attributes the Resident-General's Office issuance in 1906 of "The Regulations on the Propagation of Religion" (*Shūkyō no senpu ni kansuru kisoku* 宗教「ノ」宣布ニ関スル規則), an effort to control Japanese religious organizations in Korea, to the conflicts caused by Jōdo missionaries.²⁵ However, he reminds readers that these regulations, paradoxically, were causing Japanese sects to act even more aggressively (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5 and VIII 3–9). Takeda was sure that their power grab would eventually turn the Korean Buddhist community away from Japan. Thus, he writes, "Whenever I see Japanese Buddhist sects forcibly take over Korean temples, it saddens me. Therefore, I intend only to enlighten Korean people [and monks] on the basis of Buddhism [beyond sectarian identification]" (KAWAKAMI 1987, 340–41). What Takeda was trying to accomplish by stressing the ill-effects of the rivalry among Japanese Buddhist sects was to assure Resident General Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909) that he was not working on behalf of the Sōtō sect but simply for the benefit of Korean Buddhism. In short, Takeda sought to appear above sectarianism by criticizing it.

As it turned out, Takeda was right about being concerned about the threat of the Jōdo sect. In 1910, Yi Hoegwang had launched a major project to build a temple inside central Seoul that could serve as the headquarters for Korean Buddhism, but he needed to secure funds. Yi visited and made a deal with the T'ongdo temple that, if the Ministry of Home Affairs approved the Wŏnjong Central Office, Yi himself would make the T'ongdo temple the great head temple such that it would control all of Korea's temples. However, a government official named Yokoyama from the Ministry of Home Affairs who happened to be visiting the temple told Yi publicly that the government would not approve the Wŏnjong and its central religious office. As a result, Yi failed to gain any monetary commitment from the temple (*Chūgai nippō* 17 April 1910). However, it came out that there was a Jōdo missionary who had gotten Yokoyama to say this. Worse, Yi's plans were published in Korean and Japanese newspapers and the editors denounced Yi as a "corrupt charlatan," and Takeda had to step in. In

24. This evidence is taken from an interview with Kim T'aehŭp 金泰洽 (1889–1989) in 1969 by Chŏng Kwangho (CHŒNG 2001, 18, footnote 6). Although Kim said the incident took place in May 1910, it is more likely that it happened in May 1908 in light of Takeda's report submitted to the Sōtō headquarters in October 1908.

25. Another example is that Jōdo priests were involved in a conflict with the Ilchinhoe members in P'yŏng'an 平安 Province (*Kōchūiseki* 1928, VI 2–5 and VIII 3–9).

two separate newspaper articles, Takeda defended Yi and criticized the newspapers for questioning Yi's legitimate leadership and rightful fundraising efforts. In particular, he blamed Yokoyama and a Jōdo priest for misusing their power to impede the Wŏnjong movement (*Kōchūiseki* III, 1–15).

In summary, Takeda's letter to Korean and Japanese government officials, more broadly, reveals two points that undermine the characterization of Takeda and those like him as ultranationalists alone. First, Takeda's lobbying of reluctant Japanese and Korean officials shows that there existed in Korea multiple and contested interests, not just between Koreans and Japanese but among the Japanese themselves. Second, Takeda's concern regarding Japanese Buddhist internecine conflicts disrupts the idea that a unified Japanese Buddhism worked coherently to advance Meiji interests.

Takeda and the Sōtō Mission to Korea

In mid-1908 Takeda sent a request to the headquarters of the Sōtō sect that he be appointed superintendent of the Sōtō mission to Korea, a high position at the time. The central office (*shūmuin* 宗務院), upon realizing that Takeda had substantial political clout, appointed him in June 1908 (HUR 1999, 118), providing a monthly stipend of twenty yen for his salary and ten yen for office supplies (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5). Through Takeda's urging, the Sōtō sect became serious about its missionary work in Korea. Takeda kept in frequent contact with the Sōtō headquarters regarding the religious situation in Korea, submitting a series of reports to the Sōtō secretaries Oda Setsugan 織田雪巖 (1843–1916) and Hirotsu Sessan 弘津説三 (1862–1932).²⁶

A letter from the Sōtō sect dated 18 August of that year ordered Takeda to visit the central office and report on the conditions of Korean religions: "Please report personally by 28 August, since a meeting is necessary for our policy on propagation in Korea" (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5). Takeda wrote back requesting a two month extension saying that he needed to resolve several crucial matters (explained later) relating to his work with Korean Buddhism (*Kōchūiseki*, III 1–14). His request was accepted. Upon his return to Japan that October, Takeda submitted a paper titled *Bukkyōjō no hōkokusho* 仏教上の報告書 (A Report on Buddhism) which comprises two sections: *Iryūmin ni taisuru fukyō jōtai* 居留民に対する布教状態 ("The Situation of the Sōtō Mission to Settlers in Korea") and *Kankoku Bukkyō no saikō* 韓国仏教の再興 ("The Revitalization of Korean Buddhism"), followed by copies of his petition to the Korean imperial government and supplementary documents.

26. Both of them served as the secretary of the Sōtō headquarters, alternating by year. The abbots of Eiheiji 永平寺 and Sōjiji 総持寺 were also rotated each year, as was the head priest of the Sōtō sect.

This paper, which has not been reviewed in published histories on Takeda, sheds new light on Takeda's vision for both Korean Buddhism and the Sōtō missionary effort. The vision laid out in these documents calls into question the idea that Takeda was mainly a political agent. Moreover, the writings do not lay out any concrete sign that he desired to have the Sōtō sect take over the Wŏnjong. Equally as important, the paper also contains previously unknown facts about several key events relating to the Wŏnjong, facts which should add complexity to our interpretation of the attempted alliance of late 1910.

In his *Bukkyōjō no hōkokusho*, Takeda is critical of the indifference and ill-preparedness of the Sōtō sect in its missionary work in Korea. He argues that there are two major reasons for the lack of success of the Sōtō missions, especially of missions to Japanese immigrants. First, Sōtō administrators (his readers) do not take foreign missionary work seriously. Takeda lashes out,

Since Taiwan became a part of our nation, [the Sōtō sect] has invested fifty thousand yen [for propagation], while it invests less than five thousand in Korea.... When Koreans look at Japanese monks, they definitely call them “Hongan-ji priests.” In addition, in a number of Chinese magazines, whenever Japanese Buddhism is reported, it is undoubtedly about the Hongan-ji.²⁷ [People] do not know that there exists a dharma king [*kanchō*] without peerage like the one in the Sōtō sect. Such a pity! It is because those in the order have lost the fundamental meaning of propagation and lack the spirit of practicing compassion, eliminating suffering, and providing [spiritual] medicine to people.
(*Kōchūiseki* VI, 2–5)

Takeda's expression of frustration and his sense of urgency—before he became the supervisor of missionary work—is a continuation of his feeling that the Sōtō sect had been making a dismal effort in Korea. Their lack of effectiveness was one reason he asked to become supervisor. This paragraph also shows that Takeda, as a Sōtō monk, *did* wish to see the Sōtō sect advance in Korea. Thus, despite Takeda's presentation of himself as nonsectarian to the Resident-General and to the Wŏnjong, he nonetheless had sectarian intentions.

The second major reason that the Sōtō missions were failing, writes Takeda, is that Sōtō missionaries do not have the social and political capabilities to attract new members. He points to the qualifications of a missionary (*fukyōshi* 布教師): “In Japan, where it is peaceful, priests already possess a certain sociable capacity; however, it is entirely different in foreign lands.” Therefore, he argues, the Sōtō headquarters should send missionaries who are highly sociable, who are

27. Arai Sekizen 新井石禪 (1864–1927), head of the Education Department of the Sōtō sect, attests that Takeda made this complaint in a talk given after returning from his observation trip to Manchuria in 1908. Takeda said that the Hongan-ji seems to represent all of Japanese Buddhism in Manchuria (SŌTŌSHŪ KAIGAI KAIKYŌ DENDŌSHI HENSAN IINKAI 1980, 51).

willing to actively create relationships rather than passively wait for people to come to them. He also asks that the Sōtō sect send monks who have political authority (or influence) (*chiho* 地歩) (*Kōchūiseki* VI, 2–5). Because the low status of Korean monks is the primary difficulty in revitalizing Korean Buddhism, sending missionaries to Korea who are not supported by the Sōtō headquarters, and who therefore do not possess political influence, undermines the Sōtō program, he argues. He concludes that his original request to become supervisor of the Sōtō missionaries in Korea is justified because it would be impossible to accomplish missionary work with a supervisor who lacked political influence and sociability (*Kōchūiseki* VI, 2–5).

At this point in the *Report*, Takeda puts forth two conditions to ensure the Sōtō sect's success in Korea. First, "The Sōtō sect should establish a branch temple in Seoul and new temples around the country, and expand its influence while staying in compliance with colonial policies." This head branch temple in Seoul should be controlled by the Sōtō headquarters in Japan and would supervise newly established branch temples in Korea. He recommends setting up a timeline for financing new temples as well as applying the head and branch (*honmatsu* 本末) system of Japan to the head branch temple and the new branch temples in Korea (*Kōchūiseki* VI, 2–5). The second condition was more important: Takeda suggested, "The head branch temple of the Sōtō sect in Seoul should exert itself to protect Korean monks and temples, assist propagation to Koreans, and do its best, *as a duty* [my emphasis], to revitalize Shilla and Koryō Buddhism in Korea" (*Kōchūiseki* VI, 2–5). Interestingly, even though Takeda was already in conversation with Yi Hoegwang about possible support from the Sōtō sect, his report to the headquarters makes no mention of it. This is another piece of evidence, along with Takeda's statement that Korean Buddhism should be revitalized, that Takeda, at the time of this paper, did not envision Korean Buddhism or the Wŏnjong being incorporated into or controlled by the Sōtō sect.

The Sōtō headquarters took Takeda's advice seriously and implemented most of his ideas. In 1910, it increased the missionary budget, dispatched the influential priest Kitano Genpō 北野元峰 (1842–1933) to Korea,²⁸ established a branch temple, Tanryū-ji 端龍寺 in Yongsan, Seoul, and began building smaller temples and preaching offices throughout Korea.

28. Even before the Sōtō sect sent Kitano in 1910, the Sōtō sect took Takeda's suggestions in the report seriously. Upon sending a Sōtō missionary, in a letter dated 10 September 1909, the head of the Education Department of the Sōtō sect writes, "Tanaka Dōen 田中道圓, the abbot of Ryūon-ji 龍穩寺 in Onsen 温泉 County, Ehime 愛媛 Prefecture, will be nominated as a missionary in Korea and be ordered to reside in Yongsan, Seoul. He is an experienced propagator and used to assume several important positions at the Sōtō headquarters" (*Kōchūiseki* VI, 2–5).

Initiating and Defending the Wŏnjong

Although Takeda titles this second section of his paper to the sect “The Revitalization of Korean Buddhism,” it does not actually set out a program for the renaissance of Korean Buddhism (rather, he puts forward these ideas in supplementary documents). Instead, Takeda went into detail regarding a number of events, explaining his indispensable role in founding the Wŏnjong, setting up the Wŏnjong’s central religious office, and resolving the conflict surrounding Wŏnhŭng temple in 1908. Perhaps what he means by his title, then, is that his involvement in these events had brought about a degree of revitalization for Korean Buddhism. In order to provide a comprehensive rendering of these key events, this section will supplement Takeda’s version with other primary sources. This section provides evidence that disturbs the simple characterization of the 1910 attempted alliance that the extreme, pro-Japanese Yi Hoegwang collaborated with the imperialist Takeda to sell the Wŏnjong to the Sōtō sect.

Takeda writes in “The Revitalization of Korean Buddhism” that on 15 March 1907 he asked the vice president of the Ilchinhoe, Hong Kŭngsŏp, to establish the TaeHan Wŏnjong yŏnguhoe 大韓圓宗研究會 (Great Korean Wŏnjong Research Society), and added that he, Takeda, would not directly administer it (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5). What is striking about Takeda’s request is that it implies that he, a Japanese priest, may have been the first person to initiate the idea of an administrative institution for Korean Buddhism under the name Wŏnjong. His meeting with Hong had occurred roughly three months after Takeda arrived in Korea with Uchida and a week after Takeda had written a letter to Yi Yonggu regarding revitalizing Korean Buddhism. Most surprisingly, Takeda’s suggestion occurred *one year* before the Wŏnjong itself even existed. If the creation of this research society was the product of Takeda’s letters with Yi Yonggu and connection with Hong, then it is highly possible that Takeda was the first to envision this body and coin the term Wŏnjong (Yi 1989, 40; KOSHIBA 1992, 135–36),²⁹ both of which scholars have attributed to Korean Buddhists themselves as evidence of a first, independent effort to centralize and unify Korean Buddhism. However, if it is true that Takeda coined the term, it reveals that he was integral in creating this first, modern Korean Buddhist institution.

Takeda goes on in “Revitalization” to discuss, at length, how he came to be an “indispensible” part of the Wŏnjong’s efforts to gain legitimacy. The Wŏnjong’s outreach to the Sōtō sect can be seen partly as the result of the conflict surrounding Wŏnhŭng temple and the Jōdo sect’s relentless interference with the establishment of the Wŏnjong. As mentioned above, Wŏnhŭng temple was established

29. Yi Hosŏng hypothesizes that “either Takeda might have provided the term Wŏnjong, or the term might have derived from his discourse on the spirit of Wŏnjong (*Wŏnjongjuui* 圓宗主義)” (1989, 40).

in 1902 as a response by the Korean imperial court to the increasing encroachment of the Jōdo sect on Korean temples. It was also used to house the Bureau of Temple Administration. The temple became more prominent when Yi Kūnt'aek 李根澤 (1865–1919), a military officer who had advanced to high official positions in the 1890s with the modern transformation of the late Chosŏn dynasty, happened to discover an embroidered band with a bloodstain at a local shop run by a Japanese merchant in 1902 (HWANG 2004, 82). The band was thought to be the late Queen Min's, who had been assassinated. Along with Kwŏn Chongsŏk 權鍾奭 (later Kwŏn Chunghyŏn 權重顯 1854–1934), who later became responsible for the Bureau of Temple Administration, Yi Kūnt'aek purchased the band for sixty thousand wŏn and enshrined it at the temple (HWANGHYŎN 1960, 32; *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, 6 January 1902; and *Tongyang kyobo*, 15 July 1902). The enshrinement made King Kojong 高宗 (1852–1919) cherish Wŏnhŭng temple as an imperial temple.

Under the pretext of praying for the court and the long life of the Korean emperor, Yi and his brothers Yi Kūnho 李根皓 (1860–1923), Yi Kūnsang 李根湘 (1874–1920), and Yi Kūnyong 李根鎔, as well as Kwŏn, benefitted from King Kojong's exceptional support. As a result, Yi Kūnt'aek was able to take Wŏnhŭng temple and Kwŏn was able to take the Bureau, and both, as close allies, enjoyed great wealth, fame, and political influence (*Tōkanfu bunsho*, May 1909). For a brief period, they administered the temple in such a way that it was practically at their disposal, receiving ten thousand *ryang* a year for maintenance of the temple and as a salary from King Kojong ("Chosŏn pungsok jip: Pulgyo 3" in *Chosŏn Chŏngdokbu Chungch'uwŏn jaryo*). However, when Korea became a protectorate of Japan in 1905, the temple lost its executive function and was placed under the control of the Department of the Royal Household (Kungnaebu 宮內府). As explained earlier, Korean and Japanese Jōdo members took charge of the complex but had to give its operation of the temple and the school away to Yi and other monks, all of who opposed the Jōdo sect.

In March 1908, without receiving official permission from the Department of the Royal Household, Yi Hoegwang and others established the Wŏnjong's headquarters there. Although the Wŏnjong succeeded in fending off the Jōdo missionary Inoue, they had to face a more formidable obstacle. Despite all these changes, Yi Kūnt'aek and Yi Kūnho, his older brother, would not relinquish their privileges at the complex and threatened to take back the property by force. Faced with "Yi Kūnt'aek's bad move," as Takeda put it, Yi Hoegwang sought Yi Yonggu's political influence. Yi Yonggu in turn thought Takeda would be the best person to resolve the matter (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5), most likely not because Takeda was a Sōtō priest in particular, but because Takeda was the only Japanese Buddhist with enough political capital that he could deal with Korean officials, capital that the Wŏnjong leaders lacked. However, Takeda was in Japan at

the time, so Yi Yonggu consulted Uchida instead. Uchida met Yi Hoegwang in person and, in consultation with Yi Yonggu and the Minister of Home Affairs, Song Pyŏngjun, summoned Takeda from Japan. Uchida asked Takeda to help the Wŏnjong by becoming its advisor.

Part of the reason, then, that the Wŏnjong sent a petition to the Sōtō sect and begged it to influence the Resident-General's Office could have been that Yi Kūntaek and Yi Kūnho were threatening to undo all the work that the Wŏnjong had done to set up the central religious office in the temple complex. Because Yi Kūntaek and Yi Kūnho were so well connected to the government, Yi Hoegwang desperately needed institutional backing. He saw that the Sōtō sect was highly influential and he trusted Yi Yonggu's recommendation to seek its help.

Takeda returned to Korea in 1908 and worked closely with Yi Hoegwang, sending petitions in July to the government for approval of the Wŏnjong and in September for establishing the Wŏnhŭng temple as its central religious office. In the meantime, Yi Kūnho again laid claim to the property through legal action. In early October, Yi Kūnho took more drastic measures to prevent the Wŏnjong from settling in at the temple. He collaborated with the proxy of the Jōdo head priest, Horio Kanmu 堀尾貫務 (1827–1921), and the former head abbot of Wŏnhŭng temple, Kim Wŏlhae 金越海. He used his political connections with the Department of the Royal Household, which was in charge of the temple as well (*TaeHan maeil sinbo*, 15 November 1908). Horio expressed his intention to purchase the entire complex (KAWAKAMI 1987, 345). He requested that the Department of the Royal Household disestablish the temporary central religious office set up by Yi Hoegwang and order the Wŏnjong to vacate the temple.

This action forced Takeda to confront the Jōdo sect directly and thus postpone his report and trip to the headquarters of the Sōtō sect, as mentioned earlier. To stop Horio, Takeda exercised his political connections and succeeded in getting the government to switch the office responsible for the Wŏnhŭng temple from the Department of the Royal Household to the Ministry of Home Affairs, where his close associate Song Pyŏngjun worked as Minister. In the meantime, Takeda distributed petitions for swift approval of the temporary central religious office of the Wŏnjong to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Korean government and the Resident-General's Office in the hopes of putting the issue to rest.

Concerned that these efforts would not accomplish what was needed, Takeda used the media to drum up public support. On a visit to the headquarters of the Sōtō sect in Japan on 11 October, Takeda managed to get an editorial published in the Yorozeu chōhō newspaper to deal a final blow to Yi Kūnho and Horio. It appeared in the Korean telegraph section and was titled "The Establishment of the Central Religious Office" (of Korean Buddhism):

With the purpose of unifying and promoting Korean Buddhism, Korean monks hired a Japanese priest as their advisor and established a set of regulations relating to the establishment of a central religious office [*honzan* 本山]. In addition, they submitted a petition to the Ministry of Home Affairs for approval and it is expected that the Ministry will approve it soon. If approved, it means that [Korean] monks' human rights will be recognized and [the freedom of] propagation will be granted. This development will usher in a new epoch in the Buddhism of this country. (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5)

After a concerted effort to block Horio and Yi Kūnho from undoing the work of Yi Hoegwang, the Wŏnjong monks, and himself, Takeda obtained several promises from the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Korean government. It promised that it would never grant any other governmental offices administrative authority over the Wŏnhŭng temple; that it would not acquiesce to the Resident-General's Office if it tried to alter policies; and that in case the Resident-General's Office meddled, the Ministry of Home Affairs, probably through Song Pyŏngjun, would fight back. The Ministry's support notwithstanding, Yi Kūnho would not give up his claim to the temple and brought the case to the court. To Takeda's disappointment, the court recognized Yi Kūnho's ownership but, to Takeda's relief, it permitted the Wŏnjong to occupy the temple as a tenant.

Assured use of the complex, a number of Korean monks, including Han Yon-gun 韓龍雲 (1879–1944), whom historiographies promote as the personification of Korean nationalism, sent a letter of thanks to Takeda. This case shows why the Wŏnjong turned to somebody like Takeda: as Vladimir Tikhonov points out, monks joined forces with Japanese priests to preserve temple properties from “notoriously corrupt” officials (TIKHONOV 2003, 99). By proving to the Sōtō headquarters that his efforts on behalf of the Wŏnjong were indispensable, Takeda concludes in “Revitalization” that “it is no exaggeration to say that [the future of] Korean Buddhism lies in my hands” (*Kōchūiseki*, VI 2–5).

Takeda's rendering provides a different explanation of the same events that historiography has reinterpreted in order to create a more nationalistic narrative. Takeda's version explains why the Wŏnjong sought his support and agreed to bring him on as an advisor. This sequence also shows why, if Yi Hoegwang had intended to establish an *independent* central religious office for the Wŏnjong at the same time as distancing himself from the Jōdo sect, he turned to the Sōtō sect for protection of temple property. Finally, the backdrop explains why Wŏnjong representatives visited the Sōtō sect in Japan in May 1908, asking the Sōtō sect to forward a petition letter on behalf of the Wŏnjong to the Resident-General.

The Agency of Korean Monastics

Takeda was not just constrained by the machinations of the Jōdo sect and other sects but also by the degree of agency that Korean monastics possessed in this pre-colonial period. A glimpse of how Korean Buddhist leaders were able to maneuver Takeda to accomplish their own interests can be seen in a letter from September 1909. This was written roughly a year before Japan's official annexation of Korea and thirteen months before the attempted alliance. Two Wŏnjong administrators, Kim Hyŏn'am 金玄庵 and Kang Taeryŏn, wrote on behalf of Yi Hoegwang, not long after Takeda's visit to the Wŏnhŭng temple, the administrative center of the Wŏnjong located just outside the four gates of Seoul. The full content of this letter is as follows:

After leaving our temple [Wŏnhŭng], how have you been? In order to pass on a message from the head [of the Wŏnjong] inquiring after your health, we went to your residence but were told that you had been out for several days. We think that you seem to be extremely busy arranging the great matters of our temple. Please don't worry about the head monk [Yi Hoegwang] since he has recovered a little bit from his sickness as of yesterday.

This morning, we went to the Office of Temples and Shrines in the Ministry of Home Affairs to inquire about the matter of recognition [or permission] for the central office [of the Wŏnjong]. The office replied to us that it would seem to be delayed. Nevertheless, since we are dealing with a matter of renewing and renovating Buddhism in the entire country, it is natural that we should not be hasty but rather set up the specifics and the history of Buddhism [namely the Wŏnjong institution] carefully. Yet, the most urgent matter that we should accomplish [at this point] is to establish a house [temple] and a central office in Seoul [inside the four gates]. We should first acquire permission [from the government] at any cost and then open up the general assembly of the thirteen provinces afterwards. Therefore, the [Korean] sangha must not lose sight of its core, important matters. *As grand advisor [to the Wŏnjong], please straighten your eyes and ears, quickly negotiate jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs with the government officials, and acquire recognition of the house and the central office to be set up in Seoul* [emphasis added]. Accomplishing these will be analogous to keeping alive a light ahead. It seems right that, only after these, the specific regulations of the dharma [the Wŏnjong] can be renovated.

(*Kōchūiseki*, III 1–17)

This seemingly typical letter begging a Japanese official for help, however, problematizes the conventional understanding that Japanese Buddhist missionaries imposed their colonial and imperial objectives on innocent and gullible Korean monastics at their whim. In this letter, Wŏnjong administrators pressure Takeda to live up to their expectations. Korean monastics were further empowered by

the fact that, if Takeda did not live up to their expectations, they could turn to another Japanese Buddhist sect. Takeda was well aware of how Korean Buddhists were able to play sects off to their own advantage.

Takeda's self-proclamation as the savior of Korean Buddhism, then, is not just because the Wŏnjong was at his feet. On the contrary, the Wŏnjong monks consciously imposed that status on Takeda, and Takeda was confident that he could answer to their needs. At the peak of Takeda's work for the Wŏnjong, Yi Hoe-gwang, the Wŏnjong monks, and lay Buddhists invited him to a special dinner in appreciation for his steadfast efforts. This dinner also placed unspoken pressure on Takeda to finalize his work. Cognizant of the burden, Takeda respectfully declined and, bemoaning the stalemate on getting the central office approved, wrote, "How can I dare to receive the offerings of faithful parishioners.... Please tell them, I will never receive any donations unless the central religious office of the Wŏnjong has been approved" (KAWAKAMI 1987, 362). His determination and confidence notwithstanding, Takeda never got that dinner.

Takeda's Final Push

Although Takeda and the Wŏnjong repeatedly petitioned the government for approval of the Wŏnjong, they were unsuccessful. The Resident-General's Office and the Korean government neither denied nor approved their requests: they were simply unresponsive. Even though Takeda was a key political player who was able to advance many of Japan's projects, he was unable to succeed on behalf of Korean Buddhists because this interest actually ran counter to the state's agenda. Both the Korean government and the Japanese protectorate and colonial governments sought to establish control across spheres, and having an autonomous, empowered institution such as the Wŏnjong posed a problem. The fact that Takeda had to push against his own government provides evidence that at times Takeda's Buddhist and sectarian interests weighed as much as, if not more than, his political interests.

Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 shifted Takeda's approach to the Wŏnjong (KIM Kwangsik 1996, 65) in that he advocated something closer to a merger. Without doubt, now that Korea was incorporated into Japan's empire Takeda did not need to repress his sectarian agenda any more. But another crucial reason that Takeda became even more eager to see the alliance through is that the Ilchinhoe, the most powerful political organization at the time, whose members also overlapped with Sichŏnggyo members, was disbanded under the order of the colonial authorities. It was "the worst blow" to Yi Yonggu and Song Pyŏngjun, the two leaders of the Inchinhoe (CHANDRA 1974, 65), as well as to Takeda himself who wished it to continue to exist so that it could play a leading political role in Korea and Manchuria. Sensing that the same fate might befall the Wŏnjong,

Yi Hoegwang and other, like-minded monks became more aggressive about making their institutional existence legal now that their country was no longer sovereign and the future of their religion was thrown into uncertainty. Both Takeda and the Wŏnjong determined that an alliance with the most influential Japanese sect would get the new colonial government to accede. Yet, the Sōtō sect itself was not enthusiastic about the alliance because it considered the social status of Korean monks, with whom it would be associated, to be detrimental to the public image of the sect. Nonetheless, an alliance agreement was reluctantly reached in early October, 1910 with conditions favoring the Sōtō sect but potentially benefiting the Wŏnjong as well. The deal soon became public, and a group of angry Korean monks established the Imjejong (Jp. Rinzai sect) in opposition to the Wŏnjong, charging that the Wŏnjong had tried to sell Korean Buddhism to the Japanese.

Over the following year, to Takeda's dismay, the prospects for government approval of the Wŏnjong began to falter: the Korean monks were divided and multiple affiliations with Japanese Buddhist sects intensified; an institution opposing the Wŏnjong had been established; the Sōtō sect put little effort into furthering the Wŏnjong's cause; and Takeda himself, dying from cancer, resigned from all his positions, thereby losing the political and institutional power upon which Wŏnjong monks had relied.

Desperate, Takeda, shortly before his death, hastily wrote *Enshū rokuteiron* 圓宗六諦論 (The Treatise on the Six Truths for the Wŏnjong)³⁰ in which, in about fifteen thousand words, he presented doctrinal, historical, and institutional justifications for an institutional alliance. He quickly distributed it to Governor-General Terauchi Masatake 寺内正毅 (1852–1919), government officials, Sōtō administrators, and Korean monks, believing that his treatise would surely persuade all sides into accepting the deal and therefore legitimating the Wŏnjong. Terauchi dealt the final blow to Takeda's program, however. Terauchi, one of Takeda's close associates, did not favor the idea of Korean Buddhism having control over itself, nor of the Sōtō sect interfering in Korean Buddhism. Rather, Terauchi assumed full authority over Korean Buddhism as its head through the Temple Ordinance of 1911. This promulgation marks the end of Takeda's long effort to revitalize Korean Buddhism through his own vision for it, as well as his effort to make the Sōtō sect a major player in the religious field of colonial Korea through an alliance.

30. Its full title is *Tōjō saige kōryū Enshū daiui rokuteiron* 洞上濟下興隆圓宗大有爲六諦論 (With Sōtō Above and Rinzai Below, the Six Truths to Revitalize the Wŏnjong). He began writing the treatise in February and published it three weeks before his death on 23 June 1911.

Conclusion

Was Takeda “evil,” a man whose sole objective was to swallow Korean Buddhism in one bite, as historians have often depicted him? As recent scholars have pointed out, viewing all Japanese Buddhist missionaries as evil blinds one to other, important views, some of which I bring to light in this paper. What, then, are some of the other ways we can interpret Takeda’s missionary work as advisor to the Wŏnjong, and what nonpolitical motivations might he have had, motivations that have been neglected in the current narratives about him?

First and foremost, tensions existed on many levels, even among the Japanese. Although scholarship on the colonial period has long recognized how internal divisions undermine the aggressor-victim paradigm, the relationship between Takeda and the Wŏnjong has not been reassessed, in part because of lack of evidence and in part because the view of Takeda is entrenched. In this period, three different divisions fractured the scene: sectarianism within Japanese Buddhism, disagreement within sects, and tension between the Japanese government and Buddhist sects. Takeda’s work was greatly shaped by these divisions.

Second, conflicts among Koreans explain why some Korean Buddhists turned to Japanese Buddhists. In the struggle for control of the Wŏnhŭng temple, Yi Kŭnt’aek and his brothers, in cahoots with Korean government officials, almost ended the Wŏnjong movement. This conflict caused the Wŏnjong to approach the Sōtō sect for help and is the reason that Takeda became involved in their cause. This point reverses the idea that Takeda was the aggressor and the Wŏnjong the victim, or that naïve Korean monks were seduced or coerced into selling themselves out.

Third, Takeda was constrained by the agency that Korean monks wielded in the pre-colonial period. Similarly, Yi and the Wŏnjong monks strategically capitalized on Takeda by nominating him as advisor to their fledgling institution. Later, they proactively sought to harness the considerable influence of the Sōtō sect through a strategic alliance. Takeda’s self-proclamation as the savior of Korean Buddhism was not just because the Wŏnjong was at his beck and call. On the contrary, the Wŏnjong monks consciously imposed that status on Takeda to force him to live up to expectations.

Fourth, if Takeda was seeking to colonize Korean Buddhism on behalf of the Japanese imperial government, then why did he consistently lobby Korean and Japanese authorities for a relatively *independent, self-governing* institution for Korean Buddhism up until 1910? In fact, if Takeda wanted Korean Buddhism absorbed into Japanese Buddhism, then why did he even propose to Korean Buddhist leaders, in 1908, to establish a centralized Korean Buddhist institution? Moreover, Takeda went to great lengths to argue that the state should support, protect, and provide some level of autonomy, to Korean Buddhism. Takeda’s differences with the state on Korean Buddhism, as well as his articulate defense of

the separation of church and state, chips away at the image of Takeda as solely a crony of the Meiji regime.

These four points are not meant to override (or excuse) the infamous acts Takeda committed, including his role in the annexation of Korea by assassinating the Korean empress, and scheming to bring Korean Buddhism under the wings of the Sōtō sect at the dawn of Japan's colonization of Korea. Even though Takeda strove to appear to have Korean Buddhism's best interests at heart, his ulterior motives are undeniable. Nevertheless, the evidence discussed in this article at least reveals how the demonization of a historical figure like Takeda leads us to overlook details that challenge a bipolar narrative. Takeda may have been an evil monk but he was also a complex figure with multiple motivations. Reassessing one of the most apparently uncomplicated of characters, and discovering that even he is not so simple, should inspire historians to take a closer look at other Buddhist missionaries who have only been cast as imperial aggressors, thus creating an even richer narrative of the pre-colonial and colonial period.

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