

The Korean Buddhist Empire

HARVARD EAST ASIAN MONOGRAPHS 416

The Korean Buddhist Empire

A Transnational History (1910–1945)

Hwansoo Ilmee Kim

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction	1
1 The Valorization of the Koryŏ Canon	31
2 A Buddhist Christmas: The Buddha's Birthday Festival	67
3 The Transnational Buddhist Yu Guanbin	105
4 Transcultural Zen: Sōma Shōei's Training with Korean Masters	143
5 Governmentality: The Great Head Temple	184
6 Propagation in Colonial Korea, Japan, and Manchuria	231
Conclusion	276
<i>List of Names and Terms</i>	301
<i>Bibliography</i>	309
<i>Index</i>	333

Figures

I.1	Toh Chinho in 1930	xiv
1.1	The Haein Temple complex	33
1.2	The woodblocks of the Koryŏ Canon at Haein Temple	34
1.3	A woodblock from the <i>Kalpanā-maṇḍitikā Sūtra</i>	35
1.4	The Canon Storage Hall	43
3.1	Yu Guanbin in 1933	110
3.2	Yu Guanbin's induction as a lay disciple of Taixu	115
3.3	Delegates at the East Asian Buddhist Conference	117
3.4	A recent photograph of Koryŏ Temple in Hangzhou	124
3.5	The official letter granting Yu Guanbin Chinese citizenship	131
4.1	Sōma Shōei with Nakamura Kentarō	152
4.2	Chŏng Suok seen with a group of nuns at the Rinzaï seminary for nuns	155
4.3	Pang Hanam	167
4.4	A recent photograph of Sangwŏn Temple	168
5.1	Hakubun Temple in 1932	197
5.2	T'aego Temple (currently called Chogye Temple)	219

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HARVARD EAST ASIAN MONOGRAPHS 416



FIG. 1.1. Toh Chinho in 1930 (*Honolulu Advertiser*, July 24, 1930). Courtesy of the *Honolulu Advertiser*.

Introduction

In 1930, a young, progressive Korean nationalist monk named Toh Chinho (1889–1979?) (fig. I.1) found himself on a Japanese luxury liner bound for Hawaii.¹ There he would represent Korean Buddhism at the six-day Pacific Buddhist Youth Conference.² The conference had been organized by Japanese Buddhists to showcase Japanese Buddhism’s international leadership before delegates from the United States, Canada, China, Burma, and Thailand.³ Hawaii was selected as the conference location because it had the largest Japanese immigrant community outside of East Asia as well as an active cadre of Japanese

1. His last name is spelled as “Tough,” “To,” or “Do” in primary sources. In this book, for the sake of simplicity and also to avoid confusion, I will use the spelling “Toh.” Toh’s exact date of death is not known, but he was still alive in May 1978, when Toh visited Korea and was interviewed by a Korean daily newspaper (*Tong’a ilbo*, May 31, 1978). Two months later, Ch’oe Yŏnggho, a professor at the University of Hawaii at the time, also interviewed Toh. Margaret K. Pai interviewed Toh to write a memoir of her parents when Toh was ninety years old, which means he was still alive in 1979 (see Pai, *The Dreams of Two Yi-min*, 21). Although Sŭnim’s “Turning the Wheel of Dharma in the West” relies on Pai’s work on Toh, Samu puts Toh’s date of death as sometime in or after 1986. Since Toh would have been ninety-seven by 1986, I suspect he more likely passed away not long after 1979 (Samu, “Turning the Wheel,” 227).

2. *Yomiuri shinbun*, February 13, 1930; *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun*, July 1, 1930; *Maeil sinbo*, July 7, 1930; *Sinhan minbo*, July 10 and August 14, 1930.

3. *Yomiuri shinbun*, February 13, 1930.

Buddhist missionaries.⁴ Korean Buddhists leaders, who were seeking to consolidate an autonomous identity for Korean Buddhism, did not want Japanese Buddhists to represent Korean Buddhism at the conference. Thus, they sent Toh as their delegate with the hope of establishing an international standing for Korean Buddhism.

Toh, who was critical of how Japanese Buddhism dominated Korean Buddhism in colonial Korea, was determined to use the Hawaii conference to assert that Korean Buddhism was a historically independent and authentic Buddhism. By doing so, he hoped to overturn the perception that Korean Buddhism was a mere appendage of Japanese or Chinese Buddhism. To that end, he brought with him hundreds of copies of an English-language pamphlet that vigorously argued for the defining role of Korean Buddhism in Buddhist history. These pamphlets were based on a short history of Korean Buddhism written by the leading Buddhist intellectual Ch'oe Namsŏn (1890–1957) at the request of leaders in Korean Buddhism's central administration.⁵ Ch'oe's history detailed how Korean Buddhism was, in fact, the “mother” of Japanese Buddhism. Toh had this history translated into English,⁶ the emerging lingua franca for Buddhist dialogue, and intended to distribute this text along with other pamphlets on Korean Buddhism at the conference.

As the liner departed Japan, however, Toh learned that he was listed as a member of the Japanese delegation, and, thus, Korean Buddhism would be represented as a branch of Japanese Buddhism. In heated debates about this with the thirty-five Japanese delegates onboard, Toh argued that Korean Buddhism must be represented as independent of Japanese Buddhism, claiming that the fact that Korea was presently part of imperial Japan did not override the distinct identity of Korean Buddhism as a religion. Amazingly, he got the Japanese delegates to agree that Korean Buddhism had “a [unique] history and background,” further conceding that, since the conference was “not political but for the purpose of Buddhist propagation,”⁷ Korean Buddhism should represent itself. Toh called for his name to be taken off the roster of Japanese delegates and demanded that he be listed as a stand-alone

4. *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 21, 1930.

5. It was titled “Korean Buddhism and Her Position in the Cultural History of the Orient.”

6. *Pulgyo* 76 (October 1930): 6. Ch'oe Pongsu (dates unknown) was the translator.

7. *Chūgai nippō*, July 31, 1930.

delegate of Korean Buddhism. The Japanese delegates, ruffled but unable to counter Toh's points, accepted his demands. They revised the structure of the group and relayed the information via telegraph to Japan, where it was published in the widely read Buddhist newspaper *Chūgai nippō*.⁸ Elated, every morning during the voyage, Toh would play the piano in the ship's library and sing the Buddhist songs "Homage to the Three Jewels" and "Chanson de Matin" (Morning song).⁹ During the conference, Toh secured a seat in the middle of the floor, where he represented Korean Buddhism independently of Japanese Buddhism.¹⁰ He was one of the most active delegates, serving as vice-chairman of the organizing committee,¹¹ busying himself with meeting people, and distributing copies of the essay and pamphlets he had prepared to other representatives. He even found time to visit local libraries and hand out his materials in the city. At the conference, Toh worked hard to make the significance of Korean Buddhism known and declared, "For the first time, the seeds of Buddhism and Korean culture have been transmitted to the minds of white people."¹²

Toh's trip exemplifies the energetic engagement of Korean Buddhists with other Buddhists in and beyond colonial Korea despite their living under colonial rule. Like Toh, many Korean Buddhists regularly crossed Korea's cultural and national borders. As such, Korean Buddhism participated in and was significantly shaped by the forces of transnationalism, a phenomenon that enabled Buddhists from different countries to convene, exchange ideas, and envision a pan-Asian and global Buddhism even as Buddhists of each country were also motivated by nationalist and sectarian interests. These transnational engagements set the framework for much of the Buddhist thought and activity of the period. The central purpose of this book is to show how Korean Buddhists played an integral part in Buddhist transnationalism even though they were colonial subjects. The knowledge and experience gained through personal and group networking with other Asian Buddhists and state authorities deeply changed how Korean Buddhists thought of themselves and their place in the world.

8. *Pulgyo* 75 (September 1930): 6–8; *Chungwae ilbo*, March 20, 1931.

9. *Chūgai nippō*, July 31, 1930.

10. *Bukkyō kaigai kaikyōshi shiryō shūsei* 3 (Hokubei), 249.

11. *Chūgai nippō*, August 6, 1930; *Chungwae ilbo*, August 24, 1930.

12. *Pulgyo* 76 (October 1930): 6.

The transnational dimension of Korean Buddhism gave rise to and was further advanced by three major discourses: a distinctive form of Buddhist nationalism in Korean Buddhism, Buddhist governmentality, and propagation. Each of these discourses is manifest in Toh's trip. Although Toh withheld his bitterness about Japanese colonial rule over Korea, he freely and adamantly defended Korean Buddhism. Toh, like many other monks, did not shy away from responding to challenges posed by the influx of Japanese Buddhist missionaries. Though Korean monks had to mask their political nationalism, they had room to express Buddhist nationalism. As Toh implied, Korea might have lost its political independence, but it had not relinquished its religious autonomy.

Toh's story likewise reveals the discourse of Buddhist governmentality. In the premodern period, Korean Buddhism comprised a loose affiliation of temples and lineages. In the early decades of the modern era, a number of leaders sought to centralize and institutionalize Korean Buddhism, following the example of Japanese Buddhism. In 1929, shortly before Toh's departure for Hawaii, a major Sangha meeting of monastics sought to reorganize an existing but weak institutional structure to create a coherent governing body, identity, and allegiance. The meeting enacted new bylaws, an assembly system, and a uniform code of conduct for monastic behavior and practices. Sending Toh to the Buddhist conference in Hawaii was a way for the central office of Korean Buddhism to showcase, both to its own religious community and to outsiders, the unity of Korean Buddhism under its leadership.

Lastly, Toh's activities highlight the discourse of propagation. Early in the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), monastics were gradually but steadily driven from urban areas to the mountains, and Buddhism lost much of its economic, social, and political capital. Later in the dynasty, the state forced monks into labor for state projects and military service. As a result, by the turn of the twentieth century, the social status of monks was dismal. The top priority for Korean monastics was therefore to shake off their pariah-like identity and recover their status.¹³ To overcome this stigmatization and to reassert their relevance, Korean Buddhist leaders promoted the message that Korean Buddhism was both a deep part of Korean tradition and identity, and a vital, modern religion on a par with and even superior to its competitors, namely,

13. Jin Y. Park, *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, 1–2.

Japanese Buddhism and Christianity. Emulating the methods of other missionaries, Korean Buddhists initiated large-scale propagation programs, creating and distributing print media, setting up propagation halls and schools in urban centers, and establishing lay associations to disseminate this new image of Korean Buddhism quickly and effectively. Toh's activities during the conference are representative of the importance of propagation for Korean Buddhism in this period.

This book sets out to explore how transnationalism, in concert with Buddhist nationalism, governmentality, and propagation, shaped Korean Buddhism. This wider landscape of consideration, I argue, adds a broader context for the prevailing nation-centered scholarship on colonial Korean Buddhism. Moreover, such a rendering of the period reveals distinctive features of modern Korean Buddhism. With this overview in mind, we turn to look at how the theory of transnationalism will inform this reinterpretation of colonial-period Korean Buddhism.

Korean Buddhism and Transnationalism

Over the past twenty years, scholars have increasingly drawn on the concept of transnationalism to rethink the histories of their periods and regions of inquiry.¹⁴ In this book, I am going to use the contentious terms “transnational” and “transnationalism” both broadly and specifically. Broadly, I draw from Susanne Rudolph's claim that “religious communities are among the oldest of the transnationals.” Rudolph explains that “Sufi orders, Catholic missionaries, and Buddhist monks carried work and praxis across vast spaces before those places became nation-states or even states.”¹⁵ Challenging the assumption that religion would “fade” with “secular global process,” she argues that religion has persisted in exerting its influence as a transnational force in the global flow of capital and media. The influence of religion is noticeable among diasporic communities that sustain a wide range of networks with their homelands.¹⁶ Buddhism, since its introduction to East Asia

14. To name a few, Smith and Guarnizo, *Transnationalism from Below*; Vertovec, *Transnationalism*; and Ben-Rafael and Sternberg, *Transnationalism*.

15. In Rudolph and Piscatori, *Transnational Religion*, 1. Also see Robert Wuthnow's “Transnational Religious Connections,” 211.

16. Rudolph and Piscatori, *Transnational Religion*, 1.

and even after the rise of nation-states, has also acted as a translocal, transborder, transcultural, and transhistorical conduit of social, economic, and political networking. As such, in modern East Asia, Korean Buddhists living in Japan, China, Manchuria, and beyond maintained their religious affiliation with colonial Korea, as did diasporic Japanese and Chinese Buddhists with their homelands. At the same time, Korean Buddhists also established new relationships with other ethnic, political, and religious groups in foreign lands, creating multiple and fluctuating identities and communities.

However, the concept of “transnational Buddhism” in this book is not confined to the ties sustained between the home and foreign lands or to new networks among a single ethnic group. Rather, the term also points to a larger Buddhist geography and consciousness in which East Asian Buddhists came together as representatives of their national Buddhisms to work toward common goals. The usual terminology to describe this cooperative feature is “international Buddhism.” Yet I would like to argue that the term “transnational Buddhism” captures the kind of shared community that Buddhist leaders from different countries envisioned. They imagined rekindling a centuries-old religious identity that went beyond the boundaries of national territory, culture, or politics. Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzhak Sternberg define this aspect of transnationalism as “an association with a condition of dispersal in different states and societies of social entities and actors that *share an allegiance to some common attributes*.”¹⁷ Ben-Rafael and Sternberg differentiate transnationalism from internationalism, stating that internationalism is characterized by “activities setting in contact official bodies—states, universities, associations or parties—belonging to different states.”¹⁸ Korean Buddhists’ contacts with other Asian Buddhists in and beyond colonial Korea can thus be described as participation in “international Buddhism,” more commonly known as “pan-East Asian (or Asian) Buddhism.” But, whereas transnational Buddhism is inclusive of internationalism, it does not necessarily carry the anti-Western sentiment of other pan-isms that were prevalent in the Middle East, India, and Asia during the early twentieth century.¹⁹ What made East Asian Buddhist leaders’ networks more extensive

17. Ben-Rafael and Sternberg, *Transnationalism*, 1; my emphasis.

18. Ben-Rafael and Sternberg, *Transnationalism*, 1.

19. Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism*; Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire*.

and intentional was the shared traditional Buddhist identity that the forces of modernity drove them to recover. Thus, on the one hand, I use the term “transnationalism” alongside the terms “long-distance nationalism” (or immigrant nationalism),²⁰ “internationalism,” and “pan-Asian Buddhism.” On the other, I use “transnationalism” specifically to refer to this sense of belonging to both an imagined and a real religious community, shared by Korean Buddhists living in and beyond colonial Korea.

The term has its critics, however, and I agree with Partha Chatterjee and Walter D. Mignolo that using the term “transnationalism” in studies of religion, culture, and politics runs the risk of obscuring colonial atrocities and anticolonial nationalist resistance.²¹ Nevertheless, when used with care, the lens of transnationalism provides, as Akira Iriye argues, a “historiographic revolution” that helps us go beyond “the nation-centered understanding of modern history.”²² Studies of modern Buddhism have likewise taken a transnational turn in their approach.²³ Rather than thinking about Buddhism in one country or geographic region, scholars have begun to appreciate the role of intra-Asian contacts and East-West networks that, though active throughout premodern history, intensified in modern times and dramatically shaped the Buddhisms of Asia.²⁴ This transnational viewpoint is helpful in unveiling multiple forces of tradition, modernity, and nationalism that were at play in East Asian Buddhism. Likewise, transnationality is a significant feature of colonial Korean Buddhism on the ground. The ideas that Korean Buddhists were exposed to in colonial Korea and through their studies in Japan and other countries transformed all facets of Korean Buddhism, including its practices, institutional vision, publications, rituals, and festivals.

Transnationalism is especially evident in the efforts to popularize traditional Buddhist scriptures. By bringing scriptures into the center of politics and pan-Asian Buddhist ideology, Korean Buddhist identity

20. Benedict Anderson, *Long-Distance Nationalism*.

21. Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*, 14; Mignolo, *Darker Side of the Renaissance*, 4–5.

22. Iriye, *Global and Transnational History*, 1–3.

23. For a representative work, see Bhushan, Garfield, and Zablocki, *TransBuddhism*.

24. See Jaffe, “Buddhist Material Culture” and “Seeking Śākyamuni”; Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*; Yoshinaga, “Theosophy”; Bocking, Choempolpaisal, Cox, and Turner, *Buddhist Crossroads*.

was imagined, contested, and negotiated. The *Tripitaka Koreana*, or Koryŏ Canon (*Koryŏ taejanggyŏng*), is a thirteenth-century Korean collection of Buddhist scriptures carved onto 81,258 wooden printing blocks. The Koryŏ Canon became prominent through Orientalist scholarship on the Buddhist canon and as a result of East Asian Buddhists' yearning for original texts. This is the focus of chapter 1. Western, Japanese, and Chinese Buddhist scholars and leaders, in search of the most authentic and accurate versions of Chinese Buddhist canons, declared that the Koryŏ Canon, itself a replica of a collection of older but lost Chinese versions, was the best candidate. East Asian Buddhists unanimously praised it as both a symbol of Korean civilization and a world treasure. The colonial government of Korea supported the promotion of the canon by granting it state protection and by sponsoring two major copying projects in 1915 and 1937. These projects certainly had political motives. One of the 1915 copies was gifted to the Taishō emperor (1879–1926) to commemorate Japan's colonization of Korea, and one of the 1938 prints was given to Emperor Puyi (r. 1934–45) of Manchukuo as a symbol of the unity of Japan, Korea, and Manchuria. Later, colonial authorities became a major print distributor of the Koryŏ Canon in East Asia. Korean Buddhists capitalized on the popularity of the canon to reassert the centrality of Korean Buddhism in world Buddhism and, more important, the superiority of Korean Buddhism over Japanese Buddhism.

The transnational flow of ideas also influenced festivals. Korean Buddhists today believe that the Buddha's Birthday Festival, which takes place in Seoul and all other major cities in Korea during the month of the Buddha's birth, is traditional. However, the well-choreographed parade, colorful floats, and elaborate ornaments are the result of transnational Buddhist conversations from less than a century ago. This development is discussed in chapter 2. In brief, the modern reinvention of the Buddha's Birthday ceremony began in Sri Lanka in the late nineteenth century as a response to the popularity of Christmas. Sri Lankan Buddhist reformers and Western Buddhist sympathizers transformed the traditional Buddhist ceremony into a "Buddhist Christmas," as Christian missionaries later called it. This modernized form of the Buddha's Birthday Festival was introduced to Japan and popularized as Hana matsuri in the mid-1920s.²⁵ Hana matsuri served

25. Snodgrass, "Performing Buddhist Modernity."

as a model for the Buddha's Birthday celebration in colonial Korea. Buddha's Birthday became a megafestival in colonial Seoul, a Japanese-Korean Buddhist joint event sponsored by the colonial government. Korean Buddhist leaders embraced the modernized form of the festival and used the occasion to assert their centrality to Korean culture and society.

In addition to festivals, East Asian Buddhists exchanged new ideas through movements and conferences. One of the most important conferences took place in Tokyo in 1925. Delegates created documents attesting to a common identity among Buddhists and agreed to work together to disseminate Buddhist teachings to the rest of the world. This event stimulated Korean Buddhists to reimagine the place of Korean Buddhism in the East Asian Buddhist context and beyond and to organize their own institutional gatherings. For example, Korean Buddhists held a major Korean Buddhist Sangha gathering in 1929, which resulted in Toh's participation in the Hawaii conference of 1930.

Another outcome of the 1925 Tokyo conference was that Korean Buddhists joined a transnational Buddhist movement spearheaded by the Chinese Buddhist reformer Taixu (1890–1947). It was called the Fohua yundong, perhaps best translated as a “Buddhacization (as in the word ‘Christianization’) movement.” The ideas promoted by this movement reverberated across Japan, colonial Korea, and colonial Taiwan, spawning associations, publications, and lectures. Taixu's model for Buddhist reform served as an alternative to the Pan-Asian and transnational Buddhist movements originating from Japanese Buddhist leaders. Korean Buddhists respected Chinese Buddhism, and there was a brief period of collaboration between Korean and Chinese Buddhist leaderships. Korean Buddhists further envisioned exporting their traditions of Buddhism back to China, the homeland of their Buddhism.

At the center of this collaboration was a Korean-born Chinese Buddhist named Yu Guanbin (or Ok [Oak] Kwanbin in Korean, 1891–1933),²⁶ the prominent business magnate who is the subject of chapter 3. Ethnically half Korean and half Chinese, Yu worked with Taixu to promote his movement by offering nearly unlimited financial support. Through Taixu, Yu also worked with Japanese Buddhists and Korean Buddhist

26. His descendants use “Oak” instead of “Ok,” and I will use both in this book interchangeably.

leaders to rebuild an eleventh-century Korean temple, Koryōsa, located near Shanghai. Yu's life and work not only reveal the national and transnational religious and political forces at play in this disruptive, dynamic period of East Asian history, but, more important, his case exposes the impact of converging and competing visions of the pan-East Asian Buddhism in which Korean Buddhism played a part.

Transnational Buddhist movements such as Taixu's were both modern and a revival of traditional Buddhist ideas. Historically, Buddhist ideas, texts, and practitioners constantly crossed borders throughout the premodern period of East Asia.²⁷ One of the enduring Buddhist ideals that continued into the modern era and was given new life was the concept of the itinerant Zen monk (Jp. *unsui*; K. *unsu*; Ch. *yunshui*). This unique Zen ideology was operative in colonial Korea as well. The promotion of Zen, one of the many Buddhist lineages and styles, as a unifying practice for Buddhism became popular in the early twentieth century through the efforts of the Korean Buddhist reformer Paek Yongśōng (1864–1940) among others. His vision was shared by the Japanese colonizer Abe Mitsuie (1862–1936), who wanted to spread Zen Buddhism throughout colonial Korea. Their collaboration brought about a Zen boom in colonial Seoul in the mid-1910s.

One of the most fascinating figures who lived by this Zen ideal was the young Japanese Sōtōshū priest Sōma Shōei (1904–71). As will be examined in chapter 4, from the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s, Sōma stayed at a number of Korean Zen monasteries, practicing with Korean monks under the tutelage of eminent Korean masters, including Master Hanam (1876–1951), who would later become the first state-recognized patriarch of colonial Korean Buddhism in 1941. For Sōma, the search for enlightenment was not bound by national or cultural barriers. Sōma's respect for Korean Sōn (Zen) practitioners, and especially for Hanam, was detailed in his travelogues, which were published in a Japanese Buddhist journal in colonial Korea. Sōma's writing made Hanam famous among Japanese Buddhists living not only in colonial Korea but also in imperial Japan. Sōma's studies with Korean masters are a good example of how transcultural Zen ideology enabled a colonizer to participate in the culture of a colonized country under the guidance of the colonized. Moreover, Korean monastics received

27. Buswell, "Thinking about 'Korean Buddhism.'"

Sōma as a fellow practitioner and allowed him to join their practice, thereby forming meaningful relationships based on Zen teachings.

Thus, as is seen in the cases of the Koryŏ Canon, the Buddha's Birthday Festival, Yu's work, and Sōma's Zen practice, discussed in chapters 1 through 4, transnational forces were instrumental in the development of Korean Buddhism. It was also through transnational contact that Korean Buddhists generated three key discourses to shape their understanding of their own practice and institutions: Buddhist nationalism, Buddhist governmentality, and the spirit of domestic and foreign propagation. It was through these discourses that Korean Buddhists began to articulate their own tradition in the modern era and to assert that they had a place at the table within the larger Buddhist community.

Three Key Discourses in Colonial Korean Buddhism

Korean Buddhist Nationalism

Recent scholarship has aptly detailed the significance of religion in the formation of nationalism²⁸ as well as the existence of multiple and competing nationalisms.²⁹ Likewise, Koreans during the colonial period conveyed not only political nationalism but also a plurality of identities based on language, culture, and literature.³⁰ In the absence of a Korean state, religion became yet another avenue of expression for Korean nationalism. Buddhism, as a centuries-old tradition, provided Korean Buddhists with a strong alternative identity, albeit freshly re-imagined, that could stand in for political nationalism.

Korean Buddhist nationalism mirrored the religious nationalism that was widespread throughout Asia at the time. In the scholarship of Buddhist nationalism, Japan and Sri Lanka represent two distinct

28. Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism*; Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*; Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples*.

29. Brook and Schmid, *Nation Work*; Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples*.

30. Wells, *New God, New Nation*; Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism*; and Schmid, *Korea between Empires*.

types.³¹ Buddhist nationalism in Japan, one of the few Asian countries to avoid Western colonization³² and “the only non-Western imperium of recent times,”³³ emerged as part of Japan’s nation and empire building. In contrast, Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka, as in other Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar (Burma)³⁴ and Vietnam,³⁵ arose in reaction to European colonialism. One commonality that Japan and Sri Lanka shared was that they were further shaped by their response to missionary Christianity.

Although Buddhists in Korea developed a form of Buddhist nationalism similar to the Buddhist nationalisms of countries under colonial rule, Korean Buddhist nationalism was distinct because it was formulated in response to an Asian colonizer that shared cultural and religious affinities. In other words, unlike other Asian countries that were colonized by Western powers, Korea was colonized by another East Asian country that had Buddhist, Confucian, and other shared roots. In addition, Korea’s religious nationalism was further shaped by Korean Buddhists’ recognition that Buddhism in Japan was modernizing and flourishing in part through state support.³⁶ Korean Buddhists believed that their own Korean government, in contrast, had disenfranchised their religion for centuries, disabling the monastic Sangha on all fronts. When the Chosŏn dynasty fell to the Japanese, Korean Buddhists did not fear that Japanese rule would lead to the ultimate extinction of their religion or “a crisis of monastic authority,”³⁷ as Buddhists in South and Southeast Asian countries did under Western colonial rule.³⁸ Rather, Korean monastic communities, who had been losing state support for centuries, felt that they were being liberated

31. For representative works on Japanese Buddhist nationalism, see Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*; Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism*; Victoria, *Zen at War*; and Ives, *Imperial-Way Zen*. For Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, see Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*; Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed?*; Wijeyeratne, *Nation, Constitutionalism, and Buddhism*.

32. The four countries are Japan, Korea, China, and Siam (Thailand). See Peattie, “Japanese Colonial Empire,” 217.

33. Myers and Peattie, *Japanese Colonial Empire*, 6.

34. Schober, *Modern Buddhist Conjunctures*, 52.

35. Do, “Quest for Enlightenment,” 260.

36. Sungtaek Cho, “Reconsidering the Historiography,” 58.

37. Schober, *Modern Buddhist Conjunctures*, 39.

38. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*; Turner, *Saving Buddhism*.

from the yoke of the Chosŏn's anti-Buddhist policies as Japan took over governance of Korea.

The colonial government used their policy toward monastic communities as a way of luring Korean monks into accepting Japanese colonial rule. They granted the Korean Sangha a legitimate status and offered public recognition of their religion. Although colonial authorities circumscribed the activities of Korean monastics and temples through the Temple Ordinance of 1911, Korean monastics nevertheless viewed Japan's governance as an opportunity to reestablish the monastic community and reassert the significance of their tradition. Although most Korean monastics may have been bitter about the loss of their native government, this resentment was not as strong as that of other Asian Buddhists whose Western colonial overseers gave preference to Christianity over Buddhism. It is certainly the case that, throughout the colonial era, a sizable number of Korean monastics fought Japan's rule. Especially through the 1910s and 1920s, monks joined armed political independence movements and participated in the Korean provisional government in exile in Shanghai.³⁹ Yet the majority of Buddhist monks, even nationalist ones, actively engaged with colonial authorities to ensure state support for their religion. Thus, although Korean Buddhist nationalism had elements of political nationalism under heightened political circumstances at various times, on the whole, it was fundamentally a religious nationalism.

Furthermore, unlike other Asian Buddhist nationalisms that developed in reaction to the dominance of and in emulation of colonial-backed Christianity, Korean Buddhist national identity was distinctive in that it evolved in response to the dominance of Japanese Buddhism in and beyond colonial Korea, which I term "the Japanese Buddhist paradigm."⁴⁰ Korean monastics felt overshadowed by the towering presence of Japanese Buddhist temples and propagation halls in Seoul and other major cities as they struggled to create their own urban religious communities. Threats from Japanese Buddhists took many forms, from outright attempts to incorporate Korean Buddhism

39. Kim Kwangsik, *Minjok pulgyo ūi isang kwa hyŏnsil*; Kim Sunsŏk, "Taehan sŭngnyŏ yŏnhaphoe."

40. The term "Japanese Buddhist paradigm" is drawn from Goossaert and Palmer's term "Christian paradigm," which describes how pervasive Christian models were in Republican China (*Religious Question*, 73–83).

into their own sectarian structures to creating propaganda about Korean Buddhism that presented it as unsuitable to cope with modern life. In both print and lectures, Japanese Buddhists frequently undermined the legitimacy and pride of Korean Buddhism, prompting Korean Buddhists to ramp up their self-promotion. Japanese and Korean Buddhism each sought to capture new adherents in a war for cultural superiority that ultimately contributed to Korean Buddhist nationalism.

To further complicate Korean Buddhist nationalism, Japanese Buddhists' calculated attempts to control and belittle Korean Buddhism derived not only from the colonizer's practice of dominating the colonized but also from an uncomfortable fact of history: fourteen hundred years earlier, Korean Buddhism had been a civilizing force in Japan and the primary exporter of Buddhism to Japan. Fully aware of and unable to disregard that history, Japanese Buddhists used the concept of "repaying with gratitude" (*hōon hanshi*) to rationalize maintaining Japanese leadership, as though they were expressing gratitude to the "motherland" of their religion.⁴¹ Not many Korean Buddhists appreciated that rhetoric.

Despite this awkward relationship, the consensus among Korean Buddhist monks was that Japanese Buddhism was the only modernized Buddhism in the world and the most successful. They felt Japanese Buddhism should be taken as the model for modernizing the Korean Buddhist tradition, providing a template for institutional structure, propagation methods, rituals, festivals, publications, and other facets of their religion. Of the three hundred or so Korean monks who received their education abroad during the colonial period, more than 90 percent did so in Japan.⁴² Those educated in Japan were later instrumental in creating institutions that emulated those of Japanese

41. *Chūgai nippō*, September 17, 1930.

42. Yi Kyōngsun and Ko Yōngsōp estimate the number to have been 363 to 370. See Yi's "Ilche sidae ūi pulgyo yuhaksaeng tonghyang," 271; and Ko's "Ilche Kangjōnggi chae-Il yuhaksaeng," 301. Among the exceptions, a score of monks studied in China. Two studied in Europe, namely, Kim Pōmnin (1899–1964) at the University of Paris from 1921 to 1926 and Paek Sōng'uk at the University of Würzburg, Germany, from 1922 to 1925. One studied in America: Pak Noyōng (or No-yong Park, 1899–1976) at the University of Evansville in Indiana in the 1920s ("Korean Liberator Here, Unknown to Students," *The Crescent*, December 2, 1921; Pak, *Chinaman's Chance*, 26). One studied in Sri Lanka: Yi Yōngjae (1900–27) from 1925 to 1927.

Buddhism. Such institution building would further solidify Korean Buddhism's nationalist identity.

The Christian paradigm was equally significant in fomenting a Korean Buddhist nationalism. In fact, during the colonial period, Christianity in Korea was at the forefront in representing a Korean religious and political nationalism.⁴³ For example, Christian missionaries and leaders resisted Japanese colonial rule, elevated the Korean native script *hangul* to become the primary print language,⁴⁴ and in the late 1930s got Korean Christians to reject the Japanese practice of emperor worship.⁴⁵ In addition, whereas Japanese Buddhist missionaries failed to convert a sizable number of Koreans and ended up catering primarily to Japanese immigrants living in Korea,⁴⁶ Christianity spread rapidly among Koreans, with phenomenal growth in the number of churches during the colonial period.⁴⁷ Korean Buddhists were alarmed and envious. (The actual threat to Buddhism came after 1945, when the American occupying forces in Korea gave privileges to Christianity, creating a shift from a pro-Buddhist paradigm under Japanese rule to a pro-Christian paradigm under American occupation.) Korean Buddhists admired Christians' missionary fervor and thereafter emulated their missionary skills, as did Japanese Buddhists.

Nonetheless, Christianity was the underdog throughout much of the colonial period. The Japanese colonial government viewed Christianity as an extension of the West and therefore as a threat to colonial competition with Western countries. Yet Christianity in Korea did not pose an immediate danger either to Japanese or to Korean Buddhism, especially in terms of institutional strength or legitimacy. Korean Buddhists did not experience Christianity in Korea as a colonizing or imperial religion, even though Japanese Buddhists wished they would. Rather, it was the Japanese Buddhists whom Korean Buddhists considered to be colonizers. More important, Korean Buddhists rarely had a

43. Wells, *New God, New Nation*; Oak, *Making of Korean Christianity*.

44. Oak, *Making of Korean Christianity*; Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *History of Korean Christianity*.

45. Buswell and Lee, *Christianity in Korea*.

46. Nakanishi, *Shokuminchi Chōsen*.

47. In 1919, Korean Christianity had established 3,246 churches and preaching halls with 2,490 religious leaders. In comparison, Korean Buddhism had 1,338 temples and 40 propagation halls with 7,647 monastics, while Japanese Buddhism had 266 temples and propagation halls with 323 priests. See *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō*, 1920.

sense that they were losing followers to Christianity. Because the Chosŏn era's anti-Buddhist policies had pushed the temples far from cities and villages, Korean Buddhist temples did not have well-established parishes, as did Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asian countries. Thus, although Christianity affected Korean Buddhist nationalism to an extent, Japanese Buddhism was more directly responsible for prompting Korean monastics to solidify their Buddhist nationalist identity.

Korean Buddhists had to walk a fine line in their public expression of this nationalism because they relied on the state, the Japanese colonial government, for a range of needs. Even though the majority of Korean monks bridled against the government's regulations for temples and wished to abolish them, their criticism of colonial policy did not derive from the view that the colonial state was persecuting Korean Buddhism, but rather from the belief that its policies were too restrictive and thus detrimental to the autonomy of Korean Buddhism. Even as Korean monastics endeavored to gain more institutional independence from the state, they needed the state to continue giving privileged support to Korean Buddhism, the same kind of support that Japanese and Chinese Buddhists expected from their own governments. Because of this, when Korean Buddhist nationalism was asserted in public spaces, this religious nationalism, though masking a political nationalism, often superseded the political nationalist component of the movement because the colonizing regime was amicable to the tradition. Colonial authorities were convinced that Korean Buddhist monks possessed symbolic capital that could be used to imperialize Korean subjects as Japan contemplated global domination. Eager to leverage the colonial government's image of Korean Buddhism, Korean Buddhist leaders approached colonial authorities as they would any state government, colonizer or not, to further their own religious goals. When Japan expanded beyond colonial Korea, Korean monks promoted Japanese state programs in part to strengthen their Korean Buddhist national identity.

Buddhist Governmentality

"Governmentality" is a term coined by Michel Foucault to mean "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very

specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target the general population.”⁴⁸ In other words, it is the way the state expresses control over or governs the populace. Although this interpretative framework was introduced with secular governments and modern subjects in mind, Foucault acknowledges that this idea is derived from religious governmentality, “pastoral power” employed to mold an individuality that would voluntarily confess one’s sins for salvation.⁴⁹ Foucault defines pastoral power as “a power that individualizes by according as much value to a single sheep as to the whole flock.”⁵⁰ He attributes the germination of this power to Christianity, writing, “This type of power was introduced into the West by Christianity and was institutionalized in the ecclesiastical pastorate: the government of souls was formed in the Christian Church as a central and learned activity indispensable for the salvation of all and of each.”⁵¹ The early church’s programs, rituals, theological teachings, and confession not only were designed, he points out, to maximize the pastoral power through which the church dominated and controlled its flock, but the people themselves had internalized the view that these apparatuses were for their benefit. Foucault terms this internalization as “the conduct of conduct.”⁵² For Foucault, pastoral power was indistinguishable from secular power until the seventeenth century. When new secular political structures took over certain pastoral powers from religion, they institutionalized these through modern governing instruments, which Foucault calls the “different arts of governmentality.”⁵³ Secular governmentality, however, did not put an end to Christian governmentality. As recent scholars have persuasively argued, religious governmentality continues to exert influence on people, now in collaboration with as well as in opposition to secular governmentality.⁵⁴ This dance of secular and religious governmentalities was prominent in colonial settings despite the modern legal structures that created the separation of religion and state. In Asian countries under Western colonialism, religious and

48. Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *Foucault Effect*, 102–3.

49. Foucault, “Security, Territory, and Population,” 67.

50. Foucault, “Security, Territory, and Population,” 67.

51. Foucault, “Security, Territory, and Population,” 67.

52. Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *Foucault Effect*, 2.

53. Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *Foucault Effect*, 2.

54. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion*; Garmany, “Religion and Governmentality”; Ghatak and Abel, “Power/Faith.”

political identities were inseparable. As such, Buddhist institutions, driven by modern forces, vigorously pursued the creation of a Buddhist governmentality that paralleled colonial governmentality.⁵⁵

Japan's style of governmentality in Korea, despite its stated goal of uniting Koreans and Japanese, largely revolved around racialized division, exclusion (or a selected inclusion), and coercion.⁵⁶ Even when the colonial government attempted to assimilate Koreans through State Shintō, this campaign fundamentally operated as an imposition of an alien tradition on Koreans.⁵⁷ But, when it came to Korean Buddhism, the colonial government used a different approach. Rather than undermining the legitimacy of the Korean Buddhist tradition, it recognized that Korean Buddhism could not be supplanted by Japanese Buddhism. Unlike the one-directional imposition of State Shintō in colonial Korea, the colonial government did not institutionally and ideologically force Japanese Buddhism on Koreans. Rather, the colonial government encouraged Korean Buddhist institutions to use their own religious and symbolic capital and exert their own governmentality, which, the government believed, would be indispensable to the success of its larger colonial governmentality. It was in this context that Korean Buddhist leaders undertook their own governmentality.

Korean Buddhist leaders strove to implant, clarify, and enforce in the minds of monastics a particular version of Korean Buddhist history, legitimacy, orthodoxy, orthopraxy, duties, and behaviors. Religious symbols, tangible and intangible, including texts, temples, rituals, festivals, and practices, all of which will be discussed in this book, were created not only for the spiritual liberation of individuals but also to better control, mold, and domesticate monastics and believers within a clearly defined institutional structure. Like secular governments, Korean Buddhist leaders endeavored to create control, regulation, and management systems that would turn monastics and lay Buddhists into modern subjects. This governmentalizing process peaked in the early 1940s, was disrupted in postcolonial Korea as a result of political

55. Turner, *Saving Buddhism*, 14; Maxey, "Finding Religion," 4.

56. For more discussion on Japan's racialized policy on Koreans, see Driscoll, *Absolute Erotic*; Fujitani, *Race for Empire*; Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*; and Henry, *Assimilating Seoul*.

57. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul*.

turmoil and factional infighting in the 1950s and 1960s, regained momentum in the 1970s, and so on.

Following interviews with Japanese Zen priests in 1978, Foucault developed contrasting views of Christian and Zen Buddhist spiritualities. He asserted that Christian spirituality was fundamentally in “search of more individualization,” which led the church to create governmentalizing apparatuses to inculcate that individualization. Zen Buddhists were, “conversely, tending to attenuate the individual,”⁵⁸ which he took to mean that Zen was free from governmentality. However, Japanese Buddhist institutions, including Zen Buddhism, employed a regimen of institutional, doctrinal, and educational systems, intensely so in the modern period, to centralize their sectarian institutions and regulate individual priests and followers. This process undoubtedly went in tandem with Japan’s nation-building efforts, yet not necessarily at the expense of the religious institutions’ sectarian interests.

In colonial Korea, Buddhist and secular governmentalizing processes negotiated with each other. Beginning in 1908, the Korean Buddhist leadership, emulating Japanese Buddhist sects, introduced initiatives to bring a fragmented Korean Buddhism under one institutional body. They began by identifying the need to build a great head temple in central Seoul—which is the focus of chapter 5—as a means of exerting administrative authority over Korean Buddhism’s thirty head temples and thousand-plus local temples. To build these headquarters, however, the leaders needed the legal power to nominate abbots and administer temple properties. On this issue, though, the colonial authority’s idea of governmentality differed from the idea of Buddhist governmentality held by many Korean Buddhist leaders. The colonial government considered Korean monks to be an effective pacifying force for the Korean populace and an ideological tool for Japan’s imperial expansion. It expected them to play that role in return for state recognition and administrative support of their religion, but it did not want to grant the full administrative power Korean Buddhist leaders sought. Struggles between the Korean Buddhist leadership and the Japanese colonial government over this issue persisted until the mid-1930s, when the colonial authorities allowed the establishment of

58. Foucault, *Religion and Culture*, 112.

a great head temple and granted executive power to the Korean Buddhist administration that would occupy it. By this time, the colonial authorities had a larger objective, or a new “political rationality,”⁵⁹ in mind. David Scott characterizes this political rationality as “a new game of politics that the colonized would (eventually) be obliged to play if they were to be counted as political.”⁶⁰ If the colonial government was to grant more autonomy and leverage to the Korean Buddhist institution, they expected Buddhist leaders to completely invest themselves in mobilizing a war campaign in colonial Korea, Manchuria, and China in return. The Korean Buddhist leadership complied, and the deal was sealed. Buddhist leaders fully used the public spaces and opportunities now available to them to consolidate institutional power over all local temples and other Buddhist establishments, while at the same time championing Japan’s war efforts. At the peak of Japan’s total war, the two governmentalizing forces, secular and Buddhist, operated smoothly, despite the different motivations behind their efforts.

Propagation

Although premodern Buddhism is largely considered a nonmissionary type of religion, in contrast to historical Christianity, Buddhism made a radical departure from its relatively passive approach as Western powers began to colonize Asia.⁶¹ Sri Lankan Buddhist leaders established the Society of the Propagation of Buddhism in 1862, “in imitation of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel.”⁶² Soon after, Sri Lankan Buddhist leaders such as Hikkaduve Sumangala (1827–1911) and Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) proclaimed that Buddhist methods of propagation were far superior to Christian ones. They conveyed that view to Japanese Buddhists who were trying to get their own missionary efforts under way.⁶³ Taixu as well as other monastic and lay

59. Scott, “Colonial Governmentality,” 193.

60. Scott, “Colonial Governmentality,” 208.

61. Finucane and Feener, *Proselytizing*, 214, n. 7. Also see Walters, “Rethinking Buddhist Missions.”

62. Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, 203.

63. Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism*, 189.

leaders in China also believed that the propagation of a modern form of Buddhism would save, as they saw it, this war-entrenched and materialistic world.⁶⁴ Japanese Buddhists enthusiastically presented Buddhism as a missionary religion at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893.⁶⁵ The discourse of Buddhist propagation at this level of intensity was a modern development. As so little of this missionary zeal is seen in premodern Japanese Buddhism, the aggressiveness of its proselytization in the modern era was, as James Ketelaar asserts, “the most dramatic shift” in the history of Japanese Buddhism.⁶⁶ But by the early twentieth century, it had become clear that Buddhism’s survival was contingent upon how successful Buddhists would be in converting others; the exigency for Buddhist propagation became widely accepted.

Likewise, propagation in the context of the Korean Buddhist traditions was, as Mark Nathan asserts, “a quintessentially modern religious discourse.”⁶⁷ Like Buddhists in other countries, Korean Buddhists critically reexamined their own tradition and their obligations as religious leaders. They witnessed how effectively Christian missionaries disseminated the Gospel to the heathen and how responsive Japanese Buddhists were to the needs of Japanese immigrants. Informed by Western scholarship and other Asian Buddhists that Buddhism was at heart a missionary religion, Korean Buddhists came to believe that Buddhist monastics should become propagators.⁶⁸ This belief was reflected in the vision of Korean Buddhism’s central administrative body. Training, education, lay and priestly associations, and religious establishments were largely predicated on furthering propagation efforts.

State authorities were also responsible for popularizing the term “propagation” and instilling its importance in the minds of both Japanese and Korean Buddhists. Propagation became an integral part of Japan’s state and colonial governmentality. Similar to the term for moral suasion (*kyōka*),⁶⁹ the Japanese word for propagation—*fukyō*—

64. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 61–62.

65. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*.

66. Ketelaar, “Kaikyōron.”

67. Nathan, “Buddhist Propagation,” 6.

68. Nathan, “Buddhist Propagation,” 6.

69. Garon, “Women’s Groups and the Japanese State.”

became, as Prasenjit Duara wrote, the Japanese state's "institutionalized framework for guiding participation in governmentality."⁷⁰ Early in the establishment of the Meiji regime, the government mobilized all Japanese religious and nonreligious teachers and leaders into serving as propagators for state programs. Likewise, all Buddhist leaders were tasked with disseminating state ideology to Japanese citizens and promoting state programs by integrating them into Buddhist teachings.⁷¹ Buddhists incorporated the government's term *fukyō*, which referred to edicts to promote state programs, into their own sectarian bylaws and directives for local temples and priests. They further appropriated the term to refer to their own Buddhist missionary work, using it widely until 1945.

The Japanese governmental and Buddhist efforts at propagation were hugely influential on Korean Buddhism. In the late Chōson period, Korean Buddhist monastics began to use the equivalent term *p'ogyo*. The Chosōn government codified the term in its policies for Buddhism by using the word *p'ogyo* in the Temple Ordinance of 1902. The ordinance, modeled after Meiji Japan's policy for Japanese Buddhism, contained language directing Korean Buddhists to engage in *p'ogyo*, and Korean Buddhists began using the word widely thereafter.⁷² The Temple Ordinance of 1911 issued by the colonial government further emphasized that propagation should be a major task of Korean monks, again using the term *p'ogyo* in the regulations. But the colonial government was clear about setting limits on propagation: it should not be about politics or be detrimental to the stability and order of society. The state did not want Korean Buddhists to coopt propagation as a means of subverting colonial rule. At the same time, the colonial state also expected Korean Buddhist monks to propagate state programs actively and faithfully, including promoting the war effort. As such, propagation in Korean Buddhism developed in close connection with the state.

Yet the centuries-old marginalization of Chosōn Buddhism had left the cities empty of Buddhist establishments. Monastics had few propagation skills and limited resources to return to cities and rebuild Buddhism. Major head temples managed to build new establishments

70. Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 115.

71. Hardacre, *Shintō and the State*.

72. Nathan, "Buddhist Propagation," 141–42.

called *p'ogyodang*, or propagation halls, in Seoul and other cities, but it was only in the early 1930s that Japanese colonial authorities saw the urgency of enlisting Korean monastics for their political mobilization, as Meiji Japan had done with Japanese Buddhist priests in the late nineteenth century. Propagation halls—which will be the subject of chapter 6—emerged as a nexus of colonial ideology and colonial Buddhist modernity.

Although Korean *p'ogyodang* were modeled on the Japanese Buddhist propagation halls in colonial Korea called *fukyōjo*, the Korean term *p'ogyodang* or *p'ogyoso* carries added significance for Korean Buddhism's modern transformation. Since the Temple Ordinance of 1911 did not allow Korean monks to establish new temples, setting up propagation halls, lesser establishments than temples, served to work around the government regulations. These propagation halls, which numbered around two hundred by the mid-1920s, did not receive direct orders from the central office of Korean Buddhism, because the central office did not have the power to nominate abbots for these halls. Instead, monks or preachers for *p'ogyodang* were dispatched from their head temples. Even this connection between preachers and their head temples was loose since, once halls were established, preachers were largely on their own financially. The lack of support made the preacher position undesirable, leading unqualified monks to fill these roles. The poor quality of the preachers undermined the very purpose of the establishments, which was to convert people. Buddhist leaders in the central office attempted to improve the situation, but, because the colonial government limited their powers through the Temple Ordinance of 1911, their efforts were unsuccessful.

The situation changed in the early 1930s, when Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo in northeast China. The Japanese imperial government desperately needed Korean monastics' support for state mobilization programs, such as the Spiritual Development Movement (Shinden kaihatu undō) and the People's Full Mobilization Movement (Kokumin sōdōin undō). The need ramped up again in anticipation of war against China in 1937. The Meiji state was overextended, and it needed an efficient governing system that would be effective in inculcating its state ideology in the colonial populace. As a result, the colonial government now supported Korean Buddhism's efforts to centralize itself and, with financial and administrative backing, increase the number of Buddhist propagation halls in villages and

cities. They created the slogan “One Temple in Each Village”⁷³ along with the policy of “One [Shintō] Shrine in Each Village.”⁷⁴ In 1937, colonial authorities finally granted Korean Buddhist leaders permission to establish a great head temple and let it have full control over the propagation halls and preachers. The colonial government also provided public places, such as schools and town halls, where Buddhist preachers could disseminate the ideology of *kōminika* (turning Koreans into faithful subjects of the emperor) along with Korean Buddhism. By the early 1940s, Korean Buddhism’s central institution envisioned foreign missions in Manchuria, Japan, China, and India, and, at the peak of Japan’s total war, it began legally to tie all Korean Buddhist establishments abroad to the homeland institution. In conjoining the advancement of Korean Buddhism with that of the Japanese imperial government, Korean Buddhists became colonized colonizers. They joined Japanese Buddhists in mobilizing, to use Nile Green’s term, “evangelical imperialism”⁷⁵ in new lands. However, Korean Buddhist monks were acting not as Buddhists of Japan but as Buddhists with a clear Korean Buddhist identity seeking to extend their reach via the paths built by the Japanese empire.

In sum, the concept of transnationalism draws our attention to the three key discourses of Buddhist nationalism, Buddhist governmentality, and propagation, and, as the six chapters that follow will show, illuminates the ways in which Korean Buddhists were able to advance their personal and institutional interests in a colonial context. They employed multiple political, religious, and material efforts that were driven by shifting strategies of resistance, negotiation, and collaboration. By appropriating global knowledge and networks, which were both circumscribed and enabled by colonialism, Korean Buddhists were able to contextualize past trauma, articulate and preserve their religious identity, and rebuild their social and institutional status. The conclusion of the book looks at how transnationalism, Buddhist

73. *Tong’a ilbo* and *Maeil sinbo*, June 15, 1935.

74. *Nissen nippō*, June 10, 1935; *Chōsen minpō*, December 24, 1938; *Maeil sinbo*, April 11, 1944.

75. Green, *Terrains of Exchange*, 29. Green uses this term to show how the British provided Muslims in India with technological infrastructure and evangelical fervor to propagate their religion in and beyond the British empire (p. 263).

nationalism, governmentality, and propagation changed in postcolonial Korea under a radically different religious and political paradigm.

Debates on the Historiography

Seen through the framework of transnationalism, Buddhist nationalism, Buddhist governmentality, and propagation, colonial Korean Buddhism looks dynamic, complex, and creative. Nevertheless, this rich history has been occluded by the postcolonial narratives of Korean Buddhist history written from the 1950s and into the present. This nationalist and ethnocentric scholarship on colonial Korean Buddhism has recently faced major questions. Although English-language scholars were the first to problematize nationalist readings of this history, recently an increasing number of Korean-language scholars have begun critiquing these narratives as well. A heated debate conducted recently in a Korean Buddhist newspaper represents the brewing dissatisfaction with the binary interpretative paradigm of Korean Buddhism under colonial rule and attests to the need to create an alternative narrative.

The debate began when one of the leading scholars of Korean Buddhism, Sungtaek Cho, presented a paper at a Buddhist conference in Korea in 2011. His presentation was based on his previously published article titled “Reconsidering the Historiography of Modern Korean Buddhism: Nationalism and Identity of the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism.” The article was originally published in Korean and later appeared in English as a book chapter.⁷⁶ Cho takes on the authority of colonial Korean Buddhism scholar Kim Kwangsik, who has published over 170 articles and 20 books on modern Korean Buddhism. Cho’s criticism of Kim’s scholarship is twofold. First, Kim’s descriptions of the history of modern Korean Buddhism revolve around a simple pro- or anti-Japanese binary. Second, Kim tends to present the largest denomination of Korean Buddhism, the Chogye Order, as the sole proponent of anti-Japanese Korean Buddhism. In regard to the Chogye Order’s current designation of itself as the bearer of nationalist

76. Sungtaek Cho, “Kūndae Han’guk pulguyosa kisul” and “Reconsidering the Historiography.”

Korean Buddhism, Cho claims that the Chogye Order finds its *raison d'être* in jumping on the bandwagon of anti-Japanese rhetoric that was prominent in postcolonial Korea. Building his argument on the work of Western scholars,⁷⁷ Cho sets forth the “dilemma” as a new interpretative tool to supplant the nationalist-centered and presentist historiography articulated by Kim. He explains the dilemma of colonial Korean Buddhism as follows:

Early modern Korean Buddhism was, in sum, “a Buddhism in dilemma.” The whole picture of the various aspects of Korean Buddhism spawned through dilemmas is the history of modern Korean Buddhism. The origin of the dilemmas, which Korean Buddhism had to endure since the early 20th century and, subsequently, during the colonial period, concerns two facts: one is the fact that the religion of Japan, the colonizer, was Buddhism, and the other is that the Buddhism of Japan was more “advanced” compared to Korean Buddhism which had, through 500 years of suppression, become powerless.⁷⁸

Applying a clear-cut pro- and anti-Japanese dichotomy to Korean Buddhists' interactions with Japanese Buddhists and colonial authorities, Cho argues, does not do justice to Buddhists who were plagued with ambivalence and inner conflict.

Soon after Cho's conference presentation, Kim made a rebuttal in the Buddhist newspaper *Pöppo sinmun*,⁷⁹ charging that Cho's criticism of the Chogye Order was too harsh given that the Chogye Order, despite its numerous trials and tribulations, had endeavored to preserve a Buddhist identity and protect the Korean people. Kim questioned whether Cho had intentionally ignored the contribution of the Chogye Order to Korean nationalism and prioritized modernizing aspects because Cho had a “cosmopolitan consciousness” that, Kim claims, he internalized during his graduate studies in the United States. Kim also asserted that Cho's suggestion of the “dilemma” as a new interpretative framework was unqualified to be “a view of history,” calling it nothing

77. A few are Evon, “Constructing a Buddhist Imaginary”; Tikhonov, “Did They Sell the Sect?”; Auerback, “Japanese Buddhism.”

78. Sungtaek Cho, “Reconsidering the Historiography,” 55.

79. *Pöppo sinmun*, November 22, 2011.

more than “a dainty modifier that only partially helps one understand the situation.”⁸⁰ Kim’s rebuttal was followed by Cho’s response⁸¹ and a counterresponse from Kim.⁸²

When the debate between these two scholars met an impasse, two other scholars offered their own reflections. Kim Sunsök acknowledges the importance of both approaches but also points out their limitations. He problematizes Cho’s framework of “dilemma” as “insufficient to adequately draw out the situation of modern [Korean] Buddhism.” At the same time, he also critiques Kim Kwangsik’s approach, arguing that it does not satisfy “[scholarly] objectivity.”⁸³ Kim Sunsök heeds Robert Buswell’s suggestion that Korean Buddhism should not be confined to Korea and needs to be understood as an important hub within wider religious networks.⁸⁴ Kim Sunsök also champions Buswell’s suggestion that scholars of Korean Buddhism should engage with scholars from other countries to create a fuller description of Korean Buddhism. Kim then presents his own interpretative concept of “refracted modern Buddhism” to show how the modernity of Korean Buddhism was maimed and changed by the backdrop of colonialism.⁸⁵ He advises scholars to pay extra attention to the variability of Korean Buddhists’ responses to colonial rule at different times and in different circumstances.⁸⁶ Another scholar, Kim Yongt’ae, appreciating all these interpretative concepts, proposes that scholars avoid excessive self-denial (or hatred) or self-affirmation (or pride) in understanding colonial Korean Buddhism. He urges that scholars find a balance between particularism (prioritizing Korean Buddhism) and universalism (viewing Korean Buddhism solely through an East Asian and global perspective).⁸⁷

This thought-provoking debate underscores the difficulty of examining, in a balanced way, the complex layers of colonial Korean

80. *Pöppo sinmun*, November 22, 2011.

81. *Pöppo sinmun*, November 25, 2011.

82. *Pöppo sinmun*, December 5, 2011.

83. *Pöppo sinmun*, November 25, 2011.

84. He must be referring to Buswell’s article “Thinking about ‘Korean Buddhism.’”

85. *Pöppo sinmun*, December 16, 2011.

86. *Pöppo sinmun*, December 16, 2011.

87. *Pöppo sinmun*, December 27, 2011. As part of this effort, in 2014, Kim Yongt’ae published a book titled *Glocal History of Korean Buddhism* that chronologically traces the development of Korean Buddhism from the ancient period to the present.

Buddhism that arose from distinct political and religious circumstances. However, these debates also reflect a positive trend: scholars in Korea have begun to respond to Western scholarship and are open to alternative perspectives that move beyond, in Buswell's words, "the simplistic nationalist shibboleth" that has prevailed for decades.⁸⁸ My own book is the first attempt in the English language to apply a new interpretative framework—transnationalism—to the period. I find that a transnational perspective brings out important dimensions of colonial Korean Buddhism that a nationalist perspective misses: the formation of a Buddhist-centered nationalism, Korean Buddhism's efforts toward a governmentality that paralleled the governmentalities of other Buddhisms, and Korean Buddhist propagation that was self-motivated and extrapolitical.

One of the reasons Korean scholars are struggling to revise their historiographies is that interpretations of the period are confined by a prevailing nation- and ethnic-centered framework. This framework presupposes a relationship solely between colonial Japan and colonized Korea, leading scholars to find Korean agency primarily in Korean resistance against Japanese aggression. However, this version of agency looks limited when one considers that even staunch nationalist Korean monks negotiated and worked with the colonial government in one way or another. Such a binary interpretation makes eliciting Korean agency difficult. Agency is found, however, by looking at Korean Buddhism beyond the confines of colonial boundaries and from the transnational perspective. By paying attention to Korean Buddhists' transnational engagements and the ways in which they made global knowledge their own, colonial-era Korean Buddhism's key discourses—Korean Buddhist nationalism, Buddhist governmentality, and propagation—emerge as additional forms of Korean Buddhist agency.

Another reason why historiographies of this period are nation-centered is that scholars tend to draw solely from Korean-language or Japanese-language materials as well as limiting their focus to one geography. To bring to light the richer history of colonial Korean Buddhism, this book makes extensive use of Korean, Japanese, and Chinese primary archives not yet fully reviewed by scholars. Korean and Japanese sources include Buddhist journals, diaries, autobiographies,

88. Buswell, "Thinking about 'Korean Buddhism,'" 43.

newspapers, and government documents published in colonial Korea and imperial Japan.⁸⁹ Chinese sources comprise similar archives and, most important, Buddhist publications from the Chinese Republican period (1911–45).⁹⁰ English sources encompass travelogues, letters, and journals written by Christian missionaries as well as those written by governmental and nongovernmental officials in Asian countries.

By drawing on these untapped archives and using a new interpretive framework, this book will present six representative cases in order to understand colonial Korean Buddhism from a transcultural, transnational, and global perspective without undermining its national dimension. I argue that colonial-era Korean Buddhism was much more transnational than originally believed and that Korean Buddhists skillfully appropriated global knowledge, ideas, and movements not only to reconfigure their religion to align with state authorities but to advance their institutional visions in and beyond colonial Korea.

The continuation of Toh Chinho's story, with which we opened, illustrates the centrality of transnationalism in directing the work of colonial Korean Buddhists as well as the very conscious development of Buddhist nationalism, Buddhist governmentality, and propagation in his actions. When Toh landed in Honolulu a day before the official commencement of the conference, he unexpectedly faced another hurdle to his objectives. Makitō Tetsuzō, a Japanese Buddhist missionary whose temple was in Pusan, Korea, demanded that Toh and other Japanese delegates designate him as a fellow representative of *Korean* Buddhism. A heated argument followed. Makitō reasoned that, "since he was living and working as a missionary in Korea," he should be eligible. Toh, however, vehemently insisted that Makitō, whom Toh later called "a ghost delegate,"⁹¹ was not qualified to represent Korean Buddhism. He maintained that Japanese Buddhism in colonial Korea was under a different legal framework than Korean Buddhism was. Japanese Buddhism in colonial Korea fell under the Shrines and Temple Regulations that had been promulgated by the Japanese home government and was administered primarily by each sect's home offices in Japan. Korean

89. *Ch'ongdokpu pulgyo kwan'gye charyo*.

90. For example, *Minguo fojiao qikan wenxian jicheng* (Complete collection of Republican era Buddhist periodical literature).

91. *Pulgyo* 75 (September 1930): 8.

Buddhism, in contrast, operated under the Temple Ordinance enacted by the colonial government in 1911, and thus Korean Buddhism had nothing legally or institutionally to do with Japanese Buddhism in colonial Korea. The other Japanese delegates agreed, and Makitō's repeated efforts to make his case proved futile: Makitō attended the conference as part of the Japanese delegation.⁹²

Thus, Toh not only blocked a Japanese missionary from attending as a member of the Korean Buddhist delegation but secured representation for Korean Buddhism independently of Japanese Buddhism. He returned to Korea as a hero of Korean Buddhism. Toh went on to found the Buddhist Youth Association, modeled after the Christian Youth Association, which listed propagation as one of its top priorities. The fact that Korea was under foreign rule did not hamper this propagation effort. The following year, Toh returned to Hawaii as the first Korean Buddhist missionary to America.⁹³ He was determined to bring with him to America a new way of propagation based on this-worldly teachings for laypeople and to live there permanently.⁹⁴

92. *Pulgyo* 75 (September 1930): 7–8.

93. *Korean Pacific Weekly* 49 (September 1931).

94. *Tong'a ilbo*, August 22, 1931.

CHAPTER ONE

The Valorization of the Koryŏ Canon

Deep in the mountains of southern Korea, there is a temple dedicated to housing and preserving the Korean version of Buddhist canonical texts. During the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), between the years 1236 and 1251, the text of this canon, known as the *Koryŏ taejang-gyŏng* (hereafter Koryŏ Canon), was expertly carved into tens of thousands of woodblocks. A national treasure of the Korean people, the Koryŏ Canon was not the first woodblock canon of its kind. Two centuries earlier, in 1081, the Koryŏ dynasty had produced its original canon in the hopes of protecting the kingdom from a foreign invasion by the Liao (Khitan). Their prayer was answered; the Khitan army retreated.¹

In 1234, the first canon was destroyed by Mongol invaders. Two years later, again needing to fend off an invasion, the Koryŏ court turned to the power of the Buddha by commissioning a second woodblock carving of the canon. Under the supervision of a monk named Sugi, a special editing team again compiled all the major scriptures of the Northern Song (960–1127) and Khitan versions available at the time. The scholar monks carefully compared and cataloged various recensions to correct previous mistakes and omissions. The project took sixteen years because the aim was to produce the most authoritative, comprehensive, and accurate version of the Buddhist scriptures,

1. Vermeersch, *Power of the Buddhas*, 350.

superseding in renown even the first Koryŏ Canon. Unfortunately, the Buddha did not respond to their prayers. After nearly three decades of trying to defend its borders, the Koryŏ dynasty gave in to Mongolian rule, becoming a vassal state in 1259. Nonetheless, when the second Koryŏ Canon was completed, it became a national treasure of the Koryŏ dynasty,² and it remains, as Robert Buswell writes, “the only complete [woodblock] canon still extant on the mainland of Asia.”³

The blocks of the canon, when rolled with ink, are pressed onto paper to produce printed versions for further distribution. As with other Buddhist canonical texts, the Koryŏ Canon served both as an object of worship and a source of proselytization. Whether they were royal or aristocratic families, commoners or monastics, Buddhists copied, distributed, and venerated these texts throughout Buddhist history. These devotional activities constitute what is known in the broader Buddhist world as the “Cult of the Canon.”⁴

Because of the importance of the canon to Buddhists, Japanese rulers and other Buddhists have sought to obtain copies of the Koryŏ Canon from the various governments of the Korean peninsula since the thirteenth century. However, with the ascendancy of the neo-Confucian Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), Buddhism was gradually marginalized as a state religion through anti-Buddhist policies. Likewise, the dynasty sought to undermine the relevance of the canon by claiming that it contained heterodox teachings. The government often declined Japanese requests for copies of the canon as diplomatic gifts. Although, in the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty, Korean royal families and aristocrats privately continued to make prints of parts of the canon for the welfare of their families and ancestors, the canon was largely neglected. As a result, from the seventeenth century until the turn of the twentieth century, it was widely believed among the Japanese that the woodblocks had been lost.

All that changed in early 1910, roughly four months before Japan’s annexation of Korea. In early April, the Korean press headlined what appeared to be breaking news. Japanese journalist and government

2. For more details on the carving of the two Koryŏ Canons, see Lancaster and Park’s *Korean Buddhist Canon* and Buswell’s “Sugi’s ‘Collation Notes.’”

3. Buswell, “Sugi’s ‘Collation Notes,’” 130.

4. Jiang and Chia, *Spreading Buddha’s Word*, 2.



FIG. 1.1. The Haein Temple complex. Courtesy of Haein Temple, Mt. Kaya National Park, South Kyöngsang Province, South Korea.

official Satō Rokuseki (or Satō Hiroshi, 1864–1927), acting as advisor to the Chosŏn imperial court under the Japanese protectorate established in 1905, announced that he had “rediscovered” the woodblocks of the Koryŏ Canon in storage at the Haein Temple (figs. 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3).⁵ Satō sent two underlings, Matsumoto Torakichi (1876–1956) and Aoki Yoshimatsu, to print the Koryŏ Canon under the pretext of scholarly interest. Aoki repeatedly visited the temple with a forged letter of permission and demanded full access to the canon.⁶ Soon, the issue caught the attention of Korean reporters. What alarmed the newspapers most and “angered Korean monks in the country,” as the Confucian scholar Hwanghyŏn (1855–1910) wrote in his diary, was the worry that Satō would, under the pretense of academic research, relocate the entire canon to Japan.⁷

5. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, February 19, 1910; *Chūgai nippō*, March 29, 1910.

6. Murakami Ryūkichi, *Kaiinji Daizōkyōban*, 26–40.

7. Hwanghyŏn, *Maech’ōnyarok* 6 (1910): 24; *Kyŏngnam ilbo*, April 2, 1910; *Hwang-sŏng sinmun*, April 1 and 10, 1910.



FIG. 1.2. The woodblocks of the Koryŏ Canon at Haein Temple. Courtesy of Haein Temple, Mt. Kaya National Park, South Kyŏngsang Province, South Korea.

Although removing Korean artifacts to Japan had been a common practice among Japanese curators since the late nineteenth century,⁸ the idea of moving the canon was too much for many Koreans. The canon was an integral piece of Korean history and of inestimable spiritual value. In response to these concerns, the Korean newspaper *Hwangsŏng sinmun* called Satō's claims of rediscovery "crazy," recounting the history of the canon's renowned status in Korea as "a national treasure," "the only [complete canon] in the East," and "without doubt . . . the best canon in the world."⁹ The newspaper editorial went so far as to warn the resident monks at the temple that, "if they fail to protect [the canon], they will not be able to escape from falling into a thousand layers of hell."¹⁰ Another editorial in the same newspaper, using a more nationalist tone, reminded the monks guarding the canon at Haein Temple that, even though Buddhism was a global religion with other-worldly pursuits, it could exist only if the nation and the people

8. Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty*, 20.

9. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, April 10, 1910.

10. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, April 10, 1910.

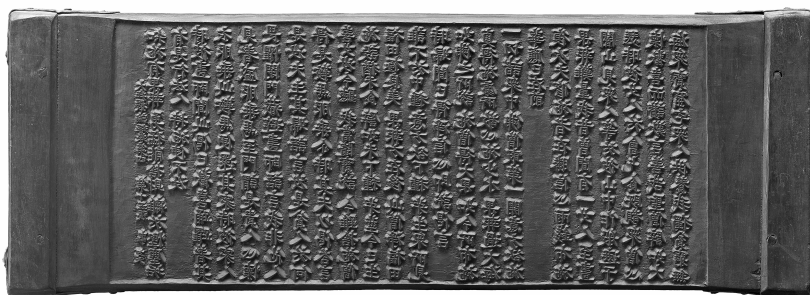


FIG. 1.3. A woodblock from the *Kalpanā-maṇḍitikā Sūtra*. Courtesy of Haein Temple, Mt. Kaya National Park, South Kyōngsang Province, South Korea.

living in it were secure.¹¹ This editorial made it clear that the woodblocks of the canon were “not just a treasure for the Korean Buddhist tradition, but also an unparalleled treasure for the [Korean] *nation*.”¹² The Korean government, though in the last days of its nominal independence, responded to this brewing nationalist sentiment by dispatching a dozen or so police to the site to investigate Satō’s efforts and provide security for the temple complex.¹³

This incident and the ensuing developments transformed the Koryŏ Canon, previously a marginal artifact to those outside the royal and elite classes in the anti-Buddhist Chosŏn government, into powerful symbolic capital for both Japanese and Korean nationalists. For the Japanese, possession of the canon symbolized their uncontested control over Korea. For Koreans, the canon was a tangible embodiment of their nation and material evidence of their Korean heritage that, unlike legal standing or boundaries on a map, colonization could not erase. Thus, although both Japanese and Koreans valorized the Koryŏ Canon as a national and indeed a world treasure, they saw it from the often conflicting perspectives of colonizer and colonized. The Koryŏ Canon became a site through which modern political and religious identity was configured, articulated, and contested. Furthermore, it served as “portable sanctity,” to borrow Lewis Lancaster’s term.¹⁴ The canon was an object that was essential to Korean Buddhism’s identity over

11. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, April 10, 1910.

12. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, April 10, 1910; my emphasis.

13. *Kyŏngnam ilbo*, April 2, 1910.

14. Lancaster, “Korean Religious Society,” 155–56.

and against the Buddhism of other countries as well as to its globalization. Even more widely, it offered a locus through which a transnational Buddhist community was variously imagined.

The power of objects such as the Koryō Canon is not unique to canons generally or to the modern period. Indeed, the material importance of objects, images, and texts has already been taken up by a number of scholars of the Buddhist world.¹⁵ However, as will become clear in this chapter, the powerful political, religious, and diplomatic symbolism historically embodied by the material form of Buddhist canons—like the Koryō Canon—intensified in the modern period. To understand the power of the canon in the modern period, we will have to look at it through a transnational lens, examining its influence in both religious and ostensibly secular contexts. Reprints of the Koryō Canon, for example, were on permanent exhibit in museums for public viewing, and, with the rise of Orientalist scholarship on Buddhism, they also gained prominence as objects of scholarly research.

These more secular aspects of the colonial-era valorization of the Koryō Canon can best be seen in the effects of two printing projects that the colonial government implemented in 1915 and 1937. These projects, sponsored in response to colonizing, nationalizing, and globalizing discourses on the canon, attested to the persistent importance of religion—manifested in material form—for modernity, nationalism, and imperialism.

“Rediscovery” of the Koryō Canon

Nationalist and globalizing discourses about the Koryō Canon first arose in the modern period in response to Satō’s triumphant and scandalous claim of “rediscovery.” In fact, this claim was so outrageous

15. Among scholars who have advanced our understanding of Buddhism and material culture in general, Kieschnick’s *Impact of Buddhism*, Rambelli’s *Buddhist Materiality*, Buswell’s “Sugi’s ‘Collation Notes,’” and Vermeersch’s *Power of the Buddhas* explore the dynamic influence of printing sacred Buddhist scriptures on politics, merit-making, diplomacy, and other cultural practices in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Buddhism respectively. Jaffe’s “Buddhist Material Culture” and Tarocco’s *Cultural Practices* elaborate on the significance of Buddhist material culture in constructing Asian and Buddhist identities in the first half of the twentieth century.

that it was even refuted by a newspaper in Japan. The newspaper editorial, corroborating the arguments of the Korean press, reminded readers that the existence of the Koryŏ Canon had been made known to the public by a number of Japanese scholars decades earlier—and, in Korea itself, the significance of the canon had been common knowledge all along.¹⁶

Despite these corrections, Satō's claim that the canon was "rediscovered" was not entirely groundless. As noted earlier, for centuries Japan not only knew of the canon but had also sought tirelessly to acquire copies and even obtain the original blocks. This quest was so key to Japanese interests, in fact, that, during the first two hundred years of the Chosŏn dynasty, the Chosŏn government called Japan's emissaries, in a somewhat pejorative way, "Sutra Seeking Envoys."¹⁷ The Chosŏn government reluctantly granted Japan copies of parts of the canon, which were subsequently preserved in two temples: Zōjō Temple in Tokyo and Kennin Temple in Kyoto. However, after Japan's invasion of Korea in the late sixteenth century and the implementation of anti-Buddhist policies by the Chosŏn state, contact between the nations became restricted and the inflow of reprints of the canon into Japan all but ceased, so that the physical existence of the woodblocks of the canon were gradually forgotten by the Japanese. From 1784 to the 1880s, the Japanese believed that the original blocks of the Koryŏ Canon no longer existed.¹⁸

If there was indeed a modern rediscovery from the Japanese point of view, Satō was nevertheless hardly the first discoverer. As Chosŏn Korea suffered from social and political instability in the late nineteenth century, Japan acquired greater control over the country after victories in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5. An increasing number of Japanese crossed the sea to settle in Korea under an imperative to "civilize" and "modernize" the peninsula. They included scholars, Buddhist missionaries, and petty opportunists, some of whom were aware of the historical significance of the canon and also curious to verify rumors of its existence. They quickly descended on Haein Temple. In 1902, for example, scholar and professor at Tokyo Imperial University Sekino Tadashi (1868–1935) visited

16. *Yomiuri shinbun* and *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun*, March 30, 1910.

17. Han Munjong, "Chosŏn chŏngi Ilbon," 12 and 15.

18. Ikeuchi, *Man-Sen shi kenkyū*, 571–72.

many temples, including Haein Temple.¹⁹ Sekino, whose contributions to scholarship on Asian art and architecture were unparalleled, was later credited with “discovering” the originals of the canon by Japanese scholar Ikeuchi Hiroshi.²⁰ Sekino published a report in 1908,²¹ which was taken up by Ono Genmyō (1883–1939), a Jōdoshū priest (and later one of the leading compilers of the Taishō Canon in the 1920s).²² Ono’s article based on the Sekino report became a catalyst for scholarly debates about various aspects of the canon.²³ Several years later, the Sōtōshū priest and imperialist Takeda Hanshi (1863–1911), who was instrumental in Japan’s annexation of Korea and was a personal devotee of Buddhist canons generally, verified the existence of the original woodblocks of the canon.²⁴ Even Westerners took an interest. As early as 1884, US Navy officer George Clayton Foulk (1856–93) visited the temple and counted all the woodblocks of the canon.²⁵ British envoy to Japan Ernest Satow (1843–1929)²⁶ also wrote an English article on the canon that circulated in Korea.²⁷

By the early 1900s, then, the canon was so well known within and beyond Korea that Satō’s claim to have rediscovered it was hardly accurate. Indeed, the Chosŏn court had already printed parts of the canon in 1898 and 1906, and the Korean government even exhibited a print of the Koryŏ Canon (most likely the 1898 printing) at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1900. Seven years earlier, they had not seen fit to include the canon among the many cultural items sent to the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, but by 1900 the value of the canon as one of the oldest extant was widely appreciated.²⁸ Furthermore, in 1909, just a few months before Satō declared his rediscovery, another Japanese scholar, Kanao Tanejirō (1879–1947), applied to the Korean Internal Department of the Palace for permission to reprint

19. Pai, *Constructing Korean Origins*, 25.

20. Ikeuchi, *Man-Sen shi kenkyū*, 572.

21. Sekino, “Kaiinji Daizōkyōhan.”

22. Along with Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaikyō (1872–1933) later published the *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*. See Wilkinson, “Taishō Canon Devotion,” 306–7.

23. Yi Nūnghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa*, 670; Ikeuchi, *Man-Sen shi kenkyū*, 572.

24. Yi Nūnghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa*, 670–71.

25. Foulk, *Inside the Hermit Kingdom*, 100.

26. Ruxton, *Sir Ernest Satow’s Private Letters*, 62.

27. *Maeil sinbo*, March 24, 1915; *Chūgai nippō*, March 28, 1915.

28. Yi Kakkyu, *Han’guk ūi kūndae pangnamhoe*, 48–49.

the canon. This request was granted in September of the same year,²⁹ and he was able to print a copy of fifteen fascicles.³⁰

Knowing that so many, including Satō, had their eyes on the canon, Takeda took steps to protect the canon from potential plunder, which additionally secured it for Japanese colonial interests. In 1910, he petitioned the resident general (soon to be governor general) Terauchi Masatake (1852–1919) to designate the canon as a national and world treasure. Takeda included a treatise on the history of the canon based on information provided by the prominent Korean monk Yi Hoegwang (1862–1933), with whom he had worked since mid-1908 to set up a modern institution for Korean Buddhism. Takeda argued that the Home Ministry of the Korean government, consisting of pro-Japanese Koreans, should be in charge of the canon rather than the Internal Department of the Palace, an enfeebled office of the waning Chosŏn dynasty. Takeda believed that the canon would be better protected and promoted as a national and world treasure under the aegis of Japan, that is, by the Home Ministry, than by the old, defunct Chosŏn court.³¹

Takeda's request may have been issued in response to the palace's attempts to tighten their control over the canon after the Satō revelation.³² A Korean newspaper reported that the Internal Department of the Palace, partly concerned by Takeda's petition, moved the entire canon to the palace museum.³³ It is not known whether this occurred, but it is at least evident that the palace tried to assert its authority. The advisor to the Home Ministry of the government, Hayashi Gonsuke (1860–1939), sent out a stern warning that anybody intending to make a reprint or move the canon should do so in communication with the ministry.³⁴ Home Minister Yi Chaesun also “sternly warned the monks [of Haein Temple]” to abide by the instruction that the treasure “should be neither relocated nor printed without permission.”³⁵

29. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, September 19, 1909.

30. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, March 25, 1915.

31. Takeda, *Kōchū iseki*, reel 3, 1–15.

32. Takeda died in 1911 and so did not live to see the fruition of his plans in the 1915 printing of the canon by Terauchi and the official, legal designation of the canon as a national treasure far later, in 1935 (*Tong'a ilbo*, May 2, 1935).

33. Hwanghyŏn, *Maechŏnyarok* 6 (1910): 2.

34. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, April 9, 1910.

35. Murakami, *Kaiinji Daizōkyōban*, 31 and 33.

In sum, although Satō's claim of rediscovering the canon was an overstatement, the news of his interest and the return of the Koryō Canon to the national spotlight served as a turning point for Koreans and Japanese in reconsidering the nature and value of the Koryō Canon.

A National and Global Treasure

The infatuation of Japanese—including Satō, Takeda, and many others—with the Koryō Canon was a continuation of Japan's centuries-old desire to acquire the Koryō Canon in its entirety. To some extent, their renewed attention to the Koryō Canon followed scholarly research on the original canons that had begun in the late nineteenth century. Orientalist scholars, such as Max Müller (1823–1900) and Rhys Davids (1843–1922), had systematically collected and translated Sanskrit and Pali texts using Western academic methods that had been developed for use with classical, biblical, and other Western texts. Influenced by this methodology, Japanese Buddhist scholars, in collaboration with their Chinese counterparts, also began compiling and categorizing the Buddhist canons written in Chinese. The Chinese Buddhist lay leader Yang Wenhui (1837–1911), for instance, began collecting Chinese canons with the help of a Japanese Buddhist priest named Nanjō Bunyū (1849–1927). Soon, many East Asian Buddhist leaders came to the conclusion that the Chinese-language canons were superior to the Sanskrit and Pali versions, and various teams vied to compile the most comprehensive collection. In 1880, Japanese Buddhists published a relatively well researched *Reduced Printed Edition* (*Shukusatsu zōkyō*), based on the 1669 *Ōbaku Edition* (*Ōbakuzō*), which was regarded as highly flawed. An updated version, the *Manji Canon Edition* (*Manjizōkyō*), came out in 1902, followed by the *Great Japanese Edition of the Buddhist Canon* (*Dainichi zokuzōkyō*, 1905–12). In China, the scholar monk Zongyang (1865–1921), with financial support from a female lay Buddhist named Luo Jialing (also known as Lisa Roos [1864–1941]), started to compile a Chinese Buddhist canon in 1908, taking the *Reduced Printed Edition* as a model. This canon was later published as *Pinjiiazang* in 1913, after her Dharma name, Pinjia.³⁶

36. Tarocco, *Cultural Practices*, 34.

This sudden rise of interest in compiling and printing original Buddhist texts naturally drew attention to the Koryŏ Canon, because scholars, including Nanjō, were generally of the consensus that it predated and had served as the model for all the above-mentioned Chinese-language Buddhist canons.³⁷ For example, although the *Pinjiayang* was based on the *Reduced Printed Edition*, it was produced as a direct result of Zongyang's desire to get hold of a copy of the Koryŏ Canon. According to the Korean scholar Yi Nūnghwa (1869–1943), when Zongyang saw an article on the Koryŏ Canon in the newspaper *Hushang gebao* in Shanghai, he consulted the Chinese Buddhist reformer Taixu on the possibility of acquiring a print. Realizing the sheer expense required to make a new print, Zongyang and Taixu agreed to purchase a recently published copy of the *Reduced Printed Edition*. In the preface to the *Pinjiayang*, Zongyang writes that there were versions of canons from the Yuan, Ming, and Koryŏ dynasties but that, “other than the Ming version, most of the prints of these are not available anymore” (with the exception of the recently published *Reduced Printed Edition*).³⁸

Thus, the Koryŏ Canon was known to and desired by many East Asian Buddhist leaders in the lead-up to the twentieth century. It was swiftly becoming an object of trans-Korean and global interest. By the 1910s, articles on the Koryŏ Canon were featured in newspapers and journals in East Asia, reflecting a growing international recognition of the canon.

The Korean nationalist newspaper *Capital Gazette* (*Hwangsŏng sinmun*), for example, presented a series of ten articles specifying reasons the Koryŏ Canon should be designated as a world treasure. With the title “The Unparalleled Treasure of the World,” this series was based on an article by a Japanese scholar (name unknown) published in the Chinese newspaper *Far Eastern News* (*Yuandong bao*).³⁹ In other words, the version published in the Korean newspaper was a Korean translation from the Chinese version of an originally Japanese article. The author begins the article by explaining his title. He writes that, although people might accuse him of “inflating” the significance of the Koryŏ Canon, his title is not rhetorical but literally true. He provides three reasons. First, he touts the Koryŏ Canon as not only the most

37. Paik, *Tripitaka Koreana*, 73.

38. Yi Nūnghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa*, 683.

39. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, June 23, 1910.

accurate but also the most flawless version and goes through each other Buddhist canon in circulation to prove his point. He argues that the Pali canons inscribed on brittle palm leaves did not last so they had to be reinscribed regularly: as a result, the oldest of the Pali texts were at most a few hundred years old. Besides, he argues, those canons contain “only the Hinayana texts,” to the exclusion of the Mahayana. As for the Tibetan canon, he acknowledges that it includes more than ten thousand texts but indicates that many of those seem to be later fabrications and that the canon did not include the Mahayana texts in their entirety. Everything considered, the most comprehensive and reliable versions of Buddhist texts in premodern times were the Chinese ones. The Koryō Canon (referring to the second version), he states, was compiled from two different Chinese versions: the Northern Song dynasty Kaibao Tripitaka of 983 and the Khitan Liao version of 1056. By comparing these two Chinese versions, the author claims, the Koreans were able to minimize the errors of individual Chinese characters seen in the previous versions. They were also able to include more texts, thus producing the most accurate and comprehensive woodblock canon of all.⁴⁰

The author goes on to argue that this Koryō version of the canon supersedes all the versions compiled in Japan as well. The first Japanese version, the seventeenth-century Ōbaku Canon, was created on the basis of the Northern Song version, which had many errors and missing characters. Only by incorporating the Koryō version available at Kenjin Temple at the time were the Japanese able to create a more complete collection. The most recent Japanese version, published in 1905–12, the *Supplement to the Canon* (*Zoku Daizōkyō*), he suggests, was more extensive than the Koryō Canon in that it encompassed all other Chinese and non-Chinese versions of canons that were not within the corpus of the Koryō Canon. Yet he maintains that the Koryō Canon stands out for its accuracy. Therefore, he reasons, the Koryō Canon is the best of all Buddhist canons and thus is the utmost treasure of the world.⁴¹

The author also defends the canon’s status as “an unparalleled treasure” on the basis of the woodblocks themselves, which, despite their fragility, had been miraculously preserved. He compares the epigraphic inscriptions with xylographic inscriptions, the former of which last much longer than the latter. Nevertheless, the woodblocks of the Koryō

40. *Hwangsōng sinmun*, June 23, 1910.

41. *Hwangsōng sinmun*, June 24, 1910.



FIG. 1.4. The Canon Storage Hall (Changgyönggak). Courtesy of Haein Temple, Mt. Kaya National Park, South Kyöngsang Province, South Korea.

Canon had survived for 886 years, from the time of the Koryŏ king Hyönjong (r. 1009–31) to 1910.⁴² Not only did they survive for so long but the blocks, amounting to 150,000 pages, did not show any signs of damage. This, he insists, “should astonish the world.”⁴³

Finally, he discusses the storage building that was constructed to preserve the woodblocks of the canon. The building is located in the center of the temple complex as if the *raison d’être* of all other structures in the complex was to protect this single building, the Canon Storage Hall (Changgyönggak) (fig. 1.4). Even though these other buildings are in the proximity of the hall, they are far enough away that, if they caught fire, the fire could not reach the hall. In addition, the hall, with its magnificent size, has windows on all four sides that can be opened and closed to admit sunlight and provide air circulation, thus preventing damage from moisture or rain. The structure is not just scientifically designed, he writes, but sacred to the point that, according

42. Actually, as explained above, the extant version he was referring to was the second one, carved in the thirteenth century.

43. *Hwangsöng sinmun*, June 28, 1910.

to legend, even birds dare not fly directly above the hall so as not to pollute it with their droppings.⁴⁴ The author sums up the significance of the canon by emphatically asserting that it “can truly be called the jewel of the world.”⁴⁵

Undoubtedly, the author’s presentation of the Koryŏ Canon is overblown, and his detailed visual descriptions of the canon and the temple complex belie the fact that he never actually visited the site. His knowledge was mainly derived from the abbot of Haein Temple, Yi Hoegwang, who had also inspired Takeda with his descriptions of Haein Temple and the Koryŏ Canon. Despite the author’s secondhand knowledge, his enraptured view was shared by the Japanese and Korean scholars of the 1910s. Everyone agreed that the Koryŏ Canon was the oldest, most accurate, and best-preserved Buddhist canon, and that it was the culmination of Korean, Asian, and world civilization. On the one hand, this rhetoric might have been merely lip service by the Japanese in particular, who were convinced that they would absorb Korea and therefore obtain full possession of this masterpiece, which they had coveted for centuries. On the other, the valorization of the canon did not dissipate among Japanese and Koreans even after the annexation of Korea in late 1910 and onward. Indeed, interest in the canon would only intensify throughout the colonial period.

A Colonial Gain: The First Printing Project of 1915

The canon gained even more renown in the colonial world when the colonial government undertook a large-scale printing project in 1915. When the Japanese annexed Korea in 1910, printing the canon had not been a priority, despite an increasing number of devotees to the canon and its national/transnational reputation. Colonial authorities were preoccupied with subduing anti-Japanese forces in the wake of annexation and thus did not focus their attention on cultural artifacts. However, this does not mean that they paid no attention to them. Even before the 1910 annexation, the resident-general government initiated ethnographic, anthropological, and archaeological research and surveys throughout the Korean peninsula. Thus, even at the beginning of

44. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, June 28, 1910.

45. *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, June 29, 1910.

the colonial period, the state had completed a substantial inventory of cultural and religious artifacts to be brought under the jurisdiction of the government. The Koryŏ Canon was on the list, but authorities felt no urgency either to relocate it to Japan or to print a paper copy to satiate the demands of Japanese Buddhists. The canon was also already legally protected under the Temple Ordinance promulgated in 1911, which stipulated that no Buddhist treasures and sacred objects located in Korea should be transferred or sold.

Why, then, in late 1914, did Terauchi decide to initiate the printing project? First, he wanted to dedicate a printed canon to the Taishō emperor on the day of his enthronement, scheduled for November 11, 1915. This gift was meant to express gratitude to Emperor Meiji, Taishō's father and predecessor, for Japan's annexation of Korea as well as serve as a prayer for the welfare of the imperial family and the prosperity of the country. As with the canon's initial production in the thirteenth century, a new printing of the canon would be a propitious event for the nation to whom it was dedicated, so the timing was particularly important. Second, Terauchi planned to exhibit the print of the canon, along with many other artifacts, at a major state event, called the Korean Industrial Exhibition (Chōsen bussan kyōshinkai), to commemorate the fifth year of colonial rule. With international recognition of the canon already established, its printing and display would demonstrate the prudence and power of Japanese stewardship by showcasing the colonial government's care and maintenance of a colony's treasure.

With these goals in mind, in August 1914 Terauchi ordered the advisory councilor of the colonial government, Akiyama Masanosuke (1866–1937), to begin research on the woodblocks of the Koryŏ Canon. Akiyama designated the administrator in the Advisory Office, Oda Miki-jirō (1875–1929), to supervise the investigation of the physical condition of the canon. The initial report inventoried some 81,240 panels (eighteen short of a complete copy)⁴⁶ and found that several were not originals but had been carved later.⁴⁷ Confirming that all the blocks were perfectly preserved, Oda was given the green light to print three copies. One copy would be installed at the imperial Sennyū Temple in Kyoto, while the other two would be preserved at the Korean palace and the exhibition hall of the government general in Seoul.

46. One block is one panel.

47. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 19.

The printing team, which included Oda, the colonial scholar Katō Kankaku, and others, was given three instructions: First, the copy to be printed for the emperor should be a foldable version with a special silk cover, whereas the other two should be bound with paper covers. Second, all materials necessary for the printing should be authentic products of Korea. And third, the printing and bookbinding procedures should be done solely by Koreans and according to Korean methods.⁴⁸

Despite the short deadlines and the importance of the project, the printing had to be postponed with the onset of winter. It was feared that cold temperatures might freeze and burst the woodblocks as they were being handled with ink and so forth.⁴⁹ The injunction against printing during the winter had been an absolute rule at the temple. In 1910, the resident monks had even hung such a notice at the main entrance of the hall.⁵⁰ The team decided to wait until March 15 of the following year, 1915, using the interval to ready all the material and human resources. They also resolved some of the logistical issues that turned up in their initial research. For twenty-eight days, from October 9 to November 5, 643 workers recataloged all the canon blocks for the sake of a smoother execution of the printing project.⁵¹

As they prepared for spring, the team paid special attention to the kind of paper that would be used. For the emperor's copy, they decided to use Korean yellow paper from mulberry trees. For the other two, they opted to use white paper, also produced in Korea. The issue of workers also required careful consideration. Oda and Katō initially had difficulty finding specialists in woodblock printing, since typing had already become more common. Nonetheless, they eventually managed to find thirty applicants, of whom eleven eventually passed their examination. One of these was selected to be the leader of the group, and all were placed on a merit-based salary system. They were joined by two hundred monks at Haein Temple, who assisted them on an ad hoc basis. All materials and workers arrived at the temple and the project commenced on March 15.⁵² Four days later, on March 19, Terauchi

48. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 17–18.

49. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 2.

50. Murakami Ryūkichī, *Kaiinji Daizōkyōban*, 30.

51. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 21.

52. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 45–49.

himself paid a special visit to the Canon Storage Hall at Haein Temple, “carefully” inspected the printing process, and stayed overnight.⁵³

In order to have an authentic print of the canon, Oda and Katō decided to re-create the eighteen woodblocks that had been lost and to restore 1,017 unrecognizable characters across 136 locations within the canon. They searched for the original printed versions of the lost blocks and damaged letters, and found them scattered at the Wŏlchŏng and Chŏng’yang temples in Korea, at the Zōjō Temple in Tokyo, and at the Hongan Temple in Kyoto. They managed to collect all the pieces, made a copy of each, and, based on the original prints, had new blocks carved of valuable pear wood in the same size as the original canon panel characters.⁵⁴ The famous Korean calligrapher Kim Tonhŭi (1871–1937) and other wood carvers were hired for this task.⁵⁵ On the side of the newly created woodblocks, the phrase “carved in Taishō Fourth Year” was inscribed.⁵⁶ When all the printing had been completed, artisans created the cover using the traditional Koryŏ tile pattern from Mang-wŏltae in Kaesŏng, the capital of the Koryŏ dynasty. On August 30, 1915, the entire project, from printing to fixing and binding, was complete. The foldable version amounted to 6,805 texts and 663 fascicles, and the two bound versions had 1,260 texts each. Ten days later, on September 11, Oda sent a report to Terauchi titled “Report on the Printing of the Koryŏ Canon,”⁵⁷ providing exact details of the full project from start to finish.

Before the print for the emperor was shipped to Japan, one of the remaining two copies made its debut at Korea’s Industrial Exhibition. Held two months before the enthronement of the Taishō emperor, it was intended to show the world the progress made possible by colonial rule. This was the first large-scale event after Japan colonized Korea and one of three during the colonial period (the other two being in 1929 and 1940). The event took place from September 11 through October 31 in a temporary complex inside the Kyŏngbok Palace, the epicenter of the former Chosŏn dynasty. In the grand exhibition hall, the major agricultural, mechanical, and commercial products were

53. *Maeil sinbo*, March 24, 1915; *Chōsen ihō*, March 1915, 178.

54. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 60–61.

55. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu*, 7.

56. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 62.

57. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*.

displayed. In addition, a section called the Art Hall showcased cultural and archaeological artifacts. Among the many Buddhist artifacts were the 1915 reprint of the Koryŏ Canon as well as other texts related to the printing culture of the Chosŏn era.⁵⁸ As John Burris has described for similar appropriations in modern international expositions in Europe and America, these artifacts were “samples of a country’s most prized and representative possessions” and thus “symbols of cultural prestige.”⁵⁹ However, whereas Western colonizers took artifacts from the colonies to the imperial centers for exhibition, Japan’s intention was to present itself as the preserver and restorer of cultural artifacts of its colony rather than the pillager. Aggressively promoted by the colonial authorities, the exhibition attracted more than a million Koreans and Chinese over a span of fifty days. Later, the Art Hall became a permanent museum, the Museum of the Government General. Thus, one of the three reprints of the Koryŏ Canon was, for the first time, made permanently available for public viewing outside Haein Temple. A year later, the colonial government produced a postcard to commemorate the event and the progress, symbolized by this printing, made in colonial Korea.⁶⁰

The following month, in November, Terauchi headed to Tokyo to attend the enthronement ceremony. He brought with him part of the printed copy of the Koryŏ Canon, forty volumes of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as well as a letter to the Taishō emperor. In it, Terauchi reiterates the reputation of the Koryŏ Canon, noting that, “among the extant Buddhist canons that had been transmitted to our country [Japan], there was none as perfect as the Koryŏ Canon.” He continues, “When I saw with my own eyes and investigated the canon during my trip to southern Korea, there was no damage or lost blocks, despite its age. It is my belief that the canon should truly be called a national treasure.” By “national,” Terauchi does not mean it is a treasure of the Korean nation anymore, but of the Japanese Empire. Terauchi goes on to praise the recent annexation of Korea and to thank Emperor Meiji “for bringing Korea under Japan’s control so as to ‘end stagnation and discontinuation.’” He claims that the reprinting project was made possible by the grace of Emperor Meiji and reinforces the idea that it was the

58. Kim Indök, “Sijŏng 5-yŏn kinyŏm Kongjinhoe.”

59. Burris, *Exhibiting Religion*, 2–3.

60. *Maeil shinbo*, October 1, 1915.

Japanese, as touted by Satō and others, who “rediscovered” the canon. Terauchi writes: “Even this supreme treasure, which had been unknown for seven hundred years and which finally came to light, is also by the grace of the emperor, which permeates all Korea.” He assured the emperor that the reprint was authentic and purely Korean, because he had hired only Koreans to work on it and had used only Korean materials. Terauchi concludes that, by installing the print of the entire Koryŏ Canon in the Imperial Temple, Sennyūji, he intends to “commemorate the great accomplishments of the previous emperor, Meiji.”⁶¹

Attached to the letter was also a short history of the Koryŏ Canon. After explaining that this is the most up-to-date version of the Song and Khitan textual tradition, he stresses that, “when it comes to the accuracy of the canon, there is no parallel among the extant Buddhist canons, and that is why it is a true world treasure.”⁶² On the same day, the Internal Palace minister replied that the emperor was “satisfied” with the gift of the governor general.⁶³ After the enthronement ceremony, Terauchi also paid a visit to the Sennyū Temple to meet with the abbot, Yamauchi Reimyō, and informed him that, in accordance with the emperor’s order, the print of the entire Koryŏ Canon would be sent to the temple and installed there. With agreement from the abbot, Terauchi sent a telegram to the home minister of the colonial government Yamagata Isaburō (served 1910–19) to prepare for the delivery. The sixty-six bundles comprised 1,512 fascicles from 6,779 volumes and were packed in fifteen containers that departed Seoul on November 29. They arrived at the temple in Kyoto on December 2. A special Buddhist ritual was held to welcome the canon, after which the print was enshrined in the Śarīra Hall of the temple. This is the first historical case of a print of the Koryŏ Canon being delivered to Japan in its entirety in the seven centuries of its existence.⁶⁴ Terauchi had accomplished his goal of symbolically unifying Japan and Korea through the medium of the canon.

Three decades later, in 1943, the colonial government published a book that comprised twelve colophons of the canon. This book included the colophon of the 1915 printing under Terauchi’s name in a collection that also contained previous colophons by the Koryŏ and Chosŏn

61. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 1–7.

62. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 11.

63. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 11.

64. Oda, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*, 12–15.

kings. All these colophons begin by venerating the teachings and power of the Buddha and the merits of printing his teachings. Thus, the colonial government presented itself as the legitimate inheritor of the Korean dynasty, not its usurper, by preserving and reproducing an unadulterated, authentic version of the Koryŏ Canon.⁶⁵

A Diplomatic, Religious Gift: The Second Printing Project of 1937

Two decades later, in 1937, another printing was commissioned. This second reprint, undertaken by Governor General Minami Jirō (1874–1955), differs from the first one on two points. First, it was initiated to appease the “yearning” of Emperor Puyi (r. 1934–45) of Manchukuo, the puppet state established by the Japanese Empire in Manchuria.⁶⁶ Second, whereas the supervisors of the first printing did not necessarily render the undertaking as a *Buddhist* event, the person in charge for the second printing did approach it as such. Takahashi Tōru (1878–1967), a professor at Korea’s Imperial University, was one of the most prominent Japanese Buddhist scholars in colonial Korea and had already conducted preliminary research on the Koryŏ Canon at Haein Temple in the summer of 1911.⁶⁷ For him, the printing was not primarily a political undertaking. Although the 1915 printing had been accompanied by Buddhist ceremonies, Takahashi from the beginning conceived of the 1937 printing as an explicitly Buddhist ritual event.

This project originated from Emperor Puyi’s historic visit to Japan in April 1935 to demonstrate his fealty to imperial Japan, the new homeland of Manchukuo. His visit was both timely and politically motivated, as “the whole arrangements for this trip were,” Puyi admitted in his later diary, “made by the Kwantung army,”⁶⁸ the Japanese imperial army in Manchuria. Japan needed to demonstrate to the public that there was strong unity between the two nations. During his eight-day visit, Emperor Puyi had the opportunity to visit the Imperial Library and Museum, and expressed great interest in the old texts displayed there. What

65. Chōsen Sōtokufu toshokan, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō*.

66. *Shinkyō nichinichi shinbun*, September 17, 1937.

67. Takahashi, “Kaiinji Daizōkyōban.”

68. Puyi, *From Emperor to Citizen*, 280.

captivated him in particular was the print of the Ōbaku Temple version of the canon. After being informed that the Koryō Canon was its original source, he expressed his desire to acquire a copy of the Koryō Canon “even if it would cost a great amount of money.”⁶⁹ Coincidentally, around this time the Koryō Canon was officially designated as a national treasure.⁷⁰ Japan’s Imperial Household Ministry delivered Emperor Puyi’s message to Governor General Minami, whose secretary, Shiobara Tokisaburō (1896–1964), contacted Takahashi. Relying on Oda’s report on the 1915 printing project, Takahashi estimated a budget of 15,000 yen would be needed. Shiobara relayed this information to the official of the Imperial House of Manchukuo, Hayashide Kenjirō (1882–1970), who gave him the go-ahead for the project.

Even though he was inexperienced in the printing business, Takahashi made it clear that he had agreed to undertake the project because it “would play a significant role in making a Buddhist connection between Manchuria and Korea.”⁷¹ Takahashi considered the project to be different from the 1915 printing: the earlier version, he wrote, “was printed entirely by the hands of the state authorities.”⁷² His team of twenty-three included eight printing specialists, four of whom had worked on the 1915 printing, as well as fifteen monks and laymen at Haein Temple and from nearby villages to assist. Since Takahashi had been working closely with many Korean Buddhist monastics on other projects and had also been teaching at the Korean Buddhist monastic college, it was natural that he would involve monks at Haein Temple in the project. Ch’oe Yōnghwan, the resident monk of the temple, was designated to be the supervisor of the other monks, who together would assist the printing specialists. In addition, Takahashi assigned three monks to the correction team to minimize mistakes during the printing procedure.

On the day of the commencement of the project, September 2, 1937, Takahashi held a ceremony to offer a special prayer for a successful printing. He invited the three hundred resident monks and nuns of the temple as well as all the workers involved. In his speech at the ceremony, Takahashi explained the significance of the project to the audience: “This

69. *Nichinichi Kyōto mainichi shinbun*, January 23, 1938.

70. *Tong’a ilbo*, May 3, 1935.

71. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*, 4.

72. Takahashi, “*Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*” (1951), 214.

project originated from the sincere [Buddhist] belief of the emperor of Manchukuo, and thus those who are working on this will accrue a great amount of merit.”⁷³ He requested that, for the duration of the project, the monastics pray during morning and evening ceremonies for the success of the project and the long life of the emperor of Manchukuo. He further assigned a chanting monk to circumambulate the Canon Storage Hall, ringing bells and chanting *dhāraṇī* (Skt. “spell” or “code”) every day to ward off any bad omens or accidents.⁷⁴ He also decided to make an additional copy of the canon for the Korean Buddhist monastic school. While Takahashi followed the 1915 precedent of using yellow paper, a silk cover, and the like to re-create an authentic Koryō style of printing, he also reenacted highly ritualized printing practices according to Koryō custom. The ritualization of the carving and reprinting of the canon was, as Sem Vermeersch writes, “the core of an important Koryō ritual, the Tripitaka ritual,” which symbolically represented “the Koryō worldview” and was deeply rooted in belief in “the power of the Buddhas.”⁷⁵ Likewise, Takahashi’s secular and religious visions mingled as he imagined Korea and Manchuria becoming one body (albeit under the parenthood of Japan) through the locus of the sacred words of the Buddha.

So important was this union of secular and religious concerns that Takahashi wanted to confirm whether Emperor Puyi’s motives were truly pious. He worried that the emperor, a known collector of artifacts, sought a copy of the canon as a mere addition to his collection. Thus, during Takahashi’s visit to Shinkyō (Ch. Xinjing), the capital of Manchukuo, to discuss some logistical matters about the printing project, Takahashi took the opportunity to inquire of the official Hayashide about the emperor’s Buddhist faith and his reasons for acquiring a print. Hayashide vehemently denied that the emperor’s desire to have a reprint had to do with his hobby and maintained that it “derived from his deep faith in Buddhism.” Hayashide even shared with Takahashi that “the emperor burns incense and meditates every morning.”⁷⁶ (In his autobiography, Puyi later corroborated Hayashide’s claim regarding

73. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*, 15–16.

74. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*, 16.

75. Vermeersch, *Power of the Buddhas*, 360–64 passim.

76. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*, 9–10.

his level of devotion to Buddhist practices.)⁷⁷ Takahashi returned to the project with renewed dedication.

In his efforts to create an authentic replica of the original canon, Takahashi had to deal with the eighteen woodblocks that had been lost. For the 1915 printing, the famous calligrapher Kim Tonhŭi had carved new blocks based on the reprints available at Korean and Japanese temples. But this was not good enough for Takahashi. Instead, he went back to the temples where reprints of the original eighteen blocks were preserved and had them copied through collotype (an early photographic method of copying) “in order to restore the perfect woodblocks of the Koryŏ Canon.” Thus, rather than have a well-known contemporary calligrapher write in his own style, Takahashi asked the calligraphers to attach photocopied prints directly to prepared woodblocks and carve the missing letters from them.⁷⁸

The printing took forty-five days and was completed on October 17. The entire reprint resulted in 1,163 volumes. Takahashi again held a big Buddhist ceremony, joined by two hundred monastics from Haein Temple along with all the workers. Everyone expressed gratitude to the Buddhas for the protection granted during their work and prayed for the health of Emperor Puyi. The printed canon was finally shipped from Keijō (colonial Seoul) to Shinkyō on January 17, 1938. Accompanying the canon was a catalog titled *Supplement to the Buddhist Canon* (*Sokch'anggyŏng*), a later addition to the canon compiled by the famed Koryŏ monk Ŭich'ŏn (1055–1101), as well as a photo book of Haein Temple. Five days later, the shipment passed customs and was finally delivered to the Department of the Imperial Household. At 2:00 p.m. on January 22, Emperor Puyi, who had awaited the arrival of what one Manchukuo newspaper called “the great canon of the unparalleled treasure of the world,”⁷⁹ paid a visit to the department. He “first put his palms together” in front of the sacred canon and then closely observed

77. In his autobiography, Puyi recounts, “The more I read Buddhist books and the more I believed them. . . . I used to meditate everyday,” and also reminisces, “Under my influence the whole household started intoning Buddhist chants, while the air echoed with the sound of the wooden drum and brass gong. The palace seemed to have become a temple” (Puyi, *From Emperor to Citizen*, 308).

78. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*, 7–8.

79. *Shinkyō nichinichi*, January 23, 1938.

it “with satisfaction,”⁸⁰ wrote Takahashi a year later. (The second copy, intended for the Korean Buddhist monastic school,⁸¹ was sent to the Pohyŏn Temple in P’yŏngan Province for various reasons.)⁸² In 1939, Takahashi wrote a report detailing the project and submitted it to the colonial government.⁸³

Thus, the second reprinting again telegraphed that the colonial government was the disseminator of Korea’s important religious materials. In addition to demonstrating imperial power, it also further secured it. In the same way that the Koryŏ kings commissioned the two Koryŏ canons in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries to fend off invasions with the help of the Buddha’s power, the Japanese colonial government used the canon to cement its alliance with Emperor Puyi and thus win the war against China. Success in battle was sought through the power of the Koryŏ Canon, or, as the Korean Buddhist newspaper put it, the power of the Buddhas.⁸⁴ As supervisor, Takahashi amplified this dual aspect with the 1937 printing. He made sure that it was not only a political, diplomatic gift, but also a religious exchange—a normative practice since the spread of Buddhism within and beyond India.

Symbolic Value of the Koryŏ Canon for the Japanese

The 1915 and 1937 reprints of the Koryŏ Canon, combined with the rise of interest among scholars in East Asia and beyond, enjoyed broad publicity, prompting the Japanese to advance their own perspective on the canon’s significance. This perspective, while emphasizing the archaeological and cultural value of the canon, gave equal if not greater emphasis to the idea that Japan “rediscovered,” preserved, and promoted this artifact domestically and internationally. This rhetorical strategy ultimately “Japanized” the canon. The more the Japanese

80. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*, 40.

81. *Pulgyo sibo*, August 1, 1937.

82. *Pulgyo sibo*, April 1, 1938. This print is currently preserved at Dongguk University in Seoul as well (Baba, “Tōkoku daigaku Kōrai *Daizōkyō*,” 184).

83. Takahashi, *Kōraiban Daizōkyō inshutsu tenmatsu*. The same article was published again in 1951.

84. *Pulgyo sibo*, September 1, 1937.

highlighted both the canon's particularity (Koreanizing it) and its universality (de-Koreanizing it), the more Japan presented itself as a benevolent civilizer and colonizer. The Japanese also took pains to claim their preeminent role in revitalizing Buddhism in China by reimporting knowledge of the Dharma to the mainland.

The Japanese Buddhist scholar Murakami Senshō (1851–1929) was one of many Japanese who reflected these viewpoints. Murakami wrote in an article that the history of Buddhist canons can be thought of as “an international competition for printing the canon.” Whereas hundreds of years ago canon printing was “[most] popular” in China, “these days, Japan has been [most] successful, in conjunction with its academic research.”⁸⁵ Murakami then pointed out that the Japanese rediscovery of the Koryō Canon led to the recent export of a print of the Japanese version, which itself was a print of the Koryō version, back to China. (He was referring to the *Pinjiasang* version printed in Shanghai in 1913.) Thus, the canons modeled after the Koryō Canon were “being spread through Japan and China.”⁸⁶ The role of Korea in this dissemination was acknowledged, but that was superseded by Japan's. As the owner of the Koryō Canon, Japan emerged as the primary agent responsible for returning the authentic canon to its motherland.⁸⁷

The Japanese also constructed and reinforced a narrative around the canon that exaggerated Japan's role in the political and cultural sphere, painting Koreans as either ignorant of the immense cultural value of the treasure that they held or stubbornly unwilling to share it with the world. The Japanese journalist and founder of the *Kokumin shinbun*, Tokutomi Ichirō (or Tokutomi Sohō, 1863–1957), wrote an article after personally viewing the three reprints of the Koryō Canon in August 1915.⁸⁸ Tokutomi reminds his readers how much the Koryō Canon had been historically valued by the Japanese. He claims that the Japanese knew the value of the canon long ago and constantly “begged for it” despite the fact that the Korean court made all possible excuses to “reject” their requests. (For example, the Japanese folklorist Yanagi Sōetsu [1889–1961] went so far as to say that one of the two objectives of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's sixteenth-century military invasion

85. *Maeil sinbo*, March 31, 1915.

86. *Maeil sinbo*, March 31, 1915.

87. *Maeil sinbo*, March 31, 1915.

88. *Maeil sinbo*, August 14, 1915.

of Korea was to obtain the Koryŏ Canon.)⁸⁹ Tokutomi points out that the Zōjō Temple in Tokyo was the only place outside Korea that historically had a copy of the Koryŏ Canon, the acquisition of which he attributes to the first ruler of unified Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616).⁹⁰ Ieyasu’s wisdom in recognizing the value of the Koryŏ Canon established, for Japanese such as Tokutomi, that the Japanese had been guardians of the Koryŏ Canon for centuries—especially when compared to the way Korea’s own neo-Confucian sympathies in the Chosŏn dynasty had disparaged and neglected this Buddhist treasure. The tremendous care the Japanese had given to the 1915 printing, particularly in ensuring its authenticity by using Korean materials and expertise exclusively, was further evidence, for Tokutomi, that Japan was the rightful caretaker of what was “not just a national treasure, but also a world treasure.”⁹¹

As such, the 1915 and 1937 printings were embodiments of Japan’s political control over Korea. If the 1915 printing symbolized the unity of Japan and Korea, the 1937 printing showed that Japan could use the canon to solidify the inclusion of Manchukuo in this union. Culturally, the printings were a public proclamation that an item coveted by Japan for centuries was finally possessed in its entirety and was now Japan’s to disseminate. Both printing projects were part of the colonial discourse, “de-Koreanizing” and “Japanizing” the Koryŏ Canon in order to legitimate Japan’s imperial worldview.

Renewed Symbolic Value for Koreans

Koreans responded to these events with a complex range of emotions, from outright anger at Satō’s manipulations, to gratitude to the Japanese for protecting their national treasures, to self-criticism for not being able to do so themselves, and lastly to a sense of cultural superiority over Japan.

Satō’s attempt to relocate the canon prompted Koreans to see the canon in a new light, especially in nationalist terms. One piece of evidence is that the Korean press glossed over the fact that a Korean monk

89. *Samchŏlli* 12/8 (1940): 126.

90. *Maeil sinbo*, August 14, 1915.

91. *Maeil sinbo*, August 14, 1915.

at Haein Temple had been working behind the scenes with Satō all along.⁹² Rather, the story they told was that a Japanese pillager was about to plunder a Korean cultural wonder. The press related that it was not only a Buddhist treasure but an “unparalleled national treasure,” clearly valued by the nation, regularly reprinted over the centuries, and desired by Chinese Buddhists as well.⁹³ Despite this overblown rhetoric, it was precisely owing to the Satō incident that Koreans, including monks, renewed their interest in the Koryŏ Canon and became “determined to repair and preserve it permanently.”⁹⁴ Nevertheless, such protection had to be enforced with the assistance of the Japanese. In 1910, the Internal Palace Department dispatched a Korean official, Pak Chubin, and the Japanese advisor to the department, Murakami Ryūkichi (1877–1934),⁹⁵ who submitted “The Report on the Investigation of the Canon at Haeinsa” (*Kaiinji Daizōkyōban chōsa hōkokusho*), in which they recorded the history, physical condition, and numbers of the woodblocks and texts of the canon.⁹⁶ The Korean monk Yi Hwang, who was behind Takeda’s petition, also planned to make a print of the canon in collaboration with Sekino Tadashi.⁹⁷ In 1910, however, nothing was possible without Japan’s intervention.⁹⁸

Koreans felt ambivalence about Japanese interest in their Koryŏ Canon. On the one hand, they knew that the colonial government was using it as a political tool. When Terauchi made his print of the Koryŏ Canon in 1915, Korean newspapers reported the event factually but were clear that they regarded the copy donated to the Japanese emperor as fundamentally about the “commemoration of Japan’s colonization of Korea.”⁹⁹ A Korean newspaper published by Korean immigrants in San Francisco also expressed this view, saying that Terauchi considered the gift to be “a permanent monument of annexation,” bitterly admitting that Japan had complete control over Korea.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, some Koreans appreciated the level of attention and care

92. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, February 19, 1910.

93. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, April 10, 1910.

94. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, April 10, 1910.

95. *Taehan maeil sinbo*, April 9, 1910.

96. *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 1917:3.

97. *Maeil sinbo*, October 21, 1910.

98. Murakami, *Kaiinji Daizōkyōban*.

99. *Maeil sinbo*, September 20, 1917.

100. *Sinhan minbo*, October 24, 1917.

that the Japanese lavished on the Koryŏ Canon. The intellectual Chang Chiyŏn (1864–1921) wrote:

Count Terauchi Masatake claimed, “It [the Koryŏ Canon] is not only Chosŏn’s treasure but also the absolute treasure of the East and not just the absolute treasure of the East but also the absolute treasure of the world. It should not be kept at a mountain temple but in all the libraries and museums of the world.” Despite difficulties, he made a personal trip to Haein Temple and promulgated an edict to print three copies of the canon to disseminate it to the world. This is not something one does on a whim. Without a great karmic connection, great compassion, and great wisdom of the Supreme Mahayana, how could one have made public the Haein [Temple’s] canon, which had been hidden for several centuries, to all nations of the world and for eternity?¹⁰¹

Even Chang, though a staunch nationalist who was bitter about Japan’s annexation of Korea, viewed Terauchi’s handling of the canon positively, and he even reiterated claims that the Japanese effectively rediscovered this ancient treasure.

Korean Buddhists had an even more positive response. Yi Hoegwang, the abbot of Haein Temple, and two Korean lay Buddhists, O Chaep’ung and Yun T’aehŭng, created a special plaque to “commemorate Terauchi’s order to produce three copies of the canon and his personal visit to the temple.”¹⁰² The plaque’s inscription read: “The Light Picture of the Eighty Thousand Great Canon at Haein Temple on Mountain Kaya.” The accompanying image contained a circle at the center, which Yi, O, and Yun explained is Buddha-nature, in Korean termed “Haein”—the name of the temple. The rays radiating from the circle represent the myriad worlds that manifest from this Buddha-nature. These rays, they said, also symbolize the Eighty Thousand Great Canon, namely, the Koryŏ Canon. They argued that the disk on the Japanese flag had the same significance: the center is Japan and the spiral expansion symbolizes the rest of the world. Thus, the triad of Buddha, the Canon, and Japan became visually integrated in the act of appreciating Terauchi’s support for Buddhism in general and the Koryŏ

101. *Maeil sinbo*, March 25, 1917.

102. *Maeil sinbo*, June 10, 1915.

Canon in particular.¹⁰³ The Korean Buddhists' response must be seen in light of the marginalization of Buddhism under the Chosŏn regime. Governor General Terauchi's attention had elevated the status of the religion enormously.

However, many other Koreans deplored their nation's inability to protect its own heritage. The Korean intellectual Ch'oe Namsŏn was a historian who had pretty much "lived at the library" in Tokyo when he had studied there in 1904 and 1906. During his visits, he researched the many texts that had gone from Korea to Japan over the years, with some of the originals even having been lost in Korea but preserved in Japan.¹⁰⁴ To Ch'oe, knowing of the historic flow of knowledge and culture eastward from Korea to Japan, it was painful to witness the westward counterflow resulting from colonialism. His response to the news of Terauchi's printing project was emotional. Ch'oe decried the fact that Koreans had neglected their national treasures and that they seemed incapable of preserving and promoting them. He berated his own people for having failed to maintain the cultural heritage of their forebears, blaming it on negligence and laziness. Echoing the Japanese claims of "rediscovery," Ch'oe shames the Korean people for not even recognizing the existence of this treasure, "as if a thick layer of dust accumulated on the top of a great sword."¹⁰⁵ Even though there had been three major reprints of the canon in the prior two hundred years, no one, he laments, owned a reprint in its entirety. He writes, "For this reason, I cannot help offering condolences to the Koryŏ Canon with sadness and sympathy . . . because such a supreme treasure has received such ill treatment and contempt [from its own people]."¹⁰⁶ He invokes, by way of comparison, a prominent Chinese lay Buddhist who, understanding the value of such artifacts, had been instrumental in collecting and compiling Buddhist texts: "Is there truly no layperson like Yang Wenhui in Korea?"¹⁰⁷

This self-criticism was not unusual. In 1925, for example, the Korean monk Paek Sŏng'uk (1897–1981), who had studied in Germany, heard the news that Japanese Buddhist scholars Takakusu Junjirō

103. *Maeil sinbo*, June 10, 1915.

104. Yi Nŭnghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa*, 666.

105. *Maeil sinbo*, October 11, 1916.

106. *Maeil sinbo*, October 11, 1916.

107. *Maeil sinbo*, October 11, 1916.

(1866–1945), Watanabe Kaigyoku (1872–1933), and Ono Genmyō, often referred to as “three masters,”¹⁰⁸ were about to compile the *Newly Revised Canon of the Taishō Era* (Taishō Canon; *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*) based on the Koryō Canon and other canons in collaboration with hundreds of other scholars from the East and the West. He lauded their project as “being worth congratulating from the perspective of Buddhism,” but lamented that, “seen from the perspective of [Korean Buddhists], is it not the reality that we failed to transfer what we have inherited from our ancestors to others with our own hands? Moreover, have we not failed when we are not aware of what is going on when such an inheritance is being disseminated through others’ hands?”¹⁰⁹ Paek felt further embarrassed when the Japanese, including Takakusu and Watanabe, later promoted the publication of the *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* as a symbol not only of the academic but also of the religious and political superiority of Japan over other countries.¹¹⁰ Seeing their own canon promoted by their colonizers, Korean intellectuals and monastics felt responsible for failing to protect the cultural and religious legacies that were integral to their nation and their faith.

“Re-Koreanizing” the Canon

Later, though, this shame was supplanted by outright pride. By 1925, Ch’oe shifted from denouncing the Korean people’s failure to preserve the canon to emphasizing that the Koryō Canon was the mind and soul of Korean Buddhism—the people and the nation—and the ultimate Buddhist canon of the entire world. “Korean Buddhism is the Buddhism of Buddhist canons,” he proudly proclaimed.¹¹¹ It is more than a mere religious treasure, he writes, for, “of the Korean nation, people, and Buddhism, one could endure Buddhism being taken away [while keeping the canon], but [one could not endure] the [removal of] the Koryō Canon while keeping Buddhism.”¹¹² Like Tokutomi, Ch’oe considers the quality and rarity of the canon as characteristics that mark

108. Wilkinson, “Taishō Canon Devotion,” 307.

109. *Pulgyo* 7 (January 1925): 138.

110. Wilkinson, “Taishō Canon Devotion,” 302–4.

111. *Pulgyo* 19 (January 1925): 3–4.

112. *Pulgyo* 19 (January 1925): 3–4.

it as a classic of the world. Ch'oe further maintains that the canon was something that China and Japan cherished but were incapable of creating themselves.¹¹³ Ironically, Ch'oe asserts the value of the Koryŏ Canon as evidence of the cultural superiority of Korea over Japan and other countries by emphasizing that it was elevated by Japanese scholars and the colonial government. He turns the discourse of “de-Koreanizing” the canon into one of “re-Koreanizing” it.

This effort to reassert Korean Buddhism's rightful place in Buddhist history as well as its contemporary relevance culminates in an article Ch'oe wrote in 1930 for Toh Chinho to distribute to American readers. Toh was to attend the Pacific Buddhist Youth Conference in Hawaii in June of that year. He would bring hundreds of copies of Ch'oe's article with him to be distributed at the conference as well as to local museums and libraries. Ch'oe used this opportunity to argue for the superiority of Korean culture over Japanese. As in the 1925 article, but with more pointed arguments targeted at Japan, Ch'oe spends a great deal of time on the value of the Koryŏ Canon in the context of East Asian Buddhism. The Koryŏ Canon, he writes, was the best of all previous Chinese canons as well as the primary model for later Japanese and modern Chinese canons. Ironically, Ch'oe argues, China had been reluctant to learn from other countries, owing to its sense of superiority and for a long time pretended not to know the value of the Koryŏ Canon. But, with the changing times, modern China had started to accept the influence of the outside world, and, with Japanese help, it published a Buddhist canon called the *Pinjiazang*. Given that all Japan's Buddhist canons were based on the Koryŏ Canon, Ch'oe dubbed this counterflow of influence “the import of the Koryŏ Canon into China” or “the unification, by the Koryŏ Canon, of all the Chinese-language canons.”¹¹⁴

Ch'oe then turns to belittling the position of Japan with respect to the Koryŏ Canon. Since the fourteenth century, Ch'oe writes, “the diplomatic relationship between the two countries [Japan and Korea] has revolved entirely around the Koryŏ Canon.”¹¹⁵ Why was the canon so important to Japan? One reason, he writes, was the need to resupply Buddhist texts to temples that had been pillaged and damaged in

113. *Pulgyo* 19 (January 1925): 4–5.

114. *Pulgyo* 74 (August 1930): 25.

115. *Pulgyo* 74 (August 1930): 26.

Japan's civil wars.¹¹⁶ Ch'oe gives even greater weight to another factor: "With the level of skill and technology in Japan at the time [the pre-modern era], the Japanese were incapable of borrowing and installing the vast number of volumes [properly]. Moreover, they were overwhelmed by the sheer beauty of the Koryŏ Canon and would not dare to attempt to carve the wooden panels themselves."¹¹⁷ To further disparage the Japanese, Ch'oe reminds the reader that the Japanese had been desperate to wheedle texts out of the Chosŏn government. The government in turn deliberately stated to Japanese envoys that the canon did not exist anymore, which was why the Japanese believed this to be the case until the end of the nineteenth century. Finally, Ch'oe argues that the Japanese decision, during the premodern era, to make their own copy of the canon merely proved their cultural dependence on Korea. Ch'oe summarizes the relationship between the two countries in terms of "the Japanese islands lagging behind the Korean continent," continuing to be nurtured by "cultural nutrients" through the "breast milk" called Buddhism. Korea was the mother and Japan the baby, and the Koryŏ Canon was the "nutritious milk" flowing between them.¹¹⁸

It is not known how the readers at the Hawaii conference reacted to the essay in the pamphlets Toh distributed. Nonetheless, Ch'oe had found an argument that turned Japanese colonizers' glorification of the canon against their own efforts to "de-Koreanize" it. Thus, the Koryŏ Canon had become a nexus where both colonial and anticolonial discourses converged.

The Transnational Dimension of the Koryŏ Canon

Although the politics surrounding the Koryŏ Canon were deeply embedded in colonial realities, the accumulation of a body of scholarly knowledge about the canon elevated its status to a point where it had significance beyond the colonial and nationalist paradigms. Both Korean and Japanese scholars poured their energy into answering

116. *Pulgyo* 74 (August 1930): 26.

117. *Pulgyo* 74 (August 1930): 27.

118. *Pulgyo* 74 (August 1930): 32–33.

questions with respect to the history of the canon: When and how was the canon created? What motivated such grand-scale projects? Why was the canon moved to Haein Temple? What role did Ŭich'ŏn play in the creation of the second Koryŏ Canon?¹¹⁹ A growing body of scholarship on the canon circulated beyond the Japanese imperial borders, creating a transnational understanding of the Koryŏ Canon in the scholarly community.

In response to the sincere wishes of scholars and schools from China and Japan to receive parts of the canon print, in 1931 Seoul Imperial University professor Fujitsuka Chikashi (1879–1948) and Katō Kankaku obtained permission from the colonial government to print one hundred copies of the *Issaikyō ongi* (Pronunciation and meaning in the complete Buddhist Canon), a section of the canon. Each copy amounted to twenty-five books that contained a hundred Buddhist texts. These copies were distributed to colleges and libraries in China and Japan as well as to Seoul Imperial University, the colonial government, and the Korean Buddhist central institution.¹²⁰

Although the Korean press touted the dissemination of Korea's Buddhist canon back to China as “cultural reimportation,”¹²¹ the trans-cultural and transnational circulation of Buddhist texts and the cross-national scholarly literature emerging as a result also played a role in reminding East Asian Buddhists that they had a shared Buddhist literary heritage. Despite the political saturation of the colonial realities in play, this common heritage contributed to an imagined East Asian community. A result of the cross-cultural interaction around the Buddhist canons was the *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, completed in 1934, which adopted the Koryŏ Canon as what Robert Buswell describes as “the textus receptus,”¹²² a piece of work that is believed to be identical

119. Just to name a representative sample of scholars: Sekino Tadashi (1904), Ono Genmyō (1907), Tsumaki Chokuryō (1910), Tokiwa Daijō (1910), Takahashi Tōru (1911), Yi Nūnghwa (1918), Ch'oe Namsŏn (1926), Imamura Tomo (1930), Pak Pongsŏk (1933), and Ikeuchi Hiroshi (1937). See Lancaster and Park's introduction in *Korean Buddhist Canon*.

120. *Tong'a ilbo*, March 6 and August 21, 1931.

121. *Tong'a ilbo*, March 6 and August 21, 1931.

122. Buswell, “Sugi's ‘Collation Notes,’” 131. *Textus receptus* in Latin literally means “received text” and refers to the version of the Greek New Testament published by Robert Stephanus (1503–59) and later replicated by Erasmus (1466–1536). Until the

with the original. This borderless textual exchange was enabled through the reprinting of the same sacred Buddhist texts.¹²³

The canon also carried religious significance beyond the Korean borders. For example, Ōya Tokujō (1882–1950), a professor at Rinzai University, visited Haein Temple and, with the permission of the colonial government, undertook a small-scale printing project in April 1929. As Oda may have done in 1915 and Takahashi would do later in 1937, Ōya, a Shinshū Buddhist, followed Buddhist rituals that were integral to the project and donated food and money to the temple.¹²⁴ Overtaken by the thought of touching the eight-centuries-old canon, Ōya wrote in his diary, “I felt as if I had been transported to a somewhat mysterious land.”¹²⁵ The wooden panels of the Koryō Canon, to Ōya and many others who had visited the sacred space in which it was housed, were what David Morgan has described in other contexts as “a matrix . . . in which belief happens as touching and seeing, hearing and tasting, feeling, and emotion, as will and action, as imagination and intuition.”¹²⁶ If “materiality mediates belief,” as Morgan posits, religion is ultimately “a habit” resulting from a repeated process of experiencing embodied materiality through our sensorium.¹²⁷ In this sense, the 1915 and 1937 printing projects should be viewed as enactments of a centuries-old religious habit or tradition of printing. Oda’s and Takahashi’s passionate, ritually conscious efforts to re-create the authentic reprint of the sacred objects and the inclusion of Terauchi’s colophon with those of the previous kings that were preserved at Haein Temple situate the colonial endeavors into a long history of religious printing.

The Japanese attitude toward the Koryō Canon had thus moved beyond the colonial discourse. As Charles Hallisey cautions in his

nineteenth century, the *Textus Receptus* became the most authoritative text of the New Testament. See Holbert and McKenzie, *What Not to Say*, 213.

123. Thus, the Koryō Canon also became a site of the literary transculturation seen throughout Japan’s empire, contributing to what Karen Thornber conceptualizes as “vibrant nebulae of intra-Asian text contact.” This transnational space of religious and cultural imaginary played a role not only in the cultural negotiations taking place within and beyond Japan’s empire, but also enabled other artistic, religious, and political contacts across the borders. See Thornber, *Empire of Texts*, 3 and 21–22.

124. *Chōsen bukkyō* 1929:33.

125. *Chōsen bukkyō* 1929:36.

126. Morgan, *Religion and Material Culture*, 8.

127. Morgan, *Religion and Material Culture*, 4 and 12.

discussion of the modern European construction of Theravada Buddhism, the Orientalist discourse was not one-dimensional but the result of “a productive ‘elective affinity’ between the positive historiography of European Orientalism and some Buddhist styles of self-representation.”¹²⁸ A similar “elective affinity” was manifested in the modern constructions and imaginations of the Koryŏ Canon in which Japanese and Koreans directly and indirectly participated.

Conclusion

In August 1932, aware of the transnational reputation of the Koryŏ Canon, the Korean nationalist monk Han Yong'un made a pilgrimage to Haein Temple to have a firsthand look at “the pinnacle of Korean culture and the world jewel.” In his essay about this trip, later published in a Korean Buddhist journal, he repeatedly and repentantly admits that it was “a shame” that he, as a Korean and a monk, had not visited “this holy site,” even as all foreigners who ever put their feet in the land of Korea made a pilgrimage there themselves.¹²⁹ What he does not mention in his essay is a familiar scene that might have discomfited him on entering the Canon Storage Hall. In order to access the hall during the colonial period, one had to receive special permission from the resident Japanese official who kept the key—a bold reminder of the foreign, colonial supervision over the canon. He nonetheless felt overflowing emotion: “The eighty thousand or so panels of the canon are the accomplishment of the world made by the hands of our ancestors. Who would not be moved to tears of gratitude upon touching the work of the ancestors’ hands, if one has blood and fire in him?”¹³⁰

In his essay, Han takes for granted that the Koryŏ Canon had emerged in the colonial era as a religious, cultural, and national/transnational treasure both in Korea and in and beyond Japan’s greater empire. Although Han was silent about the role of the colonizers, this elevation of the canon’s status was made possible in large part by the way the Japanese articulated new meaning and potential for the canon. The integration of the canon into Japan’s colonial and imperial

128. Hallisey, “Roads Taken,” 48–49.

129. *Pulgyo* 100 (September 1932): 111.

130. *Pulgyo* 100 (September 1932): 113–14.

worldview prompted Koreans to counter this colonial image, but, in so doing, they inevitably had to mimic Japanese rhetoric in order to “decolonize” and “renationalize” the canon. At the same time, the fame of the canon boosted the esteem of the central institution of Korean Buddhism, which regularly exhibited copies of the canon at its headquarters in Seoul.¹³¹ The Koryŏ Canon became a symbol of Korean Buddhist nationalism.

Thus, the valorization of the Koryŏ Canon by both Koreans and Japanese reflects a contentious colonial reality. The Koryŏ Canon can also be understood in the context of the emergence of a modern trans-cultural and transnational Buddhism, a loose but visible religious community conceived in part through the centuries-old practice of disseminating sacred texts across borders. The Koryŏ Canon was not the only symbol of a Buddhist heritage, however. The Buddha’s Birthday Festival, to which we will now turn, also became emblematic of the transnational Buddhist community.

131. *Tong’a ilbo*, May 27, 1922.

CHAPTER TWO

A Buddhist Christmas The Buddha's Birthday Festival

At eight o'clock on the morning of May 26, 1928, the massive display of fireworks launched from Namsan mountain could be seen by the 300,000 residents of Seoul. It was a day of celebration of the Buddha's birth. Two hours later, an airplane showered the city with a million blue and red flower petals and 30,000 event fliers. Large, elaborate ceremonies held in three separate locations in central Seoul each had a pavilion, an altar, and a baby Buddha statue. The Japanese Buddhist groups went first at eleven o'clock, presiding over an ornate, public liturgy in one location. They were followed by the Korean Buddhists, who officiated their own equally complex ceremony at a second location at one o'clock. At three o'clock, Japanese and Korean Buddhists gathered together at the third location. Colonial government officials, including the governor general, the mayor of Seoul, and other dignitaries, joined them. Among the three consecutive events, there were parades featuring lanterns of different shapes, colorful paper flowers, and intricately ornamented floats, including a white elephant that symbolized the Buddha. Tens of thousands of people, including children, filled the streets. The city government dispatched additional buses and streetcars to accommodate the influx of people from the suburbs, and all the public transportation crews pinned carnations on their jackets. For its scale, the 1928 festival was hailed by newspapers as "a rare spectacle, [not seen] in recent years."¹

1. *Maeil sinbo*, May 26 and 27, 1928.

The Buddha's Birthday Festival (K. Hwaje; Jp. Hana matsuri; lit. "Flower Festival"), as a joint Japanese-Korean Buddhist- and government-sponsored event in Korea, commenced in 1928 and continued to the end of Japan's colonial rule in 1945. During most of this period, it was the signature festival of the year. Hana matsuri celebrations in imperial Japan and colonial Korea were primarily political: they dovetailed with Japanese imperialist objectives and provided a cultural symbol that legitimated Japanese expansion.² At the same time, the reinvention and popularization of these festivals held special significance for Japanese and Korean Buddhists seeking to modernize the Buddhist tradition they shared with each other and with others in East Asia. Thus, the Buddha's Birthday Festival reflected the forces and ideas that compelled these two communities to reach, as Pierre Bourdieu wrote of social agents, "a practical mutual understanding (*collusio*)," even "despite the antagonism."³

This chapter examines how transnational and national, or global and local, forces brought about a unique discourse for the Buddha's Birthday Festival in colonial Korea. On the one hand, the very nature of this festival as cultural, ideological, and religious capital that was both universal and local, old and new, increased Korean Buddhism's usefulness to the government, as Gray Tuttle points out about the prominent Chinese Buddhist reformer Taixu's approach to Republican China, "mak[ing] the state dependent on Buddhism."⁴ As such, the colonial government granted significant support to ensure the continuity and popularity of the festival throughout the colonial period. Japanese Buddhists saw the festival as a way to prove their leadership as Buddhist modernists and to actualize their vision of establishing their Buddhism in a colonial land. As for Korean Buddhists, this festival and the state's sponsorship of it gave them an opportunity to reclaim their place in Korean society after centuries of marginalization during the Chosŏn dynasty. Following independence, Korean Buddhists made the festival their own, further reinventing its symbols and meanings.⁵

2. P'yŏn, "Hana matsuri," 169.

3. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 154.

4. Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 123.

5. In 2008, the Chogye order, the largest Buddhist denomination in South Korea, published *Ch'op'ail haengsa 100-yŏn* (A century of the April Eighth Ceremony) to provide a history of "the identity of the Lantern Festival" (p. 12). The book is a

In this chapter, I argue that Hana matsuri in colonial Korea should be considered not simply as an imposition of the colonizer on the native culture, but also as a complex, creative feature of transnational Korean Buddhism in the colonial context.

The development of Korea's Hana matsuri cannot be understood without taking into account the pan-Asian and transnational Buddhist discourse of the period. Especially for Korean Buddhism, the global context of Buddhist modernization is indispensable to our comprehension of why, despite the power differential, Korean and Japanese Buddhists willingly collaborated with each other and, more important, presented this festival as a common cultural and religious identity of their countries. In turn, the mobilization of Buddhists to promote the festival convinced the colonial government in Korea that the festival would be effective religious, cultural, and political capital for colonial governmentality. Historiography tends to depict the government as having enacted Hana matsuri in a top-down fashion,⁶ but in fact the government was responding to an opportunity presented by Korean and Japanese Buddhists. Thus, it is important to look back to the late nineteenth century to make sense of how Buddhists (and sympathizers) in Asian and Western countries joined together to create a modern Buddhism to counter the efforts of Christian missionaries and European

collection of one hundred years of news articles and pictures of the festival. In the preface, the editors pose the question: does the Lantern Festival of today have any connection to the Hana matsuri of the colonial period? However, in answering, the editors trace the present-day form of the Lantern Festival back to 1955, thereby excluding the significant influence of the colonial-era festival on the contemporary version. Although the editors provide a longer history of the festival, including its premodern forms, the book does not mention Hana matsuri celebrations in colonial Korea and moves quickly into detailing the postcolonial version of the Lantern Festival (pp. 13, 14, and 24).

6. For example, Japanese and Korean folklore scholar P'yŏn Muiyŏng argues in his recent articles that Hana matsuri celebrations in imperial Japan and colonial Korea were primarily political and thus dovetailed with Japan's nationalist and imperialist objectives, providing a legitimating, cultural symbol ("Hana matsuri," 169). P'yŏn declares that colonial Korea's Hana matsuri was merely a copy of the Japanese version ("Niteika ni okeru Chōsen no shigatsu yōka," 62). Though P'yŏn mentions response to Christianity as a nonpolitical motivation for this festival ("Niteika ni okeru Chōsen no shigatsu yōka," 60), he largely fails to locate the festival in the context of modern, global Buddhism.

imperialism, which in turn generated a new form of the Buddha's Birthday Festival. The movement began in colonial Sri Lanka.

The Buddha's Birthday Festival in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan Buddhism began modernizing itself in the mid-nineteenth century. The authority of the monastic-centered Sangha and superstitious practices were questioned, and Buddhism was recast as philosophical, rational, and scientific. Sri Lankan Buddhists responded to the rapid spread of Christianity by emulating and adapting Christian missionary practices. This included establishing Sunday schools and social welfare programs, performing wedding ceremonies, and propagating Buddhist teachings through publication. In this regard, Sri Lankan Buddhism, like other Buddhisms in Asia in the modern period, took on a form that scholars have termed "Protestant Buddhism."⁷ The rising interest among Buddhist reformers in reviving and reinventing the Buddha's Birthday Festival was integral to this Protestant Buddhist ethos.

The emergence of the festival as a shared Buddhist discourse also has its origins in the pan-Buddhist effort to find common ground by centralizing the figure of Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha. In the course of trying to rediscover the historical Buddha, Buddhist reformers sought to take control of the site of the Buddha's enlightenment at Bodh Gaya in northern India, which had been controlled by Hindu groups since the twelfth century. These efforts were spearheaded by a range of actors from the West and the East, including Western Orientalists, Buddhist sympathizers, and Asian Buddhist reformers from Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, China, and Japan. Of them, Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) had the greatest impact.

A lay Buddhist reformer born in Sri Lanka, Dharmapala worked closely with Olcott, one of the founders of the Theosophist Society and the first European/American to convert publicly to Buddhism.⁸ Despite their differences, Dharmapala and Olcott shared two objectives:

7. Gombrich and Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*; Prothero, "Henry Steel Olcott."

8. Prothero, "Henry Steel Olcott," 284.

to keep Christianity at bay and to revive an enervated Buddhism. Influenced by European Orientalist scholarship, both of them believed that the Buddhisms of different countries could be united and energized by establishing the centrality of the historical Buddha.⁹ In 1881, Olcott began working with Sinhalese Buddhist monks to petition the British government to restore the Buddha's Birthday (known as Wesak,¹⁰ or Vesak) as a public holiday: he called it "the Buddhist Christmas."¹¹ The British colonial authorities had discontinued Wesak in 1815 in an effort to constrain native culture in colonial Ceylon. Christian missionaries had pushed for this policy as well. Throughout the late nineteenth century, colonial authorities acceded to the demands of Christian missionaries that colonial authorities dissociate themselves from Buddhism. The colonial government also gave privileges to the Christians through financial support for churches, schools, and social welfare programs. They gradually realized that it had been a mistake to marginalize Buddhism, however, and that it would be politically advantageous to integrate Ceylon's native religion into the colonial apparatus. Seizing on this change in disposition to push his petition forward, Olcott took the leading monastic reformer of the day, Hikkaduve Sumangala (1827–1911), to meet with the governor of Ceylon, Arthur Charles Hamilton-Gordon (served 1883–90), to discuss Wesak in more detail.¹² Before this meeting, Olcott sent a petition to the governor asking that the birthday of Lord Buddha, the day of the full moon in May, be proclaimed a full holiday for Buddhist government employees, "as the sacred days of Mussulmen, Hindus, and Parsees, are officially recognized holidays in India, for employees of those several faiths." Olcott further asserted that "the Buddhists, who are always most loyal subjects, are compelled to either work on this, their most holy day of the year, or lose their day's pay."¹³

9. Jaffe, "Buddhist Material Culture" and "Seeking Śākyamuni"; Snodgrass, "Defining Modern Buddhism"; Penner, *Rediscovering the Buddha*, 123–42.

10. Wesak is also a celebration of the Buddha's enlightenment and his death. However, in the context of the modern revitalization of Wesak in Sri Lanka, its celebration of the Buddha's birth was a dominant discourse among Sinhalese Buddhists.

11. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 73.

12. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 73.

13. "Buddha's Birthday in Ceylon," *Theosophist* 9/106 (July 1888): 624.

Cognizant of this momentum, the governor accepted Olcott's petition on behalf of a number of reformers. Through the efforts of Olcott and the Theosophical Society,¹⁴ Wesak was reinstated and designated a public holiday in 1884 after six decades of abolition.¹⁵ The Sinhalese Buddhist community began planning a large-scale celebration, modernizing the event and fundamentally changing its nature and structure by using symbols and rituals that emulated those of Christianity.¹⁶ On April 28, 1885, Wesak was celebrated in the presence of Sinhalese and Western Buddhists with Buddhist carols by Dharmapala,¹⁷ cards, parades, gifts, and other elements.¹⁸ Prominently displayed was a Buddhist flag "invented" by Olcott¹⁹ to be akin to "a cross in Christianity."²⁰ Olcott characterized the flag as "a universal symbol of the Buddhist religion"²¹ and "a powerful reinforcement" of his "Buddhist Catechism."²² Both Olcott and Dharmapala viewed Wesak not only as a Sri Lankan Buddhist festival but also as an event for Buddhists around the world. On their first visit to Japan in 1889, they introduced the flag, carols, cards, and more; these were soon incorporated into the fore-runners of Hana matsuri.

Dharmapala was influenced by other Orientalists who contributed to his growing interest in the historical Buddha. Through his relationship with Olcott, he met Edwin Arnold (1832–1904), who in 1879 had published an influential, lengthy poem on the life of Śākyamuni titled *The Light of Asia*. Deeply inspired by Arnold, who later asked Buddhists to recover the sacred site of Bodhi Gaya where the Buddha reached

14. "Literary Notes," *Path* 3 (1888): 231.

15. Kemper, *Rescued*, 377.

16. For more details on the new elements in Wesak attributable to the influence of Christianity, see Somaratna, "Christian Impact."

17. *Maha Bodhi* 98/99 (1891): 44.

18. Somaratna, "Christian Impact." According to *Overland Ceylon Observer*, they used Chinese and Japanese lanterns for the festivals (May 26, 1891, 567; May 7, 1890, 473; also *Ceylon Observer*, May 28, 1896). Although it is unclear whether East Asian lanterns were introduced to Sri Lanka at this time, these articles show that Sri Lanka was already connected to East Asia through trade. For example, on May 11, 1888, three Chinese ships bound from Plymouth to Hong Kong arrived in Colombo (*Overland Ceylon Observer*, May 11, 1888).

19. *Overland Ceylon Observer*, May 23, 1891.

20. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 351.

21. *Theosophist* 12 (1891): vi.

22. Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves*, 351.

enlightenment, Dharmapala made a pilgrimage to India in 1891. Shocked to see that the Bodh Gaya temple had become a Hindu temple, Dharmapala established the Maha Bodhi Society in 1891 following Arnold's suggestion,²³ and he began publication of its journal. Then he launched a vigorous decades-long international effort to reclaim the site as a "Mecca" or "Jerusalem" for Buddhists. (The effort to restore the Bodh Gaya temple was stalled by resistance from Hindu followers and by the colonial situation; Buddhists did not gain partial control over the site until 1944.)²⁴ In collaboration with other reform-minded Buddhists, Dharmapala convened the First International Buddhist Conference at Bodh Gaya on October 31, 1891.²⁵ Two years later, he was invited to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, thereby establishing him as a Buddhist figure of international renown. In 1896, Dharmapala also presided over the first Wesak ceremony to be held in Calcutta, where excerpts from Arnold's *Light of Asia* were read in the presence of British and Indian dignitaries.²⁶ On his third trip to the United States, in 1897, Dharmapala presided over San Francisco's first Wesak, which drew some four hundred people.²⁷

By the end of the nineteenth century, Wesak had become a widely celebrated national holiday in Sri Lanka, a symbol of Buddhism's newfound dominance. An English-language newspaper reported on the large-scale Wesak festival in 1896 as follows:

The Buddhists of Colombo observed today as the Wesak holiday in honor of the anniversary of Prince Siddhartha's attaining Buddhahood. . . . Last evening two Buddhist processions paraded the streets, and at night there were several carol parties carrying illuminated transparencies representing Prince Siddhartha &c. The carol[ers] are to parade the streets tonight also. Last night many of the Buddhist residences had grand illuminations, and the illuminations are to be continued tonight on an equally grand scale. Several special trains ran today for the

23. *Budh-Gaya Temple Case*, 17.

24. For more detail, see Geary, *Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*.

25. *Maha Bodhi* 98, 99 (1891): 194.

26. *Academy* 50 (1896): 50.

27. Seager, *World's Parliament*, 157.

convenience of Buddhists attending the Kelaniya Temple. The passenger traffic was very heavy.²⁸

This kind of development greatly alarmed Christian missionaries, who considered the state-sanctioned Buddhist holiday to be “one of the greatest hindrances to the Gospel” in the British colony.²⁹ The journals of missionaries reveal what they thought of all of this. Walter D. Hankinson (1867–1944) of the Baptist Missionary Society said that the “revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka” was part of “a long list of imitations” in “a strong spirit of opposition to Christianity.” Hankinson went on to say that this revival demanded from Christian missionaries “a very high standard of missionary life and work and teaching, as well as a revision of [missionary] methods.”³⁰ Some missionaries were alarmed by Buddhism’s resurgence and began to change their strategies in response. But others went so far as to encourage Christians to protest the Buddhists’ elaborate displays and processions in the main part of the capital city. For instance, a weekly English-language newspaper, the *Catholic Messenger*, featured a scathing review of the Buddha’s Birthday procession in order to incite its Christian readers:

Wesak with its manifold annoyance to quietly disposed people is soon to dawn upon us again and the event cannot but raise anxiety being calculated to engender, as it has so often done before disturbance, riots and bloodshed. It is only the noisy section of the Buddhist community that is responsible for the ridiculous Wesak displays, which are purely an invention of late years and due in no small share to Government patronage. . . . [Wesak displays] are got up not for the honour of Buddhism . . . but in order to engender bad feeling towards Christians and Christianity. This being the objective of the Wesak decorations and processions, all Christians, no matter to what denomination they belong, should set their face determinedly against them. . . . In whatever streets in Colombo they are the majority they should petition the Mayor against processions being allowed to pass through them, and if there be churches in the streets they have a double right to protest.³¹

28. “The Wesak Festival,” *Overland Ceylon Observer*, May 26, 1896.

29. *Thomas County cat.*, January 17, 1889, 6.

30. *Sunday at Home* 42 (1895): 340.

31. *Overland Ceylon Observer*, May 16, 1894, 529.

Fully cognizant of Christians' frustration and increasingly confident of the restored position of Buddhism in Sri Lankan society, Dharmapala later invited them, perhaps teasingly, to join in Buddhism's "day of universal rejoicing."³²

Dharmapala, Olcott, Sri Lankan monks, and Western Buddhist sympathizers worked together to generate a new Buddhist identity, pride, and power in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the revitalization of the Buddha's Birthday Festival along with the effort to reclaim the Bodhi Gaya temple complex brought Buddhists from across Asian countries together, kindling a sense of a global Buddhist community. The idea of a festival for the Buddha's Birthday spread rapidly throughout Asia. Japanese Buddhists became especially interested in establishing the Buddha's Birthday Festival for themselves.

Hana Matsuri in Tokyo

Unlike Sri Lanka, Japan was not under colonial rule, but by the late nineteenth century Japanese Buddhists feared Western imperialism and Christianity. At first, the Meiji government did not see Buddhism as useful to the creation of an affluent and militarily strong modern nation. Buddhism was viewed as a feudal and superstitious religion that was antithetical to modernization and Westernization. Thus, the Meiji government adopted a policy that sought to eradicate Buddhism (*hai-butsu kishaku*), elevate Shintōism as the state religion, and modernize what remained of Buddhism by decriminalizing the practices of clerical marriage and meat eating (*nikujiki saitai*).³³ In the face of these challenges, Japanese Buddhist reformers and intellectuals strove to find a way to turn their tradition into a modern religion that would be compatible with science, reason, and modern nation building. Although the West and Christianity became dominant frames of reference, Japanese Buddhists' close contact and collaboration with other Asian Buddhists and Western Buddhist sympathizers were essential to

32. *Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* 22/11 (October 1913): 224.

33. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs*; Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman*; Hardacre, *Shintō and the State*.

creating modern Japanese Buddhism.³⁴ These new relationships also gave Japanese Buddhists a pan-Asian Buddhist identity.

Like other Buddhists in Asia, Japanese Buddhists emphasized the centrality of the historical figure of Śākyamuni. Beginning in the 1870s, a dozen or so Japanese Buddhist priests embarked on pilgrimages to India, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand to find the authentic, original teachings of Śākyamuni.³⁵ Kitabatake Tōryū (1820–1907) and Kurosaki Yūji visited Bodh Gaya in 1883 on their way back to Japan from Europe. Kitabatake later gave talks about his experiences in India, inspiring Shaku Kōzen (1849–1924) and Shaku Sōen (1859–1919) to travel to Sri Lanka in 1886 and 1887 respectively. Both of them befriended key Buddhist reformers, including Dharmapala and Olcott. Four years later, Kōzen was ordained as a Theravada monk with a new Dharma name, Gunaratna Thera. Kōzen accompanied Dharmapala on Dharmapala's first trip to India and, along with the priest Tokuzawa Chiezō (1871–1908), who had been collaborating with Olcott in India, cofounded the Maha Bodhi Society and its journal. Kōzen returned to Japan after seven years in Sri Lanka and India, and assiduously championed the prioritization of Śākyamuni over other Buddhist deities and the popularization of the Wesak.³⁶

Japanese Buddhists also invited Western and Asian Buddhist reformers to visit Japan in order to bring about a paradigm shift for Japanese Buddhism. On February 9, 1889, with an invitation from Japanese Buddhist youth groups, Olcott and Dharmapala landed in Japan and during the next four months—107 days all together—gave seventy-five public talks to 187,500 people.³⁷ Olcott's talks largely revolved around the danger of Christianity, Buddhists' duty to propagate their religion, and the unity, under Śākyamuni, of all Buddhists regardless of their sectarian differences. He met with many key Japanese politicians, including the prime minister and various departmental ministers of the government, all of whom received him with respect.³⁸ At each event, Olcott and Dharmapala displayed the Buddhist flag they had designed, and it was soon adopted in Japan as well. They also

34. Jaffe, "Buddhist Material Culture" and "Seeking Śākyamuni."

35. As well as Korea, China, Burma, and Tibet.

36. Jaffe, "Seeking Śākyamuni," 89.

37. Murphet, *Yankee Beacon*, 149.

38. Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism*, 169–70.

inspired Japanese Buddhists to establish organizations similar to the YMCA and YWCA called Shin bukkyō seinenkai, YMBAs (Young Men's Buddhist Associations) and YWBAs (Young Women's Buddhist Associations). These two organizations became key in organizing Japan's Buddha's Birthday Festival several years later.³⁹

In premodern times, the Buddha's Birthday in Japan had been celebrated at courts and temples separately, as it had been in Sri Lanka, China, and Korea. But, in the early Meiji, the custom began to change. Following Japan's adoption of the Gregorian (solar) calendar in 1872, the eighth day of the fourth lunar month was replaced with the Gregorian date of April 8. One of the first modernized forms of the Buddha's Birthday Festival was organized in 1892 by the YMBA, three years after Olcott's first visit to Japan. Although some Buddhist priests participated, these events were largely organized by youth groups without the institutional backing of sectarian Buddhism.⁴⁰ During these early years, the youth groups began to hold their own ceremonies separately from temples but could not unify their efforts to hold one large festival; different university campuses and private institutes held their own events. Some celebrations took place sporadically in different locations in Tokyo.

In an effort to make the holiday more transsectarian and international, in 1902 the Japanese Buddhist youth groups invited Dharmapala to the festival. Also present were Indian students studying in Japan, who augmented the festivities with performances of Indian music. Dharmapala gave a congratulatory speech.⁴¹ This version of the Buddha's Birthday Festival, run by youth groups and with no official recognition from the sects, ceased in 1903 after eleven years of development.

When Buddhist youth groups revived the festival in 1915, they tried to secure the government's financial and administrative support, but the government declined to participate.⁴² Because of the government's cold reception, the organizers of the 1916 celebration proceeded more assertively.⁴³ This time, leading Buddhist priests from

39. Murphet, *Yankee Beacon*, 146–47.

40. P'yōn, "Hana matsuri," 147–49.

41. *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 1902.

42. *Chūgai nippō*, April 8, 1916.

43. *Chūgai nippō*, April 8, 1916.

different sects—such as Andō Reigan (1870–1943), Kitano Kenpō (1842–1933), and Shaku Sōen—joined together with youth groups. They then drew in traditional Buddhist sects to establish the Association of Hana matsuri of the Tokyo Alliances. Andō, a priest of the Ōtani Hongan Temple and one of the cofounders of the Buddhist youth groups in the 1890s, was especially active. He introduced some elements from the Sri Lankan version of the Buddha’s Birthday celebration into the Japanese version.⁴⁴

The term “hana matsuri,” which Andō and others popularized as referring to the Buddha’s Birthday Festival, had its origins in 1901 in Berlin.⁴⁵ There, Japanese residents led by Anesaki Masaharu (1873–1949) and Chikatsumi Jōkan (1870–1941) organized a Buddha’s Birthday event. Anesaki had previously been involved in the Buddha’s Birthday Festival in Japan and had worked closely with Buddhist youth groups. Chikatsumi wrote in his memoir that in 1901 the Buddha’s Birthday, on April 8, coincided closely with the Western date of Easter (Ostern) that year, April 7. He noted that, in Germany, Easter was also called Blumenfest (Flower Festival). Chikatsumi wrote, “The celebration dates for the two great religions of West and East happened to meet each other.”⁴⁶ Chikatsumi and eighteen other Japanese scholars, diplomats, and army officials organized a special Buddha’s Birthday Festival and named it Blumenfest, translated into Japanese as Hana matsuri. This term was introduced by Anesaki and others when they returned to Japan, and it spread quickly among Buddhists there.⁴⁷

The 1916 Hana matsuri, held at Hibiya Park in Tokyo, was the first Buddha’s Birthday celebration that was both a transsectarian⁴⁸ and a lay-monastic collaboration.⁴⁹ In addition, like the 1885 Wesak in Sri Lanka, the 1916 Hana matsuri ushered in many modern traits of Buddhist festivals in Japan. The most conspicuous was an air show in the morning: aviator Art Smith (1890–1926) flew an American plane on

44. In 1941, he was planning to publish a book titled *Hana matsuri shi* (History of Flower Festivals) (*Yomiuri shinbun*, June 11, 1941). It is unclear whether or not the plan was followed through.

45. “Hana matsuri to shinjidai no sōi,” *Zenbutsu tsushin*, February 1960, 1.

46. Iwaya, *Yōyō miyage*, 176.

47. Iwaya, *Yōyō miyage*, 179.

48. Rev. K. Murakami, “Flower Festival.”

49. *Chūgai nippō*, April 14, 1916.

behalf of the event.⁵⁰ A Sri Lankan-style altar for bathing a baby Buddha, designed by Sri Lankan students in Japan and Shaku Kōzen, was installed at the site. The event was notably international, with Buddhist clergy from India, Mongolia, and other Asian countries participating. The transectarian presentation of this event led the government to take an interest and become involved. All the participants put carnations on their coats, military and children's bands played Buddhist music, and the celebration ended with a calling of the name of the emperor three times.⁵¹ It was one of the largest public festivals in modern Tokyo, and, rejoicing in their success, all Buddhist sects agreed that it should be held in the same format annually. The popularity of this festival caught Christian missionaries' attention. Lampooning Japanese Buddhists as imitators of Christianity, *Woman's Work*, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society journal, remarked of the 1916 Hana matsuri that "they even had a Buddhist Christmas!"⁵² In 1919, colonial Taiwan began to hold its own Hana matsuri in Taipei in a style similar to the one held in Tokyo.⁵³

Over time, Hana matsuri in Japan became larger, more elaborate, and more entertaining. By 1924, the event had become large enough that it required more space than Tokyo's Hibiya Park. The event was instead structured around a long parade that began in Asakusa and ended in Hibiya Park, roughly an eight-mile distance. The parade featured ornamental floats, dancing, and singing. Tens of thousands of people lined the parade route. Fireworks went off, and flower petals were scattered along the way. Commercial initiatives also accompanied the event, with shops and department stores offering bargains and sales. The following year, the first four airplanes owned by Japan "scattered innumerable petals of colored paper lotus flowers."⁵⁴ Hana matsuri became Tokyo's signature festival. Soon other major cities put on

50. In 1922, one of three civilian aviators who flew a plane to celebrate the Hana matsuri festival was a Korean, An Ch'angnam (1901–30) (*Yomiuri shinbun*, April 9, 1922). An studied and received his pilot's license at an aviation school in Japan in 1921. He became the first Korean to fly over the Korean peninsula. He died in a plane accident in China in 1930 (*Tong'a ilbo*, April 12, 1930).

51. *Chūgai nippō*, April 14, 1916.

52. *Woman's Work* 31 (1916): 118.

53. *Taiwan nichinichi shinpō*, April 6, 1919; *Nanying fojiaohui huibao* 7/2 (1929): 88–89.

54. *Young East* 1/11 (April 1926): 370–71.

their own Hana matsuri, making the Buddha's Birthday a national festival. Each year, more Buddhists and foreign dignitaries attended, giving Hana matsuri international stature. It was, as Judith Snodgrass terms it, "performing Buddhist modernity."⁵⁵

Japanese Buddhists had an opportunity to expose other Asian Buddhist countries to Hana matsuri at the second Eastern Asian Buddhist Conference,⁵⁶ which took place in November 1925 in Tokyo. Chinese, Korean, Taiwanese, and Western Buddhists attended. The delegates created a manifesto for pan-Asian and global Buddhist cooperation with the goal of achieving "the Buddhacization of the world." They declared that, "at the day of the birthday of the great saint Śākyamuni, all Buddhists shall hold the Buddha's Birthday festival in unison and make it a custom of the world."⁵⁷ After the great success of this festival, Japanese Buddhists lobbied for other Asian countries to adopt their own versions of it. Although most of the representatives at the conference agreed with this idea in principle, there was disagreement about the date to hold the event. Japanese Buddhists suggested April 8, determined by the Gregorian calendar. However, Taixu, despite agreeing with the world trend of using the Gregorian calendar, advocated for the lunar date—roughly a month later than April 8—that was being followed by Chinese and Korean Buddhists.⁵⁸

Debates on the necessity of transitioning from the lunar to a Gregorian calendar had in fact begun as early as 1913 in China. That year, Taixu had expressed his position on this issue in an article commemorating the 2,940th anniversary of the Buddha's birth. His stance was inevitable given that Republican China, established in 1911, had adopted the international Gregorian calendar system, following the global trend. Because China had followed the lunar calendar, the eighth day of the fourth lunar month would generally fall around Gregorian May 12, more than a month later than April 8 on the Gregorian calendar. However, since the Chinese custom of observing the lunar calendar could not be changed suddenly, Taixu thought that the new calendar should be accepted for tracking the Buddha's Birthday but that the lunar calendar should also be respected. He cited Japan as an example

55. Snodgrass, "Performing Buddhist Modernity."

56. The first was held in China during the previous year, 1924.

57. *Young East* 1/1 (June 1925).

58. *Pulgyo* 18 (1925): 20.

of a nation that recognized both dates (in fact, Japanese Buddhists predominantly used the Gregorian calendar date of April 8).⁵⁹ Taixu published an almost identical article ten years later, in 1923, when Chinese Buddhists celebrated the Buddha's 2,950th birthday.⁶⁰ Maintaining his flexible position, Taixu suggested at the Tokyo conference that both dates be recognized and that each country follow its own custom, which undermined the Japanese Buddhists' hopes of finding agreement on one date for all Buddhist countries. This discord notwithstanding, the delegates' promotion of the Buddha's Birthday as a pan-Asian holiday is a defining element of Buddhist modernity.⁶¹

In emulation of the Tokyo Hana matsuri, Taixu also promoted a public festival, the first of its kind in China, in accordance with the lunar calendar, the following year.⁶² However, the festival in China did not achieve the scale of Japan's. Although Buddhist associations and temples organized various events for the festival, including public talks and stage performances, they did not incorporate the parade of colorful floats that one would witness in Japan or Sri Lanka. One distinctive feature of the celebration in China was that Buddhist leaders requested that central and local governments not execute anyone in prison and that business owners not slaughter any animals on this day.⁶³ Also distinctive to the Chinese version, a symbolic Buddhist ritual held at the event involved releasing animals to bring peace and compassion to the world.⁶⁴

To return to Hana matsuri in Japan in 1925, Japanese Buddhist modernizers lobbied the government to make April 8 a national holiday in Japan, as Sri Lankan Buddhists had done for Wesak.⁶⁵ Although this effort was unsuccessful, it attests to the momentum that Japanese Buddhists felt at the time. The governmental authorities also recognized that Buddhism mattered in imperial Japan. Japan's central and municipal governments fully embraced Hana matsuri as furthering the image of Japan as the political and religious leader of the East.⁶⁶ For example,

59. *Fojiao yuebao*, May 1913, 1–4.

60. *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan* 2 (1923): 10–13.

61. *Pulgyo* 18 (1925): 20.

62. *Chūgai nippō*, May 30, 1926.

63. *Haichaoyin* 7 (July 1926): 3; *Shen bao*, May 6, 1923, and May 10, 1926.

64. *Haichaoyin* 7 (July 1926): 3.

65. *Yomiuri shinbun*, January 17, 1926; *Chūgai nippō*, December 26, 1926.

66. Snodgrass, "Performing Buddhist Modernity."

in 1931, King Prajadhipok (1893–1941) and Queen Rambai Barni (1904–1984) of Siam (Thailand) attended the Buddha’s Birthday Festival at Hibiya Park, adding to the prominence of this festival in international diplomatic relations.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, a similar but more complicated discourse about modern Buddhism was taking form around the festival in colonial Korea.

Transnational Contact and the Buddha’s Birthday Festival in Colonial Seoul

In the late 1800s, Korean Buddhism, through increased contact with the global community and freed from the suppression of the Chosŏn dynasty, began undergoing its own process of modernization. A significant number of Korean Buddhist monks studied in Japan and China, absorbing ideas about modernity and reform. Like the leading Buddhist reformers of Japan and Sri Lanka, the Korean monks Han Yong’un (1879–1944), Kim T’aehŭp (1889–1989), Paek Sŏng’uk (1897–1981), Kim Pŏmnin (1899–1964), and Yi Yŏngjae⁶⁸ (1900–1927), among others, emphasized the centrality of Śākyamuni and reconfigured the institutional, doctrinal, and ritual aspects of Korean Buddhism to make it compatible with modern society. Han traveled to Manchuria and subsequently to Japan in 1908. Kim T’aehŭp graduated from Tōyō University in 1921 and from Nihon University in 1923. Paek went to France in 1920 to study at the University of Paris and in 1925 earned a degree in Western philosophy at the University of Würzburg in Germany. Kim Pŏmnin went to France and received a degree in philosophy from the University of Paris in 1926. Both Paek and Kim Pŏmnin later became lecturers at the Buddhist seminary in Seoul. Yi first studied at the Imperial University in Tokyo, followed by a scholarly trip in 1925 to Sri Lanka to learn about what he thought would be a more authentic version of Buddhism. During his studies, he wrote articles for a Korean Buddhist journal introducing the customs, culture, and religions of Sri Lanka. In 1926, along with his English-educated Kandyan teacher U. B.

67. *Mid-Pacific Magazine*, June 1931, 13.

68. He also sent a Wesak postcard that was featured in the same journal (*Pulgyo* 27 [September 1926]).

Dolapihilla⁶⁹ and his American friend A. Pauer,⁷⁰ he attended the Wesak ceremony held in Kandy, the old capital city of Sri Lanka, and wrote a detailed article about the festival for a Buddhist journal in Korea.⁷¹ Unfortunately, his studies were cut short when he died suddenly from disease in Sri Lanka. These monks and others wrote extensively on the changes in Buddhism in other Asian countries, Orientalist scholarship on Buddhism, and the Bodh Gaya reclamation. These writings were read widely by other Korean Buddhists, creating a broad knowledge of global trends among the monastic community.

Korean Buddhists were also deeply influenced by their contact with Dharmapala. He accepted an invitation from Japanese Buddhists to visit on a trip in 1913, stopping by Seoul on his way to Manchuria. Interestingly, the Korean Buddhists mistakenly believed that Dharmapala was Indian and a monk, most likely because of the ochre-colored robes he wore as a lay Buddhist who had taken the vows of homelessness.⁷² (Japanese and Chinese Buddhists likewise thought that Dharmapala was a celibate monastic.) Korean and Japanese Buddhists educated Dharmapala about the history of Korean Buddhism, including its centuries of persecution by Confucianists and banishment from the capital. Dharmapala later wrote that, because “the Sangha were tyrannized by a dynasty of usurpers”⁷³ and “Buddhism [in Korea] declined,” therefore “Korean civilization went down.”⁷⁴ Korean Buddhists also proudly

69. Ratnatunga, *They Turned the Tide*, 35. In his letter, Yi misspelled his teacher's name as U. B. Dolapihina (*Pulgyo* 29 [June 1926]: 37).

70. I was not able to identify A. Pauer. Yi just writes he was studying the same subject, namely, Pali and Buddhism (*Pulgyo* 29 [June 1926]: 37).

71. *Pulgyo* 29 (June 1926): 36–41.

72. Dharmapala had worn white robes until 1895 when he began donning ochre robes. See Kemper, *Rescued*, 231.

73. *Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* 22/11 (November 1913): 234.

74. *Diary*, August 21, 1913, in Kemper, *Rescued*, 125. This sentiment about the fate of Korean Buddhism was also shared by two Indians who visited colonial Korea in the 1930s. The Indian Buddhist monk Rahul Sankrityayana (1893–1963) wrote, based on observations during his visit in 1935, that “Korean Buddhism has a glorious history, but the country faced incessant invasion from China and had to wage relentless struggle in order to maintain its independence. Buddhism shaped the trajectory of Korean civilization, but unlike Japan, Korean people faced tumults and travails. . . . Deep in their heart, the Korean people still treasure their Buddhist legacies” (quoted from Mohan, “India's Buddhist Linkage,” 20). Likewise, the Indian historian Kalidas Nag (1892–1966), who visited Korea in 1938, wrote that “Korean Buddhism has been

shared the view that they were succeeding in restoring Korean Buddhism. Thus, Dharmapala wrote in his journal, “for the first time in Korean [*sic*] history, after three centuries of banishment, a Buddhist monastery stands in the heart of Seoul.” However, Dharmapala attributed this modern development not to Korean Buddhism but “to the Japanese Buddhist activities.”⁷⁵ For his part, as early as 1889, Dharmapala had expressed his wish that Japan “should civilize [Korea],” and, on witnessing Japan’s full colonial control of Korea during his visit in 1913, he enthused, “My wish is fulfilled.”⁷⁶ Contrary to his antagonism toward British colonial rule over Ceylon and India, he exalted Japan’s colonial dominance in Asia, writing in his 1925 diary that, “without Japan, Asia is a funeral house.”⁷⁷

During his visit, Dharmapala gave several talks to Korean monks and Buddhists, sharing the activities of the Maha Bodhi Society and outlining some pressing issues for Buddhism (such as recovering the Bodhi Gaya site). At a welcome party, Dharmapala was quoted as saying that he had found a stash of Śākyamuni’s *śarīra* (relics) in India and had been waiting to entrust one of the pieces to the right group. Wishing for the prosperity of Korean Buddhism, Dharmapala gave Korea one of the *śarīra*. He claimed, in giving this relic to Korean Buddhists, that “it is the good Karma of the Sinhalese that to them is given the chance of unifying the Buddhist Faith.”⁷⁸ The Korean monks later erected a stupa at Kakhwangsa (Kakhwang Propagation Hall), the central administrative headquarters of Korean Buddhism, and enshrined the *śarīra* in it. The opening ceremony of the stupa was followed by a three-day exhibition.⁷⁹

in a very perilous state ever since the year 1472, when the king cleared the capital, Seoul, of Buddhist bonzes and temples. It was only in the early years of the present century that the attitude of the government changed. . . . As we have seen, some effort is being made at a revival of [Korean Buddhism]. On the whole, however, the religion is still in a rather moribund condition in Korea” (also quoted from Mohan, “India’s Buddhist Linkage,” 25).

75. *Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* 22/11 (November 1913): 235.

76. *Diary*, August 19, 1913, in Kemper, *Rescued*, 125.

77. Curuge, *Dharmapala Lipi*, 52, and *Diary*, June 27, 1925, quoted from Kemper, *Rescued*, 116.

78. *Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* 22/11 (November 1913): 235.

79. *Maeil sinbo*, August 23 and October 8, 1913; Yi Nünghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa*, 1016. It was exhibited again in 1923 (*Chosŏn ilbo*, October 19, 1923).

Dharmapala had an intriguing interaction with the prominent Korean master Paek Yongsŏng (1864–1940) during his visit. At a welcome party hosted by Korean Buddhist leaders, Paek, through an interpreter, asked Dharmapala how many years had passed since the Buddha's birth. "It has been 2,500 years," answered Dharmapala, reflecting the number that South and Southeast Asian Buddhist countries were following. However, Paek corrected him by giving the number that East Asian countries had been using: "It is not true! It has been 2,940 years." He continued, "There are conflicting theories in the sutras surrounding the birthday of the Buddha, but the historical evidence is obvious and it also complies with the contents of the sutras. Even though there exists the theory that you have just mentioned, that theory cannot be trusted."⁸⁰ A week later, on August 18, at a talk he gave to the Chinese Buddhist community, Dharmapala continued to use the 2,500-year number.⁸¹ The moment reveals how the issue of chronology and calendars was a major point of conversation and contention in the effort to modernize Buddhists and create a unified vision for Buddhism across Asia.

Despite this uncomfortable moment between Paek and Dharmapala, Dharmapala nonetheless had a major influence on Paek, which also had a long-term impact on Korean Buddhism. Paek was inspired by Dharmapala's programs, such as the Maha Bodhi Society, its journal, and the effort to recover the Maha Bodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya.⁸² Paek went on to establish Taegakkyo (the Korean translation of Maha Bodhi Society) in 1921 with the mission to bring about a new form of Buddhism in Korea. Taegakkyo also published a number of journals in the same vein as the Maha Bodhi Society's,⁸³ and it sent missionaries and established temples in Japan and Manchuria.

After Dharmapala's departure, Korean Buddhist leaders at the central office remained in contact with Dharmapala and the Maha Bodhi Society in India. The office would send its monthly journal to Dharmapala, and, owing to this ongoing contact, in 1925 the Maha Bodhi Society

80. Kim T'aehŭp, *Yongsŏng Sŏnsa ōrok*, 27.

81. *Maha-Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* 22/10 (October 1913): 221.

82. During his study trip in Sri Lanka, Yi Yŏngjae also had contact with the Maha Bodhi Society. During his trip to Kandy to observe Wesak, he stayed at the society's branch office for several days.

83. Masŏng, "Han'guk pulgyo."

sent a fundraising letter to the Korean Buddhist central office. They were attempting to garner Korean Buddhists' support for Dharmapala's movement to restore the sacred sites of Buddhism in India, including Bodh Gaya. The letter stressed that monetary donations had been pouring in from Western Buddhists to restore the sites from the damage done in the attacks by Śaivites (worshippers of the Hindu god Shiva) and Muslims. It urged Korean Buddhists to make donations to the society and provided bank information for the campaign.⁸⁴

Dharmapala also sent the central office a personal letter dated March 25, 1933.⁸⁵ In it, he thanked Korean Buddhist leaders for having sent him a copy of the journal of Korean Buddhism, *Pulgyo*. However, he expressed his regret, too, that "there is nobody who can understand its content" and recommended that the editor include "a section in English in the journal" so that he could understand and learn about Korean Buddhism. Dharmapala also mentioned his memorable 1913 trip to Korea and inquired about what had happened to the Buddha's relic that he had bequeathed to them. He was curious to know whether they had built a temple to enshrine it as they had promised. (They had enshrined it in the newly built Kakhwang Propagation Hall. In 1930, they erected a stupa in front of the hall and stored the relic inside.) Then Dharmapala moved on to the topic of the state of Buddhism in India. He deplored the fact that, "seven hundred years ago, Muslim invaders destroyed Buddhism. . . . [Ever since,] Indian people forgot about our lord Buddha. . . . I was determined to revitalize the Dharma on this soil again and have been working hard in a country where Brahmanism, Islam, and Christianity dominate."⁸⁶ He reminded Korean Buddhists that the Bodh Gaya "belongs to Korean, Japanese, Chinese . . . and other Buddhists" but that it illegitimately "is under the occupation of Śaivites who are daily desecrating the holy site." He concluded his letter by asking for Korean Buddhist support for his movement and encouraging them to make a pilgrimage to the sacred sites in India.⁸⁷

Unfortunately, Dharmapala passed away a month after he wrote the letter. The Korean Buddhist journal *Pulgyo* featured a translated article titled "A Giant Star of Indian Buddhism, Master Dharmapala,

84. *Pulygo* 14 (September 1925): 15–16.

85. *Pulygo* 107 (June 1933): 58.

86. *Pulygo* 107 (June 1933): 58.

87. *Pulygo* 107 (June 1933): 58.

Passes Away” and added that Dharmapala “had not an insignificant connection with Korean Buddhism.” The journal also dedicated a eulogy poem commemorating his steadfast encouragement of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Buddhists to make a concerted effort to reclaim sacred Buddhist sites (including the Buddha’s birthplace, Lumbini) and ultimately to revitalize Buddhism both in India and around the world.⁸⁸

Korea’s Indigenous Version of the Buddha’s Birthday

In Korea, the Buddha’s Birthday was traditionally, in Robert Buswell’s words, “the highlight of the Buddhist ceremonial year.”⁸⁹ It was celebrated with rituals such as lighting lanterns, reading sutras, and inviting monks for meals. The Buddha’s Birthday was just one of many Buddhist festivals, three of which were lantern festivals. These festivals evolved during the Koryŏ dynasty and were state-sponsored occasions aimed at unifying the country and praying for the welfare of the king and his family.⁹⁰ Because they were state festivals, the court determined the dates for all of them. The festival specifically for the Buddha’s birth, which was set for the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, emerged toward the end of the Koryŏ dynasty and became fixed during the Chosŏn.⁹¹ Despite the anti-Buddhist policies of Chosŏn, the 4/8 lantern festivals survived, whereas the festivals on other dates had all but disappeared by the middle of the Chosŏn period.⁹² The defacement of Buddhism during the Chosŏn era took its toll. The 4/8 lantern festival lost its original purpose of celebrating the Buddha’s birthday and became essentially a holiday for children. Families attended public festivals in Seoul and Kaesŏng to light lanterns, pray for the welfare of their families, and entertain themselves in major commercial districts. Nevertheless, during the precolonial period, celebrations were held in major cities such as Kaesŏng and P’yŏngyang (capitals of previous

88. *Pulyo* 107 (June 1933): 58.

89. Buswell, *Zen Monastic Experience*, 43.

90. Kim Jongmyung, *Han’guk chungsae*; P’yŏn, *Ch’op’ail minsongnon*; Vermeersch, *Power of the Buddhas*.

91. Kim Jongmyung, *Han’guk chungsae*, 129; P’yŏn, *Ch’op’ail minsongnon*, 50.

92. P’yŏn, *Ch’op’ail minsongnon*, 37.

dynasties)⁹³ as well as Seoul.⁹⁴ Throngs of people, figuratively described in newspapers as “people-mountains and a people-sea” filled the streets to participate in the Lantern Assembly (Yöndünghoe), which at that time was only loosely associated with the Buddha’s birth in the popular imagination. The holiday was also a major shopping day, and people flooded commercial districts to buy toys for children and lanterns to decorate their homes. Thus, even though the policies of the neo-Confucian government were unfavorable toward Buddhism, the lantern festivals in these cities continued to be celebrated as a quasi-Buddhist custom.

The increasing contact of Korean monks with Buddhists from the outside world contributed to changing the government’s attitude toward Buddhism. The government’s new attitude toward Buddhism during the late Chosön dynasty was likely the result of the increased presence of Japanese Buddhist missionaries along with Japan’s deepening involvement in Korean affairs in the early 1900s. Thus, in the precolonial period, the neo-Confucian Chosön government adopted the policy of being, as the newspaper *Korea Review* reported, “favorable to this cult [Buddhism],” and the Buddha’s Birthday “was observed with considerable show.”⁹⁵ Although the ceremony in 1902 that the *Korea Review* refers to was confined to the temple complex Wönhüngsa (later Kakhwangsa) in central Seoul, it was a sign of Korea’s participation in the broader discourse of Śākyamuni’s centrality and the significance of his birth. By 1913, the increasingly elaborate event at Kakhwang Propagation Hall had become so popular that the temple had to issue tickets to limit attendance.⁹⁶ The ceremonies at temples outside Seoul were also well attended. A Christian missionary reported in 1907 that more than eight thousand Buddhists were coming to the temples on Mt. Kūmgang in Kangwön Province to celebrate the birth of Śākyamuni.⁹⁷

Korean Buddhists, temples, and cities continued to expand this holiday after Japan’s annexation in 1910. New roads and mass transportation made pilgrimage to remote temples easier, contributing to the rising popularity of the event. The colonial government itself increased transportation for this holiday by dispatching special trains with

93. *Maeil sinbo*, May 19, 1934.

94. These celebrations were not held at the Kakhwangsa complex.

95. *Korea Review* 1902: 217.

96. *Maeil sinbo*, May 13, 1913.

97. *Missionary Review of the World* 30 (1907): 647.

discounted tickets.⁹⁸ Modernity also changed the nature and structure of the celebration of the festival. Even remote mountain temples were influenced by multiple sources, including Sri Lankan Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, and Korean Christianity. New elements from these sources were incorporated, such as Buddhist hymns (versus chanting), musical and theatrical performances on the life of the Buddha, and public lectures (versus Dharma talks for Buddhists within the confines of a temple).

Frederick Starr (1858–1940), a professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago who visited Korea four times from 1911 to 1918 and stayed at monasteries to interview monks,⁹⁹ wrote that in 1918 tens of thousands of Koreans, mostly Buddhists but also many non-Buddhists, made a pilgrimage to one of Korea's major head temples, T'ongdosa, to participate in the celebration of the Buddha's birth and to light lanterns for the health of their families and the welfare of the deceased. Even though the temple was located ten miles away from the railway station, an estimated 15,000 people packed themselves into the temple complex, and 10,000 people stayed overnight, sleeping on the temple grounds. Starr observed that the pilgrims enjoyed a moving-picture show about the life of the Buddha and circumambulated inside and outside the temple carrying lanterns.¹⁰⁰

In the 1920s, with increased focus on the Buddha as a central figure, the Lantern Festival gradually incorporated the life of the Buddha back into the holiday. Buddhist monks also began distributing pamphlets and translations of *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse (1877–1962) in the streets.¹⁰¹ Thus, by the 1920s, Korea's native version of the Buddha's Birthday was in place, celebrated nationally, and already undergoing modernization as Japanese Buddhists turned their attention to introducing their own version, Hana matsuri, to colonial Korea. Because of the popularity of the native holiday, Japanese Buddhists had to find ways to entice Korean Buddhists to join Hana matsuri.

98. *Tong'a ilbo*, May 5, 1926; *Sidae ilbo*, May 8, 1926.

99. "Buddhism in Ancient Korea," *Boston Herald and Journal*, November 2, 1918.

100. Starr, *Korean Buddhism*, 62–63, and also in "Koreans Latest People to Seek Independence," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, December 14, 1918. In that same year, Starr published his widely acclaimed, *Korean Buddhism*, the first English-language book on Korean Buddhism. See *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1918, 8.

101. *Pulgyo* 24 (June 1926): 45.

Japanese Buddhists' Efforts to Establish Hana Matsuri in Korea

Japan's initial confidence that its integration of Korea as a colony would be straightforward was shattered in 1919. After a decade of enduring strict military rule (1910–19), more than two million Koreans rose up against Japan and demanded immediate independence. Embarrassed by what Western powers would think of this rebellion, Japan changed its repressive colonial policy to a more moderate and culturally sensitive one (*bunka seiji*). This policy allowed indigenous voices to be expressed, albeit within the confines of colonial rule.¹⁰² However, although the colonial government intensified its efforts toward cultural assimilation throughout the 1920s, little progress was made.

In the mid-1920s, Japanese Buddhists, seizing on the political impasse as an opportunity to advance themselves, approached the colonial government with the proposal that Hana matsuri be introduced as a holiday to unite the two cultures. Doing so had the added benefit of reasserting Japanese Buddhism's significance both to the Japanese colonial government and to Korean culture. Japanese lay Buddhists believed that a jointly sponsored Buddha's Birthday Festival was a promising avenue for reducing antagonism between Koreans and Japanese and mitigating the risk of future nationalist uprisings. At the same time, enlarging the festival would help Buddhists regain their pride and challenge Christianity. It would be a win-win situation for both Japanese Buddhists and the colonial authorities.

Despite this bold vision, holding a jointly sponsored Hana matsuri in colonial Korea was not simple. Japanese lay Buddhists found themselves attempting to coordinate multiple groups from both the Korean and Japanese communities. Debate about the celebration's date further complicated matters. Whereas Korean Buddhists followed the lunar-calendar-based date in early or mid-May, Japanese Buddhists used the Gregorian calendar date of April 8.

One of the initiators of this effort was the Japanese lay Buddhist Moriwaki Takayuki. At a meeting in 1924, Moriwaki expressed his intention to make Hana matsuri a festival for all people in Seoul, both Japanese and Korean,¹⁰³ since holding the festival just among Japanese

102. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation*, 111.

103. *Chōsen bukkyō* 121 (1936): 15.

Buddhists would be, as another Jōdo Buddhist, Isei Hakuchū, said, “lonesome” (*sabishii*).¹⁰⁴ Later, Nakamura Kentarō (1883–?) took over Moriwaki’s leadership, emerging as the central figure in this effort. Nakamura was also key in the most influential lay Buddhist movement in colonial Korea, the Association of Korean Buddhism (*Chōsen bukkyō dan*), established in 1920. He convened a meeting of Japanese Buddhist sects in 1926. All applauded the idea of a joint Hana matsuri, but they disagreed on which date should be used. The debate mirrored the one between the Chinese monk Taixu and Japanese Buddhist leaders at the Second East Asian Buddhist Conference a year earlier. Nakamura presented three reasons to persuade Japanese Buddhists at the meeting to opt for the later date in May. First, although in Japan flowers begin to bloom by April 8, in Korea it was still cold and the flowers had not yet come out. As one member said, “One cannot enjoy the feeling of a real flower festival [in April in Korea].”¹⁰⁵ Second, and more important, imposing a Japanese custom on Korea would not be an ideal approach. Thus, Nakamura insisted, “the Korean custom should be respected.”¹⁰⁶

A third reason to follow the lunar calendar was given. Just as Hana matsuri boosted business in Japan through department store bargains, which made the festival more attractive, so, too, could the event benefit Korean and Japanese businesses in Korea. Some Japanese Buddhists attending the meeting suggested inviting the Association of Commerce and Industry (*Sanggonghoe*), composed of Korean merchants, to participate. When Nakamura approached this association, he was told that, unless the later lunar-based date was observed, they would not participate.¹⁰⁷ Korean merchants would not be able to profit if the festival did not get Koreans to come out into the streets, and the streets were too cold in April for leisurely shopping.

Although the majority at the meeting agreed with these points, several representatives of Japanese Buddhist sects disagreed and decided to leave the alliance.¹⁰⁸ There was nevertheless sufficient momentum that the Japanese Buddhists received support from five major

104. *Chōsen bukkyō* 25 (1926): 75.

105. *Chōsen bukkyō* 49 (1928): 3.

106. *Chōsen bukkyō* 49 (1928): 3.

107. *Chōsen bukkyō* 121 (1935): 16.

108. *Chōsen bukkyō* 49 (1928): 4, and 121 (1935): 16.

associations: the Central Office of Korean Buddhism, the Association of Korean Commerce and Industry, the Association of Korean Buddhism, the Association of Japanese Commerce and Industry, and the Association of Japanese Buddhist Sects. Together they formed the Association for the Celebration of Hana matsuri (K. Hwaje pongch'anhoe; Jp. Kasai hōsankai).

There is no available record of the ways that Korean Buddhists participated in this discussion. The Korean Buddhist institution decided to “create a permanent office,” however, and nominated a number of Korean monks, including Kim T'aehŭp, to work with the association.¹⁰⁹ This shows that Korean monastic leaders apparently welcomed a joint Hana matsuri and participated in the decision-making process.

Several lines from the association's prospectus point to how the Buddha's Birthday Festival was interwoven with the vision of a transnational Buddhism. It notes that the East had been celebrating the birth of Buddha since ancient times and that, with “the social awakening of Buddhists in recent years,” the event had become more festive and elaborate. The prospectus suggests that people in Korea should bolster “this good custom” to “contribute to the spiritual cultivation of all of Korea.”¹¹⁰

As soon as the joint association was formed, Nakamura and others began to lobby the colonial government to support the event administratively and financially. Impressed by the level of cooperation that the Japanese Buddhists had mustered, the colonial government committed to backing it fully. On May 26, 1928, the first Hana matsuri to be sponsored by Japanese Buddhists, Korean Buddhists, business associations, and the colonial government was held in a massive, festive way, as described at the beginning of this chapter.

The introduction of this joint Hana matsuri to colonial Korea was not, as the historiography of the period would have it, merely an imposition of the Japanese for the purpose of colonial domination. Rather, it was a collaborative effort among a range of individuals and parties. These efforts reflect Japanese Buddhists' desire to create a sense of Buddhist community through the festival. Although that community was undoubtedly formed through assimilation of the colonizer and the colonized, at the same time, it was a specifically Buddhist community

109. *Pulgyo* 49 (1928): 91.

110. *Chōsen bukkyō* 49 (1928): 4.

imagined by reformers. Thus, this festival in colonial Korea should be understood as part of an ongoing effort to participate in a larger vision for a shared Buddhism that was popular, modern, social, national, and international.

Creating a Festival for Both Buddhists and Non-Buddhists

Korean Buddhist reformers did not want to limit Hana matsuri to Buddhists but envisioned it as resecularized—social, popular, and family-centered. The format and rhetoric of the festival reflected the extended vision. Like Japanese Buddhists, Korean Buddhists created banners and literature with the words “popularization,” “family-ization,” “socialization,” “massification,” and “spiritualization,” referring to Buddhism in general and to Hana matsuri in particular. Quixotic as these slogans might sound to us today, they express the level of seriousness among Japanese and Korean Buddhists about manufacturing a modern Buddhism and reconfiguring their identity, which they believed had been hijacked by modern forces and aggressive Christian missionaries.

The effort to make the festival modern and popular is exemplified in the ways that the festival parade was structured and exhibited in the public spaces beyond Buddhist compounds. First, unlike the Hana matsuri in Tokyo, which took place in Hibiya Park alone, Seoul’s had three different locations, which made the festival much more visible.¹¹¹ It involved three celebrations held at different times of the day. After fireworks and an airplane flight announced the day of the Buddha’s Birthday at eight o’clock, the first public event took place at the square in front of the Bank of Chosŏn at eleven o’clock, with Japanese Buddhist organizations officiating. Before coming to the first location, Japanese Buddhists had held a ceremony at their sectarian temples. As for the Korean Buddhists, they began with traditional rituals at Kakhwang Propagation Hall in the morning and then moved to the *Tong’a Daily Newspaper* building, a second location, and held a collective ceremony presided over by the Korean Buddhist central office. As soon as the rituals were over, both Korean and Japanese groups commenced

111. In 1934, the number of locations was increased to four.

parades from their respective compounds to a third location, Changch'ungdan Park, a couple of miles away from the first two locations. A palanquin with a sculpture of a white elephant was led by thousands of Korean and Japanese students and accompanied by Buddhists with lanterns and dozens of Buddhist leaders riding in cars. The procession turned onto Chongno Street, drawing a large turnout, before continuing on to Changch'ungdan Park to join the Japanese Buddhists and government officials. The final event, at 3:00 p.m. in Changch'ungdan Park, was presided over by the Association for the Celebration of Hana matsuri. Each location had a platform at which people could ladle water over a statue of the baby Buddha. Five hundred dignitaries, including the governor general and mayor of Seoul, participated in the ceremony at the park, making the event a state ceremony to commemorate the birth of the Buddha. Thus, by using the central spaces of Seoul, Korean and Japanese Buddhists presented the Hana matsuri as a citywide festival for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

Without a doubt, the Buddhist festival was a political festival. The structure of Hana matsuri palpably reflects the colonial reality of the way Seoul was inhabited by the colonized and the colonizer. Generally speaking, central Seoul was latitudinally divided. Koreans lived in the northern half and Japanese in the southern. The southern half was so Japanese that a Korean cynically called the Japanese the "new owner" of the southern part of Seoul.¹¹² The central office of Korean Buddhism was located in the northern half, whereas the temples of the Japanese Buddhist sects were nestled in the southern half. Shops and other businesses exhibited a similar division: Chongno Street in the north had mainly Korean shops, and Main Street in the south had Japanese businesses. Thus, the organizers of the festival had chosen their locations strategically and symbolically. The *Tong'a Daily Newspaper* building was in the Korean-dominated area, and the Bank of Chosŏn was in the Japanese. Between these two locations was the third, suggesting that this location would ceremonially and symbolically reconcile the north-south division that continued to exist despite the colonial government's ambitious city planning to spatially amalgamate Korean and Japanese residents.¹¹³ Thus, the festival was an intervention by Korean and

112. *Kaebŏk* 48 (June 1926): 67.

113. Todd, *Assimilating Seoul*, 28–61.

Japanese Buddhists to provide Buddhism as a conduit through which the unity of the two peoples could be achieved.

The structure of the festival was also designed to promote commercialism. The economic disparity between the two communities in Seoul widened as the years passed. Many of the Korean shops on Chongno Street lost their businesses to Japanese entrepreneurs.¹¹⁴ Chongno Street had been the place where old lantern festivals took place and where shops sold lanterns and toys on that day. In some ways, the organizers hoped that Hana matsuri would, as Nakamura indicated, mitigate the financial hardships of these Korean businesses by returning shoppers to the area, while also benefiting Japanese shops. During the first Hana matsuri, each shop on Chongno Street lavishly decorated its display windows and offered discounts, and as a result the sales that day were “very good.”¹¹⁵ According to a newspaper report, in 1929 the Association of Central Prosperity (Chungang pönyönghoe) encouraged people to purchase watermelon lanterns for the parade and for home decoration.¹¹⁶ The organizers of Hana matsuri deliberately planned the route of the lantern parades during these three ceremonies to pass through shopping areas like Chongno. Commercialism was a big part of this event as it was in the case of Hana matsuri in Japan.

Despite the political and commercial motifs, the Korean Buddhist administrative office took advantage of the platform presented by the Japanese and “made two or three times the preparation” needed in order to have a successful event in 1928.¹¹⁷ The titles of news articles reflected Seoulites’ reception of the event: “4/8 Lantern Festival Revived after Forty Years,” “Lantern Festival Celebrated Citywide,” and “Flowers above and below the World! Festival Mood Fills the Entire City.”¹¹⁸ Regarding Hana matsuri the following year, one Korean monk stated, “People in Seoul who had unconsciously lit lanterns according to yearly custom were thoroughly showered by the Buddha’s sacred virtues, and the streets boomed like those during the Three Kingdoms.”¹¹⁹ Another monk echoed him, saying that this event was “an expression of the

114. Chön, “Chongno wa Ponjöng.”

115. *Maeil sinbo*, May 26, 1928.

116. *Chosön ilbo*, May 15, 1929.

117. *Pulgyo* 60 (1929): 2.

118. *Maeil sinbo*, May 19, 20, and 26, 1928.

119. *Pulgyo* 60 (1929): 75.

revitalization of the peak of Buddhism” and “the reappearance of Three Kingdoms Buddhism.”¹²⁰ Another exclaimed, “Korean Buddhism finally seems to have become People’s Buddhism and Social Buddhism.”¹²¹ Pleased with the success of the festival, the Korean Buddhist central office affirmed that it would continue to participate in the annual festival.¹²²

The successful commencement of a modern Buddha’s Birthday Festival in Seoul made Buddhists happy, but they soon began to worry. After attending Seoul’s Hana matsuri for just two years, the Sôtō missionary Kawamura Tōki, though pleased in many regards, complained that it “was too elaborate” and “became popular too quickly.” He was concerned that the event had not developed “substantial experience”; whereas the organizers of the Tokyo Hana matsuri had built up experience since 1916, those in Seoul had not.¹²³ Some Buddhists in Korea complained that it was not successful enough and that the Hana matsuri celebrated in Seoul was far from being on a par with Christmas. In order to make it equal to Christmas, Hana matsuri should become “family-centered,” said editorials.¹²⁴ Kawamura argued that the organizers of Hana matsuri could learn much from the Christian Christmas and suggested that broad dissemination of Buddhism could be accomplished by giving free Buddha statues to all Koreans.¹²⁵ The Association of Korean Buddhism duly began casting twenty million Buddha statues for distribution.¹²⁶ Although this project did not come to fruition, it is an example of how Japanese and Korean Buddhists interacted around their shared vision of Hana matsuri’s role in propagating Buddhism to the populace.

Just as the Tokyo Hana matsuri spread to other cities in Japan, the elaborate Seoul Hana matsuri soon spread to other Korean cities. Within just a few years, Hana matsuri became widespread throughout colonial Korea, just as it had in imperial Japan.

120. *Pulgyo* 60 (1929): 2.

121. *Pulgyo* 60 (1929): 75.

122. *Pulgyo* 49 (1928): 91.

123. *Kongō* 6/5 (1929): 12–13.

124. *Chōsen bukkyō* 72 (1930): 53.

125. *Kongō* 7/4 (1930): 16–17.

126. *Chōsen bukkyō* 57 (1929): 30.

The Transnational Debate on Hana Matsuri's Date of Observance

In the late 1930s, Hana matsuri was downsized when Japan redirected its resources toward expansion into Manchuria, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and Japan's overall war effort. The future of a joint Hana matsuri also faced an internal challenge: Japanese Buddhists in colonial Korea were becoming aggrieved that they had to adhere to the later Korean lunar-based date rather than the earlier Japanese Gregorian date that Japanese Buddhists in the homeland followed. A Sōtō priest expressed his brewing irritation when in 1933 he remarked, "Do we really have to use the lunar calendar [for Hana matsuri]? The country [the colonial government] is spending a huge amount of money. Next year, we should hold it according to the Gregorian calendar."¹²⁷ In 1937, the colonial government responded to Japanese Buddhists' complaints about holding Hana matsuri on the lunar date. As Japan's second war against China loomed on the horizon, the colonial government in Korea intensified efforts to fully integrate Korea into Japan. Any element at odds with this goal came under scrutiny from the colonial authorities. New religions were charged with being superstitious and insidious and were ordered to disband or be merged into the major religions approved by the state. Eradicating old, premodern customs was another measure taken. As part of this national policy, enacted in 1936,¹²⁸ the colonial authorities decided that Buddhists should follow the Gregorian calendar. This decision directly affected the celebration of the Buddha's Birthday at most Korean temples and especially the Hana matsuri festival taking place in cities. The colonial regime announced that 1937 would be the last year that the Buddha's Birthday celebration would be observed in accordance with the lunar calendar.¹²⁹

Similar pressure to turn to the Gregorian calendar was mounting in China as well. Here, the pressure did not come from the government but from Buddhists themselves. On April 4, 1931, the Association of Chinese Buddhism (*Zhongguo fojiao hui*) sent an official letter to all the provincial and local Buddhist temples and associations calling for

127. *Kongō* 10 (1933): 19.

128. *Tong'a ilbo*, July 9, 1936.

129. *Chosŏn ilbo*, May 17, 1937.

them to celebrate the Buddha's Birthday uniformly on April 8 according to the Gregorian date.¹³⁰ (The association reiterated its request in 1932 as well.) The association reasoned that all Buddhist countries—such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Japan, and Korea (mistakenly)—were using the Gregorian calendar.¹³¹ However, the letters did not bring about any fundamental change in the custom.

In 1937, in the wake of Japan's invasion of China, a different date was suggested by the ninth (or sixth)¹³² Panchen Lama, an influential Tibetan Buddhist leader who worked with the Chinese nationalist government to improve the relationship between Tibet and China.¹³³ He argued that Chinese Buddhists as well as Tibetan Buddhists should adopt not only the Gregorian system in full but also the Gregorian date followed by other Asian Buddhist countries. With the exception of Japan, which had adopted the April 8 date of the Gregorian calendar, other South and Southeast Asian countries as well as the West viewed the Gregorian date of May 15 (which would correspond to 4/15 on the lunar calendar) as the official day of the Buddha's birth. Thus, the Panchen Lama suggested Chinese Buddhists should consider the date recognized by most other Buddhist countries as the date of the celebration. He asked that the Association of Chinese Buddhism open a forum to gather opinions from prominent monastic and lay leaders in order to reach some sort of consensus. With a consensus, he hoped that Buddhist leaders could request that the Chinese government designate the Buddha's Birthday as a national holiday. Following the Panchen Lama's request, the association sent out letters and collected opinions. The responses fell into three different camps. The first group of monks and lay leaders felt negatively about the Panchen Lama's idea, the second group supported his argument, and the third group proposed that they keep the existing lunar date while simultaneously adopting a new Gregorian date in addition.¹³⁴

130. *Zhongguo fojiao huibao* 1/2/3 (1930): 1, and 4/5/6 (1930): 1; *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan* 27 (1931): 3.

131. *Zhongguo fojiao huibao* 1/2/3 (1930): 1.

132. There are some ambiguities about the number, depending on how one counts the number of reincarnations. See Tuttle's *Tibetan Buddhists*, 244 n. 11.

133. Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 140.

134. *Shen bao*, May 17, 1937.

These opinions from monks and lay leaders notwithstanding, the position of two prominent monks dictated the conversation. Taixu shifted from his earlier position, abandoning the idea of following the Gregorian date of April 8, as adopted by Japan. Now, he supported adopting the Gregorian date of May 15 (which would correspond to 4/15 on the lunar calendar) in order to align with the global consensus.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, he allowed for some flexibility on the issue, saying that the lunar date could also be preserved according to custom.¹³⁶ Thus, he supported the Panchen Lama's viewpoint. However, another prominent monk, Yinguang (1862–1940), was not happy with this solution and vociferously opposed any modification to the calendar, charging that the Panchen Lama had no authority to suggest the change and that China did not need to follow the example of other Asian countries to which China had transmitted Buddhism.¹³⁷ Yinguang disliked the fact that a Tibetan lama was intervening in a matter pertaining to Chinese Buddhism to begin with. The debate ended without any conclusive outcome. Even under Japan's occupation in 1939, Japanese and Chinese Buddhists jointly held a ceremony to celebrate the Buddha's Birthday on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, since Japan took an approach of appeasement similar to the one taken in colonial Korea until 1937. In Taiwan, the colonial government took the initiative in 1917 to encourage people to use the Gregorian calendar and intensified its policy in 1919. As in China, however, the change happened slowly, and two dates continued to be used among its people.¹³⁸

Similarly, the Korean government adopted the Gregorian calendar as early as 1895 but failed to replace the old calendar. Further, it faced opposition to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar from some intellectuals. It had to wait to make the shift until 1937, when colonial authorities enforced a more aggressive policy. Within Korean Buddhism, no major debate transpired on this issue among monastics, and it was Japanese Buddhists, in collaboration with colonial authorities, who took action to change the date. With the announcement of the policy, the thirty-one head temples and the central office of Korean

135. *Shen bao*, June 15, 1937.

136. *Haichaoyin* 18 (June 1937): 94.

137. *Haichaoyin* 18 (June 1937): 94; *Shen bao*, June 18, 1937.

138. Heylen, *Becoming Taiwan*, 91–92.

Buddhism in Seoul, which were under the direct jurisdiction of the colonial regime, had to follow the new April 8 Gregorian date. The central office of Korean Buddhism continued to participate in the joint Hana matsuri on the Gregorian date until the end of the colonial era. The colonial government did not fully enforce the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, however. Despite the colonial government's decision, some Korean temples in rural areas continued to observe the lunar calendar, attesting to the inherent limitations of Japan's control over Korean Buddhism and reflecting resistance on the part of Korean Buddhists.

Although Japanese Buddhists were relieved to return to the April 8 Gregorian calendar date for Hana matsuri, Koreans lost their enthusiasm for the event once the date officially changed. This matter may seem trivial today, but Koreans considered the lunar calendar a part of their cultural and national identity, and many other aspects of Korean culture revolved around lunar dates. Yun Ch'ihō (1864–1945) wrote in his diary in 1930, "The Korean population has come to ignore the fact that the Gregorian calendar is the calendar of the country. The people almost unconsciously do this as a form of silent protest against Japanese domination."¹³⁹ Although Korea's official adoption of the Gregorian chronology goes back to 1895, the Korean government continued to follow the dual system of using the Gregorian calendar for state and diplomatic affairs and the lunar calendar for customary matters. Despite numerous petitions that demanded unification of the dating system under the Gregorian calendar, the dual system persisted. Thus, although it was not an outlandish policy for the colonial government to attempt to do away with the lunar calendar, the bitter colonial experience among Koreans had transformed the observance of the lunar calendar system into a symbol of resistance against Japan.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, the Korean monk Toh Chinho proudly announced at the Hawaii Buddhist conference in 1930 that Korea celebrated the Buddha's Birthday according to the lunar calendar.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, the conference participants, led by Japanese Buddhists, passed a bill stating that all Buddhists should follow the date of April 8 according to the Gregorian

139. *Yun Ch'ihō ilgi* 9 (January 1930): 263.

140. Park Suhwan, "Kūndae sigi," 115–34.

141. *Pulgyo* 76 (October 1930): 11.

calendar.¹⁴² Thus, it was inevitable that holding Hana matsuri on the Gregorian date would discourage Koreans from participating. Moreover, it was simply a cold time of year in Korea, and the flowers had not yet bloomed.

The event was beset by financial disagreements as well. The city government had been giving 2,500 yen annually to businesses involved in Hana matsuri, but all this money, which later increased to 7,000 yen, was given to the Association of Japanese Businesses. The Association of Korean Businesses complained that not “a single yen [was given] to the Korean Association.”¹⁴³

Despite these problems, the 1937 Hana matsuri—the last one held on the lunar date—was largely successful, with all the locations of its major events receiving a high turnout. The festival continued to serve as a distinctively Buddhist festival in Korea that had broad appeal across the country. In 1941, Japan became fully immersed in World War II and the colonial regime changed the structure of Hana matsuri. In an effort to bring unity and uniformity to this event, the colonial government and the association decided to hold the festival at a single location rather than at three. By 1943, Japan was in a state of complete war and resources were limited. The sixteenth Hana matsuri, which took place that year, was scaled down, regimented, and held indoors in a major city building, further dampening the festive atmosphere.

Nevertheless, Korean Buddhists made the most of Hana matsuri by capitalizing on its publicity. Media coverage, including radio, provided a prime way for Korean Buddhists to reassert their relevance to Korean culture. They also harnessed the public space made available through the colonial authorities to increase the visibility of Korean Buddhism. This effort would not have been possible without their skillful engagement with Japanese Buddhists. Hana matsuri is one example, among many others, of how Korean Buddhists coopted the work of Japanese Buddhists and appropriated modern ideas. Moreover, Korean Buddhists gained significant experience and knowledge through working with Japanese Buddhists and the government on Hana matsuri and thus became prepared to make this modern festival their own when the time came. That time arrived at the end of the colonial era.

142. *Bukkyō kaigai kaikyōshi shiryō shūsei*, 84.

143. *Tong'a ilbo*, January 13, 1935.

Conclusion

From the late nineteenth century on, Buddhists felt an urgent call to reenergize the apathetic, traditional Buddhism of the premodern era in order to compete with Christianity and to survive during a time of massive social and political upheaval. This call was answered through many reforms, including returning the historical Buddha to a central position and re-creating a springtime festival that celebrated the Buddha's Birthday—termed the Lantern Assembly in Korea, the Flower Festival in Japan, and the Buddha Day Festival in Sri Lanka. Thus, the annual Buddha's Birthday festivals in these countries had a common genesis.

First, the festival was in each case a response to and emulation of what Christianity offered its adherents. Buddhist leaders did not mimic Christmas but hoped to supersede it by displaying Buddhism's modernity through the highly performative festival. Second, Buddhist leaders in all three countries presented this event both as core to their country's national identity and as international and universal. Sri Lankan Buddhists deemed Wesak to be representative of how their own Buddhism was superior to all others, whereas Japanese Buddhists believed that Hana matsuri reflected the preeminence of Japanese Buddhism. Even under Japan's rule, Korean Buddhists did not abandon the belief that they embodied the true identity of the Korean culture and that Korean Buddhism was the mother of Japanese Buddhism. Third, despite this nationalist undertone of an ostensibly international event, the organizers of the Sri Lankan and Korean festivals managed to garner the support of their foreign, colonial governments. The joint Buddha's Birthday Festival in Korea was, for almost eighteen years, the defining national festival heavily promoted by the colonial government. That political support was possible in part because the Buddha's Birthday Festival represented a common heritage in Asia, and Buddhists skillfully used this transnational and transcultural connection to the benefit of Buddhism.

The Buddha's Birthday Festival in colonial Korea is also distinctive, however, because of the conscious effort among Japanese Buddhists, working together with Korean Buddhists, to bring Buddhism into the center of colonial Korea's politics and culture through the promotion of this shared religious festival. They did this by carefully reconfiguring

the nature and content of the festival to fit the landscape of colonial Korea so that a new form of the Buddhist festival could emerge. More than the emulation of Christmas, what Japanese Buddhists introduced to colonial Korea was a Japanese version of a religious festival that was both appropriated from Christianity and informed by their own and other Buddhist traditions. David McMahan offers the concept that Buddhist modernism in the West has “retraditionalized” elements of Buddhism, making them explicitly Buddhist, while at the same time “detraditionalizing” them, creating a modernized, popular version accessible to everyone.¹⁴⁴ Likewise, Japanese and Korean Buddhists both retraditionalized and detraditionalized the Buddha Birthday Festival in colonial Korea.

As for the Korean monks involved in the planning and execution of the Buddha’s Birthday Festival, we have seen the ways in which they strategically formed relationships and alliances—with Japanese Buddhists, the colonial government, and other Asian Buddhists—to advance their causes. Such networking can be understood as a form of “locative pluralism,” a term offered by Anne Blackburn to characterize the colonial Sinhalese monastic reformer Sumangala’s tactical social affiliations with multiple parties (including the British colonial government and other Asian Buddhists in Japan, Burma, and Thailand). Blackburn defines locative pluralism as “acting simultaneously in relation to plural and shifting collectives of belonging to which one feels a sense of responsibility and emotional investment.”¹⁴⁵ Just as the campaign for the Buddha’s Birthday Festival in Sri Lanka was accompanied by such multiple alliances, the work of Korean Buddhists is also characterized by locative pluralism, as they endeavored to preserve their traditional identity while also renovating their religion. The Buddha’s Birthday Festival of colonial Korea came to embody a unique, Korean Buddhist modernity—a localized version of a global Buddhist discourse—and thus became an integral feature of modern Korean Buddhism.

Just as Korean Buddhist leaders helped bring the Buddha’s Birthday Festival to the center of the colonial Korean cultural and political sphere through plural and shifting relationships, so, too, did other

144. McMahan, *Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 246–47.

145. Blackburn, *Locations*, 210.

Buddhists in and beyond colonial Korea both struggle with and benefit from the complex social, political, and religious dynamics of the period. In the next chapter, we turn to the story of a fascinating character operating out of Shanghai in the 1920s and 1930s, whose life work was the very expression of transnationalism in Korean Buddhism.

CHAPTER THREE

The Transnational Buddhist Yu Guanbin

On the night of August 1, 1933, two Korean assassins waited outside a house in the Japanese quarter of China's port city of Shanghai. Their target, a forty-three-year-old man, came out around midnight and made his way toward his car. They swiftly blocked his path, fired a fatal shot into his chest, and aimed a second shot into his body as he lay on the ground. Then the two men disappeared into the darkness.¹ The victim, one of the most successful Korean businessmen in China at the time, was the owner of a transnational company trading in medicines and other products. He was ethnically both Korean and Chinese, with the Korean name Ok Kwanbin and the Chinese name Yu Guanbin (1891–1933; hereafter referred to as Yu).

Why Yu was assassinated reveals much about the complex forces at play in the 1920s and 1930s. Yu was the chief financial backer of the leading Chinese Buddhist modernizer, Taixu, and worked tirelessly to promote Taixu's vision of a Chinese transnational Buddhism. Much of Yu's financial success necessitated working with the Japanese, who in effect regulated the economy of Taiwan, part of China, and its colony, Korea. He was to some extent a Korean nationalist, but some Korean nationalists exiled in Shanghai were more radical and viewed Yu's business with the Japanese colonial government and funding of Chinese

1. *Shen bao*, August 2, 1933; *Tong'a ilbo*, August 3, 1933; *Haichaoyin* 14 (September 1933): 135; Yi Tögil, *Yi Hoeyöng*, 302–3.

Buddhist and political causes as an abandonment and betrayal of Korea. This chapter explores the dynamics of the interaction among Chinese transnational Buddhism, Korean nationalist politics, and the necessity of doing business with the Japanese (colonial) government in the life and death of one person.

Yu's personal ambition was to become an influential figure in business, politics, and religion. As a capitalist and political operator, Yu worked internationally. His success in his trading business resulted in a complex and far-reaching network of relationships. As a speaker of Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and English, his linguistic abilities and familiarity with East Asian and Western cultures were significant advantages in Shanghai, a city that, in the 1920s, was the prototype of a modern, internationalized metropolis. Nevertheless, owing to the tumultuous times, these advantages also worked against his aspirations. At the height of modern nation building, colonialism, and imperialism in China, Yu was continuously juggling his national and transnational identities in his relationships to interact with those of different nationalities and conflicting interests. His struggle was amplified by living in Shanghai, where Chinese, Japanese, and Western powers vied for control and where Korea's Provisional Government (1919–32) resided. Thus, to succeed as an entrepreneur, Yu had to work with multiple groups, including the Japanese, which was unacceptable to Shanghai's radical Korean nationalists.

As for his affiliation with Buddhism, Yu adopted a specific form of modern Buddhism, the version that was spearheaded by Taixu. The goal of actualizing Taixu's Buddhism occupied much of Yu's thought and activities from 1926 until 1933. As a trusted lay disciple of Taixu, Yu was at the forefront of Taixu's "Buddhacization Movement" (Fohua yundong), a term for the transnational effort to popularize Buddhism around the world. During this period, Yu placed his financial assets and social network at the service of Taixu's movement.

The scholarship on modern Korean and Chinese Buddhism, particularly lay Buddhism, has focused on the significant contributions of intellectual reformers,² including Yi Nünghwa, Ch'oe Namsŏn, Yang

2. Two representative works on lay Buddhists in modern China are Huang Zhiqiang et al., *Jinxiandai jushi foxue*; and Kim Yongjin, *Chungguk kundae sasang*. Also, Sŏ, "Ch'öngdae ūi pulgyo chöngch'aek."

Wenhui, Ouyang Jingwu (1871–1944),³ and Wang Xiaoxu (1870–1948).⁴ Recently, however, greater attention is being given to the lay Buddhist leaders who contributed financially and materially to the making of modern Buddhism.⁵ Several scholars who have written about Yu have emphasized his impact on modern Korean and Chinese Buddhism, especially his promotion of the reconstruction of a Korean temple in Shanghai, his role as a mediator between Korean and Chinese Buddhism, his significant leadership in Chinese Buddhist institutions,⁶ and his success in business.⁷ The existing scholarship indicates that Yu's life and activities should be understood from a broader geographic, cultural, and political perspective. Based on biographies of Yu by scholars as well as primary sources, this chapter places Yu's Buddhist life in the larger context of the transnational Buddhacization Movement, to which Taixu and many other Asian Buddhists of the mid-1920s and early 1930s subscribed.

In this chapter, I also argue that Taixu's Buddhacization Movement, a unique version of transnational Buddhism, provides a framework in which one can better understand the motivations and trajectories of Yu's Buddhist work and, through him, the dynamics of modern East Asian Buddhism. Scholarship has often focused on the Japanese version of pan-Asianism (or Asian Buddhism) and the responses of non-Japanese Buddhists to it.⁸ Yet there were other forms of Buddhist globalization initiated by reformers from other countries, some of which garnered the support of both Japanese and other Asian Buddhists. In a sense, Taixu's Chinese transnational Buddhist movement emerged as a counterpoint to Japan's version of a pan-Asian but

3. Aviv, "Differentiating the Pearl."

4. Hammerstrom, *Science of Chinese Buddhism*.

5. Francesca Tarocco has published the well-researched work on the material contribution of lay Buddhists to modern Chinese Buddhism *Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism*. See also Jessup, "Buddhist Activism"; and Clart and Scott, *Religious Publishing and Print Culture*, for further details.

6. Huang Xianian, "Jindai Zhonghan lianguo fojiao youhao"; Huang Xinchuan, "Min'guk sigi pulgyo"; Cho Yǒngnok, "Ilche kangjǒnggi Hangju Koryōsa"; Kim Kwangjae, "Ok Kwanbin ūi Sanghae mangmyōng."

7. Takei, "1920-nendai shotō no Shanhai"; Kim Kwangjae, "Sanghae sigi Ok Kwanbin."

8. Saaler and Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism*; Saaler and Koschmann, *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History*; Tankha, *Shadows of the Past*; and Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism*.

Japan-centered transnational Buddhist movement. Yu's collaboration with Taixu to promote the Buddhacization Movement is a manifestation of competition between these global visions. From this perspective, Yu's life offers a model for how transnational Buddhism could resonate with an influential lay figure and then play out locally through him in an international city like Shanghai. For his own part, Yu's engagement in Taixu's transnational Buddhist movement served to moderate the tensions and difficulties of projecting a consistent personal identity in a rapidly changing multifaceted world. Transnational Buddhism provided a neutral zone, buffering the anomie of his multiple identities and his complex social and national relationships.

This chapter also addresses the question of why Yu was killed, highlighting the tensions between transnationalism and nationalism. According to Korean primary sources, Yu was killed because of his collaboration with the Japanese as a spy and because of his arrogance.⁹ The Korean scholar Cho Yǒngnok attributes Yu's murder to his personal habit of "demeaning other people."¹⁰ In contrast, Chinese scholars Huang Xianian and Huang Xinchuan describe Yu as a Korean nationalist.¹¹ They and other Chinese sources attribute his murder to robbers and ruffians, implying economic and perhaps personal motivations rather than political ones.¹² Kim Kwangjae has most recently suggested that Yu's refusal of monetary support for radical Korean nationalists (or anarchists) led to his death.¹³ Other sources cite some combination of these explanations. I would add that Yu's emotional and material investment in Taixu's *transnational* Buddhist cause at the expense of the Korean nationalist cause was an important factor leading to his assassination.

9. For example, Kuksa p'yōnch'an wiwōnhoe, *Yun Ch'ihō ilgi*.

10. Cho Yǒngnok, "Ilche kangjōmgi Hangju Koryōsa," 68.

11. Huang Xianian, "Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao"; Huang Xinchuan, "Min'guk sigi pulgyo."

12. *Shen bao*, August 12, 1933.

13. Kim Kwangjae, "Ok Kwanbin ūi Sanghae mangmyōng."

Yu's Biography

The period in which Yu lived was characterized by nation building, colonialism, imperialism, and modernity, and these forces led to unprecedented contact among East Asians. After an embarrassing experience with American gunboat diplomacy and the extraterritorial rights asserted by Western countries in the mid-1850s, Japan had quickly modernized, and it emerged by the early twentieth century as the first modern non-Western empire. Japan brought Korea under colonial rule in 1910, during Korea's final and abortive effort to transform from a monarchy to a modern nation-state. Many anti-Japanese nationalists and other Koreans moved to Manchuria and China to continue to fight for independence. Eying China for territorial expansion, Japan joined the European powers in securing extraterritorial rights in the major port cities of China, including Shanghai. After the demise of Manchu rule in 1912, China's struggles to unify and create a modern nation-state were plagued by semicolonization and constant civil warfare. It was a time during which many forces clashed in East Asia, and Yu's personality and career developed in response to living in such a tumultuous era (fig. 3.1).

Yu was born in northern Korea in the town of Tongdu, Chungwha County, South P'yŏngyang Province,¹⁴ on June 18, 1891. Although his mother was a native Korean, his father was a Chinese immigrant from the city of Kunming in Yunnan Province. As a child, Yu was a devout Christian, as were many others in P'yŏngyang (the city was often called Korea's "New Jerusalem").¹⁵ He was also a staunch patriot and nationalist. In 1905, when he was sixteen, Korea became a protectorate of Japan. Yu and Kim Ku (1876–1949), a leading nationalist, joined the nationalist group Sinminhoe (New People's Association), established by An Ch'angho (1878–1938). They toured the country giving speeches at Christian churches, urging Koreans to reject the protectorate treaty. Yu was a convincing orator, inspiring many with his patriotic message. He studied at Taesŏng hakkyo, established by An, and at Sungsil School, established by the American Presbyterian missionary William M. Baird

14. "Zai Shanhai Chōsenjin Oku Kanhin." Another Japanese source says Taedong County ("Oku Kanhin no ansatsu ni kansuru ken," 1).

15. Morris-Suzuki, *To the Diamond Mountains*, 105.

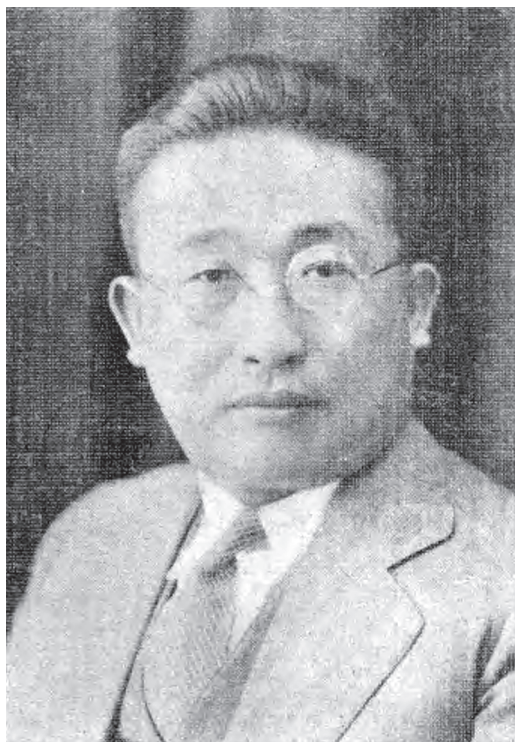


FIG. 3.1. Yu Guanbin in 1933 (*Haichaoyin*, September 1933, 6). Courtesy of Shanghai Library.

(1862–1931). He went on to receive a law degree from Posŏng Professional School in Seoul.¹⁶

In 1910, at the age of twenty-one, he was arrested by the Japanese police for colluding with the British journalist Ernest Bethell (1872–1909), founder of the *Korea Daily News* (*Taehan maeil sinbo*), for translating news into English as a reporter, and for giving an anti-Japanese speech. In 1912, the Japanese arrested him again, along with his older cousin Yu Chengbin (1885–1933),¹⁷ on charges of involvement in a plot to assassinate Governor General Terauchi Masatake, referred to as the “105 Incident.” Among the 105 suspects who were put on trial, six were found guilty of treason, including the leading Christian intellectual Yun Ch’iho and Yu Guanbin, who was initially sentenced to a six-year

16. “Zai Shanhai Chōsenjin Oku Kanhin.”

17. “Oku Jōhin sinmun chōsho,” April 22, 1912.

term in prison, which was later reduced to three years.¹⁸ During his prison time, he read books on politics, economics, literature, and history. His readings influenced him to turn from politics to business. After his discharge, in 1915, he got a job at a bank, thanks to the help of Yamagata Isoo (1869–1959), a Japanese intellectual.¹⁹ Later, based on his experience in finance, Yu established a small lumber company.²⁰

After the violent 1919 March First Independence Uprising, when he realized that he could no longer accomplish much as an entrepreneur and nationalist activist in colonial Korea, Yu crossed the border into China. Many Korean nationalists joined the Chinese revolution at the time, believing that the success of China's revolution would have a direct impact on Korea's independence.²¹ First, Yu went to Guangdong to work with Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the founding father of Republican China. Yu worked with Sun to bring the large but generally isolated Muslim community of the country into the government in order to bring political stability to the region. In the spring of 1924, Yu converted to Islam at the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque, the largest mosque in Shanghai, becoming, according to a Chinese newspaper, "the first Korean Muslim."²² Yu made himself president of his own initiative, which he called "The Mission of Islam to Korea" (Koryō hoegyo chōndohoe hoejang).²³ In May 1924, Yu attended a Muslim holiday celebration at which five thousand were in attendance. For this occasion, he wrote "A Song in Praise of the Absolutely Perfect Saint [Mohammad]" (*Yushengzan*) and distributed thousands of copies to Muslim communities in China to push for national unity.²⁴ Despite his efforts as well as those of Sun, the initiative saw little success owing to a "lack of nationalist sentiment" among the Muslims.²⁵ Discouraged, Yu went to Shanghai in 1920.

18. According to a government document, Yu was absolved of any suspicion "owing to absence of proof" (Takei, "1920-nendai shotō no Shanhai," 175; Yamasaki Keiichi, "Chūyō naru futeisennin").

19. "Bukkoku kika sennin no shōshū fuō."

20. *Haichaoyin* 14 (September 1933): 8; Kim Kwangjae, "Sanghae sigi Ok Kwanbin milchōngsöl," 49–50.

21. Yi Hoeryōng, *Anak'isūt'ūdül*, 162.

22. *Shen bao*, May 16, 1924, and August 12, 1933.

23. "Zai Shanhai Chōsenjin Oku Kanhin."

24. *Shen bao*, May 16, 1924.

25. Later, in 1928, Yu rearticulated his approach to Chinese Muslims in an article titled "Chinese Islam and Chinese Revolution" ("Zhongguo huijiao yu Zhongguo

Yu thrived in Republican Shanghai, “China’s largest metropolis,”²⁶ as it was the most international, modernized, and capitalist city in China at the time. The city’s Western and Japanese quarters were well established, allowing business and material cultures to prosper. Shanghai was also the seat of Korea’s Provisional Government, founded in 1919, which anticipated a lengthy fight against Japanese colonialism. Shanghai thus provided Yu with the opportunity to reignite his nationalist fervor. Yu easily reconnected with Korean nationalists, such as Kim Ku and An Ch’angho. Along with Yi Kwangsu (1892–1950) and the Korean monk Paek Sŏng’uk, Yu was soon serving as an editor for the *Shanghai Independence Newspaper*, which was published as an organ of the Korean Provisional Government. Yu also became a leading member of the Association for Korean Residents in Shanghai.²⁷ Factionalism, antagonism, and disagreements over policies with the Provisional Government,²⁸ especially with Kim Ku, led Yu to distance himself from the government. Worse yet, it came to light that, early on, Yu’s colleagues had suspected him of being a Japanese spy.²⁹ Disappointed, he left Shanghai for Nanjing to study at Jinling University.³⁰ When he returned to Shanghai a year later, in 1920, he briefly turned to Russian communism, served as a communist representative in Shanghai,³¹ and was associated with a radical group.³²

In 1921, he began reimmersing himself in business. In April 1921, Yu and his cousin Yu Chengbin, along with an American partner, established a pharmaceutical company called Yodök yanghaeng, which they ran together. After four months, Yu parted with Chengbin and established his own trading company called Paedal kongsa; in 1924 he changed its name to Sandök yanghaeng. After an official trading

geming”). In it, Yu provides a positive view of Chinese Muslims, arguing that they brimmed with revolutionary spirit and capacity and thus that China’s nationalist revolution would be impossible without the integration of ten million Chinese Muslims (*Guomin gonglun* 2 [1928]: 1–6).

26. Wakeman and Edmonds, *Reappraising Republican China*, 124.

27. *Haichaoyin* 14 (September 1933): 8; Takei, “1920-nendai shotō no Shanhai,” 175.

28. Yun, “Sanghae sigi taehan min’guk,” 38.

29. Kim Kwangjae, “Sanghae sigi Ok Kwanbin milchōngsöl,” 45.

30. Yamasaki Keiichi, “Chūyō naru futeisennin.”

31. “Zairo Kanzoku kyōsantō no Ro-Kan jōyaku teketsusetsu.”

32. “Sanghae esō Ok Kwanbin i Taehan ch’ōngnyōn taehoe ae.”

route was established between Shanghai and colonial Korea, Yu set up branches in several cities, including Seoul, P'yŏngyang, and, later, San Francisco.³³

In 1928, Yu received Chinese citizenship,³⁴ based on his father's Chinese heritage, and became a member of the Chinese Republican Party, in which he represented the districts of Shanghai and Kunming. He became involved in numerous political and nonpolitical organizations of the Chinese Republican government, emerging as an influential capitalist and politician.

Involvement in Taixu's Movement

How did Yu come to devote himself to Taixu's Buddhist programs? Undoubtedly, Taixu's Buddhacization Movement addressed Yu's spiritual needs, but the movement also dovetailed with his personal ambitions. Taixu's vision was as international as Yu's; at the same time, Yu's earlier nationalist ambitions corresponded to certain threads in Taixu's Buddhism. In some sense, the two men complemented each other.

Taixu was both a renowned and a controversial monk in modern Chinese Buddhism. He was lauded as "the St. Paul of Chinese Buddhism" and "the very soul of present day Buddhist reform."³⁵ He was also criticized by many, including the Chinese monastic community, for proposing Buddhist reform programs that were "far too radical."³⁶ Yoshiko Ashiwa lists three contributions Taixu made to Chinese Buddhism. First, Taixu initiated a movement reforming Buddhist doctrines, institutions, and property rights (called the "three revolutions"). His essay detailing the three reforms, titled "The Reorganization of the Sangha System," caused an uproar in the monastic community. Second, Taixu advocated a "world Buddhism" that would modernize and globalize Buddhism so that it could stand on par with Christianity. Third, he established a complex set of relationships with religious and political leaders both inside and outside of China that connected Chinese

33. Takei, "1920-nendai shotō no Shanhai," 176–77 and 185; *Haichaoyin* 14 (September 1933): 8.

34. *Haichaoyin* 14 (September 1933): 8.

35. Quoted from Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 59. See also Ritzinger, "Taixu," 1.

36. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 2.

Buddhism to the rest of the world.³⁷ As Don Pittman notes, Taixu was “the most politically involved of all the major Buddhist leaders in the Republican period.”³⁸ Taixu’s version of this new Buddhism, as seen through his three contributions, was later termed by him and his followers “Buddhism for human life” (*rensheng fojiao*) or “Buddhism for this world” (*renjian fojiao*).³⁹ Despite the resistance and controversy around his reforms, Taixu nonetheless left an indelible mark on Republican and post-Republican Chinese Buddhism in China as well as in Taiwan⁴⁰ and Vietnam.⁴¹

Yu first encountered Taixu in November 1926. Yu’s American friend Presbyterian missionary Gilbert Reid (Li Guibai, 1857–1927), who in 1904 had established a place for elite social gatherings called Shangxiantang (New Learning or China International Institute), asked Taixu to give a talk at the institute and invited Yu to attend. Taixu’s talk was on “How Buddhism Should Be Disseminated in the Modern World.” Deeply moved by Taixu’s articulate presentation of Buddhism’s universality and superiority over Christianity, and by his transnational vision, Yu decided to become his lay disciple. Shortly after Taixu’s talk, Yu sent a letter introducing himself:

I have been a Buddhist for several years, but since I came to this country, I have so far been too busy to be able to receive Dharma teachings. What a shame! Fortunately, the Dharma reached Shanghai and [now] Bin [Yu] desires to receive the precepts and become your disciple. I beg you to have compassion and not to abandon me but to guide me. . . . I heard that you are spreading the Buddhacization Movement broadly. . . . Although I don’t know if you would be willing to come to Shanghai, I would like to implore you to do so.⁴²

The letter indicates that Yu had converted to Buddhism before his encounter with Taixu but that Taixu had kindled Yu’s desire to study the

37. Ashiwa and Wank, *Making Religion*, 55–56.

38. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 10.

39. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 9; DeVido, “Influence of Chinese Master Taixu.”

40. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 11.

41. McHale, *Print and Power*; DeVido, “Influence of Chinese Master Taixu.”

42. *Haichaoyin* 7 (December 1927): 9–10.



FIG. 3.2. Yu Guanbin's induction as a lay disciple of Taixu (*Haichaoyin*, August 1927, 168). Courtesy of Shanghai Library.

teachings more seriously. In response, Taixu soon visited Shanghai, granted Yu the precepts, and welcomed Yu as his lay disciple (fig. 3.2).

It was not long before Taixu invited Yu to become a key lay activist in his Buddhacization Movement. Taixu later remembered of Yu: "Since people saw in the newspaper that I would give a talk, not a small number showed up to hear my lecture. Among them was one person originally from Kunming [a city in China] but born and raised in Korea. He was Yu Guanbin of Shanghai who runs a pharmaceutical business."⁴³ Once the teacher-disciple relationship was established, Yu met Taixu's expectations with devotion and enthusiasm, becoming deeply involved in Taixu's Buddhist movement.

43. Taixu, *Taixu dashi zizhuan*, 29, 303.

The Buddhacization Movement

The first use of the term “Buddhacization” (*fohua* in Chinese) occurred when Taixu, along with lay Buddhists Zhang Zongzai and Ning Dayun, among others, established the New Youth Association for Buddhacization (Fohua xin qingnianhui) in 1923. The association attracted many, eventually involving more than three thousand members.⁴⁴ The term *fohua* became popular among Chinese Buddhists, spawning related terms, such as Pan-Asian Buddhacization (*quan yaxiya fohua*) and global Buddhacization (*quan shijie fohua*). Toward these objectives, Taixu also established the World Buddhist Federation (Shijie fojiao lianhehui) in the same year. In 1923, he also held the first World Buddhist Conference, in Kuling, followed by a second the next year. The purposes of these conferences were manifold but were primarily aimed at increasing the unity of Asian Buddhists and promoting the dissemination of Buddhism to the West. Although these conferences were not well prepared, well publicized, or truly international in scale,⁴⁵ it is apparent that Taixu envisioned them as a way of furthering Buddhism as a global religion. He vigorously pursued relationships with others, from both the East and the West, who held the same ideals. To this end, he proposed to the leaders in his network of contacts that an East Asian Buddhist Conference (Tōa bukkyō taikai) be convened (fig. 3.3). This proposal materialized the following year, 1925, in Tokyo (the same conference is discussed in chapter 2).

The 1925 Tokyo conference proved to be a significant opportunity for Taixu, because it was there that he articulated his vision and gained the full attention and support of other Asian Buddhists. Taixu attended the conference with a retinue of nineteen delegates (seven monastics and twelve lay Buddhists), the largest delegation from outside of Japan. In contrast, there were only three Korean and seven Taiwanese delegates attending the event.⁴⁶ Taixu and his entourage captured most of the media’s attention, reinforcing the lingering historical significance of Chinese Buddhism as the mother of East Asian Buddhism in the imagination of Japanese Buddhists.

44. Shi Dongchu, *Zhongguo fojiao jindai shi*; Wang Jianchuan, “Zhang Zongzai”; Lai Yonghai, *Zhongguo fojiao tongshi*, 57.

45. Ritzinger, “Taixu,” 75.

46. *Pulgyo* 18 (December 1925): 16–17.



FIG. 3.3. Delegates at the East Asian Buddhist Conference (*Han'guk pulgyo 100-yŏn*, 107). Courtesy of Minjoksa Publications, Seoul.

The conference, spanning three days in November, included a series of lectures and discussions on the doctrines, education, and social work of Buddhism. Each session concluded with specific manifestos from the delegates. The first day, they reached an agreement that each country would exchange lay and monastic Buddhist scholars in order to advance a shared understanding of Mahayana Buddhism. On the following day, in order to unify East Asian Buddhists and disseminate Buddhism to the West, they agreed that schools for all ages should be established in East Asia and Europe, Buddhist journals should be published, and the Buddha's Birthday Festival should be observed on a single date. The last day of the conference was concerned with Buddhist proselytization, primarily through social work (such as serving the poor, providing medical care, and setting up schools for children). The Chinese delegates were the most vocal about specific measures to be taken. Taixu stressed that propagation should be implemented transdenominationally, transnationally, and transracially.⁴⁷ He and the other Chinese delegates proposed that East Asian Buddhists collectively

47. *Chūgai nippō*, November 6, 1925.

establish a “Buddhist Compassion Hospital” in Shanghai, and it was unanimously approved.⁴⁸

Back in China, inspired by the success of this event, Taixu and the Chinese delegates began to carry out the programs agreed on at the conference. Taixu, along with 177 laypersons and monastics, including nine Japanese Buddhists, founded a publishing company called the Pan-Asian Buddhacization Education Company (Quan yaxiya fohua jiaoyushe) and promoted the Buddhacization Movement through publications, schools, and teaching.⁴⁹ This pan-Asian Buddhist movement influenced Japanese Buddhists as well. In Japan, inspired by Chinese lay delegates such as Zhang Zongzai and Liu Fengming, among others, students of the Rinzaishū sect founded the Association of the Buddhacization for New Youth (Nihon bukke shin seinenkai) and started publication of the journal *Buddhacization* (*Bukke*).⁵⁰ Taixu’s presentation of his movement at the conference also influenced Buddhism in colonial Korea and colonial Taiwan. In Korea, the lay Association of Korean Buddhism (Chōsen bukkyōdan) launched a nationwide movement to promote similar ideas. The Chinese term for Buddhacization, *fohua*, was circulated as *bukke* in Japan and *pulhwa* in Korea, as well as in Taiwan, producing various organizations and programs similar to the ones in China.

It was in 1926, just a year after having debuted his program on the international stage in Tokyo and while traveling to promote his Buddhacization program in China, that Taixu received Yu’s letter. Taixu greatly needed a devout and wealthy lay Buddhist like Yu to underwrite his expensive Buddhist programs.

The Emergence of Yu as a Key Lay Buddhist Leader

Soon after Taixu gave Yu the precepts together with the Dharma name Huiguan (Wise Contemplation), Yu was brought into the center of the implementation of Taixu’s reform programs. Yu was not a passive provider of money for Taixu’s initiatives. He approached issues with his

48. *Pulgyo* 18 (December 1925): 13–24.

49. *Pulgyo* 22 (April 1926): 75–82.

50. *Pulgyo* 22 (April 1926): 75.

own ideas, vision, and energy. Yu was just as ambitious, if not more so, than Taixu.

Within a year, Yu became an influential lay leader in Chinese Buddhist circles. From that point on, he was known by his Buddhist name rather than by his birth name.⁵¹ One of the major projects that Taixu had long envisioned was the establishment of an educational institute for monastics that could produce modernized, reformed, elite monks. In 1927, Yu met Taixu's expectation by investing his own money to set up a Buddhist Monastic Institute (Fojiao sengyuan) and its journal *Fayuan* (Dharma garden).⁵² In a letter to lay Buddhist Yi Tingda inviting Yi to serve as assistant administrator of the institute, Yu explained that constructing the facility had been the fulfillment of Taixu's long-awaited vision and that Taixu expected it to be foundational for "revitalizing Buddhism and saving this corrupt world."⁵³ The following year, Yu was recognized among lay Buddhist leaders for his work and elected to a standing committee of the Association of Chinese Buddhism. Yu also funded the journal *Haichaoyin* (Voice of the sea) that Taixu had begun publishing in 1920. When this journal suffered financially, Yu became a key donor and its secretary.⁵⁴ In 1930, Yu founded the most significant Buddhist institute of the time. He poured in 100,000 yuan of his own capital to build a Buddhist pharmaceutical factory, clinic, and herbal institute that integrated traditional Eastern and modern Western medicines, naming it the Buddhist Compassion Pharmaceutical Company (Fociyao bi).⁵⁵ Although medicine had been integral to Buddhist culture ever since Buddhism was transmitted to China from India in the first century,⁵⁶ this was the first large-scale venture advancing medicine in the context of science and Buddhism. This discourse of Buddhism as compatible with science and modern medicine was popular in the 1920s and 1930s among Chinese Buddhist

51. Kim Kwangjae, "Ok Kwanbin ūi Sanghae mangmyōng," 49.

52. *Pulgyo* 33 (March 1927): 52; *Chūgai nippō*, July 10, 1927; Hong Jinlian, *Taixu dashi*, 229.

53. *Haichaoyin* 8 (June 1927): 6.

54. *Haichaoyin* 8 (July 1927): 3, 126.

55. After Yu's death, his wife and his brother-in-law, Feng Mingzheng (1907–55), took over the company. In 1956, the Chinese government took ownership and moved it to Lanzhou. Currently, the company is incorporated and the government owns 70 percent of its stock. See www.fczy.com.

56. Salguero, *Translating Buddhist Medicine*.

intellectuals including Wang Xiaoxu (1875–1948).⁵⁷ Yu imported and produced medicines and energy boosters; he also advertised in newspapers and journals, including *Haichaoyin*, which he edited. Thus, Yu almost single-handedly brought one of the major goals proposed by Taixu and the Chinese Buddhist delegates at the 1925 East Asian Buddhist conference to fruition: the establishment of a Buddhist clinic in Shanghai. Without Yu's support, Taixu would have had a hard time realizing this project.

Yu also made an intellectual contribution to Buddhism. Through dozens of essays in journals, including *Haichaoyin*, he articulated ideas on Buddhist reforms and conveyed news about Buddhism abroad, particularly about Buddhism in Korea and Japan. He also published a book (of 100,000 words) titled *The History and Teachings of Śākyamuni* (Shizun zhi lishi yu jiaofa). In it he touched on the life and teachings of the Buddha, the development of Buddhist philosophy, and Western scholarship on Buddhism. The book was well received for its clarity and strong writing. Taixu congratulated Yu on the publication of the book in a foreword: "He knows the fundamental principles [of Buddhism]." Ouyang Jingwu also took note that Yu had written a book that traces "the life and teaching of the Buddha's forty-nine years [of teaching]."⁵⁸

Echoing Taixu's calls for reform, Yu wrote a treatise titled "Ways to Revitalize Chinese Buddhism" (Zhongguo fojiao zhenxing ce), published as a special piece for *Haichaoyin*. Yu, like Taixu, wanted to see Chinese Buddhism unified in order to become an influential, modern religion. In this treatise, he specifies the conditions necessary to reach this goal in three sections: monastic reform, engagement in social and cultural changes of the times, and Buddhist self-reliance. In the first section, Yu, like Taixu, is critical of the low quality of monastics and their ignorance of the current situation of the world. To produce modern monastics, he puts forth four suggestions: that ordination be restricted, that the conferring of precepts be confined, that superstitious practices be banned, and that modern education be provided to monastics. In the second section, he argues that society is a product of the times and that, if Buddhism fails to follow modern trends, it will inevitably fall behind. He maintains that Buddhism should fully keep up

57. Hammerstrom, *Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 38–49.

58. *Haichaoyin* 13 (August 1932): 80.

with the social and cultural movements of the era. Four initiatives, he urges, should be put into motion: schools for all walks of life, both monastics and laypeople, should be established; a Buddhist library should be instituted to serve as the center for Buddhacization; charitable facilities, such as hospitals and orphanages, should be constructed; and Buddhist journals should be published.⁵⁹ In the third section, Yu stresses the promotion of self-reliance at a time when the world economy is struggling. He suggests that Buddhism should offer a Dharmic way toward agricultural and commercial success. The treatise concludes with Yu pointing to the bodhisattva ideals of Mahayana Buddhism, which include not only self-cultivation but also universal salvation. Thus, he stresses, this life path is for monastics and laypeople alike. Yu ends his treatise with a series of slogans:

May the great unity of Buddhists soon come!
 The true movement of practicing Buddhism and saving people
 and the world!
 Promote the powerful movement of the preservation of Buddhism
 and Sangha reforms!
 Eradicate deceptive Buddhists and the parasitic Sangha!
 Support Buddhists who make an effort!
 Correct people's attitudes toward the Buddhist faith!
 Set up a new standard for the development of the culture
 of the world on the basis of the true spirit of the Dharma!
 May Buddhists make strides!
 Hurrah, Mahayana Buddhism!⁶⁰

These slogans reveal that Yu was both visionary and fervent in his promotion of Chinese Buddhism.

Nonetheless, Yu seemed to be aware of the gap between his idealism and reality. He acknowledged that his ideas might be "somewhat abstract,"⁶¹ but, as a person of action, he tried to put his ideas into practice. For example, he helped build a Buddhist library, working with the Japanese Buddhist Yamada Kenkichi (1863–1928), whom Taixu recruited for the project. The pharmaceutical factory and the clinic also

59. *Haichaoyin* 8 (January 1928): 1–5.

60. *Haichaoyin* 8 (January 1928): 5.

61. *Haichaoyin* 8 (January 1928): 5.

represented efforts to actualize his vision of Buddhism. In an article titled “The Buddhist Compassion Pharmaceutical Company’s Plan for the Renovation of National Medicine,” Yu presented the company as a place where medicine would be studied scientifically to improve the outdated practices of Chinese medicine. The objective of his pharmaceutical project, he proclaimed,⁶² was to get rid of superstitious medical practices and offer scientific, modern treatments to the poor. These patients would then be motivated to embrace Buddhism and thereby eventually be ushered into full enlightenment.

Yu also believed that Buddhism was superior to other religions, especially Christianity. His view of Buddhism in general and Chinese Buddhism in particular as the pinnacle of religious practice was formed through his own encounters with other religions. He grew up ardently Christian, was briefly a Muslim, then became something of a Buddhist before finally becoming a dedicated practitioner of Buddhism through his encounter with Taixu. He strove to present Buddhism as a religion that, unlike others, was simultaneously scientific, rational, modern, and socially engaged. He also endeavored to correct misconceptions about Buddhism. In a critical review of a book on comparative religion, Yu warns the reader of errors in the book’s presentation of Buddhism and corrects, point by point, the author’s mistakes. Yu’s refutation primarily revolves around the vastness of Buddhism’s worldview and salvation: unlike other religions, they are not just confined to this world and human beings. He also argues that Buddhism encourages self-reliance, in contrast to Christianity’s reliance on God.⁶³

In his diary, Taixu wrote that Yu’s clear plan for Sangha reform was aligned with his own. According to Taixu, Yu first wanted to build a firm economic base, then to administer the Sangha Monastic Institute, and finally to renovate Buddhist rituals according to the needs of the times. As such, Yu proposed that monks’ robes be simplified to look like Japanese ones and planned to promote Buddhist rituals for rites of passage, marriage, and other celebratory events for all stages of life.⁶⁴ Yu also raised funds for the Association of Chinese Buddhism, which was charged with implementing these reforms, by reaching out to lay Buddhists. It is not surprising that Taixu recorded this in his diary: “[His]

62. *Haichaoyin* 12 (May 1931): 85–91.

63. *Haichaoyin* 8 (October 1927): 380.

64. Taixu, *Taixu dashi zizhuan* 19:95.

faith in me was very strong, and he later helped me with many Buddhist programs that I had initiated.”⁶⁵ Yu was indispensable to Taixu.

A Bridge between Korean and Chinese Buddhism

Yu’s efforts to build a relationship between Chinese and Korean Buddhism, from the late 1920s until his death in 1933, was the first major initiative of its kind in the modern period. This bridge building was a natural expression of his strong allegiance to both countries and to the Buddhisms of each. Taixu’s pan-Asian Buddhacization Movement made Yu’s contact with Korean Buddhism necessary and timely. Even before Yu’s outreach to Korean Buddhist institutions, Taixu was known to Buddhists in colonial Korea through Buddhist journals. After the 1925 conference in Tokyo, Taixu and his movement were frequently featured in the Korean Buddhist journal *Pulgyo*. Soon after the conference, the Chinese leader of the World Lay Buddhist Association (Shijie fojiao jushilin), Liu Fengming, visited Korean Buddhism’s administrative headquarters in Seoul along with a Japanese Buddhist missionary to Korea (and later to China), Mugade Tetsudō, to seek support for the movement from Korean Buddhists.⁶⁶

One project in particular provided Yu an opportunity to engage with Korean Buddhists and institutions. There was a Korean temple in suburban Hangzhou, near Shanghai, that had been built in the eleventh century and had largely been forgotten. A prince (and monk) of the Koryō dynasty, Ŭich’ōn (1055–1101), had once resided there.⁶⁷ By the mid-1920s, the temple, known as Koryōsa, was in disrepair and occupied by adherents of other religions. A few Korean expatriates and students in Shanghai uncovered the history of the temple, and word of the temple spread to other Koreans in Shanghai and in colonial Korea. These expatriates and students submitted articles to Korean journals expressing the urgent need to restore the temple. At a time when Korea was under colonial rule and Korea’s Provisional Government was in

65. Taixu, *Taixu dashi zizhuan* 19:95.

66. *Chūgai nippō*, July 14, 1927; *Pulgyo* 23 (May 1926): 57–58.

67. For more details on the connection between Ŭich’ōn and the Koryōsa, see Chi-chiang Huang’s “Ŭich’ōn’s Pilgrimage.”



FIG. 3.4. A recent photograph of Koryŏ Temple in Hangzhou (*Pŏpbo sinmun*, October 1, 2014). Courtesy of Nam Suyŏn from *Pŏpbo sinmun*.

exile in Shanghai, the temple carried tremendous significance as a cultural symbol of the Korean nation and Korean sovereignty (fig. 3.4).

Among those interested in the temple was Pyŏn Tonghwa, a Korean monk studying at Tongji University in Shanghai.⁶⁸ Pyŏn was one of the dozens of monks who had crossed the northern border with China in 1919 to continue the fight against Japanese colonialism by working for the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai. He visited the Korean temple Koryŏsa and submitted a travelogue that included the history of the temple to the Korean journal *Tongmyŏng*. His article was also featured in the Buddhist journal *Pulgyo*. Pyŏn laments the lack of social and international activity in Korean Buddhism, in comparison with other religions, as well as its continuous infighting. He asks Korean Buddhists to mobilize to rebuild the temple. Pyŏn argues that Korean Buddhism has transformed from mountain Buddhism to

68. Cho Yŏngnok, "Ilche kangjŏmgi Hangju Koryŏsa," 61.

Buddhism-beyond-mountains and again, most recently, to urban Buddhism. Now, he urges, it is time to transform urban Buddhism into international-and-world Buddhism. He makes two assertions: that recovering the Korean temple in China would be far better than building several temples in Korea and that investing 1,000 yuan in Koryōsa would be more valuable than investing 100,000 yuan in Korea. He states that this is a golden opportunity to export Buddhism back to China. In another article, Pyōn writes that there are about a hundred sites of Korean temples, hermitages, and pagodas in and around Hangzhou near Shanghai; he argues that these sites should be recovered and reclaimed as part of Korea's heritage.⁶⁹

Pyōn and others approached the wealthy and newly converted Buddhist Yu in 1926 and informed him about the significance of the temple. Soon Yu, as he did with several of Taixu's projects, took over the restoration of the temple. In late 1926, Yu sent a series of letters to *Pulgyo* and its editor, the leading scholar monk Kwōn Sangno (1879–1965), informing Kwōn of his plan to raise funds for the reconstruction of the Korean temple. Kwōn was one of three Korean Buddhists who had attended the 1925 conference in Tokyo. There, he witnessed the influence of the Chinese Buddhists, such as Taixu and Zhang Zongzai, and later introduced their writings to Korea through *Pulgyo*. Deeply inspired by the Buddhacization Movement initiated by Taixu, Kwōn wrote a long article in which he asked, "Why isn't there anyone like Taixu in Korea?"⁷⁰ Impressed by the vitality of modern Chinese Buddhism, Kwōn wrote that Korean monastic robes were inappropriately short and proposed that Chinese robes be adopted (even as Yu recommended Chinese monks adopt the style of Japanese robes!). He sent a letter to Chinese Buddhists to purchase some sample robes.⁷¹ Yu thought Kwōn would be the best person to work with on the temple restoration project.

In his letters to Kwōn, Yu opened by writing that the reform movement of Chinese Buddhism spearheaded by Taixu was spreading rapidly and suggesting that Korean and Chinese Buddhists find ways to collaborate. He believed that collaboration could be accomplished through rebuilding the temple. Yu wrote that he had made a pilgrimage

69. *Pulgyo* 30 (December 1926): 16.

70. *Pulgyo* 33 (March 1927): 2–8.

71. Huang Xinchuan, "Min'guk sigi Pulgyo kan'haengmul."

to the site and had been deeply moved by the history of the temple where the monk Ŭich'ŏn had stayed to study Buddhism many centuries earlier. Yu told Kwŏn that, soon after his visit, he launched a plan to purchase the land. He indicated that Chinese lay Buddhists had also expressed interest in restoring the temple and that he would set up a committee for reconstruction. Yu also pointed out that the leading intellectual Ch'oe Namsŏn had established an Association of the Commemoration of the State Preceptor Ŭich'ŏn in colonial Korea. Thus, it was timely, Yu asserted, that the temple be rebuilt. As a preparatory step, Yu asked Kwŏn about the possibility of making a copy of part of the Koryŏ Canon at Haein Temple (discussed in chapter 1), a temple where Ŭich'ŏn had donated many collected scriptures centuries ago, and bringing the copy of the canon to the Koryŏsa temple to enshrine it there.⁷² He promised to pay the expenses for making the copy and transporting it. He concluded by stating that, although he was willing to fund the majority of the temple renovations, it would be crucial for Kwŏn and others to raise additional funds in both countries.⁷³ A month later, Yu sent more letters to Kwŏn informing him of the progress on reconstruction.

To start the project officially, Yu hosted a Buddhist luncheon and event with Taixu in attendance. Yu made it clear that this event was organized “in the name of Korean Buddhists” and invited forty prominent Chinese Buddhist leaders, scholars, and businessmen.⁷⁴ Yu distributed pamphlets promoting the reconstruction of the Koryŏsa, and Taixu gave a congratulatory speech, which was followed by the unanimous approval of the project by those attending.

Enthusiasm notwithstanding, Yu felt that the success of the plan was dependent on its funding. In another letter to Kwŏn, published in *Pulgyo* in 1927, he states that he estimates the entire expense for building the temple to be 15,000 yuan, that he has personally contributed 3,000 yuan to get the work under way, and that he wants both Korean

72. Seven months later, Yu wrote an article on the history of the Koryŏ Canon in *Haichaoyin*. In it he glorifies the Koryŏ Canon as the masterpiece of all the Buddhist canons in the world and as the model for all contemporary Chinese and Japanese editions. He also praises his friend Ch'oe Namsŏn for providing detailed research on the Koryŏ Canon (*Haichaoyin* 8 [July 1927]: 3–5).

73. *Pulgyo* 29 (November 1926): 40–41.

74. *Pulgyo* 31 (January 1927): 79.

and Chinese Buddhists to collect the remainder. Yu outlines how Korean Buddhist monastics could participate in this fundraising drive. He projects that, if each of the thirty head temples in Korea donated 300 yuan, the total would amount to 9,000 yuan. Combined with his own donation of 3,000 yuan, the remainder would be just 3,000. Yu speculates that this could be covered by Chinese Buddhists, or even by himself. Yu was aware that the economic situation of the Korean temples would make raising 9,000 yuan difficult. (Yu had earlier contacted and shared his idea with the Korean monk Han Yong'un [1879–1944], who had explained to Yu that the temples were in dire financial straits.) Nonetheless, Yu emphasized the significance of the Koryōsa for Korean Buddhism. Yu wrote, “If we can restore the temple with our own power, preserve it, and make it a liaison between the two Buddhisms in Hangzhou, where the power of Buddhism is concentrated, Chinese Buddhists should also be able to help our programs whenever the thirty head temples desire to launch programs.” If the circumstances of Korean Buddhism did not permit Korean monks to raise funds, Yu dramatically proclaims: “I will complete the project [at any cost], even if I have to beg for the rest of my life.”⁷⁵ Yu sounds much like Dharmapala, who dedicated his life to recovering the Bodh Gaya site in India.

In another letter to Kwōn, Yu shared news of his other projects, including the establishment of a pharmaceutical company and a propagation hall as part of the Buddhacization Movement. Interestingly, Yu presents these undertakings as part of the work of Korean Buddhism, as he considers himself to be Korean. Thus, he expresses his desire for these plans to be seen as the first joint projects of Chinese and Korean Buddhism. Yu informs Kwōn that he has begun working with the Korean monk Pyōn, assigning Pyōn to be the protégé of Taixu for Korean Buddhism. Yu assures Kwōn that both he and Pyōn will take full charge of the temple renovation.⁷⁶

The letter to Kwōn was supplemented by a document titled “The Temple Complex Koryōsa That Commemorates the Centuries-Long Relationship between the Two Buddhisms.” The original document had already been published in *Haichaoyin*. After briefly describing the location, history, and plan for restoring the temple, Yu includes the text of his congratulatory speech. As a way to curry favor with Chinese

75. *Pulgyo* 31 (January 1927): 78–80.

76. *Pulgyo* 31 (January 1927): 78–80.

Buddhists in attendance, including Taixu, Yu stresses the status of Chinese Buddhism as the parent of Korean Buddhism.

The true Dharma flowed to the eastern land. Precisely 1,299 years after the Buddha's parinivana [namely, AD 372] Master Shuntao [K. Sundo] from Jin [China] came to Korea and commenced to transmit Buddhism. From this time, the boundless teaching from west China entered the eastern land where there was a Dharmic connection. The twelve schools in the three Korean states all trace themselves to China. Therefore, the nine hundred temples of Korea all came from China as well. Those compassionate mothers who gave the Dharma milk and the teachers who transmitted the essence of mind all go back to the great masters of many generations in China.⁷⁷

In a subsequent speech, Yu again emphasized that Taixu and Chinese Buddhists fully endorsed the rebuilding of the Koryōsa temple as one means of revitalizing the old, historical connection between China and Korea and to bring new significance to the relationship. Yu signed the document he included with his letter to Kwōn as a representative of Korean Buddhism in Shanghai. At the event discussed in Yu's document, he reports that the preparatory committee for the project has been formed, with Kwōn (the person he is writing to), Han Yong'un, and Yu representing the Korean side.⁷⁸ Thus, through this temple project, Yu emerged as the uncontested leader of Korean Buddhism in China, in addition to the many positions he already held as a lay leader in Chinese Buddhism.

To further solidify the connection between the two Buddhisms, Yu also asked Kwōn to spread the word about the Chinese Buddhist journal *Haichao yin* to gain subscribers from Korea.⁷⁹ Yu said that, since he, a Korean Buddhist, was deeply involved in this journal, the journal should therefore be thought of as a collaboration between Chinese and Korean Buddhism. Yu stated that he represented Korean Buddhism, and Taixu represented Chinese Buddhism. It is clear that, without

77. *Pulgyo* 31 (January 1927): 81; *Shijie fojiao jushilin* 142 (1927): 123.

78. *Shijie fojiao jushilin linkan* 142 (1927): 123 and 146–47.

79. *Pulgyo* 36 (June 1927), last page.

Yu's efforts, there would have been significantly less contact between Chinese and Korean Buddhism in the modern period.⁸⁰

Yu's influence extended beyond the Koryōsa project. Yu supplied Buddhist news from abroad to Buddhist journals. He translated news about Buddhism from Korea, Japan, and the West into Chinese from Korean, Japanese, and English. Yu also deepened the connection between Taixu and Korean Buddhism. He arranged for Taixu to send three poems congratulating the Korean Buddhist journal *Taebōmnoe* on its publication. The Korean monk and publisher of the journal, Chōng Unhae, wrote a note of thanks to Taixu and included a copy of the teachings of the prominent Koryō monk Paegun (1299–1374), adding that he hoped this book could become a reference for those who study the history of Korean and Chinese Buddhism.⁸¹ In 1929, Taixu also sent his monastic colleagues Yuanying (1878–1953) and Renshan (1887–1951) to represent Chinese Buddhism at the Korean Buddhist Conference of 1929, held in Seoul.⁸² (For various reasons, Taixu was unable to visit Korea before his death in 1947.)

Caught between Korean Nationalism and Chinese Buddhist Transnationalism

Yu's tireless activities in business, politics, and religion, and his juggling of multiple identities and affiliations, brought him a complex range of relationships. Although liked by many, his ambitious personality and self-aggrandizement, often combined with unethical business practices, engendered enmity. The reasons most biographers give for his death are valid, but two other factors contributed to his murder as well. First, Yu's full-on involvement with Taixu's Buddhist movement led to the exclusion of support for Korean nationalists; second, Yu's sensitivity to criticism led him to lash out and alienate others, regardless of the repercussions. These two factors played off each other and led to difficult, even toxic, situations.

For example, just as some Korean nationalists thought Yu was not Korean enough, there were some Chinese who viewed him as not Chinese

80. Huang Xianian, "Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao."

81. *Haichaoyin* 10 (November 1927): 459.

82. *Zhongguo fojiao yuekan* 4 (1929): 58.

enough.⁸³ In July 1931, when Yu was nominated to be a board member of the Association of Chinese Buddhism, rising as a key leader of lay Buddhism within a short period of time, a conservative board member, Huang Jianliu, wrote a long, open letter in the journal *Fojiao pinglun* that was filled with criticisms such as “a person like Yu does not speak like the Chinese at all.”⁸⁴ (Yu was not fluent in Beijing dialect.)⁸⁵ Huang questioned Yu’s nationality and therefore the legitimacy of his nomination, citing the bylaws of the association, which stipulated that board positions should be filled by Chinese citizens only.⁸⁶ In response, Yu distributed equally lengthy pamphlets that described Huang as “somebody full of smoke in his face,” meaning that Huang was an opium addict.⁸⁷ The matter only came to rest when Yu gained his Chinese citizenship⁸⁸ and submitted the official document attesting to it (fig. 3.5).⁸⁹ Later, Taixu’s monastic disciple Zhi Feng, in his eulogy for Yu, gave a more nuanced reason for Yu’s decision to change his nationality: “Because his Korean nationality caused suspicion and brought about inconvenience in his business and the way he behaved, he recovered his [Chinese] nationality.”⁹⁰ Thus, among the Chinese, Yu’s ambiguous ethnic and national identity in combination with his vituperative response to criticism sometimes proved problematic.

Likewise, these two factors caused serious complications in his relationships with Koreans in Shanghai. Yu could be dismissive when members of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai approached him for money. However, Yu had reason to distance himself from his former friends. Elements of the Provisional Government had coalesced into a distinctly radicalized nationalist group in the aftermath

83. The scholar Huang Xianian writes that the sudden rise of Yu’s leadership in collaboration with Taixu intensified the tensions between conservatives and radical reformers like Yu and Taixu (see Huang Xianian, “Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao”; Kim Kwangjae, “Ok Kwanbin ūi Sanghae mangmyōng”).

84. Huang Xianian, “Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao,” 155.

85. *Chūgai nippō*, August 8, 1933.

86. Huang Xianian, “Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao,” 155.

87. *Chūgai nippō*, August 8, 1933.

88. Huang Xianian, “Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao,” 155.

89. *Zhongguo fojiao huibao* 15/21 (April 1931): 2–3. Yu paid six yuan for the processing fee and two yuan for a stamp to the Provincial Government (*Jiangsu sheng zhengfu gongbao* 60 [1928]: 29).

90. *Haichaoyin* 14 (September 1933): 132.

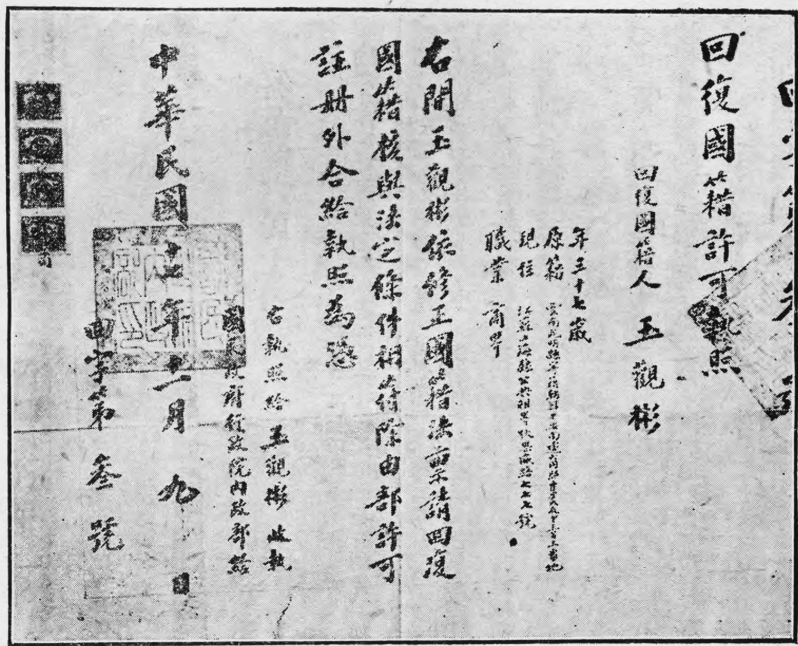


FIG. 3.5. The official letter granting Yu Guanbin Chinese citizenship (*Zhongguo fojiao huibao*, April 1931, 388). Courtesy of Shanghai Library.

of the March First Independence Uprising in 1919. Self-identified as anarchists, they justified the use of terrorism and assassination to remove anyone who opposed their brand of opposition to Japanese colonialism. In 1932, they formed the Black Terror Group (*Huksaek kongp'odan*).⁹¹

Korean anarchists in China saw Yu as someone who had changed from a staunch nationalist into an outright collaborator with the Japanese. This stigmatization had begun in the early 1920s, when he was first becoming known among Koreans as a rising entrepreneur in Shanghai. According to Yu's Japanese Buddhist friend Fujii Sōsen (1896–1971), who wrote two articles commemorating Yu for the Japanese Buddhist newspaper *Chūgai nippō*, Yu had said: “When I was young, I fought for the independence of Korea and also with anti-Japanese movements. But once I arrived in Shanghai, I observed the prevailing trends of the

91. *Shen bao*, August 9, 1933.

world and realized that I should not devote my life to such trivial matters. I came to know that I would have to live my life for a greater cause [Buddhism's revival]."⁹²

Although one should be cautious about taking the passage at face value, given its Japanese source and Fujii's presumptive interest in dismissing Korean nationalism, the passage does provide a glimpse into the metamorphosis of Yu's political views and personal ambitions. This change may have had its roots in his time in prison in Korea, when he immersed himself in reading books on politics, economics, religion, and other topics. In the aftermath of the March First Independence Uprising, other Korean nationalists, including Yun Ch'ihō, Ch'oe Namsŏn, and Yi Kwangsu (1892–1950), also turned their attention away from the uncompromising independence of Korea to strengthening the country as a precondition for eventual independence.⁹³ Yu, likewise, came to believe that the anti-Japanese movement would be futile without self-reliance in the form of economic power and modern knowledge. Accordingly, soon after his release from prison, Yu turned his attention to business. Later, Yu wrote an essay, published in a Korean newspaper, in which he asserted that Koreans should strengthen themselves by establishing trading businesses internationally.⁹⁴

However, doing business inevitably meant working with government and therefore with the Japanese. When a direct trading route between Shanghai and Seoul was officially opened in the 1920s, Yu had to receive permission from the colonial government in Korea to operate his business, just as the highly successful capitalist Kim Sŏngsu (1891–1955) had done.⁹⁵ In colonial Korea, both had to work with the colonial government. Initially, Korean newspapers were suspicious of Yu's company, claiming that he conducted business unethically and harmed consumers. This led the colonial government to investigate Yu and his company. Over time, however, through an aggressive public relations campaign, advertising in newspapers, and improving customer service, Yu's company was able to build trust with its

92. *Chūgai nippō*, August 8, 1933.

93. Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea*; Wells, *New God, New Nation*.

94. *Tong'a ilbo*, March 22, 1921.

95. Carter, *Offspring of Empire*.

customers.⁹⁶ From the perspective of some Korean nationalists, the trajectory of Yu's career betrayed the nationalist cause because he worked within the colonial system. The Korean Christian leader Yun Ch'ihō began to hear that Yu had turned into a Japanese collaborator. This came as a shock to Yun, who remembered Yu as an uncompromising Korean nationalist. In 1921, Yun stated: "Mr. Ryang tells me that Oak Kwan Bin [Yu] is reported to have turned into a spy in the service of the Japanese. I can hardly believe it. Oak is one of the most talented young Koreans I have ever seen."⁹⁷

Yu also befriended many Japanese individuals, including the two influential Japanese Buddhist missionaries Mugade Tetsudō and Fujii Sōsen. His associations with the Japanese deepened when he started his pharmaceutical business. Yu imported German and American medicines and sold them to different national groups both in China and in several branches of his company in colonial Korea. He also had a monopoly on the medicines for syphilis and other illnesses manufactured in Germany and America, which he exported to Japan and Korea.⁹⁸ His association with the Japanese increased as he became central to Taixu's Buddhacization Movement. Yu worked with leading Japanese Buddhists, such as Maeda Eun (1857–1930), Takakusu Junjirō (1866–1945), Mizuno Baibyō (1877–1949), and Kimura Taiken (1881–1930), in organizing events. From the perspective of Korean nationalists, this turn toward the Japanese in both business and Buddhism meant Yu had turned away from his earlier anticolonial stance.

Thus, Yu's relationships with some of the key members of the Korean Provisional Government deteriorated, including his long relationship with Kim Ku. Nonetheless, because Yu was successful in business, he was frequently approached by members of the Provisional Government for money for their causes. According to An Ch'angho's diary entry on January 30, 1920, Yu recommended that, in order to ease the financial strains of the government, An consider opium trafficking with America. An wrote that he had declined the suggestion outright and admonished Yu for suggesting such a thing,⁹⁹ which would harm the world. Over time, Yu increasingly ignored the Provisional

96. Takei, "1920-nendai shotō no Shanhai."

97. *Yun Ch'ihō ilgi* 8 (April 15, 1921).

98. *Samchōlli* 9 (September 1933); *Chūgai nippō*, August 7, 1933.

99. "Ilgi," in *Tosan An Ch'ang-ho chōnjip*.

Government's requests for financial contributions. Yu did not feel it would be effective to support a nationalist government so plagued with factionalism and infighting. This, in turn, led the radical Korean nationalist cohort of the Provisional Government to paint him as a traitor. Radical nationalist Koreans hated him not only because of his pro-Japanese dealings and his reluctance to provide financial support, but also because of the condescending manner in which he turned down their requests.

Yu was very aware of how Koreans saw him. In an essay published in the Korean journal *Tonggwang* in August 1931, four years after his adoption of Chinese nationality and two years before his death, Yu appears to be attempting to reassure Koreans of his fidelity and affection for Korea. Yu expresses unbearable nostalgia for his hometown in Korea. His longing to return to P'yongyang takes up a third of the essay: "Whenever I think of my hometown, my heart stops and I shed hot tears." To build sympathy, he characterizes his life as full of "poverty, hardship, and sorrow," and then continues, "With a mere one yuan in my hand, I have worked really hard . . . [as a merchant to] take money away from others." He acknowledges that "my greed for business and fame are as strong as that of others" and that people call him "a spiteful and cold-hearted person," a "deceitful person," and "a swindler." He thus laments:

Who can understand my mind, even a tiny bit? . . . I have not had one single person who can truly understand my true mind. In fact, I did not make any effort to make myself understood, and I did not even possess the virtue to understand others before I wanted others to understand me. This is probably the reason . . . I have felt sad about not having a friend, and I am feeling sad even now.¹⁰⁰

Even though people criticize him for his cold-heartedness, Yu continues, he is generally empathetic and cannot count how many times the people he has helped have eventually hurt him. Thus, he has tasted a lot of suffering and feels sad.

100. *Tonggwang* 24 (August 1931): 58–60.

For this reason, I strove to learn the ultimate meaning of life from love in Christianity, righteousness in Islam, and compassion in Buddhism. . . . I came to believe that one could realize the truth and the true Dharma by being faithful to oneself and by not deceiving one's instinct. Maybe this belief is the reason people imagine I am a cold-hearted person. However, how can empathy arise if there is no sensation of oneself? If the empathy denies oneself and if the empathy is what controls others' empathy, where can empathy as false as this exist?¹⁰¹

Yu then indicates his determination: "I have turned forty and don't have many years left. . . . My effort from this point on is to make my existence known to the world [by doing good works]." In conclusion, he reiterates his nostalgia for his hometown: "My hometown . . . is the root of my longing and the only destination of my path ahead," and "my tears will turn into glowing marbles of success, and there will come a time when they shine in the sunlight of my hometown."¹⁰² Ironically, Yu was killed by people of the country to which he had the greatest emotional attachment.

Yu's essay explains a lot about his personality, his awareness of the criticisms levied against him, and the role of Buddhism in his life. As he implies in his essay, from the end of the 1920s on, Yu's primary concern was implementing Buddhist programs. Thus, he was increasingly reluctant to divert his assets to other matters.

The radical nationalists' view of Yu was a little different. One of the masterminds behind the assassination, Chǒng Hwaam (1896–1981), characterizes Yu, in his autobiography, as "a nouveau riche who established the Buddhist Compassion Pharmaceutical Company, colluded with Japanese officials, recklessly committed anti-Korean activities, and made a lot of money."¹⁰³ Chǒng continues, "Yu disdained Korean nationalists as those who would wander around on the pretext of working for independence but were homeless and ignorant, and who, if given a sack of rice, would instantly become sycophants."¹⁰⁴ Chǒng writes that he was disgusted by Yu's pretentiousness and disregard for

101. *Tonggwang* 24 (August 1931): 58–60.

102. *Tonggwang* 24 (August 1931): 58–60.

103. Chǒng Hwaam, *Yi choguk ōdiro kal kōsinga*, 159.

104. Chǒng Hwaam, *Yi choguk ōdiro kal kōsinga*, 160.

others, and by Yu's expensive car, house, and luxurious lifestyle. Chŏng says that, despite the dire financial situation of the government, he and Kim Ku had declined Yu's offer to help the Insŏng School, although, over their objection, the Provisional Government itself ultimately accepted the offer.¹⁰⁵

Kim Ku and Chŏng eventually reached the limits of their patience and could no longer bear Yu's prosperity and arrogance. Together they hired two assassins, O Myŏnjik and Ŏm Hyŏngsun. O and Ŏm followed Yu around for two months, tracking his daily routine in the city to determine the best time and place to kill him. In the course of their spying, they found out that Yu was having an affair. Yu's first wife was Korean. After he moved to Shanghai, without divorcing his first wife, he took as his second wife a Chinese woman named Feng Peilan (1904–97) who worked as his secretary. In addition to the two, Yu was having an affair with the wife of a nationalist Korean who was a member of the Korean nationalist association Hŭngsadan (Young Korean Academy). Since her husband was running a tricycle factory far away from home, Yu regularly visited her house, which was across the street from his cousin, Yu Chengbin.¹⁰⁶ Yu was shot by the two assassins on August 1, 1933, when he came out of the house after spending time with her. The Korean Christian intellectual Yun Ch'ihŏ wrote in his diary of Yu's death:

[The Korean nationalist] Mr. Yŏ Unhyŏng, on his way to Outer Diamond Mountains, stopped off to see me. He said that Oak Kwanbin [Yu], who had been assassinated in Shanghai a week or so ago, had been a marked man among his enemies for some years because Oak, who made some money from patented medicines and swindled other people, refused to contribute to public causes [the Korean Provisional Government]. He wouldn't even help a worthy student. He protected himself by winning the good graces of the Japanese.¹⁰⁷

The Korean journal *Samchŏlli* offered a similar reason for his death: "Whenever he was asked for money for anti-Japanese movements, he was said to have declined, saying, 'You are not the only one who is

105. *Sinhan minbo*, January 10, 1929.

106. Chŏng Hwaam, *Yi choguk ŏdiro kal kŏsinga*, 338–42.

107. *Yun Ch'ihŏ ilgi* 10, August 21, 1933.

working' and 'I also have reason to make money.' This greed and stinginess became a major reason for the revenge killing."¹⁰⁸ Yu certainly was collaborating with the Japanese. Even the Japanese colonial government, in its report on Yu's case, called him "pro-Japanese."¹⁰⁹ According to Chǒng Hwaam, Yu allegedly provided 20,000 yuan worth of lumber to the Japanese military forces and worked as a spy for the Japanese police.¹¹⁰ The fact that he was amicable to the Japanese did not, however, help his business. On January 28, 1932, the Japanese army clashed with Chinese troops in Shanghai, one precursor to the full-blown Sino-Japanese war five years later.¹¹¹ The battle itself was instigated by an incident that had taken place ten days earlier, when five Japanese Buddhist priests marched down a street in central Shanghai beating drums and chanting sutras. They did this at the peak of anti-Japanese sentiment in China, which had been building since 1931, following Japan's invasion and occupation of Manchuria. Provoked by the priests' showy public display, Chinese onlookers beat them up so badly that one priest died.¹¹² The Japanese military used this incident as an excuse to take over Shanghai. Backed by superior naval and aerial weapons, Japanese military forces launched a sweeping attack and bombed the city, defeating the ill-equipped but resilient Chinese army. Among many buildings pulverized by the bombardment was Yu's Buddhist Compassion Pharmaceutical Company factory. He tried to protect it by staying in the building but eventually had to flee for his life.¹¹³

Even though Yu lost significant assets in the Japanese bombing and was perceived by Korean nationalists to be a collaborator with the Japanese, Korean nationalists still sought Yu's financial support. The Japanese newspaper *Asahi shinbun* reported that Yu had previously supported the Korean nationalists but had declined to provide money for Yun Ponggil's (1908–32) plot to assassinate some Japanese generals at the Japanese emperor's birthday ceremony set for April 29, 1932, at Hongkou Garden. The newspaper reported that Yu's failure to provide any support

108. *Samchǒlli*, September 1, 1933.

109. *Sōtokufu keimu kyokuchō shorui*, July 9, 1934.

110. Chǒng Hwaam, *Yi choguk ōdiro*, 338–42; see also Cho Yǒngnok, "Ilche kangjǒmgi Hangju Koryōsa," 68.

111. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, 44. Jordan's book is the most comprehensive work to date on the battle of 1932.

112. Birnbaum, *Manchu Princess*, 119–20.

113. *Tong'a ilbo*, March 9, 1932.

for this plot was the direct reason for his murder.¹¹⁴ Thus, it was not only Yu's collaboration with the Japanese that directly led to his killing but also, as Kim Kwangjae argues, Yu's reluctance to provide financial assistance for the Provisional Government's radical actions.¹¹⁵

According to a Korean source, Yu's antinationalist activity was exemplified by his establishment of a (pro-Japanese) Korean fraternal business society in 1921,¹¹⁶ in an effort to check a similar (but anti-Japanese) Korean society in Shanghai. Yu's association allegedly received financial and administrative assistance from Japan. Another source, however, contradicts this assertion; it states that Yu's association was established in order to support the Provisional Government by donating 10 percent of its annual profits.¹¹⁷ People around Yu were clearly uncertain about his allegiances and intentions.

A week after Yu's death, the anarchists, or radical nationalists, distributed an official document on the assassination titled "The Korean Association of Eliminating the Cunning" and had it published under the title "The Nature of Yu Guanbin's Crimes" in a Shanghai daily newspaper. This document details nine sinful activities that Yu committed, likening Yu to the infamous seller of the Korean nation to Japan, Yi Wangyong (1858–1926), and characterizing Yu as a most "faithful dog [to Japan] and conniving ghost" (*gonggou changgui*). They accused him of being a traitor to both Korea and China, saying that he had worked for the Japanese colonial government as a spy since 1920. To garner support for their assassination from the Chinese side, they claimed that Yu had fabricated his Chinese nationality, infiltrated a Chinese political party, reported secret information of the Chinese nationalist government to their mutual enemy, Japan, and provided the Japanese military with resources.¹¹⁸

Four months after Yu's death, his cousin Yu Chengbin, also a staunch nationalist at one time,¹¹⁹ was likewise assassinated, becoming

114. *Chūgai nippō*, August 8, 1933.

115. Kim Kwangjae, "Sanghae sigi Ok Kwanbin milchöngsöl," 65.

116. *Tong'a ilbo*, July 29, 1921.

117. "Kanjin tōmei chokikukai soshiki ni kansuru ken."

118. *Da wanbao*, August 9, 1933; *Shen bao*, August 9, 1933; *Tong'a ilbo*, August 15, 1933; Chöng Hwaam, *Yi choguk ödiro kal kösinga*, 338–42.

119. Takei, "1920-nendai shotō no Shanhai," 174. Chengbin worked closely with An Ch'angho in the Provisional Government and helped establish the Independence Party (Tongniptang) in 1929 (*Tosan An Ch'ang-ho chönjip*, 175).

another victim of the same radicals a couple of months later.¹²⁰ Yu Chengbin was then working as a Chinese detective and was alleged to have obstructed the anti-Japanese movement. Soon after Yu Guanbin was assassinated, Yu Chengbin had taken finding and arresting the assassins into his own hands.¹²¹ The disposal of Yu Guanbin's body and the jurisdiction of his case became an issue. Since the assassination occurred within the Japanese quarter and since Yu had been born in colonial Korea, the Japanese police considered him to be a Japanese subject. As such, the Japanese police took custody of the body for autopsy. However, Yu's former Chinese associates considered him a Chinese citizen since Yu had recovered his Chinese nationality: they demanded that the Japanese turn the body over to Chinese authorities. They saw the actions of the Japanese police as an encroachment on China's sovereignty and blamed the Chinese police and the city government of Shanghai for not asserting their authority over the matter.¹²² Things became further complicated when Yu Chengbin claimed his cousin was Korean, while Yu's second wife, Feng Peilan, claimed her husband was Chinese, insisting that the Chinese authorities take custody of his body.¹²³ At any rate, the rumor that Yu was killed because he was a Japanese spy also alarmed the Republican government of China, which had fought against Japanese imperialism since the Mukden Incident in 1931. In the end, Yu was considered a Korean citizen, and the Japanese police sent his body back to his hometown in colonial Korea for the funeral. The two assassins were arrested in 1936 and taken to Seoul for trial.¹²⁴

Taixu was staying in Lushan when he received a telegram from a lay Buddhist in Shanghai informing him of Yu's death. Deeply saddened, Taixu wrote a letter to the Wuchang Buddhist Studies Institute (Wuchang foxueyuan) and the Buddhist Right Faith Society (Hankou zhengxinhui), directing them to hold a memorial service.¹²⁵ Within a

120. *Shen bao*, December 19, 1933.

121. This is based on an interview with Ku Ikkyun (1908–2013). See Kim Kwangjae, "Sanghae sigi Ok Kwanbin milchöngsöl," 65, n. 48.

122. *Shen bao*, August 4, 1933.

123. *Xinwen bao*, August 3, 1933.

124. *Maeil shinbo*, July 1, 1936.

125. According to one of Yu's three daughters, Helen Chu (b. 1931) of Long Island, New York, Taixu continued to visit her family even after her father's death. She

few days, almost all the Chinese Buddhist lay and monastic associations in Shanghai as well as those from several other cities held a special memorial for Yu. Shocked and bewildered by Yu's violent death, they eulogized and lauded him as an ideal lay Buddhist and renewed their commitment to carrying out his legacy. Chinese Buddhists at the time did not consider Yu to be a pro-Japanese collaborator but a staunch anti-Japanese nationalist, and they therefore concluded that Yu had been killed by "thieves."¹²⁶

With Yu's death, the energy behind rebuilding the Koryōsa evaporated.¹²⁷ The rapport between Chinese and Korean Buddhism of the late 1920s and early 1930s also dissipated following Yu's death. Taixu's Buddhacization program was "deeply affected."¹²⁸ Taixu had relied on Yu's economic and political clout to enact his Buddhist initiatives.¹²⁹ To Taixu, Yu was one of the rare laypeople who exerted tremendous leadership skills but never challenged Taixu's authority. Unflinchingly devoted to Taixu, Yu was an ideal working partner for the Buddhacization Movement.

Despite Yu's renunciation of his Korean nationality and the recovery of his Chinese nationality, his identity as a Korean persisted in the eyes of other Korean nationalists in Shanghai. Yu always believed that he was Korean and never intended to fully renounce his Korean national identity. He remained involved in the temple project even after obtaining his Chinese citizenship and continued to identify himself as Korean.¹³⁰ Depending on his audience, Yu used either side of his dual national identity. His religious identity further complicated matters. Even though Yu had strong ethnic nationalism, he nonetheless was dedicated to Buddhism to the extent that he was willing to work with the enemy. Yu poured his energy and money into the Buddhacization Movement, working even with Japanese Buddhists, and at the same

remembers one of the larger rooms in her house was used to accommodate Taixu and his retinue whenever he visited Shanghai. She also remembered that Taixu loved ice cream (interview conducted November 2015).

126. Huang Xianian, "Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao," 155.

127. Seven decades later, the city of Hangzhou reconstructed the temple as a tourist site.

128. Huang Xianian, "Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao," 157.

129. Yinshun, *Taixu dashi nianpu*, 361.

130. Huang Xianian, "Jindai Zhonghan liangguo fojiao youhao," 157.

time rejecting sponsorship of the Korean nationalist movement. He was killed for his perceived violation of Korean ethnic nationalism.

Conclusion

The case of Yu and his life as a Buddhist requires us to consider the Buddhism of this period as existing beyond national boundaries and the development of transnational Buddhism as extending beyond Japanese influence. The time period in which Yu lived, as Cemil Aydin has articulated, abounded with international and transnational ideologies, such as pan-Asianism, pan-Islamism, pan-Slavism, pan-Europeanism, pan-Africanism, and other pan-isms.¹³¹ Among the pan-Asian and global Buddhist discourses that affected East Asian Buddhist leaders, Taixu's transnational Buddhacization Movement, along with pan-Asian Buddhist movements in Sri Lanka and Korea, differed from the Japanese version. (The Japanese transnational Buddhist movement took a distinctive form because it was coopted by imperial expansion.) The Chinese version of pan-Asian Buddhism, albeit ultimately unsuccessful for various political and religious reasons, emerged as a persuasive alternative to the Japanese version. For a brief period, Taixu's Buddhacization Movement provided a counterweight to the more dominant influence of the Japanese Buddhist discourse in East Asia, and Yu was an active implementer of the movement.

In thinking about Buddhists of the period, it is important to understand that Yu is not representative. He does, however, typify the complexities of national identity in the face of colonialism and imperialism, especially of the Korean diaspora in China, Manchuria, Japan, Russia, and America. As was the case with so many, he had to continuously negotiate and renegotiate his cultural, religious, and national identities. For him, transnational Buddhism offered a space for a coherent identity that one could share with others outside political agendas.

Even though transnational visions were operative among Buddhists at the time, nationalist visions grew ever more dominant. In fact, transnationalism and nationalism were mutually inseparable because each transnational vision arose from the particulars of the nation in which it originated and fed back into nationalist aims, such as

131. Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism*.

autonomy, authority, and sovereignty. The transnational discourses operated alongside competing and conflicting national visions and interests. While presenting himself as cosmopolitan, Taixu was also uncompromisingly nationalistic in his concern for the future of China, which was plagued by civil war and semicolonialism. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the subsequent Shanghai Incident in 1932 further hardened his ethnocentric message.

Yu was also a long-distance Korean nationalist in his own right, even though he promoted transnational and global Buddhism. He was deeply concerned about the future of Korea and the welfare of the Korean people. This long-distance nationalism continued even after he became a Chinese citizen. However, his commitment to the transnational Buddhist cause led him to work with Buddhists from Japan. Radical Korean nationalists translated such cooperation as undermining the Korean cause. The transnational vision was not able to offset the nationalist and particularistic demands of the period, even in the unique circumstances of Shanghai. Despite the fact that this transnational, global Buddhist movement was relatively short-lived and did not materialize fully, Yu's engagement in the Buddhacization Movement provides us with a unique and colorful glimpse into the dynamics among East Asian Buddhist modernity and Chinese transnational Buddhism, Korean nationalist politics, and Japanese Buddhist interests. If this transcultural Buddhist identity galvanized the support of East Asian Buddhists outside of Korea, this shared religious identity also generated meaningful contact in colonial Korea, the topic to which we now turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

Transcultural Zen

Sōma Shōei's Training with Korean Masters

One afternoon in late April of 1929, a young Japanese Sōtō Zen priest arrived at a large temple in the mountains of southeastern Korea. He wore a traditional long, white robe in the Korean style and carried letters of recommendation from influential Japanese and Korean lay Buddhists. His name was Sōma Shōei (1904–71), and he had just graduated from Komazawa University the year before.¹ Sōma sat down anxiously before the abbot of Pömō Temple and, through an interpreter, begged the abbot to permit him to join the monastery's three-month meditation retreat. He had long wished to learn Zen meditation from the great masters of Korea. The abbot, Kim Kyōngsan (1852–?), replied,

Although we have a meditation hall here in this head temple, it is against the rules to accept anybody in the middle of retreat. In addition, the monastic regulations will be too strict for you to follow. Moreover, it will be quite disruptive to the other monks already in retreat if somebody who is unfamiliar with our language, customs, and culture suddenly joins us. What do you think about practicing meditation at a nearby

1. Sōma was born in Niigata Prefecture (*Sōtōshū shūhō* 767 [July 1929]: 6). Little else is known of his early life except that he was affiliated with the Tentaku'in in Aichi Prefecture (*Sōtōshū shūhō* 764 [April 1929]: 10).

branch temple, one that also has a meditation hall and that can accommodate your needs?²

Sōma was so eager to join a meditation retreat of any kind that he was not disappointed by the abbot's reply. He hurried over to the branch temple a quarter mile away and received permission to enter the retreat there. Thus began Sōma's six-year relationship, from 1929 to 1936, with Korean Buddhism. During these years, he did retreats at different Korean monasteries, studied with Korean Sōn (Ch. Chan; Jp. Zen) masters, made pilgrimages to major temples and religious sites, and traveled throughout Korea. Sōma wrote at length about all these experiences, compiling the most extensive firsthand account and perhaps the only account of colonial Korean Buddhism ever written by a Japanese Buddhist priest.

Sōma's youth and determination to practice in Korea seem to have kept him relatively free from ideological interpretations of his monastic experiences. His narratives lack an air of Japanese superiority and reveal a deep respect for Korean masters and his fellow meditation practitioners. His writing also shows that he primarily identified himself as an *unsui*, an itinerant monk—a monastic modality that Zen monks in China, Korea, and Japan had used for centuries with origins in the practices of the historical Buddha. This transnational and transcultural modality allowed Sōma to share a feeling of brotherhood with the Korean Sōn monastics he met and vice versa. As a result of his time in Korea, his understanding of Zen practice and Buddhism was transformed. More important, his writings on Korean Sōn had a significant impact on how Japanese Buddhists viewed Korean Buddhism as well as how they understood their own identity as Buddhists. More broadly, Sōma's accounts furthered the idea, under discussion among Buddhist leaders and intellectuals, that Zen Buddhism, as opposed to other forms of Buddhism, could appeal to modern East Asians.

This chapter explores Sōma's adventures in Korea to argue that traditional Buddhist ideas, practices, and worldview, including the *unsui* modality, continued to be operative for Buddhists in the modern period. In other words, Buddhist transnationalism in the modern period comprised not just modern elements such as governmentality

2. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 290.

and propagation, but premodern ideals that East Asian Buddhists valued, such as the sacredness of texts and images and the designation of monastic roles. The remarkable consistency of these across centuries and across East Asian lands provided a common language through which Japanese and Korean Buddhism could communicate. As such, Sōma's pilgrimage in colonial Korea presents a good example of how Japanese clericalism and Korean monasticism were bounded by but also moved beyond colonial dichotomies. In writing about the situation on the ground, Sōma challenged the stereotypical Japanese Buddhist view of Korean Buddhism and even the belief that Japanese Buddhism was superior. Sōma's identity as an *unsui* enabled him to engage with Korean monastics through the context of a centuries-old Zen paradigm, a context that offered an alternative to colonialism, nationalism, and modernity.

Three Families under the Same Roof

To put into perspective Sōma's practice at Korean monasteries and the significance of his writings for Japanese Buddhists, let me begin with a sketch of the Buddhist landscape in colonial Korea. From 1877, when Japanese Buddhism established its first post in the port city of Pusan, to 1911, when Japan officially made Korea its colony and promulgated the Temple Ordinance, Korean Buddhist communities coexisted with steadily growing Japanese Buddhist communities of various sects. Korean Buddhist communities were largely concentrated in areas far from the cities, while almost all Japanese Buddhist establishments took root in the cities. Despite the distances, during this period Korean and Japanese Buddhists tried to form various degrees of institutional alliances or mergers, but none were successful. The 1911 Temple Ordinance, which prohibited direct institutional agreements between Korean and Japanese Buddhists, ushered in a new structure for the relationship between the two Buddhisms. Korean Buddhists no longer needed Japanese Buddhism's institutional support because it was available through the colonial government directly. Contact between the two Buddhist communities from this point on, therefore, largely occurred through three avenues. The first area of contact was through Korean monks studying at Japanese Buddhist sectarian universities. The second was through projects on behalf of the colonial government in

which the colonial government encouraged a working relationship (for example, organizing the Buddha's Birthday Festival). Lastly, individual Buddhists, albeit numerically insignificant, formed personal relationships with each other for various efforts. However, these relationships operated under the framework of the Temple Ordinance, which kept the two communities separate. As a result, Japanese and Korean Buddhists coexisted in a shared land but largely minded their own business. The internal relationship building of the precolonial period dissipated in the first decade of the colonial period as a colonial governing system set in.

However, in 1920, the Buddhist landscape of colonial Korea changed dramatically. The March First Independence Uprising alarmed the colonial government. It questioned the effectiveness of its hawkish policy in governing its new colony. The government was especially concerned about the leading roles of Christians in instigating the uprising. State officials also held Japanese and Korean Buddhist leaders partly responsible and accused them of not doing their job of working together to pacify the populace through ways religion can moderate political resentment. The new governor general, Saitō Makoto, appointed on the heels of the uprising, expressed this disappointment in the two Buddhisms. The government realized that it would need the two Buddhisms to work together in a more organized way. Hence, a third community was instituted to act as a powerful intermediary. It was spearheaded by Japanese and Korean lay Buddhists who were dissatisfied with what they felt were the lethargic clergy. These Japanese and Korean lay Buddhists held powerful positions in government, business, and the media in colonial Korea. They saw a new organization as a way to overcome the obstacles of language, culture, prejudice, and disinterest that had kept the two Buddhisms apart. Nakamura Kentarō, a key player who later helped popularize Hana matsuri in colonial Korea, along with Abe Mitsuie, Kobayashi Genroku, Kwōn Chunghyōn (1854–1934), and Yi Wōnsōk, established the organization Chōsen bukkyō taikai (Great Meeting of Korean Buddhism) in 1920. (In 1925, it was renamed Chōsen bukkyōdan [Association of Korean Buddhism], hereafter the Association.) The Association, made possible with the financial support of Kobayashi, a wealthy Buddhist businessman who donated 100,000 yen in startup money, received the endorsement of all the major Japanese and Korean Buddhist leaders. The founders set up

branches in each of the major provinces and made an effort to build bridges between Japanese and Korean Buddhist communities through journals, lectures, the distribution of Buddha statues, and the introduction of new scholarship. The Association's efforts to bring the two Buddhist communities together culminated in a conference held in 1929. More than five hundred Buddhist leaders from all the Japanese Buddhist sects, the abbots of Korea's head temples, and other Buddhist leaders convened in the garden of the colonial government headquarters for discussions.

Among other activities, the Association also published the monthly journal *Korean Buddhism* (*Chōsen bukkyō*). Approximately 3,000 copies of each issue were distributed, primarily to Japanese residents in colonial Korea but also to the homeland and other colonies. Reflecting the determination to bring the two communities together, the first few issues were printed in both Japanese and Korean. (In addition, the Association issued a news journal for children in the Korean language.)³ The articles pertaining to Korean Buddhism were carefully selected to showcase the positive. Some were written by Nakamura himself to rectify misconceptions that the Japanese had about Korean Buddhism. As discussed in chapter 2, beginning in 1928, the Association was also at the forefront of planning for the Buddha's Birthday Festival, which was organized jointly by the two Buddhist communities.

The Association of Korean Buddhism, which was primarily managed by Japanese Buddhists, was more than a bridge between Japanese and Korean Buddhism: it exerted tremendous influence politically and socially, to the extent that it came to represent, in the minds of many, Japanese Buddhism; and some Korean Buddhist leaders feared that the Association might seek to represent Korean Buddhism as well. Thus, there were three distinct Buddhist bodies in colonial Korea: the Korean Buddhist community, the Japanese Buddhist sects, and the Association of Korean Buddhism. Of these three, the Japanese lay-led Association dominated the scene from the 1920s through the end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945. It was also the Association that sponsored Sōma's time in Korea. The person who was directly responsible for Sōma's visit was one of the founding members of the Association, Abe Mitsui.

3. *Chosŏn pulgyo so'nyŏn nyusŭ* 3 (1924).

Abe and Zen Buddhism

In order to make sense of Sōma's relationship with the Association and its journal, it is crucial to understand Abe's background and vision. Abe was born in Kumamoto in 1862 and started his career as a reporter for the newspaper *Kokumin no tomo* (People's friend) in 1886. He became an editor in 1889 and vice president in 1911. He was invited to Korea by Governor General Terauchi Masatake to advise him. Abe arrived in Korea in 1914 and was assigned to serve as the president of *Keijō nippō* (Seoul daily), the most influential newspaper at the time. (Journalist Tokutomi Sohō [1863–1957], who published the *People's Friend* and founded the *Seoul Daily*, had been Abe's longtime friend, and Abe was considered to be Tokutomi's right-hand man.) Through this position, Abe befriended prominent Korean intellectuals such as Yun Ch'ihō and Yi Kwangsu as well as the leading businessman Kim Sōngsu. Although Abe was not a government official, he had a tremendous amount of political power. He was also well known in the Buddhist arena. In fact, just as the Sōtō missionary Takeda Hanshi was the most influential Buddhist in the precolonial period, Abe was the most prominent Japanese Buddhist during the 1920s and 1930s in colonial Korea. He was better known by his Dharma name, Mubutsu Koji.

As a lay disciple of Rinzai Master Shaku Sōen (1859–1919),⁴ Abe devoted much of his time and energy to promoting Zen Buddhism in colonial Korea and to radically overhauling Korean Buddhism. His partnership, although brief, with the renowned Korean Buddhist master Paek Yongsōng, who also met Anagarika Dharmapala the same year, was noteworthy. When they first met, in 1913, by way of introduction from a Korean lay Buddhist, Paek had been vigorously promoting Sōn Buddhism. In particular, he wanted to unify Korean Buddhism under the Imje (Ch. Linji; Jp. Rinzai) lineage, doctrine, and institution. Imje, a major lineage of Zen founded by Linji Yixuan (?–866) in China in the ninth century, is the Zen lineage that was adhered to by Abe as well as Paek. In 1907, Paek made a trip to China, the homeland of Chan. During his six-month stay there, he met many Chinese Chan practitioners and Buddhist leaders and engaged in dialogues about Chan.⁵ Although details about his interactions with Chinese monks are not

4. Nakamura Kentarō, *Chōsen seikatsu gojūnen*, 54.

5. Han Pogwang, "Yongsōng Sūnim ūi chōnbangi."

available, his experience must have consolidated his commitment to the Imje lineage. Later, when Paek was challenged by a major rival of Korean Buddhism, out of desperation, he turned to the politically and religiously influential Abe for assistance. Their collaboration to promote Sōn Buddhism, particularly the Imje lineage, brought about a Zen boom in colonial Seoul in the first part of the 1910s. Yet Abe's vision differed from Paek's in that Abe tried to present the Japanese version of the Linji branch as the ideal form of Buddhism, whereas Paek touted the Korean version. Abe considered the Japanese Rinzai Zen the most universal and the form that Korean Buddhism could adopt to unify internally as well as to work with other Buddhisms externally.⁶

An early piece from the 1930s titled "Chōsen bukkyō ni taisuru hiken" (An opinion about Korean Buddhism) reflects Abe's view that Korean Buddhism needed reform and states some of the objectives the Association should consider to accomplish that reform. Abe suggested that Japanese Buddhists "instruct and guide" and "improve and innovate" Korean Buddhism,⁷ which he considered stagnant. Abe's proposal prioritized Zen, suggesting that it would be the most effective framework for popularizing Buddhism in Korea. Abe's stance can be gleaned, as early as 1918, from a talk he gave at a Zen retreat in Japan. Lauding his master Sōen's trips to China and Korea, Abe expressed his happiness that, thanks to Sōen, the Rinzai tradition had returned to China and Korea from Japan and had "revitalized Rinzai Zen in those lands."⁸

Abe's views on Rinzai in particular and Zen in general persisted into the early 1930s, when he laid out a detailed proposal in his "Opinion about Korean Buddhism." He recommends that Korean Sōn monks be sent to Japanese Zen monasteries so that they can learn about the style and vitality of Japanese Zen. In the same way, young Japanese priests who have recently graduated from universities should be dispatched to stay at Korean temples, where they could learn the Korean language, study Korean Buddhism, and ultimately contribute to the popularization of Buddhism in imperial Japan and colonial Korea. It is interesting that Abe does not consider Korean Sōn to be of value for

6. Kim Hwansoo, "Seeking the Colonizer's Favors."

7. *Abe Mitsuiie kankei bunsho mokuroku*, 251. I would like to express my appreciation to Ellie Ch'oe, an assistant professor at Cornell University, for kindly sharing this source with me.

8. *Zendō* 1918:21.

young Japanese priests to practice and learn, even though by this time he had met Master Paek. Abe also suggests that Japanese Buddhist intellectuals should come and enlighten Korean monks. He recommends as an excellent starting point reading the lectures by a friend of his, the well-known Suzuki Daisetsu (D. T. Suzuki; 1870–1966) of Ōtani University, who was planning to visit China and Korea.⁹ Although it is unclear whether Suzuki visited Korea and met Korean monks, Abe sent a copy of a report on Suzuki's visit to China to two Korean monks, Pang Hanam (1876–1951) and a monk named Paek.¹⁰ Abe's vision was to popularize the Japanese form of Zen in Korea with the help of Sōen and Suzuki, who had successfully transmitted Zen Buddhism to the West, and by working with Korea's prominent Zen masters.

Sōma's Meeting with Abe

Sōma's first meeting with Abe took place in Tokyo in early 1929, less than a year after he had graduated from Komazawa University. Also attending this meeting was a group of ten Korean students Abe had brought to Japan to learn about Japanese Buddhism. When Sōma expressed his interest in practicing at Korean monasteries, Abe was delighted. Abe complained about the lack of missionary spirit among Japanese Buddhist priests in Korea, particularly when compared to Christian missionaries who willingly lived among Koreans, became fluent in the Korean language within a year, and converted Koreans en masse. None of the Japanese Buddhist priests, Abe lamented, were capable of doing what the Christian missionaries had done.¹¹

Sōma later recalled a brief exchange he had had with the ten Korean students present at the meeting. They agreed with Abe, pointing out that Japanese Buddhist priests in Korea were completely useless and had no relationship with Korean Buddhists such as themselves,¹²

9. *Abe Mitsuie kankei bunsho mokuroku*, 125.

10. *Chōsen bukkyō* 104 (1934): 8. The journal conjectures that one of them could be Paek Sōng'uk (1897–1981). However, in extant sources, there is no record showing that Paek Sōng'uk was acquainted with Suzuki. It is most likely that Abe is referring to Paek Yongsōng in light of Abe's previous relationship with him (see Kim Hwansoo, "Seeking the Colonizer's Favors").

11. *Chōsen bukkyō* 119 (1936): 45–46.

12. *Chōsen bukkyō* 119 (1936): 45–46.

attesting to Abe's point that Japanese Buddhist priests were primarily concerned about their own Japanese communities in Korea and were uninterested in reaching out to Korean people. Although Sōma was from a different Zen lineage, Abe felt he was the perfect candidate to ignite some kind of missionary spirit among Japanese priests. He took Sōma's enthusiasm as a sign of missionary fervor and encouraged Sōma to leave for Korea as soon as possible. Abe wrote an addendum to "An Opinion about Korean Buddhism" stating that Sōma was a fitting example for young Japanese priests who wanted to study at Korean monasteries.¹³ Abe then introduced Sōma to Nakamura Kentarō, another influential lay Buddhist figure in colonial Korea. Nakamura had been living in Korea since coming to work for a railroad company in Pusan in 1899. He had already learned Korean at a Korean language school in his hometown of Kumamoto, Japan, and spoke it fluently.¹⁴ He also worked as a reporter at the *Seoul Daily* while Abe was the president and became a Buddhist through his friendship with Abe. (Nakamura lived in Korea for forty-seven years, until the end of the colonial period.) Nakamura provided substantial financial support throughout Sōma's trips in Korea. In return, Sōma contributed diaries and travelogues on Korean Buddhism to the Association's journal *Korean Buddhism*. Sōma also received assistance from the Sōtō sect through a grant.¹⁵ Whenever he needed them, Abe and Nakamura wrote recommendation letters, which Sōma submitted to Korean monks in order to receive permission to stay at monasteries. Except during three-month retreats or in cases of illness (one of which forced him to return to Japan to recover),¹⁶ Sōma sent his pieces, mostly in the form of travelogues and letters written to Nakamura, to the journal on a regular basis (fig. 4.1).

Sōma's writing reflects the colonial ethos of the time. Although not stated outright, it is clear that Sōma assumes that Korea will be assimilated into Japan (*dōka*) and that Korean subjects will be imperialized

13. *Abe Mitsuie kankei bunsho mokuroku*, 251.

14. Nakamura, *Chōsen seikatsu gojūnen*, 9–10.

15. *Kongō*, a journal published by the branch temple of the Sōtō sect in Seoul, reports in its news section, "Since this summer, Sōma Shōei, who has been practicing at the Pōmōsa, will receive some grant money [from the Sōtō headquarters]. We would like to wish him good health and great progress in his Zen practice" (*Kongō*, February 1930, 18).

16. For example, *Kongō* reports that because of sickness Sōma had to return to Japan in 1930 (*Kongō*, October 1930, 17).



FIG. 4.1. Sōma Shōei, holding a staff at right, with Nakamura Kentarō, seated in the middle of the group (*Han'guk pulgyo 100-yŏn*, 121). Courtesy of Minjoksa Publications, Seoul.

(*kōminka*). It is important to bear in mind that Sōma's long journey across Korea would not have been possible without financial and administrative support from Nakamura, Abe, the Sôtō sect, and others who worked for the colonial government. Almost all Sōma's writings, with the exception of one piece, were published in *Korean Buddhism*, the journal of his sponsors. In addition, at the request of *Korean Buddhism*, Sōma undertook several anthropological research projects on local Buddhist faith traditions. He also conducted a tour for a group of twenty young Korean monks of a prison complex, the colonial

government's offices, a military post, and media facilities in Seoul.¹⁷ Working with the colonial government, Sōma was instrumental in having the sound of a famous, historic metal bell of a Korean temple broadcast by radio throughout colonial Korea to celebrate the New Year.¹⁸ By creating knowledge about Korean Buddhism and culture for the Japanese, Sōma was thus a participant in the colonial discourse. Nowhere in his writing does Sōma directly challenge the legitimacy of Japan's colonial rule over Korea, although in places he is quietly critical of the way it was being implemented. In the wake of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, he even wrote a letter to one of his mentors about Japan's total mobilization policy, expressing his desire to be of service to the nation.¹⁹ Therefore, although Sōma went to Korea to practice for personal reasons, his writings helped further the objectives of the Association and the visions of Nakamura and Abe. His writings were inevitably part of the goal to promote assimilation, and thus they contributed to the colonial agenda.

Sōma's Adventures in Colonial Korea

Nevertheless, Sōma himself did not identify with the double agendas typical of some Japanese Buddhist colonialists. Rather, he grounded his status in a traditional Zen identity that had been shared by East Asian countries for centuries—that of an *unsui*. Sōma's interpretation of the *unsui* modality was not derived from the Zen ideology that some Japanese Buddhist intellectuals presented as the pure essence of Japanese civilization.²⁰ Rather, Sōma's identification as an *unsui* was personal, transnational, and less politically shaded.

The literal meaning of *unsui* is “clouds and water,”²¹ referring to the ideal characteristics of a Zen monastic's life. That is, Zen monastics should “live their lives so smoothly that they can be compared to a moving cloud or to running water” and “gather around a great master as water or clouds gather in certain places.”²² In living like a cloud,

17. *Chōsen bukkyō* 117 (1935): 28.

18. *Chōsen bukkyō* 108 (1936): 42.

19. *Chōsen bukkyō* 108 (1936): 42; 136 (1938): 10.

20. Sharf, *Zen of Japanese Nationalism*; Heisig and Maraldo, *Rude Awakenings*.

21. Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary*, 1047.

22. Satō, *Unsui*, 1.

which moves freely and leaves no trace, an *unsui* is not confined by space and time in his search for enlightenment: he should travel about as a pilgrim, learning from masters. This ideal goes back to the life of the historical Buddha. At the time of the Buddha, monastics were expected to live together during the rainy season for three months twice a year; during the other six months, they traveled around without settling in, disseminating the Dharma. This earlier tradition developed into the *unsui* ideology associated specifically with Chan in China.²³ Chan practitioners would attend a three-month intensive meditation retreat at different monasteries in summer and winter and wander about during the months in between. The tradition had continued to the twentieth century throughout Buddhist East Asia.

At the time, it was common for a graduate of Komazawa University to spend a few years as an *unsui* as part of his training. Sōma, a graduate of that university, which was operated by the Sōtō sect, chose to do this in Korea. During his six years as an *unsui*, Sōma experienced the Korean Zen monastic life to the fullest, trained under masters to deepen his spiritual practice, and developed a strong sense of community. His fellow Japanese Buddhists appreciated his sympathetic descriptions of Korean Buddhism not because he introduced them to the attractive qualities of Korean Buddhism but because he did so in a way that was honest, sincere, and respectful of Korean monastics and their tradition.

With the help of Abe, Sōma was nominally assigned by the Sōtō sect to be a missionary at the two Sōtō branch temples in Seoul.²⁴ He arrived in Seoul on April 15, 1929. After several weeks of preparation, he headed off to Pōmō Temple with a recommendation letter from Abe and Yi Ch'anggūn (1901–?), head of the Office of Religion in the colonial government, to start his first retreat in Korea. Why it was that Yi and Abe sent Sōma to Pōmō Temple in particular bears exploring. According to statistics printed in the Korean Buddhist journal *Sōnwōn* in 1932, Pōmō Temple and its branch Naewōnam were two of nineteen Sōn

23. Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary*, 1047; Faure, *Chan Insights*, 155. Faure writes that the wandering aspect of the Chan practitioner contributed to the creation of “a new sacred geography” in China through respatializing or delocalizing traditional pilgrim sites in China.

24. *Sōtōshū shūhō* 765 (1929): 1. According to a different source, he was assigned to a rural propagation hall in Korea (Sōtōshū kaigai kaikyō dendōshi hensan i'inkai, *Sōtōshū kaigai kaikyō*, 270).

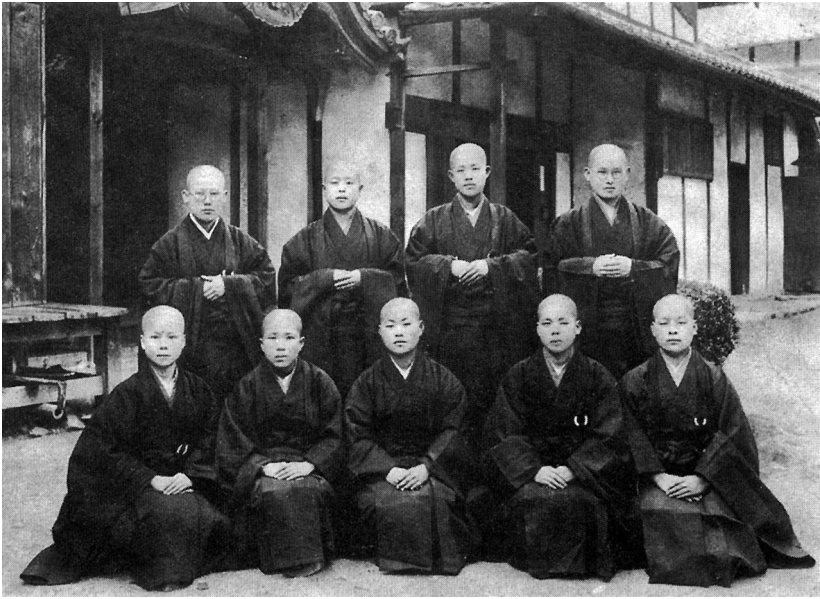


FIG. 4.2. Chŏng Suok, first on the left in the back row, seen with a group of nuns at the Rinzai seminary for nuns (*Han'guk pulgyo 100-yŏn*, 161). Courtesy of Minjoksa Publications, Seoul.

monasteries in Korea. It was estimated that roughly 230 Korean Sŏn monks were living there as *unsus* (Jp. *unsuis*), mainly practicing *kongan* (Jp. *kōan*) meditation, a type of meditation related to that used in the Japanese Rinzai lineage of Zen.²⁵ This was just a fraction of the total monastic population, which numbered around 7,000 (5,709 monks and 1,185 nuns) in 1932.²⁶ Unfortunately for those Japanese seeking to promote Zen, the number of Sŏn monasteries in Korea was declining: whereas in the precolonial era there had been about a hundred monasteries, in the colonial period only nineteen remained.

Furthermore, no monastery was available for nuns where they could have a regular, intensive retreat, even though there were more than a thousand nuns at the time. The elite nun Chŏng Suok (1902–66) wrote a critical essay on the status of nuns in Korea after her study trip to Japan from 1937 to 1939 (fig. 4.2). She toured various cities in Japan and stayed

25. Sōtō and Ōbaku also used this method.

26. *Sōtokufu tōkei nenpyō* 1934.

at a Nichirenshū temple for a year. Then she continued her studies at a Rinzai seminary for nuns in 1939. Suok was impressed by the status of nuns in Rinzaishū and particularly by the fact that there were special educational and meditation facilities for nuns (Rinzaishū had the best-known meditation nunnery, the Enkō Temple).²⁷ In her essay published in the Korean Buddhist journal *Pulgyo sibo*, she harshly criticized the male-dominated Sangha of Korean Buddhism for paying no attention to nuns' education and the Sōn practice. She argued that, in order to improve nuns' status in Korea, "a seminary and a retreat center for nuns should be established."²⁸

Setting aside the fact that there were no monasteries for nuns, there were several reasons for the loss of nearly four out of every five Sōn temples in the early twentieth century. Korean Buddhist reformers, seeking to modernize, succeeded in relocating the Buddhist clergy from the mountain monasteries to the cities, where they could minister to larger groups. In this new paradigm, the role of itinerant monks was seen as lowlier than even the now-low role of the scholar monk because both were useless in furthering propagation efforts. Moreover, the emphasis on propagation rather than personal, secluded practice meant that limited temple resources were funneled into the establishment of propagation halls in cities (which will be discussed in chapter 6). By 1929, when Sōma began his training, eighty-two such city centers, managed by sixty-three propagation monks, had been established.²⁹

Equally threatening to the population of *unsuis* was the increasing trend toward marriage among Korean monastics. A growing number of Korean monks had decided to marry, in part because they believed that, like Christian ministers and Japanese priests, a married cleric would be more socially viable in modern society. The majority of the head monks and administrators of temples in Korea were openly married. Eventually, in 1926, the heads of the major temples petitioned the colonial government, asking that the provision in the 1911 Temple Ordinance requiring celibacy for head monks be lifted.³⁰ Eliminating this requirement would follow the policy that the Meiji government promulgated in 1872 in which eating meat and marriage for the Japanese

27. *Yomiuri shinbun*, February 4, 1933.

28. See Chōng Suok, "Naeji Pulgyo kyōnhakki," 6.

29. *Chōsen yōran* 1929.

30. Kim Kwangsik, *Sae pulgyo undong*, 174.

clergy had been decriminalized. By 1929, according to the colonialist scholar Takahashi Tōru (1878–1967), more than 80 percent of Korean temples were following this new tradition.³¹ A Korean monk in 1941 even suggested that Korean Buddhism no longer be thought of as monastic Buddhism, but rather be considered a form of lay Buddhism, similar to Japanese Buddhism. He stated that these two Buddhisms were the only lay Buddhist traditions in the Buddhist world, indicating that clergy from Korean and Japanese Buddhism were aberrations from the broadly held Buddhist tradition of celibacy.³²

As a greater number of monks came to have wives and children, the monks' families drained the temples' accounts, thus exacerbating the problems of the already financially strained temple economies.³³ Sōn monasteries had depended mainly on the financial support of the head temples, which could no longer provide funds. Sōn monastics tended to remain celibate because one needed to be single, without the obligations of family life, in order to pursue such an intensive and extended time in retreat. Gradually, other monks came to view celibate monks as unproductive members of the Buddhist clergy, and they became marginalized. As a result, the number of Sōn monasteries inevitably decreased. In an effort to preserve the Sōn tradition and protect the interests of these Sōn monks, thirty-five monks in leadership positions established the Society for Supporting Sōn Fellows (Sōnu kongjehoe) in 1922. Pōmō Temple was a major force in founding this society. It established a branch temple in Seoul and managed to collect enough resources to run the facility along with other programs, such as hosting Sōn masters for Dharma talks.³⁴ Given Pōmōsa's leading role in preserving Sōn, it was an obvious place for Abe to send Sōma to begin practicing.

Sōma's first impression of the Naewōnam branch monastery was that, "as compared to busy temples in Japan, this temple is truly a blessed place for Zen practice."³⁵ Regarding the resident monks, he continues, "I admire those monks who are practicing according to their own ability, as if they had just one day in a hundred years [to practice]." Sōma

31. Takahashi, *Richō bukkyō*, 953.

32. *Kyōngbuk pulgyo*, December 2, 1939, 4.

33. Buswell, *Zen Monastic Experience*, 29–30.

34. Chōng Kwangho, *Ilbon ch'imryak sigi ūi hannil kwan'gyesa*, 275.

35. *Chōsen bukkyō* 64 (1929): 64.

describes meeting with an old master of the temple who decades earlier had been the head monk of Pömō Temple and who now practiced without leaving the temple and its mountains. Intrigued that Sōma had arrived wearing the white robes of traditional Koreans, the master asked him a series of questions. He wanted to know why Sōma came to Korea and why he chose this monastery in particular. The master noted, "It is a strange connection that I will teach Sōn to somebody who came from Japan,"³⁶ thus acknowledging this role reversal in Korean-Japanese relations. Apparently, Sōma was given permission to join the retreat that had begun two months earlier, even though it is usually against the rules to enter a retreat after it has begun. Joining thirty-plus other monks, Sōma began a retreat schedule that included eight hours of meditation a day.

In an early submission to the journal *Daruma Zen*, Sōma details the twenty different tasks assigned to each monk at the retreat center, beginning with the *chusil*, who oversees and manages all the details of the retreat. He then lists the *sōnbaek*, a senior practitioner who administers retreat regulations; the *chijōn*, who is in charge of rituals and cleaning; the *sōgi*, who works as the secretary; the *ch'aegōng*, who is in charge of preparing side dishes such as those made from mountain vegetables; and so on.³⁷ This structure was universal among the nineteen Korean Sōn monasteries operating at the time, with slight differences from one monastery to the next.

On the first day, the *sōgi* assisted Sōma with settling in. In the meditation hall in front of the entire community of monks on retreat, he introduced Sōma to those in charge of each task, one by one, and had some of the most important regulations that Sōma would need to abide by translated. Sōma and the Korean monks communicated by brushing out classical Chinese characters, a written language that both sides could read, since Sōma did not know Korean, and his interpreter had already left. This situation reminded Sōma of ancient times when monks of different cultures met. He writes, "For some reason, it came to my mind that, when Japanese monks studied in China many years ago, they must also have communicated by way of handwriting. Suddenly, I felt as if I had become one of those monks of old, as if I were

36. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 292.

37. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 294–95.

not in contemporary Korea.”³⁸ Sōma was reenacting a centuries-old tradition that allowed Zen teachers and students across East Asia to communicate. Nonetheless, Sōma was determined to learn Korean as soon as possible. At the end of the introductions, Sōma did a full prostration before the monks as a sign of his commitment to adhere strictly to the regulations. He recalls this moment: “This one bow had quite a significant meaning.”³⁹ The bow was an official request that he be received into the retreat, upon which the monks bowed back as a sign that they accepted him as a full member of the community.

Sōma managed to adjust to the rigors of the retreat: waking up at three in the morning, eating spicy food, coping with the hot, muggy weather, enduring bug bites, refraining from killing those bugs, and more. He was assigned to the role of picking mountain vegetables (*ch'aegöng*). Eating spicy food, he writes, was the most difficult adjustment. One time, during a communal meal, he dared to eat one of the most piquant dishes. With his eyes closed, his mouth “flamed out like a volcano” and his eyes “brimmed with tears.” A senior monk saw this and suggested that the temple could provide specially prepared, non-spicy food for him. Sōma respectfully declined.⁴⁰

On the second day of retreat, Master Hanam called Sōma and said, “I would like to teach you everything about Korean monastic life, so it is unfortunate that we both cannot communicate.” Sōma replied, “It is unfortunate, indeed, since I also have many questions to ask you. By the way, please treat me as you do other monks.”⁴¹ The master continued by informing him of a number of points:

I assume that owing to differences in culture and customs, especially regarding food, you must undergo some inconveniences. . . . I hope you will be able to get used to these inconveniences, since I hear that it is your purpose in coming here [to practice as the Korean monks do]. . . . If you have any difficulties, though, feel free to ask me. I would like to provide you with as much accommodation as I can.⁴²

38. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 293.

39. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 297.

40. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 311.

41. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 311.

42. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 311.

Sōma writes that the master's words made him feel "as though my tears would fall in response to his kindness."

The master further reminded him of two important points regarding practice:

It is common in Korea for Sōn monks to do *kongan*⁴³ practice. If you have adjusted to the daily life here, I would like you to work on a *kongan*. . . . Furthermore, needless to say, I would like you to observe precepts well. I assume that you must have heard about the precepts in detail upon ordination. I would like young monks to pay special attention to not smoking, drinking alcohol, and eating meat.⁴⁴

On the point of precepts, Sōma learned about one of the defining characteristics of Korean Buddhism during this period. Although Hanam does not specifically address the issue of clerical marriage in his admonition, he, as a celibate monk, is implying that Sōma should also observe celibacy as well as the other precepts. Despite the growing phenomenon of clerical marriage in Korea, the celibacy that many Korean monks rigorously adhered to was one of their exceptional qualities.⁴⁵ Japanese Buddhists who had decried the backwardness of Korean Buddhism at least admired how Korean monastics practiced this precept and were greatly impressed by the way they upheld the other traditional precepts. Sōma writes of the master's comments,

At some point while listening to him, I felt my face reddening. I recalled what I had heard from somebody before coming to this temple: that he was one of the foremost masters of samadhi [concentration] meditation,

43. *Kongan* (*gongan* in Chinese or *kōan* in Japanese) means authoritative stories, riddles, or anecdotes exchanged between teachers and students that work as meditative topics and foci for practitioners in their path to enlightenment. For more detail, see Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary*, 324.

44. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 311–12.

45. Jeongeun Park in her dissertation provides a variety of reasons why Korean monks gradually took up clerical marriage. Rather than the colonial government's top-down imposition, she argues, the practices of the Dharma family lineage between teachers and disciplines and the rights of monks to inherit property from their teachers as well as the adoption of modern ideas contributed to the spread of clerical marriage in colonial Korea. See Jeongeun Park, "Clerical Marriage."

one who has stayed in the deep mountains, preserved precepts, and has never slept lying down. Hence, I could feel something powerful from him such that it makes those who talk about precepts seem like they are merely spouting words.⁴⁶

Throwing himself fully into the retreat, Sōma diligently abided by the precepts and began *kongan* practice.

After a week, even though he and the Korean monks communicated through only a few words, Sōma felt included in the community.

While in conversation, we became close and could talk about the Dharma as if we were Zen friends from the start. . . . Because they only spend time meditating and studying sutras, they might not know the world outside well. [Nevertheless], they have something that enables them to live entirely secluded in the deep mountains. Those monks who are into keeping precepts sometimes tested me with honest questions and reflections. . . . Gradually, I felt like I was being led into a world separated from the secular world.⁴⁷

It appears that the Korean monks went out of their way to integrate Sōma into their community, perhaps because of Sōma's sincerity and dedication to Zen practice:

To my surprise, although they spend almost all their time practicing sitting meditation, I came to find that they are trying to learn Japanese. In the breaks between meditations, they diligently ask me a lot of questions. I was envious of them since they can memorize Japanese words quite fast. Their pronunciation is also good. Thus, we spend breaks by teaching and learning words from each other.⁴⁸

Sōma also records a specific event that reflects how a Sōn monastery was supported in Korea during this time. On the third day of his retreat, the temple was holding a big annual commemoration for some donors who had given land to it. Sōma was surprised that this ritual

46. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 312.

47. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 318–19.

48. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 318.

performance was allowed to interrupt the retreat because Zen is conventionally understood as antiritualistic, antiscriptural, and iconoclastic, and Zen retreats are usually a time when the monastery is closed to the outside world. This points to a difference between Korean Sŏn and Japanese Zen, with Korean Sŏn taking a more inclusive approach to the range of Buddhist practices. Here, Sōma takes a critical view of Japanese Buddhism. He expresses his doubts about whether Japanese temples, which received similar donations from parishioners (*danka*), truly fulfilled their promise to pray for the donors every year. What impressed him even more was the way, after the ceremony, all the food was distributed among the monks: “With the principle of equality governing distribution, I was a little bit amazed that every monk [no matter what rank] received the same portion.”⁴⁹

Sōma documents another large ceremony that was held on the last day of the three-month retreat, which was 7/15/1929, on the lunar calendar. On the day before this special day, there was no meditation, and the monastery was flooded with devout lay Buddhists who came to pray to the Buddha for their ancestors. This is one of the major Buddhist holidays in East Asia, called Paekchung in Korean (Jp. Obon), and the Sŏn monastery was not an exception in performing this festival’s ritual on behalf of the ancestors of its members. All the Sŏn monks chanted scriptures, invoking the name of the Buddha Amida (Amitabha) and praying. This scene intrigued Sōma: “Although it was not the first time that I heard the *nenbutsu* (chanting the Buddha’s name) at a Zen monastery, I have never seen Zen monks chanting alongside [lay] believers.” Yet Sōma does not judge what he was seeing as anti-Zen or inauthentic, but instead puts a meditative spin on such this-worldly ritualism: “When syllables of *Namu Amit’a pul* (Jp. *Namu Amida butsu*) tenderly reverberated throughout the deep mountains, I was enchanted by the solemnity manifesting from the beautiful chorus of chanting, and my body swayed from side to side. At this moment, everybody forgot about the sultry weather and suffering, and just rejoiced with rapture.”⁵⁰ The ceremony continued through the night until the morning of the fifteenth. After the rituals came to an end, the bustling temple returned to its original repose.

49. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 314.

50. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 321.

However, an unexpected incident caused another hubbub. The *chijōn* monk in charge of rituals and four other monks were seized by acute food poisoning. Everyone was at a loss as to what to do and could only watch the sick monks anxiously. Sōma did not hesitate to offer pills and tinctures that he had brought for his own use. He had received them from the Zen scholar Nukariya Kaiten (1867–1934) in case he might fall ill with this kind of acute sickness during his stay in Korea.⁵¹ Sōma had the monks take the pills, which cured them the same day. Rejoicing, Sōma and the monks cried together in gratitude. Sōma had been extremely worried about the effectiveness of the medicines.⁵²

In the same way that Sōma cared for his fellow monks, he was aware of their care for him. He later reflected:

It is strange that one who does not know the language and customs well can get by each day without many problems. However, behind the scenes of this happiness, I must be aware of how much care the monks of the monastery have provided for me. As if they are taking care of a baby, they observe and anticipate my needs from my behavior. By being attentive to my needs, even young monks help me without my asking. However, in fact, this support can be thought of in another way. Regardless of language barriers, behavior says something that words cannot. Therefore, although friendship can arise from both words and behavior, it can also be formed from behavior alone.⁵³

The day after the three-month retreat ended on the sixteenth of the month and the sick monks had recovered, all the *unsuis* left for unknown locations, while Sōma stayed on at the temple for three more years. The *sōgi* monk told Sōma, “We will meet again if we are meant to.” The *chijōn* monk, whom Sōma had befriended and helped to heal from the food poisoning that had nearly killed him, held Sōma’s hands tightly in gratitude without saying a word. Sōma said, “Please take good care of yourself.” Sōma described how lonely he felt at being left behind. “At last, with big packs on their backs and holding bamboo hats in their hands, they close the door of the monastery behind them without any

51. Nukariya wrote the first comprehensive book on the Korean Sōn tradition, *Chōsen zenkyō shi*, in 1930. Later, he served as president of Komazawa University.

52. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 328–30.

53. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 319.

attachment. They are finally leaving. I feel alone. They are walking in a line. Walking away. Into the thick forests. They are gone. They have gone to seek the Dharma. They must go somewhere to resolve the great matters of birth and death. Will they reach enlightenment there?”⁵⁴

Sōma's first monastic experience in colonial Korea provides a fresh perspective on the relationship between Japanese and Korean Buddhists. An itinerant monk traveling to neighboring countries, such as China, Korea, or the far reaches of central Asia, and developing a strong sense of a transnational community of Buddhists is not unusual. Throughout the history of Buddhism, innumerable seekers of the Dharma have crossed seas and continents, and worked across national and cultural boundaries. Sōma's case, though, is exceptional because his pilgrimage took place in the context of colonialism and imperialism. Most Korean-Japanese Buddhist relationships were largely colored by political necessities, mainly to the advantage of the colonizer. Sōma's shared identity as an *unsui* enabled him to find a degree of freedom from the colonial discourse, to feel at home in a Korean monastery, and to develop a strong sense of brotherhood with Korean Sōn monks. For example, some years later, when Sōma was on his way to Kwiju Temple in Hamgyōng Province just after completing several months of intensive retreat, he caught the flu and could not continue to travel. Fortunately, he ran into two *unsuis* with whom he had practiced before. When they found out Sōma was ill, they looked after him for two weeks until he recovered and was ready to resume his journey. However, it had snowed continuously for three days the morning before Sōma was ready to leave, making travel dangerous. Nevertheless, the life of the *unsui* requires that one move constantly and not stay in one location except for during retreat periods. Sōma reported, “I am leaving today.” “Isn't it still snowing?” asked one of the monks. However, the monk knows why Sōma plans to head out: the *unsui* is without ties, like clouds and water. Sōma writes, “Being aware of the spirit of the *unsui*, the monk did not argue with me further.”⁵⁵

Sōma set out for a different temple than he had originally planned. Exhausted from the long journey, he arrived at a temple in the Ch'iaik Mountains of Kangwōn Province. Sōma was surprised when a monk peeked his head out of a room and said, “You must be the one from

54. *Daruma Zen* 16 (1929): 333.

55. *Chōsen bukkyō* 89 (1933): 18–19.

Kūmgang Mountain!” The monk carried Sōma’s backpack and ushered him into the room. Sōma recorded this warm welcome: “It is such a pleasure to meet an acquaintance in the middle of nowhere. The delight of being an *unsui* erupts from here. The abbot of the temple also appeared and others studying at the temple gathered together. I entrusted myself to them as if leaving my exhausted body to them.”⁵⁶ Here, his identity as an *unsui* predominates, and his other identities as a Japanese citizen and a Sôtō priest are secondary. In this moment, the camaraderie among Zen monastics and *unsui* was deeper and broader than national and sectarian identities.

Sometime later, while on retreat at the T’ap monastery, Sōma reveals another, rather comical, feature of the *unsui* community.

*Unsu*is usually arrive at Zen monasteries at least a week before a three-month retreat commences. I like this period the most because I can hear all the different impressions, experiences, and stories that the *unsuis* bring from their travels to villages and temples. It is as if I were reading the *Unsu shinbun* [newspaper] but with a livelier take.⁵⁷

He then preempts any possible misinterpretation of this passage by those who might believe that Korean monks are not serious about their practice and act more like common people:

If I write this way, Korean *unsuis* might be thought of as chatterboxes. But there is no one who keeps silence as strictly as the *unsui* in Korea. They express the entirety of a thought with merely a frank word or phrase. Such is the flavor of Sōn monks.⁵⁸

Taken together, these passages convey appreciation, respect, and gratitude for Korean Buddhism, rather than the more frequently spouted allegations that Korean Buddhism is decadent, ignorant, or in dire need of reform, and thus are valuable as a point of contrast in colonial studies.

56. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 41.

57. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 27.

58. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 27–28.

Search for Masters

One of an *unsui*'s primary tasks is to find a master who can guide him in meditation practice and teach him the Buddhist path.⁵⁹ Sōma met a number of prominent masters, including Pak Hanyōng (1870–1948), Kim Kyōng'un, and Pang Hanam, who were well respected by Korean Buddhists. His most memorable and personally transformative encounter occurred with Hanam, the most prominent Sōn master in colonial Korea (fig. 4.3). Revered as an exemplary recluse who never left his monastery and was devoted solely to teaching meditation to students, Hanam attracted many *unsuis* who were serious about their Sōn practice. Despite his great reluctance, he later became the first patriarch of the institutional governing body of Korean Buddhism, the Chogye Order, in 1941, under the condition that he would not be required to leave his mountain.⁶⁰ Hanam was also known to Japanese Buddhists and venerated by Japanese Buddhist intellectuals. Indeed, it was Sōma who made Hanam well known. Hanam deeply influenced Sōma's understanding of the form that true Buddhism and monastic life should take in modern times.

In 1933, Hanam resided at Sangwōnsa, a branch of the head temple Wōlchōngsa, in Kangwōn Province, in northeastern Korea (fig. 4.4). He was leading a three-month retreat for thirty-five monks when Sōma arrived. Sōma presented a recommendation letter from the abbot of Wōlchōngsa and begged Hanam to receive him for the winter retreat. The first meeting between Sōma and Hanam was a typical encounter between a spiritual seeker and a master in East Asian Zen discourse. The following is the initial exchange between Sōma and Master Hanam:

Hanam: By the way, I hear that Japanese Buddhism is quite popular.

Why did you venture into these deep [Korean] mountains?

Sōma: I came to practice Sōn under your close guidance.

H: It is quite cold here, it snows a lot, and it's very windy. In addition, if it snows, it is impossible to get access to the village. What if you

59. Kuzunishi, *Zen Life*, 167; Satō, *Unsuī*, 1.

60. Chonggo, "Life and Letters," 72–73.

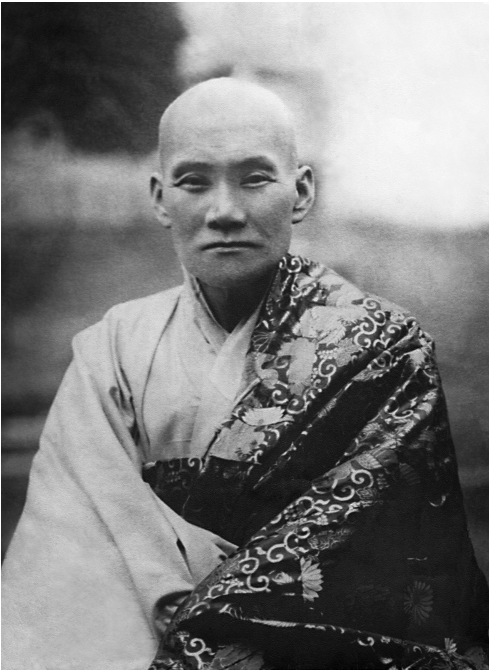


FIG. 4.3. Pang Hanam
(*Pöppo sinmun*, March 22,
2004). Courtesy of Minjoksa
Publications, Seoul.

get sick? [Zen masters would test the commitment of prospective students by raising multiple problems.]

S: Having given my life for the Dharma, I would rather consider these hardships as a pleasure.

H: Although I cannot help you if the community denies you admission because your late arrival violates retreat rules [he arrived fifteen days late], I will give you special permission so that you can practice here.⁶¹

As was the case at Pömōsa, Sōma had to wait to receive a final answer until the monastics had discussed his request for entry in a public Sangha meeting (*taejung kongsa*). To Sōma's relief, they accepted him. He joined the other monks in the retreat for the remainder of the winter session.

Sōma was assigned the duty of cleaning the meditation complex. The retreat schedules were tight and the rules rather strict. Sōma writes:

61. *Chōsen bukkyō* 87 (1933): 15.



FIG. 4.4. A recent photograph of Sangwön Temple. Courtesy of Nam Suyön from *Pöppo sinmun*.

“One is neither allowed to talk until nine o’clock in the evening nor to have personal time. Everybody practices assiduously and seriously. One thing that is different from other meditation centers is that there are just two meals a day—and one of them, breakfast, is [merely] rice porridge.”⁶² The reduced meals were attributed to the dire financial situation of the head temple that supported the branch,⁶³ but Hanam did not seem to mind. Rather, he said to Sōma, “Śākyamuni [Buddha] had just one meal a day; therefore we should all be appreciative of having even breakfast. With that note, I want you to practice diligently.”⁶⁴ Sōma’s personal admiration of Hanam’s disposition is stated clearly in a letter to Nakamura. Sōma writes of Hanam’s emphasis on precepts, the core of Hanam’s teachings. Hanam had told him, “If one fails to preserve precepts, he cannot be called ‘one who left home’ [a traditional Buddhist term for monastics] to seek the way to enlightenment. A

62. *Chōsen bukk’yō* 97 (1934): 16.

63. Wōlchōngsa allegedly was 800,000 won in debt and eventually had to sell off vast tracts of land in order to pay it back (Kim Kwangsik, *Sae pulgyo undong*, 162).

64. *Chōsen bukk’yō* 97 (1934): 16.

precept breaker is inferior even to a layperson.” Sōma points out that students viewed Hanam’s teachings as authoritative: “Those who are practicing under his guidance, of course, do their best not to break a single word of the master. As for what he says, no interpretation needs to be attempted.”⁶⁵

Sōma was deeply moved by Hanam’s steadfast practice, despite his weakening health: “Master was suffering from chronic stomach-aches, and his energy gradually deteriorated. As a result, it became almost impossible for him even to sit with us. I was just grateful to him for teaching us despite his illness. In addition, despite his sickness, he never lagged behind us in practice. Except for three or four hours of sleep, he meditated all day [in his room].”⁶⁶ Deeply enchanted, Sōma reveals some of Hanam’s more personal qualities. “Although stern and strict, in person he becomes a child with a pure mind. One will feel happiness from his candor.”⁶⁷ His observation of Hanam and the way other monastics diligently followed the instructions given by their master led Sōma to form a vision of what true monastic life should be. Sōma continues: “When believers send gifts such as cakes, no matter how little the quantity, they will be distributed equally to everybody. There is no distinction between master and disciples. The true spirit of ‘leaving home’ is actualized.”⁶⁸

After the winter retreat was over, Sōma asked Hanam for some calligraphy, and Hanam wrote four characters: “Do not seek fame.” Sōma and his fellow monks joined the master for a final meal of noodles, committing to each other to “practice diligently in the future.”⁶⁹ A year later, Sōma would return to Hanam to do an intensive seven-day retreat during which students do not sleep.

As noted earlier, Sōma also practiced under Hanyōng and Kyōng’un, two other renowned masters. Under Hanyōng, Sōma studied sutras at a Buddhist seminary for a year.⁷⁰ Kyōng’un, who was eighty-three years old at the time, also left a deep impression on Sōma. He writes of the overwhelming feeling he experienced in the presence of this master

65. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 17.

66. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 17.

67. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 18.

68. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 19.

69. *Chōsen bukkyō* 97 (1934): 19.

70. *Chōsen bukkyō* 110 (1935): 5.

when he was ushered into the old master's room: "I could not utter a word. I instinctively prostrated on the floor at once. . . . I had finally met this great Sŏn master, Kim Kyŏng'un, in person!" Sōma also delivered a letter to Kyŏng'un from Hanyŏng, which he had brought with him. After reading it, Kyŏng'un told Sōma in a clear voice: "Buddhism in Japan and Korea is the same. Nevertheless, how good it is for you to come to Korea to study and practice meditation! Who would say the Dharma will perish?! Practice itself is the life of Buddhism."⁷¹ In the course of conversation, Kyŏng'un repeatedly reminded Sōma that he "should not forget to practice diligently." This left a deep impression on Sōma. Sōma reflects, "I believe that, if there are no practitioners, Buddhism will be nothing more than a historical relic. The prosperity of Buddhism, as Master says, will depend solely on one thing: practice." Sōma felt self-conscious about his own level of diligence in practice, particularly sitting in front of a master who practiced assiduously day and night. Sōma writes, "I felt as if a tremendous presence was pressing in on me from the old master who has practiced continuously and sincerely."⁷² When Kyŏng'un fell ill, Sōma visited him again and delivered messages from Abe and Nakamura wishing him a speedy recovery.

Sōma's Views on Japanese and Korean Buddhism

After roughly four years of training with Korean masters and monastics, Sōma questioned why Japanese Buddhists broadly characterized Korean Buddhism as "mountain Buddhism" and Japanese Buddhism as "urban Buddhism." Behind this dualistic representation was the implication that progressive-minded, urban Buddhism was superior to isolated, anachronistic mountain Buddhism. He writes,

Korean Buddhism is often called mountain Buddhism. Mountain Buddhism itself is fine! The true disciple of the Buddha adheres to his identity as a *bhikkhu* [monk] by renouncing the world. Now, mountain Buddhism is being turned into urban Buddhism. However, how much can

71. *Chōsen bukkyō* 98 (1934): 11.

72. *Chōsen bukkyō* 98 (1934): 11.

we value urban Buddhism? Japanese Buddhism might be called urban Buddhism; nevertheless, how many urban Buddhists can we say are the true disciples of the Buddha, and how much do they actually save and guide society?⁷³

This was a bold statement that ran contrary to one of the aims of the journal in which it was published, namely, to avoid subverting the view that Japanese Buddhism is superior. By writing this, Sōma undermined the assertions of many Japanese Buddhists that their own Buddhism was more modernized, urbanized, and socialized. Sōma's critique deepened as he came into greater contact with local Koreans and Japanese laypeople because he found the private views on both sides to be even more skewed than what was put forward in the public conversation. During his extended travels in Korea, Sōma had many occasions to hear what other people thought of Korean and Japanese Buddhism. In his responses, he is generally critical and self-reflective when talking about Japanese people and Buddhism, whereas he is defensive and sympathetic toward the Korean people and Buddhism.

Sōma was well aware of the way the Japanese treated Koreans in colonial Korea. His first experience of Japanese arrogance (as he would view it) was when he was staying at Pōmōsa. Japanese tourists who were on a sightseeing trip to view fall leaves at the temple complex approached Sōma and inquired about something. They had not realized that he was Japanese because he was wearing the white robes of a native Korean. When Sōma answered in fluent Japanese, they were surprised. As he accompanied them, Sōma could sense their arrogance toward the Korean people and monks at the temple. In a letter to Nakamura, he wrote, "In order to understand Korea, as you said, one must become Korean by dressing in the Korean traditional white clothes. It is shameful to see Japanese people living in Korea. Their understanding of Korea is entirely wrong. And those lacking a correct understanding of it display the attitude of conquerors. Korean people have to put up with it. Not everybody, I believe, will tolerate it."⁷⁴ Sōma understood that the disastrous March First Independence Uprising in 1919 stemmed from the tension and animosity between Koreans and Japanese. He firmly

73. *Chōsen bukkyō* 87 (1933): 19.

74. *Chōsen bukkyō* 64 (1929): 40.

believed that it would be impossible for the Japanese to live among Koreans if they did not learn the language and follow their customs.

During one journey on a cold winter day, he sought shelter at a local police station and started a conversation with a Japanese police officer. When the officer learned that Sōma was a Japanese Buddhist priest, the policeman complained that there were not enough Japanese priests in the village available to administer funeral ceremonies for Japanese residents. The policeman's remark hit Sōma hard. Sōma laments: "Japanese Buddhism is needed only for funerals!"⁷⁵ Sōma knew that Japanese Buddhist priests were perceived, as a Higashi Hongan Temple priest put it, as "specialist[s] in the business of funeral services for Japanese."⁷⁶ Worse, the police officer said that, when a local troublemaker sought his advice, the officer had sent him to a Christian church since there was no Buddhist priest and temple nearby. Sōma felt even more dejected when the officer said that the troublemaker went on to become a devout Christian convert. The officer admitted that he himself was ignorant about Buddhism but that he remembered that when he was little his mother would make him put his palms together and pray to the Buddha. Sōma laments, "Isn't it the reality that the current [Japanese] Buddhism is merely sustained by mothers?"⁷⁷ Sōma shares this exchange and his observations in his writings for *Chōsen bukk'yō* to try to correct the belief that Japanese Buddhism was popular and vibrant.

Two incidents in particular reveal Sōma's respect for Korean Buddhism. One time, a female Korean innkeeper asked him, "Japanese priests, I hear, are esteemed, aren't they? There was a time when the social status of Korean monks was low beyond comparison." To this, Sōma questions what it means to be a Buddhist priest: "Is it true, as she said, that Japanese priests are socially higher than Korean monks? Is social status necessary for those who have renounced the world?" Perhaps in remembrance of Hanam's instruction "Do not seek fame," Sōma answers his own question thus: "I myself [a Japanese priest] am

75. *Chōsen bukk'yō* 90 (1933): 36.

76. *Kakusei* 12 (February 1937). Japanese Buddhism as funeral Buddhism has been widely studied. See Tamamuro, *Sōshiki bukk'yō*; Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism* (p. 16 and chap. 3); and Williams, "Funerary Zen."

77. *Chōsen bukk'yō* 90 (1933): 37.

nothing more than an alms beggar.”⁷⁸ In another, similar incident, an old Korean man he had met at an inn explained his view of the stark contrast between Korean and Japanese Buddhism: “It is said that Buddhism is flourishing in Japan and that Korean Buddhism is not even comparable to Japanese Buddhism. First and foremost, Japanese people have faith. We once went to a Japanese propagation hall in Kangnŭng, and everybody in the hall was praying with his or her hands together.”⁷⁹ Upon hearing this, Sōma momentarily lost his temper and retorted: “There is no question about the popularity of Korean Buddhism during the Silla and Koryŏ dynasties. . . . It makes me sad to see people’s lives distanced from this great Buddhism.” He acknowledged, nevertheless, that Korean Buddhism “was miserable in the past” and had lost much of its cultural and religious influence.⁸⁰ He was especially concerned that the number of Sŏn monasteries had significantly decreased as a result of social change.

Although *unsuis* generally removed themselves from the world and did not actively teach or minister to laypeople, Sōma was nonetheless concerned that Buddhism be made available to the general populace. Like most clergy of his time, he strongly supported Buddhist propagation as a means of disseminating the Dharma widely. For these reasons, Sōma was critical of how both Japanese and Korean Buddhists lacked missionary spirit and fervor. When he visited a temple in northern Korea, he was stunned to see that the area had become heavily Christian. He called it “a place of Christian monopoly.” Sōma was right in that Presbyterians, by the 1920s, had firmly established Christianity in the largest city of the area, P’yŏngyang.⁸¹ Surrounding an empty Korean temple were churches filled with people singing hymns. Sōma felt dispirited about Buddhism’s lack of strength because he saw that Christian missions had made so much progress in such a short time. He writes, “If Buddhists today had made one millionth the effort in proselytization as Christian missionaries have, the result would have been different.”⁸²

78. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 38.

79. *Chōsen bukkyō* 89 (1933): 23.

80. *Chōsen bukkyō* 89 (1933): 23.

81. Clark, *Living Dangerously*, 121.

82. *Chōsen bukkyō* 92 (1933): 33.

“Go Back to the Mountains”: The Impact of Sōma’s Writings

The publication of Sōma’s firsthand observations about the vitality of the Korean monastic tradition and its great masters was not enough to change widely held misconceptions that Japanese Buddhists had about Korean Buddhism and monastics. However, Sōma’s descriptions of his rich experience did influence a number of Japanese Buddhist leaders, priests, and intellectuals, who subsequently gained a more favorable impression of Korean Buddhism. One Sōtō missionary, writing for the journal *Kongō (Vajra)*, was impressed by Sōma’s efforts to learn from Korean Buddhism and used Sōma as an example to criticize the lethargic missionary work of Japanese Buddhists.⁸³ Another admirer, a military colonel named Kaneko Tei’ichi, was inspired to visit Pōmō Temple after reading Sōma’s account of his time there. Japanese Buddhists seem to have been most influenced by Sōma’s writing on Hanam. Sōma’s deep respect for Hanam caused other Japanese Buddhists to change their belief that Korean Buddhism lacked any respectable, serious masters and monks. The journal *Korean Buddhism* repeatedly mentioned Sōma’s presentation of Hanam in various articles and commentaries as if suddenly the true Dharma had been discovered in Korea after centuries of absence. Nakamura, along with a reporter, took the head of the Police Department, Ikeda Kiyoshi (1885–1966),⁸⁴ with him to pay a visit to Hanam as if they were seeking out a new holy man discovered in a desert.⁸⁵ Ikeda, himself a Buddhist, had also been inspired by Sōma’s writing to meet Hanam.⁸⁶ After an arduous and challenging trip to reach Hanam’s remote monastery, Nakamura and Ikeda finally arrived and sat down with the master. Through Nakamura as interpreter, Ikeda told Hanam that he had learned about the master from Sōma and thanked Hanam for having taken good care of Sōma, whom Ikeda identified as his friend, during retreat. Ikeda asked Hanam to continue to instruct Sōma if Sōma came back, to which Hanam replied, “I am not at all a useful person. But, if he comes back, I would love to practice

83. *Kongō*, October 1930, 14.

84. Ikeda served from 1931 to 1936.

85. Sōma’s mentor, Abe, was also eager to meet Hanam, although Abe’s poor health prevented him from traveling (*Chōsen bukkyō* 119 [1936]: 50).

86. Nakamura, *Chōsen seikatsu gojūnen*, 184.

together.” (As mentioned earlier, Sōma did come back to do an intensive retreat under Hanam.)

A journal article describing the meeting between Ikeda and Hanam concludes with an assessment typical of writing from this period: “For Master Hanam, who must have experienced contempt from society, his meeting with the head of the police department must have been, I believe, one of the most unforgettable impressions in his life.”⁸⁷ The reporter believed that the visit to Hanam from such a high state official was an honor because Hanam, as a monk, held a very low position in society. (Nakamura later wrote similarly in his memoir.)⁸⁸ In the same issue of the journal, Sōma, who had heard about their visit, wrote a letter to Nakamura with an entirely different characterization: “I conjecture that the meeting with Master Hanam was a beautiful gift from Korea. However, if we bother him too much with frequent visits, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that he might hide himself deeper into the mountains. For certain, his great work is to be in contact with his students, and I believe that his teachings will be like a great river that saves boundless sentient beings.”⁸⁹ Nakamura’s meeting with Hanam slightly shifted Nakamura’s views on Korean Buddhism. Two years later, in an editorial addressed to Korean monks admonishing Korean Buddhism for lacking able figures, he admits, “I don’t mean that there are no respectable monks among the seven thousand [monastics in Korea]. I am aware that there are eminent masters. In addition, I know that there are monks who are serious about practice.”⁹⁰

This sort of acknowledgment is unusual in Japanese Buddhist writing. Sōma’s writing also inspired the Rinzai master Kasan Daigi to visit Hanam to “seek teachings that can help him [Kasan] understand the Rinzai tradition.”⁹¹ Despite that stated intention, Kasan ended up advising Hanam on how to correct the drawbacks of the Korean monastic system by emulating the Japanese monastic system. Kasan recommended that Hanam integrate physical labor into Korean monastic practice. A journal article reports Kasan as saying that, upon his instruction, Hanam “was in tears with full agreement,” that “he had

87. *Chōsen bukkyō* 102 (1934): 4.

88. Nakamura, *Chōsen seikatsu gojūnen*, 184–85.

89. *Chōsen bukkyō* 102 (1934): 7.

90. *Chōsen bukkyō* 106 (1935): 1.

91. *Chōsen bukkyō* 124 (1937): 35.

heard this idea for the first time,” and that he conversed with Kasan “for four straight hours.”⁹² Thus, although Sōma’s writings brought Japanese Buddhism to pay respect to Hanam, in the end the Japanese Buddhists’ view that Korean Buddhists were socially inferior and needed guidance persisted, even on encountering someone as senior as Hanam. (Sōma’s introduction of Hanam and other Korean masters to the public prompted the journal he was writing for to balance the reporting by introducing Japanese masters as great as Hanam. The journal soon featured Tōyama Kassan from Hokkaido as evidence that “there is a similar master in Japan [as Hanam in Korea].” But this master is different. He is “like Master Hanam brought to Main Street [i.e., not secluded in the mountains],” writes the reporter for the journal. The next few issues of the journal featured details about *unsui* life in Japan.)⁹³

The most noteworthy change produced by Sōma’s writings was found in the person of Takahashi Tōru. A prominent colonialist scholar who taught at Keijō (Seoul) Imperial University and who would undertake the printing of the Koryō Canon in 1937, Takahashi had written one of the most influential works on Korean Buddhism in 1929, a work titled *Richō bukkō*. He also wrote about other religions and folk traditions in Korea. Along with a similar book, *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa* (Comprehensive history of Korean Buddhism), written by the Korean scholar Yi Nūnghwa a decade earlier, *Richō bukkō* is the most comprehensive work on the history of Korean Buddhism from the colonial period. But, as the modern scholar Kawase Takaya asserts, Takahashi was a typical colonialist scholar whose stance on Korean Buddhism reflected colonial ideology, with its narrative leading up to an argument for the reformation of “spineless” Korean Buddhism.⁹⁴ Sōma’s articles, however, shifted Takahashi’s earlier views on solving the problems of Korean Buddhism. For example, in *Richō bukkō* Takahashi examines issues in Korean Buddhism before the issuance of the 1911 Temple Ordinance and then points out the improvements that came about as a result of the ordinance and the colonial government’s subsequent promotion of Korean Buddhism through the late 1920s. Detailing the dilapidated condition of Korean Buddhism, he makes five comparisons

92. *Chōsen bukkō* 124 (1937): 35.

93. *Chōsen bukkō* 90 (1933): 22–26.

94. Kawase, “Shokuminchi ki Chōsen,” 151–71.

between Korean and Japanese temple Buddhism of the precolonial period. Colonial Japanese Buddhists singled out two of Takahashi's five comparisons in contrasting themselves with Korean Buddhists—the parish system and the social status of Buddhist clergy.

First, according to Takahashi, Japanese Buddhist priests busy themselves daily by caring for the needs of their parishioners through performing funerals and other rituals and giving Dharma talks. In contrast, Korean monks are lazy because there is no parish system to prompt them to provide services to members. Takahashi reasons that, owing to the long period of persecution during the Chosŏn dynasty, Korean Buddhism did not develop a base of parishioners who could donate economic resources to temples. As a result, Korean monks were forced to support themselves by begging, performing labor, and selling artifacts, thereby rarely interacting with laypeople. Second, Korean monks are ignorant. Here, Takahashi admits that many Japanese priests in Japan are likewise uneducated, especially in the Jōdoshin sect. Yet, compared with the level of ignorance of Korean monks, they are “great scholars.”⁹⁵ Among the other remaining points of comparison, Takahashi presents two positive qualities of Korean monastics. Whereas Japanese Buddhists are divided into various sects, Korean Buddhists maintain some kind of unity, a trait that enabled Korean monks to survive their long persecution. In addition, Korean monks abide by precepts and monastic rules far better than Japanese priests do. However, the weight of his argument fundamentally tips toward how to improve Korean Buddhism so that it could be elevated to at least the same level that Japanese Buddhism had achieved.⁹⁶

Based on the first point, that Korean temples have no parish system, Takahashi characterizes Korean Buddhism as a monastic-centered Buddhism because the only Buddhists in Korea are monastics who remain confined to the temple complex. As such, Korean monks, he concludes, have completely lost the capacity to relate their religion to society (*shūkyō no shakōsei*). He asserts that the most urgent priority for Korean Buddhism is to integrate Korean Buddhism into society, a priority he terms “the socialization of religion” (*shūkyō no shakaika*).⁹⁷

95. Takahashi, *Richō bukkyō*, 1019–37.

96. Takahashi, *Richō bukkyō*, 1037–39.

97. Takahashi, *Richō bukkyō*, 1039–40.

Reflecting his position as a colonialist scholar, Takahashi believes that the socialization of Korean Buddhism was to a great extent accomplished after the 1911 Temple Ordinance. More specifically, the colonial government's pro-Buddhist policies brought about fundamental changes in Korean Buddhism. He enumerates five changes: (1) the lazy and useless number of chanting monks was reduced and the number of (also lazy and useless) Sōn monks decreased; (2) young monks were motivated to study; (3) the features of a modern Korean society, such as improved roads, modern education for young monks, tourist housing, and modern office culture, had been introduced to temples; (4) budgets for proselytization and education were increased; and (5) thanks to the Temple Ordinance, the social status of Korean monastics had been elevated to be on par with that of Japanese priests.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, Takahashi points out that the socialization of Korean Buddhism during the colonial period caused some potentially undesirable effects. Korean monks were rapidly secularizing, no longer wearing monk robes but instead dressing in lay clothing. In emulation of Japanese Buddhist priests, they also ate meat and openly took wives. He also asserts that, under the pretext of proselytization, monks were squandering temple resources. With the growing number of propagation halls established in cities, monks had increasing contact with women, resulting in complaints of inappropriate behavior from onlookers. In the end, Takahashi warns that the final outcome would depend on preparing appropriate measures to deal with the problems brought about by the socialization of Korean Buddhism.⁹⁹ As seen in his accounts, Takahashi still considers the socialization of Korean Buddhism as a desirable path, despite some negative consequences.

In response to Sōma's articles on Hanam, however, Takahashi makes a major shift from these views of four years prior. Takahashi opens an article by acknowledging that it was thanks to Sōma's writings that he came to know of Master Hanam's day-to-day life. "Although I heard his name twenty years ago, I had not had an opportunity to learn of his teaching [until reading Sōma's accounts]," he remarks. Hanam, he goes on to write, is "an emblematic Zen monk that one once found in Chosōn [i.e., premodern] Buddhism." Yet he does not fully accept Sōma's characterization of Hanam as a great spiritual master. Takahashi

98. Takahashi, *Richō bukkyō*, 1040.

99. Takahashi, *Richō bukkyō*, 1042.

writes that “the vitality of Zen in the Chosŏn dynasty was lacking, but Korean monastics were able to reach some spiritual advancement through preserving precepts.”¹⁰⁰ While attributing Hanam’s spiritual foundation to the practice of precepts rather than to Zen meditation practice itself, Takahashi nevertheless praises Hanam: “The mind of enlightenment that Chosŏn Sŏn monks attained is like a lake in a deep mountain. It is as if no fish are swimming, not a single wave is moving, and the depth and purity is limitless. Whenever things appear, the lake reflects them, and, when they disappear, it does not leave any trace. Master Hanam is like this lake, and he is an old master whom Sŏn practitioners should revere.”¹⁰¹ It is Takahashi’s newfound respect for the potential of mountain Buddhism, as seen in the monk Hanam, that leads him to reassess whether Korean Buddhism should be socialized and urbanized.

In the same article from 1933, however, Takahashi turns his attention back to the corrupt situation of Korean Buddhism, noting that it had become even more corrupt since his first talk on the matter. He makes a series of acerbic remarks to the effect that in this day and age Korean monks “live completely like laypeople.” He says that the abandonment of precepts and the practice of clerical marriage is ubiquitous and many Korean monks justify taking a wife, having children, possessing a house and property, eating meat, drinking alcohol, and smoking as long as they follow a monk’s life symbolically or spiritually. He proclaims that “Korean Buddhism has reversed its religious basis from monastics to laity.” Thus, “in cities and villages, one can see neither Dharma nor monks nor temples.”¹⁰² Takahashi did not mean this literally; indeed, the number of propagation halls and propagation monks was increasing. What he meant was that there were few *celibate* monks who abided by the precepts.

Takahashi had a strong dislike for married monks, whether Korean or Japanese. The least qualified clergy, he says, are monks who entered the priesthood but are preoccupied with supporting their wives and children without an interest in helping people who are suffering. “The Dharma [in Korea] today is in much greater jeopardy than it was when it endured persecution during the Chosŏn dynasty,” he writes. “What

100. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 24.

101. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 24.

102. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 25.

should we do?” he asks rhetorically. He answers, “The only way is to reverse the trend of Korean Buddhism that began after annexation; that is, to send Korean Buddhists back to the mountains.”¹⁰³ Reversing his earlier vision of reform for Korean Buddhism, he continues: “The sound of the whistle that has beckoned Korean monks up to now is the song that draws monks from the mountains into cities and from home-renouncing monk to laity. The sound of the whistle from now on should be the song that drives monks from the laity to home-renouncing monk and from cities into the mountains.”¹⁰⁴

Influenced by Sōma, Takahashi modified his earlier emphasis on the socialization of Korean Buddhism and indirectly acknowledged the failure of colonial policies for Buddhism. In addition, as seen in his biting criticism of the popularity of clerical marriage, by the 1930s Takahashi did not consider Japanese Buddhism itself to be a model for reforming Korean Buddhism. In a speech given in 1936, he argues that there would be “no merit at all” in sending Korean monks to the schools of Japanese Buddhist sects because these schools are merely academic and lack real religious practice and spirit.¹⁰⁵ Abe likewise was averse to Japanese Buddhism. Sōma quotes him as saying that, “even seeing a [priest’s] wife’s slip hanging [on the clothesline] in the temple complex makes me feel disgusted, and I don’t feel like going there ever again.”¹⁰⁶

Both Abe and Takahashi, after learning more about Korean Buddhism through Sōma’s writings, began to doubt the widely held view that Korean Buddhism should modernize by coming into the cities, that mountain Buddhism was without value and obstructed modernization, and that Japanese Buddhism was superior. Takahashi suggests that mountain Buddhism and Sōn be considered the key to revitalizing Korean Buddhism, as Sōma had indicated in his writings. Sōma’s presentation of Korean Sōn thus played a significant role in reshaping the Japanese rhetoric on reforming Korean Buddhism. At the end of his article, Takahashi says, “I would like to dedicate a stick of incense as an expression of wishes for Master Hanam’s health.”¹⁰⁷

103. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 25.

104. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 25.

105. Takahashi, “Chōsen bukkyō no rekishiteki etaisei,” 18.

106. *Chōsen bukkyō* 119 (1936): 48.

107. *Chōsen bukkyō* 90 (1933): 25.

Conclusion

One sign of the popularity of Sōma's articles is that every issue of the journal *Korean Buddhism* includes a postscript announcing Sōma's whereabouts and the upcoming topic of his next entry. The postscript also sometimes apologizes for failing to feature his pieces. Sōma's narratives captured the imagination of many readers. Although Sōma was a young priest who had no significant administrative position in his sect, he became so important, memorable, and meaningful that Nakamura, in a memoir published in 1969, highlights just two things in reference to the journal *Korean Buddhism*; one of those is "Sōma Shōei's writing." He remembers it as "precious material" that helped one to understand Korean Buddhism.¹⁰⁸

In 1936, after six years of adventures in Korea, Sōma returned to Japan to live as an *unsui* there. After practicing for a year at Eihei Temple in 1938, Sōma continued to sit in retreat at a small Sōtō monastery called Taijōji, located in Kanazawa. With so many years of practice in Korean monasteries, Korean Buddhism had become a major point of reference for him, even when practicing in the Japanese style. In a letter to Nakamura in March 1938, Sōma writes that the meditation practice and retreat management at Taijō Temple were "quite similar to those of the Korean [monasteries]."¹⁰⁹

Sōma writes again to Nakamura in December of that year about the volatile position of imperial Japan in the global community and the seriousness of the Sino-Japanese war that had begun in 1937. Hearing that some of his friends had been drafted and died in the war, Sōma is defensive about his *unsui* life.

Just because it is a time of total mobilization for all people in Japan does not mean that one can perform service for the nation only through putting on a military uniform. It is also important to protect the home front without guns, and it will be honorable for an *unsui* like me to exert myself through practice in a monastery.¹¹⁰

108. Nakamura, *Chōsen seikatsu gojūnen*, 97–98.

109. *Chōsen bukkyō* 129 (1938): 8.

110. *Chōsen bukkyō* 136 (1938): 10.

He continues,

With that in mind, I have practiced so far in good health. However, at the time of a state emergency, it is wasteful only to practice meditation. Furthermore, I have been able to practice for a long time; this is not the first time that I started practice. I would like to return to Korea as soon as possible and do my best at a given place. I think that returning would be the best thing to do, and it would not run counter to *unsui* practice. Thus, I feel like finishing practice in Japan and traveling to the temples that I had wanted to visit. Now, I have finally arrived in Tokyo. . . . My return to Korea this time will be a real one. For so many years in the past, I have been given so much support in my studies. This time, I will devote my entire energy for the benefit of Korea.¹¹¹

It is not known what Sōma wished to devote himself to or how it would have benefited Korea. However, it is clear that Sōma took Japan's colonial rule over Korea as a given and understood the implication of Japan's wars against China and the West. Yet his descriptions of his monastic experience do not revolve around the colonizer/colonized paradigm as seen in the writings of Takahashi, Nakamura, Abe, and many other Buddhist priests on the topic of Korean Buddhism. The journal was probably excited about Sōma's writings and readers were moved because they could receive stories about Korean Buddhism without the ideological overlay and were consequently invited into a centuries-old shared sphere of Buddhist thought and practice.

We do not know from extant sources whether Sōma made it to Korea. Perhaps new sources will be found later. It suffices to say that Sōma's monastic experience in Korea provided the unique perspective of a Japanese Zen priest who had meaningful relationships with Korean monastics, relationships that made a significant impact not only on his religious practice and identity but also on Japanese and Korean Buddhists' envisioning of what a modern, authentic Buddhism could be. These relationships were based on Sōma's practice as an *unsui*, a transcultural and transnational identity that enabled him to join the practice community easily and see the value of Korean monastic training in a larger Buddhist context.

111. *Chōsen bukkyō* 136 (1938): 10.

Buddhists' transcultural and transnational relationships contributed to rediscovering their shared East Asian Zen identity, even in the colonial setting. Likewise, transnational influences inspired and shaped the founding of new administrative headquarters to centralize the governance of Korean Buddhism, our topic in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Governmentality The Great Head Temple

On October 25, 1938, a celebration heralded the opening of a large and stunningly beautiful great head temple in Seoul that would serve as the spiritual and administrative center for Korean Buddhism's seven thousand monastics, thirty-one head temples, and thousand-plus branch temples. The historic event marked the moment in which Korean Buddhism became unified under one centralized, state-approved institutional entity. A Korean newspaper headline announced: "A great head temple established; advancing the socialization of Buddhism; the centralization of the thirty-one head temples completed; [Buddhism] marching from mountains to cities!"¹ The erection of this great head temple (*ch'ong ponsa*), initially called T'aegosa, as the headquarters of Korean Buddhism, was the culmination of a nearly forty year effort by Korean Buddhist reformers to centralize, unify, and modernize Korean Buddhism. The history of this building and its designation as Korean Buddhism's great head temple reveals how Korean Buddhism underwent a dramatic process of governmentalization in the colonial period, the impact of which reverberates into our time. Indeed, in the bustling streets of Seoul, the very same temple, in addition to several large buildings in the complex, serves as the headquarters for Korea's largest Buddhist denomination today.

1. *Tong'a ilbo*, October 23, 1938.

Korean Buddhists, in their efforts to establish a powerful institutional structure, were in step with the reform-minded Buddhist leaders of Japan, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and others.² The institutions of Japan and Korea, in particular, came about in either of two ways: by forming a central administrative office or by founding a great head temple. These were not mutually exclusive. For example, most Japanese Buddhist sects instituted the head priest system (*kanchō seidō*) in 1884.³ According to this system, a central administrative office was stationed in the great head temple, where the head priest resided as the head of the sect. The Sōtōshū, however, positioned its central administrative office in Tokyo, far from the two great head temples that took turns assuming its leadership.

The colonial government laws regulating Korean Buddhism prevented Korean Buddhism from pursuing a great head temple system that could oversee the affairs of the thirty-one head temples. Thus Korean Buddhist leaders first pushed for installing a centralized administrative system. When they failed to win the support of Korean monks and authorities, they turned to the other option of founding a great head temple as a spiritual center, which materialized in 1938. Korean Buddhism then pursued installing a central administrative office, in the same complex, that would have the power to nominate abbots.

Although Korean monastics should be given much credit for their strenuous efforts to this end, the completion of the great head temple and the central administrative office system was accomplished primarily because the colonial government itself made a huge pivot in its agenda. In the early 1930s, the colonial government initiated a spiritual mobilization drive that mixed spiritual revitalization with a political, imperial vision. It was called the Spiritual Development Movement (Shinden kaiatsu undō), which was announced in 1932 and in full force in the mid-1930s.⁴ The movement was a successor to the Village Revitalization Movement (Nōson kōsei undō) implemented in colonial Korea and imperial Japan in response to the global depression in the

2. Nakanishi, *Shokuminchi Chōsen*; Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*; Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*; Goossaert and Palmer, *Religious Question*; Schober, *Modern Buddhist Conjunctures*; Blackburn, *Locations*.

3. Hardacre, *Shintō*, 43.

4. Kim Sunsök, *Ilche sidae Chosŏn Ch'ongdokpu*; Kawase, *Shokuminchi Chōsen no shukyō*; Nakanishi, *Shokuminchi Chōsen*.

late 1920s and Japan's establishment of Manchukuo in the early 1930s. The colonial government sought to unify the country, prevent unrest, and mobilize the populace for state projects through the movement. These goals were expressed in the motto "to cultivate the fields of minds" (*shinden kaihatsu*), a concept taken from Buddhist and Confucian scriptures. The movement essentially claimed to enhance people's religiosity and promote recognized religions, but the government's true intention was to inculcate Koreans with the national polity (*kokutai*), or, more bluntly, undivided reverence for the emperor.⁵ This state propaganda was much like the Great Promulgation Campaign that the Meiji regime instituted in the 1870s in Japan. Like Japanese Buddhism in Japan, Korean Buddhism was expected to play a key role in disseminating these teachings. The state recognized that Korean Buddhism required a unified, centralized executive body in order to accomplish this aim. As such, although the state had previously controlled (and thereby disempowered) Korean Buddhism, it now sought to strengthen Korean Buddhism by supporting the creation of a great head temple and a central administrative office. Moreover, Korean Buddhism was able to accomplish its long-desired dream as the state made an all-out effort to eradicate all new, "superstitious" religions.⁶ Not only did this reduce the competition for Korean Buddhism, but it also inadvertently led to a huge gift: once the new religion Poch'ŏn'gyo was abolished, its massive, beautifully constructed central building was sold, at a bargain price, to Korean Buddhists. The building was subsequently disassembled, transported, and reassembled in Seoul, reborn as an authentic, traditional Korean Buddhist temple and the new headquarters for Korean Buddhism.

Alongside the favorable political conditions, there was significant momentum in the leadership of different Korean Buddhist groups to come together to establish a great head temple. After decades of debate, Korean Buddhists came to largely agree that the tradition needed to modernize itself by becoming unified. Korean Buddhism sought to emulate the model used by Japanese Buddhism, which also underwent a major modernization process during the early Meiji era. Korean Buddhists took note that such a system was both state-supported and semi-autonomous. The promise of such autonomy spoke to the quiet but

5. Nakanishi, *Shokuminchi Chōsen*, 233–43.

6. Aono, "Ilche ūi pulgyo chōngch'aek."

pervasive sense of Buddhist nationalism among Korean Buddhists. The establishment of the great head temple was also fueled by a reaction to the establishment of a potential competitor, a great head temple built by Japanese Buddhists in Seoul in the early 1930s. This temple, along with several other attempts by Japanese Buddhists to erect temples that would also serve as the headquarters of Korean Buddhism, prompted Korean Buddhists to take action and speed along their own vision. These internal and external factors united to produce this historic moment in Korean Buddhism.

Scholars have debated whether the establishment of the great head temple was driven primarily by Korean Buddhists' own volition, by colonial authorities, or by a combination of both.⁷ This chapter argues that the great head temple was due to actions taken by both. However, because much of the prevailing scholarship focuses on the role of the colonial government, this chapter will lay out in greater detail the history of how Korean Buddhist leaders skillfully took advantage of political conditions from the late 1920s through 1945. The colonial government's desperation, as it strove to handle the country's economic depression, and Japan's rapid military expansion into China led the colonial government to turn to Korean Buddhism. The state viewed Korean Buddhism as a reliable religion that could effectively mobilize the country economically, militarily, and spiritually through its Spiritual Development Movement propaganda. Korean Buddhist leaders took ownership of the movement and, in return, demanded that the state commit to developing Korean Buddhism as a unified entity. They especially pushed for recognition as an institution that was independent of Japanese Buddhism. For the sake of Japan's empire, the colonial government empowered Korean Buddhists by granting them their long-desired central institution. Thus, the great head temple building should be characterized less as a colonial or nationalistic product than as a by-product of the state's needs and Korean Buddhists' tactics. The temple was a calculated transaction between two parties who knew each other's needs and deftly negotiated to accomplish their respective objectives. In the end, Korean Buddhists fell short of securing an equivalent status between their great head temple and the great head temples of Japanese Buddhist sects. Nonetheless, the new temple

7. Kim Kwangsik, *Han'guk kũndae pulgyosa yŏn'gu*; Kim Sunsŏk, *Ilche sidae Chosŏn Ch'ongdokpu*; An, "Han'guk pulgyo ch'ongbonsa kŏnsŏl."

succeeded in unifying Korean Buddhism more fully than had ever been achieved in previous centuries and in symbolizing the power of Korean Buddhism.

Earlier Efforts: 1908 to 1930

The movement to centralize Korean Buddhism, if not to build a great head temple, started as early as the late nineteenth century, in the sunset of the Chosŏn dynasty. Japanese Buddhist missionaries to Korea, who were already familiar with the great head temple system instituted in their own sects in the early Meiji, introduced the idea to Korean Buddhism. When they commenced larger-scale missions to Korea after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, it did not take long for Japanese sects to install competing administrative centers in Korea, each attempting to bring all Korean temples and monastics under the authority of their sect. For instance, the Nichirenshū missionary Katō Bunkyō approached Korean monks in the 1890s with the idea of forming an institutional body in central Seoul that, in partnership with the Nichirenshū, could control Korean Buddhism. With a similar goal in mind, in 1895 his fellow missionary Sano Zenrei (1864–1917) sought to designate the Korean temple Chunghŭngsa near Seoul as both the primary missionary post for the Nichirenshū and, more important, the administrative center of Korean Buddhism. Threatened by the attempted power grabs of Japanese Buddhist sects on Korean Buddhism, in 1899 the Korean Chosŏn government took control of Korean Buddhism into its own hands. The government established a small temple, later called Wŏnhŭngsa, right outside the four gates of Seoul and set up an administrative office there. The government assigned two lay officials to be in charge of both the temple itself and the office to administer matters relating to Korean Buddhism. This move created a unique system in which a government office was stationed inside a temple complex. Shortly after its establishment, the office promulgated regulations for Korean Buddhism through the Temple Ordinance of 1902, itself an emulation of the Japanese Buddhist institutional structure. The office gave Korean Buddhism the extant institutional name Sŏn Kyo yangjong (or Joint School of Sŏn Kyo) and, as with Japanese Buddhism's head-branch temple system, designated sixteen temples as the major head temples of Korea's provinces. The Wŏnhŭngsa, where this government office was located, was designated as the great head temple

of these sixteen. Thus, Korean Buddhism's first great head temple system originated from the Korean Chosŏn government itself.

However, because the lay officials residing at Wŏnhŭng Temple controlled all matters, Korean monks were powerless. Wŏnhŭngsa, though technically a temple, was essentially a government branch that oversaw Korean Buddhism. The system was short-lived, in any case. The temple, the office, and the Temple Ordinance became defunct in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, when Japan became the caretaker government of Korea. Two Japanese Buddhist sects, the Jōdo sect and the Jōdoshin sect, capitalized on this chaos by attempting to assume control of Wŏnhŭng Temple for their own sectarian expansion and control of Korean Buddhism. The Japanese Shingon priest Shaku Unshō (1827–1909), in 1906, also tried to take over the former headquarters of Korean Buddhism by approaching Resident General Itō Hirobumi (served 1905–9), albeit in vain. The Jōdo sect briefly won control in 1906.

In 1908, the Korean Buddhist monk Yi Hoegwang was able to take Wŏnhŭng Temple back from the Jōdo sect. With Wŏnhŭng Temple now in the hands of Korean Buddhist monastics, Korean Buddhist leaders began to discuss the formation of a modern and semiautonomous institution seriously. They established the Wŏnjong, replacing the Chosŏn's title of the Joint School of Sŏn Kyo, and set up an administrative office at Wŏnhŭngsa, designating Yi as the sect's head priest. However, since the Wŏnjong lacked institutional and political clout, Korean monastics worked with the Japanese Sōtōshū missionary Takeda Hanshi, who was soon invited to serve as an advisor to the Wŏnjong. Yi, Takeda, and other monks wrote a detailed proposal arguing for legal standing for the Wŏnjong as Korean Buddhism's central executive body and submitted it to both the Korean and the Japanese authorities in Korea. Neither government, however, would recognize the Wŏnjong's legality.

Undeterred, Yi and other Korean monks tried a different and even bolder strategy. Wŏnhŭng Temple was located outside the four gates of Seoul, which Korean monastics had been barred from entering for centuries because of the neo-Confucian sympathies of the Chosŏn dynasty. The physical location of Korean Buddhism's future great head temple was tremendously symbolic for Korean monastics. A temple outside the gates signified that Korean Buddhism held a marginal status; inside the gates meant that Korean Buddhism held a central role

in Korean society. Thus, the Wŏnjong moved out of Wonhŭng Temple and built a new temple, Kakhwangsa, inside the four gates of Seoul (modeled architecturally after the Sôtōshū's branch temple in Seoul).⁸ The Wŏnjong declared that Kakhwangsa was the administrative center of Korean Buddhism, equivalent in status to a great head temple in Japan. Simultaneously, in an effort to press authorities to recognize the Wŏnjong, Yi and his colleagues sought to ride along on the institutional clout of the powerful Sôtō sect by attempting to merge the Wŏnjong and the Sôtōshū. However, this strategic alliance angered many other Korean monks since the merger would mean that the Wŏnjong would be annexed by the Sôtōshū. Spearheaded by Han Yong'un, these monastics established a counterinstitution called the Imjejong, set up their own administrative office not far from Kakhwang Propagation Hall, made Han the head priest, and declared itself the executive body of Korean Buddhism.

Concerned about the increasing infighting among Korean and Japanese Buddhists, the colonial government disestablished both the Wŏnjong and the Imjejong in 1911. The government ordered Korean Buddhism to adopt the former institutional name, Joint School of Sŏn Kyo, that the previous Chosŏn government had employed. Rather than closing Kakhwangsa, the colonial government allowed it to serve as a liaison for what were by then thirty head temples. This coordinating office was a far cry from the great head temple or centralized office that Yi, Takeda, Han, and others had wished for. Thus, Kakhwangsa not only failed to gain the status of a temple but was demoted to a propagation hall. (It became the first propagation hall in modern Korean Buddhism,⁹ and this status continued until it was transformed into the great head temple in 1938.)

Shortly thereafter, Governor General Terauchi enacted the Temple Ordinance of 1911, effectively bringing Korean Buddhism under his direct control and sidelining the Japanese Buddhist sects. According to the Temple Ordinance, he alone held the power to appoint the abbots of the thirty head temples. Likewise, the abbots of the local temples were appointed by provincial governors (and not, significantly, by the head temple abbots). Furthermore, any transaction regarding temple properties required approval from the government. In effect, Terauchi

8. *Tong'a ilbo*, July 3, 1920.

9. Kim Kwangsik, "Kakhwangsa."

became what Han Yong'un later called the de facto "pope of Korean Buddhism."¹⁰ To smooth the feathers ruffled by this dramatic reconfiguration, Terauchi invited the newly appointed abbots of the thirty head temples to his residence in the colonial government complex. During this meeting, he emphasized that his favorable policies on Buddhism had improved the social standing of Korean monks and outlined the leadership roles these abbots should play in a new era. This special meeting for the head abbots to receive instructions from the governor general became an annual event with the government throughout the colonial era.¹¹ As a result of the Temple Ordinance of 1911, the vision of creating a centralized institution for Korean Buddhism was aborted. Throughout the 1910s, Kakhwangsa, as a propagation hall and not a temple, served as a meeting place for the abbots of the head temples to coordinate plans to run a school and other joint programs. The thirty head abbots were equal in status to each other and operated independently of any overarching institutional umbrella.

From 1912 to 1919, Terauchi's military rule silenced any discussion of potentially resuming institutional reform. However, in 1919, the March First Independence Uprising shook the very foundation of Japan's confidence in its rule over Korea. In the general atmosphere of protest and revolt, young Korean Buddhist monks challenged the fragmented senior leadership of Korean Buddhism at Kakhwang Propagation Hall. Discussions resumed in late 1919, hammering out a substantive institutional structure for Korean Buddhism. The new governor general, Saitō Makoto, had already shifted the colonial policy of rule through military force to a more conciliatory cultural rule. Keen to enact measures that would prevent another anti-Japanese rebellion, Saitō addressed policy changes to be made in regard to Korean Buddhism. Knowing that the March First Independence Uprising had been instigated largely by Christians, Saitō wanted to promote Buddhism as a counterforce to Christianity in colonial Korea. As a way to revitalize Buddhism, Saitō revised the Temple Ordinance of 1911 to allow the establishment of a great head temple in Seoul, permitting it to control the thirty head temples, and appointing a pro-Japanese head priest. This revision is the first time the term "great head temple" is mentioned by the colonial government itself. The turn in colonial policy prompted

10. "Chosŏn yusinhoe ūi sach'allyŏng p'yejiundong," *Tong'a ilbo*, April 25, 1922.

11. Kawase, *Shokuminchi Chōsen no shukyō*, 35.

both Korean and Japanese Buddhist leaders to reintroduce their respective visions for institutional Korean Buddhism.¹²

Partly encouraged by Saitō's changes, young Korean monks began to reshuffle the existing institutional structure, which they viewed as corrupt and ineffectual. They believed that the Temple Ordinance of 1911 was problematic and demanded that the colonial government nullify it altogether rather than slightly revising it. The monks also asked to disestablish the office of the thirty head temples and set up a new, powerful administrative office instead. They instituted the Ch'ongmuwŏn as a new central administrative office to replace the former office. These demands split Korean Buddhism once again, with one group supporting the abolition of the ordinance and the other supporting the status quo. Kakhwang Propagation Hall became a battleground for the two opposing offices.

Amid this infighting, Yi Hoegwang, who had attempted to merge the Wŏnjong and the Sôtō sect in late 1910, resumed his venture in 1920. Emboldened by Saitō's openness to institutional change and by other events, Yi approached the Rinzai sect as a potential partner for institutional planning. He also began building a propagation hall in central Seoul by mortgaging Haein Temple, of which he was abbot. The large property on which he built this hall had belonged to a palace of the Chosŏn dynasty. He intended to transform the propagation hall into a great head temple that would house a central administrative office. This new headquarters would thus be in direct competition with the existing administrative center of Korean Buddhism at Kakhwang Propagation Hall called the United Office of the Thirty Head Temples (Samsip ponsan yŏnhap samuso). Just as the Sôtō-Wŏnjong alliance of 1910 did not last, the Yi and Rinzaishū collusion was equally short-lived, owing to the revelation of the deal in the Japanese Buddhist daily newspaper *Chūgai nippō*. The Rinzai sect denied involvement in any deal with Yi, and Korean monks roared in opposition to it. Despite opposition, Yi nevertheless held a major opening ceremony in December 1920 that included an elaborate parade with thousands of people, including Japanese officials, in attendance.¹³ Yi had even set up a Buddhist medical clinic, and he planned to build a new hall for Buddhist youth in the

12. Kawase, *Shokuminchi Chōsen no shukyō*, 39.

13. *Maeil sinbo*, December 23, 26, 27, 1920.

same complex.¹⁴ Despite setbacks, Yi's establishment emerged as a substantial threat to the other two camps vying for control of Korean Buddhism, the newly formed Ch'ongmuwŏn, made up of young monastics, and the established senior abbots who convened at Kakhwang Propagation Hall. The remaining head abbots responded to the brewing factionalization of Korean Buddhism and changed their name from the Unified Office to the Kyomuwŏn, making it a corporate organization with an endowment of 600,000 yen.

By 1920, there were three factions in Korean Buddhism competing with each other. However, both the Kyomuwŏn and the Ch'ongmuwŏn, while fighting each other over Kakhwangsa, had to respond to Yi's growing power. To counter Yi's new movement, each sect unveiled its own grand construction plan to replace the existing, modestly sized Kakhwang Propagation Hall and create a larger, more powerful center for Korean Buddhism.¹⁵ Nevertheless, both sects ended up scrapping their plans for financial and other reasons.¹⁶ Instead, they spent their energy fighting each other at Kakhwang Propagation Hall, where their new offices were located, like two incompatible families under one roof. Physical violence ensued: one party would put up their office sign only to have it removed, after a fist fight, by the other party. This competition persisted until 1924, when the colonial government intervened, backed the Kyomuwŏn as a legitimate office for Korean Buddhism, and ordered the Ch'ongmuwŏn to be closed down. Thus, the institutional format of 1910 was restored but under a different name. The government did not bother to reclassify Yi's central propagation office, but, with the Kyomuwŏn as the only legal organ, Yi's grand plot became obsolete. To Yi's dismay, his aggressive expansion of the propagation hall complex incurred a huge amount of debt, nearly bankrupting Haein Temple. The propagation hall was taken over by the bank in 1924 and lawsuits followed, ultimately costing Yi his abbacy of Haein Temple (and the propagation office complex).¹⁷

But old habits die hard. Yi returned to the scene in 1926. This time, he worked with several Korean and Japanese Buddhists to construct "a great head temple" in Seoul with the idea of "contributing to the

14. *Maeil sinbo*, January 10, 1921.

15. *Maeil sinbo*, January 12, 20, 23, 1921.

16. *Maeil sinbo*, March 21, 1921.

17. Im, *Ch'inil sŏngnyŏ 108-in*, 73.

harmony of Japan and Korea” (*naisen yūwa*). Yet, as before, Yi’s attempt failed.¹⁸ With the conclusion of Yi’s institutional efforts, the second of its three major challengers had disappeared, but the Kyomuwŏn continued to be institutionally weak and functioned much like the former meeting office of the thirty head temples.

In 1929, a group of reform-minded young monks, led by those who had studied in Japan, France, and Germany,¹⁹ held a Sangha gathering to bring the different factions together.²⁰ Rather than trying to replace the existing Kyomuwŏn, they took a different approach. They introduced the idea of creating bylaws (*chonghŏn*) and a parliamentary system (*chonghoe*) for the existing institution as a way to centralize Korean Buddhism. These forms of governance had already been implemented in Japanese Buddhist sects in the early Meiji period, becoming essential to sectarian identity and decision making. Using Japanese Buddhism as a model, the monks at the Sangha gathering appointed seven leading masters to serve as patriarchs, spiritual figureheads who would institutionally oversee Korean Buddhism. The monks also aimed to democratize the Kyomuwŏn by having a parliamentary system through which more young monks could become involved in denominational politics. In response to mounting pressure from lower down, most of the head monks acquiesced to the reform-minded monks’ ideas. Yet, although these new systems were put into practice, this governing apparatus was not taken seriously. The colonial government’s obstruction was one factor, but the overall indifference of the abbots of the head temples, whom the reformist monk Kim Pŏmnin derided as “faces of darkness,”²¹ was another. When this effort proved futile, Buddhist reformers returned to the idea of establishing a great head temple.²² Despite all the factionalism, Korean Buddhist leaders had come to agree that a modern religion should be centralized to govern its own establishments and members effectively and that it would have to create such a governing organ.

18. *Tong’a ilbo*, May 12, 1926.

19. That is, Paek Sŏng’uk, Kim Pŏmnin, and Toh Chinho (Kang Yumun, in *Pulgyo* 100 [October 1932]).

20. Kim Kwangsik, *Han’guk kŭndae pulgyosa yŏn’gu*, 342.

21. Kim Kwangsik, *Han’guk kŭndae pulgyosa yŏn’gu*, 403.

22. Kim Kwangsik, *Han’guk kŭndae pulgyo ūi hyŏnsil insik*, 4.

The Threat of the Itō Hirobumi Temple

In 1929, the same year that Korean monks tried to reform the Kyomuwŏn, construction began on a grand temple to memorialize the resident general Itō Hirobumi, who had been assassinated in 1909. At the forefront of the project was the Japanese official Kodama Hideo (1876–1947), who had served Itō as a middle-ranking secretary in the Resident General's Office and later emerged as a high official in the colonial government. In early December 1929, Kodama held a press conference announcing the grand project. Firmly believing that Itō had sincerely worked for the unity of Korea and Japan, Kodama declared that a physical monument to commemorate Itō's legacy should be established in colonial Seoul rather than in Japan. Kodama also promised that this temple would assist in unifying Korean and Japanese Buddhism and would thus work closely with Korean head temples. Korean Buddhists interpreted this announcement as a statement that the new temple would assume the power to govern Korean Buddhism, thereby placing Korean Buddhism under Japanese Buddhism. Clearly, this presented a grave threat to their aspirations of autonomy for Korean Buddhism.²³

Kodama vowed to build the temple in a Korean and Zen Buddhist traditional style, similar to Terauchi's commitment to print a Korean-style Koryŏ Canon back in 1915. The colonial government and the mayor of Seoul gave their full support to Kodama's project. Among several possible sites, the prestigious Changch'undan Park at the foot of Seoul's famous Namsan mountain was selected. The entire budget was estimated at 400,000 yen, half of which would be raised in Japan and the other half in colonial Korea and Taiwan. The fundraising was successful, and the large building was completed in a matter of three years in 1932, the twenty-third year after Itō's death. To make the building truly Korean-styled, construction materials from the former Kyŏngbok Palace of the Chosŏn dynasty were incorporated into the structure.²⁴

In addition to honoring Itō, the Japanese also considered the temple to be a space where Japanese and Korean people could be united. As a

23. *Chōsen bukkyō* 67 (December 1929): 50; 69 (February 1930): 50.

24. *Yomiuri shinbun*, March 5 and 17, 1930; December 7, 1932.

symbolic gesture, the son of An Chungŭn (1879–1910),²⁵ the man who assassinated Itō, was brought to the temple and given the opportunity to repent for the tragic mistake on behalf of his late father. The Japanese also wanted to characterize the temple as a spiritual center where both Korean and Japanese Buddhists could work together in a transectarian way in the name of “Japan and Korea as one body” (*naisen ittai*). To enact the vision, Kodama planned to do three things: elect a Korean monk as the abbot, select Japanese priests as residents, and promote Korean Buddhist thought.²⁶ However, Kodama’s plan to make the Korean temple Korean in nature did not materialize. Since Itō was a member of the Sōtō sect, the temple, by force of circumstances, became affiliated with the Sōtōshū; the Sōtō priest Suzuki Tenzan (1863–1941) was appointed its first abbot, and the Korean monk Kim Mukcho was assigned to be a resident propagator.²⁷ Two years later, in 1934, Suzuki’s successor, Ueno Shūn’ei (1872–1947), claimed that the temple would be the institutional center for Korean Buddhism. But, according to a nationalist article written by the reformist monk Kim Pōmnin in 1963, Ueno had allegedly announced, “The administration of Korean Buddhism should not be assigned to Korean monks in light of [Japan’s] colonial control [over Korea]. Thus, Hakubun Temple should be made the great head temple and Korean Buddhism annexed to Japanese Buddhism.” According to Kim, Ueno submitted a request for these policies to the colonial government.²⁸ Whether or not Kim Pōmnin’s later recollections were accurate, the towering presence of a Korean-style, Japanese-controlled temple at the foot of Namsan must have hurt the pride of many Korean monks. Compared to the small, Japanese Sōtō-style Kakhwang Propagation Hall, crowded among other buildings in central Seoul, Hakubun Temple telegraphed Korean Buddhism’s inferiority. Korean Buddhists had to change that situation (fig. 5.1).

While the construction of Hakubun Temple was in full swing, Kim Pōmnin charged the Korean monk Kim Sangho (1889–1965) with the

25. An’s second son’s name was An Chunsang (1907–51). An had one daughter, An Hyōnsang (1902–60), who also visited the Hakubun Temple to repent for her father. See Mizuno, “Hakubunji no wakaigeki to gojitsudan.”

26. *Chūgai nippō*, October 22, 1929; *Maeil sinbo*, May 31, 1934.

27. *Chōsen futatabi Manshū* 334 (September 1, 1935).

28. *Taehan pulgyo*, August 1, 1963.



FIG. 5.1. Hakubun Temple in 1932 (*Han'guk pulgyo 100-yŏn*, 179). Courtesy of Minjoksa Publications, Seoul.

responsibility of galvanizing support among Korean monks to build a great head temple that Korean Buddhism could claim as its own. Kim Sangho, who worked as the manager of general affairs in the Kyomuwŏn, traveled around the country, informing the abbots of head temples that Hakubun Temple would soon be completed and that, once operational, it was intended to institutionally absorb Korean Buddhism. He urged Korean monks to unite in forming a response to this scheme. Working against “a Japanese Buddhist priest’s conspiracy,” as Kim Pŏmnin referred to Ueno’s plan, Kim Sangho prodded the abbots of two major head temples to raise funds that could be spent to persuade Korean and Japanese officials to help Korean monastics. Kim Sangho also told these abbots that he would notify Japanese Buddhist leaders that Korean Buddhists would undertake their own building project. Kim Sangho connected himself with the official Kim Taeu, who served in the Office of Religion of the colonial government and who was sympathetic to his initiative. However, the fundraising drive did not fare well owing to the dire financial situation of the temples. Kim Sangho sold his wife’s land to secure the necessary funds and to keep his and Kim Pŏmnin’s movement alive. One of the two abbots pledged to pay Kim back, but the abbot died without fulfilling his promise. Using a portion of the money, Kim Taeu invited a dozen or so Japanese Buddhist leaders to a dinner

party and announced that Korean Buddhist leaders would be uniting in an effort to build a great head temple.²⁹ (It is not known how the Japanese guests received this news.)

Based on Kim Pömnin's article written in 1963, the scholar Chöng Kwangho concludes that Hakubun Temple was the primary reason for the great head temple movement since Korean Buddhists considered the construction of Hakubun Temple to be another plot by the Japanese to annex Korean Buddhism.³⁰ The scholar Kim Kwangsik does not feel that Hakubun Temple was the direct cause of the great head temple movement in the early 1930s, but he agrees with Chöng that it was a contributing factor.³¹ However, the Korean monk Kang Sökchu, who lived during the second half of the colonial period, confirms the assertions of Kim Pömnin and Chöng Kwangho. In a 2002 interview, he reminisced that, "when the Japanese were about to build Pangmun Temple [Hakubun Temple], young monks rose up and constructed T'aego Temple."³² Undoubtedly, Hakubun Temple was at least a powerful motivation in the renewed efforts by Korean Buddhists to construct a great head temple themselves.

Evolution of Kakhwang Propagation Hall

Even though Hakubun Temple had fired up Korean Buddhists' desire to build an equivalent temple, a plan to renovate or reconstruct Kakhwang Propagation Hall, which was in poor condition, was already in motion. With the founding of Hakubun Temple, that initial renovation plan evolved into a plan to make it a full-blown great head temple.

When Wonhüngsa, located outside the four gates of Seoul, became defunct in 1904, Yi Hoegwang and other Buddhist leaders used the rent from that facility to pay for establishing the first modern Korean Buddhist institution. In 1910, with donations from thousands of monastics and lay Buddhists from across Korea, Yi was able to purchase a small piece of property inside the four gates of Seoul. There, he

29. *Taehan pulgyo*, August 1, 1963.

30. Chöng Kwangho, "Ilbon ch'imnyak sigi," 531–32.

31. Kim Kwangsik, *Han'guk kündae pulgyo üi hyönsil insik*, 414, n. 33.

32. Hyedam, 22-in, 31.

built Kakhwangsa, which functioned as the administrative headquarters of Korean Buddhism.³³ In 1914, the building was demolished and reconstructed,³⁴ and the occasion was accompanied by the installation of a *śarīra* (Buddha's relic) donated by the Sri Lankan Buddhist reformer Anagarika Dharmapala. When he visited Kakhwang Propagation Hall in 1913 and donated the relic of Śākyamuni, Korean Buddhist leaders planned to erect a stupa to enshrine it. Instead, they preserved the relic in a metal case inside the newly built Kakhwang Propagation Hall building, which was constructed in a style that mixed Western and Japanese Sōtō-style influences. In the early 1920s, there was discussion of rebuilding Kakhwang Propagation Hall as a mecca for Korean Buddhism, but this idea did not go far.

Frustrated, in 1930, the chief preacher of Kakhwang Propagation Hall, Kim T'aehŭp, reignited the effort. In an essay, he urged Buddhist leaders to undertake a new, grand plan for Kakhwang Propagation Hall. He wrote, "There is a proverb saying that the higher the mountain, the deeper the valley, and the deeper the water, the more the fish. As such, in order to maintain our stature, isn't it imperative that we have a decent building for our central organization?"³⁵ He continued with more specifics:

No matter what, I think that the so-called central temple [or Propagation Hall], Kakhwangsa, cannot be left as it is. In fact, it looks less impressive than propagation halls in the city of Suwŏn and one in the city of Wŏnsan. Whenever the wind blows, the foundations of the pillars tremble; whenever it rains, the building leaks. . . . Often those who come to attend Dharma talks [at Kakhwangsa] end up turning around and leave the temple feeling discomfort.³⁶

Kim also argued that Kakhwang Propagation Hall needed rebuilding in order to properly house and honor the Śākyamuni relic donated by Dharmapala in 1913, which was still in a metal box. In order for this temple to truly become the representative face of Korean Buddhism,

33. *Maeil sinbo*, October 1, 1910.

34. *Maeil sinbo*, September 28, 1914.

35. *Pulgyo* 67 (January 1930): 4.

36. *Pulgyo* 67 (January 1930): 4.

he argued, a hall for Master T'aego—whom he considered to be the founder of Korean Buddhism—should also be constructed.³⁷ Then, Kim made a revealing statement about the temple from a comparative perspective: “I cannot help but deplore the incapability of Korean Buddhists whenever I see Christianity, Ch'öndogyo, Sich'öngyo, or the temple of Ch'a Kyöngsök [or Ch'a Wölgok, 1880–1936, the founder of Poch'ön'gyo, an offshoot of the Tonghak religion] in Chöng'üp.”³⁸ His statement indicates that he and other Buddhist monks were aware of and envious of Poch'ön'gyo's main temple building, which eight years later would be purchased and moved by the Korean Buddhist community.

Although a pagoda for the Buddha's relic that Anagarika Dharmapala brought to Korea was finally erected in 1930, Kim's proposal to rebuild Kakhwang Propagation Hall was put on hold because of disagreements with the Korean Buddhist institution and the global depression in the late 1920 and early 1930s. Prices of rice plummeted, having an impact on the temple economy since payments from tenant farmers were one of the main sources of income for major monasteries. The central office had difficulty collecting duty money from the head and branch temples. Since the money was used to run the office and schools, to fund publications and support events, as well as to pay staff salaries, the debt of Kakhwang Propagation Hall and the central office snowballed. The publication of the monthly Buddhist journal was suspended for over a year between 1933 and 1934, and an institution-run school was on the verge of being sold to pay down the debt. Under these circumstances, undertaking a large-scale building project was out of the question.

In mid-1935, however, the administrators at Kakhwang Propagation Hall seriously began planning the project by instituting a preplanning committee that consisted of the thirty-one head abbots and Master Song Chonghön (or Manam, 1875–1957) as its president. The building would be constructed in a purely Korean temple style.³⁹ This time, Korean Buddhists had a better chance to accomplish their goal, thanks to a nationwide Spiritual Development Movement initiated by the colonial government.

37. *Pulgyo* 67 (January 1930): 4.

38. *Pulgyo* 67 (January 1930): 5.

39. *Maeil sinbo*, May 29, 1935.

Meeting of Abbots: 1935

The colonial government began planning the Spiritual Development Movement in 1932, with nationwide implementation in 1935. The government empowered and elevated the Office of Religion to execute the movement.⁴⁰ In March 1935, Governor General Ugaki Kazushige (served 1931–36) invited Korean and Japanese Buddhist leaders, including the abbot of Hakubun Temple, Suzuki Tenzan, to his residence to promote the movement that he had initiated in Korea.⁴¹ Korean Buddhism was singled out as the leading engine for this movement, and the colonial government cajoled Korean Buddhists into believing that the mobilization itself was a Buddhist movement from which Korean Buddhism would benefit. As part of this movement, the colonial government drafted a policy that would draw Korean monastics from the temples in the mountains into the cities and towns by creating more religious facilities, eventually “establishing one temple in each village.”⁴² Korean monks seized on this opportunity to gather the support of other monastics for the construction of a great head temple by taking active ownership of the new role charged to them by the colonial government.

The abbots of the thirty-one head temples also responded to the changed atmosphere. On July 28, 1935, five abbots of head temples convened in Seoul and created a promotional association for the movement, vowing to mobilize all Korean Buddhists to spread the Spiritual Development Movement.⁴³ As a follow-up, they decided to meet with the other abbots a month later. On August 27, the abbots congregated at Kakhwang Propagation Hall for a two-day meeting to discuss executing programs for the Spiritual Development Movement. During the meeting, they were invited to the residency of Governor General Ugaki. Ugaki asked the abbots to do their best to “advance the development and improvement of Korea’s spiritual dimension through promoting Buddhism.” In order to do that, he said, temples and monastics should be reformed to help generate the faith of the people. Thus, Ugaki justified edicts he had promulgated several months before that had initiated the purification of temples and the education of monks as a

40. *Pulygo sibo*, August 3, 1935.

41. *Maeil sinbo*, March 6, 1935.

42. *Maeil sinbo*, June 15, 1935.

43. *Pulgyo sibo*, August 3, 1935.

prerequisite for the success of the Spiritual Development Movement.⁴⁴ After this meeting, Buddhist leaders agreed that they would demolish the deteriorating Kakhwang Propagation Hall and erect a new, large temple “as a commemorative project of the Spiritual Development Movement.”⁴⁵ Soon, the nature of this project changed from a commemorative building to a great head temple on the site of Kakhwang Propagation Hall, with a budget of 50,000 yen. They also agreed that a special committee of seven monks should be organized in order to prepare a proposal for government approval.

Regional Unity: 1936

In addition to the creation of external conditions conducive to building, at long last, a great head temple, an interesting development in Korean Buddhism happened simultaneously in the mid-1930s. The rifts in Korean Buddhism, divided by regions and monasteries, gradually began to narrow. This emerging unity was partly driven by the shared goals of establishing a great head temple and leading the government’s Spiritual Development Movement.

Throughout the colonial period, Korean Buddhism had been plagued with factionalism. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the affluent monasteries such as Pŏmŏsa, Haein, and T’ongdo temples in the southeast provinces tended to dominate the Buddhist arena. Often their monopoly was envied and challenged by less affluent monasteries in other regions, especially by those in the Chŏlla provinces. Monasteries such as Pong’ŭn Temple and Yongju Temple located in and near Seoul also had influence because of their close proximity to the political center. The remainder of the monasteries in the northern provinces were not as prominent as other monasteries involved in institutional politics.

In fact, these regional divisions had their roots in the Temple Ordinance of 1902 instituted by the Chosŏn government. The creation of a head temple system in which sixteen temples would oversee regional temples led to aggressive lobbying and competition in the selection process. The divisions worsened after the colonial government took

44. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1935.

45. *Maeil sinbo*, September 3, 1935.

over the affairs of Korean Buddhism, in part because the number of head temples increased to thirty in 1911 and then thirty-one in 1926. Administrative division was less prominent during the Chosŏn dynasty since monastics freely affiliated with any monastery in the country in the course of their practice and study careers. Although this tradition continued during the colonial period, the new administrative division, as the Korean monk Tong'un lamented in 1937, caused thirty-one head temples and their branch temples to "moan from the condition of meaningless splits"⁴⁶ and to be plagued by "factional competition among the south and north and the east and west."⁴⁷

In addition to the regional divisions of Korean Buddhism, the Temple Ordinance of 1911 created a new problem: without any central control system for the thirty-one head temples, the abbots of these temples emerged, as many monastics complained, as dictators.⁴⁸ Since the Temple Ordinance decreed that the abbots of the head temples would receive their appointments from the governor general and branch temples would receive appointments from the provincial governors, the abbots had nothing to fear other than the secular authorities. The system had no checks and balances on the power of these abbots. As long as they complied with authorities, they could secure their position and rule their monasteries as they wished. Worse, the Temple Ordinance granted additional power to the abbots of the head temples by giving them the authority to punish and even excommunicate monks in the head and branch temples. Moreover, the only monetary obligation they had to fulfill was to pay the amounts allocated to them by the Kyomuwŏn to fund schools and other proselytization programs. But even this financial duty was frequently ignored.⁴⁹ Because of the privileged status of the abbots of the head temples, the abbacy of these temples and major administrative positions beneath them became the locus of power struggles throughout the colonial era. To secure their interests, the abbots created factions and "were hostile and jealous with each other, and did not bother to file lawsuits" when their positions and authority were challenged.⁵⁰

46. *Kūmgangjŏ* 22 (January 1937): 6, 7.

47. *Kūmgangjŏ* 24 (July 1940): 6.

48. *Pulgyo* 101 (December 1932): 25.

49. *Kūmgangjŏ* 24 (July 1940): 34.

50. *Kūmgangjŏ* 24 (July 1940): 34.

Mistrust, jealousy, and competition made national unity impossible even though all these monasteries and monastics were unusually homogeneous in their practices and lineages. However, the change in the political atmosphere and pressure from the colonial authorities to focus attention on the Spiritual Development Movement brought about growing institutional unity in Korean Buddhism. The three wealthiest head temples in Kyŏngnam Province formed an association in 1934 with the mission of promoting Korean Buddhism and sponsoring publication of the national Buddhist journal, which had been discontinued in 1933. This model for local unity spread to other regions, prompting the five head temples in Kyŏngbuk Province to organize their own association and commence publishing their own monthly journal in 1936. The following year, the five head temples in Chŏlla Province followed suit. Thus, the thirteen most influential head temples in the country became involved in a regional association.⁵¹ This association made a commitment to the propagation of the Spiritual Development Movement as it gathered momentum.

What happened a week after the establishment of the association of the five head temples of Chŏlla Province in January 1937 was nothing short of remarkable, especially given that mistrust between the monasteries in Kyŏngsang and Chŏlla provinces, called “the two powers of Korean Buddhism,”⁵² was deep and wide: these regional associations had a “historic meeting”⁵³ in Taegu in Kyŏngbuk Province. They agreed to work together to spread the momentum of this unity nationally, thereby pushing forward the concerted effort to establish a great head temple in Seoul.

Meeting with Governor General Minami Jirō: 1937

The abbots of the thirty-one head temples along with the leaders of the Korean Buddhist institutional office *Kyomuwŏn* gathered again a month later, on February 23, 1937, at *Kakhwang* Propagation Hall. During the session, a meeting with Governor General Minami Jirō

51. *Kyŏngbuk pulgyo*, April 1, 1937.

52. *Kūmgangjŏ* 19 (November 1931): 50.

53. *Kyŏngbuk pulgyo*, April 1, 1937.

was arranged for the next day at the colonial government office, and the Kyomuwŏn formed a special committee for the meeting.

The committee prepared a proposal that laid out the following recommendations:

The construction expenses for the great head temple, within the limit of 100,000 yen, should be raised in a year.

The maintenance fee of 300,000 yen for the great head temple should be collected.

The title of the great head temple should be “The Great Head Temple Kakhwangsa of Korean Buddhism’s Joint School of Sŏn Kyo.”

The government’s assistance should be sought for the actualization of the construction of the great head temple.⁵⁴

With consensus around this proposal, the abbots met Governor General Minami the next day.

As crucial as this meeting was for Korean Buddhist leaders, it was also quite important for Minami himself. He needed the support of the Korean Buddhist institution to intensify the colonial government’s Spiritual Development Movement. At the meeting, Minami gave a welcome speech, encouraging the Buddhist leaders to help improve the spiritual health of the populace, and stated that, as a precondition for their participation, the Buddhist monastic community should be reformed and purified first (similar to Ugaki’s recommendations). Minami’s speech was followed by remarks from a colonial official, Tominaga Fumiichi, head of the Department of Educational Affairs (which included the Office of Religion), the office in charge of matters related to Buddhism. Tominaga added further details to Minami’s exhortations and laid out the key agenda items for discussion. Specifically, the government wished to see temples change from being resorts for food and entertainment to sacred spaces for rituals, talks, learning, and so forth. In addition, the government wanted to improve the training of monastics so that they served as quality, educated spiritual leaders that were respected by the populace. (Korean Buddhist monastics largely agreed with the government on these points.) In return, Minami and Tominaga wanted to hear, firsthand, from the Korean Buddhist leaders

54. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 59.

in attendance ideas for the best way to improve Korean Buddhism in order for it to meet the expectations of the colonial government. The Korean Buddhist leaders stated, with overwhelming consensus, that a great head temple would resolve all the issues in Korean Buddhism and allow Korean Buddhism to move forward efficiently to implement the government's ideas.⁵⁵

Among the views voiced at the meeting, the abbot of Pomōsa, Ch'a Sangmyōng, lamented that Korean Buddhism was ruled by "thirty-one local chieftains without unity." Yi Chong'uk, the abbot of Wōlchōngsa, echoed Ch'a in saying that, if only a great head temple had been established in 1911 when the Temple Ordinance was enacted, Korean Buddhism would have been in a much better place today. The representative of Yōngmyōng Temple, Kwōn T'aesik, affirmed that Korean Buddhism should have its headquarters in the center of Seoul, just as Korea's government was in the center. He boldly stated that the great head temple should have the power to nominate all head priests (which went directly against the Temple Ordinance of 1911). Another abbot echoed Kwōn's point that the great head temple should administer all temple and monastic matters. In order to establish the great head temple, Pak Yōng-hŭi, the abbot of Hwaōmsa, and several others noted, 100,000 yen might be needed to construct a building, and 300,000 yen should be secured to run it. Pak said that these amounts should be allocated to and collected from the thirty-one head temples.⁵⁶

Not everyone agreed with these ideas. Although he concurred with the general idea of establishing a great head temple, the abbot of Yongjusa, Kang Taeryōn, did not think that the temple should exert administrative power. Rather, he suggested that it remain as a liaison to connect the thirty-one temples and not be placed above them.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, his status quo suggestion was quickly dismissed by an overwhelming chorus in favor of an executive great head temple. At the end of the meeting with Minami, everyone unanimously agreed to the plan.⁵⁸ Governor General Minami gave the green light, marking a significant moment in which not only a majority of the abbots of the

55. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 10–17.

56. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 10–17.

57. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 13.

58. *Pulgyo sibo*, April 1, 1939.

thirty-one head temples willingly agreed to create a great head temple but the colonial authorities also approved the plan.

The day after the meeting with Minami, the abbots met again. They formed a preplanning committee, which comprised fourteen members who would hash out the logistics. They decided to raise the 100,000 yen needed for construction by having head temples donate a percentage of money toward the project. The Kakhwang Propagation Hall building would be disassembled and the money earned from selling off its materials would go toward the construction expenses. The committee decided that the original site of Kakhwang Propagation Hall would be used for the new temple. The abbots met a week later, on March 5, to ratify these plans, which the colonial government itself had approved. Finally, a decades-long dream of Korean Buddhism was about to materialize after numerous external and internal obstacles, including resistance from the colonial government and infighting among monks.

The Buddhists Buy a Temple Building: Summer and Fall 1937

Although the abbots of the thirty-one head temples were prepared to raise the funds for a modest great head temple, it suddenly came to their attention that an enormous, gorgeous temple from a recently shuttered new religion could be theirs for a bargain price. This structure, located in Chŏng'ŭp in Chŏlla Province, bore almost all the same features as a traditional Korean Buddhist temple. It had belonged to Poch'ŏn'gyo, one of sixty new religions in colonial Korea.⁵⁹ Poch'ŏn'gyo was established by the charismatic figure Ch'a Kyŏngsŏk in 1919.⁶⁰ Within a decade, the religion had gained an astronomical number of members, estimated in the hundreds of thousands or, allegedly, several million. Ch'a built a palace complex in Chŏng'ŭp, which boasted thirty-six buildings at a purported cost of one to two million yen. However, this new religion, with its strong millenarian vision, became the target of the government's concern. Ch'a was even accused of *lèse-majesté* since the religion taught that, when the current world came to an end, Ch'a

59. *Chosŏn minbo*, June 11, 1936.

60. For two recent works on this religion, see Kim Chaeyŏng's *Poch'ŏnggyo* and Jorgensen's "Poch'ŏnggyo and the Imperial State."

would become the universal king of a new world. Naturally, Poch'ŏn'gyo became a prime target of the colonial government's suppression of what were termed pseudo- and superstitious religions in the mid-1930s.

The Japanese government distinguished between state-recognized, traditional religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Shintō, and new religious movements that operated outside the state apparatus. They called these new religions superstitious because their belief systems were deemed antimodern, antiscientific, and dangerous to society. A similar crackdown occurred simultaneously in Japan under the banner "eradicate the evil cults" (*jakyō semmetsu*). The prime target there was Ōmotokyō, which likewise was disestablished.⁶¹ The two were so similar that Poch'ŏn'gyo was often called "Korea's Ōmotokyō." In fact, a decade earlier, in 1926, Poch'ŏn'gyo and Ōmotokyō had discussed creating an alliance and even considered a merger.⁶² This relationship between the two neighbors is one reason that the Japanese government clamped down on them at the same time.⁶³ The colonial government waited for a moment of weakness in order to shut Poch'ŏn'gyo down completely. Ch'a passed away on April 30, 1936. He had promised that, upon his death, the members of Poch'ŏn'gyo would be ushered into a new world, and senior members would receive appointments as high officials in the new kingdom. Suffice it to say that prediction did not come to pass, and the community was thrown into turmoil. The members could not financially maintain the massive complex. They went 30,000 yen into debt and had to borrow money just for the funeral ceremony for Ch'a.⁶⁴

The colonial government quickly moved to confiscate the entire complex, putting all thirty-six buildings up for sale to pay back the debt.⁶⁵ The government made it clear that buyers would have to disassemble the buildings and move them out of the complex. The first public auction took place on November 10, 1936, but the government could not find any takers. Another auction was arranged two weeks later, on November 25. This time, twenty-six Korean and Japanese individuals took an interest and purchased different buildings, paying 24,000 yen

61. Garon, "State and Religion," 273–74.

62. *Tong'a ilbo*, July 3 and 25, 1926.

63. *Tong'a ilbo*, December 19, 1935.

64. *Tong'a ilbo*, May 10 and July 28, 1936; *Chosŏn sinmun*, July 29, 1936.

65. *Chosŏn chungang ilbo*, August 27, 1937.

all combined.⁶⁶ The largest building was called Sibilchön (Ten-One Hall or Great Ultimate Hall), the name of the new world in Ch'a's eschatological vision of the future. It had been intended to serve as the seat of Ch'a's enthronement when the old world came to an end.⁶⁷ This resplendent building was sold to Edo Chōjirō (dates unknown) for 3,000 yen, although it was believed to have originally cost over 100,000 yen to build in 1929.⁶⁸

The Sibilchön had a number of noteworthy attributes. It was the largest Korean-style, single-building structure in Korea at the time. The six massive wooden pillars had been imported from Manchuria. The timbers were so heavy and large that they had to be floated down from Manchuria via the sea. But, on their way to Chōlla Province, the timbers disappeared in a storm, only to be found later near Hokkaido in Japan and put back on the right route.⁶⁹

When and how the Korean Buddhist leadership was first informed of the Sibilchön is a mystery, but there are a number of theories. One possible connection may have come through the prominent Korean monk T'anhö (1913–83), whose father was second in command in Poch'ön'gyo. T'anhö became a monk at age twenty-two in 1934, practicing under Master Hanam at Wölchöngsa, two years before Ch'a passed away. Given that Yi Chong'uk was the abbot of Wolchöngsa, An Husang conjectures that T'anhö might have informed Yi about what was happening with Ch'a's religion and, later, about the availability of the Sibilchön for purchase.⁷⁰ Yet it appears that Korean monks had taken notice of the building earlier. The chief preacher of Kakhwang Propagation Hall, Kim T'aehüp, had mentioned the existence of this enviable building as early as 1930. An also suggests, and it seems entirely plausible, that the colonial government itself recommended that Yi and the other leaders purchase the building.⁷¹

At any rate, hearing the news about the upcoming sale of this famous building, Yi, along with two members of the planning committee, headed to Chöng'üp on March 5, 1937, to meet with Edo. Surprised

66. *Maeil sinbo*, October 27; November 30, 1936.

67. Kim Chaeyöng, "Poch'ön'gyo," 158.

68. *Sin pulgyo* 12 (May 1938): 30.

69. *Tong'a ilbo*, August 4, 1937.

70. An, "Pulgyo ch'ongbonsan ch'angöngo."

71. An, "Pulgyo ch'ongbonsan ch'angöngo."

by the low price Edo had paid, Yi offered 12,000 yen,⁷² and he paid the full amount on March 7, 1937.⁷³ Once the Sibilchön was purchased by Korean Buddhists, it became news. A newspaper reported, “This building changed its owner and identity, and was married to become a Buddhist main hall.”⁷⁴ The colonial government ordered all the building parts to be disassembled as soon as possible.⁷⁵ Three weeks later, as of March 26, the building began to be disassembled and moved to the train station to be transported to Kakhwang Propagation Hall in Seoul, 160 miles away. All the materials arrived by May 14. It took a year and a half to reassemble and complete the building. Reassembling the structural wooden beams was completed on October 12, 1937, followed by the installation of new tiles, the steam heating system, and further materials, and, finally, the painting occurred by August 1, 1938. On October 10, 1938, the entire building was completed, and the dedication ceremony was held on October 25. The total expense came to 170,000 yen, 70,000 yen more than originally budgeted but producing a much bigger and more beautiful temple than 100,000 would have built from scratch.⁷⁶ With the expected administrative support from the colonial authorities for purchasing, transporting, and rebuilding, the great head temple was finally completed. The whole process happened so quickly and smoothly that it was apparent that Korean Buddhist leaders had worked in seamless cooperation with government authorities. It was almost as if the colonial government were granting a gift to the Korean Buddhist community.

Korean Buddhism greatly benefited from the crackdown on new religions in other ways as well. For example, in addition to receiving the Sibilchön, the large and beautiful main gate of the Poch’ön’gyo complex, Pohwamun, was relocated to the Naejang Temple and modified to become its main hall.⁷⁷ Another new Buddhist religion, Taegakkyo, established by the Korean Buddhist monk Paek Yongsöng in the 1920s, was forced to merge with Korean Buddhism. Japanese Buddhism also

72. *Sin pulgyo* 12 (May 1938): 30.

73. *Kyöngbuk pulgyo*, January 1, 1939.

74. *Kyöngbuk pulgyo*, January 1, 1939.

75. *Maeil sinbo*, November 30, 1937.

76. *Sin pulgyo*, November 1938, 3–4.

77. Originally, the gate was sold to Yi Yongch’an, a Korean, in 1936. In 1958, the Naejangsa purchased the building. Unfortunately, it burned to the ground on October 31, 2012.

benefited. A new Korean religion, Suungyo (later Mit'agyo), founded by Yi Sangyong (1922–38), was ordered to either join the Ōtani sect or disband. Five thousand members opted for converting to the Ōtani sect in 1936.⁷⁸

In sum, the unique political situation of the mid-1930s—the crack-down on new religions in combination with the large-scale mobilization of the Spiritual Development Movement—dovetailed in a timely way with the unique situation within Korean Buddhism—unusual unity and clarity of vision—to give rise to the founding of a great head temple.

Han Yong'un's Push for Great Head Temple Status

The size of the new building was not enough to impart to it the level of legitimacy and significance of being both the administrative and the spiritual center of Korean Buddhism. In late 1938, it was nothing more than a massive structure without a name or purpose. A number of Buddhist leaders spoke out to determine the nature of this megabuilding and the roles it could play in regulating Korean Buddhism. One of the most ardent proponents of bestowing real authority on the new building to serve as a central institution for Korean Buddhism was Han Yong'un. He led the debate on what responsibilities and powers the great head temple should have. Shortly after the thirty-one abbots met with Minami in February 1937, Han authored an article titled “The Measure of Governing Korean Buddhism” in which he makes a forceful, articulate argument that Korean Buddhism should set up a great head temple system that would function as a central governing body.

Han begins by recalling ideas from an article he had published in 1913 titled “The Reform of Korean Buddhism.” At that time, he writes, he had argued for the unity of Korean Buddhism, but he characterizes his ideas back then as “rather abstract and conceptual” and “without a concrete agenda.” He then shifts to the present time, 1937, and comments on the whole building project driven by the colonial government. Han, one of the more nationalistic monks at the time, sidesteps problematizing this colonial support by arguing that he does not want to ask whether the force behind the developing centralization of

78. *Keijō nippō*, July 9, 1936; *Chūgai nippō*, February 2, 1937; *Shinshū* 427 (April 1937).

Buddhism was “passive” (that is, an outside force, namely, the colonial authorities) or “active” (an inside force, Buddhists themselves). He likens this to the Buddhist concept of interdependence: “a tiny pebble falling from the top of the mountain is intertwined with the entire planet, and the sprouting of nameless weeds is inseparable from the climate of the solar system.”⁷⁹ To him, the initial motive, which he assesses as passive in nature, was not as important as the practice or action taken thereafter.

Han then discusses two systems for creating control-authority (*t’ongje kigwan*), an idea that had already been sketched out in his 1931 article.⁸⁰ One system consisted of a central (or liaison) administrative center, whereas the other system consisted of a great head temple. The first system would set up an administrative center for Korean Buddhism in Seoul while leaving the current head-branch temple system in place. The second system would construct a great head temple that would subordinate all the head and branch temples under its control, thus establishing “a master-servant relationship.”⁸¹ Han then lays out the pros and cons of these two systems. A central administrative system would not be a powerful engine for controlling Korean Buddhism but rather a harmonizing, administrative body. Thus, the central administrative system would be “collaborative,” “arbitrary,” and “incorporative.” In contrast, the great head temple system would be “compulsory,” “subordinating,” and “authoritative.”⁸² As such, the central administrative system could easily be “nominal” and therefore could be “abolished” at any time, since it would be equal in authority to the head temples. This central administrative system, wrote Han, would never work in a society in which all its members had not reached the self-realization of accepting an organic body like the central administrative system, alluding to the immaturity of Korean Buddhism. In addition, this type of system is not democratic and its activities would be dictated by the abbots of the thirty-one head temples; if disagreements arose, the system would gradually collapse. Han shows that this characterization of a central administrative system is not just theoretical by retracing the history of reform efforts from 1911 on. Earlier efforts to implement

79. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 4.

80. *Pulgyo* 88 (October 1931): 2–10.

81. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 7.

82. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 6–7.

a central administration, a denominational parliament, and a number of other institutional changes with regard to the head-branch system had failed. Han argues that the great head temple system is fundamentally different: whereas the central administrative system would handle formal and official functions, the great head temple system would also become an object of religious respect and could not easily be disestablished. Thus, Han concludes that the great head temple system is the most desirable option for Korean Buddhism's administrative and spiritual center.⁸³

Han next outlines how a great head temple system should be put in place. He set forth two different scenarios. The first would be to create a new temple in the center of Seoul. The second would be to select an existing influential head temple to be the great head temple. Here, Han strongly opposes a new building as "nonsense" and "incomprehensible" since, as mentioned earlier, he believes that the great head temple should have a kind of spiritual gravity, drawing out the faith of Buddhists. Such a temple would thus need historical significance and a level of legitimacy to make it worthy of serving as the center of Korean Buddhism. Han proposes that an existing head temple, one that has a long history and tradition, should be nominated for the title of the great head temple. He admits that there would be a potential drawback: the designation of one of the head temples as the great head temple would result in the other thirty temples being reluctant to subordinate themselves to the great head temple, since they would consider it to be equal but not superior to them. Yet Han refutes this idea by arguing that a great head temple, without tradition, respect, and legitimacy, would inevitably become nothing more than a short-lived administrative facility. Thus, he summarizes his argument by writing that, "if one were to set up a control-authority for Korean Buddhism, it would be better to establish a permanent great head temple system rather than a temporary central administrative system." The question that follows, then, is what should be done when the colonial government and the Korean Buddhist leaders agree to build a great head temple? Han answers, "if one adopts the great head temple system, all Buddhists should be open-minded and appoint one among the traditional head temples. The new building should be used as a branch temple (K. *pyörwön*; Jp. *betsuin*)

83. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 7–8.

or an office of the great head temple.”⁸⁴ This system would be the same, therefore, as the one used by Japanese Buddhist sects.

Most important to Han was how the great head temple should be operated in relation to the colonial government. Similar to what many other Buddhist reformers had said, Han argued that the great head temple must have the power to appoint the abbots of the head temples, and the abbots of the head temples needed the authority to nominate the abbots of local temples.⁸⁵ This level of self-determination would be in direct opposition to the Temple Ordinance of 1911, which stated that these positions should be approved by the governor general and the provincial governors respectively. Han’s institutional vision is continuous with Yi Hoegwang’s proposal of 1908, which was quickly rejected by the colonial government.

Once the Sibilchön found a new home on the site of Kakhwang Propagation Hall, Han wrote a follow-up article, published in November 1938. He opens by saying that the historical significance of this temple is “unprecedented,” “amazing,” and that it is “more than deserving to be the great head temple.”⁸⁶ This position thus departs from his earlier assertion that one of the thirty-one head temples should be designated as a great head temple. Perhaps its sheer grandeur, along with its location on what was now a somewhat historical site, Kakhwangsa, inside the four gates of Seoul, gave it sufficient stature, in Han’s mind, to merit a great head temple designation. Or perhaps he had simply yielded to the realities of the situation, that there was momentum among his fellow monks to call it a great head temple. (Puzzlingly, he does not mention or question the origin of the building; Poch’ön’gyo had been thoroughly demonized by Korean media and intellectuals. It is most likely that, as Han was mute about the colonial government’s support for this project, he might also have taken the salvaging of the Sibilchön as inevitable in light of financial and logistical necessities.) Han now demanded that Buddhist leaders equip the building with temple status. This required a modification or exception to the Temple Ordinance of 1911, which strictly prohibited establishing new temples. In fact, the abbots of the thirty-one head temples had already held a meeting a month before Han’s article was published, and they had

84. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 7–8.

85. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 8–9.

86. *Sin pulgyo* 17 (November 1938): 4.

submitted a proposal for recognition from the colonial government of the legal standing of the new building according to the Temple Ordinance. Yet this move irritated Han a great deal. In the same article, Han berates the Buddhist leaders for seeking state recognition when there was no existing clause dictated in the Temple Ordinance regarding a great head temple to begin with. In order for the Temple Ordinance to be applied to this case, the Temple Ordinance should be amended to include a new clause, writes Han. He charges that this “pathetic”⁸⁷ approach of the Buddhist leaders would undermine Korean Buddhism’s autonomy. Han believed the new temple on the Kakhwang Propagation Hall site should be a great head temple, but he did not like the way Korean Buddhist leaders were trying to secure that status legally.

Han was not the only one who took an idealistic stance. Another elite Buddhist monk, Kim Tonghwa (1902–80), opposed the idea of establishing a new great head temple in the center of Seoul. Kim, a graduate of Risshō University in Japan, was on the faculty at the same university. Notified of the completion of the building in 1938, he wrote a lengthy article in response to the decision by Korean Buddhist leaders to designate it as a great head temple. He fundamentally agrees that a massive Buddhist facility in Seoul is necessary in order not only to “compete with other religions and Japanese Buddhism” but also to “save face for Korean Buddhism.” However, he “absolutely oppose[s] elevating the temple as the great head temple.” He equates a great head temple for Korean Buddhism to “the Deer Park in India, Jerusalem in Christianity, and Mecca in Islam.” Thus, he disagrees with the idea that Seoul should be selected for the location of the great head temple because it was considered by many masters to be an “evil city.” He fears this plan would not only bring misfortune to Korean Buddhism temporarily, but also damage the future of Korean Buddhism for a hundred years. Like Han, Kim proposes, in consultation with experts, that one of the thirty-one head temples with a deep history and tradition be nominated as a great head temple.⁸⁸ As for the new building in Seoul, he suggests that it be made a branch temple of the great head temple or a mere administrative office.⁸⁹ However, Kim’s arguments and suggestions came too late, with the tide moving in the direction that Han

87. *Sin pulgyo* 17 (November 1938): 4.

88. *Kyōngbuk pulgyo*, April 1, 1939.

89. *Kyōngbuk pulgyo*, April 1, 1939.

had already accepted, which was to transform the new building into an authentic great head temple.

Imbuing the Temple with Spiritual Status

Strangely, the weird origins of the new temple on the site of Kakhwang Propagation Hall did not seem to bother Korean monastics. Nobody questioned that it might be inappropriate to use a building that once belonged to a new, superstitious, and much derided religion as a great head temple for Korean Buddhism. Perhaps the highly nationalist rhetoric of the Poch'ŏn'gyo doctrines spoke to the underlying nationalist feelings of Korean Buddhist leaders, making it more acceptable to purchase the building. In fact, it was believed that the Sibilchŏn had been deliberately built to challenge the magnificence of the main Shintō shrine in Seoul.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, it seems odd that Korean Buddhist leaders did not problematize the origins of their new building. Rather, they were primarily concerned with how to turn it into a symbol of a unified Korean Buddhism.

Korean Buddhist leaders had drafted a proposal to impart the building with temple status and submitted it; now they waited for government approval. In May 1940, the colonial government approved the proposal to legally make the building a temple and to elevate it to the status of a great head temple. But a simple change in legal designation was insufficient to imbue the temple with the kind of authority that would command the respect of Buddhists nationally.

As if trying to scrub out the questionable origins of the building and its potential lack of legitimacy, Buddhist leaders thought of a perfect solution and decided to move, not physically but symbolically, a traditional temple named T'aegosa, located roughly ten miles to the north, to the new location. T'aego Temple was a small branch temple of Chungŏng Temple (the Nichirenshū priest Sano Zenrei had formerly designated Chungŏng Temple as the headquarters for Korean Buddhism, but it had been destroyed soon after).⁹¹ T'aego Temple was valued because it was where T'aego Pou (1301–81), considered to be the father of Korean Buddhism's Sŏn lineage, resided. Built in the

90. *Kaebŏk* 1 (November 1, 1934).

91. Kim Kwangsik, *Sae pulgyo undong*, 103–44.

fourteenth century, it burned down during the Imjin War in the late sixteenth century. The temple was reconstructed in the eighteenth century but was once again damaged by a flood in 1915. By the early 1920s, the temple was in very poor condition.⁹² Around that time, Yi Hoegwang considered T'aego Temple as a candidate for establishing a great head temple. He suggested that T'aego Temple be relocated to the Kakhwang Propagation Hall complex in central Seoul.⁹³ In 1926, an editorial published by Korean Buddhism's main journal, in response to news that another temple had been elevated to become a head temple, thus increasing the number of head temples from thirty to thirty-one, lamented the further division of Korean Buddhism by arguing that "it is natural that, in light of the lineage of Korean Buddhists, T'aego Temple be the only head temple and that all other temples be subordinated as branch temples."⁹⁴ In 1930, the monk Kim T'aehŭp recommended that a hall for Master T'aego be built at Kakhwang Propagation Hall, although he did not ask that Kakhwang Propagation Hall be replaced by a new T'aego Temple. In 1932, the monk Kim Kyŏngju explicitly stated, "T'aego Temple should be moved to the center of Seoul and the office set up as the central administrative office of the Joint School of Sŏn Kyo so that this office can control the finances and administration of the head temples."⁹⁵ With the new temple built in 1938, a consensus was reached that T'aego Temple should be designated as a great head temple and moved to the Kakhwang Propagation Hall complex. In 1939, Kim T'aehŭp, publisher of the journal *Pulgyo sibo* at the time, wrote an editorial in which he proposed, "We should use the already existing name Kakhwangsa or use the name T'aegosa by moving the temple. If that is not sufficient, then we should appoint a temple with a long history [as the great head temple]. In that case, T'aego Temple would serve as the great head temple, and the new building [Sibilchŏn] would become the branch temple [*betsuin*] of it."⁹⁶

Thus, with the new, traditional-style temple building replacing the older, smaller modern-style Kakhwang Propagation Hall in 1938, the name Kakhwangsa lost favor and T'aegosa emerged as the most viable

92. *Maeil sinbo*, May 9, 1921.

93. *Ilgwang* 3 (March 1931): 60.

94. *Pulgyo* 6 (December 1924).

95. *Pulygo* 100 (October 1932).

96. *Pulgyo sibo*, February 1, 1939.

candidate for legitimating the building because it referenced the Sŏn origins of Korean Buddhism. Hierarchically speaking, T'aego Temple (and also Chungŏng Temple) was a mere branch of the head temple Pong'ŭnsa. Elevating T'aego Temple to great head temple status required that it be pulled out of the lesser status first. The Buddhist leaders secured the signatures of the abbot of Pong'ŭn Temple, Kang Sŏng'in, and the incumbent abbot of T'aego Temple, Kim Yunsik, to transfer the title of "T'aegosa" to the newly built great head temple,⁹⁷ thereby erasing the temple status of the old T'aegosa. To add more legitimacy and authenticity to the new temple on the site of Kakhwang Propagation Hall, a Śākyamuni Buddha statue, cast in the fourteenth century, was moved from Togap Temple in Chŏlla Province to the new T'aegosa.⁹⁸ (The choice of a Śākyamuni Buddha statue, as opposed to other venerated deities, also marked how Korean Buddhism had joined the modernization of Buddhism across Asia with renewed emphasis on the founder of Buddhism. With the installation of a Śākyamuni Buddha statue at Korean Buddhism's new great head temple, Śākyamuni was officially brought into the center of Korean Buddhism as a shared object of worship.) The establishment of a great head temple with spiritual authority paved the way for establishing a central administrative office. With all thirty-one head temples now spiritually governed by the great head temple, it naturally made sense that a central administrative office would be an executive body that likewise regulated and controlled finances, property, and appointments. With all the logistics in order, the Korean Buddhist leaders needed one last anointment to bring their vision to life: approval from the colonial government. They submitted the request on May 22, 1939, and the government granted approval on July 15, 1940.

With T'aego Temple officially approved as the great head temple, Buddhist leaders quickly took the next steps (fig. 5.2). In November 1940, the abbots held a meeting to write denominational bylaws and bylaws for T'aego Temple itself, clarifying its status as a great head temple that had authority over the thirty-one head temples and all others. They also changed the institutional title for Korean Buddhism from the Joint School of Sŏn Kyo to the Chogye Order (Chogyejong), which derives from the name of the sixth patriarch of Chan Buddhism,

97. *Sin pulgyo*, March 1, 1940, 43.

98. *Pulgyo sibo*, August 1, 1938, 13; *Maeil sinbo*, October 23, 1938.



FIG. 5.2. T'aego Temple (currently called Chogye Temple), at center. Courtesy of Hwang Siyŏn at *Ch'ŏnji ilbo*.

Caoxi Huineng (638–713). In December, they submitted a detailed proposal for approval of the great head temple and denominational bylaws to the colonial government, and the proposal was approved on April 23, 1941. Thus, the four-decade-long, arduous process by Korean Buddhist leaders to centralize Korean Buddhism under one governing body and under one institutional structure had finally been attained.

Three Central Korean Buddhist Actors

Without the colonial government's intentional and focused support, the great head temple and the central administrative office could not have come into being. At the same time, the collective will of and energetic pursuit by Korean Buddhist leaders to create a streamlined authority for Korean Buddhism was equally significant. Three Korean Buddhist monks who seized the moment and proactively pushed for the program stood out among the others: Kim Sangho, Yi Chong'uk,

and Pang Hanam. The work of these three prominent figures was inseparable from the colonial government's mobilization of colonial Korea toward Japan's war effort. Rather than confronting the authorities, the three considered this mobilization as an opportunity for Korean Buddhism and therefore actively participated in bringing their project into fruition.

Kim Sangho, whom Kim Pömnin had praised as a nationalist, raised the alarm that the Japanese were building Hakubun Temple and fostered a sense of urgency among monastics that Korean Buddhists centralize and establish a great head temple at the risk of losing their autonomy altogether. At the same time, as a key administrator of the Kyomuwön, he frequently did business with the colonial government, attended meetings for the building of the great head temple, and promoted the Spiritual Development Movement.⁹⁹

Yi and Hanam worked closely with the colonial government throughout the 1930s to carry out the building project. They emerged as the administrative and spiritual leaders, respectively, of Korean Buddhism. Through the great head temple movement, Yi became the administrative head of the newly established Chogye Order, and Hanam, respected by both Korean and Japanese Buddhists, became the head priest of the Chogye Order in 1941. As An Husang has aptly demonstrated, Yi was formerly engaged in nationalist movements and, as a result, was jailed for three years, from 1920 to 1922. As late as 1927, the colonial government still considered him a suspicious figure who might work subversively against Japan. Yi rose to prominence in Buddhist circles in 1930. He was briefly employed as a staff member in the Kyomuwön in 1926, attended the Sangha gathering in 1929 as a key member, and presided over the second denominational meeting in 1930. At the time, he served as a temple administrator at Kakhwang Propagation Hall, lived at the head temple Wölchöngsa, and often represented the temple at national meetings. When discussion on the construction of the great head temple was heating up in 1937, Yi emerged as the most important communicator between Korean Buddhist leaders and the colonial government.¹⁰⁰

Wölchöngsa's descent into financial chaos in mid-1926 is what brought Yi closer to the colonial government. Previously, the abbot of

99. *Sin pulgyo* 2 (April 1937): 58.

100. An, "Han'guk pulgyo ch'ongbonsa könsöl."

the temple had planned to pave a road between the temple and the population center of the county and to pay for it by selling timbers cut from the temple forest. This abbot had made a problematic deal with a Japanese businessman, whom the monks later asserted deceived them. The businessman sued the temple for making another deal with a different company behind his back. The temple lost the case in court and was ordered to pay 120,000 yen in compensation. As a result, the entire property of Wölchöng Temple was foreclosed. At a loss as to what to do, the monks turned to the colonial government for help. Eventually, the colonial government arranged for the Korean Industrial Bank (Chōsen shokusan ginkō) to pay off the debtors by taking on the properties of the Wölchöngsa's branch temples as security on a loan. Around this time, Yi was assigned to manage this financial arrangement between the temple and the colonial government.¹⁰¹

In order to better cope with the financial crisis of the temple, in late 1926, Yi invited one of the most respected Sōn masters in Korea, Hanam, to take up residence at Wölchöngsa. Yi believed Hanam could attract donors to the temple. At the 1929 Sangha gathering, Hanam was designated to join the group of seven masters who would serve as patriarchs. Although he was already well known among Korean Buddhists, Hanam became famous with Japanese Buddhists through a Japanese Sōtō Buddhist monk named Sōma Shōei, who practiced under Hanam during a retreat in 1934. With Hanam residing at the temple, donations started coming in, including 40,000 yen given by a Korean Buddhist. These donations, along with the colonial government's mediation, eventually rescued the temple from bankruptcy.

Because of this history, the colonial government did not find it difficult to procure Hanam's support for the Spiritual Development Movement, including mobilizing Korean monks to promote Japan's wars. For example, a Korean official from Kangwōn Province visited Hanam, beseeching him for his support to train young, elite monks so that they could tour the province and give public talks on the Spiritual Development Campaign. Hanam and Yi, now the abbot of Wölchöngsa, promised to cooperate.¹⁰² Soon after the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, Yi summoned all the abbots of Wölchöngsa's branch temples and had them vow to support Japan's war by praying daily. Yi also

101. *Maeil sinbo*, November 16, 1926.

102. *Maeil sinbo*, January 23 and 30, 1936.

allocated 366 yen to each of the temples for them to donate to the military.¹⁰³ Four years later, Yi's temple was the first to send young monks (four, initially) as imperial soldiers to the warfront in China.¹⁰⁴ From the perspective of the colonial government, Yi and Hanam represented the most viable administrative and spiritual leaders to work with.

On June 5, 1941, Korean Buddhist leaders voted to elect the patriarch of their newly established denomination, the Chogye Order, at the great head temple, T'aegosa. Given Hanam's stature, it was not surprising that he would be chosen: among twenty-eight votes, Hanam received nineteen, thus becoming the first head priest of the order and, therefore, of Korean Buddhism. Under the leadership of Hanam, Yi was elected as the administrative head of Korean Buddhism. Soon after the decision was made, Yi proudly responded to an interview with *Korea Daily*: "Master Pang [Hanam] is the most respected master in the [Korean] Buddhist world; as such, if he accepts the patriarch position, it would be as if the future of Korean Buddhism met a new, bright light."¹⁰⁵

Thus, Kim Sangho, Yi Chong'uk, and Pang Hanam represent Korean Buddhist leaders who prioritized their vision for Korean Buddhism—namely, the construction of the great head temple and the establishment of a unified institution—over political nationalism.

Comparison to Governmentality in Other Buddhisms of East Asia

With a highly centralized institution—namely, a great head temple, a patriarch, a central administrative office, an administrative head, and a denominational parliament—Korean Buddhist leaders finally accomplished what they had envisioned. The level of institutional unity in Korean Buddhism was distinctive in comparison with the governmentalization of Buddhism in other East Asian countries, such as colonial Taiwan, China, and Japan.

In Taiwan, the Japanese colonial government had not been keen on centralizing Buddhism in the first two decades of its rule, which

103. *Maeil sinbo*, September 9, 1937.

104. *Maeil sinbo*, February 9, 1941.

105. *Maeil sinbo*, June 6, 1941.

began in 1895. It was only when a widespread anti-Japanese rebellion broke out, culminating in an incident at the Xilai An Temple in 1915,¹⁰⁶ that the government became greatly alarmed. It tried to bring Buddhism under its direct control by launching a statewide survey and investigation of temples as well as of other religious communities. But, in the absence of any cohesive administrative body of Taiwanese Buddhism, there was no major centralization movement among monks. In order to avoid suppression by the state, many Buddhist temples allied themselves, in the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, with Japanese Buddhist sects. As Charles Jones notes, the most successful example of institutional centralization in Taiwanese Buddhism, if there was one, would have been the South Seas Buddhist Association (Ch. Nanying fojiaohui; Jp. Nan'e bukkuyōkai) in 1922.¹⁰⁷ However, this had been organized by Japanese lay Buddhists. The small number of Chinese lay Buddhists involved were representative neither of Taiwanese temples nor of monastics, so the association did not function as a headquarters for Taiwanese Buddhism. The nature of this association is akin to the lay-based Association of Korean Buddhism (Jp. Chōsen bukkuyōdan), which likewise did not have any institutional relevance or control over Buddhist temples and monastics.

Beginning in the mid-1930s, the Japanese colonial government cracked down on superstitious religions in Taiwan, as it did in colonial Korea and elsewhere, as part of the *Kōminka* (Imperialization) movement. The colonial government began a campaign called “temple restructuring” (*jibyō seiri*), which Charles Jones characterizes as “a euphemism” for disestablishment.¹⁰⁸ Out of fear of losing their temples, Taiwanese Buddhist monks and nuns again aggressively sought affiliations with Japanese Buddhist sects.¹⁰⁹ Because Japanese Buddhist sects themselves were severely divided, the Taiwanese Buddhist affiliations obviated the possibility that Taiwanese temples would move toward institutional unity. For example, even though the four major monasteries in Taiwan could have led the way, they maintained their independence from each other while developing close relationships with Japanese

106. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 65.

107. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 75.

108. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 83.

109. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 88; Chinghsin Wu, “Icons, Power, and Artistic Practice,” 72.

Buddhist sects (especially Sōtōshū and Rinzaishū). Moreover, unlike the situation in Korea, the colonial government did not intend to develop Taiwanese Buddhism separately from Japanese Buddhism through a legal system, such as the Temple Ordinance of 1911, that put a wall between Japanese and Korean Buddhism.

Taiwan's case stands in contrast to developments in China. There, Buddhist leaders, both monastics and laymen, strove to establish a national Buddhist organization that would control temple property and monastics. This effort was partly in response to the need to fend off the persistent threats by central and local governments eager to appropriate temple property for educational and other nonreligious purposes. Buddhist leaders believed that, as with other traditional religious organizations in China, a national Buddhist institution following the Christian model would be, as Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer assert, "the only way to revival,"¹¹⁰ and indeed to survival. But owing to political instability, constant civil and international warfare, and monastic infighting, the various efforts of leaders were consistently undermined and aborted.

In 1912, the best-known Buddhist monastic reformer, Taixu, was able to create the first nationwide Buddhist institutional organization: the Association for the Advancement of Buddhism (Fojiao xiejinhui). Taixu sought approval for his project from the founder of the government of Republican China, Sun Yat-sen, and, along with his fellow monk Renshan, simultaneously attempted to take over the prominent Jinshan Monastery to headquarter the association and to use the temple complex for modern monastic and lay education. In a sense, Taixu and his fellow reform-minded monks attempted to turn this temple into a great head temple for Chinese Buddhism. However, his plan failed because of protests by the resident monks, who considered the move an invasion of the temple.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, President Sun gave approval to a competitor, the Chinese Buddhist Association, founded by Ouyang Jingwu, an outspoken lay Buddhist leader. The Chinese Buddhist Association had charters declaring, as Don Pittman explains, "extensive and unprecedented religious authority [over Chinese Buddhism]." This association, which comprised primarily lay Buddhists, would administer all matters throughout China related to temple

110. Goossaert and Palmer, *Religious Question*, 77, 79.

111. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 74–75.

properties and even the education system for monastics. In response, Taixu and Jing'an (1852–1912; a renowned Chan master and ascetic who was also known as “Eight Fingers” [Bazhi Toutuo]) invited monks who acted as representatives from key temples in the seventeen provinces of China to a special meeting. This monastic-based group founded the Chinese General Buddhist Association (Zhonghua fojiao zonghui) in 1912. Sun's government initially refused to approve the Chinese General Buddhist Association but later finally accepted it. However, the association dwindled when Jing'an died and did not last more than two years beyond his death. Taixu continued to call for an organizational revolution of Chinese Buddhism. He set up the League for the Support of Buddhism (Weichi fojiao tongmenghui), intending for it to be free of government intervention.

Yet, to Taixu's dismay, the Chinese Nationalist government, led by Chiang Kaishek (1887–1975), promulgated the Regulations for the Control of Monasteries and Temples (*Guanli simiao tiaoli*) in 1915. This ordinance was more restrictive than the 1913 Regulations,¹¹² and it was even more rigid than the Temple Ordinance of 1911 in colonial Korea. In addition to controlling monastics and temples, the 1915 Regulations declared that temples were public properties that could easily be reassigned for any educational or military use. The Regulations faced strong opposition from monastics and thus were not fully implemented.

In 1929, the subsequent Nanjing government adopted another measure that severely threatened the continuance of Buddhist temples. Partly driven by a proposal from a professor Tai Shuangqiu (1896–1976) from National Central University that temple properties should be confiscated for educational purposes,¹¹³ the government pushed the 1915 Regulations to the next level: a clause was added that permitted temples to be converted to schools, secular offices, libraries, parks, markets, and police and military training bases, as the government saw fit.¹¹⁴ In response, Taixu and other Buddhist leaders organized the Chinese Buddhist Association (Zhongguo fojiao hui), different from the Chinese General Buddhist Association, and vehemently protested the proposal. To their relief, the proposal was not fully implemented, but, to

112. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 84.

113. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 130.

114. Poon, *Negotiating Religion*, 126–27.

their dismay, the association itself became dysfunctional owing to disagreements over how to reform and unify Chinese Buddhism.¹¹⁵

As Korean Buddhists wished to build a great head temple, so, too, did Taixu envision constructing a national monastery that would function as the administrative and educational center for Chinese Buddhism. However, other than establishing a number of schools for monastics and lay Buddhists in the 1920s and 1930s, he was not able to see this vision through. Taixu's efforts to centralize Chinese Buddhism briefly gained ground in 1930, when Chiang Kaishek's government finally agreed to Taixu's proposal to found "a single Buddhist organization." However, that plan did not come together because of internal factions within Chinese Buddhism. Taixu tried again in 1941, but his proposal to establish a national Buddhist body was rejected by the government then because the government wanted to make use of temple properties during the peak war years.¹¹⁶ It was only after World War II that Taixu's proposal from 1941 was accepted by the Chinese government, but still the political turmoil in the late 1940s made the full implementation of Taixu's proposal impossible. Thus, although there were numerous organizations and associations in China that were directed at establishing a national Buddhist body, they neither mustered nationwide support nor lasted very long. The government's policies on Buddhism were also tenuous and were mainly concerned with reappropriating temple properties for its projects of nation building and war.

In the case of Japan, the centralization of each Buddhist sect came naturally because the head and branch temple system, *honmatsu seido*, had already been established during the Edo period (1603–1868). However, since each sect had multiple head temples, the Meiji government pressed the Buddhist sects to unify further by having each sect designate just one temple as its great head temple and placing all other temples under them. Because of the preexisting strength of the sects and the abbots of influential head temples, the Meiji government could not usurp the powers of these abbots or upset the internal dynamics of the sects. Thus, unlike in Korea, Japanese Buddhist sects maintained significant autonomy.

115. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 130–32.

116. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 145.

Japanese Buddhism became even more governmentalized when the fledgling Meiji state undertook its nationwide mobilization to inculcate state programs in the populace. Because the Meiji government had to rely heavily on Buddhist priests as propagators of state programs,¹¹⁷ it sought to strengthen the sects by making their administrative order more effective. The state enacted a more streamlined version of the head priest system that had been begun in 1884, putting one head priest in charge of ordination, the nomination of abbots and propagators, and other administrative matters. However, the Meiji government could interfere only up to a point. When the government attempted to introduce a Religious Organizations Law in the 1890s, which would have given it greater oversight and control, the Buddhist sects protested because one of the provisions encroached on the power of the head priest. The Religious Organizations Law failed to pass in the parliament multiple times owing to the rigorous lobbying of the sects. Thus, Japanese Buddhist sects enjoyed a large degree of autonomy from the government until the late 1930s.¹¹⁸

Even after the law was finally passed in 1939, the head priest's executive power was still not fundamentally compromised. Nevertheless, although some of the sects achieved a hierarchical governmental structure that served as a model for Korean Buddhism, Japanese Buddhist sects were unable to unify among themselves and continued to be plagued by both internal and external sectarian schisms. At the height of Japan's total war, the government attempted to bring the disparate lineages under a unified structure, but this effort too was in vain because of the deeply engrained, historical sectarianism of Japanese Buddhism.

Although the process of Korean Buddhist governmentalization was most similar to that of Chinese Buddhism, in which a consistent effort was made to accomplish centralization by working closely with state authorities, the final institutional structure it took most resembles that of the Japanese Buddhist sects. Even though the Japanese colonial government in Korea had as a model the system arranged in Japan between Japanese Buddhist sects and the Meiji government, in place since the 1880s, and even though Han and many other monks demanded centralization and autonomy, the Japanese colonial government

117. Hardacre, *Shintō*, 42–59.

118. Garon, "State and Religion," 277.

nonetheless resisted. Even after finally allowing centralization in the late 1930s, the colonial government continued to hold on to its prerogative to nominate the thirty-one head abbots, approve local abbacies, and regulate temple properties.

The clauses of the 1941 bylaws of the Chogye Order reflect this power structure, particularly with regard to the powers of the head priest. In these bylaws, approved by the colonial government, there was no mention that the head priest had the power to nominate the abbots of the thirty-one head temples. The only nomination power that the head priest had was the appointment of seven staff members at the central office of the great head temple, T'aegosa. Even this executive power of the patriarch required final approval by the governor general. Thus, the fundamentals of the Temple Ordinance of 1911 continued, even after the great head temple system went into full effect. Though the colonial policy for Korean Buddhism was an application of what had developed in Japan decades earlier, Korea's Temple Ordinance of 1911 also became a template for the later Religions Law of 1939/1940 in Japan, which brought Japanese Buddhism under stricter supervision by the state. Toward the end of Japan's total war, the gap in the level of executive power between the colonial government and the Korean Buddhist institution finally narrowed. In an effort to further streamline the structure of the Chogye Order at a crucial juncture in Japan's all-out war, the colonial government ordered the head priest Hanam to take full charge of the nominations of the abbots of the head and branch temples.¹¹⁹ For the first time, the colonial government imparted this power to the head of the Korean Buddhist institution. The government also decided to extend abbots' tenure from three to five years to implement policies more consistently.¹²⁰ As the construction of the great head temple and the establishment of the Chogye Order were made possible by the national mobilization campaign, the granting of full executive power to the head of the Chogye Order was also facilitated out of the exigency of Japan's war efforts. Nevertheless, because this decision was made close to the end of the Japanese Empire, namely, nine months before Japan declared defeat in August 1945, it was not fully implemented.

119. *Maeil sinbo*, November 7, 1944; *Sin pulgyo* 28 (1944): 2-3.

120. *Maeil sinbo*, November 7, 1944; *Sin pulgyo* 28 (1944): 2-3.

Conclusion

A heightened centralization of all political, social, and religious institutions is emblematic of the formation of the modern nation-state. As a social institution, Buddhism was not an exception. As the Meiji government was developing a streamlined governing apparatus, Japanese Buddhist sects were also undergoing a process of bringing their temples, priests, and assets under the control of a centralized institutional body and leadership. Thus, the level of unity, centralization, and institutionalization were often synonymous with the level of power, modernity, and autonomy. All the major religions vied to consolidate their own traditions and showcased their power through the size and splendor of their buildings. To many Asian Buddhists who were facing well-coordinated Christian missions, Japanese Buddhism represented a successful case of Buddhist centralization that could not only compete with Christianity but also enjoy a great degree of autonomy from the state. The Japanese great head temple/head priest system was the envy of other East Asian Buddhist reformers, especially of Korean Buddhists, and the Buddhists of each country wished to create a similar Buddhist institution themselves.

Influenced by the new, Western concept of the separation of religion and state, further finessed by Japanese colonizers to fit their needs, Korean Buddhist reformers believed that religion should have its own institution free from the state's interference. But the majority of Korean monks—even nationalist monks such as Kim Sangho, Kim Pömnin, and Han Yong'un—were fully aware that they would not be able to accomplish their goals without working with, and for, the state. The state's legal recognition was a necessity for generating a system of governance that in turn would bring consensus and unity among Korean Buddhism's factions.

However, the relationship between the colonial government and Korean Buddhism was not entirely lopsided. The fact that Korean Buddhism was perceived as potentially a reliable, faithful religion through which to implement state programs made the state dependent on the symbolic and institutional strength of Korean Buddhism. In this sense, the establishment of the great head temple T'aegosa and the ensuing institutional changes were accomplished through a well-choreographed exchange between the Korean Buddhist leadership and the colonial

state. As Japan expanded into Manchuria in 1931 and launched a war against China in 1937, cooperation between Korean Buddhism and the state intensified. Along with Japan's territorial expansion went Korean Buddhists' domestic and foreign missions, to which we now turn in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Propagation in Colonial Korea, Japan, and Manchuria

One of the most distinctive characteristics of modern Buddhism across Asia is the emphasis on propagation (or missionization). In the late nineteenth century, it became the norm for Buddhist leaders to believe that the future of Buddhism would be contingent on gaining converts to advance their religion. Propagation became a cornerstone of modern Buddhism. By emulating Christian missionary skills, they initiated new educational and social welfare programs and facilities for implementing them. Korean Buddhists were no exception. Under Japanese colonial rule, they took both Christianity and Japanese Buddhism as models to introduce familiar programs such as regular sermons, Sunday schools, lay organizations, and publications. They also set up new religious facilities to cater to people in the cities.

What is distinctive about the discourse of propagation in colonial Korean Buddhism is that not only did Korean Buddhist leaders initiate propagation programs on their own, but the state also played a leading role in the popularization of propagation through the Spiritual Development Movement. As discussed in the previous chapter, this movement was initiated by Governor General Ugaki in 1932, with the objective of unifying Japan's colonies culturally through a proprietary blend of state propaganda, spiritual themes, and social engineering. This state-driven campaign was carried over into his successor's (Minami Jirō; served 1936–42) term as well.¹ By participating in the program, Korean

1. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 15, 1936.

Buddhist leaders were able to witness a boom of propagation and develop the discourse of propagation into an indispensable part of their monastic and institutional identity. In a sense, the synergy between the state and Buddhism in the late colonial period was a major factor in catapulting Korean Buddhism into its modern form, which endures today.

In January of 1936, a leading Buddhist propagator who was also a key member of the Spiritual Development Movement had nothing but optimism for the future of Korean Buddhism. Increasingly, Kim T'aehŭp believed that the propagation of the Buddhist religion across the country and the world would be the central concern of a fully modernized Korean Buddhism. Looking back on the early years of propagation in the 1910s and 1920s, Kim sensed a change in the wind, proclaiming that

for a long time, the abbacy and three administrative positions of a temple had been everything monks pursued. As such, taking up a position as a propagator was totally out of favor. However, for the past two years, in line with the Spiritual Development Movement, there has been a big demand for propagators and lecturers. One can say the golden age for propagators has come. Fellow monks studying at schools: pay attention to this change! It is my hope that, as a result, the fight over abbacy can turn into a fight over propagator positions.²

Kim exhorted young monks to aspire to become aggressive propagators, rather than seeking the power and prestige of administration and official rank, taking advantage of the state campaign. In 1943, another key propagator, Kim Songnong, reflected on the impact of the Spiritual Development Movement on Korean Buddhism: "A while back, when the government policies on the Spiritual Development Movement and the Village Revitalization Movement were implemented, Korean Buddhists went to work as the vanguards of these movements. They toured the country and gave lectures to the populace through the sponsorship of the government. This was quite effective in reaching out to young people in society."³

2. *Pulgyo sibo*, May 1, 1936.

3. *Sin pulgyo* 49 (June 1943): 34.

The unique constellation of Japanese imperial propaganda under the rubric of pan-Asian nationalism represented by the Spiritual Development Movement offered a special place for Buddhism in general and, as circumstances unfolded, for Korean Buddhism in particular. The movement became so effective that Manchukuo, the puppet state erected by Japan after its invasion of Manchuria, also turned to the colonial government in Korea to learn how to implement it in its fledgling nation.⁴ How could a program based in colonial Korea and largely centered on a marginalized Korean religion become an important cultural force that had the potential to spread throughout the Japanese Empire and inspire visions of a global Korean Buddhism? How did the Spiritual Development Movement and other war mobilizations contribute to the discourse of propagation (K. *p'ogyo*; Jp. *fukyō*) in Korean Buddhism? These questions will occupy our final chapter.

As described in chapter 5, an earlier version of colonial Korea's Spiritual Development Movement had been rolled out by the early Meiji regime in Japan a half century before. The Meiji government marshaled religious and nonreligious teachers to serve as propagators to "articulate the concepts of the national polity" and to teach the people to "respect gods (*kami*) and ancestors." Likewise, the colonial government in Korea mobilized the same groups as state propagators to spread adherence to the national polity. This politically motivated state campaign resulted in "a big demand for propagators," and Korean Buddhists were seen as especially "effective to reach out to young people." The state's demand for propagators, especially Buddhist ones, was so significant that one Buddhist leader claimed that the Spiritual Development Movement was "about to usher in the golden age of Buddhism."⁵ As demand for propagators grew, the state-driven campaign prompted Korean Buddhist leaders to forge ahead, making propagation one of the central activities of the Korean Buddhist institution as they had done with the great head temple project.

By the early twentieth century, no Korean Buddhist leader doubted that Buddhism was a missionary religion and that proselytizing was an obligation for anyone who professed the religion. Driven by and modeled after Christian and Japanese missionary enterprises, Korean Buddhist leaders implemented various programs to facilitate religious

4. *Pulgyo sibo*, July 12, 1936.

5. *Pulgyo sibo*, January 1, 1936.

conversion. They hoped to prove that their missionaries could convert people as successfully as Christians and Japanese Buddhists did. Standard programs included establishing schools and kindergartens, publishing journals and books, organizing lay associations, providing regular Dharma talks, and setting up philanthropic services such as clinics.⁶ These programs were initiated by the major temples of Korean Buddhism, but most of them were located in remote mountain areas. Thus the temples sent Korean monks to the cities and towns to establish branch centers that could serve a larger population.

Beginning in 1910, the head temples set up these branches as “propagation halls,” in Seoul and in other cities. There were 16 such halls by 1913, 200 in 1931, and more than 400 by 1942. This is not particularly impressive when compared to the Japanese program: there were over 900 Japanese Buddhist propagation halls and 200 temples in colonial Korea. Both pale in comparison to the number of Christian establishments around the country: 4,300 by 1942.⁷ In spite of these meager numbers in the larger religious landscape of colonial Korea, it is nonetheless significant that Korean Buddhism consistently added around 11 propagation halls per year over the span of thirty-five years. While the number of Korean Buddhist monastics, educational institutions, publications, associations, and identified members made sluggish increases, institutions of propagation grew steadily.

The increasing number of propagation halls and propagators starting in the early 1930s reflects a crucial phase in the adaptation of Korean Buddhism to its colonial context. When Japan invaded Manchuria and established the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932, it brought the Spiritual Development Movement along with it to buttress its imperial program. The movement also grew during the lead-up to the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 and again with Japan’s commitment to total war in 1941. On the heels of Japan’s imperial expansion, Korean Buddhism followed with its own missionary endeavors. Initially concentrated largely in southern Korea, Korean Buddhist propagation halls expanded in the 1930s throughout the Korean peninsula and eventually spread into the broader empire, with halls in Manchuria, China, and even Japan itself. As the number of propagation halls increased in

6. *Tong’a ilbo*, August 21, 1936.

7. *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō* 1942.

colonial Korea and abroad, issues around the roles, status, and effectiveness of propagators and propagation halls quickly emerged. There was also the thorny problem of how to train propagators and bring them under institutional control.

Korean Buddhist propagation halls outside the peninsula generated a unique set of concerns. In Japan, these propagation halls had an uncertain legal status. Although the Spiritual Development Movement was meant to inculcate a sense of loyalty to the empire and its agendas, the question of whether a colonial religion could participate in missionizing activities in the imperial center itself presented complications that revealed the limitations and contradictions of the colonial legal framework. A debate ensued over whether laws governing colonial religions, such as the 1911 Temple Ordinance regulating Korean Buddhism, could be extended to imperial Japan or whether the regulations on native temples and shrines in Japan proper should be equally applied to Korean Buddhist establishments in Japan. Meanwhile, the Korean Buddhist propagator monks who secured their place in Japan by supporting the Spiritual Development Movement and the war effort blurred the boundary between the colonizer and the colonized.

The same tactic of using the state's need for mobilization to justify their establishments was used in Manchuria, but the situation was quite different than in Japan. The colonial governments in Korea and Manchukuo agreed to extend the application of Korea's 1911 Temple Ordinance to Manchuria and encouraged institutional connections between propagation facilities. The dynamic between a colonial subject—Korea—supporting the colonial endeavors of its colonizers in new territories was less controversial from a legal standpoint than Korea attempting to bring these operations back to the imperial center. Thus, the Manchurian situation provided Korean Buddhism with fertile ground to realize its own expansionist vision despite its status as the religion of a colonized people.

These cases—in the Korean peninsula, the imperial center, and the broader empire—sketch a picture of the many ways that colonial law in general and the Spiritual Development Movement in particular helped and hindered the spread of Korean Buddhism. They also highlight the extent to which Korean Buddhism had adapted to colonial policies, which in turn brought Buddhism and the state closer together. A detailed examination of the spread of new propagation halls in and beyond

Korea will reveal the many ways that Korean Buddhism's domestic and foreign missionary programs were implemented with and capitalized on the exigency of Japan's expansionist and wartime efforts.

The Legal Basis for Propagation Halls

When Japan colonized Korea, Korean Buddhism had roughly 1,200 temples and 7,000 monastics, with a seven to one ratio of monks and nuns. Korean monks, released from centuries of political and social restrictions on Buddhism, rushed from the temples in the mountains to cities, some with an eye toward opening temples. However, in line with the Meiji government's policies restricting the establishment of new Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines, and well aware of the dire economic situation of current Korean temples, the colonial government resisted. Through the 1911 Temple Ordinance, the colonial government set forth regulations stating that existing temples could be annexed, transferred, and disestablished; but, as there was no provision for the construction of new temples, any attempt to build a temple was denied. However, the colonial government was happy to give permission for the establishment of propagation halls. Even when propagation halls became more directly regulated under the 1915 Regulations on Propagation (K. *P'ogyo kyuch'ik*; Jp. *Fukyō kisoku*), it was relatively easy to establish these new religious centers if they furthered the imperial objective of propagation. Korean Buddhism was subject to a different legal system generally, but, when it came to establishing propagation halls, all recognized religions (Shintō, Buddhism, and Christianity) were affected by the same regulations. (Japanese Buddhists living in Korea were an exception; they were permitted to set up both temples and propagation halls as long as they received permission from their home sectarian offices and colonial authorities.) Under this legal framework, propagation halls associated with Korean Buddhism began to spread.

Kakhwangsa, for example, which was established in central Seoul in late 1910, was quickly turned into a propagation hall, the first of its kind, as the 1911 Temple Ordinance took full effect. Major monasteries also vied with one another to establish propagation halls in Seoul and other major cities. Han Yong'un founded an early competitor of Kakhwang Propagation Hall, Chungang p'ogyodang, and by 1913 there were thirteen propagation halls in Seoul all together. While the numbers of

temples and monastics remained pretty much the same throughout the colonial period, propagation halls and propagators steadily increased, and the term *p'ogyo* (propagation) became a byword among Korean Buddhist reformers.⁸

The Terms *Fukyō* and *P'ogyo*

By the early 1910s, the word *p'ogyo* was a standard term for propagation among Korean Buddhists.⁹ But how the concept of *p'ogyo* came to be so important within Korean Buddhism and how it came to occupy a space open for contestation within the colonial context is a complex tale. The term has a tangled genealogy, influenced over many years by Japanese Buddhists, Christians, Korean Buddhist reformers, and the colonial government.

In the early Meiji period, Japanese Buddhists learned a lot through observing the work of Christians and from their studies abroad. In particular, they came to believe that a central activity of religion was to perform missionary work. They soon integrated propagation, the dissemination of the teachings of Buddhism, into their vision of what a modern Japanese religion should be, using the term *fukyō*, or propagation. *Kaigai kaikyō* (foreign mission) and *kaigai fukyō* (foreign propagation) emerged as popular terms when Japanese expansion into the larger Asian world resulted in the proliferation of a Japanese expatriate community. Books and dictionaries on *fukyō* were published, as the term became an ever more important component of Japanese Buddhist and Japanese imperial ambition. By 1910, Japanese Buddhist sects had established several dozen temples and over one hundred propagation halls in colonial Korea, irrevocably changing the Korean religious landscape and prompting Korean Buddhist aspirations for propagation drives and missions of their own.

For Korean Buddhism, at least as influential as the Japanese Buddhist deployment of propagation was the competition from Christian missionaries. While Korean Buddhist monks were struggling to adapt

8. Nathan, "Buddhist Propagation."

9. Although another term, *chōndo* (Jp. *dendō*), also meant propagation and although both terms could be used interchangeably, *p'ogyo* was used more frequently in association with Buddhism and *chōndo* with Christianity. This examination focuses exclusively on the term *p'ogyo*.

to a rapidly changing political and social landscape after their long period of marginalization, Catholics and Protestants, along with other new religions, had already begun to fill the space left open by the physical absence of Buddhism in cities. By 1910, the major cities in colonial Korea were packed with Christian churches. These alarmed reform-minded monks, such as Paek Yongsŏng, whose efforts to create a new establishment in Seoul were repeatedly thwarted by a lack of financial resources and lay support. The monks picked up the term *p'ogyo* from a diverse global network, and, in response to the threat and efficacy of Christian missionary efforts, urged fellow Korean Buddhists to adopt the concept and put it into practice. When Yi Hoegwang opened Kakhwangsa, for example, he proclaimed it as *the* center for Buddhist propagation. Han Yong'un, in his 1913 treatise on the reform of Korean Buddhism, went so far as to claim that Korean Buddhism could only survive by disposing of the majority of mountain temples and replacing them with propagation halls in cities.¹⁰ This push to convert the Korean populace to Buddhism ran parallel to propagation efforts in other countries. The Buddhist monk Taixu, among others, led reforms in China. (There, the Chinese term *hongfa* was more commonly used than the Chinese equivalent of *fukyō*.)¹¹

But the term and the concept of *p'ogyo/fukyō* were also popularized by a secular force, the state. Because the term became integrated into nation building, the government ended up disseminating the term through its laws and policies.¹² Such legal codification began with the early Meiji government, which used words such as *fukyō*, *dendō*, *senkyōshi*, *fukyōsha*, and so on, in its regulations and edicts. These terms were quickly picked up by Japanese Buddhist sects and written into their own institutional bylaws and policies. The precolonial and colonial governments of Korea followed suit, using the term *fukyō* in various laws, and it was in turn taken up by Korean Buddhists and their governing institution for use in journals, educational materials, and

10. Tikhonov and Miller, *Selected Writings of Han Yongun*, chap. 1 (titled "On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism").

11. For example, a journal titled *Hongfa shekan* (Periodical of the Dharma Propagation Society) was published from 1928 to 1937. In the case of colonial Taiwan, owing to Japanese influence, the term *fukyō* was the norm.

12. Nathan, "Buddhist Propagation."

teachings. Thus, the concept of *fukyō* became deeply embedded in the Buddhisms of Japan's colonies.

Early Efforts in Colonial Korea

By 1928, there were 187 Buddhist propagation halls in colonial Korea. Yet Buddhist leaders were of the unanimous opinion that the results of their propagation initiatives in these facilities had fallen short of their expectations as it seemed that, relative to the effort, there were few new converts and members. Leaders attributed the lackluster results to the propagators' lack of qualifications and status. Other leaders noted the meager financial support for propagation halls, asserting that insufficient funding inhibited meaningful outreach, and questioned the seriousness of Korean Buddhism's commitment to substantial propagation more broadly.

Whether or not propagators were qualified to fulfill their task, it is at least apparent that, generally speaking, they were poorly prepared. They were not equipped to implement the types of modern programs needed for propagation. Chief among these was the weekly Dharma talk, which required the ability to relate to laypeople, an attunement to modern sensibilities, and familiarity with urban living. Propagators were dispatched from head temples in the mountains, following traditional monastic training, and left to find their own way propagating in the city. Thus, these propagators continued in the traditional practices with which they were familiar, focusing on rituals, chanting in Chinese phonetics, and giving philosophical Dharma talks that were largely unintelligible to their lay audiences. In addition, propagators carried on a custom inherited from countryside temples of using their halls (with the permission of police) as restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues. It was not uncommon to see female entertainers invited into these supposedly sacred spaces to dance over meals served with wine.¹³ This practice was vilified among reformers, who claimed that it distanced people from, rather than converting them to, Buddhism. In 1931, reform-minded young monks initiated a temple purification

13. *Chosŏn ilbo*, May 5, 1923, and May 5, 1935; *Tong'a ilbo*, July 14, 1924, and November 8, 1925.

movement to put an end to these corrupt practices. They even threatened excommunication for those who were caught continuing these practices.¹⁴ Police and Buddhist administrators, however, could not ignore the fact that the economics of the Buddhist infrastructure was in a ruinous state and that these business practices often proved essential to a temple's financial survival.¹⁵ The movement to quash these Chosŏn era customs seemed like a lost cause.

Four years later, however, the colonial government responded to increasing complaints from citizens and launched an official temple purification movement, ordering temples and propagation halls to stop selling wine and meals to their visitors. Unfortunately, this had the effect of throwing many temples, which did not have regular income from land or property, into financial crisis. The realities of the situation forced the government to reconsider its own crackdown.¹⁶ Expecting propagators to jettison established ways of generating income and simultaneously to implement modern propagation programs turned out to be untenable.

In addition to their lack of preparation and the financial constraints of maintaining their halls, the monks dispatched by head temples to newly established propagation halls were often not the best. These were monks the temples already saw as unsuited for more desirable work, such as administrative positions. Given their lack of abilities, such monks were consequently disinclined to innovate with new methods and practices. Originally, the Korean Buddhist central administration hoped that graduates of their Buddhist seminary in Seoul would assume responsibility for propagation halls, since they were believed to be the best educated and most qualified to establish modern outreach programs. However, in the early days of Korean Buddhist propagation, most graduates of the seminary were not interested. Instead, they had an eye toward landing a job in a limited number of administrative positions at major head and branch temples or in the central office. These positions paid relatively well and came with power and prestige. By contrast, without adequate and sustained monetary support, the position of propagator was economically untenable, did little to enhance one's sacerdotal status in the institution,

14. *Maeil sinbo*, April 28, 1931.

15. *Maeil sinbo*, April 28, 1931.

16. *Keijō nippō*, June 7, 1935.

and provided no financial gain. The monthly salary of propagators was barely enough to sustain them and their facility. A propagator from Kangye Province in northern Korea later remarked that his wages had been “far worse than a typical laborer.”¹⁷ To make matters worse, the majority of Korean monks in the mid-1920s were married; thus, propagators needed extra money to support their families. Given these economic and social realities, developing viable propagation programs was nearly impossible. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, these temples were propagation halls in name only; in reality they operated much like traditional temples.

After two decades of implementing propagation, criticism over these disappointing results mounted at the Korean Buddhist central office. Although the importance of propagation was frequently mentioned at the annual meeting of the abbots of the thirty-one head temples and several initiatives were hammered out, nothing was very effectively carried out. To be fair, the central office did not have any means of exerting institutional control or enforcement over the 187 propagation halls, as each hall fell under the administrative jurisdiction of its respective head temple. In any case, the final administrative power fell to the colonial government, which could either recognize or nullify propagation halls and propagators.

Efforts were made as early as 1921 and 1923 to address the lack of a system to oversee propagators, and a conference on propagation was held to devise a concrete plan to establish an organization that could train and supervise propagators. But infighting between the two major Korean Buddhist factions, the Kyomuwŏn and the Ch’ongmuwŏn, thwarted these initiatives.¹⁸ In 1927, the Kyomuwŏn reopened the agenda to establish a training school, but this time Kyomuwŏn planned to establish a Sŏn-based or meditation propagation (*sŏlli p’ogyo*) program rather than a preaching- or sermon-based one (*sŏlpŏb p’ogyo*).¹⁹ The organizers invited a Sŏn scholar to direct the program. Initially, the central office had designated Kakhwangsa as a central place for propagation.²⁰ However, Kakhwang Propagation Hall did not follow through on the plan to institute a Sŏn-based propagation system, nor was a Sŏn

17. *Sin pulgyo* 43 (1944).

18. *Tong’a ilbo*, November 20, 1923.

19. *Chungwae ilbo*, May 20, 1927.

20. *Tong’a ilbo*, March 15, 1927.

scholar posted as a resident. Only a full year later, in 1928, did the central office designate Kim T'aehŭp, educated at Nihon University in Japan (though not a Sŏn scholar), as the residential director and salaried preacher. In 1929, the central office, in collaboration with Kim, restarted an effort to centralize all propagation. It hosted a gathering of propagators to exchange information and come up with a consensus on texts and programs. Again, this effort found little success because the central office did not have any official governing power. Thus, the propagation halls continued to function independently in the manner of the typical, traditional temples discussed earlier, with little effort put into carrying out modern programs.

Modern Features of Propagation

The disappointing progress of the propagation program notwithstanding, a number of new changes slowly took hold as propagation halls spread throughout the cities. These changes derived not so much from the overarching institutional vision for the halls as from their physical proximity to dense urban populations. Easy access to these halls necessitated the development of programs that were different from those of traditional temples. In spite of their general conservatism, a few propagators successfully implemented new programs and as a consequence succeeded in gathering a sizable membership. Kim Chongnae, for example, at the Honam Propagation Hall in Chŏlla Province was able to boast of four to five thousand members;²¹ and Hwang Poŭng in Kyŏngju, North Kyŏngsang Province, had gained eight hundred.²² These monks offered programs for teaching illiterate Korean women to read,²³ after-hours schooling for children, and Sunday school. Kindergartens were also established beginning in 1924,²⁴ and, although numerically trivial compared to Christian programs of the same kind, eventually more than ten Buddhist kindergartens were set up in colonial Korea.

21. *Maeil sinbo*, December 4, 1912; August 13, 1914.

22. *Maeil sinbo*, July 14, 1914.

23. *Maeil sinbo*, July 24, 1931.

24. The well-known Kŭmch'ŏn and Paedal yuch'iwŏn were established in Kangnŭng and Masan respectively in 1923 and 1926 respectively; Taeja yuch'iwŏn at Kakhwangsa in 1927; and Nŭngin yuch'iwŏn in Yangyang, Kangwŏn Province, in 1938.

The most visible development, however, was the establishment of women's Buddhist associations (*puinhoe*) at many of the propagation halls. Although traditional temples set up similar groups, it was the propagation halls, beginning with Kakhwangsa, that became the epicenter of this phenomenon. This development is not surprising, given that female Buddhists now had access to halls close to their homes. Throughout Korean history, women had always been the most ardent supporters of Buddhist temples, but it was only in the colonial period that they formed a collective society. Unlike with traditional temples, which were located far away from cities and difficult to visit frequently, women in cities could visit propagation halls whenever they pleased. In addition, the halls did not own land, which was the standard of economic capital in East Asian Buddhism and brought in a sustained income to Buddhist monasteries.²⁵ Because monetary support from the head temples was meager, it was essential for a propagator to organize a lay group that could support the hall. Female lay members became the engine that not only drove the establishment of propagation halls through donations, but also ran the facilities and initiated philanthropic activities.

The participation of female members in the affairs of their propagation halls also gave them more say in operations, even to the extent that these women were able to influence the nomination of potential propagators to their hall. In one instance, the members of the Ulsan Propagation Hall took collective action in petitioning the head temple not to replace their current propagator, Kim Hwegwang, and his wife.²⁶ In another case, the Women's Buddhist Association at the Kongju Propagation Hall in Ch'ungnam Province issued a vote of no confidence on the newly assigned propagator, and, when he arrived anyway, over a hundred members got into a brawl in which a dozen were injured. Later, the association demanded that the head temple Magoksa send a different propagator.²⁷ In 1939, tensions around the nomination process again broke out between the association and the Magoksa. When the Magok Temple replaced the existing propagator, Hong Sŏnghyŏn, with a new monk, Kim Ŭngman, the association boycotted the temple's

25. Walsh, *Sacred Economies*, 122.

26. *Tong'a ilbo*, July 1, 1925.

27. *Tong'a ilbo*, March 4, 1927.

nominee.²⁸ Similar issues arose at the Ch'angwŏn Propagation Hall; when a new propagator did not meet the expectations of the female members, they rejected him. This time, the head temple acquiesced and sent a replacement.²⁹

Another noticeable innovation for the propagation hall was the advent of Buddhist wedding ceremonies. Traditionally, in Japan, weddings took place in front of the Buddha altar at an individual's house,³⁰ but in 1892 a Jōdoshinshū priest named Fujii Senshō (1859–1903) and his wife, Inoue Tamae, a daughter of a Shinshū priest, tied the knot at Tokyo White Lotus Society Hall (Tōkyō byakuren shakai dō) in a Jōdoshinshū ceremony. This appears to be the first modern Buddhist wedding in East Asia. The practice gradually spread to other sects.³¹

The first such ceremony in Korea was held in 1917 at a propagation hall. The Buddhist lay scholar Yi Nūnghwa sought to introduce the Buddhist wedding as an alternative to Confucian and Christian weddings. In an article from 1917, Yi criticizes traditional Confucian wedding rituals as too “complicated” and “expensive,” but he does not feel that the Christian wedding style is a desirable alternative. Rather, Buddhist wedding rituals that were as “simple” and “frugal” as the Christian ceremonies should be created. He suggests that the Thai Buddhist wedding could be used as a model and that manuals for Buddhist weddings should be written. Any Buddhists planning to marry, he claimed, “should do a Buddhist wedding at the propagation hall”—and, notably, not at the temple.³² Yi found a model Buddhist couple for his endeavor, and the event was held at Kakhwang Propagation Hall, officiated by the prominent Sŏn master Kim Kyōng'un. A Buddhist reporter suggested that the wedding was far better than a Christian ceremony, since Christian weddings “lacked Korean customs.”³³ A non-Buddhist reporter who also witnessed the event agreed that the Buddhist wedding ceremony, better reflecting Korean custom and feelings, might be more appropriate for Koreans. However, he also

28. *Tong'a ilbo*, February 8, 1939.

29. *Pulgyo sibo*, January 1, 1936.

30. Matsunami, *Bukkyō no wakaru hon*, 160.

31. Matsunami, *Bukkyō no wakaru hon*, 160.

32. *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 4 (September 1917).

33. *Maeil sinbo*, February 1 and 2, 1918.

thought the one held at Kakhwang Propagation Hall was quite noisy and seemed a bit too much like a show.³⁴ After this first ceremony, the idea of a Buddhist wedding quickly spread to other Buddhist establishments, with propagators playing a leading role in implementing this modern Buddhist practice.³⁵ The new custom proliferated as a majority of Korean monks began marrying. Japanese Buddhists viewed the popularity of weddings at Korean Buddhist propagation halls as a sign of Korean Buddhism's shift "from mountain Buddhism to people's Buddhism."³⁶

Propagation halls also gradually matured into sites of Buddhist learning and spiritual formation for the public. Although many propagators were ill equipped to give relevant, appropriate Dharma talks, propagation halls nonetheless came to host regular well-attended lectures. In addition to the Sunday Dharma talks, the halls periodically invited elite monks to give talks. The preferred speakers were no longer Sōn masters, but rather those who were educated in Japan and could better connect Buddhist teachings to contemporary, urban lay life. These guest talks became a prominent feature of propagation halls in the early 1920s, when the first generation of monks who had studied in Japan came back to Korea for summer visits or after obtaining their degrees. For example, in 1921, a group of student monks who were studying in Tokyo toured Korea, giving well-received talks on topics related to Buddhism.³⁷ The practice was mutually beneficial to both propagators and students: propagators could demonstrate that Buddhism was not an old, superstitious religion irrelevant to modern society, whereas student monks were able to test their knowledge and experience in practical situations and earn money to support their education. This symbiosis deepened as more student monks came back from Japan, until they themselves began to assume propagator positions in the 1930s, considerably raising the quality of programs in the halls.

34. *Maeil sinbo*, February 3, 1918.

35. For cases of Buddhist weddings that took place at propagation halls or were presided over by propagators, see *Pulgyo sibo*, February 1, 1939; March 1, 1939; July 1, 1938; June 1, 1938.

36. *Chōsen bukkyō* 35 (July 1927): 42–43.

37. *Tong'a ilbo*, March 14, 1926.

The Boom of Propagation Halls in Colonial Korea

In spite of a slow start, the number of propagation halls and the extent of their outreach increased significantly after Japan's expansion into Manchuria in 1931. The subsequent establishment of Manchukuo in 1932 also granted a larger role to Korean Buddhism in the Japanese Empire, providing ever more opportunities for Korean Buddhists interested in expanding the prestige of their religion domestically and abroad. Korean Buddhist monks responded quickly to this change and revamped their propagation efforts in the early 1930s. Whereas it had taken twenty years to establish the first 117 halls, almost 300 new locations were established over the next twelve years, from 1931 to 1942.³⁸ More than half of these new halls were set up at the same time that the colonial government commenced and fully implemented the movement. At the peak of the Spiritual Development Movement, Korean Buddhism added 170 halls in just five years—a far greater pace than during the first two decades of colonial rule.

The Spiritual Development Movement, the Korean version of the Meiji regime's Promulgation Movement, brought Korean Buddhism to the forefront of the state's programs for cultural engineering. In order to turn Koreans into docile servants of the emperor, state authorities deployed programs that promoted religiosity among the people—programs that prioritized traditional, state-recognized religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Early on, Confucianism and Buddhism were preferred as the most appropriate traditions for cultivating people's minds and improving their spirituality. The role of Christianity quickly faded; its association with Western colonialism marked it as an unsuitable religion for the movement. The Korean Christian leader Yun Ch'ihō noticed the marginal status of his religion early on, when he attended a meeting of religious leaders from all three traditions organized by the vice governor general to promote the movement. Yun later wrote in his diary that "a Confucian scholar advanced the opinion that Confucian ethical teachings are best suited for the purpose. The Buddhist priests said that the religious needs of the Korean

38. The numbers increase as follows: 39 in 1918; 65 in 1925; 95 in 1928; 117 in 1930; 120 in 1931; 147 in 1933; 192 in 1934; 203 in 1935; 243 in 1936; 322 in 1938; 343 in 1939; 373 in 1940; 409 in 1942. See *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō*.

people can be best supplied by Buddhism.”³⁹ There was not much support, however, for the idea that Christianity could most effectively address the needs of the people.

Confucian scholars seized the opportunity to promote their religion by mobilizing to spread the movement. The government likewise supported Confucian leaders in their efforts in order to increase contact between Confucians and other people, later allowing the Confucian Institute to open to the public (it had historically been available largely to the elite *yangban* class), and even authorized the institute as a venue for weddings. In addition, the government planned to open existing local level Confucian shrines to the public so that these sites could be used to disseminate state programs.⁴⁰ In some respects, Confucianism should have been a primary force for the movement, because Korea had been a devout Confucian country for five hundred years. But, despite the promise of Confucianism, its participation in the movement was overshadowed by Buddhism. Perhaps because many Japanese government officials were either Buddhist themselves or gave preference to Buddhism, the colonial government privileged Korean Buddhism. The government ordered local governments to prioritize Korean Buddhism as well, despite doubts about the efficacy of monks who had been out of touch with the rest of the world for so many centuries.⁴¹ Thus, major provincial government offices made frequent announcements that the Spiritual Development Movement would be implemented by “centering on [Korean] monks.”⁴²

As Kim Sunsök notes in an assessment of the propagation movement, the colonial government held the strong conviction that revitalizing Korean Buddhism would be the most desirable way to imperialize Koreans,⁴³ and, as a consequence, they gave significant administrative and financial support to the governing institution of Korean Buddhism. Realizing that there were not enough facilities in villages and cities, the government encouraged monks to establish propagation

39. *Yun Ch'ihö ilgi* 19 (July 1935).

40. *Maeil sinbo*, January 27, 1937.

41. *Chosön ilbo*, January 8, 1936. Korean Buddhists were not happy about this article and protested by visiting the headquarters of the newspaper. For a Buddhist response, see *Pulgyo sibö*, February 1, 1936.

42. “Using Monks for Spiritual Development Movement” (*Mokpo ilbo*, June 23, 1935).

43. Kim Sunsök, “1930-yöndaë huban Chosön ch'ongdokpu.”

halls throughout the country. To further those ends, the government eased building procedures and solicited financial contributions from the central and local governments, all so that Buddhism could indeed come down from the mountains to the cities. Beginning in 1935, an ever-increasing number of Buddhist propagation halls were established in cooperation with the government explicitly “for the purpose of the Spiritual Movement.”⁴⁴ In addition, as Manchukuo was integrated into the Japanese Empire, the government needed to develop the northern peninsula. Since most temples and propagation halls were concentrated in the south of Korea, a campaign was begun to open new facilities in northern Korea. Ultimately, the colonial government planned to establish one temple (or, more accurately, one propagation hall) per village.⁴⁵ It changed the terms of the 1911 Temple Ordinance to expedite this process, as it especially needed to speed matters along in P’yŏngyang⁴⁶ and other provinces.⁴⁷ Buddhists in Kangwŏn Province even developed a plan to build “more than one [propagation hall] per county.”⁴⁸

The colonial government also wanted to increase the number of propagators and even asked the central office of the Korean Buddhist governing institution for a list of eligible monks. The government’s requirements were that such monks possess a deep faith and proper manners, and be graduates of Buddhist universities or seminaries.⁴⁹ The government also created opportunities for propagators and other monks to give talks at local schools and various meeting places in villages and cities. Elite monks who were studying in Japan and in Seoul were also involved. They were divided into groups and toured the country to promote the program. In the process, star propagators emerged such as Kim T’ae-hŭp, Kwŏn Sangno, Yi Chigwang, and Kang Yumun, most of whom had been educated in Japan. They made full use of these opportunities to build their careers and advance Buddhism. Their lectures and teachings on the national body, the core teaching of the Spiritual Development Movement, were always explained through the mediums

44. *Maeil sinbo*, May 28, 1936; June 14, 1937; June 21, 1938; *Keijō nippō*, November 15, 1936; *Pulgyo sibo*, May 1, 1938.

45. *Tong’a ilbo*, June 15, 1935; *Pulgyo sibo*, August 1, 1935.

46. *Maeil sinbo*, February 15, 1936.

47. *Pulgyo sibo*, March 1, 1936.

48. *Maeil sinbo*, April 14, 1938.

49. *Pulgyo sibo*, May 1, 1936.

of Buddhist doctrine, terminology, and practice. For many propagators the movement was very simply a Buddhist revitalization movement.

As Korean Buddhism put the principles of the movement into their own teachings and vocabulary, a whole new genre of propagation materials was published. In 1935, Kim T'aehŭp created a reading list of texts that he felt were essential for propagators to study. The list included textbooks and scriptural sources relevant to propagation, propagation dictionaries, introductions to Buddhism, and books on Dharma talks and fables, many of which could be ordered from Japan and China.⁵⁰ In response to the Spiritual Development Movement, Ch'oe Chwihŏ (1865–?) published the journal *Kŭmgangsan* (Mt. Kŭmgang),⁵¹ which contained articles and news on propagation. An Chinho published the first comprehensive text on rituals, *Sŏgmun ūibŏm*, which soon gained wide circulation among Korean Buddhist monastics in Korea, Japan, and Manchuria.⁵² In 1938, Kang Yumun published the first comprehensive introduction to Buddhist propagation methods (*p'ogyopŏp kaesŏl*). Kang defines Buddhist propagation as “taking on general ethical and educational reforms by aiming to improve the morality of the populace, leading thought in the right direction, and ameliorating the difficulties in society in such a way that these possess the identity of Buddhist propagation.” He asserts that propagation should be implemented through a kind of “ecumenical Buddhism,” a style that does not privilege the practices of any one sect and that encourages the skillful use of the full range of media, subjects, and disciplines available.⁵³

With the colonial government's support, Buddhist propagation halls became a nexus for the melding of state and religious ideologies and the place where this new, hybrid set of teachings was disseminated. The status and significance of propagators had increased significantly by the mid-1930s so that elite Korean monks began to seek out propagation positions and to implement modern programs carefully and energetically. Through this process, a distinctively Korean Buddhist interpretation of propagation took root and thrived.

50. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1 and September 1, 1935.

51. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1935.

52. *Kŭmgangsan* 1 (September 1935).

53. Kim Kwangsik, “P'ogyopŏb kaesŏl e nat'an an kŭndae pulgyo ūi p'ogyo.” See <http://www.budreview.com/news/articleView.html?idxn=342>.

Korean Buddhist Propagation Centers in Japan

In the 1930s, Korean Buddhist propagation halls also spread to Japan. Like those in colonial Korea, these halls were established as branches of head temples, according to the individual propagator's monastic affiliations. It was unclear what legal status the local governments in Japan should accord these Korean Buddhist propagation halls on their end.⁵⁴ The uncertain legal status of these facilities came into sharp focus; a colonized people's religion had found its way to the imperial center under the very program meant to form citizens of the empire. Without any clear legal precedent, Korean Buddhist establishments in Japan defaulted to the category of pseudoreligions. As such, this lack of legal status placed them in the same category as other new religions, such as the Renmonkyō and the Tenrikyō, which were deemed "heretical" and "superstitious" in the eyes of the Japanese state.⁵⁵

A case in point is the petition of a Korean monk, Kim Chongnae, who was living in Osaka in 1933. He sent an application to the city of Osaka to request permission to open a Korean Buddhist propagation hall. He attached a letter from the abbot of his head temple, Paegyangsa, Song Chonghōn, to the application to certify the legitimacy of his work and status. But the application threw city officials into a state of confusion; there was no legal framework for processing the application. Although there were regulations concerning the propagation halls of Shintō and Japanese Buddhism in Japan, there was nothing on Korean Buddhism. The city could not reject the application outright because Kim was from a recognized religion in Korea, and his work posed no potential danger. Besides, a propagation hall would benefit the spiritual health of Korean immigrants in Osaka and further the spirit of one of the government's agendas, the "conciliation of Japan and Korea" (*naisen yūwa*). These justifications aside, handling the matter was not straightforward. The newspaper *Chūgai nippō*, for example, reported on the city official's difficult position that, "although he is aware of the necessity of the establishment [of the Korean propagation hall], he cannot simply grant permission." When Kim was notified of this, he wrote a letter of protest to city hall, arguing that failing to approve his application was "discriminative treatment that went against the freedom

54. *Chūgai nippō*, November 14, 1935.

55. Josephson, *Invention of Religion*, 239–41.

of religion (*shinkyō no jiyū*) guaranteed to Japanese citizens.” (Kim had listed himself as a citizen of the Japanese Empire to add legitimacy to his project.) Unable to answer him, the official admitted, “I think the city administration might need to adopt an expedient measure.”⁵⁶

In order to resolve this issue, the city official consulted with the Ministry of Education but received the reply that “there is no pertinent regulation.” Undeterred, Kim and other Korean Buddhists took up collective action to promote their request to establish a propagation hall. Sandwiched between the Korean Buddhist community in Japan and the Ministry of Education, the city of Osaka was concerned that this case might send a negative message to the 130,000 Koreans living in Osaka, undermining the spirit of *naisen yūwa*. Realizing that the city could not do anything for them, Kim and other Korean Buddhists went to the Ministry of Education in Tokyo to submit their petition directly.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, their application was turned down. Later, the head of the Office of Shrines and Temples in Osaka commented on the final verdict in the newspaper:

I feel very sorry for the Koreans, but there is nothing we can do about it because the existing regulations were enacted prior to the annexation of Korea. We realized it would be impossible to make an exception to the regulations to give permission for construction of a propagation hall, but, since we considered this to be an important matter, we consulted [with the Ministry of Education]. Unless the current regulations are revised, this matter will be truly troublesome [for future requests].⁵⁸

Apparently, Kim’s petition drew a great deal of attention within Japanese Buddhist circles and the final decision from the ministry “came as a shock.”⁵⁹

Some Japanese Buddhist sects, however, saw this incident as a golden opportunity to reach out to Korean residents. Adachi, the abbot of the Honganji branch temple Enkōji in Osaka, was the first to act. Hearing news that Kim’s application had been denied, the abbot

56. *Chūgai nippō*, December 3, 1933.

57. *Chūgai nippō*, January 17, 1934.

58. *Chūgai nippō*, January 20, 1934.

59. *Chūgai nippō*, May 8, 1934.

designated a preexisting annex of his temple complex to become a facility that Korean Buddhists could use as their own propagation hall, giving it the title Nikkan Temple (Japanese and Korean temple). He invited a Korean monk from the head temple Magoksa in Korea to become the resident propagator. (The abbot also had a larger vision of adding a program to train Korean monks to become foreign missionaries to Manchuria.) The abbot made sure that the opening of the propagation hall was legal: “The new name Nikkan Temple might sound like [I have] set up a new temple, but, in fact, it is just that Koreans will come to worship at my existing temple. Thus, there is no violation of the regulations on religions.”⁶⁰ Five weeks after announcing that he would create a propagation hall, there was an opening ceremony with two hundred Koreans and Japanese in attendance. Three Japanese priests and four Korean monks, including Chōng Yōngmyōng from Magok Temple, who would serve as the chief propagator, conducted rituals together. Two Korean monks would reside at the temple to support Chōng as assistant propagators. In an interview shortly after the event, the abbot Adachi promised to create a Korean youth group as well as send a Korean delegate to the Pan-Asian Pacific Buddhist Conference scheduled for July 1934.⁶¹ Later, a Śākyamuni statue was brought in from Seoul and enshrined in the temple annex to symbolize the unity of the Korean and Japanese people.⁶²

Another propagation hall, catering “just to Koreans,” was also established in Nagoya by six Korean monks, including Pak Songp’a and Chōng Yōngdal, under the aegis of the Nishi Honganji. The monks had originally planned to set up their own propagation hall, but, realizing that it would not be possible to receive legal permission, they approached the Shinshū for help. It is most likely that they had heard about Nikkan Temple and realized that an arrangement with a Japanese Buddhist sect would be the only viable option for them. Two Shinshū priests arranged a meeting for the Korean monks at the Nishi Honganji. There, the monks symbolically converted to the sect, received a statue, and opened a propagation hall.⁶³

60. *Chūgai nippō*, January 25, 1934.

61. *Chūgai nippō*, March 6, 1934.

62. *Chūgai nippō*, May 6, 1934.

63. *Chūgai nippō*, May 6, 1934; June 1, 1934.

Learning of these workarounds, Kim Chongnae decided to circumvent the legal issues with the Osaka city hall by turning to the Ōbakushū, asking the abbot of an Ōbakushū temple, Shariji in Yawata, for assistance. Eventually, he converted to the Ōbakushū in name only and became an Ōbaku propagator. With this qualification in hand, he resubmitted his proposal to the Osaka city hall. (The decision on this second proposal remains unknown.)⁶⁴ Later, in 1940, three Korean monks became disciples of the Jōdoshū temple Kachōji in the city of Yawata. Kim Ch'unsō, Yang Tuhwan, and Chōng Tōgyu, operating as Jōdoshū propagators, established a propagation hall for the 13,000 Korean immigrants of that city.⁶⁵ That year, the Sōtōshū also sponsored the Korean monk Son Sunbok to open a propagation hall.⁶⁶ These strategic affiliations between Korean monks and Japanese Buddhist sects in imperial Japan were reminiscent of those that had been forged in the precolonial period in Korea.

Not all Korean monks followed suit. Many unrecognized propagation halls did not seek Japanese Buddhist sectarian affiliations, partly because their existence was tolerated by Japanese officials as long as they kept a low profile and did not seek to be publicly recognized. The police department in Osaka was unwilling to shut these halls down. From their perspective, these facilities provided a sense of community and solace to the ever-increasing population of Korean immigrants in Osaka. Moreover, clamping down on recognized Korean religions would be counterproductive. Thus, even though there was no legal way to recognize these facilities, which would automatically be categorized as affiliated with pseudoreligion, the police approached the matter pragmatically and judiciously.⁶⁷

With this tacit understanding, propagation halls spread through different cities in Japan, though mostly concentrated in Osaka, Kobe, Tokyo, Nagoya, Fukuoka, and Yawata. Each propagation hall was an extension of a specific head or major branch temple in Korea and nominally functioned as its branch or subbranch in Japan. Unlike propagation halls in colonial Korea, the head or branch temple did not provide these Japan-based facilities with direct financial support; they were

64. *Chūgai nippō*, August 17, 1934.

65. *Chūgai nippō*, April 24, 1940.

66. *Pulgyo sibo*, July 15, 1940.

67. *Chūgai nippō*, November 14, 1935.

instead funded by donations of local Korean Buddhist members and operated independently of their home head temple (not to mention Korean Buddhism's central institution in Seoul), which they approached after the fact for the purpose of receiving legitimacy. For example, in 1936 Korean Buddhists in Japan set up a propagation hall first and then requested that the abbot of Haein Temple, Yi Kogyōng, send a monk to serve them.⁶⁸ Sometimes Korean monks studying in Japan settled in and opened their own centers. For instance, Yu Chongmuk established the Taegak Propagation Hall, affiliated with the Kwanŭm Temple on Cheju Island, Korea, while studying at Rinzai University in Japan.⁶⁹ In other instances, monks living among and serving Korean immigrants later turned their personal residence into a propagation hall. There was also a rare case in which a monk traveling in Japan was persuaded by Korean Buddhists to stay and open a temple. Yi Kūnu, a Sōn teacher of Taegakkyo in Seoul, went to Japan on a sight-seeing trip. When local Koreans in Fukuoka requested that he stay, he opened the Chungang Sōn center, which was reportedly the first Korean Sōn center in Japan that catered to lay Buddhists.⁷⁰ In each of these cases, there was no substantial institutional supervision from the homeland, and propagation halls were pretty much left to do as they pleased. The only direct relationship between the propagation halls in Japan and the central office in Seoul was through the propagator of the central office, Kim T'aehŭp, who made frequent lecture tours in Japan to promote the Spiritual Development Movement.⁷¹

Despite their lack of institutional connection, some of the Korean propagator monks in Japan developed relationships among themselves. Some formed associations to exchange ideas on propagation and rituals, and to keep up to date on the colonial government's policies and the directives of the central office in Seoul. The Association of Korean Monks in Japan (Naeji Chosōn sŭngnyō yōnhaphoe) was established for this purpose, with a preliminary meeting in Fukuoka on December 22, 1935, and annual meetings for five years after that.⁷² In Osaka, monks from fifteen propagation halls formed an association in 1935,

68. *Pulgyo sibo*, January 1936.

69. *Pulgyo sibo*, November 1, 1939.

70. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1935.

71. *Pulgyo sibo*, July 1, 1938.

72. *Pulgyo sibo*, January 1, 1939.

meeting to discuss how most effectively to promote the Spiritual Development Movement as well as the Temple Purification Movement. As a way of placing their work in line with the Temple Purification Movement, they vowed to follow a stringent dress code: they would wear their monk robes with the ceremonial *kesa* whenever they went out of their center into the public. They also talked about holding a regular training session for propagation. In terms of their day-to-day operations, the propagation halls in Japan were run like any other temple or hall in Korea. Funerary rituals, weddings, lay groups, Dharma talks, and this-worldly concerns were central.⁷³ (However, the entertainments prevalent in Korean temples were not practiced in the Korean Buddhist establishments in Japan.)

Regardless of their legal standing, propagation halls in Korea and Japan both justified their existence and their expansion on the basis of the Spiritual Development Movement. At least officially, promoting the movement was also an integral part of their programs, with propagation monks offering regular lectures keyed to the movement's concerns. At a branch hall of T'ongdo Temple in Korea, for example, one of the most active Korean monks in Japan, Yang Tuhwan, was a key promoter of the Spiritual Development Movement. Taking a leading role in Korean Buddhism in Osaka, he presided over a variety of events, such as memorial services and the installation of a Kwanŭm statue and a temple bell cast in Korea. At the height of the movement, he was one of its more vigorous supporters, giving talks not just for his congregation, but for the general Korean population in Osaka as well. He also hosted talks by Kim T'ae-hŭp when he visited from Korea. In 1937, he established an annual ceremony in commemoration of the ongoing Second Sino-Japanese War. At this ceremony, Yang performed rituals for the war dead and for Japan's victory, and collected money to support the war effort.⁷⁴ Other propagators followed suit, publicly endorsing Japan's wars in order to prove that their religious facility was on board with imperial and *naisen yŭwa* ideologies. Without actively supporting the imperial project, it would have been difficult for these establishments to ensure their continued existence and prosperity.

In 1939, the Japanese imperial government began drafting the Religions Law that would bring all religions under the tighter control and

73. *Pulgyo sibo*, May 1, 1938.

74. *Pulgyo sibo*, April 1, 1938.

supervision of the government. Both Korean and Japanese Buddhist clergy were alarmed by this development. The abbot of the Enkōji, who had established the Korean propagation hall Nikkanji, was especially worried that the law might render the Nikkan Temple illegal and thereby endanger all the work he had accomplished since opening it in 1934.⁷⁵ The pending approval of the Religions Law by the parliament also concerned the Korean monks who were running unrecognized propagation halls in Japan. Two Korean Buddhist monks and propagators, Hwang Sōngbong and Yang Tuhwan, submitted a petition requesting that the Joint School of Sōn and Kyo of Korean Buddhism, under which they operated, be recognized as one of the Japanese Buddhist sects.⁷⁶ Whether their petition was approved is unclear, but, when the Religions Law passed in parliament, government authorities gave a stern warning to head temples in colonial Korea that had granted their permission to the many propagation halls in Japan and colonial Korea. The government informed the head temples that, under the new law, there would be a wholesale crackdown on these halls as part of a broader push to eradicate pseudoreligions.⁷⁷

This threat notwithstanding, the passing of the Religions Law did not seem to have a significant impact on the establishments of Korean Buddhism in Japan. Korean propagation halls continued to exist, but, to avoid being shuttered, they increased their rituals for the war dead and redoubled their support of the Sino-Japanese and Pacific wars by collecting donations. For example, several resident monks from the propagation hall in Kobe begged for money on the streets and donated it to the war effort.⁷⁸ Likewise, 119 members of the association of Korean women Buddhists in the city of Ube donated funds.⁷⁹

In sum, Korean Buddhist monks in Japan continued to preserve their Buddhist identity and disseminate their religion by skillfully navigating a fraught legal framework that was ill equipped to address their needs. They also maintained their presence by promoting the Spiritual Development Movement and Japan's total war effort. Meanwhile, Japanese authorities and Japanese Buddhists had diverse responses to the

75. *Chūgai nippō*, June 27, 1939.

76. *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun*, August 27, 1938; *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1939.

77. *Kyōngbuk pulgyo*, October 5, 1940.

78. *Pulgyo sibo*, July 15, 1942.

79. *Ōsaka mainichi shinbun*, June 26, 1938.

Korean propagators in their midst: sometimes cooperative, sometimes appropriative, and always navigating a difficult set of conditions in the imperial, colonial context.

Korean Buddhist Missions to Manchuria

Beyond colonial Korea and the Japanese mainland, individual Korean monks as well as the Korean Buddhist central institution cast their gaze toward foreign lands. But nowhere did Korean Buddhism pour in more of its resources and efforts than it did in Manchuria, its northern neighbor. Manchuria was convenient because it had become part of the Japanese Empire in 1932, and, because of its geographic proximity to the Korean peninsula, Koreans had already lived there for centuries. Fortunately, Korean Buddhist monks did not encounter legal barriers to setting up temples and centers in Manchuria, as they had in colonial Korea and Japan, since Manchukuo was a fledgling country and the legal framework on religions was still not firmly in place. Concurrently, amid growing concerns about how to control the large numbers of Koreans living in Manchuria, the Manchukuo government sought assistance from the colonial government of Korea. Together, they saw Buddhism as a viable tool for assimilation. Not only did they support the establishment of Korean Buddhist propagation halls in Manchuria, but they also permitted the construction of new temples, which was forbidden in colonial Korea and Japan. The Manchukuo government also deemed colonial Korea's Spiritual Development Movement to be a great success, and they planned to import the program into Manchuria.

Korean Buddhists in Manchuria, like their colleagues in colonial Korea, used the Spiritual Development Movement as leverage to garner government support and expand their religion in a new land. They found themselves at the vanguard in the pacification of Manchukuo. Like the Japanese Buddhists before them, leading Korean Buddhist monks began to envision foreign missions and lobbied for the Korean Buddhist institution to integrate foreign missionary initiatives into institutional policy. Given the exigency of Japan's war effort, state authorities fully supported this initiative. At the height of Japan's total war in the early 1940s, the Korean Buddhist central institution placed Korean Buddhist establishments in Japan and Manchuria under the umbrella of

its foreign mission development. Thus, for the first time, the Korean Buddhist institution entertained in earnest the idea of colonial Korean Buddhism going international.

Korean monks crossed the border into Manchuria after Korea was colonized by Japan in 1910 and settled there to cater to Korean settlers. The first Korean Buddhist temple or propagation hall was established in 1911. The Korean monk Kim Ponyŏn opened a temple Unhŭngsa in Longjing, Jilin Province, which was followed by a number of other temples or propagation halls established by Korean monks in the next two decades.⁸⁰ The propagation hall founded by Paek Yongsŏng in 1927 in Longjing was the most successful.⁸¹ Mainly serving Korean immigrants in Jilin, it was more than a propagation center; it functioned as an alternative community, in which several dozen families lived together in the spirit of Buddhism to farm the land. At the time, faith-based agrarian communities, organized by liberal Christian and Ch'ŏndogyo (a Korean indigenous religion established in the nineteenth century) leaders, were spreading in the form of collective farms and cooperatives in colonial Korea and Manchuria.⁸² Paek's community was one of many that tried to create, as Albert Park argues, "new religious languages, practices, and institutions that embodied and promoted alternative visions of modernity."⁸³ Called Taegakkyo and founded in 1920, Paek's community was a new Buddhist religion, in many ways rather independent from mainstream Buddhism and the Korean Buddhist central institution. Nevertheless, he was the first Korean monk who officially initiated a foreign mission in the modern period. The monks who followed Paek's teachings also opened propagation halls in Japan.

Even within the mainstream of Korean Buddhism, however, the possibility of foreign propagation had been considered for some time. A decade earlier, in 1917, twenty-six members of the Association of

80. For example, a temple was built by Kim Kwisan in 1915; the Sinhŭngsa by Ch'oe Sŭngha in 1920; Yongjusa in 1923; and T'aansa in 1926. See Ch'a, "Ilche ha Kando hanin sahoe," 229–30.

81. Han Pogwang, "Yongsŏng Sŭnim"; *Pulgyo* 93 (March 1932): 15.

82. For Christian and Ch'ŏndogyo communities, see Albert Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth*; for Japanese Christian agrarian communities in Manchuria, see Emily Anderson, *Christianity and Imperialism*.

83. Albert Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth*, 18.

Japanese and Mongolian Buddhism visited Korea.⁸⁴ A key representative from Mongolia, Shi Moxiao, asked the central office of Korean Buddhism to dispatch a propagator to Mukden, where half a million Koreans were living. Since it was “a serious matter” requiring significant funding and permission from the government, the central office decided to postpone their decision until the thirty head abbots gathered for their annual meeting.⁸⁵ Nothing came out of that meeting, however, most likely because of the legal question of jurisdiction—technically, the colonial government, not Korean Buddhism, would decide the matter. Aside from that early conversation, even though individual monks moved to Manchuria and opened small propagation halls, it was not until the early 1930s that Korean Buddhists gave serious attention to establishing propagation halls in Manchuria.

This larger effort had its roots in the events of the late 1920s. In 1925, Japanese Buddhists, as discussed in the previous chapter, hosted an East Asian Buddhist conference in Tokyo meant in part to stimulate Korean and Japanese Buddhist participants to cooperate in organizing events together in colonial Korea. Japanese Buddhists in colonial Korea later announced that they would be hosting a successor conference in 1929 as part of Korea’s Industrial Exhibition. Korean Buddhists felt this was too symbolic: Korean Buddhism would essentially be represented by Japanese Buddhism. As such, they responded by organizing their own conferences. In 1928, they first held a conference for their own propagators in order to develop a training program for effective propagation. This rather small event was followed by a larger Korean Buddhist Sangha meeting in 1929, in which the leaders agreed on an assembly system of governance and drafted detailed bylaws for the governing institution. The bylaws included regulations on propagators. In a follow-up meeting in 1930, the details of the bylaws were passed and published. According to the nineteenth clause of the section on propagation, foreign missions were defined as “referring to an effort to establish propagation halls in foreign countries and an exertion to disseminate Buddhism broadly,”⁸⁶ making it the first time that the concept of a foreign mission came into the institutional vision of Korean Buddhism. (Around the same time, Toh Chinho attended the

84. *Maeil sinbo*, March 30, 1917.

85. *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 16 (July 1919): 69.

86. *Chosŏn pulgyo sŏngyo yanjong che-samhoe chonghoe hoerok*, March 25, 1931, 10.

Pan-Pacific Buddhist Youth Conference held in Honolulu in 1930. Returning to Honolulu the following year, Toh founded a temple called Koryōsōnsa.)⁸⁷

These initial forays into foreign missions notwithstanding, it was the establishment of Manchukuo that had Korean Buddhist leaders clamoring for more. New policies of the colonial government encouraged Koreans to move to Manchukuo, and Korean Buddhism took advantage of this sponsored migration. Even Han Yong'un, who (along with other cultural nationalists) increasingly turned his attention to strengthening Korean nationhood rather than outright anti-Japanese nationalism,⁸⁸ took the expansions of Japan as a golden opportunity to spread Korean Buddhism. In 1932, he wrote an article titled "Request for the Foreign Mission of Korean Buddhism." Han singled out four countries for Korean Buddhist missions: Manchuria, China, India, and America (inclusive of Hawaii). Among them, Han urged Korean Buddhists to prioritize Manchuria.⁸⁹

The Influence of the Spiritual Development Movement

As was the case in Japan and colonial Korea, the Spiritual Development Movement played a major role in helping Korean Buddhism secure a presence in Manchuria. Although Korean monks, including those from the Taegakkyo branch, had settled in Manchuria before the 1930s, the reach and extent of their work was limited. A Korean monk named Mongjōngsaeng estimated in a newspaper article that, before 1930, there had been two hundred temples and three hundred monks in Manchuria; but, he maintained, "with the exception of Kando [of Northeast China], it was after the Manchurian Incident that Korean Buddhism advanced to Manchuria."⁹⁰ Certainly, monks had

87. *Kūmganjō* 20 (December 1932): 64.

88. Lee, "Doubtful National Hero," 36.

89. *Pulgyo* 98 (August 1932): 3.

90. *Sin pulgyo*, December 1943. It was much later, in 1935, that records of Buddhist establishments in Manchuria started to appear in Korean Buddhist journals. Unfortunately, the only Buddhist journal that would have featured news on Korean Buddhism in Manchuria (and Japan) was discontinued from 1933 to 1935. Thus, information about what happened in Manchuria during those years is limited.

moved to Manchuria earlier to serve Korean immigrants there. However, the commencement and spread of the Spiritual Development Movement in Manchuria in 1935 led to a significant increase in the number of Korean Buddhist establishments in Manchuria. In 1935, Kim T'aehŭp started the monthly Buddhist newspaper *Pulgyo sibo* in colonial Korea, whose publication was inspired by the Spiritual Development Movement, and the central institution of Korean Buddhism resumed its own journal in 1937. News on the missionary developments in Manchuria began to flow into colonial Korea starting in 1935, when the movement was in full swing. With an ever-increasing number of Buddhist propagation halls or temples set up in Manchuria, Kim T'aehŭp declared, "We should advance to Manchuria and, for the sake of our fellow Koreans, build temples and establish propagation halls, and thereby expand the lines of propagation."⁹¹ In these two journals, more than thirty temples and propagation halls in Manchuria were featured in articles and advertised. Seventeen student monks of the central Buddhist seminary in Seoul even made an observation trip to Manchuria.⁹²

Among the temples in Manchuria, the most frequently featured in Kim T'aehŭp's newspaper was Kwanŭm Temple in Mukden in north-east China, a branch of the head temple Pomyŏnsa in colonial Korea. Established as a propagation hall in the early 1930s, it shortly outgrew its initial location, and administrators sought a new one. A pious lay Buddhist named Sim Kich'un donated 2,000 yen and received permission from authorities to raise further funds.⁹³ A forty-two-member committee for this project was formed on September 7, 1935, and the vice consul general to the Consulate General in Manchuria, Song Ch'ando, was elected as its president.⁹⁴ Using his political influence, Song negotiated with the city of Mukden to repurpose a former police complex, which had a 2,450-square-foot building on 14,000 square feet of land, at no cost to the organization (the property would have been worth 35,000 yen).⁹⁵ The colonial government of Korea and the Oriental

91. *Pulgyo sibo*, February 19, 1937.

92. *Pulgyo sibo*, December 1, 1935.

93. *Pulgyo sibo*, September 1, 1935.

94. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1935.

95. See *Pulgyo sibo*, April 1, 1936; February 1, 1938. Later, it was also reported to be 14,000 square feet (see *Pulgyo sibo*, January 1, 1943). See also *Tong'a ilbo*, January 18, 1938.

Development Company of Manchuria also participated in the project, donating 2,000 yen and 1,000 yen respectively.⁹⁶ The abbot of the temple was Yi Yun'gŭn, a key player in the Korean Buddhist communities of Manchukuo. A former administrator at Kakhwang Propagation Hall, Yi had also been responsible for erecting a traditional pagoda to house the Buddha's *śarīra* donated by Dharmapala. Yi was one of many Korean monks who made the journey to Manchuria to disseminate Buddhism.

While the Kwanŭm Temple project was under way, Yi wrote an article that echoed themes from Han's 1932 treatise on foreign missions. Yi titled his article "A Call to Advance Korean Buddhism Abroad." He argued that, because Korean Buddhism lacked human and material resources to undertake foreign missions quickly, Korean Buddhists could take a gradual approach. Like Han, Yi also prioritized foreign rather than domestic missions. Understandably, Manchuria was singled out, followed by China, India, and other countries. Manchuria's preeminent position on this list was justified by the substantial Korean presence in the region. Following arguments that other monks in Korea had made about Buddhism being integral to Korean culture and identity, Yi reasoned that Buddhism would be the ideal provider of control and comfort for Manchuria's Korean population. As a top priority, Yi suggested that a bureau to supervise propagation in Manchuria should be set up and that a minister to head it could be nominated. But Yi's ambitions for a global Korean Buddhism were by no means limited to Manchuria. Indeed, Yi noted that Korean emigration to China was increasing, and other religions had either already set up propagation facilities or were planning to establish them soon; Korean Buddhism, he contended, should follow suit. In India, Yi observed that Buddhism was being reimported, and he believed that Korean Buddhists should set up establishments that could join the effort, spreading Korean Buddhism in South Asia while at the same time providing Korean monks with access to India's sacred Buddhist sites.⁹⁷

Kwanŭm Temple was in many ways the first major materialization of this global ambition. On December 17, 1938, the 6,000-yen renovation of the building was completed and a new Buddha image and ritual objects were enshrined. Given the level of investment by the colonial

96. *Tong'a ilbo*, January 18, 1938; *Pulgyo sibo*, February 1, 1938.

97. *Pulgyo sibo*, August 1, 1935.

governments of Korea and Manchukuo, this was not merely the opening of an individual temple. Rather, like Korean Buddhists, the colonial governments saw it as the beginning of a new era of cultural dissemination in the new colony. The Korean Buddhist central institution was also deeply involved, dispatching its foremost preacher, Kim T'aehŭp, to give the keynote talk at the opening ceremony. Pang Hanam and Yi Chong'uk, the spiritual and administrative heads of the Korean Buddhist central institution respectively, were listed in documents as official endorsers of the new temple.⁹⁸ An inauguration ceremony was held with several hundred people, including numerous government officials, in attendance.⁹⁹ From that point on, Kwanŭm Temple was a major head temple for Korean Buddhism in Manchuria. It also served as a communications platform of the colonial government.

When Abbot Yi Yun'gŭn moved to Tianjin, a port city in north-eastern China, to establish the temple Pŏphwasa, he handed over the abbotship of Kwanŭm Temple to Yi Chigwang. A number of the administrators of the Korean Buddhist institution saw him off from colonial Seoul to wish him a successful mission of propagation.¹⁰⁰ When Kwanŭm Temple reopened, Yi Chigwang requested that the Korean Buddhist institution send him a congratulatory letter,¹⁰¹ and, in response, administrator monks Kim Sangho and Yi Kapdŏk from Seoul attended the inauguration ceremony of the temple.¹⁰² However, Yi Chigwang passed away from an unexpected illness, and, in September 1938, Kim T'aehŭp became the acting abbot of the temple.¹⁰³ In accordance with the Regulations on Temples and Shrines, Kim requested permission from the Manchukuo government for his nomination and received it the following year.¹⁰⁴ In the years that followed, Kim frequently gave talks on the Spiritual Development Movement and the National Mobilization Movement at the temple. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, he held a special ceremony commemorating the war dead, which honored primarily Japanese soldiers.¹⁰⁵ From this point on, Kim frequently

98. *Pulgyo sibo*, February 1, 1938.

99. *Pulgyo sibo*, March 1, 1938.

100. *Sin pulgyo* 11 (March 1938): 43.

101. *Sin pulgyo* 11 (March 1938): 44.

102. *Sin pulgyo* 11 (March 1938): 44.

103. *Pulgyo sibo*, September 1, 1938.

104. *Pulgyo sibo*, June 1, 1939.

105. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1939.

visited cities in Manchuria, giving talks at Kwanŭm Temple and other Korean Buddhist temples, as he had done at Korean temples in Japan. Kim emerged as a transnational itinerant preacher. His trips through Manchuria were sponsored by state authorities. He was invited by the Manchukuo government to tour the country along with Korean monks in Manchuria and give talks to promote the imperialization of the populace. Ironically, the Buddhist team he led traveled with the Christian propagation team. In response, he wrote an article in the Buddhist journal *Sin pulgyo* lamenting the popularity of Christianity in Manchuria, with its four hundred churches and tens of thousands of Christians, and called for an aggressive mission by the Korean Buddhist institution to compete with them.¹⁰⁶

Later, in 1940, the Oriental Development Company of Manchuria and Korea invited Kim to Manchuria to visit Korean immigrants' villages, give lectures on the current situation of the country, and promote the Spiritual Development Movement.¹⁰⁷ As a leading propagator, Kim did not distinguish between the movement and the Buddhist mission to Manchuria.¹⁰⁸ In 1942 and 1943, he was invited by the same government authorities and company to tour the country for a month with the same purpose.¹⁰⁹ In May 1942, Kim also gave a talk celebrating the implementation of the National Service Draft Ordinance.¹¹⁰ As a result of the close relationship between the temple and the colonial government, Kwanŭm Temple prospered. In 1942, it added a mortuary,¹¹¹ a hall for the Ten Kings (of the Underworld), a chanting hall, and a Seven Star hall. It also expanded its office space, meditation halls, and residential accommodations, projects that all together totaled some 20,000 yen in expenses.¹¹² By 1943, Kwanŭm Temple was equipped to be a completely functioning temple complex. It was the largest Korean Buddhist temple in Manchuria.

While Korean Buddhism focused most of its efforts on Manchuria, it had an eye on China as well, establishing a number of temples and

106. "P'ogyo chōndo e kwanhaya" (*Sin pulgyo* 45 [February 1943]: 16–17).

107. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1940; December 1, 1940.

108. *Pulgyo sibo*, November 1, 1940.

109. *Pulgyo sibo*, December 1, 1942.

110. *Pulgyo sibo*, June 1, 1942.

111. *Pulgyo sibo*, May 1, 1942.

112. *Pulgyo sibo*, September 1, 1942; January 1, 1943.

propagation halls there. Yi Yun'gün made good on his earlier article exhorting a global vision for Korean Buddhist missions. After his early involvement with Kwanŭmsa, Yi continued on to found other propagation halls in Manchuria and Jinan, China. Unlike propagation halls that attended primarily to Koreans, however, Yi's temple in Jinan offered programs for the local Chinese. Here, he founded a school called the Great Compassion School (Taeja hakkyo), hiring a Japanese teacher to give classes in Japanese language, Japanese history, and math. The school took in forty Chinese children in whom "pro-Japanese consciousness" could be inculcated.¹¹³ In addition to Yi's efforts, another Korean monk, Kim Kyöngbong, set out to build a propagation hall in the city of Beijing in 1940. Kim organized an association to oversee the building project and invited Kim T'aehŭp to serve on the committee.¹¹⁴ However, neither the success of Yi's and Kim's establishments nor the exact number of propagation halls or temples built in mainland China are known owing to a lack of primary sources. Most likely, the further advance of Korean Buddhist missions there was hindered as the war in China intensified.

The Role of Lay Buddhists

Although propagation halls or temples in Manchuria and elsewhere received financial support from the government, by and large they were sustained through the generous donations of lay Buddhists. For example, in the case of Kwanŭm Temple, figures like Sim Kich'un and Song Ch'ando donated large amounts of money and exerted their influence in business and local government to benefit the temple. Likewise, the devout Buddhist Paek Yönggi donated 6,000 yen of his own money to help a Korean monk open Pöhyön Temple in Mudanjiang, Manchukuo.¹¹⁵ Countless female members supported temples with small donations, including a young woman who, before she died, donated 100 yen she had saved.¹¹⁶ Although the initial establishment of these temples relied heavily on the monetary and administrative support of

113. *Pulgyo sibo*, June 1, 1940.

114. *Pulgyo sibo*, August 15, 1940.

115. *Pulgyo sibo*, November 1, 1939.

116. *Pulgyo sibo*, January 1, 1940.

government authorities, the day-to-day operations and expansion of temples relied on the often small donations of their members.

As with the halls in Korea and Japan, Kwanŭm Temple established a women's association and offered modern programs such as Sunday school for children, regular Dharma talks, meditation, chanting sessions, and weddings. These programs were often the basis for lay Buddhists' involvement in the halls. A thirty-five-year-old member of Kwanŭmsa, Han Sosun, for example, sent a testimonial to the Buddhist newspaper *Pulgyo sibo* that Kim T'aehŭp published in colonial Korea. Introducing herself as an ardent reader of the newspaper, she shares the story of her fifteen-year-old son's illness. Originally from Seoul, Han moved to Mukden along with her husband and son to make a new life for themselves. However, her son, Kilho, suddenly got sick. Medicines proved ineffective, and his condition worsened. One day, two Korean Christian missionaries visited her and recommended that she convert to Christianity and have her son baptized. They promised that, if he should survive, he would heal, but, if he had to die, he would go to heaven. She wrote that she was offended, "since I am a Buddhist who is a member of the Kwanŭmsa." Nonetheless, her faith was not strong enough to overcome her doubts, and she did not know what to do. Her ailing son suddenly sat up and yelled, "Since our family believes in Buddhism, go away and don't play such tricks!" Then he started to chant the name of Avalokiteśvara, supplicating the Buddhist deity to treat his illness. Han wrote that, after many days of praying and chanting, the deity intervened and eventually healed her son's illness.¹¹⁷ For devout lay Buddhists like Han, the opportunity to participate in devotional activities and to cultivate a better understanding of Buddhism consolidated their Buddhist identity and turned them into key supporters of their temple or propagation hall.

In another case, when the first abbot of Kwanŭm Temple, Yi Yun'gŭn, moved to Tianjin to establish a new temple, a pious female Buddhist, Chŏng Sunyŏng, sorry that there was no Buddhist temple in Tianjin, donated several thousand yen of her own money. Along with donations from others, they opened the temple. When the temple moved to a new site, another female member, Kim Unhyang, who became the president of the temple women's association, worked with Chŏng to

117. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1939.

make the transition financially possible.¹¹⁸ The indefatigable Yi sought to establish another propagation center in Jinan. Again, two female members of his first temple, Pang Yōngbok and Pak Ch'angsuk, donated 4,000 and 1,000 yen respectively.¹¹⁹ Many other propagation halls were established under similar circumstances in the cities of Manchukuo.¹²⁰ Lay Korean Buddhists in Manchukuo were generous and eager to have religious establishments of their own.

Relationship to the Manchukuo State

Although it is not clear whether all new temples received official permission from the Manchukuo government, those who applied were approved without difficulty. Although the Korean Buddhist propagation halls in Manchukuo, like those in imperial Japan, lacked a fully developed legal framework for official recognition, the Manchukuo government welcomed the establishment of Korean Buddhist facilities, particularly at the peak period of the political slogan "Manchuria and Korea as One Body" (Sen-Man ittai). Thus, just as Japanese Buddhists were able to build temples in colonial Korea but not in Japan, Korean Buddhists were allowed to establish places of worship in Manchuria although they could not build temples in colonial Korea or propagation halls in Japan. The discourse of propagation followed and was institutionally enabled by colonization, as state authorities directed Buddhist institutions to participate in their programs of cultural engineering.

Even though there was no immediate threat to their continuance, Korean propagation halls and temples did their best to ensure that their facilities fully supported the state mobilization movement and

118. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1938.

119. *Pulgyo sibo*, March 1, 1940.

120. Among them are the Songnimsa in Jinlin in 1935, the Kwangdōgsa in Mudanjiang in 1937; the Wōn'gaksa in Shanchenzhen and the Chungang Propagation Hall in Jiandao, both in 1938; the Kwangbōpsa in Fushun, the Wōn'gaksa in Mukden, the Pohūngsa in Longjing, and the Pohyōnsa in Shinkyō, all in 1939; the Wōnsōngsa in Jiandao, the Ilgwangsa in Yanji, the Nūnginsa in Jiandao, and the Popchōngsa in Mudanjiang, all in 1940; the Kwanūmsa and the Yōngmyōngsa in Jiandao, the Haegwangsa in Mudanjiang, the Buddhist propagation hall in Dalian, the Yōngmyōngsa in Xijing, and the Kūmgang Buddhist Center in Harbin, all in 1941; and the Kyerimsa in Jinlin in 1942.

war efforts. Dharma talks on the Spiritual Development and National Mobilization movements, rituals and commemorations for the war dead, and donations for the war effort were a staple of temple operations.

In spite of the generally liberal attitude toward Korean Buddhist propagation in Manchuria, the colonial government of Manchukuo did not approve every request. Not only were the usual antisuperstition measures enforced in Manchuria, but the harsh crackdown on superstitious religions in colonial Korea in 1935 also spilled over into Manchuria, especially for branches whose headquarters were in colonial Korea. For example, the colonial government forced Korean monk Paek Yongsŏng's somewhat unorthodox Taegakkyo community in Mukden to shut down. Although a number of its members traveled to the colonial government office in Seoul to protest, their request was rebuffed. The Taegakkyo propagation hall in Mukden managed to reopen and survive by supporting Japan's total war,¹²¹ but this crackdown was a clear warning to other Korean monks in Manchuria.

As the number of monks and temples grew, some monks in Manchuria, like those in Japan, felt it necessary to establish regional associations to advocate for the needs of Korean Buddhist communities in a more organized way. These associations were also formed in response to a general meeting of the Manchukuo government's national Buddhist body, the General Association of Buddhism, in April 1939. Held at the Panya Temple in Xinjing, the general meeting set out to create an institutional system to regulate Buddhism—inclusive of Japanese, Korean, and Chinese lineages—in Manchukuo. Later in 1939, sixty Korean monks attended a Sangha meeting in Jiandao to organize so they could represent themselves at future meetings of the General Association of Buddhism. They also discussed becoming a branch of the Korean Buddhist central institution in Seoul. The abbot of Pohŭngsa, Yi Haedam, and the abbot of the Taegakkyo temple, Ch'oe Kijŏng, organized the meeting with the sponsorship of the abbot of the Sŏtōshū branch temple in Jiandao. Monks in Longjing also held a gathering to

121. The Taegakkyo preacher Ch'oe Kijŏng in Mukden attended a Sangha gathering on April 8, 1939 (*Pulgyo sibo*, August 1, 1939), and also attended an event held on April 1, 1941, at the Korean temple Yŏngmyŏngsa in Xinjing, the capital of Manchukuo, to erect two monuments in commemoration of soldiers who died in battle and to pray for them. Also in attendance were Japanese Buddhist leaders and military and government officials (*Pulgyo sibo*, June 15, 1941).

discuss a number of issues ranging from regulations for temples and monks, to relations between head and branch temples, rituals, propagation, programs benefiting the nation, and so on.¹²² As the colonial government of Manchukuo became more firmly established in Manchuria, it was no longer enough simply to support the imperial program. Korean Buddhism found it necessary to organize itself to safeguard its continued existence and influence in the region.

Korean Buddhism in Manchuria and the Central Institution

The central institution of Korean Buddhism was aware of the increasing activity of Korean Buddhists in Manchukuo. These were the efforts of individual monks and head temples, and were not the result of efforts by the central institution itself. However, the situation changed in the 1930s. Not only did the central institution seek to unify these Manchurian propagation halls under its administrative umbrella, but it considered enacting propagation directly. Soon after Manchukuo was formally established in 1932, the Korean Buddhist institution made its first official connection with the puppet state. A more substantial institutional relationship began around 1938, during the peak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. This relationship continued to build, culminating in the visit of the administrative head of the Korean Buddhist institution, Yi Chong'uk, in 1942, which brought Korean Buddhism in Manchuria to the forefront of the institution's agenda.

By this time, the central institution was called the Chogye Order, and it had greater control over colonial Korean Buddhism as well as greater self-determination granted by the colonial government. Yi Chong'uk traveled to Manchuria to attend the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Manchukuo. He was also there to attend the Conference of Buddhism in Manchuria, which was ancillary to the main event.¹²³ After his grand tour of Manchuria, Yi returned to Seoul with details on the state of Buddhism in Manchukuo in general and on Korean Buddhism in particular. Based on all that he observed during his trip, Yi concluded that the Chogye Order should bring Korean

122. *Pulgyo sibo*, August 1, 1939.

123. *Sin pulgyo* 42 (November 1942): 11.

Buddhist establishments in Manchuria under its control. His report, given as a talk at a major meeting on September 29, 1942, to the abbots of the thirty-one head temples and later published in the denominational journal, is a significant historical document. It provides an excellent survey of Korean Buddhism in Manchuria at the time as well as the Korean Buddhist institutional response. It also documents a sea change in the life of modern Korean Buddhism, the moment when it truly came into its own as a modernized religion. Yi opens by highlighting how the Manchukuo government has been supportive of Buddhism and generous, both administratively and financially, to monastics. As an example, Yi recounts that the prime minister of the Manchukuo government had donated 600,000 yen to build the Bore Temple, which became one of the most prominent monasteries of the region, housing 1,200 monastics. Yi then observes that many Korean immigrants in Manchukuo tend to turn to Korean Buddhism, speculating that Korean Buddhism's cultural and linguistic familiarity (versus that of, say, Christianity) offered them solace in a foreign land. He showcases the work of Yi Yongjo, a monk, medical doctor, and Buddhist missionary who serves as an ideal model for young Buddhist missionary monks. Originally from Haein Temple, Yi Yongjo graduated from Tokyo Medical School and also studied and worked at the Keijō Imperial Medical Center. In 1932, he was appointed by the colonial government to serve as a doctor for the families of the diplomats and Korean residents in Jinlin, Manchukuo, and, soon after Manchukuo was established, he, along with his wife, Ham Yisun, opened the Jinlin Clinic.¹²⁴ The clinic cost 20,000 yen and may have been sponsored by the colonial government and the Manchukuo government.¹²⁵ In addition to his medical work, however, Yi was also active in a number of associations in the Korean immigrant community. In 1941, in concert with a number of other monks, Yi established the Association of Korean Buddhism in Jinlin,¹²⁶ and he turned it into the Kyerim Temple in 1942.¹²⁷ Yi Chong'uk praises Yi Yongjo, who not only built a Buddhist temple, Kyerimsa, to disseminate the religion in Manchukuo, but was also socially engaged and served as a medical doctor. Yi Chong'uk

124. *Kūmgangjō* 21 (1933): 39.

125. *Pulgyo sibo*, November 1, 1936; *Maeil sinbo*, October 21, 1943.

126. *Sin pulgyo* 29 (May 1941): 79.

127. *Pulgyo sibo*, October 1, 1942.

considered Kyerim Temple to be a new type of temple in which two styles of Buddhism, Korean and Manchurian, were harmonized: the resident monks of the temple concentrated their daily lives on propagation and meditation in the Korean fashion, and their temple members took charge of the financial and administrative operation of the temple in the Manchurian fashion.¹²⁸

Toward the end of his talk, Yi Chong'uk said that, like Japanese Buddhist sects in Manchuria, the Chogye Order would need to set up an administrative department to regulate and control Korean Buddhism in Manchuria and beyond. He said that all people of influence that he met, from Yanchi to Jilin to Xinjing, had consistently shared the view that it would be necessary to establish a special head temple in Manchuria and had expressed the "hope that our [Chogye] order would advance [to Manchuria] as soon as possible." Yi proposed Jilin as the ideal location for such a temple, since 80 percent of the 1.5 million Koreans in Manchuria were concentrated in that city, and 80 percent of the 80 Korean Buddhist temples, 300 monks, and 40,000 to 50,000 Buddhists were in the same province.¹²⁹

A Japanese colonial government administrator who had accompanied Yi to Manchuria, Shinppō Chōji, also presented his thoughts at this meeting. In a general overview of the religious situation and policies in Manchuria, Shinppō noted that there was one regulation pertaining to all religions, recognized and pseudoreligious alike. However, there was a distinction in managing these traditions: the Department of People's Livelihood (Minsaengbu) regulated recognized religions such as Shintō, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Islam, and Judaism, whereas the Department of Public Safety (Ch'ianbu) regulated pseudoreligions. In addition to these legal administrative bodies, the state's General Association of Buddhism in Manchuria operated as an umbrella organ for Buddhism, and both Shinppō and Yi Chong'uk had attended one of the association's meetings on their trip. Shinppō claimed that the association acted as a bridge between Buddhist communities of all ethnicities and the government. For example, the association's president was a Manchu monk, and the vice president was a Japanese priest.¹³⁰

128. *Sin pulgyo* 42 (November 1942): 2–5.

129. *Sin pulgyo* 42 (November 1942): 2–5.

130. *Sin pulgyo* 42 (November 1942): 2–5.

Shinppō also explained the policy on Buddhism in settlement villages. The basic rule was that one Buddhist establishment could be set up in each village—specifically, a Korean Buddhist facility could be set up in Korean villages, a Japanese temple in Japanese villages, and so on. But, in spite of the opportunities for expansion, Shinppō could not help expressing his disappointment in the Korean monks he had seen. Most of them, he lamented, were nothing more than street beggars, of little quality or status by Korean standards. In addition, there was no center or temple to supervise and develop them, or to train new monks. Of five major monasteries in Manchukuo empowered to train new monastics, none was affiliated with Korean Buddhism. Thus, it was urgent for Korean Buddhists to found a special monastery that could oversee, educate, and produce monastics. He estimated that such a project might cost 80,000 yen and announced that the Manchukuo government was considering offering 50,000 yen to that end if the central administration of the Chogye Order could raise the remaining amount. If the project proceeded, he promised to collaborate with Korean Buddhist leaders. He closed his talk by exhorting everyone to make his or her utmost effort to “advance Korean Buddhism in Manchuria.”¹³¹

In response to Shinppō’s talk, Yi Chong’uk promised the Buddhist leaders that his office would collaborate with the governments in colonial Korea and Manchuria to establish a controlling organ, like a head temple, for the more than eighty Korean temples in Manchuria and to install a supervisor of the missions there. This head temple would be able not only to oversee and police monastics, but also to train and ordain novices. He assured his fellow monks that, if the project were accomplished, “the issue of the Korean Buddhist Chogye Order’s advancement to Manchuria would be automatically resolved.”¹³²

Later, in a roundtable discussion on propagation, Buddhist propagators shared their experiences and their suggestions for the institution. At the discussion, a propagator monk lamented the state of programs in Manchuria, where the missions were “especially lagging behind.” Yi Chong’uk fully agreed, but he was confident that, in addition to enacting regulations for propagation, a training body could

131. *Chogyejongbo*, November 1942, 14–16.

132. *Chogyejongbo*, November 1942, 18–19.

soon be realized. Among many suggestions, including elevating the status of propagators, establishing social welfare and education programs, and making full use of state programs such as the Spiritual Development Movement, the centralization of propagation was set forth as the most pressing issue. All present agreed that, rather than leaving the matter to individual head temples, the Chogye Order's Great Head Temple should set up a permanent training program for propagators and administer all the relevant matters.¹³³

Buddhist Governmentality and Propagation

In 1943, the Chogye Order announced regulations on propagation and officially brought all propagation halls under the control of the Great Head Temple, now called T'aegosa. The colonial government approved these new regulations. All matters from opening, moving, or closing a new propagation hall to nominating, training, and firing propagators fell under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of the Chogye Order, Pang Hanam, who was also the abbot of T'aego Temple. What made the regulations powerful was a clause specifically relevant to propagation halls abroad. According to clause 7, the regulations placed "all necessary matters relevant to the propagation of our own religion in areas outside of Korea" under the determination of the patriarch.¹³⁴ In sum, this clause provided a legal framework through which propagation halls in Manchuria and Japan would be placed under the supervision of the Chogye Order.

Under these regulations, the Chogye Order quickly instituted a centralized exam to certify propagators.¹³⁵ Those who were interested applied and took the test. After the exam process was complete, the scholar-monk Kwön Sangno, who was on the evaluation committee, wrote an article titled "Upon Finishing the Qualification Exam for Propagator." His article reveals how the discourse of propagation had fully matured in the Korean Buddhist institution. He begins by making a definitive claim: "Our task is only to propagate [our religion]; it is not only so in the present, but it was so in the past. Not only in the

133. *Sin pulgyo* 49 (June 1943): 38.

134. *Chogyejongbo*, November 1942, 20.

135. Sôtōshū had a similar event in Korea. *Sin pulgyo* 27 (November 1940): 46.

past; it also had been so at the time when the Buddha expounded on his teachings on Mt. Yōngch'uk [Vulture Peak].¹³⁶ Thus, he pronounces, “propagation symbolizes our very life and vocation,” and “what is most deficient in Korean Buddhism is propagation work.” But he makes a clear distinction between propagation and the qualifications necessary to become a propagator. It went without saying, for Kwōn, that every monastic should propagate, but a propagator is one who is qualified to represent what an ideal monastic should be and to become a leader for the populace. This is why, he explains, a special exam was necessary to select only the most eligible monks for the position. Although there were just a small number of applicants who were qualified enough to pass the exam with ease, this exam would, he argues, produce propagators of the Chogye Order who could take up the task wherever they went.¹³⁷

Conclusion

Of all the transnational forces that transformed Korean Buddhism into a modernizing religion, propagation was one of the most significant. Propagation led Korean monastics to establish centers in urban areas, truly moving Korean Buddhism from the mountains to the cities. The effort to broaden Buddhism's reach into society pushed the somewhat reclusive tradition to develop preaching methods relevant to the laity; to find new ways of teaching; to set up programs that met the needs of new members, such as kindergartens and weddings; and to create women's associations.

Korean Buddhist propagation was put into high gear when the colonial government needed a conduit through which it could implement the Spiritual Development Movement on a large scale in the 1930s. Korean Buddhism and the state found a mutually beneficial arrangement in which the Buddhist tradition became paired with the movement.

Indeed, to disseminate the principles of the movement, the state provided Korean Buddhists with material and social capital as well as public platforms for teaching—resources that Korean Buddhists themselves would have been unlikely to muster in such a short period. The

136. This is believed to be a key site where the Buddha gave sermons. See the term “Grdhrakutaparvata” in Buswell and Lopez's *Princeton Dictionary*, 327.

137. *Sin pulgyo* 63 (August 1944): 4–7.

movement intensified the urge Korean Buddhists felt to propagate, to missionize in the same way Christians and Japanese Buddhists were doing. The movement also contributed to popularizing the concept among Buddhist monastics, increasing the number of propagation halls, improving the social and institutional status of propagators, and expanding the Korean Buddhist vision for propagation to foreign and even global missions. Korean Buddhists expanded on opportunities presented by the state authorities to modernize and to undertake new institutional and governmentalizing projects. Toward the end of the colonial period, Korean Buddhism had emerged, through its concerted efforts in propagation and advancing the Spiritual Development Movement, as a colonizing force in Manchuria and beyond. Thus, the establishment of Korean Buddhist missions in Manchuria was a watershed moment for the modernization of Korean Buddhism. Ultimately, it was both the state's aspirations for Korean Buddhism—its faith that Korean Buddhism would be an effective partner in the colonial project—as well as Korean Buddhists' own efforts that transformed Korean Buddhism from its premodern marginalized status into a centralized, powerful, modern religion.

Conclusion

The central argument of this book has been that the Korean Buddhism of the colonial era can be best understood from a transnational perspective, as the material culture, practice, and institutional and religious identity of colonial Korean Buddhism developed through interactions with global ideas and forces.

Revisiting Historiography

In order to explain how the transnationality of modern Korean Buddhism can help illuminate our understanding of colonial Korean Buddhism, I would like to revisit the debate between Cho Sungtaek and Kim Kwangsik reviewed in the introduction to this volume. Cho has critiqued Kim's version of modern Korean Buddhism on the basis that he is too focused on the Chogye Order's nationalist origins and history, at the expense of a more objective and complex picture of colonial Korean Buddhism. Cho instead proposes that Korean Buddhists found themselves facing a "dilemma" in the colonial period. After centuries of marginalization under a neo-Confucian state, Korean Buddhism suddenly had a colonial government that was itself supportive of Buddhism. The sight of well-respected Japanese priests arriving with money, education, institutional support, and, most important, state backing was impressive to Korean Buddhist monastics at the time. Even as Korean Buddhists felt conflicted about the colonization of their homeland by an old enemy, they took modern Japanese Buddhism

as a model for the future of Korean Buddhism. As such, Korean Buddhists experienced an inevitable dilemma, and it was often not clear which priority—political or Buddhist—should determine how Korean Buddhism would engage with the Japanese. Hence, Korean Buddhists' feelings about Japan's colonial rule and Japanese Buddhism vacillated among envy, self-comparison, emulation, cooperation, admiration, and rejection, as has been discussed in this book. Cho points out that, from this perspective, Kim's ethnocentric historiography falls short of addressing the ambivalence and internal conflict that many Buddhist leaders felt in their efforts to preserve and renovate Korean Buddhism.

Kim's criticism of Cho's "dilemma" is that it does not present "a view of history" but serves as a "dainty modifier." This critique is based on the idea that Korean Buddhists under Japanese colonial rule were obligated to adopt a mode of behavior either geared toward saving the Korean nation or not. According to Kim's approach, Korean Buddhists' legacies are to be judged by whether they resisted or collaborated with the colonizer; there can be no narrative without considering political nationalism. For Kim, Cho's "dilemma" is insufficient and undermines the patriotic, nationalist basis embodied by the Chogye Order.

The cases in this book may further the discussion of how to think about colonial Korean Buddhism and its legacy. I would like to offer three ideas, drawn from the chapters here, that have been implicit in the recent work of scholars but not explicitly addressed.

First, much of the historiography of the colonial period assumes a relatively distinct and autonomous Korean Buddhism onto which Japanese Buddhist ideas and practices were imposed or adopted. This conceit presents a postwar Korean Buddhism shedding foreign impositions and returning to a more native form. The stories in the preceding chapters, however, give us a picture of a Korean Buddhism that was indelibly and irrevocably transformed not only by Japanese Buddhism but by the colonial government as well. As such, the history of modern Korean Buddhism necessitates fully integrating Japanese Buddhism and the colonial state into the narrative. The transnational framework demands that we understand Buddhism in colonial Korea through a discussion of both Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism taken together; modern Korean Buddhism cannot be separated from modern Japanese Buddhism and vice versa. For seven decades, from the late 1870s to 1945, the two Buddhisms shared the same space in the land of

colonial Korea, and both were influenced by the same global forces. Thousands of Japanese Buddhist priests lived in Korea, serving members of hundreds of temples and propagation halls dispersed throughout colonial Korea. Though mainly focused on the immigrant community, Japanese priests, lay Buddhist leaders, and government officials nonetheless formed relationships with Korean Buddhists in Korea and abroad. Likewise, hundreds of Korean monastics traveled through Japan's metropole and its empire, bringing modern knowledge and practice back to Korea while at the same time having some impact on the views and actions of Japanese Buddhists as well. The Japanese Buddhist paradigm, which was a distinctively Japanized version of Buddhist modernity, was so decisive—more so than the Christian paradigm—in affecting all aspects of modern Korean Buddhism that the modernity of Korean Buddhism cannot be adequately explained without integrating Japan into the discussion.

Second, the historiography of colonial Korean Buddhism generally suggests that the state exerted its influence through its proxy, Japanese Buddhism. The historical examples explored in this book reveal that the colonial government itself was *directly* involved in modernizing Korean Buddhism. The government recognized that Buddhism was one of the most compelling common denominators of the citizens of its East Asian empire and was indispensable capital for colonial and imperial governmentality. Thus, the government was instrumental in localizing transnational Buddhist ideas in colonial Korea, as in the cases of the Koryō Canon, the Buddha's Birthday Festival, the construction of the great head temple T'aegosa, and Korean Buddhism's domestic and foreign missions. The state and Buddhists often worked seamlessly together to accomplish their secular cum religious visions. The state's approach to Korean Buddhism enabled Korean Buddhists to play a significant role in the realms of politics, culture, and religion despite their relatively marginal demographic status. Korean Buddhism, in turn, helped solidify the colonial and imperial vision. Toward the end of the colonial period, Korean Buddhism emerged as an apparatus of the state itself in its missions to Manchuria. From the late 1930s on, Korean Buddhism became a kind of colonized colonizer. As such, despite being under colonial rule, Korean Buddhists also adopted a colonial gaze toward other Asian countries.

Third, the need to modernize was of the utmost importance to Korean Buddhism. Without modernizing, Korean Buddhists believed,

their religion would become irrelevant or, worse, extinct. Consequently, Korean monastics would pursue modernization by any effective means, even cooperating with the state or adopting the methods of Japanese Buddhism. They believed that Japanese Buddhism had already accomplished much of what they wanted for themselves: a powerful institution, political clout, elite societal status, large lay memberships, and broader interaction with the populace. Their endeavors to bring in innovative ideas and programs propelled Korean Buddhists toward willingly engaging with their colonizers and being open to modern ideas and movements.

These three points, if further explored and integrated into scholarship, will be instrumental in better locating the shifting associations and disassociations between Japanese and Korean Buddhists and in scrutinizing the dilemma faced by Korean monks more closely. Indeed, it could be that Korean Buddhism faced not so much a dilemma between Buddhism and nation as a polylemma—the need to negotiate to secure the interests of oneself, one’s family, one’s temple, one’s Buddhism, and one’s nation as well as to form relationships with other Buddhists, to fulfill obligations to the state, and so forth. This is not to say that a polylemmic approach should be allowed to obscure the anticolonial resistance that framed much of Korean Buddhists’ thought and behavior. The political dimension, the ways colonial Korean Buddhists did or did not advance the cause of nationalism for the country, is integral to understanding this history. As such, it is essential to give due place to the deep suffering, shame, and displacement caused by Japan’s colonization of Korea as well as to the power of memories and narratives about this experience for the inheritors of postcolonial Korean Buddhism.

One of the reasons that Cho’s and Kim’s perspectives seem irreconcilable is that we may have been defining the parameters and borders of the debate too narrowly. If we broaden the perspective, stepping back to take a transnational view, we provide space for both views to have validity and greater texture. The transnational perspective also reduces the problems created by setting up Japanese Buddhism as a monolithic villain. It recognizes that Japanese Buddhism itself was a product of transnational dynamics, just as was the case for Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Tibetan, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese, Thai, and other Buddhisms. Each Buddhism was influenced by Christianity, modern ideas about centralized institutions and governmentality, the call to propagation,

Buddhist nationalism, and core transcultural ideas such as *unsui*, text veneration, and the Buddha's Birthday Festival; and these regional forms of Buddhism in turn influenced one another. Indeed, scholarship on the Buddhisms of many of the aforementioned countries is increasingly moving toward understanding them in a transnational framework. As scholars revise their history of colonial Korean Buddhism from this more interconnected perspective, a rich and insightful conversation can take place with the scholars of other regional Buddhisms to begin mapping the complex networks through which these Buddhisms shaped and reshaped each other.

By way of conclusion, I want to share what happened with each of my six case studies after the colonial period, from 1945 up to the present day. We often think of colonial Korean Buddhism as being distinct from the postcolonial period following it. But, by tracing the narrative of these six cases from the colonial to the postcolonial era, we see that there is far more continuity than discontinuity in the ways Korean Buddhism responds to the state, implements governmentality and missionary efforts, exerts a Buddhist nationalism, and participates in transnational discourse.

Bifurcation of Korean Buddhism

After the defeat of Japan in the Pacific War, the Soviet Union occupied Korea in the north and the United States took over the south. When the joint trusteeship failed in 1948, the two superpowers established opposing governments according to their own political and economic ideologies, cutting the peninsula in two. This caused Korean Buddhism to be bisected as well. North Korea now held 9 out of the 31 head temples, 518 of the 1,200 temples (43 percent), and 732 of the 8,000 Korean monks and nuns (9 percent).¹ These temples along with Japanese temples and other religious establishments were turned into educational and military training facilities for the communist revolution. The first leader of North Korea, Kim Il-sung (1912–94), confiscated their lands as part of the sweeping land reform in 1946 (a fate that also befell Chinese Buddhism during Mao's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s).² It appears

1. Yi Chiböm, "Pukhan pulgyo."

2. Cho Söngnyöl, "Pukhan pulgyo," 30–32.

that Buddhist monastics were powerless to resist and were absorbed into political organizations. The physical presence of Buddhism all but disappeared from North Korea.

In the 1980s, in response to international pressure and for the purposes of propaganda, the North Korean government constitutionally (though only nominally) recognized freedom of religion, rebuilt dozens of temples, and assigned monks to take care of them. As of today, the North boasts that it has 60 temples, 300 monks (no nuns!), and 10,000 lay members.³ Despite the regime's habit of buttressing its legitimacy through anti-Japanese and anticolonial rhetoric, it adopted the practices of clerical marriage and unshaved heads, considered by many to be a Japanized form of Korean Buddhism from the colonial era. Like the majority of colonial Korean monks, the monks in North Korea today are married and do not shave their heads. They do not live at their temples as South Korean monks do but commute to the temples from their homes. Their primary task is to cater to domestic and foreign tourists. The institutional representation of North Korean Buddhism, Chobullyŏn (the Association of Chosŏn Buddhism), tries to participate in international Buddhist conferences and collaborative efforts. However, as the association is an organ of the Community Party, all the members of the Chobullyŏn belong by default to the Workers' Party. As such, North Korea's Buddhist institution is completely subsumed by the state and shows no visible signs of Buddhist agency.

In the past thirty years, there have been a handful of interactions between the Buddhist leaderships of the two countries when diplomatic relations momentarily thawed. The Chogyŏ Order of South Korea contributed financially to rebuilding a former head temple, Sin'gyesa, a project that was completed in 2004. Two Buddhist monks, Pŏpt'a (1946–present)⁴ and Pŏmnyun (1953–present),⁵ have been involved in humanitarian activities in North Korea, especially in response to the devastating famines in the 1990s that claimed over a million North Korean lives. This sporadic contact notwithstanding, Buddhism in North Korea from the 1950s onward largely disappeared from the overall discussion of Korean Buddhism. For this reason, postcolonial

3. Cho Sŏngnyŏl, "Pukhan pulgyo," 38.

4. For more details on Pŏpt'a's work for North Korea, see Senécal's "Buddhists in the Two Koreas."

5. For more details on Pŏmnyun, see Pori Park's "New Visions."

Korean Buddhism is considered to be synonymous with the Buddhism of South Korea.

If Korean Buddhism in North Korea was overtaken by the communist paradigm, Buddhism in South Korea witnessed the rise of a Christian and United States–normative paradigm. The occupation by the United States and the installation of South Korea’s postcolonial state structure changed the landscape from one that was favorable to Buddhism to one that was favorable to Christianity. Many Japanese properties, including religious facilities, were preferentially given to Christian groups. For instance, the Higashi Hongan Temple complex in Seoul was donated to a Christian university. Even many Japanese Buddhist establishments that had initially been handed over to Korean Buddhist monks shortly after World War II ended were later confiscated by Christian communities and the government. Hakubun Temple, which was built as a memorial to Itō Hirobumi in 1932, as discussed in chapter 5, was turned into a government asset.⁶

During the colonial period, Korean and Japanese Buddhists felt threatened by the increasing influence of Christianity. The colonial government itself, composed of many Buddhists, kept Christianity’s growth in check in part because it, too, considered Christianity to be a potential problem for colonial rule. The colonial government gave Korean Buddhism preferential treatment because it saw that Korean Buddhism had great potential to further the aims of the state. Because of this, Korean Buddhist leaders enjoyed a relatively hegemonic status politically, culturally, and ideologically. That privilege evaporated with the end of Japanese colonialism and the installment of a Christian-centered government. The first commanders of the US occupation forces, General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) in Japan and Lieutenant General John Hodge (1893–1963) in Korea, declared that their vision for a new Japan and Korea was one of Christian countries.⁷ The three key political figures vying for leadership in South Korea, Kim Ku (1876–1949), Syngman Rhee (1875–1965), and Cho Mansik (1883–1950), were devout Christians who shared the same vision as the US commanders. This shift from a pro-Buddhist to a pro-Christian orientation intensified as Rhee, the first president of South Korea and a devout

6. Pak Sŭnggil, “Migunjŏng,” 77–78; An Chongch’ŏl, “Singminji hugi Pangmunsa,” 67–93; Kim Chaedŭk, “Migunjŏnggi-Changmyŏn chŏngbu,” 92–93.

7. See Moore, *Soldier of God*.

Methodist, took office and filled the majority of his cabinet positions with Christian pastors educated in the United States.⁸ Even though two Buddhist monks, Paek Söng'uk and Kim Pömnin, served in high-ranking cabinet positions in Rhee's government, they were overshadowed by the majority of Christian politicians. These politicians, along with many other Christians in the government, enjoyed linguistic fluency in English, which replaced Japanese as the lingua franca of post-colonial Korea. In other words, Korean Buddhist leaders, many of whom had been educated in Japan, now found themselves in a completely different religious and political dynamic in the Christian-centered, English-favored postcolonial state.

Korean Buddhism's Reliance on the State

Despite this paradigm shift, Korean Buddhists' reliance on the state government did not dissipate, even though the government was dominated by Christians. As soon as Korea gained independence from Japan, Buddhist leaders nullified both the 1911 Temple Ordinance and the existing great head temple system, not to mention the denominational title itself. The fledgling postwar government, however, ignored the decision and did not change the fundamentals of the Temple Ordinance, keeping the great head temple and head priest system. As a result, the great head temple T'aegosa (whose name was changed to Chogye Temple in 1954) continued to serve as the headquarters for Korean Buddhism. Under this framework, Buddhist monastics strove to hammer out a new institutional structure for Korean Buddhism while they vied for leadership positions. To reach this new institutional goal, they sought favor with the government. Just as Korean Buddhists during the colonial period capitalized on the state's Spiritual Mobilization Movement to establish a great head temple that heralded a centralized body, postcolonial Korean Buddhist leaders also benefited from the anti-Japanese and anticommunist movements in ousting opposing factions in sectarian leadership and guaranteeing the executive power of the head priest.

8. Sørensen, "Attitude of the Japanese Colonial Government" and "Buddhism and Secular Power," 132; Park Pori, *Trial and Error*; Hong Yonggi, "Evangelicals," 207.

Just like the colonial government before it, the new South Korean government would not relinquish control of one crucial power: the ability to regulate temple assets. The colonial law on preserving traditional temples had not been repealed despite repeated demands by the Buddhist central office. The colonial legacy persisted. For example, the postcolonial administrations considered regulating and preserving cultural properties and treasures, including the Koryŏ Canon, to be an essential duty of the state. This duty included funding and overseeing a new printing of the Koryŏ Canon, which now included the enormous task of translating the canon from classical Chinese to modern Korean. Competing with South Korea for legitimacy, North Korea finished a massive translation project of the 1937 copy of the Koryŏ Canon, held by Pohyŏn Temple in North P'yŏngan Province, in 1988.⁹ This was more than a decade earlier than South Korea completed its translation of the same text.

Well aware of the state's power in preserving tradition, Korean Buddhists insisted on gaining administrative autonomy from the state, but they never imagined their religion as totally independent from the state. Based on the doctrine of the inseparability of the king's law and the law of the Dharma, their religion depended on the state. This view continued into the modern era—even despite the broad acceptance of the Western ideal of the separation of church and state—to the effect that Korean Buddhists believed Korean Buddhism could only achieve institutional identity, legitimacy, and governmentality through its relationship with the postwar state.

Although Korean Buddhist leaders were largely in agreement that Korean Buddhism needed a good relationship with the state, they became severely divided by internal power struggles. When, in 1941, the Chogyŏ Temple was named house number one of Korean Buddhism, modeled largely after the Japanese Buddhist system in which each sect had a great head temple, it became an arena for conflicts in the postcolonial period. The 1941 bylaws of the Chogyŏ Order established an institutional system centered on a supreme patriarch (*chongjŏng*) as the main leader of the order. When the leadership of the central office stepped down soon after the end of Japanese rule, however, power struggles ensued in gaining jurisdiction over temple properties. The primary division revolved around married and unmarried monastics.

9. Kim Pyŏngno, *Pukhan chonggyo chŏngchaek*, 26.

Unmarried monks drew on rhetoric to have the married monks thrown out: decolonialization, de-Japanization, and, most commonly, Buddhist purification.¹⁰ Korean nuns were fully behind the unmarried monks, even taking to the streets to protest and to push the government to help them oust the married monks. After a decade of lawsuits, physical violence, and temple takeovers, the government intervened in 1962 by guaranteeing each group top positions in the Chogye Order. The spiritual head priest position was allocated to the unmarried group, while the administrative head position was granted to the married group. This dissatisfied the married camp, however, since, according to the bylaws of the Chogye Order, the duties of the administrative head were to assist the spiritual head priest. The government eventually sided with the unmarried camp, thereby resulting in the state's initial mediation of this conflict falling apart. From there, the groups took different paths: the married camp left Chogye Temple and founded their own order in 1970, which they called the T'aego Order (T'aegojong). This divided Korean Buddhism yet again: between the North and the South, and now between married and unmarried monks in the South.

Fewer than ten years after the unmarried monks took control of the central office and head temples, the Chogye Order became deeply divided yet again. One faction supported a head priest-centered institution, whereas another group favored an administrative head-centered organization in which the head priest served as a spiritual figurehead without powers of nomination. The side advocating for the administrative head-centered institutional form prevailed, with this arrangement continuing up to the present. Infighting over who occupies the administrative head position has beset Korean Buddhism for the past seven decades.

Chogye Temple

The Chogye (formerly T'aego) Temple complex, where the central office is located, likewise has been a battleground for power struggles. Competing parties of monks attempted to set up alternative central offices in different locations but to no avail. Thus, taking over the Chogye Temple complex was tantamount to seizing the Chogye Order in its entirety.

10. For more details on the purification movement, see Mun's *Ha Dongsan*.

Until the 1990s, the administrative head controlled the affairs of the head and branch temples unilaterally. Establishing the head priest system had been a platform since 1908, when Korean Buddhist leaders set up an office in Seoul to centralize and governmentalize the religion. Yet, once this administrative system finally took root, Korean Buddhism suffered from monastic hegemony. Colonial Korean Buddhist leaders used to lament that the old temple system's loose control was a weakness. In the face of this new, tightly controlled system, however, postcolonial Korean Buddhist leaders became nostalgic about the old system. In recent years, after recurrent power struggles and violence, the administrative head's level of clout has ebbed somewhat. Nevertheless, the administrative head continues to retain decisive power.

Amid its continuous sectarian instability, the effort to present Korean Buddhism as inseparable from Korean nationalism has never weakened. Korean Buddhism's one remaining justification for its superiority over Christianity has been that Buddhism and Korean nationhood are synonymous. That is, whereas Christianity came from the West, all Koreans could be proud of Korea's ancient, native, and beautiful tradition of Buddhism. Thus, Korean Buddhism was the best source of, to use Nile Green's term, "religion economy," which Green defines as the process of transactional exchange between producers (religions: in his case, Islam) and consumers (the state: India) regarding the desired objectives of multiple parties.¹¹ The nation- and ethnic-centered understanding of Korean Buddhism held by Buddhist leaders and partisan Buddhist scholars is a by-product of the competitive religious market of colonial and postcolonial Korea. Even today, Korean Buddhist leaders rely on the state for financial support.

Along these lines, in 2003, the Korean Buddhist central office undertook a major renovation of Chogye Temple, receiving 70 percent of its funding from the government,¹² just as colonial-era Korean Buddhists received funds from the Japanese colonial government to construct propagation halls within and beyond Korea. When renovations began, newspapers reported on the controversial background of the temple building, and there was even a rumor that the city of Chŏng'ŭp, where Sibilchŏn had originally been built, might ask the Chogye Order

11. Green, *Terrains of Exchange*, 8.

12. *Media Chogyesa*, accessed February, 21, 2016, <http://news.jogyesa.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=428>.

to return the building.¹³ The Chogye Order had the funds to build a new temple but was not interested in pursuing that. Brushing aside the unorthodox origins of the temple structure, Korean Buddhist leaders praised it as a symbol of Korean Buddhism and culture. To strengthen those claims, the Chogye Order removed traces of the Japanese colonial legacy in the temple complex. The pagoda, built in 1930, which contained the Buddha's relic donated by Dharmapala during his visit in 1913 and prominently sat right in front of the temple, was torn down because it was built in a Japanese Buddhist style. A new, Korean-style pagoda was erected in 2009.¹⁴ (Another major head temple, Pömōsa, which played a key role in the sectarian politics during the colonial period, likewise undertook removing colonial monuments placed there by the Japanese.¹⁵ This occurred in the 1990s and 2000s, at the peak of the Korean government's drive to erase anything associated with the nation's pro-Japanese involvement.)

In more recent years, the Chogye Order has directed its efforts toward reestablishing orthodoxy and orthopraxy throughout the institution as well as expanding its headquarters. These efforts have included enforcing a new set of education and training requirements that monastics must follow to qualify to become an abbot and to be promoted in monastic ranking.¹⁶ In addition, the Chogye Order has presented the Kanhwa Sōn style as the core meditative technique for Korean Buddhism and promoted it as the official practice of the Chogye Order.¹⁷ Furthermore, it created an education curriculum for laypeople to grant them a Chogye Order lay identification card, which proves they are truly Buddhists, not just in name.¹⁸ Lastly, in 2014, the order officially unveiled a major project to purchase the land of the entire city block surrounding the Chogye Temple complex and integrate it into the complex.¹⁹

13. *Chugan tong'a* 357 (October 2002): 57.

14. Masōng, "Han'guk pulgyo."

15. *Hyōndae pulgyo*, August 21, 2009.

16. For more details on the most recent curriculum and monastic ranking systems, see Kaplan, "Transforming Orthodoxies."

17. Kanhwa Sōn is the meditative approach of observing the critical phrase called *hwadu*. See Buswell, *Zen Monastic Experience*, 150. For more details on *hwadu* and Kanhwa Sōn, see Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary*, 358 and 415–16.

18. Kaplan, "Transforming Orthodoxies," 219.

19. *Hyōndae pulgyo*, November 11, 2014.

The Buddha's Birthday Festivals

The Buddha's Birthday Festival also continued to be a significant part of Korean Buddhism's identity, particularly as it pertained to Korean Buddhism's contribution to the Korean national identity and as a response to the rise of Korean Christianity. As soon as Korea gained independence in 1945 and Japanese Buddhism left the scene, Korean Buddhists took full ownership of the festivals in Seoul and other cities. They reverted back to the lunar-calendar-based date for the celebration, took over the planning of the festival, and replaced the Japanese term Flower Festival (*Hana matsuri*) with the title Lotus Lantern Festival (*Yōnkkot ch'ukche*). The format and structure of *Hana matsuri* were carried over, however: an organized procession, pre- and postparade events, carnations, floats, and Japanese-style lanterns remained as elements of the new Lotus Lantern Festival. Likewise, Korean Buddhists continued to draw on the rhetoric that Buddhists across Asia had deployed since the late nineteenth century: popularization, socialization, and internationalization. For example, Korean Buddhists today present the festival as a national event that embodies Korea's cultural heritage. City governments work in partnership with Buddhists to advertise the festival in cultural, cosmopolitan, and national terms, providing generous financial support and designating it as an official cultural event. Although state involvement in the festival is far less visible than it was during the colonial period,²⁰ it is apparent that the Korean government and Korean Buddhists consider the festival to be an expression of national and religious pride. It has become the most marketable event in the public sphere to bring non-Buddhists into the realm of Buddhism in Korea.

In North Korea, the government discontinued holding the Buddha's Birthday Festival in 1948. However, since 1988, some North Korean temples have held ceremonies commemorating the Buddha's birth as a way of forming relationships with Buddhist institutions from other countries.²¹ Most recently, in 2016, the Chogye Order suggested that the two Koreas hold a joint Buddha's birthday ceremony,²² although

20. Nonetheless, politicians understand that they are expected to attend the event. See P'yŏn, "Sawŏl ch'op'a'il."

21. *Yŏnhap nyusŭ*, May 22, 2007.

22. *Yŏnhap nyusŭ*, April 6, 2016.

this has not yet taken place owing to hostile relations between the countries.

Buddhists in South Korea continue to see the Lantern Festival, like Hana matsuri during the colonial period, as the Buddhist analog to Christmas. Reflective of the pro-Christian policy, US military government officials designated Christmas as a national holiday in 1945, and the holiday was later legally adopted by the pro-American Korean government. Many Buddhists felt this pro-Christian policy was unfair and mobilized to get the day of the Buddha's birth elevated to a national holiday as well. In 1975, after more than a decade of legal battles, led primarily by the lay Buddhist lawyer Yong T'aeyöng (1929–2010),²³ the government gave in and declared the Buddha's birthday to be a national holiday.²⁴

In Japan, Hana matsuri had a different fate. Despite Japanese Buddhists' efforts in the late 1920s to make the Buddha's birthday a national holiday, this never came to pass. Once a driving force in disseminating Buddhism to the East and the West, Hana matsuri is now a ceremony confined to individual temples. The specter that Isei Hakuchū feared in 1926—that of a “lonesome” festival celebrated by a few—is echoed by a comment made by the folklorist Endō Shigeru in 1989: “Compared to everyone's celebration of the birth of Jesus, [Hana matsuri] seems a little bit lonesome (*sabishii*).”²⁵ Though the decline of Hana matsuri as a massive festival in postwar Japan occurred for multiple reasons, it is also the case that the excitement of creating a pan-Asian Buddhist identity through Hana matsuri, felt so keenly by Japanese Buddhists during the prewar period, was fueled to a large extent by Japan's rise as a colonial, imperial power.

In South Korea, the Buddha's Birthday holiday is now driven by the country's economic success and its increasing global visibility as a leading producer of East Asian cultural capital such as K-pop and K-drama; this cultural influence is generally termed the Korean Wave

23. *Kyönghyang sinmun*, March 27, 1973.

24. *Kyönghyang sinmun*, February 1, 1975. In comparison, the Buddha's birthday became a national holiday in Hong Kong in 1998 and in Taiwan in 2000. In the case of Taiwan, when filing a petition to make Buddha's birthday a national holiday, the Taiwanese Buddhists also used the argument that Christmas had long been designated a national holiday (Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma*, 56). The petition carried 146,000 signatures (*Taiwan Today*, April 16, 1999).

25. Endō, “Hana matsuri,” 24.

(Hallyu). As such, the Lantern Festival in Seoul has become a festival marketed to foreigners. In close collaboration with the city of Seoul, the organizers of the festival not only invite Buddhist leaders from other countries, including Japan, but also prepare pamphlets in English, Chinese, German, and Japanese.²⁶ The Korean Buddhist leadership packages it as a truly international festivity.

The Chogye Order has cooperated with the government's effort to disseminate Korean culture to the rest of the world. This symbiotic relationship is reminiscent of the way Korean Buddhist leaders found mutual benefit in advancing the Spiritual Development Mobilization effort of the 1930s and 1940s. Like the Lotus Lantern Festival, another government-driven effort has benefited Korean Buddhism. Following up on the international attention South Korea received from hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2002, the government tried to find ways to better accommodate tourists and provide them with in-depth cultural experiences. They hit upon the idea of temple-stay programs,²⁷ which would allow foreigners to experience the richness and depth of Korean culture. The government approached Buddhist leaders to open their traditional temples to foreigners and promised to provide funds for temples to build modern facilities for accommodation and cultural (not religious) programs, including classes in pottery, traditional cooking, and the tea ceremony. As of the 2010s, abetted by the globalization of Korean cultural capital and the Korean Wave, the temple-stay programs have been successful enough to become one of the official features promoted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. The government has also provided temples with additional funds to expand their programs catering to foreign tourists. Although traditional temples would have to make significant compromises in instituting the temple-stay program, such as making a large part of the temple complex accessible to participants and enduring noise, Korean Buddhist leaders took this opportunity to advertise their religion to foreigners as well as Korean citizens. They turned the state-sponsored temple program into a propagation tool, not dissimilar to the way that colonial Buddhists had with imperial projects. The popularity of the temple programs with state support irked Korean Christians and prompted

26. *Pulgyo sinmun*, July 4, 2015.

27. For temple-stay programs, see Kaplan, "Images of Monasticism," and Galmiche, "Retreat."

them to come up with their own “church-stay program” and to demand that the government provide financial support.²⁸ The effort was in vain.

The Koryŏ Canon

Like Chogye Temple and the Buddha’s Birthday Festival, the Koryŏ Canon has consolidated its status as a national and international emblem. It has been proclaimed as Korea’s thirty-second national treasure, as a world treasure in 1995, and, most recently, as a piece of the world’s heritage by UNESCO in 2007. The canon was also fully translated into Korean in 2001. Its most complete digitization was completed in 2004.²⁹ Although the digitization project was made possible by a generous gift from Samsung, all the other major projects related to the Koryŏ Canon from the 1960s onward have been, to a great extent, funded by the government.³⁰ The Chogye Order approached these projects to consolidate its identity relative to Korean history, culture, and nationalism.³¹ The canon was also used by South Korean Buddhists as a diplomatic tool with North Korea. For the millennial anniversary of the carving of the Koryŏ Canon in 2011, the Chogye Order made a special wooden copy of part of the canon and donated it to the North Korean leader Kim Jung Il (Kim Chŏng’il, 1941–2011) shortly before he died. The gift is reminiscent of the printed canon donated by the Japanese colonial government to the Manchurian emperor in 1938. It was given in the name of “the Peace Great Canon” along with an invitation to North Korean Buddhist leaders to join the commemorative festival called “the Canon Korean Festival of a Millennium of World Culture.”³² Although North Koreans did not participate in South Korea’s state-sponsored event, the festival, which was held at Haein Temple and lasted for forty-five days, attracted more than two million South Korean visitors.³³

28. *Christian Today*, December 14, 2010.

29. Kim Jongmyung, “Digitized Tripitaka,” 185.

30. Kim Jongmyung, “Digitized Tripitaka,” 184–86.

31. *Compendium of the Complete Works of Korean Buddhism* (2015), xxiv.

32. *Bulgyo focus*, September 8, 2011. <http://www.bulgyofocus.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=63897>.

33. *Asia News Agency*, November 5, 2011, available at <http://www.anews.com/detail.php?number=285608>.

In 1998, the revelation that a long-lost print of the first version of the Koryŏ Canon (*Ch'ŏjo taejanggyŏng*), from the early eleventh century, had been discovered drew great public attention.³⁴ The central office of the Chogye Order carved wooden panels based on the print, just as the colonial government did for the missing blocks and characters in 1915 and 1937. However, given that the woodblocks of the second version of the Koryŏ Canon are the only ones physically extant in their entirety, unless the full original panels of the first version are found, the second version holds the status of the oldest, most accurate, and best-preserved sacred object. The unparalleled status of the Koryŏ Canon cemented the continued reliance of the Korean Buddhists on the state's assistance to consolidate the inseparable connection between the canon and the greatness of Korean Buddhism.

Postwar Transnationalism in Korean Buddhism

Although the vision of dispatching foreign missions and initiating large propagation programs domestically carried over from the colonial to the postwar era, the power struggles that tore Korean Buddhism apart through the late 1990s prevented any meaningful, large-scale, institutional propagation drives. Nevertheless, individual monks and monasteries have crossed the border to implant Korean Buddhism in other Asian countries and the West.³⁵

In 1990, relations between China and Korea were normalized. Korean residents and several Korean scholars in China approached the Chinese government about restoring several historic sites, including Koryŏ Temple in Hangzhou, in order to highlight the centuries-old connection between the two countries. Doing so would fulfill Yu Guanbin's dream in the late 1920s of reconnecting Korean and Chinese Buddhism by rebuilding this temple. The city of Hangzhou agreed and reconstructed the temple in 2005. In 2006, the city and the Chogye Order reached an agreement that the Chogye Order would manage the temple facilities by having four monks and staff members from Korea

34. *Chosŏn ilbo*, July 8, 1998.

35. So Kyŏngbo (1914–96), Master Seungsahn (1927–2004), and Samu Sŭnim (1941–), to name just a few individuals. For more details on the history of Korean Buddhism in the United States, see Kim Hyŏnggŭn's "Miju Han'guk pulygo."

take up residence there. The long-term goals of the project included a building dedicated to printing the Koryŏ Canon to preserve, copy, and disseminate it, just as Yu had intended. Korean Buddhism's foreign mission in China was about to take root. However, when the Chogye Order sent their people, they discovered that they would need multiple layers of permission from the Chinese government to use the facility for religious purposes. Facing this unexpected roadblock and other unfortunate administrative mistakes, the collaboration ended in 2008.³⁶ The brief surge of scholarly interest in Yu Guanbin as a Korean Buddhist also fell short of adequately reevaluating his legacy for Korean Buddhism.

Buddhists like Sōma Shōei and Yu Guanbin, who bridged the Buddhisms of East Asian countries, are still rare even in the absence of colonialism, although Japan has continued to be the country where Korean monastics go to advance their doctrinal studies. Driven by the popularity of Vipassanā, Tibetan Buddhism, and Zen, a large number of Korean monks and nuns are also practicing in Myanmar, Tibet, and India,³⁷ and a few dozen Westerners and non-Koreans have been ordained in the Chogye tradition and are practicing at Korean Sŏn monasteries. However, these adventures have largely been driven by individuals, and the Chogye Order's accommodation of ordained foreigners in Korea has been passive. Even the recent initiative by the Chogye Order to globalize the Kanhwa Sŏn form has not gained traction.³⁸

This postcolonial institutional passivity surrounding the propagation of Korean Buddhism raises a fundamental question about Korean Buddhists' actual interest in missionary work. Like Japanese Buddhists, they have believed in the past that they could cultivate massive domestic and foreign missionary programs and promote international Buddhist communities. This, however, has so far proved to be wishful thinking. Postcolonial Korean Buddhists and scholars often ascribe the lack of success in missionary work during the colonial period to colonial realities that enfeebled the unity and vitality of Korean Buddhism. However, seven decades have passed since the end

36. *Pŏppo sinmun*, February 4, 2008.

37. For the impact of Vipassanā on Korean Buddhism, see Joo, "Countercurrents."

38. For a critical assessment of the Chogye Order's effort to internalize Kanhwa Sŏn, see Senécal, "Critical Reflection."

of colonial rule, and the Chogye Order has yet to put forth an effective missionary effort. This paints colonial-era Korean Buddhism in a different light, hinting that it might have been confined by its own innate limitations rather than being entirely shackled, oppressed, or made stagnant by colonialism.

The Monastic-Centeredness of Modern Korean Buddhism

The three modern discourses of Buddhist governmentality, nationalism, and propagation, fueled by transnational forces since the early twentieth century and mediated by Japanese Buddhists and the colonial state, are ongoing. The greatest challenge in developing a robustly modernized Korean Buddhism has been the monastic-centeredness of the tradition.³⁹ Although this characteristic applies to most other Buddhist traditions in Asia, the ways in which the monastic-centeredness of Korean Buddhism has manifested itself is unique. Centuries of marginalization under neo-Confucian hegemony pushed monastics out of cities and into the mountains, resulting in more severely attenuated contact between Buddhist monastics and everyday Koreans than in other Asian countries in which forms of separation occurred from time to time. As a consequence, Korean Buddhism stepped into the modern era with a minimal base of committed lay members and the social and institutional structures that support the reciprocity of a relationship between a religion's clergy and its faithful. Moreover, neo-Confucians' demeaning attitude toward monastics trickled down to commoners, who came to view Buddhist monastics as low-caste and parasitic. In turn, Korean monastics developed fear, distrust, and discomfort in their interactions with male laity. Thus, monastics were reluctant to partner with or hand over aspects of temple and institutional matters to male laypersons, whereas lay leadership was a driving force for modern Buddhism in China,⁴⁰ Japan, and other countries. With the absence of strong lay involvement, particularly from businessmen, the professional

39. For this clergy-centered aspect of Korean Buddhism, see Hur, "Han Yong'un." See also Hwansoo Kim, "Social Stigmas."

40. For the rise of the Chinese Buddhist urban elites in the 1910s and 1920s, see Jessup, "Buddhist Activism."

class, and government officials, Korean Buddhist reform was hobbled from the start. The absence of a broad base of local religious laity is one reason that Christianity was able to spread relatively rapidly in Korea, far more successfully than it did in other Asian countries. Korea did not have an established religious tradition to resist the encroachment of a foreign religion. In Japan, for example, Christianity's progress was slowed by a highly entrenched Buddhism and Japanese Buddhist leaders' pushback. Christian missionaries hardly considered Korean Buddhism to be a roadblock to their missionary work.

The emergence of associations for laywomen did much to fill and energize the temples and city propagation halls. However, their roles were largely confined to supporting temples and monastics. They were rarely involved in decision making, and they certainly remained outside the leadership of the monastic institution. Nuns probably were the most marginalized of the four groups of practitioners—male monastics, male laity, female monastics, and female laity—despite the fact that they accounted for one out of every seven monastics during the colonial period. Korean Buddhist nuns were recognized as monastic members in denominational bylaws, but they continued to be second-class citizens in the monastic hierarchy.⁴¹ As the elite nun Chŏng Suok (1902–66) lamented in the late 1930s, male monastics had deliberately denigrated nuns to lower their status.⁴² Even Kim Iryŏp (1896–1971), a prominent modern feminist who later became a nun in 1933, could not have a voice in the male-dominated institutional structure of Korean Buddhism.⁴³ (The situation has more or less continued into the post-colonial period, even though today almost half of all monastics in the Chogye Order are nuns.)⁴⁴

Thus, the monk-centered reform movements in colonial and post-colonial Korean Buddhism have both shaped and to some extent hindered the three discourses of Buddhist nationalism, governmentality, and propagation in further modernizing Korean Buddhism. With regard

41. *Pŏppo sinmun*, February 18, 2014.

42. See Chŏng Suok, "Naeji pulgyo kyŏnhakki," 6; also Kang, "Kŭn Hyŏndaegi Han-Il piguni."

43. Jin Y. Park, *Reflections of a Zen Buddhist Nun*; "Gendered Response to Modernity"; *Women and Buddhist Philosophy*.

44. For more details on nuns and women in Korean Buddhism, see Eunsu Cho, *Korean Buddhist Nuns*.

to propagation, Korean Buddhism has been challenged in finding sufficient human resources to fulfill its ambitions domestically and abroad even as demand for Korean Buddhist services continues. With regard to Buddhist nationalism, Buddhist leaders have used their capital liberally to guarantee governmental and societal support for Buddhism. This government backing has been used, in turn, to inculcate in monastics and lay members certain expectations and cultural norms as well as to advance propagation efforts. Korean Buddhist leaders have found their greatest success in catering to the needs of the state when opportunities arise, which also furthers Buddhist institutional goals. Yet Buddhists have faltered even with this advantage because the institution continues to lack strong lay and female monastic involvement in leadership roles. The future effectiveness of Buddhist nationalism is also questionable as traditional temples are becoming more like museum and tourist sites. More surprisingly, Korean Christianity is becoming more assertive in questioning the centrality of Buddhism in the Korean cultural and national identity.

Korean Christianity's Dominance within and beyond Korea

If neo-Confucianism was the primary reference point for Korean Buddhists during the Chosŏn dynasty, then Japanese Buddhism held that spot during the colonial period. In postcolonial Korea, in the absence of both, Christianity emerged as the force against which Korean Buddhists struggled to defend their faith and measure their tradition. The civilizing forces promulgated by the United States presented an additional challenge to Korean Buddhist leaders in implementing Buddhist governmentalization, holding a hegemonic cultural nationalism over Christianity, and reinforcing domestic and global Buddhist propagation.

Facing the rise of Christianity in all spheres of South Korean society has often been a painful experience for Korean Buddhists. There have been many signs of Christian dominance in South Korea. One sign, reflecting a larger trend, came from the change in religious affiliation of two key Buddhist figures, both of whom loomed large in Korean Buddhist history and played indispensable roles in furthering the three main discourses of modern Korean Buddhism. Ch'oe Namsŏn,

one of the iconic Buddhist intellectuals and the author of an article passionately promoting Korean Buddhism (an English version of which Toh Chinho presented at the Hawaii Buddhist conference), shocked many Buddhists by publicly recanting Buddhism in a daily newspaper in 1955 and converting to Catholicism.⁴⁵ What is more striking, however, is that the nationalist hero monk of this book, Toh Chinho, who painstakingly challenged Japanese Buddhists in order to secure independent representation for Korean Buddhism and who aggressively proclaimed Korean Buddhism as the mother of Japanese Buddhism at the conference, also converted to Christianity, in 1965.

As I began this book with Toh's story, I would like to end by sharing what happened to Toh. When Toh returned to Hawaii in 1931 to open up a Buddhist propagation hall, the local Korean immigrant community was overwhelmingly Christian and considered Buddhism in Korea to be synonymous with Japanese colonialism. This was understandable, since the Japanese immigrant community in Hawaii had a strong Buddhist presence, and temples played a religious and social function for them, just as Korean churches did for Koreans in Hawaii. In this context, the fact that Toh had participated in a Buddhist conference organized by the Japanese and had come back to Hawaii to propagate Buddhism made the locals suspect that he was a Japanese spy. Toh was eventually summoned to a meeting with hundreds of Korean immigrants to defend himself against this unfounded accusation.⁴⁶ Later, he managed to teach Buddhism at a Korean school, but this incited complaints among the Korean Christian immigrants. Rather than targeting

45. *Han'guk ilbo*, December 17, 1955. The prominent nun Iryöp, who had admired Ch'oe as a scholar of Buddhism and was his intellectual colleague, wrote an emotionally charged public letter to Ch'oe repudiating his conversion. See Jin Y. Park, *Reflections of a Zen Buddhist Nun*, 97–109.

46. At the peak of World War II, Toh was accused of receiving \$80 from the Japanese consulate of Hawaii upon his reentry to Hawaii with a passport issued by the Korean colonial government in 1931. Based on this accusation, he was suspected of being a Japanese spy and later, in 1946, was investigated by the CIA (see *Pearl Harbor Attack*, 370). Ch'oe Yöngho, a professor emeritus at the University of Hawaii, interviewed Toh on July 5, 1978, and created an archive of primary sources. Based on Ch'oe's interview, Zen Master Samu Sünim and the late monk scholar Chanju Mun (his Dharma name was Söng'wön) wrote articles attempting to understand Toh in the context of the history of Korean Buddhism in the United States. See Samu Sünim, "Turning the Wheel," and Mun, "Miguk Han'guk pulgyo."

non-Korean Americans for propagation, he tried to stick to the Korean community, which was predominantly Christian and for whom Buddhism was undesirable. Facing these hurdles, on top of financial difficulties, he gradually turned his attention from Buddhism to nationalist activities and began to work as an editor for a Korean nationalist journal. We do not know what happened to the temple, Koryösönsa, that he had allegedly opened. He eventually married a devout Christian, Yun Töga (1899–1958),⁴⁷ in the mid-1930s, and was involved in church activities,⁴⁸ although he nominally kept his Buddhist identity until 1941.⁴⁹

His Buddhist identity resurfaced in 1946, when he was invited by the nationalist Kim Ku to come to Korea as a member of a US Korean immigrant committee to help rebuild Korea. Arriving in Seoul, Korean Buddhist leaders greeted him with a special welcoming party. A reporter from a Buddhist journal interviewed Toh,⁵⁰ and Toh also contributed an article to the same journal titled “The Situation of the World and a Course of Action for Korea.”⁵¹ In his interview, Toh said little about Buddhism but focused instead on articulating his nationalist views. As if he was conscious of what the reporter wanted to hear about his Buddhist activities in Hawaii, Toh ended his interview by saying, “I will talk about [my temple] Koryösönsa at a later time.”⁵² (He did not keep his promise, most likely because there was not much to talk about.) Since Toh’s visit to Korea coincided with the Buddha’s Birthday Festival, he was also invited to give a congratulatory speech for the event.⁵³ Although he gave the talk, it was clear that his primary interest was no longer in Buddhism but in postcolonial Korean politics. Rather than reconnecting with his former Buddhist colleagues at T’aego Temple (later Chogyesa), Toh stayed at the YMCA in Seoul, giving numerous talks about politics and the future of Korea.

Disillusioned with the factionalism among Kim Ku, Syngman Rhee, and others, he returned to Hawaii less than a year later. Back in Hawaii,

47. He had already married in Korea, which means this was his second marriage.

48. Toh Chinho’s autobiography (Ch’oe’s archive).

49. *T’aep’yöng’yang chubo*, February 15, 1941.

50. *Sinsaeng*, July 1946, 10–12.

51. *Sinsaeng*, October 1946, 6–16.

52. *Sinsaeng*, July 1946, 12.

53. *Sinsaeng*, July 1946, 16.

he ran a number of businesses, including a movie production company, a tailor shop, a restaurant, and a hotel. Sometime in 1965 when he became ill and was hospitalized, he read the Bible seriously and officially converted to Christianity. Joining his third wife, An Yijöngsong (1896-?),⁵⁴ who was a Christian, he became a member of the Full Methodist Korean Church in Honolulu and died a Christian.⁵⁵

54. An graduated from Ewha University and later studied Christian theology in Japan (*Tong'a ilbo*, May 31, 1978).

55. Ch'oe's interview with Toh in 1978. Toh later moved to California, where the children from his first marriage lived. He appears to have died in Huntington Beach, California, in 1987.

Names and Terms

Abe Mitsue 阿部充家	Ch'ianbu 治安部
Aichi 愛知	Chiang Kaishek 蔣介石
Akiyama Masanosuke 秋山雅 之介	<i>chijön</i> 知殿
Amida (Skt. Amitābha) 阿彌陀	Chikatsumi Jōkan 近角常觀
An Ch'angho 安昌浩	Cho Mansik 曹晩植
An Ch'angnam 安昌男	Chobullyön 조불런
An Chinho 安震湖	Ch'oe Chwihö 崔就墟
An Chungün 安重根	Ch'oe Kijöng 崔其正
An Chunsaeng 安俊生	Ch'oe Namsön 崔南善
An Hyönsaeng 安賢生	Ch'oe Pongsu 崔鳳守
An Yijöngsong 安李貞松	Ch'oe Sünghan 崔承韓
Andō Reigan 安藤嶺丸	Ch'oe Yöngghan 崔英煥
Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治	Chogy[e]jong] 曹溪[宗]
Aoki Yoshimatsu 青木吉松	Ch'ōjo taejanggyöng 初雕大藏經
Asakusa 淺草	Chöllä 全羅
	<i>chöndo</i> 傳道
Bazhi Toutuo 八指頭陀	Ch'öndogyo 天道教
<i>betsuin</i> 別院	Chöng Hwaam 鄭華岩
<i>bukke</i> 佛化	<i>ch'ong ponsa</i> 總本寺
<i>bunka seiji</i> 文化政治	Chöng Sunyöng 鄭順榮
	Chöng Suok 鄭守玉
Caoxi Huineng 曹溪惠能	Chöng Tögyu 鄭德佑
Ch'a Kyöngsök 車京石	Chöng Unhae 鄭雲海
Ch'a Sangmyöng 車相明	Chöng Yöngdal 鄭永達
Ch'a Wölgok 車月谷	Chöng Yöngmyöng 鄭永溟
<i>ch'aegöng</i> 菜供	<i>chonghoe</i> 宗會
Chang Chiyön 張志淵	<i>chonghön</i> 宗憲
Changch'ungdan 獎忠壇	<i>chongjöng</i> 宗正
Ch'angwön 昌原	Ch'ongmuwön 總務院
Ch'ia[san] 雉岳[山]	Chongno 鐘路
	Chöng'üp 井邑

- Chōng'yang 清涼
 Chōsen bukk'yō 朝鮮佛教
 Chōsen bukk'yō ni taisuru hiken
 朝鮮仏教に対する卑見
 Chōsen bukk'yō taikai 朝鮮仏教
 大会
 Chōsen bukk'yōdan 朝鮮佛教團
 Chōsen bussan kyōshinkai 朝鮮物
 産共進會
 Chōsen shokusan ginkō 朝鮮殖産
 銀行
 Chosōn 朝鮮
 Chosōn pulgyo t'ongsa 朝鮮佛教
 通史
 Chūgai nippō 中外日報
 Chungang 中央
 Chungang p'ogyodang 中央布
 教堂
 Chungang pōnyōnghoe 中央繁
 榮會
 Chunghūngsa 中興寺
 Ch'ungnam 忠南
 Chungwha 中和
 chusil 籌室

 Dainichi zokuzōkyō 大日續藏經
 danka 檀家
 dendō 伝道
 dōka 同化

 Edo Chōjirō 江戸長次郎
 Endō Shigeru 遠藤滋
 Enkōji 圓光寺

 Fayuan 法苑
 Feng Mingzheng 馮明政
 Feng Peilan 馮佩蘭
 Fociyaobi 佛慈藥弊
 Fohua xin qingnianhui 佛化新青
 年會
 Fohua yundong 佛化運動
 Fojiao pinglun 佛教評論

 Fojiao sengyuan 佛教僧苑
 Fojiao xiejinhui 佛教協進會
 Fujii Senshō 藤井宣正
 Fujii Sōsen 藤井草宣
 Fujitsuka Chikashi 藤塚鄰
 fukyō 布教
 fukyō kisoku 布教規則
 fukyōjo 布教所
 fukyōsha 布教者
 Fushun 富順

 Gaolisi 高麗寺
 gonggou changgui 功狗佞鬼
 Guanli simiao tiaoli 管理寺廟
 條例

 Haegwangsa 海光寺
 Haeinsa 海印寺
 haibutsu kishaku 廢仏毀釈
 Haichaoyin 海潮音
 Hakubunji 博文寺
 Hallyu 韓流
 Ham Yisun 咸已順
 Hamgyōng 咸鏡
 Han Sosun 韓小順
 Han Yong'un 韓龍雲
 Hana matsuri 花祭
 Hanam 漢巖
 hangul 한글
 Hankou zhengxinhui 漢口正信會
 Hayashi Gonsuke 林權助
 Hayashide Kenjirō 林出賢次郎
 Hibiya 日比谷
 Honam 湖南
 Hong Sōnghyōn 洪性鉉
 Honganji 本願寺
 hongfa 弘法
 Hongkou 虹口
 honmatsu seido 本末制度
 hōon hanshi 報恩反始
 Huang Jianliu 黃健六
 Huiguan 慧觀

- Huksaek kongp'odan 黑色恐怖團
 Hüngsadan 興士團
hwadu 話頭
 Hwaje 花祭
 Hwaje pongch'an hoe (or Kasai hōsankai) 花祭奉贊會
 Hwang Poŭng 黃普應
 Hwang Sōngbong 黃成鳳
 Hwanghyōn 黃玿
Hwangsōng sinmun 皇城新聞
 Hwaōmsa 華嚴寺
 Hyōnjong 顯宗

 Ikeda Kiyoshi 池田清
 Ikeuchi Hiroshi 池內宏
 Ilgwangsa 日光寺
 Imamura Tomo 今村鞆
 Imje (Ch. Linji; Jp. Rinzai) 臨濟
 Imjejong 臨濟宗
 Insōng 仁成
 Isei Hakuchū 伊政博中
Issaikyō ongi 一切經音義
 Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文

jakyō senmetsu 邪教殲滅
 Jiandao 間島
jibyō seiri 寺廟整理
 Jilin 吉林
 Jing'an 敬安
 Jinling 金陵
 Jinshan 金山
 Jōdoshinshū 淨土真宗
 Jōdoshū 淨土宗

 Kachōji 華頂寺
 Kaesōng 開城
 Kaibao 開寶
kaigai fukyō 海外布教
kaigai kaikyō 海外開教
Kaiinji Daizōkyōban chōsa hōkokusho
 海印寺大藏經版調查報告書

 Kakhwangsa 覺皇寺
kami 神
 Kanao Tanejirō 金尾種次郎
kanchō seidō 管長制度
 Kando 間島
 Kaneko Tei'ichi 金子定一
 Kang Sōkchu 姜昔珠
 Kang Sōng'in 康性仁
 Kang Taeryōn 姜大蓮
 Kang Yumun 姜裕文
 Kangnūng 江陵
 Kangwōn 江原
 Kanhwa Sōn 看話禪
 Kasan Daigi 華山大義
 Katō Bunkyō 加藤文教
 Katō Kankaku 加藤灌覺
 Kawamura Tōki 川村道器
 Keijō 京城
Keijō nippō 京城日報
 Kenninji 建仁寺
kesa 袈裟
 Kilho 吉浩
 Kim Chongnae 金鐘來
 Kim Ch'unsō 金春瑞
 Kim Hwegwang 金慧光
 Kim Ilsung 金日成
 Kim Iryōp 金一葉
 Kim Jung Il (Kim Chōng'il) 金正日
 Kim Ku 金九
 Kim Kwisan 金龜山
 Kim Kyōngbong 金鏡峯
 Kim Kyōngsan 金擎山
 Kim Kyōng'un 金擎雲
 Kim Mukcho 金默照
 Kim Pōmnin 金法麟
 Kim Ponyōn 金本然
 Kim Sangho 金尚昊
 Kim Sōngsu 金性洙
 Kim T'aehūp 金泰洽
 Kim Taeu 金大羽
 Kim Tonghwa 金東華
 Kim Tonhūi 金敦熙

- Kim Ŭngman 金應萬
 Kim Unhyang 金雲卿
 Kim Yunsik 金允植
 Kimura Taiken 木村泰賢
 Kitabatake Tōryū 北畠道竈
 Kitano Kenpō 北野元峰
 Kobayashi Genroku 小林源六
 Kodama Hideo 兒玉秀雄
Kokumin no tomo 國民之友
Kokumin seishin sōdōin undō
 國民精神總動員運動
Kokumin shinbun 國民新聞
kokutai 国体
 Komazawa 駒澤
kōminka 皇民化
kongan (Ch. *gongan*; Jp. *kōan*) 公案
 Kongju 公州
kongō 金剛
 Koryō 高麗
 Koryō hoegyō chōndohoe hoejang
 高麗回教傳道會會長
Koryō taejanggyōng 高麗大藏經
 Koryōsa 高麗寺
 Koryōsōna 高麗禪寺
 Kūmch'ōn yuch'iwōn 錦川幼
 稚園
 Kūmgangsan 金剛山
 Kunming 昆明
 Kurosaki Yūji 黑崎裕二
 Kwangbōpsa 廣法寺
 Kwangdōgsa 廣德寺
 Kwanūmsa 觀音寺
 Kwiju[sa] 歸州[寺]
 Kwōn Chunghyōn 權重顯
 Kwōn Sangno 權相老
 Kwōn T'aesik 權泰植
 Kyerimsa 鷄林寺
kyōka 教化
 Kyomuwōn 教務院
 Kyōngbok 景福
 Kyōngbuk 慶北
 Kyōngju 慶州
- Kyōngnam 慶南
 Kyōngsang 慶尙
 Kyōng'un 擎雲

 Lanzhou 蘭州
 Li Guibai 李佳白
 Liao (Khitan) 遼 (契丹)
 Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄
 Liu Fengming 劉鳳鳴
 Longjing 龍井

 Maeda Eun 前田慧雲
 Magoksa 麻谷寺
 Makitō Tetsuzō 楨藤哲藏
 Manam 曼庵
 Mangwōltae 望月臺
Manjizōkyō 卍字藏經
 Masan 馬山
 Matsumoto Torakichi 松本寅吉
 Minami Jirō 南次郎
 Minsaengbu 民生部
 Mit'agyo 彌陀教
 Mizuno Baibyō 水野梅曉
 Mongjōngsaeng 夢庭生
 Moriwaki Takayuki 森脇孝之
 Mubutsu 無佛
 Mubutsu Koji 無佛居士
 Mudanjiang 牡丹江
 Mugade Tetsudō 向出哲堂
 Murakami Ryūkichi 村上龍信
 Murakami Senshō 村上專精

 Naejangsa 內藏寺
 Naeji Chosōn sūngnyō yōnhaphoe
 內地朝鮮僧侶連合會
 Naewōnam 內院庵
naisen ittai 內鮮一體
naisen yūwa 內鮮融和
 Nakamura Kentarō 中村健太郎
 Namsan 南山
Namu Amit'a pul (Jp. *Namu Amida*
butsu) 南無阿彌陀佛

- Nan'e bukkyōkai 南瀛佛教會
 Nanjō Bunyū 南条文雄
 Nanying fojiaohui 南瀛佛教會
nenbutsu 念佛
 Nichirensū 日蓮宗
 Nihon bukke shin seinenkai 日本佛
 化新青年會
 Niigata 新潟
 Nikkanji 日韓寺
nikujiki saitai 肉食妻帶
 Ning Dayun 寧達蘊
 Nishi Honganji 西本願寺
 Nōson kōsei undō 農村更生運動
 Nukariya Kaiten 忽滑谷快天
 Nūngin yuch'iwōn 能仁幼稚園
 Nūnginsa 能仁寺

 O Chaep'ung 吳在豐
 O Myōnjik 吳冕植
 Ōbaku[shū] 黃檗[宗]
 Oda Mikijirō 小田幹治郎
 Ok (Oak) Kwanbin 玉觀彬
 Ōm Hyōngsun 嚴亨淳
 Ōmotokyō 大本教
 Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙
 Ōtani 大谷
 Ōtani Hongan 大谷本願
 Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無
 Ōya Tokujō 大屋德城

 Paedal kongsa 倍達公司
 Paedal yuch'iwōn 配達幼稚園
 Paegun 白雲
 Paegyangsa 白羊寺
 Paek Sōng'uk 白性郁
 Paek Yōnggi 白榮基
 Paek Yongsōng 白龍城
 Paekchung (Jp. Obon) 百中 or
 百衆
 Pak Ch'angsuk 朴唱淑
 Pak Chubin 朴胄彬
 Pak Hanyōng 朴漢永

 Pak Noyōng (Park No-yong)
 朴魯英
 Pak Pongsōk 朴奉石
 Pak Songp'a 朴松波
 Pak Yōnghūi 朴暎熙
 Pang Hanam 方漢巖
 Pang Yōngbok 方永福
 Pangmunsa 博文寺
 Panya 般若
Pinjazang 頻伽藏
 Poch'on'gyo 普天教
p'ogyo 布教
p'ogyo kyuch'ik 布教規則
p'ogyodang 布教堂
p'ogyopōp kaesōl 布教法解說
p'ogyoso 布教所
 Pohūngsa 普興寺
 Pohwamun 普化門
 Pohyōnsa 普賢寺
 Pōmnyun 法輪
 Pōmōsa 梵魚寺
 Pong'ūnsa 奉恩寺
 Popchōngsa 法定寺
 Pōphwasa 法華寺
 Pōpt'a 法陀
puinhoe 婦人會
Pulgyo 佛教
Pulgyo sibo 佛教時報
pulhwa 佛化
 Puyi 溥儀
 P'yōngan 平安
 P'yōngyang 平壤
 Pyōn Tonghwa 邊東華
pyōrwōn 別院

quan shijie fohua 全世界佛化
quan yaxiya fohua 全亞細亞佛化
 Quan yaxiya fohua jiaoyushe 全亞
 細亞佛化教育社

renjian fojiao 人間佛教
 Renmonkyō 蓮門教

- Renshan 仁山
rensheng fojiao 人生佛学
Richō bukkō 李朝佛教
 Rinzaishū 臨濟宗
 Risshō 立正
- sabishii* 寂しい
 Saitō Makoto 齋藤実
Samchōlli 三千里
 Samsip ponsan yōnhap samuso
 三十本山聯合事務所
 Samu 三友
 Sandōk yanghaeng 三德洋行
 Sanggonghoe 商工會
 Sangwōnsa 上院寺
 Sano Zenrei 佐野前勵
 Satō Hiroshi 佐藤寛
 Satō Rokuseki 佐藤六石
 Sekino Tadashi 関野貞
 Sen-Man ittai 鮮-満一体
senkyōshi 宣教師
 Sennyūji 泉涌寺
 Seungsaahn 崇山
 Shaku Kōzen 釈興然
 Shaku Sōen 釋宗演
 Shaku Unshō 釋雲照
 Shanchengzhen 山城鎮
 Shangxiantang 尚賢堂
 Shariji 舍利寺
 Shi Moxiao 釋默笑
 Shijie fojiao jushilin 世界佛教居士林
 Shijie fojiao lianhehui 世界佛教聯合會
 Shin bukkō seinenkai 新仏新青年會
 Shinden kaiatsu undō 心田開發運動
 Shingonshū 眞言宗
 Shinkyō 新京
shinkyō no jiyū 信教自由
- Shinppō Chōji 神寶長治
 Shinshū 眞宗
 Shintō 神道
 Shiobara Tokisaburō 塩原時三郎
Shizun zhi lishi yu jiaofa 釋尊之歷史與教法
Shukusatsu zōkyō 縮刷藏經
shūkyō no shakaika 宗教の社会化
shūkyō no shakōsei 宗教の社交性
 Shundao (K. Sundo) 順道
 Sibilchōn 十一殿
 Sich'ōngyo 侍天教
 Sim Kich'un 潘其春
Sin pulgyo 新佛教
 Sin'gyesa 神溪寺
 Sinhūngsa 新興寺
 Sinminhoe 新民會
 So Kyōngbo 徐京保
sōgi 書記
sōlli p'ogyo 禪理布教
sōlpōp p'ogyo 說法布教
 Sōma Shōei 相馬勝英
 Sōn (Ch. Chan; Jp. Zen) 禪
 Sōn Kyo yangjong 禪教兩宗
 Son Sunbok 孫順福
sōnbaek 禪伯
 Song Ch'ando 宋燦道
 Song Chonghōn 宋宗憲
Sōngmun üibōm 釋門儀範
 Songnimsa 松林寺
 Sōnu kongjehoe 禪友共濟會
 Sōnwōn 禪院
 Sōtōshū 曹洞宗
 Sugi 守其
 Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 or 孫逸仙
 Sungsil 崇實
 Suungyo 水雲教
 Suwōn 水原
 Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙
 Suzuki Tenzan 鈴木天山
 Syngman Rhee 李承晩

- T'aeansa 泰安寺
 Taebömnöe 大法雷
 Taegak 大覺
 Taegakkyo 大覺教
 T'aego Pou 太古普愚
 T'aegojong 太古宗
 T'aegosa 太古寺
 Taehan maeil sinbo 大韓每日
 申報
 Taeja hakkyo 大慈學校
 Taeja yuch'iwön 大慈幼稚園
 taejung kongsa 大眾公事
 Taesöng hakkyo 大成學校
 Tai Shuangqiu 邵爽秋
 Taijōji 大乘寺
 Taishō 大正
 Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修
 大藏經
 Taixu 太虛
 Takahashi Tōru 高橋亨
 Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎
 Takeda Hanshi 武田範之
 T'anhō 吞虛
 T'ap[sā] 塔[寺]
 Tenrikyō 天理教
 Tentaku'in 天澤院
 Terauchi Masatake 寺内正毅
 Tianjin 天津
 Tōa bukkyō taikai 東亞佛教大會
 Togap[sā] 道岬[寺]
 Toh Chinho 都鎮鎬
 Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定
 Tokugawa Ieyasu 德川家康
 Tokutomi Ichirō 德富一郎
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 Tongji 同濟
 Tongmyōng 東明
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 Ūich'ōn 義天
 Unhūngsa 雲興寺
 unsu (Jp. unsui) 雲水
 Unsui shinbun 雲水新聞
 Wang Xiaoxu 王小徐
 Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭
 Weichi fojiao tongmenghui 維持佛
 教同盟會
 Wōlchōngsa 月精寺
 Wōn'gaksa 圓覺寺
 Wōnhūngsa 元興寺
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 Wōnsōngsa 願成寺
 Wuchang 武昌
 Wuchang foxueyuan 武昌佛學院
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 Yunnan 雲南
 yunshui 雲水
 Yushengzan 玉聖讚
- Zhang Zongzai 張宗載
 Zhi Feng 芝峯
 "Zhongguo fojiao zhenxing ce" 中國
 佛教振興策
 Zhongguo fojiaohui 中國佛教會
 Zōjōji 增上寺
 Zoku Daizōkyō 續大藏經
 Zongyang 宗仰

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In the bibliographic entries that follow, Japanese names are used for colonial-period cities in Korea and Manchuria: Jinsen is modern-day Inchon; Keijō is modern-day Seoul; Heijō is modern-day Pyongyang. Shinkyō (Ch. Xinjing) was the Japanese capital of Manchukuo (Japan's puppet state in Manchuria); and Taihoku is modern-day Taipei in Taiwan.

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Index

Page numbers for figures and tables are in italics.

- Abe Mitsue: background of, 148;
and establishment of Association
of Korean Buddhism, 146; on
Japanese Buddhism, 180; Paek
Yongsong's collaboration with,
10; recommends Sōma to Pōmō
Temple, 154–57; Sōma Shōei's
meeting with, 150–51; and Zen
Buddhism, 148–50
- Adachi, 251–52
- Akiyama Masanosuke, 45
- An Ch'angho, 109, 112, 133
- An Ch'angnam, 79n50
- An Chinho, 249
- An Chungūn, 196
- An Chunsang, 196n25
- Andō Reigan, 78
- Anesaki Masaharu, 78
- An Husang, 209, 220
- anti-Japanese Korean Buddhism,
25–26
- Aoki Yoshimatsu, 33
- Arnold, Edwin, 72
- Asahi shinbun*, 137–38
- Asian Buddhism, 107–8
- Association for the Advancement
of Buddhism (Fojiao xiejinhui),
224
- Association for the Celebration
of Hana matsuri (K. Hwaje
pongch'anhoe; Jp. Kasai hōsan-
kai), 92
- Association of Chinese Buddhism
(Zhongguo fojiaohui), 97–98, 119,
122, 130
- Association of Hana matsuri of the
Tokyo Alliances, 78
- Association of Korean Buddhism
(Chōsen bukkyō taikai / Chōsen
bukkyōdan), 91, 146–47, 223
- Association of Korean Businesses,
101
- Association of Korean Monks in
Japan, 254
- Bethell, Ernest, 110
- Blumenfest, 78
- Bodh Gaya, 72–73, 76, 86
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 68
- Buddhacization Movement (Fohua
yundong), 9–10, 106, 107–8, 113–18,
140, 141
- Buddha's Birthday Festival, 68–
70; as continuing part of Korean
Buddhist identity, 288–91; date
of, 80–81, 90, 91, 97–101; and
efforts to establish joint Hana
matsuri in Korea, 90–93; genesis
of, 102; Korea's indigenous ver-
sion of, 87–89; modernization

- Buddha's Birthday Festival
(continued)
 and popularization of, 93–96, 102–3; in 1928, 67; in Seoul, 82–87; spread of, 79–80; in Sri Lanka, 70–75; in Tokyo, 75–82; transnationalism's influence on, 8–9
- Buddhist Christmas. *See* Buddha's Birthday Festival
- Buddhist Compassion Pharmaceutical Company, 119–20, 121, 137
- “Buddhist Compassion Pharmaceutical Company's Plan for the Renovation of National Medicine, The” (Yu Guanbin), 122
- Buddhist Monastic Institute, 119
- Buddhist nationalism, 4, 11–16, 296
- Buddhist transnationalism, in modern period, 144–45
- Buddhist wedding ceremonies, 244–45
- Buddhist Youth Association, 30
- Canon Storage Hall, 43–44, 43, 46–47, 65
- Capital Gazette*, 41–44
- Catholic Messenger*, 74
- celibacy, 156–57, 160, 179
- Ch'a Kyöngsök, 207–8
- Chan Buddhism, 148, 154. *See also* Sön Buddhism; Zen Buddhism
- Chang Chiyön, 58
- Changch'ungdan Park, 94
- Ch'angwön Propagation Hall, 244
- Ch'a Sangmyön, 206
- Ch'iaik Mountains, 164–65
- Chiang Kaishek, 225, 226
- Chikatsumi Jökan, 78
- China: Buddha's Birthday Festival in, 81; and postwar transnationalism in Korean Buddhism, 292–93. *See also* Manchuria, propagation in
- Chinese Buddhism: collaboration between Korean Buddhism and, 9–10; governmentality of, 224–26; scholarship on, 106–7; Taixu's contributions to, 113–14; Yu and bridge building between Korean Buddhism and, 123–29; Yu and unification of, 120–22
- Chinese Buddhist Association (founded in 1912), 224–25
- Chinese Buddhist Association (founded in 1929), 225–26
- Chinese General Buddhist Association, 225
- “Chinese Islam and Chinese Revolution” (Yu Guanbin), 111–12n25
- Chinese-language canons, 40–41, 42
- Chinese revolution, 111
- Chinese writing, 158–59
- Ch'oe Chwihö, 249
- Ch'oe Kijöng, 268
- Ch'oe Namsön, 2, 59, 60–62, 126, 132, 296–97
- Ch'oe Yönggho, 1n1, 297n46
- Ch'oe Yöngghwan, 51
- Chogye Order: bylaws of, 228; and debates regarding Korean Buddhist historiography, 25–26; and dissemination of Korean culture, 290; Hanam as first patriarch of, 166, 222; Joint School of Sön Kyo changed to, 218–19; and Korean Buddhist reliance on state, 284–85; and Koryö Canon projects, 291, 292; and propagation in Manchuria, 269–70, 272; and reconstruction of Koryösa, 292–93; and renovation of T'aegosa, 286–87;

- Yi Chong'uk as administrative head of, 220
- Chogye Temple. *See* T'aegosa (Chogye Temple)
- Chöng Hwaam, 135–36, 137
- Chöng Sunyöng, 266–67
- Chöng Suok, 155–56, 295
- Chöng Tögyu, 253
- Chöng Unhae, 129
- Chöng Yöngdal, 252
- Chöng Yöngmyöng, 252
- Ch'ongmuwön, 192, 193, 241
- Chongno Street, 95
- Ch'op'ail haengsa 100-yön* (A century of the April Eighth Ceremony), 68–69n5
- “Chösen bukkyö ni taisuru hiken” (Abe Mitsue), 149
- Chösen bukkyö taikai / Chösen bukkyödan. *See* Association of Korean Buddhism
- Chosön dynasty, 32–33, 37, 38
- Christianity: Buddhism's superiority over, 286; during colonial period, 15–16; increasing influence and dominance of, 282–83, 296–99; and Korean Buddhist governmentality, 17; in P'yöngyang, 173; revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka as threat to, 74–75; and Spiritual Development Movement, 246–47; Sri Lankan Buddhists' response to spread of, 70–71
- Christian spirituality, 19
- Christmas, 289
- Chu, Helen, 139–40n125
- Chungang p'ogyodang, 236
- Chunghüngsa, 188, 216
- commercialism, Buddha's Birthday Festival and promotion of, 95
- conferences: Korean Buddhist, 259; transnational Buddhist, 9–10
- Confucianism, 246–47
- “Cult of the Canon,” 32
- Davids, Rhys, 40
- Dharmapala, Anagarika, 20, 70–71, 72–73, 75, 76–77, 83–87, 199
- Dolapihilla, U. B., 82–83
- East Asian Buddhist Conference (Töa bukkyö taikai), 116–18
- Eastern Asian Buddhist Conference, 80
- Edo Chöjirö, 209–10
- Endö Shigeru, 289
- Feng Mingzheng, 119n55
- Feng Peilan, 136, 139
- fohua*, 116
- Fohua yundong. *See* Buddhacization Movement
- food poisoning, 163
- Foucault, Michel, 16, 17, 19
- Foulk, George Clayton, 38
- Fujii Senshō, 244
- Fujii Sösen, 131–32, 133
- Fujitsuka Chikashi, 63
- fukyö*, 21–22, 237–39
- General Association of Buddhism, 268
- governmentality, Buddhist, 16–20, 184–88, 229–30; central actors in centralizing Korean, 219–22; comparison of Korean and other East Asian, 222–28; early efforts to centralize Korean, 188–94; and evolution of Kakhwangsa, 198–200; Hakubun Temple as threat to Korean, 195–98; and imbuing

- governmentality, Buddhist
(*continued*)
temple with spiritual status, 216–19; as key discourse of Korean Buddhism, 16–20; meeting with Minami Jirō and centralization of Korean, 204–7; and 1935 meeting of abbots, 201–2; propagation and, 273–74; and purchase of Sibilchön, 207–11; and push for great head temple status, 211–16; regional unity in Korean, 202–4; Toh and discourse of, 4
- Great Compassion School (Taeja hakkyo), 265
- great head temple: establishment of, 19–20, 184–87; imbuing, with spiritual status, 216–19; meeting with Minami Jirō to discuss construction of, 204–7; Sibilchön purchased for, 207–11. *See also* Sibilchön
- Gregorian calendar, 80, 97–101
- Haein Temple, 33, 34, 37–38, 39, 43–44, 46–47, 65, 193
- Haichaoyin* (Voice of the Sea), 119, 120, 128
- Hakubun Temple, 196, 282
- Hamilton-Gordon, Arthur Charles, 71–72
- Han Sosun, 266
- Han Yong'un: and Buddha's Birthday Festival, 82; and Chungang p'ogyodang, 236; and establishment of Imjejong, 190; pilgrimage of, to Haein Temple, 65; on propagation, 238; and propagation in Manchuria, 260; pushes for great head temple status, 211–16; on Terauchi, 191; Yu Guanbin and, 127
- Hanam, Master: and centralization of Korean Buddhist governmentality, 219–20, 221; and propagation in Manchuria, 263; Sōma Shōei and, 10, 159–61, 166–69, 174–76; and Suzuki's visit to China, 150; Takahashi on, 178–79
- Hana matsuri: date of, 97–101; efforts to establish joint, in Korea, 90–93; influence of, on Korean celebrations, 8–9, 288; of 1916, 78–79; origins of term, 78; in present day, 289. *See also* Buddha's Birthday Festival
- Hankinson, Walter D., 74
- Hanyōng, Master, 169
- Hayashi Gonsuke, 39
- Hayashide Kenjirō, 51, 52–53
- head priest system, 185, 227, 229, 283, 286
- History and Teachings of Sākya-muni, The* (Yu Guanbin), 120
- Hong Sōnghyōn, 243
- Hwaje. *See* Buddha's Birthday Festival
- Hwang Sōngbong, 256
- Hwanghyōn, 33
- Hwangsōng sinmun*, 32–34
- Ikeda Kiyoshi, 174–75
- Ikeuchi Hiroshi, 38
- Imjejong, 190
- Imje lineage, 148–49
- India, 86
- Inoue Tamae, 244
- internationalism, versus transnationalism, 6
- Isei Hakuchū, 91, 289
- Islam, 111
- itinerant Zen monk. *See unsui*
- Itō Hirobumi, 189, 195–96
- Japan: Buddha's Birthday Festival in, 75–82; Buddhist nationalism

- in, 11–12; Korean Buddhist propagation halls in, 250–57
- Japanese Buddhism: Abe on, 180; in colonial Korea, 145–47; creation of modern, 75–77; and early efforts to centralize Korean Buddhism, 188, 189; and efforts to establish joint Hana matsuri in Korea, 90–93; governmentality of, 226–27, 229; head priest system in, 185, 227, 229, 283, 286; Korean Buddhism as distinct from, 2; Korean Buddhist historiography and, 277–78; and Korean Buddhist nationalism, 13–15, 16; as lay tradition, 157; Meiji government's views on, 75; paradigm of, 13–15; propagation of, 21; Sōma Shōei on, 162, 170–73; Takahashi on, 177
- Japanese colonial rule: adaptation of Korean Buddhism to, 234–35; Buddha's Birthday Festivals under, 68–70, 102–3; Dharmapala on, 84; and early efforts to centralize Korean Buddhism, 189; and Korean Buddhist governmentality, 19–20, 227–28, 229–30; and Korean Buddhist nationalism, 12–13, 16, 18; and modernization of Korean Buddhism, 278; and propagation of Buddhism, 20–23; recognition of religions under, 208, 210–11; and “rediscovery” of Koryō Canon, 37–39; and “re-Koreanization” of Koryō Canon, 61–62; and reprinting of Koryō Canon, 45–50, 54, 56; Sōma on, 181–82; Spiritual Development Movement under, 185–86, 187, 201–2, 221; spiritual mobilization drive under, 185–86; and symbolic value of Koryō Canon, 54–56, 65–66; Taiwanese Buddhism under, 222–24; treatment of Koreans under, 171–72; uprising against, 90, 146, 171, 191; Yu as collaborator under, 131–34, 136–37, 138
- Jing'an, 225
- Jinlin Clinic, 270
- Joint School of Sōn Kyo, 188, 189, 190
- Kakhwangsa: and Buddha's Birthday Festival, 88; and construction of great head temple, 207; and early efforts to centralize Korean Buddhism, 190, 191, 192, 193; evolution of, 198–200; meeting with Minami Jirō at, 204–7; plans to demolish, 202; as propagation hall, 236, 238; stupa erected at, 84, 86. *See also* great head temple
- Kanao Tanejirō, 38–39
- Kaneko Tei'ichi, 174
- Kang Sōng'in, 218
- Kang Taeryōn, 206
- Kang Yumun, 248–49
- Kanhwa Sōn, 287, 293
- Kasan Daigi, 175–76
- Katō Bunkyō, 188
- Katō Kankaku, 46, 47, 63
- Kawamura Tōki, 96
- Kim Chongnae, 242, 250–51, 253
- Kim Ch'unsō, 253
- Kim Hwegwang, 243
- Kim Ilsung, 280
- Kim Iryōp, 295, 297n45
- Kim Jung Il, 291
- Kim Ku, 109, 112, 133, 136
- Kim Kwisan, 258n80
- Kim Kyōngbong, 265
- Kim Kyōngju, 217
- Kim Kyōngsan, 143–44
- Kim Kyōng'un, 169–70

- Kim Mukcho, 196
- Kim Pömnin, 14n42, 82, 194, 196–97, 283
- Kim Ponyön, 258
- Kim Sangho, 196–97, 219–20, 263
- Kim Songnong, 232
- Kim Söngsu, 132
- Kim T'aehüp: and Buddha's Birthday Festival, 82, 92; and Kakhwangsa, 199–200, 209, 217; and propagation in Manchuria, 261, 263–64; and propagation of Buddhism, 232, 242, 248–49
- Kim Taeu, 197–98
- Kim Tonghwa, 215–16
- Kim Tonhüi, 47, 53
- Kim Ŭngman, 243–44
- Kim Unhyang, 266–67
- Kim Yunsik, 218
- kindergartens, 242
- Kitabatake Töryü, 76
- Kitano Kenpö, 78
- Kobayashi Genroku, 146
- Kodama Hideo, 195, 196
- kongan* (Ch. *gongan*; Jp. *köan*), 160, 161
- Kongju Propagation Hall, 243
- Korea: efforts to establish Hana matsuri in, 90–93; indigenous version of Buddha's Birthday in, 87–89; modernization and popularization of Buddha's Birthday Festival in, 102–3; Söma's activities in, 153–65; transnational contact and Buddha's Birthday Festival in, 82–87. *See also* Seoul
- “Korean Association of Eliminating the Cunning, The,” 138
- Korean Buddhism* (journal), 147, 152, 174, 181–83
- Korean Buddhism: bifurcation of, 280–83; in colonial era, 145–47, 234–35; conferences of, 259; Dharmapala's impact on, 85–87; as distinct from Japanese Buddhism, 2; early efforts to centralize, 188–94; historiography of, 25–29, 276–80; key discourses in colonial, 11–25; Korean Buddhist nationalism as key discourse of, 11–16; as lay tradition, 157; modernization of, 278–79; monastic-centeredness of modern, 294–96; postwar transnationalism in, 292–94; reassertion of, in Buddhist history, 60–62; regional unity in, 202–4; reliance of, on state, 283–85; represented by Toh at Pacific Buddhist Youth Conference, 1–4, 29–30; scholarship on, 106–7; socialization of, 177–80; Takahashi on, 176–78; threats to, 83–84n74; and transnationalism, 3–4, 5–11
- Korean Buddhist nationalism, 11–16
- Korean Industrial Exhibition (Chösen bussan kyöshinkai), 45, 47–48
- Korean nationalism, 129–42, 286
- Korean Provisional Government, 112, 123–24, 130–31, 133–34
- Koryö Canon: function of, 32; history of, 31–32; Japanese attempts to obtain, 32, 40; as national and international emblem, 291–92; 1915 printing of, 44–50; 1937 printing of, 50–54; “rediscovery” of, 32–34, 36–40; “re-Koreanization” of, 60–62; scholarship concerning, 62–63; translation of, 284; transnational dimension of, 8, 62–65; value of, 32, 34–36, 40–44, 48–49, 54–60, 65–66; Yu Guanbin on, 126n72
- Koryösa, 123–28, 140, 292–93
- Koryösönsa, 260, 298
- Kümch'ön, 242n24

- Kurosaki Yūji, 76
 Kwanŭm Temple, 261–64, 265, 266
 Kwŏn Chunghyŏn, 146
 Kwŏn Sangno, 125–27, 128, 248–49
 Kwŏn T'aesik, 206
 Kyerimsa, 270–71
 Kyomuwŏn, 193, 194, 241
 Kyŏng'un, Master, 169–70
- lantern festivals, 87–88, 288–90
 Li Guibai (Gilbert Reid), 114
 Liu Fengming, 123
 locative pluralism, 103
 Lotus Lantern Festival, 288–90. *See also* Buddha's Birthday Festival
 lunar calendar, 80–81, 91, 97, 100
 Luo Jialing, 40
- Magoksa, 243–44
 Maha Bodhi Society, 73, 85–86
 Makitō Tetsuzō, 29–30
 Manam, Master, 200
 Manchukuo: and printing of Koryŏ Canon, 50, 56; propagation hall boom and, 246, 248; and propagation of Korean Buddhism, 23, 233, 257, 260, 267–69
 Manchuria, propagation in, 235, 257–60; and central institution of Korean Buddhism, 269–73; and Manchukuo government, 267–69; role of lay Buddhists in, 265–67; Spiritual Development Movement's influence on, 260–65
 March First Independence Uprising (1919), 146, 171, 191
 marriage, among Korean monastics, 156–57, 160, 178, 179, 281, 284–85
 Matsumoto Torakichi, 33
 “Measure of Governing Korean Buddhism, The” (Han Yong'un), 211–12
- Meiji, Emperor, 45, 48–49
 Minami Jirō, 50, 51, 204–7
 missionization. *See* propagation
 “Mission of Islam to Korea, The,” 111
 monastic-centeredness of modern Korean Buddhism, 294–96
 Mongjŏngsaeng, 260
 Moriwaki Takayuki, 90
 mountain Buddhism, 170–71. *See also* Korean Buddhism
 Mubutsu Koji. *See* Abe Mitsui
 Mugade Tetsudō, 123, 133
 Müller, Max, 40
 Murakami Ryūkichi, 57
 Murakami Senshō, 55
 Museum of the Government General, 48
- Nag, Kalidas, 83–84n74
 Nakamura Kentarō, 91, 146, 151, 152, 174, 181
 Nanjō Bunyū, 40, 41
 nationalism: Buddhist, 4, 11–16, 296; Korean, 129–42, 286
 New Youth Association for Buddhization (Fohua xin qingnianhui), 116
 Nikkan Temple, 252
 Ning Dayun, 116
 Nishi Honganji, 252
 North Korea, 280–82, 284, 288–89, 291
 Nukariya Kaiten, 163
 Nūngin yuch'iwŏn, 242n24
 nuns, 155–56, 295
- O Chaep'ung, 58
 O Myŏnjik, 136, 139
 Ōbaku Canon, 42
 Ōbakushū, 253
 Obon, 162
 Oda Mikijirō, 45–46, 47

- Ok (Oak) Kwanbin. *See* Yu
Guanbin
- Olcott, Henry Steel, 70–72, 76–77
- Öm Hyöngsun, 136, 139
- Ömotokyō, 208
- 105 Incident, 110–11
- Ono Genmyō, 38, 60
- Ouyang Jingwu, 120
- Öya Tokujō, 64
- Pacific Buddhist Youth Conference,
1–5, 29–30, 61, 62
- Paedal yuch'iwön, 242n24
- Paek Söng'uk, 14n42, 59–60, 82, 112,
150n10, 283
- Paek Yönggi, 265
- Paek Yongsöng, 10, 85, 148–49, 238,
258, 268
- Paekchung, 162
- Pak Chubin, 57
- Pak Noyöng, 14n42
- Pak Songp'a, 252
- Pak Yönghui, 206
- Pali-language canons, 40, 42
- pan-Asianism, 107–8, 141
- Panchen Lama (ninth), 98, 99
- Pang Hanam. *See* Hanam, Master
- parish system, 177
- pastoral power, 17
- Pawer, A., 83
- Pinjiazang*, 40, 41, 55, 61
- Poch'ön'gyo, 186, 200, 207–8, 216
- p'ogyo*, 22, 237–39
- p'ogyodang*, 22–23
- Pohwamun, 210
- political rationality, 20
- Pömnyun, 281
- Pömö Temple, 154–64, 171, 174, 287
- Pöpt'a, 281
- Prajadhipok, King, 82
- propagation, 20–24, 274–75; and
adaptation of Korean Buddhism
to colonial context, 234–35; Bud-
dhist governmentality and, 273–
74; as distinctive characteristic of
modern Buddhism, 231–32; early
efforts concerning, in colonial
Korea, 239–42; Korean Buddhist
interest in, 293–94; modern fea-
tures of, 242–45; and monastic-
centeredness of modern Korean
Buddhism, 295–96; programs fa-
cilitating, 233–34; and Spiritual
Development Movement, 21–23;
and spread of Christianity, 173;
of Sri Lankan Buddhism, 70; and
terms *fukyō* and *p'ogyo*, 237–39;
Toh and discourse of, 4–5. *See*
also Manchuria, propagation in;
propagation halls
- propagation halls: and Buddhist
wedding ceremonies, 244–45;
emergence of, 22–23; increase
in, 234–35, 246–49; in Japan, 250–
57; legal status of, 235, 236–37; re-
lationship of, to Manchukuo
government, 267–69; as sites of
Buddhist learning and spiritual
formation, 245; and women's
Buddhist associations, 243–44
- Protestant Buddhism, 70
- Pulgyo*, 86–87, 125
- Pulgyo sibo*, 261, 266
- Puyi, Emperor, 50–54
- Pyön Tonghwa, 124–25
- Rambai Barni, Queen, 82
- Regulations for the Control of Mon-
asteries and Temples, 225
- Reid, Gilbert (Li Guibai), 114
- religion: in formation of national-
ism, 11; as transnational force, 5
“religion economy,” 286
- Religions Law, 255–56

- religious governmentality, 17–18
 Religious Organizations Law, 227
 Renshan, 129
 Rhee, Syngman, 282–83
Richō bukkyō (Takahashi Tōru),
 176–78
 Rinzai lineage, 148–49
 Roos, Lisa, 40
- Saitō Makoto, 146, 191
 Śākyamuni, 76, 84
 Samu Sūnim, 1n1, 292n35, 297n46
 Sangwōnsa, 166–68
 Sankrityayana, Rahul, 83n74
 Sano Zenrei, 188
 Sanskrit-language canons, 40
 Satō Rakuseki (or Satō Hiroshi),
 32–34, 36–37, 40, 56–57
 Satow, Ernest, 38
 secular governmentality, 17–18
 Sekino Tadashi, 37–38, 57
 Seoul: ethnic division of, 94; mod-
 ernization and popularization
 of Buddha's Birthday Festival in,
 93–96, 102–3; opening of T'aegosa
 in, 184–88
 Shaku Kōzen, 76
 Shaku Sōen, 76
 Shaku Unshō, 189
 Shanghai, 112, 137
 Shin bukkyō seinenkai, 77–78
 Shinppō Chōji, 271–72
 Shiobara Tokisaburō, 51
 Sibilchōn, 207–11, 214, 216. *See also*
 great head temple
 Sim Kich'un, 261, 265
 Sino-Japanese War, 181–82
 Smith, Art, 78–79
 Society for Supporting Sōn Fellows
 (Sōnu kongjehoe), 157
 Society of the Propagation of Bud-
 dhism, 20
- Sōma Shōei, 10–11; birth and early
 life of, 143n1; in colonial Korea,
 153–65; impact of writings of, 174–
 82; on Japanese and Korean Bud-
 dhism, 170–73; meets Abe, 150–51;
 as participant in colonial dis-
 course, 151–53; relationship of,
 with Korean Buddhism, 143–44;
 returns to Japan, 181; searches for
 masters, 166–70; sponsored by
 Association of Korean Buddhism,
 147; writings of, 144
 Sōn Buddhism, 144, 149, 162, 166,
 180, 217, 218. *See also* Chan Bud-
 dhism; Zen Buddhism
 Son Sunbok, 253
 Sōn temples, 156. *See also* Pōmō
 Temple
 Song Ch'ando, 261, 265
 Song Chonghōn, 200
 Sōtōshū, 185, 190, 196, 253
 South Seas Buddhist Association
 (Ch. Nanying fojiaohui; Jp. Nan'e
 bukkyōkai), 223
 spicy food, 159
 Spiritual Development Movement
 (Shinden kaihatsu undō): and
 centralization of Korean Bud-
 dhist governmentality, 185–86,
 187, 201–2, 221; and propagation
 of Korean Buddhism, 231–33, 246–
 48, 255, 257, 260–65
 Sri Lanka, 12, 70–75
 Sri Lankan Buddhism, 20, 70–71
 Starr, Frederick, 89
 State Shintō, 18
 Sumangala, Hikkaduve, 20, 71
 Sun Yat-sen, 111, 224, 225
 superstitious religions, 75, 97, 186,
 208, 223, 268
*Supplement to the Canon (Zoku Dai-
 zōkyō)*, 42

- Suungyo, 211
 Suzuki Daisetsu, 150
 Suzuki Tenzan, 196, 201
- Taebömnöe*, 129
 Taegakkyo, 85, 210, 254, 258, 268
 T'aegosa (Chogyo Temple), 184–88, 216–19, 283, 284, 285–87
 Taeja yuch'iwön, 242n24
 Taijō Temple, 181
Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō, 60, 63–64
 Taiwanese Buddhism, 222–24
 Taixu: approach of, to Republican China, 68; and bridge building between Korean and Chinese Buddhism, 9–10, 123, 125, 126, 128, 129; and Chinese Buddhist governmentality, 224, 225–26; Chinese transnational Buddhist movement of, 107–8; and date of Buddha's Birthday Festival, 80–81, 99; Helen Chu on, 139–40n125; and Koryō Canon, 41; and propagation of Buddhism, 20–21, 238; and Yu as key lay Buddhist leader, 118–20, 122–23; Yu as disciple of, 106, 113–18, 140; and Yu's assassination, 139
- Takahashi Tōru, 50, 51–54, 157, 176–80
 Takakusu Junjirō, 59–60
 Takeda Hanshi, 38, 39, 189
 T'anhō, 209
 T'ap monastery, 165
 "Temple Complex Koryōsa That Commemorates the Centuries-Long Relationship between the Two Buddhisms, The," 127–28
 Temple Ordinance of 1902, 22, 188, 189, 202
 Temple Ordinance of 1911: abbots under, 203, 214; and early efforts to centralize Korean Buddhism, 190–92; after establishment of great head temple system, 228; establishment of new temples under, 214–15, 236; extended to Manchuria, 235; Koryō Canon protected by, 45; marriage of Korean monastics under, 156–57; nullification of, 283; and operation of Korean Buddhism, 29–30, 145–46; propagation under, 22, 23, 236
- Temple Purification Movement, 255
 temple-stay programs, 290–91
 Terauchi Masatake, 39, 45, 46–49, 57–59, 110–11, 148, 190–91
 Tibetan canon, 42
 Toh Chinho, 1–5, 29–30, 61, 100, 259–60, 297–99
 Tokugawa Ieyasu, 56
 Tokutomi Ichirō (or Tokutomi Sohō), 55–56, 148
 Tokuzawa Chiezō, 76
 Tokyo, Buddha's Birthday Festival in, 75–82
 Tominaga Fumiichi, 205–6
 T'ongdosa, 89
Tonggwang, 134–35
 Tong'un, 203
 tourism, 289–91
 Tōyama Kassan, 176
 Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 55–56
 transnational Buddhism, 6, 129–42
 transnationalism, 3–4, 5–11, 28, 144–45, 279–80, 292–94
Tripitaka Koreana. See Koryō Canon
 Tripitaka ritual, 52
- Ueno Shūn'ei, 196
 Ugaki Kazushige, 201–2
 Ūich'ōn, 126
 Ulsan Propagation Hall, 243

- United Office of the Thirty Head Temples, 190
- unsui*: leave Pömö Temple, 163–64; masters of, 166; Sōma as, 10–11, 144, 145, 153–54, 181–82; spirit of, 153–54, 164–65; threats to, 156
- urban Buddhism, 170–71. *See also* Japanese Buddhism
- Village Revitalization Movement (Nōson kōsei undō), 185–86
- Wang Xiaoxu, 120
- Watanabe Kaigyoku, 60
- “Ways to Revitalize Chinese Buddhism” (Yu Guanbin), 120–21
- wedding ceremonies, Buddhist, 244–45
- Wesak, 71–74. *See also* Buddha’s Birthday Festival
- Wölchöngsa, 166, 168n63, 220–21
- women, and propagation in Manchuria, 266–67
- women’s Buddhist associations, 77–78, 243–44, 295
- Wönhüngsa, 188–90, 198
- Wönjong, 189–90
- World Buddhist Conference (first held in 1923), 116
- World Buddhist Federation (Shijie fojiao lianhehui), 116
- Yamada Kenkichi, 121
- Yamagata Isaburō, 49
- Yamagata Isoo, 111
- Yamauchi Reimyō, 49
- Yanagi Sōetsu, 55–56
- Yang Tuhwan, 253, 255, 256
- Yang Wenhui, 40, 59
- Yi Chaesun, 39
- Yi Ch’anggūn, 154–57
- Yi Chigwang, 248–49, 263
- Yi Chong’uk, 206, 209–10, 219–22, 263, 269–71, 272–73
- Yi Haedam, 268
- Yi Hoegwang: and early efforts to centralize Korean Buddhism, 192–94; and evolution of Kakhwangsa, 198–99; on Kakhwangsa, 238; and Koryō Canon, 39, 44, 57, 58; on relocation of T’aegosa, 217; and Wönhüngsa, 189
- Yi Kapdök, 263
- Yi Kogyōng, 254
- Yi Kūnu, 254
- Yi Kwangsu, 112, 132
- Yi Nūnghwa, 41, 244
- Yi Tingda, 119
- Yi Wönsök, 146
- Yi Yōngjae, 82–83, 85n82
- Yi Yongjo, 270
- Yi Yun’gūn, 262, 263, 265
- Yinguang, 99
- Yō Unhyōng, 136
- Yong T’aeyōng, 289
- Yoshiko Ashiwa, 113–14
- Young Men’s Buddhist Associations (YMBAs), 77–78
- Young Women’s Buddhist Associations (YWBAs), 77–78
- youth groups, 77–78
- Yu Chengbin, 110, 112, 138–39
- Yu Chongmuk, 254
- Yu Guanbin (Ok [Oak] Kwanbin), 110, 115; assassination of, 105, 108, 129, 136–37, 138, 139; and bridge building between Korean and Chinese Buddhism, 123–29; as caught between Korean nationalism and Chinese Buddhist transnationalism, 129–42; gains Chinese citizenship, 130, 131; impact of, on modern Korean and Chinese Buddhism, 106–7; international work of, 105–6;

- Yu Guanbin (Ok [Oak] Kwanbin),
(continued)
 involvement of, in Buddhacization
 Movement, 9–10, 113–18; as key
 lay Buddhist leader, 118–23; life of,
 109–13; memorial service for, 139–
 40; metamorphosis of political
 views and personal ambitions
 of, 131–32; and reconstruction of
 Koryŏsa, 293; and transnational
 Buddhist movement, 107–8
- Yuanying, 129
- Yun Ch'ihŏ, 100, 132, 133, 136,
 246–47
- Yun Ponggil, 137–38
- Yun T'aehŭng, 58
- Zen Buddhism: and Abe Mitsue,
 148–50; differences between Japa-
 nese and Korean, 162; and impact
 of Sōma's writings, 174–80; Sōma
 on Japanese and Korean, 170–73;
 and Sōma's activities in Korea,
 153–65; and Sōma's identity as
unsui, 153–54; and Sōma's search
 for masters, 166–70; transcultural
 ideology of, 10–11. *See also* Chan
 Buddhism; Sŏn Buddhism
- Zen Buddhist spirituality, 19
- Zhang Zongzai, 116
- Zhi Feng, 130
- Zōjō Temple, 55–56
- Zongyang, 40, 41



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