Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu and the Existential Dimensions of Modern Korean Buddhism

Jin Y. Park

Journal of Korean Religions, Volume 10, Number 2, October 2019, pp. 247-274 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu and the Existential Dimensions of Modern Korean Buddhism

Jin Y. Park

Abstract

What would be the attraction of religion in modern times? And how do religious practitioners come to encounter the religious dimensions of their existence? This article examines Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu's Buddhism with a focus on his struggle to define human existential reality. I will examine his life story and identify the nature of the religiosity of Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism and consider the meaning of religious practice in our time. By doing so, I propose to reconsider the beginning of modern Korean Buddhism. The beginning of modern Korean Buddhism should not be understood as the founding or revival of a certain sectarian identity of Korean Buddhism. Instead, through thematic approaches to what Kyŏnghŏ's life and Buddhism meant in terms of religious practice and how this religious practice was related to other Buddhist movements of the time, I propose to understand modern Korean Buddhism through the religious and socio-historical reality of modern Korea.

Keywords: Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu, modern Korean Buddhism, Sŏn Buddhism, Kanhwa Sŏn, existentialism

---

Jin Y. Park is professor of philosophy and religion and Founding Director of the Asian Studies Program at American University. Park specializes in Korean Sŏn and Hwaŏm Buddhism, Buddhist ethics, Buddhist-postmodern comparative philosophy, and modern East Asian philosophy. Her books include *Women and Buddhist Philosophy* (2017); *Reflections of a Zen Buddhist Nun* (2014); *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism* (2010); *Merleau-Ponty and Buddhism* (co-edited, 2009); *Buddhism and Postmodernity* (2008), and *Buddhisms and Deconstructions* (2006).
Correspondence: jypark@american.edu

This work was supported by the Academy of Korean Studies (KSPS) Grant funded by the Korean Government (MOE) (AKS-2012-AAZ-2102).

Journal of Korean Religions Vol. 10, No. 2 (October 2019): 247–274

Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu: A Life

Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu 鏡虛惺牛 (1849–1912) has been recognized as the founder of modern Korean Zen/Sŏn Buddhism or as the "revivalist" of Korean Sŏn Buddhism in modern times. It seems that there are two main reasons that Kyŏnghŏ has earned this title. The first is historical; the second, sectarian.

Historically, Kyŏnghŏ's position as the "founder" of modern Korean Sŏn has to do with periodization as well as the degree of his contribution to the establishment of contemporary Korean Sŏn Buddhism. Scholars tend to see 1893 as the beginning point of the modern period in Korean Buddhism (Kim Kyŏngjip 1998, 21; Kang and Pak 2002, 8). That was the year when the prohibition of monastics entering the capital city was removed. Among the most well-known figures before Kyŏnghŏ's time were Paekp'a Kŭngsŏn 白坡亘璇 (1767–1852) and Ch'oŭi Ŭisun 草衣意恂 (1786–1866).[1] Paekp'a proposed a systematization of Sŏn Buddhist teachings in his work *Sŏnmun sugyŏng* 禪門手鏡 (Hand mirror of the Sŏn school, 1820), and Ch'oŭi critically responded to Paekp'a's theory in his *Sŏnmun sabyŏn manŏ* 禪門四辨漫語 (Talks on the four divisions of the Sŏn school). One of the reasons neither Paekp'a nor Ch'oŭi is credited as a "founder" of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism is based on the argument that their Sŏn Buddhism was more theoretical than demonstrating Sŏn practice or the enlightenment experience. In contrast to Paekp'a's taxonomy, Kyŏnghŏ's story is one of awakening through the practice of *hwadu* 話頭 meditation. The Jogye (Chogye) Order, the largest Buddhist sect in contemporary Korea, takes Kanhwa Sŏn 看話禪, or *hwadu* meditation, as its core identity and major mode of practice. Kyŏnghŏ's enlightenment, in this context, provided the Jogye Order with a new beginning in which *hwadu* meditation proved its efficiency as a Sŏn practice; hence, Kyŏnghŏ received the title of founder of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism.[2]

Just as important as Kyŏnghŏ's level of practice is the fact that his disciples played a major role in the formation of the Jogye Order. Man'gong 滿空 (1871–1946), one of Kyŏnghŏ's disciples, was known as a leader of Korean Buddhism during the colonial period. Hanam 漢岩 (1876–1951), another of Kyŏnghŏ's disciples, was the inaugural Supreme Patriarch (*chongjŏng* 宗正) of the Jogye Order when it was established in 1941.[3] It is not surprising, then, that

the Jogye Order, a major Sŏn school in Korea, treats Kyŏnghŏ as the founder of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism.

An origin story is always related to the identity formation of an individual, society, or institution. It is not clear when Kyŏnghŏ was first named the founder of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism, or whether this title is in any way official.[4] On the other hand, the facts that (1) Kyŏnghŏ's enlightenment experience occurred through *hwadu* meditation, which the Jogye Order claims to be its core practice; (2) Kyŏnghŏ's disciples played main roles in the construction of the Jogye Order or modern Korean Sŏn Buddhist tradition; and (3) Kyŏnghŏ was recognized as a master by his disciples, all provide reasons for his title as "founder" of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism. As such, the question for our discussion concerns not the legitimacy of the title, but rather, whether that title might not have done a disservice to Kyŏnghŏ's legacy. Naming has a tendency to simplify the complexity that the name and the person's life behind that name entail. By delving more into what lies behind the title, we may better discern why Kyŏnghŏ is one of the major figures in modern Korean Buddhism, regardless of his position as its "founder" or "revivalist." To take that path, let us begin with the story of his life.

According to his biographical record, Kyŏnghŏ joined Ch'ŏnggye Monastery in 1857 at the age of nine.[5] Kyŏnghŏ's mother had been the family's sole support after the death of her husband and thought that a monastery would be a better place for her son than the marketplace. Kyŏnghŏ received the novice precepts (*samigye* 沙彌戒) at age fourteen in 1862. Later that year, Kyŏnghŏ's teacher Kyehŏ left the priesthood and so sent Kyŏnghŏ to Master Manhwa at Tonghak Monastery, where Kyŏnghŏ was to spend the next eighteen years.

Master Manhwa 萬化普善 (dates unknown) was a well-known lecturer of Buddhist scriptures. Recognizing Kyŏnghŏ's talent, Manhwa accepted him as his disciple and Kyŏnghŏ quickly absorbed Buddhism. In 1871, Kyŏnghŏ was appointed a lecturer of Buddhist scriptures (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 422/424).[6] He was only twenty-three. His fame as a sutra-lecturer spread quickly and people came to listen to his lectures from various parts of Korea. An incident that took place in 1879 would completely change Kyŏnghŏ's approach to Buddhism.

In the summer of 1879, Kyŏnghŏ wanted to visit his former teacher, Kyehŏ, after a decade-long separation. On the way, he passed through a village that had suffered a cholera outbreak. Kyŏnghŏ's disciple, Pang Hanam 方漢岩 (1876–1951), described the incident as follows:

> One day, Kyŏnghŏ thought about former teacher Kyehŏ, who took care of him as if he were his own child. Kyŏnghŏ wanted to visit him. After informing the monastery members of this plan, he went on his way. In the middle of the journey, Kyŏnghŏ was caught in a rainstorm. Hurriedly he tried to take shelter from the rain under the eaves of a nearby house. But the owner of the house hurriedly drove him out, and he tried another without success. Dozens of houses in the village treated him in the same manner. As they sent him away, they shouted in rage: "The village is contaminated by a contagious disease that spares no living soul. Why would you want to come to such a deadly place?" Upon hearing these words, Kyŏnghŏ found himself shivering all over. Both his body and mind became feeble as if death had attacked him at that very moment. Life, it seemed, was equivalent to the breath he was breathing, and all the things in the world looked like mountains in a dream. (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 400/408–409; Park 2007, 134–135)

The experience of being expelled from an epidemic-stricken village had a life-changing impact on Kyŏnghŏ's mortal understanding of not only human existence but also the meaning of his Buddhist practice. After the incident, Kyŏnghŏ aborted his trip to Seoul and returned to the monastery, where he announced the dismissal of his students.

When one realizes the reality of death, at least two possible responses are available. The first is to be a pessimist about human existence, and the second is to believe that experiencing the imminence of death leads the individual to find new meaning for existence. The latter is where human mortality opens a path to religiosity. In response to the incident described above, Kyŏnghŏ moved further into what we might call religious practice.

After returning to Tonghak Monastery, Kyŏnghŏ told his students, "I bid you farewell; please find your path according to your karma. My intentions and wishes do not lie in [studying Buddhist scriptures]" (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991,

400/409; Park 2007, 135). Kyŏnghŏ found his "intentions and wishes" in the *hwadu* meditation of Zen Buddhism, which he now dedicated himself to completely, negating efficiency and doctrinal teaching. Kyŏnghŏ's transformation from a sutra lecturer to a *hwadu* practitioner can easily be read—especially in the context of Korean Sŏn Buddhism—as living proof and endorsement of the superiority of Sŏn meditation over doctrinal study. However, if we place the event in the context of Kyŏnghŏ's life, the interpretation of Sŏn or meditation Buddhism versus scholastic approaches to Buddhism diminishes the meaning of this change by limiting the scope to sectarian competition. Although Kyŏnghŏ gave up the doctrinal approach to Buddhism and turned to *hwadu* meditation, a broader meaning of this change is that Kyŏnghŏ entered the religious world by exiting a world in which he had more scholastic interest. We do not know what were the major modes of Buddhist practice for Kyŏnghŏ before he took up *hwadu* meditation. Sutra lecturers are not necessarily religious, but we tend to default to the assumption that they should be. As we will explore later, I propose approaching Kyŏnghŏ's change from doctrinal to meditational Buddhism as a religious and existential, rather than sectarian, incident.

Hwadu practice was introduced to Korean Buddhism by Pojo Chinul 普照知訥 (1158–1210) at the end of the twelfth century. In his posthumous work, "Resolving Doubts about Hwadu Meditation" (*Kanhwa kyŏrŭiron* 看話訣疑論), Chinul adopts Chinese Chan Master Dahui Zonggao's 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) Kanhua Chan and recommends *hwadu* meditation as a "short-cut" approach to awakening. *Hwadu* meditation employs a word or phrase as a device to assist concentration and mental breakthrough. The idea is to progress beyond common-sense logic, which constantly keeps us in the taken-for-granted understanding of the world. In that taken-for-granted mode of thinking, there is life, and there is death; there is morning, afternoon, and evening. Once we are trapped in the circuitousness of daily events and the superficial understanding of reality, it is easy to miss the depth of our existence. The depth of existence can include diverse things and events in life, ranging from the existential reality of human mortality to the beauty of the blue sky or the sweetness of a well ripen watermelon. How does one describe the blue sky the day after a rain? Just saying "blue" does not do justice to the embodied experience of

seeing the blue sky with the feeling of cool wind. To describe this embodied experience of the blue sky is as impossible as to explain why we all die or why we were born to begin with. *Hwadu* meditation of Sŏn Buddhism utilizes certain words or phrases to help practitioners pass through the thickness of the surface of secular life and reach the depth of existence. Unenlightened everyday people usually regard the words or phrases in *hwadu* practice as counterintuitive. From Zen Buddhism's perspective, the counterintuitive nature of *hwadu* phrases represents how much our mental activities are conditioned by the fixed logic of the constructed understanding of existence.

When Kyŏnghŏ first tried to practice *hwadu* meditation, his problem was deeper than those of people who are wrapped in common-sense logic. Having been a lecturer of Buddhism, Kyŏnghŏ was too well-versed in various Buddhist texts—including the collection of *hwadu* phrases. He was not able to cut off the habit of literally interpreting *hwadu* phrases; in fact, *hwadu* phrases themselves had become common sense to Kyŏnghŏ.

Finally, the situation changed when he encountered a phrase by Master Lingyun Zhiqin 靈雲志勤 (?–866) of the Tang Dynasty. The phrase derived from a dialogue in which a Zen practitioner asks Lingyun: "What is the great meaning of the Buddhist teaching?" Lingyun replies: "The work of a donkey is yet to be done; the work of a horse has already arrived" (驢事未去 馬事到來).[7] For some reason, this *hwadu* was like "a silver mountain and iron wall" to Kyŏnghŏ (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 401/409; Park 2007, 135). He could not understand its meaning, nor could he find a clue to interpret the phrase. This was the *hwadu* for him. Holding onto this *hwadu*, Kyŏnghŏ sequestered himself indoors.

Months went by while Kyŏnghŏ struggled with the *hwadu*. When sleep threatened, he would prick his thigh with a gimlet. He also kept himself awake by keeping a sharpened knife below his chin. After three months of this passed, a breakthrough was about to occur. One day, a monk at the monastery came to Kyŏnghŏ and asked him the meaning of a passage that the lay Buddhist Yi had told him in the village: "A monk might become a cow, but he would have no nostrils."[8] Upon hearing this passage, Kyŏnghŏ felt that the entire world had changed. Hanam describes the incident as follows:

> When the monk mentioned about the cow without nostrils, Master Kyŏnghŏ's expression changed. It was as if a message from the time before the Buddha's birth was suddenly revealed to him. The earth flattened, as subject and object were both forgotten. Kyŏnghŏ had arrived at the state which the ancient masters called the land of great rest. A hundred or a thousand dharma talks, and inconceivable and mysterious truths, opened themselves as if a layer of ice had been broken or a tile cracked. This happened on the fifteenth day of November in the year of the Rabbit [1879], the sixteenth year of King Kojong's reign. (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 401/404; Park 2007, 136)

In the aforementioned work on *hwadu* meditation, Chinul says that when practicing *hwadu* meditation, students should concentrate on the critical phrase (or *hwadu*) without trying to interpret or analyze it. As this practice continues, Chinul advises, "all of a sudden, the flavorless and groundless *hwadu* explodes as if shaking the earth, and the *dharmadhātu* [the world of reality] becomes utterly clear" (Chinul 1979b, 735a). The record of Kyŏnghŏ's awakening experience reflects what Chinul described as a way to practice *hwadu*. Several months after his awakening, Kyŏnghŏ composed "Song of Enlightenment" (Odoga 悟道歌), in which he wrote:

> Upon hearing that there are no nostrils,
> I realized that the entire world is my home;
> On the path under Yŏnam Mountain in June,
> People in the field enjoy their time, singing a song of good harvest.
> (忽聞人語無鼻孔 頓覺三千是我家 六月鷰巖山下路 野人無事太平歌.)
> (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 340/343; Park 2007, 136)

In the sectarian discourse of the Jogye Order, Kyŏnghŏ's awakening through the practice of *hwadu* meditation confirms the efficiency of *hwadu* practice. In the context of the existentialist discourse in which we try to locate Kyŏnghŏ's life, the awakening event indicates that his encounter with the human condition in the form of witnessing death at a cholera-stricken village led Kyŏnghŏ to move deeper into the meaning of his existence. This existential

movement is facilitated through the religious practice of *hwadu* meditation. How is Kyŏnghŏ's *hwadu* practice as a sectarian endorsement of the efficiency of Sŏn meditation—as opposed to the doctrinal training—different from *hwadu* as a religious practice? We will turn to this issue shortly. Before that, let us ask some additional questions.

How did Kyŏnghŏ so quickly turn to *hwadu* meditation after giving up doctrinal studies? Was he aware of the practice, or did he meet a *hwadu* practitioner? No clear evidence is available to answer these questions, but we can reconstruct historical scenes based on existing historical materials. In this context, one relevant resource is Yi Nŭnghwa's 李能和 (1869–1943) description of meditation practice, which appears in *History of Korean Buddhism* (*Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa* 朝鮮佛教通史). In the section that discusses Buddhism in the modern period, Yi describes Taech'i Yu Honggi 大致 劉鴻基 (1831–?) and the emergence of meditation practice in Seoul among the reformists who led the coup of 1884, or the Kapsin coup (*Kapsin chŏngbyŏn* 甲申政變). Around 1882, a small group of young Korean intellectuals created the Enlightenment Party (Kaehwadang 開化黨). According to Yi, the members of the Enlightenment Party followed Yu Taech'i, who loved to engage in discourse about Sŏn Buddhism. His efforts created a boom of Sŏn in Seoul (Yi 1918, 898–899). Yi also points out that the members of the Enlightenment Party tried to put the teachings of Buddhism into practice, which party members learned from Yu Taech'i.

The details of Yu Taech'i's and the Enlightenment Party members' Buddhist practice requires a separate study, but this piece of information helps us contextualize Kyŏnghŏ's turn to Sŏn meditation. Kyŏnghŏ gave up doctrinal teaching in 1879 and immediately began to practice Sŏn meditation. The Enlightenment Party was established around 1882, and the Kapsin Coup occurred in 1884. Yu Taech'i's teaching of Buddhism and the boom of Sŏn practice in Seoul must have happened before 1882. Most likely, Kyŏnghŏ was aware of this new trend in Seoul. Yu Taech'i's whereabouts after the failure of the Kapsin Coup are unknown. The coup cost hundreds of lives, and Yu must have been one such casualty. The short-lived ambition to realize Buddhist teaching in the enlightened Korea also died out. Around 1904, Kyŏnghŏ disappeared into the northern part of the Korean Peninsula.

Isolation, Displacement, and Discord in the "Song of Enlightenment"

Looking around, I find no one nearby.
To whom shall I give this robe and bowl?
To whom should I transmit them?
Looking around, I find no one nearby.
(四顧無人 衣鉢誰傳 衣鉢誰傳 四顧無人.)
(Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 339/340; Park 2007, 136)

This is the beginning of Kyŏnghŏ's "Song of Enlightenment." The composition of an enlightenment song is a well-established tradition in Zen Buddhism. An enlightenment poem is considered living proof of the "happening" of the Buddha's teaching in the practitioner's life. It evidences that the gap between the practitioner and Buddhist teachings has been closed and that the subject-object dualism in their relationship overcome.

Kyŏnghŏ's "Song of Enlightenment," however, does not exactly match this idea. The poem hardly conveys a mood of celebration. Instead, Kyŏnghŏ begins his poem by expressing a sense of alienation: "Looking around, I find no one nearby." He bemoans that there is nobody to pass over the "robe" and "bowl," symbols of enlightenment and its transmission in Zen Buddhist tradition. Before we learn about the nature of his enlightenment and share the joy of that event in the poem, we hear him deploring his sense of alienation and of the distance between him and the world. This gap is identified here as related to dharma lineage, as he states: "To whom shall I give this robe and bowl?"

Kyŏnghŏ's biography shows that he was doubly disconnected from tradition: Not only was there no one to whom he could transmit the robe and bowl, there also was no one from whom he received transmission.[9] We can take the quoted passage in the "Song of Enlightenment" literally to mean that Kyŏnghŏ was worried about his lack of disciples, but also about not having had a teacher to endorse his awakening. If so, his sense of alienation and of the gap between him and the world would be resolved in his later years when he transmitted his dharma to his four disciples: Suwŏl 水月 (1855–1928), Hyewŏl 慧月 (1861–1937), Man'gong, and Hanam.[10] These prominent figures in modern Korean Buddhism not only received Kyŏnghŏ's dharma lineage but also played a significant role in the formation of modern Korean Buddhism.

Hanam's record of Kyŏnghŏ's life also tells us that Kyŏnghŏ did resolve the problem of having no dharma teacher. In the winter of 1879–1880, Kyŏnghŏ moved to Ch'ŏnjang hermitage, where his mother and elder brother were staying. One day at this hermitage, he is said to have declared before a gathered assembly that he had received the transmission from Yongam Hyean 龍岩慧彦 (1783–1841) (*Kyŏnghŏ* 1990–1991, 422/425). Hanam records this incidence as follows in his "Sŏnsa Kyŏnghŏ hwasang haengjang" 禪師鏡虛和尙行狀 (Biography of Sŏn Master Kyŏnghŏ):

> In the school of the patriarchs [viz. Sŏn], there exists a principle and standard for transmitting the mind-dharma, which no one can disrupt.... The recognition of the transmission of dharma from teacher to disciple has been strict because dharma has been transmitted from mind to mind, and mutual recognition takes place through mind... in the future, with regard to the origin of my dharma lineage, you should record as its source the dharma of Master Yongam, whose dharma-transmission I have received, and lecturer Manhwa should be recorded as my training teacher. (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 401/411; Park 2007, 136–137)[11]

Hanam further clarifies the lineage by saying that Kyŏnghŏ was the twelfth descendant of Ch'ŏnghŏ Hujŏng 淸虛休靜 (1520–1604) and the seventh descendent of Hwansŏng Chian 喚醒志安 (1664–1729).[12] This act of connecting his teaching with Yongam's has symbolic meaning, but, since Yongam died before Kyŏnghŏ was born, it could also be an answer to his own question: "To whom should I transmit the robe and bowl?" In Zen Buddhist tradition, to identify one's dharma master and thus to confirm the legitimacy of the dharma lineage is equivalent to proving the authenticity of one's awakening. This is because, as Kyŏnghŏ clarified in the passage quoted above, the school is based on mind-to-mind transmission. One's dharma teacher's recognition is the only certificate for enlightenment, its seal of authenticity. Scholars see Kyŏnghŏ's declaration of his dharma lineage as an effort to reconnect the disconnected tradition of Zen Buddhism in Korea, and revive the tradition in modern times. As such, Kyŏnghŏ has been accredited as the founder or reviver of modern Korean Zen Buddhism.

Did Kyŏnghŏ really find an answer to his lamentation by transmitting his dharma to his four disciples and declaring Master Yongam his dharma teacher? Doesn't the sense of isolation, discord, and displacement expressed in his enlightenment poem indicate something more intrinsic than a lack of *dharma* lineage?

A short episode entitled "A Conversation with a Woodcutting Boy on Majŏng Hill" (於馬亭嶺與樵童問答) provides an incident for thought in this context. Kyŏnghŏ was on his way back to Haein monastery after begging practice in Majŏng, a village about a half mile from the monastery (Choe 1993, 536–556). Below, I offer the entire episode:

> As the master was passing Majŏng Hill, he noticed a group of woodcutting boys enjoying moments of leisure. The master asked the children:
>
> "Kids, do you know who I am?"
>
> "No," replied the children.
>
> "Do you see me then?" The master asked.
>
> "Yes, we see you."
>
> "How do you see me when you do not know me?" the master asked. He then offered his stick to the children and said: "If you hit me with this stick, I will give you money for cookies."
>
> Having heard this offer, one smart child among them came forward and asked: "Are you serious?" And the child actually hit Kyŏnghŏ with the stick.
>
> "Hit me," the master insisted.
>
> The child hit him again, to which the master responded: "Why are you not hitting me? If you hit me with this stick, you can hit the Buddha and the patriarchs. You can hit Buddhas from the three worlds, and all the patriarchs up to now, and great masters in the world."
>
> "I hit you," the child complained, "and you say I didn't. I know you're cheating us so that you don't have to give us the money you promised."

> The master gave the child money and said: "The whole world is contaminated. I'm the only one who is awake. It would be better for me to just spend the rest of my life under the trees." (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 56–57/57–58; Kyŏnghŏ 1989, 596b)

Though simple and brief, this story is charged with the reverberations of well-known discourses in the Zen tradition. Kyŏnghŏ began his conversation with the woodcutting boys by raising the issue of identity, as in the dialogue between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu.

When Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 (?–?), the alleged founder of Zen Buddhism, visited Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (464–549), China, the latter asked Bodhidharma about his merit for having promoted Buddhism in various manners: by building temples, copying Buddhist scriptures, and supporting monastic communities. Bodhidharma refused to acknowledge the merits of the emperor's activities and instead advised him to accumulate real merit. Annoyed, the emperor asked Bodhidharma, "Who are you [to speak like that in front of me]?" "I don't know," Bodhidharma replied.

As in Bodhidharma's reply to Emperor Wu, when Kyŏnghŏ asked the children about his identity, there were multiple levels of meaning hidden in his words. For both Bodhidharma and Kyŏnghŏ, physical existence did not constitute one's identity. Seeing did not take place without knowing, and this knowing, in turn, could not be relied upon before an individual had awakened to his or her own nature. Considering this, it is only natural that the woodcutting boys playing on a mountainside had difficulty understanding Kyŏnghŏ's intention.

By luring the children to hit him, Kyŏnghŏ replayed another well-known idea in the Zen tradition, which is Linji's 臨濟義玄 (?–866) teaching of detachment from naming and the dharma, as is recorded in *Linji yulu* 臨濟語錄:

> Followers of the Way, if you want to get the kind of understanding that accords with the *Dharma*, never be misled by others. Whether you're facing inward or facing outward, whatever you meet up with, just kill it! If you meet a buddha, kill the buddha. If you meet a patriarch, kill the patriarch. If you meet an arhat, kill the arhat. If you meet your parents, kill your

> parents. If you meet your kinfolk, kill your kinfolk. Then for the first time you will gain emancipation, will not be entangled with things, will pass freely anywhere you wish to go. (Linji, 500b; Watson 1993, 52)

Like Linji in the above passage, Kyŏnghŏ insisted to the children on the importance of detachment by referencing the fact that Buddha and the patriarchs are only names.

Seen in juxtaposition with the episodes of Bodhidharma and Linji, Kyŏnghŏ's conversation with the woodcutting boys reflects the traditional Zen discourse. Like Bodhidharma and Linji, Kyŏnghŏ emphasized the immateriality of physical existence, the understanding of which leads to the Zen teaching of emptiness. Since beings are empty, Linji could instruct his students to kill the Buddha, the patriarchs, and all of those "names" until their real nature—emptiness—had emerged and the practitioner could free him or herself for the first time from the constraints imposed by conventional wisdom, thus exposing real wisdom.

By the same logic, Kyŏnghŏ insisted that the boys hit the "names" and the phantoms of those names until the real nature of being emerged. The awareness that a person needs to break up his or her attachment to names constitutes the first step toward awakening, and Kyŏnghŏ, in this episode, seems to attempt to teach the children the real meaning of disentangling themselves from names.

In all three cases, the narrative functions on the borderline between secular and religious discourses, i.e, what the Buddhist tradition takes as the conventional truth (Skt. *Saṃvṛti-satya*, K. *sokje* 俗諦) and ultimate truth (Skt. paramārtha-satya, K. *chinje* 眞諦). What happens when these two different levels of discourse collide? After experiencing a discomforting encounter between the two, Emperor Wu was described as bewildered about the meaning of Bodhidharma's response. Like Emperor Wu, many of Linji's students who were taught to murder names by killing buddhas, patriarchs, and parents must have had difficulty grasping the real meaning of their teacher's lessons. However ambiguous and quixotic the teachings might have seemed, neither Emperor Wu nor Linji's students came forward to stand against Bodhidharma or Linji. Their logic remained unchallenged as a valid, authentic truth and as a

promise that was to be fulfilled when the bewildered students were able to clear their minds through Buddhist practice. Despite the distance between Buddhist and secular logic, which must have confounded the unenlightened mind, the teachings about the ultimate truth in Bodhidharma's and Linji's stories were tolerated with further suggestions that the gap between the two worlds would be reconciled in a projected future.

In Kyŏnghŏ's story, the situation is totally different. As in the other two cases, in Kyŏnghŏ's episode, Buddhist teachings confront the secular discourse in which identities are defined by naming and individuals are recognized through their physical visibility. In this story, however, the end result is the defeat of the Buddhist discourse. Instead of making any attempt to understand Kyŏnghŏ's teaching, the smart child accuses the Zen master of trying to deceive him to save money. The old monk acknowledges his defeat, and the episode ends with a lamentation, in which Kyŏnghŏ once again expresses a sense of alienation and displacement, just as at the beginning and end of his "Song of Enlightenment."

The episode on Majŏng Hill is believed to have taken place when Kyŏnghŏ was staying at Haein monastery (around 1899), which was sometime before he disappeared into the northern region of Korea in 1904 at the age of fifty-six (Park 2007, 139). It occurred a few years after he met his disciples Suwŏl, Hyewŏl, and Man'gong, in 1884.

Why did Kyŏnghŏ want to play such a game with the children to begin with? In plain logic, it should be clear that the Zen master (and his teaching) and the woodcutting boys playing on the mountainside were not at the same level of maturity. No reader would expect the children to decipher Kyŏnghŏ's meaning when he asked them how they could see him without knowing him. Similarly, no one would expect the children to comprehend Kyŏnghŏ when he mentioned the meaning of attachment to dharma or the emptiness of naming. Defying this commonsense understanding of the situation, however, Kyŏnghŏ insisted on playing a game with the children, as if they were Emperor Wu or Linji's students in a Buddhist monastery. He even recorded this episode in writing.

Seen from this context, the existence or non-existence of disciples to transmit his dharma to might be a poor explanation for the sense of estrangement

expressed in the "Song of Enlightenment." Rather, the Majŏng Hill story and the "Song of Enlightenment" are both evidence of a change of cultural frame in modern times and they suggest that this is the frame in which modern Buddhism should place itself. The cultural environment has changed dramatically from the time of Bodhidharma and Linji and that of Chinul. To Kyŏnghŏ, the gap between Buddhist (religious) discourse and secular discourse became clear, and the former lost its validity when faced with the latter. Does this suggest that Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism failed in its confrontation with the secular worldview that prevails in the modern world? If so, what does it mean to say that he revived Sŏn Buddhist tradition in our age? We will try to answer these questions through a close analysis of Kyŏnghŏ's "Song of Enlightenment."

Existential Dimension of Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism and *Hwadu* Meditation

Kyŏnghŏ's "Song of Enlightenment" (Odoga 悟道歌) is a relatively long discourse in its entirety, and the actual enlightenment poem (Odosong 悟道頌) comes at its end. Kyŏnghŏ begins his "Song of Enlightenment" with the passage "To whom should I transmit the robe and bowl" and repeats this before he finishes the work.

Kyŏnghŏ's awakening took place in November of 1879. In the winter of 1880, he moved to Ch'ŏnjang hermitage, where his brother, Zen Master T'aehŏ, was staying with their mother (Park 2007, 136). The "Song of Enlightenment" was composed around June of that year. As such, six months elapsed between Kyŏnghŏ's actual awakening and the composition of the "Song of Enlightenment."

In the "Song of Enlightenment," we see two distinctive themes that do not seem to flow together neatly. The song is dominated by descriptions of Kyŏnghŏ's awareness of the nature of reality, which Kyŏnghŏ describes as a mode of existence in the world. As he describes it in this poem, the Huayan world of the non-obstruction of all things (事事無碍) is the reality that one sees at the level of enlightenment. In this awakened state, all appearances are representations of the Buddha's and bodhisattva's teachings, and lay people

are Vairocana Buddhas (張三李四本毘盧). This is a state that Kyŏnghŏ describes as "a stone man plays a flute and a wooden horse falls asleep" (石人唱笛 木馬打睡), the state of one's original mind, which is empty.

Visibly contrasted with such a state of awakening to the reality of the world are Kyŏnghŏ's concerns about those people who have yet to realize this state. Kyŏnghŏ worries that even though this is the state of all beings, unenlightened people think that only sages can experience awakening. Kyŏnghŏ laments that no one will be able to attain awakening with such an attitude, and extreme suffering will be the lot of those who do not attain awakening in this lifetime. In the poem, Kyŏnghŏ invites people to come to him and study Buddhism. He even tries to convince listeners that he knows what kind of suffering they will undergo if they do not practice in this lifetime because he has experienced it himself. After expressing all of these worries and concerns for those who have yet to realize the reality of their existence, Kyŏnghŏ states, "To whom should I transmit this robe and bowl/Looking around, I find nobody nearby."

Reading these passages in the context of the entire "Song of Enlightenment," we come to realize that Kyŏnghŏ's worries were not so much about the issues of his dharma lineage. Rather, Kyŏnghŏ's sense of estrangement, or alienation, seem to have a deeper origin that has more to do with existential questioning. In the previous section, I suggested interpreting this sense of alienation as a symptom of the modern world in which religious worldview has eroded and now fails to have a significant impact on peoples' lives. Kyŏnghŏ seems to have considered that possibility. In his enlightenment song, Kyŏnghŏ laments that he would sing a song about no-life or the state of awakening and immediately reminds himself that no one will understand the meaning of his song. Kyŏnghŏ wonders what the cause for the gap between him and the world might be, asking, "Is this because of the time, or is this my fate?" (Kyŏnghŏ 1989, 629a). Eventually, Kyŏnghŏ seems concerned about neither. His real concern appears to be the people who fail to see the importance of practice.

In this sense, Kyŏnghŏ's "Song of Enlightenment" is comparable to Wŏnhyo in "Awaken Your Mind and Practice" (*Palsim suhaengjang* 發心修行章). In this short piece, Wŏnhyo expresses his worries about sentient beings and the urgency of practice. Line by line, Wŏnhyo reminds his readers (or his

audience) of the reality of mortality and impermanence. At the end of "Awaken Your Mind and Practice," Wŏnhyo laments. "How long will you live not cultivating, vacantly passing the days and nights? How long will you live with an empty body, not cultivating it for your whole life? This body will certainly perish—what body will you have afterward? Isn't it urgent? Isn't it urgent?" (Wŏnhyo 1979, 841c; Muller 2012, 268).[13] "Wŏnhyo, the Unbridled" (Wŏnhyo pulgi 元曉不羈), the record on Wŏnhyo in the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) describes the last years of Wŏnhyo's life as follows: "He made songs to spread into the world, and with these songs he went to all the villages and hamlets; singing and dancing, he converted [people] with his hymns and retuned. He made sure that even the poorest homestead and those who were [as ignorant and misbehaved as] monkeys all knew the Buddha's names and could all chant the invocation 'namas'" (Iryŏn 1984, 347b; Vermeersch 2012, 291).

Sincere concern for the unenlightened beings and efforts to remind them of the existential reality of mortality and impermanence are also themes with which Chinul opened his "Susimgyŏl" 修心訣 (Secrets on cultivating the mind):

> The triple world is blazing in affliction as if it were a house on fire. How can you bear to tarry here and complacently undergo such ongoing suffering? . . . The physical body is a phantom, for it is subject to birth and death; the true mind is like space, for it is uninterrupted and immutable. Therefore, it is said, "These hundred bones will crumble and return to fire and wind." . . . It is so tragic. People have been deluded for so long. They do not recognize that their own minds are the true buddhas. (Chinul 1979a, 708b; Buswell 2012, 206)

Wŏnhyo's exhortation for practice, Chinul's urge to search for salvation by looking into one's mind, and Kyŏnghŏ's encouragement for people to study with him in order to avoid future suffering might look like typical statements in Buddhist writings and not appear as main themes of their teaching. I propose to take a different look at this trend and consider it to be, in fact, a major concern of the Buddhist masters in Korean Buddhism. Mortality, impermanence, and suffering have been major themes of Buddhism since the time of Gautama

Siddhartha. Dialogues in early Buddhist texts demonstrate this nature of Buddhism, as in the case of the poisoned arrow or the "Ten Answered Questions" by the Buddha. The aim of Buddhism is to deal with suffering and the existential reality of beings, rather than offering explanations about the world and existence.[14]

Understanding Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism from the perspective of his concerns for unenlightened sentient beings and his emphasis on awakening to the existential reality of mortality, impermanence, and suffering can also help us to understand the role that *hwadu* meditation played in Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism.

Chinul introduced *hwadu* meditation as the most efficient way to attain awakening. He also underlined that *hwadu* itself is not truth, but is instead a catalyst that leads practitioners to awakening. Chinul himself struggled between Hwaŏm and Sŏn practice in order to find a correct way to practice Buddhism. He eventually came to the conclusion that there shouldn't be an ultimate difference between doctrinal and meditational schools. In the "Preface" to his *Hwaŏmnon chŏryo* 華嚴論節要 (Excerpts from the exposition of the *Huayan jing*; 1207), Chinul stated:

> What the World Honored One said with his mouth constitutes the teachings of the scholastic schools. What the patriarchs transmitted with their minds is Zen. What the Buddha said and what the patriarchs transmitted certainly cannot be contradictory. Why do [students of both scholastic and Zen schools] not explore what is at the core [of these teachings], but instead, complacent only in their own training, vainly involve themselves with debates and waste their time? (Chinul 1979c, 768a)[15]

Kyŏnghŏ's position matched Chinul's declaration, and, in that sense, his *hwadu* practice followed Chinul's teaching in his *Kanhwa kyŏrŭiron*: that is, it focused on engagement (see Pak [2009a]). It is true that, after the rainstorm experience, Kyŏnghŏ declared his rejection of the doctrinal approach and practiced *hwadu* meditation. In his enlightenment song, however, Kyŏnghŏ stated that there should not be a fundamental difference between the meditational and doctrinal schools. By turning to *hwadu* meditation, then, Kyŏnghŏ

took the path of radical engagement with Buddhist practice. For Chinul, the distinction between "engagement with word" (*ch'amgu* 參句) and "engagement with meaning" (*ch'amŭi* 參意), as well as the difference between the "live word" (*hwalgu* 活句) and the "dead word" (*sagu* 死句) were based on the level of the practitioner's engagement. From Chinul's perspective, this emphasis on the practitioner's engagement in understanding and practicing Buddhism was what distinguished *hwadu* meditation from other approaches to Buddhism.

Bringing attention to the existential dimension of Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism, the Korean Buddhist scholar Pak Chaehyŏn proposed that Kyŏnghŏ's awareness of mortality was a core theme of his Buddhism. Pak further claimed that Kyŏnghŏ believed that the Zen Buddhist emphasis on the practitioner's "engagement" (*chabalsŏng*) could have been a response to having to deal with human mortality (Pak 2009a). By focusing on the existential dimension of Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism and considering the role of Zen Buddhism in that context, we can see that the debate about dharma lineage in Kyŏnghŏ's case might not be a fundamental issue. I have already proposed this in my analysis of the "Song of Enlightenment." We can find further supporting ideas about Kyŏnghŏ's position on dharma lineage in his statement on the formation of a compact community.[16]

In his "Compact Community to be born together in the Tusita heaven by practicing together *sāmadhi* and *prajñā* and attaining Buddhahood together" (Kyŏl tongsu chŏnghye tongsaeng tosol tongsŏng pulkwa kyesamun 結同修定慧同生兜率同成佛果稧社文), Kyŏnghŏ contemplates the meaning of dharma-transmission and provides his understanding of the tradition. Kyŏnghŏ asks: What does it mean that Mahākāśyapa was the only one who could respond to the Buddha when the latter held up a lotus flower to the gathered assembly?

This well-known episode between the Buddha and his disciple has been frequently referred to as one of the first *kongan* 公案, or encounter dialogue, as we see in the episode in Case 6 of *Gateless Gate* (*Wumen guan* 無門關), a collection of *kongan*. When the Buddha asked a question, Mahākāśyapa was the only one who understood and smiled, and the incident has been used as an example of mind-to-mind transmission and as a representation of the authenticity of communication among those who have attained awakening. It

validates the privilege of their unspoken language and makes it possible for Zen tradition to place the origin of Zen dharma lineage with Śākyamuni Buddha.

As a part of this line of thought, Kyŏnghŏ wonders whether one should take dharma transmission literally. Suppose, he posits, that Mahākāśyapa was the only one among the audience who understood the profound meaning of the Buddha's gesture. If so, Kyŏnghŏ continues, how is it possible that more than one person has attained awakening in the modern degenerate world, whereas there was only one person who could penetrate the Buddha's teachings during the Buddha's lifetime? Kyŏnghŏ thus writes:

> What does it mean that the Buddha transmitted his dharma only to Mahākāśyapa? Was it because there was no other individual who had the capacity to receive the transmission except for Kāśyapa? If that were really the case, what would have happened, if, unfortunately, there were no Kāśyapa from the beginning? Does this mean that without Kāśyapa, there was no dharma transmission as such? (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 87/99)

Kyŏnghŏ's questions raise an important issue regarding the nature of the transmission of tradition and dharma lineage. First of all, Kyŏnghŏ denied that Kāśyapa (hence, those patriarchs who played a role in dharma transmission) was the only individual who received the Buddha dharma. Kyŏnghŏ argued that Kāśyapa's role was symbolic and, by the same logic, that the tradition of dharma transmission and lineage should also be viewed as having a symbolic rather than a literal function: "That the dharma was transmitted to one person indicates that the Buddha wanted to select one individual to be a leader of the religion after his *parinirvāna*. It is like there is only one sun, and not two, in the sky or there is only one king, not two, to be the leader of a nation. This does not mean that this one individual is the only one who attained enlightenment" (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 88/99).

His line of argument suggests that, for Kyŏnghŏ, mind-to-mind transmission and dharma lineage were not guarantors of the authenticity of awakening, nor did they represent the seal of the legitimacy of awakening. Instead, in this

statement on the formation of compact community, Kyŏnghŏ invited people to engage with practice that was not exclusively focused on *hwadu* meditation.[17]

The sense of urgency in Wŏnhyo, Chinul, and Kyŏnghŏ reveals a thread that connects Korean Buddhist thinkers and that we can discern clearly in Kyŏnghŏ's writings. The awareness of the urgency to address existential reality here emerges as a core aspect of Buddhism. Kyŏnghŏ's disciple, Man'gong, also inherited this sense of urgency. According to Kim Iryŏp 金一葉 (1896–1971), a disciple of Man'gong, the sense of urgency of practicing Buddhism in the face of existential reality was a core of Man'gong's teaching. Iryŏp wrote that Man'gong stated: "When one leaves the secular world and joins a monastery, the study for the person is 'to survive'" (Kim 1964, 30). This sense of urgency, which Man'gong emphasized as the first thing that practitioners had to deal with, is in line with the existential urgency that Kyŏnghŏ underlined.

Existential Awareness, Religious Worldview, and the Nonsectarian Beginning of Modern Korean Buddhism

Scholarship on Kyŏnghŏ has focused on his alleged position as the founder or revivalist of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism. This article has proposed a different approach to Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism. By examining Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism as an expression of the awareness of human existential reality, we can avoid limiting it to a sectarian narrative. At the same time, by putting him in line with other Buddhist masters in the history of Korean Buddhism who expressed a similar awareness, we still understand Kyŏnghŏ in the lineage of Korean Buddhism, simply not in a sectarian manner.

Human existential awareness is a starting point of religiosity; in that sense, Kyŏnghŏ's work seems relevant to the changing ambience of religious worldviews in our time. By shedding light on the religious dimension of Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism rather than establishing a sectarian identity, we might find a place for Kyŏnghŏ in modern Buddhism that is closer to the ethos of the time.

In addition, I proposed understanding Kyŏnghŏ in the context of his own time. By contextualizing Kyŏnghŏ with the emergence of Sŏn practice among

reform-minded Korean intellectuals, we see Kyŏnghŏ's Buddhism as an attempt to find a new way of understanding life. The Sŏn Buddhism of Korean reformers in the nineteenth century was short-lived, but the Sŏn practice movement sowed the seeds for the emergence of Buddhism for the general public during the colonial period and the emergence of the Sŏn Center in Seoul.

The beginning of modern Korean Buddhism, then, should not be understood as the founding or revival of a certain sectarian identity of Korean Buddhism. Instead, through thematic approaches to what Kyŏnghŏ's life and Buddhism meant in terms of religious practice and how this religious practice was related to other Buddhist movements of the time, we might find a true beginning of modern Korean Buddhism, the potentiality of which has been lost in the milieu of exclusively sectarian-oriented Buddhist discourse in modern Korea.

Notes

1 For example, see Seong Uk Kim's argument that Paekp'a Kŭngsŏn 白坡亘璇 (1767–1852) attempted to reestablish the identity of the Korean Sŏn tradition by creating a taxonomy of Sŏn Buddhism. Based on Linji's teaching, Paekp'a laid out a threefold taxonomy of Chan. In so doing, Paekp'a not only redefined Chinese Linji Chan, but also completed the process of its assimilation into the Korean Sŏn tradition (Kim 2017). Those who claim Kyŏnghŏ as the founder of modern Korean Sŏn Buddhism argue that Paekp'a produced a theory of Sŏn Buddhism, whereas Kyŏnghŏ practiced it. Also, see Kim Chongmyŏng (1998).

2 The exact title "founder" or "revivalist" of modern Korean Buddhism might not have come from the Jogye Order. The Jogye Order claims its founder (*chongjo* 宗祖) to be Toŭi 道義 (fl. 821); Pojo Chinul is the one who clarified the cause of the order (重闡祖); while T'ago Pou 太古普愚 (1301–1382) is the revivalist of the school. See the Jogye Order website: http://www.buddhism.or.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=DN_Content_001&wr_id=7&DNUX=info_01_0102

3 The identity of the Jogye Order and its continuity have been a topic of discussion. See Kim Sangyŏng (2013).

4 Even though the Jogye Order does not use the exact terms "revivalist" or "founder" of modern Korean Buddhism, according to the school's official website, it is clear that it takes Kyŏnghŏ as the figure who reconnected the disconnected dharma lineage and revived Sŏn practice. See http://www.buddhism.or.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=DN_Content_001&wr_id=24&DNUX=info_01_0404 (accessed June 4, 2019).

5 For Kyŏnghŏ's biography, see Kyŏnghŏ (1990–1991, 406–426). For an English translation, see Park (2007). Also see Yi (1995); Han (1999); and Hyŏndam (2010). For a discussion of Kyŏnghŏ's Zen Buddhism in English, see Sørensen (2010).

6 Here the dual numbering of the citations from the *Kyŏnghŏ chip* indicates: page number of the text in Classical Chinese/page number of the text in Korean.

7 *Lian denghui yao*, book 24.

8 Hanam recorded the incident as follows in his "An Account of Sŏn Master Kyŏnghŏ's Activities" (Sŏnsa Kyŏnghŏ hwasang haengjang 禪師 鏡虛和尙 行狀):

> One acolyte who attended Kyŏnghŏ had a father, whose family name was Yi, who was known to have attained a degree of realization after having practiced meditation for several years. People called the father Layman Yi. An occasion came when the acolyte's dharma master went to visit Layman Yi at home. During their conversation, Layman Yi stated: "A monk will eventually become a cow." The acolyte's teacher responded, paraphrasing the remark: "If a monk fails to enlighten his mind and does nothing but receives almsgivings from believers, he will definitely become a cow and thereby repay the gratitude of almsgivings in that manner." Layman Yi rebuked the monk: "How can a monk's response be so inappropriate?" The monk responded: "I am not well versed in the teachings of Sŏn. How else should I have interpreted what you said?" Layman Yi said: "You should have said that a monk might become a cow, but he would have no nostrils." Without responding further, the monk left Layman Yi. When he returned, he told the acolyte: "Your father told me such and such but I cannot understand what he means." The acolyte said: "The Abbot [Kyŏnghŏ] has lost sleep and skipped meals in practicing meditation. The Master must understand what my father meant. Dear teacher, why don't you go ask the Abbot about what my father said?" The monk cheerfully went to see Kyŏnghŏ, paid his respects and sat down. He told Kyŏnghŏ about the conversation with Layman Yi. (Kyŏnghŏ 1990–1991, 401, 409; Park 2007, 136)

9 Proposals have been made to translate "衣鉢誰傳" (which I translate as, "To whom shall I give this robe and bowl?") as "From whom should I receive this robe and bowl?" See Pak (2012).

10 Man'gong was first introduced to Kyŏnghŏ in 1884, at the Tonghak monastery, where Man'gong was serving Chinam hwasang. A year after that, Man'gong moved to the Ch'ŏnjang hermitage where Kyŏnghŏ had been staying since 1880. The same year (1884), Chŏn Suwŏl received the precepts from Taehŏ at Ch'ŏnjang hermitage and Sin Haewŏl began to study Chinul's "Susimgyŏl" with Kyŏnghŏ. About fifteen years later, in 1899, Kyŏnghŏ met his last disciple, Pang Hanam, at Kŭmrŭngpu ch'ŏngamsa. See Yi Sŏngtak (1975, 1103–1120, 1109–1110, 1114–1115). For a discussion of Kyŏnghŏ's dharma transmission to his four disciplines, see Pak (2012).

11 The dharma lineage goes: Ch'ŏnghŏ Hujŏng 淸虛休靜 → P'yŏnyang Ŏn'gi → P'ungdam Ŭisim → Wŏldam Sŏlje → Hwansŏng Chian → Hoam Ch'ejŏng → Ch'ŏngbong Kŏan → Yungbong Ch'ŏnggo → Kŭmhŏ Pŏpch'ŏm → Yongam Hyeŏn (Yi 1995, 131). Yi Sŏngtak claims that Kyŏnghŏ is actually the fourteenth-generation disciple of Ch'ŏnghŏ and the ninth-generation disciple of Hwansŏng, for two more generations need be counted between Yongam and Kyŏnghŏ: Yongam → Yŏngwŏl Pongrul → Mahwa Posŏn → Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu (Yi 1975, 1108–1109). However, according to Yi Hŭngu, Yŏngwŏl and Manhwa cannot be counted in this lineage, for they were not Sŏn masters. Yi finds evidence of this lineage from calligraphy by Kyŏnghŏ in which the Sŏn Master wrote down his dharma lineage (Yi 1995, 132).

12 Han Sanggil claims that the lineage was in fact Hanam's explanation (Han 2014). That is, Kyŏnghŏ said only that "Lecturer Manhwa should be recognized as my training master" and the rest was added by Hanam.

13 幾生不修, 虛過日夜, 幾活空身, 一生不修, 身必有終, 後身何乎. 莫速急乎. 莫速急乎.

14 This obviously does not mean that Buddhism does not have philosophical and even metaphysical dimensions, and I have discussed this issue in other places. See Park (2008, especially chapter 1).

15 "世尊說之於口 卽為教 祖師傳之於心 卽為禪 佛祖心口 必不相違." This obviously must have been one of the sources that led T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl to declare that the core of Chinul's Buddhism is Hwaŏm Sŏn 華嚴禪.

16 Debate on one's dharma lineage is not a modern phenomenon. Since its foundation, Zen Buddhism has been sensitive to the legitimacy of one's dharma lineage, and the authenticity of transmission had been an issue that can not be easily dismissed, as

we notice in the story of Huineng 慧能 (638–713) and Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706). Zen has been stretching this practice to Buddhism outside the Zen tradition and claimed that Śākyamuni Buddha transmitted the dharma to his disciple Kaśyapa, making him the first patriarch of Buddhism.

Korean Buddhism is not alien to this tradition either. Most recently, T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl (1912–1983) claimed T'aego Po'u's line as an authentic Korean Buddhist tradition, rejecting other lines as fabrication, which caused not a few debates. Seen within the context of this long and continuing tradition of lineage debate, Kyŏnghŏ's attempt to place himself within an authentic dharma lineage need not draw special attention.

17 For a discussion of Kyŏnghŏ's idea of Buddhist practice in this essay, see Kim Hosŏng (2012).

References

Buswell, Robert, Jr. 1995. "Wŏnhyo as Cultural and Religious Archetype: A Study in Korean Buddhist Hagiography." *Pulgyo yŏn'gu* 11–12 (November): 79–172.

——, trans. 2012, *Chinul: Selected Works*. *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], vol. 2. Paju, Korea: Chun-il munhwasa.

Chinul 知訥.1979a. "Susimgyŏl" 修心訣 [Secrets on cultivating the mind]. In *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], 4:708b–714a. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu.

——. 1979b. "Kanhwa kyŏrŭiron" 看話決疑論 [Resolving doubts about *hwadu* meditation]. In *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], 4:732c–737c. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu.

——. 1979c. *Hwaŏmnon chŏryo sŏ* 華嚴論節要序 [Preface to the Excerpts from the exposition of the *Huayan jing*]. *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], 4:767c–768b. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu.

Ch'oe Inho. 1993. *Kil ŏmnŭn kil* [Road without a road]. 4 vols. Seoul: Saemt'osa.

Daoyun. *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 [Record of the Transmission of the Lamp published in the Jingde era]. T 2076.51.196–467.

Faure, Bernard. 1995. "Random thoughts: Wŏnhyo's Life as Thought." *Pulgyo yŏn'gu* 11-12 (November): 197–223.

Haedong kosŭng chŏn 海東高僧傳 [Lives of eminent Korean monks]. T 2065.50.1015a–1023a.

Han Chunggwang. 1999. *Kyŏnghŏ: Kil wi ŭi k'ŭn sŭnim* [Kyŏnghŏ: the great master on the road]. Seoul: Han'gilsa.

Han Sanggil. 2014. "Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu ŭi Pulgyosa chŏk wisang" [Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu's position in the history of (Korean) Buddhism]. *Pulgyo p'yŏngnon* 57 (March): http://www.budreview.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=1398.

Hŏ Chŏng. 2014. "Kyŏnghŏ tamnon ŭi chaengjŏm kwa hyŏnchae chŏk ŭimi" [Focus and contemporary implication of discourse on Kyŏnghŏ]. *Pulgyo p'yŏngnon* 57 (March): http://www.budreview.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=1399

Hyŏndam. 2010. *Kyŏnghŏ sŏnsa iltaegi* [Life of Sŏn Master Kyŏnghŏ]. Seoul: Sŏn.

Iryŏn. 1984. "Wŏnhyo pulgi" 元曉不羈 [Wŏnhyo the unbridled]. In *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms]. *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], 6:347b–348b. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu.

Kang Sŏkchu and Pak Kyŏnghun. 2002. *Pulgyo kŭnse paengnyŏn* [A century of contemporary Korean Buddhism]. Seoul: Minjoksa.

Kim Chongmyŏng (Kim Jongmyung). 1998. "Ijong Sŏn, samjong sŏn nonjaeng" [Debate on the types of Sŏn Buddhism]. In *Nonjaeng ŭro ponŭn Pulgyo ch'ŏrhak* [Buddhist philosophy seen through debates], edited by Yi Hyogŏl, et al., 224–261. Seoul: Yemun sŏwŏn.

Kim Hosŏng. 2012. "Kyŏnghŏ ŭi 'Chŏnghye kyesa' e nat'anan suhaeng inyŏm chaego—Kyesamun ŭl chungsim ŭro" [Reexamination of the idea of "practice" in Kyŏnghŏ's society of Samādhi and Prajñā with a focus on the Kyesamun]. *Pulgyohak yŏn'gu* 33: 347–395.

Kim Iryŏp. 1964. *Haengbok kwa purhaeng ŭi kalp'i esŏ* [Between happiness and misfortune]. Seoul: Wimun ch'ulp'ansa.

Kim Kyŏngjip. 1998. *Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo sa* [History of modern Korean Buddhism]. Seoul: Kyŏngsŏwŏn.

Kim Sangyŏng. 2013. "Chŏn kŭndae Chogyejong yŏksa ŭi chŏn'gye yangsang kwa kŭ tŭksŏng" [Evolution and characteristics of the history of the Jogye Order in the premodern period]. *Han'guk sŏnhak* 36 (December): 454–492.

Kim, Seong Uk. 2017. "The Re-Invention of Korean Sŏn Buddhism in the Late Chosŏn." *Journal of Korean Religions* 8(1): 161–183.

Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu. 1989. *Kyŏnghŏ chip* [Works of Kyŏnghŏ]. In *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], 11:587b–701. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu.

——. 1990–1991[1942]. *Kyŏnghŏ chip* 鏡虛集 [Collected writings of Kyŏnghŏ]. Korea: Kŭngnak sŏnwŏn.

Linji. *Linji lu* 臨濟錄 [Record of Linji]. T. 47.1985.466b-506c.

Muller, A. Charles, ed. 2012. *Wŏnhyo: Selected Works.* Collected Works of Korean Buddhism, vol. 1. Paju, Korea: Chun-il munhwasa.

Pak Chaehyŏn (Pak Jae-Hyeon). 2009a. "Kuhan mal Han'guk Sŏn Pulgyo ŭi kanhwa Sŏn e taehan han ihae: Song Kyŏnghŏ ŭi Sŏn sasang ŭl chungsim ŭro" [An understanding of Kanhwa Sŏn in Korean Sŏn Buddhism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: with a focus on Sŏn Master Song Kyŏnghŏ]. *Ch'ŏrhak* 83: 1–24.

——. 2009b. *Han'guk kŭndae Pulgyo ŭi t'ajadŭl* [Outsiders of modern Korean Buddhism]. Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa.

——. 2012. "Kyŏnghŏ pŏmmaek ŭi chŏnsŭng e kwanhan sŏjihak chŏk kŏmt'o" [Bibliographical examination of Kyŏnghŏ's dharman lineage and transmission]. *Pojo sasang* 37(2): 295–330.

Park, Jin Y. 2002. "Zen and Zen Philosophy of Language: A Soteriological Approach." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 12 (June): 209–228.

——. 2005. "Zen Language in Our Time: The Case of Pojo Chinul's Huatou Meditation." *Philosophy East & West* 50(1): 80–88.

——, trans. 2007. "A Crazy Drunken Monk: Kyŏnghŏ and Modern Buddhist Meditation Practice." In *Korean Religion in Practice*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., 130–143. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

——. 2008. *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Buddhist-Postmodern Ethics*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Song gaoseng zhuan 宋高僧傳 [Biographies of eminent monks of the Song]. T 2061.50.709a–900a.

Sørensen, Henrik H. 2010. "Mirror of Emptiness: The Life and Times of the Sŏn Master Kyŏnghŏ Sŏngu." In *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, edited by Jin Y. Park, 131–155. Albany: State University of New York Press.

T = Takakusu Junjirō, et. al., eds. 1924–1935. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏経 [Tripitaka compiled during the Taishō period]. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai.

T'oeong Sŏngch'ŏl. 1976. *Han'guk Pulgyo ŭi pŏpmaek* [Dharma lineage of Korean Buddhism]. Kyŏngnam, Korea: Changkyŏnggak.

Vermeersch, Sem. 2012. "Wŏnhyo the Unbridled." In *Wŏnhyo: Selected Works*, edited by A. Charles Muller, 285–293. Paju, Korea: Chun-il Munhwasa

Watson, Burton. 1993. *The Zen Teachings of Master Linji.* Boston: Shambhala.

Wŏnhyo. 1979. *Palsim suhaengjang* [Awaken your mind and practice]. *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* [Collected works of Korean Buddhism], vol. 1. Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu.

Yi Hŭngu. 1995. *Kyŏnghŏ sŏnsa: Kongsŏng ŭi p'ian* [Sŏn Mster Kyŏnghŏ: the other shore called emptiness]. Seoul: Minjoksa.

Yi Nŭnghwa. 1918. *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa* [History of Korean Buddhism]. Seoul: Sinmun'gwan.

Yi Sangha. 2011. "Kyŏnghŏ chip p'yŏnch'an, kanhaeng ŭi kyŏngwi wa pyŏnmo yangsang" [An account of the creation and publication of collected works of Kyŏnghŏ and changes over time]. *Tongyanghak* 50 (August): 1–19.

Yi Sŏngtak. 1975. "Kyŏnhŏ ŭi Sŏn sasang" [Kyŏnghŏ's Sŏn thought]. In *Sungsan Pak Kiljin paksa hwagap kinyŏm Han'guk Pulgyo sasangsa* [A history of Korean Buddhist thought: essays in commemoration of the sixtieth birthday of Pak Kiljin], edited by Sungsan Pak Kiljin paksa hwagap kinyŏm saŏp ch'onghoe, 1103–1120. Chŏnbuk, Korea: Wŏn Pulgyo sasang yŏn'guwŏn.