

Transforming Orthodoxies: Buddhist Curriculums and Educational
Institutions in Contemporary South Korea

by

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Graduate Program in Religion
Duke University

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Graduate Program in
Religion in the Graduate School
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2015

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

What do Buddhist monks really know about Buddhism? How do they imagine their religion, and more importantly, how does their understanding of their tradition differ from the one found in our typical introduction to Buddhism textbooks? In order to address these fundamental questions, this dissertation concentrates on the educational programs and curricular canons of Korean Buddhism. It aims to find out which part of their enormous canonical and non-canonical literature do Korean Buddhist professionals choose to focus on as the required curriculum in their training (and what do they leave out), why is it chosen and by whom, and how does this specific education shape their understanding of their own religion and their roles within it. It tracks down the 20th-century invention of the so-called ‘traditional’ Korean monastic curriculum and delineates the current 21st-century curricular reforms and the heated debates surrounding them. Ultimately, it illustrates how instead of Buddhist academics learning from the Buddhists about Buddhism, it is actually often the Buddhists in their monasteries who end up simulating the educational agendas of Buddhist studies.

Research for this work involved diverse methodologies. Multiple-sited ethnographic fieldwork in monasteries was supplemented by archival digging in the Chogye Order’s headquarters in Seoul and textual analysis of historical records, Buddhist media reports, and online blogs. I have visited the current official 17 monastic seminaries in Korea, as well as many of the new specialized monastic graduate institutes and lay schools, interviewed teachers and students on site, and inspected classrooms and schedules. During winter 2013-4 I have conducted a full-scale participant observation attending the Buddhist lay school of Hwagyesa, during which I engaged some of my classmates with in-depth interviews, and distributed a written attitude survey among the class.

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Introduction

This project sprang out of a set of simple questions. What do Buddhist monks and nuns know about Buddhism? How might their understanding of their religion differ from the Buddhism we find in our modern textbooks? And ultimately, how have such perceptions of the tradition been constructed and re-constructed over time? Obviously, even after confining the inquiry to the Korean case alone, answering such questions still involves significant methodological difficulties. Each individual monastic's familiarity with Buddhist texts and his or her views about them clearly vary to a certain degree, and interviewing them all would require several consecutive rebirths in the realm of human research. Instead, I believe that looking at the Buddhist monastic seminaries' textual curriculums (which are now mandatory for all home leavers in Korea) may be the best way to catch a glimpse of what monastics are taught to believe Buddhism to be. In other words, looking at what Korean Buddhist professionals pick out of their enormous canonical and non-canonical literature to focus on as the required syllabi for their training (and at what they leave out), would paint the most authoritative picture of what Korean Buddhist orthodoxy entails, and of the ways monastics are encouraged to understand their religion and their roles within it. Curriculums, I believe, may be able to point us towards the identity of a whole tradition.

To be sure, scholars have long noted that the formal Buddhist canons were unsatisfactory for understanding actual textual practices of Buddhists on the ground, and offered to talk of 'ritual

canons,'¹ 'practical canons,'² and 'curricular canons'³ instead, as the actual bodies of texts preserved, studied, and ritualized in particular communities. Accordingly, in Korea, the lengthy formal *Koryŏ Canon* has been treated historically more as a talisman than as a collection of texts to be actually studied, and it was other, sometimes non-canonical texts, which constituted the 'curricular canons' learned by monastics.⁴ As we shall see, various Admonition texts replaced the formal *Vinaya* in controlling behaviors in Korean monasteries, and a few selected treatises (rather than some of the more well-known canonical sutras) formed the orthodox core of the 'traditional' seminary programs. Nevertheless, as I will argue in Chapter 3, current 21st-century seminary reforms bring these 'practical canons' of Korean Buddhism closer to the formal canons, or at least closer to the formal Buddhist canons as imagined by the dominant works of Buddhist studies. If the formal canons did not really matter before, we now made them matter.

This work is essentially a biography of a curriculum. It centers on the birth, institutionalization, and fall of the 'traditional' Korean Buddhist monastic curriculum during the past five centuries. It illustrates how a particular 17th-century pedagogic program was reimaged in the course of the 20th-century to become the sole unified Korean monastic program, only to be criticized and utterly reformed in the 21st. Through detailed analysis of such modifications, I will attempt to demonstrate how Korean Buddhist reformers today tend to imitate the pedagogical practices and canonize the textual totems of contemporary Buddhist studies, and by doing so

¹ Steven Collins, "On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990).

² Anne M. Blackburn, "Looking for the Vinaya: Monastic Discipline in the Practical Canons of the Theravada," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22, no. 2 (1992).

³ Justin Thomas McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2008).

⁴ The *Koryŏ Canon*, often mistranslated to English as the *Tripitaka Koreana* (the original Korean name reads 'Great Storehouse of 80,000 Buddhist Texts,' *P'alman taejanggyŏng*, 八萬大藏經) was printed mostly in the 12th-century although some texts were added in later centuries. For an analysis of its contents see: Lewis Lancaster and Sung-bae Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). See also the entry for *Dazangjing* in: Robert Buswell and Donald Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013). Pp. 225-6.

ultimately transform Korean Buddhist orthodoxy from a particular kind of Chinese-centered scholastic Chan, to the broad, inclusive, Indian-focused religion we usually find in our English introductory textbooks. Rather than scholars going into the monasteries to find out what Buddhism is all about, it is more often the Buddhists monastics who search for Buddhism outside their clusters and in our modern libraries, and then bring this Buddhism back home.

Apart from Robert Buswell's classic, *The Zen Monastic Experience*,⁵ which presents material from approximately 40 years ago, very little has been written on the monastic practices of Korean Buddhism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries outside the Korean Buddhist world itself. Consequently, in this work I attempt to paint a more general picture of contemporary monastic life in Korea, using the analysis of educational reforms as a springboard for raising broader issues regarding the kind of negotiations and discourses which dominate the lives of monastics today. Should monks see themselves primarily as Chan practitioners or as propagators? Should they all be able to read Buddhist Classical Chinese texts or be fluent in English? Does one become a better monk by understanding various Buddhist doctrines or by working humbly and diligently within a group? How does one teach Buddhism to the laity? Ultimately, my hope is to go beyond education and provide a glimpse of the institutionalized systems that shape monastic careers in contemporary Korea, as well as of the bureaucratic complications and realpolitik involved. Although the dominate Chogyŏ (曹溪) Order will stand at the center of the investigation, the systems of other comparatively large Korean Buddhist institutions such as the T'aego (太古) and Ch'ŏnt'ae (天台) (thus far virtually ignored in English academia) will be considered as well. The last chapter will expand the discussion beyond the schooling of the

⁵ Robert Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

sangha to examine the recently developed lay education system, which is operated by the monastic institutions.

Buddhist Education in Contemporary East Asia

Scholarly research on Buddhist pedagogy in China has mostly concentrated on the early 20th-century, and we still know very little about contemporary monastic educational institutions and programs. Welch,⁶ Pittman,⁷ and more recently Rongdao Lai,⁸ have presented detailed accounts of the attempts to modernize sangha education in China in the 1920's and 30's by building new seminaries with broader Buddhist and secular curriculums modeled on the Japanese sectarian universities. Most, if not all of these seminaries, closed down with the political turmoil of the 1950's, and it is only since the 1980's that seminaries for the Chinese sangha have begun to proliferate once again.⁹ The central governmentally-funded university of the Chinese Buddhist Association has been operating since 1980 in Beijing, and new sangha schools have been erected in monasteries, particularly in the south of the country.¹⁰ I have had a chance to visit one of these new monastic institutions, the seminary at Mt. Tiantai (Wannian chansi, 萬年禪寺), which

⁶ Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

⁷ Don Alvin Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

⁸ Lei Kuan Rongdao Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 2013).

⁹ Welch discusses shortly the demise of these seminaries under Mao and the creation of a new official Buddhist school in Beijing in the 1950's. See: Holmes Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972). Pp. 156-9.

¹⁰ Long examined the establishment of various seminaries in Sichuan in the 1980's and 90's, including the first female seminary in China and a governmentally-funded Tibetan Buddhist seminary. See: Darui Long, "Buddhist Education in Sichuan," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 34, no. 2 (2002). Borchert has recently written a detailed ethnography of a Buddhist school established by the Dai-lue minority in Yunnan: Thomas Adams Borchert, "Education Monks: Buddhism, Politics and Freedom of Religion on China's Southwest Border" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2006).

offered a four-year broad Buddhist studies curriculum for 50 monks in 2014.¹¹ It is hard to tell whether this school is at all representative of the general situation in China, but it was explained to me by the Head Teacher that very few of the Tiantai monastics are admitted into the institution, and most others do not receive any substantial textual education throughout their monastic careers apart from memorizing the liturgy. In Taiwan, both Foguangshan and Dharma Drum Mountain operate secular Buddhist degree-granting universities as well as seminaries limited to the sangha. Dharma Drum in particular puts an emphasis on education, and it is probably the only Buddhist institution in East Asia outside of Korea which enforces a mandatory four-year monastic seminary program for all aspiring novices.¹²

In Japan, Buddhist education has been relegated for the most part to the sectarian universities which have been established at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th-centuries.¹³ These Buddhist-affiliated schools have gradually secularized throughout the 20th-century, and only trifling percentages of their students today are aspiring priests coming from temple families.¹⁴ Apart from secular degrees, the various Japanese denominations usually require some additional study and practice in a training monastery in order to obtain priest certificates. This period seems to range from several months to two years, but very little has been published about the actual curricular programs involved. What we do know is that in Sōtō monasteries this

¹¹ On my visit in summer 2014 I learned that although approximately half of the curriculum consisted of traditional Tiantai related texts, the other half included courses on Indian Buddhism, several Pāli sūtras, other Mahāyāna doctrines such as Mādhyamika, as well as Buddhist histories, calligraphy, and contemporary politics. See also: Wanniansi, *Zhejiang fuxueyuan Tiantaizong fuxueyuan 浙江佛學院天台宗佛學院 (The Buddhist seminary of the Tiantai Order of Zhejiang)* (Wanniansi: The [Chinese] Tiantai Order, 2013).

¹² This sangha seminary was opened in 2001. See: Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, "Education, Invention of Orthodoxy, and the Construction of modern Buddhism on Dharma Drum Mountain" (M.A. Thesis, Florida State University, 2012). Pp. 122-3.

¹³ Hayashi Makoto, "Religious Studies and Religiously Affiliated Universities," in *Modern Buddhism in Japan* ed. Hayashi Makoto, Otani Eiichi, and Paul Swanson (Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2014).

¹⁴ Mark Rowe and Hiroki Kikuchi, "Round-Table Discussion: The Current State of Sectarian Universities," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004).

training often includes lectures on the writings of Dōgen and Keizan, and that even in Rinzaï monasteries (often envisioned as extremely anti-textual) the kōan curriculum sometimes involves individual sutra study and the writing of commentaries.¹⁵ In addition, many (though certainly not all) Kōya-san-affiliated Shingon priests go through a rather rigorous one-year seminary program on the mountain after graduating from college, which involves classes in rituals, Shingon history, Sanskrit, preaching, and Buddhist culture.¹⁶ Although the Tendai School too operates several seminaries, it is uncertain how many of the denomination's priests actually go through any significant period of education there.

Buddhist monastic education in Korea sticks out of this group for several reasons. For one thing, as we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, it is the only East Asian Buddhist curricular program which has been unified nationally for at least a century, perhaps longer. Even after splitting into the Chogyŏ and T'aego Orders in 1970, seminaries of both dominant institutions mostly maintained the same 'traditional' curriculum, which has its roots in the 17th-century. Unlike in Japan, secular university education is only pursued by small percentages of the sangha, and mountain seminaries continue to dominate the scene. Additionally, making the four-year Buddhist seminary textual program mandatory for all Chogyŏ monastics in the 1990's probably made this community the most textually fluent Buddhist sangha in the Mahāyāna world today.

¹⁵ For the case of Sōtō see: Griffith Foulk, "The Zen Institution in Modern Japan," in *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, ed. Kenneth Kraft (New York: Grove Press, 1988). In addition, Nonomura recalls a summer lecture series on *Dōgen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye* when he attended in Eihei-ji in the 1990's: Kaoru Nonomura, *Eat Sleep Sit* (New York: Kodansha International, 1996). With regard to Rinzaï, Hori discusses the practice of choosing 'capping phrases' for various kōans, as well as the writing of explanations and poetic verse as part of the kōan curriculum. Nevertheless, Hori admits that such practices vary in different monasteries and in some no writing exercises are involved in the training at all. In any case, very few of the Rinzaï priests stay in training monasteries long enough to go through such advanced scholarly practices, and most simply select the appropriate 'capping phrases' out of a phrasebook. See: Victor Sogen Hori, "Zen Koan Capping Phrase Books: Literary Study and the Insight 'Not Founded on words or Letters,'" in *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism*, ed. Steven Heine and Dale Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁶ Philip Nicoloff, *Sacred Kōyasan: A Pilgrimage to the Mountain Temple of Saint Kobo Daishi and the Great Sun Buddha* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008). Pp. 191-5.

Unlike in neighboring nations, the Korean Buddhist monastic educational programs are neither diverse nor marginal. They are rather unified and all-encompassing, influencing the perceptions of virtually each and every home-leaver in the nation today. This makes these curriculums ever more significant as mirrors for understanding what Buddhism really means for contemporary monastics on the peninsula. .

Doing Fieldwork in Korean Buddhist Monasteries

In order to paint a comprehensive picture of Buddhist education in Korea, I have not confined myself to one particular methodological paradigm. Historical investigation and textual analysis were used side by side with semi-structured interviews, sociological surveys and multiple-sited ethnographic work in Korean monasteries.¹⁷ I have spent considerable time at the Chogye Order's archives in Seoul digging through relevant internal seminar protocols and other related reports. More importantly, between the years 2012-2014 I have visited all of the current officially-recognized 15 Chogye seminaries in the country, as well as the functioning schools of other Buddhist orders and many of the new monastic graduate schools, interviewed some of the teachers and students on site, and collected data regarding their programs and schedules. I also conducted participant observation in a three-month basic lay education course in Hwagyesa (where I distributed written attitude surveys), audited classes for a semester in the largest T'aego Order school in Seoul, and participated in a three-day monastic 'continuing education' (*yŏnsu kyoyk*) program operated by the Chogye Order.

¹⁷ It is often lamented that Buddhist studies lacks sufficient ethnographic work and mainly concentrates on textual analysis. See for example: Gareth Fisher, "Fieldwork on East Asian Buddhism: Toward a Person-Centered Approach," *Fieldwork in Religion* 5, no. 2 (2010).

Commenting on her own fieldwork in Japan, Hardacre noted that formal introductions were often very important for establishing connections with religious groups in the country.¹⁸ I have likewise began my research using personal connections for arranging meetings with seminary teachers, but soon learned that in Korea at least, that was unnecessary and often even hindering. Arriving at a monastery with a formal appointment ensured, of course, that someone was going to be waiting for me, sometimes bearing gifts, willing and able to pour some tea and talk. The problem was that what they usually said in such formal occasions remained formal as well, and personal opinions and sentiments were very much kept to oneself. Arriving as a complete stranger with a smile was usually more beneficial. Korean monasteries are open and monastics are generally kind and welcoming, and in almost all cases I was able to simply arrive unannounced to a seminary and find at least one teacher who was willing to share his experiences and thoughts with me quite openly, show me around the cluster, and provide me with a room to stay for a couple of nights. In fact, being a Korean- speaking long- haired Israeli who was interested in Korean Buddhism made me a novelty in the eyes of many monastics, and they were often at least as curious and interested in talking to me as I was in talking to them. Many viewed our meetings also as an opportunity for propagation, some explicitly encouraging me to spread their teachings in my home country.

Nevertheless, some limits could not be overcome. Irvine mused that his own fieldwork in a Benedictine Monastery was somewhat like ‘playing at being a monk,’ as he was not ordained himself and his existence was always peripheral rather than participatory.¹⁹ Korean monasteries commonly attempt to maintain some spatial boundaries between the lay and the ordained. Eating,

¹⁸ Helen Hardacre, "Fieldwork in Japanese Religious Groups," in *Doing Fieldwork in Japan*, ed. Theodore Bestor, Patricia Steinhoff, and Victoria Bestor (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003).

¹⁹ Richard Irvine, "The Experience of Ethnographic Fieldwork in an English Benedictine Monastery: Or, Not Playing at Being a Monk," *Fieldwork in Religion* 5, no. 2 (2010).

sleeping and meditation are almost always done separately, but other limits apply as well. As a layperson, although I was allowed to enter the classrooms and examine the textbooks, I was very rarely permitted to actually join classes in monastic seminaries. When I tried to protest about it I was often told that my presence would be disturbing to the highly impressionable novices. In some monasteries teachers told me that if I was so interested in joining these classes, I should just shave my head. They did not show much concern about the possibility of my disrobing right after concluding my research. The majority of those who disrobe do so in the very early stages of their monastic careers, and as one seminary teacher told me, “after a year or two in robes on the mountain you will not be thinking of disrobing any longer.”²⁰

As an outsider to the monastic world my participation in the seminaries was peripheral at best. Ordaining as a novice, I would have undoubtedly been able to illustrate in more detail the day-to-day life of one particular seminary, but I would not have been permitted to travel from institution to institution and present a broader more inclusive bird view of monastic education in Korea. In fact, during my visits I was sometimes asked by the seminary teachers themselves about the situation in other schools, thus in a way becoming an informant myself, the interviewer changing into an interviewee. Some seminary teachers knew less about the programs of other schools than I gradually came to know, and at times queried about it and expressed interest in reading this work when it was done.

Interviewing teachers at the seminaries proved to be much simpler than talking to the novices, which were generally under a lot of pressure and strict discipline. When I tried to engage them in conversation they were often reluctant to talk, taking me to their teachers instead, or

²⁰ It is estimated that about half of the Korean postulants and novices return to the laity before receiving the full precepts, and much smaller numbers leave later in their monastic careers. Nevertheless, I believe the situation is different for the foreign sangha, many of whom seem to have been disrobing after years of monastic life. To be sure, ordaining just for research with no sincere intentions was never really a possibility for me.

pointing towards the office and running away to tend to one of their numerous duties. One time as I attempted to ask a seminary student about his life, he frowned and reproached me saying ‘isn’t this frivolous speech?!’ (*igŏt hamburo iyagi aniyo?!*)²¹ Students of the various monastic graduate schools and at the Basic Chan Hall (see Chapter 3) were usually more willing to talk, but the more meaningful exchanges I had with seminary novices have been outside monastic walls, when I accidentally met them on the bus or in the city. Foreign monastic students, too, were generally much less anxious to openly talk to me about their life at the seminary, some finding respite in speaking some English, even just for a little while.

Chapter Summary

I begin this study with an archeological breakdown of the 20th-century seminary curriculum. Chapter 1 analyzes the fixed set of texts which comprise what has come to be known as the Korean monastic ‘traditional’ curricular program. Special attention is given to lesser-known texts, which have nonetheless been quite significant for the Korean experience. I examine the historical construction of this ‘practical canon,’ and perhaps more importantly, analyze the prevalence of intertextual references within its texts and the kind of ideologies placed at its center to make it a coherent whole. I supplement the discussion with a short translation of a 17th-century text, which presents the first historical doctrinal overview of this ‘traditional’ curriculum.

Chapter 2 illustrates how this particular historical syllabus has been institutionalized to become the sole unified (and later mandatory) national Korean program during the 20th-century. In addition, it examines various attempts to reform and modernize sangha education at the time,

²¹ As we shall see in Chapter 1, the ‘practical *Vinayas*’ of Korean Buddhism often condemn frivolous speech.

focusing on the establishment of Buddhist higher-education institutions and independent female seminaries. The chapter investigates seminary day-to-day schedules and practices, and ends with the crucial 1994-5 Chogyŏ institutional reforms which have made seminary education mandatory for all monastics. Consequently, for the first time in history, Korean Chan monastics all had to study texts before they could enter a Meditation Hall (*Sŏnwŏn*, 禪院).

We reach the climax of the story in Chapter 3. In it I detail the 21st-century denunciations of this ‘traditional’ curriculum, and the far-reaching recent Chogyŏ Order reform of the program. It introduces the new required syllabus and the rather animated battle between the Chogyŏ headquarters and some of the seminary teachers surrounding its operation. The limited set of Classical Chinese texts that comprised the ‘traditional’ program have been substituted for the most part with vernacular Korean textbooks on broader Buddhist themes, and new pedagogical practices, such as final examinations and thesis writing, have been introduced into the mountain seminaries. I attempt to demonstrate how such reforms reflect the ways local Asian Buddhists tend to imitate the hegemonic ideals and practices of modern Buddhist studies, and how this new program essentially transforms Korean Buddhist orthodoxy from a particular kind of Chan to a more general, inclusive kind of Buddhism. The chapter goes on to delineate other important 21st-century developments, such as the proliferation of *Vinaya* Schools (*yulwŏn*, 律院) and other monastic graduate schools, the creation of the Basic Chan Hall, and the arrival of foreign monastics to the seminaries. A short analysis of the contemporary monastic educational institutions of the T’aego and Ch’ŏnt’aeg Orders is presented as well.

In Chapter 4 I continue my discussion of recent reforms, here focusing on the creation of new sangha rank-examination systems in the Chogyŏ and T’aego Orders. I argue that these new structures revolutionize monastic hierarchies in Korea by positioning education and exams (rather than seniority, number of retreats, or spiritual development) as the principal criteria for holding

higher positions in the bureaucracy. In order to make sure all had a fair chance of success in such exams, the Chogyé Order has recently unified and centralized postulant education, creating a new postulant canon of required texts, as well as established a system of ‘continuing education’ courses required for all those wishing to sit in for the higher sangha exams. I have participated in one of these new exam- preparation courses, and my own experiences are described in the supplement to the chapter.

In Chapter 5, I turn my attention from the schooling of monastics to the fascinating new lay education system administered by the Chogyé Order. Over a half a million Buddhist laypeople and 500 monasteries throughout the country are already involved with this system, which has clearly become the hallmark of the Chogyé Order’s propagation agenda. It is grounded upon a novel lay registration network which requires attending a basic Buddhism course at a designated temple in order to receive an official Lay Identification Card. It now involves a lay ranking structure based on educational achievements, and culminates in the yearly Lay Propagator Exam. Besides delineating the historical construction of this system, I will investigate lay attitudes and motivations for joining the programs, analyze official textbook agendas, and provide ethnographic snippets from classroom rituals. Overall, I believe the new sangha seminary programs and the new lay education system are closely interrelated. That is, through broader seminary curriculums the Chogyé Order attempts to nurture monastics who are not only able to practice Chan, but are also capable of standing in a classroom and teaching the laity in one of the numerous new lay universities.

Editor's Note

Unless a foreign title has become customary (i.e. *Śūraṅgama*, *Huayan*), I use English titles for Buddhist texts throughout. For the most part I follow Buswell's English rendering of the main Korean curricular text titles, but I often provide shortened titles in case of repeated use (i.e. the *Letters*, *Excerpts*, *Ch'imun*, etc.). When shortened titles are used it is noted in the body of the work. All text titles are italicized throughout. A short glossary of the main curricular texts historically used in Korea and other relevant terminology is available at the end of this work. Chinese (*pinyin*) transliteration is given for texts and terms which originated in China, but Korean (McCune- Reischauer) and Japanese transliterations are used when referring to more specific Korean and Japanese-related individuals, institutions, jargon and texts.

1. The Traditional Curriculum

1. *Admonitions to Beginners*: Raising the intention towards enlightenment and practicing precepts, meditation and wisdom.
2. *Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*: Subduing restless affections and safeguarding against unwholesome action.
3. Dahui's *Letters*: shunning unwholesome understandings and revealing correct views.
4. Zongmi's *Chan Preface*: Correlating the three traditions (of Chan and learning) and bringing them back into one.
5. Chinul's *Excerpts*: Distinguishing sudden and gradual (approaches to practice) and revealing ineffable awareness.
6. Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*: Raising great intentions and breaking down the *gong'an* (literally: infiltrating into the entrance).
7. The *Śūramgama Sutra*: Abandoning muddy thought-recollections and giving rise to refined wisdom.
8. *The Awakening of Faith*: Opening the two gates (of *samsāra* and nirvana) which are based on the one mind.
9. *The Diamond Sutra*: Breaking down the two attachments (to self and dharmas) and revealing the three kinds of emptiness (of self, dharmas, and the view of emptiness itself).
10. *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*: Cutting off ignorance to reveal the Buddha nature.
11. *The Huayan Sutra*: Gathering the numerous dharmas to illuminate the one mind.

(The Head of the Central Sangha College, Chongbŏm, explaining the traditional curriculum, 1997¹)

The above quote summarizes succinctly (though rather abstractly) the texts and tenets which stand at the center of the basic Korean Buddhist monastic curricular canon. This comparatively short list of texts was chosen and gradually assembled by several monks between the 16th- and 18th-centuries out of the immense body of Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, to form what would later become a particular kind of orthodox monastic Buddhism in Korea. This

¹ Taken from Chongbŏm, "Kangwŏn ūi kyoyuk ch'egye wa kaesŏn panghyang 강원의 교육체계와 개선방향 (The educational system and reform objectives of monastic seminaries)," in *Kangwŏn ch'ongnam 강원총람 (A comprehensive survey of monastic seminaries)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 1997). P. 61.

specific model of a Chan-curriculum is made up of four stages. The first stage focuses on Admonitions literature (usually referred to as the *Ch'imun*, class,² texts 1-2 above), which I will argue has constituted the 'practical *Vinaya*³' of Korean Chan. The *Sajip* (四集, Fourfold Collection, texts 3-6 above) are four treatises written by Chinese and Korean Chan teachers and collected together to form the second stage of the curriculum. The third stage involves study of the *Sagyo* (四教, Four Sutras, texts 7-10 above), the *Śūraṅgama*, *Diamond*, and *Perfect Enlightenment* sutras, as well as the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, which evidently was elevated to sutra status here. The *Taegyo* (大教, Higher Learning, text 11 above), or the last stage of the curriculum, positioned the *Huayan Sutra* at the peak of this canon, and historically involved additional study of Chan histories and *gong'an* collections as well.

It is those texts, rather than the formal Koryŏ Canon, which constituted the textual totems standing at the center of Korean Buddhist monasticism at least in the last century. This curriculum has become the actual Korean Buddhist canon through most of the 20th-century and up until very recent reforms. Therefore, before I move on to discuss the far-reaching curricular modifications taking place in Korea today, I wish to devote this first chapter to this traditional model. I will begin by providing short introductions to the texts themselves, giving more attention to some of the less-known texts here. Consequently, I will attempt to comment on the intertextuality among its components and on the specific picture of Buddhism it paints to those who study it. Finally I will provide a historical survey of its construction, and argue that although the curriculum has been gradually assembled ever since the 16th-century, and evidently used by several teachers ever since the 17th, contrary to the common view in Korean Buddhist and

² This stage is often called the *Śrāmaṇera* (Novice) Stage (*Sami kwa*, 沙彌科) in the literature, but in reality Korean monastics most often refer to this stage simply as the *Ch'imun* class.

³ Blackburn, "Looking for the Vinaya: Monastic Discipline in the Practical Canons of the Theravada."

academic circles, there is no evidence that it constituted the single universal Korean Buddhist curriculum in late Chosŏn. In fact, in the next chapter I will illustrate how it was only re-imagined and fixated as the orthodox ‘traditional curriculum’ in the course of the 20th-century.

The First Stage: Admonitions Literature

The *Dharmaguptaka*, or Four-section *Vinaya* (*Sifenlu*, 四分律), most often associated with East Asian Buddhism, is missing from the traditional Korean Buddhist curriculum. Missing are also the *Brahma Net Sutra* (*Fanwangjing*, 梵網經) with its 58 Bodhisattva precepts, and texts of the Pure Rules (*Qinggui*, 清規) genre, which are generally viewed by scholars as independent *Vinayas* of Chan monasteries.⁴ Yet, a different Chan *Vinaya*-type genre does appear in the first stage of the Korean syllabus: that of Admonitions (Kr. *kyŏng* 警, *kyŏnghun* 警訓, *kyŏngmun* 警文, *kyŏngch’aek* 警策).

The most fundamental text in the entire traditional monastic seminary program has been the *Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks* (*Zimen jingxun*, Kr. *Ch’imun kyŏnghun*, 緇門警訓, hereafter ‘*Ch’imun*’).⁵ The central position of the *Ch’imun* for Korean Buddhism may be further emphasized considering the fact that historically most monks did not go through the entire curriculum but discontinued their studies after only going through the early stages, i.e. after studying the *Ch’imun*. As we shall see later on, the *Ch’imun* is also one of the few texts that has made it intact through the recent Chogyŏ Order reforms, and it is still (at least partially) studied by most Korean novices today. Such Admonitions literature is also the *Vinaya* studied today in

⁴ See for example: Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China* (USA: Kuroda Institute, 2002). Chapter 2.

⁵ T 2023.48. For the English translations of the text titles I follow: Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience*. Pp. 96-7.

the T'aego Order seminary at Sōnamsa, as well as in the Korean Ch'ōnt'ae School's seminary at Kuinsa. Nevertheless, this crucial text for the understanding of Korean Buddhism has been almost completely neglected by the English-language academia, and very little has been written about it by Korean scholars as well.⁶ I will attempt a preliminary introduction here.

The *Ch'imun* is essentially a compilation of short treatises written by various Chinese Chan masters, but it also includes writings by Tiantai, Vinaya and Pure Land teachers.⁷ 172 such treatises were compiled into the first nine-fascicle *Ch'imun* edition made in 1313 by Zhixian Yongzhong (智賢永中) in Yuan China. Yongzhong claimed his compilation was based on an earlier Admonitions text, *The Precious Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Community* (*Zilin baoxun*, 緇林寶訓), which was compiled in 1255 by Zexian Yunqi (擇賢蘊齊).⁸ Merely 35 years after its first publication, T'aego Pou (太古普愚, 1301-1382), returning from a brief two-year visit to China in 1348, brought the *Ch'imun* along with an edition of *Baizhang's Pure Rules* back to Korea. Pou held the highest monastic political position of State Preceptor (*Kuksa*, 國師) in late 14th-century Koryō, and used his influence with the explicit aim to reconstruct and organize the sangha according to these new Chan disciplinary expositions.⁹ A little over a century later, in

⁶ It is often the case that the texts studied by scholars are very different than those studied by the religious communities themselves. This is not restricted to the Korean or Buddhist case alone. Cort has found that the actual canons studied by scholars of Jainism similarly differ greatly from the actual texts studied by the Jain communities. See: John E. Cort, "The Intellectual Formation of a Jain Monk: A Svetambara Monastic Curriculum," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29 (2011). Pp. 328-340.

⁷ Wōnil, for example, shows that the three first chapters were written by a Mazu-line Chan teacher (Guishan, 滙山), a Yunmen-line Chan teacher (Cijue, 慈覺), and by the 6th Patriarch of Pure Land who also studied at Mt. Tiantai (Zhijue, 智覺). See: Wōnil, "Ch'imun kyōnghun e taehan sogo 치문 경훈에 대한 소고 (Some thoughts on the *Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*)," *Sudara* 2 (1987). Pp. 127-9.

⁸ Shiina Koyu, "Shimon keikun no bunken shi teki kōsatsu 『緇門警訓』の文献史的考察 (A study of the textual history of the *Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*)," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 59, no. 2 (2011). Koyu adds that it was the earlier text, the *Zilin baoxun*, that has made it to Japan in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, and attempts to link the text to a particular Rinzai lineage, that of Xueyan Zuqin (雪巖祖欽, 1215~1287).

⁹ Hui-chin Sin, "Ch'imun kyōnghunju ūi kyoyukchōk kach'i e kwanhan yōn'gu 緇門警訓註의 교육적 가치에 관한 연구 (A research about the educational value of the *Commentary to the Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*)" (Masters Thesis, Dongguk 2007). Pp. 24-9.

1470 Ming China, a Chan monk by the name of Rujin (如璫, 1425-?) re-published the *Ch'imun* with an additional fascicle, and it is this longer ten-fascicle edition that has become the standard text in late Chosŏn and in modern Korea.¹⁰ 11 woodblock editions of this *Ch'imun* edition from 16th and 17th-century Chosŏn are now extant.¹¹

There is at least one piece of evidence suggesting that such Admonitions collections were used in the instruction of novices on the Chinese mainland as well. The 1341 Yuan dynasty *Pure Rules of a Village Temple* (*Cunsi qinggui*, 村寺清規) proclaimed that new monastics were first to be instructed in the (above mentioned) *Precious Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Community*, as well as in some other short expositions found in the *Ch'imun* such as *Guishan's Admonitions* (*Guishan jingce*, 滙山警策) and Yong'an's *Record of the Monks' Hall* (*Sengtangji*, 僧堂記).¹² In Korea it seems probable that the *Ch'imun* has been used at least by students of the Pou lineage ever since the 14th-century, but it is generally believed that it was actually Pou's 4th generation disciple Paekam Sŏngch'ong (栢庵性聰, 1631-1700) who popularized the text further. Sŏngch'ong was a prominent teacher in his day, and was in fact involved in the publication of several other curricular texts such as the whole *Sajip* collection, the *Huayan Sutra* and the *Awakening of Faith*.¹³ In 1695 Sŏngch'ong composed the first and only available *Ch'imun*

¹⁰ Sŏn-yŏp Wang, "Yŏngnamdae tosŏgwan tongbin mun'go sojang p'yohun sap'an Ch'imun Kyŏnghun ūi Sŏji mit Kugyŏl 영남대도서관 동빈문고 소장 表訓寺板 『緇門警訓』의 서지 및 구결 (A study of the bibliography and kugyŏl of *Ch'imun Kyŏnghun* at Yŏngnam University central library)," *Minjok munhwa nonch'ong* 48 (2011). P. 148.

¹¹ For details see: *ibid.* Pp. 150-3. It was published six times in the 16th- (1524, 1532, 1537, 1539, 1549, 1588) and five in the 17th-(1614, 1638*4, 1664, 1682, 1695) centuries.

¹² Chun-fang Yu, "Chan Education in the Sung " in *Neo-Confucian Education : the Formative Stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary (USA: University of California Press, 1989). Pp. 98. Note that after studying these Admonitions texts new monks were to be instructed in the *Śūraṅgama*, *Diamond*, *Perfect-Enlightenment* and other sutras, after which the monastic curriculum ended with studying the Confucian classics!

¹³ Jong-su Lee, "Chosŏn hugi Pulgyo illyŏk kwamok ūi sŏnjŏng kwa kŭ ūimi 조선 후기 불교 履歷科目의 선정과 그 의미 (The selection of the Buddhist curriculum in late Chosŏn and its significance)," *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 150 (2010). P. 127.

Commentary (*Ch'imun kyŏnghunju*, 緇門警訓註), and in his introduction, he argued that this is a great text for the instruction of beginners, crucial for admonishing and keeping novices in line.¹⁴

Blackburn described how in about the same time in Ceylon, instead of learning the actual Pāli Canon, some Buddhist communities trained novices through handbooks which contained essential summaries from the sutras and *Vinayas*, as well as short discussions of meditation techniques.¹⁵ In a similar way, the *Ch'imun* constitutes a comprehensive beginners textbook involving personal rules and precepts, instructions for communal life, examples of vows of earlier teachers, meditation instructions, hymns, letters by Chinese kings praising the dharma, encouragements for study and practice, and so on. Most of the expositions are authored by Song Chan teachers, but some date back to earlier times, including pieces by Dao'an (道安, 312–385) and early dynastic kings.¹⁶ In the only available content analysis of the *Ch'imun* to date, Sin Hui-chin argues that out of the original 203 essays of the *Ch'imun* Commentary, 121 are *Vinaya* related (60%), 46 are meditations related, and 68 are wisdom related.¹⁷ Teachers I have talked to in Korean monastic seminaries today often explain that these essays should be seen as advice of elders and models of good monastic behavior rather than as strict rules and regulations. A prominent female monastic teacher reputedly said that the *Ch'imun* is to Buddhists what the

¹⁴ Sin, "Ch'imun kyŏnghunju ūi kyoyukchŏk kach'i e kwanhan yŏn'gu 緇門警訓註의 교육적 가치에 관한 연구 (A research about the educational value of the *Commentary to the Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*)." Pp. 35-42.

¹⁵ Anne M. Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in 18 Century Lankan Monastic Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). P. 12.

¹⁶ A piece on Emperor Ming of Han who is believed to be the first to receive Buddhism in China is included, along with a short royal message (*Chiwen*, 勅文) regarding Buddhism by Emperor Wen of Sui (541-604), a piece about a Jin Dynasty (3rd-century) king receiving the Bodhisattva precepts, and a couple of other chapters written by Song Dynasty kings in favor of Buddhism.

¹⁷ Sin, "Ch'imun kyŏnghunju ūi kyoyukchŏk kach'i e kwanhan yŏn'gu 緇門警訓註의 교육적 가치에 관한 연구 (A research about the educational value of the *Commentary to the Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*)." Pp. 67-72.

Analects and Mencius are for the Confucian aristocracy (*yangban*, 兩班).¹⁸ It assembles the most fundamental proverbs of the sages.

Early 20th-century Korean Buddhist reformers have critiqued the length and repetitious nature of this text, and attempted to create shorter more palatable versions to the *Ch'imun*. Pak Han-Yŏng's (1870-1948) first early attempt to limit the *Ch'imun* to its most essential 43 chapters did not hold ground, but An Chin-ho's 1936 abridgement became the orthodox seminary edition for the rest of the 20th-century.¹⁹ Along with other well-known Korean Buddhist reformers such as Han Yong-un and Kwŏn Sangno, An was one of the first graduates of the Myŏngjin school, and he was the one to venture a complete rearrangement of the text into 67 chapters under 14 general categories. This compilation begins with a group of six chapters under the title of Admonitions (*Kyŏnghun*, 警訓), which seem to be considered as the most significant section appearing first in the volume and most widely studied in seminaries today. Next in order are categories titled Urging to Study (*Myŏnhak*, 勉學), Bequeathed Instructions (*Yugye*, 遺誡), Guidelines (*Chammyŏng*, 箴銘), Letters (*Sŏjang*, 書狀), Records (*Kimun*, 記文), Introductions (*Sŏmun*, 序文), Vows (*Palmun*, 願文), Chan (*Sŏnmun*, 禪文), Instructions to the Community (*Sijung*, 示衆), Hymns (*Kech'an*, 偈讚), Defending the Dharma (*Hobop*, 護法), Miscellanea (*Chamnok*, 雜錄), and Appendices (*Purok*, 附錄).

¹⁸ Myoŏm is the one quoted here. See: Yogyŏng, "Piguni kyoyuk toryang Pongnyŏngsa sŭngga taehak e taehan koch'al biguni kyoyuk dorang bongnisa-sungga-daehak e daehan gochal (Inquiry into the nun education at Pongnyŏngsa's sangha university)," in *Piguni sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa munhwa biguni sungga-daehak-ui yŏksa wa munhwa* (The history and culture of nun seminaries), ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2009).

¹⁹ Sin, "Ch'imun kyŏnghunju ūi kyoyukchŏk kach'i e kwanhan yŏn'gu 緇門警訓註의 교육적 가치에 관한 연구 (A research about the educational value of the *Commentary to the Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*).". Pp. 80-81.

This *Ch'imun* begins with *Guishan's Admonitions* (*Guishan dayuan chanshi jingce*, 漚山大圓禪師警策), which as far as I know is the only essay of the compilation to be (partially) translated into English.²⁰ Guishan (漚山, 771-853) has been Baizhang's disciple, and as such must have been involved with the construction of Chan rules and regulations. His Admonitions essay circulated independently as an instructional text for beginners in China, and Poceski argues that although he was associated with the Hongzhou Chan lineage, his manuscript shows no anti-moral iconoclastic agenda but a more down-to-earth Chan of daily institutional life at a monastery.²¹ We have seen earlier that this text was recommended for monastic novices by some of the Chinese Pure Rules texts, and historically it seems to have played a part in the disciplinary instruction of new monastics in Vietnam as well.²² The second essay of the *Ch'imun* is taken directly out of Zongze's 11th-century *Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery* (*Chanyuan qinggui*, 禪苑清規), and presents a summary of Chan monastic management offices and positions.²³ Another noteworthy essay is Huiran's (慧然) 'Raising Vows' (*Fayuanwen*, 發願文) which has made its way from the *Ch'imun* straight into the morning and evening chanting liturgy of some of the major Korean monasteries, including Haeinsa and Chŏngamsa.²⁴

²⁰ Found in: Mario Poceski, "Guishan Jingce and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice," in *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in Zen Buddhism*, ed. Steven Heine and Dale Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²¹ Ibid. P. 36.

²² Minh Thi Nguyen, "Buddhist Monastic Education and Regional Revival Movements in Early Twentieth Century Vietnam" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007). Pp. 73-4.

²³ Hyewŏn, "Hyŏndae Han'guk sŏnwŏn Ch'ŏnggyu ŭi mosŭp kwa naagal pangyang 현대 한국 선원 청규의 모습과 나아갈 방향 (The shape of modern Korean Chan monastic Pure Rules and future objectives)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 5 ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2004). Pp. 265-7.

²⁴ Chi-hyŏn Kim, "Chogyŏjong kibon kyoyuk kigwan p'yojun kyogwa kwajŏng e taehan yŏn'gu 조계종 기본교육기관 標準教科課程에 대한 研究 (Research regarding the standard curriculum of the Chogyŏ Order's basic education institutions)." *Han'guk Pulgyohak* 65 (2013). P. 335.

As many prominent Chinese Buddhists received a classical education, it is not surprising to find numerous references to Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi and other Confucian thinkers throughout the *Ch'imun*. Some authors admonish Buddhist novices using the well-known adage from the Analects of 'restrain yourself and return to the rites (*kejifuli*, 克己復禮),²⁵ others refer to Xunzi's scales and rectangles (*guiju*, 規矩) which are needed to rectify the sangha, as "even jade cannot be made into a bowl without carving, so does a man cannot know the Way without study,"²⁶ and yet others put their own words of caution and encouragement into the authoritative mouth of Confucius, just as *The Zhuangzi* is known to have done before. Though scholarly discussion of *Vinaya* texts tend to focus on matters of material possessions and sexual and dietary restrictions, these Chinese (Confucian inspired) Chan Admonitions seem to be more interested in prodding novices to study hard and live harmoniously with others. As we shall see later on, such ethical focus of living harmoniously in the community is often singled out by seminary teachers as the most important value to be learned by Buddhist novices at the beginning of their monastic careers.

The *Ch'imun* is a long and comparatively difficult text. It contains a large number of challenging rare Chinese characters, some of which are utterly indecipherable. The fact that different essays have been written in different time periods and use different grammatical structures and terminology certainly does not make this compilation easier to read. Nevertheless, Buddhist seminary teachers often argue that this text is not read at the beginning of the

²⁵ I have read through some of the chapters using a modern Korean translation to the text: Chae-ch'öl An, *Ch'imun kyŏnghun* 緇門警訓 (*Admonitions to the gray-robed monks*) (Seoul: Tongbang Pulgyo taehak, 2004). This quote is found in the 4th-chapter of the compilation: Mingjue's (明覺, 988-1052) 'Remaining Writing on the Wall' (*Bijianyiwen*, 壁間遺文), pp. 106.

²⁶ This is the first line of the chapter 'Encouraging Study' (*Quanxuewen*, 勸學文) found in *ibid.* P. 191. It appears in other places in the *Ch'imun* as well. It reads: '玉不琢不成器 人不學不知道.'

curriculum just for its content, but it is used as a kind of Chinese character primer and Buddhist terminology lexicon in preparation for reading more philosophical texts in later stages of the program. In other words, the *Ch'imun* serves as a kind of crash-course in reading Chinese Buddhist literature, and after struggling with it at first, novices discover that they could read other curricular texts with relative ease. Some Korean monastic teachers also argue that reading through the exhortations of the patriarchs in the *Ch'imun* helps increase the faith and confidence of novices in the Buddhist path.²⁷ In 2008 the Chogye Order published a new shorter edition of the *Ch'imun* in 44 essays (*Sinp'yŏn ch'imun*, 新編緇門) in an attempt to further simplify the collection.²⁸ In a 2000 Chogye seminar, a monastic teacher from Pŏmŏsa argued that seminaries should not focus only on Chinese admonitions and a 'Korean *Ch'imun*' should be fashioned as well.²⁹ The fact is, however, that a Korean Admonitions collection has been in use for centuries.

Admonitions to Beginners (*Ch'obalsim chagyŏngmun*, 初發心自警文, hereafter '*Ch'obalsim*') is a collection of three essays by prominent historical Korean Buddhist teachers, which has sometimes accompanied the *Ch'imun* in the early stages of the curriculum, though in the 20th-century it was usually studied by postulants before actually entering a seminary. The three texts are now available in English translation in the *Collected Works of Korean Buddhism*. The First is Wŏnhyo's (617-686) *Arouse the Mind and Practice* (*Palsim suhaengjang*,

²⁷ See for example: Kwangmyŏng, "Suhaengmyŏn esŏ pon kangwŏn kyoyuk 修行面에서 본 講院教育 (Seminary education from the perspective of practice)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk kwa Han'guk Pulgyo 승가교육과 한국불교* (*Sangha education and Korean Buddhism*), ed. Kaksan (Taegu: Chŏn'guk kangwŏn yŏnhap Pulgyo haksul taehoe chunbi wiwŏnhoe, 2003). P. 96.

²⁸ The Chogye Order, *Sinp'yŏn ch'imun* 新編緇門 (*New edition to the Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks*) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, Education Department, 2008).

²⁹ Yonghak, "Kangwŏn kyoyuk ŭi hyoyulchŏgin haksŭp ŭl wihan kangwŏn kyoje kaesŏnan 강원 교육의 효율적인 학습을 위한 강원 교제 개선안 (Reform plan of seminary textbooks for efficient practice of seminary education)," in *Kangwŏn kyogwa t'ongil mit kaesŏn ŭl wihan kyoyuk kwan'gyeja yŏnch'anho* 강원 교과통일 및 개선을 위한 교육관계자 연찬회 (*Public hearing for educators regarding the unification and reform of seminary curriculums*), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul 2000).

發心修行章).³⁰ This short 706-character text does not go into much detail but provides general encouragements to practice, admonishments against breaking the precepts, and warnings regarding harmful desires. The next essay, Chinul's *Admonitions to Neophytes* (*Kye ch'osim hagin mun*, 誠初心學人文) gets into more specifics.³¹ Its content is divided into three parts: admonitions for beginners (keeping the ten precepts, staying away from corrupt friends, getting along with others and respecting their privacy, walking, eating and speaking solemnly, and so on); admonitions to fully-ordained monks on the communal life (staying out of fights, refraining from frivolous talk, eating in untimely manner, and refraining from over-associating with the laity); and admonitions on the right frame of mind for Chan practice (refraining from doubt, laziness, and so on). It was written by Chinul in 1209 based on the Chinese *Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery* with the specific goal of regulating and disciplining his community in Susōnsa, yet, soon later it began circulating in other monasteries as well.³²

The popularity of Chinul's *Admonitions to Neophytes* soon inspired other Korean Buddhist teachers to compose their own *Admonitions*. In the mid-14th-century the Korean Tiantai teacher, Unmok, published the *Tiantai Admonitions* (*Ch'ōnt'ae marhak unmok hwasang kyōngch'aek*, 天台末學雲默和尚警策), and in the early 15th the Chan teacher Yaun (野雲) composed the third and final text that made it into the *Ch'obalsim* collection: the *Self*

³⁰ Translated in: Robert Buswell, "Arouse Your Mind and Practice!," in *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume 1: From Early Times to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Peter H. Lee (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). Pp. 154-7. Also in: Charles Muller, "Awaken Your Mind and Practice (Balsim suhaeng jang) 發心修行章," in *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism Vol. 1*, ed. Charles Muller (Seoul: The Chogyae Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012). Pp. 261-9.

³¹ Translation available in: Robert Buswell, "Admonitions to Neophytes (Kye ch'osim hagin mun 誠初心學人文)," in *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism Vol. 2*, ed. Robert Buswell (Seoul: The Chogyae Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012).

³² Pang-ryong Kim, "Kojungse Han'guk sōnwōn ch'ōnggyu ūi t'ūkch'ing kwa ūiui 고중세 한국 선원 청규의 특징과 의의 (The special features and significance of Korean Chan halls in ancient times and in the middle-ages)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk 5*, ed. Education Department The Chogyae Order (Seoul: The Chogyae Order, 2004). Kim claims that Chinul actually refers to the Pure Rules in his essay. Pp. 207-212.

Admonitions (*Chagyŏngmun*, 自警文).³³ This essay is centered on ten general warnings which are similar to Chinul's admonitions mentioned above (refraining from over-associating with the laity, refraining from frivolous speech, and so on), but involves somewhat more sophisticated language and poetry. Wŏnhyo and Chinul's compositions circulated separately for a time, and the three were assembled and published together for the first time under the title of *Ch'obalsim* in 1567 in Ssanggyesa. Ever since 1612 they were always published together as a collection (13 times before the 20th-century), and as early as the 16th-century they have even been published in the new *Hangŭl* vernacular script.³⁴

In sum, it makes sense that the monastic career begins with some education regarding the rules of the communal life in the monastery, and this seems to be the case in other Buddhist communities as well.³⁵ As in South Asian communities, this initial disciplinary schooling in Korea has not been done through the formal canonical *Vinaya* or the well-known Pure Rules literature, but with the aid of Chinese and native Korean admonition compilations. This *Admonitions genre*, which sets off the Korean monastic curriculum, has taken the place of the formal *Vinaya* texts in Korean monastic Buddhism for the past several centuries. The focus of these disciplinary texts is not dietary, sexual or material possessions, but restraining one's speech and action within a community to avoid strife, and encouraging novices to strive in their study

³³ Ibid. P. 212. An English translation of the *Chagyŏngmun* is found in: Richard McBride, "Watch Yourself! (Jagyeongmun 自警文) By Yaun," in *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism Vol. 6*, ed. The Chogyŏ Order of Korean Buddhism (Seoul: 2012). P. 403.

³⁴ Hŭi-suk Ko, "Han'guk Pulgyo kangwŏn samigwa kyoje ŭi sŏjjŏk yŏn'gu 韓國佛教 講院 沙彌科 教材의 書誌的 研究 (A bibliographic research of the study materials of the novice course in Korean Buddhist seminaries)," *Sŏjihak yŏn'gu* 10 (1994). P. 913.

³⁵ Note however that in Tibetan monastic schools the curriculums usually begin with logic and debate manuals, move on to Mahāyāna treatises, and only culminate after many years of study with *Vinaya*! See: V. Nithiyanandam, *Buddhist System of Education* (Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2004). Pp. 75-91. See Also: Georges Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk* (California: University of California Press, 2003). Pp. 112-131.

and practice. As we have seen, it also involves more practical instructions in meditation and monastic management, as well as a variety of short ritual texts, vows, letters of kings, and inspirational material by famous masters. Ironically, as we shall see in later chapters, contemporary Korean Buddhist modernizers have criticized the *Ch'imun* for being 'too Chinese,' calling for a romantic return to the canonical *Vinaya*, which perhaps is a return to a Buddhism that has never really existed.

The Second Stage: Chan Treatises

After completing the admonitions stage of his/her education, the monastic novice is ready to move on to the next stage, that of the Fourfold Collection of Chan treatises (四集, hereafter '*Sajip*'). These four treatises are viewed as further introductory material on the doctrines and practices of Chan, studied before one could move on to study the sutras in the later stages of the curriculum. Such gradual progress from commentaries to sutras is not unique to the Korean monastic program, and the various Tibetan Buddhist curriculums, for example, also spend many years on commentarial texts (*sastras*) before moving on to study some of the formal sutras.³⁶ The significance of these specific four treatises for the understanding of what Korean Buddhism actually stands for is immense, as they are the ones chosen to instruct the yet flexible minds of novices, and point them into the orthodox way Korean monastics were to understand and practice their tradition. The four are often divided into two parts. The first two are Zongmi's (宗密, 780–

³⁶ The Tibetan curriculums in fact seem to spend much more time on commentaries than on sutras, and some end with only *Vinaya Sutra* study at the end of many years of commentarial analysis. For details see: *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Pp. 112-133.

841) *Chan Preface*³⁷ and Chinul's (知訥, 1158–1210) *Excerpts from the Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record with Personal Notes* (hereafter '*Excerpts*'³⁸), which are essentially expositions discussing the various Chan houses and doctrines, and are thus sometimes labeled as learning (*kyo*, 教). The next two are Dahui's (大慧, 1089–1163) *Letters*³⁹ and Gaofeng's (高峰, 1237-1295) *Chan Essentials*,⁴⁰ which focus mainly on instructions in the *kanhua* (看話) Chan method of *huatou* (話頭, critical phrase) practice, and are thus often labeled as Chan.⁴¹ Only two of these four are found in the Taishō edition of the canon, yet they have been more influential to the Korean tradition than most other texts in that authoritative collection.

The first historical references for these four being taught together successively in Korea are from the early 16th-century. One of which is found in Hyujōng's (休靜, 1520-1604) records of Chiōm (智嚴, 1464-1534), which explain that "in guiding beginners, first establish the factual knowledge using the *Preface* and the *Excerpts*, and then sweep away the maladies of knowing and understanding using the *Chan Essentials* and the *Recorded Sayings*, and point towards the way out."⁴² This seems to point towards a fascinating pedagogical use of the four

³⁷ 禪源諸詮集都序 Found in T 2015.48. Full English translation available in: Jeffrey Lyle Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2009).

³⁸ 法集別行錄節要并入私記, not found in the Taishō canon. Full English translation available in: Robert Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983). Pp. 262-374.

³⁹ 大慧書狀. Found within the larger Record of Dahui (大慧普覺禪師語錄) in T47.1998. Miriam Levering is working on a full English translation to this text, which will hopefully be out soon.

⁴⁰ 禪要. Not Found in the Taishō. Robert Buswell is working on an English translation to this text.

⁴¹ On the division of the four to 'Chan' and 'teaching' see for example: Education Department The Chogyae Order, "Chigwan sūnim int'ōbyu 지관 스님 인터뷰 (An interview with Venerable Chigwan)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 6, ed. Education Department The Chogyae Order (Seoul The Chogyae Order, 2006).P. 384.

⁴² The quote is: 若導初學則先以禪源集別行錄立如實知見次以禪要語錄掃除知解之病而指示活路也. I have found it in Hyujōng's collection of Chiōm's essays titled *Pyōksongdang Yarohaengnok* (碧松堂野老行錄). Note that the expression 'maladies of knowing and understanding' is found several times in essays by Chinul, usually referring to the '10 maladies of Chan practice' depicted by Dahui. Also note that although the quote refers to the 'Recorded Sayings' rather than Dahui's *Letters*, it is most likely that this is the text in question, as the *Letters* are the last part of Dahui's Recorded Sayings which were especially popular in Korea at the time. Nevertheless, a more explicit reference to the *Letters* within a very similar framework is found in the records of Kyōnghōn (敬軒, 1542-1632) who has been a near contemporary of Chiōm and a student of Hyujōng, and claimed that "first using the *Preface* and *Excerpts* one can

texts in succession: the first two building knowledge, and the other two destroying it. Yet, it is only in the early 17th-century that we first encounter Chan teachers referring to the four as a collection titled *Sajip*, and evidence of several monasteries printing them together as a set.⁴³

Zongmi's *Preface* was first transcribed in 857 (Tang Dynasty). A Dunhuang manuscript of the text from 952 is extant, but it only first made it into the formal canon in 17th-century Ming.⁴⁴ It was published several times in China and in the Buddhist Xixia Tangut world, as well as twice in Japan in the 17th-century within Kegon (華嚴) circles, but it was by far more widely circulated in Korea, largely due to Chinul's interest in Zongmi.⁴⁵ It was printed 16 different times on the peninsula in the 15-17th centuries alone.⁴⁶ The main message of the text seems to be that Mahāyāna sutras should not be discarded by Chan practitioners, as they are the word of the Buddha and thus cannot be contradictory to the mind of the Buddha, which is Chan. Zongmi criticizes in this essay the 'misunderstanding' regarding Bodhidharma's slogan of mind

determine and unpack the (various) interpretations of the Buddha Dharma, and based on this strong foundation, one later moves on to the *Chan Essentials* and Dahui's *Letters* which break through the maladies of knowing and understanding the Buddha Dharma" (先以都序節要 決釋佛法之知見 以固其基本 次禪要書狀 擊碎佛法知解之病, I have extracted this quote from a comprehensive collection of education-related quotes assembled by Nam To-yŏng in: To-yŏng Nam, "Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ rŭl chungsimŭro pon Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyoyuk 한국불교전서를 중심으로 본 조선시대 사원교육 (Temple education in the Chosŏn period seen through the *Complete Works of Korean Buddhism*)," in *Kangwŏn ch'ongnam 강원총람 (A comprehensive survey of seminaries)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 1997).

⁴³ Sŏng-p'il Son, "16-17 segi Pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa Pulgyogyŏe ūi tonghyang 16•17 세기 불교정책과 불교계의 동향 (Buddhist policies and tendencies in the 16-17th-centuries)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Dongguk University, 2013). Son explains that they were all published together for the first time in Jirisan's Nūngin Hermitage in 1603-4. Then again in Songwangsa in 1608-9, in Yongboksa in 1628, and in Yongjangsa in 1635.

⁴⁴ Note that the Dunhuang version of the *Preface* appears under a different title: 大乘禪門要錄 (Important Records of the Mahāyāna Chan Gate). See: Peter Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Pp. 315-6. For the text inclusion in the formal Ming Canon see: Broughton, *Zongmi on Chan*. P. 190

⁴⁵ *Zongmi on Chan*. For Korea see: Yonghak, "Tosŏ ūi ot'alcha chijŏk e taehan kyŏnhae 도서의 오타자 지적에 대한 견해 (Thoughts about misprints in the *Chan Preface*)," in *Sŏngga kyoyuk* 7, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2008).

⁴⁶ For the 15th-century printings see: "Tosŏ ūi ot'alcha chijŏk e taehan kyŏnhae 도서의 오타자 지적에 대한 견해 (Thoughts about misprints in the *Chan Preface*)." For the 16th and 17th centuries see: Sŏng-p'il Son, "16 segi Chosŏn ūi Pulsŏ kanhaeng 16 世紀朝鮮의 佛書刊行 (Buddhist text printing in 16th-century Chosŏn)" (Masters Thesis, Dongguk 2007); "16-17 segi Pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa Pulgyogyŏe ūi tonghyang 16•17 세기 불교정책과 불교계의 동향 (Buddhist policies and tendencies in the 16-17th-centuries)."

transmission not depending on words and letters,⁴⁷ and argues that Bodhidharma simply taught that as skillful means to inform people that the moon (awakening) does not lie in the finger (sutras), yet the sutras are needed to point us towards it. The *Preface* correlates various sutra teachings to the teachings of the Chan houses, and compares the sutras to the inked string of the carpenter, as they are to be used as a measuring standard for Chan practitioners. In it Zongmi laments the fact that in his day sutra scholasticism was often practiced in separate circles from Chan, and called for a sutra-based Chan practice. Thus, the first thing that was traditionally taught to Korean monastic novices who have completed the preliminary Admonitions course, is that Chan is not separated from the words and letters of the Mahāyāna sutras, and sutra study is essential to their practice.⁴⁸

The second great project of the *Preface* is comparing and contrasting the Chan and Tiantai lineages of the day, using the frameworks of gradual and sudden approaches to practice. In short, Zongmi designates the various teachings as viable skillful means, but seems to favor the position of the Heze lineage in which sudden awakening is a necessary pre-condition for correct cultivation, for without such primary awakening how could one know what to base his/her practice on.⁴⁹ He explains that just as the sun rises suddenly yet the frost melts gradually, as a

⁴⁷ This may perhaps be the first historical mention of this famous Chan slogan.

⁴⁸ There are several generic terms used in East Asia to refer to the kind of sutra-based scholastic Chan where sutra-study and Chan practice complement each other: *Chanjiao yizhi* (禪教一致) and *dinghui shuangxiu* (定慧雙修) seem especially common in contemporary references to the thought of Zongmi, Yongming Yanshou (永明延壽, 904-975) and Chinul, though I was not able to find actual use of the term *Chanjiao yizhi* prior to the 16th-century (it appears in Hanshan Deqing's *Hanshan laoren mengyouji* 憨山老人夢遊集). The second term, *dinghui shuangxiu*, is more common, and it actually appears in Yanshou's well-known *Zongjing lu* (宗鏡錄). This complementary nature of wisdom and meditation is of course emphasized in the Chan tradition at least as early as the Platform Sutra. Another term that is often used in the scholarship to refer to the same kind of Chan (that DOES depend on words and letters) is *wenzi Chan* (文字禪), but it turns out this term has been coined by Huihong (1071-1128) to connote the poetic, lettered Chan of later Song, rather than the notion of a sutra-based Chan practice. See the entry for *wenzi Chan* in: Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. P. 995.

⁴⁹ Zongmi says: "If one practices without yet being awakened, this is not real practice." (若未悟而修非真修也, T.2015.48 0406a07). For a detailed discussion see: Peter Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual

child is born with all limbs intact but only gradually matures their function, and as an aristocrat who grew up in the wilderness suddenly returns home and gradually learns ritual and music, so although one suddenly realizes his Buddha nature, he still has to gradually remove his 'beginning-less habit-energies' (*wushixiqi* 無始習氣) to become fully enlightened. This Heze-Chan sudden-enlightenment-followed-by-gradual-cultivation (*dunwujianxiu*, 頓悟漸修) model proposed by Zongmi has become the hallmark of the traditional curriculum, and for that reason it has been standing at the center of the Korean Buddhist discourse for centuries.

Much of the popularity of Zongmi in Korea is due to Chinul. He brought Zongmi and his Heze syncretic sutra-based Chan ideology, which has lost its popularity in China since the 11th-century, back from the dead, and into mainstream Korean Buddhism.⁵⁰ The *Excerpts* are described by Buswell as Chinul's magnum opus, written in 1209, a year before his death, and composed with the purpose of serving as a handbook for students.⁵¹ It is the only native Korean text in the *Sajip*, yet it essentially continues to discuss the various Chan houses using the same Zongmi-related themes of sudden and gradual discussed above. In fact, it is presented not as an individual thesis but as a commentary to another, lost, Zongmi text, *The Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record*.⁵²

Chinul quotes Zongmi's critic of the main Chan schools saying that the Northern School regards everything as false, the Hongzhou school regards everything as true, and the Oxhead school regards everything as nonexistent, and provides the simile of the Mani jewel

Cultivation," in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter Gregory (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 1987).

⁵⁰ Robert Buswell, *Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean way of Zen* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1991). P. 50.

⁵¹ *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul*. P. 262.

⁵² 法集別行錄. This title does not appear in any Buddhist catalogue, and Buswell contends that perhaps it is an earlier proto-version of Zongmi's Chan Collection (sometimes called Chan Canon). See: "The Identity of the Pōpchip pyōrhaeng nok [Dharma collection and special practice record]," *Korean Studies* 6 (1982). P. 11.

which remains luminous no matter what color it reflects, but the Hongzhou insist that the colors are the jewel, the Northern school attempts to remove the colors, and the Oxhead school believes both the color and the luminosity are nonexistent.⁵³ He reiterates the idea that Zongmi's sudden-awakening- followed- by- gradual- cultivation is the best model, especially for the present degenerate age (*malbŏp*, 末法). He then turns to focus on cultivation practices. Chinul allows that Pure land chanting practices (*yŏmbul*, 念佛) as well as cultivating wisdom using the sutras are good practices for those of lesser faculties, cultivating faith with the *Huayan Sutra* is a good practice for those of middle faculties, and practicing no-mind (*munyŏm*, 無念) as well as *huatou* (話頭) investigation are beneficent for those of high faculties.⁵⁴ His version of Buddhism taught to novices in Korea is thus multi-praxis, allowing various ways of cultivation to the sangha. Nevertheless, he did posit no-mind and *huatou* meditation at the peak of his scheme, and it is this kind of meditation that is the focus of the next two *Sajip* texts.

Kanhua Chan with its focus on *huatou* meditation practice is generally thought to be invented by Dahui, and first popularized in Korea by Chinul.⁵⁵ The third essay of the *Sajip*, the *Letters*, consists of the last five fascicles (25-30) of Dahui's Record, which include 65 letters he had sent to 42 people, only two of which were monks, and 39 were great scholar- officials (*shidafu*, 士大夫).⁵⁶ Dahui presided over the two most important monasteries in China at the time, and some of his correspondences are with prominent Confucian literati, such as Liu Zihui

⁵³ *Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean way of Zen* . Pp. 156-164.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Pp. 61-72.

⁵⁵ Schlütter argued that Dahui himself has never used the term *kanhua* Chan for his method, and it seems to have been first coined by modern Japanese researchers. See: Morten Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008). Note 27 on page 215. Note that in Japan Dahui was important to Hakuin, the founder of the modern Rinzai tradition.

⁵⁶ Kūm-yŏn Hwang, "Taehye Chonggo sŏnsa ūi Sŏjang yŏn'gu 大慧宗杲禪師의 書狀 연구 (Research of Dahui's Letters)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Dongguk University, 2010). Pp. 90-92.

who has been the teacher of young Zhu Xi (1130-1200), one prime minister, and several direct students of the Cheng brothers.⁵⁷ Thus, although the *Letters* has become a crucial text in monastic training in Korea, it was probably originally focused on propagating *huatou* practice to lay Confucian scholars.

‘Quiet sitting’ (*jingzuo*, 靜坐) has become somewhat of a popular practice among Song scholar-officials, and Dahui’s first goal in the *Letters* seems to have been to condemn such endeavors and recommend *huatou* investigation instead.⁵⁸ Schlütter argued that Dahui’s critic of such ‘quiet sitting’ or ‘silent illumination’ (*mozha*, 默照) should be seen in the context of the revival of the Caodong tradition at the time and the competition between the Linji (to which Dahui belonged) and the Caodong masters over the political support of the literati.⁵⁹ The *Letters* reiterate over and over that ‘quiet sitting’ is just idleness and real practice is not related to sitting or lying down, to quiet or noise, but should be done at all times, in everyday activities, and even in dreams. ‘To make the Buddha sit is to kill the Buddha,’ exclaimed Dahui, and warned that those who are attached to sitting will never reach the principle.⁶⁰ In a famous story, Dahui burned the woodblocks of the *Blue Cliff Record* (written by his own teacher nonetheless), perhaps in order to reprimand his students for simply ‘learning’ the different *gong’an* cases instead of

⁵⁷ Dahui presided over the monasteries of Ayuwangshan and Jingshan, for details see: Miriam Levering, "Dahui Zonggao," in *Zen Masters*, ed. Dale Wright Steven Heine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). For his students see: "Ch'an Enlightenment for the Laymen: Ta-hui and the New Religious Culture of the Sung" (Harvard University, 1978). Pp. 76-81.

⁵⁸ It was recommended for example by Luo Congyan (1072-1135) as well as by other Confucian literati in the 11th and 12th centuries. For details see: Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On ‘quiet sitting’ in Neo-Confucianism see also: Rodney Taylor, *The Religious Dimensions of Confucianism* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990). Pp. 77-114; *The Confucian Way of Contemplation: Okada Takehiko and the Tradition of Quiet-Sitting* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988). Pp. 35-41.

⁵⁹ See: Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China*. This is the main argument of the book, but see in particular pp. 116-182.

⁶⁰ The full quote is 若學坐禪 禪非坐臥 若學坐佛 佛非定相 於無住法 不應取捨 汝若坐佛 即是殺佛 若執坐相 非達其理. These quotes are found in: Hwang, "Taehye Chonggo sōnsa ūi Sōjang yōn'gu 大慧宗杲禪師의 書狀 연구 (Research of Dahui's *Letters*). Pp. 253-6.

actually holding on to them. Lists were unnecessary, and one *huatou* was sufficient, Dahui's favorite clearly being the 'Wu' (無 as the answer to the question whether a dog has a Buddha-nature) to which he refers 34 times in *Letters* to 25 people.⁶¹ (In comparison he only refers to other *huatou*'s in his communications with four people.) In explaining *huatou* practice, Dahui was also perhaps the first teacher in Buddhist history to re-conceive doubt (*yiqing*, 疑情) not as a hindrance, but as a vital driving force in the investigation, necessary to break through the *huatou* towards enlightenment.⁶² Such ideas have been expanded upon in the last essay of the *Sajip* collection, Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*.

Just like the *Letters*, *Chan Essentials* is principally a collection of teachings to the laity regarding correct *huatou* practice. The work consists of 29 chapters: 13 sermons to large (lay) audiences, three private interviews, two letters, and some biographical information, all collected by one of Gaofeng's lay disciples between 1288 and 1295.⁶³ Ironically, although this text was never able to find its way into a standard edition of a formal Buddhist canon, it was published in Korea more often than any of the other *Sajip* essays, 33 times since its first engraving in 1354 to the end of the 18th-century.⁶⁴ Gaofeng has been recognized as the 18th patriarch of the Linji Chan lineage. His sermons illustrate a more sudden approach to practice than what we have seen in the other *Sajip* essays. In fact, in contrary to the textually-based scholastic Chan of Zongmi and Chinul, the introduction to the *Chan Essentials* states explicitly

⁶¹ Ibid. Pp. 106-8.

⁶² Robert Buswell, "The Transformation of Doubt (Ŭijŏng 疑情) in Kanhwa Sŏn 看話禪: The Testimony of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)," in *Kanhwasŏn, kŭ wŏlli wa kujo 간화선, 그원리와 구조 (Kanhwa-Chan, its principle and structure)* (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2011).

⁶³ Suk-hyŏn Kim, "Kobong hwasang Sŏnyo yŏn'gu 高峰和尚禪要 研究 (Research on Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Dongguk 2013). Pp. 1, 56-60, 77.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Pp. 118-121. See also: Chŏng-ryong Ha, "Sinpyŏn Sajip ŭi ŭiui wa kwaje 新編 四集의 意義와 課題 (The significance of and problems in the new edition of the *Sajip*)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk 2*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 1998). Pp. 359-60.

that these are the teachings that are not based on words and letters (*buliwenzi*, 不立文字), and it is generally understood that the work embodies a sudden-awakening-sudden-cultivation (*dunwudunxiu*, 頓悟頓修) approach to practice.⁶⁵ In other words, this essay seems a little out of place in the *Sajip* collection, and this may perhaps lead us to believe that the curriculum orthodoxy is somewhat flexible and open-ended, introducing novices to various approaches and letting them follow whichever they prefer independently. Then again, I believe that the main intention behind adding this text to the program was for its extensive practical instructions in concrete *huatou* practice, rather than for its theoretical standpoints.

At the center of the discussion in this treatise stand the Three Essentials (*sanyao*, 三要) of *huatou* contemplation.⁶⁶ The first essential is the faculty of great faith (*daxingen*, 大信根) in the soteriological capability of this *kanhua* Chan method itself. The second, which is Gaofeng's most original addition to Dahui's methodology, is raising 'great fury' (*dafenzhi*, 大憤志), which brings an urgency that is so intense that it "is just as if you've come across the villain who murdered your father." The third essential, resting on the first two, is great doubt (*dayiqing*, 大疑情), which gradually engulfs the person until there is no separation between

⁶⁵ Chae-kang Chŏn, "Sŏnyo haesŏk ŭi oryu wa parŭn haesŏk 선요 해석의 오류와 바른 해석 (Mistakes and corrections in the *Chan Essentials* analysis)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 7, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2008). Pp. 395-7.

⁶⁶ My discussion of the three essentials rests on: Kim, "Kobong hwasang Sŏnyo yŏn'gu 高峰和尚禪要 研究 (Research on Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*)."; Buswell, "The Transformation of Doubt (Ŭijŏng 疑情) in Kanhua Sŏn 看話禪: The Testimony of Gaofeng Yuanmiao 高峰原妙 (1238-1295)." The following translation from the text given by Buswell summarizes the process succinctly: "If we're speaking about authentic Sŏn contemplation, there have to be three essentials. The first essential is to have the faculty of great faith: This Matter should be so patently obvious that it is just as if you are leaning against Mt. Sumeru. The second essential is to have great fury, which is just as if you've come across the villain who murdered your father and right then and there you want to cut him in half with a single strike of your sword. The third essential is to have the sensation of great doubt, which is just as if you've done a heinous act in secret and are about to be exposed (若謂着實叅禪.決須具足三要.第一要有大信根 明知此事 如靠一座須彌山.第二要有大憤志 如遇殺父冤讎.直欲便與一刀兩段.第三要有大疑情 如暗地做了一件極事 正在欲露未露之時)

oneself and doubt and one becomes one chunk (*yipian*, 一片) of doubt, to finally enter the ‘no-mind samadhi’ (*wuxinsanmei*, 無心三昧) of enlightenment.

Perhaps more than the other parts of the curriculum, the *Sajip* collection highlights the particular Korean flavor of Chan. This specific flavor seems to have been concocted by Chinul, who in his *Excerpts* blended the textual Chan and ‘sudden-awakening- followed- by- gradual cultivation’ approaches of Zongmi and the Heze School, with the *kanhua* Chan soteriology of Dahui (and later of Gaofeng). This has been the flavor that Korean novices have tasted in the monastic seminaries of the 20th-century. It is a particular kind of Chan that is not based on ‘quiet sitting’ but on sutra learning and on raising doubt with the aid of one *huatou* during all activities of daily life. And it is through the lens of these basic approaches to Buddhist practice that novices would be likely to understand the teachings of the Mahāyāna sutras which comprise the next two stages of the curriculum.

The Third Stage: The Four Sutras

After completing the *Sajip* course, novices going through the traditional curriculum are finally ready to start reading the words of the Buddha in the sutras. Four sutras were selected and compiled to form this *Sagyo* (四教) course by several early 17th-century teachers, and I suspect that these particular sutras were chosen because they were the favorites of the *Sajip* authors, and for confirming the basic ideologies these authors wished to promote. The four are the *Diamond*, the *Śūraṅgama*, the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, and the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, which although strictly speaking is a treatise and not a sutra, it was regarded as important enough to be added to this central group of texts. It is important to note that several well-known Mahāyāna sutras were left out of this curriculum, and, perhaps, the absence of the

Platform Sutra, often understood as fundamental to the Chan tradition, is especially conspicuous. It is also interesting that at least three of the four (all but the *Diamond*) are believed to be Chinese apocryphal texts, composed in 7-8th-century China, rather than ‘authentic’ Indian translations. I will not be able to provide a comprehensive discussion of these texts here, and will make my comments short.

The *Diamond Sutra*⁶⁷ is part of the Perfection of Wisdom genre and has been central to most East Asian Buddhist traditions. In Korea it has been the second most frequently printed text between the 15-17th centuries.⁶⁸ Moreover, the modern Chogye Order Constitution (*Chonghŏn*) points to this sutra and to this sutra only, as the foundational teaching of the school. In early 15th-century Korea, Kihwa (己和, 1376–1433) assembled five representative commentaries to this sutra into a collection and added an introduction. This compilation, known in Korea as the *Ogahae* (五家解) includes commentaries from Chinese teachers from the 6th to the 12th centuries (Zongmi among them), and has commonly been studied together with the sutra itself in Korean monastic seminaries.⁶⁹

The *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*⁷⁰ is a rather short Chinese apocryphon to which at least four commentaries were written in the 8th-century. It became especially well-known after Zongmi’s praise for it in the 9th-century, and his commentary for to the text inspired the additional composition of several sub-commentaries. It was first mentioned in Korea only in the 11th-

⁶⁷ 金剛般若波羅蜜多經. T8.235.

⁶⁸ It was published over 30 times in Korea during these two centuries alone. See: Son, "16-17 segi Pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa Pulgyogyŏ ŭi tonghyang 16•17 세기 불교정책과 불교계의 동향 (Buddhist policies and tendencies in the 16-17th-centuries)."

⁶⁹ Charles Muller, "A Korean Contribution to the Zen Canon: The Oga Hae Seorui (Commentaries of Five Masters on the Diamond sutra)," in *Zen Classics: Formative Texts in the History of Zen Buddhism*, ed. Dale Wright Steven Heine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁷⁰ 大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經 T17.842. Complete English translation available in: *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment: Korean Buddhism's Guide to Meditation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

century by Ŭich'ŏn (義天, 1055-1101), who wrote a short essay on it, and it was often cited later by prominent Korean teachers such as Chinul, Hyesim, Pou, and Hyujŏng.⁷¹ It is structured in such a way that the first chapters depict a more sudden approach 'pointing directly to one's mind,' and the later chapters describe various means with a more gradualist perspective. Like some of the other curricular texts, chapters out of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* sometimes made it into the liturgy (or ritual canon) of some of the monasteries. As of 2014, for example, the third chapter of the sutra, the "Chapter of the universal Vision Bodhisattva" (*Poan posal-pum*, 普眼菩薩品), is chanted in its Korean translation in the daily morning ceremonies at Wŏljŏngsa.

The *Śūraṃgama Sutra*⁷² shares much with the above *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, and Benn went as far as to argue that the later seems to be a summary of the essential points of the longer *Śūraṃgama*.⁷³ The two share the same first commentator (Weique, 惟愨) in the 8th-century, as well as the same similes of the fingers pointing at the moon, the disoriented person who confuses north and south, and the 'sky flowers' (*konghua*, 空華) as allusion for optical illusion.⁷⁴ These metaphors have become staples in Korean Chan circles. Disputes about the *Śūraṃgama*'s authenticity erupted in 8th-century Nara Japan, and it never gained much popularity in Japan since.⁷⁵ In China Zhu Xi claimed it was a forgery, but it nevertheless enjoyed great popularity during the Song and Ming periods, and at least 86 commentaries were written to it in

⁷¹ Ibid. Pp. 3-60.

⁷² 大佛頂如來密因修證了義諸菩薩萬行首楞嚴經 T19.945. English translation is available online through the Buddhist Texts Translation Society.

⁷³ James Benn, "Another Look at the Pseudo-Śūraṃgama sūtra," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 68, no. 1 (2008). Pp. 63-4.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ronald Epstein, "The Shurangama Sutra (T. 945): A Reappraisal of its Authenticity," in *Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society* (Philadelphia 1976).

the Middle Kingdom.⁷⁶ It remained central in modern China, and Yang Wenhui's well-known Jetavana Hermitage, which became a prototype for early 20th-century seminaries, centered its entire 2nd-year curriculum on this text.⁷⁷ The first Korean commentary to the *Śūraṃgama* appeared in 1265, and two additional ones were written during the Chosŏn period (one in the new *Hangŭl* script).⁷⁸ Kim Chin-yŏl provides detailed analysis of the references in the text and argues that the sutra was composed in China between the years 714-723.⁷⁹ The sutra begins with the famous story of Ānanda being seduced by a prostitute on his alms rounds, and as he returns to the assembly the Buddha thus delivers a long sermon which centers on the impossibility of locating the self, and from which several *huatou* have been extracted. The sutra is also famous for its admonition for strict vegetarianism, and includes the *Śūraṃgama* Dhāraṇī, which has become one of the most popular spells in East Asian Buddhism.

The fourth text, which seems to have become part of the *Sagyo* in a somewhat later period, is the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*.⁸⁰ A longstanding adage in Korean monastic seminaries states 'tedious *Awakening of Faith* and firm *Śūraṃgama*' (*k'ank'an Kisin, ch'adol Nŭngŏm*, 칸칸기신, 차돌능엄), and indeed the *Awakening* is a rather scholastic exposition of the

⁷⁶ Chin-yŏl Kim, *Nŭngŏm kyŏng yŏn'gu immun 능엄경연구입문 (Introduction to research on the Śūraṃgama Sutra)* (Seoul: Unjusa, 1993). Pp. 381-8.

⁷⁷ The curriculum of Wenhui's Jetavana Hermitage can be found in: Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)." Pp. 113-4.

⁷⁸ Yonghak, "Kangwŏn kyoyuk ŭi hyoyulchŏgin haksŭp ŭl wihan kangwŏn kyoje kaesŏnan 강원 교육의 효율적인 학습을 위한 강원 교제 개선안 (Reform plan of seminary textbooks for efficient practice of seminary education)." P. 41.

⁷⁹ Kim, *Nŭngŏm kyŏng yŏn'gu immun 능엄경연구입문 (Introduction to research on the Śūraṃgama Sutra)*. P. 114.

⁸⁰ 大乘起信論. T32.1666. D.T. Suzuki has translated this treatise in the early 20th-century, but what has now become the standard is: Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Awakening of Faith—Attributed to Āśvaghoṣa, with commentary by Yoshito S. Hakeda* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967). Note that Hakeda and Suzuki translated different versions of treatise.

mind.⁸¹ Wŏnhyo's 7th-century commentary is considered one of the three main commentaries to the text, and its popularity in Korea continued well after Wŏnhyo. It was printed in seven different monasteries in the 17th-century alone, and its schemata of the one mind and two gates is considered basic doctrine by most, if not all, Korean monastics and Buddhist scholars alike.⁸²

The Fourth Stage: Huayan

The last stage and the peak of the curricular canon involves the study of the *Huayan Sutra* (華嚴經).⁸³ This sutra is thus given a special place in the Korean tradition, which is accordingly often understood to be Huayan-Chan. Historically this sutra was sometimes accompanied in the last stage of the program by two Chan collections: *The Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuandenglū*, 景德傳燈錄⁸⁴) and the *Enlightened Verses* (*Sŏnmun yŏmsong*, 禪門拈頌⁸⁵), but these texts have rarely been studied in seminaries in the 20th-century, and are not anymore considered to be part of the core traditional curriculum. Nevertheless, these three seem to have been regarded as the highest Buddhist teachings in 14-15th centuries' Korea. The Great

⁸¹ Yonghak, "Kangwŏn kyoyuk ūi hyoyulchŏgin haksŭp ūl wihan kangwŏn kyoje kaesŏnan 강원 교육의 효율적인 학습을 위한 강원 교제 개선안 (Reform plan of seminary textbooks for efficient practice of seminary education)." P. 42.

⁸² Son, "16-17 segi Pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa Pulgyogyŏ ūi tonghyang 16•17 세기 불교정책과 불교계의 동향 (Buddhist policies and tendencies in the 16-17th-centuries)."

⁸³ The full title is: 大方廣佛華嚴經. T09. 278, 279. English translation available in: Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture : A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra* (Boston: Shambala Publication, 1993).

⁸⁴ T51.2076. This influential compilation of biographies, sermons, dialogues and poems of dharma teachers was the first work of the 'Transmission of the Lamp' genre (*Chuandeng lu*), which is believed to be inspired by official Chinese dynastic histories. It was compiled by Daoyuan (道源) in 1004, and Welter argued that it generally presents a Wuyue-region Chan, dominated by the non-radical, scholastic, sutra-based approach of Yongming Yanshou (and Zongmi), which certainly fits the general attitudes of the Korean curriculum. For a detailed analysis see: Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Chapter 5.

⁸⁵ The text is not included in any formal canon. A hundred out of its 1,463 cases were translated into English by Juhn Ahn in: Juhn Ahn, "Gongan Collections," in *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism Vol. 7*, ed. John Jorgensen (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012).

Code of Administration (*Kyŏngguk-taejŏn*, 經國大典) of Chosŏn designates these specific three texts to be recited at the official national sangha examinations: the *Huayan Sutra* by doctrinal (*kyo*, 敎) monks, and the two other collections by Chan (禪) monks.⁸⁶

The lengthy *Huayan Sutra* is generally regarded as a compilation of various shorter sutras, most well-known of which is the *Ten (Bodhisattva) Stages Sutra* (*Shidejing*, 十地經), whose basic contents are also found in the *Śūraṅgama Sutra* of the *Sagyo*. There are two editions to the text, the earlier 5th-century 60-fascicles compilation, and the 7th-century 80-fascicles version, and seminary teachers in Korea generally decided individually which version to use in class. *The Transmission of the Lamp* was written in the early 11th-century and consists of 1,701 biographies Chan teachers, beginning with Śākyamuni himself. It thus presented novices with both a history as well as prototypes of enlightenment from which *gong'ans* could be extracted. Finally, the extensive *Enlightened Verses* is the first Korean native *gong'an* collection, compiled by Chinul's disciple and successor Hyesim (慧心, 1178-1234) based on *The Transmission of the Lamp*, with additional cases extracted from the *Huayan*, *Lotus* and other sutras. This sutra-based Chan collection consists of 1,463 cases supplemented by explanations and poems. In the following section I will explore the ways in which this last stage of the program relates to the other texts of the traditional curriculum.

⁸⁶ In early Chosŏn Korean Buddhism was generally divided in such a structure between doctrinal and Chan monks, yet it is generally believed that by the 16th-century these two were unified into one main school of Korean Buddhism. About these exams see for example: Sem Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism during the Koryŏ Dynasty (918 - 1392)* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008). P. 199.

Intertextuality

The Buddhist textual depository is enormous, and so Buddhist traditions inevitably must pick and choose particular texts to focus on in their liturgies and curricular programs. These choices are what make the various Buddhisms distinct from one another. The important questions, though, are why specific texts were preferred over others by an individual tradition, and what makes these selections stick together as a generally coherent set. We have seen earlier the way in which Chinul's particular synthesis of Zongmi's soteriology and Dahui's (and Gaofeng's) approaches to practice create a unified *Sajip* ideology. In this section I will attempt an analysis of the main ideologies, similes, schemata, and intertextual mutual-referencing which gives the whole traditional Korean monastic curriculum a single unified, particular taste.

Probably the most dominant teaching that runs across most of the Korean traditional curricular texts is Zongmi's 'sudden-enlightenment- followed- by- gradual- cultivation,' with its more gradualist approach to Chan soteriology. It was most explicitly promulgated by Zongmi and Chinul, and Levering found an allusion to it also in Dahui's *Letters*.⁸⁷ Poceski found this same soteriology in the first and most well-known chapter of the *Ch'imun*, *Guishan's Admonitions*.⁸⁸ Perhaps the most explicit reference to it in the curricular sutras is the *Śūramgama*'s claim that "although one is suddenly enlightened to the principle, actual manifestations of things are not suddenly eliminated, but are gradually extinguished."⁸⁹ I have found this exact quote reiterated over and over again by Zongmi and Chinul, and it is also found in other widespread Chosŏn

⁸⁷ Dahui explains that practice begins with awakening (o, 悟), see: Levering, "Ch'an Enlightenment for the Laymen: Ta-hui and the New Religious Culture of the Sung." P. 6.

⁸⁸ Guishan claims that even if one suddenly gains wisdom he still needs to practice in order to rid himself of the habitual karmic tendencies. See: Poceski, "Guishan Jingce and the Ethical Foundations of Chan Practice." P. 32.

⁸⁹ See T19.945 p0155a08-9: 理則頓悟乘悟併銷 事非頓除因次第盡. Kim also discusses the sudden-awakening-followed-by-gradual-cultivation approach in the *Śūramgama* in his: Kim, *Nūngŏm kyŏng yŏn'gu immun* 능엄경연구입문 (*Introduction to research on the Śūramgama Sutra*). Pp. 141-6. 426-7.

Buddhist treatises such as Hyujŏng's *Mirror of Sŏn* (*Sŏnga kuigam*, 禪家龜鑑).⁹⁰ Although I was not able to find explicit references to this approach in the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, Zongmi insisted in his commentary to it that it conformed to this same model, and it is his commentary that eventually became the most authoritative way to understand the text.

Furthermore, Buswell explained how the *Huayan* too can easily be reconciled with the schema of 'sudden-awakening- followed- by- gradual-cultivation.' He illustrated how Chinul described the 52 stages of the *Huayan* as starting with the initial sudden awakening to one's Buddhahood at the beginning of the Ten Faiths, only to gradually progress later through the Ten Abidings, Ten Practices, Ten Transferences, and Ten Bodhisattva stages, to finally reach complete enlightenment.⁹¹ Not only do almost all the curricular texts conform to this model, but perhaps the curricular structure itself may be viewed as symbolizing and encompassing a similar process, which begins with the *huatou* practice focus of the *Sajip* texts to inspire initial awakening, and only later moves on to the study of the long gradual path of cultivation as depicted in the *Huayan Sutra*. Note that this process is illustrated yet again by Dahui's (pedagogical) biography which depicts his first awakening as inspired by a sermon of a teacher (like a *Ch'imun* text), his second by investigating a *huatou* (as explained in the *Sajip*), and his final awakening as stimulated by reading about the 8th-stage of the Bodhisattva in the *Huayan Sutra* (as in the last *Taegyo* stage of the curriculum).⁹²

The ideological fathers of the whole curriculum are the two *Sajip* authors, whose teachings were synthesized by Chinul: Zongmi and Dahui. Zongmi appears in the curriculum

⁹⁰ English translation available: Mark Mueller, Won-yoong Sunim, and Mujin Sunim, *Mirror of Zen: A Korean Buddhist Classic by Sŏsan* (Seoul: Propagation Ministry of the Korean Buddhist Chogyŏ Order, 1995).

⁹¹ Note that Chinul is here influenced especially by Li Tongxuan's (李通玄, 635-730) *Exposition of the Huayan*. See: Buswell, *Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean way of Zen*. Pp. 47-54.

⁹² For Dahui's biography see: Levering, "Dahui Zonggao."

several times; his *Preface* is part of the *Sajip*, his unknown *Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record* stands at the center of Chinul's *Excerpts*, his commentary to the *Diamond Sutra* is included in the *Ogahae* collection traditionally studied with the *Diamond Sutra* in Korean seminaries, and his commentary to the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* is also often used in the course. This *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* seems to have been his favorite sutra, and it is said to have sparked his own initial awakening. He proclaimed that although the *Huayan* is the most exalted sutra, this short text is the best shortcut to get to it.⁹³ He often borrowed similes from the *Śūraṅgama* (fingers and moon, and so on) and the *Awakening of Faith* (wind and waves) to illustrate his soteriology. In sum, the *Sagyo* sutras and the *Huayan* were the sutras most often commented upon and referred to by Zongmi, and perhaps for that reason they have been adopted as a set into the Korean curriculum. Zongmi has been regarded both as a patriarch of the Huayan tradition as well as of the Heze Chan school, and it is this blend of sudden Chan and gradual Huayan-centered program that underlies the Korean program.

Like Zongmi, Dahui too seems to have embodied a sutra-based textual Chan approach. Levering noted that his writings involve a great deal of sutra references, which are generally missing from the recorded sayings of other Chan masters such as Linji and Mazu.⁹⁴ In fact, his *Letters* quote generously not just from any sutra, but especially from the same set of curricular sutras I have been discussing thus far. The largest number of quotes in his essays comes from the *Huayan*, and is followed by *Śūraṅgama*, *Diamond Sutra*, *Transmission of the Lamp*, and *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* references.⁹⁵ Besides the *Letters*, three other essays by

⁹³ Muller, *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment: Korean Buddhism's Guide to Meditation*. P. 16.

⁹⁴ Levering, "Ch'an Enlightenment for the Laymen: Ta-hui and the New Religious Culture of the Sung." P. 207.

⁹⁵ Hwang, "Taehye Chonggo sōnsa ūi Sōjang yōn'gu 大慧宗杲禪師의 書狀 연구 (Research of Dahui's *Letters*).\" Pp. 97-105. Hwang found 21 references to the *Huayan Sutra* in the *Letters*, 15 to the *Śūraṅgama*, 14 to the *Transmission of the Lamp*, eight to the *Diamond Sutra*, and five to the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the most oft quoted other text being the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, five times. Note, however, that another Korean scholar found a different number of

Dahui were included in the unabridged *Ch'imun* collection, and as noted earlier, his last awakening was inspired by the *Huayan Sutra*. Evidently, the same limited collection of texts dominated the writings and life experiences of both Zongmi and Dahui.

Commenting on Zongmi and Dahui in his *Excerpts*, Chinul also often referred to this same body of texts, in particular to the *Huayan Sutra* (to which his second awakening experience is attributed, and on which he even wrote a short essay⁹⁶), the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* and the *Awakening of Faith*. It is perhaps Chinul's vision that holds the whole set of texts together. More surprising perhaps would be to discover that although Gaofeng's more sudden-focused Chan approach of the *Chan Essentials* does seem to generally quote less from the sutras than the other *Sajip* essays, its largest number of quotations too are taken from the *Huayan* and *Śūraṅgama* Sutras.⁹⁷

There is some evidence that this exact set of sutras was used in tandem in 14th-century Chinese Buddhist monasticism as well. A 1338 Pure Rules collection (*Chixiu baizhang qinggui*, 勅修百丈清規) provides a list of sutras to be chanted on special events which fascinatingly parallels the Korean traditional curricular sutras precisely, with the only difference being an addition of one so-called 'state-protection sutra'.⁹⁸ These *Sagyo* and *Huayan* sutras were the

references in the *Letters*: 30 from the *Huayan Sutra*, 16 from the *Śūraṅgama*, eight from the *Nirvana* and *Vimalakīrti* each, seven from the *Diamond* and *Lotus* each, six from the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, and at least eight more from other Mahāyāna texts. The dominance of the *Huayan* and *Śūraṅgama*, though, is consistent in both sources. See: Tōk-chin Yi, "Taesūng kyōngjōn i Sōn Pulgyo e mich'in yōnghyang 대승경전이 선불교에 미친 영향 (The influence of Mahāyāna sutras on Chan Buddhism)," in *Taesūng Pulgyo, ōttōk'e karūch'igo silch'ōn hal kōdin'ga* 대승불교, 어떻게 가르치고 실천할 것인가 (*How to teach Mahāyāna Buddhism and put it into practice*), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012).

⁹⁶The essay is titled *Preface and Conclusion from Condensation of the Exposition of the Avatamsakasūtra* (*Hwaōm non chōryo* 華嚴論節要). Translated by Buswell in: Buswell, "Preface and Conclusion from Condensation of the Exposition of the Avatamsakasūtra (Hwaōm non chōryo 華嚴論節要)." Pp. 355-367.

⁹⁷ Kim found five quotes from the *Huayan Sutra* in the *Chan Essentials*, three from the *Śūraṅgama*, *Lotus* and *Nirvana* Sutras each, four from the *Transmission of the Lamp*, two from Dahui, and five from the Confucian Analects! See: Kim, "Kobong hwasang Sōnyo yōn'gu 高峰和尚禪要 研究 (Research on Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*)." Pp. 87-92.

⁹⁸ The Sutras are the *Huayan*, *Śūraṅgama*, *Diamond*, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, *Lotus* (which as we shall see soon was part of the *Sagyo* before it was replaced by the *Awakening of Faith*), as well as the Golden Light Sutra

favorite texts of the *Sajip* authors, most notably Zongmi and Dahui. They inspired their awakenings, and were frequently commented on and quoted by them in order to support their own agenda of a textual-sutra-based-*Huayan*-focused-‘sudden-awakening-followed-by-gradual-cultivation’ Chan. It would be later teachers who would systematize this group of texts into a unified four-phase curriculum, but it is the founding ideology of Zongmi and Dahui and the sutras they favored which paints the image of the particular kind of Buddhism the Korean tradition was destined to become.

Historical Construction and Deconstruction

In this final section I will attempt a nuanced historical survey of the creation of this traditional curriculum in 16-20th-century Korea. In order to do so I will rely on two kinds of evidence: printing records and bibliographies of monks from the period. Research on printing history in Korea is still in its rudimentary stages and there seems to be some inconsistency in the sources. Yet, these primary findings are valuable for pointing out the more popular texts of a given time period, and at times can even tell us which texts were published together (as a curriculum) in one particular location. In general, scholars believe that *Huayan*-related publications were most popular during the Koryŏ period, and Chan text printing gained momentum in the early Chosŏn (15-17th centuries).⁹⁹ The *Lotus Sutra* has been by far the most frequently printed Buddhist text consistently between the 15-17th centuries. Nevertheless, I

(*Jingguangmingjing*, 金光明經). See: Pöphy, "Chogyejong ūi sūngga kyoyuk kwa Ch'ōnggyu 조계종의 승가교육과 淸規 (The sangha education and Pure Rules of the Chogye Order)," in *Sŏnwŏn ch'ōnggyu p'yŏnch'an ūl wihan haksul semina 선원청규 편찬을 위한 학술세미나 (Academic seminar about the compilation of Chan Hall Pure Rules)* (Haeinsa2007).

⁹⁹ Sōkoku Hō, "Kankoku Bukkyō shosi kenkyū 韓国仏教書誌研究 (Bibliographic study of Korean Buddhism)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Taishō University, 2005). Pp. 269-171.

believe it is possible to detect a gradual increase in the publication of the traditional curriculum set of texts during the course of this period. Table 1 illustrates the printing frequency of selected Buddhist texts in the early Chosŏn Dynasty.

Table 1: Most Frequently Printed Texts in Early Chosŏn¹⁰⁰

Text	14-15 th - Century	16 th - Century	17 th - Century
<i>Lotus Sutra</i>	9	35	68
<i>Diamond Sutra</i>	9	11	11
<i>Śūraṅgama Sutra</i>	4	3	7
<i>Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment</i>		2	5
<i>Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna</i>		1	7
<i>Huayan Sutra</i>	?	1	?
<i>Zongmi's Chan Preface</i>	1	6	12
<i>Chinul's Excerpts</i>	1	8	12
<i>Dahui's Letters</i>		7	10
<i>Gaofeng's Chan Essentials</i>		8	10
<i>Ch'imun</i>		3	5
<i>Enlightened Verses</i>		4	
<i>Ch'obalsim</i>		8	
<i>Mengshan Treatises</i>		20	3
<i>Hyujŏng's Treatises</i>			18

¹⁰⁰ Data for this table was extracted from information found in: Son, "16-17 segi Pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa Pulgyogyŏ ūi tonghyang 16•17 세기 불교정책과 불교계의 동향 (Buddhist policies and tendencies in the 16-17th-centuries)."; "16 segi Chosŏn ūi Pulsŏ kanhaeng 16 世紀朝鮮의 佛書刊行 (Buddhist text printing in 16th-century Chosŏn)."

<i>Sutra on the Profound Kindness of Parents</i> ¹⁰¹ (大報父母恩重經)	4	17	8
The Six Sutras Collection (六經合部)	6		
<i>Platform Sutra</i>	1	3	
<i>Suryukchae</i> Ritual Texts ¹⁰²		28	8
The Four Confucian Books (四書)	8	12	60

As the table shows, besides the *Lotus* and the *Diamond Sutras*, the most widely printed Buddhist text in the 15th-century has been *The Six Sutras Collection* (*Yukkyōng happu*, 六經合部) which consisted of the *Diamond Sutra*, a chapter from the *Huayan Sutra* on Samatabhadra Bodhisattva's vow (*Puxian xingyuan pin*, 普賢行願品), the *Śūraṃgama* Mantra (*Lengyan shenzhou*, 楞嚴神咒), the *Amitābha Sutra* (*Amituo jing*, 阿彌陀經), Avalokiteśvara's chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Guanshiyinpusa pumenpin*, 觀世音菩薩普門品), and a confession ritual text for Avalokiteśvara (Kr. *Kwanseūm posal yemun*, 觀世音菩薩禮文). This list is obviously different from the above curriculum, but it does include parts of the *Diamond*, *Śūraṃgama* and *Huayan* which stand at the center of the program to come. Perhaps this was the most popular Buddhist curriculum (or at least the 'ritual canon') of 15th-century Korea.

¹⁰¹ This 7th-century Chinese apocrypha seems to have been popular in China as well. Over 50 copies were discovered in Dunhuang. It focuses on the debt of sons to their loving mothers, and Zongmi quoted large portions from it in his writings. For detailed analysis see: Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Chapter 7.

¹⁰² The *Suryukchae* (水陸齋, Water and Land Ritual) is a ritual intended to ease calamities by guiding departed souls to the land of bliss (with the rationale that suffering often sprang from dejected souls). It was widely practiced in early Chosŏn, but was discontinued in the 16th-century and replaced by a Confucian parallel rite to placate the souls of the un-mourned. It was re-established in modern Korea. See: Hee-sook Nam and Inga Diederich, "Publications of Buddhist Literary Texts: The Publication and Popularization of Mantra Collections and Buddhist Ritual Texts in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty," *Journal of Korean Religions* 3, no. 1 (2012). Pp. 20-1.

The 16th-century brought a great increase in Chan treatise publications. There is evidence for two teachers who used the four *Sajip* texts together as a set to teach novices. These were Chiöm and Kyöngghön, whom I have quoted above. Although other teachers in the period are recorded as teaching one or two essays of the *Sajip* collection, there is no other evidence from the 16th-century of the four being taught as a set by anyone else. In fact, according to the available printing records the most popular Chan treatises in Korea at the time were not authored by any of the *Sajip* writers, but by Mengshan (蒙山, 1232-1308).¹⁰³ Mengshan was a well-known contemporary of Gaofeng who attracted the attention of numerous Korean students, but his influence withered after it was Gaofeng and not himself who received official Linji transmission in 1288.¹⁰⁴ Son explains that Mengshan was especially popular in Korea among monastics of Naong's (懶翁, 1320 – 1376) lineage, which during the 16th-century, and especially after the Japanese invasion (1592-8), gradually lost favor to the T'aego- Hyujöng lineage, which has led the fighting efforts.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, as can be easily traced from the table above, Hyujöng's treatises and the *Sajip* texts replaced Mengshan as the most widely published Chan texts in the 17th-century. Interestingly, however, Mengshan was not completely forgotten in Korean Buddhist education circles, and his essays are often still studied, though not in the regular seminaries but as a part of the new Basic Chan Hall curriculum for novices.¹⁰⁶ I will return to this program in

¹⁰³ A summary of his record (蒙山和尚法語略錄, also published in the Korean *Hangül* script) was printed eight times in the period, and his sermon on the six destinies 蒙山和尚六道普說 was printed 12 times in the 16th-century. See: Son, "16 segi Chosön üi Pulsö kanhaeng 16 世紀朝鮮의 佛書刊行 (Buddhist text printing in 16th-century Chosön)." Pp. 64-5.

¹⁰⁴ Kim, "Kobong hwasang Sönyo yön'gu 高峰和尚禪要 研究 (Research on Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*)." P. 108.

¹⁰⁵ Son, "16 segi Chosön üi Pulsö kanhaeng 16 世紀朝鮮의 佛書刊行 (Buddhist text printing in 16th-century Chosön)." Pp. 64-5.

¹⁰⁶ The 2001 Sangha Examination Preparation Booklet lists questions regarding Mengshan intended for the graduates of the Basic Chan Hall program. See: Education Department The Chogye Order, *4 kûp sŭngga kosi yesang munjejip* 4 급 승가고시 예상문제집 (*Prospective questions for the 4th-level sangha examination*) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2001).

Chapter 3. Interestingly, Mengshan's ritual manual, the *Mengshan shishi Yi* (蒙山施食義) seems to be a highly prevalent ritual text in Chinese monasteries today.

There is virtually no evidence for the use of the *Ch'imun* in the 16th-century. The monastery which seems to have published the greatest number of curriculum texts was Ansimsa (安心寺), which was located in the Southwest of the peninsula, and in 1575-6 published not only three of the *Sajip* texts together (The *Letters*, *Excerpts*, and *Chan Essentials*), but also the *Ch'imun*, the *Diamond* and the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*.¹⁰⁷ There is no evidence for the exclusive teaching of the *Sagyo* sutras in the 16th-century. However, the main figure of the period, Hyujŏng, is recorded to have been teaching the Ten Basic Sutras and Treatises (*Sippon kyŏngnon*, 十本經論) which included mostly texts which in time became part of the fixed curriculum (the *Diamond*, *Śūraṃgama*, *Huayan*, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, *Lotus*,¹⁰⁸ *Enlightened Verses*, *Transmission of the Lamp*), but also other texts such as the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*.¹⁰⁹ In sum, the *Sajip* texts were assembled for the first time in the 16th century, and some teachers seem to have focused on the sutras which would later constitute the *Sagyo*, but there is no evidence that these programs were anything more than individual preferences rather than institutional orthodoxies at the time.

In the 17th-century it all seems to have come together, at least in some locations. As can be inferred from the table above, the four *Sajip* texts gained prominence and were first printed together in four different locations in the early years of the century. More importantly, for

¹⁰⁷ Son, "16 segi Chosŏn ūi Pulsŏ kanhaeng 16 世紀朝鮮의 佛書刊行 (Buddhist text printing in 16th-century Chosŏn)." P. 17.

¹⁰⁸ We shall soon see that the Lotus has been originally part of the *Sagyo*.

¹⁰⁹ Data extracted from the list of educational references found in: Nam, "Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ rŭl chungsimŭro pon Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyoyuk 한국불교전서를 중심으로 본 조선시대 사원교육 (Temple education in the Chosŏn period seen through the *Complete Works of Korean Buddhism*)."

the first time five different teachers are recorded as going through a similar curriculum of texts which include the four *Sajip*, the *Sagyo* (with the *Lotus Sutra* instead of the *Awakening of Faith*), the *Huayan*, and *The Transmission of the Lamp* and *Enlightened Verses* collections.¹¹⁰ Note, however, that these texts are listed in different orders in these five references, and in some cases it seems the order was reversed and the *Huayan* actually stood at the beginning of the program rather than ended it.¹¹¹ Ch'ŏnghak (淸學, 1570-1654) deserves a special mention here, as he provides us for the first time with the categorical terminology: *Sajip* and *Sagyo*. A chapter in his record is titled *Sajip-Sagyo-Transmission of the Lamp- Enlightened Verses-Huayan*,¹¹² and offers the first and only historical textual analysis of the curriculum prior to the 20th-century. I present a full translation of this script, which details the main doctrines of the traditional curriculum, at the end of this chapter.

It has been pointed out that the Korean Neo-Confucian education curriculum was also assembled in the 16th and 17th centuries and perhaps influenced the creation of a similar system by the Buddhists.¹¹³ Private Confucian academies (*Sŏwŏn*, 書院) have begun to proliferate in 16th-century Korea, and it has been claimed that the two systems were parallel both in the length of the programs (Buddhists 10-12 years and Confucians 13-15 years) as well as in the general gradual

¹¹⁰ The five are Ch'ŏnghak (淸學, 1570-1654), Ŏn'gi (彦機, 1581-1644), Hyŏnbyŏn (懸辯, 1616-1684), Ch'aekhŏn (策憲, 1623-?) and Toan (道安, 1638-1715). Data extracted from the biographical list in: *ibid*.

¹¹¹ Ŏn'gi's list, for example, has the program begin with the *Huayan Sutra*, followed by the *Lotus*, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, *Śūramgama* and *Diamond*, and then the *Transmission of the Lamp* and the *Enlightened Verses*, only to finally reach the *Sajip* at the end. As we shall see in a later chapter, such a curriculum which places Chan treatises at the end was recently proposed and attempted at Haeinsa's seminary in the 21st-century.

¹¹² 四集四教傳燈拈頌華嚴

¹¹³ I believe this was first pointed out by Nam in: To-yŏng Nam, "Han'guk sach'al kyoyuk chedo 韓國寺院 教育制度 (The education system of Korean monasteries)," *Yŏksa kyoyuk* 28 (1980). Pp. 33-4. See also: "Ch'ŏnt'ong munhwa wa kyoyuk: Sach'al kyoyuk ūl chungsimūro 전통문화와 교육: 사찰교육을 중심으로 (Traditional culture and education: Focusing on monastic education)," *Kyoyuk nonch'ong* 10 (1990). Also: Jong-su Lee, "Monastic Education and Educational Ideology in Late Choson Buddhism," *Journal of Korean Religions* 3, no. 1 (2012). Pp. 78-9.

progress from more elementary schooling to higher studies.¹¹⁴ This may be so but it is not much, and I believe a more interesting mimesis could be detected. The Korean Neo-Confucian curriculum was based on Zhu Xi's model which progresses from the Four Books (*Sishu*, 四書) believed to either be written or edited by the ancient teachers, and into the Five Classics (*Wujing*, 五經, note *jing* also means sutra). In a very similar way, the core of the Korean Buddhist curriculum has been structured in such a way as to focus first on a collection of four treatises by the older teachers (*Sajip*), followed by the four *jing* (sutras/classics) of the *Sagyo*. Therefore, perhaps Zhu Xi's influence has stretched beyond Confucian education to provide the framework for the construction of the Buddhist monastic curriculum as well.

As political circumstances altered in the later part of the Chosŏn we find a decreasing number of Buddhist publications and an increase in Confucian book printings in the 18-19th centuries.¹¹⁵ There are several allusions to our curriculum in the biographies of monks of the period, and the *Ch'imun* is mentioned more often than before. In the early 18th-century we also begin to find the *Awakening of Faith* at times replacing the *Lotus* in the *Sagyo* set, and I have found that since the 19th-century all *Sagyo* records contain the *Awakening of Faith* instead of the *Lotus*.¹¹⁶ More research should be done in order to find out the reason for such a curious shift in the *Sagyo* in the 18th-century, but perhaps it has something to do with the stronger referential affiliation the *Awakening of Faith* has to Zongmi and Chinul.

It is important to emphasize that this was by no means the sole Korean Buddhist curriculum before the 20th-century. Contrary to what seems to be the general understanding in

¹¹⁴ "Monastic Education and Educational Ideology in Late Choson Buddhism."

¹¹⁵ Son, "16-17 segi Pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa Pulgyogyŏ ŭi tonghyang 16•17 세기 불교정책과 불교계의 동향 (Buddhist policies and tendencies in the 16-17th-centuries)." P. 125.

¹¹⁶ I found the first reference to the *Awakening of Faith* instead of the *Lotus Sutra* in the record regarding Hyewŏn (海源, 1691-1770)

Korean Buddhist circles, although this program has its roots in the 17th- and 18th-centuries, it has not been fixated and popularized nationwide before the modern period. An analysis of education-related biographical information of over 130 monastics of the late Chosŏn shows that very few, 12 to be exact, are recorded to have been involved in study or teaching of at least the *Sajip*, *Sagyo* and *Huayan* courses as a set.¹¹⁷ Even as late as the 19th-century, only five out of the 50 monks referenced in the list had undergone a program that involved at least the *Sajip* and *Sagyo*. Other curriculums existed too. Kŭngsŏn (亘璇, 1767-1852), for example, is recorded as having what seems to be a shorter more sudden-Chan-focused curriculum, going through the *Diamond* and *Platform* sutras together with the *Chan Essentials* and *Enlightened Verses*.¹¹⁸ The early 19th-century monk Hyejŭp (惠楫, 1791-1858) is recorded to have begun his studies with the *Ch'imun* and the *Sajip* at 19, but then instead of progressing to the fourfold *Sagyo* sutras, he went on to study the so-called Fivefold Teachings (*Ogyo*, 五教), which are generally depicted as *Vinaya*, Nirvana, Buddha-nature, *Huayan*, and *Yogācāra*.¹¹⁹ In the next chapter I will illustrate how it was actually 20th-century Korean Buddhist academics who labelled our specific program as the Korean 'traditional' monastic curriculum, and who may thus be responsible for the fixation and popularization of this model. By the late 20th-century it has first become the mandatory educational program for all Korean Buddhist novices, only to be rapidly and utterly revised a few years later in the early 21st.

¹¹⁷ Of-course this source is partial and there may be numerous unrecorded and forgotten monks who did go through this curriculum. I have analyzed the reference list extracted from the *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* and found in: Nam, "Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ rŭl chungsimŭro pon Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyoyuk 한국불교전서를 중심으로 본 조선시대 사원교육 (Temple education in the Chosŏn period seen through the *Complete Works of Korean Buddhism*)."

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Supplement to Chapter 1: Full Translation of Ch'ŏnghak's (淸學, 1570-1654) Curriculum Poem:¹²⁰

1. *Chan Essentials:*

If you want to know the essential focus of study,
Begin with the Chan mind of Heaven and Earth.
As climbing a cliff without worrying about losing your life,
As piercing through a diamond with no hesitation,
As a brilliant shortcut which runs contrary to the flow of a boat,
A piercing wisdom like a mosquito biting into an iron bull.
Establishing the three essentials [of faith, rage, and doubt] all together in the numinous
tower of mind,
And not wavering even in face of fire or falling stars.

2. Dahui's *Letters:*

Why argue about the correct lineage of Chan,
As the imposing sharpness [of Dahui] alone stands out from the crowd.
Not falling for the ten maladies of *huatou* practice¹²¹ and of purifying all dreams,

¹²⁰ The following is my translation of the chapter taken from the *Yŏngwŏldang Taesa Munjip* (詠月堂大師文集 found in: Tongguk Taehakkyo, *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu 1979). I would like to thank Yi Sangmin for his useful comments on earlier drafts of this translation.

¹²¹ 十種病. This is a reference to Dahui's discussion of the famous 'Wu' 無 *huatou* (does the dog have a Buddha-nature? Wu) where he explains that one can err in ten different ways while keeping this *huatou*. Dahui actually seems to have only eight errors listed, but Chinul systematized the eight into ten in his *Excerpts*, and he often refers to them as the Ten Maladies of Knowledge and Understanding (十種知解之病). The ten are: 1. Not understanding it to mean yes or no. 2. Not considering it in relation to doctrinal theory. 3. Not pondering over it logically at the consciousness base. 4. When the master raises his eyebrows or twinkles his eyes, not considering it as instructions. 5. Not making stratagems for solving it through the use of words. 6. Not busying oneself inside a shell of unconcern (this refers to the defect of silent reflection). 7. Not transforming the doubt towards the *huatou* to a doubt about the mind itself. 8. Not looking for evidence in the wording itself. Chinul adds- 9. Not taking it as the 'Wu' of true nonexistence. 10. Not grasping at a deluded state simply waiting for awakening (without positive practice). I have relied on Buswell's translation of the ten in his: Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul*. Pp. 338, 373-4.

Raising [*huatou*-related] doubt morning, noon and evening, cleansing your mind,
Understanding through words will make you sink into the underworld,
Investigating the ‘live word’ [of the *huatou*] will get you out of the realm of ghosts,
Not allowing in even a tiny fraction of other views,
And you still do not know only he is the [true dharma] heir?

3. Chan *Preface*:

The entire teachings of the Buddha,
Zongmi reformulated and outlined.
He revealed the functions of the three teachings,¹²²
And clarified their connectedness and one-taste,
The vow for wisdom overturns prior confusions,
Sitting Chan is a helpful skillful means on the way,
These few chapters open up a great path,
Sympathetically responding to all, they teach in detail.

4. Chinul’s *Excerpts*:

For those first entering the great wisdom of the Heze garden,
With extensive expertise of the various schools [Chinul] leveled the road ahead,
Discerning between the hanging Mani jewel itself and the colors of blue and yellow [it
manifests],
Holding a copper mirror to clarify [the difference between] essence and functions,
As if suddenly waking up in bed, and the dark dream is destroyed,
[And then continuing with] gradual cultivation and study to achieve good form,

¹²² Of *yogacaric* dharma-characteristics 法相, *Madhyamic* refutation of characteristics 破相, and dharma-nature 法性.

And finally taking hold of the Chan sword which can cut through frost,
And cutting off all shrubbery of sentiments [obstructing] the road ahead.

5. *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment:*

[This Sutra tells of] Bodhisattvas asking the Buddha about the practices that lead him
thus far,

And he entirely reveals the ultimate beyond the fleetingness of joy,
Ignorance quietened: this is the nature of true suchness,
Seeds of afflictions extinguished: this is the origin of liberation,
[In which] wisdom and delusion are completely inseparable,
And sentient and non-sentient beings are wonderfully hard to distinguish,
It has already been a long time since the myriad beings achieved Buddhahood,
Laying on a white cloud, complete enlightenment surrounds all!

6. *The Diamond Sutra:*

The Buddha has already expounded about the principle entirely,
Why then did the Five Chan Houses¹²³ have to reiterate?
The Torch of the *Diamond Sutra* sheds light on the three types of emptiness,¹²⁴
In the light of its wisdom the Six Perfections¹²⁵ are completed,
The various manifestations die out yet it is not the end of manifestation,

¹²³ This probably refers to the Five Chan houses of the Tang (*Linji* 臨濟, *Guiyang* 潯仰, *Caodong* 曹洞, *Yunmen* 雲門, and *Fayan* 法眼).

¹²⁴ The three kinds of emptiness (三空) are the emptiness of self (我空), emptiness of dharmas (法空), and emptiness of emptiness (空空).

¹²⁵ The six perfections (六度) of generosity, discipline, tolerance, rigor, concentration and wisdom.

The three types of mind¹²⁶ all enter [emptiness] yet these minds are not abandoned,
Hence the wisdom-eye which understands emptiness has been cleansed,
How could such saintly blessings be repaid any time soon?

7. The *Śūraṅgama* Sutra:

If you wish to know how to overcome the afflictions,
Look through the bright window of the *Śūraṅgama* Sutra,
Evaporating the fog of emotion by searching for the mind in seven places,¹²⁷
Clearing out the murky eyes by analyzing the Eight Transformations,¹²⁸
The Five Aggregates¹²⁹ transform into the Womb of the *Tathāgata*,
The seven elements¹³⁰ become a wonderful castle of enlightenment,
Eliminating delusions and destroying malicious intentions,
Each and every thing brightens the original truth.

¹²⁶ 三心. The *Diamond Sutra* talks of the pure mind (清淨心), the material mind (色生心), and the mind of the five senses (聲香味觸法生心). It also talks (or rather dismisses) the three minds of past, present and future (過去心 不可得 現在心 不可得 未來心 不可得).

¹²⁷ 七處窮心. This refers to the Buddha teaching to Ananda in the first fascicle of the *Śūraṅgama* after Ananda is back from his seduction by a prostitute, and asking him whether the mind is 1. Inside the body? 2. outside the body? 3. within the eyes (or other body-sense organs)? 4. of the body? 5. in all of the above combined? 6. In-between the senses and sense objects? 7. in none of those places? The mind was not found in any of these. Upon hearing this teaching Ananda weeps and repents for his mischief with the prostitute saying his body left home but his mind was still entangled, and vows to not only learn but also practice the way (as one who only speaks of food will never get full).

¹²⁸ 八還. This refers to a teaching in the second fascicle of the *Śūraṅgama* where the Buddha explains to Ananda about the eight kinds of transformations, in which things return to their sources: Light returns to the sun, dark returns to the black moon (!), circulation returns to an open window, blockage returns to fenced walls, conditions return to making distinctions, no-obstination returns to emptiness, stuffiness returns to dust, and freshness to clear air. The Buddha's point here seems to be to that all things that are transforming and return to something else are not really themselves- but only what does not return to anything is their real seeing nature, which is also the true nature. See T. 16.945 (阿難此諸變化明還日輪. 何以故. 無日不明明因屬日. 是故還日. 暗還黑月. 通還戶牖. 擁還牆宇. 緣還分別. 頑虛還空. 鬱 [土*字]還塵. 清明還霽).

¹²⁹ 五陰. The well-known five aggregates are form, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

¹³⁰ 七大. The *Śūraṅgama* Sutra talks of the seven elements as water, fire, earth, wind, space/ether, sight (and other senses), and consciousness.

8. The *Lotus Sutra*:

The ten directions¹³¹ are completely revealed from the white tuft of hair [between the

Buddha's eyebrows],

And by this men and gods cut through the distinction between knowing and the objects
known,

As [one grasps that] the myriad dharmas are all true: joy is attained,

[Knowing that] the thousand distinctions are all wonderful is the beginning of achieving
bliss,

Rights and wrongs, causes and effects are all linked to the same essence,

The worldly and sagely, pure and coarse are one and the same,

The myriad other-worldly Buddhas of the past present and future-

Their teachings are basically the same as the teaching [of Śākyamuni] on Vulture's Peak.

9. The *Huayan Sutra*:

The *Huayan Sutra* is the crown of the various teachings,

By all-embracing, the result is awakening, and everything is linked together naturally,

The one and the many interpenetrate, lighting up a thousand lights,

Phenomena and principles join together into one hanging moon,

Cultivating the Six Senses to advance through the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva,

Practicing to attain great merit in this full lifetime,

Only by knowing that things do not differ from one another,

One directly attains the body of truth and there is no further need for Chan!

¹³¹ 十方. North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest, Up, and Down.

10. *The Transmission of the Lamp*:

The thirty scrolls of *The Transmission of the Lamp* explicate the origins of the Way,

Detailed stories from previous generations are all included:

King Wu of Liang's questions to Bodhidharma release us from our shackles,

The second patriarch wipes off our murky eyes with 'No-mind,'

The circumstances of the patriarchs illuminate night and day,

Paraphrases from this group of sages clarify heaven and earth,

Leisurely studying these extensive verses and fathoming their gist,

Know that these living beings are all past Buddhas!

11. *The Enlightened Verses*:

The Way is already abundant in the flow of the rivers and the lofty mountains,

And who will try to communicate it through words?

Yunmen with a single blow destroys the Thus-come-one,¹³²

Linji's *gong'ans* of 'on the way'¹³³ and the 'void-ness of Manjusri'¹³⁴,

The numinous dragon of the great seas is hard to catch,

Green Paulownia tress and great phoenixes¹³⁵ are hard to assemble,

Knowing that words are all frivolous,

Look to the ends of heavens, after the rains the peaks appear!

¹³² This refers to the second case of The Enlightened Verses which tells the story of Śākyamuni taking seven steps right after his birth, pointing to all directions and proclaiming himself to be the only honored one, and Yúnmén (雲門, 862 – 949) commenting that if he was there and saw that he would have killed him with a single blow and given him to a dog to eat up! Translation of this case is available in: Ahn, "Gongan Collections."; *ibid.* Pp. 73-4.

¹³³ 途中. This probably refers to Linji's (臨濟, 9th-century) saying that some never leave home yet are always 'on the way' and some leave home but are not 'on the way'. This case was not translated into English in the Complete Works of Korean Buddhism, but is found in Sasaki's translation of Linji's Records: Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *The Record of Linji* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009).P. 143.

¹³⁴ 妙首空. This probably refers to Linji's saying that the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī was not found on Mt. Wutai as was commonly thought, but simply in the moment to moment activity. See: *ibid.* P. 202.

¹³⁵ These are rare, perhaps mythological, Chinese flora and fauna.

The above poem summarizes for us the curricular texts, and more importantly what were considered as the most significant doctrines found within them. It is perhaps the best available summary of the traditional Korean Buddhist monastic curriculum's actual contents and doctrinal foci. It illustrates how novices going through this curriculum would end up understanding their tradition through the schemata of Gaofeng's Three Essentials, Dahui's Ten Maladies of *Huatou* Practice, Zongmi's accommodating attitudes to the various Chan houses, Chinul's 'sudden-awakening-followed-by-gradual-cultivation,' the Original Buddhahood of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the emptiness of the *Diamond Sutra*, the inability to find a constant self in the Seven Places, Eight Transformations and Five Aggregates in the *Śūramgama*, the equalization of all manifestation as joyful in the *Lotus*, the all-embracing interpenetration of all phenomena and principles and the Ten Bodhisattva Stages of the *Huayan*, the history of the Chan school's patriarchs in *The Transmission of the Lamp*, and finally some *gong'an* cases from the *Enlightened Verses*. This is indeed a very comprehensive Chan curriculum, but it is perhaps more interesting to examine what it is NOT. First, any kind of *Vinaya*-type literature is missing from this list.¹³⁶ Moreover, all curricular texts besides the *Lotus* and parts of the *Huayan* have been identified to be Chinese apocrypha, and what are generally considered today as some of the most basic Buddhist doctrines: the four noble truths, the eightfold path, the 12-linked conditioned origination schemata, and so on received only peripheral mention (if at all¹³⁷), and were probably virtually unknown to Buddhist monastics going through such a curriculum prior to the mid-20th-

¹³⁶ It is possible that Admonitions were taught to postulants before they were even novices and thus are not included in most records of teachers of the 17th-century.

¹³⁷ A short and rather abstract treatment of the four noble truths as they manifest in various realms is given in the *Huayan Sutra*. I was unable to track down any mention of the eightfold path or the 12-linked chain of causation in these curricular texts.

century. As we shall see in Chapter 3, reparation of such ‘deficiencies’ in the traditional curriculum are among the main reasons extensive reforms have been taking place recently in the Chogyé Order’s education system.

2. Modernizing Buddhist Education in 20th-Century Korea

Traditions are often fashioned in retrospect.¹ It is thus perhaps unsurprising that, ironically, the sacralization of the ‘traditional’ Korean curriculum seems to have been made possible due to the new ‘modern’ history writing of the 20th-century. Pioneering early 20th-century Korean Buddhist historians, most notably Yi Nūnghwa, Kim Yōngsu and Kwōn Sangno, were the first to investigate the origins of the curriculum studied in their day. Influenced mainly by Japanese prototypes of modern Buddhist historiography with a sort of religious Stockholm Syndrome,² their projects involved attempts to systematize national Chan lineages, and they each pointed out different historical figures as prominent in the construction of the ‘traditional’ national Korean curriculum.³ Their projects were essentially anachronistic, focusing on the history of the present rather than on the present of history. Their narratives were not free of political agenda, giving historical authority to a particular curriculum (supposedly maintained by a particular lineage), rather than analyzing the pluralities of the past. Yi Nūnghwa published his encyclopedic *History of Korean Buddhism* (*Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa*, 朝鮮佛教通史) in 1918, and in it illustrated two slightly different ‘traditional’ curricular models, one involving a ten-year program, and the other an 11-year curriculum. This schema has become the orthodox

¹ This phrase is inspired by the Hobsbawm and Ranger’s classic: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

² I borrow this revealing phrase about the way the colonized seem to fall in love if not with the colonizer itself then at least with its ideas from Wendy Doniger’s: Wendy Doniger, *On Hinduism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). P. 17.

³ Yi Nūnghwa claimed the curriculum was completed by Sōngch’ong (性聰, 1610-1666), Kim Yōngsu pointed to Wōldam (月潭, 1632-1704) as the figure who first put together the whole program, and Kwōn Sangno thought it was Toan (道安, 1638-1715) who synthesized the curriculum. See for example: Nam, "Han'guk sach'al kyoyuk chedo 韓國寺院 教育制度 (The education system of Korean monasteries)." Pp. 27-40.

understanding of the Korean ‘traditional curriculum,’ and has been quoted and re-quoted in Korean Buddhist circles ever since. I bring it in full in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Yi Nūnghwa’s Traditional Curricular Models⁴

COURSE	TEN-YEAR SYSTEM		11-YEAR SYSTEM	
Novice Courses (<i>Sami-kwa</i> , 沙彌科)	One year	1. Ten Novice Precepts 2. Chanting Ritual Texts 3. <i>Heart Sutra</i> 4. <i>Ch’obalsim</i>	Three years	1. Ten Novice Precepts 2. Chanting Ritual Texts 3. <i>Heart Sutra</i> 4. <i>Ch’obalsim</i> 5. <i>The Novice Precepts and Decorum</i> ⁵ 6. <i>Ch’imun</i> 7. <i>Precious Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Community</i> (<i>Chánlin bǎoxùn</i> , 禪林寶訓)
Collection of Four Course (<i>Sajip-kwa</i> , 四集科)	Two years	1. Zongmi’s <i>Chan Preface</i> 2. Dahui’s <i>Letters</i> 3. Chinul’s <i>Excerpts</i> 4. Gaofeng’s <i>Chan Essentials</i>	Two years	1. Zongmi’s <i>Chan Preface</i> 2. Dahui’s <i>Letters</i> 3. Chinul’s <i>Excerpts</i> 4. Gaofeng’s <i>Chan Essentials</i>
Four Sutras Course (<i>Sagyo-kwa</i> , 四教科)	Four years	1. <i>Śūramgama Sutra</i> 2. <i>The Awakening of Faith</i> 3. <i>Diamond Sutra</i>	2.5 years	1. <i>Śūramgama Sutra</i> 2. <i>The Awakening of Faith</i> 3. <i>Diamond Sutra</i> 4. <i>Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment</i>

⁴ Quoted for example in: Chongmuk, "Ch’ongnim ūi chindan, naagal panghyang: Haein ch’ongnim chungsim ūro chŏngnim ūi chindan, naagal panghyang: Haein chŏngnim chungsim ūro (Diagnosis of the Chan community and objectives for its development: Focusing on the Haeinsa community)," in *Chogyejong ch’ongnim ūi yŏksa wa munhwa jogyejong chŏngnim ūi yŏksa wa munhwa* (The history and culture of the Chogye Order’s Chan communities), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2009). P. 220.

⁵ *The Novice Precepts and Decorum* (*Shami Luyi*, 沙彌律儀) is a short text said to have been compiled in 16th-century Ming by Lianchi (蓮池, 1536-1615). It includes both the ten *Śrāmaṇera* precepts as well as 284 minor rules of decorum for communal monastic living. The *Śrāmaṇera* precepts include the basic five precepts (not to kill, steal, be involved in licentious acts, lie, drink) supplemented by additional rules against adornment with flowers and perfumes, dance, songs and entertainment, sleeping on high and broad seats/beds, eating between meals, and handling gold and silver. It is unclear when this text has become popular in teaching novices in Korea.

		4. <i>Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment</i>		
High Teachings Course (<i>Taegyo-kwa</i> , 大教科)	Three years	1. The <i>Huayan Sutra</i> 2. The <i>Enlightened Verses</i> 3. The <i>Transmission of the Lamp</i>	3.5 years	1. The <i>Huayan Sutra</i> 2. The <i>Enlightened Verses</i> 3. The <i>Transmission of the Lamp</i> 4. The <i>Ten-Stages Treatise</i> (<i>Shidelun</i> , 十地論) 5. Hyujŏng's <i>Mirror of Sŏn</i> (<i>Sŏnga kuigam</i> , 禪家龜鑑) 6. The <i>Lotus Sutra</i>
Optional Course (<i>Suŭi-kwa</i> , 隨意科)	Four years or more of additional specialized study.			

Yi has been called the ‘father of modern Korean Buddhist studies,’ and was the first lay Buddhist to have authored and edited books and magazines on Buddhism in modern Korea, yet he often neglected to provide references and textual evidence for his claims.⁶ In fact, Nam argued that Yi’s methodology in gathering information about the ‘traditional curriculum’ consisted of simply sending letters to prominent monks at Hwaŏmsa and Sŏnamsa, and asking them about it.⁷ Thus, it is not impossible that Yi’s curricular models reflect the ones used at these temples in the early 20th-century, more than they do any earlier historical models. They show that although the core *Sajip*, *Sagyo* and *Taegyo* courses seem to have been rather common at the time, the *Ch’imun* was included only in the 11-year model, and the ten-year curriculum found the shorter *Ch’obalsim* collection sufficient. Yi’s longer model also offers a few other idiosyncrasies, such as the inclusion of the *Precious Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Community*, as well as both the *Lotus Sutra* and Hyujŏng’s *Mirror of Sŏn* at the last stage of the program.

⁶ Jongmyung Kim, "Yi Nŭnghwa, Buddhism, and the Modernization of Korea," in *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, ed. Jin Y. Park (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010). Pp. 92, 99. This was often the case in early 20th-century scholarship.

⁷ Nam, "Han'guk sach'al kyoyuk chedo 韓國寺院 教育制度 (The education system of Korean monasteries)." Pp. 27-40.

Modernity often involves conflicting forces and rhetoric. It sometimes plays at the same time on both the rhetoric of the old and traditional, as well as on that of the new and innovative. In this chapter I will explore the ways in which both of these modern rhetorical strategies made their mark on Buddhist education in 20th-century Korea. On the one hand, in agreement with the classic Weberian model of modernity, we shall see how the ‘traditional’ curriculum (which now had a history) has been unified, rationalized to focus on institutions rather than on charismatic teachers, and systematized through formal decrees and regulations. By the end of the 20th-century, this curriculum has gained almost absolute authority as it has been codified in law as the mandatory precondition for receiving the full-precepts and becoming Chogye-Order-affiliated monastics. On the other hand, I would like to emphasize in this chapter the rhetoric of innovative modernity, which was used by many 20th-century Korean Buddhists in their attempts to reformulate the ‘traditional’ curriculum, “to match it to the changing times”, and to create new types of Buddhist educational institutions. The creation of the first female monastic seminaries, as well as the construction of various higher-education Buddhist colleges in the mid-20th-century will be discussed within this context. These trends will provide the necessary context for the far-reaching curricular reforms of the 21st-century, which will be illustrated in the next chapter.

Monastic Seminary Education in Colonial Korea

Han Yong-un (韓龍雲, 1879-1944) is probably the most well-known colonial Korean Buddhist modernizer. In his 1913 classic, *On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism* (*Chosŏn pulgyo yusillon*, 朝鮮佛教維新論), he lamented the fact that monks in his day only focused on studying short commentaries (the *Sajip*?) and the saying of the patriarchs, and called

for three pressing needs in the education of the sangha: first, general knowledge (*pot'ong-hak*, 普通學), as a basis for later specialization, second, reform in pedagogy (*sabŏm-hak*, 師範學) and raising the quality of teachers, and third, sending monks to study abroad in India, China, Europe and America.⁸ Reforms in these three areas were indeed soon to be pursued.

The importance of supplementing Buddhist curriculums with general secular subjects such as science, philosophy, literature and languages in order to create more capable missionaries was emphasized not only by Han Yong-un, but also by other early modern Korean reformers, such as Pak Han-yŏng (1870-1948) and Kwŏn Sangno (1879-1965).⁹ In fact, modernist reformers in Japan and China at the time were also promoting more general education for the sangha and overseas study and travel. Taixu's new Buddhist seminaries in 1920's China, for example, with curriculums based on Japanese sectarian Schools, provided lectures in general history, geography, the Japanese language, and even psychology.¹⁰ In Korea, as early as the years 1906-1910, 20 secularized modern primary schools (*pot'ong hakkyo*, 普通學校) were established in various mountain monasteries throughout the country. These schools offered mixed classes of both monastic and lay youngsters, and put together four-year curriculums consisting of Buddhist doctrine, Korean language, Chinese reading, math, science, handicraft, music, and perhaps the most modern subject of them all, sports.¹¹ Unlike in Southeast Asia where temples seem to have been historically functioning as primary schools for village children, there is no evidence for

⁸ The entire work has been translated by Tikhonov and Miller in: Vladimir Tikhonov and Owen Miller, *Selected Writings of Han Yongun* (London: Brill, 2008). The part about education paraphrased above is found in pp. 58-64.

⁹ Mark Andrew Nathan, "Buddhist Propagation and Modernization: The Significance of P'ogyo in Twentieth-Century Korean Buddhism" (Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, 2010). Pp. 44-51.

¹⁰ Tuzzeo, "Education, Invention of Orthodoxy, and the Construction of modern Buddhism on Dharma Drum Mountain." Pp. 55-6. See also: Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Pp. 234-6.

¹¹ Yŏng-hoe Chŏng, *Kaehwagi chonggyogyŏ ūi kyoyuk undong yŏn'gu 개화기 종교계의 교육운동 연구 (Research of religious educational movements in the age of civilization)* (Seoul: Hyeon Press, 1999). Pp. 131-3.

monasteries involvement in secularized primary general schooling in Korea prior to the 20th-century.¹²

In 1911 the Japanese promulgated the infamous Temple Ordinance. This set of regulations is usually portrayed as a Japanese colonial attempt to place Korean Buddhism under its control (which it partly was), yet it could also be viewed as the first modern bureaucratization of Korean Buddhism. Through it, a unified 30-head-temples-system was set up, and the committee of abbots of these 30 temples (*Ponsan chuji hoeŭi*, 本山住持會議) became the de-facto frontrunners of Korean Buddhism, and led discussions on education reforms. It was this committee that established in 1915 a new graded education system which was based on the above mentioned monastic primary schools, supplemented with regional seminaries (*chibang hangnim*, 地方學林) in the mountain monasteries, as well as with higher education in a Central Seminary (*Chungang hangnim*, 中央學林) in Seoul.¹³ While the monastic primary schools focused on general secular subjects, the regional seminaries had a peculiar three-year curriculum that rearranged the *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts and supplemented them with Korean, history, sports, and introductions to the canonical *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* and *Brahma Net Sutra*.¹⁴ The regional seminary established in Pŏmŏsa in 1916, for example, taught introductions to the formal *Vinaya*, *Transmission of the Lamp*, the *Preface and Letters*, the *Diamond Sutra* and *Awakening of Faith*,

¹² For Southeast Asian temples' historical role as primary schools see for example: Stanely Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). P. 202.

¹³ Ki-un Yi, "Kūndaegi Pulgyogyŏ ŭi 30 ponsan kyoyuk ch'eje chŏngbi wa injae yangsŏng 근대기 불교계의 30本山 교육체제 정비와 인재양성 (Consolidation of the education system and cultivating men of ability by the 30 Buddhist head temples in the modern period)," *Han'guk sŏnhak* 20 (2008). Pp. 438-442. See also: Pori Park, *Trial and Error in Modernist Reforms: Korean Buddhism under Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2009); "Korean Buddhist Reforms and Problems in the Adoption of Modernity during the Colonial Period," *Korea Journal* 45, no. 1 (2005).

¹⁴ Chŏng, *Kaehwagi chonggyogyŏ ŭi kyoyuk undong yŏn'gu 개화기 종교계의 교육운동 연구 (Research of religious educational movements in the age of civilization)*. Pp. 132-3.

as well as Korean, history of Japan and history of the Korean Three Kingdoms Period all in the first year. The second year was devoted to the *Excerpts, Chan Essentials*, the *Śūraṅgama Sutra*, and the History of the Koryŏ Dynasty, and the third year to the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and the History of the Chosŏn Dynasty.¹⁵ The core *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts were all there, but were studied in a different order and were supplemented by various history courses.

These new regional seminaries were meant to replace the earlier ‘traditional’ monastic seminaries (called *kangdang* at the time, 講堂), and so as 47 *kangdang* existed in 1913, only 25 remained after the reforms in 1917. Nevertheless, the earlier institutions maintained their popularity, and as 542 students are said to have been studying in these *kangdang*’s in 1917, only 290 students were enrolled to monastic primary schools, and only 222 attended the regional seminaries at the time.¹⁶ Interestingly, the largest monastic seminaries of the early 20th-century were not found in the places one familiar with Korean Buddhism today would expect them to be. To be sure, the largest seminary seems to have been T’ongdosa, which is still prominent today, and had 58 students in 1918. Other popular monastic seminaries of the time, however, have long gone out of fashion: Kŏnpongsa attracted 57 students, Kŭmyongsa 54, Yujŏmsa 46, while Haeinsa only had five students in 1918.¹⁷

This new three-level education system did not last long. Partly due to financial difficulties and partly due to traditionalist anti-reform (or according to the orthodox Chogyŏ Order history ‘less-Japanese influenced’) counter-revolutionist monastics, monasteries returned to

¹⁵ Hwarang, "Pŏmŏsa kangwŏn ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 범어사 강원 의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of Pŏmŏsa’s seminary)," in *Sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 승가대학 의 역사와 문화 (The histories and cultures of sangha universities)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2009). P. 8.

¹⁶ Chŏng, *Kaehwagi chonggyogyŏ ūi kyoyuk undong yŏn'gu 개화기 종교계의 교육운동 연구 (Research of religious educational movements in the age of civilization)*. P. 132.

¹⁷ Anonymous, "Chosŏn Pulgyo ch'ongbo " (1918).

their individual *kangdang* models in the late 1920's.¹⁸ By 1937 there were 32 such monastic seminaries in the country teaching an overall number of 646 students, the largest located in Pusan's Pŏmŏsa.¹⁹ Their curriculums, however, seem to have been anything but systematized and unified. Evidence is scant, but the available data suggests that although the 'traditional' curricular texts stood at the center of seminary education during colonial times, many, if not most seminaries, hosted teachers teaching only some of these texts, and very few monks, if any, have gone through the exact order of texts as depicted by Yi Nŭnghwa above. Hwarang tells the story of a particular early 20th-century monk who began his education in 1913 at the large Pŏmŏsa seminary studying the *Śūraṅgama*, *Enlightened Verses*, *Transmission of the Lamp*, and the *Brahma Net Sutra* for a year, before moving to a different monastery to study the *Sagyo* texts for two years. He finally returned to Pŏmŏsa for three years of *Huayan Sutra* to end his studies.²⁰ Note that the *Sajip* treatises have not been part of this curriculum, and that the Chan anthologies have been moved to the early stages of the program. This particular monk's education lasted for six years, and there is evidence that the T'ongdosa curriculum of the 1930's lasted seven years (no *Ch'imun*, two years of *Sajip*, three years of *Sagyo* and two years of *Huayan*), both already much shorter than the programs depicted in Yi Nŭnghwa's historiography.²¹

In 2000 an interview with perhaps the only living monk that has studied in seminaries during the colonial period was published by the Chogyŏ Order.²² In it, Pŏmnyong recalls

¹⁸ Education Department The Chogyŏ Order, *Chogyŏjongsŏ: kūnhyŏndae p'yŏn* 曹溪宗史: 근현대편 (*The history of the Chogyŏ Order: Modern and contemporary*) (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2007). Pp. 139-140.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hwarang, "Pŏmŏsa kangwŏn ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 범어사 강원의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of Pŏmŏsa's seminary)." P. 4.

²¹ Yanggwan, "T'ongdosa sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa chŏnt'ong 통도사 승가대학의 역사와 전통 (The tradition and culture of T'ongdosa's sangha university)," ibid. P. 5-6.

²² This interview is available in: Kyesŏng, "Chŏn'gyeda hwasang Pŏmnyong sŭnim 전계다화상 범룡 (梵龍)스님 (An interview with Pŏmnyong sŭnim)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 3, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul The Chogyŏ Order, 2000).

beginning his seminary education in Yujömsa in the mid 1930's, where he studied parts of the *Ch'imun* and *Ch'obalsim* as well as Dahui's *Letters* for about a year. There were over 30 students in the seminary at the time, which made it a comparatively large center of learning, yet there were almost no books available, and most of the study consisted simply of copying the texts from the wood-engraved plates available on site, and trying to memorize them. There were no formal classes, and 2-3 days a week students simply copied a page of text and attempted to memorize it, though Pömnnyong remembers that only one in ten succeeded in doing so. In any case, after less than a year undergoing this kind of study, he travelled to the seminary of Sangwönsa and studied the *Diamond Sutra* with the *Ogahae* commentarial collection, as well as Chinul's *Excerpts* there. This ended his textual education and he went to sit at a Chan Hall.

Although this fascinating memoir is only the story of one monk, I believe it is highly revealing regarding the realities of seminaries in the early 20th-century. Unlike the institutional curricular histories enumerated above which illustrate formal plans and policies, this individual account exposes a much humbler reality in which students simply had to do with reading and copying the texts available in no particular order and with no unified time-frame. We can probably deduct from this that monastic education prior to the 20th-century has often been even more sporadic and unsystematic.

To be sure, proposals for monastic seminary curriculum reforms continued to be issued through the 1930's, though none of them were actualized. In the March 1932 issue of the magazine *Pulgyo*, a monk by the name Ch'öln sounded his critic for studying the 'difficult' *Sajip* treatises at the beginning of the curriculum, and offered instead a curriculum that begins with the *Ch'obalsim*, *Ch'imun*, and other disciplinary treatises such as the *42-Section Sutra*

(*Sishierzhangjing*, 四十二章經²³) and the *Bequeathed Teachings Sutra* (*Yijiaojing*, 遺教經²⁴), moves on to studying various commentaries on the *Sagyo* sutras, and ends with the more difficult *Huayan*, *Enlightened Verses*, the *Abhidharmakośa*, and the *Sajip* texts of the *Letters* and *Preface*.²⁵

A more extreme seminary reform proposal was issued in the 1930's by the Scholarly Association of Korean Buddhism (*Chosŏn pulgyo hagin taehoe*, 朝鮮佛敎學人大會) which included a number of Korean monastics who returned from studying in Japanese universities, and were very much influenced by the kind of new Buddhist studies they encountered there.²⁶ These reformers proposed not only supplementing the monastic seminary courses with general education in history, geography, algebra, geometry, science, music, sports, agriculture, composition, Japanese, and even English, but also a complete reformation of the Buddhist part of the program. Instead of focusing the study on the treatises of the patriarchs (*Ch'imun*, *Sajip* and commentaries on the sutras), they offered general introductions to various Buddhist traditions.

²³ T17.784. This text was traditionally believed to be the first Buddhist scripture brought to China from India, but is now widely believed to be apocryphal. An introduction and translation are found in: Robert Sharf, "The Scripture in Forty-two Sections," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

²⁴ T12.389. The *Yijiaojing* (also called 佛垂般涅槃略說教誡經 or 佛臨般涅槃略說教誡經 or 佛臨般涅槃經) was supposedly translated by Kumarajiva but there is no extant Sanskrit and it is probably a Chinese apocryphon. It has much content commonality with the Pāli *Nirvana Sutra* and with Asvagosā's *Buddhacarita*. The text has been often published together in a three-text *Vinaya* collection called the *Fuzusanjing* (佛祖三經) along with *Guishan's Admonitions* (see Chapter 1) and the *42-Section Sutra*. The precepts especially emphasized in this text are: do not buy and sell goods, do not manage houses and fields, do not raise animals, do not read stars or read fortunes for people in a variety of other ways, do not take more food than is sufficient for you, and so on. It also discusses the importance of controlling hunger, laziness, anger, pride, and sycophancy, and ends by explaining the various merits for this. Note that this *Bequeathed Teachings Sutra* and the *42 Section Sutra* seem to have also been the practical *Vinayas* in the first year of Yang Wenhui's early 20th school in China. For the curriculum of Yang's seminary see: Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)." Pp. 113-4.

²⁵ Ch'ŏlun, "Kangwŏn kyoyuk kwa chedo kaesin 講院敎育과 制度改新 (Seminary education and system reform)," *Pulgyo* 93 1932.

²⁶ This reform proposal is found in: Kwang-sik Kim, "1930 yŏndae Pulgyogyŏ ūi kangwŏn chedo kaesŏn munje 1930 년대 佛敎界의 講院制度 개선문제 (Problems in reforming the Buddhist seminary system in the 1930's)," in *Kŭnhyŏndae Pulgyo ūi chaejomyŏng 근현대불교의 재조명 (Re-illuminating modern and contemporary Buddhism)*, ed. Kwang-sik Kim (Seoul: Minjoksa, 2000).

Following the Buddhist scholarly trends in Europe and Japan in the early 20th-century and in absolute opposition to the way Buddhism has been historically studied in their own land, these reformers disregarded commentaries and treatises and called for an almost protestant concentration on the real word of Buddha *Śākyamuni* as manifested in the sutras and in Indian Buddhism.²⁷ Their comprehensive curriculum of introductions included for the first time courses on early Buddhism and the *Jātakas*, as well as introductions to the teachings of Tiantai and *Yogācāra* Buddhism. Although this curriculum proposal was never put into practice, it is worth bringing in full here, perhaps as a premonition for the comprehensive reforms that will take place almost a century later, in early 21st-century Korea. The full proposal is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The Scholarly Association of Korean Buddhism 1930's Curricular Reform Proposal

1 st year	1. Buddhist <i>Vinaya</i> 2. <i>Jātakas</i> 3. Buddhist Treatises 4. The Essentials of the <i>Śūramgama</i> 5. Early Buddhism 6. History of Buddhism in Korea 7. Mantras and Rituals	8. Korean and Chinese Characters Composition 9. Japanese Reading and Writing 10. English	11. History and Geography of Korea 12. Calculation 13. General Science 14. Music 15. Sports
2 nd year	1. Understanding the Rules and Ethics of the Order 2. The Essentials of the <i>Huayan</i> 3. Buddhist Treatises 4. The Essentials of the <i>Diamond Sutra</i> 5. The Essentials of the <i>Awakening of Faith</i> 6. History of Indian Buddhism 7. Mantras and Rituals	8. Korean and Chinese Characters Composition 9. Japanese Reading and writing 10. English	11. Japanese History and Geography 12. Algebra 13. General Science 14. Music 15. Sports
3 rd year	1. The Order and Social Ethics 2. The Essentials of the <i>Huayan</i> 3. The Essentials of the Major Buddhist Schools	7. Korean and Chinese Characters Composition	8. Western History and World Geography 9.

²⁷ Jaffe has illustrated the growing interest in *Śākyamuni* and in Indian Buddhism in Japan in the late 19th and early 20th-century: Richard Jaffe, "Seeking Sakyamuni: Travel and the Reconstruction of Japanese Buddhism," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004). Similar Orientalist influenced interest in Sanskrit was also increasing among modern Chinese Buddhists. See: Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma* (New York: Routledge, 2007). Pp. 66-71.

	4. The Essentials of the <i>Abhidharmakośa</i> 5. The Essentials of Tiantai 6. History of Chinese Buddhism		Geometry 10. General Science 11. Music 12. Sports
4 th year	1. The Order and Social Ethics 2. The Essentials of Chan 3. The Essentials of Major Buddhist Schools 4. The Essentials of <i>Yogācāra</i> 5. Buddhist Research Methods 6. History of Japanese Buddhism	7. Korean and Chinese Characters Composition 8. Japanese Reading and writing 9. English	10. Western History and World Geography 11. Geometry 12. Agriculture 13. Music 14. Sports

Thus far I have tied my discussion to Han Yong-un's first proposition, which was the need to supplement sangha education with general secular knowledge. Han's second theme, which was raising the quality of teaching, will be addressed in the next section, but first some words must be said about his last reform proposal: sending monastics to study abroad. At least 360 monastics left Korea to study abroad during the 35 year colonial rule.²⁸ Most of course went to Japan, which was not only close geographically and linguistically, but also provided increasing opportunities for travel in colonial times. In fact, it is estimated that there were over 200,000 Korean university students in Japan between the years 1919-1942, and Buddhist monastics seem to have constituted only a small portion of this general trend. 11 Korean monastics also left to study in China during that time, and two went all the way to Europe, one studying in France and one in Germany in the 1920's. In Japan, the most popular university among Korean monastic students was Komazawa of the Sōtō school, but some studied in other sectarian schools, as well as in general non-Buddhist universities.

At first, monastic leaders seemed excited to send as many monastics as they could to study in the 'modern world' and there was even somewhat of a competition among temples who

²⁸ My discussion here is based mainly on: Kyōng-su Yi, "Ilche sidae Pulgyo yuhaksaeng ūi tongyang 일제시대 불교 유학생의 동향 (Trends in Buddhists studying abroad during the Japanese colony)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 2, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1998).

could send more of its monks abroad, but by the 1930's there was much disillusionment. Many of the monastics who left ended up following Japanese Buddhist customs and marrying, others studied subjects unrelated to Buddhism and used this education to enhance their secular status, get a job and disrobe after graduation, and yet others returned with antagonistic attitudes towards the old-fashioned 'authoritarian' abbots who supported their study abroad in the first place.²⁹ Attempting to address these issues, the abbots of the large temples of T'ongdosa, Pŏmŏsa, and Haeinsa met in 1937 and stipulated that all prospective study abroad students should be firm graduates of the *Taegyo* course who have undergone several retreats, and were obligated to send in progress reports, as well as hold a temple position for at least 3-5 years upon return. This attempt was unsuccessful, however, as most monks pursued this education using their own economic resources and were not dependent on their home monasteries. Nevertheless, some did return to become important leaders and scholars of Korean Buddhism, and their experiences in Japan undoubtedly shaped their reform suggestions upon return. While away, they have been introduced to the teachings of various Buddhist traditions, and it is interesting to see how beginning in the 1920's after the first few monastics returned from their studies in Japan, Korean Buddhist magazines, which previously tended to focus on Chan, began publishing articles on other Buddhist doctrines popular in greater East Asia at the time, such as *Abhidharma*

²⁹ Scholars have noted that monks in Southeast Asia, Nepal and south China often use monkhood as an avenue for social mobility, joining the sangha for its free educational opportunities in order to enhance their secular status, and many disrobe right after graduation. Tambiah noted that about half of the Thai Buddhist university graduates disrobe after graduation: Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*. Pp.293, 358-9. For this practice in Cambodia see: Bruce Mathews, "Buddhism in Extremis : the Case of Cambodia " in *Buddhism and Politics in Twentieth-Century Asia*, ed. Ian Harris (London: Continuum, 1999). Pp. 61-2. For minorities in south China see: Borchert, "Education Monks: Buddhism, Politics and Freedom of Religion on China's Southwest Border." P. 189. For Laos see: McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand*. P. 65. In Nepal as well most monastics who pursue higher education abroad tend to disrobe after graduation. see: Sarah Levine and David N. Gellner, *Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth Century Nepal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Pp. 152-168.

philosophy.³⁰ In the latter half of the 20th-century the number of Korean monastics studying abroad decreased drastically, but the Chogyŏ Order today still invests some of its resources giving scholarships to capable monastics for pursuing graduate work abroad.³¹

Early Initiatives of Higher Buddhist Education

Efforts have also been made from the very early years of the 20th-century to create unified central modern higher Buddhist studies institutions, with the goal of nurturing specialists, monastic seminary teachers and propagators. The Myŏngjin School (明進), its name alluding to new popular attitudes of progress and civilization, seems to have been the first of such attempts. Inspired by the 800 or so Protestant missionary private schools which have been proliferating in Korea at the time, as well as by new Japanese Buddhist sectarian universities which were first founded in the 1880's, the school was opened in 1906 in Seoul's Wŏnhŭngsa.³² It was led at first by Yi Po-dam and Yun Ch'i-ho, who has been the first Korean to study in the USA, attending Emory University in the late 19th-century.³³ Historian Yi Nŭnghwa was one of the lecturers at the school. It was sponsored by the Japanese Pure Land (Jōdo) School, which has been highly active

³⁰ Welch noted a similar new trend of Japanese-influenced *Abhidharma* focused study in the new Chinese monastic seminaries of Taixu in the 1930's. See: Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*. P. 113.

³¹ It is estimated that there are about 40-50 Korean monastics who received Ph.D. degrees abroad in the latter half of the 20th-century, most of whom from Japanese Universities. See: Taegyŏng, "Chongdan sŭngga chŏnmun illyŏk yuksŏng mit hwaryong pangan e taehayŏ 종단 승가 전문인력 육성 및 활용 방안에 대하여 (On nurturing and utilizing monastic specialists in the Order)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 5, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul The Chogyŏ Order, 2004). Pp. 308-9.

³² Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyŏnsa 동국대학교 백년사 (100 years history of Dongguk University)*, vol. 1 (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2006). P. 61-9. For the establishment of Japanese sectarian schools see: Makoto, "Religious Studies and Religiously Affiliated Universities." P. 167.

³³ Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyŏnsa 동국대학교 백년사 (100 years history of Dongguk University)*, 1. P. 71.

both in Korea and in China from the late 19th-century.³⁴ Nevertheless, although Jōdo's *Amidism* was proclaimed as its doctrinal basis, the Myōngjin 's curriculum included classes on a variety of Buddhist themes, as well as in a selection of modern 'general knowledge' courses in history, geography, science and even law.³⁵ Its two-year program is detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: The Curriculum of the Myōngjin School³⁶

	FIRST YEAR		SECOND YEAR	
	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester
Courses (3-4 religious courses and 7-8 secular subjects each semester). Five hours of class a day.	1. Dushun's <i>Huayan fajie guanmen</i> , 華嚴法界觀門) ³⁷ . 2. The Three Pure Land Sutras.	1. Chegwan's <i>Outline of the Tian-Tai Four Teachings</i> (<i>Ch'ōnt'ae sagyōi</i> , 天台四教儀) ³⁸ . 2. The Lankavatara Sutra.	1. <i>The Huayan Sutra</i> . 2. <i>The Enlightened Verses</i> . 3. <i>The Nirvana Sutra</i> . 4. Law.	1. <i>The Huayan Sutra</i> . 2. <i>Transmission of the Lamp</i> . 3. Yanshou's <i>Records of the Source-Mirror</i> ³⁹ . 4. Law.

³⁴ For a detailed discussion of the Jōdo's activities in late 19th and early 20th-century Korea see: Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, *Empire of the Dharma : Korean and Japanese Buddhism, 1877-1912*, Harvard East Asian Monographs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). Chapter 3.

³⁵ Vladimir Tikhonov, "Japanese Missionaries 1876-1910 " in *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, ed. Jin Y. Park (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010). P. 265.

³⁶ Taken from: Changik, "Hyōndae Pulgyo ch'ulgacha toje kyoyuk ūi kwaje 현대불교 출가자 도제교육의 과제 (The issue of contemporary Buddhist apprentice education)," *Chonggyo kyoyukhak yŏn'gu* 32 (2010). Pp. 116-7.

³⁷ This is a treatise on Huayan attributed to its first patriarch Du-shun (杜順, 557-640), and a commentary for it was produced later by Zongmi as well as by other Chinese Buddhists. In general it expounds upon the four Huayan insights into the *dharmakaya/dharmadhatu* (法界觀門): the phenomenon *dharmakaya*, the principle *dharmakaya*, the non-obstruction of phenomenon and principles *dharmakaya*, and the non-obstruction of phenomena *dharmakaya* (事法界, 理法界, 理事無碍法界, 事事無碍法界). A full English translation of this short treatise is found in: Alan Fox, "Dushun's Huayan Fajie Guan Men (Meditative Approaches to the Huayan Dharmadhatu)," in *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings*, ed. William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³⁸ This summary of Tiantai thought written in China in 960 by the Korean monk Chegwan (諦觀, -970) has become the most dominant Tendai introductory text in modern Japan, and thus received considerable attention from western scholars of Buddhism as well. Via the Japanese-influenced Myōngjin curriculum Chegwan has found his way back to Korea too! A full English translation of the text is available in: David Chappell, *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism: An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984). Charles Muller provides a more recent translation of the text on his website at: <http://www.acmuller.net/kor-bud/Sagyovui.html>.

³⁹ *The Record of the Source-Mirror* (*Zongjing lu*, 宗鏡錄) is Yongming Yanshou's magnum opus, which was inspired by the comprehensive scholastic sutra-based Chan of Zongmi, and has several quotations from the *Chan Preface* itself. It was later often quoted by Chinul. The text is thus in line with the 'traditional' Korean curriculum. For a treatment of the text and its author and a partial English translation see: Albert Welte, *Yongming Yanshou's Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu: A Special Transmission Within the Scriptures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

	3. <i>The Brahma Net Sutra</i> . 4. History of Religions. 5. Arithmetic. 6. Historical Geography of Korea. 7. Science (Natural History/ Biology). 8. Calculation. 9. Agriculture. 10. Japanese. 11. Sports	3. The <i>Dharmaguptaka Vinaya</i> . 4. Propagation Methods. 5. Arithmetic. 6. Historical Geography of Korea. 7. Science (Natural History/ Biology). 8. Land Measuring. 9. Drawing. 10. Japanese. 11. Sports	5. Philosophy. 6. Arithmetic. 7. Historical Geography of Foreign Countries. 8. Science (Physics and Chemistry). 9. Land Measuring. 10. Japanese. 11. Sports	5. Philosophy. 6. Arithmetic. 7. Historical Geography of Foreign Countries. 8. Science (Physics and Chemistry). 9. Economics. 10. Japanese. 11. Sports
Practice	Two hours a day of Chan meditation			

As the table shows, although the three Pure Land Sutras were taught in the first year of the program, the focus of the Buddhist-part of the curriculum continued to be Huayan and Chan Buddhism. *The Brahma Net Sutra* and the canonical *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* were added to a somewhat comprehensive Mahāyāna curriculum of Tiantai, Huayan, and mostly Chan-related sutras and treatises. Law and land measurements skills were taught in order to aid monks in protecting their monastic lands from governmental encroachments. The school accepted both monastics and lay people. Its modern program and relations with the Japanese seems to have been quite controversial. Conservative monks protested the use of the new central Seoul temple of Wŏnhŭngsa for the school, and a monastic by the name of Na Ch'ŏng-ho, went as far as to create a rival institution in Pongŭnsa.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the first eleven students graduated in 1908, among them prominent modernist figures, such as above mentioned Han Yong-un and Kwŏn Sangno,

⁴⁰ Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyŏnsa 동국대학교 백년사 (100 years history of Dongguk University)*, 1. Pp. 74-80.

Independence Movement activist Yi Chong-uk, and An Chin-ho, who has been mentioned in the previous chapter as the one creating the abridged *Ch'imun* used in seminaries today. In 1909 the school came under the direction of Yi Hoegwang, infamous for his attempted alliance of Korean Buddhism with the Japanese Sōtō sect.⁴¹ Yi changed the name of the school, pointing explicitly to its function, to Buddhist Teachers School (*Pulgyo sabōm hakkyo*, 佛教師範學校). He also extended its program length to four years (matching it to the higher education systems of Europe and Japan), but due to economic difficulties topped over by inner dissension among Korean reformers regarding the Sōtō -alliance, it was soon closed down in 1910.⁴² All in all, Myōngjin seems to have been a rather humble first attempt for a centralized higher education institution of Korean Buddhism. It lasted for only three years and produced only 18 graduates. Yet, it signposted the road ahead.

I believe the Myōngjin School bears unmistakable similarities to Yang Wenhui's Jetavana Hermitage Seminary, which operated at the exact same time in China. Both were inspired by Japanese Buddhist sectarian university programs and taught a mix of Buddhist and general subjects for a small number of Buddhist elite members.⁴³ Both were revolutionary in creating mixed classrooms of lay and ordained, and allowing lay scholars to teach monastics about Buddhism (and both were criticized for it by more traditional monastics).⁴⁴ Both were at least partly formed in order to help protect monastic lands, and both fostered students who would

⁴¹ For analysis of the Sōtō-alliance see: Kim, *Empire of the Dharma : Korean and Japanese Buddhism, 1877-1912*. Chapter 6.

⁴² Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyōnsa 동국대학교 백년사 (100 years history of Dongguk University)*, 1. Pp. 84-93.

⁴³ The Jetavana Hermitage set a maximum number of ten students a year. See: Lai, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911-1949)." P. 97.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Pp. 99-100.

become the next leaders of the nation's Buddhist community.⁴⁵ Finally, both were short lived, yet the Jetavana Hermitage became the prototype for the 72 Buddhist Academies (*Foxueyuan*, 佛學院) which operated in China between the 1920's and 40's, and Myōngjin too paved the way for other Buddhist higher education institutions which sprang up throughout the 20th-century.

Most other Buddhist higher education schools which were established in colonial Korea were similarly comparatively small and short-lived. The Buddhist Academy of Higher Education (*Pulgyo kodŭng kangsuk*, 佛教高等講塾) was established in 1914 in the same Wōnhŭngsa where Myōngjin was formally located with 26 students, but closed down in less than a year.⁴⁶ The Central Seminary (*Chungang hangnim*, 中央學林) was established in 1918 with a curriculum which puts additional emphasis on Japanese language and history classes, but was closed down in the early 1920's.⁴⁷ The Buddhist Specialists School (*Pulgyo chōnsu hakkyo*, 佛教專修學校) was opened in 1928 with 31 students, three English teachers, and new courses in Buddhist Arts, and a year later Pak Han-yōng established the first Korean Buddhist Research Institute in Kaeunsa.⁴⁸ They were both short-lived. Higher education institutions were established outside Seoul as well, and in 1927 the Tongguk Seminary (*Tongguk kyōngwōn*, 東國經院) has opened in Yujōmsa, proposing a ten-year program for future seminary teachers.⁴⁹ All *Sajip* graduates were eligible to enroll, and the curriculum began with five years of sutra reading,

⁴⁵ In early 20th-century China the government confiscated temple lands to create schools and much of the new Buddhist seminaries were built in temples in order to avoid such governmental encroachment. As we have seen the Myōngjin as well had special classes in land measurement for similar purposes. The most well-known student at the Jetavana Hermitage has been Taixu, who was later involved with the establishment of numerous Buddhist seminaries in China.

⁴⁶ Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyōnsa* 동국대학교 백년사 (100 years history of Dongguk University), 1. Pp. 94-7.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Pp. 107-111.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Pp. 128, 150.

⁴⁹ For information on this school see: Yi, "Kūndaegi Pulgyogyē ūi 30 ponsan kyoyuk ch'eje chōngbi wa injae yangsōng gundae-gi bulgyōgyeui 30 bon-san kyōkyūch'ejē chōngbi wa injae yangsōng (Consolidation of the education system and cultivating men of ability by the 30 Buddhist head temples in the modern period)." Pp. 445-452.

continued with three years of special research, and ended with two years of general Buddhist philosophy and history. But plans aside, this school too was dismantled before it was able to produce a single graduate.

The 1930's brought some change. The Central Buddhist Specialized School (*Chungang pulgyo chŏnmun hakkyo*, 中央佛教專門學校) was the first Buddhist school in Korea to receive official recognition and a university status by the Japanese colonial government in 1930, and perhaps for this reason was able to persist longer and attract a greater number of students. It handed out official graduate diplomas to a student body consisting of half monastic and half lay students, and boasted over 200 alumni by 1940.⁵⁰ In 1940 it was re-named the Hyehwa Specialized School (*Hyehwa chŏnmun hakkyo*, 惠化傳問學校) dropping 'Buddhism' from its title in concurrence with the Japanese secularizing policies of the time.⁵¹ As the Japanese war efforts intensified in the early 1940's Korean Buddhist students had to wear army uniforms to school and were often mobilized for military labor on vacations.⁵² All the headmasters of the school were Japanese, as well as 11 out of the 30 regular lecturers. It was closed down due to the war in 1944, and was only re-opened again after independence in 1946, this time as the Dongguk University.

⁵⁰ Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyŏnsa 동국대학교 백년사* (100 years history of Dongguk University), 1. Pp. 138-158.

⁵¹ Makoto shows how Japanese sectarian schools all dropped the name of their sect from their titles in the early 20th-century as well. See: Makoto, "Religious Studies and Religiously Affiliated Universities." Pp. 169, 176.

⁵² Tongguk taehakkyo, *Tongguk taehakkyo paengnyŏnsa 동국대학교 백년사* (100 years history of Dongguk University), 1. Pp. 164-178.

From Buddhist Schools to Buddhist-affiliated Universities

When the central Buddhist institution was re-opened as Dongguk University, it took another step away from the Buddhist monastic world, and legally entered the modern national secular education system. It was no longer focused on the sangha, nor was it strictly Buddhist for that matter. To be sure, it still had a Buddhist Studies Department, but it was now supplemented by Korean Literature, English and Sociology Departments. By 1953 it also established a Law School and a Department of Agriculture, opened a graduate school, and in the 1950's began distributing internationally-recognized secular B.A, M.A and Ph.D. degrees to its graduates. As it gradually established additional secular departments throughout the remainder of the 20th-century, it attracted an increasing numbers of lay students, as well as many who were not Buddhist at all. Today, religion rarely plays a part in the decision of Koreans to attend this school. In fact, the university office presented me with recent statistics in which even in the Buddhist-related Departments (there are now Buddhist Studies, Chan Studies, Indian Philosophy, and Buddhist Social Welfare Departments) only 27% of the student body consists of monks and nuns. One may very well ask in what sense it is still considered to be a Buddhist institution at all.

Clearly, this is not an unusual phenomenon. Countless universities in Europe and North America were first established as Christian schools, and many are still affiliated to a denomination and hold services, although their curriculums and student bodies are almost completely secularized. In Korea too there are now 33 Christian Protestant-affiliated universities offering almost completely secularized programs. The sectarian Buddhist universities in Japan seem to have gone through a similar process of curricular secularization in the 20th-century, and their student bodies today consist of only 2-10% of students coming from temple families on their

way to join the clergy.⁵³ Some of the professors in these schools have expressed concern about the loss of their Buddhist identity, and institutions have attempted to address this problem by making ‘Introduction to Buddhism’ a required course for all first year students, and by providing space for Buddhist practice for those who wished to do so.⁵⁴ Dongguk responded in similar ways. All undergraduate students today are required to sit in two Buddhist-related courses before graduation, one called ‘Meditation and the Self,’ is taught by a monk and includes actual sitting meditation practice, and the other focuses on basic doctrine, and is called ‘Buddhism and the Human Being.’ There is also a small temple on campus which offers weekend sermons and doctrinal classes.

Although secularized, Dongguk’s main strength lies in offering the more academically-oriented Korean sangha an alternative to the monastic seminaries. Almost all of the university’s monastic students reside in special dormitories where some communal practice is encouraged (see Figure 1).⁵⁵ The Buddhist classes and seminars offered, though, are a far cry away from the ‘traditional’ text-focused study of the *Ch’imun*, *Sajip*, *Sagyo*, *Huayan*, and in line with contemporary general histories and summaries-focused Buddhist studies programs of Japanese and western universities. Dongguk thus serves as a kind of channel that connects the local sangha to the scholarly trends of Buddhist studies elsewhere, and in the next chapter we shall see how these styles were recently able to infiltrate down into the mountain monasteries as well. The school provides the most rigorous Buddhist research environment available in Korea

⁵³ At Ryokoku, Rissho and Komazawa only 2% of the students come from temple families, in Aichi Gakuin only 0.5%, in Jōdo’s Bukkyō 3%, in Hanazono 5%, in Taishō 10%, and in Otani 16%. See: Rowe and Kikuchi, "Round-Table Discussion: The Current State of Sectarian Universities."

⁵⁴ Ibid. Pp. 438-451. Borup notes that in reality almost no students participate in morning rituals and Zen practice offered in the mornings, and only the poorest of the soon-to-be-priests live in the special dormitory and obligingly participate in communal Buddhist practices in Hanazono University. See: Jørn Borup, *Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhism: Myōshinji, a Living Religion* (Boston: Brill, 2008). Pp. 138-9.

⁵⁵ Male monastics live in Paeksangwŏn dormitory near Hwagyesa, and female students in Hyegwangsa.

today, and has produced almost a 100 M.A holding monastics and 20 Ph.D.'s by the end of the 20th-century.⁵⁶ These graduates often assume leadership positions in the Chogyae Order, military positions as Buddhist chaplains, or teach at the mountain monastic seminaries.⁵⁷



Figure 1: Paeksangwŏn, the Male Monastic Dormitory of Dongguk University

Two other much smaller Buddhist-affiliated universities have been recently established in Korea. The small Chingak Order (眞覺) established the Widŏk University in Kyŏngju in 1994, and the Korean Ch'ŏnt'aek Order began operating Kŭmgang University in 2004. Though technically not recognized as a Buddhist group, Won-Buddhism also operates a secular university in Iksan, which has been officially recognized as a degree-granting institution since 1971. Mention can also be made of the interesting case of the Masan College, which began as a Buddhist higher- learning school set within the grounds of Haeinsa monastery in the 1950's, and

⁵⁶ Taegyŏng, "Chongdan sŭngga chŏnmun illyŏk yuksŏng mit hwaryong pangan e taehayŏ 중단 승가 전문인력 육성 및 활용 방안에 대하여 (On nurturing and utilizing monastic specialists in the Order)." P. 308.

⁵⁷ Pak Il-sŭng argued that in the 1970's 25% of monastic graduates became military chaplains, 25% returned to their monasteries, 23% took jobs at the main Chogyae office, and 20% continued to graduate school abroad. See: Il-sŭng Pak, "Sŭngga ŭi taehak kyoyunnon 僧伽의 大學教育論 (Educational theory for monastic higher education)," *Sŏngnim* 9 (1975).

has been so thoroughly secularized throughout the 1960's to finally lose all Buddhist affiliation, and be legally recognized as the Kyŏngnam University in 1971.⁵⁸

As Dongguk was gradually secularizing, a new purely monastic central higher-education institution was established as an alternative. The Central Sangha College (*Chungang sŭngga taehak*, 中央僧伽大學) was first established in 1979, allowed nuns to join classes since 1982, established a graduate school in 1989, and was finally recognized legally as a four-year degree-granting institution in 1994.⁵⁹ It is the only Buddhist monastic degree-granting institution in Korea, though mountain seminary teachers sometimes express their hope that their schools will also be nationally recognized as universities in the future.⁶⁰ This is not a unique Korean phenomenon, and several monastic Buddhist schools in other Asian countries have also begun distributing secular B.A. and graduate degrees in the latter half of the 20th-century.⁶¹ Jorgensen argued that in its early years the Central Sangha College was a hub for monastic radicals and

⁵⁸ For the story of the Masan College see: Yŏng-sŏp Ko, "Pulgyogyŏ ūi Haein-masan taehak (1946-1967) kyŏngyŏng 불교계의 해인-마산대학 (1946-1967) 경영 (The operation of the Buddhist Haein-Masan Univesrity between 1946-1967)," *Han'guk sŏnhak* 22 (2009).

⁵⁹ Sŏran, "Han'guk Pulgyo sŭngga kyoyuk ūi palchŏn panghyang e taehan yŏn'gu 한국불교 승가교육의 발전방향에 대한 연구 (Research on the development of Korean Buddhist sangha education)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk 1*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 1995). P. 299.

⁶⁰ Although the monastic seminaries are not officially recognized as universities in Korea, some have recently been able to create exchange programs with recognized universities abroad. Unmunsa, for example, established exchange programs with Qinghua University in China and Hanazono in Japan in 2007. See: Ko, "Pulgyogyŏ ūi Haein-masan taehak (1946-1967) kyŏngyŏng 불교계의 해인-마산대학 (1946-1967) 경영 (The operation of the Buddhist Haein-Masan Univesrity between 1946-1967)." P. 398, note 18.

⁶¹ Examples abound. In Sikkim the 'Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies' began granting secular degrees to the sangha in 1983: Chowang Achrya, "Aspects of Monastic Education in Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 2 (1998). Pp. 4-5. Several Bhutanese monastic colleges began granting secular degrees in the 1990's: Brian Denman and Sigye Namgyel, "Convergence of Monastic and Modern Education in Bhutan?," *International Review of Education* 54 (2008). P. 482. A degree-granting monastic university was established in Singapore in 2006: Jack Meng Tat Chia, "Teaching Dharma, Grooming Sangha: The Buddhist College of Singapore," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 24, no. 1 (2009). Laos also has one such degree-granting monastic university, and Thailand has two, both founded in the mid 1990's. For Thailand see: David Gosling, "Visions of Salvation: A Thai Buddhist Experience of Ecumenism," *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1992). Pp. 36-7. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*. For Laos see: Pyŏng-hwal Cho, "Segye sŭngga kyoyuk ūi ŏje wa onŭl 세계 승가교육의 어제와 오늘 (The past and present of sangha education in the world)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk 4*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, Education Department, 2002). Pp. 269-70.

reformers, its ideology based on banned translations of the Marxist Buddhism of Sen'o Girō.⁶²

Today it is often imagined within the Korean sangha as the school for monks interested in politics, who hope to hold management positions in the Chogye headquarters after graduation.

The Central Sangha College offers a sort of middle way between the mountain monastic seminaries and Dongguk University. It is now located in a new modern campus rather than in a mountain monastery, and like Dongguk, it stepped away from the *Sajip-Sagyo* textual-focused curriculum of the seminaries to teach more general Buddhist studies courses on Buddhist culture, social welfare, temple management, propagation methods, and so on. The school also promotes research, and grants graduate degrees. Unlike Dongguk, however, only monks and nuns are allowed to enroll, and they all must live communally at the school and participate in weekly communal work and rituals. Today, all first year students must live together in a 'big room,' and often hold communal *Diamond Sutra*-reading (*kangyōng*, 看經) sessions in the afternoons as they do in the monastic seminaries. The student body is comparatively large, and in the past 30 years or so it has produced over a thousand alumni.

Monastic Seminaries in Post-Colonial Korea

Unlike in Japan, where it is generally understood that Buddhist-affiliated universities have for the most part replaced textual education in monastic settings, in Korea mountain seminaries have continued to play a major role even after the creation of Dongguk and the Central Sangha College. Seminaries were closed down during the turmoil of the Korean War (1950-1953), but since the mid-1950's major monasteries gradually began re-organizing monastic

⁶² John Jorgensen, "Minjung Buddhism: A Buddhist Critique of the Status Quo " in *Makers of modern Korean Buddhism*, ed. Jin Y. Park (Albany: University of New York Press, 2010). P. 281.

schools based on the *Ch'imun-Sajip-Sagyo-Huayan* program, which by now has widely come to be perceived as the sole Korean 'traditional curriculum.' Haeinsa's seminary was the first to re-open in 1955, followed by the first nun seminaries of Tonghaksa and Unmunsa, and later in the 1960's T'ongdosa, Yongjusa, Pŏmŏsa, as well as other smaller temples established their own schools. By 1969 there were 12 operating seminaries on the peninsula with an overall student body of about 500 monastics.⁶³ Hwaŏmsa's seminary opened in 1971 by a teacher from Pŏmŏsa, Pulguksa's school was established in 1975, and by the end of the 1970's there were already 18 seminaries teaching over 700 students.⁶⁴ Chikchisa, Songwangsa⁶⁵, Ssanggyesa, Ch'ŏnamsa, and other monasteries established seminaries in the 1980's, but as some smaller seminaries closed down, the overall number of schools remained between 16 and 20 ever since the 1970's. The majority of these seminaries were very small. Even the larger monastery of Pŏmŏsa, for example, produced an average of only six graduates a year between the mid-1960's and mid 1970's, and T'ongdosa an average of about four graduates a year in the 1960's and ten a year in the 1970's and 80's.⁶⁶ Somewhat larger were Haeinsa, which boasted over 70 students in the 1970's and over a hundred in the 1980's. The female seminaries have had larger student bodies too.

These monastic seminaries were nothing but unified and systematized at first.

Between the 1960's and the early 1980's each monastery ran its own program, centered mainly

⁶³ The Chogyŏ Order, *Chogyŏjongsŏ: kūnhyŏndaŏ p'yŏn* 曹溪宗史: 근현대편 (*The history of the Chogyŏ Order: Modern and contemporary*). Pp. 211, 236-7.

⁶⁴ Statistics provided in Pyŏng-jo Chŏng, "Han'guk Pulgyo ūi hyŏnhwang kwa munjejŏm 한국불교의 현황과 문제점 (The present situation and the problematic issues of Korean Buddhism)," *Pulgyo yŏn'gu* 2 (1986). Pp. 200-1.

⁶⁵ For the history of Songgwangsa's seminary see: Kye-p'yo Yi, "Songgwangsa kangwŏn ūi yŏksa 松廣寺 講院의 역사 (The history of Songgwangsa's seminary)," in *Sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 승가대학의 역사와 문화* (*The histories and cultures of sangha universities*), ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2009).

⁶⁶ For Pŏmŏsa see: The Chogyŏ Order, "Irhwan sŭnim int'ŏbyu 일환 스님 인터뷰 (Interview with Rev. Irhwan)." *sa* see: Hwarang, "Pŏmŏsa kangwŏn ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 범어사 강원의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of Pŏmŏsa's seminary)." Pp. 6-7. For T'ongdosa see: Yanggwan, "T'ongdosa sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa chŏnt'ong 통도사 승가대학의 역사와 전통 (The tradition and culture of T'ongdosa's sangha university)," *ibid.* Pp. 19-20.

on the ideas of its Head Teacher (*kangju*, 講主), and the lengths of the programs varied between 2-6 years in different schools.⁶⁷ Monks were not obligated to join a seminary, and in fact it is estimated that less than 50% did. Others would simply join a Chan Hall or take on a position (*soim*, 所任) at a temple. Often the decision whether to join a seminary or not was not completely dependent on individual desires but on that of one's mentoring monk (*ŭnsa*, 恩師), which is assigned to every new postulant in Korea, and serves almost as a monastic substitute to the secular father-figure for the rest of his/her monastic career. Even those who did enter seminaries often read through only parts of the *Ch'imun* and perhaps some of the *Sajip* texts before leaving the seminary.⁶⁸ Rarely did anyone study the complete *Sagyo* texts and *Huayan Sutra*.⁶⁹

Several biographic anecdotes confirm this lack of systematization. Irhwan recalls joining Haeinsa's seminary when it re-opened in 1955 along with about 50 other students, and going through the *Ch'imun*, *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts for about four years, but having to travel to T'ongdosa to study the *Huayan*, as Haeinsa did not have a teacher for that course at the time.⁷⁰ Chigwan, who has been abbot of Haeinsa in the 1970's and head of the Chogye headquarters in the early 2000's, also went to Haeinsa in 1955 but studied only the *Sagyo* and *Huayan* there for three years. He then travelled to T'ongdosa to study *The Enlightened Verses*, but explains that there were no formal classes. He simply studied the text individually and went to see a teacher when he had specific questions to ask. He also recalls that in the 1960's Haeinsa systematized the

⁶⁷ Chongmuk, "Sŭngga taehak (kangwŏn) kyogwa kwajŏng unyŏng e kwanhan sogo 승가대학(강원) 교과과정 운영에 관한 소고 (Some thoughts on the operation of the curriculums in sangha universities)," in *2006 Korea Conference of Buddhist Studies* (Haeinsa2006).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Sugyŏng, "Samsŏn kangwŏn ŭi paltalsa 삼선강원의 발달사 (The history of the development of Samsŏn Buddhist College)," in *Piguni sŭngga taehak ŭi yŏksa wa munhwa 비구니 승가대학의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of nun seminaries)*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2009). P. 216.

⁷⁰ The Chogye Order, "Irhwan sŭnim int'ŏbyu 일환 스님 인터뷰 (Interview with Rev. Irhwan)." Pp. 412-3.

curriculum into a four-year program, and that the only monasteries that taught the whole core ‘traditional’ curriculum at the time were Haeinsa, T’ongdosa and Tonghaksa (for nuns).⁷¹ Wönsan, who has been the head of the Chogye’s Education Department in the late 1990’s, further emphasized the flexibility and lack of structure in the education system at the time. He explained that different monasteries had teachers specializing in different texts, and so students often travelled from seminary to seminary to study. He himself went through most of the ‘traditional curriculum’ studying different curricular texts in three different locations. He also remembers that students spent most of their time doing odd jobs at the monastery, and spent very little time actually studying.⁷² Accordingly, it seems clear that in the 1960’s the shift from a teacher-based apprenticeship education to a modern institution-based school system had not yet been completed.

To be sure, there was no lack of reform proposals. In 1965 Chigwan, who has been the Head Teacher of Haeinsa at the time, suggested adding additional basic Mahāyāna sutras to the curriculum.⁷³ Two years later, in 1967, the head of the entire Haeinsa community, Sōngch’öl, proposed an innovative four-year seminary curriculum with a new emphasis not only on secular subjects, but also on Indian Buddhism. His plan included required courses in the Pāli language, the *Āgamas*, philosophy, education, Buddhist history, and religious studies, as well as electives in law, psychology, biology, culture, and music. He also suggested supplementing the Haeinsa seminary with a graduate school for training teachers. These plans, however, were not realized.⁷⁴

⁷¹ "Chigwan sūnim int’ōbyu 지관 스님 인터뷰 (An interview with Venerable Chigwan)." Pp. 365-75.

⁷² Nūnghō, "Sōnjisik ūl ch’ajasō ch’odae kyoyukwōnjang Wōnsan sūnim 선지식을 찾아서 초대교육원장 원산스님 (Finding a dharma friend in the first head of the education department Rev. Wōnsan)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk 4*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2002). Pp. 399-400.

⁷³ Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience*. P. 100.

⁷⁴ For the detailed proposal see: Yōng-sōp Ko, "Haein kangwōn- Haeinsa sūngga taehak (1900-2009) ūi yōksa wa munhwa 해인강원-해인사승가대학 (1900~2009) 의역사와 문화 (The history and culture of Haeinsa seminary 1900-2009)," *Pulgyo hakpo* 53 (2009). Pp. 89-94.

In 1972 The Chogye headquarters sponsored a survey of the seminaries' situation in the country and concluded that the level of education was very low. In order to promote a better educational atmosphere they suggested changing the name of the seminaries from the old-fashioned sounding Lecture Hall (*kangdang*, 講堂 or *kangwŏn*, 講院) into the more modern sounding Sangha Academy (*Sŭngga hakwŏn*, 僧伽學院), and unifying the system into a six-year curriculum split in half into 3 years of doctrinal learning (*kyo*, 敎) and 3 years of Chan (禪).⁷⁵ This proposal too was never realized.

In 1975 the Buddhist magazine *Sŏngnim* (釋林) devoted a volume to articles dealing with the education of the sangha. In it, Kiyŏng lamented the strict split between practice at Chan Halls and study at seminaries and argued for the need to devise a new system that integrates both into one.⁷⁶ Another article in that volume noted the economic difficulties of the Korean sangha, and argued that the sangha of the day could not rely on donations alone and so seminary education should be supplemented by some sort of professional education that will allow monks, paradoxically, to earn money in secular society in order to continue their religious work.⁷⁷ Later, in 1986, a prominent Korean lay Buddhist professor by the name of Chŏng Pyŏng-jo put forth another interesting reform proposal. First, echoing Kiyŏng above, he suggested adding a textual study program to the Chan Halls during the retreat off-seasons, focusing on Chan treatises and histories. In Addition, he put forth an eight-year curricular proposal for the seminaries. His program begins with a year of *Ch'obalsim*, *Śākyamuni's* biography, religious studies, and

⁷⁵ Kwang-sik Kim, "Hwaŏmsa sŭngga taehak ŭi yŏksa 화엄사 승가대학의 역사 (The history of Hwaŏmsa's sangha university)," in *Sŭngga taehak ŭi yŏksa wa munhwa 승가대학의 역사와 문화 (The histories and cultures of sangha universities)*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2009). Pp. 6-7.

⁷⁶ Ki-yŏng Yi, "Sŭngga kyoyuk ŭi chemunje 僧伽敎育의 諸問題 (Various problems with sangha education)," *Sŏngnim* 9 (1975).

⁷⁷ Ui-pŏm Wŏn, "Sŭngga kyoyuk ŭi yŏksajŏk chŏn'gae 僧伽敎育의 歷史的展開 (The historical development of sangha education)," *ibid.*

Buddhist cultural history. The second stage is a three-year study of *Āgamas*, *Vinaya*, the *Diamond Sutra*, Chinul's *Chinsim-chiksöl* (眞心直說), philosophy, Indian Buddhist history, and English.

The next stage was another three-year study of the *Lotus Sutra*, *Awakening of Faith*, Chan history, research on Wŏnhyo, history of Buddhism in China and Korea, and Sanskrit. The final year in his proposal was dedicated to the *Huayan Sutra*, propagation methods, and further research in Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁷⁸

The above reform proposals seem to have much in common, that is, besides the fact that they were all mostly unrealized. Early 20th-century Buddhist discourse emphasizing the importance of secular general education for the sangha, continued well into the 1980's, though the focus shifted from science to philosophy, history and (comparative) religion. Often the need to teach monks languages was emphasized, whether it was Japanese in the early years of the century, or English and Indian Classical languages in the post-colonial years. As in other traditionally Mahāyānist East Asian countries, Indian Buddhism, especially the *Āgamas* and *Abhidharma*, seems to have gradually become more important to Korean Buddhists through the 20th-century. At the same time, I believe it is also possible to detect a weakened focus on Chan in favor of a more general sort of Buddhism, as well as a greater focus on the sutras instead of treatises. The only treatises left on Chŏng's above-mentioned proposal, for example, are a few native-Korean-written essays, perhaps in an attempt to nationalize the curriculum. The *Sajip* texts are completely missing from it. As we shall see in the next chapter, many of these new trends in what Korean Buddhists understood to be central to their tradition would break through into actual reforms on the ground in the 21st-century.

⁷⁸ Chŏng, "Han'guk Pulgyo ūi hyŏnhwang kwa munjejŏm 한국불교의 현황과 문제점 (The present situation and the problematic issues of Korean Buddhism)." P. 205.

Having said all that, I must concur that some real development did in fact take place. First, advanced institutions for further training of seminary graduates were established. Two monastic teacher training academies were opened in 1982.⁷⁹ More interesting perhaps was the creation of new *Vinaya* Schools (*yulwŏn*, 律院) for higher systematized study of the formal *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*. The first is said to have been established in T'ongdosa in the 1950's, and another was opened in Haeinsa in 1977.⁸⁰ This is another indication for the tendency of Korean Buddhists (as of other Asian Buddhists) to pay more attention than ever before to formal canonical works during the course of the 20th-century. A more detailed analysis of these schools will be presented in Chapter 3.

The core 'traditional' curriculum seems to have gradually become the basis of all institutions, and it was often supplemented by special weekend lectures on general non-Buddhist subjects. Haeinsa, for example, offered English classes and special lectures in philosophy, psychology, Buddhist history and propagation methodology since the 1980's.⁸¹ Hwaŏmsa at the time supplemented the curriculum with *Abhidharma* courses and daily Sports.⁸² All nun seminaries added Hyujŏng's *The Mirror of Sŏn* and the *Brahma Net Sutra* to their curriculums in the 1980's.⁸³ By the early 1990's all 16 operating seminaries structured their program around the

⁷⁹ These two were the Hwaŏm Academy and Hwangak Buddhist academy. (Both have been closed by the end of the century). See: The Chogyŏ Order, *Chogyŏjongsŏ: kŭnhyŏndaŏ p'yŏn* 曹溪宗史: 근현대편 (*The history of the Chogyŏ Order: Modern and contemporary*). P. 281.

⁸⁰ Chongmuk, "Ch'ongnim ūi chindan, naagal panghyang: Haein ch'ongnim chungsim ūro chŏngnim ūi jin dan, naagal panghyang: Haein chŏngnim chungsim ūro (Diagnosis of the Chan community and objectives for its development: Focusing on the Haeinsa community)." Pp. 197-210.

⁸¹ "Sŏngga taehak (kangwŏn) kyogwa kwajŏng unyŏng e kwanhan sogo 승가대학(강원) 교과과정 운영에 관한 소고 (Some thoughts on the operation of the curriculums in sangha universities)."

⁸² Kim, "Hwaŏmsa sŏngga taehak ūi yŏksa 화엄사 승가대학의 역사 (The history of Hwaŏmsa's sangha university)." P. 5.

⁸³ Chŏng-ja Kim, "Unmunsa haginŏng ūi suhaeng mit kyoyuk ch'egye yŏn'gu 운문사 학인승의 수행 및 교육체계 연구 (Research regarding the educational system and practice of Unmunsa's monastic students)," *Tongbuka munhwa yŏn'gu* 24 (2010). P. 197.

core texts of the ‘traditional curriculum,’ and most supplemented it by special lectures on various general topics. Eight of the seminaries offered Japanese language classes, and five taught English. Five schools offered special lectures on Buddhist history, and three in propagation theory and calligraphy. Computers were taught in two places, as well as comparative religion. Lectures on the *Āgamas* were given in two of the seminaries, and other schools had special talks on *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* thought. In addition, Zhuangzi was read at Pulguksa, and the Analects at Ssanggyesa.⁸⁴ Finally, the martial art *Taijiquan* (Kr. *T’aegŭkkwŏn*, 太極拳) has been taught at Ch’ŏnamsa ever since it was founded in the mid 1980’s.

Modern Sudden and Gradual Debates

Another fascinating curriculum-related development occurred in the mid 1970’s, with the revival of the old Zongmi-related sudden and gradual soteriological debate. The central figure in the debate has been the head of the Haeinsa community in the 1970’s and the head of the entire Chogyŏ Order in the 1980’s, Sŏngch’ŏl (性徹, 1912-1993). Sŏngch’ŏl critiqued the ‘sudden-enlightenment- followed- by- gradual- cultivation’ (*dunwu jianxiu*, 頓悟漸修) model of Zongmi and Chinul as compromising the absolute, simultaneous, immediate nature of real Chan enlightenment, and favored instead the more subitist model of ‘sudden- enlightenment-and- sudden-cultivation’ (*dunwu dunxiu* 頓悟頓修).⁸⁵ Looking back at Zongmi’s essays, Sŏngch’ŏl found that the initial ‘sudden-awakening’ is occasionally characterized as ‘understanding awakening’ (*jiewu*, 解悟) while the complete awakening at the end of the gradual practice was

⁸⁴ Education Department The Chogyŏ Order, "(Anonymous Report)," in *Sŭngga Kyoyuk 1*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 1995). Pp. 57-61.

⁸⁵ Woncheol Yun, "Zen Master T’oe’ong Sŏngch’ŏl’s Doctrine of Zen Enlightenment and Practice," in *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, ed. Jin Y. Park (Albany: University of New York Press, 2010). Pp. 199-222.

sometimes termed ‘confirmed awakening’ (*zhengwu*, 證悟).⁸⁶ Consequently, and in accordance with Dahui’s critic of knowing and understanding (*zhijie*, 智解) as harmful to *huatou* practice, Sōngch’ōl argued that Zongmi’s ‘sudden awakening’ should not be regarded as awakening at all, but simply as a kind of rational understanding which cannot be trusted as a basis for real Chan practice.⁸⁷ He likened using this ‘understanding’ to practice Chan to jumping into the fire while holding an armful of wood.⁸⁸

Sōngch’ōl backed his ideology with real action. In 1976 he took the gradualist ‘heterodox’ *Sajip* essays of Zongmi and Chinul off Haeinsa’s seminary curriculum.⁸⁹ Instead, he added two other texts to the *Letters* and *Chan Essentials*, forming a new *Sajip*. These were the *Platform Sutra* and a 14th-century text by the Ming monastic Dazhu (大珠) on sudden-awakening (*Dunwu rudao yaomenlun*, 頓悟入道要門論), which generally confirms his more subitist soteriological views. With these changes, the *Sajip* lost its original focus on Heze gradualist Chan, and have been placed by Sōngch’ōl within the confines of what came to be the orthodox Linji lineage. One may wonder to what extent contemporary (Rinzai-influenced) Japanese Buddhist scholarship has had an impact on his views. One could also ask whether the *Huayan*, *Śūramgama* and other more gradualist texts should not have been taken out of the curriculum along with the *Preface* and *Excerpts* to complete Sōngch’ōl’s sudden-complete- enlightenment vision. Such changes have not been made. Nevertheless, his new subitist *Sajip* collection

⁸⁶ Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation." Pp. 283.

⁸⁷ Sōng-pae Pak, "Sōngch’ōl sūnim ūi tonō chōmsusōl pip’an e taehayō 성철스님의 돈오점수설 비판에 대하여 (About Rev. Sōngch’ōl’s critic of the sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation theory)," in *Kkaedarūm, tonō chōmsu inga tonō tonsu inga 깨달음, 돈오점수인가 돈오돈수인가 (Enlightenment: Sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation or sudden awakening and sudden cultivation)*, ed. Kōn-gi Kang and Ho-sōng Kim (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1992). Pp. 238-241.

⁸⁸ Yun, "Zen Master T’oe’ong Sōngch’ōl’s Doctrine of Zen Enlightenment and Practice." P. 222.

⁸⁹ Jae-ryong Shim, *Korean Buddhism: Tradition and Transformation* (Seoul: Jimoondang International 1999). P. 215.

remained on the Haeinsa (perhaps the most dominant monastic seminary in Korea) curriculum well into the 21st-century. It also seems to have influenced the ideas of teachers in other seminaries. Until the 1990's Hwaŏmsa's seminary too taught a similar program involving the *Platform Sutra*, Dahui's *Letters* and the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, and neither the *Preface* nor the *Excerpts*.⁹⁰ As we shall see in the next chapter, my own fieldwork in seminaries today shows that although the *Sajip* has for the most part lost its place on the curriculums, when having to choose among its texts, seminaries tend to pick Dahui's *Letters* (and in some cases the *Chan Essentials*) over the essays of Zongmi and Chinul.

Stepping Down from the Hermitages: Nun Seminaries

Perhaps the greatest revolution in 20th-century Korean Buddhism has been the gradual independence and growth of female monastic education, which has previously been marginalized or subordinated to the male seminaries. In pre-modern Korea, nuns were excluded altogether from the sangha examinations and from holding official Buddhist positions and titles, yet by the early 20th-century several male seminary teachers began taking in nun students from the surrounding hermitages.⁹¹ The first female-only seminary was opened in Seoul's Pomunsa in 1936,⁹² and there were a few other mostly unsuccessful attempts to open nun seminaries in

⁹⁰ The Chogyŏ Order, "(Anonymous Report)."

⁹¹ Eunsu Cho, "Female Buddhist practice in Korea: A Historical Account," in *Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen: Hidden Histories, Enduring Vitality*, ed. Eun-su Cho (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011). Pp. 29-34. Interestingly, Sujŏng writes that while male students at the time studied the *Sagyo*, female students focused on the Lotus! Was the Lotus viewed as less-philosophic and more feminine? Was this related to the famous Naga girl story of the Lotus which points out the ability of females to attain enlightenment as well (though going through maleness first)? See: Sujŏng, "Tonghaksa sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa hyŏnwang 동학사승가대학의 역사와 현황 (The history and present situation of Tonghaksa's sangha university)," in *Piguni sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 비구니 승가대학의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of nun seminaries)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2009). P. 61.

⁹² Pomunsa has been separated from the Chogyŏ Order in 1972 to form an independent female Buddhist school called the Pomun School. See: Pori Park, "The Establishment of Buddhist Nunneries in Contemporary Korea," in *Korean*

Namjangsa, Mit'asa and other small temples in the 1940's and early 1950's.⁹³ At the time, nuns gradually began to step down from the surrounding satellite hermitages they inhabited to live in some of the larger central monasteries.⁹⁴ Finally in 1956, the first female monastic in Korean history, a nun by the name of Myoŏm, has received official 'transmission to teach' (*chŏngang*, 傳講) from her male teacher, Kyŏngbong, and began teaching classes in the newly founded female seminary of Tonghaksa.⁹⁵ Two years later in 1958 Unmunsa's nun seminary was established by a male T'ongdosa monk, and about 20 other nun schools were established in the same way in the 1960's and 70's, though most were short-lived.⁹⁶ The final breakthrough happened in 1985. Up until then all nun seminary teachers received 'transmission to teach' from male teachers, but in 1985 the first nun-to-nun transmission occurred in Unmunsa, symbolizing the final independence of the female seminaries from their male supervision.⁹⁷ Nun seminary student numbers grew rapidly, and since the early 1980's there have consistently been more female seminary students in Korea than there were male seminary students. In fact, in the 1990's female seminary student numbers doubled that of their male counterpart. While many male monastics skipped the

Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen: Hidden Histories, Enduring Vitality, ed. Eun-su Cho (Albany: University of New York Press, 2011). Pp. 166-8.

⁹³ Sugyŏng argues that some of these seminaries were closed down because they worried about assembling many virgins together at the time so the Japanese would not come and collect 'comfort women' from there! See: Sugyŏng, "Samsŏn kangwŏn ūi paltalsa 삼선강원의 발달사 (The history of the development of Samsŏn Buddhist College)."

⁹⁴ Regrettably, still in Korea today it is very often the case that monks occupy the main monastery and female monastics (sometimes in larger numbers than the monks in the central monastery itself) are relegated to smaller surrounding hermitages.

⁹⁵ Sujŏng, "Tonghaksa sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa hyŏnwang 동학사승가대학의 역사와 현황 (The history and present situation of Tonghaksa's sangha university)." Pp. 65-6.

⁹⁶ Unsan, "Unmun sŭngga taehak ūi chŏnt'ong kwa hyŏnjaesŏng 운문승가대학의 전통성과 현재성 (The traditional and present character of Unmunsa's sangha university)," in *Piguni sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 비구니/승가대학의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of nun seminaries)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2009). P. 16.

⁹⁷ Myŏngsŏng transmitted the teachings to two nuns at the time. See: Kim, "Unmunsa hagsinsŭng ūi suhaeng mit kyoyuk ch'egye yŏn'gu 운문사 학인승의 수행 및 교육체계 연구 (Research regarding the educational system and practice of Unmunsa's monastic students)." P. 192.

seminary and went directly to the Chan Hall after their novice ordinations, almost all female novices were encouraged to begin their monastic careers in a seminary.

Scholars have attempted to explain the creation of new independent female monastic seminaries referring to the nuns' leadership roles in the Purification Movement of the 1950's, after which they were "rewarded" with their own temples and seminaries.⁹⁸ Some explain that as married clergy were expelled from the monasteries in the 1950's and 60's and there was simply not a sufficient number of celibate monks to take over, nuns were given a chance to occupy some major temples such as Unmunsa and Tonghaksa, which soon became the first female seminaries.⁹⁹ Sugyŏng argued that even earlier, during the Korean War, as monks were leaving the monasteries to join the military, seminary teachers tried to fill their empty classrooms with nuns, accepting them as disciples and giving them 'transmission the teach.'¹⁰⁰ The overall zeitgeist of a better sexual equality in 20th-century Korea was probably the most dominant factor in the changes, as it has been in many other religious communities in modern times. Personal connections of some of the leading nuns also proved to be helpful. Perhaps the most dominant seminary nun in the 20th-century, Myoŏm, who (as mentioned earlier) has been the first female to receive 'transmission to teach' in the 1950's, taught in several major seminaries, studied at Dongguk's graduate school, and established the major seminary of Pongnyŏngsa in 1974, certainly had such connections.¹⁰¹ Her father had been a prominent monk in colonial times. As the story goes, six years after his ordination he visited his ex-wife once in order to filially satisfy his

⁹⁸ For the Purification Movement see: Chanju Mun, *Purification Buddhist Movement 1954-1970: The Struggle to Restore Celibacy in the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism* (Blue Pine Books, 2011).

⁹⁹ Yogyŏng, "Piguni kyoyuk toryang Pongnyŏngsa sŭngga taehak e taehan koch'al 비구니 교육 도량 봉녕사승가대학에 대한 고찰 (Inquiry into the nun education at Pongnyŏngsa's sangha university)." P. 93.

¹⁰⁰ Sugyŏng, "Samsŏn kangwŏn ŭi paltalsa 삼선강원의 발달사 (The history of the development of Samsŏn Buddhist College)." P. 212.

¹⁰¹ Yogyŏng, "Piguni kyoyuk toryang Pongnyŏngsa sŭngga taehak e taehan koch'al 비구니 교육 도량 봉녕사승가대학에 대한 고찰 (Inquiry into the nun education at Pongnyŏngsa's sangha university)." P. 103.

aging mother's wish for a grandchild.¹⁰² Thus Myoŏm was born. During the military turbulence of the late 1940's her mother took her to hide in her father's temple, where she met the monastic leaders of the day, ordained, and even studied under Sŏngch'ŏl.¹⁰³ Her important role in the female monastic emancipation in Korea should not go unnoticed.

By the end of the 20th-century there had been five female monastic seminaries on the peninsula. The three already mentioned large centers of Unmunsa (which has continuously been the largest seminary in the country with over 200 students in the 1990's), Tonghaksa and Pongnyŏngsa (with over a 100 students each in the 1990's), as well as two somewhat smaller communities: Seoul's Samsŏn Seminary which opened in 1979,¹⁰⁴ and Ch'ŏngamsa's school which operates since 1987.¹⁰⁵ They all followed the 'traditional curriculum,' supplemented by special lectures in Buddhist history and culture. Each is imagined a little differently by nuns: Unmunsa is known as the working seminary, Tonghaksa as the scholarly seminary, Pongnyŏngsa as the strict disciplinary seminary, and Ch'ŏngamsa as the 'free thinking' seminary. Sometimes female novices decide which school to attend according to such stereotypes. Although nuns often

¹⁰² Interestingly the *Vinaya* offers an almost identical story in which Sudinna is urged by his mother to sleep with his ex-wife just once in order to continue the family line but after he does so he is harshly rebuked by the Buddha. See: Achim Bayer, "A Case for Celibacy: The Sudinna Story in the in the Pāli Vinaya and Its Interpretation," in *Zentrum für Buddhismuskunde* (Hamburg 2012).

¹⁰³ Yogyŏng, "Piguni kyoyuk toryang Pongnyŏngsa sŭngga taehak e taehan koch'al 비구니 교육 도량 봉녕사승가대학에 대한 고찰 (Inquiry into the nun education at Pongnyŏngsa's sangha university)." Pp. 98-9.

¹⁰⁴ Samsŏn has been the only monastic seminary in the country in which students did not actually live together as a community but commuted daily for morning classes, and left after class. It was also the only seminary in Seoul, besides the Central Sangha College. It was intended as an alternative for older and ill nuns, for female students of Dongguk who wished to go through the 'traditional' curriculum as well, and for nuns with temple positions in Seoul who could not leave for the mountains. It has been continuously criticized for not being a true seminary with communal life, and was finally closed down by the Chogyŏ Order for this reason in 2014. On the school's history see: Sugyŏng, "Samsŏn kangwŏn ūi paltalsa 삼선강원의 발달사 (The history of the development of Samsŏn Buddhist College)."

¹⁰⁵ For Ch'ŏngamsa's seminary history see: Pullim, "Ch'ŏngamsa sŭngga taehak ūi pyŏnch'ŏnsa mit apūro ūi palchŏn panghyang 천암사승가대학의 변천사 및 앞으로의 발전 방향 (The history of the changes and the future developmental objectives of Ch'ŏngamsa's sangha university)," in *Piguni sŭngga taehak ūi yŏksa wa munhwa 비구니승가대학의 역사와 문화 (The history and culture of nun seminaries)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2009).

claim that their ordination gets them to transcend gender differentiation, in the 1990's female seminaries (and female seminaries only) offered special classes in piano and flower arrangement, both clearly associated with feminine gender roles. Such courses were dropped from the programs in the 21st-century. In 1992 the largest monastic library in the country, with tens of thousands of books, as well as modern seminar and multi-media rooms, was opened in Pongnyŏngsa (see Figure 2). The first female monastic *Vinaya* School has been opened there too, in 1999, inspiring the establishment of others in the 21st-century.



Figure 2: Pongnyŏngsa's Seminary Modern Library

As there have always been fewer female seminaries than there have been male ones, and at the same time there has been an overall greater number of female monastic students in the country, female institutions obviously tended to be much larger than the male schools. But numbers are hardly the only difference. Female seminaries and nunneries in general tend to be situated in more secluded monasteries, Ch'ŏnamsa certainly being the most secluded of them all. The most striking peculiarity of the female seminaries, however, is the almost complete lack of lay employees. While in Korean male Buddhist monasteries today lay volunteers and paid workers do most if not all of the office, kitchen, construction and farming work, in female seminaries it is the students who are doing all of the (un-professional) labor. Often the lower

classes do the cleaning, kitchen and farming work, and the higher classes are in charge of the office and managerial jobs. In fact, when I visited Ch'ŏnamsa in 2014 some of the older nuns insisted that not only the students but the entire community is working together daily in the kitchen, gardens, and so on. When I asked nun seminary teachers about this inequality, they often explained that nunneries are much poorer than male monasteries, as lay female devotees (*posalnim*) usually prefer to donate their time and money to the male temples. They simply cannot afford to pay lay employees. Others seem to find comfort in the fact that unlike in other Asian countries at least they were allowed to ordain and manage their own temples, and stress that work is a beneficent and crucial Buddhist practice for novices. When I asked male monastics about this difference they sometimes lowered their heads ashamed, many admitting that perhaps their seminaries should be more like those of the nuns.

Communal Life at the Seminaries

Seminary teachers frequently stress that the most important part of the monastic school's life is not the textual study itself. Although this has been changing recently, 20th-century seminaries commonly had very little formal class time, very little class preparation, and no homework, reports or exams. Rather, they say, most essential to the seminary education was the 'communal living' (*taejung saenghwal*, 大衆生活). Seminary novices are obliged to live together in shared 'big rooms' (*kŭnbang*), where they do not only sleep together, but also study, chant, eat and spend most of their time with each other (see Figures 3, 4). Sharing such a small space with other students is often portrayed as both the toughest as well as the most significant part of the

training in the seminaries.¹⁰⁶ Personal privacy is given away completely, and in order to survive novices simply must smooth their edges and ‘lower their minds’ (*hasim*, 下心). This cultivation of humbleness bordering on self-negation, accompanied by order, cleanliness, quietness, and other qualities necessary to maintain peace in a very small room full of busy students, are viewed as the real educational goals of the seminaries. Fist fights do happen at times, and I have been told that monks are never expelled from a seminary due to negligence in study, but occasionally leave because of being unable to adapt to the sometimes suffocating communal living. ‘Sangha’, after all, means community, and so seminary education is focused primarily on molding the novices into a harmonious community, rather than on the teaching of doctrines. “I am not really here to learn about Buddhism,” a friendly seminary student told me when I visited Pōmōsa’s seminary in 2013, “I am here to learn how to be a monk!”



Figure 3: The *Sagyo* Class ‘Big Room’ at Tonghwasa’s Seminary

¹⁰⁶ See for example an essay by Ssangyesa’s seminary student: Chehaeng, “Taechung saenghwal kwa hagōp sōngch’wido 대중생활과 학업성취도 (Communal living and the way of fulfilling one’s education),” in *Sūngga kyoyuk kwa Han’guk Pulgyo 승가교육과 한국불교 (Sangha education and Korean Buddhism)*, ed. Kaksan (Taegu: Chōn’guk kangwōn yōnhap pulgyo haksul tachoe chunbi wiwōnhoe, 2003).

To be sure, learning to be a monk in Korea also involves adapting to very strict hierarchies and constant reproaches. Seminary students of the first three grades choose a leader (called *ch'aljŭng*) who is responsible for the overall order in the 'big room.' The higher *Taegyo* class leader is called *Ipsŭng* (立繩) and his position allows him to distribute punishments to the lower grade students. Many *Ipsŭng*'s seem to exercise this right generously. Common faults are brief lateness, disorganized shoes, mistakenly wearing someone else's shoes, speaking or acting impolitely to one's seniors, improper walking and sitting postures, failing to show up to a scheduled task, failing to have one's name on a piece of clothing, wearing colorful underclothes, and a variety of other behaviors that may seem improper to the senior students. The standard punishment is prostrations in the Buddha Hall for a specific time period, which could range from 30 minutes to an all-night vigil depending on the severity of the crime. Some of the female monasteries punish with additional labor time instead. It is also very common for the higher class students to assemble their minors and reproach them all together for some time with harsh language. Higher class students also every so often order their minors to perform all kinds of sundry tasks for them. Like all Korean men, male monks have had to join the military for two years either before or after ordination, and many compare the strict military hierarchic relationships they have endured there, to the ones in the seminaries. Female monastics brag sometimes that their seminaries are much less hierarchic in nature, as they have no prior military experience. Above the *Ipsŭng* in the seminary hierarchy stands the Study Supervisor (*hakkam*, 學監), who is the second in command below the Head Teacher, and is responsible for the general order and discipline of the students.



Figure 4: The ‘Big Room’ in Sŏnamsa’s Seminary

As we have seen, prior to the mid-20th-century seminary schedules seem to have been quite loose and flexible. Education was for the most part dependent on the Head Teacher, rather than on systematized programs. In the second half of the century this teacher-based apprenticeship model gradually transformed into a modern institution-based school system with set curriculums and daily schedules, which were soon codified in newly written seminary Pure Rules. In some of the schools this shift has only taken place in the 1980’s and 90’s.¹⁰⁷ The busy seminary schedules include rituals, formal classes, sutra reading and chanting, group debates, work, and formal monastic meals. Focusing on the Buddhist monastic life in Sri Lanka, Samuels has argued that the sangha learns monastic behavior less through textual study, and more through what he termed ‘action-oriented pedagogy,’ which involves doing, performing and speaking.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, in Korean monastic seminaries class time has been limited, yet living through the strict

¹⁰⁷ Yogyŏng, "Piguni kyoyuk toryang Pongnyŏngsa sŭngga taehak e taehan koch'al 비구니 교육 도량 봉녕사승가대학에 대한 고찰 (Inquiry into the nun education at Pongnyŏngsa's sangha university)." Pp. 126-7.

¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Samuels, "Toward an Action-Oriented Pedagogy: Buddhist Texts and Monastic Education in Contemporary Sri Lanka," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 4 (2004).

busy daily schedules gradually transformed the awkward novices into right-postured, solemn and firm monastics.¹⁰⁹

Schedules still vary to a degree, yet the core seminary daily program has been unified at least since the 1990's, and is as follows. Students rise at 3AM and are responsible for all the preparations necessary for the morning rituals (*yebul*, 禮佛). This includes making the rounds in the monastery to wake all humans and spirits by sounding the various monastic instruments (*toryangsök*, 道場釋), as well as arranging the sitting pillows for the community in the main hall before the morning rituals, which usually begin around four and last for about 20-30 minutes. After the morning rituals most seminaries hold a communal sutra chanting session (*kangyöng*, 看經), which lasts between 20-50 minutes. Interestingly, in female seminaries this exact same activity is called *ipsön* (入禪), literally meaning 'entering Chan', and thus stressing the meditational aspect of this communal chanting. The *Diamond Sutra* is the most common sutra read out-loud in-unison in many seminaries during these sessions; some prefer reading *Guishan's Admonitions* or other parts of the *Ch'imun* instead, and in some schools the actual texts studied at the time in class are the ones chanted. This communal chanting is important not only for reviewing and internalizing the texts, but also for providing a chance for the vocal development important for monastic rituals, as well as for developing concentration and practicing breath-control. It is also an opportunity to work on body posture, as sitting in the full lotus position is encouraged. Some seminaries hold such communal chanting sessions several times a day.

¹⁰⁹ Songwangsä's Hakkam stressed the same point in his essay: Wöngyöng, "Chönt'ong kangwön hagin üi kibon kyoyuk e taehan insik koch'al 傳統講院學人의 基本教育에 대한 認識考察 (Consideration of the basic education of the traditional seminary students)," in *Süంగా kyoyuk kwa Han'guk Pulgyo 승가교육과 한국불교 (Sangha education and Korean Buddhism)*, ed. Kaksan (Taegu: Chön'guk Kkngwön yönhap Pulgyo haksul taehoe chunbi wiwönhoe, 2003). P. 90.

Both breakfast and lunch are usually taken in the ‘big room’ in the formal four-bowl ritualistic style (*paru kongyang*, 鉢盂供養, see Figure 5), though dinner is eaten casually in the dining hall.¹¹⁰ These four-bowl meals involve intricate ritual which can take almost a full hour, and are aimed again to promote harmonious communal action, attitudes of humility and gratitude towards the food, and encouragement to practice harder.¹¹¹ Seminary students are also responsible for sounding the monastic instruments and arranging the halls before the evening rituals, and are the ones conducting the longer mid-day offering rituals (*sasi pulgong*, 巳時佛供) in the various halls of the monastery. Through repeated performance of these ceremonies, novices memorize the *dhāraṇīs* of the *Thousand Hands Sutra* (*Ch’ōnsu kyōng*, 千手經, which is chanted at the mid-day ceremony), and their body gestures, singing voices and postures gradually become more ‘monkish.’ Although the numerous rituals, sutra chanting sessions and formal meals at the seminary clearly involve solemn concentration and are generally understood to be different types of cultivation (*xiuxing*, 修行), there was no time allocated to formal group Chan-sitting in any of the seminaries prior to the 21st-century. As the novices are at the lowest position in the monastery (except for the postulants, if any), much of their time is dedicated to doing all sort of odd jobs in the cluster. In fact, cleaning and running errands is often what monks seem to remember most

¹¹⁰ Such four-bowl meal rituals are only taking place in monastic seminaries, in some of the Chan Halls, as well in the touristy Temple Stay program. Other than novices, tourists, and sometimes during retreats, monks simply eat in a regular dining hall. There have been attempts to trace this ritual to an episode in which Buddha *Śākyamuni* received one bowl from each of the Four Heavenly Kings (*Sach’ōnwang*, 四天王) to use in his meals. *Paru* (鉢盂) means rice bowls, and *kongyang* (供養, literally offering) is the word used for eating in Korean Buddhist circles. The ritual involves various chants. Every monk in Korea possess a set of four-bowls to use in these rituals, one is used only for rice, one for vegetables, one for soup, and one for water. Most crucially the food itself is used to wash off and wipe clean the bowls at the end of the meal, and special attention is given to not leaving even tiny bits of food in the bowls. The leftover water is used to feed the hungry ghosts with their needle-thin throats, and so if even tiny bits of food are left in the water they might choke! In case that there are too many chunky pieces of food left in the water, novices are sometimes made to drink the leftover watery food of the community themselves. A detailed description of these procedures can be found in: Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience*. Pp. 123-5.

¹¹¹ Chehaeng, "Taechung saenghwal kwa hagōp sōngch’wido 대중생활과 학업성취도 (Communal living and the way of fulfilling one's education)." P. 146.

about their seminary lives. Some of the students are also chosen as personal attendants to the older monks in residence.

Towards the end of the 20th-century seminaries usually had about an hour and a half of formal class time after breakfast, five or six times a week. Classes were often held in the ‘big room,’ once it was cleaned after breakfast. Classes began, as they still do today, with a short bowing ritual formally entreating the teacher to teach (*sanggangrye*, 上講禮). As the ‘traditional curriculum’ is focused on specific texts rather than on general surveys and introductions, classes were conducted in what is often called the ‘Confucian school method’ (*sōdang-sik*, 書堂式), in which texts are read line by line in the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese characters, and then translated into modern Korean. There was not much discussion or attempts to understand the contexts of the texts, and study essentially meant reading and translating. Memorization supposedly played a major role in the study historically, as it has been elsewhere,¹¹² but by the end of the 20th-century only short parts from the *Ch’imun* were sometimes memorized in the seminaries. Some of the monks I talked to who had attended seminaries in the late 20th-century recall that they had to memorize a passage or two from the *Ch’imun* and recite it in front of the teacher every morning. The gradual modern pedagogical move away from memorization of texts and into a more content-analysis-focused education has been complete by the turn of the century. Apart for the liturgy, there is no memorization at all in Korean Buddhist seminaries today.

¹¹² Memorization has been the general pre-modern way of schooling in many if not most religious traditions. Scholars of Korean Buddhism sometimes quote the early 20th-century record of Hoemyōng that explains that at least one 17th-century teacher (Chian, 志安, 1664-1729) asked all the *Ch’imun* and *Sajip* students to chant and memorize these texts, while his *Sagyo* and Huayan students analyzed the texts quietly. (See for example: Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience*. Pp. 96-8). However, I have found no evidence for this in neither of Chian’s extant works which contain some biographic material, the *Hwansōng sijip* (喚惺詩集) and the *Sōnmun ojong kangyo* (禪門五宗綱要). Dreyfus illustrated how even in the late 20th-century, memorization of the core curricular texts in order to be able to quote from them in debates, has still been the major pedagogical method in Tibetan monastic schools. See: Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Pp. 85-92.



Figure 5: The Formal Four-Bowl Meal¹¹³

Time has been reserved in the afternoons for individual preparation for the next day's class, which basically involved trying to find the difficult Chinese characters in the dictionary. Moreover, time was allocated in the evenings for short group debates (*nongang*, 論講). Debates seem to have been a common pedagogical tool in ancient Buddhist Indian universities, as well as in medieval Japan.¹¹⁴ In fact, in 20th-century Tibetan seminaries up to ten hours a day were devoted to debates.¹¹⁵ The Korean seminary debates, however, are nothing like their animated Tibetan counterpart. More than actual debates they should be understood as group preparation for the next day's class. These sessions today are rather short, usually lasting between 15-30 minutes, and some seminaries have gotten rid of them altogether. Other seminaries hold such sessions only for the upper level students. One of the teachers in Hwaŏmsa explained that they have decided to

¹¹³ Picture taken from the website: www.bulgyofocus.net

¹¹⁴ For debates in ancient Indian monasteries see: Nisha Singh, *The Origin and Development of Buddhist Monastic Education in India* (Delhi: Indo-Asian Publication House, 1997). Groner discussed debates in the medieval Japanese Tendai tradition: Paul Groner, "Training Through Debates in Medieval Tendai and Seizan-ha Temples," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 38, no. 2 (2011).

¹¹⁵ A great illustration of the debate system on Tibetan monasteries is offered in: Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*.

do without the debate sessions as the level of the students was too low for deep discussions without a guiding teacher, and as anyways, “argumentative debates by students are usually frowned upon in Korean culture, and novices tend to have a hard time voicing their own opinions in front of their seniors.” By nine PM bedding is spread on the floor and lights go out in the ‘big room.’

Compulsory Monastic Education

As we have seen, proposals for modernizing, unifying, and systematizing the monastic seminary curriculums have been put forth numerous times during the 20th-century. In the 1960’s the Chogyae Order began to systematize the seminaries through a series of standardized laws. The first Chogyae Education Law (*Kyoyuk-pŏp*) was promulgated in 1962 stipulating a three-year seminary system for novices followed by a four-year specialized system for fully ordained monks.¹¹⁶ Several revisions ensued, and by the early 1980’s the ‘traditional’ curricular texts were finally codified into the law, stipulating that seminaries should have a four-year program, the first year dedicated to the *Ch’imun*, the second to the *Sajip*, the third to the *Sagyo*, and the last to the *Huayan Sutra*. More importantly, for the first time in Korean history, the law has made seminary education mandatory. All novices were now obligated by the Chogyae law to graduate from a four-year program in a monastic seminary, the Central Sangha College, or Dongguk University in order to receive the full precepts.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Pyŏng-ch’ŏl Ko, "Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong kyoyuk ūi t’ŭkchŏng kwa chŏnmang 대한불교조계종 교육의 특징과 전망 (The special characteristics and prospects of the Korean Buddhist Chogyae Order's education)," *Chonggyo yŏn’gu* 62 (2011). P. 205.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. P. 206.

Laws aside, the Chogye did not have absolute control over the abbots and Head Teachers at the mountain monasteries, and although the systems have been gradually unified into four-year programs in the 1980's, many novices, especially in male monasteries, were still reluctant to enter seminaries. This all changed in 1994. That was the year when the Chogye headquarters underwent a bureaucratic revolution and semi-independent Propagation and Education Departments were formed. The newly founded Education Department soon amended the Education Law with various stipulations regarding seminary teacher qualifications. It also attempted to give a more modernized 'feel' to the seminaries by changing their name, yet again, this time to 'sangha universities' (*sŭngga taehak*, 僧伽大學). Most importantly, it began enforcing compulsory seminary education on all of its monastic novices.¹¹⁸



Figure 6: The Changing Names for the Seminary Remain Side By Side on the Gates to the School at Sŏnamsa¹¹⁹

The significance of this move should not go unnoticed. Scholars of Asian Buddhism have often noted that scholastic education has been pursued by only the most elite of monastics.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. P. 207-211.

¹¹⁹ The traditional 'Buddhist Lecture Hall' sign is the one at the top, the more modern 'Buddhist Specialized Academy' is on the right side, and the recent 'Sangha University' title is written on the left side.

Very small percentages of the Thai and Tibetan sangha actually go through the seminary programs, and if any mandatory training is required for ordination, it is commonly short and focused on learning the chants necessary for conducting rituals.¹²⁰ Even in contemporary Japan, where most Buddhist priests receive degrees from sectarian Universities, other than short training sessions in monasteries, extensive Buddhist doctrinal education does not seem to be a mandatory precondition for ordination.¹²¹ In Korea as well, less than half of the new novices are believed to have gone through any doctrinal education in a seminary through most of the 20th-century.¹²² With these new laws, however, instead of monastics either choosing a scholastic career in a seminary or going straight to the Chan Halls, the seminary has become a necessary step before one could receive the full precepts, become a formal Chogye- affiliated monastic, and begin his/her formal retreats. Significantly, doctrinal education has become a universal precondition for formal monastic Chan practice.

Hyönŭng has been one of the chief engineers of this new system. He has been both a seminary teacher as well as an abbot at Haeinsa, and in the past several years he has been serving

¹²⁰ In Thailand only 5% of the northern sangha, for example, was enrolled to the new Buddhist universities in the early 20th-century, and systematized doctrinal education remains to be mostly restricted to the Bangkok elites: McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand*. Pp. 107-113. In the Tibetan Gelukpa school only about 20% of the sangha was involved with any kind of scholastic practices in the late 1950's: Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Pp. 48-9.

¹²¹ I have found no clear data about the exact mandatory educational qualifications for the Japanese clergy, but perhaps some anecdotal information may be able to point us towards more general trends. A Japanese Rinzai monk I met on a recent visit to Kyoto's Kenninji explained that there is no mandatory Buddhist education for new monks in the Rinzai school, and although most do go to university, there are sometimes problems when those who did not receive formal doctrinal education have to speak to the public (propagate). A Japanese Tendai monk from Hiei's Enryakuji I met on the same visit explained that the only mandatory education for a Tendai monk is a 2-month long training session in the basic ritual texts of the school. Most Shingon priests at Kōya-san go through a year-long program at a seminary (Senshu Gakuin for males or Niso Gakuin for females) on the mountain, but this is not mandatory and some may still choose to receive training in a university or in their own temple. See: Nicoloff, *Sacred Kōyasan: A Pilgrimage to the Mountain Temple of Saint Kobo Daishi and the Great Sun Buddha*. Pp. 191-195.

¹²² Statistics show that as in 1994 only 44% of new monastics received education in a seminary, Dongguk or the Central Sangha College, by 2002 the number jumped to over 80%. See: Education Department The Chogye Order, "Sŭngga kyoyuk ŭi sŏnggwa wa chŏnmang 승가교육의 성과와 전망 (The outcome and prospects of sangha education)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk 4*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2002). P. 261.

as the head of the Chogye's Education Department. In 1994, while working at the Order's headquarters, he published a seminal pioneering piece in a Buddhist magazine. In it he argued that:

“The state of chaos in the education of the Chogye Order today arises from the confusion regarding practice and education. How are practice and education different? Education is the process of preparation for genuine practice!”¹²³

Such soteriology, which begins with doctrinal study as preparation for Chan, seems to tally with the scholastic Chan of Zongmi and Chinul, rather than with Sŏngch'ol's critic of the need of doctrinal 'understanding' before attempting Chan practice. Accordingly, in 1994, the 'traditional' Korean curriculum was finally canonized in law to become the required set of texts novices must study in order to ordain in the Chogye Order.¹²⁴

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In sum, a particular historical curricular model was authorized in the early 20th-century as the 'traditional' Buddhist educational program, then was gradually unified into a four-year sequence, and subsequently made mandatory by Chogye law. Along with this curricular canon, the daily schedules, teaching qualifications, vacation dates, and other seminary regulations were also gradually systematized throughout the century. At the same time, additional subjects were added to the curriculum reflecting contemporary trends in Buddhist studies abroad. Independent female monastic seminaries were established in the latter half of the century, and

¹²³ Hyŏnŭng, "Chonghŏn-chongbŏp kwa sŭngga kyoyuk 종헌-종법과 승가교육 (The Order's laws and constitution and sangha education)," *Sŏnu toryang* 6 (1994). P. 111.

¹²⁴ To be sure novices are also allowed to go through the more modern curriculums of Dongguk University or the Central Sangha College in order to ordain.

various higher educational institutions for monastics were opened both in the mountains and in Seoul. By the end of the century a clear-cut distinction between ‘traditional’ education at the mountain monastic seminaries and ‘modern’ education in Seoul’s Dongguk University and the Central Sangha College was apparent. As we shall see in the next chapter, this clear-cut distinction soon became blurred with new 21st-century seminary reforms.

3. Buddhism Simulating Buddhist Studies: 21st-Century Monastic Educational Reforms

“The actual seminary students’ appreciation of the importance of sutra study is very poor. Because of traditional attitudes of contempt for study by the Chan School which emphasizes transmittance outside of texts, the notion that sitting Chan is the only practice and reading sutras is not practice at all is widely spread. As long as we do not reconsider our understanding of the role of learning and the necessity of sutra studies for coming to terms with existential issues, the students’ level of sutra understanding, analysis, and posture while reading will be nothing but sluggish.”

(Myōngbōp, a leading female monastic seminary teacher, 1998¹)

“Monks do not believe in Buddhism. This is because monks do not know Buddhism. This may sound like a joke but it is in fact the proper way to express the truth.”
(Tobōm, Abbot of Silsanga, 2000²)

In February 2000 a group of prominent Chogye monastics met in Seoul for a roundtable discussion on the current state of the Order. After going through the customary round of formal greetings, the conversation soon heated up as one of the members broached the issue of the factional violence that erupted during the 1998 Chogye elections.³ The participants expressed their deep shock and embarrassment for these incidents (as the fights received widespread media coverage), and debated ways to prevent such “un-Buddhist” monastic violence in the future. Haeinsa’s seminary Head Teacher at the time, Chio, maintained that in order to avoid such

¹ Myōngbōp, "Suhaengja paech'ul esō kangwōn ūi silsang kwa kaesōnjōm 수행자 배출에서 강원 의 실상과 개선점 (The actual state of seminaries and reform ideas from the perspective of nurturing practitioners)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 2, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1998). P. 147.

² Education Department The Chogye Order, "Chongdan sat'ae ūi kyohun kwa sūngga ūi kwaje 종단사태의 교훈과 승가의 과제 (The moral of the Order's incident and the task of the sangha)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 3, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2000). P. 30.

³ It is estimated that several hundred Chogye monastics fought in and around Chogyesa a day before the Order's planned elections in 1998. The police had to put an end to the fighting, about 40 were injured, and both local and foreign media coverage ridiculed Korean Buddhism for the event.

factionalism altogether, perhaps the traditional mentoring monk (*ŭnsa*) system should be done away with, and all postulants should be under the responsibility of the Order as a whole.⁴ He added that a better education is needed to prevent unethical violence among the sangha, stating that the study of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, not formally part of the ‘traditional curriculum,’ is necessary. Other participants agreed. The abbot of Silsangsa at the time, quoted above in the chapter heading, argued animatedly that if monks had really understood Buddhism, such violence would never have erupted in the first place. He called for a stricter system of evaluation in the seminaries to make sure all graduates who are eligible to receive the full precepts will be knowledgeable (and thus pious, ethical and peaceful) Buddhist monks. All in all, it seems to have been the consensus that the ‘traditional curriculum’ and seminary system were unable to create good moral monastics, and reforms were necessary.

To be sure, the above critique of the traditional monastic education system makes for just one example in a deluge of disapproval. This chapter will begin by delineating similar attacks on the ‘traditional curriculum’ and on the monastic educational system voiced within the Chogyŏ Order in the last 20 years or so. Such critique actualized recently into far-reaching curricular reforms, which as I will argue, tend to replicate, both in form and in content, the pedagogical practices and ideals of modern Buddhist studies. After analyzing this Buddhist imitation of Buddhist studies, I will examine the widespread counter-reform voices that can be heard these days by many of the seminary teachers who oppose the new programs. I will then introduce the reader to the multifarious new monastic graduate schools recently opened by the Chogyŏ Order, as well as to the novel institution of the Basic Chan Hall. The chapter will end

⁴ The whole discussion is found in: The Chogyŏ Order, "Chongdan sat'ae ŭi kyohun kwa sŭngga ŭi kwaje 종단사태의 교훈과 승가의 과제 (The moral of the Order's incident and the task of the sangha)." Pp. 17-54.

with a short investigation of the current clerical education systems of other dominant Buddhist Orders in Korea, as well as comment briefly on the foreign monastic students who study in the Chogyse seminaries today.

The ‘Traditional Curriculum’ Under Attack

In the last 20 years or so the ‘traditional curriculum’ and seminary system have been under attack. Be it in internal Chogyse Order seminars, Buddhist journal articles, or online blogs, prominent monastics have frequently criticized the system for being archaic, outdated, skewed, incomprehensible, intolerably lacking, and internally incoherent, and called for reforms. As early as 1995 Sōran argued that the main problem with the education system was the backwardness of the curriculum. It reflected certain historical Buddhist trends specific to Korea, but had very little relevance to the world today, he claimed. He added that it was next to impossible to grasp Buddhism as a whole through studying it.⁵ Similarly, Hyōnsōk claimed that the curriculum reflected particular Chan-focused 17th-century Korean mountain Buddhism and was thus not really representative of Buddhism in general.⁶ Others agreed that sticking to such an ancient curriculum in today’s modern information society makes Korean Buddhism seem archaic and irrelevant.⁷ Tonghwasa’s Head Teacher, Haewōl, was especially explicit. In a 2003 seminar he stated that “it was impossible to understand Buddhism correctly through the seminary system of

⁵ Sōran, "Han'guk Pulgyo sūngga kyoyuk ūi palchōn panghyang e taehan yōn'gu 한국불교 승가교육의 발전방향에 대한 연구 (Research on the development of Korean Buddhist sangha education)." P. 316.

⁶ Kim, "Chogyejong kibon kyoyuk kigwan p'yojun kyogwa kwajōng e taehan yōn'gu 조계종 기본교육기관 標準敎科課程에 대한 研究 (Research regarding the standard curriculum of the Chogyse Order's basic education institutions)." P. 321.

⁷ See for example: Yanggwan, "T'ongdosa sūngga taehak ūi yōksa wa chōnt'ong 통도사 승가대학의 역사와 전통 (The tradition and culture of T'ongdosa's sangha university)." P. 24.

the day,” and attempted to deconstruct the *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts in order to show their inability to convey general Buddhist doctrine and soteriology.⁸

The context underlying these attacks seems to have been the changing conceptions regarding the fundamental objectives of monastic education. As self-perceptions of monastics in Korea gradually altered during the 20th-century from being mostly mountain Chan practitioners to placing increasing weight on their roles as propagators, seminary education began to be viewed not simply as preparation for practice towards spiritual development, but also as preparation for propagation. Thus, beginning in the 1990's, education critics argued that seminary curriculums should be more comprehensive in order to create monastics that will be able to better explain Buddhism to the general public.⁹ In other words, monastic leaders contended over and over again that seminary education should not focus on Chan alone, but convey an overall knowledge of Buddhism in its historical context and its relations to modern social ethics so it could be used later in propagation and teaching to the laity.¹⁰

This has been a controversial point of view and other monastics have argued that Chan practice rather than bookish knowledge would make one a better propagator, one that is able to speak confidently from his/her own experience. Most contemporary Chogye reformers, however, seem to follow the logic that Chan practice may allow one to know the sensation of hot and cold, but he/she needs a different kind of education in order to be able to explain these sensations to

⁸ Haewöl, "Kangwön kyoyuk, Pulgyo rül al su innün'ga 講院教育, 불교를 알 수 있는가 (Is it possible to know Buddhism through the seminary education?)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk kwa Han'guk Pulgyo 승가교육과 한국불교 (Sangha education and Korean Buddhism)*, ed. Kaksan (Taegu: Chōn'guk kangwön yōnhap Pulgyo haksul taehoe chunbi wiwōnhoe, 2003). P. 60.

⁹ See for example: Pöpsōng, "Sūngga kibon kyoyuk ūi ch'egye'ghwa rül wihayō 승가 기본교육의 체계화를 위하여 (About the systematization of basic sangha education)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk 1*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1995). Pp. 81-3.

¹⁰ See for example a paper by one of Haeinsa's teachers Mugwan: Mugwan, "Chibang sūngga tachak kyoyuk chedo palchōn kwaje wa panghyang 지방 승가대학 교육제도 발전과제와 방향 (The development and the objectives of the education system at regional sangha universities)," *ibid.* P. 130.

those who have not felt them.¹¹ One of the monks working at the Education Department, Pöbin, stretched this same rationale even further, arguing that seminary education should foster creative spirit and initiative, and nurture monastics who will not only be able to reach out and missionize among the younger Korean intellectuals, but could also become social leaders in Korea themselves.¹² He expressed hope for greater Buddhist participation in the public discourse regarding the environmental and economic labor issues of the day. Better educated monastics would also be likely to receive greater respect in contemporary Korean society, he added, and thus would be able to attract more followers.¹³

It is especially interesting to discover what it was exactly that many of these reformers viewed as the missing curricular components that would make a more general understanding of Buddhism possible. Following earlier 20th-century trends discussed in previous chapters, contemporary monastic reformers generally believe this missing link to be the Theravāda texts of the *Nikāyas*, and (their counterpart) the *Āgamas*. A Seminary teacher from Paegyangsa, for example, argued in a 2000 seminar that although the principles of the Theravādin *Āgamas* are reflected in the Mahāyāna sutras, studying them separately would allow a better general understanding of Buddhism, and they must be added to the curriculum.¹⁴ A special workshop on teaching the *Nikāyas* (so-called ‘early Buddhism’) was organized by the Chogye Order in 2012,

¹¹ Hori uses this hot and cold metaphor (found in the Platform Sutra) to point out the difference between knowing for oneself and explaining to others. See: Victor Sogen Hori, *Zen Sand: The Book of Capping Phrases for Koan Practice* (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 2003). P. 11.

¹² Pöbin, "Sūngga kyoyuk, sahoi wa sot'ong hago yōksa e puhap haeya 승가교육, 사회와 소통하고 역사에 부합해야 (Sangha education should correspond with society and conform with history)," *Pulgyo p'yōngnon* 12, no. 1 (2010).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Pöpchang, "Kangwōn kyogwa kwajōng chōnban e taehan munjejōm mit kaesōnan 강원 교과과정 전반에 대한 문제점 및 개선안 (Problems and reform plan for the entire seminary curriculum)," in *Kangwōn kyogwa t'ongil mit kaesōn ūl wihan kyoyuk kwagyechea yōnch'anhoi 강원 교과통일 및 개선을 위한 교육관계자 연찬회* (Workshop for educators regarding the unification and reform of seminary courses), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2000). P. 21.

with over 80 seminary teachers participating. Presentations in this meeting made clear that the way Korean Buddhism was practiced (i.e. giving students a confusing *huatou* and letting them struggle with it for a long time without knowing much about what the Buddha actually taught) makes the understanding of Buddhism rather foggy, and it is important for all monks to study the ‘early teachings’ in order to get a clear idea of Buddhism’s main structures and doctrines (the four noble truths, nirvana, the five *skandhas* and the 12-linked *pratītyasamutpāda* are specifically mentioned) on which to base their practice on. The importance of learning the *Nikāyas* as a doctrinal basis for the purpose of understanding the supposedly later Mahāyāna texts was emphasized.¹⁵ The head of the Chogye Education Department himself, showing adopted orientalist tendencies, stated in 2010 that one of the greatest problems with the ‘traditional curriculum’ was that it was not “sticking to what the Buddha actually taught” (as written in the Pāli Canon). ‘Early Buddhism’ was not part of the historical curriculum due to lack of sources, he argued, but with the increasing availability of Korean translations, studying the *Nikāyas* would be beneficial for understanding Buddhism systematically.¹⁶

Now this is quite significant. It is true that in general East Asian Mahāyāna thinkers historically did not disregard the texts of the Small Vehicle all together but often portrayed them simply as more shallow (*ch’ŏn*, 淺) teachings in their classification of doctrines schemas.¹⁷ We have also seen in the previous chapter how Indian Buddhism has gradually become more

¹⁵ Proceedings found in: Education Department The Chogye Order, *Ch’ogi Pulgyo kyosupŏp yŏnch’anhoe 초기불교 교수법 연찬회* (Workshop regarding the teaching of early Buddhism) (Seoul: The Chogye order, 2012).

¹⁶ *Sŭngga kibon kyoyuk kigwan kyogwa kwajŏng mit kyogwamok kaep’yŏnan maryŏn ŭl wihan kongch’ŏngoe 승가 기본교육기관 교과과정 및 교과목 개편안 마련을 위한 공청회* (Public hearing regarding reform plans for the curriculums in the sangha’s basic educational facilities) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2010). Pp. 5-8.

¹⁷ Zongmi himself, standing at the center of the ‘traditional curriculum,’ is known for his five level classification of teachings (*p’angyo*, 判教) in which the Small Vehicle is classified as the second most shallow teaching after the Teaching of Men and Gods. For Zongmi’s system see: Peter Gregory, *Inquiry Into the Origin of Humanity: An Annotated Translation of Tsung-Mi’s Yuan Jen Lun with a Modern Commentary* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1995).

important to Buddhist reformers in historically Mahāyāna areas throughout the 20th-century. Such protestant-like tendencies are echoed by Korean curriculum reformers today, some of whom still lament that the “words of the (Chan) patriarchs” are studied in seminaries instead of the real “word of the Buddha” as found in the Pāli Canon.¹⁸ Consequently, the *Nikāyas* are now viewed as more central than ever before. They are said to encapsulate the most fundamental systematized doctrines necessary for understanding Buddhist soteriology, essential for grasping the ideas found in Mahāyāna Sutras. The four noble truths and 12-link chain of causation, rarely mentioned in Korean Buddhist history, are now seen as the most fundamental Buddhist teachings through which the more sophisticated Mahāyāna and Chan texts should be learned and understood.

The Indian sutras were not the only component missing from the ‘traditional curriculum’ according to many of the Chogye education reformers. The Indian *Vinaya* was absent too. A Dongguk University adjunct monk-professor and a former Chogye Education Department member, T’oehyu, argued in a recent Chogye seminar that the Admonitions literature traditionally studied in seminaries (as well as the Pure Rules and Bodhisattva Precepts) have been polluted by Chinese Confucian ethics, and only the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* could really teach novices how to behave like Buddhist monks.¹⁹ Accordingly, the ‘practical *Vinayas*’ of Korean and East Asian Buddhism were insufficient, and an attempt to make the seminary curriculum conform more strictly to the formal Buddhist canon has been encouraged. Chongmuk went on to explain that although some of the precepts in the Indian *Vinaya* are irrelevant and cannot be followed today,

¹⁸ Chimun, “Sūṅga kyoyuk ūi hyōndaehwa 僧伽教育의 現代化 (Modernization of sangha education),” in *Sūṅga kyoyuk kwa Han’guk Pulgyo 승가교육과 한국불교 (Sangha education and Korean Buddhism)*, ed. Kaksan (Taegu: Chōn’guk kangwōn yōnhap pulgyo haksul taehoe chunbi wiwōnhoe, 2003). P. 108.

¹⁹ T’oehyu, “Taesūṅ Pulgyo wa onūl ūi sūṅga kyoyuk 대승불교와 오늘의 승가교육 (Mahāyāna Buddhism and sangha education today),” in *Taesūṅ Pulgyo, ōttōk’e karūch’igo silch’ōnhāl kōdin’ga 대승불교, 어떻게 가르치고 실천할 것인가 (How to teach and put into practice Mahāyāna Buddhism)*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012).

these rules should not be discarded of but rather studied historically in order to understand their original purpose and promote faith.²⁰ Since the early 2000's the Education Department has been planning to rectify this lack by installing a *Vinaya* Master in each and every seminary, but with no success to date.²¹ Nevertheless, as we shall see soon enough, introductory courses to the various Indian *Vinayas* are now a mandatory part of the unified Korean curriculum.

Fascinatingly, even the Mahāyāna and Chan texts of the 'traditional curriculum' have been recently viewed as unsatisfactory. Contemporary critics deemphasize the importance of studying the historically more popular texts in Korean Buddhism of the *Śūraṅgama* and *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, and some aspire to add the *Lotus* and *Vimalakīrti* sutras to the curriculum instead.²² In 2006 the Chogye Education Department recommended teaching only Dahui's *Letters* supplemented by the *Platform Sutra* instead of the full *Sajip* texts.²³ Soon afterwards a Dongguk University monk-professor argued in a Chogye conference that the *Sajip* texts were not the best texts available for understanding *Kanhua* Chan, and recommended studying the *Gateless Barrier* (*Wumenguan*, 無門關) instead.²⁴ Another Dongguk Professor contended in a different Chogye seminar that it is impossible to understand the *Awakening of Faith* without basic knowledge of

²⁰ Chongmuk, "Sūṅga taehak (kangwŏn) kyogwa kwajŏng unyŏng e kwanhan sogo 승가대학(강원) 교과과정 운영에 관한 소고 (Some thoughts on the operation of the curriculums in sangha universities)."

²¹ Education Department The Chogye Order, "Sūṅga kyoyuk chedo kaesŏn Ch'ujin wiwŏnhoe hwaltong kyŏnggwa 승가교육제도개선 추진위원회 활동 경과 (Progress report of the activity of the Committee for the Promotion of Systematic Reforms in Sangha Education)," in *Sūṅga kyoyuk* 6, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2006). Pp. 90-1.

²² See for example: Pŏpchang, "Kangwŏn kyogwa kwajŏng chŏnban e taehan munjejŏm mit kaesŏnan 강원 교과과정 전반에 대한 문제점 및 개선안 (Problems and reform plan for the entire seminary curriculum)." Pp. 21-26. The Chogye Order, "2000, 2001 yŏndo Kyoyugwŏn saŏp hyŏnhwang mit kwaje 2000, 2001 년도 교육원 사업현황 및 과제 (The tasks and current activities of the Education Department in 2000, 2001)." P. 24.

²³ "Sūṅga kyoyuk chedo kaesŏn Ch'ujin wiwŏnhoe hwaltong kyŏnggwa 승가교육제도개선 추진위원회 활동 경과 (Progress report of the activity of the Committee for the Promotion of Systematic Reforms in Sangha Education)." P. 92.

²⁴ Sŏngbon, "Kibon kyoyuk kigwan kongt'ong kyogwamok sŏnjŏng kwa sūṅga kyoyuk ūi munjejŏm 기본교육기관 공통교과목 선정과 승가교육의 문제점 (Selection of unified curriculums for basic education facilities and the problems with sangha education)," in *Sūṅga kyoyuk* 7, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2008). P. 316.

the four noble truths and it is impossible to understand the Chan treatises of the *Sajip* without the basis of the *Platform Sutra* and the treatises of Bodhidharma.²⁵ I believe these reform ideas and plans illustrate an intriguing shift in Korean Buddhist circles, a move away from their indigenous canons and closer to the canons of modern Buddhist studies. The *Lotus*, *Platform*, *Vimalakīrti*, and *gong'an* collections such as the *Gateless Barrier* have been placed in a central position in modern Buddhist studies textbooks and courses in the West and in Japan, while the *Śūraṃgama*, *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, Dahui's *Letters*, Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials* and other Korean traditional curricular texts have received comparatively minor attention. The hegemony of modern Buddhist studies, mainly located in Western universities and owing a great deal to historical Western contacts with particular Japanese sectarian Buddhist scholars, is now swaying traditional Korean Buddhist seminary education as well. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

The 'traditional curriculum' has also been attacked recently for being internally and externally incoherent. Internally, some argued that the inconsistency between the sudden-enlightenment- followed- by- gradual- cultivation ideal of Zongmi's *Preface* and Chinul's *Excerpts* and the more sudden and complete subitist ideal found in Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials* was too confusing for monastic novices.²⁶ Others noted that the 'traditional curriculum' begins with Chan treatises and then proceeds to Mahāyāna Sutras and argued that this is (externally) incoherent with the identity of the Chogye Order as fundamentally a Chan tradition. A prominent

²⁵ O-min Kwōn, "Kyohak kwa chongak - hyōnhaeng pulgyo kangwōn ūi kyogwa kwajōng e taehae tasi saenggak handa 교학과 중학 - 현행 불교강원의 교과과정에 대해 다시 생각한다 (Doctrinal and religious learning- Re-thinking the Buddhist seminary curriculum)," in *Han'guk Pulgyo hakhoe che 42 hoe ch'un'gye chōn'guk pulgyo haksul palp'yo taehoe 한국불교학회 제 42 회 춘계 전국 불교 학술 발표 대회 (The 42nd Korean national Buddhist scholarship conference)*, ed. The Chogye Order (Seoul2005). P. 12.

²⁶ Myōngbōp, "Suhaengja paech'ul esō kangwōn ūi silsang kwa kaesōnjōm 수행자 배출에서 강원의 실상과 개선점 (The actual state of seminaries and reform ideas from the perspective of nurturing practitioners)." Pp. 152-3.

seminary teacher at Haeinsa, Chongmuk, thus decided to move the Chan *Sajip* texts (with the addition of the *Platform Sutra*) to the end of the curriculum, creating a different flow which begins with Admonitions, then moves to the Mahāyāna *Sagyo* and *Huayan*, and culminates with Chan.²⁷ Chongmuk believed that this structure better matched the ideal of ‘discarding the teachings and entering Chan’ (*sagyo ipsŏn*, 捨教入禪) often attributed to the 16th-century Korean Chan Master Hyujŏng. This has been the actual schedule at the large seminary of Haeinsa for several years in the first decade of the 21st-century. However, this was not a popular move, and several seminary teachers told me in private conversations that they believe it is wrong to regard the *Sajip* as Chan and the *Sagyo* and *Huayan* as Mahāyāna since all curricular texts should be read with a Chan perspective, and in fact they were all read traditionally accompanied by commentaries written by Chan masters. Apart from being incoherent, other, more nationalistic reformers, claimed that the curriculum was not sufficiently ‘Korean.’ Some lamented the fact that although the Chogyŏ constitution lists the Korean monks Toŭi (道義, 783-821) and T’aego Pou (普愚, 1301-1382) as the patriarchs of the school, their works are not studied in seminaries, and Chimun argued for the necessity to add materials by the Silla monastics Wŏnhyo and Ŭisang to the programs as well.²⁸

Not only the content but also the form of the seminary system has been repeatedly disparaged lately. First and foremost, critics pointed out that seminaries focused on labor and rituals while actual textual study has been peripheral and inadequate. Some noted that 1-2 hours

²⁷ Chongmuk, "Sŭngga taehak (kangwŏn) kyogwa kwajŏng unyŏng e kwanhan sogo 승가대학(강원) 교과과정 운영에 관한 소고 (Some thoughts on the operation of the curriculums in sangha universities)."

²⁸ Kwŏn, "Kyohak kwa chongak - hyŏnhaeng pulgyo kangwŏn ŭi kyogwa kwajŏng e taehae tasi saenggak handa 교학과 중학 - 현행 불교강원의 교과과정에 대해 다시 생각한다 (Doctrinal and religious learning- Re-thinking the Buddhist seminary curriculum)." P. 12. Also: Chimun, "Sŭngga kyoyuk ŭi hyŏndaehwa 僧伽教育의 現代化 (Modernization of sangha education)." Pp. 112-3.

of classes five or six times a week were insufficient, and offers were made to extend daily class schedules to 4-6 hours a day.²⁹ Moreover, seminary classes have been often cancelled due to preparation for temple events in which the students were expected to do most of the work. During my last stay in Pŏmōsa, for example, most classes were cancelled for a week due to preparations for an elderly monk's birthday, and when I visited Pŏpchusa classes were cancelled as students had to clean the monastery before a lay precepts ceremony. Contemporary reformers often voice their critique of such prioritizing of labor over education in the seminaries, and call for a stronger emphasis on actual classroom study. What is more, a Haeinsa-related seminary teacher argued in a 1998 Chogyŏ forum that the whole system of communal living in one big-room (usually seen as crucial for molding novices into monks) is prohibitive to quiet study and should be abandoned.³⁰ Several reformers stressed in addition the importance of creating a stricter unified evaluation and grading system of exams and reports in the seminaries in order to create sturdier bookish attitudes among the students.³¹ A humorous seminary teacher from Haeinsa, with whom I have been discussing these reform proposals, told me rather sarcastically in a recent visit that soon they may also decide to allow the seminary students to skip the morning rituals in order to get a healthier night sleep for better study. As of yet, reformers did not go as far as that.

Finally, reformers have tended to criticize the passive rote repetition after the teacher and exegetical focus in the seminary classrooms in what is often called the 'Confucian-school-

²⁹ The Chogyŏ Order, "Sŭngga kyoyuk chedo kaesŏn Ch'ujin wiwŏnhoe hwaltong kyŏnggwa 승가교육제도개선 추진위원회 활동 경과 (Progress report of the activity of the Committee for the Promotion of Systematic Reforms in Sangha Education)."

³⁰ Mugwan, "Chibang sŭngga taehak kyoyuk chedo palchŏn kwaje wa panghyang 지방 승가대학 교육제도 발전과제와 방향 (The development and the objectives of the education system at regional sangha universities)." P. 141.

³¹ See for example: Sŏran, "Han'guk Pulgyo sŭngga kyoyuk ŭi palchŏn panghyang e taehan yŏn'gu 한국불교 승가교육의 발전방향에 대한 연구 (Research on the development of Korean Buddhist sangha education)," *ibid.* P. 316.

institutions rather than be the focus of the basic education of all monastics, he added.³⁵ As we shall see, such suggestions to *Hangŭlize* the curriculum have met strong opposition from the majority of the seminary teachers today.

The New Curriculum

Unlike in earlier days, this time these critiques soon turned into actual reforms on the ground. The first came in the early 2000's as the Chogyŏ Education Department came up with a new recommended syllabus for the seminaries. Structured in a new way around the Tripitaka-style classification of texts into Sutras, *Vinaya* and Treatises, the Chogyŏ attempted to supplement the 'traditional curriculum' with more canonical *Vinaya* as well as modern vernacular histories and introductions to multiple Buddhist themes. The study of computers and foreign languages was also encouraged in this new syllabus, as well as the practices of rituals, work, chanting, and even meditation for the students. The *Lotus*, *Vimalakīrti*, and *Platform* sutras, popular in Buddhist studies today, as well as the *Āgamas*, were added to this program too. This curricular suggestion is given in Table 5 below.

³⁵ The Chogyŏ Order, *Sŏngga kibon kyoyuk kigwan kyogwa kwajŏng mit kyogwamok kaep'yŏnan maryŏn ŭl wihan kongch'ŏngoe* 승가 기본교육기관 교과과정 및 교과목 개편안 마련을 위한 공청회 (Public hearing regarding reform plans for the curriculums in the sangha's basic educational facilities).

Table 5: The Chogye Order Plan of New Unified Curriculum in the Early 2000's³⁶

	SUTRA	VINAYA	TREATISE	ELECTIVES	PRACTICE
Ch'imun Course (緇門)	<i>Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks</i>	Introduction to <i>Vinaya</i>	1.History of Indian Buddhism 2.Introduction to religious studies 3.History of Buddhist doctrine	1.Computers 2.Rituals 3.Foreign languages 4. <i>Āgamas</i> 5. <i>Mādhyamika</i> and <i>Yogācāra</i> 6. <i>Lotus Sutra</i> 7. <i>Vimalakīrti Sutra</i> 8. <i>Platform Sutra</i>	Morning rituals, communal work, meditation and chanting
Collection of Four Course (四集)	1. Chan Preface 2.Dahui's <i>Letters</i> 3.Chinul's <i>Excerpts</i> 4.Gaofeng's <i>Chan Essentials</i>	The Novice Precepts	1.History of Chinese Buddhism 2.Introduction to the sutras 3.Introduction to Chan texts		
Four Sutras Course (四教)	1. <i>Śūraṅgama Sutra</i> 2. The <i>Awakening of Faith</i> 3. <i>Diamond Sutra</i> 4. <i>Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment</i>	Daoxuan's <i>Jingxin jieguan fa</i> (淨心戒觀法)	1.History of Korean Buddhism 2.Introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism 3.Comparative religion		
High Teachings Course (大教)	<i>Huayan Sutra</i>	The <i>Brahma Net Sutra</i>	1.History of Chan thought 2.History of the Chogye Order 3.Propagation methodology		

³⁶ I have put this table together combining two Chogye suggestions which were put forth between 1999 and 2007. See: "(Anonymous Report)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 3, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1999). Pp. 75-6. See also: *Sūngga kyoyuk kwajong mit kyoyuk kigwan annae* 승가교육 과정 및 교육기관 안내 (Information on the curriculum and educational institutions of the sangha) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2009). Pp. 14-5.

A few of the larger seminaries began offering special lectures in accordance with this new Chogye recommended program. Songgwangsa, for example, added lectures on several treatises by Chinul and Wŏnhyo, as well as on the *Platform*, the *Brahma Net*, *Yogācāra*, and some basic Buddhist history.³⁷ Haeinsa's curriculums in the first decade of the 21st-century seem to have changed every time a new Head Teacher was appointed. Nevertheless, all seminaries kept the 'traditional curricular' texts as the basis of their programs. This all began to change only in 2010 as the Chogye promulgated a new unified curriculum mandatory for all its affiliated seminaries. This is now the sole official required curriculum of the Chogye Order, and it paints a picture of Buddhism which is quite different from that of the older program. It is illustrated in Table 6 below.

³⁷ Yi, "Songgwangsa kangwŏn ūi yŏksa 松廣寺 講院의 역사 (The history of Songgwangsa's seminary)."

Table 6: The New Compulsory Unified Mandatory Chogye Order Seminary Curriculum³⁸

YEAR	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
1 st	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts 1 2. Introduction to Buddhism 3. Introduction to <i>Vinaya</i> 4. History of World Buddhism (video lectures) 5. Elective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts 2 2. Understanding Early Buddhism 3. Introduction to Chan 4. History of Korean Buddhism 5. Elective
2 nd	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts 3 2. Early Buddhist Texts 1 3. Buddhist Rituals 1 4. Beginner Buddhist English 1 5. Understanding Buddhist Cultural Heritage (video lectures) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist texts 4 2. Beginner Buddhist English 2 3. <i>Prajñā</i> and <i>Mādhyamika</i> Thought (video lectures) 4. Buddhist Rituals 2 5. Elective
3 rd	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts 5 (The <i>Diamond Sutra</i>) 2. Readings in Chan Anthologies 3. Propagation Methodology (video lectures) 4. The <i>Vinaya</i> and Buddhist Ethics (video lectures) 5. Elective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts 6 2. Understanding <i>Kanhua</i> Chan 3. <i>Yogācāra</i> and <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> Thought 4. Pure Land Thought 5. Elective
4 th	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist texts 7 2. <i>Huayan</i> Thought 3. Elective 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts 8 2. Buddhism and Society (video lectures) 3. Elective 4. Thesis Writing

The first thing one can easily notice about this new curriculum is the change of focus from studying *Hanmun* classical texts to going through various vernacular thematic overviews and introductions. As we have seen, before 2010 seminary curriculums were based on readings of

³⁸ Education Department The Chogye Order, 2014 *yōndo sūngga taehak p'yojun kyoyuk kwajōng annae 2014 년도 승가대학 표준교육과정안내* (The 2014 information regarding the standard educational curriculum of sangha universities) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2014).

the Classical Chinese ‘traditional curricular’ texts, only marginally supplemented by general histories. Now, however, only one class per semester (less than one fourth of the entire curriculum) is dedicated to such readings of classical texts, and most of the study is centered on general textbooks. This makes for a great hermeneutic shift in the way textual study is done in monastic settings in Korea. Seminary teachers often regard the traditional exegetical style of reading and decoding classical texts in their classical languages (in this case Classical Chinese) as a form of Buddhist practice in itself, while reading summaries and histories as a more secular pedagogical form which involves gaining knowledge about a topic. The difference is mainly between viewing study as a form of contemplative practice in itself, and seeing it as preparation for practice. Soon we shall see how this aspect of the new curriculum is almost universally disputed by seminary teachers today.

For now we may note that besides the *Diamond Sutra* (which is mandatory reading in the 3rd-year) seminary teachers can select the texts they wish to teach in the Reading Chinese Buddhist Texts courses. Most choose to continue teaching (time-permitting) some of the texts of the ‘traditional curriculum.’ Almost all continue to read at least a part of the *Ch’imun* in the first year and several chapters from the *Huayan* in the last.³⁹ However, due to lack of class time much of the *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts had to be set aside. The *Sajip* texts suffered the most from these reforms. Most seminaries elect to read Dahui’s *Letters* and only a few teachers also go through Gaofeng’s *Chan Essentials* or Zongmi’s *Preface*. Chinul’s *Excerpts* has been deleted from the schedules of all seminaries today, even from that of his home temple, Songwangsa.⁴⁰ The

³⁹ As the curriculum involves many new courses not much time is left for studying these texts and many seminaries end up reading just a chapter or two out of these texts. In Songwangsa, for example, they only read the last chapter of the *Huayan* (*Lifajie pin*, 立法界品)

⁴⁰ In 2014 Songwangsa seminary was teaching Dahui and the *Platform* instead of the full *Sajip*, but read through another shorter text by Chinul: *The Secrets of Cultivating the Mind* (*Susim kyöl*, 修心訣)

Śūramgama has not fared much better, and most seminaries today only read through the first chapters of the *Awakening of Faith* (and perhaps some of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*) in their third year Chinese Buddhist Texts courses.⁴¹

Instead of these *Sajip* and *Sagyo* readings, and as a response to the ‘traditional curriculum’ critics discussed above, the new program involves three required courses that deal mainly with Pāli Buddhism (Introduction to Buddhism,⁴² Understanding Early Buddhism, and Early Buddhist Texts 1), four required new *Vinaya*-related courses (Introduction to *Vinaya*, The *Vinaya* and Buddhist Ethics, and Buddhist Rituals 1 and 2), four Mahāyāna doctrines general overviews (*Prajñā* and *Mādhyamika* Thought, *Yogācāra* and *Tathāgatagarbha* Thought, Pure Land Thought, and *Huayan* Thought), three new Chan introductions (Introduction to Chan, Reading Chan Anthologies, Understanding *Kanhua* Chan), and five required classes on Buddhist history, culture and propagation (History of World Buddhism, History of Korean Buddhism, Propagation Methodology, Understanding Buddhist Cultural Heritage, Buddhism and Society). The only required language classes on the curriculums are English (rather than Pāli, Sanskrit or Chinese). Two Buddhist English classes are now mandatory subjects in the second year, and the Chogye Order has recently published two Buddhist English textbooks to be used in these classes. Besides the fact that English is now the global lingua franca and command of it often symbolizes social prestige in Korea, the purpose of studying English in monasteries is evidently propagation,

⁴¹ These are partial results of my fieldwork survey in 2014 regarding the actual *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts studied in seminaries: at Hwaōmsa only Dahui, the *Awakening of Faith* and the *Sutra of Perfect Awakening* were studied, and at Songwangsa and Sudōksa the same three were studied together with the *Platform Sutra*. At Tonghwasa Dahui, Gaofeng and the *Awakening* were studied, at Pōpchusa Dahui, Gaofeng and the *Śūramgama*, at Haeinsa Zongmi, Gaofeng, the *Awakening*, and the *Sutra of Perfect Awakening* were read, at Ssanggyesa Dahui and Gaofeng were only studied out of the *Sajip*, and at Pongnyōngsa Dahui, Zongmi, the *Śūramgama* and the *Awakening* were studied.

⁴² Although Introduction to Buddhism should involve not only the Indian origins, the focus of this particular course as can be seen in the teacher’s guide to it is clearly the teachings of the Pāli canon.

and the textbooks focus on useful expressions for welcoming foreign visitors to the temples and guiding Temple Stay participants.⁴³

Seminary teachers tend to emphasize that “students are like trees that have been replanted somewhere else and thus can easily be disturbed from the outside, so they must be strictly isolated.”⁴⁴ As the various Admonitions similarly illustrate, the less monastic novices are involved with the laity the better. Consequently, lay involvement with the seminaries has been frowned upon and often strictly forbidden. Nevertheless, due to the sheer amount of new specialized courses to be taught in the new program, many of the monasteries today simply had to resort to inviting lay academic specialists or language teachers to come to the monasteries to teach once or twice a week.⁴⁵ Moreover, some have opened their gates and began sending their novices to attend classes in nearby secular universities for credit. Both Hwaṃsa and Paegyangsa are examples of temples that have established connections with nearby universities and send their novices to classes on social welfare outside the monastery proper.⁴⁶ To remedy the lack of specialist teachers in the seminaries, the Chogye has also prepared video lectures for some of the new courses on the curriculum.

The new program includes seven elective courses throughout the four years. The formal list of possible electives illustrates the same tendency to add courses on Indian Buddhism,

⁴³ See: Education Department The Chogye Order, *Buddhist English* (Vol. 1, 2) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). Note that in Taiwan too an English textbooks for the sangha (called *Sangha Talk*) was published in 1998 offering short reading comprehension excerpts from the sutras and *Jātakas*, and even from Dōgen. See: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, *Sangha Talk* (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1998).

⁴⁴ This is a quote from a Head Teacher of a major seminary in the 1990’s. See: Yōng-sōp Chang, *T’ōnamyōn kūman inde* *따라면 그만인데* (*If you leave, that is enough*) (Seoul: Goodbook Press, 2008). P. 25.

⁴⁵ Some examples are in order: in 2014 Songwangsa had a lay professor coming to teach early Buddhism and Mādhyamika Thought, Tonghaksa had a lay teacher coming to teach *Yogācāra* Thought, and almost all schools had lay English teachers coming in to teach. Some seminaries, T’ongdosa for example, remain strictly against this new practice, and refuse to invite lay teachers into their classrooms.

⁴⁶ Chang, *T’ōnamyōn kūman inde* *따라면 그만인데* (*If you leave, that is enough*). Pp. 118, 149.

general Mahāyāna, and contemporary issues related to Buddhist culture and society to the curriculum. The list consists of Early Buddhist Texts 2, Understanding the *Abhidharma*, Introduction to Mahāyāna, Tiantai Thought, Esoteric Buddhism, Mahāyāna in Practice, Reading Chan Anthologies 2, Chan Practice, Guiding Chan Meditation, Computers, Buddhism and Eastern/Western Philosophy (video lectures available), Buddhist Biology, Buddhism and Social Welfare, Buddhism and Women, Understanding World Religions (video lectures available), Buddhism and Science, Buddhist Psychological Counseling, Essay Writing, Buddhist English (Intermediate and High), Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Sanskrit (video lectures available), and Pāli (video lectures available). My visits to seminaries in 2014 showed that no teachers to date dared to venture into teaching such classes as Buddhism and psychology, science, biology and so on, and most either used video lectures for their electives or kept to the more conventional Mahāyāna and Chan electives.

Following the critique and attempting to provide proper class time for the numerous new required courses on the reformed curriculum, some (though certainly not all) seminaries have added additional 1-2 hours of formal classes in the afternoons.⁴⁷ Final exams at the end of semesters have also been gradually becoming the norm, though no actual grades are usually given. Students often explain that these exams do not really matter, and failure to pass exams is not likely to create problems in graduating. Some teachers today give writing assignments as well. In Songwangsa, for example, all novices write a 12-page graduation thesis in their final year. New modern classrooms with desks and chairs have replaced the traditional form of having classes in the ‘big rooms’ in some of the schools (see Figures 7, 8). Group graduation trips, most

⁴⁷ At Pongnyōngsa, for example, female novices study for two hours in the mornings and two most afternoons. T’ongdosa and Haeinsa also added some class time in the afternoons. Many of the seminaries hold video lecture viewings during the weekends.

commonly to the Buddhist sites in India and sometimes to famous mountains in China or Japan, have also become customary. I provide the current schedules of T'ongdosa's seminary as an example for the way the new syllabus has been adopted in Table 7 below.



Figure 7: The Traditional Seminary Classroom at Tonghwasa (left) and the New Seminary Classroom at Pongnyŏngsa (right).

Table 7: The 2013 Seminary Class Schedules of T'ongdosa⁴⁸

First semester:

		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 st year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>Guishan's Admonitions</i> from the <i>Ch'imun</i>)					Understanding Early Buddhism (video lecture)
	8:15-9:30	Intro to Buddhism, History of Korean Buddhism			Early Buddhist texts (<i>Sutta-nipada</i>)		
	afternoon						
2 nd year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Diamond Sutra</i>)				Understanding <i>Abhidharma</i>	Understanding Buddhist Cultural Heritage (video lecture)

⁴⁸ Collected in a visit in October 2013.

	8:15-9:30	Chinese, The Order and Modern Ethics			
	afternoon				
3 rd year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (the <i>Diamond Sutra</i>)	Chinese		Propagation Methodology (video lecture)
	8:15-9:30	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Awakening of Faith</i>)			
	afternoon		Chanting Rituals		
4 th year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Huayan Sutra</i>)	Special Lecture	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Huayan Sutra</i>)	
	8:15-9:30				
	afternoon				

Second semester:

		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1st year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The 42 Sections Sutra</i> and <i>The Bequeathed Teachings Sutra</i>)		Understanding World Buddhism (video lecture)	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The 42 Sections Sutra</i> and <i>The Bequeathed Teachings Sutra</i>)		
	8:15-9:30	Early Buddhist texts, <i>The Vinaya</i> , Mahāyāna Precepts			Introduction to Chan		
2nd year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Mirror of Sōn</i>)		Introduction to Mahāyāna	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Mirror of Sōn</i>)		<i>Prajñā Paramita</i> and <i>Mādhyamika</i> Thought (video lecture)
	8:15-9:30	History of World Buddhism (video lecture)			Chinese		
	afternoon		Chanting Rituals				
3rd year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (The <i>Sūraṃgama Sutra</i>)					Buddhism and Society (video lecture)
	8:15-9:30	Understanding <i>Kanhua</i> Chan, <i>Yogācāra</i> and Tathagata Thought			Chan Anthologies (Chinul's <i>The Secret of Cultivating the Mind</i> , <i>Susim kyōl</i> , 修心訣)		

4 th year	7-8:15	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Huayan Sutra</i>)		Pure Land Thought	Chinese Buddhist Texts (<i>The Huayan Sutra</i>)		
	8:15- 9:30						



Figure 8: Scenes for Haeinsa's Seminary⁴⁹

This new Chogye curriculum is thus revolutionary in both form and content. It embodies focal shifts from canonical Chinese texts to vernacular Korean textbooks, from reading as practice to reading for knowledge, and perhaps most importantly, from a traditional Zongmi/Chinul- flavored-textually-based-*Huayan*-Chan curriculum, to a more universal ecumenical program that attempts to encapsulate Buddhism as a whole.⁵⁰ Ironically, ever since the beginning of the 20th-century scholars of Korean Buddhism have often characterized the nation's Buddhism as 'syncretic' and 'all-encompassing' (*t'ongbulgyo*, 通佛教). Eunsu Cho has traced the origins of this discourse to the early modern scholar Ch'oe Namsŏn (1890-1957) who,

⁴⁹ The new modern style desks and chairs classrooms on the left. The football field on the right. Students have time to play football twice a week and are known to be the best seminary football team in Korea.

⁵⁰ Note that some of the large mountain monastic seminaries in Taiwan today also offer ecumenical curriculums that include Pāli, Chinese, and Tibetan material. See: Tuzzeo, "Education, Invention of Orthodoxy, and the Construction of modern Buddhism on Dharma Drum Mountain." P. 21. A comprehensive overview of the current monastic education system in China is yet to be written, but there seems to be a tendency to teach more inclusive curriculums there as well.

while attempting to find a uniqueness to Korean Buddhism, raised Wŏnhyo from near oblivion and made him and his supposed ‘syncretic’ ideology the central prototype of the religion on the peninsula.⁵¹ The ‘traditional curriculum,’ however, was anything but all-encompassing. It reflected a very specific form of textually-based *Kanhua* Chan. But prophecies seem to have a tendency to fulfill themselves. With the new curricular program, the Chogye Order has certainly become one of the most syncretic Buddhist institutions in the world today. Encompassing Indian Buddhism, various Chinese Mahāyāna schools as well as Chan and modern interpretations of Buddhism, the new curriculum makes Korean Buddhism truly *t’ongbulgyo*.

Buddhism Simulating Buddhist Studies

In his introduction to Baudrillard’s *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Patton recalls a fascinating occurrence from the first Gulf War when “the CNN cameras crossed live to a group of reporters assembled somewhere in the Gulf, only to have them confess that they were also sitting around watching CNN in order to find out what was happening.”⁵² Reporters watching the news in order to find out what they are supposed to be reporting seems to some extent comparable to Korean Buddhist monastics looking outside to the canons of modern Buddhist studies in order to find out what they are supposed to study in their monasteries. Freiburger has written in 2004 that “the discipline of Buddhist studies has created its own teaching canon: a secondary canon, as it were, extracted from the primary one.”⁵³ Buddhist studies has certainly been creating its own

⁵¹ Eunsu Cho, "The Uses and Abuses of Wŏnhyo and the "T'ong Pulgyo" Narrative," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 9, no. 1 (2004). See also: Robert Buswell, "Imagining 'Korean Buddhism'," in *Nationalism and Construction of Korean Identity*, ed. Hyung Il Pai and Timothy Tangerlini (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1998).

⁵² Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991). P. 2.

⁵³ Oliver Freiburger, "The Buddhist Canon and the Canon of Buddhist Studies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27, no. 2 (2004). P. 262.

canon, but I believe that although it has been partly extracted from the “primary” Asian canons, in many ways it also serves as a primary canon itself, informing the reformation of Asian Buddhist agendas. As the hegemony of academic Buddhist studies is increasing, questions of “primary” and “secondary” canons become more complex, and it is unclear whether it is the scholars who study the Buddhists or the Buddhists who study the scholars. In fact, instead of scholars looking into the traditional curriculums of Asian monasteries in order to find out what Buddhism is all about and what texts they are supposed to be studying, it seems more common for monastics to be the ones who look for Buddhism outside their own monasteries, in secular university halls, libraries and English textbooks.

One interesting piece of evidence for this could be found in the Chogye Teacher Guides published in 2012. These teachers’ textbooks were distributed to all seminaries, and although not widely used to date,⁵⁴ they represent the official authorized direction the Order wishes to take. The Education Department put together seven such books, each on a different theme (Early Buddhism, Mahāyāna, Chan, Chinese Texts, Applied Buddhism, Buddhist History, and *Vinaya* and Ethics), overall containing 41 separate course syllabi.⁵⁵ Remarkably, the reading lists for these syllabi include Korean translations of 30 of the most canonical western languages’ works in Buddhist studies. Lamotte’s tome on Indian Buddhism is there, as well as Rahula’s

⁵⁴ Teachers often told me privately that these teacher guides offer syllabi which are simply too complicated for the simple study in the seminaries, and it would be very hard to use them. Some claimed they do consult them, though, in preparing their lectures.

⁵⁵ See: Education Department The Chogye Order, *Ch’ogi Pulgyo: kangŭi kyehoegan 1 초기불교: 강의계획안 1* (Syllabi 1 for early Buddhism) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). *Taesŭng Pulgyo: kangŭi kyehoegan 2 대승불교: 강의계획안 2* (Syllabi 2 for Mahāyāna Buddhism) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). *Sŏn Pulgyo: kangŭi kyehoegan 3 선불교: 강의계획안 3* (Syllabi 3 for Chan Buddhism) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). *Hanmun pulchŏn: kangŭi kyehoegan 4 한문불전: 강의계획안 4* (Syllabi 4 for Classical Chinese Buddhist texts) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). *Ŭngyong Pulgyo: kangŭi kyehoegan 5 응용불교: 강의계획안 5* (Syllabi 5 for applied Buddhism) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). *Pulgyosa: kangŭi kyehoegan 6 불교사: 강의계획안 6* (Syllabi 6 for Buddhist history) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012). *Kyeyul kwa Pulgyo yulli: kangŭi kyehoegan 7 계율과 불교윤리: 강의계획안 7* (Syllabi 7 for *Vinaya* and Buddhist ethics) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2012).

What the Buddha Taught, which has perhaps become THE canon of Buddhist studies taught in numerous university Introduction to Buddhism courses.⁵⁶ Streng's book on Nagarjuna is also now part of the official Chogye syllabi, two books by Paul Williams are there, Cook's introduction to *Huayan* thought, Christopher Queen and Rick Fields on modern Buddhism, as well as various publication on comparative religion by Ninian Smart, Joachim Wach, Eric Sharpe, and others. Mel Gibson's *The Passion of Christ* and the 1993 film *The Little Buddha* are also recommended on the Comparative Religions syllabus. Besides Korean books and translations of English books, the syllabi also include 48 translations of Japanese academic sources. Moreover, the seven syllabi offered in the Teacher Guide for the Chinese Text Reading courses do not include course plans for classes on the *Sajip* texts or the *Śūramgama* Sutra. Instead, they offer syllabi for readings of the *Platform Sutra*, and two native Korean texts: The 13th-century mythological-historical collection of the *Samguk yusa* (三國遺事), and the 16th-century *Mirror of Sŏn*.⁵⁷ If we view these syllabi as the proposed new canon of the Chogye Order (and I do believe we should view them this way), then the trend is clear: a move away from the texts which traditionally informed Korean Buddhism and into different kinds of texts and foci, that of modern Buddhist studies.

To be sure, such re-importation of Buddhism is by no means strictly a Korean phenomenon. Scholars have long noticed similar 'reverse-orientalism' and 'pizza-effects,' where just as pizzas seem to have been re-imported from America to Italy to form the contemporary style of the food, modern western- influenced forms of Buddhism have often become popular in

⁵⁶ McMahan fascinatingly deconstructed the book and argued that it is not that Rahula's Buddhism is not 'real,' but it is not simply what the Buddha taught. It selects from the canon those extracts that can be interpreted to resonate with modernity and obscures the parts that do not, and this idealized, textualized orientalist Buddhism has little to do with the lives and rituals of living Buddhists. See: David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Pp. 50-1.

⁵⁷ The Chogye Order, *Hanmun pulchŏn: kangŭi kyehoegan 4 한문불전: 강의계획안 4* (Syllabi 4 for Classical Chinese Buddhist texts)..

Asia, replacing traditional forms of the religion.⁵⁸ Some well-known examples for this are Olcott's 1881 *Buddhist Catechism* which has been studied by monastics in Ceylon, Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddhism*, which has been studied by Pure Land priests in Japan, and the Thai monastic textbooks written by King Chulalongkorn and Prince Wachirayan which have often included materials from Rhys Davids and the Pāli Text Society.⁵⁹ Moreover, the (New-Age) writings of Osho Rajneesh on Zen have been reported to be read in Japanese monasteries, Jeffrey Hopkins' English commentaries read by exiled Tibetan monks during the Kalachakra initiation, and Goldstein's books on Insight Meditation are said to be sometimes read by Burmese monks.⁶⁰

In his *Curators of the Buddha*, Lopez famously argued that western scholars of Buddhism created an authentic Buddhism through which "all the Buddhisms of the modern Orient were to be judged, and to be found lacking."⁶¹ In the same way, contemporary Chogyé Order reformers seem to have been judging their 'traditional curriculum' through the lens of the canon of Buddhist studies, and to have found it lacking. Nevertheless, the prudent reader may have noticed that I have been careful thus far not to identify this canon of Buddhist studies as 'western.' To be sure, I do believe that it has been forming mainly in the affluent universities of North America, and to a lesser extent in those of Europe and Japan. These prominent institutions give the emerging canon of Buddhist studies its legitimation in the eyes of many Asian Buddhists. Nevertheless it is not only westerners who are involved with the creation of this new canon today,

⁵⁸ For an overview of this phenomenon see: Jørn Borup, "Zen and the Art of Inverting Orientalism: Religious Studies and Genealogical Networks," in *New Approches to the Study of Religion Vol. 1*, ed. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and Randi R. Warne (Berlin: Verlag de Gruyter, 2004).

⁵⁹ See: McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Pp. 99-103. For Thailand see: Patrick Jory, "Thai and Western Buddhist Scholarship in the Age of Colonialism: King Chulalongkorn Redefines the Jatakas," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 3 (2002).

⁶⁰ Ryan Bongseok Joo, "Countercurrents from the West: "Blue-Eyed" Zen Masters, Vipassana Meditation, and Buddhist Psychotherapy in Contemporary Korea," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79, no. 3 (2011). P. 623.

⁶¹ Donald Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995). P. 7.

but academics from a plethora of national and ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are to some extent practicing Buddhists themselves, including an ordained minority. Some of the contemporary Chogye Order reformers were influenced by this new canon directly while studying in foreign universities (a former Haeinsa seminary teacher who has been one of the leaders of the current reforms, for example, graduated from Columbia University). Most Chogye monastic reformers, however, came to confide in the canon of Buddhist studies through the curriculums of their own secular Dongguk University.

The canon of Buddhist studies focuses mainly on the Pāli sutras and on several oft translated and studied Mahāyāna works. The Japanese influence on the Chan (or Zen) part of this canon is palpable, as most scholars of Zen (as well as most western practitioners) focus their research on Japan. This Japanese impact on the Buddhist studies Zen canon can be traced back to early 20th-century Japanese teachers who taught in the west, and has been sustained to this day through established institutional and financial connections between North American and Japanese establishments, which enable students to pursue the study of Japanese Buddhism with relative ease. Countless Buddhist studies scholars, even those not specializing in Japanese Buddhism, are trained in the Japanese language in order to be able to read secondary research originating in Japan, a trend which must contribute to the bias. Consequently, the canon of Buddhist studies tends to focus on the key texts emphasized by Japanese Zen masters, the *Platform* and the *Vimalakīrti Sūtras*, the *Gateless Barrier* and other kōan collections studied in Japanese Zen monasteries, and the writings of Dōgen and other Japanese teachers.⁶² The fallacy of categorizing Buddhist history through the sectarian eyes of modern Japanese scholarship has been increasingly

⁶² D.T. Suzuki was probably the most influential of them all in the selection of this Zen Buddhist studies canon.

acknowledged by recent research.⁶³ As we have seen in Chapter 1, most works found on the Korean ‘traditional curriculum’ only receive marginal attention in the canon of Buddhist studies. The new reforms bring the Chogyŏ program closer to the curriculums of Buddhist studies, and consequently Korean *Sŏn* closer to Japanese Zen (which, significantly, became the standard term in most Buddhist studies works, including those not dealing with Japan in particular). Both in content and in form the new program imitates the scholarly practices of Buddhist studies. Many of the seminary teachers, however, have been unhappy with these changes, often viewing them as the “secularization” of their monastic lives.

The Education Department vs. Seminary Teachers

A 2000 Chogyŏ survey among 30 seminary teachers and almost 700 students revealed that only 56% supported curricular modifications.⁶⁴ Almost all of these reform supporters, however, thought it would be best to simply supplement the ‘traditional program’ with some general courses in religious studies, Buddhist history, and English (as many as 54% wanted English classes). Only 25% thought the *Ch’imun* and *Sajip* should be substituted by modern subjects, and over 85% did not wish to extend the daily class time beyond three hours a

⁶³ See for example: Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China*. Pp. 156-60. Also: Jamie Hubbard, "Premodern, Modern, and Postmodern: Doctrine and the Study of Japanese Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 19, no. 1 (1992).

⁶⁴ Education Department The Chogyŏ Order, "Kangwŏn kyogwa kwajŏng t’ongil mit kaesŏn ŭl wihan sŏlmun chosa punsŏk kyŏlgwa 강원 교과과정 통일 및 개선을 위한 설문조사 분석결과 (Analysis of the results of the surveys regarding seminary curriculum unification and reform)," in *Kangwŏn kyogwa t’ongil mit kaesŏn ŭl wihan kyoyuk kwan’gyeja yŏnch’anhoe 강원 교과통일 및 개선을 위한 교육관계자 연찬회* (*Educators seminar on seminary curriculum unification and reform*), ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2000). Pp. 49-54. See also: "Kangwŏn kyogwa kwajŏng t’ongil mit kaesŏn ŭl wihan sŏlmun chosa punsŏk pogosŏ 강원교과과정 통일 및 개선을 위한 설문조사 분석보고서 (Analysis report of the survey regarding the unification and reform of the seminary curriculums) ". Pp. 33-55.

day.⁶⁵ A more general 2009 survey among over a thousand Chogye monastics who were not necessarily associated with seminaries illustrated more favorable attitudes towards curricular reforms. 74% of the respondents in that survey contended that the ‘traditional curriculum’ must undergo modern reforms.⁶⁶ Many of the more conservative seminary teachers strongly opposed the reforms. Some of them bluntly shunned the seminary reform-related seminars organized by the Order. In fact, most seminary teachers today continue to object to the new curriculum.

Haeinsa, perhaps the most politically oriented monastery in Korea with close connections to the Chogye headquarters, was the first to transform its curriculum conforming to the new Chogye plans in 2010-11.⁶⁷ Soon some of the smaller seminaries, which have been more favorable to the changes, such as Sudōksa and Hwaōmsa, began transforming, as well as the female seminaries, which generally tend to be less disputatious with the headquarters. In 2012 the seminary of Songwangsa also began to reform its curriculum. Many of the teachers I have been talking to said that this surprised everyone as Songwangsa was generally known to be highly conservative, and a Study Supervisor (*Hakkam*) from one of the nunneries whispered in my ear that “they were simply bribed to change.” One of the lay workers at the headquarters confirmed that resisting seminaries sometimes received economic incentives to reform. Yet, persistent opposition remained in the largest seminary in Korea today, that of T’ongdosa, as well as in some smaller monasteries such as Pōmōsa and Ssanggyesa. The dispute between T’ongdosa and the headquarters was in fact so tense at one point that the monastery boycotted the annual joint

⁶⁵ "Kangwŏn kyogwa kwajŏng t’ongil mit kaesŏn ūl wihan sŏlmun chosa punsŏk pogosŏ 강원교과과정 통일 및 개선을 위한 설문조사 분석보고서 (Analysis report of the survey regarding the unification and reform of the seminary curriculums)". Pp. 39-45.

⁶⁶ Pōbin, "Sūngga kyoyuk, sahoi wa sot’ong hago yōksa e puhap haeya 승가교육, 사회와 소통하고 역사에 부합해야 (Sangha education should correspond with society and conform with history)." P. 281.

⁶⁷ All Chogye Order Heads to date have been Haeinsa related monastics, and many of the prominent monastics in the headquarters including the cotemporary Head of the Education Department have been students and teachers in Haeinsa.

seminary sporting event organized by the Order in 2012. Finally, in 2013, the Education Department decided to put a stop to this and threatened that novices who will not be educated in the new program will not be able to receive the full precepts after graduation and become official Chogye-affiliated monastics. This made all open opposition disappear. Today, all seminaries officially claim to follow the new curriculum.

The main grievance of the resisting teachers is that the new program converts their monasteries into secular universities. As early as 1995 a traditionalist monk by the name of Sōran argued vehemently that “converting practice places to universities is like giving up the original attitude of the sangha,” and that trying to mix monasticism with modern universities is “like wearing a Confucian hat with a western-style suit and tie.”⁶⁸ His passionate opposition to the reforms could be felt as he probably exaggerated a little arguing that converting seminaries to universities is equal to “killing the Buddhists and the Buddha Dharma, and returning monks to secular life.”⁶⁹ A Ssangyesa seminary teacher had a more romantic criticism for such reforms. He explained that when regular people get sick they eat (medicine) in order to get better, but monks fast and rest the body to get better, and similarly secular universities teach by filling with knowledge and seminaries teach in order to rest the mind.⁷⁰ He added that the teaching method of simple memorization of short passages every day is a great way to rest and clear the mind, much more fruitful for monastics than filling the mind with much knowledge.⁷¹ A Pōmōsa teacher expressed perhaps the most pessimistic critique for modernizing the seminaries:

⁶⁸ Sōran, "Han'guk Pulgyo sūngga kyoyuk ūi palchōn panghyang e taehan yōn'gu 한국불교 승가교육의 발전방향에 대한 연구 (Research on the development of Korean Buddhist sangha education)." P. 191-2.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Wōlho, "Chōnt'ong kangwōn kyoyuk kwa hyōndaesik taehak kyoyuk e taehan pigyo koch'al 전통 강원교육과 현대식 대학교육에 대한 비교 고찰 (Comparative inquiry into traditional seminary education and modern university education)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk 4*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2002). Pp. 157-8.

⁷¹ Ibid.

“As the sangha educational environment gets contaminated by materialistic culture under the ‘pretty name’ of modernization, its autonomous nature is gradually lost. Great material facilities rather become causes for the obstruction of practice, making the minds of the monastic students scattered and generally with no interest in study. Many students do not know why they came to the seminaries and what they have to do there, feel no interest in the courses studied, and gradually lose confidence in their way. They therefore become interested in things that are un-related to practice, and the only purpose of their stay (in the seminary) is receiving the full *bhikṣu* precepts at the end.”⁷²

Many of the seminary teachers express similar concerns regarding the compatibility of their novices for this new academically oriented curriculum. A teacher from Pöpchusa told me that most of his students are not interested in study and simply wait for their graduation in order to join a Chan Hall. Others expressed the fact that many of their students are older (in 2012 only 27% of new Chogyae novices were below the age of 30, 36% being over 40!⁷³) and thus not very much prone to study. Some of them supposedly have ‘complexes’ about school study as they were not very good in that field before leaving home. In fact, it is rather unfortunate to discover that only approximately 30% of new monastic novices in Korea have graduated from a university before leaving home, which is about half of the ratio of overall university graduates in the

⁷² Sangjŏng, "Kangwŏn, kwayŏn kibon kyoyuk in'ga 강원, 과연 기본교육인가 (Do seminaries constitute basic education after all?)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk kwa Han'guk Pulgyo 승가교육과 한국불교* (*Sangha education and Korean Buddhism*), ed. Kaksan (Daegu: Chŏn'guk kangwŏn yŏnhap Pulgyo haksul taehoe chunbi wiwŏnhoe, 2003). Pp. 153-4.

⁷³ The Korean sangha is an aging society. In the late 1990's only 7% of novices were over 40 years old, in the early 2000's 17% of new home-leavers were above 40, but since 2007 the numbers have risen to above 30% and in 2010 in particular over 40% of new novices were over 40 years of age! This troubles the Chogyae Order which does not want its monasteries to become senior-citizens' homes, and hopes for monastics who are still in their prime and able to study, develop spiritually, lead, and propagate. Therefore, in 2002 the Chogyae decided to lower the maximum age for new monastics to 40 years of age as older monks were having difficulties adapting to seminary study and communal life. Nevertheless as new monastic numbers continued to diminish in the 2000's this rule was reversed in 2005, setting the maximum age for ordination again at 50. See: The Chogyae Order, "Kyoyugwŏn 10 yŏn ŭi saŏp pogo mit ch'omgp'yŏng 교육원 10 년의 사업보고 및 총평 (Operation report and general critique of the last ten years of the Education Department)." For age statistics in the late 1990's see: "Chogyejong sŭngga kyoyuk hyŏnhwang 조계종 승가교육 현황 (The present situation of the Chogyae Order's sangha education)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 2, ed. Education Department The Chogyae Order (Seoul: The Chogyae Order, 1998). P. 59. For the 2000's see: Pogwang, "Taehan Pulgyo chogyejong ŭi ch'ulgaja hyŏnhwang kwa ch'ulga chedo ŭi kaesŏn pangan 대한불교조계종의 출가자 현황과 출가 제도의 개선방안 (The present situation of the home leavers of the Korean Buddhist Chogyae Order and plans for improving the system of leaving home)," in *Taegak sasang* 17 (Seoul: Dongguk University, 2012). P. 221.

country.⁷⁴ A female novice from Unmunsa told me explicitly that if she wanted a textbook education she would not have left home, and is very disappointed to have to go through such an academic curriculum in the mountains. Many new monastics leave home in order to get away from such secular activities, and are similarly disappointed to have to go through the new seminary program that resembles to a large extent the system they have left behind. Of course not all novices are disappointed and not a few do enjoy the scholarly pursuits at the seminaries. Some argue that making the seminary a mandatory condition for full ordination is problematic as those who are not interested in book-learning must study together with those who are, a situation that lowers overall classroom performance.⁷⁵

In addition, virtually every seminary teacher I have met expressed his opposition to the *Hangŭlization* of the curriculum. Many lamented the loss of the special ‘taste’ of the Chinese characters in the translations and overviews. Studying a large number of introductory courses is often understood as making seminary study superficial, and the study of the Chinese texts with the various possible crisscrossing connotations of each character as deeper and more satisfying. One of the leaders of the opposition to the new Chogye program and to the *Hangŭlization* of the curriculum is the current Head Teacher of T’ongdosa, Hyŏnjin. Hyŏnjin is admired by his students and seems to be very well respected, not only in the T’ongdosa community, but among

⁷⁴ Statistics show that over 60% of Koreans are now university graduates. Meanwhile between 1995-8 only 32%, and by 2012 only 28% of new Chogye novices graduated from a university. Almost all new novices leave home at an age in which they could have already graduated. These statistics illustrate that unfortunately often it is those who failed to succeed in the education-based modern Korean society that choose to find an alternative in the monasteries. For statistics in the 1990’s see: The Chogye Order, “Chogyejong sŭngga kyoyuk hyŏnhwang 조계종 승가교육 현황 (The present situation of the Chogye Order’s sangha education).” P. 59. For the 2000’s see: Pogwang, “Taehan Pulgyo chogyejong ūi ch’ulgaja hyŏnhwang kwa ch’ulga chedo ūi kaesŏn pangan 대한불교조계종의 출가자 현황과 출가 제도의 개선방안 (The present situation of the home leavers of the Korean Buddhist Chogye Order and plans for improving the system of leaving home).” P. 223.

⁷⁵ Chehaeng, “Taechung saenghwal kwa hagŏp sŏngch’wido 대중생활과 학업성취도 (Communal living and the way of fulfilling one’s education).” P. 148.

other monastics in the Order as well. He turned out to be a great host too. When I visited in 2014 he greeted me with a bright smile, showed me his several-hundred-years-old edition of the *Huayan Sutra*, and prepared his best tea leaves for our conversation. He said he believes that reading one paragraph and chewing it over and over going deeper into its meaning is a much more meaningful practice for monks than learning a mass of texts. He emphasized that this kind of study is better in *Hanmun*, not because he simply likes the Chinese characters, but because a lot of the complex various meanings of the characters is simply lost in translation. He also told me that there is no need to study early Buddhism separately, as Mahāyāna encapsulates the early teaching too. In fact, Hyōnjin claimed that if studied properly (with commentaries and a good teacher), the *Huayan Sutra* encapsulates all the Buddhist teachings and no other textual study is necessary. When I left his room I found myself strangely convinced.

To be sure, more reform-minded monastics tend to caricature such attachment of the seminary teachers to the Chinese characters. They seem to have a point claiming that teachers resist *Hangŭlization* in order to maintain the special status they earned as experts in the texts of the ‘traditional curriculum.’ Their skill in Classical Chinese is their social capital that ensures their positions of power in the Order, and obviously some may fear losing this special status. A blogger, probably a Chogye monastic, who calls himself Magnolia (*Hubak Namu*), ridiculed the seminary teachers for clinging to the Chinese texts as the ‘original’ although they are themselves translations of Sanskrit. He added that many teachers have simply become too comfortable in their chairs and too lazy to start preparing for new courses.⁷⁶ Other reformers argue somewhat sarcastically that teachers tend to resist allocating more study time as they need the students’ time for a variety of sundry tasks at the monastery. A Tonghwasa teacher told me with a dose of

⁷⁶ <http://blog.daum.net/whoami555/13741990> Accessed in October 2013.

ambivalent humor that if novices would spend so much time actually studying, “who will ring the bells, chant and clean the monastery?”

Some seminary teachers who have been in favor of curriculum reforms in the early 2000’s now lament that they have gone too far. One monastic reformer calculated that several years ago the *Huayan Sutra* was studied for a total of 336 hours in the seminaries, but now it was reduced to a mere unproductive 28-hour course called *Huayan Thought*.⁷⁷ Even the teachers at Haeinsa, the seminary that led the reforms, now express their objections to the new system. One of them told me explicitly that the new program is Buddhist studies and not Buddhism, and he does not want to be a part of it. Chungmok, an elderly Haeinsa teacher who has been active in the Chogye reforms discourse, told me that there are simply too many classes in the new program. He believes that the best way is having a 1:1 ratio between traditional and modern classes. When I asked him why, then, if so many teachers object to the new program, does the Education Department insist on it? He calmly explained that along with several other seminary teachers he is working on an orderly report regarding the application of the new curriculum and the need for another reform. He plans to present this report to the Chogye headquarters in the near future, and only time will tell whether the new program will be restructured yet again, soon.

From Seminaries to Monastic Graduate Schools

Everyone in the Chogye Order today seems to be distressed about the diminishing numbers of new matriculants. They do have a good reason to be concerned. Statistics show that

⁷⁷ Kim, "Chogyejong kibon kyoyuk kigwan p'yojun kyogwa kwajŏng e taehan yŏn'gu 조계종 기본교육기관 標準教科課程에 대한 研究 (Research regarding the standard curriculum of the Chogye Order's basic education institutions).".

while in the 1990's approximately 400 new novices were ordained with the Order each year, numbers gradually decreased in the 2000's, and these days only about 200 male and female Koreans leave home and join the Chogye Order each year.⁷⁸ Some relate the higher numbers of new monastics in the late 1990's to the economic crisis in the country at the time, and believe that with economic betterment less choose to leave to the mountains. What is important for our discussion here, however, is the fact that with smaller numbers of new novices many of the seminaries have recently found themselves with very small student bodies. 12 out of the 19 seminaries operating in 2003 housed over 30 students but only six seminaries had such numbers in 2013 (see Table 8 for monastic schools' student numbers throughout the ages). The overall number of seminary students in Korea dropped to almost half in the last ten years from 1,106 to 566. Consequently Chogye reformers have argued that there is simply no need any longer for so many seminaries. They suggested that the Central Sangha College would be sufficient to house all Chogye novices and can serve as the sole required program, and it would be better if all seminaries would simply transform into specialized graduate schools for those wishing to continue research and for fostering teachers and specialists in various Buddhist- related fields.⁷⁹ Monasteries housing seminaries wishing to keep their prestige have been resisting this move, some claiming that it is in fact the seminaries that should remain as the basic institutions and the Central Sangha College transform into a specialized graduate school.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as we shall see this process of transforming seminaries into graduate schools is already under way.

⁷⁸ Pogwang, "Taehan Pulgyo chogyejong ūi ch'ulgaja hyŏnhwang kwa ch'ulga chedo ūi kaesŏn pangan 대한불교조계종의 출가자 현황과 출가 제도의 개선방안 (The present situation of the home leavers of the Korean Buddhist Chogye Order and plans for improving the system of leaving home)." P. 221.

⁷⁹ See for example: Hyŏnŭng, "Chogye chongdan sŭngga kyoyuk ūi tangmyŏn kwaje e tehayŏ 조계종단 승가교육의 당면과제에 대하여 (The present problems of the Chogye Order's sangha education)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk 1*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1995). P. 173-4.

⁸⁰ This was offered in a Chogye seminar by a Ch'ŏngamsa teacher in 2002: The Chogye Order, "Sŭngga kyoyuk ūi sŏnggwa wa chŏnmang 승가교육의 성과와 전망 (The outcome and prospects of sangha education)." Pp. 252-3.

Table 8: Monastic Seminary Enrollments

	Institution	Students in 1918 ⁸¹	Students in 1937 ⁸²	Students in 1976 ⁸³	Students in 1982 ⁸⁴	Students in 1995 ⁸⁵	Students in 1998 ⁸⁶	Students in 2003 ⁸⁷	Students in 2013/14 ⁸⁸
Male Seminaries	Paegyangsa	19	24	15		15	7	5	closed in 2013
	Pömōsa (re-opened in 1962)	32	66	41		13	26	47	31
	Pōpchusa (re-opened in 1971)	29	11	45	45	17	30	44	20
	Pulguksa (since 1975)	-	-	35	32	17	15	16	23
	Songwangsa (re-opened in 1983)	47	27	-	-	35	76	72	30
	Sudōksa (since 1996)	-	-	40⁸⁹	-	-	10	16	19
	Ssanggyesa (re-opened in 1988)	-	10	-	-	20		34	15
	Chikchisa (since 1981)	-	-	-	-	5	19	17	10- (closed in 2013)
	T'ongdosa	93	?	27	58	48	54	65	55
	Haeinsa	20	37	77	112	116	89	82	54
	Tonghwasa (re-opened in 2000)	55	49	28	-	-	-	36	18

⁸¹ Anonymous, "Chosŏn Pulgyo ch'ongbo ".

⁸² Information collected from: Nam, "Han'guk Pulgyo chōnsō rŭl chungsimūro pon Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyoyuk 한국불교전서를 중심으로 본 조선시대 사원교육 (Temple education in the Chosŏn period seen through the *Complete Works of Korean Buddhism*)."

⁸³ Chōng, "Han'guk Pulgyo ūi hyōnhwang kwa munjejōm 한국불교의 현황과 문제점 (The present situation and the problematic issues of Korean Buddhism)." Pp. 200-1.

⁸⁴ Ibid. P. 202. This seems to include only partial numbers for select seminaries.

⁸⁵ Statistics received from the Chogyŏ Order.

⁸⁶ Statistics received from the Chogyŏ Order.

⁸⁷ Statistics received from the Chogyŏ Order.

⁸⁸ According to my own fieldwork in institutions throughout the country.

⁸⁹ At the time there were 40 female students only.

	Institution	Students in 1918 ⁸¹	Students in 1937 ⁸²	Students in 1976 ⁸³	Students in 1982 ⁸⁴	Students in 1995 ⁸⁵	Students in 1998 ⁸⁶	Students in 2003 ⁸⁷	Students in 2013/14 ⁸⁸
	Hwaōmsa (since 1969)	-	-	20	-	12	16	23	19
	Pagyesa	-	14	-	-	-	-	10	Closed
	Sōnunsā (since 2003)	-	-	30	-	-	-	10	Closed in 2012
	Total Male Enrollment			409⁹⁰	247	309	352	487	284
Female	Tonghaksā (since 1956)				75	123	151	133	55
	Pongnyōngsā (since 1975)			30	72	138	107	99	40
	Samsōn (since 1979)					35	36	39	Closed in 2014
	Unmunsa (since 1958)			116	147	218	235	232	132
	Ch'ōngamsā (since 1987)					88	103	116	55
	Total Female Enrollment			313⁹¹	352⁹²	602	632	619	282
	Total Seminaries Enrollment	764	718⁹³	722	599	911	984	1,106	566
Central Sangha College							320	224	155
Dongguk University (Seoul)							71	55	58
Dongguk University (Kyōngju)							78	89	52
The Basic Chan Hall (male)							72	241	50

⁹⁰ This number includes the students of several seminaries not on the list as they closed before the 1990's: Sinhūngsa 7, Wōlchōngsa 10, Kūmsansa 15, Taehūngsa 8, and Pongsōnsa 12.

⁹¹ This number includes female students in other seminaries operating at the time including Hwaunsa 40, Magoksa 42, Taewōnsa 20, and Sōngnamsa 25.

⁹² This number includes female seminaries that have closed long ago such as Hwaunsa 34, and Hūngguksa 24.

⁹³ This is a minimum number. Apart from the temples listed above other seminaries were relatively large at the time: Kōnbongsa and Sōkwangsa with 41 students each, Kounsa with 30, Kimyongsa with 28, and Kaeunsa with 26.

	Institution	Students in 1918 ⁸¹	Students in 1937 ⁸²	Students in 1976 ⁸³	Students in 1982 ⁸⁴	Students in 1995 ⁸⁵	Students in 1998 ⁸⁶	Students in 2003 ⁸⁷	Students in 2013/14 ⁸⁸
The Basic Chan Hall (female)								67	12
Total Basic Institutions Enrollment							1,525	1,782	893
Monastic Graduate Schools	Central Sangha Graduate School						12	7	56
	Unmunsa Chinese Texts Graduate School (since 2013)						6	2	10
	Tonghaksa <i>Huayan</i> Graduate School (since 2008)						11	12	10
	Silsangsa <i>Huayan</i> Graduate School (since 1995)								Closed in 2012
	Pongsönsa <i>Śūramgama</i> Graduate School (since 1994)						7	5	10
	Tonghwasa Chinese Texts Graduate School (since 2011)								28
	Chikchisa Chinese Texts Graduate School (transformed in 2014)								4
	Samsön Chinese Texts Graduate School (transformed in 2014)								24
	T'ongdosa <i>Vinaya</i> School (reinstated in 2005)								21
	Haeinsa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 1968)						6	9	11
	Songwangsa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 1988)							10	3
	Paegyangsa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 2006)								4
	Ch'öngamsa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 2008)								20
	Pongnyöngsa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 1999)							5	16
	Unmunsa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 2008)								10
	Pömösa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 2013)								8
	Tonghwasa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 2011)								20
	Pagyesa <i>Vinaya</i> School (since 1997)						5	4	?
	Ösan Ritual School (since 1997)						18	8	36
	Korean Buddhism Traditional Ceremony Academy (since 2012)								17
	Yumasa Chan Graduate School (transformed in 2012)								15
	Paegyangsa <i>Mādhyamika</i> and <i>Yogācāra</i> Graduate School (transformed in 2013)								12
	Sönunsa Early Buddhism Graduate School (transformed in 2012)								16
	International Buddhist Graduate School (since 2012)								14
Sum Graduate Schools Enrollment							65	62	365

To be sure, in 20th-century Korea monastics wishing to continue to advanced study and research after graduating from a seminary did have a few options. As we have seen in the previous chapter, several specialized *Vinaya* Schools focusing on the research of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* have been operating in the early 20th-century, both Haeinsa and T'ongdosa reinstated them in the 1970's, and Songwangsa erected one in the late 1980's. Such specialized monastic *Vinaya* Schools are quite unique to Korea.⁹⁴ Following recent trends discussed above to bring back the canonical *Vinaya* into the Chogye monasteries, as many as seven new monastic *Vinaya* Schools were established on the peninsula in the last 15 years.⁹⁵ These include the first female *Vinaya* School, opened in Pongnyōngsa in 1999, followed by similar establishments in Unmunsa and Ch'ōngamsa in 2008. The curriculums of these schools today often include not just readings from the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, but also Pure Rules literature, the *Brahma Net Sutra*, Comparative *Vinayas*, Modern Law and Ethics, and Ritual Practice (for the official recommended Chogye Order curriculums for the *Vinaya* Schools and other monastic graduate schools see Appendix A). Resembling the structure of modern graduate schools, the programs now involve two years of basic courses equal to a monastic M.A., followed by optional three additional years of research, and students of these institutions are encouraged to develop new modern Pure Rules and rituals for the Order as a whole.⁹⁶ The number of scholars in

⁹⁴ Although Welch reported the existence of *Vinaya* institutions in early 20th-century China, he noted that these were mainly places of ritual study rather than textual research. See: Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*. Pp. 104-5. Pittman illustrated that at the time some Chinese *Vinaya* schools offered 53-day courses in preparation for ordination, rather than advanced study. See: Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Pp. 54-5. It has also been reported recently that there are two *Vinaya* Schools operating in China today, though no details were given about their actual programs or locations. See: Cho, "Segye sūngga kyoyuk ūi ōje wa onūl 세계 승가교육의 어제와 오늘 (The past and present of sangha education in the world)."

⁹⁵ Note that Sudōksa received a prestigious status as the fourth Korean 'Comprehensive Chan Center' (*Ch'ongnim*, 叢林) with plans to establish a *Vinaya* School as early as 1984, though no such school has been erected there to date.

⁹⁶ See for example: Chongmuk, "Ch'ongnim ūi chindan, naagal panghyang: Haein ch'ongnim chungsim ūro 총림의 진단, 나아갈 방향: 해인총림 중심으로 (Diagnosis of the Chan community and objectives for its development: Focusing on the Haeinsa community)." Pp. 210-1.

these schools is comparatively small, and as they are not novices any longer but fully ordained monastics, schedules tend to be looser. When it comes to the *Vinaya* rules, however, many of them are quite strict, and I (as a laymen) was not allowed to actually enter their classrooms or look at their textbooks (since according to the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* lay people are prohibited from studying the *Vinaya*).

Apart from these *Vinaya* graduate schools, the Chogye Order has been encouraging the establishment of a variety of other specialized monastic schools. In the early 2000's it was decided at the headquarters that licenses of seminaries housing less than 40-50 students should be revoked.⁹⁷ Due to strong resistance from the seminaries this minimum number dropped to 20 in 2009. Yet, as Table 8 above illustrates, only four of the male seminaries today are able to meet this requirement. In recent years several smaller seminaries that were unable to withstand the pressure from the Order have closed down, some of which transforming into specialized graduate schools instead. In 2012 Pagyesa's seminary closed down, Yumasa transformed to a Chan Graduate School and Sönnunsa to Early Buddhism Graduate School. In 2013 Paegyangsa's seminary closed down and erected a *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* Graduate School instead, and Chikchisa transformed to a Chinese Texts Monastic Graduate School. Recently the Samsön female seminary in Seoul was forced to close down as well, as it did not meet the new criteria in which all seminary students must live together in the monastery, and transformed too into a Chinese Texts Graduate School.⁹⁸ The Buddhist media reported that in the near future the Chogye

⁹⁷ Education Department The Chogye Order, *Sūṅga kibon kyoyuk kigwan mit chönmun kyoyuk kigwan chojōngan maryōn ūl wihan kongch'ōngoe 승가 기본교육기관 및 전문교육기관 조정안 마련을 위한 공청회* (Public hearing regarding regulation plans for basic and specialist educational facilities for the sangha) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2010).

⁹⁸ The Samsön Seminary has provided a special opportunity for study for female monastics who due to illness or other responsibilities were unable to leave Seoul for a mountain monastic seminary. Students living in various temples in Seoul commuted to the seminary each morning. This system has been criticized for some time by several reformers in the Order.

plans to be firmer in enforcing the minimum numbers and closing down seminaries in order to create a more stable unified and financially-feasible system of basic monastic education for all novices.⁹⁹ To avoid closure some seminaries today attempt to lure prospective novices by offering larger stipends and even new iPads to new students, but with the decrease in new monastic numbers it is unlikely that the smaller seminaries will be able to survive for long.

Before the mid 1990's only 4-5 specialized advanced study institutions were available for Chogyé monastics. Now there are 24, with 11 opening in the last couple of years alone. While seminary student bodies are getting smaller, the number of monastic graduate students actually jumped six times in the last ten years. These new institutions illustrate yet again the tendency of the Chogyé today to broaden its Buddhist interests and encourage learning of more comprehensive Buddhist curriculums. Apart from the ten *Vinaya* Schools and seven graduate schools focusing on Chinese textual programs which tend to resemble the 'traditional curriculum,' the Early Buddhism Graduate School at Sönnunsa, for example, offers both textual analysis and chanting in the Pāli language six days a week led by Chogyé monastic teachers who have studied in Sri Lanka, India and Thailand. Another example is the new *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* Graduate School at Paegyangsa (see Figure 9), which offers classes only twice a week for a small group of monastics who commute to the monastery for class. One of the teachers told me the first year graduate students study Introduction to *Mādhyamika* using translations of Paul Williams' books. Tonghwasa's new Chinese Texts Graduate Schools has taken a step further recruiting lay people from the nearby city of Daegu to join the sangha in its classrooms.

⁹⁹ Ho-sūng Ch'oe, "Chōngwōn midal sūngga taehak, taehagwōn ūro chōnhwan hwallo mosaek 정원미달 승가대학, 대학원으로 전환 활로 모색 (Looking for ways to transform seminaries which do not meet the minimum student quotas into graduate schools)," *Pōppo sinmun* 2014.



Figure 9: The *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* Graduate School in Paegyangsa

Two specialized ritual chanting schools were also established in recent years, the Ōsan Ritual School (*Ōsan chakpŏp hakkyo*) established in Seoul in 1997 and the Korean Buddhism Traditional Ceremony Academy (*Han'guk pulgyo chŏnt'ong ūiye chŏnsŭngwŏn*) established in Kimpo in 2012. These institutions do not teach the basic daily rituals all Chogye monastics are familiar with, but the more complex chanting and dancing involved in confessional, funerary, memorial and healing chanting rituals, which are called *pŏmp'ae* (梵唄).¹⁰⁰ In late 20th-century Korea the T'aego Order was considered to be the Buddhist institution specializing in ritual, and the founding teachers of both these Chogye schools have initially studied *pŏmp'ae* in the T'aego school at Pongwŏnsa. Both are also recognized by the Korean government as Masters of Intangible Cultural Heritage for their mastery of these traditional rituals, and their schools are thus partially funded by the national government. The rationale behind the opening of these schools was the systematization and unification of the various styles of ceremonial chanting, as

¹⁰⁰ According to the pamphlets given out in these schools the Korean *pŏmp'ae* lineage began with a Ssangyesa monk by the name of Chingam who brought the right ways of chanting the rituals back from Tang China. The name of the school, Ōsan (魚山), is simply another term for *pŏmp'ae*. In general, *pŏmp'ae* is mentioned in Chinese sources as early as the 2nd-century, and Ennin's diary of his travels to the Tang tells of three styles performed at Korean temples in Shandong at the time: Silla style, Tang Style, and a style similar to what was practiced in Japan at the time. Notably, Ennin is said to have created the Tendai *pŏmp'ae* (called *Tendai shōmyō*) on his return to Japan. See: Byong Won Lee, "A Short History of Pomp'ae: Korean Buddhist Ritual Chant," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1, no. 2 (1971).

well as the fostering of a group of Chogye-affiliated ritual specialists to perform on special occasions.¹⁰¹ I was allowed to join several classes in these schools, where the format reminded me of the preparation for my Bar-Mitzvah long ago. The teacher performed the chants according to the ‘correct’ tones and the students (both male and female together) repeated after him, used their iPhones to record him in order to review later at their own temple, and practiced working the drums, bells and cymbals used in the ceremonies. I recently encountered a short opinion piece in a T’aego Order newspaper lamenting the fact that the Chogye is now surpassing the T’aego even in its own field of specialty, rituals.



Figure 10: Performing a Buddhist Ceremony as Part of the Final Examinations at the Ōsan Ritual School

Perhaps the most fascinating and revolutionary new Chogye specialized monastic graduate school is the International Buddhist Graduate School (*Kukche pulgyo taehak*) founded in Hwaunsa in 2012. All classes in the school are conducted in English with the intention of fostering monastics who will be able to propagate (Korean) Buddhism abroad and lead Temple

¹⁰¹ See for example: Pōpsan, "T'ūksu hakkyo kaesōl kwa kwalli Uunyōng e taehayō 특수학교 개설과 관리운영에 대하여 (On establishing and managing specialized schools)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk 1*, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1995). Pp. 195-8.

Stays.¹⁰² The current 14 all-female monastic graduate students in this school attend regular English classes every morning taught by two young American teachers. One of them told me he often makes use of YouTube videos of Dharma talks by American Zen teachers in his class. The headmaster, Chijōng is a kind and outspoken nun who is highly critical of the ‘traditionalist’ formalities of the Chogye Order. She teaches the afternoon classes which focus on reading Buddhist sutras and other related material in English. That particular semester the first year students were reading Red Pine’s translations of Bodhidharma’s writings, but as it was a little difficult they switched to an easier book by Thich Nhat Hanh.¹⁰³ The second year students were reading Jane Blanchard’s personal account of her Christian spiritual pilgrimage in Spain, titled *Women of the Way*.¹⁰⁴ As we all know, languages are not limited to vocabulary and grammar, and embody much broader cultural ramifications, and as the English language tends to be more liberal than the formal hierarchical Korean, students’ attitudes seem to conform. I was invited to join one afternoon seminar which involved surprisingly open debates (in English of course) questioning some of the most basic Korean monastic norms, at the end of which it was decided by popular vote that it was unnecessary to wake up at four AM in this school, and waking at five would be sufficient. During the summer breaks the school takes trips to American and European Buddhist centers, where students get to meet prominent western Buddhist leaders, and gain experience in western-style Buddhist practice.

¹⁰² Note that in other Buddhist localities English is not only not studied but is sometimes prohibited altogether. Dhammasami reports that conservative nationalistic monastics in Burma and Thailand regard English as ‘animal science’ and ban its teaching in the monasteries. See: Khammai Dhammasami, "Idealism and Pragmatism: A Dilemma in the Current Monastic Education Systems of Burma and Thailand," in *Revisiting Buddhism and the spirit cult in Burma [and Thailand]* (Stanford University 2004).

¹⁰³ Red Pine, *The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma* (Washington: Empty Bowl, 1987). I believe the Thich Nhat Hahn book in question was: Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace in Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* (New York: Bantam, 1992).

¹⁰⁴ Jane Blanchard, *Women of the Way: Embracing the Camino* (Florida: Jane Blanchard, 2012).

The Basic Chan Hall (Kich'o sŏnwŏn, 基礎禪院)

As we have seen in the previous chapter, since the mid 1990's seminary education has become a mandatory pre-condition for full ordination and for joining Chan Halls. This has been a revolutionary shift from the traditional system in which novices could choose to study in a seminary, enter a Chan Hall, or take on other administrative positions in temples, and this move has been strongly opposed by more meditation-minded monastics. Therefore, in 1997 a compromise was made, and the Basic Chan Hall has been established in Tonghwasa as an alternative to seminary education. Like a seminary, it offers a four-year course required for full ordination, yet, it allows its monastic novices to both sit in seasonal three-months Chan retreats (*kyŏlche*, 結制) twice a year, as well as attend classroom education in the retreat off-seasons (*haeje*, 解制). This institution has been very popular at first with approximately 300 novices enrolled in the early 2000's, but the Chogyŏ Education Department has been pressuring monastic leaders to limit the number of novices they sent to this institution as they believe classroom education there is insufficient, and numbers dropped presently to approximately 60 students.¹⁰⁵ In recent years the 30-day classroom sessions have been extended to 50-days, and broader introductory textbook courses have been gradually added to traditional readings of Chan-related texts in these study sessions.

Nevertheless, curriculums for these classroom study sessions still evidently focus on Chan treatises. The current official schedule of the Basic Chan Hall¹⁰⁶ begins with an introductory

¹⁰⁵ In fact in 2010 the Chogyŏ headquarters recommended that a quote of ten students maximum will be allowed to join the Basic Chan Hall each year, though this suggestion was not yet followed. See: The Chogyŏ Order, *Sŭngga kibon kyoyuk kigwan mit chŏnmun kyoyuk kigwan chojŏngan maryŏn ŭl wihan kongch'ŏngoe* 승가 기본교육기관 및 전문교육기관 조정안 마련을 위한 공청회 (Public hearing regarding regulation plans for basic and specialist educational facilities for the sangha). Pp. 20-22.

¹⁰⁶ Received personally from the Tonghwasa office.

class on Early Buddhism and Chan, a 13th-century Admonitions text regarding the dangers of Chan sickness (*Chan jing yu*, 禪警語¹⁰⁷), and three additional Chan treatises¹⁰⁸ for the first year, the *Platform Sutra*, Gaofeng's *Chan Essentials*, and three additional Chan treatises¹⁰⁹ for the second year, and the history of Chogye Chan as well as the collected sayings of Mengshan (夢山, see Chapter 1) and of the 14th-century Korean Master T'aego Pou for the third year students. Only in the final fourth year the program takes a step away from Chan and provides broader introductory classes on the *Vinaya* and the history of Buddhism in India and Korea. This official curriculum though seem to change often enough, and when I visited in February 2014 the 3rd- and 4th-year novices sat in joint classes on the *Awakening of Faith*, introduction to *Yogācāra* and *Tathāgatagarbha* Thought, ritual chanting practice, and only one Chan treatise reading, Huihai's 8th-century *Treatise on the Essential Gate of Entering the Way Through Sudden Awakening* (*Dunwu rudao yaomenlun*, 頓悟入道要門論). The Education Department is making the efforts to bring the curriculum of the Basic Chan Hall into closer agreement with the official seminary program.

Several years ago the male novices of the basic Chan hall moved north, where they now attend retreats together with fully ordained monastics at Paektamsa and the nearby Yonghwasa Chan Halls. During the off-seasons they head down to Tonghwasa and attend classes together with the female novices there. Some of the students explained that the male novices sit in

¹⁰⁷ Written in the 13th-century by Boshan (博山). X63 No. 1257. Not included in the Taishō Canon.

¹⁰⁸ The three are a collection of sayings by Huanbo's (黃檗) from the 9th-century titled *Essentials of Mind Transmission* (*Chuanxin fayao*, 傳心法要, T.48.2012), Chinul's *Treatise on Resolving Doubts about Observing the Keyword* (*Kanhua kyōlūi ron*, 看話決疑論, not in the Taishō), and a 16th-century treatise by the anti-Jesuit Zhu-hong (祿宏) titled *Progress through the Gate of Chan* (*Chaguan cejin*, 禪關策進, T48.2024).

¹⁰⁹ The three are the Third Patriarch's Sengcan (僧璨, 6th-century) *Xinxinming* (信心銘, T48.2010), the *Treatise on the Essential Gate of Entering the Way through Sudden Awakening* (*Dunwu rudao yaomenlun*, 頓悟入道要門論, X63.1223) by Dazhu Huihai (大珠慧海, 8th-century), and the 16th-century Korean master Hyujōng's work *Sōn kyo kyōl* (禪教訣, not in the Taishō canon).

front of the class so that they would not be able to see the nuns sitting in the back. The nuns in turn are forbidden to talk to or even look the male novices in the eyes. They have two hours of classes in the mornings and two in the afternoons. In general these novices seem much more free and outgoing than the novices I usually encountered at seminaries. The strict hierarchies and working chain-of-command that stamp life in most seminaries are much looser in the Basic Chan Hall, where novices of different grades sit together with fully ordained monks in the Halls, and their self-confidence is unmistakably higher. When I asked the two friendly novices at Tonghwasa whether they thought the short study sessions they held were sufficient, they laughed saying that “meditation raised their IQs” and in these short sessions they can quickly comprehend everything others study in the seminaries all year.

The female novices of the Basic Chan Hall reside in a large hermitage called Yangjin-am (see Figure 11), located approximately 20 minutes’ walk uphill from the main temple of Tonghwasa. Leading the female novices (yet still subordinate to the male head of the entire Basic Chan Hall) is an impressive charismatic nun by the name of Wŏnjŏng. There are currently only 12 female novices in the institution, and she explains that many of the elder nuns in Korea strongly believe that novices should begin with a seminary before attempting to sit Chan and forbid their disciples to come. Some of her students, she adds, ran away to join this center without permission. When I asked how she leads the training in the Chan Hall, she modestly said that she does not actually do much. She is not allowed to give *huatou* to her disciples as she is not a ‘Great Monastic’ (*k’ŭnsŭnim*), she added.¹¹⁰ Many of her students complain about the uselessness

¹¹⁰ There are only two monks in Korea today who are regarded as ‘Great Monastics’ and have received the official stamp (*inga*, 印可) for their attainments. The first is Chinje who is located at the same Tonghwasa, and the second is Songdam located in Incheon.

of the study sessions, and she simply tells them that if they are bored in class, they can just sit there and meditate. Real study (*kongbu*) for most involved with the Basic Chan Hall is meditation practice, and classroom study is not taken too seriously.



Figure 11: Yangjin-am Housing the Female Novices of the Basic Chan Hall

The Seminaries of Other Buddhist Organizations

The T'aego Order (太古宗) is undoubtedly the second most dominant Buddhist institution in Korea with over 3,000 affiliated temples and almost 9,000 clergy members as of 2013.¹¹¹ It separated entirely from the Chogyae in 1970 after a long and violent so-called 'purification movement.'¹¹² The separation between the Chogyae and the T'aego is not doctrinal but disciplinary: T'aego clergy members are allowed to eat meat and marry openly, and Chogyae monastics are not supposed to. Nevertheless many of the T'aego clergy I have met made it a point to emphasize that not all of them get married, and it does seem that a large ratio of the female

¹¹¹ Statistics received from the T'aego Order.

¹¹² There are numerous Korean works on the 'purification movement' and the split between the T'aego and Chogyae, but the only detailed English work on the subject is: Mun, *Purification Buddhist Movement 1954-1970: The Struggle to Restore Celibacy in the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism*.

members in particular lead an abstinent life. The T'aego actually maintains a slightly larger number of temples than the Chogye, but the majority of them are small family-run urban temples. Seminary education is not a mandatory requirement for ordination in this school and very few actually go through it, though the clergy working at the headquarters ensured me that they are working on a reform making education a requirement for ordination just like the Chogye order. Some T'aego monks end up studying in Chogye seminaries.¹¹³ The only monastic seminary of the school, housed in the beautiful monastery of Sōnamsa, has had only about 300 graduates ever since it was established in 1975.¹¹⁴ It is a mixed-gender monastery housing 18 male and seven female T'aego clergy students today. Only two teachers teach at this school. The monastery also houses perhaps the sole T'aego Order Chan Hall (though only 4-5 clerics sit there every season) and there are plans to establish a *Vinaya* School as well.

Ironically, the T'aego, often stigmatized as a modern, impure Buddhist institution, operates the only seminary in Korea today that still teaches the 'traditional curriculum.' To be sure, just as in the Chogye, the T'aego Order headquarters has been recently attempting to supplement and broaden this curriculum. The new proposed program (shown to me at the headquarters) supplements the 'traditional curriculum' with courses on Indian Buddhism, Buddhist psychology and science, BBC's documentaries on Buddhism, Thich Nhat Hanh's books on Vipassanā, videos talks by the Dalai Lama, Laozi, the *Book of Changes* and *The Analects*, classes on Tibetan Buddhism, translations of the writings of the eccentric New-Age writer Ken Wilber (!), and even translations from the writings of Indian hippie gurus Maharishi and Osho

¹¹³ When I visited Pōpchusa in 2013 two T'aego monks were enrolled in the seminary. The Chogye Order generally allows up to two monastics from other institutions to be enrolled in each seminary, though apart from the two in Pōpchusa I did not encounter other T'aego monks in Chogye institutions.

¹¹⁴ Sōnamsa sits in Chogye Mountain not far from Songwangsa, and its ownership is still disputed. The Chogye Order still claims it belongs to it though it is obviously operated by the T'aego.

Rajneesh. This curriculum plan is so broad one may very well ask if Buddhism is still its central focus. Yet, my visit to Sōnamsa in 2014 proved that it was not implemented at all. The texts of the ‘traditional curriculum’ are still studied there in *Hanmun* for an hour every morning five days a week. For students of the first two years the morning classes are supplemented by ritual classes in the afternoons. These days they also hold an hour a week of early Buddhism lectures for the first two years, and *Abhidharmakośa* for the latter two. Once a week they also sit together for a communal 50-minute *Vipassanā* meditation session (not *Kanhua* Chan but *Vipassanā*), and a calligraphy class. When I asked the friendly 50-something-year-old students who showed me around the seminary about the books by Osho, Wilber, and the Dalai Lama noted above, they told me that they are in fact available in the seminary’s library (see Figure 12) and recommended for reading, but there are no classes actually dedicated to them to date.



Figure 12: Sōnamsa’s Rustic Attic Library

As most T’aego clerics operate small temples and are unable to leave for a monastic seminary in the mountains, a different kind of school was established for them in 1983. The Tongbang School sits in an alley behind Yonsei University in Seoul, not far from the large T’aego temple of Pongwōnsa. It is housed in a rather indistinct and somewhat run-down four-story building (see Figure 13), which hides the fact that it is essentially the main school of the

Buddhist T'aego Order, now bragging more than 1,500 alumni. It offers two-year courses in five different departments: Buddhist Studies, Buddhist Dance, Buddhist Arts, Sangha Studies, and Sutra Translation. What is most distinct about this school, though, is that all classes are filmed and students are able to stay in their temples and attend online. I audited classes in the Sangha Studies Department at this school in winter 2013-4, and 29 out of the 33 students enrolled at the time took classes online and did not show up to class. In fact, in one case I was the only student actually sitting in class. Others commuted, and there is also a small dormitory on site. The school is open for both male and female students, the ordained and the lay, but virtually all lay students I had talked to were planning to ordain in the near future. Lay students usually wore traditional Korean clothes (*hanbok*) to class, and I gathered that many of them were children of an ordained parent. Interestingly, a significant number of ordained students did not belong to the T'aego Order but to other small Buddhist-affiliated New Religious Groups.

The Sangha Studies Department, established in 2004, essentially offers a shortened version of the 'traditional curriculum.' The *Ch'imun* is studied in the first year, and the *Chan Essentials* and *Awakening of Faith* in the second. These are supplemented by Introduction to Sangha Studies as well as by the required courses for all Departments in Mahāyāna Thought, History of the T'aego Order, Rituals, *Abhidharmakośa*, Buddhist Social-Welfare, and Propagation. When I attended in 2013 the *Ch'imun* was taught once a week for an hour and a half by a lay professor specializing in Classical Chinese. Classes focused on rigorous analysis of the grammatical structures used in the text. My classmates and I (and probably most online viewers) certainly had a hard time following. The Introduction to Sangha Studies was taught by an elder T'aego cleric and one of the headmasters of the school, Suam. Classes began and ended with a bow accompanied by the *mokt'ak* (wooden fish) instrument in an attempt to give the lecture a more monastic Buddhist feel. Much of the class contents dealt with explaining the concept of

‘sangha,’ and Suam often began his sentences with “although we in the T’aego Order do not follow this” the sangha was traditionally supposed to do so and so. In fact, the apparent complexities of trying to maintain an ordained status while living as laypeople often popped up during lectures at this school.



Figure 13: The T’aego Order’s Tongbang Buddhist School

Very recently another T’aego school has opened in a suburb of Seoul, allowing clergy and laypeople to commute for classes in ritual (*pŏmp’ae*) or in another shorter version of the ‘traditional curriculum.’ This school is called the Anjŏng Buddhist University, and it was opened in 2012 in Anyang. It is still very small with less than 20 students, almost half of which are lay people preparing to ordain. The ‘traditional seminary course’ offers a program of four years beginning with *Ch’imun* in the first, the *Sajip* in the second, the *Śūramgama* and *Awakening of Faith* in the Third, and the *Sutra of Perfect Awakening* and *Diamond Sutra* in the Forth. Apart for the *Huayan*, which has been dropped from this program, it corresponds completely to the ‘traditional curriculum.’ This is a new program and it is still unclear how successful and popular it is going to be.



Figure 14: Class Time at the T'aego Order's New Anjŏng Buddhist University

The Korean Ch'ŏnt'aek Order (Chi. Tiantai, Jap. Tendai, 天台), with its 350 temples and over 400 monastics is the only other Buddhist institution in Korea that runs its own monastic seminary.¹¹⁵ The Order was established in 1966 with an obvious attempt to link it to the tradition of Mt. Tiantai, though I believe it should perhaps be viewed as a Buddhist-affiliated New Religious Movement. Priests were at first allowed to remain married, though today this has been banned. Female monastics do not shave their heads but wear it back with two pins, and all must live in the main temple of Kuinsa. Only male monastics are allowed to head branch temples. Interestingly, monastics at this institution still do not take the full precepts, which they view as Hīnayāna. Their main practices are the chanting of *Kwanseŭm posal* (觀世音菩薩, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), and diminishing sleep. New postulants are not supposed to lie down at all for the first six months, and monastics claim to only sleep about 3-4 hours a night and spent the rest of the night chanting. Numerous laypeople go to Kuinsa and other affiliated temples and participate in all night chanting vigils. Monastics are expected to join at least two monthly retreats

¹¹⁵ Sports and Tourism Korean Ministry of Culture, "Han'guk ūi chonggyo hyŏnhwang 한국의 종교 현황 (The present situation of religions in Korea)," (2012).

a year, in which instead of standard meditation, chanting *Kwanseŭm posal* is practiced for long hours throughout the day.

Kuinsa, the head temple of the Ch'önt'ae Order, is probably the largest monastery on the peninsula. It feels more like a small village than a temple, full of commotion and sound, buses of laypeople coming and going, and chanting from the huge halls. It established a rudimentary seminary as early as 1982, but only in 2005 it created a systematized mandatory three-year education program for all postulants.¹¹⁶ When I visited in 2014 the Head Teacher explained that there are now 11 teachers at the school, most of whom laymen, and that male and female students hold classes together but practice separately. He emphasized that practice, rather than classroom study, is the focus of the seminary, explaining that postulants work all day in the fields or in the kitchen and only hold short evening two-hour classes between the hours 8-10 PM.¹¹⁷ In fact, during the first two years classes are held only three times a week. The curriculum is a mix of texts from the 'traditional curriculum' with texts more relevant to Tiantai. Zhiyi's *Lesser Calming and Contemplation* (*Xiaozhiguan*, 小止觀) is studied in the first two years, along with the *Ch'obalsim* Korean admonitions collection, the *Novice Precepts and Decorum*, and Chegwan's *Tiantai Outline of the Fourfold Teachings* (*Ch'önt'ae sagyoŭi*, 天台四教儀). The third and last seminary year is more classroom- oriented with lessons six times a week on the *Ch'imun*, *Diamond Sutra*, *Awakening of Faith*, the *Lotus Sutra*, and general introductions to early Buddhism and to *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra*. Almost all study is done in the vernacular Korean rather than in *Hanmun*, and instead of homework students are encouraged to stay up late

¹¹⁶ Hun Kim, "Taehan Pulgyo Ch'önt'aejong ŭi chonggyo kyoyuk e taehan koch'al 대한불교천태종의 종교교육에 대한 고찰 (A study about the religious education in the Ch'önt'ae Order)," *Sinjonggyo yŏn'gu* 24 (2011).

¹¹⁷ The school skips the novice (*sami*) stage and new postulants (*haengja*) remain postulants until they graduate from the seminary, take the ten Bodhisattva precepts and become monastics.

chanting. In sum, it seems that the ‘traditional’ Korean Buddhist curriculum, even if not followed completely, remains the central prototype of textual education to be negotiated with by all major Buddhist institutions on the peninsula.



Figure 15: The Korean Ch'önt'ae Order's Seminary at Kuinsa

Foreign Students

As of 2013 there were 102 Chogyae-affiliated foreign monastics in Korea, 45 of whom studying in Dongguk University or in one of the monastic seminaries (see Table 9).

Approximately half of these foreign monks are European or North American. Most of these monastics were introduced to Korean Buddhism in their home countries either through the International Kwanŭm School established by Süngsan (known commonly as Seung Sahn, 1927–2004) who has opened 120 Buddhist centers in over 30 countries, or through the propagation efforts of another Korean monk, Wŏnmyŏng (1950–2003), who has been active especially in Russia and Eastern Europe. Up until the early 2000's these foreign monastics have simply studied under their masters and did not enroll into seminaries. The first foreigner recorded to have ever graduated from a Korean monastic school is a monk from Kirgizstan who attended Songwangsa's

seminary in the early 2000's.¹¹⁸ As basic education is now required for receiving the full precepts in the Chogye Order, foreign monastics are obliged to enter as well.

Table 9: Chogye Order- Affiliated Foreign Monastics in Korea (2013)¹¹⁹

COUNTRY	SAMI (MALE STUDENT)	SAMINI (FEMALE STUDENT)	FULL MONK	FULL NUN	TOTAL
USA	6	2	11	5	24
Sri Lanka	9		1		10
Poland	2	1	3	2	8
Nepal	5		1		6
Russia	3		3		6
Czech Rep.	1	1	3		5
Taiwan		1		3	4
Bangladesh	2		2		4
India	2		2		4
China	2			2	4
Canada	1			3	4
Australia			1	2	3
Italy			2	1	3
Hungary	1		1	1	3
Lithuania			1	1	2
Malaysia	1			1	2
Argentina	1		1		2
Laos	1				1
Myanmar	1				1
Serbia			1		1
Estonia	1				1
England	1				1
Uzbekistan			1		1
Japan			1		1
France				1	1
Sum	40	5	35	22	102

¹¹⁸ Chang, *Tŏnmyŏn kūman inde* 떠나면 그만인데 (If you leave, that is enough). P. 110.

¹¹⁹ Statistics received from the Chogye headquarters.

Acculturation has not been easy. Most foreign monks in Korea live and practice separately in one of the three foreign monastic centers of Musangsa, Hwagyesa's International Chan Center, or the Lotus Lantern Center at Kanghwado. As can be expected, decorum at these places is very different from that of traditional Korean monasteries, and I have heard of cases in which Korean monks visited, saw monks sitting down to eat together with female and male laypeople, and were so shocked they ran away. Entering a seminary involves not only slipping into the rigid hierarchies of the early stages of the Korean monastic career, but also necessitates a good command of Korean and Chinese characters, which at least some of the foreign monks do not possess. In more than one occasion a seminary teacher complained to me that his foreign students do not understand anything in class, arguing that they should have studied Korean before coming. Some do actually speak fluent Korean, but other foreign monastic students admit that all they do in class is sit quietly and meditate. For this reason, the Chogyŏ has been planning to establish a separate seminary for foreign novices that will use English and foster monastics who will be able to propagate Korean Buddhism in their home countries.¹²⁰ This has not yet been actualized.

One particular seminary teacher also told me rather indignantly that all his foreign students want to do is meditate, and they are not interested in studying at all. Meditation seems to be the Buddhist activity that attracts westerners to the tradition most of all, and many are disappointed to discover that it is not going to be a major part of their novice life in Korea. It is in fact quite hard for a foreign monk to enter a Chan Hall in Korean temples as these places are often dominated by cliques and are unwilling to allow unknown monastics to join. A Chan Hall

¹²⁰ Yŏn'gyŏng Ŏ, "Sinnyŏn hoegyŏn ũro pon 2014 süngga kyoyuk pangyang 신년회견으로 본 2014 승가교육 방향 (New Year's conference on the prospects of sangha education in 2014)," *Pulgyo sinmun* 2014.

monk from Haeinsa told me they never allowed a foreigner to join because they smell differently and this obstructs practice. Wouldn't the fact that they are eating the same food change the smell, I asked, only to be answered that the senses become exceptionally acute during retreats and even the slightest smell that remains from before is prohibitive to the common endeavor. For years foreigners were not even allowed to enter the Basic Chan Hall, but in 2012 the first three foreign novices were finally allowed to enter. They proved to be very diligent and it was decided that others will be permitted to join in the future.

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This chapter discussed the far-reaching contemporary reforms of the Korean monastic education system. It highlighted the debates between reformers pushing for general mandatory Buddhist studies for all monastics in order to create more knowledgeable monastics able to propagate and participate in the socio-political issues of the day, and the more traditional seminary teachers who believe that chewing a simple phrase from the sutras over and over again is a more effective monastic pedagogical practice than broad learning. At the center of the discussion stood the mandatory new reformed curriculum, which, as I have attempted to demonstrate, owes much to the hegemonic educational ideals and practices of contemporary Buddhist studies, and transforms Korean Buddhist orthodoxy into a more inclusive breed. It illustrated the wide variety of new monastic specialized schools that have been recently opened in Korea fostering monastic specialists in multiple fields, discussed the educational endeavors of other Buddhist schools, and demonstrated the difficulties of foreign monastic students to acculturate to the system. The next chapter will continue to discuss contemporary monastic reforms, focusing on the creation of a new educationally based rank-exam system for the sangha.

4. Re-creating the Sangha Rank-Examination System

“Although it seems that a ‘secular’ system of exams is unfit for the life of those who left home, in actuality the four seasons continue to operate deep in the mountains as well, and in order to farm and eat there is a need for a an ordered system and regulations even among home leavers.”

(Pöpsan, A monk-professor at Dongguk University, 2002¹).

“Examining the sangha on Buddhism is like testing a horse how it walks!”

(Koryŏ Dynasty monks criticizing the sangha exam system²)

Can exams evaluate Buddhist practice? Most would probably oppose the idea that general objective examinations could determine Buddhist spiritual development. Yet, throughout history, Buddhist monastics in East and Southeast Asia have been repeatedly tested in various ways on their Buddhist learning and practice. Sometimes their own status as monastics was dependent on passing such exams, and often, ranks, positions both within and without the sangha, as well as material rewards were bestowed on those who managed to pass. Ironically, then, monastics who have left the secular structures of society often found themselves simply transferring into another society, not very differently structured from the one they have left behind. As Pöpsan explains in the quote above, the four seasons continue to operate deep in the mountains and (a hierarchic) division of labor is still generally accepted there too. But are exams the best way to generate such social structures in the sangha? In the last several centuries it seems

¹ Paraphrased from: Pöpsan, "Han'guk Pulgyo sŭngga- pŏpkye chedo ūi koch'al kwa chongdan sŭngga kosi chedo ūi sihaeng 한국불교 승가-법계제도의 고찰과 종단 승가고시제도의 시행 (Consideration of the Korean Buddhist sangha rank system and operation of the Order's sangha exam system)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 2, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2002). P. 205.

² Paraphrased from: Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism during the Koryo Dynasty* (918 - 1392). P. 203.

that monastic hierarchies in Korea were based mostly on seniority in the sangha, number of Chan retreats taken, and probably personal connections, rather than on exams. Nevertheless, as will be clear by the end of this chapter, these days the criteria for advancing in the monastic hierarchies in Korea is undergoing a great shift. Education has taken a primary role in the structure, and a modern unified objective examination system has been set as the main standard for advancing in rank and holding higher positions within the Chogyŏ Order today.

Historically, Buddhist monastic examinations in East Asia were operated and overseen by the secular government. In China, rulers often used qualifying exams in order to limit the numbers of the sangha, which was exempted from military service, labor, and from paying taxes. In Korea, the monastic exams were initiated and developed in parallel to the civil service exams, and as such served primarily for selection of a few governmentally recognized position-holders.³ In the mid-16th-century, the Chosŏn government discontinued the exam system permanently, and it is only now, half a millennium later in the 21st-century, that a monastic rank-examination system has been re-created on the peninsula. The new system involves eight ranks and five different exams; the first two must be passed in order to qualify for taking the novice and full precepts and formally enter the sangha, and the other three serve as selection exams for higher ranks and positions. New programs and institutions were recently developed in order to prepare monastics for these exams. Furthermore, for the first time in Korean history, the monastic exams are open to female monastics, and they are not managed and overseen by the secular government, but are autonomously operated by the Chogyŏ Order. Therefore, these exams are not used for exterior control of the sangha as they have been in earlier times, but rather for the internal structuring of the bureaucracy of the Order. Their main rationale is not to limit the size of

³ Ibid. P. 202.

the sangha or choose a few elite members, but to encourage overall monastic unity, impartiality, and continuous learning and development.

I will begin my discussion in this chapter by contextualizing the new system within the history of Buddhist monastic examinations in Korea and in broader East Asia, and then provide a general analysis of the new system itself. Next, I will move on to a more detailed description of the contents of the different exams, which just like the curriculums discussed in previous chapters, serve as valuable sources of information regarding what parts of Buddhism really matter for Korean monastics today. First, the 5th-level exam, which is based on a new postulant education program, will be examined. Next, I will analyze the 4th-level exam required for taking the full precepts in relation to the changing seminary curriculums. Lastly, I will look at the contents of the three higher-level exams, and the new ‘continuing education’ programs set up in order to prepare more senior monastics for taking them.

A Brief History of Sangha Examinations

The famous Chinese traveler Xuanzang, who visited India in the 7th-century, reported that monastic hierarchies in the motherland of Buddhism at the time were based on oral examinations rather than on seniority. He added that servants and elephants were awarded to those who did exceptionally well in the exams and were able to expound upon several texts.⁴ In China, examinations of monastics on the sutras in order to purify the sangha from those who simply joined in order to avoid taxation and labor were sporadically conducted in various localities since the 4th-century.⁵ It is interesting to note that it was the Tang Emperor Zhongzong

⁴ Singh, *The Origin and Development of Buddhist Monastic Education in India*. Pp. 178-180.

⁵ Eric Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Pp. 259-60.

(656-710, 中宗), that was raised under the tutelage of Xuanzang, who was the first Chinese ruler to implement an examination system for all monastic aspirants on a national level in 705.⁶ Shortly later, in the year 747, a system of monk certificates was inaugurated, and only those who passed a recitation exam, had connections to the royal family, or were wealthy enough to purchase a certificate, were allowed to ordain.⁷ Various 8th-century royal regulations stipulated the number of pages to be recited for these exams (usually between 500-1000 pages from the *Lotus*, *Vimalakīrti* or *Mahāparinirvāṇa* sutras), and in 773 the composition of short essays on these texts was added to the format.⁸

Research regarding Buddhist-related policies in later Chinese dynasties is relatively scarce, but in general it seems that monastic exams continued to take place, though mostly on the local administrative levels. In 11th-century Song, for example, the Chief Rectifier of the sangha of Hangzhou, Hui-pien (慧辯, 1014-1073) created an exegetical examination system for those who wished to compete for vacant abbacy positions in small temples in the area (while larger public monasteries' abbots were usually appointed by recommendation).⁹ Later, a Pure Rules text written in 14th-century Yuan (the *Jiaoyuan qinggui*, 教苑清規) continued to stipulate both oral and written exams for the Tiantai sangha.¹⁰ The first Ming Emperor also purged the sangha using exams in the 14th-century, laicizing monastics whose knowledge of Buddhist texts seemed insufficient.¹¹

⁶ Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under Tang* (New-York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Pp. 49, 165-6.

⁷ Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972). P. 243.

⁸ Eric Zürcher, "Buddhism and Education in Tang Times," in *Neo-Confucian Education*, ed. Theodore De Bary and John Chaffee (USA: University of California Press, 1989). Pp. 31-33.

⁹ Chi-chiang Huang, "Elite and Clergy in Northern Sung Hang-chou: A Convergence of Interest," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter Gregory and Daniel Getz (USA: The Kuroda Institute, 1999). Pp. 311-313.

¹⁰ The text is found in the CBETA database as: X0968.

¹¹ Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. Pp. 434-5.

In Korea, there is some evidence that exams and ranks were distributed at least locally in late Silla. Chajang (慈藏, 590-658) is said to have established a twice-yearly monastic examination system which sought to determine who kept the *Vinaya* rules, and epitaphs from late Silla show that the monastic ranks of *Taedök*, *Taesa*, and *Sönsa* (大德, 大師, 禪師) were already in use.¹² Nevertheless, it was the Koryŏ King Kwangjong who nationally formalized the sangha examination procedure in 954; four years before the first Civil Service examinations were organized in Korea.¹³ Both the Civil Service and the monastic examinations were intended to take place once every three years during the dynasty, and we now have records of 37 monastic exam occasions, most of which from the 12-13th-centuries. In general it seems there were three stages of exams. Only passers of the first level of preliminary exams were authorized to sit for the main exams, usually called the ‘Great Selection’ (*Taesŏn*, 大選).¹⁴ Those who passed this ‘Great Selection’ received the rank of ‘Great Virtue’ (*Taedök*, 大德), and were thus eligible for abbot positions.¹⁵ Some records show that exam passers were also granted land.¹⁶ They could then continue to climb the monastic hierarchy, which involved five additional ranks: ‘Great Teacher’ (*Taesa*, 大師), ‘Notable Teacher’ (*Chungdaesa*, 重大師), ‘Eminent Teacher’ (*Samjungdaesa*,

¹² Pankaj Mohan, "The Roles of Monks Won'gwang and Chajang in the Formation of Early Silla Buddhism," in *Religions of Korea in Practice*, ed. Robert Buswell (New-York: Princeton University Press, 2008). Pp. 53-5, 63.

Hŭng-sik Hŏ, "Koryŏ sidae ūi sünggwa chedo wa kü kinŭng 高麗時代の僧科制度와 그機能 (The sangha examination system and its function in the Koryŏ Dynasty)," *Yŏksa kyuyuk* 19 (1976). Pp. 112-3.

¹³ Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism during the Koryŏ Dynasty (918 - 1392)*. P. 188.

¹⁴ Other terms for these exams found in the sources are: *Sönsŏn* (禪選), *Sŏndo* (選度), *Sŏnbuljang* (選佛場), *Sŏngwa* (禪科), *Kuksi* (國試), *Sŭngsŏn* (僧選), and so on. See: Pöpsan, "Han'guk Pulgyo süngga- pŏpkye chedo ūi koch'al kwa chongdan süngga kosi chedo ūi sihaeng 한국불교 승가-법계제도의 고찰과 종단 승가고시제도의 시행 (Consideration of the Korean Buddhist sangha rank system and operation of the Order's sangha exam system)." P. 208.

¹⁵ Hŭng-sik Hŏ, "Koryŏ ūi süngjik kwa süngjŏng 高麗의僧職과僧政 (Monastic offices and monastic politics in the Koryŏ Dynasty)," in *Süngga kyoyuk* 3, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2000). Pp. 176-7.

¹⁶ "Koryŏ sidae ūi sünggwa chedo wa kü kinŭng 高麗時代の僧科制度와 그機能 (The sangha examination system and its function in the Koryŏ Dynasty)." P. 130.

三重大師), followed by either ‘Chan Master’ (*Sōnsa*, 禪師) and ‘Great Chan Master’ (*Taesōnsa*, 大禪師) in the Chan tradition, or ‘Head Priest’ (*Sujwa*, 首座) and ‘Monastic Minister’ (*Sūngt’ong*, 僧統) in the ‘Learning’ (*kyo*, 敎) tradition.¹⁷ There is evidence for at least two cases in which higher exams were held for acquisition of these higher ranks, but it seems that personal recommendation remained the main channel through which monastics could climb further in the bureaucracy.¹⁸

More interesting are the actual proceedings and contents of the exams. Different exams were distributed for the Chan and ‘Learning’ (*kyo*, 敎) traditions, and in the late Koryō a separate Tiantai exam was also in place for some time. Hō has argued that until the mid-13th-century the Chan exams were focused on explanation of key terms, and the ‘Learning’ exams focused on *Yogācāra*, but later the *Huayan Sutra* became the center of the ‘Learning’ exams, and short poems were written for the Chan counterpart.¹⁹ Scholars noted an attempt for a pan-sectarian exam in 1370 that involved examining all monks on various *gong’ans*.²⁰ Nuns were excluded from the exams and from holding official titles.²¹ Exams were generally oral, and often involved public debates. In fact, proposals for written exams both for the monastics as well as for the Civil Service were rejected by the Censorate in the 11th-century, reasoning that this would simply enhance writing skills rather than the ability to discuss ideas, though later written components do seem to have been added.²² Ironically, since the late Koryō all monastic exams

¹⁷ For the ranks see for example: Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism during the Koryo Dynasty (918 - 1392)*. P. 191.

¹⁸ Hō, "Koryō sidae ūi sūnggwa chedo wa kū kinūng 高麗時代の僧科制度와 그機能 (The sangha examination system and its function in the Koryō Dynasty)." P. 117.

¹⁹ Ibid. Pp. 124-131.

²⁰ Ibid. P. 137.

²¹ Cho, "Female Buddhist practice in Korea: A Historical Account." P. 29.

²² Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism during the Koryo Dynasty (918 - 1392)*. P. 199.

had to be presided over by one who had passed the Confucian Civil Service exams, and secular officials often supervised the proceedings. As official exams became the dominant way to climb up the monastic hierarchies and monks seemed to have spent considerable amount of time preparing for them, criticism began to be heard against the system. The prominent monk Chinul, for example, although passing the examinations himself, was soon disgusted with the worldly atmosphere surrounding them, and attempted to create an alternative structure outside the royally sponsored hierarchies deep in the Chogy Mountain.²³

Yet, the exam system remained intact through the dynastic change. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Chosŏn codified the exam curriculum into law, which stated that the Chan exams should deal with the *Transmission of the Lamp* and Hyesim's *Enlightened Verses*, and the 'Learning' exam should be on the *Huayan Sutra* and the *Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva*. Only about 30% of exam takers were able to pass the exams, which were evaluated by ten monastics and presided over by a secular official. Exam passers still needed further recommendation and the sanction of the king in order to receive abbot appointments.²⁴ In the late 15th-century King Songjong abolished the monastic examinations as part of the dynastic policies of marginalizing Buddhism, and although they were revived for about a decade in the mid-16th-century by Munjong, this move generally put an end to the system for the next 550 years.

Buddhist ecclesiastic exams took place in other East Asian localities as well. In Japan monastic oral exams took place in Kōfukuji since the 8th-century, and were regulated by the governmental Office of Monastic Affairs.²⁵ These exams were first focused on recitation, but

²³ Buswell, *Tracing Back the Radiance: Chinul's Korean way of Zen* Pp. 19-21.

²⁴ Pong-ch'un Yi, "Chosŏn sidae ūi sŭngjik chedo 조선시대의 僧職제도 (The monastic office system of the Chosŏn era)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 3, ed. Education Department The Chogy Order (Seoul: The Chogy Order, 2000). P. 184.

²⁵ Richard Bowring, *The Religious Traditions of Japan 500-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). P. 98.

gradually doctrinal mastery was required too.²⁶ In the 9th-century Saichō established an alternative examination system for Tendai on Mt. Hiei, and exam passers in this tradition gradually came to occupy major positions in the government.²⁷ Tendai examinations continue to this day in Japan, and contemporary monks climb through the 11-rank system of the school mainly through modern academic degrees and exams.²⁸ In Tibet, the system of *Geshe* examinations focusing on debates was established in the 17th-century, has been historically overseen by the government, and continues to operate to this day.²⁹ Nithiyanandam recalls how in his own *Geshe* exams in the 20th-century he was expected to memorize 1500 pages of text, and prizes (hats, robes, scarfs, coins) and punishments (cleaning, whipping) were distributed according to the number of folios remembered.³⁰ Government-sponsored monastic exams were established in 17th-century Thailand and Burma as well.³¹ These exams focused on simple translations from the Pāli to the local languages, and were mainly used by the government to select a few elite ecclesiastic administrators receiving royal stipends.³² The system was reformed in 19th-century Thailand, and to this day involves a nine-level system of Pāli translation exams of increasingly difficult texts.³³

²⁶ Groner, "Training Through Debates in Medieval Tendai and Seizan-ha Temples." P. 234.

²⁷ *Ryogen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2002). Pp. 128-143.

²⁸ Ibid. P. 144. For the Tendai rank system see: Sōran, "Han'guk Pulgyo sūngga kyoyuk ūi palchōn panghyang e taehan yōn'gu 한국불교 승가교육의 발전방향에 대한 연구 (Research on the development of Korean Buddhist sangha education)." P. 314.

²⁹ Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Pp. 144-6, 317.

³⁰ Nithiyanandam, *Buddhist System of Education*. Pp. 92-6.

³¹ Dhammasami explains that they were first established in order to limit the numbers of the sangha at times of war in order to stop conscripts from joining the sangha. See: Khammai Dhammasami, "Growing But As A Sideline: An Overview of Modern Shan Monastic Education," *Contemporary Buddhism* 10, no. 1 (2009). P. 39. See also: "The Impact of Political Instability on the Education of the Sangha in the 17th-Century Siam," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities* 1 (2008). Pp. 181-192.

³² Stephen J. Zack, "Buddhist Education Under Prince Wachirayan Warorot" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell, 1978). Pp. 54-7.

³³ Yoneo Ishii, *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986). Pp. 84-7.

Reviving the Monastic Rank-Exam System in Korea

Right from the very beginning of the 20th-century it is possible to detect attempts to re-organize the monastic bureaucracy in Korea according to a formal rank system. The 1902 Detailed Rules for Operating Temples in the Country (*Kungnae sach 'al hyōnhaeng sech 'ik*, 國內寺刹現行細則) stipulated three sangha ranks (called *Sōkp 'um*, 釋品) based on seniority in the sangha.³⁴ Soon after, in 1912, the Assembly of Abbots of the 30 Main Temples, which has been newly organized by the Japanese, formulated a six-rank system resembling the one used centuries earlier in the Chosŏn, still based mainly on seniority but adding educational stipulations (graduating from the *Taegyo* course at a seminary) for receiving ranks.³⁵ The Assembly of Abbots stipulated yet another five-rank system in 1941, in which sitting in a fixed number of retreats (and not just seniority) was necessary in order to advance in the hierarchy.³⁶ The rank titles used in this early regulation are the ones still used by the Chogye today, but no actual exam system was set up at the time.

The Chogye Order Constitution written in 1962 signaled some change. This document generally maintained the same rank hierarchy, based on seniority and number of retreats, which was promulgated in the 1940's, but in addition stipulated the creation of a Sangha Examination Committee to be in charge of both sangha and lay propagator exams.³⁷ Accordingly, higher-rank

³⁴ Kyōng-hun Pak, "Kūndae Pulgyo ūi sūngjik chedo 근대불교의 僧職제도 (The monastic bureaucratic system in modern Buddhism)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 3, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2000). P. 208.

³⁵ Ibid. P. 211.

³⁶ This system is part of the *Chosŏn pulgyo chogyejong ch 'ongbonsa t 'aegosa pōp*, 朝鮮佛教曹溪宗總本寺太古寺法. See: Pōpsan, "Han'guk Pulgyo sūngga- pōpkye chedo ūi koch'al kwa chongdan sūngga kosi chedo ūi sihaeng 한국불교 승과-법계제도의 고찰과 종단 승가고시제도의 시행 (Consideration of the Korean Buddhist sangha rank system and operation of the Order's sangha exam system)." P. 215.

³⁷ Ibid. P. 217. Mubi, "4 kūp sūngga kosi ūi hyōnhwang kwa palchōn panghyang 4 급 승가고시의 현황과 발전 방향 (The current situation and possible development of the 4th-level sangha examination)," in *4 kūp sūngga kosi chedo kaesŏn ūl wihan t'oronhoe Charyojip 4 급 승가고시 제도 개선을 위한 토론회 자료집* (Collection of materials

titles were distributed in the late 1960's, but no exams were actually operated.³⁸ Based on this constitution, the first Sangha Rank Law (*Pŏpkye pŏp*) was enacted in 1976, detailing the various ranks in relation to specific qualifying exams, and more notably, adding for the first time in Korean history a separate set of rank titles for female monastics.³⁹ Then, in 1985 the Sangha Exam Law (*Sŭngga kosi pŏp*) fashioned the basic system we know today. It stipulated seniority, retreats, and specific exams as qualifications for climbing up the monastic rank hierarchies. According to it, the 5th-level exam would signal the end of the postulancy period, in which monastics would be tested on ritual texts, the *Admonitions to Beginners*, and the *Novice Precepts and Decorum* (*Shami luyi*, 沙彌律儀). The 4th-level exam would be a qualification test for taking the full precepts ending the novice phase, and its contents would be the *Ch'imun*, *Sajip* and *Sagyo* texts of the 'traditional' seminary curriculum, as well as history of Buddhism and a foreign language. The 3rd-level exam would be a qualification exam for abbacy and other positions, and would include questions on the *Transmission of the Lamp*, the *Enlightened Verses*, propagation methods, and comparative religion. The contents for the higher two tests were not specified.⁴⁰

Yet examinations were still not operating. One reason for this was the absence of a registration system that would be able to keep track of the resumes of monastics, i.e. their educational records, the number of retreats they have participated in, and so on. With the computation of the Chogye headquarters in the 1990's this problem has been gradually

regarding the debates on reforming the 4th-level sangha examination system), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2000). Pp. 8-9.

³⁸ "4 kŭp sŭngga kosi ūi hyŏnhwang kwa palchŏn panghyang 4 급 승가고시의 현황과 발전 방향 (The current situation and possible development of the 4th-level sangha examination)."

³⁹ See: The Chogye Order, "Pŏpkye pŏp 법계법 (Sangha rank law)," ed. The Chogye Order (1976).

⁴⁰ Pon'gak, "4 kŭp sŭngga kosi chedo ūi kaesŏn ūl wihan chean 4 급 승가고시 제도의 개선을 위한 제안 (Proposals for reforming the 4th-level sangha examination system)," in *4 kŭp sŭngga kosi chedo kaesŏn ūl wihan t'oronhoe charyojip 4 급 승가고시 제도 개선을 위한 토론회 자료집* (Collection of materials regarding the debates on reforming the 4th-level sangha examination system), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2000).

eliminated. Another reason for the delay has probably been the need to convince skeptical sangha leaders of the necessity for such exams. Korean monastic leaders reiterated the arguments of Koryŏ Dynasty monks about the inability of unified exams to evaluate Buddhist monastic practice. For instance, in a 2000 Chogyŏ seminar, the Head of the Basic Chan Hall, Yŏngjin, argued that although exams may be appropriate for the seminary graduates, they are not suitable for evaluating the practice of the novice graduates of the Basic Chan Hall. Nevertheless, he did agree that there was a need for common evaluation in the contemporary world, and offered that the graduates of his institution would be assessed and graded based on their attitudes during the retreats.⁴¹

Between the years 1999-2001 the Chogyŏ headquarters distributed several opinion surveys regarding the exam system among its sangha. A 1999 survey among several hundred abbots, for example, found that 84% supported putting into practice the rank-examination system.⁴² Other surveys had less positive results. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a survey among seminary students in 2000 found that the majority was strictly against operating an exam system.⁴³ Their rejection of the examinations could be at least partly explained by the fact that like most students, they simply feared being tested themselves in the near future. The largest survey was conducted among 7,000 monastics and lay Buddhist academics in the same year, and in it 60% were found to support the plans for the new system, while the rest objected to the whole

⁴¹ Yŏngjin, "Sagŭp sŭngga kosi kaesŏn panghyang e taehan kich'o sŏnwŏn ŭi ipchang 四級 僧伽考試 개선방향에 대한 基礎禪院의 입장 (The position of the Basic Chan Hall regarding the reforms of the 4th-level sangha examinations)," *ibid.* Pp. 23-6.

⁴² The Chogyŏ Order, "Pon-malsa chuji yŏnsu sŏlmun chosa pogosŏ 본-말사 주지연수 설문조사 보고서 (Report of the survey among abbots of main and branch temples about continuing education)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk 3*, ed. Education Department The Chogyŏ Order (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2000). P. 126.

⁴³ The Chogyŏ Order, "Kangwŏn kyogwa kwajŏng t'ongil mit kaesŏn ŭl wihan sŏlmun chosa punsŏk pogosŏ 강원교과과정 통일 및 개선을 위한 설문조사 분석보고서 (Analysis report of the survey regarding the unification and reform of the seminary curriculums) ". Pp. 36-7.

idea of having ranks in the sangha, which they believed should be based on communality and equality.⁴⁴ Thus, evidently, the Korean sangha was split in opinion regarding the need for a rank-exam system, though attitudes seem to have been somewhat more favorable towards the exams among the more senior monastics of the time.

Finally a decision was made. In a 2001 seminar, the Chogyŏ Order's Education Department Head, Mubi, announced that "at first it was said that evaluating character through a test does not tally with Buddhism, but I think it is the best method [for making all monks have the proper study and practice attitudes]. So I believe it is obvious that at least those who wish to be abbots or leaders in the Chogyŏ headquarters should have the basic qualification of passing the 3rd-level exam."⁴⁵ The first 5th- and 4th-level exams in modern Korea took place in 2000, and the yearly 3rd-level exam began in 2001. The first 2nd-level exam took place only in 2010, and the highest 1st-level exams are planned to begin in 2015. Several changes and amendments have been made in the early 21st-century to the Sangha Examinations Law, and a summary of the whole system is presented in Table 10 below.

⁴⁴ Myŏng-u Han, "Pŏpkye kubun hwijang naenyŏn put'ŏ ch'agyeong 법계구분 휘장 내년부터 착용 (Using badges to differentiate monastic ranks from next year)," *Hyŏndae Pulgyo* 2002.

⁴⁵ The preceding of this roundtable discussion could be found in: The Chogyŏ Order, "Sŏngga kyoyuk ŭi sŏnggwa wa chŏnmang 승가교육의 성과와 전망 (The outcome and prospects of sangha education)." P. 257.

Table 10: The Chogye Order's Rank-Examination System⁴⁶

Title	Time	Practice and Examination	Competence for Positions
Postulant (<i>Haengja</i>, 行者)⁴⁷	At least six months	Basic education and preparation for monkhood. Postulant Education program.	Menial tasks and study
Novice (<i>Sami</i> 沙彌 (m)/ <i>Samini</i> 沙彌尼 (f))	At least four years	After passing the 5 th -level sangha examination and receiving the ten precepts for novices, one goes through the basic education system. ⁴⁸	Menial tasks and study
'Seeing Virtue' (m.), 'Virtuous Conduct' (f.) (<i>Kyōndōk</i> 見德/ <i>Kyedōk</i> 戒德)		After graduating from one of the basic education programs, passing the 4 th -level sangha examination, and receiving the full precepts, one begins to attend retreats and/or take on positions in temples.	Recognized formally as a full member of the sangha.
'Middle Virtue' (m.), 'Virtuous Concentration' (f.) (<i>Chungdōk</i> 中德/ <i>Chōngdōk</i> 定德)	At least ten years since ordination	After completing at least four retreats or receiving a secular Ph.D., and passing the 3 rd -level sangha examination or graduating from a Monastic Graduate School	Eligible for abbacy or office director in branch monasteries.
'Great Virtue' (m.), 'Virtuous Wisdom' (f.) (<i>Taēdōk</i> 大德/ <i>Hyēdōk</i> 慧德)	At least 20 years since ordination	After passing the 2 nd -level sangha examination.	Eligible for various posts in the Chogye Order headquarters.
'Religious Virtue' (m.), 'Sagacious Virtue' (f.) (<i>Chongdōk</i> 宗德/ <i>Hyōndōk</i> 賢德)	At least 25 years since ordination	After passing the 1 st -level sangha examination.	Eligible for abbacy in major monasteries and other important posts.

⁴⁶ Table adapted from the Chogye booklet: *Sūngga kyoyuk kwajong mit kyoyuk kigwan annae* 승가교육 과정 및 교육기관 안내 (Information on the curriculum and educational institutions of the sangha).

⁴⁷ The distinction between a postulant (*haengja*, 行者) and novice (*sami*, 沙彌, śrāmaṇera) did not exist in India, and Zürcher traces it to 7th-century China. See: Zürcher, "Buddhism and Education in Tang Times." Pp. 30-31.

⁴⁸ In one of the monastic seminaries, the Central Sangha University, Dongguk University's Buddhist studies program, or the Basic Chan Hall.

‘Religious Teacher’ (m.), ‘Bright Virtue’ (f.) (<i>Chongsa</i> 宗師/ <i>Myōngdōk</i> 明德)	At least 30 years since ordination	Individual practice	Eligible as Head of the General Assembly, Head of the Education Department, Propagation Department, and so on.
‘Great Religious Teacher’ (m.), ‘Bright Teacher’ (f.) (<i>Taejongsa</i> 大宗師/ <i>Myōngsa</i> 明師)	At least 40 years since ordination	Individual practice	Eligible as Head of the Chogye Order and for serving in the Committee of Elders.

As can be deduced from the table, passing the 5th-level exam is now required for becoming a novice and passing the 4th-level exam is required for becoming a full member of the sangha. Afterwards, monastics are generally not obligated to sit in for the higher exams, and only those with political motivations who wish to become abbots and/or hold higher positions in the Chogye Order must first go through these exams. Nevertheless, when I asked some of the higher exam takers their reason of doing so, some explained that although they do not plan to actually hold a position, they simply felt the pressure to advance in the hierarchy in order not to fall behind and stay in line with their peers. The Chogye Order now plans to make those who pass the 3rd-level examination eligible to vote in the elections for the Order leadership, a move that will surely encourage more monastics to study for and sit in for the exam.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ So far only 320 members of the entire Chogye sangha are eligible to vote (the 81 assembly members, and 10 members out of each of the 24 parishes). Giving the right to vote to all *Taedōk/Hyedōk*-ranked passers of the 3rd-level exam would raise the number of eligible voters to about 6000. On these recent plans see: Sōng-min Sin, "Chogyejong ch'ongmuwōnjang sōngō indan hwaktae toena 조계종 총무원장 선거인단 확대되나 (Can we expand the number of voters in the elections for the head of the Chogye Order's main office?)," *Hyōndae Pulgyo* 2014.

Ranks have also been recently differentiated more strictly by attire. Postulants must wear brownish-colored (male) or orange (female) robes, and novices wear the Korean gray robes with a brown stripe in the collar, and their outer robes could only be made from as many as nine patches. After passing the 4th-level exams and receiving the full precepts monastics get rid of the brown stripe and wear completely gray robes, after passing the 3rd-level exam their outer garment could be made from as many as 15 patches, and finally after passing the 1st-level exam they could wear robes made of 25 patches.⁵⁰ Since 2002 monastics also receive badges in different colors according to their rank, though I have never seen monastics actually wear them.

Creating a Postulant Canon and the 5th-Level Exams

The modern rationalization of Buddhist monastic postulancy in Korea began with the establishment of a unified Chogye Order ordination system in the early 1980's, continued with the creation of national postulant-education programs based on a new emerging postulant canon in the 1990's, and culminated in the 21st-century with the 5th-level exams required of all monastic postulants before taking the novice precepts. Up until the 1980's, aspiring monastics would simply receive the novice precepts from their own guiding teacher at their home-monastery (if at all), and perhaps travel to the provincial head monastery to receive the full precepts. Much due to the efforts of the reformer Il't'a, the first unified Chogye ordination-system was inaugurated in 1981 (in T'ongdosa), and both novice and full-precept ceremonies have been conducted nationally ever since.⁵¹ Soon, the sporadic and subjective manner of educating postulants has

⁵⁰ The Chogye Order, "Sŭngga poksik yut'ong hyŏnhwang kwa kaesŏn pangan sŏlmun chosa punsŏ pogosŏ 승가복식 유통현황과 개선방안 설문조사 분석보고서 (Analysis report of the survey regarding the present circulation and reform plans of the sangha attire)." P. 89.

⁵¹ Chanju Mun, "Kim Il'ta's (1929~99) Systemization of the Current Jogye Order's Orthopraxy " *Taegak Sasang* 18 (2012). Pp. 376-7.

come under attack as well, and calls for substantial systematized postulant education programs began to be heard. Essentially, these calls represent an attempt to objectify and rationalize the individual-teacher-based apprenticeship-style Buddhist postulant period, as well as eliminate regional differences. In this section I will focus my discussion on the new Chogye Order's postulant education system, which prepares new monastics for the 5th-level exam and for their novice ordinations.

Most of all, monastic critics in the late 20th-century lamented the fact that many monasteries simply treated postulants as free-of-charge laborers and servants, and spent very little time actually educating them in the Buddhist teachings. Pöpchang, a prominent monk who eventually served as the Head of the Main Assembly in the Chogye in the early 2000's, reminded us that according to the *Platform Sutra* Huineng himself began his monastic career doing manual work, and that through labor postulants can learn order, respect, frugality, simplicity, altruism, humility, patience, as well as rid themselves of secular habits.⁵² Nevertheless, he believed that overstressing labor creates overly formalistic hierarchies and problematic relationships among the sangha, which run the risk of becoming an obstacle to smooth communal life, initiative spirit, and Buddhist contemplation. He thus argued for the need to create a unified postulant program balancing labor with classes on Buddhist doctrines and rituals, supplemented by an hour of sitting meditation every evening.⁵³

Pöpchöng, a well-known monk in Korea who has written several bestselling books on Buddhism, seems to have had similar ideas. He wrote in 1992 that postulants are usually in a very unstable state of mind and easily influenced, and so their postulancy should not be wasted on

⁵² Pöpchang, "T'ongil toen haengja kyoyugüi chedo hwangnip pangyang 통일된 행자교육의 제도 확립 방향 (Establishing a unified postulant education system)," *Sönu toryang* 2 (1992).

⁵³ Ibid. Pp. 330-1.

labor alone, and must be supplemented by a curriculum of *Vinaya*-related texts, basic Buddhist doctrine, ritual practice, confessionals and sitting meditation.⁵⁴ Chihwan further expounded on such plans in 1992. He argued that the Korean sangha must re-think the traditional strict postulant system, which was more like a test, similar to the habit of lions known for throwing their young off a cliff, and raising only those who manage to crawl back up.⁵⁵ He lamented the fact that very large percentages of the postulants in Korea drop-out disappointed before receiving the precepts, and argued that the main reasons for this were the lack of affectionate role-models and reliance on strict authority structures instead, the lack of practice and study of Buddhism and the focus on work alone, as well as the lack of a systematized unified program. He then offered a detailed plan for a postulant curriculum, which included teachings on (1) Buddha's life with the aid of *Jātakas* to emphasize altruism, (2) the *Heart Sutra* as a basis for the doctrine of emptiness, (3) several chapters of the *Huayan Sutra* to emphasize the importance of vows as the beginning (and fulfillment) of all practice (4) *Āgamas* and *Ch'imun* for learning about the early sangha, (5) several Chan treatises, (6) additional Admonitions texts and the *Novice Precepts and Decorum*, (7) daily chanting and confessionals, (8) Buddhist history, and (9) learning respect for one's elders and devotion through labor and servitude.⁵⁶

This proposal was not adopted at first, but looking at the postulant curriculums of today I believe it is possible to detect much influence. To be sure, a much more modest postulant curriculum was adopted at first. When the Chogyé Order began organizing 23-day long unified

⁵⁴ He specified the *Vinaya*-related texts to be studied as the *Admonitions to Beginners*, the *42-Section Sutra*, the *Novice Precepts and Decorum*, and the *Bequeathed Teachings Sutra*. Pöpchöng, "Haengja kyoyuk öttökö hal ködin'ga 행자교육 어떻게 할 것이냐 (How should we conduct postulant education)," *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Cihwan, "Paramjikhhan suhaengjasang hwangnip ūl wihan haengja kyoyuk maeyong 바람직한 수행자상 확립을 위한 행자교육 내용 (Postulant education programs for nurturing desirable practitioners)," *Sōnu toryang* 2 (1992). P. 283.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

education programs nationally for postulants in 1991, the basic curriculum included the Buddha's biography (newly written by the Order), along with two *Vinaya* texts: the *Ch'obalsim* (examined in Chapter 1), and the *Bequeathed Teachings Sutra* (see Chapter 2, note 24), a Chinese apocryphal text which recounts the Buddha's final admonitions and encouragements before his passing. Soon later, with the creation of the Chogye Order's Education Department in 1995, these three texts were codified into an official *Postulant Textbook* (*Haengja kyobon*), thus becoming the postulant canon of modern Korean Buddhism.⁵⁷

By the dawn of the 21st-century the new postulant system seems to have been normalized. All monastic aspirants now needed to spend a period of at least six months as postulants in their home temples, visit their local head temple for further training every couple of months, and join a three-week unified national program in preparation for the 5th-level sangha exams, ending with a novice precept ceremony. Postulants today are expected to go through a list of newly published introductory textbooks on basic doctrines, history of the Order, chant collections, ritual procedures, Pāli texts, Chinese characters and so on prior to joining the joint postulant education program and taking the 5th-level exams. Evidently, the postulant canon has been broadening and diversifying since the early 1990's. The exam-preparation booklet published in 2006, for example, shows that basic Buddhist doctrine, Buddhist history, ritual procedures, as well as two additional disciplinary texts were added to the original three-text canon.⁵⁸ The newly-added *Vinaya*-related texts were the *Novice Precepts and Decorum*, which was composed in 16th-century China and details the ten novice precepts along with a long list of monastic decorum (see

⁵⁷ The textbook is: Education Department The Chogye Order, *Haengja kyobon* *행자교본* (*Postulant textbook*) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 1995).

⁵⁸ *5 kūp sūngga kosi yesijip* 5 급 승가고시 예시집 (*Collection of preparation questions for the 5th-level sangha exam*) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2006).

Chapter 2 note 5), and the 42-Section Sutra, which focuses on ethical admonitions to the sangha (see Chapter 2 note 23). The actual schedules of the unified three-week postulant programs confirm that lectures dealt with these exact texts.⁵⁹

In 2010 another reform occurred. The schedule of the intensive postulant program was shortened to about two weeks, but more remarkably, the *Brahma Net Sutra* was added to the postulant canon, and a Bodhisattva Precepts ceremony began supplementing the novice precept ritual at the end of the program. Up to this point, although Bodhisattva Precept ceremonies based on the *Brahma Net Sutra* were conducted sporadically on the peninsula for both monastics and laypeople, these rituals have not been a formal part of the monastic ordination process. The fact that the Bodhisattva precepts of the *Brahma Net* are often mentioned in contemporary Buddhist studies materials as the Mahāyāna substitution for the Theravāda *Vinaya* surely must have inspired modern Korean Buddhist reformers to add this ritual to the Chogye ordination procedures. Since 2010, all postulants are required to participate in separate novice as well as Bodhisattva precepts rituals in order to officially become Chogye Order novices.

In the last decade or so, the unified postulant education programs have been taking place in the beautiful monastery of Chikchisa.⁶⁰ Twice a year, all postulants who have been living in temples throughout the country for at least five months, assemble in Chikchisa together with roughly two dozen practice-guides (*sūpūija*) coming from several major Korean monasteries. Female and male postulants inhabit two separate huge halls for the program. The schedules are tight and busy, involving classes, special lectures, ritual practices, robe-dressing guidance, and

⁵⁹ *Che 34 ki haengja kyoyuk kyehoeksŏ* 제 34 기 행자교육계획서 (Plan for the 34th postulant education program) (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2008).

⁶⁰ In the 1990's the program took place sometimes in Chikchisa and other times in T'ongdosa, Haeinsa, Songgwangsa, or Pŏmŏsa, but in the last decade or so both this program as well as all Chogye ordinations have been fixated to Chikchisa.

numerous confessional bowings. Postulants do not eat after lunch during the two weeks, they participate in about six hours of classes a day, perform 108-bow confessionals every morning and every evening, and take three-steps-one-bow and one-step-one-bow trips up the hill and towards the Main Dharma Hall of Chikchisa once a week (see Figure 16). Schedules for the program from 2014 show that the 5th-level examinations took place on the 15th-day, right after which a Bodhisattva Precept Ceremony was conducted. Participants told me that only the ten major precepts of the *Brahma Net* were taken during the ritual; the 48 minor ones ignored. After the ceremony the postulants gathered for an all-night-3000-bows-vigil followed by a morning novice precepts ritual that ended the program, and allowed the exhausted new novices to return to their home monasteries. Besides having lectures on the (mostly admonitions and other *Vinaya*-related) texts of the new postulant-curricular canon discussed above, participants in the 2014 program had several writing assignments in which they had to expand upon their own goals, vows, and aspirations in the form of letters to their parents and/or guiding teachers. I was told that these letters were not really sent out, but served as exercises for the new monastics meant to clarify their intentions to themselves, raise vows, and keep as sort of time-capsules useful for checking themselves in the future. The exact schedule for the postulant education program of 2014 is found in Appendix B.



Figure 16: The One-Step-One-Bow Procession of Postulants towards the Main Dharma Hall of Chikchisa

Before concluding this section, let us take a closer look at the exams taken at the end of the postulant education programs. First, note that at least in the last decade or so very few postulants actually failed the exams, and an average of almost 99% of test-takers passed. A foreign monastic in Korea told me that his Korean language skills were so basic when he had to take this exam that he simply did not understand the questions and had to guess the answers throughout, yet he still passed. This proves that unlike in some historical cases, the aim of the exams is not to limit the number of the sangha, but to simply encourage learning. The exams have had both written and oral components. The written part involves open broad essay questions and (more recently added) short multiple-choice questions, which deal more specifically with the contents of the texts of the postulant canon. In the 2013 5th-level exams, for example, some of the essay questions were: 1. Describe the person you respect the most and how do you intend to use your future practice to resemble him/her. 2. Describe the five precepts and your practice of them. 3. Use the Four Great Vows to describe the reason for your leaving home. 4. Describe the first and last teachings of the Buddha. 5. Describe the connection between your intention in leaving home and *Śākyamuni*'s intention in living home. 6. Based on your own experience with the variety of desires and lifestyles of people, how would you put into practice the Four Great Vows of the Bodhisattva path?⁶¹ In my humble opinion, these are great questions and *gong'ans* for new monastics. Rather than simply testing their knowledge and understandings of basic Buddhism, these questions force Korean postulants to contemplate their own motives and goals in relation to the Buddhist teachings, and raise vows for future practice. These are personal questions aimed to teach rather than just to test.

⁶¹ Test Preparation manuals and actual questions are periodically posted on the Chogye Order website, and I have assembled these example questions from there.

The oral part of the 5th-level examinations is usually very short (see Figure 17). Each postulant in turn moves forward to sit in front of two testers, who first ask a few questions regarding his/ her personal motivation to ordain. Then they may ask the postulant to perform a short ritual chant using the traditional wooden-fish instrument (*mok-t'ak*). This should be done from memory. The *Heart Sutra*, the morning and evening taking refuge texts, or the first part of the *Thousand-Hands Sutra* (used for the mid-day offering ceremonies) are usually performed at this occasion. These three chants make for the basic ritual canon of the Chogy Order and are performed daily in all monasteries, and so obviously all must memorize them prior to ordination. They are short enough, and most dedicated lay Buddhists in Korea today memorize them as well.



Figure 17: The Oral Part of the 5th-Level Sangha Exam at Chikchisa, March 2014

The Seminary Curriculums and the 4th-Level Exams

The 4th-level sangha exams serve as qualification tests for novices before receiving the full-precepts and becoming full members of the Chogy Order. When novices coming from monasteries all over the peninsula gathered in Songwangsa for the first of such exams in 2000, the curriculum reflected the ‘traditional’ seminary programs (and included the basic postulant canon as well). Ten questions were dedicated to basic Buddhism, the *Novice Precepts and*

Decorum, and the *Huayan Sutra* respectively, and five questions each dealt with the *Ch'imun*, *Sajip*, *Sagyo*, and *Ch'obalsim* texts.⁶² In following years, exam questions altered according to the changing seminary curriculums, reflecting the official Chogyŏ understanding of the basic material each and every monastic was expected to be familiar with. In 2002 questions on Buddhist history and basic *Vinaya* were added to this exam. Exam preparation booklets published by the Order in 2003 and 2006 show that questions on popular academic Buddhist topics of the time such as *Mādhyamika*, *Yogācāra*, the *Platform* and the *Brahma Net Sutras* began supplementing questions related to the 'traditional' curriculum on the exams. Moreover, as *Kanhua Chan* (看話禪) gradually came to be regarded and promoted as the central hallmark of Korean Buddhism by the Chogyŏ, two relevant *Kanhua Chan*-related late-Ming Dynasty treatises were selected and added to the 4th-level exam curriculum.⁶³ The first was *Admonitions to Practice Chan* (*Canchan jingyu*, 參禪警語) written by Wuyi Yuanlai (無異元來, 1575-1630), and the second was *Changuan cejin* (禪關策進) written by Yunqi Zhuhong (雲棲祿宏, 1535-1615).⁶⁴

The problem was that not all novices received their education in the monastic seminaries. As we have seen, monastic novices could choose an education either in a seminary, in the Basic Chan Hall or the modern Dongguk University and Central Sangha College, all of which offering very different curriculums. Critics thus argued that as the exams were constructed according to the seminary programs, they were not suitable for the novice graduates of these other

⁶² Wŏn-u Kim, "4 kŭp sŭngga kosi ch'ulche pangyang hwakchŏng 4 gup sŭnggagosi chulchewang hwagŭng (Determining the 4th-level sangha exam questions)," *Hyŏndae Pulgyo* 2000.

⁶³ For the promotion of *Kanhua Sŏn* as the hallmark of Korean Buddhism by the Chogyŏ Order see: Bernard Sénécal, "A Critical Reflection on the Chogyŏ Order's Campaign for the Worldwide Propagation of Kanhwa Sŏn," *Journal of Korean Religions* 2, no. 1 (2011).

⁶⁴ Education Department The Chogyŏ Order, *4 kŭp sŭngga kosi yesang munjejip 4 gup sŭnggagosi yesangmunjejip* (Prospective questions for the 4th-level sangha examinations) (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2003). *4 kŭp sŭngga kosi yesang munjejip 4 gup sŭnggagosi yesangmunjejip* (Prospective questions for the 4th-level sangha examination) (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2006).

institutions.⁶⁵ A solution was yet to be found for this issue, and all novices still sit in together for the same exam. Thus, many of the novices, especially those graduating from Dongguk and the Basic Chan Hall, must prepare individually for the exams using study notes and Chogye textbooks. This does not seem to pose a real problem as most do manage to pass, and an average of approximately 95% of all 4th-level test takers pass the exam.⁶⁶

Following curricular reforms, in 2010 the 4th-level exam has undergone considerable modifications. Only 50% of the exam questions from then on would deal with the ‘traditional’ curricular texts, and the other half of the questions deal with early Buddhism, various Mahāyāna doctrines and texts, *Vinaya* and Buddhist ethics, temple management, and contemporary Buddhist issues.⁶⁷ Exams now take place once a year in the Central Sangha College and involve three parts: open essay questions, multiple choice questions on specific doctrines, and short translations of key phrases from the texts, as well as a 10-20 minute interview in front of two testers. Like the interview of the 5th-level exam, this oral assessment too is focused on evaluation of the novice’s attitudes and motivation as well as on short performances of the daily chanting rituals. By 2014 the *Ch’imun* and *Sajip* Chan treatises were completely left out of the exam. Instead, Chan-related questions dealt mainly with the *Platform Sutra* and the above-mentioned *Kanhua* Chan texts, conforming to the current Buddhist studies understanding of what the main text of Chan really are. Questions related to the four *Sagyo* sutras were limited to short phrase translations, and the

⁶⁵ For this debate see for example an essay by the Haeinsa’s seminary Head Teacher at the time, Chio: Chio, "Kibon kyoyuk kwajōng isu injōngūro ūi 4 kūp sūngga kosi 기본교육 과정 이수 인정으로의 4 급 승가고시 (The 4th-level sangha exam as confirming the completion of the basic education course)," in *4 kūp sūngga kosi chedo kaesōn ūl wihan t’oronhoe charyojip 4 급 승가고시 제도 개선을 위한 토론회 자료집* (Collection of materials regarding the debates on reforming the 4th-level sangha examination system), ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2000).

⁶⁶ Su-ryōng Yō, "Sūngga kosi, kaep’yōn kyogwa panyōng sūpūi kanghwa 승가고시, 개편 교과 반영 · 습의 강화 (Reflecting upon sangha exams and curricular reforms and strengthening practice)," *Pulgyo p’ok’ōsū* 2010.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

only questions on the *Huayan* dealt with the ten Bodhisattva stages. This re-confirms the results of the previous chapter which revealed how the modern Korean curricular-canon has shifted from a Chan-*Huayan*-focused program to a broader, all-inclusive Buddhist agenda influenced by modern Buddhist studies.

As was the case of the 5th-level exams, the essay questions here too are especially interesting. Some of the possible essay questions for the 4th-level exams published by the Chogye in recent years deal with Buddhist doctrinal history (for example ‘compare and contrast the eightfold path and the six perfections,’ ‘why do you think the Buddha allowed meat eating in three circumstances and Mahāyāna forbids it altogether?,’ ‘how did the teaching of emptiness of the *Prajñā-paramitas* influence Chinese Buddhism?,’ and so on), and other questions clearly attempt to encourage novices to contemplate some of the Buddhist doctrines and form individual opinions about them (for example ‘what is your opinion of the recent critique of ‘praying for luck Buddhism (*kibok Pulgyo*)?,’ ‘what is the difference between faith in Buddhism and in other religions?,’ ‘compare the new *uposatha* system of the Chogye with the one described in the *Vinaya*,’ and so on). Most remarkable are the essay questions, which seem to force soon-to-be-fully-recognized- Chogye monastics to think about various ways in which the Buddhism they studied could be propagated and skillfully used in order to benefit modern society. Some examples are: ‘why do conflicts appear between religions and how could the Buddhist worldview help in solving them?’ ‘Explain the best way for contemporary (lay) people to practice *Kanhua* Chan in order to deal with social stress and disorganized values,’ ‘what would be the best propagation method among the Korean urban population today?’ And ‘discuss how chanting the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas could be useful as a healing practice for dealing with the stress of modern society.’ The above examples reveal that just like the essay questions in the 5th-level exam, the point is not to simply evaluate familiarity with Buddhist histories and doctrines,

but to encourage active contemplation of the ways one could put them into use during his/her monastic career.

The Higher Rank Examinations and the ‘Continuing Education’ Programs

As pointed out earlier, the first 3rd-level sangha exams took place in 2001, and have since served as qualifying tests for those interested in abbacy in local branch monasteries or in directing offices in the major monasteries, and in climbing up the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Chogye Order. Unlike the 5th- and 4th-level exams, this test is not a mandatory part of the ordination process, and so it is perhaps unsurprising to discover that many Korean monastics simply choose to ignore it. Although all those who have been members of the sangha for at least ten years and participated in at least four retreats are eligible to sit for these exams, early statistics show that only about half of qualified monastics have actually taken the test.⁶⁸ With the Order's encouragement and growing peer pressure, gradually, higher percentages of eligible monastics are signing up for the exam. Moreover, as it was originally envisioned not as an entrance exam for all but as a higher examination to select leaders, grading criteria seem to have been stricter and larger numbers failed to pass at first. Between 11-13% of test takers have failed to pass in the early 2000's.⁶⁹ More recently, however, the Chogye Order seems to have been promoting higher examinations for all monastics as a way to encourage broader continual learning and development, and accordingly grading has become more lenient, and only 3% of over 400 test

⁶⁸ Education Department The Chogye Order, "2002-3 yŏn sŭngga kyoyuk hyŏnhwang 2002-3 년 승가교육 현황 (The state of sangha education in 2002-3)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 5, ed. Education Department The Chogye Order (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2004). P. 58.

⁶⁹ According to online Buddhist news in 2002 290 monastics passed and 44 failed this exam, in 2003 320 passed and 43 failed, and in 2004 93 passed and 12 failed.

takers failed to pass the 2013 3rd-level test. In 2010 the Education Department announced that graduating from one of the various new sangha graduate seminaries (discussed in the previous chapter) would be considered the same as passing the 3rd-level exam.⁷⁰

The contents of the 3rd-level exams are not very different from the 4th-level, blending doctrinal and historical knowledge of Buddhism with personal essays on the way these doctrines could be put into practice today. The 2003 3rd-level exam, for example, had two parts, the first focusing solely on the *Diamond Sutra*, and the second asking more general questions on Buddhist culture, propagation methods, and temple management.⁷¹ In recent years the exam has been divided into three parts: 50 short questions on basic doctrines, 1-2 essay questions, and an oral interview evaluating the candidate's past activities and future plans as member of the Chogye sangha.⁷² Examples for some essay questions from recent exams include: 'which Buddhist values could be best embodied in contemporary society?' 'How does Buddhist compassion tally with the reluctance of many contemporary sangha members to participate in society?' 'How could Buddhism today increase its competitiveness using its 'harmonizing controversies' (*hwajaeng sasang*) and bodhisattva ideals?' 'How should the Chogye Order reform itself to be more transparent and pure?' 'How can the Mahāyāna precepts be put into practice in modern society?' 'Provide plans for financial expansion and fair management of temples.' 'What are the abbots' roles in their respective regional societies?' 'Provide plans of propagation adequate for the

⁷⁰ The Chogye Order, *Sūnga kibon kyoyuk kigwan mit chōnmun kyoyuk kigwan chojōngan maryōn ūl wihan kongch'ōngoe* 승가 기본교육기관 및 전문교육기관 조정안 마련을 위한 공청회 (Public hearing regarding regulation plans for basic and specialist educational facilities for the sangha).

⁷¹ "2002-3 yōn sūnga kyoyuk ūi chindan kwa kwaje 2002-3 년 승가교육의 진단과 과제 (Diagnosis and problems in sangha education, 2002-3)." P. 33.

⁷² The most recent list of all 263 possible short questions for the 3rd level exam is available at: 2014 yōn 3 kūp sūnga kosi tandaphyōng munjejip 2014 년 『3 급 승가고시』 단답형 문제집 (Collection of short-answer questions for the 2014 3rd-level sangha exams) (Online: The Chogye Order, 2014).

modern five-workday week and city life.’ And so on.⁷³ As can be easily deduced from these examples, exam questions aim to encourage monastic test-takers to be involved in secular society, and think of new up-to-date propagation methods in order to remain competitive in the religious marketplace of contemporary Korea.

The 2nd-level exam, qualifying sangha members for holding executive positions in the Chogye headquarters’ bureaucracy, has been taking place every year since 2010. Evaluating Buddhist doctrinal and textual familiarity has been almost completely relegated to the 3rd- and 4th-level tests, and the 2nd-level exams focus mainly on evaluating the actual experience and practice of the candidates, and on essays regarding the development of the Chogye Order and the relations of its sangha with contemporary society. The interview (i.e. past activities in the sangha) in this exam actually counts for more than the written section: 2/3 of the final grade. Sample essay topics are: the difference between the Buddhist belief in the Pure Land and the Christian belief of redemption, social activism in the spirit of Chan, modern application of ‘no killing’ and vegetarianism, Buddhist perspectives on social justice and human rights, the problem of sticking too much to Korean traditional Chan in trying to propagate in other cultures, plans of propagation to males to correct the lay Buddhist gender imbalance, modernizing and popularizing Buddhist rituals, propagation using social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and smartphones, state laws that cause problems to the Order or temples, the rights and duties of public temples and private hermitages, a welfare system for elderly monks and nuns, and so on. Evidently, this exam is not intended to appraise the monastics’ fluency in Buddhist textual doctrines, but to assess their ability to find creative solutions for the practical modern-day needs of the Chogye sangha.

⁷³ The Chogye Order publishes a list of possible exam questions on its website several months before an exam is scheduled to take place.

The 1st-level examinations have not yet taken place. The first is scheduled for April 2015.⁷⁴ Personnel at the Education Department explained to me that evaluation of preaching is going to be a major part in this test. In fact, the Chogyae Order plans to change the 2nd-level exam system too, and a choice between written essays and 10-15 minutes oral preaching will be available for future examinees. The rationale for this is clear. As the 5th- and 4th-level exams serve mainly to assess the candidates' fluency in Buddhist doctrines, history and ethics before accepting them as full members of the sangha, the contents of the higher level exams gradually move to focus on different skills necessary for monastic leaders and position holders. These are personal experience, temple management, creativity in devising propagation methods, and oratory skills in preaching.

In order to prepare monastics for the higher exams, as well as to provide them with an opportunity to keep up with the changing times and re-check their Buddhist understanding, a system of short 'continuing education' (*yŏnsu kyoyuk*) seminars was established by the Chogyae Order. The first inchoate programs began in 1995 right after the creation of the Education Department and were intended to raise leadership and propagation skills for abbots and high position holders alone. 1,134 sangha members, who comprise 58% of invited monastics that year, participated in seminars dealing with temple management and accounting, *Vinaya*, lay organizations, and Buddhist environmentalism in 1995.⁷⁵ Since 1997 new yearly 'continuing education' programs were created for foreign monks in Korea and other temple position holders

⁷⁴ These exams were planned to begin in 2014, but have been recently postponed to 2015. According to the Buddhist media the test will assess prior propagation activities and plans for future work. See for example: Sŏng-min Sin, "Chogyejong, naenyŏn ch'ŏt 1kŭp sŭngga kosi silsi 조계종, 내년 첫 1급 승가고시 실시 (The Chogyae Order to implement the first 1st-level sangha exams next year)," *Hyŏndae Pulgyo* 2014.

⁷⁵ The Chogyae Order, "Sŭngga kyoyuk ūi tangmyŏn kwaje e taehayŏ 승가교육의 당면 과제에 대하여 (On the present problems in sangha education)." P. 28. Additionally, in 1996 the rate of participants rose to 68% (1090 of 1569 eligible monastics), in 1997 53% participated (1141 of 2147), and in 1998 60% (1007 of 1684) participated in the program.

as well.⁷⁶ The programs gradually expanded, attracting more participants (about 4000 participate yearly these days), and adding new seminars on topics such as children (Buddhist) education, the IMF and Buddhism, modern roles of abbots, preaching methods, temple construction, computers, and so on.⁷⁷ Finally, in 2001, participating in ‘continuing education’ seminars became a requirement for all those wishing to take the higher rank-exams.⁷⁸

In other words, these seminars have become firmly involved with the rank-exam system. All abbots as well as those who wish to sit in for the higher exams must participate in at least one ‘continuing education’ seminar a year, and at least three overall before sitting for the 3rd-level exams. Moreover, beginning in 2014, ‘continuing education’ seminars were divided according to sangha ranks: all ranked ‘Seeing Virtue/Virtuous Conduct’ are gathered for seminars dealing with practice in modern society, the importance and methodology of propagation, and the parish system. All ‘Middle Virtue/Virtuous Concentration’ ranking monastics learn about the future vision of the Chogye Order, counseling for the laity, and strategies for regional propagation, all ‘Great Virtue/Virtuous Wisdom’ ranked members take classes on world politics and economy, the role of the Chogye Order on the Korean Peninsula, and the functions of head district/parish temples, and higher-ranked ‘Religious Teacher/Bright Virtue’ monastics participate in special lectures on the tendencies and flow in human civilization, and on social leadership.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ The seminars for foreign monks often involve lectures on Korean temple etiquette, rituals, chants, and Chan Hall regulations in Korea. They also provide a chance for all foreign monastics in Korea to get together for a couple of days and catch up. Schedules for the 2002 for seminar, for example, are available in: *Educational Retreat of Basic Seminary for Foreign National Suhnims* (Seoul: The Chogye Order, 2002).

⁷⁷ Note that, as with the seminary curriculums, it was monastics associated with the monasteries of T’ongdosa and Pōmōsa in particular who seemed to have rebelled against the Order and participate much less in its seminars. Overall 84% of abbots thought the seminars were a good idea and should be mandatory. See: "Pon-malsa chuji yōnsu sōlmun chosa pogosō 본-말사 주지연수 설문조사 보고서 (Report on the survey regarding continuing education among the abbots of main and branch monasteries)." Pp. 93-140.

⁷⁸ "Sūngga chaegyoyuk kyebal kōmt'osō 승가 재교육 계발 검토서 (Examination of the development of continuing education for the sangha)."

⁷⁹ Ho-sūng Ch'oe, "Chogyejong, naenyōn pōpkye pyōl kyoyuk sibōm unyōng 조계종, 내년 법계별 교육 시범운영 (Model operation for the Chogye Order's next year's education according to rank)," *Pōppo sinmun* 2013.

In recent years most of the seminars (as well as the higher exams) take place in the newly built Traditional Buddhist Cultural Center (*T'aehwasan chŏnt'ong pulgyo munhwawŏn*) near Magoksa. The place belongs to the Chogye Order but looks more like a resort than a monastery, and often houses secular company membership training sessions (usually called MT's in Korea) with a Buddhist flavor (see Figure 18). The Chogye Order's 'continuing education' seminars usually last between 3-5 days and cost between 50-200 USD. Apart from the above mentioned rank-related seminars, a variety of other courses have been offered in recent years. Besides the obvious seminars on Buddhist texts, temple management and propagation, various fascinating new courses in western philosophy, science, Korean history, feminism and Buddhism, the tea ceremony, Buddhist psychology, yoga, Christianity, Daoism, cinema, Darwinism, and so on are arranged to broaden the horizons of the Chogye monastic leaders. Since 2013 pilgrimage voyages were added to the system, and these days 4-10-day trips to famous Buddhist sites in India, China, Myanmar, Japan, Tibet, and the Silk Road are organized as 'continuing education' for the Chogye sangha. The 2014 schedules also included some new courses in oratory speech skills and using new technologies for propagation.⁸⁰ In 2013 I received special permission to join a new intriguing 'continuing education' seminar called 'Practice and Coffee,' and my analysis of that particular seminar is presented as a supplement at the end of this chapter.

⁸⁰ Schedules for the last several years could be found on the Chogye Order website.



Figure 18: The Traditional Buddhist Cultural Center (Housing the Higher Sangha Exams and the Continuing Education Seminars)

The T'aego Order Rank-Exam System

The second largest Buddhist organization in Korea, the T'aego Order, also operates a similar rank-exam system for its sangha. The rank titles in fact match almost completely their Chogyae counterpart, except that the T'aego does not distribute different titles for females, and that the lowest rank of the fully ordained is called 'Good Virtue' (*Sōndōk*, 善德) rather than 'Seeing Virtue' as in the Chogyae. Ranks are based on seniority in the Order as well as on passing rank-exams, which have been distributed once every 2-3 years since the early 1980's. Unlike the Chogyae, there are no qualifying exams (and no mandatory qualifying education) for ordinations, and so tests are strictly operated for higher ranks. The contents of these exams, though, are very similar to the Chogyae, typically involving interviews on past activities and future plans in the Order, and essays dealing mainly with devising new propagation methods and sangha participation in modern society.⁸¹ The T'aego also runs yearly 'continuing education' intensive one-day seminars according to rank, mandatory for all those who wish to continue and climb the

⁸¹ See for example a news article on the 10th T'aego exams which took place in 2007: Wōn-u Kim, "T'aegojong che 10 ch'a pōpkye kosi 태고종 제 10 차 법계고시 (The 10th T'aego Order rank examinations)," *Hyōndae Pulgyo* 2007.

monastic hierarchies of the school. I participated in the 2013 program, which took place in the T'aego headquarters in Seoul's Pŏmnyunsa. In the first day, about 300 'Good Virtue' ranked monastics huddled together in the lecture hall listening to a law professor explain about religious taxation laws in Korea (see Figure 19). The next day, about 200 'Great Virtue' ranking monastics gathered to listen to lectures regarding the T'aego headquarters plans and policies for the following year, and on various new Buddhist welfare programs developed by some of the school's temples.



Figure 19: 'Continuing Education' Day for T'aego Monastics at Seoul's Pŏmnyunsa

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In sum, in recent years the Korean Chogyŏ (and T'aego) Orders have endeavored to give structure to their monastic bureaucracies by creating fixed unified rank-exam systems. Unlike their historical precedents, the new sangha exams are autonomously operated by the Buddhist institutions themselves, and rather than aiming to limit and control the sangha, they encourage learning and promote modern unified curriculum-based scholarship. The 5th- and 4th-

level exams of the Chogye serve as qualifying exams for taking the novice and full precepts respectively, and are based on the new postulant and seminary curricular canons. Passing the higher level exams qualifies candidates for abbacies and other bureaucratic positions, though all eligible monastics are encouraged to sit in for them regardless of their professional aspirations. Rather than testing fluency in texts and doctrines, these higher exams evaluate prior practice and management experience, and assess the ability of candidates to serve as leaders and devise new skillful propagation methods in order to increase the Chogye's competitiveness in the multi-religious society of Korea today. Consequently, contemporary sangha rank and position hierarchies are based mainly on textual education and exams, rather than on meditation practice. Several sangha members lament this structure, believing that exam preparation could actually become an obstacle to genuine practice. Nevertheless, as we have seen, exam questions often attempt not just to confirm knowledge, but to encourage active contemplation on the way Buddhism should be practiced and propagated in the world today. To be sure, the four seasons do seem to continue to operate deep in the mountain monasteries, and the debate seems to focus not on the existence of the hierarchies themselves, but on the conditions most appropriate for determining them.



Figure 20: Monks Taking the 3rd-Level Sangha Exam, 2012⁸²

⁸² This picture has been taken out of the following website:
<http://www.bulgyofocus.net/news/quickViewArticleView.html?idxno=66517>

Supplement to Chapter 4: From the Tea to the Coffee Ceremony

“The mind of tea is exactly the mind of Zen. Whoever puts aside the mind of Zen does not have the mind of tea, and whoever does not have the flavor of Zen does not know the flavor of tea.”

(Jokuan Sotaku, *The Record of Zen Tea*, 1715⁸³)

“Coffee clears one’s spirit. It clears the blood, and more than that it calms one’s mind.”

(Barista monk, abbot of Hyöndöksa, 2013⁸⁴)

When I first noticed an advertisement for a course titled “Practice and Coffee” (*Suhaeng kwa k’öp’i*) on the Chogye Order’s ‘continuing education’ brochure I was immediately intrigued. The abstract to the course read “As in Buddhism eating and cooking is practice, the making itself and the tasting is practice too. If you do not put your true mind into the Coffee-making process you cannot call it coffee at all. Therefore if the person who makes the coffee and the one who drinks it do it with the same sincerity, the fragrance and taste of the coffee would be great.” This seemed deliciously revolutionary and I began trying to convince the Education Department to let me participate in the program. After considerable amount of persuasion I was granted special permission, and set out to the new Traditional Buddhist Cultural Center for the seminar.

This Cultural Center, which houses most ‘continuing education’ programs and higher sangha exams, was built in 2009 and is located in a beautiful mountain setting about ten minutes’

⁸³ Quoted in: Theodore M. Ludwig, "Before Rikyu. Religious and Aesthetic Influences in the Early history of the Tea Ceremony," *Monumenta Nipponika* 36, no. 4 (1981). P. 378.

⁸⁴ Se-hyök Song, "K’öp’i pongnün sansa...sūnim ūn parisūt’a 커피 볶는 산사...스님은 바리스타 (Coffee roasting mountain temple and monk barista)," *YTN* 2013.

walk from Magoksa monastery. Although named the Buddhist Cultural Center, it looks more like a resort than a temple, with no dharma halls or chanting rituals, but with a football field, a teahouse, a convenient store, a karaoke venue, and numerous guestrooms and classrooms instead. Apart from the 40 monastics on site who came for the coffee seminar, the place hosted at the time another program for several dozen new Samsung employees (some of whom were wearing temple-stay clothes). Our teacher for the three-day ‘Practice and Coffee’ program was introduced as an International Latte Art Champion, and I later learned that she was in fact Christian, and was invited to lead the program by monastics from the Chogye headquarters who attended her coffee-making classes in Seoul. She thus barely discussed Buddhism during the seminar, but simply led practical drip-coffee making sessions for the sangha. Participants brought their own coffee-making tool sets, and various preparation methods were learned and practiced in small groups throughout (see Figure 21).



Figure 21: Monks Learning and Practicing the Coffee Ceremony

Needless to say, historically it was tea rather than coffee that was strongly associated with East Asian Buddhism. Tea was widely drunk in China at least since the Tang, and there is evidence that by the 7th-century Buddhist monastics used tea for wakefulness in meditation, as a

medicinal herb, and as an offering.⁸⁵ More elaborate tea ceremonies (or perhaps tea parties?), influenced by the rituals of the Confucian nobility, are stipulated in the monastic Pure Rules literature written in the Song.⁸⁶ In Korea tea drinking became central in Buddhist monasteries since the Unified Silla period (668-935).⁸⁷ The relationship between tea and Buddhism has been further emphasized by early 20th-century Buddhist modernizers such as D.T. Suzuki (who referred to the 18th-century Record of Zen Tea quoted at the heading of this section), often viewing the tea ceremony as integral to the practice of Zen.⁸⁸ My experience shows that Korean monastics today still do drink a lot of tea, though usually with no elaborate ceremony involved. Tea is simply drunk as the refreshment of choice while conversing with fellow monastics or with guests. The question remains whether tea has some intrinsic qualities that link it to meditation, or whether it is the ritual that is more fundamental. Would ceremoniously and mindfully preparing and drinking strawberry chocolate milkshakes produce the same effect? Moreover, East-Asian monastics obviously traditionally eat rice-based food (often in a highly ritualized manner), but does that mean that rice is more Zen than bread?

The Chogye Order planners of the 'Practice and Coffee' seminar clearly did not believe tea was in some way intrinsically more Zen than coffee. Opinions in the seminar itself varied. I was invited to one of the guestrooms one evening for what turned up to be a fascinating discussion of coffee and tea. Sitting with several monastics and drinking tea (!) for a couple of hours, opinions regarding Buddhism and coffee were split. One of the monks argued that although the preparation ritual could serve as a useful practice no matter what drink was made,

⁸⁵ Ludwig, "Before Rikyu. Religious and Aesthetic Influences in the Early history of the Tea Ceremony." P. 373.

⁸⁶ Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China*. P. 94.

⁸⁷ Seungsook Moon, "Buddhist Temple Food in South Korea: Interests and Agency in the Reinvention of Tradition in the Age of Globalization," *Korea Journal* 48, no. 4 (2008). P. 153.

⁸⁸ Ludwig, "Before Rikyu. Religious and Aesthetic Influences in the Early history of the Tea Ceremony." P. 378.

coffee is addictive and is generally unsuitable for the sangha. Another monk agreed, adding with disgust that anyone who does not feel the un-calming effects of drinking coffee is clearly not a genuine practitioner. When I asked these two why they had signed up for this particular seminar, they explained that they had to participate in a course before sitting for the 3rd-level exam, and this was the one best fitting their schedules. They were generally unsatisfied with the new exam system, saying that ranks should be based on practice and not on learning, which is often only marginally related to Buddhism at all. In fact, they added that preparing for the exams actually takes time away from practice and is obstructive rather than beneficent to the development of the Order. Other monks in the room were more positive. Some claimed that as both coffee and tea contain caffeine they can commonly be used to fight drowsiness while meditating. Others explained that drinking coffee today is important not as a sort of contemplative practice, but for propagation. As coffee is now the drink of choice for most Korean city-dwellers, the sangha must keep up with the times, they claimed. Sharing a cup with the visiting laity at temples was a good method to smoothen the atmosphere, strengthen ties, and bring them closer to Buddhism.

Coffee surely is the drink of choice in Korea today. Although only first introduced to the peninsula by Russian visitors in the 19th-century, the small country is now the 11th largest coffee consumer in the world, and any visitor to Seoul would be struck by the innumerable coffee shops lining up the streets of the city. Coffee shops are also found these days in many of the entrances to the large mountain monasteries. A Buddhist online magazine reported in 2012 that many Chan Hall monks drink coffee rather than tea during retreats, and in the large Chan hall at T'ongdosa, for example, over 50% of monastics were said to prefer drinking coffee during retreats.⁸⁹ Hyōndōksa has begun operating Coffee-Temple-Stay programs in 2010, in which

⁸⁹ Chōng-ūn Ha, "Sūnim kwa k'ōp'i 스님과 커피 (Monks and coffee)," *Pulgyo sinmun* 2012.

coffee-ceremonies are taking place, where coffee is served in traditional porcelain bowls, and is drunk quietly and solemnly with two hands. The abbot of this small monastery is the one quoted at the heading of this chapter saying that “coffee clears one’s mind.” During my recent fieldwork in Korea, when visiting temples I was frequently asked whether I prefer tea or coffee, and many of the monastics had professional drip-coffee making tool sets in their rooms. Figure 22 shows the coffee-making set found at the Grounds Master Office (*Wŏnjusi*) of Pŏmŏsa.



Figure 22: Coffee Making Tool Set at Pŏmŏsa

Walking down the mountain with two friendly nuns who have participated in the coffee seminar, I was invited to their small temple for a visit. I told them I will be glad to come someday, and asked if they would serve me coffee when I arrive. ‘NO’ they laughed, “only tea in our temple.” Old habits, indeed, do die hard.

5. From Preachers to Teachers: The Creation of an Orthodox Lay Education System

“There is no need to emphasize any more that lay education is the most effective of all the propagation methods in passing down the Buddha’s teachings to the laity today. Propagation through practice or through cultural (programs) may create an organized and mature laity, but they are unable to spread as wide as lay education can. Besides, practice and cultural programs without (a basis in) doctrinal education may collapse like a house of cards.”

(Ko Myōng-sōk , Lay Team Leader at the Chogyae Propagation Department, 1999¹)

Propagation (*p’ogyo*, 布教) has been a central keyword in Korean Buddhist discourse since the beginning of the 20th-century. In his recent dissertation, Nathan has shown how Korean Buddhist propagation took the form of a conceptual as well as physical movement from the mountains and into the cities.² The first modern Seoul temple was established in 1902, seven years after the Chosŏn Dynasty’s ban on monks to enter the capital has been lifted. By the end of the colonial era in 1945, over 300 propagation temples were set in Korean urban centers.³ It is more than likely that these new urban temples have been modeled on the Japanese propagation centers established in Korea since the end of the 19th-century. Japanese Buddhists began viewing their religion as a missionary religion on par with Christianity since the Meiji period, and as is often the case, the colonized were quick to pick up on the attitudes of their colonizer.⁴ Urban Buddhism has expanded ever since. Official Korean government statistics from 2012 enumerate

¹My translation from: Myōng-sōk Ko, "Sindo kyoyuk kwa sindo chojik kwalli ūi hyoyulchōk pangan 신도교육과 신도조직 관리의 효율적 방안 (Effective program for managing lay education and group formation)," *Sŏn munhwa yŏn'gu* 7 (2009). P. 3.

² Nathan, "Buddhist Propagation and Modernization: The Significance of P’ogyo in Twentieth-Century Korean Buddhism." P. 85.

³ Ibid. P. 115.

⁴ Kim, *Empire of the Dharma : Korean and Japanese Buddhism, 1877-1912*. P. 73-4.

2,806 Chogye, 3,280 T'aego, and several hundred smaller Orders' temples in the country, only 438 of which are traditional mountain temples.⁵ Accordingly, there are over 6,000 urban Buddhist temples in Korea today, functioning mainly as junctures of contact between the clergy and the laity.

Lay practice in these modern urban Buddhist temples has been mostly unsystematized and sporadic. Their main function was simply to provide a space, a Dharma Hall, where the neighboring Buddhist laity could come to pray, give offerings, and bow in times of need. Lay Buddhists could also join morning and evening chanting rituals with the sangha, perhaps come listen to Dharma Talks, which have been sometimes offered during the weekends, or purchase professional performances of funerary services or other semi-shamanic rituals. In the last 20 years, however, a new agenda had been the focus of Buddhist propagation in Korea. The establishment of the Chogye Order's Propagation Department in 1995 marks the beginning of this new emphasis: centering propagation around an orderly lay education system.

Admittedly, as early as the 1970's a number of charismatic individuals established several Buddhist schools in the cities, offering classes on Buddhist doctrine and history to the laity. Only since 1995, however, the Chogye Order's sangha itself decided to take the prerogative. It began by launching a network of lay schools in its temples and holding classes taught by monks and nuns there. It then continued by publishing unified textbooks to be taught in these classrooms, distributing lay propagator exams for graduates, establishing a new educationally-based rank system for the laity, and most importantly, making lay education a required qualification for anyone wishing to formally be considered a lay (Chogye Order-affiliated)

⁵ Korean Ministry of Culture, "Han'guk ŭi chonggyo hyŏnhwang 한국의 종교 현황 (The present situation of religions in Korea)."

Buddhist. This chapter will take a step away from discussing the education of the sangha, and focus on this new system of lay education in contemporary Korea.

It has often been noted by scholars that the category of lay Buddhism is quite loose and flexible. Tweed argued that it is hard to define Buddhist identities in the west, as many express interest but do not practice (like “night-stand Buddhists” who keep a Dalai Lama book on their nightstand), and others do not practice Buddhism exclusively.⁶ I believe the situation in East Asia is not radically different. Although some Buddhist texts explain that an *upāsaka* (lay) is one who upholds the three jewels and takes the five precepts, certainly not all those who consider themselves Buddhists in Asia have actually taken the precepts formally.⁷ In Korea very few lay Buddhists took the five precepts before the recent education reforms. Chogye statistics from 2000 show that almost half of those sincere laypeople who have been volunteering and studying at temples never formally took the precepts.⁸ In fact, just as Tweed argued about the western laity, many Koreans Buddhists profess interest and belief in Buddhism but do not actually practice, and others do not practice it exclusively.

But things do seem to be changing fast. Clearer borders are formed to establish who is a Buddhist layperson and who is not. Right after the establishment of the Propagation Department by the Chogye Order in 1995, for the first time in Korean Buddhist history, lay affiliation has been systematized through a process of registration and the distribution of Lay

⁶ Thomas A. Tweed, "Night Stand Buddhists and Other Creatures: Sympathizers, Adherents, and the Study of Religion," in *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship*, ed. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Christopher S. Queen (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1999).

⁷ In the *Jivaka Sutta* (AN 8.26), for example, the Buddha explains that an *upasaka* is one who takes refuge in the three jewels, and a virtuous *upāsaka* is one who takes the five precepts.

⁸ Propagation Department The Chogye Order, "Sindo kyoyuk kwallyōn chosa kyōlgwa 신도 교육 관련 조사 결과 (Survey results regarding lay education) " (2000). P. 36.

Cards (*sindojŭng*).⁹ But the real revolution was spurred by the Chogyae Laity Law revision of 2001, which stipulated a mandatory 12- lectures-educational course as a prerequisite condition for anyone wishing to officially become a Chogyae lay person. As will be clear by the end of this chapter, Chogyae Order lay affiliation is not loose anymore, but is grounded on a fixed procedure beginning with basic classroom education and ending with graduation-precept ceremonies. This course is based on a Chogyae- published textbook which serves as the basic text of the contemporary Korean lay canon. It holds the information every layperson is required to possess, and as such, creates the first fixed unified Korean lay Buddhist orthodoxy.

The chapter will start by reconstructing the historical systematization of lay education in Korea, and then move into thicker ethnographic descriptions of the actual contents of the programs. It will analyze lay attitudes and motivations for joining the education programs, official textbook agendas, educational aims and rationales, codifications of lay roles and practices, and classroom rituals, in an overall attempt to paint a picture of the new Korean Buddhist lay orthodoxy the current Chogyae education is in the process of creating.

Early Individual Initiatives

Urban propagation temples, which have been proliferating gradually since the early 20th-century, have often set up regular dharma talks (*pŏphoe*, 法會, literally ‘dharma assemblies’) during the weekends. These dharma talks were, and still are, un-systematized inspirational sermons delivered by monks. It is only the 1970’s that brought more structured doctrinal lectures

⁹ In Japan a system of lay registration and affiliation to Buddhism temples (The Danka System) has been in place since the Heian Period, and in the Edo (1600-1868) it turned into a mandatory national system of citizen registration. No such system existed in Korea.

to the laity in the form of weekly lectures.¹⁰ In 1973 the first lay school, the Taewŏn Buddhist School, was opened in Seoul offering courses on Buddhist doctrine and culture to the laity. Soon afterwards, in 1975, the Pulgwang Association initiated popular weekly lectures on the *Diamond Sutra*, and the number of lay devotees who came to listen jumped from 43 to 470 within a year.¹¹ While Pulgwang was established by one charismatic monk and the Taewŏn School was created by several laymen, both held classes in ordinary rented buildings rather than in temples. The Taewŏn School offered a couple of two-year programs, one on Buddhist Media, and one for Dharma Teachers. All teachers at the school were Dongguk University professors, and the curriculum used was mainly made of photocopies of academic textbook material. It was a small school, and by 1975 it had its first 15 graduates.¹²

In the 1980's at least 19 similar lay schools sprouted up in Seoul and in other cities. The first lay school in Pusan was established in 1982, and soon others were set up in Daegu, Incheon, and other major cities. The majority of these institutions followed the pattern set by the Taewŏn School: only five out of the 20 odd schools established before the 1990's were located in actual temples, and most offered classes taught by academics rather than by monks, basing their lectures on Dongguk University curriculums.¹³

The context for this sudden rise of Buddhist lay schools is at least partly related to the intensifying competition with Christianity. While only a little more than 1% of the Korean

¹⁰ An untitled Propagation Department report tells of one earlier school in Seoul's *Taekaksa* which offered three-week courses for the laity as early as 1953, but these courses were short lived.

¹¹ Ko, "Sindo kyoyuk kwa sindo chojik kwalli ūi hyoyulchŏk pangan sindo kyoyukwa sindo jojik gwariui hyŏlchŏk pang'an (Effective program for managing lay education and group formation)." P. 8.

¹² Kwan-t'ae Kim, "Han'guk Pulgyo sindo kyoyuk ūi yŏksa wa hyŏnhwang 한국불교 신도교육의 역사와 현황 (The history and present situation of Korean Buddhist lay education)," in *Sindo kyoyuk ūi hyŏndaejŏk panghyang kwa naeyong sindo kyoyukui hyŏndaejik panghyang kwa naeyong (The present objectives and contents of lay education)* (Seoul 2012). P. 13-15.

¹³ Ibid. 17-18.

population was Christian at the beginning of the 20th-century, by 1945 over 3% were converted, and during the 1960's Korean Protestants doubled their size to make up 6% of the population.¹⁴ This rapid growth continued well into the 1970's and 80's, and as Buddhist spectators were watching by the sidelines, they attempted to find ways to adopt Christian propagation methods with the same kind of subversive mimetic tendencies we tend to find among rivals. They watched how the Korean Catholic Church created a unified national course in basic doctrine (called *ch'algo*) required for all those who wished to baptize into the tradition.¹⁵ They observed how individual Protestant Churches, too, developed Sunday school courses as preparation for baptism, bible reading groups, as well as music and sports programs for their affiliated laity.¹⁶ And they decided that creating similar education programs for the Buddhist laity may perhaps not only be able to attract more people to the temples, but more importantly, could strengthen the communal religious affiliation of the scattered un-organized lay Buddhists that existed somewhere out there in Korean urban centers.

Perhaps it is best to exemplify such Christian influences using one of the first lay schools established by a monk in Korea, the Nūngin Sōnwŏn. Nūngin Sōnwŏn was established by Chigwang in 1984, and is the largest and most affluent Buddhist lay school in the nation today, bragging a number of 140,000 graduates by 2013. Chigwang himself explained to me in December 2013 that he grew up as a Catholic, and even started the process of studying for the priesthood, before leaving home during the political turbulence of the late 1970's and becoming a Buddhist monk. Yet he remained impressed with the Catholic education system, and is not

¹⁴ James Huntley Grayson, "A Quarter Millennium of Christianity in Korea," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert Buswell and Timothy Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006). Pp. 15, 20.

¹⁵ Ch'ang-ik Yi, "T'ajonggyo ūi sindo kyoyuk ūi naeyong kwa panghyang 타종교의 신도교육의 내용과 방향 (The contents and trends of lay education of other religions)," in *Sindo kyoyuk ūi hyōndaejōk panghyang kwa naeyong 신도교육의 현대적 방향과 내용 (The present direction and contents of lay education)* (Seoul 2012).P. 71.

¹⁶ Ibid. Pp. 67-71.

ashamed to state explicitly that he implemented Catholic- style educational methods when setting up his own lay school. The lay women volunteers that were working at the temple office at the time and eavesdropping on our conversation jumped in telling me how every Sunday they sing at the Nūngin Sōnwōn the ‘welcoming song’ for first-time participants, with new Buddhist-style lyrics composed by Chigwang (along with other piano-accompanied Christian-influenced Buddhist hymns). Apparently the ‘welcoming song’ is a well-known tradition for welcoming newcomers to Korean Protestant churches, and the lay women at this temple were nothing but proud about introducing such tradition into their Buddhist temple. One of them added that they have recently begun holding dharma talks in groups according to ages, “just as they do in Christian churches.”

The Nūngin Sōnwōn is not part of the Chogyae education system. Most classes are taught by Chigwang and some by an affiliated Dongguk professor, and all textbooks used are books written by Chigwang himself. Yet, as the Chogyae Order was systematizing its education it looked at this school as a primary model for success. In a 2000 seminar the Chogyae recommended adopting the Nūngin Sōnwōn’s system of adding chanting rituals to the lectures, distributing lay cards to form stronger affiliation, creating a lay- ranking system, and giving the laity a larger role in the actual management of the temples.¹⁷ All of these strategies have become part of the Chogyae system in recent years. Chigwang, however, told me he believes he owes his success to a different cause. He explained that unlike in the Chogyae institutions, one person (himself) has been continuously leading the school for many years and is thus able to maintain

¹⁷ The Nūngin Sōnwōn distributes six lay ranks. In 2000 there were 40 Dharma Transmitters (*Chōnbōpsa*), 33 Dharma Teachers (*Hyōnpōpsa*), 102 Nūngin Directors (*Nūnginjang*), 763 Nūngin Administrators (*Nūngindūng*), 763 General Staff (*Ch’ōngmu*), and 1264 Prayer Organizers (*Kido Kansa*). See: Education Department The Chogyae Order, "Sōul chiyōk Nūngin sōnwōn 서울 지역 은인선원 (The Nūngin Sōnwōn of the Seoul area)," in *Sūngga kyoyuk* 3 (2000). Pp. 249-55.

long lasting relationships with the affiliated laity. In Chogye temples monks and nuns fill a position at the temple (perhaps a teacher) for several years before moving on to another position or another temple altogether. Abbots and teachers change often enough, and this makes the laity associate itself to a temple or simply to the religion, rather than to a specific personality. The Nūngin, however, is built around one charismatic teacher, Chigwang, and although this kind of guru-style Buddhist center seems to be successful in attracting large numbers of followers, only time will tell whether or not it will be able to survive the loss of its founder.

A similar early lay Buddhist school that centered around one charismatic monk but seems to have managed to survive his passing is Pulgwangsa. The Pulgwang Association was created by Kwangdōk in the mid 1970's, but it was only in the mid 1980's that it set up a systemized school, creating a gradual curriculum of basic sutra courses, propagators exams, and a lay rank system based on examinations and seniority in the movement.¹⁸ Kwangdōk was one of the earliest sutra translators into modern Korean, and the sutra courses at the center are based on his translations to this day. He passed away in 1999, yet his school was able to survive by registering with the Chogye Order in 2002 and joining its new educational network. Classes are still taught in the same old ordinary building which was used in the 1980's, yet in recent years an impressive temple has been built nearby with several dharma halls, and offices, and some of the activity has been moved there.

Another significant early Buddhist lay school worth mentioning here is the Tongsan Buddhist School. It was established by a prominent layman by the name of Kim Chae-il in 1982,

¹⁸Chae-yōng Kim, *Kwangdōk sūnim ūi saengae wa Pulgwang undong* 광덕스님의 생애와 불광운동 (*Kwangdōk sūnim's life and the Pulgwang movement*) (Seoul: Pulgwang Press, 2000). Pp. 359-63. The system began with basic education after which one became a Teacher (*Myōnggyosa*), and after five more years one became a Dharma Teacher (*Myōngbōpsa*). As a Dharma Teacher one could take a yearly course and sit for the propagator exam. The first exam took place in 1993 and 55 lay people passed and received the Pulgwang Propagator (*P'ogyosa*) rank. Propagators of 15 years seniority receive the rank of Dharma Transmitter (*Chōnbōpsa*).

and began operating three-months long doctrine courses taught right in Chogyesa's dharma hall. By the early 1990's the school was offering basic courses based on Sŏngchŏl's famous *Hundred Days Dharma Talk* (*Paekil pŏpmun*) lecture series from 1962, as well as two-year programs with 18 different courses on Mahāyāna doctrine, and a three-year graduate school program, all taught by Dongguk and Central Sangha University professors for the laity.¹⁹ This school set an important precedent for the practice of having lay precept ceremonies and getting a Buddhist name as part of the basic education graduation ceremonies, and incorporated the interesting practice of writing down *Namu Amitabah* on paper 108,000 times as a requirement for graduation. Kim Chae-il's explicit hope in setting up this school was to transform Korean Buddhism from 'skirt Buddhism' (*ch'ima Pulgyo*) dominated by ignorant elderly women, to a more philosophically oriented 'male Buddhism' (*namsŏng Pulgyo*) (the sexism here is not my own).²⁰ Such rhetoric of attempting to attract more men into the frequently female dominated Korean temples by providing systematic doctrine courses is often heard from the Chogye Order personnel as well. Furthermore, lamenting the fact that most hotel rooms in Korea contained a Christian Bible but no Buddhist scripture, the school held a fascinating campaign in the early 2000's translating from Japanese and publishing a great number of *Buddhist Bibles* (*Pulgyo sŏngjŏn*, 佛教聖典) and distributing them in over 6,000 high-end hotel rooms.²¹ In 1997 Tongsan opened a branch in Los Angeles. The main school still stands today right beside the Chogye main temple of Chogyesa. Its largest classroom is furnished with Buddhist images, a blackboard, as well as with long church benches (see Figure 23), showing some remarkable material Christian influences on Korean lay Buddhist education.

¹⁹Most information on Tongsan is taken from: Tongsan Buddhist Univesrity, *Taejung p'ogyo ūi yŏksa nŭl saero ssŭn Tongsan 30 yŏn 대중포교의 역사를 새로 쓴 동산 30 년* (30 years of Tongsan: Writing a new history of mass propagation) (Seoul: Tongsan Panyahoe Press, 2012).

²⁰Ibid. Pp. 63.

²¹ Ibid. Pp. 116-9, 151.



Figure 23: Classroom at the Tongsan Buddhist Lay School Furnished with Church-Benches

The early 1990's saw a great increase in the construction of Buddhist lay schools. By 1994 there were 76 lay schools in the country, 60% of which were still not located within or related to temples at all. Almost 90% of the schools were affiliated with the Chogye Order, and half were located in Seoul.²² As almost all of these schools were established by individual initiatives of lay people and monks, most were not able to survive long. Only about a third of these schools still operates today.

The Chogye Order System

In 1994 the Chogye Order headquarters underwent massive structural reforms, and both separate Education and Propagation Departments were established. Soon afterwards the Propagation Department began taking direct control of the Chogye- affiliated lay schools. As we have seen, up until that point all schools were set up by individual initiatives of monks, or more

²² The Chogye Order, "Sindo kyoyuk kwallyŏn chosa kyŏlgwa 신도 교육 관련 조사 결과 (Survey results regarding lay education) ".P. 3-5.

often laymen, and the Buddhist orders were for the most part disinterested in their management and curriculums. But this all changed in 1995, as the Chogye Order sangha took the reins. The Chogye Propagation Department began setting up a unified structure of lay temple schools (literally called Lay Buddhist Universities, *Sindo pulgyo taehak*, 信徒佛教大學), teaching a centralized curriculum, and ultimately preparing lay people for work as Buddhist propagators. It quickly established a system of school registration according to a unified set of conditions, and the first 37 schools registered with the Chogye in 1995. The number of registered lay schools keeps rising, and as of 2013 it stands at 120 institutions (see Table 11).²³ While almost all early schools were located in Seoul, only 11 of the current 120 are situated in the capital. One of the administrators at the Propagation Department explained to me that there are still many schools which are un-interested in registering, as the Chogye is unable to provide them with any financial support. However, what the Chogye headquarters does provide the schools are teaching materials (teachers' handbooks, ready-made PowerPoint presentations and videos to use), as well as official recognition and Lay Cards for the graduates.

Simultaneously, the Propagation Department started, for the first time in Korean Buddhist history, to assemble and register its laity, provide them with Lay Cards (see Figure 24), and collect mandatory yearly membership fees from them.²⁴ Lay Buddhist affiliation in Korea was thus becoming less loose and flexible, with the laity holding Buddhist ID cards and voluntary

²³ Information received directly from the Chogye Order.

²⁴ Gareth Fisher notes that most lay people he encountered during his fieldwork in Beijing held similar 'conversion certificates' (or more literally 'taking refuge certificates,' *guiyi zheng*, 歸依證) which they received for a small fee after taking the three refuges in front of a monastic or in mass conversions. Many of these lay people believe such certificates should allow them free entrance to temples and discounts in case of lounging in monasteries, but not all temples actually acknowledge such benefits, a fact which, as Fisher illustrates, sometimes causes some friction. See: Gareth Fisher, "In the Footsteps of the Tourists: Buddhist Revival at Museum/Temple Sites in Beijing," *Social Compass* 58, no. 4 (2011). See also: *From Comrades to Bodhisattvas: Moral Dimensions of Lay Buddhist Practice in Contemporary China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014). Pp. 14, 153.

donations transforming into yearly fees. The first Chogyae Lay Cards were distributed in October 1995 to lay people who simply applied in their neighborhood temples. Lay (membership) Cards (*sindojŭng*) cost a small fee (usually about \$10 US), and the Chogyae encourages lay registration by entitling Lay Card holders to free entrance to all Chogyae Order-affiliated mountain temples and their surrounding Korean National Parks, as well as discounts in selected hospitals, museums, spas and resorts. As of 2013 just a little over half a million lay people registered with the Chogyae. The yearly fee the laity is expected to donate is called *kyomugŭm* (敎務金), which is not a traditional Buddhist term, but one that was borrowed directly from Korean Catholicism by the Chogyae Order (this is the Korean translation of the Latin *Dinarius Cultus*). It is currently set on 10,000 Won (about \$10 US).²⁵ This is a trivial amount for most Koreans today, yet there is no real system for collection, and very few lay people actually pay (the numbers stood at only 30% payers in 2009).²⁶



Figure 24: (My) Chogyae Lay Card

²⁵ Propagation Department The Chogyae Order, "Sindo tŭngnok mit sindo kyoyuk ōmmu maenyuŏl 도등록 및 신도교육 업무 매뉴얼 (Manual for operating lay registration and education)," (2011).

²⁶ "Chongdan p'ogyo ūi hŭrŭm kwa hyŏnhwang 종단포교의 흐름과 현황 (The flow and present condition of the Order's propagation)," (Seoul: Chogyae Order Press, 2011).Pp. 335-6.

In 1995 the Propagation Department also began administering written Propagator Exams (*p'ogyosa kosi*, 布教師 考試) for graduates of the registered schools, with 305 lay people passing the first of such exams that same year.²⁷ The numbers of test takers has gradually been rising, and as of 2013 there are already 7,234 formally recognized lay propagators who passed these Chogye exams (see Table 11). An examination to select a group of professional laypeople is a whole new concept in the traditional monastic-centered Buddhist world.²⁸ As is often argued in regard to modern forms of Buddhism, such an exam diminishes the distinction between the professional Buddhists (traditionally the sangha) and their lay followers. The Propagator Exams provide the Korean laity with a novel opportunity to become Buddhist professionals without leaving home, and therefore participate in the formal ecclesiastical hierarchy. Looking into the official preparation booklets for these exams (*P'ogyosa kosi yesang munjejip*), which were first published in 1995, one may note that almost all questions are multiple-choice, and are set up according to the contents of the new Chogye textbooks. The most recent preparation booklet published in 2013 divides the questions into six subcategories: Buddhist Primer, Understanding Buddhism, Buddhist History, Buddhist Culture, Understanding Propagation, and the Chogye Order Constitution and Laws.²⁹ A 2012 report by the Propagation Department demonstrates that

²⁷ Ibid.Pp. 311-12, 342.

²⁸ Although several lay-centered Buddhist groups hold exams, the only other example I found in the literature for traditional monastic-centered Buddhist institutions holding exams for the laity is in Thailand. Ishii reports that national lay Buddhist doctrinal examinations were introduced in 1929, based on the same textbooks used by the sangha. See: Ishii, *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*. P. 77, 92. In Myanmar, lay people are allowed to sit in with the sangha for the national Pāli Exams, and lay passers receive, just like the monks, the rank of *Dhammacarya* (Dharma Teacher). See: Cho, "Segye sūngga kyoyuk ūi ōje wa onūl 세계 승가교육의 어제와 오늘 (The past and present of sangha education in the world)." P. 278.

²⁹ Propagation Department The Chogye Order, *P'ogyosa kosi kich'ul munjejip* 포교사고시/기출문제집 (Sample question collection for the propagator exam) (Seoul: Chogye Chong Ch'ulpansa, 2013).

only 3% of propagators are below 40 years old, 82% above 50, and just over half of those passing the exams are male.³⁰

The same report states that the highest number of propagators (23%) is active in regional welfare, but does not specify further. From my own experience, this usually, though not always, means doing kitchen and office work in the temples themselves, rather than being involved in broader activities aiding the poor and needy of Korean society. 20% conduct military propagation, which means they are involved in military Sunday Buddhist programs, and 11% are said to be active in temple culture programs, implying administration and guiding work in Temple Stays.³¹ It is not clear how the other half of the propagators actually propagate.³²

³⁰ Propagation Department The Chogyŏ Order, "Che 18 hoe yebi p'ogyosa kyoyuk charyojip 제 18 회 예비포교사 교육 자료집 (The 18th data collection [booklet] regarding preparatory propagators' education)," (2012). P. 41.

³¹ Ibid. P. 39. On the Temple Stay Program see my: Uri Kaplan, "Images of Monasticism: The Temple Stay Program and The Re-branding of Korean Buddhist Temples," *Korean Studies* 34 (2010).

³² In Chogyŏ seminars participants often lament the fact that although the goal of the system is to create propagators there are no specific stipulations for their activities as propagators after completing the education. This will surely change in the near future. See for example: Ŭng-ch'ŏl Kim, "Sindo chŏnmun kyoyuk kigwan kyogwa kwamok e kwanhan sogo 信徒 專門教育機關 教科課程에 관한 小考 (A short reflection on the curriculum of the lay specialized educational institutions)" in *Sindo kyoyuk ch'egye-hwa rūl wihan kongch'ŏnghoe 신도교육 체계화를 위한 공청회 (Public hearing regarding the systematization of lay education)*, ed. The Chogyŏ Order Propagation Department (Seoul: 2000). P. 60.

Table 11: The Chogyé Lay Education System in Numbers³³

YE A R	NEW REGISTE R E D L A I T Y	LAITY PAYING YEARLY FEES (KYOMUGŨ M)	NUMBER OF LAY BUDDHIST UNIVERSIT IES	NUMBER OF GRADUATE S FROM THE LAY BUDDHIST UNIVERSITI ES	NUMBER OF NEW LAY MISSIONAR IES
1996	57,233	57,149			386
1997	53,377	65,938			404
1998	37,422	47,471			257
1999	35,161	52,144			355
2000	26,782	47,685	46		
2001	25,703	46,413			
2002	27,967	54,009	48	1,018	278
2003	27,612	56,765	53	1,650	366
2004	26,061	33,795	53	2,002	388
2005	25,891	30,131	60	1,823	
2006	21,227	29,687	64	2,576	425
2007	19,668	26,325	75	3,513	366
2008	17,934	25,023	80	3,297	397
2009	49,137	30,901	86	4,103	542
2010	55,596	33,397	95	4,200	558
2011			104	4,400	575
2012			115	4,900	620
2013			120	6,000	713
Total:	506,797		120	39,482	7,234

Mandatory Basic Lay Education

As the Propagation Department's agenda in the late 1990's focused on creating a lay education system based on specialized doctrinal study in preparation for the Propagator Exams, the 2000's brought fascinating new reforms. In a series of revisions to the Laity Law (*Sindo pŏp*, 信徒法) in 1999 and 2001, the Chogyé established a new graded educational system. It begins

³³ Information received from the Chogyé Order.

with (required) basic education, only after which one could receive the precepts, a Lay Card and a Buddhist name, and be eligible to continue on to specialized Buddhist schools in preparation for the Propagator Exam. Note that a distinction has been created here between basic and specialized lay education institutions, the lay schools I have been discussing thus far being on the specialized list. About 500 Chogye temples were recognized as Chogye basic-education institutions in 2001, all eligible to provide a program of at least 12 hours of classes to the laity based on the new Chogye Order's textbook, the *Buddhist Primer*. These basic courses end with precept ceremonies and the distribution of Lay (membership) Cards.³⁴ The significance of this systematic reform is easy to miss. Since 2001 taking an introductory course on Buddhism has become a mandatory qualification not just for becoming a specialized propagator, but simply for receiving the precepts and being officially recognized as a Chogye-affiliated layperson.

As the stem thickened the branches widened. A three-month unified basic education course gradually became the norm in the last decade, and at the same time the curriculums of the specialized lay schools broadened and diverged. At first, most schools held courses on the *Heart*, *Diamond*, and *Thousand Hand* sutras (probably the three most commonly read sutras by the Korean laity), as well as on some traditional arts such as calligraphy, flower arrangement, pottery, etc. In an attempt to attract more students, temple schools today offer much more. A few examples are in order. Chogyesa's lay school, like numerous Korean churches, now offers guitar, flute, and singing lessons, along with a variety of lessons on Buddhist texts, from the *Āgamas* to the Chan Anthologies. The Tongsan school nearby has been offering courses in ocarina playing, Buddhist dance, photography and Sanskrit, along with a variety of Buddhist textually-focused

³⁴The Chogye Order, "Chongdan p'ogyo ūi hūrūm kwa hyōnhwang 종단포교의 흐름과 현황 (The flow and present condition of the Order's propagation)." P. 350.

classes. In 2013 a monk from Tibet was teaching a course on Vajrayāna there as well. A new Chogye Order International *Sŏn* Center was inaugurated in affluent Kangnam in 2010, equipped with a coffee shop, an ATM, a restaurant, monks' living quarters, Temple Stay facilities, a large dharma hall on the roof, and classrooms for lay education in the basement (see Figure 25). Besides keeping the orthodox Chogye lay curriculum, it also offers modern-style courses titled Tea and Meditation, Buddhism and Movies, and a temple food cooking program taught by a monk in white chef clothes in special classrooms equipped with kitchens (see Figure 26).

In addition, a Cyber Buddhist University was set up in 2006, and over 500 lay people receive their basic education online every year since.³⁵ Some of the larger lay schools supplemented their programs in the 2000's with graduate programs. Lastly, a new Chogye Buddhist Counselor School has been producing about ten graduates a year since its inauguration in 2007. Half of these graduates are nuns and the rest are lay women who go through a curriculum of classes in Buddhism and psychology, and are encouraged to volunteer as counselors in temples and military bases after graduation. A specialized lay school for Buddhist children and youth leaders has also began operating recently in Pusan.

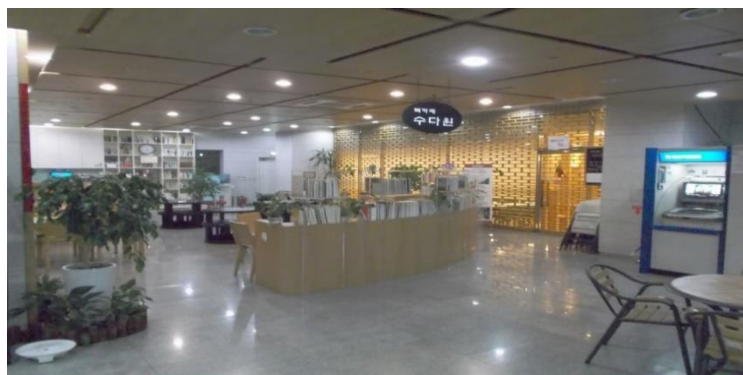


Figure 25: The Lobby of a Modern Chogye Temple. (International Sŏn Center)

³⁵ Ko, "Sindo kyoyuk kwa sindo chojik kwalli ūi hyoyulchŏk pangan 신도교육과 신도조직 관리의 효율적 방안 (Effective program for managing lay education and group formation)." P. 12.



Figure 26: Temple Food Cooking Class at the International Sŏn Center

Furthermore, in recent years a new lay rank hierarchy has been initiated by the Chogyŏ. As we have seen earlier, some of the guru-style lay schools such as Pulgwangsa and Nūngin Sŏnwŏn created their own lay ranking system based on education and seniority. This was most likely adopted from Korean Christianity in which most Protestant churches use a four-rank scheme, and Catholics six.³⁶ Buddhist-related New Religious Organizations, rather than the traditional Buddhist Schools, seem to have a greater tendency to strengthen lay affiliation by creating such ranking systems. The Korean Won Buddhist School has a six-rank lay system, and in Japan, the Sōka Gakkai, for example, maintains a four-level exam-rank system since the 1950's.³⁷ In a further attempt to strengthen lay affiliation, the Korean Chogyŏ Order decided to adopt one as well.

³⁶ The lay Protestant ranks advance from Regular Devotee (*Pyŏn sindo*), to Manager (*Chipsa*), to Deacon (*Kwŏnsa*), to Elder (*Changno*). In Catholicism ranks advance from Preparatory Devotee (*Yebi sindo*), to Regular Devotee (*Pyŏn sindo*), to Doctrinal Teacher (*Kyori kyosa*), to Missionary (*Chŏn'gyosa*), to Great Theologian (*Taesinhaksaeng*), and finally to Congregational (*Sudohoe*).

³⁷ For Won Buddhism see the school website at: <http://www.won.or.kr>. For the Soka Gakkai system see: Levi Maclaughlin, "Soka Gakkai in Japan" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2009).

The first Chogyé Laity Law, which was enacted in 1984, fashioned a rudimentary seniority-based lay ranking system beginning with *Wōnsa* (元士) for all laypeople above 35 years of age, and *Kōsa* (居士, ‘householder,’ for men) and *Kyohwasa* (教化士, ‘educator,’ for women) for those over the age of 45. This system was never actualized and was excluded from the law in its 1994 revision.³⁸ In 2011, however, a new four-level Buddhist lay rank system based on education rather than on seniority was legislated by the Chogyé. The first two ranks are related to the basic education course. They are given to those who receive some basic information in a temple and register for the basic course, and to those who graduate from the basic education course and become official laypeople, respectively. They are titled ‘Arising the Mind’ (*Palsim*, 發心) and ‘Practitioner of the Way’ (*Haengdo*, 行道), and constitute the first two stages in the Four Bodhisattva Stages schema (*Posal saji*, 菩薩四地) appearing in the *Manjusri’s Questions on Enlightenment Sutra*.³⁹ The next two ranks are related to the more advanced specialized lay education whose goal is to create propagators. The third rank is given to those who graduate from a registered Buddhist Lay School, and the fourth to those who pass the Propagator Exams and complete additional six months of specialized leadership training at the Order’s headquarters. Their titles are taken straight out of the *Huayan Sutra*: the third, ‘Unmoving’ (*Pudong*, 不動) constitutes the 8th-stage of the ten Stages of the Bodhisattva, and the fourth, ‘Virtuous Wisdom’ (*Sōnhye*, 善慧), constituting the ninth, and almost final stage. Actual distribution of ranks began in 2012, and according to the Propagation Department approximately 18,000 laypeople received the ‘Practitioner of the Way’ and ‘Unmoving’ ranks in the first two years. Badges in different

³⁸ Ko, "Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong kyoyuk ūi t'ŭkching kwa chōnmang 대한불교조계종 교육의 특징과 전망 (The special characteristics and prospects of the Korean Buddhist Chogyé Order's education)." Pp. 225-6.

³⁹ See 文殊師利問菩提經 -T14.464. This exact schema is copied verbatim also in T53.2122

colors are distributed representing the ranks, the lighter the color the higher the rank (see Figure 27). Table 12 summarizes the current Chogye Order education system.



Figure 27: Lay Rank Badges

Table 12: The New Chogye Order Lay Education System

	Contents	Required Textbooks	Time	Place	Rank and Eligibility
Entering the Order	Basic information in temple		1-2 hours		Arising the Mind (Palsim, 發心)
Basic Education (基本教育)	Buddhist etiquette, basic doctrine	<i>Buddhist Primer (Pulgyo immun)</i>	At least 12 hours	1. Over 500 Registered Chogye temples 2. Digital (Online) University	Practitioner of the Way (Haengdo, 行道, eligible to continue to Specialized Education)
Specialized Education (專門教育)	1. Required courses: Introduction to Buddhism, Life of the Buddha 2. Electives.	1. <i>Introduction to Buddhism (Pulgyo kaeron)</i> 2. <i>The Life of the Buddha (Puch'ŏni m ũi saengae)</i>	At least 96 hours including 64 hours of required courses (reduced in 2011 from 128 hours)	1. 120 Registered Chogye Buddhist Lay Universities 2. Digital (Online) University. 3. Buddhist Counseling University. 4. Buddhist Instructors University.	Unmoving (Pudong, 不動, eligible to sit for the Propagator Exam, Buddhist Counseling Exam, or Children/Youth Leaders' Exam)

Continuing Education (再教育)	Participation in a fixed number of lay meetings, welfare, activities, etc.			1.Propagation Department 2.Head District Monasteries	Unmoving (Pudong, 不動) eligible as member of the Central Lay Assembly)
Leaders' Training (指導者教育)	Passing the Propagator Exam and participation in six months of special education.			Propagation Department	Virtuous Wisdom (Sōnhye, 善慧)

Other Korean Buddhist Orders

Before I continue into a thicker description of the Chogyé programs, something must be said about lay education in some of the other Korean Buddhist institutions. It is interesting that although the T'aego generally prides itself on being closer to the laity, until very recently it has shown very little effort to educate its lay followers in the Buddhist teachings. Evidently, education was not understood to be part of the traditional methods of propagation. To be sure, the T'aego has been involved with some lay education initiatives, and a few individual T'aego clergymen had opened small doctrine and ritual courses for the laity in the 1980's. The Haedong Buddhist School, which was opened in 1987, for example, still stands today tucked away on the 3rd-floor of a run-down building in Seoul's Chongno market, offering courses on basic sutras and rituals to about 20 lay students each semester. But such efforts were few and far in between.

Observing closely the Chogyé reforms, however, the T'aego headquarters has recently begun taking action towards creating its own lay education system. One of the clergymen

at the headquarters told me that in 2006 they have established a centralized lay school registration system too, and gave me a list of 15 T'aego lay schools registered and active as of 2013. Only two out of the 15 institutions on the list were established before the year 2000. Three of these schools are located in Seoul, none of them offering programs that last for longer than several months, or a student body larger than several dozens a year at the most. The T'aego does organize, though, special ritual training programs which take place at the Seoul headquarters every year and authorize their lay graduates (who are mostly family members of clergy) to lead chanting rituals at T'aego temples. Moreover, trying to keep up with the competition, in 2013 the T'aego began issuing its own Lay (membership) Cards. Thus far there is no educational requirement for receiving one, and very few have actually bothered applying. In sum, the T'aego lay education system is still rudimentary, but the headquarters is currently striving to strengthen and expand it, and surely results will be seen in the near future.

The third largest Buddhist Order in Korea is the Kwanŭm (觀音宗), literally the Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Order.⁴⁰ It is much smaller than the Chogye and T'aego, encompassing a number of 510 temples and 780 clergy as of 2012.⁴¹ Its headquarters sit in Seoul's Myogaksa, a temple that holds a popular touristy Temple Stay program for experiencing monastic life, but does not actually have any monastic life of its own. The simulacra has really taken over reality in this temple, which no monks actually inhabit but only Temple Stay guests sometimes do.⁴² The temple does have a beautiful dharma hall and it also houses the 'Seoul

⁴⁰ Note that the international Korean Chan Order created by Seung-sahn, which has temples in Korea and abroad, is also called the Kwanŭm Order but it is a completely different institution.

⁴¹ Korean Ministry of Culture, "Han'guk ŭi chonggyo hyŏnhwang 한국의 종교 현황 (The present situation of religions in Korea)."

⁴² This is a third order simulacrum in which the simulation masks the absence of any reality behind it, as appears in Baudrillard's famous procession of the simulacrum in his: Jean Baudrillard, *Simulation and Simulacra* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

Buddhist Culture University' (*Sŏul pulgyo munhwa taehak*). Although the school's website claims they maintain a two-year lay program which culminates with a propagator-rank exam, the bulletin board at the temple itself advertised in 2013 only a short six-month Buddhist studies course for the laity.⁴³

The Korean Ch'önt'ae Order is a whole different story. Not only does it boast running a private secular university (Kŭmgang University), but it also operates an impressive network of lay doctrinal schools, all called by the same name: Kŭmgang Buddhist Schools (*Kŭmgang Pulgyo taehak*, 金剛佛教大學, literally Diamond Buddhist Universities).⁴⁴ Their history is parallel to the one of the Chogye schools: the first few opening in Seoul and Pusan in the 1980's, 1-2 year courses and additional graduate programs were organized in the 1990's, and by 2003 there were 11 such Diamond schools in the country.⁴⁵ As can be expected, their curriculums focus on the *Lotus Sutra* and other traditional Tiantai texts such as Zhiyi's *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohezhi guan*, 摩訶止觀), and so on. I visited the largest Diamond school in Seoul's Kwanmunsa in 2013, and learned that there are now 15 such schools, most offering two-year programs taught primarily by lay professors. Kwanmunsa's school has a student body of over 200 students. Unlike the Chogye Order, however, education is not a pre-condition for becoming an official Ch'önt'ae layperson. There is a different qualification for that: joining a short chanting retreat at the main temple of Kuinsa.

⁴³ <http://www.myogaksa.net>

⁴⁴ There are only four recognized Buddhist secular universities in Korea today. Two of them belong to the Chogye Order (Dongguk and the Central Sangha College), one to Ch'önt'ae, and one to the smaller Chingak Order (Widŏk University).

⁴⁵ The Ch'önt'ae Order Main Office, *Ch'önt'ae sinhaeng ūi ch'ŏkkŏrŭm 천태신행의 첫걸음* (*First steps in the Ch'önt'ae faith*) (Seoul: The Ch'önt'ae Order Main Office Press, 2003). Pp. 252.

Apart from the above-mentioned institutions, almost 70 other Buddhist groups were registered with the Korean Ministry of Culture by 2012.⁴⁶ Most of these groups are very small and do not involve much educational activities for the laity. One of them, though, seems especially visible and is worth mentioning here: The Pure Land Association (*Chōngt'ohoe*, 淨土會) is a lay-centered group which was founded and lead by the prolific 'smiling monk,' Pōmnyun, in the late 1980's. Unlike the Japanese Pure Land movements, its lay practice focuses on chanting the name of *Avalokiteśvara* (*Kwanŭm*) rather than that of *Amitābha* Bodhisattva.⁴⁷ It operates numerous small centers in Korea, and 14 branches abroad, some of which administering lay schools with programs on Buddhist history, basic doctrines and on the *Diamond*, *Heart* and *Platform* sutras. Today these programs are all based on a video-lecture-series recorded by Pōmnyun.

Who are the Students?

Between September and December of 2013 I participated in a 13-week Chogye basic lay education course in Hwagyesa, a traditional Buddhist temple in northern Seoul. As most of these courses today go, classes were held inside a dharma hall and taught by a monk, in stark difference from the earlier versions of ordinary building classrooms and classes taught by lay teachers. During class we were sitting on cushions on the floor, and using small folding tables as they did in older Korea, giving the class a more traditional form and atmosphere (see Figure 28).

⁴⁶ Korean Ministry of Culture, "Han'guk ŭi chonggyo hyōnhwang 한국의 종교 현황 (The present situation of religions in Korea)."

⁴⁷ In Korea the cult of *Avalokiteshvara* has become the most popular since the 9th-century, replacing older stress on *Śākyamuni* and *Maitreya*, and overshadowing the mostly post-mortem related *Amitabha* cult. See: Richard McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and the Hwaom Synthesis in Silla* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008). Pp. 44-70

Being a young foreigner, my existence attracted all kinds of attention, which varied from mild suspicion to enthusiastic curiosity. The majority of the other students were 50-something-year-old females. To be exact, only five out of my 44 classmates were male, and only five were below 40 years of age. This seems to be typical. A 2003 Chogyae Order survey found that only 22.5% of all receivers of basic lay education were male, and 85% were above 40 years of age.⁴⁸ Interestingly, the ratio of females is much higher at the lower levels of the Buddhist lay education system, yet as you climb up the educational ladder, males do seem to be catching up.



Figure 28: Class at Hwagyesa

After several lectures I had gotten pretty friendly with one of the other male students. He was the youngest male in the class besides myself, and explained that he works online from home most days, and thus had time to join the course. Most Korean middle-aged men work long hours and do not have sufficient free time for such activities, he explained. All other male students in the class were already retired. Women in contemporary Korea often do not hold a job

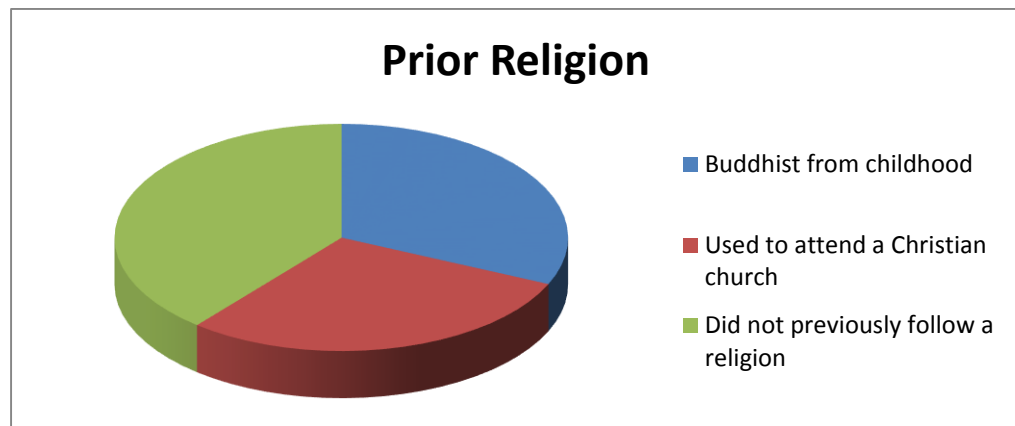
⁴⁸ Propagation Department The Chogyae Order, "2003 yŏn sindo kibon kyoyuk kaesŏl ŭl wihan sŏlmun chosa kyŏlgwa pogosŏ 2003 nŏn sindo kibon kyoyuk gaesŏl ŭl wihan seolmunjosa gyeolgabogoseo (A report of the results of a 2003 basic lay education survey)," (2003).

after marriage, and certainly have more free time to come. Nevertheless, I was still wondering whether time was the whole story here. One of my female classmates had a more interesting theory. She claimed that Korean men would often simply be “too proud to join such a class with the *ajummas* (middle-aged women).” Although her own husband was very much interested in Buddhism, he would never “lower himself” to join such a class in the temple, and would simply prefer to read about Buddhism at home, she explained. This way, the stereotypes of temples as lay feminine spaces seem to perpetuate themselves.

Probably the greatest indication of the success of these new basic lay schools lies in the fact that many of their students are new to Buddhism. The 2003 survey found that almost 40% of the basic education receivers were new to the religion, claiming being part of the faith for less than four years.⁴⁹ My own survey at Hwagyesa confirmed this success. Only 32% of my classmates maintained that they have been Buddhists since they were young. Another third of the class did not really follow a religion previously, and the last third had actually been attending Protestant or Catholic churches before joining this Buddhist program (see Table 13).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Table 13: Religiosity of Students Prior to Joining the Basic lay Course at Hwagyesa



My fellow younger male student in the class revealed that he used to be Catholic when he was younger. He met his wife in church, and they both continued to attend services with their children until the children grew up and left home. His wife still attends church sometimes, but he likes hiking, and while doing so he gradually became more and more attracted to the temples that are scattered in just about every slope and turn in the Korean mountains. The “traditional Korean atmosphere” of these places made him feel at ease, he explained. He finally decided to join this class and obtain some basic information about this religion. As the class progressed I could see his sincerity toward it increase as well.

People sometimes joke that Koreans are Christian when they are young and Buddhist when they get older. Korean churches are often places where Koreans meet their dating partners and school buddies, and temples do seem to cater more to the calm-seeking elderly. Being well aware of this, some temples today attempt to attract younger Koreans by organizing ‘Singles Temple Stays’ (see Figure 29), where young participants get an opportunity to seek potential partners in a quiet mountain setting during the weekend. Nevertheless, the temple- goer

population is still dominated by older devotees and the new lay education focuses on introducing the older population to the tradition.



Figure 29: A Korean Buddhist Temple Advertising a ‘Singles Party’ Temple-stay

One of my female classmates admitted to me one day after class over coffee that she still believed in God. She was in fact amazed that an Israeli like myself was more skeptical, and was almost trying to convince me I should. I was amazed in turn that she continued to believe in (a Biblical) God although joining this Buddhist course. She did not understand my amazement. She has been attending Protestant churches for years, and was unable to see a real difference between Buddha and God, or between Christianity and Buddhism for that matter. She was sure the other students in class felt the same way. We had already been taking this class for over two months, and I had tried to point out some of the obvious differences between the religions, and had even shown her some quotes in our textbook. But to no avail. She was certain these were just the small details, but the main ideas were the same. I asked her, then, if Christianity and Buddhism were the same, why on earth had she decided to switch. She explained that she “likes Jesus but loves Buddha.” Her specific circumstances at her church led her to leave, and she decided to come to the temple instead. “It is the same,” she insisted, “it is just a matter of taste!” This conversation left me a little bewildered. I had always thought people tended to convert based

on the difference between their former religion and the new one, but this nice woman had converted to Buddhism, not because it was different, but because it was just the same as Christianity.

A 2000 Chogye survey showed that after graduating from the basic course 15% of the students still believed, like my classmate above, in a Judeo-Christian kind of creationism.⁵⁰ This is just a minority, however, and as we will see later on, some surveys do actually show a good amount of transformation. But before we talk more about the results, more has to be said about the concrete proceedings of the basic course at Hwagyesa.

Social Efflorescence

The official aims of the Chogye education system is not only to pass down the Buddhist teachings to the laity, but also to create a more adhesive Chogye Order affiliated lay community. Thus, forming relationships in my class at Hwagyesa was prioritized in order to ensure deeper ties to the temple and continuous participation in the Chogye lay community. In the first day of classes we were divided into smaller groups of about eight people in each, elected team leaders to each group, and made a schedule of tasks (cleaning the classroom, washing dishes at the temple kitchen, organizing the pillows, etc.) according to group. Group leaders were responsible for attendance, telephoning those who missed class to encourage stable participation. Maintaining group social pressure for continual involvement is probably one of the main reasons for the success of Christianity in Korea, and with lay education this method has entered Buddhist temples as well. Several cultural events were part of the course for the same rationale. On the 6th-

⁵⁰ "Sindo kyoyuk kwallyŏn chosa kyŏlgwa 신도 교육 관련 조사 결과 (Survey results regarding lay education)".P. 34.

week we all took a fieldtrip (literally ‘holy land pilgrimage’, *sŏngji sullye*, another Christian-borrowed term) to Pŏpchusa temple, a few weeks later we had a weekend sporting event for which special cheers were written and practiced together after class in preparation, and the 11th-week’s class was devoted to practicing the traditional communal monastic meal ritual (*paru kongyang*, 鉢盂供養). Many lay schools today take their students to a Temple Stay as well. All this activity is done to create the same Durkheimian social efflorescence that is certainly an important adhesive for maintaining any religious community.

In addition, classes do not only involve a lecture, but also a set of singing, chanting and bowing rituals before and after the teacher enters the hall. The contemporary lay ritual canon is a hybrid mix of new piano-played Christian-styled Buddhist hymns, and both Chinese and Korean chants with or without the *mok-t’ak* (木鐸, a small traditional percussion instrument used in Korean temples) of a mix of vows, short sutras, and even translations of Pāli texts.⁵¹ Each student received a ritual collection booklet, and as most texts were short and simple, by the end of the course most were memorized by my classmates. The ritual set began with the Three Refugees and Four Great Vows (*sahong sŏwŏn*, 四弘誓願⁵²), sung with the piano, followed by the popular modern Buddhist hymn, ‘We are Also Like the Buddha’ (*Urido Puch’ŏnim kati*).⁵³ The next step was the Korean translation of the *Heart Sutra* chanted with the *mok-t’ak*, after which we all would read aloud together a translation of the short Pāli *Metta Sutta* (慈悲經, *Chabi kyŏng*), and

⁵¹ The first Buddhist hymns were composed as early as 1925 by the well-known scholar Kwŏn Sangno based on the *Pumouñjung kyŏng* (父母恩重經), yet it was in the 1960’s and 70’s that the majority of the Buddhist hymns sang today were composed. See: Chŏng, "Han'guk Pulgyo ūi hyŏnhwang kwa munjejŏm 한국불교의 현황과 문제점 (The present situation and the problematic issues of Korean Buddhism)." Pp. 210-11.

⁵² To save all beings, end all afflictions, study all the dharmas, and complete the Buddha’s path.

⁵³ The first verse and chorus are: In one dark moment, just as it is will shine forth, right thought, right speech, right action, will break through ignorance and light up the world, and deep in our heart we can get enlightened, (chorus:) striving, striving, striving without tiring, we are also like the Buddha, we are also like the Buddha.

then the monk-teacher would come in, we would prostrate three times in front of him, sing the ‘Song of Requesting Teaching’ (請法歌, *Ch’ōngbōp-ka*⁵⁴) and the lecture would begin. At the end of class we would bow to the monk-teacher again, sing the Three Refugees and Four Great Vows with the piano again, and then bow to each other before leaving. This ritual is repeated in all of Hwagyesa’s lay classes and dharma talks today, and very similar sets are practiced in lay classes and dharma assemblies in other Korean Chogye temples as well. Basic education courses serve as primary places where this unified lay ritual canon is conveyed to the laity, learned and internalized.

A New Lay Canon

Immediately after its establishment in 1995, the Chogye propagation Department began working on a set of unified orthodox textbooks to be used at its lay schools. In 1996 the *Buddhist Primer* (*Pulgyo immun*, 佛教入門) was first published, in 1998 *Buddhist Doctrine* was out, and since then 12 other official Chogye textbooks on topics such as Buddhist history, culture, propagation, and the life of the Buddha were printed. Two of these publications, the *Life of the Buddha* and *Introduction to Buddhism*, published in 2011, became the required material for the specialized schools preparing laypeople for the Propagation Exam. More important to our discussion here, however, is the *Buddhist Primer*, which is now the sole required text for all those wishing to go through the Chogye basic education courses and officially become Buddhist lay people. Essentially, it is the basic guidebook for those wishing to know what Chogye orthodox

⁵⁴ Its lyrics are: ‘great virtuous teacher/monk, come up to the stand, preach the Buddha’s teaching (literally make the lion roar), give us the nectar of dharma, from great causes of the past, creating new conditions for the future, with great compassion, teach us the dharma!’

lay Buddhism is, and how it should be practiced. As such, it constitutes the most basic lay 'practical canon' in Korea today.

The *Buddhist Primer* is a national bestseller, selling about 30,000 copies a year.⁵⁵ Most of these copies are bought by new lay students who are obligated to buy a copy as they register for the basic course. The book's main focus is etiquette. In fact, the first half of the book does not contain a word about the life of *Śākyamuni*, the Four Noble Truths, or other core doctrines, but deals with two subjects and two subjects only: etiquette and temple structures.⁵⁶ Anyone who needed further proof for the underground Confucian ritualism that stands at the basis of East Asian culture to this day will find it reading the long first chapter of the *Buddhist Primer* with its excruciatingly detailed discussions of the right postures in bowing, standing, sitting, walking, speaking, eating, and giving offerings to the Buddhas. The second chapter familiarizes the reader with the gates, halls, stupas, and the various holy statues, paintings, and utensils found in traditional Korean temples. By the end of this second chapter you reach the midpoint of the book, and not a word was said about the Buddhist teachings. The second half of the book does provide short expositions on Buddhist doctrine (12% of the book pages), faith, traditional practices, and history. The focus of this basic Chogye education is thus clear: constructing a unified system of lay Buddhist etiquette.

⁵⁵ Ko, "Sindo kyoyuk kwa sindo chojik kwalli ūi hyoyulchōk pangan 신도교육과 신도조직 관리의 효율적 방안 (Effective program for managing lay education and group formation)."P. 11.

⁵⁶ Propagation Department The Chogye Order, *Pulgyo immun 불교입문 (Buddhist primer)* (Seoul: Chogye Order Press, 2012).

The Lotus vs. the Bow

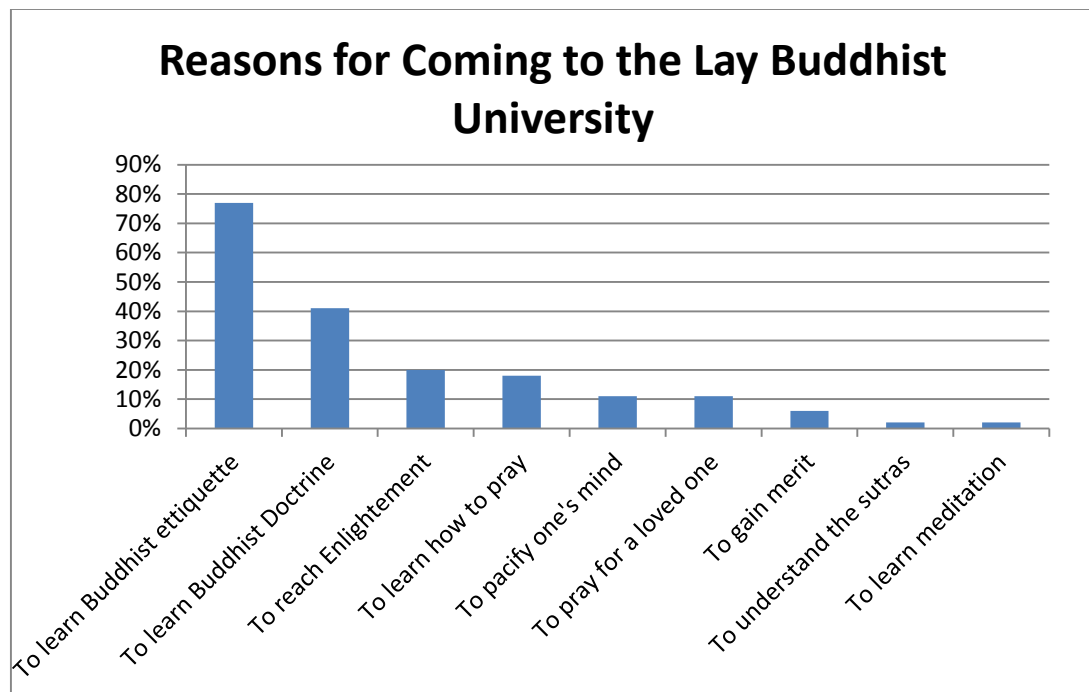
After three weeks of classes, I became increasingly weary of the teacher reiterating the importance of compromising and conceding to others, putting down our shoes in order when entering temple halls, being nice to one another, wearing long pants and socks (I was personally castigated for not doing so), turning off mobile phones and not smoking in the temple grounds, and extensive specific instructions regarding correct bending angles while bowing, and the exact situations in which full prostrations or half bows are necessary. While our monk-teacher was explicitly claiming that the most symbolic gesture of Buddhism is the bow, I was contemplating the fact that in the west the most symbolic Buddhist gesture seems to be the lotus posture. While in the west the emphasis in introducing people to the religion generally lies on meditation practice, in Korea the process of becoming a layperson begins with learning how to make offerings, greet monks, and bow correctly.

Walking down to the subway stop after class with an elegant 50-something years old classmate, I could not hold my frustration. I asked her if she was not bored by all this trivial mannerism we have been listening to during these last three weeks. She said she had actually found it interesting, and when I tried to push further, she muttered that Koreans today have no manners and it's great that they have a place to learn some now. I retorted asking whether she does not prefer to spend our class time at the temple learning from the monks what Buddhism is and what the sutras teach us, but she just shrugged it off. "All I want to learn is how to behave in a temple when I come to pray, how to bow correctly and make offerings in the right way so that my prayers would be answered," she explained.

Other classmates expressed similar interests. They did not feel they needed to know more about Buddhism. After all, temples were places they could come and pray, and so the most urgent thing to know was simply how to do it properly. The results of a written survey I

distributed in the second month of classes confirmed that my own weariness of etiquette education was not widely shared. 59% reported that one of the two most interesting things they learned in the course was etiquette. This was in fact the most popular answer. It was also by far the most common answer (77%) to a question that asked them to choose two reasons out of a list of possible reasons for participating in this course in the first place (see Table 14). On the the hand, only one student said her main reason for coming was to learn how to meditate. One elderly woman told me personally that she decided to join the class following a dream where she saw the new Korean female president taking a *mok-t'ak* out of her bag.

Table 14: Hwagyesa Survey Reasons for Enrolling to the Basic Education Course



To be sure, as in other contemporary Asian Buddhist cultures, lay meditation is on the rise in Korea as well. This is at least partly due to the hegemony of what McMahan termed

‘global folk Buddhism.’⁵⁷ Joo illustrated how beginning in the 1990’s a great influx of translations of Buddhist books by the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh (his book *Anger* sold 1.2 million copies in Korea!), and various western *Vipassanā* meditation teachers filled Korean bookstores, and a new western-influenced meditation-focused discourse of lay Buddhism infiltrated the nation.⁵⁸ Beginning in the 1980’s Lay Chan Halls (*posal sŏnwŏn* 菩薩禪院 or *simin sŏnwŏn* 市民禪院, literally ‘Bodhisattva’ or ‘Citizen Chan Halls’) were beginning to proliferate in Korea, where (mostly elderly female) laypeople sit for three months retreats just like the sangha. An internet blog listed 48 such centers in the country in 2000, and a Chogyŏ Order report from 2006 listed an increased number of 68, as well as additional 6 *Vipassanā* meditation centers.⁵⁹ The Buddhist media reported in 2005 that as many as 6,000 laypeople participated in the three months winter retreat of 2004-5 in separate Lay Chan Halls (laypeople are not allowed to sit together with the sangha in Chogyŏ retreats).⁶⁰ This is almost a triple the number of monks and nuns usually participating in such retreats. When I visited one of the larger Bodhisattva Chan Halls situated next to the famous T’ongdosa monastery in fall 2013, 70 elderly women and ten elderly men inhabited the place, paying about \$800 US for accommodation and food during the retreat, and receiving weekly instructions from one of the monks of the temple. Two Lay Chan Halls sit in hermitages around Haeinsa (one established as early as the 1980’s) housing about 40 men and women who sit together with a monastic teacher for eight hours a day during the three-month retreats, which take place year round.

⁵⁷ McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Pp. 261-3.

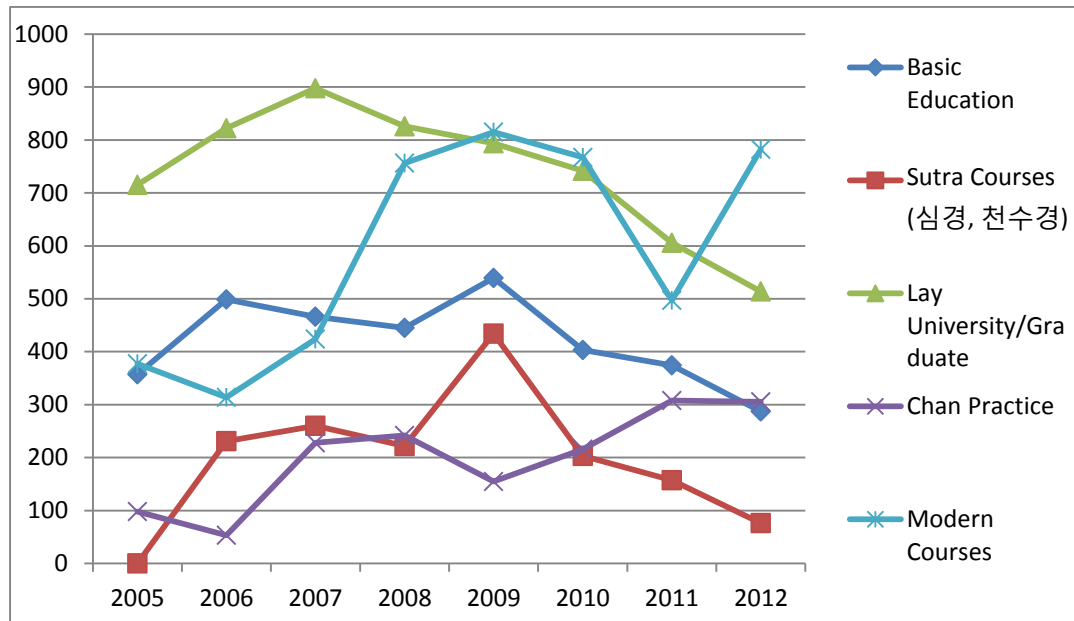
⁵⁸ Joo, "Countercurrents from the West: “Blue-Eyed” Zen Masters, Vipassana Meditation, and Buddhist Psychotherapy in Contemporary Korea."

⁵⁹ For 2000 see: <http://www.buddhism.pe.kr/seon/seon10.htm> For 2006 see: Education Department The Chogyŏ Order, "Kungnaeoe suhaeng hŭrŭm ŭi ihae wa Chogyejong ŭi kwaje 국내외 수행 흐름의 이해와 조계종의 과제 (Understanding current cultivation trends within and without the county and the problems of the Chogyŏ Order)," in *Sŭngga kyoyuk* 6, ed. The Chogyŏ Order Education Department (2006). Pp. 160-1.

⁶⁰ <http://www.ibulgyo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=64517>

There is more evidence for this growing interest in lay meditation. In the January 15th, 2014 edition, one of the leading Buddhist newspapers in Korea, the *Pŏppo sinmun*, published an editorial claiming that between the years 2000 and 2012 there was a yearly increase of 22% in the number of research publications dealing with meditation in Korea, proving the growing interest of the laity and the general public. Following this trend, some of the Chogye specialized lay schools began offering courses in meditation practice. One notable example is the small school in Seoul's Kŭngnaksa, which was named by its guiding teacher, Suwŏl, Prayer and Meditation (lay) Buddhist School (*Kido myŏngsang Pulgyo taehak*). I was allowed to join one meditation class at the school, and was struck by the New-Age feel of the session. As Suwŏl guided me and the two dozen middle-aged women through various breathing and imagination exercises, Indian mantras accompanied by sitar were playing through the stereo in the background. Pulgwangsa is another temple that begun administering meditation practice as part of its lay school, and these courses gradually attract a growing number of students. In fact, a close look at Pulgwangsa's class registration statistics shows that as less laypeople are interested in joining the basic and specialized Chogye programs and the more traditional sutra-based courses at this school, the only agenda that continues to see gradual increase in student interest is Chan meditation practice (see Table 15). As the table shows, Chan is practiced by only about 300 laypeople at the center while other courses attract much larger numbers, yet, if we focus on the ratio of increase, the number of Chan-practice interested laity tripled between 2005 and 2012.

Table 15: Pulgwangsa's Student Numbers According to Class Themes⁶¹



Nevertheless, meditation is not part of the agenda of the Chogye basic lay education system. It is only addressed in a couple of lines at the last page of the *Buddhist Primer*, and it is rarely mentioned in class. One day after school in Hwagyesa, I hung around a bit chatting with the lay volunteer administrators of the course. They assured me that they all did, indeed, practice sitting meditation. When I asked why then is meditation not taught in this class, their answer was plain and simple: meditation is not for the beginner. Unlike the well-known ‘just sit’ command of some western Zen teachers, the Chogye Order tries to ease newcomers more gradually into deeper Buddhist practice. It starts with familiarizing the laity with its temples and the proper behaviors in them, and only later gradually gets them more interested in doctrine and practice. One of the monks working for the Propagation Department explained this process in a 2000

⁶¹ Statistics Received directly from Pulgwangsa's main office.

seminar. Korean lay Buddhists have often been criticized for their ignorant praying for fortune practices (*kibok Pulgyo*, 祈福佛教), he said,

“yet the problem does not lie in praying for fortune. The pure mind of such prayers is where the religious mind originates. The problem thus is not in such prayers but in the lack of efforts to develop them into an elevated religious mind. Accordingly, effort is needed to develop such religious mind that begins from prayer, through altruistic activities and similar religious practices, into a feeling of devotion and oneness. In other words, lay education should lead the laity from prayer to Bodhisattva practice.”⁶²

Hence, gradual transformation from simple prayers to deeper Buddhist practice is one of the goals of the basic education system, and I believe it is generally working. My own survey in Hwagyesa confirmed that although only one out of my 44 classmates came to the course hoping to learn meditation, and only 16% reported that they have meditated before, by the second month of the course almost a third wished to meditate in the future and thought meditation is one of the two most important practices of the laity (second highest answer after chanting/praying) (see Table 16). In fact, after two months of attending classes at Hwagyesa, interest in dharma talks’ attendance and in reading sutras also rose quite significantly (see Table 17).

⁶² Chihyŏn, "Sindo kyoyuk ūi panghyang 신도교육의 방향 (The direction of lay education) " in *Sindo kyoyuk ch'egye-hwa rūl wihan kongch'ŏnghoe 신도교육 체계화를 위한 공청회* (Public hearing regarding the systematization of lay education), ed. The Chogyŏ Order Propagation Department (Seoul: The Chogyŏ Order, 2000).P. 23.

Table 16: Hwagyesa Student Attitudes towards Meditation

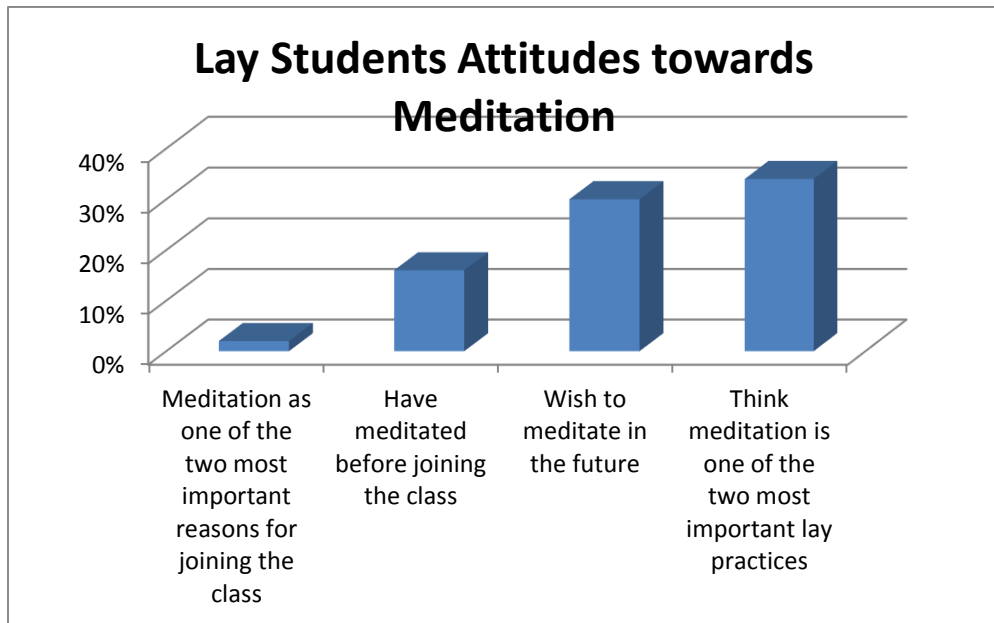
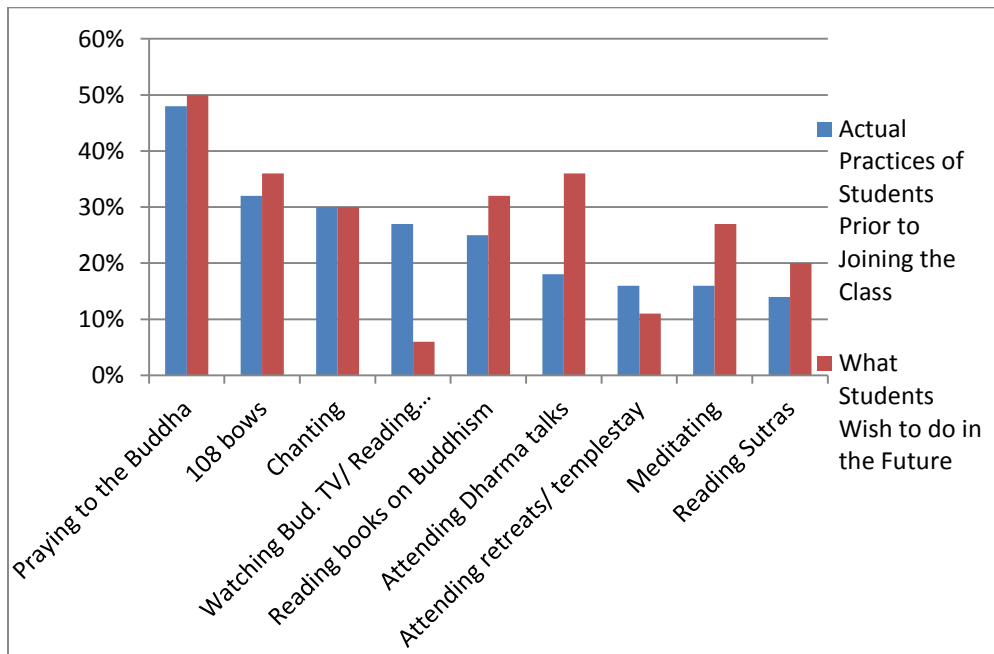


Table 17: Changes in Attitudes toward Various Practices during the Basic Lay Course at Hwagyesa



The Chogye Order has conducted several surveys over the last decades, which confirm similar results. Taking into consideration that the questions were based on self-reporting of change, a method which is problematic in itself, a survey from 2000 shows that although only 50% of the students believed in the theories of arising of conditions (*yŏn'gi-sŏl*, 緣起說), transmigration, and the Buddha Nature before taking the Chogye courses, 90% believed in them after graduation.⁶³ Perhaps more importantly, both the 2000 and 2003 surveys showed that basic course graduates donated more, participated more often in weekend dharma talks (from 50% before taking the course to 83% after graduation), practiced more bowing, chanting and meditation, participated in more welfare activities at temples, were more willing to join lay organizations and continue climbing the lay education ladder, and had more confidence in acting as propagators and telling others about the virtues of Buddhism.⁶⁴

In May 2014 the Chogye Propagation Department organized a seminar for discussing strategies for better propagation of meditation (*myŏngsang-p'ogyo*, 冥想布教) to the Buddhist laity. Participants pointed out the popularity of meditation today in psychological circles both in Korea and in the west, and lamented the fact that such meditational practices often seem to have been disassociated from the Buddhist religion. The results of a 2013 survey were presented showing that 21.3% of the Korean Buddhist laity practiced some breathing meditation, 21.3% chanted, and only 4% practiced the traditional *Kanhua* Chan meditation.⁶⁵ A debate arose between more traditionalist panelists who thought Chan meditation should be propagated

⁶³ Ibid.P. 33.

⁶⁴ Ibid. P. 37. See also: The Chogye Order, "2003 yŏn sindo kibon kyoyuk kaesŏl ūl wihan sŏlmun chosa kyŏlgwa pogosŏ 2003 년 신도 기본교육 개설투를 위한 설문조사 결과보고서 (A report of the results of a 2003 basic lay education survey)."

⁶⁵ In'gyeong, "Myŏngsang p'ogyo ūi yŏkhal kwa chongdan ūi kwaje 명상포교의 역할과 종단의 과제 (The role of meditation-propagation and the Order's problems)," in *Myŏngsang p'ogyo ūi hyŏnhwang kwa chŏnmang 명상포교의 현황과 전망 (The present situation and future prospects of meditation-propagation)* (Seoul2014).

exclusively, and others who argued that various meditational methods should be taught side by side, saying it was more important to teach Buddhism as a whole rather than focus on the particular Sino-Korean tradition. Some noted that in fact at least half of the Chan Hall monks and nuns in Korea today practice *Vipassanā* rather than the traditional *huatou* Chan practice. It was generally agreed that very few (about 5%) of the Chan Hall monks in Korea actually teach meditation to the laity, and that there was an urgent need to establish more meditation centers and programs where monks could teach meditation to regular people. The Propagation Department personnel were taking notes, and it seems likely that in the near future a greater focus will be put on meditation in the Chogyé lay education system.

Lay Checklists

Ever since the enactment of the first Laity Law in 1984 the Chogyé has attempted to give unity and shape to the sporadic and disorganized heap of Korean Buddhist lay practices. The law stipulated that the duties of each and every layperson was attending dharma talks and temple educational programs, propagating by bringing at least three new people to the temple every year (!), and sustaining their affiliated temple and the Chogyé Order by volunteering for it, donating to it, and keeping its laws.⁶⁶ The 1999 revision to this law specified that all laity should go through the basic education program, and added that they should all keep the five precepts, and practice, though it does not specify exactly how.⁶⁷ Needless to say, most laypeople do not read the Chogyé laws, and are unfamiliar with their lawful duties stated above.

⁶⁶ Ko, "Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong kyoyuk ūi t'ŭkching kwa chŏnmang 대한불교조계종 교육의 특징과 전망 (The special characteristics and prospects of the Korean Buddhist Chogyé Order's education)." P. 218.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

The basic education, thus, has become a new channel through which the laity could be taught their duties. Thus, the Chogyŏ Order has prepared a list of 11 orthodox practices, which all laypeople are now taught to observe. The list is found in the Teacher's Guide accompanying the *Buddhist Primer* and distributed to all monk-teachers who are involved with the lay education system.⁶⁸ It is worth bringing here in its entirety:

1. Participate in regular dharma talks and temple events.
2. Read a fixed quantity of sutras every day.
3. Memorize the *Heart Sutra* and other important ritual texts.
4. Remember (yŏm, 念) the Buddha and raise a mind towards enlightenment when you wake up, and remember the Buddha (念) with thankfulness before you go to bed.
5. Put your hands together with a vow before eating, and do not leave any food.
6. Put aside a little money every day for donating to the temple.
7. Go on temple pilgrimages.
8. Go to practice meetings at temples (*surŏnhoe*).
9. Read Buddhist newspapers and magazines, and watch Buddhist TV.
10. Buy and read other Buddhist related books, and recommend them to others.
11. Write a diary.

About half of the list deals with private personal acts of studying, raising vows, and writing a diary (interestingly added here perhaps as a modern act of confession and contemplation). The other half of the list is related to participation in a community of lay people: joining assemblies, events and pilgrimages, donating to temples, and keeping oneself connected

⁶⁸ Propagation Department The Chogyŏ Order, *Pulgyo immun: sindo kibon kyoyuk kangŭi chich'imsŏ 불교입문: 신도기본교육 강 의지침서 (Buddhist primer: Teacher's guidebook for basic lay education)* (Seoul: Chogyŏ Order Press, 2012). The checklist is found on pp. 78-83.

with the community through a shared media. Some of the items on the list bear unmistakable similarity to popular Korean Christian practices. Bedtime prayers and confessions have already become a symbol of Christianity in Korea, as well as daily reading of the Bible, and putting aside money regularly for donation. Both Buddhist precepts and chanting/bowing/meditation practices are suspiciously missing from this checklist.

Strangely enough, the *Buddhist Primer* itself also includes both daily and yearly checklists for the laity, which are somewhat different from the above Teacher Guide list. The daily checklist, in particular, bears a different focus. It includes daily chanting and Chan sitting meditation practice, making offerings, as well as some general precepts such as speaking the truth, and being kind and compassionate towards one's neighbors. The daily checklist is as follows:⁶⁹

1. Participate in morning chanting and bowing ritual.
2. Make offerings and vows in front of Buddhas.
3. Read sutras.
4. Sit in Chan meditation before going to bed.
5. Address your friends by their dharma name.
6. Take a look at some form of Buddhist media.
7. Speak the truth.
8. Act compassionately.
9. Greet your neighbors.
10. Do not waste food.

⁶⁹ *Pulgyo immun 불교입문 (Buddhist primer)*. Pp. 186-7.

These newly constructed lay daily ten commandments read by over 500,000 lay Buddhists in Korea, are supplemented in the *Buddhist Primer* with another checklists of ten yearly practices:

1. Donate to temples.
2. Go on at least one pilgrimage.
3. Attend at least one practice meeting at a temple (*suryŏnhoe*).
4. Attend at least two dharma talks a month.
5. Read a Buddhist text and recommend it to others.
6. Participate in temple all-night vigils or a lantern parade.
7. Participate at least twice in welfare activities.
8. Do not receive or give money unjustly.
9. Read Buddhist magazines or watch the Buddhist TV.
10. Receive lay education.

In sum, although there is some discrepancy between the various lay checklists prepared by the Chogyŏ, the attempt itself is worth the attention. In recent years the Chogyŏ Order has been trying to create the first clear orthodox canon of Buddhist lay rituals and other daily and yearly encouraged behaviors. The main means of propagation for this innovative lay orthodoxy is the newly built education system.

Graduation and Precepts

The basic education course ends with a graduation precept ceremony. Although lay Bodhisattva precepts' ceremonies (*Taesŭng posalgŭe sugye pŏphui*, 大乘菩薩戒 受戒法會) are conducted sporadically regardless of the education system in several Korean temples, the basic

course is now a requirement for anyone wishing to take the five lay precepts (*Ogye sugyesik*, 五戒受戒式).⁷⁰ The ceremony at the end of the Hwagyesa course took place in the larger dharma hall, and was quite solemn. It involved ritual offerings done by our classmate representatives dressed in rather peculiar Buddhist white *hanboks*, white being the traditional Buddhist color of the laity (see Figure 35). It then continued with our canonical lay ritual set, followed by a group confessional (*ch'amhoe*, 懺悔) that involved much bowing, and the famous burning of the forearm with a piece of incense as a symbolic act of sincerity (*yŏnbi*, 燃臂, see Figure 36). Only then began the precept taking ritual itself.

We were all kneeling down as the main preceptor went over the five precepts individually and asked whether we accept them or not.⁷¹ We responded in union ‘yes we will,’ after each precept. When we arrived to the last precept, the one against drinking alcohol, I decided I would not repeat after the preceptor, as I was not willing to vow not to do so. I was looking at the people around me, and they all seemed to continue repeating after the teacher, though I doubted if any of them would really stop drinking altogether. It would be next to impossible to engage in secular social relationships in Korea without drinking every so often. On the way home, I asked two of my female classmates whether they were planning to keep the precepts they have just taken in such a grave ritual. They said that they were indeed planning to do so. Really? I asked, will you not drink at all anymore? “Oh, it is OK to drink a little,” they replied, “the important thing was not to get too drunk.” “We are not home-leavers”, they added, “we can be a little flexible.”

⁷⁰ In Bodhisattva Precept Ceremonies in Korea the laity usually takes the ten major precepts from the *Brahma Net Sutra*. Such events do not happen very often, but when they do they attract large crowds.

⁷¹ The five lay precepts are not to take life, not to take what is not given, not to lie, not to be involved in illicit sexual relations, and not to drink alcohol.

It was reported in a 2000 Chogye Order seminar that over half of the laypeople who receive the precepts do not actually keep them. The most problematic precept, of course, was the no-drinking rule, which is clearly in discord with customary behavior in Korean society, and the report argued that it was very rare that anyone actually kept it.⁷² This does not seem exceptional in the Buddhist world. Gombrich maintained that although laypeople in Sri Lanka repeatedly recite and take the five precepts, it would be virtually impossible for them to strictly abide by them.⁷³ Considering the fact that Japanese clerics today continue to take the precepts without actually following them, Jaffe argued that the precepts are still important, even if just as an ideal to be reflected upon rather than actually abide by.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, one of the participants in that Chogye Order seminar did seem to take the precepts quite seriously. He offered an innovative solution, one that is even based on canonical texts.

This solution is based on the *Da zhidu lun* (大智度論, attributed to Nāgārjuna), which confirms that the white-clothes-wearing laity living in the world and having to manage workers would have a hard time keeping the five precepts (here referring especially to the precept against false speech!), and offers to divide the lay precept keepers into five categories: those keeping only one of the precepts (*yifenxingzhe*, 一分行者), those keeping two or three of them

⁷² Söng-ch'öl Kim, "Myöt kaji munje e taehan chean 몇 가지 문제에 대한 제안 (Proposals for several problems)," in *Sindo kyoyuk ch'egyehwa rül wihan kongch'ŏnghoe 신도교육 체계화를 위한 공청회* (Public hearing regarding the systematization of lay education), ed. The Chogye Order Propagation Department (Seoul: 2000). P. 39. In October 2014 the Buddhist media published a survey that showed that lay Buddhists were in fact keeping the precepts less than the adherents of other religions in Korea. According to the survey Protestants were the strictest observers of their commandments, after which came the Catholics, the Won Buddhists, and last the lay Buddhists, only about 20% of whom claimed to hold the precepts well. See: Söng-min Sin, "Han'guk Pulcha tül chigye to kyōngak to anhandā 한국불자들 持戒도 經學도 안한다 (Korean Buddhists do not keep the precepts and do not study sutras)," *Hyōndae Pulgyo* 2014.

⁷³ Richard Gombrich, *Buddhist Precept and Practice : Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991). Pp. 286-301. He explains that the precepts could be interpreted in various ways and it would be impossible for farmers, for example, not to take life. He thinks it is not the actual practice though, but the intention that counts.

⁷⁴ Richard Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman : Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001). Pp. 234-241.

(*shaofenxingzhe*, 少分行者), those keeping four precepts (*duofenxingzhe*, 多分行者), those keeping all the five (*manxingzhe*, 滿行者), and those who in addition to these five precepts vow in front of the *Vinaya* Master not to indulge in obscene behavior even with their own spouse (*duanyinzhe*, 斷淫者).⁷⁵ The presenter said that in order to solve the problem of breaking precepts, which makes things even worse as it involves lying (which means breaking another vow), these five categories should be used today. Each should decide beforehand which precepts he can keep, only vow on these during the ceremony, and only the ones he decided upon would be mentioned in his precepts certificate.⁷⁶ For all I know, however, this proposal was not put into practice in Chogye temples yet.



Figure 30: Class Representatives in White *Hanboks* Making Offerings at the Precept Ceremony

⁷⁵ The *Da Zhidu Lun* is found in T25. 1509. No Sanskrit original exists and Lamotte doubted Nagarjuna's authorship of this text, yet the controversy remains, see: Venkata Ramanan, *Nāgārjuna's Philosophy* (USA: Harvard-Yenching Institute 1966). P. 13. The Chinese text reads: “復次，白衣處世，當官理務，家業作使，是故難持不惡口法。妄語故作，事重故不應作。是五戒有五種受，名五種優婆塞：一者，一分行優婆塞，二者，少分行優婆塞，三者，多分行優婆塞，四者，滿行優婆塞，五者，斷姪優婆塞。一分行者，於五戒中受一戒，不能受持四戒；少分行者，若受二戒，若受三戒，多分行者，受四戒，滿行者，盡持五戒，斷姪者，受五戒已，師前更作自誓言，我於自婦不復行姪。是名五戒。”

⁷⁶ Kim, "Myöt kaji munje e taehan chean 몇 가지 문제에 대한 제안 (Proposals for several problems)." Pp. 39-41.

When the ceremony was over we had some coffee and snacks, took the mandatory group commemoration pictures, and received our precept certificates, new Buddhist names, a Buddhist beads bracelet, Lay Cards, and rank badges. We were all now ranked ‘Practitioners of the Way.’ Some of the students received prizes for their attendance and sincerity during the program. We now officially belonged to the Buddhist laity. My group began to apply medium-strength peer pressure on me, trying to convince me to continue and enroll to the three-months Buddhist ritual course expected to begin the following week. The course was a success and most students could not wait to continue visiting the temple, and progressing through the educational programs offered there. Taking the basic class seemed to have encouraged them to want to learn even more about Buddhism. Although most came to the class in order to learn how to behave in the temple and how to pray correctly, by the last lecture in Hwagyesa, students were enthusiastically asking the monk-teacher all sorts of questions about Buddhist philosophy, and attainments of higher states of mind. They came to pray, but ended up with a spark of interest and enthusiasm for much more.



Figure 31: Burning the Forearm during the Precept Ceremony at Hwagyesa

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Lay (classroom) education is the hallmark of the Chogyŏ Order propagation agenda today. As I described in the first part of this chapter, early individual initiatives to establish lay Buddhist schools in the 1970's and 80's, turned into a more systematic endeavor by the Chogyŏ sangha in the mid 1990's. Gradually a both physically and doctrinally unified system of basic mandatory education for all laypeople was created, followed by more diverse specialized programs preparing the laity for the Propagator Exams, and raising professional lay counselors and youth leaders. Today, the Chogyŏ Order estimates that every year over 25,000 laypeople go through the basic education system in over 500 temples throughout the nation, several thousand continue on to study in one of the 120 registered specialized lay temple schools, and another several hundred continue to pass the Propagator Exams. Numbers are rising, and this new system is likely to involve a growing number of Korean lay Buddhists in the future.

In the early 2000's an interesting debate ensued within the Order regarding whether lay education was actually advantageous at all. A prominent monk in the Chogyŏ headquarters by the name of Chihyŏn, argued that "more than enlarging the affection for the (Chogyŏ) Order and its monks, the outcome of (contemporary) lay education is critique and alienation [from the Order]." ⁷⁷ He added that he was told by a lay school administrator at Pongŭnsa that in fact after graduation people tend to be vaguer about right and wrong behavior, and instead of keeping the precepts they disregard them more than ever before. Others agreed that academic-style education of Buddhism could lead the laity away rather than towards a deeper Buddhist faith. One of the lay professors at a seminar claimed that perhaps the problem lies in teaching Buddhism based on critical Buddhist studies approaches imported from the west, and recommended teaching the laity

⁷⁷ Chihyŏn, "Sindo kyoyuk ŭi panghyang 신도교육의 방향 (The direction of lay education) ". P. 19.

according to an early lay curriculum he found in the writings of the Tibetan monk-scholar, Tsongkhapa.⁷⁸

The ethnographic second part of this chapter, I believe, shows that at least the basic education program of the Chogyé is focused on enhancing faith and communality, rather than on teachings that could serve as a basis for critique. Classes revolve around new lay ritual and temple etiquette orthodoxy, in which bowing and chanting dominate and theoretical disputes are shunned. The mantra of ‘action is mind’ is repeated, and faith is cultivated through humble and respectful action. The doubt- arising emphasis of the Chan teachings is missing from the curriculum, at least in the early stages of the lay education system. All in all, the case of Hwagyesa demonstrates that the basic programs are generally able to familiarize newcomers to the proper behavior within the temples, and encourage them to seek deeper teachings and practice in the future.

Cho Söngt’aek, a professor of Buddhist studies at Korea University, was invited to give a talk at a Chogyé seminar dealing with lay education in September 2012. In his presentation, Cho explained that the new lay education system was built in the context of competition with Christianity in a religiously pluralized Korean society, and so through this system the Chogyé attempts to produce a stronger sense of solidarity and commitment among the laity in order to enhance its own human resources.⁷⁹ However, he continued, unlike army training in which soldiers are trained for the sake of the army and country, lay education should not be for the sake of the Chogyé Order, but for the sake of the lay people themselves. Cho critiqued the

⁷⁸ Söng-ch’öl Kim, "Sindo kyoyuk üi mokp’yo wa panghyang 신도교육의 목표와 방향 (The goals and objectives of lay education)," *ibid.* Pp. 49-53.

⁷⁹ Söngt’aek Cho, "Sindo kyoyuk üi hyöndaejök panghyang kwa naeyong 신도교육의 현대적 방향과 내용 (The present direction and contents of lay education)," in *Sindo kyoyuk üi hyöndaejök panghyang kwa naeyong 신도교육의 현대적 방향과 내용 (The present direction and contents of lay education)*, ed. Education Department The Chogyé Order (Seoul: The Chogyé Order, 2012).P. 3.

current Chogyé system for making the laity a passive audience protecting and supporting the monks of the Order from the outside, and called for an education that focuses on helping the laity become active Buddhist practitioners themselves.⁸⁰

My survey above shows that although Cho is undoubtedly right to point out that much emphasis is given to assembling individuals under the Chogyé Order and creating a unified community of Chogyé affiliated laity, this collective commitment in turn encourages the lay students at the schools to gradually take deeper interest in Buddhist teachings and practices. As most newcomers who take the basic courses are simply interested in correct ways to pray and behave in temples, they are gradually exposed to deeper philosophies and contemplative activities. In similarity with monastic novices, their faith is raised by action rather than by textual understanding, through bowing, chanting and singing in the dharma-hall-classrooms. They learn to make vows and begin their way on the Bodhisattva path, and are gradually encouraged by the Chogyé to participate in a variety of contemplative practices as well. The *Buddhist Primer*, the new lay canon of contemporary Korean Buddhists, paints a comprehensive picture of the lay ideal (represented in the checklists). This unified ideal includes both participation in a community through temple events, assemblies, shared media, and pilgrimages, as well as basic personal attitudes of compassion and kindness, chanting, daily Chan sitting practice, and writing a diary. In sum, the Chogyé Order's sangha, which was mostly hermitic and secluded by the beginning of the 20th-century, has become increasingly involved with secular society offering various rituals and weekend sermons to the laity, and in the last 20 years has also been organizing systematic Buddhist classroom lessons to the laity. Hence, Korean monastics, who adopted the role of propagators as preachers in the 20th-century, have become Buddhist school teachers for the laity

⁸⁰ Ibid.Pp. 1-3.

in the 21st. It is the new mandatory monastic seminary education that ensures that all home leavers will be sufficiently fluent in the necessary skillful means for teaching the laity. Therefore, this new lay education system would probably not have been able to develop smoothly without the parallel establishment of a universal seminary system for Chogyé monastics.



Figure 32: Graduation Robes in a Traditional Temple (Hwagyesa, 2013)

Conclusions

What came to be known as the ‘traditional’ Korean Buddhist monastic seminary curriculum can be traced back to the 17th century, yet, contrary to common opinion, it was only one among several pedagogical programs that existed side by side before the 20th-century. It was only during the last 100 years or so that this particular syllabus was systematized, unified, legitimized in history writing, propagated nationally, and finally set in Chogyŏ law as the mandatory course for all monastic novices. The ten core texts that comprise this curricular canon were thus some of the most commonly printed and studied Buddhist works in Korea for several centuries, and as such exerted much influence on the way Buddhism has been understood and practiced on the peninsula.

Interestingly, however, some of these texts have been mostly ignored by academia. The admonitions collection of the *Ch’imun*, for example, which has served as the ‘practical *Vinaya*,’ and as evidence suggests, the most frequently studied work in Buddhist seminaries in modern Korea, is virtually unknown to Buddhist studies. Chapter 1 introduced these ten core texts, and discusses the mutual-referencing and unified agenda of the syllabus, which spiced Korean Buddhism with its particular flavor. Not conforming to the Japanese- influenced, sectarian epistemological taxonomies through which Buddhist studies has been accustomed to categorize Sinitic Buddhism, the Korean curriculum promulgates a Zongmi and Dahui- centered tradition of sutra-based, scholastic, Huayan- focused *gong’an* Chan, with an overarching soteriological structure of ‘sudden-enlightenment-followed-by-gradual-cultivation.’

Nevertheless, as illustrated in Chapters 2 and 3, in modern times this ‘traditional’ program has been under continuous pressure to reform and reorganize itself according to regional and global trends in Buddhist studies. In the early 20th-century, attempts were made to restructure

the curriculum by adding secular subjects and courses on Indian Buddhism according to the modern programs of the new Japanese sectarian universities. These efforts materialized in the establishment of pioneering Buddhist higher-education institutions in Korea, but it seems that monastic seminary programs remained, for the most part, unchanged. More recently, however, the seminary system came under pressure to conform to the hegemonic pedagogical foci and practices of contemporary, Western university-led, Buddhist studies. The ‘traditional’ curriculum has been critiqued for being outdated, skewed, incomprehensible, and intolerably lacking, and the need to create broader, more inclusive programs that will be able to promote the “understanding of Buddhism as a whole,” stressed. With a similar rationale, since the beginning of the 21st-century, the Chogye encouraged the creation of various new monastic graduate seminaries that could nurture specialists in broader Buddhist themes.

In 2010, a new national mandatory curriculum was introduced into the Chogye monastic seminaries. Unlike the particular, scholastic Huayan-Chan that characterized the ‘traditional’ curriculum and with it Korean Buddhist orthodoxy in general, the new syllabus consists of broader introductory courses dealing with multiple Mahāyāna traditions, Pāli sutras, Indian *Vinaya*, English language study, and Buddhist propagation and cultural courses. Instead of simple recitation and memorization of Classical Chinese texts, the new program endorses textbook-based general introductions in the vernacular, and contains exams and writing assignments. Interestingly, some of the historically more popular Chan texts of Korean Buddhism (such as the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, the *Śūraṅgama Sutra*, Zongmi’s *Preface*, Chinul’s *Excerpts*, etc.) have been mostly removed from curriculums today, and exchanged for the Chan works that hold more central positions in the canon of Buddhist studies (such as the *Platform* and *Vimalakīrti* sutras). Clearly, thus, these new educational programs transform the identity of the

Korean tradition from a specific kind of Chan to a more general, inclusive Buddhism, similar to the one found in our Buddhist studies textbooks.

With the expansion of bureaucracies, legal systems, news- media and information technology, modernity seems to allow greater systematized intervention in the lives of ordinary human beings.¹ The Buddhist monastic world is no exception. Greater unification and control of individual temples and monastics has been gradually achieved with the modernization and rationalization of the Chogye Order bureaucracy. Monastic education, which, as evidence suggests, has been nothing but loose, sporadic and personalized before the mid-20th-century, has by now become mostly unified, fixed and objectified. The data presented in the body of this work illustrates how apprenticeship-pedagogy, based largely on the inclinations of individual teachers, has transformed in recent decades into a legally-enforced, curricular, institution-based monastic education system, controlled and managed by one central body, the Chogye headquarters. Along with curricular institutionalization, the Chogye has recently created the first modern, rationalized national postulant education system, as well as a new structure of exams, ranks and positions, aimed to ensure greater objectivity and transparency in the monastic hierarchies.

The contents of these novel rank-exams, presented in Chapter 4, bring to light what the Chogye Order considers to be its two main objectives today. The first is re-interpreting Buddhist doctrines, practices and disciplinary rules, and making them more suitable for contemporary life to ensure the vitality and relevance of the Buddhist tradition. In preparing for the exams, the Order encourages monastics to contemplate possible ways to develop new modern organizational

¹ Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). P. 3. Weber famously argued that the modern rationalization of bureaucracies imprisoned individuals in “iron cages.” See: Peter Lassman, ed. *Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Introduction. Foucault, too, has done much to illustrate the ways in which modern institutions intervene and control the lives of individuals to a greater extent than ever before. See in particular his: Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

structures, rituals, cultivation practices and monastic ‘Pure Rules,’ while retaining the spirit of the ancient sutras and *Vinaya*. The second major objective is devising new propagation methods to increase the Order’s competitiveness in the Korean religious marketplace of today. Exam questions encourage monastics to ponder how new technologies, cultural agendas, and doctrinal flexibility may be used to attract more people to (Korean) Buddhism in the contemporary world.

Propagation, in fact, has taken a central position both in the sangha exam questions as well as in the new seminary programs. Chogye educational reformers re-imagined the purpose of seminary education as being chiefly preparation for propagation, rather than as preparation for Chan meditation, or simply as Buddhist practice in itself. Indeed, in the 21st-century, increasing numbers of Chogye monastics became involved in propagation, mainly as teachers in Buddhist lay schools. In Chapter 5 I analyze this new system of lay education, which was quickly able to attract enormous enrollments. Here, yet again, we witness the modern rationalization and systematization of Korean Buddhism. For the first time in Korean history, Buddhist lay status is conferred on individuals through a fixed process of registration and education, and proper lay etiquette, practices, and beliefs are unified into an orthodox program, and conveyed to the laity through official textbooks in temple classrooms.

It is said that during the yearly university entrance examinations in Korea all construction is halted, and even flights are restricted in order to avoid noise that may interrupt the examinees.² As in neighboring countries, Korean students tend to spend long hours in after-school academies (*hagwŏn*), and success in examinations generally ensures high social prestige.³ The Chogye order,

² Michael Seth, *Education Fever: Society, Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in South Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002). P. 1.

³ This ‘education fever’ and ‘examination mania’ is sometimes attributed to the Confucian value of ‘loving study’ (*haoxue*, 好學) which appears several times in the *Analects*.

too, seems to have been infected with this ‘education fever’ (*kyoyugyŏl*). Buddhist monastic life in Korea today involves more hours of classroom education than ever before; beginning with the new three-week postulant program, continuing with four years of mandatory seminary study and additional increasing opportunities for monastic graduate work, and lasting throughout the rest of one’s monastic career in the form of ‘continuing education’ seminars and exam preparation. This certainly makes classroom textual education more central to monastic Buddhism in Korea than it was ever before.

Appendix A: Chogye Order Official Curriculumms for the Monastic Graduate Schools

Below are the recommended schedules for the various new monastic graduate schools affiliated with the Chogye Order. These schedules appear on the Order's website. Schedules for Pure land and *Yogācāra* Graduate Schools, which have not yet been established on the peninsula, are also included as recommendations for the future. In general, these schools are expected to house a minimum of 20 students, accommodating both female and male monastics, and are encouraged to accept laymen as well. Communal living in these schools is not mandatory, and students could simply commute to the monastery for classes.

A. Standard Curriculum for *Vinaya* Sangha Graduate School (ten currently exist):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	- <i>Dharmaguptaka Vinaya</i> (in comparative perspective) -Ethics *Creating better precept ceremonies for novices	- <i>Dharmaguptaka Vinaya</i> (in comparative perspective) -Mahāyāna Precepts *Creating better full precept ceremonies and eating rules.
Graduate 2 nd year	-Reading the <i>Brahma Net Sutra</i> -Buddhist Ethics *Creating better Bodhisattva precept ceremonies, and confession rituals.	-Baizhang's Pure Rules and the new Chogye Order Pure Rules -The Chogye Order Constitution and Laws -Thesis writing
Research 1 st year	Readings from and research about the <i>Vinayas</i> of the various early Indian sects.	Readings from and research about the <i>Vinayas</i> of the various early Indian sects.
Research 2 nd year	Readings from and research about the Chinese <i>Vinaya</i> -related Buddhist texts.	Readings from and research about Korean <i>Vinaya</i> -related Buddhist texts, as well as modern ethics.
Research 3 rd year	Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

B. Standard Curriculum for Chan studies Sangha Graduate School (currently one in Yumasa):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-Early Buddhism and Chan -Mahāyāna texts and Chan	-Research of Laṅkāvatāra Chan -Research of Patriarch Chan
Graduate 2 nd year	-Research of <i>Kanhua</i> Chan -Korean Chan Thought	-Methods of Guiding Chan Practice -Special lectures on Chan Lamp Anthologies -Thesis writing
Research 1 st year	-Research on <i>Tathāgatarbha</i> Thought -Research on Chan Pure Rules	-Research on Chan Anthologies of the Five Houses -Chan Chanting Research
Research 2 nd year	-Research on Dahui - <i>Huayan</i> -Chan Research	-Korean Chan Texts Research -Tiantai- Chan Research
Research 3 rd year	-Chan Culture Research -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

C. Standard Curriculum for Chinese Buddhist Texts Sangha Graduate School (four currently exist):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-Readings from the <i>Āgamas</i> - <i>Ch'imun</i> -Chinese Characters Research 1	-Dahui's <i>Letters</i> -Chinul's <i>Excerpts</i> -Chinese Characters Research 2
Graduate 2 nd year	- <i>Śūraṅgama Sutra</i> - <i>Diamond Sutra</i> - <i>The Awakening of Faith</i>	- <i>Lotus Sutra</i> - <i>Nirvana Sutra</i> - <i>Vimalakīrti Sutra</i>
Research 1 st year	- <i>Huayan Sutra</i> 1 -Sung-chao's collection, <i>The Starting Treatises</i> (Zhaolun, 肇論)	- <i>Huayan Sutra</i> 2 -Zhiyi's <i>The Great Calming and Contemplation</i>
Research 2 nd year	- <i>Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms</i> (<i>Samguk yusa</i> , 三國遺事) - <i>The Sutra of Infinite Life</i>	-Inscriptions of Great Monks -Wŏnhyo's <i>Treatise on the Diamond Samadhi Sutra</i>
Research 3 rd year	-Reading from the <i>Collected Works of Korean Buddhism</i> -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

D. Standard Curriculum for the Early Buddhist Texts Sangha Graduate School (currently one in Sōnunsa):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-Pāli Language 1 -History of Theravāda -The <i>Sutta Nipata</i>	-Pāli Language 2 -The <i>Āgamas</i> and Nikāyas -The <i>Mahasatipatthana Sutta</i>
Graduate 2 nd year	-Pāli Language 3 -Readings from the <i>Samyutta Nikāya</i> -Readings from the <i>Vinaya's Maha-vagga</i> .	-Readings from the <i>Anguttara Nikāya</i> -Readings from the Jātakas -Readings from the <i>Dhammapada</i>
Research 1 st year	-Readings from the <i>Dīgha Nikāya</i> -Buddhagosa's <i>Visuddhimagga</i> 1	-Readings from the <i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> -Buddhagosa's <i>Visuddhimagga</i> 2
Research 2 nd year	-Readings from the <i>Milinda-Panha</i> -Buddhagosa's <i>Vinaya</i> Commentary- The <i>Samanthapasadika</i>	-Readings from the <i>Theragatha</i> -Readings from the <i>Abhidhamma</i> 1
Research 3 rd year	-Reading from the <i>Abhidhamma</i> 2 -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

E. Standard Curriculum for the *Huayan* Sangha Graduate School (two currently exist):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-Introduction to Huayan Studies -The Ten Stages (of the Bodhisattva) - <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> Thought	-The <i>Awakening of Faith</i> -Chengguan's <i>Pure Conversations of -- Huayan</i> (<i>Hwaōm hyōndam</i> , 華嚴玄談) -History of Huayan Thought in China
Graduate 2 nd year	-Readings from Siksanda's 80 scroll <i>Huayan Sutra</i> 1 -Huayan and Tiantai -History of Korean Huayan Thought	- Readings from Siksanda's 80 scroll <i>Huayan Sutra</i> 2 -Uisang's <i>Huayan Dharmadhatu Diagram</i> (<i>Pōpkyedo</i> , 法界圖) -Huayan and Chan
Research 1 st year	-Research of early Huayan Thought	-Research of Fazang's Huayan Thought -Research of Uisang's Huayan Thought

	-Research of Wōnhyo's Huayan Thought	
Research 2 nd year	-Research of Chengguan's Huayan Thought -Research of Kyunyō's (均如) Huayan Thought	-Research of Late Huayan Thought History -Research on Bodhisattva Stages Thought
Research 3 rd year	-Vasubandhu's Treatise on the Ten Stages Sutra -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

F. Standard Curriculum for the Prajñā/Mādhyamika Sangha Graduate school (currently one in Paegyangsa):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-Indian Buddhist Thought - <i>Prajñā/Mādhyamika</i> Thought 1 -Sanskrit 1	-Prajñā/ <i>Mādhyamika</i> Thought 2 -Sanskrit Reading of the <i>Diamond Sutra</i> -Sanskrit 2
Graduate 2 nd year	-Chinese <i>Prajñā/Mādhyamika</i> Thought - Nāgārjuna's <i>Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā</i> (Reading in Chinese) - Candrakīrti's Commentary- the <i>Prasannapadā</i> 1	- Readings from the 8000-verses <i>Prajñā-paramitra Sutra</i> -Research in Relevant Tibetan Literature - Candrakīrti's Commentary- the <i>Prasannapadā</i> 2
Research 1 st year	-Readings from the 25,000-verses <i>Prajñā-Paramita Sutra</i> 1 -Aryadeva's <i>Satasastra</i> 1	- Readings from the 25,000-verses <i>Prajñā-Paramita Sutra</i> 2 -Aryadeva's <i>Satasastra</i> 2
Research 2 nd year	- Nāgārjuna's <i>Vigrahavyāvartanī</i> 1 -Shantideva's <i>Bodhicaryavatara</i> 1	- Nāgārjuna's <i>Vigrahavyāvartanī</i> 2 -Shantideva's <i>Bodhicaryavatara</i> 2
Research 3 rd year	-Yijing's translation of Nagarjuna -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

G. Standard Curriculum for the *Yogācāra/ Tathāgatagarbha* Sangha Graduate school (not actually existing to date):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-History of Indian Buddhism -Research in <i>Yogācāra</i> and <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> Thought 1 -Sanskrit 1	-Research of <i>Ahidharmakosa</i> - Research in <i>Yogācāra</i> and <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> Thought 2 -Sanskrit 2
Graduate 2 nd year	-The <i>Awakening of Faith</i> -Vasubandhu's <i>Thirty Verses of Consciousness-Only</i> -The <i>Samdhinirmocana Sūtra</i>	- The (Mahāyāna) <i>Nirvana Sutra</i> -Maitreya's <i>Mahāyāna-Sutra-Alamkara-karika</i> -Research in Relevant Tibetan Literature
Research 1 st year	-The <i>Yogācārabhūmi-sastra</i> 1 -Sanskrit Readings from Maitreya's <i>Mahāyāna-sutra-alamkara-karika</i>	- The <i>Yogācārabhūmi-sastra</i> 2 -The Three <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> Sutras
Research 2 nd year	- Xuanzang's <i>Cheng weishi lun</i> (成唯識論) -Sanskrit Reading from Asanga	- Xuanzang's <i>Cheng weishi lun</i> (成唯識論) 2 - <i>The Treasure-Nature Treatise</i> (<i>Baoxinglun</i> , 寶性論)
Research 3 rd year	-Asanga's <i>Mahāyāna-saṃgraha</i> -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

H. Standard Curriculum for the Pure Land Sangha Graduate Schools (not actually existing to date):

COURSE	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Graduate 1 st year	-Introduction to Pure Land -The Three Pure Land Sutras -Japanese 1	-The <i>Pratyutpanna Sutra</i> -Indian Pure Land Thought -Japanese 2
Graduate 2 nd year	-The Pure Land Faith -Research in Chinese Pure land Thought -Research in Korean Pure Land Thought	- Vasubandhu's <i>Sukhavati-vyūhopadesa</i> -Wōnhyo's <i>The Path Where the Mind Plays in Bliss</i> (<i>Yusim-allakdo</i> , 遊心安樂道) -Research in Japanese Pure Land Thought
Research 1 st year	-Research in Tan-Luan's (曇鸞) Pure Land Thought	- Research in Wōnhyo's Pure Land Thought -Maitreya's Pure Land Thought

	-Research in Chanting Chan	
Research 2 nd year	- Research on Pure Land Thought During the Tang -Research on Kyōnghūng's (憬興) Pure Land Thought	- Research on Fayan's (法演) Pure Land Thought -Research on Shinran's Pure Land Thought
Research 3 rd year	-Chanting Rituals and Preparation for Death -Reading for one's specialized research.	Thesis writing.

Appendix B: Schedules of the 2014 Chogye Order Postulant Education Program

TIME	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	
3:00	Arrival	Waking up							
3:00-3:40		Wash up and gather in Dharma Hall							
3:40-4:00		Morning Chanting Ritual							
4:00-5:40		108 Bows and Chanting Practice							
5:40-6:00		Rest							
6:00-7:00		Formal Four-Bowl Monastic Meal							
7:00-7:25		Work/Rest							
7:25-7:30		Class Beginning Ritual							
7:30-8:30		Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	Novice Precepts and Decorum			One Step One Bow		Novice Precepts and Decorum	
8:30-8:50		Rest							
8:50-9:50		Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	Chanting Rituals					Chanting Rituals	
9:50-10:50		Opening Ceremony	Thousand Hands Sutra Chanting for Offering Rituals						
10:50-11:00		Rest							

11:00-12:00		Formal Four-Bowl Monastic Meal						
12:00-12:30	Physical inspection	Free Practice (reviewing studied material)						
12:30-13:40		Special Lecture	Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	Novice Precepts and Decorum		Monastic Dress and Posture Practice		
13:40-14:00		Rest						
14:00-15:20		Life of Buddha	Admonitions to Beginners	The 42 Sections Sutra	Basic Doctrine	Life of Compassion	The Meaning of Bowing	Work and Developing Faith
15:20-15:40	Rest							
15:40-17:00	Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	Life of Buddha	Admonitions to Beginners	History of the Chogyé	Basic Doctrine	Practicing Chan	The Vinaya of Homeleavers	Social Leadership
17:00-17:50	Cleaning/ Work/ Showers					Shaving Heads	Chikchisa Temple	Cleaning/ Work/ Showers
17:50-18:20	Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	Religious Practice (reviewing learned material)						
18:20-18:40		Using the Mok-t'ak Instrument						
18:40-18:50	Rest							
18:50-19:20	Evening Chanting Ritual							

19:20-20:10	Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	108 Bows Confession				Writing a Letter		108 Bows Confession
20:10-20:30		Rest						
20:30-21:00		Write Diary, Bedtime						
TIME	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14	DAY 15	DAY 16
3:00	Waking up							All Night 3000 Bows
3:00-3:40	Wash up and gather in Dharma Hall							
3:40-4:00	Morning Chanting Ritual							
4:00-5:40	108 Bows and Chanting Practice							
5:40-6:00	Rest							
6:00-7:00	Formal Four-Bowl Monastic Meal							
7:00-7:25	Work/Rest							
7:25-7:30	Class Beginning Ritual							
7:30-8:30	Novice Precepts and Decorum			Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	3 Steps One Bow and Head Shaving	Chanting Ritual	Free Practice	Closing Ceremony
8:30-8:50	Rest					Receiving the Robes Ceremony	5 th -Level Sangha Exam (Written Part)	Rest
8:50-9:50	Chanting Rituals							Novice Precept

9:50-10:50	Thousand hands Sutra Chanting for Offering Rituals							Ceremony
10:50-11:00	Rest					Rest		
11:00-12:00	Formal Four-Bowl Monastic Meal							
12:00-12:30	Free Practice (reviewing learned material)						5 th -Level Sangha Exam (Oral Part)	Ending
12:30-13:40	Novice Precepts and Decorum	Monastic Dress and Posture Practice			Brahma Net Sutra	Practice		
13:40-14:00	Rest							
14:00-15:20	Meeting with an Elder	Various Buddhist Practice Methods	Ch'obal sim	Raising Vows	Brahma Net Sutra	Video about Indian Buddhist Pilgrimages		
15:20-15:40	Rest							
15:40-17:00	The Huayan Story of a Novice (善財) in Search of the Dharma	Various Buddhist Practice Methods	Ch'obal sim	Buddhism and Modern Society	Monastic Dress and Posture Practice	Video about a Prominent Korean Monk	Bodhisattva Precept Ceremony	
17:00-17:50	Cleaning/ Work/ Showers					Cleaning		Picture Taking
17:50-18:20	Religious Practice (reviewing material)					Free Practice (reviewing material)		The Monastic Education System
18:20-18:40	Using the Mok-t'ak Instrument							

18:40-18:50	Rest			
18:50-19:20	Evening Chanting Ritual			
19:20-20:10	108 Bows Confession	Writing One's Own Practice Goals	Free Practice	Speech by Chogye Education Department Personnel
20:10-20:30	Rest			All Night 3000 Bows
20:30-21:00	Writing a Diary and Sleep			

Glossary of Principal Curricular Titles and Terms

Title Used in this Thesis	Full English Title	Chinese Characters	Pinyin	McCune-Reischauer	Notes
<i>Awakening of Faith</i>	<i>The Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism</i>	大乘起信論	<i>Dasheng qixin lun</i>	<i>Taesŭng kisin ron</i>	Part of the <i>Sagyo</i>
<i>Bequeathed Teachings Sutra</i>		遺教經	<i>Yijiao jing</i>	<i>Yugyo kyōng</i>	Vinaya-related
<i>Chan Essentials</i>		禪要	<i>Chanyao</i>	<i>Sōnyo</i>	Part of the <i>Sajip</i> , written by Gaofeng
<i>Chan Preface</i>		禪源諸詮集都序	<i>Chanyuan zhuqhuanji dōuxu</i>	<i>Sōnwŏn chejōnjip tosō</i>	Part of the <i>Sajip</i> , written by Zongmi
<i>Ch'imun</i>	<i>Admonitions to the Gray-Robed Monks</i>	緇門警訓	<i>Zimen jingxun</i>	<i>Ch'imun kyōnghun</i>	Song compilation of admonitions
<i>Ch'obalsim</i>	<i>Admonitions to Beginners</i>	初發心自警文	<i>Chufaxin zijingwen</i>	<i>Ch'obalsim chagyōngmun</i>	Collection of three Korean-written admonition essays
<i>Diamond Sutra</i>		金剛經	<i>Jingang jing</i>	<i>Kūmgang kyōng</i>	Part of the <i>Sagyo</i>
<i>Enlightened Verses</i>	<i>The Sōn School's Enlightened Verses</i>	禪門拈頌	<i>Chanmen niansong</i>	<i>Sōnmun yōmsong</i>	Korean <i>gong'an</i> collection
<i>Excerpts</i>	<i>Excerpts from the Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record with Personal Notes</i>	法集別行錄節要并私記	<i>Fajibiexinglu jieyao bingru Siji</i>	<i>Pōpchippyōrhaengnok chōryo Pyōngip sagi</i>	Part of the <i>Sajip</i> , written by Chinul
<i>Huayan Sutra</i>		華嚴經	<i>Huayan jing</i>	<i>Hwaōm kyōng</i>	Part of the <i>Taegyo</i>
<i>Letters</i>	<i>Dahui's Letters</i>	大慧書狀. (found within the larger <i>Record of Dahui</i> 大慧普覺禪師語錄)	<i>Dahui shuzhuang</i>	<i>Taehye sōjang</i>	Part of the <i>Sajip</i> , written by Dahui
<i>Mirror of Sōn</i>		禪家龜鑑	<i>Chanjia guijian</i>	<i>Sōn'ga kwigam</i>	Written by Hyujōng
<i>Novice Precepts and Decorum</i>		沙彌律儀	<i>Shami luyi</i>	<i>Sami yurŭi</i>	Vinaya-related

<i>Sagyo</i>	The Fourfold Sutra Collection	四教		<i>Sagyo</i>	<i>Diamond, Śūraṅgama, Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment, and the Awakening of Faith</i>
<i>Sajip</i>	The Fourfold Treatise Collection	四集		<i>Sajip</i>	<i>The Chan Preface, Excerpts, Letters, and Chan Essentials</i>
<i>Śūraṅgama Sutra</i>		楞嚴經	<i>Lengyan jing</i>	<i>Nūngōm kyōng</i>	Part of the <i>Sagyo</i>
<i>Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment</i>		圓覺經	<i>Yuanjue jing</i>	<i>Wōn'gak kyōng</i>	Part of the <i>Sagyo</i>
<i>Taegyo</i>	Higher Learning (Course)	大教		<i>Taegyo</i>	Usually involving the <i>Huayan Sutra</i>
<i>Transmission of the Lamp</i>	<i>The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp of the Jingde Era</i>	景德傳燈錄	<i>Jingde chuandenglu</i>	<i>Kyōngdōk chōndūngnok</i>	Biographies of Chan patriarchs
<i>42-Section Sutra</i>		四十二章經	<i>Sishierzhang jing</i>	<i>Sasibijang kyōng</i>	Vinaya- related

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Biography

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