

# Introduction

HWANSOO KIM

A decade has passed since the publication of the first English-language edited volume on modern Korean Buddhism, *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, edited by Jin Y. Park (2010). The book included thirteen articles by leading scholars of colonial and postcolonial Korean Buddhism on topics ranging from modernity, nationalism, and colonialism to Buddhist reform, Sōn (Zen 禪) revivalism, gender, and politics. These articles problematized the tendentious interpretation of modern Korean Buddhism as divided between modernity and tradition and between nationalism and collaboration, thus enriching our understanding of modern Korean Buddhism.

Since the publication of *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, six other monographs on modern Korean Buddhism have been published that, taken together, have furthered and finessed that volume's themes while also contributing new approaches and perspectives on the role and nature of Buddhism in modern Korea.<sup>1</sup> Numerous articles written over the past decade have also advanced the multifaceted aspects of modern Korean Buddhism. It is high time to gather some of this new research into a single volume, and the present one is a result of this need.

*New Perspectives in Modern Korean Buddhism* is composed of ten chapters divided into four parts. It continues to engage with the themes covered in *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, namely colonialism, nationalism, and modernity, but it also emphasizes the lived experiences of individuals as well as the transnational and institutional dimensions of modern Korean Buddhism. The current volume also expands on four

areas that, although mentioned in the first volume, have gained greater attention in recent years: perennial existential concerns and the persistent relevance of contemporary religious practice, gender issues, ethical concerns about clerical marriage and scandals, and engagement with secular society. These chapters reveal the limits of metanarratives, such as those of colonialism, nationalism, and modernity, in understanding the complexity of the individual's lived experience of religion: thus, they demand that we diversify the methods by which we articulate modern Korean Buddhism. Indeed, some of these issues have been sidelined *because* of the dominance of the nationalistic, modernist, and ethnocentric historiography of modern Korean Buddhism.

Spanning the period from the late nineteenth century to the present, *New Perspectives in Modern Korean Buddhism* addresses both ongoing and new themes to help the reader understand recent scholarly trends in the field and to rethink the role of religion in today's context. Is religious practice still relevant to modern, secular society? If so, which aspects of religion should scholars explore? What roles do gender and sexuality play in the evolution and understanding of a religion? Where do the religious and secular worlds meet, and what kind of revelations do we encounter at that juncture? What might these revelations tell us about the current situations of religion and Buddhism? These are some of the questions with which the ten chapters in this compilation are engaged.

### Korean Buddhist Nationalism, Modernity, and Institutional Reform

Following the end of the Neo-Confucian Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), Korean Buddhism faced two distinctive forces during the colonial period: the West and Japan. Western culture flooded in as an imperialistic force that highlighted the differences in power and resources between East and West. Japan was a neighboring country, but in the process of modernization, it also exercised imperial power over Asian neighbors.

The fact that Korean Buddhists were governed by Japanese colonizers who were fellow Asians and Buddhists complicated their responses to colonialism and modernity. Unlike Chinese Buddhists and Buddhists in other Asian countries, who were responding primarily to Western imperialists and Christian missionaries, Korean Buddhists faced a contradictory, complex situation. They had been marginalized by their own Neo-Confucian gov-

ernment for centuries. Though they were resentful about Japanese political rule, monastic leaders saw an opportunity to elevate Korean Buddhism by drawing on the status, resources, and connections of Japanese Buddhist sects and the pro-Buddhist Japanese state. On the one hand, Korean Buddhists considered Japanese Buddhism to be a model for modernizing themselves in terms of building on institutional structure, developing propagation programs, and forming a symbiotic relationship with the state in much the way that Chinese Buddhists looked up to Japanese Buddhism for their own modernization initiatives.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Korean Buddhists felt threatened by Japanese Buddhist sects, which were significantly more powerful politically, institutionally, and financially, and they worried that Japanese Buddhism would eventually take control of Korean Buddhism. This conflicted relationship was further complicated by the rapid rise of Christianity in Korea. Korean Buddhists found themselves competing with both Japanese Buddhism and Western Christianity in the religious marketplace, not to mention that they also had to counter the threat posed by the rapid spread of numerous new religious movements.<sup>3</sup>

The influence of Christianity in Korean society intensified following Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, which ended its colonial rule and heralded the arrival of Western forces in postwar Korea. To meet the challenges posed by Japanese colonialism and Christian aggression, Korean Buddhists appropriated ideas from multiple sources that were both Western and non-Western, as did Japanese,<sup>4</sup> Chinese,<sup>5</sup> and other Asian Buddhists.<sup>6</sup> One could characterize this complex engagement of Korean Buddhists with two imperial powers—the West and Christianity as well as Japan and Japanese Buddhism—as a distinctive feature of *Korean Buddhist modernity*.

During the colonial period, lacking political and material resources, some Korean Buddhists came to depend on the Japanese colonial government to keep both Japanese Buddhism and Western Christianity at bay while also drawing on the state to revitalize Korean Buddhism and restore it to social and political prominence.<sup>7</sup> Under these circumstances, Korean Buddhism's modernization, creation of a national identity, and institutional reform efforts were deeply enmeshed in the governing apparatus of the Japanese empire.<sup>8</sup> Some Korean Buddhists engaged with the practices, ideologies, and platforms presented by the Japanese empire to assert their own national and religious identity. But Korean Buddhists tended to avoid outright political and ethnocentric nationalisms in developing a sense of identity: they articulated their own form of what might be called a *Buddhist* nationalism. Likewise, many Chinese Republican monastic and

lay Buddhist leaders developed an “alternative notion of nationalism” that was rooted in Buddhist moral and ethical values.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Korean Buddhism, this form of nationalism was informed by its interaction with Japanese Buddhism and further facilitated by global knowledge and ideas.

Korean Buddhists’ strategic engagement and negotiation with the colonial government bore fruit as Japanese imperialism advanced further into China and beyond, especially as Japan needed effective support from the leadership of Korean Buddhism through the propagation of state ideology. After decades of attempts to centralize Korean Buddhism institutionally, all of them futile because of factionalism, internal power struggles, and the lack of support from colonial authorities, a great head temple was founded in 1938 to function as the administrative headquarters for Korean Buddhism. Denominational bylaws that established governance over monastics and lay communities were written in 1941, and the colonial government quickly recognized and approved them. This new, centralized system put an end to the traditional independence of the thirty-one head temples, placing them all directly under the great head temple T’aegosa (太古寺; later, Jogye Monastery 曹溪寺), where the administrative central office was also located. Thus, the Jogye Order (曹溪宗) came into being upon its official recognition by the colonial government in 1941.

The centralization of Korean Buddhism turned out to be both a blessing and a curse for the Buddhist community. Like major Japanese Buddhist sects and the Catholic Church, Korean Buddhism had finally developed into a single, unified community under one administrative system. However, this modern institutional structure also centralized power into the hands of a small group of administrative monks, in particular the administrative head of the Jogye Order, which significantly changed the traditional model of sangha governance and leadership. Struggles over powerful administrative positions have plagued Korean Buddhism since then, and its leaders have continuously wrestled with how to mold the institution into a workable governing system to both preserve traditions and respond to the needs of contemporary society.

### Beyond the Grand Narratives in Sŏn Buddhism

If nationalism as a dominant reference point hampers the creation of a multifaceted picture of modern Korean Buddhism, the concept of modernity as a linear trajectory has also confined Korean Buddhism’s narrative.

As such, scholars have identified the events signifying Korean Buddhism's modernization as the fissures, disruptions, and transformations of Buddhist tradition occasioned by modern forces. Examples abound, such as the encounter of Korean and Japanese Buddhism following Japan's forced opening of Korea in 1876; the lifting of the prohibition on monks' access to the capital as part of the Kabo Reforms of 1897; the reopening of a temple in the capital in 1911, centuries after the last one there was disestablished; the creation of preaching halls in major cities; and the development of missionary work and education. As for individual cases, scholarship has focused on Han Yongun's radical reform to upend the institutional structure of Korean Buddhism;<sup>10</sup> Paek Yongsong's (白龍城, 1864–1940) founding of a new Buddhist religion, Taegakkyo (Great Enlightenment Teaching 大覺教), and his project to translate Chinese Buddhist texts into Korean;<sup>11</sup> and the lay intellectual Yi Nünghwa's (李能和, 1869–1943) efforts toward objectivity in scholarship.<sup>12</sup> Even in postcolonial Buddhism, the Minjung Buddhist movement of the 1980s, the temple-stay programs of the past two decades,<sup>13</sup> and the most recent monastic<sup>14</sup> and lay education reforms have been showcased as unprecedented changes driven by modern forces.

Yet this near-exclusive focus on modernization has come at the expense of accounting for the ways in which these figures and efforts worked through personal, social, and political problems on the basis of tradition. For example, David Ownby and Vincent Gooseart look at Buddhists and Taoists in Republican China to show that their focus has not always been on radical change, but on finding tools and methods informed by tradition for dealing with the problems at hand.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Justin Ritzinger's research on modern Chinese Buddhism challenges the dominant image of the reformer Taixu (太虛, 1890–1947) as a staunch modernizer. Ritzinger shows that Taixu constantly harkened back to his tradition, as is demonstrated in his unswerving faith in Maitreya and Tuṣita Heaven.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, Richard Jaffe revises our understanding of modern Japanese Buddhism as a product of Japan's encounter with European modernity. He argues that modernity did not derive solely from the West but came from multiple sources. Japanese Buddhist leaders in the modern period turned to South Asian and Southeast Asian Buddhisms as much as if not more than they looked to the West in a quest for an authentic, original Buddhism that could reorient and update their religion.<sup>17</sup>

Scholars of modern and contemporary Korean Buddhism are also aware of the limits of modernist and nationalist frameworks in explaining Korean Buddhism. As such, two chapters of Part I complement the

modernity- and linear-centered narrative of Korean Buddhism by looking carefully at how traditional religious experiences, practices, and identities were resurrected and have persisted as ways of coping with recurring existential issues and social dilemmas.

In chapter 1, Jin Y. Park studies the nuanced legacy of one of the leading Sŏn masters of modern Korean Buddhism. Hyeam Sŏnggwan (慧菴性觀, 1920–2001) is widely known as an ardent and traditional Sŏn master who practiced strict asceticism, eating just one meal a day and never lying down to sleep. He later assumed a senior leadership position in the Jogye Order. He became deeply involved in political resistance to stop the order's administration from devolving into a monopoly in 1994 and 1998. A strong proponent of the Sŏn teaching of sudden enlightenment, Hyeam was sectarian in his approach to Sŏn practice, asserting that the teachers of gradual enlightenment descended from an illegitimate line of Korean Buddhism.

Park details Hyeam's dynamic life and contentious work in relationship to these institutional and sectarian identities in order to move away from prior hagiographical depictions of him. Her contribution in this chapter lies as much in her critical analysis of Hyeam's life as in her attention to his indefatigable commitment to awakening. In so doing, Park philosophizes Hyeam's life and argues that he struggled with existential questions. Specifically, his version of Sŏn Buddhism was an expression of his awareness of human reality and could create for readers, in Park's words, "a moment of rapture in the midst of the quotidian and the familiar." In a sense, his Sŏn experience and teaching were a response to religious and perennial realities that were not unique to his time.

Park avers that Hyeam's Buddhism is continuous with that of previous masters in Korea's history, such as the Buddhisms of Kyŏnghŏ (鏡虛, 1849–1912), Iryŏp (一葉, 1896–1971), and Sŏngchŏl (性徹, 1912–1993) in their rigorous struggle in the midst of human suffering. On the basis of this understanding, she cautions against limiting Hyeam to the sectarian lineage of Sŏn. She proposes placing him in the larger philosophical dimensions of Korean Buddhism and concludes that Hyeam's religiosity, rather than his Sŏn sectarian identity, was what made him a modern Korean Buddhist through his insight into the nature of religiosity based on the awareness of human mortality.

In a similar way, in chapter 2, Mark Nathan critically examines the Sŏn monk and reformer Paek Yongsŏng as an example of a Buddhist figure who evades easy categorization. Yongsŏng endeavored to establish

an ideal institutional form for Korean Buddhism. As part of this effort, Yongsŏng opened a temple in 1911 in the central part of Seoul, where Buddhist temples had been banned for centuries, and strove to centralize Korean Buddhism on the basis of his version of Sŏn Buddhism. When his efforts did not bear fruit, he founded his own school out of frustration, which later developed into the aforementioned Taegakkyo religion.

Conventional scholarship, Nathan argues, has colored Yongsŏng as either an ardent modernist or a staunch traditionalist, and one whose leitmotif only rested on nationalism and anticolonialism. By stepping away from these metanarratives and instead taking a microhistorical approach, Nathan makes the case that Yongsŏng is better understood through a fine-grained analysis of his various motivations, his fluid identity, and the complex network of relationships he employed in response to colonial and global forces. Building on Anne Blackburn's concept of "locative pluralism" and Thomas Tweed's "translocal" understanding of Buddhism, Nathan suggests that scholars must incorporate a "relational approach" to adequately account for the richness of figures in modern Korean Buddhism.

The two chapters in Part I that follow largely deploy this relational, existential, microhistorical, transnational approach, providing substantially more multiperspectival stories that reflect the real complexities of the era and its key figures.

## Nuns and Laywomen in Modern Korean Buddhism

Scholarship that employs modernity, colonialism, and nationalism as dominant reference points for investigating modern Korean Buddhism has also muted the voices of female monastics and laywomen. A number of books on female Korean Buddhists have been published recently to rectify this absence. Martine Batchelor, a former Korean nun, wrote *Women in Korean Zen: Lives and Practices* (2006) in memory of her teacher, the eminent nun Sŏngyŏng (禪敬, 1903–1994), a Sŏn master at Naewŏn Monastery (內院寺). *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism* also included two chapters on Korean nuns, Masters Daehang (大行, 1927–2012)<sup>18</sup> and Iryŏp, contributed by Chong Go and Jin Y. Park, respectively. In 2011, Eun-su Cho published an edited volume of seven articles on Buddhist women in Korean history, giving voice to Korean Buddhist women leaders. Six chapters were on figures from the premodern era; the last, by Pori Park, examined the establishment of nunneries in contemporary Korea.

In addition to this book, Jin Y. Park's research on Kim Iryöp, an intellectual writer and influential master, has shown that Iryöp was a seminal figure among the "New Women" in modern Korea and for colonial Korean Buddhism. She is the first female Korean Buddhist figure to receive extensive, in-depth scholarly examination.<sup>19</sup>

The two chapters of Part II join this ongoing effort to recover the marginalized voices of female Buddhists, one lay and one monastic. A number of nuns have been brought into the narratives of modern Korean Buddhism in recent works,<sup>20</sup> but the voices of lay Buddhist women have been less heard. This is vexing given that the vast majority of devotees of Korean Buddhism have been female and must have been working behind the scenes in large numbers to modernize Korean Buddhism. In the third chapter, Hwansoo Kim examines the work of a largely forgotten laywoman, Chhön Ilchhng (千一淸, 1848–1934?), one of the highest-ranking ladies in the court of the late Chosön dynasty.

Chhön did not remain confined to a servant's role in the Yi royal household; rather, she became an influential figure in Chosön politics and diplomacy, especially with Japan. She also played a crucial role in modernizing Korean Buddhism during the precolonial and colonial eras, one possibly equal in significance to the roles of monastics such as Yi Hoegwang (李晦光, 1862–1932), with whom she worked. In this chapter, Kim draws on the fragments that are known about Chhön to make the case that she contributed vitally to the incipient stages of modern Korean Buddhism. Chhön drew on a wide network of relationships both inside and outside the court to establish the very first modern institution of Korean Buddhism, the first modern temple in central Seoul, and the first modern Buddhist clinic in Korea. Kim restores Chhön's centrality as a Buddhist modernizer while also demonstrating that Chhön was highly traditional. Kim uses Chhön's story to bring some balance to a largely monastic-centered history and lengthen the lineage of lay female leadership.

In chapter 4, Eun-su Cho introduces us to a fascinating nun, Suok Sünim (守玉, 1902–1966), who made an indelible impact on the Korean Buddhist nuns' community. Suok was the rare Korean nun who went to Japan to study. For more than two years in the late 1930s, she formed close relationships with nuns in the Nichiren and Rinzaï sects. After witnessing the vibrancy of the Japanese nuns' traditions, including meditation halls and modern education programs, Suok wrote a travelogue for a Korean Buddhist journal back home. In one section, she delivered a scathing



and vociferous critique of Korean monks as culprits in the mistreatment of nuns. After returning to Korea, Suok became an influential leader in the nuns' community and worked strenuously as a dharma instructor and abbess. She was instrumental in generating a strong *bhikkhuni* consciousness and identity in Korean Buddhism. She also played a leading role in the movement to reinstate celibacy in the monastic community, which had become largely married under Japanese colonial rule. Cho argues that Suok was the foremost leader not only among Korean nuns in matters of education, practice, social engagement, and the establishment of feminist awareness, but more broadly in institutional reform and the modernization of Korean Buddhism.

### Clerical Celibacy, Marriage, Scandals, and Monastic Rules

Like Japanese Buddhism,<sup>21</sup> clerical marriage has been a central issue in modern Korean Buddhism.<sup>22</sup> The conventional narrative says that the spread of clerical marriage was due to the influence of modern Japanese Buddhism and even that the Japanese colonial government actually imposed marriage on the celibate Korean monastic community. But recent scholarship reveals a more complicated story.

During the Chosŏn dynasty, the definition and status of monastics was fundamentally compromised as a result of policies regulating Buddhism. Monastics were assigned duties to the state as soldiers and corvée labors, which blurred their identities. By the end of the nineteenth century, it was common for monks in the countryside to take wives and even raise children.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in the first decade of the twentieth century, even before Japan's colonization of Korea, Buddhists and state officials petitioned the Korean government to legalize clerical marriage as part of the country's nation-building efforts. While modern Japanese Buddhism undoubtedly influenced this trend by decriminalizing clerical marriage and meat eating in 1871, these petitions also reflected the reality in Korea at the time.

Previous scholarship has tended to attribute clerical marriage to the colonial government's revision of the Temple Law of 1911 by eliminating the clause on celibacy, which had been a prerequisite for appointment to the abbacy of head temples. Recent scholars have stressed that the colonial government never clearly imposed clerical marriage on the monastic community, that there were public debates on the matter without state

interference,<sup>24</sup> and that state authorities were, in a sense, responding to the demands of Korean monastic leaders who had already been practicing clerical marriage. The three chapters in Part III develop a new understanding of celibacy and marriage using case studies. They further examine the long-term consequences of policy decisions in contemporary Korean Buddhism.

In chapter 5, Jeongeun Park provides an analysis of how clerical marriage came to be dominant by delving into specific cases from the mid-1920s. Park points out that the Temple Law of 1911 standardized not only clerical rank, education, and the management of temple properties, but also the rules regarding ordination, the implementation of the Vinaya, and clerical celibacy. As mentioned above, it stipulated that *bhikṣu* (celibacy) was a prerequisite for abbacy of the head and local temples. As more monks began taking wives, including the abbots of head temples, it became imperative to change this provision. Otherwise, the *bhikṣu* status of these monks would be nullified; more importantly, those serving as abbots would be dismissed.

Park describes fascinating cases of the colonial government demanding family lineage registers for newly appointed abbots and rejecting some on the basis of their marriage. But the government faced a dilemma, as more monastic leaders than they expected were married. The authorities eventually agreed to eliminate the celibacy requirement for abbacies. However, neither married monastics nor the colonial government wanted the prestigious *bhikṣu* status to be eliminated, so they agreed that, as long as monastics faithfully followed the *ordination* rituals specified in the Temple Law, being married would not negate their *bhikṣu* status. For the colonial government, this was a compromise that minimized disruption. Park maintains that, as a result, the oxymoron “married *bhikṣu*” (K. *taechöśung* 帶妻僧) became a common term, and Korean monks carried this dual identity of being ritually *bhikṣu* and in practice married for the remainder of the colonial period.

After the Japanese left, the married monks who had enjoyed prestige and power under colonial rule were ousted from their positions. A purification movement ensued: backed by the newly established South Korean government, celibate monks took over the major head temples and the leadership of the denomination. But the question of clerical marriage continued to plague Korean Buddhism, and this is the focus of the next chapter.

In chapter 6, Sujung Kim zooms in on a recent scandal involving the head monk of the celibate Jogye Order, who fathered a daughter with a nun but kept the matter secret. He denied the reports even as mounting evidence became public. By focusing on this and a slew of other sex scandals of recent years, Kim historicizes the prevalence of monks secretly taking wives. One of the many factors that led to the discourse of secrecy, she argues, was the way the Purification Movement was implemented. In an effort to drive married monks out of the temples, the celibate faction colored them as collaborators with Japanese colonialists who had adopted the practice of clerical marriage uncritically. In the postcolonial era, anyone daring to come out as married would automatically be stigmatized as a pro-Japanese collaborator.

The unmarried camp also hastily began ordaining untrained men in an effort to offset the numerical imbalance and to more forcefully oust the married monks. The rampant incorporation of these low-quality monks led to pervasive moral laxity. In addition, the unmarried camp enticed married monks to join their cause by asking them to divorce their wives on paper while what they did in private was overlooked.

Kim offers five angles for making better sense of this situation and understanding why the public shows considerable tolerance for violations of celibacy. For example, she writes that, although the present situation is partly the result of colonialism, Japanese Buddhists, and modernity, the Sōn Buddhist tradition of antinomianism and the lionization of morally flexible Buddhist monastics such as Wōnhyo and Kyōnghō are equally responsible. Despite this internal contradiction, the Jogye Order, established by the unmarried camp, has continued to present itself as the preserver of the monastic tradition of celibacy. Kim concludes that it is the policies and rhetoric of the order itself that are responsible for the widespread secrecy, rather than the moral failings of individual monks.

Likewise, since the inception of the monastic community, the Buddhist sangha has been perpetually concerned with keeping its reputation in society intact. In chapter 7, Uri Kaplan examines the Jogye Order's reforms of its monastic rules following a series of scandals that culminated in an incident in 2012. A group of monks from the renowned Paegyang Monastery were caught drinking, smoking, and gambling on a hotel's hidden camera. Faced with a slew of such scandals, which sparked a public outcry against monastic corruption, the Jogye Order reined in its clergy by reeducating them on the Vinaya rules.

Kaplan points out that the Jogye Order was well aware that the traditional Indian and Chinese monastic rules would be difficult to enforce in the present, highly globalized, wired society. Therefore, the order created simplified, standardized, and updated Vinaya rules in the hopes that they could be realistically and effectively implemented. Called *The Pure Rules for the Sangha* (K. *Sūngga ch'ōnggyu* 僧家清規) and instituted in 2015, they concern monastic etiquette and mindset as well as how to deal with money and property. Like the traditional rules that were written centuries ago, these new rules are very much in line with the secular government's legal system. Kaplan stresses that the new rules are a telling example of “the constant negotiation between reform and revival, modernization and traditionalism.” Moreover, Kaplan reminds us in his conclusion that this negotiation and any other undertaking by the Jogye Order is intent primarily on “maintaining the favorable social reputation” of the Sangha, a central concern of the monastic community throughout history.

The strong attachments to these aspects of Buddhist practice and identity cannot be fully grasped in modernist terms because they are manifestations of traditional practices and ideas as ways of reckoning with contemporary concerns. These three chapters provide a clear reminder that scholars should account for the persistence of the tradition and perennial issues as much as the advent of change and transformation.

### Secularity, Society, and Politics

The three chapters in Part IV of this volume bring to light the limitations of ethnocentric and binary interpretations of modern Korean Buddhism, such as nationalism versus collaboration, tradition versus modernity, or mountain Buddhism versus city Buddhism. To better understand the diverse players in modern Korean Buddhism and to better elicit the details of the agency they exercised in the colonial and secular context, transnational and relational perspectives are needed. The dichotomous, modernity-centric understanding of postcolonial Korean Buddhism also overlooks a dynamic interaction between tradition and modernity and between religion and secularization, in which traditional values and identities constantly reinforce themselves even amid the heightened discourse of modern Buddhist propagation advanced by the Jogye Order.

In chapter 8, Gregory Evon reevaluates Han Yongun's (韓龍雲, 1879–1944) nationalism by analyzing his fiction and reveals Han's indebtedness to

Japanese intellectual trends, particularly to the Buddhist scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi (福澤諭吉, 1835–1901). Han's 1910 treatise on the reformation of Korean Buddhism was informed by Fukuzawa's rendering of the difference between East and West.<sup>25</sup> Painfully aware of the wretched condition of his native Buddhism, Han accepted Fukuzawa's social Darwinism but articulated a way of repackaging his tradition to bring it up to date. But Evon maintains that not all of Han's writings should be considered signifiers of Korean nationalism, Japanese colonial aggression, and political liberation. Using the novel *Fate* (K. *Pangmyŏng* 薄明) as evidence, Evon argues that when Han wrote it in the 1920s, he had joined the intellectual milieu of his time in which popular culture was focused on the idea of "love." Driven by the commercial literary market and the mass publication industry, Han used print capitalism as an opportunity to disseminate his religion in vernacular language, making it more accessible to the populace.

Evon concludes that the tension between coloniality and modernity was not as acute as previously believed and that many Buddhist leaders, including Han, had other, equally pressing concerns and interests, as reflected in their writings and activities. One must look at colonial Korean Buddhism in the broader context in which multiple human concerns and motivations played out. This perspective is especially important for locating the agency of historical figures. Instead of being shackled by colonial aggression and manipulation, historical figures performed intelligent navigation to realize their goals.

One figure who exemplifies the agency of the colonized was Kim Kugyŏng (金九經, 1899–1950?), who traversed the Japanese empire while making significant contributions to transnational scholarly work. In chapter 9, Kim Cheonhak studies the life of Kim Kugyŏng, who was employed at Keijo Imperial University and worked as a researcher and librarian in Beijing and Manchuria during the colonial period. Working with prominent Chinese and Japanese scholars, Kim conducted extensive fieldwork to procure rubbings of historical memorials. Through articles that circulated among East Asian scholars, he took the role of a bridge between Chinese, Japanese, and Korean scholarship, which enabled him to make major contributions to contemporary East Asian history, religion, and cultural studies. His scholarly endeavors were also made possible by the platforms he was offered by the Japanese empire, not to mention the education he received in Japan and the network of relationships he cultivated.

However, Kim's relationship with Japan was not one-directional. He also influenced Japanese scholars such as Suzuki Taisetsu (鈴木大切,

1870–1966) and Seizan Yanagida (聖山 柳田, 1922–2006), who relied on Kim's research for their own works. His scholarship even had an impact on the compilation of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (大正新脩大藏經). Kim Cheonhak shows that Kim Kugyōng cannot be placed in a binary framework. Even though Kim Kugyōng later took a Japanese name, he was a transnational figure whose primary devotion was to Buddhist scholarship and who indirectly promoted the prestige of Korean Buddhism in scholarly circles. He was even thought of as a Buddhist nationalist in his own right, on a par with Han Yongun.

Although a primary concern of colonial and postcolonial Korean Buddhism has been to make Buddhism socially relevant and influential, traditional values and structures continue to assert themselves. In chapter 10, Florence Galmiche examines the tension between the need to modernize Buddhism and the idea of reviving the monastic tradition by defining monastic life in the mountains as the authentic form of Buddhist practice. In fact, this conflicting demand of maintaining the tradition while modernizing Buddhism has been a main phenomenon ever since Korean Buddhism encountered modernity, but recent years have witnessed new developments in this dual task. The Jogye Order, the largest Buddhist denomination in South Korea, recently launched programs to educate the laity, especially female devotees, and reemphasize propagation (K. *p'ogyo* 布教). These programs were largely implemented in urban temples, where laity were trained to become Buddhists of the “highest quality” who understand and practice Buddhism correctly in the face of increasing secularization. To regulate lay practices and instill a Buddhist identity, the Jogye Order issued membership cards to the laity and organized communal educational programs.

Galmiche points out that this “churchification” of urban temples had both expected and unexpected consequences. On the one hand, it closed the gaps between the monastic and lay populations and between the mountain and city temples. On the other hand, she argues that the education programs in fact reinforced the supremacy of the monastic community over the laity and heightened the significance of the mountain temples over their city counterparts. She suggests that this reinforcement came about through the strengthening of monastic precepts and retreats, the reemphasis on monastic ethos, and the encouragement of pilgrimages to mountain temples by lay members. In making this case, Galmiche articulates the ongoing tension and negotiation between tradition and modernity that can be found in the policies and programs initiated by the Jogye Order.

## Going Forward

Together, the ten chapters in this volume direct our attention to a set of new approaches meant to help us comprehend colonial and postcolonial Korean Buddhism in a more nuanced way. The chapters also reflect the need for a new direction in Buddhist scholarship in accordance with the changing landscape of religious life and the role of religion in modern times.

According to the most recent census data available from Statistics Korea (2015), South Korea has more Christians than followers of any other religion. Among the country's population of 51 million, 19.7 percent practice Protestantism, 15.5 percent practice Buddhism, and 7.9 percent practice Catholicism.<sup>26</sup> The two branches of Christianity together account for 27.6 percent of the population, making it the dominant religion in South Korea. The Christian paradigm, or as Vladimir Tikhonov calls it "the Christian monopoly,"<sup>27</sup> has been firmly established in Korean society on all fronts—cultural, economic, and political. This presents a serious challenge for Korean Buddhism.

Another pressing issue for Korean Buddhism is a rapid drop in new novices, especially among women.<sup>28</sup> The situation has become so dire that the Jogye Order recently launched an ad campaign to entice people to become monastics by emphasizing the benefits of monastic life.<sup>29</sup> This drop-off is not unique to Korean Buddhism, though; it has become a major problem for the Catholic Church as well. Nevertheless, Korean Buddhism was not prepared for the trend. The issue is only compounded by the increasingly aging population of monastics, largely in line with the general demographics of Korean society.

In addition, South Korea is becoming increasingly secular in the same pattern that many European countries have experienced.<sup>30</sup> Although Christianity has numerically surpassed Buddhism in South Korea, total religious affiliation in the Korean population fell to 43.9 percent in 2015,<sup>31</sup> and it is likely to fall further in the years to come.

Korean Buddhism has been hard-pressed to reckon with these challenges and with its diminishing relevance to Korean society. The prisms of sectarian discourse, ethnocentric nationalism, and male-centered modernity as well as the dualism of celibacy versus clerical marriage are no longer adequate interpretative tools for understanding Korean Buddhism in particular or the function of religion and the manifestation of religiosity in modern society more generally. This situation tells us that Buddhist scholarship cannot be satisfied with simply bringing more attention to the

ways that modern and contemporary Korean Buddhism have continuously worked to resolve the tension between internal concerns (doctrine, ritual, and institution) and external forces (modernity, colonialism, and Christian missions). It demands that scholars, monastics, religious organizations, and followers address issues that are urgent today, such as gender, sexuality, race, secularization, and globalization. It also demands that we ask what forms of engagement the Buddhist community should use to address these issues, as lay practitioners or monastics and as individuals or institutions.

The diminishing number of people declaring religious affiliation does not mean that the role of religion in human life and society has completely lost its ground. The existential pain of human life has not changed. In what new ways does religion influence people's lives, implicitly and explicitly? What new scholarship and methods are needed to understand these new modes of religiosity? In lieu of the meta-narratives that dominated Korean Buddhist scholarship until recently, an understanding of the lived experiences of Buddhism, positive or negative, might bring us closer to understanding the multifaceted nature of modern Korean Buddhism from more critical and creative perspectives. The chapters in this volume are the results of this aspiration.

## Notes

1. The six monographs are Mun, *Purification Buddhist Movement, 1954–1970* (2011); Kim, *Empire of the Dharma* (2013) and *The Korean Buddhist Empire* (2018); Park, *Women and Buddhist Philosophy* (2018); Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities* (2018); and Kaplan, *Monastic Education in Korea* (2020).

2. Cho, "Reconsidering the Historiography of Modern Korean Buddhism," 54–74.

3. Two representative new religions were Chōndogyo and Pochōngyo. See Young, *Eastern Learning and the Heavenly Way*; and Jorgenson, "Pochōngyo and the Imperial State: Negotiations between the Spiritual and Secular Governments," 177–205.

4. For the most recent work on the transnationality of Japanese Buddhism, see Jaffe, *Seeking Sakyamuni*.

5. See Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land*; and Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism: Early Twentieth-Century Engagements*.

6. See Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*; and Turner, *Saving Buddhism*.

7. Evon, "Korean Buddhist Historiography and the Legacies of Japanese Colonialism (1910–1945)"; Kim, *The Korean Buddhist Empire*; and Nathan, *From the Mountains to the Cities*.



8. Kim, *The Korean Buddhist Empire*.
9. Kiely and Jessup, eds., *Recovering Buddhism in Modern China* (see “Introduction”).
10. For example, see Tikhonov and Miller, trans., *Selected Writings of Han Yongun*.
11. See Han, “Yongsōng Sūnim ūi chōnbangi ūi saengae” (The Early Part of Venerable Yongsōng’s Life) and “Yongsōng Sūnim ūi hubangi ūi saengae” (The Later Part of Venerable Yongsōng’s Life).
12. See Yi, *Yi Nūnghwa wa kūndae pulgyohak*.
13. See Kaplan, “Images of Monasticism.”
14. A detailed analysis of the monastic education reforms appears in Uri Kaplan’s monograph published in 2020.
15. See “Introduction,” Ownby and Gooseart, *Making Saints in Modern China*.
16. Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land*.
17. Jaffe, *Seeking Sakyamuni*.
18. Most recently, Pori Park published an article on Daehaeng Sunim titled “Uplifting Spiritual Cultivation for Lay People: Bhikṣuṇī Master Daehaeng (1927–2012) of the Hanmaum Seonwon (One Mind Sōn Center) in South Korea” (2017).
19. See “Gendered Response to Modernity: Kim Iryōp and Buddhism”; *Women and Buddhist Philosophy: Engaging Zen Master Kim Iryōp*.
20. One nun who has recently gained increasing attention is Pongnyōgwan (蓬廬觀, ?–1938), who revitalized precolonial and colonial Buddhism on Cheju Island by building and rebuilding all of the major temples standing today. See Kim, *Minjok Pulgyo ūi isang kwa hyōnsil*, 35; Pongnyōgwan Sōnyanghoe, *Hyeowōldang Pongnyōgwan sūnim*.
21. See Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman*.
22. For the most complete discussion of the movement, see Mun, *Purification Buddhist Movement, 1954–1970*.
23. Kim, “The Mystery of the Century.”
24. Auerback, “Ch’inil Pulgyo yōksahak ūi chaego” (Rethinking the Historiography of Pro-Japanese Buddhism), 15–53.
25. Tikhonov and Miller, trans., *Selected Writings of Han Yongun*.
26. Statistics Korea, “2015 in’gu chut’aek chōngjosa p’yobon chipkye kyōlgwa” (Results of the Sample Survey on the 2015 Population and Housing Census), 17.
27. Tikhonov, “South Korea’s Christian Military Chaplaincy in the Korean War: Religion as Ideology?”
28. For example, the female novitiates numbered 137 in 2005 and decreased to 52 by 2018 (Kim, “Sutch’a ro ponūn Pulgyo wa Chogyechong 2017” (Buddhism and Jogye Order of 2017 Seen through Numbers).
29. Pak, “Sūnim kuin kwango sidae” (The Age of Advertisement for Recruiting Monastics).
30. See Chaves, *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*.
31. Statistics Korea, “2015 in’gu chut’aek chōngjosa,” 17.