JOURNAL OF DAESOON THOUGHT & THE RELIGIONS OF THE EAST ASIA

THE DAESOON ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
DAEJIN UNIVERSITY

pISSN: 2799-3949
eISSN: 2799-4252

Vol.3 Issue 2, MARCH 2024

JDTREA
JOURNAL OF DAESOON THOUGHT & THE RELIGIONS OF EAST ASIA

Aims and Scope

The *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia (JDTREA)* is the official English language journal of the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, and thus far, it is the only peer-reviewed, English language journal dedicated to not only research on the contemporary relevance of East Asia Religions, but also to research on the relatively new fields of East Asian New Religious Movements (EANRMs) and Daesoon Thought. Although there is a reasonable level of worldwide familiarity with the major religious traditions of East Asia, misunderstandings are still common, and novel research on these movements remains highly beneficial. As for EANRMs and Daesoon Thought, both are profoundly under-researched outside of East Asia. As a remedy to this, the Daesoon Academy of Science (DAOS), aims to publish *JDTREA* twice a year and hold conferences on East Asian religions and Daesoon Thought such as the World SangSaeng Forum and the *JDTREA* Conference. Daesoon Thought refers to a grouping of native Korean religious concepts best characterized by the Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence (*Haewon Sangsaeng*) and the Grateful Reciprocation of Favors for Mutual Beneficence (*Boeun Sangsaeng*); two concepts that can be traced back to the religious figure, Kang Jeungsan. The editorial board of *JDTREA* consists of active scholars from over a dozen countries including Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, China, France, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, the UK, and the USA. *JDTREA* is published to promote global studies on East Asia religion and Daesoon Thought by encouraging wide-ranging research on these topics. The scope of *JDTREA* includes the following:

- Interpretation and analysis of religious phenomena in all fields of the humanities and social sciences
- Comparative research on the above in relation to another religion, philosophy, ideology, etc.
- Critical reviews of academic trends, mainly in the arts and humanities, that relate to East Asian religions and/or Daesoon Thought
- New interpretations of and approaches to East Asian religions and/or Daesoon Thought

The types of publications featured in *JDTREA* will include original articles, research notes, and book reviews. Other types of contributions are negotiable but subject to the approval of the editorial board. All unsolicited articles will be subject to peer review, and commissioned articles are reviewed by the Editorial Board.

About the Journal

JDTREA debuted on September 30th, 2021 with volume 1, issue 1. The journal is set to be published twice annually and special editions may also be published in the future. The number of copies printed will be 500 per publication. The full texts will be freely available at www.jdre.org. No publishing costs will be incurred by authors who submit to the journal.

Abstracting and Indexing Services

Portions of articles, metadata, or full texts of articles from the *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* are available via CrossRef Metadata (2021-) and Google Scholar (2021-).

Publisher: BAE Kyuhan, The Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Korea
Editor-in-Chief: Carole M. CUSACK, University of Sydney, Australia

The Daesoon Academy of Sciences
Daejin Education Building 403, Daejin University
1007, Hoguk-ro, Pocheon-si, Gyeonggi-do, 11159, South Korea
Tel: +82-31-539-2523 Fax: +82-31-531-2541
E-mail: idaos@daejin.ac.kr
Ⓒ The Daesoon Academy of Sciences (www.daos.or.kr/en/)

Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia

Volume 3 Issue 2, March 2024

Publisher

BAE Kyuhan

Daejin University, Korea

Editor-in-Chief

Carole M. CUSACK

University of Sydney, Australia

Review Editor

Holly FOLK

Western Washington University, USA

Associate Editor

LEE Gyungwon

Daejin University, Korea

Managing Editor

Jason GREENBERGER

Daejin University, Korea

Copy Editor

CHOI Wonhyuk

LEE Suhyun

Daejin University, Korea

Office Staff

NA Kwonsoo

PYEON Gyeongil

Daejin University, Korea

Honorary Editors (alphabetical order by nation)

Don BAKER University of British Columbia, Canada

Massimo INTROVIGNE The Center for Studies on New Religions, Italy

Eileen BARKER London School of Economics, UK

J. Gordon MELTON Baylor University, USA

Editorial Board

Christopher HARTNEY The University of Sydney, Australia

David W. KIM The Australian National University, Australia

Mario MARINOV South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria

Susan PALMER Concordia University, Canada

LI Hongjun Yanbian University, China

WANG Zhihe Institute for Postmodern Development of China USA, China

Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD Bordeaux Montaigne University, France

KAWANISHI Eriko Osaka Professional Institute University, Japan

OBUSE Kieko Kobe University, Japan

AHN Shin Paichai University, Korea

KO Namsik Daejin University, Korea

Milda ALISAUSKIENE Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Boudewijn WALRAVEN Leiden University, Netherlands

Irena BOROWIK Jagiellonian University, Poland

Boris FALIKOV Russian State University, Russia

Javier MARTINEZ-TORRON Complutense University, Spain

CHERN Meeihwa Taiwan Association for Religious Studies, Taiwan

HUANG Pochi Huafan Univetrsity, Taiwan

George CHRYSSIDES York St John University, UK

Catherine WESSINGER Loyola University New Orleans, USA

Edward IRONS The Hong Kong Institute for Religion USA

Patrick LAUDE Georgetown University, USA

Thien-Huong NINH Cosumnes River College, USA

Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia is a peer-reviewed, academic journal published in English by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences (DAOS). Article submissions, queries and editorial matters should be addressed to the editorial committee. For more information, please contact:

Tel: +82-(0)31-539-2523, Fax: +82-(0)31-531-2541, E-mail: idaos@daejin.ac.kr

DAOS maintains an executive office in the Daejin Edu. Building 403, Daejin University, 1007 Hoguk-ro, Pocheon-si, Gyeonggi-do, 11159, Rep. of Korea

JDTREA
JOURNAL OF DAESOON THOUGHT & THE RELIGIONS OF EAST ASIA

Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia

Volume 3 Issue 2
March 2024

DAOS
DAESOON ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
The Daesoon Academy of Sciences

CONTENTS

Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia
Volume 3 Issue 2, March 2024

Editor's Preface

Carole M. CUSACK (The University of Sydney, Australia) ---- 9

Research Articles

- **"God Always Find a Way": The Crisis of Civilization and Its Overcoming through the Worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe**
  CHA Seonkeun (Daejin University, Korea) ---- 13
- **Writing Miracles and Denominational Establishment: On the Belief Narratives of Quanzhen Daoism**
  ZHANG Shuqing (Nanjing University, China) ---- 35
- **The Ethical Obligations of Humankind towards Animals and Its Implications for Korean Religions: Focusing on Korean Buddhism and Daesoon Thought**
  Dominik RUTANA (SWPS University, Poland) ---- 55
- **Messianism in Civilizational History: The Transformation of the Buddhist Messiah via Maitreya**
  DINH Hong Hai (Vietnam National Univesity-Hanoi, Vietnam) ---- 71
- **Won Buddhism in America: Exploring Ways to Balance Tradition and Innovation**
  Grace J. SONG (Won Institute of Graduate Studies, USA) ---- 93
- **Death Cannot be Seen: The Mortuary Rites of a Contemporary Monastic**
  XU Mingqian (National Chengchi University, Taiwan) ----121

CONTENTS

Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia
Volume 3 Issue 2, March 2024

Book Review

- **David Weiss, *The God Susanoo and Korea in Japan's Cultural Memory: Ancient Myths and Modern Empire***
  Carole M. CUSACK (The University of Sydney, Australia)
  ----------145
- **Yu-Shuang Yao, and Richard Gombrich, *Chinese Buddhism Today: Conservatism, Modernism, Syncretism and Enjoying Life on the Buddha's Light Mountain***
  J. Gordon MELTON (Baylor University, USA)
  ----------147
- **C. Pierce Salguero, *Buddhish: A Guide to the 20 Most Important Buddhist Ideas for the Curious and Skeptical***
  Holly FOLK (Western Washington University, USA)
  ----------149
- **Elliot Cohen, *The Psychologisation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions: Colonisation, Translation, and Commodification***
  LEE Kwangyu (Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church, USA)
  ----------151

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Carole M. CUSACK
The University of Sydney, Australia

JDTREA

This is the sixth issue of *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* in our fourth year of publication. It feels that the culture the publisher Daejin Academy of Sciences (DAOS) and the Editorial Board have sought to build through this new publication and the annual JDTREA Conference that serves as an incubator for articles featured in JDTREA have matured. *JDTREA* continues to build a global readership with interest in Asian religions, new religions from Asia now found in the West, and the Korean new religion Daesoon Jinrihoe. In particular, we are committed to bringing the work of Asian scholars, which to date has not been that prominent for Anglophone scholars, to a far greater audience.

As has become *JDTREA* tradition, this issue contains six articles, three of which are about aspects of Daesoon Jinrihoe and three of which examine broader topics in Asian religions. The first article is by Cha Seonkeun (Daejin University, Korea) and is titled "God Always Find a Way": The Crisis of Civilization and Its Overcoming through the Worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe" This research focuses on civilizational crises, both historical and contemporary, and argues that religion can play a role in aiding humans to overcome such upheavals. This perspective is illustrated by an analysis of the key Daesoon Jinrihoe theological doctrine of "grievance resolution for mutual beneficence." The second contribution is by Zhang Shuqing (Nanjing University, China). This article is titled "Writing Miracles and Denominational Establishment: On the Belief Narratives about the Ancestor of Quanzhen Daoism" and investigates the image of the ancestor of Quanzhen Daoism from a narrative perspective, also evaluating the influence of this image on the development of Quanzhen Daoism in terms of belief, genealogy, and the compilation of sacred history.

Next is Dominic Rutana's (SWPS University, Poland) examination of attitudes to animal rights, broadly conceived of, in "Ethical Obligations of Humankind towards Animals and Its Implications for Korean Religions: Focusing on Korean Buddhism and Daesoon Thought." Using two normative ethical theories – virtue ethics and the ethics of care – Rutana examines potential solutions to the issue of discrimination against non-human animals in contemporary society and traces its implications for Korean religions. The fourth article is "Messianism in Civilizational History: Transformation of the Buddhist Messiah via the Maitreya Symbol" by Dinh Hong Hai (Vietnam National University-Hanoi City, Vietnam). This research examines current global disasters (wars, the climate crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic) and evaluates theological ideas of the end times and the anticipated messiah in Buddhism.

Next is Grace J. Song's (Won Institute of Graduate Studies, USA) "Won Buddhism in America: Exploring Ways to Balance Tradition and Innovation." This is a lively and interesting account of the fifty-year history of Won Buddhism in the United States,

which has a strong sociological slant. The shift from a Korean religion taking root in America to a Korean-origin religion that has become thoroughly Americanised is one found in many migrant religions in colonial countries like the United States, Australia, and Canada, for example. The final research contribution is by Xu Mingqian (National Chengchi University, Taiwan), and is titled "Death Cannot Be Seen: The Mortuary Rites of a Contemporary Monastic." This is a fascinating analysis of the expectations of a religious community when a revered leader dies. The religion is Buddhism and the leader is Venerable Hsing Yun (1927–2023), the founder of Fo Guang Shan; the article ranges over time and across signs of holiness and rituals accompanying death, the transformation of a living leader into an otherworldly being.

The journal issue is completed by reviews supplied by the Review Editor, Professor Holly Folk (Western Washington University). As ever, gratitude is due to Bae Kyuhan, Lee Gyungwon, Jason Greenberger, and Choi Wonhyuk from Daejin University, and to the authors and referees who made this issue happen. It is a pleasure to complete the third volume of JDTREA, and I hope that this issue will be of use to scholars around the world.

Carole M. Cusack
Editor of *JDTREA*
The University of Sydney, Australia

RESEARCH ARTICLES

- "God Always Find a Way": The Crisis of Civilization and Its Overcoming through the Worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe
  CHA Seonkeun (Daejin University, Korea)

- Writing Miracles and Denominational Establishment: On the Belief Narratives of Quanzhen Daoism
  ZHANG Shuqing (Nanjing University, China)

- The Ethical Obligations of Humankind towards Animals and Its Implications for Korean Religions: Focusing on Korean Buddhism and Daesoon Thought
  Dominik RUTANA (SWPS University, Poland)

- Messianism in Civilizational History: The Transformation of the Buddhist Messiah via Maitreya
  DINH Hong Hai (Vietnam National Univesity-Hanoi City, Vietnam)

- Won Buddhism in America: Exploring Ways to Balance Tradition and Innovation
  Grace J. SONG (Won Institute of Graduate Studies, USA)

- Death Cannot be Seen: The Mortuary Rites of a Contemporary Monastic
  XU Mingqian (National Chengchi University, Taiwan)

"God Always Find a Way": The Crisis of Civilization and Its Overcoming through the Worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe

CHA Seonkeun

JDTREA 2024,3(2):13–34
Original Articles

Correspondence to
CHA Seonkeun
Daejin University, Korea
chasungun@daejin.ac.kr

ORCID
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7278-1171

Cha Seonkeun currently serves as the Chair of the Department of Daesoon Studies at Daejin University and is the acting dean of the College of Daesoon Studies. Prior to his current roles, he held the position of Vice Director at the Daesoon Institute of Religion & Culture. Cha Seonkeun initially pursued studies in artificial intelligence before transitioning to religious studies. His present focus involves the detailed organization of Daesoon Studies by incorporating diverse research approaches from the modern field of religious studies. Notably, he recently authored the book *Contemporary Religious Studies and Daesoon Thought: Comparative Research Method and Application* (2023). In addition, he has published several papers, including 'A Comparative Study on the *Simwudo* of Daesoon Jinrihoe and Buddhism' (2023), 'A Comparative Study on the Water-Fire Theories of Kang Jeungsan and Wei Boyang' (2023), 'Yeongdae from the Viewpoint of Material Religion' (2023), and 'The Shrine of Gods and the Naejeong from the Perspective of the Perfected Dharma and *Lüzu-quanshu*' (2023).

OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia Vol. 3. Issue 2 (March 2024): 13–34
© 2024 by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Daejin University, Korea

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.13

Day of submission: 2024.01.25.
Completion of review: 2024.02.15.
Final decision for acceptance: 2024.03.20.

P-ISSN: 2799-3949
E-ISSN: 2799-4252

Abstract

This article is a compilation of civilizational crises and their overcoming from the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, based on the premise that religion can offer advice on the crises faced by modern civilization. It is a reinterpretation of human history from a religious perspective, focusing on mutual contentions, grievances, grudges, and their overcoming. Daesoon Jinrihoe explains that modern civilizational crises were first recognized by divine beings in the 18th and 19th centuries, and then later recognized by humans in the 20th and 21st centuries. Unable to resolve the civilization crises, the divine beings asked the Supreme God to intervene in human history, and the Supreme God was born in a human body to reveal the root causes and development of various civilizational crises and to propose solutions to overcome them. These solutions encompass setting the world aright and ushering in a new era through the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth (天地公事), attaining enduring peace by practicing grievance resolution for mutual beneficence (解冤相生), and reconstructing the relationship between divine beings and humans in harmonious coexistence. Devotees hold that Daesoon Jinrihoe is a religion that originated as a solution to a problem faced by God rather than humankind. As such, it considers the crises of civilization and their overcoming as the reason for existence. According to the religion's worldview, the Supreme God has already provided the solution to these civilizational crises. With a tip of the hat to the film *Interstellar* (2014), it could be said, "God Found a Way. He Always Has." Now, Daesoon Jinrihoe posits that it is up to humans to implement the way that God found.

Keywords: Daesoon Jinrihoe; civilizational crises; the Supreme God; Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth; *Cheonji Gongsa*; Grievance Resolution for Mutual Beneficence; *Haewon Sangsaeng*

Introduction

By limiting the scope of observation to what is known, the only civilization currently known to exist in the cosmos resides on 'the Pale Blue Dot.' The civilization of Earth, which Homo sapiens have built, boasts a long prehistory and a history spanning approximately 10,000 years. Humanity experienced a rapid elevation of civilization during the Industrial Revolution, which began in the late 18th century. Despite enduring numerous wars and conflicts, this civilization appears to hold the promise of utopia for humanity, thanks to its ongoing advancements in science and technology.

However, there are traps that lie ahead for the civilization of Earth that are not easily surmounted. This includes earthquakes that measure a nine or higher on the Richter Scale, supermassive volcanic eruptions like Tamu Massif, Siberian Traps, Yellowstone, and Deccan Traps, as well as unforeseen potential collision threats from Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHAs).[1] In addition, prominent examples of natural disasters include massive events like Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) produced by large-scale solar explosions. Various risks are created by humanity itself, including Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), Strong Artificial Intelligence (Strong AI), the destruction of nature, and resource exhaustion. Scientist and historian, Jared Diamond, argued that the lack of society's response to four factors, climate change, hostile neighbors, the collapse of essential trading partners, and environmental problems, all risk the collapse of civilization. He warned that in order to prevent the decline and downfall of present and future societies, attention should be focused on issues such as anthropogenic climate change, the buildup of toxins in the environment, energy shortages, and other problems (Diamond 2005, 10–15, 486–496).

Amid growing concern about the impending Holocene extinction, in recent times, scientists have meticulously quantified the dangers that threaten the Earth. On May 31, 2023, this task was conducted by 51 scholars, with Johan Rockström heading the effort by integrating natural and social sciences. The new environmental standard, 'the safe and just Earth System Boundaries (ESBs),' was published in the journal *Nature*. ESBs are the concept wherein existing environmental assessment and improvement goals such as Planetary Boundaries (PBs), doughnut economics, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been developed. As articulated by the authors of the study, ESB comprises the climatic impacts resulting from global warming, the biosphere of natural ecosystem areas, the biosphere of functional integrity, surface water flows, groundwater levels, phosphorus saturation in agricultural fields, nitrogen levels, and aerosol pollution, including dust. Except for aerosols, the remaining seven categories are reported to have measurement data that has exceeded the danger threshold.

Of course, aerosol pollution is not to be taken lightly. According to the research team, as of now, 85% of the global population is exposed to air pollution, specifically PM2.5 (fine particulate matter), exceeding recommended levels. This exposure is

estimated to result in an annual mortality rate of approximately 4.2 million people (Rockström, Gupta, et al. 2023, 103–109). Consequently, it can be argued that the integrated environmental assessment framework, incorporating both natural and social sciences, has lit a red warning light.

Following the publication of this research, just two months later, the Earth witnessed a series of the hottest days on record. At last, on July 27, 2023, António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared the end of the era of global warming and the commencement of the 'era of global boiling' (UN News, July 27, 2023). Although the Earth has encountered warm periods in the past, the present rapid temperature increase poses a significant challenge, as there is insufficient time for ecosystems, including humanity, to adapt.

It took humanity approximately 10,000 years to create civilizations. However, before and after the Industrial Revolution, the development of civilizations underwent significant transformations within approximately 300 years. Now, we are coming to the realization that it may only take a few decades to potentially collapse our civilizations.

Can religion offer meaningful advice to humanity in the face of this crisis of civilization? Recognizing that religion has the potential to reshape human values and behavioral patterns and can bring peace of mind to individuals facing death, the answer to this question is 'yes.' Religion may be able to provide its own wisdom for overcoming various crises of civilization by applying its doctrines. Yet, in the worst-case scenario, it may offer a final sanctuary to those with faith who are soon to face annihilation.

Indeed, it is possible to argue that hope cannot be acquired from religion. Over the past 300 years, during which human civilization has developed rapidly, religion has lost much of its former societal influence and has failed to harmonize with the speedily advancing field of science. As a result, it can be criticized for not having a credible role in the future of modern civilization, which is based on the Enlightenment and scientific rationalism. Traditional religious texts do not specifically contain narratives about modern civilizational crises and the means for overcoming them, and there is a lack of historical precedent for predicting and offering influential advice for the current crisis of civilization armed with science and technology.

In that case, what focus is redirected from well-established traditional religions to faith groups that have emerged more recently? If those religions arose during the rapid development of modern civilization that transpired during the past 300 years, they might possess greater awareness of issues related to the negative aspects of modern civilization. Indeed, such religions do exist. One of them is Daesoon Jinrihoe, which originated in Korea. This religion goes as far as to assert that its existence and purpose are linked to addressing such crises and their solutions. Therefore, as humanity acknowledges the warning lights across all environmental assessment indicators, there may be a need to explore at least once what Daesoon Jinrihoe has to say about the true nature and causes of the civilization crisis, as well as how to overcome it.

Beginning and Development of the Civilization Crisis

In East Asian traditional wisdom, all things follow a cyclical pattern: they are born in spring, grow, and flourish in summer, reach harvest in autumn, and rest in winter.[2] These cycles of change create diverse and intricate relationships between elements, encompassing one-to-one, one-to-many, unilateral, and bilateral interactions. These relationships are categorized into two types: Mutual Beneficence (相生), where elements support each other, and Mutual Contention (相克), where elements overcome each other. When these relationships, whether based on mutual beneficence or mutual contention, are harmonized effectively, the cyclical process of all things proceeds smoothly.[3] Conversely, when harmony is absent, the process becomes discordant.

The issues that Daesoon Jinrihoe focuses on begin with the observation that these relationships are not in harmony. In other words, Daesoon Jinrihoe sees that among all things, the predominant order in relationships tends to be characterized by mutual contention. Consequently, grievances and grudges arise among all elements, accumulating over time and filling the world. This, in turn, leads to a situation where all things cannot sustain their lives. This insight forms the fundamental worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe (*Reordering Works* 1:3).

Daesoon Jinrihoe believes that human grievances and grudges, stemming from individuals exercising their free will, not only disrupt social order but also violate the laws of nature (*Dharma* 1:31). Humans have formed multitudinous relationships while building societal groups, and these relationships are more characterized by conflict than by cooperation. As a result, individuals harbor grievances and grudges. These sentiments sometimes find resolution, but at other times, are left to generate new grievances. Over time, the cumulative volume of grievances and grudges increased and surpassed a critical threshold. This has resulted in the breakdown of natural laws and even the threat of global annihilation. From the religious perspective of Daesoon Jinrihoe, this crisis is attributed to certain events that occurred long ago, one from some 4,200 years and the other some 400 years ago (Cha 2021, 22).

The Grievance (冤) of Danzhu 4,200 Years Ago

There was an event held by tradition to have occurred 4,200 years ago. It still captivates great attention in East Asia. It is said that at that time, King Yao's empire held sway over the midstream region of the Yellow River. The oldest and most prestigious historical record of this empire is *Shangshu* (尙書). This book was recognized as a model of good governance that should be followed by later East Asian rulers. However, those who read this book carefully often realize that the rule of King Yao was quite glorified. To put it a little radically, this book is consistent with the view that small groups must obey the orders of large groups unconditionally, or they must be

destroyed. The reason for this criticism is that the Yao Dynasty intentionally concealed or reduced the number of cases wherein the cultures of weaker tribes were attacked or forces occupied weak tribes for unjustifiable reasons. These incidents were even distorted so that acts of aggression were portrayed as 'virtuous rulership'. The scholar who pointed this out is Cha Seon-keun (Cha 2015). Based on his work, the history of that time can be examined to understand the grievance harbored by Danzhu.

According to Cha, the empire had established itself as a formidable force both militarily and culturally. King Yao dedicated himself to rapidly enhancing the lives of neighboring tribes by disseminating the civilization of his empire which he deemed superior to that of neighboring civilizations. Despite each tribe's unique traditions, he believed that adopting the civilized lifestyle promoted by his empire would uplift humanity. King Yao pursued his goals through a combination of tactics both conciliatory and oppressive. The majority of nearby tribes, recognizing their inferiority, willingly chose to join Yao's dominion. However, a few tribes staunchly resisted this assimilation, as it required them to relinquish their independence and much of their ancestral culture. Over time, they were also forced to submit politically to Yao's empire and endure subjugation. An outlier tribe ultimately found itself overpowered by Yao's well-trained elite troops in a swift and conclusive victory.

Danzhu, the son of King Yao, paid close attention to this issue and tried to protect the interests of the weaker neighboring tribes. Danzhu believed that when it came to incorporating the weaker neighboring tribes into the empire or allowing them to remain as neighbors, neither forceful subjugation nor discrimination should be employed.

However, King Yao considered Danzhu's vision overly idealistic and impractical in the context of spreading advanced civilization through the expansion of the empire. The clash between imperial expansion and regionalism was inevitable. To minimize sacrifices, a swift process of civilization emphasizing speed was deemed necessary. Given this vision, Danzhu's idea would have only hindered such progress. With this political stance in mind, King Yao sought an alternative successor to Danzhu. The chosen individual was Shun, renowned for his filial duty. During his 28-year tenure under Yao's regency, Shun continued to implement a policy of rewarding tribes that embraced the empire's civilization while using force to subdue tribes emphasizing regionalism.

Danzhu strove to become a king and protect the rights of weaker tribes, yet, King Yao did not recognize his plan. The difference between the two regarding the establishment of relationship with the strong groups who conformed to the empire's advanced civilization and the weak tribes who rejected it resulted in Danzhu bearing his grievance. Accordingly, Danzhu's grievance is not attributed to his not having become a king but to his inability to use his kingship to care for the weak (Cha 2015, 92–120).

In a situation where Danzhu's vision of harmonizing the empire with weaker tribes

became a mere pipedream, the resistance of tribes opposing imperial rule continued nevertheless. During the later days of Emperor Shun, a rebellion erupted in Cangwu County (蒼梧). He personally embarked on an inspection, seeking to understand the situation. However, he fell ill and died on the way, leaving his two wives grief-stricken. In their despair, both leaped into the Xiaoxiang River (瀟湘江) to end their lives. At the very spot where the two perished, bamboo shoots with speckled markings sprouted. These bamboo shoots, known as Xiaoxiang bamboo (瀟湘斑竹), became widely known as a symbol of the tears and bloodshed endured by the two wives.

This series of events sowed the seeds of grievance in the world. As time passed, the grievance grew, the world became increasingly chaotic, and humanity faced the threat of destruction. This is one of the fundamental premises through which Daesoon Jinrihoe views the world.[4] This unique perspective, which attributes the major cause of humanity's impending crisis to the grievance that emerged during the transmission of civilization from Yao to Shun, can be described as Daesoon Jinrihoe's reinterpretation of history from a religious standpoint.

The Migration of Gods Presiding over Civilization and the Enlightenment of the Dao 400 Years Ago

Another event from 400 years ago provides a more specific explanation of a civilizational crisis. Summarizing the description by Daesoon Jinrihoe, it can be stated as follows: the crisis, which had been gradually growing since the time of Danzhu, crossed a threshold after the arrival of Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), a Jesuit missionary from Macerata, Italy, in the year 1610. Matteo Ricci came to China to propagate Catholicism but was hindered by unsavory Confucian customs and could not fully realize his intentions before his death. After his passing, tradition holds that he led gods of civilization for Eastern civilization to return with him to the West where he played a major role in creating a civilization modeled after heaven. However, that civilization became excessively materialistic. Humans immersed in materialism grew arrogant, neglected the realm of divine beings, sought to dominate nature, exploited the weak, and took lives without hesitation. The authority of divine beings and their teachings eroded, while those with power and influence, driven by a desire to destroy both weaker humans and nature, did as they pleased and could not be brought back under control. As a result, the world fell into imminent threat of complete annihilation (*Progress of the Order* 1:9).

Daesoon Jinrihoe further asserts the existence of another influential figure in the development of the West: Venerable Jin-Muk (震默, 1562–1633), a Buddhist monk who lived during the mid-Joseon period. He left behind a trail of enigmatic legends and miracles and earned profound reverence among the people of Joseon (Korea). He was an extraordinary individual, sometimes even believed to be an incarnation of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. He had planned to bring the marvelous law of the

heavenly realm to the human world and greatly advance culture. However, he was assassinated by a jealous Confucian scholar, Kim Bonggok (金鳳谷, 1573–1661). In response, Jin-Muk carried the grievance. He then guided the gods who preside over the Enlightenment to the Dao to the West, contributing significantly to the development of culture (*Reordering Works* 3:4. *Authority and Foreknowledge* 2:37). In the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, religion is considered to be the foundation of culture (*Progress of the Order* 1:65), and the gods who preside over each religion are spoken of as the gods of the Enlightenment to the Dao. Thus, these gods, guided by Jin-Muk, are believed to have played a pivotal role in advancing Western culture.

This explanation, similar to the case of Danzhu, is a result of Daesoon Jinrihoe interpreting history and religion in conjunction. If this perspective is accepted, then the advancement of the West should only have been possible after the death of Matteo Ricci in 1610 and the assassination of Jin-Muk in 1633. It is indeed the case that Western civilization experienced rapid growth from the 17th century onwards. Until the 16th century, Western knowledge was primarily based on Scholasticism, which reflected the Christian faith, and it was not conceptually grounded in what would currently be considered modern science. Therefore, the progress of civilization was also limited during that era.

Indeed, it is recognized that the social atmosphere created by the Renaissance movement in the 14th to 15th centuries and the development of printing technology, along with the contributions of Copernicus (1473–1543) and Galileo (1564–1642) in the 16th century, played important roles in overcoming Scholasticism. However, the genuine era of the Scientific Revolution emerged after the 17th century (Cho 2015, 103–116).

During this period, prominent figures who made significant contributions included: Isaac Newton (1643–1727), regarded as expounding the pinnacle of classical physics; Robert Boyle (1627–1691), who opened new horizons in modern chemistry; Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695), the advocate of the undulatory theory of light and a key figure in establishing the theoretical foundations for electromagnetic communication; Antonie van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723), known for his pioneering work in microbiology and the foundation of bacteriology through the discovery of bacteria; Robert Hooke (1635–1703), who laid the groundwork for mechanical engineering and solid state physics; and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), who made significant contributions to the establishment of binary notation, crucial for the fundamental development of computers, and differential and integral calculus. These individuals were the leading figures of their time.

Institutions such as the 'Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge,' founded in 1660; the 'Academy of Sciences (Académie des sciences)' established in Paris in 1666; and the 'Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences (Königlich-Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften)' founded in Berlin in 1700, also played an active role in supporting the Scientific Revolution. These communities of scientists,

breaking away from Scholasticism, accumulated new knowledge and technology, leading to a remarkable advancement in the level of civilization.

Particularly, attention should be paid to the Industrial Revolution that took place in Europe from the mid-18th century for about a hundred years. For a long time, humanity remained in a nomadic lifestyle of hunting and gathering, lasting almost 2.5 to 3 million years. Approximately 10,000 years ago, there was a groundbreaking advancement in civilization when humans settled in one region, began farming, and raised livestock, marking the Agricultural Revolution. In comparison, or even more significantly, the second major transformation of civilization, the Industrial Revolution, emerged. The Industrial Revolution enabled the development of industry, mass production and consumption of goods, and the advancement of capitalist economies, marking an era of unprecedented progress in civilization.

While the leap of Western material civilization, emphasizing human reason, demonstrated positive aspects to some extent such as the development of material productivity, overcoming poverty, population growth, the establishment of capitalism, and the improvement of human rights for white men in the West, it also accelerated invasion and exploitation in non-Western regions, led to conflicts with socialist and communist systems, environmental pollution, the destruction of ecosystems, resource exhaustion, extreme polarization, and the decline of humanity. Among these, it is a recognized fact that the massive carbon emissions since the Industrial Revolution have been hastening various ecological crises faced by human civilization.

As mentioned earlier, Daesoon Jinrihoe explains that the activities of Matteo Ricci with gods of civilization in the East and Jin-Muk's activities with gods of the Enlightenment to the Dao facilitated the dramatic development of Western civilization. It also stresses that Western material civilization imitates model that exist in heaven, and the excessive focus on materialism intensifies human arrogance, ultimately leading the world towards destruction. In brief, it can be acknowledged that Western civilization since the 17th century has progressed while grappling with various problems. In particular, the idea that human responsibility, rooted in the otherization of nature, has been a major cause of civilization crises remains relevant even today.

In the current context, discussing the problems of Western material civilization and addressing human arrogance and environmental destruction may not seem unusual. However, it is essential to note that this explanation emerged in Korea during the early 1900s. A century ago, Western material civilization was seen as a model for non-Western societies, and Korea, in its flowering stage of modernization, shared this perspective. During that period, just before falling under colonization, Korea was significantly influenced by social evolutionism and civilization enlightenment theories that justified imperialistic invasion through the concepts of survival through competition and victory or defeat. Consequently, Korea hastily adopted Western modern culture. Activities such as understanding the history, advantages, and disadvantages of human civilization, or addressing issues within Western civilization, were virtually impossible for the country

to accurately perceive at that time (G. Kim 2003, 308). Therefore, it is quite remarkable that Daesoon Jinrihoe was able to offer such timely warnings about the harm, problems, and crises of Western civilization by reinterpreting history from a religious perspective.

Overcoming Civilizational Crises

In its own unique way, Daesoon Jinrihoe explains civilizational crises through a logic of polarization, grievances, the harms of material civilization, and human arrogance. Furthermore, it presents a characteristic perspective on how to overcome this crisis. The backdrop is not only the human realm but also the realm of the divine.

In the Realm of God

In the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, the Supreme God presided over the overall laws governing the operation of the entire universe, without involving Himself in the specific execution of those laws. The actual ruling and execution were handled by the divine beings assigned to each domain and region, according to their respective roles (Cha 2013, 135). These divine beings or small 'g' gods, during the 17th-century Scientific Revolution and the 18th-century Industrial Revolution, predicted that despite civilization making significant advances, the end result would nevertheless destroy nature and bring about the destruction of humanity. Therefore, the beings who first foresaw and contemplated the various crises of civilization were not the humans of the 20th and 21st centuries, but rather various gods such as divine sages (神聖), buddhas (佛), and bodhisattvas from the 18th and 19th centuries.

All along, the gods have influenced the history of the entire Earth to promote the survival of both nature and humanity. However, humans, captivated by the rapid advancement of science and the development of economics and capitalism, did not acknowledge the existence of the gods or their functions and roles. The authority of the gods declined, and the smooth operation of various global programs that they had managed fell into failure. In such a situation, the gods could not offer a suitable solution to the crises of civilization. Furthermore, since the scale of those crises was global, as gods who could not exert control beyond their specific regions, they were naturally limited in their ability to respond. Facing an unprecedented level and range of catastrophe, the gods promptly gathered to discuss a plan. The conclusion they reached was to rely on the Supreme God. Ultimately, the gods approached the Supreme God who resided in the Ninth Heaven, to implore the Supreme God to intervene in the state of the world's turmoil. Thus, they appealed for the salvation of the world and its inhabitants. The Supreme God accepted their petition, examined the whole world, and set out to rectify it (*Progress of the Order* 1:9).

In the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, the gods' petition depicts several key facts about their role. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, it is noteworthy that the entities who first

addressed the crisis of civilization were not humans but the gods themselves. Secondly, the gods' appeal was a crucial event that transformed the role of the Supreme God. Prior to the gods' appeal, the Supreme God was a 'deus otiosus,' a 'hidden god,' who had not intervened in human history. However, after the gods' appeal, the Supreme God transformed into a 'revealed god' who actively intervened in history (Cha 2013, 136–139). Thirdly, this event brought the religion known as Daesoon Jinrihoe into existence. Without the gods' appeal, the Supreme God might not have taken an active role in altering human history or even appeared on Earth. Furthermore, the religious movement called Daesoon Jinrihoe may not have come into existence at all. Therefore, it is fair to say that the gods' appeal was, in essence, the starting point for the emergence of the religious tradition, Daesoon Jinrihoe.[5]

After the gods' petition, the Supreme God descended to the Tower of Heavenly Revelation in the Kingdom of the Great Law in the West,[6] itinerating the world carefully and beginning to examine civilization and the catastrophes that humankind would encounter. While intinerating throughout the world, the Supreme God, upon seeing the small country of Korea in the East, decided to stay and help its people who were suffering, trapped between powerful nations, in order to resolve their grievances (*Authority and Foreknowledge* 1:11). The golden icon of Maitreya at Golden Mountain Temple, the Buddhist temple at the heart of Korean Buddhism's Maitreya faith and a representative site in Jeolla Province, became the place where the Supreme God chose to stay.

In the Realm of Humanity

While the Supreme God resided within the icon of Maitreya Buddha at Golden Mountain Temple in Korea, a man named Choe Je-u (崔濟愚, 1824–1864) was earnestly praying at Dragon Pond Pavilion (龍潭亭), located beneath Gumi Mountain in Gyeongju, seeking a way to redeem the chaotic world. On April 5, 1860, the Supreme God communicated with Choe Je-u, imparting teachings on how to save the world. This event is recorded as the first-ever instance in Korean religious history when a human directly encountered the Supreme God.

Starting in June of 1861, Choe Je-u began to disseminate the teachings he had received from the Supreme God. When rumors spread that heavenly spirits (天靈) had descended upon him, many people started to follow him. The Confucian scholars, who comprised Korea's ruling class at the time, accused Choe Je-u of being a subversive figure who challenged the hierarchical society of the era and believed in the arrival of a new age. They also criticized him for using spiritual talismans (靈符) and incantations as methods of spiritual cultivation. Choe Je-u struggled to overcome the prevailing social atmosphere heavily influenced by Confucian ideology. Furthermore, in the context of Daesoon Jinrihoe, his teachings did not fully accurately reflect the will of the Supreme God.

In the end, the Supreme God withdrew the heavenly mandate (天命) and divine teachings (神教) that had been bestowed on Choe Je-u. Shortly thereafter, Choe Je-u was arrested by the constable's office and, in March of 1864, he was executed on charges of causing turmoil in the world (*Progress of the Order* 1:9). Since human efforts alone proved insufficient to resolve the world's crises, the Supreme God chose to intervene directly. Consequently, on September 19, 1871, in a village in Jeolla Province, the Supreme God incarnated in the body of a human named Kang Jeungsan (姜甑山, 1871–1909).

Starting in 1897, Jeungsan traveled throughout the Korean Peninsula for three years, observing the sentiments of the public (民心) and the political affairs of that time period. In 1900, he reorganizing the divine system on Mount Streamer-on-Cauldron (Siru-san) in his hometown (*Acts* 2:10). In July of 1901, he passed judgment on the gods at Great Court Temple on Mount Mother (Moak-san) in Jeonju, (*Progress of the Order* 2:21), and then he proclaimed a new solution to the world's calamities, the Great Dao of Heaven and Earth (天地大道) (*Progress of the Order* 2:12).

He undertook various tasks to resolve all the world's grievances and construct a world where coexistence ruled without conflict. This endeavor is referred to as the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth (天地公事) and is believed to rectify and reform Heaven and Earth such that a new era will emerge (*Reordering Works* 1:1·3, *Prophetic Elucidations* 10). According to the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth, the future era, known as the Later World (後天), will be a time of coexistence and peace, whereas the preceding era, known as the Former World (先天), was characterized by mutual contention and conflict.

To redeem the world in that mid-crisis state by re-creating the structure and order of Heaven and Earth such that the Former World transitions into the Later World, is unique and unprecedented vision unparalleled idea in the history of world religions. In those days, many Koreans did not believe it was possible and criticized Jeungsan for his seemingly irrational behavior (*Acts* 3:34). Nevertheless, he persevered in carrying out the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth despite the challenging circumstances he encountered. In the end, his works were completed in 1909.

Before Jeungsan passed away, he claimed that, following the program he had devised, a successor would emerge to establish the true dharma and propagate it (*Progress of the Order* 1:41–42). He also prophesied that humans would attain wisdom, reach a perfected state of unification with the Dao (道通), and commensurate with their abilities, they would be enabled to achieve their aspirations (*Progress of the Order* 1:34). Furthermore, he asserted that Korea would rise as a superior nation (上等國), lead the world in matters of culture (*Prophetic Elucidations* 29), and all cultures, civilizations, and languages would unify. He added that a paradisiacal new era, free from Mutual Contention, would be established on Earth, where humanity would thrive (*Reordering Works* 1:2, *Dharma* 3:23,40, *Prophetic Elucidations* 12).

During Jeungsan's active period, Korea was on the brink of collapse and faced

colonization by the Japanese Empire. His assertion that Korea would emerge as a culturally superior nation and lead the world was deemed too illogical and shocking to be accepted at the time. However, there were descendants who practiced Jeungsan's teachings, placing their faith in the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth. Among these, the most notable is Daesoon Jinrihoe(Cha 2023a, 82), which believes that the Reordering Works were passed down respectively to the successors: Jo Jeongsan (趙鼎山, 1895–1958), known as Doju, the Lord of the Dao, and Park Wudang (朴牛堂, 1917–1996), known as Dojeon, the Leader of the Dao. Additionally, Daesoon Jinrihoe asserts that Degree Numbers (*dosu*), the historical program previously set in place, is gradually being realized in the human world over time. K-pop and the global popularity of the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) are seen as aspects of that program created by the Supreme God. Daesoon Jinrihoe believes that, according to the Supreme God's plan, all beings in the world have found a way to live, and they think that even the crises of civilization can be overcome (Cha 2021, 23–24).

To sum up, in the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, the entities that foresaw the crises of civilization and provided solutions to overcome them by diagnosing the causes of the crises were not humans but gods. The anticipation and diagnosis of crises and the formulation of solutions to those crises all occurred within the divine realm, and from an in-group perspective, Daesoon Jinrihoe characterize their movement as not being a human religion containing human concerns but instead as divine-centered religion embodying the concerns of the gods.

The Task Entrusted to Humanity

Given that tradition holds that the will and plan of the Supreme God arranged for the overcoming of the crises facing human civilization, should humans just wait by with confidence? Rather than that conclusion, Daesoon Jinrihoe asserts that humans have been assigned with significant responsibilities that they must fulfill.

Development of an Era of Grievance Resolution

In the Daesoon Jinrihoe worldview, the Supreme God has assessed that the causes of turmoil in the world can be attributed to Mutual Contention and grievances. The relationships among all things are swept up in a momentum that propels them toward Mutual Contention, which in turn creates grievances. These grievances have disrupted the world order and resulted in various calamities. Therefore, it is essential to resolve these grievances and establish relationships among all things based instead upon Mutual Beneficence. To achieve this, the Supreme God undertook a series of works, which are referred to as the Reordering Works, as was mentioned earlier.

The Supreme God perceived that it takes time to resolve the grievances that have accumulated throughout the world. The entities that need to resolve these grievances

include not only living humans but also abstract groups, such as numerous human beings who died while bearing grievances, peoples and nations, and all the divine beings that dwell throughout Heaven and Earth; this even includes animals or natural formations such as the ground (Cha 2023a, 322–330). Therefore, the Supreme God declared the opening of an era for resolving the grievances of all entities, including gods and human beings, according to their own free will, as their own wishes. This era is referred to as 'the era of grievance-resolution (解冤時代)' (*Reordering Works* 1:32, *Progress of the Order* 1:20 · 32, *Dharma* 1:9 · 67, *Dharma* 2:14 · 20).

In the context of the Daesoon Jinrihoe's worldview, the era of grievance-resolution corresponds to a transitional period between the Former World and the Later World. As mentioned earlier, the Former World is characterized by Mutual Contention and conflict, while the Later World is defined by Mutual Beneficence and peace. Between these two eras lies a transitional period, known as the interim era. This interim era is further divided into three phases: the era of grievance-resolution, the era of diseases, and the era of the Great Opening, as illustrated in Figure 1. The era of grievance-resolution represents a time when all beings resolve grievances according to their own free will. The era of diseases signifies a period marked by an unprecedented, massive epidemic that humanity has never experienced. Finally, the Great Opening era symbolizes the ultimate judgment of gods and humans, during which everything in the Heavens, on Earth, in the mountains, in the seas, and beyond, reestablishes itself anew. Daesoon Jinrihoe believes that these eras unfold as scheduled according to the Supreme God's program of the Reordering Works (Cha 2023a, 163–168).

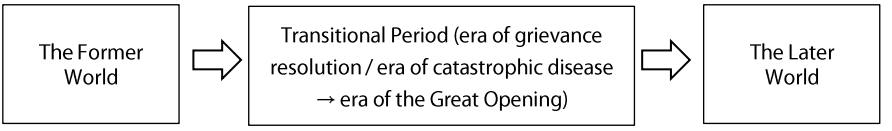


Figure 1. Periodization as understood in Daesoon Jinrihoe

The approach to resolving grievances during the era of grievance-resolution can vary widely. Individuals may seek to satisfy their desires for honor, popularity, wealth, and power as part of their personal grievance-resolution. Grievance resolution in the context of Mutual Contention might involve actions like seeking vengeance or focusing ill will upon others. Alternatively, one can choose to resolve grievances through acts of mercy, virtue, or by cultivating oneself in Mutual Beneficence. Regardless of the method chosen for resolving grievances, individuals should accept responsibility for the consequences of their choices. In the time of the Great Opening, Daesoon Jinrihoe believes a great judgment will be determined to assess the outcomes of grievance-resolution (Cha 2013, 176–177).

If the prevalence of negative methods for resolving grievances surpasses that of positive ones during the era of grievance-resolution, the world is likely to descend into

extreme chaos. Even after the Supreme God's Reordering Works, the persistence of war and calamities can be attributed to this imbalance. The Supreme God acknowledges that the choice of negative or positive application of grievance-resolution ultimately depends on individual free will. However, instead of self-centered or Mutual Contention-based approaches to resolution, the Supreme God urged individuals to straighten their hearts and embrace resolution based on Mutual Beneficence (*Dharma* 3:24). This is because, as the saying goes, "A propitious flower brings propitious fruition; An unpropitious flower brings unpropitious fruition." (*Acts* 5:38). This represents the realization of Mutual Beneficence and, simultaneously, the task assigned to humanity in the face of civilization's challenges.

Harmonious Union between Divine Beings and Human Beings and the Realization of Human Nobility

In Daesoon Thought, it is said that the Supreme God has determined that the primary cause driving the crises of civilization is rooted in humanity's arrogance due to its inclination toward materialism and greed. This type of arrogance neglects the divine realm and the teachings of the gods. Therefore, the Supreme God found it necessary to restore divine authority in order to formulate policies for the world's redemption. To achieve this, the method chosen by the Supreme God is considered as an adjustment of the relationship between humanity and divine beings. This adjustment is meant to foster cooperation through Mutual Beneficence rather than having one side be subordinate to the other.

This perception is grounded in traditional East Asian thought, which emphasizes the necessity for two entirely contrasting entities to work in harmony to achieve a goal, as stated in the saying, 'After yin and yang combine, the Dao of change comes into existence.' (*Saving Lives* 43).[7] Kang Jeungsan's successor, Jo Jeongsan, specifically explained this: "As gods come to be and humans come next, the former is yin and the latter yang... Gods and humans make creation happen through yin and yang. Gods without humans behind them have no one to supplicate them and rely on them. Humans without gods before them, have no one to guide them and no one to rely on. When gods and humans are in concord, every affair is accomplished; When gods and humans are in unity, all kinds of enterprises are fulfilled. Gods are waiting for humans; Humans are waiting for gods. If yin and yang are in unity with each other and gods and humans are unified with each other, the Dao of Heaven is accomplished and so is the Dao of Earth. Therefore, when the affairs of gods are accomplished, the affairs of humans are accomplished; when the affairs of humans are accomplished, the affairs of gods are accomplished." (*Progress of the Order* 2:42).[8]

Based on the principle in which yin and yang, namely gods and humanity, unite to achieve a common goal, the Supreme God planned for gods and humans to cooperate with each other in order to overcome the world's crises and progress towards paradise

by implementing the scheduled program of the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth. This is referred to as the 'harmonious union between gods and human beings (神人調化),' which includes 'the cooperation between gods and humanity to achieve a goal [造化]' (J. Kim 1996, 342–349). It further entails the two empathizing [感通] with one another through [通化] the harmonization of gods and humanity [調和] (Zhan 2013, 217). According to the principle of harmonious union between gods and human beings, when the two are unified, the status of humanity is naturally elevated.

The Supreme God manifested this principle as human nobility (*Dharma* 2:56), which is literally interpreted as human dignity. However, in the religious context of Daesoon Jinrihoe, this term should be considered in light of the recognition of the value of gods and the understanding that goals can be achieved through the harmonization of gods and humanity. Consequently, the truth is that not only humanity is dignified, but also gods and human beings enhance their dignity together (Cha 2023a, 257–260).

In the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, human nobility, achieved through the harmonious union between gods and human beings, signifies the perfected unification with the Dao (道通). This concept refers to living within the bounds of knowledge and practice with omniscience (無所不知) and unlimited capabilities (無所不能). Furthermore, it is stated that at its zenith it enables one to 'live permanently without aging (不老不死).'

To achieve this, one must, through cultivation, establish harmony (調化) with the gods that align with the given person's capacity. This is the task bestowed upon humanity by the Supreme God as a solution to the crises of civilization. In other words, humans are not called upon to manifest their inherent divinity (神性) by ascending to the level of gods through cultivation. Instead, the goal is to recover their innate pure disposition and heaven-endowed nature (天稟性). Subsequently, individuals should receive the guardianship of the gods that correspond to their capacity. Through this, they can exercise the abilities and authority of those gods. This is the essence of attaining the perfected state of unification with the Dao through the harmonious union between gods and human beings. This is how true human nobility is realized (Cha 2023a, 250–265).

The Content of the Task Given by the Supreme God to Humanity

In other words, based on the above, first, in the worldview of Daesoon Jinrihoe, the Supreme God accepted the gods' petitions and intervened to overcome the crises of civilization by offering solutions such as the Great Opening and the emergence of the Later World. Before that era approaches, the grievances accumulated through Mutual Contention must be resolved. If these grievances persist, they will become seeds for chaos in the Later World. Therefore, the Supreme God initiated an era in which each individual is responsible for resolving their own grievances. According to this, everyone

has the freedom to solve their grievances. It is evident that the Supreme God entrusted humanity with this task. It is implied that instead of pursuing selfish grievance resolution through revenge or the pursuit of personal interests, individuals should strive to resolve grievances through mutual benevolence. This practice aims to resolve grievances for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. The era for resolving grievances is relatively short in the context of all of human history. When this period ends, all entities, including humanity and the gods, will be judged based on the results of their grievance resolutions.

The Supreme God, recognizing the erosion of divine authority in the present reality, orchestrated a relationship between gods and humanity founded on Mutual Beneficence. Their intended collaboration aims to surmount crises and build a new world. Gods and humans should rely on one another, and through the practice of cultivation, humans gain divine protection, granting them access to gods' authority and capabilities, often referred to as 'the perfected unification with the Dao' and 'human nobility.' Consequently, it becomes imperative for humans to acknowledge the value of gods and strive to harmonize with the gods. This serves the need for cultivation and consists of the core of task entrusted to humanity by the Supreme God.

It is essential to practice grievance-resolution for mutual beneficence, to build all relationships on the basis of Mutual Beneficence, to harmonize with divine beings, as those are the duties of devotees.[9] These practices propel them towards the Later World- a better world beyond the ultimate judgment of the Great Opening. This promising future, is said to be a world where only Mutual Beneficence exists. Therefore, tradition holds that the diagnosis and resolution of the various crises of civilization have already occurred in the divine realm. Entering into that realm; however, requires individual efforts, the specifications of which have been explained by Daesoon Jinrihoe.

Conclusion

The main character of the highly-successful film, 'Interstellar' (2014) says, "We will find a way. We always have." This line carries a powerful belief that even in the face of the imminent annihilation of civilization, humanity has the faith to overcome the crisis. Hence, there is "No need to worry!"

This optimism regarding the future is founded on solutionism, the idea that there is always a solution to every issue. It is based on the belief that issues like the climate crisis, created by science and technology, can eventually be resolved through further advancements in science and technology. However, solutionism tends to focus on alleviating symptoms without tackling the underlying causes of crises. Humanity needs to reflect on its role in civilizational crises. If it is not recognized that anthropocentrism, the ruthless exploitation and destruction of nature, the misconception that resource utilization and economic growth must be infinite on a finite Earth,[10] excessive greed for materials, and the competitive and exploitative attitude towards others and nature

are the fundamental causes of present crises, then greater advancements in science and technology may only lead to more serious crises.

In this context, religion can clearly offer opportunities, given that its influence can lead to changes in human values and provide shelter for those exhausted by crises. If the question is asked whether religion can make significant claims to humans facing times of scientific and civilizational crises, Daesoon Jinrihoe, would respond as follows: The Supreme God has accepted the plea of the divine beings to save the world and, by eliminating all root causes of calamities, has preordained an earthly paradise of Mutual Beneficence, free from Mutual Contention and grievances. To quote the protagonist of the film, Interstellar, "God found a way. He always does." Therefore, following Daesoon Jinrihoe's soteriology, humans must work to qualify themselves to enter the soon-to-come world of coexistence. The way is to make one's relationships with individuals, communities, and other beings mutually beneficial rather than contentious; not to harbor or create grievances; and, when grievances do arise, to resolve them through the pursuit of mutual benefit. In this faith system, humans must abandon pride, humbly recognize the value of the divine, and work together in harmony, empathy, and unity.

Daesoon Jinrihoe, which emerged in the Far East of Asia, conveys a unique message regarding the various crises facing modern civilization created by the advancements in science and technology. This message assures that the Supreme God has profoundly 'intervened' in all forthcoming crises. This religious vision of Daesoon Jinrihoe wherein the Supreme God acted to solve the crises face by humankind via the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth offers a sense of hope to devotees who might otherwise feel anxious about their survival in times of crisis. The manner in which Daesoon Jinrihoe flourishes in Korea suggests that this vision of hope is of profound benefit to the considerable number of adherents who cherish it.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1] Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHAs) are space bodies with a diameter of 140 meters or more, posing a risk of collision with Earth. Asteroids with a diameter of around 100 meters have the potential to devastate an entire city, while those with a diameter of approximately 1 kilometer can damage the Earth's ecosystem beyond repair, making recovery impossible.

[2] This is often expressed as origination (元), proliferation (亨), accomplishment (利) of *The Book of Changes*, and completion (貞), or birth (生), growth (長), harvest (斂), and storage (藏) of *Six Secret Strategic Teachings* and *Three Strategies of Huang Shigong*; "乾, 元亨利貞. … 元者善之長也, 亨者嘉之會也, 利者義之和也, 貞者事之幹也." 『周易』「乾卦第一」; "天生四時, 地生萬物, 天下有民, 聖人牧之, 故春道生, 萬物榮, 夏道長, 萬物成, 秋道斂, 萬物盈, 冬道藏, 萬物靜, 盈則藏, 藏則復起, 莫如所終, 莫如所始, 聖人配之, 以爲天地經紀, 故天下治, 仁聖藏, 天下亂, 仁聖昌, 至道其然也."

[3] Appropriate Mutual Contention is necessary for the growth and development of all things. Mutual Contention, in and of itself, does not constitute a moral problem. This is because it exists as a pair with Mutual Beneficence in the operational laws of the universe and supports growth and development (Cha 2019, 270-271)

[4] "This is like leading the head to make the body follow. Yao deemed Danzhu unworthy and gave his two daughters to Shun and abdicated the throne to him. This caused Danzhu to form a grievance, which, in turn, caused Shun to die at a river near Cangwu County, and his two wives drowned themselves in Xiaoxiang River. This was the root grievance that entangled the world continually, generation after generation and caused Heaven and Earth to overflow with grievances and reach the brink of near disaster. Consequently, as I endeavor to rescue humanity from this state of destruction, I must undergo this Reordering Work of Grievance Resolution." (*Reordering Works* 3:4).

[5] In the book, *Essentials of Daesoon Jinrihoe*, the petition of the gods is also described in the first part of Chapter 4, 'History,' of Daesoon Jinrihoe (*Essentials of Daesoon Jinrihoe* 2020, 17).

[6] The Tower of Heavenly Revelation in the Kingdom of the Great Law in the West is considered to be the Vatican, where the Pope resides, or the Notre-Dame Cathedral in France. However, it is more commonly regarded as a structure situated in the divine realm beneath the heavens, where the Supreme God resides. At Daesoon-seongjeon in Yeoju Headquarters Temple Complex of Daesoon Jinrihoe, where sacred paintings are enshrined, there is a picture of this tower that appears to exist in the divine realm rather than in the human world (Cha 2007, 10-12).

[7] 人爲陽, 神爲陰, 陰陽相合然後, 有變化之道也.

[8] 有神有人, 神陰人陽. … 神人以陰陽, 成造化. 神無人, 後無托而所依, 人無神, 前無導而所依. 神人和, 而萬事成, 神人合, 而百工成. 神明俟人, 人俟神明. 陰陽相合, 神人相通然後, 天道成而地道成. 神事成而人事成, 人事成而神事成.

[9] The Scripture of the Black Tortoise page 2 contains the following : "Water, Fire, Metal, and Wood, having waited for the proper time, come into maturity. Water arises from fire. Therefore, there is no principle of mutual contention in the world." (Progress of the Order 1:66) See the following for a detailed explanation of this Cha (2023b).

[10] To meet the current levels of resource consumption for humanity, it would require 1.75 Earths. If everyone consumed resources like Americans, it would immediately require 5.1 Earths, and if like Koreans, it would require 4.0 Earths.

References

Cha, Seon-keun 2007 "Descending to the Tower of Heavenly Revelation in the Kingdom of the Great Law in the West Due to the Petition of Gods, Buddhas, and Bodhisattva." *Daesoon Bulletin* 68: 10–12. [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 「신성. 불. 보살의 하소연으로 서양 대법국 천계탑에 내려오시다」, 『대순회보』 68. https://webzine.daesoon.org/board/index.asp?webzine=56&menu_no=912&bno=1954&page=1

2013a "An Introduction to the Study of the Outlook on Highest Ruling Entity in Daesoonjinrohoe (Ⅰ): Focusing on Descriptions for Highest Ruling Entity and It's Meanings." *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 21: 99–156. [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 「대순진리회 상제관 연구 서설(Ⅰ): 최고신에 대한 표현들과 그 의미들을 중심으로」, 『대순사상논총』 21. https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.2013.21.0.99

2013b "Contemporary Society and Shamanism Ritual-Focusing on the Emergence of Haewonsangsaeng Gut and Its Meaning." *Korean Journal of Religious Studies* 72: 151–183. [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 「현대사회와 무속의례」, 『종교연구』 72.

2015 "Understanding the Grievance of Danzhu." *Daesoon Bulletin* 175: 92–120. [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 「단주의 원(冤)에 대한 이해」, 『대순회보』 175. https://webzine.daesoon.org/m/view.asp?webzine=214&menu_no=3603&bno=6439&page=1

2019 "The Problem of Theodicy in Daesoon Jinrihoe." *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 33: 257–286. [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 「대순진리회에서 신정론 문제」, 『대순사상논총』 33. https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.2019.33.0.257

2021 "Opening the Great Dao in Shinchuk Year: Part I." *Daesoon Bulletin* 240: 20–31. [Korean Language Text] .

차선근, 「신축년에 천지대도를 열으시고 (상)」, 『대순회보』 240: 20–31. https://webzine.daesoon.org/board/index.asp?webzine=284&menu_no=4864&bno=9031&page=1

2023a *Contemporary Religious Studies and Daesoon Thought : Comparative Research Method and Application*. Seoul: Bakmun Publishing. [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 『현대종교학과 대순사상: 비교연구 방법과 적용』, 서울: 박문사.

2023b Cha, Seon-keun, "Comparative Study on the Water-Fire Theories of Kang Jeungsan (姜甑山) and Wei Boyang (魏伯陽)" *Korean Journal of Religious Studies* 83(2): 129–156 [Korean Language Text] 차선근, 「강증산과 위백양의 수화론 비교연구」, 『종교연구』 83(2).

Cho, Hyeon Beom 2015 "Confucian Scholars and 'Western Learning' in the Late Choseon Period: A Critical Review on the Dichotomy of 'Religion/Science'." The Study of Korean History of Thought 50: 96–144. [Korean Language Text] 조현범, 「조선 후기 유학자들의 서학 인식: 종교/과학 구분론에 대한 재검토」, 『한국사상사학』 50.

Daesoon Institute for Religion and Culture (DIRC) 2020a *The Canonical Scripture*. Yeoju: Daesoon Jinrihoe Press. http://dict.dirc.kr/app/e/1/page

2020b *Essentials of Daesoon Jinrihoe*. Yeoju: Daesoon Jinrihoe Press. http://dict.dirc.kr/app/e/3/page

Diamond, Jared M. 2005 *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York, NY: Viking

Kim, Gisu 2003 *Ethno-Religion and Its Practical Study of Humanism*. Seoul: Aha Publishing [Korean Language Text] 김기수, 『민족종교 그 실천적 인간학: 수운최제우에서 의암 손병희, 증산 강일순까지』, 서울: 아하.

Kim, Jeongtae 1996 "Tenets of Daesoon Jinrihoe," *Journal of the Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 1: 331–381 [Korean Language Text]

김정태, 「대순진리의 종지에 관한 연구」, 『대순사상논총』 1.
https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.1996.1.0.11

Rockström, Johan, et al. 2023 "Safe and Just Earth System Boundaries." *Nature* 619 102–111. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06083-8

UN News 2023 "Hottest July Ever Signals 'Era of Global Boiling Has Arrived' Says Un Chief". UN News, accessed on 27 July 2023. https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1139162.

Zhan, Shi Chuang 2013 "The Ideals of Humanism and Human Peace in Daesoon Thought" *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 21 199–254. [Korean Language Text] 좐스촹, 「대순사상의 인문정신과 인류평안의 이념」, 『대순사상논총』 21.
https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.2013.21.0.199

Writing Miracles and Denominational Establishment: On the Belief Narratives of Quanzhen Daoism

ZHANG Shuqing

ZHANG Shuqing obtained her bachelor's degree in economics from Beihang University (China) in 2017. Motivated by her profound interest in philosophy and religious studies, she pursued her master's degree at the Department of Philosophy of Peking University (China) from 2019–2022, successfully earning a Master's degree in Philosophy in 2022. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate at Nanjing University (China), specializing in Daoism within the Department of Philosophy.

JDTREA 2024,3(2): 35–54

Original Articles

Correspondence to

ZHANG, Shuqing

Nanjing University, CHINA

sqz@smail.nju.edu.cn

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6385-2590

OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia Vol. 3. Issue 2 (March 2024): 35–54
© 2024 by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Daejin University, Korea

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.35

Day of submission: 2024.01.15.
Completion of review: 2024.02.20.
Final decision for acceptance: 2024.03.20.

P-ISSN: 2799-3949
E-ISSN: 2799-4252

Abstract

This article focuses on the image of the ancestor of Quanzhen Daoism from a narrative perspective and also evaluates the influence of this image on the development of Quanzhen Daoism in terms of belief, genealogy, and the compilation of sacred history. Quanzhen Daoism has a rich tradition of narrating and writing its history. In fact, narrating history is actually a form of constructing history. From the recounting of events such as the birth of the founder of the religion, Wang Chongyang (王重陽, 1112–1170), his conversion to Daoism, his practice and preaching, and his 'ascent to immortality' in Quanzhen historical hagiographies, readers can observe the recording of miracles as a narrative feature. The narratives of religious texts differ from ordinary historical narratives in that the former maintain the core concern of simultaneously promoting belief in miracles and strengthening the religious lineage of the respective tradition. Therefore, exploring the relationship between the narrative of the image of the ancestor and the development of the Quanzhen Sect, along with the establishment of beliefs, is the starting point of this article.

Keywords: Narratives; Quanzhen Daoism; Wang Chongyang; Miracles; Sect Development

Introduction

In the middle of the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234), Wang Chongyang founded a new Daoist sect that differed from traditional Daoism, namely Quanzhen Daoism. The study of Quanzhen Daoism is a hotspot in contemporary Daoist scholarship and one of the focal points of international Sinology. Up to now, studies on early Quanzhen Daoism figures such as Wang Chongyang and the 'Seven Realized Ones' (七真, *Qizhen*) have mostly been approached from the following paths: history of thought; history of sects; and the bibliographic method. The following sections provide a concise review of the existing research from these three perspectives.

Writings on the history of thought as a research method focus mainly on the theoretical basis of Quanzhen Dao's cultivation of immortality, including the ideological origin of such cultivation methods as life and soul cultivation, and explain the characteristics of the unity of the three religions of Quanzhen Daoism in comparison with those of Confucianism and Buddhism. This section includes works such as "Early Quanzhen Daoism Philosophy Thought Outline" coauthored by Ding Yuanming, Bai Ruxiang, and Li Yancang (Ding et al., 2011), *Early Quanzhen Daoism Thought Exploration* by Li Yancang (Li 2014), "Wang Chongyang's Mindfulness Thought Outline" by Bai Ruxiang (Bai 2007, 55–58), *Jin Yuan Quanzhen Daoism Inner Alchemy Mindfulness* by Zhang Guangbao (Zhang 1995), *The History of Chinese Daoism Thought* edited by Qing Xitai (Qing 2009, 177–231), and Sun Yiping's dissertation titled "On Quanzhen Dao's Borrowing and Absorbing of Buddhism." (Sun 2011, 37–67)

Writings that take the history of the sect as a clue are mainly concerned with the founding and development of Quanzhen Daoism and its interaction with local society, culture, and regime. In this category, Chen Yuan's Examination of the New Daoism in Hebei at the Beginning of the Southern Song Dynasty (Chen 1989), Zhao Weidong's Historical Essay on Quanzhen Daoism in the Jin and Yuan Dynasties (Zhao 2010), Zhang Guangbao's work on the Founding and Historical Inheritance of Quanzhen Daoism (Zhang Guangbao 2015), Volume III of the History of Daoism in China, edited by Qing Xitai (Qing 1988–1995, 30–91), and other such texts can be used as reference materials.

Bibliography as the main method of work can be referred to in Chen Yuan's Taoist gold and stone (Chen 1988), Wang Zongyu's Jin-Yuan Quanzhen religious stone carvings of a new compilation (Wang 2005), Wu Yakui's Jiangnan Taoist monumental data collection (Wu 2007), Zhao Weidong and Chen Fayong's Jin-Yuan Quanzhen Taoist monuments and inscriptions collection (Zhao and Chen 2020), etc.

Monographs on early Quanzhen figures, this category of works focuses on the life narratives of the early Quanzhen figures, the interpretation of the ideology of indoctrination, and the collection of their literature and historical materials. Japanese scholar Hachiya Kunio wrote *Research on Daoism During the Jin Dynasty: Wang*

Chongyang and Ma Danyang (Hachiya Kunio 2007) and *Research on Daoism During the Jin and Yuan Dynasties: The Seven Realized Ones* (Hachiya Kunio 2014). Chinese scholars have also produced many results in their studies of early Quanzhen figures, and the Qilu Shushe (齊魯書社) has released a series of Quanzhen Xuean (The Case of Quanzhen Studies), such as *Wang Chongyang Xuean* by Guo Wu (Guo 2016), *Ma Danyang Xuean* by Lu Guolong (Lu 2010), and *Tan Duduan Xuean* by Zhao Weidong (Zhao 2010b).

However, there are not many studies that start with a narrative analysis of the history of beliefs and the formation of the image of the ancestors. It is not difficult to find that the narratives of the Quanzhen historical biographies of the early figures, such as Wang Chongyang, who entered into Daoist practice and even founded the sect, are of great significance to the faith identity and sect construction of Quanzhen Daoism. Considering these biographies, the following questions can be explored: How was Wang Chongyang's image as the master established? What are the characteristics of the writing of the ancestor image? And what are the implications of such a narrative for the development of the sect? In fact, the portrayal of the ancestor as an individual practitioner is closely related to the history of the sect's founding. In light of this, this article attempts to explore the narrative characteristics of Quanzhen's ancestor image by analyzing the historical materials of Wang Chongyang and to examine how the ancestor image important to Quanzhen's beliefs was constructed and its influence on the development of the sect in terms of the genealogy of beliefs and the codification of sacred history.

In the Song Dynasty, Wu Zhen (吳縝) in the *New Tangshu Corrections* (新唐書糾謬, *Xintangshu jiumiu*) mentioned the creation of historical biographies:

> There are three key elements to writing a history book: first is factual accuracy; second is the use of praise or condemnation; and third is the literary style. Factual accuracy means being faithful to historical facts. Using praise or blame based on these facts constitutes the second element. The third and final element requires the use of literary style, which results in a history book.[1] (Wu 1966, 4)

The creation of a historical biography requires three elements: facts, the author's evaluative approach, and literary style. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for any historical biography to consist solely of objective records; the author's biographical reorganization and interpretation must be included in the formation of the biography. The same is true for Daoism's and other religions' narrative texts, which are distinguished by their focus on a transcendental goal. The historical narratives about religious figures, particularly ancestor types, also reflect the concept of faith and the biographer's attitude towards the subject, whether admiration, esteem, and so on. Therefore, the historical biography of religion should be an explanatory text that combines religion, history, and literature. This narrative character also determines various methods such as religion, history, and narratology should be used to break

through a single paradigm in the study of religious history and biographies. This is also where this article seeks to innovate via methodology.

Miraculousness: Narrative Characteristics of the Image of the Ancestor of Quanzhen Daoism

In Making *Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*, American scholar Robert Ford Campany examines immortal biographical narratives. Using the example of Han (漢) and Wei (魏) immortals, he demonstrates that inscriptions and texts are typical works of collective public memory. They preserve vital memories of immortal, true figures and events in cultural transmission while also shaping these memories in a compelling manner (Campany 2009, 223). When examining the literature on the predecessors of Quanzhen Daoism, the impact of textual construction on collective memory can be observed, as proposed by Campany. However, the distinguishing characteristic of Quanzhen's ancestral accounts compared to those of the Han and Wei Immortals is that Quanzhen Daoism is an organization, and it possesses a self-aware drive to establish its own history, resulting in a substantial tradition of writing the history of the organization in addition to the narratives outside the organization.

Zhang Guangbao believes that one of the reasons why Quanzhen Daoism can reopen the Daoist system from the Jin Dynasty and rise to prominence after nearly a thousand years of uninterrupted inheritance is that it has a strong tradition of religious history writing (Zhang 2018). During the Jin and Yuan periods, Quanzhen religious history writing experienced its most prosperous era. Within this time, eight major religious historians emerged from the Quanzhen Sect.In order of birth, they were Li Ding (李鼎, 1186?–1298?), Qin Zhi'an (秦志安 1187–1244), Li Zhiquan (李志全, 1191—1261), Ji Zhizhen (姬志真, 1192—1267), Shi Zhijing (史志經, 1202—1275), Li Daoqian (李道謙,1219–1296), Zhao Daoyi (趙道一), and Zhu Xiangxian (朱象先). (Zhang 2018, 24) In terms of historical documents, particularly famous are *the Records of the Correct Lineage of the Golden Lotus* (金蓮正宗記, *Jinlian Zhengzong ji*) by Qin Zhian (秦志安), the Records of the Origin of Immortals in Ganshui (甘水仙源錄, *Ganshui xianyuan lu*), and the Annals of the Seven Realized Ones (七真年譜, *Qizhen nianpu*) by Li Daoqian (李道謙). The following briefly describes the background of these hagiographies:

> 1. The name of the book Records of the Correct Lineage of the Golden Lotus originates from the story of "Seven Golden Lotus Bearing Sons（七朵金蓮結子)," which refers to the Seven Realized Ones adopted by Wang Chongyang. Thus, the main content of the book is about the story of the founder of the sect, Wang Chongyang, who adopted the disciples, the Seven Realized Ones (Gao 2020, 3–5).

2. The name 'Gan Shui Xian Yuan Lu' is taken from the story of Wang Chongyang's encounter with immortals in Ganhe (甘河)and his drinking of the sacred water (神水, ***shenshui***) (Gao 2020, 10–12). Ganhe's encounter with the immortals is a significant event in Wang Chongyang's transition to Daoism.

3. The *Annals of the Seven Realized Ones* describes the major events that occurred between the birth of Wang Chongyang in the second year of Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty (1112) and the death of Qiu Chuji in the twenty-second year of Genghis Khan (1227), marking the end of the 116-year period during which Wang Chongyang and his disciples, including Qiu Chuji and the other Seven Realized Ones, spread their teachings in the Quanzhen Daoism tradition. (Gao 2020, 9)

These stories are the sources for the history of the Quanzhen Daoist organization, and they constitute the sacred memory of the masters in the hearts of the followers and disciples of Quanzhen Daoism. The authors, Qin Zhian and Li Daoqian, as disciples of Quanzhen Daoism, naturally wrote from the position of honoring the ancestors. From a hermeneutical point of view, this kind of conscious writing of history is actually a conscious construction of the sacred history of Quanzhen Daoism.

The impact of the ancestor's image on the development and spread of beliefs is apparent in the fact that Quanzhen Daoism boasts a cohort of historians who intentionally write religious history, as well as a wealth of other literature within the faith. The Quanzhen historical biographies depict the ancestor's image in great detail. These narratives also showcase the great grandmasters' images and provide real-life examples of the sect's core concepts, illustrating their strong faith identities and convictions. In the following, taking Wang Chongyang, the actual founder of the Quanzhen sect, as the main object of investigation, the narrative characteristics of his deeds as a grandmaster will be examined, such as his miraculous birth, his conversion to the Dao, his cultivation and preaching, and his "ascension to immortality," from the historical biographies of the Quanzhen sect.

The reason why Wang Chongyang, the early ancestor of Quanzhen Daoism, was taken as the object of study is that he is representative, authoritative, and exemplary. From a historical development perspective, Quanzhen Daoism is a newly emerged Daoist school in the Song and Yuan dynasties. It has incorporated concepts and classical elements from different traditions, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. In contrast to Daoist schools of the Middle Ages, such as Celestial Masters Daoism (天師道), Quanzhen Daoism differs in terms of belief concepts and forms of religious organization. In terms of standing, it also emerged as one of the two major sects alongside Zhengyi Daoism (正一道) in later periods. On the other hand, from the point of view of the life of the high Daoists and the formation of divine narratives, Wang Chongyang was the actual founder of Quanzhen Daoism. Although the genealogy of the ancestors within Quanzhen Daoism goes back to Emperor Donghua (東華帝君) and Zhonglv (鐘呂), these figures were farther away in time from the Song and Yuan

dynasties, and Wang Chongyang is the historical figure who started Quanzhen Daoism.

The Miracle of Wang Chongyang's Birth

The *Record of the Immortal Deeds of Grandmaster Chongyang in Zhongnan Mountain* (終南山重陽祖師仙跡記, *Zhongnanshan chongyang zushi xianjiji*) states that Wang Chongyang's mother carried him for 24 months before his birth.[2] (Li Daoqian 2020a, 168) This unusual length of gestation suggests that Wang Chongyang was unique even as a fetus. The *Tablet of the Ancestor of the Quanzhen Religion of Immortal Chongyang in Zhongnan Mountain.* (終南山神仙重陽真人全真教祖碑, *Zhongnanshan shenxian chongyang zhenren quanzhen jiaozu bei*) explains, The Immortal Mother (仙母, *xianmu*) gestated for twenty-four months and eighteen days, and the presence of twenty-four qi (二十四氣, *ershisi qi*) and the remaining earth qi (土氣, *tuqi*) transformed Wang Chongyang into a true man (真人, *zhenren*).[3] (Li Daoqian 2020b, 161–162)Twenty-four months and eighteen days is the recorded duration of the Immortal Mother's pregnancy, and the record here adds eighteen days. This tablet explains that this unusual time is related to the twenty-four qi and the earth qi. The twenty-four months correspond to the twenty-four qi, and the eighteen days correspond to the earth qi. This stele was written by Li Daoqian, a Quanzhen disciple who composed several religious and historical documents during his lifetime. He aimed to add a mystical element to Ancestor Chongyang's birth, suggesting an inherent difference and indicating his attainment of the proper fruits of cultivation. Additionally, his purpose in writing this stele was to emphasize the reverence of future disciples for Ancestor Chongyang.

In addition, Zhao Daoyi of the Yuan Dynasty also recorded in his Sequel to the Comprehensive Mirror of the Cultivation of the True Immortals of All Ages (歷世真仙體道通鑒續編, *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian xubian*) that the mother experienced a strange dream, became pregnant, and was born on the 22nd day of the 12th month of the second year of the reign of Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty (1112). (DZ vol. 5, 414) His mother's strange dream is a supernatural narrative that is not uncommon in history. For instance, the Records of the Historian (史記, *Shiji*) document that Liu Bang(劉邦, 256 BC / 247 BC—195 BC)'s mother conceived in a dream where she met a god. (Sima 1982, 341) This supernatural dream might suggest that the fetus has a special origin and that its birth will have an extraordinary impact on the world at that time. Therefore, retelling the extraordinary birth of Grandmaster Wang Chongyang serves as the foundation for his subsequent noteworthy accomplishments and serves as a means of sanctifying the Grandmaster rather than simply providing subjective evaluations.

The Miraculous Event of Conversion and Initiation to Daoism

For practitioners, initiation and conversion are significant life events and symbolic occurrences that signify a believer's entrance into the world of faith. In the narrative of this event, the encounter with Wang Chongyang, the religion's founder, is remarkably miraculous. Wang Chongyang's "miraculous" performance began when he met immortals in Ganhe (甘河), who taught him the "recipe for cultivation of the true spirit", after which he "woke up as if he were drunk". (Qin 2020, 18) The Record of the Immortal Deeds of Grandmaster Chongyang in Zhongnan Mountain records Wang Chongyang's encounter with the immortal at Ganhe as follows:

> In the sixth month (己卯, *jimao*) of Zhenglong (正隆, *zhenglong*,1159), Wang Chongyang suddenly met the immortals at Ganhe. The immortals covertly gave Wang Chongyang the pithy formula (口訣, *koujue*) and allowed him to sip the divine water (神水, *shenshui*) because they believed he could be trained. From then on, Wang Chongyang cut off his ties with the secular world. His behavior was unpredictable, as he pretended to be a madman (for the sake of cultivation). (Li Daoqian 2020a, 169)

Thus, the encounter with the Immortal at Ganhe directly led to Wang Chongyang's transition from his secular identity to the world of believers, from his original identity as a martial artist to his abandonment of all earthly possessions. His wild behavior facilitated his entry into Daoism. From the perspective of the Quanzhen sect, it is apparent that Wang Chongyang, as its founder, made significant sacrifices after embracing Daoism. He abandoned his original official position and even left his family and children, and these extraordinary actions were taken in order to establish the Quanzhen Sect in the future and change the trend of the times. From the moment Wang Chongyang met the immortals at Ganhe and exchanged secret water with them, it was evident that his exceptional cultivation talent made him a potential candidate for selection by the immortals. Additionally, his acts of feigning madness to make Daoist cultivation easier are deserving of admiration and respect by his followers, which in turn foster a sense of belonging and identification with the sect. Obviously, this narrative strongly supports the characterization of Wang Chongyang as the "sect founder".

The Miracles in the Practice and Preaching of Inner Alchemy

In addition to the strong divine narrative of the conversion to Daoism, the practice and preaching of Quanzhen Master also involved many events that deserve to be written about by historians of the religion. The practice of Quanzhen Daoism is dominated by the cultivation of internal alchemy. The process of cultivation and the landscape（內景,

neijing) of inner alchemy (内丹, *neidan*) are important parts of the manifestation of the divinity of the ancestor of Quanzhen Daoism, which is related to the construction of the image of the ancestor and even the sanctity of the system of internal elixir cultivation and the legitimacy of the transmission of the teachings of the Order.

The cultivation of the inner elixir is not only the main way of cultivation but also a way for Quanzhen to realize the "meditative communication"[4] between masters and disciples. Qiu Chuji, a follower of Wang Chongyang, previously conveyed to his disciple Yin Zhiping (尹志平) details about his personal cultivation experiences in Panxi (磻溪), as described in the *Records of the Northern Journey of the Immortal Qinghe* (清和真人北遊語錄, *qinghe zhenren beiyou yulu*):

> I have a strong connection with my ancestor, Wang Chongyang. During my time in Panxi, I abstained from salt, stayed up till midnight, and meticulously checked for errors in trivial matters. Then, one night, I witnessed a vision of a baby on my master's lap, mere months old. This prompted the realization that my understanding of natural philosophy was still rudimentary. Half a year later, I had a similar encounter, but the baby had already grown to be two years old. I came to the realization that my nature was gradually growing. Subsequently, I noted that I did not harbor any malevolent thoughts. About a year later, I encountered the same child, who was now three or four years old and able to walk and stand alone. After that encounter, I did not see the child again. It then dawned on me that my master had continued to cultivate me until I could depend on myself.[5]

The inner realm of Qiu's practice in this passage is so rich that it can even change dynamically over time and contains a full content of internal alchemy practice. According to scholar Guo Wu (2011), Qiu's "baby" represents his own "Dao Nature" (道性) or "Dharma Body" (法身). The "baby" is a symbolic representation of Qiu's level of cultivation, progressing from "a hundred days" to "three or four years old", indicating his rise to "self-competence", where he is able to stand and walk on his own. At this time, Wang Chongyang, who has long since died, was reportedly able to "manifest" himself to Qiu Chuji and educate him, adding to the mystery of the "Dharma Body" of the Quanzhen religion. (Guo 2011, 18–19) In my opinion, "meditative communication" in the inner realm of cultivation is one of the most palpable and religiously rich ways of transmission from master to disciple, and its peculiarity lies in the fact that it requires the support of cultivation power. This inner realm, which can only be felt by the practitioner, undoubtedly strengthens the sense of identity of the disciples of the sect with the grandmaster, the Quanzhen internal alchemy practice system, and the whole religious order. From the point of view of succession, the practitioner's being "enlightened in the realm" by the deceased ancestor is equivalent to borrowing the power of cultivation from the ancestor, and the ancestor himself has thus become a special source of faith. This belief, based on a specific ancestor, may be called "ancestor belief".

The Miracles of the Ascension to Immortality

As mentioned above, the Quanzhen historical biographies describe the various auspicious appearances of the ancestor at birth with a certain amount of divine brushstroke. Similarly, death is also an important part of portraying the Quanzhen ancestor as different from ordinary people. The theme of life and death has always been important. For believers, the miraculous aspects of life and death are even more valid for the practice of faith and cultivation. For the believers, the masters' deaths and the visions they leave behind will also teach them about the transcendence of life. At the same time, the sacred image of the ancestor is constantly being formed, and the sacred history of the order is being constructed in the process of writing down these deeds and passing them on to future generations.

The *Tablet of the Ancestor of the Quanzhen Religion of Immortal Chongyang in Zhongnan Mountain* (終南山神仙重陽真人全真教祖碑, *Zhongnanshan shenxian chongyang zhenren quanzhen jiaozu bei*) states that Wang Chongyang predicted his return date (歸期, *guiqi*) and instructed his followers on his passing:

> One day, Immortal (Wang Chongyang) said, "The time will come. Tomorrow, I will travel west." ..... He advised his disciples to recite the Prajna Heart Sutra (Xinjing,《心經》), the Tao Te Ching (Daodejing,《道德經》), the Sutra of Purity (Qingjingjing,《清靜經》), and the Sutra of Filial Piety (Xiaojing,《孝經》), believing that by relying on them they could cultivate their eternal life. (Li Daoqian 2020b, 166)

In the process, Wang Chongyang also demonstrates the miraculous event of coming back from the dead (起死回生, *qisihuisheng*). The details of the incident are recorded in the *Records of the Correct Lineage of the Golden Lotus* (《金蓮 正宗記》):

> Wang Chongyang said, "You should not grieve after I ascend to heaven." After he finished speaking, he returned to the west. Ma Yu couldn't help but cry with grief. The others advised him: "Don't go against our master's words." Ma Yu said, "I have not yet achieved anything since I entered the Way. What should I do now that my master has forsaken me?" Before Ma Yu could finish, Wang Chongyang suddenly opened his eyes and said, "Why are you so depressed? In the past, I met the Immortals in the GanHe and got these five secret words (五篇秘語, *wupian miyu*), all of which are bestowed on you today." Ma Yu worshipped them and kneeled down to accept them. Wang Chongyang then said to Tan Chuduan, "The methods of your immortal cultivation are all in Ma Yu's hands." (Qin 2020, 21)

The "Five Secret Words" (五篇秘語, *wupian miyu*) are given sanctified status by this narrative technique, which also successfully reflects the two events of Wang Chongyang's conversion to Daoism and his death, or so-called "ascent to immortality".

In other words, among the cultivation and refining secrets received from the early masters of the Quanzhen sect are the "Five Secret Words," which have been passed down from generation to generation. Thus, just as with the Heart Seal Dharma lineage of the Buddhist Zen Sect, which is connected to the formation of the key concerns of the sect's legacy, the holy status of the "Five Secret Words" in the sect becomes self-evident. This shows that the divine narrative technique not only plays an important role in shaping the image of the master but also has profound significance for the establishment and transmission of the religion.

In fact, there are many places in Quanzhen's hagiographies describing the miraculous deeds of the ancestor Wang Chongyang, far more than those listed above. What is clear is that writing about the miraculous deeds of ancestors is a commonality of Quanzhen's historical hagiographies as well as a narrative strategy for constructing the sect's sacred history.

Establishing the Order: The Role of the Master's Image in Sect Development and Faith Identity

As seen through the combination of documents such as inscriptions, comprehensive mirror (通鑒, *tongjian*), and literature, the depiction of the ancestor Wang Chongyang in the Quanzhen historical tradition is characterized by a supernatural narrative. How can the relationship between the supernatural narrative and the development of the sect best be undertood? This is an important level of consideration in this article. Here, the concept of "dharma lineage" (法緣宗族, *fayuanzongzu*) proposed by scholar Zhang Xuesong (2015) can be drawn upon to discuss the impact of the image of the ancestor on the genealogy and religious identity of Quanzhen Daoism.

Zhang Xuesong suggests in *The Dharma Lineage of Chinese Buddhism: An Analysis of Chinese Religious Organizational Patterns* that traditional Chinese religions have the concept of "dharma lineage" in addition to blood lineage and geographic lineage. (Zhang Xuesong 2015) Because of the organizational structure of religion, joining a sect means joining a "clan organization." For instance, monks achieve the rank of monk by shaving their heads, taking vows, and preaching the dharma (attaining enlightenment). This entails leaving their own blood family and becoming a part of a dharma-preaching family (sect) and establishing their association with the "dharma lineage", which results in numerous socio-economic and sectarian organizational functions. The construction of this "dharma lineage" relationship mainly comes in two ways: one is the worship of the ancestors of the past generations, and the other is the shaving of the head and the establishment of the Dharma transmission sect's generation poem in order to form a genealogy. (Zhang Xuesong 2015, 141) From the beginning, Quanzhen Daoism had an impulse to create a religion; as early as the preaching in Shandong, Wang Chongyang founded the "three states and five associations (三州五會, *sanzhouwuhui*)". By the time Ma Yu, Qiu Chuji, and others took charge of the religion,

it was expanding the size of its own sect, forming a sect with a large number of followers. Until the Yuan Dynasty, Quanzhen Daoism formed its own network of palaces and temples throughout the country. During the middle and late Ming Dynasties, Quanzhen Daoism, which was established as a sect, further manifested its nature, leading to an active period that was closely tied to the rise of clans in various parts of China's history during that time. (Zhang Xuesong 2013, 125–136) From the history of the development of Quanzhen Daoism, it is evident that the "dharma lineage" concept applies to Quanzhen Daoism as well.

From the perspective of the dharma lineage, the ancestor, a figure from the early teachings, is considered the founder of the clan and the origin of its genealogy. Therefore, the writing and narrative of the history of the dharma lineage are actually closely related to the history, present, and even future of the entire dharma lineage. This is also a fundamental starting point for this article to investigate the shaping of the master's image from a narratological perspective.

According to Zhang Xuesong, the ability of a religion to attract adherents often depends on its sacred presence, which differs from that of the average secular society. Religious organizations often require sanctification processes too. In traditional religions, the divine presence is often found in the ancestor of the religion or in the first or second generation of disciples. Subsequently, a holy tradition is necessary to preserve this "sacredness". (Zhang Xuesong 2015, 68) In Quanzhen Daoism, the ancestor Wang Chongyang is such a "divine being". The Quanzhen religion's "holy biography" of the ancestor, which recounts the ancestor's life through miraculous events, is a way of constructing and maintaining the "divine presence". For the dissemination of the religious organization as a whole, and especially for Quanzhen Daoism as a new religion at the time of the Jin and Yuan dynasties, it is more important to rely on the personal charisma of the founder or the ancestor to increase the attractiveness of the religious group. The writing of the "divine" narratives was a means of demonstrating the charisma of the ancestor. Such charisma is manifested in many ways, including the birth of the ancestor, his conversion to the Way, the inner realm of cultivation, the process of preaching, and his death. Not only is the ancestor himself exceptionally gifted, but the teachings he gives and passes on are all of great "origin". During the cultivation process, the portrayal of the ancestor's image is not complete without the narration of miraculous inner experiences, the ancestor's performance, and transformative actions leading up to the "ascension to immortality". In other words, constructing the genealogy of the dharma system and developing supernatural narratives of the ancestors around Quanzhen's beliefs and technical practices is the process of sacralizing one's own religious order.

What distinguishes the narratives of religious texts such as Quanzhen historical biographies from ordinary historical narratives is the way in which they are divinely crafted to create qualitative differences from everyday experience and general historical events while maintaining a central concern with faith, that is, presenting, arguing for,

and defending it. Thus, it is imperative that attention is paid to the complex relationship between the portrayal of the ancestors and the construction and dissemination of faith.

Examining the religious characteristics of Quanzhen Daoism, a tendency towards sectarianism can be observed. From the outset of the formation of the religion, Wang Chongyang promoted monkhood through his *Fifteen Theses on the Establishment of the Religion* (立教十五論, *lijiao shiwu lun*), which stated that "anyone seeking to become a monk must firstly join a nunnery". (DZ vol. 32, 153) He modeled this system on the practices of Zen jungle temples and monasteries, creating a system where the Taoist monks in this school left their homes, journeyed to the clouds (雲遊, *yunyou*), and resided in monasteries. (Qing and Zhan 2019, 89–90) This tendency toward sectarianization was present at the time of Quanzhen's founding, and with the support of the Yuan government, Quanzhen Daoism was able to expand rapidly. As the sect expanded, the Ancestor's supernatural narratives shaped the image of the Ancestor's magnificence and also triggered the worship of the Ancestor's beliefs among the followers, which served to unite people's hearts and minds. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the relationship between sect and state changed, and the support for Taoist sects such as Quanzhen Daoism from the regime became weaker and weaker. The time changed, but in terms of the Order, the worship of the ancestors recognized in this external environmental turbulence cannot be changed. From the point of view of the organization's management, the need to rely on the ancestor's beliefs for the organization to establish a theological foundation makes Quanzhen's "dharma lineage" in the ancestor play a certain spiritual leader or link-like role.

Furthermore, while the organizational model of the "dharma lineage" is universal, in the case of Quanzhen Daoism, there is a certain specificity, namely, the secretive transmission and individuality of the inner alchemy practices. In other words, the truth of Daoism is transmitted in a unique and secretive way between masters and disciples who have a covenant. (Cheng 2017, 16) The cultivation system of Quanzhen Daoism is centered on internal alchemy. In the process of cultivation, there is the object of transmitting and receiving the dharma. Given the technical and practical nature of inner alchemy, the relationship between disciple and grandmaster is not only intergenerational in terms of organizational management but also involves covert technical practice inheritance. Masters can teach their disciples directly during their lifetime, and even after they have "ascended to immortality", they can also reveal to their disciples the inner realm of their cultivation in a manifested way. The disciple's inner alchemy level is enhanced through "meditative communication" between master and disciple. This unique method of secret transmission enables Quanzhen disciples to establish an intuitive and personal connection with the Master. Consequently, this process reinforces their faith in the master while passing down the dharma lineage through generations. In essence, the acknowledgement and acceptance of the Master are crucial for the order's organization, management, and transmission of the dharma lineage.

To summarize, the legends of the ancestors serve as tangible examples of faithful identity and conceptual certainty, maintaining the cohesion of the "Dharma lineage". From a genealogical perspective, the divine narratives of the ancestors are fundamentally valuable in establishing a sacred history within the sect and legitimizing the "dharma lineage". The ancestors are the foundation of the sect's history and sacredness. Subsequently, the establishment and growth of the sect are the carriers and extensions of the ancestral sanctity. Miracles serve as an underlying characteristic in the Quanzhen historical recounting, with faith identity as the ultimate outcome.

Conclusion

The depiction of Wang Chongyang in Quanzhen's historical biographies focuses on significant events throughout his life, including his birth, conversion to Daoism, cultivation, teaching, and death. These biographies present a consistent narrative style, featuring divine elements. As a result, many of Quanzhen's biographies showcase Wang Chongyang's miraculous abilities, which set him apart from ordinary individuals. In fact, writing and recording the births and deaths of early religious figures, their conversion experiences, the process of cultivation, and even the legends of the supernatural is a way of establishing and transmitting the concepts of religious beliefs. The establishment, preaching, and genealogical development of Quanzhen Daoism heavily relied on the faith narrative of its ancestor figure.

The article's key research question concerns the connection between the sacred narratives of Quanzhen's ancestor figures, the establishment of the order's beliefs, and the growth of the sect. Writing about the miracles of the ancestors is a technique of historical narrative. As the ancestor serves as the founder of the religion and the bedrock of the faith of its community, the narrative of the ancestor is intertwined with the identity and development of the religious community as a whole. It is hoped that this article's examination of the narratives of Quanzhen's master can offer novel perspectives for the analysis of early Quanzhen's figures and their association with the sect's identity, with the ultimate goal of enabling the academic community to achieve a greater depth of understanding.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1]夫為史之要有三:一曰事實，二曰褒貶，三曰文采。有是事而如是書，斯謂事實。因事實而寓懲勸，斯謂褒貶。事實、褒貶既得矣，必資文采以行之，夫然後成史。

[2] 母孕二十四月而生。

[3] 仙母孕二十四月又十八日，按二十四氣余土氣而成真人也。

[4] The term “meditative communication" refers to a process within the inner landscape of inner alchemy practice in which masters and disciples can communicate with each other in a specific way. However, this process requires the practitioner to possess a certain level of proficiency. Many references to these extraordinary events can be found in the Quanzhen historical biographies.

[5] 俺惟與祖師結緣素深。昔在磻溪日，至於不令食鹽，未至夜半不令睡，比細事亦蒙一一點檢。忽一夕，境中見祖師膝上坐一嬰兒，約百日許。覺則有悟於心，知吾之道性尚淺也。半年，複見如前境，其兒已及二歲許。覺則悟吾道性漸長。在後，自覺無惡念。一年，又如前境，其兒三四歲許，自能行立。後不復見。乃知提挈直至自有所立而後已。(DZ vol. 33, 174)

References

Bai, Ruxiang 2007 "Wang Chongyang's Mindfulness Thought Outline, Journal of Theory." *Journal of Theory* 7 55–58. [Chinese Language Text] 白如祥, 《王重阳心性思想论纲》, 理论学刊。https://doi.org/10.14110/j.cnki.cn-37-1059/d.20 07.07.015

Company, Robert Ford 2009 *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

Chen, Yuan 1988 *Daojia Jinshi Lve*. Peking: Cultural Relics Press. [Chinese Language Text] 陳垣, 《道家金石略》.

1989 *Examination of New Taoism in Hebei at the Beginning of the Southern Song Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 陈垣, 《南宋初河北新道教考》, 北京: 中华书局.

Cheng, Lesong 2017 *Daoism: Body, Immortality, and Mysticism*. Beijing: Peking University Press. [Chinese Language Text] 程乐松, 《身体, 不死与神秘主义 道教信仰的观念史视角》, 北京: 北京大学出版社.

Ding, Yuanming, Bai Ruxiang Li Yancang 2011 *An Outline of Philosophical Thought in Early Quanzhen Taoism*. Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 丁原明, 白如祥, 李延倉, 《早期全真道教哲学思想论纲》, 齊魯書社.

Gao, Liyang 2020 *Quanzhen Shizhuan Wuzhong Jijiao*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 高丽杨, 《全真史传五种集校》, 中华书局.

Guo, Wu 2011 *Qiu Chuji Xue An*. Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 郭武, 《丘處機學案》, 齊魯書社.

2016 *Wang Chongyang Xuean*. Ji nan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 郭武, 《王重陽學案》, 齊魯書社.

Kunio, Hoshiya *Research on Daoism During the Jin Dynasty: Wang*

2007 *Chongyang and Ma Danyang*. Qin wei. Beijing: China Social Science Press. [Chinese Language Text] 蜂屋邦夫, 欽偉剛 譯,《金代道教研究: 王重陽與馬丹陽》, 北京: 中国社会科学出版社.

2014 *Research on Daoism During the Jin and Yuan Dynasties:The Seven Realized Ones*. J. T. e. al. Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 蜂屋邦夫, 金鐵成 譯,《元时代的道教—七真研究》, 齊魯书社.

Li, Daoqian 2020a *Record of the Immortal Deeds of Grandmaster Chongyang in Zhongnan Mountain from the Records of the Origin of Immortals in Ganshui*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 李道謙,《終南山重陽祖師仙跡記》,《甘水仙源錄》, 高丽杨,《全真史传五种集校》, 中华书局.

2020b "Tablet of the Ancestor of the Quanzhen Religion of Immortal Chongyang in Zhongnan Mountain from the Records of the Origin of Immortals in Ganshui." In L. Proofread by Gao (eds.), *Quanzhen Shizhuan Wuzhong Jijiao* Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 李道謙,《終南山神仙重陽真人全真教祖碑》,《甘水仙源錄》, 高丽杨鑑,《全真史传五种集校》 中华书局.

Li, Yancang 2014 *Early Quanzhen Taoist Thought Exploration*. Jinan QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 李延倉,《早期全真道教思想探源》, 齐鲁书社.

Lu, Guolong 2010 *Madanyangxuean*. Jinan: QiLu Press.[Chinese Language Text] 卢国龙,《马丹阳学案》, 齐鲁书社.

Qin, Zhian 2020 "Records of the Correct Lineage of the Golden Lotus." In L. Gao (eds.), *Quanzhen Shizhuan Wuzhong Jijiao* Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 秦志安,《金蓮正宗記》, 高丽杨鑑,《全真史传五种集校》, 中华书局.

Qing, Xitai 1988–1995 *The History of Chinese Taoism*. Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House. [Chinese Language Text] 卿希泰,《中国道教史》, 四川人民出版社.

2009 *The History of Chinese Taoist Thought*. Peking: People's Publishing House. [Chinese Language Text] 卿希泰, 《中国道教思想史》, 人民出版社.

Qing, Xitai, Zhan Shichuang 2019 *The General History of Chinese Taoism*. Peking: People's Publishing House. [Chinese Language Text] 卿希泰, 詹石窗, 《中国道教通史》, 人民出版社.

Sima, Qian 1982 *Records of the Historian*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 司馬遷, 《史记》, 北京：中華書局.

Sun, Yiping 2011 "On the Borrowing and Absorption of Buddhism by Quanzhen Daoism." In b. Zhao Weidong zhu (eds.), *Studies of Quanzhen Taoism.* Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text]孫亦平,《論全真道封佛教的藉鑒與吸收》, 趙衛東, 《全真道研究》, 齊魯書社.

Wang, Zhongfu 1988[1223] "Fifteen Essays on the Establishment of the Religion." In *Dao Zang* 32. Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books Publishing House. [Chinese Language Text] 王中孚, 《立教十五論》, 《DZ 道藏》, 三家本.

Wang, Zongyu 2005 *A New Compilation of Jin and Yuan Quanzhen Sect Rock Carvings*. Beijing: Peking University Press. [Chinese Language Text] 王宗昱, 《金元全真教石刻新編》, 北京大学出版社.

Wu, Yakui 2007 *A Collection of Daoist Tablet Records in Jiangnan*. Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House [Chinese Language Text] 吴亞魁, 《江南道教碑记资料集》. 上海辭書出版社。

Wu, Zhen 1966 *New Tangshu Corrections*. Taibei: Taiwan Commercial Press. [Chinese Language Text] 吴缜, 《新唐书纠谬》.

Yin, Zhiping 1988 "Records of the Northern Journey of the Immortal Qinghe." In *Dao Zang* 33. Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books Publishing House. [Chinese Language Text] 尹志平, 《清和真人北遊語錄》, 《道藏》, 三家本。

Zhang, Guangbao 1995 *Jin Yuan Quanzhen Daoism Inner Alchemy Mindfulness*. Beijing: Life, reading, new knowledge Joint Publishing Company. [Chinese Language Text] 張广保, 《金元全真道内丹心性学》, 生活・讀書・ 新知 三联书店.

2015 *The Founding and Historical Inheritance of Quanzhen Daoism*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. [Chinese Language Text] 张广保, 《全真教的创立与历史传承》, 中华书局.

2018 "Quanzhen Historians and the Construction of Quanzhen History." In Z. Weidong (eds.), *Studies of Quanzhen Taoism* Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 張廣保,《全真教史家與全真教史的建構》, 趙衛東, 全真道研究 7. 齊魯書社.

Zhang, Xuesong 2013 "Quanzhen Paibei Zipu Fayin." In Z. Weidong (eds.), *Studies of Quanzhen Taoism* Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 張雪松, 《全真道派輩字譜發隱》, 趙衛東, 《全真道研究》3, 齊魯書社.

2015 *The Dharma Lineage of Chinese Buddhism: An Analysis of Chinese Religious Organizational Patterns*. Beijing: China Renmin University Press. [Chinese Language Text] 張雪松,《佛教"法缘宗族"研究: 中国宗教组织模式探析》, 中国人民大学出版社.

Zhao, Daoyi 1988[1223] "Sequel to the Comprehensive Mirror of the Cultivation of the True Immortals of All Ages." In *Dao Zang* 5. Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books Publishing House. [Chinese Language Text] 趙道一, 《歷世真仙體道通鑒續編》, 《道藏》, 三家本.

Zhao, Weidong 2010a *Historical Studies of Quanzhen Taoism in the Jin and Yuan Dynasties*. Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 趙衛東, 陳法永, 《金元全真道教史論》, 齊魯书社.

2010b *Tan Chuduan Xuean*. Jinan: QiLu Press. [Chinese Language Text] 趙衛東, 《譚處端學案》, 齊魯書社.

Zhao, Weidong and Chen Fayong 2020 *Jin Yuan Quanzhen Taoist Inscriptions Collection,* JiJinan: Shandong University Press. [Chinese Language Text] 趙衛東, 陳法永, 《金元全真道碑刻集萃》, 山東大學出版社.

The Ethical Obligations of Humankind towards Animals and Its Implications for Korean Religions: Focusing on Korean Buddhism and Daesoon Thought

Dominik RUTANA

Dominik Rutana is an assistant professor in the Department of Asian Studies, SWPS University. He received his PhD degree in religious studies from The Academy of Korean Studies in Seongnam, South Korea. His research focuses on Korean Buddhism, Shamanism, New Religious Movements and Korean mythology and folklore.

JDTREA 2024,3(2):55–70

Original Articles

Correspondence to

Dominik RUTANA

SWPS University, Poland

drutana@swps.edu.pl

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6189-5811

OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia Vol. 3. Issue 2 (March 2024): 55–70
© 2024 by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Daejin University, Korea

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.55

Day of submission: 2024.01.05.
Completion of review: 2024.02.10.
Final decision for acceptance: 2024.03.20.

P-ISSN: 2799-3949
E-ISSN: 2799-4252

Abstract

This study presents and examines various ethical theories that could offer potential solutions to the issue of discrimination against non-human animals in contemporary society, and traces its implications for Korean religions. The article focuses on two normative ethical theories – virtue ethics and the ethics of care – and through an analysis of existing research, argues that both theories may serve as foundational principles guiding our behavior, not only in our interactions with other humans but also in our treatment of non-human animals. Furthermore, the examples presented in this study demonstrate that similar ethical theories have already been adopted as frameworks for human behavior towards other living beings within two religious traditions, Buddhism and Daesoon Jinrihoe. In both belief systems, animals are acknowledged as integral components of the world in which we live. Additionally, both religions endorse the idea that the well-being of non-human animals and our attitudes toward them can also have a direct impact on our present lives, as well as on our future existence. Consequently, promoting morally upright conduct towards other living creatures should be viewed as a necessary measure, beneficial not only for the animals themselves but also for the collective well-being of humanity.

Keywords: virtue ethics; ethics of care; Buddhism; Daesoon Thought; animal welfare; compassion; Buddha-nature; *Haewon Sangsaeng*; *dongmul cheondojae*

Introduction

Among the various social ethical movements that occurred in the past century, the animal rights movement is unique, not only because it concerns non-human animal welfare but also because it was initiated by academia. The utilitarian analysis of animal welfare proposed by the Australian philosopher captured public attention in the 1970s, starting an ongoing debate on the moral obligations of humans towards animals. In his study, Singer based his anti-speciesist[1] argument on the premise that all non-human animals share an interest in being free from suffering. Therefore, they deserve equal consideration and should not be subjected to any form of exploitation or ill-treatment (Singer, 1975).

A few years after Singer published his book, another philosopher introduced an even more controversial theory, which was based on the premise that animals possess advanced cognitive abilities similar to humans.[2] Based on this, he suggested that animals should be granted equal rights to those of human beings (Regan, 1983). This, in turn, revived the philosophical and religious disputes regarding the ethical obligations of humankind towards non-human animals. Scholars suggest that those obligations can be explained in connection with popular ethical theories, such as virtue ethics and the ethics of care.

The aim of this article is to present and examine various ethical theories as potential approaches to addressing the issue of discrimination against non-human animals in contemporary society and to explore its implications for Korean religions. This study will specifically focus on two types of normative ethical theories – virtue ethics and the ethics of care – which serve as foundational principles guiding our behavioral norms not only towards other humans but also towards non-human animals. The doctrinal and practical examples implemented in this study will illustrate that theories based on similar principles have already been introduced as measures of human behavior towards other living creatures in religions like Buddhism and Daesoon Jinrihoe (대순진리회/大巡眞理會, The Fellowship of Daesoon Truth).

Virtue Ethics and Ethics of Care

Virtue ethics is a form of normative philosophy primarily developed in the West by ancient Greeks. Although many famous Western philosophers have devised different forms of virtue ethics, the one proposed by Aristotle (384–322 BCE) continues to be the most influential. In his agent-centered theory, which focuses on individuals and their characters rather than singular actions, Aristotle refers to virtues as character traits or psychological dispositions deeply embedded in every person. These dispositions help us behave appropriately in certain situations by encouraging proper responses in accordance with reason (Dimmock and Fisher 2017, 52). Thereby, virtues also play a crucial role in defining our character and shaping who we are. Consequently, it

becomes particularly important to consistently cultivate and develop the skill of virtue, not merely through intellectual teaching or single actions, but through continuous improvement, practical learning, and habitual conduct (Dimmock and Fisher 2017, 53–54). This will lead us to "*eudaimonia*,"[3] which according to Aristotle, is the state we experience once we fully achieve a good, happy life. *Eudaimonia* is also the ultimate aim and end of human existence (Dimmock and Fisher 2017, 51).

To properly learn from others, particularly those who are more "morally skilled in practicing virtue," and to recognize, for instance, what is morally good or bad, or how to respond courageously or compassionately in specific situations, we must also cultivate what Aristotle referred to as practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Only a person who possessed that practical wisdom can act in a rational manner and translate their psychological dispositions or character traits into practical behavior. In other words, "practical wisdom supports our instinctive knowledge of how to respond virtuously to various feelings, emotions, and situations" (Dimmock and Fisher, 2017, 55). Hence, only an individual who is practically wise and morally mature can understand what is worthwhile, important, and advantageous in life (Hursthouse and Pettigrove, 2018). In this context, virtue ethics not only helps humans to understand what it means to be a virtuous person but also teaches us how practicing virtuous habits. This enables us to make the right choices when confronted with ethical dilemmas.

A truly virtuous person also develops characteristics such as goodness, friendliness, compassion, and sensitivity, which inherently impact not only their own life but, most importantly, the lives of others. In this sense, the journey towards a *eudaimon* life will exert an influence on the lives of other beings, including non-human animals.[4] Mostly because it is challenging to believe that genuinely virtuous person would remain indifferent to the suffering of others, even animals. As noted by Fröding and Peterson (2011), virtue ethics prohibits us from neglecting the interests of others, particularly those beings with whom we have formed some bonds, such as pet animals.[5] This approach, also one of the characteristics of a sentimentalist virtue ethics, allows us to experience more empathy for those close to us rather than distant others or strangers.

Sentimentalist virtue ethics, as advocated by David Hume (1711–1776), places a strong emphasis on human connection, particularly on benevolence and sympathy and/or empathy toward others. According to this notion, we are capable of understanding our moral dispositions and distinguish between what is morally right or wrong by relying on our feelings toward others (Slote 2013, 25–26). Our capacity for empathy, encompassing the ability to feel the pain, joy, and other such states of others, is not only crucial to human altruism but also serves as explanation for our moral judgments. It provides a more vivid understanding of our actions toward other beings than any other form of virtue-ethical rationalism. In this context, it becomes clear why our moral judgments and behaviors towards family, friends, or those we know are characterized by greater empathy compared to people's actions towards strangers. Simultaneously, humans tend to feel more empathy and exhibit a greater willingness

to help someone whose danger or suffering they have witnessed, as opposed to cases wherein they are unaware of the danger or suffering of others (Slote 2013, 25). Nevertheless, both Aristotelian and sentimentalist virtue ethics do not permit indifference to the misfortune and suffering of other beings, including non-human animals. Simultaneously, these perspectives highlight the principle that humans should refrain from causing harm to others and, when necessary, take care of them. This makes it similar with the viewpoint advocated by care ethicists.

Brite Wrage (2022, 2) defines the ethics of care as an ethical framework asserting that care, interpreted as the intentional meeting of others' needs, is central to morality. Within this framework, emotions such as empathy and sympathy play a crucial role in moral motivation; our emotional connection with others makes us to care for them. In this context, empathy, rather than reason, is acknowledged as a wellspring of morality. Furthermore, the intentional meeting of the needs of others extends not only to humans but also to non-human animals. There are situations in which many of these creatures depend on humans and require our care to survive, develop, and achieve basic well-being.

In his article on animal welfare, Daniel Engster (2006, 525) pointed out that, "since all human beings depend upon the care of others for our survival and basic functioning and at least implicitly claim that capable individuals should care for individuals in need when they can do so, we must logically recognize as morally valid the claims that others make upon us for care when they need it, and should endeavor to provide care to them when we are capable of doing so without significant danger to ourselves, seriously compromising our long-term well-being or undermining our ability to care for other individuals who depend upon us."

Within the above context, the "principle of consistent dependency' argument may not always directly apply to human-animal relations, especially in the case of wild animals whose survival and well-being are not always dependent on human care, in the same ways as humans, too, do not necessarily rely on animals for their survival and development, the situation changes when humans take actions that make animals dependent upon them. In other words, when humans actively establish a relationship of dependency with animals – such as adopting a pet, using animals for clinical research, or exploiting the natural environment, causing damage to wildlife – they have moral obligations to care for the well-being of each of them (Engster 2006, 526–527). Furthermore, some care ethicists argue that concern should extend not only to animals with which humans share a relationship or those whose well-being is threatened by our actions but also to all non-human creatures capable of experiencing suffering the same way humans do. Because this is what makes a human a genuinely caring and compassionate person (Animal Ethics 2023). In the end, tending to the well-being of non-human animals not only has moral implications but also directly impacts our physical live. Every creature plays a vital role in the ecosystem humans inhabit, and it is human society's responsibility to care for that ecosystem. Thus, fulfilling

humankind's moral obligations towards animals should be approached in similar terms. In Korea, religious traditions such as Buddhism and Daesoon Jinrihoe actively promote the well-being of non-human animals, addressing both physical and metaphysical aspects. The following section will explore this issue in detail.

Korean Buddhism and Animal Welfare

One of the numerous social and cultural changes that occurred in Korea, driven by rapid modernization and economic growth in the latter part of the 20th century, was the change in the attitudes and perceptions toward non-human animals, particularly pet animals. The emergence of the animal protection movement in the early 1980s, along with the increasing criticism against the consumption of dog meat[6] and the enactment of the first *Animal Protection Act* in 1992, all serve as illustrative examples of those changing attitudes. These are further underscored by the surge in popularity of pet animals, beginning in the early 2000s, and the continuous growth of the "pet industry." Additionally, as emphasized by Kim Seok-eun (2020), a few years ago, Korea entered into the so-called "era of the personification of pets."[7] This signifies that Koreans no longer perceive pets, especially dogs and cats, as mere "objects," but rather as integral members of their families deserving protection similar to any other family member.

All the above-mentioned recent developments in animal welfare, combined with the increasing fascination with pets and the evolving perception of them, serve as good examples of the formation of virtuous habits and care ethics toward animals in Korean society. However, examples of fulfilling moral obligations and practicing care toward non-human animals can also be found in various religious traditions long known to Koreans. Buddhism is one of them.

It is well known that among five Buddhist precepts (*ogye,* 오계/五戒), the first one – the precept of *ahiṃsā* (*bulsalsaeng,* 불살생/不殺生), typically translated into English as "non-injury" or "nonviolence" – generally refers to abstaining from killing. This precept teaches the sanctity of all life and thus applies to our actions not only toward other humans but also toward all living beings, including animals. As Finnigan (2017, 3) has pointed out, the Buddha considered animals to have moral significance, and consequently, he taught his disciples to avoid any occupations that involve the killing of animals. He also prohibited any behavior that intentionally causes harm to animals and even encouraged people to help animals wherever possible, including rescuing them and setting them free.

All the aforementioned actions are connected to another Buddhist virtue, that of compassion, known as *karuṇā* (*jabi,* 자비/慈悲). Early Buddhist scripture collections, such as the *Majjhima Nikāya*, define compassion as an altruistic attitude that strives for the welfare of others out of empathetic concern, seeking to deliver them from suffering (Finnigan 2017, 6). Compassion is a central virtue in Mahāyāna Buddhist

teachings, where it is presented as one of the most important characteristics of great bodhisattvas, like Avalokiteśvara (*Gwanseeum bosal,* 관세음보살 /觀世音菩薩) or Kṣitigarbha (*Jijang bosal,* 지장보살/地藏菩薩). However, compassion, understood as a practical attitude of avoiding harm and assisting living beings in need, is not exclusive to bodhisattvas; it applies to all followers of the Buddhism. It is important; however, to understand the meaning of being a truly compassionate person in Buddhist terms.

According to the Buddha's teaching, a truly compassionate person refrains from harming or killing others, including animals, out of genuine concern for their well-being, whereas a selfish person engages in such actions with the belief that it would somehow benefit themselves, perhaps by accommodating good *karma* (Finnigan 2017, 7). In other words, not only actions but also motivations matter. Therefore, embodying compassion in Buddhist terms requires a profound understanding of the virtue of compassion and acting accordingly in every situation. However, nowadays many Buddhist followers find it difficult to fully understand this concept. Before this problem is explored further, two other doctrinal arguments against the mistreatment of non-human animals can be presented as these are often invoked by Korean Buddhist monastics in their discourse on animal welfare and ecology.

The first argument relates to the idea of Buddha-nature, usually referred to in Sanskrit as *tathāgatagarbha* (*yeoraejang,* 여래장/如來藏, "the womb of the Thus-Come-One"), or *buddhadhātu* (*bulseong,* 불성/佛性, "buddha-nature").[8] The notion was introduced in India along with the scripture titled *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* (*Yeoraejanggyeong,* 여래장경/如來藏經). The sutra preaches:

> Sons of good family, just as these unsightly, putrid, disgusting and no [longer] pleasing lotuses, supernaturally created by the Tathāgata, and the pleasing and beautiful form of a tathāgata sitting cross-legged in [each of] the calyxes of these lotuses, emitting hundreds of thousands of rays of light, [are such that when they are] recognized by gods and humans, [these latter] then pay homage and also show reverence [to them], in the same way, sons of good family, also the Tathāgata, the Honorable One and Perfectly Awakened One, [perceives] with his insight, knowledge and tathāgata-vision that all the various sentient beings are encased in myriads of defilements, [such as] desire, anger, misguidedness, longing and ignorance.
>
> And, sons of good family, [he] perceives that inside sentient beings encased in defilements sit many tathāgatas, cross-legged and motionless, endowed like myself with a [tathāgata's] knowledge and vision. And [the Tathāgata], having perceived inside those [sentient beings] defiled by all defilements the true nature of a tathāgata (*tathāgatadharmatā*) motionless and unaffected by any of the states of existence, then says: "Those tathāgatas are just like me!"

> Sons of good family, in this way a tathāgata's vision is admirable, [because] with it [he] perceives that all sentient beings contain a tathāgata (*tathāgatagarbha*). (Zimmerman 2002, 102–105)[9]

The verses above clearly state that all sentient beings, despite being stained with a countless number of defilements, share the same innate potential – "unaffected by any of the states of existence" – a fundamental nature that they share with the Buddha. This potential enables them to attain enlightenment. Therefore, harming or killing other creatures that share the potential of becoming a Buddha is considered unacceptable from the perspective of Buddhist doctrine (Finnigan 2017, 9). It also significantly affects our karma, and consequently, our future existence.

The second argument refers to the Buddhist law of dependent origination, *pratītyasamutpāda* (*yeongi,* 연기/緣起), which asserts that all entities arise and exists interdependently. If all entities arise and exists relationally, and they cannot exist without each other, all of them must be seen in equal terms. Therefore, all beings should be respected and treated with the same empathy and compassion. What is crucial here; however, is to understand compassion not simply in terms of providing physical or psychological well-being to others but also in metaphysical terms. By practicing compassionate behavior toward others, people can provide them with an opportunity to be free from the ignorance and suffering of this world, guiding them toward enlightenment (Lim and Lee 2021, 184). The Buddhist ritual of releasing animals (*bangsaengjae,* 방생재/放生齋) and ritual of sending the souls of animals to the otherworld (*dongmul cheondojae,* 동물 천도재/動物薦度齋) serve as good examples of practicing the virtues of compassion and care toward animals on both mundane and metaphysical levels. Furthermore, both rituals also have positive effects on the lives of the Buddhists who practice them.

The first from the previously-mentioned Buddhist ceremonies focuses on releasing captive animals into their natural habitat,[10] which is understood as a means of cultivating compassion toward other living creatures. However, by doing this, practitioners not only providing the animals with better living conditions, but also with the possibility of taking refuge in Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha). It is believed that this, eventually, might help them in attaining enlightenment in the next life (Lim and Lee 2021, 184). Moreover, according to the Buddhist doctrine, the ritual itself also affects the lives of people who participate in it – by showing compassion to other living creatures, the practitioners of the ritual not only perfect themselves but also accumulate good *karma*, which will eventually positively affect their future existence. Also, if the ritual is perceived from the point of view of the notion of the dependent origination of all sentient beings, by bringing back animals to their natural environment, devotees are also improving the ecosystem, and by this by doing so, their own living conditions. In other words, by taking care of others, people also take care of themselves, and gain a chance to improve their own existence, both in this world and the future one.

However, some scholars have already pointed out[11] that today, many Buddhist practitioners struggle with a proper understanding of the true meaning of compassion and, therefore, the genuine meaning and purpose of the ritual of releasing animals. For example, an increasing number of Buddhists nowadays decide to perform the ritual motivated solely by self-interest and a desire to accumulate good deeds in this life. This situation has led to the commercialization of the ritual, and with the constantly growing demand for the animals to be released, many practitioners simply buy animals that were previously caught, specifically for that ceremonial purpose (Shiu and Stokes 2008, 188). Moreover, many of those animals are released thoughtlessly and end up in an environment that is not suitable for them. This might not only lead to their death but also to the destruction of other species and their natural habitat, causing problems in the ecosystem (Jung 2020, 152). In this sense, the practice of the ritual of releasing animals has nothing to do with animal welfare, as well as the practice of the virtue of compassion and care toward non-human animals, as understood in Buddhist terms. This is not the case with other Buddhist ritual of sending off the souls of dead animals to the otherworld.

While the ritual of releasing animals was introduced in Korea during the Three Kingdom Period (57 BCE–668 CE) (Lim and Lee 2021, 181), the Buddhist ritual of sending the souls of animals to the otherworld first appeared in Korea around year 2000[12] as a response of the Buddhist community to the needs of time; precisely the aforementioned changing attitudes of the Korean people toward non-human animals.[13] The ritual quickly gained popularity, which resulted in an increased number of temples that have started to offer *dongmul cheondojae* to anyone wishing to send the soul of their beloved companion to the otherworld. Today, many Korean Buddhist temples still offer rituals for companion animals, as well as conduct rituals for so called "road-kill animals," animal victims of human violence and abuse, and even wild animals and plants that have fallen victims to the modernization and environmental degradation.

One of the main purposes of the Buddhist *cheondojae* is to appease the soul of the deceased person and secure its rebirth in one of the three benevolent realms of existence – the world of gods, demigods, or humans. Therefore, by performing *dongmul cheondojae,* Buddhists can not only fulfill their moral obligation towards their pet companions but also help them achieve a better future life. Moreover, by conducting the ritual, they can practice compassion and care toward all sentient beings and through this practice cultivate and improve ourselves morally. Additionally, conducting a ceremony for the souls of wild animals and plants allows them to raise awareness about the critical need for the protection of the natural environment, which is gradually being degraded by human activities. Lastly, performing the ritual is seen as helping them accumulate good *karma*, which can be advantageous for their own future reincarnations.

Daesoon Thought and Animal Welfare

In the previous section, Buddhists position and doctrinal arguments regarding animal welfare were briefly outlined and some examples of Buddhist ritual practices, which should be regarded as living expression of ethical virtues towards non-human animals, were introduced. In this section, the problem of the ethical obligations of humankind towards animals from the perspective of Daesoon Jinrihoe's system of thought will be examined.

According to the Daesoon Thought, all things in the universe originated from the Supreme God – Sangje (상제/上帝),[14] and therefore are organically interrelated (Joo 2020, 303). In other words, Daesoon Jinrihoe followers perceive the universe as a one whole, constituted of smaller components – different kinds of beings connected through dynamic mutual relations (Kim and Lee 2021, 250). In this context, all sentient beings are not only important parts of one, larger "organism,' but at the same time, all of them have the same right to liberation in accordance with the Daesoon Jinrihoe's principle of the Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence (*haewon sangsaeng,* 해원상생/解冤相生).' This notion is emphasized in chapter two of Acts from *The Canonical Scripture* (*Jeongyeong,* 전경/典經, 2020).

> Sangje, who had been finishing the Holy Work of Great Court Temple (Daewon-sa), changed His clothes and went out of the room. When He stepped outdoors, many varieties of birds and species of animals gathered together quite suddenly in the valley around the temple. They greeted Him as if they were begging Him for something. Sangje looked around the group of birds and animals with interest and said to them: "Do you also wish for the resolution of grievances for the Latter World?" In reply, the animals bowed to Him as if they understood. When Sangje told them, "I see. Now step aside." The multitude of animals followed His order. (*Acts* 2: 15)

This verse clearly indicates that Sangje himself included non-human animals in his plan of creating a new, better world, and accordingly, they had become a subject of the Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence. In other words, all the animals had become a part of the system that is based on correlation and mutual reciprocity between animals and humans. This makes the principle of Mutual Beneficence – *sangsaeng*, similar to the principle of consistent dependency in care ethics. Furthermore, emotions, viewed as the roots of various kinds of relationships, also play an essential role in this principle,[15] as do virtues and practical wisdom.[16] Unfortunately, it is not clear how precisely the *haewon sangsaeng* principle should be applied to animals; how and to what extent humans are obliged to help them, and to what extent do they need or are dependent on such help? What can be taken for granted; however, is that all the misfortune of animals, and consequently, their grudges and grievances, stem from human activities and attempts to subjugate the natural environment over the

centuries. Therefore, since all the grudges and grievances of the animals originate in human's actions, it seems obvious that it is our moral obligation to free them from it (Kim and Lee 2021, 250–251). As Cha Seon-keun (2020, 320) has pointed out, this can be achieved by implementing and practicing the principle of Mutual Beneficence. At the same time, caution should be taken not to provoke or directly cause new grievances, not only toward animals, but also to any other creatures, and even plants which, as aforementioned, are also an inseparable part of the universe.

Daesoon Jinrihoe's doctrine states that the Later World (*hucheon*, 후천/後天),[17] distinguished by harmony and Mutual Beneficence, can be attained through the Resolution of Grievances of all creations, not only humans. In other words, if the attainment of the ideal earthly paradise is desired, this world, or to name it in terms of Daesoon Thought – the Former World (*seoncheon*, 선천/先天), characterized by chaos and conflicts, must undergo a complete transformation. The transformation will become possible only when all Mutual Contention, grudges and grievances of all beings disappear. In this context, only by adopting a caring attitude toward non-human animals and engaging in morally conducted actions that benefit them, such as improving their existence and thereby addressing their grievances and grudges, can the achievement of the Later World be entertained as a hope. Therefore, promoting and fulfilling ethical conduct toward animals, taking care of them on both physical and psychological levels, is not only important from the ecological point of view. From the perspective of Daesoon Jinrihoe's doctrine, it is a necessary means that will also directly benefit the whole humankind in the future.

Conclusion

Among many different approaches in animal welfare debate, the argument based on moral sentiments of compassion, sympathy, and care for animals as both sentient beings and essential element of our ecosystem, as well as human comfort in many areas of life, seems to preside over different ideas. It is in human nature to take care of others, especially those with whom one shares intimate bonds or whose suffering one witnesses. Nevertheless, a truly virtuous and caring person also would not remain indifferent to the misfortune of any other being, including animal. The two examples of religious traditions presented in this article also follow this notion.

Although both Buddhism and Daesoon Jinrihoe recognize the idea of the dominion of humankind over animals, at the same time, both traditions provide their believers with practices through which they can develop morality toward non-human beings. This is crucial from the perspective of the doctrine of both systems because they acknowledge animals as an integral part of the world where humans live. Both traditions follow the notion that the welfare of non-human animals and humankind's attitude towards them may directly affect, both positively and negatively, not only one's present but also one's future life. In this sense, both religious traditions also provide

their followers with a broader concept of a good, happy life that goes beyond the this-worldly concept of *eudaimonia* introduced by the Greeks. Therefore, promoting right moral conduct toward other living creatures should be considered as a necessary measure not only for their benefit but also for the benefit of the whole world and humanity.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1] The term "speciesism' was introduced by the English philosopher Richard Ryder in the 1970s and popularized by Peter Singer. It refers to the practice of treating members of one species, specifically humans, as morally superior to other species. Supporters of speciesism argue that certain attributes, such as moral agency, autonomy, rationality, intelligence, and language use, are unique to humans and justify treating them as morally more important than animals (Duignan 2013).

[2] This statement was later confirmed by scholars of cognitive ethology, who provided empirical evidence for animal cognition and communication (Fröding and Peterson 2011, 63-64).

[3] *Eudaimonia* is one of the key concepts in ancient Greek moral philosophy. It is usually translated as "happiness" or "flourishing," and sometimes as "well-being." In his work *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argued that living in accordance with virtues is necessary for *eudaimonia* (Hursthouse and Pettigrove, 2018).

[4] Even though, Aristotle himself excluded animals from his virtue ethics theory as soulless and inferior to human beings.

[5] Fröding and Peterson (2011, 50, 67) suggest that there is a morally significant distinction to be drawn between animals who are our friends and those who are not. From the point of view of Aristotle's ethical theory, friendship is based on three main virtuous qualities – excellence, pleasantness, and usefulness, which translate into three types of friendships: friendship based on mutual admiration, the one based on mutual pleasure, and friendship based on mutual advantage. When we befriend an animal, we have moral obligations toward them that arise from our friendship, because we admire, take pleasure, or benefit from each other's company. However, we do not usually develop this kind of obligation toward animals that we do not consider as friends.

[6] The first Korean Animal Protection Society was established in 1991 (Veldkamp 2008, 165).

[7] Among the different causes of this situation, Kim points out socio-cultural changes, such as Korea's rapid economic growth, the emergence of single-person households, aging of society, and a low birth rate. In addition, he believes that the era of personification of pet animals starts when the country's per capita national income exceeds 30,000 USD, and Korea already reached that number in 2018 (Kim 2020, 660).

[8] The second term, buddhadhātu, appears to be prevalent in Korean and other East Asian Buddhist traditions.

[9] For the full English translation of *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, see Zimmerman 2002, 94-161.

[10] The exact origin of the ritual is not clear. The earliest description of the ceremony can be found in the Daoist text *Liezi*. This suggest that since the arrival of Buddhism in China, the cultural practice of animal release, which resonates well with the notions of compassion and nonviolence, has been given a

Buddhist meaning. Subsequently, Chinese Buddhists produced apocryphal texts to justify such a practice as their own (Shiu and Stokes 2008, 182-184).

[11] See Lim and Lee (2021), Shiu and Stokes (2008), and Jung (2020).

[12] Located in Gangwon Province, Hyundeok Temple (현덕사/賢德寺) was among the Korean Buddhist temples that initiated the tradition of dongmul cheondojae. The ritual has been taking place there every year since 2002 (Hyundeok Temple Site).

[13] The author of the article was able to confirm this statement through an interview with a monk at Yaksu Temple (약수사/藥水寺), located in Gwanak District in Seoul. The interview was conducted on October 1, 2021. During the interview, the monk was asked about the reasons behind the emergence of *dongmul cheondojae*. He linked his answer to recent demographical changes in Korean society and the increasing number of Koreans who own pets, stating, "In the past, Koreans didn't think of animals as a part of their families, but now they do. For them, they are part of their family, like any other member."

[14] Sangje not only presides over all beings but also possessed the power to transform the universe according to his will. As Cha Seon-keun (2020, 305-306) has pointed out, The Supreme God Kang Jeungsan (상제 강증산/上帝 姜甑山, 1871–1909), has already designed the transformation of the universe through the act of Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth (*cheonji gongsa*, 천지공사/天地公事), which has been later continued by his successors Doju Jo Jeongsan (도주 조정산/道主 趙鼎山, 1895–1958) and Dojeon Park Wudang (도전 박우당/都典 朴牛堂, 1917–1996). Based on that, Daesoon Jinirihoe's practitioners believe that only the Supreme God Kang and his successors possessed the ability to change the nature, and human beings should conform to this rule.

[15] Lee Gyung-won (1998, 549) has described the concept of *sangsaeng* as a state of peaceful coexistence founded on understanding, enriched with all the fundamental emotions typical of a relationship, such as missing and cherishing each other.

[16] As Joo So-yeon and Ko Nam-sik (2023) have demonstrated, virtues are essential traits for achieving the resolution of grievances for mutual beneficence. Therefore, we should consistently practice and cultivate them. However, in doing so, we cannot solely rely on our feelings. We must understand the underlying reasons behind the grievances and grudges of others. To achieve this understanding, something that Aristotle would refer to as practical wisdom is required.

[17] The phrase 'later world' refers to a future ideal world. This idea is present not only in Daesoon thought but in numerous new religious movements that originated in Korea.

References

Animal Ethics 2023 — "Virtue Ethics and Care Ethics." Animal Ethics, accssed on 3 August 2023. https://www.animal-ethics.org/virtue-ethics-care-ethics/.

Cha, Seon-keun 2020 — "An Introduction to the Study of the Ecological Theory of Daesoon Jinrihoe: Sangsaeng Ecological Theory." *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 35 295–330.[Korean Language Text]. 차선근, 「대순진리회 생태론 연구서설: 상생생태론」,『대순사상논총』 35. https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.2020.35.0.295

Demiéville, Paul 1965 — "Momies d'Extrême-Orient." *Journal des Savants*: 144–170.

Daesoon Institute for Religion and Culture (DIRC) 2020 — *The Canonical Scripture*. Yeoju: Daesoon Jinrihoe Press.http://dict.dirc.kr/app/e/1/page

Dimmock, Mark and Andrew Fisher 2017 — *Ethics for a-Levell: For AQA Philosophy and OCR Religious Studies*. Open Book Publishing. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1wc7r6j

Duignan, Brian 2013 — "Speciesism." *Encyclopedia Britannica,* accssed on 26 January 2024. https://www.britannica.com/topic/speciesism

Engster, Daniel 2006 — "Care Ethics and Animal Welfare." *Journal of social philosophy* 37(4): 521–536. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2006.00355.x

Finnigan, Bronwyn 2017 — "Buddhism and Animal Ethics." *Philosophy Compass* 12(7): e12424. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12424

Frööding, Barbro and Martin Peterson 2011 — "Animal Ethics Based on Friendship." *Journal of Animal Ethics* 1(1): 58–69. https://doi.org/10.5406/janimalethics.1.1.0058

Hursthouse Rosalind — "Virtue Ethics." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of*

and Glen Pettigrove 2018 *Philosophy,* edited by Edward N. Zalta. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/ethics-virtue/

Hyundeok Temple Site 2024 "History of Hyundeok Temple." accssed on 28 January 2024. http://www.hyundeoksa.or.kr/html/dzDocument/00001 00002.html.

Joo, So-yeon and Nam-sik Ko 2023 "A Study on Moral Systems of Aristotle and Kang Jeungsan: Focusing on the Nature of Virtue and Teleological Characteristics." *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 46: 189-234. [Korean Language Text] 주소연, 고남식, 「아리스토텔레스와 강증산(姜甑山) 성사(聖師)의 덕(德)이론 고찰: 덕의 속성 및 목적성과 관련하여」, 『대순사상논총』 46. https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.2023.46.0.189

Jung, Kiok 2020 "Right Understanding on 'Releasing Living Creatures' in Buddhism." *Won-Buddhist Thought and Religious Culture* 86: 147–175. [Korean Language Text] 정기옥, 「불교 방생의 올바른 이해」, 『원불교사상과 종교문화』 86.

Kim, Jin-young and Young-jun Lee 2021 "Animal Welfare from the Perspective of the Grievance-Resolution of Animals." *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Sciences* 37 229–262. [Korean Language Text] 김진영, 이영준, 「동물해원 관점에서의 동물복지」, 『대순사상논총』 37. https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.2021.37.0.229

Kim, Seok-Eun 2020 "A Study on the Effects of Companion Animals on Humans: Based on the Tale of a Righteous Dog in Hongseong)." *The Journal of the Korea Contents Association* 20(12): 659–670. [Korean Language Text] 김석은, 「반려동물이 인간에 미치는 영향에 관한 연구: 홍성 의견(義犬) 설화를 중심으로」, 『한국콘텐츠학회논문지』 20(12). https://doi.org/10.5392/JKCA.2020.20.12.659

Lee, Gyung-won 1998 "The Meaning of Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence and Reordering Work of Heaven and Earth." *The Journal of Daesoon Academy of Science* 4:541–568.

[Korean Language Text] 이경원, 「해원상생의 의미와 천지공사」, 『대순사상논총』 4. https://doi.org/10.25050/jdaos.1998.4.0.15

Lim, Sang-mok and Sukhwan Lee 2021 "The Modern Significance of Releasing Captive Animals: Mainly Focused on Hanmaum Thought." *Dongseocheolhagyeongu* 100: 177–203. [Korean Language Text] 임상목, 이석환, 「방생의 현대적 의미 —한마음사상을 중심으로」, 『동서철학연구』 100. https://doi.org/10.15841/kspew..100.202106.177

Regan, Tom 1985 *The Case for Animal Rights*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shiu, Henry and Leah Stokes 2008 "Buddhist Animal Release Practices: Historic, Environmental, Public Health and Economic Concerns." *Contemporary Buddhism* 9(2): 181–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/14639940802556529

Singer, Peter 1975 *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals*. New York, NY: Random House.

Slote, Michael 2013 "On Virtue Ethics." *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 8(1): 22–30. https://doi.org/10.3868/s030-002-013-0003-6

Veldkamp, Elmer 2008 "Commemoration of Dead Animals in Contemporary Korea: Emergence and Development of Dongmul Wiryeongje as Modern Folklore." *The Review of Korean Studies* 11(3): 149–169. https://doi.org/10.25024/review.2008.11.3.007

Wrage, Birte 2022 "Caring Animals and Care Ethics." *Biology & Philosophy* 37(3). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10539-022-09857-y

Zimmermann, Michael 2002 *A Buddha Within: The Tathāgatagarbhasūtra; the Earliest Exposition of the Buddha-Nature Teaching in India*. Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University.

Messianism in Civilizational History: The Transformation of the Buddhist Messiah via Maitreya

DINH Hong Hai

Dinh Hong Hai earned two bachelor's degrees; one from Hanoi University of Industrial Fine Arts in 1996 and the other from Vietnam National University Hanoi in 1998. After being educated in the M.Phil program at the University of Delhi (India) in 2006, Hai attended Harvard University from 2008 to 2010 and then defended his Ph.D. dissertation at the Graduate School of Social Sciences, VASS, in 2011. He now serves as a faculty member at Vietnam National University-Hanoi City, and deputy general secretary of the Asian Semiotics International Association (ASIA)

JDTREA 2024,3(2): 71–92

Original Articles

Correspondence to

Dinh Hong Hai

National Univesity-Hanoi City, Vietnam

haidinh@vnu.edu.vn

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8007-5306

OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia Vol. 3. Issue 2 (March 2024): 71–92
© 2024 by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Daejin University, Korea

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.71

Day of submission: 2024.01.25.
Completion of review: 2024.02.10.
Final decision for acceptance: 2024.03.20.

P-ISSN: 2799-3949
E-ISSN: 2799-4252

Abstract

The world we live in is becoming more convenient thanks to the inventions of science and technology. Still, the world is also becoming more and more unpredictable with the current situation of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity). The Covid-19 pandemic brought the biggest global disaster ever with 774,631,444 infected people and 7,031,216 deaths (WHO on February 11, 2024) but it seems that humanity is gradually forgetting this disaster. Meanwhile the economic stimulus packages worth trillions of dollars from governments after the pandemic have further caused the world debt bubble to swell. The bubble burst scenario is something that many economic experts fear.

Apparently, in the transitional period of the early decades of the 21st century, the world's economic, cultural, political, social, natural, and environmental aspects have undergone profound transformations: from the real estate and finance crises in the United States since 2008; through the melting of the Arctic ice over the past several decades; to the double disaster of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011. Especially, in the context of the world economic crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic, the human achievements of the past thousands of years are in jeopardy of being wiped out in an instant. Many people are predicting a bad scenario for a chain collapse.

Facing the signals of an imminent economic catastrophe based on the appearance of "the Gray Rhino, Black Swan and White Elephant," many drawn in by Eschatological thought declare that Doomsday will occur shortly. This is the time for many other people to hope for the incoming Messiah. The Messiah is said to appear when people feel despair or suffer a great disaster because faith in the Savior can help them overcome adversity mentally. This research will find out how adherents of Buddhism view and deal with civilizational crises by examining history via symbols associated with Maitreya as based upon the Buddhist Messiah, Maitreya.

Keywords: Messianism; Buddhist Messiah; Maitreya symbol; civilizational history

Introduction

The original English meaning of the word Saviour/Savior is derived from the Latin for "a person who rescues or saves somebody/something from danger, failure, loss, etc." (Crowther 1995, 1044). However, the term Messiah is used more often these days due to Christianity's modified use of the Jewish concept, which is explained in a subsequent section. According to the majority of dictionaries and encyclopedias, a Messiah is a person who saves the world from pain or a "person who is expected to come and save the world" (Crowther 1995, 733). In reality, each religion and culture will differ based on their respective concepts and traditions. In almost Asian cultures in general and Buddhist cultures in particular, the Savior does not exist continually in the same way that the Messiah does in the existing Western society. Instead, the Savior is sometimes invisible, strong, or weak, depending on the economic, cultural, political, and social environment of the time and location.

Understanding the beliefs surrounding Maitreya, the Buddhist Messiah, in Asian cultures can provide insight into the cultural, social, economic, and political developments of various countries throughout history. This article takes a new approach by connecting the changes in beliefs surrounding Maitreya to the cultural marks established on the Silk Road during the medieval period and their appearance as symbols in the 21st century. It is an interdisciplinary approach that draws from fields such as history and anthropology to gain a deeper understanding of Maitreya's significance as a research object, specifically in his role as a Buddhist Messiah. This new perspective sheds light on the various aspects of Maitreya's influence in contemporary social political and economic life.

Messianism in Non-Buddhist Religions

A belief similar to that of the Messiah likely existed in the social lives of ancient humans. When confronted with the might of nature and its limited powers, humankind requires (at least psychologically) the assistance of supernatural forces. Moreover, the physical and mental agony that people experience is persistent and seemingly eternal. Consequently, only a Savior can bring a stop to their misery. In addition, the concept of eschatology and the end times in several of the world's major faiths has contributed to the building of the conviction that a brighter, happier millennium (as portrayed in the *Biblical Book of Revelation*) will usher in the end of the current, suffering-filled world. Possibly this is why the desire for a millennium devoid of suffering and grief has always been so strong. The more difficult life becomes, the more the desire for the Messiah to arrive and to eradicate evil and provide happiness and prosperity to all grows. Because of this, the Messiah in each religion or culture is vastly different, from the name to the moment of birth, from the background to the manner of the "Savior of the world," even though they all share the same name: the Messiah. First, we need to

know the differentiation of the Messiah in different religions.

—***The Messiah in Zoroastrianism***. The earliest text on Messianic beliefs is written in Avestan (an ancient language of the present-day nation of Iran) which refers to the Messiah in Zoroastrianism from approximately 1000 BCE. The concept of the Messiah holds a central place in Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest religions. Rooted in ancient Persian texts, the notion of the Messiah, known as Saoshyant in the Avesta, embodies the promise of a savior figure who will bring about the final renovation of the world (Lotha 2011). Within Zoroastrianism, Saoshyant is envisioned as a divine being who will lead humanity to a state of everlasting righteousness and perfection, heralding the triumph of good over evil. This belief in the coming of the Saoshyant has profoundly influenced subsequent religious traditions, including Buddhism. In particular, it finds resonance in the Buddhist concept of Maitreya, the future Buddha expected to appear on Earth in a time of darkness and strife to usher in an era of peace and enlightenment. The parallels between the Zoroastrian Saoshyant and the Buddhist Maitreya highlight the interconnectedness of religious ideas across cultures and epochs, underscoring humanity's enduring quest for salvation and spiritual renewal (Scott 1990).

—***The Messiah in Hinduism.*** India boasts a rich tapestry of religions, making the identification of a singular messianic figure amidst its diverse pantheon a daunting task. With a civilization spanning over five millennia, India's religious landscape is as varied as it is ancient. Among the plethora of deities worshipped across the subcontinent, scholars have endeavored to uncover traces of a messianic archetype within the vast expanse of Indian mythology and tradition. One prominent figure or perhaps concept that emerges from the labyrinthine depths of Indian religious texts is the "Chakravartin," a term derived from ancient Sanskrit and translated into Chinese as the dharma-wheel-turning king or the dharma-wheel-turning sagacious king (轉輪王 zhuǎnlúnwáng or 轉輪聖王 zhuǎnlún shèngwáng). While navigating through the labyrinth of Indian religious lore, researchers have pointed to the Cakravartin as a potential manifestation of the messianic ideal (Rosenfield 1967).

In Indian tradition, the Chakravartin is often intertwined with the cosmic order, associated with Vishnu, one of the principal deities in Hinduism. Vishnu, revered as the preserver of the universe, is depicted as the embodiment of divine wisdom and righteousness. Within the Vishnu Purana, an ancient Hindu scripture, The avatar of Vishnu named Kalki assumes the role of the Messiah, tasked with the restoration of order and the establishment of righteousness during pivotal epochs known as "yugas," including the Millennium alluded to previously. He is described to appear in order to end the Kali Yuga, one of the four periods in the endless cycle of existence (Krita) in Vaishnava cosmology (Brockington 1998). Chakravartin refers to a universal ruler, often considered a righteous king who rules over the entire world or a vast empire that brings about a period of peace, prosperity, and moral order. As such, the identification of the Chakravartin as the Indian counterpart to the messianic archetype underscores

the profound spiritual resonance embedded within India's multifaceted religious traditions. Despite the complexities and controversies surrounding this identification, the enduring allure of the Chakravartin persists as a testament to India's enduring cultural and religious legacy. The concept of Chakravartin is the most influential notion in the establishment of the Buddhist Messiah.

—The Messiah in Judaism. The concept of the Messiah holds profound significance within Judaism, a faith tradition that, despite its relatively small size with approximately 10 million adherents, has exerted a monumental influence on global civilization, particularly shaping the development of Christianity. The prominence of Judaism in that historical and cultural landscape has resulted in the frequent usage of the term "Messiah" in English, surpassing the usage of "Savior," underscoring the enduring legacy of Jewish religious thought. Within the Hebrew Bible, the Messiah is depicted not only as the spiritual leader of Israel but also as a priestly and kingly figure. This multifaceted portrayal is evident in passages such as *Exodus* 30:22–25, where the Messiah's role encompasses both priestly and royal duties. Anointing, a ritual act symbolizing divine consecration and empowerment, plays a central role in the investiture of the Messiah (or Moshiach in Hebrew, means God's anointed one). This is "a person expected to come and save the world" (Crowther 1995, 733)

Historically, the prophet Samuel is recorded as having anointed King Saul, signifying his consecration as the chosen ruler of Israel. Subsequently, during the illustrious reign of King David, the anticipation of a future Messiah who would deliver Israel from adversity and establish universal peace became deeply ingrained within Jewish eschatological expectations. This messianic hope, rooted in the prophetic vision of a redeemed and perfected world under the benevolent rule of the Messiah, continues to resonate within Jewish theology and collective consciousness. The Messiah is envisioned as the ultimate redeemer, tasked with restoring the glory of Israel and ushering in an era of justice, righteousness, and spiritual renewal for all humanity. The enduring belief in the coming of the Messiah serves as a testament to the enduring faith and resilience of the Jewish people throughout the centuries that the term Messiah became a common word in modern-day language in many cultures and religions.

—The Messiah in Islam. The concept of the Messiah holds a significant place within Islam, where the awaited savior is known as al-Mahdi. This figure, also referred to as Muhammad al-Mahdi or simply Mahdi, is central to Islamic eschatology and is believed to play a pivotal role in the redemption and renewal of the Muslim world. According to Islamic tradition, al-Mahdi is associated with the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad and is considered the twelfth Imam in the Twelver Shia branch of Islam. The Twelver Imam Doctrine maintains that al-Mahdi, whose full name is Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi, was born on July 29, 869. He is believed to be the final and ultimate savior of humanity, destined to emerge at the end of times to bring about justice and righteousness.

One of the distinctive aspects of the belief in al-Mahdi is the concept of his

occultation or concealment. According to Shia tradition, al-Mahdi entered a state of occultation, or hiding, in the late 9th century, and he is believed to be currently in hiding, awaiting the appointed time determined by Allah for his reappearance. This period of occultation is seen as a test of faith for believers, who anticipate his eventual return to establish justice and equity on Earth. Islamic eschatological narratives envision al-Mahdi and Isa (Jesus in Islamic tradition) as pivotal figures who will collaborate in ushering in a golden age of peace, prosperity, and harmony. It is believed that al-Mahdi will lead the Muslim community to victory over oppression and tyranny, and together with Isa, he will establish a reign of justice and righteousness (Amini 1999). The belief in al-Mahdi serves as a source of hope and inspiration for Muslims worldwide, emphasizing the ultimate triumph of good over evil and the fulfillment of divine promises. The anticipation of al-Mahdi's advent underscores the enduring faith of Muslims in the ultimate victory of truth and justice, reinforcing their commitment to upholding moral values and righteousness in anticipation of his arrival (Zeidan 2019).

—***The Messiah in Christianity.*** Within Christianity, the belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah holds central importance. Christians consider Jesus to be not only the founder of their religion but also the long-awaited Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures, known as the Old Testament in Christianity. According to Christian theology, Jesus fulfilled numerous Messianic prophecies found in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as being born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), being of the lineage of King David (2 Samuel 7:12–13), and being born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection are seen as the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation for humanity. As the Messiah, Jesus is believed to have come to Earth to reconcile humanity with God, to offer forgiveness of sins, and to bring about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Christians view Jesus as the ultimate expression of God's love and grace, and through his sacrificial death and resurrection, believers are offered the gift of eternal life and salvation.

The belief in Jesus as the Messiah is fundamental to Christian faith and practice, shaping the Christian understanding of salvation, redemption, and the nature of God. Christians affirm Jesus' identity as both fully human and fully divine, emphasizing his role as the unique mediator between God and humanity. Throughout Christian history, the figure of Jesus as the Messiah has been a central focus of worship, devotion, and theological reflection. The Christian faith is founded upon the belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah who brings hope, salvation, and reconciliation to all who believe in him. Jesus was given the title "Messiah" because he was believed to be the man sent to earth by the Father to rescue humanity from sin and suffering (thus, Jesus is also referred to as the Son). According to the Christian Bible, Jesus Christ is both a human teacher and the Son of God. By means of incarnation, this divinity coexists with time and history.[1]

Through the preceding examples, it is clear that the Messiah is a shared belief among numerous religions and cultures, but that conceptions of the Messiah vary greatly from

one place to the next. Referring to this theme, Kitagawa remarked: "Clearly, the concept of a better future than the present has led to successful accomplishments. Well-executed work at the end of the world that is not only based on intuition but also speculations and assertions. Most of these speculations and assertions are frequently associated with a religious illusion of a sovereign, a king of the universe, or an ultimate savior, which can be found in many long-established Eastern and Western religions" (Sponberg and Hardacre 1988, 8). Consequently, it can be seen that the prevalent belief in religions and cultures today is the faith in the Messiah, and the Buddhist Messiah, Maitreya, is the most influential messianic symbol in Asia.

The Buddhist Messiah Maitreya in Civilizational History

The concept of Maitreya, often referred to as the "Future Buddha," occupies a significant place in Buddhist tradition and civilizational history. Foretold in Buddhist scriptures, Maitreya is believed to be a bodhisattva who will eventually attain enlightenment and become the next Buddha, succeeding Gautama Buddha. Throughout Buddhist literature, Maitreya is depicted as a compassionate and wise figure who will appear in the distant future to teach the Dharma, the path to enlightenment. The belief in Maitreya has been influential across various Buddhist traditions, serving as a source of hope and inspiration for practitioners as they strive towards spiritual awakening. The anticipation of Maitreya's arrival has had profound implications for Buddhist thought and practice, shaping the development of Buddhist communities and institutions. In times of social and political upheaval, the belief in Maitreya has provided solace and encouragement, reminding believers of the ultimate goal of liberation from suffering.

The concept of Maitreya has also played a role in broader civilizational history, influencing art, literature, and cultural expressions across Buddhist societies. Depictions of Maitreya can be found in Buddhist art and iconography, symbolizing the aspiration for a future of peace, harmony, and enlightenment. Furthermore, the idea of Maitreya as a universal savior figure has resonated beyond the boundaries of Buddhist communities, inspiring dialogue and exchange with other religious traditions. In some instances, parallels have been drawn between Maitreya and messianic figures in other faiths, highlighting shared themes of redemption and spiritual renewal. Overall, the concept of Maitreya in Buddhist civilizational history serves as a testament to the enduring appeal of the bodhisattva ideal and the universal quest for enlightenment and liberation from suffering. Whether as a symbol of hope for future generations or as a catalyst for social and spiritual transformation, Maitreya continues to inspire believers around the world, embodying the timeless values of compassion, wisdom, and altruism central to the Buddhist path.

In many religions, a single Messiah is known for saving people and the world at the end of the current age. However, in Buddhism, the Messiah has multiple manifestations,

including the Buddha and the Bodhisattva. The Maitreya Buddha holds the third position among the Three Worlds Buddhas (past, present, future), and is referred to as the Future Buddha. Currently residing in Tushita heaven, Maitreya in his Bodhisattva incarnation will be reborn in the distant future. By comparing the concept of the Messiah in other religions, we gain a better understanding of Maitreya's expected role in the future and how it differs from that of other Saviors. This also helps us appreciate the unique aspects of Buddhist belief in Maitreya and the unexpected variations in the Buddhist conception of the Buddhist Messiah.

According to the *Five Great Treatises* of the Yogacara of Mahayana Buddhism written by Asanga, Maitreya is the Bodhisattva who descended to earth and passed on the teachings to Asanga in order for him to compose the above sutras. Asanga was said to "receive teachings from Maitreya Bodhisattva on emptiness, and how he continued to travel to receive teachings from Maitreya on the Mahayana sutras" (Rahula 2015, xiv). As for the recorded teachings of Maitreya Buddha by Asanga, there is little evidence to indicate that he is the incarnation of a "flesh and blood" savior like Jesus in Western Christianity or manifestations of messianic figures in the other religious. The texts claiming the birth of Maitreya Buddha, meantime, are extremely ambiguous, mysterious, and difficult to identify. However, among the authors of these treatises were two notable great commentators, an Indian and a Chinese, named Asanga and Xuanzang, who particularly addressed Maitreya in their works.

These are the most intriguing documented shreds of evidence of Maitreya Buddha's birth and existence, as well as Maitreya's beliefs. Notably, these significant treatises attributed to Asanga were written under the pseudonym Maitreyanatha. According to Asanga, it was because he received those teachings directly from Maitreya Buddha. However, Asanga describes Maitreya Buddha's identity in these sutras in a rather obscure manner (Kim 1997, 28). Hence, the period in which Asanga penned the aforementioned Great Treatises might be considered a defining moment for the textualization of Maitreya's image and Maitreya doctrines.

At this juncture, the following issue must be posed: Did Maitreya order Asanga to produce the above-mentioned texts, or was Asanga himself the author of the sutras written under the pseudonym Maitreyanatha? This is the key that will allow us to establish who Maitreya is adjacent to the rather hazy and nebulous signs of the Future Buddha. However, other than folklore and mythical tales, no one has discovered any actual evidence of a person named Maitreya.[2] This demonstrates that the Savior Maitreya is, first and foremost, a religious figure developed by Buddhists to "save" their own spiritual lives. Therefore, it can be argued that the manifestation of messianic symbols in sociocultural life depends on the society itself and the culture from which it is derived. How are the symbols associated with the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya depicted in Buddhist societies? How do these modifications occur? The article will now explore answers to these questions commencing with the transformation of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya as a symbol in the Medieval period below.

Transformation of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya as a Symbol in the Medieval Period

During the Medieval period, the symbols and representations associated with the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya underwent significant transformation, reflecting changes in religious, cultural, and artistic expressions across Buddhist societies. Several key factors contributed to these transformations, including the spread of Buddhism to new regions, interactions with other religious traditions, and evolving political and social contexts. In the medieval period, Maitreya's iconography evolved, with new symbols and representations emerging in Buddhist art and sculpture. While earlier depictions often portrayed Maitreya in a traditional seated posture, later representations began to incorporate regional artistic styles and cultural influences. As Buddhism spread to new regions, particularly East Asia, Maitreya's symbols and imagery assimilated with local cultural traditions. In China and Japan, for example, Maitreya became associated with concepts of benevolence and good fortune, leading to the incorporation of symbols such as the laughing Buddha or "Budai" into Maitreya's iconography. These cultural adaptations reflected the syncretic nature of Buddhism as it encountered diverse cultural contexts.

In some Buddhist traditions, particularly during periods of social and political upheaval, there was a heightened emphasis on eschatological expectations associated with Maitreya's arrival. Artistic representations and religious texts from this period often depicted Maitreya as a messianic figure who would bring about a golden age of peace and prosperity (Kitagawa 1981, 108–10). These depictions served to inspire hope and resilience among believers amidst challenging circumstances. The medieval period witnessed the emergence of new ritual practices and devotional expressions centered around Maitreya. Pilgrimages to sacred sites associated with Maitreya's future advent became increasingly popular, and devotees engaged in acts of worship and supplication in anticipation of his arrival. These practices contributed to the proliferation of symbols related to Maitreya and imagery within Buddhist communities that will be mentioned below.

As Buddhism interacted with other religious traditions, such as Hinduism and Daoism, Maitreya-symbols and attributes were sometimes assimilated or adapted into the religious iconography of these traditions. One of the clearest appearances is the Laughing Buddha in the Sinosphere. "Apart from some local factors originating in Northeast Asian legends regarding those gods, some of the main characteristics revealed are aspiration to have a full stomach, happiness, wealth, and longevity. The aspiration is made concrete by the images of a fat old man with a look of satisfaction on his face" (Dinh 2013, 168). This interreligious dialogue led to the exchange of ideas and the enrichment of symbolism associated with Maitreya through cross-cultural influences. In general, the transformation of Maitreya-symbols in the medieval period reflects the dynamic nature of Buddhist religious expression and the adaptation of

religious beliefs and practices to changing historical and cultural contexts. Through these transformations, these symbols continued to inspire devotion, offer solace, and convey spiritual aspirations to believers across diverse Buddhist societies. For example, this symbol is shown in Thangka paintings by Tibetans, in craft and souvenir stores in Nepal and Bhutan, in Buddhist halls in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, and in Buddhist households throughout Asia. Specifically, this kind of symbol also takes the shape of the Colossal Buddha on the Silk Road in Central Asia (Dinh 2010, 56).

Thus, this research, which disregards the stories surrounding Maitreya Buddha, examines the socially significant components of the Maitreya-symbol from an overlapping approach derived from history and anthropology. Consequently, it investigates the economic, cultural, and political elements that have impacted the lives of individuals in Buddhist countries, particularly believers of Maitreya as a Messiah, based on apparent symbols as well as invisible but ubiquitous phenomena in these communities. The manifestations of the messianic Maitreya in Medieval Times document an era of peak development of this type of belief in the Asian cultural realm, particularly the Buddhist civilizations that existed and prospered under the impact of the Silk Road's dissemination of Buddhism with artifacts from that time period that are still in existence today.

The Maitreya-symbol first formed in India's Early Buddhism with iconography of Maitreya Buddha at Buddhist relics in Ajanta, Elora, Gandhara, Mathura, and Sanchi before it expanded throughout medieval Asian civilizations. Small-sized icons, reliefs, and murals representing everyday life in society were the most typical depictions of Maitreya at that point in time. The small size of these symbols hints at the ambiguity surrounding this Buddhist Messiah's role in Early Buddhist India. These Maitreya-symbols, for instance, are commonly referred to as "attendants" of Buddha Shakyamuni and are often smaller in size than Shakyamuni when Maitreya is depicted as a member of the Buddha's retinue. In Theravada Buddhism, Ajita, the crown prince, plays a minor but significant role alongside Shakyamuni Buddha in the preservation of this early vestige of the Maitreya. However, Maitreya's function and status as a Messiah were clearly defined after the three main branches of Buddhism (Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana) were divided approximately two millennia ago. Accordingly, the belief in the Messiah Maitreya plays an incredibly crucial role in Mahayana Buddhism. This is attested to in part by the mega icons of Maitreya that flourished in the civilizations that developed along the Silk Road.[3] "Through cultural transmission which occurred from the East to the West and vice versa, this route played an extremely crucial part during the ancient and medieval time, particularly during the period of flourishing of Mahayana Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhist Art" (Dinh 2013, 52).

The most significant phase of mega icons of Maitreya along the Silk Road growth occurred between the 1st century BCE and the end of the first millennium due to the rapid growth of Mahayana Buddhism and the necessity for international commerce during this time, the Silk Road became a very successful evangelistic instrument. This

trade network linked India's civilizational centers with those of Central Asia, traversing the Himalayas and the Taklimakan Desert to reach the Chinese mainland. During this period, several Buddhist centers such as Bamiyan (Afghanistan), Khotan, Kurcha, Tufan, Dunhuang, Pengcheng, Luoyang, and Longmen emerged along the Silk Road (now in China). Nonetheless, Bamiyan, Dunhuang, Yungang, and Longmen are the only surviving Buddhist centers from this time. These are significant remnants of the early propagation of Mahayana Buddhism. Considering the Buddhist centers that arose along the Silk Road, a "hierarchy" of symbols can be seen which was a crucial aspect of Buddhist art that grew in this direction. The foundation of this hierarchy is a clearly stratified society. Accordingly, significant icons like Shakyamuni are sometimes shown as robed Greek rulers, while bodhisattvas are frequently portrayed as images of Asian princes. Specifically, Maitreya is expressed in both buddha and bodhisattva forms, allowing him to be viewed both as an emperor and a prince (Dinh 2010, 173).

Upon the establishment of Mahayana Buddhism, the Maitreya symbol rapidly spread over the whole Asian continent to the Himalayas, Central Asia, China, the Korean peninsula, Japan, and Vietnam. In the Himalayas, Maitreya is known as *Byamspa* in Tibetan, *Mile* in Chinese, *Mireuk* in Korean, and *Miroku* in Japanese. When Buddhism was freshly internationalized in Asia, Shakyamuni Buddha was still at the core, thus Maitreya-symbols were enshrined or placed in such a manner which made it clear that they were not meant to compete with symbols of Shakyamuni Buddha in Buddha halls. Maitreya is held to be a Bodhisattva who dwells in the Tusita heaven and will be born into the human world in the far future. After the era of Shakyamuni Buddha ends, it will be the time of Maitreya Buddha's birth to rescue sentient beings. Therefore, Maitreya Bodhisattva in the current time is set to be the Buddha in his forthcoming life (Ritzinger 2017, 13). This specific incarnation of the Maitreya-symbol is the basis of innumerable stories and myths about Maitreya and its various expressions in Mahayana Buddhism have led to the production of many symbols of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya.

Depictions of Maitreya during this era are often show him as being seated on a throne with straight legs (the position of an emperor), with the legs sometimes crossed or standing (Figures 3, 4, 11, and 12). Far fewer paintings and sculptures have him appear as a seated figure in a meditative posture (which is characteristic of icons of Shakyamuni Buddha). Maitreya's hands in these images often are held in the Dharmachakra gesture, which is associated with the Chakravartin, "Wheel-Turning Sacred King." Nonetheless, several more Buddhist symbols bearing the Dharmachakra mudra (gesture) are also visible. Maitreya Buddha's high bun adorned with ribbons and ornate beads signifies his function as crown prince (who would ascend the throne) and sets him apart from the great majority of other sculptures of this time. In addition, there are other ornamental components such as capes, arrows, crowns, and bracelets. These expressions demonstrate unequivocally that Greek art had a significant impact on Indian Buddhist art; starting with Gandhara which expanded over the Himalayas

and Central Asia. In Central Asian areas along the Silk Road, the Maitreya symbol gradually changed form, particularly in the size of icons, while retaining the basic features that were shaped in ancient Indian art from the center of Gandhara, such as the mega icons of Maitreya in Bamiyan, Dunhuang, Longmen, and Yungang (Figures 9 and 12).

The creation of the mega icons of Maitreya along the Silk Road throughout the Medieval period is intimately connected to the development of the Buddhist Messiah. Theoretically, this is a concrete manifestation of Messianic beliefs that have their origin in Hinduism (via the Chakravartin concept). This idea merges Buddhist teachings with Zoroastrian mythology to produce a Buddhist Messiah. In other words, the Chakravartin symbol of Hinduism has "joined" Buddhism in order to evolve into a new sign: Buddha Shakyamuni's future "successor." Perhaps it is for this reason that Maitreya's early appearances often resemble a crown prince. In reality, this shift assisted not only the missionaries in establishing the Buddhist Messiah but it also enabled the Indian "domestic savior" to expand into the non-Hindu global community.

After its development in Silk Roads, Maitreya-centered messiah beliefs were transmitted to China. The symbol of Maitreya was progressively converted into a new emblem with Chinese characteristics: Venerable Budai (also known as the cloth-bag monk, *Budai Heshang,* 布袋和尚) (Leighton 1998). Therein, the Maitreya emblem evolved into a new form of expression with a seated posture, a large physique, potbelly, and broad grin (Figures: 5,6,7,8,14). Venerable Budai is the picture of the cloth-bag monk, who traveled frequently with a cane and large canvas bag. Budai was said to have had an odd temperament. He used to beg for alms, place the items he received in a cloth bag, and then distribute them to others while eating and drinking like an ordinary person. Budai veneration gained prominence in the Southern Song Dynasty likely originating at Lingyin Pagoda in Hangzhou, where the earliest icon of Budai was found (1127–1279).

Venerable Budai (commonly known as the Fat Buddha or the Laughing Buddha) has no connection to the Maitreya symbol in India, the Himalayas, or Central Asia from the standpoint of visual arts (while the symbol of Shakyamuni Buddha retains many of the basic features of the Indian archetype). This demonstrates that the Maitreya symbol underwent a "cultural secession" after it was introduced to the central region of Chinese civilization. This sign not only diverged from its precursors in Indian culture to become the fat, smiling buddha as seen in Lingyin Pagoda[4] but also evolved into countless more forms of folk expression with several new uses. This new style of expression established not merely a new form of Maitreya, but also a new type of belief that extended beyond the boundaries of Buddhism.[5]

During the Medieval period, Buddhism spread rapidly to various Asian cultural centers, leaving its mark on many civilizations along the Silk Road. One of the most prominent symbols of this religion was Maitreya, whose likeness appears in numerous important Buddhist relics across India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and China.

Examples include two mega icons in Bamiyan, Afghanistan that were 33m and 54m high (which were unfortunately destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban regime, despite being world cultural heritages), and a 72m high statue in Mount Emei, China (which is the world's largest Buddha statue and also a world cultural heritage). Currently, designers and architects in India have completed a design for a 152-meter-tall bronze Maitreya Buddha monument, which will become the world's largest Buddha statue and the world's largest bronze statue once completed (Dinh 2009). (Figures. 11,13).

At this juncture, the question must be answered: why were so many Maitreya sculptures erected along the Silk Road rather than sculptures of Shakyamuni Buddha? The response relates to the primary focus of this study. Accordingly, the influence of the Messiah idea is the reason why people here believe in the limitless power of Maitreya Buddha - the Future Buddha who can save all sentient beings from their current sorrow. Based on a comparative viewpoint, we can see that the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya has a close relationship with the Messiahs of Hinduism and Zoroastrianism, particularly the role of the Chakravartin. The building of these giant statues, on the other hand, necessitates an enormous investment of human and material resources. Consequently, only those with sufficient sociopolitical-economic power can implement their ideas and direct the creation of these monumental structures. The aforementioned gigantic monuments are also emblems of the riches of the dynasties who constructed them and are frequently associated with rulers or reigning dynasties. This is the phenomenon of the politicization of the Buddhist Messiah in Medieval Buddhist societies like China. Thus, the Buddhist Messiah has become a unique type of belief in Buddhist civilizations and a powerful political instrument of the regimes.

When surveying the many thousands of icons Buddhism, Maitreya's depiction frequently includes the following styles and features:

– Gandhara-style standing statue (Figure 1)
– Standing structure of Himalayan design (Figure 2)
– Sitting figure in the Gandhara style - legs extended (like on Emei Mountain, Figure 11)
– Gandhara-style sitting statue, cross-legged (Figure 12)
– The form of a Himalayan-style seated figure with its legs extended (Figure 4)
– Chinese-style standing statue – Venerable Budai (Figure 14)

It might be claimed that the symbol of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya, as represented by the mega icons is the most convincing evidence of the Medieval Buddhist messianic faith. Their expressions reveal not only the cultural and religious lives of the people but also the economic and political circumstances of that time period. In this context, the Maitreya symbol not only demonstrates the significant role of the Buddhist Messiah but also emphasizes the "universal" status that Buddhism attained, as do the mega icons

of Maitreya Buddha. It is also one of the highest points of Buddhist art and sculpture in general. The unique cultural features of this sign; however, appear to be concealed in folklore and in the culture in which it resides by way of indigenization in Medieval society. This will be explored further in the next section.

The Buddhist Messiah Maitreya in Buddhist Societies

Based on the transformation of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya symbols in the Medieval period above, we can see that kind of symbols has held a significant and enduring presence in Buddhist societies throughout history, playing diverse roles and inspiring various expressions of devotion and religious practice. Across different Buddhist cultures and traditions, Maitreya has been venerated as a symbol of hope and compassion because of the belief that he will be the Future Buddha. In Mahayana Buddhist societies, Maitreya is said to await his appearance in a distant age wherein he will bring about a new era of spiritual renewal and enlightenment. That is the reason why the symbol of Maitreya is prominently featured in Buddhist art, sculpture, and iconography to show his role as a Buddhist Messiah across historical periods. Thus, the belief in Maitreya as a way to improve compassion and inspires individuals to cultivate virtues such as generosity, kindness, and altruism. This fosters harmony and mutual respect in societies as a form of interreligious dialogue.

This interreligious dialogue enriches the cultural and spiritual landscape of Buddhist societies, fostering mutual understanding and respect among different faith communities whether through artistic depictions, devotional practices, or ethical teachings. In contrast to what is represented in Buddhist teachings, Buddhist symbols in society are frequently a blend of Buddhist teachings and the local culture where Buddhism was introduced. Therefore, in order to identify the cultural "layers" created by this process, it is necessary to "unpack" at least two fundamental cultural layers, namely original elements and indigenous elements. When Buddhism was internationalized as a world religion, cultural elements originating in India merged with indigenous cultures in the regions it passed through to create new cultural elements. Thus, in this study, the process of interference between Indian culture and the indigenous Chinese cultural background will be focused upon through investigation of the transformations of the Maitreya-symbol in Chinese culture during the Medieval period.

Before Buddhism was introduced to China, numerous indigenous religions and belief systems already existed, with Confucianism and Daoism dominating. During the feudal period of the Medieval Times, these religions were elevated to the level of "national religions," with Confucius and Lao Tzu serving as kind of "national symbols" for Confucianism and Daoism, respectively. Perhaps this explains why Chinese society was initially resistant to the reception of a new religion such as Buddhism and a new symbol such as Maitreya. In the first century CE, Buddhism was introduced to China.

While it did not clash with Confucianism, as Confucianism was not classified as a religion, it did face opposition from Daoism. However, over time, the feudal Chinese regimes in the Medieval period skillfully incorporated Daoist beliefs with the concept of a Golden Age, leading to the emergence of the Maitreya faith in Chinese Buddhism. This movement not only influenced culture, society, and art, like many other religions but also had a significant impact on Chinese politics. It also had an impact on neighboring countries such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

Once Buddhism and the belief in the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya became established in mainland China, it had a profound impact on the spiritual life of the people. That is the reason why the Chinese feudal dynasties utilized religion and belief to gain political power, using the motto"Mandate of Heaven" (天命, *tianming*) to impose regulations, institutions, and laws without taking personal responsibility, as it was considered to be the will of God. Examples of figures who did this include Empress Wu Zetian (625–627, personal name Wu Zhao) and Hongwu Emperor (1328–1398 personal name Zhou Yuanzhang). During the end of the Yuan dynasty, there was a rebellion against the Yuan court led by Zhou Yuanzhang, known as the Red Turban rebellion. This rebellion is a notable example of the manipulation of the influence of the Maitreya religion in Chinese politics. Zhou Yuanzhang, who was a monk, used his affiliation with Buddhist organizations such as the White Lotus Sect (白蓮教) and Maitreya Sect to propagate the belief in Maitreya as the savior and incite a revolt against the royal government. Due to the poverty of the people and his anti-imperial court sentiments, the revolt was successful, and Zhou Yuanzhang formed the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).[6]

The evidence above shows that the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya went beyond the border of the religion of the Medieval period to "intervene" in the real world in Asian societies like China. It has evolved from a mere symbol of Maitreya's beautiful intentions in Buddhist teachings to the change of social, political, and cultural life. These shifts are increasingly pronounced and pervasive in contemporary life. Indeed, the evolution of the concept of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya has seen its influence extend far beyond the boundaries of Buddhist teachings, impacting various aspects of social, political, and cultural life throughout history and continuing to do so in contemporary times. Over time, as Buddhist ideas and practices interacted with broader societal contexts, the symbolism and significance of Maitreya underwent profound transformations. Thus, the intervention of Maitreya in the real world can be seen in how the concept inspired social and political movements aimed at fostering justice, equality, and compassion heading revolutions. In some cases, belief in Maitreya's imminent arrival served as a rallying cry for resistance against oppressive regimes or as a catalyst for social reform and renewal. It can be said that Maitreya's imagery and symbolism have been incorporated into diverse cultural traditions, reflecting a universal aspiration for spiritual awakening and social harmony to make great changes in Asian societies.

The emergence of Maitreya as a figure of significance in contemporary life

underscores the enduring relevance of Buddhist teachings and values in addressing pressing global challenges. In an increasingly interconnected world, the principles of compassion, altruism, and mindfulness espoused in Buddhist teachings find resonance among people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Moreover, the shifts observed in the perception of Maitreya reflect broader trends of religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue, where religious symbols and figures serve as points of convergence and mutual understanding among different faith traditions. Therefore, the evolving significance of the Buddhist Messiah Maitreya demonstrates the transformative power of religious ideas and symbols to inspire positive change in society. As Maitreya continues to exert influence in contemporary life, the teachings attributed to this figure serve as a beacon of hope and guidance for individuals and communities seeking to navigate the complexities of the modern world with compassion and wisdom.

Conclusion

From its position as the Future Buddha and the Buddhist Messiah according to Mahayana teachings, the Maitreya-symbol has evolved into a powerful faith after being transmitted all over Asia, focusing on the Chinese and Sinosphere cultures. The symbol of Maitreya in this process not only changes the form of expression (from Maitreya in the Indian archetype to Chinese Maitreya) in Mahayana Buddhism, but it also generates a type of Buddhist symbol with new nuances, even a new type of belief in addition to the roles of the Buddhist Messiah as well as the Future Buddha.

In its journey from its origins in Indian Mahayana teachings to its adoption and adaptation within Chinese and Sinosphere cultures, the Maitreya symbol has undergone a process of cultural assimilation and reinterpretation. This process has not only changed the outward form of expression, as seen in artistic representations and religious iconography, but it has also imbued the symbol with new meanings and connotations unique to the cultural contexts in which it flourished. One notable aspect of this transformation is the blending of Maitreya with indigenous Chinese cultural and religious elements, resulting in the emergence of a distinctively Chinese Maitreya figure. This fusion of cultural influences has enriched the symbolism of Maitreya, incorporating aspects of Chinese folklore, and philosophical traditions into the narrative surrounding the future Buddha. Furthermore, the symbol of Maitreya in Chinese and Sinosphere cultures has given rise to new forms of belief and devotion, distinct from its original portrayal as the Future Buddha and Buddhist Messiah in Indian Mahayana teachings. In addition to serving as a figure of hope for future enlightenment, Maitreya has become associated with concepts of prosperity, longevity, and worldly blessings within Chinese folk religion and popular culture.

Thus, it can be said that the Maitreya symbol has played a role in shaping the religious landscape of Chinese Buddhism, inspiring new forms of religious practice, ritual worship, and spiritual devotion. Pilgrimages to Maitreya temples and sacred sites,

as well as the offering of prayers and incense, reflect the deep reverence and faith that devotees hold towards this revered bodhisattva. In this way, the evolution of the Maitreya symbol within Chinese and Sinosphere cultures exemplifies the dynamic interplay between religious traditions and cultural contexts, resulting in the creation of a rich tapestry of beliefs, practices, and symbols that continue to shape the religious and spiritual lives of millions of people across Asia and beyond.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my gratitude to Anne-Marie Hilsdon, Curtin University, Australia, for her advice and guidance throughout the article, as well as for English proofreading.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1] According to John 3:16–17, Jesus, the Messiah, is the gift of the Father's love for the world's salvation; he gave his life for humanity (2 Corinthians 5:15). See: http://biblescripture.net/. Accessed 17 June 2023.

[2] Xuanzang (also known as Sanzang/Hsuan Tsang/Hsien Tsang -玄奘), unlike Asanga, was a Zen monk of the Tang Dynasty who was born after the Maitreya cult had become widespread in India. Above all else, he was a thorough scholar of Buddhist teachings. He was a famous missionary, and a great scholar, and had enormous merit in promoting Buddhism in China. Because of this profundity, Xuanzang's works are widely regarded for their precision. In Xuanzang's literature, Maitreya Buddha is frequently mentioned as in Asanga's writings, this material does not allow us to pinpoint the origin of Maitreya Buddha, but it does indirectly accept his presence as the Future Buddha (Hsien Tsiang 2004, 137).

[3] The cult of Maitreya is also well developed in the other branch, Vajrayana Buddhism; nevertheless, it is not as powerful as Maitreya's role as a Buddhist savior in Mahayana Buddhism, where mega icons of Maitreya were made along the Silk Road during the Medieval Times.

[4] *Budai Heshang* is a legendary Chinese monk, whose name literally means "Hemp Sack"; also occasionally referred to as *Fenghua Budai*, and *Changtingzi*. He is said to have hailed from Fenghua county in Ningbo prefecture of Zhejiang province. Budai is often depicted as a short figure with an enormous belly and a staff or walking stick on which he has hung a hemp bag or sack (*budai*), whence derives his name. Budai wandered from one town to the next begging for food, some of which he saved in his sack. This jolly figure is remembered as a thaumaturge who was particularly famous for accurately predicting the weather. See more detail in: *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* by Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez Princeton University Press 2014.

[5] Maitreya - God of Wealth is a new symbol in Vietnamese culture that appears as a combination of Maitreya worship and the cult of the God of Wealth in Vietnam. See more detail in: Dinh, H. H. 2018. "Maitreya-God of Wealth: A Case Study of Culture Change in Vietnam," Vietnamese Studies No.1 (207), 2018, pp.53-82.

[6] Zhou Yuanzhang not only used Buddhism as a highly efficient weapon to defeat the Yuan dynasty but

also as a highly effective tool to manage his followers by combining the Three Religions (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) into the regime's hands. This tendency is essentially the politicization of religion for the Ming Dynasty's benefit. It demonstrates the deliberate "fabrication" of Buddhist teachings in order to construct Chinese-imprinted Buddhist symbols by feudal governments of medieval China for political purposes. Therefore, the symbol of Maitreya in Buddhism became the most popular and "profitable" idea among Chinese feudal kingdoms. Future Buddha instantly converted into the current Messiah to serve the monarch, royal family, and centralized politicians.

References

Amini A. I. 1999 — *Al-Imam Al-Mahdi: The Just Leader of Humanity*. Translated by Dr. Sachedina. Ansariyan Publications.

Brockington, J. L. 1998 — *The Sanskrit Epics*. BRILL Academic.

Buswell, Robert E 2003 — *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, MacMillan Books.

Buswell, Robert E and Donald S. Lopez. 2014 — *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton,NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chan Nguyen – Bach, Nguyen Tuong — *Dictionary of Buddhism*. Hue: Publishing House. [Vietnamese Language Text] N. Bách, Tường Từ Điển Phật Học.

Crowther, Jonathan 1995 — *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Das, Asha 2003 — *Maitreya Buddha in Literature, History, and Art*. Kolkata: Punthi Pustak Kolkata.

Dinh, Hong Hai 2009 — "Maitreya Images in Asian Buddhist Fine Arts.", Harvard-Yenching Institute Working Paper Series. https://www.harvard-yenching.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy_files/MAITREYA%20image%20IN%20ASIAN%20BUDDHIST%20FINE%20ARTS_Dinh%20Hong%20Hai.pdf

2010 — "The Role of the Silk Road on the Development of Mahayana Buddhist Arts." *Dialogue April-June* 11(4). http://www.asthabharati.org/Dia_Apr10/dinh.htm

2014 — "Symbolism in the New Era of Buddhism." *Dialogue Journal* 15(1). Aceesed on 02 FeB 2024. http://www.asthabharati.org/Dia_July%20013.pdf

2018 — "Maitreya–God of Wealth: A Case Study of Culture Change in Vietnam." *Vietnamese Studies* 1: 53–82.

Hsien, Tsang 2004 — *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* S. Beal. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

Keenan, John P. 1989 — "AsanGa's Understanding of Ma¯Dhyamika Notes on the Shung-Chung-Lun". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12(1): 93–108. Accessed on 10 FEB 2024. http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-jiabs-87495

Kim, Inchang 2007 — *The Future Buddha Maitreya : An Iconological Study*, Foreword by Lokesh Chandra. Delhi: D.K. Printworld.

Kitagawa, Joseph M. 1981 — "The Career of Maitreya, with Special Reference to Japan." *History of Religions* 21(2): 107–125.

Lao, Tư ̛ and Lê Thịnh 2001 — *Confucianism—Buddhism—Taoism*. Hanoi: Literature Publishing House. [Vietnamese Language Text] *Hà Nội. vie Tư ̀ điển ba ́ch khoa Nho-Phật-Đạo* , Ha ̀ Nôi ̣: Nhà xuâ ́t ban ̉ Văn hoc ̣.

Leighton, T. D. 1998 — *Bodhisattva Archetypes: Classic Buddhist Guides to Awakening and Their Modern Expression*. New York: Penguin Arkana.

Lotha G 2011 — Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed on 19 FEB 2024. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Saoshyans.

Rahula, Walpola 2015 — *Asanga, Abhidharmasamuccaya: The Compendium of the Higher Teaching*. S. Boin-Webb *(trans)*. Fremont, CA: Jain Publishing Company.

Ritzinger, J. 2017 — *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism*. Oxford University Press.

Rosenfield, J. M. 1967 — "The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans". *California Studies in the History of Art*. University of California Press

Scott, D. A. 1990 — "The Iranian Face of Buddhism" *East and West* 40(1/4).

Sponberg, Alan and Helen — *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*. Cambridge: Cambridge

Hardacre 1988 University Press.

Zeidan, Adam 2019 "Muḥammad Al-Mahdī Al-Ḥujjah." *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 15 Mar. 2019, accessed on 5 July 2023. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad-al-Mahdi-al-Hujjah

Appendixes

Group 1: Maitreya symbols in India



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 1. Maitreya symbol in Gandhara, India. Photo by Dinh Hong Hai
Figure 2. Maitreya sign in Ladakh, India, is 15.24m tall and carved directly into a cliff. Source: https://asianartnewspaper.com/travel-ladakh-and-three-maitreyas/
Figure 3. Maitreya symbol in Ladakh, India, is from the 10th century. Photo by Dinh Hong Hai
Figure 4. Maitreya symbol in Nubra valley, India, 32m high. Source: https://travelsetu.com/guide/maitreya-buddha-statue-tourism

Group 2: Maitreya symbols as Budai Monk in China and Vietnam



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Figure 5. The Maitreya Budai Monk in Lingyin Temple, Hangzhou, China. Photo by Dinh Hong Hai
Figure 6. The Maitreya Budai Monk in Vietnam. Photo by Dinh Hong Hai
Figure 7. Maitreya Budai Monk, and the Six Thieves in Vietnam. Photo by Dinh Hong Hai
Figure 8. Maitreya Budai Monk, folk statue. Photo by Dinh Hong Hai

Won Buddhism in America: Exploring Ways to Balance Tradition and Innovation

Grace J. SONG

Grace J. SONG is an ordained Won Buddhist Kyomunim and advocate of interfaith dialogue. She serves as the Chair of the Won Buddhist Studies Department at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies. She also sits on the board of The Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies. Grace holds a Ph.D. in Won Buddhist Studies from Wonkwang University, an MA in East Asian Philosophy from Seoul National University, and a BA in Religious Studies from the University of Toronto. She leads annual meditation retreats at the Won Dharma Center. Her writings and online teachings have been featured in *Tricycle*: *The Buddhist Review Magazine* and *Buddhistdoor Global*.

JDTREA 2024,3(2):93–119

Original Articles

Correspondence to

Grace J. SONG

Won Buddhist Studies Program, USA

grace.song@woninstitute.edu

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6123-087X

OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia Vol. 3. Issue 2 (March 2024): 93–119
© 2024 by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Daejin University, Korea

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.93

Day of submission: 2024.01.25.
Completion of review: 2024.02.25.
Final decision for acceptance: 2024.03.20.

P-ISSN: 2799-3949
E-ISSN: 2799-4252

Abstract

The introduction of Won Buddhism to the United States has reached its fifty-year mark. Brought to the West by Korean *kyomus* (Won Buddhist clergy), these initial Won Buddhist clergy set a foundation for future ordained devotees to reside in America and further the religion's mission. Innovation has always played an important role in the formation and growth of Won Buddhism. The founder, Sotaesan, declared the necessity to reform traditional Buddhism to make it accessible to the laity and espoused values such as inclusiveness, equality, public work, and practicality. Over the past few decades, these innovations have helped Won Buddhism in America to shift from a strictly ethnic-related context to an emphasis on its universal nature. However, as the religion continues achieving a foothold in Western soil, critical questions arise such as how can Won Buddhism honor its Korean origins while becoming increasingly international? What are the detriments to decontextualizing and de-emphasizing elements thought to be "too Korean" or "too traditional," or thought to be irrelevant in the West? When Buddhism spreads to a new country, it not only influences the culture it enters but is also shaped by the adopting culture. In American history, this has often meant the erasure of Asian cultures that were home to Buddhism for millennia and from which the dharma is inextricable. I argue in this article that if Won Buddhism is to thrive in the United States conscious consideration will have to be given to the indispensable aspects of its Korean roots and tradition while connecting with the current circumstance in fresh, relevant, and effective ways that include the multi-cultural and ethnic makeup of the US. This entails understanding American history and Asian Buddhism's history in America, as well as cultivating a competency or fluency in the cultures that allowed Won Buddhism to survive for decades.

Keywords: Won Buddhism; Buddhism in America; Asian Buddhism; tradition; innovation

Introduction

Tradition[1] and innovation have always been at the heart of Won Buddhist history and practice. Won Buddhism was founded during a time of great transformation. Previously known as the 'hermit kingdom', Korea opened its doors to foreign influence. It introduced and spread Catholicism, Western learning, scientific technology, and the Western political and economic system in the middle of the nineteenth century. This new perspective on the world resulted in a tremendous desire on the part of Korean Buddhists to overturn the persecution of Buddhism during the Joseon Dynasty. Won Buddhism grew out of the movement to reform and renovate Buddhism for the contemporary secular world. In 1920, the founder, Sotaesan (少太山, 1891–1943), drafted the *Joseon Bulgyo Hyeokshinnon* [2] (朝鮮佛教革新論 *Treatise on the Reformation of Joseon Buddhism*), which was published in 1935. The themes in the *Joseon Bulgyo Hyeokshinnon* focused on reforms to make Buddhism accessible and relevant to the masses.

> Buddhism became a religion for a few when it was ill-treated and persecuted [during the Chosŏn dynasty]. The doctrine and system of traditional Buddhism were mainly structured for the monastic livelihood of the Buddhist monks who abandoned their secular lifestyle, and hence, were unsuitable for those people living in the secular world. Although there were faithful lay devotees in the secular world, they could not become central in their roles and status, only secondary. Accordingly, the lay devotee could not stand in the lineage of the direct disciples of the Buddha or become an ancestor of Buddhism easily except for those who made unusual material contributions or attained extraordinary spiritual cultivations. How can this doctrine and system be beneficial for the majority of ordinary people? (Park 1997, 297)

Sotaesan was concerned with how to carry out the Buddhist teachings in an accessible way. He spent a great deal of time formulating a doctrine based on *buddhadharma* but adapted it for modern society. He was not rejecting the efficacy of buddhadharma, but argued that the societal needs were incompatible with the traditional Buddhist structure. In this case, Sotaesan's reformation was compatible with the flow of the needs of the masses and the times. For example, he opened up new opportunities for women by allowing them to serve as ordained clergy on an equal basis with men (Adams 2009, 25). In his teaching on the *Development of Self-Power*, Sotaesan states that "Regardless of whether we are men or women, we should not live a life of dependency as in the past, unless we cannot help but be dependent due to infancy, old age, or illness. Women too, just like men, should receive an education that will allow them to function actively in human society" (*CATWS 2016*, 41). Therefore, during the formative years of Won Buddhism, women actively engaged in spiritual training alongside men and were also significant financial contributors (Song 2023,

369),[3] who supported the sustainability of the Order during challenging times.

Despite Won Buddhism's commitment to an egalitarian doctrine and its significant efforts to promote gender equality among its clergy, historical practices mandated female clergy to adhere to the archetype of "chaste women," a requirement that was not equivalently imposed on their male counterparts. This longstanding tradition saw a significant shift in 2019 when the Supreme Council (Suwidan 首位團), alongside the Head Dharma Master, serving as the highest authorities within the order, ratified modifications to the "*Jeongnam Jeongnyeo* (Celibate Male and Female Ordained Devotees) Regulations." These amendments specifically abrogated the necessity for female *kyomu*[4] (Won Buddhist ordained devotee) candidates to submit a "*Jeongnyeo* Application Form," a document that formerly served as a formal vow of lifelong celibacy. Consequently, the constitutional reform eradicated the celibacy mandate, thereby granting female kyomu the autonomy to marry, aligning their marital rights with those afforded to male clergy (Jo 2019). The Sixth Head Dharma Master Jeonsan elucidated that, although Sotaesan had delegated the choice of marriage to the discretion of the individual, this liberty had not been extended to women. He further indicated that the implementation of regulatory modifications within the order would necessitate a phased approach, with an anticipated timeline of 20–30 years for complete assimilation (Mun 2019).

This significant shift in policy regarding the celibacy mandate for female clergy within Won Buddhism not only addressed disparities in the treatment of male and female kyomus but also set the stage for further discussions on modernization and inclusivity within the order. Such discussions have extended beyond the parameters of marriage and celibacy, touching upon aspects of daily ministerial life, including attire for female kyomus. The younger cohort of female Won Buddhist clergy has raised concerns regarding the need to modernize the attire of female kyomus. According to one newspaper article, female clergy actively engaging with young people have encountered mockery and intense scrutiny. These female kyomu argue that traditional attire is perceived as antiquated, uncomfortable, and at times projects an odd image to the youth (Pak 2020; Kim 2017; Kim 2018). In response, the Won Buddhist Supreme Council initiated a trial period allowing female kyomus to don western-style suits.

Just as the revision of the female kyomus' dress code signifies a response to contemporary societal values and the practical needs of its clergy, so too has Won Buddhism's foundational philosophy been shaped by a receptivity to diverse religious traditions. After his enlightenment, Sotaesan explored a wide range of religious texts, including the *Four Classics* and the *Classic of Filial Piety* from Confucianism; *The Diamond Sutra* and the *Palsang-nok* (Record of the Eight Scenes of the Buddha's Life) from Buddhism; the *Eumbugyeong* (Yellow Emperor's Hidden Talisman Classic) and the *Okchugyeong* (Scripture of the Jade Pivot) from Daoism; the *Donggyeongdaejeon* (Great Canon of Eastern Learning) and the *Gasa* (Hymns) from Cheondoism; along with the Old and New Testaments of Christianity. Despite a particular resonance with

the *Diamond Sutra*, Sotaesan held the view that each religion emerged in its own time to guide people towards righteousness and morality through faith (CATWS 2016, The Gist of Indebtness to Laws: 1). Therefore, there was no need for religions to compete against each other, as each tradition had its own unique role in the salvation of sentient beings. This approach was further echoed by Second Head Dharma Jeongsan (鼎山 1900–1962), who expanded upon these ideas, highlighting the harmonious coexistence and mutual respect among different religious paths.

> This means that all religions and churches should achieve a grand unity and harmony by understanding that their principles all derive fundamentally from a single source. In this world, there are the three great global religions of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, and many other established religions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and so forth (*The Dharma Discourses of Cardinal Master Chŏngsan* 2016, XIII. The Fortune of the Way, 35).

The inclusive nature of Won Buddhism, with its receptivity to multiple religious traditions, seems to make it a fit for the diverse religious landscape of America, where individuals from various faith backgrounds coexist. However, as Won Buddhism establishes its presence in the United States and undergoes expansion, critical inquiries emerge regarding the adaptability and suitability of the Won Buddhist doctrine and practices, originally formulated within a Korean context, for Western adherents. It prompts an examination of whether these doctrines and systems align with and benefit the broader spectrum of Western individuals. Furthermore, it raises the question of how Won Buddhism can evolve to present its teachings in ways that are both faithful to its traditional roots and innovatively relevant within the diverse cultural and ethnic landscape of a multicultural nation.

Fortunately, the reformed dimensions of Won Buddhism, originating from Korea, exhibit significant parallels with the evolution of American Buddhism, including the emphasis on a lay-oriented sangha, simplification of tradition, an inquiry-driven approach, and a tradition that is both socially aware and engaged. Nonetheless, Won Buddhism faces the imperative challenge of honoring its foundational principles while innovatively adapting its teachings for effective conveyance within a new cultural context. This juxtaposition highlights the broader discourse on the authenticity and legitimacy of Buddhist practices in America, where Asian and Asian American expressions of Buddhism have often been marginalized and labeled as superstitious or inauthentic, thus challenging the integrity and historical depth of these traditions.

Up until now Won Buddhism has maintained strong ties to its Korean roots, which was a result of the kyomus being predominantly from Korea, which meant closer ties to the culture and language. However, moving forward, more focus has to be placed on how to maintain its necessary roots as it branches out, to avoid the pattern of Asian Buddhist erasure and in turn often the essence of buddhadharma itself. This is not about ownership, as the teachings should be free to all. However, the teachings cannot

be separated nor is it necessary to separate them from context. In fact, doing such as was just mentioned might prove detrimental. In this article, it will be argued that if Won Buddhism hopes to thrive in America it needs to understand the historical context in which it arrived and find ways to balance tradition and innovation. Tradition with innovation and adaptation invites vitality. It is unwise to embrace beliefs that contradict Won Buddhism's profound understanding of the world and its workings. Yet, spirituality without the anchor of tradition becomes superficial, merely echoing individual preferences.

Won Buddhism Comes to America

In its 50-year history in the US, Won Buddhism has experienced a slow and steady growth. Won Buddhism's entrance into the West can be divided into stages, beginning with the 1973 establishment of Won Buddhism of America, Inc. in the State of California under the leadership of Lee Je Seong (李濟性, 1935–2009) and Baek Sang Won (白想源, 1941–2015).[5] Lee and Baek started the process of incorporating the temple. This facilitated the assigned clergy in securing permanent residency, and also permitted them to legally undertake educational and spiritual activities in America. In January of 1973, Jeong Ja-Seon (丁慈善 1922–1974), a Won Buddhist ordained devotee with a strong desire to support edification in the West, helped establish the Chicago Won Buddhist temple (Pak 2005, 137). The first Won Buddhist clergy who entered the US were assigned by the Korean headquarters to establish temples in populated or accessible locations. These were primarily clerics with limited English proficiency who had made a strong spiritual commitment to create the financial foundations for future generations. At this stage, Won Buddhism was exported to the US and initial interest came more from the exporter than from potential devotees or practitioners.

One of the first Won Buddhist ordained devotees to be assigned abroad was Park Jang Shik (朴將植, 1911–2011). In his memoir, Park describes his early years in America during the 1970s. His encounter with unfamiliar western customs forced him to learn new forms of communication and reflect on the hurdles of acculturating a religion in another country. He wrote, "When modifying the teachings, the core message should, of course, remain unchanged, however purveyors of the teaching need to attain a deep understanding of the region, its traditional culture, and subtle and peculiar usages of language…to do so the order must actively engage in society and reach out to other religions through the United Religions movement." He later adds, "Developing the arts as a means of edification is just as urgent as modifying the teachings. Humans are rational as well as emotional beings. Therefore, the emotional side should not be ignored" (Pak 2005, 158–159).

In this initial stage, Won Buddhism in America can be characterized as an ethnic Korean religious movement. For the first fifteen years, Won Buddhist temples focused their energy and resources on attracting Korean immigrants struggling to adjust to a

new environment. This population were those coming to North America as immigrants in search of jobs, new opportunities, and a better future for their families, simply bringing their religion along. Won Buddhist temples provided immigrants with religious ideas and practices but more importantly helped them preserve a sense of cultural identity.

The next stage starts in the mid-1980s. Won Buddhist services in English were held first in Miami and later in Philadelphia, San Diego, Manhattan, and San Francisco (Kim 2000, 42). English services and programs were created for second-generation Koreans born in the United States (Adams 2009,21). As the need for English-led services grew, many Won Buddhist clergy pursued higher education as a way to enhance their English and also their knowledge of Western culture.

In 2001, the establishment of the Won Institute of Graduate Studies marked a significant milestone in the preparation of students for Won Buddhist service within the English-speaking realm. This initiative was aimed at translating and adapting texts, rituals, and practices for Western application, as well as promoting academic research on the integration of Asian religions into Western culture. The curriculum was designed to encompass a broad spectrum of studies, including the traditional spiritual teachings of Won Buddhism and the practical applications of these teachings in contemporary society.

With the inception of the Won Institute, the scope of Won Buddhism expanded significantly beyond the confines of the ethnic Korean community, embracing a more inclusive approach. The Institute introduced programs in acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine, recognizing the importance of holistic health practices as integral components of spiritual well-being. These programs were established with the dual purpose of equipping students with professional competencies in the ancient healing arts and integrating these practices within the spiritual and philosophical framework of Won Buddhism. The Won Institute's approach is designed to cultivate a holistic conception of wellness that reconciles the interrelations among mind, body, and spirit, thereby aiming to furnish its students with the requisite skills and knowledge for proficient service to diverse communities.

Nearly two decades later, another significant development occurred for Won Buddhism in the United States. On January 12, 2021, Venerable Juksan[6] was formally appointed as the Head Dharma Master of Won Buddhism in the USA, a decision that reflected the organizational principle articulated by Sotaesan's regarding the strategic localization of leadership roles within the movement. Third Head Dharma Master Daesan[7] articulated the rationale, noting, "For the sustained growth of our religious community, establishing clear guidelines for the position of overseas head dharma masters is crucial. According to Master Sot'aesan, while the central head dharma master would reside in Korea, each foreign country should have its own head dharma master. These leaders are expected to gather every three years at Kŭmgang Mountain for a conference" (The Discourses of Master Taesan 2014,166).



Figure 1. After finishing the kyomu training at the Hawaii International Retreat Center, each temple was gifted with the Il-Won-Sang calligraphy by Master Daesan (1996)

Consistent with this strategic direction, the Won Buddhism Constitution was revised in 1999 to add a new section, "The Overseas Headquarters."[8] This amendment established the legal groundwork required for appointing head dharma masters in countries beyond Korea, thereby facilitating the further global dissemination of Won Buddhism.



Figure 2. Fourth Head Dharma Master Jwasan strolls along the Moro Rock Trail accompanied by kyomus (2002)

As Won Buddhism evolves within the American context, it exemplifies the capacity of a spiritual tradition to preserve its core values while actively integrating into new cultural and community landscapes. The appointment of a Head Dharma Master for the USA, along with the establishment of legal and organizational structures to support its international growth, reflects a strategic balance between honoring its heritage and embracing necessary adaptation. Nevertheless, specific members of the Won Buddhist clergy residing in the United States, such as Yang Euncheol, harbor concerns regarding the level of autonomy that can be realistically attained for North American missionary operations, especially in light of significant shortcomings in self-sufficiency concerning both personnel and financial assets. Furthermore, Yang argues that, according to the current statutes and regulations governing Won Buddhism, the scope of authority vested in the North American Headquarters closely resembles that of a merely "autonomously expanded version of the Korean Central Headquarters." This is evident in several critical areas, including the compilation of scriptures and amendments to the constitution, which still require the approval of the Head Dharma Master based in the Central Headquarters in Korea. Yang further queries the effectiveness of establishing the North American Headquarters, pondering, "If a resolution regarding the attire of

female clergy, reached in consensus in North America, fails to be enacted due to divergent views from the Central Headquarters, then what meaningful impact does the establishment of the North American Headquarters actually convey?"[9] These challenges raise important questions about the effectiveness of the North American Headquarters in embodying a truly autonomous entity within the global Won Buddhist community. Moving forward involves addressing the complexities of autonomy and adaptation, yet the core mission to disseminate teachings of enlightenment and well-being remains steadfast.

Table 1. History of Won Buddhist Temple/Institution Expansion in the Eastern and Western Districts of North America

Year Established	Won Buddhist Temple/Institution
1972	Won Buddhism of Los Angeles
1973	Won Buddhism of Chicago
1975	Won Buddhism of New York (Flushing)
1984	Won Buddhism of San Francisco
1985	Won Buddhism of Valley
1987	Won Buddhism of Philadelphia
1989	Won Buddhism of Fresno
1991	Won Buddhism of Washington Won Buddhism of Orange County
1992	Won Buddhism of San Diego
1994	Won Buddhism of Manhattan
1996	Won Buddhism International Retreat Center of Hawaii
1999	Won Buddhism of Miami Won Buddhism of Hawaii
2000	Won Buddhism of Houston Won Buddhism of Richmond
2001	Won Institute of Graduate Studies
2003	Won Buddhism of Boston
2004	Won Buddhism of Denver
2005	Won Buddhism of Atlanta
2007	Won Buddhism of Berkeley

2010	Won Buddhism of New Jersey
2011	Won Buddhism of North Carolina Won Dharma Retreat Center
2013	Won Buddhism of San Bernardino
2014	Won Buddhism of Austin
2020	Won Buddhism of Houston

Won Buddhism's Innovations

The presence and perception of Won Buddhism in America have evolved significantly over the years. Its progressive expansion in the West is largely due to its transition from an approach primarily associated with a specific ethnic context to a focus on its universal applicability (Kim 2000, 42). The foundational principles laid out by Sotaesan at the inception of Won Buddhism—emphasizing practicality, inclusiveness, equality, and social engagement—remain pertinent in today's Western milieu. Historically, Won Buddhism has distinguished itself as a religious movement through its commitment to innovation (Adams 2009, 25).

As McMahan describes, Buddhism in the contemporary era shows a "modern world-affirming stance, a sense that the locus of a meaningful life is not in another realm but in the way this life, everyday life, is lived, and second, the shift toward interiority, reflexivity, and self-scrutiny" (McMahan 2008,13). Unlike some movements which held negative perceptions of material civilization during the 1960s and 1970s (Kim 2000),[10] Sotaesan was clearly aware of the problem of modernity and spoke of the necessity of a re-creation of spirit that would be able to respond to the influences of Western material civilization positively (Kim 2000,43). His response was not to reject matter, but to teach concrete methods of accomplishing spiritual development that were not separate from secular life. Sotaesan saw the positive value of material civilization and knew it would be an essential element in creating a truly developed civilization (Kim 2000,44). However, Sotaesan emphasized that "mind practice becomes the basis for all other studies" (CATWS *2016, The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter Eleven, Maxims: 1). Sotaesan argued for a spiritual revolution of the whole world through the power of the mind. This meant, first, a reform of unreasonable systems and customs; second, to bring people a religion that enlightens their innate Buddha-nature, helping them to cultivate, sharpen, and apply it in their everyday lives.

A key aspect often highlighted by those who engage with Won Buddhism is its emphasis on actionable guidance for personal transformation. Won Buddhism provides clear, practical instructions for daily practices, suggesting that adherence to these practices can lead to significant changes in an individual's spiritual life and, consequently, influence all facets of their existence, including their interactions with

others. To support practitioners in their practice, Won Buddhist temples place a strong emphasis on community, facilitating regular group activities and offering continuous engagement. Additionally, some temples provide opportunities for individual or group scripture study, as well as short-term retreats designed to offer intensive training periods away from urban distractions. As Adams points out, Sotaesan recognized a gap in traditional Buddhism between understanding doctrines and applying them ethically. Won Buddhism strives to ensure that faith translates into tangible ethical actions affecting society and culture (Adams 2009, 13). Therefore, Sotaesan steered the movement away from shamanistic or superstitious practices, anchoring it solidly in Buddhist principles while also integrating key concepts Confucianism and Daoism (Adams 2009, 23).

Won Buddhism adopts a world-affirming approach, organizing its structure to enable lay individuals to actively participate regularly. In the United States, many Won Buddhist temples are increasingly recognizing and enhancing the role of lay teachers. For instance, at the Philadelphia, Manhattan, and North Carolina temples, lay members are entrusted with various leadership responsibilities, including conducting services, delivering dharma talks, leading projects, facilitating study groups, or managing financial tasks. By integrating lay leaders into the temple's daily operations, a system of mutual learning and communication is established between ordained members and the laity, promoting an environment of shared support and respect. Temples fostering a tightly knit community often maintain an open-door policy, allowing members to freely engage in meditation practice or seek guidance from teachers. The use of the *Il-Won-Sang* symbol (a simple circle) by Won Buddhism signifies the vision of a unified religious community rather than a narrow sectarian group, offering a symbol that is accessible and not alienating to the general American public. Indeed, this approach aligns more closely with Western perspectives that often eschew various forms of idolatry, which has led to discomfort with traditional images or statues of the Buddha. (Kim 2000, 51)

In *The Scripture of the Founding Master* a person inquires, "If Śākyamuni Buddha is your foundational teacher, why do you not enshrine an image of him but instead enshrine *Il- Wo ̆n -Sang*?" Sot'aesan replies, "With an image of Śākyamuni Buddha, it is difficult to elucidate and teach a realistic understanding of the evidence of bestowed transgressions and merits. However, *Il- Wo ̆n -Sang* represents the pure Dharmakāya Buddha. Heaven and earth, parents, and our fellow beings are all transformation bodies of the Dharmakāya Buddha; laws as well are bestowed by the Dharmakāya Buddha. We can easily expound and teach the evidence that heaven and earth, parents, fellow beings, and laws bestow transgressions and merits on us. Therefore, we enshrine *Il-Wo ̆n-Sang* as our object of faith" (CATWS 2016, *The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter Two, Doctrine: 9).



Figure 3. Il-Won-Sang at the altar of the Won Buddhism of Manhattan temple

Beyond transitioning the focus of faith and practice to *Il-Won-Sang*, Sotaesan also crafted a scripture in simple Korean vernacular, thereby enabling a broader audience to easily understand its teachings.

> A disciple esteemed knowledge of literary Chinese over vernacular Korean script, so the Founding Master said, "The Way and its power originally have nothing to do with letters, so let go of such thoughts. In the future, we will compile all our scriptures in simple language that the general public can readily understand; the day is not far away, either, when the peoples of the world will each translate and widely study these scriptures we have compiled in our own vernacular language. So do not revere only difficult literary Chinese." (CATWS 2016, The Scripture of the Founding Master, Chapter Fourteen, Prospects: 3).

Aiming to make its teachings globally accessible, Won Buddhism undertook a significant effort to translate its core scriptures from Korean into various languages. This effort was institutionalized with the formation of Institution for Overseas Missions at Wonkwang University in 1962, supported by a grant from the Korea Ministry of Education. Under Dr. Pal Khn Chon's leadership, the institution initiated the biannual publication of an English booklet titled *Won-Buddhism*, which reached over 400 recipients in 26 countries. The booklet aimed to clarify Won Buddhist principles and document important historical developments within the movement. Regrettably, the publication ceased in 1993, three decades after its first issue. Numerous readers voiced a keen interest in the availability of additional Won Buddhist materials in English, including commentaries, articles, and books. The cessation revealed a strong demand for more Won Buddhist resources in English, spanning commentaries, articles, and books. Responding to this need, Dr Pal Khn Chon[11] took on the formidable task of translating Won Buddhist scriptures into English. In 1971, the first English edition of *The Canonical Textbook of Won Buddhism* was published, later renamed *The Scripture of Won Buddhism* in June 1988. This translation became a foundational text, leading to further editions and revisions.[12]

Following the important step of making its scriptures available in English, Won

Buddhism broadened its scope beyond mere textual translation, stepping into active participation within the global religious and interfaith arenas. This engagement has marked a significant area of growth for the tradition. Since 1992, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations has recognized Won Buddhism as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). This status has enabled the establishment of the Won Buddhism UN & Interfaith office in Manhattan. Representatives from Won Buddhism have assumed significant roles, including the presidency of Religious NGOs at the UN, co-founding the Values Caucus at the UN, and organizing significant events such as the Universal Ethics Millennium Conference. A key figure in these efforts, Rev. Chung Ohun Lee, served as the Won Buddhist representative at the UN since 1992 to 2018. In her article titled *Building a Fraternal World* (2015), Lee writes, "Now is the time to translate our words, visions, and ideas into actions—to embody spirituality and practice mindfulness at all times. We have to work together to incorporate into our daily lives the spiritual practices of meditation, wisdom, loving-kindness, and compassion to build a fraternal world" (Lee Chung Ohun 2015,108).

Although Won Buddhism has made notable strides in areas such as interfaith dialogue, some scholars argue that it has yet to fully embrace aspects of 'modernization'. Joon-Sik Choi, a Korean Studies professor at Ewha Womans University, believes that Won Buddhism's failure to take a prominent role in the modern era stems from the substandard presentation of its teachings and rituals. "The 'content' of Won Buddhism is excellent but it is packaged terribly. Although Sot'aesan's teachings are among the best in the world, it is not being presented on the same level as the quality of its parts" (Choi 2011, 153).[13] Choi further points out an intriguing aspect: a significant drawback in the way Won Buddhism is introduced to the Western world lies in its minimal architectural impact. This means there's no clear indication that a space is dedicated to Won Buddhism or the level of dedication and sincerity involved in creating such a sacred environment.

> "Wŏn Buddhism is like a venture business. What, by definition, is 'venture'? A venture company has to have a unique set of strategies to maintain a competitive edge in the face of older and larger companies. This is the only way that it can remain competitive and survive. Then how can Wŏn Buddhism survive? I do not yet see a unique Wŏn Buddhist strategy…As I said earlier, Wŏn Buddhist temples are not very attractive. If I held an influential post within the order, I would assemble a Wŏn Buddhist Committee on Religious Culture and recruit the best architects in Korea (and from other countries if necessary) to create a completely different type of temple structure that is also still rooted in tradition" (Choi 2011, 154).[14]

Choi further contends that Won Buddhism has not yet developed a distinct religious culture. He notes that Won Buddhist ceremonies bear a strong resemblance to church services, with activities such as hymn singing and sitting in pews. He suggests that Won

Buddhism should emphasize its Korean origins and distance itself from the Christian framework, which many temple visitors might be seeking to leave behind (Choi 2011, 154–155).

Honoring Won Buddhist Tradition

Building on Choi's critique of Won Buddhism's cultural and ritual presentation, Daniel Adams (2009) delves deeper into the tradition's identity crisis with a thought-provoking inquiry: "How can Won Buddhism remain Korean while becoming increasingly international?" In other words, how is Won Buddhism to preserve its religious and cultural heritage? And why is this significant? This is when we must examine Won Buddhism in the landscape of American Buddhism and the history of Asian Buddhism in the West. American Buddhism is a history of Asian immigration and the cultivation of Asian American Buddhist practices in the context of exclusion and white supremacy.

The fact is that there has been a history of erasure of Asian cultures, and of Asian and Asian American people, in contemporary Western Buddhism. Asian immigrants brought Buddhism to the U.S. more than 150 years ago, and Asian Americans are now two-thirds of Buddhists in the U.S. The history of Buddhism in the U.S. also generally centers on white practitioners; it is often said to have started with white converts who traveled to Asia and the counterculture movement of the 1960s. When Asian American Buddhists are acknowledged, it's often to create a binary between the "true" or "pure" Buddhism of white meditation practitioners and the "cultural baggage" or "superstition" of Asian ritual, as experts say. But in the racial reckoning sparked by Black Lives Matter and the murder of George Floyd, growing anti-Asian racism during the pandemic and the coming of age of a younger, more outspoken, generation, Asian American Buddhists are challenging the white-dominant narratives of Buddhism and re-centering Asian American identity in what it means to be Buddhist in the US (Kandil 2021).

Scholars like Funie Hsu, Duncan Williams, and Chenxing Han provide political context for how Western Buddhists converts often dismiss Asian Buddhism as lesser than—either by critiquing institutions themselves or by considering Asian Buddhists as lacking adequate intellectual or spiritual understanding of their own traditions (Moon 2020). As Funie Hsu explains, "The historical racial-religious marginalization, both from the dominant mainstream and white Buddhist cultures, has structured an internalized shame for many Asian American Buddhists who have picked up on the not-so-subtle hegemonic critiques of Asian and Asian American Buddhisms as 'heathen,' 'idolatry.' 'superstition,' and 'cultural baggage': code words for 'foreign'" (Hsu 2021, 80; Wu 2002,79).

Chenxing Han highlights the existence of a "two Buddhisms" classification, which separates convert Buddhists, often characterized as white and middle-class, from the non-convert, Asian, immigrant "ethnic" Buddhists. Reflecting on this division, the editor

of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review Magazine* in 1991 remarked that Asian American Buddhists "have not played a significant role in shaping what is known as American Buddhism," suggesting that they are considered Buddhists residing in America rather than fully integrated American Buddhists (Han 2020).

Engaging with Buddhism in a cultural framework necessitates a critical examination of the historical and interconnected narratives of the cultural and religious traditions we inherit or adopt. The exclusion of Asian American Buddhists from depictions of Buddhism in America is detrimental. Addressing inaccuracies in the portrayal of American Buddhism requires a unified and concerted endeavor. For *kyomus* who were born and raised in Korea, this means examining American history and the history of Asian Buddhism in America as well as assimilation to belief in the dominance of the Western world and whites (Lee Erika 2015; Zia 2000). For many years, Asian Buddhist institutions in the West have transitioned leadership to primarily white successors through Asian teachers. These teachers may not have fully understood the complexities of American racism or acknowledged their own biases (Moon 2020).

This phenomenon is evident in the realm of scripture translations, where terms are often considered unfamiliar or awkward from the perspective of individuals with a Western Christian background or limited Buddhist knowledge. There's a tendency to dismiss these terms as irrelevant due to their perceived lack of coherence or comfort. Consequently, Korean kyomus may defer to Westerners, who are presumed to possess superior proficiency in English or have notable professional credentials, leading to modifications of the original wording. However, substituting English terms based on subjective experiences or feelings, without a comprehensive understanding of the original Korean lexicon, Chinese characters, or the historical Buddhist framework, introduces a risk of significant inaccuracies. Achieving a genuine understanding of specific terms, especially those without direct English analogues, necessitates an openness and willingness to engage deeply with Buddhist practice and scholarship.

The intricacies encountered in the translation of scriptures highlight the vital necessity of preserving and respecting the Korean origins of Won Buddhism, a principle fervently supported by Sotaesan and his disciples. They spiritually identified with Korea as a homeland, recognizing its crucial significance for the future. An illustrative example of this is Sotaesan's allusion to the Diamond Mountain. He instructed his followers that the guardians of the Diamond Mountain should cultivate characteristics reflective of the mountain's essence; sincerity, respectfulness, steadfastness, and the preservation of one's innate purity. In this manner, the mountain embodies the essence, while the individual exemplifies its expression (CATWS 2016, *The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter Fourteen, Prospects: 6). This implies that while the mountain remains static, serving as the essence, it is up to the individual to effectively harness this essence to realize its function. Yet, Sotaesan's reference to the Diamond Mountain extended beyond metaphorical significance, hinting at its physical reality as well.

As Sotaesan stated, "As the Diamond Mountains become known to the world, Korea

will again become Korea. Then, the Master said, 'The Diamond Mountains are mountains peerless under heaven, so in the near future, they will be designated as an international park and be tended resplendently by various nations. Subsequently, people in the world will vie with each other to find the host of this mountain. Thus, if the people who are to be its hosts have nothing prepared in advance, with what will they treat their guests?" (CATWS 2016, *The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter Fourteen, Prospects: 5)

His immediate successor, Jeongsan, echoed this sentiment in the following passage:

> Seeing the mugunghwa [the rose of Sharon, the Korean national flower] and the T'aegŭkki [the T'aegŭk flag, the Korean national flag] in front of Sandong Temple, the Master said, "Mugunghwa is a good name. Mugung means limitless and unchanging; and mugunghwa foretells that this country will become the origin of the Way and its power in the new world. T'aegŭkki involves a profound principle. T'aegŭk [the Grand Ultimate, taiji] is the principle of the universe, which is the parent of the myriad things. T'aegŭk is also mugŭk [the ultimate of nonbeing] and mugŭk is Il-Won. The T'aegŭkki indicates that the great Way of Il-Won will in the future become the place of refuge for the whole human race; and this country, which is its place of origin, will become the spiritual-parent nation of all living creatures"(*Dharma Discourses of Cardinal Master Chŏngsan 2016*, On the Korean National Destiny: 33).[15]

Jeongsan continues by saying, "The Founding Master was reborn several times in this land of Korea in preparation for establishing this Order. Both overtly and covertly, he created in advance many affinities in this nation." He continued, "The legend that Mount Kŭmgang (the Diamond Mountains) is the practice site of Dharmodgata (Elevated Dharma) Bodhisattva is a prediction that a new dharma that will save the world will arise in Korea. And the legend that Sadāprarudita (Ever Weeping) Bodhisattva will come from the West to meet Dharmodgata Bodhisattva means that Westerners will come to the East to seek the dharma" (*Dharma Discourses of Cardinal Master Chŏngsan*, Chapter XIII, The Destiny of the Way: 14).[16] These quotations, steeped in spiritual tradition and forward-looking perspectives, emphasize Korea's significant contribution to the development of a transformative spiritual movement. Drawing from this lineage of anticipation, Sotaesan and Jeongsan inspire the cultivation of moral integrity and a reverence for the deep spiritual foundations of Won Buddhism rooted in Korean tradition. They foresee the beginning of a new period characterized by a shared dedication to the betterment of humanity, indicating that the core of Won Buddhism integrates respect for its historical heritage with a proactive approach to innovation.

A Balancing Endeavor: The *Bridge Builders*

Maintaining the Korean foundations of Won Buddhism, while also accommodating necessary modifications and updates, presents a complex yet essential challenge. Achieving an equilibrium between preservation and adaptation is key. Tradition encompasses the handing down of customs, beliefs, and rituals through generations, acting as a means to preserve history and honor the insights of ancestors and mentors. In contrast, innovation focuses on breaking new ground and expanding horizons. It involves embracing uncertainty and experimenting with novel approaches to forge improvements. While they might seem at odds, tradition and innovation complement each other: tradition offers a steadfast base for innovation, and innovation ensures tradition remains applicable and significant.

Attaining this nuanced equilibrium necessitates a collaborative effort, requiring the involvement of individuals deeply rooted in the traditional aspects of Won Buddhism as well as versed in the modern environments where it aims to thrive. The individuals suited for this pivotal role can be described as 'bridge builders.' These practitioners and clergy members possess a deep comprehension of Korean culture and the historical foundations of Won Buddhism, coupled with the ability to adeptly engage with the dynamics and expectations of Western societies. Their responsibilities are diverse: they act as guardians of tradition, educators, cultural intermediaries, and agents of change. Through maintaining a diligent personal spiritual practice, they live the teachings of Won Buddhism, serving as genuine exemplars of its principles and values.

The methodology employed by these 'bridge builders' is distinguished by a profound comprehension of the challenges inherent in transplanting an Asian spiritual tradition into predominantly uncharted cultural landscapes. They acknowledge that cultural assimilation is a slow and complex process, replete with obstacles. Consequently, they temper their expectations, understanding that rapid transformation or smooth acculturation is improbable. Their patience and forward-looking perspective are essential attributes in managing the nuances of this cross-cultural endeavor.

One tangible aspect of their work involves the preservation of tradition to provide a sense of continuity and stability. This aligns with the principles of Sot'aesan, who focused on both preserving and advancing the Buddha's dharma lineage and work by respectfully receiving the Buddha's fundamental spirit (*The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter Two, Doctrine: 9). By adopting Sakyamuni Buddha as his original guide, Sotaesan established a link to the revered Buddha, aiding followers in grasping the deep foundations of Won Buddhism. While Sotaesan updated the teachings for modern times, he drew upon early Buddhist traditions to foster a sense of identity and community. Sotaesan said, "In our country, Buddhism has been treated contemptuously for several hundred years and people have tended to show little reverence for whatever is associated with Buddhism. But now if we wish to guide all

sentient beings to the two roads of wisdom and merit by discovering the fundamental truth and accomplishing essential practice, we must take buddhadharma as our core principle. Moreover, Buddhism will become the major religion of the world" (CATWS 2016, *The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter One, Prefatory: 15).

However, Sotaesan warned that one must not cling to a single point of view: "Virtually everyone today clings to a single point of view, preventing them from achieving the perfect Way. Confucian scholars are attached to Confucian customs, Buddhist monks to Buddhist customs…In consequence, they do not manage to become well-rounded persons…I am not saying that you should lose your principal convictions and adopt other dharmas indiscriminately, but rather that you should widely apply other dharmas after you have established your principal convictions" (CATWS 2016, *The Scripture of the Founding Master*, Chapter Three, Practice: 27). Sotaesan emphasized the value of embracing a broad perspective and avoiding attachment to personal viewpoints. Similarly, when considering the adaptation of Won Buddhism, it is crucial to reflect on which innovations are essential for its development and expansion in Western contexts.

To address this question of essential innovations for Western progress and growth, we turn our attention to a specific yet pivotal endeavor: the translation of Won Buddhist scriptures from Korean to English. This task is emblematic of the broader mission of adaptation and renewal. Translating sacred texts is not merely a linguistic exercise but a profound act of cultural interpretation. It requires sensitivity to the nuances of language, a deep understanding of both the source language and the target language, and an openness to ongoing revision. As Imami et al observe (2021), "Full attention in the translation process is on cultural procedures rather than linguistic procedures. Translating is the most challenging job because if the two cultures cannot correlate or give a clear idea about the aspect of the culture in question, it may be meaningless" (Imami et al 2021,179)[17] Recognizing these translations as works in progress rather than definitive versions reflects a humble acknowledgment of the complexity of this endeavor. It is an ongoing journey of discovery, learning, and adaptation, aiming to make the profound wisdom of Won Buddhism accessible and relevant to a diverse global audience.

Therefore, the role of 'bridge builders' in Won Buddhism encompasses the crucial task of cultural and spiritual interpretation. Their deep engagement with Won Buddhist practices enables them to internalize and embody the essence of its teachings, which is vital for conveying the depth and nuance of the tradition to those who may not have been exposed to its principles. A significant aspect of their work involves elucidating complex concepts that are intrinsic to Won Buddhism but may be unfamiliar to Western practitioners. A prime instance is the term 'mind-ground (心地),'[18] which, although not commonly used in everyday language, carries considerable importance within the Won Buddhist tradition, particularly regarding practice. Bridge builders, therefore, must possess not only a deep understanding of these concepts but also the skill to

convey them in a manner that resonates with a Western audience. Moreover, certain Korean terms used in Won Buddhism may not have direct English equivalents, presenting an additional layer of complexity. Bridge builders are tasked with not just translating these terms but also providing comprehensive explanations that capture their full meaning and significance. This requires a nuanced understanding of both Korean and Western cultures and the ability to navigate the subtleties of spiritual language. In essence, the role of bridge builders in Won Buddhism is not only to translate words but to translate meaning, context, and culture. Ultimately, the goal is to assist practitioners in integrating Won Buddhist teachings into their everyday lives.

Serving as a 'bridge' entails more than just translating concepts from one language to another or adapting practices to fit new cultural norms. It involves a deep commitment to understanding the historical journeys of Buddhist communities in America, recognizing the challenges they have faced, and drawing lessons from their resilience. The experiences of Japanese American Buddhists, for instance, serve as a poignant example. Historical accounts reveal their determined efforts to safeguard their religious beliefs and freedoms in the face of adversity, showcasing a steadfast commitment to their faith amidst widespread misunderstanding and discrimination (Williams 2019). The history of Asian American Buddhism offers valuable lessons on the consequences of cultural and religious erasure. For Won Buddhists, this knowledge acts as a foundation for building a future in which their tradition remains vibrant and stable, firmly rooted in its Korean origins yet flexible enough to grow and flourish in a global context. This approach not only honors the rich history of Asian American Buddhists but also contributes to a richer, more inclusive tapestry of religious and cultural expression in the modern world.

Convert Won Buddhists can also be bridge builders, and can serve as vital links between the original Korean Won Buddhist teachings and the diverse cultural environments they inhabit. As a personal anecdote, the dedicated convert Won Buddhists I have met show a similarity which is that they integrate Won Buddhist principles into their lives, demonstrating the universality and practical applicability of these teachings. Their lived experiences and stories serve as powerful testimonials to the transformative potential of Won Buddhism, encouraging others (especially those new to Won Buddhism) to explore and adopt its practices. They also show compassion and care in creating supportive environments for the Won Buddhist clergy from Korea as well as new and long-standing practitioners, whether by organizing gatherings and study groups or presiding over Dharma services. Through their experiences and overcoming their own inner biases or attachments, they can offer guidance and support to those new to the tradition, helping them to overcome challenges and integrate the teachings into their personal contexts. Long-time practitioners who go on a pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Won Buddhism in Korea often return with a fresh outlook and deepened appreciation for the Korean origins. Therefore, this group can be considered advocates for Won Buddhism, raising issues that need to be resolved within Won

Buddhism but always grounded in faith and respect for the community.

The intricate dance of preservation and adaptation that defines the journey of Won Buddhism in the modern world is a testament to the enduring relevance and resilience of spiritual traditions. The 'bridge builders,' whether they are seasoned practitioners, clergy, or devoted converts, stand at the heart of this transformative process. They embody the living link between the ancient wisdom of Won Buddhism and the ever-evolving tapestry of global cultures. As the tradition evolves and adjusts, attracting young individuals remains a significant challenge. This delicate balance of honoring the past while embracing the potential of the future constitutes the legacy of the 'bridge builders,' whose dedication ensures that Won Buddhism remains a dynamic and significant path in the pursuit of understanding and enlightenment in our increasingly interconnected world.

Conclusion

The spread of Won Buddhism into the United States highlights the complex task of transplanting a spiritual tradition from Korea into a significantly different cultural setting. Despite its core teachings advocating for equality, implementing these principles within Won Buddhism has been a gradual process. The tradition has shown adaptability, influenced by its history of navigating cultural and spiritual shifts, which has allowed it to remain relevant in modern contexts. Sotaesan, the founder, envisioned a Buddhism that transcended traditional monastic restrictions, advocating for a spirituality that is actionable, inclusive of all genders, and encourages interfaith dialogue and community engagement.

The role of 'bridge builders'—individuals dedicated to adapting spiritual practices for new cultural environments—remains crucial in this adaptation process. They work to keep the core of Won Buddhism intact while making it accessible within the American cultural milieu. By drawing lessons from the integration experiences of other Asian Buddhist traditions in the US, which have moved through cycles of tolerance, marginalization, and eventual acceptance, Won Buddhism must navigate the complex interplay of maintaining its traditions and embracing necessary changes. This effort to balance tradition with modernity is pivotal to its development, reflecting wider challenges faced by spiritual traditions in an era of significant change. Won Buddhism's commitment to practical spirituality, inclusivity, and social engagement illustrates its approach to staying relevant. Its presence in the U.S. illuminates the dual aspects of opportunity and challenge that come with modifying core teachings to suit the demands of modern society.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1] In this context, I define tradition as the *process* of handing down from generation to generation, and some *thing*, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time (Graburn 2001, p. 6). Therefore, tradition is continually being created and used by people, which helps it to continue to exist (Finnegan 1991, p. 112).

[2] This article will use Revised Romanization of Korean as this is the standard used by *JDTREA*; however, some titles of texts and direct quotes from texts will appear in McCune-Reischauer Romanization if that is the manner in which they were translated.

[3] Records indicate that one of the first female disciples of Sot′aesan, Yi Chŏngch′un, resolved to donate all of her land holdings that she accrued with the money earned through her kisaeng labor. Her donations helped solidify the financial foundation for Won Buddhism in its formative years and signified the starting point of her many future contributions to Won Buddhism.

[4] Under Revised Romanization of Korean, this would be written as gyomu (교무/ 敎務); however, the spelling of *kyomu* is common in western nations where Won Buddhism operates temples.

[5] It is also important to recognize the critical contribution of lay members in the establishment of the Los Angeles temple. These individuals not only offered a provisional location for conducting a Dharma meeting but also dedicated their time and effort towards securing the temple's formal acknowledgment as a legal religious entity. Among these lay members were Mr. Sung-Bak Heo, Dr. Myung-Keun Yim, Mrs. Pal-Chin Yim, Mr. Do-Chul Moon, Mrs. Hyung Yeun Jung, Mr. In Sung Bak, and Mr. Nak-Chil Sung. (CLYHP 2003)

[6] Dharma Name, Hwang Doguk 黃道局 (1950–, dharma title Juksan 竹山)

[7] Dharma Name, Kim Daegeo 金大擧 (1914–1998, dharma title Daesan 大山)

[8] On November 8, 1999, during the 5th amendment of the religious constitution, Fourth Head Dharma Jwasan (李廣淨, Lee Gwangjeong 1936–) aimed to incorporate the system of overseas head dharma masters into the constitution, following the directives of Master Daesan. However, due to opposition from the majority, the overseas head dharma master system was not incorporated, but a legal foundation for the establishment of an overseas headquarters was laid. Given that Won Buddhism's international outreach was just beginning and there was a limited comprehension of global propagation among its followers, this move was pivotal. It paved the way for an autonomous religious constitution that would oversee the functioning of overseas headquarters and the overseas head dharma master system, thereby establishing the foundation for worldwide spread. See Ahn Semyŏng, "Mijuch'ongbu, segyegyohwa chŏnjin'gijirosŏŭi kyŏlshilsŏngŏp," Wŏnbulgyo sinmun, January 9, 2020. https://www.wonnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=204277. Accessed on February 11, 2023.

[9] Yang Euncheol, "Mijuch'ongbu kŏnsŏrŭi kwaje," *Wŏnbulgyo sinmun,* April 17, 2019. https://www.wonnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=203433

[10] Bokin Kim gives a good example of how the International Society of Krishna Consciousness rapidly progressed in the 1960s because of its anti-materialistic stance..

[11] This author's name would be spelled as Pal-Geun Jeon (전팔근 *Korean order) in the Revised Romanization system.

[12] The Preface of *The Doctrinal Books of* Wŏn-*Buddhism* outlines the efforts of the Committee for the Authorized Translation of the Chŏngjŏn in producing a new English rendition of the Scriptures (CATWS 2016, ix-xiv).

[13] Despite Choi's critique being published more than ten years ago, his observations remain pertinent and should be heeded as Won Buddhism further establishes its presence in America.

[14] Additionally, some scholars contend that Won Buddhism has yet to establish a unique architectural identity. (Hahn Joh and Won-Suk Kim 2018). Interestingly, this article highlights that with the advent of new architectural technologies in concrete and glass (1946-1979), a new era of architectural expression

begins, leading to the emergence of modern architectural-style temples. This resulted in the appearance of many church-like temples that mimic the spires of churches and the basilica-style longitudinal section layout. Additionally, in alignment with the expression of Korean identity in the national religion of Won Buddhism, many traditional-style temples emerged, featuring tiled roofs and lanterns expressed in reinforced concrete and masonry. Notably, there has been the appearance of eclectic temples that combine both church-style and traditional-style architecture.

[15] This harks back to Korea's founding ideology, *Hongik Ingan* (弘益人間 broadly benefiting the human realm), which is an ideal articulated at the time of the founding of the Korean nation. The origin of this idea is recorded in history as part and parcel of the story of Dangun, the first ancestor of all Korean people. It contains an exceptional aspiration that the Korean people would build a nation that "lived for the benefit of all humankind."

[16] In the Wisdom sutras, Bodhisattva Dharmodgata is described as a "good friend" who leads Bodhisattva Ever Wailing to enlightenment across numerous lifetimes.

[17] These scholars argue that the process of translating between languages presents intriguing challenges due to the inherent differences in linguistic structures and cultural contexts. Within the realm of translation issues, one encounters lexical and morphological challenges, syntactic difficulties, and semantic obstacles.

[18] Ground used metaphorically to describe the true mind that all sentient beings are originally endowed with. (Buswell and Lopez 2013, 1010).

References

2016 *The Dharma Discourses of Cardinal Master Chŏngsan*. Iksan: Won-Buddhism

2014 *The Discourses of Master Taesan*. Iksan: Wonbul gyochulpansa. [Korean Language Text] 『대산 종사법어』, 익산: 원불교출판사.

1989–Present *Wonbulgyo Newspaper*. [Korean Language Text] 원불교신문.

Adams, Daniel J 2009 "Won Buddhism in Korea: A New Religious Movement Comes of Age." *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch* 84 1–35. http://anthony.sogang.ac.kr/transactions/VOL84/VOL084-1.docx

Buswell, Robert E. and Donald S. Lopez 2013 *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton: University Press

Choi, Joon-Sik 2011 *Won-Buddhism: The Birth of Korean Buddhism*. Seoul: Jimoondang.

Committee for the Authorized Translations of Won-Buddhist, Scriptures (CATWS)2016 *Doctrinal Books of Won-Buddhism : Wonbulgyo Kyosŏ*. Iksan: Wonkwang Publishing Co.

Committee of LA 30 Years History Publication (CLYHP) 2003 *Sky Flowers Blooming in the City of Angels*. Iksan: Wonkwang Publications. [Korean Language Text] LA 교당 30 년사 간행위원회, 『천사의 도시에 핀 하늘 꽃 —원불교 LA 교당 30 년사』, 익산: 원광사.

Finnegan, Ruth 1991 "Tradition, but what tradition and for whom?", *Oral Tradition* 6(1): 104–124. https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/64696/OralTradition6-1-Finnegan.pdf?sequence=1

Graburn, Nelson HH "What Is Tradition?" *Museum Anthropology* 24(2-3): 6–

2000 11. https://escholarship.org/content/qt6jx218bc/qt6jx218bc_noSplash_d16c7d4063260e5debe3d7362bf612bb.pdf

Ha, Sanghee 2017 "Gender Equality Ideology", *Hanuran sinmun*, July 8, accessed on December 8, 2023 [Korean Language Text] 하상희, "남녀평등사상", 한울안신문. http://www.hanulan.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=147199.

Han, Chenxing 2020 "We're Not Who You Think We Are". *Asian American Policy Review,* 2 February 2020. Accessed on 12 August 2023. https://hksspr.org/were-not-who-you-think-we-are/.

Hsu, Funie 2021 "We've Been Here All Along." *Lions Roar*, March 17, 2021. Accessed on 12 July 2023. https://www.lionsroar.com/weve-been-here-all-along/

Imami, Tiara Ridha and Fatchul Mu'in 2021 "Linguistic and Cultural Problems in Translation". 2nd International Conference on Education, Language, Literature, and Arts (ICELLA 2021) Atlantis Press. :178–186.

Jo Hyeon, 2019 "Women in Won-Buddhism Can Now Get Married". *The Hankyoreh*, August 12, accessed on 12 December 2023. [Korean Language Text] 조현, "원불교 여자교무도 결혼 가능해졌다", 한겨레신문.

Joh, Hahn and Won-Suk Kim 2008 "A Research of the Architectural Embodiment Design-Method of Won-Buddhism Doctrine." *Korean Institute of Interior Design Journal* 17(5): 31–39. https://koreascience.kr/ article/JAKO200800557084114.pdf

Kandil, Caitlin Yoshiko 2021 "Young Asian American Buddhists Are Reclaiming Narrative after Decades of White Dominance". *NBC News,* July 9, accessed on 12 December 2023. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/ young-asian-american-buddhists-are-reclaiming-narrative-decades-white-rcna123.

Kim, Bokin *Concerns and Issues in Won Buddhism*. Philadelphia,

2000 PA: Won Publications.

Kim, Sungsoon 2017 "Gender Issues in Contemporary Won Buddhism: Focusing on the Status of Female Clerics." *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 30(2): 239–256.

2018 "Gender Issues in 21st Century Won Buddhism". *Hanuran sinmun*, November 28, accessed on 12 December 2023. [Korean Language Text] 김혜월(성순), "21 세기 원불교의 젠더문제", 한울안신문. http://www.hanulan.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=159002.

Lee, Chung Ohun 2015 "Building a Fraternal World: A Won Buddhist Perspective". *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture* 4(2): 105–108, accessed on 7 December 2023. https://paperity.org/p/82831619/building-a-fraternal-world-a-won-buddhist-perspective

Lee, Erika 2015 *The Making of Asian America: A History*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster New York.

McMahan, David L. 2008 *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moon, Reverend Cristina 2020 "From 'Just Culture' to a Just Culture." *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review Magazine*, October 29, accessed on 12 December 2023. https://tricycle.org/article/asian-american-erasure-buddhism/

Mun, Mijeong 2019 "As Times Change... Won Buddhism Abolishes Celibacy Vow for Women's Religious Affairs". *Catholic Press*, April 25, accessed on 12 December 2023. [Korean Language Text] 문미정, "시대 변화 따라…원불교 여성교무 독신 서원 폐지한다", 가톨릭프레스. http://catholicpress.kr/m/view.php?idx=5841

Pak, Chang Sik 2005 *Pyeonghwaui Yeomwon*. Iksan: Wonbulgyochulpansa. [Korean Language Text] 박장식, 『平和의 念願』, 익산: 원불교출판사.

Pak, Yujeong 2020 "Female Academic Affairs, Talking About Change." *Monthly Wongwang*, March 06, accessed on 08 December 2023 [Korean Language Text] 박유정, "여성 교무, 변화를 말하다", 월간 원광. https://www.m-wonkwang.org/news/articleView.html?idxno=4372

Park, Kwangsoo 1997 *The Won Buddhism (Wo˘nbulgyo) of Sot'aesan: A Twentieth-Century Religious Movement in Korea*. San Francisco; London; Bethesda: International Scholars Publications.

Payne, Richard K. 2021 *Secularizing Buddhism: New Perspectives on a Dynamic Tradition.* Boulder: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Shaheen, James 2012 "Buddhist Training for Modern Life." *Tricycle*: *The Buddhist Review Magazine*, November 14, accessed on 8 December 2023. https://tricycle.org/magazine/buddhist-training-modern-life/

Son, Taekgyun 2015 [100 years of Won Buddhism] "Volunteering and missionary work abroad... The history of the 'open denomination' written through sweat and tears", April 23, accessed on 11 December 2023. [Korean Language Text] [원불교 100년] "해외에서 봉사와 포교… 땀과 눈물로 쓴 '열린 교단' 역사", 동아일보. https://www.donga.com/news/Culture/article/all/20150423/70865922/1.

Song, Grace, J. 2023 "From Courtesan to Wŏn Buddhist Teacher: The Life of Yi Ch'ŏngch'un". *Religions* 14: 369–386. Accessed on 12 December 2023. http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel14030369

Soule, Frank 1967 *Annals of San Francisco : Containing a Summary of the History... Illustr. With 159 Engravings.* Accessed on 11 December 2023.https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c065506286&seq=46

Williams, Duncan Ryuken 2019 *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press

of Harvard University Press

Wu, Frank H. 2002 *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Zia, Helen 2000 *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Death Cannot be Seen: The Mortuary Rites of a Contemporary Monastic

XU Mingqian

XU Mingqian received his Ph.D. at the Graduate Institute of Religious Studies, National Chengchi University, Taiwan. His research focuses on overseas Chinese Buddhism across East Asia, Southeast Asia, and North America, mainly before the 1980s. Besides that, he interests himself in hagiographic narratives of monastic sacred deaths as well as comparisons between the past and modern times.

JDTREA 2024,3(2):121–142

Original Articles

Correspondence to

Mingqian XU

National Chengchi University,Taiwan

mingqian.xu@dila.edu.tw

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1368-5985

OPEN ACCESS

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia Vol. 3. Issue 2 (March 2024): 121–142

© 2024 by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences, Daejin University, Korea

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.121

Day of submission: 2023.12.20.
Completion of review: 2024.02.15.
Final decision for acceptance: 2024.03.20.

P-ISSN: 2799-3949
E-ISSN: 2799-4252

Abstract

What should death be like for a deeply venerated or highly prominent Buddhist monastic? This question itself does not just pertain to death rituals, funerals, or cremations but also to the entire process, as understood within the tradition, of leaving this realm and entering into another. It is in all of these aspects that something exceptional should be highlighted to exemplify accomplishments of the given individual's religious life, and draw attention to the profound spiritual attainment of that figure that devotees believe lies beyond what is achievable by ordinary humans.

The recent death of Venerable Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan, led to plentiful discussions in Taiwanese society from people of all walks of life, spanning scholars to media and citizens. This study will reveal the peculiarities of this interesting case, mainly as it relates to the late master's mortuary rites. In doing so, other monastics who passed away in contemporary times will be brought up for comparison. In addition to its notable innovations and creativity, the focal case of the mortuary rites for Hsing Yun manifests the tension between traditional and modern Buddhist ideologies and practices; especially as these tensions unfold within the Humanistic Buddhist context.

Keywords: Hsing Yun; Fo Guang Shan; Death Rites; Zuogang; Śarīra

Introduction

On February 5th 2023, the Lantern Festival marked the end of Chinese New Year. It was amid this initially festive atmosphere that the passing of eminent monk and founder of Fo Guang Shan (佛光山), Venerable Hsing Yun (星雲, 1927–2023), took Taiwanese people as well as Fo Guang Shan supporters around the globe by surprise. Although the news was not officially confirmed at the time, the next day it was verified that Hsing Yun had died at the age of 97. He was one of the longest-lived of his generation and especially among monastics who had crossed the strait from the mainland to Taiwan around 1949. It is a widely acknowledged fact that a large part of the current state of Taiwanese Buddhism was built by these Civil War diasporic Buddhists. Another example is the Dharma Drum Mountain (法鼓山) founder, Sheng Yen (聖嚴, 1931–2009), who passed away more than a decade ago.

Hsing Yun, however, suffered from illnesses long before death. His diabetes can be traced back to the 1960s, at the time when his religious career was about to expand. He then underwent heart surgery in 1995, and combined with the preexisting diabetes, these ailments hindered his ability to walk. By the 2010s, Hsing Yun began having difficulty with his vision, and it was even rumored that the master was more or less blind during the last years of his life. Those years were also notable in that he no longer made public appearances.

Despite those health issues, he set an example for other leaders in terms of institutional management, and stepped down as abbot in 1985. Since then, the position has been held by four different abbots. If we consider how many FoGuang Shan branches are in Taiwan and internationally, the significance of institutionalization becomes clear. The organization has shown it can be run even without its charismatic founding leader. That being said, Hsing Yun still serves as the crucial spiritual support at the heart of Fo Guang members. Events such as the Chinese New Year reunion dinner, will likely present pre-recorded video clips of Hsing Yun providing well-wishes, to substitute for his actual presence.

His iconic status is a key factor in understanding why his passing and funeral were so significant to hundreds of thousands of people. In order to more deeply examine that matter, first a review of ideas regarding mortuary-related practices in the Chinese cultural context will be provided. The process of death as a means to demonstrate religious attainments in Buddhism is an essential part of this examination. Throughout the course of this investigation, the peculiarities of the mortuary rites honoring Hsing Yun will be made more apparent.

Buddhist Death and Manifestations of Sacredness through Rites

Although generally death is feared, in traditional Buddhism it is a way to demonstrate the accomplishments produced by long years of practice. Even non-believers sometimes value the act of passing as a means to reveals one's virtue. A good death (善終, *shanzhong*) indicates dying in peace, and this term can be juxtaposed against a sudden end (橫死, *hengsi*), which implies a violent death, an accidental death, or even a suicide. Additionally, to die with family and friends present is considered better than dying alone.

Buddhists push those non-Buddhist social conventions surrounding death further by setting additional criteria. Pure Land practitioners would eager to know if the deceased left signs that they were on to the road towards the grand destination. Within tradition, signs include an improved complexion or an auspicious place wherein the body's last bit of warmth lingered. For example, auspicious signs include the deceased's face appearing ruddy and moist (面色紅潤, *mianse hongrun*) or their body remaining soft (身體柔軟, *shenti rouruan*) instead of falling into quick rigor mortis. If the body's last trace of warmth pools at the top of their head, this is taken as evidence that they are bound for rebirth in the Pure Land.

There are alternative protocols and remedial measures if the above criteria go unfulfilled or are insufficiently fulfilled. In such cases, Pure Land practitioners provide chanting services, which mainly consist in reciting homages to Amitābha Buddha. The timing is considered crucial, as it should last eight to twenty-four hours from the time when the deceased stopped breathing. During this period, people in the vicinity are prohibited from touching the body or crying. The chanting is believed to eliminate bad karma and summon Amitābha to carry the deceased over to be reborn in the Pure Land (往生極樂, *wangsheng jile*). It is further believed that interruption of the service, decreases the chance that the departed will attain an auspicious rebirth.

Pure Land beliefs have become a mainstream in Chinese Buddhism since the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912). Due to its simplicity and claimed efficaciousness, the Pure Land style chanting of the Buddha's name merged broadly into funerary rites, and this created a market-demand for such services. Some providers of said services have merely shaved their heads without taking precepts or undergoing religious training. Elite monastics see this as degrading Buddhism. Republican Buddhists like Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947) reacted to this type of Buddhism, and advocated for a more rational and socially engaged practice which came to be known as "Buddhificationism" (*fohua* 佛化) or "New Buddhism" (新佛教, *xin fojiao*). This version of Buddhism keeps its distance from death rituals, and distances itself from faith in Amitābha's Pure Land, in order to avoid being seen as superstitious or connected with negative images of popular Buddhism. Taixu indicated that the training ground to achieve Buddhahood was one's present life in the human realm (人生, *rensheng*). Clearly, these were the basic ideas that characterize Humanistic Buddhism as observable in Taiwan nowadays.

The reasons why this background is essential for understanding Hsing Yun's death rites will become apparent in the following discussion.

Below, a broader picture of the generalities of Buddhist death will be presented. Here too, the image of death as a passage from this realm to another, from a flesh body to something unknown, is drawn upon, and Buddhists who are confident that they can control part of that sequence, are expected to demonstrate it in a tangible way. To be noted, most of these phenomena can apply to both monastics and laity. Indeed, even non-Buddhists have been known to exhibit these phenomena. Foreknowledge of one's time of death (預知時至, *yuzhi shizhi*), for instance, is rather common among devoted practitioners. It is not surprising that ordinary people sometimes demonstrate this ability, even accidently. Other "auspicious signs" (瑞相, *ruixiang*) include exuding pleasant smells (異香, *yixiang*), dying in the seated posture (坐化, *zuohua*), leaving behind bodily relics (舍利, *śarīra*; *sheli*), and non-burning or non-decaying, which is known as leaving behind a whole-body relic (全身舍利, *quanshen sheli*). Cases of the above can be found in traditional texts such as biographies of eminent monks and multiple Pure Land Buddhist biographies, as well as, recent word-of-mouth or documented recollections within various Buddhist communities.

This study will argue, however, that in the modern and contemporary era, high-profile demonstrations of auspicious deaths have increasingly become a privilege reserved for monastics. These demonstrations are meant to mark the continuity of a monastic's religious life as extraordinary or present their life from a different angle. Buddhism, which has undergone many significant reforms during Taixu's lifetime and more recently, has modified in a knowledge-oriented direction that emphasizes doctrinal and textual studies, as well as participation in social welfare activities. For many monastics and lay practitioners alike, their lives are not especially devoted to the pursut of spiritual power and the corresponding practices of cultivation, as these are sometimes deemed irrational. Still there have been notable instances of well-known auspicious deaths, and most of these cases have involved monks. Taixu, for example, died young, and when he was cremated, a portion of his heart formed an interconnected crystalline structure which was passed down as a sacred relic (an "unburnable heart") that reminds devotees of his this-worldly system of thought and spiritual practices.

To examine this matter in further depth, it will be necessary to explain a number of mortuary rites. These practices are meant to convey a sacred nature to wider public. What constitutes auspicious signs during the death of Buddhist individuals is often overly subjective. For laity and lesser-known monastics, either the relatives of the deceased observe the body of the departed and determine there were auspicious signs, or they might state that they had visions of buddhas, bodhisattvas, or lotuses. Ultimately, these are no more than personal experiences and remain in a fairly private domain. For eminent monastics; however, their death rites are examined for physical evidence, and more crucially, these rites are witnessed by the masses, photographed, and recorded

via audio and visual mediums.

Two rites that will be briefly explained below are *zuogang* (坐缸, premortem sitting or postmortem placement into a seated posture within a large earthenware jar) and traditional cremation (茶毗, *tupi*).[1] Both of these contemporary rites for sacred deaths within Buddhism directly link to the discussion of the rites recently held for Master Hsing Yun.

Zuogang

This term, literally meaning "sitting (in a) tub," is one of the most common ways to produce a whole-body relic. This is achieved by placing the deceased's body into an earthenware tub, and then placing another upside-down tub on top of it like a cap. Once sealed, this enables the body to dry out naturally. Substances that assist in drying are sometimes used (charcoal, lime, various desiccants, and so on). Years later if the body resists decay, it is processed and then gilded to create the appearance of a 'golden body' (金身, *jinshen*). The resulting 'flesh-body bodhisattva' (肉身菩薩, *roushen pusa*) is then be enshrined and venerated.

Although various customs Western scholars term 'mummification' can be traced back to ancient China, over ten flesh-body bodhisattvas have occurred in Taiwan mainly in the second half of the last century. Many of the cases occurred within popular folk religion rather than Buddhism.[2] Among the Buddhist examples, Venerable Cihang (慈航 1895–1954) was purportedly the 'first,' and his remains the most well-known case. This is why, as will later be apparent, when Hsing Yun's death rites were first partly revealed to the public, scholars and many in the media (who likely relied upon testimony from the former) suspected that *zuogang* would be carried out the way it had been done for Cihang.

Indeed, Cihang case serve as a sort of paradigm as he made the unfamiliar method of tub-sitting widely known to the Taiwanese island. Being a mainlander as well as Taixu's disciple, he had an overwhelmingly positive reputation among Buddhists. This helped his allegedly miraculous mortuary rites gain acceptance even among individuals who prided themselves on their rationality. In this research, it is posited that after his example gained recognition, *zuogang* became a byword for the process of Buddhist and also non-Buddhist mummification. Later in the 1970s, another monastic, Venerable Qingyan (清嚴, 1924–1970) was also mummified via a process that closely followed the model established by Cihang (Gildow and Bingenheimer, 2002).

To bring a broader context here, it is worth noting that the earthenware pot, jar, or urn burial was an ancient method, notably in prehistoric times, across different cultures. Archaeological reports indicate that this distinct style of casket was often used for remains of infants, children, and those who died in their early youth; however, it was not strictly limited to those cases. Records on eighteenth century Taiwan show it was local custom in a region mid-south of the island, which employed a large earthenware

tub to enclose the body for burial under the family's house (Huang, 1879). Given such containers were a daily household item for storage, they were presumably more accessible than wooden caskets, and these containers were also cheaper and more compatible with human-living areas.

In the context of Buddhist funerary usage, the fact that receptacles are able to contain a seated body make them suitable for monastics and laity if they died in a meditative posture or were arranged in such a position post-mortem. The vessel, a wooden box or earthenware tub, for this usage is called a ***kan*** (龕).[3]

Data gathered by Yetts (1911) and his observations show that in the middle and lower Yangtze River region in the early last century, earthenware tubs were commonly used in monastic death rites. Both cremation and burial may require a ***kan***, especially in the case of an eminent monk, the final interment will not be carried out for at least a week. Burial could be postponed for months or even years. During the time prior to burial, a corpse is placed in a ***kan*** and kept in the monastery. The burial tub procedure was indicated previously when it was described as an upright ~~jar~~tub, with the body inside, which is covered with an upside down and sealed along the rims of the two ~~jars~~. Ordinarily, leaving behind a flesh-body relic, requires a special diet meant to emaciate body prior to death. Tubs (jars, other large vessels, and so on) of these kinds are meant to be reopened two or three years after the time of sealing. In mummification cases where *zuogang* was not performed, the bodies might still dry naturally (sometimes by accident), sometimes smoked into that state via incense, or prepared by removing viscera.

To further this research argument, it is important to cover the details concerning the first Taiwanese Buddhist mummy. One unique aspect to note is that, strictly speaking, Cihang was not a traditional ascetic. It was rather the case that his religious career had many modernized aspects. His postmortem image is, by and large, in contrast to his previous life, and many speculated that the precedent he set could foreshadow Hsing Yun's own potential use of the *zuogang* method.[4]

Multiple cases studies have been done on Cihang's different stages of wandering and promoting dharma in Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Stefania Travagnin (2006) has specifically discussed thoroughly his death, enshrinement, and reactions from the Buddhist community. Born into a notable family in 1895, Cihang, then named Ai Jirong (艾繼榮) lived in Jianning, a county in the northern part of Fujian. Before become a renunciant monastic, he lost both of his parents successively. Then under Venerable Zizhong (自忠), he received his tonsure, and soon, full ordination in Nengren Monastery (能仁寺).

When he began to wander around sacred sites and monasteries, two factors are worth noting: one, is that he had been to Mount Jiuhua, which has deep ties to the phenomenon of whole-body relics. This might have affected Cihang, who eventually decided to adopt this way for his own death rites.[5] Second, as many monastics did, he became part of the new Buddhism network through one of Taixu's sangha training

facilities, the Minnan Buddhist Seminary (閩南佛學院). Though previously learning Chan, Tiantai, and Pure Land from various masters at different sites, at Minnan he had the chance to study closely under Taixu, and he internalized ideas regarding social engagement which became crucial to his later career.

Modernized education carried out at the seminary challenged many of the students who struggled under the unfamiliar system. One reported incident recorded that the dean, Venerable Daxing (大醒, 1900–1952) once humiliated Cihang for being illiterate. He was also known to be poor at composition. (Kan, 1996) Instead of becoming frustrated by these criticisms, Cihang studied diligently, founded the Buddhist Studies Department and-embarked on sangha training course as well as social education later on when he served as the abbot of Yingjiang Monastery (迎江寺) in Anqing.

From 1930 to 1935, he traveled from Hong Kong to Burma and established a local Chinese Buddhist Studies Association (中國佛學會) in Rangoon. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, he joined the international delegation of Taixu again traveling to countries of South and Southeast Asia where he stayed in Malaysia and Singapore. Together with laymen such as Bi Junhui (畢俊輝, 1906–1981), Cihang continued to promote what he believed to be the "lifebuoys of Buddhism"; namely "education, culture, and social welfare." Since for Republican monastic elites the spiritual tradition entailed struggles with the fate of China, the way to adjust was understood to be through a total reform.

Yet it is insufficient to think of the master as only a modern monk. Examining his life more deeply reveals that he had mixed qualities. Reflecting back on their time in Taixu's Sangha Training Course (僧伽訓練班) at Pilu Monastery (毘盧寺), Nanjing, Venerable Daoyuan (道源, 1900–1988), an acquaintance of Cihang, mentioned that Cihang was unlike other "new monks" who were unwilling to wear dharma robes and carry prayer beads. Cihang wore a robe while prostrating every day at the main hall (Daoyuan, 1954). To put it simply, Cihang consciously maintained what then would have been categorized as "outdated" practiices as a compromise between traditional and modern sensibilities. Another example is that in Penang after the death of Taixu, he received his dharma lineage from Venerable Yuanying (圓瑛, 1878–1953), who, to some extent, had a rivalry with Taixu over the national Buddhist association, and also in terms of their competing views on modernization. The action of receiving his dharma lineage in this manner was seen by many in the community of new monks as controversial, and this led to further challenges for him during his time in Taiwan.

In 1948, Cihang made his last border-crossing under the invitation of Venerable Miaoguo (妙果, 1884–1964), the abbot of Yuanguang Monastery (圓光寺). This phase of his religious career seemed full of suffering. During seminary, he and Miaoguo worked together, but only for a short period. Along with the Kuomintang regime's retreat the following year, some young monks who came from the mainland were eager to find a place to stay. Cihang showed great compassion to them, but Miaoguo refused to include more monks. He then transferred junior monks from one monastery to

another; however, due to economic factors, it was not easy to accommodate them. The worst was yet to come; that same year, due to fears of communist infiltration, many monastics from the mainland were taken into custody. Cihang was not spared from this incident, and the majority of high-ranking monks did nothing to intervene. Even after his release, this episode was a shadow that lingered over him for quite some time, and he remained under surveillance by the ruling regime.

Cihang finally settled in a suburb in Taipei where he lived out his remaining years. Nuns of the Jingxiu Chan Monastery (靜修禪院) were willing to build a place from him, the Maitreya Inner Hall (彌勒內院), which was completed in August 1950. This hall was also an institute that could accept young monastics. The name was due to Cihang's continuation of the Maitreya faith practiced by Taixu; yet, quite interestingly, Cihang himself has an appearance similar to the Chinese version of Maitreya Buddha. Despite the various miseries he had endured, Cihang was a widely welcomed dharma propagator and teacher who was deeply loved by devotees and disciples. His Dharma lectures attracted mass crowds, and one particular memorial article (Zhong, 1954) praised him as "the best guiding teacher for beginners" (*jieyin chuji de daoshi* 接引初機的導師). Student monks were especially grateful to him since he was the one provided them with the most care on the island.

With Cihang's life now reviewed, the following crucial question can be addressed: why did he chose *zuogang* as one of his mortuary rites in hopes of becoming a flesh-body bodhisattva? He foresaw the time of his death three years in advance and left a will six months prior to his death. The will addressed numerous matter, and clearly indicated "…to deal with…" the remains without coffin or cremation, but instead, to use a big tub "… place (my body)…" in lotus posture and "… set it at…" the back hill. Three years later the tub is to be opened, and if "…the corpse…" has fallen apart and decayed, leave it in the earth. If it remains intact, gild and enshrine it in stupa or the monastery." This style of advanced directive was claimed by a disciple to be "unprecedented" (Cichun, 1959). Although many among followers were suspicious of the message and some thought Cihang was joking since he was a humorous person, while others suggested there the directive contained a secret meaning to be contemplated.

As three years passed, opinions on whether to open the tub (開缸, *kaigang*) varied. It was Venerable Dao'an (道安, 1907–1977) who presided over the Commemoration Committee which decided to extend the original time period to five years. Yet in 1959, this hesitation led to a vote on the matter, and on May 19th, a tub-opening ceremony was held. Cihang's remains were found to be in an auspicious state, and the first wide-known full-body relic in Taiwan created quite a stir in society. Reports dominated newspapers coverage for days. People poured into the site to see it for themselves in-person and pay their respects. Buddhists, many of whom were surprised and delighted, joined the discussions and said the result was due to the spiritual practices and virtue of Master Cihang. They pointed out that this case was not like other historical mummies

(such as those from Egypt), since none of the internal organs had been removed and since his hair, beard, and eyebrows all continued to grow. The successful drying process made his body much thinner and darkened his skin; however, it was recorded that his body remained elastic.

To answer the question posited two paragraphs above, religiously speaking, if Cihang is taken as a manifestation of a bodhisattva, he revealed lingering imperfections in terms of his personality and degree of ability. On the other hand, through great compassion and aspirations, the dharma emerged from within his turbulent life. By adopting *zuogang* Cihang conveyed the message that despite challenges, a person's level of attainment eventually is revealed through their death. There could also have been other strategic motivations. Hsing Yun (2013) who knew Cihang quite well, guessed that he had considered it a way to keep disciples and devotees waiting for at least the three years, and that delay would prevent them from scattering or losing enthusiasm. Hsing Yun himself was against opening the tub, since he believed that all organic matter is subject to decay.

Cremation

Buddhist cremation and the related phenomenon of *śarīra* worship are no less complicated than mummified whole-body relics. The production and credibility of relics derived through cremation are sometimes met with doubt or held to the scrutiny of scientific criterion. Most Buddhists believe through proper practice, and especially through Pure Land style chanting of homages to Buddha (念佛, *nianfo*), some "material" sign will be left behind after cremation. Opposite opinions include those from medical professionals who consider relics to result from various physical conditions. In addition, those who argue for purely physical causes tend to further state that low-heat cremation is a necessary component that enables relics to form.

According to this more scientifically-oriented explanation, śarīra can hardly be said have manifested due to practice, morality, or other such factors. It is more likely, that those who desire relics connected to their relatives or masters create the conditions that ensure the highest likelihood of the formation of relics. Non-Buddhists do not typically sift through ashes looking for relics, and as such, it is hardly surprising that they do not find these objects. Some modern rational Buddhists have taken to downplaying the meaning of relics. They reason that it is not essential to doctrinal teachings. Some even agree with the physical explanations of how śarīra are formed.

For the "enchanted" though, cremation today has become more and more problematic. Crematoriums in urban areas use furnaces that reach one thousand degrees Celsius or more to maximize efficiency. High-heat cremations make the formation of relics unlikely for Buddhists who put their faith and practice through this rather literal test of fire.[6] Crematoriums in less populated areas or venues with specially made furnaces are better suited for the pursuit of material results.

Two representative cases of Buddhist cremation relics were those of reputed incarnated Buddhas in post-war Taiwan. The senior figure was the seventh (or nineteenth according to legend) Jangiya Khutughtu (章嘉呼圖克圖, *Zhangjia Hutuketu*, 1890–1957), and the other was the fifth Kanjurwa Khutughtu (甘珠呼圖克圖, *Ganzhu Hutuketu*, 1914–1978). Jangiya was one of the most eminent monastics who retreated with the Kuomintang regime to the island. Since the Qing Dynasty, the incarnations were close to rulers. They constantly lived in capital and were responsible for the religious missions of inner Mongolia and various other regions. Privileges for these preceptors (國師, *guoshi*) were maintained during the Republican period by awarding them high positions replete with titles such as the "Master of Protecting the Country, Pure Enlightenment, and the Auxiliary of Dharma" (護國淨覺輔教大師, *huguo jingjue fujiao dashi*).

After he died in March 4th 1957 of gastric cancer, the funeral of Jangiya was supported by the regime. Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石, 1887–1975) led more than a thousand government officials in attending the ceremony. A marching band was also sent to take part in the procession. He was cremated in Beitou, a suburb of Taipei, beside which his relic stupa still stands. During the rites, Kanjurwa lit the fire. There were "eight dishes of small colored śarīras" and "four plates of śarīra flowers and large śarīras." The total number of relics was claimed to be around six thousand in total. It is worth noting that while that massive number of relics was understood as evidence of the Khutughtu's status, as time passed, these relics faded from memory for local Buddhists. The stupa went on to be covered by overgrown grass and even faced the risk of being torn down. Through media reports, civil efforts came in, and only then did the city government resolve the issue by recognizing it as historic site. (Lefeng, 2018) Naturally, a renovation was scheduled, and it was recently completed.

To some extent, the value of relics is decided by the living devoted Buddhists. The mere existence of śarīra relics is not especially meaningful if no one feels compelled to venerate them. Kanjurwa's case is another standard example. His tradition was also Mongolian, and he migrated to Taiwan in 1949. The relationship between this younger "living buddha" and rulers was probably not as prominent as it was for Jangiya. After the latter's passing, Kanjurwa entered the leadership circle of Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (中國佛教會, *zhongguo fojiao hui*) for a while; however, he also maintained his own preaching audiences and supporters.

Kanjurwa died on June 13th 1978. At the end of the month, a cremation stupa was built at Fayu Monastery (法雨寺) in Beitou. Although details are unclear, his remains were said to have been exposed to flames for five-day five-night period. On the seventh day when his disciples were picking relics from the ashes, they "unexpectedly" found that the fires had failed to burn a large part of their master's body. This resulted in an unusual relic-body. It was recognized as miraculous matter. Gildow and Bingenheimer (2002) based on their sources indicate that the product was only due to the improper handling of the rites. The relic-body enshrined in his vihāra located in Xindian (新店),

but later something deeply unfortunate transpired. A rape case happened there in 1992, and this led to the closure of the site. The scene that was once crowded with worshippers no longer exists, and a desolate vihāra is all that remains.[7] After thirty years passed, the site was renovated and reopened via support that mainly came from the former Minister of National Defense, as well as the Minister of the Veterans Affairs Council, Feng Shih-kuan (馮世寬 1945–).[8]

Hsing Yun's Mortuary Rites

The abovementioned Buddhist deaths, mortuary rites, and relics serve as an important basis to understand the more recent events and those of Hsing Yun in particular. On the night of February 5th 2023, news of Hsing Yun's death broke after years of his personal public silence. Buddhists both in and outside the Fo Guang Shan circle either saw this coming and were prepared, or were abruptly shocked. They were witnessing the end of an era. The generation which involved Hsing Yun himself and other monastic mainlanders and their role as leaders of Taiwanese Buddhism symbolically ended with his passing.

At first, caution prevailed as many wondered whether the unverified news may have been misreported. Early the next morning, a ceremony at Fo Guang Shan took place, and people were probably rather stunned by what they saw. The master's remains were encased in a white tub with decorative border; and a sort of cap on the top. It looked more like an Indian style stupa, and later verifed to be a stupa (塔, *ta*) rather than a tub (缸, *gang*). Below, there was a lotus-shape pedestal mainly made of wood. The whole set was taller than a human.



Figure 1. Hsing Yun's stupa-like casket (photograph by author [2023])

It is worth noting that the process allowing the masses to pay homage to the master's remains, which for figures like Hsing Yun would be normally necessary, was not observed. Perhaps only close disciples were around when enclosing of the body (真身封龕, *zhenshen fengkan*, the official term) was carried out privately. The "stupa" was later moved to the memorial venue. After being moved, it was viewable by the public.

Confusion began to emerge. Many of those who remembered Cihang's *zuogang* had the instinct to speculate that something would be done. That would have been rather surprising though, as it might contradict the modernized Buddhism promoted by Hsing Yun and his followers. For most, those rites fall under the classification of being traditional, mystical. Yet as soon as speculation that Hsing Yun might be on his way to becoming a flesh-body bodhisattva, it was announced that he would be cremated in a matter of days.

What was even more perplexing was that the media seemed to be unaware that *zuogang* and *tupi* are completely distinct death rites. The two rites lead to separate disposal methods and different material results in terms of the type of relic(s) produced. A more responsible press, would have taken great care not to conflate these radically different rituals. According to the reports, they had the understanding that Hsing Yun's *zuogang* was based on his will. At the same time though, preparation for his cremation was underway. Suffice it to say that the deceased master was seated in a casket (*kan*) as one stage of his preliminary rites as Yetts described. As for what would be done with the *kan*, whether it be kept to preserve the body, buried, or cremated, that would be determined by either Hsing Yun's will or by his disciples.

As a matter of fact, it is not clear whether he had chosen to follow the *zuogang* rites in an attempt to produce a relic-body. In 2013, back when he was eighty-five, he composed an article titled "Sincere Confession: My Last Order" (真誠的告白：我最後的囑咐, *Zhencheng de gaobai: Wo zuihou de zhufu*, 2015). This was taken as his open will, and in it, he interestingly said "I shall leave behind no relic-bits" (我沒有舍利子, *wo meiyou sheli zi*, literally, "I have no śarīra"). In terms of analysis, his words semantically do not preclude the production of a flesh-body relic, yet this cannot be taken too hastily. There could be several explanations. As for the question of why a master of Humanistic Buddhism would wish to become a corporeal immortal, that decision would have indicated the master's willingness to stay in this "human world" as a comfort or source of inspiration to sentient beings.

The confusion was, in part, due to the lack of clarity and immediate response from Fo Guang Shan officials. Among other considerations, in the same will Hsing Yun claims he had no personal savings, but only had a charitable educational trust fund of more than a billion dollars which mainly came from income derived from his writings and calligraphy. However, elsewhere he mentioned the assets donated to the fund were in excess of twenty million dollars. Different media outlets opted to report only one figure or the other (one billion or twenty million), and the general population hardly knew

which was accurate.[9]

On February 8th, the fourth day after the master's passing, Fo Guang Shan indirectly responded to the *zuogang* confusion via its online media. The *Merit Times*, the *Life News Agency*, and the websites operated by Fo Guang branches, posted same article titled, "Why Master Hsing Yun Adopted a Sitting-stupa Cremation," composed by the president of Merit Times, Venerable Miaoxi (妙熙). Multiple ideas were brought up in this short article that had been provided for clarification. For the most important, the widely circulated speculation that *zuogang* would be used in an effort to produce a whole-body relic was overthrown. The author explained the rites being observed were such that Hsing Yun's casket imitated the style of Parinirvana Stupa,[10] wherein the "dharma-body, true body" (法體真身, *fati zhenshen*) sits for seven days until cremation, and this is called a "sitting-stupa cremation" (坐塔荼毗, *zuota tupi*).

She further connected the ideas of a sitting-stupa and "dying in a seated posture" by indicating that the master passed in meditative position, and was not manipulated into that posture postmortem (this is the original, intended use of a *kan*; a receptacle for an "already" seated body). Miaoxi, through a Q&A format, pointed out differences between sacred and the mundane phenomena. Conventions dictate that auspicious signs serve as a verification of a practitioner's attainment, as well as a good death without suffering and pain. Although Hsing Yun's passing is consistent with this expectation, naturally, detractors will remain suspicious that the master was post-facto sanctified. Furthermore, interestingly and perhaps ironically, the young disciple mentioned Hsing Yun's instruction of leaving behind no relics (at that time he had not yet been cremated and relics had not yet been retrieved) and expounded that his intent was to encourage others not obsess over śarīra beliefs and veneration.

With regards to this clarification, it can be observed that the article stated "tradition" was being followed; however, much of the rhetoric was recently only "invented." Precedents may exist for a seated-stupa cremation in Buddhist hagiographies; however, Hsing Yun's *kan* does not follow any previous example. It is certainly of interest that his casket was inspired by the Buddha's Parinirvana Stupa. Furthermore, it makes sense for there to be a certain degree of invention given that Fo Guang Shan is known for its modern sensibilities.

With regard to the disposal of the *kan*, there has been a great deal of speculation, but in this article, it is inferred that Hsing Yun's remains being preserved in that receptacle may have at one point been considered. The reason is that it seems Fo Guang Shan did not have an exact plan for how to deal with this matter and whether or not cremation would ultimately be used when they designed the stupa-style casket. According to media reports, discussion about cremation between the personnel of Fo Guang Shan and Daxian Monastery (大仙寺) continued until February 7th. The latter, which owns a crematorium, had received request from Fo Guang Shan and undertook the task, but preceding operation was said to have been a rush-order. Apparently, there were some technical issues resulting from the size of the casket being significantly

larger than a standard-sized coffin.[11] From these details it can be surmised that the the means to dispose of the remains had only been recently decided.

It turns out Daxian Monastery crematorium had handled other cases of high-ranking and well-known monastics over the past few years, including Wei Chueh (惟覺, 1928–2016), another founder of one of "Taiwan's four Buddhist mountains," Chung Tai Shan (中台山), and Chin Kung (淨空, 1927–2022), a Pure Land master and the founder of the Buddha Educational Foundation (佛陀教育基金會). Both cremations resulted in relic flowers but no reports of relic-bits. It is worth noting that the furnace at the crematorium runs at a lower-temperature than those of normal urban crematoriums. It burns below nine hundred degrees according to sources. It is unclear whether the choosing of the site was due to hopes of producing śarīra. But after the relics of Hsing Yun had been collected and publicly announced, it was indeed controversial due to the way in which it potentially contradicted Hsing Yun's written will. The credibility of those "countless" round and smooth relics, some of which resembled pearls was questioned as well.[12]

Of potentially greater issue though is the context behind the encasement of the master's bodily remains. Namely, the attitude towards death presented by Hsing Yun, how it was shaped by the social circumstances of the modern era, and how it was expanded to an internal culture at Fo Guang Shan are all ultimately worthy of interest. Moreover, it is fascinating that the relics potentially contradict the faith commonly attributed to Fo Guang Shan.

The endeavors and achievements of Hsing Yun in promoting Humanistic Buddhism is overwhelmingly admired by Buddhists both inside and outside of Fo Guang Shan. Though his contact with Taixu was rather brief, he managed to gain recognition as one of the main successors of Taixu in Taiwan (Pittman, 2001). The time of Republican period was one wherein Buddhism faced challenges from secular worldviews and values. Taixu used words that emerging intellectuals and middle class could understand while expounding Buddhism's commonalities with some aspects of the Western intellectual tradition known to readers of that time. He upheld the Buddhist worldview as superior, as it tends to examine phenomena more deeply and result in greater overall wellness. It was reckoned that since modern citizens participate in political activities, labor, and entertainment, modern Buddhists should also expand their Buddhism into these avenues.

To rephrase this more simply, this movement determined that Buddhism ought to honor tradition, but do so while incorporating new understandings and necessary modifications. This emerging new culture was known by Buddhist modernists as "Buddhification," and it can be seen as a more secular and popularized (大眾化, *dazhong hua*) Buddhism. Hsing Yun went even further than Taixu in pursuit of this style of Buddhism. He also had better conditions to accomplish than his predecessor.

As a monastic who had been born in Jiangsu (江蘇), Hsing Yun was young when followed the Kuomintang army's landing on Taiwan. During the post-war period, a

decade or so, the good-looking and talented Hsing Yun cultivated his audience. He wrote well-received Buddhist pop literature, and some of these works were adapted into plays and films. This is how he achieved fame early in his career. In the middle of the 1960s, Hsing Yun's dharma propagation career saw him transferred from the northern to southern part of Taiwan. He built a seminary on desolate hill surrounded by a bamboo forest and woods. This was the beginning of Fo Guang Shan. Back then, his focuses were on sangha education and cultural activities. As the institution expanded and martial law was lifted in 1987, social participation diversified into domains such as education within the system, charity, and sports.

This type of intense engagement had not existed in traditional Buddhism, and as was mentioned earlier this was a reaction to both outside changes such social circumstances, and also to inner problems. Repentance, rituals, and chanting Buddha's name on behalf of the dead were deemed by many to be over-emphasized. These practices led Buddhism to be linked to death and passiveness. The image of monasticism as a whole was thereby implicated. At that same time, the Pure Land faith was increasingly accused of not caring about the world.

In turning the tide, the concern of Hsing Yun was that of worldly matters with which Buddhists could engage in order to propagate dharma broadly and to as large an audience as possible. He wished to present Buddhism as a youthful and vivid religion. Besides the success of his Buddhist novels and films, the master proved himself to be charismatic and skilled in mobilizing young people. Needless to say, generating capital was a crucial factor behind his successful career. Fo Guang Shan, like other groups in Taiwan, was fortunate to have developed during the island's economic boom, and the movement also enjoyed support from overseas Chinese.

Holding these considerable resources, Hsing Yun advanced Buddhist popularization to the maximum degree possible. In recent years, those visiting Fo Guang Shan during the Chinese New Year period will find that the mountain has been created like a "Theme Park for Humanistic Buddhism," with all varieties of entertainment such as concerts, fireworks, drone light shows, shopping, restaurants, carnival parades, museums, 3-D films, and even a street full of vegetarian food vendors. One could say Fo Guang Shan has its own version of most common forms of leisure and entertainment. Some describe the institution as a "department store" (I feel "religious enterprise" might be more fitting). Furthermore, the religious community at Fo Guang Shan do not tend to discuss death, and the reason for doing so is fairly obvious.

This is done to disconnect the perceived ties between death and Buddhism and to avoid generating a potentially negative image. Fo Guang Shan formed a unique culture wherein insiders normally greet each other by saying "auspicious" (吉祥, *jixiang*), instead of following the Chinese Buddhist habit saying Amitābha (阿彌陀佛, *amituo fo*). The wording clearly shows a this-worldly and positive direction, and it can be taken as another example of this recurrent topic in the Fo Guang environment. Regarding the afterlife, Hsing Yun was like other masters of Humanistic Buddhism who have no

interest in attaining a Pure Land rebirth. He told disciples that he will continue to be a monk in his next life. During his death rituals, the masses chanted the name of Śākyamuni Buddha, which was rare on this kind of occasion.



Figure 2. The concert and light show at Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum (photograph by author [2023])

Therefore, when Hsing Yun asserted in his will that he will leave behind no relic-bits, this statement matches the beliefs he stated throughout his life. Conceptually, relics honor the dead, but they can hardly be said to produce "worldly" benefits for society. He also instructed that the rites and rituals observed should be kept as simple as possible. A model of a simplified funeral for an eminent monastic was held for Sheng Yen, the founder of Dharma Drum Mountain, who also set a precedent not to collect relics.[13] All in all, this article argues the result of Hsing Yun's cremation still struggled with the stereotype of a traditional good death or sacred death in the Buddhist context. The material response was perhaps what Fo Guang Shan's numerous devotees from around the globe wished to have, especially after years of silence of the master. They did not even see his remains, due to the tendency to deemphasize death. Some may conclude that the end product was due a tension between or mixture of "old" and "new."

Conclusion

It is fascinating that Hsing Yun's legacy revives widespread discussion of mortuary rites. That noise in part resulted from contemporary people not understanding the traditional funerary rites for high-ranking monastics and those believed to have achieved spiritual attainments. If the function of a *kan,* and its typical usage and variety of outcomes were better understood, the possibility that he aspired to become a bodily immortal would have been understood as just one of numerous possibilities. Cihang's

case foreshadowed this possibility. Furthermore, the design of the *kan* and the later clarifying statements can be considered evidence of invention to some extent.

Furthermore, the modern system of thought instructed by Taixu, Hsing Yun, and others tends to highlight human life and generally avoids linking Buddhism to death. One can say this has even become a sort of ideology. Previously in this article, it was shown how it is these idfeological tendencies are deeply rooted inside the Fo Guang Shan environment, and therefore, one would naturally expect these values to be mirrored during the founder's final rites. Some speculation can be made as to why Hsing Yun's death was covered in a way that did not permit the public to view and pay respects to his pre-cremated remains; opting instead to have his last image be that of a master privately seated within a stupa-like *kan*. In the Humanistic Buddhist context and Fo Guang Shan's version in particular, it just cannot be forgotten that death-related concepts, practices, and physical death itself tend to be hidden since they do not manifest the positivity of life.

As for the relics, these are trickier to characterize. Experiences documented in texts and testimony from Buddhists indicate a perceived connection between material results and religious accomplishments. It was not easy to eliminate this long-standing convention even Hsing Yun himself expressed reservations about it in his will. The religious sentiment of hundreds of thousands of the devotees cannot easily be dismissed. Their faith in Master Hsing Yun must be respected as they are the economic pillar of Fo Guang Shan's sizable international organization. Conversely, the high-profile public declaration brought some inevitable criticism. This issue should not be overlooked; however, it can also be understood as a manifestation of the core of tension between traditional Buddhism and modern Buddhism. Many decades after the introduction of the rational milieu, Buddhists have not given up searching for signs of sacredness, and their quest will no doubt continue in the future.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

[1] It should be noted that *tupi* is used in the context of monastics. The term is likely to be Indian-originated. There is an equivalent word in Pali, jhāpita, meaning "cremation." In standard Chinese, cremation generally is called "*huohua* (火化)" or "*huozang* (火葬)."

[2] For more information on mummification in Chinese Buddhism refer to Demiéville (1965), Faure (1992), Sharf (1992), Matsumoto (1993), and more recently Ritzinger and Bingenheimer (2006). These authors provide a critical review of previous works. For information on whole-body relics in Taiwan, see Gildow and Bingenheimer (2002), Gildow (2005; 2011), and Travagnin (2006; 2016).

[3] See also the description of Yetts (1911), in which he refers to the deceased monastic under such a condition as a "priest sitting in the *kan*" (坐龕和尚, *zuokan heshang*).

[4] To avoid confusion here, *zuogang* in this context specifically means to leave a flesh-body. Aside from this though, they both were seated in a type of *kan*, and little difference can be observed.

[5] Gildow and Bingenheimer (2002) seem to suggest this potential connection, while Travagnin (2006) references a saying that points out the same thing. And it is said Qingyan had traveled to Mount Jiuhua, as well (Kan, 1996).

[6] However, regarding the temperatures of the furnaces at different crematoriums and which conditions are conducive to producing relics, data from the sources is not entirely consistent. What is provided here are just relative numbers.

[7] See also Lu (1993).

[8] The brother of Kanjurwa who inherited the vihāra was a veteran. The property was then taken over by the Veterans and Dependents Foundation after his death.

[9] Another issue is that some maintain that Hsing Yun was born in 1922 and died at the age of 102.

[10] The Stupa located in Kushinagar, north India, purportedly where the Buddha passed away. The Parinirvana Temple as well as the Stupa thus serve to commemorate his nirvana.

[11] As a result, their solution was to lay down the "stupa" allowing it to enter the furnace to be cremated.

[12] Taiwanese Buddhist scholar, Chiang Tsanteng (江燦騰), posits these questions on his personal website, and indicates his suspicion that the relics are artificial. He makes reference to previous forgeries of Tibetan dzi beads (天珠, *tianzhu*) and relics in Taiwan, suggesting such forged relics are not a new phenomenon. Chiang's points have been echoed by others.

[13] It is said, according to who witnessed the cremation, that Sheng Yen left many colorful relic flowers and bead-shaped relics. Yet the sangha group that followed the master's instructions did not verify these and simply ground his remains into powdered ashes.

References

Cichun 1959 — "Cihang Pusa Buke Siyi." *The Buddhism Today* 27: 22–27. [Chinese Language Text] 慈純, 《慈航菩薩不可思議》, 今日佛教雜誌社.

Daoyuan 1954 — "Ku Cihang Fashi." *Bodhedrum* 19: 6–7. [Chinese Language Text] 哭慈航法師, 《菩提樹》 19: 6–7. http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/DLMBS/en/search/search_detail.jsp?seq=578314

Demiéville, Paul 1965 — "Momies d'Extrême-Orient." *Journal des Savants*: 144–170.

Faure, Bernard 1992 — "Relics and Flesh Bodies the Creation of Ch'an Pilgrimage Sites." In Susan Naquin and Chün-Fang Yü (eds.), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, 150–189. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gildow, Douglas 2005 — "Flesh Bodies, Stiff Corpses, and Gathered Gold: Mummy Worship, Corpse Processing, and Mortuary Ritual in Contemporary Taiwan." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 33: 1–37.

2011 — "The Reintroduction and Diffusion of Mummification Practices in Taiwan, 1959–2011". 4th Congress of the Asia & Pacific Network (4ème Congrès du Réseau Asie & Pacifique).

Gildow, Douglas and Marcus Bingenheimer 2002 — "Buddhist Mummification in Taiwan: Two Case Studies." *Asia Major* 15(2): 87–127.

Hsing, Yun 2013 — "Dalu Senglu Zai Taiwan." In H. Yun (eds.), *Bainian Foyuan 7: Seng Xin Pian 1*, 184–263. Gaoxiong: Foguang. [Chinese Language Text] 星雲, 《大陸僧侶在台灣》, 《百年佛緣》 7: 僧信篇 1, 高雄: 佛光出版社.

2015 — "Zhencheng De Gaobai: Wo Zuihou De Zhufudalu Senglu Zai Taiwan." In H. Yun (eds.), *Pinseng Youhua Yaoshuo*, 577–586. Taibei: Fubao Wenhua. [Chinese

Language Text] 星雲,《真誠的告白: 我最後的囑咐》, 《貧僧有話要說》.

Huang, Shujing 1879 *Taihai Shicha Lu*. [Chinese Language Text] 黃叔璥,《臺海使槎錄: 謙德堂 刻本》.

Kan, Zhengzong 1996 *Taiwan Gao Seng*. Taibei: Bodhi Ever Green. [Chinese Language Text] 闞正宗, 《台灣高僧》, 菩提長青出版社.

Lefeng 2018 "Taiwan Fojiao Shengdi Zhangjia Huofo Sheli Ta". YAHOO accssed on 11 May 2023 [Chinese Language Text] 樂風, 台灣佛教聖地章嘉活佛舍利塔. https://ynews.page.link/mQUY.

Lu, Buwen 1993 *Roushen Pusa Chuanqi*Taipei: Kaijin Wenhua. [Chinese Language Text] 呂不聞, 《肉身菩薩傳奇》, 開今文化出版.

Matsumoto, Akira 1993 2009 "Chūgoku No Nyūjō Miira No Kenkyū." In N. M. K. Gurūpu (eds.), *Nihon Chūgoku Mīra Shinkō No Kenkyū*, 142–216. Tokyo: Heibonsha. [Japanese Language Text] 松本昭, 《中国の入定ミイラの研究》, 日本ミイラ研究グループ編, 《日本・中国ミイラ 信仰の研究, 平凡社》.

Pittman, Don A. 2001 *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu:HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Ritzinger, Justin and Marcus Bingenheimer 2006 "Whole-Body Relics in Chinese Buddhism–Previous Research and Historical Overview." *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 7: 37–94.

Travagnin, Stefania 2006 "Elder Gongga 貢噶老人 (1903–1997) between China, Tibet and Taiwan: Assessing Life, Mission and Mummification of a Buddhist Woman." *Journal of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions* 3(1): 250–272. http://hdl.handle.net/11370/ec175036-0a6b-4555-97b3-e58393335a9e

Yetts, W. Perceval 1911 "Notes on the Disposal of Buddhist Dead in China." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and*

Ireland 43(3): 699–725.
https://doi.org/10.1017/S0035869X00041897

Zhong, Shipan 1954 "Tong Shi Dao Shi." *Bodhedrum* 19 [Chinese Language Text] 鍾石磐, 《痛失導師》, 菩提樹.
http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/DLMBS/en/search/search_detail.jsp?seq=578314

BOOK REVIEWS

- David Weiss, *The God Susanoo and Korea in Japan's Cultural Memory: Ancient Myths and Modern Empire*

  Carole M. CUSACK (The University of Sydney, Australia)

- Yu-Shuang Yao and Richard Gombrich, *Chinese Buddhism Today: Conservatism, Modernism, Syncretism and Enjoying Life on the Buddha's Light Mountain*

  J. Gordon MELTON (Baylor University, USA)

- C. Pierce Salguero, *Buddhish: A Guide to the 20 Most Important Buddhist Ideas for the Curious and Skeptical*

  Holly FOLK (Western Washington University, USA)

- Elliot Cohen, *The Psychologisation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions : Colonisation, Translation, and Commodification*

  LEE Kwangyu (Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church, USA)

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.145

David Weiss, *The God Susanoo and Korea in Japan's Cultural Memory: Ancient Myths and Modern Empire*, London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2022, 245 pp. ISBN: 978-0-3502-7118-0, £90.00 (pbk)

Carole M. Cusack
University of Sydney, Australia

David Weiss's *The God Susanoo and Korea in Japan's Cultural Memory: Ancient Myths and Modern Empire* is a revision of his 2017 University of Tübingen PhD thesis. The book is an ambitious study that ranges from the earliest Japanese and Korean chronicles to the twentieth century political history of the two nations that demonstrates links between ancient and modern uses of myth. Myths connect Japan's national identity as descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu, and Korea's colonised identity as descended from her younger brother, Susanoo. The Meiji restoration of 1868 brought Japan into the modern world, and the emperor promoted Shinto (rather than Buddhism) as the foundation of Japanese identity. The "theory of common ancestry of Japanese and Koreans" (5) was deployed to justify Japan's colonial rule of Korea as "a return to primordial unity … as depicted in the *Nihon Shoki*" (8) Weiss asks how Susanoo became core to discussions of Japanese and Korean identity, and also how he was raised to prominence as a deity?

For Japan, pre-modern Korea was imagined in several different ways: as a cultured and wealthy civilization; as a "threat to Japanese security" (21); and as a rebellious "vassal state" (23). Weiss analyses the subtle negotiation of Japanese identity vis-à-vis both the West and other Asian nations, in which it was possible to leverage Japan's adoption of Western modernity to make it the pre-eminent Asian nation, while fuelling anti-West sentiment at home. Korea "became a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and was annexed in 1910" (29), which resulted in policies intended to nullify Korean identity, through the promotion of the idea of common ancestry and the imposition of mandatory Shinto shrine visits. Amaterasu and Meiji Tenno (Emperor Meiji) were enshrined in the Chōsen Shrine, built in 1925 (in preference to Susanoo or the Korean heroic ancestor Tan'gun, with whom he was sometimes identified). In 1938 Susanoo was established in the Kōgen Shrine, and by 1945 when Japan was defeated in World War II there were about 1100 Shinto shrines in Korea. Chapter 2, "A Foil to Set Off the Sun Goddess: Susanoo in the Ancient Sources" and Chapter 3, "Passion for Transgression: Susanoo's Liminal Character" argue that in ancient sources Susanoo is rarely understood on his own terms, but rather in relation to other deities, most notably his 'sister' Amaterasu. However, careful investigation of sources suggests that

Susanoo originally belonged to the Izumo mythology, which is focused on earth and the realm of the dead, rather than the Plain of High Heaven, the primary location of the Yamato/ Imperial deities. In the merger of these sources into a court mythology, "Susanoo plays the role of a liminal figure that adds disorder to the order symbolized by Amaterasu" (77).

Part 2, "Political Mythology: A Genealogy of Susanoo's connection to Korea," mines the *Nihon Shoki* for ancient references linking Susanoo to the liminal land of Korea (Silla/ Kara). Weiss's argument covers Izumo's connections to otherworlds (making it parallel to the relation between Susanoo and Amaterasu, as the Izumo shrine served as a foil to Yamato and Ise); the Korean culture heroes Tan'gun and Chumong, and motif clusters (bears, rivers, and mountains) attached to them in Korean myth; and Susanoo's various roles and names. Chapter 5, "The God with a Thousand Faces: Susanoo and His Alter Egos in Medieval Mythology," explores his cult at Yasaka Shrine, Gion where he is a pestilence god, associated with other plague deities like Gozu Tenno and Muto; and his assumption of the roles of the major deities of Izumo, "Yatsuka Mizuomitsuno and Okuninushi" (129). Weiss also covers interest in Susanoo's grave as an entrance to the realm of the dead, his inclusion in Tendai Buddhism, and his posited origin in Korea. Chapter 6, "Korea as a Realm of Death: Susanoo and Korea in Modern Discourses," traces more recent interpretations of Susanoo through Confucian views in the early modern era, the separation of Shinto and Buddhism during the Meiji restoration, the perspective of National Learning (*kokagaku*), and in the colonial period. Weiss argues convincingly that "an imperialist reading of the ancient Japanese myths justified both the colonized Koreans' inclusion and their marginalization in the Japanese empire" (173).

The epilogue, "After the War: Susanoo in Scholarship, Tourism and Popular Culture," gives a brief account of the god's role as a tourist attraction, and presence in videogames, among other contemporary phenomena, to indicate how his "Korean" identity has been erased and he is now perceived as entirely Japanese. Bloomsbury Shinto Studies is a uniformly excellent book series, and Weiss's learned yet readable study is a worthy addition. It is highly recommended for academic libraries, Japanese Studies specialists, and all scholars interested in the political deployment of myth.

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.147

Yu-Shuang Yao and Richard Gombrich, *Chinese Buddhism Today: Conservatism, Modernism, Syncretism and Enjoying Life on the Buddha's Light Mountain*. Sheffield, UK: Equinox Publishing, 2022, 127 pp. ISBN: 978-18-00502314, $80.00 (pbk)

J. Gordon Melton
Baylor University, USA

In *Chinese Buddhism Today*, Yu-Shuang Yao and Richard Gombrich offer a learned introduction to one of two major Taiwanese Chinese Buddhist groups to expand beyond their beginnings on the small and somewhat isolated island where they were born to make a global impact. Previously, Yao, a professor at Fo Guang University in Taiwan, published a study of one of the groups, the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, in her 2012 volume *Taiwan's Tzu Chi as Engaged Buddhism*. In this later volume, Yao combines her insider access to Fo Guang Shan with the lengthy immersion in Buddhist studies of co-author Gombrich, the president of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies in the UK, to highlight the other prominent Taiwanese group, Fo Guang Shan (i.e., Buddha's Light Mountain).

Tzu Chi and Fo Guang Shan share many characteristics. Both were born in Taiwan just as the martial law which had been imposed in the 1950s and had hobbled the development of new religious expressions was being brought to an end in the 1970s. And each established its place in the world as an expression of an early twentieth century movement in Chinese Buddhism called "Humanistic Buddhism." Founded by a mainland Chinese monk, Humanistic Buddhism emerged as a reaction to the dominant forms of Buddhism that Tai Xu (1889–1947), found around him in the tumultuous time of political transition in China. In his view established Buddhism traditions were caught up in ritual, internal explorations, and the afterlife even as they offered little insight on the immediate needs of believers to make their way in the rapidly changing world.

Drawing on influences from the various revolutionary political movements contending for China's heart and the social concern emphases of a rival Christianity, Tai Xu began to develop a Buddhism that challenged monastic separatism, encountered the real world, and emphasized the improvement of human life. Over his life, he was able to travel widely and spread his ideas. Among the places they bore fruit was Vietnam, where a young monk named Thich Nhat Hanh would spread Tai Xu's ideas under the label of "engaged Buddhism."

Shortly before the aging teacher's death, a young Chinese monk initially encountered Tai Xu. After World War II, Hsing Yun (1927–2023) migrated to Taiwan

where he established his own Humanistic Buddhist movement as Fo Guang Shan, a Buddhist monastic order, and its accompanying lay organization, Buddha's Light International Association.

As Yao and Gombrich recount the story of Tai Xu and his passing his teachings to Hsing Yun, they call attention to the distinctive innovation Hsing Yun would make to the tradition out of his own unique life experience. Maturing in the post-World War II era, he was duly impressed by the material success emerging in the West in general and America in particular. In the 1970s, in the immediate wake of Fo Guang Shan's founding, Hsing Yun visited America and founded a branch temple in Los Angeles. Even as he initiated the global spread of his innovative Buddhist teachings, he opened what would become the largest Chinese Buddhist temple in the West in California. Meanwhile, back home in Taiwan he refocused the attention of followers away from targeting life in the Pure Land of the world after death and toward the building of a Pure Land-like world in this life. Hsing Yun has continued to encourage Buddhists to enjoy life utilizing the tools and products of modern life and has advocated the end of the separation of monastic life from the rest of the world.

The main body of *Chinese Buddhism Today* surveys in some detail the activity of the movement in revising traditional Chinese Buddhist rituals for modern consumption; its revised perspectives on the afterlife relative to the key ideas of karma, death and ancestor worship; and the importance of education. Each of these emphases have become the focus of the dominant practice within the movement—practice being, Yao and Gombrich note, far more important in Buddhism than belief. Relative to education, Fo Guan Shan has founded a university adjacent to its showcase California temple, a key demonstration of the readiness of Buddhism encountering the West's intellectual structures.

Chinese Buddhism Today is a welcome overview of Fo Guan Shan and the international movement that it has become. Though based in Taiwan, it has been able to build cordial relations with the religiously hostile government in mainland China. Though having its major strength in the relatively isolated Taiwan, it has been welcomed throughout both the Buddhist world and the Chinese diaspora. Even as it is recognized by the global Buddhist establishment, it has become a force advocating the movement of Buddhism into an encounter with the modern world. Those wishing to understand where Buddhism is going will find Yao and Gombrich's presentation a helpful aid in that endeavor.

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.149

C. Pierce Salguero, *Buddhish: A Guide to the 20 Most Important Buddhist Ideas for the Curious and Skeptical Mind,* Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2022, 175 pp. ISBN: 978-08-07064566, $16.95 (pbk)

Holly Folk
Western Washington University, USA

C. Piece Salguero has produced an important and enticing study of Buddhism that hits the middle way between obfuscating complexity and watered down teaching, between popularized new age platitudes and long winded hairsplitting, and between religious exhortation and academic garishness. It is ideal for an entry level undergraduate course.

Salguero tries for, and largely succeeds, in giving the essential ideas of Buddhism, accompanied by concise and relatable explanations from history, contemporary discourse, and his own experience with Buddhism. Despite all that is written on Buddhism, he aims to fill what he sees as need: an introduction to the primary teachings and traditions of Buddhism to a general audience of non-believers who nevertheless want to know about Buddhism in a way that does not water down the complexity and diversity of the religion, but also in a way that does not introduce unnecessary issues that preclude understanding. This book is helpful in this regard.

One of the ways he accomplishes the difficult task he sets for himself of making Buddhism relatable is by positioning himself within his presentation of Buddhism, asking early in his Introduction, "Who am I?". He does what I would call self-location. Salguero describe himself as not a Buddhist, but as someone with a keen interest, a fascination and an appreciation of it for approximately thirty years. The religion has been with him in some sense for his entire adult life, and he has written about it in academic contexts. Salguero also describes his upbringing within the Western tradition, letting us know the nature of his religious and cultural formation as a young adult.

Although Salguero describes himself as not a Buddhist, he also notes that he spent a considerable amount of time practicing Buddhist meditation and studying Buddhism in religious contexts throughout Asia. And yet he also says that he does not accept many of the fundamental concepts of Buddhism, does not believe many of the stories associated with it, and does not accept many of the practices. He is a critic of Buddhism, but one with a wealth of practical insider experience of the religion and a rich academic education in the religion.

Prima facie, it may strike one as indulgent to spend, as Salguero does, many pages

describing themselves and their personal relationship with a subject matter, but that impression would be wrong. I wish more authors would, as Salguero does, tell us who they are and why they are writing about a subject. Of course, the ability to do that presupposes contemplation and consideration of one's self. Self-location is a reflective pratice that is expressed in writing. That is also a Buddhist exercise. I think it is good for a reader to read an author's self-location because it is better for the reader to know about the author than not know. We learn about the motives, beliefs, and education of an author, which helps the reader evaluate the book in a more objective and precise manner than not knowing. This practice of self-location might appear as confessional, and in some sense, it is, but in Salguero, it is without the attending notions of shame or sin. It is not a confession of belief, but an expression of presuppositions and positionality. Whatever one calls it, what Salguero does creates the self-reflective awareness necessary to make an objective presentation of the Buddhist religion.

Another noteworthy and admirable feature of Salguero's book is the way he sets up problematics that can appeal simply and directly to a general reader in a way that does not pander to the reader, make the religion sound glib, or get lost in unnecessary details. To illustrate this, let me outline Salguero's discussion of the doctrine of no-self, one of the most philosophically demanding, minutely scrutinized, and counter-intuitive teachings of the Buddhist religion. Salguero recognizes that the idea of renouncing the self may "sound weird, undesirable, or even dangerous" (41). He frames it as the renunciation of the self, setting alongside other things, "out lifestyle, our money, our comfort, and our time" (41). Rather than focus on the philosophical arguments that deconstruct the notion of the self, as found for instance in Nagarjuna's *Mula Madhyamaka Karika,* Salguero places attention the notion of self as a thing, like the renunciation of money and comforts. These can be given up at will, so can the self.

Salguero frames his discussion of Buddhist no-self doctrine using modern science, and about this it would have been interesting to hear more. He says that contemporary science, "will help us to put these Buddhist ideas [of the no-self] into perspective," and the argument he makes seems to be that both science and Buddhism see the self as an illusion. He claims that neurology and cognitive science demonstrate that, "the sense that each of us is an individual self is the result of a particular sort of brain activity" (41). Since the self arises from the brain, our sense of "me" is a, "feeling that is being generated by the brain at an unconscious level." He seems to suggest Buddhism is like science in this regard because it also, "claims that you can destabilize the process of 'selfing' and arrive at a state of 'non-self' (*antman*)" (42). Salguero goes on to clearly articulate the doctrine of no-self, and it is refreshing to see it in the context of modern science.

Overall, this book outlines central concepts in the Buddhist religion in short chapters, providing a general reader or undergraduate student with an accurate and interesting depiction of Buddhist teachings and some of their major historical developments.

https://doi.org/10.25050/JDTREA.2024.3.2.151

Elliot Cohen, *The Psychologisation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions: Colonisation, Translation, and Commodification*. London: Routledge, 2022, 158 pp. ISBN: 978-03-67375362, $37.99 (pbk)

LEE Kwangyu
Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church, USA

Though where and when it began remains unclear, it catches our attention that, in the past few decades, psychotherapy has been increasingly influenced by the meditative practices of Eastern religious traditions or the former has been considering the latter as one experimental alternative. Elliot Cohen questions what caused such a change in the relationship between Western-originated psychotherapy and Eastern-rooted religious practice. There is no doubt that both have one thing in common; how to take good care of the human psyche. Yet, one question remains unanswered: How have they been intermixed with each other?

In his book *The Psychologisation of Eastern Spiritual Traditions: Colonisation, Translation, and Commodification* (2022), Cohen attempts to make a cultural analysis of how Western psychology has adopted Eastern religious traditions for the sake of its own practice. To do so, Cohen first investigates the history of Western psychology's encounters with Eastern traditional religions, particularly Buddhism and Daoism. These encounters were initially influenced by Western colonialism, which perceived Western and Eastern cultures in a dualistic manner. Western culture was considered superior, materialistic, extroverted, analytic, and objective, while Eastern culture was viewed as inferior, spiritual, introverted, synthetic, and subjective. However, the collective traumas brought about by the two World Wars led Westerners to reevaluate their beliefs in their reason-armed and development-led civilization. This shift paved the way for a counterculture movement in the post-war generation, where Westerners sought after Eastern traditional religions and their lifestyles, considering them in a more positive and idealistic light. The East and its religions became a special place where Westerners could find spiritual fulfillment that they could not attain through their traditional religion and society.

Secondly, Cohen explores how Eastern religions, primarily Buddhism and Daoism, have become an alternative to the West's psychotherapy. He refers to this process as 'the psychologization of Eastern spiritual traditions,' which means that Westerners somewhat hastily utilized the 'psychological' aspects of these religions for their own purposes, without fully understanding their unique historical contexts and the

different ways they were practiced for thousands of years.

Thirdly, Cohen argues that, due to the psychologization and commercialization of Eastern spiritual traditions, Eastern spirituality in the West, exemplified by Buddhism and Daoism, has been reduced to mere products that are bought and sold in the mindfulness market. To make matters worse, sexuality and attractiveness are attacked to them to make them more desirable.

Lastly, Cohen presents a tentative solution to the current problems caused by the psychologization and commercialization of Eastern spiritual traditions. Pointing out that Eastern spiritual traditions and Western psychology can help each other, he emphasizes the importance of transpersonal psychology, which embraces the numinous and transcendent realms of human experience, as a new intersectional space where the two different psychological and spiritual traditions can harmoniously coexist.

This book is recommended to anyone who wants to understand how Western psychology has integrated Eastern spiritual traditions and the implications of this process, including the challenges of commercialization and potential paths for harmonious coexistence between the two traditions.

About JDRE.ORG

The Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia (JDTREA) launched on September 30th, 2021 with volume 1, issue 1. *JDTREA* is published twice annually and special editions may also be released in the future. *JDTREA* is available via Open Access website with the following features:

Homepage www.jdre.org



- **Full text searches of the whole articles**
- XML archives
- Free PDF downloads
- Advanced searches of articles by keywords, titles, or authors
- E-submission
- Up-to-date announcements

Subscriptions: Daesoon Academy of Science (DAOS) will send *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia (JDTREA)* for free to a selection of relevant individuals and institutions. Full-text PDF files are also available at the official website (www.jdre.org). The circulation number of print copies is 500. To order a subscription to *JDTREA*, please contact our editorial office.

Contact Information: Daesoon Academy of Sciences Department of Administrative, Room 403, Daejin Education Building, Daejin University, 1007, Hoguk-ro, Pocheon-si, Gyeonggi-do, 11159, South Korea. E-mail: idaos@daejin.ac.kr. Tel: +82-31-539-2523

Method of Payment: Bank transfer (Contact us for banking details)

Postal Information: *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* (eISSN: 2799-4252, pISSN: 2799-3949) is published in English twice a year on March 30 and September 30 by Daesoon Academy of Science (DAOS), Room 403, Daejin Education Building, Daejin University, 1007, Hoguk-ro, Pocheon-si, Gyeonggi-do, 11159, South Korea

Postmaster: Daesoon Academy of Sciences Department of Administrative, Room 403, Daejin Education Building, Daejin University, 1007, Hoguk-ro, Pocheon-si, Gyeonggi-do, 11159, South Korea

Digital Object Identifiers: For information on doi, please visit www.doi.org

Permissions: For information on how to request permissions co-reproduce articles or information from this journal, please contact us at idaos@daejin.ac.kr

Advertising: *JDTREA* does not currently accept any commercial product advertisements.

Disclaimer: Articles published in *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* do not represent the views of *JDTREA* or those of its editorial board. Individual authors are solely responsible for opinions expressed and the accuracy of facts published in the articles and reviews.

Daesoon Academy of Sciences (DAOS, Chairman: Bae Kyuhan; www.daos.or.kr/en/) is the research institute that best exemplifies the founding principles of Daejin University. DAOS has supervised numerous research activities for the purpose of promoting and developing studies on Daesoon Thought for the past 30 years. *JDTREA* (www.jdre.org) is the official English language journal of the Daesoon Academy of Sciences.

JDTREA is an open access journal distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license (www.creative-commons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Part of articles, metadata, or full text in *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* is available from CrossRef metadata (2021-), Google Scholar (2021-).

Its website and XML files are produced and maintained by Guhmock, the Republic of Korea (www.guhmok.com). This paper meets the requirement of KS X ISO 9706, ISO 9706-1994 & ANSI/ NISOZ39.48_1992 (Permanence of Paper)

Submission Guidelines for *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia*

Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia (*JDTREA*) is a peer-reviewed, academic journal published in English by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences. In 1992, The Daesoon Academy of Sciences was established at Daejin University. The goal of the academy is to stimulate dialogue and exchange ideas, theories, and perspectives among scholars in both Asia and the West, by publishing cutting-edge articles in all subfields of Daesoon Studies and the Religions of East Asia. *JDTREA* was first published in 2021. *JDTREA* is widely recognized by scholars as one of the leading English-language journals in the field of Daesoon Studies.

CALL FOR PAPERS

All topics related to Daesoon Thought are potentially eligible, and this is also true of all topics related to East Asian philosophies and religions. The journal's call for papers is on-going, the due dates for paper submissions are January 30 and July 30 respectively, and the journal is published on March 30 and September 30 each year.

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

The Daesoon Academy of Sciences welcomes the submission of papers in any field of Daesoon Thought and/or East Asian philosophies and religions. The paper should be an unpublished original work and not under consideration to be published elsewhere. All manuscripts will be reviewed by at least two [2] blind reviewers. Book reviews and research notes relevant to Daesoon Thought and East Asian philosophies and religions may also be submitted. In the preparation of manuscripts, authors are requested to observe the standards specified below.

In general, the style guidelines that authors are expected to follow consist of *JDTREA*'s own style guideline, and in the case of issues not covered in *JDTREA*'s style guideline, the 17th Edition of the Chicago Manual of Style can be referred to as a supplement. The length of manuscripts should be no more than 8,000 words, with references up to no more than 10,000 words. Endnotes should be used in manuscripts. In the case of book reviews or research notes, the length should be up to 1,000 words. For the transliteration of Korean words, follow the new romanization conventions put forth by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in 2000 (www.mcct.go.kr).

Additional instructions for authors can be obtained via our website (www.jdre.org). Manuscripts should be submitted via email as MS Word documents accompanied by an abstract of 200 words with five to ten keywords and a 100-word introduction to the author(s). In case the manuscript is written by more than one author, all of the names have to be clearly indicated: the order of the names depends on the degree of the individual's contribution to the article. Articles will be edited to conform to the style of *JDTREA* in terms of layout and the romanization of Korean names and words. Other changes may be made in the interest of clarity. The editors are the final arbiters of length, grammar, and format. Submissions can be sent in either through the following link: www.jdre.org/author/submission or the following email address: idaos@daejin.ac.kr

Article Processing Charges: No page charge or article processing charge applies. There is also no submission fee. *JDTREA* is a platinum open access journal which means there are no author-side fees.

Copyright: The copyrights of all published materials are owned by the Daesoon Academy of Sciences (DAOS). All authors must sign a Transfer of Copyright Agreement when submitting their manuscripts.

Contact Point: Jason GREENBERGER, Managing Editor Further information can be obtained via our website (www.jdre.org), e-mail (idaos@daejin.ac.kr) or via telephone (+82-31-539-2523). Books for review should also be sent to the same address. JDTREA does not guarantee review of unsolicited books. All papers featured in *JDTREA* are also accessible in PDF format at: www.jdre.org

JDTREA

Journal of Daesoon Thought & the Religions of East Asia

RESEARCH ARTICLES

CHA SEON-KEUN — "GOD ALWAYS FIND A WAY": THE CRISIS OF CIVILIZATION AND ITS OVERCOMING THROUGH THE WORLDVIEW OF DAESOON JINRIHOE

ZHANG SHUQING — WRITING MIRACLES AND DENOMINATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT: ON THE BELIEF NARRATIVES OF QUANZHEN DAOISM

DOMINIK RUTANA — THE ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS OF HUMANKIND TOWARDS ANIMALS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR KOREAN RELIGIONS: FOCUSING ON KOREAN BUDDHISM AND DAESOON THOUGHT

DINH HONG HAI — MESSIANISM IN CIVILIZATIONAL HISTORY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BUDDHIST MESSIAH VIA MAITREYA

GRACE J. SONG — WON BUDDHISM IN AMERICA: EXPLORING WAYS TO BALANCE TRADITION AND INNOVATION

XU MINGQIAN — DEATH CANNOT BE SEEN: THE MORTUARY RITES OF A CONTEMPORARY MONASTIC

BOOK REVIEWS

CAROLE M. CUSACK — DAVID WEISS, THE GOD SUSANOO AND KOREA IN JAPAN'S CULTURAL MEMORY: ANCIENT MYTHS AND MODERN EMPIRE

J. GORDON MELTON — YU-SHUANG YAO, AND RICHARD GOMBRICH, CHINESE BUDDHISM TODAY: CONSERVATISM, MODERNISM, SYNCRETISM AND ENJOYING LIFE ON THE BUDDHA'S LIGHT MOUNTAIN

HOLLY FOLK — C. PIERCE SALGUERO, BUDDHISH: A GUIDE TO THE 20 MOST IMPORTANT BUDDHIST IDEAS FOR THE CURIOUS AND SKEPTICAL

LEE KWANGYU — ELLIOT COHEN, THE PSYCHOLOGISATION OF EASTERN SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS: COLONISATION, TRANSLATION, AND COMMODIFICATION

DAOS

THE DAESOON ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, DAEJIN UNIVERSITY