Articles

Volume 18 Number 2
December 2015
The Review of Korean Studies

Article

Militarized Masculinity with Buddhist Characteristics: Buddhist Chaplains and their Role in the South Korean Army

Vladimir TIKHONOV

The Review of Korean Studies Volume 18 Number 2 (December 2015): 7-33

Introduction: Chaplaincy and the State-Religion Nexus

Chaplaincies in the South Korean army constitute a critical nexus in the relations between the actors in the religious market, the state, the military as one of the crucially important parts of state bureaucracy, and military's ideology of statist nationalism, traditionally underpinned by strong anti-Communist sentiments. Theoretically, South Korea is a religiously pluralist society. It is a market[1] where diverse religions—primarily, various Protestant denominations, Catholics, Buddhists, and a plethora of smaller new religious groups—relatively freely compete for the sympathies and (financial) support from the consumer. The reason "market" may constitute an appropriate metaphor for describing the religious situation in South Korea is both the absence of state religion and the remarkable degree of dynamism in the changing patterns of the religious affiliations during more than six decades of South Korea's history as a separate state (it was founded in 1948).

The very concept of exclusive and personal belonging to a certain religious group (religious affiliation) was brought to Korea in the nineteenth century by the spread of Christianity and, generally, modern consciousness (Baker 2006a). It was South Korean history, however, that saw an explosive growth in such a belonging. From 1964 to 1996, the number of the people who could identify their religious affiliation increased six-fold (Kim 2002). In a way, growth in religious belonging coincided with the development of South Korean capitalism.[2] The mutual influence of these two phenomena provides grounds for talking about "religious market" in the South Korean case. Religions have been acquiring their followers in harsh mutual competition, in which—until the mid-1990s—Protestants were emerging as victors. From ca. 3% in the early 1950s, they increased their following to 19.7% by 1995. It was largely due to their ability to offer opportunities for social networking and drastic increase in social capital to the urban middle classes and newly urbanized workers. Furthermore, "religion" is often understood in South Korea as trading contributions to the religious bodies for this-worldly favours from the supernatural forces these bodies claim connections to. In a 1998 survey, ca. 40% of the Protestant respondents agreed that donating money to church

1. On religious market and its effects on the popularity of religion, see Iannaconne 1991.
2. For further details about the development of capitalism in South Korea, see Amsden 1992.

brings more prosperity in return, thus viewing religion as an investment of sorts (Kim 2002).

However, even if religious market theory may be applied to the South Korean case, it does not mean that this market is, or ever was "perfect." Indeed, it would be difficult to expect given the decisive role which the state has been playing in the development of South Korean capitalism (Woo 1991). Of course, the role of the state is not the only limitation on the supposed rationality of the market choice made by the religiously affiliated South Koreans. Just as elsewhere, some inherit their religious belonging, and the choices in many other cases are heavily conditioned by class, gender, and regional identities.[3] Still, as I will argue in the present chapter, in the particular South Korean case the state—while officially pursuing a *laissez-faire* approach to the religious sphere—does exerts an important influence on the configuration of the religious market. It is the military chaplaincy that functions as one of the key instruments of such influence. Whereas the contemporary Chinese (PRC) state attempts to regulate the religious market through a system of controls and prohibitions resulting in the growth of "grey" market sectors (Yang 2006), the South Korean state, by contrast, does not attempt to control the market as a whole but provides advantages to the chosen actors via such channels as access to the military chaplaincy. Very importantly, this interplay between the state/military and religion also affects the socio-political horizons of the religions involved, institutionalizing and cementing their acceptance of the militarized patterns of modernity and citizenship (Moon 2005) which South Korea has developed. On the one hand, according to a 2003 opinion survey, 72.2% of the South Korean Protestants believed that the war could not be justified in *any* case (Hansin Taehakkyo Haksurweon Sinhak Yeon'guso 2004, 36). On the other hand, the conservative majority of South Korea's Protestants opposes the perspective of establishing alternative civil service for conscientious objectors, being afraid that it would benefit their Jehovah's Witness competitors (who are commonly regarded as non-Christians in the South Korean Protestant world) and undermine the all-important national defence (Yun 2014). Such a cognitive dissonance of sorts—war as such is opposed, but military service is accepted and obviously is not regarded

3. On the general limitations of religious market approaches, see van der Veer 2012.

as a part of preparation for war—demonstrates the degree to which the statist logic of "national defence first" permeated the religious consciousness in South Korea, the topic on which I will specially focus below.

The article twenty of the existing Constitution of South Korea provides for religious freedom and denies any religion the status of state religion. However, such institutions as military chaplaincy emphasize the fact that certain (presumably larger and more mainstream) denominations allowed to run their chaplaincies in the military—while the rest of the religious organizations is de facto denied such a right—are given a state recognition of their established positions. Given the crucially important role the religious propagation in the military plays in South Korea, a hard-core conscription society (see Moon 2005) which maintains 639,000-strong standing army, seventh largest (in the numerical terms) in the world, access to the military personnel for proselytising purposes gives a denominations effectively oligopolistic status. It puts a denomination on a qualitatively different level vis-à-vis its competitors. At the same time, such access implies the willingness of the religious group in question to moderate or adjust its doctrines to conform to military's specific objectives namely encouraging the conscripts to endure the hardships of their mandatory service terms for the presumed greater good for oneself and community. The religious groups in question have also to legitimise the skills conscripts have to learn, namely skills in depriving state-designated enemies of their right to live. While running a chaplaincy does not necessarily imply a militaristic overemphasis in the doctrines of the denominations in question, it does necessitates giving decidedly important place to the state in the structure of the religious doctrine. State's willingness to provide access to the captive audience in the military for proselytising has to be reciprocated by the confessions' willingness to provide state with a certain place in their belief systems.

Currently, the South Korean military has Protestant (262 chaplains, 979 military churches), Buddhist (136 chaplains, 404 military temples), Catholic (86 chaplains, 282 military churches), and Won Buddhist (2 chaplains, 1 military temple) chaplaincies (Hwang 2008). The access to the military is not principally denied to other denominations. However, sending chaplains requires extensive paperwork. Its aim is to persuade the Ministry of Defence that the denomination in question possesses enough followers currently enlisted in the ranks, and, moreover, has the doctrinal structure fully compatible with

military requirements. It has to demonstrate that it will not create unnecessary problems if allowed to operate a chaplaincy. Currently, Buddhist chaplaincy, for example, is monopolized by the largest and supposedly most representative—that is, claiming to be the inheritor of the orthodox Dharma lineage of Korea's Meditation School Buddhism—Jogye Order. The attempts by the traditional rival Taego Order (the heirs of the colonial-time monastics who accepted the Japanese Buddhist practice of clerical marriage) or the third-largest Cheontae Order (claiming to inherit the Dharma lineage of Korean and generally East Asian Tiantai tradition) to send chaplains on its own were so far unsuccessful (Beophyeon 2011). Seen in this light, dispatching chaplains should be regarded as a privilege of sorts granted by the state to the denominations deemed most useful for the purposes of the state in general and military in particular.

The number of the chaplains each denomination is allowed to dispatch is also subject to a political negotiation process. It is a well-known fact among the South Korean Buddhist chaplains, for example, that the decision to drastically (by 75 persons) increase the number of the Buddhist chaplains in accordance with the statistical share of Buddhists among country's religious population (the Ministry of Defence orders No. 358 and 402, February 2, 1994) was taken by President Kim Young-sam (1993-1998) in an attempt to smooth down the mood of the Buddhist electorate agitated over the perceived preference the devotedly Protestant president gave to the Christians in appointments to the top state positions (including positions in the military). Yet another factor in the decision was a number of the anti-Buddhist actions taken by Christian officers in the army (for example, a Buddha statue was destroyed and burned during a removal of a military temple in 17th Infantry division, tank squadron, on April 1, 1993)[4] which could potentially endanger the Protestant president's standing among the Buddhist electorate. In a way, the number of Buddhist chaplains allowed to the army served as a trade-off in the complicated game of give-and-take between the Protestant president and the leadership of Buddhist community. The latter felt embattled due to the dominant positions Christians occupy in many sectors of South Korean society, and on account of zealous support many Protestants (especially Evangelicals) rendered to "their" president during the elections.[5] The fact that the decision was never fully carried out—

4. For further information, see Hwang 2008, 277-89.
5. On this point, see Lee 2006.

the envisioned number of Buddhist chaplains was 170 by 2000, but even now, it is only 136—bespeaks also the difficulties Buddhists, with their relatively weak political influence (it is commonly perceived to be weaker than that of Catholics and especially Protestants),[6] have in negotiating details of chaplaincy arrangement with the Ministry of Defence bureaucracy (Hwang 2008, 289).

Buddhist chaplains belong to a borderline zone of sorts in the South Korean society: being uniformed officers (they wear their monks' robes only during the Buddhist religious ceremonies), they at the same time belong to the Special Military Religion District (Gunjong teukbyeol gyogu) of Jogye Order (established in 2005) and, as such, are fully ordained, regular Buddhist monks. However, until 2009 only the military chaplains had the privilege of being allowed to marry in otherwise strictly celibate Jogye Order. The revocation of this "chaplain exception" was seen as a sign of Jogye Order gradually recovering its sovereignty over the disputed bodies of its half-monastic and half-military members (Yi 2009). At the same time, military monks are not allowed to vote at the Jogye Order's internal elections. While proselytising in the military is seen as strategically important, chaplains, due to their status as half-monks only, are accorded somewhat less prestige than regular monks following the proper regimen of study and meditation (Pak 2008).

Then, what are the reasons why the young monks studying at Dongguk University and Central Sangha University (Jung'ang Seungga Daehak)—the only two educational institutions qualified to produce Buddhist chaplains—decide to take the chaplain recruitment examination and serve at least for three obligatory years at the institution the purposes of which are far removed from the world of religion? Why do some of them make chaplaincy into their life-long careers? How do they rationalise their relations with the military in the doctrinal and ideological terms? Do they see any proximity between the monastic and military life? How do they proselytise and what functions do they perform in the military beyond administrating Buddhist rituals and preaching the doctrine to the soldiers and officers? What models of masculine behaviour are they supposed to suggest to the soldiers under their charge? And how do they construct their relationship with their Protestant and Catholic colleagues-cum-rivals? The present chapter built on the interviews I have

6. For further details, see Gim 2011.

conducted with South Korean Buddhist chaplains in Seoul, South Korea, in July 2013, attempts to answer these and other questions by taking the insider's view on the functioning of the Buddhist chaplaincy system into the perspective. The in-depth interviews were taken from nine chaplains, two of whom were retired and the rest was on active service. The names are changed, in order to ensure the confidentiality of the interviews.

Buddhist Chaplains: Motivations, Self-legitimization, Duties

The reasons given by the Buddhist chaplains for choosing their career varied from one generation to another. The chaplains of the older generation (in their 40s and 50s) were often mentioning their belief in the importance of chaplaincy for the Buddhist community as a whole. However, the younger chaplains (in their 20s) were emphasizing more personal concerns and interests. Typically, Gang K. (infantry colonel, ordained as Jogye Order monk in 1978) informed me that he ventured into chaplaincy service because it was seen as a crucial instrument in competition against the Christians who had been enjoying quick numerical growth since the 1960s. "At the time when even Buddhist broadcasting did not exist" (it was established only in 1990, while Protestant broadcasting station existed since 1954) Buddhist chaplaincy in the military was envisioned as marching in the forefront of Buddhist mission (interviewed on July 19, 2013, at Buddhist Weon'gwangsa temple attached to the Ministry of Defence). Personal career reasons—there were few venues in 1970-80s South Korea to earn one's living with the degree in Indian Buddhist philosophy he possessed—did play their part. However, the motivation to be named first was the anxiety about Buddhism's perceivably weak competitive position vis-à-vis Christians. Conversely, Heo Ch. (29, retired chaplain who served in 2010-2013, currently a PhD student at Dongguk University) openly admitted that chaplaincy allowed him to deal away with the mandatory military service—from which even the clergy is not exempted in South Korea—in a most convenient way. After all, serving as officer (chaplain) implies much less hardship than service as an ordinary conscript. At the same time, as ordination is precondition to serving as a Buddhist chaplain, Heo welcomed the opportunity to be ordained and thus obtain first-hand knowledge of the realities of Korean Buddhist. Lastly, he

considered his religious duty to care after Buddhist soldiers throughout the trials of military life (interviewed on July 18, 2013, on Dongguk University grounds). Generally, younger generation chaplains seemed to care less about the competition against Christians and more about both their personal career choices, life experiences, and the opportunities to help their fellow Buddhists as individuals rather than Buddhist community as a totality.

The obvious contradictions between the objectives of the military and Buddhism's first precept against killing (the first and most important of the Five Basic Precepts, or *pañca-śīla*, *geunbon ogye* in Korean.) did not seem to present any particular issue to the chaplains of older generations. However, they seemingly vexed the younger chaplains in their 20s. The grounds presented by the former in support of their view about the full compatibility of Buddhism and military, can be classified into several categories.

First, the older chaplains formulated the views on the state which made it look more like an all-embracing totality rather than a contract-based association of citizens. As Gang K. phrased it "individual exists only if state survives; the religion can exist only if state survives." (South Korean) state, in his view, was the pre-condition for the existence of both Korean Buddhism as institution and Korean Buddhists as individuals. Thus, defence of the state was individuals' primary and existential duty, which no religious considerations could ever negate. The Social Darwinist traits visible in Gang's phrasing of his view were also palpable in the view stated by a retired chaplain (colonel) in his 60s, Jeon J. (served in chaplaincy in 1982-2002): "Army teaches to win. It teaches to always take the first place. If you come second, it means that you are already dead. And Buddhism in the army has to teach how to win, so that my country survives, so that we all survive" (interviewed on July 17, 2013, at Buddhist Bogwangsa temple in northern Seoul).

Second, the older chaplains tended to refuse connecting military or military service with "killing" (*salsaeng*) as prohibited by Buddhist canons. Typically, Jeon insisted that chaplains were to "pray for peace" and serve in the military with the hope it would never go to war. Yet another colonel at chaplaincy service, Ji S. (in his 50s, currently on active service), insisted that the purpose of the military was to "establish harmony in the world and inside the society, defend the peace and spearhead the construction of the Pure Land paradise on earth, while taking the state as a bigger and more inclusive form of life than an individual or any other collective" (interviewed on July 19, 2013,

at Buddhist Weon'gwangsa temple attached to the Ministry of Defence). In a word, peace was viewed by the chaplains as militarised peace (or "peace by strength"). Basically, it amounted to a carefully kept mutual balance between the well-armed states each of which was to claim that it "defends peace" by maximising its military advantage. While such a view of peace—reminiscent of the assumptions of realist school in international relations[7]—may well be congruent with the intellectual culture of the South Korean army, it was somewhat surprising to hear it from the people who concomitantly are also full-time religious practitioners. However, it looks as if in the questions of war and peace, Buddhist chaplains tended to rely more on the military, rather than religious part of their dual identity.

Thirdly and very importantly, the doctrinal appropriateness of chaplaincy was defended on the basis of Korean Buddhist tradition. While Ji also pointed out that, in realistic terms, avoidance of military service became an impossibility for the Korean monks since the state began to forcibly draft them during the all-out anti-Communist mobilisation in the time of Korean War (1950-1953) and serving as a chaplain hardly qualitatively differed from being forced to serve as a conscript, all the chaplains I have talked with defined the Korean Buddhist tradition as "state-protective" (*hoguk*). Interestingly, at least some of the chaplains were seemingly aware that such a tradition was not necessary in harmony with the socio-political views and practices of earlier Indian Buddhists. Gim emphasized, for example, that "unlike Indian states, Korean states tended not to grant their Buddhist communities extraterritorial privileges." However, the fact that this tradition was Korean (or broader East Asian—some of the chaplains were aware about the history of monks' militias, or *sōhei* in Japan) rather than pan-Buddhist, did not devaluate it in the eyes of the chaplains—rather the opposite.

Silla's famed priest Weon'gwang (541-630) and his Five Commandments for Secular Life (*Sesok ogye*) were commonly understood by the chaplains as the earliest archetypical expression of the state-protective tradition. In this connection, it is no accident that the chief Buddhist military temple attached to the Ministry of Defence was named

7. On this school, see Donnelly 2000.

Weongwangsa, in honour of the priest.[8] The fact that Weon'gwang's commandments—which included the instructions prohibiting retreat from a battle or random taking of life (rather than taking of life as such)—were aimed at secular warriors rather than monks (while chaplains formally are supposed to be still monks) did not seem to influence the chaplains' view of them as fully legitimising their activities.

Yet another important precedent the Buddhist chaplains constantly invoked, was the military activities of the Korean monk militias (*seungbyeong)* headed by high-ranked priests Seosan (Hyujeong, 1520-1604) and Samyeong (Yujeong, 1544-1610) during Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea (1592-1598). In fact, it emerges completely clear from the official Korean sources such as *The Veritable Records of Joseon Dynasty* (*Joseon Wangjo Sillok*) that neither of the two monks ever *volunteered* to fight against the invaders. While there were some scattered clashes between the Japanese and the monks' local self-defence militias attempting to defend their temples from looting, the pan-national monks' militia was organized only after King Seonjo summoned Seosan in 9th lunar month of 1592 and *ordered* him to start recruiting the monks (*Seonjo Sillok*, Fascicle 26, 25th year, 9th lunar month, 12th day *gisa*).[9] Before the royal orders to Seosan, the monks' militia were in fact sometimes mustered locally by the provincial administrators, and always operated as a part of governmental army. The fact that Seosan and Samyeong acted on royal orders—which they could not violate without heavily endangering the very existence of Buddhism in the neo-Confucian Joseon Kingdom—is well-established in the South Korean historical scholarship.[10] However, the Korean Buddhist chaplains tended to present both of their role models as a sort of patriotic volunteers; such a (mis) interpretation of history was most likely intentional.

In replying that they did not view their chaplaincy activities as contradicting the Buddhist precepts against violence the younger chaplains hardly differed from the older ones. In their cases, however, the system of argumentation was noticeably different. The state as pre-condition for

8. See an English translation of Weon'gwang's original biography from *Haedong Goseungjeon*, or *The Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, in Lee 1993, 78-83.

9. http://sillok.history.go.kr/inspection/inspection.jsp?mState=2&mTree=0&clsName=&searchType=a&keyword=%ED%9C%B4%EC%A0%95+%EC%8A%B9%EA%B5%B0

10. See, for example, Yang and Gim 1992, especially pp. 221-236.

the existence of individual or peace maintainable only by force was hardly mentioned, as well as the putative state-protecting traditions. However, the younger chaplains emphasized that, in the situation when the majority of the able-bodied South Korean males *have* to undergo the mandatory military service, helping them in the capacity of chaplains could be a part of the altruistic commitment of a monk.

Typically, Heo mentioned that taking part in the military training helps chaplains to understand what the soldiers have to go through so that to assist them in a best possible way. And as long as assisting soldiers is an altruistic pursuit, it should not constitute a violation of the Buddhist precepts in their broad and essential sense. Heo specifically mentioned in addition that he did not consider state-protecting Buddhism a suitable topic for preaching to his charges; my impression was that he viewed the mandatory military service as an inescapable trial of sorts in which monks were to help the laymen. Interestingly, anti-Communism almost never figured in the answers, although Gim mentioned in passing that South Korean army "defends our people from the forces of evil." Beyond this, however, North Korea, South Korean army's most likely battlefield enemy, was not named at all. It looked as if the chaplains viewed the mandatory military service and their part in strengthening "spiritual fighting capacity" (*jeongsin jeollyeok*) just as a part of the routine business of the state, "business as normal," without any reference to South Korea's specific problem of national division and North-South confrontation.

Some of the chaplains mentioned the specific difficulties monks—both chaplains and the younger monks conscripted for their obligatory service periods (currently 21 months for infantry)—face in the barrack lives. Faced with the social atmosphere where drinking and boasting about one's sexual exploits is seen as a crucial trait of authentic masculinity, some conscripted monks prefer to hide their status to evade teasing and possibly heavier bullying. At the same time, some of them get accustomed to drinking and brothel visits, and their newly acquired habits later put their monasteries in dishonour (interview with Ji). Chaplains, even while considering themselves primarily monks, have to drink and eat meat together with the other officers, especially in the presence of their superiors, their monastic status being no excuse. In practically all cases, they conform to these unwritten rules of the military life (interview with Jeon). At the same time, the disciplined atmosphere of army life does resonate, to a degree, with

the strictly regimented life of the Korean monasteries (interview with Ji). In fact, discipline is one of the things Buddhist chaplains' instruction is supposed to strengthen. As one of the younger chaplains I have met, captain Yeom J. (in his 20s, a recent graduate of Dongguk University), told me, the foremost task of the Buddhist chaplain is "strengthening the spiritual force" (*jeongsinnyeok ganghwa*) of the solider through developing his "religious fighting capacity" (*sin'ang jeollyeok*). One of the crucially important elements of such a "cultivation strategy" (*gyohwa jeollyak*) is destroying soldiers' propensity to rebel (*banhangsim eobs'aegi*). It is supposed to be done by carefully working with soldiers' mind-heart (*sim* in Chinese, *maeum* in Korean), persuading the soldier to accept the reality as it is, to conform to it and to find a secure position in it, rather than harbouring grudge or trying to be critical (interviewed on July 19, 2013, at Buddhist Weon'gwangsa temple attached to the Ministry of Defence).

"Stabilizing" the internal life of the soldiers should help them to end their stints without accidents or disciplinary violations, but also submit themselves voluntarily to a plethora of rules and regulations altogether constituting the totality of the barrack life. An older chaplain, Ji, also informed me that mind-heart and the ways to cultivate and control it so that one's behaviour would answer army's expectations constituted the core of his preaching and consulting work with the soldiers. He even found a doctrinal source for this in the Buddhist teachings of *kṣānti* (*in'yok* in Korean)—patience (one of six and ten *pāramitās*—perfections). A younger chaplain, Heo, agreed with this view, and added that "harmonization of an individual's human relations"—centred on developing the ability to satisfy one's superiors and conform to their demands—is grounded in the core Buddhist teaching of *anātman* (*mua* in Korean), or denial of the existence of permanent and independent self. On understanding that one's instinctive urge to resist army's regimental environment is nothing more than a fallacious attachment to an illusion of self, one should be able to cultivate oneself into a person ideally suited to the barrack life. Following this line of reasoning, any breach of military discipline may be seen as a religious failure. It will be a failure of self-cultivation, a failure to develop oneself spiritually to the degree one's internal urges would fully conform to the needs of the Ministry of Defence. And following on one's unconscious urges to rebel is nothing more than clinging to the erroneous views on self, drifting further and further from

the ideal of Enlightenment—as seen by Ministry of Defence version of Buddhism.

Buddhism, Patterns of Masculine Self-Disciplining and Religious Market Strategies

Behavioural correction of the type described above is being done during the regular "character tutoring" (*inkyeok jido*) sessions, both collective and individual. These sessions are usually done on Wednesdays and Sundays—which are the days generally reserved in the military for the religious events. Aside from the admonitions on giving up attachment to one's self, these sessions may give soldiers, more practically, an opportunity to voice their complaints about beatings by their superiors and senior soldiers, as well as other forms of mistreatment. The ample use of corporal punishment, both by the officers, non-commissioned officers and senior soldiers is a "tradition" of South Korean military most likely inherited from the Japanese imperial army (Moon 2005, 26-28) in which the majority of the funding members of the South Korean military forces served (Yang 1988). As all the chaplains I have talked to unanimously testify, brutal mistreatment of the soldiers remains a feature of the South Korean army, especially in the cases of its elite Marine (*haebyeongdae*) or Special Warfare Command (*teukcheonsa*) units (interview with Han). At the same time, it was pointed out that the amount of the abuse has been drastically reduced under the liberal administrations of Kim Dae Jung (1998-2002) and Roh Moo Hyun (2002-2007).

Aside from the ideological commitment to eradication of the modes of disciplining strongly associated with the legacies of Japanese colonial state and South Korea's authoritarian past, the liberals in power were worried by frequent lethal "incidents" in the military. On top of suicides, the aggravated victims sometimes took justice into their own hands and massacred their victimizers. The news on such "incidents" further tarnished the already rather problematic image of South Korea's armed forces, strongly associated in the minds of many South Koreans with authoritarian ruthlessness and negation of human dignity (Gim 2007). In one particularly stunning case, on June 19, 2005, private Gim Dongmin, serving in a unit based in Yeoncheon County, Gyeonggi Province, close to DMZ (Demilitarized Zone, de facto borderline between

North and South Korea), killed eight soldiers and officers (including his own commanding officer) in revenge for the abuse he allegedly suffered. He was later sentenced to death (Gim 2008). A recent (April 2014) deadly torture of a young conscript, Yun Seungju, by his co-soldiers directed by a sadistic non-commissioned officer, who had the conscript victimized for several consecutive weeks before murdering him (Gim 2014), made South Koreans once again painfully aware of the degree of physical and moral pain military service may imply.

While murders or random shootings are certainly not an everyday occurrence in the military, 17.7% of the respondents to a 2013 survey of conscripts by Military Human Rights Centre (Gun Inkweon Senteo) acknowledged having seen a beating—more than twice of the number of these who confessed having witnessed a beating in the military during a similar survey in 2005 (Gwak 2013). The survey results suggest that even if some improvements in the quality of the barrack life were achieved during the liberal administrations (as chaplains tended to state during the interviews, see above), they were quickly reversed after more conservative President Lee Myung Bak (2008-2013) took power in 2008. Prevention of deadly emergencies, as well as reduction in illicit violence in general was seen as one of their most important duties by all the chaplains I have interviewed. Usually, they are supposed to report to the commanding officer upon receiving a complaint about mistreatment, and then keep pressing for having the grievances properly dealt with; it is considered commonsensical that for the Buddhist soldiers it is psychologically easier to reveal their traumas to the Buddhist chaplains (interview with Ji).

The "character tutoring" the chaplains are involved with, gives them ample grounds to defend themselves from the accusations that their contribution to the military contradicts the basic rejection of violence one easily finds in the Buddhist doctrine. In fact, the chaplains I have interviewed were all quick to mention that they viewed their activities as violence prevention rather than participation in state-directed militarist violence. Spontaneous outbursts by bored, over-stressed, or rebellious soldiers directed against each other were seen as authentic violence, while neither army nor any other state/official institution were not viewed as inherently violent. Consequently, the masculine ideal, from the viewpoint of the chaplains interviewed, was a well-disciplined man fully able to fit himself into any sort of "organizational culture"

(*jojik munhwa*) he had to deal with by reigning in his emotions and following the pre-existing order of things. These ideas did not look fully dissimilar to the Buddhist chaplains themselves, who usually get along with meat-eating and drinking in order not to break the "human harmony" (*inhwa*) within the military organization.

In fact, Buddhist chaplains are often used as exemplary "organizational men" inside the Buddhist community. One recent article in a Buddhist newspaper describing two months-long training the future Buddhist chaplains were to receive at Geumnyeonsa military temple in Pusan in spring 2013, noted, for example, that practical experience of "[right] behaviour in the world" (*cheose*) was even more important for the aspiring chaplains than the knowledge of Buddhist rituals etc.: "since military is strictly a part of the organizational life, one has to know how, for example, to deal with the inflexible commanding officers" (Jang 2013). Of course, dealing with the rigidities of the military life means in this context rather fitting in than raising questions or making troubles. This is the gist of the message Air Forces' Buddhist chaplain, lieutenant colonel Heo Hyeogu (2013) sends to the soldiers under his charge: "Nothing changes if you simply say that you cannot adjust yourself, that you want to be transferred somewhere else, that you would prefer to have no senior servicemen (*gocham*) above you. And in civil life you meet even harder challenges. So, what is important is the willingness and efforts towards wisely overcoming yourself." Mature men as viewed by the Buddhist chaplains, in a word, are these skilled at adjusting themselves to the pre-existing social order rather than questioning it. It is also taken for given that the state-sanctioned order represents the anti-thesis to violence rather than institutionalized violence as such.

Nothing of this, of course, is especially surprising—or specifically Korean. In the age of late capitalism, conformism is no longer as problematic as it could be, at least in some circles, in the age of counter-cultural revolts in the late 1950s to early 1970s (Reynolds 1996, 2-19); on the contrary, the self-adjustment capabilities are treated as an important instrument for middle-class "success," for men and women alike. While quasi-religious methods of self-adjustment and fitting into the existing order, such as yoga or mindfulness training seem to sell better among women than among men—82.2% of all yoga practitioners in USA were women in 2012 (Harris Interactive Service Bureau 2012)—males are by no means excluded from the middle-class self-

improvement fashion. On the contrary, self-adjustment is increasingly treated as most necessary for typically "male" occupations. Global managerial class, for example, is still mostly male-dominated: the proportion of women among senior managers is 18% in North America and 21% globally (King 2012). These predominantly male managers are bombarded now by the messages on the supposed positive effects mindfulness training has on sales and managerial decisions. One of the core postulates of the mindfulness as applied to business/management is to eschew "judgemental thinking" and accept both people and things the way they are (Beard 2014). Essentially, "overcoming oneself" and other forms of "character tutoring" practiced by the Buddhist chaplains in the South Korean army boil down to a similar attitude.

Mindfulness, meditation, and yoga are utilized now even by the bastion of quintessential maleness, US Army's Marine Corps (Associated Press 2013). The absence of overtly religious references may differ it from the preaching of Korea's Buddhist chaplains, but the essential attitudes towards "character training" based on unquestioning acceptance of the existing order/hierarchies and willingness to fit into them while suppressing one's rebellious ego, are quite similar. Inasmuch as mindfulness represents a late-capitalist commercial appropriation of Buddhist meditation techniques (Anonymous 2013) permeated with the middle-class ideology of conformity and "niceness," this similarity is not even accidental. Both Korean and Euro-American character tutors/trainers—in the military, business, and elsewhere—are essentially utilizing the traditional methods of mental self-regulation for a similar set of institutional and ideological purposes, constructing fully comparable models of docile, disciplined masculinity.

What is interesting, however, is striking similarity between the sort of masculinity constructed and popularized by the Buddhist chaplains in the South Korean military, and the models of masculinity popular inside South Korea's corporate community. Typically, the South Korean guidebooks on achieving success inside the corporate jungles recommend the aspiring managers and would-be CEOs to be always in control of their emotions. They are advised to do their best to adjust themselves to the personal styles of their superiors and high-level management in general, to change themselves instead of complaining and to avoid at any price being seen as someone different from

the majority.[11] It is not accidental that some corporations use Buddhist temples and other Buddhist facilities for the corporate training sessions. Jogye Order's Korean Culture Training Centre estimates, for example, that ca. 10% of their clients are corporations. They aspire to teach their employees "traditional communal spirit" through the collective meditation sessions (Seo 2014).

To which degree this model of masculine behaviour is traditional for the Korean Buddhism is, however, a moot point. It is true that the Meditation School (Seon in Korean, Chan in Chinese, Zen in Japanese) temples in East Asia were indeed known for their highly disciplined way of life centred on a clearly defined set of regulations the origins of which were commonly attributed to Master Baizhang Huaihai (720-814) (Yifa 2002). At the same time, the religious personalities of meditation masters in the countries of the region were expected to defy the boundaries of formal discipline and self-restraint, demonstrating in such a way the unobstructed mind, enlightened enough not to need any longer to cling to any sort of formal codes. "Enlightened" masters routinely shocked their disciples into breaking down the wall of conventional thinking by yelling at them or even beating them. They generally could allow themselves to behave in eccentric, trickster-like ways, disregarding the time-honoured customs and practices, along the pattern of unconventional behaviour associated with the legends about Taoist immortals (Faure 1991, 115-25).

The same expectations applied to the Korean masters as well as their Chinese and Japanese counterparts, indeed until the twentieth century. Gyeongheo (1849-1912) known for his revival of meditational traditions, was also notorious for the eccentric behaviour (*gihaeng*) patterns, including reported illicit love affairs (Pak 2009, 15-47). A meditation monk of the next generation, Han Yong'un (1879-1944), was famed both for his physical strength and fist-fighting abilities, and, being a staunch opponent of Japan's colonization of Korea, reportedly used to beat up these of his friends and acquaintances who dared to speak Japanese in his presence, or voiced pro-Japanese views (An 1979, 259-99). Seen in this light, the disciplinary work in which the Buddhist chaplains are engaged, appears to represent a facet of institutional Buddhism's modern self-invention, or conscious adjustment to

11. See, for example, Jang 2001, 2012.

bureaucratic and market discipline. Army chaplains, as well as the monks engaged in training corporate employees, essentially attempt to deliver what both state and capital forces expect from them, with the explicit aim of self-preservation and maximizing their share on the highly competitive religious market of South Korea.

Aside from troubleshooting and disciplinary work, chaplains busy themselves with competitive proselytising. On Wednesdays and Sundays, chaplains from all the denominations conduct their religious ceremonies—Buddhist services (*beophoe*) in the case of Buddhist chaplains. On these occasions, the Buddhist chaplains always have to compare their participant numbers with that of their Protestant and Catholic rivals. While the relations with Protestant and Catholic chaplains are usually described as collegial, often even warm, the sense of competition, according to the Buddhist chaplains, is always present. The success in competition vis-à-vis other chaplains is determined by the number of soldiers who underwent the Buddhist ritual of receiving five basic precepts (*sugye*) and thus count in the statistics as Buddhist believers. Once precepts are received, such soldiers are expected to appear in the military temples every Sunday until they get discharged from the active duty.

One of the reasons why the sense of competition against Christians is so acute, is that so far, this competition was not tremendously successful, even despite the relative stagnation in the numerical strength of Protestantism in the South Korean society in general after the early 1990s (Baker 2006b). The number of statistically registered Buddhist believers in the military climbed up throughout the 1970s and reached 123,622 (compared to Protestants' following estimated at 226,007) in 1984 (Gim 1986, 161). However, it later levelled down, and was estimated at 114,085 (against 215,280 Protestants) in 2007 (Hwang 2008, 691). In South Korea, Buddhists are numerically stronger than Protestants in general—approximately 22% to 18% respectively, according to 2005 population census (Go et al. 2011, 22), but prove unable to win over their Protestant rivals in the military. This failure is attributed by chaplains themselves to the inferiority in the number of chaplains and military temples (as compared to the numbers of military churches). As Christians—Protestants and to a lesser degree Catholics —are still perceived as religiously dominating the military, the Buddhist chaplains evaluate their work as nevertheless of enormous importance for the position of Korean Buddhism on

the religious market of South Korea.

The religious loyalties acquired during the compulsory service at the military tend to last long, and to influence other family members when discharged soldiers establish their own families (interview with Ji). Military chaplaincy allows South Korean Buddhism to escape the trap of greying—while among these above forty the numbers of Buddhists exceed the numbers of Protestants, among the younger South Koreans the numbers tend to be roughly similar. This phenomenon indicates the relative successes of Protestant missionary work among the younger age cohorts. Buddhist chaplaincy is one of the few mechanisms that allow Buddhists to check somehow this success of their rivals (interview with Jeon). Indeed, among the South Koreans aged 25-29 the number of Buddhists (692,802) exceeds the number of Protestants (626,381) only by a small margin, while among these aged 75-79, there are almost twice as many Buddhists (236,346) as Protestants (142,868)—the statistics are for 2005 (Go et al. 2011, 21). Seen in this light, the maintenance of the military chaplaincy is undoubtedly an important element in South Korean Buddhists' self-marketing strategy, since it allows them to cover these segments of their potential consumers which otherwise are difficult to reach out to; indeed, in the South Korean society, temple visits are customarily perceived as something more fitting the aged (especially the older women) rather the young.

Conclusion

All in all, the military chaplaincy in general—and its Buddhist part in particular—constitutes an important linkage between the state power apparatus and the religious market. The state bestows the privileged access to the captive audience of several hundreds of thousands conscripts to the chosen mainstream religious groups and thus further boosts their market position. To this, the religious denominations reciprocate by religiously legitimising the military apparatus of the state. Of course, such legitimation is hardly of any crucial meaning for the South Korean military. It has already by the early 1970s succeeded in turning the military service into a part of a normative lifecycle of a "normal" able-bodied South Korean male, an organic part of both gender identity ("only in the military can you become a real man") and the political

identity as a South Korean citizen (Moon 2005).

Still, religious sanction for the state-approved ("licit") violence and self-sacrifice is hardly entirely meaningless. As a famed author, Gim Gijin (Palbong, 1903-1985), argued already in the early 1950s, based on his experience as a journalist following the South Korean military during the Korean War, any military experience is existential in its nature. Being in the military means either being prepared to die or/and kill in the wartime, or to be trained to do so in the peacetime. Thus, soldiers tend to be more inclined towards religion than civilians—after all, they are more likely to desperately need some idea about what awaits them beyond this existence or some religious explanation for the sufferings they have to go through (Gim [1952] 1989, 451-55). As to the specifically Buddhist stamp of approval for the state-imposed military service obligation, it is not unimportant either. Buddhism, Korea's age-old popular religion, enjoys a general appeal even outside the Buddhist religious milieu. According to a 2014 survey by Christian Ethics Practice Movement (Gidokkyo Yulli Silcheon Undong), a Christian NGO, 28% of self-proclaimed atheists named Buddhism as their most trusted religion (29% named Catholicism and 21% named Protestantism). Buddhism is widely seen as a living embodiment of the Korean tradition, although its societal contribution—through the provision of medical and welfare services etc.—is generally viewed as deficient (Yang 2014). Thus, the Buddhist insistence on military service for all the able-bodied South Korean men including Buddhists—lay or monastic—as a part of their historical state-protective function, and its vision of the military being an instrument of peace (rather than war) does seem to contribute into turning the military service into a self-evident norm.

Such a norm cannot be compromised even by the revelations about regular and systematic abuses (beatings etc.) in the ranks. The legitimation of the military service by the institutional Buddhist presence there seems to help to motivate the young South Korean Buddhists not to even try to escape their mandatory service, despite the reputation for ruthlessness the South Korean military has earned since its establishment. Its understanding of the state as all-embracing totality preceding the individual and creating the preconditions for his or her very existence—obviously harking back to the Japanese imperial ideology of the 1930s and early 1940s—should counter the more individualistic tendencies in the thinking of the younger Koreans, who, unsurprisingly, tend to prioritise their own economic

survival, rather than the defence of the state, in the current neo-liberal age.

In the military, Buddhist chaplains are to acculturate themselves to the routines of military life, the norms of which differ substantially from the monastic disciplinary canons. As commissioned officers, the chaplains are under the peer pressure to display the sort of behaviour one expects from an officer, consumption of meat and alcohol—normally prohibited for the ordained monks—included. However, concurrently with being disciplined themselves into following the unwritten norms of the barrack life, the Buddhist chaplains are to assist in disciplining the soldiers into following the official norms and statutes of the army. Buddhist chaplains' insistence on the religious (Buddhist) dimension of conformity to the disciplinary rules—conformity being regarded as a sign of successful self-cultivation—works to further legitimise the disciplinary norms of the military, the harshness of which obviously contrasts the more liberal tendencies in post-authoritarian South Korea. In fact, the emphasis on self-control and self-regulation as crucial masculine virtues amounts to a modern re-invention of Buddhism. It differs significantly from the sort of spontaneity, often bordering on eccentricity, which was expected from the meditation masters in the traditional times. It rather resembles the patterns of behaviour control in the corporate world, both inside and outside South Korea.

In a word, institutional Buddhism and the South Korean military reached a mutually beneficial symbiosis which appears to ultimately influence both sides. The military becomes the first ever place where the majority of the younger South Korean males—too overworked in their high schools due to the competition to enter the most prestigious universities—obtain the free time to enjoy organized religious activities including the Buddhist ones. In a way, religion becomes an essential feature of the barrack life, religious discipline being conflated with the military disciplinary norms. At the same time, the existence of the chaplaincy makes South Korean Buddhist community into an avid supporter of its military. Any negative sides of the over-militarization of South Korean society are thus conveniently overlooked by the majority of Buddhist clerics. In this way, the institutional Buddhism ultimately fails to successfully claim for itself the role of the "peace religion" in South Korea—ironically, given the usual (in reality, more than misleading) (Jerryson and Juergensmeier 2010) associations between Buddhism and

pacifism in the West. The symbiosis between institutional Buddhism and the military constitutes an important part of the lived reality of the large chunk of the South Korean Buddhists many of whom start temple-going while serving in the military. Thus, it definitely merits further study by the scholars of Korean religion.

References

Amsden, Alice. 1992. *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

An, Pyŏngjik. 1979. *Han Yong'un*. Seoul: Han'gilsa.

Anonymous. 2013. "The Mindfulness Business: Western Capitalism is Looking for Inspiration in Eastern Mysticism." *The Economist*, November 16. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://www.economist.com/news/business/21589841-western-capitalism-looking-inspiration-eastern-mysticism-mindfulness-business/.

Associated Press. 2013. "U.S. Marine Corps Members Learn Mindfulness Meditation and Yoga in Pilot Program to Help Reduce Stress." *Daily News*, January 23. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/u-s-marines-learn-meditate-stress-reduction-program-article-1.1245698.

Bak, Jaehyeon. 2009. *Han'guk Geundae Bulgyo eui Taja deul* [The Others of the Modern Korean Buddhism]. Seoul: Pureun Yeoksa.

Bak, Puyeong. 2008. "Sinbun eun jongdan seunim gweolli neun jehan" [Status as Order Monks; But Rights are Limited]. *Bulgyo Sinmun*, July 5.

Baker, Donald. 2006a. "The Religious Revolution in Modern Korean History: From Ethics to Theology and from Ritual Hegemony to Religious Freedom." *Review of Korean Studies* 9 (3): 249-75.

_____. 2006b."Sibling Rivalry in Twentieth-Century Korea: Comparative Growth Rates of Catholic and Protestant Communities." In *Christianity in Korea,* edited by Robert Buswell and Timothy Lee, 283-309. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Beard, Alison. 2014. "Mindfulness in the Age of Complexity: An Interview with Ellen Langer by Alison Beard." *Harvard Business Review*, March. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://hbr.org/2014/03/mindfulness-in-the-

age-of-complexity/ar/1.

Beophyeon. 2011. "Gun pogyo wa Bulgyo daehak, Bulgyo Eollon" [Military Chaplaincy and Buddhist Universities, Buddhist Media]. *Bulgyo Focus,* November 30. Accessed November 14, 2013. http://www.bulgyofocus.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=64429.

Donnelly, Jack. 2000. *Realism and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Faure, Bernard. 1991. *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gim, Deoksu, ed. 1986. *Bulgyo Gunjong sa* [The History of Buddhist Chaplaincy]. Seoul: Gunpeopsadan

Gim, Dogyun. 2014."'Yun Ilbyeong sakeon' gahae pyeongjang e jingyeok 45 nyeon. 'Sarinchoe' neun muchoe'" [The Non-Commissioned Officer who Victimized Private Yun, is Sentenced to 45 Years in Prison, Acquitted for Murder Chargers]. *Ohmynews*, October 30. Accessed October 23, 2015. http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/ view/at_pg.aspx?cntn_cd=A0002048510.

Gim, Gijin. [1952] 1989. "Gunin gwa jonggyo" [Soldiers and Religion]. In Vol. 5 of *Gim Palbong Munhak Jeonjip* [Complete Literary Works by Gim Palbong], edited by Jeongseon Hong, 451-55. Seoul: Munhak gwa Jiseongsa.

Gim, Hyeon'gil. 2008. "GP chonggi nansa Gim Ilbyeong pagi hangsosim eseodo sahyeong" [Private First Class Gim who Randomly Shot (colleagues) at the Guard Post, has his Death Sentence Confirmed by the Appeals' Court]. *Kuki News*, May 7. Accessed November 21, 2013. http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec& sid1=100&oid=143&aid=0001948072.

Gim, Seongho. 2011. "Sahoejeok yeonghyangnyeok keun Jonggyo gaesin'gyo, jonggyogye dodeok, cheongnyeomseong hwangnip sigeup" [The Religion with Strong Social Influence is Protestantism; Religions Need to Urgently Establish their Ethics and Integrity Standards]. *Seoul Sinmun*, November 21.

Gim, Yongsam. 2007. "Jeongbo munmyeonggi Han'ggukkun eui pyeongyeong munhwa gaeseon banghyang" [The Ways of Improving South Korean Military's Barrack Culture in the Age of Informational Civilization]. *Jeongsin Jeollyeok Yeon'gu* 38: 225-51.

Go, Byeongcheol et al., eds. 2011. *Han'guk eui jonggyo hyeonhwan*g [Current Status of Religions in South Korea]. Seoul: Munhwa Gwan'gwangbu.

Gwak, Huiyang. 2013. "Gundae Gut'a, 7nyeon Sae tu bae Neureo…34% 'Taryeong, Jasal Saenggakhaetta'" [Beatings in the Military Increased Twice during the Last Seven Years…34% "Contemplated Desertion or Suicide"]. *Gyeonghyang Sinmun*, January 31. Accessed October 23, 2015. http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201301310600015&code=910302.

Hansin Daehakkyo Haksurweon Sinhak Yeon'guso. 2004. *Han'guk Gidokkyoin eui Jeongchi, Sahoe Euisik Josa* [Research on the Socio-Political Consciousness of the South Korean Protestant Christians]. Seoul: Hanul.

Harris Interactive Service Bureau. 2012. "Yoga in America Study 2012." *Yoga Journal.* Accessed March 10, 2014. http://www.yogajournal.com/press/yoga_in_america.

Heo, Hyeon'gu. 2013. "Hamkke iyagihamyeon ihaehaji mothal keos i eopta" [Nothing is beyond Understanding if we Talk Together]. *Magazin Gonggam*, April 11. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://afzine.kr/90170993858.

Hwang, Ilmyeon. 2008. *Bulgyo Gunjongsa* [The History of Buddhist Military Chaplaincy]. Seoul: Gunjong teukbyeol gyogu.

Iannaconne, Laurence. 1991. "The Consequences of Religious Market Structure: Adam Smith and the Economics of Religion." *Rationality and Society* 3: 155-77.

Jang, Suyong. 2001. *Jikchang'in eul wihan Seonggong cheoseron* [The Theory of Successful Behavior for the Salaried Employees]. Seoul: Jeollyak Kieop Consulting.

_____. 2012. *Seonggonghaneun saram eui in'gan gwan'gye* [Interpersonal Relationship of the Successful People]. Seoul: Hyeondae Midio.

Jang, Yeongseop. 2013. "Gunpeopsa silmu ik'igo…Gyeongheom baeugo…" [Accustoming oneself to the Practical Aspects of Military Chaplaincy… Learning from Experience]. *Bulgyo Sinmun*. January 14. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://www.ibulgyo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=123541.

Jerryson, Michael, and Mark Juergensmeyer. 2010. *Buddhist Warfare.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kim, Andrew Eungi. 2002. "Characteristics of Religious Life in South Korea:

A Sociological Survey." *Review of Religious Research* 43 (4): 291-310.

King, Dominic. 2012. "Women in Senior Management: Still Not Enough." Grant Thornton International Business Report 2012. Accessed March 10, 2014. http://www.internationalbusinessreport.com/files/ibr2012%20%20women%20in %20senior%20management%20master.pdf.

Lee, Peter, ed. 1993. *The Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*. Vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lee, Timothy S. 2006. "Beleaguered Success: Korean Evangelicalism in the Last Decade of the Twentieth Century." In *Christianity in Korea*, edited by Robert Buswell and Timothy Lee, 330-50. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Moon, Seungsook. 2005. *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Reynolds, Simon. 1996. *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion, and Rock 'n' Roll*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Seo, Hyeonmuk. 2014. "Bulgyo jeontong yunghap…Yeonsu daejunghwa ikkeulgetta" [The Synthesis of Buddhism and Tradition…Will lead the Popularization of Training]. *Bulgyo. Dotcom,* March 4. Accessed March 11, 2014. http://www.bulkyo21.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=24246.

van der Veer, Peter. 2012. "Market and Money: A Critique of Rational Choice Theory." *Social Compass* 59 (2): 183-92.

Woo, Jung-eun. 1991. *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Yang, Byeonggi. 1988. "Chogi Han'guk Gunbu eui hyeongseong gwa jeongchihwa yangsang" [Formation of the Early South Korean Military Establishment and its Politization]. *Gukche Munhwa Yeon'gu* 5: 203-26.

Yang, Fenggang. 2006. "The Red, Gray and Black Markets of Religion in China." *Sociological Quarterly* 47 (1): 93-122.

Yang, Geunyeong, and Gim Deoksu, eds. 1992. *Imjin Waeran gwa Bulgyo Uiseunggun* [Imjin Japanese Invasion and the Buddhist Militias]. Seoul: Gyeongseoweon.

Yang, Seungnok. 2014. "Sahoe Bongsa neun Gidokkyo ga, Silloedo ga Kat'ollik i 1 wi" [The First Place in Social Service is taken by Protestant Christians, and the Highest Trust is Enjoyed by Catholics]. *Deulsori Sinmun*, February 14. Accessed August 25, 2014. http://www.

deulsoritimes.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=28034.
Yi, Gangsik. 2009. "Gun beopsa gyeorhon si seungjeok baktal" [Military Chaplains are to be Disrobed if they Marry]. *Geumgang Sinmun*, March 20.
Yifa. 2002. *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
Yun, Yongbok. 2014. "Hyeondae Han'guk Sahoe eseo Yeohowa Jeung'in eui wich'I" [The Position of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Contemporary South Korean Society]. *Sinchonggyo Yeon'gu* 30: 29-56.

Vladimir TIKHONOV (vladimir.tikhonov@ikos.uio.no), born in Leningrad (St-Petersburg) in the former USSR (1973) and educated at St-Petersburg State University (MA, 1994) and Moscow State University (Ph.D. in ancient Korean history, 1996). Vladimir Tikhonov (Korean name—Pak Noja) has worked for Russian State University of Humanities (1996), Kyung Hee University (1997-2000) and for Oslo University as associate professor (2000-2006) and as a full professor (from 2006). His main field is the history of ideas in modern Korea, particularly Social Darwinist influences in the formative period of Korean nationalism. Another major area of Tikhonov's research is the history of Korean Buddhism in modern times, particularly in connection with nationalism and militarism. The current article deals with the Buddhist military chaplaincy in South Korea. It investigates the ideological underpinnings of this institution, and its significance for the Buddhist competition with other denominations, especially the Christian ones, on South Korea's overcrowded religious market. It also explores the meanings of chaplaincy from the viewpoint of the military establishment, which regards it as an important supplementary mechanism of the military personnel management, responsible for additional, religious disciplining of the conscripts and prevention of illicit violence inside their ranks.

Abstract

Chaplaincies traditionally played an important role in the South Korean army, as religion was supposed to be an ideological weapon in the struggle against "godless Communist" North Korea. Protestant and Catholic chaplaincies were established in 1951 and then contributed greatly to the high-tempo growth of churches in post-Korean War South Korea. Buddhist chaplaincy was first permitted in 1968, as large number of Buddhist draftees was to be sent to fight in Vietnam. Since then, it has been seen by the Buddhist community as a crucial tool in securing the loyalty of the draftees; there is a widespread understanding that the religious loyalties defined among the hardships of conscript life in the military last for lifetime. As Buddhist chaplains (*gunseung*) numerically amount only to ca. one-half of the Protestant chaplains (*gunmok*) and the Buddhist field temples constitute only ca. one-third of the number of Protestant churches in the military units, Buddhist chaplains mostly see themselves as fighting an uphill battle against their Christian competitors. This paper focuses on the ways in which Buddhist chaplains define their tasks—often referred to as "increasing the spiritual strength [of the army]" (*jeongsinnyeok ganghwa*)—and ideologically legitimize their work in terms of their own religious doctrine. It will explore the ways in which they construct a model of desirable masculine behavior for the Buddhist draftees, and also on the responses they receive from their draftee audience. It will emphasize the methods they use to simultaneously justify the supposedly licit violence of the state militarist machine and prevent the illicit violence (hazing) between the soldiers. It is mostly based on the in-depth interviews conducted by the author with the Buddhist chaplains, current and former, in Seoul in July 2013.

Keywords: Chaplaincy, Korean Buddhism, military, Jogye order, religious market

Submission: 2015. 8. 29. Referee/Revision: 2015. 10. 24. Confirm: 2015. 11. 26.