

CLERICAL MARRIAGE AND BUDDHIST MODERNITY IN
EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY KOREA

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the issue of clerical marriage among Korean Buddhist clerics during the Japanese colonial period in Korea. The majority of celibate monks and scholars in South Korea accuse clerical marriage of bringing about the deterioration of “pure” Korean Buddhist tradition. This dissertation argues that clerical marriage was, in fact, one of the survival tactics of Korean Buddhist monks who were confronted with significant changes foisted upon them under Japanese colonial rule, changes that included the introduction of the modern household register system and the change in the relationship between teacher and pupil in Korean Buddhist monasteries. Clerical marriage can be seen as a barometer that exposes the complicated relationship of Buddhist ethics and colonial rule.

The dissertation is divided into five major chapters that proceed in chronological order. Chapter One revisits late Chosŏn Buddhism, a period which saw the emergence of a “dharma family” that allowed monks to bequeath their private property to their dharma descendants with the purpose of its being used for memorial services. Chapter Two examines the temple bylaws and clerical marriage in the 1910s. Temple bylaws brought the issue of “clerical marriage and meat-eating” to the surface for the first time in the history of Korean Buddhism. Chapter Three discusses the revision of the temple bylaws in the 1920s that, in essence, removed the disadvantages previously experienced by monks who married and ate meat. Chapter Four centers on the hot debate over clerical marriage in 1926, and analyzes the way in which Korean Buddhists understood clerical marriage and the revision of the temple bylaws. Chapter Five traces the practice of clerical marriage through an examination of the household registers of Korean monks, and addresses the way that the modern household register system became intertwined with the spread of clerical marriage. This chapter also shows that clerical marriage

was practiced by full-fledged monks in the early 1920s. A close examination of clerical marriage and its multiple facets by presenting concrete and tangible examples of Korean married monks may provide a deeper understanding of just how Buddhist ethics, modernity, and colonialism were interwoven.

PREFACE

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Jeongeun Park.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Scholarship in Both Korean and English Related to the Issue of Clerical Marriage

A majority of celibate monks as well as scholars in South Korea up to the present time have accused clerical marriage of causing a deterioration of the “pure” Korean Buddhist monastic rule of celibacy and of being one of the “Japanization” policies imposed on the country during the colonial period. Although the practice of clerical marriage is common among monks belonging to some Buddhist denominations, such as the T’aego Order, since monks’ marrying or having covert wives is one of the taboos Buddhists are reluctant to speak about, there are not many recent studies either in Korean or English on this issue. This is, in part, due to the fact that the Chogye Order, a Buddhist order having the largest number of celibate monks in contemporary South Korea, has dominated Korean scholarship on Buddhist Studies since the second half of the twentieth century. Because it runs the universities, libraries, and Buddhist research institutions which many contemporary scholars have been affiliated with, it has, naturally, influenced research.

Most scholars of clerical marriage share the same view as the Chogye Order. Chŏng Kwangho, a present-day Korean scholar who conducts extensive research on historical relations between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism, claims that clerical marriage among Korean monks during the colonial period represented a serious violation of traditional precepts of Korean Buddhism and is responsible for the Buddhist Purification Movement which took place right after Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule, a movement in which “pure” celibate monks struggled to keep traditional precepts.¹ Kim Sunsŏk, a Korean scholar, also argues that

¹ Chŏng Kwangho, *Hyundae hanil pulgyo kwallŏnsa yŏn’gu* (Inch’ŏn: Inha University Press, 1994), 114.

clerical marriage should be interpreted as an outcome of the Buddhist policies introduced by the colonial government in an attempt to assimilate Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism. Kim agrees that clerical marriage, along with meat-eating, violated the authentic precepts of Korean Buddhism.² However, there are different voices, voices that don't sprout the Chogye gospel, regarding the issue of clerical marriage. Pak Chaehyŏn, a Korean scholar, points out that clerical marriage should not be considered part of the push to assimilate Korean and Japanese Buddhism, but rather, should be examined as an ethical issue arising from some inevitable changes that grew out of the changing social roles of Korean Buddhists at that time.³ In addition, Kim Kwangsik, one of the most prolific scholars of Korean Buddhism, believes the autonomic movement among Korean Buddhist monks is a key factor because it inspired Korean monks to practice clerical marriage and meat-eating on their own in an attempt to popularize Buddhism.⁴

Research on clerical marriage has most often focused on a comparison between the two significant Buddhist figures who lived during colonial period, namely, Han Yongun and Paek Yongsŏng.⁵ It is well known that Han Yongun, a monk and poet, was an early Buddhist intellectual who argued for clerical marriage in the name of the modernization of Korean Buddhism in his book *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon* (Treatise on Revitalization of Korean Buddhism) in 1913. Paek Yongsŏng was a monk who established his own Buddhist organization, the Taegakgyo (Teaching of Great Enlightenment), to revive Korean Sŏn practice and also undertook the grand project of translating the Buddhist sutras into vernacular Korean. In 1926,

² Kim Sunsŏk, "Han Yongun kwa Paek Yongsŏng ūi kŭndae pulgyo kaehyŏngnon pigyo yŏn'gu," *Han 'guk kŭnhyŏndaesa yŏn'gu* 35 (2005): 88.

³ Pak Chaehyŏn, "Kŭndae pulgyo ūi taech'ŏ sigyuk munje e taehan yullijŏk koch'al," *Ch'ŏrhak* 93 (2007): 65.

⁴ Kim Kwangsik, "Yongsŏng ūi kŏnbaeksŏ wa taech'ŏ sigyuk ūi chaeinsik," *Sŏnmunhwa yŏn'gu* 4 (2008): 214.

⁵ Kim Sunsŏk, "Han Yongun kwa Paek Yongsŏng ūi kŭndae pulgyo kaehyŏngnon pigyo yŏn'gu"; Kim Kwangsik, "Yongsŏng ūi kŏnbaeksŏ wa taech'ŏ sigyuk ūi chaeinsik."

Paek, along with his supporters, submitted a petition to the colonial government that insisted that clerical marriage and meat-eating should not be permitted among Korean Buddhist clerics.

Though Han Yongun and Paek Yongsŏng both participated as representatives of Korean Buddhism in the March First Movement in 1919, the first and largest national protest rallies against Japanese colonial rule, their stances regarding clerical marriage and meat-eating were quite different. Therefore, studies comparing these two Korean Buddhist intellectuals inevitably confused present-day Korean scholars who did not fully understand the differences between the circumstances of Buddhist monasteries regarding clerical marriage in the 1910s and those in the 1920s, the eras in which Han Yongun and Paek Yongsŏng, respectively, presented their arguments.

The views of these two monks regarding clerical marriage strongly indicate that the issue of clerical marriage cannot be viewed simply as a dichotomy of nationalism and Japanese collaboration. In addition to the one-sided interpretation of the issue of monks' marriage, another obstacle in the presentation of a new interpretation is the limited use of primary sources. Most previous research on the issue of clerical marriage was confined to the examination of the theory of modernization and the comparison of Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. An absence of new theories based on new material and any new perspectives that depart from a celibate monk-centered view translates into an endless reproduction of previous studies, going round and round in circles and rehashing, over and over again, the same old material.

Alongside scholarship on this topic in Korean, there have been a few investigations into the issue of clerical marriage in English. Compared to recent studies on clerical marriage in Japanese Buddhism, for example Richard Jaffe's research on Meiji policies and clerical

marriage,⁶ the issue of clerical marriage in Korean Buddhism during the colonial period has not attracted many English-speaking scholars, partly because of the limited number of researchers on Korean Buddhism and partly because of the difficulty in accessing primary sources. Like most Korean scholars, Robert Buswell, a leader in the field, argues that clerical marriage is the most serious threat to the fundamental ethics of Korean Buddhism.⁷ Henrik Sorensen has divided Korean Buddhists during the colonial period into four groups: traditionalist celibate monks, pro-Japanese married monks, nationalist reformers, and lay Buddhist intellectuals.⁸ He asserts that, through secularization, the Japanese colonial government attempted to achieve political control over the entire Korean Buddhist community: Because the colonial government knew how the Meiji government manipulated Japanese Buddhism economically and politically by allowing clerical marriage, it applied the same policy to Korean Buddhism, and, as a result, Korean Buddhist monks came to abandon the precept of celibacy.⁹ The most recent scholarship in English on the Purification Movement is Pori Park's in which she points out the problem in the rhetoric of reductionism – that is, that all married clerics were considered to be Japanese collaborators.¹⁰ She argues that clerical marriage should be regarded as a necessary step taken by monks in an attempt to reach laypeople during the colonial period. Although some scholars

⁶ Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk Nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); “Meiji Religious Policy, Soto Zen, and the Clerical Marriage Problem,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 25, no. 1/2 (1998).

⁷ Robert Buswell, *The Zen Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 25.

⁸ Henrik Sorensen, “Buddhism and Secular Powers in Twentieth-Century Korea,” in *Buddhism and Politics in Twentieth-Century Asia*, ed. Ian Harris (New York: Pinter, 1999), 132-133.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁰ Pori Park, “The Buddhist Purification Movement in Postcolonial South Korea,” in *Identity Conflicts: Can Violence be Regulated?*, ed. J. Craig Jenkins and Esther E. Gottlieb (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 135.

present new interpretations of clerical marriage, interpretations that assert that clerical marriage should be examined as an autonomic movement among Korean monks in compliance with social change, they do not produce a vivid picture of colonial Korean Buddhism nor do they satisfactorily answer the question of why Korean monks of the period decided to marry and what their action implied. This is the focus of my dissertation.

Thesis

My interest in the issue of clerical marriage started as a result of a re-thinking of the Buddhist Purification Movement, which took place in the 1950s and 1960s in South Korea after liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945. The Buddhist Purification Movement has long been considered as a matter of decolonization, namely, a cleansing of colonial remnants, such as clerical marriage. After liberation, celibate monks blamed married monks for contaminating the “pure” Korean Buddhist tradition. The debate around clerical marriage was responsible for the violence associated with the Buddhist Purification Movement. This internal strife between married monks and celibate monks was ignited by the political discourse of the first president, Syngman Rhee, a so-called “de-Japanization,” and intensified by Pak Chŏnghŭi, a military general and dictator who rose to power in a coup. The overall picture of the conflict has been typically dichotomous: married versus celibate monks, pro-Japanese versus nationalists, administrative (i.e. married) clerics (*sap’ansŭng*) versus meditation (i.e. celibate) clerics (*ip’ansŭng*); and precept-breakers versus “pure *bhikṣu*.”

However, this dichotomy raised more questions about the practice of clerical marriage and meat-eating during the colonial period because there is no extant evidence that proves conclusively that married monks were Japanese collaborators and celibate monks were nationalists. It can, therefore, be argued that this dichotomy is a construct of the government and

the faction of celibate monks during the Buddhist Purification Movement under the false assumption that Korean married monks were imitating the Japanese Buddhist practice of clerical marriage and therefore must be pro-Japanese. Here, a couple of significant questions are raised. Does it make sense that the Japanese colonial government would have persuaded or threatened such a large number of Korean monks to take wives and thus violate Buddhist precepts? Were Korean Buddhist clerics so compliant that they would so easily yield to Japanese colonial rule in the matter of celibacy and marriage? It would seem unlikely. As is commonly known, Korean Buddhist clerics have stubbornly maintained their own distinctive traditions since the introduction of Buddhism to the Korean peninsula in the fourth century CE. Though Korean Buddhist communities were in the middle of the transformation to modernize during the colonial period and many Buddhist clerics expressed their admiration for Japanese Buddhism, it is hard to jump to the conclusion that their clerical marriage was the systematic result of the Japanese colonial government's wish to assimilate Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism through the imposition of their own Buddhist policies. What if, instead, clerical marriage was chosen by Korean Buddhist clerics as a survival tactic in the competition against other religions and a means to weathering the great changes within the Buddhist monasteries, such as that of the master-disciple relationship?

Another thing I considered was the connection between late Chosŏn Buddhism and colonial Buddhism on the issue of clerical marriage. One of the huge mistakes in the field of Korean Buddhism is regarding Chosŏn Buddhism as one thing and colonial Buddhism as another. I argue that a new understanding of Chosŏn Buddhism can lead to a connection between the Buddhism of the two different periods regarding the issue of clerical marriage despite the drastic changes in Korean Buddhism during the colonial period. Korean Buddhist scholars have found it

difficult to define the major features of Chosŏn Buddhism and have, therefore, continually characterized it as no-sect Buddhism or mountain Buddhism. However, if we turn our focus from a court-centered view to a monastery-centered view, three distinctive characteristics of Korean Buddhism in the late Chosŏn period emerge: First, the emergence of dharma lineages among disciples of eminent monk Ch'ŏnghŏ (1520-1604) with him as progenitor; second, the right of monks to own private property and hand it down from master to disciple, and third, the restoration of ordination lineage in the nineteenth century, with the monk Taeŭn (1780-1841) as the progenitor of this lineage.

Dharma lineage was established in the late Chosŏn as a means of bestowing legitimacy on monkhood at a time when there was neither a sectarian organization nor any governmental supervision to grant this. Each major Buddhist monastery developed its own distinctive dharma lineage, which became more significant when private property was inherited within the dharma family. It also resulted in the creation of a strong sense of dharma family in imitation of secular family values, as seen in the creation of Buddhist clerical genealogies. Moreover, the ownership of private property among Buddhist clerics began to appear in the late Chosŏn period, revealing a wish to transfer “pŏptap” (dharma field) to “dharma descendants” as a means of conferring upon them the ability to prepare memorial services for the deceased master-monk. These features of late Chosŏn Buddhism provide a strong foundation for the emergence of clerical marriage in the colonial period.

A third point of consideration was the understanding of Buddhist policies as they related to clerical marriage during the colonial period. Did the Office of the Governor-General of Korea really plan to assimilate Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism? Though the colonial government promoted the slogan “Japan and Korea as one entity,” it is well known that the

overall colonial policy toward the colonized was discrimination. The colonial government had different religious policies on Korean Buddhism than it did on Japanese Buddhism and, in fact, classified them as two different religions during the entire colonial period. Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, a leading scholar of modern Korean Buddhism, suggests that Japanese Buddhist missionaries failed to influence Korean Buddhism.¹¹ How do we interpret some clauses related to clerical marriage and meat-eating in the temple bylaws? Who initiated the necessity to revise some clauses from the temple bylaws related to clerical marriage and meat-eating?

Finally, I investigated the reality of clerical marriage. Just how widespread was it? Exactly how was clerical marriage defined? Who did monks marry? How was clerical marriage perceived by the majority of ordinary monks and lay people? What made many Korean clerics decide to have wives? Where did married monks' families live? What happened if a monk married after receiving *bhikṣu* precepts? Within these tangible questions lies the actuality of clerical marriage. Unless they are addressed, the very issue itself will be deadlocked, and will slip into the empty discourse of modernity per se. In addition, these questions illuminate key issues of Korean Buddhism as seen through the lens of clerical marriage and shed further light on just how Buddhist ethics were transformed and interpreted in modern Korean society, beyond the simplistic pro-Japanese versus nationalist dichotomy.

Sources

For historical analysis and in order to explore characteristics of Korean Buddhism during the late Chosŏn period, I consulted government documents such as the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty) written by official historians of the Chosŏn court, and writings

¹¹ Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, *Empire of the Dharma: Korean and Japanese Buddhism, 1877-1912* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2012).

by Hamhŏ, Ch'ŏui, and Pŏmhae, monks who lived during the Chosŏn period. In order to examine dharma lineages, I used, in particular, the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* (Biographies of Korean monks) written by Pŏmhae in the late nineteenth century.

In order to examine clerical marriage and its relationship to colonial rule during the colonial period, I read many unpublished official documents produced by the Bureau of Education in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea between the 1920s and the 1940s. Since the Bureau of Education dealt with all issues related to religion including Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism, it produced a huge amount of official government paperwork including the 1926 document entitled “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (On the Case to Indicate the Standardizing Revision of the Head-Branch Temple Bylaws of Each Parish). The archives also included other important documents such as petitions and investigative reports that contain lively scenes of ordinary monks’ everyday lives. Given that elections for the head monks were the most important events in Korean Buddhist monasteries, I examined colonial government documents related to the head monk elections of several head temples, such as T’ongdosa or Magoksa. Furthermore, I reviewed newspapers, such as *Hwangsŏng sinmun* (1898-1910) and *Maeil sinbo* (1910-1945), and Korean Buddhist journals, such as *Pulgyo* (1924-1933) and *Chōsen Bukkyō* (1924-1945). I also looked at books and essays written by Buddhist intellectuals, such as Han Yongun’s *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon* (Treatise on the Restoration of Korean Buddhism) published in 1913 and Yi Nūnghwa’s *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa* (Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism) published in 1918.

In order to examine the record of ordination, the master-disciple relation, and clerical marriage during the colonial period, I particularly turned my attention to Buddhist clerics’

household registers and Buddhist clerics' resumes which were included in the government documents for approval of head monks. Since marital status was determined by the listings in the household registers, it is critical to understand just what impact the modern household register system introduced by the Japanese in 1909 had on the spread of clerical marriage and how this changed the dharma family, specifically the relationship between master monk and disciple. As clerical marriage spread among Korean monks, the master-disciple relationship was replaced by the relationship between a father and his biological offspring.

The research and analyses in this dissertation represent the first time these primary sources, namely, unpublished government documents, Buddhist clerics' resumes and their household registers that have been used in the field of Korean Buddhist scholarship. Through the telling and interpretation of these unspoken stories of clerical marriage within Korean Buddhism during the colonial period, I have attempted to put forth the idea that clerical marriage was not a matter for reprobation or avoidance but, rather, a process that helped to transform traditional Buddhism into modern Buddhism.

Theoretical Framework

Some Korean scholars associate Buddhist modernity with the Westernization of Korean Buddhism, a period in which Buddhist intellectuals adopted Sunday school, urban missionary centers, and even Western-style Buddhist wedding ceremonies during the colonial period. In this sense, they understand modernity to have occurred as a means of Westernization in the modern period. However, the renowned sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt (1923-2010) raised a critical point about the assumption that "the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail

throughout the world.”¹² He contended that modernity should not be identified solely with Westernization: “One of the most important implications of the term ‘multiple modernities’ is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only ‘authentic’ modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others.”¹³ The term “multiple modernities” as used by Eisenstadt clearly implies that modernity can be seen as a something of multivalent signification.¹⁴ Linda Woodhead, a specialist in the sociology of religion, furthers this notion, arguing that Westernization is not a prerequisite to modernization, drawing on the following points: non-Western countries have achieved modernization with or without Western influence; the agents of modernization can be drawn either from internal development or from external influences, such as colonialism, and Western modernization is not necessarily synonymous with evolution and development.¹⁵ The concept of modernity should be understood as a compilation of complicated processes, such as the emergence of the nation state, colonialism, rationalization, urbanization, universalization, secularization, and so on, all of which took place in distinct places and at distinctive times.¹⁶

Proof of these arguments can be seen in the great transformations that Korean Buddhism underwent during the colonial period, transformations that were not totally connected with

¹² S. N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

¹⁴ Even though he uses the term “multiple modernities” in order to explain the outcome of modernization in terms of globalization in the mid- and late twentieth century, I think it can be a useful term to indicate early modernity. What I think of the limitation of his thesis is however, that he overlooked fundamentalistic elements which can be seen in these strongly articulated anti-Western and anti-modern themes.

¹⁵ Linda Woodhead, “Introduction: Studying Religion and Modernity,” in *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations*, ed. Linda Woodhead, et al (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-6.

Western influences. In fact, the issue of clerical marriage dealt with in this dissertation is not associated with Western influence at all but with a legacy from the Chosŏn dynasty: the spread of clerical marriage in the 1920s was rooted deeply in some characteristics of Chosŏn Buddhism.

Modernity is taken as the opposite of tradition, and/or a simple chronological categorization along with pre-modern and the post-modern. However, the concept of modernity is far too complicated to be referred to in these simplistic terms. The relation between modernity and tradition should not be interpreted as new and old, good and bad, innovative and obsolete, or secular and religious. Rather, modernity often brings about the revival of old modes of thinking or practice; and tradition can present itself as another way of interaction with the present.¹⁷ For example, Victorian people were fascinated with the ancient mainstream Buddhism of the Buddha's era, and Japanese Zen Buddhism, with its emphasis on, and association with, the origin of Chinese Chan practice, attracted Westerners in the early twentieth century and continues to attract them today.

When it comes to Buddhist modernity, tradition and modernity are not polar opposites. The creation of Buddhist modernity involved extensive re-construction or re-interpretation of the religion's traditional past; some elements of tradition were indeed removed, while others were selected to remain in its doctrines. For instance, the Zen or Sŏn tradition in Japan and Korea was reinforced and partially re-interpreted in the twentieth century in order to acquire its own unique meditation and *koan/hwadu* tradition. The same thing can be said about the practice of clerical marriage among Korean Buddhist monks. Although most Korean scholars maintain that the practice of clerical marriage was a new phenomenon introduced under Japanese colonial rule, the term "taech'ŏsŭng" (married monks) in fact appears in the Chosŏn court records. Thus, a true

¹⁷ David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 27.

investigation into the issue of clerical marriage must look back to Chosŏn Buddhism.

David McMahan, a specialist in Buddhist modernism, recently suggests that the term Buddhist modernism refers not to all Buddhism in the modern period, but only to new forms of Buddhism that “have emerged out of an engagement with the dominant cultural and intellectual forces of modernity.”¹⁸ McMahan interprets modern Buddhism as a new form that is “the result of a process of modernization, westernization, reinterpretation, image-making, revitalization, and reform that has been taking place not only in the West but also in Asian countries for over a century.”¹⁹ He uses the term “Buddhist modernism,” not because it takes place in the modern era, but because it has been involved in the force of modernity.²⁰ In addition, he claims that Buddhist modernism cannot be reduced to a simple Western- or Asian-oriented phenomenon and furthermore that neither Western scholars nor Asian intellectuals can accurately represent it.²¹ In his opinion, Buddhist modernity is “a dynamic, complex, and plural set of historical processes with loose bonds and fuzzy boundaries.”²² Even though “modernity generally refers to the gradually emerging social and intellectual world rooted in the Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, the European Enlightenment, Romanticism, and their successors reaching up to the present,”²³ McMahan also rejects the idea of Buddhist modernity as a Western construct because the main agents were not solely Western intellectuals but also Asian

¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹ Ibid., 5.

²⁰ Ibid., 6.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 9.

intellectuals.²⁴ He claims that Buddhist modernity should be understood to be a “combined creative, heterogeneous adaptation of certain aspects of modernity with selective resistance to others.”²⁵

From this discussion it can be argued that modernity should involve “linear changes.” Whereas “cyclical changes” are transformations that occur within the established social structure without any basic changes in politics or economics,²⁶ the term “linear changes” refers to transformations that shatter the very social structures in which cyclical changes exist: in politics, the economy, science, and religion.²⁷ The difference between cyclical changes and linear changes must be considered with respect to these transformations; modernity always involves linear changes in the basic social structure; two easily accessible examples are the economic change from a pre-industrial to an industrial society and the shift of religious authority from traditional religious leaders to educated laypeople.

It seems important to get a clear sense of what really happened in Buddhist modernism in terms of transformations of Buddhist institutions, practices, monastic rules and Buddhist consciousness, in order to avoid confining Buddhism to the solely metaphysical concepts of spirituality, peace or rationality. In addition, we need to be aware that Western modern Buddhism is not the sole representation of Buddhist modernity. As long as Buddhist modernity remains trapped at the conceptual level, the level at which we can understand its transformation

²⁴ Ibid., 6.

²⁵ Ibid., 14. In this sense, “selective resistance to other” can be interpreted as a reaction to colonialism. In fact, many Asian countries exhibit a complicated relationship between religion and colonialism. Colonialism can be one of the most influential motivators of modernization.

²⁶ Torkel Brekke, *Fundamentalism: Prophecy and Protest in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 17.

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

is limited. Buddhist modernity should be more concrete and tangible, buttressed by various historical examples and case studies. For the productive analysis of Buddhist modernity, I adopt the view of Buddhist modernity as a sign of the progress of history, an ongoing process of transformation to remain relevant to modern society. At the same time, it is the complicated result of modernization, accelerated by colonialism, the nation-state, secularization, and so on. In addition, Buddhist modernity is not just a Western construct, but a global one. For more relevant and textured examination of Buddhist modernity, the key elements of Buddhist modernity must be identified.

During the colonial period, Korea experienced tremendous changes and achieved economic modernity and cultural modernity in part through Japanese efforts to construct an economic base that would allow them a more efficient means of exploitation and in part through Korean intellectuals' endeavor to create a modern national identity by providing modern newspapers, journals, radio stations, and literature. By the same token, Buddhist modernity is actually multi-lineal and multilateral, having both internal and external agents that contribute to the process of transformation. In other words, Buddhist modernity is a visible result of the ways in which monks and nuns came to change their everyday lives. These changes are not "cyclical changes" but "lineal changes." While Japanese colonial rule imposed "cyclical changes" through the government supervision of the Korean Buddhist community, Korean Buddhists achieved their "lineal changes" through drastic changes in monastic rules, and engagement in temple business. Clearly, the issue of clerical marriage can be understood as one of these lineal changes. Although the Japanese colonial government imposed uniform monastic rules upon all Korean monks and nuns to gain more effective control over all Buddhist monasteries, Korean Buddhist clerics also had a hand in transforming monastic rules through their selection of what would be

the best practice for themselves, practices which included clerical marriage.

Most scholars contend that, during the Japanese colonial period from 1910 to 1945, Korean Buddhism experienced modernization through active revitalization of Sŏn practice, establishment of modern Buddhist education institutions, and political involvement with other social movements such as the March First Movement of 1919. For example, many of the authors included in *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, a recent book of collected essays, focus on three points: Buddhist reform movements such as modern education, Sŏn revivalism, and new intellectualism.²⁸ On the other hand, one should also re-examine the way ordinary monks and nuns changed their daily lives on their own. These tangible and concrete changes help move the theory of modernity out of the purely conceptual discourse, a discourse created for a sake of theory itself. Throughout continuous historical process, Korean Buddhism experienced a series of significant developments such as abrupt changes in the dharma family relationship, the Buddhist cleric's right to own private property, and alterations in the monastic rules that allowed the spread of clerical marriage. Clerical marriage, especially, prompted lineal changes in Korean Buddhist monasteries.

Organization

I've divided my dissertation into five major chapters that progress in the following chronological order: A re-examination from a new perspective of the main characteristics of late Chosŏn Buddhism; an investigation of the main issues of clerical marriage that can be seen in the temple bylaws in the early 1910s; an analysis of the process of the revision of the temple bylaws of 1926 that lifted restrictions on clerical marriage; an overview of the debates over the temple

²⁸ Jin Y. Park, "Buddhism and Modernity in Korea," in *Makers of Modern Korean Buddhism*, ed. Jin Y. Park (Albany, N. Y.: SUNY Press, 2010), 1.

bylaw revisions in 1926 and a conclusion that uses historical sources such as monks' household registers to illuminate the practice of clerical marriage among Korean Buddhist monks, the motivators of the spread of clerical marriage, Korean monks' new interpretation of monastic rules, and the impact of the temple bylaws between the 1920s and the 1940s.

In Chapter One, entitled "Re-thinking Late Chosŏn Buddhism," I focus on the new characteristics of Korean Buddhism that emerged in Korean Buddhist monasteries beginning in the seventeenth century. After the Chosŏn court abolished both the monk examination system and the monk certification system, Korean Buddhism did not retain any denominations and thus lost much of its vitality. For this reason, most historians conclude that the Chosŏn was the darkest age in Korean Buddhist history. However, a new means of attaining legitimacy as Buddhist clerics emerged among the disciples of eminent monk Ch'ŏnghŏ, one that relied on dharma lineage passed down from Ch'ŏnghŏ himself and establishing him as the progenitor of Chosŏn Buddhism. The lineal transmission of dharma from master-monk to disciple was further secured when the monks were given the right to own private property in the seventeenth century. As a result, late Chosŏn Buddhism found itself the creator of the pseudo-family relationship, that is, a relationship between master-monk and disciple in which the disciple had the right of primogeniture and the obligation to perform the memorial service for his master monk/father. In addition to the establishment of dharma lineage, the monk Taeŭn restored ordination lineage in the nineteenth century through his "self-ordination through auspicious signs." The fact that ordination lineage had to be restored indicates that it had been broken which, in turn, points to a weak tradition of full ordination among Korean Buddhist monks. To examine late Chosŏn Buddhism, I reviewed such primary sources as the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Annals of Chosŏn Dynasty) and monks' writings including Pŏmhae's *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* (Biographies of Korean

Monks).

Chapter Two, entitled “Temple Regulations and the Issue of Clerical Marriage,” explores Buddhist Regulations including the 1911 Temple Ordinance and the temple bylaws. I examine how all matters of Korean Buddhism, including monastic rules, were supervised by the colonial government through three sets of Buddhist regulations, namely the Temple Ordinance, its follow-up Enforcement Regulations, and the head-branch temple bylaws. The issues of clerical marriage and meat-eating emerged as controversial because they imposed restrictions on those monks who married and ate meat and stressed the importance of *bhikṣu* ordination. Using the head-branch temple bylaws, newspapers, Buddhist magazines, and Yi Nūnghwa’s *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa* (Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism), I analyzed the way that Korean monks interpreted and responded to these restrictions.

In Chapter Three, entitled “Revision of the Temple Bylaws: The Lifting of Restrictions on Married Monks,” I turn my attention specifically to the 1926 revision in the temple bylaws. One of the most controversial questions regarding clerical marriage was that of who first suggested the necessity of lifting the restrictions on clerical marriage and meat-eating. Was it the Japanese colonial government who wished to assimilate Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism? Or was it Korean Buddhist monks who were influenced by Japanese Buddhist missionaries? Through the examination of a series of colonial government documents produced in early 1926 by the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, I have uncovered what appears to be the hidden intention of the colonial government and its major concerns related to the lifting of the restrictions on married monks.

Chapter Four, entitled “The Debate over Clerical Marriage,” focuses on the way Korean

Buddhist intellectuals and monks understood the 1926 revision in the temple bylaws, their opinions on these changes and the way they expressed those opinions. After the announcement revealing the revision in the temple bylaws, hot debates over the issue of clerical marriage appeared in the Buddhist journal *Chōsen Bukkyō* between July and September 1926. Twenty-eight writers, including Korean monks, Japanese Buddhist priests, Korean monks in Japanese Buddhist missionary centers and Korean officials of the colonial government joined in this three-month long printed debate in this Buddhist journal. The journal articles were followed by a petition submitted to the colonial government by the renowned Sōn monk Paek Yongsōng and his followers that claimed that clerical marriage would ruin Korean Buddhist monasteries and requesting, therefore, that some head temples be granted exclusively to celibate monks in order to maintain “pure” Korean Buddhist tradition. This debate and petition illustrate clearly the way that Korean Buddhists tried to construct and provide doctrinal rationale for their claims both for and against clerical marriage and its association with modernity. Their writings give a more detailed and vivid picture of just how widespread clerical marriage was among Korean monks. To support my argument, I have cited essays published in three successive editions of the *Chōsen Bukkyō*.

Chapter Five, entitled “An Examination of Japanese Colonial Rule, Household Registers, And Clerical Marriage,” further investigates the practice of clerical marriage through an examination of household registers called “hojōk,” a system introduced by the Japanese in 1909 in order to control and supervise Koreans. Buddhist clerics’ household registers are significant because they provide concrete evidence of Korean Buddhist secularization as illustrated by the monks’ use of their birth surnames in their household registers rather than the common Buddhist surname Sōk. During the early colonial period, Korean Buddhist clerics listed their disciples as

“adopted sons” because they considered the master-disciple relation in a Buddhist temple to correspond with the father-son relation in a secular family. However, the colonial government prohibited this practice on the grounds that this type of adoption would clash with the father-son relationship as defined by civil law. As a result, Buddhist clerics’ household registers became entangled with the issues of clerical marriage, Japanese colonial rule and the succession of private property. In addition, this chapter uses Buddhist clerics’ resumes as well as their household registers to take a closer look at the meaning of *bhikṣu* ordination as well as the practice of clerical marriage which, in turn, will promote a better understanding of the associations Korean Buddhist monks made between their *bhikṣu* status and their clerical marriage. To add to this understanding and further clarify the issues, I also consulted colonial government documents related to head monk elections and investigative reports about clerical marriage that were produced by the Department of Religion and local police.

In summary, it would not be presumptuous to say that clerical marriage was a barometer that exposed the complicated relationship between Buddhist ethics and colonial rule. Close examination of clerical marriage in the lives of ordinary monks shatters the binary divisions that have long been the subject of conceptual discourses: Clerical marriage was neither a “Japanization” nor a “deterioration” of pure Korean tradition. Information about married monks found in primary sources reveals a new perspective on this issue, one that shows that clerical marriage was, in fact, a mode of life freely chosen by many Korean Buddhist monks and not a phenomenon that appeared suddenly during the colonial period and as a result of the revision of the head-branch temple bylaws. Rather, it was closely related to the strong tradition of the dharma family, a weaker tradition of ordination, and the rights of monks to own and bequeath private property. By closely examining clerical marriage and its related multiple facets and by

presenting concrete examples taken from primary sources about the lives of ordinary Korean married monks, I believe this dissertation creates a more complete understanding of the way in which Buddhist ethics were intertwined with the far-reaching and pervasive issues of modernity and colonialism.

CHAPTER ONE

RE-THINKING LATE CHOSŎN BUDDHISM

Introduction

When it comes to the issue of clerical marriage during the Japanese colonial period in Korea from 1910 to 1945, Japanese colonial policy on Korean Buddhism has long been thought of as a key factor in the spread of this practice among Korean Buddhist clergy: As the Government-General of colonial Korea lifted the ban on clerical marriage and meat-eating in the mid-1920s for the purpose of assimilating Korean Buddhist clerics into Japanese Buddhist practice, Korean Buddhism found itself faced with a rapid spread of clerical marriage among the majority of Korean monks. However, insufficient research on clerical marriage stands in the way of drawing any firm conclusion about its major triggers. One of the main obstacles in the way of a clear understanding of clerical marriage is a narrow-sighted nationalistic view that dichotomizes monks' celibacy and marriage casting it as purity vs. contamination of the Korean Buddhist tradition. In the context of underlying connections between Chosŏn Buddhism and colonial Buddhism, an investigation of late Chosŏn Buddhism may provide a deeper understanding of the dramatic change in the monastic rules of colonial Buddhism.

In respect to clerical marriage among Korean monks during the colonial period, several key questions regarding Korean Buddhist clerics' way of life arise. Why should monks or nuns be celibate? Why shouldn't they eat meat, fish, alcohol, or the five acrid vegetables (garlic, wild chive, leeks, onion, and asafetida)? These questions lead researchers to the examination of a profound tenet, that is, the *vinaya* which incorporates the precepts of Korean Buddhism and the ordination of Buddhist clerics. Becoming a monk or a nun means the renunciation of lay life and

the entrance into the Buddhist monastic community. In the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* (Biographies of Korean Monks), written by a monk named Pŏmhae who lived in nineteenth century Chosŏn Korea, two phrases stand out: “ch’ulga” (leaving home) and “ch’eyŏm” (being tonsured and wearing colored robes). These phrases literally depict not only the physical changes necessary to becoming a monk or a nun but also represent the entrance into another type of society and the adoption of a new culture and its rules. Those who enter the sangha (*sūṅga* in Korean), the monastic community, leave the secular life, along with its social position and wealth behind. A Buddhist cleric counts his age as zero upon entering the sangha, and instead of considering himself a member of his biological family, he becomes part of another family connected through dharma.

In this sense, Buddhist monks and nuns do not renounce the world to become a recluse. Conversely, they join a new community called a sangha, within which they must comply with the rigors of strict monastic rules, rules that govern every action from sexual matters to simple daily schedules. All regulations about celibacy, food, clothes, hair, education, labor, rituals, behavior, and so on are specified point by point in texts, such as the *Four Part Vinaya*. The sangha is one of the Three Treasures (the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha), and, as such, represents the essence of Buddhism. Its monastic regulations have maintained its integrity for over two thousand years and thus are pivotal to gain a thorough understanding of Buddhism. Buddhist monastic rules define the religious identity of Buddhism because they distinguish the Buddhist world from the secular world.²⁹ This does not imply, however, that monastic rules are totally removed from the social order. In fact, monastic rules are closely related to society by implication: Buddhist clerics rely on the laity for financial resources as well as political

²⁹ William M. Bodiford, “Introduction,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya: Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Stanley Weinstein*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 2.

protection. What is more, Buddhism is not averse to incorporating pre-existing cultural practices. When Buddhism was first introduced in China, monastic rules from Indian mainstream Buddhism were selected, revised, and intermingled with other prevailing values, such as Confucian values.

Vinaya, along with the *sūtra* and the *abhidharma*, is one of the *tripiṭaka*, the Three Baskets that hold the Buddhist canon. The term refers to *vinaya* literature which describes Buddhist regulations and disciplinary guidelines and addresses a wide range of monastic codes. Precepts (*śīla*), on the other hand, are more specific rules or instructions for proper behavior for both lay practitioners as well as ordained Buddhist clerics. Korean Buddhism has four different sets of precepts: the five precepts for the laity, the ten precepts for novice monks and nuns, the full precepts for *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* (250 precepts for monks and 348 precepts for nuns), and the 58 bodhisattva precepts for both lay practitioners and full-fledged clerics. Each group has to observe a designated behavioral code. Korean Buddhism has a common term “kyeyul” (a compound of precepts and *vinaya*), encompassing general monastic regulations and disciplines which Buddhist clerics and laypeople are expected to obey. This compound term, in particular, implies that early Buddhists did not distinguish *vinaya* and precepts separately, but rather used them interchangeably.

To date, researchers have not gone into the *vinaya* tradition of Chosŏn Buddhism in much detail because this had dwindled in medieval Korea due to government intervention in monastic rules. Additionally, the ordination lineage was lost between the Koryŏ and the late Chosŏn and was not revived until the nineteenth century when it was re-constructed by two Korean monks, Taeŭn and Manha. The Chosŏn government not only interfered with the ordination of Buddhist clergy but also meddled in clerical deportment, including clerical marriage, for the ostensible

reason that it wanted to control the population of monks who were tax-exempt. The government saw to it that the legitimacy of monkhood hinged entirely on whether a monk held a government-issued certificate called a “toch’ŏp.” After the government abolished the monk certificate system, Chosŏn Buddhism began to put more emphasis on dharma lineage rather than ordination lineage.

This chapter will critically examine some of the characteristics of late Chosŏn Buddhism, using the writings of Ch’oŭi and Pŏmhae, monks who lived in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and will investigate the factors that provided the basic structure of the spread of clerical marriage during the colonial period.

Vinayas and Pure Rules in the Buddhist Traditions in China and Korea

Early Vinaya Tradition and Pure Rules in Chinese Buddhism

When Buddhism spread to China early in the Common Era, *vinayas* of Indian Buddhism were translated into Chinese, along with many other texts including sutras and *abhidharmas*. For example, the *Dharmagupta Vinaya*, the *Sarvastivada Vinaya*, the *Mahasanghika Vinaya*, and the *Mahisasaka Vinaya* were translated into Chinese sometime early in the fifth century C. E.

Among them, the *Dharmagupta Vinaya* was the first one to be translated into Chinese, thereby gaining the support of eminent commentators. The *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* was a *vinaya* of the Dharmaguptaka, one of the eighteen or twenty early Buddhist schools in India. In China, its title was translated as the *Four Part Vinaya* (*Sifen lu* in Chinese) because of its four parts: the Bhikṣu-vibhaṅga, the Bhikṣuṇī-vibhaṅga, the Skandhaka, and the appendices. Although it was one of the Hinayana (Small Vehicle) *vinayas*, the *Four Part Vinaya* was observed all over Korea, China, and Vietnam incorporating, as it does, the precepts for *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī*.

One of most distinctive features of the *vinaya* tradition in Chinese Buddhism is the

balanced view between Mahayana (Great Vehicle) tradition and Indian mainstream Buddhist traditions. A noteworthy example is the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* which contains the fifty-eight precepts called the bodhisattva precepts. Despite being called a sutra, which can imply a simple aphorism, it contains the most significant monastic rules for Mahayana tradition. Recently scholars have suggested that the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* was an apocryphal scripture, written in China at the time that various Indian *vinaya* texts were introduced and translated into Chinese.³⁰ Because *vinaya* texts from Indian Buddhism did not fit Chinese needs completely, early Chinese Buddhists created their own *vinaya* texts better suited to their Mahayana belief and practices, while at the same time justifying the “historical legitimacy”³¹ of Chinese Buddhism. In the process of the synthesis of Indian Buddhism with the Chinese cultural situation, some Confucian discourses found their way into this canonical text.³² Undoubtedly, the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* was accepted as a main canonical text for the bodhisattva precepts for Buddhist clergy and the laity. Henceforth, the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* was believed for two millenniums to be one of the missing Indian scriptures translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva (344-413), the scholar-monk and renowned translator of Buddhist texts.

In addition to the various precepts in the Mahayana and Hinayana texts, there is another regulation in the Chan tradition, namely, “pure rules” (Ch. *qinggui*). It first appeared in the *Pure Rules of Baizhang* during the Tang period when Chan master Baizhang (720-814) established a

³⁰ Robert Buswell, “Introduction: Prolegomenon to the Study of Buddhist Apocryphal Scriptures,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocryphal*, ed. Robert Buswell (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 8; Bodiford, 5.

³¹ Bodiford, 5

³² Martine Batchelor, *The Path of Compassion: The Bodhisattva Precepts* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 27.

set of pure rules for his Chan monastery to demonstrate “its independence”³³ from the Vinaya School through its use of different monastic rules.

Vinaya and Pure Rules in Korean Buddhism from Silla to Koryŏ

When Buddhism traveled from China and was introduced to the three kingdoms of Korea from the fourth and to the fifth centuries C.E., it was the *vinaya* texts from the *tripiṭaka* that were principally emphasized. It was during this time that the three kingdoms, Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla were struggling through the early stage of becoming states. Buddhism along with Confucianism served as a useful tool for the rulers of the three kingdoms because of Buddhism’s well-organized disciplines and spiritual power. Since the royal family and aristocrats supported scholar-monks financially during the Three Kingdoms period, the power of the state was directly related to the prosperity of Buddhism and, therefore, eminent monks concentrated their efforts on their doctrinal studies.

Not surprisingly, after the Silla kingdom unified the peninsula in 676 C.E., Silla Buddhism reached its peak in doctrinal studies. Most commentaries on the *vinaya* texts of Korean Buddhism were written by Silla monks between the seventh and ninth centuries. Early Korean monks sustained the view of counterbalance between the Hinayana tradition and Mahayana belief which was developed in China. The *vinaya* tradition of Korean Buddhism based on the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* and the *Four Part Vinaya* was established in this early stage.

Among the preeminent Silla monks who wrote commentaries on the *vinayas* were Chajang (590-658), Wŏnhyo (617-686), and Kyŏnghŭng in the seventh century and T’aehyŏn (or Taehyŏn) in the eighth century. The most prolific writer was Wŏnhyo, who is famous for a

³³ Yifa, “From the Chinese Vinaya Tradition to Chan Regulations: Continuity and Adaptation,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya: Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Stanley Weinstein*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 124.

mysterious experience in a grave while on his way to China to study Buddhism.³⁴ In addition, he is also known as the earliest Korean Buddhist monk to break his vow of celibacy, by siring a child named Sölch'ong by a princess of the Silla kingdom. Wŏnhyo wrote seven commentaries on the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*, among them the *Pŏmmanggyŏng chongyo* (Doctrinal Essentials of the Sutra of Brahma's Net) and the *Pŏmmanggyŏng posalgyebon sagi* (Commentary on the Chapter of the Bodhisattva Precepts in the Sutra of Brahma's Net).

Chajang was another renowned Silla monk whose accomplishments are described in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks) written by Daoxuan of Tang China. Among the achievements he is known for his part in the construction of T'ongdosa – one of the three Treasure Temples of Korea – and its diamond platform for relics of the Buddha. As a prominent preceptor, he wrote the *Sabunyul kalmagi* (Commentary on Karma of the Four Part Vinaya) and the *Sipsongyul mokch'agi* (Commentary on Mokṣa of Ten Recitations Vinaya) as commentaries on the *Four Part Vinaya* and the *Ten Recitation Vinaya*, respectively.

One who exerted considerable influence in East Asia was T'aehyŏn (or Taehyŏn),³⁵ the founder of the Yogācāra School of Korean Buddhism. His *Pŏmmanggyŏng kojŏkki* (Exposition of the Sutra of Brahma's Net), one of fifty commentaries on Mahayana literature, became a predominant text in Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. While other monks' commentaries dealt solely with the second fascicle of the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*, a comparatively

³⁴ During this period, it was not unusual for Korean monks to travel to China to study Buddhism. Wŏnhyo set off for China, and one night along the way, he slept in a cave. At midnight Wŏnhyo woke up thirsty and saw a vessel of fresh water nearby him. He happily drank it. The next morning, he was shocked to realize that he had slept in an old grave and drunk rotten water out of a skull. It was then that Wŏnhyo understood that everything depends on perception. He gained enlightenment at that moment and gave up going to China for study.

³⁵ He had two canonical names. The name T'aehyŏn was used in most materials in China and Korea, while the name Taehyŏn was used in Japanese sources. See Woncheol, "Introduction," in *Exposition of the Sutra of Brahma's Net*, ed. and trans. Charles A. Muller (Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, 2012), 9.

easy part, his *Pŏmmanggyŏng kojŏkki* considered the first and the second fascicles together. In this sense, T'aehyŏn's commentary was rare enough for the Japanese monk Shōsan (1288-1362) to praise it in his own work the *Bonmōkyō koshakuki kōgi* (Annotation to Exposition of the Sutra of Brahma's Net).³⁶ Because the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* itself did not have headings to label principal precepts of Mahayana disciplines, writers of its commentaries provided their own labels in their commentaries on the ten grave precepts and forty-eight minor precepts. The most famous labels of the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* in East Asian Buddhism are T'aehyŏn's labels, including, as the first of ten precepts, the "prohibition of taking pleasure in killing."³⁷

Compared to Silla Buddhism, however, Koryŏ Buddhism did not produce prolific writers on *vinaya* texts, for the reason that doctrinal schools, including the Vinaya School, were at an ebb during this period in history. As the Sŏn school buttressed by the Ch'oe clan under the military rule flourished, Koryŏ monks, instead, paid more attention to pure rules. The first pure rules of Korean Buddhism were shown in the *Kyech'o simhak inmun* (Admonitions for Beginning Students) written by Chinul in 1205. Chinul (1158-1210) was one of the most famous monks in the history of Korean Buddhism. Although he is popularly considered the founder of a Sŏn sect called Chogyejong (Chogye Sect),³⁸ historical records, in fact, indicate that the Chogyejong was established before Chinul.³⁹ Nonetheless, it is apparent that Chinul played a substantial role in the development of the Chogyejong. In 1185, establishing a society for

³⁶ Woncheol, 31.

³⁷ Ibid., 32.

³⁸ Chae-ryong Shim asserts that Chinul was "the foundation for the development of an indigenous form of Korean Sŏn, namely, the Chogyejong." See Chae-ryong Shim, *Korean Buddhism: Tradition and Transformation* (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing Co., 1999), 14.

³⁹ Yoon-ku Suh, "The History & Culture of Buddhism in the Koryŏ Dynasty," in *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, ed. Korean Buddhist Research Institute (Seoul: Tongguk University Press, 1993), 140.

Buddhist practice made up of laypeople and monks called “Chŏnghyesa” (Community of *Samādhi* and *Prajñā*)⁴⁰ in Mt. Chogye, he went on to create the *Kyech'o simhak inmun* to provide basic regulations for novice monks and ordained *bhikṣu* in this Sŏn community.

Although Koryŏ Buddhism was strongly patronized by the court and aristocrats, it did not feature prominently in *vinaya* studies or ordination lineage at all. As the Koryŏ dynasty became more centralized, it tried to oversee growing Buddhist institutional power through the monk certification system and the monk examination system. In fact, after the monk examination was divided into two divisions of *sŏn* (meditation) and *kyo* (doctrines), Koryŏ Buddhism put emphasis on a syncretism between the two. Whereas state's systematic supervision secured a firm institutional ground for Buddhism, it also undermined the autonomy of the Buddhist *vinaya* tradition and ordination. This weak *vinaya* tradition persisted as one of the characteristics of Buddhism during the Chosŏn dynasty.

Vinayas, Precepts, and Ordination of Chosŏn Buddhism

General Buddhist Policies of the Chosŏn Court

During the transition period from Koryŏ to Chosŏn in the late fourteenth century, Buddhism found itself systematically criticized and in a position of tension with a new state ideology, Neo-Confucianism. The Neo-Confucian literati were hostile to Buddhism because of its strong association with the Koryŏ court and financial weakness. The Buddhist policy to reduce institutional power began with the third king T'aejong (r. 1400-1418), and was strengthened in the reign of the fourth king Sejong (r. 1418-1450). It was not until the sixteenth century that Buddhist institutions, such as the monk examination and certification system, were

⁴⁰ Later its name was changed to “Susŏnsa” (Sŏn Cultivation Community).

completely uprooted.

At the heart of the Neo-Confucian anti-Buddhist policy was, first of all, its concern about the lavish economic privileges which Koryŏ Buddhism enjoyed for hundreds of years. Temples added more tax-exempt lands and slaves during the Koryŏ period, and, as a result, the financial resources of the government were consequently weakened. The new Chosŏn dynasty had to squeeze financial resources from Buddhist institutions so as not to make the same mistake that the Koryŏ court had by concentrating all economic and political power in Buddhist monasteries. The Chosŏn government gradually reduced the number of temples and monks, temple slaves, and land in order to increase tax income and to reallocate land to meritorious civil and military retainers who helped to overthrow the Koryŏ and establish the Chosŏn.

This is not to say, however, that Buddhism was completely oppressed by the court. Early kings, such as T'aejo, T'aejong, and Sejong, were faithful Buddhists, despite Neo-Confucian scholars' animosity against the faith. The first king T'aejo (r. 1392-1398) not only appointed a monk named Muhak (1327-1405) as a "wangsa" (Royal Teacher) but also invited one hundred eighty monks to the court on his birthday.⁴¹ What's more, he held Buddhist rituals in public, in particular the "Suryukchae" (Ritual of Water and Land) which was performed to placate wandering ghosts and demonstrated the king's compassion for the populace after the massive homicide of his political opponents, Wang clan, the former royal family of the Koryŏ dynasty.⁴² These court-sponsored Buddhist rituals and royal banquets for Buddhist monks persisted until the early sixteenth century when Neo-Confucian exclusivism replaced it in the

⁴¹ It was Muhak who advised the king to move the capital city from Kaesŏng to Hanyang (Seoul in the present); *T'aejo sillok* 10: 6a [1396/10/11]. King's birthday was celebrated as "ch'uksŏng pŏphoe" (Dharma Assembly for Royal Celebration), one of the splendid Buddhist events since the Koryŏ period.

⁴² Mihwa Choi, "State Suppression of Buddhism and Royal Patronage of the Ritual of Water and Land in the Early Chosŏn Dynasty," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 22, no. 2 (2009): 191-192.

court.⁴³ In short, though criticized by Neo-Confucian literati, Buddhism still enjoyed support from the royal family as well as commoners throughout the Chosŏn period. This support was due, in part, to a strong belief in the supernatural power of Buddhism, as expressed through rituals aimed at pacifying wandering souls, having a son, rising in official rank, and healing. In this sense, Don Baker, a leading scholar of Korean religion and Korean history, points out that Buddhism was not persecuted but privatized, though it lost its status as the state's official religion during the Chosŏn period.⁴⁴

The Chosŏn government gradually reduced institutional power of Buddhism. Chosŏn Buddhism ultimately lost its sectarian diversity when the government forced various Buddhist sects to coalesce into just two denominational divisions of *sŏn* (meditation) and *kyo* (doctrines). The policy of withdrawing official support for Buddhism that eradicated the monk examination (*sŭnggwa*) and monk certificates (*toch'ŏp*) also erased the nominal existence of *sŏn* and *kyo*, as well as robbing Buddhist monks of their legitimate status as licensed clerics. Because of this policy, modern Korean scholars continued to use the pejorative terms “Buddhism no sect” or “mountain Buddhism” when referring to Buddhism during the Chosŏn period. Nonetheless, a broader view of the monolithic term “Buddhism” reveals different stories seen from diverse angles, such as doctrinal studies, Buddhist culture, including paintings and publications, Buddhist rituals, temple economy, ordination lineage, and dharma lineage. From this different perspective, more distinctive features of late Chosŏn Buddhism arise. Although the Buddhist institutional power gradually diminished, the Chosŏn government's policy of withdrawing official support for Buddhism eventually led to the formation of new currents within Buddhist

⁴³ Ibid., 210.

⁴⁴ Don Baker, “Privatization of Buddhism in the Chosŏn Dynasty,” *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 14, no. 2 (2014): 161.

communities: the emergence of dharma lineage and monks' private property, as well as the revival of ordination lineage in the late Chosŏn period.

Vinaya and Pure Rules in the Chosŏn Period

Given that Buddhist ethics was intrinsically contradictory to Confucian values, the Confucian literati mainly targeted Buddhist ethics, reprimanding its foreign origin and uselessness to society. For example, in his book, *Pulssi Chappyŏn* (Argument against Buddha), Chŏng Tojŏn (1337-1398), the most meritorious retainer of the new dynasty, accused Buddhist ethics of being totally alien from Confucian values. Kwŏn Kŭn (1352-1409), in his preface to *Pulssi Chappyŏn*, wrote: "The Buddhists damage and ruin proper ethics; this will certainly eventuate in people's becoming like animals and proper human relationships will perish. Those with Confucian responsibilities must regard them as enemies and attack them forcefully."⁴⁵

In the middle of such a hostile environment for Buddhism, only one monk, Hamhŏ (1376-1433) dared to present a counterargument and defend the usefulness of Buddhist ethics. In his book the *Hyŏnjŏngnon* (Exposition of the Correct), he compared the five precepts of Buddhism with five Confucian ethical constants, thereby proposing an interchangeability between Buddhist precepts and Confucian values:⁴⁶

In Confucianism the five virtues are considered the pivot of the Way. The five precepts of Buddhism are indeed identical with the five virtues of Confucianism. 'Do not kill' is benevolence. 'Do not steal' is righteousness. 'Do not commit sexual misconduct' is propriety. 'Do not drink alcohol' is wisdom. 'Do not speak falsely' is trust.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Michael C. Kalson, "The Writings of Kwŏn Kŭn: The Context and Shape of Early Yi Dynasty Neo-Confucianism," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, ed. Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 94.

⁴⁶ The five Buddhist precepts (*pañca-sīla*) are vows for laity, the first five vows out of the ten novice precepts. The five Confucian virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trust.

⁴⁷ Hamhŏ, *Hyŏnjŏngnon kanp'yesŏk kyoso*, trans. Kim Kiyŏng (Han'guk pulgyo yŏn'guwŏn, 2003), 38.

Hamhŏ hoped that recognizing and reconciling these two different ethical sets of Buddhism and Confucianism as branches of the same essential values tree would show that Buddhist monastic rules were useful to the state as well as the society. His keen understanding of the correspondence between the five precepts and the five Confucian virtues greatly influenced later Chosŏn monks. This also shows that Buddhism had to accept Confucian hegemony in ethical discourse.

That Confucian values penetrated Buddhist communities can be seen in the way that Buddhist funeral rituals adopted certain Confucian values. In a book, *Sŏngmun sang 'ŭi ch'o* (Excerpts of Funeral Service of Buddhism), written in 1636, the Buddhist monk Pyŏgam (1575-1660) introduced the system of “the five mourning grades”⁴⁸ of Confucianism into Buddhist funeral rituals. Other Buddhist ritual manuals followed, including *Sŏngmun karyech'o* (Excerpts of Family Rites of Buddhism) written by Chinil in 1631, and *Sŭngga yeŭimun* (Ritual Manual of the Sangha) composed by Myŏngjo in 1670. There are two salient reasons for these successive publications regarding funeral rituals of Buddhism: 1) The urgent necessity of funeral manuals for the laity as well as Buddhist clerics after the calamity of wars, the Imjin War (1592-1598) and the Manchu invasion (1636-1637); and 2) To make manifest the compromise between Buddhist and Confucian values.

The most notable Buddhist preceptors of nineteenth century Korea were Ch'oŭi and Pŏmhae, who followed Hamhŏ's thought on *vinayas*. Ch'oŭi (1786-1866) was an eminent Sŏn master who attempted to revitalize the Buddhist tea practice in his books *Tongdasong* (Verses on

⁴⁸ As the standard mourning system of the Confucian society, it regulates how long family members should wear mourning according to how close kinship to the deceased they are. This mourning system was specified in the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* (National Code).

Korean Tea) and *Tasinjŏn* (Biographies of Tea Deities) in Korea, and who conferred the novice precepts to forty monks and the bodhisattva precepts to seventy monks.⁴⁹ In “Taedunsa sŭngboan sŏ” (Preface of Roster of Monks and Nuns of Taedunsa) in the *Iljiam mun’go* (Collected Works of Iljiam),⁵⁰ he elucidated the importance of precepts: “According to the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*, all sentient being can be elevated to the status of the buddhas if they receive the Buddha’s precepts. ‘Kyeyul’ [precepts and *vinayas*] becomes the foundation of enlightenment. It plays a role of a boat or raft to sail one across the sea of suffering.”⁵¹ Relying on the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*, he believed that the precepts and *vinaya* were the essential means to the attainment of ultimate enlightenment.

In another essay, “Taesŭng Pinigye’an sŏ” (Preface of Roster of Precepts of Mahayana Vinaya), he explained the importance of Buddhist precepts by comparing them to Confucian virtues:

In Confucianism the virtue of propriety becomes the foundation of benevolence and righteousness. Without propriety, two other virtues would be destroyed. In Buddhism, ‘kyeyul’ [precepts and *vinayas*] becomes the foundation of *samādhi* and *prajñā*. If ‘kyeyul’ is abandoned, *samādhi* and *prajñā* would be damaged. If one ignores propriety, he is not worthy of commenting about Confucianism. If one neglects ‘kyeyul,’ he is not worthy of mentioning Buddhism. Therefore, anyone in pursuit of the whole understanding cannot be separate from ‘kyeyul’ for a second. There are four sets of precepts: *kōsagye* [precepts of laity], *samigye* [novice precepts], *pigugye* [precepts of *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī*], and *posalgye* [bodhisattva precepts]. Overall, precepts are one of the three essential aspects of Buddhism. More specifically, precepts are divided into those of two vehicles [*yana*], namely, Mahayana and Hinayana. Hinayana deals with outer

⁴⁹ Pŏmhae, “Ch’oŭi sŏnbaek chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 4, in *Han’guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 10, ed. Tongguk taehakkyo han’guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ p’yŏnch’an wiwŏn (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, 1997), 1039.

⁵⁰ Iljiam is one of Ch’oŭi’s pen names. In order to renounce people and society, Ch’oŭi stayed in a small hermitage called Iljiam. Later, he took its name as his pen name. See Pŏmhae, “Ch’oŭi sŏnbaek chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, 1039.

⁵¹ Ch’oŭi, “Taedunsa sŭngboan sŏ” in *Ch’oŭi sigo*, in *Han’guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 10, ed. Tongguk taehakkyo han’guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ p’yŏnch’an wiwŏn (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, 1997), 865-866.

phenomena based on substances and therefore, it has precept of outer phenomena. Mahayana treats inherent nature based on universal principle and, therefore, it has precepts of inherent nature. It is myself who observes the precept of outer phenomena, and the precepts of inherent nature. If you have to choose one of them, discard the precepts of outer phenomena and keep the precepts of inherent nature. Substances and outer phenomena are existent. If someone does not understand the meaning of existence, he falls into the fallacy that everything is existent. On the other hand, inherent nature and universal principle are emptiness. If someone does not understand emptiness, he falls into the error that everything is non-existent. Substances are existent, and outer phenomena are existent. If someone clings to existence with the concept of existence, his fallacy of the concept of permanence would be worse. Inherent nature is emptiness, and universal principle is emptiness. If someone understands emptiness with the concept of emptiness, he would overcome the concept of elimination. It indicates that precepts of the inherent nature of Mahayana play a role of a short cut to ascend into the realm of the buddas, discarding the concept of two extremes [existent/non-existent; or permanence/elimination] and even the concept of the middle way.⁵²

In essence, there is subtle difference between Hamhŏ and Ch'oŭi in their comparison of Buddhist precepts with Confucian virtues. Whereas Hamhŏ identified Buddhist precepts with Confucian virtues in order to justify the usefulness of Buddhist ethics, Ch'oŭi just exemplified Confucian virtues so as to make readers understand the importance of Buddhist precepts. Nonetheless, *vinayas* were still regarded as the essence of Buddhist practice, especially through the concept of three Buddhist essential aspects (*śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā*). On the other hand, they put more emphasis on bodhisattva precepts than Hinayana precepts. While Hinayana precepts in the *Four Part Vinaya* were strictly for Buddhist clerics, bodhisattva precepts in the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* were conferred on laity as well as Buddhist clerics and were relatively simple to observe even in the restrictive circumstances of this period in Korean history.

During the same time period as Ch'oŭi, Pŏmhae (1820-1896), one of the prolific writers of late Chosŏn Buddhism, wrote the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* (Biographies of Korean Monks) and the

⁵² Choŭi, "Taesŭ ng pini kye'an sŏ" in *Iljam mun'go*, in *Han'guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 12, ed. Tongguk taehakkyo pulchŏn kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2002), 264.

Pŏmhae sŏnsa munjip (Collected Works of Pŏmhae). In his “Chasŏl hyeja kyeansŏ” (Preface to a Buddhist Mutual Assistance Society Called Hyeja), he compared five Buddhist precepts with five Confucian virtues:

There are five precepts of the Buddha: not to kill, not to steal, not to commit sexual misconduct, not to speak falsely, and not to drink alcohol. There are five virtues of Confucianism: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trust. The five virtues and the five precepts have the same meaning despite the different names. People of wisdom will understand for themselves without teachings. However, I am teaching deliberately because it is my duty to transmit this teaching from ancestors to descendents.⁵³

In another of his essays “Tap Pak Noha sŏ” (Reply Letter to Pak Noha), Pŏmhae said, “The virtues of benevolence and righteousness of Confucianism correspond to *samādhi* and *prajñā*. The former two virtues are the essence of Confucianism; the latter two aspects are that of Buddhism.”⁵⁴

In addition to precepts, pure rules (*ch’ŏnggyu*) were also important for Buddhists in the late Chosŏn period. At the same time that the Sŏn Buddhist master Kyŏnghŏ (1842-1912) set up “Susŏnsa” (Sŏn Cultivation Community)⁵⁵ in Pŏmŏsa in 1902 for the practice of Sŏn, he also established “Kyemyŏngam susŏnsa ch’ŏnggyu” (Pure Rules of Susŏnsa in Kyemyŏngam). This tradition of pure rules continued into the colonial period at which time a head temple established pure rules for its own Sŏn monastery.

As a whole, highlighting the overlap in Confucian and Buddhist ethics, Chosŏn Buddhism had to arrive at some sort of compromise in order to justify its usefulness in a

⁵³ Pŏmhae, “Chasŏl hyeja kyeansŏ,” in *Pŏmhae sŏnsa munjip*, in *Han’guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 10, ed. Tongguk taehakkyo pulchŏn kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, 1997), 1092.

⁵⁴ Pŏmhae, “Tap Pak Noha sŏ,” in *Pŏmhae sŏnsa munjip*, 1095.

⁵⁵ This title was taken from Chinul’s community in the Koryŏ.

predominantly Confucian climate. To this end, monks strove to reconcile worldly and other-worldly concerns through a harmony between Buddhist precepts and Confucian virtues. Not surprisingly, therefore, Buddhist clerics came to absorb and internalize Confucian values. Primogeniture and “the five mourning grades” in Buddhism are a case in point: monks began using their first disciple as legitimate dharma heirs to perform memorial services and inherit the dharma lineage.

Ordination, Precepts, and Monk Certificates

Chosŏn Buddhism relied on the *Four Part Vinaya* and the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* for proper and ideal ordination. Accordingly, as Ch’oŭi said, there are four different sets of precepts: *kŏsagye* (laity precepts), *samigye* (novice precepts), *piŭgye* (*bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* precepts), and *posalgye* (bodhisattva precepts).⁵⁶ There were five precepts for lay followers, ten precepts for novice monks/nuns, 250 precepts for *bhikṣu* and 348 precepts for *bhikṣuṇī*, and fifty-eight bodhisattva precepts for both Buddhist clerics and the laity. While the first three sets of precepts are based on the *Four Part Vinaya*, the latter bodhisattva precepts, as Mahayana precepts, relied on the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*.

These sets of precepts correspond to each stage a Buddhist cleric must pass through. As a prerequisite to the monastic life, a monk must first become a “haengja” (postulant), enduring and executing chores such as cooking, laundering, and cleaning. This stage can last from a few months to one year. After the *haengja* stage, postulants are ordained as *sami* (novice monk; *śrāmaṇera* in Sanskrit) or *samini* (novice nun; *śrāmaṇerī* in Sanskrit) through a certain ordination ceremony in which they receive ten precepts from their teacher called “ŭnsa,” or “tūktosa.” The ten precepts (*dasa-sīla* in Sanskrit) consist of these vows: not to take life, not to

⁵⁶ Choŭi, “Taesŭ ng pini kyeon sŏ” in *Iljam mun’go*, 264.

steal, not to engage in sexual activity, not speak falsely, not to drink alcohol, not to eat after midday, not to participate in secular amusements, not to adorn the body with ornaments, not to sit on high chairs, and not to accept gold and valuables. Receiving these ten precepts and being a Buddhist cleric was called “tŭkto” in Korean Buddhism, literally meaning “to cross over from this shore to the other shore.” The relationship between novice cleric and teacher was significant because it lasted until death and even after death through Buddhist genealogies called “sŭng chokpo.” Large monasteries created their own Buddhist genealogies tracing lineage all the way from Śākyamuni himself to their closest progenitors. Pŏmhae also made reference to the importance of the genealogy of monks in his essay, “Sŭng chokpo sŏ” (Preface to Genealogy of Buddhist Monk).⁵⁷

In order to become a full-fledged cleric, novices, who have completed special training and who were older than twenty years, received a full set of precepts called “pigugye” or “kujokkye,” consisting of 250 precepts for *bhikṣu* and 348 precepts for *bhikṣuṇī*. While the ten precepts were conferred by the novice’s original teacher (*ŭnsa*), the ordination ceremony for *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* required three masters – a preceptor, a reciting preceptor, and an instructional preceptor – as well as seven witnesses. At the same time as they received “kujokkye,” they also received the bodhisattva precepts, consisting of ten grave precepts and forty-eight minor precepts.

Despite the stated necessity of having three preceptors for *bhikṣu* ordination, it seems likely that most *bhikṣu* ordinations did not, in fact, fulfill this requirement. This can be concluded by examining the broken ordination lineage in the early Chosŏn period. According to the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, a monk named Sŏam (?-1876) not only received dharma from his original teacher but

⁵⁷ Pŏmhae, “Sŭngjokbo sŏ,” in *Pŏmhae sŏnsa munjip*, 1089.

also received the precepts of *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva from his original teacher as well, and not, as might be expected, from the preceptor monks.⁵⁸ Extrapolating from ordination records in the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, among other documents of the period, it can be surmised that not all monks received *bhikṣu* precepts in the traditional procedure consisting of three preceptors and seven witnesses during the Chosŏn period. On the other hand, during the early colonial period, when the Japanese colonial government extended the qualifications required of head monks and abbots in Korean Buddhist temples by adding *bhikṣu* ordination as one, the number of *bhikṣu* ordinations in major Buddhist monasteries increased, complying with the traditional procedure in which three preceptors and seven witnesses were required.

When all ordination requirements have, finally, been fulfilled, the newly ordained, full-fledged monks and nuns are called “pigu” and “piguni,” transliterations of *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī*. In fact, during the Chosŏn dynasty, Buddhist clerics were called several names: “sŭngni” (monks and nuns), “p’ilch’u” (transliteration of *bhikṣu*),⁵⁹ “sangin” (monks), and “tosŭng” (monk-certificate holders). Although early Chosŏn Buddhism was under conditions that did not enable monks to meet the full requirements for *bhikṣu* ordination, historians of the court and other Confucian scholars still used the term “pigu” or “p’ilch’u” to refer to Buddhist monks generally.

The term “tosŭng” (monk-certificate holders), on the other hand, conveyed a substantial meaning related to “toch’ŏp” (monk certificates). Originally “tosŭng” was an abbreviation of “tŭkto wisŭng” (one who crossed over to the other shore to be a Buddhist cleric).⁶⁰ Under strict

⁵⁸ Pŏmhae, *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 5, 1054.

⁵⁹ Yi Kyugyŏng (1788-?) interpreted “p’ilch’u” in a different way in his encyclopedic book *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn sango* (Abundant and Overflowing Notes for Five Continents): “The term ‘p’ilch’u’ refers to someone who has left home and become a monk. In Ch’ŏnch’ukguk [India], there was ‘manch’o’ [a kind of tendril] called ‘p’ilch’u.’ It is said that this grass had five virtues, and therefore, this term is used to refer to a monk.”

⁶⁰ Yi Chigwan, *Kasan pulgyo taesarim*, vol. 4 (Seoul: Kasan pulgyo munhwa yŏn’gu wŏn, 2001), 997.

governmental supervision, “tosŭng” came to connote a legitimately tax-exempt monk who held “toch’ŏp,” the government-issued certificate that supplied the monk’s name, ancestral seat, age, and his father’s and maternal grandfather’s names and service status.⁶¹ Because this certificate was issued solely for the purpose of identifying this monk’s tax-exempt status, neither the monk’s teacher nor his temple affiliation was displayed. During the Chosŏn period, monks were exempt from tax, the corvée, and military service because they traditionally were not engaged in production, such as farming, fishing, and trading. Because of this, the government felt it had to control monks’ population in order to manage tax revenue. The Chosŏn government understood that the most effective way to control Buddhist monks was to retain the system of monk certificates that had been established during the Koryŏ dynasty. To be acknowledged legitimate, a monk had to hold a certificate issued by the Sŭngnoksŏ (Office of Buddhist Registry) in the Yejo (Ministry of Rites) after paying a certain amount of money to the government.

The *Kyŏngguk taejŏn*, a national code of the Chosŏn dynasty drafted by the Neo-Confucian scholar and advisor to King T’aejo, Chŏng Tojŏn, and later disseminated in 1485, gave specific instructions in its “Tosŭng” subsection on how to be a legitimate monk.

One who hopes to be a monk, first of all, should give notice of his initiation to the Sŏn sect or the Kyo sect, and then has to pass the examination of chanting *Heart Sūtra*, *Diamond Sūtra*, and the *Saldalt’a*⁶² within three months after his initiation. He has to report it to the Ministry of Rites. If he is lowborn, he has to get permission from his original owners. Next, he should pay twenty rolls of hemp, and then the ‘toch’ŏp’ (monk certificate) will be bestowed upon him. If he does not pay twenty rolls of hemp within three months, his family should report it to nearby government offices and they will laicize him and levy regular tax duties. If his family intentionally fails to report this, they

⁶¹ “Toch’ŏp sik,” *Kyŏngguk taejŏn*.

⁶² Opinions differ on what exactly the *Saldalt’a* was. “Sal 薩” refers to bodhisattva, and “dalt’a 怛陀” is a transliteration of the Sanskrit “tathā” (such as *Tathāgata* 如來). It is assumed that the *Saldalt’a* was a collection of mantras for bodhisattvas and *Tathāgata*.

will be punished as well. If he lends his “toch’öp,” or borrows the “toch’öp” of another, he will be punished according to the regulations on admissions to the capital gates.⁶³

In short, anyone who wanted to be a monk needed to follow a certain process specified by law: one had to be initiated into the Sŏn sect or the Kyo sect, to take the monk examination, and to pay a poll tax in the form of hemp rolls to the government in order to acquire monk certification. Failure to pay resulted in the novice monk’s initiation being nullified. It is interesting to note that the terms “tosŭng” (monk-certificate holders) and “toch’öp” (monk certificates) were both heavily associated with governmental intervention in Buddhist ordination. In the context of governmental supervision of tax-exempt monks, the legitimacy of Buddhist clerics was ultimately determined not by an ordination ceremony but by government-issued certificates during the early Chosŏn period.

The renowned Buddhist scholar during the colonial period, Yi Nŭnghwa, provides a longer account of the initiation of Buddhist monks and nuns in his book *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa* (Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism) written in 1918. According to his account, after the promulgation of the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn*, a Buddhist cleric’s ordination was regulated as a process during which applicants needed to pass the monk examination before receiving a monk certificate from the government.⁶⁴ Yi Nŭnghwa suggested that the abolishment of the certificate and examination systems eventually led to a general downgrading of qualifications required of Buddhist monks.⁶⁵ He adds, “Regardless of the time that the ‘toch’öp’ was issued or abolished,

⁶³ “Tosŭng,” *Kyŏngguk taejŏn*. “The regulations on admissions to the capital gates” (*hyŏndae kwanbang p’aemyŏn yul* 懸帶關防牌面律) were regulations that only “capital gates pass” holders were allowed to enter the capital gates. If someone lent or borrowed this pass, he received the punishment of one hundred slaps on the buttocks.

⁶⁴ Yi Nŭnghwa, *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa*, trans. Yi Pyŏngdu (Seoul: Hyeon, 1993), 87.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

anyone who completed his or her ordination ceremony (*tūktosik*) was called *sami* [*śrāmaṇera*] or *samini* [*śrāmaṇerikā*], a person observing the ten precepts.”⁶⁶ As for the full ordination, Yi Nūnghwa uses the term “ipsin,” which literally means “establishment of oneself in life through study and self-discipline.”⁶⁷ According to Yi Nūnghwa, “ipsinsūng” (full-fledged monks) should meet certain qualifications: to have had the 250 precepts in the Hinayana *vinaya*, and the ten grave precepts and the forty eight minor precepts in the Mahayana *vinaya* conferred upon them; to fulfill the dharma age of three; and to pass the triennial examination of *Chōndūngnok* (Record of the Transmission of the Lamp) and *Sōnmun yōmsong* (Compilation of Examinations of and Verses on Ancient Precedents) of the Sōn Sect or *Hwaōmgyōng* (Flower Ornament Sutra; Avataṃsaka Sūtra in Sanskrit) of the Kyo Sect.⁶⁸

Some scholars argue that this move on the part of the Chosŏn government to oversee monk certificates is evidence that decisively proves oppression of and hostility towards Buddhism. However, I argue that the system of monk certificates should not be considered as having arisen entirely out of the Chosŏn government’s anti-Buddhist policy, but rather, it should be considered as one of the existing characteristics of Chinese Buddhism and Korean Buddhism due to the fact that Song China and Koryŏ Korea had also set up this institutional system. It is also worth noting here that the system of monk certificates was two-sided: The government controlled the monk population in order to manage tax revenue, and Buddhist clerics secured their right to exist in the society as legitimately tax-exempt monks. In other words, intensified government intervention into Buddhist affairs ensured the stable maintenance of institutional

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 88.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Buddhism which the Buddhist clerics wanted, and at the same time, entailed restrictions of the autonomy of Buddhists which the government wanted.

These systems were abolished in 1492, revived in 1550 temporarily by King Myōngjong (r. 1545-1567) whose mother Queen Dowager Munjōng (1501-1565) was a devout Buddhist, and abolished again soon after his mother's death in 1565.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the temporary revival of the Buddhist institutional systems brought about a short-term renaissance of Chosŏn Buddhism. Some prominent monks, such as Ch'ōnghō (1520-1604) and Samyōng (1544-1610), passed the monk examination and gained renown as men of high character when they organized a militia of Buddhist monks to fight Japanese invaders during the Imjin War.

When these Buddhist institutional systems were uprooted in the mid-Chosŏn period, Buddhism lost its institutional grounds including monks' tax-exempt status, and, more dishearteningly, lost the denominational division between the Sŏn and the Kyo. Despite these setbacks, Buddhism maintained its autonomy outside government supervision, and even saw the establishment of several important rights, namely, dharma lineage, monk's right to private property, and the revival of ordination lineage through which Buddhist clerics strove to define the monkhood by themselves in the late Chosŏn period. In the next section, we will discuss how this government intervention in ordination that lasted from the Koryŏ period to the early Chosŏn period eventually led to a weak *vinaya* tradition, which, in turn, became one of the complicated reasons that explain the spread of clerical marriage in the Japanese colonial period.

⁶⁹ Since filial piety was considered one of the most important virtues in Neo-Confucianism as well as Korean's moral consciousness, the kings were not able to resist them if their parents were devout Buddhists. In addition to Dowager Munjōng and his son King Munjong, King T'aejong had a difficult time when he tried to decrease the number of monks and temples because his father King T'aejo, a devout Buddhist, was against King T'aejong's Buddhist policies.

Prohibition of Clerical Marriage

In addition to the Chosŏn government's intervention in the systems of the monk examination and monk certificates, it also laid down national laws that meddled with the Buddhist cleric's deportment. For example, it decreed that once a monk had committed fornication, homicide, or theft, he would be punished by the government, then forcibly laicized.⁷⁰ The government, additionally, banned women from visiting Buddhist temples in order to prevent fornication.⁷¹ Regarding clerical marriage, the government prohibited it in national laws – the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* as well as the *Taemyŏngnyul chikhae* (Literal Explanation of the Ming Code) – expressly for the management of the cleric population and social status. The *Taemyŏngryul chikhae*, a translation of the *Ming Code* using *idu* scripts, specified that if a Buddhist monk had a wife or concubine, he should be laicized after receiving eighty slaps on the buttocks. The *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* offered this decree: Any offspring of a Buddhist monk would automatically belong to the lowest social rung, even if the offspring's mother was a commoner (*yangin*).⁷² It is clear from these laws that the Chosŏn court's prohibition of monks marrying or, indeed, having sexual relations with women at all, arose not out of Buddhist precepts at all but out of the government's wish to maintain social order and bring in revenue.

In spite of this, however, the *Sillok* (Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty) occasionally included records of married monks who were, at this time, referred to as “taech’ŏsŭng.” While some modern scholars argue that the word “taech’ŏsŭng 帶妻僧” (married monks) stems from

⁷⁰ *Sejo sillok* 23: 29a [1461/3/15].

⁷¹ *Sejo sillok* 7: 16a [1457/3/23].

⁷² “Kongch’ŏn,” *Kyŏngguk taejŏn*. One's social status was usually determined by the social status of his/her mother except in the case of the son of a *yangban* father and a commoner mother. The status of this offspring was between *yangban* and commoner status.

the Japanese expression “nikujiki saitai 食肉妻帶” (eating meat and having wives) used during Japanese colonial rule between the years 1910 and 1945, it was commonly used in the *Sillok* of the Chosŏn period as much as 500 years earlier. Not surprisingly, the Confucian-centered *Sillok* described married monks as thieves and evaders of military service.⁷³ An entry in the *Sillok* illustrates the contemporary attitude: For instance, when government officials discussed the demolition of temple buildings during the reign of King Sŏngjong, one official suggested that the leftover pieces of timber should be confiscated because “otherwise, monks would use these leftover pieces to build a house for their wives’ family or their brothers, for there are many married monks these days.”⁷⁴

Despite its official prohibition during the Chosŏn period, clerical marriage was not a rare occurrence. This was not only because the concepts of *vinaya* and precepts were not strongly imbedded in Buddhist clerics, but also because the basic behavioral code of monks was determined by the government, not by *vinaya* and precepts. It would appear then that, whenever the governmental supervision over Buddhist matters loosened, there was great potential for lax morality and poor deportment among Buddhist clerics. It is interesting to note that the basic perception of the connection between clerical deportment and governmental supervision developed in the Chosŏn period not only remained unchanged during the colonial period but, further, was systematically strengthened by a set of head-branch temple bylaws.

⁷³ *Sejo sillok* 47: 1a [1468/7/1].

⁷⁴ *Sŏngjong sillok* 90: 12a [1478/3/19].

Re-thinking Late Chosŏn Buddhism

Formation of Dharma Lineage

The Korean Buddhist scholar Kim Yongt'ae defines the late Chosŏn period as “the era of the transmission of dharma lineage.” He said, “dharma lineage as transferred from the dharma master began to be regarded as the leading criterion indicating the relationship of teacher to pupil. The era of the transmission of dharma arrived.”⁷⁵ During the Koryŏ and the early Chosŏn period, although dharma was transmitted from an original teacher (*ŭnsa* or *tŭktosa*) to a disciple, it was not significantly formulated to be passed on in linear succession from generation to generation.⁷⁶ This was because, during the Koryŏ and the early Chosŏn period, a monk's identity was established by two official systems: the monk certificate displaying his legitimacy as a tax-exempt monk, and the monk examination to specify his affiliated sect. When these two systems were finally overturned in the late Chosŏn period, Buddhist monks of this period had to wrestle to re-establish their religious identity on their own. At this time, when Buddhist clerics had to prove who they were and what they belonged to without any governmental supervision, Chosŏn Buddhism ushered in a new phase: dharma lineage.

Dharma lineage refers to a lineal succession that passes from a dharma master to a dharma descendent. In the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, various terms are used to mean transmission of dharma: “kŏndang” (to establish his own dharma-banner),⁷⁷ “sabŏp” (inheriting dharma),⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Kim Yongt'ae, *Chosŏn hugi pulgyosa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Sin'gu munhwasa, 2010), 79.

⁷⁶ Kim Yŏngsu, *Chosŏn pulgyo sago* (manuscripts in 1939), 159; Kim Yongt'ae, 77.

⁷⁷ Pŏmhae, “Mundam sŏnsa chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 5, 1052.

⁷⁸ Pŏmhae, “Kuyŏn kangbaek chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 6, 1069.

“yŏmhyang” (burning the incense),⁷⁹ and “su pŏbin” (receiving the seal of dharma).⁸⁰ In the Sŏn Buddhist tradition, once a monk fulfilled all the requirements of Buddhist practice and passed a test, he was approved as an heir of dharma lineage. The test was not strictly formatted. Rather, it was an exchange of “hwadu” (meditation theme) or an exchange of silence. The ceremony marking the conferring of the privilege of transmitting dharma lineage was called “kŏndang sik,” and, during it, a dharma successor received his dharma name from his dharma master. The ceremony also established his right to teach as a recognized dharma successor.

Two dharma lineages were formed based on two distinguished dharma progenitors of Chosŏn Buddhism: Ch’ŏnghŏ’s lineage and Puhyu’s lineage. Ch’ŏnghŏ (1520-1604),⁸¹ the most famous monk of the Chosŏn period, passed the monk examination which had been temporarily restored during the reign of King Myŏngjong and participated in the Imjin War as a leader of the monk army. Praising his accomplishments during the Imjin War, King Sŏnjo granted him the title “General of the sixteen temples in the eight provinces,”⁸² and, later, bestowed land and slaves to support a shrine to Ch’ŏnghŏ in Taedunsa after his death. Ch’ŏnghŏ’s lineage was internally divided into branch lineages of his four disciples, Samyŏng, P’yŏnyang, Soyo, and Chŏnggwan. To date, two thirds of Korean Buddhist temples claim to belong to the branch

⁷⁹ Pŏmhae, “Munam kangbaek chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 5, 1051.

⁸⁰ Pŏmhae, “Pyŏngnyŏn sŏnsa chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 6, 1069.

⁸¹ His formal full name is Ch’ŏnghŏ Hyujŏng. Ch’ŏnghŏ is his dharma name, and Hyujŏng, his ordination name. The formal name of a Buddhist cleric is the combination of the dharma name and the ordination name.

⁸² “Ch’ŏnghŏ chonja chŏn,” *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 2, 1014-1017. In this title “P’alto sibuyuk chong toch’ongsŏp 八道十六宗都摠攝” (General of the sixteen temples in the eight provinces), the term “chong” (宗) literally refers to denominations. However, since late Chosŏn Buddhism did not have any sects or denominations, it would be appropriate to interpret it as a large Buddhist monastery. For example, in the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Pŏmhae wrote that the Songgwang temple was “the grand monastery among the sixteen monasteries” (十六宗之大道場). See Pŏmhae, “Pyŏngnyŏn sŏnsa chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*.

lineages of Samyŏng and P'yŏnyang under Ch'ŏnghŏ.⁸³ Buddhists of the late Chosŏn period employed dharma lineage centering around Ch'ŏnghŏ to overcome the effects of the abolition of a governmental Buddhist institutional system.

In the seventeenth century, two different theories evolved regarding who exactly was the legitimate dharma progenitor of Ch'ŏnghŏ among all Koryŏ monks. The Confucian scholar Hŏ Kyun (1569-1618) claimed that dharma had been transmitted from the Koryŏ monk Naong to Ch'ŏnghŏ. On the other hand, Ch'ŏnghŏ's disciple P'yŏnyang (1581-1644) pointed to the Koryŏ monk T'aego as the dharma forefather of Ch'ŏnghŏ. Naong (1320-1376) and T'aego (1301-1382) were remarkable Koryŏ monks, both of whom were trained in Linji practice. The main difference between them was that T'aego, who studied Chan practice in China, was, therefore, more closely associated with Chinese Buddhism, while Naong was a teacher of Muhak, who served as royal teacher of King T'aejo. Through this relationship, Naong was strongly connected with one of the monks who lived in the late Koryŏ period.⁸⁴

A look at the origins of these theories illustrates just how well dharma lineages were elaborated and re-constructed in the process of selecting a dharma forefather for Ch'ŏnghŏ. As an advocate of Naong, Hŏ Kyun, a member of the Confucian literati and the author of the Korean vernacular novel, *Hong Kiltong chŏn* (The Tale of Hong Kiltong), was a sincere Buddhist who had a close relationship with Samyŏng (1544-1610), a disciple of Ch'ŏnghŏ. This close relationship led him to compose the stele inscriptions of Samyŏng and Ch'ŏnghŏ's teachings in order to commemorate their achievements after their death. Hŏ Kyun also wrote "Ch'ŏnghŏdang chip sŏ" (Preface of Collection of Ch'ŏnghŏ) in which he traced dharma lineage from Tobong

⁸³ Kim Yongt'ae, 117.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 189.

through Naong to Ch'ŏnghŏ.⁸⁵ However, P'yŏnyang, a disciple of Ch'ŏnghŏ and the dharma brother of Samyŏng, decried Hŏ Kyun's theory, and instead maintained that it was not Naong but T'aego who transmitted dharma from a Chinese Linji monk named Sŏgok (1272-1352) to Ch'ŏnghŏ.⁸⁶

It can be seen, then, that while the Sŏn tradition of Koryŏ was pivotal in Hŏ Kyun's theory, P'yŏnyang's theory turned on the idea that the direct transmission of dharma came from the Chinese Linji tradition.⁸⁷ The latter theory found more support among Ch'ŏnghŏ's disciples because T'aego was a more prominent monk than Naong, and furthermore, direct transmission of dharma from China was more in line with the Sino-centrism that flourished around this time.⁸⁸ In his book *Chosŏn hugi pulgyosa yŏn'gu* (A Study in the History of Late Chosŏn Buddhism), Kim Yongt'ae explains further why P'yŏnyang accepted T'aego but denied Naong as one of dharma ancestors of Chosŏn Buddhism: "He [P'yŏnyang] tried to declare the orthodoxy of Chosŏn Buddhism by making a connection with the Chinese Linji tradition. At the same time he cut off the connection with early Chosŏn monks who were associated with late Koryŏ Buddhism."⁸⁹ In short, late Chosŏn Buddhism developed its orthodoxy and legitimacy through having recourse to a well-elaborated dharma lineage associated with Sino-centrism.

Generally, both the dharma lineage and ordination lineage of late Chosŏn monks can be found in several forms including stele inscriptions, brief records of the deceased (*haengjang*),

⁸⁵ Ibid., 173; "Ch'ŏnghŏdang chip sŏ" in *Ch'ŏnghŏ chip*, in *Han'guk pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 7, ed. Tongguk taehakkyo pulchŏn kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1990), 659-660.

⁸⁶ "Ch'ŏnghŏdang chip sŏ," 658-659.

⁸⁷ Kim Yongt'ae, 180.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 189.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

historical records of the temple (*saji*), and the writings of monks such as Pŏmhae whose *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* (Biographies of Korean Monks) was written in 1894. The *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* is fascinating because, in it, Pŏmhae illuminated the dharma lineage as well as the ordination lineage of the Chosŏn period through biographies of monks. It consists of six fascicles that portray 199 Korean monks, including Pŏmhae himself, from 371 C.E. to 1894.⁹⁰ In particular, the third fascicle deals with Chosŏn monks who lived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the next three fascicles portray monks in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Additionally, Pŏmhae included fourteen monks who were still alive at the moment that he completed this book in 1894.

Although it is standard hagiographical form to depict a monk's life from birth to death with some hyperbole, information on monks in the last two fascicles seems to be reliable in that Pŏmhae personally knew and met many of them who were his dharma ancestors, dharma brothers, his ordinands, or monks from neighboring temples. If the work has a weakness, however, it is its narrow perspective, a result of Pŏmhae's failure to consider a wider range of dharma lineages.⁹¹ Because Pŏmhae was a monk of Taedunsa, a temple belonging to a branch lineage of Pyŏnyang, he followed Pyŏnyang's theory of dharma lineage through T'aego to Ch'ŏnghŏ as the authentic lineage.⁹² In other words, one serious limitation of the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* is that Pŏmhae's understanding of dharma lineage was confined in scope to his own dharma lineage.

The most important information in each biography is the teacher-pupil relationship in

⁹⁰ As a matter of fact, Pŏmhae's *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* includes biographies of two laymen, two Chinese monks, and one Korean nun, along with those of other Korean monks.

⁹¹ Kim Yongt'ae, 125.

⁹² Ibid.

terms of the lineal succession of dharma. For example, according to “Sōram chongsa chōn” (Biography of Eminent Master Sōram), Sōram (1651-1706) was tonsured by Chongan and transmitted dharma from Wōljō who belonged to the branch lineage of Pyōnyang.⁹³ In “Paekp’a kangbaek chōn” (Biography of Venerable Lecturer Paekp’a), monk Paekp’a (1767-1852) was described as the “dharma heir of Sōngbong, dharma grandson of T’oeam, dharma great-grandson of Sōlp’a, and dharma great-great-grandson of Hoam.”⁹⁴ In these cases, the monks had two teachers in their lives: the original master who tonsured them, thereby accepting them as life-long disciples at their novice ordination, and the dharma master who transmitted dharma to them at the ceremony of dharma succession.

On the other hand, monk Yōnju (1827-?) in “Yōnju kangbaek chōn” (Biography of Venerable Lecturer Yōnju) received his dharma transmission from his original teacher:

His ordination name was Kūkhyōn. His dharma name was Yōnju. He had the birth surname Sin and was born in Haenam. At an early age, he entered Mt. Turyun and was tonsured by the Sōn master Sinwōl. He received full precepts at the platform of the Sōn master Muha Siyun. The seal of dharma was transmitted to him through his original teacher Sinwōl. He visited the lecture hall of Ŭnghwa and Tarhwa in Mt. Talma and was taught Buddhist and non-Buddhist scriptures. He joined the lecture hall of Ch’immyōng and Yongun in Mt. Chogye and learned the principles of *sōn* [meditation] and *kyo* [doctrines].”⁹⁵

As this passage shows, Yōnju received his dharma lineage from his original teacher, not from a dharma master. Similarly, Kūngp’a (1833-?) in “Kūngp’a sōnsa chōn” (Biography of Sōn Master Kūngp’a), received dharma from his original master, as well.⁹⁶ His dharma lineage is described

⁹³ Pōmhae, “Sōram chongsa chōn,” in *Tongsa yōlchōn*, Fasc. 3, 1025.

⁹⁴ Pōmhae, “Paekp’a kangbaek chōn,” in *Tongsa yōlchōn*, Fasc. 4, 1033.

⁹⁵ Pōmhae, “Yōnju kangbaek chōn,” in *Tongsa yōlchōn*, Fasc. 5, 1063.

⁹⁶ Pōmhae, “Kūmp’a sōnsa chōn,” in *Tongsa yōlchōn*, Fasc. 6, 1066-1067.

in more detail: “He was a descendent of the seventy-fourth generation of Śākyamuni, of the seventeenth generation of T’aego, of the eleventh generation of Ch’ŏnghŏ, of the fifth generation of Yŏndam. He was a great-grandson of Wanho, and a disciple of Sŏkho.”⁹⁷

During the late Chosŏn period, there were several reasons why it was important for Buddhist monks to be dharma heirs. A monk’s membership in a dharma family was firmly determined through dharma lineage, and established his identity and as someone who was qualified to have own dharma heir. More importantly, he had the right of succession of property. In short, which dharma family they belonged to became the new criterion Buddhist clerics relied on to represent themselves within the monastic community. What is interesting is that the concept of dharma family was deeply associated with secular family values: a Buddhist cleric aspired to have a dharma heir to perform memorial services as well as to continue to transmit his dharma lineage. As will be discussed in the next section, one of the cornerstones in the foundation of the transmission of dharma lineage was the succession of private property ownership among Buddhist clerics.

Buddhist Clergy’s Private Property

Whereas Buddhist monasteries had plenty of tax-exempt land and temple slaves during the Koryŏ dynasty, rarely is there a mention of Buddhist monks’ holding private property. This is because the Koryŏ government prevented monks from possessing private property in order to check an excessive concentration of clerical financial resources. In contrast, though it seems to have contradicted the Chosŏn government’s general Buddhist policy, after the seventeenth century Buddhist clerics were permitted to possess private land. At the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty, as is well known, the government confiscated numerous tax-exempt land and temple

⁹⁷ Ibid.

slaves from Buddhist monasteries as one of its Buddhist policies of withdrawing official support for Buddhism. Moreover, after the Imjin War, monks were forced to provide their labor to the government as soldiers, fortress guards, craftspeople, manufacturers, and construction workers. By permitting monks the privilege of private property ownership, the government, having already exploited Buddhist monks as thoroughly as possible in the clerical realm, made it possible to exploit them in the secular realm as well. Private property ownership emerged in tandem with the construction of dharma lineage in the late Chosŏn period and monks came to absorb Confucian values including primogeniture and genealogy in terms of succession of dharma and property.

Three types of source materials provide historical context for monks' private property ownership. First, the issue of a monk's inheritance of private property was dealt with in the royal edicts, such as the *Sinbo sugyo chimnok* (Revised Collection of Royal Edicts) compiled in 1743 during the reign of King Yŏngjo (r. 1724-1776).⁹⁸ The *Sinbo sugyo chimnok*, along with the *Kaksa sugyo* (Royal Edicts for All Offices) of the sixteenth century and the *Sugyo chimnok* (the Collection of Royal Edicts) of 1697 are among the records of royal edicts that were compiled during the late Chosŏn period.⁹⁹ A miscellaneous regulation in 1657 found in the *Sinbo sugyo chimnok* specified that, after the death of a monk, his private land should be inherited by his

⁹⁸ Kim Kapchu, *Chosŏn sidae sawŏn kyŏngjesa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Kyŏngin munhwasa, 2007), 155.

⁹⁹ These materials provide a clear look at the dynamic changes that took place in mid-Chosŏn society. After the completion and dissemination of the *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* (National Code) in 1470 and the *Taejŏn husongnok* (Late Expansion of the National Code) in 1543, the Chosŏn government realized the need for a compilation of royal edicts which were discussed and regulated after the dissemination of two previous national codes. These collections paint the coeval Chosŏn society like a vivid picture. They reveal the ways Chosŏn society changed in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, describing the frequent political conflict due to factionalism, the development of commercial activity, the increase in agricultural production, and the intensified division between the *yangban* and the commoners.

secular family members while all his other belongings should be given to his disciples.¹⁰⁰ The regulation that governed the inheritance of a monk's private land was revised in 1674 as follows: "If a monk has family members or cousins, his posthumous farmland should be evenly divided among them and his senior disciple. If he does not have any family members or cousins, it should be given to his affiliated temple to support the tax obligations of the temple."¹⁰¹ Comparing these two records, it can be seen that the role of the senior disciple was strengthened in the right of succession, which can be interpreted as illustrating the acceptance of the Confucian idea of primogeniture in the Buddhist monasteries.

The second of the previously mentioned historical sources is the land register (*yang'an*) the data in which was gleaned from a survey that was taken every twenty years. "Kusan myŏn yang'an" (Land Register of Kusan District) and "Wanjŏn myŏn yang'an" (Land Register of Wanjŏn District) recorded in the early eighteenth century enumerated how many monks owned private land: fifty-six monks (7.5 percent) out of 736 land owners in Kusan; fifty-one monks (4.2 percent) out of 1,205 in Wanjŏn.¹⁰²

As the final historical source, household registers of monks clearly indicate their possession of private property. In 1675, during the reign of King Sukchong (r. 1674-1720), the government decided to incorporate "monks who owned private land" into triennium household registers in order to increase the overall revenue as well as to supervise the monk population.¹⁰³ Because the system of monk certificates had been abolished, the government no longer had a

¹⁰⁰ Kim Kapchu, 155.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 162.

¹⁰² Ibid., 157

¹⁰³ *Sukchong sillok* 3:48a [1675/5/9]; 3:49b [1675/5/13].

reliable source of information about monks' numbers. Thus, entering information about monks into household registers had a double objective: first, to increase the revenue and check tax-evaders, and second, to oversee monks' population. Not surprisingly, the monks' household register was very similar to monk certificates in that both sources asked for name, age, and clan seat, as well as the service status of father and maternal grandfather.

There were four paths that monks could take in order to become a landowner: by cultivating a designated wasteland, by purchasing land, by inheriting land from a birth parent or master monk, and by virtue of having been a landowner before ordination.¹⁰⁴ Since the Chosŏn government was willing to grant ownership of reclaimed wasteland free of charge to monks, the monks often cultivated the wilderness near their temple. In addition, when commerce and agricultural production were developed in the seventeenth century, monks became actively engaged in commercial activities as the manufacture of the hemp-cord shoes, paper, or the cultivation of yeast for rice wine. A record in the *Sillok* of 1734 provides historical evidence of this: "Commercial monk Sŏkhun and others were passing by the boundary of Ch'angsŏng, carrying money and silk on a cow, but the cow fell down into the river."¹⁰⁵ Other records describe a carpenter monk in the fifteenth century¹⁰⁶ and a painter monk in the seventeenth century,¹⁰⁷ providing further evidence that monks were actively engaged in manufacture and commerce for their livelihoods. Their income from this industry made it possible for them to afford to purchase land.

¹⁰⁴ Kim Kapchu, 158-160.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 159; *Yŏngjo sillok* 38: 26a [1734/6/14].

¹⁰⁶ *Tanjong sillok* 3: 25a [1452/9/27].

¹⁰⁷ *Kwanghaegun ilgi* 101:6b [1616/3/17].

According to Yi Nŭnghwa's *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa*, land in the Buddhist monasteries was categorized in four ways: "purhyangdap," "yŏngdap," "chewidap," and "pŏptap."¹⁰⁸ "Purhyangdap" referred to rice fields that had been donated by the laity. "Yŏngdap" referred to rice fields used for memorial services of dharma ancestors and whose rice crop was spent on annual memorial services held at the ancestor hall (*yŏngdang*). Like "yŏngdap," "chewidap" also referred to rice fields endowed by monks that provided expenses for memorial services. Like the laity, monks endowed their property to temples for annual memorial services. "Pŏptap" refers to rice fields that were inherited from a dharma ancestor and were considered to be pivotal for their livelihoods.¹⁰⁹ If the monk died without dharma descendents, this land would be inherited by his affiliated temple.¹¹⁰ Memorial services for ancestors both of the biological family as well as those of a monk's dharma lineage were so important that plenty of land was endowed for expenses.

In short, Buddhist clerics' private land was pivotal in the transmission of dharma lineage in that it provided an economic foundation separate from temple property which, in turn, enabled Buddhist clergy to support their dharma descendants. It also provided the minimum economic basis for clerical marriage in the colonial period.

Revival of Ordination Lineage

Because no existing record of ordination lineage – either official or unofficial – survives from the early Chosŏn period, it can be concluded that ordination lineage broke off until the nineteenth century when records indicated that two kinds of brand-new ordination lineage

¹⁰⁸ Yi Nŭnghwa, 178-179.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 181.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

abruptly appeared. The first is attributed to monk Taeŭn (1780-1841) who established an ordination lineage through his “self-ordination through auspicious signs.” The second type of ordination lineage was established when monk Manha (?-?), in 1892, traveled to Beijing, China and received the full precepts from the Chinese preceptor Ch’angdo in the Pŏbwŏn temple (Ch. Fayuansi). He used this to his own ordination lineage in Chosŏn Korea.

Dharma lineages were shaped elaborately through careful selections of dharma progenitors. Ordination lineages, on the other hand, appeared all of a sudden out of a mystical story about Taeŭn in the nineteenth century. The story, in brief, is this: After Taeŭn was self-ordained through an auspicious sign taken from the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*, he conferred *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts upon his teacher Kūmdam while Kūmdam and he prayed together in Ch’ilburam (Seven Buddhas Hermitage) on Mt. Chiri over the course of several days. On the seventh day, a ray of auspicious light suddenly penetrated Taeŭn’s forehead, which both he and his teacher understood to be the kind of self-ordination written about in the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*. Upon this realization, Kūmdam immediately asked Taeŭn for ordination, even though he was the teacher and Taeŭn, the pupil. Based on this mystical event, Taeŭn became the first “authentic” preceptor of Chosŏn Buddhism.

Taeŭn’s self-ordination is not unique to Korean Buddhism. In fact, this “self-ordination” is one of the characteristics of the Mahayana *vinaya* tradition, clearly distinguishing from the Hinayana tradition. While the *Four Part Vinaya*, one of the Hinayana *vinayas*, strictly requires three preceptors and seven witnesses in the full ordination ceremony, the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* suggests and recognizes self-ordination as an alternative if preceptors are not available. The *Brahmā Net Sūtra* says, “When you have a good desire to receive bodhisattva precepts, pray for self-ordination in front of the image of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, repenting for seven days

before the Buddha. Then you will be able to see an auspicious sign, and immediately obtain precepts.”¹¹¹ It goes on to say: “If you are not able to find a preceptor within the distance of one thousand *ri* (approximately 400-500 km), you can be self-ordained before the image of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. You should witness an auspicious sign.”¹¹²

Taeŭn’s mystical experience of self-ordination was legitimized by other forefathers of the Mahayana tradition including Daoxuan (596-667), the founder of the Chinese Vinaya school (Ch. Nanshan zong), and Saichō (767-822), the founder of the Japanese Tendai school.¹¹³ Pŏmhae also related Taeŭn’s experience to Daoxuan’s self-ordination. In “Taeŭn sŏnbaek chŏn” (Biography of Venerable Sŏn Practitioner Taeŭn), Pŏmhae tells about Taeŭn’s life:

His Ordination name was Nango, and his dharma name was Taeŭn. He was born in Naju in the year of *kyŏngja* [1780] during the reign of the Qing emperor Qianlong. He entered the sangha on Mt. Wŏlch’ul, being tonsured by the Sŏn master Kŭmdam who was a disciple of the Sŏn master Yŏndam. He was taught by Yŏndam, Paengnyŏn, Ŭiam, Nangam, Wanho, and Yŏnp’a. When he fulfilled the requirements of the Buddhist practice, he burned the incense and opened his own lecture hall.... Many people praised him as an incarnation of Tosŏn [Ch. Daoxuan], the founder of the Vinaya School of China.¹¹⁴

In addition to the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Pŏmhae mentions Taeŭn briefly in “Subosal kyeche’ŏp pal” (Afterword of Reception of Bodhisattva Precepts) in the *Pŏmhae sŏnsa munjip* (Collected Works of Pŏmhae): “[you] should attain enlightenment through the story of Taeŭn and Kŭmdam.”¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Brahmā Net Sūtra*, in Taishō Tripitaka Vol. 24, No. 1484, CBETA Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Collection, http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T24n1484_002.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Nobuyoshi Yamabe, “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya: Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Stanley Weinstein*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005), 17-18.

¹¹⁴ Pŏmhae, “Taeŭn sŏnbaek chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 4, 1040.

¹¹⁵ Pŏmhae, “Subosal kyeche’ŏp pal,” in *Pŏmhae sŏnsa munjip*, 1079.

The second ordination lineage is attributed to Manha who was ordained in 1892 by a Chinese preceptor named Ch'angdo in the Pöbwön temple (Ch. Fayuansi), China. According to the woodblock version of an ordination certificate of T'ongdosa, Ch'angdo was appointed "a great teacher to confer precepts" at Pöbwönsa in 1869 by Chinese emperor Tongzhi.¹¹⁶ T'ongdosa's ordination certificate of 1900 says, "In the eighteenth year of *kwangsō* [1892], when the Chinese preceptor Ch'angdo conferred precepts upon monks in Pöbwönsa, Sūngnim [also known as Manha], a monk from Chosŏn, was ordained. On his return to his country, Sūngnim built an ordination platform and conferred precepts upon monks."¹¹⁷ Pömmae did not mention Manha in his *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* which was completed in 1894. This is likely because he did not know of Manha's ordination in China in 1892.

Many accounts of ordination among monks who lived in the nineteenth century can be found in Pömmae's *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*. This is because Pömmae himself was a renowned preceptor who belonged to the ordination lineage of Taeūn, as the third successor after preceptor Ch'ōi. Thus, he understood the importance of ordination lineage better than any other monk, and endeavored to record ordination information in each monk biography he wrote. By comparing ordination records in the six fascicles of the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, it can be seen that ordination information increased in the late Chosŏn period. In the first fascicle, for example, only four novice ordinations were recorded from 371 to 1405 though Pömmae wrote the biographies of eighteen monks who lived during these years. Furthermore, *bhikṣu* ordination and bodhisattva ordination were not noted at all. The last three fascicles show a marked change: ordination records show an increase in the biographies of monks who lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth

¹¹⁶ Yi Chigwan, *Han'guk pulgyo kyeyul chŏnt'ong* (Seoul: Kasan pulgyo munhwawŏn ch'ulp'anbu, 2005), 142.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 146.

centuries. There are nine records of *bhikṣu* ordination and three of bodhisattva ordination out of fifty-three monks in the fourth fascicle; twenty records of *bhikṣu* ordination and eight of bodhisattva ordination out of forty-seven monks in the fifth fascicle; and thirteen records of *bhikṣu* ordination and twelve of bodhisattva ordination out of thirty-four monks in the last fascicle.

It is interesting to note that most monks who appear in last two fascicles of the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* are those who were initiated into or practiced in Taedunsa which Pŏmhae and Ch'oŭi were affiliated with and received precepts from Pŏmhae and Ch'oŭi. More interestingly, the biographies of several monks reveal that they received their second full precepts from these two renowned preceptors Ch'oŭi or Pŏmhae. Kŭmp'a (1833-?) is a case in point. According to "Kŭmp'a sŏnsa chŏn" (Biography of Sŏn Master Kŭmp'a), he "wore colored robes and had Sŏn master Sŏkho as his original teacher. He received the full precepts from venerable Sŏn master Chihŏ. His original teacher transmitted dharma to him. He received *bhikṣu* precepts and bodhisattva precepts from Pŏmhae Kagan."¹¹⁸ Although a Buddhist monk usually receives *bhikṣu* precepts only once in his lifetime, Kŭmp'a received *bhikṣu* ordination a second time from Pŏmhae. In addition to Kŭmp'a, Pomun (1816-1892) and Ch'uiun (1866-?)¹¹⁹ also received their second *bhikṣu* precepts from Ch'oŭi and Pŏmhae respectively.¹²⁰ Their dual *bhikṣu* ordination from Ch'oŭi and Pŏmhae can be explained by saying that these two preceptors were legitimate heirs of the ordination lineage of Taeŭn.

¹¹⁸ Pŏmhae, "Kŭmp'a sŏnsa chŏn."

¹¹⁹ Two monks portrayed in the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn* became the head monks during the colonial period. One is Ch'uiun who became head monk of Taehŭngsa from 1912 to 1918, and from 1923 to 1926, and the other is Hoegwang, head monk of Haeinsa from 1912 to 1924.

¹²⁰ Pŏmhae, "Pomun sŏnsa chŏn," in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 5, 1061; Pŏmhae, "Ch'uiun kangbaek chŏn," in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Fasc. 6, 1073-1074.

Once ordination lineages had been constructed in the nineteenth century, major Korean temples, such as T'ongdosa, Haeinsa, or Songgwangsa conformed to one or the other of these ordination lineages. T'ongdosa, P'omŏsa or Wŏljŏngsa followed Manha's ordination lineage: Haeinsa, Songgwangsa, Hwaŏmsa or Taehŭngsa embraced Taeŭn's.¹²¹ The late creation of ordination lineages in the nineteenth century can be seen as further evidence of Korean Buddhism's weak *vinaya* tradition.

Prelude to Clerical Marriage in Colonial Buddhism

As stated earlier, monks and nuns were considered to be entering a new society called sangha and to be observing new monastic rules that regulated everything from food to sexual matters. Upon entering this new society, Buddhist clergy renounced secular values along with their original families. During the Chosŏn period, these renounced secular values were replaced by new Buddhist philosophies, such as the strong “parent-child” relationships based on dharma lineage succession and a monk's privilege of owning private property. In other words, the late Chosŏn period saw the emergence of a “dharma family,” a synthetic product of Buddhist ethics and Confucian values. Similar to ordinary families in lay society, monks were able to bequeath their private property to their dharma descendants – mostly senior disciples – with the purpose of its being used for memorial services. Understanding that this new concept of “pseudo-family” and private property among Buddhist clerics dominated late Chosŏn Buddhism is critical to understand the spread of clerical marriage during the colonial period.

It is also important to recall that it was the Chosŏn government that wrote and enforced Buddhist clergy's behavioral codes that ranged from the prohibition of clerical marriage to the restriction on women from entering temples. The government supervised Buddhist sexual

¹²¹ Yi Chigwan, *Han'guk pulgyo kyeyul chŏnt'ong*.

matters because the monks' population was directly related to revenue and other obligations. The government oversaw a monk's life from ordination through state-issued certificates to clerical marriage and fornication.

Government supervision recurred under Japanese colonial rule and, in fact, Korean monks welcomed it for temple property and monk's social status were secured under its protection. The compound term "taech'ŏ sigyuk" (clerical marriage and meat-eating) which was introduced in head-branch temple bylaws during the colonial period was symbolic because this term contradicted the most basic rules of the Hinayana and the Mahayana traditions – celibacy and vegetarian diet. While Buddhist sexual matters were regulated by national law during the Chosŏn period, the Japanese colonial government, instead, oversaw clerical deportment through a set of head-branch temple bylaws they drafted.

It can be said that the spread of clerical marriage among Korean monks in the colonial period did not appear as a direct result of Korean monks' zeal for imitating modern Japanese Buddhist practice but rather as a way of transforming its weak *vinaya* tradition. In fact, clerical marriage during the colonial period should be examined from this perspective.

Conclusion

Korean Buddhism observes *vinayas* based on two *vinaya* traditions, the *Four Part Vinaya* in Hinayana tradition, and the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* in Mahayana tradition. During the early Chosŏn period, legitimate monkhood was determined not by novice ordination but by a government-issued certificate. After Buddhist institutions such as monk's certificates and the monk examination were abolished, Buddhist clerics struggled to define themselves through the construction of dharma lineage and ordination lineage.

The dharma lineage, which emerged in the seventeenth century, concentrated on the lineal succession of dharma from Chŏnghŏ (1520-1604) and his dharma brother, Puhyu. When monks were permitted to own private property in the seventeenth century, it became the single most important resource in the transmission of dharma lineage to dharma descendants.

Ordination lineage was re-constructed from indigenous practices and introduced through Chinese Buddhism as well. Of the two types of lineage, dharma and ordination, dharma lineage is comparatively stronger because it is older, ordination only having arisen in the nineteenth century. The weak *vinaya* tradition of Chosŏn Buddhism, along with the emergence of “dharma family” and a monk’s right to own private property, became the foundation for the increase of clerical marriage among Korean monks during the colonial period. This will be examined further in upcoming chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

TEMPLE REGULATIONS AND THE ISSUE OF CLERICAL MARRIAGE

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, Korea went through a tremendous transformation, changing from Imperial Korea (1897-1910) to Protectorate Korea (1905-1910) to colonial Korea (1910-1945). Korean Buddhism was, of course, affected by the turmoil, first confronted by the 1902 Temple Regulations set by the Korean Imperial government, then the 1906 Regulations on Religion set by the Office of the Resident-General, and, finally, the 1911 Temple Ordinance set by the Office of the Governor-General. After the signing of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1910, Japanese colonial rule exercised its full leverage on the whole Korean monastic community through the promulgation of this Temple Ordinance. In other words, early twentieth-century Korean Buddhism underwent significant institutional transformation due to a prolonged absence of systematic intervention followed by strong supervision from the government.

The Temple Ordinance stated that each Buddhist parish should establish its own head-branch temple bylaws as a set of self-regulatory rules – however, temple bylaws were unilaterally instituted by the colonial government. After creating the Temple Ordinance, the Japanese colonial government enacted the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance, in which thirty temples were designated as head temples in the thirty Buddhist parishes system. In this way, colonial Buddhism was controlled by three layers of regulations – the Temple Ordinance, its follow-up Enforcement Regulations, and the temple bylaws – and all Korean temples were hierarchically regrouped into thirty head temples and their branch temples. The temple bylaws effectively removed the autonomy of Korean Buddhist clerics, putting everything

– from the election of the head monk to what might be considered appropriate clerical deportment – into the hands of the Japanese colonial government. Most significantly, the temple bylaws brought the issue of “clerical marriage and meat-eating” to the surface for the first time in the history of Korean Buddhism. From the very beginning, colonial Buddhism had been forced to deal with the implications of this deeply complicated issue, and it soon became the nucleus of hot debate over the relationship between Buddhist ethics and Buddhist modernization.

Several studies that have analyzed these head-branch temple bylaws through the lens of the subjugation of Korean Buddhism under Japanese colonial rule have condemned the revision of the head-branch temple bylaws as the unique cause of the spread of clerical marriage. Such approaches, however, fail to adequately explain the entanglements and ramifications that were concomitant with the rise of clerical marriage. This chapter examines the relationship between the temple bylaws and clerical marriage, contesting the claim that this practice among Korean monks was exclusively the result of the revision to the temple bylaws in 1926. I argue that clerical marriage was already an issue, as early as 1912. To support my claim, I will draw on the head-branch temple bylaws, the daily newspapers *Hwangŏng sinmun* and *Maeil sinbo*, the Buddhist magazines *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* and *Haedong pulbo*, and Yi Nŭnghwa’s *Chosŏn pulgyo t’ongsa* (Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism).

Korean Buddhism in the Transition Period

The 1902 Temple Regulations

After the signing of the Treaty of Kanghwa in 1876 which opened the country’s gates to foreign trade, Korea had to come to grips with influences from foreign religions including Christianity and Japanese Buddhism. During the early Meiji period of Japan, the Korean

peninsula became the target of overseas missionary work of Japanese Buddhist sects striving to prove their usefulness to a government that was hostile enough to have created the slogan “haibutsu kishaku” (abolish Buddhism and destroy Śākyamuni). In 1877, the Higashi Honganji dispatched its priest, Okumura Enshin, to Korea to establish a missionary center in Pusan. He was soon followed by missionaries from other sects, such as the Nichirenshū that arrived in the late nineteenth century. It was not until 1895 when a Nichirenshū priest named Sano Zenrei petitioned the Chosŏn government to lift its ban on monks entering the capital that Korean monks came to see the Japanese Buddhists more favorably.

It was at this point that the Korean government realized that it had to put Buddhist temples and clerics under its control in order to prevent the proselytizing of Japanese Buddhists¹²² and to protect Buddhist property from local Korean gentry who forcibly attempted to occupy temple buildings to use as schools.¹²³ The promulgation of Temple Regulations by the Korean government in 1902 restored governmental supervision of Buddhism, something that had been abandoned hundreds of years before. Despite its precise title, “Kungnae sach'al hyŏnhaeng sech'ik” (Detailed Regulations on Korean Buddhist Temples), its thirty-six articles were really more of a sketch of stipulations on Buddhist institutions, and monks' education and punishment. To regulate Buddhist institutions, the government set up an office called “Sasa kwalli sŏ” (Bureau of Temple Administration) designed to deal exclusively with the clerical ranking system and monk certificates, at the same time as it placed sixteen large temples (*chungbŏpsan*) under a head temple (*taebŏpsan*) Wŏnhŭngsa.

Except for Article 29 concerning the modern education of Buddhist clerics there was, on

¹²² Kim Kyŏngjip, 215.

¹²³ Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, 157.

the whole, nothing truly novel about the 1902 Temple Regulations when compared to the regulations from the early Chosŏn period. In particular, the arrangement of one head temple and sixteen major temples did not differ significantly from that of Chosŏn Buddhism, which had the two head temples (*susach'al*) of Pongŭnsa and Pongsŏnsa, and sixteen large monasteries under them. As the system of monk certificates was revived, monks had to pay two *nyang*¹²⁴ in order to obtain a government-issued certificate. Article 27 states that no Buddhist cleric should use temple-owned land for personal gain, and further stipulated that no one is allowed to occupy it even if the temple were to find itself on the verge of its ruin. It might almost be said that this article embodies the very decline, economic hardships, and exploitation suffered by Korean Buddhism at this time.

Clearly, the main purpose of the 1902 Temple Regulations was to protect temple property from local Korean gentry who, as the number of temples gradually waned, tried to repurpose temple buildings as schools, which was considered a misuse of property. Whatever influence the 1902 Temple Regulations might have exerted over Korean Buddhism was short lived. They were abolished two years later in 1904 due to political instability and corrupt officials who rendered them largely ineffective through the trading of monk certificates for monetary gain.¹²⁵

The Wŏnjong and the Imjejong

Once Japanese Buddhist sects established overseas missionaries in the late nineteenth century, Korea quickly became an arena in which Japanese Buddhist missionaries competed against each other to exercise their full sectarian power. At first, their primary concerns were to

¹²⁴ “Nyang” is a unit of coinage of the Chosŏn period.

¹²⁵ Kim Kyŏngjip, 224.

provide religious services to Japanese soldiers or businesspeople living on the Korean Peninsula, but soon they began reaching Koreans by providing language training. For example, a Jōdoshū missionary named Itō Yōkō set up a school in Kaesŏng in 1901 for the purpose of providing Japanese language education to Koreans.¹²⁶ At the same time, Japanese Buddhist sects also began to meddle in Korean Buddhist affairs in the 1900s, and Korean Buddhists who had witnessed the high social status enjoyed by Japanese priests, as well as their strong economic and political power, were eager to emulate them.

After the signing of the Treaty of 1905, Korea became a protectorate of Japan and Japanese Buddhist missionaries vied with each other even more vigorously to gain prominence on the Korean Peninsula. Inoue Kenshin, a Jōdoshū priest, was actively involved not only in setting up the Pulgyo yŏn'guhoe (Society of Buddhist Studies), the first modern organization of Korean Buddhism, but also in founding the Myōngjin School, the first modern Buddhist school, in 1906. As the competition escalated, Japanese Buddhist missionaries in Kyōngsŏng (Seoul) created the Keijō Bukkyō kakushū rengōkai (Association of Japanese Buddhist Sects in Kyōngsŏng) in 1906 in order to defuse overheated contests among themselves.¹²⁷ The association's aim was stated as: "Nowadays we hope to keep pace with each other in order to promote the development of Buddhism in Korea."¹²⁸ By the late 1920s, this association had developed a close relationship with Korean Buddhists.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Inaba Tsugio, "Jōdōshū no kyū kankoku niokeru kyōiku katsudō: Nihongo kyōiku o chūshin tosite," *Bungei Gengo Kenkyū Gengo Hen* 16 (August 1989), 69.

¹²⁷ Keijō Bukkyō kakushū rengōkai, "Keijō Bukkyō kakushū rengōkai setsuritsu go todoke," in Chōsen Tōkanfu Chihōbu, "Shūkyō ni kansuru zakken toji" (1906-1909), 34.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ *Maeil sinbo*, March 1, 1929.

The Japanese Resident-General Office also recognized that it had to put the brakes on the Japanese Buddhist sects' activities, and, to this end, wrote its "Shūkyō no senpu ni kansuru kisoku" (Regulations on Religion) in 1906. Consisting of eight articles, its primary goal was to restrict, to a certain extent, Japanese religious propagation.¹³⁰ According to its first article, all Japanese religions, including Sect Shinto and Japanese Buddhism, were required to designate administrators of their missionary centers, and all propagation methods and supervisory methods had to be approved by the Japanese Resident-General's Office of Korea.¹³¹ In addition, "Shūkyō no senpu ni kansuru kisoku" effectively prevented Japanese Buddhists from interfering in the matters of Korean Buddhism. One of the reasons that Japanese authorities did not want Japanese Buddhists to exert excessive influence on Korean Buddhism was that the intense competition among Japanese Buddhist sects could stand in the way of Imperial Japan's seizing of Korea by arousing strong animosity against Japan as a whole among Korean Buddhist intellectuals and the laity through aggressive missionary work and interference in Korean Buddhist matters by Japanese Buddhist sects. However, at the same time that it regulated Japanese Buddhist interference, the Japanese Resident-General's Office was also attempting to control Korean Buddhism directly, and, in fact, the Temple Ordinance, as the most effective tool for a direct control of Korean Buddhism, was enacted in tandem with Japanese colonialization of Korea.

As the encounters between Japanese Buddhist missionaries from various sects and Korean Buddhists became more frequent, some elite monks realized that it might be wise for Korean Buddhism to establish a sect: Korean Buddhism had not had any denominations for hundreds of years. Because the Chosŏn government had abolished Buddhist institutions and did

¹³⁰ Han Tongmin, 117.

¹³¹ Chōsen Tōkanfu, "Shūkyō no senpu ni kansuru kisoku," in Chōsen Tōkanfu Chihōbu, "Shūkyō ni kansuru zakken toji" (1906-1909), 69-75.

not permit religious interchange with neighboring countries, Korean Buddhism was wholly isolated from both Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. Contact and interaction with other Buddhist practitioners was one of the compelling reasons that encounters with Japanese Buddhism carried great appeal for Korean Buddhists in that it showed them exactly what Korean Buddhism lacked when compared with Japanese Buddhist practices. In 1908, finally, fifty-two representatives of Korean Buddhism convened at Wŏnhŭngsa and established the first modern Korean sect. They called it Wŏnjong (圓宗) and appointed Yi Hoegwang (1862-1933) as its first patriarch. This denominational title “Wŏnjong” was totally new to Korean Buddhists, having never appeared among any of the sectarian titles, including the eleven sects which existed in the early Chosŏn period.¹³² Though its derivation is still unclear, according to Yi Nŭnghwa, the name is thought to have come from the Buddhist term “wŏnyung muae 圓融無礙” (perfect interpenetration without obstruction).¹³³

Its first patriarch, Yi Hoegwang, is a key figure for the understanding of early colonial Buddhism, not only because he was the first head monk of the Haeinsa parish and its most renowned preceptor, but also because he was the one who attempted to merge the Wŏnjong with a Japanese sect. His excellence as a scholar monk had already been praised by Pŏmhae, who included Yi’s biography in his book *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*.¹³⁴ Originally, Yi Hoegwang was a monk at Sinhŭngsa, received his dharma lineage from Poun Kungyŏp and became a fourteenth

¹³² The eleven sects were Chogyejong in the Sŏn tradition, Ch’onggijong and Sininjong in the esoteric tradition, Sojajong and Pŏpsajong in the Ch’ŏnt’ae [Ch. Tiandai] tradition, Chaŭnjong in the Yogacara tradition, Namsanjong in the Vinaya tradition, Hwaŏmjong, Tomunjong, Chungdojong, and Sihŭngjong.

¹³³ Yi Nŭnghwa, 96.

¹³⁴ Pŏmhae included nine monks who were still alive when he wrote the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*. Amongst them, Yi Hoegwang was the second youngest monk in the *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*. The youngest monk was Paek Ch’uiun.

descendant of Ch'ŏnghŏ and ninth descendant of Hwansŏng.¹³⁵ At first, he was considered the most prominent Buddhist leader in the 1900s, and, in fact, it is said that after he opened his own study hall, hundreds of monks gathered from all over the country to learn from him.¹³⁶ His reputation suffered, however, owing to his attempt to create a Sōtō-Wŏnjong alliance and he was later reviled as a “traitor for selling Korean Buddhism to Japan.”¹³⁷

As a new Buddhist sect, the Wŏnjong had to receive official recognition from the government, and, to this end, Yi Hoegwang submitted a petition for approval to the Office of Japanese Resident-General in May 1910. The government, needless to say, denied his petition because it did not want to approve the formation of a sect that integrated Korean Buddhists and might, therefore, be able to resist government control. Desperate to gain the approval of the government, Yi finally made contact with the Sōtō priest named Takeda Hanshi (1863-1911). Takeda, who had been involved in the assassination of Queen Min in 1895, was more of a right-wing political activist than of a Buddhist priest¹³⁸ but he was useful to Yi because he had a close relationship with Governor-General Terauchi Masatake.¹³⁹ Thanks to Takeda's intervention, Yi traveled to Japan in October 1910, shortly after the Japanese annexation of Korea on August 29, 1910, to meet Ishikawa Sodō, the chief abbot (*kanchō*) of the Sōtōshū and finally agreed on a Sōtō-Wŏnjong alliance. Modern scholars condemn this Sōtō-Wŏnjong alliance as a religious annexation following the Japanese annexation of Korea in the same year, while the noted Korean

¹³⁵ Pŏmhae, “Hoegwang sŏnbaek chŏn,” in *Tongsa yŏlchŏn*, Facs. 6, 1075.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Im Hyebyong, *Chinil sŭngnyŏ 108-in: kkŭt naji anŭn yŏksa ŭi murŭm* (P'aju: Ch'ŏngnyŏnsa, 2005), 49.

¹³⁸ Nam-lin Hur, “The Sōtō Sect and Japanese Military Imperialism in Korea,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26/1-2 (Spring 1999), 117-118.

¹³⁹ Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, 276.

and Japanese historian Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, after considering the contents of the agreement of a Sōtō-Wōnjong alliance, sees it as Yi's using Takeda Hanshi and the Sōtōshū to receive formal authorization from the government.¹⁴⁰ According to the second and seventh clauses of the agreement, the Sōtōshū had the responsibility of obtaining approval for the Wōnjong from the Japanese Governor-General's Office or the alliance would be nullified.¹⁴¹

This attempt at a Sōtō-Wōnjong alliance brought about an immediate reaction from the Buddhist reformer and poet Han Yongun (1879-1944), as well as from other Buddhist elites, such as Pak Hanyōng (1870-1948) and Chin Chinŭng (1873-1941). These renowned monks convened at Songgwangsa on January 15, 1911, and formed a new Buddhist sect called Imjejong (臨濟宗) which was based on traditional Sōn practices of Korean Buddhism. They criticized the Sōtō-Wōnjong alliance not only because all of Korean Buddhism would be subjugated to a Japanese Buddhist sect, but also because Korean Buddhism had a different dharma lineage from that of Sōtōshū.¹⁴² As noted in Chapter 1, Chosōn Buddhism established its dharma lineage from the Chinese Linji (Kr. Imje; Jp. Rinzai) tradition and was passed down from T'aego or Naong in the Koryō period to Ch'ōnghō or Puhyu in the Chosōn period. However, Sōtōshū's dharma progenitors were Dongshan and Caoshan who came from the Chinese Chan sect Chaodong Zong.

Why, then, did Yi Hoegwang choose the Sōtōshū, not the Rinzaishū? As a respected scholar-monk and preceptor, he was well aware of his dharma lineage and its importance better than anyone else.¹⁴³ Despite the different Sōn tradition, Yi Hoegwang had little choice but to

¹⁴⁰ Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, 228-229, and 261.

¹⁴¹ Takahashi Tōru, *Richō Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Hōbunkan, 1929), 923-924.

¹⁴² Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, 261.

¹⁴³ He belonged to the P'yōnyang branch lineage of the Ch'ōngho lineage.

form an alliance with the Sōtōshū, instead of the Rinzaishū, because the Rinzaishū was a more recent arrival to the Korean Peninsula.¹⁴⁴ Having opened its missionary office in Kyōngsŏng in 1907, it simply had not amassed enough power by 1910 to have any significant influence or leverage on political issues. Yi Hoegwang's purpose in forming an alliance at all was to gain acceptance from the Governor-General of Korea, and the Sōtōshū whose Takeda Hanshi had connections to the Governor-General presented the best way to achieve this end.¹⁴⁵

The Office of the Governor-General did not approve the Wŏnjong or the Imjejong. The Japanese colonial government knew that approval of either or both of these two sects might cause internal tension or conflict among all Korean Buddhists. In addition, there was a good possibility that it might also provoke nationalist sentiment among Korean Buddhists if it approved a Wŏnjong alliance with a Japanese Buddhist sect. The government understood that the most effective way to control Korean Buddhism was to maintain it as “non-sect,” and to prohibit sectarian diversity. When the Japanese colonial government passed the Temple Ordinance on June 3, 1911, these two modern Buddhist sects did not receive official recognition and disappeared. In 1912, the Bureau of Kyōngsŏng (Kyōngsŏng pu) summoned Yi Hoegwang and Han Yongun as representatives of the Wŏnjong and the Imjejong and ordered them to close their offices. Ultimately, the first modern sectarian movements in Japanese occupied Korea ended in vain.

¹⁴⁴ Sŏng Chuhyŏn, “1910 nyŏndae ilbon pulgyo ūi chosŏn p’ogyo hwaltong,” *Han’guk munmyŏng hakhoe* 5, no. 2 (2004): 77.

¹⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that when Yi Hoegwang made a second attempt to ally Korean Buddhism with a Japanese Buddhist sect in 1920, he chose the Rinzaishū. But, once again, this alliance failed again.

Temple Bylaws and the Issue of Clerical Marriage

The 1911 Temple Ordinance and the Thirty-Parish System

Aimed at institutionalizing Korean Buddhism, the 1911 Temple Ordinance (*Sach'allyŏng*) and its follow-up, the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance (*Sach'allyŏng sihaeng kyuch'ik*), with their skillful weaving together of Korean Buddhist traditional values and Japanese colonial policy, were the most efficient regulations of the Korean monastic community. That the Temple Ordinance endured from 1911 to 1961, remaining in effect even after the end of Japanese colonialism in 1945, can be seen as a testimonial to its influence on Buddhist monasteries. The Temple Ordinance is responsible for the thirty-parish system, one of the most sweeping changes in Korean Buddhism. It consisted of seven provisions:

1. Approval of the Japanese Governor-General is mandatory if a Buddhist temple is merged, moved or closed. The same applies if a temple or temple grounds wish to change its name.
2. The temple grounds and monasteries should be used only for propagation, rituals or habitation of Buddhist clerics unless the governor of the local government approves another use. Those that are not Buddhist clerics are not allowed to use a temple.
3. Each head temple should generate temple bylaws to regulate the relationship between the head temple and its branch temples, to establish rules, rituals, and to decide other matters. Temple bylaws should be approved by the Governor-General.
4. Each temple should have its own abbot. The abbot, as a representative of the temple, will be in charge of all temple property, administration, and rituals.
5. No temple property, including fields, forests, buildings, statues, stone monuments, antique manuscripts, antique paintings, and other valuables, may be disposed of without permission of the Governor-General.
6. Violations of the Temple Ordinance will result in punishment of no less than two-years imprisonment or a five-hundred *wŏn* fine.

7. The Governor-General may impose other rules on Korean temples, if necessary.¹⁴⁶

One month after the institution of the Temple Ordinance, the office of the Governor-General published the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance to impose more specific regulations. This document stipulated that a head monk or abbot was limited to a three-year term of office, and that all head monks of all thirty parishes needed to be approved by the Governor-General.¹⁴⁷ The most drastic difference between these colonial regulations and those of the Chosŏn period was that the colonial regulations emphasized a new hierarchical order of temples, empowering a head monk to supervise all the temples in his parish, whereas, during the early Chosŏn period, abbots were recommended by the Sŏn and the Kyo sects, and then appointed by the Ministry of Rites every thirty months,¹⁴⁸ but they did not possess the absolute power to control all temple matters. Furthermore, except for identifying two head temples (*susach'al*) and the sixteen major temples (*sibyuk chong*), traditional Korean Buddhism did not have a ranked temple classification system. The Temple Ordinance placed all Korean Buddhist temples into thirty parishes, and created a pyramidal hierarchy between the head temple and branch temples within each parish. According to the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance, the thirty head temples were as follows:

Kyŏnggi Province: Pongŭnsa, Pongsŏnsa, Yongjusa, and Chŏndŭngsa

North Ch'ungch'ŏng Province: Pŏpchusa

South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province: Magoksa

North Kyŏngsang Province: Tonghwasa, Ŭnhaesa, Kounsa, Kimnyongsa, and Kirimsa

¹⁴⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu, “Seirei” No. 7 (June 3, 1911) in *Ilche sidae pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa hyŏnhwang: Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu kwanbo pulgyo kwallyŏn charyojip*, vol.1, ed. Taehan pulgyo chogyejong ch'ongmuwŏn (Seoul: Sŏnu toryang ch'ulp'anbu, 2001), 19.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

¹⁴⁸ “Tosŭng,” in *Taejŏn hoet'ong*.

South Kyōngsang Province: Haeinsa, T'ongdosa, and Pōmōsa
 North Chōlla Province: Wibongsa and Posōksa
 South Chōlla Province: Taehūngsa, Paegyangsa, Songgwangsa, and Sōnamsa
 Kangwōn Province: Kōnbongsa, Yujōmsa, and Wōljōngsa
 Hwanghae Province: P'aeyōpsa and Sōngbulsā
 South Py'ōngan Province: Yōngmyōngsa and Pōphūngsa
 North Py'ōngan Province: Pohyōnsa
 South Hamgyōng Province: Sōgwangsa and Kwijusa¹⁴⁹

Each head temple had the responsibility of supervising its branch temples and of appointing branch temple abbots, whose appointment was later approved by the governor of the province that it belonged to. Thus, a new concept “head and branch temples” (*ponmalsa*) appeared in Korean Buddhism in tandem with the Temple Ordinance. In fact, this system of head and branch temples (Jp. *honmatsu seido*) was one of the major characteristics of Japanese Buddhism. It was developed from the network system of the *gozan* (Five Mountains) and the *jissatsu* (Ten Temples) of the Rinzaishū during the Muromachi period (1338-1573). The *gozan* network and the *shōgun* regime had a reciprocal relationship: The *shōgun* controlled and protected the *gozan* network and, in return, the *gozan* gave its support to the *shōgun* regime to help it maintain political power. In the very early Edo period (1603-1867), the Japanese government applied this “pyramidal chain” to all Buddhist temples in Japan through the temple regulations.¹⁵⁰ After each sect established a relationship between head and branch temples and submitted “registers of head and branches” (*honmatsu chō*) to the shogunate, temple regulations, such as the *Shoshū jūin hatto* (Ordinances for Temples of All Buddhist Sects), were applied uniformly to all Japanese Buddhist sects in the hierarchical chain of head and branch temples.

¹⁴⁹ Chōsen Sōtokufu, “Chōsen Sōtokufu Rei” No. 84 (July 8, 1911), in *Ilche sidae pulgyo chōngch'aek kwa hyōnhwang: Chosōn ch'ongdokbu kwanbo pulgyo kwallyōn charyojip*, vol. 1, 19-20.

¹⁵⁰ Helen Hardacre, “State and religion in Japan,” in *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 281.

Presumably, the success of this system, as it was deployed in Japan, is one of the factors that led the colonial government to apply it unilaterally to Korean Buddhist temples.

To date, it is uncertain what criteria the colonial government used to choose from among about nine hundred temples those thirty that would become head temples.¹⁵¹ According to the Korean Buddhist scholar Han Tongmin, when the Pulgyo yŏn'guhoe (Society of Buddhist Studies) was established in 1906, it designated twenty-seven major temples, including T'ongdosa, Songgwangsa, and Pŏmŏsa, and asked these major temples for contributions toward operating expenses.¹⁵² The Office of the Wŏnjong also designated major temples, twenty-nine of them, from which they selected missionaries.¹⁵³ Taking into consideration all of the previously designated temples from 1906 and 1910, Han Tongmin concluded that the thirty head temples chosen by the colonial government had been taken from among these twenty-seven and twenty-nine temples.¹⁵⁴ In other words, the thirty head temples were not entirely new – either in concept or in number – in that most of them had already been recognized as representative temples of Korean Buddhism. However, these major monasteries may not have ranked relations with other temples, as Yi Nŭnghwa pointed out that traditional Korean Buddhism did not have a hierarchical chain.¹⁵⁵

After the promulgation of the Temple Ordinance, all temples were forcibly clustered together regardless of dharma lineages or *sŏn/kyo* traditions. It is no wonder, therefore, that

¹⁵¹ According to newspaper accounts of the time, the number of Korean Buddhist temples amounted to 957 as of October 1909. See *Hwangŏng sinmun* and *Taehan maeil sinbo*, October 22, 1909.

¹⁵² Han Tongmin, 107.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ Yi Nŭnghwa, 138.

branch temples with different dharma lineages from their designated head temples raised loud objections to this thirty-parish system. Hwaōmsa, a branch temple of the head temple Sōnamsa, is a case in point and a case that brought about a change in the system. From the start, Hwaōmsa was dissatisfied with its head temple Sōnamsa, precisely because the two temples were of different dharma lineages. In fact, in 1914, when the Buddhist magazine *Haedong pulbo* listed the number of monks and nuns in the thirty parishes, Hwaōmsa, along with another branch temple Ch'ōnūnsa, were listed independently, separate from the Sōnamsa parish.¹⁵⁶ Hwaōmsa's resistance was long and tragic, resulting in the murder of Kim Haksan, the abbot appointed by the head temple Sōnamsa. Ultimately, the colonial government capitulated to Hwaōmsa's demands, and elevated it to head temple status in 1924. In this way, the thirty parish system morphed into the thirty-one parish system.

Another huge change involved status. The colonial government raised head monks to a front rank position equivalent to that of a “chuingwan” (Jp. *sōninkan*), a middle-ranked officer of the colonial government.¹⁵⁷ This change of status empowered them in matters of finance, administration, and punishment though not beyond the scope of their parish. As the power of head monks increased, the colonial government deliberately attempted to place pro-Japanese monks in those positions, and even went as far as manipulating who could be head monk candidates.¹⁵⁸ As can be clearly seen, most head monks were compliant with colonial policies out of necessity and for survival: They would not be able to receive re-approval from the

¹⁵⁶ *Haedong pulbo* 4 (February 1914), 94-96. The total number of monks and nuns in temples of the Sōnamsa parish except Hwaōmsa and Ch'ōnūnsa was 140, while there were 75 monks and nuns in Hwaōmsa and 78 in Ch'ōnūnsa.

¹⁵⁷ Kim Sunsōk, *Ilche sidae chosōn ch'ongdokbu ūi pulgyo chōngch'aek kwa pulgyogyē ūi panūng* (Seoul: Kyōngin ch'ulp'ansa, 2004), 54.

¹⁵⁸ The ramifications of this practice will be discussed further in the last chapter.

government, otherwise.

A few months after the Temple Ordinance was put into effect, the colonial government further elucidated the overall purpose of it in the *Kwanbo* (Official Gazette; Jp. *Kanpō*), saying that it was intended to prevent a decline of Korean Buddhist temples and to preserve the condition of Korean Buddhism.¹⁵⁹ Interestingly, while clarifying the purpose of the Temple Ordinance, it also expressed deep concern about widespread rumors that were circulating about it:

It seems that there are some people who spread false information that the Temple Ordinance would deprive Korean Buddhist clerics of ownership of temples and would finally get rid of all Korean clerics. This false information induced some monks to attempt to make a head-branch temple relationship with Japanese temples, to issue ‘a request for being added as a branch temple,’ to sign a contract to entrust temple property, or to issue documents for the abbot appointment.¹⁶⁰

As the *Kwanbo* suggests, the entire Korean monastic community was thrown into turmoil, shortly after the Temple Ordinance was issued. Rumors abounded, and, as a result of these, some Korean Buddhists tried to take refuge in Japanese Buddhism, seeking to become a branch temple of a Japanese Buddhist sect.

Hoping to widen the distance between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism and to strengthen their direct control of Sect Shinto and Japanese Buddhism in Korea, the colonial government additionally introduced the *Jinja jiin kisoku* (Regulations on Shinto Shrines and Japanese Buddhist Temples) in 1915.¹⁶¹ That the colonial government saw the need for two

¹⁵⁹ Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Kanpō* No. 318 (September 18, 1911), in *Ilche sidae pulgyo chōngch'aek kwa hyōnhwang: Chosŏn ch'ongdokbu kwanbo pulgyo kwallyŏn charyojip*, vol. 1, 23-24.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ In order to differentiate two Buddhisms, the colonial government used the different terms: “jisetsu 寺刹” and “jūji 住持” for Korean Buddhist temples and abbots, and “jiin 寺院” and “jūshoku 住職” for Japanese Buddhist temples and abbots. See Han Tongmin, 100; On the other hand, Korean clerics used both terms to refer to Korean Buddhist temples and abbots. See *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 6 (July 1912), 57.

different sets of regulations, viz., the Temple Ordinance for Korean Buddhism, and the Regulations on Shinto Shrines and Japanese Buddhist Temples for Japanese Buddhism in Korea, can be interpreted to mean that they were perceived as different religions. An anecdote further illustrates this: In 1912, the head temple Taehŭngsa selected Kam Sŏnwŏl as the first head monk and requested official approval from the colonial government. Approval was denied because he had been ordained in Japan. As reported in the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo*, the story is as follows:

Taehŭngsa in Haenam county in South Chŏlla Province selected Kam Sŏnwŏl as head monk. However, the Office of the Governor-General did not approve Kam's appointment, and, instead, appointed Paek Ch'ŭiun as head monk.¹⁶² We heard that Kam used to live in Japan and received his novice precepts there and was, therefore, not considered a Chosŏn monk.¹⁶³

From this account, it can be concluded that the colonial government strictly differentiated between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. In fact, the historian and Korean Buddhist scholar Hwansoo Ilmee Kim asserts that Korean Buddhism was ultimately able to circumvent Japanese Buddhist influences entirely thanks to the Temple Ordinance.¹⁶⁴

In analyzing the initial intentions and results of the Temple Ordinance and the follow-up Enforcement Regulations, it is possible to glean the policies and attitude of the Japanese colonial government toward Korean Buddhism. The ultimate interest of the colonial government lay not

¹⁶² Later, Kam Sŏnwŏl was elected as head monk of Taehŭngsa in 1926 and 1930. However, his election in 1926 was not approved by the government, on the basis of his clerical marriage. He finally won the position of head monk in 1930. However, his resume attached in the election documents in 1930 noted that he received novice precepts under the guidance of Pak Ch'ŏngbong in Taehŭngsa in 1894, not in Japan. Thus, it is not clear whether he deliberately deleted his ordination in Japan or the colonial government misunderstood his ordination information. See Chŏsen Sŏtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Taehŭngsa jŭji shŭshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (January 10, 1927); Chŏsen Sŏtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Paegyangsa oyobi Taehŭngsa jŭji shŭshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (November 6, 1930).

¹⁶³ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 5 (June 1912), 73.

¹⁶⁴ Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, 318.

in the religious assimilation of Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism, but, rather, in the maintenance of Korean Buddhism as it always had been, namely, as a non-sect religion. They sought to do this through rigid and systematic regulations. Furthermore, the Japanese colonial government promoted this total distinction between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism because it wanted Korean Buddhism to play a religious role in the lives of the colonized in order to maintain social stability and maximally exploit colonial Korea. This same reasoning can be said to be behind the colonial government's resistance to revitalizing or modernizing Korean Buddhism and its restriction on the construction of new Buddhist temples.¹⁶⁵ Because the colonial government eventually prevented sectarian diversity in Korean Buddhism, and virtually eviscerated the autonomy of monasteries and clerics, the Korean monastic community had no choice but to maintain their identities through dharma lineage and this is why the transmission of dharma lineage among clerics was forefronted in the mid-1920s.

Head-Branch Temple Bylaws and Clerical Marriage

The Temple Ordinance of 1911 stipulated that each head temple had to set up bylaws that would regulate the relationship between itself and its branch temples, as well as oversee monastic rules, and rituals. These parish bylaws would then be submitted for approval to the Japanese Governor-General of colonial Korea. Though it appears that each head temple was authorized to outline its temple bylaws as a set of self-regulatory rules on its own terms, the reality, nevertheless, was the standardization of the bylaws across the thirty parishes. This is evident in the fact that the colonial government created and distributed a single draft of temple bylaws consisting of one hundred clauses of uniform structure and contents to each head temple, which created a bureaucratic rigidity in Korean Buddhism that served as effective foundation for

¹⁶⁵ Han Tongmin, 103.

total control by the colonial government.

A set of temple bylaws consisted of thirteen articles and one hundred clauses, beginning with a first article entitled “General Rules” which specified the head temple’s name, history, dharma lineage, and so on. The second and third articles regulated the relations with branch temples, as well as listing the qualifications of the head monk and branch temple abbots. The fourth, fifth, and sixth articles addressed personnel management and finance. The seventh article regulated Buddhist rituals such as the Japanese emperor’s birthday ceremony called “Tenchōsetsu” and the memorial ritual of Emperor Kōmei (1831-1867).¹⁶⁶ The eighth article delineated monastic rules, such as the initiation, ordination, and education of Buddhist clerics. The ninth to thirteenth articles discussed propagation of Buddhism, reward, punishment, the laity, and other miscellaneous topics.

In the temple bylaws, the colonial government skillfully blended the Korean Buddhist tradition and Japanese colonial strategies. Temple bylaws contained features of traditional Korean Buddhism, such as dharma lineage, the *sŏn/kyo* preference or the clerical ranking system (*pŏpkye*), as well as the elements of Japanese Buddhism which granted enormous power to the head monk in a hierarchical chain of a head and branch temples and prescribed rituals for Japanese Emperors. Temple bylaws were born out of a concern for minimizing collective resistance from Korean Buddhists, while also curtailing the autonomy of the Korean Buddhist communities.

Another characteristic of temple bylaws was the rigid qualifications required of head monks and abbots: Head monks must be older than 40; they must have received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts; they must have completed summer meditation retreats no fewer than 10

¹⁶⁶ Yi Nūnghwa, 280.

times; and they must have finished the highest Buddhist training course (*taegyogwa*).¹⁶⁷ Abbots were required to be over twenty-five years old, to have received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts, to have completed a minimum of five summer retreats, and to have graduated from the intermediate course (*sagyogwa* for the Kyo tradition or *sajipgwa* for the Sŏn tradition).¹⁶⁸ Though the exact qualification criteria of abbots during the Chosŏn period are not clearly understood, these strict qualifications for head monks and abbots were likely quite different as can be concluded from a statement made by Yi Nŭnghwa in 1918: “Even if T’aego, Naong, Sŏsan, and Yujŏng were still alive, none of them would be eligible for head monk status.”¹⁶⁹ Additionally, temple bylaws regulated the procedure for the selection of head monks: Each head temple would hold an election whose outcome was determined by the direct votes of *bhikṣu* enrolled in the Buddhist clerical registers of their head and branch temples.¹⁷⁰ After the election, each head temple had to submit a set of documents including the winner’s resume and an overall election report to the colonial government for final approval by the Governor-General of colonial Korea.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, the first head monk of each parish was not selected through public election because Korean Buddhism had difficulty finding monks who fulfilled all the necessary qualifications for head monks. The Japanese colonial government wished to approve head monks as soon as possible in order to stabilize the thirty parish system, and, therefore, they made an

¹⁶⁷ Yi Nŭnghwa, 275.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 140.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 275-276.

¹⁷¹ After the colonial government revised some clauses related to clerical marriage in the temple bylaw in 1926, it added one more document in a set of required documents: a copy of household register of the head monk candidate.

alternative proposal stipulating that the first head monks and abbots would be selected in one of the three traditional ways: 1) by recommendation from a master monk, 2) by selection among dharma relatives or 3) by invitation from other temples.¹⁷²

These strict qualifications for head monks, abbots, and voters in the head monk election required a very strong emphasis on *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordination. Additionally, temple bylaws demanded that *sŏn* practitioners going on a summer or winter retreat should have received *bhikṣu* precepts.¹⁷³ This presented a problem since, due to its long history of broken ordination lineage, Korean Buddhism did not have a strong tradition of *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordination. By making *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordination essential qualifications for head monks, abbots, *sŏn* practitioners, and even voters, the colonial government not only used it as a criterion to divide elite monks from rank-and-file monks, but also forced the complicated issues of clerical marriage and meat-eating to come into the foreground.

The core precepts among *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva are vows of celibacy and vows not to kill. The qualifications for ordinands of *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordination as specified by the colonial government's temple bylaws read as followed:

A monk who is over twenty years old can receive *bhikṣu* precepts. But *bhikṣu* ordination is not permitted for one who has a wife and eats meat. Only a monk who has received *bhikṣu* precepts can receive bodhisattva precepts as well. Without *bhikṣu* ordination, there will be no bodhisattva ordination.¹⁷⁴

Thus temple bylaws as laid down by the colonial government were vague: They did not expressly prohibit Korean monks from marrying and eating meat but put at a distinct

¹⁷² Chōsen Sōtokufu, “Kan tsūchō” No. 260 (September 8, 1911), in Yi Nūnghwa, 256-257.

¹⁷³ Yi Nūnghwa, 285.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

disadvantage those who did. In short, by tightening *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordination regulations, temple bylaws attempted to inhibit clerical marriage and meat-eating among Korean clerics. This clear intention can be seen in Article Eleven, “Punishment,” that regulates penalties that range from forced laicization to reprimands. According to one of the clauses in Article Eleven, a monk who allowed his wife and children to reside in the temple or who let women stay at a temple would be given the minor punishment of being put on probation.

The compound words “taech’ŏ sigyuk” (having wife and eating meat) in the colonial government’s temple bylaws had never before been used in the history of Korean Buddhism. Though the terms “taech’ŏ” (having wife) or “taech’ŏ sŭng” (married monks) can be found in accounts from the Chosŏn period, early advocates of clerical marriage in 1907 used “kyŏlhon” or “honin” for marriage,¹⁷⁵ “ch’ich’ŏ” or “kach’ŏ” for having a wife,¹⁷⁶ and “sŭngni chakpae” for clerical marriage.¹⁷⁷ The wording *taech’ŏ sigyuk* (帶妻食肉) has the same meaning as the Japanese *nikujiki saitai* (肉食妻帶). In Japanese Buddhism, this lifting of the ban on clerical marriage and meat-eating presented one of the modern transformations of Buddhism, declared in 1872 by the Meiji government as the *nikujiki saitai* law.¹⁷⁸ This law stipulated that Japanese Buddhist priests could marry, eat meat, have long hair, and use their birth names if they wished. The *nikujiki saitai* law further decreed that the ordination ceremony was no longer necessary; giving notice to local offices was sufficient.¹⁷⁹ When, in May 1872, the *Jinshi Koseki* Law, the

¹⁷⁵ *Taehan maeil sinbo*, January 18, 1907.

¹⁷⁶ Han Yongun, *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon*, trans. Yi Wŏnsŏp (Seoul: Unjusa), 58-65.

¹⁷⁷ *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, August 20, 1907.

¹⁷⁸ The term *nikujiki saitai* first appeared in the apologetic literature of the Jōdo Shinshū, faced with criticism of clerical marriage from the other sects. See Jaffe, *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, 54.

¹⁷⁹ Jørn Borup, *Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhism: Myōshinji, a Living Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 22.

basic system for taking a census of the number of households as well as the population was issued, all Buddhist priests also appeared in household registers as citizens (*kokumin*). The noted Buddhist scholar Richard Jaffe argues that the *nikujiki saitai* law aimed to dissolve boundaries between Buddhist priests and the laity in order to identify clerics as Japanese subjects.¹⁸⁰ Clearly, the *nikujiki saitai* law in Japan brought about a tremendous transformation and modernization of Japanese Buddhism in a direct parallel with the modernization of Japanese society as a whole.

Although the colonial government borrowed this compound “*taech’ŏ sigyuk*” from Japanese Buddhism, it did not have the same intention that the Meiji government had with the *nikujiki saitai* law. Though the Japanese colonial government borrowed the structural framework of temple regulations, the head-branch temple system, and the wording “*taech’ŏ sigyuk*” from Japanese Buddhism, the temple bylaws of colonial Korea in 1911 were initially intended to institutionalize Korean Buddhism unilaterally and thereby monolithically delimit the autonomy of Korean Buddhists. With this intention in mind, the colonial government did not put any words that might be associated with “modern” or “reform” in any Korean Buddhist policies including either the Temple Ordinance or the temple bylaws. Where “*nikujiki saitai*” in Japanese Buddhism connoted the modernization or secularization of Buddhism, “*taech’ŏ sigyuk*” in the temple bylaws of colonial Korea instead indicated governmental intervention in monastic rules, restricting autonomy in Korean Buddhist communities.

Watanabe Akira: Architect of Temple Bylaws

As for the drafter of the Temple Ordinance and the follow-up Enforcement Regulations, it is Yamagata Isaburō (1857-1927), the Vice Resident-General, who is believed to have authored

¹⁸⁰ Jaffe, *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, 59.

them.¹⁸¹ In addition to these two colonial Buddhist regulations – the Temple Ordinance and its Enforcement Regulations– it is believed that the temple bylaws were prepared by the Japanese colonial government. While the Temple Ordinance and its Enforcement Regulations consisted of several provisions in total and provided an overall contour to control colonial Buddhism through strong legal restrictions, the temple bylaws laid down all required rules for Korean temples and clerics in one hundred comprehensive and specific clauses. From this, the conclusion can be drawn that the temple bylaws were authored by someone who had specialized knowledge of Korean Buddhism, as well as Japanese religious policies. Though temple bylaws were composed in Japanese, it is clear that the draftsman not only knew the Japanese term *nikujiki saitai* but was also familiar with the Korean translation *taech'ŏ sigyuk*.¹⁸² He was also aware that each Korean Buddhist monastery had its own dharma lineage which distinguished it from other monasteries, and that traditional training for Buddhist clerics was divided into *sŏn* (meditation) and *kyo* (doctrines).

In his book *Nihon no Chōsen shihai to shūkyō seisaku* (The History of Japanese Occupation of Korea and Religious Policies) published in 1988, the scholar Han Sōkhūi suggested that Watanabe Akira, a Japanese official in the Japanese colonial government, was a composer of the temple bylaws. Although he did not provide any evidence for his claim in his book, Han Sōkhūi claims that Watanabe Akira drafted the temple bylaws by emulating Japanese Buddhist regulations.¹⁸³ Some Korean scholars such as Kim Sunŏk believe Watanabe Akira to

¹⁸¹ Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, 276.

¹⁸² The thirty head temples submitted their own temple bylaws written in Japanese to the colonial government in 1912.

¹⁸³ Han Sōkhūi, *Ilche ūi chongyo ch'imnyaksa*, trans. Kim Sūngt'ae (Seoul: Kidok kyomunsa, 1990), 68. This book *Nihon no Chōsen shihai to shūkyō seisaku* was originally published in Tokyo in 1988 and then translated into Korean in 1990.

be the author of the Temple Ordinance, based on a statement made by Yi Chonguk, the head monk of Wŏljŏngsa in Kangwŏn Province from 1930 to 1945, at the assembly of the thirty-one head monks in February 1937.¹⁸⁴ At this assembly, Yi Chonguk praised Watanabe's achievements:

For the development of Chosŏn Buddhism, Governor-General Terauchi¹⁸⁵ ordered the great Buddhist scholar Watanabe Akira to conduct research on Chosŏn Buddhism and the thirty head temples. As a result of his research, two Buddhist regulatory documents were created: The 1911 Temple Ordinance and its follow-up treatise the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance, and the temple bylaws.¹⁸⁶

According to Yi Chonguk, Watanabe Akira prepared a draft of the temple bylaws as well as of the Temple Ordinance.

More persuasive than the above is Watanabe's own statement, a significant new piece of evidence of his authorship of the temple bylaws that I discovered in a colonial government document created by Watanabe in 1926. In "Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō torishirabe gushin" (Report on the Examination for the Revision of Head-Branch Temple Bylaws of Each Parish), Watanabe wrote that he had written a draft of the temple bylaws. When several clauses in the temple bylaws related to clerical marriage and meat-eating were revised by the colonial government in 1926, Watanabe was also a key figure who conducted a field trip to Japan to examine the cause and effect of lifting the ban on clerical marriage and meat-eating.

Watanabe Akira worked in the Buddhist Affairs division in the Residency-General Office as well as the Government-General Office. Before heading to Korea, he had worked in the Bureau of Religion in Tokyo. His working experience in Tokyo was revealed when several

¹⁸⁴ Kim Sunsŏk, *Ilche sidae chosŏn ch'ongdokbu ūi pulgyo chŏngch'aek kwa pulgyogyŏ ūi panŭng*, 53.

¹⁸⁵ Terauchi Masatake (1852-1919) was the third resident-general from 1910 to 1911, and then the first governor-general of colonial Korea from 1911 to 1916.

¹⁸⁶ Ch'oe Kŭmbong, "Samsibil ponsan chuji hoedong kyŏnmun ki," *Pulgyo* 2 (April 1937), 14.

Korean head monks went to Japan on a Buddhist inspection tour in 1917. There they visited the Bureau of Religion (*Shūkyōkyoku*) in the Ministry of Education (*Monbushō*) where Watanabe Akira used to work, and met Watanabe's old colleagues.¹⁸⁷ Though it is uncertain what year Watanabe arrived in Korea, it is clear that he was around in 1909 because when the Japanese Resident-General's Office conducted a nationwide survey of Korean Buddhist temples and clerics at that time, he was the one who worked on this project.¹⁸⁸

From 1909 to 1910, the Japanese Resident-General's Office dispatched Watanabe Akira and another official with the surname Kawai to conduct surveys on Buddhist monasteries.¹⁸⁹ Based on the information gathered in these surveys, the Japanese Resident-General's Office prepared to create and distribute a set of Buddhist regulations entitled "Sasa chaesan kwalli kyuch'ik" (Regulations on Management of Temple Property).¹⁹⁰ Though a request was made to the Committee for Law Examination to screen and examine it, its promulgation was eventually abandoned in 1909 because it was never completed.¹⁹¹

After the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, Watanabe Akira began work in the Office of the Governor-General of colonial Korea, which continued to collect information about Korean Buddhism and its related regulations. On October 29, 1910, the newspaper *Maeil sinbo* reported that Japanese colonial rule was on the point of preparing Buddhist regulations:

¹⁸⁷ *Maeil sinbo*, September 30, 1917.

¹⁸⁸ In fact, Japanese imperial rulers had collected information the year before in 1908 for the purpose of supervising temple holdings, because, though the government considered temple property to be public property, temples were still often taken by local influential figures for use as schools. See *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, February 5, 1908; July 29 1908; December 10, 1908.

¹⁸⁹ *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, August 11, 1910.

¹⁹⁰ *Hwangsŏng sinmun*, December 10, 1909.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

The Japanese Government-General of Korea conducted a survey of Korean Buddhism. The number of Buddhist clerics is around six thousand, and, to date, based on regulations, they have not been permitted to propagate Buddhism but only to preach sermons on the sutras. However, under the present Japanese annexation of Korea, they no longer will have to observe these regulations. Because, in Japan, Buddhist priests are actively engaged in propagation as well as preaching, from now on government officials will treat Korean clerics in the same manner as they do Japanese Buddhist priests. To enact this, the government is in the process of composing a draft which will be similar to the previous regulations.¹⁹²

Clearly it can be seen that the Temple Ordinance and the temple bylaws were based on information collected by Watanabe Akira between 1909 and 1910: the temple regulations arose directly from the government's survey of the current circumstances of Korean Buddhism.

The most obvious evidence that Watanabe is the one who drafted temple bylaws can be found in a report submitted to the head of the Bureau of Education in 1926. As a core member of the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education in the office of the Governor-General of Korea, Watanabe worked on the revision of temple bylaws related to the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating. Early that year, the colonial government dispatched Watanabe Akira and another Korean official named Yu Man'gyōm to Japan to conduct a field investigation about clerical marriage in Japanese Buddhist sects. As soon as the two of them returned to Korea, Watanabe submitted a report entitled “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō torishirabe gushin” (Report on Examination for the Revision of Head-Branch Temple Bylaws of Each Parish). In this report, he emphasized his previous experience in drafting temple bylaws, saying, “I was in charge of the examination of the temple bylaws of each head temple when the Temple Ordinance was enacted, and this time I am also charged of making this plan to revise

¹⁹² *Maeil sinbo*, October 29, 1910.

temple bylaws.”¹⁹³ Other reports, such as “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (On the Case to Indicate the Standardizing Revision of Head-Branch Temple Bylaws of Each Parish)¹⁹⁴ provide further evidence of not only how well he understood each clause of the temple bylaws, but also how firm his grasp was of the historical context of the prohibition of clerical marriage during the Chosŏn period.

In addition, Watanabe was actively engaged in Korean Buddhist affairs during the 1910s and 1920s. As an official in the Buddhist Affairs division at that time, he attended many Korean Buddhist events, including the inauguration ceremony of head monk Hong Wŏlch’o (1858-1934) at Pongsŏnsa in May 1913,¹⁹⁵ and the Third Assembly of Thirty Head Monks in February 1914.¹⁹⁶ In this capacity, he was respected and regarded as an admirable figure by young Korean Buddhists. In an essay in the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo*, a monk named Kim Sŏngryul wrote about his meeting with Watanabe Akira whom he called “kunja” (noble man), for the hard work he did on behalf of Korean Buddhism.¹⁹⁷

Though Watanabe Akira’s education background remains unknown, his many essays in magazines and the books he wrote about Korean Buddhism contribute to his reputation as an expert in Korean Buddhism. In his 1921 essay, “Pulgyo ūi kyeyul kwa chonggyo kyŏngch’al kwa ūi kwangye” (The Relationship between Buddhist Precepts and the Religious Police)

¹⁹³ Watanabe Akira, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō torishirabe gushin” (March 24, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (May 10, 1926), 1206.

¹⁹⁴ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken,” (May 10, 1926).

¹⁹⁵ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 16 (May 1913), 72. He was also attended inauguration ceremony of head monk Kuk Ch’anghwa at the Chōndūngsa temple in 1914. See *Haedong pulbo* 5 (March 1914), 75.

¹⁹⁶ *Haedong pulbo* 4 (February 1914), 90.

¹⁹⁷ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 18 (July 1913), 55.

published in the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo*, he compared Buddhist monastic rules with current police law, clearly showing that both of them prohibited people from performing superstitious rites, from interrupting ancestor worship or funeral rituals, and from defiling a temple, a shrine or a church.¹⁹⁸ As a result of this comparison, he concluded that Buddhist monastic rules or “kyeyul” (precepts and *vinaya*) were as important as police laws in that they not only prevented evil karma, but also promoted *samādhi* (meditative concentration) and *prajñā* (wisdom) through Buddhist teachings.¹⁹⁹ This essay demonstrates his profound knowledge of Buddhism and indicates that he was a strong advocate for the rigor of Buddhist monastic rules.

Watanabe was a prolific writer on Korean Buddhism. Among the other books and essays he wrote are the *Chōsen sanjūroku hanzan genin jūji hōkei jufu* (Illustration of Dharma Lineages of the Thirty Six Head Monks of Korea) published in 1918, the *Chōsen sōryo shuzen teiyō* (Summary on Sōn Practice of Korean Buddhism) published in 1928, “Sekikutsuan ni okeru Shiragi jidai no iseki” (Remains of the Silla Period in Sōkkūram) published in 1924, and “Chōsen no jisetsu ni okeru zendō no setsubi ni tsuite” (On the Meditation Hall of Korean Buddhist Temples) published in 1928.

From this evidence it can be reasonably assumed that Watanabe Akira was most likely the architect of the temple bylaws. As a specialist in Korean Buddhism and a government official in Buddhist Affairs in the office of the Governor-General, his influence on Korean Buddhism extended from the temple bylaws of 1911 to the revision regarding clerical marriage and meat-

¹⁹⁸ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 22 (January 1921), 16-17. Because this essay was written in Korean, it is clear that someone translated his original from the Japanese essay for publication. Historical accounts indicate that he was always accompanied by a Japanese-Korean translator which indicates that his Korean was very poor.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

eating in 1926. In short, the temple bylaws arose out of a combination of Japanese colonial rule and Watanabe's professional knowledge of Korean Buddhism.

Korean Buddhist Responses to the Issue of Clerical Marriage

Reaction to the Temple Bylaws Related to Clerical Marriage

The earliest recorded clerical response to the Temple Ordinance and temple bylaws is found in the first Korean Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* that began publication in February 1912.²⁰⁰ Considering the relatively slow ripple effect within the Buddhist community during the early colonial period, it is probably sufficient to rely upon these essays in this Buddhist magazine as reflecting the general opinions on the new Buddhist regulations. From the reports in this publication, it can be seen that the overall reaction to the Temple Ordinance and temple bylaws instituted under Japanese colonial rule was divided: A majority of the monks welcomed the re-organization of Buddhist institutions enthusiastically, believing that temple property and social status would be protected by these regulations. Others, mostly married monks, or so-called “ignorant” and “delinquent” monks (*pullyang sŭng*) complained about the temple bylaws, according to the Buddhist magazine.

During the colonial period, Buddhist magazines, such as the *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* published from 1912 to 1913, and its successor *Haedong pulbo* published from 1913 to 1914, acted as the official gazette of the Office of Governor-General on all matters concerning Buddhism. These Buddhist journals delivered the most recent Buddhist policies of the colonial government in a special section called “Kwanbo ch’orok” (Summary of Official Gazette) and

²⁰⁰ During the colonial period, a total of thirty-one Buddhist magazines were published. The first Buddhist magazine *Tongyang kyobo* was published by the Jōdōshū in 1902. The second, the *Wŏnjong* published in 1910 by the Wŏnjong, lasted only two months around 1910. No copies of the *Wŏnjong* exist today.

recent events of Buddhist organizations and temples in a section called “Chappo” (Miscellaneous News). Though these magazines were strictly censored by the colonial government, they, nonetheless, acted as windows on Buddhist affairs from the capital to the remote mountains. In fact, these new Buddhist regulations, viz., the Temple Ordinance, its Enforcement Regulations, and temple bylaws were introduced in detail in the first three editions of the *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo*.²⁰¹

The thirty-parish system was well established when, in 1912, head monks of the thirty parishes were approved by the Governor-General, and presented their head-branch temple bylaws to the colonial government, beginning with the “Wibongsa Head-Branch Temple Bylaws” submitted on January 4 of that year.²⁰² In June, the thirty head monks held the first assembly to discuss the four agendas of Korean Buddhist communities: to observe head-branch temple bylaws and the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance; to establish the temple bylaws using a uniform structure; and to discuss the two Buddhist sects, the Wŏnjong and the Imjejong, and the future of Korean Buddhism.²⁰³ They did this although they did not have the authority to determine the outcomes of these discussions.

As can be seen from the order of the four agenda items, their top concern was the temple bylaws. Since the colonial government had provided a basic template and contents, all that each head temple had to do was to fill in some blanks with its name, dharma lineage, the *sŏn* or the *kyo* preference, and lists of branch temples. Between early January and early June 1912, seventeen head temples submitted their head-branch temple bylaws to the Governor-General.

²⁰¹ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 1 (February 1912), 2 (March 1912), and 3 (April 1912).

²⁰² Chōsen Sōtokufu Chihōkyoku, “Jihō ninka shinsei no ken” (September 7, 1912).

²⁰³ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 6 (July 1912), 57.

Thus, it can be concluded that the agenda regarding temple bylaws was brought to the table at the assembly so as to urge the remaining thirteen head monks to submit their head-branch temple bylaws as soon as possible. In addition, they, in particular, emphasized the need to obey one specific clause that stated that a monk who “has a wife and eats meat” would never be permitted to occupy any important position nor to receive *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts, and that a married monk should not let his wife and children reside in the temple.²⁰⁴

There was no collective resistance against Buddhist policies of the colonial government among the Buddhist elites because Korean Buddhist elites, by and large, welcomed the Temple Ordinance and temple bylaws as protective tools designed to revitalize Buddhism and rescue it from a decline that had begun in the nineteenth century due to the exploitation of temple property and to corvée demands. Additionally, after encountering Japanese Buddhist priests and observing their high social status and political and economic power, Korean Buddhist leaders were willing to be sheltered under the umbrella of Japanese Buddhist sects. Nineteen temples, including Chikchisa, Haeinsa, and T’ongdosa, requested status as a branch temple of the Higashi Honganji around 1906.²⁰⁵ After the promulgation of the Temple Ordinance, most influential Buddhist figures peacefully accepted the Buddhist policies of the colonial government. During their first assembly, all head monks agreed to strictly follow the Temple Ordinance and temple bylaws so that “these regulations could protect Korean temples everlastingly.”²⁰⁶ Furthermore, some Buddhists praised these Buddhist regulations, regarding them as a solid foundation on which to

²⁰⁴ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 6 (July 1912), 64.

²⁰⁵ Honganji (Ōtaniha), *Chōsen kaikyō gojunenshi* (Keijō: Chōsen Kaikyō Kantokubu, 1927), 195-196.

²⁰⁶ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 6 (July 1912), 70.

build a more modern iteration of Korean Buddhism.²⁰⁷

After this first assembly, the head monks returned to their parishes eager to promote their head-branch temple bylaws. To this end, they held special information sessions for affiliated monks in their parishes. Haeinsa, Kōnbongsa, Magoksa, and Pongŭnsa, for example, invited abbots and monks in their parishes to advertise a detailed explanation of the importance of temple bylaws.²⁰⁸ Among these, the most enthusiastic head temple was Haeinsa, because its head monk Yi Hoegwang, who used to be the first patriarch of the Wōnjong, was also elected as the first chairperson of the assembly of the thirty head monks. Yi Hoegwang published 500 copies of the *Haeinsa ponmal sabōp* (Haeinsa Branch-Head Temple Bylaws) and distributed them to monks as soon as its temple bylaws were approved in July 1912.²⁰⁹

However, some temples and monks raised dissident voices.²¹⁰ According to the *Chosŏn pulgyo wōlbo*, Pak Pyōktam, Yi Yusōk, and Sōng Yonghae, three monks of the head temple Yongjusa, opposed the Temple Ordinance and disobeyed their head monk, and, as a result, were expelled from their temple or punished with probation. Although the magazine did not explain the reason for their resistance, it did label them as “delinquent monks” (*pullyang sūng*) which makes it likely that their disagreement was about the restrictions that had been placed on married monks.²¹¹ An interesting article in the magazine was called “Ignorant Monks Resent Temple Bylaws” (*Uja wōnbōp*), which states;

²⁰⁷ Pak Injōl, “Sabōp sirhaeng i yujaebubōp chesōnsa,” *Chosŏn pulgyo wōlbo* 10 (November 1912), 41.

²⁰⁸ *Chosŏn pulgyo wōlbo* 8 (September 1912), 65; *Chosŏn pulgyo wōlbo* 11 (December 1912), 57-58.

²⁰⁹ *Chosŏn pulgyo wōlbo* 7 (August 1912), 64.

²¹⁰ Between 1912 and 1914, Buddhist magazines delivered reports of the four cases of opposition against the Temple Ordinance and the temple bylaws.

²¹¹ *Chosŏn pulgyo wōlbo* 8 (September 1912), 66.

As the temple bylaws of each head temple were approved, they were put into effect. However, some ignorant monks who live at temples in the capital and the countryside still do not know the monastic rules. They often commit the misconduct of “having wives and eating meat.” Now that the monastic rules [in the temple bylaws] have been established, these monks resent them, for it is difficult for them to move their wives and children out of the temple.²¹²

Another essay, written by a monk named Kim Sōngryul, also describes complaints from married monks about the temple bylaws, stating;

I heard that there are many monks who refuse to comply with the temple bylaws because of their strict prohibition of clerical marriage and meat-eating. However, they are so ignorant and stupid that they only look up to doctrines of Japanese Shinshū.²¹³

As can be seen, some married monks were discontented with the temple bylaws, especially, with the clause that decreed that married monks could not live with their wives and children in the temple. Clearly, these clauses related to clerical marriage indicate the existence of married clerics, despite their small numbers.

Among the thirty head temples, Magoksa and Pongŭnsa, in particular, had trouble persuading monks of their branch temples to accept the new regulations. Branch temples of the Magoksa parish decided not to accept the head-branch temple bylaws and returned them to the head temple Magoksa in March 1913.²¹⁴ Forty monks of Pongŭnsa also rejected their head-branch temple bylaws, and the central figure in this dissident group was Kim Sōong, the abbot of Paengnyōnsa, one of the branch temples in the Pongŭnsa parish.²¹⁵ It was not until after the colonial government summoned and reproved Na Ch’ōngho, the head monk of Pongŭnsa, and

²¹² *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 10 (November 1912), 63-64.

²¹³ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 18 (July 1913), 55.

²¹⁴ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 16 (May 1913), 72-73.

²¹⁵ *Haedong pulbo* 2 (December 1913), 71-72.

Kim Sŏng that the monks in the Pongŭnsa parish finally accepted the temple bylaws. During the general meeting of the monks in the Pongŭnsa parish, a special pledge was submitted stating that they would never let women – including wives – reside in the temple.²¹⁶ With regard to clerical marriage in Pongŭna, an interesting news article entitled “Appeal from a Monk Who Had a Missing Wife” (*Silch’ŏsŭng ŭi hoso*) appeared in the news paper *Maeil sinbo* in 1912. According to this report, Mun Tŏkhwa, a monk of Pongŭnsa, asked the police to find his missing wife who had ended a four-year marriage and run away because she felt frustrated and her friends had humiliated her by calling her husband “a monk-husband” (*chung sŏbang*).²¹⁷

These cases in point prove the existence of married clerics in Korean Buddhist monasteries. Interestingly, in the mid-1920s when the issue of clerical marriage was intertwined with the revision of temple bylaws, the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education pointed to Magoksa and Pongŭnsa as the most problematic temples due to the spread of clerical marriage among their *bhikṣu* as well as their rank-and-file monks. The Department of Religion dispatched an official to investigate Pongŭnsa in 1928, and discovered that married clerics’ families still lived in the temple, although temple bylaws had expressly forbidden wives and children of married monks from taking up residence in the temple since 1912.²¹⁸ Disobedience like this shows that it was not a coincidence that Magoksa and Pongŭnsa drew negative attention throughout the 1910s and 1920s.

The majority of Korean Buddhists did not sympathize with the disadvantages to married clerics brought about by the temple bylaws. Rather, they believed that the rigor of monastic rules

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ *Maeil sinbo*, December 13, 1912.

²¹⁸ Ideguchi Yūkichi and Hong Sŏngmo, “Fukumeisho” (January 25, 1928), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pongŭnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (February 18, 1928).

would help to eradicate impropriety at the temples. Head monks of the thirty parishes discussed eliminating “unclean deeds” such as monks’ living with their wives and children at the temple and letting unchaste men and women stay the night in order to make money.²¹⁹ These cases demonstrate the way that Korean Buddhists understood and interpreted temple bylaws that governed clerical marriage and meat-eating. They interpreted temple bylaws in such a way as to stamp out or at least repress misconducts, such as allowing monks’ wives and children to reside in the temple or permitting “unchaste” women to stay at the temple.

Clerical marriage was, in fact, tolerated by temple bylaws as long as married clerics did not intend to receive *bhikṣu* precepts and did not live with their wives and children in the temple. Yi Nūnghwa also commented on the issue of clerical marriage, writing;

A Buddhist monk should not violate the precept that prohibits sexual misconduct. But how dare he bring his wife to the temple to dwell! While temple bylaws do not prohibit clerical marriage, they do prohibit his wife from dwelling in the temple. In other words, it does not matter if a monk has a wife outside the temple. From early times, it often happened that Buddhist monks had wives.²²⁰

From this excerpt, it can be seen that Yi Nūnghwa understood that temple bylaws did not prohibit clerical marriage unless a monk was a *bhikṣu*,²²¹ and that he admitted, albeit reluctantly, that clerical marriage was not a rare practice in Buddhism.

If temple bylaws implied tolerance toward clerical marriage among rank-and-file monks, while placing restrictions on married monks and prohibiting marriage among *bhikṣu*, a tricky question arises: Did temple bylaws play a role in the spread of clerical marriage or did they curb the practice of clerical marriage? With regard to temple bylaws, the ultimate interest of the

²¹⁹ *Maeil sinbo*, March 16, 1913.

²²⁰ Yi Nūnghwa, 145.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 168.

Government-General of Korea lay not in wishing to disturb, but in wishing to preserve the stability of the Korean monastic community for more effective control. Thus, it is essential to understand that the clauses related to clerical marriage in the temple bylaws were nothing more than a reflection of the reality of the Korean monastic community at the time, a reality that included a small number of married monks who lived together with their wives and children in the temple. In the short term, the disadvantages to married monks as set forth in the temple bylaws were an effective deterrent for the practice of clerical marriage. The bylaws did attempt to restrain the practice of clerical marriage among Korean Buddhist clerics by imposing restrictions on married monks. In the Buddhist magazine *Haedong pulbo*, it was written that the head temple Sōgwangsa decided to prohibit married monks in its parish from moving up the clerical ladder (*pōpkye*), and it set an example for other head temples.²²²

The Increasing Ordinations of Bhikṣu and Bodhisattva

One prominent change in the Korean monastic community after the establishment of the temple bylaws was an increase in the number of *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations. For this ceremony, major temples installed a diamond platform (*kūmgang kyedan*).²²³ After Buddhist regulations were established, the first large ordination ceremony was held in the Office of the Wōnjong (*wōnjong samuso*) in January 1912.²²⁴ Except for some Imjejong-affiliated temples like Pōmōsa, most head temples were members of the Wōnjong. As mentioned earlier, the temple bylaws specified that head monks, abbots, and *sōn* practitioners must have received

²²² *Haedong pulbo* 4 (February 1914), 105-106.

²²³ Traditional Korean Buddhism has two different platforms for ordination: the diamond platform (*kūmgang kyedan*) and the expansive platform (*pangdūng kyedan*). The diamond platform and expansive platform in Korean Buddhism were established in T'ongdosa in the seventh century and Kūmsansa in the eighth century, respectively.

²²⁴ Since the Wōnjong had its office in Wōnhūngsa in Seoul, the ceremony was held in Wōnhūngsa.

bhikṣu and bodhisattva precepts, but that married monks were not permitted to receive them.

Since *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations were significant steps toward achieving higher career goals, such as abbotship, Korean clerics began to place more weight on their importance.

This first ordination ceremony in Wŏnhŭngsa was performed in strict conformity with the *Four Part Vinaya*, with Yi Hoegwang of the head temple Haeinsa as the preceptor, Yonghŏ of Ch'ŏngnyongsa as the reciting preceptor, and Unp'a of the head temple Kŏnbongsa as the instructional preceptor.²²⁵ In this ordination ceremony, more than three hundred Buddhists were ordained: sixty-six *bhikṣu*, thirty novice monks, twenty-five novice nuns, 189 laypeople of which 28 were men and 161 were women. The Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* expressed surprise at this huge ceremony, saying that it was an unprecedented event in recent years.²²⁶

Head monks also discussed the ordination process:

Monks would receive the ten precepts from their affiliated temple abbots on the first day of summer retreat on April 15. Ordinands of *bhikṣu* precepts must be older than twenty. *Bhikṣu* ordination occurs in every three years in a head temple for monks and nuns in each parish. It is the same for bodhisattva precepts.²²⁷

Additionally, as specified by the temple bylaws, head monks agreed that married monks were not permitted to receive *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts.²²⁸ Based on this agreement, head monks held a second large-scale *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordination ceremony in September 1912 in the name of “Sŏn kyo yangjong kak ponsan chuji hoeŭiwŏn” (Association of Head Monks in

²²⁵ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 1 (February 1912), 70.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 6 (July 1912), 61.

²²⁸ Ibid., 64.

the Dual Sect Sŏn and Kyo).²²⁹ Yi Hoegwang was again invited as a preceptor and performed the ceremony for 165 Buddhists including clerics and the laity.²³⁰ These ceremonies by the association of head monks not only demonstrated a spontaneous collaboration with the colonial government but also encouraged each head temple to hold its own ordination ceremony as expected and decreed.²³¹

As a result, the increase in the number of *bhikṣu* ordination ceremonies in individual temples was directly linked to these massive ordination ceremonies. *Bhikṣu* ordination ceremonies were held in twelve temples in 1913 and two temples in 1914.²³² According to the *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo*, these frequent ordination ceremonies were a new phenomenon resulting from the establishment of the temple bylaws.²³³ Over the course of two years, more than 1500 Buddhist monks, nuns and laypeople received precepts, bringing the number of Buddhist clerics up from 5501 in 1909²³⁴ to 6915 in 1914.²³⁵ Given that married monks were not permitted to receive *bhikṣu* precepts, the increase in the number of *bhikṣu* ordinations indicates that Korean clerics were clearly aware of the advantages and disadvantages associated with clerical marriage and it can be concluded that the temple bylaws played a role in repressing the practice of clerical

²²⁹ Ibid., 69.

²³⁰ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 9 (October 1912), 70.

²³¹ Each temple held its own ordination ceremony until 1981 when the Chogyŏ Order had the first unified platform (*tanil kyedan*) in T'ongdosa.

²³² Sŏnamsa, Hwajangsa, Yongjusa, Kwijusa, Hwaŏmsa, Sŏgwangsa, Hwanhŭisa, Paegyangsa, Yujŏmsa, Kŏnbongsa, T'ongdosa and Songgwangsa held each ordination ceremony in 1913, and Hŭngguksa and Kabsa in 1914. See *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 14 (March 1913), 72; 15 (April 1913), 65-66; 16 (May 1913), 73, and 17 (June 1913), 71-72. Also see *Haedong pulbo* 8 (June 1914), 80.

²³³ *Chosŏn pulgyo wŏlbo* 17 (June 1913), 71.

²³⁴ *Hwangŏng sinmun*, December 25, 1909.

²³⁵ *Haedong pulbo* 4 (February 1914).

marriage among Korean monks at this time.

Conclusion

Since Korean Buddhism had not had an institutional bureaucratic system for hundreds of years, the most urgent task for the Government-General of Korea was how to influence and control the whole Korean monastic community. To this end, the colonial government created the Temple Ordinance, the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance, and head-branch temple bylaws, borrowing the framework of these regulations from the Japanese Buddhist system. Through the Temple Ordinance, all Korean Buddhist temples were hierarchically classified into head and branch temples in a thirty-parish system. The head monks of the thirty parishes were granted power for finance and administrative matters. As each head temple submitted its head-branch temple bylaws, the Japanese colonial government successfully established Buddhist institutionalization in colonial Korea. Additionally, it intervened in the monastic rules governing the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating by setting down constraints in the temple bylaws on those who married and ate meat. In this way, Korean clerics, not having recourse to their own interpretations on precepts and *vinayas*, came to see the temple bylaws as the monastic rules that they should live by.

Based on the increase of *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations in the early 1910s it can be concluded that the temple bylaws played a role in restraining the practice of clerical marriage for a brief period. Nevertheless, temple bylaws did not exert considerable influence on this practice in the long term, as can be seen in the fact that clerical marriage continued and increased among Korean monks from the late 1910s through the early 1920s regardless of the ordination restrictions that had been placed upon married monks. Many monks took advantages of

loopholes in the temple bylaws by taking wives after they received *bhikṣu* precepts.

The colonial government did not intend to introduce clerical marriage in order to assimilate Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism; it treated Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism as two different religions: one for the Koreans, another for the Japanese. The very existence of rules regarding clerical marriage and meat-eating in the temple bylaws itself proves that the practice of clerical marriage and meat-eating among Korean Buddhist clerics existed around 1911. A more critical issue lies in the fact that the temple bylaws replaced the previous monastic rules of Korean Buddhism and became the most significant criterion in determining clerical deportment.

CHAPTER THREE

REVISION OF THE TEMPLE BYLAWS:
THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON MARRIED MONKS

Introduction

As has been seen in the earlier chapters, key restrictions in the head-branch temple bylaws in regard to clerical marriage included clauses specifying that married monks were not permitted to receive *bhikṣu* precepts, nor were they eligible to qualify for head monk, abbot or *sŏn* practitioner status. In 1926, however, the colonial government decided to remove limitations on clerical marriage from the temple bylaws and, to this end, gave an administrative order to each head temple to revise the related clauses therein. This governmental decision shook the whole Korean monastic community that then became embroiled in a hot debate over the pros and cons of such a reversal.

The removal of a restriction often results in a surge in the practice of the restricted behavior. Most scholars argue that this revision in the temple bylaws was a catalyst in the spread of clerical marriage among Korean Buddhist monks. They blamed this government policy for the spread of clerical marriage and meat-eating and interpreted it as one of the crafty Buddhist policies – aimed at easing the assimilation of Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism. The Korean scholar, Kim Ch’angsuk argues that this revision led to the spread of clerical marriage and meat-eating among Korean monks and ultimately upset two critical traditional values of Korean Buddhism – celibacy and vegetarianism.²³⁶ I would argue that, to date, far too little attention has been paid to the agents who made the request to lift restrictions on clerical marriage

²³⁶ Kim Ch’angsuk, “Sŏkchŏn Pak Hanyŏng ūi Kyehak yakchŏn kwa yŏksajŏk sŏnggyŏk,” *Han’guksa yŏn’gu* 107 (December 1999): 132.

from the temple bylaws and their reasons for requesting it in the first place. Regarding these questions, most scholars pointed out that an unknown head temple made this request to the colonial government because it wanted to appoint as the position of head monk a married monk who once had studied in Japan.

In this chapter, I will explore more thoroughly who requested this revision and why, using accounts in newspapers, Buddhist magazines, and monks' household registers. In addition, using documents of the colonial government such as “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (On the Case to Indicate the Standardizing Revision of Head-Branch Temple Bylaws of Each Parish) created by the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education of the Government-General of Korea, I will examine how the colonial government responded to this proposal and the way in which the temple bylaws were revised. These documents contain useful information on major concerns of the colonial government regarding clerical marriage.

The Korean Buddhist Community in the early 1920s

Modern Buddhist Education System

Once the early scattered complaints and resistance against colonial Buddhist regulations were subdued and the Korean monastic community stabilized in the 1910s, the head monks of the thirty parishes set up a long-term plan for Korean Buddhism, that is, propagation of Buddhism to the public in modern forms and modern education for the Buddhist clergy.²³⁷

While the traditional Buddhist education system consisted of the dual division of doctrinal studies and meditation, Korean Buddhism in the 1910s added new subjects, such as mathematics,

²³⁷ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 1 (March 1917), 4.

history, and Japanese language to the curriculum, as well as establishing more systematic educational progression in institutions from elementary schools to local Buddhist schools and to the central Buddhist college. Using loans from the colonial government, head monks established the Pulgyo chungang hangnim (Central Buddhist College) in Kyōngsōng (Seoul) in 1915, and each head temple also founded its local Buddhist school. According to statistics, the total number of Buddhist monks and nuns in 1917 was 6742, of which 764 Buddhist clerics attended either local Buddhist schools or the Pulgyo chungang hangnim.²³⁸ Most student-monks in the Pulgyo chungang hangnim were financially supported by their affiliated head temples. Among thirty head temples, T'ongdosa supported the education of the largest number of Buddhist clerics: Among 604 monks and 72 nuns, 58 monks studied at the Pulgyo chungang hangnim and 35 monks at the local Buddhist school.²³⁹ What is more, T'ongdosa set up the first Buddhist school for nuns in 1918 at a small temple named Ongnyōnam, giving Buddhist nuns the opportunity to get a formal education for the first time in the history of Korean Buddhism.²⁴⁰

Driven by a zeal for more modern education, the number of Korean student-monks studying in Japan also increased. The first monks to study in Japan were Yi Chigwang from Kōnbongsa, Kim Chōnghae from Yongjusa, and Yi Hongsōng from Yujōmsa who traveled together to Japan in 1913 and studied at Sōtōshū University (now Komozawa University) in Tokyo until 1918, all of them supported financially by their affiliated head temples.²⁴¹ When they returned to Korea in 1918, they were welcomed enthusiastically by head monks as well as

²³⁸ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 8 (March 1918), 73-74.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 10 (July 1918), 90.

²⁴¹ For instance, Kim Chōnghae stated that Kang Taeryōn, the head monk of Yongjusa, supported him financially. See Keijō Chongno Keisatsusho, "Mimoto shōkai ni kansuru ken" (23 October, 1923).

the colonial government.²⁴² By 1921, the number of Korean monks studying in Japan had increased to around fifty, and they organized the Korean student-monks' association.²⁴³ Some monks were married while studying in Japan.²⁴⁴ Others, like Kim Chŏnghae and Yi Honsŏng, became advocates of clerical marriage.²⁴⁵ After their return, Kim Chŏnghae became the head monk of Chŏndŭngsa from 1922 to 1928 and Yi Hongsŏng served as the head monk of Yujŏmsa from 1927 to 1931.

At the same time, head temples began paying more attention to the propagation of Buddhist teachings among the public, opening their own missionary centers in Kyŏngsŏng and other major cities. One of them, Pŏmŏsa, the head temple of South Kyŏngsŏng province, appointed the reform-minded monk Han Yongun as missionary at its own missionary centre. In this way, the Korean monastic community changed its key focus from traditional meditation to modern education and dissemination. In fact, meditation was totally excluded from the discourses of modern transformations of Buddhism until 1921 when the Sŏnhagwŏn (Sŏn Meditation Centre) was established in Kyŏngsŏng in order to revive the meditation practice.

The Increase in Contact between Korean Monks and Japanese Priests

Another change in the Korean monastic community that came about around 1920 was an increase in contact between Korean monks and Japanese Buddhist priests. Religious regulations, such as the Temple Ordinance of 1911, Regulations on Shinto Shrines and Japanese Buddhist Temples (*Jinja jiin kisoku*), and Regulations on Propagation (*Fukyō kisoku*) of 1915 controlled

²⁴² *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 11 (1918), 52-53. They were invited to the Governor-General's Office and met government officials including Watanabe Akira, the colonial government's chief manager of Buddhist Affairs.

²⁴³ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 22 (January 1921), 69.

²⁴⁴ *Pulgyo* 4 (October 1924), 61.

²⁴⁵ This advocacy will be examined in the next chapter.

Japanese Buddhist missionaries' attempts at proselytizing Korean Buddhists. As a result, Japanese Buddhist missionaries were effectively prevented from exerting a deep influence on Korean Buddhism. However, beginning in the late 1910s, Japanese priests or intellectuals increasingly visited Korea and delivered special lectures. Korean Buddhists attended their lectures, some of which were summarized in the Buddhist monthly magazines. Korean Buddhist leaders also invited influential Japanese Buddhist intellectuals to special Buddhist events. The most direct contact Korean Buddhism had with Japanese Buddhism was sending monks to Japan on Buddhist inspection tours. While earlier contact with Japanese missionaries stimulated the desire among Korean monks to have the benefits they would reap under the umbrella of Japanese Buddhism, their encounters in the late 1910s were quite a bit different: As Korean Buddhism stabilized and the social status of Korean monks was elevated, Korean Buddhist leaders and intellectuals understood Japanese Buddhism to be an ideal model for Korean Buddhist modernization. Their Japanese counterparts, on the other hand, viewed Korean Buddhism as an archetype of traditional Buddhism in its maintenance of traditional monastic rules - viz., abstinence from sex and food – but also judged it to be out-of-date at the same time.

The first official contact between Korean and Japanese Buddhism was the Korean Buddhist inspection tour to Japan in 1917. Consisting of nine Korean Buddhists including six head monks, this tour was financially supported by the colonial government: The Governor-General, Hasegawa Yoshimichi (1850-1924), granted three hundred *wŏn* for travel expenses.²⁴⁶ During the 25-day tour to Japan, the Korean monks not only visited Japanese Buddhist temples including Myōshinji of the Rinzaishū, but also met the Japanese prime minister and several Japanese head monks. Their daily schedules were reported in detail in the daily newspaper *Maeil*

²⁴⁶ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 6 (August 1917), 3.

sinbo and also the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* by Kwŏn Sangno, a monk and the official recorder of this inspection tour.

During this tour, a Japanese businessperson named Kume Taminosuke (1861-1931)²⁴⁷ invited members of the inspection tour to his house. As a devout lay Buddhist, Kume advised them not to adopt the practice of clerical marriage from Japanese priests and complimented Korean Buddhism on its persistence in keeping the ways of celibacy and vegetarianism.²⁴⁸ Referring to Kume as a “lay bodhisattva” (*chaega posal*), Kwŏn Sangno wrote: “He [Kume Taminosuke] said that Japanese Buddhist priests do nothing but sleep or boast that this is my wife and that is my son.”²⁴⁹ It is very interesting to see the contradictory views of Korean Buddhism held by Japanese Buddhists: Though they, the Japanese Buddhist priests, projected – one might even say foisted – their aspirations for “pure” Buddhist tradition – abstinence from sex and food – onto colonial Korean Buddhists, at the same time, they condemned this as an outdated practice that was contributing to the decline of Buddhism. A scholar of Japanese Buddhism, Micah Auerback, maintains that when it came to Korean Buddhism, Japanese Buddhists had “two conflicting images – as exemplary practitioners and as degenerate outsiders.”²⁵⁰

Beginning in the late 1910s, famous Japanese Buddhist priests visited Korea to deliver special lectures. In March 1917, when Ōtani Kōen (1875-1943), the chief abbot of the Higashi Honganji, went to Korea, several Korean Buddhist head monks met him at a hotel in Kyŏngsŏng

²⁴⁷ One year after this meeting in Japan, Kume Taminosuke went to colonial Korea and established a company called “Kongōzan denki testudō kabushiki gaisha” (Kūmgangsan Electric Railroad Company), and built the railway line called the Kūmgang Line, which operated from 1924 until it was closed due to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

²⁴⁸ *Maeil sinbo*, September 30, 1917.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ Micah L. Auerback, “Japanese Buddhism in an Age of Empire: Mission and Reform in Colonial Korea, 1877-1931” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007), 89.

to welcome him.²⁵¹ Murakami Senjō (1851-1929), a Buddhist scholar of the Higashi Honganji, also visited Korea and delivered a special lecture about the women-centered and lay-centered features of Japanese Buddhism.²⁵² As contact between Korean monks and Japanese priests increased, Korean Buddhist intellectuals became more familiar with modern education and modern ways of spreading Japanese Buddhism, practices that included Sunday school, correspondence preaching, and the preaching circuit.²⁵³ The contact between two Buddhisms culminated in 1920 when the Chosŏn pulgyo taehoe (Assembly of Korean Buddhism) was jointly organized by Japanese politicians, such as Maeda Noboru, and Korean politicians and intellectuals, such as Pak Yŏnghyo and Ch'oe Namsŏn. The Chosŏn pulgyo taehoe changed its title to the Chosŏn pulgyodan (Corps of Korean Buddhism) in 1925, focusing on various activities including lectures and Buddhist inspection tours to Japan. The Second Conference of Asian Buddhism was held in 1925 at Zōjōji, a Japanese Buddhist monastery in Tokyo. Three Korean monks, Na Ch'ŏngho, Yi Honsŏng, and Kwŏn Sangno, along with monks from Japan, China, and Taiwan, met to discuss education, social welfare, propagation, and the doctrines of Buddhism over a three-day period.²⁵⁴

Thus, it can be seen that, as the Korean monastic community stabilized, it put more emphasis on modern education and propagation rather than doctrinal studies and meditation. It was influenced by Japanese Buddhism while recognizing that two Buddhisms were still quite different from one another. Although the colonial government installed religious regulations preventing Japanese Buddhist missionaries from meddling in the affairs of Korean Buddhism, it

²⁵¹ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 4 (June 1917), 57.

²⁵² *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 5 (July 1917), 34-54.

²⁵³ Ch'oam, "Naeji sŭngnyŏ ūi p'yogyo," *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 13 (December 1918), 10-14.

²⁵⁴ Kwŏn Sangno, "Tonga pulgyo taehoe ch'amsŏk ilgi," *Pulgyo* 18 (December 1925), 13-31.

also encouraged Korean Buddhists to go to Japan to study or on a short-term inspection tour for the express purpose of making Buddhist leaders faithful subjects of Imperial Japan. While there, it is likely that the Korean Buddhist intellectuals and Buddhist leaders observed the practice of clerical marriage among Japanese Buddhist priests, although it is difficult to confirm just how greatly these observations of this aspect of Japanese Buddhism influenced the spread of clerical marriage among Korean monks in general.

The Relationship between Korean Buddhism and the Colonial Government

In the 1920s, Korean Buddhists experienced a change in the relationship between their head monks and the colonial government. In the early 1910s, the colonial government had successfully controlled and supervised the entire Korean monastic community through Buddhist regulations. Because the appointment of a head monk depended wholly on whether the colonial government approved him or not, each head monk of the thirty parishes had to maintain a close relationship with the colonial government. However, cracks on the surface of the relationship between the Korean Buddhist community and the colonial regime began to emerge in the early 1920s. After the 1919 March First Movement, the first nationwide independence movement against Japanese colonial rule, the new Governor-General Saitō Makoto (1858~1936) changed the overall colonial policy from military rule to a so-called “cultural policy.” As this new ruling allowed Koreans to express their cultural identity through newspapers, magazines, and radio stations, Buddhist intellectuals raised their voices in criticism of the Buddhist policies of the colonial government.

Among the thirty-three Korean leaders who set up this anti-Japanese movement and signed a Korean proclamation of independence, sixteen were Christians and fifteen were members of Ch’ōndogyo (the Religion of the Heavenly Way), the first indigenous religion of

Korea, founded by Ch'oe Cheu (1824-1864) in 1860. Compared with Ch'öndogyo and Christianity, the Korean Buddhist community was not deeply involved in this nationalistic movement. Only a small number of monks, including Paek Yongsöng, Han Yongun, Han's students at the Pulgyo chungang hangnim, and some monks of T'ongdosa and Pömösa participated in the March First movement. As a result of their involvement, Paek Yongsöng and Han Yongun were among the thirty-three religious leaders sent to prison, and other monks were expelled from the sangha or found themselves under constant surveillance by the police and the Department of Religion. Other religious leaders from Christianity and Ch'öndogyo were also imprisoned. Having witnessed the massive influence religions and religious leaders played in the March First Movement, the colonial government was prompted to re-organize its bureaucratic system and establish the Department of Religion within the Bureau of Education that same year.

Under this new “cultural policy,” Korean Buddhists were able to set up central Buddhist organizations. In 1922, ten head temples, including T'ongdosa, Pömösa, and Haeinsa, founded the Chosön pulgyo chungang ch'ongmuwön (Council of Korean Buddhist Affairs) as the central organization of Korean Buddhism. However, this organization was not supported by the colonial government or any other pro-Japanese head monks. In the same year, pro-Japanese head monks had a general meeting and established their own Buddhist organization calling it the Chosön pulgyo chungang kyomuwön (Central Council of Korean Buddhism) which, with the assistance of the government, completely absorbed the Chosön pulgyo chungang ch'ongmuwön in 1924.

In 1921, some reform-minded monks and laypeople organized the Pulgyo yusin hoe (Society for the Reformation of Buddhism) to point out the flaws in such Buddhist regulations as the Temple Ordinance and the temple bylaws. Ultimately, 2284 members of this organization, claiming that the Temple Ordinance created numerous evils including power abuse by head

monks, submitted a petition to abolish the Temple Ordinance and bestow freedom from the colonial government to each temple.²⁵⁵ The foundation of their argument was that religion should be separate from the state to return financial and administrative freedom to Korean Buddhist monasteries themselves.²⁵⁶ While the Temple Ordinance had been praised as leading to the protection of temple property in the 1910s, by the early 1920s, when the new cultural policy of the colonial government allowed a certain amount of freedom of expression, Buddhist intellectuals had begun to raise their voices against the absurdity of colonial Buddhist regulations as represented by the Temple Ordinance and the temple bylaws. In short, Korean Buddhist intellectuals recognized the necessity of separating religion from the state and this became one of the most important rationales among pro-clerical marriage advocates, who asserted that clerical marriage should be a matter of personal freedom.

At around this same time, the Korean Buddhist community felt signs of strain as frequent internal conflicts over the election of head monks erupted. The incident of Ch'oe Irhae, the monk of the head temple Pŏmŏsa, is a prime example of this state of affairs. In 1923, Ch'oe Irhae sent a secret letter to Kang Taeryŏn, the head monk of Yongjusa, accusing two head temples Pŏmŏsa and T'ongdosa of "anti-Japanese sentiment." Given that Kang Taeryŏn was one of the most pro-Japanese head monks in Korea, it is not surprising that this letter soon found its way into the hands of the colonial government, which had been keeping several monks of Pŏmŏsa and T'ongdosa who had participated in the March First Movement under surveillance. Ch'oe's letter accused O Sŏngwŏl, the head monk of Pŏmŏsa, of reinstating several monks who had been expelled due to their participation in the March First Movement in 1919. In addition, Ch'oe

²⁵⁵ *Tonga ilbo*, April 21, 1922.

²⁵⁶ *Tonga ilbo*, April 25, 1922.

claimed that O Sŏngwŏl refused to join the Kyomuwŏn (Central Council of Korean Buddhism), the pro-Japanese Buddhist organization.²⁵⁷

As a result of this letter, the Bureau of Police (Kyŏngmuguk) sent a document to the governor of South Kyŏngsang province where Pŏmŏsa and T'ongdosa were located to inform on so-called "anti-Japanese" monks, including Kim Kuha, O Sŏngwŏl, and four others.²⁵⁸ A series of documents sent between the police and the provincial government reveal that, after the March First Movement, the colonial government conducted surveillance of some "anti-Japanese" monks whose names were added to a blacklist of participants that was shared by the Bureau of Police, the Department of Religion, and the provincial governments.²⁵⁹ Ch'oe's accusation of O Sŏngwŏl was rooted in his ambition to become the head monk of the Pŏmŏsa parish himself. In the end, Ch'oe's allegation turned out to be false and all his scheming came to naught. After receiving Ch'oe's secret letter from the Bureau of Police, the leaders of the South Kyŏngsang Province conducted their own investigation of these accused monks. Their response to the Bureau of Police stated that, except for the activities of a monk named Kang Sinch'ang of T'ongdosa, there was not much anti-Japanese sentiment either there or at Pŏmŏsa.²⁶⁰

Hwaŏmsa's elevation to the status of head temple in 1924 can serve as an example of the change in the relationship between the colonial government and the Korean monastic community. Even though Hwaŏmsa was originally designated as a branch temple of the Sŏnamsa parish, it

²⁵⁷ Ch'oe Irhae, "T'ongdosa Pŏmŏsa no hainichi kibun ni kansuru ken" [a letter sent to Kang Taeryŏn] (February 1923) in Chŏsen Sŏtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pŏmŏsa jŭji shŭshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (March 26, 1924), 596-598.

²⁵⁸ Chŏsen Sŏtokufu Keimukyoku, "T'ongdo, Pŏmŏsa hainichi kibun ni kansuru ken" (24 February 1923), in Chŏsen Sŏtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pŏmŏsa jŭji shŭshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (March 26, 1924), 616-617.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Keishŏnandŏ [Kr. Kyŏngsangnamdo] dŏchiji, "T'ongdo, Pŏmŏsa hainichi kibun ni kansuru ken" (27 March 1923), in Chŏsen Sŏtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pŏmŏsa jŭji shŭshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (March 26, 1924), 606-611.

did not accept it and submitted its long history to the colonial government to prove its independence from Sŏnamsa in 1913.²⁶¹ The serious conflicts between Hwaŏmsa and Sŏnamsa reached a flash point in 1921 when Hwaŏmsa monks murdered the newly appointed abbot Kim Haksan. As a result of this tragic incident, the colonial government capitulated to Hwaŏmsa's demand. Through Law Number 69 of the Government-General of Korea, enacted on November 20, 1924, the colonial government announced the revision of the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance and added Hwaŏmsa as one of the head temples. In this way, Korean Buddhism went from a thirty-parish system to a thirty-one parish system and Okamoto Giichi, the chief manager of the Department of Religion, went on to admit that there had been an administrative mistake when the thirty-parish system was created back in 1911.²⁶²

Revision of the Temple Bylaws Related to Clerical Marriage

The Department of Religion in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea

As discussed in an earlier chapter, the Japanese colonial government controlled the whole Korean monastic community through three sets of Buddhist regulations. The Temple Ordinance and its Enforcement Regulations were the primary laws imposed upon Korean Buddhism, and offenders were punished by imprisonment or government fine. At the same time, each head-branch temple of the thirty-one Buddhist parishes had its own set of “self-regulatory” bylaws whose most serious penalty decided by the head monk was permanent expulsion from the sangha. This “self-regulation” did not mean that a head monk had the authority or the autonomy to revise the head-branch temple bylaws of his parish: The temple bylaws were standardized and every

²⁶¹ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 18 (July 1913), 69-70.

²⁶² *Pulgyo* 6 (December 1924), 10.

revision of them had to be approved by the colonial government. For example, when Taehŭngsa, the head temple of South Chŏlla province, wanted to change the name of its branch temple from Mandŏksa to Paengnyŏnsa, it had to request approval of this revision from the colonial government before it could be added to the *Taehŭngsa ponmal sabŏp* (Taehŭngsa Head-branch Temple Bylaws). After approval, this revision was then announced in the *Kwanbo* (Official Gazette) as well as the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo*.²⁶³ Needless to say, head monks were not allowed to revise the content of the temple bylaws which included head monk and abbot qualifications and the education system.

All religious affairs of colonial Korea were dealt with and controlled by the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education of the Governor-General's Office of Korea. Though most of the Governor-General's staff positions were filled by Japanese, the occasional Korean was appointed as well. In November 1924, two Koreans were appointed as high ranking officials in the Bureau of Education: Yi Chinho as the head of the Bureau of Education, and Yu Man'gyŏm as the director of the Department of Religion. Yi Chinho (1867- 1943) was born in Seoul and was a military officer who was trained in the Yŏnmu kongwŏn (Military Academy of Chosŏn) during the late Chosŏn period.²⁶⁴ Being pro-Japanese, he took flight to Japan in 1894 when the cabinet of Korean politician Kim Hongjip (1842-1896) collapsed. After Korea came under Japanese control, Yi Chinho returned to Korea where he fast-tracked his political rise. He was appointed as the governor of North Kyŏngsang province in 1910 and the governor of South Chŏlla province in 1916, and, in 1924, he became the first Korean to head the Bureau of

²⁶³ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 5 (July 1917), 61-62.

²⁶⁴ It was established in 1887 as a modern military educational institute which had four American instructors but it closed in 1894 due to lack of efficient management by the government.

Education in the office of the Governor-General.²⁶⁵ Given that the colonial government had historically used Japanese bureaucrats, Yi's appointment was a testimony both to his competence as an official as well as to his loyalty to Japanese colonial rule. The Japanese were not the only ones with expectations of Yi: Korean Buddhist leaders also expected some favorable policies from him.²⁶⁶ Yu Man'gyŏm (1889-1944), the other Korean who received an official appointment in 1924, was named director of the Department of Religion. He was born into a distinguished *yangban* family: His father was Yu Kilchun (1856-1914), a politician, Enlightenment thinker, and author of the *Sŏyu gyŏnmun* (Travels in the West). Yu Man'gyŏm graduated with a degree in Economics from Tokyo Imperial University in 1917. Appointed as official in the Office of the Government-General in 1918, he quickly became one of the most promising young Korean bureaucrats.

The Department of Religion in the Office of the Governor-General oversaw the country's main religions: Korean Buddhism, Christianity and Japanese religions including Japanese Buddhism and Shinto. Considering the backgrounds (military and economics) of Yi Chinho and Yu Man'gyŏm, it would seem that they were far removed from any specialized knowledge about religions. Were they appointed because, as Koreans, they understood the country's culture better than the Japanese? The answers to these questions are unknown but it is likely that the actual work of dealing with religious affairs was handled by other rank-and-file workers. There were three rank-and-file workers in particular who were in charge of Korean Buddhist affairs: Watanabe Akira, Ideguchi Yūkichi, and Hong Sŏngmo – two Japanese and one Korean. Although only a few Koreans, like Yi Chinho, were appointed to high ranking positions, more

²⁶⁵ *Tonga ilbo*, December 13, 1924.

²⁶⁶ *Maeil sinbo*, May 21, 1926.

Koreans were hired as rank-and-file workers in the Office of the Governor-General and served as interpreters or translators. The most experienced administrator was Watanabe Akira who, along with Takahashi Tōru (1878-1967) who wrote the *Richō Bukkyō* (Buddhism of the Yi Dynasty) published in 1929, had the most specialized knowledge about Korean Buddhism. Watanabe had worked on Korean Buddhist affairs since 1909 and was the author of the draft of the temple bylaws. In the mid-1920s, when the colonial government revised the temple bylaws and lifted the limitations on married monks, Watanabe's name appeared most frequently, not only in government documents, but also in reports investigating married monks. That Watanabe was not promoted to a higher position in the colonial government despite his knowledge and long career might be due to his lack of higher education.

Proposal of a Revision in the Temple Bylaws

One of the most significant questions regarding the revision in the temple bylaws is who first suggested that a change in the attitude toward clerical marriage was necessary. The answer is that it was the head monks themselves who addressed the issue. In January 1925, after establishing the Kyomuwŏn (Central Council of Korean Buddhism), the head monks held the first council where they asserted the necessity of modifying the temple bylaws.²⁶⁷ In October 1925, they held a special general meeting where they made the decision to approach the colonial government about the proposed revision. The newspaper *Tonga ilbo* reported that their agenda was to lift the restrictions on clerical marriage for head monk candidates.²⁶⁸ It states;

Head monks of the thirty-one parishes agreed to the necessity of protecting themselves as a whole and made a clever plan that they hoped would curb government supervision,

²⁶⁷ Obong sanin, "Chosŏn pulgyo ūi hyŏnan ūl haegyel hara," *Pulgyo* 7 (January 1925), 16.

²⁶⁸ *Tonga ilbo*, October 31, 1925.

supervision that they thought was unfavorable to them. The first step they took was to name Yi Wanyong as a patron of their organization. Just as it is a common saying that birds of a feather flock together, so it is that villains make friends with each other. To strengthen their position, they banded together at Yongjusa, and plotted various plans. During the recent council meeting of the thirty-one head monks, the proposal to revise the temple bylaws was discussed, specifically the revision of the one clause that prohibits married monks from holding either a head monk or abbot position.²⁶⁹

According to this account, the thirty-one head monks chose the Korean politician Yi Wanyong as the ‘protector’ of the Korean Buddhist community. Yi Wanyong (1858-1926) was a pro-Japanese politician who promoted the Protectorate Treaty of 1905 and the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1910. It is a well-known fact that head monks maintained a close relationship with pro-Japanese politicians and government officials, including Yi Wanyong, in order to secure their positions. For example, when they held a general meeting in January 1915, several officials, politicians and scholars, including Watanabe Akira, Yi Wanyong, and Takahashi Tōru were in attendance.²⁷⁰ In 1917, moreover, Yi Wanyong guaranteed the debt of the association of head monks when head monks sold their headquarters Wōnhŭngsa and built the new headquarters building named Kakhwangsa.²⁷¹ When a new Buddhist organization “Pulgyo ongho hoe” (Council of Support for Buddhism) replaced “Pulgyo chinhŭng hoe” (Council of Buddhist Revitalization) in 1917, Yi Wanyong himself became one of the initiators.²⁷² It is clear from these examples that Yi Wanyong was greatly involved in Korean Buddhist affairs and was, thus, a logical choice as protector.

As mentioned earlier, one of the required qualifications of a head monk or an abbot as

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ *Pulgyo chinhŭnghoe wŏlbo* 1 (March 1915), 72.

²⁷¹ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 1 (March 1917), 5.

²⁷² *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 2 (April 1917), 52-53.

regulated in the temple bylaws was to have received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts, but these ordinations were not permitted for those monks who married and ate meat. According to the article from the *Tonga ilbo* in October 1925, it was the head monks who initiated the discussion regarding revision of this clause. This wish for reform was intertwined with two phenomena of the Korean monastic community in the mid-1920s: one was a generational shift in head monks, from old-fashioned head monks who were appointed around 1911 to younger head monks who had had a more modern education; the other was the frequent internal strife over the position of head monk. Since the thirty-one parishes system was established without any consideration of different sectarian traditions of Korean Buddhism, head temples suffered from factional conflicts with their branch temples or internal strife between powerful monks. These factional struggles were obviously revealed in the election of the head monk. As reviewed in the previous chapter, the first head monks of the thirty parishes were selected by one of the three traditional procedures – by recommendation from a master monk, by selection among dharma relatives, or by invitation from other temples – rather than election,²⁷³ and then were re-appointed after a three-year term which resulted in long incumbencies. Na Ch'ŏngho, for example, was head monk of the Pongŭnsa parish from 1912 to 1918, and again from 1924 to 1934. Hong Wŏlch'o was head monk of the Pongsŏnsa parish from 1913 to 1928. Yi Hoegwang was head monk from 1911 to 1924 in the Haeinsa parish and Kang Taeryŏn, the head monk of the Yongjusa parish, held office for the longest period from 1911 to 1942. The length of time each head monk ruled was due to the limited number of monks who were eligible for the position. This changed as the first generation of head monks grew older or died in the early 1920s; the factional strife over head monk election intensified.

²⁷³ Chōsen Sōtokufu, “Kan tsūchō” No. 260 (September 8, 1911), in Yi Nūnghwa, 256-257.

The case of Kwijusa, the head temple of South Hamgyŏng province, illustrates clearly the interaction between the elements of changes – the spread of clerical marriage, the factional strife surrounding head monk election, and the breach of the temple bylaws – afoot in the Korean monastic community in the mid-1920s. During this time, Kwijusa experienced an internal dispute between two different groups: the conservative monks called “the old-style” (*kup’a*) and the progressive ones called “the new-style” (*sinp’a*).²⁷⁴ The new-style faction claimed that Kwijusa should build its missionary center downtown in the city of Hamhŭng and actively propagate Buddhist doctrines; the old-style monks promoted sticking to the traditional path of remaining on their mountain. This factional confrontation lasted several years, peaking in 1924 when Yi P’oun, the leader of the new-style faction, and Yu Poam, the leader of the old-style faction, stood against each other in the head monk election. The old-style faction mounted a campaign against Yi P’oun on the grounds that he was married, but he still won despite the fact the *Kwijusa ponmal sabŏp* (Kwijusa Head and Branch Temple Bylaws) stated married monks who could not receive *bhikṣu* precepts were not permitted to run for the head monk positions. The fact that Yi P’oun both ran and won despite his clerical marriage might be attributed to his having married after he had received *bhikṣu* precepts, making him a “married *bhikṣu*.” Although the term *bhikṣu* is meant to refer only to full-fledged celibate monks, this contradictory term indicates a loophole in the temple bylaws allowing a monk who had received *bhikṣu* precepts first and married later to legitimately run for the position of head monk.

Because of the campaign against him, Yi P’oun’s election was ultimately nullified by the colonial government and the Kwijusa had to hold a re-election. At the time of re-election, the two factions increased their elector numbers by conferring *bhikṣu* precepts on unqualified monks,

²⁷⁴ *Tonga ilbo*, July 30, 1925.

thus, giving them voting rights in the head monk election. The new-style faction even went to Sōgwangsa, another head temple in South Hamgyōng province, with a dozen monks from its faction, and asked Sōgwangsa to confer *bhikṣu* precepts on them.²⁷⁵ At the same time, the old-style faction took seventy monks from its faction to a neighboring temple named Sinhŭngsa, and asked for *bhikṣu* ordination to be conferred on them there.²⁷⁶ The leaders of each faction knew that their temple Kwijusa would not confer *bhikṣu* precepts on unqualified monks. Because it was unusual for monks of the head temple to go to another temple and ask for *bhikṣu* precepts to be conferred, these ordinations can be seen as a temporary expedient to increase factional power. According to the article in the daily newspaper *Tonga ilbo*, those ordinands of *bhikṣu* precepts were unqualified monks,²⁷⁷ and therefore, this election disclosed another loophole in the temple bylaws, one that made inappropriate *bhikṣu* ordination possible, thereby making it an illegitimate means of increasing voters in the election.

The demand by the head monks to revise the temple bylaws indicates that the relationship between the colonial government and head monks had shifted from the one-sided possession of the power by the colonial government in the 1910s to the mutual control of the government and the head monks in the early 1920s. Head monks banded together and raised their voices higher and higher, consolidating their power through systematic organization and the influence of the politician Yi Wanyong, whom they had named as their patron. As the balance of power shifted more toward equality, delicate fractures occurred in the relationship between the head monks and the colonial government. The proposal to revise the temple bylaws was one of the fractures.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

Head monks, wishing to extend their influence over Buddhist policies, wanted the limitations on clerical marriage lifted in order to increase their political power.

The revision of the temple bylaws was an urgent issue for head monks, since clerical marriage, both covert and open, existed among quite a number of Buddhist monks, regardless of age or clerical rank. In other words, head monks desperately wanted restrictions on clerical marriage lifted, not only for themselves but also for future head monk candidates from their faction. Despite the fact that temple bylaws required that a head monk should be a celibate who had received *bhikṣu* precepts, in reality, clerical marriage was already practiced among head monks. In fact, in 1925 when head monks proposed the revision in the temple bylaws, eight out of thirty-one head monks were already married or had been married once. Below are some records that show the prevalence of the practice as well as the attempts to hide it.

Na Ch'ōngho (1875-1934) was head monk of the Pongŭnsa parish from 1912 to 1918, and from 1924 to 1934. Two copies of Na Ch'ōngho's household register exist. They were submitted to the colonial government in 1928 and 1934. The one submitted in 1928 indicates that he was unmarried.²⁷⁸ However, the 1934 household register indicates that he married a woman with the surname Ch'oe in 1930 and that he had a son, born in 1912, with the late Mrs. Yu.²⁷⁹ This information leads to the conclusion that Na cloaked his clerical marriage until 1930. Kim Chōnghae (1879-?), one of the first three monks to study in Japan, was head monk of the Chōndŭngsa parish from 1922 to 1928. He had two different household registers, one using his adult name (*kwanmyōng*) Kim Chongch'an and one using his original birth name Kim Ch'ōru in

²⁷⁸ "Na Ch'ōngho Koseki tōhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pongŭnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (February 18, 1928), 755.

²⁷⁹ "Na Ch'ōngho Koseki tōhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pongŭnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (May 12, 1934), 633.

order to conceal his marriage. According to one household register, he was unmarried but according to another, he was married in 1920.²⁸⁰ Chin Chinŭng (1873-1942) was an abbot and head monk of the Hwaŏmsa parish from 1917 to 1925, and again from 1928 to 1931. It was recorded in his household register of 1928 that he was married in 1920 and had his first son in 1920.²⁸¹ Yi Ch'ŏrhŏ (1881-?) was head monk of the Posŏksa parish from 1917 to 1930. He was married in 1917 and had his first son in 1921.²⁸² Chi Sŏktam (1875-?) was head monk of the Ŭnhaesa parish from 1917 to 1928. According to his household register of 1927, he was married in 1923.²⁸³ Kim Kuha, one of the most influential monks in the early colonial period, was head monk of the T'ongdosa parish from 1911 to 1925. When Watanabe Akira, the official of the Department of Religion in the office of the Governor-General of Korea, was dispatched to T'ongdosa to investigate Kim Kuha in 1925, he requested Kim Kuha's household register from the local office explicitly to check Kim's marital status. According to Watanabe's report, Kim was married in 1923²⁸⁴ and had hidden his marriage until this event. Yi Podam was head monk of the Sŏngbulsŏ parish from 1918 to 1945. His marriage is known because it was recorded in his household register that he divorced his wife Mrs. Chŏng in 1915.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ "Kim Chŏnghae Koseki tŏhon," in Keijō Chongno Keisatsusho, "Mimoto shōkai no ken" (October 20, 1923), 558.

²⁸¹ "Chin Chinŭng Koseki tŏhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Hwaŏmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (July 20, 1928), 918.

²⁸² "Yi Ch'ŏrhŏ Koseki tŏhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Posŏksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 1, 1927), 863.

²⁸³ "Chi Sŏktam Koseki tŏhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Ŭnhaesa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (January 13, 1927), 572.

²⁸⁴ "Kim Kuha Koseki tŏhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 9, 1926), 496.

²⁸⁵ "Yi Podam Koseki tŏhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Sŏngbulsŏ jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 10, 1927), 841.

The marital status of many monks was revealed for the first time through the examination of household registers. But the existence of married monks was not discovered only through the examination of household registers. The information is also found in other written records. For example, there is no household register for Kim Hyeong who was head monk of the Kimnyongsa parish from 1911 to 1926. The news of his marriage was reported in the documents of Ch'oe Int'aek who was elected as head monk of Kimnyongsa after Kim Hyeong's death. According to these documents, Kim Hyeong had a wife named Kang Yŏnhŭi.²⁸⁶ In fact, after Kim Hyeong's death, Ch'oe Int'aek took Kim's widow as his concubine and had a daughter with her.²⁸⁷

Though records indicate that about one fourth of the head monks were already married in 1925, this does not mean that the rest of head monks were unmarried; their marital status is unknown because their household registers are not extant. Furthermore, if they hid their marriages, as Kim Chŏnghae did, there is no way to confirm their marital status. Additionally, they may have had concubines who were not listed in household registers. It can be suggested that a married head monk might tolerate clerical marriage among other monks in his head and branch temples. Na Ch'ŏngho, the head monk of Pongŭnsa, for example, allowed married monks' wives and children to reside in the temple though this was expressly banned by the temple bylaws. In 1928, the colonial government dispatched an official to Pongŭnsa to investigate whether monks' wives and children were residing in the temple.²⁸⁸ The inspection report said that thirteen out of a total of sixteen monks were married, and the number of their wives and

²⁸⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Kimnyongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (August 24, 1934), 786.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 782.

²⁸⁸ Ideguchi Yūkichi and Hong Sōngmo, "Fukumeisho" (January 25, 1928), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pongŭnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (February 18, 1928), 762-764.

children who resided in the temple was sixty.²⁸⁹ After this investigation, Na Ch'ōngho submitted a written oath to the colonial government, vowing to move all wives and children of monks – including his own – out of the temple within the next four years.²⁹⁰

The Department of Religion was well aware that clerical marriage was a common phenomenon in the Korean monastic community regardless of clerical rank or position during the mid-1920s. Thus, when, in 1925, the formal proposal from the head monks to revise the temple bylaws to allow it was submitted, the colonial government had no choice but to accept it. It can be said that the revision in the temple bylaws was the result of a mutual agreement between head monks and the colonial government: Both parties understood that removing the condition of celibacy would make it possible to expand the pool of eligible candidates for head monks. However, the head monks' agenda in requesting the lifting of restrictions on married monks also included not losing their hegemony. Though the colonial government accepted their proposal, it also created two new devices to control head monks' influence: First, the colonial government requested that head monks submit their household registers to the colonial government to be sure they were using their legal names, and second, it strengthened its financial supervision of temple holdings by revising Temple Ordinance and its Enforcement Regulations in 1929.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Na Ch'ōngho, "Seiyakusho" (February 13, 1928), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pongŭnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (February 18, 1928), 783-784.

Government Documents Related to the Revision of the Temple Bylaws

Revised Clauses of the Temple Bylaws

Above all, it is necessary to understand how Korean Buddhist affairs were handled by the colonial government. For the most part, after the colonial government had made a decision regarding a certain Buddhist policy, a hands-on official, such as Watanabe Akira, composed official documents based on instructions from the director of the Department of Religion. Because the Department of Religion was one of the sub-divisions under the Bureau of Education, every document had to be approved and signed by the head of that Bureau. When it came to issues involving Korean Buddhism, the Department of Religion did not send official documents directly to head temples, but to the governor of the province in which a head temple was located. During the colonial period, Korea had thirteen provinces, the governors of which were appointed by the Governor-General. Though some Korean bureaucrats who were expressly loyal to the Japanese colonial government were appointed as governors of the provinces, it was mostly Japanese who occupied these positions. In 1926, eight out of the thirteen provinces had Japanese governors while only five had Korean governors.

Thus, when the colonial government finally decided to revise some clauses of the temple bylaws, it sent an official document explaining the rationale and the standardized revision of the temple bylaws to the governor of each province who then circulated the new government instructions to each head temple located in his province. Because the temple bylaws were a set of “self-regulatory” rules for each Buddhist parish, the colonial government gave specific instructions on how to revise the temple bylaws and each head temple had to submit its revision to the Bureau of Education for final approval. To make things even more daunting, these colonial government documents should not be written in Korean but had to be written in the early modern

Japanese style – a combination of classical Chinese and *katakana* called *sōrōbun*, a name derived from the polite auxiliary verb *sōrō* (候).

After receiving the proposal from the head monks in early 1926, the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education issued a series of government documents entitled “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (On the Case to Indicate the Standardizing Revision of the Head-Branch Temple Bylaws of Each Parish) whose one hundred twenty-one pages detailed the entire process of the temple bylaws revision.²⁹¹ Written between March 11, 1926 to April 20, 1926, these individual documents are, without a doubt, the most important primary sources for scholars who wish to examine the revision process from internal discussions to preparation to the final decisions. They not only provide the basic rationale and the finished product, but also Watanabe’s inspection tour report to Japan and a summary of the oral presentation that was made in front of Yi Chinho, the head of the Bureau of Education. Two documents in particular, “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen yōshi” (Summary of Oral Presentation to Yi, the Head of the Bureau of Education) and “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen inyō kyūristu shōroku” (Excerpts from Old Monastic Rules in Oral Presentation to Yi, the Head of the Bureau of Education) clarify the way the colonial government understood monastic rules related to clerical marriage from the early Chosŏn period up to that time. Another document, “Nara, Wakayama, Tokyo, Siga, Kyoto, nifu sanken ka no shūkyō jō no shisatsu oyobi torishirabe fukumeisho” (Report on the Religious Inspectorate in Nara, Wakayama, Tokyo, Siga and Kyoto) is a report by Yu Man’gyōm and Watanabe Akira, detailing their official tour of various Japanese Buddhist temples and their meeting with Japanese Buddhist priests and government

²⁹¹ This series of documents is preserved in the archives of the Governor-General’s Office of Korea.

officials from January 22 to February 22, 1926. These documents disclose the underlying anxiety caused by the temple bylaws revision.

The final official document referring to the revision in the temple bylaws was drafted on April 20, and approved on May 10, 1926. It explains the basic rationale behind the revision: “Upon examining the current circumstances and finding that Korean monks are no longer able to observe *kyeyul* [precepts and *vinayas*], we plan to revise the temple bylaws in order to accommodate the present state of affairs.”²⁹² The document goes on to point out that the prime reason for the colonial government’s decision to revise the temple bylaws was that the government no longer felt capable of supervising this transgression of Buddhist precepts. It continues:

Unfortunately, Korean Buddhist monks are not able to maintain the old rules in which they should observe such precepts as the clerical behavior code. Nonetheless, we understand this situation because they are unable to resist the pull of marriage and eating meat. We have already made an oral presentation to our superior and are now awaiting his approval. After this, we expect that each head temple will make a request for approval of revising designated clauses of its temple bylaws that had previously emphasized the strict observance of the precepts. In this case, we hope that you [provincial governors] will examine the request and decide whether it is proper or improper based on the revised articles and clauses in the temple bylaws that we have attached with this document.²⁹³

In this document, the Department of Religion gave instructions on just how a total of nine clauses should be revised. Most essential was the elimination of the clause that stated that a head monk and an abbot should have received both *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts, one of the four qualifications of head monk and abbot candidates as put forth in Article 16 and Article 17 of the temple bylaws. The elimination of this clause implied that a married monk was permitted to be a

²⁹² Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (May 10, 1926), 1114-1115.

²⁹³ Ibid., 1116-1117.

head monk or an abbot, and based on this interpretation, the Korean monastic community understood that both clerical marriage and meat-eating among Korean Buddhist clerics had received official government approval.

In addition to Articles 16 and 17, electorship for head monk election as stated in Article 18 of the temple bylaws was modified as well. The original qualifications for voters in a head monk election were (1) *bhikṣu* who were enrolled in the head temple, or (2) abbots of the major branch temples (*subanji sach'al*).²⁹⁴ These were modified as follows: electors could be (1) *bhikṣu* who are enrolled in the head temple and in the *sannae malsa* (branch temples located in the head temple's nearby territory),²⁹⁵ (2) those who are qualified to be branch temple abbots based on [revised] Article 17, or (3) abbots of affiliated branch temples. Most controversial in the revised temple bylaws was the second condition that those who were qualified to be branch temple abbots based on [revised] Article 17 were permitted to vote in the head monk election because the revision of Article 18, as it was connected with Article 17, now made it possible for married monks, formerly blocked from actively voting, to participate in head monk elections as long as they also met the qualifications for abbot. The rationale behind this modification stated that “the original temple bylaws allowed only *bhikṣu* to have voting rights. However, considering that the revised temple bylaws would permit non-*bhikṣu* to be elected as head monks or abbots, non-*bhikṣu* must also be granted equal voting rights.”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Chōsen Sōtokufu Naimubu, “[Wibongsa] Honmatsu jihō ninka no ken” (September 7, 1912), 33.

²⁹⁵ The term “sannae malsa” literally means “the branch temples located in the same mountain area of its head temple,” as distinguished from other branch temples located in an area remote from the head temple. A special type of monastery bond was formed between the head temple and these “sannae malsa” usually because they were under the same dharma lineage.

²⁹⁶ “Bōji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsuru jōkō,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (May 10, 1926), 1119. This modification of Article 18 created much confusion over the definition of *bhikṣu* in head monk elections as in the case of Magoksa in 1927,

Because the colonial government decided to eliminate the disadvantage of marriage for monks in Articles 16, 17, and 18, it also had to re-construct some general monastic rules of Korean Buddhism as specified in Articles 51 and 52 in the temple bylaws. Originally, the temple bylaws stated that the three essential disciplines, precepts (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*), were the most important practices of Korean Buddhism but because of the changes made in Articles 16, 17, and 18, the colonial government removed the emphasis on precepts from these three essential Buddhist teachings. Article 51, originally stating that “practice (行) referred to *kyeyul* (precepts and *vinayas*) and meditation, and understanding (解) referred to wisdom,” was modified to state instead that: “monks and nuns should be discreet about their behavior, and they should maintain meditation and act with wisdom for the salvation of sentient beings,”²⁹⁷ making it more of a suggestion than a requirement. In the same way, the emphasis on precepts, meditation, and wisdom in Article 52 was modified to place emphasis on meditation and wisdom only.²⁹⁸

Articles 58, 59, and 62 were also modified based on the revision of the previous articles. Article 58 originally stated, “Monks and nuns who are over twenty years old are able to receive *bhikṣu* precepts, except those who are married and eat meat. Monks and nuns who have received *bhikṣu* precepts are able to receive bodhisattva precepts.” It was changed to specify that if monks and nuns wished, they would be able to receive *bhikṣu* precepts.²⁹⁹ Article 59, in the original version, clarified that only those who had received *bhikṣu* precepts were permitted to enter the

which will be examined in the last chapter.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 1121.

meditation hall on retreat, but it was revised as follows: “those who are over twenty years old are able to enter the meditation hall for the retreat.”³⁰⁰ Furthermore, one of the clauses in Article 62, stating that monks and nuns who wanted to promote their clerical ranks had to submit certificates proving that they had received both *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts from their head temples, was discarded from the revised temple bylaws.³⁰¹ In other words, neither *bhikṣu* nor bodhisattva ordination was mandatory any longer; instead ordination became simply one of options that monks and nuns could choose.

What is interesting in the temple bylaws revision is that, in Article 65, the colonial government created one condition among the requirements for the two highest clerical ranks that they had to have received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts. This Article originally stated that monks, in order to attain one of the two highest clerical ranks – the great master of meditation (*taesŏnsa*) and the great master of doctrine (*taegyosa*)³⁰² –, were required to have more than twenty years’ worth of experiences of meditation retreat and to have completed not only more than four years of the required courses but also certain specified courses. The document clarified the rationale behind this newly added condition: Because a great master of meditation and a great master of doctrine who had completed the highest level of Buddhist practice were so significant in the Korean monastic community, they also had to dignify themselves through *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations.³⁰³

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 1122.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 1122-1123.

³⁰² Usually monks who belonged to the *sŏn* (meditation) division moved up the cleric ladder from *taesŏn* (大禪), to *chungdŏk* (中德) to *sŏnsa* (禪師) and, finally, to *taesŏnsa* (大禪師), the highest. In the *kyo* (doctrine) division, the ranking system began with *taesŏn* (大禪), moved through *chungdŏk* (中德) to *taedŏk* (大德) to *taegyosa* (大教師), the highest.

³⁰³ “Bōji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsuru jōkō,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō

This requirement, newly added to Article 65, might seem contradictory to other revised articles from which the requirement of *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations had been discarded. However, this revision in Article 65 exposes one of the anxieties of the colonial government during the revision process: The apprehension that Korean Buddhist communities, as well as the general public, might understand the colonial government's revision of the temple bylaws as a total disregard for both the *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts that had long been regarded as the most important Buddhist precepts in Korea. This revision of Article 65 gave the colonial government an excuse to rely on, the excuse that the temple bylaws were not intended to foster the spread of clerical marriage and meat-eating because, ultimately, it was Korean monks who decided whether or not to receive *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts. In short, the lifting of restrictions on clerical marriage and meat-eating was aimed at increasing the pool of head monk and abbot candidates and this newly added requirement for the two highest clerical ranks gave Korean clerics more options: both married monks and celibate monks could now run for head monk elections and could be appointed as abbots, but only celibate monks could make promotion to the highest clerical ranks. Through the revision process, the colonial government was able to evade responsibility for the ongoing spread of clerical marriage and meat-eating.

Oral Presentation about the Temple Bylaws Revision to the Head of the Bureau of Education

Two documents, “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen yōshi” (Summary of Oral presentation to Yi, the Head of the Bureau of Education) and “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen inyō kyūristu shōroku” (Excerpts from Old Monastic Rules in Oral Presentation to Yi, the Head of the Bureau of Education) that were written by the Department of Religion as part of the procedure to revise the temple bylaws clearly address the general view of the colonial government as pertains to the

chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken,” 1123.

monastic rules of traditional Korean Buddhism. “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen yōshi” (Summary of Oral presentation to Yi, the Head of the Bureau of Education) describes the historical foundation of the prohibition of clerical marriage during the Chosŏn period and its “approval” during the colonial period. It explains that the Criminal Code, the modern criminal law of the Korean Empire introduced in 1905, replaced the old national code of the Chosŏn, and, as a result, clerical marriage which had been prohibited under this Chosŏn code was no longer the concern of the national government.³⁰⁴ This document stated that under Japanese colonial rule, clerical marriage would be permitted among Korean Buddhist clerics, except for among *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* because their celibacy was a requirement of Buddhism.³⁰⁵ With regard to the revision of the temple bylaws, the document repeated the rationale: “However, considering the current circumstances of the Korean Buddhist community in which Korean monks were in reality not able to maintain the old monastic code any longer, as well as the current trend among Japanese Buddhist sects, we decided on a revision of the temple bylaws.”³⁰⁶ This pertained to Buddhist clerics who had not achieved *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* status. At the same time, the colonial government understood that if monks married after *bhikṣu* ordination, their *bhikṣu* ordination would be immediately nullified.

The second document, “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen inyō kyūristu shōroku” (Excerpt from Old Monastic Rules in Oral Presentation to Yi, the Head of the Bureau of Education) provides historical evidence of governmental concern over marriage of Buddhist clerics from the very early Chosŏn period to 1925, by extracting information from several historical sources – the

³⁰⁴ “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen yōshi,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken,” 1124.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 1124-1125.

Ming Code, the National Code of the Chosŏn dynasty, the Criminal Code of 1905, and Kitagawa Chikai's five agendas of 1925. Kitagawa Chikai, the chief abbot of the Vinaya sect of Japan, proposed the five agendas related to Buddhist monks' behavior code at the Second Conference of Asian Buddhism held in Tokyo in 1925. His five agendas were 1) Buddhists should observe each set of Buddhist rules designated to the seven different Buddhist groups (*bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, probationary nun, novice monk, novice nun, layman, and laywoman); 2) they should understand the significance of the three Buddhist disciplines (precepts, meditation, and wisdom); 3) they should harmonize the two dichotomous concepts (phenomena and principle), and hope to accomplish consonance of understanding and practice; 4) they should understand that equality and discrimination are two sides of the same coin, and 5) they should observe the clerical behavioral code in harmony with the Buddha's teaching.³⁰⁷ However, other than the third agenda emphasizing the harmonization of the two dichotomous concepts – phenomena versus principle, and understanding versus practice – none of the other agenda items were applied to the final revised temple bylaws. This may have been because the writer of this excerpt – possibly Watanabe Akira or some other hands-on officials in the Department of Religion – clearly understood that Kitagawa Chikai's agenda (except the third item) were hardly suitable to the monastic situation as it stood within Korean Buddhism. Nevertheless, this document included Kitagawa Chikai's agenda in order to emphasize that it referred not only to the old monastic rules but also to some assertions made by the chief abbot of the Japanese Vinaya sect Kitagawa Chikai, in the temple bylaws revision process.

On the other hand, these two documents contain contradictory rationale: Though they admit that, after 1905, when modern criminal law was introduced to Korea, clerical marriage was

³⁰⁷ “Yi Gakumukyokuchō kōen inyō kyūristu shōroku,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihōchū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken,” 1127-1128.

no longer under national supervision but strictly a religious matter, the colonial government still did not allow the Korean Buddhist community to establish their temple bylaws on their own terms but provided a standardized draft of the temple bylaws to thirty Buddhist parishes and required final approval. Thus, because Korean Buddhism did not have autonomy when the temple bylaws were formulated, celibacy was clearly still supervised by the government until 1926.

The temple bylaws – both original and revised – were nothing but compulsory regulations issued by the Japanese colonial government which, it can be argued, succeeded only in creating confusion about clerical marriage: The government insisted that clerical marriage had been permitted in the temple bylaws since 1912; yet most Korean monks believed that it had been prohibited and lifted only when the government revised the temple bylaws. This clear dissonance in the understanding of the temple bylaws between the colonial government and the Korean Buddhist community erupted when modern educated Buddhist intellectuals began to think about religious freedom and concluded that it should be separate from national supervision. At the same time, the colonial government had set up national supervision over all Buddhist affairs and, therefore, had to find an excuse that would allow it to evade its responsibility on issues related to monks' marriage and freedom. Thus, they argued that the government, in fact, never banned clerical marriage among Korean monks and nuns, not even in the early colonial period.

Report on the Official Tour to Japan

Yu Man'gyōm, the director of the Department of Religion, and Watanabe Akira, an official in the same department, went to Japan for a one-month official trip from January to February 1926 to examine the general view on clerical marriage among Japanese Buddhist sects.

They visited famous Buddhist temples: Horyuji, Yakushiji, Tōshōdaiji, Kōfukuji, and Tōdaiji in Nara; Kongōbuji of Kōyasan and Miidera in Wakayama Prefecture; Ryōkōji and Zōjōji in Tokyo; Enjōji, Miidera, and Enryakuji in Shiga Prefecture; Higashi Honganji and Nishi Honganji, Myōshinji in Hanazono, Sennyuji in Higashiyama, and Chionin, Chishakuin, Myōhōin, Hōkōji, and Nanzenji in Kyoto. In Tokyo, they also met with the government officials from the Ministry of Education. Based on this inspection tour, Watanabe Akira composed the report, “Nara, Wakayama, Tokyo, Siga, Kyoto, nifu sanken ka no shūkyō jō no shisatsu oyobi torishirabe fukumeisho” (Report on the Religious Inspectorate in Nara, Wakayama, Tokyo, Siga, and Kyoto).

The main purpose of this tour was not to decide whether to allow clerical marriage among head monks and abbots, but to observe what major concerns clerical marriage would bring about in the Korean monastic community and to prepare a countermeasure. Yu Man’gyōm and Watanabe Akira mentioned this in their report:

We talked with the head, the director, and the officials in the Bureau of Religion of the Ministry of Education of Japan about the matter of clerical marriage. It is our understanding that the government should not interfere in clerical marriage because clerical marriage is a matter of religious abstinence that each Japanese Buddhist sect should determine independently. Therefore, this same measure should be applied to clerical marriage within Korean Buddhism. The matter of clerical marriage should be entirely a matter of individual abstinence among Korean Buddhists.³⁰⁸

The report details concerns about the side effects of clerical marriage in Japanese Buddhism and what solutions might be available. These concerns were summarized in three points: 1) the maintenance of clerical dignity through the relationship between Buddhist clerics and affiliated

³⁰⁸ Yu Man’gyōm and Watanabe Akira, “Nara, Wakayama, Tokyo, Siga, Kyoto, nifu sanken ka no shūkyō jō no shisatsu oyobi torishirabe fukumeisho,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (May 10, 1926), 1147-1148.

temple followers; 2) the need for a supervisory tool to monitor inappropriate behavior among monks, and 3) oversight of whatever profits are generated from either donations made by affiliated temple followers or existing temple property.³⁰⁹

Yu and Watanabe noted that clerical marriage changed the relationship between Buddhist monks and the laity by effectively removing that important distinction between them. As an outgrowth of the legalization of marriage among Buddhist monks, another enormous change occurred in the monastic life style. Traditionally, Buddhist monks were not engaged in making money, relying, instead, on donations from the laity as their main source of income. However, once the Meiji government of Japan cleared the way for clerical marriage, Buddhist priests went into business in order to support their wives and children. This removed yet another distinction between the clergy and the laity. Yu and Watanabe express their concerns about such a development, writing;

We saw that most monks were affected by the practice of clerical marriage of the Shinshū. As a result, they neglected Buddhist precepts. They had wives or concubines and had jobs, and, except for the fact that Buddhist priests had short hair and robes, they were now not that different from ordinary people.³¹⁰

Secondly, the report said that the Japanese government no longer interfered in such aspects of the monastic code as clerical marriage and meat-eating. It states;

We would like to point out a couple of things we learned during this tour because we thought these were important for reference. When we visited a temple called Kōfukuji in Nara, we met a monk named Saeki and heard from him that clerical marriage should be not restricted [by the government]. Marriage and celibacy depend on nothing but the self-awareness of the individual monk. Based on this self-awareness, monks tend to avoid

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 1141-1145.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 1146-1147.

electing married monks as abbots although the electors themselves might be married monks.³¹¹

This report goes on to point out that Japanese Buddhism lacked any supervisory system regulating the behavior of monks and this lack caused monks to regard their behavioral code as trivial and not worth adhering to.³¹²

Watanabe and Yu worried that, if Korean Buddhism imitated the Japanese Buddhist practice of clerical marriage, a lack of proper regulations would have the same effect.³¹³ But their greatest concern in the matter of clerical marriage was the financial security of the Buddhist monasteries: “Japanese Buddhism distinguishes monks’ private property from the public property of the monastery. However, Korean Buddhism does not have these regulations, and they should be established so as not to reduce temple property.”³¹⁴ As for the protection of temple property from inappropriate use in the support of monks’ wives and children, the most egregious abusers were head monks and abbots. The report continues:

Although Japanese Buddhism attempted to prevent the waste of temple property through regulations of each sect and through temple bylaws, there have still been frequent breaches in which an abbot conspired with a representative of the lay people to profit from temple property.³¹⁵

In this report, Watanabe and Yu warned that Korean Buddhism had a more serious problem when it came to breaches in regulation because it had not set up financial transparency and some

³¹¹ Ibid., 1151-1152.

³¹² Ibid. 1150-1151.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 1156-1157.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 1157-1158.

abbots took out unsecured loans resulting in serious losses in temple property.³¹⁶ The report concludes that the colonial government would do well to revise the Temple Ordinance for the security of temple property. According to the Temple Ordinance, abbots had the responsibility of managing all temple property and of handling administration as representatives of the temple. The Temple Ordinance also prohibited the sale and trade of any temple property by abbots without prior approval from the Governor-General of Korea. Violation of these regulations would result in a two-year imprisonment and a five-hundred *wŏn* fine. Unfortunately, the Temple Ordinance did not have a specific restriction preventing an abbot or head monk from offering temple property as collateral for a loan, leaving this action open for abuse.

To put a stop to this misuse and in order to protect temple property from misuse, the report suggests that the government establish regulations that restrict the abbots' and head monks' power:

Although the Temple Ordinance prohibits any disposition of temple property, it lacks a regulation that prevents [head monks and abbots] from taking out unauthorized loans which would result in financial loss to the temple. Since these cases are increasing, the government should establish a specific regulation to protect temple property.³¹⁷

In addition, this report points out that it should be the duty of married monks to support their families with their own financial resources, not with temple property.³¹⁸ According to the Temple Ordinance and the temple bylaws, temple property should be used only for maintaining the three Buddhist treasures – the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Since monks' wives and

³¹⁶ Ibid. 1158-1159.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

children were not strictly members of the sangha, their living expenses could not be paid for by the temple but had to be paid for through the married monks' private income. The report states;

If clerical marriage is officially permitted without any specific regulations, monks will begin to have wives and children, and to spend temple property for their living expenses. This would increase the consumption of temple property which should be devoted solely to the three Buddhist treasures. Use of temple property in any other way betrays the true meaning of temple property and wastes it.³¹⁹

Unlike Korean Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism had a supervisory system in place to prevent married priests from misusing temple property to support their families.³²⁰ In the conclusion section of this report of their trip, Yu Man'gyōm and Watanabe Akira make the following recommendations, writing;

It is unavoidable that Korean monks and nuns are to be permitted to marry or adopt children like Japanese Buddhist priests. However, preventing monks and nuns from using temple property for living expenses for their wives and husbands is possible. In the same way that chief abbots and the government officials in Japan prevent Japanese Buddhist priests from wasting temple property and require married priests to support their families through their own efforts, a policy will have to be enacted in Korea that will prevent waste and dilapidation of temple property as a result of clerical marriage. The second most dangerous threat to the existence of the temple is liability for unauthorized debt. This too should be strictly regulated to make it impossible for individual monks to go into debt then expect their temple to take the responsibility to repay said debt.³²¹

It can be seen, then, that the greatest concern regarding the revision of the temple laws in Korean Buddhism was to prevent married monks from spending temple property to support their wives and children, and to prevent the misuse of temple property by abbots who might use the temple

³¹⁹ Ibid., 1160.

³²⁰ Ibid. 1161-1162.

³²¹ Ibid. So few sources exist that refer to marriage among nuns that this report stands out in its discussion of clerical marriage among monks and nuns equally. In addition, it makes mention of adoption among the Buddhist clergy. Neither Yu Man'gyōm nor Watanabe Akira fully realized the seriousness of this issue until 1926 when they began collecting household registers from head monk candidates. This matter will be closely examined in the last chapter.

property as collateral to take out personal loan, thus, jeopardizing the economic balance of the temple itself.

Yi Chinho's Telegram from Tokyo

It was Yi Chinho, the head of the Bureau of Education, who, through a telegram from Tokyo, issued the final official instruction regarding the revision of the temple bylaws.³²² In it, Yi suggested some corrections to the revised clauses in the temple bylaws, which had been drafted by officials in the Department of Religion. In his communication, Yi asked for two modifications: One, to use the sentence, “We understand this situation because they are unable to resist the pull of marriage and eating meat,” rather than “We want to maintain equivalence with every Buddhist sect in Japan” and the other, to wait to enact regulations about financial control of each temple until later, to make this regulation separate from the revision of the temple bylaws.³²³ Thus, the final official document which was sent to the governors of the provinces was modified in this way: “Unfortunately, Korean Buddhist monks are not able to maintain the old rules which state that they should use the precepts as the clerical behavior code. Nonetheless, we understand this situation because they are unable to resist the pull of marriage and eating meat.”³²⁴ Clearly Yi Chinho understood that Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism should be regarded as two religions, religions that had different traditions, institutions and financial resources.

³²² Yi Chinho, “Zaikyō kyokuchō, denpō,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (May 10, 1926), 1209-1211.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

For the purposes of financial control of each temple, the colonial government revised the Temple Ordinance and its Enforcement Regulations on June 10, 1929. Through the revision of the fifth and the sixth provisions of the Temple Ordinance, the government effectively prevented head monks and abbots from offering temple property as a guarantee and borrowing money without permission of the Governor-General.³²⁵ At the same time, the government modified the Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance through the addition of eight new provisions to the existing eight, for the same purpose of preventing head monks and abbots from disposing of temple property for personal profit.³²⁶ The revised Enforcement Regulations of the Temple Ordinance specified that each head temple and branch temple must report its yearly budget and yearly settlement to the government.³²⁷

The Colonial Government's Official Stance on Clerical Marriage

Through articles from the newspaper the *Maeil sinbo* and from the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo* (Jr. *Chōsen Bukkyō*), the official stance of the colonial government regarding the revision of the temple bylaws can easily be seen. In the May 21, 1926 edition of the daily *Maeil sinbo*, Yi Chinho, the head of the Bureau of Education, wrote his opinion entitled “P’agye kwŏnjang ūn anida sise e sunŭngk’e hal ppun” (Not to Recommend the Violation of the Precept, but to Conform to the Mainstream of the Current Circumstance) on the revision of the temple bylaws. Yi claimed that the legitimization of clerical marriage and meat-eating was not aimed at encouraging a violation of Buddhist precepts but at admitting the present monastic circumstances.

³²⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu, “Seirei” No. 9 (June 10, 1929) in *Ilche sidae pulgyo chŏngch’aek kwa hyŏnhwang: Chosŏn ch’ongdokbu kwanbo pulgyo kwallyŏn charyojip*, vol.1, 72.

³²⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu, “Chōsen Sōtokufu Rei” No. 52 (June 10, 1929), in *Ilche sidae pulgyo chŏngch’aek kwa hyŏnhwang: Chosŏn ch’ongdokbu kwanbo pulgyo kwallyŏn charyojip*, vol. 1, 73.

³²⁷ Ibid.

It [revision of the temple bylaws] is not to encourage the transgression of Buddhist precepts. We hope that faithful Buddhists will still observe the precepts. The revision is aimed at ensuring that there will still be head monk and abbot candidates, something which current temple bylaws fail to do.³²⁸

Articles written by Yu Man'gyōm and Watanabe Akira appear in the July 1926 edition of the monthly Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo* (Jr. *Chōsen Bukkyō*). What is interesting about them is that whole pages of Watanabe Akira's article entitled "Kokuhō to shūkyō seido to kankei" (Relationship between the National Law and Religious Regulations) are blank. Since bibliographic information, such as the title of the article, the name of the author (Watanabe Akira), and his place of employment are fully shown in the table of contents,³²⁹ it can be suggested that Watanabe's writing was deleted through censorship in the final printing because his personal opinion on clerical marriage was likely somehow different from the government's stance.

On the other hand, Yu Man'gyōm's article, "Shūkyō gyōsei no tachiba kara" (From the Perspective of Religious Administration) was published in full in the same edition. From this, it is suggested that Yu's opinion was consonant with the government's official stance regarding the lifting of limitations on married monks. Yu Man'gyōm delineates four points regarding clerical marriage. First, he mentions that clerical marriage should be understood as a matter of personal freedom and something that should be beyond the scope of governmental intervention:

From the perspective of Buddhist morals, monks ought to obey precepts. However, from the perspective of religious administration, if the majority of monks who have neglected precepts and have wives claim for a revision of the temple bylaws, the government cannot help but accede to their demand. In short, as having a religion depends on personal

³²⁸ Yi Chinho, "P'agye kwōnjang ūn anida sise e sunūngk'e hal ppun," *Maeil sinbo*, May 21, 1926.

³²⁹ Watanabe Akira, "Kokuhō to shūkyō seido to kankei," *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July, 1926), 8-10.

freedom, religious regulations are no more than religious morals in the Buddhist sects. Therefore, the law cannot order the modification or abolition of religious morals.³³⁰

Second, Yu maintains that Korean Buddhism, like other religions such as Japanese Buddhism and Protestantism, should keep up with the times by permitting clerical marriage and playing a role in the edification of the masses.³³¹ He goes on to suggest that, from a strictly humanitarian perspective, nonmarital children should be legitimized through official recognition of clerical marriage.³³² Third, he says that those who strictly obey the precepts will gain the respect of other Buddhists: “If a monk observes the pure precepts, he will be respected as a gem is discriminated from pebbles.”³³³ As fourth and last, he asserted that Korean Buddhism should concentrate on training promising young monks to guide moral justice among the masses.³³⁴ As the director of the Department of Religion, Yu echoed the official rhetoric of the colonial government, supporting the government’s retreat from meddling in religious morals and its rescinding of the ban on clerical marriage in compliance with the Korean monks’ request. Thus, unlike Watanabe’s censored report, Yu’s article was published intact.

Conclusion

One of the most debatable issues related to clerical marriage is when and why clerical marriage spread so widely throughout the Korean Buddhist clerical community. Most contemporary Korean Buddhists as well as scholars of Korean Buddhism blame colonial

³³⁰ Yu Man’gyōm, “Shūkyō gyōsei no tachiba kara,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July, 1926), 31

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., 32.

³³⁴ Ibid.

Buddhist policies for this situation. Still others attribute the proliferation to young student-monks who had studied in Japan and observed this convention there. I argue that it was the head monks who saw the necessity of lifting the restrictions on married monks partly because fully one fourth of all head monks were already married at that time and partly because the head monks had to increase the number of monks eligible to run for head monk or abbot status. You will recall that the original temple bylaws prohibited married monks from running for the position of head monks and from being appointed as abbots. However, in reality, against temple bylaws, clerical marriage was already being practiced widely, even among *bhikṣu*, and monks had already found and exploited loopholes in the temple bylaws by marrying after receiving *bhikṣu* precepts and hiding their marriage. In addition, some unqualified monks were ordained as *bhikṣu* solely to strengthen factional power in head monk elections. Head monks saw the wisdom in a revision of the temple bylaws that would remove the need to be covert and, concomitantly, increase their power. Because the colonial government acknowledged the widespread existence of clerical marriage they were amenable to revising some clauses in the temple bylaws. It can be said that the revision of the temple bylaws in 1926 was a product of the mutual agreement between head monks and the colonial government.

The government's revision of the temple bylaws, however, was soon followed by a division within the entire Korean Buddhist community. On one hand, clerical marriage had been the elephant in the room during the early colonial period; it was there but no one mentioned it; on the other hand, on the heels of increased freedom of expression in the 1920s, Buddhist intellectuals and monks began openly discussing its pros and cons. The two sides of this issue will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEBATE OVER CLERICAL MARRIAGE

Introduction

When, in 1926, the colonial government announced the revision in the temple bylaws – specifically, the lifting of restrictions on married monks – the majority of Korean Buddhists interpreted it as meaning that clerical marriage was now officially permitted among Korean Buddhist clerics. Although clerical marriage had spread among full-fledged monks as well as among file-and-rank monks in the 1920s, monks married covertly and hid their marriages from the public because some of them felt guilty about not observing the precept of celibacy and others felt fear that they had violated the temple bylaws. The revision in the temple bylaws lifted the taboo on clerical marriage and allowed it to emerge in the public realm of colonial Buddhism. Because of this, Korean Buddhists began to think more about personal freedom, monastic rules, and government intervention in these rules.

Not surprisingly, this controversial revision provoked huge debates over clerical marriage and split the whole Korean Buddhist community into two groups: pro-clerical marriage and anti-clerical marriage. Kim Sunsŏk, a Korean Buddhist scholar, maintains that the cultural policy launched by the colonial government after the March First Movement of 1919 was, in fact, a deliberate attempt to divide the Korean Buddhist community.³³⁵ This so-called “divide and rule” policy allowed a certain amount of cultural and social freedom among the colonized while, at the same time, arousing conflict and antagonism among them. Kim Sunsŏk argues that the Japanese colonial government’s intentional scheme to incite internal strife over the issue of

³³⁵ Kim Sunsŏk, *Ilche sidae chosŏn ch’ongdokbu ūi pulgyo chŏngch’aek kwa pulgyogyŏ ūi panŭng*, 100.

clerical marriage among Korean clerics continued after liberation from Japanese rule in 1945 and carried over to the Buddhist purification movement between the married monks' faction and the celibate monk's faction in the 1950s and 1960s.³³⁶

In this chapter, I will look at various opinions on clerical marriage from the early 1910s to 1926, examining not only notable examples, such as Han Yongun's pro-clerical marriage view or Paek Yongsŏng's anti-clerical marriage stance but also the opinions of ordinary Korean monks as well as Japanese Buddhist missionaries. I will use the *Chōsen Bukkyō* (Kr. *Chosŏn pulgyo*), a Buddhist magazine whose articles in 1926 clearly show what rationales Korean monks used to support their arguments for and against this institution. By examining and comparing these arguments, I will explore how the concept of "monastic rules" changed among Korean Buddhist clergy during this time.

Advocates for Clerical Marriage Prior to the Revision in the Temple Bylaws

Han Yongun's Argument in Favor of Clerical Marriage

The first one who spoke up publically for clerical marriage in the modern era was the Korean intellectual named Ko Yŏngp'yo who returned to Korea after studying Police Affairs at Meiji University in Tokyo. In January 1907, he made a speech about the role of Buddhist clerics in modern Korean society at Pongwŏnsa in Seoul.³³⁷ In his speech, Ko said that the most important task for a civilized society was population growth, something he believed to be directly related to the growth of national power. To this end, he asserted that Buddhist clerics

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Pongwŏnsa was a temple in which Yi Tongin (1849-1881), the Korean monk and diplomat, had lived. Yi was also an Enlightenment thinker who was actively involved in the Enlightenment Movement during the late Chosŏn period. From this it can be suggested that it was likely that Pongwŏnsa was used as a place for intellectuals to display their thoughts through public speaking.

should marry and have children.³³⁸ Some Buddhists criticized Ko's position, arguing that monks should be celibate because celibacy was the most important precept, the precept, in fact, that promised wisdom.³³⁹ Also in July 1907, three government officials, Yun Sökchun, Yi Hwayöng, and Yi Minsöl submitted a petition regarding the necessity of lifting the ban against clerical marriage to the Privy Council (*Chungch'uwön*).³⁴⁰ As their rationale, they maintained that, because the family was a basic unit of society, monks and nuns should marry in order to form families.³⁴¹ Although the Korean government dismissed their petition,³⁴² these two arguments in favor of clerical marriage revealed that Korean intellectuals had begun to connect clerical marriage with modern society.

The most famous advocate for clerical marriage was Han Yongun who made a strong argument for reformation of Korean Buddhism in his book *Chosön pulgyo yusinnon* (Treatise on the Reformation of Korean Buddhism) published in 1913. Han Yongun (1879-1944) was the most well-known Korean monk, poet and independence activist against Japanese colonial rule. In 1908, he studied at Myöngjin School in Seoul, the first modern Buddhist school, and in the same year, traveled to Japan and studied there for six months. He sent a petition for clerical marriage to the Privy Council in May 1910, and another to the Office of the Japanese Resident-General in September 1910. After receiving Han's petition, the Privy Council discussed giving official permission for clerical marriage,³⁴³ but the Office of the Resident-General did not make a final

³³⁸ *Taehan maeil sinbo*, January 18, 1907.

³³⁹ *Taehan maeil sinbo*, January 30, 1907.

³⁴⁰ *Taehan maeil sinbo*, July 21, 1907.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *Hwangsöng sinmun*, August 20, 1907.

³⁴³ *Hwangsöng sinmun*, May 17, 1910.

decision about it. Han's second petition, submitted after Japan's annexation of Korea, did not receive any response. Three years later, Han reasserted the importance of clerical marriage in his book *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon*. This book was the first to stress the necessity of the reformation and revitalization of Korean Buddhism during the colonial period. His book also included his two previous petitions supporting the lifting of the prohibition on clerical marriage.

Given that his position in Korean Buddhism was prominent during the colonial period, and even more highly evaluated after liberation, Han's pro-clerical marriage stance puzzled most Korean Buddhist scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries who maintained a one-sided view that clerical marriage among Korean monks during the colonial period was influenced by the colonial government's Buddhist policy. It is well known that, after liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the history of colonial Buddhism was reconstructed by scholars who share the same view as the Chogyŏ Order, the Buddhist order with the largest number of celibate monks. Some scholars criticized Han's book *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon*, saying that it lacked anti-Japanese consciousness, and that his pro-clerical marriage argument ultimately assisted Japanese colonial rule in the early colonial period.³⁴⁴ However, when Han Yongun drafted this book in 1910, it was hard to find any nationalistic sentiment against Japanese colonial rule among Korean Buddhist intellectuals, including Han himself. Moreover, Han's stance on the issue of clerical marriage was not a simple pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese matter; his zeal for Buddhist reformation based on his Social Darwinian approach is part and parcel of this stance.

In his *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon*, Han acknowledged that Korean Buddhism should be changed in order to fit into modern society. In the chapter entitled "The Reformation of Buddhism Begins with Destruction," he defined Buddhist reformation as the destruction of the

³⁴⁴ Kim Ch'angsuk, 128; Sorensen, 133.

old customs and the construction of a new form of Buddhism.³⁴⁵ He argued that Buddhism was threatened by Western religions and Buddhist reformation must arise from the understanding of this danger to Korean Buddhism. To this end, he suggested that the first reformation that should be applied to Korean Buddhism was the social acceptance of clerical marriage. In the chapter entitled “Deliberation on the Future of Buddhism and Clerical Marriage,” he went on to say that clerical marriage would not, as many feared, ruin Buddhism for the simple reason that the most important realm among four realms of reality in Huayan (Kr. Hwaŏm) philosophy and indeed, the core concept of Mahayana Buddhism was the realm of “non-obstruction among individual phenomena.” In other words, the ultimate truth of the Buddha is not obstructed by the violation of precepts. For example, the seven Buddhas – Śākyamuni, Vipāśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa – all married and had children, but their marriages never hindered them from achieving Buddhahood. Drawing on this, Han Yongun suggested that it was high time to permit clerical marriage for the survival of Buddhism. Han believed that, if it turned out that clerical marriage was not a good fit for Buddhism, there would be time to prohibit it once this was known.³⁴⁶

More specifically, Han explains the importance of clerical marriage in four points: First, prohibition of marriage goes against filial piety, the most important value in Korean society, in that not having a child who can carry on the family lineage is a great sin against both the ancestors and the parents; second, it is harmful to the state, as all civilized states undoubtedly give the freedom to marry; third, prohibition does nothing to preserve the practice of Buddhism because few people are interested in the old-fashioned Buddhist precept that prohibits clerical

³⁴⁵ Han Yongun, 34.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 111.

marriage, and, fourth, prohibition of marriage is detrimental to the attainment of spiritual enlightenment because sexual desire is stronger when denied expression.³⁴⁷ Han further stressed that clerical marriage should be considered one of choices that monks could make for better practice.

It can be clearly seen that Han's argument for clerical marriage has a multi-layered rationale: Huayan thought, Confucian values, the concept of spiritual enlightenment, and the theory of Social Darwinism, a philosophy Han learned from the *Yinbingshi Wenji* (Literary Works from the Ice-drinker's Studio) written in 1903 by the Chinese thinker and writer Liang Qichao (1873-1929).³⁴⁸ Liang Qichao wrote that China, in order to survive in a competitive world, should strengthen itself through the construction of a strong modern nation-state. Along with other Korean enlightenment thinkers, such as Yu Kilchun (1856-1914) and Kim Okkyun (1851-1894), Han utilized Liang's theory to support his argument for Buddhist reformation. Whereas European powers utilized Social Darwinism to justify their imperialism through stressing their racial superiority, Asian intellectuals, such as the Japanese politician Kato Hiroyuki (1836-1916) and the Chinese writer Liang Qichao, used this theory as a way to promote self-strengthening within their nations.

Interestingly, Liang Qichao's thought was influenced by Inoue Enryō (1858-1919), the Japanese Jōdoshinshū priest who learned Social Darwinism from Edward S. Morse (1838-1925)

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 111-114.

³⁴⁸ Kim Sunsök, "Han Yongun kwa Paek Yongsōng ūi kŭndae pulgyo kaehyōngnon pigyo yŏn'gu"; Ryu Sŭngju, "Sahoe chinhwaron ūi suyong kwa *Chosŏn pulgyo yusinnon*: Han Yongun ūi pulgyojōk sahoe chinhwaron," *Wŏnpulgyo sasang kwa chonggyo munhwa* 41 (2009); Vladimir Tiknonov, "Social Darwinism in Korea and Its Influence on Early Modern Korean Buddhism," *International Journal of Korean History* 2 (2001); Kim Cheran, "Han chung il kŭndae pulgyo ūi sahoe chinhwaron kwa taeŭng yangsik pigyo: tongasia pulgyo ūi sahoe chinhwaron suyong kwa pip'an ūi tu hŭrŭm," *Sidae wa ch'ŏrhak* 21, no. 2 (2010).

and Ernest F. Fenollosa (1853-1908), both professors at Tokyo Imperial University.³⁴⁹ Inoue Enryō argued that Buddhism would not be able to compete with Christianity, and went on to say that unqualified elements within a new advanced society would disappear and only the fittest would survive: he considered old-fashioned Buddhism to be such an unqualified element and asserted that Buddhist celibacy, anti-modern and anti-scientific practice, had to be discarded if Buddhism wished to evolve and survive.³⁵⁰ In a letter entitled “Saitai kinseishū shoshi ni nozomu” (My Hopes for Buddhist Priests Whose Sects Prohibit Clerical Marriage) written in 1890, Inoue wrote that the overall quality of Buddhist priests who belonged to the sects that prohibited clerical marriage had deteriorated during the Meiji period because people hesitated to join these sects as clerics due to the celibacy requirement. In addition, based on his belief in Social Darwinism, Inoue argued that it was necessary to examine the family history of the ordinands for positive eugenics in order to ensure that they would become good Buddhist priests.³⁵¹ As one of the leading priests of the Jōdoshinshū, a Japanese Buddhist sect that originally allowed clerical marriage, Inoue Enryō asserted that other Buddhist sects in Japan should permit clerical marriage in order to compete with Western religions and, moreover, he claimed that priests should be selected from among those who had a good family history to improve the qualities of Japanese Buddhist priests.

Early in the twentieth-century, Japanese and Chinese intellectuals utilized Social Darwinism to develop the Chinese self-strengthening movement and Japanese imperialism. Within this framework, they associated the issue of clerical marriage, the most private subject in

³⁴⁹ Kim Cheran, 120.

³⁵⁰ Jaffe, *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, 210.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

the realm of monastic rules, with one of the tasks related to Buddhist modernization. Han Yongun also utilized this Social Darwinian approach in the matter of clerical marriage among Korean monks. However, unlike the developed discourse about clerical marriage in Japan, Han's proposal for clerical marriage was not responded to or taken up by anyone. As can be seen in the previous chapters, Han himself was a core member of the Imjejong, the Korean Buddhist sect founded in 1911, which was supported by young and progressive Buddhists. Interestingly, no one publicly supported or criticized him.³⁵² It can be suggested that his assertion about Buddhist reformation and clerical marriage was simply premature because the early 1910s was a time when Korean Buddhists were occupied in adjusting themselves to new monastic rules handed down by the Japanese colonial government, rules aimed at the effective control of the entire Korean monastic community instead of a reformation which would entail drastic changes such as official permission for clerical marriage. Although most scholars pay attention to Han Yongun as a notable advocate for clerical marriage in present day scholarship of Korean Buddhism, Han's impact on the pro-clerical marriage argument was deemed trivial during the colonial period: Not only did it fail to produce any widespread support in the 1910s, but it also was not used in the 1926 debate.

Other Advocates for Clerical Marriage

There were other monks who agreed with the necessity of lifting the ban on married monks. The first example is Kim Chŏnghae, the monk of the Yongjusa temple, who claimed a relationship between clerical marriage and Buddhist modernization. That he made his argument about this issue while studying at Sōtōshū University (Komazawa University now) in 1914 is evidence that he was influenced by Japanese Buddhism. In 1914, one year after his arrival in

³⁵² Chŏng Kwangho, 110-111.

Tokyo, he wrote an essay about clerical marriage for the daily newspaper *Maeil sinbo*, saying that Korean monks had a responsibility as citizens for improving society just as Japanese Buddhist priests did.³⁵³ He criticized Korean monks for concealing their clerical marriages and pretending to be celibate, arguing that their covert marriages disrupted the social order.³⁵⁴ He also compared Korean monks to Japanese Buddhist priests, such as Nanjō Bunyū (1849-1927) and Murakami Senjō (1851-1929) of the Jōdoshinshū, who, despite their marriages, enjoyed higher social status than Korean monks.³⁵⁵

Several months after Kim Chŏnghae's essay appeared, Kim Sŏngyul, a friend of his who was also a monk, wrote an essay for the same newspaper asserting that Kim Chŏnghae was a Buddhist intellectual who was responsible for revitalizing Korean Buddhism.³⁵⁶ Although Kim Sŏngyul showed considerable support of Kim Chŏnghae's role as a Buddhist intellectual in general, Kim Sŏngyul did not say anything that specifically backed up Kim Chŏnghae's pro-clerical marriage stance. It seems that Kim Sŏngyul did not want to express openly his own opinion about such a controversial issue. As in the case of Han Yongun, Kim Chŏnghae's essay did not gain popular support or social agreement with pro-clerical marriage. Korean society in the early 1910s did not provide an atmosphere conducive to the open discussion of the issue of clerical marriage since it was not condoned by the traditional monastic rules of Korean Buddhism.

³⁵³ *Maeil sinbo*, July 16, 1914.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ These two Buddhist priests and scholars Nanjō Bunyū and Murakami Senjō visited Korea with Ōtani Koen (1875-1943), the abbot of Higashi Honganji, in 1917.

³⁵⁶ *Maeil sinbo*, January 14, 1915.

After returning to Korea in 1918, Kim Chŏnghae became a symbol of the modern-educated monk. He reached the highest peak of his clerical career when, in 1922, he became head monk of Chŏndŭngsa, the head temple of Kyŏnggi province. Sadly, he was dismissed from his position in 1928 on charges of misappropriation of temple property, falsification of his resume, and concealment of his marriage.³⁵⁷ Although Kim Chŏnghae asserted that clerical marriage should be permitted in order to prevent covert marriage among monks, he himself hid his marriage from both his colleague-monks and laypeople. Although he confessed that he concealed his marriage because he felt shame,³⁵⁸ it might be clearly suggested that he hid it because clerical marriage was not permitted among head monks and abbots.

The most eccentric pro-clerical argument in the 1910s is attributed to Kang Taeryŏn, head monk of Yongjusa, the head temple of Kyŏnggi province, between 1911 to 1942. As a head monk, he was influential enough to be elected chairperson of the Korean Buddhist head monks' council from 1915 to 1917. In November 1919, Kang submitted a proposal to the new Japanese Governor-General Saitō Makoto.³⁵⁹ In this proposal that he made three suggestions he believed would better the future of Korean Buddhism, one of which was to allow intermarriage between Korean monks and Japanese women, and between Korean women and Japanese Buddhist priests. It states;

Every Korean monk belongs to the Sŏn sect. Korean and Japanese monks who belong to the Sŏn sect do not have wives and do not eat meat because marriage and meat-eating are violations of the precepts. On the other hand, Japanese monks in high positions in the Nishi Honganji and the Higashi Honganji marry women who were born into the royal family. Their marriage makes it possible to have a close relationship between Buddhism

³⁵⁷ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (March 17 1928).

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Kang Taeryŏn, “Pulgyo kigwan hwakchang kōnūisō,” *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 20 (March 1920), 2.

and the imperial family.³⁶⁰

He went on to suggest two specific ways to promote Buddhist influence on Korean society, namely, intermarriage between Japanese Buddhist priests of Jōdoshinshū and Korean women, and between Korean monks and Japanese highborn women.

If Japanese priests of the Nishi Honganji and the Higashi Honganji except the chief abbots would have a marital relationship with Korean women who are from the royal family, aristocracy, or commoners, it would be the first accomplishment of Buddhist consolidation. If Korean men from the royal family or aristocracy would become Buddhist monks and have a marital relationship with Japanese women who are also from the royal family or aristocracy, it would be the second accomplishment of Buddhist consolidation. If Japanese and Korean monks preach Buddhist teaching to each other by using the same language and thereby achieve enlightenment, it would be the third accomplishment of Buddhist consolidation.³⁶¹

Kang Taeryŏn's position on clerical marriage was likely influenced by his visit to Japan and his contact with Japanese Buddhist priests. When several Korean Buddhists visited Japan on an inspection tour in 1917, he was among their members. In addition, he kept frequent contact with Japanese Buddhist priests, such as Nanjō Bunyū and Murakami Senjō of Honganji. As the encounters between Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism increased, more and more Korean monks based their pro-clerical marriage claims on their observation of the practice in Japanese Buddhism. Early proposals by pro-clerical marriage discussants conveyed Korean monks' envy of this practice in Japanese Buddhism and their impatience to imitate it. Disappointingly, the colonial government did not respond to Kang's proposal on intermarriage because it did not want Korean Buddhists to get political support through intermarriage, support that could put it beyond its control.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

Early advocates for clerical marriage were influenced by Social Darwinism and Japanese Buddhism. The 1920s, however, were witness to some changes in pro-clerical marriage rationales. These changes were based on the reality of the lives that Korean monks lived at the time. As the Korean monk Yi Chiyŏng wrote in the Buddhist magazine *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo*, the changing relationship between a master-monk and his disciple monks was the most urgent problem of Korean Buddhism of the time and, in his opinion, clerical marriage was the clear solution.

Yi Chiyŏng's proposal for the development of Korean Buddhism comprises five issues: a centralized Buddhist organization, a Buddhist education policy, improvement in Buddhist propagation, resolution of financial issues of temples, and the population of the Buddhist clergy.³⁶² With regard to the last issue, Yi Chiyŏng lamented that if the number of monks continued to decrease annually, there would not be a single monk left fifty or one hundred years hence. According to his analysis, the decrease in the monk population was due to a recent phenomenon: Old monks who were hesitant to take novice monks for disciples.³⁶³ The reason for this hesitation was financial: Novice monks asked their master monks to bankroll their modern Buddhist education including, sometimes, study abroad. To make matters worse, some young monks left the sangha soon after completing their studies and returned to the secular life. This behavior frustrated their master monks who had supported them financially for several years.

In the Korean Buddhist tradition, the relationship between master monk and disciple monk is important and heavily interdependent. The master monk educates the disciples, and in

³⁶² Yi Chiyŏng, "Pando pulgyo changnae e taehan kwan'gyŏn," *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 22 (January 1921).

³⁶³ Ibid., 39.

return the disciples care for their old master monk. Their relationship is similar to that of father and son in a secular family. When a master monk dies, his senior disciple wears mourning for three years, inherits the property of his master monk – including farmland – and holds an annual memorial service for the deceased monk in the same way that the oldest son does for his deceased father.³⁶⁴ The task of conducting a memorial service and the inheritance of farmland are especially important parts of the Buddhist monastery tradition. However, the modern education system of the early twentieth century created a dilemma for middle-aged monks. Accepting novice monks as disciples came with a rather serious financial burden but, not accepting them might result in loneliness in their senescence. After some monks had been abandoned by their disciples, they began to feel that it was useless to foster someone else's children. From this feeling of despair, Yi Chiyǒng developed his solution: Monks should have their own children and take them as disciples. He writes;

The system of master-disciple relationship should be reformed. Korean Buddhism should have the same system as the Jōdoshinshū has in Japan. If monks have their own children, they could do their best for education of their children. If monks do not want to have wives and children, they could adopt their relatives' sons and make them their disciples. If they don't have sons from any relatives, they could adopt someone else's sons. Consequently, a new Buddhism would arise with this new system.³⁶⁵

Yi Chiyǒng saw the inevitable necessity for clerical marriage and argued for it in a sympathetic and desperate tone. Compared to other advocates for clerical marriage in the 1910s, Yi Chiyǒng's argument seems more persuasive because he understood the very real problem facing Korean monks, one that might bring about a crisis in Korean Buddhism. For this reason, monks began to confront the necessity of changing monastic rules.

³⁶⁴ Chōsen Sōtokufu Chūsūin, “Jōsa no mibun no kansuru ken” (January 31, 1930).

³⁶⁵ Yi Chiyǒng, 30.

Since the issue of clerical marriage had remained in the private realm until the government announcement of the revision of the temple bylaws in 1926, only a few monks – Kim Chŏnghae, Han Yongun, Kang Taeryŏn and Yi Chiyŏng – argued for clerical marriage in public forums such as newspapers, Buddhist magazines, or a book of his own authorship. They asserted that Korean Buddhism should permit clerical marriage for the sake of an advanced and modernized society, basing their arguments on their stays in Japan and their encounter with Japanese Buddhist priests. In this sense, they adopted a similar rationale as Japanese Buddhist intellectuals in the early Meiji period who urged all Japanese Buddhist sects to allow clerical marriage for their priests. Yet, when clerical marriage spread among Korean monks in the early 1920s, the main motivation behind it ended up being totally different from what these men advocated because, as the monk Yi Chiyŏng observed, the overall atmosphere of the Korean monastic community had changed.

Debate on the Issue of Clerical Marriage in 1926

Paek Yongsŏng's Petition

In 1926, the colonial government finally decided to lift limitations on those who married and ate meat from the temple bylaws. The government realized that it would be difficult to find head monk candidates without this revision due to the spread of clerical marriage among full-fledged monks. Not surprisingly, right after the government announced its decision, the Korean monastic community divided itself into two camps: the pros and the cons. The renowned Korean monk Paek Yongsŏng (1864-1940) became the central figure opposed to this revision. Paek, along with Han Yongun, was the most distinguished nationalistic activist to participate in the March First Movement against Japanese colonial rule in 1919. As a Sŏn master in 1925, he also

formed the “Hwalgu ch’amsŏnhoe” (Society for Meditation), dedicated to Buddhist meditation retreats at Mangwŏlsa, and he also organized the “Samjang hakhoe” (Society of the Tripiṭaka) to translate sutras written in classical Chinese into vernacular Korean.³⁶⁶ In addition, he was a famous preceptor whose ordination lineage was transmitted through his preceptor Sŏn’gok at Pŏmŏsa.³⁶⁷ As one of the renowned preceptors of his time, Paek realized that an increase in clerical marriage might disrupt the traditional values of Korean Buddhism and might also cause a crisis in the maintenance of *vinaya* rules within the Korean monastic community.

In May 1926, Paek, along with one hundred twenty-seven of his supporters, presented a petition regarding the revision in the temple bylaws to the colonial government. It was his reputation within the Buddhist reform movement that made him capable of collecting so many signatures. It is worth looking at his petition because it ignited a three-month-long debate over clerical marriage in the Buddhist magazine *Chōsen Bukkyō* (Kr. *Chosŏn pulgyo*) between July and August 1926. In his petition entitled “Sōryo nikujiki saitai mondai ni kansuru tanganso” (Petition against the Issue of Meat-Eating and Clerical Marriage), Paek explained his reasons for believing that Korean monks should continue to observe celibacy. He also proposed an alternative plan that would allow for the co-existence of married and celibate monks. His argument went like this: The four different Buddhist groups – *upāsaka* (male laypeople), *upāsikā* (female laypeople), *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* – should obey their own assigned precepts, and since celibacy was the core precept among precepts for *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī*, married monks obviously degraded Korean Buddhism.³⁶⁸ He states;

³⁶⁶ *Pulgyo* 23 (May 1926), 58.

³⁶⁷ Yi Chigwan, *Han’guk pulgyo kyeyul chŏnt’ong*, 179 and 443.

³⁶⁸ Paek Yongsŏng, “Sōryo nikujiki saitai mondai ni kansuru tanganso,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 33.

Those who violate the precepts that prohibit meat-eating and clerical marriage should be expelled from the sangha and laicized. ... Married monks pollute the pure Buddhist rule, transform temples into the cave of *māra* [demon] and ignore the essence of Buddhist clergy.³⁶⁹

Paek blamed the increase in clerical marriage for bringing about the corruption of temples because, as he saw it, married monks seized power in the temple. Despite his dogmatic stance on clerical marriage, he did not demand the total elimination of married monks from the temples, nor did he demand the recanting of the revision in the temple bylaws related to clerical marriage. Rather, he faced up to the reality of the spread of clerical marriage among Korean monks and suggested a different route. He wrote;

Celibate monks should be given a few head temples so as to observe the precepts and practice the Way of Buddhism. This alternative plan is designed to separate celibate monks from married monks which would make it clear that the general public and the government officials recognize who are married and who are strict adherents to the core precepts.³⁷⁰

As it stood, celibate monks, married monks and married monks' families intermingled in the same temple, something Paek regarded as problematic. Although married monks' families, including wives and children, were not permitted to reside in temples according to the temple bylaws, some temples, such as Pongŭnsa, the head temple of Kyŏnggi province, did not follow this rule strictly. Paek understood that celibate monks needed their own territory in order to maintain their celibacy and isolate themselves from other "polluted," i.e. married monks. In this way, the power struggle over head temples between married monks and celibate monks began with Paek Yongsŏng's petition. In fact, his petition became the symbolic starting line for the internal strife between the two factions – a conflict which continued long after the August 1945

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

liberation from Japan through the Buddhist Purification Movement of the 1950s and the 1960s. Celibate monks who participated in the Buddhist Purification Movement regarded Paek Yongsŏng's petition as the origin of the movement, and justified their right to take over major temples that used to belong to married monks.³⁷¹

Interestingly, Buddhist intellectuals, as well as reporters for newspapers and magazines who agreed with the revision in the temple bylaws, condemned Paek for what they deemed his short-sighted view of Korean Buddhism. They considered Paek Yongsŏng and his followers outmoded adherents of traditional Buddhist rules not because Paek and his followers opposed clerical marriage but because they made a request to the government instead of trying to address the issue within the Buddhist community itself. Thus, the issue of freedom of religion that should be separate from government control emerged on the surface in Korean society in tandem with the debate over clerical marriage:

More than one hundred Korean monks petitioned the Japanese Governor-General to prohibit clerical marriage and meat-eating. To marry and eat meat or not to is a personal matter and not one that concerns the government. Has the government ever ordered monks not to marry or eat meat? If they really want to oppose clerical marriage and meat-eating, they had better pray to the Buddha to punish those monks who are married and eat meat.³⁷²

This excerpt from an essay that appeared in the *Kaebŏk*, a magazine published by the Korean indigenous new religion Ch'öndogyo between 1920 to 1926, contended that Paek attempted to solve the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating by asking for government intervention. However, it wasn't only opponents of clerical marriage – including Paek Yongsŏng – who asked for government intervention in the matter of monastic rules. Advocates of clerical marriage –

³⁷¹ Kim Kwangsik, "Yongsŏng ūi kŏnbaeksŏ wa taech'ŏ sigyuk ūi chaeinsik," 216.

³⁷² Chŏm ku saeng, "Kyŏngsŏng chaphwa," *Kaebŏk* 70 (June 1, 1926), 95.

including head monks – did so as well. It was the policy to control all Buddhist matters ranging from financial issues to monastic rules through government-issued Buddhist regulations. In this way, Paek’s petition was significant in that it acted as a catalyst making the entire Korean Buddhist community re-think the relationship between religious ethics and the government control.³⁷³

The Debate over Clerical Marriage in the Chōsen Bukkyō in 1926

At the time when Korean Buddhists were confused by the news that clerical marriage and meat-eating were permitted to all Buddhist clerics through the revision in the temple bylaws in 1926, there existed three Korean Buddhist magazines: the *Pulgyo*, the *Chōsen Bukkyō*³⁷⁴ and the *Kūmgangjō*. The *Pulgyo* was the primary Buddhist magazine in the delivery of the news of the Korean monastic community as well as reports about any new Buddhist policies of the colonial government, and yet, except for one essay written by Paek Sōnguk (1897-1981) – a Korean Buddhist intellectual who studied in Germany and returned in 1925, and the most promising young monk at that time –, the magazine made no mention of clerical marriage. The *Kūmgangjō*, a magazine published by a group of young Korean monks who had studied in Japan, also failed to address this issue. Only the *Chōsen Bukkyō*, a magazine that was published by the pro-Japanese organization called “Chosōn pulgyodan” (Corps of Korean Buddhism) and supported by Japanese and Korean politicians, chose to cover the revision in the temple bylaws and did so from July to September 1926 in three consecutive issues. It seems that the *Pulgyo*, which was

³⁷³ It is interesting to note that Paek’s petition did not receive any positive response from the government. In addition to it, another petition against clerical marriage and meat-eating was submitted to the government which, according to the Korean monk Kim Songwōl, was proposed by a man named Im Kyōngwōn. Unfortunately, there is no further information about who Im Kyōngwōn was and what he wrote in his petition. See Kim Songwōl, “Chōsen Bukkyō sōryo no hakaiteki undō,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 17.

³⁷⁴ I romanized the title of this magazine in Japanese because it was mostly written in Japanese.

published by the head monks' council, simply did not feel free to discuss this issue because it was the head monks who proposed the necessity of the revision in the temple bylaws to the colonial government. As for the *Kūmgangjō*: It was published by young Buddhist student-monks studying in Japan who were criticized for violating the precept of celibacy as soon as they arrived in Japan. Like head monks, editors of this magazine did not feel free to address the issue of clerical marriage because it might exacerbate their bad reputation.

In comparison to the compromised position occupied by both the *Pulgyo* and the *Kūmgangjō*, the *Chōsen Bukkyō* was free to publish what it liked because it was not directly involved in this issue. In addition, as its editor as well as its readers were Japanese or pro-Japanese Buddhists, it had to support government policy regarding the revision in the temple bylaws. Therefore, in June 1926, the *Chōsen Bukkyō* published a call for opinions on the controversial topics, from which the following excerpt is taken.

Traditionally, head monks in the thirty head temples had to be celibate monks, who observed the precepts according to the temple bylaws. However, these days, increasing numbers of young monks have studied in Japan and then returned to their home temples in Korea. Because many of these young monks were married while studying in Japan and because there are also a lot of Korean monks who secretly have wives, their presence disturbs the monastic order. Based on these two reasons, not a few monks raised their voices, saying that it would be better to permit clerical marriage officially by revising the temple bylaws than allow a continuation of the violation of the temple bylaws. The head monks are requesting this of the government. However, over a hundred monks, including Paek Yongsōng, a leading monk of Korean Sōn Buddhism, rose up strongly against revising the temple bylaws. Is it right or wrong to permit clerical marriage officially? We hope that you express your opinions openly in this magazine, no matter whether you are Buddhist clergy or the laity.³⁷⁵

The magazine then ran feature essays on clerical marriage and meat-eating that had been contributed by Korean and Japanese Buddhists in the following three consecutive issues from

³⁷⁵ *Chōsen Bukkyō* 26 (June 1926), 23.

July to September. Although Micah Auerback, a leading scholar of Japanese Buddhism, pointed out that this magazine was ultimately unsuccessful in producing a consensus about clerical marriage,³⁷⁶ it is worth examining these essays because the opinions stated in them represent those of diverse voices and roles of Korean monks, Japanese Buddhist missionaries, Korean and Japanese lay intellectuals, and officials who worked in the Department of Religion in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea.

Those who opposed a revision in the temple bylaws made three points: First, Buddhist monks should obey precepts that banned clerical marriage and meat-eating according to the *Four Part Vinaya* and the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*; second, a revision would corrupt Korean Buddhism and accelerate the conflicts between married monks and celibate monks, and third, any increase in the number of married monks and their families would be deleterious to the temple economy because Korean Buddhism, unlike Japanese Buddhism, did not have a financial system that could support married monks' wives and children.

One of the essays in the *Chōsen Bukkyō* was written by Ku Manhwa, a Korean monk at the temple called Taesūngsa. Entitled “Sono tsumi sanzen daisen sekai ni dakisuru tokoro nashi” (There is No Way to Expiate this Sin in the Whole Universe), it argued that clerical marriage was nothing but a transgression because the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* said that it was unforgivable conduct for Buddhist clergy. Like Paek Yongsōng, Ku insisted that the government should designate a few head temples and branch temples specifically for four-thousand celibate monks.³⁷⁷ Since no official record regarding the overall number of celibate monks and married monks during the colonial period exists, we must rely on Ku Manhwa's “four-thousand celibate monks” as

³⁷⁶ Auerback, 301.

³⁷⁷ Ku Manhwa, “Sono tsumi sanzen daisen sekai ni dakisuru tokoro nashi,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 28 (August 1926), 19.

evidence of the population of celibate monks. According to the *Chosŏn pulgyo illamp'yo* (Handbook of Korean Buddhism) published by the Kyomuwŏn (Central Council of Korean Buddhism), the total number of Buddhist monks was 6324 and 6673 in 1925 and 1927, respectively and the number of Buddhist nuns was 864 and 917 in 1925 and 1927 respectively. Ku Manhwa's reference to 4000 indicates that about sixty-three percent of Korean monks were celibate, while thirty-seven percent were married even before the revision in the temple bylaws.

The Korean monk Yŏnghŏ also criticized the practice of clerical marriage and meat-eating as the gravest corruption in Korean Buddhism. In his essay, "Aa, Chōsen Bukkyō no Meiro" (Alas, Korean Buddhism Lost in a Maze) published in the *Chōsen Bukkyō*, he writes that clerical marriage obstructs Buddhist practice because having a wife is the root of painful retribution and evil.³⁷⁸ He also criticizes the practice of Buddhist-style wedding ceremonies in a temple, when he writes;

Monks are tonsured and wear monks' robes. They call themselves renounced *bhikṣu* and conduct summer *sŏn* retreats. After attending *sŏn* retreats for more than twenty years, they are praised as masters of doctrine or grand masters of meditation. However, behind these titles, they waste thousand-year-old Buddhist treasures, oust celibate monks from the temple out of their hatred and ambition. ... They sell the field and the forest which belong to the temple, in the name of propagation or an official project. They spend their expense money on wives and pleasure. This is the recent scene in Korean Buddhism. The bald-headed and grey-haired monks marry young maidens, have wedding ceremonies in the Buddha hall, and have sons in front of the eyes of the Buddha. The smell of cooking meat and fish replaces the odor of incense, and the sounds of dogs and hens replace the sounds of Buddhist drums and bells.³⁷⁹

He lamented the strange scenes such as these found at Korean Buddhist temples that allowed marriage and the eating of flesh. As for Buddhist-style wedding ceremonies for lay people, these

³⁷⁸ Yŏnghŏ, "Aa, Chōsen Bukkyō no Meiro," *Chōsen Bukkyō* 28 (August 1926), 18.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

were introduced in 1917 by Yi Nūnghwa, the Buddhist intellectual and author of *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa* (Comprehensive History of Korean Buddhism).³⁸⁰ After the first ceremony was performed in August 1917 in a temple in Seoul, the number of these Buddhist wedding ceremonies called “hwahonsik” increased among the laity³⁸¹ and not only among the laity. According to Yŏnghŏ’s essay, Buddhist monks also held wedding ceremonies in the temple, going against the precept of celibacy. Furthermore, married monks wasted temple property in the support of their families. Clearly, Yŏnghŏ felt that married monks contributed to the deterioration of the temple which should be “pure” and distinct from the laity.

Behind the conflicts between married and celibate monks were concerns about temple property. The Japanese Nichirenshū missionary monk Henmi Tsūkan argued in his essay “Sokkō wa jiki shōsō dewa nai ka” (Isn’t Immediate Implementation Premature?) that Korean Buddhism was not yet prepared for the economics a so-called “temple family” (*jizoku*) required.³⁸² The term “temple family” was coined after the Meiji government officially allowed clerical marriage through the Dajōkan fukoku (Promulgation by the Grand Council of the State) in 1872 and was used strictly to refer to Buddhist priest’s wives and children. In his essay, Henmi Tsūkan upheld the idea of clerical marriage because, as he saw it, although the Buddha had ordered monks not to fornicate he did not object to their having a faithful husband-wife relationship, a relationship between one husband and one wife. However, even though Henmi Tsūkan was in favor of clerical marriage, he felt Korean Buddhism’s weak economic system was not yet ready to support this state of affairs. He argued that although Japanese Buddhism had a long history of

³⁸⁰ Sanghyŏn kōsa [Yi Nūnghwa’s penname], “Ŭijŏng pulsik hwahonbŏp,” *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 4 (June 1917), 1-9

³⁸¹ *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 6 (August 1917), 69; *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 8 (March 1918), 69-70; and *Chosŏn pulgyo ch’ongbo* 15 (May 1919), 97.

³⁸² Henmi Tsūkan, “Sokkyō wa jiki shōsō dewa nai ka,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 18.

clerical marriage, it had struggled with establishing regulations related to the economic support of the temple family. According to his observation, Japanese priests' families were increasing and Japanese Buddhist temples were having difficulty taking care of former abbots' wives. To solve this issue, a bill called "jizoku hogo hōan" (Protection Bill of Temple Wives) was introduced in the Japanese Diet. However, Henmi Tsūkan believed that this bill would encounter difficulties in being approved and, indeed, many people disagreed with it, believing that there had to be other means of supporting temple families.³⁸³ From this, he concluded that it was likely that Korean married monks would rely heavily on temple income to support their family and that this would cause a gradual decline in temple wealth.³⁸⁴

Although Japanese priests' wives are still in the background at the present time – except within the Jodōshinshū –,³⁸⁵ the term "jizoku" (temple family) suggests their existence within Japanese Buddhism. Conversely, the wives of Korean Buddhist monks were totally invisible in the temple from the colonial period to the twenty-first century: there is no term that refers specifically to monks' wives or children either in the past or in the present.

Those who agreed with the revision in the temple bylaws also offered three rationales: First, they asserted that marriage or celibacy was a matter of personal freedom among Buddhist clergy. Second, they believed that clerical marriage would revitalize Korean Buddhism because it would reduce the spiritual distance between Buddhist clergy and the laity. Secularization such as clerical marriage, meat-eating and modern dress might ameliorate the feelings of those who were put off by the Buddhist practice of renunciation. Third, clerical marriage was already

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 19.

³⁸⁵ Kawahashi Noriko, "Jizoku (Priests' Wives) in Sōtō Zen Buddhism: An Ambiguous Category," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22-1/2 (Spring, 1995), 162.

widespread and therefore, a prohibition of it led to hypocrisy forcing those “celibate” Buddhist monks who had covert wives or concubines to hide them.

The *Pulgyo*, a Buddhist magazine that acted as a bulletin of the Kyomuwŏn (Central Council of Korean Buddhism), published an essay by Paek Sŏnguk, “Hyŏndaejŏk pulgyo rŭl kŏnsŏl haryamyŏn” (To Build a Modern Buddhism). In it, Paek Sŏnguk said that clerical marriage should be regarded as a personal choice, rather than a transgression. He writes;

Monks should not be permitted to have wives. However, since there are monks who married under unavoidable circumstances, it is unfair to ignore them. Although clerical marriage should not be permitted officially, it would be better to consider it as a personal choice in this transition period.³⁸⁶

In this essay, we can see one of the most popular opinions regarding clerical marriage among Buddhist intellectuals, namely, that the choice of being celibate or married was a personal one and that each monk should be free to make it according to his own choice. As the number of monks trained via the modern education system increased, they began to raise their voices against government supervision over internal matters of Korean Buddhism such as this. In this sense, the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating led Korean Buddhists to seriously consider the modernization of Korean Buddhism. In this same essay, Paek Sŏnguk pointed out the problem of power abuse committed by head monks. The temple bylaws empowered head monks to deal with the temple economy, the temple administration, and even the punishment of monks in their parish – the heaviest punishment being expulsion from the Buddhist monastery. Paek Sŏnguk criticized this system, claiming that it was unfair that head monks alone decided this

³⁸⁶ Paek Sŏnguk, “Hyŏndaejŏk pulgyo rŭl kŏnsŏl haryamyŏn,” *Pulgyo* 24 (June 1926), 13.

punishment. He went on to suggest that expulsion should be discussed for six months within the monks' community in the parish, and should be decided by a vote.³⁸⁷

This view that clerical marriage should be considered a matter of free choice for monks can be also be seen in an essay entitled “Chōsen sōryo no nikujiki saitai ni tsuite” (On Meat-eating and Clerical Marriage of Korean Monks) written by Nakamura Misaki, the Japanese chief editor of the magazine *Chōsen Bukkyō*. He maintained that the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating was an inevitable development of the modernization of Korean Buddhism:

Although various modern trends in the world poured into the Korean peninsula, the Korean Buddhist community seemed to exist on another isolated planet. However, recently there have been some changes in it due to a surge in modern influence. Among these changes are clerical marriage and meat-eating. The discussion of this issue was initiated by thirty-one head monks. Government officials have noticed these changes, as well. Newspapers have admitted it as a basic request for natural human beings and have expressed their own affirmative feelings regarding the issue. It is said that the practice of clerical marriage and meat-eating among Korean monks is now openly admitted.³⁸⁸

Regarding the background to the request for the lifting of the ban on clerical marriage and meat-eating, Nakamura explained that without the revision in the temple bylaws, Korean Buddhism would not be able to find men of ability eligible to become head monks or abbots. He said that prohibiting clerical marriage and meat-eating was illogical because legally married monks would not be able to become head monks while some “celibate” monks who were in secret relationships with women would be eligible simply because their relationships were hidden.³⁸⁹ Nakamura went on to ask a controversial question: Was the wish to lift the ban on clerical marriage simply a way for Korean Buddhism to assimilate into Japanese Buddhism?

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Nakamura Misaki, “Chōsen sōryo no nikujiki saitai ni tsuite,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926) 2-3.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 3.

Since the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating had been already addressed by Japanese Buddhism as a topic of Buddhist modernization a few decades before, many Korean Buddhist intellectuals and monks linked it with Japanese Buddhism. However, he maintained that there was no connection between the two Buddhisms on the issue of clerical marriage due to their different situations, writing:

I wonder whether we can discuss clerical marriage in Korean Buddhism in the same way we did in Japanese Buddhism. I doubt it. Japanese Buddhism experienced different stages of development, and therefore, it is impossible to compare it to Korean Buddhism. In other words, it doesn't make sense to apply clerical marriage in Japanese Buddhism to that in Korean Buddhism. The current issue as regards Korean Buddhism should be discussed strictly within the arena of Korean Buddhism.³⁹⁰

Nakamura seems to have approved the revision in the temple bylaws on the grounds that a monk's celibacy was contradictory to human nature.³⁹¹ In addition, he said that the government had no choice but to revise the temple bylaws because clerical marriage was already dominant among Korean Buddhist monks. He wrote;

It [The government] does not have to pay attention to the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating as long as Buddhism remains a useful religion for social morality and public sentiment. Therefore, it does not make sense for people to reproach the government for revising the temple bylaws since the government already recognizes that meat-eating and having concubines is widely practiced in Korean Buddhism. In other words, Korean Buddhist monks violate precepts consistently. There is no way for the colonial government to impose restraints on this violation. At this time, the government realizes that keeping the related clauses of the temple bylaws would be a futile act. Rather, it has decided to revise the temple bylaws and to leave the matter of clerical marriage and meat-eating up to the Korean monks' discretion.³⁹²

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 5.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 5-6.

³⁹² Ibid., 6.

This rationale – clerical marriage as a matter of personal choice and freedom – was also repeated in essays contributed by Kwŏn Sangno and Yi Honsŏng, core members of the Kyomuwŏn at that time. In his essay, “Jihō kaitei wa sōryo no hakai o imisuru mono dewa nai” (The Revision in the Temple Bylaws Does Not Mean Monks’ Violation of Precepts), Kwŏn Sangno (1879-1965), a Korean monk and reporter for the *Pulgyo*, emphasized that the revision in the temple bylaws did not aim at bringing about a violation of precepts. He believed that choosing to obey the precepts or not was a matter of monks’ personal freedom, not a matter of governmental supervision: “Whether to obey precepts or not is absolutely a personal choice. To delete the related clauses from the temple bylaws is not, in itself, a violation of Buddhist precepts.”³⁹³ Yi Honsŏng, one of the first three monks who studied in Japan in the 1910s, along with Kim Chŏnghae and Yi Chigwang, and the director of the Kyomuwŏn around 1926, contributed one essay to the newspaper *Maeil sinbo* and another to the Buddhist magazine *Chōsen Bukkyō*. In his essays, Yi commented that the revision in the temple bylaws was necessary to liberate monks’ private lives and should be understood as a part of the socialization of Korean Buddhism.³⁹⁴ In addition, he criticized Paek Yongsŏng’s outdated perspective on monastic rules, writing;

I don’t want to say anything about the petition proposed by Mr. Paek Yongsŏng and his followers. Their petition is not worth discussing because it does not make sense that they submitted the petition to the government. It is the business of each individual monk and a matter of freedom. Meat-eating and clerical marriage should not be regarded as the

³⁹³ Kwŏn Sangno, “Jihō kaitei wa sōryo no hakai o imisuru mono dewa nai,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 11. Unfortunately, the first part of his essay is missed because it shared a page with an essay by Watanabe Akira that was totally censored. The remaining part was clear enough to make his opinion about clerical marriage clearly understood. It is interesting to note that Kwŏn Sangno himself had married in 1918. See Yi Kyōngsun, “1917-nyŏn pulgyo kye ūi ilbon sich’al yŏn’gu,” in *Han’guk tongnip undong kwa chonggyo hwaltong*, ed. Han’guk minjok undong sahakhae (Seoul: Kukmin saryowŏn, 2000), 73.

³⁹⁴ Yi Honsŏng, “Tang’yŏnhan kwigyŏl ida pont’ae saenghwal ro powado,” *Maeil sinbo*, May 21, 1926.

reasons for the decline of Korean Buddhism. Prohibiting them will not automatically revitalize Korean Buddhism. Buddhism has simply reached a point of becoming socialized and popularized.³⁹⁵

In other words, Yi Honsōng believed that Korean Buddhism should be a religion for the general public, and not just a religion for the monks themselves.³⁹⁶

Japanese Buddhist missionaries from the Sōtōshū, the Rinzaishū, and the Jōdoshinshū also wrote about their pro-clerical marriage views and these essays were featured in editions of the *Chōsen Bukkyō*. These Japanese missionaries claimed that the practice of clerical marriage in Japanese Buddhism could be a positive example for Korean Buddhism. In his essay, “Hitsuyō ni aruzu yamu o ezaru nai” (It is not Necessary but Mandatory), Sawa Mitsunori, a Japanese Buddhist missionary from the Kōyasan Shingonshū, wrote that to oppress a primary instinct – such as the instinct to marry and raise a family – inevitably causes a disruption in social morality and accelerates anti-ethical behavior such as fornication outside of marriage.³⁹⁷ Iragashi Zetshō, a Japanese Buddhist missionary from the Sōtōshū, wrote in his essay “Chōsen sōkai no jinbutsu hutsutei o kyūhu no dō” (A Way to Solve the Lack of Men of Ability in Korean Buddhism) that Korean Buddhism had gradually declined because monks did not do their best to train either pupils from poor families or those who did not have any talent for a Buddhist clerical vocation.³⁹⁸ According to Iragashi, if clerical marriage was permitted, Korean Buddhism would be revitalized because married monks would do their best to educate their sons to be good clerics.

Among the twenty-seven essays presented in the *Chōsen Bukkyō*, the Korean monk An

³⁹⁵ Yi Honsōng, “Chōsen Bukkyō no kōhi towa nanno kankei mo nai,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 13

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Sawa Mitsunori, “Hitsuyō ni aruzu yamu o ezaru nai,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 22.

³⁹⁸ Iragashi Zetshō, “Chōsen sōkai no jinbutsu hutsutei o kyūhu no dō,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 15.

Sōgyōn's essay may well be the most interesting because of its sardonic viewpoint that arose from his reluctant approval of clerical marriage. An Sōgyōn (1880~1965), more commonly known as An Chinho, was a Korean monk who studied at Myōngjin School, the first modern Buddhist school. Later he published the *Pulcha p'illam* (Required Handbook of the Buddhists) in 1931 and its revised version *Sōngmun ũibōm* (Standard Rituals for Buddhism) in 1935, which was, until recently, regarded as the standard ritual guide for Korean Buddhism. His essay entitled “Sōkchon ũi chōkcha ro ch'ūich'ō yuksik i kaho aha - sigi kiman ira” (Is It Right for Legitimate Heirs of the Buddha to Have Wives and Eat Meat? Alas, It Was too Late to Discuss It) was full of acerbic criticism on Korean Buddhist communities. According to him, it was “the era of the end of the Dharma” (*malbōp sidae*) because it was hard to find monks who obeyed Buddhist precepts.³⁹⁹ However, he agreed that a lifting of the ban on clerical marriage was inevitably necessary in order to save Korean Buddhism. He wrote;

Someone insists that monks should obey Buddhist precepts. Apparently it seems that it is easy to do so. However, this seems like forcing an incapable man to do what is impossible, like chasing hens into water. Presumably, the government already examined this issue. If the government forces modern monks to obey the precept, there will be no monks to look after Buddhist temples. They will kill their illegitimate children, and crimes such as adultery or fornication will increase.⁴⁰⁰

An Sōgyōn also concluded that all Korean monks, including Paek Yongsōng, were already secularized, although they did not realize it. According to his analysis, Korean monks were laicized when they enrolled as citizens of colonial Korea and started to use their secular surnames in household registers, rather than using the Buddhist surname “Sōk” (transliteration of

³⁹⁹ An Sōgyōn, “Sōkchon ũi chōkcha ro ch'ūich'ō yuksik i kaho aha - sigi kiman ira,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 25. Unlike other writers, he wrote this essay in Korean.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

Śākyamuni).⁴⁰¹ In the premodern era, Buddhist clerics discarded their original surnames upon entering the sangha. During the Chosŏn dynasty, only ordination names were listed in household registers, along with other information about a monk's original background. However, when the system of modern household registers was established in 1909 as a step in the imposition of Japanese colonial rule, Buddhist monks and nuns were made to register themselves in household registers, using their secular surnames. Thus, they were literally secularized by becoming citizens of a secular society. An Sŏgyŏn, therefore, argued that it was meaningless to discuss clerical marriage and meat-eating anymore, because at the time of this laicization one and half decades ago, it ceased to be an issue.

Still, in order to solve the conflicts that remained over the issue of clerical marriage, An suggested classifying all monks into three categories: The highest monks called “punjisŭng” who strictly obeyed precepts: the ordinary monks (*pot'ong sŭngnyŏ*) who have wives and eat meat, and the false monks called “kajangsŭng” who conduct themselves shamefully.⁴⁰² He believed that these three types of monks should be separated from each other because celibate monks as legitimate heirs of the Buddha ought not to be influenced by married monks. Although he disagreed with Paek Yongsŏng's submission of a petition to the colonial government believing that the issue of clerical marriage should be solved internally by Korean monks, he partially agreed with Paek's contention that celibate monks should be granted a certain space separate from married monks. Overall, An was the only writer who interpreted the issue of clerical marriage and meat-eating as the gradual process of secularization of Korean Buddhism that had begun with the introduction of the modern system of household registers under Japanese colonial

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 26.

rule.

Regardless of their opinions on clerical marriage, all the Korean and Japanese contributors to the three editions of the *Chōsen Bukkyō* agreed on one thing that the practice of clerical marriage among Korean monks was, indeed, widespread. The use of the term “the house of mother” (*haha no ie*) attests to its prevalence. The Japanese Buddhist Shiba Zusei wrote, “I heard that meat-eating and clerical marriage were intricate issues in Korea. But I also heard that many Korean Buddhist monks have already practiced meat-eating and clerical marriage. They use the term ‘the house of mother’ to refer to the house of wives or concubines.”⁴⁰³ In addition, Korean and Japanese Buddhist contributors to the *Chōsen Bukkyō* contended that the Korean monastic community was run by powerful married monks. Since this phenomenon marginalized and threatened celibate monks, anti-clerical marriage advocates demanded that a certain number of temples be granted to celibate monks: Celibate monks did not want to lose their distinctiveness as a symbol of religious superiority. In this sense, concerns about their power in the community was an underlying factor in the tension between celibate monks and married monks.

Conclusion

In the early 1910s, advocates for clerical marriage, such as Han Yongun, argued that clerical marriage should be permitted among Korean monks. Some of them witnessed the Japanese practice of clerical marriage while visiting in Japan, while others used the theory of Social Darwinism as an argument to support their position. However, in reality, clerical marriage had been practiced for diverse reasons in the 1920s, reasons such as the the transformation of

⁴⁰³ Shiba Zusei, “Chōsen Bukkyō kai no ishin,” *Chōsen Bukkyō* 27 (July 1926), 13.

relationship between master monks and their disciples and the matter of inheritance of private property. Thus, it is necessary to look at the diverse motives for clerical marriage and not confine oneself to the discourse of modernization.

After the colonial government revised the temple bylaws and lifted the ban on married monks in 1926, the entire Korean Buddhist community became embroiled in a hot debate over clerical marriage. The Buddhist monthly journal *Chōsen Bukkyō* dedicated three special consecutive volumes to this topic in 1926, publishing various perspectives from both dissenters and supporters of clerical marriage. The revision in the temple bylaws and the resultant turmoil in 1926 are symbolic of the way in which Korean Buddhism transformed itself from a traditional religion that was totally overseen by the government to a modern religion relatively free from government supervision. Most clerical marriage advocates stressed freedom of choice in the matter of celibacy or marriage as an inherent part of joining the modern era. Many argued that clerical marriage would be helpful in the propagation of Buddhism and the reduction of the spiritual distance between the clergy and the laity. Anti-clerical marriage advocates, on the other hand, maintained that Buddhist clerics should observe the precepts and *vinaya* as written in the *Four Part Vinaya* and the *Brahmā Net Sūtra* no matter how society changed. They cited the current corruption of Buddhist monasteries and blamed this on the fact that they were led by powerful married monks. They also worried that temples did not have the economic means to support married monks' families.

Both dissenters and supporters of clerical marriage in the *Chōsen Bukkyō* all agreed on three points: First, married monks had already become the prime agents of Korean Buddhism by the mid-1920s; second, there would be no eligible head monk candidates without a lifting of the prohibition on clerical marriage and meat-eating, and third, there would be a gradual decrease in

the number of Buddhist clergy in a few decades due to the competition of other religions such as Protestantism. For these reasons, Paek Yongsŏng suggested not a recanting of this revision but an alternative plan, one that, through governmental channels, would grant celibate monks a few head temples of their own. Among various opinions, Yi Chiyŏng's analysis of the changing relations between master monk and disciple-monk, and An Sŏgyŏn's insight into the relationship between secularization and the use of secular surnames are worthy of particular notice that will be discussed further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN EXAMINATION OF JAPANESE COLONIAL RULE, HOUSEHOLD REGISTERS, AND CLERICAL MARRIAGE

Introduction

According to Micah Auerback, a leading scholar in Japanese Buddhism, when it came to clerical marriage, Korean Buddhists failed to construct or provide a doctrinal rationale for the practice and, therefore, ended up repeating “the failures of Japanese Buddhists to ‘modernize’ their domestic practices.”⁴⁰⁴ Clerical marriage was already commonly practiced in colonial Korea in the early 1920s, and, thus, it was little affected by the discourse of modernization. Although early advocates of clerical marriage in the 1910s were influenced by Japanese Buddhism and the theory of modernization, marriage among Korean monks was not directly the result of a wish to assimilate with Japanese Buddhism. For this reason, rather than relying on theoretical approaches, clerical marriage among Korean monks needs, instead, to be examined using more reliable evidence such as monks’ household registers.

Household registers can be valuable indicators of historic data because they provide comprehensive and accumulative information and changes within the Korean monastic community such as the spread of clerical marriage or the changing relationship between masters and disciples. Interestingly, monks’ household registers from the colonial period are rarely examined within the scholarship of modern Korean Buddhism, partly due to a lack of interest and partly due to difficulty in finding extant household registers. I have collected 98 household registers of head monks, and several household registers of nuns, all of which were attached to a

⁴⁰⁴ Auerback, 263.

series of official colonial government documents related to the appointment of head monks or to lawsuits brought for the correction of the relationship between master and disciple. Using household registers and official government documents related to head monk elections, this chapter will examine not only the main trigger for the spread of clerical marriage among Korean monks but also the aftermath of the revision in the temple bylaws.

Korean Monks' Modern Household Registers

Monks' Household Registers during the Chosŏn Period

The tradition of keeping household registers in Korea is an ancient one, beginning with the Silla Kingdom around the seventh century at which time the early Korean states borrowed this system from Tang China. Household registers were used to keep track of taxation, military conscription, and corvée. During the Chosŏn dynasty, household registers were renewed every three years by the Ministry of Taxation. Families from each village submitted their entries (*hogu tanja*) to the local administration. These entries included information about service status, names, ages, and clan seats. Based on these entries, the local administrative office then created household registers (*hojŏk taejang*). As a rule, monks were not included in household registers because they were automatically exempted from these obligations. It was King Sukchong (r. 1675-1720) who first ordered monks to be entered into household registers in 1675 due to a desperate need to expand the sources of income from taxation and increase participation in other obligations.⁴⁰⁵ After the Imjin War (1592 -1598) and the Manchu invasion (1636 -1637), many commoners, suffering from famine and epidemics and feeling overburdened by heavy taxation,

⁴⁰⁵ Yi Yŏngsuk, "17-segi huban hojŏk taejang ūi sŭngnyŏ tŭngjae piyul e taehan koch'al: Tansŏng Muosiknyŏn (1678) hojŏk taejang ūi Yulgoksa rŭl chungsim ūro," *Minjok munhwa nonch'ong* 40 (2008): 507.

evaded their responsibilities by going to temples and becoming monks. In an attempt to block this evasive action, the Chosŏn court made the decision to tax monks and include them in other obligations as well, which resulted in requiring information about monks to be added to household registers. However, the Chosŏn court noticed that monks who did not have land frequently changed temples in search of a better environment for Buddhist practices, while land owner monks did not move to another place, choosing to stay put in order to farm their land. For this reason, the court decreed that that only “monks who held their own land” could be added to household registers.⁴⁰⁶

The earliest example of household register with information about monks appears in the *Tansŏng hojŏk* (Household Registers of Tansŏng County) of 1678.⁴⁰⁷ In these household registers of the Tansŏng county in Kyŏngsang province there were four temples whose monk population numbered ninety-six in total.⁴⁰⁸ The first entry for the Yulgoksa temple is as follows:

The commoner-monk Kyesin, forty-eight years old, was born in the year of *sinmi* [1631]. His clan seat is Cheju. His father Ko Manryong was a horse keeper, grandfather Tŏgu was a palace guard, and great grandfather Tŏkchin was a high civil official. Kyesin’s grandfather on his mother’s side was Kang Ch’ŏlli, whose clan seat is Chinju. This information remains the same as in the year of *ŭlmyo* [1675].⁴⁰⁹

Household registers of monks contained the names of monks and their temples, their service status, clan seats, and ancestors of both the parental and maternal sides. Ancestors on both the

⁴⁰⁶ *Sukchong sillok* 3:48a [1675/5/9]; 3:49b [1675/5/13].

⁴⁰⁷ Usually, the word “ho” (戶) and “kaho” (加戶) were written in household registers to indicate the old and the new entries: “ho” referred to the existing household from the previous registry, and “kaho” meant the new household to be added to the current registry. Though the 1675 *Tansŏng hojŏk* are not extant, presumably, it was in that year that the monk was recorded in the household registry for the first time since the entry of “kaho” appears in the 1678 registry.

⁴⁰⁸ The 1678 *Tansŏng hojŏk*.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

parental and maternal sides were recorded because the government wanted to know about any tax evaders that might have been in the family. Monks' household registers were distinct from the registers of ordinary people, because monks did not have surnames and, therefore, used their ordination names (e.g. Kyesin). Existing triennial household registers that included monks were limited in number. In fact, only forty-nine household registers from 1678 to 1789 in the areas of Tansŏng, Ŏnyang, and Taegu in Kyŏngsang province included such information.⁴¹⁰

Whether the data from household registers during the Chosŏn dynasty are reliable or not is a matter of debate. Some scholars say that the Chosŏn household registers fail to provide accurate historical information such as population or land ownership.⁴¹¹ Tension existed between the government and the people because the government required the maximum in taxes and other obligations from the people,⁴¹² while the people attempted to evade these burdens by refusing to disclose information in household registers.⁴¹³ Some monks may have been evasive in their entries to order to avoid the tax burdens. Although household registers during the Chosŏn period might not be reliable for exact data in regard to the monk population, they are, nonetheless, valuable resources for speculation about monks' family backgrounds and the composition of temple residents including monks, laypeople, and temple slaves. Most importantly, the inclusion of monks in household registers signals an economic change. It indicates that they were able to own private land and were recognized as taxpayers.

⁴¹⁰ Yi Yŏngsuk, 508.

⁴¹¹ Kwŏn Naehyŏn, "Chosŏn hugi hojŏk ŭi chaksŏng e taehan punsŏk," *Taedong munhwa yŏn'gu* 39 (2001): 63-64.

⁴¹² King Sukchong established a new household supervision system called "oga chakt'ong" (block unit of five households) in order to prevent people from evading their tax obligations.

⁴¹³ Wealthy *yangban* family provided certain expenses for the rolls of paper used for composing household registers to the local administrations, and in return they received benefits such as not being added to household registers.

Monks' Household Registers during the Colonial Period

The modern system of household registers was established as a precedent procedure of colonization in 1909 through promulgation of the Ordinance of Household Registers (*Minjōkpōp*) by the Office of the Resident-General of Korea. It was revised once in 1915 and then enacted in 1922 as the Ordinance of Korean Household Registers (*Chosŏn hojōngnyōng*). The major difference between the 1909 household register system and its 1915 revision was that the former was under the aegis of the Police Bureau (*Kyōngmuguk*) while the latter was under the jurisdiction of the local governmental administration of each town. In this way, oversight of the household registration system shifted away from the police, giving the household itself the power to determine its legal family relations.⁴¹⁴

How was marriage defined during the colonial period? Did simply living together suffice or did it require a wedding ceremony and a witness? Where did concubines fit in? Did marital status include concubines and their children? When the modern household register system was introduced to all Koreans in 1909 by the Japanese government, the problem of registering of concubines and their offspring as well as the actual definition of marriage was considered. The 1909 system allowed the inclusion of concubines in household registers and the equal listing of children of the concubine alongside those of the primary wife. However, in 1913 the government decreed that children of the primary wife must be distinguished from those of the concubine.⁴¹⁵ In 1915, through the Number 240 Government Notification the colonial government took a step

⁴¹⁴ Yi Chōngsŏn, “Han’guk kŭndae hojōk chedo ūi pyōnch’ŏn: Minjōkbōp ūi pōpchejōk t’ŭkching ūl chungsim ūro,” *Han’guk saron* 55 (2009): 306.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 307.

further and decided not to allow concubines in the household registers either.⁴¹⁶ Through these processes, the colonial government imposed upon the Koreans the form of the modern family based on the Civil Law of Japan.⁴¹⁷ Though marital status was determined by a wedding ceremony in the 1910s, a debate over the definition of marriage in the High Court of the Office of the Governor-General of Korea in 1917 resulted in a decree that a wedding ceremony was no longer the gold standard in determining marital status.⁴¹⁸ Realizing that people might be reluctant to hold a wedding ceremony in the case of re-marriage or lack of money, the government accepted other evidence such as a witness to prove marriage legitimacy.⁴¹⁹

The colonial government also allowed Buddhist monks and nuns to register themselves in household registers regardless of their marital status. Japanese colonial rule recognized Buddhist clerics as members of the colonized to be controlled and supervised. During the Chosŏn period, monks' marriage was illegitimate because the national code of the Chosŏn dynasty prohibited clerical marriage. Under Japanese colonial rule, however, Buddhist monks were able to list their wives and children in household registers. In this way, household registers became the only official documents proving someone's marital status. Despite restrictions imposed upon married monks in the temple bylaws, some monks still went ahead and listed their wives and children in household registers as an effective means of clarifying legal issues such as inheritance. Other monks, more bound by the basic monastic rules, did not register their wives, preferring to keep their marriages covert. In these cases, women who were not listed in the household registers were considered concubines; monks with concubines were not subject to disadvantages such as

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 307-308.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 315.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

restrictions regarding running for head monk or participating in a *sŏn* retreat that married monks were subject to because, in the eyes of the officials, marital status was determined by listing of wives in household registers. Though the monks might have avoided disadvantages by not listing themselves as married, the women did not benefit at all in this situation. While a monk's wife was protected by civil law and given the right of property inheritance, concubines were not only totally vulnerable but also the target of humiliation.

The Government Policy Regarding the Use of Adoption by Monks in Household Registers

In examining the household registers from this time, it can easily be seen that an area of great confusion in the Korean Buddhist community was how to define or categorize the master-disciple relationship. Monks commonly listed their disciples as adopted sons during the early colonial period. However, in 1915, when the colonial government revised the overall system of household registers through the Governmental Notification Number 240, it redefined the qualifications of those who intended to adopt a son. According to the new rules, only a married man could adopt a child, the adoptee had to be the adoptive father's kin, and had to be younger than the adoptive father.⁴²⁰ Since the Governmental Notification Number 240 in 1915 was about the revised qualifications for adoption among ordinary families, the Korean Buddhist community in which monks and nuns had always used conventional avenues in the adoption of their disciples as sons and daughters was confused and raised questions about the legality and status of these adoptions. In August 1915, the Governor of South Kyŏngsang Province sent a missive to the Ministry of Justice (*Shihōfu*) of the Office of the Governor-General of Korea. It states;

⁴²⁰ Keishōnandō [Kr. Kyŏngsangnamdo], "Sōryo to yōshi" (August 20, 1915), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken" (June 17, 1926), 1239.

According to the Governmental Notification Number 240 as of August 7, the adoption of sons is restricted to married men without biological sons regardless of whether they are heads of households or not. In addition, the adopted son must belong to the adoptive father's kinship and be younger than the adoptive father. However, Buddhist clergy have conventionally taken their disciples as adopted sons who can perform memorial services and inherit their property. I want to inquiry whether or not the Governmental Notification Number 240 will admit a monk's disciple as an adopted son.⁴²¹

In response to this inquiry, the Ministry of Justice of the Office of the Governor-General of Korea answered: "Monks' disciples cannot be officially recognized as adopted sons. Buddhist clerics are not permitted to register their disciples in household registers."⁴²²

In 1916, a second inquiry regarding this issue was received from the Governor of North Kyōngsang Province: "When Korean monks enter Buddhist temples, is it possible to register them in the abbots' household registers as the abbots' adopted sons?"⁴²³ The colonial government answered, "Monks are not permitted to be registered in abbots' household registers."⁴²⁴ That these two inquiries from South and North Kyōngsang Provinces were important is evident. During the colonial period, when Korean Buddhist communities had important inquiries or issues that needed clarification, they sent letters to the governors of the provincial government. Therefore, these two inquiries from South and North Kyōngsang Provinces can be seen as quite serious, addressed to the colonial government as they were. South and North Kyōngsang Provinces had the most powerful head temples: five in North Kyōngsang

⁴²¹ Ibid., 1239-1240.

⁴²² Chōsen Sōtokufu Shihōfu, "Shihōfu Chōkan kaitō" (August 28, 1915), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken," 1240.

⁴²³ Keishōhokudō [Kr. Kyōngsangbukto], "Sōryo no nyūseki" (April 1, 1916), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken," 1240.

⁴²⁴ Chōsen Sōtokufu, "Kan tsūchō dai 49 gō" (April 14, 1916), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken," 1240.

Province (Tonghwasa, Ŭnhaesa, Kounsa, Kimnyongsa, and Kirimsa) and three in South Kyōngsang Province (Haeinsa, T'ongdosa, and Pōmōsa), the largest monk population and the greatest wealth among the thirty head temples in total. Experiencing some problems with monks' disciples and their household registers, they sent inquiries to the local government about protocol regarding a resolution to these issues. The final answer from the Ministry of Justice of the colonial government clearly stated that monks and nuns were not able to adopt their disciples.

The council of thirty head monks also raised the question of just how the master-disciple relationship should be handled in household registers and sent this question directly to the Office of the Governor-General in September 1916. Although it is not known what exact questions were delivered, the government's responses give enough hints to deduce that they were about the way to handle master-disciple relationships in household registers and the issue of property succession. The colonial government sent its official response to Kang Taeryōn, head monk of the Yongjusa parish and chair of the Council of Thirty Head Monks, in November 1916.⁴²⁵ This government document consisted of seven answers:

1. A household register refers to the document that shows a head of household and his relationship with other family members, and therefore, it is not permitted for a Buddhist cleric to list a temple abbot as a head of household in the register or to be listed in the abbot's household register.
2. If a Buddhist cleric wishes to change his/her name based on the old custom, he/she should submit copies of his/her Buddhist cleric's certificate and a confirmation letter from the master monk to a provincial governor.
3. Buddhist clerics' household registers should be based on their houses [家].
4. It does not matter how many Buddhist clerics reside in a temple. Also the master-disciple relationship or dharma relation should not be indicated in household registers.

⁴²⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu, "Kan tsūchō dai 184 gō" (November 1916), in Yi Nūnghwa, 323.

Buddhist clerics should submit their information by themselves, along with the confirmation letter from their abbots.

5. The relationship between the master and the disciple is nothing but religious courtesy and, therefore, is not appropriate for inclusion in household registers. However, although the relationship between the master and the disciple is not guaranteed in civil law, after the death of the master, the disciple-monk can inherit the master-monk's property in accordance with Buddhist custom. If this custom is not applicable, property will be passed on based on the master's will or in other ways.

6. Given that Buddhist clerics live in communal circumstances and are provided with food and other supplies by their temple, a poll tax [戸税] will not be assigned to each Buddhist cleric, regardless of whether or not he/she indicates a master-disciple relationship or dharma relation.

7. There is no relationship between household registers and Buddhist clerics' registers. According to Provision 3 of the Temple Ordinance, any Buddhist cleric whose name appears in the registers of a certain temple can be involved in the election of abbots and others for that temple.⁴²⁶

Clearly, these responses indicate that the colonial government did not approve of Buddhist clergy adopting disciples.⁴²⁷

An interesting question is why all Korean Buddhist communities were so concerned with the way monks might list their adopted disciples in household registers. As I discussed in Chapter One, Korean monks struggled to establish their own identities, and, to this end, developed distinguished dharma lineages in the late Chosŏn period. The emphasis on dharma

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ This government's decision regarding the master-disciple relationship is also seen in the *Genkō Chōsen shinzoku sōzokuhō ruishū* (Collected Current Judicial Decisions in Korea) published in 1925 by Nagumo Kōkichi, an official in the Bureau of Justice in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea. In the section "Sōryo no yōshi" (Buddhist Clerics' Adopted Children), it was written, "Buddhist clerics are not able to adopt their disciples as sons or to register their disciples as adopted sons in household registers." See Nagumo Kōkichi, *Genkō Chōsen shinzoku sōzokuhō ruishū* (Keijō : Ōsakayagō Shoten, 1925), 247; In addition, in 1933, the Office of the Governor-General collected more information about Korean conventions and published the *Minji kanshū kaitō ishū* (Collected Responses to Conventional Cases in Civil Affairs). This book also includes rules governing the succession of monks' property. See Chōsen Sōtokufu Chūsūin, *Minji kanshū kaitō ishū* (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu Chūsūin, 1933).

lineage made it possible for Buddhist monks to formalize their connection with other monks through pseudo-family relationships. Since the master-disciple relationship was similar to that of a father and son in a secular family, master monks entered their disciples as adopted sons in their household registers in the early colonial period, though the colonial government did not acknowledge this as legal based on civil law. The most important path for the succession of dharma lineage was monks' private property inherited by a disciple from his master-monk.

Property succession remained significant in the master-disciple relationship during the colonial period. Since modern laws of colonial Korea did not cover Korean convention including the issues of temple property, monks' private property, and succession of monks' private property, when the government published the *Chōsen shihō reiki* (Judicial Precedents of Korea) in 1916, it added a supplement entitled “Kanshū ni kansuru kaitō” (Responses to Conventional Cases).⁴²⁸ This supplement consisted of questions and answers between the judges and the ministers of the Office of the Governor-General. Since the Temple Ordinance stipulated that all temple property was supervised by the colonial government, monks and the government needed to clarify which would be considered temple property and which monks' private property. Regarding “buddha fields” (Kr. *puryangjŏn*; Jr. *butsuryōden*), a term which the colonial government defined as “fields that were donated to the temple for the provision of food for the Buddha,” it was ruled that these fields be considered temple property and therefore, could be sold only if the proceeds benefited the temple such as being used for repayment of a temple debt or the repair of the temple building. It was further decided that the disposition of “buddha fields” should be discussed and decided by a general meeting among the Buddhist monks of the

⁴²⁸ Chōsen Sōtokufu Homuka, “Kanshū ni kansuru kaitō,” in *Chōsen shihō reiki* (Keijō: Taisei Insatsusha, 1916).

temple.⁴²⁹ On the other hand, regarding “dharma fields” (Kr. *pŏptap*; Jr. *hōden*), a term referring to land that was passed down from master monk to senior disciple in order to perform memorial services, the colonial government ruled that they were to be considered private property. Because of this, the issue of who owned “dharma fields” became an intricate problem as illustrated by this one inquiry sent to the colonial government: If the first disciple died first and his master-monk then died without any will, who would own his “dharma fields?”

The main reason the colonial government prevented monks from listing their disciples as adopted sons in household registers is because it was contradictory to the existing civil law of colonial Korea which stated that father and son should share a surname and the master monk and the disciples monk, in fact, had different surnames. The relationship between master and disciple in Korean Buddhism was significant not only because it guaranteed the right of property succession but also because it signified the disciple’s identity with his dharma lineage, a pseudo-family relation that was threatened by the emergence of modern household registers system. To ameliorate the situation, the colonial government suggested an alternative way for Buddhist monks to prove the relationship between master and disciple: Buddhist clerics’ registers called “*sŭngjŏk*.” Unfortunately, this did not solve the problem entirely because, if married monks listed their biological children in their household registers and also had disciple-monks whose relationship with them they entered into the Buddhist clerics’ registers, conflict arose between the two sets of heirs when it came to property succession. Although there is no extant record regarding this kind of conflict over the right of property succession in the case of a monk who had both adopted disciples and biological children, it can be concluded that biological children

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 80.

listed in a household register had full legal protection based on civil law, while disciples did not have any right because adoption by a monk was, in itself, illegal.

Monks' Household Registers and Clerical Marriage

Kim Chŏnghae's Dual Household Registers of 1923

It was not until the early 1920s that the colonial government became aware of the covert marriage of head monks. The practice was discovered through the examination of household registers. In 1923, the colonial government received investigation reports from the police that Kim Chŏnghae, head monk of Chŏndŭngsa, had concealed his clerical marriage by using two different household registers.⁴³⁰ As mentioned earlier, Kim Chŏnghae was one of the first three monks to study Buddhism in Japan, from 1913 to 1918. He served as abbot of Pogwangsa from 1920 to 1922, and then was elected head monk of the Chŏndŭngsa parish in 1922 when the former head monk Kuk Ch'anghwan resigned due to old age and illness. According to his resume presented to the government in 1922, Kim Chŏnghae was born in 1879, entered Changansa in 1898, received novice precepts at Yongjusa in 1900, and received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts at T'ongdosa in 1904.⁴³¹ However, when the colonial government re-investigated his history in 1928, they found that he had falsified his records.⁴³²

A series of documents entitled "Mimoto shōkai no ken" (On Inquiry about Personal Background) issued in 1923 consisted of inquiries and responses between the Bureau of Education in the Office of Governor-General and the police regarding Kim Chŏnghae's personal

⁴³⁰ Keijō Chongno Keisatsusho, "Mimoto shōkai no ken" (October 20, 1923), 540-542.

⁴³¹ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Chŏndŭngsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (March 6, 1922), 852.

⁴³² Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (March 17, 1928), 439-441.

history. The investigation was part of a typical government practice. Head temples held head monk elections every three years. After the election, the Office of Governor-General examined the election documents and then, if they seemed legitimate, gave official approval. However, if the colonial government was suspicious about a head monk-elect, it asked the police to investigate his personal history. In 1923, the Bureau of Education asked the police of Suwŏn City to scrutinize the claims of a man named Kim Ch'ŏru whose address was in Suwŏn City, and, at the same time, asked the police of Chongno district in Seoul to look into the history of another man named Kim Chongch'an whose address was in Chongno district in Seoul. After receiving reports from the two police investigations, the Bureau of Education concluded that, despite the difference in age, name, address, and marital status, Kim Ch'ŏru and Kim Chongch'an were, in fact, the same person – Kim Chŏnghae – who had written himself into two household registers.⁴³³

Further investigation revealed that the name Chŏnghae was Kim's dharma name, Ch'ŏru his original birth name, and Chongch'an his adult name (*kwanmyŏng*) which was given to him at a capping ceremony (*kwallyesik*) to celebrate the formal rite of passage into adulthood.⁴³⁴ In the household register of Kim Chongch'an, he claimed to be thirty-eight years old, to have married a woman named Ha Nojŏk in 1920, and to have had a daughter born in 1921. In Kim Ch'ŏru's household register, however, he claimed to be forty-five years old and unmarried. Eventually, the police summoned Kim Chŏnghae to the station for further questioning. In answer to why he had created two different household registers, Kim Chŏnghae answered, "I am a monk and I am married. I created another household register as if I moved to a new place in order to register my

⁴³³ Keijō Chongno Keisatsusho, "Mimoto shōkai no ken" (October 20, 1923), 540-542.

⁴³⁴ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (March 17, 1928).

wife.”⁴³⁵ In answer to the question, “Why did you make out another household register as if you moved from Yangju county to Seoul, although you already had a household register in Suwŏn city?” Kim Chŏnghae answered, “Because I felt shame at having a wife, I did not want to reveal my name Ch’ŏru, and therefore I created an identity with the name Chongch’an as if I moved from Yangju county.”⁴³⁶ Clearly, because of the restrictions forbidding married monks from attaining high ranking positions, Kim Chŏnghae felt it necessary to create another household register in 1921 in order to conceal his marriage when he was abbot of Pogwangsa.

What is interesting here is that the colonial government did not cancel his appointment as head monk of the Chŏndŭngsa parish despite this disclosure of his clerical marriage in 1923. Furthermore, Kim Chŏnghae was one who stood to benefit greatly from the revision in the temple bylaws because he was re-elected as head monk in 1926 which, as reported in the Buddhist journal *Pulgyo*, he won on September 19, 1926, receiving 29 out of 31 votes.⁴³⁷ The Chŏndŭngsa head-branch temple bylaws were revised in August 1926 and the colonial government did not show any objection to Kim Chŏnghae’s covert clerical marriage. As discussed in Chapter Four, the Buddhist journal *Chōsen Bukkyō* claimed that one of the main reasons that the colonial government decided to revise the temple bylaws was that one unknown head temple wanted to appoint a married monk, who had studied in Japan, as head monk. From this point, we can suggest that this unknown head temple was Chŏndŭngsa and this unknown monk was Kim Chŏnghae.

⁴³⁵ Keijō Chongno Keisatsusho, “Mimoto shōkai ni kansuru ken” (23 October, 1923), in Chongno Keisatsusho, “Mimoto shōkai no ken” (October 20, 1923), 548.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ *Pulgyo* 29 (November 1926), 44.

It was not until two years later, in 1928, that the Bureau of Education declared that it reversed its official approval of Kim Chŏnghae's election and charged him with having committed the following crimes: falsification of records of ordination and *sŏn* practice in his resume, maintaining dual household registers, committing financial fraud, practicing clerical marriage, and falsification of the record of his dharma age.⁴³⁸ The government document accused Kim of embezzling temple property using his two different household registers. It states;

This head monk-elect was approved as head monk of Chŏndŭngsa, and had his dharma name, Chŏnghae. At that time a head monk-elect's household register was not one of the documents required to be approved as head monk. While in office, Kim Chŏnghae wasted temple property, failed to balance revenue and expenditure, and ultimately caused the temple to go into debt. Kim Chŏnghae borrowed money from a man named Kim Chongch'an with an interest rate so high as to be illegal. Therefore, he placed a heavy financial burden on the temple.⁴³⁹

Kim Chŏnghae made a contract to borrow money from a creditor named Kim Chongch'an – his assumed name. Because Kim Chŏnghae, the representative of the Chŏndŭngsa temple, borrowed money in the name of temple business, temple funds were used to pay the interest on this loan. High interest squeezed Chŏndŭngsa's economy while enriching Kim Chŏnghae's own purse. The colonial government also blamed his clerical marriage for violation of the celibacy precept. The report states;

This head monk-elect wrote in his resume that he was a *bhikṣu*, but it turned out that he was a precept-breaker. He had his wife in Kyŏngsŏng [Seoul] and made a trip to Kyŏngsŏng with official trip expenses under the pretext of temple business. This had a negative impact on the temple economy, and even worse, he traveled for personal reasons and not on temple business.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (March 17, 1928), 439-448.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 442.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

Though the colonial government tolerated Kim Chŏnghae's clerical marriage and his dual household registers until 1928, when his other faults, including financial fraud, were disclosed they took official action and condemned him.

Why did it take the colonial government so long to chastise Kim Chŏnghae? Probably because Kim Chŏnghae, as one of the more influential Buddhist monks who stood for Japanese colonial rule, was a symbolic figure among Buddhist intellectuals due to his study in Japan and was a core member of the Kyomuwŏn (Central Council of Korean Buddhism). Presumably, the colonial government supported his election as head monk of Chŏndŭngsa due to his pro-Japanese disposition. This theory is further buttressed by the fact that, usually, head monks were chosen from among those monks who had long been affiliated with a particular head temple. Kim Chŏnghae, however, had no connection with Chŏndŭngsa before his election to the position of head monk in 1922. Furthermore, because he was influential and a pro-Japanese monk who assisted Japanese colonial rule, the government overlooked his clerical marriage in 1923. It was not until he became a threat to the economic situation of the temple in 1928 that the government harshly reproached him, using his clerical marriage and other crimes to justify his dismissal. Though the colonial government emphasized the strictness of celibacy for monks in high ranking positions, it is clear that its primary concern was not, in fact, compliance with the monastic rules of Korean monks but the financial issues of the temple.

T'ongdosa and "Married Bhikṣu" in 1925

Another exemplary monk whose covert marriage was disclosed through a household register was Kim Kuha. As head monk of T'ongdosa from 1911 to 1925, he exerted quite a bit of influence until he was involved in internal strife due to misconduct. On June 23, 1925, Kim Kuha was summoned to the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education. At this meeting, Kim

Kuha promised that he would resign as head monk as soon as possible in order to make amends.⁴⁴¹ However, he did not resign and the problem at T'ongdosa continued, making it necessary to send the Department of Religion official Watanabe Akira to the temple on August 18 and 19, 1925, for the specific purpose of persuading Kim Kuha to resign his position as head monk. As the drafter of the temple bylaws and the most experienced hands-on official in the Department of Religion, Watanabe was the natural choice for this duty. His inspection report entitled “Tongdosa jūji Kim Kuha jishoku seimei ato no kōdō nami ni jimu hikitsugi kansuru shisatsu hukumeisho”(Report on T'ongdosa's Head Monk Kim Kuha's Movement after the Declaration of his Resignation and Transferring the Duties of Temple Administration) describes the means by which he persuaded Kim to resign and how he came to discover seventy-seven “married *bhikṣu*” at T'ongdosa.

According to his report, on his first day at T'ongdosa, Watanabe reminded Kim Kuha of Kim's declaration of resignation at the meeting in Seoul. Kim insisted that he kept the head monk position for the sake of the temple. At a second meeting the next day, Kim Kuha retained his position. As a last resort, at a third meeting on the same day, Watanabe Akira showed Kim Kuha a copy of Kim's household register. Watanabe Akira describes the scene in this way:

I showed him his household register that disclosed his clerical marriage. I rebuked him of his misconduct and transgression of the precepts. He did not try to excuse himself and kept his mouth shut, thinking about something. To summarize this situation: Though Kim Kuha was well-known for his observance of the precepts, he also had a bad reputation. In fact, he had married a woman on June 20 in the twelfth year of *Taishō* [1923]. He covered up his marriage and was then approved as head monk on March 5 in the thirteenth year of *Taishō* [1924]. Since then, his reputation became worse and worse.

⁴⁴¹ Watanabe Akira, “T'ongdosa jūji Kim Kuha jishoku seimei go no kōdō nami ni jimu hikitsugi kansuru shisatsu fukumeisho” (August 24, 1925), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 9, 1926), 488.

However, I did not think he was such a precept-breaker until I had a copy of his household register from Habuk County.⁴⁴²

According to the resume he submitted to the colonial government after his head monk election in 1924, Kim Kuha was born in 1872, entered the sangha in 1886, and received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations in 1896.⁴⁴³ After fulfilling all mandatory education and *sōn* retreat requirements, achieving the highest rank of great Sōn master, and becoming head monk of T'ongdosa, he married a woman named Kim Nan'gang on June 20, 1923.⁴⁴⁴ He was fifty-one at that time. As soon as his secret clerical marriage was unveiled, Kim Kuha declared that he would resign as head monk.

In addition to Kim Kuha's covert marriage, Watanabe Akira uncovered one more transgression. It seems that Kim Kuha arbitrarily revised one clause in the T'ongdosa head-branch temple bylaws, namely, the clause that placed restrictions on married monks. Originally, Article 52 in the *T'ongdosa ponmal sabōp* (T'ongdosa Head-Branch Temple Bylaws) stated that "Those who have received ten precepts and are over twenty years old are able to receive *bhikṣu* precepts on the Diamond Platform of T'ongdosa, based on the *Four Part Vinaya*. But those who are married and eat meat are not permitted to do so."⁴⁴⁵ However, in 1918 when Kim Kuha circulated copies of the temple bylaws to monks at T'ongdosa, it was discovered that he had deleted this important condition from Article 52: "But those who are married and eat meat are

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (March 4, 1924), 325.

⁴⁴⁴ "Kim Kuha koseki tōhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 9, 1926), 496.

⁴⁴⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu Naimubu, "T'ongdosa honmatsu jihō ninka no ken" (September 30, 1912), 156.

not permitted.”⁴⁴⁶ Kim Kuha later apologized, claiming that this condition had been deleted by mistake and that he himself did not even notice this mistake until Watanabe Akira pointed out its omission.⁴⁴⁷ Intentionally or unintentionally, Kim Kuha circulated wrong information that allowed married monks to illegitimately receive *bhikṣu* precepts at T’ongdosa from 1918 to 1925.

Once Watanabe Akira discovered this omission in the T’ongdosa temple bylaws, he realized it would be prudent to examine the marital status of all *bhikṣu* at T’ongdosa in order to check for eligible voters in the next head monk election. The T’ongdosa temple bylaws specified that eligible monks for the head monk election were *bhikṣu* who had been registered to T’ongdosa or other affiliated branch temples. However, if married monks had received *bhikṣu* precepts, Watanabe wanted “married *bhikṣu*” to be distinguished from “celibate *bhikṣu*,” because “married *bhikṣu*” could not truly be considered genuine *bhikṣu*. To this end, Watanabe asked three administrators of T’ongdosa to make a list of “married *bhikṣu*.” He wrote;

I thought that I had to know the truth about the *bhikṣu* population. I asked how many married *bhikṣu* monks there were. Information was collected and a list made. After examining it, I noticed that married *bhikṣu* numbered seventy-seven. All the influential monks of T’ongdosa were married.⁴⁴⁸

Watanabe submitted this list to the Bureau of Education.⁴⁴⁹ Following Kim Kuha’s resignation, T’ongdosa held a head monk election on May 12, 1926, and it resulted in the election of a monk named Song Sōru who received 59 out of a total of 109 votes. However, the colonial government

⁴⁴⁶ Watanabe Akira, “T’ongdosa jūji Kim Kuha jishoku seimei go no kōdō nami ni jimu hikitsugi kansuru shisatsu fukumeisho,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “T’ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 9, 1926), 492.

⁴⁴⁷ Kim Kuha, “Shimatsusho” (September 1, 1925) in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “T’ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 9, 1926), 558.

⁴⁴⁸ Watanabe Akira, “T’ongdosa jūji Kim Kuha jishoku seimei go no kōdō nami ni jimu hikitsugi kansuru shisatsu fukumeisho,” 493.

⁴⁴⁹ Watanabe Akira, “T’ongdosa sōryo chū saitaisha shimei kiroku” (August 21, 1925), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “T’ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 9, 1926), 452-453.

discovered that thirty-eight monks who appeared on Watanabe's "married *bhikṣu*" checklist had participated in this election⁴⁵⁰ and, as a result, the Bureau of Education declared it illegal and nullified it. T'ongdosa had to hold a head monk election again on July 29, 1926, and this one resulted in Song Sōru's re-election. Watanabe was dispatched to T'ongdosa again in order to check the validity of this election and he was satisfied with the fact that none of seventy-seven "married *bhikṣu*" had participated in the election.⁴⁵¹ The strife between anti-Kim Kuha and pro-Kim Kuha factions at T'ongdosa was ultimately resolved after the neutral Song Sōru became head monk. Even after discovering these seventy-seven "married *bhikṣu*" in 1925, the colonial government did not take any further measure. Thus, "married *bhikṣu*" still occupied important positions at T'ongdosa in 1926.⁴⁵² The reason behind the lack of response might be that the government realized that any penalty placed on married monks could generate some internal conflict at T'ongdosa between Kim Kuha's supporters and his opponents.

Comparing the clerical marriage of Kim Chōnghae to that of Kim Kuha, we can clarify the reason for the colonial government's tacit consent of Kim Chōnghae's marriage for several years and, conversely, its instant and harsh criticism of Kim Kuha as a precept-breaker. The most overarching concern of the colonial government was not whether Korean monks observed the precepts, but whether the government maintained effective control of the Korean monastic community. Kim Kuha was one of the most influential monks of the early colonial period, but once he introduced internal strife into T'ongdosa, one of the most important head temples, he

⁴⁵⁰ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (July 13, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 9, 1926), 468.

⁴⁵¹ Watanabe Akira, "T'ongdosa jūji kōhosha Song Sōru no senkyo ni kansuru ken" (August 6, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 9, 1926), 450.

⁴⁵² Keishōnandō Dōchiji [Kr. Kyōngsangnamdo dojisa], "Tongdosa jūji kōhosha no tōhyōshū chōsa ni kansuru ken" (June 5, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 9, 1926), 501.

was soon seen as an obstacle to the colonial government and one that needed to be purged. Clearly, the colonial government tolerated clerical marriage among its favored monks as long as they remained in favor. If, however, they became threats to the colonial government's supervision of head temples or caused internal strife among Korean Buddhists, they were quickly labeled precept-breakers and reprimanded. In short, it was not *vinaya* but the colonial government that passed final judgement on whether or not the behavior of Korean monks was ethical and the colonial government's judgement was both subjective and inconsistent.

Head Monks' Household Registers in 1925

After the revision in the temple bylaws lifting the restrictions on married monks, it was required that all head monk-elects submit copies of their household registers to the colonial government. Why did the colonial government decide to collect household registers of head monks, though all disadvantages of married monks were lifted from the temple bylaws in reality? To answer this question, we must first take a look at a document written by Watanabe Akira.

The first document to set down the necessity of collecting household registers from the head monk-elects was Watanabe Akira's proposal entitled "Jūji shūshoku ninka shinseisho tai iken" (Opinion on the Application for Approval of the Appointment of Abbots) which was submitted to his supervisor Yu Man'gyōm, director of the Department of Religion in 1925.⁴⁵³ In this report, Watanabe focused on the application for head monk's appointments made by monks who should have been disqualified, and proposed two changes; first, that the application for approval of the appointment of the head monk-elect should be submitted by an acting head monk, not by a representative of the voters and second, that the head monk-elect should submit a copy

⁴⁵³ Watanabe Akira, "Jūji shūshoku ninka shinseisho tai iken," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (December 18, 1925), 334-336.

of his household register to the colonial government.⁴⁵⁴ The official document containing these two suggestions was sent to five head temples: Pöpchusa, Songgwangsa, Kwijusa, Pohyōnsa, and Magoksa on December 18, 1925, because these five head temples held their head monk elections from May to July, 1925.⁴⁵⁵ The colonial government did not approve any appointments until the head monk-elects submitted their household registers.

It is interesting to note that the process of revising the temple bylaws began in October 1925 and culminated in January 1926. It is likely that the colonial government began to collect copies of the head monk-elects' household registers right after the revision was proposed and thus that the collection began in the middle of the revision process. This is relevant because it can be suggested that there were two purposes in collecting household registers; first, the government wanted to check the legal names of the head monk-elects in order to prevent any financial abuse and second, it needed to check the marital status of head monk-elects during this critical transition period. This can be clearly seen in this excerpt from the official document sent by the colonial government:

The government will collect household registers because some monks use different names, such as dharma names (*hōgō* or *dōgō*), in their applications for the position of head monk rather than using a name registered in a household register. This often causes much confusion in terms of official confirmation .⁴⁵⁶

The greatest concern of the colonial government was the misuse of temple funds caused by the

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji kōhonsha no koseki tōhon chōshū no ken” (December 18, 1925); “Pohyōnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 18, 1925); “Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 18, 1925); “Songgwangsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 18, 1925), and “Pöpchusa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 18, 1925).

⁴⁵⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 18, 1925), 333.

practice among head monks of using several different names. After the system of household registers was introduced, some monks listed their ordination names as given names with their birth surnames while other monks listed their full birth names. The government noticed these cases and, hoping to prevent financial abuse, demanded to know which names head monks listed in their household registers.

Keeping a sharp eye on the monks during this transition period paid off. Ultimately, the government succeeded in catching yet another head monk-elect guilty of covert marriage. The marriage of Yi Sŏnghae, head monk-elect of Magoksa, was discovered through his household register. According to Yi Sŏnghae's resume, presented to the government after his election in August 1925, he was born in 1874 and received *bhikṣu* precepts in 1914.⁴⁵⁷ In reviewing his household register, however, the government discovered that he used his secular name, Yi Chongo, and that he had a wife and a daughter who had been born in 1917.⁴⁵⁸ Upon this discovery, the government nullified his election, forcing Magoksa to hold another head monk election in 1926.

The Changing Relationship between Master and Disciple

Kwijusa: A Problem Concerning the Adoption Rights of a Monk

The requirement that head monk-elects submit their household registers to the government proved its worth yet again when the colonial government gathered the household registers of the head monk-elects from Pŏpchusa, Songgwangsa, Kwijusa, Pohyŏnsa, and

⁴⁵⁷ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa jūji kōhonsha Yi Sŏnghae ni kansuru ken" (March 2, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927), 673.

⁴⁵⁸ "Yi Chōngo Koseki tōhon," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927), 679-680.

Magoksa in December 1925. In reviewing these documents, it discovered some problems in the register of Yu Poam, head monk-elect of Kwijusa, who had been elected to that position on July 15, 1925, following the nullification of the election of Yi P'oun who was discovered to be married.⁴⁵⁹ According to Yu Poam's resume, submitted to the government in 1925, he was born in 1884, entered Kwijusa in 1895 at the age of 12, received his novice precepts in the same year, and received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts in Kwijusa in 1913.⁴⁶⁰ According to the new requirements, his appointment could not be approved until the colonial government received his household register in 1926. But, after receiving it, Watanabe Akira discovered that Yu Poam had adopted his disciple as his son.

In 1915 and 1916, the government had prohibited monks from listing their disciples as adopted sons in household registers due to their having different surnames though the right of property succession from monk master to disciple would be recognized through Buddhist clerics' registers.⁴⁶¹ Despite the ruling, the government did not notice that many monks still listed their disciples as adopted sons in household registers until it received the household register of Yu Poam in 1925 at which time, in the margin of a government document entitled "Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (On the Application of Kwijusa for Head Monk Approval), Watanabe made this note: "In his household register, someone who has a different surname is registered as

⁴⁵⁹ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (March 27, 1926), 319.

⁴⁶⁰ "Yu Poam Shūgyō rirekisho," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (March 27, 1926), 320.

⁴⁶¹ At their annual meeting in 1920, thirty head monks re-confirmed these points. See *Chosŏn pulgyo ch'ongbo* 19 (February 1920), 65.

his adopted son and therefore more investigation is needed. His register indicates that he never married.”⁴⁶²

As a result, Yu Poam had to submit his own written statement to the Department of Religion in March 1926 to explain why he had listed his disciple Son Pohyŏk as his adopted son in his household register.

In the forty-second year of *Meiji* [1909] when the system of household registers took effect in Korea for the first time, one police officer who worked in the Tŏkch’ŏn police branch in Hamhŭng County visited me in order to get me to make my household register. This police asked me what the relationship between the master monk and the disciple monk was in the temple. I answered that it was like the relationship between an adoptive father and adopted son in a secular family. The police then told me that if I did not register my disciple monk as my adopted son, there would be problems related to property succession in the future. Therefore, I registered my disciple as my adopted son in my household register as instructed, though I did not know what exactly a household register was.⁴⁶³

In 1909, when the system of household registers was introduced in Korea by the Office of the Japanese Resident-General of Korea, the local police were in charge of collecting residential and personal information. In that year, when a local officer visited Yu Poam to collect information about his family, the officer recommended that Yu register his disciple as an adopted son to make sure that his disciple would inherit his property.⁴⁶⁴ Because Yu Poam regarded the relationship between the master monk and the disciple monk as that of a father and son, he listed his own master monk Yun Kyŏngp’a as his former head of household because, in 1895, he became Yun’s first disciple, and listed his disciple monk Son Pohyŏk as his adopted son in his

⁴⁶² Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (March 27, 1926), 318.

⁴⁶³ Yu Poam, “Chinjutsusho” (March 28, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (March 27, 1926), 348

⁴⁶⁴ It may be assumed that most monks found themselves in a similar situation as Yu Poam at this time.

household register.⁴⁶⁵

In 1926, these two issues – clerical marriage and monks’ adopted sons – became even more complicated for the colonial government. If, as the government believed, the revision in the temple bylaws increased the number of clerical marriages among Korean monks, it would create conflict between a monk’s adopted sons and his biological sons in the household register. As a result, when preparing the revision, the colonial government had to reconfirm that Buddhist monks were not permitted to list their disciples in household registers.

In June 1926, the government produced and circulated an important official document entitled “Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken” (On the Agenda That Buddhist Clerics Cannot List Their Disciples as Adopted Sons in Household Registers) to all head temples. Its main contention was that Buddhist clerics were not able to adopt their disciples because this Buddhist custom might cause disturbances in the family relationship in civil law. It states;

Traditionally, Buddhist clerics raised their disciples for the transmission of sectarian identity and dharma. Buddhist clerics imitated the secular custom, taking their disciples as adopted children and listing them in household registers. This custom might cause confusion between the master-disciple relationship in religion and the kinship relationship in civil law. Therefore, as decided and noted in previous documents, this Buddhist custom of transmission of dharma through the adoption of disciples as adopted children that was condoned in the past can not be condoned any longer.⁴⁶⁶

The Bureau of Education in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea circulated this notification to every provincial office along with a directive stating that Buddhist clerics who had

⁴⁶⁵ “Yu Poam Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken” (June 17, 1926), 1241.

⁴⁶⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Sōryo no totei o yōshi tosite koseki ni hennyū suru koto o nasa shime zaru ken” (June 17, 1926), 1235.

listed their disciples as adopted sons in household registers must now correct their household registers.

When Yu Poam was re-elected as head monk of Kwijisa in 1929, obtaining 52 out of 60 votes,⁴⁶⁷ his household register, submitted in 1929 to the colonial government, was revised. The father-adopted son relationship between Yu Poam and his disciple was nullified by the local court of Hamgyōng Province on October 11, 1928, according to “the judicial decision of nullity of relationship to the adopted son.”⁴⁶⁸ Yu Poam was not an isolated example of corrections made to monks’ household registers. Yi Taeryōn, head monk-elect of Kōnbongsa, was also ordered by the colonial government to correct his household register on August 6, 1926. According to this document, Yi Taeryōn became head of his household following the death of his master monk named Hwang Manhwa. Instead of using the title “adopted son” (*yōshi*), Yi Taeryōn listed his disciples as first disciple (*chōsa*), second disciple (*nisa*), and third disciple (*sansa*) in his household register.⁴⁶⁹ Despite the use of this terminology, the colonial government interpreted Yi Taeryōn’s three disciples as “adopted sons” and ordered Yi Taeryōn to make change in his household register in October 1926.⁴⁷⁰ Consequently, after his re-election as head monk in 1929, the names of Yi Taeryōn’s disciples were deleted from his household register.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁷ Yi P’oun, the monk of Kwijusa, who was elected as head monk of Kwijusa in 1925 but whose election was canceled due to his clerical marriage, also ran for this election of Kwijusa abbot and won only seven votes. Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (April 12, 1929), 298.

⁴⁶⁸ “Yu Poam Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kwijusa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (April 12, 1929), 302.

⁴⁶⁹ “Yi Taeryōn Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kōnbongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (October 12, 1926), 972.

⁴⁷⁰ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kōnbongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (October 12, 1926), 958.

⁴⁷¹ “Yi Taeryōn Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kōnbongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (December 13, 1929), 452.

Another example, this one involving three generations as well as disciples, is the case of Kim T'anwöl. Kim T'anwöl, who had married in 1912 and had his first child in 1912, was already a grandfather when he was elected head monk of Yujömsa, head temple of Kangwön Province, in 1936. In addition to his wife, sons, and grandchildren, Kim T'anwöl also listed his disciple monks as "foster sons," along with his disciples' wives and children. The colonial government requested that Kim T'anwöl remove his disciples and their wives and children from his household register.⁴⁷² Clearly, the colonial government was not amenable to the listing of disciples in their master monk's household register no matter what the master monk chose to call them.

The Master and Disciple Relationship after 1926

Since household registers of head monk-elects became one of the submissions to the government required for official approval, whenever the government found monks' adopted sons listed on their household registers, it demanded the correction of this relationship. Because the adoption relationship in household registers was corrected only through juridical decisions, we can see an increase in the recording of this change through an examination of lawsuits brought by monks regarding the correction required in household registers. Yi P'oun's lawsuit is a notable example of this. In 1929, Yi P'oun, whose election as head monk of Kwijusa in 1925 was cancelled due to his clerical marriage, found himself involved in a lawsuit at the local court of Hamhŭng County concerning the dissolution of his adoption of a disciple. In "the case of cancellation of relationship with a disciple," the local court sent four inquiries about the master-disciple relationship in Korean Buddhism to the Office of the Governor-General in 1930, the first being, "Is there any convention in Korean Buddhism that understands the relationship between

⁴⁷² Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Yujömsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (October 27, 1936), 590.

master monks and disciple monks as the relationship between fathers and adopted children in civil law?”⁴⁷³ The remaining three questions were about how to initiate the relationship between the master monk and the disciple monk, how to cancel this relationship between them, and whether this convention was national or regional.⁴⁷⁴ In response to these inquiries, the Superintendent-General of State Affairs (*Seimusōkan*), the second highest official in the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, replied that the master-disciple relationship was considered the same as that of a father and his adopted son because the master-disciple relationship was founded on “affection,” and not for the sole purpose of “transmission of dharma.”⁴⁷⁵ He went on to say that the master monk raised and educated his disciples, and, in return, when the master monk died this disciple wore mourning clothes for three years, inherited the property of master monk, and held a memorial service for him.⁴⁷⁶ It also referred to a recent change in the master-disciple relationship due to the spread of clerical marriage:

As the number of those monks who marry and have biological sons has increased recently, these married monks have a tendency not to have the same type of affectionate relationship with their disciple monks as they used to have and therefore, the masters and disciples have become gradually estranged.⁴⁷⁷

Although the colonial government made a judicial decision that Buddhist clerics were not permitted to list adopted disciples as sons in their household registers, it also understood that the master-disciple relationship was like a father-son relationship, based on customary law. However,

⁴⁷³ Hamhŭng Chihōhōin Minjibu, “Jōsa no mibun ni kansuru kanshū no umu toigō no ken” (December 26, 1929), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Seimusōkan, “Jōsa no mibun ni kansuru ken” (March 12, 1930), 338.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 338-339.

⁴⁷⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu Seimusōkan, “Jōsa no mibun ni kansuru ken” (March 12, 1930), 321.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 321-322.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 322.

this relationship was recognized through Buddhist clerics' registers and not household registers. Thus, the right of monks' disciples to inherit property from their master monks in return for holding memorial services after the death of the master monk was threatened by the system of modern household registers.

During the colonial period, monks were able to list their wives and biological children in their household registers and that guaranteed them the right of property succession in civil law. However, the master-disciple relationship among Buddhist monks was validated only through customary law. Korean Buddhist monks were sensitive about the master-disciple relationship because this pseudo-family relationship had been considered so essential in maintaining their identity as Buddhist clerics. When this master-disciple relationship became precarious, the relationship weakened. Furthermore, monks' concerns regarding property succession and memorial services accelerated their desire to have biological offspring. As clerical marriage became a common practice among Korean monks, the master-disciple relationship became less significant because master monks were no longer able to promise property succession to their disciples once they had their biological sons listed in their household registers.

The Aftermath of the Revision of the Temple Bylaws

Magoksa: Understanding of Bhikṣu and Non-Bhikṣu

After the colonial government lifted restrictions on married monks from the temple bylaws and gave its official permission for the practice, each head temple struggled to interpret what the implication of these revised bylaws meant for them. Perhaps the most confusing issue was just how to discriminate between *bhikṣu*, "married *bhikṣu*," and "non-*bhikṣu*." In the case of T'ongdosa, many monks were married after they had received *bhikṣu* precepts. In this case, they

were called “married *bhikṣu*,” a contradictory term that appeared only in colonial Korea. Were “married *bhikṣu*” *bhikṣu* or “non-*bhikṣu*”?

Magoksa, head temple of South Ch’ungch’ōng Province, experienced the most intense turmoil after the temple bylaws revision, as it related to the definition of “*bhikṣu*” in the head monk election. The Magoksa case started with the cancellation of Yu Inmyōng’s tenure as head monk on February 19, 1925 when the colonial government discovered his embezzlement of temple property. Though Yu Inmyōng claimed to have embezzled temple property in order to revitalize temple business, he still went to prison for a few months.⁴⁷⁸ The newspaper *Tonga ilbo* reported that Yu Inmyōng spent two hundred *won* of temple money on Pusōksa, one of the branch temples of Magoksa, but those monks opposed to Yu accused him of misappropriating temple funds for his own gain.⁴⁷⁹ After Yu Inmyōng’s dismissal, Yi Sōnghae was elected as head monk, but his election was nullified due to his clerical marriage.

Thus, Magoksa had to have yet another head monk election. This election took place on November 30, 1926, after the approval of the Magoksa head-branch temple bylaws by the Governor-General of Korea on August 27, 1926. Because of the timing, married monks qualified to run for the position of head monk. At the time, there were three powerful monks at Magoksa – Yu Inmyōng, Yi Sōnghae, and An Hyangdōk – and they were already married.⁴⁸⁰ Eighty-nine monks voted: Yu Inmyōng received 25 votes, An Hyangdōk got 20 votes, and Yi Sōnghae

⁴⁷⁸ Magoksa sūngnyō 153-myōng, “T’anwōnsō” (January 20, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 769. This 153-signature petition was written in Korean.

⁴⁷⁹ *Tonga ilbo*, February 6, 1927.

⁴⁸⁰ Yi Sōnghae was most likely married before 1917 because his first son was born in 1917. An Hyōngdōk was married in 1924. Yu Inmyōng’s household register was not available, but his name was included in the list of married monks. See Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927).

obtained 15 votes. Other contenders only received 3 votes.⁴⁸¹ Astonishingly, the former head monk Yu Inmyŏng, who had been dismissed for embezzlement in 1925, was elected as head monk again. Not surprisingly, this initiated a factional dispute between Yu Inmyŏng's support and his opponents.

After this election, the Office of South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province sent a document entitled "Magoksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (On the Approval of Head Monk of Magoksa) to the Department of Religion in the Office of the Governor-General, and warned that Yu Inmyŏng's election could worsen the internal strife at Magoksa not only because he had been dismissed as a head monk but also because he had a lot of adversaries within the temple.⁴⁸² In addition, according to the general opinion among the monks at Magoksa, An Hyangdŏk, the runner-up, was the best candidate most likely to solve the long-running internal conflicts because of his wisdom as well as his erudition.⁴⁸³ Thus, the provincial office suggested to the Department of Religion that Yu Inmyŏng be replaced with the neutral An Hyangdŏk in order to ease the internal strife at Magoksa.

As expected, after the head monk election, the colonial government received petitions, five in total, from Yu Inmyŏng's supporters as well as his opponents. In their final petition, Yu Inmyŏng's opponents claimed the election was invalid because married monks had participated as voters. It states;

The [revised] temple bylaws are ambiguous and the provincial office, the county office, and the head temple misinterpreted them as regards the qualifications of voters. Because

⁴⁸¹ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927), 627.

⁴⁸² Chūseinandō [Kr. Ch'ungch'ŏng namdo], "Magoksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (January 8, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927), 653-654.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 654-655.

of this, all *bhikṣu* regardless of whether they were married or celibate participated as voters. We think that this election was illegal because it violated Article 21 of the Magoksa Temple Bylaws.⁴⁸⁴

Yu Inmyōng's opponents maintained that all monks at Magoksa did not understand clearly the voter qualifications as laid down in its revised temple bylaws, because the provincial office as well as Magoksa failed to explain the way that qualifications had changed. Because of their misunderstanding, "married *bhikṣu*" had participated in this head monk election because the monks at Magoksa understood the concept of *bhikṣu* to be those who had received *bhikṣu* ordination no matter what their marital status was when the election was held.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the greatest difference between the original temple bylaws and the revised ones was that *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations were removed as qualifications for head monks and abbots. In addition, the colonial government had revised other rules, such as those that governed the qualification of voters in head temple election. The original Article 21 in the temple bylaws of the Magoksa parish that had been approved by the government in 1912 was that voters must be "*bhikṣu* whose names were registered in the Buddhist clerics' register at Magoksa, Kyeryongsa, Kabsa, and other affiliated branch temples."⁴⁸⁵ The revised Article 21 approved by the government in 1926 was changed to read: "voters must be 1) *bhikṣu* whose names are listed in the Buddhist clerics' register at Magoksa or affiliated branch temples, 2) those who meet a set of requirements based on Article 20, or 3) those who have achieved the status of abbots of affiliated branch temples."⁴⁸⁶ Among these three,

⁴⁸⁴ Magoksa sūngnyō 110-myōng, "T'anwōnsō" (January 29, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927), 724-725. This petition was also written in Korean.

⁴⁸⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu Naimubu, "Magoksa honmatsu jihō o sada muru ken" (October 4, 1912), 268.

⁴⁸⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Magoksa honmatsu jihō kaimei no ken" (August 27, 1926), 1013.

the most confusing was “those who meet a set of requirements based on Article 20.” The Article 20 in the revised temple bylaws specified that branch temple abbots must be over 25 years old, have more than 5 dharma years, and have graduated from the course of Four Teachings.

Since the monks of Magoksa were confused by the definition of *bhikṣu* as it referred to a voter’s qualifications, the temple sent Ku Ch’iyōng, abbot of its branch temple Illaksa, to the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education in Seoul with a written inquiry on January 10, 1927. Entitled “Jihō jōbun ue toi ni kansuru ken” (On the Inquiry into Articles in the Temple Bylaws),” the document posed three questions that they hoped would clarify the definition of *bhikṣu*:

1. Are married *bhikṣu* (*saitai no bikusō*) considered *bhikṣu* and thus qualified to vote in a head monk election or not?
2. If married monks receive *bhikṣu* ordination, are they acknowledged as *bhikṣu* or not?
3. If monks marry after they have received *bhikṣu* ordination, is their *bhikṣu* ordination annulled or not?⁴⁸⁷

These questions are significant because they indicate the way the monks at Magoksa understood the concept of *bhikṣu* and alluded to three facts about the population at Magoksa: 1) There were “married *bhikṣu*” at Magoksa who had participated as voters in the head monk election of 1926; 2) Some of these “married *bhikṣu*” received *bhikṣu* precepts after they married; and 3) There were other “married *bhikṣu*” who married after they had received *bhikṣu* precepts. *Bhikṣu* is defined as one who receives *bhikṣu* precepts based on the *Four Part Vinaya*, and the most fundamental condition of *bhikṣu* ordination is celibacy. However, monks used the loopholes in

⁴⁸⁷ Magoksa, “Jihō jōbun ue toi ni kansuru ken” (January 10, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 793-794.

the temple bylaws by marrying after receiving *bhikṣu* ordination. The contradictory term “married *bhikṣu*” was coined in this way.

The colonial government had anticipated that the revision of the temple bylaws might bring about enormous confusion on the issue of clerical marriage and the concept of *bhikṣu* among Korean monks. In fact, Yi Chinho, the head of the Bureau of Education in the Office of the Governor-General, attended the general council meeting of the Kyomuwŏn (Central Council of Korean Buddhism) on March 23, 1926, and explained the significance of the revision of the temple bylaws to thirty-one head monks.⁴⁸⁸ More specifically, Yi drew a clear distinction between *bhikṣu* and non-*bhikṣu* at this meeting. The petition stated;

In the fourth general council meeting of the Chosŏn pulgyo chungang kyomuwŏn on February 23, in the 15th year of *Taishō* [1926], Your Worship Yi [Yi Chinho], the head of the Bureau of Education, taught the difference between *bhikṣu* and non-*bhikṣu* (非比丘). Article 61 of the temple bylaws says that married ones are not permitted to receive *bhikṣu* precepts because the ordination of *bhikṣu* should be based on the traditional rule.⁴⁸⁹

However, this clarification made by the Bureau of Education may not have been completely understood because “married monks” continued to reside at Magoksa, as well as other head temples.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁸ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Chōsen jisatsu seido chū shūsei no ken kan” (March 11, 1926), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Kakuji honmatsu jihō chū shūsei o yōsubeki kajō no shūsei hyōjun o shimesu ken” (May 10, 1926), 1166-1167.

⁴⁸⁹ Magoksa sūngnyō 90-myōng, “Chinjōngsō” (February 5, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July, 9, 1927), 799. This petition was written in Korean and its Japanese translation was attached. This petition states that the fourth general council was held on February 23, 1926, but its writer must have mistaken the exact date, because, according to the government document and an article in the newspaper *Maeil sinbo*, this meeting actually took place on March 23, 1926. See Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Chōsen jisatsu seido chū shūsei no ken kan” (March 11, 1926); and *Maeil sinbo*, March 27, 1926.

⁴⁹⁰ When the head temple T’ongdosa held the head monk election in May 12, 1926, thirty-eight “married *bhikṣu*” participated in this election as voters. See Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Tongdosa jūji kōhosha no tōhyōshū chōsa ni kansuru ken” (May 28, 1926), 485.

The three questions from Magoksa were answered in this way by the colonial government:

1. There had never been a Buddhist rule permitting *bhikṣu* to get married. Therefore, married ones cannot be called *bhikṣu*.
2. If married monks ask to receive *bhikṣu* precepts, they should not be permitted.
3. If they get married after having received *bhikṣu* precepts, they should know that their *bhikṣu* ordination will no longer be valid because they have violated the precepts.⁴⁹¹

In this way, the colonial government was clear on its definition of *bhikṣu*: 1) *bhikṣu* should not be married; 2) married monks were not permitted to receive *bhikṣu* precepts; 3) and *bhikṣu* ordination would be annulled if *bhikṣu* got married.

It is interesting to note that when Ku Ch'iyŏng, branch temple abbot in the Magoksa parish, went to the Department of Religion of the Bureau of Education, with the three questions concerning the definition of *bhikṣu*, he revealed that there were thirty-nine “married *bhikṣu*” among the 45 *bhikṣu* voters in the 1926 head monk election.⁴⁹² The Department of Religion ultimately ordered the Office of South Ch'ungch ŏng Province to collect all household registers from these 45 voters. An aspect of it states;

The term *bhikṣu* refers to those who have received 250 precepts based on Buddhist monastic rules, and have observed precepts. Therefore, it is necessary to check whether or not they observe Buddhist precepts. To investigate this in a simple way, we hope to collect their household registers in order to find out who are married monks and who are not.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹¹ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Jihō jōbun ue toi ni kansuru ken” (January 18, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 788-789.

⁴⁹² Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Tsūchōan” (January 18, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 790-791.

⁴⁹³ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Sōryo no koseki tōhon chōshū no ken” (January 14, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 656-657.

In the head monk election at Magoksa, there were 89 voters in total: 45 voters with the qualification of *bhikṣu* and 44 voters with the qualification of branch temple abbots. Due to the revised temple bylaws, it did not matter what the marital status of the forty-four branch temple abbots was; The government only wished and needed to check the marital status of the forty-five *bhikṣu* voters.

When Magoksa submitted the list of *bhikṣu* and non-*bhikṣu* among the forty-five voters, those listed were classified into two categories: thirteen “*bhikṣu* based on the temple bylaws” and thirty-two “non-*bhikṣu* as defined by the regulations on clerical marriage.”⁴⁹⁴ In other words, among the forty-five *bhikṣu* voters, only thirteen monks were *bhikṣu*, while thirty-two were “married *bhikṣu*” or “non-*bhikṣu*.” Certainly, Magoksa thought that its head monk election would be cancelled because the colonial government discovered these non-qualified voters. For this reason, the monks of Magoksa submitted a document to the colonial government requesting a re-election due to the expected invalidation of the first election.⁴⁹⁵

But the colonial government changed its position suddenly, and declared the head monk election valid, despite the participation of unqualified voters. In fact, the Department of Religion in the Office of the Governor-General identified all monks who participated as genuine *bhikṣu*.⁴⁹⁶

We confirmed that they [forty-five monks] took part in the election as qualified *bhikṣu* whose names were listed at Magoksa and other branch temples, and therefore, they did

⁴⁹⁴ Magoksa, “Ch’ungnam taebonsan Magoksa che o-se chuji sŏn’gŏhoe sŏn’gŏrok (February 5, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 805-807.

⁴⁹⁵ Magoksa, “Che o-se Chuji ch’uijik inga sinch’ŏngsŏ pan’gak e taehan kŏn” (February 26, 1927). in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 780.

⁴⁹⁶ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (April 29, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 620-621.

not violate Article 21 in the temple bylaws of Magoksa. Upon this understanding, we verify that this head monk election is valid.⁴⁹⁷

The question here is, of course, what caused the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education to switch its position so dramatically and maintain the validity of the election in spite of the list of “non-*bhikṣu*.”

Behind this abrupt change was Yu Inmyōng’s resignation as head monk-elect. If the government nullified the head monk election, the next head monk-elect would necessarily be elected from either the pro-Yu Inmyōng’s faction or the anti-Yu Inmyōng’s faction. This was not something the colonial government wanted. The colonial government desperately needed a head monk-elect from a third faction. It needed a head monk-elect who was neutral, namely, An Hyangdōk, the runner-up of the 1926 election. Without An Hyangdōk at the helm, the internal strife of Magoksa would only get worse. Although it is not clear what exactly made Yu Inmyōng step down as head monk-elect, he submitted his resignation in June 1927.⁴⁹⁸ As soon as Yu had resigned, the colonial government declared the validity of the head monk election of Magoksa, and approved their choice, An Hyangdōk.⁴⁹⁹ Born in 1869, An Hyangdōk received *bhikṣu* precepts in 1907.⁵⁰⁰ He was the head monk of Magoksa from 1919 to 1923, and was believed by the local government to be the monk who could best solve the internal strife of Magoksa.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 620.

⁴⁹⁸ Yu Inmyōng, “Jitai todoke” (June 13, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 623.

⁴⁹⁹ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 617-618.

⁵⁰⁰ Chūseinandō [Kr. Ch’ungch’ōngnamdo], “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (June 20, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 624.

⁵⁰¹ Chūseinandō [Kr. Ch’ungch’ōngnamdo], “Magoksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (January 8, 1927), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 654.

According to his household register, An Hyangdŏk married in 1924 at the age of 75 and had a son.⁵⁰²

Although he married after receiving *bhikṣu* precepts, his *bhikṣu* ordination was not deleted from his resume: He was a “married *bhikṣu*.” However, the colonial government did not concern themselves about this in part because the revision in the temple bylaws had removed celibacy and *bhikṣu* ordination from among the qualifications required of head monks and in part because he was useful to them politically. After the government chose to ignore the fact that Magoksa had violated the bylaws and had requested a re-election, An Hyangdŏk was installed as the head monk of Magoksa and, thanks to government interference, the internal turmoil began to subside.

Head Monks’ Household Registers from 1926 to 1945

The colonial government gathered household registers from all head monk-elects after the revision of the temple bylaws in 1926. During the entire colonial period, Korean Buddhism had one hundred seventy-five head monks in thirty-one head temple parishes. I have collected and examined 98 household registers of 75 head monks (some head monks were re-elected more than twice) who held office from 1926 to 1945. Given that there were 112 head monks in total between 1926 and 1945, these 75 head monks amount to 67 percent of the entire population of head monks who were in office from 1926, the year that the government decided to lift restrictions on married monks from the temple bylaws, to 1945, the year that Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule. In addition, I have collected resumes from 75 head monks in which

⁵⁰² “An Hyangdŏk Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken” (July 9, 1927), 626.

head monks' personal information, ordination records, education, and work experience are recorded.

Usually a head monk election took place every three years, though there were often special head monk elections held when a head monk died or resigned due to serious illness. Through examination of the household registers and resumes that were among government documents related to the approval of a head monk's appointment, we can examine the way that the revision of the temple bylaws affected the marital status of monks and the way that the colonial government's definition of *bhikṣu* influenced their understanding of "bhikṣu."

An interesting story that weaves together colonial government involvement in Korean Buddhist affairs, clerical marriage, and head monk appointment is that of Kim Kyōngsan, head monk of the Pōmōsa parish from 1926 to 1932. Kim was born in 1873, entered Pōmōsa in 1886, and received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations in 1911.⁵⁰³ In 1924, Kim Kyōngsan was elected as head monk of Pōmōsa but his appointment was delayed by the colonial government due to an internal dispute at Pōmōsa. In September 1925, when the Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education prepared the revision in the temple bylaws, it also ordered the Office of South Kyōngsang Province to collect and submit Kim Kyōngsan's household register. However, Kim did not comply because he had listed a wife therein. In November 1925, the Department of Religion again requested his household register⁵⁰⁴ but Kim did not submit it until December 19, 1925, 16 days after he had divorced.⁵⁰⁵ The colonial government did not approve his

⁵⁰³ Kim Kyōngsan, "Shugyō rirekisho," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pōmōsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 10, 1926), 916; Kim Kyōngsan, "Shugyō rirekisho," in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pōmōsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 16, 1929), 311.

⁵⁰⁴ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pōmōsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken" (November 21, 1925), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pōmōsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 10, 1926), 934-935.

⁵⁰⁵ "Kim Kyōngsan Koseki tōhon," Keishōnandō [Kr. Kyōngsangnamdo], "Pōmōsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni

appointment because of his clerical marriage experience. After the temple bylaws of the Pŏmŏsa parish were approved by the colonial government on July 5, 1926, however, the situation changed. Pŏmŏsa held a head monk election on July 27. As they anticipated, Kim Kyŏngsan was elected again, and his election was valid at this time, based on the revised temple bylaws. Given that the head monk election took place right after the government approval of the Pŏmŏsa temple bylaws, it might be concluded that both Pŏmŏsa and the colonial government planned this so that a married monk would be able to be elected as head monk. Because Kim Kyŏngsan was re-elected as head monk in 1929, we can compare his two household registers. His household register from 1925, when the original temple bylaws prohibited married monks from running for the position of head monk, indicates that Kim divorced his wife in 1925; His household register of 1929, on the other hand, indicates that he re-married his former wife in November 1926, after the temple bylaws of the Pŏmŏsa parish were revised in July 1926.⁵⁰⁶ Comparing these two household registers, one can deduce that he divorced his wife for the purpose of his candidacy for the head monk election. Additionally, when Kim Kyŏngsan presented his resume to the colonial government in 1926 and in 1929, he stated that he was a “*bhikṣu*.”⁵⁰⁷ Although, in March 1926, the government had established that *bhikṣu* ordination would be nullified at the moment that a *bhikṣu* married, the government still did not make any issue of Kim’s *bhikṣu* status.

kansuru ken” (December 19, 1925), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pŏmŏsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 10, 1926), 930.

⁵⁰⁶ “Kim Kyŏngsan Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pŏmŏsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 16, 1926), 313.

⁵⁰⁷ Kim Kyŏngsan, “Shugyō rirekisho,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pŏmŏsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 10, 1926), 916; Kim Kyŏngsan, “Shugyō rirekisho,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pŏmŏsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (August 16, 1929), 311.

It is important to understand that, though monks might present themselves as unmarried in their household registers, that did not mean that they did not have any relationships with women at all: Some monks kept concubines in the temple. For example, Pak Pobong, head monk of Pohyōnsa from 1915 to 1932, was unmarried according to his household register, though he lived with a woman in the temple from October 1927 on.⁵⁰⁸ According to his resume, he was born in 1871, entered Pohyōnsa in 1887, received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations in 1914, and was raised to the status of great Sōn master (*taesōnsa*), the highest clerical rank.⁵⁰⁹ Pohyōnsa, the head temple in North P’yōngan Province, held the head monk election in September 1927 and Pak Pobong was elected. However, the colonial government noticed that unqualified voters had participated in the election. The Department of Religion in the Bureau of Education dispatched its official Ideguchi Yūkichi to Pohyōnsa to conduct further investigation into the situation. According to Ideguchi’s report entitled “Pohyōnsa chōsa jikō” (Investigation Report on Pohyōnsa), Pak Pobong threatened monks in order to get them to vote for him as well as allowing his eight right-hand men to vote despite the fact that they did not qualify.⁵¹⁰ In addition, this report disclosed details about Pak’s private life. It states, “Pak used to be a *bhikṣu* who followed Buddhist precepts strictly. However, he recently brought a woman from Sinanju city and they lived together, thus violating the precepts. Other monks, following his transgression, had women openly, and became impure.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pohyōnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (July 24, 1928), 960.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 934-935.

⁵¹⁰ Ideguchi Yūkichi, “Pohyōnsa chōsa jikō,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pohyōnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (July 24, 1928), 956. Ideguchi’s report does not have a date. Given that Ideguchi knew about Pak’s concubine, it can be assumed that he wrote this report during a certain period between October 1927 and January 1928. The government nullified Pak’s election in January 1928.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 960-961.

Following Ideguchi's investigation, the Office of Yŏngbyŏn County in which the Pohyŏnsa temple was located conducted its own investigation. They sent an official named Saino Kiichi to Pohyŏnsa to look into the case of the head monk election and the private life of Pak Pobong. The report that was issued was entitled "Pohyŏnsa jūji senkyo ni kansuru ken" (On the Case of the Head Monk Election of Pohyŏnsa)⁵¹² and it told a different story than the one told by Ideguchi. Saino's report claimed that the participation of unqualified monks as voters in the head monk election was unintentional and could be blamed on incorrect information found in the Buddhist clerics' register of Pohyŏnsa.⁵¹³ In addition, regarding Pak Pobong's relationship with a woman called "secret concubine" (私妾), this report explained Pak Pobong's bringing of this woman to the temple in this way:

When we asked Pak Pobong what made him decide to live with this woman, Pak said that he was fifty-eight years old, and he did not have a wife or a concubine because he thought it was shameful. However, he became more and more uncomfortable with living alone, and he realized that most Korean abbots were married. Therefore, when Pak's friend advised him to take a woman as a kitchen maid (*suifu* 炊婦), he reluctantly did so.⁵¹⁴

Although Pak was deceptive in claiming that this woman was a kitchen maid, Saino Kiichi, the writer of this report, concluded that, without exception, all branch abbots of Pohyŏnsa, to say nothing of the head monk, had wives or concubines. Since the temple bylaws of the Pohyŏnsa parish had been revised on February 25, 1927, Pak's having a concubine or kitchen maid beginning in October 1927 did not, in fact, violate the temple bylaws. However, because of the unqualified voters in the election, after all, Pak Pobong's election as head monk of Pohyŏnsa

⁵¹² Saino Kiichi, "Pohyŏnsa jūji senkyo ni kansuru ken" (February 6, 1928), in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, "Pohyŏnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (July 24, 1928), 981-985.

⁵¹³ Ibid., 982.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 984-985.

was nullified in 1927. Pak was elected again, however, in the head monk election of 1928 and his appointment was approved by the government, which complimented him as a man of “great learning and prestige.”⁵¹⁵

Through an examination of 98 household registers of 75 head monks, I found that thirty-three monks were married, thirty-seven were unmarried, one was divorced, one had divorced then remarried the same spouse, and three had biological children including nonmarital children but did not register the mothers of their children in their household registers.

Table 1: Years of Ordinations and Marriages

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Kim Kuha	T'ongdosa	1911-1925	1872	1896	1896	1923	“T'ongdosa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (August 9, 1926)
Na Ch'ōngho	Pongūnsa	1912-1918 1924-1934	1875	1897	1897	1912	“Pongūnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (May 12, 1934)
Chi Sōktam	Ŭnhaesa	1917-1928	1875	1895	1895	1923	“Ŭnhaesa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (January 13, 1927)
Chin Chinūng	Hwaōmsa	1917-1925 1928-1931	1873	1913	1913	1920	“Hwaōmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (July 20, 1928)

⁵¹⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Pohyōnsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (July 24, 1928), 929.

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Yi Ch'ŏrhŏ	Posŏksa	1917-1930	1881	1899	1899	1917	"Posŏksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 1, 1927)
Yi Podam	Sŏngbulsā	1918-1945	1858	1912	1912	Divorced in 1915	"Sŏngbulsā jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (August 10, 1927)
An Hyangdŏk	Magoksa	1919-1923 1927-1935 1939-1942	1869	1907	1907	1924	"Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927); "Magoksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (July 2, 1930)
Kim Chŏnghae	Chŏndūngsa	1922-1928	1879	1904	1904	1920	"Mimoto shōkai no ken" (October 20, 1923)
Yi Sŏnghae	Magoksa	n/a ⁵¹⁶	1874	1914	1914	1917	"Magoksa jūji shūnin ninka no ken" (July 9, 1927)
Kim Kyŏngsan	Pŏmŏsa	1926-1932	1873	1911	1911	Divorced in 1925 and remarried in 1926	"Pŏmŏsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 10, 1926); "Pŏmŏsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken" (August 16, 1929)
Ch'oe Int'aek	Kimnyong-sa	1927-1934	1883	1906	1906	1922	"Kimnyongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken" (February 5, 1930)

⁵¹⁶ Yi Sŏnghae was head monk-elect in 1925, but his election was nullified due to his clerical marriage.

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Hwang Poŭng	Tonghwasa	1927-1936	1880	1904	1904	1922	“Tonghwasa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (May 2, 1927); “Tonghwasa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (May 6, 1930)
Yang Honhō	Ŭnhaesa	1928-1931	1880	1907	1907	1921	“Ŭnhaesa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (September 3, 1928)
Sin Yunyōng	Pongsōnsa	1928-1933	1868	1898	1898	1907	“Pongsōnsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (March 18, 1928)
Kwōn Sangyōn	Kounsa	1928-1933	1888	1913	1913	1927	“Kounsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (September 3, 1928)
Hwang Pyōkūng	Posōksa	1930-1932 1937-1940	1879	1901	1901	1925	“Posōksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (August 3, 1930)
Kam Sōnwōl	Paegyangsa	1930-1937	1882	1913	1913	1921	“Paegyangsa oyobi Taehūngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (November 6, 1930)

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Yi Changu	Yŏngmyŏngsa, Pŏphŭngsa ⁵¹⁷	1931-1935	1897	1916	1916	1926	“Yŏngmyŏng Pŏphŭng ryō honzan jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (July 19, 1934)
Yi Hwanhae	Sŏgwangsa	1931-1940	1884	1910	1910	1922	“Sŏgwangsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (March 27, 1934)
Yi Myŏnggyo	P’ae-yŏpsa	1934-1945	1893	1912	1912	1918	“P’ae-yŏpsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (January 17, 1934); “P’ae-yŏpsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (February 2, 1940)
Pak Tosu	Ŭnhaesa	1934-1940	1892	1912	1912	1921	“Ŭnhaesa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (July 6, 1934)
Yi Pyŏngho	Kimnyongsa	1934-1940	1890	1913	1913	1920	“Kimnyongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (August 24, 1934)

⁵¹⁷ Yŏngmyŏngsa and Pŏphŭngsa were head temples in South Py’ŏngan Province. Due to difficulties in finding eligible head monks and financial problem, one head monk played a double role as head monk in these two head temples from 1918 to 1945.

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Kim Chöngsöp	Chöndüngsa	1937-1945	1887	1910	1910	1924	“Chöndüngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (September 18, 1934); “Chöngdüngsa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (November 19, 1940)
Kang Söngin	Pongünsa	1934-1940	1894	1912	1912	1924	“Pongünsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 20, 1934)
Ch’a Sangmyöng	Pömösa	1936-1939	1895	1913	1913	1923	“Pömösa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (April 28, 1936)
Yun Sangböm	Tonghwasa	1936-1942	1890	1914	1914	1919	“Tonghwasa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (October 21, 1936)
Kim T’anwöl	Yujömsa	1936-1939	1882	n/a	1893	1912	“Yujömsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (October 27, 1936)
Yi Chonguk	Wöljöngsa	1930-1945	1884	1905	1905	1933	“Wöljöngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (December 17, 1936); “Wöljöngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (December 2, 1939)

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Kim Ch'ôngam	Yujõmsa	1939-1945	1877	1913	1913	1929	“Yujõmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (February 15, 1939)
Song Tuhan	Põmõsa	1939-1942	1888	1903	1903	1924	“Põmõsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (May 1, 1939)
Kim Chaehong	Kõnbongsa	1939-1945	1884	1916	1916	n/a ⁵¹⁸	“Kõnbongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (September 6, 1939)
Pak Yõnghũi	Taehũngsa	1937-1945	1893	1913	1913	1923	“Taehũngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (January 20, 1940)
So Pyõngsõn	Hwaõmsa	1940-1943	1889	1913	1913	1928	“Hwaõmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (March 16, 1940)
Iwamoto Bunjin ⁵¹⁹	Ŭnhaesa	1940-1945	1890	1914	1914	1922	“Ŭnhaesa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (July 12, 1940)

⁵¹⁸ Kim Chaehong listed his wife in his household register, but year of marriage was not recorded.

⁵¹⁹ His Korean name was Yi Sõktu, but he used his Japanese name Iwamoto Bunjin (岩本文璣) in the document for his approval. It was common for most Koreans to change their names to Japanese-style names in the late colonial period.

Name of Head Monk	Name of Head Temple	Years of Incumbency	Year of Birth	Year of <i>Bhikṣu</i> Ordination	Year of Bodhisattva Ordination	Year of Marriage or Birth of First Child	Source
Nishihara Sakazu ⁵²⁰	Kimnyongsa	1940-1945	1890	1912	1912	1925	“Kimnyongsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (September 20, 1940)
Tokuyama Michio ⁵²¹	Pong’ūngsa	1940-1945	1899	1925	1925	1927	“Pong’ūngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (October 10, 1940)
Matsuda Aosawa ⁵²²	Posōksa	1940-1944	1887	1914	1914	1916	“Posōksa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (November 11, 1940)
Kanamura Miyao ⁵²³	Pōpchusa	1940-1945	1883	1904	1904	1933	“Pōpchusa jūji shūshoku ninka no ken” (December 21, 1940)

Overall, thirty-seven head monks claimed to be unmarried, while thirty-eight head monks listed themselves as married or as having children. Interestingly, thirty-one monks out of these thirty-eight head monks had already married or had children without having married even before the revision of the temple bylaws in 1926. By the 1930s and 1940s, all Korean monks had become familiar with the revised temple bylaws and clerical marriage became the norm among

⁵²⁰ Kwak Kijong changed his name to Nishihara Sakazu (西原左一).

⁵²¹ Tokuyama Michio (徳山道乎) had an original Korean name of Hong T’aeuk.

⁵²² Hwang Manch’un changed his name to Matsuda Aosawa (松田青澤).

⁵²³ He had the Korean name Kim Pyōnghyōn but changed it to Kanamura Miyao (金村宮乎).

Korean monks. Because of this, household registers of head monks who were in office during these years reveal some interesting data concerning the relationship between the revision of the temple bylaws and the spread of clerical marriage. An examination of the household registers of 45 head monks disclosed that twenty-four head monks were married, eighteen head monks were unmarried, and three head monks registered only their children (including nonmarital children) but not the mothers of these children. A leading Korean scholar of modern Korean Buddhism, Kim Kwangsik, maintains that almost ninety percent of Korean monks were married by the end of the colonial period due to the revision of the temple bylaws.⁵²⁴ However, the ratio of married monks to unmarried monks as revealed in the household registers tells a different story: This revision did not, in fact, have an overwhelming impact on the spread of clerical marriage among the majority of Korean monks.

It can clearly be seen that, even prior to the revision in the temple bylaws, Korean monks who wanted to have wives and children did and most of those who were married – the thirty-one out of thirty-eight head monks in Table 1 – were already married or had children before the government lifted limitations on married monks in 1926. Monks who chose to be celibate maintained their celibacy even after the the revision of the temple bylaws lifted the ban on clerical marriage. In short, it can be said that the temple bylaws had little influence on clerical marriage among Korean monks during the colonial period.

Comparing head monks' household registers with their resumes, it can be seen that some monks received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts and then married after their ordination. For example, Chin Chinŭng was abbot of Hwaŏmsa from 1917 to 1925, and head monk of Hwaŏmsa from 1928 to 1931 after Hwaŏmsa's elevation to the status of head temple in 1924. According to

⁵²⁴ Kim Kwangsik, *Han'guk hyŏndae pulgyosa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Pulgyo sidaesa, 2006), 82.

his resume and household register, he had received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts in 1913, and was married in 1920.⁵²⁵ However, he did not remove his *bhikṣu* ordination record from his 1928 resume. Another example is Yi Chonguk, head monk of Wöljōngsa from 1930 to 1945.

According to his resume and household register, he had received his *bhikṣu* precepts in 1905 and was married in 1933.⁵²⁶ His *bhikṣu* ordination still appeared in the 1939 version of his resume.

There was no shortage of head monks who were “married *bhikṣu*” between 1926 and 1945.

Through examination of the surviving household registers and resumes of thirty-four married head monks, it can be seen that thirty-three out of these thirty-four head monks were “married *bhikṣu*.” The only exception was Kim T’anwŏl, head monk of Yujōmsa from 1936 to 1939. Born in 1882, Kim entered the temple in 1892, and received bodhisattva ordination in 1893.⁵²⁷ He was married and had his first child in 1912.⁵²⁸ The resume that he presented to the colonial

government in 1936 did not record his *bhikṣu* ordination and indicated that he received bodhisattva precepts in 1893. It is not known whether Kim T’anwŏl himself omitted his *bhikṣu* ordination record from his resume due to his clerical marriage or had not, in fact, received it.

Given that Kim became a great master of doctrine (*taegyosa*), the highest clerical rank, in 1924, it seems likely that Kim T’anwŏl had received *bhikṣu* precepts, and that he recanted his

ordination because of his marriage, though it is not known what exactly made him recant. This

situation seems to be the exception since the majority of head monks did not recant their *bhikṣu*

⁵²⁵ “Chin Chinŭng Shugyō rirekisho” and “Chin Chinŭng Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Hwaōmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (July 20, 1928), 915 and 918.

⁵²⁶ “Yi Chonguk Shugyō rirekisho” and “Yi Chonguk Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Wöljōngsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei no ken” (December 2, 1939), 170 and 178.

⁵²⁷ Kim T’anwŏl, “Suhaeng irōksō,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Yujōmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (October 27, 1936), 607.

⁵²⁸ “Kim T’anwŏl Koseki tōhon,” in Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumukyoku, “Yujōmsa jūji shūshoku ninka shinsei ni kansuru ken” (October 27, 1936), 615.

ordination after marriage. In this sense, the definition of *bhikṣu* by the colonial government did not challenge either the practice of clerical marriage or the presence of “married *bhikṣu*” among Korean Buddhist monks.

Conclusion

From the late Chosŏn period on, Korean Buddhist monks established pseudo-family relationships through dharma lineage and gained the right to own private property. The introduction of the system of modern household registers by the colonial government posed a threat to dharma family relationships in Korean Buddhism because the colonial government did not permit Korean monks to register their dharma relations in household registers. As for the clash between modern civil law and the customary law of Korean Buddhism regarding the master-disciple relationship and property succession, the colonial government suggested that this relationship was confirmed by the Buddhist clerics’ registers, based on the customary law.

The modern household register system threatened the relationship between master monks and their disciples, a relationship that allowed disciples to inherit private property from their master monks in return for which the disciples would perform memorial services for their deceased master monks. In part because of this threat, these “father-son” relationship founded on the succession of monks’ private property became a justification for the practice of clerical marriage which, in turn, soon replaced these “pseudo-family” relationships with biological family relationships.

The most controversial concept to arise from colonial Korean Buddhist tradition is “married *bhikṣu*,” a contradiction in terms. According to the colonial government’s guidelines, married monks were barred from receiving *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts. However, as can be

seen on examining the histories of head monks, “married *bhikṣu*” were common in Korean Buddhist communities. Monks received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts first, and then they married. It can be said that the existence of the “married *bhikṣu*” is a product of the weak *vinaya* tradition in Korean Buddhism and the Buddhist policies promulgated by the colonial government. Korean monks struggled to make sense of the changes and took advantage of loopholes in the temple bylaws – alternative monastic rules imposed by the colonial government – to find ways to survive on their own terms.

CONCLUSION

Clerical marriage among Korean monks occupies a unique place in Korean history in that it was both a common practice and a practice that brought about some of the greatest changes in Korean Buddhism during the colonial and the post-colonial periods, changes that re-fashioned Korean monks' understanding of monastic rules, which created sharp divisions between married monks and celibate monks and generated the Buddhist Purification Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, causing a sectarian diversity that gave rise to the T'aego Order of married monks and the Chogye Order of celibate monks in the 1970s. Despite its enormous influence on Korean Buddhism, the issue of clerical marriage during the colonial period remains an area that is woefully under-researched, an issue that is cavalierly thrown into the basket of things that can be blamed on Japanese colonial rule. Using the argument that modernity had a hand in bringing about the lineal changes that shattered the foundations of Korean Buddhism and reviewing previously ignored primary sources, including unpublished documents of the Office of the Governor-General and monks' household registers, this dissertation introduces a new interpretation of the practice of clerical marriage among Korean monks, one that sees it less as a manifestation of Japanese influence and power and more as a manifestation of Buddhist modernity, a practice chosen by rather than foisted upon Korean monks under Japanese colonial rule.

Four questions posed in the "Introduction" must be revisited in this conclusion. Was the practice of clerical marriage a product of the colonial period? Did the Office of the Governor-General of Korea plan to assimilate Korean Buddhism into Japanese Buddhism through legitimizing the practice of clerical marriage among Korean monks? Just what was the reality of

clerical marriage? Did clerical marriage during the colonial period contaminate the “pure” Korean Buddhist tradition?

The first question can be answered with a qualified “no.” Though the practice of clerical marriage became common during the colonial period, its foundation, established during the late Chosŏn period, laid the groundwork for both clerical marriage and the focus on biological family relationships during the colonial period. There are two salient reasons behind the interest in clerical marriage and biological family relationships: 1) the concept of the dharma family that created a counterpart to secular families and 2) the right of monks to own private property that could be handed down through a type of primogeniture from master monk to disciple in exchange for the performance of memorial services. The right to own private property was, in particular, indispensable in that it provided support for the family. Without these two elements, clerical marriage might not have been so widespread during the colonial occupation. In addition to the establishment of dharma lineage, late Chosŏn Buddhism saw the restoration of ordination lineage, which had been broken during the Koryŏ and the early Chosŏn period when monkhood was determined instead through a governmental certification and examination system. In other words, *bhikṣu* ordination was not the dominant practice for the majority of Chosŏn monks. The reason that this weak ordination tradition during the Chosŏn dynasty was connected with the practice of clerical marriage may be attributed to the fact that celibacy was the most important among *bhikṣu* precepts. The weak *bhikṣu* ordination tradition coupled with the absence of government supervision of Buddhist affairs eventually led to lax deportment among Buddhist clerics. Evidence of this can be found in accounts that appeared in newspapers in the early 1910s as well as in the unprecedentedly large number of *bhikṣu* ordination ceremonies that occurred during the early 1910s, a time when, according to the temple bylaws, *bhikṣu* ordination was the

most important requirement for head monks, abbots and *sŏn* practitioners.

The second question can also be answered with a qualified “no.” The colonial government regarded Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism as two totally different entities with different Buddhist regulations. When head monks of the thirty-one Buddhist parishes approached the colonial government to propose a revision of the temple bylaws that would lift restrictions on married monks, the government’s greatest concern was the financial security of the Korean Buddhist temples, a system that was different from that of Japanese Buddhist temples. It was this concern for financial security and a wish to prevent head monks from taking out loans to support wives and families that motivated the colonial government to require head monks to submit their household registers for scrutiny by government officials. The changes in the temple bylaws were not instigated by the Japanese government but by the Korean monks themselves. They did this not to come into alignment with the practices of Japanese Buddhism but in order to legalize a practice that was already widespread. The Japanese government’s concerns were more financial than ethical or spiritual: they wanted to be sure that monks were not using temple money to support their families.

The answer to the third question is that clerical marriage was a reality both before and during Japanese colonial times but its reality during the Japanese occupation changed and this change had an effect on master/disciple relationships. The change occurred when the Japanese government introduced household registers in 1909 and required monks to list themselves therein. Because Korean monks traditionally considered the master-disciple relationship that of father and son, they listed their disciples as adopted sons. However, the colonial government prohibited this type of adoption in 1915 on the grounds that the monk and his disciple had different surnames, which went against civil law. This decision shook the entire Korean Buddhist

monastic community to the core and so the colonial government suggested an alternative plan in 1916: The master-disciple relationship would be guaranteed by a means of the Buddhist clerics' register instead, which instigated a new clash between civil law and conventional law involving the inheritance of property. Because of this, the biological family relationship replaced the master/disciple relationship because leaving property to a biological relation was never jeopardized; it was protected by civil law in a way inheritance was not in the adoptive relationship.

As for the last question "Did clerical marriage during the colonial period contaminate the 'pure' Korean Buddhist tradition?," the answer is "no." There was, in fact, never a "pure" Korean tradition; the dichotomy of purity or contamination can be seen as a construct stemming from a desire to gain control over Korean Buddhism politically and economically, and to this end, projecting an unattainable wish for the "pure" tradition. Though celibate monks and the Korean government in the 1950s and the 1960s argued that purity had been lost, a look at historical documents reveals that not only did the Japanese colonial government apply the same expression when it attacked some married monks, such as Kim Kuha, head monk of T'ongdosa, but also some Japanese Buddhist priests during the colonial period expressed their wish to preserve the celibacy precept among Korean Buddhist monks, even though Japanese Buddhism had discarded this in the name of Buddhist modernization during the Meiji period.

Examinations of unpublished colonial government documents, monks' resumes, and monks' household registers suggest other new findings regarding the temple bylaws and the practice of clerical marriage among Korean monks. Although most scholars in Korean Buddhism argue that the revision in the temple bylaws in 1926 eventually led to the spread of clerical marriage, the surviving 98 household registers of 75 head monks tell a different story: Among

thirty-eight head monks who listed their wives or listed children without listing their mothers in household registers, thirty-one had married or had children during the period between 1907 and 1925. The government didn't lift the prohibition of clerical marriage for head monks, abbots, and *sŏn* practitioners until 1926, meaning that these monks were married before this ban was lifted. Among the forty-five head monks who were in office between 1930 and 1945 and whose household registers survived, twenty-four were married and eighteen remained unmarried even though clerical marriage was considered normal by both society and the Buddhist monastic community. From these facts, it can be concluded that Korean monks made their own decision about celibacy and marriage, a decision that was not necessarily influenced by the existence of restrictions on clerical marriage in the original temple bylaws nor by their eventual lifting in the revised temple bylaws.

This tendency to interpret monastic rules in their own way can also be seen in their definition of “married *bhikṣu*.” When Magoksa sent a written inquiry to the colonial government in 1927 asking for a definition of *bhikṣu*, it received this reply: *Bhikṣu* should be celibate, married monks are not permitted to receive *bhikṣu* precepts, and, if they marry after receiving *bhikṣu* precepts, their ordination will be nullified. However, an examination of the household registers and resumes of married monks clearly show that monks who had received *bhikṣu* precepts and had married did not, in fact, lose their *bhikṣu* status. Thus, it can be deduced that the monks made their own decisions regardless of the instructions handed down by the government: In the same way that the temple bylaws did not have great impact on the practice of clerical marriage, the colonial government's definition of *bhikṣu* had little impact on Korean monks' actions and behavior regarding *bhikṣu* status.

Most of the previous studies on clerical marriage in Korean Buddhism – during both the

colonial and post-colonial periods – are not free of one-sided views that clerical marriage was anti-nationalistic, particularly from a celibate-monk-centered perspective. But the findings of each chapter propose that it's necessary to pay attention to the interplay among Buddhist ethics, colonial rules, the transformation of dharma family relations, and Buddhist clerics' private property, and the way this interplay affected clerical marriage. When viewed with these elements in mind, I argue that the motivations for changing the monastic rules cannot fully be understood within the binary analytical framework of nationalism versus Japanization, or purity versus contamination. Clerical marriage was, at its core, a survival tactic used by Korean Buddhist clerics to adapt in order to survive during Japanese colonial times.

The practice of clerical marriage among Korean monks during the colonial period must be considered a phenomenon of Buddhist modernity in that these marriages involved multi-linear, multi-layered changes in the Korean Buddhist community – changes that led to engagement in temple business, new interpretations on monastic rules, and sectarian diversity. To understand the big picture of clerical marriage among Korean monks during this period is to better and more fully understand Korean Buddhism as a whole from the Chosŏn period, through the colonial period, and up to the post-colonial period and to enrich the history of the religion itself.

This dissertation has looked at the practice of clerical marriage in the lives of monks during the Japanese colonial period. This is, of course, only one small piece of the puzzle. The stories of Korean Buddhist nuns and clerical marriage during the colonial period remain to be examined and told. It can be suggested that clerical marriage was not common practice among Korean nuns because they had to leave the nunneries and return to the secular society as wives and mothers as soon as they married. “Married nuns” were not expected to stay in temples in that they already had another source of income from having husbands. As a matter of fact, the term

“married nun” itself did not and does not exist: “taech’ōsŭng” refers only to a married monk. Yet, historical sources alone would lead to the conclusion that married nuns must have existed. In future research, I hope to uncover the reality of this obscure chapter in Buddhist history and, in so doing, fill in some blanks in the history of modern Korean Buddhism.

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