

East Asia's Modernization and Institutional Formation

Dr. Santosh Kumar Gupta

Associate Professor

School of Liberal Art and Foreign Languages

Amity University Haryana

Abstract: This essay underlines the evolving dynamics of East Asian nations, with a focus on the modern development of Korea. While there are certain religious similarities throughout East Asian nations, Korean religious institutions have unique societal aspects. Buddhist institutions in East Asia had a significant role in the spread of secular and religious education. As a result, this essay highlights the reformation process and analyzes contemporary educational establishments. Furthermore, organized social welfare agendas were brought by new religions, especially Christianity, which compelled traditional spiritual organizations to modify their long-standing practices. It seems that several institutions with specialized welfare goals and educational programs have emerged throughout history.

Introduction

In traditional East Asian countries, utmost people

have been practicing Buddhism since 1st century CE. However, in the context of Korean Buddhism, which has spread widely from Monarchical Korea to Republican Korea, this is preparatory to modify. It is reawakening the dormant spirit of the highest compassion in a society that is undergoing change, all set to play a proactive role in the modern world. Both oppression and emancipation are central to the pedigrees of modern Korean Buddhism. The Joseon Royal Court carried out a comprehensive reform program in 1894 with the goal of modernizing Korean society. There were only thirty-six Buddhist monasteries during the Joseon era, down from several hundred. The number of clergies, the size of land, and the age at which a person could join the sangha were all limited. After the last limitations were put in place, monks and nuns were not allowed to access the city. Buddhist funerals were forbidden, as was beggary. Occasionally, though, new rulers would emerge who were sympathetic to Buddhism and removed some of the stricter laws. The most famous of these was Queen Munjeong, a devoted Buddhist who assumed power in place of her infant son Myeongjong and swiftly overturned numerous anti-Buddhist laws. The queen appointed the bright monk Bou as the head of the Seon school since she greatly respected him.

Caste and class discrimination are two social structures that were targeted to be eliminated as part of the reform plan. The following year, after centuries of persecution, the Buddhist monks were permitted entry into Hansung, the Joseon capital. This suggests that Buddhist monks were granted social independence and Buddhism was freed from Confucian oppression. Confucian scholars and feudal lords suppressed Buddhist institutions for the entire duration of Joseon rule. On the other hand, Japanese colonial powers embarked on change and made it easier for Korean Buddhism to escape Confucian repression.

As the Japanese military began to supplant the Korean institutions in its early stages, contemporary Korean Buddhism fall under subjugation. For Buddhist nuns and monks, celibacy was outlawed by the government in the 1870s during Japan's Meiji Restoration. After 500 years of forbidding clergy members from entering cities, Japanese Buddhists were granted permission to preach inside of them. New sects emerged in Korea, including Won Buddhism, as a result of the Jodo Shinshu and Nichiren schools' missionary efforts. Following Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 through the Japan-Korea Treaty, Korean Buddhism saw numerous changes.

The Japanese management style, in which temple abbots appointed by the Governor-General of Korea were granted private ownership of temple property and the right to inherit such property, replaced the traditional system of temples being run as a collective enterprise by the Sangha. This was accomplished by the Temple Ordinance of 1911. More significantly, pro-Japanese monks started getting married and starting families, following Japanese customs. With new headquarters at Jogye Monastery, the Temple Ordinance was amended in 1920 to reform temple administration and provide the Japanese government complete authority over the 31 major temples in the nation. Korean Buddhism came under more authority during the Second Sino-Japanese War. The sculptures from numerous temples were shipped to Japan by Japanese authorities. The repatriation of these artworks is still the subject of ongoing negotiations.

The reform movement was started in the early 1900s when Monks Podam and Wolcho established the Buddhist Research Society at Wonheung Monastery in 1904 and later the Myeongjin Institute. Their goal was to make it easier for monks to accept popular pragmatic ideas and then use them to modernize Buddhist institutions. At the Myeongjin Institute for Education, Propagation, and Restoration of

Old Institutions, they opened an administrative center. This school provided contemporary, secular courses in math, physics, biology, geography, history, philosophy, and foreign languages. A few pragmatic monks organized a number of gatherings and campaigns in the Gwangu, Jeollado, and Jirisan regions during the first two decades of the twentieth century. These efforts ultimately led to the establishment of the Imjejong Order (1911), which was led by Monk Manhae. During the Japanese rule of Korea, Han Yong-un was a revolutionary who used poetry to convey his passionate desire for his nation's independence. In addition, he was a Buddhist monk who vociferated for Buddhism's reform. Manhae, which means "ten thousand seas," was his pen name. Let's investigate this multifaceted man's life. As the Buddhist community's spokesman, Han spearheaded the March 1st independence campaign in 1919. He was one of the 33 people who signed the Declaration of Independence. As part of his preparations for the country's independence campaign, he printed and gave the documents to Buddhists. However, those who made contributions and attended the March 1st event to declare independence were taken into custody. Among them was Han. Han demonstrated his courage and dignity even while incarcerated. On

December 21, 1921, he was freed from prison and resumed his participation in national movements. He backed the national drive to promote the purchase and use of Korean goods the next year. In an effort to further education, he also took the lead in creating private collages. Han remained at the vanguard of the independence struggle long after he reached sixty. In 1940, he joined the opposition to the altering of Korean names to Japanese ones. In 1943, he spearheaded the opposition to Japan's recruitment of young Koreans as "student soldiers."

In 1912, the Imjejong Order also opened a center in Seoul, the nation's capital, to the enthusiastic backing of progressive monks, with over a thousand attendees. New concepts like Christian social welfare also drew large numbers of supporters, so these advancements weren't just the result of modernity or colonial oppression. Thus, it would be useful to look at the rise of Christian missionaries, who introduced the western concept of social welfare in East Asian nations, before delving more into the specifics of religion data. In actuality, the Joseon dynasty brought Christianity to Korea in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They managed to progressively expand their tentacles through missionary work, but it took until the nineteenth century for them to establish a foothold.

The Japanese government implemented a campaign of repression against the Christians due to their active participation in the anti-Japanese struggle. The contemporary welfare initiatives that were implemented in Korea during the late 1800s and early 1900s served as the main means for missionaries to firmly establish themselves in the country, which was completely foreign to them. Modern health care and education systems were first established by Korean Christian missionaries. Organizational data indicated that there were approximately one thousand social welfare facilities catering to women, children, the elderly, the disabled, and regional development. This seems to be the main driving force behind social service, particularly in South Korea, as the Protestant and Catholic Churches jointly oversee approximately 756 of these organizations. Early in the eighteenth century, Protestant and Catholic missionaries had laid down significant roots in Korea. Korean Catholics feel that Christianity is not the same as their own beliefs, hence despite their strong misgivings about the two factions-Protestant and Catholic-in this book, they have been grouped together rather than as distinct groups. Since Korea initially adopted the western paradigm of social welfare in the early 1920s, Christian missionaries have been active in the community.

According to some academics, "the church in Korea had an easier time of things because of education and medical advancements rather than evangelism and preaching. A further element that made the way easier for Christian missionaries was the lack of hostility against new religions." The National Catholic Welfare Conference and the Young Christian Workers (YCW) are the premier groups for advancing social and educational initiatives. The first contemporary western-styled institutions were the Pai-chai School in Seoul, the Kwanghye-won Medical Clinic, and the Baejae Hakdang (Institute for producing able men), all founded in the 1880s. Despite attempts to eliminate Christianity by the colonial administration through orthodox policies, the missionaries persisted in their objective and strove to improve the lives of the impoverished and oppressed. Following the Korean War, the missionaries expanded their welfare initiatives by giving money to widows, orphans, the elderly, the disabled, and the mute. As a result, several institutions were built for these populations.

Formation of Modern Institutions

Seon Education Center was established under these circumstances, keeping in mind colonial modernity and Christian missionaries with western influences. Along with launching the March First

Liberation Movement and Imje Institution, the monks also founded Seon School in 1921, which later served as the headquarters for Seon supporters. The initiative to teach Seon moral ideals was initiated by the Seon Institute. From 1930 until 1940, the Congress of Joseon Seon Masters was held at the Seon Institution. In an effort to forward their modernizing program, they established Joseon Seon School and passed eight ordinances during the 1935 Congress. To further institutional reform, Joseon Buddhist Yuseinhoe was established in 1921. The organization's prospects are then displayed in the newspaper article that was published. As stated in the narrative, "We previously concentrated on the Young Buddhist Association carrying out the agenda of Joseon Buddhist Yuseinhoe, with the strong belief that Joseon Buddhism needs to be reformed in order to catch up with modernization and change of time, but could not bring remarkable change." Thus, in the course of history, the largest Buddhist order was established in 1941, carrying on the Korean Buddhist tradition. Since Korean Buddhists attempted to create a single institution in 1923, Buddhist intellectuals have long supported the establishment of Joseon Buddhist Jogye School. For the order, there were trials, though. Paradoxically, the first test was faced in 1945 after Japan's colonization

of Korea was over. In this regard, the Buddhist Women Association-which was founded in 1908-was a significant pioneer in including women in social welfare activities and expanding its purview. The Farm Center (founded in 1910), the Day Care Center (1913), the Buddhist Relief Center (1925), the Mokpo Community Center (1927), and the Counseling Center (1931) were the other significant institutions. Furthermore, with the enthusiastic assistance of roughly 5,000 volunteers, the Buddhist Young Association executed a well-organized relief effort by giving food grains to those in need. In addition, a number of other Buddhist organizations made their presence known by performing humanitarian work in various locations.

Democratization and Reformation of Institutions

Following Japan's surrender in 1945, the married priests who served in the temples during the time of occupation began to give way to the celibate monastics of the Jogye Order, which has grown to be the largest Buddhist group in Korea in terms of both clergy and followers. This order considers itself to be the last surviving representation of traditional Korean Buddhism. The Taego Order, which comprises married and celibate monks, is the second largest Buddhist order in Korea. The complete ritual legacy of Korean Buddhism is solely preserved by this particular order.

For monks and nuns pursuing Seon meditation training, the Korean monastic life is notably itinerant: although each has a "home" monastery, they frequently travel throughout the mountains, remaining for however long they choose, studying and imparting knowledge in the surroundings of the temple that is housing them.

In the North Korean context, Buddhism is one of the many religions that the North Korean dictatorship actively forbids. The nation reports that there are currently 10,000 active Buddhists. Buddhism, like other religions in the nation, was closely inspected by the government, which even allowed monks to pray at Buddhist temples through the Korea Buddhist Federation, which was supported by the government.

However, given that Buddhism was an essential part of traditional Korean culture, it is said that Buddhists in North Korea fared better than other religious groups, especially Christians, who were said to frequently face persecution by the government. Buddhists also received limited government funding to promote their religion. It is impractical to emphasize the growth of Buddhist institutions because there are so few resources about the form and state of Buddhism in North Korea.

This paper, therefore, focuses exclusively on the

post-independence evolution of South Korean Buddhism. Progressive monastic organizations have progressively expanded since Buddhism was made more democratic in 1980. More than 180,000 laity and monastic Buddhists came together to form the Union of Buddhist Movements for the People on May 14, 1985. They strove to keep Buddhism independent from the military government. All of the reformist Buddhist monks joined the Association of Buddhist Monks, which was founded on June 5th, 1986, with the goal of advancing the idea of Pure Land. If Korean Buddhists experienced socio-political enlightenment in the 1980s, the 1990s saw the democratic reform of Buddhist organizations. Korean monks are aware of the extent to which, after 1980, they have lagged behind secular culture in terms of sociopolitical issues. They came to see how undemocratic, unfit, and corrupt their institutions are? Therefore, without institutional reform and adherence to a democratic system that functions rationally, Buddhism cannot be wealthy and independent of partisan influence. It is clear that the Jogye Order dramatically increased the scope of its social welfare program following the reformation movement in an effort to demonstrate the continued applicability of Korean Buddhism. Since then, the Jogye Institution has provided a number of programs

for the welfare of individuals from all social classes, such as programs for international networking and exchange and support as well as environmental protection for sustainable growth. The Korean organization deployed its resources to launch a number of initiatives aimed at increasing social involvement. Institutions offered a number of social welfare services that contributed in the transition of the conventional method.

The Jogye Order made a sincere effort in 1995 to focus on social welfare initiatives around the country by establishing a foundation. The foundation and other organizations provided coverage for a large number of welfare centers around the country in 2006. Here are a few significant categories: They were able to change the conventional method because of the various social welfare services that the organizations offered. The purpose of child care and education facilities is to offer elementary education. In actuality, orphans and abandoned children have long been housed in Korean Buddhist temples. These kids grew up to be nuns and monks, for the most part. These kids and orphans used to live in nearly all of the large monasteries. In this context, monasteries have long served as shelters for the destitute and abandoned children. Nevertheless, these kids grow up in some monasteries

and, with the right instruction, become monks or nuns. On the other hand, some institutions house children from homes in their contemporary child care and education centers. Child Education facilities and Child Care Centers are the most active welfare facilities in both urban and rural areas among those established by the Jogye Order. Nuns in particular are particularly involved in running these institutions.

At the outset, these organizations are also concentrating on youth facilities and local welfare hubs. Inadequate youth facilities and programming are the weakest link in the institutional welfare system. Sinheungsa Youth Camp was the first youth facility constructed, having been created in 1975. Most youth facilities are cramped and only feature a few desks and chairs, making it difficult to fit many youths and offer them with study space. It is necessary to develop sporting events and cultural programming. Approximately fourteen youth facilities are in operation at the moment, and these might accommodate up to 6,000 pupils. The facilities at the Regional Welfare establishment are accessible to the general public as a welfare center. The Regional Welfare Center offers highly specialized programs that are tailored to the needs of each individual. Programs such as the Good Spoon program, the elderly education program, the

youth study room, the disabled persons service program, and child care are among the most widely accessible options. As the system of self-government becomes stable, the Regional Welfare Center's obligation expands. At the moment, 17,978 persons could use the 34 regional assistance centers that are available. As comprehensive welfare establishments, regional welfare centers require skilled labor, substantial funding, and long-range strategies. But the organization doesn't offer enough resources to achieve the goal.

Institutional Engagement and Globalization

The majority of Korean Buddhists are elderly people, and South Korea features one of the world's fastest aging populations. For Buddhist communities, the most important amenity is the Senior Citizen Welfare Center. There are potentially 45 facilities at current count, but that is considerably fewer than what requirements are. In addition, the organization launched a volunteer center that currently employs over 20,000 registered volunteers across the country. These volunteers have a strong commitment to social work in general and take an especially active part in crises and other calamities.

The primary objective of the Support for Needy Neighbors initiative, which was launched shortly after

the 1997 financial meltdown, is aimed at promoting collaboration between neighbors who were unable to pay their everyday needs. The largest Buddhist order in Korea was eager to build stronger social ties between the two separated Koreans after they had endured a torturous 50 years of isolation. A distinct arm of the Jogye Order was founded in June 2002 with the goal of fostering national solidarity between the two nations. This group is making significant headway in restoring North Korea's temples and other historic structures. Jogye Order provides clothing, food grains, and other essentials for daily life on a constant basis. Likewise, the order plans on organizing the South-North Buddhist Dharma Meeting and the South-North Civilian Exchange. In Asia, Jogye Village and the Sri Lanka Welfare Program are becoming more widely recognized. The organization began restoring a Sri Lankan village that had been destroyed by flooding. China and Japan are the two main international exchange partners for the central institution. This group has hosted an array of conferences on Japan, China, and Korea. Deeper socio-religious exchange was the ultimate objective of the first Korea-Japan-China Friendship Exchange Conference, which took place in 1995.

Conclusion

Many South East Asian and South Asian nations are starting to look to East Asia as a model for transformation. The process of industrialization had a significant impact on the region's ancient institutions, especially religious ones, in addition to altering politics and the economy. The change brought about by colonists cannot be overlooked, notwithstanding the complexity of the concept of colonial modernity. The Japanese were the first people in East Asia to use modern innovations to transform their country. In order to maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula during the colonial era, the Japanese implemented a number of development projects, which in turn encouraged the local populace to restructure their traditional institutions. Organizational reform benefited greatly from the involvement of religious entities. In South Korea, there have been hostile activities by Protestants against Buddhists and adherents of traditional religions during the 1980s and 1990s. This includes the desecration of temples, the decapitation of Buddha and Bodhisattva sculptures, and the painting of red Christian crosses on Buddhist and other religious structures. In many cases, pastors of churches have even encouraged these activities. Despite such development, for instance, one sees stable coexistence of the state and religion in South Korea

today, as well as a typically amicable recognition of common interests in upholding distinct domains and encouraging religious pluralism. Perhaps no other significant nation in the world maintains a firmly secular public sphere while the private religious sphere flourishes in its diversity.

Note: Korean words are not romanized.

End Notes:

Hansung is the old name for Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

This notion based on Korean sources.

Mok Jeong-bae, "Buddhism in Modern Korea," in *The History and Culture of Buddhism in Korea*, 225-226.

Pulgyo Jongmuguk Chwijiseo, Daehanmaeilsinbo, March 17, 1908.

Pori Park, "Korean Buddhist Reforms and Problems in the Adoption of Modernity during the Colonial Period," *Korea Journal* (Spring 2005): 87-89.

Kim Gwang-sik, *Hanguk Geundae Pulgyosa Yeongu* (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1996), 71-77.

Pogyodangui Seonghwang, Maeilsinbo, May 28, 1912.

The data including Buddhist organization will be

discussed in conclusion. Won Seok Jo, "Won Pulgyowa Catholic Sahoepokjiui Bigyo Yeongu," Won Pulgyosasangwa Jonggyomunhwa, Vol. 32 (2006): 365.

Sang-duck Sunim, "Buddhist Laywomen's Social Work in Korea," (paper presented at the 8th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women Discipline and Practice of Buddhist Women: Present and Past, Seoul, Korea, June 27~July 2, 2004).

Andrew Eungi Kim, "Protestantism in Korea and Japan from the 1880s to the 1940s: A Comparative Study of Differential Cultural Reception and Social Impact," Korea Journal (Winter 2005): 272-276.

The Severance Hospital and Ewha Women's University have been developed by the missionaries in due course of time. Ministry of Culture and Sports, ed., Religious Culture in Korea (Seoul: Ministry of Culture and Sports, 1996), 73-85.

Kim Sunseok, "Geondae bulgyo jongdan seongnip gwajeong," Bulgyo Geondaehwa ui Jeon'gae wa seonggyeok, Jogyejong chulpansa, 2006. p. 64.

The Chogyejong here indicates Joseon bulgyo jogyejong (Jogye Order of Joseon Buddhism). The legislation of Joseon bulgyo jogyejong was enacted in 1940 at the Committee of the Head Monks of the Main

Monasteries on Joseon. This legislation was acknowledged by the colonial government in April 23rd 1941, and practiced in May 1st, 1941. (Jogyejongsa: Geunhyeondaesa, Jogyejong chulpansa, 2005, p. 127) Daehan bulgyo jogyejong, the Jogye Order today, was founded in April 11, 1962, in the middle of the conflict between celibacy and married monks.

See the following with regard to the founding of Jogyejong. Kim Gwangsik, "Iljeha bulgyogyo chongbonsan geonseol undong gwa Jogyejong," Han'guk geondae bulgyosa yeon'gu, Minjoksa, 1996. pp. 402-458.

Lee Yong-gwon, "Pulgyo Sahoepokjisa," In Hanguk Pulgyo Sahoepokjichongram, ed. Hanguk Pulgyo Sahoepokjichongram Pyeonchanwiwonhoe, (Seoul: Daehan Pulgyo Jogye Jong Jaedan, 1999), 1022-1024.

The chart is quoted from Jihyeon Ed., Bulgyo sahoe bookji pyeonnam, Jogyejong chulpansa, 2006, p. 14.

All the data appear in this section come from Bulgyo sahoe bokji pyeonnam, Daehan Bulgyo Jogyejong Sahoe Bokjijaedan, 2006.

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