



LOTUS LANTERN

KOREAN BUDDHISM
FOR INTERNATIONAL READERS

Supreme Patriarch
Most Ven. Jinje

President & Publisher
Most Ven. Jaseung

Editor
Ven. Jungmoon

Contributing Editor
Jogye Order International Affairs Team

Publisher
Jogye Order Publishing

Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism
55 Ujeongguk-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea
TEL : (82)2-2011-1830
FAX : (82)2-735-0614

**Free subscription available for
Buddhist organizations.**
Please send organization name and mailing
address to: sabaha@buddhism.or.kr

Contents

2 The Editor's Note

Ven. Jungmoon
Director, Department of Social Affairs

Jogye Order Feature

- 6 01 Dharma Talk: Opening of Summer Retreat 2016
(B.E. 2560)
- 8 02 Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee,
Standing Together with People in Need
Right at the Very Place

Focus

- 11 01 The Lotus Lantern Festival 2016 (B.E. 2560)
- 13 02 Great Renunciation, The Joyful Journey towards
Peace, Happiness and Freedom

Buddhist Art

- 15 01 Special Public Exhibition on the Buddha's Birthday 2560
'National Treasure No. 1891, Gilt-bronze Seated
Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva of *Heungcheonsa* Temple'

Buddhist Practice

- 16 01 What is Ganhwa Seon?

Buddhist Culture

- 23 01 Korean Traditional buddhist customs in summer

The Jogye Order News

- 30 01 The Memorial Service for Master Doui at Jogyesa Temple
- 31 02 "The Buddha accepted homosexuals into the Sangha
during his time."
A book entitled Korean Buddhism Experienced by the Sexual
Minorities has been published by the Buddhist Research Center.
- 32 03 Fund of the Dreaminus reached over \$1 Million in 2016

Greetings!

My name is Jungmoon, I am the editor of the Lotus Lantern Magazine, and the director of the Department of Social Affairs at the Jogye Order's Headquarters. The Jogye Order has been at the forefront of Dharma propagation and dissemination with various activities, both domestic and international, in diverse fields, and has shared the news and the fruits with Buddhists around the world through this quarterly magazine.

This past May, the Lotus Lantern Festival in the Buddhist Era of 2560 (2016 C.E.) was successfully held as a commemorative event for Buddha's Birthday. Thus, this summer edition highlights the fruits of the festival along with the Order's major activities. In a continuation of the spring edition, it introduces Ganhwa Seon and traditional Korean Buddhist rituals.

I hope that this magazine can serve as a seed within you that inspires your interest, understanding, and devotion towards Korean Buddhism.

May the blessing of the Buddha fill you all the time.

Ven. Jungmoon

Director, Department of Social Affairs





Scene of Lotus Parade on Jongno street in 2016

01

DHARMA TALK:

OPENING OF SUMMER

RETREAT 2016 (B.E. 2560)



Supreme Patriarch,
the Most Venerable Jinje

[Master Jinje ascended the Dharma seat and raised the Dharma staff (拄杖子) to the assembly.]

Beings and Buddhas do not interfere with each other.
The mountain is high and the water deep of their own accord.
Revealed in a thousand ways,
A hundred fragrant flowers bloom where the partridge cries.

衆生諸佛不相侵
山自高兮水自深
萬別千差明底事
鷓鴣啼處百花香

Do you understand?

Today marks the beginning of the summer retreat.
Just as a general on a battlefield must be steadfast and sacrifice everything to lead his army to victory, and just as a mountaineer must climb to the summit without giving up, the assembly at this retreat must sever all defilements and delusions.
Do not become entrapped in bad habits. Keep to your hwadu with great devotion and courage, and be consumed by the 84,000 pores of your body.
Only then, will you be freed from all past, present, and future karmas and be able to wrestle with the doubt on your *hwadu* for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Do not be distracted by your neighbors, and don't be concerned with consuming three meals a day. For the next three months, do not be distracted by the habits of your past, present and future lives, even for a moment. It is important to wrestle with your hwadu tens of thousands of times a day until it penetrates to your bones. Keep to your own hwadu. But, for those without a *hwadu* use:

“What was your true self before you were born of your parents?”

Hold this hwadu day and night; keep questioning and investigating it. During this period when your hwadu never leaves your mind, you must not succumb to drowsiness or distracting thoughts. Then your practice will mature without your even being aware of it. In this way, when true doubt is set in motion, your single-minded focus on the hwadu flows clear and without disruption. Whether you are coming or going, sitting or standing, cooking or cleaning, at work or asleep, only the singular thought of your hwadu will flow unceasingly, like a torrent of water. At this time, even when objects are visible, you will have no awareness of seeing them; when sounds are audible, you will have no awareness of hearing them. Immersed in this state, your karma of millions of past lives will melt away and a month or a year may pass. Eventually, when the opportune time arises, you may see an object or hear a sound, and your hwadu will shatter. Then you will have penetrated your hwadu, and

your true self will be illuminated.

Like a skewer you will pierce one hundred thousand gongans and reach the land of the Tathagatas without having taken a single step. If anyone throws you a question, you will answer correctly and without hesitation. Perfect enlightenment is not possible without reaching this state of one-pointed Samadhi on your hwadu. This is the attainment of enlightenment through Chamseon (meditation practice).

The reason countless retreatants do not attain awakening, even if they practice all their lives, despite shaving their heads and having meals offered to them by their patrons, is because they did not wrestle with their hwadu from the depth of their hearts.

Thus, from this day forward for the next three months, truly renounce all things and with sincere devotion, and with determination strive to realize the Dharma of seeing your true nature. Whatever defilements and delusions arise will turn to ashes. Hold only your hwadu in your mind and summon great doubt. Wrestle with it to reach the land of peace. Then you can pay off all debt and kindness done to you by becoming a person of glorious freedom in the universe. In every moment and place, hold fast to your goal and persevere in your practice.

After Master Fubei Heshang became well-known, an old lady of the temple, Ling Xing Po, visited him to pay her respects. She bowed and asked, “If you have exhausted all your effort but still cannot articulate the truth, who will you instruct?”
Fubei spoke, “Fubei has nothing to say.”
She replied, “People speak of Fubei far and wide, but he is not as good as I expected.”
Fubei said to her, “If you have something to show me then show it.”
“Heavens, oh heavens!” she cried out. “There is grievous suffering even amid all this.”
Again Fubei had nothing to say.

Ling then spoke: “Unable to distinguish

what is right from wrong, a great disaster will follow if you keep on talking as if you are helping.”

Without knowing the truth of the Buddha, giving a Dharma talk or teaching others only creates misfortune, as it leads to the decline of true Dharma and blinds thousands of people.

Nanquan commented when he heard this story, “Poor Fubei, defeated by a woman.”
When Ling heard Nanquan’s comment, she laughed.
“Old master Nanquan has quite a foundation.”
By chance, Chengyi of Youzhou was nearby and decided to test Ling.
“So how does Nanquan seem to have a foundation?”
“How sad!” she cried, “How painful!”
When Chengyi didn’t respond, Ling asked him pointedly, “Do you get it?”
Chengyi simply bowed and clasped his hands together.
Ling sighed and added, “Brain-dead Chan practitioners are too numerous.”

Sometime later, Chengyi described this encounter to Zhaozhou, who then said, “Had I met this foul old woman, I would have left her dumbstruck with a single word.”
Chengyi was puzzled and asked, “What would you have said to her, Master?”
Zhaozhou suddenly began to beat Chengyi with his stick.
“Why are you beating me?”
“How long must I wait if I don’t strike this brain-dead man now?”

This story too got back to Ling.
“Zhaozhou himself should meet me with a stick in my hands.”
This comment was relayed back to Zhaozhou, who responded by quoting her:
“How sad, how painful!” he cried.

When Ling heard this remark, she put her hands together and sighed.
She then spoke, “The radiance of Zhaozhou’s eyes pierces the entire realm with brilliant luminescence.”

In response, Zhaozhou told a monk to ask Ling a question.
“So, what are these eyes of Zhaozhou?”
In response, she thrust a clenched fist into the air.
Zhaozhou composed a poem in tribute to her.

In grasping the moment of a foundation,
That moment was taken by the foundation.
In answer to you, Ling Xing Po,
What is there to be had or lost in the sound of a cry?

當機覲面提
覲面當機疾
報你凌行婆
哭聲何得失

Ling then wrote a tribute of her own.

The Master already knows the sound of a cry
But then who could have known he had already awakened?

Turning the wheel in Magadha at the time,
How many lost the foundation in front of their eyes?

哭聲師已曉
已曉復誰知
當時摩竭令
幾喪目前機

Dear assembly do you understand the two Seon masters Nanquan and Zhaozhou? Virtuous masters Nanquan and Zhaozhou are truly the greatest spiritual realizers.

Do you know Ling Xing Po?
She is one with wisdom beyond the great spiritual masters, the greatest of the Bodhisattvas.

Do you understand Master Fubei?
What is in a name, but a puppet without a thing to show?

Assembly! Speak upon the catechism of the four masters.

[The Master addressed the silent assembly.]

Three and Four,
All buried in the same pit.
Huh! Huh!

三箇四箇漢
一坑埋却
噓 噓!

[The Great Patriarch hit the Dharma desk once with the Dharma staff (拄杖子) and descended from the Dharma seat.]



02

SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND
LABOR RELATIONS
COMMITTEE,
STANDING TOGETHER
WITH PEOPLE IN NEED
RIGHT AT THE VERY PLACE

Without a single exception, all beings on earth depend on each other. By correctly understanding the law of causality, we should keep in mind that individuals are all connected to each other and thereby indivisible from each other. This law similarly applies to societies; therefore, we should all live in peaceful coexistence. Only with this viewpoint, one can realize one’s aspirations without negatively affecting the happiness of others within the community. You can never be genuinely happy if your community suffers.

- An excerpt from the 2560 Buddhist New Year’s Press Conference Statement of the Jogye Order

The 2016 motto of the Jogye Order is ‘keeping our neighbors company with compassionate and reconciliatory support’ which was announced at the New Year’s press conference, and there are three corresponding objectives: ‘Engaged Buddhism for the People and Society,’ ‘Realization of the Four-fold Community that Embodies the Wisdom and Compassion,’ and ‘Innovation for Development of the Order.’ For the first objective, the Order has supported its subsidiary organizations and committees such as Jabinanum, Dreaminus, the Reconciliation Committee, and the Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee, which conduct various programs and projects in close cooperation to address all sorts of social issues.

Jabinanum and the Dreaminus are both non-profit foundations that work both domestically and internationally to support the people most in need by providing various kinds of humanitarian assistance. Dreaminus recently achieved success in fundraising by reaching a total of \$1 million, and will soon bear fruit by opening the Borigaram Agricultural Technical High School this coming September.



Prayer Ceremony on the 2nd anniversary of Sewol Ferry Disaster (April 14–15, at Paengmok Harbor)

The Reconciliation Committee basically works to mitigate conflicts by reconciling the opposing parties. In the case of the Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee, it was newly established in January 2016 as an expansion of the former Labor Relations Committee, in order to deal with a wider range of social issues such as gender, poverty, and human rights, in addition to labor issues. Under the committee, a group of action members were formed and they go to the heart of issues, meeting the neighbors in need and keeping them company to give support and consolation.

What distinguishes the works of the Committee from those of other organizations is that the monks go to the place of issues, present themselves on spot to give support to the people in despair and suffering, and conduct prayer practice for their ultimate well-being and happiness. While the Reconciliation Committee strives to reduce the gap in opinions among different parties, the Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee empathizes with the neighbors’ pain, advocates for the weak and makes necessary actions together with them.

You can see the activities of the Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee in the first half of the year 2016 in these photos.



Prayer Ceremony for Mr. Gwangho Han, the Deceased Worker of Yoosung Enterprise co.ltd (April 4–5, at Seoul City Hall Square)



Flying lanterns that have our earnest wishes for those Sewol Ferry victims still under the deep dark sea (April 16, at Paengmok Harbor)



The 1231st Wednesday Demonstration demanding Japan to redress the Comfort Women problems (May 18, in front of the Japanese Embassy)



Press Conference to Call for an End to Government’s Inhumane Crackdown (April 7, Mokdong Immigration Office)



Press Conference Against Racial Discrimination (March 21, at Gwanghwamun Square)



Public Rally Against Disability Discrimination (April 20, at Gwanghwamun Square)



Prayer Ceremony for the Victim of Seoul Subway Accident (June 3, at Guui Station)



The Dharma Ceremony for the Sexual Minorities (LGBT) and their Parents on the Buddha’s Birthday (May 27, at Jogye Order’s Administrative Headquarters)



Debate on the Worker Dispatching Law from the Religions’ Perspectives (Feb 18, at Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul)



On World Refugee Day, Press Conference calling for the Release of Syrians detained within the Airport for 6 months (June 20, at Incheon International Airport)

The Committee’s plan for the second half of the year is to develop alternatives to the current problems lying in the irrational social structure, from a long-term perspective. Detailed activities are the participation in the protest against mass dismissal from the structural adjustment of ship industries, conducting policy forums for safe and humane working environment, providing Templestay for the disadvantaged to heal and console their hardship, holding an assembly at a mountain temple and another concert particularly for the laid off workers and those who unfairly received severe disciplinary actions from companies, and offering counselling service for any workers who need psychological support.

As such, through these activities above, the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism would like to contribute to cultivating the healthy and sound society by restoring the currently damaged and cracked social relation network. In particular, it is expected that the activities of the Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee would be the key driving force for achieving this goal.

Interview with Ven. Hyeyong



Chairman of the Social Affairs and Labor Relations Committee

- Q** Although the Committee is only six months old, it has been very active already dealing with various social issues. How was your past six months?

A I think the expansion of the Committee from the labor issue-oriented one to the one that deals with various social issues was such an achievement the Jogye



Order made in 2016, despite this change should have been made a lot earlier. I should also say that the achievement we made was possible by the dedication and sacrifice of the action members who run directly to the spot of pain and suffering. They allowed us to respond all the social issues promptly and diligently for the past months.

- Q** I assume that you must have a vow that you would very much like to achieve when you accept the position of the Committee's chairman.

A What I have felt most urgent thing to do until today is the awareness-raising and forming a general consensus on the activities of the Committee within the Order. I hope all the head temples deeply empathize with the necessity and importance that the Committee does, so all the Buddhist community in every part of Korea could participate in realizing engaged Buddhism, and through which we would be able to easily go closer to ordinary citizens.

Q The Committee has to address a wide variety of social issues not only labor ones but also gender, poverty, human rights,

etc., which would definitely require quite a lot of manpower and financial resources. I guess you feel very difficult to cover all. What do you think the most important issue to give a focus, in particular, in order to maximize the impact?

- A** Yes, that is true. We face difficulties, as the resources and manpower are limited while we get involved with a wide spectrum of social issues. But the most important subject we normally prioritize is the labor issues. Among them, we deal with those of non-regular temporary workers and subcontract workers more gravely. In this time of high unemployment rates and flexible labor markets, Buddhist community should pay more attention and give much support for those marginalized workers.

Q What are the roles of the Committee and in which direction should it go to?

A The answer is clear and definite. As the Buddha said, one cannot be happy when others are suffering. We will do our best until all fourfold community becomes happy and until all beings become safe and happy, following the teaching of the Buddha.

FOCUS

- In this section, we introduce the key events of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.
-

01

THE LOTUS LANTERN FESTIVAL 2016 (2560 IN THE BUDDHIST ERA)

300,000 people
filling the Jongno street,
Full of youthfulness and passion
with various events on spot

The 2560 Buddhist Lotus Lantern Festival witnessed the increased participation of the young generation, which renewed this festival as a more interactive one that

pulled down barriers between generations, not to mention its characteristic as a global cultural festival. About 300,000 people of various backgrounds, nationalities, religions and ages participated, celebrating Buddha’s Birthday together on May 7 and 8, 2016.

The festival began in the playground of Dongguk University where the *Euoullim Madang* took place as the first event before the parade. Various performance groups of kids, teenagers, and young adults performed spectacular dance movements for the public and excited everybody present.

At the following event, the Dharma Ceremony, Ven. Jaseung, the President of the Jogye Order, stated, “The lantern lit in each of your hearts can comfort the society and light up the dark side of the mind. It is each one of you that can make and keep the society safe, peaceful and pleasant to live in. It depends on how much you practice. Let’s continue to plant the seeds of merits in the mind by doing good deeds in our daily lives.”

At around 7 pm when the lotus parade left *Dongdaemun*, the entire area of Jongno street was transformed into a festival

road. The parade was made up of 100,000 participants – there were also a great number of spectators and visitors cheering the performers along the route.

The parade was full of brightly decorated lanterns individually crafted by each temple, Buddhist group, and performer, each boasting of their individual creativity. There were cloud-shaped, fish-shaped, Dharma bell and Dharma drum-shaped lanterns, octagonal lotus lanterns, star lanterns, Heart Sutra lanterns, to list a few. Among the performers, there was a group of foreigners from Vietnam, Burma, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. They joined the parade by wearing their own traditional clothes. For example, the Vietnamese participants wore their traditional *Ao Dai*, adding more flavor and beauty to the parade. These 150 foreign performers are active members of the *Yeon Deung Hoe* Global Supporters’ Group.

The parade ended at *Jonggak* crossroads, where *HoeHyang Madang* (Post-Parade Celebration) took place as the final event. The cultural performances unfolded under a rain of flowers. The lively group dance of *Ganggang Sullae*, the exciting performances of popular songs exhilarated all the participants and brought them






together as one, transcending nationality, gender, ethnicity and religion.

On the following day, May 8, the another festival along the street in front of Jogyesa Temple welcomed visitors. Hundreds of traditional cultural event booths were held and offered the people a variety of hands-on experiences such as making lanterns and sampling temple food. *Cheongchun*

Madang, the event prepared for those in their 20s and 30s, was held for the first time this year and received much attention from the young visitors. The increased participation of young people in this year's *Yeon Deung Hoe* made the festival without doubt more dynamic, youthful and more vibrant than ever before.

 Article and photos provided by The Buddhist Newspaper



FOCUS

02

GREAT RENUNCIATION: THE JOYFUL JOURNEY TOWARDS PEACE, HAPPINESS AND FREEDOM

Great renunciation is an active way of life that takes both oneself and others to happiness, realizing great compassion in one's life. The original Sanskrit word for renunciation is *pravrajana*, which means discarding the secular life restrained with afflictions and anguish, and pursuing only practice in one's life with complete dedication. It refers to the choice of Siddhartha, who once having realized that he and the world are trapped in desire and suffering, bravely made the choice of discarding them. It is a noble decision with strong determination for the true happiness of all beings – to discard the desire for personal wealth and prosperity.

The following is what shows the motivation of the Buddha's great renunciation included in the *Majjhima-nikaya*, or Middle Length Collection.

“The reason for my renunciation was to attain the most peaceful and happy life free of sickness, aging, death, affliction, anguish, worries and dirtiness.”

- Middle Length Collection 56

Likewise, great renunciation is not the avoidance or escape from the secular life, but is a noble way of life with strong determination to




solve the original and fundamental problem of life and death. Renunciation has a sacred duty of 'first attain enlightenment through cultivation, then save all beings.' The renounced life allows humans to achieve the most supreme way of self-realization and paradoxically, have the practitioner ultimately make the greatest participation in society. Therefore, the genuine renunciation is regarded as a sublime and lofty life dedicated to practice and dissemination of the Dharma with diligence, following the teaching of the Buddha.

The Jogye Order has witnessed a steady decline in the number of Buddhist monastics over the past 10 years. In fact, this phenomenon does not occur only in Buddhism, but across all religions. Nevertheless, the Order decided to address this problem and set 2016 as the year of promoting monasticism and encourage the young to follow the path of the Buddha. For this purpose, the Bureau of Monastic Training is conducting various programs and activities this year.

Production of a poster series that promotes the monastic life of Buddhist practitioners to the public

The Bureau produced three sets of posters that promote monasticism to the

public. Six posters with bright images try to deliver the message that the monastic life gives happiness and freedom.

 Relevant details can be found in the spring edition.

Opening of a consulting phone-line

The Bureau opened a consulting phone-line to counsel people and respond to their questions and concerns about renunciation and monasticism. The consultation is available from Monday thru Friday from 9 am to 6 pm every day, and those phone calls coming during the off-hours from 6 pm till 9 am are recorded, so that the consulting monks can make a call back the next morning. The phone number is 1666-7987.

Conference on Renunciation at universities

A grand gathering, called the Conference on Renunciation, with a theme centered around renunciation and monastic life, took place at Dongguk University in Seoul, on May 26, 2016 and was open to anybody who was interested in this subject. About 300 attendees including university students and ordinary citizens were present. The main speaker was Ven. Beopryun, the national counselor and mentor of this time, so to speak, and the moderator was Ven. Wonyoung, another beloved Bhikkhuni, also a radio program announcer on BBS. They had a long interactive talk with the audience about monasticism, and the same program will take place in Busan in October 2016.



Contest of videos that promote renunciation and monasticism

The Bureau held a public contest of videos with the subject of renunciation and monasticism in order to promote public interest in the subject. It was announced on Feb 22, 2016 and the deadline was May 31, which was 100 days later. A total of 58 teams took part in the contest and many of them were awarded prizes including one grand prize, one first prize, and 3 participation awards, etc.

Establishing a regular counselling Dharma teacher in each Head temple

The Bureau established a regular counselling Dharma teacher who is dedicated to guiding, counseling and educating the postulants, in close cooperation with the bureau, so that all

postulants in the order can have readily available counselling service at temples.

Lectures at middle and high schools founded by the Buddhist foundation

Lectures on the meaning of renunciation, monastic life and the Order's supporting system will be given to students of high schools chosen by the Buddhist foundation for this event; the bureau conducted a discussion with the teachers at schools to prepare the details. In addition, the bureau acquired some allocated time to promote renunciation at the *Young Buddhist Camp* organized by the Korean Buddhist University Federation (KBUF) and *Camp for National Alliance* organized by Paramita Young Buddhists Association, both scheduled in summer 2016.

Appointment of the ambassador of monasticism

The Bureau has a plan to appoint several ambassadors of monasticism from Sangha and laity respectively, who will work to raise awareness of monastic life and promote renunciation to the public nationwide through various ways including the most popular communication channels of today.

BUDDHIST ART

- In this section, we introduce the major relics of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.
-

01

SPECIAL PUBLIC

EXHIBITION ON BUDDHA'S

BIRTHDAY 2560

'NATIONAL TREASURE

NO. 1891, GILT-BRONZE

SEATED AVALOKITESVARA

BODHISATTVA OF

HEUNGCHEONSA TEMPLE'



Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, also known as the Bodhisattva of Compassion, manifests herself in various forms, depending on circumstances, in order to save the myriad of beings. The most representative figure is the Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva with One Thousand Hands and One Thousand Eyes. With one thousand eyes, she looks at all beings and with one thousand hands, she takes care of all beings, all simultaneously.

This Gilt-bronze Seated Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva found in *Heungcheonsa* Temple has 40 hands, with two more used to hold palms together. Forty is an

auspicious number in Buddhism – here the 40 hands symbolize the meaning of the Bodhisattva with numerous hands.

The Korean people's faith in Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva has been long and widely practiced since the early Unified Silla Dynasty, when the sutras were first introduced, and was prevalent until the Joseon Dynasty. However, most of the statues and sculptures of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva made during those times have been unfortunately lost – not many have been passed down until today.

In this sense, this Gilt-bronze Seated

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva enshrined in Heungcheonsa Temple is such a rare relic of the Bodhisattva and especially so as the 42 hands is not a common feature in statues found in South Korea. This sculpture was praised for not only its distinctive artistic beauty but also its representative features of the late Goryeo to early Joseon Dynasty style. This statue of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva was recently designated as the Korean National Treasure No. 1891, on Feb 22, 2016.

The Jogye Order was delighted to introduce it to the public in commemoration of the Buddha's Birthday on the same year.

• In this section, we introduce Ganhwa Seon by extracting the chapters of the book, "Introduction to Ganhwa Seon" published by the Bureau of Dharma Propagation from the Spring edition 2016 to the Winter edition 2017.

•

01

CHAPTER 2.

WHAT IS GANHWA SEON?



QR code for the previous article in the spring edition

1. The Origin and Features of *Ganhwa Seon*

The Origin of *Ganhwa Seon*

Seon practice allows us to see the truth we are originally Buddha, going beyond all senses and thoughts. Ganhwa Seon is a process of spiritual practice through which we reach Samadhi by investigating and shattering the hwadu and thereby rooting out manipulative and discriminative thoughts. By doing so, it ultimately enables us to see our pristine true nature. The foundation of Ganhwa Seon was laid by Seon Master Wuzu Fayan (五祖法演 ?-1104), Seon Master Yuanwu Keqin (圓悟克勤 1063-1135) and ultimately Seon Master Dahui Zonggao (大慧宗杲 1089-1163). Seon Master Wuzu Fayan began the full-fledged practice of Ganhwa Seon by highlighting the mu-character hwadu (無字話頭). His disciple, Seon Master Yuanwu Keqin, cemented principles of Ganhwa Seon practice by compiling The Blue Cliff Record. Finally, Seon Master Dahui Zonggao, a disciple of Seon Master Yuanwu Keqin, firmly systematized principles of Ganhwa Seon, thereby providing catalytic momentum to bring Ganhwa Seon to the mainstream of the history of Buddhism.

Importantly, Ganhwa Seon has kept the spirit of Patriarchal Seon (祖師禪) intact. Then, what is Patriarchal Seon? It is the teachings by Seon Masters that fully demonstrate the realm of enlightenment, which vividly unfolds here and now. Seon Master Yunmen Wenyan (雲門文偃 864-949) said, “Body bared to golden wind (體露金風), while fallen leaves return to their roots (落葉歸根)”. Golden wind illustrates autumn wind that reveals bare branches of trees and makes leaves fall and get back to their roots. It can be likened to the state where all delusions and illusions, stemming from looks, status, honor, wealth and children, fall away and eventually our true nature is revealed. Patriarchal Seon allows us to see this state, on which the lives, practice and enlightenment of all Patriarchs are built throughout the history. Ganhwa Seon originates from the arising of enlightenment (機緣) of the eminent Patriarchs, keeping the transmitted spirit of Patriarchal Seon intact. The only difference between Patriarchal Seon and Ganhwa Seon is that Patriarchal Seon commonly featured Seon encounter dialogues (禪問答) that enable practitioners to clearly see their original nature, whereas Ganhwa Seon turned the dialogues into hwadu investigation. The essential part of Patriarchal Seon is that sentient beings see the truth that they are originally Buddha. Ganhwa Seon is one of the most remarkable spiritual practices that allow practitioners to realize that they are Buddha in the first place at the very moment when hwadu is shattered with all words and thoughts cut off.

Essence of *Ganhwa Seon*

Simply put, Ganhwa Seon is a practice to attain enlightenment by probing deeply into doubts in our mind, investigating and ultimately breaking through hwadu. Ganhwa (看話) is a combined word of observing (看) and saying or phrase (話), literally meaning “observing the critical phrase, or hwadu”. However, when it comes to this observation, one should become one with hwadu by deeply engaging in single-minded concentration on hwadu, instead of just

glancing at it. That is why we say “enter hwadu meditation” or “investigate (參究) hwadu”, because we should earnestly concentrate on hwadu with all our heart to see it shattered to pieces. Hwadu is words by the Buddha and Patriarchs with all paths of words (言路) and paths of thoughts (思路) cut off. However, it is the words prior to words that thoughts and words of human beings cannot even fathom and the thoughts before thoughts arise. Investigating hwadu, therefore, makes traces of thoughts and words disappear. Only then can we see everything as it is. And at that moment, the truth, the protagonist, the things we see are all revealed as they are. This way, Dharma flows naturally. The natural flow itself is Dharma and truth. There is nothing to be added or removed. The sun rises from the east and sets to the west. That’s all. Vigorously flowing streams are the very Dharma talks of the Buddha. Hwadu guides us to our original nature. Ganhwa Seon enables us to immediately see our true nature and to become Buddha by investigating hwadu that transcends words and cannot be figured out through thoughts. The meditation practice is attaining enlightenment with all our mind and heart. The original nature is our own nature (自性) and Buddha nature (佛性) that all beings have within. We can become Buddha when we see our own nature within ourselves with clear eyes. This is called “seeing original nature and becoming Buddha (見性成佛)”. In Ganhwa Seon, accomplishing Buddhahood is cultivating and perfecting character by attaining enlightenment through hwadu and becoming Buddha, the ideal being. Throughout Ganhwa Seon practice, we fully concentrate our mind only on hwadu, the most essential fundamental that should be resolved immediately. Peripheral details do not matter. Single-minded concentration on hwadu with no room for other matters at all is the most direct and ultimate way to be enlightened. When we awaken to truth through this practice, we can finally become the protagonist of our lives who walks all over the world confidently with wisdom like the Buddha and clear-eyed Patriarchs.

More detailed explanation on hwadu will follow at another chapter. In addition, what is regarded very important in Ganhwa Seon is entering the realm of Tathāgata, meaning “one who has thus gone or come”, after a single word or brief acts by the Buddha and Patriarchs. This is called “transcending everything and entering the realm of Tathāgata right away (一超直入如來地)”, meaning smoothly going into the realm of enlightenment by immediately going beyond tons of explanations, words and thoughts. That is why Seon Master Dahui Zonggao said, “Immediately attaining enlightenment with a single word while achieving harmony with surroundings is rare and cherished.” This moment of sudden enlightenment is like instantly lightening up a room of total darkness. The state of transparent emptiness with all of the accumulated doubts entirely taken away. Practitioners with supreme willpower and capabilities will be immediately enlightened as soon as they engage in hwadu practice. However, most of us will find it very difficult, so we begin probing into “what is this” gradually. Eminent Patriarchs constantly highlighted that practitioners should probe deeply into the doubts in our mind, with single-minded concentration on hwadu. When hwadu becomes great doubts to a practitioner, it ultimately becomes a sharp sword that would sever falling feathers (吹毛劒), or all kinds of life-and-death attachments and discriminations. A sword of wisdom. A sword of prajñā. A sharp sword that would even sever hair with just one blow. We can see the sun brightly shining within ourselves by thoroughly severing away all the traces of stereotypes, thoughts, judgments, values, rational ideas, concept of “myself” and even unconsciousness.

2. What is Patriarchal Seon?

Traditions and Features of Patriarchal Seon of Korea

Korea is well known as a country that

has kept the traditions and culture of Patriarchal Seon practice intact. At a Seon meditation hall of a tranquil mountain temple, the sound of cough, someone’s presence or even breath is not heard at all. Seon practitioners assume full lotus posture and fully concentrate on hwadu Samadhi. Neatly arranged rubber shoes in front of a door only imply that there are practitioners inside. Approximately two thousand Buddhist monks and nuns of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism hold summer and winter retreats, each for 3 months, at around one hundred different Seon monasteries. Retreats (安居) refer to intensive Seon practice where practitioners devote themselves solely to meditation and refrain from going outside of the monastery. Some engage in silence practice, while others even choose to lock themselves up in a small room for the so-called “no-door retreat (無門關)”. When retreats are completed, Seon practitioners travel about freely with no destination in mind. They assess where they stand in terms of spiritual practice while going here and there and faced with various circumstances or visiting clear-eyed teachers. These days, there are a number of urban Seon halls for lay people nationwide. A considerable number of lay practitioners manage to make time for Seon practice out of their housekeeping and work despite their busy schedules. Some also engage in retreats while observing their own rules, even though they cannot do so in mountain monasteries. One could imagine lay people in the full lotus position investigate hwadu for enlightenment during summer and winter holiday seasons. As such, traditions of Patriarchal Seon practice are found everyday lives of both Buddhist monks and nuns and lay practitioners even today.

How was Patriarchal Seon Established?

Seon (禪) has been developed along with ethnic culture and contemporary contexts of countries such as India, China, Korea and Japan throughout the long history. Importantly, traditions of

Patriarchal Seon were established in the course of incorporating characteristics of Chinese practitioners into original features maintained ever since Bodhidharma (菩提達摩) introduced Seon to China. The origin of Patriarchal Seon traces back to Bodhidharma, the 28th Patriarch of Buddhism since the Gautama Buddha. With the Second Patriarch of Seon, Dazu Huike (大祖慧可 487-593), the Third Patriarch Jianzhi Sengcan (鑑智僧璨 ?-606), the Fourth Patriarch Dayi Daoxin (道信 580-651), the Fifth Patriarch Daman Hongren (弘忍 594-674) and the Sixth Patriarch Huineng (慧能 638-713), Patriarchal Seon flourished, leading to five schools and seven sects (五家七宗). Seon Master Huangbo Xiyun (黃檗希運 ?-850) wrote in The Wanling record (宛陵錄), “the Patriarch came from the west and transmitted only one thing, Buddha mind, directly pointing out that your mind is inherently Buddha.” The Patriarch here refers to Bodhidharma, making the critical phrase of “what’s the meaning of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West? (如何是祖師西來意)” widespread. This, along with “What’s the Buddha? (如何是佛)”, has become one of the epitomized Seon encounter dialogues (禪問答) that ask the quintessential point (禪旨 meaning of Seon) of Patriarchal Seon. However, it was the Sixth Patriarch Huineng (慧能 638-713) who substantially established Patriarchal Seon. Following the Sixth Patriarch, eminent Seon Masters such as Mazu Daoyi (馬祖道一 709-788), Baizhang Huaihai (百丈懷海 749-814), Zhaozhou Congshen (趙州從諗 778-897), Huangbo Xiyun (黃檗希運 ?-850) and Linji Yixuan (臨濟義玄 ?-867) made Seon fully blossom throughout the Chinese continent. Being patient like cows while seeing through reality with tiger-like sharp eyes, they resolutely and unwaveringly highlighted that we all should see Buddha in our mind right here and right now. Seon Master Hongzhi Zhengjue (宏智正覺 1091-1157) in the mid-12th century was a leading exponent of silent illumination (默照禪), which was criticized by Seon Master Dahui Zonggao (大慧宗杲 1089-1163) who systemized and widely spread Ganhwa Seon. This led to the new era of two pillars of Patriarchal Seon, namely Ganhwa Seon and silent illumination.



Ganhwa Seon has been considered to succeed spirits and core values of Patriarchal Seon the most. Korea is one of the countries that have kept traditions of Ganhwa Seon intact.

Features of Patriarchal Seon

Patriarchal Seon is one type of meditation practice where Patriarchs (祖師) passed down essentials of Sakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment in a unique way. Patriarchs refer to clear-eyed teachers with strong practice capabilities who awaken to Buddha nature, which has been transmitted since Sakyamuni Buddha, and therefore can successfully guide practitioners to enlightenment. It is natural that extraordinary respect and trust are placed upon these Patriarchs as they attained Buddha-like supreme enlightenment. Therefore, patriarchs are no different from the Buddha and records of their

teachings are regarded as sacred as sutras, records of the Buddha’s teachings. It is also because of this reason that Patriarchal Buddha (祖佛) is widely used along with Buddha Patriarch (佛祖). Then what would be distinctive features of Patriarchal Seon except for the above-mentioned unique position of it? In Patriarchal Seon, all beings are originally Buddha and already complete as they are (本來成佛). As we are Buddha in the first place, we see completed features of ourselves here and now. Therefore, it is not transforming from the place of sentient beings to that of Buddha, but just seeing and confirming the truth that we are all Buddha where we stand. The following phrases succinctly illustrate what genuinely makes Patriarchal Seon:

A special transmission outside the teaching (教外別傳);
No reliance on written words (不立文字);
Pointing directly to mind (直指人心);

See your true nature and become Buddha (見性成佛)

Another characteristic of Patriarchal Seon includes “immediate enlightenment right after words (言下便悟)”, or achieving enlightenment upon listening to certain words or seeing certain acts.

A case in point is the Second Patriarch Dazu Huike’s immediate enlightenment as soon as he heard Bodhidharma say “bring me your mind, and I will pacify it”, which enabled Seon Master Huike to shake off anxiety and awaken to his Buddhahood, transcend life and death and make his mind calm and peaceful (安心立命). In a similar vein, a phrase of the Diamond Sutra brought sudden enlightenment to the Sixth Patriarch Huineng. As such, most Patriarchs attained enlightenment in this way. No hesitation or thoughts are allowed here. Practitioners are supposed to enter the realm of enlightenment upon

a single word right here and right now. It is like a lightening that penetrates the core of awakening in the blink of an eye. Even though it took some time for a few Seon Masters who could not awaken to truth in this way to investigate hwadu of clear-eyed teachers, however, all they needed for ultimate enlightenment was just a decisive moment. The moment of awakening is faster than light. It is immediate but complete. In addition, Seon encounter dialogues (禪問答), or questions and answers on Dharma between Seon Masters and disciples, shouts (喝) and blows (棒) are other examples that reveal our true nature in Patriarchal Seon. Shouts and blows. Shouts cut off disciples’ sense of judgment and discrimination or demonstrate the true nature beyond description of words through sudden and powerful voice. Some might have heard Seon Masters’ shout at the end of their Dharma talks. That is a shout. Blows refer to the act of hitting disciples with Dharma stick to metaphorically show breakthroughs or our original nature. Shouts and blows are also part of Seon dialogues in their own way. In Patriarchal Seon, one of the essential processes is a seal of approval (印可) through which practitioners get what they have achieved examined by clear-eyed Seon Masters through Dharma question and answer sessions in order to see whether they are truly enlightened or not. Another feature of Patriarchal Seon is that it is incorporated into our daily lives. As Seon Master Mazu Daoyi emphasized, “the ordinary mind is the Way (平常心是道), from eating food and washing face to cutting firewood”, Patriarchal Seon can be practiced regardless of what we do - whether we go somewhere, stand up, sit down, lie down, speak, remain silent, move or stand still. As such, one of the most beneficial characteristics of Ganhwa Seon is that we can continuously develop our spiritual practice by investigating hwadu whenever it is and wherever we are in our everyday lives.

3. Teachings of the Buddha and Ganhwa Seon

Seon and Doctrine

Buddhism is teachings building on Sakyamuni Buddha’s enlightenment. Enlightenment is the quintessential part of Buddhism as the ultimate destination. In other words, Buddhism is teachings that enable all beings to be enlightened and become Buddha by awakening to the ultimate truth of Dependent Co-arising and Middle Way, the two essential principles of universe that the Buddha realized. This worldview and values cherished in Buddhism form integral part of Buddhist practice that all practitioners should respect. The same is true for Ganhwa Seon. It does not aim for different worldview or values from the Buddha’s teachings, because the realm of enlightenment of the Buddha and Patriarchs is not two separate things. This is why right understanding of worldview of Buddhism should come first prior to practicing Ganhwa Seon. All preaching delivered by the Buddha throughout his life, ever since he attained enlightenment and first taught Middle Way at the Deer Park in Sarnath (鹿野園), is called doctrine (教). All of the teachings can be found in the Tripitaka Koreana. Great Master Seosan Hyujeong (西山休靜 1520-1604) in the mid-Joseon period wrote in the Mirror of Seon (禪家龜鑑), “The mind Buddha transmitted at the three places became the key message of Seon (禪旨), while every word that he said during his lifetime became the approach of doctrine (教門). Therefore, it is said, Seon is the mind of the Buddha while doctrine is the words of the Buddha.” Doctrine is verbal expression of the realm of enlightenment of the Buddha, whereas Seon is seeing awakened mind directly. Therefore, Seon is the Buddha’s mind and doctrine is the Buddha’s words. In other words, the finger that points to the moon can be likened to doctrine, while the moon itself is Seon. Doctrine and Seon are not in two different realms as both of them are based on Dharma principles of the Buddha. Therefore, clear understanding on the enlightened realm of the Buddha through doctrine should come first before engaging in Seon practice. It is crucial to secure right view (正見) through right

understanding. Great Master Seosan also writes in the Mirror of Seon that “Seon is reaching no-word realm through no word and doctrine is reaching no-word realm through words. Mind is Dharma of Seon, while words are Dharma of doctrine.” Doctrine, through words, guides us to the place of originally Buddha where even a single word is cut off, while Seon is actual practice that allows us to awaken to the truth that our mind is Buddha inherently without relying on languages or words. We are Buddha originally and already complete in the realm of Seon. So rhetoric descriptions of Seon, Buddha or mind are not tolerated, as they are like the wind and waves on a calm land (平地風波) and waves occurred with no wind (無風起浪). It can be likened to unnecessarily creating wounds on a healthy skin. However, Seon is also based on the Dharma that the Buddha awakened to. Teachings of the Buddha are guidelines for all beings to become enlightened ones with wisdom, fortune, perfect character and infinite happiness. Seon practice, too, should be built on the teachings of the Buddha. Buddha illustrated the features of awakened beings as Middle Way, Dependent Co-arising, Not-self and Emptiness. Seon is vividly revealing the truth that the Buddha taught right here through immediate enlightenment.

Seon, the Buddha’s Mind

The Buddha transmitted Seon to Mahakashyapa through mind. This is mind-to-mind transmission (以心傳心), which connects each other’s mind instantly. It is like each other’s mind deeply connected with no influence of thoughts or judgment or whatsoever. It is this way the Buddha passed down mind to Mahakashyapa through three occasions of mind-to-mind transmission (三處傳心). Patriarchal Seon and Ganhwa Seon originate from these occasions. Here is more detailed depiction of each occasion.

The First Transmission: Raising a Flower at the Vulture Peak Assembly (靈山會上舉拈花)
The Vulture Peak Assembly refers to the

scene when the Buddha gave a Dharma talk on Vulture Peak (靈鷲山). The first occasion of mind-to-mind transmission is well known as the phrase of “holding a flower aloft and smile (拈花微笑)”. Seon Master Mumoon Haegye (無門慧開 1182-1260) in the Southern Song (南宋) period described the scene as following: When Sakyamuni Buddha raised a flower preaching on Vulture Peak, all of the audience was at a loss, having no idea what it meant. It was only Mahakashyapa who broke into a smile upon seeing the flower. The Buddha said “I hereby entrust the true Dharma eye (正法眼藏), delicate mind of nirvana (涅槃妙心), true substance beyond form (實相無相), subtle Dharma gate (微妙法門), no dependence on words (不立文字) and special transmission beyond sutras (教外別傳) to Mahakashyapa.”

Mind-to-mind transmission beyond words is vividly illustrated through the occasion where the Buddha raised a flower and Mahakashyapa alone reciprocated with a graceful smile. No further explanations or words have a place to be included here. Those are all unnecessary peripherals. It was through this transmission that the Buddha passed down Seon Dharma as well as mind to Mahakashyapa.

Case 6: Buddha Twirls a Flower (世尊拈花), The Gateless Gate (無門關)

The Second Transmission: Sharing the cushion in front of the Pagoda of Many Children (多子塔前分半座)
When the Buddha was preaching in front of the Pagoda of Many Children, Mahakashyapa arrived belatedly in tattered clothes. The assembly was full of disciples with every seat filled and no one tried to yield a seat to him. Then, the Buddha called Mahakashyapa and shared his cushion with him. The audience was dumbfounded not knowing what it meant. It was only Mahakashyapa who grasped the meaning of it. Sharing a seat signifies sharing a Dharma seat (法座) together. This is the gesture of recognition and a seal of approval (印可) that Mahakashyapa attained supreme enlightenment like the Buddha.

The Third Transmission: The Buddha’s Feet Appeared through the Coffin under the Twin Sala Trees (沙羅雙樹下櫛示雙趺)
There were two sala (沙羅) trees on the hill near the Hiranyavati River (拔提河). The Buddha entered nirvana under the twin trees. Deeply saddened, disciples of the Buddha were in condolences and sacredly preserved the body of the Buddha in a coffin under the trees. When Mahakashyapa came back from his Dharma journey, he was so devastated to know that he was not there for the Buddha’s last moments. Circumambulating seven times clockwise, Mahakashyapa lamented with his eyes full of tears. At that very moment, with great compassion, the Buddha pushed out his feet and showed thousand-spoked wheel of Dharma sign on the feet to Mahakashyapa. (Nirvana Sutra 大盤涅槃經)
As such, the Buddha’s raising a flower, sharing a seat and making his two feet appear out of the coffin are the occasions of the Buddha’s mind-to-mind transmission to Mahakashyapa. As a matter of fact, the three occasions are not different from hwadu at all. Therefore, they can be regarded as the very first hwadu. No reasons or explanations could be found in Seon records with regards to these sacred occasions or the Buddha or Mahakashyapa. Even a single word would sap the vitality of the transmission as hwadu. In this wordless way, Seon is transmitted. Opening mouth is instantly delusion (開口卽錯). Added words immediately become an understanding, delusion and attachment.
It is in this vein that Great Master Seosan said, “Anyone overly attached to words will make the Buddha’s flower or Mahakashyapa’s smile mere pale traces of doctrine, while those who get the true message through mind will make even trivial worldly talks the essence of Seon beyond doctrine.”

4. We are All Buddha Originally

We are all complete here and now. I am complete and you are complete, too. I am Buddha originally and you, too, are

Buddha in the first place. Therefore, this Buddha nature does not suddenly appear from nothing, or it is not something that disappears all of a sudden. Buddhahood is always within ourselves. We only don’t know this simple truth just because accumulated misunderstanding and delusions cover up and mask our Buddha nature within.
The sun in our mind is always shining clearly. The moon in our mind lights up everything all the time. I am the blue sky. Clear and transparent sky. The sky where fleecy clouds flow flowers bloom on trees and birds sing. I am the deep sea. The fundamentals of myself tranquilly lie in the deep sea and vast ocean, not flowing away with constantly changing waves. The blue sea where all kinds of fish freely swim and seaweeds flourish. In Seon meditation, the sun, the moon, the clear sky, the deep sea and the way everything is already complete are all called “originally Buddha (本來成佛).” However, the way sentient beings live is like being swept away by waves. They vanish into the realm of being in vein and meaninglessness after all the conflicts and shouts. Not being aware that we are all Buddha originally, we carry on our lives suffering from pains and frustrations while satisfied with the fact that we are just sentient beings.
Attaining enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, with great delight, Sakyamuni Buddha said, “marvelous and marvelous! Tathagata-like wisdom and virtue are already within all sentient beings, however, discrimination and delusions prohibit them from awakening to the truth!” (Flower Garland Sutra 華嚴經)
Here, Sakyamuni Buddha laments with frustration that all beings are well-equipped with wisdom and virtue in the first place as “originally Buddha (本來成佛)”, however, they don’t realize they are not different from the Buddha, misguided by discrimination and delusions. It is like we cannot see the sun covered by clouds even though the sun is there as it is behind clouds. Therefore, the Buddha succinctly illustrated the crystal-clear truth that our mind is Buddha and the path to absolute freedom and happiness exists within ourselves.
Patriarchal Seon thoroughly succeeds

this recognition of “originally Buddha”, as the Buddha highlighted that all sentient beings have wisdom and virtue like Tathagata originally. Unwavering commitment to the truth that we are all Buddha in the first place is the very faith in Patriarchal Seon and Ganhwa Seon. Seon meditation starts from this steadfast belief. It is not forcing to have faith in this at all. As that is the way it is originally, we should place solid faith in the obvious truth. If one is obsessed with outward attachment and searching for heaven, the pure land, wealth, honor and comfort, not awakening to Buddhahood within, he or she is like talking in one’s sleep as Ven. Seongcheol said.
When starting a journey to Seon meditation, it is extremely important where we begin. Should we begin from the understanding that Seon is the process of becoming Buddha through practice or from the fact that we are already Buddha in the first place? It has been always controversial, however, Patriarchal Seon, importantly Ganhwa Seon, starts from the understanding that we are all Buddha originally (本來是佛).
Therefore, it is not sentient beings become Buddha later through practice. All they need is just a simple awakening to the truth that they themselves are Buddha. It is just about immediately realizing that we are Buddha here and now and already complete and starting to engage in Seon meditation. That is why “you are Buddha originally therefore see the true nature of yourself” is widely said in Seon instead of “you can become Buddha by cultivating your mind and getting rid of delusions”. Seon Master Dahui also said, “Awakening to the truth that our mind is already complete Buddha will make us absolutely free and fully comfortable. All delicate occurrences do not come from outside, as everything is complete inherently.” (The Collection of Epistles 書狀)
Nirvana Sutra states that “all sentient beings have Buddha nature (一切衆生悉有佛性)”, while Disquisitions of Sengzhao (肇論) describes, “mountains, rivers, grasses and trees are all Buddha originally (山川草木悉皆成佛)”, highlighting that all beings are enlightened beings as a matter of fact. There is no one who is not Buddha, and there is not a single place where

Buddha does not exist. All beings co-dependently and equally exist and are complete Buddha as they are with no discrimination. Sentient beings are Buddha originally, while reality is the very Pure Land. The vitality of already-enlightened Buddha is within ourselves and delicately works. It is kept intact whether we shout, smile or get angry. Then, why cannot we realize and see Buddha within? It is because our Buddha nature is covered by the darkness of ignorance. In other words, we are just not exerting our capabilities as Buddha because we don’t know that we are Buddha originally due to our own discrimination and delusions of greed, anger and ignorance. Therefore, once manipulations and thoughts of what is right or wrong stemming from the three poisons are cut off, the darkness fades away and Buddha nature within is revealed. This is also called “seeing true nature (見性)”, meaning we open up the eyes of our mind and see our mind as it is. Seon practice is realizing that ordinary mind is just like the mind of Buddha and getting away from all kinds of manipulation and judgment that pollute our mind. Then the true nature of our mind is revealed as it is. Seon Master Huineng asked, “Do not think of good and do not think of evil (不思善不思惡). At this very moment, what is your true nature (本來面目)?” We should never lose our true nature due to discrimination and judgment of good or evil, ugly or pretty, like or dislike.
Investigating hwadu and engaging in Seon meditation practice is firmly believing in, experiencing and confirming that we are Buddha originally. The reason for hwadu meditation is to root out manipulations and judgment fundamentally.

5. No Reliance on Written Words, a Special Transmission outside the Teaching, Pointing Directly to Mind, See your True Nature and Become Buddha

The essence of Patriarchal Seon is

succinctly summarized into these four verses as following:

A special transmission outside the teaching (教外別傳);
No reliance on written words (不立文字);
Pointing directly to mind (直指人心);
See your true nature and become Buddha (見性成佛)

Patriarchal Seon is to put “pointing directly to mind” and “seeing your true nature and becoming Buddha” through “no reliance on written words” and “a special transmission outside the teaching” into practice. In other words, the goal is attaining enlightenment by directly pointing to our mind and seeing the true nature of ourselves. The way to achieve this goal is not relying on words and sutras. These four phrases are common fundamentals that bring essential part of Patriarchal Seon to light.

No Reliance on Written Words and a Special Transmission outside the Teaching
“No reliance on written words” is widely interpreted as not framed by languages or words or not attached to languages or words. Meanwhile, “a special transmission outside the teaching” refers to special transmission beyond sutras, or mind-to-mind transmission. The light of enlightenment, like the lucid light of a lantern, is passed down from the mind of clear-eyed teachers to the mind of disciples. Seon Master Huineng’s following sentences in the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch encapsulate the essence of “no reliance on written words”:
“Dear clear-eyed teachers! Please do not be attached to emptiness (空) upon listening to me highlighting emptiness. The most important thing is not to be attached to emptiness itself.”
Seon Master Huineng asks audience not to be attached to the concept of emptiness that he mentioned. The genuine meaning of “no reliance on written words” is refraining from being attached to words and oblivious of the fundamental message of sutras or records of Patriarchs’ preaching. It cannot be further from complete denial of all words

as a means of searching for the truth. Seon is transmitted from mind to mind. Sutras and records of Patriarchs are no more than a means to enable us to awaken to our true nature. Therefore, the goal of studying them lies in rightly understanding what they truly mean and realizing the vivid truth.

Even though we take the approach of understanding Ganhwa Seon through sutras and records in the beginning, it is important to thoroughly know what those words are truly for. Sutras and records of Patriarchs are like a finger pointing to the moon or a raft to cross a river. Once we saw the moon, a finger should not occupy our mind anymore; once we crossed a river, we should not be attached to a raft. As such, the teaching of “no reliance on written words” and “a special transmission outside the teaching” clearly shows that Seon is practice that enables us to rightly see the moon, not a finger. Seon meditation allows us to directly get to the essence of truth by transcending limitations that prohibit us from seeing the moon because of attachment to a finger.

Point Directly to Mind, See Your True Nature and Become Buddha (見性成佛)
The ultimate goal of Seon meditation is to “see your true nature and become Buddha”, or to attain enlightenment by seeing one’s original nature. Then how can we thoroughly see our true nature and become Buddha? Seeing our true nature is intuitively realizing our nature, not relying on languages or words, not looking for or searching something outward. This is the core of “pointing directly to mind.” The object directly pointed to here is not something that exists outside but the mind within. The vitality inside ourselves from the beginning of our life. Our true nature covered by afflictions and delusions. Ganhwa Seon allows us to direct our outward-looking mind to inside and to see our true nature intuitively through hwadu, which is the most accurate and fastest gateless gate to the realm of “no reliance on written words” and “a special transmission outside the teaching”. Enlightenment is called “seeing true nature (見性)” in other words. As this

expression implies, enlightenment does not come from outside. It is also not attaining some wondrous experiences or something unique. Enlightenment is not acquiring something new but opening our eyes thoroughly to the fact that our inherent nature and mind is Buddha (卽心是佛). Searching for Dharma outward is in vain if we don’t know our original mind and true nature. If one awakens to one’s mind and true nature, however, he or she is a genuine Buddha. That is why Patriarchs said “there is no Buddha outside of our mind (心外無佛)”

Seon Master Linji Yixuan wrote in the *Record of Linji* (臨濟錄) as follows: “You cannot attain enlightenment because you are constantly searching for something external and consequently you are not able to rest your mind even for a second. Therefore, Patriarchs said that you look for your head with your head. If this phrase prompts you to shed light on yourself (迴光返照), not something external, and you find this moment peaceful by awakening to the truth that your body and mind are no different from those of Patriarchs and the Buddha, you are enlightened.” Here, Seon Master Linji highlights that all we need to do is just seeing our true nature by looking inward, as we are already complete Buddha inherently and do not need to seek for something else at all. “Seeing true nature” is achieved through one’s own hands-on experiences. Enlightenment does not come from reliance on sutras or records of Patriarchs. Even the Buddha or clear-eyed teachers cannot spoon-feed us with enlightenment, because it can be known only through our own “inner experience (自內證 light within ourselves).” We know how hot something is by feeling fire with our two hands; we know whether water is hot or cold by actually drinking it. Understanding and memorizing all the lines of sutras or records turns pale by immediate enlightenment of our mind. That is why Seon Master Linji said, “Understanding hundreds of sutras and treatises can never be like an awakened practitioner with tranquil mind (設解得百本經論不如一箇無

事底阿師).” For example, if a person hasn’t tried apples before but says they are good, sour and sweet, it is all wrong description. Only those who actually had apples can depict how they taste in reality. Like this, the explanation with flowery rhetoric about Seon practice by those who have never been engaged in it cannot be reliable. On the contrary, what practitioners with hands-on experiences of meditation say is reliable, even if it is not delivered in a perfectly refined form. As such, enlightenment is completely inward and one’s own experience. There is no other way to reach the realm of enlightenment except for actual practice and hands-on experience (體究鍊磨). In other words, the essence of Patriarchal Seon is enabling all beings to directly point to their mind and see originally inherited Buddha nature within through the special mind-to-mind transmission beyond sutras, records or any other forms of words.



BUDDHIST CULTURE

- In this section, we introduce the Korean traditional seasonal customs and various rites of one’s life by extracting from the book “It’s the day we go to the Buddhist temple” published by the Bureau of Dharma Propagation.
-

01
KOREAN TRADITIONAL
BUDDHIST CUSTOMS

IN SUMMER



QR code for the previous article in the spring edition



A Joseon Dynasty scholar, Bumjo Jeong, spoke highly of the endlessness of summer with the words, “Ha Ja Cheon Ji Deok (夏者天之德).” This phrase means that the season’s vibrant energy stimulates the growth of all beings, like the virtuous nature of heaven. According to the lunar calendar, the 4th, 5th, and 6th months are considered the summer months. During this period, several holidays are celebrated. Buddha’s birthday is in the fourth month; *Dano*, the spring festival, is held in the fifth month; and *Yudu*, the festival of washing away negative energy, takes place in the sixth month. This time also encompasses a number of seasonal markers, including *Ipha*, the advent of summer; Soman, the time for growing grain; *Mangjong*, the time for maturing grain; *Haji*, the summer solstice; *Soseo*, the time of minor heat; and *Daeseo*, the time of major heat.

The Buddha’s birthday in the fourth lunar month has been celebrated since the era of the Three Kingdoms (57 B.C.-668 A.D.). Even during the Joseon Dynasty (1393-1897 A.D.) when Buddhism was systematically oppressed, the Buddha’s

birthday expanded into a major holiday, widely celebrated by many people. Yeondeunghoe, the lantern festival, also developed as traditional customs are observed in the first, second, and fourth months. In the midst of these developments, Buddhism expanded significantly, from the privilege of the ruling class to a religion of the general public, and the celebration of a job well done among common people, who took a short break from laborious farming before beginning to plant the rice. Consequently, on Buddha’s birthday, people enjoyed various Buddhist activities. For instance, every household in the village hung lanterns at home or floated them on the river. People also took part in lantern-lighting activities and passing around a stupa.

With its double ‘five’s, Dano is celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth month, filled with the vibrant energy of summer, the positive energy of the sun, which is the highest of the year. Along with New Year’s Day, *Hansik* or “Cold Food Day,” and Chuseok, or Thanksgiving Day, Dano is one of the four major holidays. On this day, we can find records of a memorial ceremony for ancestors as well as the gods in heaven and on earth, dating back to the time of the three kingdoms. Subsequently, the celebration of Dano has continued in the various communities of many regions. It may take on the form of performances, like ancestors’ ceremonies, goot, or shamanistic rituals or other activities. Among them, the *Gangneung Danoje* Festival has been included on the list of Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. Additionally, as its positive energy from the sun at its fullest on Dano, it is the perfect time of the year to defeat all evil spirits. Thus, the use of written amulets is very popular during this time as well. Summer fitness activities, like riding swings and Korean wrestling are also very common.

On Yudu on the 15th day of the sixth month, when summer heat is at its peak, the tradition of enjoying a day in the cool water of the valleys has become quite widespread over the years. Just like Dano, its custom of deflecting evil spirits with the positive energy of the sun has continued up

until Yudu. In one special tradition on this day, people bathe in water flowing from the west to the east, which is considered the best water, in harmony with nature. Among the 24 seasonal divisions by the solar calendar, the 5th day of the fifth month is Ipha, the advent of summer, and the 21st is Soman, the day of growing grain. On Ipha, the start of summer, when rice sprouts and barley comes to ears, the hills and fields are covered in green and the croaking of frogs fills the air.

Soman is the time for growing grains, so all sentient beings start to thrive at full strength; that is, ‘so’, they grow gradually, and ‘man’ to their fullest. According to the *I Ching*, or the Book of Changes, an ancient divination text and the oldest of the Chinese classics, the positive energy from the winter solstice emerges following Ipchun, the advent of spring, and Ipha, the advent of summer. By the time *Soman* arrives, its energy is at its peak. Though the summer seems to have just begun, positive energy is at its fullest on Soman. Following this day, not only does the yang energy decline, but ying, or negative forces, also begin to emerge. Furthermore, the energy underground is in opposition to the air, so it said that its power is the coldest down there.

The day called Mangjong, the time of maturing grain, takes place on the 6th day of the sixth month. Haji, the summer solstice, takes place on the 21st day of the solar calendar. There is an old saying, “Don’t cut barley before Mangjong,” so this is the season of cutting barley, and planting rice seedlings. This is the best time of all, as cutting barley must be finished before the planting of rice seedlings and the plowing of fields for sowing beans may begin. Many of these tasks need to be done quickly; thus, even crude-sounding sayings, like “A fire-poker can do its job,” or “Just pee on your foot,” became popular at this period. Haji has the longest day and the shortest night. Additionally, this was the time to juggle field work, as well as get ready for either a rainy or drought season. If there was no rain in the rural areas by Haji, a rainmaking ritual would be performed.

According to the solar calendar, the 7th of

the seventh month is Soseo, the time of minor heat, and the 23rd is Daeseo, the time of major heat. By Soseo, the heat wave is at its full scale, and it is the start of the rainy season. Fruits and vegetables are abundant and wheat and barley are also available for everyone. Daeseo is the hottest period, with the second of the three dog days of summer, so it is literally filled with the scorching heat of the sun, like being in a hot oven, but sometimes rainstorms persist. At this time, school is out, and it is a vacation season, so field laborers can take a brief break from farming, away from the scorching heat – a time to recharge depleted energy with various activities like splashing water and holding festivals in villages.

Buddhist Customs on Buddha’s Birthday
Yeon Deung Hoe

Buddha’s birthday celebrates the coming of the Sakyamuni Buddha into this world by lighting lanterns not just in the temples, but every household in the village. Specifically, ‘the lighting of lanterns’ has been a widely practiced ritual among different Buddhist cultures. As the Sakyamuni Buddha entered nirvana, he advised, “Regard yourself as light and let wisdom be your light. [自燈明法燈明],” Thus, the lighting of darkness symbolizes wisdom unlocking ignorance. Accordingly, lanterns have become the key offerings of the Buddha and bodhisattvas. Furthermore, when the simple offering of lanterns of common devotees grew to the massive scale of the lantern festival, the result has been more joyous feelings and a more wonderful occasion. Lighting of lanterns was not only a ritual of strengthening one’s vow to

practice according the Buddha’s teaching, but also the key activity of the festival.

According to *Samguk Sagi*, the History of the Three Kingdoms, of Korea, it is said that the 48th King Gyeongmun of the Silla Kingdom (841-875) visited Hwangnyongsa Temple, looked around, and threw a party for all the government officials. This is an indication that the lantern festival had already been widely practiced in temples before it was celebrated on a national level during the Goryeo Dynasty (916-1392). The lantern custom is believed to have been transmitted to temples and commoners when Buddhism came in during the Three Kingdoms era, and the tradition continued on a government level on the fifteenth of the first and second months on different occasions.

The historical record of the lantern festival on Buddha’s birthday appears in the mid Goryeo Dynasty in 1166. It is written that the lighting of these offerings took place in the palace and at the homes of government officials on that day. By the time of the 33rd King, Gongmin of the Goryeo Dynasty, it is written, “On Buddha’s birthday, a national holiday on the 8th day of the fourth month, every house is lit with lanterns.” Therefore, it can be inferred that the lantern festival had been already listed as a state ritual during the Goryeo Dynasty to be officially celebrated in the first and second months of the year. Later, it emerged as a part of Buddha’s birthday, as commoners and temples naturally practiced it on that day later on. As a result, in the late Goryeo Dynasty, it was perceived by commoners to be a part of the Buddha’s birthday celebration. Moreover, this trend spread more widely during the Joseon Dynasty. During that time, various activities related to lanterns and customs have developed over the years.

The *Dongguk Sesigi*, a Record of the Seasonal Customs of the Eastern Kingdom, and *Yeoryang Sesigi*, Seasonal Festival Customs in the Capital, includes sections on the customs related to the lanterns during the late Joseon Dynasty. In one tradition, a few days before the Buddha’s birthday, a *Deunggan*, or long pole made of a bamboo, was stuck into the ground to hang lanterns on, and silk flags, peacock’s feathers, or pine

tree branches were used to decorate it. Not only commoners, but also those working in government offices or stores, regarded the practice of placing Deunggan highly. The higher the Deunggan was, the prouder they felt. Usually, there were between three or four at each house, or sometimes as many as ten. In general, commoners set up as many poles as they had children. On the streets, merchants competed amongst themselves to have the tallest Deunggan, and a multitude of people came out to see the mesmerizing designs of the lanterns.

One particularly amazing aspect of this ritual was the huge variety in lantern shapes and designs: lotus flowers, watermelons, garlic, wild grapes, oriental melons, eggs, dragons, phoenixes, cranes, birds, carp, turtles, terrapins, lions, tigers, and deer. Likewise, some of these designs featured flowers, fruits, fish, or animals, whereas others showed lucky omens or various designs like the Big Dipper. Simple indoor ones showed symbols of the sun, the moon, longevity, peace, eternity, Mt. Namsan, balls, ships, buildings, handrails, flower pots, sedan chairs, bottles, pottery, bells, and more. Some even showed a general mounted on a horse, a scene from Romance of the Three Kingdoms, a Chinese classic historical novel by Luo Guanzhong, drawn from a beautiful angle, looking down from heaven. Many children were fascinated by these lanterns, and bought them to play with.

Additionally, *Youngdeung* lanterns that created interesting shadows were very popular. Inside these lanterns was a turning lathe, filled with various animal-shaped carved papers, or a hunting scene, so as the wind blew, it went around and around, creating fascinating moving shadow scenes.

For those who could afford to have extravagant decorations, they installed Deunggan consisting of tens of tall bamboo poles as well as a mast, and beautified them with various ornaments that could be pushed by the wind. At that time, when rotating lights were placed there, it is said that they shot out continuously like bullets. Additionally, there is an indication that gunpowder was sometimes wrapped in paper and hung

between Deunggans. When it was lit with fire, it created an amazing scene of fireworks raining down, which the people enjoyed very much. Moreover, tens of pages of paper could be connected to make a dragon. When it blew in the wind, it wiggled like the creature, or sometimes clothed puppets or baskets were hung on it for amusement.

For the two days of small and large gatherings for Yeondeunghoe, lanterns were lit up, not only at the palaces, but also the capital all night long. The whole area was packed with many spectators, as the curfew was suspended for the night. During a time of inadequate lighting and a strictly enforced curfew, Buddha’s birthday was an extraordinary time of festivity, a night as bright as a day and filled with freedom. There is another record, stating that commoners were able to walk around the streets, playing musical instruments in all places all night long, so the entire city buzzed with excitement.

Ever since those days, the custom of floating lanterns on a river or in a sea has continued as one of the most important celebrations on Buddha’s birthday. Likewise, lanterns were lit not just on land, but also water, creating a splendid water-borne spectacle. The city was crowded with a sea of people and became a city of lanterns. Trails of spectators led the way to nearby hills to enjoy the whole panoramic view of the various designs of lights and crowds. It is easy to imagine why the lighting and appreciation of lanterns during Youngdeung activities had become an exciting festival for the people to entertain themselves.

Ja Choi (崔滋1188-1260), a scholar from the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), commented on the sight of lanterns in his book *Bohanjip*, Supplementary Jottings in Idleness, that ‘An array of lanterns lined up in the sky made the night like broad daylight’. Other scholars of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) praised the ten beauties of the capital in the poem – “*Hando Sipyoung* (漢都十詠).” Geojeong Seo (徐居正, 1420 -1488), one of the writers, wrote *Jongja Gwandeung* (鍾街觀燈) as follows:

Lanterns in every household of Seoul are as bright as the glow of the setting sun. The world is crowded with mountain- and lake-shaped lights, and lotus flowers appear on the second and fourth bridges. The east and west streets are bright as broad daylight, and children running around are faster than monkeys. Though the Big Dipper has gone down, lanterns stand still, and only a water clock rushes at dawn in front of the palace.

Additionally, Kings went to visit Bongeunsa Temple in the city with a long trail of loyal subjects on Yeondeunghoe. As was done in the past, a parade has been the highlight of a festival, even in modern celebrations. Though lanterns used to light up every house, it is only natural that these lanterns have managed to find their way into a festival, as we live in the society of various religions. For people who identify with the meaning of Yeondeunghoe, participating in the parade holding the bright, highly-symbolic lanterns is the most enjoyable experience of the celebration. Similarly, Yeondeunghoe is not only the key ritual among Buddhist activities on Buddha’s birthday, but also has been continuously celebrated in a way that holds historical significance among the festivals of Korea.

Tapdori or Walking Around a Pagoda in a Circle

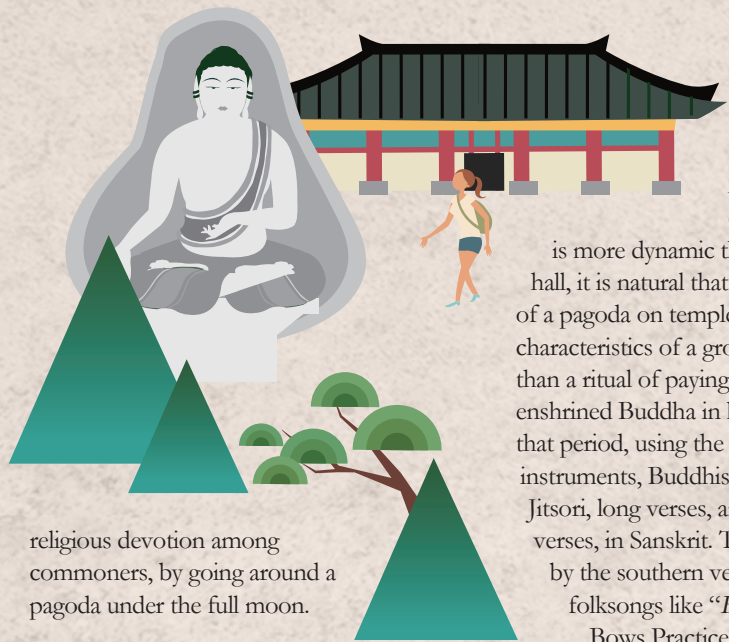
One of the important rituals on Buddha’s birthday that has been passed on is *Tapdori*. This is the circling of a pagoda, which is a structure that enshrines the relics of Sakyamuni Buddha; that is, it signifies respect toward him. Before the Buddhist era, the tradition of circling an enlightened being was a ritual called, “*Yojap* (繞),” that had been practiced in ancient India. Traditionally, people circled to the right three times. Thus, when the Sakyamuni Buddha passed away, a pagoda was created to enshrine his relics, so this spirit of respect towards him has evolved naturally. Going around a pagoda is like offering a prayer ceremony to pay homage to the virtue and dharma of Buddha. It is not only a part of monastic culture, but also a way for the laity to practice their beliefs.

The history of Tapdori in Korea also goes far back, according to Samguk Yusa or Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms, a collection of various Korean legends, myths and folktales from the 13th century. In the customs section of the Silla Kingdom, it is written that, from every second month, until the Buddha’s birthday, people in Seoul rushed to circle the brick pagoda of Heungryunsa Temple to wish for good fortune. Perhaps most notably, one part depicted, ‘...going around the brick pagoda through the deep night.’ Likewise, Tapdori holds the strong characteristics of a folk festival, so it was widely enjoyed during various Buddhist seasonal activities.

Commonly, Tapdori took place after the sunset; this can be confirmed with early records from India and Korea. Master Yijing (I Ching, 635–713) of the Tang Dynasty (618-930), who had been to India, described the custom of Tapdori as beginning before dusk. By the time the sun set, people passed through the gate of a temple to go around a pagoda three times. Additionally, the scene of Tapdori, as described in Samguk Yusa, was also set at night. Though the circling of a pagoda can be done at any time, its practice began with the laity, and followed the folk tradition. So, this Buddhist festival took place at night like Ganggangsulae, another traditional Korean circle dance performed by women under the bright full moon. Therefore, it can be seen that ritualized Tapdori on specific days or for specific events usually took place after the evening hours.

The fact that the circling of a pagoda took place at night also implies that it is closely related with lantern lighting. The early folk custom of hanging lanterns generally took place in the middle of the month, on the full moon. It can be assumed that it was done with the power of the laws of nature in mind – participants hoped to receive some of the abundance and regeneration that a full moon signifies. Hence, just as women performed *Ganggangsulae*, creating a large circle resembling the full moon to wish for the abundance and fertility of their community, Tapdori was also considered a means of sharing





religious devotion among commoners, by going around a pagoda under the full moon.

Additionally, Tapdori is a practice of putting one's zealous efforts into the cultivation of action. According to *Seokmuneoibeom*, a collection of Buddhist rituals, it is illustrated that monks gathered in a big room to spend time drawing the ten Paramitas or *Beopseong*, the realization of wisdom, on the Enlightenment Day, or during the period of zealous practice. The painting of the ten Paramitas was created to depict the ten practice methods in figures in order to attain enlightenment. *Beopseongdo* or *Haeindo*, *Vairochana Maze*, was written by Master Uisang (625-702) of the Silla Dynasty by summarizing the Avatamsaka or Garland Sutra in 210 letters in a maze. Correspondingly, the records indicating that the circling of the ten Paramitas painting and *Beopseongdo* clearly shows the high likelihood of coinciding with the continuing custom of moving around in a circle, which gave birth to the tradition of Tapdori. Thus, both the recently-revived tradition of Tapdori and the circling of the ten Paramitas painting and *Beopseongdo* can be regarded as embracing the tradition of the practitioners' ritual. This is significant in continuing the custom of moving around a traditional pagoda.

In the early form of Tapdori, it was an important way of practicing one's faith and culture, but later on, it took on the characteristics of a festival, gradually

becoming integrated into the seasonal folk customs among commoners. As a ceremony that is conducted outdoors

is more dynamic than one in a dharma hall, it is natural that Tapdori, the circling of a pagoda on temple grounds, shows the characteristics of a group activity, more than a ritual of paying homage to the enshrined Buddha in his residence. During that period, using the four Buddhist instruments, Buddhist chants are sung in Jitsori, long verses, and Hootsori, short verses, in Sanskrit. These are followed by the southern version of popular folksongs like "*Boryeom*" or the "108 Bows Practice" as well as music performed by a private band of Samhyunyukgak.

Notably, since the time of the Joseon Dynasty era, and even now, the circling of a pagoda has been widely practiced in Tapgol Park, which was originally the site of Weongaksa Temple in Seoul. Similarly, the restoration of Tapdori culture in history has continued in many places nationwide; specifically the following are known for this heritage: a pagoda in Woljeongsa in Mt. Odaesan; the Hall of the Eight Aspects of Sakyamuni Buddha's life in Beopjusa; a pagoda in Jungwon in Chungju; a pagoda in Manboksa; Seokgatap and Dabotap in Bulguksa; and the Stairs of Tongdosa. At Haeinsa Temple, Tapdori is accompanied by the ritual of holding the Tripitaka Koreana, the most famous set of Korean printing woodblocks, on one's head. This ceremony is performed once a year, first, to give sunlight to the woodblocks, and second, to renew their devotion. As the people carry the teachings of Buddha on their heads, circling a pagoda, which is the embodiment of enlightenment, their devotion toward their faith becomes deeper.

Moreover, the tradition of Tapdori took root as one of the leap-month activities of the Joseon Dynasty period along the way. Since a lunar month is several days shorter than a solar month, a "leap month" was added to the calendar about once every

three years. There was a popular seasonal custom that promised one could enter nirvana by doing *Sejeol Balgi*, making offerings in three temples per day in leap months. Thus, Tapdori became one of the leap month customs. Special customs, such as going on a pilgrimage to each of the three temples was expressed as "Sejeol," and the act of walking around a pagoda among commoners was referred to as "walking" or "Balgi." That appears to be how Sejeol Balgi and Tapdori came to be closely related.

Hogi and Water Splashing Activities

There have always been many unique activities for children on the Buddha's birthday, as if it were a holiday just for them. Among them, the most well-known example is called, "*Hogi*," which history can trace all the way back to the Goryeo Dynasty era (918-1392). In records from King Gongmin's reign in the History of Goryeo, we find details, 'On Buddha's birthday on the 8th day of the fourth month, lanterns are hung in every house, and children went around on streets in villages, asking for rice and fabric with a paper flag on a pole. This is called, "Hogi.'" Thus, it is written that King Gongmin watched children playing Hogi in the courtyard of the palace, and gave them fabric.

This custom continued until the Joseon Dynasty period. Thus, according to *Yongjaechonghwa*, a collection of miscellaneous writings, by Seong Hyeon (1439-1504, pen name Yongjae), and Dongguksesigi, a record of the seasonal customs of the eastern kingdom, in the coming of spring, after making paper flagpoles and fish-skin drums early in the morning, children went around in groups. They set out not only to acquire materials to be used in the Lantern Festival, but probably also later hung their flags on top of Deunggan.

As a part of the preparations for the lantern festival, Hogi is seen as not just a simple, amusing activity for children, but also as a ritual. According to Namseon Choi (1890-1957), a historian and scholar, it can actually be considered a

practice to cleanse a ceremonial venue before the lantern festival. *Palgwanhoe* was another ritual that included young people. Palgwanhoe was one of the two national formal Buddhist rituals of the Goryeo Dynasty period, along with Yeondeunghoe. For Palgwanhoe, after selecting four children from prominent families to wear beautiful outfits, they were asked to perform the Hwarang, or Flower Dance. Children were considered untainted beings, so whenever performing a sacred ritual, they are given the role of cleansing the premises from the east to the west.

Additionally, another children's activity, called Sobuhui, takes place on Buddha's birthday. This is played by hitting a large, upside-down bowl in a bucket with a broom, making a simple drum-like sound. Dongguksesigi refers to Taepyonggo, which was the hitting of the drums from evening to dawn, starting on the day of the first full moon of the new year. As Yeondeunghoe moved from the first to the fourth month, the records state that Taepyonggo became Sobuhui. According to Gyeongdojapgi, a collection of the seasonal customs of Seoul, Sobuhui was revised to Sogo to reflect its origin from Taepyonggo.

Fasting on Buddha's Birthday

Buddha's birthday was regarded a major holiday, so many people prepared various temple foods. Gyeongdojapgi states that when a guest came, rice cakes steamed with leaves of zelkova trees, roasted beans, and boiled water parsley were served. This was called Sobap, or "simple meal," referring to the fact that there was no meat eaten on Buddha's birthday.

Another book, Yeoryangsesigi, the annual events of Seoul, described it this way, "On Buddha's birthday, children ate rice cakes steamed with zelkova trees, and salted roasted beans while playing, hitting their buckets." Additionally, Dongguksesigi indicated, "Children set a table full of rice cakes steamed with rhododendron leaves, roasted black beans and water parsley under Deunggan." Here, rhododendron trees mean zelkova. The custom of eating roasted beans in

Korea was once recorded in the book Ohji by Zhang Yuan, a scholar of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) of China. In the "Seoul customs" section, it said that this started when people, who recited chants, saved beans that they used to count before the Buddha statues, and salted them after roasting; they were shared with passersby, building good karma.

Rice cakes steamed with zelkova trees are particularly notable as the most recognized example of temple food on Buddha's birthday. "Nongga Wollyeongga, or the Song of Famers," sang, "Lighting lanterns on Buddha's birthday is not necessary in mountainous areas, but rice cakes steamed with zelkova leaves and salted roasted beans are the seasonal delicacies of the fourth month." The rice cake song, "Ttoktaryoung," sings "On the full moon of the first month, moon cake should be eaten; Songpyeon, half-moon-shaped rice cakes are for Hansik in the second month; mugwort rice cakes should be eaten on the third day of the third month; zelkova cakes should be eaten on the 8th day of the fourth month; Surichittok are for Dano in the fifth month; and grilled wheat ones should be eaten on the 6th day of the sixth month..." From this, we can infer that rice cakes steamed with zelkova trees were the food to be eaten on Buddha's birthday. The young leaves of zelkova trees were mixed with non-glutinous powder before being steamed. This was called Yuyeopbyeong [榆葉餅].

On Buddha's birthday, making zelkova rice cakes seems to be connected to the appearance of the young buds of the trees, growing in the late spring. Therefore, having temple-style food on Buddha's birthday, in connection with the zelkova trees' growth may have significant meaning. Like a symbol of any village or community, an old shade tree provides a comfortable resting spot for the people in the village. On important days, with a gold line all around it, it protected its surrounding area like a God tree, as zelkova trees mostly took on the role of a shade tree. Because rice cakes made with the leaves of these trees is the customary seasonal food on Buddha's birthday, the significance of the rice cakes empowered

by Buddha seems quite exceptional.

Additionally, water parsley is tender around Buddha's Day and smells delicious, so a salad made with this was enjoyed by many. Thus, as on Buddha's birthday, vegetable-centric food was consumed rather than meat. It can be inferred that water parsley, in season, was chosen as a special delicacy.

The Buddhist Customs on Dano

Dano on the 5th day of the fifth month, has been the biggest holiday in many areas, especially where barley farming was the most common. This celebration is closely connected to the staple crops of a region. In the areas where rice was important, Korean Thanksgiving, Chuseok, was considered to be important, but for barley farmers, Dano was. In accordance with the seasonal customs of an agricultural society, farming culture can be divided into Dano, Thanksgiving, and multiplex. Dano culturally influenced regions which were generally located north of the Hangang River, where barley farming was the most advanced. Thus, it was proper to hold an agricultural festival, Dano, at the end of its harvest season. On the contrary, Thanksgiving culture has been practiced in the rice granary zone of the Southeastern region and the multicultural zone in the Southwest.

With the vibrant energy of summer on Dano on the 5th day of the fifth month, yang, or positive energy is the strongest in the year, as there are two 'five's'. Particularly, at five o'clock on Dano, which is the 13th of the 24 times of day, between 11:00 and 13:00, a custom developed of hanging mugwort or motherwort on the gate, or eating rice cake made of those vegetables. This practice was known to protect against evil energy. It was done to chase off evil spirits as well as heat. This was done at five o'clock when the yang energy was the strongest of the day, on Dano, a day filled with this lively force. Taking these characteristics into account, Dano is the best day of the year; it is also called 'Surit Day.' The highest point of our body is called Jungsuri, the crown of the head. So, 'Suri' refers to that which is high, noble, and holy.

Although there seems to be no relationship between Buddhism and Dano, there has been a strong connection between them in Korea. Designated UNESCO Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Gangneung Danoje Festival has been held by the local community, and they have continued their traditional town festival throughout history. During the festival, the *Daegwallyeong Guksa Seonghwangje*, Seon Master National Preceptor Beomil, is the master of the celebration. In the midst of the Joseon Dynasty era, Gyun Heo, a politician and writer, encountered a party of the festival participants, who had just finished paying tribute to the mountain god at Daegwallyeong, a mountain pass in the Taebaek Mountain Range of the eastern part of South Korea. After the encounter, he wrote that the mountain god of Daegwallyeong had supernatural powers, so people climbed up to the sacred site and offered their greetings joyfully every fifth month. As for the birth of Master Boemil, the story has been transmitted as follows: There was a maiden from a place called Haksan-ri of Gangneung City. One day, she went to a stone well to scoop up water with a bowl. Then, as soon as she brought up the container, she saw that the sun was in the bowl. Though she felt somewhat strange, she drank the water and conceived a child. As the baby was born without a father, he was abandoned on a hill behind her village. Realizing that she had done wrong, the mother couldn't sleep out of the guilt. She soon went back to the place, and brought the baby home. This child grew up to be National Preceptor Beomil.

As the founder of *Sagulsanpa*, which is one of Gusan Seonmun, the Seon gates of the nine mountain Seon monasteries, and the abbot of Gulsansa Temple, he was responsible for spreading Seon Buddhism throughout Yeongdong, or the eastern part of Korea for 40 years. The rationale behind his appointment of Guksa Seonghwangshin was that as he was in opposition to the Buddhist sect that the royal family of the Silla Dynasty had devoted. It seems that he was seen as someone who collaborated with influential families in the region as their spiritual leader, and assisted in the founding

of the Goryeo Dynasty. Soon after National Preceptor Beomil was appointed Seonghwangshin, a guardian deity, miracles sprang up. It is said that when the Japanese invaded Gangneung, the deity went up to the top of *Daegwallyeong* and used his supernatural power to change all trees and plants into soldiers, and defeated the aggressors.

In addition to that, *Beopseongpo Danoje* of *Younggwang*, South Jeolla Province, holds both the Lotus Lantern Festival and *Musoksuryukje*, a ritual offering to the Dragon King for the safety of fishermen. Beopseongpo is a port, which is why a ceremony came into existence, wishing for a safe journey for fishermen and the easing of lost souls in the ocean. On Dano, Suryukjae, a celebration of the lonely spirits and hungry ghosts both in water and on land, has been transmitted in a form of goot, or exorcism, which was performed by shamans, also adding some local elements. Furthermore, for Danoje in Jain-myeon of Gyeongsan-si, South Gyeongsang Province, Wonhyo Seongsa Tansang Daryeje also takes place to celebrate the birth place of Master Venerable Wonhyo (617-686) from the Silla period.

These examples have demonstrated how, rather than being initiated into the Buddhist community, commoners have instead actively adapted Buddhism into their lives. Moreover, many temples in the country consider Dano to be a celebration of their community, so various folk activities took place, among laity and monks alike. This is a clear indication of how Korean Buddhism has been transmitted historically, popularly, and dynamically in the midst of all sentient beings.

One well-known example is the Dano Sports Competition, which an event that has been taking place for well over forty years. On this day, people in Saha Village go to Beopjusa Temple in Mt. Songnisan. For the festival, the monks and the laity divide into teams, and participate in sports, such as the game of yut, Korean wrestling, ping pong, and soccer. At times, have been over twenty teams. For the temple, the Monastic College and Seon Center are

divided into teams, and the others, from the administrative staff to the villagers, police, local security forces, and firemen, to the laity association, people divide themselves into teams for the competition. Even those who do not participate go up to see the entertainment of the day, leaving the whole village empty, while the temple is filled with noise and laughter, unifying the Sangha and the laity alike in the festival. The Buddhist Custom of Yudu

On Yudu Day, when the heat wave is at its peak on the fifteenth of the sixth month, people took part in the custom of going to a cool river valley with some food, looking forward to enjoying some time in the water. It was believed if one washed his hair and bathed in clean water, spending a day in his clean body, he would be able to wash away bad energy, relieving his suffering from the summer heat as well. More conservative types enjoyed just splashing their feet in the cold flowing water instead.

For the festival of Yudu, the water in the east was said to be especially good. This is because the word “Yudu,” originated from “yu” of *Dongyusu*, water in the east, and “du” of *Dumokyok*, bathing the head and body. Water that flows from the west to the east is called, Seochuldongyudu. *Donguibogam*, the Principles and Practice of Eastern Medicine, called this “water medicine.” Among the five natural elements, the west is water, and the east is wood. Essentially, water from the west flows to the east grows trees and plants, following the natural law of order. Thus, water flows from west to east in harmony with the nature.

Furthermore, Yudu is a holiday that offers the first harvests to ancestors and heavenly beings. Whenever there is any new food, it is customary to offer it to the elder of a household. Similarly, the first harvest was believed to be due to the virtue of ancestors so it was considered to be naturally proper to offer it to its forefathers.

Additionally, in the Buddhist community, Bosal Gyedoryang was established on Yudu Day, receiving bodhisattva precepts. In Goryeosa, the History of Goryeo, Bosal



Gyedoryang opened in the palace on the fifteenth day of the sixth month. So, the National Preceptor and Loyal Teacher along with other high-ranking monks hosted, giving the bodhisattva precepts to a King. It is not clear when Bosal Gyedorgyang got started, but the earliest record indicates that as Buddhist texts came into the Unified Silla, where related research has been the most active, it is said to be around the Silla Dynasty era.

The bodhisattva precepts are the practical virtues that every Buddhist must take on, whether one is a member of the monastic or lay community. Among them, *Sipseongye*, the ten grave precepts, and *Sipjoonggye*, the ten good or venerable deeds, are the most recognized. Any violation of the ten grave precepts would be cause for excommunication. The ten good deeds, on the other hand, describe how to keep three deeds of body, word, and mind properly. When one is worthy of receiving the bodhisattva precepts, they are given; however, taking these repeatedly symbolizes the renewal of one's worth or qualifications.

Therefore, the loyal family of the Goryeo

Dynasty hosted Bosal Gyedoryang. It was done for the kings of generations to receive the bodhisattva precepts periodically, to renew their vows of the disciples of Buddha themselves, as well as a declaration ceremony. According to the details of the Bosal Gyedoryang of the royal family of the Goryeo Dynasty, the third King Jeongjong (945-949) hosted only once during his 13 years of reign; the 11th of Munjong (1046-1083) did so five times over a period of 37 years; the 16th King Yejong (1105-1122) did so seven times in his 18 years of reign; and the 17th Injong (1122-1146) did so sixteen times over a period of 25 years of reign. Originally, it was to be hosted on the fifteenth day of the sixth month, but there were some recordings indicating that it was held on the 14th or 25th.

The bodhisattva precepts can be given to everyone, either monastics or laity in many temples, which have the platform of precepts. However, as Buddhism was widely practiced during the Goryeo Dynasty era and the loyal family regarded that ceremony as important, it was written in Goryeosa. Coming to the Joseon Dynasty period, Bosal Gyedoryang has disappeared from its royal family, and the ceremony proceeded to give precepts to only monastics, even though the laity were set to take them, but not on a particular day. Even these days, temples host Bosal Gyedoryang frequently. After the pre-ceremony concludes, Beommangyoung,

the Brahamajala Sutra, is read, the precepts are explained, and a series of questions is asked to determine whether one would abide by them. For this ceremony, a dharma assembly of seven, including teacher preceptors and precept masters, needs to routinely attend to testify to its lawfulness.

There is no clear reason why Bosal Goryanggye has been held on the fifteenth day of the sixth month, but it seems to be closely related to the custom of sprinkling water on the crown of one's head during the ceremony. On Yudu Day, the tradition of washing one's hair and body in water flowing toward the east coincides with the cleansing of one's mind and body in a Jaegye ceremony, the precepts of taking a meal. Also, when receiving supernatural beings like Buddha, a bathing ceremony is done. Yudu was a type of cleansing ritual with water.

Accordingly, with the cleansing power of water, the rituals of washing away dishonesty or improper conduct are extensive: cleansing of the soul in Buddhism; fresh dawn water of shamanism; and the holy water of Catholicism. The sprinkling of cleansing water, as one holds his bowl, has become generally accepted whenever defeating improper conduct. From Hyunsu, the wine that is offered to ancestors in a memorial ceremony, to the fresh dawn water that holds one's devotion, these are the necessary offerings of dedication that reflect one's sincere efforts to purify the soul and move closer to the gods.

As the Yudu Festival doesn't serve merely to chase away heat waves, but also to wash away all kinds of misfortune and disasters, it helps us recount the religious significance that water holds when combined with Bosal Goryanggye of Buddhism. Bosal Goryanggye on Yudu Day has become an important vehicle of cleansing the tainted lives of the mundane world, and entering into the sacred area with a pure mind and body.

01

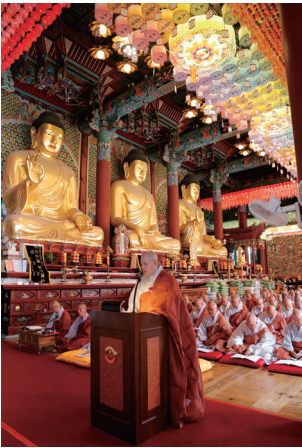
THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR MASTER DOUI AT JOGYESA TEMPLE

Memorial Tea Ceremony
for the heavenly bliss of Master Doui,
the Founder of the Jogye Order of
Korean Buddhism

At 11:00 a.m. on Monday June 6, 2016 (2560 in the Buddhist Era), Jogyesa Temple held a memorial tea ceremony for the heavenly bliss of Master Doui, the founder of Jogye Order in Korea, at its Main Buddha Hall.

The ceremony was conducted in the following order: the Three Refugees, collective recitation of the Heart Sutra, announcement of the brief personal record of Master Doui, commemorative speech for the memory of the Master, Dharma Talk of the Supreme Patriarch, memorial ritual, offering flowers, and it ended with a collective recitation of the Four Great Vows. About 200 people attended the ceremony on this day.

During the commemorative speech, Ven. Jaseung stated that he, as a disciple of the great Seon master and head of the order, would continuously practice with great devotion and unfaltering endeavor, following his path, so that the headquarters of the Jogye Order could



contribute further to the development of a more purified and undefiled mind of all Buddhists and towards a more harmonious nation.

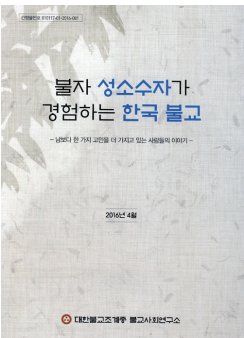
He added, “All Buddhist monks and employees of the Headquarter should also strive hard for the bliss and benefit of all beings keeping in mind the great wisdom and compassion of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.”



02

“THE BUDDHA ACCEPTED HOMOSEXUALS INTO THE SANGHA DURING HIS TIME.”

A book entitled Korean Buddhism Experienced by the Sexual Minorities has been published by the Buddhist Research Center.



The early Sangha did not discriminate against homosexuals or transgender individuals when accepting them into the community. The Buddha did not make any particular judgements regarding the sexual identity of the laity. He did impose some restrictions in the Sangha; these were not concerning one’s sexual identity, however, but regarding sexual misconduct or misbehavior that violated the precepts that the Sangha had strictly established.

These are the opinion made by Ven. Hyorok, a professor at Dongguk University, in his book entitled, *Korean Buddhism Experienced by the Sexual Minorities* (book photo above), recently published on April 27, 2016 by the Buddhist Research Center. The book was written based on in-depth interviews with



🕯 Candlelight Ceremony for the Consolation of the Orland Shooting LGBT Victims (6.15)

18 people from their twenties to fifties who are Buddhist, Catholic, and agnostic, and who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT).

In his book, he argues that *pandaka*, referring to a class of sexual minority, is often mentioned in various ways in the *Pali* texts. It implies that the early Sangha accepted people with different sexual identities, and did not discriminate whether they were heterosexual or homosexual. According to Ven. Hyorok, the early Buddhist sutras explain that one’s sexual identity can be changed not only in between lives but also during this lifetime.

There were the cases described in Pali texts that the Buddha expelled some of pandaka and hermaphrodites due to their sexual misconduct. The Buddha also expelled heterosexuals on the same grounds, however, if they committed sexual misdeeds. Thus, it can be said that the Buddhist position on LGBT individuals is neutral, not judging them as good or bad. Buddhism does not weigh one over the other, but takes it as the matter of whether one is leading a secular

life or the life of a monastic practitioner. On the other hand, the book explained the difficulties that sexual minorities face in society due to negative public perceptions. There was some suggestion made by the interviewees that while Buddhism has a more liberal point of view towards them compared to other religions, they expect the Buddhist community to take up research and make proactive measures that can bring forth some changes in the perceptions of LGBT individuals by modern society.

Ven. Beopan, the head of the Buddhist Research Center, said, “According to the *Dhammapada*, there was one arahat who used to be physically female and later became male before he was enlightened. Likewise, sexual identity should not be something ostracized, attacked or blamed by society. Buddhism fundamentally respects all living beings with compassion. We should pay attention to LGBT individuals and help them to be naturally integrated into the society without facing discrimination.”

🌸 Article and photos provided by The Buddhist Newspaper

03

FUND OF THE DREAMINUS REACHED OVER \$1 MILLION IN 2016

The Jogye Order's philanthropic foundation, Dreaminus (President Ven. Jaseung), successfully raised in excess of \$1 million in donations in 2016. Dreaminus was established on July 4, 2008 as the first Buddhist philanthropic organization, and its seed money was \$100,000. In seven years, it grew to a foundation that succeeded in bringing in 10 times that amount in donations.

According to the statistics from the National Tax Service, the total donation revenue of all non-profit foundations was \$530 million, and 82 of them received donations of over \$1 million. However, there were no Buddhist organizations included in the group of 82 until Dreaminus accomplished this goal of raising more than \$1 million in 2016.

It was all thanks to the compassionate mind and actions of individual temples, Buddhist monks, and lay Buddhists. The funds raised were used for people

living in less privileged situations, both domestic and foreign, and went towards food, shelter, education, medical care and natural disasters.

The secretary-general, Ven. Jagong, said that the Dreaminus will continue to do their best to make the precious donations most worthy, transparent, and useful for our disadvantaged neighbors, based on the Buddhist spirit and philosophy.

🌸 website: www.dreaminus.org



04

JOGYE ORDER'S PROGRAMS OF JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2016

Date	Program	Contact
July 13	Buddhist Forum	Office of Special Assistance for Policy to the President of the Jogye Order
Aug 17	Buddhist Art Exhibition (Aug 17 ~ 31)	Department of Cultural Affairs
Aug 25	The 3 rd Great Council	Association of Self Reflection and Renovation
Sep 06	2016 Special Exhibition on <i>the Faith in Amitabha Buddha and Paradise</i>	The Central Buddhist Museum
Sep 20	Exhibition of Korean Traditional Paper Flowers (Sep 20 ~ 27)	The <i>Yeon Deung Hoe</i> Preservation Committee
Sep 23	The 8 th Exhibition and Awards Ceremony for the Winners in the Buddhist Cultural Product Competition	Cultural Corps of the Korean Buddhism